



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 (number 269535) founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and management of the Nature Reserve within the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest, (known as the SSSI).

CHAIRMAN: Ian Rumley-Dawson.

SECRETARY: Miss Liz Blackwell.

TREASURER: Stefan Wiener.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot

COMMITTEE: Jill Barry, Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer,

Mike Saville, Mrs. Anne Yates.

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates.

ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

WINTER 1991.

NUMBER 40.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Barry Yates.

AUGUST 1991.

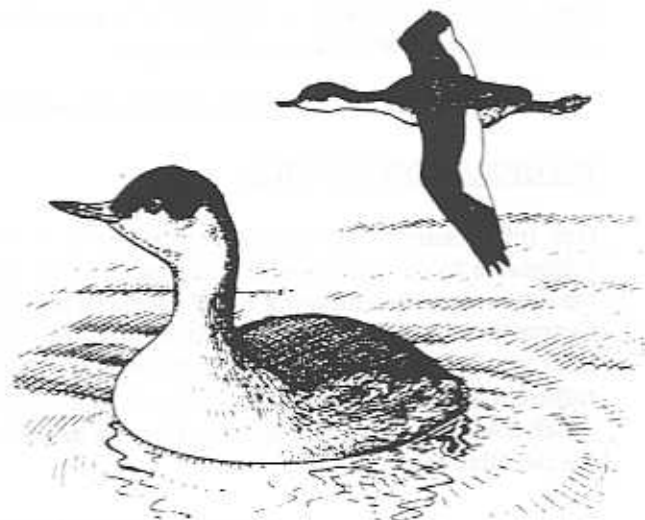
At Ternery Pool there was a superb Black-necked Grebe until 9th, the first Wigeon from 24th, 1-2 Gargany all month, 2 Marsh Harriers, 1-2 Little Ringed Plovers, a Kentish Plover on 10th, the first Golden Plover on 8th and 1-3 Wood Sandpipers all month. Unusually this month, we did not see any large gatherings of terns, perhaps indicating poor fishing in Rye Bay.

SEPTEMBER 1991.

Wildfowl numbers were good, especially at Ternery Pool, where maximum numbers were - Canada Geese 300, Barnacle Geese 3, Greylag Geese 29, Shelduck 10, Wigeon 90, Gadwall 14, Teal 300, Mallard 600, Pintail 11, Garganey 2, Shoveler 170, Pochard 5, Tufted Duck 42. However, the wader numbers were low because of high water levels covering most of the muddy margins of Ternery Pool. There were excellent numbers of Yellow Wagtail and Whinchats until the 23rd, a steady eastward movement of Siskins from 16th, a late Swift on 7th and the last Cuckoo on 17th. Very unusual for Rye Harbour Nature Reserve was the presence of Coal Tits mid-month and a Woodlark on 27th. First winter arrivals on the Reserve were a Stonechat on 26th and 7 Brent Geese offshore on 27th. An immature Common Seal was first noted at the River Mouth on 27th and was regularly seen into November.

OCTOBER 1991.

At Ternery Pool roosting Cormorants increased to a record number of 188 and Water Rails were regularly seen from the hides. Most of the wildfowl reported last month continued to be seen until the end of this month. The second week was good for raptors with the last Hobby and Marsh Harrier, occasional Peregrine and regular Sparrow Hawk, Kestrel and Merlin chasing the large flocks of finches and pipits over the "set-aside" fields. Among the waders 1-2 Little Stints remained until 9th, and Jack Snipe (best looked for at dusk) returned to the Wader Pool from the 9th.



BLACK-
NECKED
GREBES

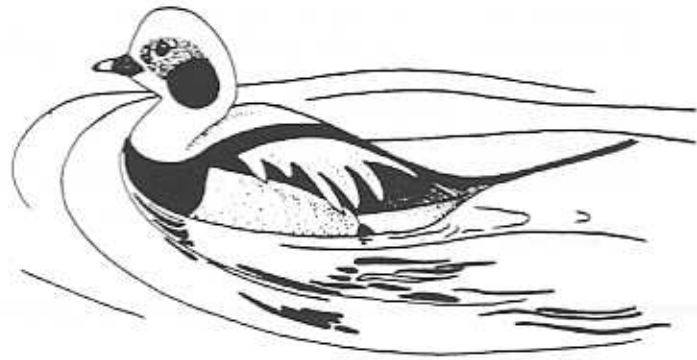
Species that have been scarce this autumn are Kingfisher and Goldcrest, perhaps both were affected by last February's icy weather? Nearly all month there was an excellent eastward passage of finches, especially Siskins, Linnets and Goldfinches, but also Redpolls and Brambling.

