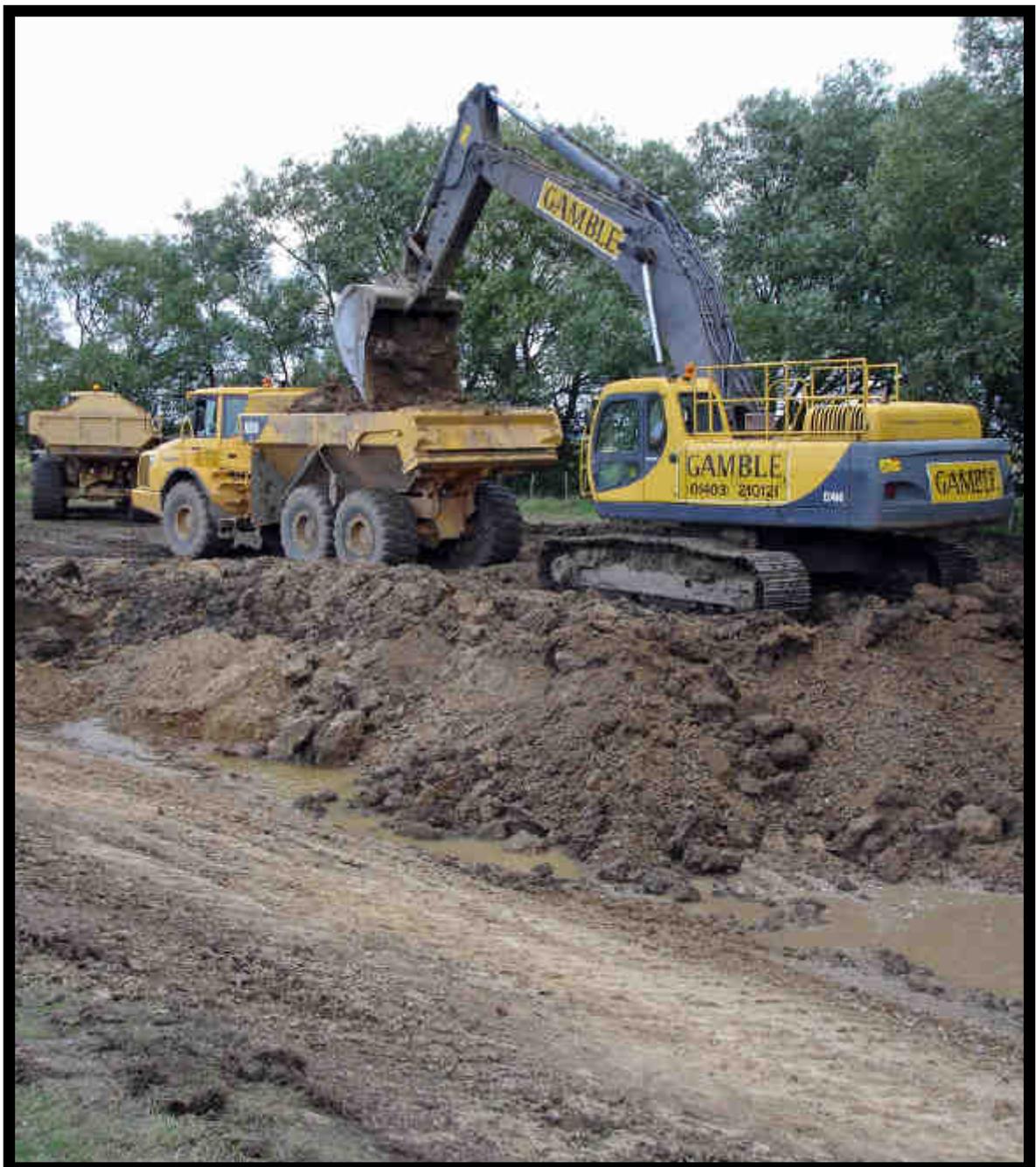


Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2006



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2006

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Cover photo shows the excavation in progress at Castle Water.

The Nature Reserve address is:

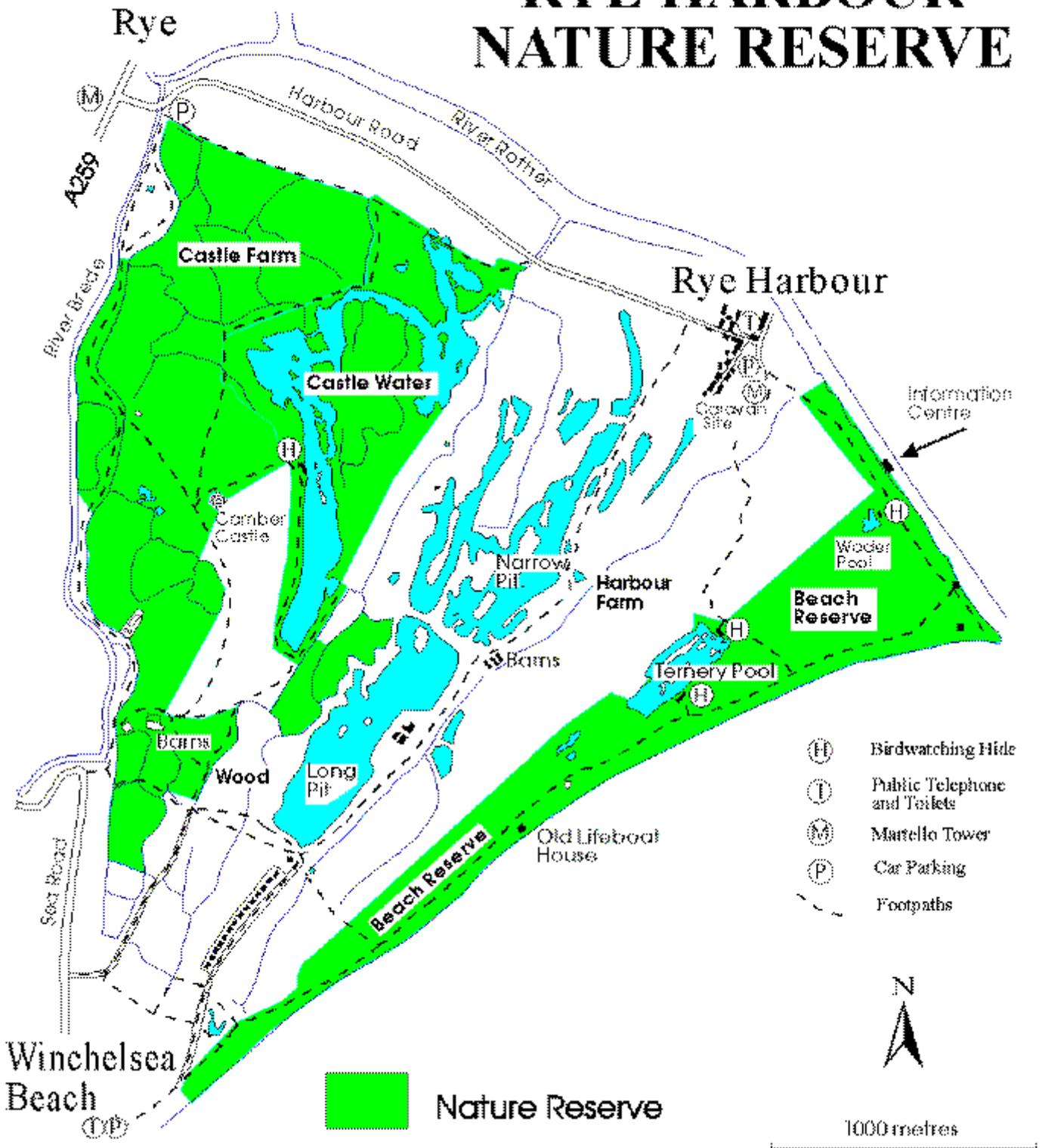
2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU

telephone: 01797 223862.

e-mail: yates@clara.net

web site: www.wildrye.info

RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

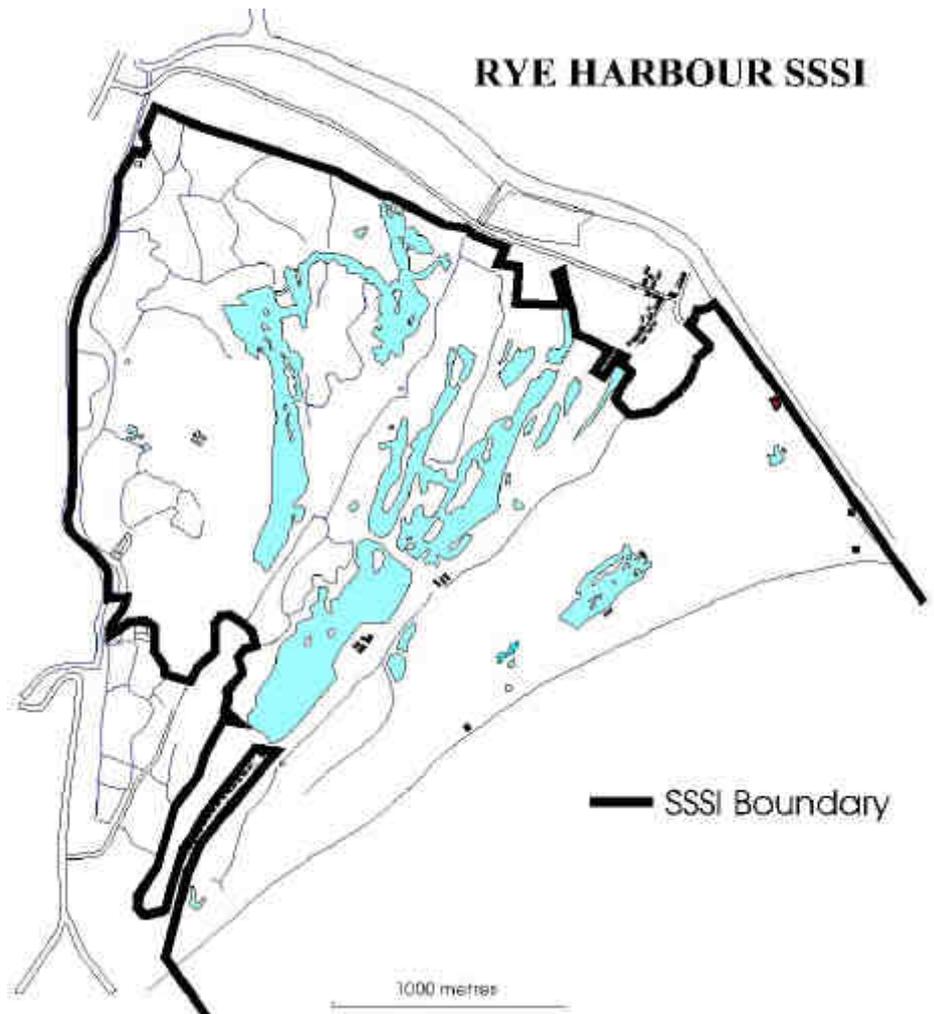


The Nature Reserve

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 appointed a Management Committee to administer the Reserve on its behalf. This was the beginning of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Since then further land has been added by agreement with neighbouring landowners and the Management Committee is hopeful that further areas of the SSSI will also become part of the Reserve. In August 1992 the Sussex Wildlife Trust purchased the 77 ha. of Castle Water and this was incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve in 1993, bringing the number of landowners to four and the area to 326 ha. In 2006 the SSSI was combined with eight other local SSSIs to form the 9,000ha. 'Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI'



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

Climate

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

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

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

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

The driest year was 1998 with 592mm.

