



A Year in the Life of Abingdon

A personal natural history of place

Version 1.0

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About this Booklet

This booklet forms part of an ongoing Field Notes Journal project — a personal record of place, built from long-term observation.

The material presented here is drawn from regular walks and repeated encounters with the same landscape over time. It reflects not everything that occurs, but what has been noticed, recorded, and come to feel familiar.

The aim is not to produce a complete account, but to describe patterns — the ways in which species appear, persist, and shape the experience of the year.

All observations are local to Abingdon and the surrounding area.

The work continues.

— Field Notes Journal

Dave Walker

Spring 2026

Year in the Life of Abingdon

A personal natural history of place

This booklet is a record of a place, observed over time.

It is not a complete account of the wildlife of Abingdon, nor an attempt to catalogue everything that occurs here. Instead, it reflects something simpler and more personal: the species that, through repeated observation, have come to define the shape of the year.

These are the birds, butterflies, and plants that I notice. The ones that appear, disappear, and return with enough regularity that their presence becomes expected. The ones that, if absent, would leave the year feeling somehow incomplete.

Over time, patterns begin to emerge.

Some species are present throughout the year, but vary in how often they are encountered. Others appear only briefly, concentrated into a few weeks, but do so with such intensity that they define a moment in the season. Some arrive and depart with precision, while others persist quietly in the background, almost always there, but rarely drawing attention to themselves.

What becomes clear is that the year is not uniform.

It is structured by pulses and absences, by peaks and lulls, by moments of sudden appearance and gradual decline. Different species occupy the year in different ways, and it is through these differing patterns that the passage of time becomes visible.

This booklet brings those patterns together.

Using long-term field records, each species is examined in terms of how it occupies the year: when it is present, when it is most active, and how its pattern compares to others. These observations are summarised and classified, but the aim is not to reduce them to categories. Rather, it is to make visible the underlying structure that repeated observation reveals.

The result is not a survey of abundance, but a description of experience.

It is an attempt to answer a simple question:

What does the year look like, when seen through the species that inhabit it?

The answer, inevitably, is partial. It reflects one place, observed in one way, over a particular span of time. But within that limitation lies its value.

Because this is not just a record of species.

It is a record of familiarity.

Of expectation.

Of the quiet knowledge that comes from seeing the same place, again and again, across the turning of the year.

And, in the end, it suggests something else.

That the year does not begin in January.
It begins when Snowdrops appear.

How to Read This Booklet

This booklet describes how different species occupy the year.

Each species is shown using two simple measures:

- Presence — how often the species is recorded
- Totals — how many individuals (or observations) are recorded

Together, these show not just whether a species is present, but how its activity changes through the seasons.

Patterns in the Year

Not all species behave in the same way.

Some are present throughout the year, but vary in how often they are encountered. Others appear only briefly, concentrated into a short seasonal window. Some show clear peaks in activity, while others remain relatively constant.

To make these patterns easier to compare, species are grouped into a small number of types.

Birds — Role in the Year

Birds are described in terms of how they occupy the year:

- Resident — present throughout the year
- Visitor — present only during part of the year
- Detectability-driven — always present, but recorded more often at certain times (for example, during singing)
- Aggregation-driven — present throughout the year, but seen in larger or smaller groups depending on the season

These categories describe patterns in the records, not just the biology of the species.

Breeding Records

For some species, records of breeding (for example, adults with dependent young) are shown separately.

These should be read as evidence of breeding, not as a complete account of when breeding occurs. A lack of records does not mean that breeding is absent — only that it was not observed.

Butterflies — Flight Period

Butterflies are described by the structure of their flight period:

- Single brood — one main period of activity
- Extended — a long or stretched period of activity
- Bimodal — two distinct peaks within the year

These patterns reflect how generations appear through the season.

Flora — Flowering Period

Plants are described by when they are in flower:

- Single flowering period — a clearly defined seasonal window
- Extended flowering — flowering spread across a longer period
- Diffuse or persistent — low-level flowering across much of the year

These categories reflect the timing of flowering, not the presence of the plant itself.

Reading the Charts

Each species page includes two charts:

- Presence shows how many days in each month the species was recorded
- Totals shows the number of individuals or observations recorded

A sharp peak indicates a concentrated seasonal event. A broad curve indicates extended activity. A flat line suggests a species that is present throughout the year.

A Note on Interpretation

These patterns are derived from long-term personal observations.

They reflect:

- Where observations were made
- What was noticed and recorded
- How visible or detectable a species is at different times

They should be read as descriptions of experience, not as complete biological accounts.

What they show is not everything that happens.

They show what becomes familiar — the recurring patterns that, over time, come to define the shape of the year.

The Year Begins

Late Winter to Early Spring

The year does not begin evenly.

For much of winter, the landscape appears static. The same species are present from day to day, and change is subtle, if it is visible at all. But beneath this apparent stillness, something is already shifting.

Then, quite suddenly, there are signs.

A small flower appears where there was none before. A familiar plant begins to show itself again. A species that has been absent returns, quietly at first, and then with increasing regularity.

These changes are not dramatic in isolation. They are easy to miss. But once noticed, they mark a turning point.

This is the beginning of the year.

The first signals come from species that flower early and briefly. Snowdrop appears at the edge of winter, often before conditions seem favourable. It is followed by other early species — some conspicuous, others easily overlooked — that take advantage of this narrow window before the rest of the landscape responds.

Alongside these, there are plants that do not so much arrive as become visible again. Red dead-nettle and Shepherd's Purse may already be present, but begin to flower more consistently, contributing a quiet continuity to the early season.

At the same time, birds begin to shift in behaviour. Species that have been present throughout the winter start to become more noticeable. Song begins to emerge, and patterns of activity change, even if the species themselves have not.

What defines this period is not abundance, but emergence.

The number of species in flower remains low. Many of the characteristic species of spring are not yet present. But the direction of change is clear.

From this point onwards, the year will accelerate.

What begins here, in small and easily overlooked moments, will build into the full complexity of spring.

But at this stage, everything is still tentative.

The signals are few.

The patterns are just beginning to form.

And the year is only just underway.

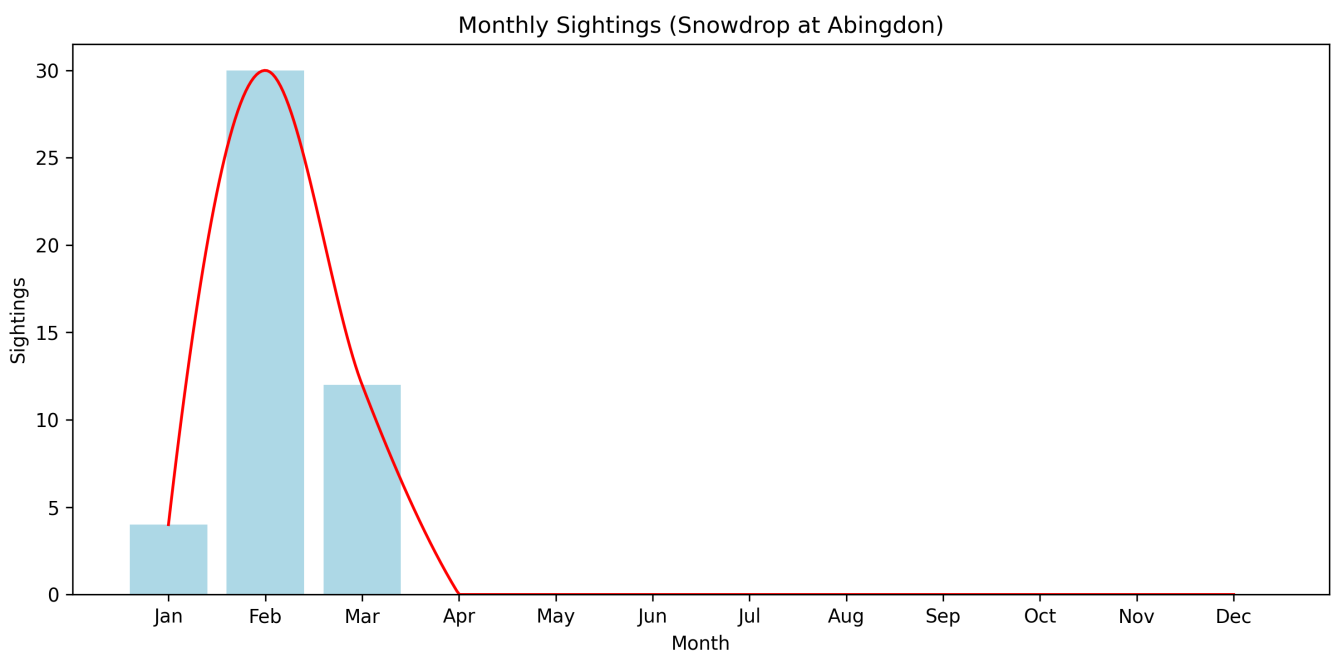
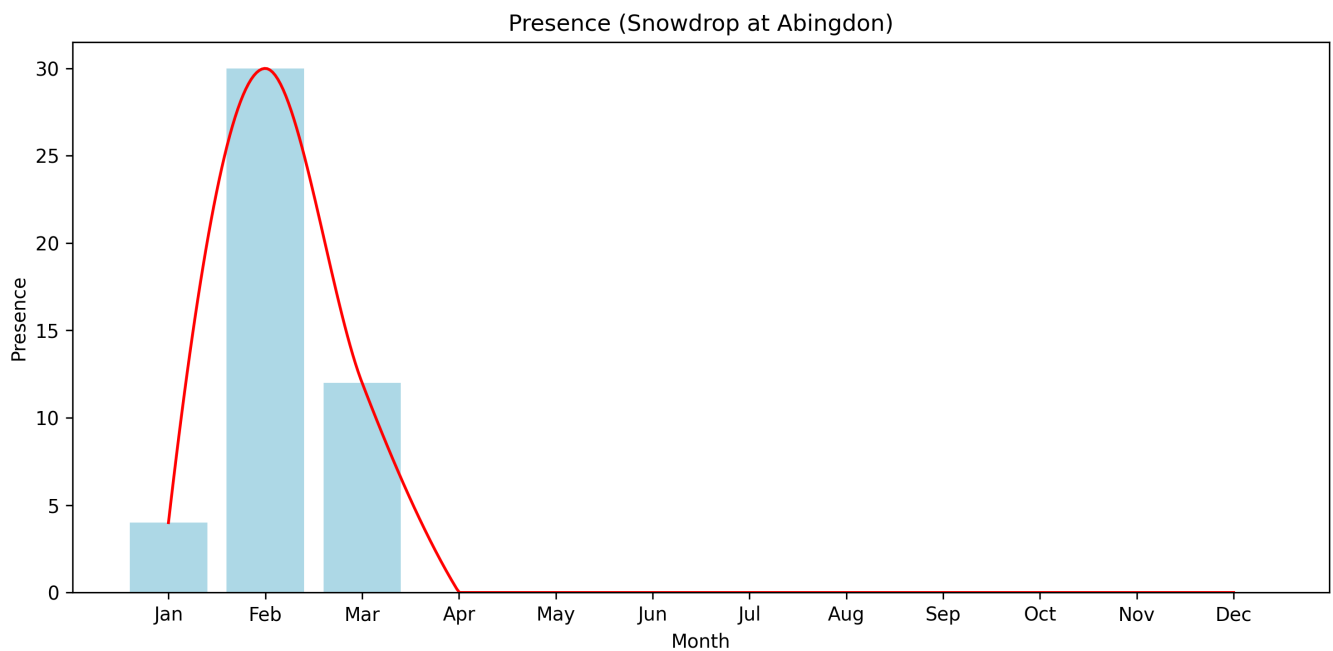
Snowdrop

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (late winter–early spring)

Snowdrop is one of the earliest flowering plants in Abingdon, often appearing while winter conditions still persist. Its nodding white flowers are widely recognised as the first clear sign of the year turning.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Snowdrop shows a **highly concentrated flowering period at the transition from winter to spring.**

Records appear early in the year, rising quickly to a peak before declining just as rapidly. Flowering is largely complete by early spring, with no activity beyond this narrow window.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, tightly defined flowering period occurring earlier than any other species in the set.**

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Snowdrop reflects a **strongly seasonal and early-emerging strategy.**

The species is adapted to:

- Flower under low temperatures and limited daylight
- Take advantage of the period before canopy development
- Complete its flowering before the main spring flush

This results in:

- A short and sharply defined flowering window
- A clear early-season peak
- Minimal overlap with later-flowering species

Unlike extended or diffuse species, Snowdrop is:

- Temporally precise
- Highly seasonal
- Closely tied to the transition out of winter

Its early appearance gives it a disproportionate significance in the seasonal cycle, marking the beginning of visible change in the landscape.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **brief, early flowering event that signals the onset of the growing season.**

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Single flowering period (late winter–early spring)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Snowdrop, flowering occurs within a very narrow seasonal window at the start of the year. The absence of records outside this period reflects the absence of flowers rather than absence of the plant.

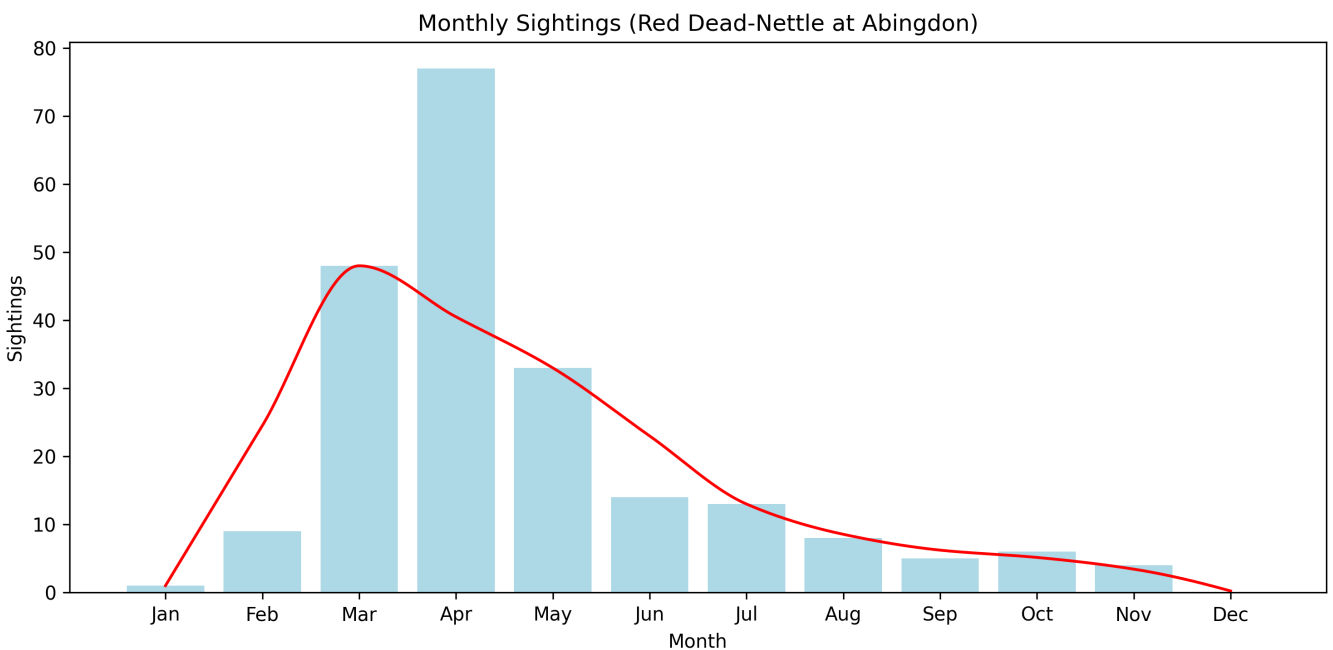
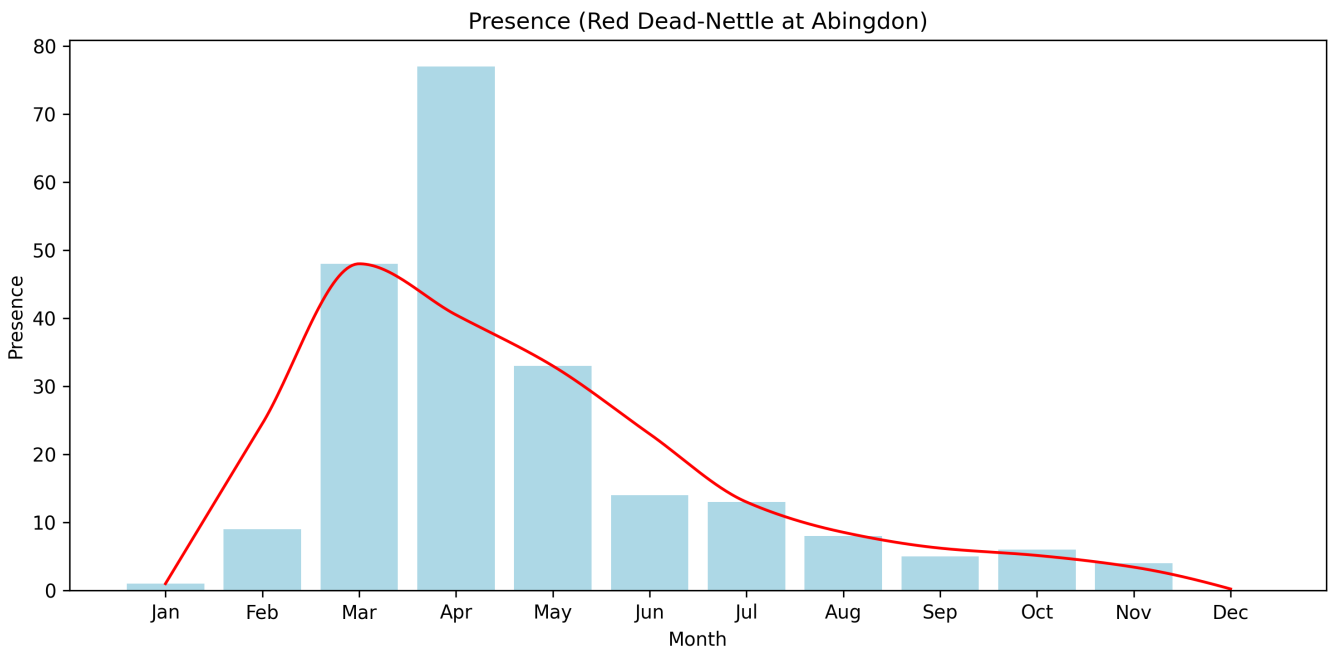
Red Dead-nettle

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (early start, diffuse)

Red Dead-nettle is a common and often overlooked plant in Abingdon, found in gardens, disturbed ground, and field edges. Its small purple flowers and low-growing habit make it easy to miss, despite its widespread presence.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Red Dead-nettle shows a **broad and extended flowering period, beginning early in the year.**

Records appear from early spring and continue through much of the growing season, with no sharply defined peak. Activity is spread across multiple months, with gradual changes rather than abrupt rises or falls.

The overall pattern is that of an **extended, diffuse flowering period with an early seasonal start.**

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Red Dead-nettle reflects a **flexible and opportunistic flowering strategy.**

Compared to more strongly seasonal species, Red Dead-nettle:

- Begins flowering early in the year
- Maintains activity across a wide seasonal window
- Does not produce a strongly concentrated peak

This results in:

- A relatively even spread of records across months
- A low to moderate level of flowering sustained over time
- A “background” presence rather than a dominant seasonal signal

Its ability to exploit disturbed ground and favourable microhabitats allows it to flower whenever conditions permit, contributing to its extended and diffuse pattern.

Unlike near-continuous species such as Daisy, it may not be present in all months, but it still spans a large portion of the year.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that provides early and sustained flowering, contributing continuity at the quieter end of the seasonal spectrum.**

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (early start, diffuse)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Red Dead-nettle, flowering may occur opportunistically across a wide seasonal window. The observed pattern reflects both biological flexibility and the likelihood of recording a low-growing, inconspicuous plant.

