

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2014



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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Cover photo:
Camber Castle

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Map of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

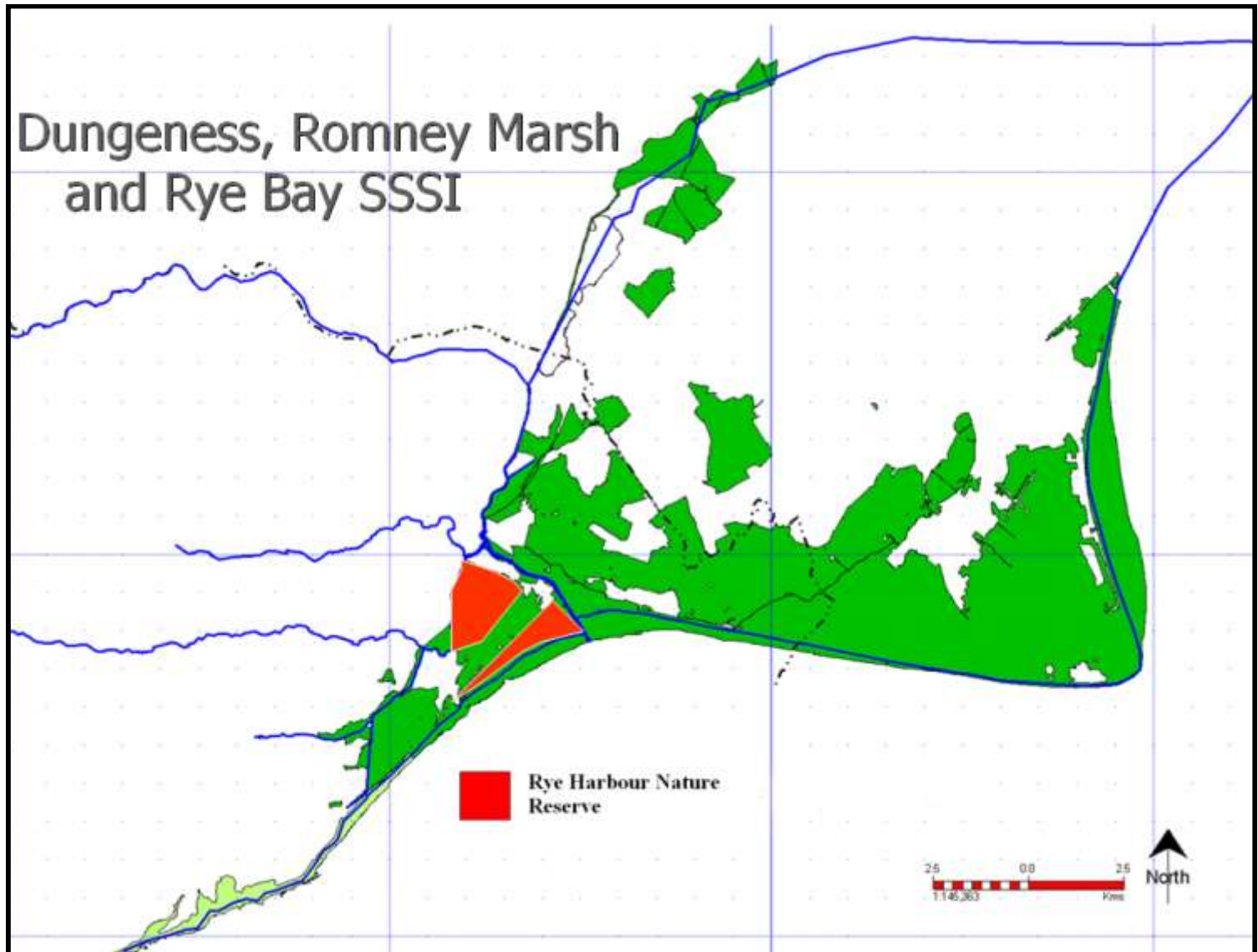


The Nature Reserve

Establishment

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

In 1970 most of the 101 ha. of shingle beach now owned by the Environment Agency (EA, but originally the Kent River Authority) was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by the County Council, which also appoint-



ed a Management Committee to administer the Reserve on its behalf. This was the beginning of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Since then further land has been added by agreement with neighbouring landowners and the Management Committee is hopeful that further areas of the SSSI will also become part of the Reserve. In August 1992 the Sussex Wildlife Trust purchased the 88.6 ha. of Castle Water and this was incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve in 1993, bringing the number of landowners to four and the area to 326 ha. In 2006 the SSSI was combined with eight other local SSSIs to form the 9,000ha. 'Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI—see above.

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

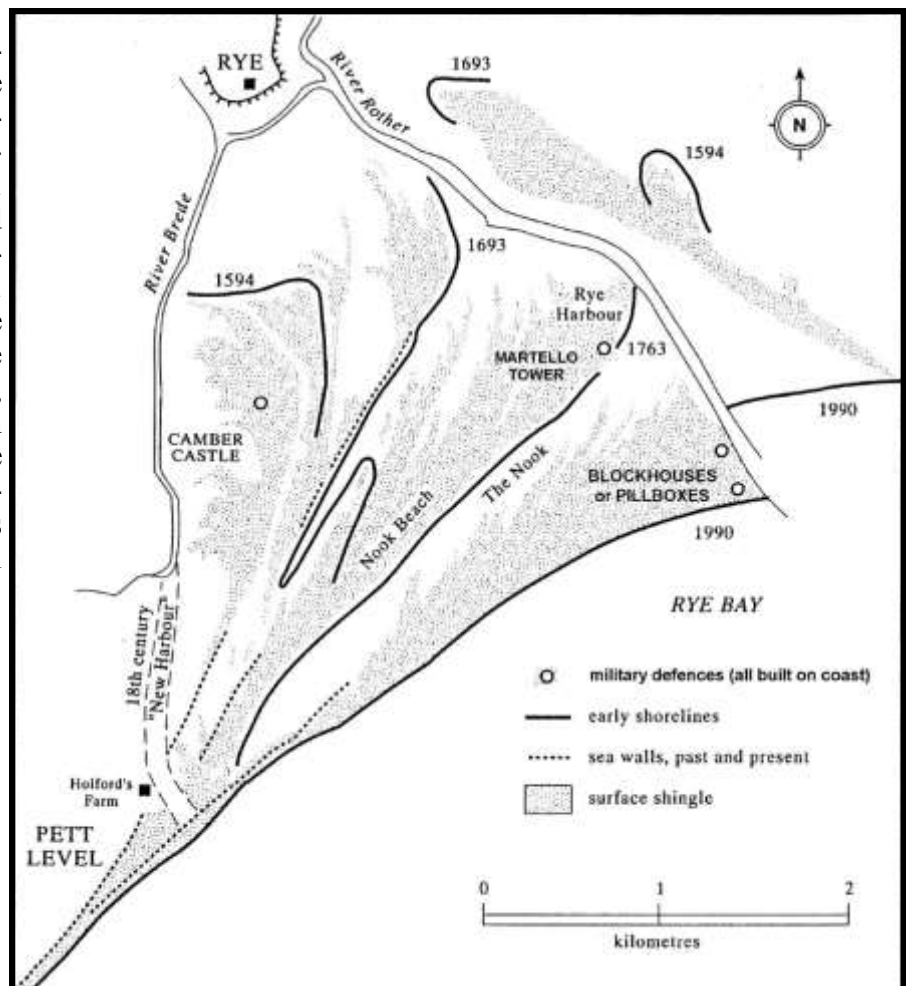
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

The driest month was August 1995 with just 1mm.

and the wettest month was October 1987 with 275.5mm.

Geomorphology

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



Habitats

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

SALINITY - from fresh water to brackish to saline.