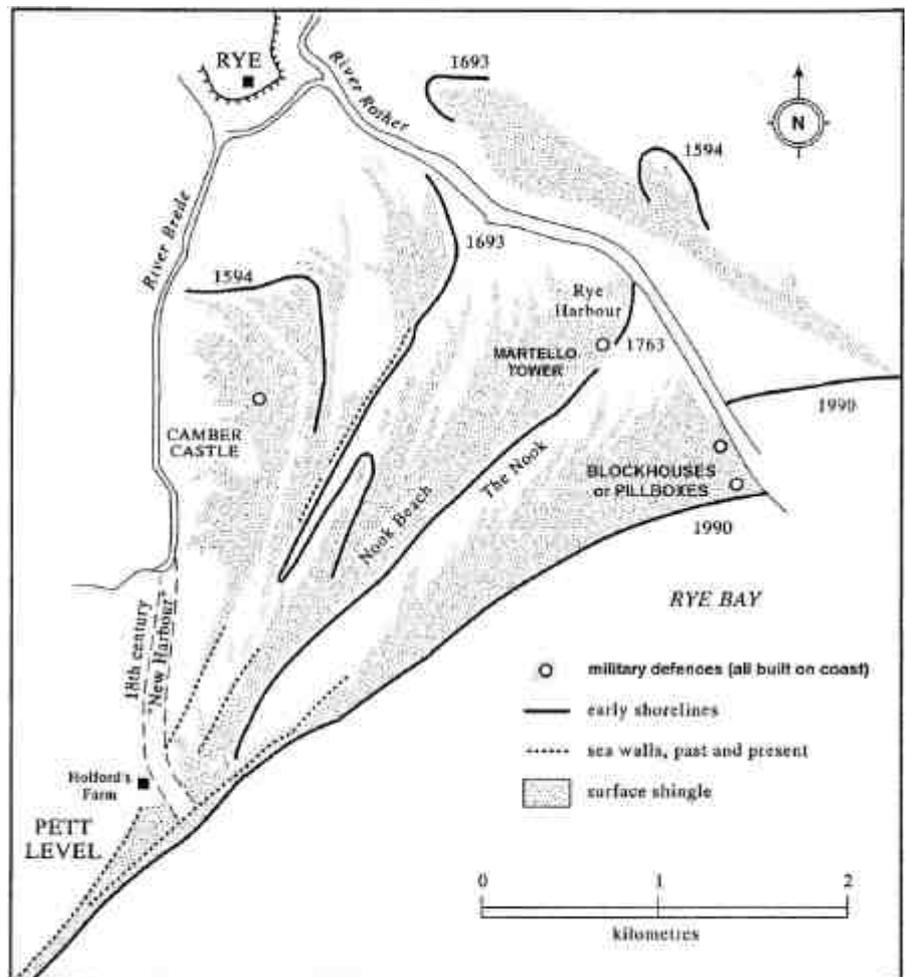
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

The driest month was August 1995 with just 1mm.

and the wettest month was October 1987 with 275.5mm.

GEOMORPHOLOGY

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



Habitats

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

SALINITY - from fresh water to brackish to saline.

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

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

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

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

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

Intertidal

At low tide there is an extensive area of sand and mud with shallow pools that is continually changing in structure and form, depending on tides and weather. The area varies with the tidal cycle, with about 105 ha. at mean low water. This is an important feeding and roosting site for waders, terns and gulls. The exposed nature of the foreshore means that few plants can maintain a foothold, but there is a rich invertebrate fauna living below the surface, for example, Sea Mouse, Baltic Tellin, 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, for example, the Beadlet Anemone (above), 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

Along the River Rother, at the higher part of the intertidal zone there has developed a 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. This type of habitat was once extensive, covering much of the river levels and Romney Marshes, but due to flood defences is now restricted to a very narrow strip along the river. Only 5 ha. lies within the LNR, but at the Wader Pool a further 0.75 ha. was created by controlling the access of the sea into a prepared scrape. This has been successfully colonised by many saltmarsh species including Sea Blite and *Corophium volutator*, a small shrimp that is the favoured food of Redshank.



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 (left). Where the grazing is reduced the tussocky grass is home to many 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. Although these areas are generally species poor, they provide valuable areas for some species, such as Grey Partridge, Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow and Mute Swan.

Drainage Ditches

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

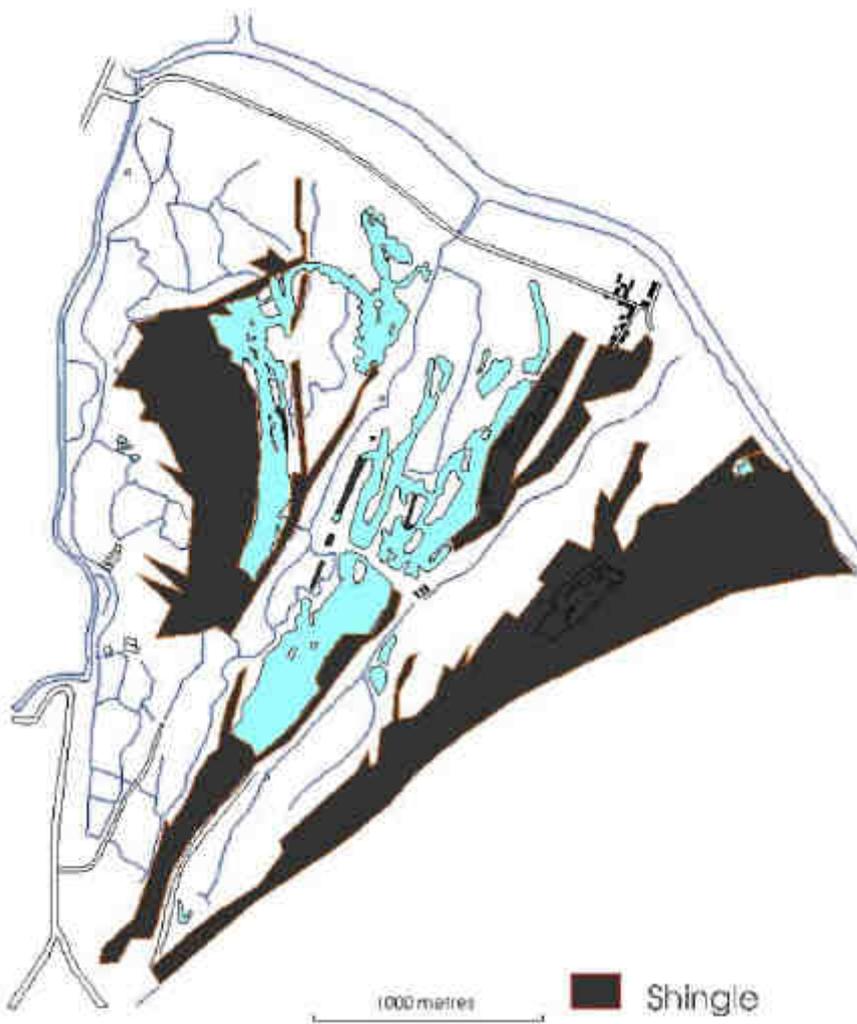


Shingle Ridges

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 recently discovered here as a new species, 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 *Ceutorhynchus 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 Pygmy 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 (right), 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.

Pits

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

New pits are rapidly colonised by a rich variety of aquatic flora and fauna but, as the vegetation develops around the margin, some of the pioneering species are lost, for example the three rare beetles Spangled Button Beetle (left), *Cercyon bifenestratus* and *Heterocerus 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 the endangered Medicinal Leech.



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

Marsh

here 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 (right) and Sedge Warblers, Bearded Tit, Water Rail and Bittern as well as many species of invertebrates (the notable moths of the reedbeds are; *Schoenobius gigantella* a pyralid, Reed Dagger, Flame Wainscot and Silky Wainscot).



Sand

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

Scrub

The development of scrub is restricted by management, especially by grazing and cultivation. There are areas of Gorse, Hawthorn, Bramble, Elder, Blackthorn (right, flowers) and Sea Buckthorn scrub at Castle Water, Castle Farm and the Beach Reserve. These are important sites for invertebrates and birds, including nesting Linnets.



Woodland

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

Species And Conservation

With this great variety of habitats it is not surprising that there is such a wealth of wildlife on the Nature Reserve.

The Beach Reserve is recognised as having one of the finest examples of coastal shingle vegetation in the country. Particularly in late May and June the beach is transformed by a colourful array of flowers, the striking Sea Kale, and Viper's Bugloss, the delicate Yellow Horned Poppy and carpets of Sea Pea to name only a few. Along the river's edge is a good example of tidal saltmarsh vegetation and going inland a little, the gravel pits and drainage dykes provide more variety in the form of waterside and aquatic plant life. Around Camber Castle there are the unique ancient shingle ridges that have a very specialised flora. In all more than 430 species of flowering plants have so far been recorded on the Nature Reserve, including 24 scarce species and one endangered species, Least Lettuce.

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. Nearly 2,500 species have been noted so far, including 220 Notable species and 60 Red Data Book (RDB). However, there remains much to learn and there is a lack of detailed knowledge about most of the rare and notable species.