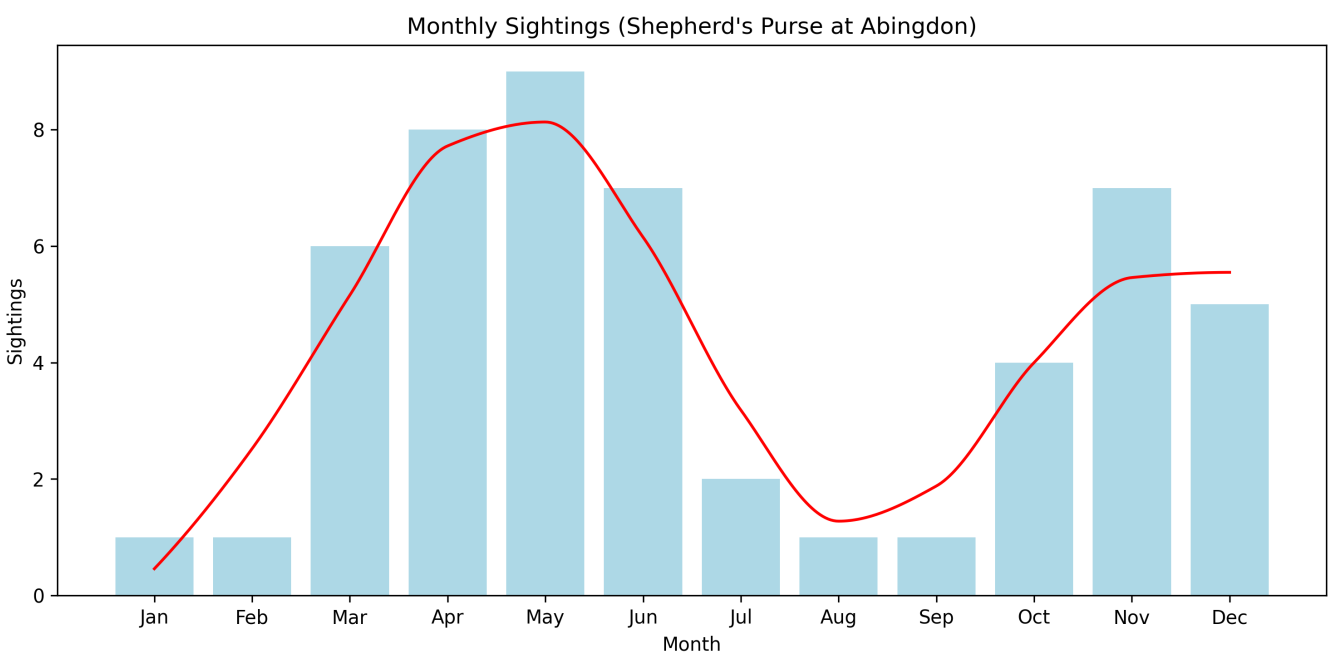
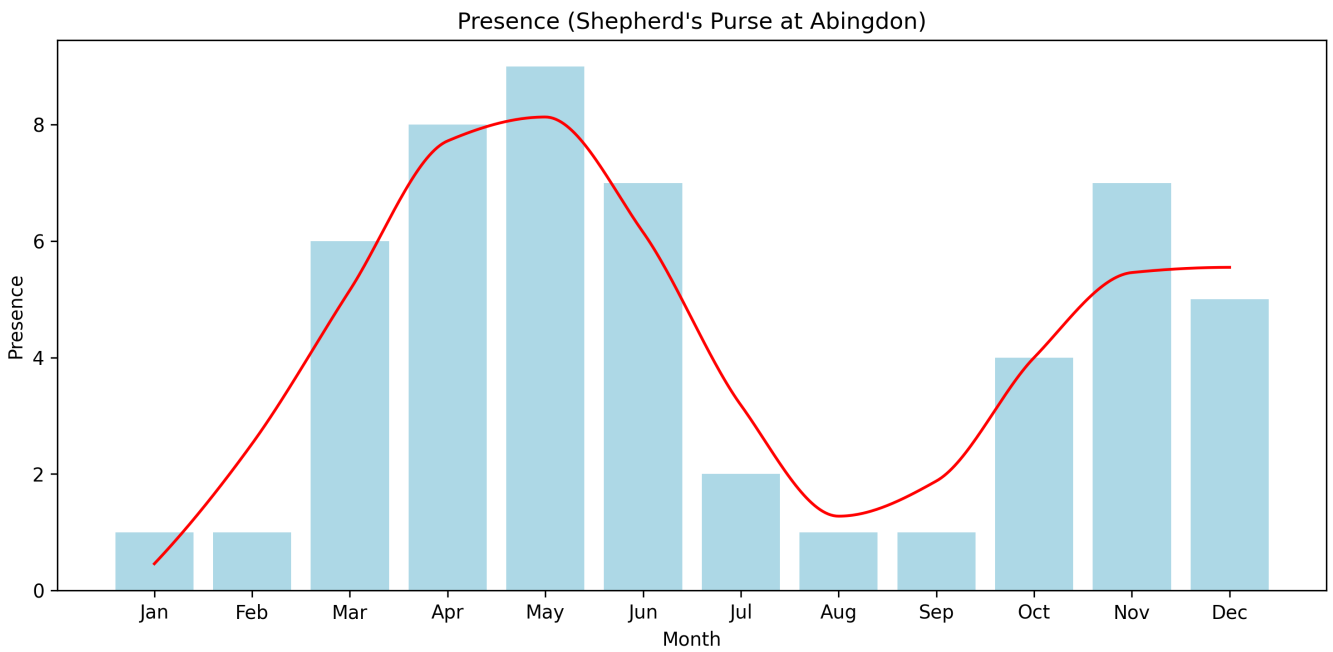
Shepherd's Purse

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (early start, persistent)

Shepherd's Purse is a small and easily overlooked plant of disturbed ground, gardens, and field edges in Abingdon. Its tiny white flowers and distinctive heart-shaped seed pods make it recognisable on closer inspection.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Shepherd's Purse shows a **broad and extended flowering period, beginning early in the year and continuing across multiple seasons.**

Records appear from early spring and persist through much of the year, with no sharply defined peak. Activity is spread across a wide range of months, with gradual variation rather than strong seasonal pulses.

The overall pattern is that of an **early-starting, persistent flowering presence.**

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Shepherd's Purse reflects a **highly flexible and opportunistic life strategy.**

The species is able to:

- Begin flowering early in the season
- Continue flowering whenever conditions remain favourable
- Occupy disturbed and nutrient-rich habitats throughout the year

This results in:

- A long flowering window
- Relatively even levels of activity across months
- A lack of a dominant seasonal peak

Like Red dead-nettle, it contributes to the **background continuity of flowering**, rather than forming a strong seasonal signal.

However, its persistence may extend further across the year, reinforcing its role as a **nearly continuous presence in suitable habitats.**

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that flowers opportunistically over a long period, helping to maintain a continuous low-level flowering signal in the landscape.**

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (early start, persistent)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Shepherd's Purse, flowering may occur across a wide seasonal window and is often influenced by local conditions and disturbance. The observed pattern reflects both biological flexibility and the likelihood of recording a small, inconspicuous plant.

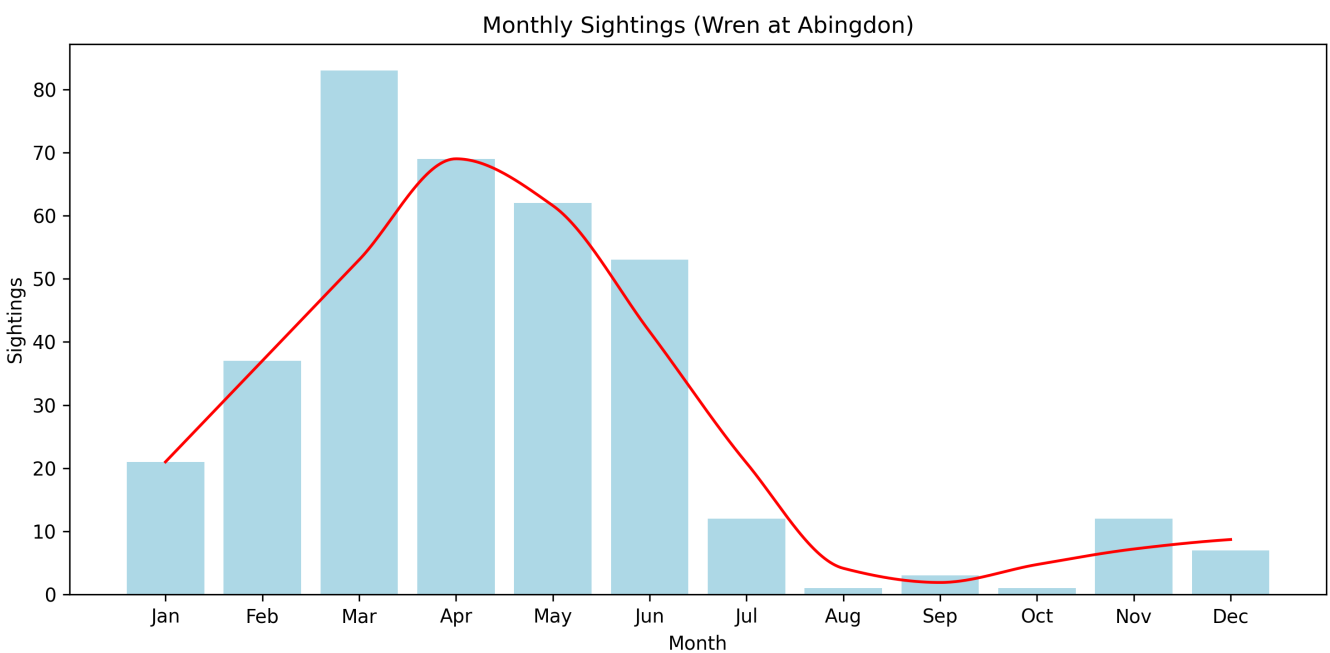
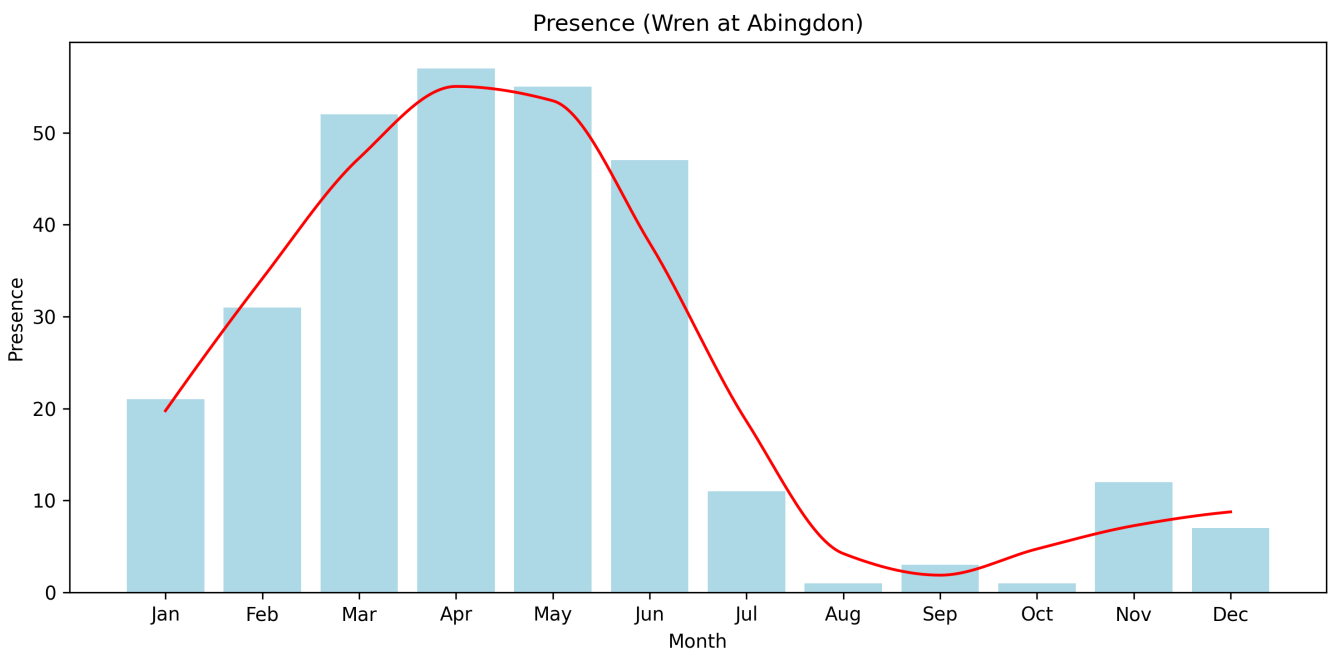
Wren

Role in the year: Detectability-driven resident

The Wren is a small but characterful resident of Abingdon’s gardens, hedgerows, and woodland edges. Despite its abundance, it is often overlooked except when in full voice, when its powerful song carries far beyond its size.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Wren shows a year-round presence with a strongly seasonal pattern in detectability.

Records occur in every month, but with a pronounced peak in spring. Sightings increase sharply from late winter, reaching a maximum in March and April, and remaining relatively high into early summer.

From mid-summer, records decline rapidly, reaching a marked minimum in August and September, when the species is only occasionally recorded.

From autumn into winter, sightings increase again, though not to the same levels as the spring peak.

The overall pattern is that of a **resident species with a strong spring maximum and a late-summer minimum, driven primarily by changes in visibility rather than presence.**

Interpretation

The Wren's seasonal pattern is a clear example of **detectability-driven variation.**

The species is present throughout the year, occupying a wide range of habitats and remaining locally common. However, how often it is recorded varies dramatically with behaviour.

The sharp rise into spring reflects the onset of territorial singing. Wrens become highly vocal during this period, delivering loud, sustained song from exposed perches, making them far easier to detect.

The peak in March and April corresponds to the main breeding period, when singing activity is at its highest.

The steep decline from summer into early autumn reflects a shift to much quieter and more secretive behaviour:

- Singing largely ceases after breeding
- Birds remain low in dense vegetation
- Detectability drops sharply despite continued presence

The partial recovery in autumn and winter likely reflects increased movement and occasional vocal activity, but without the sustained song of spring.

Unlike aggregation-driven species, total counts remain relatively stable, reinforcing that the pattern is not driven by changes in abundance but by **how often individuals are encountered.**

Overall, the Wren exemplifies a **resident species whose seasonal pattern in the data is dominated by behaviour and detectability rather than true changes in occupancy or numbers.**

Summary

Aspect

Seasonal pattern

Classification

Detectability-driven resident

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Wren, seasonal variation in records is strongly influenced by vocal activity and behaviour. Peaks in spring reflect increased detectability during the breeding season, while summer minima likely represent reduced visibility rather than true absence.

The First Pulse

Early to Mid Spring

After the tentative beginnings of late winter, the change becomes unmistakable.

What was previously scattered and intermittent begins to gather into something more coherent. Species that appeared briefly now persist. New ones arrive in quick succession. The landscape, which had shown only isolated signs of change, begins to take on a shared direction.

This is the first real pulse of the year.

Flowering accelerates. Cowslip appears across grassland and verges, followed closely by Bluebell in woodland, where large areas can change almost at once. These are not just individual occurrences, but collective events — moments where a species becomes a defining feature of the landscape.

At the same time, insects begin to respond. Early butterflies emerge into a still-limited but rapidly expanding window of opportunity. Species such as Orange-tip are tightly bound to this period, appearing, peaking, and disappearing within a short span of weeks.

Birds, too, shift in character. Species that were present but quiet through winter become far more apparent. Song becomes a dominant feature of the environment, transforming how species are encountered. The Wren, in particular, moves from being easily overlooked to unmistakable, its presence defined less by visibility than by sound.

What distinguishes this period is not just the number of species, but the synchronisation of their activity.

Different groups — plants, insects, birds — begin to align. Flowering, emergence, and song all increase together, creating a layered and reinforcing pattern. Each species contributes its own signal, but the effect is cumulative.

Compared to late winter, the year now feels established.

There is still a strong sense of progression, and much is yet to come, but the uncertainty of the earliest phase has passed. The signals are clearer, more frequent, and more widely distributed.

This is the point at which the year becomes visible not just in isolated moments, but across the landscape as a whole.

The pulse is brief, but it is decisive.

From here, the season does not hesitate. It expands.

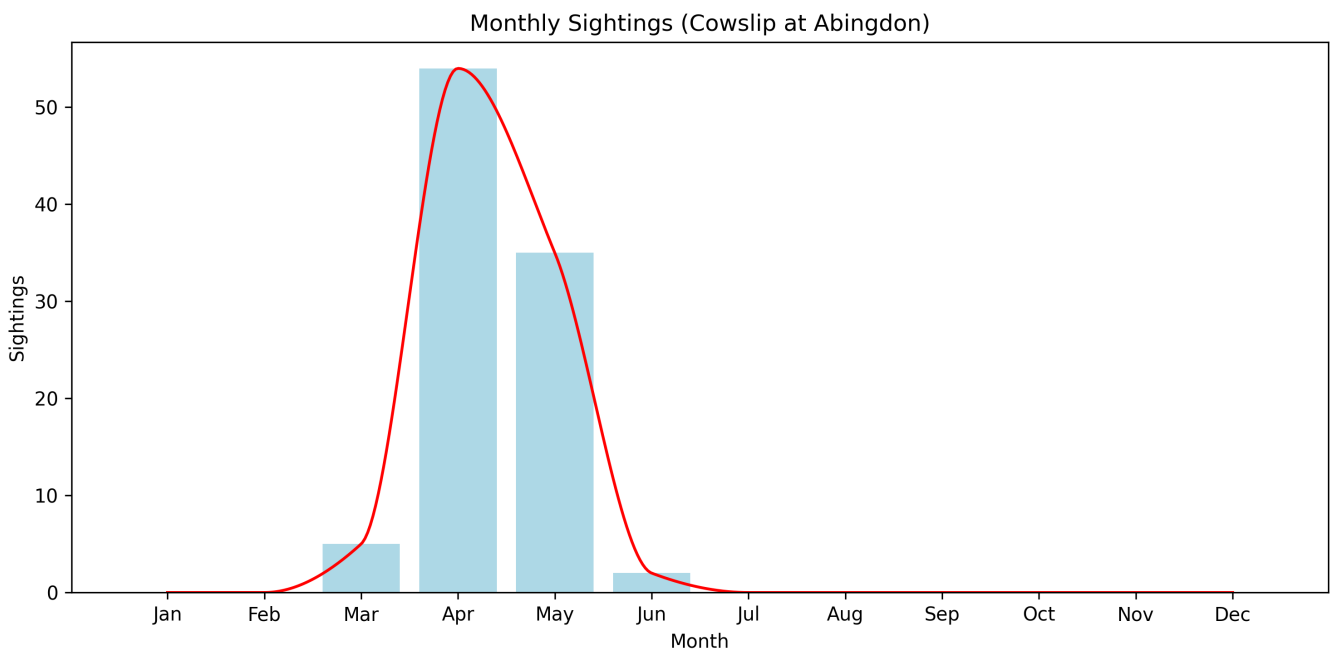
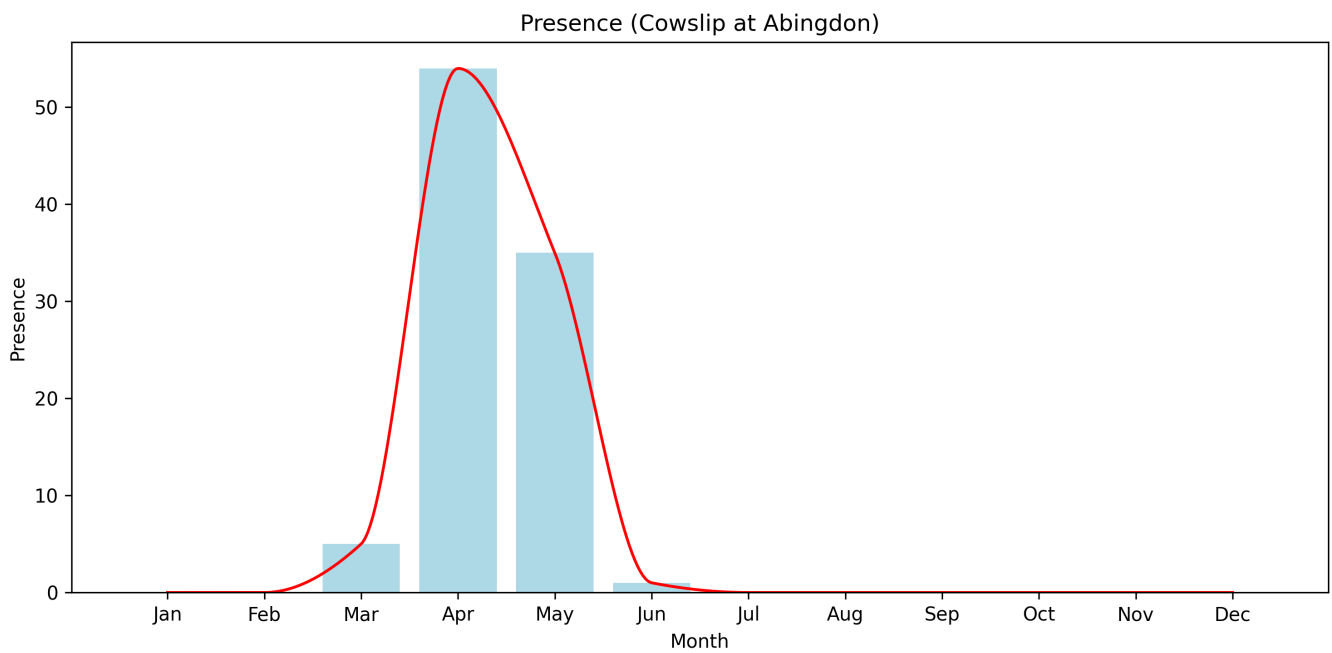
Cowslip

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (early–mid spring)

Cowslip is one of the most evocative flowers of spring in Abingdon, favouring grassland, verges, and open areas where its nodding yellow blooms appear in clusters.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Cowslip shows a **clearly defined flowering period centred on early to mid-spring.**

Records rise quickly from early spring to a peak in April or May, before declining into early summer. Flowering is largely absent outside this window.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, well-defined spring flowering period**, slightly earlier than many other widespread species.

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Cowslip reflects a **strongly seasonal and moderately concentrated spring event**.

Compared to later-flowering species, Cowslip:

- Emerges early in the season
- Builds quickly to a clear peak
- Completes its flowering before mid-summer

This results in:

- A distinct early–mid spring signal
- A clear peak without an extended plateau
- A relatively short flowering window compared to more prolonged species

Cowslip often overlaps with other spring species but occupies an earlier position in the seasonal sequence, helping to mark the progression of spring through the landscape.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single flowering period that is both seasonal and relatively early, contributing to the initial wave of spring flowering**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Single flowering period (early–mid spring)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Cowslip, flowering occurs within a relatively narrow seasonal window, and the absence of records outside this period reflects the absence of flowers rather than absence of the plant itself.

