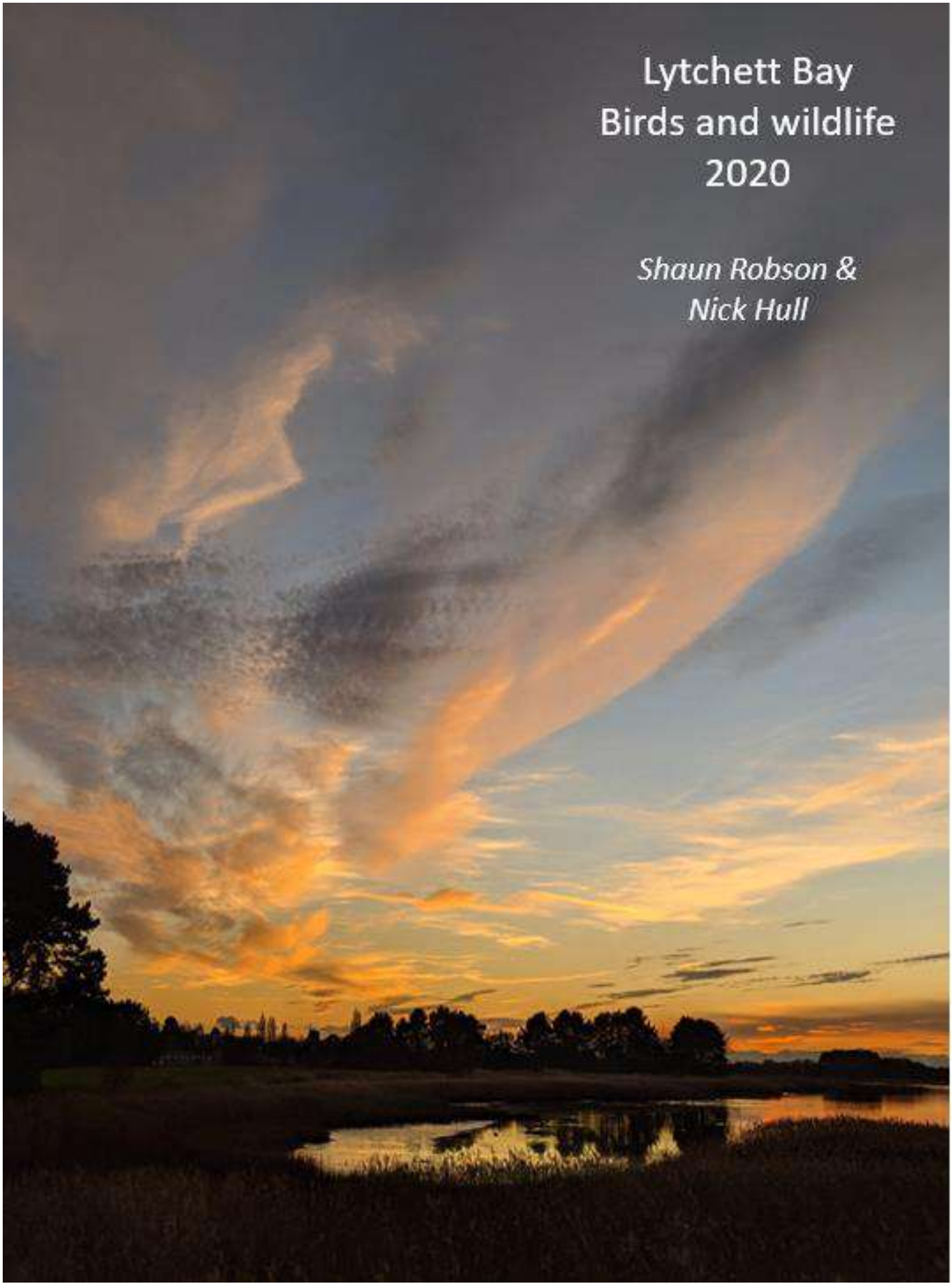

Lytchett Bay
Birds and wildlife
2020
Shaun Robson &
Nick Hull

Lytchett Bay 2020

Welcome to the 29th consecutive Lytchett Bay annual report. The data that we have gathered & 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, interest in this section is growing year on year (page 47). Thanks to Hannah Gibbons & Stephen F Smith we also continue to focus on the botanical interest with a report on the arable plants at Lytchett Fields (page 80).

We would normally start with a reference to the weather but this year something far more significant impacted on all of our lives and our abilities to enjoy and record the wildlife at Lytchett Bay. No-one will ever forget the unfolding events in February 2020 and the eventual announcement of a national lockdown on 20th March due to the coronavirus pandemic. For the best part of the spring this limited our travel very significantly, and even reduced the amount of time that we could be away from our properties. When we started to emerge in early summer few would have predicted that at the time of writing in February 2021 that we would be in "lockdown3".

Whilst "Lockdown1" prevented one of our most diligent observers from being able to visit. It also meant that those on the doorstep, who had their wider travel plans cancelled, were able to visit on a daily basis and turn their homes into bird observatories when they could not be on site. The Lytchett Bay sky has never been so keenly watched!

If there was a saving grace it was that the spring weather was glorious. Summer too was not bad….we even had some south east winds! Autumn became progressively windy, as 2019, and most of October and early November were frustrating from a ringing perspective. There was no cold weather to speak of during the whole year.

After the highs of 2016 & 2017 we had had a couple of good but what we might describe as " par" years in 2018 & 2019. I'd reflected that we needed to manage our expectations and that we couldn't expect each year to better than the last……..2020 somewhat debunked that idea, in many ways it was right up on the top of the pile.

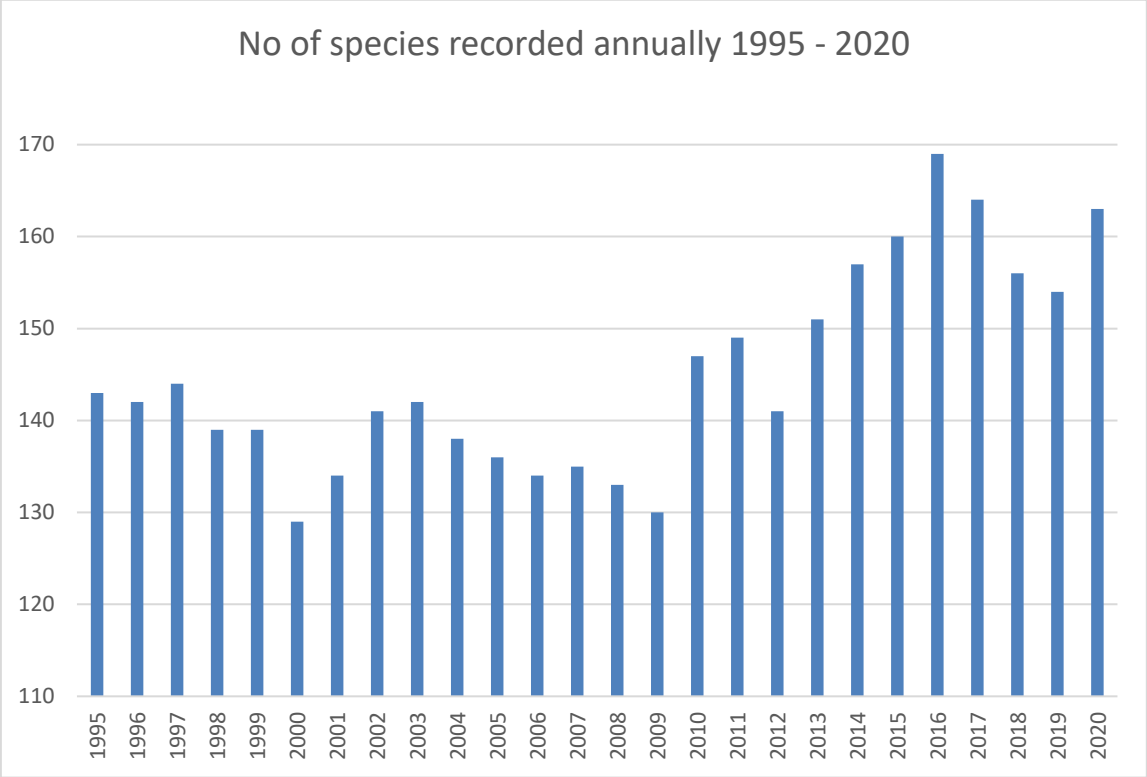
No matter which aspect of birding one enjoys, 2020 at Lytchett Bay had something special to offer.

Waders visiting Lytchett Fields show no sign of losing interest just yet, diversity and numbers were splendid. Autumn passage was as good as it ever has been. As mentioned, sky watching reached a new level and oh how the observers were rewarded – Kites, Ospreys, Harriers and Hobbies aplenty. The importance of knowing bird sounds is amplified with each passing year. Good equipment enabled more recording and a silent spring soundscape provided the perfect environment for "live nocturnal listening". Both reaped returns. The more we ring, the better we understand the site and the more success we have. 2020 was a record year and many great ringing recoveries resulted. A project to colour-ring Water Pipits got off to a strong start.

In terms of the hard facts. The evasive but lingering Long-billed Dowitcher was the only new bird of the year. This brings the Lytchett Bay bird list to 229. Whether this was the "bird of the year" is a good conversation, though one the Dowitcher will win for most of those who saw it. For those of us who have birded here for the best part of 30 years, Common Scoters ever might be considered an equal highlight? Or may be the third, but first twitchable, Grey Phalarope? If you are a fan of the heron family the idea of recording 7 species in one year was genuinely unthinkable 10 years ago.

Then there is the "supporting" cast – 7th Aquatic Warbler that went on to do something even more special; 4th Goshawk, which kindly posed for a photo; 4th & 5th Glossy Ibis that were less co-operative; 4th Great Northern Diver; 6th Arctic Tern; 7th & 8th Honey-buzzard, 9th Yellow-browed Warbler and Siberian Chiffchaff; 10th Sanderling; 12th Ring-billed Gull or even only our 2nd Ring-necked Parakeet! And that is without mentioning the very significant "what might have beens"! (see systematic list for details)

The following species occurred in either greater numbers or greater frequency than ever before. Collared Dove, Great Crested Grebe, Little Ringed Plover, Mediterranean Gull, Sandwich Tern, Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Osprey, Red Kite, Hobby, Peregrine, Raven, Lesser Redpoll and Crossbill.



Lytchett Bay – people and wildlife

As with everything else in life, the pandemic impacted severely on our plans and activities. Several partners had staff furloughed for long periods. Formal surveys were cancelled for a time. Social distancing made work parties, guided walks and ringing demonstrations impossible, or at best, very difficult.

“Staying local” had the upside of many local people finding Lytchett Bay for the first time as they undertook their daily exercise. All parts of the site increased in popularity and interest in local nature grew as it did across the country. Using social media we were able to share news of sightings and discoveries. Both platforms grew their membership - Twitter (@LytchettP) 492 followers, Facebook (Friends of Lytchett Bay) 250 friends.

With the new visitors also came an increase in recreational disturbance pressure on some areas. Saltmarsh access increased due to the dry weather, a development that needs to discouraged, particularly where it involves dogs in these sensitive habitats. We would take this opportunity to remind readers that dogs need to be on a short lead all year round at our Dorset Wildlife Trust reserves; that no dogs are allowed at RSPB Lytchett Fields and there is no access to the rear of the water works at Slough Lane. Excellent off lead dog walking facilities exist at Frenches Farm SANG and Turlin Moor recreation ground. We would be grateful if all visitors could help us protect nature whilst enjoying the area by following these requirements. Partners are working together to support, inform and educate people about the sensitivity of Poole Harbour and to find solutions and new ways for us all to enjoy this amazing place whilst respecting nature. For more information please see Heathland | Urban Heaths Partnership | Dorset (dorsetheaths.org.uk) In late 2020 their work extended to cover coastal habitats around the Harbour including Lytchett Bay.

The pandemic did not prevent all progress and some projects are moving forward. The biggest is the commencement of consultation on a cycle path which aims to link Upton with Sandford & Wareham via RSPB Lytchett Fields. Work on this continues and if approved it is hoped that it will be completed in 2022.

The drainage ditch at Lytchett Bay View lovingly known as the “Turlin Stream” was excavated by BCP Council. This was a flood management action to prevent flooding of Blandford Road and nearby property. This was soon attracting Kingfishers, Grey Wagtails and Snipe. In the spring it will soon re-vegetate and provide diverse habitats for wildlife.

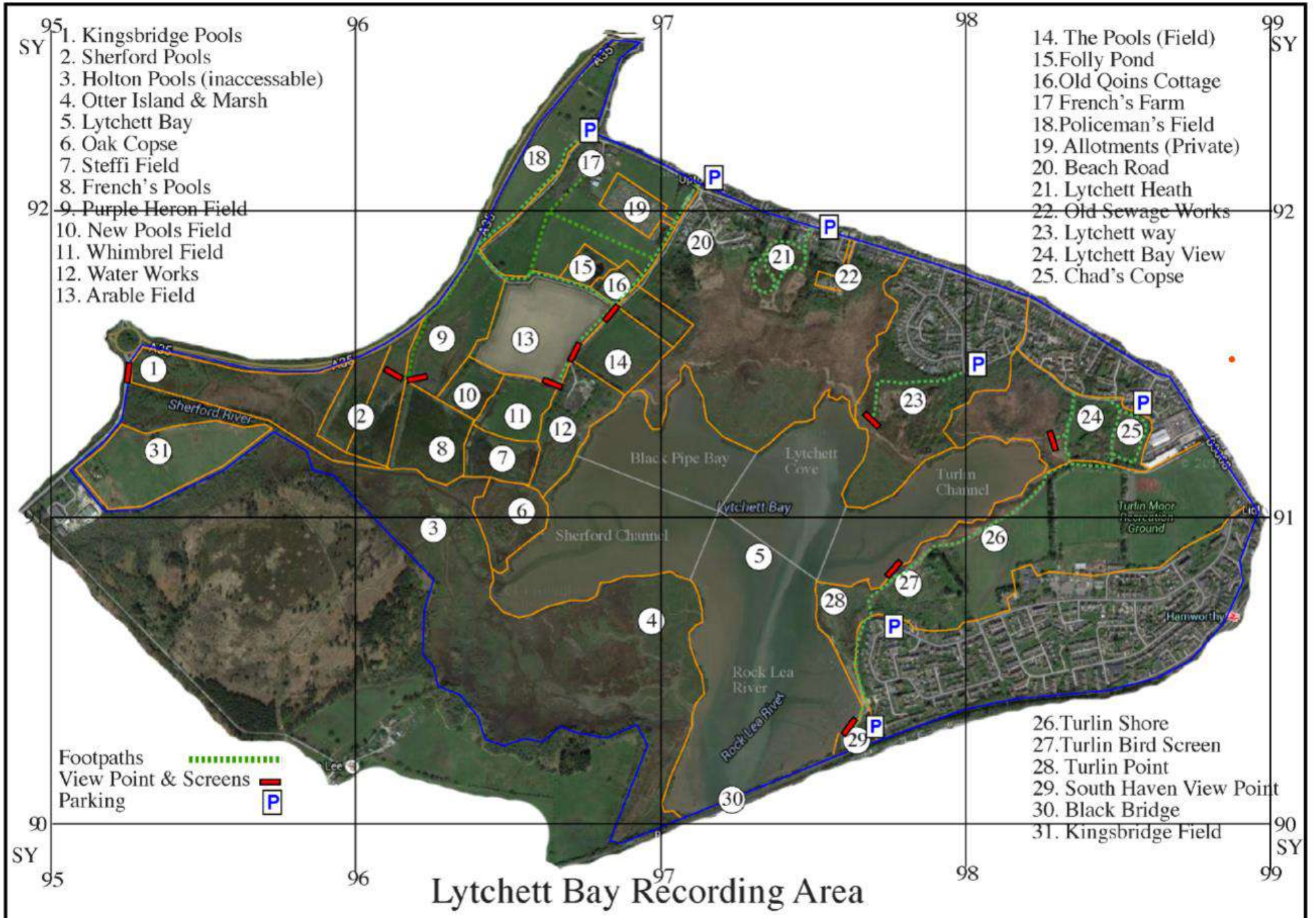
Only two volunteer work parties were held during the year. One was the traditional reed cutting at Turlin Moor (BCP) and the second was to manage the hedge near Olde Quoins to maintain the broad vista over the ever-improving arable field. Thanks to all who participated.

Nick Hull’s map below 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

The Approach Field and main ditch, RSPB Lytchett Fields © Mark Wright



Lytchett Bay Recording Area

Bird Ringing 2020

2237 birds of 58 species were ringed at Lytchett Bay. All-time records in both regards. Efforts were spread around 3 ringing sites. Lytchett Fields (21 dates), Sandy Close Pond (21 dates) and at Lytchett Heath and reed bed (46 dates). A total of 88 dates, almost double that of recent years. Though it needs to be noted that c30 of these were "low effort" visits focusing on Water Pipits or training. More than 100 birds were ringed on 3 dates.

Our early autumn ringing continued to focus on Aquatic Warbler. We actually caught one! For all of the exciting details as to what happened next you will have to read the systematic list! Colour ringing Water Pipits was a new project, part of a national study. This got off to a good start despite the limitations of the both the pandemic and unhelpful weather and we look forward to developing it in future years. Ringing Bearded Tits continues to prove valuable. We also tried to support our Ringing Groups interest in Woodcock but the number of birds on site mean that our contribution is limited.

A selection of recoveries notified to us in 2020 are shown on the map below.

Appendix 2 at the end of the systematic list summarises species ringing totals. Details of recoveries and controls are detailed in species accounts. 29,526 birds of 87 species have been ringed since 1983.


Sparrowhawk


Aquatic Warbler


Yellow-browed Warbler


Tree Pipit

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 particular 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, especially Joe Parker for his huge enthusiasm and encouragement to ring morning, day and night! 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.

Systematic List 2020

5509 specific records were collated during the year via the **@BirdTrack** and **@Team_eBird** databases covering 163 species. 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 7 days as set out below.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
29	25	31	30	30	29	31	31	30	31	30	31

The systematic list order has changed again. We are now following the latest IOC list as followed by the Dorset Bird Club.

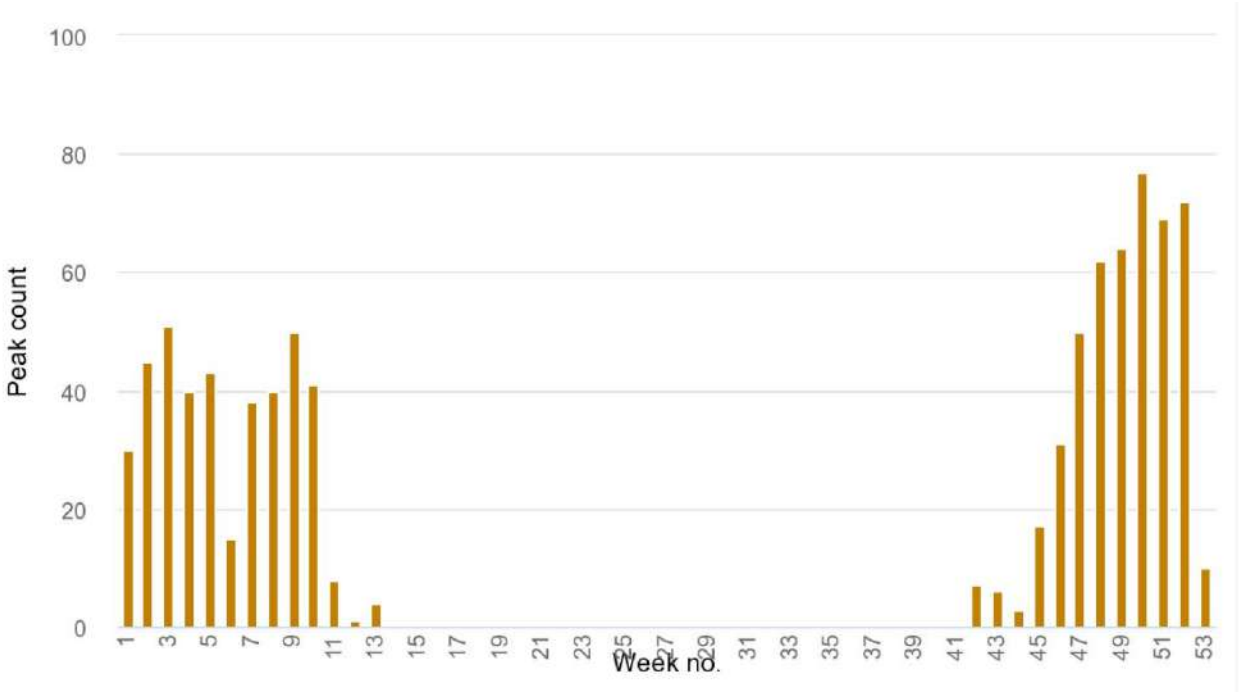
Species names are followed by 2 or 3 numbers. The first is the record known count recorded at the Bay. This now includes historical counts by observers going back to 1975. The middle figure is the maximum day count in the period since 1992 (if less than the first). The final figure is the number of years in which the species has been recorded since 1992 (max 29), 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.

Red-legged Partridge: (4 - 6)
Scarce visitor emanating from local releases. 1 was around the arable field between 17th Mar and 1st Apr.

Pheasant: ⇔
Common resident.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose: (144 – 21) ↗
Uncommon winter visitor. Another good year, the change in status that occurred in 2011 shows no sign of reversing. Present until 29th Mar and from 16th Oct after which birds were present almost daily until the year end. Max 77 on 11th Dec.



Canada Goose: (602 – 29) ↗
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
2	9	23	13	42	58	28	55	n.c.	82	n.c.	n.c.

Barnacle Goose: (42 – 10)
Scare migrant, occasional records refer to feral residents. One at Lytchett Fields on 27th Sep was presumed to be a resident bird that has been seen around Poole Harbour on various dates during the year.

Greylag Goose: (32 – 21) ⇔
Uncommon feral wanderer. Recorded in 8 months on at least 18 dates. Max 40 flew south on 17th Nov, a record count for the Bay (previously 32 on 17th Dec 2014.

U058 was ringed at Poole Park on 29th Jun 2019 and was at Lytchett Fields on 3rd May 2020.

Mute Swan: (58 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon resident, increases in winter. Bred between 2002-2007 and in 2015. Rather few, especially in the early part of the year.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4	6	6	6	0	6	2	3	6	23	20	21

Egyptian Goose: (8 – 7) ↗
Scarce feral visitor, records continue to increase year on year. The first record was in 2011. Recorded on 9 dates. 2 on 15th Apr, 1 on 21st May, 3 on 21st Jul followed by 15 bird-days in Nov. Max 6 on 26th.

Shelduck: (645 – 548 – 29) ↘
Occasional breeder and winter visitor. Two family parties with well grown young were seen on 6th Aug, it is not sure how far they had travelled. Max 84 on 31st Dec, but overall a very poor year.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
28	23	39	36	50	42	31	10	6	28	25	84

Shoveler: (28 – 28) ⇔
Scarce visitor, which can occur at any time. 19 bird-days on 6 dates. Records in both winter periods. Max 6 on 7th Oct.

Gadwall: (73 – 24) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. Bred in 2016. Most birds in late spring and early summer are presumed to be non-breeding individuals. 4 recently fledged juveniles on the 6th June proved breeding for only the second time at Lytchett Fields.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
15	2	4	8	9	31	3	6	0	2	10	11

Wigeon: (732 – 29) ⇔
Common winter visitor. Absent from 2nd Apr until 31st Aug. Max 455 on 19th Nov.

Bay monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
210	296	270	31	0	0	0	2	40	393	455	350

Mallard: (123 – 29) ⇔
Breeds at several sites around the recording area. Very regular on Sandy Close Pond. Relatively scarce in winter.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
3	13	n.c.	12	39	48	45	52	12	n.c.	n.c	n.c.

Northern Pintail: (21 - 21) ⇔
Scare visitor. A typical year with 26 bird-days on 13 dates until 8th Apr and from 2nd Sep. Max 4 on 23rd Oct.

Teal: (1345 – 29) ↗
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Nocturnal recording in May confirmed that birds were still present. On the 17th Jul 3 recently fledged juveniles were seen with an adult performing distraction behaviors. This is the first confirmed breeding at Lytchett Bay. Overall numbers were unremarkable, poor in spring. Max 568 on 27th Sep.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
174	70	86	52	p	27	30	142	568	540	256	300

Pochard: (24 – 15) ⇔
Scarce visitor. A good year with 3 records, the second in a row. 6 on 8th Mar, 1 on 12th Oct, 1 on 27th Dec.

Common Scoter:
2nd – 4th records. This species is very rare away from the sea in Dorset. In northern England cross country migration means that it's an uncommon but regular migrant at inland reservoirs. There had only ever been 1 record at Lytchett Bay, a single bird on 5th Apr 1983. A perfect date for a migrant crossing the country.

Late March 2020 saw the UK's birders adapting to lockdown and searching for new ways to bird their local patches and their gardens. It was also a time of silence. With so many people confined to home, traffic of all sorts was massively reduced. There was no airplane noise and road noise was minimal. The perfect time for the growing pastime noc-mig recording to boom.

On the night of 1st Apr a huge movement occurred in northern England and this continued during subsequent evenings. The event was well described in this article.

Massive Common Scoter movement takes place - BirdGuides

Meanwhile back at Lytchett Bay our listening station was in operation and we were delighted when the first migrant flock was recorded at 23:42 on 1st Apr (NHu)

The following evening, 2nd, there was another flock at 22:05 (NHu) and this time the recording was even better ……

https://soundcloud.com/two-owls/common-scoter-2nd-april-2020-copy

Now the challenge was to actually hear some live. Drinks and warm clothes prepared, live listening commenced at 22:30 on 3rd Apr. Recorded nothing except Hedgehog and my resident Moorhens up to 23:30. Then a Redshank and Curlew in quick succession – both in the Bay, not migrating. Followed by hooting Tawny, a patch year tick for me. After another Redshank, there to the south of me Common Scoter – 4 calls in quick succession moving east at about 23:54 (SR).

Goosander: (3 – 9)
Rare visitor. A redhead was in the Bay on 22nd Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: (73 – 29) ⇔
Winter visitor. Recorded on at least 69 dates but in all likelihood present until 6th Apr. Rather scarce in the second winter period with only 1 date in Nov and 14 in Dec. That said, numbers were strong at the year end.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
11	20	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13

Nightjar: (3 – 20) ⇔
Irregular breeder. Noted on at least 22 dates in total between 8th May and 17th Jul. A rather poor year with only a small number of records at the regular breeding site, where successful breeding probably did not occur. In addition, birds were recorded at night at both Lytchett Way and Lytchett Fields.

Swift: (113 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant and occasional local breeder. A better year than many recent ones but that really is not saying too much. Further, the improvement could be due to more intense observation during the spring lockdown. Recorded between 21st Apr and 6th Aug. Max counts were 33 on 10th May, 22 on 4th Jun and 40 on 10th Jul.

Cuckoo: (2 – 27) ⇔
Scarce visitor in spring. Like 2019, another good year compared to recent experience. Recorded on 19 dates between 23rd Apr and 26th May. 2 present on 3 dates at Lytchett Fields.

Stock Dove: (72 – 29) ↗
Uncommon Resident, increasing. At least 2 pairs bred in the vicinity of Lytchett Fields. The ploughed arable field attracted up to 22 during Apr. The sacrificial crop held 18 in Dec.

Woodpigeon: (17,785 – 29) ⇔
Common resident and autumn migrant. Substantial migrant flocks were recorded on 2 dates. 2628w on 4th Nov; 2155nw on 5th Nov. 1 ringed.

Collared Dove: (18 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon resident. Recorded across the site. Max 18 at Lytchett Bay View on 14th Oct is a record count at a single site. 1 ringed.

Water Rail: (67 pairs – 29) ⇔
Common resident and winter visitor. No perceived change in status after 2013's complete breeding survey found 67 prs. Breeding confirmed at Chad's Copse and singing noted at Lytchett Way in Mar. 1 ringed.

