



Bristol Naturalists' Society

Registered Charity No. 235494

Wildlife News: Week 15 – April 15th 2010

Weather.

High pressure brought two beautiful days on 9th and 10th with the temperature breaking through the 15C barriers for the first time since last Nov 2nd, but the wind direction switched to the NE, and night-time temperatures fell steeply. The weekly average was 13.9C, below the weekly average. The extremes for this week are 18.7C in 1997 (exceeding even the amazing April of 2007, which was the second warmest April since 1853) and 7.6C in 1998. Year-to-date has risen to 7.7C, and the last twelve months is still 13.4C.

The week was also entirely dry, and as a result total rainfall is now 30mm below normal.

Spring events.

The NE winds have checked summer migrants, who will probably pour in as soon as wind direction switches to the South.

But stimulated by quite a lot of sunshine, plants are responding rapidly. This week I have found Cuckoo Flower, Honesty, Garlic Mustard, Wood Sorrel, Golden Saxifrage, Yellow Archangel, Ground Ivy and Alkanet in flower. Some of these are very late, others are close to their normal date.

On the Downs the average date of 55 spring events is day 80, and this is 19 days later than average, though those events happened on day 54 in 2007.

Trees.

The flowers of Norway Maple have been astonishing this year, the trees glowing a golden yellow, and as most trees are still leafless, making a very striking appearance. Blackthorn is still coming out in some areas, and Hawthorn flower buds are developing rapidly so that we may get the strange sight of both species being in flower together.

To Look out for this week

Cow Parsley is about to flower; Bulbous Buttercup, Crab Apple, Wood Avens, Hedge Mustard, Horse Chestnut, Field Maple, Bugle, Holly, Solomons Seal,- all have been in flower well before this in years past.

Iceland's volcano.

As I write this my car is covered in fine grey dust, and to see a blue sky without a vapour trail anywhere is something wondrous. The events of this week remind us of our extreme vulnerability, and how unsustainable our life-style actually is.

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