



### **Garden Bird Watch this month starts 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 29<sup>th</sup>**

The banner photograph shows a hoverfly about to nectar on ivy. My impression for pollinators in 2023 is that the number of bees, hoverflies, moths and butterflies are well down. Apart from the hottest June for years, the weather has been quite mixed and unkind for insects. Our moth recording efforts are well below previous years but I have yet to collect all our data in.

### **Small mammal survey:**



For the past ten or so years, Colin and Rita have organised small mapping trapping using Longworth traps in the Wessex Waterworks meadow and wood in both April and October on the western boundary. Usually we just record wood mouse and an occasional bank and field vole. This is done to a strict Natural England protocol with the traps supplied with bedding, nuts and apple, with a maximum time limit between setting the traps and checking them of 12 hours.

This October, the southern meadow was unusable on the western side due to vegetation growth and just one wood mouse. Similarly, in the fen area, just one wood mouse, whilst for the first time we recorded two wood mice in the north wood west edge.

### **Butterfly Conservation standard Pollard survey**

A small team of members take it in turns to walk from Wyndings to the beacon, the eastwards down the slope to the Waterworks boundary, turning north along the path to the west of the fence before turning eastwards again across the top of the collecting area. The path then turns south-east towards a gate and the track leading back to the village. This means we count in six sections, with the survey taking between 90 minutes and two hours. We start on the first of April with week 26 having 30<sup>th</sup> September in it. This is a national survey allowing assessment of trends. The results are in the attached .pdf.



At the end of August, Rita and Colin recorded small blue. I was uncertain that we have this species here so when I sent the results in I asked the County reorder to check. Robyn George reported: "I have checked our records, and Small blue has been recorded in Sutton Poyntz, SY7084 before mainly in very small numbers. The first record I have is 1986, then you recorded one there in 2011. Singletons were recorded in 2019 and 2020, then in 2021, Bernard Franklin recorded 10." There is a small amount of kidney vetch - it's food plant on the hill. A good place to see this is Littlemoor Road verges and the slope above the relief road. There were also good numbers of Lulworth skipper in late June, occasional green hairstreak below the Beacon, very few dark green fritillaries and less wall and small heath than in previous years. Even now we are still seeing red admirals.

### Bird Surveys:

Members. Do two types of surveying:

Mainly Sue and Jon Campbell do a fixed-point survey of Wessex Water land, which covers the waterworks and West Hill. Dave Emery has done some trends over the past ten years. This is a summary Dave provided over the last ten years:

	sutton poyntz	BTO BBS Trends			Dorset Bird Report 2021
		Dorset 2019	SW 2022	England 2022	
Blackbird	-36	-15	-6	-6	
Blackcap	100	29	13	30	
Blue tit	-37	-18	-15	-8	
chaffinch	-73	-39	-41	-44	
Corn bunting	0		124	35	Recorded breeding Chalbury and Bincombe
Dunnoek	-52	-16	-14	-7	
Goldfinch	-71	68	20	22	Increasing
Great tit	-46	-4	-14	-12	
Linnet	-43	53	-4	-3	Declining
Long tailed tit	-53		-9	-13	
Magpie	-67	-14	-5	4	
Raven	-10		16	-4	Has been increasing
Robin	31	-22	4	14	
Skylark	-77	-23	-13	8	Declining
Songthrush	0	-32	-6	12	
Stonechat	165			172	
Wren	0	-1	12	26	
Yellowhammer	-26	-24	-31	-15	Declining

*General comparisons of percentage change over the last 10 years.*

I am sure Dave will provide a copy if asked. 2.

### Garden Bird Watch:



I have received results back from 13 gardens. Big request, please send lists a.s.a.p. after the month end as the National Trust is keeping me busy. A total of 32 species seen. Firstly, something anecdotal. Many of you know I walk early in the morning for about an hour. Usually at this time of the year, I see flocks of herring gulls, which have spent the night on Weymouth Bay move inland. In past years the numbers have been 500 plus estimated. This year I am seeing < 100. Avian flu is hitting them hard and a sighting of 20 in a garden is exceptional. House sparrows also seem to be down with only nine people reporting them, but I suspect those with feeders will attract the remaining birds. Look at starlings – they used to be resident in our gardens but just one person on Old Granary reporting them.