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

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

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

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

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

Intertidal

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

Saltmarsh

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



Reclaimed Saltmarsh

By the construction of embankments and the digging of drainage ditches it has been possible to exclude the sea and cultivate the alluvial deposits of the old saltmarsh. The major form of agriculture was and remains sheep grazing. Large expanses of grazed grassland attract large flocks of wintering lapwing, golden plover and curlew. Where the grazing is reduced the tussocky grass is home to small mammals which in turn attract hunting barn owls. Since 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

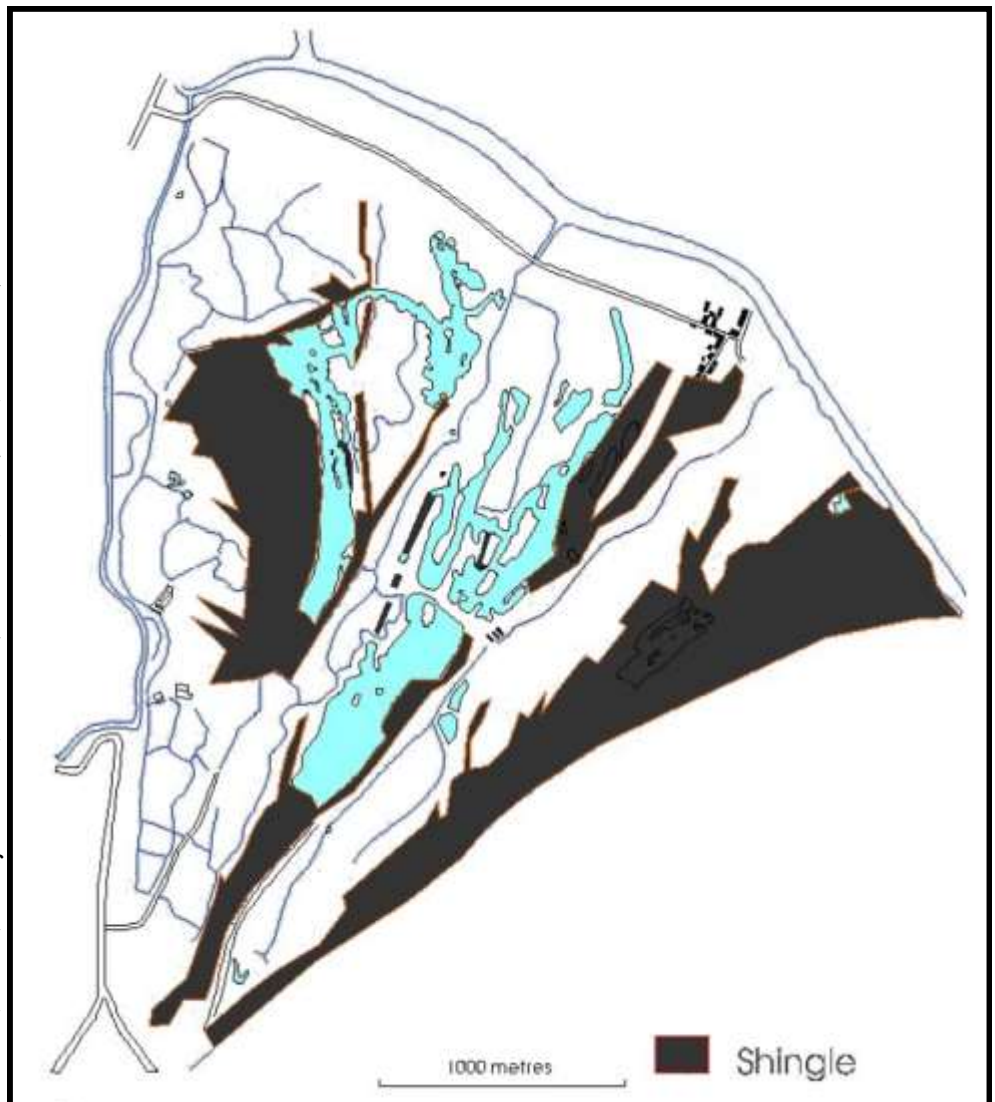
The reclaimed saltmarsh areas are drained by a network of ditches, some of which follow the line of the old saltmarsh creeks. Many are annually cleaned mechanically, but still retain an interesting remnant of the wetland flora and fauna. Nearly 5 km. of the ditches have a strong saline influence. Although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



Limobius mixtus on common stork's-bill

Species And Conservation

With this great variety of habitats it is not surprising that there is such a wealth of wildlife on the Nature Reserve. The 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 4,800 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 at :

www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

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

NUMBER OF SPECIES BY STATUS AND SITE

Sites	British Status				
	Local	Notable	Rare	Total Species	Records
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	597,504

Visiting

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



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

	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage
JAN	5220	14616
FEB	5475	15330
MAR	7298	20434
APR	7753	21708
MAY	8450	23660
JUN	8596	24069
JUL	9558	26762
AUG	10700	29960
SEP	8617	24128
OCT	6617	18528
NOV	5742	16078
DEC	5196	14549
TOTALS	89220	249822



**Visitors entering Lime Kiln
Cottage Information Centre
in 2014**

2014	Hours open	Adults Entering	Children Entering	Total Entering
JAN	151.25	516	89	605
FEB	136.25	582	146	728
MAR	161	705	157	862
APR	193.25	1406	463	1869
MAY	208.25	1326	328	1654
JUN	202.5	1336	163	1499
JUL	205.5	1512	316	1828
AUG	203.5	1918	747	2665
SEP	195.75	1500	197	1697
OCT	183.75	1004	243	1247
NOV	168.25	516	77	593
DEC	139.75	312	76	388
TOTALS	2149	12633	3002	15635

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 2014 the FRIENDS funded a quarter of staff costs and the landscaping and island building of Flat Beach and the improvements to the electric fencing.

In 2014 the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre was opened to the public by a team of volunteers. It was opened for 2,363 hours and provided information about the FRIENDS, the Reserve and its wildlife to 15,635 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 2014 there were 1,522 subscriptions, representing about 1,982 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2014 amounted to £22,815 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £4,208 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme. The Friends also receive £890 in donations, and an additional £198 in Gift Aid.

Islands across Flat Beach with flocks of golden plover and lapwing.



Publications

The following publications and sales goods are available from the Nature Reserve address on receipt of the correct payment and a large A5 (9"x 6¹/₂", unless otherwise stated) stamped addressed envelope, or from the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre, when it is open.

	Price	Postage
Rye Harbour 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.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

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)

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)

2013 Annual Report (4MB)

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 2014. 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 2014

A more or less annual visitor to Rye Harbour at this time of the year is the **Slavonian Grebe**. This species breeds in small numbers in the UK, with about 30 pairs in central and north-eastern Scotland, while wintering birds occur all around the British and Irish coasts. At Rye Harbour the best time to see this species is during December and January, with up to three seen in recent years. Called the horned grebe in North America due to the tufts of golden feathers present on its head during the breeding season, the British name refers the defunct state of Slavonia (now eastern Croatia). Like many grebes, Slavonian grebe has its legs right at the end of the body, excellent for swimming, terrible for walking and both the Latin name *Podiceps* and the Gaelic spàgritòn mean literally ‘arsefoot’!



A feature of the reserve during January was the huge numbers of birds present on the abundant standing water. A wetland bird survey count on the 19th found 3300 **golden plover**, 3046 **lapwing** and 196 **redshank**, while other high counts included 600 **dunlin** and 90 **sanderling** on the 16th, 600 **oystercatcher** and 500 **curlew** on the 9th and 145 **knot** and 95 **grey plover** on the 24th. Also of interest, at least 28 **ruff** were present on Flat beach on the 20th. Notable species included the long staying **spotted redshank** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm, and up to two **jack snipe** and unseasonal **common sandpiper** and **green-shank** on Harbour Farm. Waterfowl numbers were also high, and counts on the 18th and 19th found 875 **teal**, 756 **wigeon**, 741 **mallard**, 485 **gadwall** and 297 **shoveler**, while a count of 108 **shelduck** on the 17th was a record for the reserve. Less common species of waterfowl recorded during January included two **long-tailed duck** and the male **scaup** on Long Pit, and two **great white egret**, a **Slavonian grebe** and **bittern** at Castle Water. Raptors included up to three **marsh harrier** recorded at Castle Water and the occasional **merlin** and **peregrine** on the Beach Reserve, while **barn owl** was present regularly at Castle Water late in the month. Notable passerines included three **firecrest** at Castle Water on the 23rd (with one on the 25th), six **brambling** on the Beach Reserve on the 10th and **bearded tit** from the viewpoint on the 19th.