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

However, Rye Harbour is most famous for its bird life and in particular its sea-bird colonies. As well as the rare Little Tern, this includes Common Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black-headed Gull and more recently Mediterranean Gull. In recent years the populations of these and other ground nesting birds (such as Ringed Plover, 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-fox electric fencing enclosures and the enlistment of about 80 voluntary wardens. So far more than 270 species of birds have been recorded on the Reserve, of which over 70 have nested. Apart from the interest of the breeding birds, Rye Harbour is also a good place to observe bird migration, while in winter large numbers of wildfowl and waders gather to take full advantage of the relatively undisturbed Reserve area. A complete list of species recorded on the Nature Reserve is available from the Reserve address and on our web site www.wildRye.info

The Rye Harbour SSSI and Local Nature Reserve constitute 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

(figures in red are only a guide - they are several years old)

Sites	British Status				Total Species	Records
	Common	Local	Notable	Rare		
Rye Harbour LNR	2,387	626	271	106	3,685	66,042
Rye Harbour SSSI	2,697	713	310	145	4,117	121,076
Rye Bay	4,416	1,205	565	192	6,378	220, 200

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 4 of this report.

Information Centres

The Nature Reserve has an unmanned Information Kiosk situated in the Martello Tower car park at Rye Harbour. Some information is displayed on the outside, with forthcoming events and 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 2.15 people passing Lime Kiln Cottage (see table below). There are several other access points to the Nature Reserve, so this is not the entire picture of visitor use.

	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage
JAN	3696	7945
FEB	3176	6828
MAR	3778	8122
APR	6316	13579
MAY	4994	10736
JUN	6280	13501
JUL	6965	14974
AUG	7501	16126
SEP	6675	14351
OCT	5728	12315
NOV	3408	7327
DEC	3178	6833
TOTALS	61692	132638

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

Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre	Hours open	Adults Entering	Children Entering	Total Entering
JAN	162	850	147	997
FEB	134	634	130	764
MAR	168	678	73	751
APR	187	1481	381	1862
MAY	172	1000	260	1260
JUN	184	1209	164	1373
JUL	200	1260	249	1509
AUG	207	1555	496	2051
SEP	207	1507	169	1676
OCT	204	1595	351	1946
NOV	168	771	161	932
DEC	158	706	138	844
TOTALS	2149	13246	2719	15965

Birdwatching Hides

There are four 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 and also has a sound induction loop fitted. Similarly, the Parkes Hide was replaced in 2004 with funding from the Brett Environmental Trust and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

The **Colin Green** Memorial Hide, not far from the car park, provides excellent views of the Wader Pool and the shingle beach beyond. This hide is accessible to most wheelchairs.

The **Castle Water** Hide 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 it is a challenging route!

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 2006 the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre was opened to the public by a team of volunteers. It was opened for 2,149 hours and provided information about the FRIENDS, the Reserve and its wildlife to 15,965 people.

Camber Castle is also opened to the public by volunteers from 2pm-5pm every Saturday and Sunday throughout the months of July, August and September, plus bank holidays between March and Oct. In 2006 it was opened by volunteers for 114 hours, with 1196 visitors entering.

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 2006 there were 1,334 subscriptions, representing about 1,762 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2006 amounted to £16,550 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £4,240 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme.

Publications

The following reports and checklists are available as downloads from the reserve website at www.wildRye.info

Booklets

Rye Harbour Booklet (1 MB)

RX Wildlife Booklet (1MB)

Leaflets

Camber Castle (500KB)

Three Circular Walks (600KB)

Rye Harbour's Little Terns (275KB)

Two Bays leaflets

Camber Castle circular Walk

Checklists

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 (6MB)

The Birds and other vertebrates of Rye Harbour (4MB)

The Grasshoppers and Crickets of Rye Harbour (1.2MB)

The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Rye Harbour (2.9MB)

Management Reports

Nature Reserve Management Plan 2005-09 (10MB)

2004 Annual Report (14MB)

2005 Annual Report (900KB)

The following publications and sales goods are available from the Nature Reserve address (on receipt of the correct payment and a large A5 (10"x 7") 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	free	60p
RX Wildlife Booklet - wildlife sites from Hastings to Romney Marsh	free	60p
A 2.5 mile walk taking in Camber Castle and part of the Nature Reserve	free	24p
Annual Report - copies of some previous year's reports.	£2.00	£1
Birds and other vertebrates of Rye Harbour – report summarising the occurrence of all species (also available as a download from www.wildRye.info)	£4.00	£1
Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour – report summarising the occurrence of all species (also available as a download from www.wildRye.info)	£4.00	£1
Colour Postcards – Marsh Frog, Rye Harbour 1929, 4 birds, 4 flowers, Shore at Low Tide, Pett Level Shore, Black Hut, shingle, Groynes, Camber Castle, Camber Castle artist's impression.	20p	24p per order
Writing Paper with envelopes - pack of ten with Little Tern and Yellow Horned Poppy illustration.	£3	60p
Notelets - pack of ten with Nature Reserve illustration.	£2	60p
Illustrated Tea Towel	£3	60p
Illustrated Mug	£3	(not posted)
Oven Mitt	£5	£1
Note Pad	£1.50p	60p
Coasters	£2	60p
Car Sticker	50p	24p
Pen	£1	40p
Pencil	30p	40p
Eraser	50p	40p
Keyring	80p	40p
Bookmark	£1	40p
Fleece – dark blue with embroidered logo, full length zip XL, L, M S.	£25	£2.50
Sweatshirt - dark blue with embroidered logo, XL, L, M S.	£15	£2.50
Polo Shirt - dark blue with embroidered logo (S,M,L,XL)	£10	£1.50
T-shirt - white with logo, XL, L, M S.	£5	£1.50
Sounds CD – sounds recorded by Peter Philpot	£6	40p
Virtual Tour CD – to run on PC (not fully on Mac)	£6	40p
Archive CD - all the Friends Newsletters plus many reports, species lists, photos	£6	40p

Wildlife Summary

The following is a monthly summary of the wildlife seen by, or reported to the Nature Reserve for the recording area in 2006. This area covers the whole of the Rye Harbour SSSI, the villages of Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach, the Wood, Camber Sands, the River Rother up to Rye and the Sea.

More details can be found on our web site and in a series of five-yearly species reports “The Birds and other Vertebrates of Rye Harbour” and “The Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour”.

January 2006

Bird highlight of the month was a **Raven** which was present briefly on the Beach Reserve on the 30th before flying off to the east. This is only the sixth record of this spectacular species on the reserve, and the first since 1999. A close second however was a flock of eight **Whooper Swan** which flew over Castle Water on the 3rd, the first record since 1995!



Despite the cold weather during January, there were still signs of the coming spring on the reserve. **Grey Partridge**, **Mistle Thrush** and **Song Thrush** could all be heard singing from the first week of the month, pairs of **Oystercatcher** were staking out territories on the Beach Reserve, and **Great Crested Grebe** could be seen displaying on the pits. However, it was still our winter visitors which constituted the main interest during January. Winter water birds included at least two **Bittern**, nine **Smew**, and two **Goldeneye**, while Castle Water played host to **Slavonian Grebe** (which commuted between here and the Long Pit) **Black-necked Grebe** on the 22nd, up to three **Scaup** and a superb male **Pintail** on the 31st. In addition, a flock of seven **White-fronted Goose** (above) flew over Rye Harbour Village on the 22nd. Waders included the occasional **Green Sandpiper**, **Knot**, **Jack Snipe** and up to 15 **Ruff**, while numbers were provided by over 2000 **Lapwing**, 280 **Dunlin** and following on from the good numbers at the end of 2005, 690 **Oystercatcher** at the Ternery Pool roost. Passerines included a **Firecrest** near Castle Water Hide on the 21st, up to 75 **Corn Bunting** on Harbour Farm and small numbers of **Fieldfare** and wintering **Chiffchaff**, while the highlight was 14 **Snow Bunting** which flew over the river mouth towards Camber Sands on 21st, part of a flock which has been present there for the past two months. Raptors included regular **Peregrine** and **Marsh Harrier**, the latter now much more common during the winter than previously at Rye Harbour, up to two **Merlin**, and the occasional **Hen Harrier**. Up to four **Long-eared Owl** were present at the traditional Castle Water and Narrow Pit roosts, and both **Little Owl** and **Barn Owl** also put in an appearance.

Non-avian interest during January was provided by two **Common Seal** which were present on Camber Shore from the 20th to 24th, and several sightings of **Brown Hare** on Harbour Farm. In addition, a new species of fungus was added to the reserve list, the aptly named and bizarre looking **Yellow Brain Fungus**, which was found growing on gorse at Castle Water during one of the regular work party outings.

February 2006

Despite the markedly wintry weather during much of February, there were still yet more signs of the coming spring around the reserve. On the Beach Reserve **Ringed Plover** and even the occasional **Lapwing** had begun to display, and the first of our **Mediterranean Gulls** began to appear mid-month, while at Castle Water, the **Cormorant** colony was already in full swing, with around 20 nests present by the end of the month! **Bittern** were regular during the month, with a maximum of two birds sighted on several occasions from the viewpoint at Castle Water. Also at Castle Water, up to seven **Smew** were still present as well as a maximum

of three **Scaup**, while three **Red-crested Pochard** were present here on the morning of the 12th, moving to Long Pit later in the day. Also at Long Pit, a **Slavonian Grebe** was present intermittently until mid-month, along with a maximum of five **Golden-eye**. A small movement of geese during the month included up to 13 **Brent Goose**, 12 **White-fronted Goose**, and even eight **Bean Goose**, the first sighting of this species on the reserve since 1999! Many wader species were still present in their high winter numbers including up to 600 **Lapwing**, 240 **Curlew** and 200 **Dunlin**, while more interesting species included a **Knot** on 12th on the Wader Pool and up to 12 **Ruff** at Castle Water. Notable passerine sightings during February included three **Snow Bunting** on the Beach Reserve on 3rd, a **Firecrest** at the Narrow Pits on the 19th, and up to 28 **Fieldfare** at Castle Water, while raptors included regular **Merlin** and **Peregrine** and the occasional **Marsh Harrier**. A single **Long-eared Owl** was present at the Narrow Pits throughout the month, a **Short-eared Owl** was present on Harbour Farm on the 3rd, and there was the occasional sighting of **Barn Owl** from the viewpoint at Castle



Water. Offshore, interest picked up slightly in comparison to January, with sightings of up to 20+ **Eider**, 16 **Red-throated Diver**, 60+ **Common Scoter**, the occasional **Gannet** and large numbers of **Great Crested Grebe**. The highlight however was a **Black-throated Diver** at the river mouth on 12th, probably a bird released by the RSPCA at Pett Level during the early part of the month.

