

### Nature Notes.

If you would like to attract wild birds to your garden, you have to give them what they need- food water and shelter. Peanuts are good to attract greenfinches, blue and great tits, great spotted woodpeckers, nuthatches, house sparrows and starlings. Use a mesh seed-holder rather than one where they can take a whole nut at once, or you could be refilling it every day. Sunflower seeds are even more popular and also attract coal tits. These are too small to go in a mesh holder and they do disappear quickly. Fat balls are attractive to long tailed tits, who come in groups of five or six. Jackdaws like them too, as do squirrels. They do not play fair though, as I saw a squirrel in a hedge eating the fat through the plastic mesh surrounded by lots of empty mesh bags! Goldfinches are abundant locally and nyjer seeds are their favourite. Ground feeding birds, such as robins, blackbirds, thrushes, dunnocks and chaffinches, tidy up beneath the feeders. Make sure there is water available and everyone will be happy. However, sparrow hawks are hungry too, so make it difficult for them by putting the feeders close to cover. Small birds are sometimes taken, but most get away.

Put up nest boxes now out of reach of predators and shaded during the hottest part of the summer day. It gives birds time to check them out, and in a hard winter are shelter for wrens and tits where they huddle together to keep warm during the night.

An interest in birds is one that can be enjoyed from your home whatever the weather, so here are some ideas for Christmas presents. A starter pack of nuts, seeds and holders; a bird identification book; nest box; membership of a wildlife group such as RSPB or the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northants Wildlife Trust; bird table; bird bath and at the top end of the market, binoculars.

Last winter Mike Philipson saw a flock of waxwings in West End, about their furthest western limit. If you see anything you would like to share with the rest of the village, send a message (including pictures), to [feedback@bugbrookelink.co.uk](mailto:feedback@bugbrookelink.co.uk) or call me at 832125.

Margaret Cooke.

### The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch is 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January. Please try to take part and let me know what you see by e-mail [feedback@bugbrookelink.co.uk](mailto:feedback@bugbrookelink.co.uk) or call me at 832125. You simply watch for an hour and record what you see and the maximum number of each species you see at any one time. If you do not manage to do it on those days, anytime the same week will count. The best times to do it are probably around 9-10am and 3-4 pm. If we get a good enough response we shall analyse the results and let you know in LINK. Please tell us where you did your birdwatch too. For more information go to <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/takepart/>

Margaret Cooke.

