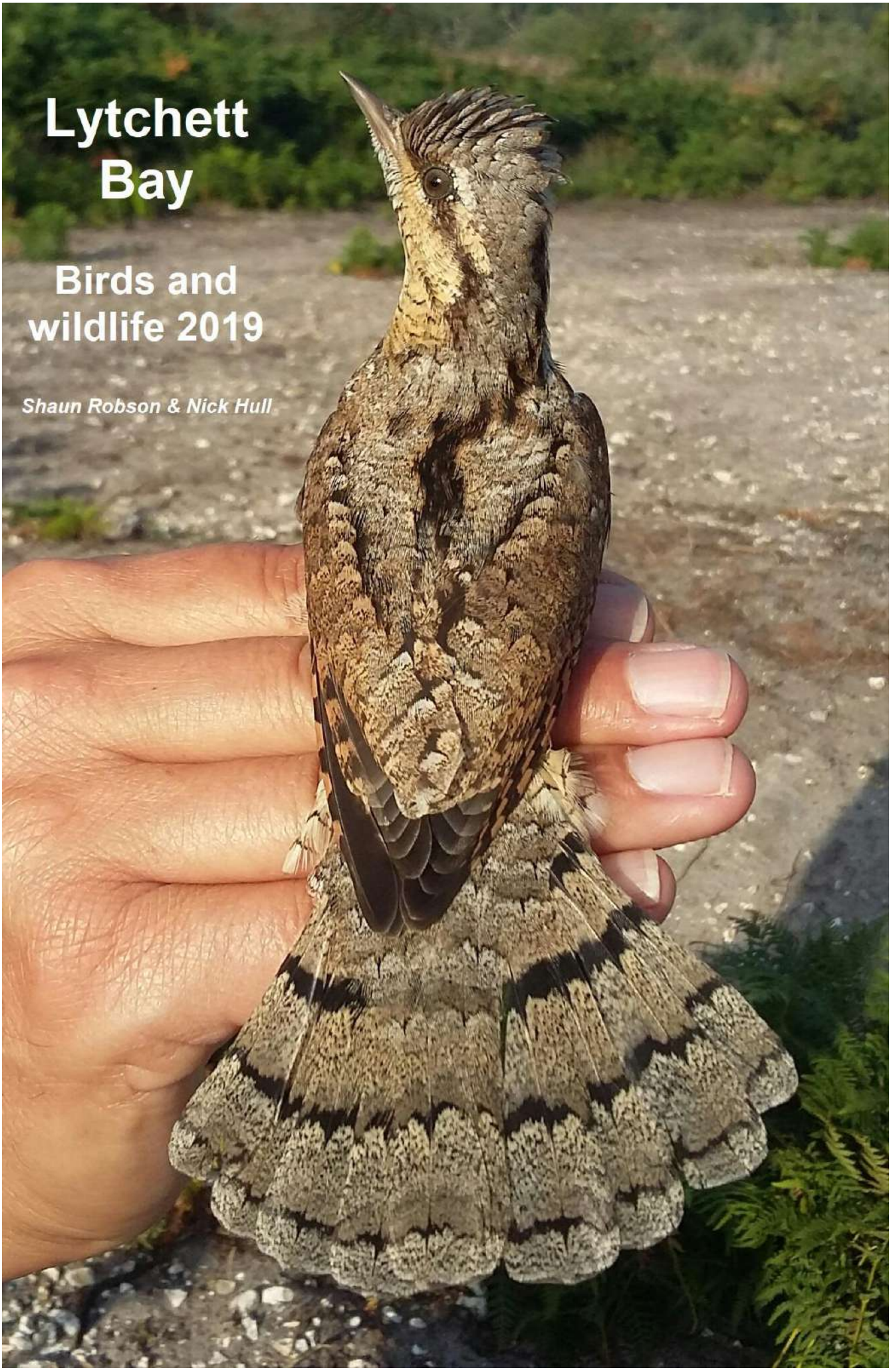

Lytchett Bay
Birds and wildlife 2019
Shaun Robson & Nick Hull

Welcome to the 28th consecutive Lytchett Bay annual report. The data that we have gathered and published over the period constitutes a comprehensive log of the site's ornithological importance since 1992. Since 2014 thanks to work led by Nick Hull, we have widened the report to cover a much wider taxa and interest in this section is growing year on year (see page 43). Thanks to Stephen F Smith we also have our first focus on the areas botanical interest with a report on the arable plant interest at Lytchett Fields (see page 70).

Weather wise the year was rather unremarkable. For much of the time it was slightly warmer and dryer than average, but the autumn was rather windy and wet. Overall there was a lack of easterly airstreams thereby reducing opportunities for continental migrants to reach us and there were no significant cold snaps.

The core team of Shaun Robson and Ian Ballam worked to provide good coverage and were strongly supported by a wider group of regular visitors. Ringing effort was lower than many recent years, partially as a result of a rather windy autumn and partially due to availability of ringers.

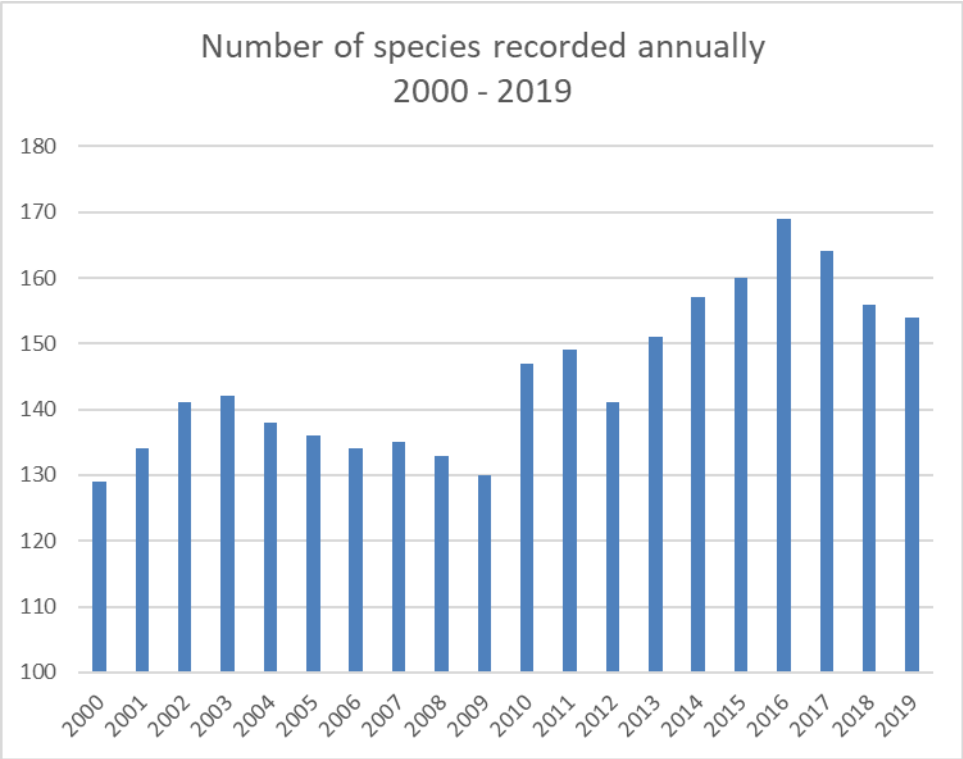
There were many highlights, though there is no doubt that our expectations need to be managed! After the rush of surprises and record counts in recent years there is a need for us to review our perceptions against the actual record more often. Familiarity breeds contempt, days that we could only have dreamt of in the noughties are now frequent occurrences.

A fly over Stone Curlew was the highlight of the year (at least for one lucky observer) and this new species brings the Lytchett Bay bird list to 228. Almost as thrilling was our 2nd Black-necked Grebe, the first record since 1994.

Additional bird highlights included 2nd record of Pale-bellied Brent Goose, 3rd & 4th Wryneck, 5th Common Crane, 7th Black Redstart, 8th Yellow-browed Warbler & Siberian Chiffchaff, 9th Sanderling.

The following species occurred in either greater numbers or greater frequency than ever before. Dark-bellied Brent Goose, Wigeon, Osprey, Little Ringed Plover and Grasshopper Warbler.

A report of a juv Black-winged Stilt on 12th Sep by an unknown observer remains outstanding. The Dorset Records Panel would welcome a description.



Lytchett Bay – people and wildlife

As reported in the 2018 report, 6 organisations, who between them either own, lease or manage almost the entire shoreline and immediate hinterland of Lytchett Bay came together to form The Lytchett Bay Nature Partnership.

In 2019 partners met regularly and have worked together on a number of initiatives including a Sika Deer survey, jointly promoted events and volunteer work parties, an access review and there is plenty more in the pipeline. Follow the partnership and share your news and pictures on Twitter **@LytchettP** or on Facebook at **Friends of Lytchett Bay**.

The formation of partnership was celebrated with a flowerbed installation organised by Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council.

Engagement events included 2 guided walks at DWT NR & 3 wader identification events at RSPB Lytchett Fields. This year's ringing demonstrations had to be cancelled due to poor weather.

Visitors enjoying the wader the autumn spectacle at RSPB Lytchett Fields © S.Robson

A Sika Deer survey combined on the ground counting together with an aerial drone survey of the existing habitat condition.

©RSPB

The impact of grazing on the reed-bed can be easily seen in this picture of Holton Lee Pool. Not only has much of reed been grazed out completely but that which remains is heavily tracked. It is planned that these surveys continue in the future to build our understanding of deer numbers, habitat condition, bird populations and utilisation.

Habitat works to manage the ditches at Lytchett Fields were hampered and ultimately limited by a long spell of wet and windy weather late in the autumn. Nonetheless our roosting islands were refreshed and the main ditch cleared. The RSPB would like to record its thanks to Alaska Environmental who conducted the work on the ground and to the Dorset Bird Club for their funding support. A new kissing gate was installed at the entrance to Lytchett Fields to improve accessibility.

© S.Robson

5 Volunteer work parties were held during the year and included reed cutting at Turlin Moor (BCP), heathland management at Lytchett Bay Nature Reserve (DWT), gorse removal and hedge planting at Lytchett Fields (RSPB) and litter picking at Turlin Moor (GoPladdle & Friends of Hamworthy Park).

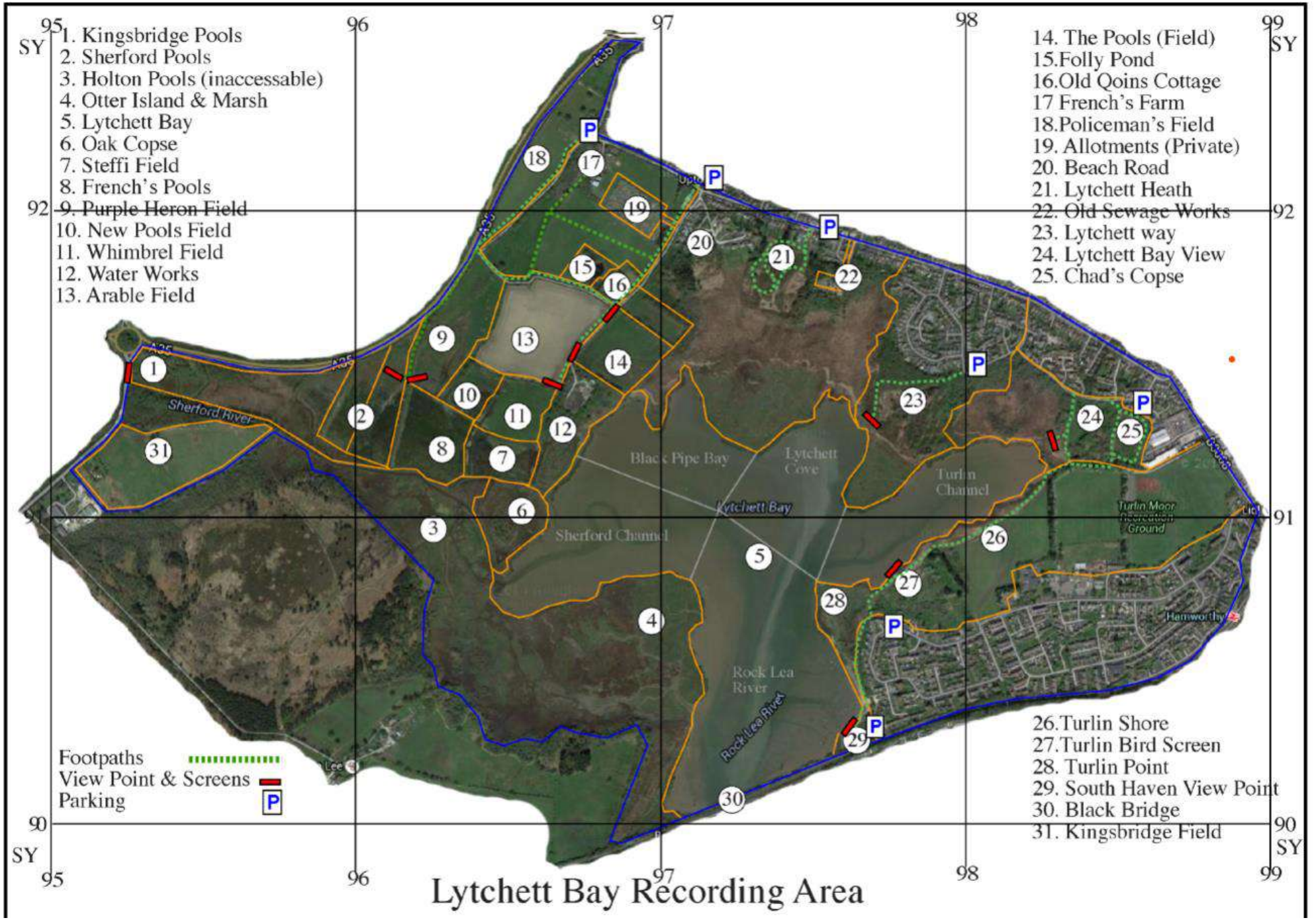
More than 50 people turned out for a day of gorse and birch bashing at Lytchett Heath. Thanks to ARC, DWT & BCP

Our annual clearance at the Turlin Moor screen was made all the more special by one of BCP regular volunteers field drawing © Craig Wilson

Nick Hull's map gives a complete overview of the recording area. Whilst we have named as many sites as we can, please remember that some areas remain private and we would be grateful if visitors stick to the extensive network of public and permissive pathways that are available. There is a wide selection of viewpoints that provide visibility of the area.

The Guide to Birding Lytchett Bay remains the "go to" document for someone wishing to visit the site for the first time.

https://www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk/pdf/guide_birding_lytchett_bay_2.pdf



Lytchett Bay Recording Area

Bird Ringing 2019

988 birds of 39 species were ringed at Lytchett Bay. Efforts were spread around 3 ringing sites. Lytchett Fields (3 dates), Sandy Close Pond (8 dates) and at Lytchett Heath and reed bed (23 dates). A total of 34 dates cp 43 in 2018. More than 100 birds were ringed on 2 dates.

Our main target remained the “red listed” Aquatic Warbler but once again weather systems in the key period were very unhelpful….this is beginning to sound like a broken record!

Highlights included our first Wryneck (thanks to Terry Elborn for capturing it so fabulously for our report cover this year). A record day of Grasshopper Warblers and another good year for Bearded Tits. We had some very good recoveries both from traditional capturing and re-trapping as well as colour-ring reading.

A selection of interesting recoveries that we recorded this year. Full details can be found in the systematic list, together with many more.

Appendix 2 details the individual species totals at the end of the systematic list.

27,298 birds of 85 species have been ringed since 1983.

Acknowledgements

Stour Ringing Group would like to thank Wessex Water, RSPB, Post Green Estate, DWT, ARC for their kind permission to ring at Lytchett Bay.

The Birds of Poole Harbour host this and our previous annual reports on their website which is hugely appreciated.

SR would like to add additional thanks to Ian Ballam for his continued commitment to birding and bird recording at Lytchett Bay and for his support with various volunteer activity at Lytchett Fields. To friends at Stour Ringing Group for companionship and hard work. Nick & Jacqui Hull who put considerable effort in to collating a checklist of other wildlife. To Stephen Smith for his work on arable plants.

To all the observers who supplied records and comments via BirdTrack, e-Bird, Twitter and other information sources. Finally, to everyone who has allowed us to use their excellent images which brighten and decorate this report. Please keep them coming.

RSPB Lytchett Fields at high tide. Frenches Pool is the large squarish area in the foreground with Sherford Pools being the area in the top of the picture. The public viewpoints are in the area at the top right corner of Frenches Pool. ©RSPB

Systematic List 2019

4799 specific records were collated during the year via the **@BirdTrack** and **@Team_eBird** databases. In addition, many more records of common species were submitted via "complete lists" to both databases. Each of the main sites at Lytchett Bay have been set up as e-Bird "Hotspots", users of e-Bird are encouraged to log their sightings against these. If anyone would like advice on the use of e-Bird then SR is very happy to try and support. BirdTrack's site mechanism is based around 1km squares, again records logged against the actual square are most helpful.

BTO Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS) are conducted monthly from September to March. RSPB Lytchett Fields is surveyed completely bi-weekly on the high tide. This data is incorporated within the species accounts.

BirdTrack functionality has been used to generate graphs showing the weekly maxima throughout the year for some regularly occurring species. The interpretation of these requires some caution as not all "graphed" species are counted every week; this can lead to gaps in the data. Where necessary this is clarified in the text.

Bird records were received from the recording area on all but 13 days as set out below.

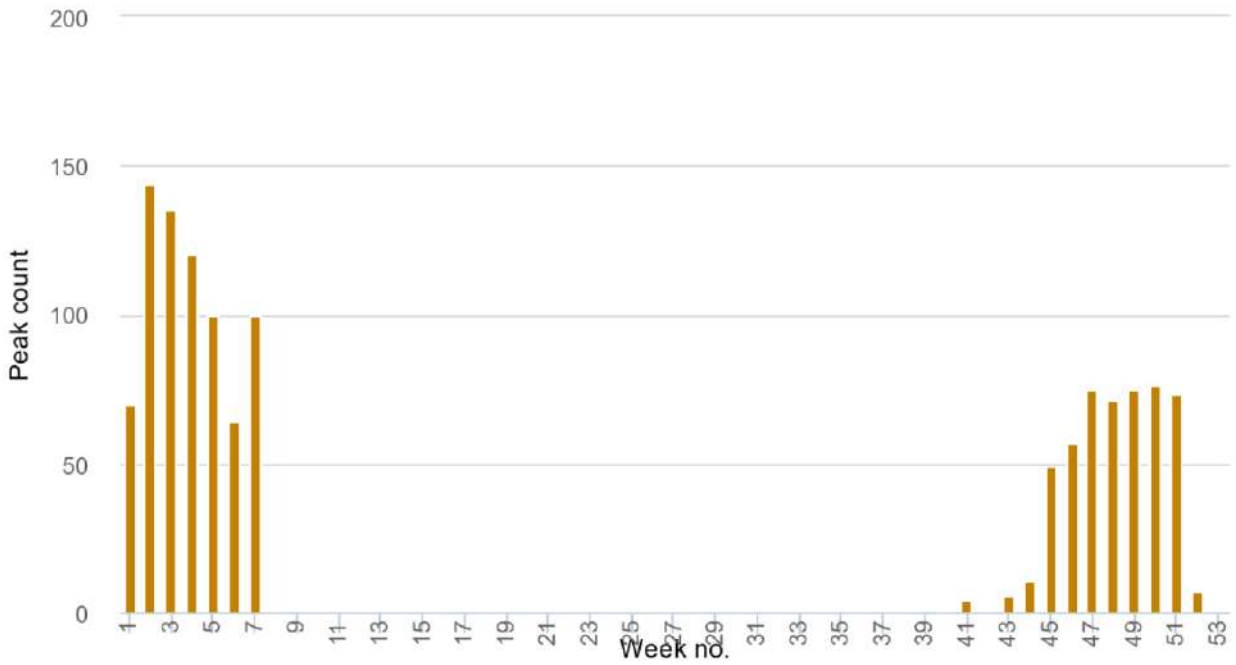
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
29	27	30	30	30	29	30	31	30	30	29	27

For the first time the systematic order follows the IOC World Bird List v10.1. This may feel awkward to many old timers (like myself) but with Dorset Bird Club adopting this approach from 2019 it is a good time to make this necessary step.

