



The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

A registered charity (No.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: Michael Saville

VICE CHAIR: Nicola Frith

SECRETARY: Liz Blackwell

TREASURER: Frank Clarke

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot

COMMITTEE: Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer, Anne Yates.

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates

ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

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WINTER 1994 NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 49.

WARDENS' REPORT

AUGUST 1994

The driest month of the year with just 41mm. of rain, but this was spread over 15 days.

On the 1st a moth, the Scarce Black Arches, was caught on Beach Reserve and was only the third record for Sussex. Another rare species seen was a Common Frog at Castle Water.

Duck numbers increased slowly, but at Ternery Pool, by mid-month, there was at least 80 Teal, 45 Shoveler, 260 Mallard, 6 Gadwall, 3 Garganey and single Pintail and Wigeon. Roosting Cormorants increased rapidly with 204 by 7th. Waders provided further interest, with single Little Ringed Plovers, up to 18 Sanderling along the shore, 4 Little Stints at Watch Cottage Pools on 3rd, single Ruff on 14th and up to 8 Black-tailed Godwits. Greenshank numbers remained low throughout the month, but there was a flock of 36 on 3rd. Other birds of note during the month included a Marsh Harrier on 1st, a Roseate Tern on 2nd, Black Terns on several days and 2 Little Egrets on 22nd. However, the first sign of "winter" was the flock of over 1000 Lapwings on Castle Farm from mid-month.

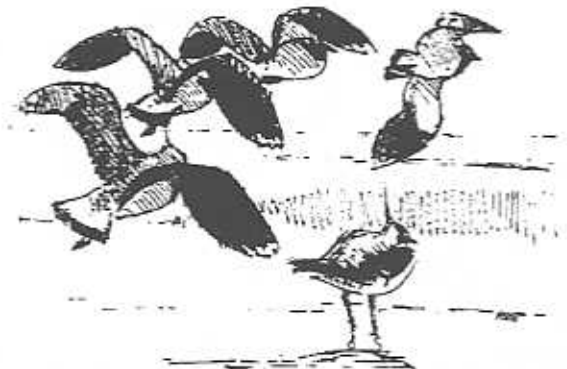
SEPTEMBER 1994

This was a very wet month with 116mm. of rain (more than double the average) spread over 19 days.

Another new moth species recorded was

the Pearly Underwing on 27th.

Autumn migration got well under way, with summer visitors disappearing fast. The last Cuckoo was on 3rd, Spotted Flycatcher on 5th, Common Tern on 10th, Swift on 21st, Redstart (the only autumn record!) on 27th, Sandwich Tern on 22nd and Hobby on 30th. The waders were scarce, with few birds around. The only Little Stints were 2 in a ditch at Castle Water on 24th, a single Black-tailed Godwit until mid-month, single Spotted Redshanks until 27th and single Greenshank and Green Sandpiper all month. There was a good passage of finches from mid-September to November, with many Siskin, and a few Redpoll. Scarce migrants included 2 Little Egrets on 3rd with a single still present until at least the 14th, a Purple Heron on 10th, a Spoonbill on 14th, an Osprey on 16th and 20th, a Marsh Harrier on 2 dates, a Wryneck (in our membership Secretary's garden) 17th-22nd and 2 Black-necked Grebes on 30th.



OCTOBER 1994

After a very dry first half of month there was 161mm. in the last eleven days!

This was an exceptional month for Clouded Yellow butterflies with up to 4 seen together throughout the month.

The last of the summer visitors were seen as follows; Whitethroat on 1st; Lesser Whitethroat, Sand Martin and House Martin on 3rd; Turtle Dove and Yellow Wagtail on 4th; Sedge Warbler on 9th; Black-tailed Godwit on 11th; Whinchat on 20th and Wheatear on 24th. Scarce migrants included female Red-Backed Shrike on 1st, 2 Black-necked Grebes on 2nd, with one still present on 5th, a drake American Wigeon (hybrid) from 3rd, a Jay (quite rare here) on 5th, 2 Glossy Ibis (very rare in Britain), a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker on 6th, an immature Red-necked Grebe on 9th-12th, Yellow-legged Gulls on 10th, 5 White Fronted Geese on 20th, Great Grey Shrike on 24th. The most unusual feature was the passage of Brent Geese, they normally follow the coast but this year many flocks were seen heading towards the coast over Rye and Castle Water. Winter visitors appeared throughout the month; 1-2 Merlin from early in the month, Redwing from 6th, Fieldfare from 15th, Rock Pipit and Short-eared Owl from 23rd, Black Redstart on 24th, Jack Snipe and Scaup from 28th and a Long-tailed Duck from 30th.

