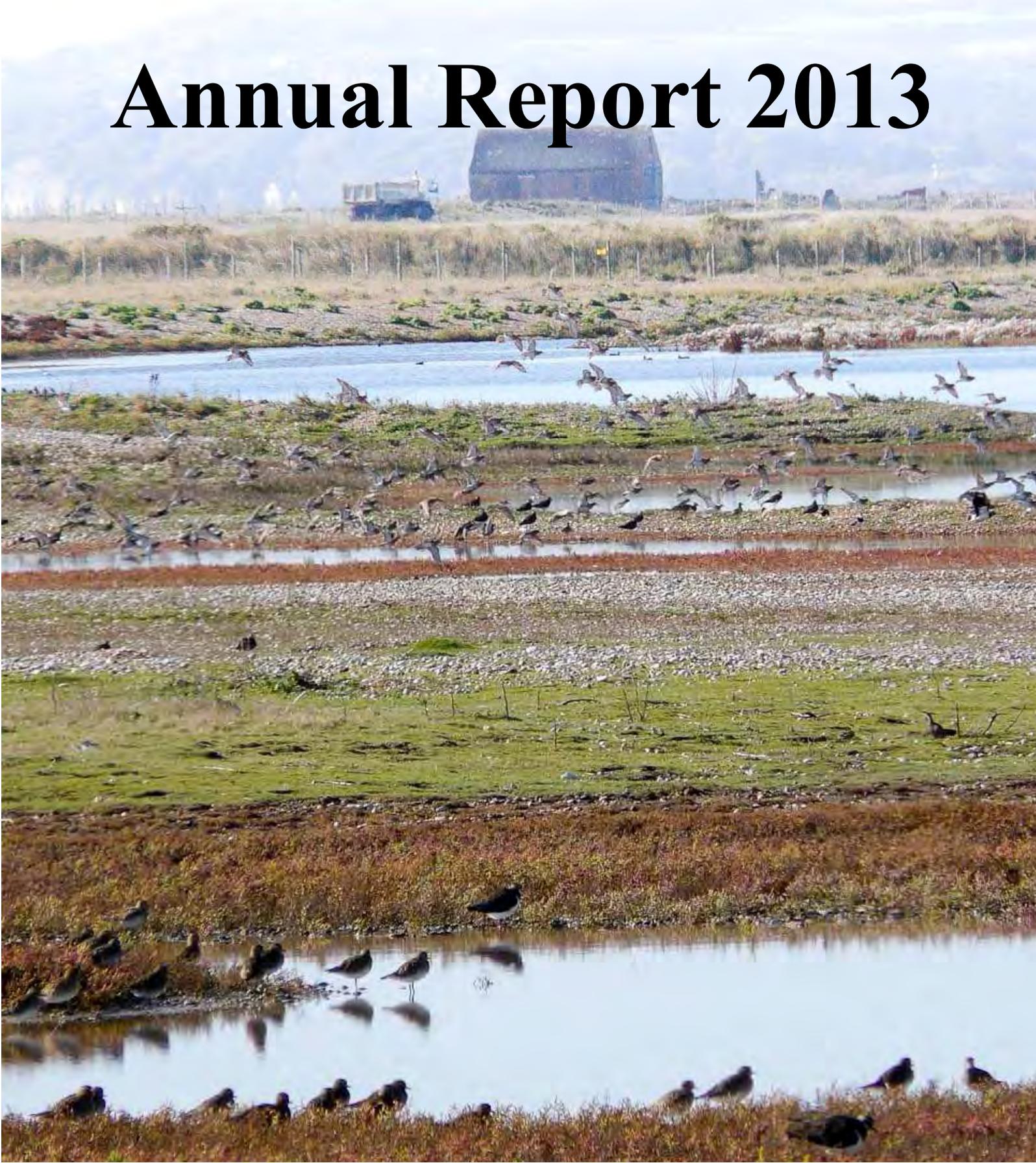


Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2013



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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Cover photo:
Rye Harbour Farm new shingle and saltmarsh

The Nature Reserve address is:

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telephone: 01797 223862.

e-mail: rhnroffice@sussexwt.org.uk

web site: www.WildRye.info

Guide to footpaths around Rye Harbour Nature Reserve



RYE HARBOUR
NATURE RESERVE



Key	
	Nature Reserve
	Footpaths
	Birdwatching Hide
	Car Park
	Toilets

www.WildRye.info

1 kilometre

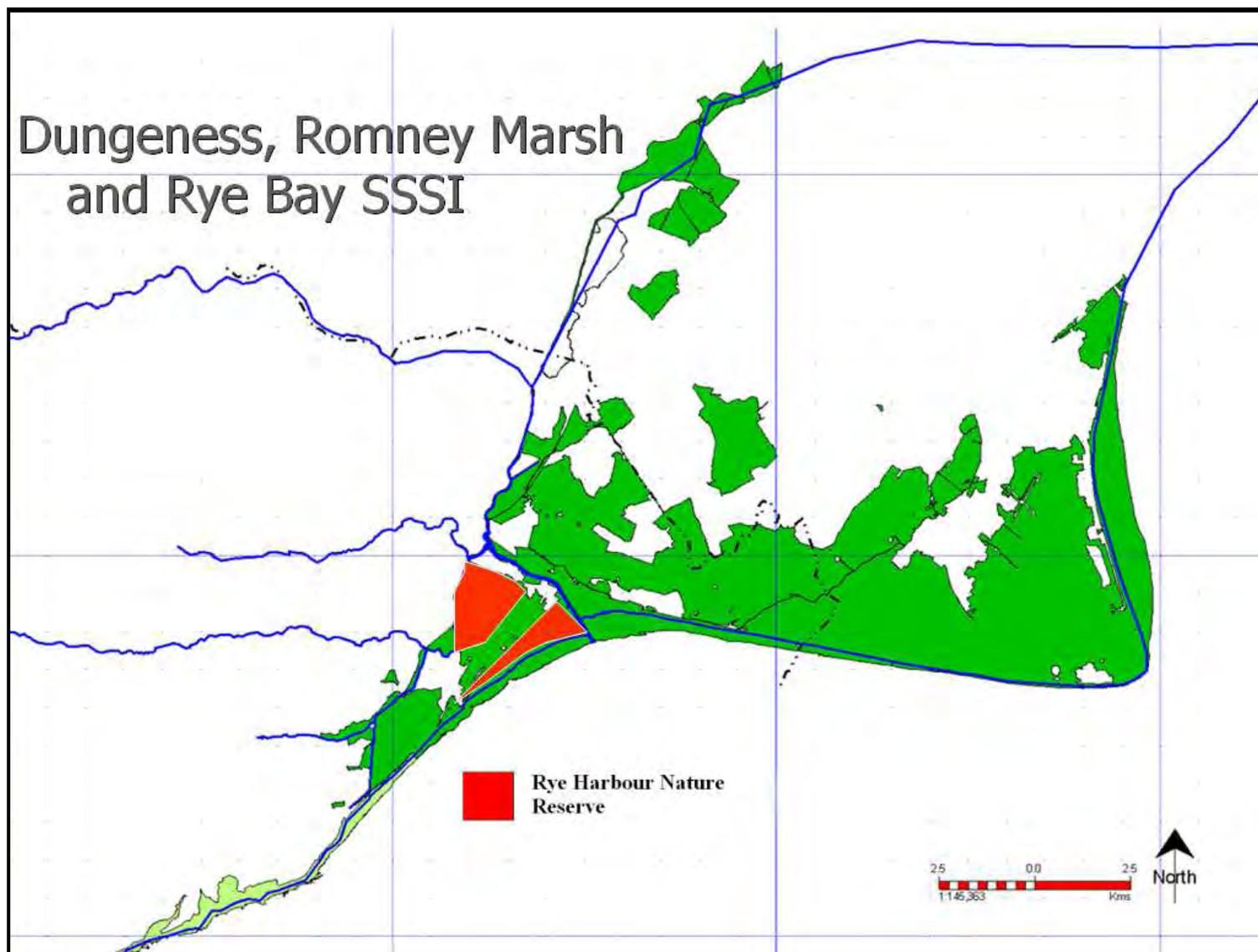
← To Pett Level

The Nature Reserve

Establishment

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

In 1970 most of the 101 ha. of shingle beach now owned by the Environment Agency (EA, but originally the



Kent River Authority) was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by the County Council, which also appointed a Management Committee to administer the Reserve on its behalf. This was the beginning of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Since then further land has been added by agreement with neighbouring landowners and the Management Committee is hopeful that further areas of the SSSI will also become part of the Reserve. In August 1992 the Sussex Wildlife Trust purchased the 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 designations: as part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Ramsar site**

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 Harbup Farm.