Species names are followed by 2 or 3 numbers. The first is the record known count recorded at the Bay. This now includes historical counts by observers going back to 1975. The middle figure is the maximum day count in the period since 1992 (if less than the first). The final figure is the number of years in which the species has been recorded since 1992 (max 28), the year in which the current spell of comprehensive coverage began.

The symbol which follows each species name shows the direction of travel of the species status at Lytchett Bay over the last 5 years. We think these are quite intuitive; strongly increasing, increasing, stable, declining and strongly declining. Hopefully this feature will enable others to compare the data from this site with experiences at their own site and engender some debate and understanding.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose: (144 – 20) ↗
Uncommon winter visitor. A record year with a flock in both winter periods, encouraged by the algal mat. Present until 14th Feb and from 7th Oct after which birds were present almost daily until the year end. Max 144 on 11th Jan was a new record count for the Bay.



Pale-bellied Brent Goose

Juv Pale-bellied Brent Goose with 2 juv Dark-bellied and Wigeon, 4th Dec. © Ian Ballam

Second record. 2 juveniles were in the Bay with Dark-bellied Brents on 3rd Dec (SR) one remaining until 4th Dec (IB).

Canada Goose: (602 – 28) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. 1 pair bred raising 4 young. In autumn large numbers passed over the site as they commuted between feeding and roosting sites on a NW-SE axis.
Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4	11	5	4	55	2	18	13	360	n.c.	185	n.c.

Greylag Goose: (32 – 20) ⇔
Uncommon feral wanderer. Recorded throughout the year on at least 17 dates. Max 24 on 10th Oct.

Mute Swan: (58 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon resident increases in winter. Bred between 2002-2007 and in 2015.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
28	17	6	7	2	3	n.c.	10	7	11	32	25

Egyptian Goose: (8 – 6)
Scarce visitor, records continue to increase year on year. The first record was in 2011. Recorded on 7 dates in Feb, Apr, May, Aug, Nov & Dec. Max 2 on 4 dates.

Shelduck: (645 – 548 – 28) ↘
Occasional breeder and winter visitor. No evidence of successful breeding this year. The largest congregations of the year again involved presumably non-breeding birds at Lytchett Fields in Apr and May, but maxima continued to fall.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
38	66	61	85	72	31	60	7	1	38	58	7

Shoveler: (28 – 27) ⇔
Scarce visitor, which can occur at any time. 27 bird days on 7 dates. Records spread throughout the year. Max 8 on 21st Jan and 1st Apr.

Gadwall: (73 – 23) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. Bred in 2016. Most birds in late spring and early summer are presumed to be non-breeding individuals.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
30	22	6	9	9	33	0	5	0	8	16	9

Wigeon: (732 – 28) ⇔
Common winter visitor. Absent from 15th Apr until 15th Sep. Max 732 on 11th Jan was a new record count for the Bay, previously 671 on 2nd Jan 2011.

Bay monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
732	435	140	5	0	0	0	0	12	289	534	552

Mallard: (123 – 28) ⇔
Breeds at several sites around the recording area. Very regular on Sandy Close Pond.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
11	24	14	14	53	42	n.c.	79	n.c.	n.c.	17	11

Northern Pintail: (21 - 20) ⇔
Scare visitor. A very poor year compared to recent experience. Seen on only 4 dates. 1 on 11th Jan, 7 at Lytchett Fields on 25th Sep, 3 on 10th Oct and 2 on 24th Nov.

Teal: (1345 – 28) ↗
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Like 2018 most of the early autumn monthly maxima counts came from Lytchett Fields but after early Oct the numbers of Teal using the fields again mysteriously dropped and the huge majority of birds remained in the Bay during the whole tidal cycle. This behavior again continued until the end of the year.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
338	530	334	162	4	15	21	306	550	560	560	242

Pochard: (24 – 14) ⇔
Scarce visitor. A good year with 3 records. 3 were seen from Lytchett Bay View on 29th Oct, one over Bay on 31st Oct and then 6 in the Bay on 2nd Dec.

Tufted Duck: (20 – 17 – 16) ⇔
Scarce visitor. 4 records, same as 2018, but fewer bird-days. 1 on 6th Apr, 1 on 28th Oct, 4 on 30th Oct and 1 on 31st Oct.

Red-breasted Merganser: (73 – 28) ⇔
Winter visitor. Recorded on at least 62 dates but in all likelihood present until 9th Apr and from 1st Nov.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
11	18	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	7

Pheasant: ↘
Common resident.

Little Grebe: (12 - 28) ⇔
Winter visitor. Recorded occasionally until 5th Apr and from 14th Aug. Max 4 on 14th Jan.

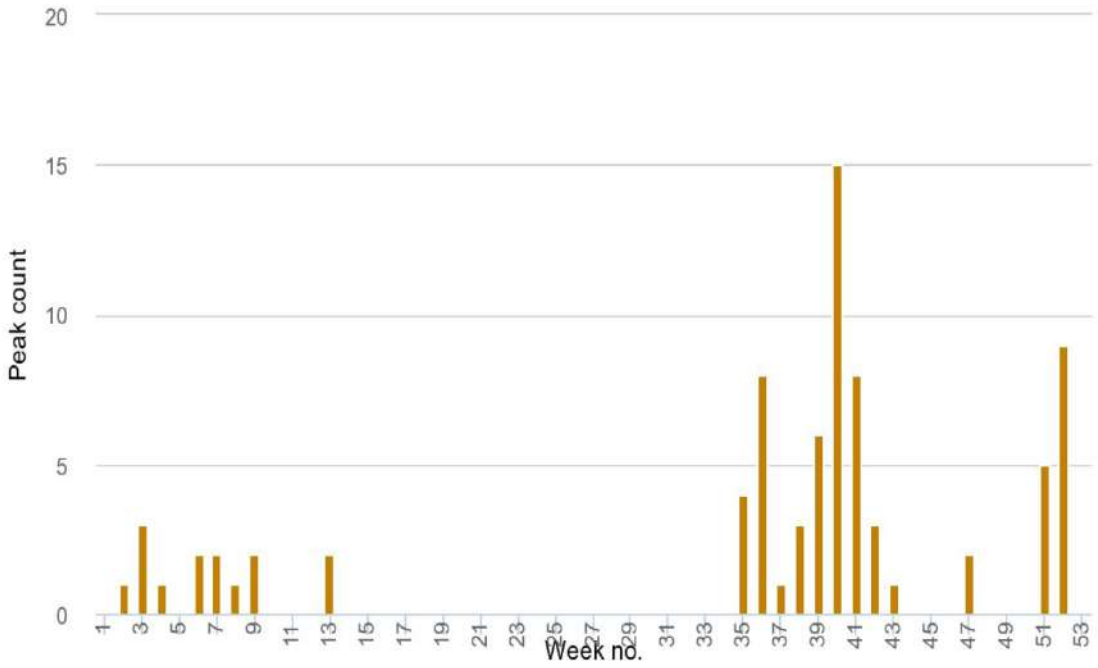
Great Crested Grebe; (4 - 25) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. Recorded on at least 43 dates (exactly the same as 2018). No records between 30th Jul and 18th Oct. Max 4 on 4th Dec, equaled the max count at the Bay.

Black-necked Grebe:
2nd record.

Yes, we know that we are very deep into "record shot" territory but it was the first to ever be photographed at Lytchett Bay (Ian Ballam)

One was found in the Bay on the 29th Dec (IB et al). Despite their frequent and increasing presence in Poole Harbour this is one of the species that the Black Bridge "blocks" from Lytchett Bay. The first record since 2 on 11th Dec 1994 seen during a WeBS count. A welcome tick for all modern "patchers"

Spoonbill: (25 – 10) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. Seen on 42 dates (74 in 2018), split between either end of the year. Max 15 on 6th Oct.



aNN/NfRP *– was present on 7th & 28th Feb, 29th Mar 2019.*

Reading and interpreting colour rings can be tricky. A photographic record is invaluable (I.Ballam)

A juv ringed at Den Oever, Schor, NETHERLANDS on 30th Jul 2016. A SW movement of 543km.

It was seen in Devon and Somerset later in 2016, in Ireland in 2017 and France in 2018

Thanks to Petra de Goeij for this and information.

Bittern: (1 – 6)
9th record.

2018: One was seen in flight at Lytchett Fields on 11th Dec (ND). It did not linger and disappeared off towards Holton Lee. The first record since 2014.

Cattle Egret: (4 – 6)
Rare visitor. Now almost an expected fixture on the annual Bay list. 2 records this year. One standing on the frozen Sherford Pools on 23rd Jan (SR), then 3 spent the afternoon on French's Pools on 3rd Sep (SR et al).

Grey Heron: (10 – 28) ⇔
Daily visitor in small numbers. Max 5 on 28th Aug.

Great White Egret: (7 – 6) ↗
Scare visitor. Recorded on 12 dates between Feb and Nov, another step-up on previous years (2018 – 7, 2017 – 4, 2016 – 5). All singles except 2 on 2nd July.

Little Egret: (67 – 27) ⇔
Common visitor, seen every day. Use of the evening roost was noted on 10th Feb, 7 birds, and 17th Nov, at least 13 birds.

Bay monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4	9	8	10	6	14	20	16	18	11	18	9

Cormorant: (370 – 27) ↗
Daily visitor. Max 100 on 4th Nov.

Osprey: (4 – 27) ⇔
Annual passage migrant. Another excellent year with records on 44 dates.

There were 6 spring records, all in April, including the first on 1st.

2 then appeared in mid-June. A female (CJ7) raised and ringed at Rutland in Leicestershire and a male (LS7) released in Poole Harbour in 2017.

After which records were frequent until 10th Oct, Max 3 on several dates. Some birds took to perching for prolonged periods in trees around Lytchett Fields.

Sparrowhawk: (4 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon visitor. Recorded on at least 71 dates throughout the year, almost the same as 2018. Display noted in April when both male and female birds present, likely to have bred.

Marsh Harrier: (6 – 27) ↗

Increasingly regular visitor. Noted on at least 132 dates, sustaining the dramatic increase first witnessed in 2015. Whilst the species did not breed in Poole Harbour it was recorded frequently in every month of the year. Max 3 on 29th Sep.

This imm M was seen frequently later in the year (© Mark Wright)

Hen Harrier: (2 – 27) ⇔
Irregular Visitor. Recorded on only 5 dates (17 in 2018). As last year it is likely that only two birds were involved. An Ad female may have accounted for all the sighting bar one, on the assumption that the bird present in the first part of the year returned following the summer. 11th Jan, 17th Feb, 13th Nov, 9th Dec and then another ringtail on 22nd Dec.

Red Kite: (3 – 14) ↗
Scarce migrant, increasingly expected on spring migration. Recorded on 5 dates between 12th Apr and 18th May. Max 2 on 2 dates. Surprisingly none during summer or autumn.

Common Buzzard: (15 – 28) ⇔

The commonest raptor of the area. Breeds widely in the vicinity.

More usually seen soaring high above the Bay this fine picture captures another aspect of the Buzzard's character. (© M.Wright)

Water Rail: (67 pairs – 28) ⇔
Common resident and winter visitor. No change in status after 2013's complete breeding survey.

Moorhen: (18 – 28) ↗
Common resident. Breeds widely across the area, much more so than in the past. A pair bred at Sandy Close Pond for the first time since 2010. 6 young hatched but only one survived, local cats suspected of being responsible.

Crane: (1 – 3)
5th record. One was briefly at Lytchett Fields on 28th Sep (IB). The previous records were in 1975, 1999 and 2 in 2016.

Stone Curlew:
1st record. 1 flew N over Lytchett Heath on 18th Jun (SR). A wholly unexpected date and location for a bird that we had long imagined standing in the arable field. See finders account in appendix 1.

Oystercatcher: (400 – 28) ⇔
A common winter visitor and passage migrant. Turlin Fields and Turlin Shore at high tide remain the favored locations, with fewer birds remaining in the bay to feed at low tide than. Increasingly birds are seen on Lytchett Fields, particularly in late spring and summer. The maximum count was on 23rd Dec at Turlin Fields.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
60	133	62	10	8	7	9	10	39	47	253	330

Pied Avocet: (327 – 27) ↗
Increasingly regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Year on year occurrence seems less reliant on cold weather. Present daily until 26th Feb and from 7th Oct. Unusually there no records between these dates. The max count was on 14th Dec. There were occasional records from Lytchett Fields and birds roosted on Turlin Point frequently during both winter periods.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
162	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	129	255

***W/B+R/G** (EY98059) was present on 3rd Jan 2019.*

It had been ringed on 24th May 2015 as a pullus at Seal Sands, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland. A S movement of 483km. On 18th Feb during its return journey N it was seen at Martin Mere, Lancs.

***GB+BY –** was present on 2nd Jan 2019.*

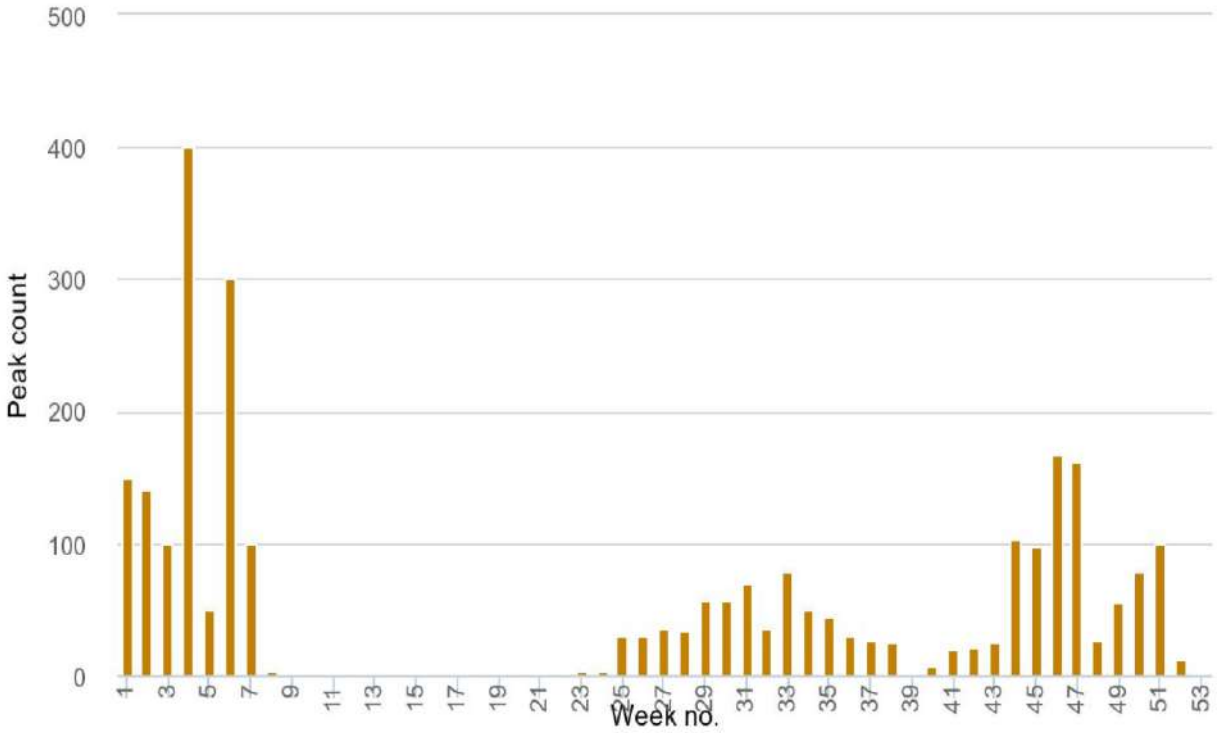
It had been ringed as a pullus at Beaulieu River, Hampshire on 25th Jun 2014. A movement of 44km. It been seen previously at Lytchett Bay on 8th Feb 2015.

It returned to breed at Normandy Marsh, Hants, raising four chicks in Jul 2019, during which time it was also sexed as a male.

Lapwing: (3000 – 28) ⇔

Formerly bred, now a non-breeding visitor in smaller numbers. Bred regularly during early 1990's. Last confirmed breeding 1999. 1 or 2 birds were present at Lytchett Fields in Apr and May but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. Birds were recorded in every month of the year and on most visits. The max count of 400 was on 22nd Jan. Numbers in the second half of the year were well below par.

Sometimes it takes a decline in a species population to draw attention to its beauty, this is certainly the case with the once common Lapwing (© Ian Ballam)



O3YL – *was present on 9th Nov.*

It was ringed on 18th May 2019 as a nestling at an as yet unreported location in the NETHERLANDS. Further details are awaited.

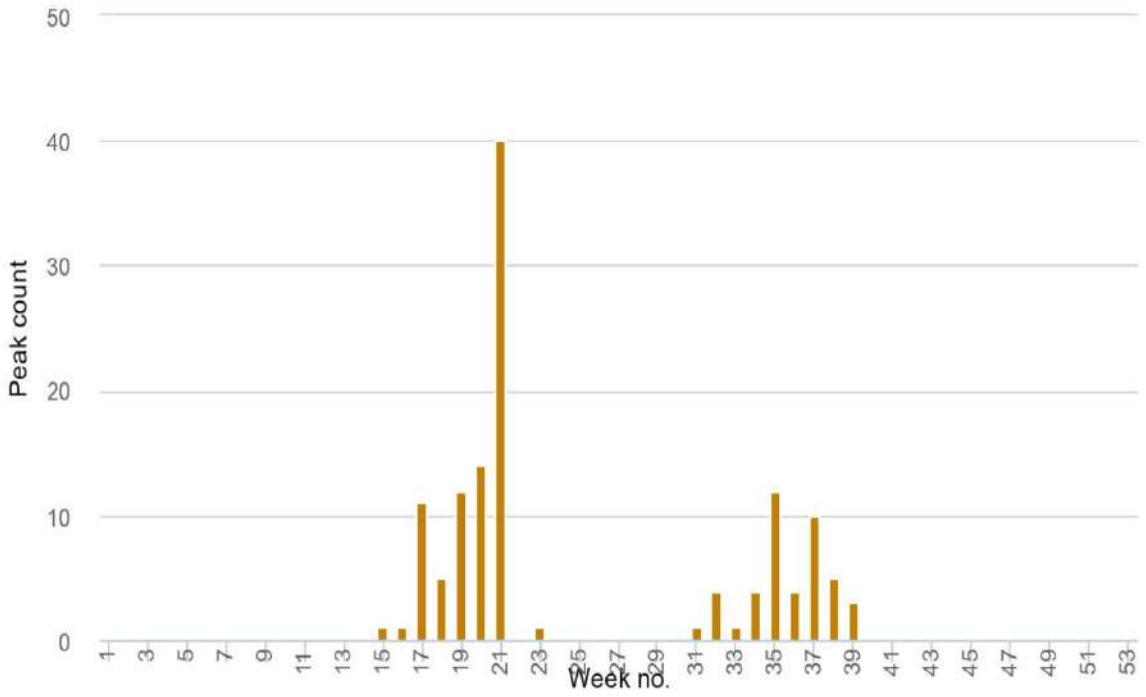
This is the first colour ringed bird of this species that we have recorded. Back in 1981 when Lapwing was a very common bird at Lytchett Bay winter ringing produced some very interesting information about their movements in subsequent winters with 3 recoveries: 2 in SPAIN in 1985 & 1987 and 1 in FRANCE in 1985

© Ian Ballam

Grey Plover: (18 – 22)
Scarce visitor. A distinctly ordinary year. 14 bird-days in spring between 24th Apr – 20th May. Max 6 on first date. Singles on 5th Oct and 30th Nov.

Ringed Plover; (50 – 24) ↑
Passage migrant, previously scarce. 235 bird-days over 50 dates, considerably better than historic records but also much fewer than 2017 & 2018.