Interesting non-avian records during February included yet more sightings of the elusive **Water Shrew** at Castle Water and at Ternery Pool, where the provision of an artificial nest raft has proved a great success, while a **Common Seal** was at the river mouth on the 13th, and there were several sightings of **Brown Hare** (above) on Harbour Farm, the stronghold for this increasingly rare mammal. This month also saw the first moth record of the season, with the discovery of a **Pale Brindled Beauty** at Lime Kiln Cottage on the 18th.

March 2006



The arrival of March brought with it the first flush of spring migrants on the reserve. The first **Wheatear** (left) of the spring was seen on the 23rd, with up to nine present by the end of the month, the first **Swallow** on the 28th and **Sand Martin** on the 29th, while both **Chiffchaff** and **Blackcap** could be heard singing in Rye Harbour Village by the 31st. Another sign of spring on the reserve was an increase in seabird numbers on the main seabird colony at Ternery Pool, with up to 700+ **Black-headed Gull**, 65 **Mediterranean Gull** and 54 **Sandwich Tern** present by the months end.

However, despite these signs of the coming spring, numbers of other passage migrants were quite low, certainly in comparison to last years totals at this time.

Those that did occur included up to five **Avocet** at Ternery Pool on the 25th, a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Wader Pool on the 21st and a **Firecrest** at Castle Water on the 23rd, while a count of almost 900 **Dunlin** on the 18th was suggestive of a move northwards by this species. Offshore, sightings included over 100 **Common Scoter**, up to 12 **Eider**, and small numbers of **Red-throated Diver**, **Fulmar** and **Gannet**. The most notable sightings here, however, were a **Black-throated Diver** on 14th, two **Velvet Scoter** on the 20th, and a massive movement of **Brent Goose** mid-month, peaking at 1535 birds

on the 13th, one of the largest totals for this species ever recorded at Rye Harbour! In addition, many winter visitors still lingered on the reserve during March. The last **Bittern** of the winter was sighted on the 9th, the last **Smew** on the 12th, and both **Golden-eye** and **Slavonian Grebe** were present at Long Pit until the end of the month, joined briefly by a **Black-necked Grebe** on the 20th and 21st. On Harbour Farm, both **Short-eared Owl** and **Merlin** were present during March, two **Long-eared Owl** roosted at the Narrow Pit early in the month and a **Pink-footed Goose** was present at Castle Water to the 31st.



Non-avian sightings during March included yet more harbingers of spring as the weather warmed up. Both **Slow Worm** and **Grass Snake** (above) put in appearances, while moths in the Lime Kiln Cottage light trap included **Common Quaker** and **Hebrew Character**. Plants in bloom this month included **Common Whitlow Grass**, **Common Field Speedwell**, **Grey Willow** and **Blackthorn**.

April 2006

Highlight of the month at Rye Harbour was an **Alpine Swift** which was present over the village for several hours on 2nd. This was part of a significant influx of this rare vagrant from southern Europe at this time, and constituted only the third record here and the first since 1983! In addition, on the 25th an **Osprey** flew east along the coast, while two **Ravens** were present on Castle Farm.

With the arrival of April, passage movement picked up considerably, though overall things seemed a tad later than last year, and by the end of the month the reserve had its full complement of summer visitors. This included the first **Little Tern** on the 16th, **Turtle Dove** on the 25th, **House Martin** on the 8th and **Swift** on the 28th. However, while some birds were just arriving on the reserve, others were already getting down to the serious business of producing this year's batch of chicks. On the Beach Reserve, **Black-headed Gull**, **Ringed Plover** and **Oystercatcher** were already on eggs by the end of the month, while the wardens had reports of the first **Lapwing** chick on the 23rd! Among the waterfowl passage migrants included up to three **Garganey** (9th) and both **Black-necked Grebe** and **Slavonian Grebe** in breeding plumage, while an unusual record was



of four **Whooper Swan** on Harbour Farm on the 22nd. Notable waders during April included up to seven **Avocet** (20th), two **Little Stint** on Ternery Pool on the 29th and small numbers of **Little Ringed Plover**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Bar-tailed Godwit** and **Ruff**, while the traditional **Whimbrel** (left) roost on Flat Beach Quarry had reached 206 by the end of the month. Other notable migrants included a **Black Redstart** on the 10th and a **Nightingale** present on the Narrow Pits continually late-month, the first record of this species here since 2001. Offshore movement included a **Great Skua** on the 21st, **Arctic Skua** on the 17th, up to 500 **Common Scoter** and small numbers of **Great Crested Grebe**, **Fulmar** and **Gannet**, while the occasional **Black Tern**, **Arctic Tern** and **Little Gull** also put in an appearance.

Invertebrate highlight this month was the discovery of a female **Oil Beetle** (*Meloe proscarabaeus*, right) on the Beach Reserve on 22nd. This large, flightless species is a nest parasite of solitary bees, and this was the first Sussex record for around 40 years! Catches in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap continued to be affected by the generally cold damp weather, though several new species were added for the year, including **Small Quaker**, **Powdered Quaker**, **Clouded Drab** and **Satellite**. The most notable catch, however, was another beetle, with several individuals of the nationally scarce **Great Silver Water Beetle** turning up early in the month. **Dotted Bee Flies** were regular on the **Ground Ivy** at Castle Water. The large black **St. Mark's Flies** started to appear on the **Alexanders** at the end of the month, a little later than usual.



May 2006

Bird highlight this month was an unprecedented movement of **Storm Petrel** in Rye Bay, part of a larger event all along the south coast. A maximum of 18 individuals of this species occurred on the 23rd, a figure made all the more striking by the fact that there were no records at all for the reserve previous to this date! Also associated with this movement were two **Manx Shearwater** on the 24th, only the fifth reserve record. Other notable sightings for May included a **Purple Heron** from the viewpoint on the 12th, a **Spoonbill** on the Bittern Excavations on the 16th, and a pair of **Raven** over the Beach Reserve on the 6th.



May saw the breeding season at Rye Harbour finally get into full swing, and by the end of the month all of the reserves important breeding species had made a start on raising this year's compliment of young. Some of these, such as **Little Tern**, had only just began to nest and were still incubating eggs, others, such as **Black-headed Gull**, **Ringed Plover**, **Redshank** and **Oystercatcher** hatched their first chicks, while yet others, such as **Lapwing** produced their first fledglings! Despite this, passage movement was still occurring at the end of the month. Probably the most dramatic manifestation of this was the presence of over 700 **Swift** over the reserve on the 31st. Numbers of **Whimbrel** at the traditional roost on the Quarry remained high during the first week of the month, peaking at 222 birds on the 2nd. Up to 49 **Bar-tailed Godwit** and 7 **Black-tailed Godwit** were present during the month, as well as regular **Avocet** and **Little Ringed Plover** and the occasional **Knot**, **Common Sandpiper** (right) and **Greenshank**. Offshore movement included up to 500 **Common Scoter**, 32 **Fulmar**, 20 **Gannet** and small numbers of **Arctic Skua**, and **Kittiwake**,



while **Arctic Tern**, **Black Tern** and **Little Gull** were recorded on the shore or on the pits. An unusual record was of three **Eider** at the river mouth towards the end of the month, a very late occurrence for this essentially winter visitor.

Poor weather during May meant that moth trapping on the reserve was somewhat curtailed, though there were still some interesting species in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap. These included rarities such as *Ethmia bipunctella*, **White Colon** and **Reed Dagger** and migrants such as **Diamond-back Moth** and **Silver Y**. Butterflies included **Small Copper**, **Small Heath** and **Holly Blue**, while migrant species such as **Painted Lady** and **Red Admiral** began to appear in increasing numbers from mid-month. Plants in flower during May included **Yellow Vetch**, the first time this species has been recorded on the reserve, **Sea Kale** (above), **Sea Campion**, **Mouse-eared Hawkweed**, **Yellow Horned Poppy** and **Bird's Foot Trefoil**.

June 2006

During this month our special breeding seabirds reached the peak of their season, and the reserve was alive with chicks and fledglings. At Ternery Pool, over 500 **Sandwich Tern**, 2000 **Black-headed Gull**, 75 **Mediterranean Gull** and 150 **Common Tern** have bred successfully this year. On the shore, around 20 pairs of **Little Tern** nested, with the first chicks appearing around mid-month, and by the end of the month were only days away from producing their first fledglings. However, perhaps our most notable nesting bird this year was **Common Gull**. Despite its name, this species last bred in Sussex in 1963, and there was much surprise and delight when a pair set up home on Ternery Pool!



With the advancing year **Lapwing** flocks became an increasingly frequent feature on the reserve, with up to 500 on the Bittern Excavation, while both **Avocet** and **Little Ringed Plover** continued to be regular on the Beach Reserve. Small numbers of returning passage birds also began to trickle through during June. There were regular **Green Sandpiper** from mid-month, with up to three birds present, the occasional **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Grey Plover** (right) and **Whimbrel**, and a **Greenshank** on the shore on the 29th. Best of the bunch, however, were five **Woodlark** at Castle Water on the 5th, the highest number recorded at Rye Harbour since records began and the first since 1999! On the Bittern Excavation a pair of **Garganey** was present on the 15th, while a rather surprising visitor was a lone **Egyptian Goose** which was present on Castle water from mid-month. Birds of prey were relatively thin on the ground during June, though both **Marsh Harrier** and **Hobby** (up to four) were present throughout the month, while there were occasional sightings of **Barn Owl** around the reserve. Offshore, up to 250+ **Common Scoter** and 133 **Gannet** were present, while **Roseate Tern** was regular here and on Ternery Pool up to mid-month (with a maximum of two on the 1st) and single **Little Gull** were sighted on the 1st and 3rd. The highlight however, and probably bird of the month on the reserve, was a superb adult **Long-tailed Skua** which was present over the Beach Reserve briefly on the giving excellent views for a very pleased group of visiting birdwatchers!

June is usually a good time to look for invertebrates, and this year was no exception! Increasing numbers of moths were caught in the Lime Kiln Cottage light trap, including rarities such as the micros *Ethmia bipunctella*, *Dolicarthria punctalis* and *Synaphe punctalis* and the macro moths **Cream-bordered Cream Pea**, **Star-wort** and **Sand Dart**, while butterflies on the wing included **Holly Blue**, **Clouded Yellow** (right), **Meadow Brown** and **Small Heath**. Plants in



flower this month included **Stinking Hawksbeard**, **Viper's Bugloss**, **Biting Stonecrop**, **Twiggy Mullein** and **Bee Orchid**.

