



ABINGTON NATUREWATCH

The
Record
2021

Records of the activities of Abington Naturewatch for 2021. This report includes records of sightings of the fauna and flora in Great and Little Abington, Cambridgeshire, as noted by members and covering several sectors: Wildlife at Granta Park and in the River Granta, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians, Mammals, Insects, Flora and Fungi. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, most group activities and trips were cancelled this year.



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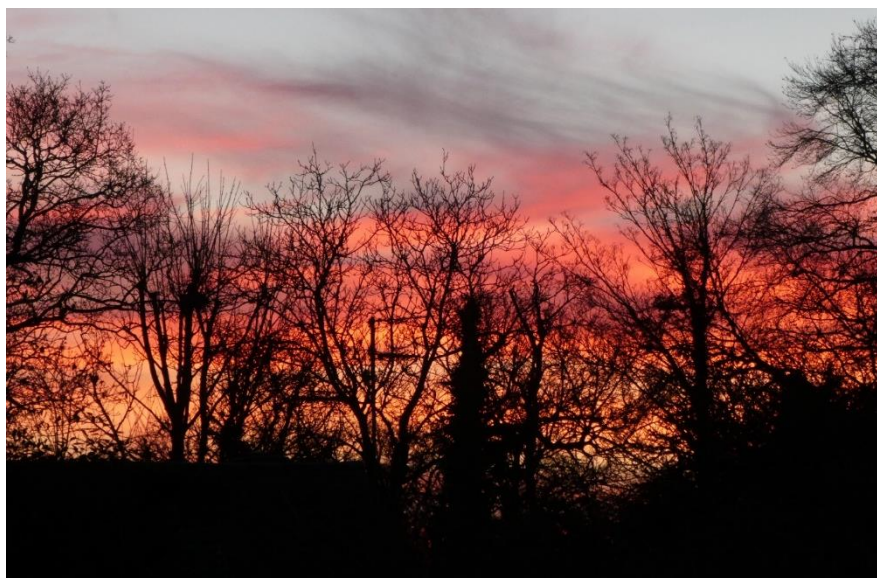
Many thanks to all those members who submitted observation records and photographs for use in the Blog and this Record. Please keep it up, with as many photographs as possible.

To keep in touch with events and sightings during the year, please visit the ANW Blog at:

<http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>

Notes:

- i. Abington Naturewatch covers the area of the parishes of Great and Little Abington: from the Roman Road south to the Essex border, and from the A11 east to Hildersham parish boundary. A map showing local names of the main areas is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/scdm1th>
- ii. Abbreviations used throughout this document: AbPkFm, Abington Park Farm; GA, Great Abington; GP, Granta Park; LA, Little Abington; LSA, Land Settlement Association area (North, South, Chalky and Cutting Roads); ORC, Old Railway Cutting (adjacent to Pampisford Road, GA).
- iii. All photographs taken in 2021 in the Abingtons, unless noted. Photographers are:
 Andy Merryweather (AM), Barry Brooks (BMB), Carol McCrae (CMcC), Darren Bast (DB), David Farrant (DF), Derek Turnidge (DLT), Genevieve Dalton (GD), Jennifer Hirsh (JAH), Jez Smith (JS), John Turner (JT), Justine Upham (JU), Len Mead (LAM), Peter Brunning (PJB), Polly Merryweather (PM), Richard Smith (RS), Susan Hodges (SH).
- iv. Visits out of the Abingtons are recorded separately in Section 11.
- v. For contact details for all sections, please refer to the back page.
- vi. Cover photos:
 - 1: Great Spotted Woodpecker at the nest - 09May (JT);
 - 2: Little Abington church and flooded meadow - 17Jan (AM)



3: Sunrise - 31Jan (DF)

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1. FOREWORD

I. 2021 Coronavirus Continues

Coronavirus again had an impact on our Naturewatch activities as we were unable to carry out many of our planned visits during the year. With lockdown early in the year and people working from home and enjoying their daily walks it did mean we generally had more reports. Many members were also able to take part in our two local garden bird surveys in January and May. The position improved in the middle of the year with more freedom, but people were still wary of gathering in groups. We did manage finally to hold a visit to the Roman Road and a general review meeting in early December, but then Covid concerns increased again.

The 2021 weather (see details below) had several effects on our RiverCare observations. The heavy rainfall spikes of rain in January, May, July and the late autumn caused what was a low river flow in the River Granta in the early part of the year, to run fast and high in the summer and late autumn. This caused scouring of the river bed and impacted the numbers and species seen in our river sampling in July and August.

The cool dry spring also reduced the numbers of early Butterflies and Bumblebees, and the caterpillars available for early nesting birds to feed to young. It may also be the reason that no frogspawn was reported, which is strange given the numbers of known ponds. There was also a delay in the appearance of flowering annuals due to the dry spring weather.

II. Granta Park

Granta Park was also affected by the Lockdown with many of its staff having to work from home in the early part of the year, and the grounds of the Park remaining quiet. Fortunately through, some of its reporters were still able to access information on the wildlife and we have received a report for The Record.

We are grateful to Granta Park for the continued support of Abington Naturewatch through the award of a small annual grant. This goes towards the printing of The Record and the hire of the Institute for meetings.

III. Naturewatch Members

The monthly reports on the Naturewatch Blog and the Blog in general has continued to be of great interest to members confined at home. We would not be able to produce the reports and continue the Blog without the observations and photos sent in by our members. The overall number of reports has increased this year and we hope this will continue into 2022. However, even with the new housing in the village, we do not seem to be attracting more local people into Naturewatch and we must discuss what we can do to overcome this.

The Record has been produced each year since 2005 and has recorded the wildlife of the area, as originally tasked when set up, to **'monitor and record wildlife (fauna and flora) within the borders of the Abingtons'**. The Record could not be produced without the reports from members and the work of our Project Team in assembling the data, the photographs, writing the reports and putting The Record and Blog together. Copies of The Record are sent to the County Records office and to various environmental organisations in Cambridgeshire.

Last year we lost Anne Dunbar-Nobes from the Project Team, who is now settled in Scotland and early in 2022 we are losing Jennifer Hirsh who is standing down as insect recorder after 11 years. We would like to record Naturewatch's thanks to Jennifer for her general support and insect recording. I would also like to record my thanks to the members of the Project Team who put all the data together for the monthly reports, supply many of the photos and write the final reports for The Record. Without their efforts Abington Naturewatch could not exist and The Record could not be produced.

Despite the new houses in Abington, the numbers of our interested members does not increase. We have also lost members of our Project Team. One of our objectives in 2022 is to see what measure/s we can take to improve the situation.

David Farrant

2. WEATHER

The weather pattern in the Abingtons for 2021 was as follows:

January – Cool and wetter than average.

February – Average rainfall. After a cold dry spell at the beginning of the month temperatures rose quickly to mid- to high-teens by the end of the month.

March - Dry particularly in the latter half of the month. Cooler until the very end when temperatures rose in to the 20s.

April – Very dry with only 4mm of rain, and frosts with fairly cool daytime temperatures in the first half of the month. Then temperatures recovered.

May – Wetter than average particularly the second half.

June – Fairly dry with average to high temperatures.

July – Very wet with double the average falling over the month. On the 19th July, 68mm of rain fell in 24 hours of storms, with high temperatures too.

August – Rainfall below average and temperatures disappointingly low for the time of year.

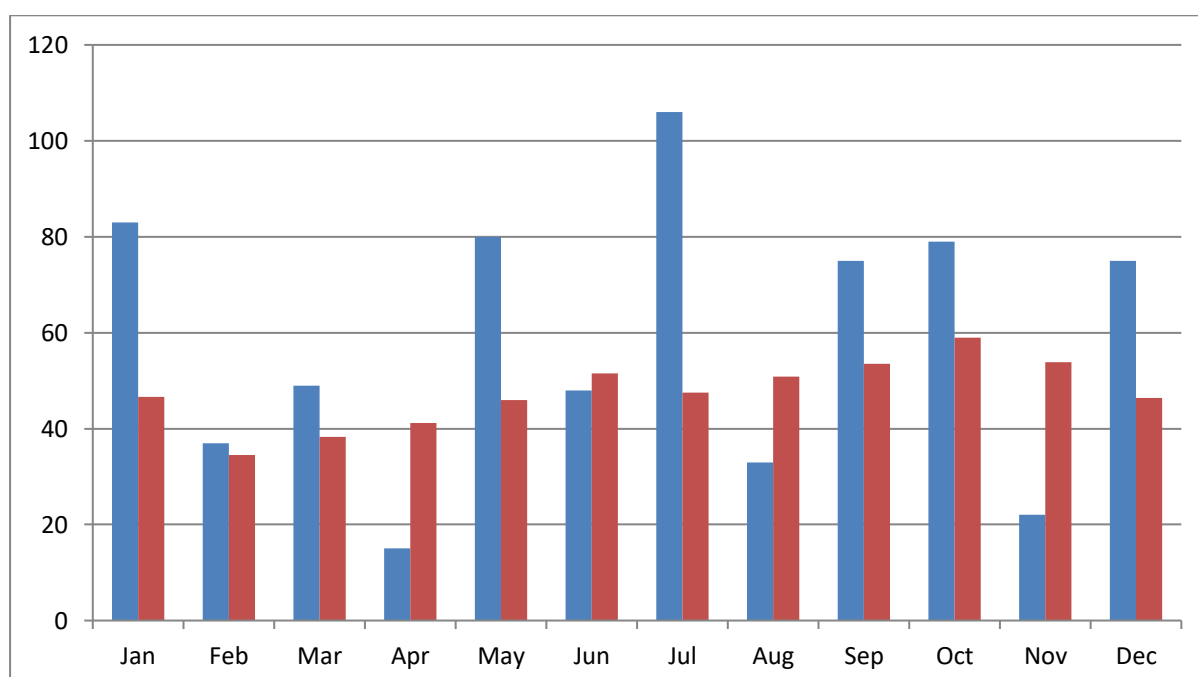
September – Wetter than average with most of the rain falling mid-month with 41mm in a day on the 14th. Temperatures were good for the time of year.

October – Fairly dry and warm but a spike of 24mm of rain on the 19th.

November – Cold with frosts. Also a dry and windy month.

December – Above average rainfall with 75mm in the second half leading to saturated ground. Cold and dull but no frosts.

Abington Rainfall 2021 (blue) compared with Average (red) in millimetres



Source of average (1981 to 2010) for Cambridge

Gaynor Farrant

3. A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY



4: Flooding, Bourn Bridge - 28Jan (BMB)



5: South of Chalky Rd – 24Feb (AM)



6: Bumblebee on Blackthorn, GP – 05Apr (AM)



7: Cowslips and Cherry blossom, GP – 08May (AM)



8: Ermine Moth caterpillars, Roman Road – 16Jun (LAM)



9: Brown Hare in meadow, GP – 25Jul (AM)



10: Wasp Spider, PRV Bourn Bridge Rd – 22Sep (JU)



11: Dramatic skies, south of Chalky Rd – 07Nov (AM)

4. RIVERCARE

I. Overview

Abington RiverCare is a member of the national *RiverCare* organisation and has two main interests: looking after the stretch of the River Granta next to the playing fields in the village, and surveying its flora and fauna.

On the last Monday in the month, except for bank holidays when it is the next working day, we walk through the playing fields along the river and check its condition, picking up litter along the bank and, if possible, from the river [*volunteers are always welcome at the road bridge at 9:30am*].

We look out for, and attempt to eradicate, invasive plants such as **Himalayan Balsam** and **Giant Hogweed** – we occasionally remove a small amount of Himalayan Balsam from the bank near the cricket ground but there is now less than before. We notify landowners or the *Environment Agency* of any issues that need further attention, such as the clearance of larger items of debris. The national *RiverCare* organisation provides equipment, insurance, safety guidelines and other advice.

We paused most activities due to COVID restrictions during 2021, but re-started occasional sampling in April 2021 and resumed litter-picking in the summer.

The River Granta continued to have low flows for much of the year but occasional heavy rains (see weather report in section 2) helped to keep the channel clear. There was local flooding for a few days on a few occasions. Work has been done to the drainage in the High Street after serious flooding in September and in Church Lane we are now used to flooding near the church. Many of the land drains in the village are on private land and have fallen into disrepair, while more hard surfaces reduce the natural drainage.

There is considerable concern, both locally and nationally, about our chalk streams (the Granta is one such). See <https://chalkaquiferalliance.wordpress.com/>.

