

# The Birds of Wareham Common

*The 'All Time' Bird List: Version 1*



*Wheatear north of the railway on 30 August 2021*

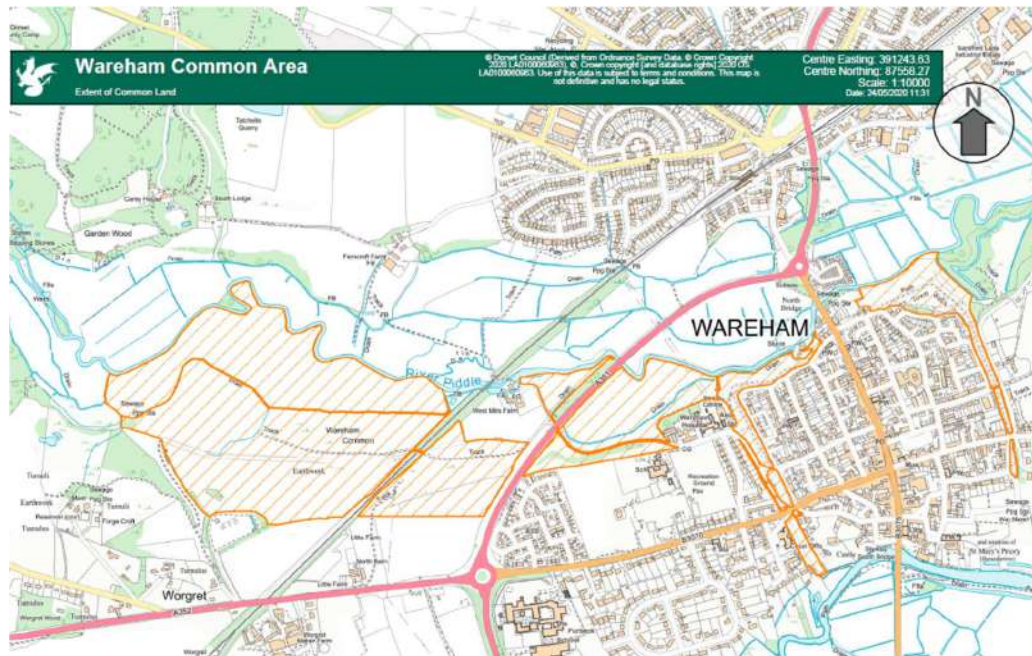
# 1. Introduction

## Version 1

- 1.1 This is the first version of the ‘all time’ list of birds recorded on Wareham Common. It is largely based on the ‘Birds of Wareham Common 2020’ report produced in January 2021, which described the birds recorded on Wareham Common during that year, together with some records from 2019. That report also listed bird species known to have occurred in previous years. This first ‘all time’ list adds in additional species seen in 2021 together with some additional historic records from earlier years. This list also establishes a more definitive (and slightly larger) Wareham Common Recording Area.
- 1.2 A total of 144 bird species had been recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area by the end of March 2022. 43 breeding bird species have been recorded in recent years, including 32 confirmed breeders, 8 probable breeders and 3 possible breeders. More detail on the birds that have been recorded is set out in the systematic list in Section 2. Section 3 contains a summary list of the birds recorded, the year when each species was last seen and a summary of the breeding status of each species. It is hoped to update the overall list (and the breeding status of birds) in future years as more records are gathered.

## Common Land Units

- 1.3 Wareham Common itself lies to the north-west of the town and is made up of 3 Common Land Units, which all lie south of the River Piddle, as shown in Figure 1 below. North (and west) of the railway the two main units are divided by a ‘drain’ running east / west. North of the drain is CL 136: Portland Meadow, which lies almost entirely in the floodplain of the River Piddle. South of the drain is CL 23: Wareham Common, which also extends east of the railway and east of the bypass, up to the ‘West Walls’ of Wareham Walls. The whole of Wareham Walls forms a third unit, CL 22: The Town Walls. The Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Purbeck and South Dorset map shows the areas of Common Land as open access land.

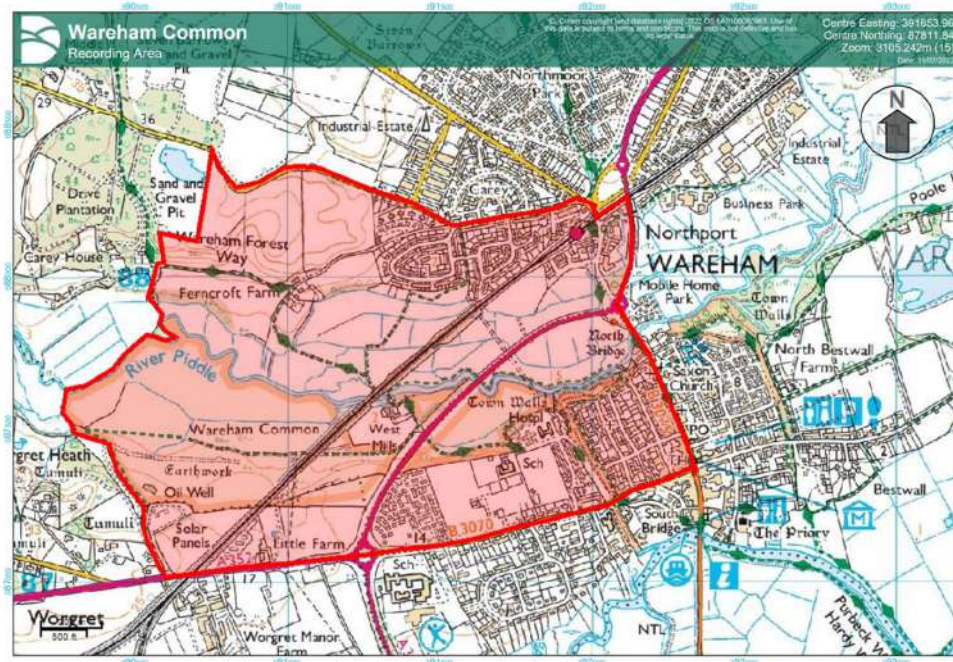


**Figure 1 - Common Land Units in the Wareham Common area**

## Recording Area Boundaries

1.4 The defined 'Wareham Common Recording Area', extends beyond the Common itself to include: other parts of the floodplain outside the various Common Land Units; the sides of the Piddle Valley; and parts of the built-up area of Wareham, as shown in Figure 2 below.

- From the Cross in the centre of Wareham, the **eastern boundary** runs along North Street to the North Causeway Roundabout and then along the A351 to the point at which it crosses the railway;
- The **northern boundary** follows the railway to the pedestrian level crossing at Northport and then runs a very short distance along the Bere Road to the junction with Carey Road. It then follows Carey Road through Northern Wareham and beyond to Tatchell's Sand and Gravel Pit;
- The **western boundary** runs along the eastern edge of the gravel pit, the eastern edge of the Carey House Estate (which in part is defined by the River Piddle), the western edge of Wareham Common and an oil well and then along the track serving a few properties at Worgret to the A352; and
- The **southern boundary** follows the A352 eastwards to the Purbeck School Roundabout and then along Worgret Road / West Street to The Cross.



**Figure 2 - Map of the Wareham Common Recording Area**

## Recording Area Sub-areas

1.5 The main 'sub-areas', where the bulk of bird species have been recorded are '**North of the Railway**' and '**South of the Railway**'. Both sub-areas include parts of the floodplain outside the various Common Land Units and parts of Little Farm, which lies between the southern edge of the Common and the A352. The 'south of the railway' sub-area is bisected by the northern section of the Wareham Bypass and includes a small solar farm just east of the

railway. The 'north of the railway' sub-area includes an oil well, woodland screening around it and an arable field west of the railway.



***Floods on Wareham Common south of the railway (and south of the bypass)***

- 1.6 North of 'north of the railway' lies the sub-area of '**Carey**', which is the built-up part of Northern Wareham south of Carey Road, and '**Ferncroft Farm**', which is the farmland area south of Carey Road extending down to the River Piddle. South of 'south of the railway' lies '**Wareham North West**', which includes the north-west quadrant of the historic town and various developments beyond The Walls including schools, playing fields, the doctor's surgery, the hospital and the new Westgate housing development adjacent to the Purbeck School Roundabout.



***Wareham Common north of the railway after the hay cut***

### The Wareham Common Area Systematic List

- 1.7 The 'Birds of Wareham Common 2020' report provided much detail on: bird species seen; the number of birds present; and the dates when seen. The systematic list in Section 2 is less detailed and uses the information from the 2020 report (and other information) to give a brief indication of how each species uses the Wareham Common area (i.e., for wintering, breeding or on migration). The list is based on records of birds seen (heard, or otherwise recorded) on, over and from the recording area.

### Contributors

- 1.8 The list has been compiled by Trevor Warrick with records from other local birdwatchers, including Ian Alexander, Adam Day, Peter Hadrill, Garry Hayman, James Lidster, Durwyn Liley, Peter Moore (who also provided a selection of photos) and Joe Parker. Observers on

the adjacent Carey House Estate including Brittany Maxted, Mark and Mo Constantine and Paul Morton also contributed to the list of birds seen in the Wareham Common area. The knowledge and recollections of attendees of the Poole Harbour 'Bird Pub' greatly helped with historic records. Steve Smith also supplied many old reports from which historic records were extracted.



*Wareham Common north of the railway before the hay cut*



*Mouse-ear Hawkweed in flower on the drier acid grassland north of the railway*

## 2. Birds Recorded in the Wareham Common Area

2.1 This is an 'all time' list of the birds recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up until the end of March 2022. It follows the taxonomic order of the 'Dorset List' (as of October 2021), published in the 2020 Dorset Bird Report.

### Systematic List

#### Canada Goose

Canada Geese are most frequently seen in small numbers on the floodplain of the River Piddle during the winter months. Larger flocks can be seen when the Common is flooded in the winter, or flying over the area at any time of year. This species is known to breed on the nearby Trigon Estate.



***Canada Geese with young on the Trigon Estate on 17 May 2021***

In recent years, the highest count is of 65 birds on the meadows south of the bypass on 21 January 2021. The highest count north of the railway is of 27 birds on 05 March 2020.

#### Barnacle Goose

The only record in recent years is of a single Barnacle Goose with 6 Canada Geese north of the railway on 03 June 2020. This was seen by an observer fly fishing on the River Piddle. Given the date this is presumed to have been a feral bird.

#### Greylag Goose

Greylag Geese mostly occur north of the railway in small numbers when the meadows are flooded in winter. In 2020, there was a maximum count of 7 birds on the floods on 01 January. This species can also be seen flying over the Common at any time of year with a maximum count of 37 birds flying upstream north of the railway on 05 January 2022.



***37 Greylag Geese flying over the Common on 05 January 2022***

### Mute Swan

Mute Swans can be seen both north and south of the railway in small numbers throughout the year, either on the River Piddle or grazing on the meadows.

South of the railway, 2 pairs bred in 2020 raising 6 (later 5) fledged young. In 2021, a single pair south of the railway raised 8 cygnets. Birds were recorded nesting on the River Piddle north of the railway, in both 2020 and 2021. In 2021, 2 adults with 5 cygnets remained on the meadows north of the railway until the end of the year and into 2022.



***Mute Swan with 5 cygnets on the River Piddle close to North Mill on 08 May 2020***

North of the railway there was a maximum of 24 birds on 01 January 2020. A maximum of 11 birds was recorded south of the railway on 01 January and 14 April 2020.

### Bewick's Swan

There is an historic record of 7 Bewick's Swans on 'Wareham Common - Piddle flood field' on 11 January 1998. A wintering flock became established in the Lower Frome Valley in 1968/69 peaking at 127 birds in 1991/92, but subsequently declining to a few birds by the end of the century. The birds seen in 1998 were most likely to have been part of that flock. Given the subsequent decline in numbers it seems unlikely that Bewick's Swan will be seen again on the Common, except perhaps briefly in very small numbers in winter or on migration.

