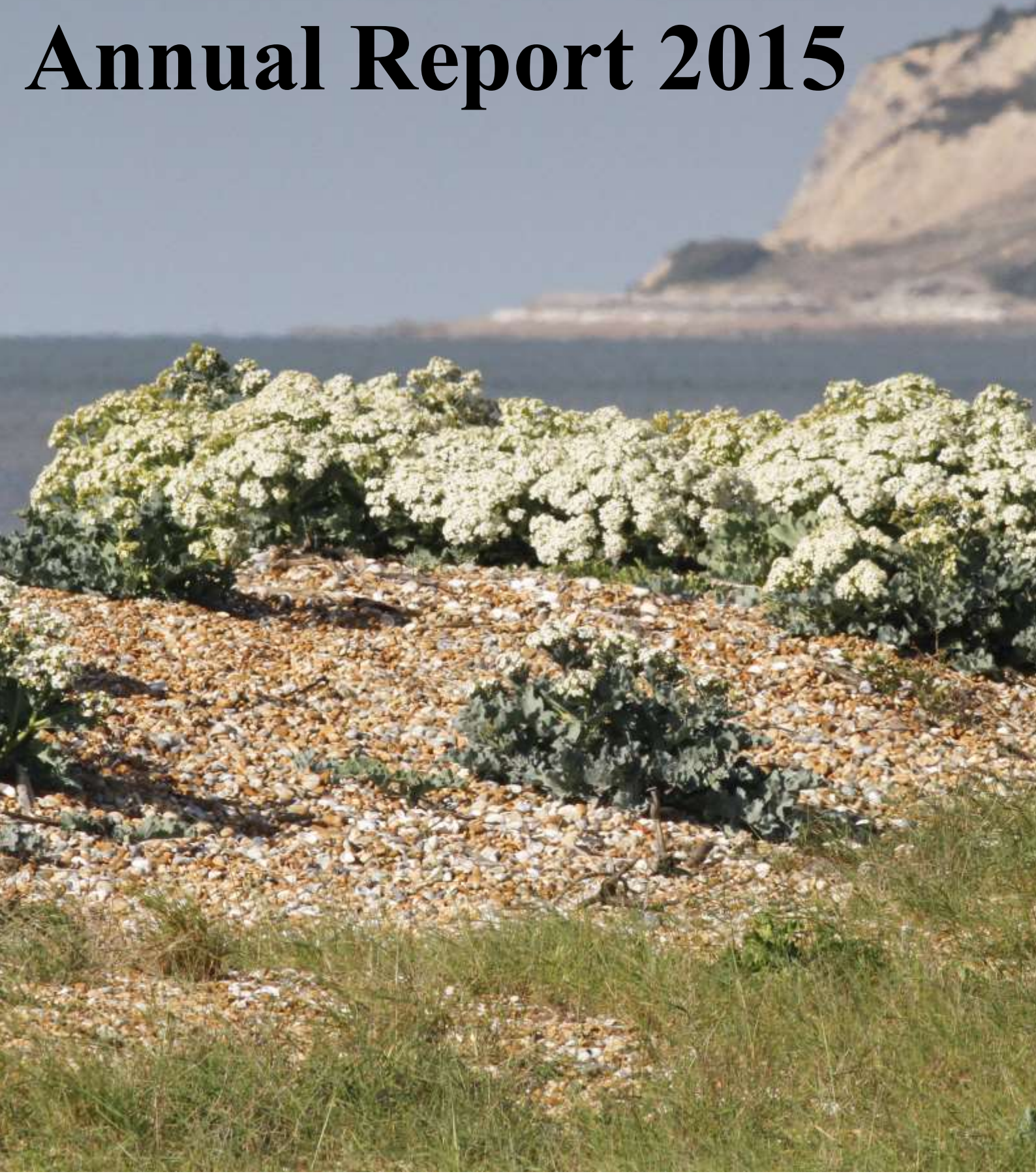


Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2015



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Contents

	page number
The Nature Reserve	
Establishment.....	4
Brief Description	5
Climate	5
Geomorphology.....	5
Habitats.....	6
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 2016	36
3. Bird Populations at Rye Harbour SSSI	37
4. School Visits	39
5. Notes for the Guidance of Visitors	40

Cover photo: Sea Kale

The Nature Reserve address is:

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

telephone: 01797 227784

e-mail: rhnoffice@sussexwt.org.uk

web site: www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

Map of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

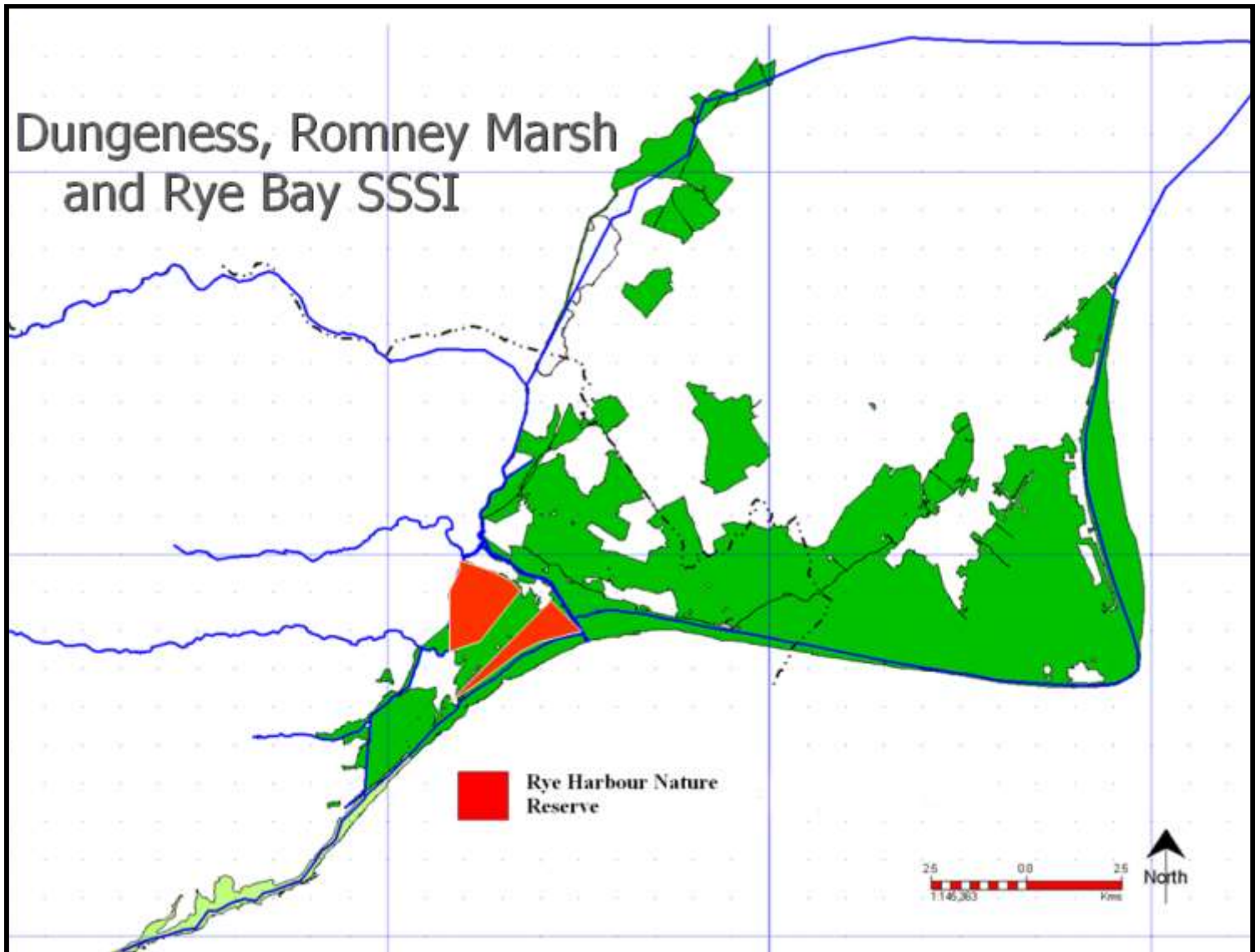


The Nature Reserve

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 appoint-



ed 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 88.6 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—see above.

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 designation: as part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Ramsar site** (this was designated in March 2016).

Brief Description

The SSSI at Rye Harbour 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 Rye Harbour Farm. The loss of wetland has been partly offset by the extraction of the largest shingle ridges creating pits and the in 2005 the creation of borrow pits to create the secondary sea defence on Rye Harbour Farm. In 2011 the Environment Agency re-created about 20ha. Of saltmarsh on the seaward side of the secondary sea defence.

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.