II. News

i. Contacts

We have seen little of our contacts this year, due to COVID, but they include:

RiverCare: <http://www.rivercare.org.uk/>. Lynsey Stafford, who lives in Cambridge, is our main contact, and made one visit. Andrew Walters is project manager.

Wildlife Trust: Ruth Hawksley visits occasionally and helped repeat one sampling session. We carefully separated and counted every tiny creature so that our result was not rejected as too low. This yielded a better result, but numbers are still low after the drought conditions.

South Cambs District Council: We are not in regular contact about the river but there is a new committee on climate and ecology, and Geoff Harvey from Abington is one of the committee vice-chairmen.

Environment Agency: whilst we do not meet regularly, we liaise with John Findlay in connection with our River Sampling records.

III. Introduction

We usually run three or four fauna sampling sessions a year over the summer, but had fewer this year. We also sample water quality approximately monthly. We paused these group activities in 2020 due to COVID restrictions, in line with advice from RiverCare, but restarted again in April 2021.

Our fauna reports from the River Granta are submitted to the Riverfly Partnership database in the name of Abington Naturewatch. They focus on up-wing flies, of special interest to

fishermen.

We sample at Abington Ford (OS grid ref: TL534489), just upstream of the road bridge. We log our findings directly on a database so they can be observed by the Environment Agency (and anyone else). To view the results, go to <http://www.riverflies.org/riverflies-gis-home>, then explore data for Cam catchment (River Granta).

We use a sampling method based on three minutes (split between three or more locations) use of a net, disturbing the river-bed by kicking/shuffling just upstream so that material is carried into the net. We supplement this by examining stones and local vegetation for additional specimens. We look mainly for the larvae of some specific species of river flies. N.B. we do not find Stoneflies in Abington.

The Riverfly Partnership *abundance* figures are as follows:

1 – 9	category A = (based on a quick count)
10–99	category B = (+ estimated number to nearest 10)
100–999	category C = (+ estimated number to nearest 100)
over 1000	category D = (+ estimated number to nearest 1000)

We have also been testing the water quality using the 'Freshwater Watch' methodology, which focuses on measuring water turbidity (cloudiness) and two chemicals: nitrates and phosphate, commonly used in agriculture and elsewhere, and which can become prevalent in run-off. Most of our tests have shown high nitrate and low phosphate levels, but there have been a few cases of high phosphate levels. Our results are reported using the 'Freshwater Watch' app on a mobile phone and can be viewed online at <https://freshwaterwatch.thewaterhub.org>.

The automated feedback is usually as follows: 'your dataset indicates that this waterbody has a poor ecological status. Potential sources of nitrate pollution include fertiliser runoff, sewage discharge and livestock activities'.

Our sampling site is of course around three miles downstream of the Linton sewage works, so it may not be so surprising that nitrate levels are high!



12: Sampling site by the ford – (PJB)



13: Juv. Brown Trout – 27Apr (PJB)



14: Signal Crayfish – 01Jun (PJB)



15: Bullhead – 01Jun (PJB)

IV. Sampling results

i. 27th April 2021

River	Good, steady flow, fair depth, clear		
Water Quality	As usual, more weed than usual	Nitrate	High>10
Weather	Overcast, bright, ca 10C	Phosphate	Low<0.02
Date	27/04/2021	Time	16:00
Recorded	Robin Harman, Peter Brunning, David Farrant		
Samples	12 kick samples x 15 seconds, sweep riverside plants		
		1	Overall
Up-wing flies	Olives (<i>Baetidae</i>) – v small	15	B
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus (small)	4	A
Fish	1 Stone Loach, 1 Juvenile Brown Trout(?)	2	A
Notes	Two fish, fewer larvae than usual,		
Photos	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/62830a		
	https://freshwaterwatch.thewaterhub.org/sample/abington-ford-27-04-2021-0		

ii. 1st June 2021

River	Good, steady flow, fair depth, clear		
Water Quality	As usual, clear	Nitrate	High>10
Weather	Sunny, bright, ca 20C	Phosphate	Low<0.02
Date	01/06/2021	Time	18:00
Recorded	Robin Harman, Peter Brunning, David Farrant, Sally Turnidge		
Samples	12 kick samples x 15 seconds, sweep riverside plants		
		1	Overall
Up-wing flies	Blue-winged Olive (<i>Ephemerellidae</i>)	~50	B
	Olives (<i>Baetidae</i>) – v small	~150	C
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus (small)	50	B
Other	Hairworms	3	A
	Signal Crayfish (4 cm)	1	A
Fish	2 Juvenile Brown Trout + 1 very small, 1 Bullhead	4	A
Notes	River looks good and clean after heavy rain. Three fish, larvae much more plentiful, some other life		
Photos	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/b91gQ1		
	https://freshwaterwatch.thewaterhub.org/sample/abington-ford-01-06-2021-0		

iii. 17th August 2021

River	Good, steady flow, fair depth, clear		
Water Quality	As usual, but no weed	Nitrate	High>5
Weather	Overcast, ca 20C	Phosphate	High 0.5
Date	17/08/2021	Time	18:00
Recorded	Robin Harman, Peter Brunning, Derek & Sally Turnidge		
Samples	6 kick samples x 30 seconds, sweep riverside plants		
		1	Overall
Up-wing flies	Mayfly (<i>Ephemeridae</i>)	1	
	*Green Drake (Extended Groups chart)?		
	Olives (<i>Baetidae</i>) – v small	9	A
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus (small)	20	B
Other	Signal Crayfish (< 25mm)	10	B
Fish	1 Stone Loach?	1	A
Notes	One fish, fewer larvae than usual.		
Photos	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/N1W792		
	https://freshwaterwatch.thewaterhub.org/sample/abington-ford-17-08-2021-18		

iv. 3rd September 2021 (re-sampling following 17th August)

River	Steady but low flow, water depth low, fairly clear (less than usual)		
Weather	Overcast, just below 20C		
Date	03/09/2021	Time	10:00
Recorded	Peter Brunning, Ruth Hawksley		
Samples	6 kick samples x 30 seconds, includes sweep of river plants at edges		
		1	Overall
Caddisflies	Cased	3	A
	Caseless (very small)	28	B
Up-wing flies	Olives (<i>Baetidae</i>) – v small	24	B
Freshwater Shrimp	Gammarus (small)	6	A
Other	Riffle Beetle	3	A
	Angler's Curse	1	A
	Crane fly larva	1	A
	Midge larva	2	A
	Beetle larva	1	A
	Mite	1	A
	Leech	1	A
	Hairworm	8+	A
	Flatworm	1	A
	Snail Potamogyrus	3	A
	Signal Crayfish (< 25mm)	1	A
Fish	1 Bullhead 30mm, 2 Minnow 20, 60 mm	3	A
Notes	Mostly identified very small creatures		
Photos	https://www.flickr.com/gp/peterjeb/nqU6sv		



16: Upwing Fly nymphs – 01Jun (PJB)



17: Stone Loach – 17Aug (PJB)

V. RiverCare & BeachCare Conferences

None were held this year due to COVID restrictions.

Peter Brunning

5. BIRDS

I. Members' Reports

A total of 88 different bird species were reported in the Abingtons during 2021, in over 5860 individual sightings. This included one species not previously reported to ANW, namely a **Sedge Warbler**.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed their bird sightings and reports this year, both from the villages and from Granta Park, which are summarised in the monthly sections below.

i. January 2021 – 44 species reported

The local Abington **RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch** produced an impressive total of 22 reports, spotting 30 different species.

Of the winter visitors, flocks of 10-30 **Redwing** seen in hedgerows right across the villages, with a notable increase in sightings in second half of the month, and 1-4 **Fieldfare** on the ORC and LSA, as well as c30 on Perse sports fields. After an absence of some months, there were also 17 reports of **Song Thrush** singing and feeding in gardens, and on the LSA and ORC.

Goldfinch reported in good numbers (up to 23) at some feeders, alongside 4-8 **Greenfinch** and 2-6 **Chaffinch**, both seen more regularly this month. **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** also reported widely, and **Long-tailed Tit** more occasionally. A single **Coal Tit** and **Goldcrest** continued to be seen in a Cambridge Rd garden. **Wren**, **Robin** and **Dunnock** regularly heard singing.

Reed Bunting regularly under feeders in one Lewis Cres garden, as was the case last year, and a pair of **Blackcap** also spotted taking seed from feeders.

Several reports of up to 20 **Skylark** singing and displaying in loose flocks near AbPkFm, and flocks of 11-12 **Meadow Pipit** and **Pied Wagtail** reported feeding in fields adjacent to GP.

Kestrel, **Sparrowhawk** and **Buzzard** reported from several locations around the villages, as was a **Red Kite** over both the LSA and Bourn Bridge Rd.

Both male and female **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were seen most days at some feeders, as well as a few reports of **Green Woodpecker**, mostly in the fields adjacent to Church Lane.

Collared Dove, mostly in groups of 2-6, but up to 14, were commonly seen under some bird feeders, as were increasing numbers of **Stock Dove** (4-6). Both **Magpie** (1-2) and **Jay** (1-3) also being reported more frequently around garden feeders at several locations.

Barnacle Goose (4-6) spotted feeding on GP cricket field and flying over Sluice Wood, and two **Grey Heron** seen feeding in the flooded meadows between the churches. **Mallard** and **Moorhen** also reported there, as well as along the river and on GP lake.

Small numbers of **Common Gull** were spotted amongst larger flocks of **Black-headed Gull** (50-200), on GP cricket field and Perse sports fields, as well as following the plough in fields along Bourn Bridge Rd.

ii. February 2021 – 58 species reported

A **Merlin**, an uncommon bird for the Abingtons, was observed hunting in cold weather, flushing a flock of Skylark and pursuing one over the fields south of Chalky Rd (8th). Also unusually for the Abingtons, a **Grey Partridge** was spotted in a garden on Bourn Bridge Rd, the first report since 2014.

A single **Lesser Redpoll** was seen in a garden on High St, LA (7th, first this year), and up to three **Siskin** were regularly spotted amongst a finch flock on a feeder in GA after the 18th.

Both **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** continued to be reported, and notably this month the majority of sightings were of birds in gardens feeding on berries, presumably due to the recent cold winter.

A **Chiffchaff** was heard singing from a thicket in Lewis Cres (24th), and a **Blackcap** pair were seen regularly on feeders, and also heard singing on 25th.

Several reports of **Buzzard**, including four soaring high above GA on a sunny day, and an unusually high number of reports (10!) of 1-2 **Red Kite**. A **Kestrel** and **Sparrowhawk** seen at several locations, and a **Tawny Owl** was heard at three locations, regularly at one LSA site.

Along the river, a **Kingfisher** was spotted in Sluice Woods (26th, first this year), a **Little Egret** was feeding in the flooded fields between the churches, and a **Grey Heron** around GP lake.

Great Spotted Woodpecker were seen most days at some feeders, and 1-2 **Jay** were also reported fairly frequently in some gardens. Conversely, there was a drop in reports of **Green Woodpecker** with only two sightings on GP and LSA, and **Nuthatch** was reported only once.

Good numbers of **Goldfinch** (10-22) seen regularly at some feeders, alongside **Chaffinch** and **Greenfinch** (6-10), often as mixed flocks. **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit** also widely reported, with 1-2 **Coal Tit** seen in at least six gardens, regularly in some, with several reports of 1-2 **Goldcrest** in conifers in Cambridge Rd and Meadow Walk gardens.

A small group of **Reed Bunting** continued to be seen feeding in Lewis Cres, as well as on GP. **Corn Bunting** were seen in treetops south of Chalky Rd, and two reports of **Linnet**, a flock on the LSA and unusually a few in a GA garden. **Meadow Pipit** were spotted on rough garden on GP, and a single **Pied Wagtail** was reported from several gardens, as were **Song Thrush** regularly seen feeding in gardens, and heard singing towards the end of the month.

An unusually large flock of 100+ **Black-headed Gull** reported from several locations including the Perse sports fields, then later flying overhead apparently searching for food.



