



Bristol Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity No. 235494

Wildlife News: Week 09 – March 03rd 2008

Weather

The Winter had an average temperature of 9.1C, warmer than any recent one back to 1999, and much more than the long-term average of 7.7C, but just below that of 1887. The rainfall average 118mm a month, just below last year, but much more than the long term average of 78mm, and part of a trend to wetter winters that began in 1970. There were 23 frost nights, 5 cold enough to cause ice to form, and one day when snow lay briefly

February

The average temperature was 9.3C, the warmest since 2002, and well above the long term average of 7.6C. The twenty year average temperature is now higher than it was in 1939, the top of the last warming spell. The warmest February ever was in 1920 at 12.9C.

The total rainfall was 42mm, well below the average of 62mm, but similar to five of the years since 2001. The most extraordinary feature however was the sunshine, which average 4.8 hours a day, double the long term average, and more than we had last June.

Finally This week,

Av temp 9.7C, a little above the average for the week. Year to date 9.6C, and last twelve months 14.6C, but falling. Rainfall totalled 18mm.

Spring events

Blackthorn is breaking into cloud of white blossom right across the country, Camellia's are coming out in gardens, the first flowering Current are just open, and this week saw masses of Frogspawn laid. If you have had some, and not sent me the date please do- it helps statistics to be based on as large a sample as possible. I had a report of Cuckoo Flower open on March 1. The previous earliest date was March 24th in 1893, which was an unusually early spring. The exceptional amount of sunshine in February may well enable many species to flower early This week look out for Yellow Corydalis. Forget-me-not. Horse Chestnut buds could begin opening soon. Laurel flowers.. Danish Scurvy Grass.. Bulbous Buttercup. Marsh Marigold. Wild Cherry.

Swifts

John Tully and I are asking for volunteers to carry out trial counts designed to find a way of accurately measuring Swift breeding populations. It has become clear that the Swifts we see during May are the breeding population. Young non-breeders arrive at the end of May, which confuses the issue. However non-breeders often get involved in screaming parties that are apparently always close to a nest site. BBS counts are probably not a very effective way of monitoring Swift populations, but they have shown a 35% decline nationally. Please let me know if you are interested in helping. There is an interesting website at www.londons-swifts.org.uk