

# **Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2012**



# RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2012

## Contents

	page number
<b>The Nature Reserve</b>	
Establishment.....	4
Brief Description.....	4
Climate .....	5
Geomorphology.....	5
Habitats.....	5
Species and Conservation.....	10
Visiting .....	11
The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.....	13
Publications.....	14
Wildlife Summary.....	17
Moths of Rye Harbour.....	30
Management Summary .....	32

## Appendices

1.....	Nature Reserve Management - Committees, staff and objectives	34
2.....	Income and Expenditure Accounts for Year End 31st March 2013	37
3.....	Bird Populations at Rye Harbour SSSI	39
4.....	School Visits	41
5.....	Notes for the Guidance of Visitors	42

Cover photo:  
Rye Harbour Farm new shingle and saltmarsh

The Nature Reserve address is:

2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU

telephone: 01797 223862.

e-mail: [rhnroffice@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:rhnroffice@sussexwt.org.uk)

web site: [www.WildRye.info](http://www.WildRye.info)

# Guide to footpaths around Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

**Sussex**  
Wildlife Trust








**RYE HARBOUR**  
NATURE RESERVE



[www.WildRye.info](http://www.WildRye.info)

1 kilometre

**Key**

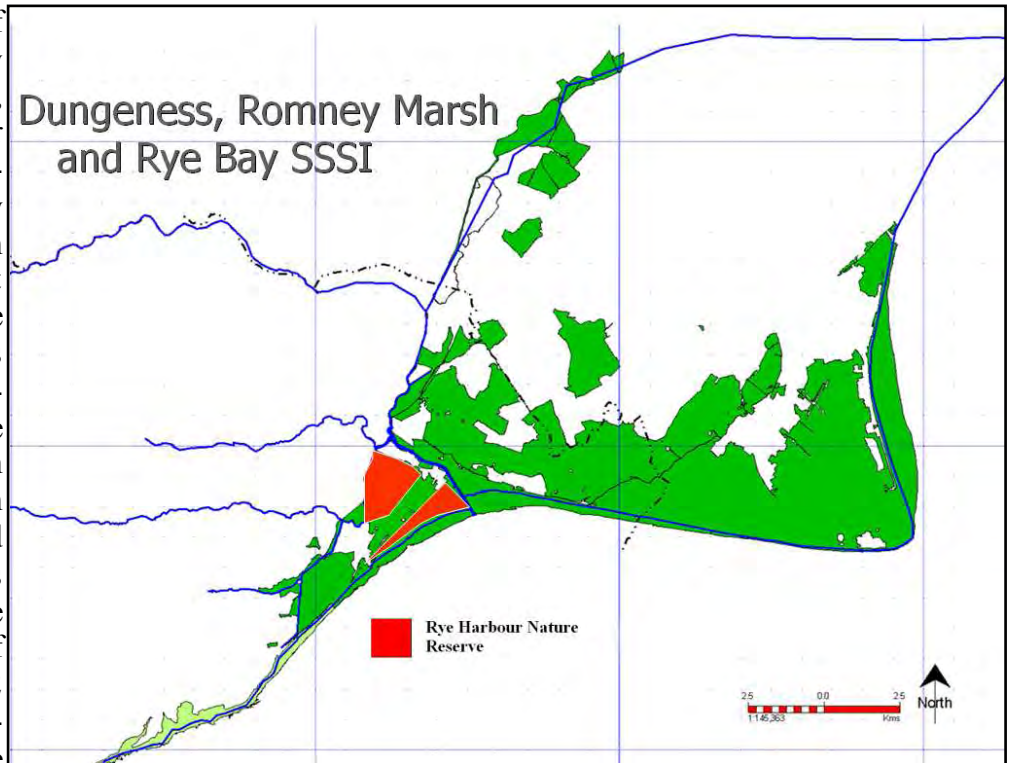
-  Nature Reserve
-  Footpaths
-  Birdwatching Hide
-  Car Park
-  Toilets

# The Nature Reserve

## Establishment

The large triangle of land lying between Rye, Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) in 1953. In 1965 the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) published a report on the future development of the East Sussex Coast which included proposals to encourage the establishment of a Nature Reserve over the whole of this 766 hectare SSSI.

In 1970 most of the 101 ha. of shingle beach now owned by the Environment Agency (EA, but originally the Kent River Authority) was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by the County Council, which also appointed a Management Committee to administer the Reserve on its behalf. This was the beginning of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Since then further land has been added by agreement with neighbouring landowners and the Management Committee is hopeful that further areas of the SSSI will also become part of the Reserve. In August 1992 the Sussex Wildlife Trust purchased the 77 ha. of Castle



Water and this was incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve in 1993, bringing the number of landowners to four and the area to 326 ha. In 2006 the SSSI was combined with eight other local SSSIs to form the 9,000ha. 'Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI.

The SSSI is also part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Special Protection Area (SPA)** and the Dungeness **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**. It is still being considered for another international designations: as part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Ramsar site**

## Brief Description

The SSSI is generally flat and low lying with no natural feature above 6m. and most below 4m. The high points are the crests of storm ridges (5.5m. at Watch Cottage, 4.5m. at Camber Castle and 6m along shore) built up over hundreds of years by the action of tides and storms. The low points were areas of saltmarsh between the shingle ridges. The influence of the sea has been greatly reduced by sea defences and a drainage system of ditches emptying into the rivers has lowered the natural water table. This has enabled a traditional agriculture of mainly sheep grazing with some arable and, from 1977 until 2003, extensive arable cultivation of Harbour Farm. The loss of wetland has been partly offset by the extraction of the largest shingle ridges creating pits.

## Climate

Winds prevail from the south-west and give the area a typically mild and damp maritime climate. Strong winds from south-east to south-west are laden with sea spray and this hostile salinity probably influences the distribution of some species. The proximity to the sea does, however, generally protect the area from extremes of temperature. There are occasional long periods of dominating easterly winds that make the climate drier, more continental and give extremes of heat in the summer and cold in the winter.

The maximum temperature recorded was 32.5°C on 3rd August 1990.

The minimum temperature was -12°C on 10th February 1986.

The greatest daily rainfall was 72mm on 8th October 1987.

The driest year was 1998 with 592mm.

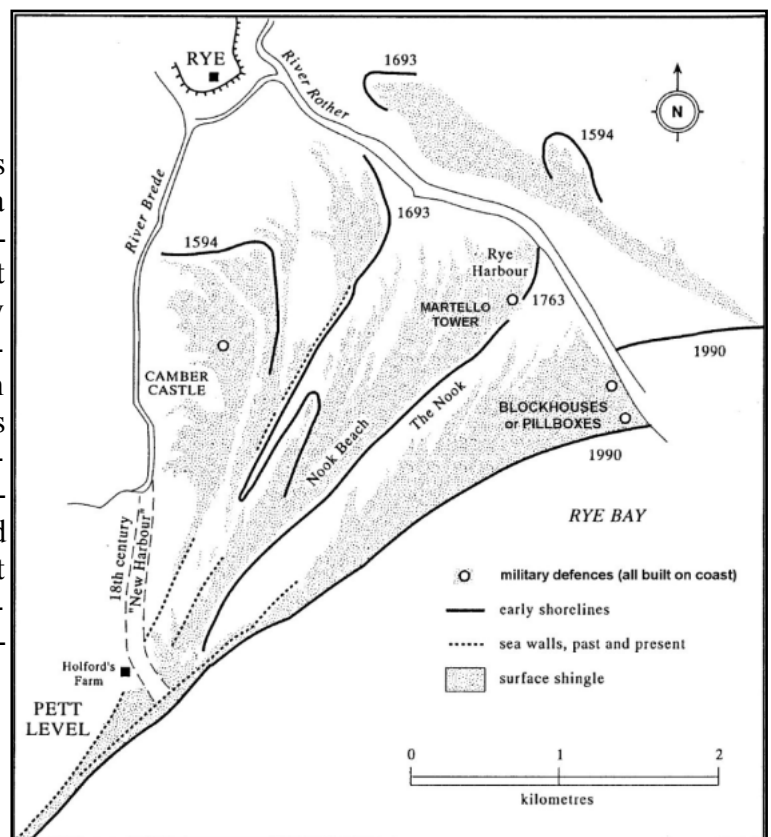
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

The driest month was August 1995 with just 1mm.

and the wettest month was October 1987 with 275.5mm.

## Geomorphology

Although much of the interest in the Reserve is centred upon its varied wildlife, the SSSI as a whole is of considerable geomorphological interest because of the succession of shingle ridges that traverse it. These ridges have been accurately dated because they were established during recorded storms over several hundred years. Herein lies another valuable aspect of the SSSI, as it is possible to put an accurate time scale to the vegetation succession, from the bare shingle of the current storm crest to the stabilised grassland around the historic Camber Castle. For a detailed account see Lovegrove (1953) *Old Shorelines Near Camber Castle*. The *Geographical Journal*. 119, 200-207.



## Habitats

There are several important factors that increase the diversity of habitats within the area. These include a wide range of:

**SALINITY** - from fresh water to brackish to saline.

**WATER LEVEL** - at Castle Water levels fluctuate by up to 1m. from summer to winter.

**EXPOSURE TO SALT LADEN WINDS** - related to the distance from the coast.

**SOIL** - from pure shingle to sand to fine marine sediments.

**LAND MANAGEMENT** - from no inputs to sheep farming to intensive arable farming.

It is possible to differentiate 10 broad habitats within the SSSI:

## Intertidal

At low tide there is an extensive area of sand and mud with shallow pools that is continually changing in structure and form, depending on tides and weather. The area varies with the tidal cycle, with about 105 ha. at mean low water. This is an important feeding and roosting site for waders, terns and gulls. The exposed nature of the foreshore means that few plants can maintain a foothold, but there is a rich invertebrate fauna living below the surface, for example, sea mouse, banded wedge shell, lugworm and slipper limpets. The shrimp *Crangon vulgaris* is common in the shallow water over sand just offshore and during the spring and summer people use wide nets to catch shrimps for food. At the River Mouth the sea defences provide a hard substrate for some rocky shore species, such as beadlet anemone, serrated wrack and channelled wrack (right), a regionally rare species. The commercial fish stocks of Rye Bay have declined during the last 50 years following the more efficient methods employed by fishing boats, but there is still a small fishing fleet based in Rye and some shore fishing by rod and by netting.



## Saltmarsh

This type of habitat was once extensive, covering much of the river levels and Romney Marshes, but due to flood defences, before 2011 was restricted to a narrow strip along the River Rother. At the higher part of the intertidal zone there has developed 5 ha of saltmarsh habitat that is dominated by Borrer's saltmarsh-grass, stiff Saltmarsh-grass, sea purslane and sea aster. On the highest part of the saltmarsh, only occasionally covered by the sea, grows sea heath and sea wormwood and on the lowest part, in the mud that is covered by most tides, grow several species of glasswort (right). These specialised plants are the food of some scarce invertebrates, including crescent striped moth, many micro moths and beetles. A further 0.75 ha. was created at the Wader Pool by controlling the access of the sea into a prepared scrape, and this has been successfully colonised by saltmarsh species such as sea blite and *Corophium volutator*, a small shrimp that is the favoured food of redshank. In addition, a saltmarsh re-creation programme on Harbour Farm, completed in 2011, has created an additional 20ha of this habitat which has already been colonised by a wide range of saltmarsh species.