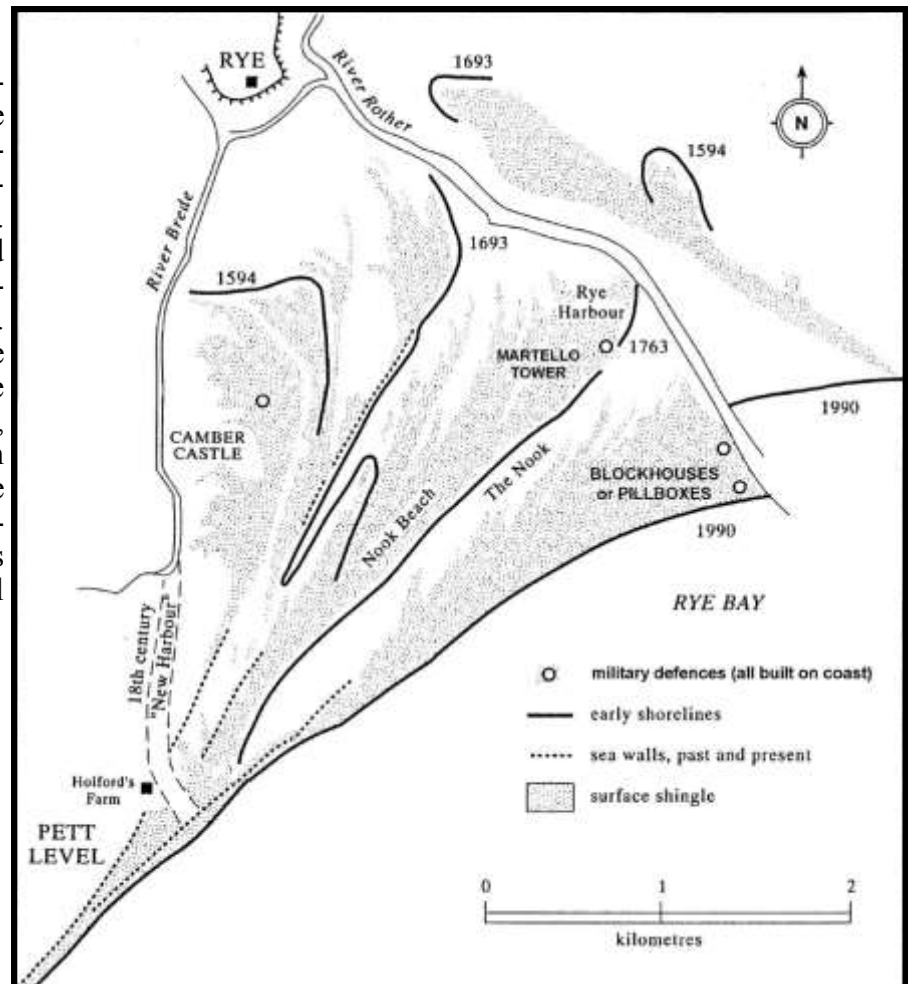
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

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 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, 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, 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. 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 2011 the Environment Agency's saltmarsh re-creation project on Rye Harbour Farm added 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 1970s 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 skylark.

Drainage Ditches

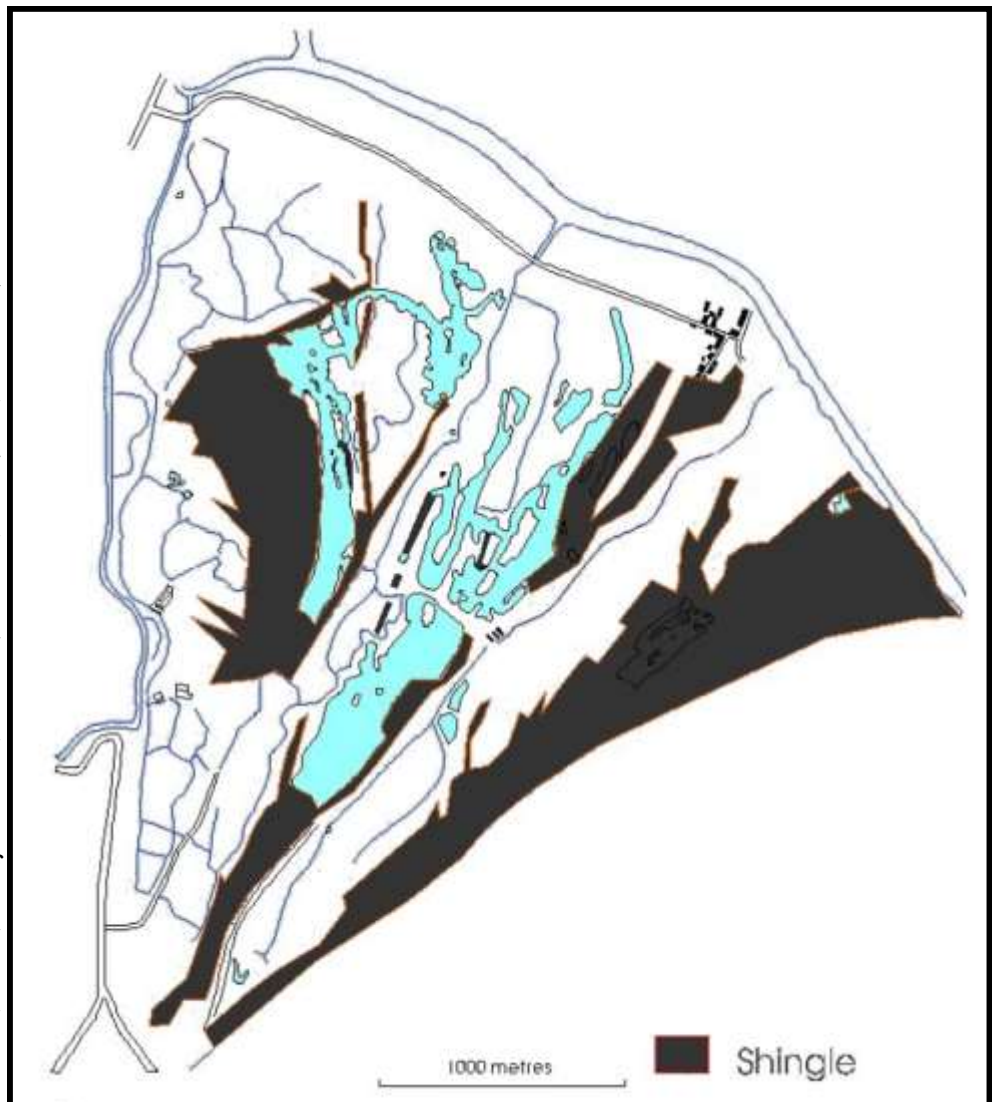
The reclaimed saltmarsh areas are drained by a network of ditches, some of which follow the line of the old saltmarsh creeks. Many are annually cleaned mechanically, but still retain an interesting remnant of the wetland flora and fauna. Nearly 5 km. of the ditches have a strong saline influence. Although 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 and other, more saline ditches by sea club-rush. Some 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 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 Rye 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 or clay 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 70 ha. of open water with a range of salinity.

	Area	Salinity
Ternery Pool	5.2ha	35ppt
Flat Beach and Quarry	9.7ha	35ppt
Harbour Farm Pits (x4)	5.1ha	9 - 46ppt
Castle Water	43.9ha	0ppt

New freshwater 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. Freshwater Pits have been colonised by the non-native invasive *Crassula helmsii*, which threatens native species, but there is hope for future biocontrol in 2017.

In brackish and saline pits the plant species are fewer, with fennel pondweed in brackish and sea lettuce and spiral tasselweed growing in abundance. The invertebrates diversity is low, but some species can be abundant such as the brackish water prawn *Palaemonetes varians*.

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 and the Quarry 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 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). In 2003 and 2006 excavation at Castle Water created the potential for 20 ha of reedbed there which is still developing.

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 (below).

Scrub

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



Limobius mixtus on common stork's-bill

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 Nature Reserve's species list stands at 4,275.

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 Horned 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 497 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 3,162 invertebrate 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, but the Common Frog has not been seen here for many years. At night the Reserve is the domain of Badger, Fox and eight species of bat

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 voluntary wardens. So far more than 297 species of birds have been recorded on the Reserve, of which over 95 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 at :

www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

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

2014 figures	British Status				
	Local	Notable	Rare	Total Species	Records
Rye Harbour LNR	590	245	184+	4,275	101,537
Rye Harbour SSSI	650	266	c.200	4,989	202,161
Rye Bay	1,139	475	c.250	8,076	597,504

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. Much of the south part of the reserve is suitable for wheelchairs and all birdwatching hides are adapted. 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 (right) 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.

Further information is available at the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre 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



	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage	Estimated people entering southern part of the nature reserve
JAN	5615	11792	18197
FEB	5953	12501	19292
MAR	6724	14120	21791
APR	8544	17942	27689
MAY	8448	17741	27378
JUN	8189	17197	26538
JUL	9108	19127	29517
AUG	11239	23602	36423
SEP	8789	18457	28483
OCT	7478	15704	24234
NOV	4396	9232	14246
DEC	5422	11386	17571
TOTALS	89903	188796	291352

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 2.1 people passing Lime Kiln Cottage and that only 65% enter the south part of the nature reserve along this route.

In the table we have estimated total visitors to the southern part of the nature reserve and by adding a nominal figure for visitors to the north part we reach a total estimate of **300,000 visitors a year**.

**Visitors entering
Lime Kiln Cottage
Information Centre**

2015	Hours open	Adults Entering	Children Entering	Total Entering	Total Passing South
JAN	165.25	399	81	480	11792
FEB	156	656	167	823	12501
MAR	159.75	686	155	841	14120
APR	209	1248	328	1576	17942
MAY	205	1327	311	1638	17741
JUN	184.25	1099	96	1195	17197
JUL	195.5	1304	285	1589	19127
AUG	208	1610	575	2185	23602
SEP	165.75	973	146	1119	18457
OCT	191.75	937	210	1147	15704
NOV	166.45	363	27	390	9232
DEC	137.25	392	83	475	11386
TOTALS	2144	10994	2464	13458	188796



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 funded by the Gooders' family and the Friends. It is not far from the car park, and provides excellent views of the Wader Pool and the flooded Flat 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 2015 the Friends funded a quarter of staff costs and the landscaping and island building of Flat Beach and the improvements to the electric fencing.

