



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

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

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 6 / 7 .

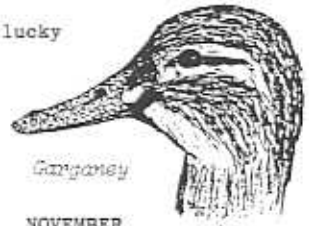
N U M B E R 2 5 .

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Dr. Barry Yates.

Since the last Newsletter in August, the weather has continued its usual erratic path, and has provided the Reserve with many unusual migrant birds and an extended flowering period of several plants, particularly the Herb Robert. As in recent years, October and November have been very mild, and I wonder if there is another cold winter coming. This mild weather has meant there has been little variety of wildfowl, but it did extend the stay of some Garganey, a summer visitor, until November 15th. With colder weather we can expect many birds from Europe and Scandinavia to find refuge with us, providing more varied birdwatching.

The recent FRIENDS GUIDED WALKS have proved very popular and we have been very lucky with the weather, and the birds. In October the whole group had good views of Ruddy Duck and Serin (a new bird for me as well as the Reserve), and in November the fog lifted just in time for us to watch a Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier hunting over the Reserve.



Garganey

Very unusual birds have continued to visit the Reserve, making it a memorable year, with several new species for the Reserve (marked + below):-

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
Spoonbill	Pectoral Sandpiper	Ruddy Ducks (3)	Bewick's Swan
Semi-palmated Sandpiper +	Tawny Pipits (2)	Serin +	Black-necked Grebe
Aquatic Warbler +	Glossy Ibis +	Woodlark +	Little Auk

834
'86

Unfortunately most of these birds stayed only briefly, but to give yourself a better chance of seeing some of them, you should arm yourself with two booklets: Most useful is the Annual Report (@ £1 plus s.a.c.) which gives information on the times and places of previous sightings, and secondly a Tide Table so that you can visit the Reserve at the best time for seeing most of the birds - at the high tides. High Tide Tables are available from:-

Adams the Stationers, High Street, Rye, East Sussex.

OR Information Centre, Robertson Terrace, Hastings, East Sussex.

Many of the regular birds have been particularly common this year, up to 14 Spotted Redshanks, 150 Snipe, 110 Shoveler, 19 Gadwall, 9 Pintail and 1,000 Greenfinches.

The past year has been particularly important for the Reserve with the acquisition of the new cottage, establishment of the Wader Pool, first successful breeding of Sandwich Terns, and membership of the FRIENDS approaching 800. This next year could be just as eventful - a new hide is planned for the Wader Pool, improvements and extensions of the electric fencing, and hopefully another new species of breeding bird at Ternery Pool! No guessing please.

I would like to wish all members of the FRIENDS a Happy New Year, and thank you all for your support during 1986. With your continued support, we can together make still further improvements to the Nature Reserve that will benefit both the wildlife and those visitors who come to see it in the future.

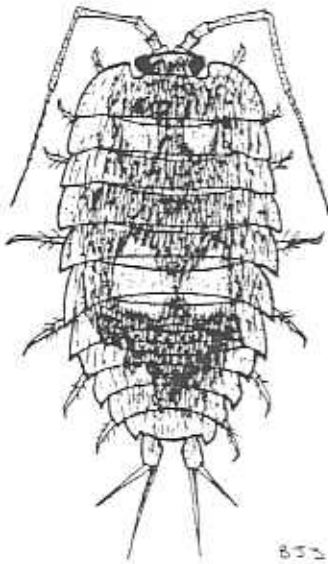
RESULTS OF RECENT FRIENDS FUNDRAISING.

Coffee Morning, Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, 24th August 1986 = Profits £215 (a most successful event).
Charity Auction, Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, 6th September 1986 = Profits £490 (as a new experiment for us, this type of unusual fundraising event proved to be most interesting and a great success for our funds).

Our thanks to all those who so generously gave their time as well as items for these events.