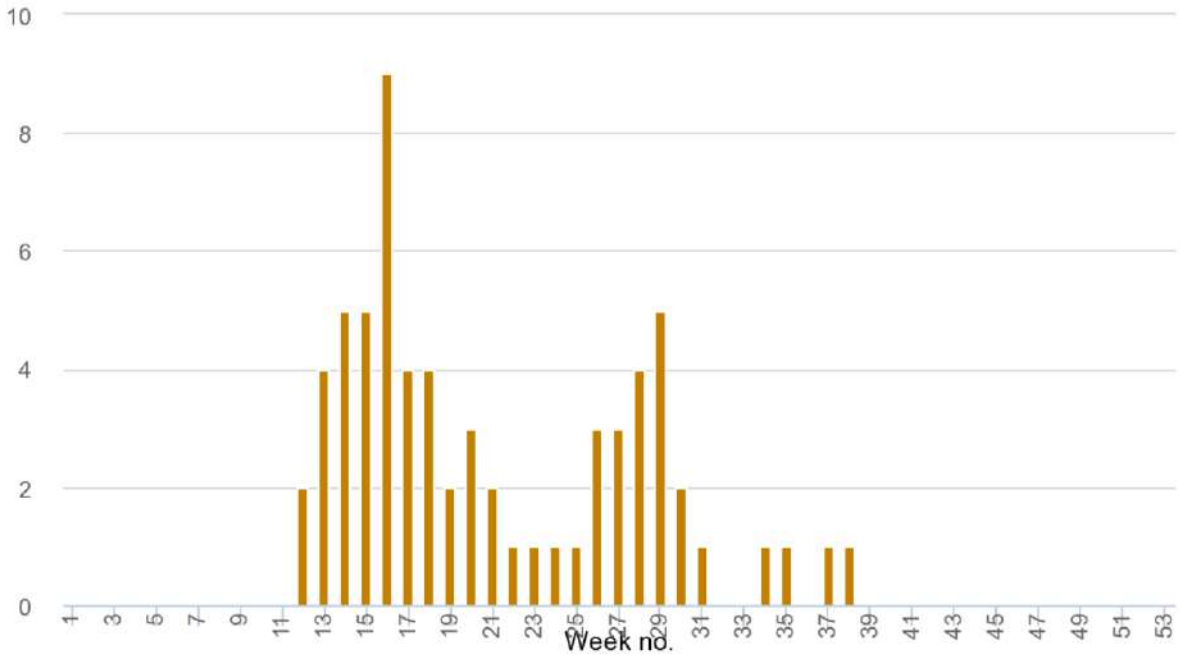
Spring migration 11th Apr - 3rd Jun. Autumn migration 3rd Aug – 23rd Sep. Max 40 on 24th May. The majority of records in both seasons coming from Lytchett Fields.



Little Ringed Plover: (12 – 17)
Increasingly frequent summer visitor. Birds were recorded on 85 dates, the most ever. (48 in 2018, 55 in 2017, 43 in 2016, 67 in 2015.). The number of bird-days was consequently very good – 197, max 9 on 16th Apr. Mostly recorded at Lytchett Fields but also on occasions from Holton Pools.

Hopes that a pair might breed were encouraged by a lingering pair during April into May, when copulation was observed, and almost daily records during May and June. An apparent family party was seen in late June and early July suggesting that may be a pair had successfully bred somewhere not far away. However, we are not confident that this was at Lytchett Bay, though it is not impossible.

The first record was on 22nd Mar and the last was on the 16th Sep (the latest record at the Bay, previously 13th Sep 2014).



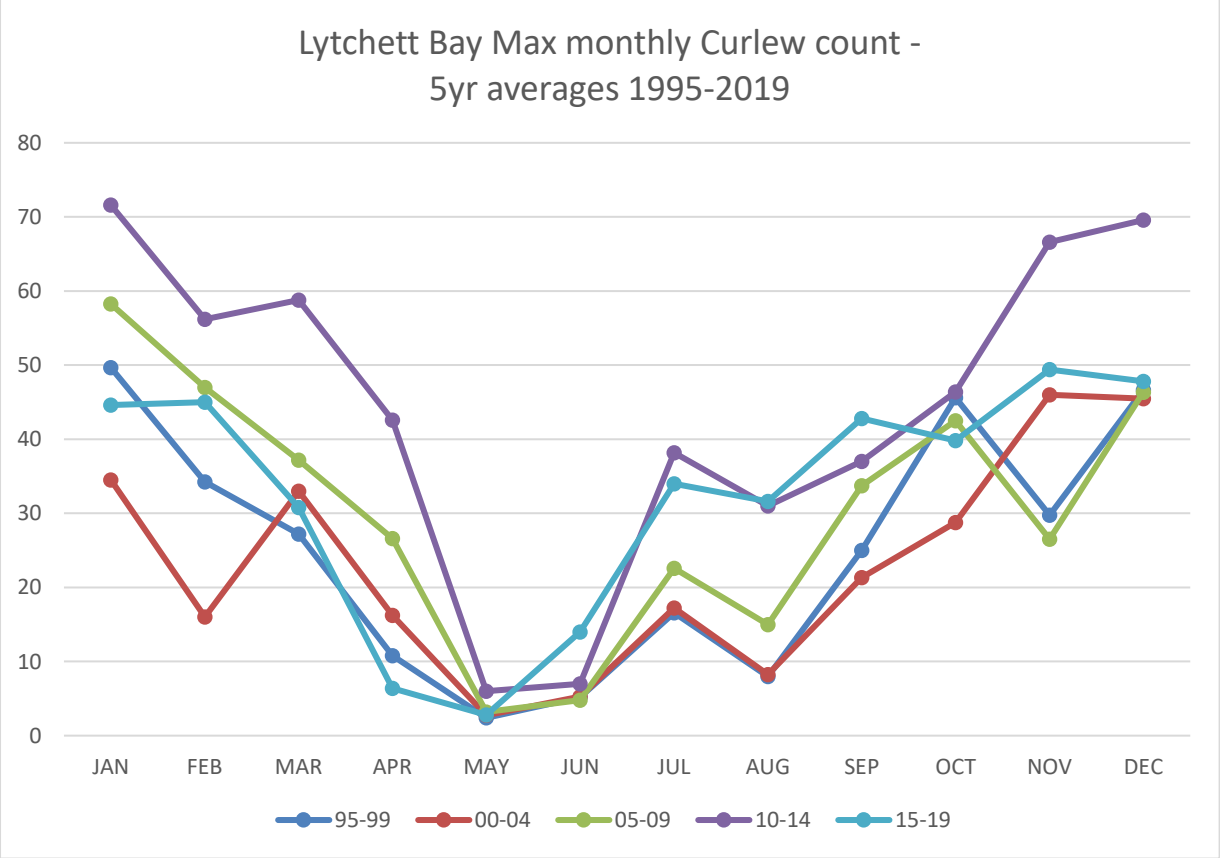
Whimbrel: (157 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant, most numerous in Spring. An above average year. After the first on 14th Apr there were 172 bird-days up until 2nd Jun, max 41 on 10th May. Autumn passage occurred between 1st Jul and 23rd Aug involving 60 bird-days, max 7 on 2 dates.

Curlew: (116 – 28) ⇔
Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Present throughout the year, most common in early autumn and winter. Max 55 on 30th Nov. Frequently seen on The Pool and in the stubble field during high tide in winter.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
24	26	23	8	3	22	33	32	53	36	40	54

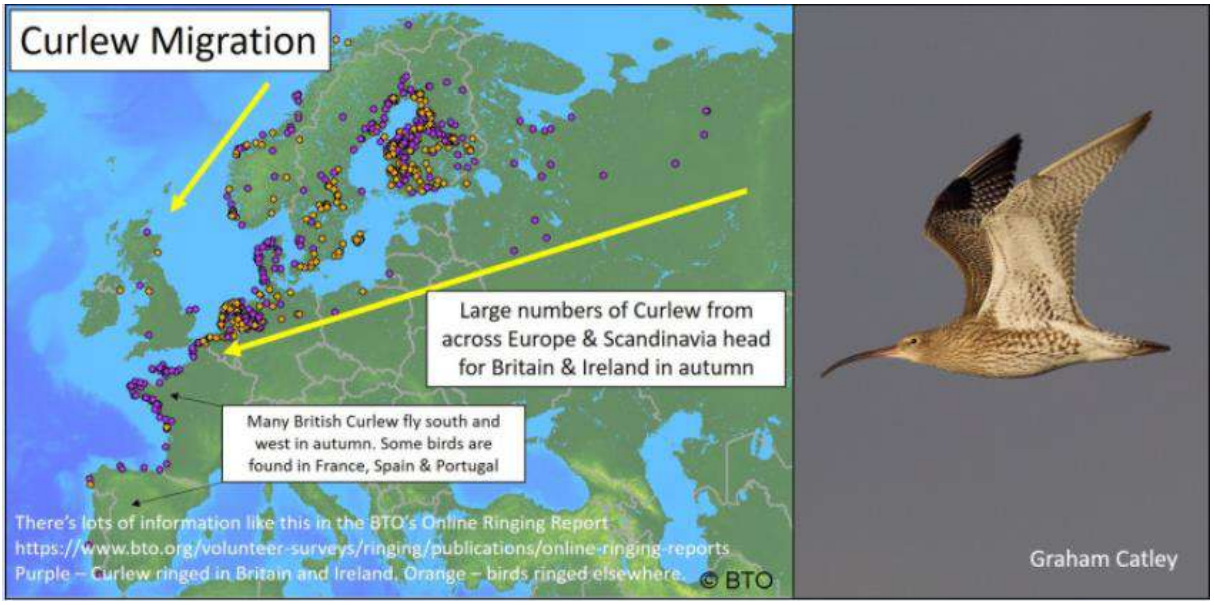
Birders memories often play tricks, how often do we hear that "it's not as good as it used to be". I often think this at Lytchett Bay and this year's Curlew figures certainly "felt" poor to me. I thought I'd check the data we now hold going back to 1995……



Quite a surprise, the best 5 yr period by some distance was 2010-2014, then 2005-2009, with the current period in the middle of the 5 for the first half of the year and in second place for the second half.

Given the severe declines in GB and Irish Curlew as a breeding species this feels like a surprise. However, the attached Wader Tales Blog provides good reasons for caution, as it likely is that some of our birds come from Finland and beyond!

https://wadertales.wordpress.com/2015/11/03/is-the-curlew-really-near-threatened/



M//R+R//WR *was present until 10th Feb and from 1st Jul until at least 14th Dec.*

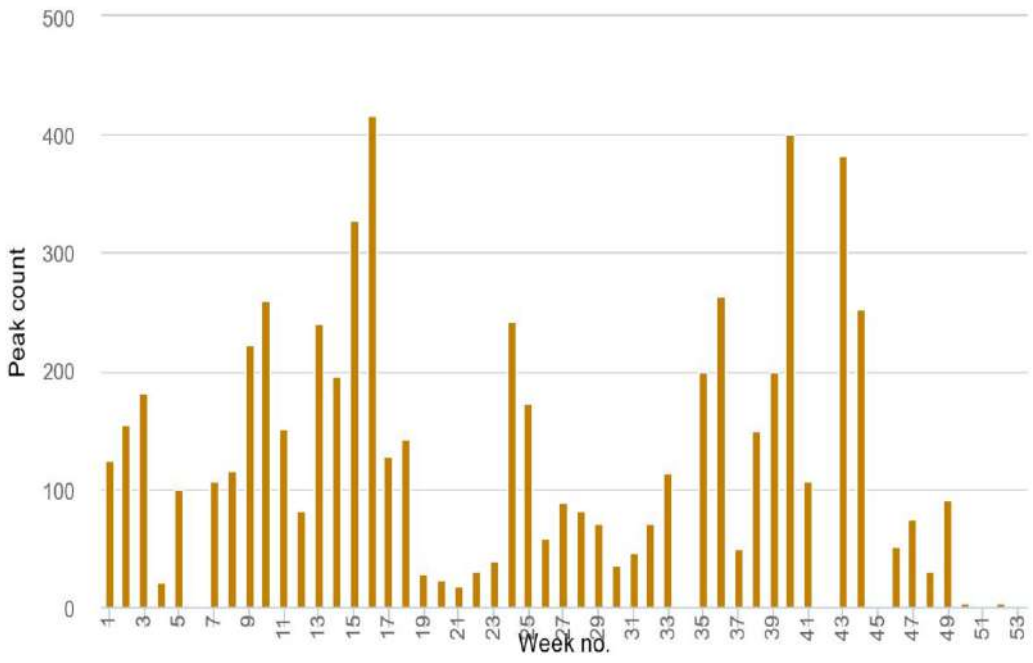
It was ringed at Strodgemoor, Burley Street, New Forest, Hampshire on 25th May 2018 as an Ad F. The bird was fitted with a GPS tag, unfortunately this fell off 1 month after fitting. It was seen in the Avon Valley, Hants in March 2019, presumably on its way back to its breeding site. It had been seen at the Bay from 16th Sep 2018.

Thanks to Pete Potts for this information.

© Ian Ballam

Bar-tailed Godwit: (110 – 24) ⇔
Scarce visitor. A good year with 53 bird-days on 21 dates between 22nd Apr and 18th Oct. Unusually more in autumn than in spring. Max 7 on 22nd Sep. Records split between the Bay and Lytchett Fields.

Black-tailed Godwit: (1240 – 28) ⇔
Common passage migrant and winter visitor. The species was present throughout the year.



Birds began to gather and feed at high tide on Lytchett Fields from mid-Mar onwards, peaking at 242 on 14th June. The max count of the year was 417 in the Bay on 16th Apr.

Over the last 20 years colour ringed birds have proved that birds visiting Lytchett Bay breed in Iceland (*L.l.islandica*). Birds seen at Lytchett Bay also visit western France, Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, E England as well as many locations along the south coast.

Colour ringed birds were recorded as follows.

NW+OfL *was present on 20th Jan, 1st Oct and 4th Dec 2019.*

I.Ballam

It had been ringed on 29th Jul 2014 at Moeze, Charente Maritime, FRANCE as an Ad male. In Jul – Aug 2018 it was seen in Falkirk, Scotland, presumably on its return from ICELAND. It had previously been seen at the Bay in Feb, Mar, Aug and Dec 2015, Jul & Aug 2016, Jan, Aug, Sep 2017 & Apr, Oct and Dec 2018.

RNW+YRY *was present on 25th Feb, 6th Apr and 1st Oct 2019*

S.Robson

It had been ringed on 18th Jan 2015 as a 1stW female at Axe Estuary, Devon. It was also seen at La Manche, Normandy, FRANCE on 29th Apr 2015. It had previously visited the Bay in Nov - Dec 2015, frequently in 2016 and Feb, Mar, Aug, Sep, Oct & Nov 2017. 12th Oct 2018

YG+OO(Z) *was present on 2nd Sep & 1st Oct 2019*

S.Robson

It had been ringed on 8th May 2016 at Gunnersholt, S. ICELAND. It had previously been seen at the Bay between 17th – 26th Aug 2016 and 20th Mar, 25th Mar and 12th Nov 2017. 18th Apr 2018.

RGW+RNR *was present on 12th Jan 2019*

I.Ballam

It was ringed on 13th Sep 2013 at Harty, The Swale, Kent, SE England. It has also been seen in Essex and Suffolk. It had previously been seen at the Bay on 10th Jan, 5th Feb 2017 and 30th Dec 2018

BYG+GYG *was present on 25th Feb, 6th & 17th Apr 2019.*

I.Ballam

It had been ringed on 4th Oct 2013 as an Ad female at Iken, River Alde, Suffolk. It was seen at Akureryri causeway, N ICELAND on 29th Apr 2014. On 23rd Jan 2016 it was at Prunjepolder near Moriaanshoofd, The NETHERLANDS. It previously visited the Bay on 17th Apr 2015 and Mar & Apr 2016

BOL+RNR *was present on 23rd Oct 2019.*

I.Ballam

It was ringed at Harty, Swale, Kent on 28th Aug 2019 as an Ad F. It was still in Kent on 16th Oct 2019.

YRY+GWG *was present on 7th Oct 2019*

I.Ballam

It was ringed at Collyford Common, Seaton, Axe Estuary, Devon on 25th Sep 2018 as a 1st cal yr M.

It was seen again in Devon on 29th Nov 2019.

Left leg always given first, all rings above the tibia (unless preceded by the mark //). Recently some birds have been marked with leg flags rather than rings. Colours are:

O = Orange	L = Lime (this can look very washed out in the field, approaching white)
R = Red	G = Green
W = White	B = Blue
Y = Yellow	N = Niger

Many thanks to Pete Potts and the Farlington Ringing Group, Böðvar and the Iceland Wader Group and Vincent Lelong for supplying this information.

Turnstone: (9 – 9)
11th record, just about annual in recent years. Nonetheless, surprisingly rare given that they are a common winter visitor less than a kilometer from the boundary of the recording area.

1 on 1st Sep was the only record.

Red Knot: (34 – 19)
Scarce visitor. The first of the year was on 30th June, was it going north or south? 22 bird-days in autumn between 2nd Sep and 1st Oct. Max 12 on first date. 2 on 24th Nov was the last record of the year. Mostly at Lytchett Fields.

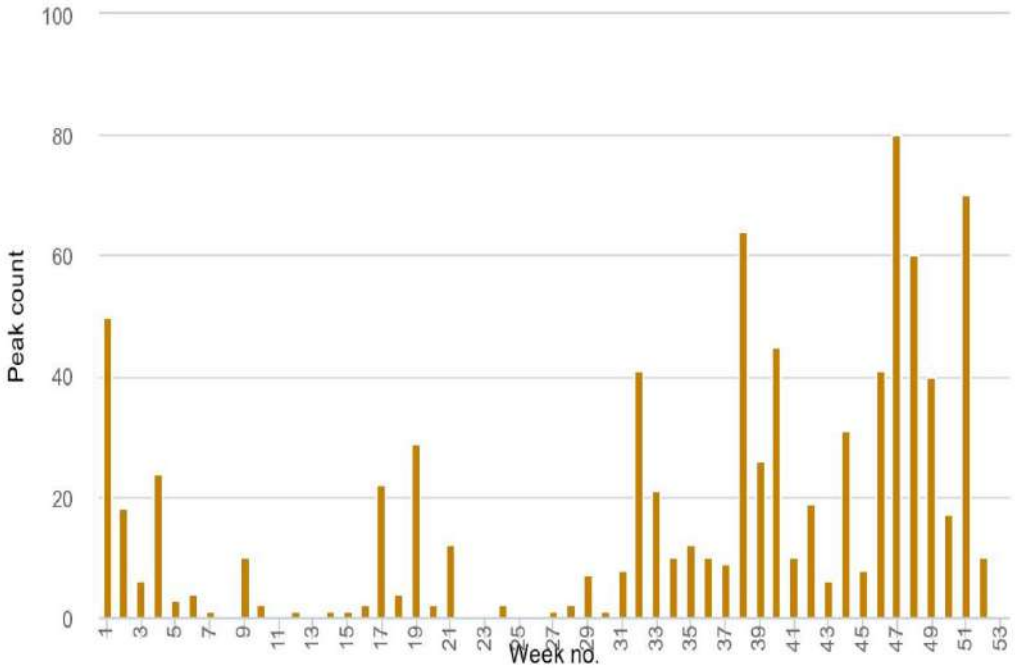
Ruff: (11 – 24)
Scarce visitor. In spring, one on 29th – 30th Mar and on 4th Apr. 41 bird-days in autumn from 26th Aug to 29th Sep. Max 2 on many dates. All records at Lytchett Fields.

Curlew Sandpiper: (9 – 13) ↗
Scarce autumn migrant. By long-term standards a good year though nowhere near the peaks of 2016 & 2017. A rare spring record, one moulting into breeding plumage on 23rd - 24th Apr.

In autumn 40 bird-days on 17 dates. After 1 on 10th Aug, 4 juveniles arrived on 29th Aug and remained until 4th Sep. Records continued on and off until 29th Sep.