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.

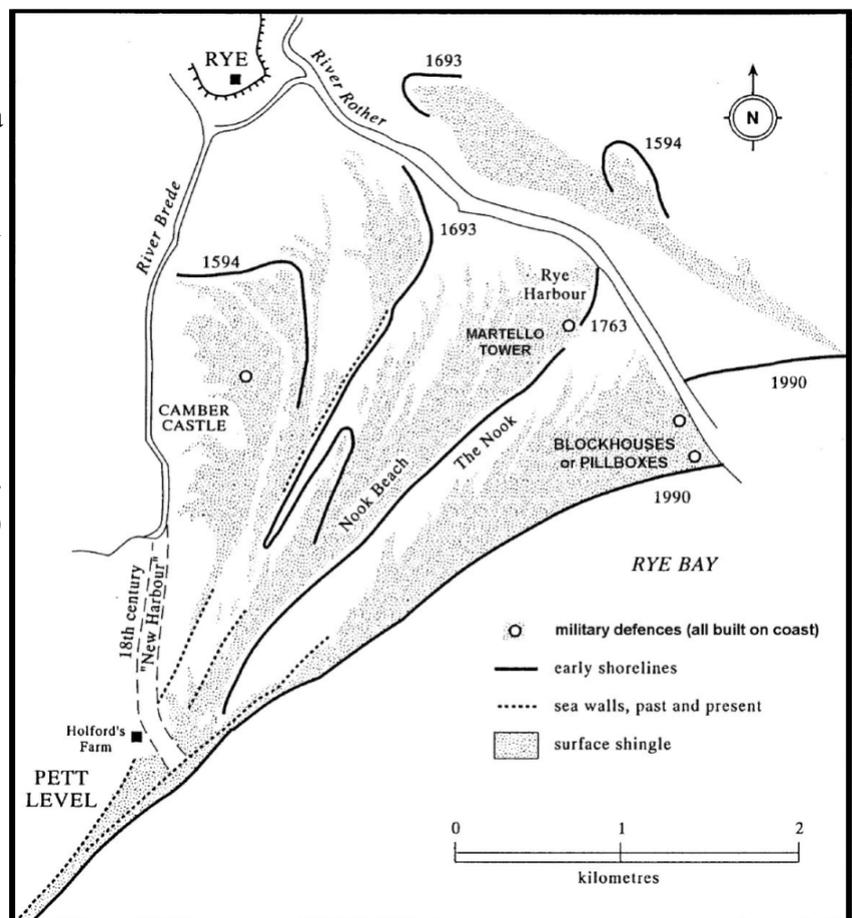
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

The driest month was August 1995 with just 1 mm.

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 1970's there has been an increase in arable agriculture with some ditches filled in and field drainage installed, though the saltmarsh re-creation project on Harbour Farm (see above) has reversed some of these losses. Although generally species poor, these areas provide valuable habitat for species such as grey partridge and skylark.

Drainage Ditches

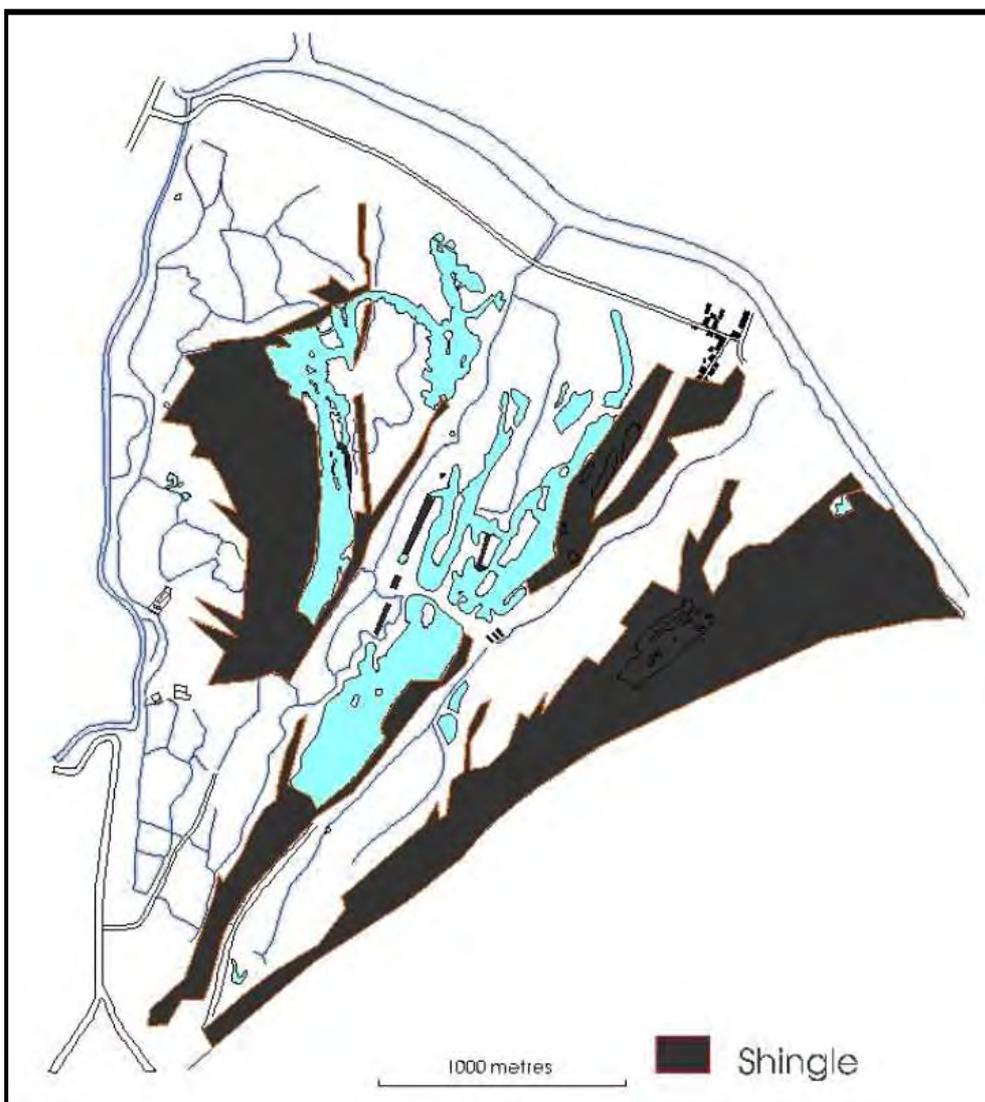
The reclaimed saltmarsh areas are drained by a network of ditches, some of which follow the line of the old saltmarsh creeks. Many are annually cleaned mechanically, but still retain an interesting remnant of the wetland flora and fauna. Nearly 5 km. of the ditches have a strong saline influence. Although 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.

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

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.

Species And Conservation

With this great variety of habitats it is not surprising that there is such a wealth of wildlife on the Nature Reserve. The Beach Reserve is recognised as having one of the finest examples of coastal shingle vegetation in the country. Particularly in late May and June the beach is transformed by a colourful array of flowers, the striking Sea Kale, and Viper's Bugloss, the delicate Yellow 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 430 species of flowering plants have so far been recorded on the Nature Reserve, including 24 scarce species and one endangered species, least lettuce and one that was extinct in Britain, stinking hawk's-beard.

Where there is a good variety of plant life, there usually exists a correspondingly good variety of animal life. Studies carried out on the invertebrates have shown Rye Harbour Nature Reserve to be of outstanding National Importance. Around 4,500 species have been noted so far, including 245 Notable species and 104 Red Data Book (RDB). However, there remains much to learn and there is a lack of detailed knowledge about most of the rare and notable species.

Of the larger animals on the Reserve perhaps the one most commented upon is the Marsh Frog (which was introduced from Hungary to Romney Marsh in 1935), to be heard noisily croaking all summer—but the Common Frog has not been seen here for many years. At night the Reserve is the domain of Badgers, Foxes and Bats.