## Egyptian Goose

Egyptian Geese are occasional visitors to the Common, both north and south of the railway, throughout the year. Most of the records in 2020 and 2021 related to a pair of birds that were more regularly seen at Swineham. More recently, higher numbers have been seen, both on the Common and at the nearby Holme Lane Pit. The maximum count is 12 birds flying over the Common on 09 August 2020. 6 birds were seen on the Common itself (north of the railway) on 28 December 2021.



***Egyptian Geese on the floods between the bypass and the railway on 29 December 2020***

## Shelduck

The only records in recent years are of a single bird on the flooded meadows north of the railway on 05 March 2020, with 2 birds feeding on a muddy pool in the same area on 31 March 2020.

## Mandarin

The first record in recent years was of 2 birds flying over the floodplain and into a ditch on or just beyond the far western end of the Common on 16 March 2021. This pair subsequently nested just off the Common on the Carey House Estate and successfully fledged young.



***Mandarin flying over the western end of the Common on 16 March 2021 (Peter Moore)***



### Garganey

The only record in recent years is of a pair on the flooded meadows south of the railway during the afternoon of 20 March 2020.



***The pair of Garganey on the floods south of the railway on 20 March 2020***

### Shoveler

In recent years, the only records come from the late winter period of 2019. On the flooded meadows south of the railway there were 7 Shoveler on 20 November, 5 on 06 December and 2 on 20 December 2019.

### Gadwall



***Gadwall on the floods south of the bypass on 11 January 2021***

1 or 2 birds were regularly seen on the flooded meadows south of the railway between January and April in both 2020 and 2021. North of the railway, a pair of Gadwall was seen on the flooded meadows on 3 occasions between 14 and 22 April 2020. A pair was also seen north of the railway on 24 May 2021 with a single bird seen on the River Piddle on 02 June. Although present in the nesting season north of the railway, there was no evidence of breeding. The maximum count was of 4 birds on 22 January 2020.

### Wigeon

In recent years, the only record is of a single bird with Mallards on the floods south of the bypass on 11 January 2021.



***Male Wigeon with a pair of Mallard on the floods south of the bypass on 11 January 2021***

### Mallard

Mallard are almost always present on the Common, both north and south of the railway. Typically, there are fewer birds north of the railway, with the highest counts recorded south of the bypass when the meadows are flooded. The highest count in recent years, was of 74 birds on 02 November 2021. The highest count in 2020 was also in November (on 17th) of 59 birds on the flooded meadows south of the bypass.

In 2020, regular surveying effort showed that a minimum of 5 different pairs produced around 30 ducklings south of the railway. In 2021, casual records showed that 2 pairs raised 5 juveniles south of the railway. There was no evidence of breeding north of the railway in 2020 or 2021.

### Teal

Teal is an occasional visitor to the Common, usually in flood conditions. The first record for the Common in recent years was of 2 female-type birds on the floods south of the bypass on 04 October 2020. On 07 January 2021, a single male Teal was with Mallards in the same location with 2 birds there on 21 October 2021.

### Common Scoter

There is a national mass migration of Common Scoter, including over land, in the early spring when the distinctive calls of this species can be heard at night. 2 flocks were heard calling over West Walls during a 2-hour period during the night of 03 April 2020.

### Goldeneye

The only record in recent years is of a male Goldeneye on the Common south of the railway on 06 January 2001. The bird was seen on the River Piddle downstream from North Mill.

### Goosander

A pair of Goosander were seen on the River Piddle on the Carey House Estate just beyond the western edge of the Common on 19 January 2020. The first record for the Common itself in recent years was of a pair on the River Piddle in a similar location on 05 March 2020.

There have been occasional records in subsequent years, all north of the railway and mostly at the far western end of the Common. The highest count (of 3 birds) was on 08 March 2021 (3 females) and on 01 January 2022 (1 male and 2 females). It is suspected that this species may breed further upstream on the Rivers Piddle and Frome, although this has not been proven.



***A pair of Goosander flying along the River Piddle on 15 February 2021***

### Pheasant

Pheasants can be seen or heard on the Common at any time of year. Nearly all sightings come from the Common north of the railway, but birds have also been seen at Ferncroft Farm and south of the railway. The highest count was of 15 birds on 01 November 2021. This comprised 2 birds on the Common itself and 13 in maize stubble in the field east of the oil well. All birds are likely to be wanderers from nearby shoots, such as on the Trigon Estate.

### Red-legged Partridge

The only record in recent years is of a single bird south of the railway, in the triangular field south of West Mills on 02 May 2020. This is likely to have been a bird wandering from a nearby shoot.



***Red-legged Partridge in the Triangular Field 02 May 2020 (Peter Moore)***

### Nightjar

Nightjars have occasionally been recorded foraging over the Common in the summer months and have also been caught in nets by ringers on the adjacent Carey House Estate. In 2021, foraging birds were seen south of the railway on 21 May and over West Walls on 11 September. In 2021, breeding was confirmed just outside the recording area when Nightjars with young were seen on the small patch of heathland to the north-east of Wessex Water's Puddletown Road Depot. Birds feeding over the Common maybe from here or from nests on other nearby heathlands.

### Swift

Swifts feed over the Common and nest in buildings within the built-up area of Wareham during the summer. In recent years the earliest record is of a single bird on 19 April 2020 over North West Walls, with the latest record on 18 August 2020 north of the railway. The maximum count is 19 birds over the West Mills area on 05 May 2020.

Swifts have been observed entering nest sites in the rooves of buildings in East Street, North Street and West Street, Wareham. During the summer, parties of screaming birds can often be observed over the town and the birds seen over the Common will include birds from the breeding colonies in Wareham.

### Cuckoo

In recent years, the earliest migrant Cuckoo was recorded south of the railway on 13 April 2021. Birds are most frequently seen or heard from mid-April until mid-June. In June 2020, a Cuckoo was seen prospecting the Common south of the bypass, where there is a concentration of nesting Reed Warblers, suggesting possible breeding on site.



***Cuckoo on a fencepost south of the bypass on 13 April 2021***

#### Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)

A small flock of Feral Pigeons is regularly seen in and around Wareham, most frequently on the rooves of properties near the Quay. These birds infrequently venture into the northern part of Wareham Old Town and occasionally pass over the Common south of the railway. The maximum count in recent years is of 6 birds on 05 January 2022.

#### Stock Dove



***Stock Dove in Wareham Lady St Mary churchyard on 26 April 2021***

Stock Doves can be seen on the Common at any time of year, having been recorded in all months. Usually just 1 or 2 birds are seen, either north or south of the railway. The maximum count was of 5 birds on 19 October 2021. On 26 December 2020, 3 birds were seen feeding on maize stubble in the field just south of the Common between the railway and the oil well. All records are thought to be of birds wandering from nearby estates.

### Wood Pigeon

Wood Pigeons can be seen on the Common at any time of year, having been recorded in all months. Typically, less than 20 birds are seen, but much higher numbers can be recorded, especially on migration in November. On 07 November 2020, 137 birds were observed flying over the Common north of the railway, including flocks of 43, 29, 20 and 11. The highest count was of 243 birds on 16 November 2020, with most birds flying from the woods beyond the western end of the Common. Also 112 birds were recorded on 16 January 2022. Moderate number can also be seen feeding in the fields at Little Farm, with the highest count being 45 on 26 January 2022. On 03 March 2022, a Woodpigeon was observed nesting in the roof above the westbound platform at Wareham Station, confirming breeding in the recording area.

### Collared Dove

Collared Doves can be seen on the Common itself and within the built-up areas of Wareham at any time of year. Typically, just 1 or 2 birds are seen on the Common, often around Little Farm. However, the maximum count was of 5 birds sitting together in a tree on the edge of the built-up area of Carey on 29 December 2020. There has been no evidence of Collared Doves breeding on the Common, either north or south of the railway. This species is likely to breed within the built-up area of Wareham, but has not been observed to do so.

### Water Rail

The first record of Water Rail in recent years was of a single bird south of the railway on 06 April 2020. A bird was heard 'squealing' from the ditch at the base of North West Walls on 19 October 2021 and then on 2 further occasions until 01 November. A bird was briefly seen flying from the edge of the River Piddle below West Mills on 16 November 2021. The secretive nature of this species makes it difficult to detect and it is likely to occur much more frequently than these records suggest. Recent surveys have shown that there is a breeding population of over 200 pairs around Poole Harbour, although there is no evidence of breeding on the Common.

### Moorhen

Moorhens are resident on the Common, both north and south of the railway, and 1 or 2 birds can be seen at any time of year. The maximum count was of 8 birds on 23 December 2020, including 7 on the seasonal pool that forms just north of the bypass embankment, but south of the railway. 5 or more birds were recorded on that pool on several occasions in late 2020. Higher numbers can be seen when the meadows south of the bypass flood, for example 6 birds were there on 04 March 2020. High counts have also been observed north of the railway, with a maximum of 7 in the River Piddle opposite the Carey House Estate on 19 October 2021.

In 2020 and 2021, breeding was only confirmed south of the railway, although it is likely that several pairs breed all along the River Piddle, both north and south of the railway. A single juvenile was seen on the river below West Mills on 23 August 2020 and a nest was found on the ditch at the base of North West Walls in June 2021.



***Moorhen on the River Piddle below West Mills on 05 September 2020***

#### Coot

Coot are typically seen in the winter when the Common is flooded. In 2020, a single bird was regularly seen on the flooded meadows south of the bypass until 29 March. This increased to 2 birds on 20 and 21 March. In 2021, a single bird took up residence on the seasonal pool that forms just north of the bypass embankment, but south of the railway between 11 January and 17 February. There is just 1 record of Coot from north of the railway. A single bird was seen on the River Piddle, just downstream from the Carey House Estate, on 16 August 2020.

#### Little Grebe



***Little Grebe on the floods south of the bypass on 03 February 2021***

Little Grebes occur during the winter months. Most records are from along the River Piddle south of the bypass, but there are also a few records of birds on the river north of the railway towards the western end of the Common. On the river sightings are usually of 1, or maybe 2, birds but higher numbers can be seen on the meadows south of the bypass when they flood. In 2020, birds were seen here from the beginning of the year until 26 March, with a maximum of 4 on 21 February and 21 and 22 March. The highest count in recent years was of 7 birds in this area on 28 November 2019. On 30 January 2022, a pair was seen and heard singing on the river south of the bypass, but there has been no more definite evidence of breeding.

### Lapwing

Lapwings are occasionally seen in the winter months flying up and down the Piddle Valley. Wintering birds have also been recorded in the arable field east of Little Farm. The maximum count is of 70 birds flying south of the railway on 13 January 2020. In 2020, small numbers of Lapwing fed on the exposed mud on the flooded meadows north of the railway during late March and early April. 6 birds on 22 March reduced to 2 by the end of the month. This pair remained and were possibly holding territory (although there was no obvious sign of nesting) until 14 April, when they departed. These birds were regularly seen chasing off Carrion Crows from the flock of 50 or more birds that were also feeding in the area.

### Little Ringed Plover



***Little Ringed Plover on the mud south of the bypass on 19 April 2020***

During spring migration in 2020, Little Ringed Plovers were regularly seen on the flooded meadows on the Common, both north and south of the railway, as well as at Swineham. Birds were recorded north of the railway from 22 to 25 March. Birds then favoured the meadows south of the railway until 23 April. From then until 31 May, birds were only seen at Swineham. In 2020, there was a total of 13 bird days in the wider Wareham area in March, 19 in April, and 8 in May, giving 40 spring bird days in total.