NOVEMBER 1994

The weather this month was exceptional, with the highest temperatures since our records began in 1977. The mean maximum temperature was 12.6°C (compared with an average of 10.2°C). The mean minimum was 9.1°C compared with an average of 4.4°C. However, the rainfall was only 53mm, just half the average.

The mild weather encouraged some late flying summer visitors with Red Admirals seen on 3 dates and an unidentified Hawker dragonfly on 26th. The moths continued to be of interest with Grey Shoulder Knot, a first for the Reserve and several more Pearly Underwings, a scarce migrant.

There was a single Swallow on 7th and Chiffchaff on two dates. Wildfowl numbers were reasonable during the month with a few notable absences; the hybrid drake American Wigeon was still

present until at least 26th; up to 51 Wigeon and 32 Gadwall moving between Ternery Pool and Castle Water, Teal and Mallard numbers were low all month with peaks of 112 and 224 respectively; Scaup, all females or immatures, were seen on 3 dates, and the female Long tailed Duck stayed all month. However, Eider and Goldeneye were scarce with just a single record for each. Winter raptors were well represented with regular Sparrowhawk, a single ringtail Hen Harrier and 1-2 Merlins all month. The wet weather encouraged the waders to be quite widely distributed with a large mobile flock of more than 2500 Lapwing in the area together with a few Golden Plovers, up to 160 Snipe on the Wader Pool and over 40 Sanderling along the shore. Other birds of note included Black Redstart on 3rd and 6th, Avocet on 4th, Firecrest and Brambling on 6th and Woodcock on 13th and Bearded Tits from mid-month.

DECEMBER 1994

The weather at the time of writing (12th) has remained very mild (last night's minimum temperature was 11.5°C!). This probably was the cause of a Swallow remaining (returning?) to the area on 5th. There were also several flowering plants around with Large Evening Primrose, Gorse and Daisies all in full bloom.

After the flooding caused by strong winds and high tides of the 4th there was a sighting of a Cormorant fishing(?) in the normally dry shingle ridges. Other more normal birds of note were Avocet on 1st, Black-necked Grebe on 5th, Long-tailed Duck until 6th, 18 Ruff on 4th, 2 adult Mediterranean Gulls. Near to Camber Castle there were large flocks of Linnets which attracted the attentions of Hen Harrier and Merlin.



CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

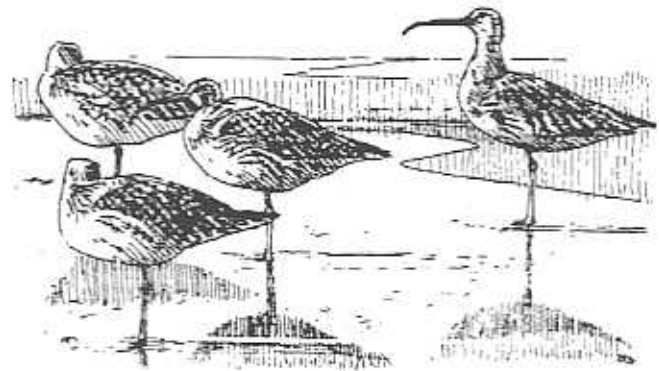
Friends who were at the AGM in September will remember that we mentioned three projects that were in hand;

The first was re-profiling the banks of Castle Water adjacent to and opposite the proposed new hide. This was completed in September with the aid of grants from the National Rivers Authority, English Nature and East Sussex County Council; it proved unnecessary for the Friends to share in these costs.

The second was the new hide on the north-west side of Castle Water; the Friends are meeting half the cost of materials, the other half being covered by Rural Action. Work started in December and progress is being made thanks to the efforts of our workparties led by Barry and Dominic. (How about lending a hand? Meet at 10 a.m. at the Information Centre on the first and third Tuesdays of the month). The hide should be ready for use by the end of March 1995.

The third was the acquisition of a 4-wheel drive vehicle. The Reserve now has a used Land Rover purchased from the NRA by the Reserve's Management Committee. It has proved invaluable with the recent wet weather and the work to be done at Castle Water.

Barry and Dominic have produced the Diary for 1995 in this Newsletter and there should be something for everyone. Last year the walks were well attended, especially the Whimbrel Walk with the very early start, but this year it will start at 4.30am to catch the early birds. If you would like a walk on another theme, please contact them to see if something can be arranged for 1996. If you belong to a another organisation that might enjoy similar Guided Walks, then please contact Barry to discuss.



THE NEWSLETTER

We have been thinking about the ways in which we can relieve the Warden of some of the work he does for the Friends. At present Barry not only writes most of the material in the Newsletters, but also edits and produces the master copy ready for printing in Lewes.