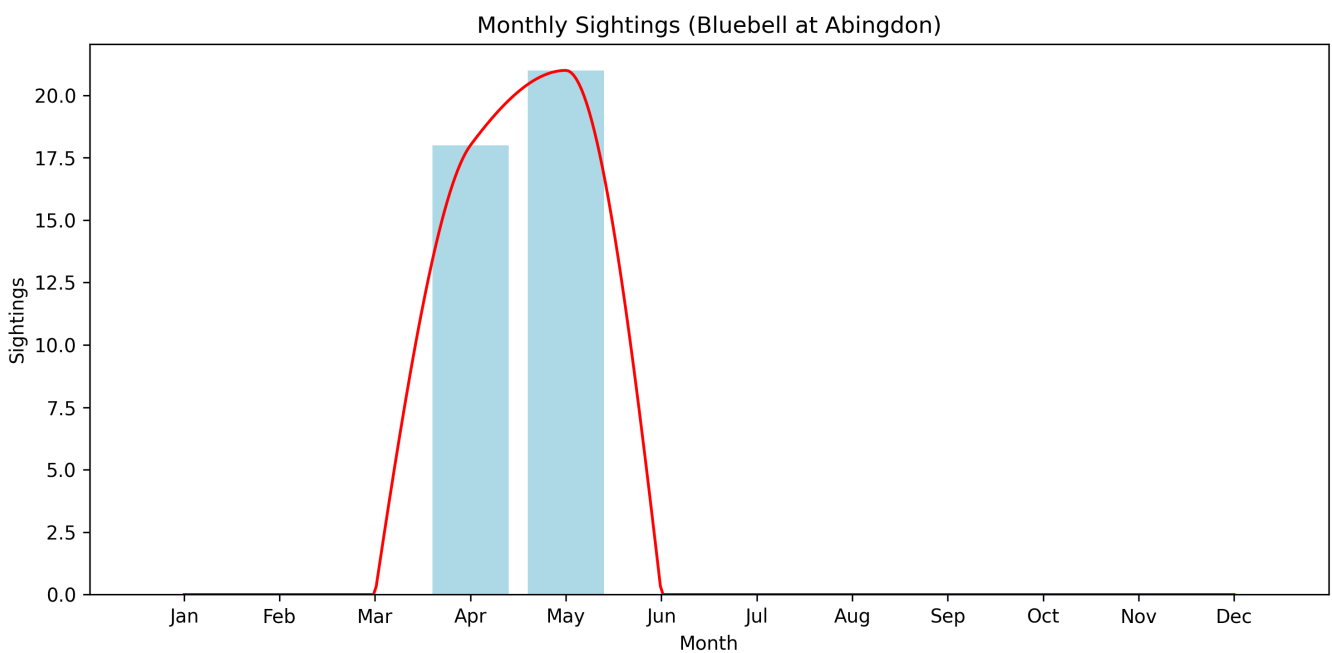
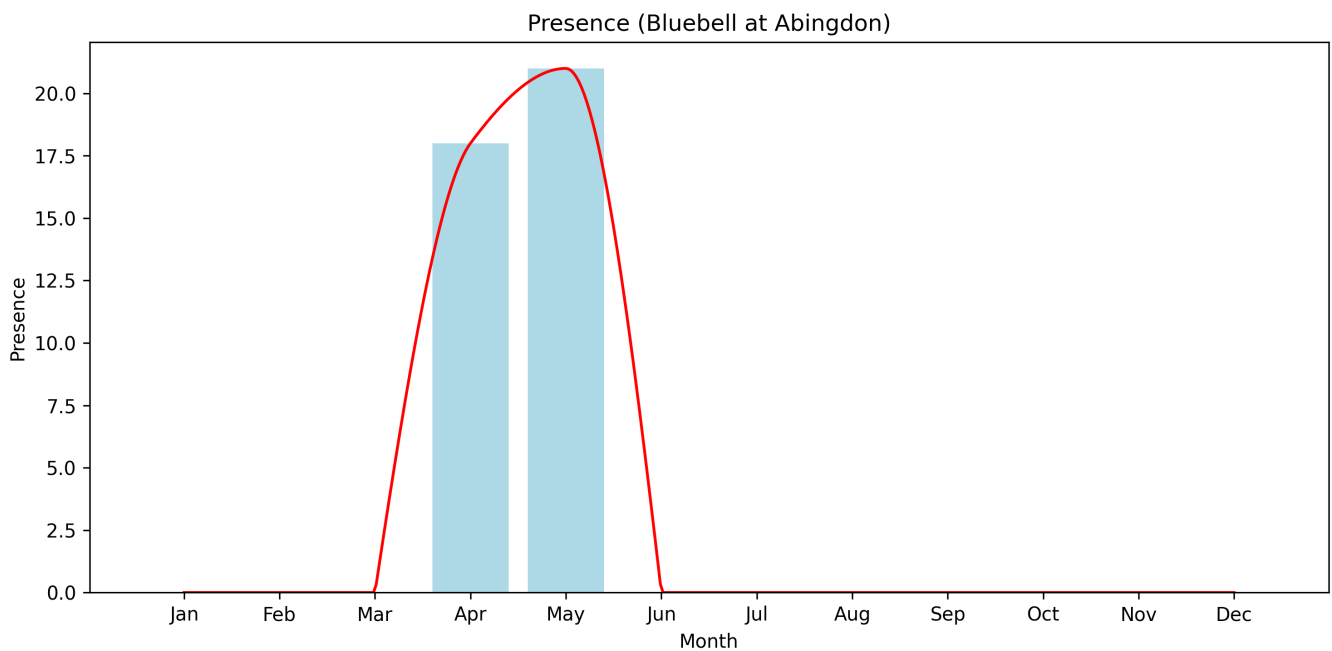
Bluebell

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (spring)

The Bluebell is one of the defining plants of spring in Abingdon, forming dense carpets in woodland and shaded habitats. Its brief but striking flowering period is a hallmark of the season.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Bluebell shows a **highly concentrated spring flowering period.**

Records are confined to a short window in mid-spring, with activity rising rapidly to a peak before declining just as quickly. Outside this period, there are no records of flowering.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, tightly defined flowering window**.

Interpretation

The Bluebell's flowering pattern reflects a **synchronised seasonal event**, closely tied to environmental conditions in early to mid-spring.

Flowering occurs within a narrow time frame:

- Emergence and flowering happen rapidly once conditions are suitable
- Peak flowering is short-lived
- The display fades quickly as the season progresses

This results in a strong, concentrated signal in the data, with little variation outside the main flowering window.

Unlike species with extended or repeated flowering, Bluebell exhibits:

- A single, clearly defined flowering period
- No secondary peaks
- No late-season activity

Overall, the pattern reflects a **spring ephemeral strategy**, where flowering is concentrated into a brief but highly visible period.

Summary

Aspect

Flowering period

Classification

Single flowering period (spring)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For plant species such as Bluebell, the flowering period represents a short-lived phase within a longer annual cycle. The absence of records outside this window reflects the absence of flowers rather than absence of the plant itself.

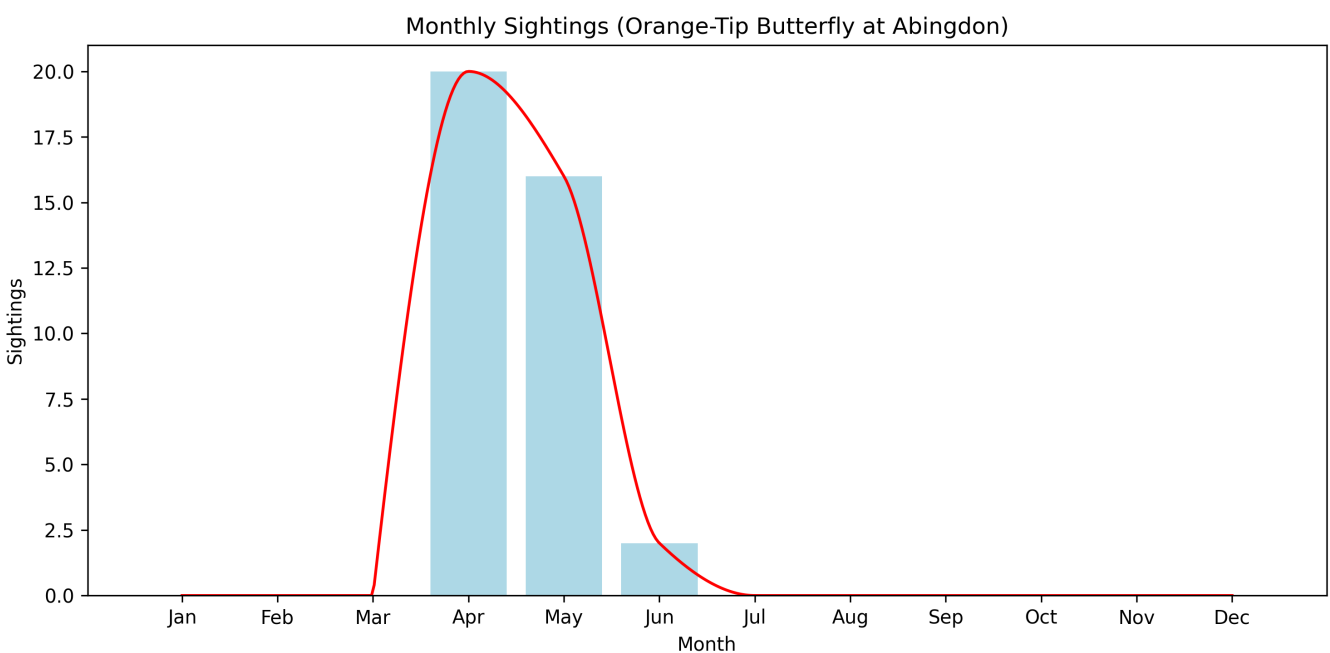
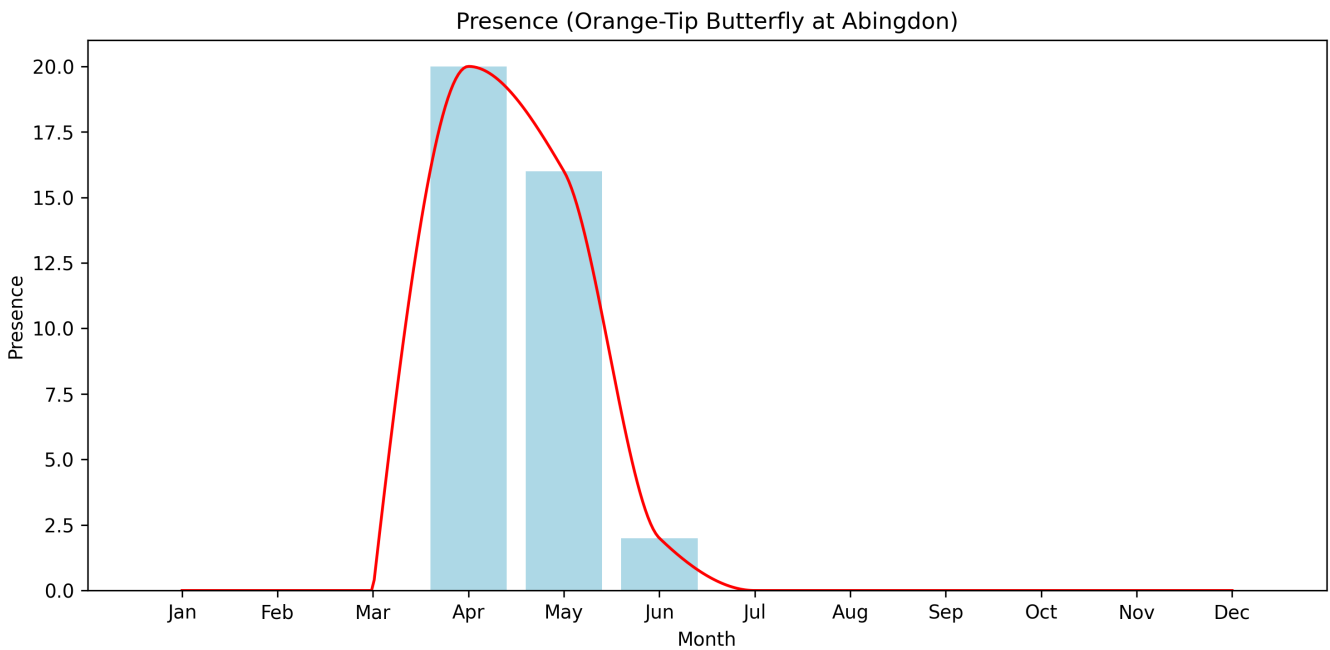
Orange-tip Butterfly

Flight period type: Single brood (spring)

The Orange-tip Butterfly is one of the defining species of spring in Abingdon, closely associated with damp meadows, hedgerows, and roadside verges where its foodplants grow. Its appearance is brief but often conspicuous during its peak.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flight period across the year.

Flight Period



Orange-tip shows a **highly concentrated spring flight period**.

Records are confined to a short window from April through early June, with a strong peak in April and high levels continuing into May. By June, activity drops sharply, and the species is absent for the remainder of the year.

The overall pattern is that of a **single brood species with a tightly defined spring flight window**.

Interpretation

The Orange-tip's flight period is a clear example of a **short, well-defined seasonal emergence**.

The abrupt appearance in April reflects the synchronous emergence of adults, with numbers rising quickly to a peak within a narrow time frame.

High activity through April and May corresponds to the main breeding period, when males patrol actively and are frequently encountered.

The rapid decline into June reflects the end of the adult flight period:

- Individuals are short-lived
- There is no overlapping second brood
- Activity drops away quickly once reproduction is complete

Unlike species with extended or bimodal patterns, there is little evidence of:

- Prolonged emergence
- Secondary peaks
- Late-season activity

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single, tightly constrained brood with a brief and highly seasonal period of adult activity**.

Summary

Aspect

Flight period

Classification

Single brood (spring)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed activity rather than complete biological accounts.

For butterfly species such as Orange-tip, the flight period reflects a single, discrete generation. The absence of records outside the spring window represents true absence of adults rather than reduced detectability.

Expansion

Mid to Late Spring

After the first pulse of early spring, the year does not simply continue — it broadens.

What had been a series of relatively distinct signals begins to overlap. Species that peaked earlier are still present, while new ones continue to emerge. The result is not a single defining moment, but a growing complexity.

This is a period of expansion.

Flowering becomes more widespread and less concentrated. Species such as Cow Parsley and Garlic Mustard move into prominence, extending the flowering season beyond the brief pulses of early spring. Unlike the tightly synchronised displays that precede them, these species persist for longer, creating continuity across the landscape.

At the same time, earlier species do not disappear immediately. Bluebell may still be present in woodland, while Cowslip lingers in open areas. The clear boundaries of early spring begin to soften, replaced by a more gradual transition.

Butterflies reflect this shift. Species such as Brimstone, which began activity earlier in the season, continue to be recorded, their presence now forming part of a broader and more sustained pattern rather than a brief emergence.

Birds reach a peak of activity during this period. Song is no longer a signal of emergence, but a constant feature of the environment. The Song Thrush, in particular, becomes a defining presence, its repeated phrases carrying across gardens and woodland edges. Unlike species whose visibility depends on brief seasonal events, it contributes a sustained and recognisable pattern.

What distinguishes this phase is overlap.

Different species are no longer taking turns. Instead, they coexist within the same window, each contributing to a layered and increasingly dense seasonal structure. The year is no longer defined by individual signals, but by the way those signals combine.

Compared to the clarity of early spring, this period is less sharply defined. Peaks are broader, transitions are more gradual, and the boundaries between phases become less distinct.

But this is not a loss of structure. It is a different kind of structure — one based on accumulation rather than emergence.

The year is no longer just beginning.

It is building.

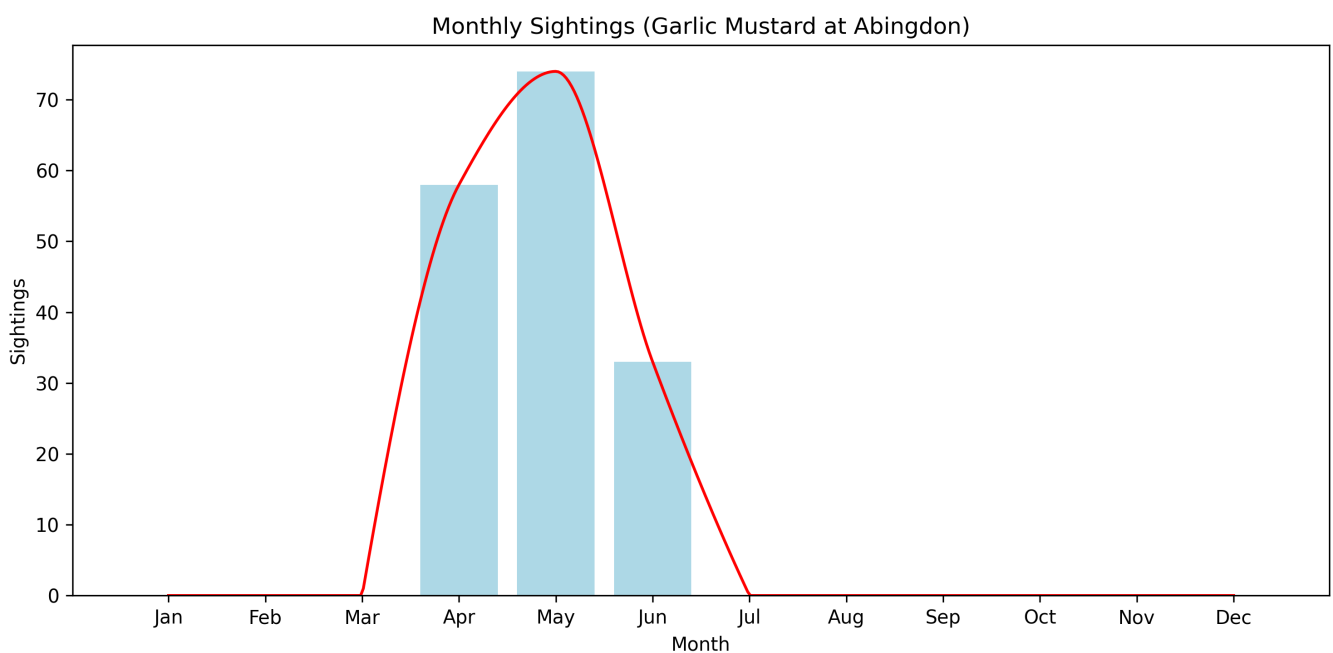
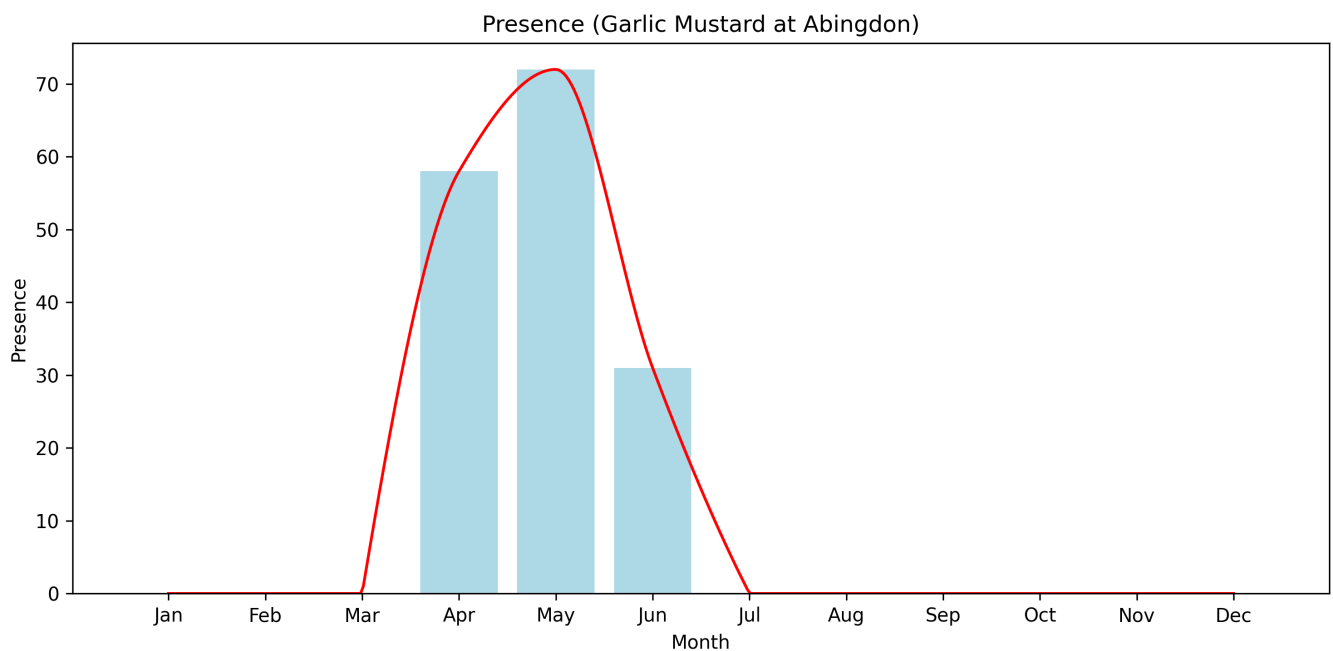
Garlic Mustard (Jack-by-the-Hedge)

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (spring–early summer, moderate duration)

Garlic Mustard is a common plant of hedgerows, woodland edges, and shaded verges in Abingdon. Its small white flowers and distinctive scent make it a characteristic, if often understated, feature of the spring landscape.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Garlic Mustard shows a **well-defined flowering period centred on spring and extending into early summer**.

Records rise through spring to a peak in late spring, with activity continuing into early summer before declining rapidly. Flowering is absent outside this seasonal window.

The overall pattern is that of a **single flowering period with a moderate duration**, longer than the earliest spring species but shorter than extended summer bloomers.