On 10 June 2020, it was confirmed that a pair had raised at least 1 juvenile at Dorey's Pit, Holme Lane, which may be where the late May birds at Swineham came from. However, there was no evidence of breeding on the Common in 2020.

There was no floodwater on the Common during the 2020 autumn migration period for Little Ringed Plover and consequently there were no autumn records. There were also no records at all for the Common in 2021, as the Common was not flooded during either their spring or autumn migration periods.

### Whimbrel

Whimbrel have only been recorded in small numbers on spring migration. The first record in recent years was of a single bird flying over West Walls calling on 27 April 2021. On 14 May 2021, 4 birds were seen in the ploughed field east of Little Farm, with a single bird present there on 24 May.



***2 of the 4 Whimbrel in the field east of Little Farm on 14 May 2021***

### Curlew

Curlews only visit the Common very occasionally during the winter or in times of flood. In recent years, the only records are of 6 flying over West Walls on 18 February 2020 and of 3 with Black-tailed Godwits on the flooded meadows south of the by-pass on 06 March 2020.

### Black-tailed Godwit

Black-tailed Godwits have only been recorded south of the railway (and south of bypass) when the meadows flood during the winter. Appearances are fairly sporadic and are usually of 1 to 4 birds, although sometimes larger flocks of up to 24 have been recorded. When conditions are right, they can be seen on a regular basis, for example in March 2020 they were recorded on 11 dates. Birds are most frequently seen early morning prior to being disturbed by walkers, or late afternoon when returning to Poole Harbour having fed on flooded areas further upstream.

The maximum count in recent years is of 720 birds in late afternoon on 04 March 2020, when the birds stayed for a short period before flying off together at dusk. Other higher counts include 163 on 29 October 2019 and 108 on 21 March 2020. However, since then birds have only been recorded in small numbers.



***Part of the flock of 720 Black-tailed Godwits south of the bypass on 04 March 2020***

### Ruff

In recent years there have only been two records of Ruff on the Common, both on floods south of the bypass in winter. The first record was of a single bird with a distinctive white head and upper body early on the morning of 21 March 2020 with Black-tailed Godwits. The only other record is of another single bird in the same area on 04 October 2020. This bird was searched for on the meadows north of the railway, but could not be relocated.



***Ruff with Black-tailed Godwits on 21 March 2020***

### Woodcock

Woodcock feed on the Common at night in the winter and can be observed arriving at dusk on clear nights. They were first observed on 11 January 2022, when 10 or more birds were seen flying in low over the woods on the Carey House Estate to feed either on the estate or on the western end of Wareham Common itself.

### Jack Snipe

There are only two records of Jack Snipe in recent years, both from wet areas in the winter. The first record is of a single bird flushed from the meadows south of the bypass on 20 November 2019. A single bird was also seen on 16 January 2022.

### Snipe

Snipe is a winter visitor to the Common and can be seen both north and south of the railway in small numbers. Birds have been recorded from January until April and then from September to December in a variety of locations. The highest count for the Common as whole in recent years was 13 birds on 04 April 2021 comprising 8 south of the railway and 5 to the north and the highest count north of the railway was of 12 birds on 19 February 2012, which were flushed when viewing the Glossy Ibis that was present at the time.

Perhaps the most reliable site is the rough, damp meadow south of the main east / west ditch across the Common north of the railway. The maximum count flushed from this area is 11 birds on 22 December 2020 and 02 February 2021. South of the railway the highest count is also of 11 birds from the meadows by North Mill on 03 March 2021.

### Common Sandpiper

The only record for the Common itself is of a single bird on the bank of the River Piddle below West Mills (south of the railway) on 27 June 2020. A Common Sandpiper was also heard calling as it flew over Mill Lane, Wareham on 24 August 2017. This species is likely to occur more frequently than the records suggest on migration in spring and autumn.

### Green Sandpiper

There are few records of Green Sandpiper in the recording area, but these records are spread throughout the year. The only record north of the railway is of a single bird that flew up calling from Mill Meadow on the Carey House Estate (and over the Common) on 16 September 2020, although a bird was also seen just off the Common at Worgret Heath on a pool in the flat field immediately west of the oil well on 05 March 2022.

There are a few more records south of the railway. A single bird was seen by the River Piddle in early (either 09 or 12) June 2020, with another single bird seen at West Mills on 19 October 2020. In 2021, a single bird was flushed from the floods on the meadows south of the bypass on 08 January. In 2022, a single bird was seen on a small pool in the arable field east of Little Farm on 14 and 16 February.

### Redshank

Redshank is an occasional visitor to the Common south of the railway when it floods in the winter. The first record in recent years was a single bird on the meadows north of North West Walls on 19 January 2020. 2 birds were with Black-tailed Godwits on the meadows north of the Doctor's Surgery on 06 March 2020 and on 14 March 2020, a single bird was north of the by-pass on the flooded meadows east of West Mills.

### Black-headed Gull

Black-headed Gulls can be seen on the Common at any time of year, both north and south of the railway. The highest numbers are seen when the Common is flooded. Birds often gather on the floods south of the bypass with over 100 birds being recorded in each month from January to April and from October to December. The maximum count was of 244 birds on 03 October 2020.

More than 100 birds have also been seen on the floods north of the railway in January and April with the highest count being 168 birds on 19 April 2020. The highest count for the Common as a whole is 250 birds on 29 December 2020 comprising 208 south of the railway and 42 to the north.

### Little Gull

The only record is of a first winter bird on the Common south of the railway on 09 April 2004. This is the text from the original e-mail: *“First winter type Little Gull on Wareham Common this morning with about 20 Black Headed Gulls. The birds are just south of the by-pass where it crosses the River Piddle to the north west of the town. Drive thru year tick a distinct possibility!! The birds seemed fairly settled and stayed put when dog walkers went past. You can also drive onto the top end of the Common if you carry on through Stretche Road car park (off West Street opposite Purbeck Council offices) bear left and keep going past the health centre / hospital. From here you can also probably twitch it without getting out of the car!”*

A long-staying bird also visited the Piddle Valley at nearby Swineham in February 2021.



***Little Gull in the Piddle Valley at Swineham on 22 February 2021***

### Mediterranean Gull

Mediterranean Gulls are seen on the Common during the spring, from as early as 07 April until late May, with a few birds also being seen in June. The latest record is of 2 birds over Ferncroft Farm on 24 June 2020. Birds favour the meadows north of the railway, where they often feed in small numbers with Black-headed Gulls with a maximum of 5 on 19 April 2020. South of the railway birds are typically seen flying over the Common, with a maximum of 9 on 16 April 2021. Birds can also be heard calling over the north-western part of Wareham in April. A concerted ‘garden watch’ effort could certainly achieve a significantly higher maximum.



***Mediterranean Gull north of the railway on 30 May 2021***

On 08 and 10 April 2020, 2 birds showed courtship behaviour on the meadows north of the railway including bill rubbing and on 11 April a pair was observed mating. It is thought that the birds nesting in Poole Harbour travel up the Piddle Valley to feed (and mate) early in the breeding season, with a small number dropping in on Wareham Common.

#### Common Gull



***Common Gull in the paddock by West Mills on 06 December 2020***

Common Gulls visit the Common during the winter months: January to March and October to December. Birds are most frequently seen south of the railway, usually in small numbers (less than 5) either in the paddock adjacent to West Mills or on the meadows south of the bypass. Higher numbers have been recorded on the floods, with 17 birds present on 21 February 2021 and a maximum of 22 birds on 21 February 2020. Birds also occasionally visit the former Middle School Playing Field with a maximum of 6 birds on 26 December 2020. Common Gulls are seen less frequently north of the railway, usually when the meadows are flooded. The highest count north of the railway was 14 birds on 15 February 2021.

### Great Black-backed Gull

Great Black-backed Gulls are most often seen flying over the Common, both north and south of the railway and can be seen at any time of year. Usually, only 1 or 2 birds are seen, but the maximum count was of 5 birds flying east, south of the railway on 08 November 2020. Single birds occasionally settle on the floods south of the bypass in winter.

### Herring Gull

Herring Gulls are most often seen flying over the Common, both north and south of the railway and can be seen at any time of year. There was a maximum of 36 birds south of the railway on 31 March 2020, including 34 birds passing overhead. In the winter, Herring Gulls often join the Black-headed Gulls on the flooded meadows south of the railway, with a maximum of 21 birds seen on the ground on 20 February 2021. The highest count on the ground north of the railway was of 7 birds loafing on the drier, acid grassland on 04 October 2020.

### Lesser Black-backed Gull

Lesser Black-backed Gulls are less frequently seen than Herring Gulls on the Common and usually the records are of 1 or 2 birds. Often the birds are seen flying over the site, but they can also settle with other Gulls on the floods, particularly south of the bypass. The only record of a Lesser Black-backed Gull settled on the ground north of the railway was when a single bird was seen loafing with 7 Herring Gulls on the dry acid grassland on 04 October 2020.

### White Stork

The only record of White Stork was of a single bird drifting high, south of the railway on 06 April 2020 heading towards East Stoke (Joe Parker). On 09 April 2020, what was presumed to be the same bird was seen in the Frome Valley near Holmebridge. A White Stork was also reported in the Wool area on 24 and 25 May and at Silverlake near Crossways on 26 May 2020. There is a re-introduction scheme on the Knepp Estate in Sussex and so it is possible that this bird was from that (or another similar) scheme, although it was not obviously ringed or tagged. The record was accepted by the Dorset Rarities Panel and included in the 2020 Dorset Bird Report.

### Cormorant

Cormorants have been recorded flying over the Common, both north and south of the railway, in every month. Typically, the records are of 1 or 2 birds in flight, with a maximum of 4 on several occasions. Single birds may also land on the Common, usually in the winter, with a maximum of 3 recorded by the River Piddle north of the railway on 03 March 2021. Birds on the ground south of the railway are usually on the riverbank or associated with winter floods.



***Cormorant north of the railway on 03 March 2021***

Glossy Ibis



***Glossy Ibis 3T7 in February 2012 (Peter Moore)***

A Glossy Ibis was first seen on the Common north of the railway on 12 February 2012. It re-appeared on 18 February and stayed until 26 February 2012. The bird was ringed (3T7) on the Donana Biological Reserve in Spain in May 2004 as a first-year bird. It was seen at Oued Massa, Morocco on

29 April 2005. Before arriving at Wareham Common it was seen at Lower Tamar Lakes in Devon on 20 January 2012.

### Spoonbill

The only record in recent years is of 3 birds seen from West Walls on 08 February 2021. They were seen flying up the Piddle Valley. These are likely to have been birds wandering from the wintering flock in Poole Harbour.

### Night Heron

A Night Heron was found (by Mark and Mo Constantine and Ian Lewington) on the Carey House Estate on 03 May 2021 and when flushed from a ditch, flew over the western end of the Common. After that sighting, the bird remained on the Carey House Estate for a few more days.



***Night Heron over the western end of the Common on 03 May 2021 (Peter Moore)***

### Cattle Egret

The first record in recent years is of a flock of 4 Cattle Egrets flying over West Walls on 17 April 2020. A flock of up to 12 birds was then recorded north of the railway on 15 and 17 November 2021, with 10 birds present on 18 November. On 17 November 2021, some of the birds joined the cattle in the fields at Ferncroft Farm. A single bird was also seen with cattle in the field east of Little Farm on 05 and 13 March 2022. In recent years, Cattle Egrets have been seen regularly nearby. In spring 2020, birds were regularly seen in the Frome Valley west of the Wareham and Stoborough Bypass and during the summer birds were recorded loafing with Little Egrets on the island on the main lake at Swineham. Given the increase in records from the surrounding area, Cattle Egrets are likely to be seen more frequently on the Common in the future.