18: Redwing, GP – 30Jan (AM)



19: Fieldfare, Bourn Bridge Rd – 13Feb (DF)



20: Siskin, Lewis Cres – 18Feb (AM)



21: Reed Bunting, Lewis Cres – 29Mar (AM)

iii. March 2021 – 57 species reported

Winter visitors: Several sightings of 1-3 **Fieldfare**, the last report of the winter being on 29th, and generally 1-2 **Redwing**, as well as a larger flock of 20 behind Cambridge Rd, the last report for the winter on 21st. Conversely, **Siskin** were increasingly reported from several gardens, particularly later in the month, with up to 12 together on 31st. A few **Lesser Redpoll** were seen regularly in a mixed finch flock, and 1-2 **Brambling** occasionally with **Chaffinch** under feeders in Lewis Cres.

Two male **Wheatear** in breeding plumage, seen feeding along a field edge near Roman Road (29th); an increasingly rare passage migrant in the south, breeding on northern moorland.

Several **Chiffchaff** were heard singing from 14th onwards, and whilst some winter in the UK, most winter in southern Europe, starting to return to the UK in early-March, peaking in April. Several **Blackcap** heard singing towards the end of the month, were also likely to be birds returning to the UK to breed having wintered further south, replacing the birds that overwintered here, which depart for Europe in March.

A single **Kingfisher** was spotted flying along the river near the Millennium Bridge (22nd), a **Little Egret** was again seen feeding in adjacent fields, and 2-3 **Grey Heron** were spotted on GP and the Perse sports fields. **Mute Swan**, **Canada Goose** and **Greylag** were all seen on GP lake, alongside a few **Mallard**.

Great Spotted Woodpecker continued to visit some garden feeders regularly, with four reports of 1-3 **Green Woodpecker** on GP and along the Old Coach Rd, and a **Treecreeper** and a **Nuthatch** were seen along edge of Abington Woods.

Nine reports of **Red Kite** flying above several sites, and **Buzzard** were regularly seen, some soaring high above village, and one being mobbed by corvids. **Kestrel** and **Sparrowhawk** reported, and a **Tawny Owl** was heard calling during the night near Lewis Cres (6th).

Good numbers of **Reed Bunting** continued to be reported, a singing male **Yellowhammer** was heard on LSA (9th), a flock of **Meadow Pipit** seen feeding on rough ground on GP, and up to 25 **Skylark** were in fields south of LSA. Several reports of **Pied Wagtail**, 1-2 on the school roof, as well as on the LSA, with larger flocks of up to 40 on the Perse sports fields.

Coal Tit, **Long-tailed Tit** and **Goldcrest** all reported regularly at some locations. Up to four **Jay** were seen squabbling, with 1-2 seen more widely, and **Mistle Thrush** were heard singing.

iv. April 2021 – 60 species reported

Winter visitors: in much smaller numbers now. A few reports of 1-4 **Siskin** on feeders and two reports of 2-3 **Lesser Redpoll**, the last report for both species being on 11th. A **Brambling** was seen drinking from a birdbath in a Bourn Bridge Rd garden, this last report on 20th being quite late in the year.

Migrants: A female **Common Redstart** was spotted along ORC on 11th, characteristically dropping from a perch in the hedge to catch insects on the ground below. This uncommon migrant travels north through the UK to breed in the north and west, and was a first report for the Abingtons. A **Short-eared Owl** was spotted hunting along Roman Road (26th); small numbers overwinter in Cambs, migrating north in the spring, but are rarely seen in the Abingtons, the previous sighting being in Sep'2015. A single **Ring Ouzel** was also spotted amongst a flock of **Mistle Thrush** on recreation ground (29th); another unusual sighting in the Abingtons, seen only once or twice in the last 20 years, and generally uncommon in east England, this bird was likely en route to its more northern breeding grounds. A single **Raven** was seen flying over Granta Park on 11th.

Summer visitors: The first **Swallow** was seen on 2nd above High St, LA, quickly followed by several sightings on GP and ORC, and of birds returning to nest sites on LSA. Only one report of a single **House Martin** flying over on 5th, with none seen around local nest sites this month.

Warblers: **Chiffchaff** and **Blackcap** were regularly reported throughout the month at a number of locations. Several **Common Whitethroat** were heard singing along Roman Road (first on 22nd), as were **Lesser Whitethroat** along ORC from 30th.

Several reports of **Mistle Thrush**, some apparently passing through, but also seen collecting food on the recreation ground and around Church Lane, presumably for nesting females or young. **Song Thrush** were heard singing and also seen collecting food, and several already-fledged young birds were spotted; a **Blackbird** (8th), a **Robin** (11th) and a **Dunnock** (24th).

A pair of **Nuthatch** were seen near recreation ground, and a **Treecreeper** pair were reported nesting, but abandoned later in the month. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were still regularly visiting some gardens, and **Green Woodpecker** were spotted on Cambridge Rd, on LSA and on GP where a pair is known to be nesting. Regular reports of 2-4 **Stock Dove** in some gardens and on GP.

Reed Bunting seen in reedbeds on GP, with a few still feeding in Lewis Cres. Singing male **Yellowhammer** and **Corn Bunting** reported on LSA, a few **Linnet** occasionally on LSA and ORC, and **Skylark** were heard above fields on LSA, ORC and Pampisford Rd. Small numbers of **Pied Wagtail** regularly reported, mostly feeding in fields around the villages.

Small groups of **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch** and **Chaffinch** still being seen around feeders, with an occasional **Coal Tit**, **Long-tailed Tit**, **Goldcrest**, **Wren**, **Jay** at a few locations.

A **Mute Swan** pair, **Canada Goose** and **Greylag** all reported on GP lake, alongside a few **Mallard** and **Moorhen**, with a **Grey Heron** reported on GP and Cambridge Rd.

Up to four **Buzzard** were regularly seen high above village, often being mobbed by corvids, and a **Red Kite** was also reported, with three being seen above the allotments on one occasion. A single **Kestrel** was seen along ORC, and a **Sparrowhawk** was spotted doing display flights above GP, as well as above Lewis Cres.



22: Yellowhammer, ORC – 02Jun (AM)



23: Female Common Redstart, ORC – 11Apr (AM)



24: Jackdaw, Church Lane – 03May (PJB)



25: Red Kite, ORC – 16Jun (AM)

v. May 2021 – 61 species reported

With the warmer weather and southerly airstreams came the remaining summer visitors, with some species being reported two weeks later than usual in some parts of the country.

Summer visitors: **Swift** were first seen on 8th May (cf 5th in 2020, 4th in 2019), returning to village nest sites over the following few days, and with 15 seen on 31st over Hood's Meadow. After the first sighting in April, the bulk of the 'local' **House Martin** finally returned to the village between 8th and 11th, with up to eight seen together over GA High Street (in 2020, birds returned to the nests around the school on 19th April). **Swallow** continued to be reported widely throughout the month, notably around the LSA where up to twelve were seen (11th).

Warblers: **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** regularly heard at several sites, and **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Common Whitethroat** were seen occasionally on the LSA, the ORC, and the Roman Road. A **Willow Warbler** was heard just once on LSA (30th), and both **Reed Warbler** (30th) and **Sedge Warbler** (2nd) were heard singing from the reeds on GP lake, the latter species being a first record for the Abingtons!

A **Hobby** was seen hunting over the Perse sport fields (31st). Three reports of 1-2 **Red Kite** around Bourn Bridge Rd, a **Sparrowhawk** was occasionally seen over Lewis Cres, and there were regular sightings of a **Kestrel** and 1-2 **Buzzard**.

A **Kingfisher** was spotted along the river through Sluice Wood (2nd), and also along the river, a **Grey Wagtail** (30th) and four reports of a **Little Egret**. Several **Grey Heron** were seen around Bourn Bridge Rd and GP, as well as a **Cormorant**, a pair of **Mute Swan**, and a large groups of **Greylag** and **Canada Goose** on the lake. Relatively few **Mallard** or **Moorhen**, with no ducklings yet reported.

Corn Bunting, **Linnet** and **Yellowhammer** were all regularly heard singing on the LSA, ORC and Roman Road, and both male and female **Reed Bunting** were seen in the reeds on GP, and in Lewis Cres. Several **Skylark** could be heard singing together over the fields south of the LSA, and over the Roman Road. Regular reports of larger groups of **Pied Wagtail** feeding on the LSA and GP cricket green.

Both **Song Thrush** and **Mistle Thrush** were spotted gathering food on the village cricket field and taking it to nearby nests. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** continued to visit feeders in several gardens, and were heard calling at several locations, as were **Green Woodpecker**. Occasionally **Goldcrest** and **Coal Tit** were also reported.

vi. June 2021 - 49 species reported

The appearance of young birds was widely reported this month, with groups of **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** seen searching for insects. More birdsong was also heard, particularly from **Blackcap**, **Wren** and **Song Thrush**, as males defended their territories.

Summer visitors: A **Cuckoo** was heard calling at several locations on 9th and 12th; these being the only reports this year. Regular reports of up to six **House Martin** over Mortlock Gardens, but none were yet seen nesting around the school. **Swift** were regularly seen around both churches, with up to eight heard screaming over the High Street GA, and two **Swallow** were reported over Lewis Cres.

Blackcap and **Chiffchaff** continued to be regularly heard at several sites, with **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Common Whitethroat** seen occasionally along the Roman Road and ORC.

An adult **Tawny Owl** with two fledged young was seen on GP, and the screeching call of a **Barn Owl** was heard on several evenings near Lewis Cres. **Sparrowhawk** were reported returning to hunt in gardens, and several people reported a **Red Kite** patrolling low over both Lewis Cres and Cambridge Rd. Regular sightings of a **Kestrel** and a **Buzzard**.

A single **Nuthatch** made a welcome return to feeders on High St, LA, with adult and young **Great Spotted Woodpecker** visiting feeders regularly in several gardens, and a **Green**

Woodpecker regularly seen in one Cambridge Rd garden.

Along the river, a **Kingfisher** was spotted near Sluice Wood (26th), and a **Grey Wagtail** was seen downstream of the Millennium Bridge, as were a female **Mallard** with eight ducklings.

Small numbers of **Coal Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit** seen regularly in a Cambridge Rd garden, and a single report of a **Pied Wagtail** feeding on a house roof in GA. Unusually, a male **Bullfinch** was seen a Lewis Cres garden (22nd), and higher numbers of **Chaffinch** were seen in gardens, alongside the more regularly reported **Goldfinch** and **Greenfinch**. Small flocks of 10-20 **Starling**, including young, and a recently fledged **Dunnock** also reported. **Corn Bunting**, **Linnet**, **Yellowhammer** and **Skylark** continued to be heard.



26: Lesser Whitethroat, ORC - 12May (AM)



27: Great Spotted Woodpecker, High St – 05May (JAH)



28: Young and adult Blue Tit, ORC – 16Jun (AM)



29: Tawny Owl, GP – 08Jun (DB)

vii. July 2021 – 53 species reported

Larger groups of young birds were widely seen this month, particularly of **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit**, with a young **Great Spotted Woodpecker** observed 'learning the ropes' on bird feeders.

Summer visitors: **House Martin**, **Swallow** and **Swift** continued to be seen widely; up to 12 **House Martin** being regularly seen over Mortlock Gardens, eleven reports of **Swift** mostly around the churches, with up to 20 seen feeding high above GA church, and drinking from the GP lake, but also more unusually seen over the LSA. Four reports of **Swallow**, including a flock of 10 adults and recently fledged young feeding over the fields south of Chalky Rd (23rd).

Blackcap and **Chiffchaff** continued to be heard at several sites, with occasional sightings of **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Common Whitethroat** along the Roman Road and the ORC. A male **Reed Warbler** was also briefly heard singing in the GP reeds around the lake (17th).

Unusually, a **Common Sandpiper** was observed feeding along the margins of GP lake one morning, where four **Barnacle Goose** were also seen alongside family groups of **Canada Goose**, up to 30 **Mallard** and several **Moorhen**. A **Kingfisher** was again spotted along the river, this time near the Millennium Bridge (17th).

Blue Tit and **Great Tit** flocks of 10-20 young birds were widely reported on garden feeders this month, along with small numbers of **Coal Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit**. **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch** and **Chaffinch** were regularly seen in gardens, alongside **Blackbird**, **Robin** and **Dunnock**, and more occasionally, **Wren** and **Song Thrush**.

Both adult and young **Great Spotted Woodpecker** regularly visited feeders in several gardens, and a **Green Woodpecker** was a regular visitor to a Cambridge Rd garden. A single **Nuthatch** was also seen in gardens on High St, LA and Bourn Bridge Rd.

Adult and young **Magpie** were widely reported and, unusually at this time of year, a **Jay** was spotted in a Cambridge Rd garden. Pairs of **Stock Dove** and **Collared Dove** regularly seen under some feeders.