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Garlic Mustard reflects a **seasonal but not overly compressed flowering strategy**.

Compared to tightly constrained species such as Bluebell, Garlic Mustard:

- Emerges slightly later in spring
- Builds to a clear peak over a broader window
- Persists briefly into early summer

This results in:

- A defined central peak (often May)
- A noticeable but limited extension beyond the peak
- A clear end to flowering by early summer

Unlike extended flowering species, it does not maintain activity across the full summer, and unlike very early species, it does not peak in the earliest part of spring.

Instead, it occupies a **middle position in the seasonal sequence**, contributing to the continuity of flowering between early spring specialists and longer-lasting summer species.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single, moderately extended flowering period characteristic of mid- to late-spring species**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Single flowering period (spring–early summer, moderate duration)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Garlic Mustard, flowering occurs over a defined seasonal window that bridges early and late spring. The absence of records outside this period reflects the end of flowering rather than absence of the plant.

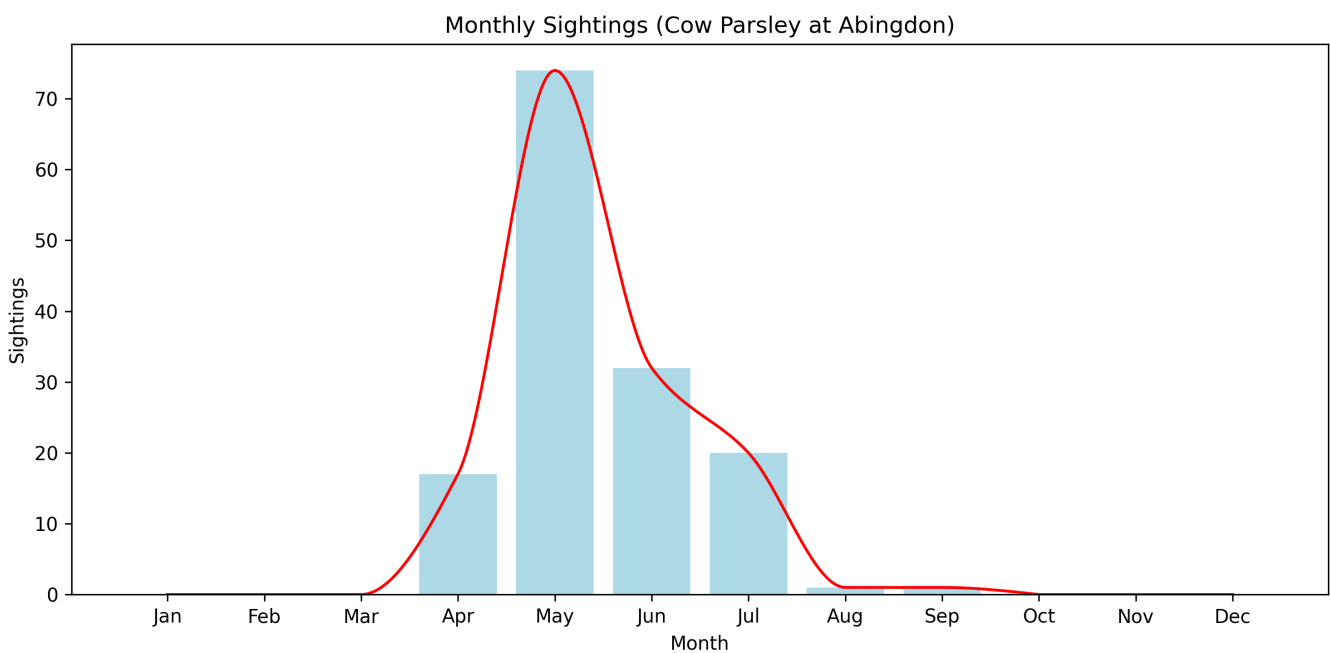
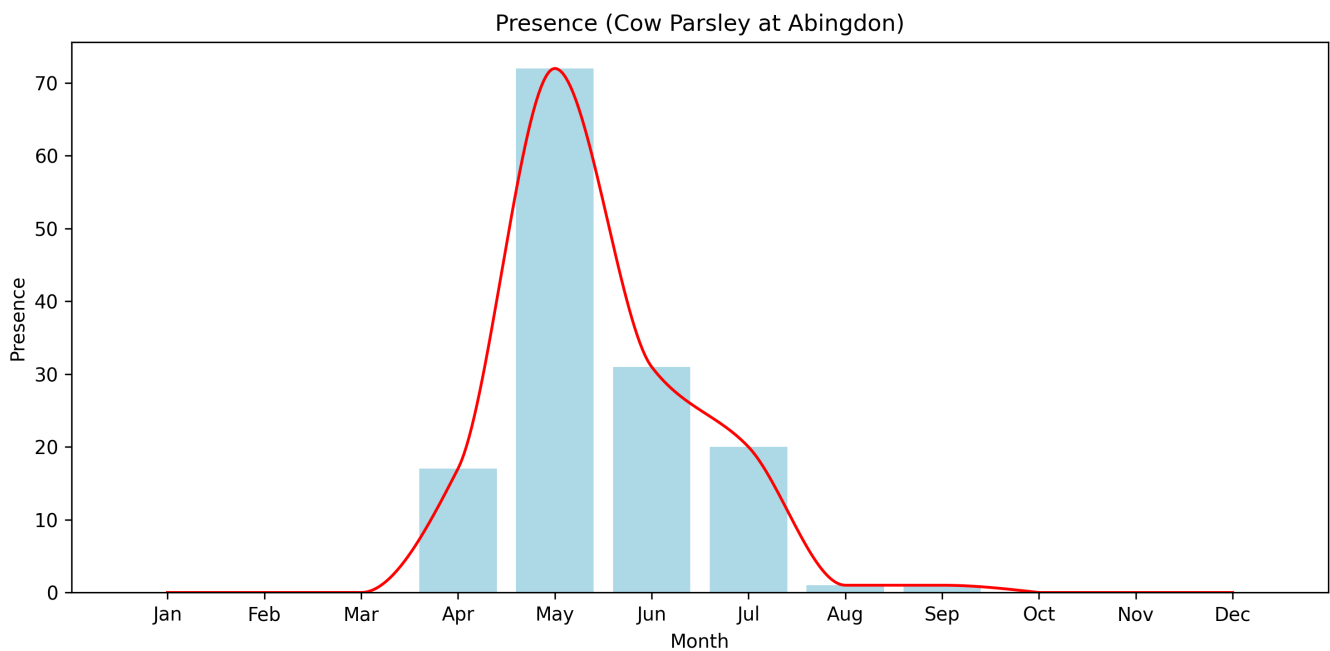
Cow Parsley

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (spring–early summer)

Cow Parsley is one of the most characteristic plants of late spring in Abingdon, lining roadsides, hedgerows, and field margins with its frothy white umbels.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Cow Parsley shows a **strongly seasonal flowering period centred on late spring.**

Records rise rapidly through spring to a clear peak in May, with high levels often extending into early June. After this, flowering declines quickly, with little to no activity beyond early summer.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, well-defined flowering period with a slightly broader window than the earliest spring species.**

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Cow Parsley reflects a **synchronised but slightly extended spring display.**

Unlike very early species such as Bluebell, Cow Parsley:

- Emerges later in the spring
- Builds quickly to a strong peak
- Maintains flowering for a short period into early summer

This results in:

- A pronounced central peak (typically May)
- A short plateau or tail into June
- A rapid decline once flowering is complete

The species' abundance and visibility during its peak period make it a defining feature of the late spring landscape, particularly along roadsides and field edges.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single flowering event that is both highly visible and seasonally constrained, marking the transition from spring into early summer.**

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Single flowering period (spring–early summer)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Cow Parsley, flowering is highly synchronised across the landscape, producing a strong seasonal signal over a relatively short time window. The absence of records outside this period reflects the end of flowering rather than absence of the plant.

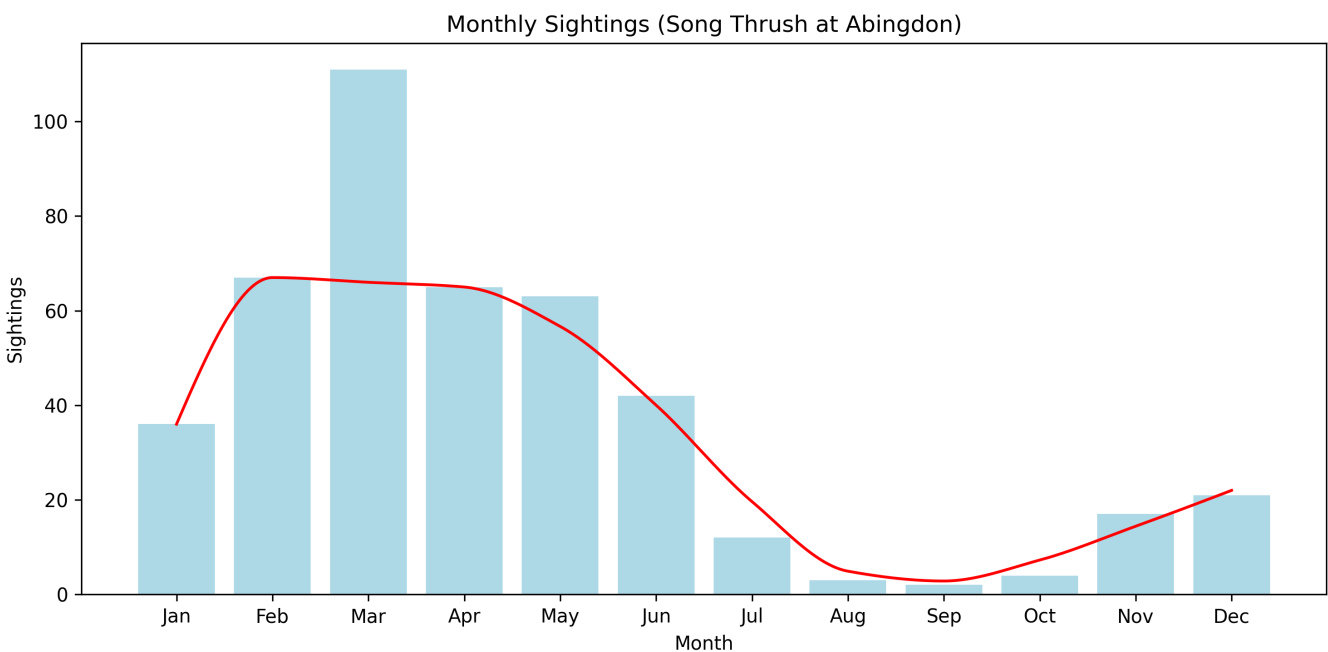
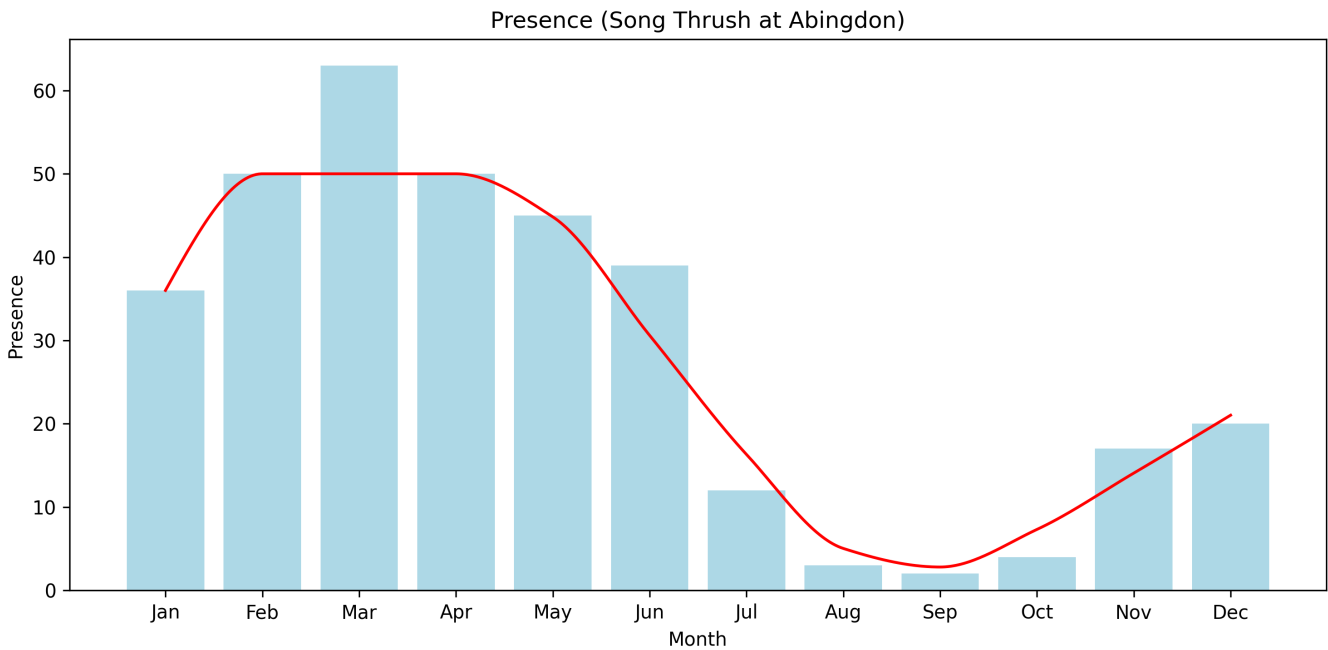
Song Thrush

Role in the year: Resident (strong spring peak, late-summer minimum)

The Song Thrush is a familiar garden and woodland-edge bird in Abingdon, best known for its rich, repetitive song, often delivered from a prominent perch.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Song Thrush shows a **year-round presence** with a strong seasonal structure.

Records are already well established in winter, rising through late winter to a clear peak in March. High levels continue through April and May before gradually declining into early summer.

From July through September, the species reaches a pronounced minimum, with only occasional records.

From October onwards, sightings increase again through autumn into early winter, though at lower levels than the spring peak.

The overall pattern is that of a **resident species with a strong spring maximum, a late-summer trough, and a modest autumn–winter recovery.**

Interpretation

The seasonal pattern of Song Thrush is strongly influenced by **detectability, particularly through song.**

The rise from winter into early spring reflects the onset of territorial singing. Males begin singing early in the year, often in late winter, making the species far more conspicuous than at other times.

The peak in March and sustained high levels through April and May correspond to the main breeding season, when song is frequent and birds are easily located.

The steady decline into summer, and especially the sharp drop from July to September, likely reflects a combination of factors:

- Reduced singing after breeding
- Dispersal of juveniles
- More secretive behaviour during moult

During this period, birds remain present but are far less detectable.

The recovery in autumn and early winter suggests a return to more visible foraging behaviour, possibly combined with local movements or an influx of birds, though without the strong acoustic signal seen in spring.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **resident species whose visibility in the records is heavily shaped by seasonal changes in behaviour rather than simple presence or absence.**

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Seasonal pattern	Resident (spring peak, late-summer minimum, detectability-driven)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Song Thrush, seasonal variation in records is strongly influenced by vocal activity and behaviour. Peaks in spring reflect heightened detectability during the breeding season, while summer minima likely represent reduced visibility rather than true absence.

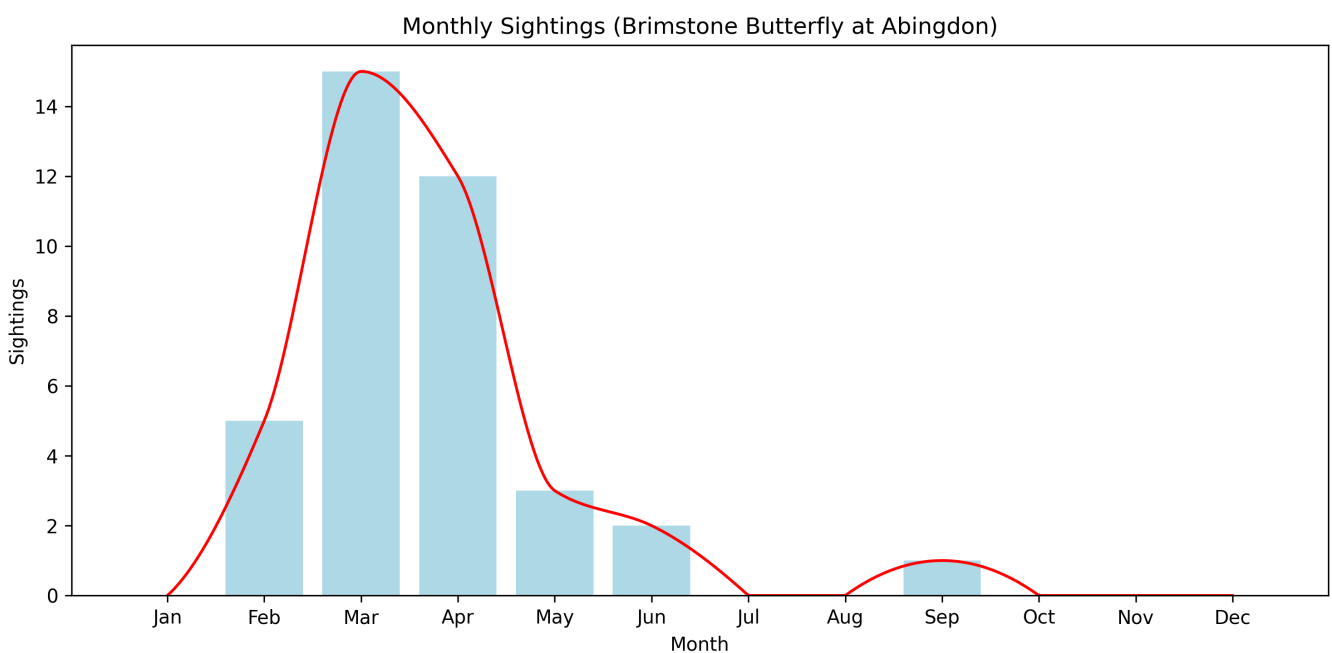
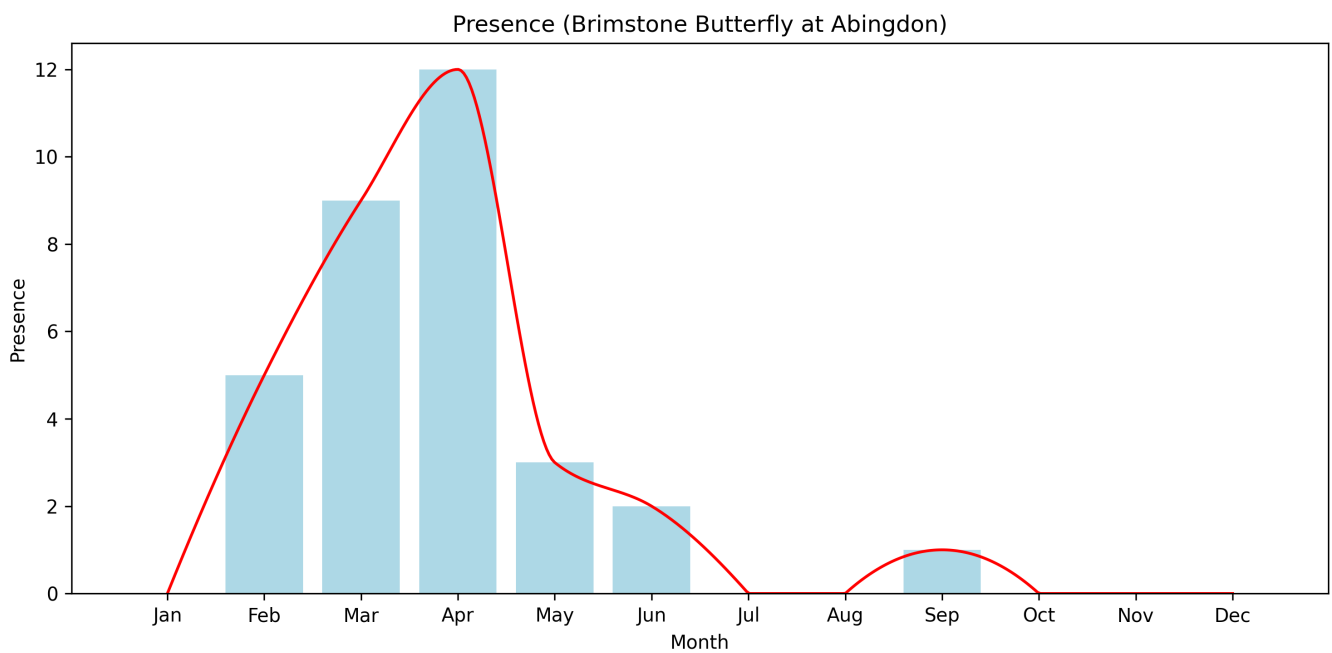
Brimstone Butterfly

Flight period type: Single brood (extended)

The Brimstone Butterfly is one of the earliest butterflies to appear in the year in Abingdon, often seen on the first warm days of late winter. Its strong yellow colour and purposeful flight make it a distinctive early-season presence.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flight period across the year.

Flight Period



Brimstone shows a **single, extended flight period centred on early spring**.

Records begin in February, rising through March to a peak in early spring (March–April). Activity then declines gradually through May and June.

After a summer gap, a small number of records appear again in early autumn.

The overall pattern is that of a **single brood with an extended seasonal presence, including a late-season tail**.

Interpretation

The Brimstone's flight pattern reflects its distinctive life cycle, particularly its ability to **overwinter as an adult**.

The early appearance in February and rapid rise into March and April correspond to overwintered adults becoming active as temperatures rise. These individuals dominate the spring peak.

Following this, activity declines through late spring and early summer as the first generation completes its life cycle.