However, Rye Harbour is most famous for its bird life and in particular its sea-bird colonies. As well as the rare little tern, this includes common tern, Sandwich tern, black-headed gull and more recently Mediterranean gull. In recent years the populations of these and other ground nesting birds (such as avocet, oystercatcher, redshank, lapwing, and wheatear) have increased in number and breeding success. This has been achieved through careful habitat management and implementing conservation measures such as the erection of anti-predator electric fencing enclosures and the enlistment of about 80 voluntary wardens. So far more than 280 species of birds have been recorded on the Reserve, of which over 85 have nested. Apart from the interest of the breeding birds, Rye Harbour is also a good place to observe bird migration, while in winter large numbers of wildfowl and waders gather to take full advantage of the relatively undisturbed Reserve area. A complete list of species recorded on the Nature Reserve is available from the Reserve address and on our web site www.WildRye.info

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

NUMBER OF SPECIES BY STATUS AND SITE

Sites	British Status			Total Species	Records
	Local	Notable	Rare		
Rye Harbour LNR	590	245	184+	4,470	101,537
Rye Harbour SSSI	650	266	c.200	4,989	202,161
Rye Bay	1,139	475	c.250	8,076	589,066

Visiting

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

Information Centres

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

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



	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage
JAN	4446	12449
FEB	4327	12114
MAR	4739	13268
APR	6578	18417
MAY	7243	20280
JUN	7478	20938
JUL	8724	24426
AUG	10466	29305
SEP	7389	20689
OCT	5476	15331
NOV	4177	11694
DEC	3606	10095
TOTALS	74646	209007

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



Visitors entering Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre in 2013

2013	Hours open	Adults Entering	Children Entering	Total Entering
JAN	144.5	446	133	579
FEB	156.5	509	163	672
MAR	158.75	413	64	477
APR	191.25	985	253	1238
MAY	211.25	1209	254	1463
JUN	207.5	1233	197	1430
JUL	200.5	1348	28	1629
AUG	212.25	1991	799	2790
SEP	202.5	1369	85	1454
OCT	187.75	898	225	1123
NOV	163	473	91	564
DEC	108.5	364	63	427
TOTALS	2144.25	11238	2355	13846

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 2013 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 13,846 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 2013 there were 1,575 subscriptions, representing about 2,120 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2013 amounted to £22,520 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £4,245 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme. The Friends also receive £15,780 in donations, and an additional £785 in Gift Aid.

This year the Friends funded the landscaping of some of the pits on Rye Harbour Farm, including the new islands in the second saltmarsh field (below).



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

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

Booklets

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

Leaflets

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

Checklists

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



Sandwich Tern

Wildlife Reports

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

Management Reports

Nature Reserve Management Plan 2012 - 21 (10MB)

2012 Annual Report (11.5MB)

2011 Annual Report (4.8MB)

2010 Annual Report (5.6MB)

2009 Annual Report (7.4MB)

2008 Annual Report (1.4MB)

2007 Annual Report (1.2MB)

2006 Annual Report (1MB)

2005 Annual Report (900KB)

2004 Annual Report (1.6MB)

2003 Annual Report (6.6MB)

1997 Annual Report (1MB)

1973 Annual Report (12MB)

1972 Annual Report (21MB)

1971 Annual Report (14MB)

1970 Annual Report part 1 (5MB)

1970 Annual Report part 2 (13MB)

ALSF Project Report (2MB)



Two Bays Reports

Changes in Rye Bay (0.2MB)

Changes in Rye Bay slides (22.7MB)

Two Bays Species Report (0.1MB)

Hymenoptera of Rye Bay (0.5MB)

Coleoptera of Rye Bay (0.9MB)

Diptera of Rye Bay (0.6MB)

Araneae of Rye Bay (0.4MB)

Lepidoptera of Rye Bay (1.2MB)

Two Bays Saltmarsh Leaflet (0.3MB)

Two Bays Sand Dune Leaflet (0.3MB)

Two Bays Shingle Leaflet (0.3MB)

Two Bays Reedbed Leaflet (0.3MB)

Viper's Bugloss

Wildlife Summary

The following is a monthly summary of the wildlife seen by, or reported to the Nature Reserve for the recording area in 2013. 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 2013

The long-awaited cold snap turned up during January bringing with it good numbers of birds. There were some particularly high wildfowl counts during this period, with the most notable being over 2500 **wigeon** and 972 **teal** on the 17th, and 2130 **Brent goose** (right) on the 12th, these last two constituting record counts for the reserve. There were also regular **bittern** sightings including two on the 17th, a **smew** was present on Ternery



Pool on the 11th, and 68 **white-fronted goose** flew over Castle Water on the 23rd, while up to 10 **goldeneye** were present on Harbour Farm/Long Pit and up to six **pintail** at Castle Water. In addition, two **great white egret** were seen on 26th, initially leaving the little egret roost early morning and later on the new saltmarsh.

Large numbers of **curlew** were recorded this month, with a maximum of 850 leaving Harbour Farm at dawn, one of the highest counts ever here, while **lapwing** peaked at 1225 on the 4th and **golden plover** at 700 on the 11th. The good run of **snipe** continued with 145 on Harbour Farm on the 21st, while a flock of 26 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 28th was also above average. On the shore, peak counts included 220 **dunlin**, 180 **knot**, 120 **sanderling** and 61 **grey plover**. Other sightings included three **avocet** on Harbour Farm/Flat Beach on the 24th and 26th and a **bar-tailed godwit** on Harbour Farm on the 26th. Wader highlights were several **woodcock** around the reserve mid-month, always a sign of cold weather, five **jack snipe** on the 21st, and the regular **spotted redshank** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. Raptor sightings included up to three **marsh harrier**, regular **merlin** and **peregrine**, a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 24th and, best of all, a **hen harrier** here on the 7th. Offshore movement during early January included good numbers of **Brent goose**, and small numbers of **red-throated diver**, while later in the month sightings included 75 **gannet**, 70 **guillemot**, 120 **razorbill** and three **Slavonian grebe** on the 25th. This month also saw the first **Mediterranean gull** sighting of the year, a single bird at Ternery Pool on the 11th. As with other groups, passerine numbers during January were influenced by the cold weather mid-month. Sightings included up to 180 **fieldfare** over Harbour Farm, 45 **redwing** at Castle Water and 235 **skylark** on the new saltmarsh. There were also a couple of sightings of

corn bunting flocks on Harbour Farm, with six on the 19th and 10 on the 21st, the first records of this ex-breeder here since 2009. Other notable sightings included a **raven** over Harbour Farm on the 16th, a **firecrest** at Castle Water on the 4th and the highlight, a **hawfinch** at Castle Water Hide on the 24th.

Despite the cold weather during January, this month saw the first invertebrate sighting of the year, with a record of a queen **buff-tailed bumblebee** on the Beach Reserve on the 4th. Other notable non-avian sightings included three **brown hare** at Castle Water on the 4th, and a **common seal** in the River Rother on the 11th and 30th.

February 2013

Bitterly cold weather during February meant that numbers of many waterfowl remained high. Early in the month peak counts included 645 **teal**, 472 **wigeon**, 170 **gadwall** and 147 **shoveler**, while numbers of **goldeneye**, a typically winter species at Rye Harbour peaked at 13 mid-month. At Ternery Pool a **Slavonian grebe** was present on the 2nd and a **red-breasted merganser** from the 22nd to 28th. **Bittern** was seen throughout the month, with a maximum of two at Castle Water on the 7th, and there were also regular sightings of **great white egret** on the Beach Reserve and at Castle Water, with a maximum of three birds on several dates. In contrast, by the end of the month we had already had our first sightings **Sandwich tern**, with five birds present on the Beach Reserve on the 16th, and **Mediterranean gull**, three on the 2nd, while **black-headed gull** numbers also began to pick up!

A fine selection of waders was present during February, with both a good range of species and some high counts. **Dunlin** in particular became increasingly abundant with a maximum count of 650 on Flat Beach/Harbour Farm on the 21st, while roosting birds on the shore included 60 **sanderling**, 28 **grey plover** and 16 **knot**. Also on the Beach Reserve, a **little stint** and up three **avocet** were present throughout, while the overwintering **spotted redshank** was joined by a second bird late month. On Harbour Farm highlights were several sightings



of **jack snipe** (with two on the 21st), small numbers of **green sandpiper**, **black-tailed godwit** and **bar-tailed godwit**, and 470 **curlew** on the 2nd, while at Castle Water a count of 31 **ruff** on the 22nd was notable. Raptor highlight during February was a ringtail (female or immature male) **hen harrier** which was seen over the Beach Reserve/Harbour Farm on the 21st and 28th, a welcome record for this increasingly scarce species. Apart from that, the usual suspects, with regular **marsh harrier** (with three on several dates) and **peregrine** and a **common buzzard** on 7th. In addition, there

were regular sightings of **barn owl**, with up to three present late in the month. Offshore, movement began to pick up during February, probably representing both cold-weather movements and seasonal passage. Numbers were provided by 300 **wigeon**, 170 **common scoter** and 100 **teal** on the 11th, with smaller numbers of **great crested grebe**, **red-throated diver**, **pintail** and **shelduck** also present. The highlight was two **black-throated diver** out from the old lifeboat house on the 9th. In addition, a **great skua** was present briefly over Flat Beach during bad weather on the 10th. Little in the way of notable passerine sightings this month; a maximum of 61 **fieldfare** on Castle Farm on the 3rd, 75 **skylark** on the new saltmarsh on the 6th, up to three **rock pipit** (above) on the saltmarsh and eight **bearded tit** at Castle Water on the 7th being the only records of interest.