## Reclaimed Saltmarsh

By the construction of embankments and the digging of drainage ditches it has been possible to exclude the sea and cultivate the alluvial deposits of the old saltmarsh. The major form of agriculture was and remains sheep grazing. Large expanses of grazed grassland attract large flocks of wintering lapwing, golden plover and curlew. Where the grazing is reduced the tussocky grass is home to small mammals which in turn attract hunting barn owls. Since 1970's there has been an increase in arable agriculture with some ditches filled in and field drainage installed, though the saltmarsh re-creation project on Harbour Farm (see above) has reversed some of these losses. Although generally species poor, these areas provide valuable habitat for species such as grey partridge and sky lark.

## Drainage Ditches

The reclaimed saltmarsh areas are drained by a network of ditches, some of which follow the line of the old saltmarsh creeks. Most are regularly cleaned mechanically, but still retain an interesting remnant of the wetland flora and fauna. Nearly 5 km. of the ditches have a strong saline influence. Although there has been some infilling of ditches in the SSSI during the last twenty years there is about 22 km. remaining. Some ditches are dominated by reed, some by branched bur-reed (right) and other, more saline ditches by sea club-rush. Many ditches dry out in some summers and this keeps the fish population low, which in turn enables a high population of amphibians and aquatic invertebrates to survive, for example more than 100 species of water beetle, including the largest British insect, the great silver water beetle. The marsh frog is the most common amphibian.



## Shingle Ridges

There are three types of shingle ridges within the SSSI, covering 325 ha:

### i) Natural, bare ridges

Where the form and structure of the ridges are natural there is very little soil and it is only possible for a very few, highly specialised, plant species to colonise, for example, sea kale, sea pea sea campion and curled dock. Similarly the invertebrate fauna is highly specialised, for example, the rare flea beetle *Dibolia cynoglossi* is found only on red hemp-nettle. These shingle ridges are also home to the tiny fly, *Megaselia yatesi* that was discovered here as a new species in 2001, living about 1m. below the surface. The ridges are also the preferred habitat of nesting little tern, oystercatcher and ringed plover. These natural ridges are characterised by a smooth rounded form, a grading of stone size and little material between the stones. Over very many years material accumulates (by exceptionally high tides and wind blown debris), especially at the base of ridges and more species become established, for example, viper's bugloss, yellow horned poppy and the maritime sub-species of herb robert.

The viper's bugloss is an important plant for several rare invertebrates, the micro moths *Ethmia bipunctella*, *E. terminella* and *Cynaeda dentalis*, and the weevil *Mogulones geographicus*. Where the shingle is not disturbed, a rich lichen community develops which builds up the soil for other plants to grow in the shingle. This lichen community is home to many invertebrates including the two rare sub-species of pigmy footman. Along the Beach Reserve there are several sorted piles of blue flints or boulders of around 2-3 inches in length.



These once provided a modest living to those who collected them for the manufacture of high grade pottery. Hundreds of tons of these flints were shipped to the Stoke-on-Trent area by sea, either to Runcorn or Selby. The trade petered out in the early 1950's purely for economic reasons, but in some places on the shore it is still possible to see some of the sorted piles of the "blue boulders" that were not collected.

### ii) Natural, vegetated ridges

After hundreds of years a thin soil has developed on the old shingle ridges (although this may have been encouraged by past land management to increase the area for grazing) and a variety of grassland plants have established, buck's-horn plantain (right), stemless thistle, stork's-bill, smooth cat's-ear, sand spurrey, gorse and fifteen species of vetch and clover. A few bare areas do still exist, but in some cases this is due to more recent damage. The thin soil overlying shingle dries out very quickly and consequently the plants must be adapted to regular periods of drought. For the invertebrates, such as the girdled and the hairy-legged mining bees (both notable species) the thin soils on the ridges warm up quickly and there is a good source of nectar.



### iii) Damaged ridges - where shingle has been disturbed

or removed to a level above the water table, there is a succession of plants that is different to that of natural ridges. Relatively quickly a wide variety of species colonise so that little bare shingle remains. In a few areas where there is little sand between the stones the shingle does remain quite bare despite the disturbance. In a wide variety of places sand has been added to flattened areas (along old railway, roadway and on the sites of fishing huts) and these are particularly rich in grassland species such as Danish scurvygrass, bird's-foot trefoil, rue-leaved saxifrage and the endangered least lettuce. As part of the saltmarsh re-creation project on Harbour Farm several shingle ridges covered by soil during the conversion to arable were stripped in an attempt to re-create shingle habitat.

## Pits

Where shingle was extracted to a level below the water table there have developed important wetland habitats that have partly replaced the natural wetland that occurred here. An important aspect of their interest is a very wide range of salinity within the SSSI. There is about 85 ha. of open water.

New pits are rapidly colonised by a rich variety of aquatic flora and fauna but, as the vegetation develops around the margin, some of the pioneering species are lost, for example the three rare beetles spangled button beetle, *Cercyon bifenestratus* and *Augyles hispidulus* are dependent on bare sand at the margin of still, fresh water. If left unmanaged the pit margins often develop a fringe of reed or reedmace, which in time may become shaded out by willows. These more mature areas are the habitat of rare species such as medicinal leech and the hairy dragonfly (right).



The variety of water depth is attractive to a wide variety of wildfowl throughout the year; diving duck prefer the deep water of the pits, while the dabbling duck prefer the shallows and margins. Some pits have islands which are a safe haven for nesting or roosting birds. At Ternery Pool the islands have been managed to provide suitable nesting sites for terns and gulls. At Castle Water the Nature Reserve has modified the steep margins to create gentle gradients that favour much wetland wildlife.

## Marsh

Where the water table is close to the ground level there is the potential for the development of a marsh habitat. The vegetation is dependent upon the salinity, soil type and the degree of grazing, so within the LNR and SSSI there is a wide variety of marsh communities: rushes tolerate grazing, whereas *Phragmites* reed (right) grows where there is none. The reedbed is important for several species of bird - reed and sedge warblers, bearded tit, water rail and bittern as well as many species of invertebrates (the notable moths of the reedbeds are; *Schoenobius gigantella* a pyralid, reed dagger, flame wainscot and silky wainscot).



## Sand

In a few areas the soil is sandy. On the Beach Reserve, near the saltmarsh, there is a small dune of wind blown sand from Camber Dunes, across the River Rother. At Castle Farm, near the farm buildings there is an extensive ridge of sand. Plants associated with this habitat include thyme-leaved sandwort, sea sandwort, sand sedge and sand couch grass. At Castle Water the extensive sandy areas are mainly man-made, resulting from the large quantity of washings from the shingle extraction process. Here the grassland is particularly interesting and in some areas bare sand dominates with rosettes of stork's-bill. This is the habitat of the weevil *Limobius mixtus* at Castle Water, its only known British site.

## Scrub

The development of scrub is restricted by management, especially by grazing and cultivation. There are areas of gorse (right), hawthorn, bramble, elder, blackthorn and sea buckthorn scrub at Castle Water, Castle Farm and the Beach Reserve. These are important sites for invertebrates and birds, including nesting linnets.



## Woodland

Trees would dominate much of the area if it were not for management, especially by grazing and cultivation. Where these activities have not taken place for very many years, for example, on some islands at Castle Water, there is a dense growth of several tree species, including white and grey willows and birch. It is on several of these islands that the cormorant colony has developed in recent years.

## Species And Conservation

With this great variety of habitats it is not surprising that there is such a wealth of wildlife on the Nature Reserve. The Beach Reserve is recognised as having one of the finest examples of coastal shingle vegetation in the country. Particularly in late May and June the beach is transformed by a colourful array of flowers, the striking Sea Kale, and Viper's Bugloss, the delicate Yellow Homed Poppy and carpets of Sea Pea to name only a few. Along the river's edge is a good example of tidal saltmarsh vegetation and going inland a little, the gravel pits and drainage dykes provide more variety in the form of waterside and aquatic plant life. Around Camber Castle there are the unique ancient shingle ridges that have a very specialised flora. In all more than 430 species of flowering plants have so far been recorded on the Nature Reserve, including 24 scarce species and one endangered species, least lettuce and one that was extinct in Britain, stinking hawk's-beard.

Where there is a good variety of plant life, there usually exists a correspondingly good variety of animal life. Studies carried out on the invertebrates have shown Rye Harbour Nature Reserve to be of outstanding National Importance. Around 2,500 species have been noted so far, including 245 Notable species and 104 Red Data Book (RDB). However, there remains much to learn and there is a lack of detailed knowledge about most of the rare and notable species.

Of the larger animals on the Reserve perhaps the one most commented upon is the Marsh Frog (which was introduced from Hungary to Romney Marsh in 1935), to be heard noisily croaking all summer, while another is the Brown Hare, now an uncommon sight on the beach throughout the year. At night the Reserve is the domain of Badgers, Foxes and Bats.

However, Rye Harbour is most famous for its bird life and in particular its sea-bird colonies. As well as the rare little tern, this includes common tern, Sandwich tern, black-headed gull and more recently Mediterranean gull. In recent years the populations of these and other ground nesting birds (such as avocet, oystercatcher, redshank, lapwing, and wheatear) have increased in number and breeding success. This has been achieved through careful habitat management and implementing conservation measures such as the erection of anti-predator electric fencing enclosures and the enlistment of about 80 voluntary wardens. So far more than 270 species of birds have been recorded on the Reserve, of which over 70 have nested. Apart from the interest of the breeding birds, Rye Harbour is also a good place to observe bird migration, while in winter large numbers of wildfowl and waders gather to take full advantage of the relatively undisturbed Reserve area. A complete list of species recorded on the Nature Reserve is available from the Reserve address and on our web site [www.WildRye.info](http://www.WildRye.info)

The Rye Harbour SSSI and Local Nature Reserve constitutes a unique place and its management is of paramount importance for the future of its communities of plants and animals. It is not just the number of species recorded that is important, but also the large number considered local, notable, rare or endangered. The following table shows the number of species and their national status (according to RECORDER 6) on each of the areas within the Nature Reserve, the SSSI and the Rye Bay area.

### NUMBER OF SPECIES BY STATUS AND SITE

Sites	British Status			Total Species	Records
	Local	Notable	Rare		
<b>Rye Harbour LNR</b>	590	230	184	4,470	101,537
<b>Rye Harbour SSSI</b>	650	266	125	4,989	201,688
<b>Rye Bay</b>	1,139	475	235	8,076	500,858

## Visiting

Access to the Reserve is restricted to footpaths and in order to avoid disturbance to wildlife all visitors are particularly requested not to enter the sign-posted "Wildlife Sanctuary Areas" or any of the other fenced areas within the Reserve. There is no public vehicular access to the Reserve, but cars may be left in the car park at Rye Harbour where there is also a public convenience. Anyone proposing to organise a group visit to the Reserve should consult Appendix 5 of this report.

## Information Centres

The Nature Reserve has an unmanned Information Kiosk (below) situated in the Martello Tower car park at Rye Harbour. Information is displayed on the outside, highlighting historical features in the surrounding area, forthcoming events plus what to look out for throughout the month.