Moorhen: (18 – 29) ↗
Common resident. Breeds widely across the area, much more so than in the past. A pair bred at Sandy Close Pond for the second year in a row. 6 young hatched but only two fledged, local cats suspected of being responsible. Max full grown birds at any one site was 11 at Lytchett Fields on 19th Jul.

Coot: (62 – 18)
Very scarce visitor, though night recording is proving that they are frequent overhead nocturnal migrants! All records refer to unseen nocturnal migrant's sound recorded flying over Nick Hull's listening station at Lytchett Way or The Birds of Poole Harbour station at various sites. Recorded on at least 25 dates in spring between 3rd Mar and 10th May and on 5 dates in autumn between 14th Aug and 26th Oct.

There were no field sightings for the 4th year in a row. The last sighting was on 9th - 12th May 2016.

2019: This species was accidently omitted from the systematic list last year.

One was sound recorded on 23rd Jan at Lytchett Heath

Little Grebe: (12 - 29) ⇔
Winter visitor. An interesting and unusual year. After up to 4 in Jan there were no further records until a series of nocturnal sound recorded birds in the first 18 days of May, the first time the species has been recorded in this month. Whether these were migrants or local breeding birds is unknown. 1 was in the Bay on 2nd Jun lending weight to the possibility of local breeding. The first typical returning birds were on 28th Jul. The year-end max was 7 on 23rd Nov.

Great Crested Grebe; (4 - 26) ↗
Increasingly frequent visitor. Recorded on at least 85 dates, almost double any previous year. The only period without any records was between 28th Jun and 31st Aug. Max 7 on 9th Nov, is a record the Bay, previously 4 on several dates.

Oystercatcher: (400 – 29) ⇔
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 species attempted to breed for the first time at Lytchett Fields. A pair laid two clutches, one toward the end of May on the island on Frenches Pool and another discovered on 12th Jun in "The Whimbrel Field". Sadly both were predated and the attempt failed.

The maximum count was on 15th Jan at Turlin Fields.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
260	n.c.	28	20	9	4	3	28	42	101	108	230

Pied Avocet: (327 – 28) ↗
Increasingly regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Year on year occurrence seems less reliant on cold weather. Present daily until 1st Mar and from 5th Oct. Migrants were recorded in late Mar, Apr, Aug and via noc-mig recordings in May and Jul. The max count was on 21st Dec. There were occasional records from Lytchett Fields (max 59 on 7th Dec) and birds roosted on Turlin Point frequently during both winter periods (max 100 on 18th Dec).

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
103	53	6	2	1*	0	1*	6	0	16	65	129

WB+WG *(EY98316) was present on 11th Dec 2020.*

It had been ringed 5yr 6mnth 9days ago on 2nd Jun 2015 as a pullus at Seal Sands, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland.

RB+GY *(EY04573) was present on 19th Dec 2020.*

It had been ringed as a pullus at Seal Sands, Cleveland on 12th Jun 2012 and had previously visited us on 23rd Nov 2014. It was seen in Essex in 2013 and Cornwall in 2017.

RB+YB *(EY04836) was present on 11th Jan 2018 (not previously reported).*

It had been ringed as a pullus at Greenabella Marsh, Hartlepool, Cleveland on 24th Jun 2014. It has subsequently been seen in Yorkshire and Essex

© Ian Ballam

GB+BY *(EY78234) was present on 19th Dec 2020 by which time it had lost its blue ring!*

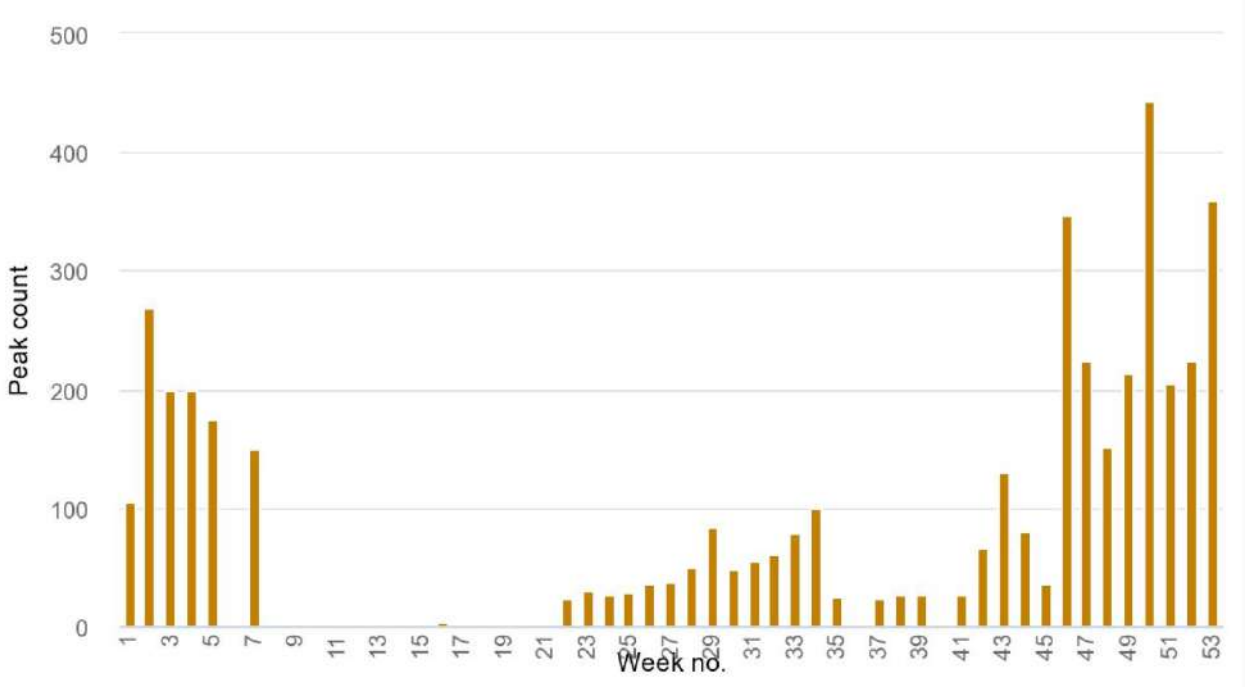
It had been ringed as a pullus at Beaulieu River, Hampshire on 25th Jun 2014. A movement of 44km. It been seen previously at Lytchett Bay on 8th Feb 2015 and 2nd Jan 2019.

It returned to breed at Normandy Marsh, Hants, raising four chicks in Jul 2019, during which time it was also sexed as a male. It returned in 2020 when it was noted that the blue ring was missing.

© Shaun Robson

Lapwing: (3000 – 29) ⇔
Formerly bred, now a non-breeding visitor in smaller numbers. Bred regularly during early 1990's. Last

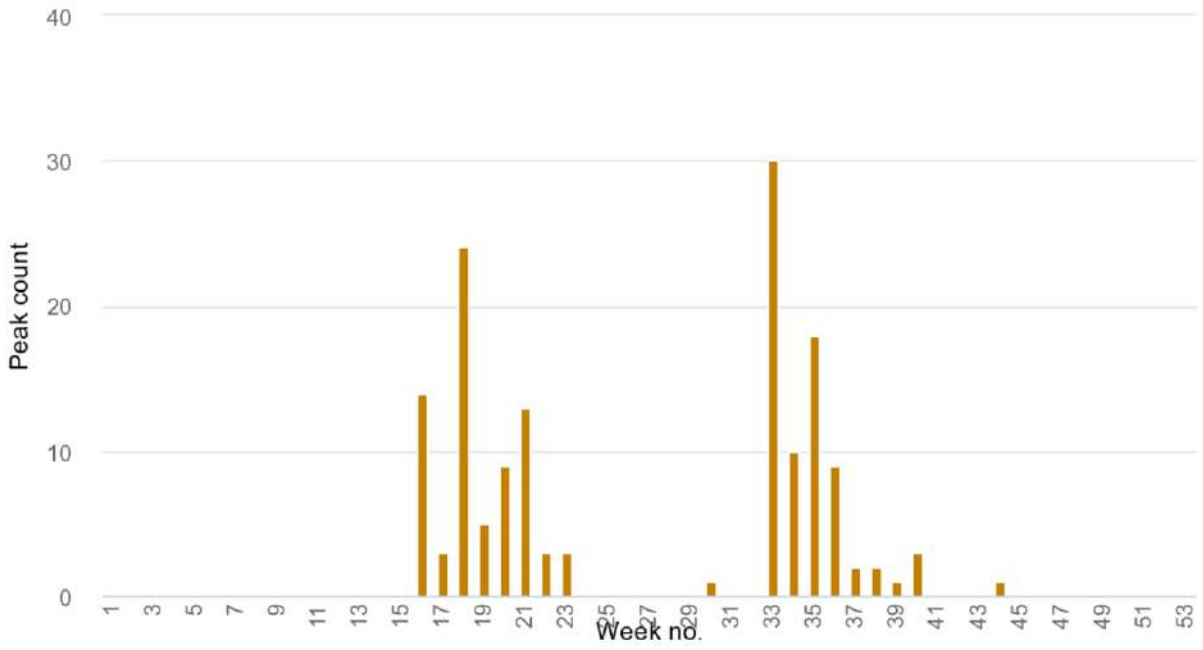
confirmed breeding 1999. 1 or 2 birds were present during Apr and May and whilst display was observed there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. Birds were recorded in every month of the year except Mar. The max count of 443 was on 12th Dec.



Grey Plover: (18 – 23)
Scarce visitor. A very poor spring with only 1 record, a noc-mig bird on 7th May. Autumn was good with 25 bird-days between 4th Aug – 27th Oct. Max 8 on 20th Oct.

Ringed Plover; (50 – 25) ↑
Passage migrant, previously scarce. 314 bird-days over 65 dates.

Spring migration 16th Apr – 2nd Jun. Max 29 on 28th Apr (contra graph!) Autumn migration 25th Jul – 26th Oct. Max 30 on 16th Aug. The majority of records in both seasons coming from Lytchett Fields.



m/R+Yfl(MNL) *– A pullus ringed on 25th Aug 2017 at, Jomfruland, Kragero, Telemark, NORWAY was seen and the colour ring read in the field 2 yrs 11mnths 21days later on 15th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Fields. A S movement of 1169km.*

Our first recovery for this species.

Remarkably m/R+Yfl(MML) ringed as a pullus on 2nd Aug 2017 at the same site in Norway has recently been seen in Christchurch Harbour, Dorset.

© *Ian Ballam*

Little Ringed Plover: (15 – 18)
Increasingly frequent summer visitor. One of many highlights this year was a breeding pair at Lytchett Fields followed by a record day count in July. The number of bird-days was consequently the best ever – 214, max 15 on 9th Jul. All records came from Lytchett Fields.

A pair were confirmed as present in mid-May and were soon seen copulating. On 27th Jun two freshly fledged juveniles were with them. After 2019's pair somewhere in the locality we are confident that this pair bred within the recording area.

Male and female © Richard Stephenson

Fresh juvenile © Shaun Robson

The first record was on 17th Mar and the last was on the 6th Aug.

Whimbrel: (157 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant, most numerous in Spring. A good spring. The first on 13th Apr was followed by 272 bird-days up until 25th May, max 56 on 3rd May. Autumn passage occurred between 13th Jul and 2nd Sep involving 40 bird-days, max 5 on 25th Jul.

Curlew: (116 – 29) ⇔
Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Max 64 on 19th Jan. Frequently seen on The Pool and in the stubble field during high tide in winter. Max 15 on 9th Jan.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
64	57	48	6	5	21	18	13	26	30	47	27

***M//R+R//WR** was present until 20th Feb 2020 and from 14th Jul 2020 until the year end.*

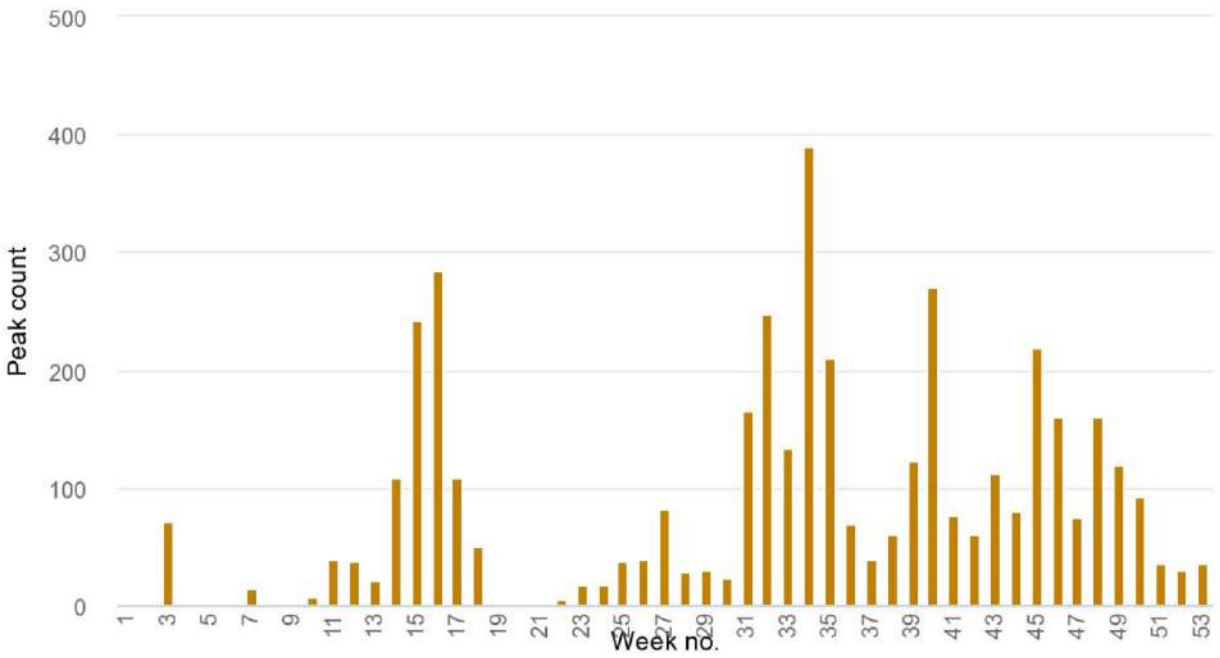
It was ringed at Strodgemoor, Burley Street, New Forest, Hampshire on 25th May 2018 as an Ad F. The bird was fitted with a GPS tag, unfortunately this fell off 1 month after fitting. It was seen in the Avon Valley, Hants in March 2019, presumably on its way back to its breeding site. It had been first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

Thanks to Pete Potts for this information.

© Ian Ballam

Bar-tailed Godwit: (110 – 25) ⇔
Scarce visitor. An ordinary year, 27 bird-days on 17 dates. Unusually 3 winter records – singles on 17th & 19th Jan and 19th Dec. Spring passage between 28th Apr and 10th Jun. Max 5 on 1st date. In autumn between 1st – 11th Sep. Max 4 on 1st date.

Black-tailed Godwit: (1240 – 29) ⇔
Common passage migrant and winter visitor. Rather scarce until mid-Mar. Birds began to gather and feed at high tide on Lytchett Fields regularly from early Apr onwards, peaking at 390 on 21st Aug. By late autumn birds had reverted to roosting in Holes Bay and much smaller numbers visited Lytchett Fields. The first juv was seen on 11th Aug.



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.

A relatively poor year for Colour ringed sightings but birds were recorded as follows.

NW+OfL *was present on 13th Apr 2020.*

© Ian 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, Dec 2018 and Jan, Oct & Dec 2019.

BOL+RNR *was present on 10th Aug and 11th Dec 2020.*

© Ian 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. It had previously visited Lytchett Bay on 23rd Oct 2019.

O+GG//W *was present on 13th Jun 2020*

© Shaun Robson

It was ringed at Snettisham, Norfolk on 2nd Sep 2019 as a 1st cal yr.

It remained around the Wash until Mar 2020.

WNfl+GW *was present on 11th Aug 2020*

© *Ian Ballam*

It was ringed at Welwick, Humberside on 10th Dec 2018 as a 1st cal yr

It has also been seen in Essex in Mar 2019, Devon winter 2019 and Kent in Jul 2020

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 Jenny Gill, Vincent Lelong, Ian Nicholson for supplying this information.

Turnstone: (9 – 10)
12th record, just about annual in recent years. Surprisingly rare given that they are a common winter visitor within 100's of metres of the recording area boundary.

The recent run of annual records continues. 3 were at Lytchett Fields on 31st Aug.

Red Knot: (34 – 20)
Scarce visitor. 1 in spring on 13th Apr. 64 bird-days in autumn between 22nd Aug and 11th Sep. Max 6 on 6th. Mostly at Lytchett Fields.

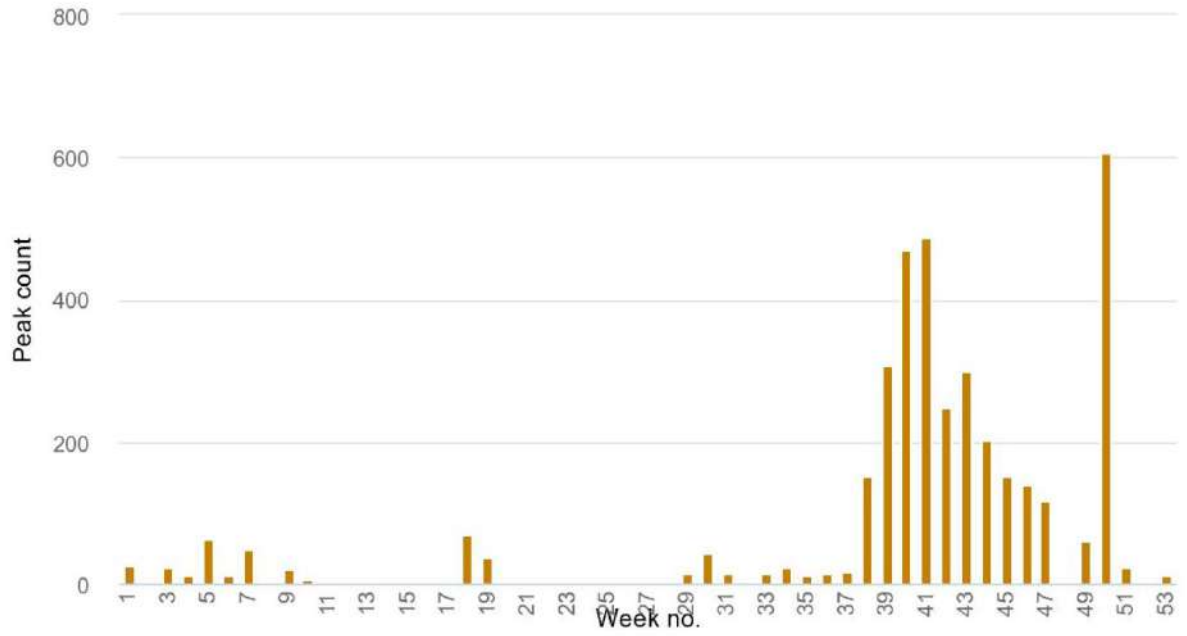
Ruff: (11 – 25)
Scarce visitor. 1 on 3rd May was the only spring record. 41 bird-days in autumn (exactly same as 2019) from 14th Aug to 2nd Oct. Max 4 on 15th Sep. All records at Lytchett Fields except 1 at Holton Pools.

Curlew Sandpiper: (9 – 14) ↗
Scarce autumn migrant. Since the creation of Lytchett Fields we have come to expect a decent passage of this species in autumn and this year delivered once again. 52 bird-days between 2nd Sep and 28th Oct, recorded on 28 dates. Max 4 on first date.

Sanderling: (7 – 6) ↗
10th record. The run continues, the 6th year in a row that we have recorded this species. 2 summer plumaged birds arrived in the Bay on the rising tide on a damp and drizzly 22nd May (SR).

Dunlin: (1800 – 1200 – 29) ⇔
Regular winter visitor and passage migrant. After a quiet start to the year there was a good spring migration peaking at 68 on 28th Apr. Migration continued with noc-mig picking up up-to 4 flocks per night in early May. Small numbers continued on and off into June.

The first returning bird was on 6th July after which autumn migration was excellent. Max 468 on 29th Sep. The year ended with an impressive 607 on 7th Dec. The huge majority of birds were seen at Lytchett Fields. 1 ringed.



Little Stint: (7 – 14) ↗
Scarce autumn migrant. The quiet years continue, Lytchett was no different to anywhere else. Migrants were thin on the ground. 2 records, both from Lytchett Fields. One was present for a short time on the morning of 31st Aug and the other briefly on the afternoon of 5th Sep.

Long-billed Dowitcher:
First record. With perfect timing a juv arrived at Lytchett Fields on 29th Sep (IB et al) when your report editor was in Cambridge celebrating his wife's birthday.

Never easy to see it played hide and seek with those who tried to catch up with it. Having been seen daily up to and including the 2nd Oct it duly went walk about over a very wet weekend upon the Editors return. Thankfully just when it felt that hope of a return was gone there it was! Sitting on an island on Sherford Pool on the 5th. Its last appearance was the 7th when it shared the site with a Grey Phalarope! The 34th and 35th species of wader to be recorded at the fields since 2012 and the 12th record for Dorset. See Ian's finders account on page 45.


The first view © Ian Ballam

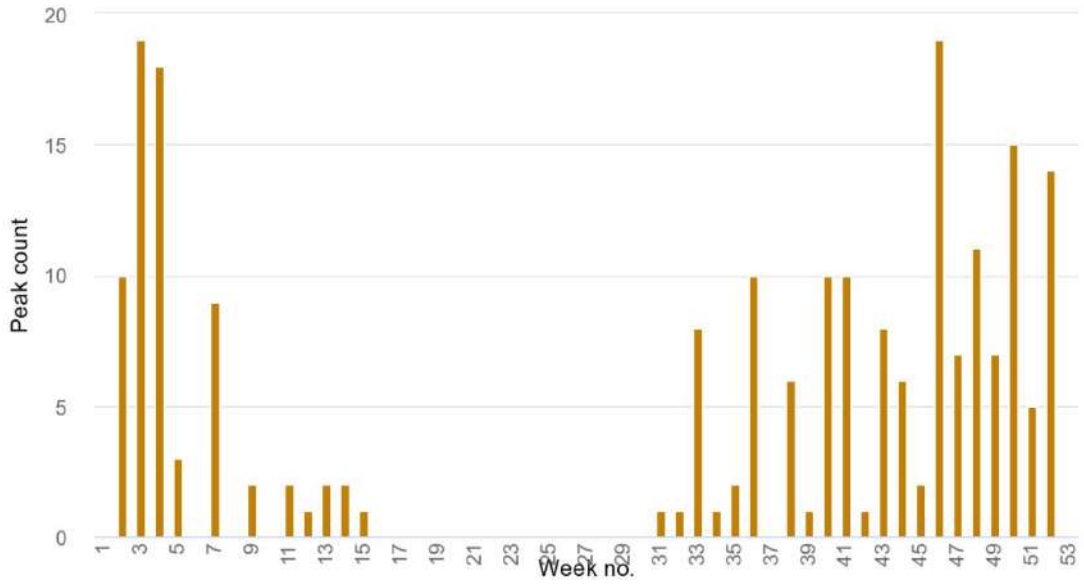
Woodcock: (5 – 19) ⇔
Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. The number of records of this species is largely a reflection of the effort made to see them. Nick Hopper studied Woodcock during early 2014 on behalf of The Birds of Poole Harbour. Following transects at Lytchett Bay the estimated winter population was predicted to be 8 birds (No more than 5 have ever been seen on one visit).

1 on 19th Jan, 2 on 25th Oct, 2 on 13th Nov, 1 on 15th Nov and 3 on 7th Dec were the only records submitted. 1 ringed.

Jack Snipe: (5 - 21) ⇔
Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. Like Woodcock, records are to a degree a reflection of birder / ringer effort as much as presence. Nonetheless 2020 was very-good, probably the best for some years. 1 ringed.

2 on 19th Jan, then singles on 2 dates in Oct, 2 in Nov and 3 in Dec. All from Lytchett Fields except one at Lytchett Way.

Snipe: (160 – 132 – 29) ↘
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded until 9th Apr, returning on the 27th Jul. A better year than 2019 but still poor in terms of numbers. A day-time roost was discovered at Lytchett Bay View in both winter periods. Max 19 on 2 dates. 1 ringed.



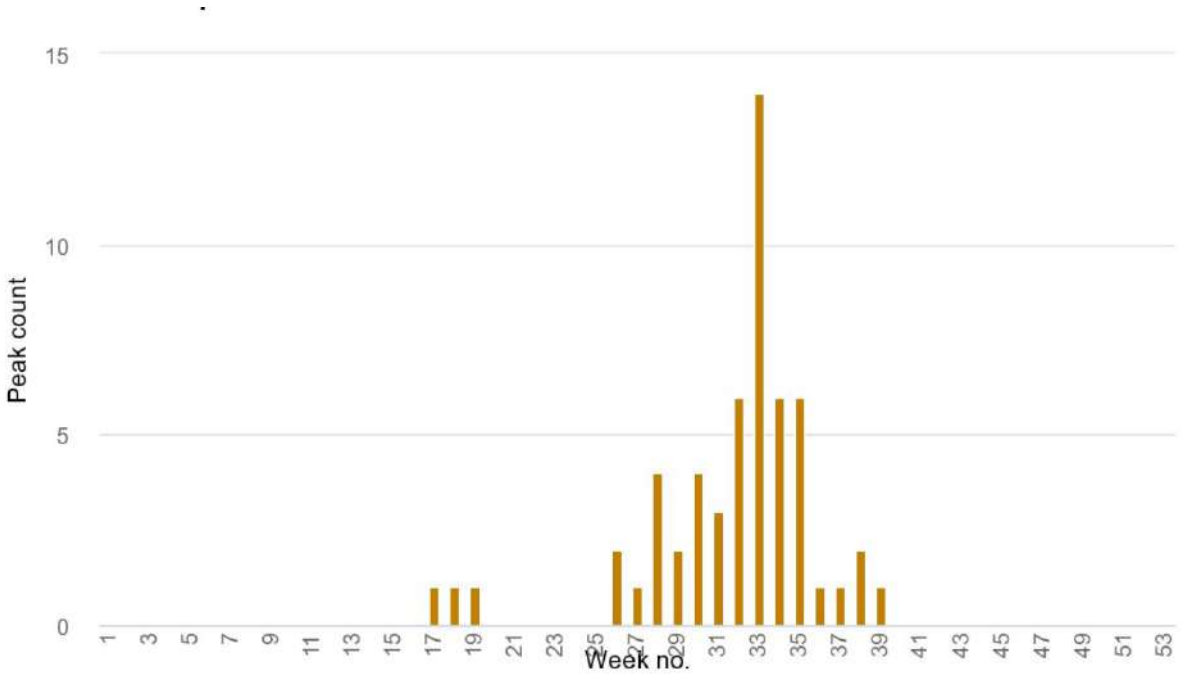
Grey Phalarope: (1 – 2)
Third record. IB and SR were still basking in the pleasure of the Dowitcher. Birding the Turlin Shore on the morning of 7th Oct, chasing down an interesting sandpiper which given the date may have been another American vagrant. In the end it wasn't, *just* a late Common Sandpiper. Meanwhile over on Lytchett Fields a visiting birder had found the Bay's first Grey Phalarope since 1999 (IBd et al).


© Shaun Robson

Not realising the local gravity of the find we heard nothing of it until IB arrived at the viewpoints late in the morning. After a brief panic the bird was confirmed as still being present. It lingered until 13th Oct and even though it could disappear into inaccessible parts of the site for long periods it usually reappeared with patient observation. A long-awaited addition to every current patch list. The previous records were on 15th Dec 1978 and 7th Dec 1999.