## Grey Heron



***Grey Heron south of the bypass on 07 February 2021***

Single birds have been recorded flying over the Common, both north and south of the railway, throughout the year. The maximum count is of 4 birds flying up the Piddle Valley, presumably to roost on 28 August 2020. 1 or 2 birds have been observed roosting in trees on the Carey House Estate in August 2020. Birds occasionally visit the Common itself and have been recorded both by the River Piddle north of the railway and on the floods south of the bypass. The maximum count on the Common itself is 2 birds north of the railway on 31 March and 13 October 2020.

## Great White Egret

The first record in recent years was of a Great White Egret flying west over the Common south of the railway, later returning east over the Common north of the railway on 01 January 2021. On 04 January 2021, a Great White Egret was seen next to the River Frome near Holmebridge, which may have been the same bird. A Great White Egret was seen by the River Piddle north of the railway towards the western end of the Common on 11 May and 16 June 2021. A bird also flew over West Walls on 21 December 2021. Given the increase in records in Dorset in recent years, Great White Egrets are likely to be seen more frequently on the Common in the future.

## Little Egret

Little Egrets can be seen flying over the Common at any time of year, usually in 1s or 2s. Typically, birds visit the Common itself when it is flooded, where they feed in the shallow pools and channels.

The maximum count of 9 was on 07 April 2020 when there were 4 birds north of the railway and 5 birds south of the railway. There were also 8 birds present south of the railway on 30 March 2020.

### Osprey

There are just a couple of records of Osprey over the Common.

On 04 April 2020 an Osprey was seen flying over the Common south of the railway towards Poole Harbour carrying a twig. The same bird was seen on 06 April and was confirmed by its ring as 'CJ7', a bird born at Rutland Water, which subsequently stayed in Poole Harbour during the summers of 2020 and 2021. The Birds of Poole Harbour 'nest cam' has captured her building a nest on a platform close to Poole Harbour, laying (unfertilised) eggs and, in 2021, attracting a mate. It is hoped that she will breed in 2022 and subsequent years.

On 19 August 2020 an adult female Osprey was seen from North West Walls flying towards Wareham. Ospreys have been seen in greater numbers migrating through Poole Harbour in recent years as a result of re-introduction programmes both locally and elsewhere in Britain. Sightings on the Common are likely to increase in the future, especially if birds breed in nearby Poole Harbour.

### Sparrowhawk

Sparrowhawk has been recorded on the Common in every month and can be seen both north and south of the railway as well as over Ferncroft Farm and the built-up areas of Wareham and Carey. Sparrowhawks are most frequently seen south of the railway and nearly all records are of single birds, although 2 birds have been seen on a number of occasions, for example on 13 and 26 September and 01 October 2020.



*Sparrowhawk in a garden in Wareham on 02 April 2020*

### Goshawk

The first record in recent years was of a Goshawk over the far western end of the Common on 26 March 2022. Goshawks have previously been seen at various sites in the local area, including Swineham, the Carey House Estate and the Trigon Estate, but this was the first definite record for the Common itself.

## Marsh Harrier

Marsh Harriers are very occasionally seen flying over the Common. The first record in recent years was on 24 June 2019 when a Marsh Harrier flew off the Common south of the railway and then low over Wareham via Ropers Lane. On 06 April 2020, a migrating Marsh Harrier, which had earlier been seen over Lytchett Bay, passed over the Common south of the railway and was seen from North West Walls. The most recent sighting was on 08 March 2022 over Wareham Railway Station. Birds have also occasionally been seen further up the Piddle Valley over the Carey House Estate, for example on 11 February 2020. Most records are likely to be from birds that winter (and occasionally breed) in Poole Harbour.



***Marsh Harrier over Swineham Point on 03 January 2021***

## Hen Harrier

The first record in recent years was of a ringtail high over the Piddle Valley south of the railway on 18 January 2015, seen from within the built-up area of Wareham. The only other record is also of a ringtail flying from the Carey House Estate across the Common north of the railway on 04 November 2020.

## Red Kite

Red Kites are occasionally seen flying over the Common, chiefly in the spring. Usually there are just 1 or 2 records a year, but in 2020, 9 birds were seen on migration during the spring on 5 dates between 07 April and 10 May. The 3 birds seen on 10 May 2020 were part of a huge influx of birds into Dorset, which mostly seemed to be heading west ahead of colder, northerly winds. This influx included: 117 birds at West Bexington; 87 birds at Bridport; 63 birds over Westbourne; 50+ over Abbotsbury Swannery, 34 birds over Lodmoor and 30 over Swanage. The most recent record is of a single bird over Wareham Railway Station on 08 March 2022.



***Red Kite over Wareham Common on 07 April 2020***

### White-tailed Eagle

The only record is of a juvenile White-tailed Eagle seen (by Adam Day) over West Walls late morning on 07 September 2020. He tweeted *“just went outside to check the commotion in the garden from the birds to see a juvenile White-tailed Eagle slowly drifting over the house with Ravens in hot pursuit!”* There is a re-introduction scheme on the Isle of Wight, but satellite tracking data showed that the bird over Wareham was not part of that scheme and was presumed to be of continental origin. There were two records of wild birds in Dorset in 2020, the first since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as recorded in the Dorset Bird Report. With the re-introduction scheme on the Isle of Wight there have been many sightings in and around Poole Harbour, including at nearby Swineham. There are likely to be further sightings of these re-introduced birds on the Common in the future.

### Buzzard



***Buzzard south of the railway on 10 August 2020***

Buzzard has been recorded on the Common, both north and south of the railway and over the built-up areas of Wareham and Carey in all months of the year. North of the railway there was a maximum of 6 birds in the air together on 04 August 2021, with 5 birds mobbing a Red Kite on 07 April 2020. South of the railway, the maximum count is of 4 birds together on 01 April 2020 and 16 March 2021.

There are few trees on Wareham Common, so it is unlikely that Buzzards breed on site. However, breeding was confirmed on the Carey House Estate in 2019 and Buzzards also breed on the Trigon Estate. Some of the birds visiting the Common were clearly juveniles, probably from nests on these estates further up the Piddle Valley.

### Barn Owl

Barn Owls breed on or adjacent to the Common north of the railway and regularly hunt over that area throughout the year. A pair bred in a nest box on the Carey House Estate during the summer of 2020, producing 4 juveniles and a pair was thought to breed on the Common itself in 2021.



***Barn Owl north of the railway on 12 March 2021***

In 2020, 2 adults were regularly seen hunting over the Common north of the railway in the evenings during August and September and into early October. A single Barn Owl was observed using an ivy-clad tree on the Common north of the railway as a daytime roost from 10 October until 06 December 2020 with single birds continuing to be seen throughout the winter and into early 2021. 2 birds were seen hunting together on 30 June 2021, suggesting breeding in the area.

### Tawny Owl

Records of Tawny Owl are typically of calling birds heard towards or after dusk. Birds can be heard north of the railway calling from the woods beyond the western end of the Common. Tawny Owls are known to breed on the Carey House Estate and this was confirmed when young birds were photographed in May 2019. South of the railway birds can be heard calling from within the built-up area of Wareham, most frequently during the winter. In 2020, this included frequent records of calling birds from the conifers behind the Doctor's Surgery, particularly in February and October.

## Hoopoe

The only record in recent years is of a Hoopoe (seen by Joe Parker) at the base of North West Walls, south of the River Piddle on 06 April 2020. It was disturbed and then flew over the houses in Wareham, but despite searching was not relocated.

## Kingfisher

Kingfisher can be seen both north and south of the railway, usually along the River Piddle. However, on 16 September 2020 a bird was seen in scrub adjoining the northern side of the railway, where it was thought to be fishing on the ditch at the base of the embankment. In recent years, birds have been seen frequently in all months from August to December, but are more difficult to see in the first half of the year. South of the railway, birds have been seen: fishing at the pool below the weir at West Mills; on the River Piddle south of the bypass; at the base of North West Walls; flying under the Wareham Bypass; and downstream of North Mill.

Kingfishers are not thought to breed on the Common, but breeding was confirmed on the adjacent Carey House Estate in 2019 (2 pairs) and on the Trigon Estate (3 pairs) in 2020. Ringing shows that birds from elsewhere also visit the Piddle Valley, as a bird ringed at Lytchett Bay (11 kilometres to the north-east) on 17 August 2020 was recovered on the Carey House Estate on 23 August 2020.



***Kingfisher at the pool below West Mills on 17 September 2020***

## Wryneck

The Dorset Natural History Report for 1916 notes a Wryneck heard outside Wareham Station (by E Harker Curtis) on 27 May 1916. Wryneck was a fairly common breeding species in Dorset in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so is likely to have occurred more frequently than this single historic record suggests. Wryneck was lost as a regular breeding species in Dorset by 1950, but still occurs as a vagrant, most often in the autumn. Any future records on the Common are likely to be of autumn vagrants.

## Great Spotted Woodpecker

Great Spotted Woodpecker has been recorded on the Common in every month of the year. Birds are most frequently seen and heard north of the railway, often at the far western end of the Common where the highest count has been 2 birds. North of the railway birds have also been seen at Ferncroft Farm. South of the railway single birds have been recorded from the trees behind the

Doctor's Surgery and from the trees by the River Piddle downstream from West Mills. Birds are also occasionally seen in gardens in the north-western part of Wareham.

Given the lack of woodland habitat, it is unlikely that this species breeds on the Common, but birds have been heard drumming both at the far western end of the Common and in the trees behind the Doctor's Surgery. This species is known to breed nearby, for example on the Carey House Estate.



***Great Spotted Woodpecker in a Wareham Garden on 13 September 2020***

### [Green Woodpecker](#)

Green Woodpecker has been recorded most often in July and August from north of the railway at the far western end of the Common. South of the railway, there are just two records of single birds on 10 August 2020 and 16 January 2022.

This species breeds in nearby Wareham Forest but is unlikely to breed on Wareham Common given the lack of woodland habitat.

### [Kestrel](#)

Kestrel has been recorded in every month of the year and can often be seen hunting over the Common, both north and south of the railway.

On 27 June 2020, an adult and a juvenile were seen and on 05 July 2020, 3 birds were observed hunting together: 2 adults and a juvenile. Given the lack of trees, these birds probably bred nearby, rather than on the Common itself. Breeding was confirmed on the Carey House Estate in 2020. In April 2020, 2 birds were calling and flying together from the mature conifers behind the Doctor's Surgery. Although nesting was suspected, breeding was not proved.



***Kestrel flying over the Common with prey on 07 May 2021 (Peter Moore)***

### Merlin

There are only three records of Merlin on the Common. The first record in recent years was of a Merlin over the meadows south of the bypass on 19 December 2019. A bird was also seen flying across the Carey House Estate and then across the Common north of the railway on 02 November 2020. The third record is of a male on 15 February 2021 flying over the field between the railway and the oil well, north of the railway.



***Merlin north of the railway on 15 February 2021***



***Hobby over the floodplain on 16 May 2021***

### Hobby

The first record of Hobby in recent years was of a single bird hunting for hirundines over the River Piddle at the far western end of the Common on 03 May 2021. A pair of birds was observed on 16 and 24 May feeding in the same area, but there were no further records until a single bird was seen on 01 September 2021. Birds were also regularly heard calling at dawn and dusk in the summer of 2019 on the Carey House Estate, but in both cases, breeding was not proven.



## Peregrine

There are only three records for the Common north of the railway in recent years. These are: a Peregrine over the meadows on 17 April 2020; an adult male taking a Mallard on 01 July 2020; and a bird taking a small mammal from the floodplain of the Carey House Estate on 03 May 2021.

