



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 (Tern Watch Organiser).

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates.

ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

AUTUMN 1992.

NUMBER 42.

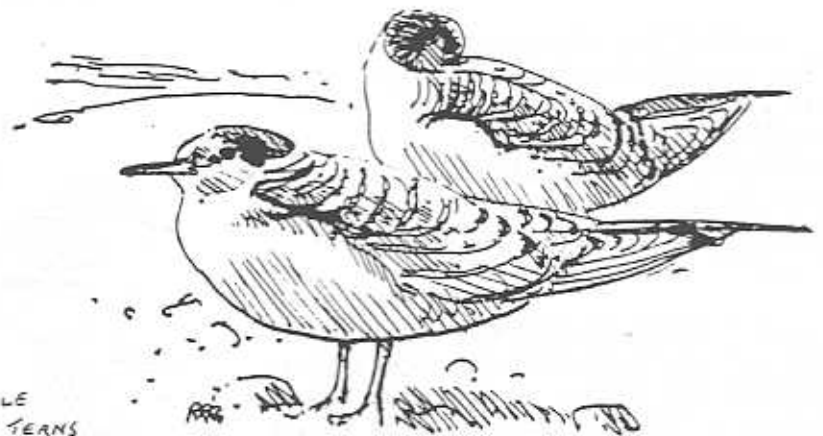
WARDEN'S REPORT.

Barry Yates.

APRIL 1992.

April is the month when most of our summer visitors and passage migrants appear, so it was an exciting time. The first dates were:-

Little Ringed Plover 18th
Temminck's Stint 27th
Curlew Sandpiper 21st
Ruff 19th
Bar-tailed Godwit 5th
Whimbrel 11th
Greenshank 15th
Common Sandpiper 22nd
Little Gull 19th
Common Tern 14th
Little Tern 18th
Black Tern 21st
Turtle Dove 29th
Cuckoo 16th
Swift 26th
Swallow 9th
House Martin 24th
Yellow Wagtail 1st
White Wagtail 14th
Redstart 21st
Nightingale 22nd
Sedge Warbler 17th
Reed Warbler 25th
Lesser Whitethroat 28th
Whitethroat 23rd
Garden Warbler 26th
Willow Warbler 28th
Wood warbler 28th



JUVENILE
COMMON TERNS

LAPWING
WITH CHICKS



At Ternery Pool there was a Spoonbill on 8th and the first Canada goslings appeared on 21st. At the Wader Pool 1-3 Jack Snipe remained all month. In the River Rother there was an Eider and a Common Seal all month, and a Red-breasted Merganser on 27th and 28th.

Birds of prey were varied, with Hen Harrier regular until 19th, Merlin until 14th, Hobby on 29th, Goshawk on 23rd, Peregrine on 3 dates and Sparrowhawk and Kestrel regular.

MAY 1992.

The spring passage of waders included:- 1-2 Avocets, 2 Little Ringed Plovers, 1-8 Grey Plovers in breeding plumage, 2 Knot in breeding plumage, 12 Sanderling in breeding plumage, 1 Little Stint, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, up to 8 Ruff, the last 2 Jack Snipe on 5th, 2 Black-tailed Godwits, up to 15 Bar-tailed Godwits, up to 130 Whimbrel, just 3 Curlew, 2 Spotted Redshanks, 2 Greenshanks, several Common Sandpipers and 8 Turnstones.

The Least Tern (American species of Little Tern) came back on 24th for its 10th season here at Rye Harbour, but it was elusive until June when several hundred "twitchers" successfully heard and saw this very rare bird. The Raven seen on 19th was probably not a wild bird. A superb pale phase Arctic Skua was seen over the Pits on a couple of days, then found dead at the Wader Pool.

JUNE 1992.

At Ternery Pool there was an adult Little Egret from 20th-24th, 1 Spoonbill on 29th, up to 3 Avocets for the first 2 weeks of June, a few scattered records of Greenshank, Spotted Redshank and Green Sandpiper. More unusual than these were the occasional sightings of a Long-eared Owl, a Red-footed Falcon on 13th, 14th and 15th, a female Nightjar on the Beach on 2nd and a Golden Oriole singing in the Wood on 25th. The traditional roost of Curlew had already increased to 195 by 28th.

JULY 1992.

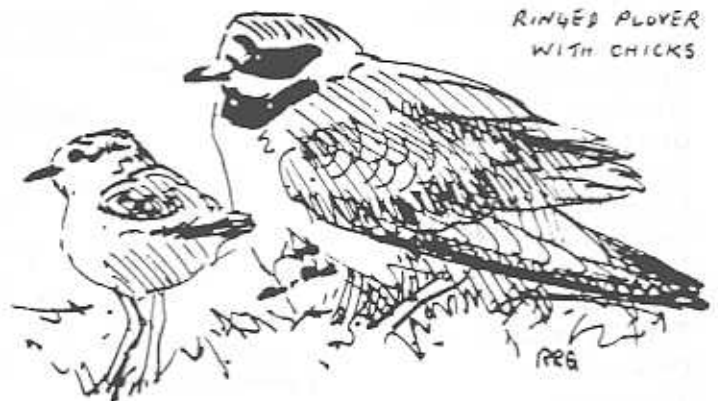
At the Wader Pool there were up to 12 Black-tailed Godwits, some in breeding plumage of the Icelandic race, hungrily feeding for several weeks and joined for a few days by a Curlew Sandpiper in full breeding plumage.

PLANTS.