A **Grey Wagtail** was twice seen feeding alongside the river by the Recreation Ground, and small groups of **Pied Wagtail** were spotted in paddocks on the LSA, and the GP cricket green.

Up to 20 **Skylark** were regularly heard over the fields south of the LSA, alongside smaller numbers of **Yellowhammer**, **Corn Bunting** and **Linnet**, also on the ORC and Roman Road.

A **Barn Owl** continued to be heard regularly late evening near Lewis Cres, and a **Tawny Owl** was heard calling from around GP. **Sparrowhawk** also continued to be seen around garden feeders, and a **Red Kite** was again spotted flying low fields at the edge of the villages. Regular sightings of a **Kestrel**, particularly around Cambridge Rd, and a **Buzzard**.

viii. August 2021 – 49 species reported

Larger flocks of young birds were widely seen, particularly of **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit**, but also **Long-tailed Tit**, **Goldfinch** and **Greenfinch**. Of the summer visitors, a few warblers, **Swallow** and **House Martin** continued to be seen, as well as one late and very fortunate **Swift**.

Summer Visitors: A **Swift** was found trapped in a mass of cobwebs in LA church, unable to fly. Once rescued and cleaned off, it seemed unharmed and headed off on its somewhat delayed journey south – this being the last report this year (15th). A group of adult and young **Swallow** was seen along Chalky Rd, and up to four **House Martin** were regularly spotted over Mortlock Gardens and Cambridge Rd, with a **Hobby** seen pursuing a flock of migrating **House Martin** over Lewis Cres on 23rd.

Small numbers of **Blackcap** and **Chiffchaff** were heard and seen occasionally at several sites, and a **Common Whitethroat** was reported twice along the ORC.

Flocks of 10-15 **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** regularly in several gardens, along with small numbers of **Coal Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit**. Young birds observed starting to gain their adult plumage.

House Sparrow, **Wren** and **Dunnock** were seen regularly in a few gardens, a **Song Thrush** occasionally on the LSA, and one report of a **Jay** along Cambridge Rd. **Collared Dove** and **Stock Dove** also regularly reported in some gardens. **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch** and **Chaffinch** still often seen, and **Robin** were regularly heard singing throughout the day.

Green Woodpecker seen in a number of gardens, and on the LSA, and up to four adult and young **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were spotted in a Cambridge Rd garden, with 1-2 seen elsewhere. **Nuthatch** continued to visit a garden on High St, LA.

Regular sightings of 1-2 **Buzzard**, particularly around Lewis Cres and the LSA, and more occasionally, a **Kestrel** and a **Red Kite** were seen around Cambridge Rd. Two reports of a **Sparrowhawk**, and both **Barn Owl** and **Tawny Owl** continued to be heard in the late evening.

Small groups of **Yellowhammer**, **Corn Bunting**, **Reed Bunting**, **Linnet** on the ORC and LSA, as well as up to eight **Skylark** still singing near AbPkFm. Two juvenile **Grey Wagtail** were also seen drinking from a puddle with a **Linnet** flock there.

A **Little Egret** was spotted along river in Sluice Wood (16th), as well as two reports of a **Grey Heron**. Two **Moorhen** were seen by a garden pond on Chalky Rd.



30: Swallow on wire, LSA – 30May (AM)



31: Common Sandpiper, GP lake – 17Jul (AM)



32: Skylark, south of Chalky Rd – 30May (AM)



33: Reed Warbler, GP reedbed – 30May (AM)

ix. September 2021 – 43 species reported

Summer Visitors: a few species were still being seen until mid-month, including a few warblers, although some of these may be resident birds. Six reports of up to four **Swallow**, mostly flying low and feeding as they went, so most likely on migration; last reported on 20th. One nesting pair of **Swallow** was reported to have successfully produced three broods at one location again this year. **House Martin**, often in flocks of up to 30 birds, likely preparing to migrate, reported over Lewis Cres and Granta Park; last reported on 15th, and a single **Hobby** was again seen flying with migrating flocks of **House Martin** over Lewis Cres on 4th and 8th.

Several reports of **Chiffchaff** from gardens on Cambridge Rd and Lewis Cres, as well as on GP, and a single report of an adult female **Blackcap** feeding in undergrowth on GP.

A **Kingfisher** was again seen flying along the river, this time under the road bridge on 5th. **Pied Wagtail** were more frequently reported this month from several sites, with up to 40 feeding on the GP cricket field, accompanied by three juvenile **Yellow Wagtail** on 8th.

Great Tit and **Blue Tit** flocks of 6-8 were regularly at several garden feeders, as well as 1-2 **Coal Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit**, seen more occasionally. Good numbers of **Greenfinch** (up to 20) on feeders especially early in the month, with flocks of 15-25 **Goldfinch** also regularly seen, and smaller numbers of **Chaffinch** (1-2) more occasionally.

Robin regularly heard singing as both males and females started to define their winter feeding territories. **Dunnock**, **Wren** and **Song Thrush** also all regularly reported in gardens, and small flocks of **Starling** (up to 40) reported starting to gather together, particularly towards dusk.

Jay increasingly seen in some gardens, especially those with oak trees nearby, with birds seen busily collecting acorns. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** and **Green Woodpecker** reported at several sites, and one of a **Nuthatch** visiting a garden feeder on High Street, LA.

Buzzard were frequently seen and heard calling over the village, sometimes 4-6 soaring high up whilst travelling through. One report of a **Kestrel** on Cambridge Rd, a **Sparrowhawk** was seen on the LSA and Lewis Cres, and two reports each of **Barn Owl** and **Tawny Owl** calling during the night. No reports of **Red Kite** this month.

x. October 2021 – 47 species reported

The summer visitors were now well and truly gone, to be replaced by the first of the winter visitors. Several **Fieldfare** were first reported on 7th in a back garden on Church Lane, slightly earlier than the 12th in 2021. There were no other sightings this month, and no **Redwing** reported yet. More broadly across the country, the appearance of winter visitors was said to be 1-2 weeks later than average.

For the fifth time in six months, a **Kingfisher** was seen along the river, this time in Sluice Wood on 10th. One **Grey Wagtail** was also spotted along the river in Sluice Wood (15th), as well as single reports of a **Grey Heron** and a **Little Egret**, both near the Millennium Bridge. A single **Barnacle Goose** seen on GP (15th), and there were 1-5 **Pied Wagtail** at several sites.

Blackbird were more regularly reported in gardens again, particularly in berry-bearing bushes, and both **Song Thrush** and **Mistle Thrush** also seen. **Robin** also regularly reported, as well as occasional **Dunnock** and **Wren**.

Mixed flocks of up to 18 **Great Tit** and **Blue Tit** reported, with eight regularly seen at several garden feeders, alongside 1-2 **Coal Tit** in two gardens, and occasionally small flocks of **Long-tailed Tit**. One report of a **Goldcrest** amongst a tit flock.

Good numbers of up to 15 **Goldfinch** on feeders, with 2-8 **Greenfinch** also seen regularly. Smaller numbers (1-3) of **Chaffinch** more occasionally. One or two **Jay** were regularly spotted in some gardens, in particular around oak trees, but also under feeders. Single report of a **Chiffchaff** along the ORC on 15th.

Nuthatch continued to visit a garden on High Street, LA, but also more unusually were seen in gardens on Cambridge Rd and Bourn Bridge Rd. A **Great Spotted Woodpecker** was reported often in several gardens, and a **Green Woodpecker** was seen three times.

Sparrowhawk were more frequently spotted hunting near garden feeders this month, as well as four sightings of 1-2 **Buzzard** overhead, two reports of 1-4 **Red Kite**, and a **Kestrel** on Cambridge Rd.

Up to 10 **Skylark** continued to be heard singing near Abington Park Farm, and 50+ **Linnet** spotted feeding along the field edges nearby, as well as two **Meadow Pipit** on the LSA. Flocks of 50+ **Black-headed Gull** reported on Perse sports field, with an occasional **Great Black-backed Gull** also seen in fields around the villages.

xi. November 2021 – 49 species reported

Winter visitors: several reports of both **Fieldfare** and the first **Redwing**, as well as another winter visitor, the **Siskin**. Two reports of **Redwing**, first seen on 23rd, and a larger flock of 20 on the LSA on 29th, and six reports of **Fieldfare**, mostly of small flocks of 1-4 on the LSA and flying overhead. A single report of 1-2 **Siskin** calling overhead near Lagden's Grove, GP on 9th, which is unusually early for the Abingtons, being more usually reported on feeders later in the winter.

An uncommon sighting of a **Peregrine** was reported, flying low overhead south of Chalky Rd and heading towards Linton (7th). Also unusually, a **Tree Sparrow** was seen in a garden on Church Lane on 3rd, this locally uncommon relative of the House Sparrow being last reported in the Abingtons in 2014.

Two reports of a **Kingfisher** unusually both around garden ponds, one on High St, LA (13th), and a second in Mortlock Gardens (14th). It is unclear if these were of the same bird or two separate birds.

A pair of **Mistle Thrush** was seen several times, including unusually near Lewis Cres, and also heard singing when windy. **Song Thrush** were seen at several sites, and several reporters commented that **Blackbird** were being seen more often in gardens this month.

Sparrowhawk were more frequently spotted hunting near garden feeders this month, and 1-2 **Red Kite** were again seen soaring quite low over the village. A **Buzzard** was also reported and a **Tawny Owl** was heard frequently in GA.

Great Tit and **Blue Tit** regularly reported at garden feeders, alongside a **Coal Tit** and up to 12 **Long-tailed Tit** seen occasionally in gardens on both Cambridge Rd and Lewis Cres. One report of a **Goldcrest** near the Millennium Bridge.

Goldfinch continued to be seen in good numbers, with increasing numbers of **Greenfinch** and **Chaffinch** also being more frequently seen. Regular reports of **Robin**, **Dunnock**, **Jay** and more occasionally a **Wren**. Several **Stock Dove** and up to six **Collared Dove** regularly in some gardens, but interestingly being noted as seldom seen in others.

Great Spotted Woodpecker were now regularly seen on feeders in several gardens, and a **Green Woodpecker** was reported once from Abington Woods. **Nuthatch** continued to be 'regular' visitors to gardens on Church Lane and High St, LA.

Several reports of small numbers of **Pied Wagtail** from several sites, including calling from roof ridges, and feeding on GP cricket green alongside five **Barnacle Goose**. Three reports of a **Little Egret** along the river between the Millennium Bridge and Sluice Wood.

Skylark, **Linnet**, **Yellowhammer** and **Lapwing** all reported around fields south of LSA. A few **Herring Gull** and **Black-headed Gull** (up to 20) also spotted in the fields around LSA, and on Church Lane.



34: Long-tailed Tit, Lewis Cres – 05Nov (AM)



35: Barnacle Goose, GP lake – 17Jul (AM)



36: Jay, Lewis Cres – 27Nov (AM)



37: Sparrowhawk, Lewis Cres – 04Nov (AM)

xii. December 2021 – 50 species reported

Winter Visitors: both **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** continued to be reported, as well as another winter visitor, the **Lesser Redpoll**. Nine reports of **Redwing** from around the villages, including flocks of 30-40 in fields adjacent to Church Lane and on the LSA, as well as feeding in Yew trees on GP. Only one report of a small flock of **Fieldfare** along the Roman Road this month, but a flock of 10 **Lesser Redpoll** was seen flitting between high trees along the Roman Road (27th), the first report this season.

A pair of **Bullfinch** was seen and heard in hedgerows along the Roman Road (27th), and up to five **Chaffinch** were spotted more frequently this month, alongside the good numbers of **Goldfinch** (10-15) and **Greenfinch** (3-6) reported regularly on feeders. Frequent reports of **Robin**, **Dunnock**, **Jay** and **Magpie**, with a **Wren** seen more occasionally.

Mistle Thrush and **Song Thrush** continue to be spotted, as well as several **Blackbird** seen feeding more commonly in gardens this month. Also in gardens, small groups of **Great Tit** and **Blue Tit** were regularly seen, as well as a **Coal Tit** and 6-8 **Long-tailed Tit** spotted occasionally in several gardens. Up to 10 **House Sparrow** were reported chirruping loudly in the winter sun on Lewis Cres.

A **Great Spotted Woodpecker** was seen daily on feeders in several gardens, a **Green Woodpecker** was spotted at several sites, and a **Nuthatch** was reported once.

