



Bristol Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity No. 235494

Wildlife News: Week 23 – June 9th 2008

Weather

A warmer week, average 19.1C, spot on the recent average for this week. Year to date 12.3C, below 2003 and 2007 at this point but above other recent years; Last twelve months 14.19C, and stationary because last year early June was the same temperature as this year. It was the second half of June and July that were so poor last year. 68 hours of sun was also encouraging, and it was a dry week with just 5mm of rain, bringing total rainfall this year to 494mm, 105mm above the usual average for the date.

Spring events

I have found 16 new species in flower this week including Great Bindweed, Great knapweed, Mignonette, and, very early, Hemp Agrimony, also the first Buddleia, Great Lettuce and Bristly Oxtongue. Dropwort has opened on the Downs.

There were 74 species in flower on my standard walk across the Downs, compared with the recent average of 76, and compared with 94 last year. This is because a number of spring flowers have finished, but late summer flowers have yet to appear. However events are now running very close to the average over the past decade.

Plants that may come into flower this week.

Musk Mallow, Silverweed, Field Bindweed, Ladies Bedstraw, Black Horeound, Great Hairy Willowherb, Vervain, Stinking Iris, Creeping Jenny, Enchanters Nightshade, Tall Mellilot, Large-leafed Lime, Common Valerian, Bullrush, Flowering Rush, Knotgrass, Ladies Bedstraw and Ladies Mantle. These predictions are based on last year's dates. Each week I take the previous week's list, delete those plants I have found in flower, and add from last year's dates. It does help to know what to look for.

Swifts.

Swift numbers seem to be very low this year, which is disturbing. I am helping run a survey into low-level screaming swift parties and would be very grateful for details, ie time, date, number in party and precise location- ie street address. Low-level Swift parties are almost always associated with breeding pairs. Swift chicks should now be hatching, and the chances of seeing birds going into roof spaces to feed are greater. We want to try to get details of Swift nesting sites because they are exceptionally site faithful.

Festival of Nature

Once again this was a considerable success, and lucky with the weather. The BNS stand was visited by many people, and as usual the photographic display was admired. Let us hope that many of those who took leaflets decide to join.

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