The small number of records later in the year likely represent newly emerged individuals from this brood. These butterflies may then persist into autumn before entering hibernation.

The result is a pattern that appears “extended” despite being a single brood:

- **Early activity** driven by overwintered adults
- **Peak in spring** during breeding activity
- **Late-season tail** from newly emerged individuals

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single brood species with a prolonged period of adult activity due to overwintering behaviour**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flight period	Single brood (extended)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed activity rather than complete biological accounts.

For butterfly species, seasonal patterns reflect the timing of adult flight periods rather than continuous presence. In species such as Brimstone, overwintering as an adult can extend the apparent flight period across multiple parts of the year.

Establishment

Spring into Early Summer

By this point, the rapid changes of spring begin to settle.

The pace of new arrivals slows, not because the season has stalled, but because much of what defines it is already in place. Species that emerged in earlier phases remain present, and those that followed have now fully established themselves.

This is the period where the year feels complete.

Flowering is no longer characterised by sudden appearances or brief pulses. Instead, it becomes sustained and assured. Species such as Red Campion come into their own, providing colour and continuity across a wide range of habitats. Rather than dominating for a short time, they persist, forming part of a stable and ongoing display.

Earlier species begin to recede, but gradually. The sharp transitions of spring give way to softer declines, with overlap still present but less pronounced than before. What remains is a sense of balance.

Bird activity reflects a similar shift. The intensity of early-season song begins to ease, but does not disappear. Instead, it becomes part of a more settled soundscape, where species are no longer announcing their presence so urgently, but continuing within established territories.

The Skylark exemplifies this phase. Its song, which rose rapidly during spring, now forms a sustained feature of open farmland. The peak of activity has passed, but the species remains a defining presence, its behaviour less about emergence and more about continuation.

What distinguishes this period is stability.

The patterns established in spring are now maintained rather than created. Species are present not because they have just arrived, but because they belong to this phase of the year.

There is still change — there always is — but it is less dramatic, less immediate. The year has moved from growth into persistence.

This is the point at which the season feels fully realised.

It is no longer becoming.

It is.

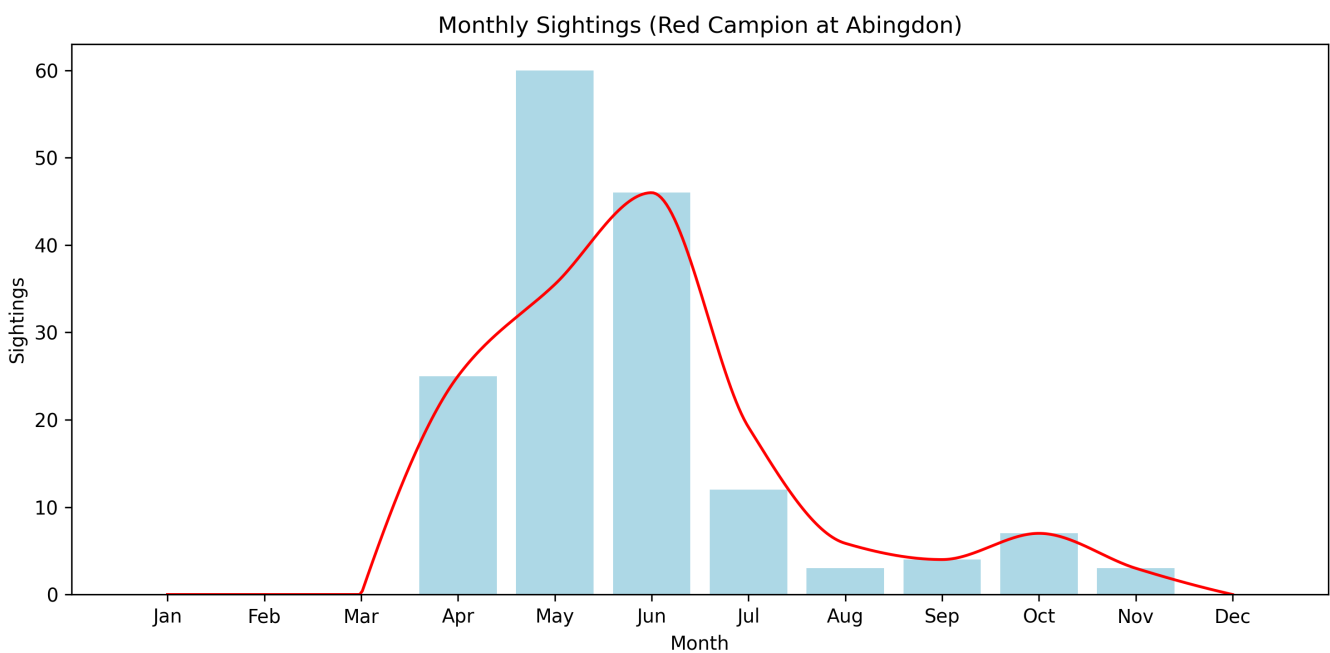
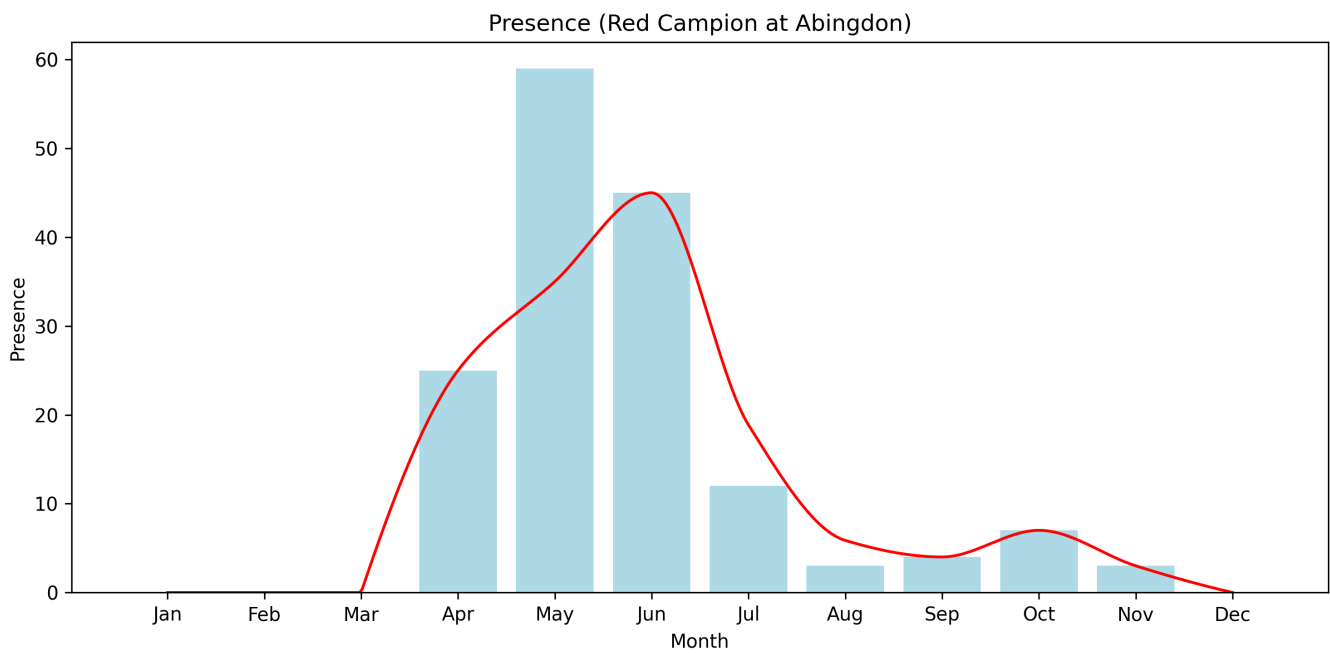
Red Champion

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (spring–summer, moderate peak)

Red Champion is a familiar and attractive plant of hedgerows, woodland edges, and grassy banks in Abingdon. Its bright pink flowers are often among the first to bring colour to the landscape as spring progresses.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Red Champion shows a **broad flowering period extending from spring into summer.**

Records begin in spring, rising to a clear peak in late spring or early summer. Flowering continues at moderate levels through the summer months before gradually declining.

The overall pattern is that of an **extended flowering period with a defined but not sharply peaked centre**.

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Red Champion reflects a **prolonged but structured flowering strategy**.

Compared to tightly constrained spring species, Red Champion:

- Emerges relatively early in the season
- Builds steadily to a central peak
- Maintains flowering well into summer

This results in:

- A clear seasonal rise and fall
- A sustained period of visibility across multiple months
- A presence that bridges spring and summer

Unlike species with very diffuse flowering, Red Champion still shows a recognisable peak, giving it a stronger seasonal identity.

At the same time, its extended flowering period means it contributes continuity rather than a brief, synchronised display.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that combines a clear seasonal signal with a prolonged period of flowering**, helping to carry the transition from spring into summer.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (spring–summer, moderate peak)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Red Champion, flowering spans a relatively long period, with a clear seasonal centre but extended activity on either side. This results in both a recognisable peak and a sustained presence in the landscape.

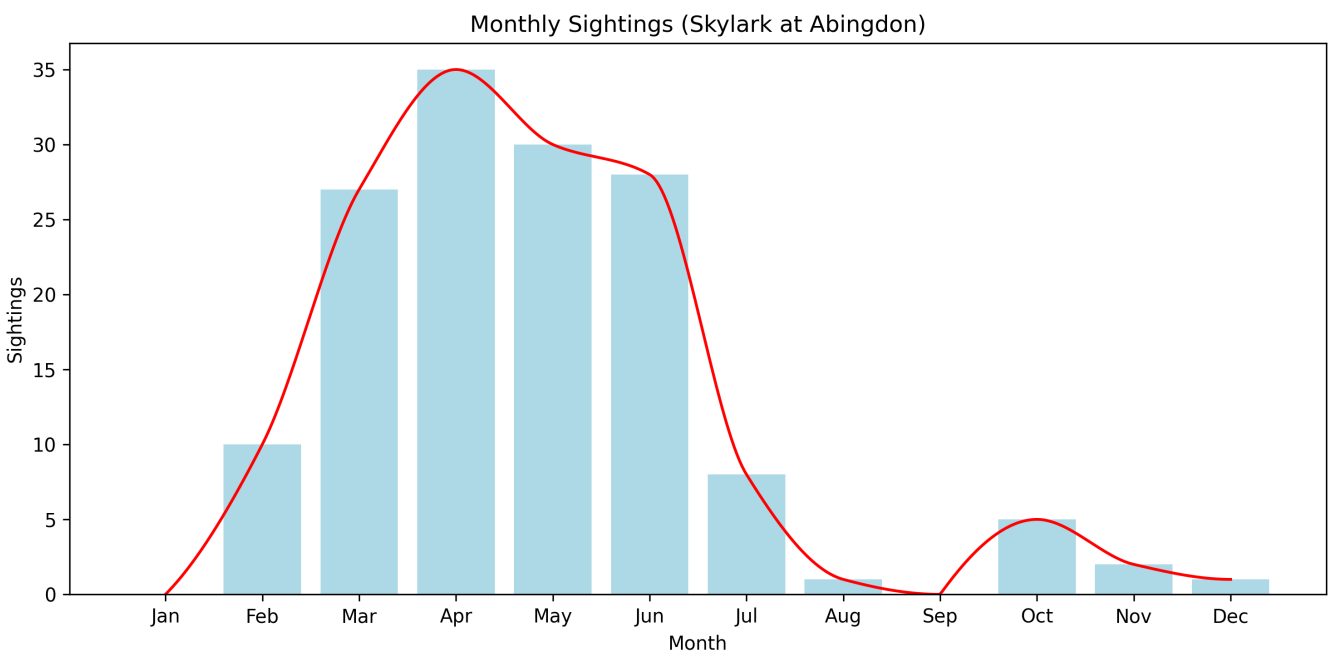
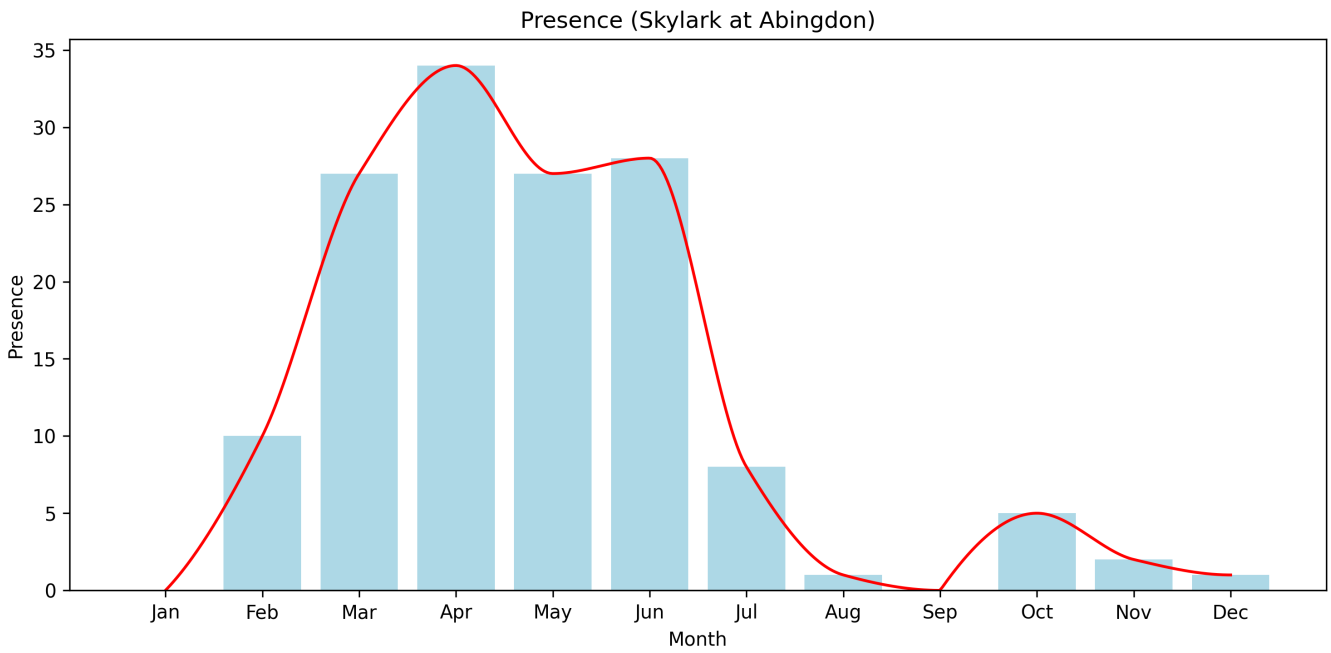
Skylark

Role in the year: Spring–summer breeder (strongly seasonal)

The Skylark is one of the defining birds of open farmland around Abingdon, best known for its sustained, high, cascading song flight over fields.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Skylark shows a strongly seasonal pattern centred on spring and early summer.

Records begin to appear in late winter, rising rapidly through March and reaching a peak in April. High levels continue through May and June before declining sharply into mid-summer.

By late summer, the species is largely absent from the records. A small number of sightings return in autumn and early winter, though at much lower levels than in spring.

The overall pattern is that of a **spring–summer species with a pronounced peak during the breeding season and only limited presence outside it.**

Interpretation

The Skylark's seasonal pattern is closely tied to breeding behaviour and, in particular, its highly conspicuous song flights.

The rapid increase in records through late winter and early spring reflects the onset of territorial display. Males rise high above fields, delivering continuous song for extended periods, making the species highly detectable.

The peak in April and sustained presence through May and June correspond to the main breeding period, when display activity remains frequent.

The sharp decline from mid-summer reflects a reduction in song and display once breeding activity subsides. Birds remain present in the landscape but are far less conspicuous, leading to a marked drop in recorded presence.

The small number of autumn and winter records likely reflects occasional movements or local overwintering individuals, but without the sustained visibility seen in spring.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species whose detectability is strongly driven by seasonal display behaviour**, with its presence in the records closely tracking its period of song and breeding activity.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Seasonal pattern	Spring–summer breeder (display-driven presence)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Skylark, presence is closely linked to vocal and display activity, meaning that seasonal peaks reflect not just abundance but visibility and audibility in the landscape.

The Height of the Year

High Summer

After the stability of early summer, the character of the year shifts again.

The sense of balance gives way to something more immediate. Activity becomes more concentrated, more intense, and in some cases, more fleeting. What was sustained now begins to compress.

This is the height of the year.

Some species reach their most visible and defining phase during this period. Rosebay Willowherb rises rapidly into prominence, its tall spikes of colour marking open ground and disturbed places. Unlike the gradual build of earlier species, its presence feels decisive — a clear statement of the season.

At the same time, other species operate on a much shorter timescale. The Swift is perhaps the most striking example. Arriving later than many summer species, it quickly becomes a dominant feature of the sky, its constant movement and high calls creating a sense of energy and urgency. Yet this presence is brief. Even at its peak, there is an awareness that it will not last.

Butterflies reflect both aspects of this period. Some species, such as Speckled Wood, show renewed activity as new generations emerge, creating distinct peaks within the season. Others continue from earlier phases, but their patterns now feel more concentrated, shaped by the constraints of the summer window.

What distinguishes high summer is intensity combined with brevity.

Species are not simply present — they are at their most visible, most active, and often most numerous. But this comes with a sense of compression. Peaks are sharper, transitions are quicker, and the season, though full, begins to feel limited.

There is also a subtle shift in direction.

While the landscape is still rich and active, the forward momentum of spring has slowed. New arrivals are fewer, and the emphasis is no longer on growth, but on expression — the culmination of what has been building.

This is not a period of expansion or establishment.

It is a period of maximum presence.

And, quietly, it carries with it the first suggestion that the year has begun to turn.

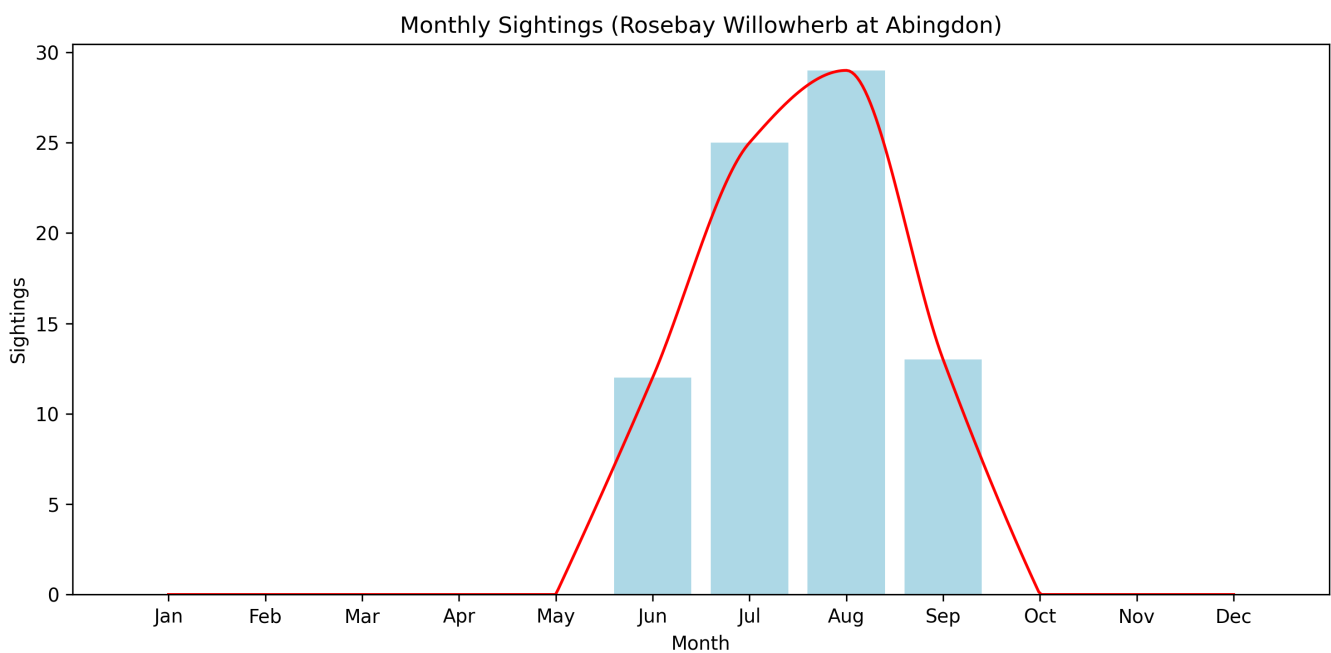
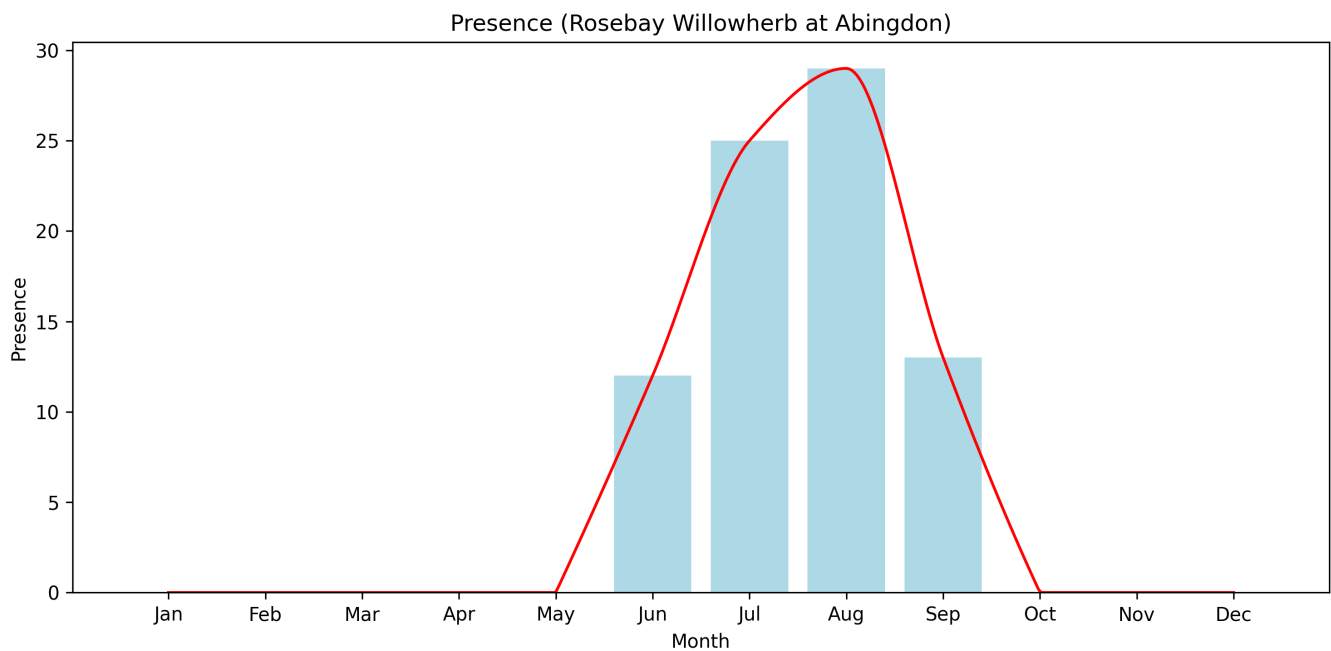
Rosebay Willowherb

Flowering period type: Single flowering period (summer, strong peak)

Rosebay Willowherb is a tall and striking plant of disturbed ground, railway edges, and open habitats in Abingdon. Its vivid pink spikes are one of the defining visual features of high summer.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Rosebay Willowherb shows a **clearly defined summer flowering period with a strong central peak.**

Records begin in early summer, rising rapidly to a maximum in mid-summer. High levels are maintained for a relatively short period before declining into late summer.