The only non-avian sightings of note during February involved several plants of **common whitlow grass** in flower at Camber Castle on the 17th, and **devil's coach horse** and the ground-beetle *Licinus punctulatus* under sleepers on Flat Beach on 18th. This latter is a rather scarce species which has not been recorded on the reserve since 2000, so a welcome record.

March 2013

Bird highlight during March was the appearance of two **Kentish plover** on the new saltmarsh out from Like Kiln Cottage on the 25th, the first time more than one of these dumpy little waders has been recorded at Rye Harbour, and both stayed until the end of the month. This species used to be a reasonably common breeder around the coasts of south-east Britain, but persecution by collectors and destruction of the nesting habitat saw numbers fall until the last regular breeding in 1931. There were occasional nesting attempts after this (including at Rye Harbour in the 1950s), but nowadays this species only reaches our shores as a vagrant. One of the birds was ringed in Schleswig-Holstein in Germany in 2009, and had not been seen there since 2010, so its arrival here was something of a surprise.

There was relatively little evidence of obvious migrants during March, though good numbers of common passage waders such as **dunlin** and **golden plover**, and up to 1480 **brent goose** suggested that movement was well under way. A **little ringed plover** on the 7th was notable in that it was least a week earlier than the previous earliest record at Rye Harbour and looks to have been the first in Britain this year, while 28 **little gull** on the 18th was the highest count here since 1984. Other obvious migrants included **black redstart**, with three on Harbour Farm on the 27th and the first **wheatear** of the year on the same date, much later than we would expect. On Ternery Pool, the cold-weather knocked back a promising start to the breeding season for our gulls and terns, though by the end of the month maximum counts included 900 **black-headed gull**, 250 **Sandwich Tern** and 132 **Mediterranean gull**, while on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm around 70 **avocet** were showing interest in the pits and pools. The best of the rest bird-wise included yet more sightings of **great white egret**, regular **spotted redshank** and **little stint**, and the occasional **bittern**, with two on the 13th.

As might be expected, the continuing cold snap kept any invertebrate sightings to a minimum. For instance, the Lime kiln moth trap was ran on three days early on in the month, but the only takers were a rather sluggish dung-fly and the odd gnat, while several hours

spent searching debris on the shingle mid-month only managed to turn up a very unresponsive **devil's coach-horse**, several **woodlouse spider** (right) and one or two ground beetles. Very disappointing indeed! However, there was a queen **buff-tailed bumblebee** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 21st, and several other spiders including **pretty ant spider** and the six-eyed spider *Harpactea hombergi* on the 20th, and bizarrely a young **false widow spider** *Steatoda nobilis* found dead in a snowdrift at Lime Kiln on the 12th! There was also at least one sighting of **common lizard** during March, at Castle Water Hide on the 4th.



April 2013

Mid-April saw the first records of **whimbrel** on the reserve for 2013. This 'mini-curlew' breeds all around the northern hemisphere, including a few hundred pairs in Scotland, and winters at similar latitudes south of the equator. Most birds recorded in Britain at this time of the year are on their way from West Africa to their breeding grounds in Iceland, and Rye Harbour has been a traditional staging post for these long distance migrants, providing day-time feeding on the saltmarsh and sheep-grazed grassland, and overnight roost sites within the electric fencing. From a peak of around 600 birds in 1996, numbers have fallen over the last few years, with a maximum of only 76 birds recorded in 2012. Hopefully, the work we have carried out here in recent years to create pits and pools and re-create saltmarsh on Harbour Farm will see their numbers increase once more.

In addition to the whimbrel, other passage migrants included both **bar-tailed** and **black-tailed godwits**, **golden plover**, **knot** and **ruff**. Hirundines began too appear around mid-month, though numbers were very low with only a maximum of eight apiece of **swallow** and **sand martin** and four **house martin** seen. We also had our first records of **swift** about the same time, with seven at Castle Water on the 18th, and **yellow wagtail** with three birds here on the 19th. As regards summer breeders, numbers of **little ringed plover** increased slowly throughout the month, largely as a result of records of birds taking up territories on Harbour Farm, while around 20-25 pairs of **avocet** were also staking claim to their patches here. Similarly, **wheatear** numbers picked up on the Beach Reserve, and we saw our first **little terns** on the 19th. Towards the end of the month we began to hear the songs of summer warblers, and a visit to Castle Water on the 24th found **chiffchaff**, **blackcap**, **whitethroat sedge warbler**, **reed warbler** and **lesser whitethroat** singing away for all they were worth! On a sadder note, the last of several **bittern** sightings during the month involved a dead bird at Castle Water on the 22nd. Highlights were one of the two **Kentish plover**, which was still present up to the 6th, a **red kite** at Castle Water on the 18th, the overwintering **spotted red-shank**, still present on the 7th, and two **garganey** on Harbour Farm on the 6th.

Warmer weather later in the month saw the number of invertebrate sightings pick up considerably, though the number of species recorded was still low for the time of year, and probably about a month to five weeks behind what we would expect. Catches in the Lime Kiln moth trap were particularly poor; the months total a single **Hebrew character!** The only bumblebee recorded was **buff-tailed bumblebee**, though butterflies fared a bit better, with records of **red admiral**, **peacock** and **small tortoiseshell**. Invertebrate highlights were **great silver water beetle** on the 21st and the first few records of **dotted bee-fly** around the same date. Plants in flower during April included **coltsfoot**, **red dead-nettle** and **ground-ivy**.

May 2013

Bird highlight during May was undoubtedly a **Terek sandpiper** (right), which was present for a few hours on Harbour Farm on the evening of the 25th. This is only the second record of this rare vagrant wader at Rye Harbour (the first was in 2008), and there have been fewer than 100 records in Britain since the first bird was recorded here in 1951 (strangely enough in East Sussex), so this was a real find and attracted quite a few birders even for the short time it was present. This species breeds from Finland through to north-eastern Siberia and the unusual name comes from the Terek River, where it was first found, which flows through Georgia and Russia into the Caspian Sea.



Best of the rest as far as the birds go were up to three **Temminck's stint**, the highest single count here for 25 years, which were present on Harbour Farm on the 26th and two **spoonbill** on Flat Beach on the 30th. Also of note, two **black tern** were present on the Quarry on the 24th, with a **roseate tern** here on the 19th, a **black-necked grebe** stayed at Ternery Pool from the 3rd to the 17th, and a **little stint** was seen on Flat Beach on the 24th. In addition, several sightings of **garganey** during May included a brood at Castle Water late in the month. On Ternery Pool, our **black-headed gull** colony seems to have produced a bumper crop of chicks, while up 16 **little tern** were present on the Beach Reserve during May, and at least six pairs had taken up residence on Flat Beach by the end of the month. On Harbour Farm, upwards of 25 pairs of **avocet** nested, with several broods of chicks present here and on the Beach Reserve by the 31st, while our **wheatear** population seems to be doing a little better compared to recent years, with perhaps five pairs distributed around the Beach Reserve. In addition, a brood of **pochard** at Castle Water late in the month was a nice surprise.

Moth trap catches were still very poor for most of the month, though they did pick up towards the end as the weather improved, with the highlights a couple of **bordered ermel**, a **light feathered rustic** and a **gem**. Similarly, butterfly numbers were very low, with the majority of records involving **small tortoiseshell**, **peacock** and **small** and **green-veined white**,

while dragonflies/damselflies included **hairy hawk**, **variable damselfly** and **red-eyed damselfly**. There was also a sighting of an immature male *Pellenes tripunctatus* (right) near the Gooders hide, though no sign of adults yet this year. This month also saw a couple of sightings of **brown hare** on Castle Farm. Plants in flower included **sea kale**, **sea pea**, **early forget-me-not** and **salsify**.



