



Ruby-tailed (cuckoo) wasp

Photos: Roger Hamling



Clouded yellow



Coal tit

# Bystock Pools

Autumn 2024

## Things to look for in Autumn

The bare stony ground west of the gate into the meadow is the home for several species of ground nesting solitary bees. Look for small holes and watch the bees go in and out. If you look carefully you could see brightly coloured Ruby-tailed Wasps (10 mm long). The females lay their eggs in the nests of the bees. When the eggs hatch, they eat the larvae of the bees. This habit gives the Ruby-tailed wasp its other name of 'Cuckoo Wasp'.

Red Admiral, Peacock, Speckled Wood and white butterflies are still flying on warm sunny days. These can occasionally be joined by a clouded yellow, a migrant butterfly. Southern and Migrant Hawker dragonflies will fly into mid-October. Common darter dragonflies can be seen as late as December.

Autumn is the season to look for fungi. Your search will be more productive after a period of rain. By the end of October many of our wintering birds will have returned. Probably the most obvious are Redwings and Fieldfares. These members of the thrush family often join Blackbirds, Song and Mistle Thrushes in and around the Meadow. Some Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs also manage to find enough food to overwinter here. Look for foraging flocks of tits, Nuthatches, Treecreepers, Goldcrests and Firecrests

## Reserve management

The fortnightly volunteer work parties have been concentrating on reducing the impact of bracken. The Valley comprises wet heath in the lowest area and dry heath each side. Bracken covers much of the dry heath and suppresses the smaller heathland plants, particularly, the heathers. The results of clearance can be seen from the splash of purple in late summer and early autumn.



Please  
Keep  
Dogs  
on  
Leads