Outside this window, there are no records of flowering.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, strongly seasonal flowering period centred on summer**.

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Rosebay Willowherb reflects a **highly visible and seasonally focused flowering strategy**.

Unlike early or extended flowering species, Rosebay Willowherb:

- Emerges later in the year
- Builds quickly to a pronounced peak
- Concentrates its flowering into a relatively short summer window

This results in:

- A strong and unmistakable mid-summer signal
- A clear rise and fall in activity
- A visually dominant presence during its peak

The species' association with open and often disturbed habitats allows it to form dense stands, further amplifying its seasonal impact.

In contrast to diffuse or background species, Rosebay Willowherb represents a **distinct seasonal event**, marking the height of summer.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **single, concentrated flowering period that defines the mid- to late-summer landscape**.

Summary

Aspect

Flowering period

Classification

Single flowering period (summer, strong peak)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Rosebay Willowherb, flowering is concentrated into a distinct seasonal window. The absence of records outside this period reflects the absence of flowers rather than absence of the plant.

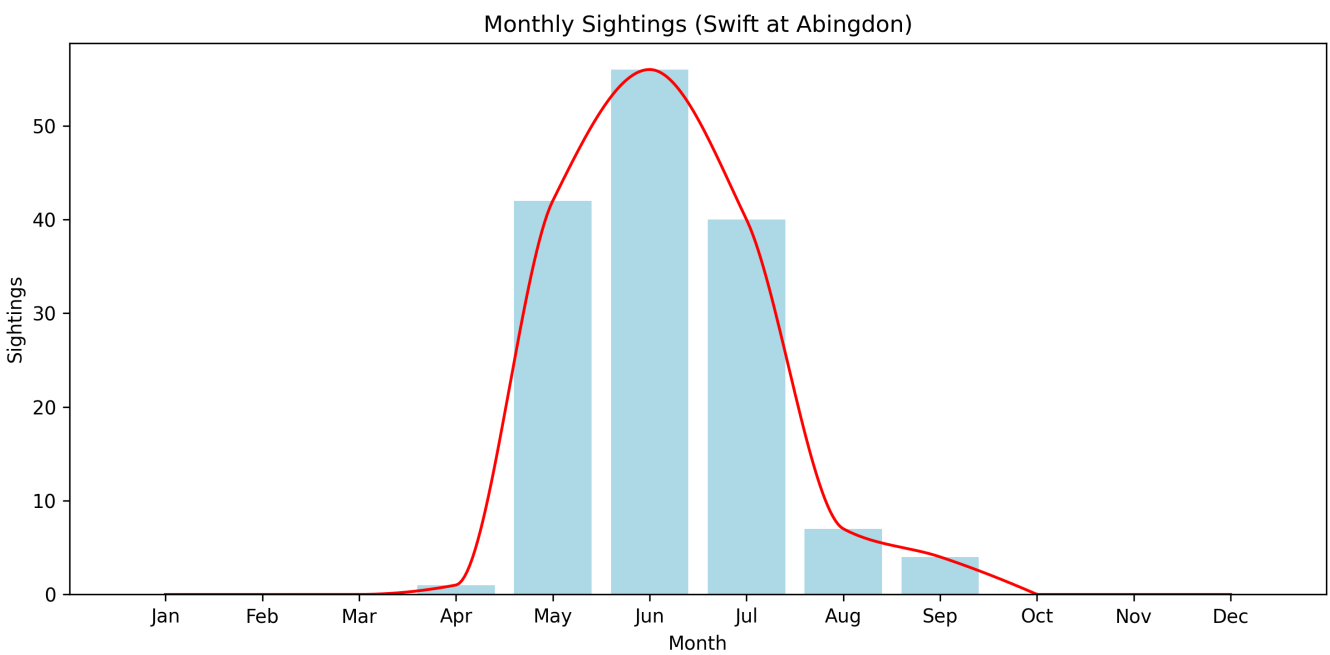
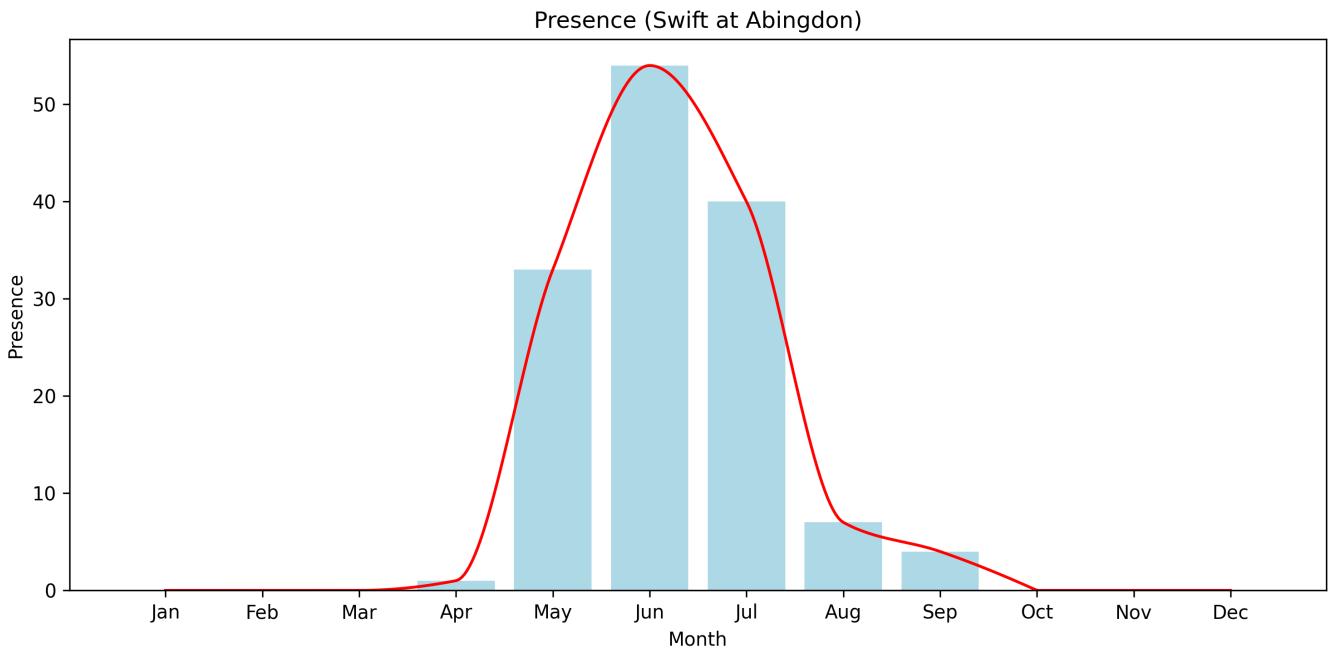
Swift

Role in the year: Summer visitor (highly seasonal, short-duration)

The Swift is one of the most distinctive birds of summer in Abingdon, spending almost its entire life on the wing and announcing its presence with high-pitched screaming calls as it races over rooftops.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Swift shows an **extremely compressed seasonal pattern**, even among summer visitors.

There are no records through winter and spring. The species appears abruptly in May, rising immediately to a peak.

High levels are sustained through June and into July, forming a tight midsummer plateau.

From late July into August, records decline rapidly, with only a small number of sightings persisting into early August before the species disappears completely.

The overall pattern is that of a **short-duration summer visitor, present for a brief and sharply defined window in the year.**

Interpretation

The Swift's seasonal pattern reflects one of the most tightly constrained migratory schedules of any regularly observed species.

Arrival is typically sudden, with birds returning in May and immediately becoming highly visible as they forage and interact vocally in the airspace above the town.

The strong peak through June and July corresponds to the breeding period, during which screaming parties and constant aerial movement make the species especially conspicuous.

The rapid decline from late July is characteristic. Adults begin departing early, with numbers falling quickly even while some juveniles remain briefly.

By August, most birds have left, and by late summer the species is entirely absent.

Compared to Swallow, the Swift's presence is:

- **Later to arrive**
- **More tightly concentrated**
- **Earlier to depart**

Overall, the pattern represents a **pure and highly constrained migratory signal**, with presence in the records almost perfectly matching the species' brief residency in the UK.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Seasonal pattern	Summer visitor (May arrival, June–July peak, early departure)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Swift, presence in the dataset closely reflects true occupancy of the landscape, with minimal ambiguity introduced by detectability. The sharply defined seasonal window makes Swift one of the clearest indicators of midsummer in the annual cycle.

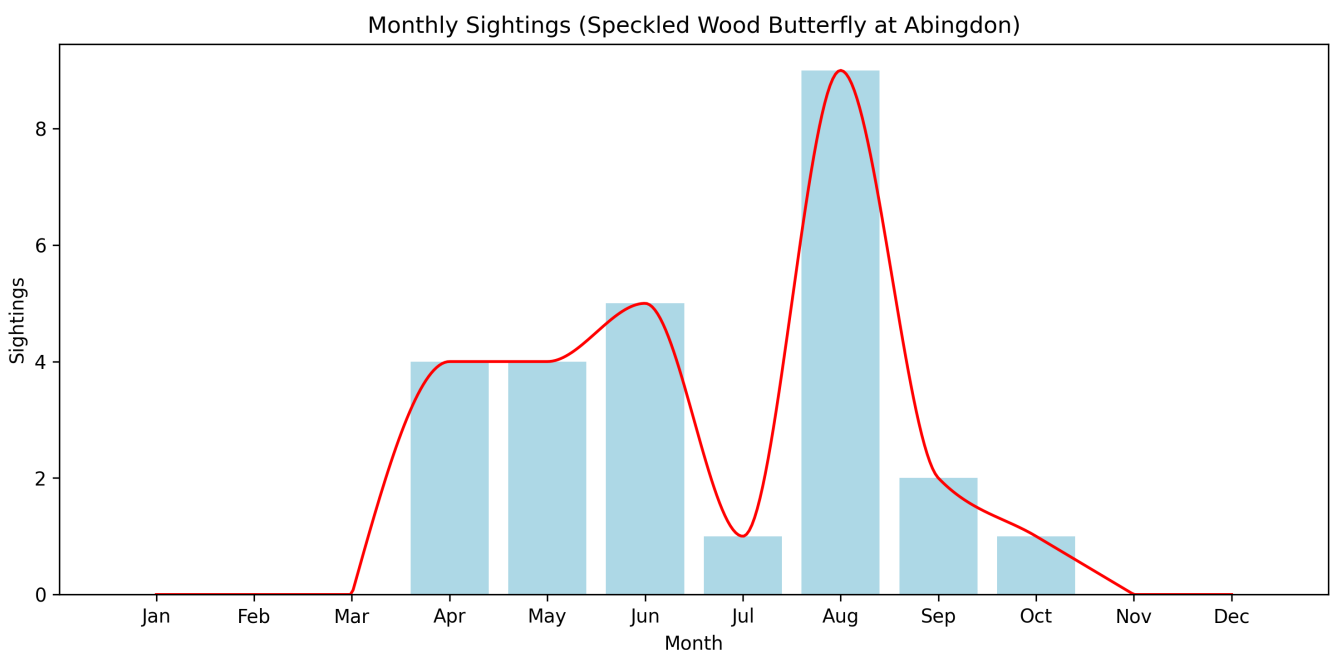
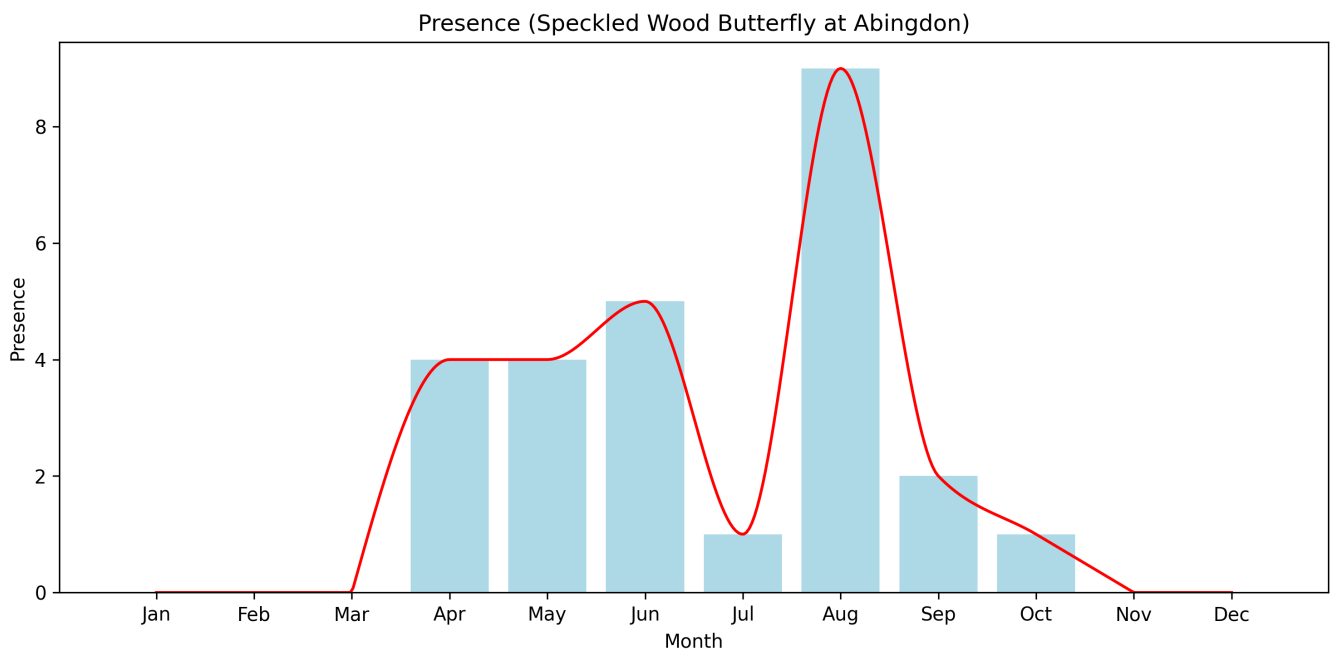
Speckled Wood Butterfly

Flight period type: Bimodal (separated broods)

The Speckled Wood Butterfly is a characteristic species of shaded habitats in Abingdon, often encountered along woodland edges, rides, and hedgerows where dappled sunlight breaks through.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flight period across the year.

Flight Period



Speckled Wood shows a **bimodal flight pattern**, with two distinct peaks separated by a clear dip.

The first peak occurs in late spring to early summer, with activity building from April through May to a maximum in June.

A marked dip follows in July, after which a second, stronger peak appears in late summer, centred on August.

Activity then declines through September and into early autumn.

The overall pattern is that of **two clearly separated periods of activity within the year**.

Interpretation

The bimodal pattern reflects the presence of **two distinct broods** within a single season.

The first peak represents the emergence of the spring generation, with activity increasing through April and May and reaching a maximum in June.

The subsequent dip in July marks the transition between broods, when relatively few adults are present.

The second peak in August corresponds to the emergence of a later generation, producing a renewed period of activity in late summer.

Unlike overwintering species such as Peacock, the two peaks here represent **separate generations rather than different phases of the same individuals**.

This results in a pattern that is:

- Structurally similar to other bimodal species
- Biologically distinct in its underlying mechanism

Overall, the pattern reflects a **multi-brooded species with discrete generations producing separate peaks in activity across the season**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flight period	Bimodal (separated broods)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed activity rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Speckled Wood, bimodal patterns reflect multiple generations within a single year. The dip between peaks represents a genuine gap between broods rather than reduced detectability or behavioural change.

Release and Continuation

Late Summer to Autumn

After the intensity of high summer, the year begins to loosen.

The sharp peaks and concentrated activity of the previous phase give way to something more gradual. Transitions are less abrupt, and the sense of urgency begins to fade. What follows is not a sudden change, but a slow release.

This is a period of continuation.

Some species begin to decline, their peak now behind them. Others persist, maintaining a presence that stretches beyond the height of the season. The overall effect is not one of disappearance, but of extension — the year continuing forward at a different pace.

Birds reflect this shift clearly. Species such as Swallow remain visible, often in groups, but their behaviour has changed. The focus is no longer on breeding or display, but on movement and preparation. Numbers may still be high, but the underlying pattern is one of departure.

Butterflies, too, show this continuation. The Red Admiral extends well into late summer and autumn, its presence less concentrated than earlier species but more prolonged. Rather than a single defining peak, it contributes a long seasonal tail, carrying activity forward after many others have declined.

Plants reinforce this sense of persistence. Species such as Daisy and Dandelion continue to flower, sometimes at reduced levels, but often still widely present. They do not define the season in the way that earlier species did, but they ensure that it does not end abruptly.

What distinguishes this period is duration without intensity.

The year does not stop. It stretches.

Peaks have passed, but presence remains. Activity continues, but at a lower level, more evenly distributed, less demanding of attention.

There is also a growing sense of direction.

While some species persist, others quietly disappear. The balance shifts gradually, almost imperceptibly at first, but with increasing clarity as the season progresses.

This is not the end of the year.

But it is the point at which its trajectory becomes clear.

The energy of summer has been released. What remains is the continuation — and the slow movement towards its close.