June 2013

With their striking black and white plumage and upturned bill, **avocet** are one of those birds that even non-birders recognise. The name comes from an Italian word 'avosetta', and may relate to the black and white outfits worn by lawyers in certain countries, and in fact in some parts of England these birds were known as 'lawyers' (a name still used in some parts of America for the closely related American avocet). At the start of the 19th century avocet bred primarily on the south and east coasts, from Sussex around to the Humber estuary, but a combination of habitat loss, hunting and probably egg collecting saw numbers fall until it became extinct as a breeding bird in England in about 1840. The return of the avocet to our shores occurred just after the start of the Second World War, when flooding of coastal areas to hamper invasion, coupled with exclusion of the public, created suitable breeding conditions, with the first returning birds breeding in Norfolk in 1941. Since then the species has gone from strength to strength, with about 1500 pairs nesting from the south coast to Cumbria! At Rye Harbour, the first breeding attempt was in 1994, but it was not until 2006, after excavation work on Harbour Farm associated with the sea-defence bank produced several saline pits with islands, that numbers really 'took off'. This year we have had around 28 pairs, with many of the oldest chicks fledging by the end of the month.

Notable sightings during June included two **garganey** and a **curlew sandpiper** on Harbour Farm early in the month, two **roseate tern** on Ternery Pool on the 27th and, best of the bunch, a **golden oriole** at Castle Water on the 18th. Among our breeding birds, **black-headed gull** seem to have had a good year, producing many fledglings, while **Mediterranean gull** numbers are well down, with only a few birds breeding and very few chicks produced. **Sandwich** and **common tern** numbers have also been low, while 11 pairs of **little tern** nested on Flat beach, producing their first chicks mid-month. **Wheatear** seems to be having a slightly better year, with five or so nesting pairs, and at least three sets of fledglings were present on Flat Beach from mid-month. In addition, up to six pairs of **little ringed plover** have been present on Harbour Farm, with a brood of three chicks seen on the 6th.

Interesting invertebrates seen during June included the Red Data Book soldier fly **ornate general** and **variable damselfly** at Castle Water, **brown-banded carder bee** on Harbour Farm and the striking blue darkling beetle *Helops caeruleus* on the Beach Reserve. In addition, a visit by the British Arachnological Society on the 15th found several rare spiders in-

cluding the tiny money spider *Trichoncus affinis* (only the third reserve record), *Lathys stigmatisata* and *Haplodrassus minor*. Plants in flower during June included **viper's bugloss**, **twiggy mullein**, **common spotted orchid** and **bee orchid**.

July 2013

One species which is always very popular with birders at Rye Harbour is **roseate tern**. Despite breeding worldwide, this is an uncommon species in Britain, with a population of less than 70 pairs, the main colonies in northern Scotland, north-east England and north Wales. First recognised as a distinct species in 1813, breeding numbers have been on something of a roller coaster since then. During the 19th century the species was almost brought to extinction by collecting both of eggs and feathers for the millinery trade, before recovering during the early 20th century. There was another crash from about the late 60s and early 70s when numbers in Britain fell from around 700 pairs in 1969-70 to 56 in 2000 due to trapping in the African wintering grounds, predation and habitat loss. Since then conservation measures have seen a small increase, but this is still a species with a precarious foothold in Britain, and one of only three red-listed seabirds. The best times to see this species at Rye Harbour are at dusk and high tide, usually on the Quarry or Ternery Pool, and this month up to two birds were present regularly throughout. Roseate Tern is most likely to be confused with common tern, but can be identified by its paler colouration, often with a pinkish breast (hence it's name) longer tail, and distinctive call, a harsh, two-syllable 'chu-wit' reminiscent of spotted redshank..

Passage movement picked up during July, with a range of migrant species recorded. From mid-month at Castle Water. This included 18 **greenshank**, 14 **common sandpiper**, eight **green sandpiper**, 12 **little ringed plover** (below) and small numbers of **ruff** and **black-tailed godwit**, while on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm a range of species including **knot**, **sanderling**, **bar-tailed godwit**, **curlew**, **whimbrel** and **golden plover** were present during the month. Best of these migrants was probably **wood sandpiper**, with one at Castle Water on the 24th and two on Harbour Farm on the 22nd. Other notable birds during July included **garganey**, with four on the Beach Reserve on the 13th, and **turtle dove** and **yellow wagtail** at Castle Water on the 16th, while the highlight was two **Balearic shearwater** seen close offshore on the 19th

Better weather during July saw a welcome increase in the numbers of insects on the reserve. The Lime Kiln moth trap, particularly later in the month, had around 70 species per night, a good total at any time of the year, with the highlights be-



ing **bordered ermel**, **starry pearl**, **hook-tipped grass veneer**, **rosy-streaked knothorn** and **crescent striped**. Similarly butterfly numbers picked up, with the best of the bunch being a good crop of **marbled white**, including up to six at Castle Water and even one in the Lime Kiln garden! Other invertebrate highlights included the beetle *Isochnus sequensi*, **salt marsh horsefly** (both Red Data Book), a **humming-bird hawk-moth** near Parke's hide on the 28th, and a **summer chafer** found on the 14th, the first ever record at rye Harbour. Plants in flower during July included **sea heath**, **wild carrot** and **marsh-mallow**.

August 2013

A feature of the Beach Reserve and Rye Harbour Farm during August is the large numbers of **yellow wagtail**, and this year was no exception, with around 450 late in the month. This species is a summer visitor to Britain, arriving in April and leaving for its African wintering grounds around September. Breeding occurs in a range of habitats, and at Rye Harbour the main areas in recent years have been on Harbour Farm with the odd pair on grassy shingle on the Beach Reserve, though in the past it was much more widespread. Over the last 35 years numbers of yellow wagtail breeding in Britain have dropped by about 80%, putting it firmly on the list of red list breeding species (those of the most conservation concern due to falling breeding numbers), and this has been reflected in the breeding population at Rye Harbour. At its peak in the late 80s, over 60 pairs bred, but numbers have fallen steadily since then and only single pairs nested in 2012 and 2013.

Plenty of passage movement during August, with a wide range of migrating birds on the reserve. Waders included increasingly large flocks of **golden plover**, **lapwing**, **curlew** and **dunlin**, while an influx of sandpipers during August included small numbers of **wood sandpiper**, with two on the 3rd and 5th, 19 **green sandpiper** (below), and 61 **common sandpiper**, 48 on the new saltmarsh alone. Up to 12 **greenshank** and 13 **black-tailed godwit** were present on the 9th and 28th respectively, with smaller numbers of **avocet**, while two **little stint** were at Castle Water on the 29th, eight **knot** on Flat Beach on the 19th, with nine **ruff** here on the 9th, and six **little ringed plover** at Castle Water on the 2nd. Passerines during August included good numbers of **wheatear**, with 25 on the 29th, while an influx of hirundines saw counts of up to 400 **sand martin** and 250 **swallow** on the 23rd and 30 **house martin** on the 29th. There were also two **turtle dove** on Harbour Farm on the 24th and a **spotted flycatcher** at Castle Water on the 8th. Raptors included regular **marsh harrier**, a **hobby** on the Beach Reserve on the 31st and a **buzzard** at Castle Water on the 10th. On the Beach Reserve, the **common tern** colony was having a very late season, with unfledged chicks still present at the end of the month, though it does seem to have produced a decent number of fledglings. Both **little tern** (early in the



month) and **Sandwich tern** (throughout) were present, with the occasional **roseate tern** also putting in an appearance.

The Lime Kiln moth trap turned up some interesting species during August, the highlights being several **pale grass eggar** (right), and the occasional **bordered ermel**, **crescent striped** and **rosy-streaked knothorn**. As with birds, something of a month for migrants, with lots of **silver y** and **diamond-back moth** and the odd **dark sword grass** in the trap, a



humming bird hawk-moth on the Lime Kiln Buddleia on the 11th, and a **Jersey Tiger** on the Beach Reserve on the 13th. In addition, **clouded yellow** were seen throughout the month (including a recently emerged individual in the Barn Field on the 14th), with the odd **painted lady** and **red admiral** thrown in for good measure! Plants in flower during August included **least lettuce**, **red hemp-nettle**, **wild carrot** and **meadow vetchling**.

September 2013

Bird of the month during September was a **tawny pipit** which was present at Castle Water briefly on September 5th. This large, pale pipit breeds from Asia, to Western Europe, with the closest birds in northern France, and winters in Africa and southern Asia. It is an occasional vagrant to Britain, with around 30 birds a year reaching our shores, and there have been only seven records at Rye Harbour since 1970, with a few more dating back to the 1900's. Another uncommon vagrant this month was a **pectoral sandpiper** which was present on Harbour Farm from the 12th to 16th of the month. Despite being a 'yank', this is actually a more frequent visitor to Britain than the previous species, (and has probably bred here in the past), though has still only been recorded at Rye Harbour in nine years since 1975. As well as these highlights, other notable birds during September included a **great white egret**, which was seen at Castle Water on the 16th and 21st, an **osprey** over the Beach Reserve on the 13th, and a **spoonbill** seen here on a couple of dates mid-month.