In 2015 the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre was opened to the public by a team of volunteers. It was opened for 2,144 hours and provided information about the Friends, the Reserve and its wildlife to 13,458 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 2015 there were 1,477 subscriptions, representing about 1,917 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2015 amounted to £21,240 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £4,145 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme. The Friends also receive £1,300 in donations, and an additional £317 in Gift Aid.



Turnstones roosting at high tide

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 6¹/₂" , unless otherwise stated) stamped addressed envelope, or from the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre, when it is open.

	Price	Postage
Rye Harbour Leaflets		
Summer Birds at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	50p each	
Winter Birds of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	or three	55p
Coastal Flowers at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	for £1	
Rye Harbour booklet - your guide to a shingle Nature Reserve	£1	75p
Camber Castle Booklet - description of Henry VIII's Castle	£1	75p
Colour Postcards - postage for up to 10 cards	40p each	55p
	or six for £2	
Writing Paper with envelopes - pack of ten with little tern and yellow horned poppy illustration.	£3.25	£1.20p
Notelets - pack of ten with Nature Reserve illustration.	£2.25	£1.20p
Greetings Cards - Blank	£1.00 each	55p
Calico Bag - with little tern logo	£3	75p
Illustrated Tea Towel	£4	75p
Mug	£4	£2.85
Coasters	£2	75p
Window Sticker (right)	50p	55p
Pen	£1.25	75p
Pencil	40p	75p
Eraser	60p	75p
Keyring	£1.25	55p
Leather Bookmark	£1.25	55p
Magnetic Bookmark	£1.50	75p
Cap - Navy blue with embroidered RHNR logo	£8	£1.40
Micro Fleece Hat - 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.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

Booklets

- Rye Harbour What's On (547KB)
- Rye Harbour Booklet (1.8 MB)
- RX Wildlife Booklet (1MB)
- Camber Castle Booklet (2.3MB)

Leaflets

- Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Leaflet (1MB)
- Camber Castle Leaflet (500KB)
- Camber Castle Circular Walk Leaflets (995KB)
- Rye Harbour Timeline (417KB)
- Common Winter Birds at Rye Harbour (2MB)
- Common Summer Birds at Rye Harbour (1MB)
- Coastal Flowers at Rye Harbour (2MB)

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)

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)
- A Survey of the Feeding Activity of the Breeding Terns of Rye Bay (3MB)

Management Reports

Nature Reserve Management Plan 2012 - 21 (10MB)

2014 Annual Report (2MB)

2013 Annual Report (4MB)

2012 Annual Report (11.5MB)

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)

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)



Autumn Lady's-tresses

Wildlife Summary

The following is a monthly summary of the wildlife seen by, or reported to the Nature Reserve for the recording area in 2015. 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 2015

January saw the addition of a new wader species to the Rye Harbour list with the arrival of a **lesser yellowlegs** (right) on the reserve. Initially present at Pett Level from the 25th December, this bird was first seen at Rye Harbour on the 4th January, at the western end of Harbour Farm, and spent the rest of the month shuttling between the two sites. This vagrant from North America is a close relative of the familiar redshank, though smaller, slighter and with long bright yellow legs as the name suggests.



In Britain, the species has averaged about five records a year since 1950, with the last Sussex record in 1998 at Pett Level.

January was a very good month for wader watchers on the reserve, with lots of species and many individuals (and let's not forget the lesser yellowlegs!). Peak counts of **golden plover** and **lapwing** included 2500+ on Flat Beach on the 5th and 1500 on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm on the 17th, while **dunlin** (760), **curlew** (520), **sanderling** (250), **snipe** (126) and **ruff** (18) also produced some good totals. Best of the bunch were four **jack snipe** on the Beach Reserve on the 27th, and the **purple sandpiper** on the Quarry on the 1st, while it was also good to see the first **avocet** of the year, with two birds on Flat Beach on the 4th and 9th. Cold weather brought some high waterfowl counts during the month, including 425 **teal** on the 18th, and 190 **shoveler**, 180 **gadwall** and 27 **pintail** on the 27th. In addition, up to six **goldeneye** were present throughout the month, a male **scap** was on Long Pit on the 1st, and 'redhead' **smew** were seen at Castle Water on the 23rd and 27th and Narrow Pit on the 4th. **Bittern** were recorded at Castle Water on the 15th and 19th, with two on the former date, there were regular sightings of **great white egret** on Narrow Pit, Harbour Farm and at Castle Water, with two birds on several dates, and a flock of 35 **white-fronted goose** overflowed the viewpoint at dusk on the 18th. A good selection of passerines included regular **rock pipit** on the saltmarsh, over 100 **skylark** on Flat Beach Level on the 18th, **raven** over Harbour Farm on the 9th and 19th and at Castle Water on the 27th and four **bearded tit** at Castle Water on the 19th. The highlight was a **firecrest** at Castle Water on the 22nd, while a group of six **bullfinch** here on the 5th was also of note.

Cold weather again meant very few insect sightings during the month, though we did have the first butterfly of the year with a **small tortoiseshell** near the viewpoint on the 27th. At

Lime Kiln Cottage, sunny days found numerous blowflies, *Calliphora vicina* basking on any upright surface, while grubbing for ground beetles turned up *Badister bullatus* on Flat Beach on the 19th, and *Agonum thoreyi* and *Agonum fuliginosum* from Castle Water on the 27th.

February 2015

February saw the first records of **Mediterranean gull** for 2015, with up to six birds present among larger numbers of **black-headed gull** at Ternery Pool late in the month. This striking gull, with its pure black head, drooping bright red beak and pale wings was first recorded in the UK in the mid 19th century, with the first breeding in 1968. At Rye Harbour, the first nesting occurred in 1987, when two pairs bred, but it was not until the early part of the 21st century that breeding really ‘took off’ on the reserve, with numbers rising rapidly from two pairs in 2001 to 176 pairs in 2010. Since then, however, numbers have fallen drastically, with only one unsuccessful pair in 2014. Something of a pirate, Mediterranean gull steals food from the other gulls and terns with which it nests, mainly black-headed gull and Sandwich tern at Rye Harbour. This behaviour may be particularly important when feeding chicks, and it seems that poor food availability for these species has had a knock on effect, resulting in the poor show for our ‘Meds’ over the last few years.

Still good numbers of waders present on the Flat Beach during February, with **golden plover** (2000) and **lapwing** (1000) as usual providing the bulk. Elsewhere on the reserve high counts included 490 **dunlin**, 88 **knot** and 64 **grey plover** on the shore on the 17th, and on Harbour Farm 330 **curlew** on the 26th and 25 **ruff** on the 27th. Wader highlight was the **lesser yellowlegs** which was still present at the western end of Harbour Farm up to the 21st, though a count of 18 **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm on the 27th was notable in being the highest count ever for this species at Rye Harbour. In addition, a **purple sandpiper** was present on the Quarry on the 27th and a **green sandpiper** on Harbour Farm on the 26th, while it was also good to see four **avocet** on Flat Beach on the 19th and 11 on Harbour Farm on the 27th of the month. Notable waterfowl included **Slavonian grebe**, **black-necked grebe**, **smew** and **scaup** on Long Pit, two **great white egret** on Harbour Farm on the 5th and Castle Water on the 6th Pit, 18 **white-fronted goose** on Harbour Farm on the 13th, up to 10 **goldeneye** on



Harbour Farm, and several sightings of **bittern** at Castle Water throughout the month. Offshore, 80 **common scoter** were present on the 12th and 60 **red-throated diver** on the 13th. Raptors during February included **marsh harrier** on several dates, with four at Castle Water on the 27th, a **common buzzard** over Harbour Farm on the 6th and **peregrine** on Harbour Farm on the 3rd and Castle Water on the 27th. **Skylark** numbers remained high on the new saltmarsh during February, with a flock of 135 present on the 6th, while elsewhere on the reserve 35 **meadow pipit** were present on

Harbour Farm on the 9th, and at Castle Water a **chiffchaff** was heard on the 10th, **kingfisher** were seen on the 8th and 23rd and several sightings of **bearded tit** included six on the 27th. Passerine highlight, and a pleasant surprise, were several **corn bunting** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve on the 9th, including a singing male at Ternery Pool, while Harbour Farm also hosted a **grey wagtail** on the 9th and two **raven** on the 5th.

Towards the end of the month increasingly spring-like weather encouraged the first queen **buff-tailed bumblebees** out of hibernation, with sightings on the shore on the 27th and the Beach Reserve on the 28th. At Lime Kiln Cottage, late winter insects included **common green shieldbug** on the 27th and small numbers of **yellow dung-fly** from about mid-month, while **common lizard** was found late in the month. Small mammals recorded on Harbour Farm early in the month included **common shrew**, **pygmy shrew** and **field vole**. Plants in flower included **coltsfoot** and **Persian speedwell**.