There is a vehicle counter at the entrance to the car park providing figures that are useful in estimating visitor numbers. A sample count has indicated that for every car entering the car park there are 2.8 people passing Lime Kiln Cottage (see table below). There are several other access points to the Nature Reserve, so this is not the entire picture of visitor use.



	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage
<b>JAN</b>	3509	9825
<b>FEB</b>	4143	11600
<b>MAR</b>	5300	14840
<b>APR</b>	5724	16026
<b>MAY</b>	7113	19915
<b>JUN</b>	7099	19877
<b>JUL</b>	8334	23334
<b>AUG</b>	9976	27933
<b>SEP</b>	8200	22960
<b>OCT</b>	5206	14575
<b>NOV</b>	3961	11089
<b>DEC</b>	3638	10186
<b>TOTALS</b>	72201	202161

Further information is available at the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre (below) where there are information boards, leaflets, reports and voluntary wardens to help you discover the wildlife of the Nature Reserve. This is open when volunteers are available, most days 10.00 – 16.00 hrs during the autumn and winter and 10.00–17.00 hrs spring and summer



\* Data not available

**Visitors entering Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre in 2012**

	<b>Hours open</b>	<b>Adults Entering</b>	<b>Children Entering</b>	<b>Total Entering</b>
<b>JAN</b>	177.5	617	101	718
<b>FEB</b>	150.75	589	171	760
<b>MAR</b>	185	819	96	915
<b>APR</b>	187.5	853	301	1154
<b>MAY</b>	209.75	1163	195	1358
<b>JUN</b>	198.25	1185	253	1438
<b>JUL</b>	206.5	1424	358	1782
<b>AUG</b>	210.5	1842	735	2577
<b>SEP</b>	199	1529	236	1765
<b>OCT</b>	197	920	227	1147
<b>NOV</b>	172.5	579	133	712
<b>DEC</b>	138.75	307	57	364
<b>TOTALS</b>	2233	11827	2863	14690

**Birdwatching Hides**

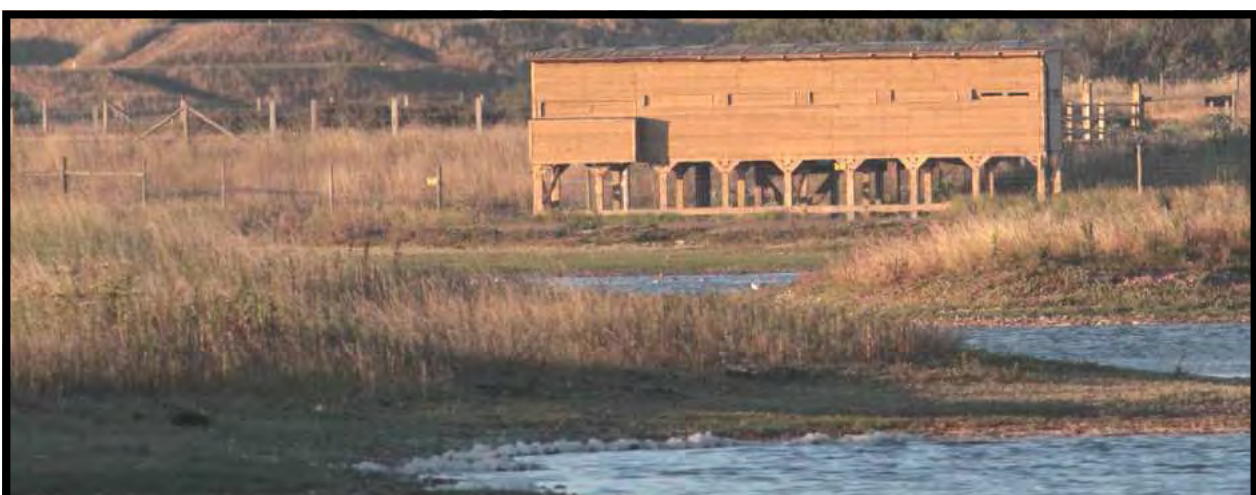
There are five birdwatching hides that are always open to the public.

The **Guy Crittall** and **Dr. Ray Parkes** Memorial Hides provide excellent viewing points from which to observe the birds present at Ternery Pool. The Crittall Hide is fully accessible after its reconstruction in 2003 as part of the ALSF project . Similarly, the Parkes Hide was replaced in 2004 with funding from the Brett Environmental Trust and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

The **John Gooders** Memorial Hide (below), replaced the Colin Green memorial hide in 2013, and was partly funded by the Gooders’ family. It is not far from the car park, and provides excellent views of the Wader Pool and the shingle beach beyond. This hide is accessible to wheelchairs.

The **Ken Halpin** Memorial Hide, previously Castle Water Hide, was renovated in 2012 with funding from the Halpin family. It is sited close to Camber Castle at the edge of Castle Water where it overlooks new islands and shores that have been re-profiled to enhance their value for wetland wildlife. This hide is now accessible to some wheelchairs, but is a challenging route!

The **Steve Denny** Hide overlooks the Quarry. It was completed in 2009 and was funded by the family of Steve Denny, a long-time committee member of the Friends. This hide is accessible to most wheelchairs.



## Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

The FRIENDS was founded in 1973 as a fund raising branch of the Management Committee of the Nature Reserve. The primary aim of the FRIENDS is to raise money in order to improve and enlarge the Reserve and to do so by encouraging interest in the conservation of wildlife and scenic beauty within the area. Monies raised by the FRIENDS have provided materials for fencing and hide construction, tools, notice boards, publications and part-funded the Nature Reserve vehicles, Wader Pool, Watch Cottage and Assistant Warden. There was an important addition to the Reserve in 1992 with the purchase of Castle Water by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. This purchase was only made possible by £40,000 contributed by the "FRIENDS' LAND FUND". In 1998 the FRIENDS took on the lease and modernisation of Lime Kiln Cottage to provide accommodation for staff and volunteers. In 2003 the Friends provided 5% "match funding" for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) project and £25,000 towards the Reedbeds and Bitterns project at Castle Water.

In 2012 the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre was opened to the public by a team of volunteers. It was opened for 2,233 hours and provided information about the FRIENDS, the Reserve and its wildlife to 14,690 people.

Newsletters are circulated to the FRIENDS, giving news on the wildlife and progress on the Reserve, dates and details of guided walks, special events, voluntary wardening and the workparties to carry out essential management. Members are encouraged to help support the Reserve in these ways, to benefit the wildlife, learn more about the wildlife and meet people with similar interests.

At the end of 2012 there were 1,540 subscriptions, representing about 2,055 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2012 amounted to £21,920 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £4,006 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme. The Friends also receive £4,670 in donations, and an additional £1,160 in Gift Aid.



## Publications

The following publications and sales goods are available from the Nature Reserve address on receipt of the correct payment and a large A5 (9"x 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>", unless otherwise stated) stamped addressed envelope, or from the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre, when it is open.

	Price	Postage
<b>Rye Harbour booklet</b> - your guide to a shingle Nature Reserve	£1	69p
<b>Camber Castle Booklet</b> - description of Henry VIII's Castle	£1	69p
<b>Colour Postcards</b> - postage for up to 10 cards	40p each	69p or six for £2
<b>Writing Paper with envelopes</b> - pack of ten with little tern and yellow horned poppy illustration.	£3.25	£1.10p
<b>Notelets</b> - pack of ten with Nature Reserve illustration.	£2.25	£1.10p
<b>Christmas Card</b> - packs of five	£2.50	69p
<b>Greetings Cards</b> - Blank	£1.00 each	69p
<b>Calico Bag</b> - with little tern logo	£3	69p
<b>Illustrated Tea Towel</b>	£3.50	69p
<b>Notepad</b> - RHNR logo	£1.75	69p
<b>Coasters</b>	£2	69p
<b>Window Sticker</b> (right)	50p	50p
<b>Pen</b>	£1.25	69p
<b>Pencil</b>	40p	69p
<b>Bendy Pencil</b>	85p	69p
<b>Eraser</b>	60p	69p
<b>Keyring</b>	£1.25	50p
<b>Leather Bookmark</b>	£1.25	50p
<b>Magnetic Bookmark</b>	£1.50	69p
<b>Fleece</b> - navy blue with embroidered logo, full length zip XXL, XL, L, M S.	£20	£2.60
<b>Sweatshirt</b> - dark blue with embroidered logo, XL, L, M S.	£12	£2.60
<b>Polo Shirt</b> - dark blue or white with embroidered logo (S, M, L, XL)	£10	£2.60
<b>Cap</b> - Navy blue with embroidered RHNR logo	£8	£1.40
<b>Micro Fleece Hat</b> - navy blue beanie with embroidered logo	£8	£1.40



## Downloads

The following reports and checklists are available as downloads from the reserve website at [www.WildRye.info](http://www.WildRye.info)

### Booklets

- Rye Harbour Booklet (1.8 MB)
- RX Wildlife Booklet (1MB)
- Camber Castle Booklet (2.3MB)

### Leaflets

- Camber Castle (500KB)
- Three Circular Walks (600KB)
- Rye Harbour's Little Terns (275KB)
- Camber Castle circular Walk

### Checklists

- A Checklist of all species of the SSSI at Rye Harbour (375KB)
- A Checklist of the Birds of Rye Harbour (390KB)
- A Checklist of the Flowers of Rye Harbour (420KB)
- A Checklist of the Spiders of Rye Harbour (300KB)
- A Checklist of the Dragonflies and Grasshoppers of Rye Harbour (93KB)
- A Checklist of the Butterflies and Moths of Rye Harbour (1.4MB)



**Stinking Hawksbeard**

### Wildlife Reports

- The Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour (1MB)
- The Birds and other vertebrates of Rye Harbour (1.3MB)
- The Grasshoppers and Crickets of Rye Harbour (1.6MB)
- The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Rye Harbour (4.4MB)
- The Rare Moths of Rye Harbour (1.6MB)
- Rye Bay Terns report from 2010 Annual Report of the Sussex Ornithological Society (0.4MB)
- Rye Bay Mediterranean Gulls from 2011 Annual Report of The Sussex Ornithological Society (0.9MB)

## Management Reports

Nature Reserve Management Plan 2012 - 21 (10MB)  
2011 Annual Report (4.8MB)  
2010 Annual Report (5.6MB)  
2009 Annual Report (7.4MB)  
2008 Annual Report (1.4MB)  
2007 Annual Report (1.2MB)  
2006 Annual Report (1MB)  
2005 Annual Report (900KB)  
2004 Annual Report (1.6MB)  
2003 Annual Report (6.6MB)  
1997 Annual Report (1MB)  
1973 Annual Report (12MB)  
1972 Annual Report (21MB)  
1971 Annual Report (14MB)  
1970 Annual Report part 1 (5MB)  
1970 Annual Report part 2 (13MB)  
ALSF Project Report (2MB)

## Two Bays Reports

Changes in Rye Bay (0.2MB)  
Changes in Rye Bay slides (22.7MB)  
Two Bays Species Report (0.1MB)  
Hymenoptera of Rye Bay (0.5MB)  
Coleoptera of Rye Bay (0.9MB)  
  
Diptera of Rye Bay (0.6MB)  
Araneae of Rye Bay (0.4MB)  
Lepidoptera of Rye Bay (1.2MB)  
Two Bays Saltmarsh Leaflet (0.3MB)  
Two Bays Sand Dune Leaflet (0.3MB)  
Two Bays Shingle Leaflet (0.3MB)  
Two Bays Reedbed Leaflet (0.3MB)

## Other Reports

Introductory Biogeography to Bees of the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East. Andrew Grace  
(2010) (3.7MB)



# Wildlife Summary

The following is a monthly summary of the wildlife seen by, or reported to the Nature Reserve for the recording area in 2012. This area covers the whole of Rye Harbour SSSI, the villages of Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach, the Wood, Camber Sands, the River Rother up to Rye and the Sea.