As well as the 'pec sand', a good range of waders were present during September, including both **black** and **bar-tailed godwit**, **ruff**, **little ringed plover**, **avocet** and **knot**. 'Best of the rest' were two **little stint** at Castle Water on the 2nd, **spotted redshank** on Ternery Pool on the 12th and 19th, and up to five **curlew sandpiper** at Castle Water early in the month, while numbers were provided by 900 **lapwing** on the 20th, 400 **curlew** on the 26th and 290 **golden plover** on the 19th. Raptors included the occasional **marsh harrier** and **peregrine**, several **hobby** up to mid-month and a couple of **merlin** on the 24th, while **buzzard** was seen at Castle Water on the 3rd and 13th. Passerines included up to 400 **meadow pipit**, 25 **yellow wagtail** and smaller numbers of **wheatear** and **whinchat**, with the highlights being three **spotted flycatcher** at Castle Water on the 20th and 21st, a **grey wagtail** at Castle Water

on the 3rd and a **raven** here on the 12th. Peak hirundine numbers during September involved 800 **swallow** on the 24th, 500 **sand martin** on the 22nd and 200 **house martin** on the 19th.

Continued good weather during September saw some decent catches in the Lime Kiln moth trap. The bulk was made up of **lunar underwing** and **square-spot rustic**, while notable species included an abundance of **feathered brindle**, a **four-dotted footman** on 26th, the first reserve record for this partial migrant, and the water beetle *Dytiscus circumflexus* on the 23rd. Other notable invertebrates included both **long-winged** and **short-winged cone-head** and **Roesel's bush-cricket** on Harbour Farm, **grey bush-cricket** at Lime Kiln, and the parasitic fly *Mintho rufiventris* in Rye Harbour village, while **humming-bird hawk-moth** on the Beach Reserve on the 1st and several **clouded yellow** were the best of the migrant species. Plants in flower this month included **autumn lady's tresses**, **sea-aster** and **marsh-mallow** (below).



October 2013

Bird highlight during October was a **dotterel** which was present on Flat Beach on 12th October. This relative of the ringed plover breeds on Arctic tundra and high mountain plateaus in northern Europe, with a small population in northern Scotland. It winters in a narrow belt from Morocco to Iran, and at Rye Harbour usually turns up during spring or autumn passage, most frequently during late April/early May and September to early October and quite often in with flocks of golden plover. The name itself is a pejorative term meaning a doting old fool, referring to the birds trusting nature (both the scientific name *morinellus*, which means 'little fool' and the Gaelic name for this species, amadán, meaning 'idiot' or 'fool' have a similar meaning). Over the years, this trusting nature made the bird very vulnerable to humans, initially for their flesh (they were considered a delicacy during the middle ages) and later because their feathers were prized for making trout flies and their skins

for taxidermy. Coupled with egg-collecting, this resulted in a steep decline in breeding numbers in Britain during the 19th century, and by the early 20th century only about 50 pairs bred here Britain. Fortunately things have picked up somewhat since then, and now about 700 pairs breed in Scotland. This is one of the few species of wader where the male is duller in coloration than the female, a feature related to the fact that it the male, rather than the female which cares for the young.

Other interesting waders during October included several sightings of **little stint**, with three on the Beach Reserve on the 16th, regular **spotted redshank** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm, two **jack snipe** on Harbour Farm on the 12th and 29 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 25th. Raptor highlight during October was an **osprey** over the Beach Reserve on the 1st, while there were several sightings of **merlin** during the month. Decent numbers of hirundines early in the month included 60 **swallow** and 22 **house martin** on the 11th, while up to 45 **siskin** were seen in flight over the shore and small numbers of **wheatear** were present throughout. This month also saw the first small flocks of winter thrushes, with 10 **redwing** at Castle Water on the 11th and similar numbers of **fieldfare** here on the 13th. Also at Castle Water up to 15 **bearded tit** were present in the reedbeds, while on Harbour Farm finch flocks included up to 120 **linnet** and 70 **goldfinch**. October also saw the first sightings of **bittern** for the autumn with singletons at Narrow Pit on the 27th and Castle Water on the 30th.

Catches in the Lime Kiln moth trap during October contained a good selection of autumn fare, with the bulk of the catch consisting of **setaceous Hebrew character** and **lunar underwing**. The highlights were several **feathered brindle** and the odd **feathered ranunculus**, while migrants included **dark sword-grass**, **rush veneer** and **angle-shades**. Also of interest was a **tawny pinion** found at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 29th, only the third reserve record and the first since 1998. Insect highlight during October was a **red-veined darter** on Harbour Farm on the 15th, while two **western conifer seed bug** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 15th and 28th were also notable (right). Also of note a young **common toad** was found at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 20th.



November 2013

A pleasant surprise on the reserve during November was a female **long-tailed duck** (below) which was present on the Beach Reserve from 10th to the end of the month. This species breeds all round the northern hemisphere, and in Europe winters mainly in the Baltic, with up to four million birds present in the mid 90's (though since then numbers have dropped

round the northern hemisphere, and in Europe winters mainly in the Baltic, with up to four million birds present in the mid 90's (though since then numbers have dropped considerably). In Britain around 15,000 birds occur during the winter, mainly off northern and eastern Scotland, though with smaller numbers further south. At Rye Harbour it has been more or less annual since the early 70's, though this is the first record since 2008. Its name comes from the long tail feathers found in the male, though these are lacking in the female and juveniles. In North America it is sometimes called oldsquaw, though this name seems to have fallen out of favour, at least partly because of a fear that it could be offensive to Native Americans!



On Flat Beach Level, the **golden plover** flock continued to provide something of a spectacle, with up to 1500 birds present, along with up to 500 **lapwing**, 180 **dunlin** and smaller numbers of other waders. Also here, the wintering **spotted redshank** was seen regularly, while waterfowl included up to 400 **wigeon**, 150 **teal** and, on the 12th, 16 **pintail**. Elsewhere on the reserve, single **bittern** were seen at Castle Water on the 14th and 15th, up to three **great white egret** were present on Narrow Pit and at Castle Water later in the month, and 72 **ruff** were on Castle Farm on the 5th. Offshore, sightings included 390 **brent goose**, 350 **common scoter**, three **red-throated diver** and two **great skua** on the 5th and seven **red-breasted merganser** on the 11th, while 94 **little gull** were on Ternery Pool on the 11th, and six **Sandwich tern** on the shore on the 5th. Up to five **marsh harrier** were present at Castle Water during the month, with a **merlin** here on the 14th, while a **short-eared owl** overflew Flat Beach Level on the 2nd. Notable passerines included a **snow bunting** on the Beach Reserve on the 7th, a **grey wagtail** on Ternery Pool on the 28th, three **brambling** at Castle Water on the 14th, four **corn bunting** on Harbour Farm on the 5th, a **swallow** over Harbour Farm on the 8th and the odd **wheatear** in the first half of the month.

tropical Africa and Asia and also on the south coast of Britain. At Rye Harbour it is an annual visitor, usually singletons, but with five in September 1995 and August 1999. Similar to the common redshank, it is distinguished by its more graceful build, paler colouring and thinner bill with a slightly down-curved tip, and also by its distinctive call, a two syllable teu-it more like a roseate tern than a redshank. It is actually more closely related to species such as common greenshank and greater yellowlegs. The name refers to the paler spots on a dark back which characterises the breeding plumage, though stage is rarely seen at Rye Harbour, most of the birds present here are in the dull pale grey and white winter colouration.

Wet weather and extremely high tides resulted in high water levels and lots of standing water on the reserve, which while it caused problems to the staff was much more to the liking of our birds. Peak wader counts included 2000 **golden plover** on Flat Beach on the 16th, 2000 **lapwing** on the Beach Reserve on the 15th, 350 **dunlin** on the shore on the 20th and 280 **curlew** on Harbour Farm on the 9th. Other notable counts included 44 **grey plover** 17 **sanderling** and 12 **knot** on the shore on the 20th, and 17 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 9th. Peak counts of waterfowl included 300 **wigeon** on Flat Beach on the 15th and 300 **mallard** and 121 **teal** at Castle Water on the 14th. Other notable waterfowl included up to three **great white egret** on Narrow Pit and at Castle Water, occasional **bittern** at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm, small numbers of goldeneye and **pintail**, and the female **long-tailed duck** on Ternery Pool throughout. Raptors included the usual fare, with regular **marsh harrier** sightings at Castle Water and on Harbour Farm, single **merlin** on the Beach Reserve on the 15th and 16th, and a couple of sightings of **peregrine**, with two over the Beach Reserve on the 16th. In addition, a **barn owl** was also present at Castle Water on the 19th. Notable passerines during December included two **bearded tit** on Harbour Farm on the 29th, and **chiffchaff**, **Dartford warbler** and two **firecrest** at Castle Water on the 19th (with two more reported here on the 29th).

