

Country Notes for June 2025

As we enter the month where spring slowly drifts into summer it is good to reflect back on the spring so far. It has certainly been one of the driest on record and there have been some spells of very warm weather, bordering on hot. No year is the same of course and one of the glories of living in England is that there is so much variation in our climate.

Perhaps owing to the nature of spring this year, our winter migrating birds had largely all returned north before the actual start of spring on 20th March. In the last week of winter, for example, I do not recall seeing any fieldfares or redwings. Summer migration began quite early with my first chiffchaffs being recorded on 7th March and the first butterfly, a brimstone, being recorded on Eythorne Green on 5th March, these dates all actually being in winter!

On 2nd April I recorded the first swallow flying over my garden and I distinctly remember that I was having lunch in the garden at the time so it must have been quite warm! It was soon joined by others. The first nightingales appeared and were singing in the village on 10th April, which is also quite early for them.

Since then I have recorded red kites, a couple of cuckoos and increasing numbers of nightingales. In fact I feel confident in saying that I have never known so many singing nightingales in our two villages before, which is very encouraging when their numbers have decreased nationwide so rapidly in recent years. There are also good numbers of whitethroats and blackcaps. I have even heard a willow warbler. These birds were once common in Kent but most now head further north before settling to breed. The first three swifts flew over my garden on 7th May.

At the time of writing in the second week of May my butterfly count, which started with that brimstone, has also included red admirals, peacocks, commas, small tortoiseshell, small whites, large whites, orange tips, holly blues, small heaths and small coppers.

This is all very encouraging! Let's hope that in the coming days and months our birds and butterflies continue to do well. There is so much to look forward to at this time of the year.

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