Peregrines are seen more regularly south of the railway and have been recorded in most months of the year, especially in the autumn and winter. Birds are most often seen hunting over the floodplain south of the railway (and bypass), especially when the floods attract wetland birds. On 16 February 2020, a Peregrine was seen feeding on a Black-headed Gull and on 23 April 2020 a bird was seen hunting the waders.

## Ring-necked Parakeet

The first record in recent years is of 3 birds visiting feeders in a garden in the north-western part of Wareham on 05 January 2008. The only other record is of a single bird flying across the Common and into the trees behind the Doctor's Surgery on 25 March 2020. These records are both thought to be of wandering birds from the Studland area.

## Red-backed Shrike

The only record in recent years is of a female Red-backed Shrike on the 'Piddle Water Meadows' north of the railway on 06 June 2007. This species last bred in Dorset in 1955, but vagrants occasionally occur. Another vagrant bird was also recorded on the nearby Trigon Estate in the 1980s.

## Jay

Jay has been recorded in most months of the year and birds are most frequently seen north of the railway at the far western end of the Common. Most records are of single birds, but 3 have been seen on several occasions, especially later in the year. South of the railway there are fewer records and birds have most frequently been seen on the scrubby slope south of West Mills between the bypass and the railway.

On 31 August 2020, 2 adults and a juvenile were seen together at the far western end of the Common, confirming breeding in the area.



***Juvenile Jay at the western end of the Common on 31 August 2020***

## Magpie

Small numbers of Magpies have been recorded in all months of the year, both north and south of the railway. The maximum count is of 15 birds at Ferncroft Farm on 30 January 2022. In summer 2020, birds were seen going to roost in the trees behind West Mills, with 15 birds observed at dusk on 28 August and 14 birds seen on 18 September 2020. At least some of the birds seemed to come from the built-up area of Carey, Northern Wareham.

Breeding was confirmed south of the railway on 01 June 2020, when 2 juveniles were seen with 2 adult birds in the paddock at West Mills. The juveniles were also seen on several subsequent occasions.



***Juvenile Magpie in the paddock at West Mills on 01 June 2020***

## Jackdaw



***Juvenile Jackdaw being fed in a garden in Wareham on 01 June 2020***

Jackdaw has been recorded in all months of the year with flocks of 20 or more birds being seen in most months. The highest counts have been of birds feeding on the floodplain, both north and south of the railway. The maximum count for the Common as a whole was on 17 November 2020 when there were 101 birds feeding on the meadows south of the bypass, with 33 north of the railway, giving a total of 134 birds.

An adult was seen feeding a juvenile on a bird table in a garden in Mill Lane, Wareham on 30 June 2020 confirming breeding in the local area, although probably not on the Common itself.

### Rook

Rook has been recorded in all months of the year. They are most often seen feeding on the floodplain north of the railway, especially in the winter. The maximum count is of 67 birds north of the railway on 22 December 2020. South of the railway Rooks are less frequently seen and are generally less numerous, although 68 birds were recorded on 16 January 2022. Birds can occasionally be seen feeding on the floods south of the bypass, especially in winter, or flying over the site.

### Carrion Crow

Small numbers of Carrion Crows have been recorded in all months of the year, both north and south of the railway. Much higher numbers can be seen north of the railway when the meadows flood. On 28 March 2020 a large mixed flock of corvids on the meadows included a maximum count of 57 Carrion Crows. South of the railway the maximum count is of 11 birds on 01 November 2020.

### Raven

Raven has been recorded both north and south of the railway in small numbers. Birds are regularly seen throughout the winter and early spring, but are rarely observed during late spring and summer. The maximum count is of 8 birds flying over the Common north of the railway on 15 November 2021. The maximum count south of the railway is of 6 birds flying east down the Piddle Valley and over North West Walls on 26 March 2020.



***Ravens over North West Walls on 26 March 2020***

Ravens have been seen prospecting the conifers behind the Doctor's Surgery as a potential nest site on several occasions, mostly in December and January, but there is no evidence that this location has been selected by breeding birds.

### Waxwing

There are two definite records of Waxwing in the recording area, both from within built-up areas. The first record is of a single bird in the north-western part of Wareham on 19 December 2010, which was part of a large influx of birds to Dorset at the time. The other record is of 5 birds at the junction of Carey Road and Wessex Oval Road at Carey on 30 and 31 January 2019.

Between 05 February and 07 March 1996, a flock of up to 40 Waxwings was seen around Northmoor Park in Northern Wareham with a total of 271 bird days. There are no specific records for the Carey area, but it is likely that Waxwings moved into the recording area at some point during their stay.



***Waxwing in a Wareham Garden on 19 December 2010***

### Coal Tit

Most records of Coal Tit are from north of the railway, where birds favour the woodland around the oil well and the line of trees between Portland Meadow and the main Common. 1 or 2 birds have been seen throughout the winter and into early spring, but seem to be largely absent in the summer when presumably they move into nearby woodlands to breed. Coal Tits are seen much less frequently south of the railway, but can be seen in gardens within the built-up area of Wareham during the winter.

### Blue Tit

Blue Tit has been recorded both north and south of the railway in all months of the year. The maximum count was of 14 birds on 29 September 2020, comprising 11 birds north of the railway (including 6 in trees around the oil well) and 3 birds south of the railway. A single juvenile bird was seen in the trees around West Mills on 04 June 2020, confirming breeding on the Common. A pair with a juvenile were also seen at the base of North West Walls on 31 July 2020. Blue tits also nest in gardens in Wareham, often in nest boxes.

### Great Tit

Great Tit has been recorded both north and south of the railway in all months of the year. The maximum count was of 8 birds (6 south of the railway and 2 north) on 16 March 2021. On 08 June 2020, 2 adults were seen with at least 1 juvenile on the ditch at the base of North West Walls

confirming breeding on site. Breeding was also proved in 2021, when a single juvenile was seen with 2 adults south of the railway on 3 occasions between 30 May and 05 June.



***Juvenile Great Tit south of the Railway on 30 May 2021***

#### Woodlark

The only record of Woodlark on the Common itself is of 2 birds flying north of the railway on 19 March 2020. These are likely to have been birds from nearby breeding or overwintering populations. Woodlarks breed on the nearby Carey House Estate and Trigon Estates and there is also a significant overwintering population between the Common and Wareham Forest. In 2020, 38 birds were recorded on 08 September: 21 on the Carey House Estate; and 17 on the Trigon Estate.



***Woodlark on the Trigon Estate on 10 May 2021***

## Skylark

Skylark has been recorded in all months of the year, except December and is most frequently encountered north of the railway, where 1 or 2 birds are often seen (or heard) over the floodplain. South of the railway Skylark is much less frequently recorded. Most records relate to the West Mills and Little Farm areas between the bypass and the railway, where birds are most often seen in spring and late autumn. The maximum count was of 6 birds on 03 March 2021, comprising 4 birds south of the railway and 2 north.

North of the railway singing Skylarks have been heard as early as 15 January, with singing birds more regularly heard from mid-March onwards. On 25 May 2020 a pair was observed on the ground on the floodplain and were seen flying in the same location on 08 June, suggesting that they were breeding on the site. On 24 June 2020, a juvenile was seen on the lane to Ferncroft Farm confirming breeding in the area.



***Juvenile Skylark at Ferncroft Farm on 24 June 2020***

## Sand Martin

Sand Martin is a summer visitor and can often be seen, both north and south of the railway between April and September. The earliest record in recent years was of 2 birds over the northern part of Wareham on 12 March 2020. The latest record was of a single bird with House Martins over the River Piddle by the Carey House Estate on 05 October 2020. Birds are most frequently seen feeding over the floodplain and the River Piddle, usually in small numbers, although occasionally larger numbers congregate. The highest count was of 96 birds feeding over the meadows and the River Piddle south of the railway on 12 May 2020. Birds are known to breed at nearby Tatchell's Sand and Gravel Pit.

## Swallow

Swallow is a summer visitor and can often be seen, both north and south of the railway, between April and October. The earliest record in recent years was of a single bird over the River Piddle north of the railway on 26 March 2022. The latest record was of a single bird south of the railway on 25

November 2021. Birds are most frequently seen feeding over the floodplain and the River Piddle, usually in small numbers, but higher numbers have been recorded during autumn migration. In 2020, there were 61 birds on 02 October, at least 100 birds on 03 October (maximum count), 59 birds on 04 October and 70 birds on 05 October. There are no records of Swallow breeding in recent years, although there is a strong likelihood that they have bred in agricultural (or other) buildings in the recording area.

### House Martin

House Martin is a summer visitor and can often be seen, both north and south of the railway, between April and September. The earliest record in recent years was of a single bird with 3 Sand Martins over West Mills on 02 April 2021. The latest record was of 5 birds south of the railway on 10 October 2020. The highest count was of an estimated 200 House Martins feeding over the floodplain and the Carey House Estate on 20 September 2020. 120 birds were also seen on 30 August 2021.

A minimum of 6 House Martin nests were found on the Westgate housing development by the Purbeck School Roundabout on 17 June 2020. 5 of the 6 nests were on the same block of houses (17 to 31 Westerman Way overlooking a mini park area). Groups of 10 to 20 House Martins feeding over the Common during the summer, particularly in the West Mills / Little Farm area, were likely to have included birds from this colony.

### Cetti's Warbler



***Cetti's Warbler on the ditch at the base of North West Walls on 01 August 2020***

Cetti's Warblers are present on the Common all year, both north and south of the railway, but are more difficult to detect during the winter when they are often silent. Singing males during May and June suggested breeding on the site, which was confirmed with juveniles seen in late July 2020.

In mid-May 2020 there were 7 singing males on the Common, which were thought to be territorial breeding birds: 2 north of the railway; and 5 to the south (see map with the commentary on Reed Warbler).

North of the railway a singing male was recorded in the waterside trees immediately adjacent to the railway line behind West Mills on 15 May (and subsequently). Another singing male held territory on the tree-lined stream on the edge of the Common, left of the track through the ford to Ferncroft Farm.

South of the railway 5 singing males were recorded on 13 May (and subsequently).

- 3 of these were south of the bypass. 1 was in the reeds just west of North Street bridge on the River Piddle; 1 was along the ditch at the base of the Walls by a mature tree half way along; and another was at the far western end.
- 2 were north of the bypass. 1 was in trees on the embankment on the northern side of the road; and 1 was in the trees and the fenced-off emergent vegetation on the northern bank of the River Piddle just below West Mills.

On 13 June 2020 an adult was seen carrying food on the ditch at the base of North West Walls and on 26 July a family party of 4 birds, with at least 2 juveniles, was seen in the same area, confirming breeding on the site.

### Long-tailed Tit

Long-tailed Tit has been recorded both north and south of the railway in all months of the year. The maximum count was a flock of 16 birds in the trees around West Mills on 17 November 2020. A total of 16 birds was also recorded for the Common as a whole on 13 October 2020: with 10 birds south of the railway and 6 to the north.



*Long-tailed Tit south of the railway on 05 February 2020*



In April and May 2020, a pair was regularly seen in the same location along the ditch at the base of North West Walls suggesting nest building in that area. On 20 July 2020 a juvenile was seen in a flock of 5 birds in the scrub on the northern edge of the bypass, south of West Mills confirming breeding in the area.



*Juvenile Long-tailed Tit in scrub by the paddock at West Mills on 20 July 2020*

#### Willow Warbler



*Willow Warbler on the ditch at the base of North West Walls on 06 August 2020*

Willow Warblers are only seen on migration on the Common and have been recorded both north and south of the railway. There are generally few birds seen in the spring, with larger numbers on return migration peaking in August.

