

Chance to join in the Big Bordon Birdwatch

by **Mary Bishop**
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SATURDAY, October 30, sees the launch of the first-ever Big Bordon Bird Watch.

It's being launched by the new Deadwater Valley Trust countryside ranger, Adrian Brockless, who stepped into his new post at the beginning of September.

People in the Bordon and Whitehill area are being asked to take part by Adrian and the aim is to gather data about birds in the town.

He said: "One thing about wildlife is that it often never does what you expect it to do.

"In most years, the end of September sees cooler weather and the departure for Africa of most of our house martins and swallows. This year, however, the relatively mild and wet conditions of recent weeks have allowed the birds to remain a week or two longer than normal."

Adrian said jays - which are members of the crow family - are also a common sight at the moment and autumn is the best time to see them, as they are drawn from cover by the glut of acorns - a favourite food. Al-

exandra Park and the area around Knoxes' Pond (off Conde Way) are particularly good places to spot these colourful birds.

Adrian explained: "There is an interesting symbiosis between the jay and the oak tree. Jays, rather like squirrels, will eat some acorns and bury the rest of what they collect for future consumption.

"Fortunately - for the oak tree - they are blessed with poor memories and tend to forget where they have buried their food. The buried acorn is then able to germinate, producing a new oak sapling and the jays benefit from the extra food supply the trees produce every autumn."

Many of the area in Whitehill and Bordon are Special Protected Areas (SPAs) because of ground nesting birds like nightjars, Dartford warblers and woodlarks.

The warblers, he said, had taken "a particularly hard hit" due to the harsh winter. Adrian has taken up his post after moving from the Na-

tional Trust in Seahouses, Northumberland, where he spent three months in a tent monitoring Little Terns. He has also been involved with the RSPB's Farnham Heath Restoration Project.

To become involved in the Big Bordon Bird Watch, simply go into your garden or go somewhere local where you might see a good number of bird species (Adrian recommends Alexandra Park or Knox's Pond, and says the morning is the best time to observe). Record the highest number of each bird species you see in a 20-minute period and put the figure in the space below the appropriate species on the recording sheet below.

Cut out the recording sheet and send it to: Deadwater Valley Trust, Phoenix Arts Centre, Station Road, Bordon GU35 0LR.

The results will be collated and published in the Post

Adrian said: "I would urge everyone who can, to take part in this scientific survey."



Deadwater Valley Trust ranger Adrian Brockless, ready for the Big Bordon Birdwatch.

See www.deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk for more details.

