

With the country firmly in the grip of freezing conditions, many birds are dropping in to gardens in their search for food. Joining our regular garden visitors are many species that we don't often see. Locally there have been reports of numerous thrushes, finches and tits turning up, including some non native visitors such as redwing, fieldfare, redpoll, siskin and brambling. There has also been a marked hike in sightings of blackcap – these distinctive little warblers are summer visitors but in recent years increasingly more of them have decided to spend the winter here.

Obviously these garden visitors are very reliant on you keeping your bird feeders and tables well stocked – so, please make sure that you do.

Don't forget that Big Garden Birdwatch takes place this weekend. This RSPB led survey is the world's biggest birdwatching event and is free, easy and fun to participate in – All you have to do is make a note of the number of birds that visit your garden during any one hour period on Saturday or Sunday – Simple!

You don't have to be any kind of expert to take part, as the RSPB have plenty of information on their website to help you identify your sightings along with details of how to record what you see.

For more details visit www.rspb.org.uk



Coming Up

There are some smashing illustrated talks coming up: On Saturday 2nd February, Wendy Conway presents 'Walk on the Wild Side – a Kenyan Safari'. Herds of wildebeest, 2 million flamingo, African fish eagle – plus the obligatory big cats, makes this talk the perfect tonic to a winter evening.

On Saturday 16th February, Colin McShane introduces 'Studying Migration in Rybachy'. Situated on the ' Courish Split', a narrow spit of sand dunes on the Russia's Baltic coast, Rybachy houses Europe's earliest bird observatory. Over 10 million birds migrate past this point every autumn - and Colin can't wait to tell you all about it.

Come along and find out more - Argus readers are very welcome.

The talks takes place at Goytre Village Hall (just off the A4042 Newport to Abergavenny road) and start at 7.30pm. Entry, including tea and biscuits, costs £2

For more details visit www.gwentbirds.org.uk

Keep in Touch

Thank you to all readers that have taken the time to get in touch.

I always enjoy hearing from you and can be contacted at smegstevens@gmail.com