In 2020, the first migrant was seen on 06 April and the last on 05 September. In spring 2020, only 2 birds were seen on migration south of the railway, with 4 to the north. In autumn 2020, 29 birds were seen on migration south of the railway, with 10 to the north. A similar pattern was observed on the adjacent Carey House Estate, where 34 Willow Warblers were ringed in autumn 2020 between 17 July and 18 September. The latest date Willow Warbler has been recorded is 21 September 2021.

### Chiffchaff

Despite being mainly a summer migrant, Chiffchaff has been recorded on the Common in every month of the year. A few birds overwinter in very small numbers. They also occur on migration in both spring and autumn, with a few birds staying to breed. There is typically an increase in numbers in the summer and autumn after the breeding season and during autumn migration.

Chiffchaff has been recorded singing south of the railway as early as 28 January 2020, but typically spring migrants arrive and start to sing more consistently from mid-March onwards. For example, 4 birds were noted singing north of the railway on 22 March 2020 with many singing birds heard thereafter.



***Chiffchaff on Wareham Common on 20 July 2020***

In 2020, autumn migration peaked with a notable 'fall' of birds on 22 September, when 30 Chiffchaffs were seen across the Common as a whole, including 21 north of the railway, mostly in the hedges and trees along the southern boundary of the site. The influx of birds in the autumn was also reflected in the ringing totals from the adjacent Carey House Estate where a total of 146 birds were ringed between 17 July and 17 October, including 61 in September and 77 in October.

The presence of Chiffchaffs throughout the year, with singing birds in the spring strongly suggests that they breed on the Common, but this has not been confirmed.

### [Siberian Chiffchaff]

[The first record in recent years is of a Siberian Chiffchaff initially seen on 19 December 2019 on the ditch at the base of North West Walls, which stayed until 26 March 2020. It was joined by a second bird towards the end of its stay with 2 birds being seen on 16 and 22 March 2020. The original bird was first heard to call on 02 January 2020 and occasionally called throughout the rest of its stay. On 16 March 2020, 1 of the 2 birds (probably the original bird) also sang. Until late February, the original bird was most frequently found on the ditch at the base of North West Walls, presumably to feed on insects on the ditch and along the River Piddle. From March onwards the original bird ranged more widely and towards the end of its stay it was most frequently found in the trees behind Christmas Close flats.]



***Siberian Chiffchaff on the ditch at the base of North West Walls on 20 December 2019***

### Sedge Warbler

Sedge Warblers are only seen on migration on the Common. They only occur in small numbers, but have been recorded both north and south of the railway. Most records are from the edges of the River Piddle or from ditches across the Common.

In recent years, the earliest migrant has been on 16 April 2020, with the latest recorded on 08 September 2021. In spring 2020, 6 birds were seen on migration south of the railway, with none to the north. In autumn 2020, only 1 bird was seen on migration south of the railway, with 3 to the north. In 2021, a total of 9 migrant birds were recorded during the year across the Common as a whole, comprising 6 in the spring and 3 in the autumn. Ringing on the adjacent Carey House Estate shows that more birds pass through the area than the records suggest. In 2020, 33 Sedge Warblers were ringed at Carey in the autumn between 17 July and 16 September.

A bird was seen singing at the far western end of the Common by the River Piddle on 28 April 2021 and seemed to be holding territory, as it was regularly seen in the same location until 30 May 2021, but breeding was not proved.



***Sedge Warbler by the River Piddle north of the railway on 16 August 2020***

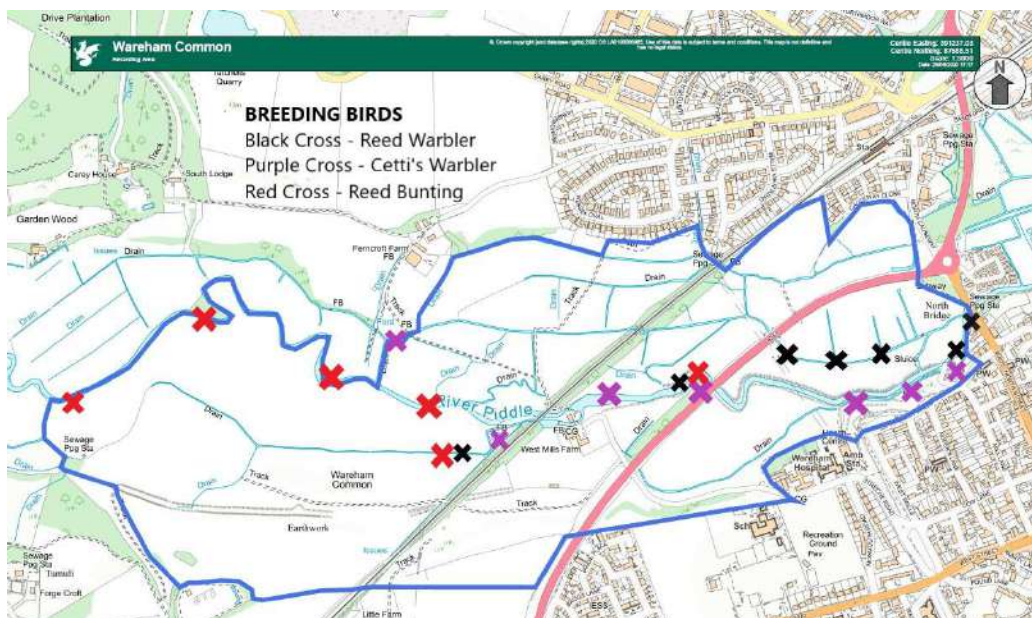
#### Reed Warbler

Reed Warblers occur on migration, both in spring and autumn and as a breeding species. In 2021, the first migrant was recorded on 28 April, with the last migrant seen on 08 September. Birds can be seen on the Common, both north and south of the railway, from late April until early September, most frequently on reed-fringed ditches or in reeds on the River Piddle below North Mill. On the adjacent Carey House Estate, 7 Reed Warblers were ringed in the autumn between 02 August and 06 September 2020.



***Reed Warbler carrying food north of the railway on 26 July 2020***

Breeding birds were surveyed in 2020 and this showed that in mid-May there were 7 singing males on the Common: 1 north of the railway; and 6 to the south (see map).



**Map Showing Locations of Breeding Reed Warbler, Cetti's Warbler and Reed Bunting in May 2020**

North of the railway, a singing male held territory towards the eastern end of the main east / west ditch across the meadows, between the railway line and the wooden gate. On 26 July 2020, 3 birds (including at least 1 juvenile) were seen in this location confirming breeding on the site.

South of the railway, 5 singing males were recorded on the meadows south of the bypass:

- 2 in reeds along the River Piddle just west of North Street bridge; and
- 3 on the main east / west ditch, 2 of which were at junctions with other (north / south) ditches where there are clusters of reeds.

On 15 May 2020, a further singing male was recorded in the fenced-off emergent vegetation on the northern bank of the River Piddle below West Mills, north of the bypass.

### Blackcap

Blackcaps can be seen on Wareham Common at any time between March and October and wintering birds are occasionally seen in gardens in the built-up areas. Migrating birds start to arrive in March and are thought to breed on the Common, with higher numbers seen in autumn with a peak in September.

Records of wintering birds in a garden in the north-western sector of Wareham include: 1 on 29 December 2014, with 2 the following day; 2 on 02 January 2015; 1 on 02 February 2019; and a female on 15 January 2020.

In 2020, the first singing Blackcap was heard on 16 March, although in 2021 the first singing bird was not recorded until 31 March. In 2020 there was a maximum of 6 singing birds on 03 May, all south of the railway. The last migrant in 2020 was a single female north of the railway on 13 October. On the adjacent Carey House Estate, 39 Blackcaps were ringed in autumn 2020 between 16 July and 12 October, with a peak of 18 ringed birds during September.

Blackcap is not thought to breed north of the railway, but probably does south of the railway. On 06 June 2020, a female was seen taking food into a bush on the scrubby bank south of West Mills, suggesting that there was a nest with young, although this was not proven.



***Female Blackcap on the scrubby slope south of West Mills on 02 September 2020***

### Garden Warbler

Garden Warblers pass through the Common on migration in very small numbers and can be seen in both spring and autumn. There are only 4 records in recent years: all south of the railway. The only spring record is of a singing bird in the hedge on the edge of the Common by the former Middle School Playing Field on 28 April 2021. 2 birds were seen together on the scrubby slope south of West Mills on 16 August 2020 and a single bird was seen in the scrub by the bypass opposite the paddocks at West Mills on 02 September 2020. A single bird was also seen south of the railway on 30 August 2021.

Although not recorded north of the railway, Garden Warblers are likely to visit this part of the Common, as 5 birds were ringed during autumn 2020 on the adjacent Carey House Estate between 17 July and 18 September.

### Lesser Whitethroat

Lesser Whitethroat is a summer migrant that has also bred on the Common. In 2020, a singing male was first recorded on 02 May on the scrubby slope south of West Mills. It was seen on several subsequent occasions and joined by a second singing male on 13 May in the same area. The second birds sometimes moved over to north of the railway. Both birds were still present on 27 June and it is likely that both pairs bred, although this was not proven. The last sighting in 2020 was of a single bird on 18 September.

Lesser Whitethroat did not breed on the Common in 2021, when there were only 2 records: a single bird on 25 August on the scrubby slope south of West Mills with 2 birds in the same location the following day.



***Lesser Whitethroat on the scrubby slope south of West Mills on 04 May 2020***

### Whitethroat

Whitethroat is a summer migrant that has also bred on the Common. It can be seen both north and south of the railway between April and September.



***Whitethroat on Wareham Common on 01 May 2021 (Peter Moore)***

In 2020, Whitethroat was first recorded on 11 April north of the railway in Gorse immediately south of the floodplain. Birds were regularly recorded throughout the summer, with the last record on 09 September 2020. On the adjacent Carey House Estate, 5 Whitethroats were ringed in the autumn between 09 August and 18 September 2020.

In 2020 it was thought that there were up to 5 pairs: 1 or 2 north of the railway and 1 to 3 to the south. North of the railway birds were seen holding territory along the main east / west ditch (west of the steel gate) and in scrub by the railway. South of the railway there were possibly 1 or 2 pairs on the scrubby bank south of West Mills, with potentially another pair in the hedge at Little Farm. In all cases breeding was not proven.



***Juvenile Whitethroat south of the bypass on 20 June 2021***

In 2021, breeding was confirmed south of the railway when an adult with a juvenile was seen at the base of the slope behind the Doctor's Surgery on 20 June.

#### Dartford Warbler



There are only two records of Dartford Warbler in recent years. The first was of a single bird in Gorse on the floodplain meadows north of the railway from 01 until 09 November 2020. The second was of a single bird on the floodplain north of the River Piddle on 01 January 2021, where it was on a ditch in the company of Reed Buntings and a Stonechat. These are both likely to have been wandering birds from populations on nearby heathlands.

***Dartford Warbler in Gorse on the floodplain meadows north of the railway on 04 November 2020***



## Firecrest

This species is becoming much more common in Dorset, with many reports of singing males in the breeding season in recent years. Although Firecrest is resident in Dorset all year, it is only a winter visitor to Wareham Common, where it has been recorded from January to March and from September to December. The first record for the area in recent years was of a bird on North West Walls on 11 and 12 February 2006, which had moved into a cleared area where trees and scrub had been removed to better reveal the archaeology of The Walls.

1 or 2 Firecrests were regularly seen on the ditch at the base of North West Walls from 21 December 2019 to 04 March 2020. One of these birds also moved into a garden in Mill Lane, Wareham on 15 January 2020. This species was less visible south of the railway in subsequent winters with the only records being a bird by North Mill on 13 February 2021 and a bird in Mill Lane on 24 January 2022.