This is one of the nine species of woodlouse that has been recorded at Rye Harbour. It is the largest species, with some specimens exceeding 30mm in length. The colour is variable, from a mottled dark grey-green to a uniform light grey-brown, with individuals able to change. There are two lighter patches on the back. It's size and features combined with it's requirement for sea water make it a distinctive woodlouse.

The Sea Slater is mainly a species of rocky coasts, occurring below or around the high-water mark, so it is generally scarce in Southeast England. At Rye Harbour there are few suitable sites for it, but it does occur under stones along the Saltmarsh, and at the River Mouth. By day it remains concealed, coming out into the open only at night.



857386

MATHMANIA

Can you calculate the following sum? All are connected with the Reserve:-

- Take the petals of Yellow-horned Poppy,
- Add the Little Tern pairs in 1986,
- Add the number of flaps at the front of each hide on the Reserve.
- Divide by the usual clutch size of Ringed Plover,
- Divide by the species of Lagomorph to be found on the Reserve.
- Subtract the number of seeds in a Sea Kale pod.
- Divide by the species of Charadrius recorded.
- Subtract the number of chimney stacks at Watch Cottages.

To get the number of Sand Martins nesting at Rye Harbour in 1986.

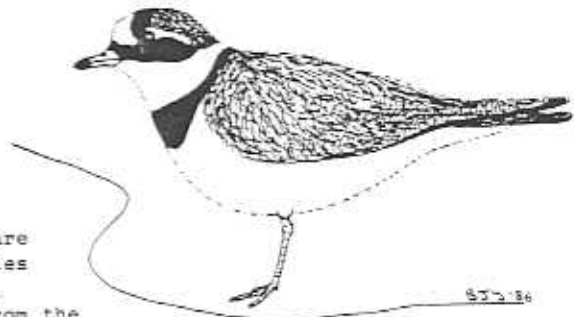
BIRDWATCHING COURSES.

Learning more about birds can be a very slow process, but I hope to make it easier for those that already have a basic knowledge. I shall be running a year long series of monthly guided birdwatching walks, with the aim of seeing and hearing as many species as possible, and watching their changes of plumage, numbers and behaviour. The visits will last approximately 3 hours and will be on the same day of the week each month, but the time of day will vary. Depending on response, there could be a weekday and weekend group and each will be limited to 10 people, so that everyone will see the birds comfortably. 100 species guaranteed! The cost will be £12 per person for the year. For further details please contact Barry Yates (with s.a.e.) at address in Newsletter heading. Please state your preferred day. Starts February.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*).

This is the commonest of the three species of small plover that are recorded on the Reserve, but it can be mistaken for the Little Ringed Plover which is smaller with distinct yellow eye ring, or the Kentish Plover which is paler with black legs, especially in the autumn when there are many juveniles about.

During the winter this species becomes very scarce and all records are noteworthy. It is not until early March that the first birds return from their wintering areas in the south and west, and take up their territories on the shingle. Here they are conspicuous because of their "butterfly" displays, where the males fly with stiff wingbeats, repeatedly calling a tuneful "teelea". The breeding population has greatly benefitted on the Reserve from the protection originally directed at Little Terns, and the number of pairs has increased from 10 (in 1976) to 50 (in 1985) and represented 52% of all pairs nesting in Sussex in 1984.



857386

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Sunday, 1st February 1987: GUIDED WALK to Ternery Pool to find Sea Slater and Ringed Plover if possible. 10.00am to 1.00pm. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

Friday & Saturday, 17th & 18th April 1987: WORK PARTY to clean litter from the beach and to prepare Ternery Pool for breeding birds. 10.00am to 4.00pm. Meet at the Information Centre or later at Ternery Pool. Bring suitable garden tools and lunch.

Saturday, 25th April 1987: GUIDED WALK to Ternery Pool and the Wood to look for early migrants. 10.00am to 3.00pm. Meet at the Information Centre with lunch.

Saturday, 2nd May 1987: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, at 7.30pm in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. Further details will be announced in the next Newsletter.