Despite the wet weather there were a few invertebrate records during the month. Flies included the first **drone fly** of the year on the 13th, while the winter gnat (sort of a spindly

crane-fly) *Trichocera regelationis* was recorded at Lime Kiln on the 25th. Sorting through moss from areas of shingle on the 12th turned up several species of true bug including *Taphropeltus contractus*, *Scolopstethus affinis* and **bishops mitre bug**, so called because its shape resembles an ecclesiastical hat! Moss sorting also found the tiny money spider *Centromerus dilutus*, the first time this species has been recorded on the reserve.

February 2014

As we move towards March the reserve is increasingly showing signs of the spring to come. Many birds have been singing and displaying since December, but this activity now seems to be taking on increasing urgency as the birds stake out their territories for the coming breeding season. One of the most obvious signs of spring is the return of **black-headed gull** and the odd **Mediterranean gull** to Ternery Pool, with up to 1500 of the former and 11 of the latter present here at the end of the month (as well as the odd **Sandwich tern**). At the moment water levels are high on the breeding islands, so this makes for noisy and bad-tempered encounters between competing birds! What may be the first of our breeding **avocet** have also returned to the reserve, with up to 30 birds present towards the end of February and increasingly we are seeing pairs of **lapwing** and **oystercatcher** pairing up and defending their patches. At Castle Water, our **marsh harriers** also seem to be getting in the mood, with their aerial displays seen towards the end of the month. Let's hope this years a bumper season!

Wader numbers remained high on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm during February, with counts of up to 2400 **golden plover**, 2100 **lapwing** 450 **oystercatcher** and 430 **curlew**, while up to 580 **dunlin**, 84 **grey plover**, 80 **knot**, and 37 **ruff**, as well as smaller numbers of **black-tailed godwit** and **bar-tailed godwit** were present on the islands on Ternery Pool and 240 **sanderling** were present on the shore on the 22nd. Wader highlights during February were **jack snipe** at Ternery Pool on the 1st and 27th, and the long-staying **spotted redshank**, which was joined by a second bird from the 2nd. Notable waterfowl during February included up to two **Slavonian grebe** at Castle Water, two **long-tailed duck** and the male **scaup** on Long pit, and up to two **great white egret** and the occasional **bittern** at Castle Water, while a flock of 49 **pintail** on Flat Beach on the 22nd was one of the highest counts ever for this species on the reserve. Raptor highlight during February was a ringtail (i.e. female or immature) **hen harrier** at Castle Water on the 22nd, while other species included up to five **marsh harrier** at Castle Water, and up to three **peregrine** and a **merlin** over the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. There were also occasional sightings of **barn owl** at Castle Water during the month. Little in the way of notable passerine sightings during February, with the most notable being several records of **bearded tit** at Castle Water.



A slight improvement in the weather during late February saw increasing numbers of insect sightings on the reserve, including several **small tortoiseshell** and the odd **drone fly** and **honey bee**. Highlights were the uncommon leaf beetle ***Longitarsus dorsalis*** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 26th and the local rove beetle ***Stenus aceris*** on Harbour Farm on the 19th, the first record for the reserve. This month also saw the first flowering stems of **lesser periwinkle** and **red deadnettle** around Lime Kiln Cottage.

March 2014

A much anticipated bird at Rye Harbour at this time of the year is the **wheatear**. This species breeds all around the northern hemisphere and in Britain is most closely associated with stony, sheep-grazed grassland in the north and west of the country. In the past however it occurred commonly on the downs in Sussex, though unfortunately the species was considered something of a delicacy in the area, with locals catching and selling the birds for a profit, and this, combined with the loss of their downland habitat, resulted in the virtual disappearance from Sussex. These days Rye Harbour is one of the few places in the county where they still breed, with up to 12 pairs nesting annually. The common name is a corruption of the rather earthier 'white-arse', referring to its white rump, though the local name in Sussex was the equally rude 'arseling'!

As always, March was a month of two halves as far as the birds go, with a distinctly wintery feel to the start of the month, and a more spring like aspect later on as the first of the summer migrants arrived and spring passage kicked in. At the beginning of the month the reserve was dominated by large flocks of **golden plover** and **lapwing** on the Beach Reserve and a wide range of winter waterfowl both here and at Castle Water. Notable 'winter' visitors included the occasional **bittern** at Castle Water, two **long-tailed duck** and **scaup** on Long Pit, **great white egret** and **spotted redshank** on the Beach Reserve and **merlin** here and on Harbour Farm. As the season marched on and the weather improved, we began to see a distinct change. On Ternery Pool, tern and gull numbers built steadily, with up to 1500 **black-headed gull**, 145 **Mediterranean gull** and 500 **Sandwich tern** towards the end of the month, while up to 24 **avocet** were also present on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. The first of our breeding summer visitors included **wheatear** on the 17th, a **swallow** over the Beach Reserve on the 29th and a **little ringed plover** on Harbour Farm on the 27th. Other notable migrants included a **little stint** on the new saltmarsh from the 22nd, four **garganey** on Harbour Farm on the 22nd, two **black redstart** at Ternery Pool on the 28th and **green sandpiper** on Harbour Farm on the 27th. In addition, a **red kite** was seen over Rye Harbour village on the 17th, and a **short-eared owl** over Ternery Pool on the 27th. Highlight was a **Kentish plover** which was present briefly on the Beach Reserve on 5th, the third year in a row this species has been recorded on the reserve during March!

The warmer weather, particularly towards the end of the month, saw an increase in insect activity on the reserve. At Lime Kiln Cottage, moth trapping turned up **common** and **small Quaker**, **early grey**, **early thorn** and **Hebrew character**, as well as the local diving beetle ***Dytiscus circumflexus*** and the craneflies ***Trichocera regelationis*** and ***Symplecta stictica***. Butterflies on the wing included **small tortoiseshell**, **peacock** and **comma**, while both **buff-tailed** and **red-tailed bumblebee** also put in an appearance. Other insects of note included **dotted bee-fly**, and the uncommon beetles **bombardier beetle** and ***Helops caeruleus***. Plants in flower included **ground ivy**, **red deadnettle** and **Persian speedwell**.

April 2014

A sound which is eagerly awaited at this time of the year is the call of the first **cuckoo** of the spring. The lifestyle of this species is well known, the female laying her eggs in the nests of songbirds such as dunnock, reed warbler and meadow pipit, and the young then ejecting the eggs or young of the host and being raised by the unfortunate foster parents. The shape of the adults is very reminiscent of a bird of prey, and the cuckoo uses this similarity to good effect, prompting small birds to mob it and allowing their nests to be pinpointed.



At Rye Harbour, cuckoos can often be seen on the Beach Reserve, feeding on hairy moth caterpillars, a food which many birds avoid due to the fact that they are poisonous. The cuckoo gets around this by biting off the head, splitting the body with its beak and shaking the insect until the toxic contents fall out!