March 2015

This month saw the first records of **garganey** on the reserve for 2015, with one at Castle Water on the 28th. This small duck, slightly bigger than a teal, breeds in small numbers at Castle Water, and is unusual amongst British waterfowl in that it is a summer visitor. Birds spend the winter in southern Africa, appearing on the reserve at the start of spring and begin their return journey around July. Females are fairly drab, but the males are super beasts, with a brown head and white eye-stripe, while both sexes have pale blue panels on the wings visible in flight. The English name probably comes from the rattling call of the male, and an old name for this species in Norfolk is ‘gargle-teal’.

While there was still a good range of wader species during March, the large numbers of individuals which have become typical of Rye Harbour during the winter were less evident as species such as **golden plover** and **curlew** moved off to their breeding grounds and **lap-wing** flocks either moved on or broke up as local birds set up territories. There were some obvious signs of passage movement during March, with the appearance of **little ringed plover** and **green sandpiper** on Harbour Farm on the 23rd and the steady increase in **avocet** numbers, with 58 birds present on the 27th, though cold, northerly winds perhaps discouraged many species in this respect for much of the month. Notable records included up to 130 **knot** on shore ridges on the 13th, 22 **ruff** on Harbour Farm on the same date and several sightings of **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve. Waterfowl during March included two booming **bittern** at Castle Water on the 27th, two **spoonbill** on the Beach Reserve on the 17th, **great white egret** on the Beach Reserve and at Castle Water on several dates, the male **scaup** on Long Pit early in the month and up to six **goldeneye** on Harbour Farm. Up to four **marsh harrier** were present, with the resident pairs beginning to display in preparation for the breeding season, while other raptors included **merlin** on Harbour Farm on the 19th and 20th and a **peregrine** over Harbour Farm on the 13th. At Castle Water, sightings of **barn owl** were regular, with perhaps two seen on the 8th. With the breeding season imminent, seabird numbers on the reserve increased throughout the month, with up to 110 **Sandwich tern** and **Mediterranean gull** present on around the breeding colonies. Passerines showed some signs of passage movement from mid-month, but as with other groups things did seem a bit slow! A **black redstart** was present on the Beach Reserve on the 13th, the first singing **chiffchaff** at Castle Water on the 18th (with four by the end of the month) and the first **wheatear**, **sand martin** and **swallow** on the 21st. Also on the 21st probably the last of the winters **fieldfare**, with three at Castle Water.

The moth trap was run for the first time this month at Lime Kiln Cottage, though the cold weather resulted in only one bedraggled **common Quaker** in total! Elsewhere on the reserve **Buff-tailed bumblebee** queens were seen regularly, both **peacock** and **small tortoise-shell** were on the wing, and caterpillars of **cream-spot tiger** and **drinker** began to emerge from hibernation later in the month. Other invertebrates during March included the spring hoverfly *Cheilosia grossa* and the rare beetles *Odacantha melanura*, *Helops caeruleus* and *Badister collaris*.

April 2015

April is a good time to see **brown hare** on the reserve, particularly the grassy ridges near Camber Castle. At this time of the year, females can sometimes be seen fending off the attentions of amorous males, standing on their hind legs and ‘boxing’ their suitors (it’s this bizarre behaviour which gave rise to the phrase ‘mad March hares’, though it is not confined to this month). Similar to the familiar rabbit, hares can be told by their longer black-tipped ears and longer legs, this latter allowing them to reach speeds of up to 40 mph. Unlike rabbits, hares do not use burrows, rather resting in depressions in the ground called ‘forms’ Brown hares used to be very common in England, though changes in agriculture, possibly coupled with increased numbers of foxes, a major predator, in recent years has seen numbers fall considerably.



No great numbers of waders during April, though a good selection of species. Migrants included small flocks of **golden plover**, **curlew** and **dunlin**, small numbers of **snipe** and **ruff** and the occasional **greenshank** and **common sandpiper**. Good numbers of **whimbrel** and **bar-tailed godwit** were also present, particularly towards the end of the month, and two **spotted redshank** was on Harbour Farm on the 23rd. The wintering purple sandpiper was seen until 16th. By the end of April, our breeding waders had already set up territories, most notable among these being perhaps 25 pairs of **avocet** and five pairs of **little ringed plover**. Breeding seabird numbers on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm included peak counts of 500 **Sandwich tern**, 126 **Mediterranean gull**, 70 **common tern** and 35 **little tern**, while notable waterfowl included two booming **bittern**, up to five **garganey** and a **great white egret** at Castle Water and four **red-breasted merganser** offshore on the 9th. Raptors included the resident breeding **marsh harrier** pair at Castle Water, a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 4th, a **peregrine** over Harbour Farm on the 4th and, later in the month several sightings of **hobby** including two at Castle Water on the 24th. In addition, the occasional **barn owl** was present on Harbour Farm with a **short-eared owl** here on the 18th.

Passerines during April included a good selection of passage migrants and summer visitors. Hirundines included up to 50 **house martin**, 30 **sand martin** and 20 **swallow**, while 40 **swift** were seen at Castle Water on the 27th. This month also saw an influx of warblers, with **blackcap**, **chiffchaff**, **sedge warbler**, **reed warbler**, **whitethroat** and **lesser whitethroat** all singing by the end of the month, while a **garden warbler** at Castle Water on the 27th and a **wood warbler** on the Beach Reserve on the 23rd were notable. Other passage migrants included at least two **nightingale** on Narrow Pit on the 22nd and **whinchat** on the Beach Reserve and on Harbour Farm on the 14th and 27th. The first **cuckoo** of the year was seen on the 16th on Harbour Farm, with up to ten present by the end of the month, while small numbers of **wheatear** and **yellow wagtail** were also recorded. Very unusual here were sightings of Jay on 6th and 19th. Finally, a flock of six **corn bunting** on Harbour Farm on the 6th was a pleasant surprise.

Still very poor for moths during April, the Lime Kiln trap empty more often than not, and with only the odd **common Quaker**, **small Quaker** and **clouded drab** to show for my efforts! Caterpillars were far more obvious, with **oak eggar**, **cream-spot tiger**, **garden tiger** and **drinker** all recorded during April. Still early days for dragonflies and damselflies, though **large red damselfly** and **hairy hawk** were seen at Castle Water, while butterflies included **small copper**, **small tortoiseshell**, **peacock** and **speckled wood**, then a **painter lady** on 28th. Other interesting invertebrates during the month included **dotted bee-fly** and **lesser thorn-tipped longhorn beetle**, only the second reserve record. Plants in flower included **common whitlowgrass**, **Danish scurvygrass**, **ground ivy** and **hawthorn**.

May 2015

The late spring period is perhaps the only time that **nightingale** can be heard singing around Rye Harbour, with one or two birds usually heard by the Narrow Pits and near the caravan park. Nightingales winter in West Africa and arrive in Britain around about June, with most British breeders occurring in the south-east corner of England. Since the late 90's, changes in land management and climatic changes, perhaps combined with mortality on their wintering grounds, have seen a reduction in numbers here of over 50%, resulting in the species being placed on the amber list of birds of conservation concern. While relatively dull in appearance, the nightingale more than makes up for this with its famous song, a combination of fluting whistles and liquid trills usually delivered from deep within scrub. Indeed, so secretive are the adults that they are more often heard than seen. The name itself is very old, dating from perhaps 1000 years ago, and means 'night songstress', due to the fact that the species often sings at night, and the misconception in earlier times that it was the female, rather than the male, which sang.

This month saw the first chicks of **lapwing oystercatcher** and **ringed plover**, with the latter in particular appearing to be having a good year. Once again our **avocet** appear to be doing well with around 30 pairs producing good numbers of chicks by the end of the month, while at least five pairs of **little ringed plover** were present around the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. On Ternery Pool perhaps 1200 pairs of **black-headed gull** and at least 200 pairs of **Sandwich tern** nested, while on Flat Beach at least six pairs of **little tern** were present towards the end of the month. At Castle Water booming **bittern** were heard throughout the month, while the resident pair of **marsh harrier** were seen regularly. The reserve saw several interesting visitors during the month. A Danish ringed **spoonbill** was present on Harbour Farm on the 11th before being joined by a second bird on the 12th, with both remaining until the 19th, while a **purple heron** and **great white egret** were present on the 13th and **roseate tern** on the 2nd and 12th. In addition, passage migrants included up to 48

dunlin, 16 **black-tailed godwit**, 12 **whimbrel**, five **curlew**, eight **bar-tailed godwit**, three **ruff**, seven **little stint** and singles of **curlew** and **common sandpiper**, while up to eight **hobby** were present at Castle Water early in the month.

Still very poor for moth trapping on the reserve, with both number of species and individuals well below what I would expect for this time of the year. Highlights were the first record of **bordered ermel** for the year and our first **pale pinion** since 2008! A better selection of dragonflies and damselflies included the first **downy emerald**, **four-spotted chaser** and **variable damselfly** at Castle Water, with **hairy dragonfly** still active here early in the month, while butterflies included **brown argus**, **small copper**, **orange-tip** and **painted lady**. Notable species included the beetles *Helops caeruleus*, *Larinus planus* and **great silver water beetle** (the latter from the moth trap at Lime Kiln Cottage). Mammals included **brown hare** and **water shrew** at Castle Water, the latter the first record here for several years. Plants in flower included **sea kale**, **sea campion**, **sea pea**, **yellow horned-poppy**, **viper's bugloss**, **bittersweet**, **herb robert**, **red clover**, **salsify** and **yellow rattle**.