North of the railway at the far western end of the Common, birds were seen from 31 August 2020 into early 2021, most frequently in the trees around the oil well. 2 birds were chasing each other in the trees by the oil well on 08 March 2021, but there was no subsequent evidence of breeding.

Firecrest has been confirmed as a breeding species on the adjacent Carey House Estate, with a minimum of 3 pairs in 2020. Birds that visit the Common in the winter probably move into nearby woodlands in the summer, such as those on the Carey House Estate and at Swineham, to breed.



***Firecrest south of the railway on 21 December 2019***

## Goldcrest

Goldcrest is a winter visitor to Wareham Common, where it is most frequently seen from January to March and from August to December.

South of the railway, Goldcrests are most frequently seen on the scrubby slopes, most notably in the trees and scrub behind the Doctor's Surgery, where a maximum of 5 birds was seen on 19 January 2020. North of the railway, birds are most frequently seen at the far western end of the Common, including in the trees around the oil well. Several late year records in 2020, suggested a late autumn influx with a maximum of 3 birds on 25 November. This was borne out by ringing records on the adjacent Carey House Estate with 9 birds ringed between 07 and 17 October 2020.

## Wren



***Juvenile Wren at the base of North West Walls on 02 May 2020***

Wren has been recorded in every month of the year and can be seen both north and south of the railway and in gardens within the built-up area of Wareham and Carey. The maximum count for the Common as a whole was 9 birds on 06 November 2021, with 8 birds recorded on 07 April 2020, 02 December 2020 and 12 April 2021. A total of 56 Wrens were ringed on the Carey House Estate between 17 July and 17 October 2020.

Breeding was proven south of the railway when a juvenile bird was seen being fed by adults on the ditch at the base of North West Walls on 02 May 2020. Wren is also likely to breed north of the railway, but this has not been proven.

## Nuthatch



***Nuthatch occupying a nest hole in a tree by the oil well on 23 March 2021***

The vast majority of records of Nuthatch come from north of the railway, where it is more frequently seen in late summer and autumn. There are very few records south of the railway, but Nuthatch has been recorded in the trees behind Christmas Close and in gardens in the north-western sector of Wareham. The maximum count was of 3 birds on 22 September 2020, including 2 birds in the trees around the oil well.

There are confirmed breeding populations on the Carey House Estate and in the woods at Swineham and the more frequent late summer and autumn records probably reflect the dispersal of birds after the breeding season. Breeding was confirmed north of the railway when a pair was seen occupying a nest hole in a tree by the oil well on 23 March and 12 April 2021.

### Treecreeper

The first record of Treecreeper for the area was on 05 September 1999 when a single bird was seen in trees close to the Doctor's Surgery, south of the railway (and bypass) during an ecological survey of Wareham Walls. At that time the section of the Walls adjacent to the Doctor's Surgery was covered with open woodland dominated by a few mature Ash trees.

In recent years, there have been just five records of Treecreeper for the recording area. Although this species is resident all year round, it has only been recorded on the Common between November and February and only from north of the railway. In 2020, a bird was seen in the trees around the oil well on 04 November and in the line of trees between Portland Meadow and the main part of the Common on 25 November. In 2021, a bird was seen in the trees on the slope south of Ferncroft Farm on 09 January, with a bird seen in the line of trees at the edge of Portland Meadow on 02 February. In the early part of 2022, the only record was of a bird in the woods on the edge of the Carey House Estate at Ferncroft Farm on 30 January.

### Rose-coloured Starling

There is just a single record of Rose-coloured Starling from the recording area. An adult bird was seen in a garden on West Walls on 10 June 2020 (by Sheila Morrissey). Despite a search on 11 June and subsequent days, the bird was not re-found. The record was accepted by the Dorset Rarities Panel and included in the 2020 Dorset Bird Report.

### Starling

Starling can be seen on the Common at any time of the year, both north and south of the railway. Birds are more numerous and more frequently seen south of the railway, where they often visit gardens and trees in the north-western part of Wareham.

The maximum count comes from a 'mini-murmuration' that formed during evenings in mid-January 2020 around the North Mill area. 212 birds were counted on 19 January, which seemed to go down into the reeds in the Piddle Valley east of road into Wareham. Large flocks have also been seen in the trees above North West Walls, including 100 on 09 January 2021 and 152 on 11 January 2022. Flocks also congregate on the wires at Little Farm with a maximum of 88 on 22 September 2020.

North of the railway the maximum count was of 42 birds flying west on 04 November 2020, with 40 birds seen on 29 December. However, numbers are usually much lower. Starlings are also considered to be 'surprisingly uncommon' on the adjacent Carey House Estate.

Breeding has been confirmed both north and south of the railway. Starlings nested in the roof of a property in Mill Lane, Wareham in 2020 and a juvenile was seen on 08 May. Starlings were also observed occupying a hole in a telegraph pole just to the west of the oil well on 24 April and 05 May 2021. They were also seen taking food into the hole to feed chicks.

## Blackbird

Blackbird can be seen throughout the year on the Common, at Ferncroft Farm and within the built-up areas of Wareham. Counts of more than 10 birds have been made on the Common in nearly every month, usually with higher numbers south of the railway. The highest count was of 20 birds on 12 December 2020 comprising 15 birds south of the railway and 5 to the north. The larger population south of the railway reflects the greater availability of suitable habitat.

Breeding was confirmed south of the railway on 05 July 2020 when a single juvenile was seen in brambles on the banks of the River Piddle at the base of Wareham Walls. However, it is likely that Blackbird bred both north and south of the railway in greater numbers, but this was not proven.

## Fieldfare

Fieldfare is a winter visitor to Wareham Common, but is much less frequently seen than Redwing. The largest flock was recorded north of the railway on 09 November 2020, when 120 birds were seen feeding on berries in the Holly trees at the far western end of the Common. Fieldfare were still present in this area on 16 November, although the flock had reduced to about 40 birds. 5 birds were also seen at Ferncroft Farm on 09 January 2021. South of the railway birds are usually seen in much lower numbers, such as 3 with Redwings in the pines behind the Doctor's Surgery on 12 January 2020, 2 in an Oak tree on West Walls on 10 February 2020 and 4 at the base of North West Walls on 18 February 2020.

## Redwing

Redwing is a winter visitor to Wareham Common and has been recorded from January to March and from October to December. Birds can be seen both north and south of the railway, but Redwing are more frequently seen (and in higher numbers) north of the railway, where birds often favour the far western end of the Common. On 09 November 2020, 22 birds were feeding on berries in a Holly tree in this area and on 07 November 2021, 26 came into roost in trees and scrub along the ditches in this area.

The highest count north of the railway was of 31 birds on 16 November 2020, with more than 20 birds being recorded in most winter months. South of the railway the highest count was of 20 Redwing between the bypass and the railway, where birds were feeding around the paddock at West Mills, although most counts south of the railway are of less than 10 birds.

## Song Thrush

Song Thrush has been recorded in all months of the year and can be seen on Wareham Common and in gardens in Wareham. There seems to be a slightly larger population south of the railway where there is more suitable habitat. South of the railway the maximum count was of 6 birds on 02 December 2020, with 5 birds being seen on 01 January 2021. North of the railway the maximum count is of only 3 birds on 15 May 2020, 28 April 2021 and 14 May 2021. A total of 17 birds were ringed on the adjacent Carey House Estate between 23 July and 15 October 2020.

It is highly likely that Song Thrush breeds on the Common, but this has not been proved. In early spring 2020 a pair was seen regularly at the base of the slope behind Christmas Close, which may have nested in the trees or scrub behind the flats, although this could not be confirmed.

## Mistle Thrush

Mistle Thrush has been recorded on the Common from January to June and from October to December and all records are from north of the railway. Most records are of 1 or 2 birds, but 3 birds

were recorded together on 10 and 20 October 2020. Birds seem to favour the western end of the Common and are often seen on the line of wires that runs east / west across the site.

Breeding was confirmed on the adjacent Carey House Estate in 2019 and 2020, but there is no evidence of this species breeding on the Common itself.

### Spotted Flycatcher

Spotted Flycatcher is a summer visitor that only occurs on the Common on migration. Birds have been recorded in both spring (April and May) and autumn (August to early October). Most records are from north of the railway, but this species has also been recorded to the south.

In 2020, the first migrant was seen on 27 April and the last on 03 October. In spring 2020, only 1 migrant was recorded on the Common: a single bird south of the railway in Alders on the bank of the River Piddle at the base of North West Walls on 27 April. In autumn 2020, 6 birds were seen on migration south of the railway, with 14 to the north.



***Spotted Flycatcher on the scrubby slope south of West Mills on 05 September 2020***

In 2021, the first migrant was not seen until 07 May and the last on 03 September. In spring 2021, only 1 migrant was recorded on the Common: a single bird south of the railway at the base of North West Walls on 05 May. In autumn 2021, no birds were seen on migration south of the railway, with 23 to the north and 1 on Ferncroft Farm. Most of these birds were seen at the far western end of the Common, either in trees on the wooded meander opposite the Carey House Estate, or in trees and scrub by the pumping station on the edge of Portland Meadow. The maximum count was of 9 birds north of the railway on 26 August 2021.

There is no evidence that Spotted Flycatcher breeds on the Common, but breeding was confirmed on the adjacent Carey House Estate (1 or 2 pairs) in 2019.

## Robin

Robins can be seen throughout the year across the recording area and breeding has been confirmed both north and south of the railway. Birds are also frequently seen in gardens in the built-up areas of Wareham.

Counts of more than 10 birds have been made on the Common in January and from September to December. The maximum count for the Common as a whole was 17 birds on 06 December 2020 comprising: 10 south of the railway and 7 to the north.

It is likely that there are many pairs of Robins breeding across the recording area, including in gardens. Breeding on the Common itself north of the railway was confirmed when a juvenile was seen on 25 July 2020. Breeding south of the railway was also confirmed when a single juvenile was seen at West Mills on 11 June 2020. 2 adults were also seen with a recently fledged juvenile on 12 August 2020 at the base of North West Walls.

## Nightingale

2 male Nightingales were distantly heard singing at night from the Carey House Estate, initially on 19 April 2019. They were heard on several occasions until mid-June, particularly on still spring nights. Distant singing birds were heard again on the Carey House Estate in spring 2020.

Nightingale was first recorded for the Common in spring 2021, when a bird was heard regularly singing during the day from the far western end. The singing bird was originally located on 24 April at Worgret Heath in scrub immediately north of the Wessex Water compound, but subsequently moved further down the slope towards Wareham Common, where it continued to be heard singing during the day until mid-June. The fact that the bird in 2021 sang during the day and well into June suggests that it did not attract a mate, although it is possible that it managed to do so in earlier years.



***Nightingale at Worgret Heath on 07 May 2021 (Peter Moore)***

### Pied Flycatcher

There are just two records of this summer migrant to the recording area, one south and one north of the railway. The first was a female in trees close to the Doctor's Surgery seen during an ecological survey of The Walls on 05 September 1999. At that time, this section of the Walls was covered with open woodland dominated by a few mature Ash trees. The only other record is of a female seen (and heard calling a lot) in the line of trees between the main Common and Portland Meadow, north of the railway on 18 August 2020.

### Black Redstart

There are just two records of Black Redstart for the Wareham Common area. The first was of a bird at Wareham Station in the 'early winter' of 1986. The second was of a bird in Streche Road Car Park, off West Street on 18 and 19 December 2002. There have been no subsequent records, but birds have been recorded just outside the recording area in recent years. In 2020, birds were seen in Lady St Mary Churchyard on 02, 04 and 25 April and 30 November. A bird also wintered at nearby Trigon House from late January until at least 30 March 2021.