## January 2012

Waders provided the greatest diversity during January, though in general numbers were lower than those recorded in the last few months. The highest counts of both **Golden Plover** and **Lapwing** were recorded on the 12<sup>th</sup>, with 1500 and 500 respectively present on Flat Beach Level, while 88 **Curlew** were recorded here late on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. However, these last two species were outstripped by **Oystercatcher** during January, with 610 on Flat Beach on the 15<sup>th</sup>, one the highest January counts for this species in recent years. Other interesting wader sightings during



January included up to 100 **Dunlin**, 70 **Knot**, 35 **Sanderling**, 14 **Grey Plover** and a **Bar-tailed Godwit** on the Beach Reserve and six **Black-tailed Godwit** and five **Ruff** at Castle Water. Wader highlights were probably the **Spotted Redshank** which was present on Ternery Pool and the adjacent parts of Harbour Farm during the first half of the month, and four **Avocet**, which were present on Wader Pool and the new saltmarsh near Lime Kiln Cottage on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The mild weather which prevailed for most of the month meant that there were no large counts of waterfowl to compare with those recorded during January 2010 and 2011, though a count of 276 **Gadwall** on the 15<sup>th</sup> was the third largest count on the reserve for this species, and nine **Goldeneye** on the 27<sup>th</sup> was also notable. Other interesting waterfowl this month included, a **Black-necked Grebe** on Long Pit on 27<sup>th</sup>, and up to two **Bittern**, three **Red-crested Pochard** (including two superb males) and four **Pintail** at Castle Water. The highlight however was a **Great White Egret** which flew over the Beach Reserve late in the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Regular sightings of **Marsh Harrier** this month included three on several dates at Castle Water, while other raptors of note included regular **Merlin**, with two on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and a **Peregrine** at Castle Water on the 9<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there were occasional sightings of **Barn Owl** at Castle Water during January. Passerine sightings during January included regular **Stonechat**, a **Chiffchaff** at Castle Water on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, up to 18 **Fieldfare**, and occasional sightings of **Bearded Tit**, including three on Harbour Farm on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Little in the way of notable non-avian sightings during January, though the mild weather during the month did coax a **Small Tortoiseshell** out of hibernation near the viewpoint on the 12<sup>th</sup>, while at Castle Water a **Stoat** was seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a **Brown Hare** on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

## February 2012

February was a month of contrasts as winter begin to give way to spring. Earlier in the month freezing conditions brought large numbers of waterfowl to the reserve, including 900 **wigeon**, 503 **teal**, 339 **gadwall** and 243 shoveler, while other typically winter visitors included up to 34 **white-fronted goose**, 27 **fieldfare**, seven **smew**, three **bittern**, two **woodcock** and a **black-necked grebe**. By the end of the month in contrast, longer and warmer days brought a hint



of spring with the wildlife reacting accordingly. On the Beach Reserve over 300 **black-headed gull** and nearly 60 **mediterranean gull** were present while **ringed plover**, **oystercatcher** and **lapwing** could all be seen displaying.

Among the waders, this combination of winter visitors, the first inklings of summer breeders and a few passage migrants meant that a good selection of species were present during the February. At least 800 **golden plover** and 67 **curlew** were present, while lapwing peaked at 300. Increasingly during February singletons or pairs of this latter species, as opposed to large winter flocks, became more obvious as breeding birds began to stake out their territories. On the shore the bulk was provided by **oystercatcher**, with up to at least 317 birds recorded, while a maximum of 170 **dunlin**, 60 **knot**, 27 **grey plover** and 21 **sanderling** were also present. Other notable waders during February included up to 18 **ruff** at Castle Water, four **avocet** on the Beach Reserve, and the occasional **green sandpiper** and **bar-tailed godwit**, with the highlight being the long-staying **spotted redshank** which was present on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm throughout the month. Raptors during February included up to four **marsh harrier** at Castle Water and on the Beach Reserve, regular **merlin** and the odd **peregrine**, while **barn owl** was present occasionally at Castle Water. Species offshore during February included up to 200 **great crested grebe**, 70 **gannet**, 55 **red-throated diver**, 36 **brent goose**, 18 **goosander**, this latter one of the highest counts ever here, and five **eider**. Passerines during the month included up to 27 **fieldfare**, the occasional **stonechat** and up to five **bullfinch** and best of all, at Castle Water, two **firecrest** on the 4<sup>th</sup> and four **bearded tit** on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

As might be expected the warmer weather brought out a few invertebrates during February, the highlights being a **small tortoiseshell** in Rye Harbour village and an immature **nursery web spider** at Lime Kiln Cottage, both on the 23rd. In addition, a young **slow-worm** was also present at Lime Kiln on the same date, while a **weasel** was seen here on the 3rd. Plants in flower included **lesser periwinkle**, **red dead-nettle** and **hairy bittercress**.

## March 2012

March saw the breeding season begin in earnest at Rye Harbour as the first of our summer visitors began to arrive on the reserve. Hence the first **sandwich tern** was seen on the 1st and the first **wheatear** on the 16th, and by the end of the month both **sedge warbler** and **chiffchaff** were singing at Castle Water. On the Beach Reserve **lapwing** breeding was well under way, with several nests found late in the month, while at Ternery Pool numbers of seabirds increased dramatically, with at least 1500 **black-headed gull**, 550 **mediterranean gull** (a record count for this species on the reserve) and 800 **sandwich tern** present towards the end of March.

A good range of passage waders included up to 220 **golden plover**, 110 **curlew**, 98 **dunlin** and 31 **knot**, with smaller numbers of **grey plover**, **black-tailed godwit**, **bar-tailed godwit** and **green sandpiper**. In addition, the long-staying **spotted redshank** was still present up to mid-month, while breeding species included up to 31 **avocet** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve and the odd **little ringed plover** towards the end of the month. Notable waterfowl during March included regular **bittern** at Castle Water, with 'booming' heard later in the month, three **spoonbill** on the Beach Reserve on the 20th, a male **garganey** on Harbour Farm on the 11th and a **slavonian grebe** on Long Pit on the same date. Relatively little offshore this month, with the highlights being 635 **brent goose** and 37 **gannet** on the 15th and four **eider** on the 24th. Raptors included regular **marsh harrier** and **merlin**, a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 19th and a **peregrine** on the Beach Reserve on the 14th. **Barn owl** was seen regularly at Castle Water during March, with a **little owl** here on the 22nd and a **short-eared owl** on the Beach Reserve on the 12th. Among the passerines the odd winter visitor was still present early in the month, with **stonechat** on Harbour Farm on the 4th and eight **fieldfare** at Castle Water on the 12th, though the main interest during the month was provided by passage migration. This included the first **sand martin** of the year on the 17th and **swallow** on the 29th, while a couple of **black redstart** were present mid-month and two **willow warbler** were at Castle Water on the 31st. Other notable sightings included, at Castle Water, a **firecrest** on the 19th and regular **bearded tit**, while six **raven** flew over the Beach Reserve on the 20th, the highest count ever on the reserve.

As might be expected invertebrate numbers picked up considerably during March. Among the butterflies, **red admiral**, **small tortoiseshell**, **peacock** and **large white** were all on the wing while, species in the Lime Kiln moth trap included **small quaker**, **common quaker**, **powdered quaker** and **early grey**. Notable invertebrates recorded during the month included a **minotaur beetle** on Harbour Farm on the 13th, a couple of **bombardier beetle** on Flat Beach on the 20th and **dotted bee-fly** on several dates, while the highlight was the Red Data Book rove beetle *Lathrobium rufonitidum* at Castle Water on the 18th. Similarly reptiles became more evident as the temperatures increased, with sightings of both **common**

**lizard** and **grass snake**. Plants in flower during March included **red deadnettle**, **colts-foot**, **ground ivy** and **common whitlowgrass**, while several spikes of the fungus **winter stalkball**, something of a Sussex rarity, were found near the viewpoint on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

## April 2012

The pace of the breeding season picked up during April, despite the wet weather. By the end of the month the majority of our summer visitors had arrived, including the first **yellow wagtail** on the 1<sup>st</sup>, **cuckoo** on the 16<sup>th</sup> and **little tern** on the 17<sup>th</sup>, while the earliest **swift** of the year was seen on



the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the Beach Reserve, **wheatear**, **oystercatcher** and **ringed plover** had all staked their claim to territories, the first **little ringed plover** were displaying at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm, and on Ternery Pool at least 1600 **black-headed gull** and 23 **Mediterranean gull** were nesting. For some early breeders the breeding season was well under way, with the first **coot** chicks seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the first **lapwing** chicks on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

As might be expected with winter visitors, summer visitors and passage all present, April saw a good selection of waders on and around the reserve. At least 90 **golden plover** were present on Flat Beach and the new saltmarsh mid-month, while up to 20 **snipe** were at Castle Water on the 1<sup>st</sup> and eight **curlew** on Harbour Farm on the 28<sup>th</sup>. On the shore, at least 28 **knot** and 16 **bar-tailed godwit** were present on the 26<sup>th</sup>, up to 11 **grey plover**, while six **ruff** and a **greenshank** were on Harbour Farm and a **common sandpiper** on Ternery Pool on the 29<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there were occasional **green sandpiper** on Harbour Farm and on Castle Water, while **whimbrel** numbers were again poor this year, with a maximum of 60 birds seen at Castle Water late in the month. Wader highlights were a **dotterel** on Harbour Farm on the 11<sup>th</sup> and a **stone curlew** at Castle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup>, while a **jack snipe** at Castle Water on the 14<sup>th</sup> was also of note. Notable waterfowl at Castle Water during April included occasional **bittern** and **garganey** on several date, with seven here on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Raptors during April included up to four **marsh harrier** at Castle Water, occasional **merlin** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm and a **peregrine** over the Beach Reserve on the 14<sup>th</sup>. **Barn owl** sightings during April included regular birds at Castle Water and Harbour Farm. April saw the last of our compliment of breeding warblers arrive with the appearance of **reed warbler** on the 7<sup>th</sup>, **whitethroat** on the 12<sup>th</sup> and **lesser whitethroat** on the 14<sup>th</sup>, while there were regular sightings of **bearded tit** at Castle Water during the month. Passage migrants included a **redstart** at Ternery Pool on the 7<sup>th</sup> and three **grey wagtail** at Castle Water on the 13<sup>th</sup>, while hirundines included over 50 **swallow** and six **house martin**. Several **willow warbler** and at least three **nightingale** could also be heard in song both around and within the reserve, while the highlight was a **ring ouzel** near the viewpoint on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Poor weather during April meant that there was relatively little in the way of invertebrates! The Lime Kiln trap turned up few moths, with **silver y**, **white-shouldered house moth** and **light brown apple moth** the only species trapped. Butterflies on the wing included **small copper**, **peacock**, **orange-tip** and **speckled wood**, while the first **large red damselfly** and **azure damselfly** became active at the end of the month. Of note were several rare or uncommon invertebrates including the spiders *Lathys stigmatisata* and *Sitticus inexpectus* and the beetles *Cassida nobilis* and *Helops caeruleus*. Plants in flower during April included **early forget-me-not**, **doves-foot cranesbill**, **ground-ivy** and **Persian speedwell**.