June 2015

One of the characteristic insects of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is the **great silver water beetle**. This behemoth is one of the largest British insects, up to 5cm in length and weighing in at around 25-30g. As the name suggests, this is an aquatic species, the adults storing a bubble of air under their abdomen to allow them to breathe (and giving them the 'silver' part of the common name) and feeding largely on plant material, while the larvae feed on freshwater snails, drilling holes in the shell to get at the juicy insides. A rare species in Britain, great silver water beetle is associated largely with grazing marshes and ditches in Britain, and at Rye Harbour they are most at home in the ditches and pools at Castle Water, though they are most often seen when they come to the moth trap at Lime Kiln Cottage.

In general it's been a good year so far for our breeding birds. At Ternery Pool around 200 pairs of **Sandwich tern** are doing well after several years of poor productivity, producing around 200 chicks and with the first fledglings seen late in the month, while at least four fledged **Mediterranean gull** were present on the 26th, the first successful breeding here for a couple of years. On Flat Beach Level, it seems that work carried out during the winter to provide extra protection against predators has been successful so far, with little sign of the depredations of the previous couple of years. The bulk of our **oystercatcher** nested here, with perhaps 20 pairs successfully hatching and then fledging good numbers of chicks, while **ringed plover** also seem to have done better than usual. In addition, at least nine pairs of **little tern** set up home here, with the first chicks produced towards the end of the month. On Harbour Farm, at least 40 pairs of **avocet** nested, and while they struggled early on in the season later nesters did well and many early failures re-nested so that both fledged young and tiny chicks were present by the end of the month. **Wheatear** also seem to having a slightly better year, with perhaps five pairs on the Beach Reserve probably well into their second broods by the end of June. There have however been some disappointments. **Lapwing** numbers were down this year and those that did nest were probably adversely affected by the poor weather and very few fledglings were seen. Similarly **redshank**, though present in good numbers at the start of the season, have been similarly unproductive. Another disappointment has been **turtle dove**. It used to be that you could almost guarantee it at two or three places in area, but this year we have had only a few sightings, at Castle Water. Some early signs of passage movement were seen during the month, presumably birds nesting in the far north, and included regular **whimbrel** and **curlew** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve, and **bar-tailed godwit** and **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm on the 9th and 29th.

The improved weather during June saw an increase in the catch for the Lime Kiln moth trap. Highlights included the macros **star-wort**, **shore wainscot**, **dotted fan-foot** and **cream-bordered green pea** and the micros **starry pearl**, **giant water veneer** and **salt-marsh grass veneer**, while migrants included **small mottled willow**, **bordered straw** and **rush veneer**. Still very poor for butterflies despite the upturn in the weather, with low numbers recorded throughout, though there were several records of **red admiral** and **painted lady** during the month. Other interesting invertebrates recorded during June included **bombardier beetle** and the **false widow spider** *Steatoda nobilis*. Plants in flower during June included **pyramidal** and **common-spotted orchid**, **ribbed melilot**, **evening primrose**, **sea heath** and **yellow vetch**.

July 2015

One of the rarest plant that we have at Rye Harbour is the **least lettuce**. This delicate plant, growing up to about 1m in ideal conditions, is only found in two or three places in England, usually on disturbed sandy shingle or old sea walls. While never a common species it used to be more widespread in the south-east before suffering severe declines due particularly to sea wall refurbishment and river engineering, and it is now included in schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act which protects our rarest plants. At Rye Harbour this species has suffered in the past from over-



grazing by rabbits, so the construction of fenced areas on the Beach Reserve has benefited them greatly, and the best place to see them on the reserve is in the enclosure just south of the Parkes and Denny Hide.

For some of our most ‘high profile’ birds the breeding season for 2015 came to a close during July. **Black-headed gull** seem to have had a decent year with many fledged young present on the reserve, while after several years of almost zero productivity it was good to see over 100 fledged **Sandwich tern** with adults at Ternery Pool early in the month. Our **avocet** have had a bit of a strange year, with good hatching success but a lower than normal fledging rate, perhaps due to a combination of poor weather and predation pressure. For other species however, proceedings were still ongoing. On Flat Beach the **little tern** produced their first fledgling mid-month, with at least three present on the 29th, though bad weather

later on appears to have done for some of the smaller chicks, while many **ringed plover** have produced a second brood. The **common tern** on the Quarry were soldiering on, producing a few fledglings though they seem to have suffered badly from the depredations of herring gulls. On Harbour Farm two pairs of **little ringed plover** hatched chicks early in the month, though these did not appear to survive long. A good range of migrant waders during July included **green sandpiper**, **common sandpiper**, **greenshank** and **whimbrel**, with good counts including 100 **lapwing**, 95 **curlew**, 40 **dunlin** and 14 **black-tailed godwit**, while a flock of nine **golden plover** on Flat Beach on the 16th was a sign of the advancing year. The highlights were two **little stint** on Harbour Farm on the 16th. Notable passerine sightings during July included three **raven** in flight over Harbour Farm on the 9th, small groups of **yellow wagtail** on the Beach Reserve on the 10th and 16th, and 150 **swift** and 18 **sand martin** over the Beach Reserve on the 10th. Other notable sightings during July included two **garganey** at Castle Water on the 6th and an **Arctic tern** on Ternery Pool on the 4th.

Some good species in the moth trap at Lime Kiln Cottage this month, including the micros **bordered ermel**, **starry pearl**, **horehound plume** and **rosy-streaked knot-horn** and the macros **crescent striped**, **white satin** (not rare nationally but not recorded here since 1999), and the migrant **small marbled**. Butterflies have been quite poor this year, though again a few **painted lady**, **clouded yellow** and **red admiral** were of interest, as were the first records of **marbled white** for the year at their colony near the viewpoint, while the best of the bunch for the dragonflies were records of **brown hawker** and **emperor** at Castle Water. Other notable invertebrates included the rare **saltmarsh horsefly** and the even rarer **four-lined horsefly**, only the second reserve record, as well as **bee-wolf** and **hornet hoverfly**. Plants in flower during July included **least lettuce**, **red hemp-nettle**, **red clover**, **marsh-mallow**, **marsh helleborine**, **stinking hawksbeard** and the very rare saltmarsh grass **sea barley**.

August 2015

It's not very often that we get to add a new species of mammal to the reserve list, but we did manage it this month with the discovery of **Nathusius' pipistrelle** at Castle Water on the 27th. Eleven bats were trapped under licence using a combination of sound lures and 'harp traps' the largest number of individuals ever caught in a single night in the UK. Though rarely recorded, this species has a wide distribution, with records as far north as Shetland (the site of the first UK record in 1940) to the south coast. A migratory species in Europe. It was initially considered to be only an accidental visitor to the UK, though since then research has suggested that there may be regular migration between the UK and Scandinavia in Spring and Autumn, with some individuals remaining all year, and it is now a breeding species.

An increase in passage movement later in the month saw a good range of waders on the reserve. These included increasing numbers of **lapwing**, with 1000 at Castle Water on the 14th and 20th, 71 **golden plover** on Flat Beach Level on the 29th, regular **common sandpiper** and small numbers of **black-tailed** and **bar-tailed godwit**, **avocet**, **ruff** and **whimbrel**. Highlights were 11 **wood sandpiper**, 18 **green sandpiper** and 44 **greenshank** on Flat Beach and nine **curlew sandpiper** on Harbour Farm downed by poor weather on the 24th, and at least one **little stint** and another **curlew sandpiper** on Flat Beach on the 30th. Passerines also showed evidence of passage movement. Hirundines included up to 270 **sand martin**, 200 **swallow** and 60 **house martin** during the second half of the month, while 250 **swift** were seen on the 24th. Large numbers of **yellow wagtail** on the Beach Reserve late in the

month peaked at 350 on the 24th, with 14 **wheatear** on the 29th. In addition, **linnet** numbers have been increasing as we move towards autumn with around 250 present on the Beach Reserve on the 15th, with 400 **starling** also here on the same date. Other notable avian sightings during the month included two **hobby** at Castle Water on the 14th, two **peregrine** over the Beach Reserve on the 21st and a **garganey** at Castle Water on the 30th. This month also saw the end of the **little tern** breeding season at Rye Harbour, with at least five young fledging, the best result for several years.



A good month for the Lime Kiln moth trap, particularly as regards migrants. Highlights were **diamond-spot pearl** on 9th, and **breckland plume** and **ni moth** on the 2nd, while there were also several records of **Jersey tiger** and **humming-bird hawk moth**. Similarly butterfly records during August included migrants such as **red admiral**, **painted lady** and several **clouded yellow**. Other notable invertebrates during August included **13-spot ladybird** on Harbour Farm on the 27th, the first reserve record for this rare migrant, **salt-marsh horsefly** on the new saltmarsh on the 5th, **great silver water beetle** at Castle Water on the 30th and several sightings of both **brown-banded** and **moss carder bee** throughout. Plants in flower during included **autumn lady's tresses**, **rock samphire** and **Babington's orache**.

