

# Briantspuddle Wildlife News No.6

Please keep sending any wildlife news within our parish to [angie@pbtalbot.plus.com](mailto:angie@pbtalbot.plus.com)  
Some of our summer migrants have already arrived and are building nests, others are still travelling. Swallows are here and some swifts – however the northerly winds make their journey more difficult. Our garden birds are nesting and raising families, wildflowers are blooming and everywhere is fresh and green.

**You may want to see the latest guidance from the RSPB on what and when to feed garden birds: Feed seasonally. Feed safely.**

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/how-to-help-garden-birds>



**Marsh Tit**



**Cetti's Warbler**



**Goldcrest**



**Corn Bunting**

## **American Gull visits Moor Lane meadow.**

We have had a lot of Gulls in recent weeks and I was hoping for something a bit different, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> April it happened. But it was fellow birder Andy Mears who spotted a 1<sup>st</sup> winter BONAPARTES GULL with lots of BLACK HEADED GULLS, while he was helping with an invertebrate survey on the river Piddle. Lucky for us he put the news of his find on

RARE BIRD ALERT so some of us were soon stood by the gate to the field. But it was quite hard to pick it out as it was very distant. It brought out some of Dorset's top birders, so it was soon spotted. The best views were when it was flying around and the distinct barring on its wings could be seen.

It is thought this bird had flown in from LYNCH COVE near CHICKERELL where it was seen earlier in the morning, but it went missing from there, and was later re- found at MOOR LANE. Luckily for us birder PHIL CHEESMAN was at LYNCH COVE and got some great shots of it flying and has kindly sent us one to show in our newsletter. The bird was at MOOR LANE for about four hours before returning to LYNCH COVE.

It is a scarce visitor to Dorset but turns up most years in small numbers. The first five records for Dorset occurred over a forty-five year period 1970-2014, but there have now been another eight in the last ten years 2015-2024, not sure how many in 2025, but with two at LYNCH COVE this year to add to the records, you can see it is still a scarce bird here. We seem to be getting a few more in recent years down to an increase in the breeding population on the other side of the ATLANTIC, Top effort by all concerned.



**Leucistic Great Spotted Woodpecker**

Vivi and Alex sent us these photos of a leucistic Great Spotted Woodpecker which has a rare genetic condition that causes a partial or total lack of pigmentation which only affects the feathers on a bird. Leucism is estimated to affect roughly 1 in 30,000 birds.



**Leucistic Plumage**



**Normal Plumage**



This is a nest that Vivi found whilst clearing the garden that turned out to belong to a Chiffchaff.

## Spring Birds

Spring bird migration is well under way, with Chiffchaff and Blackcap arriving in good numbers, less so the Willow Warbler. Swallow and House Martins numbers have been low, but Sand Martins passing through in good numbers. A few Reed and Sedge Warblers have returned to Briantspuddle meadows, and though not a migrant, I had a good count of ten male Reed Buntings over a half mile stretch of the river. The Cetti's Warbler also seems to be increasing.

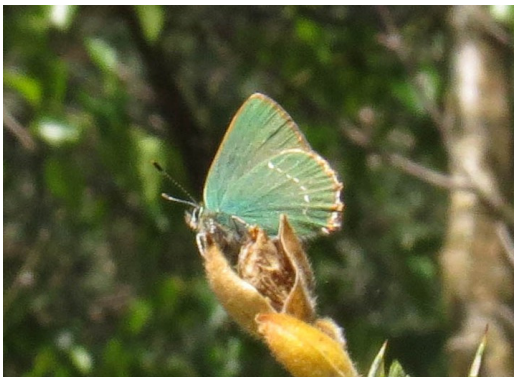
Tree pipits are back on the heath and also I've seen a few Dartford Warblers and quite a



**Woodlark**

few Stonechats and Linnets. My first Nightjar was on 28<sup>th</sup> April - same as last year. A Woodlark seen carrying food on ERICA TRUST LAND is good news. Bird migration has been a bit slow this year but still hoping for a few more. Even the Cuckoo is proving hard to hear this year, a few people heard one a bit early but it never stayed. The Swifts have returned a couple days earlier this year and up to now the best count I have had is six but early days yet, more on these next time.

## Spring Butterflies



**Green Hairstreak**



**Small Copper**

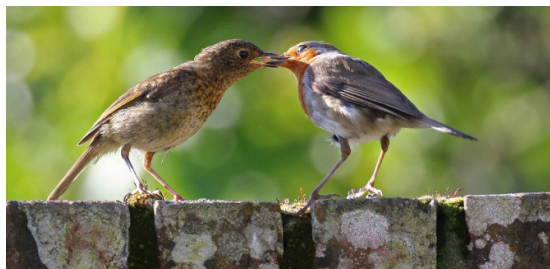
Both these butterflies are getting to be scarce in our Parish.

A good start to the butterfly season with a nice few butterflies out and about in the sunshine, with Brimstone, Peacock, Red Admiral, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue, Small White, Small Copper, Green Veined White, Green Hairstreak, Painted Lady and Wall Brown - all seen by the 5<sup>th</sup> May. So will it be a bumper year? I'm not sure but sorry to say we need a bit of rain to help the wild flowers that the

butterflies depend on, last year was too dry and many flowers just died off. But this year it's a good start.

### Young birds

It's been a bit quiet of late, bird wise, and my 2 photos show why - with young Siskins and Robins in my garden.



Young Robin and Parent



Young Siskin and Parent

### Wood Pigeon (Columba palumbus)



As I stand and gaze through the kitchen window, I am entertained by the antics of pigeons, (the ones visiting my garden are, I believe, wood pigeons).

Courting is serious business! The bow of male toward female, her sidesteps to fend off a most persistent pursuer now swelling his chest to enhance the bowing. I once witnessed a gust of wind catch a male mid bow and topple him from the fence. He was not deterred!

I looked out during a brief summer downpour to see several pigeons prostrate on the patio. Oh no, mass murder on the paving slabs! Closer inspection revealed that some were rolling from side to side, lifting the underside of their wings to catch elusive rain drops whilst others were flattening themselves into the puddles, revelling in the coolness. Rays of sunlight revealed the myriad colours quietly residing in their neck feathers, enhanced by the surrounding grey. Such a common bird, often overlooked but worthy of a second glance.

Of course, I also curse the mess they make of my patio but remind myself that it's a small (well, not that small) inconvenience from a creature that amuses me whilst I'm performing the humdrum tasks of life.

With thanks to Roger Hewitt, Dianne George, Helen Frost, Vivi and Alec Armitage, Campbell de Burgh, and Peter Talbot.