## May 2012

A veritable chick-fest at Rye Harbour this month as the bulk of our breeding birds produced their young. On Ternery Pool, 1600 pairs of **black-headed gull**, and later on 650 pairs of **Sandwich tern** and 55 pairs of **Mediterranean gull**, produced their first chicks and by the end of the month the islands were covered in hundreds if not thousands of spotted fluffy bundles! On Harbour Farm around 30 pairs of **avocet** produced their first chicks mid-month, though survival rates, as with the majority of our waders this year, was poor. The **little tern** were a bit late this year, but by the end of the month at least 12 pairs were prospecting around the decoys on the Beach Reserve, with several birds probably on eggs, while at the other end of the scale the oldest of the surviving **lapwing** chicks were fledged.

An impressive influx of waders early in the month saw up to 20 species feeding on the new salt-marsh at the eastern end of Harbour Farm. This included up to 280 **ringed plover**, 230 **bar-tailed godwit**, 168 **knot**, seven **curlew sandpiper**, three **little stint**, two **little ringed plover** and a **Temminck's stint**! The pick of the bunch however was a female **Kentish plover** which was present from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, the first record at Rye Harbour for over 10 years. Also present during the month were up to 34 **black-tailed godwit**, small numbers of **green sandpiper**, **common sandpiper** and **ruff**, while a superb **spotted redshank** in full breeding plumage was present on Flat Beach on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Notable waterfowl during May included a pair of **garganey** at Castle Water on the 25<sup>th</sup> and a superb **spoonbill** in full breeding regalia on the Beach Reserve on the 26<sup>th</sup> and Castle Water on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Raptors during May included regular **marsh harrier**, **merlin** early on and the occasional **peregrine**, while up to eight hobby were present at Castle Water towards the end of the month. In addition, both **short-eared owl** and **barn owl** were seen hunting over Harbour



Farm. Very little offshore this month though an **Arctic skua** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and a first year **little gull** at Ternery Pool on the 29<sup>th</sup> were notable. Of our nesting passerines, there were several **wheatear** around early on though very few stayed on at Rye Harbour, with perhaps only two or three pairs taking up residence, while there were regular sightings of **bearded tit** at Castle Water and the occasional **turtle dove** at several sites. A small influx of hirundines early in the month included up to 70 **swallow** and small numbers of **house martin** and **sand martin**, joined by 23 **swift** on the



4<sup>th</sup>. Apart from this there was relatively little sign of movement, with the odd **whinchat** and a **ring ouzel** seen Castle Water on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The much awaited good weather later in the month brought better numbers to the Lime Kiln moth trap. Highlights were **bordered ermel** and **light feathered rustic**, while the first **great silver water beetle** on the 31<sup>st</sup> was also notable. Butterflies on the wing during May included **brown argus**, **comma**, **common blue** and **small copper**, while odonata included **downy emerald**, **hairy hawkler**, **variable damselfly** and **red-eyed damselfly**. Other invertebrate highlights included the rare jumping spiders *Pellenes tripunctatus* and *Phlegra fasciata* on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm respectively and the rare money spider *Trichopterna cito* at Castle Water, a species not seen on the reserve for over 10 years. Plants in flower this month included **sea kale**, **sea pea**, **viper's bugloss** and **lesser mouse-ear**.

## June 2012

It has not been the best of years for several of our nesting seabirds at Rye Harbour, due to a combination of predation, poor food availability and perhaps inclement weather. On Ternery Pool, while the **black-headed gulls** appeared to be having a fairly good season, the same could not be said for other of our special species. Our **Sandwich terns**, for instance, have had little success, despite many attempting to re-nest, while the same was also true of the **Mediterranean gull** colony which produced very few fledglings this year and also our **common tern**. In the **little tern colony**, a promising start to the breeding season saw at least 12 pairs produce their first chicks mid-month before the colony succumbed to the attentions of an unknown predator, with all young being lost. On the plus side however, despite the attentions of predators early on in the season, the persistent avocet had produced several fledglings by the end of the month, with a few young broods still around, the first **wheatear** fledglings were seen on Flat Beach mid-month, and up to five pairs of **little ringed plover** nested on Harbour Farm.

There was some sign of wader passage during June as the some birds began to make their

way south from their northern breeding grounds. This included up to 36 **black-tailed godwit** at Castle Water on the 11th, eight **curlew** and a **bar-tailed godwit** roosting on Flat Beach on the 13th, 32 **dunlin** here on the 18th and singles of **green sandpiper** at Castle Water and Harbour Farm on the 29th. Notable raptors during June included a **common buzzard** and a **peregrine** at Castle Water on the 7th and the occasional **hobby** while there were a few sightings of barn owl at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm during the month. No real action offshore this month, though a moulting male **eider** was present at the river mouth for a few days mid-month, a **roseate tern** was seen on the Beach Reserve on several occasions between the 5th and 13th of the month, and an immature **little gull** was present on Ternery Pool on the 5th. Similarly there was little passerine activity during June, with the only records of note being at least 300 **swift** at Castle Water on the 7th and 40 **house martin** and 30 **swallow** here on the 11th. The 'variable' weather during June meant that the Lime Kiln moth trap was not run as frequently as normal, with the highlights being a few **bordered ermel**, **oblique-striped** and **rosy wave**. Butterflies were also few and far between after the poor weather, though records did include **large skipper**, **small tortoiseshell**, **red admiral** and **painted lady**, while dragonflies on the wing included **downy emerald**, **black-tailed skimmer** and the first **emperor**, **common darter** and **ruddy darter** of the year. Notable invertebrates during June included two individuals of the very rare **long-horned general soldier fly** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve and several examples of the rare weevil ***Limobius mixtus*** at Castle Water, its only site in Britain! Plants in flower during June included **henbane**, **wood sage**, **common spotted orchid** and **pyramidal orchid**.

## July 2012

What a difference a month makes! Despite problems with predation, weather and food supply, at the start of July the reserve was still thronging with birds, especially Ternery Pool and the Quarry where the **black-headed gull**, **Sandwich tern** and **common tern** were making their last stand. In contrast, by the end of the month the breeding season was effectively over (apart from the odd straggler), Ternery Pool was beginning to look like an avian desert in comparison to earlier in the year, and an increasing number of passage migrants moved through as they headed south towards their southern wintering grounds.

Waders showed plenty of evidence of passage movement during July, the bulk of the numbers provided by **lapwing**, with 100 birds mid-month (though this was well down on last years July maximum of 2800, and well below the average for the last 10 years), and 43 **dunlin**, while numbers of **curlew** began to creep up during July, with a peak count of 23 on Flat Beach mid-month. In addition, there were regular sightings of **whimbrel**,



**green sandpiper** and **common sandpiper**, with the occasional **knot**, **sanderling** and **black-tailed godwit**, while the first returning **golden plover** and **grey plover** also put in an appearance. Wader highlights were a **wood sandpiper** at Castle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup> and a **spotted redshank** on Flat Beach on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Raptors included the regular **marsh harrier**, with at least two female and four immature on the 26<sup>th</sup> at Castle Water, and the occasional **hobby**. There were also regular sightings of **barn owl** at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm. Little in the way of notable passerine sightings during July, with the highlights being a **turtle dove** at Castle Water on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a species which is becoming increasingly scarce here, and a **grasshopper warbler** on Harbour Farm on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, while other interesting sightings included up to 17 **bearded tit** at Castle Water and the occasional **yellow wagtail** and **wheatear**.

Somewhat better weather during July saw an increase in invertebrate numbers at Rye Harbour. At Lime Kiln Cottage the moth trap turned up some interesting species including **bordered ermel**, **starry pearl** and **pale grass egg**, while there was marked increase in butterfly numbers with the first sightings of **marbled white** and steadily increasing numbers of **meadow brown** and **gate-keeper**, **small skipper** and **Essex skipper**, and even the odd **painter lady**! Notable dragonflies/damselflies included the first **brown hawk** and **emerald damselfly** of 2012. Insect highlight was the discovery at Castle Water of the rare beetle *Paracorymbia fulva*, also a first for the reserve and for Sussex, and the rare saltmarsh hoverfly *Lejops vittata*, while a record of the uncommon weevil *Mogulones geographicus* was the first here for over 10 years. Plants in flower this month included **marsh helleborine**, **wild carrot**, **red hemp-nettle** and **common toadflax**.

## August 2012

Wader passage was much in evidence this month, bringing a wide range of species to the reserve. Numbers were provided by **lapwing**, with 500 at Castle Water on the 25<sup>th</sup>, **oystercatcher** (400+ on Flat Beach Level on the 19<sup>th</sup>) and **curlew** (160 on West beach on the 6<sup>th</sup>), while **dunlin** and **golden plover** also topped the 100 mark. The highlights were regular **wood sandpiper**, with five on Harbour Farm on several occasions, and up to three **little stint** at Castle Water. Also of interest, two **curlew sandpiper** were seen on Flat Beach on the 13<sup>th</sup>, at least 25 **green sandpiper** were present around the reserve on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and nine **greenshank** were at Castle Water on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Notable waterfowl this month at Castle Water were two **garganey** on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> and 49 **little egret**

leaving the roost on the 10<sup>th</sup>, while the long-staying **eider** was present at the river mouth throughout.

Still a few terns around up to mid-month, with 130 **Sandwich tern** on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 110 **common tern** on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a **little tern** on the 19<sup>th</sup>, while two **black tern** were present at Castle Water on the 25<sup>th</sup>. A small offshore movement during the month included 90 **gannet**, and up to four **arctic skua**, while an adult **little gull** was present



on the Beach Reserve on the 22nd. The highlight, however, was an adult **Sabine's gull** seen on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the first record for the reserve. Raptors during August included **merlin** and **hobby** mid-month, and several sightings of **peregrine** later on, while residents included regular **marsh harrier** and **sparrowhawk**. As with the waders, there was plenty of evidence of passerine movement during August. Hirundines moving through included at least 200 **sand martin** and 150 **swallow**, while at least 100 **yellow wagtail** and 35 **meadow pipit** were present on shore ridges mid-month. **Wheatear** were recorded throughout, with a maximum of 18 on the 16<sup>th</sup>, while small numbers of **whinchat** began to arrive late in the month with a maximum of three Harbour Farm on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Best of the bunch were **spotted flycatcher** in the Wood on the 30<sup>th</sup> (2) and at Castle Water on the 31<sup>st</sup>, and two **common redstart** on Harbour Farm on the 31<sup>st</sup>, while three **turtle dove** at Castle Water on the 18<sup>th</sup> and a **garden warbler** in the Wood on the 30<sup>th</sup> were also of note.