The latest dates for summer visitors were - Turtle Dove 6th, Sand Martin 26th, Swallow 30th, House Martin 25th, Yellow Wagtail 30th, Whinchat 14th, Wheatear 28th, Reed Warbler 13th, Whitethroat 2nd and Garden Warbler 4th. Many of these dates were later than normal.

NOVEMBER.

Without any very cold weather, this month provided few surprises. There was a Red-necked Grebe in the area on 28th and a single Whooper Swan flying over on two days. There were up to 5 Pintail including a regular fine male, up to 11 Scaup, 3 female Long-tailed Ducks from 4th, several Goldeneye including a fine male from 16th and a male Red-breasted Merganser on 30th. The raptors were varied, if not numerous, with a few single Hen Harriers, regular Merlin and Sparrow hawk and an occasional Peregrine, but the bird of the month was a Goshawk on 12th.

LONG-TAILED DUCK



Water Rails were regular but often elusive. Among the waders there were 2 Avocets on 20th, up to 350 Golden Plover, 60 Sanderling, 13 Jack Snipe and 400 Curlew.

Roosting Gulls were counted on 25th, resulting in 1,750 Black-headed, 8,050 Common, 8 Lesser Black-backed, 3,650 Herring and 1,305 Great Black-backed Gulls. Auks were very scarce, but a Little Auk was seen on the 10th. Unusually all 5 common owls were noted this month with the most unusual record being that of a Tawny Owl in the Wood.

A few "summer visitors" were noted. The last Swallow and House Martin were seen on 4th. A Wheatear with a damaged leg was present for three weeks until 9th and a few Chiffchaffs remained in the Wood.

REQUESTS FOR HELP.

There may be opportunities during the coming year for the Reserve to undertake more management of the land within the SSSI. If you can spare some time and energy in participating, then please contact Barry Yates with details of when you are available and what you would prefer to do. Even if you have helped before, please still let Barry know so that lists can be updated. Such extra help may be needed for fencing, litter collecting, Ragwort pulling, plant recording, island weeding, counting birds, counting visitors, nestbox or raft construction, scrub clearance, helping at fund raising events (cake baking, coffee making) and helping with guided walks. Also if you have some special skills to offer or have access to materials at special rates that would be of use to the Reserve, then also please let us know. Thank you.

INFORMATION CENTRE.

Our Information Centre at Rye Harbour is not manned at any time of the year, but if there were sufficient volunteers to do this, then it could be of much more value to visitors, as well as being of far greater benefit for the Reserve by encouraging more people to join the Friends. Certainly it would be a great advantage to see the Centre manned at weekends from April through to September, providing information, leaflets and our range of sales goods to visitors. If you are willing to give assistance here, please contact Barry Yates. Maybe with sufficient supporters on a regular basis, we could build-up a much needed special Sales Team for the Reserve, which could bring-in a lot of extra finance, as well as a deeper interest from visitors and would certainly improve the facilities of the Reserve.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1992.

Saturday 7th March: WORK PARTY.

10am - 2pm at the Wader Pool. Bring rubber boots and garden spades to complete the work on the extension of the pool. Meet at the Information Centre.

Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th March: BEACH CLEAN-UP.

In conjunction with the Rother Environment Group, bring work gloves to collect the wind-blown rubbish from our beach. There will be hot soup at the Old Lifeboat House at 1.00pm. Meet at the Winchelsea Beach gate at Dog's Hill Road (map reference TQ 918 161).

Saturday 21st March: SOS WORK PARTY.

10am - 3pm. Weeding islands at Ternery Pool and laying a plastic liner on one island. Bring garden forks and spades, work gloves and rubber boots. Meet at the Information Centre.

GUIDED WALKS: All the following walks start from the Information Centre in the large carpark by the Martello Tower at Rye Harbour.

Sunday 2nd February 10am - 1pm Friends Guided Walk to see Winter birds.

Saturday 4th April 9am - 1pm Friends Guided Walk to see early migrants.

Saturday 16th May 9am - 2pm Friends Guided Walk to see the wildlife at it's best.

FRIENDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Saturday, 9th May 1992, 7.30pm. Please note that this meeting will be held at the Rye Community Centre in Rye. The reason for this change of venue is due to the fact that over the last few years our Annual General Meeting has become so popular and well attended, that we have now outgrown our usual hall. Hopefully, the larger Rye Community Centre will enable us to expand our sales stalls and other attractions at this important meeting of our year. It gives members a good opportunity to hear about some of the latest developments and wildlife on the Reserve, as well as providing a good chance for the exchange of other ideas and information.

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RYE HARBOUR WATCH GROUP.

