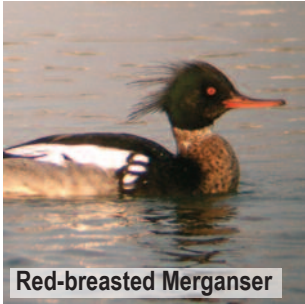




# Ed's Nature Notes

## January 2012



## Birds

Looking back to my notes from last year, the weather couldn't be more different. Last January we were gripped in some of the coldest conditions for decades. The current weather we are told by meteorologists is near to the average for the time of year, but it does seem incredibly mild.

The mild weather has possibly resulted in some species such as **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Shelduck** arriving in smaller numbers. But it has meant that other species may stay on here rather than escape frozen conditions as they did last year.



It was seemingly a good year for acorns and other tree mast. Large flocks of **Wood Pigeons** and **Finches** are congregating in woodland and feeding on the bounty. A group of **Snow Buntings** are still present on East Head and an immature male **Eider** duck near Pilsey.

## Mammals

The mild weather should also made life easier for our non-hibernating mammals such as **Water Vole** and **Roe Deer**. However, it could be problematic for hibernating species. Mild spells can cause bat species and hedgehogs to emerge from hibernation. With limited food available they can quickly use up valuable fat reserves.



## Insects

It is not a completely blank time of year for insects. Look for the **Winter Moth** which can often be seen on night-time car journeys, attracted toward you car lights. The caterpillars of the Winter Moth are one of the key food sources for **Blue Tits** feeding chicks in the Spring.



## Plants

The bare, dark, skeletal trees of December are already starting to show signs of life and colour. Buds are slowly developing on many species, giving a golden hue to some species of **Willow** and a developing red tinge to **Oak**.



## Sightings

Please report any interesting sightings to the Harbour Office, particularly of Water Voles or fields being used by Brent Geese.

[www.conservancy.co.uk](http://www.conservancy.co.uk) 01243 512301