With spring passage in full swing during April, the reserve played host to a wide range of migrants. Wader highlights included up to three **curlew sandpiper**, two **little stint**, and a **Temminck's stint**, while the best of the bunch was yet another **Kentish plover** on Flat Beach on the 26th. Other notable waders included up to 49 **whimbrel**, 36 **bar-tailed godwit**, 12 **knot** and smaller numbers of **common sandpiper**, **green sandpiper**, **greenshank** and **spotted redshank**. Breeding **avocet** numbers peaked at around 20 pairs late in the month, while small numbers of displaying **little ringed plover** were also present here. On Ternery Pool, up to 2000 **black headed gull**, 800 **Sandwich tern**, 300 **Mediterranean gull** and 120 **common tern** were present during April, while the first of our **little tern** were seen on the 16th, with up to 18 recorded on Flat Beach by the end of the month. Notable waterfowl included a **cattle egret** at Castle Water on the 15th, a **common crane** here on the 19th, and up to two **red-breasted merganser** on the Beach Reserve early in the month, Raptors included the last **merlin** of the winter on the 4th, regular **marsh harrier** at Castle Water, and a **common buzzard** over the Beach Reserve on the 23rd, while a **red kite** over Harbour Farm on the 12th was the highlight. Early April saw the first of our returning summer warblers, with **sedge warbler** and **reed warbler** singing early in the month and **willow warbler** and **lesser whitethroat** a couple of weeks later. At Castle Water **bearded tit** were regular in the reedbeds, while small numbers of **wheatear** and **yellow wagtail** were scattered throughout the reserve. Hirundines included up to 10 **sand martin**, 11 **swallow** and the occasional **house martin**.

Catches in the Lime Kiln moth trap were still quite poor during April, mainly a small range of spring species, such as **common**, **small** and **powdered Quakers**, **early grey** and **clouded drab**. Something of a surprise however was a **barred tooth-striped** which was found on the 1st of the month, a very uncommon species which in Sussex is confined to a few sites on chalk between Shoreham and Eastbourne! Butterflies included several **brimstone**, a spring species which is not often recorded at Rye Harbour, and **orange-tip** as well as **peacock**, **small tortoiseshell** and **comma**. Damselflies on the wing included **large red**, **azure** and **blue-tailed**, while dragonflies included **hairy hawk** and **downy emerald**. Plants in flower during April included **sea kale**, **spring vetch**, **ground ivy** and **white deadnettle**.

May 2014

One bird which epitomises summer for me is the **little tern**, and their graceful display flights and chattering calls always brings a smile to my face. The smallest of all the terns this species is identified by its yellow beak with a black tip, yellow legs, and white forehead (the specific name 'albifrons' means 'white forehead'). These are one of our rarest breeding seabirds, with around 2,400 pairs in scattered colonies around the British coastline, and its' decline in the 20th century appears to be largely the result of human disturbance due to our increasing use of the coast for recreational purposes since the 1920s and 30s. In the early 1970s, for instance, there were less than five pairs nesting on the shingle at Rye Harbour. In order to protect this tiny colony, Rye Harbour Nature Reserve was set up in 1972, and the advent of wardening and the provision of electric fences, saw numbers rise steadily to a peak of 76 pairs in 1985. However, since then numbers have dropped gradually, due to increasing vegetation cover on what was once bare shingle (little terns like to have a clear view of their surroundings), and predation from ground predators such as fox and badger, and no birds nested here at all in 2008 and 2009. Since then, we have used decoys and sound recordings to tempt them back and in 2013 11 pairs nested, with about the same number present this year.

On Ternery Pool, breeding for our other seabirds was well under the way, with around 250 **Sandwich tern**, 80 **common tern** and 1500 **black-headed gull**, the latter with several hundred chicks. After a good start, only one pair of **Mediterranean gulls** nested, though occasional birds could still be found on the reserve throughout the month. May also saw several sightings of **little gull** on the Beach Reserve. As might be expected at this time of the year, there were a good selection of both migrant and breeding waders around during the month. Notable migrants included regular **little stint**, the occasional **curlew sandpiper**, small numbers of **whimbrel** and up to eight **knot**, while a flock of 47 **black-tailed godwit** was on Harbour farm on the 14th. On Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve our breeding **avocet** produced their first chicks mid-month, while at least one **little ringed plover** brood was seen on Harbour Farm later on. Notable waterfowl during May included several sightings of **garganey** on Harbour Farm and at Castle Water, **bittern** from the viewpoint, and best of the bunch, a **spoonbill** on the new saltmarsh on the 13th. Notable passerines during May included three **spotted flycatcher** and three **whinchat** at Castle Water on the 15th, a **turtle dove** at the viewpoint, and three singing **corn bunting** on Castle Farm. In addition, our **wheatear** produced their first broods late in the month, with at least a couple present on Flat Beach. Highlights were a **red-rumped swallow** among around 200 hirundines and 60 **swift** at Castle Water on the 8th and a **hooded crow** briefly at the river mouth on the 3rd.

Moth numbers in the Lime Kiln trap picked up in May, with a good range of species recorded. The bulk of the catch was made up of **small elephant hawk-moth** and **common swift**, while the highlights were a **white colon** on the 14th and a **shore wainscoton** on the 31st. Similarly butterfly numbers increased during the month, and included several **painted lady** and **red admiral**. Dragonflies included **hairy hawk**, **downy emerald** and **four-spotted chaser**, while damselflies included **variable**, **red-eyed** and **large red**. Invertebrate highlights during May included the parasitic fly *Wagneria gagatea*, the first record for the reserve, the jumping spider *Pellenes tripunctatus*, and the sea beetle weevil *Lixus scabricollis*. Plants in flower included **yellow horned-poppo**, **viper's bugloss**, **common vetch**, **sea pea** and **yellow rattle**.

June 2014

Sandwich tern is the largest of the three species of tern which nest at Rye Harbour, and also the first to arrive, with the first birds seen as early as late February in some years. Named after Sandwich in Kent (where it now, unfortunately, does not nest), its pale grey back, black cap with a shaggy crest and black bill with a yellow tip, as well as its raucous 'kerrick' call make it a very distinctive species. Less aggressive than some of the smaller tern species, Sandwich terns often nest with other, more belligerent species to avoid predation, and at Rye Harbour the colony is on Ternery Pool along with both black-headed gull and common tern, species known for their hostility to predators. It is also the commonest of our breeding terns, with up to 750 pairs (7% of UK total), but in recent years success has been very variable, due to a combination of poor food supply and perhaps predation. Fortunately, adult birds are quite long-lived (around 30 years), and do not have to breed successfully every year.



Our breeding seabirds are having a rather mixed season. **Black-headed gull** are doing rather well, and many have now fledged, while our common tern also seem to be producing a decent crop of chicks. Sandwich tern on the other hand are having yet another poor year, perhaps due to poor food supply, with very few chicks seen. Most of our **little tern** on Flat Beach seem to have survived the depredations of a couple of badgers earlier in the season, and around 6-8 pairs are present (though no chicks have been seen yet). Similarly, wader success had been variable. **Avocet** produced their first fledglings during June, and seem to have done quite well, while the oldest of three or four pairs of **little ringed plover** on Harbour Farm also fledged during the month. **Lapwing**, **ringed plover** and **redshank** seem to have had moderate success, producing small numbers of chicks and a few fledglings, while **oystercatcher** have had a very poor year, with very few chicks produced (badgers inside fences!). On the Beach Reserve four or five pairs of **wheatear** continued to produce their first broods and had probably moved onto their second by the end of the month. Migrant numbers increased steadily during June as passage movement picked up. A good selection of waders included **grey plover**, **curlew**, **knot**, and later in the month three **green-shank**, **spotted redshank**, a few **whimbrel**, up to 13 **bar-tailed godwit** and several **green sandpiper**. Notable waterfowl included three **garganey** at Castle Water on the 28th, and four **spoonbill** on the new saltmarsh on the 10th and another two on 30th. On the sea a couple of **eider** on 5th and 90 **common scoter** on 13th.