Good weather during August meant that the catches in the Lime Kiln moth trap were the best this year, with up to 70 species trapped. Notable residents included **bordered ermel**, **starry pearl**, **marbled yellow pearl** and **sulphur pearl**, while significant migrants included **vagrant piercer**, the second reserve record, and **Portland moth**, a first for the reserve proper. In addition, a **western conifer seed bug** was trapped on the 30<sup>th</sup> and three **Jersey tiger-moth** on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Other notable invertebrates this month included several sightings of **long-winged conehead** and **Roesel's bush-cricket**, the impressive hoverfly *Volucella zonaria*, and the BAP bumblebees **large garden bumblebee** and **moss carder-bee**. Plants in flower this month included **autumn lady's tresses**, **marsh-mallow**, **rock samphire** and **knotted pearlwort**.

## September 2012

With the combination of both winter and summer visitors and increasing numbers of passage migrants, September usually has a good range of species to offer, and this year was no exception. Hence **wheatear** and **yellow wagtail** shared the reserve briefly with **whinchat**, **stonechat** and **pie flycatcher**, while on the freshwater pits, numbers of **wigeon**, **gadwall** and **teal** increased steadily throughout the month.

Waders during September included small numbers of **knot**, **ruff**, **black-tailed godwit**, **bar-tailed godwit**, **greenshank**, and **green sandpiper**, while the largest counts were provided by 430 **oystercatcher** on Flat Beach on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 350+ **lapwing** at Castle Water on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 210 **curlew** roosting on West Beach on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 100 **golden plover** on Flat Beach on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Best of the bunch were singletons of **little stint** on the Beach Reserve and **wood sandpiper** on Harbour Farm/Ternery Pool on several dates. September saw increasing num-

bers of wildfowl attracted to the reserve, perhaps due to the large amount of standing water after high tides and heavy rain. From the 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> up to 160 **wigeon**, 150 **mallard**, and 90 **teal** were present on Flat Beach Level, while around 100 **gadwall** and 60 **shoveler** were present at Castle Water during the same period. Notable waterfowl included three **garganey** at Castle Water on the 9<sup>th</sup> and best of all a **spoonbill** which was present on Flat Beach and the new saltmarsh from the 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>. Raptors this month, as well as the resident **marsh harrier**, included the occasional **buzzard** and **peregrine**, a **merlin** on the 13<sup>th</sup> on the Beach Reserve and a **hobby** here on the 21<sup>st</sup>, while the highlight was an **osprey** at Castle Water on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Offshore the only birds of note were a **great skua** on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14 **gannet** on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 30 **common scoter** on the 16<sup>th</sup>, while three **black tern** were on the quarry on the 1<sup>st</sup> and two **little gull** on Ternery Pool on the 13<sup>th</sup>. In addition, a **little tern** was present on the shore on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 65 **Sandwich tern** were present on Flat Beach on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Hirundine passage continued into September, with the maxima being 800 **swallow** on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 200 **sand martin** on the 8<sup>th</sup> and around 80 **house martin** on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Other migrants included 60 **yellow wagtail** on West Beach on the 13<sup>th</sup>, up to 21 **meadow pipit** on Harbour Farm, eight **wheat-ear** on the Beach Reserve and the occasional **whinchat** and **stonechat**. Passerine highlights were a **pieb flycatcher** at Castle Water on the 27<sup>th</sup> and a **wryneck** here on the 4<sup>th</sup>, while a **firecrest** at Ternery Pool on the 28<sup>th</sup> and a **treecreeper** at Castle Water on the 27<sup>th</sup> were also of interest.

Invertebrate numbers tailed off noticeably during September, with low counts in both the moth-trap and on the butterfly/dragonfly transects. One notable feature of the fauna however was the large numbers of **silver y** seen, including over 50 on a single large plant of shrubby horehound in the Lime Kiln garden! Notable invertebrates seen during September

included **grey bush-cricket**, the parasitic fly *Mintho rufiventris* and the beetles *Helops caeruleus*, *Ophonus ardosiacus* and *Panagaeus bipustulatus*, the last of these not seen at Rye Harbour for over 20 years, while other interesting species were a **lesser stage beetle** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the distinctive harvestman *Dicranopalpus ramosus* on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Plants in flower this month included **marsh mallow**, **sea-aster** and **fleabane**.

## October 2012

Waterfowl communities began to take on an increasingly wintry feel during October, both in terms of numbers and species present. While low temperatures did not arrive until later in the month, and then only briefly, from early on we began to see increasingly large numbers, often a



harbinger of wintery conditions. Peak numbers during this period included 344 **mallard**, 133 **shoveler**, 118 **gadwall** and 115 **teal** on the 14<sup>th</sup>, while 262 **wigeon** were present on Flat Beach Level on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 130 **pochard** were on Long pit on 28<sup>th</sup>. Also this month saw the first **bittern** of the 'winter' period, with one at Castle Water on the 11<sup>th</sup>, while a **spoonbill** was present at Castle Water on the 9<sup>th</sup>, with further sightings from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>.

Extensive flooding on Flat Beach Level due to high tides and heavy rain attracted good numbers of waders during October. The bulk of the numbers were provided by **golden plover** which peaked at 1500 on 9<sup>th</sup>, while up to 112 **dunlin**, 107 **oystercatcher**, 80 **lapwing**, 10 **snipe**, six **avocet** and smaller numbers of **ruff**, **little stint**, **ringed plover**, **turnstone** and **redshank** were also



present during the month. Elsewhere on the reserve, 133 **curlew** were at Castle Water and six **bar-tailed godwit** were on Ternery Pool on the 11<sup>th</sup> and **greenshank** were present on Harbour Farm on the 1<sup>st</sup> (two) and at Castle Water on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Highlights were a **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm on the 25<sup>th</sup> and two **curlew sandpiper** at Castle Water on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Raptors during October included the occasional **marsh harrier** at Castle Water and Harbour Farm, a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 15<sup>th</sup>, a **merlin** on shore ridges on the 5<sup>th</sup> and several sightings of **hobby** over Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve. In addition, a **barn owl** was present at Castle Water on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a **short-eared owl** was seen briefly on Harbour Farm on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Still some movement of hirundines during October, with up to 400 **swallow**, 30 **house martin** and a few **sand martin** passing through early on in the month, while what I always think of as 'autumn finches' included up to 70+ **siskin** and 45 **lesser redpoll** mid-month. Other passage migrants included **grey wagtail** at Castle Water on the 13<sup>th</sup> (two) and 15<sup>th</sup>, a **black redstart** on Harbour Farm on the 9<sup>th</sup> and a **redwing** at Castle Water on the 11<sup>th</sup>, with the highlight being **firecrest** on several dates at Castle Water. Other notable passerine sightings, both at Castle Water, included 2000 **starling** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 28 **bearded tit** on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the latter a record count for this species on the reserve.

As might be expected numbers of invertebrates were relatively low during October. Moths caught in the Lime Kiln moth trap included **feathered brindle**, **feathered ranunculus**, **large wainscot** and **setaceous hebrew character**, while dragonflies such as **migrant hawk** and particularly **common darter** were seen throughout the month. Vertebrates included several sightings of **common seal** late in the month, and three **common lizard** on Flat Beach on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

As with waterfowl, wader numbers remained high during November, mainly on the flooded area of Flat Beach and largely due to big flocks of **golden plover** (with a maximum of 2000 on Flat Beach between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>) and **lapwing** (nearly 1300 around the reserve on the 18<sup>th</sup>). Numbers were also provided by **oystercatcher**, with 456 on Flat Beach on the 18<sup>th</sup>, **curlew** (112 on the shore the 11<sup>th</sup>), and **dunlin** (80 on Flat Beach on the 1<sup>st</sup>), while a count of 110 **snipe** and on the 30<sup>th</sup> was also notable. Other species included small numbers of **grey plover**, **bar-tailed godwit**, **avocet**, **green sandpiper** and **ruff**, with the best of the bunch four **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm on the 30<sup>th</sup> and a **spotted redshank** on Flat Beach on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Apart from the ubiquitous **marsh harrier** and frequent **sparrowhawk**, there were little in the way of raptor sightings during November, despite the large numbers of birds present, with a **peregrine** over Flat Beach on the 1<sup>st</sup> and a **merlin** over Shore Ridges on the 15<sup>th</sup> the only sightings of note. Passerines sightings included, three **swallow** on the 13<sup>th</sup> and a **wheatear** on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the very last of our ‘summer birds’, while at the other end of the seasonal spectrum, **fieldfare** numbers been to creep up during the month, with a maximum of 38 at Castle Water on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and six **redwing** were present on the 13<sup>th</sup>. On the Beach Reserve, roving finch flocks included up to 65 **goldfinch**, 60 **linnet** and 22 **greenfinch**, while up to 90 **skylark** were present on Harbour Farm late in the month. In addition up to two **bearded tit** were present at Castle Water and small numbers of **rock pipit** frequented the saltmarsh and Flat Beach. Highlights were three **firecrest** at Castle Water on the 14<sup>th</sup> and a **snow bunting** at Wader Pool on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Insects during November included small numbers of **common darter** and **buff-tailed bumblebee**, and a **2-spot ladybird** at Castle Water on the 24<sup>th</sup>, while the striking fly *Mesembrina meridiana*, a relative of the house-fly, was seen at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The only other non-avian sighting of note during the month included the occasional **common seal** in the river Rother! Plants still in flower included **bristly ox-tongue**, **nipplewort** and **smooth sow-thistle**.

## December 2012

Wildfowl numbers remained high during December, and if anything were somewhat greater than in the previous couple of months, with numbers of **shoveler** (240 on the 11<sup>th</sup>), **gadwall** (349 on the 16<sup>th</sup>) and **teal** (709 also on the 16<sup>th</sup>) in particular showing a marked increase. This month also saw good counts of **pintail**, with 10 at Castle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and **gold-eneye** (eight on the 16<sup>th</sup>), while a maximum of four **smew** were present on Ternery Pool on the 29<sup>th</sup> and three **bittern** at Castle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Highlights were two **great white egret** at Castle Water seen roosting with little egrets at Castle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup> and again on Flat Beach 13<sup>th</sup>, and up to two **slavonian grebe** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm.

In contrast the waterfowl, wader numbers were by and large much lower during December, largely due to a drop in the number of species such as **lapwing** and **golden plover**, which peaked at around 550 and 250 respectively. However, numbers of **curlew** did increase with a maximum of 670 on the shore on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and there appeared to be a significant influx of **snipe** mid-month, with a maximum of 260 on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The most significant wader record during the month were nine **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm on the 11<sup>th</sup>, one of the highest counts ever at Rye Harbour for this secretive species, while other notable records included the regular **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve, a **woodcock** at Cas-

tle Water on the 12<sup>th</sup> and **little stint** on Flat Beach on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Offshore sightings during December included 200 **guillemot** on the 10<sup>th</sup> (with 17 **razorbill** on the same date) regular **red-throated diver**, with 140 on the 10<sup>th</sup>, up to 70 **common scoter**, 65 **kittiwake** and 65 **great crested grebe**, with the highlight two **black-throated diver** on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Notable raptors during December included regular **marsh harrier** and **merlin** and the occasional **peregrine**, while a **barn owl** was present at Castle Water on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Among the passerines numbers of **skylark** on the new and existing saltmarsh remained relatively high, with a maximum count of 65 on the 4<sup>th</sup>, while there were regular sightings of **rock pipit** on the Beach reserve, with a maximum of four at Wader Pool on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and up to six **bearded tit** were present at Castle Water. Passerine highlight during December was a **Lapland bunting** present on Harbour.

