

Weather

2012 saw a particularly dull and wet summer followed by a cool and showery autumn, colder in some areas with early snow.

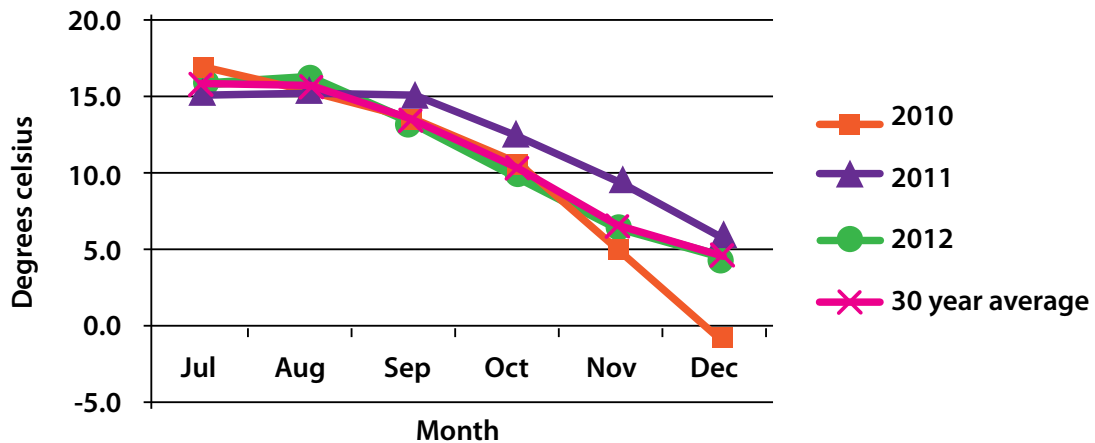
June to August's mean temperature was 13.9°C, 0.4°C below average, the coolest summer since 1998. July was 1°C cooler than the 30 year average (1981-2010), the coolest July in 12 years.

The summer was exceptionally wet, especially in June and July, with 371 mm of rain, with only one summer (1912) wetter since 1910. July saw 1.5 times the normal rainfall. Only north-west Scotland was relatively dry. It was also

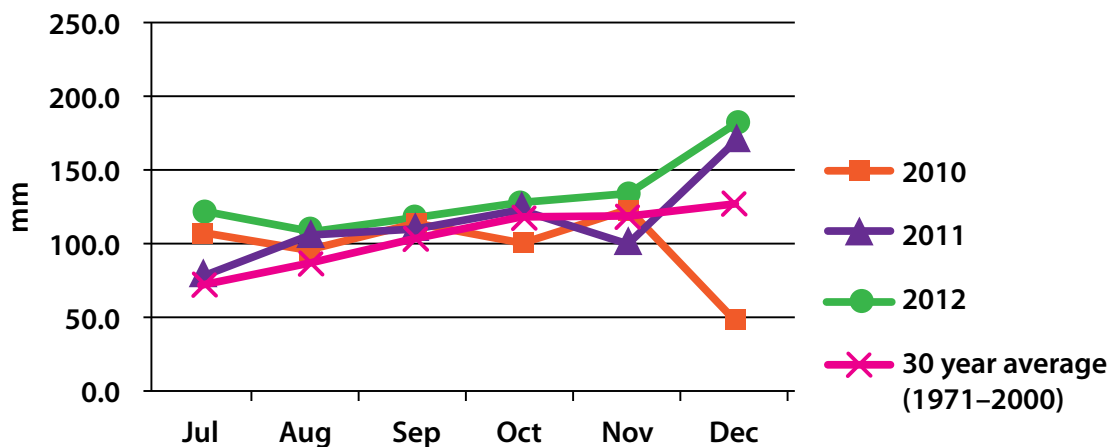
dull, with only 82 per cent of normal sunshine, and June the dulliest month of all compared with average.

Autumn was cool, with temperatures averaging 8.6°C, or 0.8°C below average. October was 1.3°C below average. It was the coldest autumn since 1993. It was also the wettest September in northern England since 2000, but in East Anglia and parts of eastern Scotland rainfall was below average. November was very wet across a swathe of the country from south west to north east, with flooding and disruption caused by 1.5 times average rainfall for the month in a succession of extreme events.

Central England temperature (Jul-Dec) compared with 30 year average (Met Office)



UK monthly precipitation Jul-Dec 2012-12 compared with 30 year (1981-2010) average



Events in Autumn 2012

On average, compared to our benchmark year of 2007:

- Departing migrant birds left one day earlier
- Winter bird arrivals were five days later
- First leaf tint was on average seven days later than in 2007, and full tint 3 days later, but leaf fall was the same as in 2007

Tree first tint was particularly late in pedunculate oak and beech (13 and 11 days later than 2007 respectively).

Summer-autumn fruiting

The most noticeable figures are the very late fruiting dates for trees and other plants such as bramble, with tree fruit ripe an average of 12 days later than the benchmark year

of 2007, and almost all species at least ten days later.

Dates for bramble and blackthorn fruit ripe were, respectively, 15 and 13 days later. These dates are far later than any others since 2007.



Anecdotally, it was a poor year for fruit generally, with fruit growers experiencing poor harvests. This is borne out by the fruiting scores (which record fruit abundance) recorded for Nature's Calendar. Mean fruiting scores were the lowest since 2001 for 14 out of 16 species. Cold, wind and rain during blossom time could be partly to blame, but also the impact of bad weather on pollinators.

Species	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ash	3.8	3.5	4.1	4.1	3.3	4.0	3.0	3.7	3.2	4.1	3.4	2.9
Beech	2.3	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	2.2	3.6	3.4	4.1	2.2
Blackthorn	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.6	2.1	3.5	3.6	3.8	2.3
Bramble	3.4	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.1
Dog rose	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.3
Elder	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.1
Field maple	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.1	3.5	3.6	3.8	2.9
Hawthorn	3.7	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.5
Hazel	2.2	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.4	2.3	3.3	3.3	3.5	2.4
Holly	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.8	4.0	2.8
Horse chestnut	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.3	2.3
Ivy	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.0
Oak (pedunculate)	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.3	4.0	1.9
Oak (sessile)	2.6	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.8	2.0
Rowan	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.4
Sycamore	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.1	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.1

Table 1: Mean annual fruiting scores from 2001-2012. This records the amount of fruit or seeds on a tree or shrub. Coloured boxes indicate the years with the lowest fruiting scores for each species.

1 = no fruit, 2 = meagre, 3 = moderate, 4 = good crop, 5 = exceptional

Recording

The number of records we received in autumn 2012 experienced a further drop, with 23,514 records compared with 26,334 in autumn 2011 and 31,438 in autumn 2010. The fewer records we have, the less robust the dataset as a whole is for indicating real trends.

There is still far less data on autumn events than for spring, but all the records you can collect are invaluable in helping us build a long-term picture of changes in natural events in response to the climate, so please do continue to submit them.