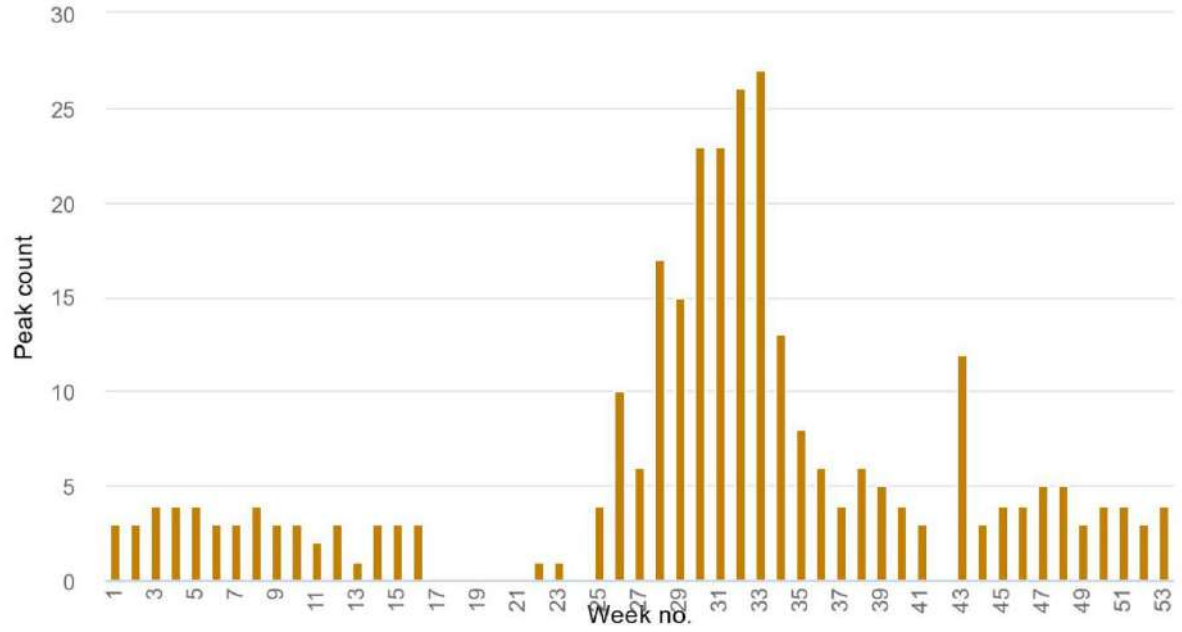
This year we were fortunate to receive some cracking flight shots of waders, our favourite group of Lytchett Bay birds. Common Sandpiper (top left) and Black-tailed Godwit (bottom left) © Mark Wright. Redshank beautifully captured across calm waters (centre) ©Simon Wilson. Grey Phalarope (top right) ©Mark Wright and August Avocets (bottom right) ©Quarkish

Common Sandpiper: (14 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. 6 bird-days in spring between 20th Apr & 9th May. Autumn passage was between on 24th Jun to 7th Oct. Max 14 on 13th Aug, equaled the record day count.



In total there were 163 bird-days in autumn, about 80% of the totals in each of the last 3 years. 1 ringed.

Green Sandpiper: (30 – 29) ↗
Common non-breeding visitor. Lytchett Fields and western most part of the Bay is the favored area. Present until 18th Apr and from 31st May (the earliest ever return rate, presumably a non-breeder). After which birds were seen on most visits until the year end. Max 27 on 13th Aug.

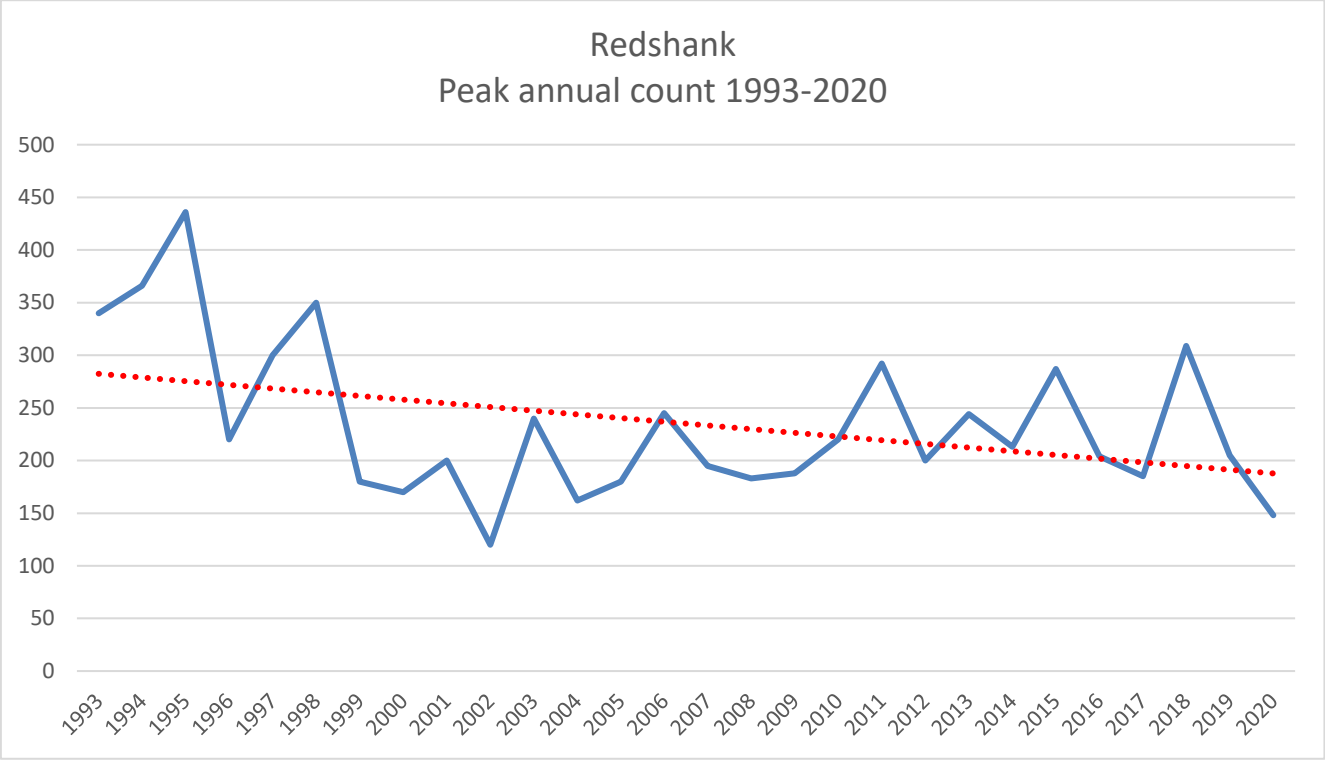


Redshank: (608 – 436 – 29) ↘
Common winter visitor with remanent breeding population on salt marsh. There were no confirmed breeding records this year, spring records were few. Many of the saltmarshes at Lytchett Bay are now either heavily grazed by Sika, frequently disturbed by dog walkers or patrolled by foxes.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
148	112	127	32	3	23	104	65	131	117	113	122

Overall numbers were lower than previous years and it seems like the long-term decline is continuing. Max 148 on 19th Jan. The peak number this year was less than 25% of that recorded in 1986.



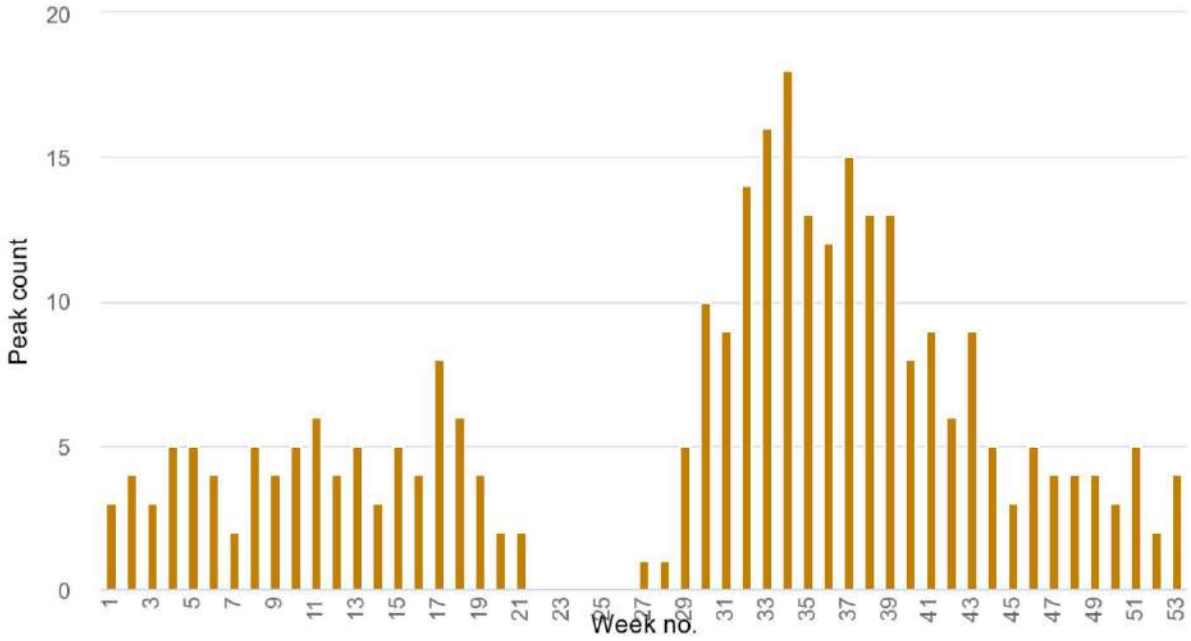
Wood Sandpiper: (5 – 17)
Scarce migrant. Another excellent autumn with 25 bird-days at Lytchett Fields between 13th Aug and 8th Oct. Max 2 on 3 dates in Aug.

Spotted Redshank: (68 – 42 – 29) ⇔
Rare passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. Recorded on 150 dates. Like recent years, this is largely thanks to long staying birds. At least one was present from 2018 until 23rd Apr with two present on at least 5 dates. 3 in full breeding plumage arrived on 20th June. 1 or 2 were then recorded almost daily until the end of Oct. Juveniles were seen in mid-late Aug suggesting that over the period there was some turnover of individuals. Max 2 on several dates. Rather scarce in Nov and Dec when our resident bird went wandering making only the occasional return visits.

Lytchett Fields accounted for most records, though this fine noc-mig recording was made by Nick Hull at his listening station on 21st Apr at 21:11hrs

https://soundcloud.com/two-owls/spotted-redshank-1

Greenshank: (49 – 27 – 29) ⇔
Common non-breeding visitor. There were no records between 21st May and 3rd Jul but present almost daily outside that period. Max 18 on 18th Aug. Lytchett Fields was far and away the most used habitat.



RN+GB (*previously incorrectly annotated as GB+RN, left leg should be stated first****)*** *- was present from the beginning of the year until at least 8th Apr. It returned for its 6th season on 9th Aug and was still present into 2021. Unfortunately we have been unable to get any further updates on this bird from the ringer so we do not know if it has been seen anywhere else.*

© Ian 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, 2019-20.

Black-headed Gull: (12000 – 10000 – 29) ⇔
A very common visitor. A rather poor year for pre-roosting numbers. Max 2000 on 20th Mar.

K19A (Yellow ring/black characters) *was at Lytchett Fields on 18th May 2019. It has now been traced. It was ringed as 1yr old on 18th Jun 2018 at Lake Babite, Riga, LATVIA****.***

T58 (White ring) *was present on 24th Sep, 5th Oct and 22nd Dec 2020. It had been ringed on 19th Mar 2011 at Svanemøllebugten, København, DENMARK. A movement of 1120km.*

It had previously been seen at the Bay 30th Sep 2017 and 25th Dec 2018.



The diversity of Lytchett Bay is demonstrated year after year. But let's be honest, most of us love it for its waders!. There aren't many more beautiful than fresh juvenile Black-tailed Godwit freshly arrived from Iceland. © Shaun Robson Or may- be it's the thrill of a swirling flock responding to a passing raptor. In this case Dunlin with a Common Buzzard. © Ian Ballam Lytchett Fields hold the biggest numbers of Green Sandpiper anywhere in Dorset © Ian Ballam Curlew Sandpipers once a real rarity are now an expected autumn migrant. Like this one, mostly juveniles. © Ian Ballam It was a good year for Wood Sandpiper and one particularly showy individual lingered near the viewpoints. © Mark Wright The last picture from Holton Pools perfectly compares Common and Spotted Redshanks in autumn. © Richard Stephenson


Mediterranean Gull: (140 – 28) ⇔
Spring and early summer visitor, occasional at other times. Assessing actual numbers in spring is very difficult due to the number of calling birds passing overhead, however the max of 140 passing through Bay in evening of 21st Apr feels like a record. Juveniles were seen in July.

Monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1	17	26	140	48	18	4	0	0	2	4	9

Common Gull: (3000 – 29) ⇔
A common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in spring. 1000+ on 15th Dec was the biggest count of the year. Not recorded between 5th May and 20th Jul.

Ring-billed Gull: (2 – 10)
12th record. First since 2017 and the first in mid-winter. Christmas may have been "cancelled" but there was one small upside. This bird would probably not have been discovered it had not been. An Ad was found in the pre-roost on Boxing Day and was seen again on 27th (SR, PVH). Its arrival coincided with arrival of large numbers of Common Gulls and just ahead of a winter storm. Intriguingly what appeared to be the same bird was photographed at Martin in Hampshire on 3rd Jan 2021 and was considered by that finder to be a bird which visited Ibsley Water during the winter of 2018-19!

Great Black-backed Gull: (151 – 29) ⇔
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 and this year's max of 26 on 24th Apr was the highest for many years.

Herring Gull: (2500 – 29) ⇔
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 250 on 2nd Nov.

Scandinavian Herring Gull L.a.argentatus

An intriguing 3rd W gull arrived in early Dec and remained into 2021. At first thoughts leant toward Yellow-legged Gull but no matter how hard we tried to persuade ourselves that this was what it was the features never really fitted. Whilst the upperpart colour was right for *L.michahellis* the extent of head streaking never was. In the end we got some photos and sought some external advice. At the time of writing we consider that the bird is a Herring Gull of the race *argentatus.*



3 very interesting gulls, all of which caused identification headaches during their visit. The first lingered through the late spring and early summer and was widely accepted to be a 3rd Cal yr Yellow-legged Gull © Shaun Robson. The second, seen only on 1st September, felt like a potential Caspian Gull but no observation or photos of the open wing were obtained and at this age that means that a confirmed identification was impossible © Ian Ballam. The final bird provided weeks of debate following its arrival in early December. Initially considered to be Yellow-legged, we always had real doubts. After photos were obtained and further enquiries made, current thinking supports 3rd Cal yr Scandinavian Herring Gull © Richard Stephenson.

Yellow legged Gull: (65 – 28) ↓
Increasingly uncommon visitor. The hay-days of the late 90's is long gone. Despite never having more than 2 on any one date it was an intriguing year. A 3rd Cal yr bird appeared at Lytchett Fields on 22nd May and remained until at least 4th Aug. It was an interesting looking bird that at times hinted at some Caspian Gull genes but the overwhelming consensus was that it was this species. During Aug adults and at least 1 juv

was seen but never more than 2 birds on any one day. Records continued through the autumn.

We still await our first Caspian Gull, though Ian Ballam may have come close with the briefly seen (sub) adult seen on 1st Sept (see photo above).

Lesser Black backed Gull: (2128 – 29) ⇔
Common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Rarely counted, though numbers much lower now than they were in the 90's/early 00's.

L.f.intermedius

A very distinctive adult of this race, which breeds in southern Scandinavia, was present on 26th & 27th Dec (SR et al)

Sandwich Tern: (6 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon summer visitor. Recorded on an exceptional 38 dates between 7th Apr and 12th Oct. Max 6 on 27th Sep, equaling the record count made on 5th Oct 2014.

Common Tern: (25 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon summer visitor. Recorded on 26 dates between 10th May and 12th Sep. Max 2 on 2 dates. Records split between the Bay and Lytchett Fields.

Arctic Tern: (17 – 1 – 4)
6th record since 1992. 1 in the Bay on 6th Apr (JH, NHu)

Great Northern Diver: (1 – 3)
4th record. One arrived high from the east on the morning of 2nd Nov (SR) and appeared to drop into the Bay however it must have soon moved on as it was not seen subsequently. The first record since 26th Nov 2009.

Cormorant: (370 – 29) ↗
Daily visitor. Large feeding flocks now occur frequently in autumn. Max 300 on 27th Sep.

Glossy Ibis: (1 – 3)
4th & 5th records.

One briefly landed amongst the morning gull flock roosting on Frenches Pool on 14th Sep but moved on immediately (IB).

The second was barely more obliging, arriving from the east on 20th Oct, it circled Lytchett Fields, looked like it was going to land and then flew off SE over the Bay but not before a couple of photos were taken (SR et al).

© Ian Ballam

Spoonbill: (25 – 11) ⇔
Increasingly frequent visitor but a much poorer year than of late. Seen on only 14 dates (42 in 2018 & 74 in 2018). These covered Jan, Feb, Apr, Jun and Dec. Max 10 on 26th Dec.

B(AE) + W(AE) *– was present on 15th Feb 2020 and 6th Dec 2020.*


© Ian Ballam

It was ringed as a pullus at Schiermonnikoog, NETHERLANDS on 19th Jul 2006 and is now 14 years old. It had previously been seen at Lytchett Bay in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2018. The bird commutes back and forth between SW England and The Netherlands. En route for the last 2 years it spent late Sept and Oct at Somme in northern France.

Many thanks to Sven Prins for this information.

Bittern: (1 – 7)
10th record. One was accidently flushed from reeds next to the Turlin Moor Viewing screen on 20th Dec. It flew off and landed back in the reeds but was never seen again (SA)

Cattle Egret: (5 – 7)
Scarce visitor. After a few false starts this species is now firmly establishing itself in Britain. We are enjoying our own growing share. Recorded on at least 17 dates but the reality was that it was present on many more.

A slow start with none until 13th Jul. 5 on 9th Aug were a record count for the area, exceeding 4 on 3rd Nov 2007 (which was also the first record).

2 were seen on 25th Oct and presumably these birds visited, or at least over flew the recording area, on many, if not all, dates until the year end. They seemed to spend much of their time feeding in the Sherford Valley west of the Bakers Arms and then over flew the Bay, and in particular Lytchett Bay View, on their way to roost at Holes Bay with Little Egrets. Early starters could watch them return the following morning.


© Ian Ballam

Grey Heron: (13 – 29) ⇔
Daily visitor in small numbers. 13 arrived on the morning of 31st Aug in groups of 2,7 & 4 constituting a record count for the site (previously 10 on 2 dates).

Great White Egret: (7 – 8) ↗
Scare visitor. Recorded on 11 dates (12 in 2019). All in the autumn between 11th Sep and 1st Nov. Max 3 on 17th Sep. For the first time a bird lingered around the fields and Bay and was seen frequently between 16th - 28th Sep.

Little Egret: (67 – 28) ⇔
Common visitor, seen every day. There were no records of birds using the occasional evening roost. The largest counts were made by observing birds at Lytchett Bay View flying to, or arriving from, Holes Bay. Max 39 on 23rd Dec.

Bay monthly max:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
17	10	6	10	8	6	21	19	18	18	25	39

Osprey: (4 – 28) ⇔
Annual passage migrant. The best year ever – seen on 81 dates.

21 spring records is astonishing. The earliest was on 24th Mar at Turlin Moor and the last at Lytchett Fields on 6th May. 2 birds were seen on 3 dates. At least 9 of these were migrants moving through the area. The remainder may relate to CJ7, the returning Rutland hatched female, which accounted for at least 5 confirmed records.

We love this picture, really shows the battle Ospreys have with their prey when they first catch them © Alison Copeland

Occasional records continued through June and July. No new birds were introduced in to the harbour and CJ7 failed to find a mate.

From 2nd Aug it was clear that migrants were returning south. There were 98 bird-days until 5th Oct, a truly splendid autumn. For considerable periods it was impossible to visit the area and not see one or more. Max 4 on 15th Aug.

Word of the daily Osprey show soon spread. Those who came were treated to some good performances which included Marsh Harriers, Hobbies and in this case a Peregrine © Allan Gates

Honey-buzzard: (1 – 6)
7th & 8th records. A bird that had been seen over several days in the Wareham Channel was seen circling over "Black bridge" on 7th Aug (PM et al). The second record was of one circling over the Bakers Arms on 28th Aug (IML, JSP)

Sparrowhawk: (4 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon. Recorded on at least 102 dates throughout the year, considerably more than in recent years. This is probably due to a combination of now having an established breeding pair and greater observer effort during lockdown. At least 1 pair bred raising at least 2 young. 2 ringed.

Goshawk:
4th record. After a little run of records in the 90's this species simply disappeared from the radar. With the growing populations in Dorset, and particularly Hampshire, over recent years, it is a surprise that it has taken until now to end the drought.

Suspicions that a bird was in the area were aroused by several massive flushes of pigeons and corvids in the days leading up to the final confirmation on 28th Nov when a juv was seen sitting in a tree at Lytchett Fields (IB, GH et al). What was presumed to be the same bird was seen again on 15th Dec (IB).

Previous records:
1 on 4th Apr 1994
1 on 11th Feb 1996
1 on 25th Oct 1997

© Ian Ballam

Marsh Harrier: (6 – 28) ↗
Increasingly regular visitor. Noted on at least 135 dates, sustaining the dramatic increase first witnessed in 2015. Recorded in every month of the year with several active migrants noted in spring. Max 3 on at least 6 dates. 1 roosted occasionally at both ends of the year.

Hen Harrier: (2 – 28) ⇔
Irregular Visitor. Recorded on 8 dates, a slight improvement on 5 in 2019. A ringtail was seen on 3 dates between 13th Jan and 15th Feb. A juv was seen on 5th & 6th Nov with ringtails recorded on 22nd Oct, 20th Nov and 29th Dec.

Red Kite: (29 – 15) ↗
Scarce migrant, increasingly expected on spring migration. After records on 5 dates with a maximum of 2 on any one day in 2019 I don't think we were ready for 2020!

71 bird-days in spring between 12th Feb and 31st May with an incredible max of 29 on 10th May. This was simply stunning with birds moving SW from mid-morning till lunchtime across much of the Poole and Bournemouth area. We enjoyed more than our fair share.

This was also the year that we all got one or more on our garden lists! By way of example, confined to the house due to lockdown SR ambled up to do some sky watching from an upstairs window after lunch on 22nd Apr and saw 6 pass east within minutes.

© Tony Furnell

After none in autumn 2019 it was good to have 4 records. Singles on 19th Sep, 9th Oct, 13th Oct and 1st Dec.

Common Buzzard: (15 – 29) ⇔
The commonest raptor of the area. Breeds widely in the vicinity. Max 10 on 16th Mar.

Barn Owl: (2 – 19)
Bred at French's Farm until 2009. Shortly after this the nest box was removed. Since then the species has been very scarce. 1 on A35 by Lytchett Fields was the only bird seen this year. In addition there were 3 nocturnal sound recordings made at Lytchett Way listening station in Apr, 3 in Sep and 2 in Oct.

Tawny Owl: (2 territories – 29) ⇔
Uncommon resident. After several poor years there was a definite upturn in 2020. 1 pair raised 2 young at Lytchett Fields in a Kestrel nest box. In the autumn, birds were very vocal in the eastern end of the recording area often calling intensely from dusk until dawn.


Hungry youngsters wait for dinner © Paul Morton


Successful parent has rat on the menu © Richard Stephenson

Kingfisher: (5 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant and uncommon, but frequently seen, winter visitor. Bred in 2000 and possibly in other years since. Typically becomes scarce from Christmas onwards.

Breeding occurred on the Sherford, in or on the edge of the recording area consequently there were regular records in Mar - Jun. Recorded from all round the Bay in the second half of the year. Max 5 (all ringed) on 12th Aug, a day record for the site. One at Sandy Close Pond on 19th Mar was notable and presumably a migrant returning to its breeding site inland? 9 ringed.

***SE90746** – A 1stW ringed on 17th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 6 days later on 23rd Aug 2020 in the Piddle Valley, Wareham. A SW movement of 11km.*

***SA27399** – A 1stW ringed on 31st Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 88 days later at the same site demonstrating that it was wintering here rather than a passage migrant.*

Great Spotted Woodpecker: ↗
Breeding Resident. Seen regularly in most parts of the Bay. Drumming heard in most areas during spring. 5 ringed.

Green Woodpecker: ⇔
Breeding resident but uncommon. Recorded in all parts of the Bay. No change in status.

Kestrel: (3 – 29) ⇔
Resident. Recorded on at least 64 dates from 13th Mar, mostly from Lytchett Fields. The nest box was not used and the species was not thought to have bred locally.

Merlin: (2 – 25) ⇔
Scarce winter visitor. A good year with records on 14 dates. 2 singles in the first part of the year were followed by a nice series of sightings of an imm/female and a male from 8th Oct. The male was suspected of roosting at the Bay at the end of the year.

Neither of our small falcons are easy to catch up with so capturing both Merlin © Ian Ballam and Hobby © Richard Stephenson in the same year was rather special.

Hobby; (4 – 27) ⇔
Irregular summer visitor. A record year with a record count. 60 bird-days on 41 dates between 29th Apr and 18th Sep (previous best was 26 on 23 in 2013). A breeding pair, probably two, nested within a few kilometers of the recording area. Their regular hunting visits were one of the highlights of the year especially during August when their juveniles joined the daily raptor show alongside Ospreys and Marsh Harriers. 4 were seen together on 10th May in a kettle of Buzzards and Red Kites!

Peregrine: (3 – 28) ⇔
Frequent visitor, rare in early summer. Recorded on record at least 70 dates, a record year (previously 58 dates in 2016). Noted in every month with the only gap being between 4th Jun and 5th Jul.

© Pennhill Man

Falcon Sp:
Perhaps the best record of the year, the best record ever at Lytchett? Perhaps we will never know? A falcon seen and photographed over Lytchett Fields on 25th Aug (RGo), posted on social media, and which thanks to the sharp eyes of Paul Morton, eventually attracted a lot of attention. Was it really an Eleonora's Falcon? Unfortunately, the trail soon went cold when the finder informed everyone that there was only one shot. The camera battery had died immediately after.

This single photo (lower cropped version of same) left raptor experts in disagreement © Rene Goad

RBA were keen supporters of the ID…

"**Eleonora's Falcon**
We'd have to hope it's going to be third time lucky this year for **Eleonora's Falcon**. One retrospectively identified bird is just one of those things; a second bird is unfortunate; a third bird would be too much pain to bear. Hot on the heels of the pale morph bird seen fleetingly in Norfolk at Winterton North Dunes on 20th August, belated news emerged this week of a dark morph bird seen in Dorset at Lytchett Bay on 25th.

Just like the Norfolk bird, this one too was photographed – another one that proves the old adage of what's hit's history, and what's missed's mystery. We don't have to go too many years back to a time when digital photography was the exception rather than the norm and reports of such birds were inevitably met with guarded caution. Increasingly, we've a decent chance of, at the very least an intriguing record shot or, in the case of these birds, emphatic certainty.

This comes to be Dorset's first record of this uber-rare raptor, filling a large hole in the middle of the south of England where previous records were concerned, between the one day birds in Cornwall on 11th August 2012 and Essex on 13th September 2008.

With news that there's been a major influx of **Eleonora's Falcons** into mainland Europe this late summer, a second bird in Britain was always a possibility. Now we just have to hope for a third… one that strays into the path of someone who recognises it for what it is there and then… and one that hangs around in the area long enough for a few folk to connect with one of the ultimate blockers."

Others were not so certain and at the time of writing we are unsure as to whether anyone is going to submit it to BBRC, a pre-requisite in-order that it can be considered for acceptance.