A better month for the moths at Lime Kiln, though numbers of species and individuals was still a bit low compared to previous years. Highlights were the micros **starry pearl**, **rosy streaked knot-horn** and **salt-marsh grass-veneer** and the macros **shore wainscot** and **sand dart**, while immigrants included **bordered straw** and **diamond-back moth**. Similarly butterfly numbers were very poor during June, though the month did come up with the occasional **red admiral** and **painted lady** and the first appearance of our resident **marbled white** at Castle Water. Other notable invertebrates recorded during June included the bug *Megalonotus sabulicola* and the beetle *Helops caeruleus* on the Beach Re-

serve and the **long-horned general soldierfly** at Castle Water. It has been a good year for orchids on the reserve this year, with **pyramidal**, **common spotted** and particularly **bee orchid** showing in good numbers, while a single plant of **southern marsh orchid** at Castle Water was the first one I have seen here in 10 years!

July 2014

For me, the bird of the month was a summer-plumaged **black-necked grebe** which was present on Ternery Pool from the 6th to the 8th. This species is more or less annual at Rye Harbour, and while it has been recorded every month of the year, has occurred largely during the autumn and winter months in recent years. As a consequence, we generally see it in its drab winter plumage, so to see it in its summer finery was a real treat! In Britain, around 50 pairs breed in Scotland and northern England, on shallow, undisturbed pools. The relatively small wintering population (around 130 birds) tends to occur around the southern coasts of England and Wales. The life-cycle of this species involves several periods annually when their flight muscles atrophy, and consequently for up to nine or ten months of the year black-necked grebes are virtually flightless, the longest period without flight for any flying bird. However, prior to migration, these muscles expand, and this species is capable of flights of several thousand miles when necessary.

Migration continued apace during July, and good numbers of migrant waders included up to 180 **dunlin**, 120 **curlew**, 47 **golden plover** and 42 **sanderling**. Migrants also included up to 16 **green sandpiper**, 15 **snipe**, 13 **knot**, nine **common sandpiper**, eight each of **black-tailed godwit** and **greenshank**, and smaller numbers of **grey plover**, **whimbrel** and **ruff**. Highlights were a **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm on the 31st, a **curlew sandpiper** on the Beach Reserve on the 25th and several sightings of **wood sandpiper** later in the month, with four present on Harbour Farm on the 28th. Raptors included the usual **marsh harrier**, with four at Castle Water on the 7th and occasional **hobby** and **peregrine**, with two of the latter on the Beach Reserve on the 22nd, while waterfowl included an unseasonal **red-breasted merganser** on the quarry from the 9th to the 12th, and a **garganey** offshore on the 29th. Hirundines trickled through throughout the month, with a maximum of 200 **sand martin** over the Beach Reserve on the 10th, 150 **swallow** over Harbour Farm on the 22nd and 35 **house martin** over Castle Water on the 7th. **Swift** passage in the first half of the month culminated in a count of 150 on Harbour Farm on the 18th. Passerine highlight was undoubtedly a **serin** which was present on Harbour Farm on the 12th, while other notable sightings included two **turtle dove** at Castle Water on the 7th and 17th, a count of 22 **bearded tit** at Castle Water on the 7th, three **raven** on Harbour Farm on the same date and small numbers of **yellow wagtail** and **wheat-ear** throughout.

Moth numbers definitely 'caught up' during July, with up to 70 species in the trap at Lime



Kiln Cottage. Rarities included **starry pearl** and **bordered ermel**, but the star was a **bright wave** on the 7th, only the second reserve record for this red data book species. Similarly, butterfly counts looked much healthier during the month, with the highlights being **marbled white**, **brown argus** and even several records of **clouded yellow**, while dragonflies included the year's first **emperor** and **migrant hawker**. Uncommon invertebrates recorded during July included the weevil *Limobius mixtus*, the brush-horned sand-beetle *Orthocerus clavicornis* and the 'true bugs' *Megalonotus praetextatus* and *Odontoscelis lineola*. The highlight however was the Red Data Book fly *Miltogramma germari*, found on Castle Farm on the 25th, the first reserve record. Plants in flower this month included **sea-heath**, **marsh mallow** and **strawberry clover**.

August 2014

A regular feature of the reserve at this time of the year is **whinchat**. This species breeds all the way from Europe to western Asia and winters in Africa, and though it is fairly common throughout most of this range, its has decreased dramatically in Britain, with numbers halving between 1995 and 2008, possibly due to agricultural intensification. It has now all but gone as a breeding species from the south and east of Britain, only being seen here as a migrant in spring and particularly autumn. The scientific name of this species is *Saxicola rubetra*, which means 'little rock dweller', a reference to its preference for open, rock-strewn ground during the breeding season.

A bumper crop of waders during August as passage movement continued. Numbers were provided by 600 **lapwing**, 250 **dunlin**, 240 **golden plover** and, 218 **curlew**, while counts of 160 **ringed plover** on Flat Beach on 23rd and 17 **whimbrel** on the new saltmarsh on the 4th were also notable. Other migrants included up to 28 **black-tailed godwit**, 26 **sanderling** and 17 each of **knot** and **green sandpiper**, with smaller numbers of **little ringed plover**, **common sandpiper**, **ruff** and **avocet**. Highlights were up to four **curlew sandpiper** at Castle Water on the 26th and Flat Beach on the 28th, thee **little stint** (Harbour Farm on the 7th and Flat Beach on the 16th), two **wood sandpiper** on Ternery Pool on the 8th and **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm on the 14th and Flat Beach on the 22nd. Still a few terns around during the month, particularly on Flat Beach, with peak counts of 120 **Sandwich tern**, 100+ **common tern** and small numbers of **little tern**, while two **black tern** were over the new saltmarsh on the 14th. The presence of feeding terns offshore presumably attracted the attention of the two **Arctic skua** which were seen here on the 21st. As with the waders, lots of



evidence of passerine movement during August. Top Hirundine counts during the month included 300 **house martin** on the 8th and 22nd, 80 **sand martin** on the 28th and 45 **swallow** on the 1st. Good numbers of **yellow wagtail** on the Beach Reserve included 200 on the 21st, while the peak count of **wheatear** was 22 on the 16th. Some high counts of **starling** during August peaked with 1000 on Harbour Farm on the 22nd, while up to 160 **linnet** were present around the reserve late in the month. Passerine highlights were a

common redstart at the River Mouth and a **spotted flycatcher** near the view-point, both on the 28th.

Notable moths during August included the macros **crescent striped**, **large thorn** and **Jersey tiger**, and the micros **long-legged tabby**, **saltmarsh grass veneer** and **marbled yellow pearl**, while several **humming-bird hawk-moth** frequented the Lime Kiln Buddleia during the month as well. The other invertebrates of note were the 'true bug' *Megalonotus praetextatus*, the horsefly *Hybomitra ciureai* and several sightings of **clouded yellow**. Plants in flower included **least lettuce**, **red hemp-nettle**, **Babington's orache** and **purple loosestrife**.



September 2014

These days, **little egret** is a familiar site on the reserve, particularly feeding in the channels on the new saltmarsh or wading on Flat Beach, and in recent years up to 100 of these white herons have been counted roosting at Castle Water. This was not always the case however. The first sightings in Britain were not until the 1950s, and at Rye Harbour not until 1986, and even up until 25 years ago, the presence of a little egret in Britain would have been guaranteed to attract excited 'twitchers'. Little egret is a widespread and common breeder through out the northern hemisphere, but up until the first half of the 20th century, the closest birds to Britain were found in southern Europe and North Africa. Since then, however, breeding populations have spread north, and the first nesting in Britain occurring in Dorset in 1996 and in Sussex in 2001. The species has bred at sites quite close to the reserve, and hopefully will decide to set up home here in the future.

