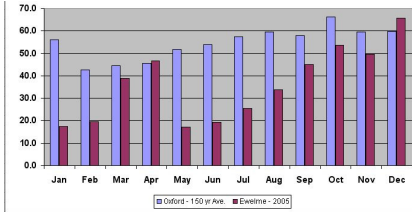


Diary

March 2006

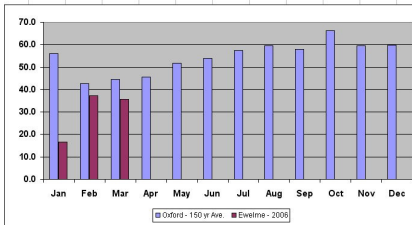
Weather

As anyone can see by the water level in the beds, the rain situation is getting critical and without a large increase in rainfall it seems inevitable that the beds will dry out this summer. The following plots illustrate the rainfall over the last 15 months.



The upper picture shows the rainfall month by month throughout 2005 with the red representing measurements from my Benson garden and the blue, the 150 year average from Oxford records.

The lower graph shows records for this year up to the end of March.



Night time temperatures were generally below the average for the first three weeks of the month but recovered during the last week to be slightly above average. A total of 19 nights of frost were recorded in Benson during March which is the third highest number recorded for the month since 1984. Maximum temperatures recorded were around the March average.

Birds

A quiet month for birds with, probably the highlight of the month, being a female Siskin seen on 23rd of the month. Not too surprising with a general influx of these delicate little finches but this record represents my 72nd specie for the beds. It has been a good winter for Water Rail with at least 3 spending their winter with us – and possibly more. They generally depart for their breeding grounds about this time of the year though we always hope they might stay to breed. The last sighting I have heard of was about the 19th but I would be pleased to hear of anything later.



Butterflies

No butterfly records yet but this is probably due to me not visiting the beds during the last few days of the month. Brimstone butterflies were on the wing elsewhere and probably at Ewelme too.

Etc



It was good to see the first signs of spring with green buds on many of the trees and the first of the flowers showing some colour. Snowdrops and Daffodils put on a good show and the first of the Celandines and Coltsfoot (feet?) were in flower.