Sanderling: (7 – 5) ↗
9th record. The run continues, the 5th year in a row that we have recorded this species. This year's bird left it very late……1 flew in and landed in front of Lytchett Bay Viewpoint on 15th Nov (SR).

Dunlin: (1800 – 1200 – 28) ⇔
Regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Frequently recorded throughout the year but numbers were very poor. The first year since 2008 that we have not had a day count which exceeded 100. Max 80 on 20th Nov.



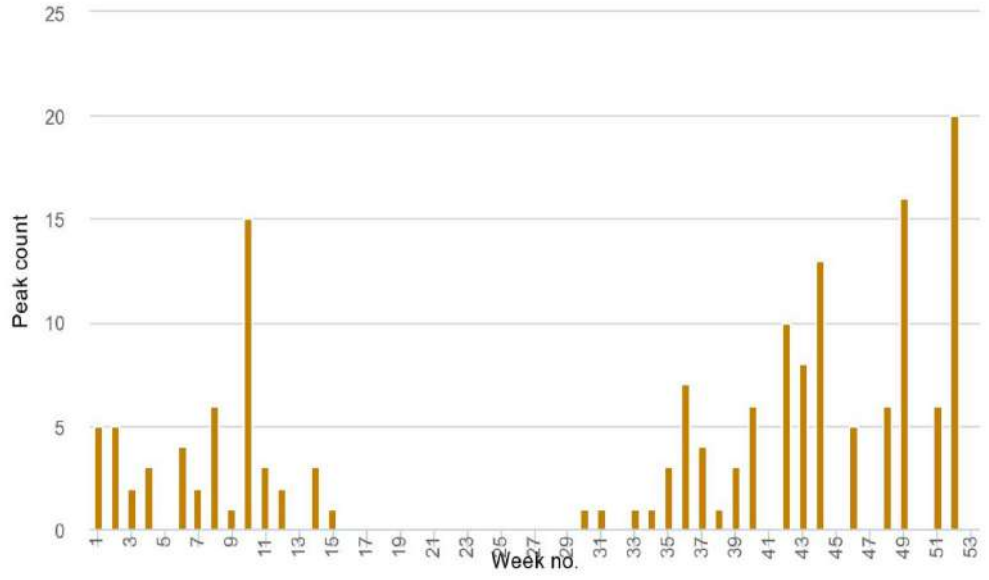
Little Stint: (7 – 13) ↗
Scarce autumn migrant. Like elsewhere another quiet year following on from 2018. 1 was at Lytchett Fields on 9th Sep and another or the same between 12th – 16th Sep.

Woodcock: (5 – 18) ⇔
Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. The number of records of this species is largely a reflection of the effort made to see them. Nick Hopper studied Woodcock during early 2014 on behalf of The Birds of Poole Harbour. Following transects at Lytchett Bay the estimated winter population was predicted to be 8 birds (No more than 5 have ever been seen on one visit).

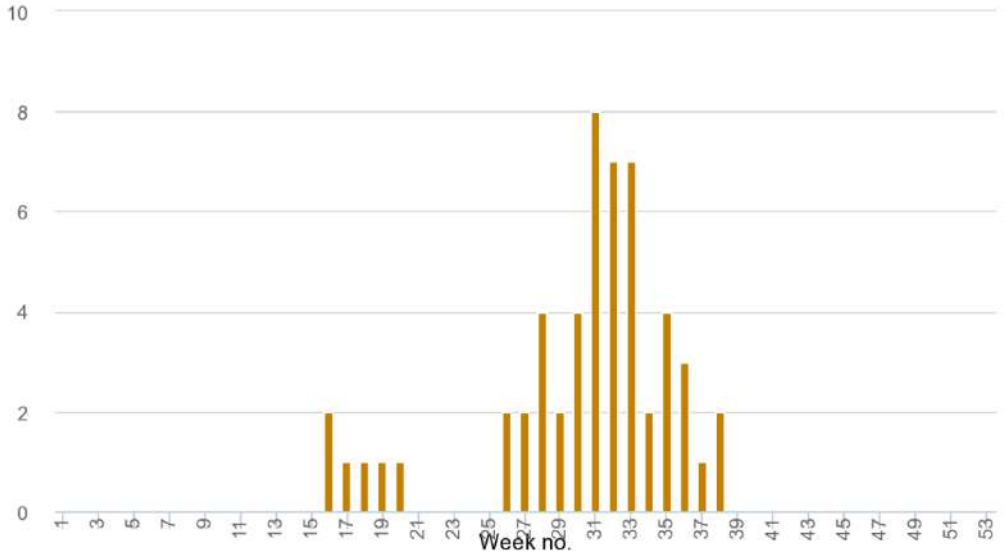
3 on 10th Jan, 1 on 2nd Feb and 1 on 18th Dec were the only records submitted. 2 ringed.

Jack Snipe: (5 - 20) ⇔
Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. Slightly more than 2018 but still hard to find this year. Singles at Holton Pools on 22nd Jan and Lytchett Fields on 6th Feb, 21st Feb, 21st Oct and 7th Dec.

Snipe: (160 – 132 – 28) ⇔
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded until 13th Apr, returning on the 24th Jul. Another species which had a very poor year. Often hard to find, especially at Lytchett Fields where it has been suggested that the saline influence may not be to its liking. However historically the species also favored sites on the saltmarshes and these no longer seem to hold many birds. May be other factors are at play? Max 20 on 29th Dec. 1 ringed.

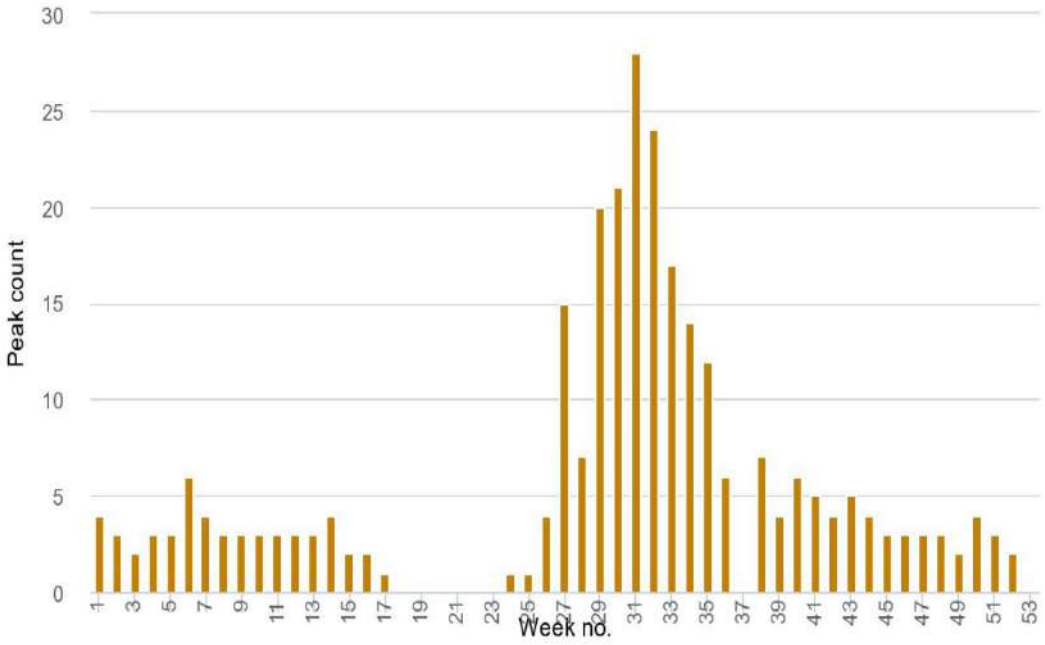


Common Sandpiper: (14 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. 10 bird days in spring between 15th Apr & 3rd May. Max 2 on 2 dates. Autumn passage was between on 29th Jun to 19th Sep. Max 8 on 3 dates.



In total there were 202 bird days in autumn almost identical to 2017 and 2018.

Green Sandpiper: (30 – 28) ↗
Common non-breeding visitor. Lytchett Fields and western most part of the Bay is the favored area. Present until 24th Apr and from 11th Jun. After which birds were seen on most visits until the year end. Max 28 on 2nd Aug. 6 on 6th Feb was a very good winter count.



Redshank: (608 – 436 – 28) ↔
Common winter visitor with small breeding population on salt marsh. There were no confirmed breeding records this year, spring records were few. Many of the saltmarshes at Lytchett Bay are now either heavily grazed by Sika, frequently disturbed by dog walkers or patrolled by foxes.

Overall numbers were much lower than 2018 which was an exceptionally good year.

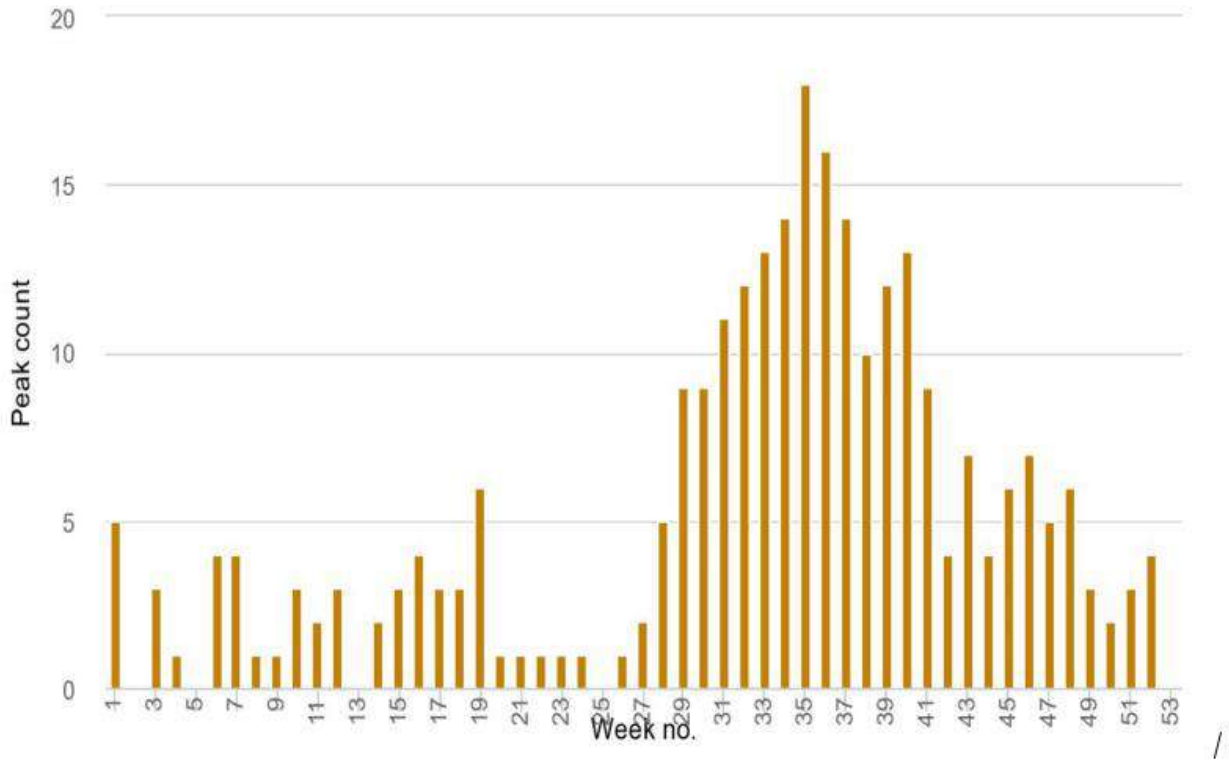
Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
79	135	89	19	3	43	121	135	127	205	132	76

Wood Sandpiper: (5 – 16)
Scarce migrant. We have returned to "normal" after a few great years. There were none in spring. Singles on 5 dates in autumn. 23rd Jul, 30th Jul, 27th Aug, 4th and 11th Sep.

Spotted Redshank: (68 – 42 – 28) ↔
Rare passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Recorded on 186 dates, almost 3 times that in 2018. Like recent years, this is largely thanks to long staying birds. Nonetheless this was the best year since at least 2008. At least one was present from 2018 until 23rd Apr with two present on at least 13 dates. A bird in full breeding plumage arrived on 23rd June and was joined by at least 2 more by 7th July. 1 or 2 were then recorded almost daily until the year end. 4 were present on 27th Sep and 31st Oct. Juveniles were seen on several dates in the autumn suggesting that over the period there was some turnover of individuals. Lytchett Fields accounted for most records.

Greenshank: (49 – 27 – 28) ↔
Common non-breeding visitor. This species is almost a daily ever present. There was no discernable boundary between birds leaving to breed and arriving from the breeding grounds. Max 18 on 27th Aug. Lytchett Fields was far and away the most used habitat.



GB+RN *- was present from the beginning of the year until at least 9th Apr. It returned for its 5th season on 2nd Jul and was still present into 2020.*

I. Ballam

It had been ringed on 29th Sep 2015 as a juv at Seabrook, Montrose Basin, Scotland. It was seen at Steart, Somerset in Dec 2015. It had previously visited the Bay on at least 4th – 12th Apr 2016. Returning for the non-breeding seasons of 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19.

GO+O(flag)R *– was present on 4th Aug 2019.*

I.Ballam

Unfortunately to date we have been unable to trace its history. We believe that it was ringed in FRANCE.



Our compulsory wader gallery is once again graced with some beautiful images.
Curlew mainly frequent either the Arable Field or The Pool. Sightings on the main fields, or like this one on Holton Pools, are unusual (M.Wright).
Their counterpart, Whimbrel much prefer the Bay mud at low tide (I.Ballam).
Greenshanks can be found for much of the year and increasingly enjoy Holton Pools (M.Wright).
Little Ringed Plovers are potential breeders and this early returning juvenile probably had not come far (D.Foster).
Lytchett Bay was once Dorset's premier site for the elegant and always sought after Spotted Redshank.
This year it just about hinted that a return to better form might be on the cards (Breeding plum Ad I.Ballam, Non-breeding M.Wright)



Black-headed Gull: (12000 – 10000 – 28) ⇔
A very common visitor. At least 10,000 were in the pre-roost on 27th Feb. This is the biggest count in the period since current recording began in 1992 and not far short of the 12,000 recorded on 14th Mar 1981.

There were 3 ringing recoveries this year.

CZP ES19873 *– A juv ringed at Droužkovice, kraj, Ústecký, CZECH REPUBLIC on 13th Jun 2011 was found dead 2846 days later on 28th Mar 2018 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 1358km.*

208A (Orange ring/black characters) – *A pullus ringed at Ibsley, Hants on 10th Jun 2014 was seen at Lytchett Fields on 24th May 2019.*

K19A (Yellow ring/black characters) *was at Lytchett Fields on 18th May 2019. It has not been traced yet, but it is believed to have been rung in LATVIA.*

Little Gull: (2 – 16)
Scarce visitor, not annual. The first since 2016. One was in the Bay on 23rd Dec (per Bird Guides), no further detail available.

Mediterranean Gull: (139 – 27) ⇔
Spring and early summer visitor, occasional at other times. Excellent series of counts in spring. Juveniles were seen in July.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2	95	55	104	18	7	3	1	1	1	1	1

PRE8 Red ring (FN98191) *– An Ad ringed at Jeziórko, Grębów, POLAND on 4th Jun 2016 was seen in field where its colour ring was read 1004 days later on 4th Mar 2019 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 2014km. This bird has been seen in GERMANY in 2017 and BELGUIM in 2018.*

Great Black-backed Gull: (151 – 28) ⇔
Daily visitor throughout the year in small numbers. The max count for the site of 151 was way back in 2003. This species still occurs daily but a max of 12 on 3rd Dec is a good count nowadays.

P:30A *– was present on 4th Feb 2019*

It had been ringed as a pullus on 11th Jun 2012 at Portland Harbour, Dorset. It previously been seen at Lytchett Bay on 4th Jun 2016.

Common Gull: (3000 – 28) ⇔
A common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in spring. 1000 on 3rd Feb was the biggest count of the year. Not recorded between 24th Apr and 28th Jul.

Herring Gull: (2500 – 27) ↗
Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Numbers much lower than 90's/early 00's when Corfe Mullen tip attracted large numbers of gulls to the wider area. Max 160 on 10th Nov.

Yellow legged Gull: (65 – 27) ↡
Increasingly uncommon visitor. Peaking in summer. The hay-days of the late 90's is a fading memory. As stated last year most sightings probably refer to a long staying and returning adult. This bird lingered from 2018 until 20th Jan. One on 24th May was unusual. The presumed returning adult re-appeared on 18th Jun and was present until the year end. Additional individuals were only seen on 3 dates. 2 on 15th Aug and singles on 22nd Sep and 10th Oct.

Lesser Black backed Gull: (2128 – 28) ⇔
Common autumn and spring passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Rarely counted, though numbers much lower now than they were in the 90's/early 00's.

Sandwich Tern: (6 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon summer visitor. Recorded on 16 dates. The year got off to an extraordinary start when 4 were seen on Lytchett Fields on 24th Jan. This would have been unthinkable 20 years ago when wintering birds in Poole Harbour were a very rare thing. The remainder occurred between 22nd Apr and 4th Oct.

Common Tern: (25 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon summer visitor. Recorded on 20 dates between 25th Apr and 26th Sep (equaling the latest date at the Bay). Max 2 on 3 dates. Records split between the Bay and Lytchett Fields.

This is the first time that we have had an image of this quietly attractive dove in the report and it's a cracker
© John Wall

Stock Dove: (72 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon Resident. Frequently seen and widely scattered records. Max 15sw with Woodpigeons was the largest count submitted.

Woodpigeon: (17,785 – 28) ⇔
Common resident and autumn migrant. Substantial migrant flocks were recorded on 4 dates. 2725w on 28th Oct; 2084sw & 1054ne on 6th Nov; 760nw on 16th Nov; 550w on 18th Nov.

Collared Dove: (15 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon resident. Recorded across the site. Max 14 at Turlin Moor on 13th Jan.

Cuckoo: (2 – 27) ↘
Scarce visitor in spring. A very good year compared to recent experience. Recorded on 20 dates between 14th Apr and 19th May. All singles.

Barn Owl: *(2 – 18)*
Bred at French's Farm until 2009. Shortly after this the nest box was removed. Since then the species has been very scarce. Sadly, one was found dead at Lytchett Fields on 15th Feb. This was the only record of the year.

Tawny Owl: (2 – 28) ↘
Uncommon resident. There is no doubt that Tawnies are struggling at the Bay. Reported on only 5 dates – mainly in the Lytchett Heath / Lytchett Way areas.

Short Eared Owl: (1 – 8)
Rare visitor. 1 (or possibly 2) was seen over Lytchett Bay on 1st Nov (SR, IB). One arrived high from the N over Lytchett Bay View around 10am and having been harassed by corvids it continued south. Half an hour later it, or another, appeared high over Lytchett Way before dropping toward the saltings. Given the rarity of the species at the Bay it is probably safer to conclude that only one bird was involved.

Nightjar: (3 – 19) ⇔
Irregular breeder. Present at Lytchett Heath during the breeding season from 26th May intermittently until mid-July at least.

Swift: (113 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant and occasional local breeder. Another dreadful year with records on 21 dates between 4th May and 13th Aug. Max 12 on 19th May.

Kingfisher: (4 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant and uncommon, but frequently seen, winter visitor. Bred in 2000 and possibly in other years since. Typically, this species becomes scarce from Christmas onwards. One on 12th Jan was the only record early in the year. One at Lytchett Fields on 9th Apr may be indicative that breeding was taking place not too far away on the Sherford? Commonly seen from 2nd Jul onwards, max 3 in Aug.

Wryneck:
3rd & 4th records. One of the highlights of the year occurred when one flew into our nets during a ringing session at Lytchett Heath on 25th Aug (TE, IML, SR et al). Another was found at Lytchett Fields on 6th Sept but was typically elusive and soon moved on (PM, IB).

Great Spotted Woodpecker: ↗
Breeding Resident. Seen regularly in most parts of the Bay. Drumming heard in most areas during spring.