July 2006

Apart from the odd straggler, July effectively saw the end of the breeding season for our important seabirds, and overall it's been a pretty good year at Rye Harbour during 2006. The main colony on Ternery Pool produced around 500 fledged **Sandwich Tern**, 100 fledged **Common Tern** and 60 fledged **Mediterranean Gull**, while the reserve's **Black-headed Gull** were as prolific as ever, producing several thousand scruffy, squeaking fledglings! In addition, on the shore ridges, 21 pairs of **Little Tern** made their home this year, though the season came to an abrupt end with the disappearance of many chicks over the course of a single night, and only nine young fledged.

July saw an increased incidence of passage movement as yet more northern breeders began to make their way south for the winter. This included up to 38 **Avocet**, 20 of both **Green Sandpiper** and **Common Sandpiper** (above), regular **Black-tailed Godwit**, and **Little Ringed Plover**, and the occasional **Greenshank**, **Whimbrel**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, and **Curlew**. Passerine movement included 80 **Sand Martin**, 40+ **Swallow**, 20+ **Swift** and 15 **House Martin** mid-month, while over 30 **Yellow Wagtail** were recorded on the Beach Reserve on the 29th. Other signs of the advancing year included an increase in numbers of **Little Egret** at the traditional Castle Water roost, with 34 birds recorded on the 25th, and of **Lapwing**, with over 400 recorded on the Bittern excavations on the 3rd. Offshore sightings included up to 40 **Gannet**, the occasional **Arctic Skua**, and 700+ **Common Scoter**, the latter a surprisingly large number for this time of year, while a **Little Gull** was present on the Beach Reserve on the 17th. Both **Marsh Harrier** and **Hobby** were occasional throughout the month, while there were also several sightings of **Peregrine**. In addition, at least one pair of **Barn Owl** bred on the reserve this year, with birds often seen hunting on both Castle Water and on Harbour Farm.

The hot weather during July really brought out the insects, and there were some very notable records during the month. This included **Silver-washed Fritillary** at Castle Water Hide on the 24th, only the second reserve record, **Chalk Hill Blue** on the 25th, the first time this chalk grassland species has been recorded on the reserve, and a male **Lesser Emperor** from 19th to 24th at Castle Water, while other migrants included large numbers of **Red Admiral** and **Painted Lady** and the occasional Clouded Yellow. The most exciting record however was a female **Scarce Emerald Damselfly** (right) on the Beach Reserve on the 26th. One of the rarest of British damselflies, this species has not been recorded from either Rye Harbour or East Sussex since 1947! Plants in flower this month included **Least Lettuce**, **Sea Heath**, **Rottingdean Sea-lavender** and **Red Hempnettle**.



August 2006

During August, despite the presence of late broods of **Ringed Plover** and **Great Crested Grebe**, interest on the reserve turned increasingly towards the passage migrants which began to move through in increasingly large numbers. With so many birds on the move, this time of the year always brings with it the chance of something out of the ordinary, and this month the most unusual visitor was a **Great White Egret** which was present at Castle Water on the 25th of the month. Once unknown at Rye Harbour, sightings of this impressive heron have increased in the last few years, and it has been annual in the last three! Its close relative the **Little Egret** occurs in significant numbers on the reserve at this time of the year, and 2006 was no exception, with a record count of 79 birds leaving the Castle Water roost on the 11th!

Passerine movement during August saw up to 400+ **Yellow Wagtail**, 250+ **Sand Martin**, 40+ **Swallow**, 25+ **Swift**, 18 **Wheatear** and small numbers of **House Martin** moving through the reserve, while an increase in abundance of species such as **Willow Warbler**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Black Redstart**, **Grey Wagtail** and **Whinchat** was noted as these species began to move south in greater numbers. Similarly, numbers of species of migrant wader increased into August as we moved further into the passage season. The highlight was a **Dotterel**, a less than annual visitor to the reserve, which was present on Flat Beach Level on the 30th associating with a flock of about 230 **Golden Plover**. Other notable passage waders included up to three **Wood Sandpiper** on both the 15th and 22nd, single **Little Stint** on the 21st and 22nd, a **Spotted Redshank** on the 15th and a flock of 21 **Ruff** on the 18th. Offshore movement during the month included 70+ **Gannet**, 400+ **Common Scoter**, up to four **Arctic Skua** and a **Great Skua** on the 24th, while up to two **Black Tern** and an **Arctic Tern** were also present on the reserve during the month. Other interesting sightings during August included single **Garganey** at Castle Water on the 18th and 25th, regular **Hobby**, and the occasional **Marsh Harrier** and **Peregrine**.

The Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap continued to turn a number of interesting species during August. This included the micros *Platytes alpinella*, *Cyeda dentalis* and *Sitochroa palealis* and the macros **Rosy Wave**, **Reed Dagger** and **Oblique Striped**, the new species for the year included **Lesser Tre-Bar**, **Square-spot Rustic**, **Orange Swift** and **Laced Heath**. As with the birds, migrants continued to be a feature of the insect fauna during August. As well as familiar long distance travellers such as **Red Admiral**, **Painted Lady** and **Large White** this included **Clouded Yellow**, good numbers of **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** (right) and in the moth trap **Scarce Bordered Straw**, **Small Mottled Willow**, **White-point** and **Dark Sword-**



ass. Other notable non-avian sightings during August included several new sites for the impressive **Wasp Spider** on the reserve, and a **Common Seal** at the river mouth on the 28th.

September 2006

September is generally the month when passage movement gets into full swing, and this year was no exception. Bird highlight during September was a **Temminck's Stint** on the sea-defence excavations adjacent to Lime Kiln Cottage. The bird was present from the 19th to the 22nd of the month, giving excellent views to many birders. Close second were a **Wryneck** which was present behind Ternery Pool briefly on the 27th, and an **Osprey** over Harbour Farm on the 8th. A rather unexpected record during September was of a very tame **Marbled Duck** on the new excavations at Castle Water on the 25th! While a truly wild example of this southern European species has never been recorded in Britain, some are kept in collections and considering the confiding nature of this individual this was undoubtedly the origin of the Castle Water bird.

A good range of passage waders were present on the reserve during September, including up to 12 **Little Stint** on the 28th, one of highest totals ever seen at Rye Harbour, **Spotted Redshank** on Flat Beach Level on the 9th, **Curlew Sandpiper** on the Wader Pool on the 22nd and 30th (two), up to six **Little Ringed Plover** and small numbers of **Ruff**, **Knot**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Greenshank** and **Avocet**. Interesting waterfowl included **Red-crested Pochard** and **Black-necked Grebe** on the Long Pit late month, six **Pintail** on the 16th, a **Garganey** on Carters Pit on the 7th and five **Brent Goose** on the shore on the 22nd. Notable passerines included a **Pied Flycatcher** at Carter's Pit on the 15th, **Firecrest** here on the 17th and also on this date **Spotted Flycatcher** at both Narrow Pit and Bourne's Field, while a good movement of hirundines mid-month included 1500+ **House Martin**, 200+ **Swallow** and 50+ **Sand Martin**. In addition, small numbers of **Wheatear** and **Yellow Wagtail** could still be found on the reserve during September, though nowhere near the numbers found last month, as well as the occasional **Whinchat** and the first **Stonechat** of the autumn. In contrast to the situation on land, visible offshore movement was very sparse, with up to 35 **Gannet** and an **Arctic Skua** on the 16th the only records of note. However, up to two **Black Tern** were present on Long Pit for a few days from the 19th. Despite the season, numbers of several species began their steady increase towards winter levels. Among wildfowl this included 138 **Shoveler**, 100 **Wigeon** and 52 **Pochard**, while waders included over 1000 **Lapwing** and 300+ **Golden Plover**. In addition, the **Corn Bunting** Flock on Harbour reached 48 by the end of the month, while 150+ **Linnet** were also present here.



As with birds, September was significant for the large number of migrant species which turned up in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap. Good numbers of the commoner species such as **Rush Veneer**, **Rusty Dot Pearl** and **Silver Y** were joined by significant numbers of rarer visitors such as **Scarce Bordered Straw**, **Delicate**, **White-point** and **L-album Wainscot**. The best of the bunch, however, were a **Striped Hawk-moth** (above) on the 7th, and several **Clancy's Rustic** from the 18th of the month, both of these new species for the reserve, as well as the second reserve record of **Cosmopolitan** on the 7th and the fourth record of the micro moth *Palpita vitrealis* on the 24th. Other notable insect migrants included several **Clouded Yellow** and the spectacular hornet mimicking hoverfly *Volucella zonaria*.

October 2006

Bird highlight during October was an immature **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** which was present on Flat Beach Level from the 7th to the 22nd of the month. This north-American wader is an uncommon visitor to Britain, and there have been only two previous sightings at Rye Harbour (the last in 1989), and less than ten records for Sussex in the last 160 years! The presence of this bird caused considerable excitement among the Sussex birding community, and several hundred people visited the reserve to see it!

October saw the tail end of the autumn passerine passage, which included small numbers of **Swallow**, **Sand Martin** and **House Martin**, up to 14 **Wheatear**, and singletons of **Yellow Wagtail**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Reed Warbler** and **Blackcap**. Pick of the bunch was a **Dartford Warbler** at the Narrow Pits on the 23rd, **Ring Ouzel** at Carter's Pit on the same date, and **Firecrest** at Narrow Pit (18th) and Carter's Pit (23rd). High tides early on in the month resulted in a good deal of standing water on Flat Beach Level, attracting large numbers of waders, including up to 900 **Golden Plover**, 68 **Ringed Plover** and 64 **Dunlin**. Less common waders here during this period included up to six **Little Stint** and four **Knot** (both on the 10th) on, two late **Curlew Sandpiper** mid-month (with an additional bird at Castle Water during the same period), an **Avocet** on the 11th

and a **Spotted Redshank** on the 29th. Similarly, the new excavations at Castle Water attracted up to 2000 **Lapwing**, 50 **Curlew** and small numbers of **Green-shank**, **Ruff**, **Snipe** (right) and **Green Sandpiper**. The very confiding **Marbled Duck** was still present, this time on the new pits adjacent to Lime Kiln Cottage late in the month, while other notable waterfowl during October included a **Black-necked Grebe** and two **Red-crested Pochard** on Long Pit from mid-month, and up to 17 **Pintail** on the Bittern Excavations. Offshore, movement picked up in comparison to September, with up to 72 **Gannet** on the 1st, 134 **Brent Goose** on the 10th, 100+ **Common Scoter** on 19th, **Black-throated Diver** and **Shag** on the 31st, **Great Skua** on 26th, and small numbers of **Arctic Skua**, **Fulmar** and **Kittiwake**. Raptors were regular during October, many attracted to the concentration of waders on Flat Beach Level, with sightings of **Peregrine**, **Merlin** and **Marsh Harrier** here in addition to residents such as **Kestrel** and **Sparrowhawk**. This month also saw the return of **Long-eared Owl** to the traditional roost at Narrow Pit, and also **Short-eared Owl**, with two birds present on Harbour Farm on the 23rd.



The Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap continued to turn up some interesting migrant species during October. This included further examples of **Clancy's Rustic**, the third reserve record of **Cosmopolitan** on the 8th, and the second reserve record of **Dewick's Plusia** on the 3rd. Both **Slow-worm** and **Common Lizard** were also recorded, taking advantage of the unseasonably warm weather, while two **Common Seal** were present in the river during the month. Plants in flower included **Yellow Horned Poppy**, **Viper's Bugloss**, **Red Valerian** and **Autumn Hawkbit**.

November 2006

This month saw the very tail-end of out passage migrants for the autumn. This included both **Swallow** and **Wheatear** on the 9th, one of the latest dates ever on the reserve for the latter species, up to 43 **Brent Geese**, and small numbers of migrant waders including a **Little Stint** on Flat Beach level on the 2nd, a **Spotted Redshank** here on the 9th, and a **Black-tailed Godwit** on the shore on the 11th.



As might be expected, winter visitors became an increasing feature of the reserve during November. This included the first **Bittern** of the autumn in flight over Narrow Pits on the 5th, the first **Smew** at Castle Water on the 28th, with a maximum of three present here by the end of the month, up to three **Goldeneye** on the Long Pit, and a maximum of two **Scaup** at Castle Water and the Long Pit. Other notable waterfowl records this month included a **Bewick's Swan** at Castle Water on the 25th, two **Red-breasted Merganser** on Ternery Pool on the 13th, two **Red-crested Pochard** on Long Pit on the 30th and two **Pintail** on Flat Beach Level on the 9th. Notable passerines included two **Firecrest** in Rye Harbour village on the 15th, four plus **Bearded Tit** from the viewpoint on the 7th, and a **Brambling** in flight over Lime Kiln Cottage on the 3rd. Flat Beach Level continued to hold good numbers of **Golden Plover**, with 500+ here on the 9th, while on the shore 460 **Oystercatcher**, 120 **Dunlin**, 90 **Sanderling** and 35 **Grey Plover** were the highlights. Elsewhere on the reserve, **Lapwing** numbers at Castle Water peaked at 1000+ on the 9th, while significant wildfowl counts included 248 **Wigeon** (above),

225 **Tufted Duck**, 144 **Pochard** and 55 **Shoveler**. This abundance of birds continued to attract the attention of a range of raptors, and there regular sightings of **Marsh Harrier** and occasional records of both **Merlin** and **Peregrine** throughout the month. However, there was only one record of **Long-eared Owl** at the traditional Narrow Pit roost, this on the 1st of the month. Offshore, things were very quiet, the only notable sightings being six **Red-throated Diver**, 100+ **Common Scoter** and two **Velvet Scoter** on the 11th.

Despite the lateness of the season there were still a few insects on the wing during November. This included **Clouded Yellow**, **Red Admiral** and on the 29th **Common Darter**, the latest ever date for this species at Rye Harbour, while the Lime Kiln moth trap turned up small numbers of **Silver Y** and **Light Brown Apple Moth**. In addition, a number of plant species were still in bloom including **Viper's Bugloss**, **Large-flowered Evening Primrose**, **Bramble** and **Yarrow**. However, the most dramatic non-avian event during November was the beaching of a 17m **Fin Whale** carcass during high winds on the 16th.

December 2006

December is traditionally a month when high numbers of wintering species is the norm, and this year was no exception. On the shore good counts of waders included 560 **Curlew** and 340 **Dunlin** on the 17th, 194 **Sanderling** on the 10th, 62 **Grey Plover** and 49 **Turnstone** on the 26th, and 51 **Ringed Plover** on the 8th. More notable waders during December included up to two **Knot** on the 10th, two **Jack Snipe** on the 7th, two **Bar-tailed Godwit** throughout the month and a **Green Sandpiper** at Castle Pit on the 4th. Significant waterfowl counts during December included 228 **Pochard**, 209 **Tufted Duck**, 190 **Wigeon**, 120 **Shoveler**, 99 **Teal** and 28 **Gadwall**. More notable species included **Bittern** from the viewpoint on the 21st and 28th, five **White-fronted Geese** at Castle Water on the 26th, a maximum of 24 **Brent Geese** on Flat Beach Level on the 16th, up to six **Smew** and four **Scaup** on Castle Pit late in the month, five **Pintail** on Flat Beach Level on the 23rd and an **Eider** at the river mouth on the 31st.

At the Narrow Pits, up to three **Long-eared Owl** were present at the traditional roost late in the month, and there were occasional sightings of **Short-eared Owl**, **Little Owl** and **Barn Owl**. As might be expected, the high numbers of birds on the reserve proved something of a honey-pot for raptors, and there were regular sightings of **Marsh Harrier**, with two birds present on the 21st, and **Merlin**, as well as more familiar species such as **Sparrowhawk** and **Kestrel**. Notable passerines during December included two **Dartford Warbler** on Harbour Farm on the 6th, **Grey Wagtail** at Castle Water throughout the month, and a up to five **Bearded Tit** from the viewpoint on the 28th. On Harbour Farm, the resident **Corn Bunting** flock peaked at 82, up to two **Rock Pipit** were present on the saltmarsh, and both wintering **Stonechat** and **Chiffchaff** were present. Offshore, there was very little movement during December, with 70 **Common Scoter** and six **Red-throated Diver** on the 27th and up to seven **Kittiwake** on the 9th the only records of note.

Despite the lateness of the season there were still a few moths on the wing during December. This included *Emmelina monodactyla*, a micro-moth which can be found at almost any time of the year, and **Winter Moth**, one of the few species which is on the wing during the coldest part of the year. Mammal sightings during the month included a **Common Seal** (right) at the River Mouth on the 9th and a **Brown Hare**, an increasingly rare sight, in front of Watch Cottage on the 7th. As might be expected there were relatively few plants in bloom this month, though the odd flower of **Gorse** and **Lesser Periwinkle** could be found in sheltered spots.



Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 8859 individuals from 235 species were recorded during 2006, mainly from the moth trap run at Lime Kiln Cottage, but also through casual observations. The following annotated list highlights the most notable migrants and scarcer resident species.

Ethmia bipunctella RDB – A total of 124 individuals between the May 11th and September 5th.

Pediasia aridella Nb - Singles on four dates between July 17th and August 5th.

Schoenobius gigantella Nb – A singleton on 23rd July.

Evergestis extimalis Nb (right) – A total of 38 individuals between July 12th and September 7th.

Cynaeda dentalis RDB – Up to two on five dates between July 17th and September 7th.

Sitochroa palealis N – A total of seven individuals between July 22nd and August 22nd.

Dolicarthria punctalis Nb – Up to three between June 26th and July 23rd.

Palpita vitrealis immigrant - A singleton on September 24th. The first reserve record.

Synapse punctalis N – A total of 159 individuals between June 25th and August 8th.

Oncocera semirubella Nb – A total of 13 individuals between July 12th and 26th.

Sciota hostilis (above right) RDB/immigrant - One on June 14th was the first reserve record and only the second record for Sussex.

Pterophorus spilodactylus RDB – A singleton on Bourne's Field on July 19th..

Nephoterix angustella Nb - One on June 13th, the second reserve record.

Pale Grass Eggar *Lasiocampa trifolii* f. *Flava* RDB - One on August 8th.

Rosy Wave *Scopula emutaria* Nb - Singles on July 12th and August 16th and 27th.

Oblique Striped *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb – Singles on July the 12th and 21st and August 8th..

Gem *Orthonama obstipata* immigrant - Ten individuals on five dates between July 26th and October 30th.

Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* immigrant - Singles on five dates between June 26th and October 1st. In addition, well grown larvae were found on Harbour Farm on October 24th and Lime Kiln Cottage on September 25th and October 29th.

Humming-Bird Hawk-Moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* immigrant – Twenty between July 1st and September 21st.

Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica* (right) immigrant - One on September 7th was the first reserve record.

Pygmy Footman *Eilema pygmaeola pallifrons* RDB – Seventy seven between July 12th and 26th..

Water Ermine *Spilosoma urticae* Nb – A singleton on June 11th.

Kent Black Arches *Meganola albula* Nb – Fifteen between July 12th and September 28th.

Clancy's Rustic *Platyperigea kadenii* immigrant - One on September 18th was the first reserve record. There were a further seven individuals between September 26th and October 16th, including two on September 28th.

Sand Dart *Agrotis ripae* Nb - Up to three between June 11th and July 12th.

White Colon *Sideridis albicolon* Nb – Nine individuals on seven dates between June 1st and 25th.



Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* immigrant – Twenty-one between July 12th and October 29th.

Shore Wainscot *Mythimna litoralis* Nb – Singles on July 21st and 23rd and August 5th.

L-Album Wainscot *Mythimna l-album* Nb – immigrant – A total of 13 individuals between July 12th and October 12th.

Cosmopolitan *Mythimna loreyi* immigrant - Singles on September 7th and October 8th, the third and fourth reserve records.

Star-Wort *Cucullia asteris* Nb – Two on June 25th, one on 5th August..

Feathered Brindle *Aporophyla australis pascua* Nb – Forty-eight between September 9th and October 12th.

Reed Dagger *Simyra albovenosa* Nb – Thirty-nine between May 29th and August 14th, including 21 on July 26th. In addition a larva was recorded from Castle Water, on the September 23rd.

Crescent Striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb – A total of 17 between July 17th and 30th.

Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* immigrant - A total of 24 individuals between August 23rd and October 29th.

Cream-Bordered Green Pea *Earias clorana* Nb – Singles on June 13th and August 8th.

Dewick's Plusia *Macdunnoughia confusa* (above right) immigrant - One on October 3rd, the second reserve record



Other notable invertebrate sightings during 2006 included:

Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* immigrant – Thirty-three between January 13th and November 5th.

Chalk Hill Blue *Polyommatus coridon* - One on Harbour Farm on July 25th was the first reserve record

Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia* - One at Castle Water Hide on July 23rd was only the second reserve record.

Lesser Emperor Dragonfly *Anax parthenope* - One was present at Castle water from July 19th to the 25th.

Scarce Emerald Damselfly *Lestes dryas* - A female of this species was photographed on the Beach Reserve on July 26th. This is the first record for both the reserve and Sussex since 1947.