September 2015

Bird highlight during September was a juvenile **red-backed shrike** which was present briefly to the north of Harbour Farm on 3rd. This species used to be a common summer visitor to the UK, with perhaps several hundred pairs breeding. However the late 20th century saw a rapid decline in numbers, with regular breeding coming to an end in 1988, though since then pairs have bred occasionally, particularly in South-west England, Wales and Scotland. Red-backed shrike feed on invertebrates or even small mammals, birds or reptiles, often impaling their prey on thorns or even barbed wire and these predatory habits have earned the species several slightly sinister local names including 'butcher bird', 'destroying angel', 'worrier' and 'throttlar'!

Passage migration was in full swing during September, so a good selection of species was present on the reserve. Numbers were provided by **lapwing**, with 1500 on Castle Water on the 5th and **curlew** (315 on the Beach Reserve on the 21st), while Flat Beach played host to 180 **dunlin** on the 11th and 78 **golden plover** on the 25th. Notable sightings included **wood**

sandpiper at Castle Water on the 1st and Harbour Farm on the 12th, an **avocet** on Flat Beach on the 11th and a **little ringed plover** at Castle Water on the 5th, while up to 24 **knot** were present on Flat Beach on the 24th, 16 **black-tailed godwit** on Flat Beach on the 16th and six **ruff** at Castle Water on the 25th. Interesting waterfowl during September included up to three **great white egret** on Castle Water and Harbour Farm on the 13th and a **spoonbill** on Harbour Farm on the 29th, while raptors included **merlin** on Beach Reserve on the 3rd and **hobby** at Castle Water on the 8th (two) and 25th. Still a few **Sandwich tern** around during the month, with 170 present on Flat Beach on the 12th, while on the same date a **little gull** was on Flat Beach (with one over Long Pit on the 13th) and five **Arctic skua** were present on the shore and over the sea. Hirundines late in the month included over 1500 **swallow** and 400 **sand martin** on the 19th and around 400 **house martin** on the 25th, while up to nine **swift** were seen early in the month. The Beach Reserve also played host to good numbers of passerines, with 200 **linnet** on the 11th, 160 **siskin** on the 8th and 150 each of **yellow wagtail** and **meadow pipit** on the 3rd and 25th respectively, while at least 30 **wheatear** and 11 **whinchat** were present here on the 19th. Other notable migrants included two **tree pipit** on the Beach Reserve on the 26th, **redstart** on the Beach Reserve on the 3rd (two) and Castle Water on the 4th, and four **spotted flycatcher** at Castle Water on the 4th with a **firecrest** here on the 5th. In addition, four **raven** were at Castle Water on the 15th, while a **treecreeper** here on the 8th was something of a surprise!

Some good migrant species in the Lime Kiln moth trap this month, with the highlights being **vestal**, **scarce bordered straw** and best of the bunch a **great brocade** on the 10th, only the fourth reserve record and the first for almost 10 years. Similarly, though butterfly numbers were dropping off there were several sightings of **clouded yellow** during the month. Probably the most notable non-avian record during September was of two **gilthead bream** found in the new saltmarsh channel by Lime Kiln Cottage on the 9th. This species is common further south in Europe, but uncommon in British waters and these individuals constituted the first reserve record. Also new to the reserve was the uncommon vagrant blowfly *Stomorhina lunata*, with two found on Harbour Farm on the 10th. Plants in flower included **sea aster**, **marsh mallow** and **hawkweed oxtongue**.

October 2015

October saw the first records of **short-eared owl** of the autumn at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. In Britain this species breeds on uplands in the north and west, but in our part of the south-east it is mainly an autumn and winter visitor, with birds originating from either northern Britain, particularly Scotland, or Scandinavia. One of the most active British owls during the daytime, short-eared owls rely largely on short-tailed voles for their food, though they will feed on other small rodents (including rats) and even small birds. At Rye Harbour they are most often seen hunting over the Beach Reserve or Harbour Farm, their presence often betrayed by groups of mobbing crows. The scientific name of this species is *Asio flammeus*, which literally means ‘flame coloured owl’ referring to the species bright plumage.

The bulk of wader numbers were again provided by **lapwing** (300) and **golden plover** (2000), while at least 280 **curlew** were recorded on Harbour Farm on the 23rd. Notable records included three **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm on 20th, a **spotted redshank** here on 29th and 22 **ruff** at Ternery Pool on the 1st, with the highlight being a **stone-curlew** on Flat Beach on the 10th. Waterfowl numbers began to increase with the advancing year, with some high counts of ducks during the month. On the 18th for instance, peak counts included 333 **teal**, 140 **shoveler**, and 847 **wigeon**, the latter a record count for October here. Notable records

included several sightings of **great white egret** at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm, including three on the 1st, **bittern** at Castle Water on the 18th and 20th, a **Slavonian grebe** at Castle Water on the 24th and an immature **spoonbill** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve from the 1st to the 4th and 26th. Raptors during October included regular **marsh harrier** and **merlin**, with a common **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 22nd and an immature **peregrine** over the Beach Reserve on the 29th. In addition there were several sightings of **short-eared owl** over the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm and the occasional **barn owl** on Harbour Farm and **little owl** both here and at Watch Cottage. A good selection of migrant passerines included up to 500 **swallow** and 50 **house martin** early in the month, good numbers of **redpoll** and **siskin** and still a few **wheatear**. Best of the bunch were three **ring ouzel** at Watch Cottage on the 21st, a **redstart** near the caravan park on the 2nd and a **spotted flycatcher** at Castle Water Hide on the 10th. In addition, up to 12 **bearded tit** were present at Castle Water on the 24th and a **raven** flew over Harbour Farm on the 20th.



A **Nathusius bat** (above) caught at Castle Water on 10th October had been previously ringed 905 miles away in Latvia on 20th August 2015. Relatively few invertebrate sightings during the month, though still some butterflies, including **red admiral** and **small tortoiseshell**, and small numbers of dragonflies, all either **common darter** or **migrant hawker**. In addition several **Roesel's bush-cricket** were seen at Lime Kiln Cottage early in the month. Plants in flower included **apple-of-Peru**, **viper's bugloss**, **yarrow** and **red valerian**.

November 2015

One bird which has become increasingly scarce on the reserve in the last 15 years is the **hen harrier**. During the summer, this species breeds on upland areas in Britain, mainly heather moorland, feeding largely on small birds and mammals, with individuals moving to lower levels during the winter months. There is also an influx of birds from the continent at this time of year, mainly in the south and east of the country. While the species has a white rump at all stages, males have a striking pale grey plumage with black wingtips, making them virtually unmistakable. Females and immatures, on the other hand, are a much duller brown with a barred tail and are usually referred to as ‘ringtails’ as a consequence. Unfortunately breeding numbers of hen harrier have dropped in the UK over the last few years as a consequence of persecution in their upland breeding habitats and in England the species is close to extinction, with less than 10 pairs in 2015.



Golden plover (above) numbers continued to increase during November, with flocks of over 1000 regularly present on the Beach Reserve and with a maximum of 3000 on the 20th. **Lapwing** numbers peaked at 730 on the 15th, while 290 **curlew** were present on Harbour Farm on the 20th. In addition, 95 **dunlin** were on Flat Beach Level on the 17th, 42 **snipe** on Harbour Farm on the 16th and two **ruff** at Castle Water on the 12th, while the wader highlight was a **spotted redshank** which was present on Flat Beach Level on the 16th. Wildfowl numbers during November continued to rise as we head towards the end of the year, with notably high counts during the month including 1162 **wigeon** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve on the 15th, including 1043 on Flat Beach alone, and 123 **shoveler** at Castle Water on the 12th. Other notable wildfowl sightings included a **bittern** at Castle Water on the 21st and several reports of **Slavonian grebe** and **black-necked grebe** on Long Pit and/or at Castle Water. Passerines included a very late **wheatear** at Ternery Pool on the 20th, a **chiffchaff** at Castle Water on the 21st and small groups of **corn bunting** on the new saltmarsh on the 19th (three) and 21st (two). In addition, a **goldcrest** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 20th was unexpected and there were regular sightings of **kingfisher** throughout the month. Raptors included regular **marsh harrier**, with three at Castle Water at dusk on the 15th, **merlin** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve on several dates and **peregrine** over the Beach Reserve on the 16th and 19th, while the highlight was a ‘ringtail’ **hen harrier** near Camber Castle on the 10th.

December 2015

Golden plover has become something of a feature of the reserve in the last 10 years, with large flocks frequenting Flat Beach Level in particular during the winter, and this month was no exception with counts regularly exceeding 2000 and with a maximum of around 3000 on the 17th. In Britain, this species breeds in upland habitats during the summer, moving to lower level during the winter where flocks may be joined by birds from northern Europe. It is largely nocturnal, perhaps because gulls are less likely to steal their meals at this time of day, feeding on invertebrates in grassland during the night and roosting during the day, with birds moving as much as 10km between feeding and roosting sites. In addition, while daytime gatherings can number in the thousands, giving many eyes to spot potential predators, night-time flocks are usually fewer than 10 birds.

