



# NEWSLETTER

## The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

c/o. 1 Coastguard Cottages, Rye Harbour, Rye, East Sussex,  
TN31 7TS.

Telephone: Rye (0797) 223862

A registered charity founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and maintenance of the Nature Reserve within the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest, (known as the SSSI).

CHAIRMAN: Ian Rumley-Dawson. VICE CHAIRMAN: Clifford Percival. TREASURER: Pat Bonham.  
SECRETARY: Miss Liz Blackwell. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot.  
COMMITTEE: Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer, Mrs. Anne Yates,  
Dr. Barry Yates.

W I N T E R 1 9 8 5 / 8 6 .  
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N U M B E R 2 2 .  
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### WARDEN'S REPORT.

Dr. Barry Yates.

This years weather really has been "topsy-turvy", and after a wet and cool summer the warm, dry autumn has been most enjoyable. Some summer visitors may have taken advantage of this fine weather and stayed later than usual; Cuckoo until 15th September, Garganey to 8th October, Turtle Dove to 12th October, Yellow Wagtail to 17th, Wood Sandpiper to 20th, Swallow until 14th November and Chiffchaff until 28th November. Autumn is always a good time for birdwatching, with many species to be seen. For example, on the Friends Walk on 19th October we found over 60 species including Firecrest, Twite and Eider.



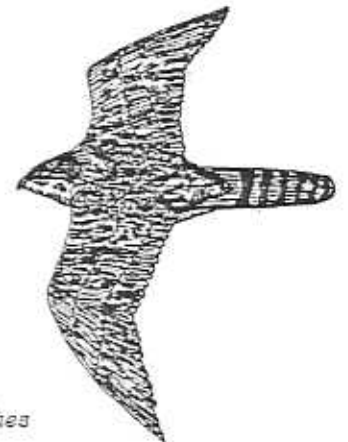
*Yellow-browed Warbler*

Last year the Reserve had the fifth record for Sussex of Wilson's Phalarope (from North America), and in October this year we had the seventh. It was a first winter bird and made an appearance at Ternery Pool on 9th October. The other unusual visitor was a Yellow-browed Warbler (from Asia), reported in the wood on 22nd October, at a time when there was an influx of this species along other parts of the South Coast.

on 21st and 22nd, up to 9 Scaup including a single adult male from 14th to 19th and an immature Long-tailed Duck from 26th November. The variety of commoner wildfowl has also increased with the cold weather, which also heralded the arrival of a Red-necked Grebe at the end of November.

The large numbers of small birds and mammals attracted to the Reserve in autumn to feed on the seeds of the summer flowers, have in turn attracted a variety of birds of prey. Most commonly seen was the Kestrel sitting on the overhead cables or hovering in search of prey above other areas. Frequent sightings of the Hen Harrier around Ternery Pool occasionally resulted in the chase and capture of other interesting birds, such as Water Rail or Snipe, and the dashing Merlin made repeated attempts to catch Greenfinches along the beach. Other birds of prey seen since the beginning of September were Marsh Harrier, Sparrowhawk, Hobby and Peregrine.

All these species can be difficult to identify as they fly away quickly, but keep your eye on them, note the way they fly, their silhouette and any distinctive marks on the tail or underside. If you are lucky and can keep up with their fast movements, then you may see them chase and possibly capture their prey, but more usually they fail and have to try again, especially if they are young birds in their first year. However, they certainly provide some fascinating entertainment for the birdwatcher.



*Merlin  
chasing  
Greenfinches*

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### BINOCULARS AND TELESCOPES.


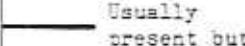
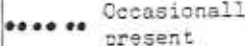
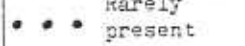
Do you need advice on binoculars or telescopes? Whether it be repair or cleaning, or the purchase of new or secondhand instruments, the Warden may be able to help. If you are dissatisfied with your binoculars, are they out of alignment, or do they just need cleaning?

I can supply new equipment from SWIFT, HABICHT, BUSHNELL and BAUSCH & LOMB, or I may be able to put you in touch with owners of suitable secondhand equipment.

All enquiries to: Barry Yates (see address in the heading of this Newsletter).

