



Photo: WTPL / Margaret Barton

Autumn 2010 Review

Welcome to your second newsletter of 2011. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the observations you have sent to us. Only with the help of valued citizen scientists like yourselves can we assess the impact of climate change upon wildlife in the UK.

There have been some exciting new developments on the Nature's Calendar website www.naturescalendar.org.uk since the last newsletter. The team has been busy creating brand new fact packs, recipe sheets, quizzes, poetry and other resources. If you can visit the website please do so. The more recorders submitting observations online the better for the charity as it reduces our running costs. If paper is the only way please keep sending them – every observation is important.

I look forward to receiving your upcoming observations and hopefully welcoming you as an online recorder if at all possible in the near future.

Until next time,

Beverley



Photo: WTPL / Michelle Davies

Recording

Recording remained strong last autumn, with 31,438 observations of individual autumn events submitted to Nature's Calendar in 2010 compared with 33,145 in 2009 and 33,978 in 2008.

Weather

Our benchmark against which we compare years is the period July-December 2007 when the temperature was only 0.04°C above the 30 year (1961-90) average. The same period in 2010 recorded 1.1°C below average, compared with 2009 when temperatures were 0.5°C above the average. The cold snap we experienced from the end of November and through December is largely responsible for this figure.

The summer of 2010 (June to August) saw mean temperatures 0.6°C above average, though frequent cloudy conditions in July and August meant temperatures tended to be lower, relative to normal, by day than by night. It was the coolest August since 1993, though mean temperatures were only somewhat below the 30 year average. Summer rainfall was 7% above normal, but this masked monthly variation, with June drier than normal, and July much wetter, with over twice as much rain as the average.

Autumn temperatures were 0.3°C below average. November in particular was colder than usual, with mean temperatures 1.6°C below average and very cold temperatures in the last week of the month, which made it the coldest November across the UK since 1993. Rainfall was around average in the period September to November.



Photo: Jakob Sigurdsson

Events in 2010 compared to 2007

Classic autumn events (October-December)

On average:

- Departing migrants left one day later
- Winter arrivals were 9 days later, as in 2009
- Events leading up to leaf fall were later, with first tint two days later, full tint two days later, leaf fall one day later, but trees bare one day earlier, perhaps due to the cold snap at the end of the autumn period.

Summer-autumn fruiting (August-September)

On average:

- Fruit ripe was five days later than in 2007 and 2009, perhaps because of the cool, cloudy conditions in July and August.

Long term variations

We've also been looking at all the data from 2000 to 2010. Now that we have been collecting records for so many years it is possible to see the wide variation in dates for phenological events year on year. Fruiting events in particular show huge variation, with a month or more difference between the earliest and latest dates recorded for events. This shows how important it is to compare records over as long a period as possible to get a good idea of the longer term trends, and how important it is for you to continue sending us your records. What more encouragement do you need to get out and enjoy the natural world?!



Photo: WTPL / Nicholas Spurling



Photo: WTPL / Steven Kind



Photo: WTPL / Anna Badley