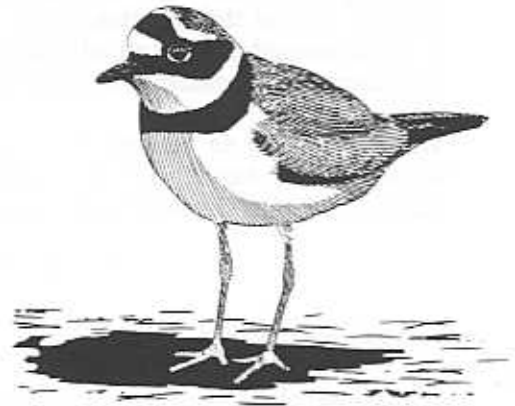
Barry Yates.

WATCH is a National club for young people who care about wildlife and the environment as a whole. It is the junior wing of the RSNW Wildlife Trusts Partnership.

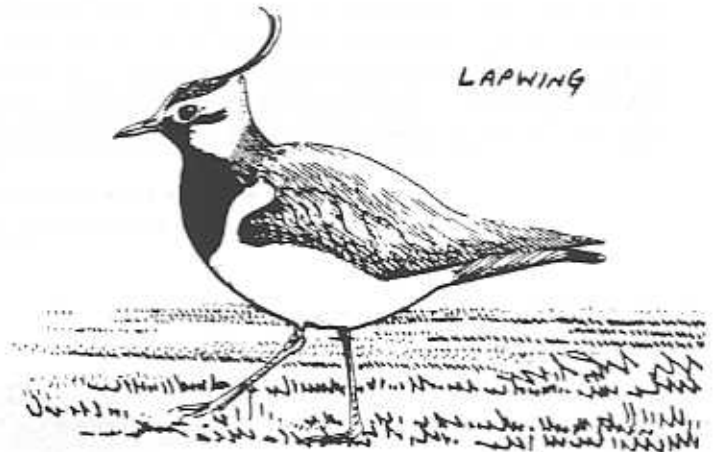
Around the Rye area there are few opportunities for children to get involved with wildlife groups. I feel that such involvement is very important, so I am proposing to start a WATCH GROUP at Rye Harbour. This will only be possible if I can get a co-leader and some regular helpers. I can provide full details of WATCH and how adults can help if you send me a s.a.e.. If the idea is successful, there will be further details in the Spring edition of this Newsletter.

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LITTLE RINGED PLOVER



LAPWING



WADER POOL EXTENSION.

The latest extension of the Wader Pool is now almost completed. We managed to get a sufficient quantity of fine clay to seal the last area which has now been flooded. Small animals are colonising the new areas of the Pool and should provide an adequate supply of food for waders in the spring. Although the area looks very bare and disturbed, it continues to be the best place to observe Snipe and Jack Snipe.

We still need to do a small amount of work with a machine, but when that is done, we will carry out some landscaping by hand!!! For this final stage of the work we have planned a special Work Party on Saturday, 7th March 1992, (see Dates for Your Diary).

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ASSISTANT WARDEN.

Dominic Funnell.

For the last three years the funding of an Assistant Warden has been possible with a grant from English Nature (formerly known as the Nature Conservancy Council), plus some top-up funding from the Friends. Unfortunately, the English Nature grant will no longer be available, but the Reserve's Management Committee will continue to employ an Assistant Warden with the support of the Friends. We are pleased to report that Dominic Funnell will, for the third year, be the Reserve's Assistant Warden. During the winter, Dominic has been abroad, working on a survey of raptors in Israel, but he has now returned and will soon take up his work again on the Reserve.

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WARDEN'S WANDERINGS.

Barry Yates.

It is not only our Assistant Warden who has been to Israel for some winter sun and birdwatching. Our Warden has also been to experience the delights of watching migrants and desert species in Eilat. If you would like to travel with him, under the auspices of BIRDING, (the well known travel company run by John Gooders), for a one week trip in March 1992 to watch the spectacle of bird migration in comfort, then contact Barry quickly for further details. Last bookings by the end of January 1992.

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WATCH COTTAGE IMPROVEMENTS.

The Reserve's cottage has had some major improvements completed in recent months. The walls of the older part of the property needed new wall ties and four windows needed replacement. The Friends Committee agreed to fund this much needed urgent work. It was completed before any bad weather arrived and the Warden reports that the cottage is now significantly warmer and drier than before.

The replacement windows were supplied and fitted by Davis & Tate, who operate a "Recommend a Friend" scheme. So if you are considering such work on your own house or office, then the Reserve could benefit by receiving a £50 recommendation commission. If you would like to help the Reserve in this easy way, then please **MAKE SURE YOU CONTACT BARRY YATES FIRST BEFORE YOU APPROACH THE COMPANY.** Barry will then pass your name by a special voucher on to the company who will in turn contact you.

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..... The End

TURNSTONES