A **Buzzard** was spotted flying low over a garden in Meadow Walk, hotly pursued by two **Magpie**, as well as several sightings elsewhere around the villages. Up to four **Red Kite** were seen over open ground and along the old A11, with occasional reports of a **Sparrowhawk** and a **Kestrel**. A **Tawny Owl** was again heard calling near Lewis Cres early in the month.

A **Little Egret** was spotted fishing along the river by the Millennium Bridge, and up to four **Grey Heron** were seen around GP, near Sluice Wood and on the Perse sports fields. A **Grey Wagtail** was spotted in amongst a flock of 31 **Pied Wagtail** feeding on the GP cricket green, and on the GP lake a few **Mallard** and **Moorhen** were seen alongside a **Mute Swan** and five **Barnacle Goose**.

Meadow Pipit, **Yellowhammer** and **Red-legged Partridge** were all reported on the LSA, on GP and along the Roman Road. Flocks of 50-100 **Black-headed Gull** were seen in fields along North Rd, on the Perse sports fields and on GP, and both **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Herring Gull** were seen flying over the Roman Road.



38: Little Egret above GP – 30May (AM)



39: Blackbird, Lewis Cres – 02Nov (AM)

xiii. Summary Table of Bird Sightings

The following table indicates the number of sightings received for each bird species by month, the darkness of the blue shading representing of the number of sightings reported.

In the first column, green shading indicates the one species reported this year for the first time in the Abingtons; the **Sedge Warbler**. The orange shading indicates uncommon species, seen in 2021, but reported only two or three times over the last eight years (2014-2021).

Species notably absent from reports this year, but seen regularly in past years, were **Great Crested Grebe**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Little Owl**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Tufted Duck**.

2021: 88 species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Barn Owl						3	2	2	2				9
Barnacle Goose	3						1			1	1	1	7
Blackbird	69	32	31	39	33	28	16	12	15	18	21	21	335
Blackcap	14	16	14	15	22	9	6	2	1				99
Black-headed Gull	5	6	2		1		2		1	2	2	5	26
Blue Tit	68	25	28	29	28	25	14	21	15	24	23	29	329
Brambling			4	1									5
Bullfinch						1						1	2
Buzzard	8	11	14	17	10	5	3	6	8	5	2	10	99
Canada Goose		1	3	1	3		1		1				10
Carrion Crow	33	13	10	19	15	3	4	2	3	6	6	5	119
Chaffinch	43	26	41	19	15	10	4	7	6	8	10	9	198
Chiffchaff		3	9	12	13	3	4	5	6	1			56
Coal Tit	12	6	5	5	3	4	4	6	5	7	8	14	79
Collared Dove	44	19	23	20	18	16	11	14	9	18	15	14	221
Common Gull	2												2
Common Sandpiper							1						1
Common Whitethroat				1	7	3	4	2					17
Cormorant					2								2
Corn Bunting		1		1	4	2	2	1					11
Cuckoo						5							5
Duncock	40	21	28	28	15	10	10	9	10	7	7	10	195
Fieldfare	10	12	3							1	6	1	33
Goldcrest	3	5	2	2	1					1	1		15
Goldfinch	55	25	33	28	24	26	15	13	19	25	18	21	302
Gt. Black-backed Gull								1		1		1	3
Gt. Sp. Woodpecker	44	19	30	10	16	13	9	6	3	17	18	33	218
Great Tit	44	19	29	21	23	22	18	22	22	18	18	27	283
Green Woodpecker	3	2	4	4	6	3	5	5	3	3	1	4	43
Greenfinch	36	21	29	22	17	23	12	17	16	16	16	16	241
Grey Heron	2	1	2	3	3			2		1		4	18
Grey Partridge		1											1
Grey Wagtail					1	1	2	1		1		1	7
Greylag Goose		1	2	1	5								9
Herring Gull	2	1		1	1			2	3		1	2	13
Hobby					1			1	2				4
House Martin				1	11	11	7	10	9				49
House Sparrow	30	12	14	8	13	15	2	3	11	2	7	4	121
Jackdaw	44	18	25	22	22	14	13	8	11	16	12	11	216
Jay	27	11	13	3	3	5	1	1	6	20	21	16	127
Kestrel	2	3	3	3	6	7	5	3	1	1		2	36
Kingfisher		1	1		1	1	1		1	1	2		9

2021: 88 species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	<i>Total</i>
Lapwing											1		1
Lesser Redpoll		1	12	4								1	18
Lesser Whitethroat				1	4	2	1						8
Linnet		2		3	5	3	3	4		1	1		22
Little Egret		1	1		4			1		1	3	1	12
Long-tailed Tit	26	13	9	3	7	2	2	8	3	10	5	11	99
Magpie	43	19	23	28	25	17	15	13	10	16	17	18	244
Mallard	3	5	6	4	8	1	2		2	2	2	5	40
Meadow Pipit	1	1	2							1		1	6
Merlin		1											1
Mistle Thrush		1	4	8	1					1	6	4	25
Moorhen	2	3	2	1	3		3	2	1		1	5	23
Mute Swan			4	1	3							1	9
Nuthatch		1	1	1		1	2	3	1	9	3	1	23
Peregrine											1		1
Pheasant	32	16	23	3	4		1			1	4	1	85
Pied Wagtail	1	5	9	7	8	1	2		3	4	4	3	47
Raven				1									1
Red Kite	3	10	9	9	3	7	4	2		2	4	5	58
Red-legged Partridge		3	6	1	7	1	1	3		2		2	26
Redstart				2									2
Redwing	19	12	5								2	9	47
Reed Bunting	1	3	15	15	4			1					39
Reed Warbler					2		1						3
Ring Ouzel				1									1
Robin	59	23	31	31	32	23	13	19	21	15	23	20	310
Rook	17	7	19	11	13	4	3	2	2	5	3	5	91
Sedge Warbler					1								1
Short-eared Owl				1									1
Siskin		6	27	8							1		42
Skylark	3	9	12	6	9	12	6	1		3	1		62
Song Thrush	21	12	20	14	15	11	4	2	1	2	9	1	112
Sparrowhawk	2	2	1	3	3	4	2	2	2	3	6	1	31
Starling	16	7	14	9	12	6			2	3	2	3	74
Stock Dove	31	11	27	24	15	24	11	6	9	6	11	15	190
Swallow				5	10	1	4	4	6				30
Swift					15	12	11	1					39
Tawny Owl		3	1			2	2	1	2		5	2	18
Tree Sparrow											1		1
Treecreeper			1	1									2
Wheatear			1										1
Willow Warbler					1								1
Woodpigeon	65	29	36	34	29	28	21	18	12	24	19	24	339
Wren	7	8	13	14	11	7	7	6	3	3	4	6	89
Yellow Wagtail									1				1
Yellowhammer		1	1	1	5	2	3	2			1	1	17
Total Reports	995	547	737	591	602	439	303	285	270	335	356	408	5868

II. Abington Big Garden Bird Watch

As has been the case for over forty years, the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch again took place during the last weekend of January, this year from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st January. ANW members submitted an impressive total of 22 reports this year, up from 15 reports in 2020, and collectively a total of 30 bird species were seen! Many thanks to everyone who took part.

'Top Species' in the Abington BGBW this year were: **Blue Tit** (1st), **Woodpigeon** (2nd), **Robin** (3rd) and **Blackbird** (4th).

Reed Bunting, **Fieldfare**, **Redwing**, **Stock Dove** and **Jay** were all recorded this year, but were absent in 2020. Conversely, **Black-headed Gull**, **Green Woodpecker**, **Kestrel** and **Nuthatch** (shown in italics in the table below) were spotted in 2020, but were absent from this year's list. Notably, these 'variable' species are all less common, and so less likely to be seen during any given hour of watching in any given year.

More interestingly perhaps, are the several 'common' species that were seen less often this year, by at least 15% compared to last year - notably **Chaffinch**, **Collared Dove**, **Dunnock**, **Great Tit** and **Jackdaw**, possibly indicating a decline in these species. Conversely, species such as **Blue Tit** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were seen more frequently this year.

The table below lists the number of reports received for each species in both 2021 and 2020 BGBW, and in brackets the percentage of reports containing that species for each year.

Species	Reports 2021	Reports 2020	Species	Reports 2021	Reports 2020
Blackbird	17 (77%)	11 (73%)	Jay	1 (5%)	
Blackcap	2 (9%)	1 (7%)	<i>Kestrel</i>		1 (7%)
<i>Black-headed Gull</i>		1 (7%)	Long-tailed Tit	11 (50%)	6 (40%)
Blue Tit	21 (95%)	11 (73%)	Magpie	8 (36%)	6 (40%)
Carrion Crow	6 (27%)	3 (20%)	Moorhen	1 (5%)	
Chaffinch	7 (23%)	6 (40%)	<i>Nuthatch</i>		1 (7%)
Coal Tit	6 (27%)	6 (40%)	Pheasant	1 (5%)	2 (13%)
Collared Dove	5 (23%)	9 (60%)	Redwing	1 (5%)	
Dunnock	10 (45%)	9 (60%)	Reed Bunting	1 (5%)	
Fieldfare	1 (5%)		Robin	19 (86%)	12 (80%)
Goldfinch	9 (41%)	7 (46%)	Rook	4 (18%)	4 (27%)
Gt.Sp. Woodpecker	6 (27%)	2 (13%)	Song Thrush	2 (9%)	3 (13%)
Great Tit	11 (50%)	10 (67%)	Sparrowhawk	1 (5%)	3 (13%)
Greenfinch	5 (23%)	4 (27%)	Starling	2 (9%)	1 (7%)
<i>Green Woodpecker</i>		2 (13%)	Stock Dove	1 (5%)	
House Sparrow	9 (41%)	7 (46%)	Woodpigeon	20 (91%)	14 (93%)
Jackdaw	11 (50%)	11 (73%)	Wren	4 (27%)	4 (27%)



40: Blue Tit 'lift-off', Lewis Cres – 06Nov (AM)



41: Blackbird 'sunning', Lewis Cres – 30May (AM)

III. Abington Bird Survey, Bank Holiday Weekend, 28th to 31st May

This year 10 reports were received, comprising 57 species seen in the Abingtons. Both figures are a little lower than last year; in 2020, 63 species were included in 19 reports.

This year **Robin** and **Woodpigeon** were most frequently seen, closely followed by **Blackbird**, **Jackdaw** and **Blue Tit**. The table below lists the number of reports received, and the maximum number seen at any one time, for each species.

Species	No. of Reports	Max. Count	Species	No. of Reports	Max. Count
Robin	10	5	Canada Goose	2	12
Woodpigeon	10	10	Coal Tit	2	1
Blackbird	9	5	Goldcrest	2	2
Jackdaw	9	12	Greylag Goose	2	11
Blue Tit	8	6	Kestrel	2	1
Buzzard	7	3	Little Egret	2	1
Dunnock	7	6	Mallard	2	11
Goldfinch	7	6	Mistle Thrush	2	3
Great Tit	7	5	Mute Swan	2	2
House Sparrow	6	15	Red-legged Partridge	2	2
Magpie	6	6	Skylark	2	6
Rook	6	20	Song Thrush	2	2
Collared Dove	5	17	Sparrowhawk	2	1
Red Kite	5	2	Swallow	2	8
Starling	5	12	Black-headed Gull	1	1
Wren	5	2	Cormorant	1	1
Blackcap	4	2	Corn Bunting	1	3
Gt. Sp. Woodpecker	4	1	Grey Heron	1	1
Green Woodpecker	4	2	Hobby	1	1
Stock Dove	4	3	Jay	1	1
Carrion Crow	3	2	Lesser Whitethroat	1	1
Chaffinch	3	2	Linnet	1	7
Chiffchaff	3	2	Long-tailed Tit	1	5
Greenfinch	3	3	Pheasant	1	2
House Martin	3	12	Reed Bunting	1	2
Moorhen	3	4	Reed Warbler	1	2
Pied Wagtail	3	3	Whitethroat	1	2
Swift	3	15	Willow Warbler	1	1
			Yellowhammer	1	4

Derek Turnidge and Andy Merryweather



42: Nuthatch, High St LA – 04Aug (JAH)



43: Blackbird being fed, Church Lane – 24Apr (BMB)

6. REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Reports of sightings were few and far between this year. The first reports were of **Smooth Newt** in garden ponds in Little Abington, with the first report at the end of March and a few more during May.