Green Woodpecker: ⇔
Breeding resident. Bred successfully and recorded in all parts of the Bay. No change in status.

Kestrel: (3 – 28) ⇔
Resident. A rather patchy year recorded on only 29 dates but likely to have been present on more. A nest box mounted early in the year was not used. Not thought to have bred locally.

Merlin: (2 – 24) ⇔
Scarce winter visitor. Sightings were a little thin this year. Seen on 4 dates; 5th Jan, 6th Feb, 11th Nov and 13th Nov.

Hobby; (3 – 26) ⇔
Irregular summer visitor. A good year with records on 19 dates between 4th May and 6th Oct. Max 2 on 3 dates.

Peregrine: (3 – 27) ⇔
Uncommon visitor, rare in early summer. Recorded on record 53 dates, back to normal after last year's dip and noted in every month of the year.

Peregrine is often enjoyed though sometimes they find too comfortable a perch near Lytchett Fields where they linger menacing the migrant waders. This juvenile took up a short residence and was finely captured by © Ian Ballam

Jay: (12 – 28) ⇔
Resident. Regularly seen throughout the year but most often in autumn.

Magpie: ⇔
Common Resident.

Jackdaw: (610 – 28) ⇔
Resident. Recorded throughout the year. 256nw on the morning of 28th Oct at Lytchett Bay View was a nice example of migration.

Rook: (185 – 28) ↗
Breeds on edge of recording area. 23 nests at Watery Lane colony. 16 – 25 nests 2010 – 2019.

Carrion Crow: (100 – 28) ⇔
Common Resident. Breeds widely across the area. No significant records submitted.

Raven: (7 – 25) ⇔
Uncommon but now recorded on an almost a daily basis throughout the year. 7 on 19th Jun equaled the record count achieved on 2 previous dates.

Coal Tit: ↗
Uncommon resident, increasing. Recorded from most sites across the calendar. 6 ringed.

Marsh Tit: (1 – 5)
Rare visitor. A juvenile visited Sandy Close Pond feeders on 18th Jul. One of the surprises of the year.

Blue Tit: ⇔
Common resident. 89 ringed.

Great Tit: ⇔
Common resident. 32 ringed.

***TX40468** – A 1st W F ringed at Lytchett Bay on 26th Sep 2018 was re-trapped 184 days later on 29th Mar 2019 at Trent Farm, Dorset, A NW movement of 47km. A rare example of dispersal for this species from Lytchett Bay.*

Wow © Ian Ballam

Bearded Tit: (40 – 28) ↗
Scarce breeder and uncommon passage migrant. A full breeding survey was attempted. A combination of difficult access and bird behavior made achieving a precise number of breeding pairs difficult. However, there were at least 4, and possibly 8, pairs east of the Sherford. Many young were seen in May and June. Typically, the species was very visible in autumn when at least 40 were at Lytchett Heath on 8th Oct. 41 ringed.

Ringing included some interesting controls/re-traps. 8 birds ringed at the site in previous years were re-trapped this year – 2 from 2017 and 6 from 2018.

ABE8374 *- An unaged F ringed at Lytchett Bay on 8th Oct 2019 and was re-trapped 14 days later on 22nd Oct 2019 at Radipole Lake, Dorset. A WSW movement of 33km.*

Woodlark: (15 – 18) ⇔
Irregular visitor. 1 accidently flushed from bare ground on the hot afternoon of 28th Jun at Lytchett Heath was a surprise. Unfortunately, it was the only record of the year.

Skylark: (781 - 28) ⇔
Scarce breeder and passage migrant. Just 1 territory established and held throughout the spring. Up to 7 were in the arable field throughout Jan and Feb. Autumn passage began on 8th Oct but was light. Max 16 on 10th, 10 on 25th and 15 on 28th. Small numbers used the arable field daily during Dec. 2 ringed.

Sand Martin: (5000 – 27) ↘
Common passage migrant. Recorded from 30th Mar until 22nd Sep. A dismal year in terms of numbers. Max 15 on several dates.

Swallow: (1000 – 800 – 28) ⇔
Common passage migrant, breeds at French's Farm. Recorded from 2nd Apr until 16th Oct. Max 222 on 22nd Sep.

House Martin: (1800 – 28) ⇔
Common passage migrant, breeding colony on edge of recording area at Watery Lane. Present from 5th Apr to 7th Oct. Max 100 on 2 dates in Sep.

The colony at Watery Lane has spread into Seaview Road.

No of House Martin nests at the Watery Lane colony 2005 – 2019. No of nest collapsed or destroyed in brackets.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
15 (5)	16 (6)	14 (5)	13 (8)	15 (5)	8 (7)	13 (4)	2 (0)	4 (1)	?	7 (3)	10 (4)	18 (?)	17 (?)	12 (4)

Cetti's Warbler: (11 males – 27) ⇔
Breeding resident. A full survey revealed a further decline, only 5 territories east of the Sherford (6 – 8 in 2018 following the severe weather in Mar). The reasons for this are unclear but scrub clearance at a historically successful site holding 2 pairs means that the habitat there is now unsuitable. On a wider scale it seems that significant browsing of the understory vegetation by Sika deer may be the cause of the decline?

Present at Sandy Close Pond occasionally in both winter periods. 11 ringed.

Long tailed Tit: ↗
Common resident. Regularly recorded from most sites at the Bay. 26 ringed.

Yellow-browed Warbler: (1 – 6)
8th record. Just like the first 15 years ago this one appeared at Lytchett Bay View in early Dec. Present from 4th – 9th Dec (SR et al)

Willow Warbler: (60 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant. This species has been lost as a regular breeder.

The first record was on 31st Mar. Spring migration was slightly better than last year but still poor. Autumn migration was reasonable and occurred between 20th Jul and 2nd Oct. Max 16 on 29th Jul. 64 ringed.

Daily max and bird days are given in the following table.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
		1	5			16	9	11	1		
		1	14			21	80	34	1		

Chiffchaff: (142 – 28) ↗
Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. A complete breeding survey found 7 – 10 territories east of the Sherford.

There were 4 records of singles in Jan and Feb. 1 on 13th Mar was probably the first spring migrant, which peaked with 15 on 17th Apr. Autumn migration was unremarkable, max 25 on 18th Sep. 123 ringed.

Siberian Chiffchaff: (1 - 7)
Scarce migrant. 8th record. 1 was trapped and ringed at Lytchett Heath on 25th Oct (SR et al)

Sedge Warbler: (219 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant. 9 bird-days in spring was a considerable improvement on 2018 but still poor. Recorded between 18th Apr and 4th May, max 2. Autumn passage commenced on 16th Jul and continued to 19th Sep. Reduced ringing effort meant that numbers logged were down on recent years. Max 39 on 8th Aug. 154 ringed. There were first class recoveries.

Daily max and bird days are given in the following table.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
			2	2		6	39	12			
			5	4		10	169	33			

S391566 – *An Ad ringed at Lytchett Bay on 25th Jul 2018 was re-trapped 21 days later on 15th Aug 2018 at Herdade dos Forninhos, Beja, PORTUGAL. A SSW movement of 1539km.*

14764026 *A 1st W ringed at Oorderen, Antwerpen, BELGIUM on 17th Aug 2016 was re-trapped 1086 days later on 8th Aug 2019 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 451km.*

ABE8072 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 8th Aug 2019 was re-trapped 5 days later on 13th Aug 2019 at Tour aux Moutons, Donges, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE. A S movement of 378km.*

S391580 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 25th Jul 2018 was re-trapped 396 days later on 25th Aug 2019 at Cabanot, Audenge, Gironde, FRANCE. A S movement of 677km.*

S391043 *– An Ad F ringed at Lytchett Bay on 23rd Aug 2017 was re-trapped 354 days later on 12th Aug 2018 at Mars-Ouest, Sant-Philbert-de-Grand-Lieu, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE. A S movement of 401km.*

S391735 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 1st Aug 2017 was re-trapped 321 days later on 18th Jun 2019 at Cape Clear, Cork, IRELAND. A W movement of 528km.*

S391664 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 27th Jul was re-trapped 8 days later on 4th Aug at La Claire Mere, L Eree, Guernsey, CHANNEL ISLANDS. A S movement of 147km. This record is particularly remarkable as it mirrors S391684 ringed on the same morning and re-trapped at the same site two days later (See 2018 Lytchett Bird and Wildlife report).*

AAE5973 *– A 1st W ringed at Icklesham, East Sussex on 1st Aug 2019 was re-trapped 2 days later on 3rd Aug at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 191km.*

AJB2157 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 15th Aug 2018 was re-trapped 370 days later on 20th Aug 2019 at Slapton Ley, Devon. A WSW movement of 123km.*

Reed Warbler: (107 males – 28) ⇔
Common summer visitor. Present between 18th Apr and 3rd Oct. A complete breeding survey took place covering the whole site from Kings Bridge / River Sherford eastwards to South Haven at Turlin Moor. 107

singing males were recorded, a notable increase since the last survey in 2011 which found 84. Prior to this only a partial survey had been undertaken, comparative figures for this are set out below. 89 ringed.

Kings Bridge to Lytchett Way

1995 28 singing males
2011 67 singing males
2019 86 singing males


© *Shaun Robson*

The first recovery below is remarkable. Once we saw that the bird was carrying a Norwegian ring we scrutinised it very closely, fully anticipating that we had caught a Marsh Warbler! However the biometrics left us in no doubt about the ID and when distribution maps were fully analysed it was clear that Reed was in fact far more likely. An exciting event nonetheless.

HK27650 *– A 1st W ringed Slevdalsvannet, Farsund, Vest-Agder, NORWAY on 7th Aug 2019 was re-trapped 17 days later on 24th Aug at Lytchett Bay. A SW movement of 992km.*

ABE8171 – *A juvenile ringed at Lytchett Bay on 20th Aug 2019 was found dead 7 days later on 27th Aug 2019 in Poole. A movement of 3km.*

Grasshopper Warbler: (33 – 21) ⇔
Passage migrant, predominantly in autumn. Under recorded. Bred in 1986.

No spring records but a record autumn despite reduced ringing effort. 58 bird-days between 3rd Aug and 8th Sep. 54 of these were ringed including an incredible 33 on 20th Aug! The previous record count was 18 on 27th Aug 2016.

Blackcap: (75 – 28) ↗
Passage migrant, summer visitor and scarce winter visitor. A full breeding survey was undertaken identifying 14-18 territories, a new high for this increasing species.

A male and female were seen infrequently around Sandy Close Pond and Lytchett Bay View in Jan and Feb.

Identifying the first summer arriving migrant is made more difficult due to the risk of counting south-east bound continental winterers as north bound summer migrants! There were no more records until 30th Mar.

Migration was average in spring and autumn with the exception of 8th Sep when 30 were seen.

Single birds were seen at two sites in Dec. 61 ringed.

Garden Warbler: (7 – 26) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. 1 in spring on 1st May at Lytchett Fields. Only 7 bird-days in autumn between 3rd – 25th Aug. All singles. 4 ringed.

Lesser Whitethroat: (3 – 23) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant, which occasionally breeds or holds territory. The run of poor years continues.

In spring singles on 4th and 8th May. 1 in autumn on 13th Sep.

Whitethroat: (18 – 26) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. Bred in 2013. An average year. 10 bird-days in spring between 18th Apr & 12th May. In autumn, 37 bird days between 7th Aug & 19th Sep. Max 4 on 16th Sep. 12 ringed.

Dartford Warbler: (2 pairs – 25) ⇔
Currently absent, previously breeding resident. None have been recorded since Aug 2018. It was presumed that this was a result of "The Beast from the East" in Mar 18, however there was a record of a juvenile in Aug of that year. Hopefully they will return soon.

Firecrest: (4 – 16) ⇔
Scarce visitor. Another relatively poor year, though whilst records were only received for 8 dates it is likely that birds were present during both winter periods. 1 at Lytchett Heath on 21st Jan, Lytchett Way on 12th Feb and Lytchett Bay View on 6th Mar, after which there were no records until 17th Nov. 3 were at Lytchett Fields on 28th Nov and 5th Dec and singles were seen on 3 other dates. 1 ringed.

Goldcrest: (27 – 28) ⇔
Passage migrant, which occasionally breeds. Present during the breeding season at Lytchett Heath. Typical migration, max day count at any one site; 15 on 8th Oct and 10 on 9th Oct. Widespread in small numbers during both winter periods. 33 ringed.

Wren: ⇔
Common resident. 17 ringed.

Nuthatch: ⇔
Uncommon. Seen occasionally throughout the year from sites stretching from Lytchett Fields to Turlin Moor including frequently at Sandy Close Pond in the summer. 1 ringed.

Treecreeper: ⇔
Uncommon. Recorded only occasionally during the first 5 months from a variety of sites.

Starling: (35000 – 5600 – 28) ⇔
Common resident**.** No counts exceeded 225. 1 ringed.

Ring Ouzel: (3 – 10)
Scarce migrant. 1 at Lytchett Fields on 16th Oct was a very nice surprise for the finder (PM).

Blackbird: (45 – 28) ⇔
Common Resident. No significant records submitted. 38 ringed.

Fieldfare: (559 – 28) ↗
Uncommon winter visitor. Very scarce early in the year. 60 on 2nd Feb the only notable record after which none were recorded. First returning birds were seen on 22nd Oct. There were no major flights and though most records came from Lytchett Bay View, 50 at Lytchett Fields on 16th Nov was the max count.

Redwing: (1000 – 514 – 28) ⇔
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded until 16th Mar and from 13th Oct. Diurnal migration included 116n on 29th Oct. 120 at Lytchett Fields on 7th Dec was notable. 7 ringed.

RL41187 *– A 1st W ringed at Lytchett Bay on 2nd Dec 2017 was hunted and shot 383 days later on 20th Dec 2018 at Virelade, Gironde, FRANCE. A S movement of 686km. The bird was described by the hunter as "an unidentified thrush". A very sad end to the life of a wonderful migrant that made the return journey from its northern breeding grounds only once before being killed.*

Song Thrush: (1256 – 28) ⇔
Breeding resident and passage migrant. A full survey (east of the Sherford) found up to 10 territories, a decline cp 12 in 2011. 7 ringed.

There no autumn flights or significant counts. 2 had started singing by 23rd Dec.

Mistle Thrush: (60 - 20 – 28) ↘
Uncommon resident. Probably the poorest year on record. 18 bird-days over 12 dates. Max 3 on 20th Jan. No records between 20th June and 8th Oct.

Spotted Flycatcher: (8 – 6 – 28) ↘
Passage migrant, previously bred. An average year. One in spring on 7th May. 18 bird-days in autumn between 26th Aug and 18th Sep was a reasonable return by modern standards, max 3 on 2 dates.

Robin: ⇔
Common resident. 16 ringed.

Black Redstart: (1 – 7)
Rare visitor. 1 was at Frenches Farm Allotments on 24th Oct (SR, IB)


© Ian Ballam

Common Redstart: (2 – 21) ⇔
Scarce autumn migrant. One in spring on 17th Apr at Lytchett Fields. 4 in autumn. Two were ringed at Lytchett Heath on 25th Aug. Singles on 28th Aug at Holton Pools at Turlin Moor on 18th Sep (equaling the latest date at the Bay). 2 ringed.

Whinchat: (11 – 26) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. One in spring on 20th Apr (equaling the earliest date at the Bay). 14 bird-days in autumn between 27th Aug and 6th Oct. Max 3 on 14th Sep. All records at Lytchett Fields.

Stonechat: (23 – 28) ↗
Returning breeding resident (7 pairs in 2002). After a 12 year gap this species bred at Lytchett Heath in 2018. This year a pair raised two broods at Lytchett Fields and another pair raised one brood at Frenches Farm Fields.

Present in every month of the year and recorded at a wide range of sites around the bay. Max 11 on 6th Oct. 3 ringed.

Northern Wheatear: (39 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. Almost every record of this species occurs in the north west of the recording area. A slight improvement on 2018 but occurrence seems to be reducing as the area of short grass is much less than it once was.

16 bird-days in spring following the first at Holton Pools on 25th Mar. Last on 6th May. Max 6 on 18th Apr.

11 bird-days between 8th Aug and 6th Oct. Max 2.



This Yellow-browed Warbler was probably the first to be pictured in the field at Lytchett Bay. Sedge Warblers are common early autumn migrants. Goldcrest can be found at any time of the year but are rarely common. Blackcap continue to establish themselves as a breeding species, whilst winter sightings remain occasional at best. A survey of breeding Reed Warblers found that they reached a new high mark. Common Whitethroat remains enigmatic and still failing to establish themselves as a regular breeder. All photos ©Ian Ballam except Whitethroat @ Keith Rawling.



House Sparrow: (101++ – 28) ⇔
Resident. Usually recorded around the urban fringe, seems to be doing well in many areas around the Bay. No additional effort was made to follow up on the 6 roosts identified at the end of 2017. 7 ringed.

Dunnock: ⇔
Common resident. 13 ringed.

Yellow Wagtail: (150 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. 4 singles in spring between 9th – 17th Apr. Autumn migration was very strong, starting on 12th Aug and lasting until 7th Oct. 343 bird-days, max 56 on 16th Sep. Almost exclusively at Lytchett Fields.



Two fine wagtail portraits © Mark Wright

Grey Wagtail: (15 – 28) ⇔
Winter visitor, passage migrant and occasional breeder. Frequently recorded in small numbers throughout the year. A pair visited Sandy Close Pond in late Apr / early May collecting food, suggesting that breeding was taking place somewhere in the vicinity. Max 4 on 14th Oct.

Pied Wagtail: (650 – 28) ⇔
Recorded throughout the year, common in autumn. Bred successfully. Birds roost at various points around the Bay during peak migration in October. Max 260 on 29th Oct.

White Wagtail: Scarce migrant.1 on 1st Apr was the only confirmed record this year.

Meadow Pipit: (460 – 28) ⇔
Occasional breeder and common passage migrant. No records between 9th Apr and 15th Sep. 40 were present in the first winter period. Passage in both spring and autumn was unremarkable, max 76 on 6th Oct. At least 25 present around the year end. 2 ringed.

Tree Pipit: (18 – 24) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. 15 bird days between 19th Aug and 1st Sep, max 4 on 25th. Records spread between Lytchett Heath and Lytchett Fields.

Water Pipit: (20 – 22)
Scarce winter visitor. Records have returned to the previous levels since the creation of Lytchett Fields. A reasonable year with records on 42 dates (Likely that birds were present throughout the winter). Present until 4th Mar, max 3 on 1st Feb and from 25th Oct, max 8 on 10th Nov.

Rock Pipit: (*Scandinavian Rock Pipit*) (50 – 28) ⇔
Common winter visitor. Recorded until 8th Mar and from 17th Oct. The big flocks on the saltings noted in the 00's seem to have declined. Max 10 on 6th Feb and 25th Oct.

Chaffinch: (450 – 28) ⇔
Breeding resident and winter visitor. Max 30 at Lytchett Fields on 11th Feb. Regular at Sandy Close feeders in both periods, max 14 on 26th Jan. 4 ringed.

Bullfinch: (20 – 28) ↗


© Ian Ballam

Uncommon but increasing. In keeping with recent years, widely recorded across the area throughout the year, noted in every month, including 2 fresh juveniles on 26th May at Lytchett Fields. Seen daily at Sandy Close Pond throughout much of the year. Max on any one date was 7. 5 ringed.

S391739 *– A 2nd Cal yr M ringed at Lytchett Bay on 1st Aug 2018 was found dead 356 days later on 23rd Jul 2019 in Upton. A movement of 2km. The cause of death was unknown.*

Greenfinch: (60 – 28) ↘
Uncommon breeding resident, which has declined due to on-going Trichomoniasis disease in the population. This arrived in late summer 2006 and has had a severe impact on English Greenfinch populations. 18 at Lytchett Fields on 15th Jan, 14 at Turlin Moor on 4th Feb and 20 at Frenches Farm on 24th Oct were the only significant counts. 4 ringed.

