

April

The **Waxwings** returned at the beginning of the month and by the 2nd, 71 were feeding on the Cotoneaster berries at the junction of High Street and Bluebell Walk. Probably this is a record number for Luddenden. With them were 2 **Redwings**, which looked different from each other; one a visitor from Scandinavia, the other from Iceland. Other wintering birds in our gardens included **Siskins** and the odd **Redpoll**.

A big fight was witnessed in a Luddenden garden on the 3rd between a **Sparrow hawk** and a **Wood Pigeon**. The **Wood Pigeon** won although losing around 100 feathers in the process.

Our first summer visitor, a female **Blackcap**, arrived on the 12th, followed by 2 **Swallows** on the 16th. Two **Chiffchaffs** and a male **Blackcap** arrived next day, the later ate all the normal garden bird food plus porridge and then took off looking much fatter a few days latter presumably for Scotland!

The **first Willow Warbler** appeared on the 20th a two **House martins** flying with 8 **Swallows** were see on over the brook on the 25th.

The 14th was the warmest day and **Bumblebees**, both **Buff tailed** and **White tailed** began to appear, numbers increasing from then on.

No butterflies were reported in April, but the first **Orange Tips** appeared on the 2nd May.

A **pipistrelle bat** hawked insects along the river on the 23rd April, hopefully more will have survived this long harsh winter.

A **Mink** was seen north of the village on the 3rd, unfortunately it is the second sighting this year – one was shot above the cemetery.

Our resident **Dippers** and a pair of **Grey Wagtails** are along the brook. Hopefully both will breed successfully as they did last year. Our local **Heron**s all lost their eggs due to the freezing weather in March, but signs are that they may have laid again. There have been several sightings of **Song Thrushes** and **Blackbirds** eating slugs, not fortunately in gardens where they may be poisoned by slug pellets.