The first **Common Frog** was reported in June followed by a few more sightings during the summer, and up to the end of September, in both Great and Little Abington ponds.

Only three **Common Toad** were reported; one in July, one in September and one towards the end of October.

There were no reports of any frogspawn, when it would normally be expected through April and May. Looking further afield, this absence appeared to be consistent. It is not at all clear why there were no sightings of spawn or tadpoles, and few reports of adults. Perhaps it was due to the cold weather in April with low temperatures, and it was also very dry.

One report of a **Grass Snake** in Granta Park in August and no sightings of **Common Lizard** or **Slow Worm** were forthcoming. Usually there are more sightings of **Grass Snake** particularly in ponds or compost heaps. Again the cold weather and lack of food is probably a factor.

Gaynor Farrant



45: Common Frog, Bourn Bridge Rd – 17Jun (RS)



44: Common Frog, Lewis Cres – 03Jun (AM)



46: Smooth Newt, Bourn Bridge Rd – 07Jun (CMcM)

7. MAMMALS

The most reported mammal this year was the **Muntjac**, and there were also sightings of **Fallow Deer** and **Roe Deer**.

Hedgehog were not reported until August, but then appeared in various gardens over the following few months.

Other mammals reported during the year have been the usual mix of bats, hares, foxes, badgers, moles, grey squirrels and the occasional vole. One **Porcupine**, a non-native species and likely an escaper, was reportedly seen in Granta Park in July.

The table below lists all the mammal sightings, including location, date and the number of animals reported.

Species	Location, Village	Date	Number
Fox	Granta Park, GA	15 Jan 21	4
Fox	ORC, GA	17 Jan 21	1
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	24 Jan 21	1
Fox	Cooks Field, LA	28 Jan 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	28 Jan 21	1
Muntjac	ORC, GA	31 Jan 21	3
Fallow Deer tracks	Sluice Wood track	01 Feb 21	
Fallow Deer tracks	Sluice Wood track	07 Feb 21	
Fox	Newmarket Rd, near North Rd, GA	08 Feb 21	1
Muntjac	Front garden, High St. LA	08 Feb 21	2
Fallow Deer	Abington Park Farm, GA	10 Feb 21	10
Muntjac	Lewis Cres, GA	11 Feb 21	1
Muntjac	ORC, GA	14 Feb 21	1
Muntjac	Front garden, High St. LA	19 Feb 21	2
Muntjac	Sluice Wood, Granta Park, GA	26 Feb 21	2
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	27 Feb 21	2
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	01 Mar 21	1
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	02 Mar 21	2
Roe Deer	Chaplin Farm (Chalky Rd), GA	04 Mar 21	14
Muntjac	Chaplin Farm (Chalky Rd), GA	04 Mar 21	1
Hare	Chaplin Farm (Chalky Rd), GA	04 Mar 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	06 Mar 21	1
Muntjac - juvenile	Sluice Wood	17 Mar 21	1
Badger - dead in road	Newmarket Rd, near yards	18 Mar 21	1
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	30 Mar 21	1+
Hare	Hairdresser's path, Granta Park	March	1
Muntjac	Near sluice, Sluice Wood	March	1
Fallow Deer tracks	Lewis Cres, GA	March	
Muntjac	Granta Park, GA	04 Apr 21	1
Muntjac	ORC, GA	11 Apr 21	1
Muntjac	ORC, GA	11 Apr 21	1
Fallow Deer	Field south of ORC, GA	11 Apr 21	30+
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	21 Apr 21	1
Muntjac	Granta Park, GA	02 May 21	1
Field Vole	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	07 May 21	1
small bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	07 May 21	1

Species	Location, Village	Date	Number
Muntjac	Front garden, High St. LA	08 May 21	1
Muntjac	Bourn Bridge Rd driveway, LA	08 May 21	1
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd. LA	09 May 21	4+
Badger	ORC, GA	10 May 21	
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	11 May 21	
Muntjac	ORC, GA	11 May 21	
Muntjac	A11 bridge, Newmarket Rd	16 May 21	1
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	18 May 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	18 May 21	1
Muntjac	LSA, GA	30 May 21	1
Hare	LSA, GA	30 May 21	1
Muntjac	Granta Park, GA	30 May 21	1
Hare	Granta Park, GA	30 May 21	2
Hare	Fields north of Cambridge Rd, LA	31 May 21	3
Bat	Bourn Bridge Rd, LA	May	
Fox	Crossing North Rd, GA	06 Jun 21	1
Muntjac	Cutting Rd, LSA, GA	06 Jun 21	1
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	All June	
Grey Squirrel	various locations	June	6+
Muntjac	various locations	June	1
Fox	ORC, GA	23 Jun 21	2
Bat	MM bridge & playground, GA	30 Jun 21	4-6
Muntjac	Church Lane, near church, LA	30 Jun 21	1
Bat	Bourn Bridge Rd garden, LA	June	
Squirrel	Throughout villages	June	
Bat	Lewis Cres, GA	15 Jul 21	several
Fallow Deer	Field by Abington Park Farm, GA	16 Jul 21	1
Hare	Meadow, Granta Park, GA	17 Jul 21	4
Porcupine (non-native)	Granta Park, GA	28 Jul 21	1
Bat	Bourn Bridge Rd garden, LA	July	
Squirrel	Bourn Bridge Rd garden, LA	July	
Hedgehog	Garden Meadow Walk, GA	01 Aug 21	
Muntjac	ORC, GA	04 Aug 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	05 Aug 21	
Bat	Lewis Cres, GA	08 Aug 21	2
Hedgehog	Lewis Cres, GA	16-20 Aug 21	1
Hare	LSA, GA	23 Aug 21	2
Fallow Deer	LSA, GA	23 Aug 21	2
Fox	North Rd, LSA , GA	23 Aug 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	August	
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	August	
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	06 Sep 21	
Bat	Westfield garden, LA	06 Sep 21	1
Hare	Granta Park, GA	08 Sep 21	1
Muntjac	Sluice Wood	08 Sep 21	1
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	21 Sep 21	1
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Rd, LA	21 Sep 21	

Species	Location, Village	Date	Number
Muntjac	Abington Woods, LA	29 Sep 21	
Muntjac	Abington Woods, LA	30 Sep 21	
Hedgehog	Garden, Meadow Walk, GA	September	
Mole	Garden, High St. LA	September	
Mole	Recreation ground, GA	September	
Fox	Church Lane, nr Bancroft Farm, LA	04 Oct 21	1
Fallow Deer	ORC, GA	15 Oct 21	3
Hedgehog	Bourn Bridge Rd garden, LA	15.Oct.21	1
Hedgehog	Bourn Bridge Rd garden, LA	16.Oct.21	1
Muntjac	Garden, High St. LA	18 Oct 21	1
Roe Deer	North Rd, LSA, GA	18 Oct 21	1
Fallow Deer	LSA, Hildersham parish boundary	25 Oct 21	20
Hedgehog	Lewis Cres, GA	26 Oct 21	1
Mole	Recreation ground, GA	October	
Fox	Garden, High St. LA	16 Nov 21	1
Fox	Bourn Bridge Rd by carriage track, LA	23 Nov 21	1
Hare	Fields near Ab Pk Fm, GA	29 Nov 21	1
Fox	Bourn Bridge Rd, International School	04 Dec 21	1
Hare	Fields near Ab Pk Fm, GA	29 Dec 21	1

Gill Smith



47: Fox in the early morning sun, ORC – 17Jan (AM)



48: Muntjac Deer, ORC – 11Apr (AM)



49: Bat in a patio brolly, West Field - 06Sep (GD)



50: Fallow Deer eating rosehips, ORC – 01Nov (AM)

8. INSECTS

This report covers mainly butterflies, bees, dragonflies and damselflies, these being some of the more common insect groups which can be more readily recognized and identified.

The total number of reports received this year was 1168 (compared with 2359 reports in 2020), so a disappointing year in many ways. The weather during the year was very variable with lots of rain, overcast conditions and little sunshine – not good for butterflies. The number of butterfly reports was 850, down considerably on last year, when almost 2000 reports were received.

This year, with the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, many people were working from home and spending more time in their gardens, and walking in the village to exercise and seeing more insects on fine days. There were six regular reporters and several occasional reporters.

I. *Butterflies*

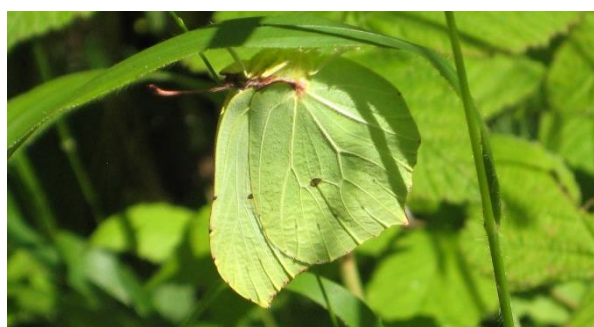
Not a good year for butterflies, with only 850 records, but through the course of the year, 25 of the 34 county's resident butterfly species were reported in the Abingtons. A few of these species were more unusual, each with fewer than 10 reports, in particular the **Small Blue**, **White-letter Hairstreak** and a **Fritillary**.

Brimstone butterflies topped the ranking in terms of number of reports. Experts say that Brimstone butterflies can be seen in every month of the year, but in Abington they are usually only reported during ten or eleven months. The **Small White** was again in second place.

First butterfly reported: Brimstone on 20th February 2021
Last butterfly reported: Brimstone on 17th November 2021

Table of 2021 Butterflies Reports, ranked (top 12) and compared with 2020

2021 Ranking	Butterfly species	No. of Reports (in 2021)	2020 ranking
1	Brimstone	155	1
2	Small White	122	2
3	Red Admiral	75	3
4	Peacock	70	5
5	Orange Tip	60	9
6	Meadow Brown	41	4
7	Holly Blue	39	10
8=	Large White	37	7
8=	Gatekeeper	37	12
10	Small Tortoiseshell	36	8
11	Comma	33	6
12	Green-veined White	32	11



51: Brimstone, Roman Road – 06 Sep (LAM)



52: Small White, Roman Road – 30 Aug (AM)



53: Comma, Lewis Cres – 29Mar (AM)



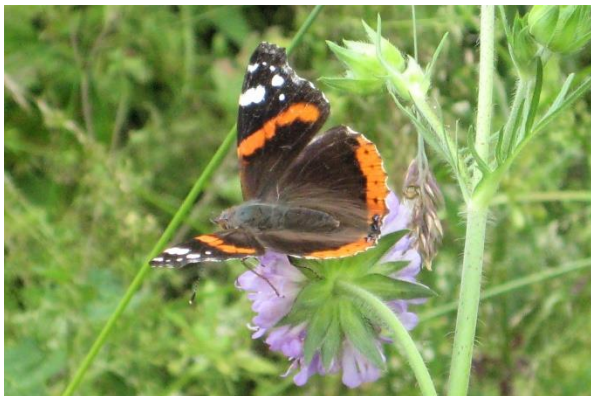
54: Orange Tip, ORC – 30May (AM)



55: Small Skipper, Cambridge Rd – 15Jun (DLT)



56: Meadow Brown, Roman Road – 04Jul (LAM)



57: Red Admiral, Roman Road – 04Jul (LAM)



58: Ringlet, ORC – 17Jul (AM)



59: Gatekeeper, ORC – 17Jul (AM)



60: Painted Lady, PRV Bourn Bridge Rd – 17Jul (DF)

Summary Table of 2021 Butterfly Reports by Month

	Species	Total	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1	Brimstone	155	19	28	30	23	10	17	19	7	1	1
2	Small White	122		2	7	22	8	42	19	19	3	
3	Red Admiral	75				2	13	16	17	16	9	2
4	Peacock	70	5	13	16	4		11	13	2	6	
5	Orange Tip	60			26	30	4					
6	Meadow Brown	41					5	26	9	1		
7	Holly Blue	39			2	20	16	1				
8	Large White	37			1		2	11	15	8		
	Gatekeeper	37					1	17	18	1		
10	Small Tortoiseshell	36	1	7	4	1	7	11		4	1	
11	Comma	33	1	3	4	1		11	6	3	4	
12	Green-Veined White	32			6	1	2	10	10	3		
13	Small Skipper	21					2	14	3	1	1	
14	Painted Lady	20				2	5	5	6	2		
15	Ringlet	13						12	1			
	Small Copper	13				4	2		4		3	
17	Marbled White	10						10				
18	Small Heath	9					3	5	1			
	Speckled Wood	9				1	2	4	1	1		
20	Common Blue	6							6			
21	Essex Skipper	5						4	1			
22	Large Skipper	3					1	2				
23	Small Blue	2						1	1			
24	White-Letter Hairstreak	1						1				
	Fritillary	1				1						
	TOTAL (by month)	850	26	53	96	112	83	231	150	68	28	3

Footnote: No butterfly reports were received in January or December 2021

II. Bees and Beeflies

Bee sightings were well down, but ten Bee species, and several Beefly species were reported:

Buff-tailed Bumblebee, White-tailed Bumblebee, Red-tailed Bumblebee, Tree Bumblebee, Carder Bee, Honey Bee, Tawny Mining Bee, Leaf-cutter Bee, Hairy-legged Flower Bee, Ground-nesting Bee.