Linnet: (250 – 28) ⇔
Uncommon breeding resident. Bred successfully at Lytchett Fields. No sign of the historical winter roost at Lytchett Way at either end of the year, which now seems to be a thing of the past. Up to 41 were around French's Farm and Lytchett Fields in Apr. Autumn migration was unremarkable.

Lesser Redpoll: (40 – 23) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. The poorest year since xxxx. 1 on 1st Mar at Lytchett Heath was the only record of the year.

Goldfinch: (120 – 28) ⇔
Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Max 88 at Lytchett Fields on 15th Aug and 100 at Lytchett Bay View on 28th Oct. 8 ringed.

Y820624 *– An Ad M ringed at Lytchett Bay on 21st Jan 2014 was found dead 2091 days later on 13th Sep 2019 having been taken by a Magpie in Hamworthy, Poole. Meaning that this bird was at least 7 years old. The record for a British Goldfinch is 10 yrs and 2 dys.*

Siskin: (280 – 25) ↘
Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor. The series of poor years continues and sightings appear to be reducing. Only 22 bird-days on 18 dates, max 2 on anyone date!

Yellowhammer: (13 – 17)
Extinct breeding species. Very scarce passage migrant. 1 at Frenches Farm Fields on 13th Sep (ESB).

Reed Bunting: (110 – 28) ⇔

Breeding resident. A full breeding survey found between 17 – 27 singing males, little change since the last survey in 2011 when 23 singing males were present. No significant counts submitted but present at Sandy Close Pond feeders in both periods. 46 ringed.

© Shaun Robson

Records received from: I.H.Alexander, I.Ballam (IB), E.S.Brodie (ESB), D.Chown, M.Constantine, Mo Constantine, N.Duckworth (ND), T.Elborn, D.Foster, T.Furnell, R.Gifford, M&L Highfield; R.Howell J.Hull , N.Hull, K.E.Lane, I.M.Lewis, J Lidster, P.Morton (PM), G.Owen (GO), J.S.Parker, M.Robb, S.Robson (SR), P.Saunders, R.Stephenson, P.Sutton, A.Taylor, C.Walker, S.Walls, M.Wood, L.Woodford, C.Wilcox, M.Wright. With additional information from Bird Track, e-Bird, Birds of Poole Harbour, Holton Lee log, Rare Bird Alert and the Dorset Bird Club. Apologies for any omissions.

Appendix 1 – Finders accounts

Stone Curlew, 18th June 2019 – The first record for Lytchett Bay – Shaun Robson

I dragged myself out of bed to do some more Bearded Tit surveying at Lytchett Bay. The reedbed was soaking and the growth since my last visits made access very unpleasant. It soon became apparent that I was wasting my time. Two males in adult plumage, two females in adult plumage and a group of juveniles. These zipped off in all directions then a female with 2 more juvs appeared flying in from a new direction. I was just left to conclude that it has been a good season so far.

The morning was damp, very overcast and rather gloomy. There was no chance of the reed-bed drying out anytime soon. I set off home and stopped on the heath to look at the growing birches between the heath and the reed-bed at around 07:35. I was just thinking that more management will be required in the coming winter when I noticed a stocky large wader flying low and head on toward me from the Bay. I was struggling to ID it. It wasn't a Eurasian Curlew but it looked too heavy and oddly proportioned for anything on my search radar. Thankfully it flew straight over my head at a height of about 5m. A Stone Curlew! Moult having just started with the inner primary and outer secondary dropped on each wing. Sadly it just kept going north having been on view for just less than a minute. Wowsa.

Despite searches of the surrounding area there was no further sightings and we were left to wonder whether it had spent anytime sat out on the saltmarsh.

The 228th species for the Lytchett Bay list and one of the most unexpected events that I have witnessed in 28 years here. Perhaps I should not have been so surprised. After all, Ian Ballam found the Buff-breasted Sand on 15th June 2017.

Appendix 2 – Bird ringing at Lytchett Bay 2019

	Full grown	Recoveries	Total
Bearded Tit	41	18	59
Blackbird	38	10	48
Blackcap	61		61
Blue Tit	89	58	147
Bullfinch	5	1	6
Cetti's Warbler	11	9	20
Chaffinch	4		4
Chiffchaff	123		123
Siberian Chiffchaff (tristis)	1		1
Coal Tit	6	1	7
Dunnock	13	2	15
Firecrest	1	1	2
Garden Warbler	4		4
Goldcrest	33	6	39
Goldfinch	8	1	9
Grasshopper Warbler	54	1	55
Great Spotted Woodpecker		3	3
Great Tit	32	5	37
Greenfinch	4		4
House Sparrow	7	1	8
Long-tailed Tit	26	9	35
Meadow Pipit	2		2
Nuthatch	1		1
Redstart	2		2
Redwing	7		7
Reed Bunting	46	4	50
Reed Warbler	89	7	96
Robin	16	4	20
Sedge Warbler	154	2	156
Skylark	2		2
Snipe	1		1
Song Thrush	7	1	8
Starling	1		1
Stonechat	3		3
Whitethroat	12		12
Willow Warbler	64		64
Woodcock	2		2
Wren	17	8	25
Wryneck	1		1
Grand Total	**988**	**152**	**1140**

Many thanks to all of our photographers. Holton Lee Pool is becoming a favourite spot. No wonder, when it is possible to get images like this!

Lytchett Bay
Non-Avian Wildlife Report
2019

Mutilla-europaea - Large Velvet Ant © Ian Ballam
Idaea muricata - Purple-bordered-Gold © Nick Hull
Vipera berus – Adder © Nick Hull

Introduction

As always with being responsible for writing any report it requires records and we are always in need of all types of reports especially of non-avian species. All we require is a simple e-mail with what you've seen with where on the patch you've seen them. Send it to me Nick Hull at nickh4142@gmail.com The more we know about the patch and it's wildlife no matter how small is valuable to keep Lytchett Bay and its heathland, fields and green space for us all to enjoy whatever your interest.

Though I've known how to identify our UK reptiles last year I started training with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation for my license to enable me to help with the surveys on RSPB Arne as well as Lytchett Bay, more on this later. I have also attended a refresher course on the identification of Grasshoppers and Crickets which helped adding a new species to our list.

As always, the process is a slow one and as I've mentioned above we are always keen to encourage others that visit the Lytchett Bay reserves to keep an eye out for all wildlife and report what you see. If you can get a photograph to confirm your id that would be great, please send it in to me or Shaun or post it on the Friend of Lytchett Bay Facebook page. (https://www.facebook.com/groups/2469123376495268/)

With Shaun and Ian concentrating efforts on the birds Jackie and I continued to try and add new species of invertebrates to the patch list and to confirm as many of the species already recorded. We have managed to add 67 new species and confirm most of the species previously recorded. We have now recorded a total 774 non-avian species since we started recording Lytchett Bay wildlife. Both Ian and Shaun contribute when they come across something new as have a number of other people.

Which brings me as always to thank the following patch watchers and visitors for their contributions to this list: Shaun Robson, Ian Ballam, Jackie Hull, Ian Lewis, Paul Morton, Liz Woodford, David Foster, Chris Walker, Alison Copland, Stephen Smith, John Westacott, Mike Gibbons and Colin Lamont . Also the following people for their help in verifying and help with identification of various insect groups. Richard Webb (Mammals); Tony Allen (Beetles); Stewart Roberts BWARS (Bees & Wasps); Jez Martin (Spiders); Paul Harris and Sean Foote (Moths) and members from the Diptera and Hoverfly Facebook groups whose help has been invaluable.

The problem with recording everything we can, the list grows each year and because of this it's becoming impossible to list every species recorded in a reasonable number of pages, so as with last year, I will summaries each species group and list the important species and those that have been recorded for the first time only. I've reduced the number of tables and placed the date the species were first recorded next to the species name with the exception of moths.

A number of species listed in the tables may have 'agg' written next to the name, this means for a definitive identification the species requires to be dissected to determine the species. I do not 'gen-det' as I do not believe in killing something that has a purpose on this earth and it should be able to fulfil that purpose before it dies. If I find a dead specimen, I have no problem in carrying out any procedure to find a definitive identification.

Thank you

Nick Hull

Photograph Acknowledgements

The Species lists

Mammals

Species not reported this year were Badger, Bank Vole, Common Shrew and Seratine Bat.

The 2019 season produced two species, which hasn't been recorded in the Lytchett Bay recording area since recording started in 2914. Short-tailed Vole which I found during a reptile survey under one of the reptile artificial refuges on Lytchett Heath, the second was a Harvest Mouse nest found in the Approach/Purple Heron field by Paul Morton. This latter species I was informed by Terry Elborn that a nest was found along the Turlin shore during the last five years whilst conservation work was being carried out by Poole Environmental Services.

Internet archive photograph

Field Vole (Short-tailed Vole) *Microtus agrestis*
Recorded 26th September 2019

The field vole (also known as the short-tailed vole) is very common in grassland, heathland and moorland habitats. It is active day and night and eats seeds, roots and leaves. Further up the food chain, it forms an extremely important part of the diet of many predators, such as kestrels, weasels and barn owls. Field voles are not great climbers, preferring to move along the ground through a network of well-used runs that lead to their burrows. They can produce three to six litters of up to seven young a year, and undergo population booms every few years. These increases don't last long, however, as they have a short lifespan and fall prey to other animals.

Photograph © Paul Morton BoPH

Harvest Mouse *Micromys minutus*
Recorded 7th September 2019

Harvest Mouse is a protected species in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a Priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

The tiny harvest mouse which weighs about the same as a 2p coin lives in long tussocky grassland, reedbeds, hedgerows, farmland and around woodland edges. It is mainly vegetarian, eating seeds and fruits, but will also eat invertebrates. Harvest mice build a spherical nest of tightly woven grass, high up in the tall grasses, in which the female will give birth to around six young.

Since Paul Morton found a nest whilst visiting Lytchett Fields RSPB on the 7th September, which was a great find, it has come to light that a nest was found in the reed bed at Turlin Moor around five years ago whilst conservation work was being carried out by Poole Council thanks to Terry Elborn for information.

Reptiles and Amphibians

This year a monthly survey took place of three areas on the Lytchett Bay conservation area and though we had a hot summer which means reptiles, particularly the snakes, are less obvious the site produced five species of reptile on all survey days accept two. The overall monthly totals stayed more or less the same but August was a late afternoon survey where we did particularly well. Over all the numbers show a fairly healthy population. From reports from visitors and observation made by myself, Ian and Shaun, Sand Lizards have done well with more sightings than usual. There are probably two reasons for this, one the conservation work that has been carried out with creating scrapes and banks and the fact we have made efforts to go and look for them.

Date	**11-Apr**	**14-May**	**11-Jun**	**4th Jul**	**15-Aug**	**26-Sep**
Species						
Adder *Vipera berus*	4	2	2	4	16	4
Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica*	2	6	8	2	6	1
Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*	12	2	15	12	24	16
Common Lizard Zootoca vivipara	5	5	0	4	1	1
Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis*	2	3	0	3	2	0
Totals	25	18	25	25	49	22

Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis*

This is a female Sand Lizard I found and photographed at Lytchett Heath, basking in the sun on one of the new banks. Showing how quickly the wildlife makes use of newly created habitat. We do not have a large population here but it is extremely hard to know if you're seeing the same individuals each time as they can roam over quite a large area.

Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica*

The photograph is of a female Grass Snake, it was around 1.5m long you can see the pale-yellow scales at the rear of the head which is the main identification feature. You can also see the black markings on the underside these markings are individual to the snake a little like a fingerprint.

Adder *Vipera berus*

This is one of the adult male Adder we found on Lytchett Heath. He was happy I wasn't going to harm him and I was only about 1m away. In fact he was just content catching the sun to warm up for the day.

Our August survey day was carried out in the late afternoon, which seems to be best for recording this species on the patch.

Odonata - Dragonflies & Damselflies

We have had another excellent year for Odonata on the Lytchett patch and three species have been added to our checklist Small Red Damselfly, which I managed to confirm this year after only having a brief view in 2018. The second was while Steve Smith was carrying out a botany survey on the Arable Field and came across a White-legged Damselfly. Ian found a Red-veined Darter on Lytchett Heath in September, which I presume was a migrant. Ian also confirmed this year breeding of the Southern Migrant Hawker. On one day, myself and Ian observed at least four pairs in tandem and had two ovipositing in the same dry pond they were found in last year. This is the first confirmed breeding of the species in Dorset that I'm aware of.

Small Red Damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum*
Recorded 22nd August 2019

In 2018 I photographed a damselfly resting in my garden thinking it was a Large Red Damselfly I just filed the photograph. This year I came across another on the 22nd August and managed a better shot and after examination found that it was a Small Red Damselfly female (*f.typica*) one of four colour forms of this species.

White-legged Damselfly *Platyenemis pennipes*
Recorded 23rd July 2019

This species was a little unexpected but was found in the Arable Field by Stephen Smith on the 23rd July whilst carrying out a botany survey a really nice addition to the list though I suspect it's a displaced individual but it remains to be seen.

Red-veined Darter *Trithemis ateriosa*
Recorded 16th September 2019

A species that breeds but mainly considered a migrant this individual photographed by Ian Ballam on the 16th September appears to be an immature male as it has a single black line down the side of the abdomen.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Photo

Orthoptera & Allied Insects - Grasshoppers, Crickets, Earwigs, Cockroaches, Stick insects & Mantids.

There are 27 native species of grasshoppers and crickets (Orthoptera) and a number of naturalised species.

Two additions to the Lytchett List and my garden or more accurately my house and a correction to a previous record. thought to have been a Short-winged Cone-head has been re identified as a Long-winged Cone-head last instar. This means that the current list stands at twelve species including the two new additions below.

Southern Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema meridionale*
Recorded 25th July 2019

An arboreal species found in oak woodland but also on other deciduous trees and on hedgerow shrubs. This is a female showing the sword like ovipositor. Unlike the next species both male and female only have short wings which barely cover a quarter of the abdomen.

This is a recent British colonist, first recorded from Surrey and Berkshire in 2001, and already recorded as far north as Nottinghamshire by 2012. This follows a well-documented expansion from southern Europe over the past few decades.

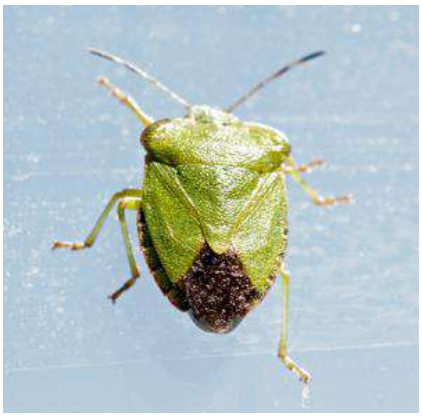
Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema thalassinum*
Recorded 10th August 2019.

Along with the previous species and Speckled Bush Cricket all seem to be common species to turn up indoors. This one was found on the sill of our conservatory. This is a male as you can see the obvious curved cerci showing at the rear. Though similar to the previous species Oak Bush Cricket are fully winged.

Hemiptera - Bugs

This is a group that probably doesn't grab the interest of many people these Insects are in the order Hemiptera are commonly called Bugs. There are about 1700 species in Britain. The range of forms is huge but they all have in common a piercing beak, used like a hypodermic needle to suck juices from plants or other animals. The name 'hemiptera' means half (hemi) wing (ptera) and refers to the feature that many bugs have the front half of the wing hardened (like in beetles) but the rear part is membranous. The bug order is divided into two sub-orders: heteroptera and homoptera. Generally the heteroptera have wings flattened over the body whilst the homopterans hold their wings in a tent-like position. Most bugs can be identified from photographs but some very similar species need examination of the actual specimens.

This year we have managed to add two species bringing our list to twenty-two species in all.



Green Shieldbug *Palomena prasina*
Recorded 17th September

Green Shieldbugs like others in the group have one generation per year; the nymphs feed on many deciduous trees and shrubs, particularly Hazel, and can be found from June to October. Later nymphs are often darker than those found earlier in the season. Newly emerged adults may show a pale wing membrane.

This species has certainly been overlooked in the past this one was found by my wife in our conservatory.

Plant Bug *Harpocera thoraciaca*
Recorded 23rd April 2019

Adults appear in the spring and are short-lived (particularly males), the species spending almost all the year in the egg stage and larval development taking only 2 weeks. The reddish nymphs are covered in dark hairs and the two basal antennal segments are thickened. Males are attracted to UV light and may be found in moth traps, where I found this individual.

Cicadellidae – Leafhoppers

Lassus Lanio
Recorded 3rd July 2017 and 11th July 2019

Only the second record of this leafhopper which is commonly found on Oak. It's identified from its similar cousin *Batracomorpus* by the 3 spines (rather than 5) at the tip of the hind femur. They can be found from June to October.

Coleoptera – Beetles

We have now recorded or rather identified a total of 48 species of beetle and there are many more out there to record. We have like many of the species groups here only just scratching the surface. The total includes the seven species below.

Diving Beetle *Hydrobius fuscipes*
Recorded 7th July 2019

Widespread and common species in Britain that are usually found in pond and small pools with bank side vegetation rather than a moth trap. They can be found all year but usually peak July to September.

Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris*
Recorded on 22nd August 2019

The Green Tiger Beetle is a common ground beetle of heathland, moorland, sandy grassland and sand dunes. Often seen in bright, sunny conditions during the spring and summer. The Green Tiger Beetle is a fast, agile hunter, running across the ground to catch its invertebrate prey, including spiders, caterpillars and ants. It is well equipped to tackle its prey, with a ferocious set of jaws and long legs that give it an impressive turn of speed (it is one of our fastest insects).

When disturbed, it will often fly a short distance before running away. Found on Lytchett Heath by Ian Ballam, it is a species that has done very well locally in recent years and has probably been overlooked on our small patches of heathland.

Dromius Meridionalis
Recorded 11th July 2019

Another beetle species from in my moth trap. This arboreal species is found on a variety of tree species such as Sycamore, Horse-chestnut and Spruce where it can often be located under the bark.

Usually seen between April and October and is fairly frequent and widespread in the southern half of Britain.

Garden Chaffer *Phyllopertha horticola*
Recorded 4th July 2016 and 14th June 2019

This is the second time this species has turned up in the garden. They are found throughout Britain usually in June and July, they live for about eight weeks and can be found feeding on leaves of various plants and trees. They can be found in Parks, Gardens, and Woodland edges.

Soldier Beetle *Malthinus flaveolus agg.*
Recorded in my moth trap on 28th June

There are only four species in the genus they are very difficult to identify and require examination of a specimen under a microscope. *M. flaveolus* tends to stand out as being larger than the other species.

They tend to like hedgerows and wooded areas.

Soft-winged Flower Beetle *Anthocomus rufus*
Recorded in the rough grass towards Turlin Moor on 23rd August.

This is a widespread species in the southern half of Britain, which prefers wetter areas around reed beds and margins. Feeds on flowers and small insects.

It can be found from August to October.

Kidney-spot Ladybird *Chilocorus renipustatus*
Recorded on the 26th February 2019

This is another species that I found in my moth trap. This is a species that likes well wooded areas and often found on tree trunks. Usually found between April and October so this individual came out of its winter hideaway early. It is a fairly common species in the UK.

Yellow & Black Longhorn Beetle *Rutpela maculata*
Recorded 25th July 2019 along footpath12.

Common and widespread in England and Wales, much less common further north.

They are usually found along hedgerows and woodland margins where the adults are most often seen on Hawthorn or umbel flowers.

The larvae live in rotten wood and emerge into adults in May and the adults can be found to around August

Alder Leaf Beetle *Agelastica alni*

The alder leaf beetle is a small, deep metallic blue insect, which can be spotted in open, sunny areas in wetlands, typically alder carr. Adults are active from April to August. Throughout this time, they will feed mainly on alder leaves but have been sighted on beech, hazel and hornbeam. This species of beetle was widely thought to be extinct from the UK, being absent for almost 70 years. They have now repopulated some parts of the UK and are showing evidence of steady recovery. These beetles are still fairly rare to see in the UK.

Flea Beetle *Psylliodes chrysocephala*
Recorded 13th September 2019 plus several dates after.