Wader highlights during September were two **little stint** on Flat Beach Level on the 13th and 19th and regular sightings of **curlew sandpiper**, with four here on several dates. Apart from this, the reserve played host to the usual fare of autumn passage waders, including species such as **knot**, **little ringed plover**, **greenshank**, **common** and **green sandpiper**, **whimbrel** and **grey plover**, with the largest numbers provided by **oystercatcher**, **golden plover**, **curlew** and **lapwing**. Notable waterfowl sightings during the month included a roost of 34 **little egret** on Narrow Pit on the 30th and six **pintail** on Flat Beach Level on the 18th. A good range of raptors during the month included **marsh harrier**, **merlin**, **hobby** and **peregrine**, with the best of the bunch an **osprey** over the Beach Reserve on the 4th. Still good numbers of hirundines moving through during September, a large passage on 6th including an estimated 5000 **swallow**, 600 **house martin** and 200 **sand martin**. There were also large numbers of **meadow pipit** and **yellow wagtail** during the month, with 580 of the former on the Beach Reserve on the 20th and 300 of the latter here on the 1st, while 182 **pied wagtail** on the 29th was the largest ever count on the reserve. Other notable sightings included small groups of **tree pipit** at Castle Water on the 6th and 12th, regular **wheatear** and small numbers of **whinchat** and **stonechat**. Passerine highlights were two **firecrest** at Ternery Pool on the 16th, and a **pied flycatcher** at Castle Water on the 13th.

Still some interesting moths around in September, encouraged by the run of good weather. Highlights were the macros **large thorn**, **oblique striped** and **white-point** and the micro **starry pearl**, while probable migrants included **rush veneer**, **European corn-borer**, **silver y** and **humming-bird hawk-moth**. Numbers of both butterflies and dragonflies/damselflies dropped off considerably during September, though the former included both **red admiral** and **painted lady** and the latter large numbers of **migrant hawk**. Other notable invertebrates included both **Roesel's** and **grey bush-cricket** and a couple of sightings of **false widow spider** at Lime Kiln Cottage. Also of interest, a **water vole** was seen at Castle Water on 13th. Plants in flower during September included **yellow-horned poppy**, **sea aster**, **marsh mallow** and **viper's bugloss**.

October 2014

Bird highlight during October was a **white-winged black tern** which was present at Castle Water from 12th of the month. This species breeds from south-eastern Europe to Australia, but in Britain it is a rare vagrant with only a handful of records each year, and this is only the second record at Rye Harbour in almost 20 years. The scientific name of this species is *Chlidonia leucopterus* which means 'swallow-like with bright white wings' referring to the pale wings which give the species its English name. This is one of the so-called 'marsh terns', which as the name suggests are usually associated with freshwater rather than coastal habitats.



Still a good range of waders present on the Beach Reserve during October. As usual numbers were provided by **golden plover**, **lapwing** and **curlew**, with smaller numbers of **dunlin**, **redshank**, **snipe** and **greenshank** and the odd **green sandpiper**, **knot**, **sanderling** and **ruff**. Best of the bunch were **little stint**, with regular sightings during the month, and at least three at Castle Water on the 22nd, and **spotted redshank**, with two on Harbour Farm on the 31st. Waterfowl highlights were a couple of sightings of **bittern** at Castle Water on the 28th and 30th, up to 18 **little egret** on Flat Beach level and up to four **pintail** at Castle Water. Offshore, 220 **gannet** were present on the 18th and **great skua** on the 18th and 22nd (two), while 14 **little gull** were on Flat Beach on the 30th. Raptors included the usual suspects, with regular sightings of **marsh harrier** **kestrel**, and **sparrowhawk**, the occasional **merlin** and the odd **peregrine**. A nice flush of passerines during October included several notable species. These included at least 12 **ring ouzel** at Castle Water on the 12th, a **firecrest** here on the 30th and a **Lapland bunting** on the Beach Reserve on the 18th, while Castle Water also played host to three **brambling** on the 16th and a **treecreeper** (something of a reserve rarity) on the 30th. The highlight however was a **yellow-browed warbler** at Castle Water on the 18th, only the sixth reserve record and the first since 2001.

It seems to be a good year for **clouded yellow**, with several sightings during the month, including a mating pair on Harbour Farm on the 22nd, while a **red admiral** was seen on the Beach Reserve on the same date, and **painted lady** at Castle Water on the 27th. Other late-season invertebrates included several sightings of **common darter**, a **buff-tailed bumblebee** on Harbour Farm on the 22nd, and a **humming-bird hawk moth** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 11th. Uncommon species included the 'true-bug' *Megalonotus sabulicola* and the wonderfully named **indolent ant** from the Beach Reserve on the 2nd. Plants in flower included both **greater** and **lesser sea-spurrey**, **hawkweed oxtongue** and **red clover**.



November 2014

This month saw regular sightings of an immature **spoonbill** on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm. This exotic looking species has actually been an annual visitor to the reserve since the 1970s, so it's not what you would call rare, but there's something about the long flattened bill and stately stance that gets many birders, including me, quite excited! This species breeds all the way from Europe to Asia, with around 5000 pairs in north-western Europe, mainly in the Netherlands and Spain. In 2010 it re-established itself as a breeding species in the UK when six pairs bred in Norfolk, the first colony here for over 300 years. Most British records are of passage or wintering birds, with around 75 recorded per year, and the distribution of records at Rye Harbour reflects this, with birds present between late February and late November.

Waders continue to be a feature on the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm with the numbers provided by up to 3000 **golden plover**, over 1000 **lapwing**, around 400 **oystercatcher** and 130 **curlew**. Best of the bunch were 25 **knot** on Flat Beach on the 19th, 17 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 29th, two **greenshank** on Flat Beach Level on the 6th, a **spotted redshank** on Harbour Farm on the 30th and a **purple sandpiper**, something of a reserve 'rarity', on Ternery Pool and Flat Beach throughout the month. High waterfowl counts late in the month, perhaps presaging cold weather to come, included 400 **wigeon**,

155 **shoveler** and 100+ **gadwall**, while notable sightings included **bittern** at Castle Water on the 20th and 29th, a **great white egret** on Harbour Farm on the 5th and 16th, four **red-breasted merganser** offshore on the 6th and up to seven **pintail** at Castle Water. Raptors included regular **marsh harrier** at Castle Water and Harbour Farm and an immature **peregrine** on the Beach Reserve mid-month, while there were several sightings of **barn owl** at Castle Water. Also at Castle Water the **white-winged black tern** was still present until the 4th, while three **Sandwich tern** were on the shore on the 8th. Passerines included probably the last of our **swallows** for this year, with two passing over on the 7th, single **wheatear** on the Beach Reserve the 1st and 3rd, and three **redwing** on Castle Farm also on the 3rd. The highlights during November were a **Lapland bunting** over the Beach Reserve on the 6th, **Dartford warbler** on Harbour Farm on the 29th, and a **snow bunting** on the Beach Reserve

on the 24th, while a pair of **raven** on Harbour Farm on the 22nd and over 100 **skylark** on the new saltmarsh on the 30th were also of note.

As might be expected, invertebrate sightings were few and far between this month. However, periods of warmer weather did result in a couple of sightings of **red admiral** on the 6th and the 22nd, while the micro moths **narrow-winged grey** and **light brown apple moth** were both recorded at Lime Kiln Cottage. Other invertebrates during November included the tiny white woodlouse ***Platyarthrus hoffmannseggii*** and the metallic blue ground-beetle **Prussian plate-jaw** from the Beach Reserve. At the end of the month there were still several "summer" flowers in bloom, including **viper's bugloss**, **sea mayweed**, **common stork'sbill** and of course a profusion of **gorse**.

December 2014

One species I think of as a real harbinger of winter at Rye Harbour is the **smew**. This small duck belongs to a group known as 'saw bills' due to the serrated edge to their bills, and includes species such as red-breasted merganser and goosander. In Britain it is a winter visitor from Scandinavia and Russia, with small numbers occurring mainly in the south-east. Females and immatures have a grey body and a rusty red head and are usually referred to as 'red heads', while the males are superb looking birds, almost completely white with a black mask and back. Alternative names for this species include 'white-nun' (mainly referring to the males), 'smee' and 'vare wigeon', a name once used in parts of south-west England for the females and immatures whose heads were thought to resemble that of a weasel ('vare' apparently is an old name for weasel).