Ring-necked Parakeet:
2nd record. 1 on 7th Sep at Frenches Farm (IB). The only other record was from Olde Quoins on 3rd Sep 2002. A bizarre similarity in dates!

Jay: (12 – 29) ⇔
Resident. Regularly seen throughout the year but most often in autumn. 1 ringed.

Magpie: ⇔
Common Resident. 1 ringed.

Jackdaw: (610 – 29) ⇔
Resident. Recorded throughout the year. Max 200 on several dates.

Rook: (185 – 29) ↗
Breeds on edge of recording area. 18 nests at Watery Lane colony. 16 – 25 nests 2010 – 2019. 4 additional nests were found in trees at the Old Sewage Works, the first-time breeding has been noted at this location.

Carrion Crow: (100 – 29) ⇔
Common Resident. Breeds widely across the area. 87 were recorded at roost at Lytchett Way on 15th Dec.

Raven: (13 – 26) ↗
Uncommon but increasing. Recorded in every month except May. 13 on 18th Nov was a record count for the site (previously 7 on several dates).

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

Blue Tit: ⇔
Common resident. 110 ringed.

Z187902 *– A juvenile ringed on 15th Jul 2015 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped on 6th Nov 2020 at Lytchett Bay. This bird is now at least 5yrs 5mnths old. The oldest ever recorded is 9yrs 8mnths.*

Z187144 *– A 1st W ringed on 26th Sep 2018 at Lytchett Bay was killed by a cat 591 days later on 9th May 2020 in Turlin Moor, Poole.*

Great Tit: ⇔
Common resident. 44 ringed.

TW94031 *- A juvenile ringed on 31st Jul 2020 at Lytchett Bay was killed by a cat 42 days later on 11th Sep 2020 in Lytchett Minster.*

Bearded Tit: (40 – 29) ↗

Scarce breeder and uncommon passage migrant. The survey in 2019 found at least 4, and possibly 8, pairs east of the Sherford. The first young this year were seen on 20th Jun. Good numbers seen in autumn. Max 19+ on 5th Oct. The majority of records coming from the reedbeds in the eastern half of the Bay. 4 in a patch of reed barely more than 2mx2m in the middle of grassland at Lytchett Bay View were particularly enjoyable. 21 ringed.

Once again we can enjoy a brilliant composition courtesy of © Ian Ballam. This time male and female Bearded Tits.

Ringing included some interesting controls/re-traps. 4 birds ringed at the site in 2019 were re-trapped this year.

AKB6015 *– An Ad M ringed at Keyhaven, Hampshire on 10th Jul 2019 was re-trapped 373 days later on 17th Jul 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 33km.*

Z408231 – *A M ringed at Lytchett Bay on 15th Aug 2015 was re-trapped there 5yrs and 2 mnths later on 10th Oct 2020. The typical lifespan for this species is 3 yrs and the record longevity is 7 yrs and 3 mnths.*

Woodlark: (15 – 19) ⇔
Irregular visitor. The poor run for this species continues. 1 over Lytchett Fields on 7th Sep was the only record.

Skylark: (781 - 29) ⇔
Scarce breeder and passage migrant. Up to 2 singing males were recorded in Mar and Apr but breeding success is unknown. Up to 15 were in the arable field throughout Jan and Feb. Autumn passage began on 26th Sep but was again light. Max 10 on 2 dates. Up to 6 used the arable field daily toward the end of Dec.

Sand Martin: (5000 – 29) ↘
Common passage migrant. Recorded from 21st Mar until 5th Oct. Good visible migration on 6th May produced a count of 158n at Lytchett Fields. Autumn was very poor with no more than 30 seen on any one date. 1 ringed.

Swallow: (1000 – 800 – 29) ⇔
Common passage migrant, breeds at French's Farm and this year at Olde Quoins cottage. Recorded from 2nd Apr until 3rd Nov. Visible migration on the 6th May produced the best spring count for many years, 364n at Lytchett Fields. A decent congregation in late Sept peaked at 250 on 29th. 19 ringed.

House Martin: (1800 – 29) ⇔
Common passage migrant, breeding colony on edge of recording area at Watery Lane. Present from 5th Apr to 9th Oct. Max 230 on 25th Sep.

The colony at Watery Lane continues spread into Seaview Road and has extended into Slough Lane and Policeman's Lane. Many birds were seen collecting mud at Lytchett Fields and Watery Lane.

No of House Martin nests at the Watery Lane colony 2006 – 2020. No of nest collapsed or destroyed in brackets.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
16 (6)	14 (5)	13 (8)	15 (5)	8 (7)	13 (4)	2 (0)	4 (1)	?	7 (3)	10 (4)	18 (?)	17 (?)	12 (4)	18 (-)

Of particular interest to the editor were 4 birds prospecting at Sandy Close for several dates in early June. Nest boxes are being erected as I write!

Cetti's Warbler: (11 males – 28) ⇔
Breeding resident. At least 6 singing males in an almost complete survey (one better than 2019). Present at Sandy Close Pond occasionally in both winter periods.

Productivity and dispersal seemed to be very good with a record 25 birds ringed inc 8 on 26th Sep.

S541947 *– A 1stW ringed on 27th Aug 2019 at Hengistbury Head, Dorset was re-trapped 411 days later on 11th Oct 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 19km.*

ABE8436 *– A bird ringed on 17th Nov 2019 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 294 days later on 6th Sep 2020 at Gins Farm, New Forest, Hampshire. An E movement of 44km.*

Long tailed Tit: ↗
Common resident. Regularly recorded from most sites at the Bay. 41 ringed.

Yellow-browed Warbler: (1 – 7)
9th record. One was trapped and ringed at Lytchett Heath on 11th Oct (SW, JSP et al). Given the large numbers in Scotland and the western coasts of the UK there were relatively few in Dorset and may be only 3 in Poole Harbour this autumn. 1 ringed.

Willow Warbler: (60 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant. This species has been lost as a regular breeder.

The first record was on 23rd Mar. Spring migration, like recent years remains poor but continued until 27th Apr. Autumn migration was very strong between 21st Jul and 18th Sep. Max 50 on 28th and 41 on 31st Jul. 157 ringed, the most since our records began in 1983.

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

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
		1	3			50	30	15			
		1	18			182	143	42			

Chiffchaff: (142 – 29) ↗
Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. No breeding survey was undertaken but the population seemed stable at 7 – 10 territories east of the Sherford found in 2019.

There were 3 records of singles at separate locations in Jan and 1 on 1st Mar. 1 on 14th Mar was probably the first spring migrant, which peaked with 14 on 21st Mar. Autumn migration was good with peaks of 51 on 16th Sep, 40 on 22nd Sep and 30 on 5th Oct. Small numbers continued until the end of Nov with one lingering at Lytchett Fields during Dec. 256 ringed.

Siberian Chiffchaff: (1 - 8)
Scarce migrant. 9th record. 1 was trapped and ringed at Lytchett Heath on 23rd Nov (SR et al)

Aquatic Warbler: (2 – 5)
7th record. Another highlight in a year of highlights. An adult female with a brood patch was trapped and ringed at Lytchett Fields on 12th Aug (SR et al). If this was not enough the bird was then re-trapped 983km to the south of us by ringers in Northern Spain!!

AJF5663 *– An Ad F ringed at Lytchett Bay on 12th Aug 2020 was re-trapped 16 days later on 28th Aug 2020 at Laguna de la Nava, Palencia, SPAIN. A S movement of 983km.*

Sedge Warbler: (219 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant. 7 bird-days in spring, very poor. Recorded between 8th Apr and 4th May. Autumn passage was pretty decent. Commencing on 14th Jul and continuing to 5th Oct. Max 54 on 8th Aug. 374 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	1		12	54	16	1		
			4	3		40	334	49	1		

3 records of birds re-trapped on subsequent migrations

***S391741** – A 1st W ringed on 1st Aug 2018 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 392 days later on 28th Aug 2019 at Evoa, Vila Franca de Xira, Lisbon, PORTUGAL. A SSW movement of 1430km. Our second Sedge movement to Portugal from early autumn 2018.*

***S391928** - A Ad F ringed on 5th Aug 2018 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 730 days later on 4th Aug 2020 at Mont Manet, Genet, Manche, FRANCE. A S movement of 232km.*

***AAE0758** – A 1st W ringed on 6th Jul 2018 at Icklesham, East Sussex was re-trapped 701 days later on 7th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A W movement of 191km.*

6 records of typical southbound migration movements though the double capture of ALN2727 is special.

***ALN2727** – A 1st W ringed on 7th Aug 2020 at Penclacwydd, Carmarthenshire, Wales was re-trapped 5 days later on 12th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SE movement of 178km. This bird then followed an expected route south and was re-trapped again 6 days later on 18th Aug at Touch Robin, Guenrouet, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE. A S movement of 350km.*

***ABE8866** - A 1st W ringed on 1st Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 7 days later on 8th Aug 2020 at Mont Manet, Genet, Manche, FRANCE. A S movement of 232km.*

***ALB1661** – A 1st W ringed on 31st Jul 2020 at Inchture, Perthshire, Scotland was re-trapped 11 days later on 11th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A S movement of 636km.*

***AAP0290** - A 1st W ringed on 30th Aug 2020 at Uskmouth, Newport, Wales was re-trapped the following day on 31st Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SE movement of 109km.*

***AFJ4259** – A 1st W ringed on 30th Jul 2020 at Westhill Farm, Oxfordshire was re-trapped 9 days later on 9th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SSW movement of 104km.*

***ACD5822** - A 1st W ringed on 8th Aug 2020 at Fishlake Meadows, Romsey, Hampshire was re-trapped 9 days later on 17th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SW movement of 50km.*

Four records of birds "coasting" east or west before heading south for the winter.

***AXL4838** – A 1st W ringed on 6th Aug 2020 at Nanjizal, Cornwall was re-trapped 2 days later on 8th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. An E movement of 271km.*

***AJF5891** - A 1st W ringed on 16th Sep 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 2 days later on 18th Sep 2020 at Icklesham, East Sussex. A E movement of 191km.*

***ANK8903** – A 1st W ringed on 14th Aug 2020 at Portland Bird Observatory, Dorset was re-trapped the following day on 15th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A NE movement of 38km.*

A not untypical movement of a young bird seemingly going the "wrong way" in autumn.

***AJF5660** – A 1st W ringed on 12th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 2 days later on 14th Aug 2020 at Squires Down, Dorset. A NW movement of 35km.*

Reed Warbler: (107 males – 29) ⇔
Common summer visitor. Present between 9th Apr and 27th Sep. 107 singing males were recorded in a full survey in 2019. 320 were ringed, a record annual total (previously 251 in 2011).

2018: Additional notable record. A bird was caught in a mist net on 4th Dec but escaped before it was extracted. The ringers involved are confident that the "acro" involved was of this species. The latest record for the Bay by more than 1 month.

***AJB2079** – A juvenile ringed on 29th Aug 2018 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 381 days later on 29th Aug 2019 at Ponta D'Evra, Lisbon, PORTUGAL. A SSW movement of 1430km.*

***ABE8673** – A 1st W ringed on 2nd Sep 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 9 days later on 11th Sep 2020 at Chenal, Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet, Charente-Maritime, FRANCE. A S movement of 589km.*

***ABE8086** – A 1stW ringed on 20th Aug 2019 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 305 days later on 27th May 2020 at Ryewater Nursery, Boys Hill, Dorset. A WNW movement of 36km. It was re-trapped there again on 20th Jun 2020 suggesting that it was breeding in the area.*

***AJF5591** – juvenile ringed on 8th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 24 days later on 1st Sep 2020 at Ibsley Water, Hampshire. A NE movement of 26km.*

Z408607 – A 1stW ringed on 4th Sep 2015 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 4yrs 11mnths later on 13th Aug 2020 at Lytchett Bay. This bird had also been re-trapped on 31st Jul 2016 and has presumably returned to breed each year since 2015. The oldest ever recorded is 12yrs 11mnths and 21 days!

Grasshopper Warbler: (33 – 22) ⇔
Passage migrant, predominantly in autumn. Under recorded. Bred in 1986.

No spring records. 41 bird-days between 22nd Jul and 16th Sep. Max 6 on 8th Aug. 39 ringed.

Blackcap: (75 – 29) ↗
Passage migrant, summer visitor and scarce winter visitor. No breeding survey undertaken but population felt stable at 14-18 territories found in 2019.

Seen regularly at Sandy Close Pond feeders up to 4th Mar. At least 5 individuals involved with 3 males and 2 females.

The first presumed migrant (may be a bird returning to the continent) was on 19th Mar. 13 on 18th Apr was the best day of spring. Autumn was decent with 38 on 16th Sep and 21 on 26th Jul.

Scarce after mid-Oct though records continued to the year end with 2 males visiting Sandy Close Pond. 132 ringed.

Garden Warbler: (7 – 27) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. 1 in spring on 22nd Apr at Lytchett Fields. 11 bird-days in autumn between 21st Jul and 7th Oct (first Oct record and latest ever date). Max 2. 6 ringed.

Lesser Whitethroat: (3 – 24) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant, which occasionally breeds or holds territory. A much better year than many recent ones.

After singles at Lytchett Fields on 22nd Apr and Turlin Moor on 25th Apr, one held territory at Lytchett Fields between 27th Apr and 15th May. A second bird was present briefly on the 6th.

In autumn, singles on 5 dates between 6th and 27th Aug. 1 ringed.

Whitethroat: (18 – 27) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. Bred in 2013. An average year. 9 bird-days in spring between 18th Apr & 6th May. In autumn, 28 bird days between 1st Jul & 16th Sep. Max 3 on two dates. 16 ringed.

Dartford Warbler: (2 pairs – 26)
None had been recorded since Aug 2018 so it was good when one was found at the traditional site on 17th July. This prompted a bit of a surge of re-colonsing/dispersing birds. 5 were ringed up to mid-Nov with 3 present together on 5th Oct. Let's hope they remain to breed in 2021.

Firecrest: (4 – 17) ⇔
Scarce visitor. A better year than 2019 but still not showing any signs of changing their historic status. Rather scarce early in the year with sightings coming from the Cottage area, Lytchett Way, Turlin Moor and Lytchett Bay View on 6 dates up to 15th Mar. The first of autumn was at Lytchett Heath on 26th Sep. There were records on 17 dates up to the year-end though up to 3 were probably near the cottage throughout. Other records came from Sandy Close Pond and Lytchett Heath. 5 ringed.

Goldcrest: (27 – 29) ⇔
Passage migrant, which occasionally breeds. Present during the breeding season at Turlin Moor, The Cottage, Beach Road and Sandy Close Pond. Typical migration, max day count at any one site; 15 on 23rd Oct and 10 on 25th Oct. Widespread in small numbers during both winter periods. 29 ringed.

LTE722 *– A 1stW F ringed on 9th Oct 2020 at Nuthampstead, Hertfordshire was re-trapped 45 days later on 23rd Nov 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SW movement of 203km.*

Wren: ⇔
Common resident. 32 ringed.

Nuthatch: ⇔
Uncommon. Seen occasionally throughout the year from sites stretching from Lytchett Fields to Sandy Close Pond, seen frequently in the summer and autumn. 2 ringed.

TW94050 *– A juvenile ringed on 3rd Jul 2020 at Lytchett Bay was killed when it flew into a window 80 days later on 21st Sep 2020 at Creekmoor, Poole. A NNE movement of 3km.*

Treecreeper: ⇔
Uncommon. Recorded only occasionally with most records coming from Lytchett Way and the Slough Lane Water wks.

Starling: (35000 – 5600 – 29) ⇔
Common resident**.** A pre-roost in Jun held up to 500 birds most evenings at Lytchett Fields. 7 ringed.

Ring Ouzel: (3 – 11)
Scarce migrant. The only record of the year was a nocturnal migrant sound recorded at the Lytchett Way listening station on 28th Sep.

Blackbird: (45 – 29) ⇔
Common Resident. No significant records submitted. 56 ringed.

LE75924 *– A juvenile ringed at Lytchett Bay on 13th Jul 2016 was taken by a cat 1393 days later in Upton on 6th May 2020.*

Fieldfare: (559 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon winter visitor. The poorest year that anyone can recall. Almost unbelievably there were no double figure counts and the species was only logged on 9 dates! 2 on 25th Feb, 1 on 2nd Apr and then up to 3 (!!) on 7 dates from 17th Oct.

Redwing: (1000 – 514 – 29) ⇔
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Thankfully a much better showing than the above species. Recorded until 11th Apr (noc-mig) and from 28th Sep (equaling the earliest return date).

c50 were around Lytchett Fields in Jan & Feb. 282 calls of nocturnal migrants were recorded on the night of 2nd Apr. Diurnal migration included 137n on 14th Oct. 111 were noted on 26th Nov. Noc-mig was typically strong in the autumn, max 218 calls on 11th Oct and 294 on 4th Nov. Small numbers were recorded until the year end. 16 ringed.

Whilst ringing with Tony Taylor on 23rd Nov at Lytchett Heath we had a very exciting moment when this bird landed above the net rides in the early morning light. This heavily cropped photo was taken at 75x magnification. Imagine seeing this bird at 8x through binoculars! We were disappointed but not wholly surprised when we zoomed in and found that it was "only" a Redwing! That said the heavy breast marking suggest that it might be of the Icelandic race *T.i.coburni?*

Look at this from the far side of the room. You will guess what we hoped it might be. © Shaun Robson

Song Thrush: (1256 – 29) ⇔
Breeding resident and passage migrant. At least 11 singing males recorded during incomplete survey. 54n on 14th Oct was the only diurnal migration count of note. Noc-mig recordings were frequent in autumn, max 114 calls on 22nd Oct. 12 ringed.

Mistle Thrush: (60 - 20 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon resident. Confirmed breeding for the first time since 2016. 1 pr raised at least 2 young at Lytchett Fields. 14 on 9th Oct was the biggest count of the year.

Spotted Flycatcher: (8 – 6 – 29) ↘
Passage migrant, previously bred. A poor year. The only two records in spring were nocturnal sound recorded migrants. 9th May at 02:12 and 10th May at 02:08. Both at Lytchett Fields. 7 bird-days in autumn between 27th Aug and 27th Sep was below par. Max 2 on 16th.

Robin: ⇔
Common resident. A pre-dawn cycle around the recording area on 19th Jan found 66 singing birds. This feels like a good number but we have nothing to compare it with! 41 ringed.

Common Redstart: (2 – 23) ⇔
Scarce autumn migrant. Only 2 records, a very poor year. Singles on 24th Jul and 17th Aug.

Whinchat: (11 – 27) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. None in spring. 19 bird-days in autumn between 24th Aug and 19th Sep. Max 2 on 3 dates. All records at Lytchett Fields.

Stonechat: (23 – 29) ↗
Returning breeding resident (7 pairs in 2002). We never understood why this species disappeared as breeding species in 2006 and now we don't understand why they are coming back so strongly. After a gap of 12 years, they bred again in 2018. This year there were at least 3 pairs. The first raised 7 young in 3 broods, the second 4 young in 2 broods and the third 3 young in 1 brood.

Present in every month of the year and recorded at a wide range of sites around the bay. Max 19 on 13th Sep shared between Lytchett Fields and Frenches Farm SANG. 11 ringed.

Northern Wheatear: (39 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. Almost every record of this species occurs in the north west of the recording area. A better year than many recent ones.

21 bird-days in spring following from 4th Apr to 6th May. Max 6 on 19th Apr.

21 bird-days between 12th Aug and 7th Oct. Max 3 on 2 dates.

House Sparrow: (101++ – 29) ⇔
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. Max count submitted was 50 at Turlin Moor on 26th Aug. 14 ringed.

Dunnock: ⇔
Common resident. 16 ringed.

Yellow Wagtail: (150 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon passage migrant. 2 spring records, 2 on 25th Apr and 3 on 6th May. Autumn migration started early on 11th Jul. There 220 bird-days until 8th Oct. Max 37 on 27th Aug. Almost exclusively at Lytchett Fields, though 1 was ringed at Lytchett Heath.

Grey Wagtail: (15 – 29) ⇔
Winter visitor, passage migrant and occasional breeder. No records between 20th Feb and 12th Jun suggested that no breeding occurred this year Otherwise frequently recorded. Max 4 on several dates.

Pied Wagtail: (650 – 29) ⇔
Recorded throughout the year, common in autumn. Bred successfully. Birds roost at various points around the Bay during peak migration in October. Max 178 on 7th Oct. 63 were counted leaving a roost toward Poole and flying over Lytchett Bay View on 25th Dec. 118 ringed.

White Wagtail: Scarce migrant. 3 singles, all at Lytchett Fields; 31st Mar, 6th Apr, 20th Apr.

Meadow Pipit: (460 – 29) ⇔
Historic breeder, now common passage migrant. No records between 5th Apr and 30th Aug. Spring passage was good, max 126n over Sandy Close Pond in 75 minutes on 1st Apr. Max in autumn was an unremarkable 80 on 26th Sep. 35 ringed.

Tree Pipit: (18 – 25) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. A much better year than 2019. 1 noc-mig bird on 11th May was the only spring record. 36 bird days between 7th Aug and 17th Sep, max 7 on 8th Sep. In addition, 13 calls of nocturnal migrants were recorded at the Lytchett Way listening station on 27th Aug. 5 ringed.

Water Pipit: (20 – 23)
Scarce winter visitor. Records have returned to the previous levels since the creation of Lytchett Fields. A reasonable year with records on 51 dates (Likely that birds were present throughout the winter). Present until 4th Apr, max 4 on several dates and from 23rd Oct, max 5 on 5th Nov.

Participation in a nationwide project to colour ring this species in the late autumn was hampered by poor weather and ultimately covid lockdown restrictions. Nonetheless 4 birds were ringed with BTO metal rings on the right tarsus and yellow rings on the left tarsus. These are numbered 0k - 3k.

There were no sightings of these birds up to the year end (but two have since been photographed early in 2021!). More effort will be made to pursue this exciting project in 2021 when restrictions allow.

© Shaun Robson

Scandinavian Rock Pipit: (50 – 29) ⇔
Common winter visitor. All Rock Pipits at Lytchett Bay are considered to be from Scandinavia of the race *littoralis.* Recorded until 18th Feb and from 11th Oct. Max at any one location was 20 on 17th Nov. Efforts to ring Water Pipits (see above) led to a record number of this species also being caught. Fingers crossed for some further recoveries. 11 ringed.

Chaffinch: (450 – 29) ⇔
Breeding resident and winter visitor. A very poor year with no settled flocks greater than 15. 34n over Lytchett Bay View on 14th Oct was notable. 5 ringed.

Hawfinch: (2 – 3)
One of the least expected records of the year. A spring migrant was sound recorded at 23:23 on 6th May (PM).

Bullfinch: (20 – 29) ↗
Uncommon but increasing. In keeping with recent years, widely recorded across the whole area throughout the year, noted in every month, including fresh juveniles on 3rd Jul at Sandy Close Pond, where they were seen daily. 12 ringed.

Greenfinch: (60 – 29) ⇔
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. Bred widely in small numbers and it felt like there were small signs of a recovery. 13 at Lytchett Fields in Aug, 17 at Lytchett Bay View in Nov and 10 regularly at Sandy Close Pond were the best counts. 19 ringed.

Linnet: (250 – 29) ⇔
Uncommon breeding resident. There were no records between 10th May and 28th Aug which suggests that the species did not breed this year. Small signs of spring migration included 25n on 19th Apr and 27w on 30th Apr. The change in management of the arable field seemed to do the trick for this species at least and the outcome was one of the successes of the year. After the arrival of 20 on 28th Aug numbers grew to 168 by mid-Oct and remained high into the New Year. The "Linnet murmuration" proved to be quite an attraction. 3 ringed.

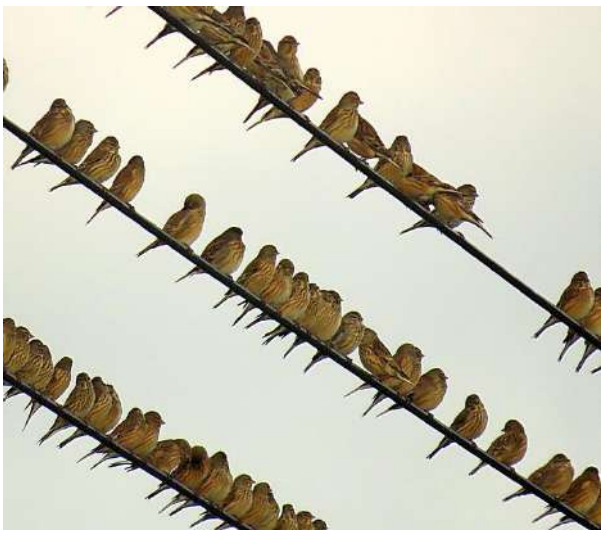
Lesser Redpoll: (40 – 23) ⇔
Scarce passage migrant. In stark contrast to 2019, this was a record year. There were none until 26th Sep when 11 were ringed at Lytchett Heath. After this they were recorded on each visit until 17th Oct. Max 33 on 10th Oct. The last records of the year were on 2 dates in Nov at Lytchett Bay View. 52 ringed and if only the weather had not been so poor for ringing then we would have caught many more. To provide some context the all-time site ringing total prior to this year was 9!

***AYJ3460** – A 1stW ringed on 5th Oct 2020 at Crabtree Hill, Gloucestershire was re-trapped 4 days later on 9th Oct 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A SSE movement of 126km.*

***AXL6006** – A 1stW ringed on 10th Oct 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 8 days later on 18th Oct 2020 at Arreton, Isle of Wight. An E movement of 58km.*

***AJF5989** – An Ad ringed on 10th Oct 2020 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 7 days later on 17th Oct 2020 at Beachy Head, East Sussex. An E movement of 161km.*

The occurrence and status of all finch species have changed significantly at Lytchett Bay over the last 30 years. Many of these simply reflect changes at a national level. Greenfinches, Chaffinches, Linnets down. Goldfinches up. Bullfinches showing recent recovery. Siskins, Lesser Redpolls and especially Brambling and Crossbill highly variable year on year. This year was a very good one for Linnets (bottom left) © Ian Ballam and Lesser Redpolls (top right) © Ed Bennett. Greenfinches seem to be slowly on the increase (bottom right) © Ian Ballam and Goldfinches remain our most encountered member of the family (top left) © Ian Ballam



This male Crossbill is probably the first ever to be photographed at Lytchett. It was part of a small flock visiting a wet ditch beneath some oak trees at Lytchett Fields. © Ian Ballam Bullfinches are daily visitors to Sandy Close Pond feeders © Shaun Robson

Crossbill: (21 – 13)
Scarce passage migrant. A record year surpassing the best years of 2012 and 2013. 61 bird-days was almost twice the previous best. After 5w on 2nd Jul records continued through Jul and Aug. Max 12ne on 21st Jul. There were records on 5 dates between 20th Sep and 5th Nov at Lytchett Fields including the rather odd sight of birds sitting in deciduous trees (before they dropped to drink in a wet ditch)!

Goldfinch: (120 – 29) ⇔
Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Max 40+ on several dates at several sites. 24 ringed.

Siskin: (280 – 26) ↘
Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor. Despite very large numbers of coastal migrants passing through Dorset in late summer and early autumn none of these reached us, the series of poor years continues. Slightly better than 2019, 57 bird-days on 31 dates across every month, max 4 on several dates.

Yellowhammer: (13 – 18)
Extinct breeding species. Scarce passage migrant. 2 at Lytchett Fields on 6th Nov (IB).

Reed Bunting: (110 – 29) ⇔
Breeding resident, c23 prs found in 2019 survey. 26 in the Arable Field on 8th Sep was the single biggest flock at any one site. Up to 4 at Sandy Close Pond in each winter period. 105 ringed.