This year in and around the Poole area we had a large hatching on Flea Beetles this is a group of beetles that measure 2-4mm in length and there are more than 100 species in Britain. They are called flea beetle as they have enlarged hind-legs and when disturbed leap like a flea. They feed on plants in the Brassica family including Cabbages and Oil-seed Rape but can be found on almost any vegetation.

The adults chew holes in the leaves. The larvae usually mine the lower petioles, moving from ageing to healthy tissue, but will move to the stem and destroy the growing point if larval numbers are large or if the rosette is poorly developed.

Widespread and common particularly in the southern half of Britain. April to November, but peaking August to October.

Vine Weevil *Otiorhynchus sulcatus*
Recorde on 24th July 2019

Found in the moth trap in my garden on 24th July. The half-grown larvae overwinter in the soil. The larvae are legless, white to pinkish in colour, and have brown heads. Both the adult and larval stages are damaging to seedlings. The adult weevils live above ground feeding on cotyledons and on the bark of seedlings at night. Root weevil larvae are subterranean, feeding on the roots of many kinds of plants including conifer seedlings in nursery beds.

Trichoptera – Caddisflies

Caddis Fly *Limnephilus auricula*

I've recorded this species a number of times in my moth trap but only recently was able to identify the species. They breed in marshes and pond edges that dry up over summer. The adult lays in autumn and larvae overwinter.

Lepidoptera - Butterflies and Moths

Butterflies

We have had a fairly good season this year of the 28 species we have found in the recording area only two haven't been recorded in 2019.

Purple Hairstreak *Quercusia quercus* which may have been overlooked as they do like to stay high in the tops of the mature oaks but what is slightly worrying, is this is the second year in succession no reports or sighting have been received. The other species not recorded is the much scarcer migrant Clouded Yellow *ssp helice* which isn't that surprising. Of the resident species good number have been seen and one in particular that has done well is Grayling *Hipparchia semele* a species that has only been recorded on two previous occasion a single individual in my garden. This year there has been several sightings and a count of 20+ from Lytchett Heath on 18th of August which was truly excellent. This year we also recorded outstanding numbers of Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui* which were part of a very broad invasion into Southern Britain.

Moths

There are a number of moth species that are considered day flying species such as Silver Y and the Burnet moths and Hummingbird Hawk moth. This year seemed to be a good year in Dorset for the latter of these and Jackie and I had the first in our garden for two years and I haven't received any other records this year. Liz Woodford recorded another species this time a micro going by the name of *Nematopogon swammerdamella* which is a first time it's been recorded on the patch. A moth which I haven't seen or caught is Fox Moth but this year I have come across a good number of Fox Moth caterpillars on our remnant squares of Heathland and they appear to be quite common.

This years trapping saw an improvement on 2018, recording 1293 moths of 224 species 31 of which were recorded for the first time, bringing the patch total to 506 species. I've also included four species that were recorded this year for the second time only.

Micro-Lepidoptera

Nematopogon swammerdamella agg. *7.015 Common*
Recorded on the 7th May 2019

Found and identified by Liz Woodford after finding it in her garden.

This is a uncommon and thinly distributed resident in Dorset.
This is the largest of Britain's longhorn moths which is associated with woodland. Its flight period is during May – June and the larvae feed on dead leaves.

Glyphipterix schoenicolella *19.008 Nationally Scarce*
Trapped 11th August 2019

This species has a disjunct distribution in the British Isles, occurring in connection with its foodplant, and can be found in fens and marshes between Cornwall and East Anglia, in parts of Northern Scotland and the West of Ireland. Adult moths fly between May and September, possibly in one long generation. The larvae feed on black bog-rush (Schoenica nigricans), internally on the seeds

Caloptilia populetorum *15.003 Rare Resident*
Trapped 3rd August 2019

A species of moorland and heath which has a wide distribution over much of mainland Britain, though not especially common. The adults resemble several other Caloptilia species and are best identified by the dark spots on the forewing leading edge and darker cilia. Their flight period is from August onwards, overwintering after which they may be seen until April or May. Despite the scientific name, the larvae feed on birch (Betula) leaves, initially in a gallery and later rolling a leaf and feeding within.

Phyllonorycter tristrigella *15.078 Scarce Resident*
Trapped 22nd April 2019

One of the more distinctive of the Phyllonorycters, this species has two complete bands across the forewing and then a chevron-like mark nearer the wingtip. It also lacks the dark fringe line often present in other species. The larvae feed on elm (Ulmus), creating a long, narrow blotch mine on the underside of a leaf between two veins. There are two broods, with adults at large during May and again in August. The species is relatively common in mainland Britain northwards to southern Scotland.

Cedestis subfasciella *16.022 Scarce & thinly distributed*
Trapped 22nd April 2019

A species associated with coniferous woodland, in particular pine (Pinus), the foodplant of the larva, which feeds internally on the needles. The adult moths have quite a long emergence period, from March until July, when they can be attracted to light.

Fairly well distributed throughout Britain, though less common in the north and west.

Oegoconia quadripuncta ***agg.*** *27.001 Uncommon Resident*
Trapped 3rd August 2019

The distribution of this species covers the south and south-east of England and Wales, and reaches as far north as Lancashire.

The adults fly in July and August at night, when they can be attracted to light. The larvae feed on leaf-litter.

Esperia sulphurella *28.019 Uncommon Resident*
Trapped 13th April 2016 accepted 2019

This species was originally trapped in 2016 but has only just been accepted due to a computer error at the time, it was missed off the 2016 records this has now been corrected. This tiny, chocolate-brown moth marked with lemon-yellow. It rests with its antennae held forward, which are marked with whitish about two-thirds along their length. It flies during the day, in May and June, and the larvae feed on dead wood.

Cnephasia asseclana agg. *49.049x Uncommon thinly distributed*
Trapped 10th July 2019

Many of the Cnephasia species are externally very similar, and often to be confident of identification, dissection is necessary.

Diurnea fagella *29.001 - Common*
Trapped 26th March 2019 & again 30th March 2019

This is an early spring species, occurring from March to May. It is quite a small moth, with an average wingspan of about 25mm. Present throughout much of Britain, the melanic form occurs in some northern and industrial areas. The females have much shorter, stunted wings than the males. The caterpillars feed on various deciduous trees.

Syncopacma larseniella/cinctella agg. 35.002 Rare very Local Resident Trapped 7th July 2019

The Syncopacma genus contains several species which are virtually impossible to distinguish except by genitalia dissection, and larseniella is one of these, easily confused with cinctella among others. It is distributed in southern and eastern England, though earlier records from elsewhere are clouded by the fact that larseniella and cinctella were once considered a single species. The larvae feed on greater bird's-foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), in a spinning between leaves. The adults fly during June and July and are attracted to light.

Aproaerema anthyllidella *35.010 Scarce Resident*
Trapped 2nd September 2019

A reasonably common species throughout most of the British Isles, though more local in Scotland, this species mainly inhabits dunes, dry grassland and rough pasture where kidney vetch occurs.

Aroga velocella *35.094 Scarce restricted Resident*
Trapped 11th August 2019

This species has a predominantly eastern and central distribution in Britain, occurring in south and south-east England, sporadically in central England, and in the very south-east of Scotland. There are two generations, with adults at large in May and again in August. The moths fly in afternoon sunshine and also after dark. The favoured habitat is moorland and heathland. The food plant is sheeps' sorrel (Rumex acetosella) and the larva feeds in a silken gallery at the base of the plant.

Acleris hastiana *49.080 Uncommon thinly distributed*
Trapped 26th June 2019

There are two generations in much of its range, with moths flying in June and July and again from August, when the adults hibernate. In parts of Scotland there is just one brood, flying from September onwards. The larvae feed on small-leaved Willows (Salix spp.), spinning together two or more leaves.

Cochylis molliculana *49.138 Uncommon thinly distributed*
Trapped 3rd August 2019

Found in various habitats including waste ground, allotments and field margins especially where the larval food plant, bristly ox-tongue, is present. The species is probably double brooded. Can be seen mid-May to early October.

Cochylis atricapitana *49.139 Fairly Common thinly distributed*
Trapped 11th August 2019

Generally distributed throughout the British Isles, this species has a tendency to be commoner around the coast and on chalky ground. It differs from similar species by its dark head and thorax. The adults fly in two generations, in May and June, and again around August. The larvae feed on common ragwort (Senecio jacobaea). Early brood larvae in July start on the flowers and complete growth in the main stem, causing a swelling with an obvious hole where pupation occurs in a yellowish brown cocoon. The later larval brood feeds in September and October in the stems and rootstock and overwinters there until pupation in April.

Marbled Orchard Tortrix *Hedya nubiferana 49.156 Uncommon thinly Distributed*
Trapped 26th June 2019

One of many similar species which mimics a bird-dropping when at rest, this is a common species throughout Britain. Flying from dusk into the night, between June and August. The larvae feed on a variety of trees including hawthorn (Crataegus) and blackthorn (Prunus spinosa).

Bud Moth *- Spilonota ocellana 49.224 Fairly Common Widely Distributed*
Trapped 7th July 2019

This is quite common over much of Britain, especially the south, and flies during July and August. The larvae feed on a wide range of shrubs and trees, and as the English name suggests, burrow into the buds during the spring, causing them to wither.

Pine Shoot Moth *- Rhyacionia buoliana 49.305 Scarce & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 26th June 2019

Widely distributed in England and Wales, this species can be a pest in pine plantations, due to the larval habit of burrowing into the needles and feeding inside developing buds. The adults fly between June and August.

Dichrorampha alpinana *49.320 Scarce & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 11th August 2019

It is fairly common over much of the British Isles and occurs in grassy meadows and rough pasture. The larvae feed on oxeye daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare) among the roots. The moths fly, often during the daytime, between June and August, when they can be found resting on flowers of the food plant.

Cydia ulicetana *49.325 Fairly Common*
Trapped 11th August 2019

A fairly common species throughout the British Isles, occupying heathland and moorland. The males fly in sunshine, but the females tend to be more crepuscular. The species is on the wing in May, with a second generation in the south from July to September. The larvae feed internally in the seedpods of plants such as gorse (Ulex) and broom (Cytisus).

Cydia fagiglandana *49.342 Uncommon & Thinly distributed*
Trapped 10th July 2019

The species is fairly common in much of England and Wales, and also occurs in southern Scotland and Ireland. Flying in June and July, the preferred habitat is beech (Fagus) woodland, where the larvae feed internally on the beech nuts.

Pempelia genistella *62.022 Uncommon & Thinly distributed*
Trapped 10th July 2019

A local species that is restricted to the south-east of England where it has a predominantly coastal distribution. It inhabits heaths and commons where it flies in July. The larvae feed on the needles of gorse (Ulex europaeus) in which they spin a dense, conspicuous silken web.

Acrobasis repandana *62.034 Scarce & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 3rd August 2019

One of the more colourful of the Pyralids, this species can be common in suitable habitat throughout England. Flying in July and August, the adults can be attracted to light, but during the day remain concealed amongst the foliage. The larvae feed on oak (Quercus), often high up in a tree, spinning together several leaves.

Thistle Ermine *Myelois circumvoluta 62.042 Common & Widespread*
Trapped 26th June 2019

As the name suggests, the larval food plants are various types of thistle, and the moth is distributed over the southern half of Britain in habitats where the food plants grow. Flying in June and July, the adults can be attracted to light.

Beautiful China-mark *Nymphula nitidulata 63.118 Uncommon & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 10th July 2019 and again 20th July 2019

One of the more distinctive and beautiful members of the Pyralidae, this species larvae are aquatic, feeding on bur-reed (Sparganium) and other water plants. Found fairly commonly around lakes, rivers and ponds throughout Britain, the moths are on the wing during July and August.

Purple-bordered Gold *Idaea muricata 70.002 Very Rare & Very Local Resident*
Trapped 26th June 2019

This small Geometrid is found locally in the southern half of England and Wales, and rarely in Ireland. Inhabiting heathland, fens and marshes, the adults fly from dusk onwards during June and July and can sometimes be found on the wing at sunrise. The larvae feed on marsh cinquefoil (Potentilla palustris) and overwinter in this stage.

Macro Lepidoptera

Red Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe spadicearia 70.051 Common & Widespread*
Trapped 11th August 2019

Fairly common throughout most of Britain, this species has two generations in the south: May to June and again in July and August. The larvae feed on low-growing plants such as knotgrass (Polygonum) and bedstraw (Galium).

Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe ferrugata 70.052 Scarce & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 30th March 2019

Relatively common throughout, the moths fly in May and June and again in August. Further north there is usually only one brood, in June and July. The larval diet consists of a variety of low plants.

The Streamer *Anticlea derivata 70.067 Uncommon & Fairly Widespread*
Trapped 22nd April 2019

Fairly common over much of Britain, though commoner here in the south. They occupy woodland edges, hedgerows and similar bushy places, this species can be found quite early in the season, flying in April and May. The larvae feed on the leaves and flowers of dog-rose (Rosa canina).

Pale Oak Beauty *Hypomecis punctinalis 70.268 Scarce & Restricted Resident*
Trapped 7th July 2019

It's always nice to find a scarce county species in the trap. Although rather variable in ground colour, this species can be confused with Great Oak Beauty. One of the separating features is that the latter species has a pale spot on a dark background on the tip of the forewing underside. Occurring in the south of England and Wales, the favoured habitat is woodland, where the larvae feed on oak (Quercus), birch (Betula) and other trees. The adults fly between May and July.

Puss Moth *Cerura vinula 71.003 Uncommon & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 28th June 2015 and again 22nd April 2019

It was a long wait to catch my second Puss Moth in the garden. They are such beautiful moths. Named after the cat-like appearance of the adult moth, this species is fairly common throughout most of Britain. The striking caterpillar feeds on aspen (Populus tremula) as well as poplar (Populus spp.) and willow (Salix spp.). When disturbed, it raises its head and waves the twin tails, which have pinkish extendable flagellae. The adult flies from May to July, and frequently comes to light.

Scarce Prominent *Odontosia Carmelita 71.023 Very Scarce Restricted Resident*
Trapped 22nd April 2019

This was an excellent first to find in the trap, a species that Inhabits mature woodland, this local species has a scattered distribution from the south-east of England, through parts of northern England, and in central Scotland and western Ireland. The thinly-scaled wings are brownish or purplish-grey, with a distinct creamy patch on the front margin. The adults are on the wing in April and May, and the larvae feed later in the summer on birch (Betula).

White Satin *Leucoma salicis 72.009 Uncommon & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 6th August 2015 and 26th June 2019

Second record of this species which glossy surface of the wings gives rise to this moth's English name. The female is larger than the male.

It is distributed widely in England and Wales, but commonest in the south. It is also a sporadic migrant, which is thought to explain the origin of several northern records. The colourful larvae are covered with white heart-shaped blotches, and feed on sallow (Salix) and various poplars (Populus).

The Shark *Cucullia umbratica 73.052 Fairly Common Resident*
Trapped 22nd April 2019

First record of this species which Inhabiting a range of open habitats and suburban areas, this species is quite well distributed over much of Britain Flying later in the season than the similar Chamomile Shark (C. chamomillae), it is on the wing in June and July. One distinguishing feature from that species is the fringe of the hindwing, which in the present species has two bands, one pale and one grey, whereas in chamomillae, there is a triple-banded effect. The larval foodplants are mainly species of sow-thistle (Sonchus).

The Mullein *Cucullia verbasci 73.058 Scarce & Thinly Distributed*
Trapped 31st May 2018 and 30th April 2019

The second year of recording this species both as caterpillars in the garden and adult moths. Distributed widely in England, most commonly in the south, and scarcer in Wales, this species is more often found in the caterpillar stage than adults The normal flight period is April to May, and the species occupies a range of open habitats as well as gardens. The larval foodplants in the wild are various species of mullein (Verbascum), but it also feeds in gardens on Buddleia.

Light Arches *Apamea lithoxylaea 73.163 Common & Widespread*
Trapped 10th July 2017 and 10th July 2019

Just one previous record for this species in 2017 though it's fairly common throughout most of Britain, this species responds to light to a certain extent but is more frequent at sugar. The flight period is between June and August, and the moth inhabits dry pastures and similarly grassy places. The larvae feed on a number of grasses, on the stems and roots.

Dot Moth *Melanchra persicariae 73.270 Common & Widespread*
Trapped 4th August 2012 and 3rd August 2019

The second record of this species since 2012 although very common and widespread in England and Wales. Frequenting a range of suburban habitats, including gardens, waste ground and roadside verges. The adults are on the wing in July and August, and frequently visit garden moth-traps. The larvae feed on a wide range of garden and wild plants.

Least Yellow Underwing *Noctua interjecta 73.346 Common*
Trapped 20th July 2019

A relatively small Noctua, with a rich reddish-brown upperwing. It is widespread, but not common, mainly in the southern half of Britain. The adults are on the wing in July and August, occurring in a wide range of habitats. The larvae feed on grasses and other herbaceous plants, and overwinter.

Fox Moth *Macrothylacia rubi 66.008 - Common*
Recorded 15th August 2019

The species is well distributed over much of Britain, and common in places. Its preferred habitats are open woodland, moors and commons.

The caterpillar is covered with blackish and tawny-coloured hairs and feeds on heather (Calluna) and bramble (Rubus), amongst others.

Diptera - Flies & Relatives

This is a massive group which we are just recording a handful of the hundreds that must inhabit the area, none-the-less we have identified seventy one species to date including those listed below.

Crane Fly *Ptychoptera albimana*
Recorded 18th April 2019

This is the seventh species of Cranefly recorded this was found in my conservatory. This is a female which can lay over 500 eggs, the larvae feed on decaying organic matter and are commonly found in damp grassy places.

Common Blue Bottle *Calliphora vicina*
Recorded 27th October 2019

This is a species that has I'm sure been overlooked in the past as this fly is the most common bluebottle and it is often associated with humans. It is 10-14 mm. The head and thorax are dull grey and the abdomen is bright metallic blue with black markings. Its body and legs are covered with black bristle-like hair. The eyes are red and the wings are clear. It has orange 'cheeks' and pale hairs at the back of the head. It was photographed by Colin Lamont on Lytchett Fields.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Hoverfly *Chrysotoxum festivum*
Recorded 21st August 2019

Found by Ian Ballam on Lytchett Fields. This is a species that likes tall grassland and open scrub. Adults visit a variety of flowers, but especially umbellifers and thistles.

A very boldly marked medium-sized hoverfly. It is always worth checking this species for the dark form of the much rarer C.elegans or the even rarer C. vernale. A very rare species of southern heathland, which resembles a small C. festivum with the yellow bars of the tergites much straighter.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Flecked General *Stratiomyidae singularior*
Recorded 23rd July 2019

A species of coastal grazing marsh in the southern half of Britain. It seems to be able to tolerate a range of salinity levels from obviously brackish to fully freshwater. Found by Ian off footpath12 on 23rd July.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Common Awl Robberfly *Neoitamus cyanurus*
Recorded 5th June 2019

Found by Ian Ballam on Lytchett Fields RSPB the Awl Robberflies are named for the distinctive long ovipositor of the female, made up of the glossy abdominal segments 6-10. This fly has a dark abdomen and legs that are black apart from the tibiae which are bright orange except for the tips which are at least partly black.

Conopidae

Photo © Ian Ballam

Conops flavipes
Recorded 6th August 2019

This is in a group of flies that are called ‘Thick-headed Flies’ they look a little like hoverflies and they often frequent the same flowers. However their larvae are parasites to bumblebees. Sometimes they are referred to as wasp flies because of their look and colouring. They are different to many flies as they have long antenna.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Tachindae

Parasitic Fly *Cylindromyia interrupts agg.*
Recorded 3rd August 2019.

Adults can be found from May to August. They mainly feed on nectar and pollen. They paratise on moths and true bugs and the larvae develop inside of the host.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Hymenoptera –Bees, Wasps, Ants & Relatives

As it is becoming increasingly important to know what pollinators we have so we can try as best we can to provide suitable habitat and food sources for their survival we have continued to try to confirm and search for new species visiting the local wild areas and the gardens. We have managed to identify five more bee species with help from experts at BWARS, along with seven species of Wasp and two new species of Sawfly and Gall wasp and what will probably be the insect of the year Large Red Velvet Ant which Ian managed to find two individuals in two different area which were really excellent records of a very stunning ant species.