As well as good numbers of **golden plover**, **lapwing** numbers peaked at around 1000 birds and this month also saw good counts of **curlew**, with 485 on the shore on the 19th, and **snipe** with 61 on the Beach Reserve on the 4th, this flock also containing at least three **jack snipe**. On the shore counts included at least 150 **dunlin** on the 18th, 72 **sanderling** on the 30th and 53 **grey plover** on the 31st, while at least 36 **knot** were on Flat Beach Level on the 13th, and 20 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 1st. Still good numbers of waterfowl on the reserve during December, despite the relatively mild weather, with counts including up to 1050 **wigeon** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm on the 29th, 194 **shoveler** on the 13th, 190 **teal** at Castle Water on the 3rd, and 81 **gadwall** here on the 3rd. Notable sightings during the month included **bittern** on several dates at Castle Water, up to three **great white egret**, two **smew** on Ternery Pool on the 4th, **black-necked grebe** on Long Pit on the 13th and the first **goldeneye** of the winter on Harbour Farm on the 13th. In addition, a super male **mandarin** on Castle Water on the 21st was something of a surprise! Raptors included regular **marsh harrier**, with two at Castle Water early in the month, regular **merlin**, **peregrine** on the 8th (Beach Reserve) and 10th (Castle Water) and a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 1st. In addition, **short-eared owl** were present over the Beach Reserve on the 4th and Harbour Farm on the 12th, a **barn owl** also being here present here on this date. Passerines included **swallow** over Harbour Farm on the 4th, our latest ever record, regular **stonechat** and **rock pipit** and up to 35 **skylark** feeding in the new saltmarsh. At Castle Water at least 10 **bearded tit** were seen on the 8th, **chiffchaff** on the 1st (two) and 22nd, and small groups of **bullfinch** on the 1st and 3rd. Probably the best of the bunch were three **firecrest** feeding in a mixed flock with five **goldcrest** and 15 **long-tailed tit** at Castle Water on the 1st and three **raven** over Harbour Farm on the 11th.



Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 5,056 individuals from 230 species were recorded during 2015, 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* Nb - A total of seven individuals on five dates between 11th May and 9th August, with a maximum of three on 11th May.

Salt-marsh grass veneer *Pediasia aridella* Nb - A total of 67 individuals were recorded on 20 dates between 18th June and 23rd August, with a maximum of 16 on 6th August.

Starry pearl *Cynaeda dentalis* Na - A total of 26 individuals on 12 dates between 21st June and 13th September. The highest counts were six on 6th August and by four on 12th and 23rd July.

Diamond-spot pearl *Loxostege sticticalis* Migrant (below) - One on 9th August was the first Rye Harbour record since 2001.

Long-legged China-mark *Dolicharthria punctalis* Nb - . Singles on 19th and 23rd July.

Rosy-striped knot-horn *Oncocera semirubella* Nb - Ten trapped on eight dates between 1st July and 9th August. All records involved singles with the exception of two on 12th July and 6th August.

Gorse Knot-horn *Pempelia genistella* Nb - The only record concerned one trapped on 3rd August.

Horehound Plume *Pterophorus spilodactylus* pRD-B2 - Singles were trapped on the 1st and 9th July.

Pale Grass Eggar *Lasiocampa trifolii f. flava* RDB1 - Singles trapped on the 23rd July and 9th August.

Oblique-striped *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb - One was trapped on 23rd August.

Convolvulus Hawk moth *Agrius convolvuli* Migrant - One trapped on 10th September.

Humming-bird Hawk Moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* Migrant - One in flight at Lime Kiln Cottage on 11th August.

Sand Dart *Agrotis ripae* Nb - The only record was one on the 9th July.

Great Brocade *Eurois occulta* Nb/migrant (right) - A singleton on 10th September was the only the fourth reserve record and the first since 1996.

Shore wainscot *Mythimna litoralis* Nb - Thirteen individuals trapped on seven dates between 21st June and 16th July, with a maximum of four on 24th June.

Reed dagger *Simyra albovenosa* Nb - Two each on the 5th, 6th and 9th August.

Crescent striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb - A total of nine individuals on seven dates between 12th July and 13th. All dates involved singles except for two each on 19th July and 13th August.

Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* Migrant - One was trapped on 13th September.

Bordered Straw *Heliopsis peltigera* Migrant - Thirteen individuals on 10 dates between 14th June and 23rd August.

Dotted Fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumnalis* Na - Singles trapped on four dates between 21st June and 19th July.

Pygmy footman *Eilema pygmaeola* RDB - One on 23rd July.

Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* Nb - Two on the 5th and one on the 12th August.

Kent black arches *Meganola albula* Nb - A total of 23 on nine dates between 7th July and 6th August, with maxima of four on the 7th, 9th and 23rd July.



Cream-bordered Green Pea *Earias clorana* Nb - Six individuals on four dates between 18th June and 9th July.

Other notable invertebrates recorded during 2015 included:

Trichopterna cito (a money spider) RDB - A male was caught in a pitfall trap on Flat Beach Level between 18th and 30th June. Rye Harbour is one of only three British sites for this species.

Trichoncus affinis (a money spider) RDB - A female was caught in a pitfall trap on Flat Beach between 14th and 30th July.

Lathys stigmatisata (a mesh-webbed spider) RDB - Two were taken in a pitfall trap on the new shingle habitats on Harbour Farm between 1st and 19th May.

Haplodrassus minor (A running ground spider) RDB - A total of 15 individuals

of this rare shingle/saltmarsh spider were taken in pitfall traps on the new shingle habitats on Harbour Farm between 1st May and 3rd September.

Dyschirius angustatus (a rove beetle) RDB - Singles were taken in pitfalls on the new shingle habitats on Harbour Farm between 1st and 19th May, 17th and 30th June and 1st and 18th July.

Euaesthetus superlatus (a rove beetle, above right)) First UK record - A male of this tiny beetle was caught in a pitfall trap on the new saltmarsh between 7th and 16th June.

Great Silver Water Beetle *Hydrophilus piceus* RDB - Singles of this wetland beetle were caught in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap on four dates between 16th April and 16th July, while another was found in a ditch at Castle Water on 29th August.

Saltmarsh Horsefly *Atylotus latistriatus* RDB (below) - Singles were recorded on four dates between 1st July and 5th August, all from the easternmost part of the Beach Reserve or Harbour Farm. Rye Harbour is one of only a handful of Sussex sites for this species.

Four-lined Horsefly *Atylotus rusticus* RDB - One was found dead in Rye Harbour Village on 9th July, only the second reserve record.

Polyodaspis sulcicollis (a frit fly) RDB - Singles of this species were taken in pitfalls on Flat Beach between 18th and 30th June and 14th and 30th July. This rare fly is only found on shingle at Rye Harbour and Dungeness in the UK, with very few records.

Bee Wolf *Philanthus triangulum* RDB - Three individuals of this solitary wasp, which catches honeybees to feed its young, were recorded at Castle Water on the 6th July.



Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2015 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, monthly fish surveys were carried out by Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority from April to September and bat surveys were conducted at Castle Water on four. All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 604,025 records of around 4,800 species in the SSSI.

Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer work-parties took place throughout the year involving , willow clearance at Castle Water, control of ragwort on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm, and removal of grass cuttings on Harbour Farm and at Castle Water. We also held Beach Cleans to clear the rubbish blown in off the sea, and several beach surveys to monitor litter on the shore.

Other management during 2015 included the cutting and removal of grass on 2.6ha of Harbour Farm to encourage bumblebees, maintenance of the electric fencing, landscaping on Flat Beach and in front of the Halpin Hide and cutting of bramble at Castle Water to benefit marsh mallow and marbled white. 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.

Ten 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, 47 Herdwick sheep belonging to Sussex Wildlife Trust were grazed on Harbour Farm to help control common ragwort, thistles, brambles and scrub and 10 Sussex Cattle at Castle Water during the winter months as part of ongoing bumblebee management.

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. 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 84 Guided Walks, booked in six visiting groups, gave eight illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle for English Heritage on three days with 136 people entering, and guided 18 school groups.



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

www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

www.RXwildlife.info covers the area from Hastings to Hythe and is updated regularly.

www.RyeHarbour.net is a library of old photos and memories for Rye Harbour village.

There is also the Facebook page www.facebook.com/RyeHarbourNR

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2015

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 ...

Work-parties	303
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,165
Beach Watch/Patrolling	105
Other	324
Total	2,897 hours



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 2015 were:

Sussex Wildlife Trust	Mr. J Power Ms. S. Walton
Environment Agency	Ms. J Shoobridge
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	Cllr. N Jennings
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. Dean



Thrift and Viper's Bugloss

Officers

The Management Committee appoints its own honorary officers;

Hon. Secretary Mr. P. Jones
 Nature Reserve address.

Conservation Sub-Committee

The Conservation Sub-committee meets quarterly to consider matters concerning the management of the Nature Reserve, and reports to the Management Committee. The members at 31st December 2015 were;

Mr A. Lloyd, Ms. A. Parfitt, Mr C. Edwards, Mr. G. Lyons, Mr B. Banks, Ms J. Shoobridge, Mr. J. Willsher and the Nature Reserve staff.

Nature Reserve Staff and Address.

Sussex Wildlife Trust provides the Management Committee with four staff who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve under the guidance of the Conservation Sub-committee. The staff were all part funded by the Friends.