AZE1057 *– A juvenile M ringed on 2nd Aug 2020 in the Piddle Valley nr Wareham was re-trapped 69 days later on 10th Oct 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A NE movement of 6km.*

AZE1093 *– A juvenile ringed on 11th Aug 2020 in the Piddle Valley nr Wareham was re-trapped 109 days later on 28th Nov 2020 at Lytchett Bay. A NE movement of 6km.*

Records received from: S. Alley (SA), I.Ballam (IB), I Barnard (IBa), E.J.Bennett, D.Chown, M.Constantine, Mo Constantine, T.Elborn, D.Foster, T.Furnell, F.Gamble, R.Gifford, R.Goad (RGo), K.Guest, S.Haggett, P.V.Harvey (PVH), M&L Highfield, G.Hayman (GH), C.Hilder, J.Hull (JH) , N.Hull (NHu), L.Lambert, S.Levy, I.M.Lewis (IML), B.Lucking, B.Maxted, G.Moors, P.Morton (PM), G.Owen, J.S.Parker (JSP), S.Robson (SR), P.Saunders, R.Stephenson, P.Sutton, A.Taylor, C.Walker, S.Walls (SW), D.White, G.White, 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.

Reed Bunting & Raven © Ian Ballam

Reed Warbler © David Foster & Wheatear © Mark Wright

Appendix 1 – Finders accounts

Long-billed Dowitcher 29th September 2020 – Ian Ballam

On the 29th of September I was making one of my normal visits to Lytchett Fields, my local patch. It was a pleasantly warm late September day with some decent sunny periods. I had been on site from just after 8am, first watching over Lytchett Bay then moving to the viewpoints on French's and Sherford Pools to watch the rising tide. It felt like a very good morning with more than 400 Dunlin present and there was good variety. I'd had been sharing texts with Shaun Robson who was away and he'd replied saying "There has to be a Pec or better, good luck, sounds great"…….

At about 09:50 I was watching a group of about 40 Dunlin through my bins that were feeding along the water's edge about half-way across Sherford Pools. Whilst watching this group 2 birds flew in and landed directly behind the Dunlin, one was a Redshank but the other wasn't . I immediately thought Dowitcher, a species I had seen a couple of times at other sites in the last few years. I called out "Long-Billed Dowitcher" to a fellow birder who was scanning through his scope from the viewing mound behind me. We both got onto the bird in our scopes and we could clearly see it was a Dowitcher although at the distance we were we couldn't rule out it being the rarer Short-billed Dowitcher. Any species of Dowitcher is a special bird for Dorset and either species would be a first record for Lytchett Fields. I immediately got on the phone to let a few of the local birders know and to put the news out on the relevant news/social media sites. Typically during this time the bird moved from its position and unfortunately neither me nor the other birder saw where it went.

Thankfully as the first visiting birders began to arrive, I rediscovered the bird feeding on and around the island at the back of Sherford Pools. The bird stayed for 9 days but gave only sporadic views, it was often elusive and disappeared completely on 3rd and 4th Oct. Persistence was required to get some detailed views and pictures. Thankfully with these obtained we could confirm that it was a juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher. This American species of wader had been toted at the start of 2020 as the next Yank that we might find at Lytchett and so it was. Following hot on the heels of Lesser Yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Pectoral Sandpiper. What and when will be the next "special American visitor" to turn up on the fields?

The closest views of the Dowitcher were obtained by © Richard Stephenson at Holton Pools on 2nd Oct. To the best of our knowledge this was the only time it was seen here. Its long disappearances demonstrate just how many hidden reed-bed pools exist around Lytchett Bay.

Appendix 2 – Bird ringing at Lytchett Bay 2020

Species	No ringed	No re-trapped/controlled
Aquatic Warbler	1	
Bearded Tit	21	14
Blackbird	56	8
Blackcap	132	1
Blue Tit	110	84
Bullfinch	12	3
Cetti's Warbler	25	19
Chaffinch	5	
Chiffchaff	256	8
"Siberian" Chiffchaff	1	
Coal Tit	6	
Collared Dove	1	
Common Sandpiper	1	
Dartford Warbler	5	3
Dunlin	1	
Dunnock	16	10
Firecrest	5	
Garden Warbler	6	
Goldcrest	29	5
Goldfinch	24	
Grasshopper Warbler	39	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	2
Great Tit	44	7
Greenfinch	19	3
House Sparrow	14	2
Jack Snipe	1	
Jay	1	
Kingfisher	9	3
Lesser Redpoll	52	1
Lesser Whitethroat	1	
Linnet	3	
Long-tailed Tit	41	16
Magpie	1	
Meadow Pipit	35	3
Nuthatch	2	
Pied/White Wagtail	118	
Redwing	16	
Reed Bunting	105	27
Reed Warbler	320	59
Robin	41	11
Rock Pipit	11	1
Sand Martin	1	
Sedge Warbler	374	12
Snipe	1	

Song Thrush	12	3
Sparrowhawk	2	
Starling	7	
Stonechat	11	3
Swallow	19	
Tree Pipit	5	
Water Pipit	4	
Water Rail	1	
Whitethroat	16	1
Willow Warbler	157	9
Woodcock	1	
Woodpigeon	1	
Wren	32	15
Yellow Wagtail	1	
Yellow-browed Warbler	1	
Grand Total	**2237**	**334**

Mute Swans at sunrise, 10th Oct 2020 © Ian Ballam

Lytchett Bay Non-Avian Wildlife Report

2020

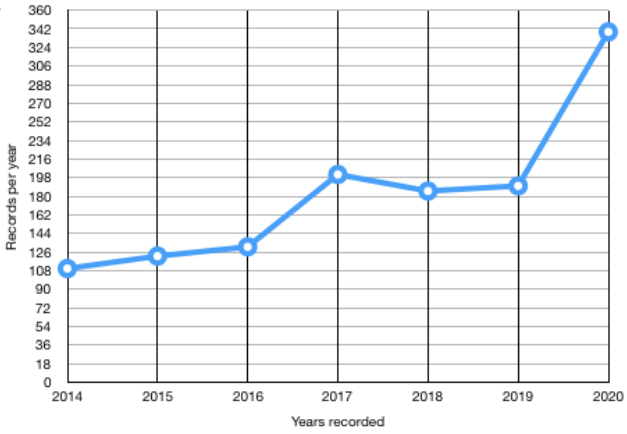
Red-tipped Clearwing Paul Swan

Pimpla contemplator David Foster

Broad-bordered Hummingbird Hawk-moth Ian Ballam

Introduction

2020 has been a very strange year one way or another with two lockdown periods that had very different effect on us all as well as the wildlife and the nature reserve. With many more people affected by the first lockdown saw a greater number of people visiting the reserves around Lytchett Bay and hopefully enjoying what they found and enjoying the wildlife it offered. On the downside towards the end of the first lockdown there were several illegal camps and parties, which led to a large amount of waste from tents to cooking and kitchen utensils, food and even table and chairs being left behind. Also BBQ's and fires which were a risk to the reed beds and woodland but fortunately we were lucky and no serious event happened. I would just like to give a big Thank You to a number of families and people local to Lytchett Way, who in one way or another helped by litter picking and removing the unwanted waste left from the various illegal events that took place over the period. You kept my faith that it was just a small number of individuals that were involved and the majority of people did care about our bay and the shoreline environment which holds so much amazing wildlife, large and small for us to enjoy year-round.



Whether an effect of lockdown I'm not sure but the number of records from individuals this year went up two-fold which was great. Though it also means I have a lot more to write in this report. I would like at this point to thank Ian Ballam who put in great effort this year and recorded many new species some of which were nationally important. Since we started recording the non-avian species in 2014 when most of the Lytchett recording area became a conservation area due to the Great Heath Project and with the opening to the public of the fields managed by the RSPB there has been a slow increase in records being reported.

For the future if you haven't submitted your sightings but would like to, you can e-mail me Nick Hull at nickh4142@gmail.com or you can post sightings and photographs on the Lytchett Bay Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/2469123376495268 or tweet to Lytchett Bay Nature @LytchettP it's getting so easy to let us know what you're seeing. The more we know about the patch and its 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.

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 placed the date and location where the species were first recorded under the species name.

As always I have to thank the following contributors for their contributions and records in no particular order: Shaun Robson, Ian Ballam, Jackie Hull, David Foster, Paul Morton, Liz Woodford, Martin Wood, Ian Lewis, Joe Parker, Ed Bennet, Chris Walker, Alison Copland, Stephen Smith, John Westacott, Mike Gibbons, Colin Lamont, Frazer Hockey, Paul Swann, Jem Bee, Rickie Fancy, Martin Howard, Trevor Steele, Emma Clark, Michelle Irving, Rosie Bailey, Jo Mary and Catherine Smith. Hopefully I haven't left anyone out I apologise now if I have.

I also like to thank the following people for their help in verifying identification of various species groups. Richard Webb (Mammals); Tony Allen (Beetles); Jez Martin (Spiders); Paul Harris and Sean Foote (Moths) and members from Dorset Bat Group, Diptera, Hoverfly and Various expert from BWARS (Bees Wasps & Ants) Face Book groups and Britain Arachnid Society & Steven Falk via Twitter; whose help has been invaluable with identifying some of the more difficult and rare species.

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 we do not believe in killing something that has a purpose on this earth and it should be able to fulfill 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. There may come a time where that one or two species may have to be collected to prove identification if work is required for their conservation we would need to know what species they are to provide the best habitat they require to help the species.

A few species have asterix *** or ** these are important species Nationally or in Dorset. Thank you, Nick Hull

Photograph Acknowledgements

Big thank you to all who have allowed me to use their photographs in this report. Unless stated otherwise all photographs are copyright of the individual photographer.

Species Account

Mammals

As a general rule the mammals recorded change little through the year but over the last year we have managed to add Grey Seal, Water Shrew and five new species of bat. The bat records came from an impact assessment that surveyed the French's Farm second phase of the proposed housing development to see what mitigation needs to be put in place for the development before it proceeds. A few species haven't been recorded many are small rodents which are probably still present in the area and only really recorded by chance. Of the larger species Badger is one that hasn't been recorded since 2015. As no setts have ever been found in the recording area it is assumed the tracks and animals seen in the past were dispersing or on feeding foray's from elsewhere. Roe Deer are still present but are not often seen as they once were and it wasn't until October that they were recorded this year.

Water Shrew ***Neomys fodiens***
Found dead on 26th April near to the Water works at Slough Lane.
Unfortunately this record was of a dead animal found by Liz Woodford but on the positive side it tells us that the species is present in the recording area. They are the largest of our British shrew they have short lives lasting no more than about 19 months. They have long pointed snout, small ears, tiny eyes. Fur is short, dense, velvety and jet black on the upper surface of the body, usually greyish white/ yellowish underneath. Most have a tuft of white hairs on ears and white hairs around eyes. They have distinctive stiff white hairs on the margins of the feet, and underside of the tail forming a keel.

Greater Horseshoe Bat ***Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*****
Recorded between – 14th May and 17th August 2019 – French's Farm
Greater Horseshoe Bat are one of Britain's rarest bat species formerly a cave-dweller, the Greater Horseshoe Bat now tends to roost in old houses, churches and barns. All UK bats are nocturnal, feeding on midges, moths and other flying insects that they find in the dark by using echolocation. In early summer, Greater Horseshoe Bats will emerge at dusk and dawn, however, preferring to roost through the middle of the night. From May, females form maternity colonies to have their pups. Greater Horseshoe Bats hibernate over the winter in caves, disused mines, tunnels and cellars.

Noctule Bat ***Nyctalus noctula***
Recorded between – 14th May and 17th August 2019 – French's Farm
One of Britain larger bat species Noctules have a characteristic powerful, direct flight on narrow pointed wings. They fly in the open, often well above treetop level, with repeated steep dives when chasing insects. Noctule bats can fly at 50 kph. Most food is caught on the wing and eaten in flight but occasionally prey is taken from the ground and in suburban areas Noctules are attracted to streetlamps to feed on moths. During spring Noctules will feed mainly on smaller insects such as midges, changing their diet to take beetles and moths later in the season. They forage mainly at dusk for up to two hours and for about half an hour at dawn. They are known to fly over 10km from roost to feeding areas.


Photograph © Seb Haggett

Leisler's Bat ***Nyctalus leisleri***
Recorded between – 14th May and 17th August 2019 – French's Farm
The Leisler's Bat is similar to the Noctule, but smaller, with longer fur, particularly around the shoulders and the upper back, giving it a lion's mane appearance. It was formerly known as the hairy-armed bat. Leisler's bats appear early in the evening, soon after the Noctule, and have been observed emerging from houses at about sunset. They may stay away from the roost until dawn. They usually fly high and fast in the open, frequently at or below tree top level, with shallow dives. Sometimes they fly close to the ground along lanes and well-lit roads. In suburban areas they may be attracted to insects around streetlights. Leisler's Bat is naturally a forest species, roosting in tree holes. Bat boxes

have proved in some areas to be a useful substitute for natural roost sites. They occasionally share roosts with Noctules and pipistrelles. They also roost in buildings, both old and new.

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeusRecord between – 14th May and 17th August 2019 – French's Farm*
The two commonest pipistrelle species found in the UK, are the Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, the latter were only identified as separate species in the 1990s. The two species look very similar and often the easiest way to tell them apart is from the frequency of their echolocation calls. Pipistrelles are the bats that you are most likely to see. They appear fast and jerky in flight as they dodge about pursuing small insects, which the bats catch and eat, on the wing. A single pipistrelle can consume up to 3,000 insects in one night!

Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auratus Record between – 14th May and 17th August 2019 – French's Farm*
Brown Long-eared bats are medium-sized. The ears are nearly as long as the body but not always obvious: when at rest they curl their ears back like rams' horns or tuck them away completely under their wings leaving only the pointed inner lobe of the ear (the tragus) visible. As well as catching insects in free flight, Brown Long-eared Bat are gleaners, often flying slowly amongst foliage, picking insects off leaves and bark. Their broad wings and tail allow slow, highly maneuverable, hovering flight. Sometimes they land on the ground to catch insects or to shift them into a controllable position in the mouth, and they are even able to take insects from lighted windows. Their flight often includes steep dives and short glides. These bats are known as 'whispering bats' because their echolocation sounds are very quiet. They have particularly sensitive low frequency hearing and often locate prey from the sounds made by the insect's own movements. They may sometimes use vision. Small prey is eaten in flight, but larger insects are taken to a 'perch'. Regularly used perches, which are frequently inside porches or barns, can be recognised by the accumulations of discarded insect remains, particularly wings of moths such as yellow underwing. Their habit of flying close to the ground, or even landing to tackle prey, makes Long-eared Bats vulnerable to attack by predators.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus Recorded on 14th September Lytchett Bay*
Jackie and I along with Alison Copland were at the end of footpath 12, we had been watching for Osprey fishing over the bay when Alison noticed a seal out in the main channel scoping it I was surprised it had a very flat looking roman type nose of a Grey Seal not what I was expecting to see as Harbour Seal is the usual species. Alison took this photograph just to confirm the record as it is the first for the bay area.


Grey Seal © Alison Copland

Grey Seal have grey and brown fur, sometimes with a pattern of blotches; no ears visible; long muzzle; nostrils parallel; larger and darker than common seal, with flat or convex profile to its head (the Common Seal has a concave profile). The average for male is around 207cm; and the females about 180cm with flippers around 25cm. The Males weigh in at around 233kg with females being about 155kg which makes it Britain largest breeding mammal. Female grey seals may live for 35 years, but males seldom survive to more than 25 years old.

Reptiles and Amphibians
Though a monthly survey didn't take place this year on the Lytchett Bay conservation area due to the Covid regulation started in March. So observations were confined to what could be found on exercise walks and casual observations. We managed to record all species that have previously been recorded in past years. In general it appeared from the reports received that the Sand Lizard population has had another good season.


Melanistic Adder © Chris Dresh ARC

The species which have not been recorded this year have been Palemate Newt and Common Toad the former is usually found in my pond but we haven't seen one this year. The toad is most probably under recorded as we have only found them on occasions during winter when garden sheds have been moved.

Mecoptera & Trichopyera

The Trichoptera, or Caddisflies, are an order of insects, somewhat related to moths, and of which there are just under 200 species in the British Isles. The name means 'hairy-winged', and indeed they differ from moths in having hairs rather than scales on their wings, amongst other differences.

Land Caddis Fly *Sericostoma personatum*
Recorded on 25th April Lytchett Way
Like others in this family it was found in my moth trap and is the sole representative of the genus in Britain and Ireland. It is a species whose larvae can be found in rivers, streams and stony lakes. The species has a preference for neutral to alkaline waters.

Odonata - Dragonflies and Damselflies

Twenty of the twenty-six species of odonata have been found in the recording area in 2020. The only species that would have been expected but wasn't recorded this year was Hairy Dragonfly as they are one of the early species to emerge and we were in lockdown at the time and not in the field and recording time was limited they were most probably overlooked. The only other species when only one individual was seen this year was Southern Migrant Hawker. This species appeared to be colonising but with only one record this season it maybe it was false hopes. Though not all is lost 2021 will be the deciding year I think for this rare hawker dragonfly as they can take two years to develop to become adults so hopefully it will be a better season in 2021.

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

Three species were added this in 2020 found by Ian Ballam, which brings the area total to fifteen confirmed species plus Short-winged Conehead that has yet to be confirmed. There have been three sightings of what were thought possibly this species but close views or photographs were never obtained.

Common Groundhopper *Tetrix undulata*
Recorded on 22nd July Footpath 12
Widespread and quite common throughout Britain, they are typically found in damp or dry locations with bare ground and short vegetation such as woodland tracks, disused railway lines, bare peat and sand dunes. I'm sure they are often overlooked because of their small size of 8 to 11 mm. They are a relative of the grasshoppers but are smaller in size and more heavily armoured and they are shorter than the similar Slender Groundhopper.

Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata*
Recorded on 22nd July Footpath12
With a length of 9-14 mm. this is a small grasshopper-like insect with wide 'shoulders' and a narrow tapering abdomen hidden beneath an extended pronotum. Females have a broad pale-brown stripe along the top of their bodies. Fully winged, they are capable of flight and adults can swim. Late instar nymphs and immature adults overwinter and mature in spring. Nymphs appear from May to July; adults appear by August. Bare mud and short vegetation in damp, unshaded locations.

Bog Bush Cricket *Metrioptera brachyptera*
Recorded on 10th August Lytchett Heath
This was a nice addition to the Lytchett list found by Ian Ballam.
The Bog Bush Cricket is one of ten bush cricket species currently found in the UK. It is a relatively large insect, being about 18mm in length but females are slightly larger than males. It is bright green underneath, brown along its sides and either brown or green along its back. The Bog Bush Crickets like to live in lowland peat bogs and they lay their eggs on purple moor grass and feed on heather (Calluna vulgaris) and Cross-leaved heath (Erica tetralix). Peat bogs are now scarce so they have few places in which to live.

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.With the lockdown coming in the early spring and people trying to occupy their time it has added 15 extra species to our bug list, bringing our total up to 37 species.

Turtle Shieldbug *Podops inunctus*
Recorded on 6th July on Lytchett Fields RSPB

An excellent find by David Foster as though this species is fairly widespread and common across southern and central England, they are rarely found unless searched for. They can be found in dry and damp habitats and are mainly ground dwelling and at around 5 to 6 mm in length, makes it a fairly small shieldbug which has two unmistakable features; a long tongue-like scutellum which reaches the rear of the abdomen and two small projections on the pronotum at each side of the head.

Bishop's Mitre Shieldbug *Aelia acuminata*
Recorded on 7th July on Lytchett Heath

A widespread species across southern Britain and at a length of 8-10mm this is a large and distinctive striped shieldbug with an obviously pointed head and ridged pronotum which gives the species their name. They have a single generation per year, laying eggs in spring and early summer, the larvae feed on seeds of grasses

Box Leatherbug *Gonocerus acuteangulatus*
Recorded 7th May Lytchett Way

Found by my wife in our conservatory Box Leatherbug or Squashbug historically a very rare species and known only from Box Hill in Surrey, where it feeds on box trees, this bug is expanding its range and now occurs widely in the south-east of England and beyond. It has been found they are exploiting different food plants, and have been found on hawthorn, buckthorn, yew and plum trees.

Birch Catkin Bug *Kleidocerys resedae*
Recorded on 13th June Lytchett Heath

Found throughout England, Wales and southern Ireland, this rust-coloured bug is common on or around birch trees. The forewings are patterned and largely transparent, with the corium and clavus punctate. The clavus has three rows of punctures. The adults overwinter, emerging and breeding in the early spring, when they fly and emit mating calls using a strigil found on one of the hind wing veins. Larvae occur March-September and there are several generations a year, at least in the south.

Plant Bug sp. *Kleidocerys Ericae*
Recorded on 2nd August on Lytchett Heath

Found mainly in England on heathland, and associated with heather, this rust-coloured bug is very similar to the much more widespread Birch Catkin Bug K. resedae above. This species is slightly smaller than K. resedae and the markings are subtly different. Specifically, the pale area of the scutellum is usually larger in K. ericae, and there are fewer dark marks on the corium.

Tarnished Plant Bug *Lygus Rugulipennis agg.*
Recorded on Lytchett Heath

This genus is one of the most problematic mirid groups to identify. The five UK species can overlap considerably in colour, markings and size; some specimens cannot be determined. The most reliable identification features concern the fine detail of the corium and are visible only at high resolution. They are one of the smaller *Lygus* species, *L. rugulipennis* has a densely pubescent corium; the lateral spacing of the hairs is generally much less than hair length. It is a common and widespread bug that can be found on many plants, particularly fat hen, nettle, dock, clovers and many compositae. It is variable in colour, ranging from yellowish brown to dull purple; females are often paler and less strongly marked than males. The adults can be found all year round but are particularly abundant in autumn.

Mirid Bug *Liocoris tripustulatus*
A common species throughout the UK and associated mainly with nettles, the food plant for all life stages, this is a variable but distinctive species. The colour of the scutellum and cuneus ranges from cream to deep yellow and the pale legs are striped with black rings. Short dark spines are present on the tibiae. Head width = 1/2 pronotum width, length of 2nd antennal segment > head width. This bug may be found as an adult all year, and variation in colour is strongly related to age. On spring emergence following hibernation, the ground colour is typically darker and the cuneus more orange yellow. Following mating, females may survive until the new generation of adults appears in mid-summer, which is generally paler and less intensely marked.

Capsid Bug *Deraeocoris ruber*
Recorded on 3rd July Lytchett Fields RSPB
Found on the fields by David Foster these bugs can be very variable in colour, which ranges from red orange to almost fully black, although the cuneus is always red to some extent. More common in southern Britain and very rare in Ireland, this bug feeds on small insects and can be found on a range of plants, especially nettles.

Potato Capsid Bug *Closterotomus norwegicus*
Recorded on 2nd July at Lytchett Way & 18th July on Lytchett Heath
This is a common and widespread bug can be found in meadows and hedgerows across Britain, where it feeds on a wide range of plants, especially nettles, composites and clovers. It is one of several similar green species, although mature males are tinged red-brown and specimens from northern Britain may have brownish-black markings. The tibial spines are shorter than the width of the tibia, and the length of the 2nd antennal segment is roughly equal to the 3rd and 4th combined. The two spots on the pronotum are frequently absent, as are the dark markings at the top of the scutellum.

Ant Damsel Bug *Himacerus Mirmicoides*
Recorded 3rd August Lytchett Heath
An interesting species found by Ian this bug is common in southern Britain in a variety of dry open habitats. Usually found on the ground or amongst low herbage. It is fairly small with a length of 7 to 8 mm. Ian's photograph shows an early instar which is very ant like, an adult looks similar to small leather bug. Usually found on the ground or amongst low herbage, this bug is common in southern Britain in a variety of dry open habitats. Adults overwinter; mating and egg-laying takes place in the spring and the new generation is complete by August.

Ground Bug sp. *Trapezonotus desertus agg.*
Recorded on 28th June Lytchett Heath
This is the most common member of the genus, widespread across the UK, particularly on heathland and chalk grassland. Trapezonotus species are medium sized ground bugs which are rather oval in shape. The sides of the pronotum are regularly rounded and thinned at the edges to produce narrow keels. Previously considered conspecific with the three other *Trapezonotus* species though they are very difficult to separate, ideally requiring examination of the male parameres (male productive organs).

Leafhopper sp. *Neophilaenus lineatus*
Recorded on 12th August Lytchett Heath
Very common and widespread throughout Britain, which is a grassland species with a length of 5-7 mm. N. lineatus is identified by the pale line running down the outside edge of the forewing, and by the central, anterior 'plate' on the vertex which is wider than long. The apex of the scutellum is normally dark, and the face has dark transverse lines, and a dark midline.

Green Leafhopper *Cicadella viridis*
Recorded on 21st July Footpath 12
A large and eye-catching species that is widespread and common in damp grassland and marshy areas throughout the UK. The bicoloured pronotum (yellow at the front and green at the rear) is distinctive. The forewings of the female are bright turqoise green, but those of the male are much darker blue-purple and may even be blackish. Adult: July-October Length 6-8 mm.

Eared Leafhopper *Ledra aurita*
Recorded 8th August Lytchett Way
With running a moth trap you always attract other species of insect and I found two of these odd-looking leafhopper in the mornings trap. They are found locally across southern Britain from May to September and found on Lichen-covered trees particularly Oak.


Photograph © Nick Hull

Hopper sp. *Kelisia Punctulum*
Recorded 27th July Footpath 12
A moderately variable species of this rather elongate genus, recognised by the medial vein of the forewing which is dark (especially apically). There may also be darkening of one or two other long veins. The spots on the genae are small, if present. A widely distributed species across southern and central England, found on sedges in damp places. Adult can be seen from July to December.

Elongated Grass Bug *Megaloceroea recticornis*
Recorded 8th August Footpath 12 & 15th August in the Arbable Field
An elongate grass bug with a longitudinal furrow between the eyes, which is distinguished by the extremely long antennae, (the 1st segment alone is almost as long as the head and pronotum combined) and with very long slender hind legs. The tarsi are all dark. Unlike Notostira elongata, the tibiae and 1st antennal segments are covered with short spinose hairs. While the body colour of adults varies from straw-yellow to green, the nymphs are green with two brown bands on the thorax.A widespread and common species of grasslands, uncut meadows and woodland borders. Adult: mainly June-September Length 8-10 mm

Coleoptera – Beetles

As with the bugs a number of beetle species have been added to our growing list with 20 more species being recorded in 2020 bringing the total to 72 species in all. Though three species of soldier beetle were recorded which because the photographs didn't show the features required to separate them to species I haven't included them here, hopefully we will be able to confirm the identity in the future now that we know what is required to separate one from the other.

Lesne's Earwig *Forficula Lesnei*
Recorded on 18th June in the Approach Field
This is a native to UK, and mainly found in Southern and Central Europe. It is a small paler version to the Common Earwig but the hind wings are absent or reduced in size. They have flattened cerci, which are straight up to approximately half their total body length of 6-7mm. Most records from the UK are on base rich soil, beaten from trees and shrubs, in hedges particularly with nettles and rough vegetation. Also uses hollow stemmed plants such as hogweed. Adults are usually seen from July to October.


Photograph © Ian Ballam

Four-banded Longhorn Beetle *Leptura quadrifasciata*
Recorded on 27th July Footpath 12
Widespread but rather local distribution it is generally fairly frequent in Britain. They are around 11-20 mm in length. Although the patterning varies it is a distinctive species, with the four yellow bands running across its elytra. They are associated with old woodland but can also be seen on flowers such as umbellifers. They are most regularly encountered during the summer. The larvae are woodborers in old tree trunks, stumps and logs.


Photograph © Ian Ballam

Wasp Beetle (longhorn beetle) *Clytus arietis*
Recorded on 16th May Lytchett Fields RSPB
This common and widespread species was found and photographed by Catherine Smith whilst on a walk in the fields. This is a species often found in hedgerow vegetation and in wooded areas. This black and yellow beetle is a wasp mimic, in both colouration and movement and is totally harmless. It breeds in the decaying wood of deciduous trees. It can often be found in clear view, resting on leaves in low vegetation. Presumably its yellow and black colours warn off any predatory birds! Usually found from May until August.


