

Thorndon Birdlife, October 2015



I was very pleased to receive two reports of nuthatches in gardens along The Street towards the end of August. In one location a pair was seen and in another, just a few hundred yards away, a single bird. Nuthatch is not a common bird in Thorndon but whenever it is found it is in the parts of the village with tall, mature trees, where they climb up and down tree trunks and along branches in search of food. They will readily come to feeding stations in gardens, where they are especially fond of peanuts and sunflower seeds. Although the nuthatch is quite a small bird, about the size of a great tit, they are quite pugnacious and dominating of other birds at a supply of food. They are blue-grey from the top of the head, down the back to the tail and on the wings, with a narrow black stripe

through the eye from the base of the bill to the side of the neck. This is set off by a white chin, throat and lower ear coverts (the area below and behind the eye) and a subtle orangey wash on the underparts. Their pointed black bill and short tail add to their woodpecker-like appearance.

The last swift I have seen so far in the village was one that was over The Street on 22nd August, several days after "our" swifts had departed, but there are still swallows and house martins around. There was a group of swallows on the wires at Thwaite in the early morning on 29th August, in readiness for their long migration to Southern Africa. Most of the swallows and house martins will have gone by the end of October so enjoy them while you can.



Painted Lady

I saw single painted lady butterflies on 22nd and 29th August and on the latter date I also saw a single hummingbird hawk moth. There was a nice variety of butterflies on buddleia in my garden on 6th September with the expected red



Hummingbird Hawk Moth



Speckled Wood

admiral, peacock, small tortoiseshell and large white being joined by a single speckled wood, and on 10th September I saw a single hornet.

I'm delighted to say that I still have the three hedgehogs in my garden coming in for the mealworms and water that I put out for them. They seem to be doing well and they all seem to be getting noticeably bigger as they fatten themselves up for their hibernation. When they hibernate will be dictated by the weather and may not be until November, so if you have them where you are please give them a helping hand. I've received a report

of three also in a garden about half a mile away from mine, which is encouraging.

As I write we're enjoying some late settled and sunny weather, but it is noticeably cool in the evenings and early mornings. This combined change in day length and temperature stimulates changes in behaviour of all living things: many plants die-back (having set seed), the leaves on deciduous trees change colour and fall and fungi (mushrooms and toadstools) become very obvious. Although the last of our summer visiting birds are heading off for warmer climes, they will soon be replaced by the winter visitors that come here from further north and east to escape the harsher conditions there. So, there's lots to look forward to in October and I'll be delighted to receive reports and other wildlife of interest in Thorndon, Rishangles, Hestley Green and Braiseworth.