Nature Reserve Manager	Dr. Barry Yates
Nature Reserve Warden	Chris Bentley
Nature Reserve Warden	Sam Smith
People & Wildlife Officer	Lucy Bowyer / Linda Wren

The Nature Reserve address is: 2, Watch Cottages, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. TN36 4LU
The office address is : Lime Kiln Cottage, Rye Harbour, East Sussex. TN31 7TT.

office: (01797) 227784

e-mail: barryyates@sussexwt.org.uk office: rhnroffice@sussexwt.org.uk



ACCOUNT NAME		Actual to date	Budget to date	Variance £	
Rye Harbour Nature Reserve					
160038	1	SUNDRY INCOME	5	0	5
190038	1	FRIENDS OF RHNR - PROJECTS	25,660	29,295	(3,635)
120138	1	ENGLISH HERITAGE	2,250	2,400	(150)
120238	1	ROTHER DC	1,000	1,000	0
120338	1	ICKLESHAM PC	450	400	50
120438	1	SWT - FISHING PERMITS CASTLE WAT	1,700	1,942	(242)
120538	1	SWT - HLS CASTLEWATER	11,366	11,365	1
140138	1	SWT - DONATIONS & CT INCOME	745	0	745
120038	1	SWT-HLS RHF and Beach Reserve	41,957	42,954	(997)
130038	1	WALKS, TALKS & EDUCATION - RYE	5,320	6,000	(680)
140038	1	FRIENDS OF RHNR- SALARIES CONTRI	31,000	25,000	6,000
150038	1	ENVIRONMENT AGENCY	30,000	30,000	0
180038	1	INCOME FROM ESCC	5,000	5,000	0
140238	1	INCOME SWT RESERVE FUNDS	0	0	0
Total Income			156,453	155,356	1,097
200038	2	SALARIES - RHNR	(123,745)	(125,627)	1,882
Total Salaries			(123,745)	(125,627)	1,882
240238	3	DEPRECIATION - POLORAIS	(1,990)	(1,992)	2
240638	3	DERECIATION - GENERAL RHNR	0	(113)	113
240438	3	DEPRECIATION - BIRD HIDE	(2,500)	(2,508)	8
240538	3	DEPRECIATION - FENCING RYE HARBO	(3,869)	(3,072)	(797)
240738	3	DEPRECIATION TRANS MULE GN65DO	(418)	0	(418)
Total Depreciation			(8,778)	(7,685)	(1,093)
230538	4	VOLUNTEER EXPENSES - RYE HARBOI	(847)	(1,000)	153
299938	4	NON RECOVERABLE VAT COST RYE H	(392)	0	(392)
251638	4	KAWASAKI TRANSMULE GN65DOA	0	0	0
240138	4	EDUCATION EVENTS	(1,780)	(2,504)	724
250238	4	PROJECTS FRIENDS OF RYE HARBOU	(435)	(5,000)	4,565
250338	4	ENVIRONMENT AGENCY LEASE	(3,150)	(3,150)	0
250438	4	LAND MANAGEMENT	(4,897)	(5,000)	103
250538	4	ADVERTISING	0	0	0
250638	4	VEHICLE COSTS - LR - BD07 LPF	(1,933)	(3,000)	1,067
250738	4	INTERPRETATION	(254)	(2,000)	1,746
212638	4	INFORMATION CENTRE	(1,031)	(877)	(154)
211538	4	TRAVEL - Rye Harbour	(790)	(649)	(141)
250038	4	OFFICE COSTS	(2,015)	(2,000)	(15)
250138	4	WORKSHOP	(330)	0	(330)
250938	4	OTHER VEHICLE COSTS - RYE HARBO	(2,153)	(2,000)	(153)
240338	4	RHNR DEPRECIATION FUND	0	0	0
Total Direct Costs			(20,007)	(27,180)	7,173
Net income(spend)			3,923	(5,136)	9,059
Grand Total:			3,923	(5,136)	9,059

Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

Number of Pairs	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
LITTLE GREBE	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	2
GREAT CRESTED GREBE	3	8	4	4	4	7	4	5	6	7
CORMORANT	130	150	146	119	123	113	161	115	167	174
GREY HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	3	5	3	3	6	6	6	8	4	5
GREYLAG GOOSE	10	7	9	10	12	8	7	9	11	16
CANADA GOOSE	14	10	7	9	5	5	3	4	6	1
SHELDUCK	3	4	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	0
GADWALL	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
SHOVELER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TUFTED DUCK	7	4	14	3	10	11	9	13	9	2
AVOCET	9	10	13	11	20	11	30	24	28	41
OYSTERCATCHER	24	28	28	25	33	31	23	27	28	36
RINGED PLOVER	30	39	33	28	25	25	19	26	25	28
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER	2	3	2	5	3	5	4	7	6	5
LAPWING	33	40	37	34	33	29	29	28	22	17
REDSHANK	16	15	18	19	13	19	12	19	20	13
MEDITERRANEAN GULL	75	40	63	90	185	100	55	36	1	3
fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL	50	15	39	64	250	50	<10	1	0	4
BLACK-HEADED GULL	2000	1400	1600	1600	2600	1700	1900	1700	1200	1400
fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL	1900	1400	2200	2200	4500	100	1900	1700	1200	1400
HERRING GULL	5	10	14	30	38	41	21	7	6	6
SANDWICH TERN	500	400	350	500	750	850	600	120	280	250
fledged SANDWICH TERN	500	400	400	600	1000	50	<10	0	0	108
COMMON TERN	169	175	150	232	341	235	149	79	90	135
fledged COMMON TERN	200	100	100	200	500	50	0	24	45	15
LITTLE TERN	21	15	0	0	7	7	13	11	10	11
fledged LITTLE TERN	9	0	0	0	7	2	0	1	1	5
SAND MARTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YELLOW WAGTAIL	2	6	7	4	2	2	0	1	1	0
WHEATEAR	11	13	12	12	5	3	4	5	5	5
CETTI'S WARBLER (SINGING)	9	18	13	15	15	14	11	7	8	12
SEDGE WARBLER	50	53	47	65	42	42	45	43	23	36
REED WARBLER	201	227	250	250	250	250	200	200	200	200
LESSER WHITETHROAT	10	11	12	20	12	9	12	16	9	16
WHITETHROAT	58	59	37	70	53	46	39	34	34	50
SKYLARK	37	41	40	33	30	32	35	34	26	23
REED BUNTING	59	49	58	52	54	55	54	37	36	33
CORN BUNTING	2	4	3	3	0	0	0	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 2015 - Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	46	27	4	3		2	2	27	23	26	18	29
GREAT CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	32	374	58	16	16	27	30	88	52	97	29	18
CORMORANT	138	183	214	304	272	326	419	321	147	116	160	82
GREY HERON	4	8	1	1	2	4	2	1	5	13	6	4
BITTERN	2	2	2	2	1					1	1	1
LITTLE EGRET	9	5	4	2	12	11	19	39	26	14	9	10
MUTE SWAN	10	8	7	22	31	71	55	30	18	22	24	13
GREYLAG GOOSE	83	117	98	35	51	100	98		314	280	101	147
CANADA GOOSE	24	72	4	10	14	24	45	64	130	46	237	75
SHELDUCK	14	12	43	43	43	27	4	24	2		8	12
WIGEON	633	434	80	2	2				66	869	1162	1050
GADWALL	288	238	86	63	9	45	34	74	86	116	37	81
TEAL	645	207	80	32		8	6	11	274	333	330	190
MALLARD	258	143	51	81	73	137	141	101	175	155	237	137
PINTAIL	27	4	4						3	14		8
SHOVELER	215	163	61	38	6	4	8	12	40	148	123	194
POCHARD	80	153	4	6		7	4	8	23	71	89	79
TUFTED DUCK	158	130	156	102	123	70	68	41	39	109	55	97
SCAUP	1	1	1						1			
GOLDENEYE	6	10	6									1
SMEW	1	1										2
COOT	554	275	177	161	147	163	464	355	354	406	348	380
OYSTERCATCHER	400	300	241	240	218	167	186	232	160	180	420	357
AVOCET	2	11	58	74	88	76	47	4	1			
RINGED PLOVER	33	8	9	30	43	7	11	30	130	45	47	24
GOLDEN PLOVER	2500	2000	350	85			9	71	78	500	3000	3000
GREY PLOVER	32	64	42	1					3	1	3	53
LAPWING	1500	1000	24	24	28	166	100	1000	1500	498	730	1000
KNOT	1	76	160					12	24			36
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	250	110	4					2	12		1	11
DUNLIN	760	490	80	200	18	2	40	80	180	20	95	150
RUFF	18	18	27	4				8	29	22	17	20
SNIPE	149	63	26	17	1			10	4	27	58	61
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT				2	16		14		16	1		
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	1	4	3	45	8	4	2		18			
WHIMBREL				56	12	4	8	3	4			
CURLEW	520	330	95	33	1	5	52	65	315	280	290	485
REDSHANK (inc. estuary)	115	68	133	43	7	22	34		38	32	70	29
GREENSHANK	1		1	5	1		3	44	5	3		
TURNSTONE	12	11	42	5	12		10	23	1	30	3	19

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.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/environmental-education/education-centres/rye-harbour-education-centre

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 nature reserve with a group of ten or more people should book with the Reserve Manager at least three weeks before the proposed visit. This aims to prevent overcrowding in the hides. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with any postal enquiry.

B) No charge is made for a visit 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 payable to Sussex Wildlife Trust to the nature reserve address.

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. For people with limited mobility we do have mobility scooters for hire, available by prior arrangement.

H) There is an information kiosk in the car park with toilet facilities nearby. From the car park the five bird-watching hides are 4 km, 1½ km., 1 km., 1km. and 600 m. (all are accessible to some wheelchairs). At Lime Kiln Cottage there is an information centre open most days of the year by volunteers.

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 SWT staff and volunteers.