Photograph © Catherine Smith

Longhorn Beetle sp. ***Stenurella melanura***
Recorded 25th May Lytchett Fields RSPB
Widespread in England particularly in the south, but less common elsewhere, they are found in wooded areas, parks and meadows where they will visit a range of flowering plants. Larvae bore longitudinal or undulating galleries in the sapwood of slender branches, trunks or decaying stumps, more especially in damp areas. They are small beetle around 6-10mm in length, the elytra appear a golden tawny brown fading to black, all other parts including head and legs are black. You can look for them between May and September.

Barley Flea Beetle ***Phyllotreta Vittula***
Recorded 17th July Lytchett Heath
This is a widespread but local species in southern England, they have various host plants such as various Brassicaceae and Poaceae (grasses), also beet (Beta vulgaris). They overwinter as adults in moss, leaf litter and rotten wood. The adults feed on leaves and the larvae on roots.

Tansy Flea Beetle ***Longitarsus jacobaeae***
Recorded 9th September Approach Field RSPB
Widespread and fairly frequent in Britain, this beetle is light golden brown in colour and between 2-4 mm in length. It has enlarged femurs typical of flea beetles. Feeds on the leaves of Ragwort, particularly Common Ragwort.

Welsh Chafer ***Hoplia philanthus***
Recorded 30th May Lytchett Fields RSPB
It is quite uncommon and mainly found in the west of England and Wales. It is usually seen in meadows and along hedgerows and woodland edges. The adult beetle can be seen from June to August. The beetles are active during the day, particularly in June and early July when they are seeking a mate. Its larvae feed on a wide range of plant species, including grass roots, and can be a problem in sports turf and lawns.

Click Beetle sp. ***Agrypnus murinus***
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Heath
In the U.K. it is generally distributed although local through England and Wales with most records from western coastal regions, especially around Wales and Cumbria, inland records are scattered with many from the Thames and Severn basins, becoming progressively rarer further north. The typical habitats in the U.K. are open scrubland, grassland and dune slacks. Adults appear early in the year, from April or May and remain active into June or July. Larval development takes two years and pupation occurs in the soil in late summer, adults eclose in the autumn and overwinter in their pupal cells, emerging in the spring.

Click Beetle sp. ***Stenagostus rhombeus***
Recorded 26th June Lytchett Way
This species was found in my moth trap and is often attracted to light it is a fairly common in southern England and the Midlands north to west Yorkshire. Scattered records in Wales, absent from Scotland. The larvae are associated predominantly with Beech but are reported from a number of other broadleaved species. They occur under loose bark of dead trees and sometimes in the wood layers just beneath. They are predatory feeding on the larvae of Longhorn Beetles (Cerambycidae). Two, possibly more, summers are spent in the larval stage, with pupation occurring in the spring.

Soldier Beetle ***Cantharis livida***
Recorded 28th June – Turlin Moor
The species is widespread in England though never common. From May to August, but June and July are peak months. This is a carnivorous beetle, the adult hunts other insects, often waiting on flowers for potential prey to arrive. The larvae hunt snails and worms. Look for them in areas of long grass, including wasteland, parkland and open woodland.

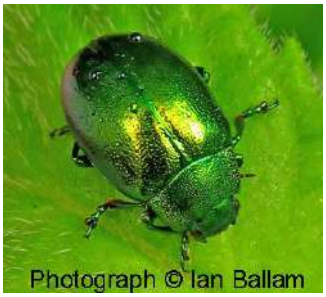
Soldier Beetle *Cantharis flavilabris*
Recorded 1st July – Lytchett Fields RSPB

Relatively common across England and southern Scotland Late May to late July The black elytra (wing covers) are shiny and have a layer of very fine hairs. The pronotum can be all black or may have varying amounts of red. The scutellum is black which distinguishes the red pronotum variety from the similar C. nigra which has a red scutellum.

Beetle sp. *Chrysolina Bankii*
Recorded 18th June Watery Lane

This is a species that is widespread, especially in the southwest; usually coastal and can be locally common. They are metallic bronze in colour with orange brown to dark brown legs. They can be found in various open habitats but also in woodland valleys. Their food plant can be varied but they especially like the leaves of ribwort plantain and a range of Lamiaceae, including mints. They usually overwinter as larvae but in warmer locations they can overwinter as adults.

Mint Leaf Beetle *Chrysolina herbacea_fem*
Recorded 13th June Watery Lane



This is a beetle whole body is an iridescent green and is peppered with tiny indentations. They are mainly found in the south and up to the Midlands and they have been recorded as far north as Scotland. Peak time seems to be August to September. Both the larvae and the adult beetles feed on mint.

16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*
Recorded 15th July Lytchett Heath

This species is widespread and fairly frequent throughout southern and south east England. Most 16-spot Ladybird records are from grasses and other low plants, including reeds, nettle, dandelion, knapweed, hogweed, cow parsley and buttercup. This species has also been recorded from shrubs, including gorse, and from Scots' pine. They feed on pollen, nectar and fungi. They overwinter in low herbage, on gorse, in plant litter, on logs, fence posts and stone walls, often in extremely large aggregations.

Yellow Water Ladybird *Anisostica novemdecimpunctata*
Recorded 11th August Black Pipe Salt Marsh

The Water ladybirds are habitat specialists, occupying reed-beds and grassland in marshy or wet locations. This species can often be found on the emergent vegetation surrounding ponds. There are a few records from exposed riverine sediments. They can be found on tall emergent plants including reeds, reed mace, reed sweet-grass and rushes. They feed on aphids, and overwinter between leaves and in stems of reeds, and in grass tussocks.

Striped Ladybird *Myzia oblongoguttata*
Recorded 9th August Lytchett Way

A scarce but widespread species that was found on the top of my moth trap in the morning this species is associated with conifer woodland with a preference for mature Scots Pine.

Glow Worm *Lampyris noctiluca*
Recorded 25th June Footpath 12

This is a species that has been recorded in the area but not since we started recording in 2012 and was recorded by Rosie Bailey towards the end of Footpath 12 a really nice record. The glow-worm is not really a worm in fact it is a beetle. This is most obvious when you see the male. They have a conspicuous sexual dimorphism, as the males are winged, with brown elytra, with a clearer pronotum and a large brown spot in the middle, while females are larviforme, meaning they are wingless and look more like the larvae and are often twice the size of the males up to 25mm. They are quite widespread in Britain and found in low growing vegetation in the evenings. During the day they can be found under stones and logs. They are most active from May to late August. Most noticeable at night in June and July when the female lights up to attract the males by emitting light from the last few segments of her abdomen.

Weevil sp. ***Apion frumentarium***
Recorded 16th May Lytchett Fields RSPB
This is a small weevil was found by Catherine Smith whilst taking an exercise walk on the fields. This species is listed as common across England, Wales and southern Scotland. They are most often found on large Docks leaves. Adults are active during warm weather on the underside of the leaves mainly during April and early June but sometimes can occur later in the year. They are a very small species at 2.5 to 4.5mm.

Nettle Weevil ***Phyllobius pomaceus***
Recorded 16th May Lytchett Fields RSPB
This is another weevil found by Catherine and again a species considered common throughout England and Wales and with a few scattered records from Scotland. Most commonly found on nettles during April to late June. This beetle has a metallic bluish-green covering of scales. However the scales easily rub off and older specimens can look almost black. The front femur has a prominent tooth and the scales are oval.

Rove Beetle_*Paederus littoralis*
Recorded 13th June Lytchett Way – 30th August Watery Lane
Found in my garden and later by Paul Swann this is the second rove beetle species recorded for the garden and for the Lytchett Bay area. This is one of four of these orange and black Rove Beetles found in the UK.

Minotaur Beetle ***Typhaeus typhoeus***
Recorded 8th June Lytchett Heath
Found by Ian Ballam this is an overdue species to be found on the patch but that's probably because we have only the Sika Deer as the main grazing animals and they tend to stay out on the marsh to feed and the cattle only graze the fields. So there isn't much in the way of dung around the heaths that attract this species. They create burrows, which can reach 1 to 1.5m in depth under the dung of rabbits, sheep, deer, horse and occasionally cattle. Hence they prefer short, grazed turf on dry, sandy soils. The larvae feed on herbivore dung inside branches of the tunnels, built and stocked by the adults. The adults overwinter as pairs in burrows and will sometimes emerge on mild winter days. Most sightings are in Spring or Autumn between periods of Jan-May and Aug-Oct.

Beetle sp. ***Amara(Curtonutus)Aulica***
Recorded 8th June Lytchett Heath
Common throughout Britain this moderate-sized beetle with a length of 11-15mm, has a black or dark red body and mid-brown legs and antennae. The pronotum is strongly contracted and sinuate to the sharp rear angles Common throughout Britain. This species has a red ID rating and unless identified by a known expert you must provide a satisfactory explanation of how it was identified for the record to be accepted. They are a seed-eating species, commonest in dry waste places and dry grassland or arable land where it lives under stones. July to October It is a nocturnal, feeding on seeds of Compositae.

Pill Beetle ***Byrrhus pilula***
Recorded 24th March Lytchett Way
Found in my garden this is an all-brown pill beetle with inconspicuous rows of dark and light brown markings on the elytra. The name Pill Beetle stems from the ability to retract all appendages into grooves underneath the body, feigning death in this manner and resembling a rabbit dropping. They are widespread in Britain, but probably overlooked at times. They live among grasses and mosses that they are believed to eat as larvae and as adults.

Caddis Flies

Land Caddis Fly ***Sericostoma personatum***
Recorded 25th April Lytchett Way moth trap
This is a reddish-brown caddis. Which is fairly common and widespread in Britain and found on the wing from May to September around rivers, streams and stony lakes.

Lepidoptera – Butterflies & Moths

Twenty-eight species of butterfly were recorded this year one of which was a first ever recorded in the area, Small Blue this is a very odd record in that we do not have ideal habitat or the main food plant for the species so it can only be assumed that it has come from somewhere else. Purple Hairstreak was recorded again this year, last recorded in 2017 so it seems they are perhaps being overlooked or just missed in the mature Oaks during the summer.

Purple Hairstreak Quercusia quercus

Recorded 18th June 2020 Approach Field hedge

Found mainly in the southern half of England, and most of Wales. Less frequent in the north of the UK mainly seen between July to September and usually seen high in the canopy of mature oak trees though they can be found sunning themselves on brambles on hot days. The adults feed on the honeydew left by aphids but the caterpillars feed on oak leaves and buds. Male Purple Hairstreak butterflies have an iridescent purple sheen all over the upper surfaces of their wings. The females have a smaller area of purple just on the forewings. This is best seen when they are flying because at rest the wings are often closed together. The undersides of the wings are a silver grey colour with just a hint of the purple. The undersides also feature the characteristic white 'hairstreak' line, and small eye markings near the 'tails'. Purple Hairstreak lays their eggs next to leaf buds on Oak trees. The eggs remain there throughout the winter and hatch around April time when the newly hatched caterpillars can start feeding on the soft, developing oak leaves inside the buds.

Small Blue *Cupido minimus*

Recorded 19th June off Footpath 12

Seen by Ian Ballam this butterfly is not in its usual environment and a little out of place as we have none of its food plant here on the patch that we know of, so a bit of a surprising record. Our smallest resident butterfly is easily overlooked, partly because of its size and dusky colouring, but partly because it is often confined to small patches of sheltered grassland where its sole food plant is Kidney Vetch. Males set up territories in sheltered positions, perching on tall grass or scrub. Once mated, the females disperse to lay eggs but both sexes may be found from late afternoon onwards in communal roosts, facing head down in long grass. The butterfly tends to live in small colonies and is declining in most areas. They are found throughout Britain and Ireland but rare and localised.

Moths

The continuation of moth trapping on the Lytchett Bay patch recorded 266 species of both macro and micro moths in 2020. Which brings the total number of species recorded to 541 species 31 of which were new for the patch area. Trapping took place in two areas this year with trapping in the garden as usual and members of the Stour Ringing Group (SRG) who carryout ringing of migrating birds also put out a trap for several nights and added three new species.

Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner *Cameraria ohridell*

Trapped 19th July Lytchett Way

This species is fairly common in Dorset and thinly distributed and a very recent resident. There are at least two generations, mid Apr-May, Jul-Sep. and as their name suggests they feed on Horse Chestnut.

Longhorn Moth *Nemophora degeerella*

Recorded 14th June Lytchett Heath

As with the last species they are considered common and fairly widespread resident nationally and in Dorset. And are very noticeable with their long antennae on warm summer days when the males can often be seen in groups, 'dancing' in the sunshine. They have a flight period of Mid May-Jun. They larvae feed on the ground on leaf litter.

Nematopogon swammerdamella agg. **
Recorded 7th May Shore Road
This is the second record of this species the first I caught in the trap in 2015. Found by Liz Woodford in her garden. This is another species that is considered common nationally but on a Dorset perspective is considered uncommon and thinly distributed resident. They have a fight period of late Apr-Jun. and they feed on leaf litter.

Case-bearing Clothes Moth Tinea pellionella
Trapped 9th April Lytchett Way
Considered nationally as a local species in Dorset is a Scarce and local resident, whose flight period is late May-October. This is a species that feeds on animal matter and bird nest detritus.

Crassa tinctella ***
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way
A nationally scarce species and a very rare resident in Dorset with a flight period of May to June, that feeds on Lichens on willow. Which I nearly missed in the bottom of the trap.

Parsnip Moth *Depressaria radiella*
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way
Though a common species nationally is uncommon and thinly distributed in Dorset. They can be found on the wing during July-Ocotber and they overwinter to the following spring. As the name suggests their main food plants are Wild Parsnip and Hogweed.

Bryotropha domestica
Trapped 8th August Lytchet Way
Common nationally but scarce and thinly distributed resident in Dorset. Which are found on the wing from late June to September. It is thought they feed on mosses.

Aristotelia ericinella
Trapped 8th August Lytchett Way
National Status of this species is considered to be local though in Dorset they are an uncommon and restricted resident. Found on the wing from June to August and they feed on heather.

Red-barred Tortrix *Ditula angustiorana*
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way
This species is nationally common and is fairly common and widespread resident in Dorset. It has a flight time of mid May to Aug and occasionally again in September and October. They feed on a variety of plants.

Grey Tortrix *Cnephasia stephensiana*
Trapped 25th August Lytchett Way
Nationally this species is considered common and is fairly common and widespread resident in Dorset, which has a flight time of June to August and feeds on a wide range of herbaceous plants.

Aleimma loeflingiana Trapped 1st August Lytchett Way
This is a Common and widespread resident in Dorset and throughout the UK flying from June to August and feeding on Oak.

Eucosma cana Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way
Nationally common and a fairly common and widely distributed resident in the county. They have a flight time from late May-Aug. and feed on Thistles spp, Common Knapweed and Black Knapweed.

Gypsonoma dealbana
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way
This is a species that is nationally common but is uncommon and thinly distributed in Dorset. They have a flight period of June – August and they feed of various trees and shrubs which include Hawthorn, Hazel, Poplar and Sallow which we have lots of.

Dichrorampha flavidorsana agg. ***
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way awaiting acceptance

This is a nationally scarce species and a very rare resident in Dorset, whose flight period is July to August and feeds on Tansy. This species is aggregated as it is similar to *Dichrorampha alpinana* and requires genitalia examination for confirmation.

Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis ****
Recorded 4th August Footpath 12 by pond

This species is nationally notable species and a rare and local species in Dorset. They fly from May to August. The main food plants are Osiers, Willows. Paul Swann found this beautiful moth on the bramble near to the dragonfly pond off footpath 12. The really odd thing is he found it about an hour after I had been in the same location using pheromone to try and attract this.

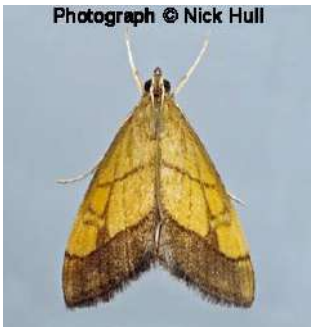
Yellow-legged Clearwing *Synanthedon vespiformis ****
Trapped 4th August Footpath 12 wood

Like the last species this is also a nationally notable species and a rare and local resident in Dorset. They have the same flight period of May to August and their main food plant is Pendunculated Oak. As I mentioned above I was experimenting using pheromone to see if I could attract the previous and this species. I didn't see the last species as I was trying to attract this species further up in the wood. I set up the pheromone and stood back and within two minutes I saw something flying around the pot I store the pheromone in and quickly potted it and confirmed it was this species.

Ephestia woodiella
Trapped 7th June Lytchett Way

Nationally this species is relatively scarce but unlike most of its congeners, this species is not a pest of dried foods in warehouses and kitchens, and occurs out-of-doors, most probably feeding on dried leaves and other plant matter.
It is relatively scarce, in southern England, flying between June and September, when it can be attracted to light.
The species was formerly known here as *Ephestia unicolorella (Staudinger)*, but according to recent taxonomy unicolorella is a distinct species known only from Turkey.

Evergestis limbata ***
Trapped 17th June Lytchett Way



This is a nationally scarce species and a rare and very local recent resident in Dorset. It has a flight period of June to August. The larvae feed, like other Evergestis species, on Brassicaceae, especially Garlic Mustard and Hedge Mustard. The species occurs in southern Europe, where it flies in July and August.

Crambus silvella ***
Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way

Nationally this species has been listed as a species likely to appear in the Red Data Book and categorised as rare. In Dorset its status is described as scarce and thinly distributed and a restricted resident. Its flight period is given July to August and it feeds on various sedges.

Agriphila inquinatella
Trapped 8th August Lytchett Way

National the status of this species is listed as common and it is also fairly common and widely distributed resident in Dorset. Their flight time is June – September and their food plants are low grasses such as Sheep's-fescue.

Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli Recorded 6th September Turlin Moor*

This was a great record found by Martin Howard in his shed in the morning was an excellent find as it is the first of this large hawk-moth species to be found on the Lytchett patch. Nationally this species is listed as a migrant and is listed as scarce and local migrant/wanderer in Dorset. They have one generation with a flight time of June to December but (mostly August to November). They feed on Bindweeds and other Convolvulaceae.

Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth *Hemaris fuciformis* ***

Recorded 6th May Lytchett Bay Heath 24th May Turlin Moor, 30th May Lytchett Bay Heath, 15th August larva.

This is another nationally scarce species and rare and very local resident in Dorset. Found by my wife and I when on the heath looking for reptiles and hoping to see Dartford Warbler and Bearded Tits. When I saw and heard this hawk-moth fly past me. It wasn't until we watched it pitch into a small patch of honeysuckle and had a closer look we were able to identify it as this species and also as a female as she was laying. Subsequently individual were seen in a Turlin Moor garden by Frazer Hockey in May then Ian Ballam saw another in August on Lytchett Heath. They have a flight period of May to June and feed on Honeysuckle and Bedstraw spp. So hopefully we have the start of a nucleus population would be a fantastic species to add to as a regular to the patch-breeding fauna.

Foxglove Pug *Eupithecia pulchellata*

Trapped 25th August Lytchett Way

A common species nationally but a species though fairly widespread in Dorset is considered uncommon. This species has a single generation and flies in May to June feeding on Foxglove hence its name. Probably attracted by the Foxgloves Jackie planted in our wildlife garden.

Grey Pug *Eupithecia subfuscata*

Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way

Nationally common and uncommon and fairly widespread resident in Dorset it is a species that I think I have trapped a few times in the past but were in very bad condition being very worn so never claimed but this time it was a fairly fresh looking individual. They have a flight period of May to July and they feed on Herbaceous plants.

August Thorn *Ennomos quercinaria* **

Trapped 18th July Lytchett Bay Heath

Ian Lewis and Joe Parker trapped this new species for the patch listed as a local species on a national basis in Dorset it is a scarce and local resident, which has one generation with a flight time of July to September. Their food plant is Pedunculate and Sessile Oak.

Yellow-tail *Euproctis simillis*

Trapped 25th June Lytchett Way

Nationally common and very common and widespread resident in Dorset is an overdue catch for my garden trap. The flight period for a single generation is July to August and they feed of broadleaved trees and shrubs.

Jersey Tiger Euplagia quadripunctaria **

Recorded 8th August Lytchett Way

A nationally scarce species that is considered as fairly common but mainly coastal resident and wanderer that has a flight period of June to September and feeds on herbaceous plants including nettles. This was a first ever that I've had in the garden obviously attracted by the light of the trap but didn't go in the trap but was on one of the shrubs next to it and escaped when I was moving the trap to prepare to list off its contents.

The Anomalous *Stilbia anomala* **

Trapped 20th September Lytchett Way

Nationally considered local but a scarce and restricted resident in Dorset, with a flight time of August to September that feeds on various grasses, especially Wavy Hair-grass. This was a first for me and for the patch a very good record.

Dusky Sallow *Eremobia ochroleuca*

Trapped 2nd July Lytchett Bay Heath

A common species nationally and fairly common and widespread resident in the county and a species that has avoided my trap was by the SRG on the heath. They have a flight period of July to August and feed on grasses.

White-line Dart *Euxoa tritici* **
Trapped 15th August Lytchett Bay Heath
A species that is common nationally which is considered uncommon and local resident in Dorset. This species has one generation, and a flight time of July to August, and feeds on herbaceous plants.

Heath Rustic *Xestia agathina*
Trapped 20th September Lytchett Way
A local species nationally which is scarce and thinly distributed and restricted resident in the county. They have one generation in August to September and feed on Heather.

Diptera - Flies & Relatives

As we are far from being experts this group is not just large but needs experience to identify to species in many cases requiring genitalia determination. All the species have been verified by experts through the iRecord system and the Diptera Facebook page. Mainly as I haven't a sufficient reference for the species details the text has been taken from online references. There has been a 121 species recorded within this group in various sub-families 44 species have been added in 2020 and as I've mentioned in previous reports there are many more out there to be discovered and identified.

Mosquitoe sp. *Dahliana Geniculata*
Recorded 11th August Black Pipe Salt Marsh
This species isn't recorded often probably because few people aren't interested in mosquito's identification but saying this there has only been 181 recorded on the NBN Atlas.

Downlooker Snipe Fly *Rhagio scoloacea*
Recorded 2nd June Lytchett Fields RSPB
There are 15 species of snipe-fly in the UK, which can be very difficult to tell apart. The Downlooker Snipe-fly is mainly orangey-brown in colour, with dark markings down the length of the body and spots on the wings. This is the most common species and like others in the group they are active predators and can often be found sat head-down on fence posts or sunny tree trunks on the look-out for passing prey. They catch smaller insects in flight, taking them back to their look-out post to eat. The larvae live in soil and leaf litter, and are also predatory.

Snipefly sp. *Thereva nobilitata agg.*
Recorded 2nd June Lytchett Heath

Widespread in Britain and fairly frequent, but not really common. This fly has a long hairy body with slender legs. The adults are conspicuous with their golden hairs and banded abdomen. The female abdomen in quite pointed. The larvae, look rather like worms and live amongst dead leaves. They eat everything from rotting plants to other insects and worms. Hedgerows and well wooded areas where it can be found resting on vegetation and is often netted from the foliage of bushes and trees. Peak in June and July.

Dark Giant Horsefly *Tabanus sudeticus*
Recorded 4th August Lytchett Heath
Is a very large rather dark species with a body length of about 25 mm with s a mall equilateral pale median abdominal triangles which do not reach the foregoing tergites, and (usually) little or no lateral reddish colour on the abdomen. These characteristics should distinguish Tabanus sudeticus from the very similar Tabanus bovinus.

Golden Horsefly *Atylotus fulvus - Nationally Scarce*
Recorded 12th June Footpath 12 Salt Marsh

This is a medium-sized species with a body length of 12 mm. Both sexes are ash-grey with very inconspicuous pale-yellow hairs on the thorax. The mainly bare thorax distinguishes Atylotus rusticus from Atylotus fulvus, which has abundant vivid golden yellow hairs on the thorax. The abdomen of the four-lined horsefly has light and dark hairs that form four indistinct longitudinal dark stripes the ground colour of the abdomen is indistinctly reddish yellow, mainly on the second segment. The flight period is in June and July.

Band-eyed Brown Horsefly *Tabanus Miki Nationally Scarce*
Recorded 4th July Footpath 12
This is a species that likes wet woodland and is a rare species in parts of Southern Britain. Its strong hold is in the New Forest and has a flight time of mid-June to early August.

Banded General *Stratiomys potamida*
Recorded 22nd July Footpath 12

Soldier flies get their name from their bold and bright colours and markings. This is a particularly striking example - looking like a very flat wasp. Fairly common in England and Wales, fewer records from Scotland. It is a slow and cumbersome flyer, often seen feeding on umbellifers and Bramble in wet and marshy areas. Its carnivorous larvae are amphibious, feeding in ponds and ditches. They can be seen from June to August.

Common Green Colonel *Oplodontha viridula*
Recorded 27th July Footpath 12
This is a local but widespread species in Britain it is a variable species but can often be quite striking in appearance. The colour of the abdomen may vary from lime green to white or orange, but always with a broad black central band. They can be found around water margins and often on reeds or other waterside vegetation from June to August.

Black-horned Gem (Soldier Fly) *Microchrysa Polita*
Recorded 14th July Footpath 12
Widespread and common in Britain, this small soldier fly has a shiny green thorax and the female has a broad abdomen. Found in well wooded areas, hedgerows, gardens, and other well vegetated places. It breeds in dung, rotting vegetable matter and compost heaps. Adults take flower nectar. March to September

Striped-legged Robberfly *Dioctria baumhaueri*
Recorded 12th June Lytchett Heath

This is a mainly black robberfly, but the front two pairs of legs are mainly orange apart from a dark stripe along the upper surface Hedgerows and meadows. Fairly frequent and widespread in England and Wales. Predatory on other insects. May to August.

Brown Heath Robberfly *Machines cingulatus*
Recorded 8th June Lytchett Heath
This is a drab yellowish-brown fly. The femora are black on the anterior surface and orange of the posterior surface. The adult makes short darts to capture prey that mainly consists of smaller flies. They are found mainly on coastal dunes, sandy heath's and similar habitats from June to October

Slender-striped Robberfly *Leptogaster cylindrica*
Recorded 13th June Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
A widespread species in the southern half of Britain, but scarce further north, that hunts in grassy places. They fly slowly amongst grasses plucking aphids from the leaves. They can resemble a crane fly when in flight.

Dance Fly sp. *Empis tessellata*
Recorded 25th May Watery Lane

Common and widespread in Britain this is the largest of the genus. It is a bristly fly with brown-tinged wings. It has black femora but the tibia and tarsi may be red/brown. It feeds on nectar it is also a predator and catches other insects using its long-pointed proboscis to pierce their bodies. Males of E. opaca and E. tessellata present a 'gift' to the female, in the form of a dead insect before mating takes place. Females will not mate with males who do not present a gift. It frequents hedges, woodland edges, gardens and shrubby habitats. They are particularly common on Hogweed and other umbellifer flowers.

Dance Fly sp. *Empis livida*
Recorded 2nd June Lytchett Fields RSPB
Fairly common and widespread in England and Wales, with fewer records from Scotland. The brown thorax has three dark stripes. The legs are red/orange. The larvae are also carnivorous and live-in damp soil and leaf litter. Usually found around hedgerows where they nectar on various species as well as taking other insects. Adults fly in between April to July.

Long-legged Fly sp. *Dolichopus popularis*
Recorded 18th June Lytchett Fields RSPB
Quite common and widespread throughout Britain, this species likes damp habitats, wet grassland, woodland edge, scrub and hedgerows. This species is typical of the genus where males have very large genitalia tucked under the abdomen and it typically rests with its front end raised - like a begging dog. Most species in the genus also have a brassy gold sheen. D. popularis has a wholly yellow hind tibia and the hind metatarsus is also mainly yellow. Males also have dark bristles at the tip of the mid tibia. Look for them from May to August.