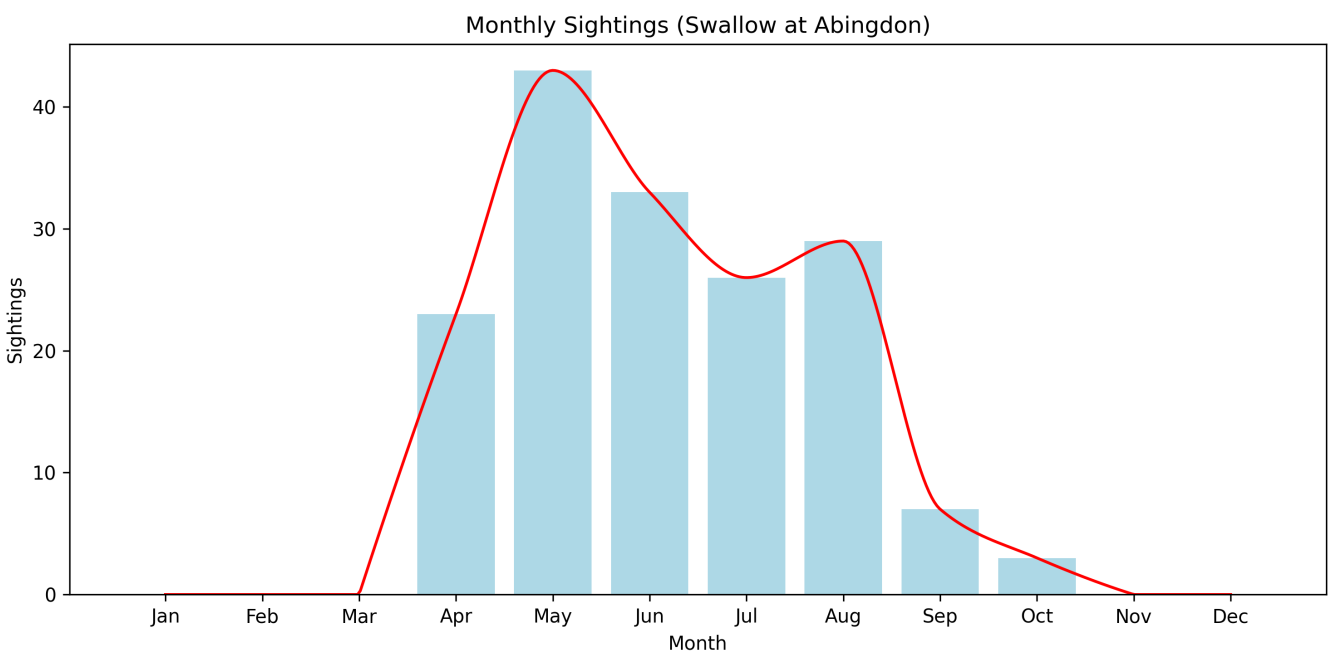
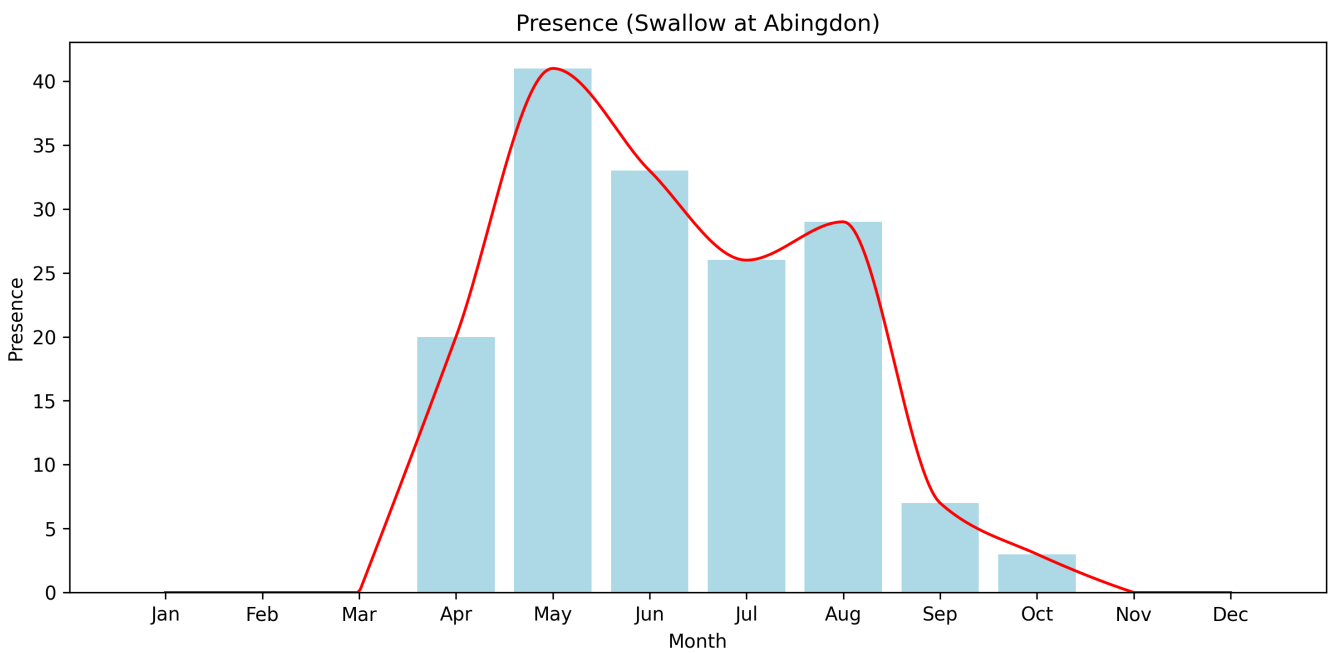
Swallow

Role in the year: Summer visitor (strongly seasonal, migratory)

The Swallow is one of the most anticipated arrivals of spring in Abingdon, its return marking the shift into the warmer months. It is most often seen hawking low over fields and water, or gathering on wires later in the season.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Swallow shows a **strongly seasonal pattern**, with a clear arrival, peak, and departure.

There are no records through winter and early spring. The species first appears in April, rising rapidly to a peak in May.

High levels continue through June, with a slight dip in mid-summer followed by a secondary lift into August.

From September onwards, records fall away quickly, with only a small number of sightings into early autumn before complete absence returns by late autumn.

The overall pattern is that of a **classic summer visitor, present only during the breeding season and absent for the rest of the year.**

Interpretation

The Swallow's pattern reflects its long-distance migratory behaviour.

The abrupt appearance in April corresponds to spring arrival from wintering grounds, with numbers building quickly as birds return to breeding sites.

The peak in May and sustained levels through June align with the main breeding period, when birds are highly active and frequently recorded as they forage in open airspace.

The slight dip in July followed by a secondary rise into August may reflect a combination of:

- Post-breeding movements
- The presence of recently fledged juveniles
- Increased flocking behaviour later in the season

This late-summer lift often coincides with birds gathering on wires and feeding more visibly before migration.

The rapid decline from September reflects autumn departure, as birds leave for their wintering grounds. By October, only occasional late individuals remain.

Overall, the pattern is that of a **pure migratory signal**, with presence in the records closely matching the species' time in the UK and showing little influence from detectability effects compared to resident species.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Seasonal pattern	Summer visitor (arrival in April, peak May–June, departure by October)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For migratory species such as Swallow, seasonal patterns reflect true presence and absence in the landscape, making them among the clearest signals in the dataset.

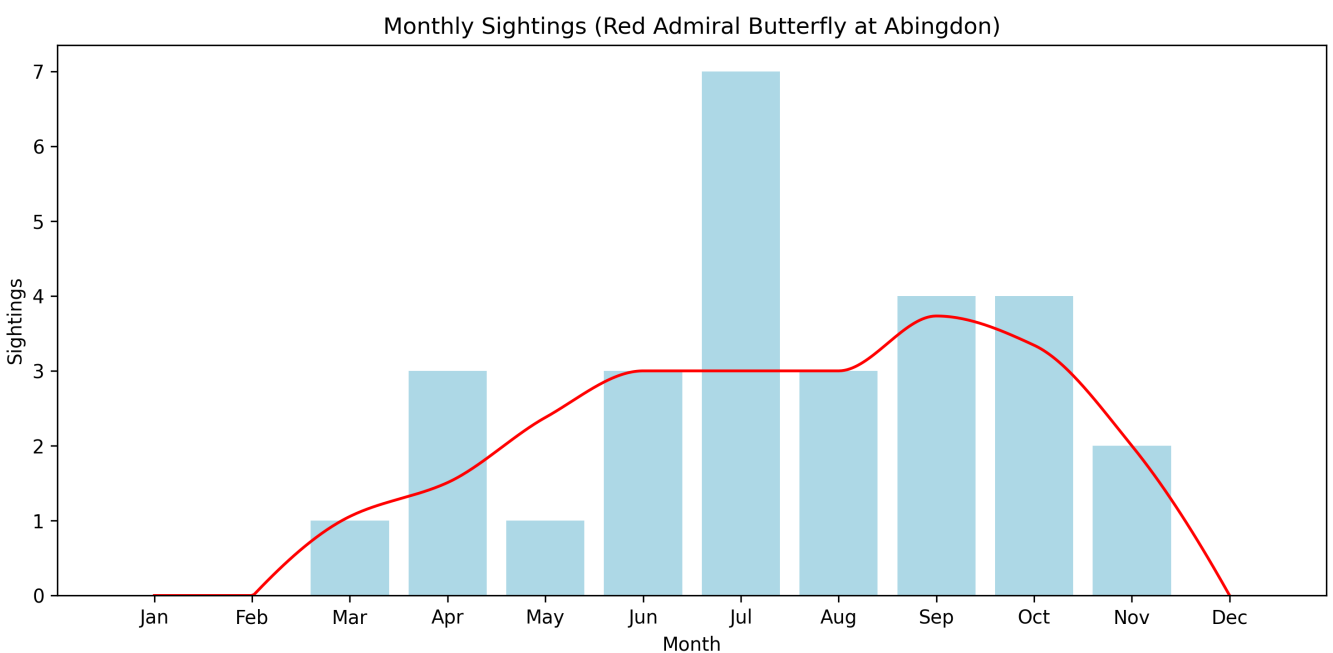
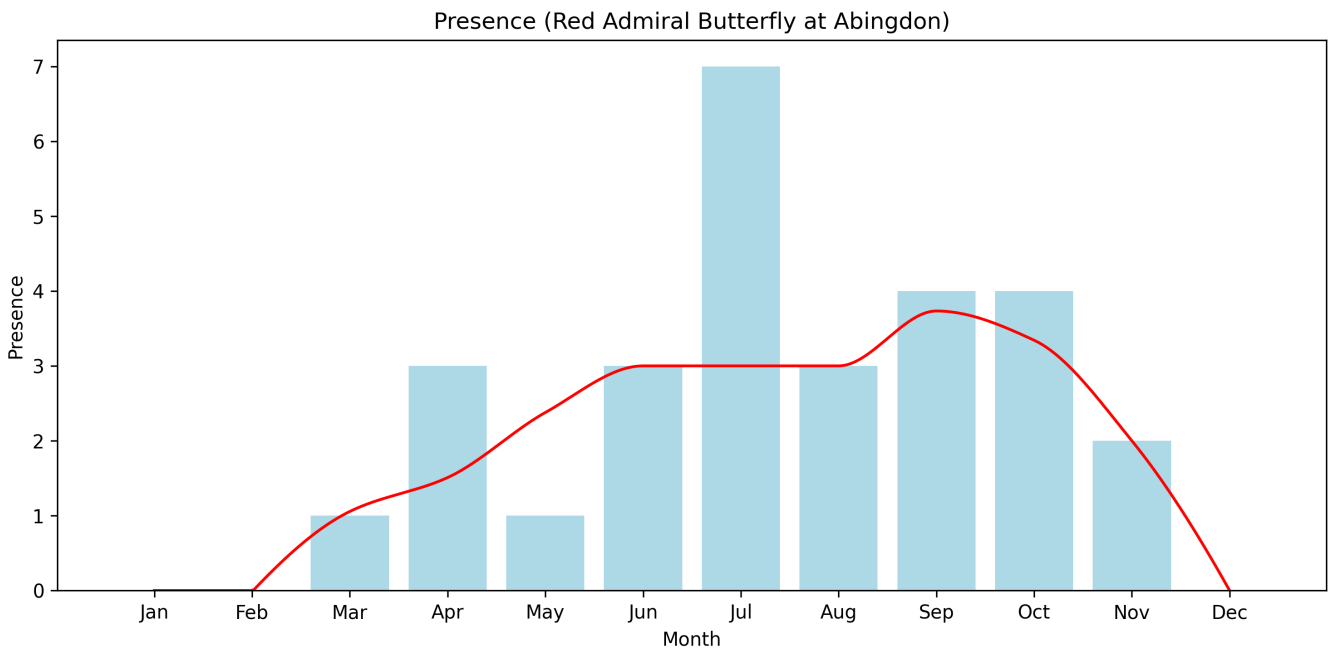
Red Admiral Butterfly

Flight period type: Single brood (extended)

The Red Admiral is a familiar and mobile butterfly in Abingdon, often encountered in gardens, woodland edges, and along hedgerows. Its appearance spans a large part of the year, with activity shifting through the seasons.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flight period across the year.

Flight Period



Red Admiral shows a **broad, extended flight period centred on mid to late summer**.

Records begin to appear in early spring, with low levels through March and April. Activity increases gradually through late spring and early summer, reaching a peak in July.

Moderate levels continue through August, September, and into October, before declining into late autumn.

The overall pattern is that of a **single, extended flight period with a long tail into autumn**.

Interpretation

The Red Admiral's extended flight period reflects a combination of **mobility, seasonal turnover, and prolonged activity**.

The early records in spring likely represent individuals arriving or reappearing after winter, though at relatively low levels.

The gradual build toward a peak in July suggests increasing activity as the season progresses, with higher numbers of individuals present and visible during mid-summer.

The sustained activity from late summer into autumn is a defining feature of the species:

- Individuals remain active well beyond the main summer peak
- Sightings continue into October and even November
- The flight period extends later than many other butterflies in the set

Unlike tightly constrained spring species, Red Admiral does not show a sharp emergence or rapid decline. Instead, it maintains a **broad seasonal presence with a single dominant peak**.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **flexible and extended period of adult activity, centred on summer but stretching across much of the warmer part of the year**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flight period	Single brood (extended)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed activity rather than complete biological accounts.

For butterfly species such as Red Admiral, extended flight periods may reflect a combination of prolonged emergence, movement, and seasonal turnover. As such, the observed pattern represents sustained activity rather than a sharply defined generation.

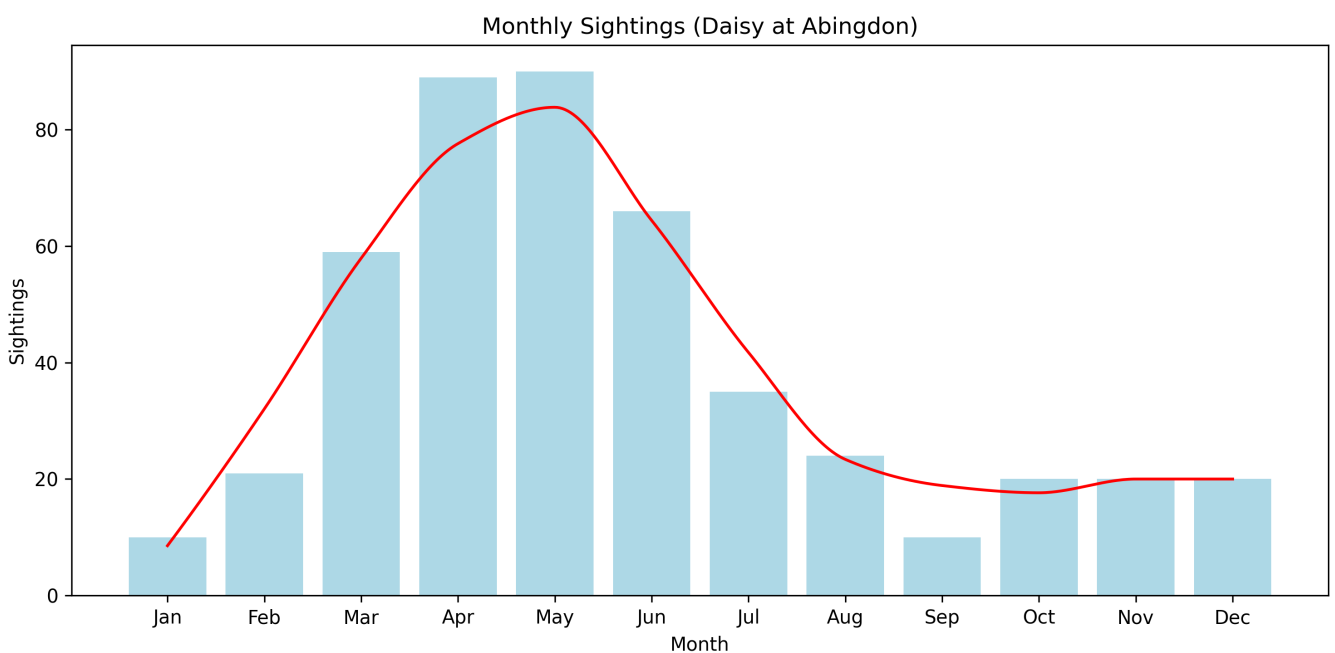
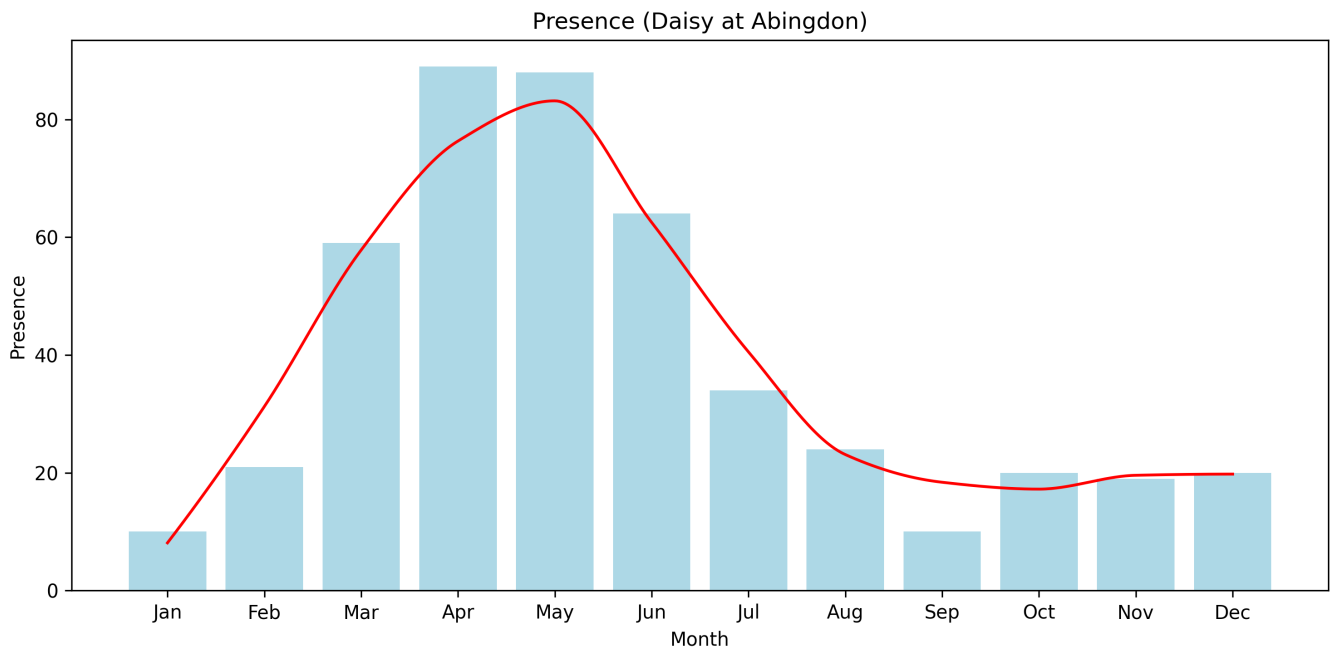
Daisy

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (near year-round)

The Daisy is one of the most familiar and widespread flowers in Abingdon, appearing in lawns, verges, and grassland throughout much of the year. Its small, bright flowers form a constant but often overlooked presence.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Daisy shows a **very broad flowering period extending across most of the year**.

Records occur in many months, with activity increasing through spring to a peak in late spring or early summer. Flowering continues through summer and into autumn, with reduced but persistent levels outside the main peak.

The overall pattern is that of a **near-continuous flowering presence with a seasonal rise and fall in intensity**.

Interpretation

The Daisy's flowering pattern reflects a **highly flexible and persistent flowering strategy**.

Unlike species with tightly constrained flowering windows, Daisy:

- Flowers over a very long period
- Maintains a continuous presence across seasons
- Responds readily to favourable conditions

This results in:

- A broad seasonal curve rather than a sharp peak
- Ongoing flowering even outside the main season
- A strong presence in everyday environments

The spring and early summer peak reflects optimal growing conditions, when flowering is most abundant and conspicuous.

Outside this peak, flowering continues at lower levels, creating a **background continuity across the year**.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that is almost always in flower somewhere, with seasonal variation expressed as changes in intensity rather than presence**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (near year-round)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Daisy, flowering is not confined to a narrow seasonal window. Instead, the species maintains a near-continuous presence, with peaks reflecting favourable conditions rather than discrete flowering events.

