



Autumn analysis 2017



by
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Summary

The autumn season started on a cool and damp note followed by a warm and dry October. November was dry and cold, but had higher sunshine hours than average. December was an unsettled mixture of mild weather and windy storms. Most autumn species and events were recorded earlier than during the benchmark year of 2007*. The exceptions were the arrival of fieldfare and redwing, full tint and first ripe fruit of beech, and bare tree for sessile oak and rowan.

*chosen because the mean monthly temperatures during autumn 2007 were similar to the 1961-90 averages.



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Weather compared with the 30 years (1960-90) average

Temperature

- October was 1.8°C higher and was warmest in the east
- Temperatures in all other months from July to December were within 0.7°C of the average
- In September, some southern areas were colder and Scotland was warmer, though temperatures were typical overall

Rainfall

- UK rainfall totals in July, August and September were at least 20% higher, followed by three months of drier weather

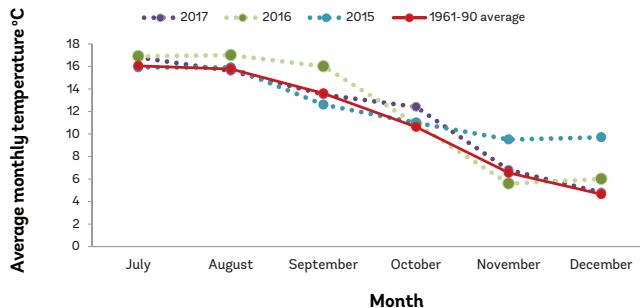
- In July many parts of the south east and central south had twice the usual amount, as did Cornwall in September
- October was drier. The UK received 92% of normal rainfall, while the south east was particularly dry with only 25%

Sunshine

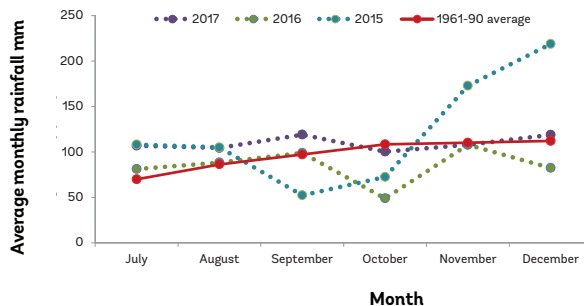
- July and August sunshine hours were near normal
- September and October were quite cloudy so sunshine hours were low
- November was bright with 22% greater than the norm
- December hours were 15% higher. It was especially sunny in north east England and central and southern Scotland

Central England Temperature ** 2015-17 - Compared with 1961-90 average

**Central England Temperature dataset is a record from a roughly triangular area of the UK, enclosed by Bristol, Lancashire and London.



UK rainfall 2015-17 - compared with 1961-90 average



Phenology

All of the following data is in comparison with the benchmark year of 2007.

The UK average date for each Nature's Calendar recorded species and event in autumn 2017 was earlier or the same. The exceptions were:

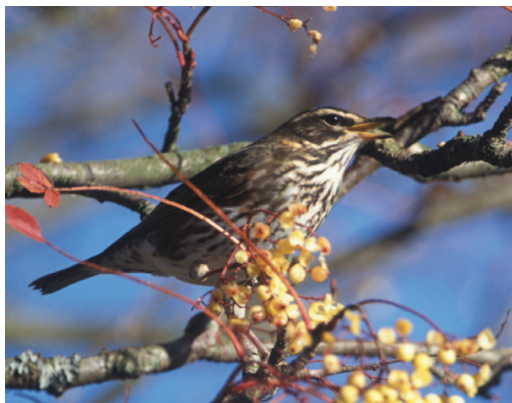
- arrival of fieldfare and redwing
- full tint and first ripe fruit of beech
- full tint of silver birch, hazel and pedunculate oak
- bare tree for sessile oak, rowan and sycamore
- first ripe fruit for beech and sessile oak

Migratory birds

- As usual, swifts were the first migratory birds to leave the UK, with an average last recorded date of 11 August. House martins and swallows departed a month later in mid-September. The summer departure date was 2 days earlier for swifts, 3 days earlier for swallows and 4 days earlier for house martins.
- Fieldfare and redwing arrival were 11 and 9 days later respectively. The average dates were both 4 November 2017.

Trees and shrubs

- First tint and full tint were generally slightly earlier. First tint for hawthorn and elder was particularly early, both by 10 days. Full tint for horse chestnut was 10 days earlier, while beech and pedunculate oak was 2 days later.
- First leaf fall showed a marked difference. All species were at least 4 days earlier, while five species were over 9 days earlier: ash, elder, hawthorn, horse chestnut and field maple.



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- Horse chestnut full tint and leaf fall averages may have been early due to horse chestnut leaf miner which causes browning of the leaves and early leaf fall.
- On average bare tree date was 2 days earlier. The exceptions were beech and pedunculate oak which were the same as the benchmark year, rowan and sycamore at a day later and sessile oak 2 days later.

Fruit

- All tree fruit records were between 0 and 5 days earlier, apart from beech which was 4 days later.
- Dog rose was 7 days earlier and bramble was 4 days earlier for average first fruit seen.
- There was only a small range in fruit score this year. Ash was lowest with 3.1 average fruit score, while rowan was highest with 4.0. A good year for fruit.

Fly agaric

- First seen fly agaric mushroom was a full 14 days earlier. This might be explained by the damp conditions of July to September.

Last lawn cut

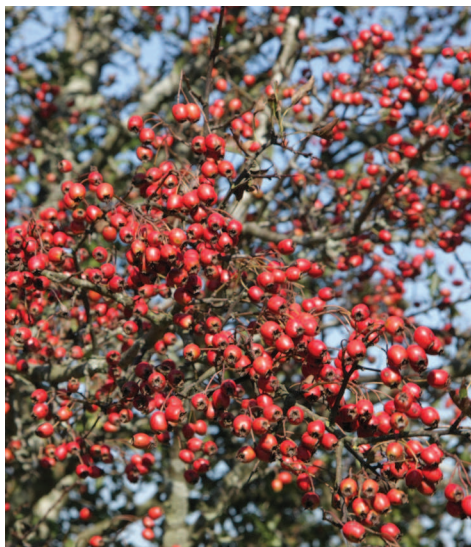
- Last lawn cut was 30 October on average, the same as the benchmark year.

Your records

In autumn 2017, we received 17,600 records from 843 recorders. This was lower than the 27,800 records from 2,300 recorders in autumn 2016, but we are confident that numbers will bounce back as online recorders adjust to the new website and new recruits flourish into big contributors.

The most recorded event was bramble first fruit with 442 records. Close contenders were the last swallow, bare ash, first tint of silver birch and first fruit of hawthorn.

The least observed events were sessile oak first ripe fruit and fly agaric first recorded, with only 48 and 103 respectively.



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Thank you for your continued support with the project. Please keep sending us your records; they contribute to a powerful dataset that helps scientists to understand nature's response to changes in the environment.

Timing of tree and shrub events in autumn 2017