Long-legged Fly sp. *Poecilobothrus nobilitatus*
Recorded 20th June Lytchett Fields RSPB
Quite common and widespread in England and Wales, fewer records from Scotland It lives in damp places with lush vegetation and is often seen resting on mud or on the water surface. This is an attractive fly with a lime green thorax. The male has conspicuous white wing tips and is easy to identify, the female lacks these white wing tips. The acrostichal bristles on the thorax are short and in two rows. The first antennal segment has hairs on the dorsal surface. May to August. A mating dance precedes copulation.

Long-legged Fly sp. *Thelaira Nigripes*
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
Fairly frequent and widespread species in England and Wales which are found in hedgerows and grassland. This is a long-legged, hairy fly with plumose antennae. The central dark band down the back of the abdomen is bordered by orange and white. There is some confusion at present about Thelaira nigrina and Thelaira nigripes. Possibly they are the same and expert dipterists seem unaware of any differences. They are parasitic on some larger moth species and found on the wing from June to August.

Long-legged Fly sp. *Dexiosoma Caninum*
Recorded 17th July Lytchett Heath & 27th July Footpath 12
This is a tachinid fly - a parisitoid which lays its eggs on other species. It is a long-legged, bristly fly. The abdomen appears banded and varies from greyish to buff and brown. It has previously been observed mainly in the south of England. The larvae of this fly are parasitic on the larvae of the Common Cockchafer. It is often seen in woods in Britain sitting on Bracken during the summer.

Hoverflies

Hoverflies are a large group within the Diptera genus and we have continued to search and add species to the Lytchett list in 2020 with 15 new species being identified bring the total to 41 species for the area.

Chequered Hoverfly *Melanostoma scalare*
Recorded 17th July Lytchett Heath
The males have longer, thinner bodies than females, with lozenge-shaped yellow spots compared to the triangular spots in females. Both sexes have largely yellow antennae. Common throughout Britain and inhabit lush herbage in well-wooded areas and even gardens. They can be seen from April to November.

Hoverfly *Chrysotoxum bicinctum*
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Heath
This is a distinctive looking hoverfly with yellow bars on a black body with chocolate wing markings. They are a common species in Southern England but can be found on the north coast of Scotland. They can be found in open grassland and grassy woodland rides.

Hover-fly sp. *Platycheirus rosarum*
Recorded 26th July & 3rd Aug Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
Found and photographed by Lyn Lambert on the Approach Field. This is a widespread but local species that like wet meadows and the edges of water bodies such as ponds and ditches but this is a species that can be abundant where they occur. Though this species is not immediately recognised which may be why we haven't recorded it before.

Hoverfly sp. *Xanthogramma pedissequum agg.*
Recorded 6th July Lytchett Heath
Quite a distinctive hoverfly, Xanthogramma pedissequum is best distinguished from the similar X. citrofasciatum by the dumpy appearance of the yellow triangles on tergite 2. The species is quite frequent in southern England south of a line from 'The Wash' to the south Wales coast. Males are sometimes seen hovering just a few centimetres above the ground, particularly over bare ground like paths. The larvae feed on aphids within the nests of ants. Grassland and open woodland rides preferring short turf and some bare ground such as pathways. They are on the wing from May to September peaking in late June and early July.

Hoverfly sp. *Dasysyrphus Venustus*
Recorded 4th June Lytchett Heath
The yellow bars reach the margins of the abdomen with inflated inner ends, so appearing to curve upwards. This species is widespread in most of Britain and favours woodland margins. They fly from April to September, peaking May and early June, and are most commonly seen in spring.

Hoverfly sp. *Scaeva Selenitica agg.*
Recorded 7th July Lytchett Heath
The species is widespread but local and is more common in southern England than elsewhere in Britain. They are a large distinctive fly with three pairs of yellow comma markings (lunules) on the abdomen; these are white on scaeva pyrastri. The commas on selenitica extend equally far forward at both the inner and outer ends. Adults are often seen on flowers from March to November peaking July and early September.

Hoverfly - sp. *Meliscaeva auricollis*
Recorded 24th March Lytchett Way
Though small and dark coloured, the slanting rear border of the yellow crescent marks on tergite 2, particularly in males, help to identify the species. The spring generation tend to be darker bodied than those born later in the year. Fairly frequent seen in southern England and the Midlands, scarcer elsewhere in Britain. The adult hibernates and a warm day in January can bring them out of hibernation. They prefer well-wooded places and are usually found around trees.

Hoverfly sp. *Syrphus ribesii*
Recorded 1st June Watery lane
This is a species that is very common throughout Britain. They are almost identical to Syrphus vitripennis (Lesser Banded Hoverfly) except the female's hind femur (top part of leg) is yellow rather than black. Both sexes of S. ribesii have the basal cells of the wings covered in microtrichia (tiny hairs) which are lacking in S. vitripennis. Found in gardens, hedgerows, waste ground and many other habitats. It can be found from March to November with peaks in late May-early June and again in July to September. Males often create a 'hum' by vibrating their wings when resting and this sound is often a familiar background noise in woodland during the summer.

Hoverfly sp. *Syrphus torvus*
Recorded 8th August Lytchett Fields RSPB (Arable Field)
Fairly frequent seen throughout Britain. This hoverfly is similar to other syrphus species and is best identified by the presence of hairs on the eyes. Found in gardens, hedgerows, waste ground and many other habitats. March to November - It is often the earliest Syrphus species to emerge in the spring, has a peak in April with a second peak in July and is sometimes one of the commoner hoverflies in autumn, having a third peak in October.

Hoverfly sp. *Cheilosia albilarsis / ranunculi agg.*
Recorded 1st June Watery lane
Cheilosia albitarsis and Cheilosia ranunculi are very similar and can often only be safely determined by detailed examination. For this reason we have treated the two species as an aggregate. They are robust with a short broad abdomen. In sunlight the thorax may be seen as metallic dark blue/green. The abdomen is more of a duller grey/bronze colour. These species are often found in damp meadows, marshy areas, woodland clearings or well-shaded verges and are associated with buttercup. Adult females may sometimes be found landing on a buttercup leaf, walking to the tip and then underneath in order to lay an egg. Their main flight period is April to August.

Hoverfly sp. *Cheilosia illustrata*
Recorded 30th June Watery Lane
Very common throughout Britain this species is a furry bumblebee mimic with a dark wing cloud. The body is usually pale haired with a black band across the centre of the thorax, and another across tergite 3. It is typically seen settled with its wings closed tightly over its back. You can often see them along Hedgerows and woodland edge, usually on umbellifer flowers of Hogweed and Angelica. The larvae tunnel the roots of large Hogweed plants in autumn. You can look for them from April to September, peaking in July.

Large Spotty-eyed Dronefly *Eristalinus aeneus*
Recorded 2nd April Lytchett Way & 6th July Lytchett Heath
This species of hoverfly and only one of two UK species with those amazing spotted eyes, found by my wife and later by Ian I think shows this species is present over a large area of the Lytchett patch. It's about 12mm long with a shiny bronze-black body, the eyes aren't immediately apparent; you need binoculars to spot them. It's almost entirely confined to the coast and occurs along most of the UK coastline. The larvae generally feed in rock pools with plenty of rotting seaweed or on saltmarsh. Mainly a summer flying species but the adults can hibernate.

Hoverfly sp. *Parhelophilus frutetorum / vericolor agg.*
Recorded 1st June Watery Lane
There are three very similar parhelophilus species, all are compact and brightly coloured hoverflies, well covered in yellow hairs. Separation of the species needs careful and close examination. It is widespread in southern Britain. Particularly alongside ponds and ditches. The larvae have been found in the leaf shields of Bulrush. April to October, peaking in June.

Hover-fly sp. *Tropidia scita*
Recorded 17th July Lytchett Heath
The key identification feature of this hoverfly is the arched and swollen hind femur with a large triangular projection on its lower surface near the apex. The projection has small black spines along its hind edge. The abdomen has orange markings on tergites 2 and 3, covering the entire lateral margins in males, but reduced in females, sometimes to paired spots. Widespread in Southern and Eastern England but local, It tends to become coastal further north, reaching as far as southern Scotland. This fly prefers marshy areas and fens, particularly where reedbeds are present. The larva is believed to develop in wet debris such as reedbed litter. Look for them from May to October, with the greatest numbers being on the wing in June and July.

Hoverfly sp. *Xylota segnis*
Recorded 4th August Lytchett Way
This is a species that I've seen several time in my garden but failed to get a photograph that allowed me to identify it to species, which I managed to do this year. This is a common widespread species in Britain that scuttles about over leaves collecting pollen and honeydew and can be seen from March to November.

Thick-headed Fly sp. *Conops quadrifasciatus*
Recorded 4th August Lytchett Heath
A long proboscis and a long pointed anal cell near the hind edge of the wing are features that characterise this family. Hind femora of this species are yellowish brown, and the female has a small yellowish pouch under the 5th abdominal

segment. They are a localised species which can be found around umbellifers such as Ragwort and are on the wing from June to September. The larvae are internal parasites of bumblebees.

Thick-headed Fly sp. *Conops Ceriaeformis*
Recorded 2nd August Lytchett Heath
This fly is scarce in the United Kingdom and like the above species the larvae are endoparasites of bees and wasps. The front of the head is black, and the body is mainly yellow in the male. The female is elongated and mostly black with narrow yellow rings. The mid and hind femora are thickened with black central rings.

Picture-wing Fly sp. *Palloptera ustulata.agg*
Recorded 19th June Lytchett Fields RSPB
Palloptera ustulata cannot be distinguished from Palloptera anderssoni without very detailed examination by an expert, and for this reason we have treated it as an aggregate. It is a small fly of about 4.5 mm. It has an orange abdomen and slight shades at the wing tips. They are fairly widespread and thought to be fairly frequent in Britain. You can find them on hedgerows and in gardens from late May to end of October.

Picture-wing Fly sp. *Palloptera Quinquemaculata*
Recorded 9th August Lytchett Fields RSPB (Green Sandpiper Pool)
A small orange bodied fly with distinctively patterned wings, although several members of this family are superficially quite similar which makes it difficult to identify. They prefer a well-vegetated habitat and are widespread and frequent in England and Wales, more coastal in Scotland.

Fungi Fly sp. *Suillia Affinis*
Recorded 18th June Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
Most fungus gnats are weak fliers and can often be seen walking rapidly over plants and soil, rather than flying. However when airborne, the gnats may be quite annoying to humans by flying into their faces, eyes, and noses, both indoors and outdoors. Some fungus gnats are exceptionally hardy, being able to tolerate cold conditions through their possession of antifreeze proteins. Typically, overwintering organisms can either avoid freezing or tolerate freezing so can overwinter without any problems.

Snail-killing Fly *Coremacera marginata*
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Heath
The adults are 7 to10 millimetres long. The prominent eyes and the legs are reddish brown. The brown or yellowish antennae are forward pointing, with a hairy 3rd segment and a whitish arista. The dark grey wings are mottled by many greyish spots and with a blackish border. They can often be found in damp areas. It may also be encountered in grasslands and woodlands, feeding on nectar or sipping dew. You can see them from late May until September or October and peaking in August. The larvae prey on terrestrial snails. They are widespread and fairly frequent in the southern half of Britain, but possibly mainly coastal in Wales and scarce north of Cumbria.

Striped-backed Snail-killer *Limnia unguicornis agg.*
Recorded 19th June Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
Limnia unguicornis is a widespread and locally common species and one of two Limnia species found in Britain, They can be found in a wide range of habitats including grassland of various sorts, wetlands, dunes and Brownfield sites. They tolerate drier habitats than Limnia paludicola and you can see the adults from May to September.

Black Scavenger or Ensign Fly *Sepsis Cynipsea agg.*
Recorded 24th July Lytchett Fields RSPB (Green Sandpiper Pool)
A small blackish fly. It is about 2.5 to 3 mm long and has dark wing spots (one on each wing) typical of the Sepsis genus. This is a difficult group to identify and specimens really need microscopic examination to arrive at the species. Males of Sepsis cynipsea have an obvious notch part way down the front tibia, which is unique within the genus. This is a species you can find around fresh dung. Although the species might be encountered at any time, the main period is between May and September with a peak in July and early August. The flies are active by day, and the sexes usually meet for mating around fresh dung where the eggs will be laid.

Parasitic Fly sp. ***Nowickia ferox***
Recorded 4th August Lytchett Heath
This fly is about the size of a large bluebottle fly. It has yellowy orange sides to the abdomen and a zig-zag central band. Like all tachinids it has numerous bristly hairs on the abdomen. It inhabits various habitats and its main flight period peak time is June to August. The maggot stage of the fly develops inside the Dark Arches moth, eating it from within, and then emerging to pupate. This species is distributed mainly in southern England and South Wales.

Rust Fly sp. ***Loxocera aristata/ albiseta agg.***
Recorded 21st July Lytchett Fields & 6th August Footpath 12

Loxocera aristata and L. albiseta are very similar to some other members of the genus. They can be distinguished by examination of the specimen or very detailed images, because Loxocera albiseta has an all-yellow face, and just a small triangular patch of short white hairs below the eye. As these features are not visible on either photograph Identification is difficulty so I have aggregated these records. Though it is likely that we have recorded both species, hopefully we will be able to get a definitive identification in the future. They are species associated with Juncus species such as Soft-rush and occurring where Juncus species are present. They can be seen during the summer and autumn.

Hymenoptera - Bee, Wasps, Ants & Relatives

Bees, wasps and ants are all part of an insect order called Hymenoptera. It is a huge group with many species and a diverse range of forms. The name hymenoptera means 'membrane wings'. A typical hymenopteran has 2 pairs of wings though they are coupled together with tiny hooks so appear as 1 pair.

This group in particular gets lots of attention mainly due to the importance of knowing what pollinator we have in the recording area and 43 species have been added to the Lytchett area this year some of these have been nationally scarce or rare species which makes the area more important to look after and monitor.

Chalcid Wasp

When we think of wasps, we tend to imagine a yellow and black striped insect with a painful sting, but wasps are actually one of the most diverse groups of animals on earth. Minute wasps called chalcids (pronounced 'kal-sids') are usually less than three millimetres long, smaller than a grain of rice. They come in a variety of glossy and metallic colours. Less beautiful, however, is how they provide for their offspring. These parasitoid wasps lay their eggs inside other insects. When the eggs hatch, the wasp larvae devour the host insect alive, until they're ready to turn into adult wasps and leave. The host is doomed to die. Their gruesome nature actually makes many chalcid wasps useful to us. As natural enemies of pest insects, hundreds of chalcid species have been used as biological control agents to protect crops and fight the spread of invasive species.

Chalcid Wasp ***Ormyrus nitidulus / Ormyrus Pomaceus agg.***
Recorded 1st August FP12 & 3rd September Footpath 12

This is a group that little is known about and there is a lot to learn about their ecology. Both these species are very similar found by Paul Swann and Ian Ballam in very typical habitat as they both are found on or around Oak trees. Ormyrids are often recorded in association with plant galls, but are not gall-formers themselves: rather, they are parasites of the insect larvae that form the galls (usually flies or other wasps). The main flight period is from April to November.

Ichneumon Wasps

All ichneumonids are parasitoids of other invertebrates – that is, their larvae infect and then kill a single host animal. In the UK we have approximately 2,500 species of ichneumonid. Making up almost 10% of all British insects, Ichneumonidae are an important insect group and one of the most diverse. The ichneumon group of wasp, other than a

few very obvious species are difficult to identify, because so many look similar. Identifications are usually made using tiny features only visible under a microscope, which makes the challenge even harder.

Ichneumon sp. *Enicospilus Ramidulus*
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Fields RSPB
An orange bodied species with pieces of orange chitin, called sclerites, in the middle of the forewing and a distinctive black tip to the abdomen. It is a nocturnal species that sometimes attracted to light. The males can sometimes be found flying by day from June to September. They are parasitic on the caterpillars of noctuid moths. They are widespread but not well recorded in Britain.

Ichneumon sp. *Pimpla contemplator*
Recorded 6th July Lytchett Fields RSPB
This species was found and photographed by David Foster and checking on the iRecord records system there has only one previous record in Dorset from Frampton north west of Dorchester. They have a fairly scattered distribution in Britain.

Ichneumon sp. *Braconidae - sub-family Helconinae sp. Agg*
Recorded 22nd July Lytchett Bay Heath
A wasp which was photographed by Ian Ballam couldn't be identified to a specific species from the photograph but was from the sub-family *Helconinae*. There are 50 sub species within the *Braconidae* group, and just over 40 species in ten genera in the sub-family *Helconinae* which are grouped into three tribes, which have been recorded as British. So far as is known all are solitary parasitoids, although biological information is lacking for most of the species. The current concept of the subfamily restricts it to groups that are koino-biont endoparasitoids of beetle larvae.

Parasitic Wasp *Lestiphorus bicinctus*
Recorded 3rd August Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)
This is a nationally scarce species in the UK It appears to be scarce in most parts of its range, though it also seems to be an elusive species. They are associated with scrubby or brambly places in sunny locations on light soils. Sites include heathland, rough grassland, parkland, coastal landslips and soft rock cliffs, coastal dunes and occasionally suburban gardens and woodland clearings. Males have been reported 'swarming' on the foliage of trees and shrubs. They are a univoltine species with a flight period of June to early October.

Spider Hunting Wasp *Priocnemis perturbator*
Recorded 17th June Footpath 12
Most frequently associated with open woodland, but may be found in a variety of habitats, as long as they are not waterlogged. It has a flight period of April to July and they are univoltine species. It is thought they prey on the larger species in the spider families Lycosidae and Gnaphosidae. Females are sometimes seen on the ground, apparently searching for prey. The spider Trochosa terricola is known as a prey item. Little is known about their nesting habits, but Priocnemis species generally use existing cavities within which they may excavate several cells. They can often be found visiting Wood Spurge, but also known to visit Blackthorn, Dandelion, Hawthorn and Willow.

Ichneumon sp. *Syzeuctus fuscator*
Recorded 17th August Lytchett Bay Heath
Checking with IRecord and the NBN atlas there seems to be only two previous records for the UK this appears to be the third and only record on the system for Dorset so it appears to be a very rare species in the UK or very under recorded species.

Cuckoo Wasps

Cuckoo wasps are members of the largest subfamily, Chrysidinae, Generally regarded as the Chrysis ignita group are the most familiar; they are generally kleptoparasites, laying their eggs in host nests, where their larvae consume the host egg or larva while it is still young, then the food provided by the host for its own juvenile. The term "cuckoo wasp" refers to the cuckoo-like way in which wasps in the family lay eggs in the nests of unrelated host species.

We have recorded a number of species in this group many we have been unable to identify to species as they require microscopic examination to get them to species level hence they have been aggregated.

Ruby-tailed Wasp sp. *Chrysis Illigeri agg.*
Recorded 25th May Lytchett Bay Heath

This is a nationally scarce species three records were received this year from the heath but as the main features cannot be seen on the photographs they have only been accepted as being Chrysis species. This isn't the only species in the genus recorded on the heath but without microscopic examination by an expert we will not get to a definitive answer to how many species reside on our small piece of heathland. Females are active from June to September but mainly during July and August. Males are active from June to August but mainly during July. They will visit Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) and Hemp-agrimony. This wasp is a parasitoid on Tachysphex pompiliformis, which is a wasp that predates on Meadow Grasshopper.

The photographs below show three other of these beautiful ruby-tail wasps that are within the Chrysis group which were taken on the Lytchett Heathland accept the one in the centre, which I found in my conservatory.

Small Velvet Ant *Smicromyrme rufipes*
Recorded 7th & 17th June Lytchett Bay Heath

Ian Ballam added this excellent record to the Lytchett Bay list,. This is one of two species of velvet ant Large Velvet Ant *Mutilla europaea* which he recorded in 2019 and now Small Velvet Ant *Smicromyrme rufipes* which Ian first recorded a male then continued on the second date to photograph a female of this smaller species. Like its congener this is a Nationally scarce species. They are not a true ant but a wasp and they can give a very painful sting so probably best not to handle. Males have been found on umbellifers and ragworts. Adults are probably univoltine; adults are found mainly during July and August, sometimes in June, and rarely in May and September. They are a parasitoid of a wide variety of ground nesting wasps and bees including crabronid and pompilid wasps and halictine bees. The female enters the burrow of its host and bites open a cell. If the host's larva is immature she closes the cell and leaves. However if a mature larva is present she inserts her gaster into the cell and lays an egg. The host is not stung. The wasp larva is an ectoparasite on the larva or pupa of its host. On reaching maturity, the parasite spins a cocoon within that of its host.

Social, Potter & Mason Wasps

Wall Mason Wasp *Ancistrocerus trifasciatus agg.*
Recorded 21st June Lytchett Bay Heath
Found and photographed by Paul Swann on the heath this was identified as possibly this species. They can be found in a wide variety of habitats often associated with marshy places. They are probably univoltine; most likely to be seen from June to August, sometimes during May and September, and rarely in April.

Digger Wasps

There are over 110 species of Digger wasp in Britain. As the name suggests female Digger wasps burrow into the ground when nesting. Digger wasps are a type of solitary wasp meaning that females make a nest for her own young. This nesting behaviour is different to social wasps, as female social wasps co-operate with their sisters and their mother in the maintenance of a colony that may well contain hundreds or even thousands of workers as well as a queen. Digger wasps resemble social wasps in appearance with their yellow and black patterns although they can be distinguished from social wasps as the wings are not folded lengthwise when at rest.

Digger Wasp sp. *Crabro scutellatus*
Recorded 9th June Lytchett Bay Heath
The species is listed as Nationally notable, The species flies from mid-June to mid-August. This species female will prey on adult Dolichopodidae (Diptera). Nesting biology - Requirements are very narrowly defined, and are mainly associated with dry, sloping exposures adjacent to damp Heathland and Bogland, the habitat of its principal prey. In such areas the nest burrows often form small aggregations. Some nesting sites may be a considerable distance from a source of suitable flies.

Field Digger Wasp *Mellinus arvensis*
Recorded 23rd September Lytchett Bay Heath
This species is a species that isn't regarded as being scarce or threatened. Which inhabits sandy localities, frequently near the coast. The species is Univoltine and are found from June to September. They prey on Diptera, particularly Muscidae, Syrphidae and Tabanidae species. Prey is sometimes hunted on mammalian droppings. The female wasp walks over the droppings and with a sudden leap, seizes the fly in her mandibles; immobilises it with a sting, and then flies with it to her nest. May also take basking flies from fences and tree trunks. The nests are constructed in sandy soil, not infrequently in aggregations. Some nests have been found under paving slabs (usually laid on sand). The soil accumulated from digging the burrow is not dispersed by ritualised, instinctive behaviour on the part of the wasp, but is left to form a tumulus. The burrow goes down 30-40 cm almost vertically and there may be one or several cells. Each cell is provisioned with four to thirteen flies, the egg being laid on the first of these. Nests are frequently established in shady locations, an unusual habit for an aculeate.

Spiny Digger Wasp sp. *Oxybelus mandibularis*
Recorded 22nd July Footpath 12
This was a great find by Ian Ballam of this scarce species and thanks to Steven Falk for his help in confirming its identification. This species is found in similar habitat *Oxybelus argentatus* occurring both on the coast and on dry, inland heaths. You can look for them from the end of June to late August. They predate on Diptera from the families Muscidae, Sarcophagidae and Tachinidae species. Little appears to be known of its nesting behaviour, but it is likely to be broadly similar to O. uniglumis. In Fennoscandia, nests are provisioned with adult Diptera; each cell containing four to six flies.

Bees

We have now recorded 56 species of bee using the Lytchett Bay recording area and some of them are of National importance and when you think we are recording many of these on a small remnant piece of Heathland and my garden plus to a lesser extent Lytchett Fields is pretty good. Though I'm sure there are a few more out there that still hasn't been recorded yet of the 275 species on the British and Irish list, though we have added 26 species this years.

Hairy-saddled Colletes. ***Colletes Fodiens agg.***
Recorded 26th June Lytchett Heath

This is a species that is hard to identify from photograph hence it has been aggregated. This species is associated with meadows and edge habitats in sandy districts, including coastal dunes. They are a univoltine species with a flight period of late July to early September. They are also Oligolectic on the pollen of flowers in the family Asteraceae. Especially found at Ragwort. Nothing is known about the nesting biology of this species, except that it nests in the ground.

Hairy Yellow-faced Bee ***Hylaeus hylinatus***
Recorded 3rd August Lytchett Fields RSPB (Approach Field)

This bee is found in many kinds of surroundings, including gardens in towns and cities, sand pits, quarries and on the coast (sand dunes, shingle forelands and the bases of cliffs). It is a univoltine species with a flight period of late May to the beginning of September. They are polylectic, visiting various flowering species to collect pollen. This bee is an opportunist, nesting in many kinds of naturally occurring niches of suitable diameter. These include burrows in masonry, rocks and sandbanks. In mainland Europe it has been reared from burrows in dead stems and wood and may use these in the British Isles too.

Common Yellow-face Bee ***Hylaeus communism***
Recorded 21st Aug 2019 Lytchett Way

Generally distributed, found in many habitats, including open woodland, grassland and coastal sites. It is often observed in private gardens. Most often encountered at rest on sunlit surfaces (especially dead wood) and visiting umbellifer flowers. It is thought they are univoltine with a flight period of late May or early June to mid-September. They are polylectic, foraging on various flowering plants. This bee is an opportunistic cavity-nester, utilising existing burrows of a suitable diameter, particularly in dead wood and woody stems (such as bramble), but also in the soil and crevices in mortar joints. This bee visits many different plant species for nectar.

Reed Yellow-face Bee ***Hylaeus pectoralis***
Recorded 1st August & 4th August Footpath 12

This is a species that has a restricted distribution and may be nationally scarce. Owing to its special nesting requirements, this little bee is associated with stands of the common reed, both in brackish and fresh water where it prefers the drier margins of the reedbed. They are single-brooded and can be found on the wing from June to late September.

Ashy Mining Bee ***Andrena cineraria***
Recorded 3rd May Lytchett Way

This was a little bit of a surprise find as I've only seen this species on Salisbury Plain in the past, but I removed an old metal shed from our garden to create more wildlife garden and Jackie called me to say there was a bee digging a burrow in the new patch. Checking I found a female Ashy Mining Bee so hopefully she has been successful and we have a colony in the making.

This species likes open sunny areas usually on sandy sites (open woodland, moorland, coastal sites, riverbanks, old quarries). Also on friable chalk, silt and clay sites, and urban areas (garden lawns, golf courses). In southern England they are found mainly on calcareous grasslands. A univoltine species in southern England males fly from March until May but mainly during April, and females from April until June but mainly during April and May. The burrow is excavated to a depth of 10-20 cm with two to three cells per nest. The burrow entrance is left open during foraging trips, but at the end of these flights, during rain and when disturbed the burrows are closed. The species overwinters as adults within the natal cells.

Orange-tailed Mining Bee *Andrena haemorrhoa*
Recorded 19th May Lytchett Heath
Fairly common and widespread in species in Britain and it appears to have no habitat restrictions beyond mountainous regions; even then it can be found in the valleys. They have a flight period of March to June. They are polylectic on a large range of pollinating flowering plants. They nest singly in short swards, and along the sides of track ways.

Short-fringed Mining Bee *Andrena dorsata*
Recorded 23rd March Lytchett Heath
A species that is widespread and local in Southern Britain, which appears to be no habitat restrictions for this species. Although there is a strong suggestion of a temperature restriction, possibly related to the need to complete two generations in a year. This species is bivoltine and has flight periods from March to May and July to August. They are widely polylectic visiting a range of flowers for nectar. They nest singly in short swards, and on patches of bare ground.

Small Gorse Mining Bee *Andrena ovatula*
Recorded 31st May Lytchett Heath
This species is locally common in coastal and heathland areas and in contrast to its close sibling species, A. wilkella, this bee has a marked preference for gravelly or dry sandy soils, such as heaths and, on the coast, dunes, landslips and cliffs. They are generally bivoltine, and on the wing from end of March to late May or June, and again from June to mid-September. However, its flight times in the year may be more complex. They are polylectic, gathering pollen from species in the families Fabaceae, Asteraceae and Brassicaceae. In the British Isles, pollen sources are only known for the second brood: heather, white clover and red clover. Their nests do not seem to have been found in the British Isles.