Wader numbers remained high during December, particularly on Flat Beach, with up to 2500 **golden plover** and 1000 **lapwing**, while up to 400 **curlew** were present on Harbour Farm late in the month. Notable species included single **jack snipe** on the Beach Reserve on the 8th and 15th, a **purple sandpiper** on the Quarry on the 7th and **spotted redshank** on Ternery Pool on the 8th, while 27 **ruff** at Castle Water on the 10th was a notably high count for this species. This month also saw several sightings of **bittern** at Castle Water, up to two **great white egret** on Harbour Farm and Narrow Pit (with up to 42 **little egret**), and a group of six **Bewick's swan** at Castle Water on the 6th. In addition, a **great northern diver** was present at the river mouth on the 25th and **smew** were seen on the 22nd at Castle Water and on the 26th on Harbour Farm. Raptors during the month included **marsh harrier** at Castle

Water and on Harbour Farm, and a couple of sightings each of **merlin**, over the Beach Reserve on the 8th and 16th, and **peregrine** over Rye Harbour Village and Harbour Farm on the 6th and 8th. As well as the usual **barn owl** at Castle Water, December also saw a couple of sightings of **short-eared owl** over the Beach Reserve on the 15th and 26th. Passerines included small numbers of **rock pipit** regularly around the saltmarsh at the eastern end of the reserve, several small flocks of **fieldfare** at Castle Water, with 70 on the 22nd, small groups of **bearded tit** and the occasional **chiffchaff**, also at Castle Water throughout the month, and a **raven** over Harbour Farm on the 17th. The highlight, however, were two **firecrest** near the hide at Castle Water on the 10th.

Little in the way of invertebrate records during December as might be expected, though a bit of stone turning on Flat Beach on 17th did turn up several **devil's coach horse** beetles, many **woodlouse spider** and the uncommon ground beetle ***Licinus punctulatus***, only the fourth reserve record.

Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 3,207 individuals from 227 species were recorded during 2014, 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 singleton on 14th July was the only record.

Salt-marsh grass veneer *Pediasia aridella* Nb - A total of 74 individuals were recorded on 10 dates between 23rd June and 9th August, with a maximum of 23 on 14th July.

Giant water veneer *Schoenobius gigantella* Nb - Recorded twice during 2014, with singles on the 23rd June and 25th July.

Marbled yellow pearl *Evergestis extimalis* Nb - One each on the 27th July and 17th August.

Starry pearl *Cynaeda dentalis* RDB (above)- A total of nine individuals on eight dates between 23rd June and 15th September. All records involved singletons except for two on 14th July.

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

Long-legged China-mark *Dolicharthria punctalis* Nb. Singles on 13th and 21st July.

Long-legged tabby *Synaphe punctalis* Nb - A total of 113 individuals on 11 dates between 21st June and 3rd August, with a maximum of 34 on 14th July.

Rosy-striped knot-horn *Oncocera semirubella* Nb - Thirteen trapped on seven dates between 25th and 30th July, with a maximum of three on 13th, 14th and 27th.

Gorse Knot-horn *Pempelia genistella* Na - The only record concerned one trapped on 27th July.

Bright wave *Idaea ochrata* RDB - One trapped on 6th July was the second reserve and third county record.

Oblique-striped *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb - One was trapped on 8th September.

Large thorn *Ennomos autumnaria* Nb - Singles trapped on 24th August and 4th September.

Pygmy footman *Eilema pygmaeola* RDB - Singletons trapped on four dates, 6th, 14th, 21st and 27th July.

Kent black arches *Meganola albula* Nb - Trapped on three dates: singles on 29th June and 13th July, and three on 14th July.

Sand dart *Agrotis ripae* Nb - One on 29th June was the only record.

White colon *Sideridis albicolon* (below) Nb - One was trapped on 19th May.

Shore wainscot *Mythimna litoralis* Nb - Trapped on seven dates between 1st June and 21st July. All involved singles apart from two each on 15th and 29th June and 21st July.

Reed dagger *Simyra albovenosa* Nb - Trapped on three dates, with singletons on 25th July and 3rd of August and two on 27th July.



Crescent striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb (left) - A total of 18 individuals were trapped on six dates between 25th July and 3rd August, with a maximum of six on 27th July.

Webb's wainscot *Archana sparganii* Nb - One trapped on 27th July.

Dotted fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis* Na - Singles trapped 29th June and 6th July.

Other notable invertebrates recorded during 2014 included:

Trichopterna cito (a money spider) RDB - Thirty-three individuals were taken in pitfall traps on Castle Farm between 1st April and 21st July. Rye Harbour is one of only three British sites for this species.

Lathys stigmatisata (a mesh-webbed spider) RDB - One was taken in a pitfall trap on the new shingle habitats on Harbour Farm between 13th and 28th April.

Haplodrassus minor (A running ground spider) RDB - Singles of this rare spider were found in pitfall traps on Harbour Farm between 25th May-8th June and 8th-26th June.

Phlegra fasciata (a jumping spider, right) RDB - One on shingle near the red-roofed hut on 18th May.

Pellenes tripunctatus (a jumping spider) RDB (above) - Two adult individuals were found on the Beach Reserve on 18th May: one near the Wader Pool Hide, the other at the River Mouth. Rye Harbour is one of only three British sites for this species.

Limobius mixtus (a weevil) RDB - Three records in the Barn Field during July 2014: three on the 10th, two on the 14th and one on the 21st.

Lixus scabricollis (a weevil, below) RDB - Singles were found on the Beach Reserve on four dates during 2014: 24th and 25th May, 19th June and 9th July.

Levels yellow-horned horsefly *Hybomitra ciureai* RDB - One on 8th July at Lime Kiln Cottage was the only record during 2014.

Miltogramma germari (a satellite fly) RDB - One was netted at Castle Water by Sussex Wildlife Trust ecologist Graeme Lyons on 25th July, the first record for the reserve.

Wagneria gagatea (a parasitic fly) RDB - An individual caught near the viewpoint on 12th May was the first reserve record.



Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2014 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, the Sussex Wildlife Trust ecologist, Graeme Lyons carried out an NVC survey of Castle Water and Castle Farm, monthly fish surveys were carried out by Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority from April to September and bat surveys were conducted at Camber Castle on two nights. All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 597,504 records of around 4,800 species in the SSSI.

Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer work-parties took place on the first and third Tuesday of the month from July to October, involving construction of rabbit/predator fencing, 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, 13 French volunteers visited during July, spending two days cutting willows at Castle Water. We also held a Beach Cleans in March and December to clear the rubbish blown in off the sea, and several beach surveys to monitor litter on the shore.

Other management during 2014 included the cutting and removal of grass on 2.6ha of Harbour Farm to encourage bumblebees, replacement of fencing destroyed by the December 2013 surge tide on Flat Beach and Harbour and improvement of the predator fences surrounding Flat Beach. 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.

Ten goats were managed on the Beach Reserve, Harbour Farm and Castle Water to control the growth of Bramble, Grey Willow and other scrub on shingle and the margins of pits and reedbeds. In addition, 47 Herdwick sheep belonging to Sussex Wildlife Trust were grazed on Harbour Farm to help control common ragwort, thistles, brambles and scrub and 25 Shetland sheep at Castle Water during the winter months as part of ongoing bumblebee management.

Interpretation

Getting information about the Nature Reserve to visitors and organisations is achieved through a variety of media - leaflets, booklets, posters, information boards, information centre, a monthly column in our local paper the Rye Observer, 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 85 Guided Walks, booked in 15 visiting groups, gave three illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle for English Heritage on four days with 145 people entering, guided 19 school groups and took our Nature Reserve display to three events.

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

www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/ryeharbour

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

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

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

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2014

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

Number of volunteer hours ...

Work-parties	310.5
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,362.5
Beach Watch/Patrolling	132
Other	96
Total	2,901 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 2014 were:

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

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 2014 were;

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

Nature Reserve Staff and Address.