Oil Beetle *Meloe proscarabaeus* - One was found on April 22nd on Harbour Farm - pictured below. This is the first ever reserve record and the first Sussex record for this species since the 1960's



Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2006 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 SSSI and the plants in the 10m. permanent quadrat on the shingle beach. There was regular moth trapping throughout SSSI. Specialists continued to visit the reserve because of the ALSF project (see below). All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 220, 267 records of more than 4,100 species in the SSSI.

Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer workparties took place on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, At Castle Water volunteers erected reed enclosures and planted reeds on the Bittern Excavation, maintained fencing, weeded islands and capped them with shingle to encourage breeding birds, planted marsh mallow, black poplar and willows, cleared willow, thistles and ragwort, dismantled an old tern-raft and goat shelter and constructed fish shelters from cut willow, while on the Beach Reserve work included, removal of rubbish, and maintenance of fencing on West Beach, We also held the Annual Beach Clean in December to clear the winter's rubbish blown in off the sea. The Tern Watch looked over the Little Terns and the rest of the wildlife of the Beach Reserve. At Castle Water we made sure the paths, stiles and hides were clear and safe for visitors.

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

See project report at www.wildrye.info/files/ALSFreport.pdf

During 2005 a successful bid was made for further funding through ALSF. The project, *Rye Harbour, A Shingle Community*, provided almost £250,000 to cover a number of projects, with the majority of the funding going towards projects during 2006/2007, particularly further excavations at Castle Water,

This funding allowed several invertebrate surveys to be undertaken by specialists, including:

Mark Telfer - saline invertebrates
Patrick Roper - Diptera survey
Peter Hodge - Coleoptera survey

This has added a considerable amount of knowledge of the saline lagoon fauna and generated a great many extra records that we are still adding to our database, Recorder 6.

The project also continued to support Sam Smith in the position of Nature Reserve Assistant, working on management of shingle species, including looking after the goats and tidying up the old and new fences and undertaking surveys.

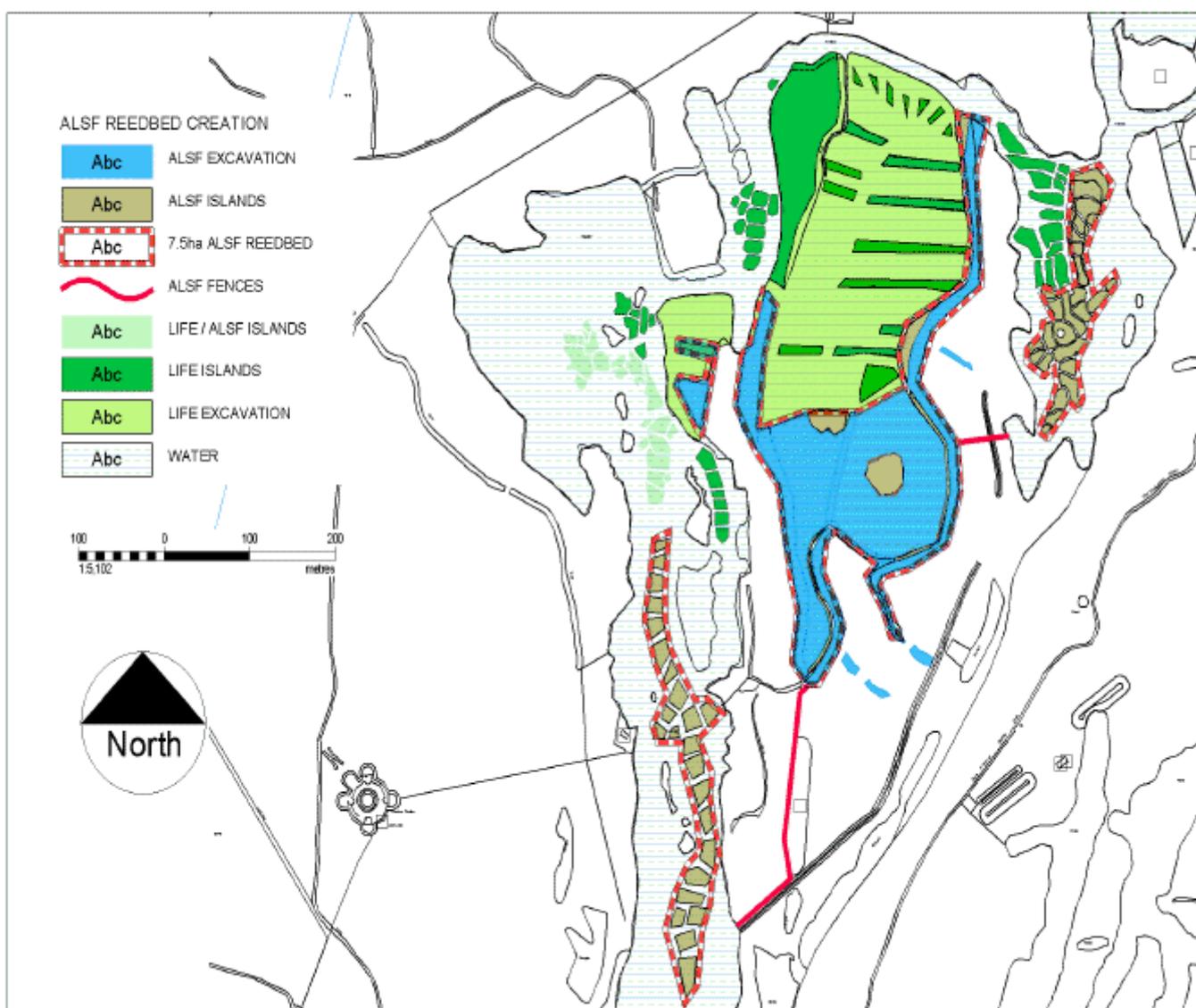
The funding also helped us pay for the construction of an extension to the viewpoint boardwalk, as well as seating on the viewpoint itself, the provision of equipment and materials, including a chainsaw and protective clothing and moth trapping equipment, staff training, and a range of interpretation material, including computer hardware/software, a webcam for Lime Kiln cottage, web-site development and a gazebo for outside events. We were also able to promote interest in the Nature reserve through the production of monthly wildlife articles by Dr Patrick Roper in the local paper.

Castle Water Excavation (Phase II)

Between July and September 2006, the second phase of excavations at Castle Water took place (below). The work was carried out by Gambles, who were responsible for the first phase excavations during 2003, and overseen by the Landscape Group of East Sussex County Council. Around 55,000 cubic metres of material were removed from fields to the east of Castle Pit, lowering the ground-level by between 0.5 and 1.5 metres, and allowing the excavated area to become inundated. The spoil was then used to fill deeper parts of the pit, before being separated into chains of low-lying islands. Other work included both the widening and deepening of existing ditches, and the re-instatement of old ditches, and the creation of a number of small ponds. In addition, some of the islands created during the first phase of the excavation, as well as a small chain of islands previously used by nesting Cormorants on Carter's Pit, were lowered by between 0.1 and 0.2 metres

The total cost of this second phase of excavation was £150, 000 and all in all 7.5ha of new wetland and 55 new islands were created. This will help to meet Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets for reedbed and species such as Bittern, Water Vole, Medicinal Leech and several other rare and endangered species, while also providing additional protected nesting space for breeding birds.

Map Showing Plan of Phase II Excavations at Castle Water



Interpretation

As part of our English Nature Wildspace! Project we produced a booklet called “*Rye Harbour – your guide to a shingle nature reserve*”, and this has now been updated. In addition the reserve has since produced an additional booklet, “*RX Wildlife - Wildlife Sites from Hastings to Romney Marsh*”, and both have been widely distributed.

We continued the monthly Wildlife Column in the local paper, the Rye Observer, completed the Annual Report and three Newsletters for the Friends and maintained the web site, which had 5,900 visits. The Monthly Wildlife Summaries were produced and posted around the Nature Reserve, on the web site and sent to Bird-watching magazine and many individuals by e-mail. We also maintained the Rye Bay Wildlife newsgroup that has 90 members exchanging views via e-mail.

We conducted 43 Guided Walks, booked in 23 visiting groups, gave 9 illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle on 46 days with 1330 people entering, guided 31 school groups and 2 university groups and took our Nature Reserve display to 7 events.

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2006

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

Number of volunteer hours ...

Tuesday + Saturday Work Parties	685
Beach Cleans	168
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,581
Tern Watch/Patrolling	1,419
Recording	10
Friends Committee/Events	272
Total	5,135

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 2006 were:

East Sussex County Council	Cllr. J. Barnes Cllr. K.J. Glazier (Vice-chair) Cllr. P. Scott Cllr. Webb
Substitute member:	
Environment Agency	Mr. J. Morgan Mr.. N. Paige
Sussex Wildlife Trust	Dr A. Whitbread Mrs. A.H. Moore DL Mr. J. Power
Substitute member:	
Landowners	Mr. F. Langrish Mr. J. Davis
Rother District Council	Mr. A.H. Lloyd (Chair) Cllr. S. Souster Cllr. R H Patten
Substitute member:	
Icklesham Parish Council	Mrs. C. Merricks
Rye Town Council	Cllr. P. Carey Cllr. F. Palmer
Substitute member:	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Mr. R. Gomes
Sussex Ornithological Society	Mr. J. Trowell Mr. R. Harris
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Mr. C. Saunders Ms. H. Doe
Substitute member:	
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	Mr. J. Gooders Mr. R. Holmes Mr. W. Marshall
Substitute member:	

Invited Members

County Ecologist	Dr. A.. Tait
Rye Bay Countryside Office	Mr. S. Fathers

Officers

The Management Committee appoints its own honorary officers;

Hon. Secretary	Mr. P Jones
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. R. Robinson

Management Sub-Committee

The Sub-committee meets quarterly to consider matters concerning the management of the Nature Reserve. The members at 31st December 2006 were;

Mr A.H. Lloyd, Ms. A. Parfitt, Dr. P. Roper, Dr A. Tait, Ms. E. Thompson, Mr. J. Willsher and the Nature Reserve staff.

Nature Reserve Staff and Address.

East Sussex County Council provides the Management Committee with a Nature Reserve Manager and Warden who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve under the guidance of the Management Sub-committee. The Warden is also funded by the Friends and the Management Committee. The Nature Reserve Assistant was funded by English Nature's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and the Wetland Discovery Officer funded by the ESCC INTERREG project called Nature Without Borders.

Nature Reserve Manager	Dr. Barry Yates
Nature Reserve Warden	Chris Bentley
Nature Reserve Assistant	Sam Smith
Wetland Discovery Officer	Miriam Bowley

The Nature Reserve address is: 2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU

Telephone:	Rye (01797) 223862.
e-mail:	yates@clara.net
web site:	www.wildRye.info

Finance

The detailed accounts of the Committee for 2006/07 are given in Appendix 2.