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# A GUIDE TO WATCHING WADERS AT RYE HARBOUR

	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
OYSTERCATCHER												
AVOCET		•	• •	• • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• •	•	•	• •		•
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER				• •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • • • •	• • • • • •	• •			
RINGED PLOVER												
KENTISH PLOVER				• • •			•	•	• •			
GOLDEN PLOVER			• •	•				• •	• • • •			
GREY PLOVER							• •					
LAPWING												
KNOT	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
SANDERLING						• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
LITTLE STINT				•	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	•	•
CURLEW SANDPIPER				• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
GUNLIN						• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
RUFF	•	•	•	• • • •	•	•	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
JACK SNIBE	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• •						• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
SNIBE					• •		• •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
WOODCOCK	• • • •	• • • •	• •								• •	• • • •
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT		•		• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
WHIMBREL				• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
CURLEW												
SPOTTED REDSHANK				• •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
REDSHANK												
GREENSHANK				• •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• •	•
GREEN SANDPIPER	•	•		• •		•	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
WOOD SANDPIPER				• •			• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
COMMON SANDPIPER	• •			• • • •	• • • •	• •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •	•	
TURNSTONE												
	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.	SEP.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
KEY	 Usually present and common			 Usually present but scarce			 Occasionally present			 Rarely present		

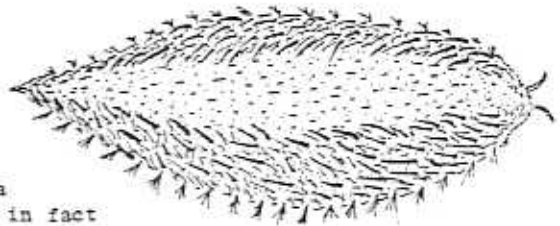
Throughout the year many species of wader will be found on the Nature Reserve, but some can only be seen for a brief period. The above table will enable you to pick the best timing for your visits for a particular species or it may give you an idea of what is likely to be about during a certain month.

Do remember that all species have particular habits that might make them difficult to find. For example Curlew, Whimbrel and Black-tailed Godwit are most numerous at dusk, when they come in to roost. Generally waders are most easily seen at high tide, so check before you set-out.

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## A CLOSER LOOK AT SEA MOUSE (*Aphrodite aculeata*).

This hairy animal, growing to about 10cm long, is rarely seen because it is normally found living in the sand below the low water mark. Occasionally, after storms, it can be found in large numbers washed up at the high tide mark. If you are lucky enough to find one, take a close look and you will see that it is covered with iridescent green and golden hairs and lustrous brown spines. Although it doesn't look like a worm, a careful examination will reveal that it is segmented and it is in fact closely related to ragworms.



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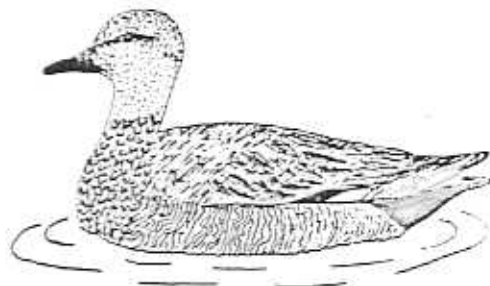
## CALLING ALL ARTISTS.

The publications of the Nature Reserve are made much more attractive with the inclusion of small, black ink drawings. It is better to have a variety of styles and subjects. So if you are able to produce one or two drawings, then please make the effort, and let us have them or maybe borrow them for future issues. Perhaps we could have a small display of your work at the Annual General Meeting in May. Please have a go.

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A CLOSER LOOK AT GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

This dabbling duck can be seen at Rye Harbour in small numbers all year round. The females, immatures and males in eclipse plumage (during late summer the males moult into a drab plumage) resemble a female Mallard, but the bill is smaller, forehead more abrupt and there is a distinct white speculum and belly. For much of the year the male (illustrated on the right) is a distinctive grey duck. In flight each wing shows a large white panel close to the body.



In England the Gadwall has become a regular breeder, mainly because of introductions since the late 19th century by wildfowlers. Its stronghold is now in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and North Kent, where it nests in long vegetation close to the water. There has been no confirmed breeding at Rye Harbour, but in several years it has been suspected and it is a strong candidate for a future breeding species.

Numbers in England are boosted in winter by birds from the main breeding areas in Central Europe, and it is at this winter time that it is at its most numerous and attractive at Rye Harbour.