III. Dragonflies and Damselflies

Fewer sightings than normal, but overall eleven different species were reported:

Emperor Dragonfly, Hairy Dragonfly, Southern Hawker, Black-tailed Skimmer Azure Damselfly, Banded Demoiselle, Blue-tailed Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly, White-legged Damselfly, Small Red Damselfly.

IV. Ladybirds

Fewer reports than usual, but both **Seven-spot Ladybird** and **Harlequin Ladybird** species were seen, as well as a less commonly reported species, the **Pine Ladybird** in March.

V. Moths

No moth events were held this year and very few species were otherwise reported, but several reports of **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** were received, as well as a sighting of an **Elephant Hawkmoth** in late June, and an **Old Lady Moth** in August.



61: Common Blue, ORC – 07Aug (AM)



62: Common Blue, ORC – 07Aug (AM)



63: Large Skipper, ORC – 23Jun (AM)



64: Small Copper, ORC – 07Aug (AM)



65: Common Blue Damselfly, GP – 17Jul (AM)



66: Southern Hawker ♀, Lewis Cres. – 01 Sep (AM)



67: Black-tailed Skimmer ♂, GP – 17Jul (AM)



68: Black-tailed Skimmer ♀, Camb. Rd – 15Jun (DLT)



69: Elephant Hawkmoth, Lewis Cres – 27Jun (PM)



70: Copper Underwing Moth, Church Lane – 19Aug (LAM)



71: Grey Dagger Moth caterpillar, LA – 02Sep (LAM)



72: Knot Grass Moth caterpillar, GA – 26Sep (AM)



73: Dark-edged Bee-fly, Lewis Cres – 04Apr (AM)



74: Cockchaffer Beetle, LA – 29May (SH)



75: Wasp Beetle, Lewis Cres – 03Jun (PM)



76: Pine Ladybird, Lewis Cres – 27Feb (AM)

Jennifer Hirst

9. FLORA

I. *Bourn Bridge Road Protected Verge*

Protected Roadside Verges (PRVs) represent the largest area of unimproved grassland in Cambridgeshire. This important habitat supports a variety of plants and animals including rare flowers. The best of these sites have been designated as PRVs to raise awareness of their importance.

Our PRVs on Bourn Bridge Rd are marked by wooden posts and were started in 2005 when Pat Daunt and others started Naturewatch. They are marked and recorded on the County Council List as S36. The PRVs are maintained by the Parish Council with a careful cutting regime, and have been assessed each year over the spring and summer for the grass and flower species present. The number of species has slowly improved, such that in 2021 Naturewatch recorded 41 species. This is very encouraging, and the species reflect what would be found on the Roman Road and other natural chalk grassland sites in the county.

II. *Protected Roadside Verge, Bourn Bridge Road – S36*

Summary Tables of Species Recorded, April - July 2021

Broadleaf Plants		
White Campion	Small Scabious	Field Bindweed
Red Dead-nettle	Goat's Beard	Ragwort
Bladder Campion	Hemlock	Spear Thistle
White Dead-nettle	Common Speedwell	Common Mallow
Hedge Bedstraw	Common Knapweed	Dwarf Thistle
Meadow Buttercup	Red Campion	Sheep's Sorrel
Ladies Bedstraw	Greater Knapweed	Sow-thistle
Cow Parsley	Toadflax	Wild Basil
Yarrow	Annual Nettle	Crow Garlic
Ground Ivy	Common Poppy	Wild Parsley
Field Scabious	Mugwort	Wild Carrot
Smooth Hawk's-beard		

Grasses		
Annual Meadow Grass	Yellow Oat Grass	Hairy Brome
Foxtail	Meadow Fescue	Sheep's Fescue
Common Bent		

David Farrant



77: Smooth Hawk's-beard, PRV 05Jun (DF)



78: Field Scabious, Knapweed. PRV – 09Jul (DF)

III. Summary of Flora Reports

February - a fine display of **Snowdrops** and **Aconites** in Mitch's Wood and Sluice Wood, and a great number of **Crocus** were visited by several bee species in Church Lane.

March – good clumps of **Snowdrops** still in flower, and lovely green glossy leaves of **Wild Arum** and **Dog's Mercury** were starting to appear. **Wych Elm** flowers were noted on GP, a species where the flowers appear before the leaves. **Celandine** and **Sweet Violet** flowers appeared around the woodland edges on GP and at several other village locations towards the end of the month, as did the tiny blue **Speedwell** flowers.

April – **Dog's Mercury** and **Celandine** were both flowering in abundance near the sluice, and the first **Blackthorn** and **Cowslip** flowers started to show early in the month. A large patch of **Stonecrop** was spotted alongside the A1307. By mid-month foamy white clusters of **Blackthorn** were in full bloom all around the village, attracting numerous Buff-tailed Bumblebee. Beneath these, the small purple flower spikes of **Ground Ivy** poked up above the low foliage, interspersed with **Celandine** flowers still shining out from the more sunny patches. A broad swathe of yellow **Cowslip** started to show on the sunny meadows, alongside **Daisy** and the delicate pink five-petal stars of **Common Storksbill** in the grass. Many of the trees started to come into leaf this month, including **Sycamore**, **Hawthorn** and **Horse Chestnut**, and along the ORC the last of the bright yellow **Sallow** catkins could still be seen. The first **White Dead-nettle** flowers were spotted, and the finely divided foliage of **Hemlock** was starting to appear, still quite low to the ground ... for now!

May – early in the month, the field of **Cowslip** in the entrance meadow on GP, and the **Flowering Cherry** blossom were a real spectacle in the spring sunshine. **Common Storksbill** and **Garlic Mustard** were in flower, and woods turned a verdant green as most trees came into leaf. The **Wych Elm** flowers were noted as now turning to seed.



79: Snowdrops, GP – 10Jan (AM)



80: Wych Elm blossom, GP – 27Feb (AM)



81: Sweet Violet, High St, LA – 19Mar (JAH)



82: Hazel catkins, GP – 17Jan (AM)

June – along the ORC, the **Wild Mustard** flowers provided a fine splash of vibrant colour, and the **Hawthorn** or May was just starting to flower early on in the month. **Wild Arum** flower spikes were fully expanded and open, and the spiky **Goat Willow** flowers were very evident, out just ahead of the leaves. Good numbers of **Cowslip** flowers were noted along the edges of the ORC this year, and **Dandelion** and **White Dead-nettle** were also seen. By the end of June, **Red Campion**, **White Campion** and **Green Alkanet** were very much in evidence alongside Linton Rd, and elsewhere. At many sites around the village, it was noted that **Spindle** and **Apple** were being attacked by Ermine Moth caterpillars particularly voraciously this year, reducing some bushes to bare branches. **Goat's Beard** and **Vetch** were in abundance along the ORC, and **Ragged Robin** was seen in flower near the GP lake. The field alongside Church Lane produced a particularly fine display of **Buttercup**, and **Comfrey** was spotted in the hedge along Cambridge Rd. **Oxeye Daisy** put on a fabulous display in many wild-flower meadows around the village, particularly on the LSA and along the ORC, and the **Dog Rose** was particularly good along the ORC. **Common Poppy** flowered along field edges, and **Common Broomrape** was seen in flower along the ORC. Towards the end of the month, **Elderflower** and **Cow Parsley** came into bloom, as did the now tall **Hemlock**, and both **Tufted Vetch** and **Meadow Vetchling**.

July – at the start of the month, **Hedge Bedstraw** was flowering nicely, as were **Common St John's Wort** and **Oxford Ragwort** along the ORC. The last of the **Elderflower** was still evident, and the **Hemlock** flowers were starting to go over, but **Meadow Vetchling** flowers were still being much visited by bees. Tall spikes of **Mullein** were in flower at the top of the High St and along the Old Railway Cutting, as well as **Greater Knapweed** and **Birds-foot Trefoil**. The **Stonecrop** was also in flower along the now disused part of the A1307, and many species were in bloom along the Protected Road Verge on Bourn Bridge Rd; **Field Scabious**, **Lady's Bedstraw**, **Common Knapweed**, **Wild Carrot** and **Ragwort** to name but a few (see separate entry above). By mid-month, **Wild Marjoram** and **Spear Thistle** were providing nectar for many insects, and the first **Wild Parsnip**, **Field Scabious**, **Red Dead-nettle** and **Lady's Bedstraw** flowers were starting to appear. **White Campion**, **Oxeye Daisy** and **Common Poppy** also continued to flower along the ORC. By the end of July, the wild-flower meadows on GP were a blaze of **Lady's Bedstraw**, **Field Scabious**, **Oxeye Daisy** and **Knapweed** flowers, and several **Pyramidal Orchid** were seen flowering alongside the lake.

August – **Wild Marjoram**, **Knapweed** and **Oxeye Daisy** continued to dominate wild-flower borders, and the banks of the ORC were awash with colourful flowers, including **Slender Thistle**, **Teasel**, **Common Knapweed**, **Mugwort**, **Ragwort**, **Small Scabious**, **Field Scabious**, **Wild Basil**, **Wild Marjoram**, **Spear Thistle** and **Lucerne**, as well as various **Dandelion** species. **Old Man's Beard** flowers started appearing towards mid-month. An ANW member's trip to the Roman Road also recorded a good number of flower species – fully listed in Section 11.

November – saw a proliferation of berries from many hedgerow species, including **Rosehip**, **Blackberry**, **Sloe**, **Hawthorn** and **Privet**, as well as the fluffy seeds of **Old Man's Beard**.

Andy Merryweather



83: First Blackthorn flowers, ORC – 27Mar (AM)



84: Stonecrop, old A1307 – 28Mar (DF)



85: Common Storksbill, GP – 02May (AM)



86: Goat's Beard, ORC – 30May (AM)



87: Ragged Robin ORC – 30May (AM))



88: Meadow Vetchling, ORC – 16Jun (AM)



89: Oxeye Daisy, ORC – 16Jun (AM)



90: Cow Parsley, Roman Road – 16Jun (LAM)



91: Pyrimidal Orchid, GP – 17Jul (AM)



92: Restharrow, Roman Road – 07Aug (AM)

10. GRANTA PARK – WILDLIFE SUMMARY

The pandemic continued to affect life at Granta Park, and 2021 remained quiet. On a positive note, a quieter Park has allowed our wildlife to flourish. The land near Illumina continued to develop and **Mute Swan** were frequently seen on the new lake. **Muntjac** were also seen more regularly at the entrance to Sluice Wood, as well as near and in the car park of the McClintock Building. Perhaps both species have benefited from the reduction in traffic and footfall over the past two years.

The most exciting development in 2021 was the installation of a floating island on the main lake, towards the end of June. This island was the first part in a scope of works that will hopefully see a number of improvements to the lake over the next few years. Waterlilies were also planted under the water surface at the same time.



93: Floating island, and Mute Swan, GP



94: Waterlilies starting to appear, GP

There are several benefits to floating islands, the two biggest being improved water quality and the creation of habitat sanctuaries, both above and below the waterline. Installed in just one day, the island provided an instant habitat suitable for small mammals, birds, amphibians, invertebrates and fish. Pictures of the installation on 22nd June can be seen below.



95: Installation of floating islands



96: Installation of floating islands

Whilst taking longer than hoped to resume nature activities on the park, we were thrilled to finally be able to invite the Wildlife Trust back to Granta Park for one of the popular Autumn Walks. Iain Webb from Wildlife Trust BCN, led a group of staff through Lagden's Grove and Sluice Wood over lunch on 9th November. We were very lucky to have a bright, crisp day for the walk and, despite taking place so late in the year, there was still plenty to see and hear, including **Otter** spraint. It's great to know that our resident otters are still thriving!