Sussex Wildlife Trust provides the Management Committee with four staff who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve under the guidance of the Conservation Sub-committee. The 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: barryyates@sussexwt.org.uk office: rhnroffice@sussexwt.org.uk

web site: <https://www.facebook.com/RyeHarbourNR>

Finance

The Sussex Wildlife Trust manages the accounts of the Nature Reserve and the detailed accounts of the Committee for 2014/15 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.



Appendix 2

Income and Expenditure Accounts Year-End 31st March 2015

	2014/15 £	2013/14 £
<u>INCOME</u>		
Grants and Contributions		
East Sussex County Council	5,000	5,000
Rother District Council	1,000	-
Icklesham PC	750	350
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve		
Staff	29,776	19,776
Other projects	25,447	43,278
Environment Agency	30,000	30,000
English Heritage	2,000	1,333
Sussex Wildlife Trust	13,308	13,074
Environment Stewardsdship (HLS)	41,957	38,636
Wetland Trust	-	-
Charitable Trusts/Donations	1,806	- 2,590
Total Grants & Contributions	151,044	148,858
Other Income		
Events and Education	5829	5,352
Sundry Income	4950	6,911
Total Income	161,823	161,120

EXPENDITURE

Staffing Costs	120,996	119,264
Reserve Management	10,150	6,690
Information Centre & Interpretation	1,495	6,898
Projects	5,180	28,735
Transport	604	905
Environment Agency Lease	1,575	3,150
Educational Visits	2,038	890
Training		547
Administration & Communication	3,300	3,043
Insurance	-	-
Vehicle Costs	13,842	5,712
Depreciation	7,566	4,998
	166,746	180,832
SURPLUS/DEFECIT	- 4,923	- 19,712

Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Pairs										
LITTLE GREBE	6	3	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	3
GREAT CRESTED GREBE	3	3	8	4	4	4	7	4	5	6
CORMORANT	134	130	150	146	119	123	113	161	115	167
GREY HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	3	3	5	3	3	6	6	6	8	4
GREYLAG GOOSE	10	10	7	9	10	12	8	7	9	11
CANADA GOOSE	15	14	10	7	9	5	5	3	4	6
SHELDUCK	1	3	4	2	1	3	2	1	1	2
GADWALL	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
SHOVELER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TUFTED DUCK	16	7	4	14	3	10	11	9	13	9
AVOCET	1	9	10	13	11	20	11	30	24	28
OYSTERCATCHER	24	24	28	28	25	33	31	23	27	28
RINGED PLOVER	34	30	39	33	28	25	25	19	26	25
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER	0	2	3	2	5	3	5	4	7	6
LAPWING	31	33	40	37	34	33	29	29	28	22
REDSHANK	12	16	15	18	19	13	19	12	19	20
MEDITERRANEAN GULL	37	75	40	63	90	185	100	55	36	1
fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL	40	50	15	39	64	250	50	<10	1	0
BLACK-HEADED GULL	1500	2000	1400	1600	1600	2600	1700	1900	1700	1200
fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL	1900	1900	1400	2200	2200	4500	100	1900	1700	1200
HERRING GULL	4	5	10	14	30	38	41	21	7	6
SANDWICH TERN	200+	500	400	350	500	750	850	600	120	280
fledged SANDWICH TERN	300	500	400	400	600	1000	50	<10	0	0
COMMON TERN	153	169	175	150	232	341	235	149	79	90
fledged COMMON TERN	200	200	100	100	200	500	50	0	24	45
LITTLE TERN	18	21	15	0	0	7	7	13	11	10
fledged LITTLE TERN	20	9	0	0	0	7	2	0	1	1
SAND MARTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YELLOW WAGTAIL	6	2	6	7	4	2	2	0	1	1
WHEATEAR	13	11	13	12	12	5	3	4	5	5
CETTI'S WARBLER (SINGING)	8	9	18	13	15	15	14	11	7	8
SEDGE WARBLER	48	50	53	47	65	42	42	45	43	23
REED WARBLER	206	201	227	250	250	250	250	200	200	200
LESSER WHITETHROAT	11	10	11	12	20	12	9	12	16	9
WHITETHROAT	58	58	59	37	70	53	46	39	34	34
SKYLARK	32	37	41	40	33	30	32	35	34	26
REED BUNTING	77	59	49	58	52	54	55	54	37	36
CORN BUNTING	2	2	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	0

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

Monthly peak bird counts in during 2014 - Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	26	20	6	0	0	7	4	2	26	26	25	33
GREAT CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	11	14	22	2	17	14	14	19	21	34	16	28
CORMORANT	62	246	117	281	275	348	353	370	318	59	8	71
GREY HERON	2	6	1	0	0	0	3	2	5	8	7	3
BITTERN	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
LITTLE EGRET	28	9	13	9	5	10	9	36	34	27	15	42
MUTE SWAN	48	38	23	59	61	84	81	91	58	24	6	9
GREYLAG GOOSE	12	18	121	81	44	132	122	144	1600	75	192	128
CANADA GOOSE	30	22	24	14	2	39	0	0	225	26	173	73
SHELDUCK (inc. estuary)	108	34	116	63	29	29	4	9	8	12	8	24
WIGEON	326	355	150	20	0	0	0	5	68	444	400	1100
GADWALL	485	350	121	32	6	42	25	43	114	157	14	274
TEAL	587	374	56	17	0	0	6	25	98	361	104	379
MALLARD	611	400	40	50	44	115	150	149	171	284	138	227
PINTAIL	4	49	9	0	1	0	0	0	6	6	6	9
SHOVELER	297	195	119	27	6	9	12	5	30	119	22	120
POCHARD	87	17	6	0	2	3	4	17	19	24	27	1
TUFTED DUCK	209	148	144	100	61	104	48	48	49	65	68	143
SCAUP	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LONG-TAILED DUCK	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COMMON SCOTER (Rye Bay)	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GOLDENEYE	9	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
SMEW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
RUDDY DUCK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COOT	471	366	62	40	97	244	336	537	490	545	107	366
OYSTERCATCHER	600	450	194	210	171	171	110	302	550	43	740	4
AVOCET	0	5	16	44	40	47	31	26	8	4	0	1
RINGED PLOVER	43	25	18	9	141	26	19	160	68	3	34	0
GOLDEN PLOVER	3300	2400	482	38	0	0	47	280	210	300	3000	2500
GREY PLOVER	92	84	8	6	5	0	2	0	2	0	0	14
LAPWING	2900	2111	14	21	33	80	900	600	787	1248	1043	1000
KNOT	118	80	30	12	10	1	13	17	11	1	25	4
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	90	240	19	0	5	0	42	26	0	1	0	22
DUNLIN (inc. estuary)	600	600	500	86	98	0	180	400	122	80	117	90
RUFF	3	37	25	0	0	0	4	4	5	6	12	27
SNIPE	33	70	10	12	0	0	18	12	0	28	1	86
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	0	2	12	0	47	13	8	28	7	0	0	0
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	0	6	5	36	26	0	7	0	1	4	4	0
WHIMBREL	0	0	0	51	32	2	8	17	4	0	0	0
CURLEW	500	430	97	33	1	6	120	218	290	350	130	400
REDSHANK (inc. estuary)	192	325	72	19	10	9	116	24	74	212	152	34
GREENSHANK	1	1	1	3	2	3	12	4	6	8	2	0
TURNSTONE	32	70	8	2	17	15	36	21	15	5	4	12

Appendix 4 - School Visits.

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

Please look at our webpage www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/environmental-education/education-centres/rye-harbour-education-centre which includes links to educational programmes, health & safety information, booking form and worksheets that can be downloaded.

Programmes of study

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

Cost

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

Wet weather facilities

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

Toilets

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

Food

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

Equipment

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

Clothing

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

Health and Safety

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

Appendix 5 - Notes For The Guidance Of Visitors.

A) Any society or individual wanting to visit the 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 five bird-watching hides are 4 km, 1½ km., 1 km., 1km. 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.