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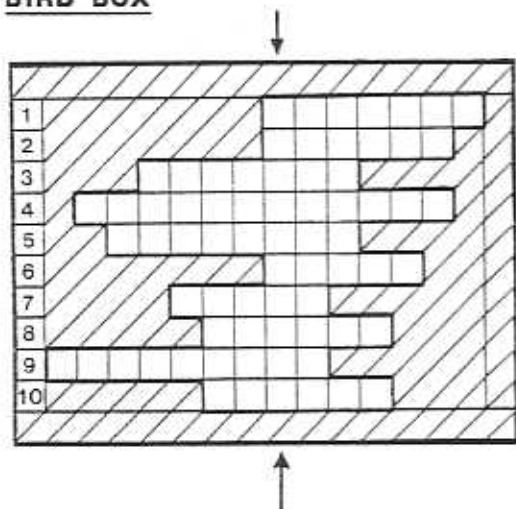
CALLING ALL NATURALISTS.

If you are interested in a particular group of plants or animals to a level where you can accurately identify them, would you be able to submit records for inclusion in the Reserve records? It is most important to include details of common name, specific name, date, location, numbers present and your name. For further details of this Record Scheme please contact the Warden, Barry Yates (address in Newsletter heading).

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BIRD BOX

Barry Yates.



Fill in the answers to reveal a favourite location at the arrows. All answers are names of birds to be seen at Rye Harbour.

1. Small thrush.
2. Country Woodpecker.
3. Woodpecker with a "Jynx".
4. No cheese with the bread.
5. Sentinel of the marsh.
6. Ruff's mate.
7. Nest is a soggy, floating heap!
8. Golden, ringed?
9. Bonxie.
10. A famous wizard.

Correct answers returned to Barry Yates (address in Newsletter heading) by end of January 1986 will have a chance to win a nestbox. Answers and prizewinner will be announced in the next Newsletter.

If you would like a nestbox but are unlucky with the quiz, they can be purchased and collected for £3 each from Barry, all profits will go to the Friends funds. Now is the time to put out your nest boxes, so that the birds can begin to set-up their territories early in the new year.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

- Sunday 5th January 1986 - BIRDWATCH UK86 (see details overleaf).
- Sunday 9th January 1986 - Friends Guided Walk, meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, at 2.00pm for a full afternoons birdwatching.
- Fri & Sat 28/29 March (Good Friday) - Work Party on the Reserve, meet at the Information Centre at 10.00am or later out on the Reserve. Bring rubber boots, spades and garden forks. The work will include island building, weeding and litter collection.
- Saturday 26th April - Friends Guided Walk to see Whimbrel, meet at Information Centre at 4.00pm for birdwatching until dusk.
- Saturday 3rd May 1986 - Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. Further details to be announced in the next Newsletter.

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# BIRDWATCH

## UK 86

### SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 1986



*Shoveler ducks*

The RSPB and the Wildfowl Trust will be collaborating with the BBC to try to make people more aware of the tremendous wealth of wildlife that can be seen during the winter months around the British countryside, with particular emphasis on wildfowl.

On Thursday, 2nd January 1986, the BBC will show a special Birdwatch programme which will be hosted by Tony Soper. The last Birdwatch programme from the Farn Islands earlier in 1985 was watched by over 10.5 million people! This time most RSPB and Wildfowl Trust reserves will be open to the public free of charge, and many other wildlife organisations and reserves will also be taking part, including the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The main aim of the programme will be to encourage people, especially beginners, to get out into their local area to watch birds. The BBC will show some of the species that are likely to be seen, and of course many of these will be at Ternery Pool on the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve on the 5th of January, when the Warden and other helpers will be in the hides to help visitors to identify the species seen - from 10.00am to 4.30pm.

This will be an excellent opportunity for beginners to learn a bit about the birds first in the programme on the Thursday, so that they will be fully informed for their excursions into the wilds on the Sunday.

Please publicise these two events especially to children and beginners - Good watching.

## ***Begin Birdwatching with us!***

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MEMBERSHIP INCREASE.

Ian R-D.

It is with some regret that the Committee of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve have to announce that the minimum annual membership subscription will be increased in 1986 to £2 and we therefore please ask members to bear this in mind when renewing their subscriptions. We would also like to remind those members that pay by automatic Bankers Order each time, that maybe these Orders need to be amended.

This matter was fully explained at the last Annual General Meeting, the main reason being the increasing costs of postage and printing of not only Newsletters but also other membership communication and records. Even with this increase, the Friends must still be one of the organisations with the lowest minimum annual subscription in the Southeast of England! Naturally, we hope that as many members as possible will continue to think that the Reserve is well worth supporting to a greater degree, and that they will reflect this in paying a subscription for an amount well in excess of the minimum figure. For this we offer our grateful thanks and look forward to some exciting challenges and new ventures for the Reserve in 1986.

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