97: Autumn walk with Iain Webb – 09Nov

Eighteen new bird boxes were purchased in 2021 to replace a number that were originally installed in 2014. A durable variety of wood-concrete boxes were chosen this time, and the landscapers will begin replacing any broken bird boxes in 2022.

In 2022 we are also hoping to explore the possibility of introducing some Barn Owl and Kestrel nesting boxes (Kestrel are frequently spotted over the cricket pitch), and possibility some feeding stations for smaller birds.

As always, staff based at Granta Park are encouraged to report what they see to the Estate Office or to Abington Naturewatch.

I. 2021 Sightings by Month

4 April - Jez Smith saw and photographed a number of species in the course of just a few hours: a **Muntjac**, a **Green Woodpecker** nesting just off the back of the McClintock Building car park, two **Sparrowhawk** displaying, a **Swallow** flying over the lake, a one-legged **Blue Tit**, a possible **Great Spotted Woodpecker** nest, and a dead **Buzzard**.



98: Muntjac, GP - (JS)



99: One-legged Blue Tit - (JS)



100: Green Woodpecker - (JS)

14 April – A **Mallard** was spotted nesting in a planter at The Apiary, and laid a clutch of eggs. Unfortunately, crows harassed the mother and, despite our best efforts to keep them away, the eggs were destroyed within a few days.

27 April - **Yellow Rattle** flowered on the meadow by the cricket pitch; this wildflower is believed to be instrumental in keeping our bees fed throughout an unseasonably cold spring.

26 May - towards the end of May, Anna our resident beekeeper, was visited by the regional bee inspector. The inspector makes regular visits to the Park to check on the health of the **Honey Bees** kept here. It was a very successful visit and we're pleased to report that the bees are thriving! They are happy, healthy and producing lots of honey.

During our trip to the woodland during the bee inspection, we also observed a number of fallen trees that have become perfect habitats for **Woodlouse**, **Ladybirds** and many other creatures.

May and June - **Greylag Goose** and **Canada Goose** seen throughout the year (photographed 28 May and 30 June).



101: Duck eggs laid in planter near The Apiary



102: Flowers on the 'entrance meadow'



103: Anna, the GP bee-keeper



104: Honey bee, GP



105: Two of the bee hives, GP



106: Woodlouse, GP



107: Seven-spot Ladybird, GP



108: Greylag Geese, GP



109: Canada Goose family, GP lake

May and June - Wildflowers continue to grow well across the Park with various areas deliberately uncut and left to grow (photographed in May and June)



110: Oxeye Daisies, GP



111: Oxeye Daisies in the wildflower meadow, GP



112: Forget-me-not, GP



113: Red Campion, GP

9 June - Bee photographed in 'Bumblebee meadow'

1 July - **Moorhen** and chicks seen crossing the road between the lake and Sluice Wood



114: Bumblebee on Kidney Vetch, GP



115: Moorhen and accompanying chicks, GP

24 August – Grass Snake spotted near the footpath to the village



116: Grass Snake, GP

2 September – **Brown-lipped Snails**, also known as **Banded Snails** (*Cepaea nemoralis*) spotted behind one of the signs in Sluice Wood.

9 Nov - **Otter** spraint spotted by the River Granta in Lagden's Grove.



117: Brown-lipped Snails, GP



118: Otter spraint, GP

As always, we had a great selection of fungi across the Park (photographed in September and October).



119: Various species of fungi, GP



Elly Miller (Granta Park)

II. Butterflies and Odonata on Granta Park

A strange year, with site access limited by coronavirus restrictions, but still good standard numbers of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies seen. No new butterfly species for the site this year, but good showings of **Painted Lady**, **Silver-washed Fritillary** and **Dark-green Fritillary** this year. No **Clouded Yellow** were seen in the usual spot outside Illumina, as unfortunately the rough ground habitat was mown at the height of their season!

A first record on Granta Park was of the **White-legged Damselfly**, with good numbers seen during the summer months on bushes around the lake and in Sluice Wood.

Other species to note were the **Pantaloön Bee** and **Beewolves** spotted on a sandy bank, and there were plenty of **Wasp Spider** around as well.

Wasp Orchid flowered in larger numbers than previous years, as did the **Bee Orchid** in the meadow adjacent to the lake.



120: Common Blue Damselfly, GP – 17Jul (AM)



121: Blue-tailed Damselfly, GP – 17Jul (AM)



122: Emperor Dragonfly, GP – 17Jul (AM)



123: White-legged Damselfly, GP – 08Jun (DB)

i. Summary Table of Butterfly Sightings, Granta Park

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Brimstone												
Comma												
Peacock												
Small Tortoiseshell												
Small White												
Orange Tip												
Large White												
Green-veined White												
Common Blue												
Gatekeeper												
Purple Hairstreak												
White-letter Hairstreak												
Holly Blue												
Large Skipper												
Marbled White												
Meadow Brown												
Painted Lady												
Red Admiral												
Ringlet												
Essex Skipper												
Small Copper												
Small Skipper												
Speckled Wood												
Brown Argus												
Small Heath												
Dark-green Fritillary												
Silver-washed Fritillary												
Total number of species			1	3	10	18	26	22	7	3		

ii. Summary Table of Dragonfly and Damselfly Sightings, Granta Park

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Large Red Damselfly												
Azure Damselfly												
Red-eyed Damselfly												
Small Red-eyed Damselfly												
White-legged Damselfly												
Common Blue Damselfly												
Willow Emerald Damselfly												
Banded Demoiselle												
Four Spotted Chaser												
Broad-bodied Chaser												
Black-tailed Skimmer												
Emperor Dragonfly												
Hairy Dragonfly												
Southern Hawker												
Migrant Hawker												
Brown Hawker												
Common Darter												
Ruddy Darter												
Total number of species					4	13	17	18	18			

Darren Bast (AstraZeneca)

11. VISITS OUT OF THE ABINGTONS

I. Abington Roman Road

7th August 2021 - despite the less-than-promising weather, and some residual concerns about coronavirus and social-distancing, four ANW members gathered at Worsted Lodge to walk along the Roman Road, in particular to look for flowers and butterflies.

A good variety of flora were identified, with nineteen species being listed overall and, when the sun briefly came out, so did a few butterflies, with seven species being seen.

Butterflies	
Gatekeeper	Common Blue
Painted Lady	Green-veined White
Small Copper	Small Skipper
Small White	

Flora	
Greater Knapweed	Red Clover
Common Knapweed	White Campion
Mugwort	Field Poppy
Yarrow (<i>Achilla</i>)	Lesser Trefoil
St John's Wort (<i>Hypericum</i>)	Goat's Beard
Ragwort	Wild Basil
Field Scabious	Salad Burnett
Small Scabious	Restharrow
Agrimony	Thistle (spp unknown)
Pignut	

Andy Merryweather



124: Flowers in the drizzle, Roman Road – 07Aug (AM)

12. REFERENCES

I. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre

CPERC (<http://www.cperc.org.uk/>) collates, manages and stores data that describe biodiversity in the local area. It is the main source of natural history and protected species information for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. In the past we have provided some of our records to them, notably about native species in decline and undesirable non-native species.

CPERC now has an online recording website *CPERC Record* where you can submit wildlife sightings for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. To get started, log in or register at www.cperc-record.org.uk.

II. Local Wildlife organisations

Wildlife Trust (for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire):

<http://www.wildlifebcn.org/>

III. RiverCare

A small group of NatureWatch members make up the Abington RiverCare team, which is affiliated to the regional *RiverCare* organisation <http://www.rivercare.org.uk/>. This, together with *BeachCare*, is run in East Anglia by [Keep Britain Tidy](#), a national environmental charity, in partnership with [Anglian Water](#).

IV. GB non-native species secretariat (GBNNSS)

The GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy was developed to meet the challenge posed by invasive non-native species in Great Britain. See <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/>.

V. Cam Valley Forum

RiverCare members also occasionally attend Cam Valley Forum events. This is a voluntary group, established in 2001, which works to protect and improve the environment of the River Cam and its tributaries – see <https://camvalleyforum.uk/>

VI. NatureWatch documents:

Flora Abingtonia 2008, compiled by Pat Daunt:

<http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/site/assets/files/1179/flora-abingtonia-full.pdf>

River Sampling 2006-2011

<http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/site/assets/files/1179/riversampling.pdf>

Bird species noted in the Abingtons – a summary compiled by Derek T & Andy M:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D8Zel6ZM3QMhxiawqs4RYl93SrNvXCGC/view?usp=sharing>

"What's that bird?" – by Andy M:

Warblers <https://goo.gl/eFXYZo> and Buntings <https://goo.gl/8BhaLx>

Raptors: Falcons <https://goo.gl/wunx4b> and Accipiters <https://goo.gl/QUhpeK>

13. CONTACT INFORMATION

I. *The Abington Naturewatch Blog*

The Abington Naturewatch Blog (i.e. a web log) at <http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>. Using a blog format makes it simpler to publish material in diary form. It is easily reached from the village website <http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/>: there is also a Naturewatch page under **Clubs**, which gives access to past issues of *The Record*.

The Blog contains reports and photographs submitted by members, monthly summaries of sightings, and useful links to other sources of information. It also lists the aims of the group, has details of members' meetings, and Project Team contact details.

Those interested in nature in the Abingtons are encouraged to join – there is no membership fee! Members receive personal invitations to meetings, by email if available.

There is a link to a simple Google map of the area, with the names used to refer to some parts of the area covered.


Naturewatch Home Page:

Abington Naturewatch

This is a place to post sightings and news for the Naturewatch group of Great and Little Abington in Cambridgeshire, UK.
See below for more details and information on how to join.

A few Garden Birds

With the coming of the colder weather, a greater variety of birds have been visiting Andy M's garden recently, with the prospect of finding easier food. One or occasionally two **Jay** have been busy gathering acorns from the oak at the bottom of the garden, and carefully stashing them for the colder weather to come. Several **Blackbird** have taken up residence in the hawthorn, carefully selecting the most nutritious berries to eat, scattering the rejects carelessly below. Similarly, **Greenfinch** have been learning how to take the ripe seed from the spent sunflower heads. Both **Green Woodpecker** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker** have visited, and a male **Sparrowhawk** has found easy pickings from the **Goldfinch** flock that regularly frequent the feeders. **Blue Tit** and **Long-tailed Tit** are also regulars, passing through in noisy, busy flocks of ever-increasing size.



Jay

Resources

- 2021 NatureWatch Programme
- Events Calendar
- NatureWatch contacts

Blog Archive

- 2007 (18)
- 2008 (19)
- 2009 (21)
- 2010 (18)
- 2011 (35)
- 2012 (30)
- 2013 (32)
- 2014 (49)
- 2015 (54)
- 2016 (62)
- 2017 (58)
- 2018 (53)
- 2019 (145)
- 2020 (210)
- 2021 (134)
- ▼ 2022 (1)
- ▼ January (1)

December 2021 - Interesting Sightings from around ...

Information and Guides

- Blog User Guide
- What's That Bird - Warblers
- What's That Bird - LBJs
- What's That Bird - Falcons
- What's That Bird - Accipiters
- Bird Species recorded in the Abingtons

II. The Abington Naturewatch Project Team and Sectors

The team is always interested to hear of any sightings in the Great and Little Abington parishes, especially accompanied by photos that can be published on our website.

Programme Coordinator (and Membership Secretary)

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RiverCare

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Robin Harman, 22 West Field, Little Abington ☎ 01223 891 730
Email: robandkayharman@gmail.com

Birds

Derek Turnidge, 23 Cambridge Rd, Little Abington ☎ 01223 891 133
Email: derek@turnidges.com

Amphibians & Reptiles

Gaynor Farrant, 9 Bourn Bridge Road, Little Abington ☎ 01223 892 871
Email: gaynorfarrant198@btinternet.com

Insects (*until end 2021*)

Jennifer Hirsh, 34 High Street, Little Abington ☎ 01223 893 352
Email: jennifer@hirsh.com

(from January 2022)

Polly Merryweather, 6 Lewis Crescent, Great Abington ☎ 01223 890 673
Email: polly.merryweather61@gmail.com

Mammals

Gill Smith, 1 Bourn Bridge Road, Little Abington ☎ 01223 892 759
Email: richardandgill.smith@live.co.uk

Flora - vacancy – volunteer welcome!

Website / Blog / Record

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Granta Park

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Email: eleanor.miller@grantapark.co.uk