Still picking up some invertebrates during December, largely as result of gathering wild carrot seeds for scattering on the Beach Reserve. This included both **7-spot ladybird** and **11-spot ladybird**, the common orb-weaving spider *Larinioides cornutus* (below), and numerous **Pea-leaf weevil**, all taking advantage of the sheltered conditions provided by the wild carrot seed heads.



Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 4,206 individuals from 224 species were recorded during 2013, mainly from the moth trap run at Lime Kiln Cottage, but also through casual observation. The following annotated list highlights the most notable migrants and scarcer resident species.

Bordered ermel *Ethmia bipunctella* RDB - A total of eight individuals were trapped on five dates between 1st June and 30th August, with a maximum of three on 18th June.

Salt-marsh grass veneer *Pediasia aridella* Nb - A total of 50 individuals were recorded on 11 dates between 30th June and 22nd August, with a maximum of 24 on 25th July.

Hook-tipped grass-veneer *Platytes alpinella* Nationally Notable - A single individual was trapped on 25th July.

Giant water veneer *Schoenobius gigantella* Nb - Recorded twice during 2013, with singles on the 8th and 17th of July.

Marsh grey *Eudonia pallida* Nb - Two on the 22nd July were the only records during 2013.

Marbled yellow pearl *Evergestis extimalis* Nb - One each on the 7th and 11th August.

Starry pearl *Cynaeda dentalis* RDB (below)- A singleton on the 25th July was the only record.

Sulphur Pearl *Sitochroa palealis* (above) Nationally Notable - A singleton was trapped on 25th July.

Long-legged tabby *Synaphe punctalis* Nb - A total of 49 individuals on six dates between 8th July and 11th August, with a maximum of 17 on 17th July.

Rosy-striped knot-horn *Oncocera semirubella* Nb - Thirty-two trapped on eight dates between 8th July and 11th August, with a maximum of nine on 25th July.

Gorse Knot-horn *Pempelia genistella* Na - The only record concerned one trapped on 31st July.

Pale Grass Eggar *Lasiocampa trifolii flava* RDB - Trapped on three dates: six on 7th August and three each on 11th and 22nd August.

Oblique-striped *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb - One was trapped on 22nd July.

Dark Tussock *Dicallomera fascelina* Nb - One was trapped on 25th July.

Pygmy footman *Eilema pygmaeola* RDB - Trapped on three dates: two on 17th July and five each on 22nd and 25th July.

Kent black arches *Meganola albula* Nb - A total of 17 between 10th July and 11th August, with a maximum of six on 25th July.



Shore wainscot *Mythimna litoralis* Nb - Singles trapped on two dates, the 31st July and 19th August.

L-album wainscot *Mythimna l-album* Nb - Singletons on 31st July, 26th September and 1st October, and two on 7th October.

Obscure Wainscot *Mythimna obsoleta* Nb - Singles trapped on 17th and 22nd July.

Feathered brindle *Aporophyla australis* Nb - A total of 54 individuals were trapped on five dates between 22nd September and 7th October, with a maximum of 17 on 23rd September.

Reed dagger *Simyra albovenosa* Nb - Three were trapped on 11th August and two on 20th August.

Marbled Green *Cryphia muralis* Nb - Trapped on three dates: singles on 25th July and 22nd

August, and two on 11th August.

Crescent striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb (left) - A total of 19 individuals were trapped on six dates between 17th July and 11th August, with a maximum of five on 11th August.

Cream-borde red cream pea *Earias clorana* Nb - Trapped on four dates between 8th and 19th August. All involved singles except for 17th July, when three were trapped.

Dotted fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis* Na - One on 17th July.

Four-spotted footman *Lithosia quadra* migrant - One on 26th September was the first reserve record.

Jersey tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* migrant/transitory resident - One on 13th August.



Other notable invertebrates recorded during 2013 included:

Pellenes tripunctatus RDB (above) - An immature male was found within a dead stem of wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) on Flat Beach on 12th May, while an adult male was found at the same site on 17th June.

Trichopterna cito RDB - Three males and a female of this money spider were sieved from tidal litter on the saltmarsh on 27th November.

Trichoncus affinis RDB - Another money spider, a male of this species was found on Flat Beach during a British Arachnological Society (BAS) field meeting on 15th June, only the second reserve record.

Lathys stigmatisata RDB - A mesh-web weaving spider. One was found during the BAS meeting on Flat Beach on 15th June.

Haplodrassus minor RDB - A ground spider. One from the saltmarsh during the BAS meeting on 15th June.

Great silver water beetle *Hydrophilus piceus* RDB - Singles trapped at light at Lime Kiln Cottage on 15th April, 18th June and 22nd August.

Isochnus sequensi RDB - One at Castle Water on 26th May was the first reserve record.

Salt-marsh horsefly *Atylotus latistriatus* (below) RDB - One was found at Lime Kiln Cottage on 31st July.

Ornate colonel soldierfly *Odontomyia ornata* RDB - Two records at Castle Water during 2013: one on 7th June, and two mating on 5th July.



Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2013 was, as ever, varied and unpredictable. The following is a brief summary of what we achieved.

Species and Site Monitoring

We carried out general wildlife recording and the regular monthly Wetland Bird Surveys and water level and salinity measurements. The annual surveys of breeding birds of the SSSI and the plants in the 10m permanent quadrat on the shingle beach. There was regular moth trapping throughout the SSSI, and specialists continued to visit the reserve. In addition, the monitoring programme set up to follow changes in the flora and fauna of habitats which arose from the saltmarsh/shingle re-creation project on Harbour Farm continued, and an NVC survey was carried out by the Wildlife Trust's Senior Ecologist on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve. All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 589,066 records of around 4,800 species in the SSSI.

Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer work-parties took place on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from July to October, involving willow clearance at Castle Water, control of ragwort on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm, and removal of grass cuttings on Harbour Farm and at Castle Water. In addition, 15 French volunteers visited during July, spending two days cutting willows at Castle Water and Corner Pools. We also held a Beach Clean in March to clear the rubbish blown in off the sea, and several beach surveys to monitor litter on the shore. The December Beach Clean did not take place, as a section of the road south of Lime Kiln Cottage was washed away by the tidal surge of the 5th/6th!

Other management during 2013 included the cutting and removal of grass, planting of comfrey and seeding of yellow rattle on 2.6ha of Harbour Farm to encourage bumblebees, completion of landscaping on Harbour Farm, including the provision of a sand martin nesting bank, and renovation of the Castle Water Hide. With the return of our nesting little terns the Beach Watch provided valuable support to the staff, watching over the terns and informing the public. Throughout the nature reserve we made sure the seats, paths, stiles and hides were clear and safe for visitors. The Nature Reserve also managed the Environment Agency's land at Rye Harbour Farm, fencing, grazing, managing Ragwort and thistles and monitoring wildlife.

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

Interpretation

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

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

We conducted 76 Guided Walks, booked in 15 visiting groups, gave three illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle for English Heritage on three days with 104 people entering, guided 34 school groups and took our

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

www.WildRye.info provides information on all aspects of the reserve and is updated monthly.

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

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

During 2013 there were more than 50,000 unique visitors to RXwildlife.info and 35,000 unique visitors to WildRye.info.

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2013

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

Number of volunteer hours ...

Tuesday work-parties	81
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,249
Beach Watch/Patrolling	251
Other	187
Total	2,768 hours

Annual pre-Christmas Beach Clean



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 2013 were:

Sussex Wildlife Trust	Mr. J Power Ms S. Walton
Environment Agency	T. Cook
East Sussex County Council	Cllr. K.J. Glazier Cllr. P. Scott
Landowners	Mr. F. Langrish
Rother District Council	Mr. A.H. Lloyd (Chair) Cllr. J. Johnson
Icklesham Parish Council	Cllr. C. Merricks
Rye Town Council	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

The John Gooders Hide

This birdwatching hide is dedicated to the memory of John Gooders who was chairman of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for ten years and a prolific author of books that inspired a generation of birdwatchers including the original “Where to Watch Birds in Britain”.