Is there a Friend who perhaps has desk-top publishing facilities and who would be willing to take on the editing and production of a master copy of the Newsletter? Naturally the Friends Committee will meet expenses and the Membership Secretary will still be responsible for circulating the 1200 copies.

It would be really good if the Friends could produce their own Newsletter. If there is someone "out there" who would take on this job, please get in touch with me.

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THE NATURE RESERVE, WILDLIFE AND YOU.

When you visit the Reserve, do you watch the wildlife, do you see the change of the seasons and do you notice differences between years?

If so, do you write down what you see?

If you answered yes to these questions, then you could add your observations to our ever knowledge of the area.

If you answered no to any question, then you may be missing out on something. By noting and writing down what you see you will understand more about our wildlife and if you send me your records you will help us to manage the area for its wildlife.

All that have to do is send me some, or all, of the following details;

The name of the species - even records of common species may be useful.

How many or what it was doing - was it singing, flowering, dead, flying south, etc

Where was it - on the beach, near the castle, in Carter's Pit or at TQ930171.

The date - simple

Your name and address - easier.

Useful records of common species are large numbers, late or early dates of occurrence or flowering, or species in new places. Records of very rare species are always difficult, but descriptions or photos may help.

The value of any record is based upon its location and this can be vague (Beach Reserve), more precise (Ternery Pool), or accurate (TQ938177). The accurate location is more difficult to describe, but I can supply maps which name the "compartments" that we use, or another map from which you can determine the grid references.

A guide to what is needed can be found by reading the latest Annual Report (available from the Nature Reserve address for £1.50p plus an A5 sae).

Some examples of useful (but not real) records - a Swallow seen 20th March, Yellow-horned Poppy flowering 30th November, a Red Admiral seen 4th December, a Little Tern feeding young at Castle Water in June, a Sea Kale plant at Castle Water, a photograph of a Great White Egret at Ternery Pool 1st April, Cinnabar Moth adult at Barn Field 3rd July, Marsh Frog calling at Castle Water 16th April, 421 Dunlin on the shore at dusk 13th December, Chiffchaff in the Wood 12th January.....the list is endless.

Your records will be entered into the Reserve's wildlife recording system - called RECORDER. Each record can then be used in future to draw up a species list for all, or a small part of the Reserve, or can be used to look at the distribution of individual species across the Reserve or through out a year. The record may well end up in a Newsletter, or the Annual Report and if it is of a bird it will be passed on to the Sussex Ornithological Society.

If you want to know more give me a call, or talk to me on the Reserve or during a Guided Walk.

Barry Yates

TIDES AT RYE HARBOUR

The state of the tide can influence what birds you see on the Beach Reserve. A high tide will make it easier to see and count waders, sea duck, Rock Pipits on saltmarsh in Winter and Dolphins offshore in July. Below is a summary of the times and heights of tides on Saturdays through the year.

REMEMBER the tide gets about 1 hour later each day, there are two high tides a day and the weather will influence the height of the tide.

January

7th-1509(2.9m) 14th-0931(2.6m) 21st-1333(3.5m) 28th -0840(2.9m)

February

4th-1356(3.3m) 11th-0759(2.0m) 18th-1242(3.7m) 25th-0716(2.2m)

March

4th-1258(3.6m) 11th-0601(1.6m) 18th-1144(3.8m) 25th-1811(2.1m)

April

1st-1203(3.6m) 8th -1633(1.9m) 15th-1038(3.7m) 22nd-1627(2.6m) 29th-1103(3.5m)

May

6th-1442(2.5m) 13th-0927(3.5m) 20th-1509(3.2m) 27th-0958(3.0)

June

3rd-1347(3.1m) 10th-0809(3.0m) 17th-1401(3.7m) 24th-0836(2.5m)

July

1st-1401(3.3m) 8th-0729(2.5m) 15th-1401(4.1m) 22nd-0740(2.1m) 29th-1308(3.5m)

August

5th-1811(2.5m) 12th-1304(4.1m) 19th-1812(2.1m) 26th-1203(3.5m)

September

2nd-1637(2.9m) 9th-1203(3.9m) 16th-1629(2.5m) 23rd-1054(3.3m) 30th-1526(3.3m)