There have been some additions to the last (July 1991) list of flowering plants of the Nature Reserve:-

- Common Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)
- Sharp-leaved Fluellen (*Kickxia elatine*)
- Great Lettuce (*Lactuca virosa*)
- Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*)
- Field Madder (*Sherardia arvensa*)
- A Bramble species (*Rubus tuberculatus*)
- Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*)
- Corncockle (*Agrosytemma githago*)

A detailed study of the plants of a one hundred square metres of natural shingle ridges has just completed it's fourth year and it clearly indicates that the population of some species fluctuates dramatically:-



RINGED PLOVER
WITH CHICKS

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
Herb Robert	1395	1	532	605
Sticky Groundsel	607	13	1854	0
Red Hempnettle	105	0	318	452
Groundsel	41	0	0	0

While other species are more constant:-

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
Sea Kale	46	34	40	49
Woody Nightshade	24	12	15	27
Danish-Scurvy Grass	7	9	37	57
Sea Pea (area of growth m ²)	4.5	3.5	4.5	7.0

BREEDING BIRDS.

Highlights from this year include the first breeding record for the Reserve of Gadwall, with one brood at Ternery Pool, and only the third breeding record of Shoveler, with a brood also at Ternery Pool. The Black-headed Gulls (100-120 pairs) and Common Terns (45-50 pairs), produced about 1.5 flying young per pair. The Ringed Plovers produced many flying young, but Oystercatchers, Redshanks and Lapwings had moderate success. Within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), there was a record number of Sedge Warblers with 83 singing males. However, two of our most important species did not fair so well - the only regular breeding Wheatears in Sussex nest at Rye Harbour, but this year there were only 5 pairs (11-13 pairs last year), so this was the lowest number since 1979. At first, the Little Terns were having a good season with 40-45 pairs nesting and catching fish easily, but when most of the chicks hatched a male Kestrel repeatedly visited the colony and took many of them. There was also some wet and windy weather and Foxes occasionally entered the fenced areas, so there are only 6-10 flying young at the moment, with a few nests still to hatch.

WADER POOL UPDATE.

Barry Yates.

The extension of the Wader Pool has been a great success, providing a larger and more diverse area for wetland wildlife. Plants are beginning to colonise the new areas and the wading birds are finding plenty of food there. The local breeding waders have raised many chicks on the Pool and other birds visit it regularly. From the Colin Green Hide it has been possible to watch, from just a few metres away, the families of Lapwing, Redshank and Ringed Plover feeding and developing. The next few months should see a great variety of wading birds passing south on migration, then the Jack Snipe should return for the winter!

WORK PARTIES.

The islands at Ternery Pool will once again need weeding this autumn, so if you are willing and able, or if you would like to see the islands close-up, then please come to the next WORK PARTY on Saturday, 19th September 1992. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour at 10.00am, or later at Ternery Pool. The day will end at about 3.00pm. Please bring work gloves, waterproof boots, garden forks and your lunch, plus binoculars in case of rarities.

PETT POOLS PROJECT.

Barry Yates.

If you are interested in wading birds and are visiting the Reserve in the autumn, then you should also consider visiting the Pett Level Pool, which is on the coast 3 miles to the west of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Here the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) has drained the pool next to the coast road, to provide a good feeding area for wading birds on their southward migration. There is usually someone around to help identify difficult waders and at weekends the SOS has an information board there.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Monday, 31st August 1992, 10am - 12 noon. PLANT & PRODUCE SALE. In aid of the Friends, to be held in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. Cakes, plants and bring-and-buy items will be most welcome, preferably on the day, or beforehand to the Warden at the address in this Newsletter heading. Last year this event raised £352 for the funds of the Friends. Many thanks to all our regular supporters and helpers on this August Bank Holiday annual event. Anyone with any new ideas for different or additional stalls please contact Liz Blackwell (Secretary of the Friends), telephone = (0424) 753016

Saturday, 19th September 1992, 10am - 3pm. WORK PARTY. See details in paragraph above.

Sunday, 4th October 1992, 2pm - 5pm. THREE MILE CIRCULAR WILDLIFE WALK. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - Continued.

Saturday, 31st October 1992, 7.30pm. in the Community Centre, Conduit Street, Rye. **WILDLIFE IN FOCUS**
A slide illustrated lecture by Melvin Smith And Colin Page, who are both members of the Friends and have supported the Reserve in many ways in the past. This will be a fund-raising event in aid of the Friends. The theme will concentrate on local natural history, photographed in and around the Rye area, with close views of birds, insects, flowers and landscapes. Refreshments and sales goods will be available during the evening. Please publicise this event as much as possible among your colleagues.

Sunday, 1st November 1992, 10am - 1pm. **BIRDWATCHING & BEACHCOMBING.** After the violent storms of October, there should be much to find along the strandline. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

Friday, 1st January 1993, 9am - 1pm. **NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRDWATCH.** Start your birdwatching year with 50 species at Rye Harbour! Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

STOP PRESS!!! LAND PURCHASE - CASTLE WATER.

After a long period of negotiation, we are pleased to announce that the Friends have been able to assist the Sussex Wildlife Trust with the purchase of a large part of the Rye Harbour SSSI. The 219 acres called Castle Water is a mixture of gravel pit, grazing marsh, ditches and shingle ridges, which has important populations of several Nationally rare species of insects. The land will be managed as part of the Local Nature Reserve, so that its wildlife value can be secured and enhanced for the future. Access will initially be limited to the southwestern end of the large pit. This is a major step forward for the Reserve, made possible by our Land Fund. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this fund. More details of this exciting development will be published in the next Newsletter.