The hide was constructed in 2013 to give more people a better view of the birds in this new wetland and the re-created saltmarsh. It was funded by The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and the Gooders family and the access to this hide was sponsored by the Fat Face Foundation.

This replaces the first hide, built here in 1987, which was dedicated to the memory of Colin Green, head of Rural Studies at Thomas Peacocke School in Rye. It overlooked the first small Wader Pool constructed here with support from Rye Rotary Club.

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 2013 were;

Mr A. Lloyd, Ms. A. Parfitt, Dr. P. Roper, Ms. N. Holt, Mr. G. Lyons, Mr. T. Cook, Mr B. Banks, Ms S. Tyler, 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 Wardens and Community Wildlife Officer were 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

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

office: (01797) 227784

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

web site: www.WildRye.info

Finance

The Sussex Wildlife Trust manages the accounts of the Nature Reserve and the detailed accounts of the Committee for 2013/14 are given in Appendix 2.

The main sources of funding for the running of the Nature Reserve are from Sussex Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council, Icklesham Parish Council and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

The Management Committee would like to express their gratitude to all who have contributed to the funds or helped with work for the Reserve during the year.

Management Objectives

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

The Management Plan has nine "Ideal Management Objectives" :

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



Black-headed Gulls in April viewed from Parkes hide.

Income and Expenditure Accounts Year-End 31st March 2013

Appendix 2

	2013/14	2012/13
	£	£
<u>INCOME</u>		
Grants and Contributions		
East Sussex County Council	5,000	5,000
Rother District Council	-	2,000
Icklesham PC	350	300
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve		
Staff	19,776	19,000
Other projects	43,278	9,683
Environment Agency	30,000	30,000
English Heritage	1,333	2,000
Sussex Wildlife Trust	13,074	13,020
Environment Stewardship (HLS)	38,636	50,324
Wetland Trust	-	6,000
Charitable Trusts/Donations	- 2,590	7,375
Total Grants & Contributions	<u>148,858</u>	<u>144,702</u>
Other Income		
Events and Education	5,352	2,881
Sundry Income	6,911	4,687
Total Income	<u>161,120</u>	<u>152,270</u>
 <u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Staffing Costs	119,264	117,663
Reserve Management	6,690	8,205
Information Centre & Interpretation	6,898	4,204
Projects	28,735	4,830
Transport	905	1,011
Environment Agency Lease	3,150	3,150
Educational Visits	890	348
Training	547	380
Administration & Communication	3,043	2,283
Insurance	-	-
Vehicle Costs	5,712	4,255
Depreciation	4,998	602
	<u>180,832</u>	<u>146,931</u>
SURPLUS/DEFECIT	<u>- 19,712</u>	<u>5,339</u>

Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Pairs										
LITTLE GREBE	6	6	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3
GREAT CRESTED GREBE	4	3	3	8	4	4	4	7	4	5
CORMORANT	132	134	130	150	146	119	123	113	161	115
GREY HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	3	3	3	5	3	3	6	6	6	8
GREYLAG GOOSE	6	10	10	7	9	10	12	8	7	9
CANADA GOOSE	13	15	14	10	7	9	5	5	3	4
SHELDUCK	3	1	3	4	2	1	3	2	1	1
GADWALL	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
SHOVELER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUFTED DUCK	12	16	7	4	14	3	10	11	9	13
AVOCET	1	1	9	10	13	11	20	11	30	24
OYSTERCATCHER	31	24	24	28	28	25	33	31	23	27
RINGED PLOVER	41	34	30	39	33	28	25	25	19	26
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER	0	0	2	3	2	5	3	5	4	7
LAPWING	29	31	33	40	37	34	33	29	29	28
REDSHANK	13	12	16	15	18	19	13	19	12	19
MEDITERRANEAN GULL	27	37	75	40	63	90	185	100	55	36
fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL	36	40	50	15	39	64	250	50	<10	1
BLACK-HEADED GULL	1075	1500	2000	1400	1600	1600	2600	1700	1900	1700
fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL	1050	1900	1900	1400	2200	2200	4500	100	1900	1700
HERRING GULL	10+	4	5	10	14	30	38	41	21	7
SANDWICH TERN	300	200+	500	400	350	500	750	850	600	120
fledged SANDWICH TERN	400	300	500	400	400	600	1000	50	<10	0
COMMON TERN	105	153	169	175	150	232	341	235	149	79
fledged COMMON TERN	175	200	200	100	100	200	500	50	0	24
LITTLE TERN	18	18	21	15	0	0	7	7	13	11
fledged LITTLE TERN	5	20	9	0	0	0	7	2	0	1
SAND MARTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YELLOW WAGTAIL	12	6	2	6	7	4	2	2	0	1
WHEATEAR	10	13	11	13	12	12	5	3	4	5
CETTI'S WARBLER (SINGING)	6	8	9	18	13	15	15	14	11	7
SEDGE WARBLER	104	48	50	53	47	65	42	42	45	43
REED WARBLER	200+	206	201	227	250	250	250	250	200	200
LESSER WHITETHROAT	7	11	10	11	12	20	12	9	12	16
WHITETHROAT	69	58	58	59	37	70	53	46	39	34
SKYLARK	32	32	37	41	40	33	30	32	35	34
REED BUNTING	66	77	59	49	58	52	54	55	54	37
CORN BUNTING	5	2	2	4	3	3	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 2013 - Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	40	38	6	3	0	3	2	7	16	34	38	40
GREAT CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	8	86	180	22	12	15	12	3	23	11	15	7
CORMORANT	89	213	184	166	201	232	203	179	29	224	37	133
GREY HERON	3	2	0	0	1	5	1	2	1	5	4	3
BITTERN	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
LITTLE EGRET	16	7	15	0	7	7	46	12	12	11	6	5
MUTE SWAN	19	18	16	14	24	47	53	19	30	21	2	2
GREYLAG GOOSE	52	12	32	12	26	37	55	102	413	228	2	50
CANADA GOOSE	94	45	10	13	12	21	30	98	0	116	0	0
SHELDUCK (inc. estuary)	46	42	23	38	20	27	19	6	7	5	19	27
WIGEON	2535	472	69	65	0	0	0	11	140	705	446	354
GADWALL	348	225	119	74	13	13	32	43	55	183	169	66
TEAL	972	645	173	60	0	0	9	63	400	433	472	121
MALLARD	617	355	246	45	30	64	90	108	350	363	485	400
PINTAIL	6	21	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	12	16	3
SHOVELER	172	147	90	64	4	8	10	18	60	111	78	35
POCHARD	102	156	19	3	2	5	16	33	11	31	25	34
TUFTED DUCK	145	128	96	116	74	82	30	81	111	101	167	58
SCAUP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LONG-TAILED DUCK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
COMMON SCOTER (Rye Bay)	0	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	350	0
GOLDENEYE	10	13	10	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
SMEW	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUDDY DUCK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COOT	337	280	214	69	44	154	265	300	264	384	339	511
OYSTERCATCHER	560	1000	425	391	216	164	230	516	600	165	800	185
AVOCET	5	6	68	49	54	29	54	3	4	0	0	0
RINGED PLOVER	35	34	29	31	89	23	2	100	113	20	5	70
GOLDEN PLOVER	700	62	260	80	0	1	32	145	290	1900	1500	2000
GREY PLOVER	61	35	17	5	6	7	0	0	0	6	15	44
LAPWING	1225	650	350	35	24	20	250	610	900	1170	831	2219
KNOT	180	74	106	1	4	8	9	8	12	1	8	12
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	120	76	39	0	17	3	20	19	0	0	0	17
DUNLIN (inc. estuary)	250	750	607	150	150	14	145	220	104	245	187	200
RUFF	26	31	1	4	0	0	5	9	5	32	72	17
SNIPE	210	68	45	12	0	0	0	17	11	78	18	33
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	0	6	5	6	0	9	6	13	8	0	0	0
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	1	1	28	18	197	7	3	4	16	3	3	2
WHIMBREL	0	0	0	74	12	2	1	10	0	0	0	0
CURLEW	850	430	110	41	13	11	62	210	400	300	330	280
REDSHANK (inc. estuary)	100	41	37	64	8	12	81	144	0	52	48	22
GREENSHANK	0	0	0	2	2	0	18	16	2	1	2	0
TURNSTONE	32	16	16	19	42	30	17	50	0	3	0	30

Appendix 4 - School Visits.

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

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

Programmes of study

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

Cost

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

Wet weather facilities

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

Toilets

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

Food

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

Equipment

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

Clothing

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

Health and Safety

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

Appendix 5 - Notes For The Guidance Of Visitors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

