

Diary

8 May 2008

Beautiful sunny day with 14 butterflies of 7 species and the first record of Dragonfly/Damselfly. A pair of Large red Damselflies were “close coupled” in the Trout Pond extension. Swallows, House Martins and Swifts all in evidence and the former trying to chase off a Sparrowhawk.

26 April 2008

The warmest day of the year so far and the butterflies obliged by adding two species to my Ewelme list for the year. At least one and possibly two Holly Blues put in an appearance at the lower end of the site and a Speckled Wood was patrolling the edge of the Blackthorn Thicket in the top meadow. Also in the same thicket there was a Sedge warbler – the first of this species I have recorded at the beds.



23 April 2008

Very pleasant between the showers and lots of singing birds. I thought I heard a Garden Warbler but couldn't catch sight of it to confirm it wasn't a Blackcap (their songs are very similar). Whilst sitting on a log listening 3 species of warbler appeared – Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Lesser Whitethroat (pictured below).



The morning was somewhat spoilt by discovering one of my nest boxes missing – I hope whoever took it is putting it to good use and has not just discarded it!

22 April 2008

What a difference a year makes! On the same date in 2007 I logged 22 butterflies of 9 species but today, although a warm and with little wind I could only find 10 individuals of three species. It is always nice to see the male Brimstone glowing in the sunshine but not easy to photograph as they never seem to rest. The other two, peacock and Small Tortoiseshell were somewhat easier. It seems to be a “Yellow” time of the year with Celandines, Dandelions and a large clump of Marsh Marigold on display.



11 April 2008

Still getting cool overnight temperatures but not quite a frost last night. The usual array of birds with both Chiffchaff and Blackcap singing and good to see a Song Thrush opposite the centre. The 55th species of the current year with the appearance of a female Reed Bunting near the Trout Pond extension.

8 April 2008

Warm in the sun and out of the wind but overnight frost again. A good morning for birds with 28 species counted including 3 Chiffchaffs (2 at lower site and one in Blackthorns at upper site), a Blackcap singing near the mill, a male Brambling still present and both Green and Great spotted Woodpeckers around. Also my first Ewelme Swallow of the year – 4 days later than 2007.

6 April 2008

Winter seems to be back with a vengeance with frost and several inches of snow early in the day – very picturesque but most of the wildlife seemed to stay in hiding. During a brief time when the sun appeared there were two Chiffchaffs heard and a male Blackcap seen.



1 April 2008

Some of the winter birds seem reluctant to leave us with at least 2 Brambling (both females) and the Water Rail still around. Forget-me-not and Red Deadnettle providing some colour amongst the Nettles.



March Weather

I recorded a total of 70.9mm in my Benson garden which represented 159% of the long term average for March. The wettest day was the 15th when exactly an inch (25.4mm) was recorded. The first three months of 2008 have been wetter than the average but not by as much as it feels due to a relatively dry February. There were frosts on 10 nights with a minimum temperature of -7.5°C on the night of the 4/5th. In general minimum temperatures were below average for most of the month and maximums around the average.

29 March 2008

Little of note in the cold and the wet though the Water Rail still present. Could it beat last year when the last sighting was on 5th April?

25 March 2008

Still winter with a strong cold wind and frost and snow overnight. Little Egret still around, not seemingly affected by the weather and a couple of Brambling still present near the site of the mill. A breath of spring with brief song from a Chiffchaff.

23 March 2008

29 species of birds on a very wintry visit. Highlights included Water Rail (still), Kingfisher, Little Egret, Canada Goose, Green Woodpecker and Green Sandpiper.

17 March



was

2008
After
missing for
around a
month the
Little Egret
back today.

We all hoped it might return with a mate but only a single one seen.

15 March 2008

Brambling still around and this group (Tidings) of 8 Magpies in deep discussion!



12 March 2008

We haven't seen the last of winter yet with Redwings and Brambling still around the lower end of the site. No sign of Water Rail – have we seen the last of these till the Autumn?

11 March 2008

Little of note during a quick walk through today but I was surprised to see the Green Sandpiper after a long gap. The photo is a rather distant view. The strong winds over the last few days have brought down a couple of “un-pollarded” Willow trees at the back of the Trout Pond. Unfortunately



one was hosting one of the nest boxes used last year by a family of Blue Tits.



6 March 2008

27 species of bird observed including Water Rail, Grey Heron, Kingfisher, pair of Canada Geese flying over adjacent field and Brambling (pic below).



Numerous clumps of frogspawn in the Trout Pond Extension (must think of a better name for this).



4 March 2008

Water Rail still present – only one seen.



Coltsfoot, Celandine, Forget-me-not and Violet in flower.



Headless mouse seen – typical of Little Owl attack.