

The Birds

There's been a slight frost over the past couple of nights, the skies are clear and the night-time temperatures getting lower; winter is certainly around the corner...

The first 'seeeeps' from the night's sky above Seaton were heard on the 13th. These 'seeeeps' come from migrating **Redwings** flying over, they like to migrate under the safety of darkness. I urge people to go outside after dark, especially on clear and still nights. Find somewhere quiet then just wait and listen. Anytime from now 'til the middle of November should prove successful if the conditions are right.

The later part of the autumn has been noticeably poor for wader migration. The wader situation on the river has been very 'samey' over the past couple of weeks with; up to ten **Black-tailed Godwits**, two **Bar-tailed Godwits**, two **Knot**, four **Dunlin**, three **Ringed Plover**, two **Green Sandpiper** and three **Common Sandpiper**. The most notable change in wader numbers is **Lapwing**, with half-a-dozen present at the start of this period, but 40 counted towards the end. Numbers will continue to grow now 'til Christmas time.



There have been a few Gulls worth mentioning. Two **Yellow-legged Gulls** have been seen on the estuary, a near-adult on 3rd and a fine adult on 11th. A couple of **Mediterranean Gulls** have been seen and the first **Common Gulls** (three) were seen on 14th.

There was one day of good seawatching during this period, the 6th. During the day 13 **Great**, one **Pomarine** and six **Arctic Skuas** flew west along with three **Balearic Shearwaters**, two **Arctic Terns** and a **Little Gull**.

With the lack of bird photos, I shall include a few moth pictures taken recently in Seaton...



Photos: Yellow-legged Gull - Gavin Haig; Black Rustic, Frosted Orange, Barred Sallow and Beaded Chestnut - Steve Waite; Merveille du Jour - Karen Woolley.

Holyford Woods

Jean Kreiseler says that it is a bit quiet in the woods at the moment.

"The recent quiet still days have meant the slightest sound is magnified and acorns falling sounded like stones on the paths. Paco (the dog) scented the Roe Buck for me this week, as relaxed as ever feeding among the gorse bushes on The Hangings.

The list of birds I have heard and seen lately is headed by a **Chiffchaff** calling not far from my seat. There are several vocal **Wrens** about seemingly defending their chosen territories already. Others are **Great, Blue** and **Long-tailed Tits**, **Green** and **Greater Spotted Woodpeckers**, **Nuthatch**, **Robin**, **Moorhen**, **Jay**, **Rook**, **Crow**, **Raven**, **Buzzard**, and **Kestrel**. For the first time for ages I have seen a Grey Squirrel. There is very little colour change in the trees as yet." So, quiet it may be, but still worth a visit by the sound of things.

The Trivia

Nancy Raine reports “A **Wood Pigeon** flew into my patio window (Popes Lane, Colyford) at great speed, making a loud bang; sadly it did not survive. A few minutes later another bird turned up, a similar-ish size and colour, at first I thought it was the mother, as there have been several families raised in our garden this summer. But of course it was a female **Sparrow Hawk**, who then started to eat it. I didn’t really want the mess on my patio, so moved the poor dead bird on to my lawn, and the **Sparrow Hawk** flew away.

Minutes later she was back, looking indignantly all around for her breakfast. Since I was sitting very close to the window, I got a fantastic view of her close up, for quite a while, so I quickly checked my guess at her identity on the computer. Eventually she spotted the pigeon on the lawn, and is now munching away happily.

It may not be a dog-eat-dog world here in Colyford, but it is certainly a bird-eat-bird one!”

And, close to home, on the day after, I was startled by an almighty crash on the window of my study in Springfields, and guess what? Exactly the same scenario! The Colyford **Sparrow Hawks** are well fed!



Sue Smith saw this **Knot** with a **Godwit** on the estuary the afternoon of the 8th, and Ian and Carol Lowe wondered if this is a **Tree Pipit**, but I suspect it is a **Meadow Pipit**.



You send me far more photographs than I can use in the newsletter – but please don’t stop. I love to get them, and share with you what you have seen.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 28th October 4.30 p.m.

Bird-watching tram trip. Booking essential on 01297 20375

Friday 30th October 10.00 a.m. onwards

Meet the Birds at Colyford Common

For more information, ring EDDC on 01395 517557.

This twice-monthly email newsletter is freely available to anyone who would like it, as is a periodic one about the activities of the East Devon Local Group of the Devon Wildlife Trust. Just send me an email with Axe Estuary Birds and/or East Devon DWT in the subject line. Also, for those without a computer, I will send a copy by post if you would like to send me some stamps.

Thanks to those who keep us informed – please continue to tell us of any unusual, interesting or amusing sightings, and what is about locally, and send any photos you would like to share.

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