

Country Notes for November 2022

There is no doubt that with the arrival of November we are in deepest autumn. The days are shorter and the last of the leaves will soon be leaving the trees, those on the oak trees probably being the very last. Our summer migrant birds are now long gone and those from more northern climes have all arrived. In our villages the most notable are the fieldfares and redwings, which have flown in from Scandinavia and northern Europe. The fieldfares flying overhead may be recognised by their 'chuck chuck' call and the redwings by their thin, high pitched 'peep', often heard at night. A walk in the countryside this month can often be quite cold and wet, but there are days when the weather is kind to us and it is a joy to be out and about in our fields and woods.

For us humans one of the moments that mark the beginning of November is Bonfire Night, and we will certainly be treated to our usual wonderful display in Hollingbourne. If you are planning a display at home and you will be enjoying the warmth of a welcoming bonfire, do please check before lighting the bonfire that no hedgehogs have moved in, in the hope of a cosy winters' hibernation. Hedgehogs are not only the gardener's friend, eating many of our unwanted garden pests but they are also declining rapidly. By checking our bonfires before lighting them we can all do something to help conserve these delightful creatures and save them from a horrible death.

It is always worth listening out for owls at this time of year, if you are out and about after dark. Tawny owls and little owls are the most likely in our villages. Tawny owls make the traditional 'twit twoo' call and little owls make a rising 'keek' sound, although just to confuse things tawny owls can also make a fairly similar sound!

Wrap up warm and enjoy the countryside in November. Once you get out there you will almost certainly be glad you did!

Andrew G Snowdon