Hawk's Beard Mining Bee *Andrena Fulvago*
Recorded 18th July Lytchett Fields RSPB (Arable Field)
The British status for this species as recently has gone from notable to now Near Threatened. They are associated with open grasslands and have a flight period of May to July. They feed solely on the flowers of the daisy (Asteraceae) family. Usually they nest singly but has been reported in small aggregations. All observations of this species for both males and females have been on yellow-flowered daisies.

Small Shaggy Bee *Panurgus calcaratus*
Recorded 30th June Lytchett Heath
This species is mostly found on southern Heathlands from Dorset to the Thames Estuary where there is short heathy, grasslands over sandy or sandy-clay soils. They are univoltine with a flight period of June to September and they only collect pollen from yellow-flowered Asteraceae. They nest in aggregations in the ground, often at the edges of paths or other areas of bare ground. Nest entrances are often shared by a number of females.

Bloomed Furrow Bee *Lasioglossum albipes*
Recorded 8th August Slough Lane
This is a fairly common species throughout Britain and is associated with woodland edges and also found in clearings, glades and scrubby areas. At Dungeness in Kent, found on the large shingle area, sometimes commonly. The female flies from mid-March to early October, whilst the male appears by early July, flying to mid-October. They are polylectic but frequently visits species of buttercup for pollen and visit a variety of flowers for nectar. A primitively eusocial mining bee, the foundress female digs a vertical main burrow to a depth of about 15cm. The arrangement of the cells is open to question. Between 20% and 50% of the first brood are males but although many first brood females mate they remain as workers with undeveloped ovaries. These workers prepare about 50 brood cells in which males and reproductive females are produced. These females mate and dig hibernacula by deepening the main burrow of the maternal nest. There are reports of the old foundress females surviving the winter and establishing new nests in the spring .

Smeathmans Furrow Bee *Lasioglossum Smeathmanellum*
Recorded 1st June Lytchett Heath
In Steven Falk's field guide this species is noted as widespread and common in southern Britain, it has in recent years been reported as showing a decline nationally. Although L. smeathmanellum may be encountered almost anywhere in southern England and Wales, it is often abundant on coastal soft-rock cliffs. Inland it is frequently reported as nesting in the soft mortar of old walls. The females fly between late March and September, males are found between July and September. As with all British Lasioglossum, only mated females hibernate. This species is polylectic, which has been recorded visiting a wide variety of flowers from a number of different plant families. They often nest communally in suitable areas of old walls and bare cliffs, but is not known to be eusocial, with a queen and a few workers.

Grey-tailed Furrow Bee *Lasioglossum Prasinum*
Recorded 28th May Lytchett Heath

The status of this species shows a highly restricted range being mainly confined to the dry heaths of Dorset, Hampshire, West Sussex and Surrey. Females initiate nests during May, new males and females are produced during August and September. As this is a solitary species, the flight period of females is extraordinarily long. A polylectic species, but with a strong preference for heath and heather flowers during the mid and late summer and been recorded visiting Bell heather, Cross-leaved heath, Dandelion, Forget-me-not, Hawk's Beard, and Pine. It has been recorded as collecting pine pollen on Studland Heath.

Chalk Furrow Bee *Lasioglossum Fulvicorne*
Recorded 22nd July Footpath 12
This species is widespread in England and frequent on calcareous soils such as chalk scarps but also found on other strata. Shows a preference for short grassland in dry areas. They are probably univoltine; the female has a long-life span, appearing on the wing from mid-March to the end September and males from mid-June until early October. They are widely polylectic and probably visits a variety of flowers for nectar only. The nesting biology is not well known but the species is solitary, the female digging a nest in short turf in the spring.

Yellow Loosestrife Bee *Macropis europaea*
Recorded 4th Aug Lytchett Fields RSPB
Found by Ian Ballam on Yellow Loosestrife in the Approach field this species is listed as rare and Nationally Notable it is a species that is mostly recorded in southeast England from Dorset to Norfolk. The inhabit wetland sites supporting the main forage plant, Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris). Hence this bee is to be found in fens, bogs and alongside rivers and canals. They are univoline and have a flight period, mid-July to early September which is closely synchronized with the flowering of its main host plant. Being mainly monolectic on Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris), collecting both pollen and floral oils. The bee may also obtain pollen from other plants. Nest burrows are excavated in the soil, generally in banks or slopes. The burrow entrances are usually well concealed by overhanging vegetation and are thus rarely observed nests normally occur in loose aggregations.

P**antaloon Bee *Dasypoda hirtipes***
Recorded 13th June Lytchett Heath

This is another species that is Nationally Notable, found on our small bit of heathland this species inhabits sandy soils, particularly on Heathlands and coastal dunes. They are univoltine species whose flight period is from late June to the end of August or the beginning of September. They are Oligolectic on Asteraceae plants visiting species like Common Ragwort, Fleabane, Creeping Thistle, Cat's-ear, Hawkbit, Perennial Sow-thistle and Smooth Hawk's-beard though further confirmation of these being forage species is required. Females mainly excavate their nests in sandy, sparsely vegetated, level soil. Some sites contain nest aggregations of great extent. The main burrow is very long (8-60 cm) and is excavated at an oblique angle, resulting in a 'fan' of spoil to one side of the entrance.

Common Wool Carder Bee *Anthidium manicatum manicatum*
Recorded 29th May Lytchett Heath

We have recorded Common Wool Carder Bee every year since we started recording the bee species on the Lytchett Patch but the usual species is *Anthidium manicatum nigrithorax* the British sub species. Ian noticed it looked different as it had more extensive yellow bars on the tergites instead of the usual yellow spots. We referred the photograph to the experts who agreed this individual appeared to show the feature of the continental species A. *manicatum manicatum.* They use various habitats, which includes private gardens (both in rural and urban areas), open broadleaved woodland, chalk grassland, coastal sand dunes and landslips. They are single brooded from late May to early August, with a peak in June/July.

Spotted Dark Bee *Stelis Ornatula* ***
Recorded 25th May Lytchett Bay Heath

This is another great record found and photographed by Ian Ballam as this species is classified as Rare and has only been recorded from about a dozen post-1970 10 km squares in England and Wales. They have been found both inland and in coastal sites, including heathland, chalk grassland, open broad-leaved woodland, coastal dunes and landslips. They are univoltine and have a flight period of end of May to late August. In Britain they are a cleptoparasite of H. claviventris. They visit various flowers such as Bird's-foot-trefoil, Cinquefoil, Ragwort, Fleabane and Hawk's-beard.

Silvery Leafcutter *Megachile leachella*
Recorded 31st May Lytchett Bay Heath

In the literature this species is listed as scarce and threatened and a notable species. They can mainly be found on coastal sand dunes. There are, however, a few inland sites, most of which are on sandy soils. They are univoltine with a flight period of June to late August. They are polylectic, exploiting a wide range of flower species. Nest burrows are excavated in the soil. Occasionally nests occur in compact and extensive aggregations. Cut leaf sections from numerous species of plants have been reported, including petals of Common Bird's-foot-Trefoil.

Willughby's Leafcutter Bee *Megachile willughbiella*
Recorded 31st May Lytchett Bay Heath

This bee is widespread and locally common over much of Southern Britain. This bee is found in a variety of habitats where there is suitable nesting and foraging. gardens and brownfield sites are frequently visited and used for nesting by this species, particularly in the main centre's of conurbation in England. They have a flight period of mid-June through July and into early August is the optimum flight period for this species. They are polylectic, recorded visiting various flowers but willughbiella shows a preference for bellflowers, bird's-foot-trefoils, thistles and brambles. They have been recorded nesting in wood or soil, there is also a record of a nest in a length of rubber hose. The cells are constructed from leaves including beech and tutsan.

Wood Carving Leafcutter *Megachile Ligniseca*
Recorded 7th July Lytchett Bay Heath

A widespread and fairly scattered species mainly in southern England and since it is a species that utilises bramble, thistles and himalayan balsam it is likely to be found where these species dominate. It has also been found on post-industrial sites where it was recorded feeding on himalayan balsam and found frequently flying about standing deadwood and bramble thickets. This is a summer-flying species with early records from mid-June to as late as early September. The majority of records however fall between early July and mid-August. A polylectic species recorded visiting thistles and bramble and has also been observed visiting Himalayan balsam though no information was obtained on whether this was for nectar or pollen. The nests are most frequently encountered in timber such as old trees and fence posts. One nest has been found in an iron tube. The nesting holes are typically of a large diameter and the cells constructed of sycamore leaves. It is surmised that other plant species are used though no evidence of this has been recorded to date.

Orange-horned Nomad Bee *Nomada fulvicornis*
Recorded 23rd March & 7th July Lytchett Bay Heath

This is listed as a rare species in England though it's fairly widespread in its distribution. The habitat for this species varies with the various host Andrena with which this cleptoparasite associates. In the main, the bee is often encountered on sandy soils, heathland along coastal cliffs and landslips also occasionally chalk grassland and salt marsh edges. This is bivotine in most part of its range flying from late March to early June, and again from late June to the end of August. The population in Yorkshire are univoltine, being active from late March to June is presumed to parasitise on A.tibialis. This bee is entirely cleptoparasitic and, as such, collects no pollen, but the spring population will visit willow, wild cherry, spurges, brassicus and daisy. The summer ones use bramble, thistles, Rosebay Willowherb, Ragwort and goldenrod.

Little Nomad Bee *Nomada flavoguttata*
Recorded 7th June Lytchett Bay Heath

This species is common over much of southern England but scarce in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, like other nomad bees they are found wherever their host species can be found. This is a species that can either be univoltine or bivoltine depending on the flight periods of its host species. They can be found from the end of March to late August. This species is a cleptoparasite of certain Andrena species in the subgenus Micrandrena. Those recorded are Andrena alfkenella, Andrena falsifica, Andrena minutula, Andrena semilaevis and Andrena subopaca. Many different flowers are visited for nectar.

Green-eyed Flower Bee *Anthophora bimaculata*
Recorded 24th May Lytchett Bay Heath & 17th July Lytchett Way

The bee is not regarded as being scarce or threatened and is largely confined to southern England especially the associated particularly with light sandy soils and, as such, is generally to be encountered inland on lowland heaths and commons, and on coastal dunes and landslips. Sometimes abundant where found, particularly in the vicinity of its nesting sites. They are univoltine species with a flight period of late June to mid-September. They are polylectic species collecting pollen from a variety of flowering plants. They nest usually in dense aggregations, often in exposed soil in either level surfaces or, more especially, slopes and cliff faces. The cleptoparasitic bee Coelioxys rufescens has been reared from cells of A. bimaculata and is sometimes noted about nesting aggregations of the same species here In Dorset, C. elongata has also been observed investigating nest burrows of the same host.

Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*
Recorded 14th July Lytchett Bay Heath

This species I'm sure we have overlooked or misidentified in the past through inexperience though first identified on the heath I later found them in my garden and other areas on the patch. This is a species that was first recorded in Britain as recently as 2001 in Wiltshire after an expansion in Europe and have quickly colonized the south of England. This is a species closely associated with open woodland conditions, gardens are basically this and the species is strongly synanthropic in Britain, although this may change as it becomes more established. They nest in aerial cavities, often using old bird nests or nest boxes, but also small mammal nests as starters. The species is commonly associated with human activity and is regularly found nesting under eaves, behind soffit boards and in cavity walls. It also regularly nests low to the ground in compost bins. It has been noted that B. hypnorum has larger colonies than most Pyrobombus, it has been suggested there may be up to 400 workers.

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*
Recorded 18th July Lytchett Bay Heath, 19th Lytchett Fields RSPB

This widespread and common species is associated with a wide range of habitats, being one of the bumblebees regularly encountered in gardens as well as the open countryside and woodland. The species is eusocial, with queens emerging from hibernation in March, workers present from April onwards, and males and new females from July to early October. The species is a polylectic which doesn't seem to have a clear preference for any particular flowering

plant and is much of a generalist. They nest underground and are started in old mammal nests. Populations are large, with between 100 and 300 workers. The life cycle is long, about 5 or 6 months. The species is remarkable for its use of 'traditional' hibernation sites, which are north-facing banks, usually within open woodland. Large numbers of queens use these sites year after year.

Heath Bumble Bee *Bombus jonellus*
Recorded 30th May Lytchett Bay Heath

This widespread and locally common species has shown a decline in southern Britain but it is a species that is considered strongly associated with Heathland and moorland, it does occur in a wide variety of other habitats, although it is usually less frequent in these. In southern lowland areas B. jonellus is often bivoltine, with first-generation queens searching for nest sites in March, and males and new females are produced in May. These queens may either enter hibernation or found new nests in June. These nests produce their sexuals in late August or September. In northern and upland areas nests are not founded until June, with males in late August and September. Workers may therefore be found between April and September in southern and lowland areas, but only between July and September in northern or upland areas. They are widely polylectic visiting a very wide variety of flowers, both for pollen and nectar. This species nests in a variety of situations, including roof-spaces; old birds' nests (usually in holes); moss and leaf-litter on the surface of the soil and underground in old mouse or vole nests. The nest is small, usually with fewer than 50 workers.

Arachnids - Spiders

This is a group which on the face of it looks easy to identify but once you make the step of looking to an identification you then find with some 670 species it isn't as easy as one thinks. In saying this Ian and myself have managed to add 8 species to our very small list of now 26 identified species recorded In the Lytchett Bay area.

Spider sp. *Xysticus acerbus agg. Recorded 16th August Lytchett Bay shore*

The spider appears to be very local and at most sites only a few specimens have been found, but there now seems to be an increase in distribution and frequency happening, at least in some areas. They spider occur 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. Both sexes are adult in April and May.

Jumping Spider *Heliophanus flavipes agg. (H.cupreus.)*
Recorded 22nd May Lytchett Bay Heath & 19th July Lytchett Way

Though a small species at around 5 mm. they are still a striking spider with a dark body covered with numerous paler hairs which are sometimes golden. Its legs and palps are a golden lemony yellow in colour. The male is similar to H. cupreus. It may occur on low vegetation and the shrub layer, or on lower branches of trees, but always shows a preference for sunny conditions. Adults of both sexes are found mainly in May, June and July, females occasionally persisting into September. The species is local but widespread in much of the southern half of Britain and central eastern Scotland, but very scattered or absent in upland areas and much of the north.

Jumping Spider *Heliophanus cupreus agg. (H. flavipes) Recorded 19th July Lytchett Way*

This was an amazing record in that Jackie saw this small spider walking around in the conservatory and calls me saying "there is a small jumping spider here, but not like usual zebra ones" So after taking a selection of shots and checking my reference and later confirmed the identification with BAS. This species is widely distributed as far north as central Scotland but it is absent or very scattered in many parts of the country. It is widespread in western and central Europe. A species collected from a wide variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands, raised bogs, coastal cliffs, shingle beaches and wastelands and other disturbed habitats

such as quarries. In these varied habitats, it is commonly found in the drier parts, occasionally seen active on the surface but more commonly within litter.

Metallic Jumping Spider *Evarcha arcuata* ***
Recorded 8th July Lytchett Way

This is a Nationally Scarce species with records concentrated within southern Heathland districts (especially the heaths of Surrey and the New Forest) but with scattered records as far north as Yorkshire. A medium-sized, rather robustly built jumping spider (females up to 8mm long) usually found in mire, wet heath or damp acid grassland. Males are predominantly blackish with greyish markings of variable extent and whitish rings on the tarsi. Females are paler and browner with vague chevrons on the abdomen.

Spider sp. *Xerolycosa nemoralis*
Recorded 30th June Lytchett Bay Heath
This species is widely distributed in southern England except in the southwest and can be abundant at some sites in the south-east of England (mainly in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and southern Hampshire), but is very local and has shown some decline in the past 30 years. On Heathland it seems to get scarcer in the west of its range. They can be found in dry litter and bark in coppiced areas or clearings in woods, on short stony chalk grassland, on recently burnt Heathland (up to about 4 years after fire) or bare patches on older Heathland.

Furrow Spider *Larinioides Cornutus*
Recorded 24th July Lytchett Fields RSPB (Arable Field)
The species is widespread in southern Britain, becoming more patchy and scattered in the north. The spider can be found on reeds, grasses, and other waterside vegetation and in tall herbage and rough grassland, usually in damp places. Females can often be found spun up in a tough silk retreat in the seed heads of plants but they are also found on bridges and posts etc., where their orb webs are very prominent. During the day these webs may seem to be deserted, the spider having retreated to a hiding place in the foliage or a crevice in wood. The spider is a frequent aeronaut as an immature, so can turn up in some habitats well away from water. Adults are found mainly in early summer and late summer/autumn.

Rustic Wolf Spider *Trochosa ruricola*
Recorded 10th April Chad Copse

Fairly frequent and widespread in Britain I found this species whilst carrying out reptile work and found it under one of the artificial refuges and quickly took a photograph. They can be found mainly from April to June in Grassland, lawns and woodland scrub. The females are 15 mm (sometimes even bigger) and the males are 10 mm. Both sexes are dark brown with a pale band running the length of the carapace and continuing to the first half of the abdomen. The two short lines on the carapace are diagnostic of Trochosa species. The light cardiac mark tells it apart from the similar T. terricola. The spider hunts on the ground and is often caught in pitfall traps.

Four spotted Orbweb Spider *Araneus quadratus*
Recorded 2nd September Lytchett Fields RSPB

This particularly beautifully coloured individual was photographed by Shaun Robson whilst carrying out conservation work at the fields and was found on Holly-May's fleece.

One of our heaviest spiders, A. quadratus is an autumn-maturing orb-web weaver. They are readily identified in the field by the four white spots on the abdomen even though the background can be quite variable in colour ranging from orange-red to light yellow-green.

Harvestman

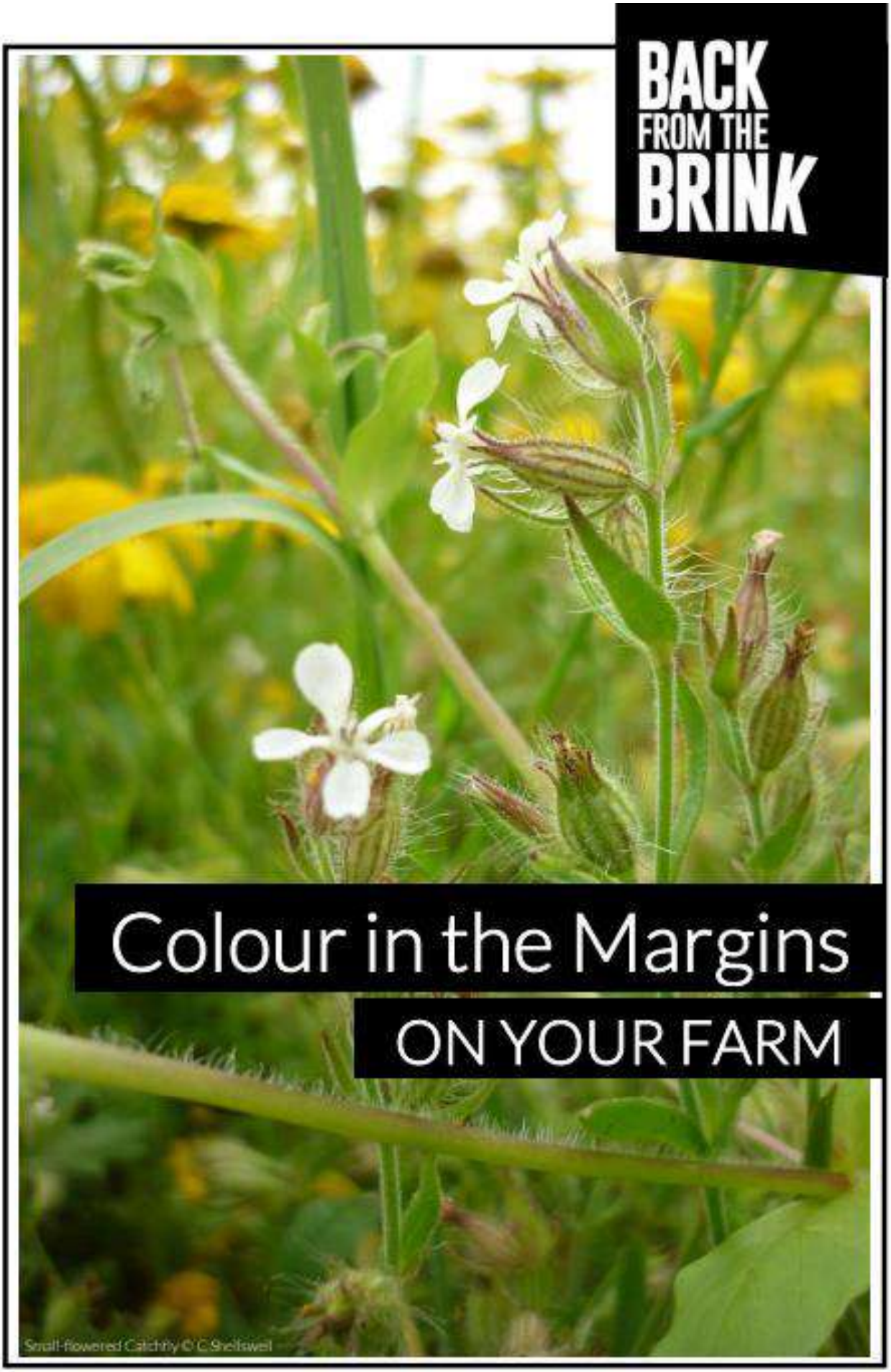
With their globular body and long thin legs, Harvestmen are unmistakable. Unlike true spiders, the body of a Harvestman consists of a single part rather than two. Many have very long legs and suspend their body low near the ground with their legs bent above them, thus forming a capital 'M' shape with the body at the central V of the M. Long legs allow the animal to span large distances between leaves and twigs as it climbs about vegetation. Not all species are long-legged, certain secretive soil and litter species have much shorter legs. World-wide there are over 3,500 species, of which only a couple of dozen are found in Britain.

Harvestman sp. *Phalangium opilio*
Recorded 19th July Lytchett Bay Heath

This and the next species have almost certainly been overlooked in the past as they seem to be commonly seen around the area. Which matches their distribution in the UK as a species that is widespread and fairly frequent in England, less well recorded elsewhere in Britain. This species can be found during summer and autumn in well vegetated areas. They feed on soft-bodied animals such as aphids, caterpillars, leafhoppers, beetle larvae, mites, slugs, etc. Also known to scavenge on various arthropods, including hard-bodied animals.

Harvestman sp. *Odiellus spinosus*
Recorded 29th July Lytchett bay Heath

This species is common species and is a southerly species that has been moving northwards. The adults emerge in June and can live through to December. It prefers man made habitats and is most often found in gardens and around buildings.


BACK
FROM THE
BRINK
Colour in the Margins
ON YOUR FARM
Small-flowered Catchfly © C Shellswell

Frenches Field, Lychett Bay

BACK FROM THE BRINK

Arable plants are the fastest declining group of plants in the UK. They have declined by a staggering 96% in the last 200 years. Seven arable plants are now extinct and a further 54 are considered threatened. Arable plants provide the food and habitat that farmland wildlife relies on, such as pollinators, birds and small mammals. With your help, the Colour in the Margins Project aims to highlight the importance of this undervalued group and halt their decline before it's too late.


Wild Pansy © Hannah Gibbons


Weasel's snout © Cath Shellswell

We found...

Good numbers of Small-flowered catchfly along with a range of other rare arable plants. The management currently carried out at Lychett bay is great for Small-flowered Catchfly.

Small-flowered Catchfly *Silene gallica*

Description: A small member of the campion family that grows to about 30cm in height. The hairs are tipped with sticky glands, hence the name 'catchfly'.

GB status & rarity: Endangered

Distribution: This species used to be widespread throughout the UK but now tends to have a south-western distribution. A significant proportion of the national population is present within Devon and Cornwall. This species was recorded at Higher Brownstone in 2006 and 2007.

Habitat: Requires annual disturbance and germinates in spring.

Key threats: Intensive farming such as herbicide use. Switch from arable farming to grassland farming.


Small flowered catchfly © Cath Shellswell

Small-flowered Catchfly *Silene gallica* Population Survey

A species population survey was carried out for Small-flowered Catchfly at Frenches Field, Lychett Bay

The Species Population Survey is designed to assess the size and status of an individual plant population. For consistent monitoring of arable plants, a population survey should be undertaken once a year when the plant is in flower. If the species is found to be present information about other environmental and management factors are also gathered, such as the type of crop, timing of cultivation and a soil sample may be taken to measure soil nutrients.

Date of survey: 30/06/2020 (plus numerous other visits during the summer)
Your surveyor was: Stephen Smith

A Species Population Survey was carried out at the following sites:
Lychett Bay Arable Field (Frenches Field)

Number of plants	Grid reference	Comments
1000's	SY968926	Several 1000's of Small-flowered Catchfly plants found within the north-eastern field corner
1	SY966924	One plant found along the southern boundary
300	SY965925	Several hundred plants found along the western boundary

This is the third consecutive year which this species has been recorded through Colour in the Margins at Lychett Bay. It is great to see that the population is fairly stable. It is also great to see that this species grows within a diverse arable plant community.

Inventory Survey and Important Arable Plant Survey

BACK FROM THE BRINK

An inventory survey / important arable plant survey was carried out on Frenches Field, Lychett Bay

The Arable Plant Inventory Survey is designed to gather a large volume of information in a standardised manner. It is a complete survey of all plants found in an arable field, generally at a presence/absence level. Only the plants recognised as being rare or threatened are summarised in the table below. These are known as Important Arable Plants and an Important Arable Plant Area (IAPA) score can be generated to indicate the County, National or European importance of the holding and field. Very threatened species that are Critically Endangered or Endangered may have a population count or a more in-depth Species Population Survey may be organised to count the population.

Date of survey: 30/06/2020
Your surveyor was: Stephen Smith

The IAPA Scoring System

The score is based on the presence of threatened arable plants that have been given a rating of between 1 for locally rare species of least concern to 9 for critically endangered or extinct species. It is calculated by adding together all of the species scores found over the last 20 years. The total is then compared to the overall soil type of the holding to identify whether the farm holding is of County, National or European importance, and the soil type of each field to identify whether individual fields are of importance.

Importance at a holding level				Importance Scores at a Field Level			
Importance	Soil type			Importance	Soil type		
	Chalk / limestone	Clays / poor-draining	Sands / free-draining		Chalk / limestone	Clays / poor-draining	Sands / free-draining
European	90+	70+	70+	European	45+	40+	45+
National	45-89	30-69	35-69	National	25-44	25-39	30-44
County	30-44	20-29	20-34	County	15-24	15-24	15-29

Plant	Species	IAPA Score	Comment
Small-flowered catchfly	*Silene gallica*	8	Found in 2018, 2019 & 2020
Corn Marigold	*Glebionis segetum*	7	Found in 2018, 2019, 2020
Corn Spurrey	*Spergula arvensis*	7	Found in 2018, 2019, 2020
Weasel's Snout	*Misopates orontium*	7	Found in 2019, 2020
Field Woundwort	*Stachys arvensis*	6	Found in 2019
Lesser Quaking-grass	*Briza minor*	6	Found in 2018, 2019, 2020
Sharp-leaved Fluellen	*Kickxia elatine*	2	Found in 2018
Common Stork's-bill	*Erodium cicutarium*	1	Found in 2019
Small Bugloss	*Lycopsis arvensis*	1	Found in 2018, 2019, 2020
Wild Radish	*Raphanus raphanistrum*	1	Found in 2020

Field IAPA Scores for Frenches Field, Lychett Bay (2018-2020 data): **46** **(European Importance for Arable Plants)**

Who to contact:
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Small-flowered Catchfly © Hannah Gibbons

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