



Bristol Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity No. 235494

Wildlife News: Week 10 – March 11th 2010

Weather

Temperature average 7.3C, compared with the extremes for the week of 13.0C and 6.4C. The week was totally dominated by high pressure, NE winds and with five frost nights. The year to date has crept up to 5.5C, and the last twelve months is static at 13.4C. It was a totally dry week, and the rainfall is now 30mm (two weeks worth) below average.

Onset of spring.

Almost nothing is moving, though I did find the first Dogs Mercury had pushed through the soil, though flowers had not opened. Daffodils are now well up, and with well formed buds, but there is as yet no sign of Celandine. Yew flower buds by contrast are swelling and look ready to burst, and Elm cant be far behind.

To Look out for this week.

Yew is about to start shedding pollen, Dandelions, which have been completely shut down by the cold will burst into bloom as temperatures rise, Vernal Whitlow grass and Barren Strawberry should flower soon, and Celandine cant be far behind.

Frogspawn.

A number of gardens have reported Frogspawn, but whether it will survive being iced over will be interesting. I expect another rush of spawning as soon as the temperature rises.

Birds in my garden.

As usual at this date both the numbers and species using my feeders is falling fast. My female Blackcap has disappeared, presumably setting off back to South Germany. Chaffinches and Greenfinches have gone, the former probably north and the latter east. The Long –tailed Tits are now nest building, and the Goldfinch flocks have broken up. Given the fact that Ivy berries are now the only hedgerow food available it might seem surprising that garden food is scorned, but everywhere birds are hunting lawns and pastures for worms and grubs to help bring them into condition for the complex and demanding process of nest building and egg-laying. Redwings often gather in trees and burble a soft sweet song together before dropping to the grass below.