

## BIRD-LIFE IN THE WYCHWOODS

The winter regime of our winter birds has now set in. Wintering flocks of Fieldfares are regularly to be seen as they search for food. Their loud "chack-chack" calls attract attention as they fly over. With them are usually the smaller Redwings, which are readily recognised if seen close to, by the white stripe above the eye. Both are members of the Thrush family.

The Thrush family are at present feeding upon the haws on the hedgerow Hawthorne bushes. Once this crop is used up, the Fieldfares and Redwings will spend a great deal of their time searching for food on the pasture fields.

Succulent fruits are produced by plants purely as a bribe to get their seeds spread in the droppings of the birds. Normally the seeds of plants with succulent fruits have tough, protective seed-coats. All of these plants compete to attract the birds to eat their fruits, with one exception.

The Ivy flowers in the autumn, and is pollinated by wasps and their hoverfly mimics. The Ivy berries ripen in the latter part of the winter when food for the birds is scarce. This is not altruism by the Ivy, but purely avoiding competition in getting its seeds dispersed. For many birds the Ivy berries are a life-saver in the February to March period.

John Campbell. (first published in 1981.)

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## CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

**DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS EVE  
GATHERING AROUND  
THE SHIPTON CHRISTMAS TREE  
FOR THE ANNUAL CAROL SINGING.**

**THE SERVICE BEGINS  
AT 7.00 p.m.**