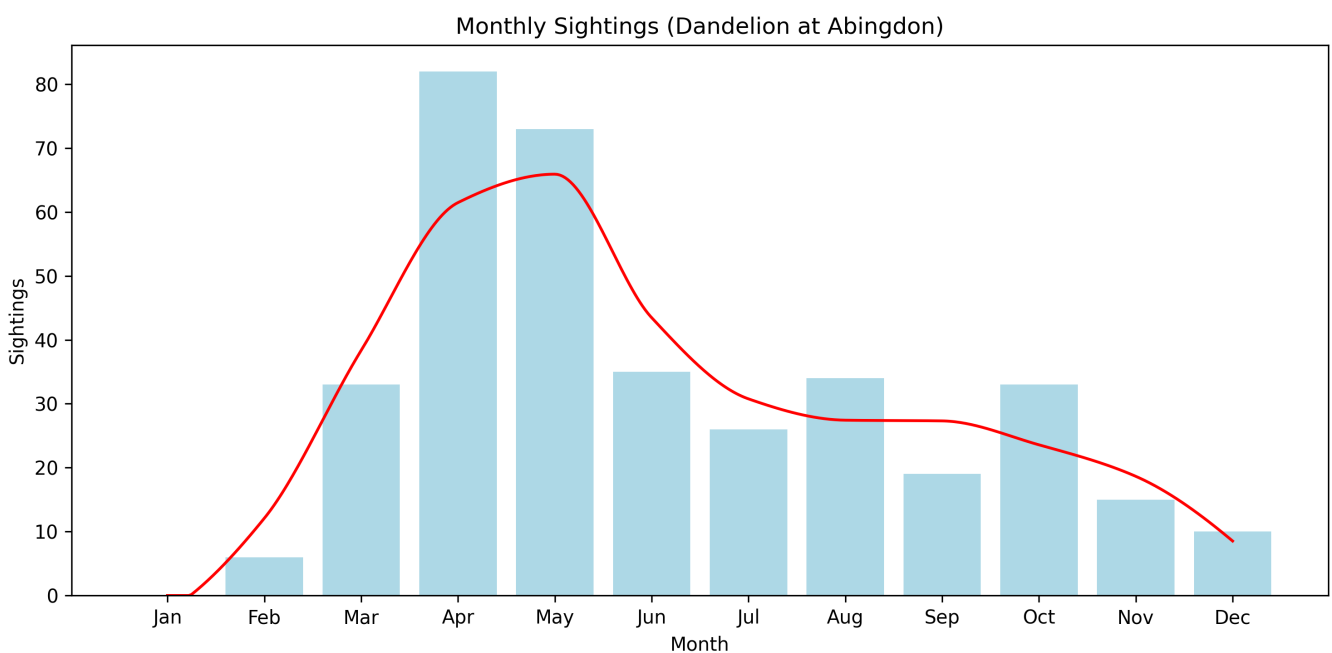
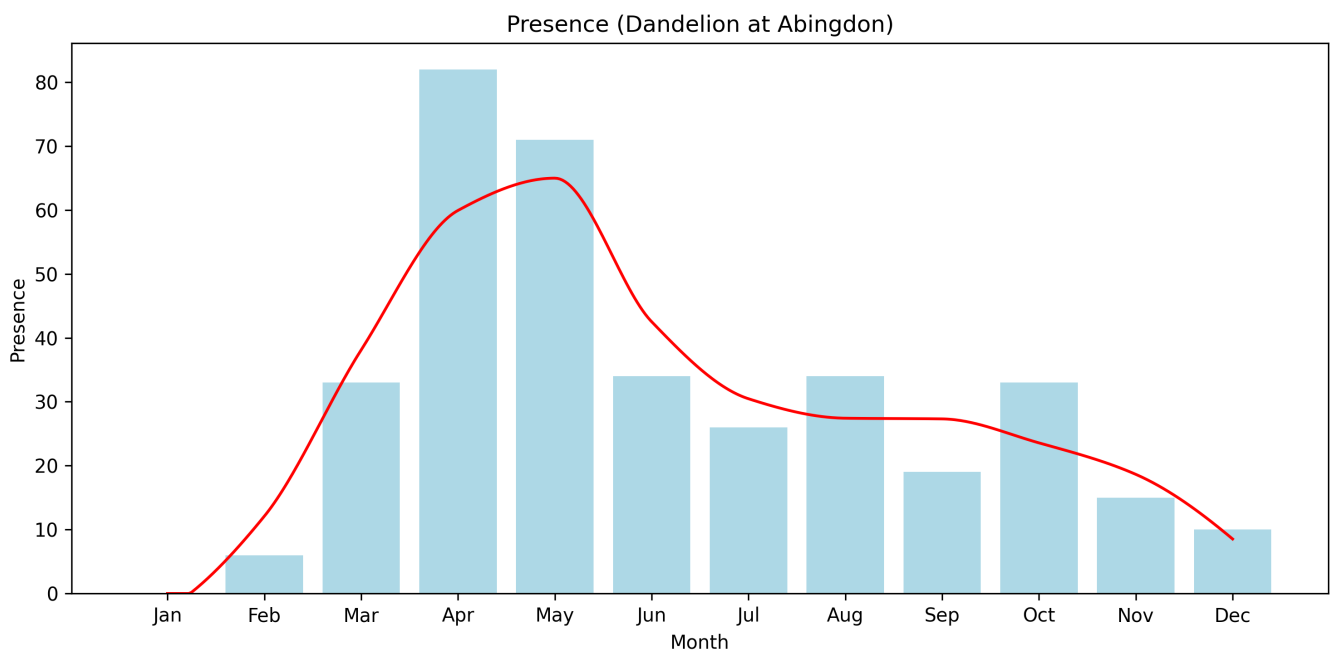
Dandelion

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (near year-round, spring peak)

Dandelion is one of the most widespread and recognisable plants in Abingdon, occurring in lawns, verges, and disturbed ground. Its bright yellow flowers are especially prominent in spring, forming a familiar seasonal signal.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Dandelion shows a **very broad flowering period extending across much of the year**, with a strong seasonal peak.

Records occur in many months, rising sharply through spring to a pronounced peak in late spring or early summer. Flowering continues through summer and into autumn, with lower levels outside the main peak.

The overall pattern is that of a **near-continuous flowering presence with a strong spring maximum**.

Interpretation

The Dandelion's flowering pattern reflects a **persistent and opportunistic flowering strategy**.

Like Daisy, Dandelion:

- Flowers across a wide seasonal window
- Maintains a presence beyond the main peak
- Is capable of flowering whenever conditions allow

However, unlike Daisy, it shows a more pronounced seasonal structure:

- A strong surge in spring when conditions are optimal
- High visibility during this period due to mass flowering
- Continued but reduced activity outside the peak

This results in:

- A clear central peak
- Extended tails into summer and autumn
- Occasional flowering even outside the main season

The species' ability to exploit a wide range of habitats contributes to its sustained presence across the year.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that combines near-continuous flowering with a strong seasonal pulse**, making it both persistent and highly visible at key times of year.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (near year-round, spring peak)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For plant groups such as Dandelion, records may include multiple closely related species with overlapping flowering times. As such, the observed pattern represents a combined seasonal signal rather than a single tightly defined flowering event.

The Constant Layer

What Remains

Throughout the year, much changes.

Species appear and disappear. Some are present only briefly, marking specific moments in the season. Others rise to prominence and then fade, their influence concentrated into particular phases.

But not everything follows this pattern.

Some species remain.

They do not define the year through sudden appearance or dramatic peaks. Instead, they provide a continuous presence, forming a background against which the more visible changes take place.

This is the constant layer.

Species such as Woodpigeon are present throughout the year, but vary in how they are encountered. At times they are seen in large numbers, gathering and moving across the landscape. At others, they are simply part of the everyday environment, noticed without drawing attention.

Plants such as Daisy and Dandelion show a similar persistence. They may reach peaks of activity, particularly in spring and early summer, but they rarely disappear entirely. Instead, they continue at lower levels, maintaining a thread of continuity across the seasons.

Other species, like Cleavers or Shepherd's Purse, contribute in quieter ways. Their flowering may be diffuse, their presence easily overlooked, but they extend across large parts of the year, filling gaps that more seasonal species leave behind.

What distinguishes these species is not intensity, but consistency.

They are the elements that remain when others have gone. They provide structure when the more dynamic signals of the year are absent. They ensure that the landscape is never entirely empty, even at its quietest points.

Without them, the year would feel fragmented — a series of isolated events with little connection between them.

With them, it becomes continuous.

Seen in this way, the more dramatic patterns of the year — the pulses of spring, the intensity of summer, the gradual release into autumn — are layered on top of something more stable.

They are variations within a framework that persists.

And it is this framework that allows the year to be experienced not just as a sequence of changes, but as something whole.

The species that remain do not draw attention to themselves.

But they are always there.

And, in the end, they are what hold the year together.

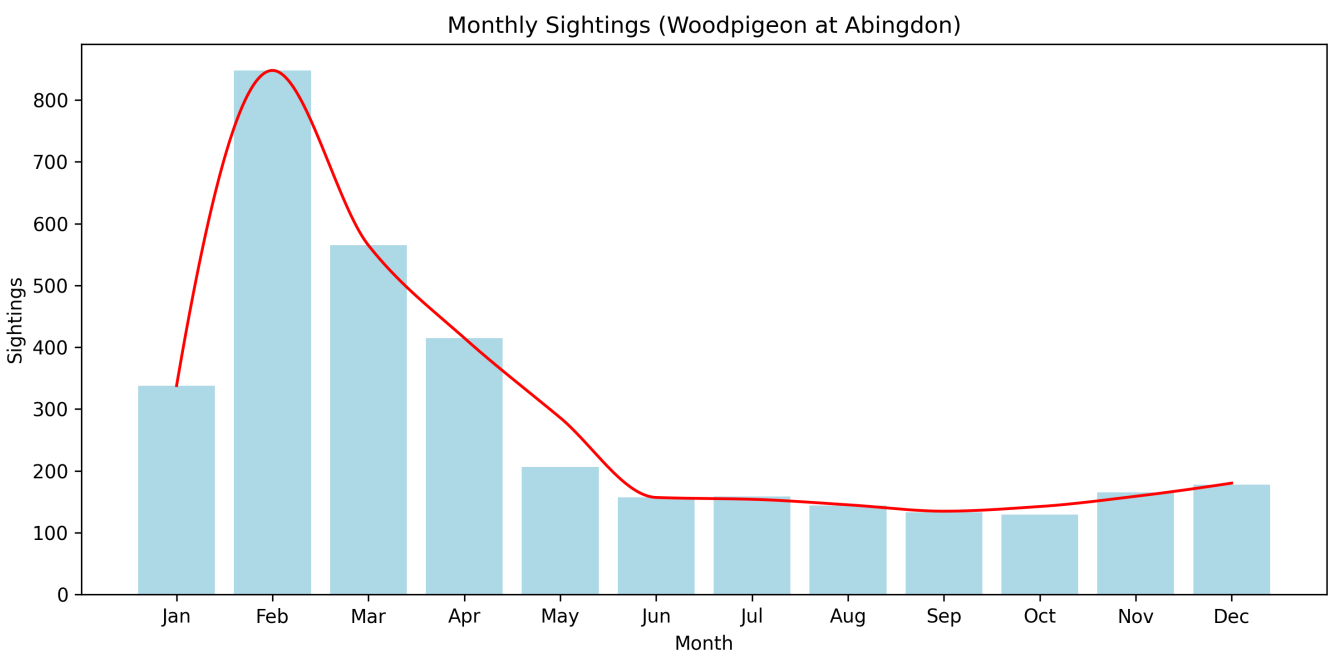
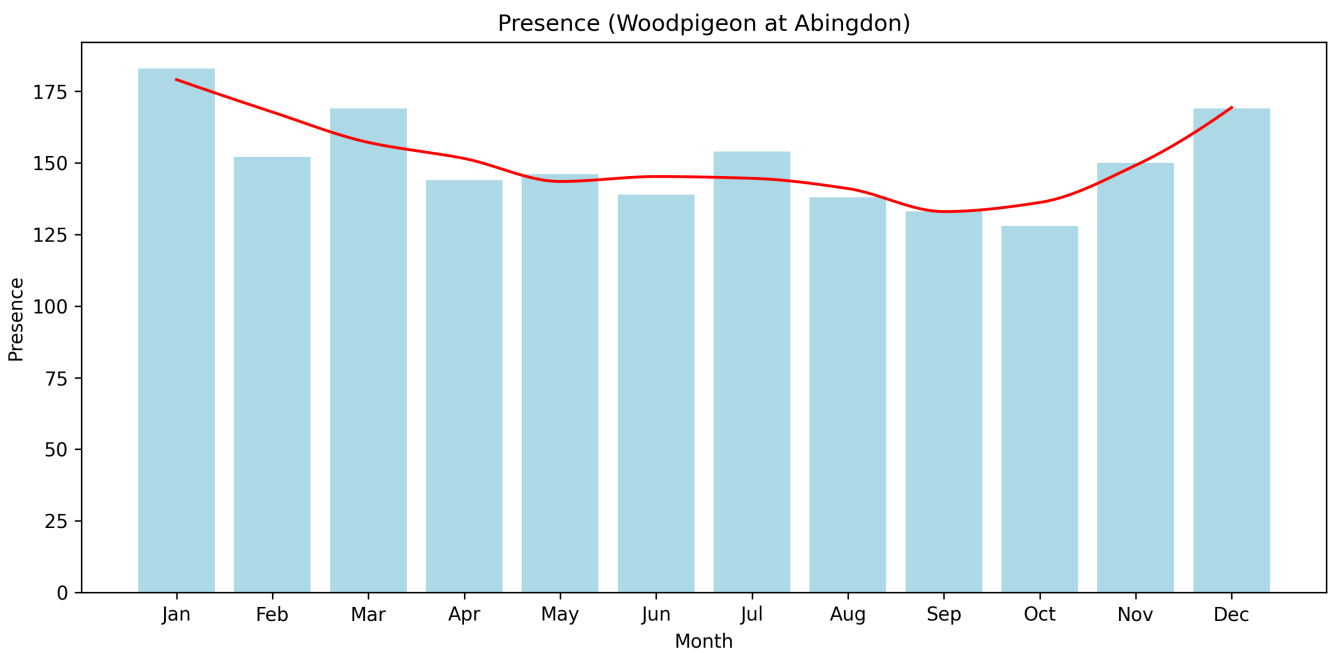
Woodpigeon

Role in the year: Aggregation-driven resident

The Woodpigeon is one of the most familiar and widespread birds in Abingdon, present in gardens, farmland, and woodland throughout the year. Its steady cooing and frequent movement across the landscape make it a constant backdrop to everyday observation.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: how it occupies the year.

Seasonal Pattern



Woodpigeon shows a **consistently high presence throughout the entire year**, with only modest seasonal variation.

Records occur in every month, with presence remaining broadly stable from winter through summer. There is a slight tendency toward higher levels in winter and early spring, but the overall pattern is remarkably even.

In contrast, total sightings show greater variability, with more pronounced peaks and troughs across the year.

The overall pattern is that of a **fully resident species, always present but with changing group sizes rather than changing occupancy**.

Interpretation

The key feature of Woodpigeon's seasonal pattern is the **decoupling of presence and abundance**.

The species is recorded in every month, and in a large proportion of days within each month. This reflects its status as a true resident, occupying the landscape continuously throughout the year.

However, the number of individuals recorded varies more strongly. This suggests that:

- Birds form larger or more visible groups at certain times of year
- Movements within the local landscape affect how many individuals are encountered at once

The slightly elevated presence in winter and early spring may reflect increased visibility as birds range more widely over open farmland or gather in loose flocks.

During the breeding season, birds are more dispersed and territorial, which can reduce the number of individuals recorded per observation even though the species remains present.

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that is always there, but not always encountered in the same way**. Seasonal structure is driven less by arrival or departure, and more by shifts in grouping behaviour and local movement.

Summary

Aspect

Seasonal pattern

Classification

Aggregation-driven resident

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed behaviour rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Woodpigeon, presence alone provides limited seasonal insight, as the species is recorded consistently throughout the year. Instead, variation in counts and grouping behaviour plays a more important role in shaping the observed pattern.

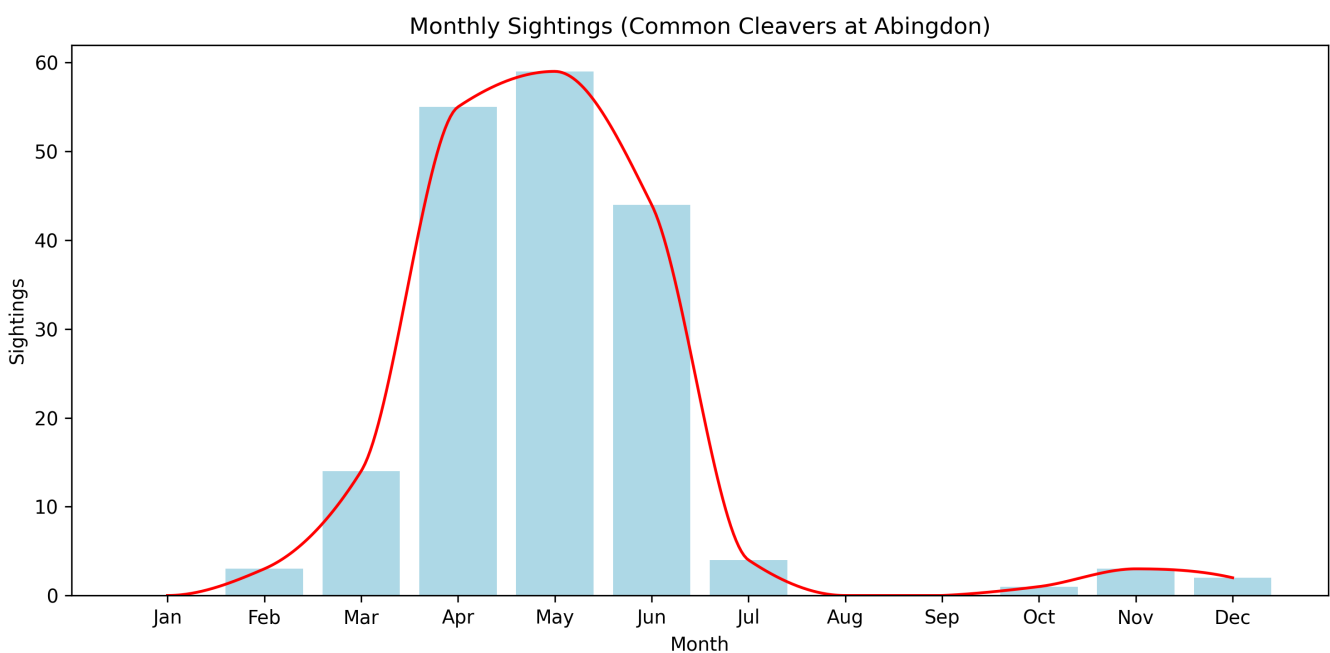
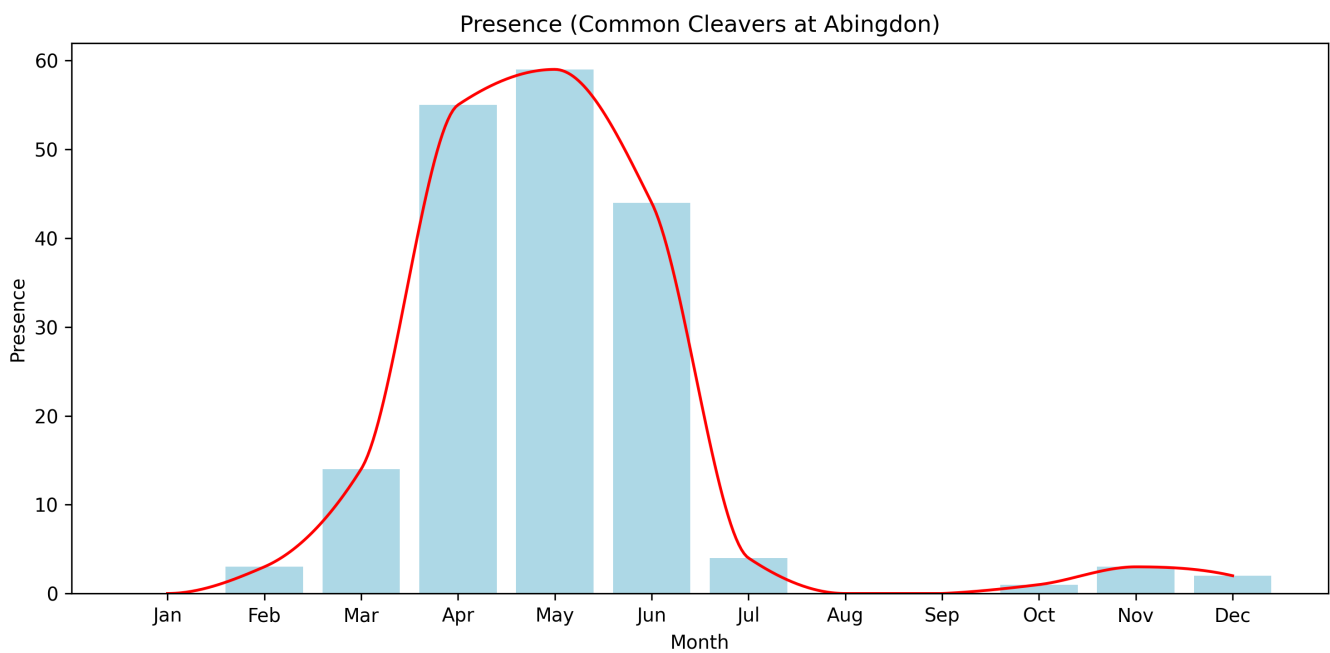
Common Cleavers

Flowering period type: Extended flowering period (spring–summer, diffuse)

Common Cleavers is a widespread and often overlooked plant in Abingdon, found scrambling through hedgerows, along verges, and in disturbed ground. Its small, inconspicuous flowers contrast with its abundant and persistent presence.

This page summarises how the species appears in the records: the structure of its flowering period across the year.

Flowering Period



Common Cleavers shows a **broad and extended flowering period across spring and summer**.

Records begin in spring and continue steadily through the summer months, with no sharply defined peak. Activity is spread across the season, with gradual rises and falls rather than abrupt changes.

The overall pattern is that of a **long, diffuse flowering period without a strong central peak**.

Interpretation

The flowering pattern of Common Cleavers reflects a **low-intensity but persistent seasonal presence**.

Unlike species that produce a strong, concentrated display, Cleavers:

- Flowers over an extended period
- Produces relatively inconspicuous blooms
- Is often recorded opportunistically rather than as a focal observation

This results in:

- A relatively even distribution of records across the season
- A lack of a pronounced peak
- A “background” signal rather than a dominant seasonal event

The extended flowering window may also reflect:

- Variation in habitat conditions
- Continuous growth and flowering across the season
- The species’ ability to exploit disturbed or nutrient-rich environments

Overall, the pattern reflects a **species that flowers steadily over time, contributing continuity rather than a distinct seasonal highlight**.

Summary

Aspect	Classification
Flowering period	Extended flowering period (spring–summer, diffuse)

Notes

These patterns are derived from long-term personal field records and should be read as descriptions of observed flowering rather than complete biological accounts.

For species such as Common Cleavers, the flowering signal may be influenced by detectability and recording behaviour, as the flowers are small and often overlooked. As such, the observed pattern represents a combination of biological timing and observational emphasis.

Closing

The year does not end in a single moment.

There is no clear point at which one phase gives way entirely to the next. Instead, change continues as it has throughout — gradually, unevenly, and often without drawing attention to itself.

Some species have already gone. Others remain, though less frequently encountered. A few continue almost unchanged, forming the same quiet background that has been present from the beginning.

The patterns described in this booklet begin to loosen.

Peaks flatten. Absences lengthen. The strong signals of spring and summer give way to something more subdued. And yet, nothing truly disappears. The structure remains, even as its expression fades.

In time, the landscape returns to a state that resembles the beginning.

Fewer species are in flower. Activity is reduced. What stands out once again are the constants — the species that persist, and the subtle shifts that mark the passing of time.

And then, almost without notice, the cycle begins again.

A first flower appears.

A familiar pattern re-emerges.

Something that was absent returns.

The year does not start over.

It continues.

And what was once anticipated becomes familiar once more.