Mammalian sightings during December included the occasional **common seal**, either swimming up the river Rother or hauled out on the shore at the river mouth, and a **weasel** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Invertebrates included a **December moth** at Lime Kiln on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and somewhat surprisingly, a **devil's coach horse** on the Beach Reserve on the 4<sup>th</sup>.



## Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 3,868 individuals from 223 species were recorded during 2012, mainly from the moth trap run at Lime Kiln Cottage, but also through casual observation. The following annotated list highlights the most notable migrants and scarcer resident species.

**Bordered ermel** *Ethmia bipunctella* RDB - A total of 24 individuals were trapped on nine dates between 23rd May and 20th August, with a maximum of nine on 23rd May.

**Wainscot Neb** *Monochroa palustrella* Nb - One trapped on 26th June.

**Salt-marsh grass veneer** *Pediasia aridella* Nb - A total of 30 individuals were recorded on 11 dates between 25th June and 20th August, with a maximum of six on 25th July.

**Giant water veneer** *Schoenobius gigantella* Nb - Recorded twice during 2012, with singles on the 26th June and 4th July.

**Marbled yellow pearl** *Evergestis extimalis* Nb - Two trapped on 20th August and one each on the 22nd and 23rd.



**Starry pearl** *Cynaeda dentalis* RDB (above)- Trapped on three dates: two on 25th July and one each on 29th July and 4th August.

**Sulphur Pearl** *Sitochroa palealis* (above) Nationally Notable - A singleton was trapped on 9th August.

**Long-legged tabby** *Synaphe punctalis* Nb - A total of 71 individuals on 15 dates between 25th June and 4th September, with a maximum of 14 on 22nd July.

**Rosy-striped knot-horn** *Oncocera semirubella* Nb - Twenty four trapped on six dates between 25th July and 20th August, with a maximum of nine on 9th August.

**Gorse Knot-horn** *Pempelia genistella* Na - The only record concerned one trapped on 9th August.

**Pale Grass Eggar** *Lasiocampa trifolii flava* RDB - One was trapped on 22nd July.

**Rosy Wave** *Scopula emutaria* Nb - A singleton was trapped on 26th June.

**Oblique-striped** *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb - Trapped on five dates between 2nd May and 20th August, with a two on 23rd and 24th May.

**Dark Tussock** *Dicallomera fascelina* Nb - One was trapped on 16th July.

**Pygmy footman** *Eilema pygmaeola* RDB - Trapped on two dates: four on 25th July and one on the 29th.

**Kent black arches** *Meganola albula* Nb - A total of 12 between 26th June and 9th August, with a maximum of five on 16 July.

**Portland Moth** *Actebia praecox* (left) Nb - A singleton trapped on 23rd August was the first reserve record (though there have been records from the surrounding area in the past)

**Shore wainscot** *Mythimna litoralis* Nb - Singles trapped on two dates, the 25th and 26th June.

**L-album wainscot** *Mythimna l-album* Nb - A singleton on 4th July was the only record.

**Obscure Wainscot** *Mythimna obsoleta* Nb - One trapped on 19th July was the only record.

**Feathered brindle** *Aporophyla australis* Nb - One was trapped on 11th October.

**Reed dagger** *Simyra albovenosa* Nb - One was trapped on 25th July.

**Marbled Green** *Cryphia muralis* Nb - Trapped on two dates: one on 16th August and on the 19th.



**Crescent striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb** (left) - A total of 45 individuals were trapped on 12 date between 4th July and 20th August, with a maximum of 26 on 25th July.

**Cream-bordered cream pea *Earias clorana* Nb** - One was trapped on 4th July.

**Other notable invertebrates recorded during 2012 included:**

*Pellenes tripunctatus* RDB - Adults of this jumping spider were found on the Beach Reserve on 10 dates between 7th May and 10th July, with a maximum of five on 19th May. In addition, an immature was found on 17th July.

*Trichopterna cito* RDB—A male of this money spider was found at Castle Water on 21st July, the first record at Rye Harbour since 1998.

*Trichoncus affinis* RDB - Another money spider, a female of this species was pitfall trapped on the shingle re-creation on Harbour Farm between 21st June and 18th July, the first record for the reserve.

**Great silver water beetle *Hydrophilus piceus* RDB** - One was present in an MV trap at Lime Kiln Cottage on 31st May.

*Polistichus connexus* RDB - An individual of this ground beetle turned up in a pitfall trap on the shingle re-creation on Harbour Farm between 21st June and 18th July.

*Lathrobium rufo nitidum* RDB - A male of this rove beetle was found at Castle Water on 18th March.

**Tawny Longhorn Beetle *Parcorymbia fulva* RDB** - One was photographed at Castle Water on 12th July, the first record for both the reserve and Sussex.

*Limobius mixtus* RDB - Found on two dates during 2012: three each on 27th June and 4th July. Rye Harbour is the only extant British site for this rare weevil.

**Salt-marsh horsefly *Atylotus latistriatus* (below) RDB** - Two were found on 22nd July, a male on Harbour Farm and a female at Lime Kiln Cottage.

**Long-horned General Soldierfly *Stratiomys longicornis* RDB** - Two found on the 20th June, one on Harbour Farm and one at Lime Kiln Cottage.

*Lejops vittatus* RDB - One was found on Harbour Farm on 8th July.

*Erynnia ocypterata* RDB - A singleton of this rare parasitic fly was found at Castle Water on 24th May.



# Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2012 was, as ever, varied and unpredictable. The following is a brief summary of what we achieved.

## Species and Site Monitoring

We carried out general wildlife recording and the regular monthly Wetland Bird Surveys and water level and salinity measurements. The annual surveys of breeding birds of the SSSI and the plants in the 10m. permanent quadrat on the shingle beach. There was regular moth trapping throughout the SSSI, and specialists continued to visit the reserve. In addition, the monitoring programme set up to follow changes in the flora and fauna of habitats which arose from the saltmarsh/shingle re-creation project on Harbour Farm continued and a survey for rare shingle and wetland spiders was undertaken. All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 584,372 records of around 4,800 species in the SSSI.

## Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer work-parties took place on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from July to October, involving willow clearance at Castle Water and control of ragwort and spear thistle on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. We also held the Beach Cleans in March and December to clear the rubbish blown in off the sea and several beach surveys to monitor litter on the shore. Other management during 2012 included the provision of additional fencing and 'water fences' on Harbour Farm to deter predators, completion of island building at Ternery Pool, profiling of some pits on Harbour Farm and renovation of the Castle Water Hide. With the return of our nesting little terns the Beach Watch provided valuable support to the staff, watching over the terns and informing the public. Throughout the nature reserve we made sure the seats, paths, stiles and hides were clear and safe for visitors. The Nature Reserve also managed the Environment Agency's land at Rye Harbour Farm, fencing, grazing, managing Ragwort and thistles and monitoring wildlife.

Sixteen goats were managed on the Beach Reserve, Harbour Farm and Castle Water to control the growth of Bramble, Grey Willow and other scrub on shingle and the margins of pits and reedbeds. In addition, 26-44 Herdwick sheep belonging to Sussex Wildlife Trust were grazed on Harbour Farm to help control common ragwort, thistles, brambles and scrub.

## Interpretation

Getting information about the Nature Reserve to visitors and organisations is achieved through a variety of media - leaflets, booklets, posters, information boards, information centre, a monthly column in our local paper the Rye Observer, and Rye Bay Wildlife newsgroup. The Friends financed an events leaflet that was widely distributed.

Two booklets are available for £1 from Lime Kiln Cottage information centre "*Rye Harbour - your guide to a shingle nature reserve*", and "*Camber Castle - A look into the past of Henry VIII's castle*".

We conducted 74 Guided Walks, booked in 15 visiting groups, gave five illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle for English Heritage on three days with 91 people entering, guided 16 school groups and took our Nature Reserve display to three events.

In late May the fifth Wildlife Festival was organised across the area from Hastings to Dungeness.

Our websites play an increasing role in the Nature Reserve Interpretation.

[www.WildRye.info](http://www.WildRye.info) provides information on all aspects of the reserve and is updated monthly.

[www.RXwildlife.info](http://www.RXwildlife.info) covers the area from Hastings to Hythe and is updated daily.

[www.RyeHarbour.net](http://www.RyeHarbour.net) is a library of old photos and memories for Rye Harbour village.

During 2012 there were more than 50,000 unique visitors to [RXwildlife.info](http://RXwildlife.info) and 35,000 unique visitors to [WildRye.info](http://WildRye.info).

## Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2012

As always the projects around the Nature Reserve are dependent to a large measure on the support of volunteers and there is a summary below of their contribution.

### Number of volunteer hours ...

Tuesday work-parties	196
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,344
Beach Watch/Patrolling	287
Other	411
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,238 hours</b>



# Appendix 1 – Nature Reserve Management

## Management Committee

The Nature Reserve is managed and administered by a committee of voting members nominated by and representing various bodies. The committees and their members at 31st December 2012 were:

Sussex Wildlife Trust	Mr. J Power Mr J Whitty Ms S. Walton
Environment Agency	T. Cook
East Sussex County Council	Cllr. K.J. Glazier Cllr. P. Scott
Landowners	Mr. F. Langrish
Rother District Council	Mr. A.H. Lloyd (Chair) Cllr. J. Johnson
Icklesham Parish Council	Cllr. C. Merricks
Rye Town Council	The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Rye
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Mr. M. Randall
Sussex Ornithological Society	Mr. R. Harris
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Mr. R. Suthers
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	Cllr. J. Barnes (Vice-chair) Mr. C. Page



## **Management Objectives**

Despite some external constraints the Nature Reserve is managed in such a way that the populations of rare and endangered species are safeguarded and the scenic attraction of the whole area enhanced. This is described in a Management Plan that is updated and agreed every five years.