Suborder Symphyta - Sawflies

Sawflies can generally be distinguished from bees and wasps by the lack of a 'waist'. There are around 600 UK species, some large and colourful, others tiny and obscure. A number are known to gardeners as some sawfly larvae feed on common garden plants such as Berberis, Geranium and Solomon's Seal.

Six species of this group have now been recorded, I'm am sure that there are more out there to be found, two species were added this year.

Turnip Sawfly *Athalia rosea*
Recorded 25th June 2019

Found in the Arable Field where the adults feed on nectar visiting a range of flowers, often cruciferous plants and umbellifers. The larvae are dark greeny-grey, or almost black (18-25 mm) in length. The larva overwinters in the ground in a cocoon, and feeds on cruciferous plants.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Photo © Ian Ballam

Fig Wort Sawfly *Tenthredo scrophulariae*
Recorded on 7th August 2019

I came across this colourful sawfly whilst walking down towards the fields along Watery Lane.

They can be found in any habitat where figwort plants are present. The larvae feed on Figwort plants and are usually seen in August and September. The adults are carnivores mainly, hunting small flies and other insects.

Suborder Apocrita - Gall Wasps

Gall Wasp / flies are an interesting group there are 86 species of Gall or cynipid wasps in Britain and Ireland. Many are associated with Oak trees where various species produce galls on the roots, buds, foliage, catkins and acorns.

Gall wasps insert their eggs into the part of a plant where the gall will develop. The plant grows the gall in response to chemicals that are secreted by the larval stage. The inside of the gall has a layer of nutritive cells on which the larva feeds. Most galls caused by gall wasps contain a single larva but some, such as oak apples and bedeguar galls on rose, will contain numerous larvae.

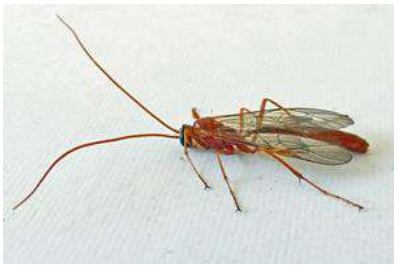
Oak Apple Gall *Biorhiza pallida*
Recorded 21st April 2019

The apple like gall caused by this wasp is more likely to be seen than the adult wasp. The wasp is around 2 to 3.5mm, they are a golden chestnut in colour.

This year was particularly good for them as the Oaks on Border Drive had many apples scattered in the canopy.

Ichneumonidae - Parasitic Wasps

The ichneumon group of wasp, other than a few very obvious species is another specialist group and difficult to identify. Most of the group, I have been able to identify up until now have almost always been found in or close to my moth trap. Though Ian and I have been able to photograph one or two different species whilst out walking and birding in the area. We have now recorded eleven species in this group.



Ichneumon Wasp *Ophion scutellaris*
Found dead on the 20th April Lytchett Way

This is a species that has been pending for a year or two as this group is hard to identify from photographs but this year I found a dead individual in the moth trap and managed with help to id it to species. The adults and larvae feed on caterpillars.

Parasitic Wasp *Syrphoctonus tarsatorius*
Recorded on the 21st April Lytchett Way

This is a species that is associated with fly and hoverfly larvae. It appears to be widespread in Britain, but the exact status is difficult to determine due to lack of records.

Mutillidae – Wasp / Velvet Ant

Photo © Ian Ballam

Cuckoo Wasps *Hedychrum neimelai / nobile agg*.
Recorded 7th August 2019

This species is listed as rare and when I first recorded a specimen last year I was overjoyed as it was a species I'd looked for, for a long time, but my photograph was pretty poor. This year Ian Ballam surpassed himself with getting a real close-up shot of this beautiful jewel wasp species.

You find them in open sandy localities: lowland heaths, coastal dunes, cliffs with sandy deposits, and other disturbed locations, for example sandpits, footpaths and railway cuttings. Adults fly in bright sunshine around nesting sites of the hosts and feed at the nectaries and extra-floral nectaries of flowering plants.

The hosts of this species are Cerceris ruficornis, C. arenaria, C. rybyensis and C. quinquefasciata. All the host species nest in sandy places. On detecting a host's nest the female enters and lays an egg in a cell. On hatching the chrysidid larva acts as a parasitoid consuming either the mature larva or prepupa of the host.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Large Red Velvet Ant *Mutilla europaea*
Recorded 1st July 2019 and

This species is listed as Nationally Notable. So when Ian found one crossing the road near the sewer works on 1st July it was a truly excellent find. Then on the 22nd of August he came across a second on Lytchett Heath.

This is the larger of the two species of British mutillids (the other being Smicromyrme rufipes). Unlike many aculeate wasps, the female is apterous, a feature which gives it an ant-like appearance and leads to its being called a 'velvet ant'. The male, however, is fully winged and capable of sustained flight.

Mutillid wasps are parasitoids of the resting stages of other insects, including aculeate Hymenoptera, Diptera, Coleoptera and Lepidoptera. M. europaea parasitises various bumblebees (Bombus spp.) and also occasionally enters honeybee (Apis mellifera) hives.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Polistes & Vespa Wasps

We have recorded five species in this group with the European Hornet being the largest. The German *Vespula germanica* and Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* are resident and nests have been found most years. Since my plum tree died it has been very hard to record these wasps but hopefully in 2020 I have an idea or two to try and see if I can at least record more species in this group.

European Hornet *Vespa crabro* and Asian Hornet *Vespa velutina*

As European Hornet is a protected species, I was pleased last year when Ian located a nest in an oak tree near the water works, though Hornets have been regularly seen and were turning up regularly in my moth trap this year but no nest was found.

This species is still continuing to be persecuted over the last year because of incorrect reporting in the press scaring the general public about the invasive Asian Hornet Vespa velutina and people finding and dealing with the nest by employing pest control companies to destroy them, PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS.

If you come across a Hornet nest in 2020 take a photograph of one of the Hornets if you can. Neither species of hornet are particularly aggressive but the stings can be painful. Please **Do Not** disturb the nest or get to close but contact the National Bee Unit (NBU) The Dorset Regional Bee Inspector is listed as **Peter Davies** Mobile No: 07900 292160 e-mail peter.davies@apha.gov.uk he will know what to do and give you the correct advice. If you live outside Dorset, if you follow this link and scroll down to find your areas contact. http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm

Sphecidae - Sand Wasps

Sand Wasp *Podalonia hirsute*
Recorded 21st April 2019

Found in our wildlife garden this species has like many parasitic wasp an interesting life cycle. The unicellular nest is invariably provisioned with one large caterpillar, whereas often more than one is used by Ammophila. While the wasp is digging her burrow, the paralysed caterpillar is typically left in a small tuft of vegetation, which probably reduces the risk of it being discovered by predators, such as ants, or of desiccating on the hot sand. The burrow is oblique and 6-7 cm long. When it is complete, the prey is pulled into the cell, oviposited on then the nest entrance closed using sand and debris. Some females commonly open other females' nests and carry off their prey, as also occurs in Ammophila.

Crabronidae - Digger Wasps

When I first found the digger wasp burrows on Lytchett Heath in 2015 I only managed to identify *Cerceris arenaria* though I thought there were others present I never was able to get photographs good enough for a positive identification. Since the paths have been scraped and sand banks have been created, though more for the reptiles, it has provided ideal burrowing site for the digger and sand wasps. Hence with Ian Ballam's help we have managed to add four species to our Lytchett Bay biodiversity list.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Digger Wasp - *Cerceris Rybyensis*
Recorded on the 7th August and a number of date thereafter up to September.

The prey consists of small and medium-sized bees of various genera, which are paralysed by stinging. The neck is also squeezed between the wasp's mandibles (malaxation); the prey dies in about two days. This wasp hunts only bees returning to their nests with pollen, but clearly there are exceptions, as some of the females are free of pollen and a few males. The number of prey items per cell varies from five to eight, depending on prey size.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Bee Wolf - *Philanthus triangulum*
Recorded on the 20th August and on several date up to mid-September.

A little under 20 years ago, this magnificent wasp, commonly known as the 'bee wolf' or 'bee-killer' was considered to be one of the great aculeate rarities in Britain. Records for the last few years indicate that currently the species is locally common to abundant in a steadily increasing number of sites in southern England, with a single record for north Wales.

This wasp nests in both level sandy exposures and in vertical soil faces. Some nesting aggregations reported to be as many as 15,000 burrows. The main nest burrow may be up to 1 m in length, with 3-34 short lateral burrows at the end, each terminating in a cell. The prey is paralysed by being stung immediately behind the front legs. Returning females, clutching the prey with their legs, often hover above the nest burrow before slowly descending to it. This wasp's main prey is throughout its range of this wasp is the worker honeybee (Apis mellifera).

Photo © Ian Ballam

Common Spiny Digger Wasp - *Oxybelus uniglumis*
Recorded on 26th June and a number of dates to mid-September.

This species is the commonest of the Oxybelus group of wasps and is usually associated with open patches of bare, loose sand (it has even been observed in sand bunkers on a golf course). It also occurs on heavier soils, for example in open woodland. It preys on Diptera, mostly muscids sp. of fly.
The wasp burrows in flat or sloping (not vertical), bare, sandy soil. The oblique burrows are 2-12 cm long and take about two hours to dig. At the end of digging, the female quickly closes her nest by scraping sand into the entrance and begins hunting. Prey is captured in mid-air and on vegetation and stung once in the thorax behind a front leg base (Steiner, 1979). Females fly to a spot near the nest with the prey carried under the body; then the prey is impaled on the sting for the last metre or two (very unusual in solitary wasps). Nest provisioning is described and illustrated by Olberg (1959). Each cell is provisioned with 2-16 paralysed flies, the number depending partly on their size. Provisioning a cell takes about 90 minutes. After taking the last fly in, the female arranges the flies in the cell, oviposits on them, then digs the next cell. There are usually two or three cells in a nest. The most successful females can provision 34 cells in a day.

Apidae – Bees

Since starting to record the bees in my garden back in 2012 we have been trying each year to find more and adding to our list. This year we have managed to add five species not recorded before which brings our total to 28 species.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Heath or Girdle Colletes - Colletes succinctus
Recorded on the 6th August at Lytchett Heath, and on several dates till late September.

Mainly found on dry heaths and moorland though the species is also known from a number of coastal and other inland sites. In southern Britain this species generally seems to nest singly or in small aggregations but elsewhere in northern Britain aggregations can contain 60-80,000.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Leafcutter Bee - *Megachile versicolor*
Recorded on Lytchett Heath on the 3rd August and various dates up till September.

They can be found in a variety of habitats from heathland to brownfield sites and formal gardens to ruderal verge habitats. Tree trunks, dead plant stems (including bramble), and roofing timbers are all noted as providing suitable locations for nesting. They will visit flowers of bird's-foot-trefoil, thistles and bramble.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Large Sharp-tailed Bee *Coelioxys conoidea*
Recorded on Lytchett Heath 22nd August.

This is the second sharp-tailed species we have recorded on the patch. They are found in coastal dunes and landslips, inland commons and heaths and, more rarely on chalk grassland. The species is cleptoparasite of the leafcutter bee Megachile maritime. (a species we haven't recorded yet)

They visit sea-lavender (Limonium species), common mallow (Malva sylvestris), sea rocket (Cakile maritima), bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.), sea-holly (Eryngium maritimum), sea bindweed (Calystegia soldanella), thyme (Thymus species), spear thistle (Cirsium vulgare), knapweeds (Centaurea species) and ragwort (Senecio sp).

Photo © Ian Ballam

Red-thighed Epeolus - *Epeolus Cruciger*
Recorded on the 18th August at Lytchett Heath.

Found on Inland heaths (where it is often common) and moors; also coastal sand dunes and undercliffs.

This species doesn't collect pollen but is a cleptoparasite of Colletes succinctus and C. marginatus. They feed on nectar sources include clover (Trifolium spp.), a hawkbit (Leontodon sp.), heather (Calluna vulgaris), a mint (Mentha sp.), ragwort (Senecio jacobaea) and sheep's-bit (Jasione montana).

Black-thighed Epeolus variegates
Recorded on the 21st August Turlin Field

Found in open woodland, heathland, coastal dunes, cliffs and salt marshes. Like the previous species it is also a cleptoparasite of several Colletes species: C. daviesanus ; C. fodiens ; C. halophilus and C. succinctus. However, there are very few rearing records and some of the above hosts have yet to be confirmed.

They have been recorded visiting various plants bog pimperel (Anagallis tenella), bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.), clover (Trifolium sp.), common fleabane (Pulicaria dysenterica), common ragwort (Senecio jacobaea), creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens), creeping thistle (Cirsium arvense), hawkbit (Leontodon sp.), oxtongue (Picris sp.), thyme (Thymus sp.), viper's-bugloss (Echium vulgare), and wild carrot (Daucus carota). It is most frequently seen on common ragwort (Senecio jacobaea).

Arachnids - Spiders, Ticks & Scorpions

Seventeen spider species have been identified to date this is a large group of species and we have only managed to add one species this year. We are only scratching the surface with this group but hopefully with time our list will grow as we gain experience.

Photo © Ian Ballam

Xysticus acerbus
Recorded 21st of August at Lytchett Heath

This spider occurs in a fairly wide range of grassland habitats, chalk or limestone grassland in Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset, short meadow grassland in Sussex and Glamorgan and sand dunes at Braunton Burrows (Devon). It has also been found on heathland and coastal under-cliff in Dorset. In 2005 numerous juveniles were found at a washlands in South Essex, with one adult being reared through. Both sexes are adult in April and May. This spider appears to be very local and only a few specimens have been found.

Lytchett Bay Arable field plant survey 2019
Central Grid reference: SY 9667 9257
Observer: Stephen Smith, 7 South Road, Corfe Mullen, Dorset BH21 3HY
thesmiths@southroad.plus.com

Aims and background

For many years the field has been well known for its impressive display of Corn Marigold, and in 2018 an initial survey was made by Kevin Rylands. The general aim of the 2019 survey was to extend knowledge of the arable plants present in the field, especially the priority species. I must stress that as a botanist I am a beginner, and there was a fairly lengthy process in the identification of a widespread Fumitory species, which I concluded was probably Common Ramping-fumitory.

Chronological summary

I first visited the field on 23rd Mar, before the annual ploughing had been carried out. Not surprisingly, the flora was limited at that time to a few species such as Lesser Celandine and Creeping Buttercup, but Red Dead-nettle was fairly numerous, and I found one plant of Cut-leaved Dead-nettle near the western boundary.

Ploughing and sowing were carried out in early April. After that I visited the field on 10 dates during April, May, June and early July. The figures in square brackets are the scores for priority species given by Plantlife.

Summary by species

Lesser Quaking-grass *Briza minor* [Plantlife score 5]
First identified on 1st July; widespread but thinly distributed.

Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*
Numerous all over site from April to July.

Lesser Celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*
Common along margins in April.

Common Poppy *Papaver rhoeas*
Present throughout the site, but thinly scattered.

Common Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria muralis*
After long deliberation it was concluded that the fumitory widespread over the field in May and June was probably this species. The key feature appears to be the almost spherical fruits with fine longitudinal lines, just visible in photo left. The white sepals just visible in photo [right] are also consistent with the species. Whether or not it is the priority subspecies *neglecta* [Plantlife score 7] is a matter for more expert research.

White Campion *Silene latifolia*
Present in small numbers along northern boundary near metal gate.

Small-flowered Catchfly *Silene gallica* [Plantlife score 8]
One of the priority species for the site, this diminutive member of the Campion family was identified in 2018 and searched for diligently in 2019, especially in the extreme eastern and south-western parts of the field. It was finally found in flower on 1st July, when the number of flower-heads was estimated at between 500 and 1,000. A quadrat survey was carried out on 6th July. One plant was located in the south-western corner of the field. [Photo]

Common Chickweed *Stellaria media*
Not surprisingly, widespread all over the field, especially in May.

Corn Spurrey *Spergula arvensis* [Plantlife score 7]
Identified in 2018 as one of the prority species; in 2019 it grew up all over the field, in both ploughed and unploughed areas. Flowers appeared in late May and persisted until the beginning of July.

Redshank *Persicaria maculosa*
First noted on 2nd June in the western parts of the field, this species continued to be widespread until July.

Pale Persicaria *Persicaria lapathifolia*
First noted on 15th June near the eastern telegraph pole; thinly distributed but widespread. [Photo left]

Field Pansy *Viola arvensis*
Already present in small numbers before ploughing, mainly along northern boundary. It then became more widespread and continued to flower until July.

Brassica sp. Many white and yellow flowers, presumed varieties of Rape and Charlock, left over from cultivation in previous years.

Hedge Mustard *Sisymbrium officinale*
A few plants present along southern boundary.

Scarlet Pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis*
Not surprisingly, this common arable weed was widespread all over the field.

Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*
Numerous in the unploughed eastern strip and in the western corner.

Hairy Tare *Vicia hirsuta*
This is a tentative identification of fairly numerous plants in the 'cottage corner' of the field.

Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia*
Several examples of this oddly human-faced plant were first noted on 24th May. After that it became numerous in the eastern reaches of the field, mainly in the ploughed areas. [Photo right]

Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium* [1]
10-20 plants first identified on 28th April near the metal gate.

Bugloss *Anchusa arvensis* [1]
Easily identifiable with its small blue flowers and leathery bristly leaves, this was first noted on 28th April near the metal gate. After that it became widespread in the field. [Photo right]

Red Dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*
Present early in the survey period.

Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum*
One plant found near the western boundary in April.

Common Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis tetrahit*
First noted in late June in the south-eastern corner, this became numerous along the southern boundary.

Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*
A common species of woods and hedges; numerous near the hedges in the 'cottage corner'.

Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris*

Several patches of this impressive plant in western corner of field, mainly near the small pond just outside the field boundary. [Photographed against background of Corn Marigolds.]

Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis* [Plantlife score 6]
3 plants first noted on northern boundary on 17th June. After that, found in small numbers along most boundaries. [Photo right]

Weasel's-snout *Misopates orontium* [Plantlife score 7]
A priority species for the conservation of arable fields, this member of the Snapdragon family is quite easy to identify with its hooded mauve flowers and narrow folded leaves. First noted on the northern boundary on 13th June, it became widespread, although remained thinly distributed. [Photo left]

Thyme-leaved Speedwell *Veronica serpyllifolia*
One plant noted near southern boundary on2nd June.

Ivy-leaved Speedwell *Veronica hederifolia*
A common species present along the southern hedge boundary.

Corn Marigold *Chrysanthemum segetum* [Plantlife score 7]
One of the priority species for the site, this species was present in its millions all over the field. Flowering began in the first week of June, and by mid-June the whole field was a mass of yellow. A real Van Gogh job – the photo on the right does not do it justice!

Gallant-soldier *Galinsoga parviflora*
First identified near the metal gate on 17th June; the species then became widespread in the western parts of the field and was still in full flower when the survey visits ended in mid-July. [Photo left]

Mayweed / Chamomile sp.
Widespread, but neglected by the survey.

Marsh Cudweed *Gnaphalium uliginosum*
The species began flowering in early July, by which time the survey visits were coming to an end.

Creeping Thistle *Cirsum arvense*
Widespread; this aggressive species was identified in 2018 as a possible threat to the Small-flowered Catchfly.

Chicory *Cichorium intybus*
A few plants appeared in early July in the eastern parts of the field.

Priority species and total Plantlife score

Lesser Quaking-Grass	5
Small-flowered Catchfly	8
Corn Spurrey	7
Common Stork's-bill	1
Bugloss	1
Field Woundwort	6
Weasel's-snout	7
Corn Marigold	7
Total	42

References used

Rose, F. updated by O'Reilly, C., *The Wild Flower Key*. Warne, 2006
Wilson, P. and King, M., *Arable Plants – a field guide.* English Nature and Wildguides, 2003.