

Diary

May 2006

Weather

At last some rain worth talking about! The total recorded for May amounted to 98mm which is almost twice the average for May. It was also the highest monthly total recorded since October 2004. Unfortunately, as they say, it is the “wrong sort of rain”. Rain at this time of year adds very little to the aquifer which supplies the water to the springs which, in turn, supply the watercress beds. It temporarily increases the flow down the stream but, without regular heavy rainfall, levels will probably soon fall again.

Minimum temperatures through the month were at or above the average with no frosts recorded. Maximum temperatures recorded in my Benson garden were above average for the first half of the month but generally below average during the second half.

Birds



Some interesting sightings though nothing to get the “twitchers” excited. Almost unbelievably my first sighting of a Grey Heron on the beds for a Year! An early Hobby flypast on the 1st and the first Swift of the year on the same day. The first Meadow Pipit since March 2003 was a good record and it was good to see several of the nest boxes being visited by Blue Tits. Numbers of young Moorhens and Mallards seem low which is probably down to the Corvid family – still, plenty of time for another try.

Butterflies

My number of species for the year reached 9 (I expect Des has a bigger list) with the highlight being a Painted Lady seen on the 13th but not since. Unfortunately the wet, cool weather during the latter half of the month reduced butterfly activity.



Etc



Better late than never spring arrived - eventually. Many flowers came into bloom including a good clump of Ragged Robin and several Stars of Bethlehem. Des reported a few Grass Snakes and a sighting of a Muntjak Deer but only a single Water Vole though possibly with young offspring.



During my regular visits I saw two young Fox Cubs chasing one another and wrestling at the lower end of the site.