The Management Plan has nine "Ideal Management Objectives" :

- 1. To maintain and where appropriate enhance the mosaic of all potential habitats at all stages of succession.**
- 2. To manage habitats to benefit the species that are nationally rare or notable.**
- 3. To preserve the remaining geomorphological features of interest.**
- 4. To encourage public appreciation of the area's wildlife and scenic value.**
- 5. To improve the scenic value of the area.**
- 6. To encourage routine monitoring, educational use and research.**
- 7. To comply with all legal and other obligations to landowners, neighbours and visitors.**
- 8. To extend the LNR to include all the other land within the SSSI and interesting adjacent areas.**
- 9. To inform national, regional and local bodies empowered to make decisions affecting the site.**

## Appendix 2

### Income and Expenditure Accounts Year-End 31st March 2013

	2012/13 £	2011/12 £
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
<b>Grants and Contributions</b>		
East Sussex County Council	5,000	20,300
Rother District Council	2,000	1,000
Icklesham PC	300	300
<b>Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve</b>		
Staff	19,000	19,000
Other projects	9,683	626
Environment Agency	30,000	15,000
English Heritage	2,000	2,000
Sussex Wildlife Trust	13,020	7,041
Environment Stewardship (HLS)	50,324	24,612
Wetland Trust	6,000	11,400
Charitable Trusts/Donations	7,375	-
<b>Total Grants &amp; Contributions</b>	<b>144,702</b>	<b>101,279</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Events and Education	2,881	4,389
Sundry Income	4,687	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>152,270</b>	<b>105,668</b>
 <b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Staffing Costs	117,663	91,077
Reserve Management	8,205	5,077
Information Centre & Interpretation	4,204	6,220
Projects	4,830	-
Transport	1,011	3,009
Environment Agency Lease	3,150	3,150
Educational Visits	348	168
Training	380	118
Administration & Communication	2,283	1,845
Insurance	-	6,601
Vehicle Costs	6,594	-
Depreciation	602	6,756
	<b>149,270</b>	<b>124,021</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFECIT</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>- 18,353</b>



## Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

### Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Number of Pairs</b>											
<b>LITTLE GREBE</b>	10	7	6	6	3	4	2	4	3	4	3
<b>GREAT CRESTED GREBE</b>	6	8	4	3	3	8	4	4	4	7	4
<b>CORMORANT</b>	120	125	132	134	130	150	146	119	123	113	161
<b>GREY HERON</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>MUTE SWAN</b>	6	6	3	3	3	5	3	3	6	6	6
<b>GREYLAG GOOSE</b>	6	7	6	10	10	7	9	10	12	8	7
<b>CANADA GOOSE</b>	15	14	13	15	14	10	7	9	5	5	3
<b>SHELDUCK</b>	8	3	3	1	3	4	2	1	3	2	1
<b>GADWALL</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
<b>SHOVELER</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TUFTED DUCK</b>	17	15	12	16	7	4	14	3	10	11	9
<b>AVOCET</b>	2	0	1	1	9	10	13	11	20	11	30
<b>OYSTERCATCHER</b>	18	25	31	24	24	28	28	25	33	31	23
<b>RINGED PLOVER</b>	40	39	41	34	30	39	33	28	25	25	19
<b>LITTLE RINGED PLOVER</b>	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	5	3	5	4
<b>LAPWING</b>	15	35	29	31	33	40	37	34	33	29	29
<b>REDSHANK</b>	10	10	13	12	16	15	18	19	13	19	12
<b>MEDITERRANEAN GULL</b>	13	25	27	37	75	40	63	90	185	100	55
<b>fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL</b>	5	22	36	40	50	15	39	64	250	50	<10
<b>BLACK-HEADED GULL</b>	700	800	1075	1500	2000	1400	1600	1600	2600	1700	1900
<b>fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL</b>	700	700	1050	1900	1900	1400	2200	2200	4500	100	1900
<b>HERRING GULL</b>	2	4	10+	4	5	10	14	30	38	41	21
<b>SANDWICH TERN</b>	150	250	300	200+	500	400	350	500	750	850	600
<b>fledged SANDWICH TERN</b>	150	400	400	300	500	400	400	600	1000	50	<10
<b>COMMON TERN</b>	34	74	105	153	169	175	150	232	341	235	149
<b>fledged COMMON TERN</b>	50	120	175	200	200	100	100	200	500	50	0
<b>LITTLE TERN</b>	19	25	18	18	21	15	0	0	7	7	13
<b>fledged LITTLE TERN</b>	1	30	5	20	9	0	0	0	7	2	0
<b>SAND MARTIN</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>YELLOW WAGTAIL</b>	15	12	12	6	2	6	7	4	2	2	0
<b>WHEATEAR</b>	7	8	10	13	11	13	12	12	5	3	4
<b>CETTI'S WARBLER (SINGING)</b>	0	8	6	8	9	18	13	15	15	14	11
<b>SEDGE WARBLER</b>	70	81	104	48	50	53	47	65	42	42	45
<b>REED WARBLER</b>	150+	200+	200+	206	201	227	250	250	250	250	200
<b>LESSER WHITETHROAT</b>	5	6	7	11	10	11	12	20	12	9	12
<b>WHITETHROAT</b>	55	62	69	58	58	59	37	70	53	46	39
<b>SKYLARK</b>	15	21	32	32	37	41	40	33	30	32	35
<b>REED BUNTING</b>	25	64	66	77	59	49	58	52	54	55	54
<b>CORN BUNTING</b>	2	1	5	2	2	4	3	3	0	0	0

Population estimates for these species start in 1970 and details are given in the report "Birds and other Vertebrates of Rye Harbour".

**Monthly peak bird counts in during 2012** - Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	7	30	8	2			1	4	17	25	43	36
GREAT CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	2	397	82	20	13	16	10	7	24	17	57	65
CORMORANT	36		171	217	331	275	89	415	204	212	122	67
GREY HERON	5	11	3	1	2	1	3	6	2	8	11	14
BITTERN	2	3	2	1						1	1	3
LITTLE EGRET	14	4	10	16	11	1	18	49	14	24	13	22
MUTE SWAN	2	2	22	19	69	81	65	82	33	45	36	1
GREYLAG GOOSE	115	112	20	19	37	22	46	58	371	130	125	112
CANADA GOOSE	188	84	10	8	14	18	113	81	15	144	28	213
SHELDUCK (inc. estuary)	40	30	40	35	37	12	10	10	6	3	22	22
WIGEON	100	900	9						160	397	645	534
GADWALL	285	339	78	43	22	15	11	33	100	119	104	314
TEAL	278	503	167	34	2	1		20	104	194	206	709
MALLARD	116	332	160	72	65	76	17	150	180	344	365	543
PINTAIL	2	17	3	4						1	5	10
SHOVELER	90	243	94	42	4		4	27	60	119	128	240
POCHARD	73	164	4	4	3	4	17	27	136	130	181	182
TUFTED DUCK	137	255	132	116	119		37	95		190	133	178
SCAUP												
LONG-TAILED DUCK												
COMMON SCOTER (Rye Bay)									30		5	70
GOLDENEYE	5	15	6								1	8
SMEW		7										4
RUDDY DUCK	1	1								1		
COOT	212	582	290	105	88	101	277	258	130	351	413	430
OYSTERCATCHER	610	317	390	344	219	211	156	404	430	107	456	539
AVOCET	4	6	40	56	63	23	28	11			2	
RINGED PLOVER	38	11	18	14	333	3	1	78	55	2	34	33
GOLDEN PLOVER	1500	800	220	144	3		2	54	27	1500	2000	250
GREY PLOVER	16	27	1	2	92		4	3	3	1	3	17
LAPWING	500	300	39	45	31	107	350	500	350	231	1281	556
KNOT	105	60	31	28	254		2	18	2			6
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	35	21			19		16	22	1			
DUNLIN (inc. estuary)	100	396	98	14	380	32	62	160	260	62	80	22
RUFF	5	18	14	6	3			12	2	1	6	
SNIFE	35	39	15	20				29	8	28	110	260
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	6		8		34	36	12	7	2			
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	1	4	17	16	399	1			11	6		2
WHIMBREL				76	40		9	3				
CURLEW	88	67	140	8	6	8	23	160	210	305	112	670
REDSHANK (inc. estuary)	69	54	164	132	13	16	34	48	117	139	133	145
GREENSHANK				1	5		3	9	2	2		
TURNSTONE	5	9	1	25	22	5	10	11	41	8	23	34

## **Appendix 4 - School Visits.**

Education is an important aspect of the Nature Reserve; we employ a Community Wildlife Officer to work with educational groups on planning and leading visits.

Please look at our webpage [www.wildrye.info/reserve/schools](http://www.wildrye.info/reserve/schools) which includes links to educational programmes, health & safety information, booking form and worksheets that can be downloaded.

### **Programmes of study**

While the Nature Reserve most obviously lends itself to the Science, Geography or History curriculum, it can equally well serve as a stimulus for writing, Art, Maths or Music. There is a comprehensive Key Stage 1 & 2 programme of visits, which can also be adapted for KS3, or visits can be tailored to individual groups' requirements.

### **Cost**

Visits led by a member of the Nature Reserve staff are charged – please see the website for up-to-date prices. Self-guided visits are free but donations are appreciated.

### **Wet weather facilities**

There are very limited wet weather facilities at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. It is possible for groups to shelter in the information centre, bird-watching hides or the blockhouses in heavy rain.

### **Toilets**

There are no toilets on the Nature Reserve; however public toilets can be found in Rye Harbour village, near to the car park.

### **Food**

Visitors should bring food and drink appropriate to the length of the visit and the season. There are no consumables for sale at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, but there is a shop in Rye Harbour village, next to the public toilets

### **Equipment**

We will provide all necessary equipment for groups that we are leading; self-guided groups may hire out equipment such as binoculars, clipboards, minibeast-hunting equipment, pond nets and books/ID guides for a small donation.

### **Clothing**

It is important that visitors bring suitable clothing with them. Windproof and waterproof coats and also sturdy shoes are appropriate all year round. In summer hats and sunscreen are also necessary. In winter warm clothes will make a visit to the exposed beach much more comfortable.

### **Health and Safety**

Children must remain under teachers' control at all times and teachers remain responsible for the children during a visit. Teachers are also responsible for all First Aid arrangements and must carry the necessary First Aid Kits and a mobile telephone. We require a ratio of one adult to ten or fewer children (not including any Nature Reserve helpers). Your party must have insurance to cover your own potential liabilities. Our Public Liability insurance covers the legal liability of the Nature Reserve for loss, damage or injury to third parties. Risk Assessments can be provided for groups that our staff are leading, but self-guided groups must prepare their own risk assessments. Pre-visits to the Nature Reserve are advisable.

## Appendix 5 - Notes For The Guidance Of Visitors.

A) Any society or individual wanting to visit the Reserve with a group of ten or more people **MUST** obtain a permit from the Reserve Manager at least three weeks before the proposed visit. This will try to prevent overcrowding in the hides. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with any enquiry.

B) No charge is made for a permit but visitors are requested to consider a donation towards the essential running costs of the Reserve. A donation box is located at Lime Kiln Cottage, or you can send a cheque!

C) If groups exceed 20 in number they should be split into smaller groups to go around the Reserve.

D) The Reserve Staff are prepared to meet all parties before they enter the Reserve and to accompany them round **if this has been arranged beforehand**. The reserve also offers a series of guided excursions on various aspects of the reserve (please contact the reserve for further details and up-to-date prices).

E) Leaders of groups are reminded that they will be held fully responsible for the conduct of their members. The leaders of school parties are urged to ensure that the staff to student ratio is such that adequate control can be maintained over the whole group.

F) Access to the Reserve is by designated footpaths. Visitors must keep to these routes and under no circumstances enter the fenced **Wildlife Sanctuary Areas**.

G) There is no public vehicular access to the Reserve and cars should be left in the public car park at Rye Harbour. However, vehicular access may be allowed, by prior arrangement with the Reserve Staff, for any disabled visitor unable to manage the walk to the hides.

H) There is an Information Centre in the car park with toilet facilities nearby. From the car park the four bird-watching hides are 4 km, 1½ km, 1 km. and 600 m. (all are accessible to some wheelchairs).

I) The Reserve is an exposed area – even in summer - and suitable, warm, windproof clothing is recommended on all but the warmest days.

J) To avoid disturbing the wildlife near the hides please do not extend arms through the viewing slots. Photography of nesting birds, picking of flowers and other disturbance of wildlife is prohibited by law.

K) Anyone wanting to carry out ecological fieldwork on the Reserve must make prior application to the Reserve Manager in writing, giving full details of the proposed work.

L) All dogs should be kept on a lead or under **STRICT** control.

M) Visitors must comply with any proper request of the Reserve staff and volunteers.

