



### Garden Bird Watch this month 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023

During the early part of 2022, a few of us joined a National monitoring programme for mistletoe, noting it in around 20 places both here and elsewhere in Weymouth and west Dorset. We also reported some historical losses where trees had been cut down, housing developments etc. It is easy to see mistletoe at this time of the year and just after Christmas I noticed two more places in Sutton Poyntz. Is it a plant? Well it could be as it has dioecious flowers (*i.e.*) separate male and female flowers. It is definitely parasitic often on apple, limes poplars and occasionally on field maple. Here and it was in my garden on hawthorn.

This specimen is easily seen walking back to the village on the footpath from the camping fields in an old hedge line of ash, maple and oak with the stream on the north side.



Jon Waterman sent me this image of a common lizard on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022 sunning itself on a step in his garden. Fortunately, he had a suitable place to keep it warm in his greenhouse where it was placed in a suitably warm plant.

I reported the find to Dorset Environmental Records Centre who told me that the latest record they had in a year was mid-November and the earliest 11<sup>th</sup> January.

### Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland New Year Flower Hunt.

In January 2022, we recorded around 30 plants in flower in SY7083 so registered these in this National survey. The week of frost commencing around 11<sup>th</sup> December finished off any chance of repeating the survey in 2023 successfully, so with winter heliotrope, hazel, petty spurge, annual meadow-grass, smooth sow thistle and dandelion, it seemed a waste of time filling in the computer form.



### **Garden Bird Watch Results:**

Firstly for the first time for many years, the Friday team, reported lapwing in the fields to the east of Veterans Wood, whilst Jack reported golden plover in the large field to the north of his house during the cold spell 12-17<sup>th</sup> December. Nobody mentioned snipe during the very wet spell post-Christmas but it was really too wet and muddy to venture into the fields unless one really had to.

With this *Newsletter* are the results of December Garden Bird Watch. But regrettably just 11 people sent reports. There is also a summary of April to December. Regrettably an unfortunate delete meant I lost January to March. Redwing were absent but one report of five fieldfare from Northdown Farm, two reports of song thrush and one of mistle thrush again from Northdown Farm. I wonder what other birds are a vector for spreading the sticky seeds of mistletoe, although a human hand can help in the autumn. Of the other red data birds all reported house sparrow, one report of greenfinch, three reports of grey wagtail and four reports of starlings. With Dorothy away, no report of yellowhammer. Blackcap seemed to have survived with three reports but no chiffchaff and chaffinch numbers are well down.

Good numbers of goldfinch, robins, long-tailed tits and two people were lucky enough to hear tawny owl.