October

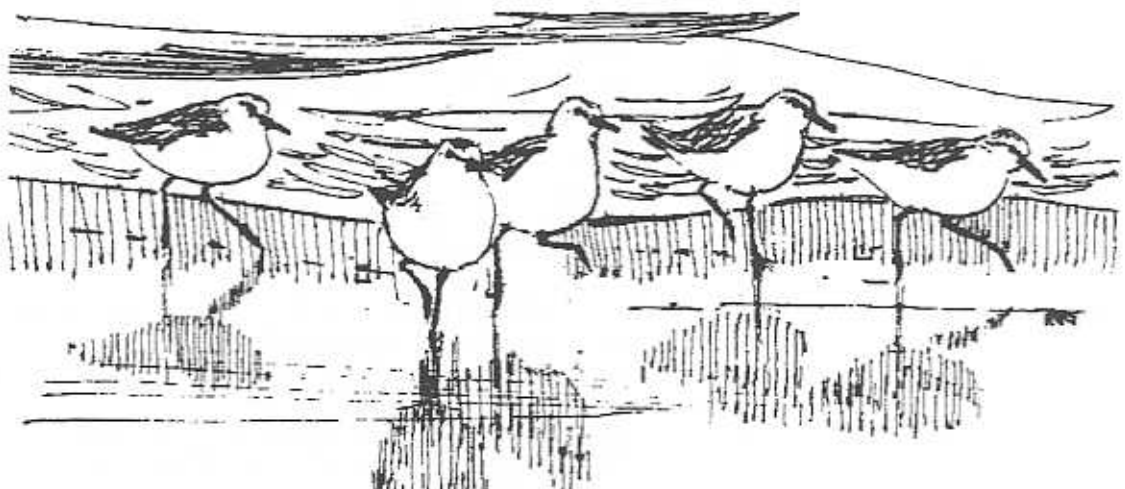
7th-1101(3.7m) 14th-1505(3.0m) 21st-0935(3.0m) 28th-1426(3.7m)

November

4th-0847(3.1m) 11th-1312(3.2m) 18th-0657(2.4m) 25th-1229(3.5m)

December

2nd-0705(2.6m) 9th-1223(3.3m) 16th-1727(2.1m) 23rd-1132(3.9m) 30th-1748(2.2m)



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 1995

- Sunday, 1st January. START YOUR BIRD YEAR LIST HERE.
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, returning about 1pm.
- Sunday, 12th February. MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL. A long circular walk of Beach Reserve and Castle Water with a picnic stop at Camber Castle.
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, returning about 2pm.
- Saturday, 18th March,
and
Sunday, 19th March. BEACH CLEAN - a chance to clear the beach of the winter's rubbish and, perhaps, see your first Wheatear and Sandwich Tern of the Year.
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, with work gloves, working until about 1pm.
- Sunday, 30th April. ANNUAL WHIMBREL WALK - an early start to see one of the largest roosts of Whimbrel in Britain (peaked at 416 in 1994!) then to look for another 69 species - hopefully.
Meet at Information Centre at 4.30am, returning about noon.
- Saturday, 13th May MEMBERS EVENING - an illustrated talk at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. See next Newsletter for details.
- Saturday, 27th May. SHINGLE FLOWERS. A short, but slow circular walk to find some of the flowers of the Beach Reserve.
Meet at Information Centre at 2pm, returning by 5pm.
- Sunday, 11th June. THE ANNUAL CYCLING TOUR OF THE NATURE RESERVE. Please bring your own bicycle, lunch and energy.
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, returning about 2pm
- Saturday, 15th July. WILDLIFE AT NIGHT. Bats and Moths, Badgers and Owls may all be seen on this evening walks. Meet at Brede Lock car park at 8.30pm, returning about mid-night.
- Saturday, 12th August. WILDLIFE OF THE BEACH. A chance to build sandcastles and find what lives below the sand. Please bring a small bucket and spade, if you can!
Meet at River Mouth at 4pm, finishing about 6pm.
- Thursday, 7th September. WADERS AND OTHER MIGRANTS AT PETT POOLS AND RYE HARBOUR.
Meet at 9am at Pett Pools (TQ9014) or at 10am at Dog's Hill Road toilet block (TQ917160) for a circular walk around the Reserve, returning about 1pm.
- Saturday, 23rd September. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at Community Centre, Rye.
More details in next Newsletter.
- Sunday, 15th October. THE CASTLE WATER CIRCULAR WALK (leaflets available @ 20p) with a chance to go inside Camber Castle.
Meet at the Brede lock car park (TQ920198) at 9am, returning about mid-day.
- Saturday, 25th November. BIRDWATCHING AT HIGH TIDE. A very high tide will provide a good chance to watch birds.
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, returning about 1pm.
- Saturday, 16th December. BIRDWATCHING AT DUSK. A good time to count the roosts of gulls and waders, and perhaps to see an owl or two.
Meet at Information Centre at 2pm, returning about 5pm.