The main sources of funding for the running of the Nature Reserve are from East Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, Rother District Council, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Icklesham Parish Council and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. There was additional funding this year from English Nature through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (for many projects associated with shingle habitats) and from the Brett Environmental Trust (for the replacement of the Parkes Hide).

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.**



Appendix 2 - Revenue Account and Balance Sheet for 2006/07

RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

BALANCE SHEET

31ST MARCH 2007

	<u>2006/07</u>		<u>2005/06</u>
	£		£
FIXED ASSETS			
Information Centre		7,094	7,094
Land Rover			
Cost brought forward	6,500		6,500
	-----		-----
	6,500		6,500
Depreciation brought forward	4,958		4,444
Provision in year	386		514
	-----		-----
	5,344	1,156	4,958

			1,542
Equipment			
Cost brought forward	26,306		26,100
Purchased in year	5,852		206
	-----		-----
	32,158		26,306
Depreciation brought forward	16,007		12,574
Provision in year	4,038		3,433
	-----		-----
Less: Depreciation	20,045	12,113	16,007

		20,363	18,935
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	300		9,656
Prepayments	4,915		5,167
Cash at bank and in hand	5,359		79,309
	-----		-----
	10,574		94,132
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due			
Within one year			
Other creditors	789		65,260
	-----		-----
NET CURRENT ASSETS		9,785	28,872
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		-----	-----
		30,148	47,807
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
Accumulated Reserves		28,386	46,045
Repairs and Renewal Fund		1,762	1,762
		-----	-----
		30,148	47,807
		-----	-----

RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE
REVENUE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2007

	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2005/06</u>
	£	£
INCOME		
Grants and Contributions		
English Nature - ALSF	204,224	27,179
Sussex OS – ALSF	4,000	-
East Sussex County Council	39,465	65,013
Rother District Council	1,000	-
Icklesham PC	300	300
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve		
- ALSF	4,500	4,242
- Accommodation costs	12,600	12,600
- Staff costs	4,890	4,658
Environment Agency (re-stated see note)	8,000	13,090
English Heritage	2,000	1,749
Sussex Wildlife Trust	8,750	4,825
Wetlands for Wildlife	2,899	2,390
Rye Town Council	200	
In Kind Volunteers	1,793	-
Total Grants and Contributions	<u>294,621</u>	<u>135,956</u>
Other Income		
Environment Agency Land Management	8,000	7,000
Consultancy income	-	-
Guided walks and school visits	4,905	3,682
TOTAL INCOME	<u>307,526</u>	<u>146,638</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Staffing costs	53,147	82,483
- Arrears for 2004/05	-	30,421
Housing Accommodation	12,600	12,600
Information Centre & Interpretation	1,152	147
Nature reserve		
ALSF – Grazing and fencing	27,996	1,593
- Reed-bed excavation	168,166	-
- Interpretation	9,136	3,883
- Staff costs	18,184	9,375
- Volunteers	1,793	-
- Local Heritage	1,119	12,457
- Surveys	3,585	2,603
Other	10,384	10,334
Transport	4,542	5,323
Administration & communication	3,631	2,984
Insurance	5,746	5,112
Depreciation of Capital Expenditure	4,424	3,947
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>(325,605)</u>	<u>(183,082)</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(18,079)	(36,444)
Add. Interest received	420	423
	<u>(17,659)</u>	<u>(36,021)</u>
RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD	<u>47,807</u>	<u>83,828</u>
RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD	30,148	47,807

Note: The income for 2005/06 has been re-stated in respect of £8,000 received from the Environment Agency in March 2006 which related to the year 2006/07. As a result the income figure has been reduced by £8,000 in 2005/06 and increased by £8,000 in 2006/07.

Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Pairs											
LITTLE GREBE	4	5	9	8	9	11	10	7	6	6	3
GREAT CRESTED GREBE	10	11	8	5	10	6	6	8	4	3+	3
CORMORANT	2	7	45	80	75	107	120	125	132	134	130
GREY HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	5	7	6	4	7	3	6	6	3	3	3
GREYLAG GOOSE	2	0	2	2	2	3	6	7	6	10	10
CANADA GOOSE	30	34	30	11	13	9	15	14	13	15	14
SHELDUCK	10	12	10	8	3+	3	8	6	3	1	3
GADWALL	3	1	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	0
SHOVELER	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
TUFTED DUCK	15	10	10	10	4+	7	17	15	12	16	7
RUDDY DUCK	3	3	3	2	0	3	4	6	8	10	5
OYSTERCATCHER	19	23	18	21	20	27	18	25	31	24	24
RINGED PLOVER	40	51	40	51	40	50	40	39+	41	34	30
LAPWING	16	10	15	11	10	14	15	25	29	31	33
REDSHANK	13	11	9	18	15	17	10	10	13	12	16
MEDITERRANEAN GULL	2	2	0	0	0	2	13	25	27	37	75
fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL	2	0	0	0	0	4	5	22	36	40	50
BLACK-HEADED GULL	335	350	80	180	33	300	700	800	1075	1500	2000
fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL	150	60	150	0	0	400	700	1000	1050	1900	1900
HERRING GULL	13	9	9	9	5	1	2	5	10+	4	5
SANDWICH TERN	12	30	13	26	0	24	150	250	300	200+	500
fledged SANDWICH TERN	0	0	12	0	0	3	150	300	400	300+	500
COMMON TERN	80	120	120	70	57	40	34	86	105	153	169
fledged COMMON TERN	20	15	180	0	0	55	50	120	175	200+	200
LITTLE TERN	30	35	29	24	0	26	19	25	18	18	21
fledged LITTLE TERN	0	4	0	16	0	20	1	31	5	20	9
SAND MARTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YELLOW WAGTAIL	23	25	12	20	13	11	15	12	12	6	2
WHEATEAR	8	9	8	7	7	7	7	8	10	13	11
SEDGE WARBLER	86	92	50	67	80	52	70	81	104	48	50
REED WARBLER	200+	200+	200+	153+	200+	150+	150+	120+	200+	206	201
LESSER WHITETHROAT	7	3	3	5	6	2	5	6	7	11	10
WHITETHROAT	36	36	37	48	45	46	55	62	69	58	58
REED BUNTING	40	40	37	50	40	37	25	64	66	77	59
CORN BUNTING	3	5	5	4	4	4	2	2	5	2	2

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 2006

Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	4	9	7	4	1	4	1	6	16	11	13	12
GREAT-CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	34	621	22	15	13	23	27	41	43	31	46	35
CORMORANT	80	90	93	140	189	318	145	493	226	263	245	23
GREY HERON	5	3	2	2	2	4	2	5	9	8	9	8
BITTERN	1	1									1	1
LITTLE EGRET	31	32	23	16	9	6	34	79	67	45	46	53
MUTE SWAN	2	58	1	18	19	37	57	85	24	30	85	71
GREYLAG GOOSE	45	39	17	17	17	27	28	2	40	68	2	5
CANADA GOOSE	146	102	44	14	23	33	42	120	35	161	170	73
SHELDUCK (inc.estuary)	18	17	22	31	27	35	32	15		10	12	19
WIGEON	261	200	118		1			1	100+	300	248	190
GADWALL	50	29	44	22	15	12	2	37	70	74	40	40
TEAL	83	51	53	16			4	42	138	127	53	128
MALLARD	159	118	43	49	33	44	83	146	253	146	169	118
PINTAIL	1	0	3	2					6	22	2	1
SHOVELER	72	41	47	19	5	27		31	132	34	55	133
POCHARD	178	127	85			8		4	42	123	154	228
TUFTED DUCK	222	188	127	175	125	67	64	11	92	70	225	209
SCAUP	3	4									2	4
LONG-TAILED DUCK		1										
COMMON SCOTER (Rye Bay)	100	60+	100+	500	500	250+	700	400+	60+	100+	100+	20+
GOLDENEYE	2	6	8								3	5
SMEW	9	8	4								2	4
RUDDY DUCK	7	3	3	8	9	7	6	8	3	4	3	1
COOT	277	241	94	74	24	50	217	499	787	749	563	202
OYSTERCATCHER	692	512	415	292	213	147	212	261	412	458	460	368
AVOCET			5	7	20	19	38	1	2	2		
RINGED PLOVER	66	37	61	30	24	27	22	33	82	68	38	51
GOLDEN PLOVER	243	80	92	1				213	210	900	800+	58
GREY PLOVER	10	29	42	9	4	1	2	3	12	16	35	50
LAPWING	2316	600+	300+	54	58	150+	400+	1500+	1000+	2000+	3000	1050+
KNOT	1	1	4		1	1	1	2	6	4		2
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	70	60	15	8	6		5	1		41	90	194
DUNLIN (Inc. Estuary)	280	250+	897	51	41	18	38	42	86	64	140	356
RUFF		12		1				21	6	2		
SNIPE	27	17	20	19	3		1	3	17	33	14	21
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	1		1	4	7		9	1		1	1	
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	2	2	4	34	49	2	2	2	4		3	2
WHIMBREL				206	222	1	2	1				
CURLEW	415	65	47	18	12	16	24	73	139	118	115	560
REDSHANK (Inc. Estuary)	73	25	45	34	18	40	58	118	183	122	59	53
GREENSHANK					4	1	2	3	3	1		
GREEN SANDPIPER	1					5	23	14	7	4	4	1
COMMON SANDPIPER				1	4		21	21				
TURNSTONE	24	32	32	29	44	16	9	8	19	20	30	51

Appendix 4 - Notes For The Guidance Of Visitors.

- A) Any society or individual wanting to visit the Reserve with a group of ten or more people **MUST** obtain a permit from the Reserve Manager at least three weeks before the proposed visit. This will try to prevent overcrowding in the hides. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with any enquiry.
- B) No charge is made for a permit but visitors are requested to consider a donation towards the essential running costs of the Reserve. A donation box is located at Lime Kiln Cottage, or you can send a cheque!
- C) If groups exceed 20 in number they should be split into smaller groups to go around the Reserve.
- D) The Reserve Manager is prepared to meet all parties before they enter the Reserve and to accompany them round **if this has been arranged beforehand**.
- 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 Manager, for any disabled visitor unable to manage the walk to the hides.
- H) There is an Information Centre in the car park with toilet facilities nearby. From the car park the four birdwatching hides are 4 km, 1½ km., 1 km. and 600 m. (the latter with access for 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.
- 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.

thank-you