### Redstart



There have been just six records of this summer visitor to the Wareham Common area in recent years, all on autumn migration. The first record was of a bird in a garden in Wareham on 05 October 2016. In 2020, there was a single bird south of the railway on 23 August on the scrubby slope south of West Mills. A Redstart was seen in the same location on 02 September, with another bird north of the railway on the same date. In 2021, there was a single bird north of the railway on 25 August and a single bird south of the railway (again on the scrubby slope south of West Mills) on 27 August. In 2020, just 2 Redstarts were ringed on the adjacent Carey House Estate: 1 on 30 August; and 1 on 06 September.

***Redstart in a Wareham Garden on 05 October 2016***

### Whinchat

There have been just two records of this summer visitor to the Wareham Common area in recent years, both north of the railway. The first was of a spring male on the main east-west ditch between the railway and the wooden gate on 22 April 2020. The second record was of a Whinchat with a Wheatear near the River Piddle on 25 August 2021.



***Male Whinchat on the main ditch north of the railway on 22 April 2020***

### Stonechat

Stonechat is resident on the Common in all months of the year and can also be seen at Ferncroft Farm. Birds breed in the summer, both north and south of the railway, and numbers can increase significantly after the breeding season.

The maximum count for the Common as whole was 18 birds on 13 September 2020, including 10 in the triangular field on the southern edge of the Common, with a further 8 birds north of the railway. 14 birds were present on 16 September and 16 birds were present on 07 October 2020. This influx was reflected in the ringing totals on the adjacent Carey House Estate, where 52 different birds were ringed between 16 July and 17 October 2020, including 34 in July.



***A juvenile Stonechat being fed at the base of North West Walls on 15 May 2020***



In 2020, it is estimated that 4 pairs bred on the Common: 3 north of the railway; and 1 to the south. North of the railway 1 pair nested in the Gorse on the meadows between the wooden gate and the steel gate. On 12 May this pair was seen with 3 juveniles. Another pair was slightly further west with 2 fledged young seen on 06 June. The third pair was by the River Piddle on Portland Meadow and probably nested north of the river on the Carey House Estate. South of the railway a pair nested in the Gorse on the north-facing slope behind the Doctor's Surgery, where 2 juveniles were seen with adults on 15 May 2020 and subsequently. Fledged juveniles were also seen, both north and south of the railway, in 2021.

### Wheatear

Wheatear can be seen on migration in both spring and autumn. Birds have been recorded on the Common in April and May and from August until October.

In 2020, the first spring Wheatear was seen north of the railway on 05 April and the last bird was seen on 05 October south of the railway. During spring migration in 2020, only 2 birds were seen south of the railway with 1 bird seen to the north. During autumn migration in 2020, 3 birds were seen south of the railway: 2 on the scrubby slope south of West Mills; and 1 on the former Middle School Playing Field, with 10 to the north. In 2021, Wheatears were only seen north of the railway during the autumn, with a total of 10 birds recorded.



***Wheatear north of the railway on 05 September 2020***

### Dipper

The only record in recent years is of a Dipper flushed from close to the weir on the River Piddle at North Mill south of the railway on 20 March 2011.

Dipper was recorded just outside the recording area on the River Piddle on the Trigon Estate in 1980. There are also historic records of Dippers breeding 'in the vicinity of Wareham' in 1896 and 1913.

### House Sparrow

House Sparrow is resident throughout the year on Wareham Common and is a visitor to gardens within the built-up areas of Wareham. House Sparrows are most numerous to the south of the railway, especially around the paddock at West Mills, on North West Walls and in the north-western sector of Wareham.

The maximum count was of 50 birds in the paddock by West Mills on 15 August 2020, although flocks of 30+ birds have been recorded in this area from June to November. The highest count north of the railway was of 10 birds on 29 December 2020 and the highest count at Ferncroft Farm was 12 birds on 01 September 2021.

Breeding was confirmed when at least 1 juvenile was seen in the scrub along the River Piddle at the base of North West Walls on 01 June 2020. There are likely to be many more breeding pairs across the Common and within gardens in the built-up areas of Wareham.



***Juvenile House Sparrow by the River Piddle south of the railway on 08 June 2020***

### Dunnock

Dunnock is resident throughout the year on Wareham Common and is a visitor to gardens within the built-up areas of Wareham. The highest count for the Common was of 13 birds on 03 March 2021, including 9 birds south of the railway. 11 birds were also recorded on 15 February 2020, 23 March 2021 and 12 April 2021.

Breeding was confirmed south of the railway on 16 August 2020 when a family party of 6 birds was seen near Little Farm, including at least 1 juvenile.

### Yellow Wagtail

Yellow Wagtail can be seen on the Common on migration in the autumn, with birds recorded from August to October. Although birds must pass through the area in April and May, this species has yet to be recorded in the spring.

In 2020, this species was recorded in good numbers in the autumn, both north and south of the railway. North of the railway a total of 43 birds were recorded in the autumn and 5 were ringed on

the adjacent Carey House Estate between 10 and 12 September. 98 birds were seen to the south of the railway, including a flock of 78 birds on 09 September, mostly in the triangular field beyond the scrubby slope south of West Mills. Yellow Wagtails were only seen north of the railway on autumn migration in 2021, with a total of 96 birds recorded, typically in flocks of 20 to 30 with the cattle on the floodplain.



***2 of the 78 Yellow Wagtails south of the railway on 09 September 2020***

#### Grey Wagtail

Grey Wagtail is a resident on the Common throughout the year, which also breeds. Birds are typically seen on or close to the River Piddle. The maximum count for the Common as a whole is 4 birds on 27 April, 15 May and 17 November 2020. On the latter date, 2 birds were by the ford on the path to Ferncroft Farm with 2 more south of the railway.



***Grey Wagtail on the River Piddle below West Mills on 31 March 2021***

In 2020, 2 pairs bred south of the railway. 1 pair nested at North Mill and on 27 April a single juvenile was first seen. The female bird of this pair was ringed and the same pair were observed mating at North Mill on 12 May. The second pair bred just upstream of the weir on the River Piddle at West Mills. On 15 May 2020, 2 juveniles were being fed by 2 adults, neither of which were ringed. Grey Wagtail also bred on the Carey House Estate in 2019 and 2020.



*Juvenile Grey Wagtail at North Mill on 14 June 2021*

#### Pied Wagtail



*Pied Wagtail on the floods south of the bypass on 31 January 2021*

Pied Wagtail is a resident throughout the year that also breeds. Birds are usually only seen in small numbers, but larger flocks can be found in autumn and winter. The maximum count for the Common as a whole was 54 on 26 September 2020, comprising 53 birds on the Former Middle School Playing Field and 1 north of the railway. Large flocks have also been recorded in the paddock at West Mills (38 on 01 November 2020) and on the floods south of the bypass (35 on 17 November 2020).



***Juvenile Pied Wagtail on the pool north of the bypass on 13 May 2020***

Breeding was first confirmed on the Common on 13 May 2020, when a juvenile was seen feeding with an adult bird on the muddy seasonal pool on the northern side of the bypass embankment. The nest was not located, but was suspected to be on the banks of the River Piddle. On 09 June 2021, a pair was observed going under the solar panels on the roof of 11 North Walls, Wareham. The same pair was seen feeding a single juvenile on 07 July 2021.

#### Meadow Pipit



***Meadow Pipit north of the railway on 28 April 2021***

Meadow Pipit has been recorded in all months (except July) and occurs both north and south of the railway. Meadow Pipits are more frequently recorded during the autumn, sometimes in high numbers both north and south of the railway. In autumn 2020, 26 birds were ringed between 06 September and 12 October on the Carey House Estate.

The maximum count for the Common as a whole was 170 birds on 05 October 2020, comprising 167 birds north of the railway (mostly on the floodplain) with 3 more to the south. Other 100+ counts were: 159 on 26 September 2020, comprising 104 south of the railway with 55 to the north; and 132 on 21 September 2021, comprising 113 on the floodplain north of the railway with 19 to the south.

On 28 April 2021, a Meadow Pipit was first seen doing a 'parachute' display flight from a small tree on the main east / west ditch north of the railway. This behaviour continued to be observed in the same location until 30 May 2021, but breeding was not proven.

### Tree Pipit

There have been just two records of this summer visitor to the Wareham Common area in recent years, both in the autumn. The first was of a single Tree Pipit with 3 Meadow Pipits in the triangular field south of West Mills on 16 September 2020. The second was of a single bird in the line of trees between Portland Meadow and the main Common, north of the railway on 26 August 2021. Ringing on the adjacent Carey House Estate shows that more birds pass through Wareham Common than these two records suggest. In autumn 2020, 19 birds were ringed between 21 July and 06 September, 15 of which were ringed in August.



*Tree Pipit north of the railway on 26 August 2021 (Peter Moore)*

### Chaffinch

Chaffinch is resident on the Common all year round. Birds can be seen both north and south of the railway, usually in small numbers. Although breeding has not been confirmed, this species is likely to breed in the area. The highest count was of 20 birds on 04 November 2020, comprising 15 birds north of the railway and 5 to the south. 17 birds were seen north of the railway on 01 January 2022, but otherwise there have only been 4 other counts of more than 10 birds in recent years.

A male was seen taking food into a bush, presumably to a nest, on the scrubby slope south of West Mills on 17 June 2020. Also, on 08 May 2021 a female was seen carrying nest material behind the Doctor's Surgery, south of the bypass. However, in both cases breeding was not proven.



***Female Chaffinch carrying nest material behind the Doctor's Surgery on 08 May 2021***

#### Hawfinch

The first record in recent years was of a single bird flying over the Common north of the railway on 17 November 2021. The bird flew from the Carey House Estate, where birds were subsequently heard on 04 and 06 March 2022.

#### Bullfinch



***Bullfinch north of the railway on 04 November 2020***

Bullfinch is resident on the Common all year round and can be seen both north and south of the railway. Bullfinch breeds on the Common, with higher numbers seen in the autumn and winter. The highest count was of 10 birds on 15 February 2021, comprising 8 birds north of the railway and 2 to the south. 9 birds were seen on 09 November 2020 (2 north and 7 south of the railway). 7 birds were also seen on the Common on 13 October and 02 December 2020. South of the railway, the birds favour the scrubby bank south of West Mills, sometimes moving into the hedges and trees around West Mills and north of the railway birds favour the trees and scrub at the far western end of the Common. The higher counts were made when birds were present in both locations.

In 2020, a pair was first seen on the scrubby bank south of West Mills on 12 May and heard calling on many subsequent visits. On 13 August, 2 juveniles were seen with 2 adults confirming breeding on the site. This family party was seen again on 18 and 27 August.

### Greenfinch

Greenfinch is resident on the Common all year round and is thought to breed. Birds can be seen in small numbers both north and south of the railway. The maximum count was of 9 birds on 07 November 2020, comprising 7 birds north of the railway and 2 to the south. 17 birds were ringed on the adjacent Carey House Estate, between 21 July and 10 September 2020 indicating that the local population may be larger than the sightings suggest.

Birds were heard singing on the scrubby bank south of West Mills on 12 May 2020 and calling from the same area on 17 June. However, breeding was not proven.

### Linnet

Linnet can be seen from March until early November and breed on the Common. Birds favour the land north of the railway, but are also often seen around Little Farm. Usually, they are seen in small numbers, but larger flocks occur both in early spring and after the breeding season. The maximum count was 45 birds feeding on the ground at Little Farm on 14 October 2020, with 35 birds in the same location on 03 March 2021. The maximum count north of the railway was 40 birds on 19 October 2021.

A pair was regularly seen on territory just north of the railway during April and May 2020. On 04 and 06 June 2020, Linnets were seen at Little Farm just south of the railway, including adults feeding juveniles, confirming breeding in the area.

### Lesser Redpoll

There are just five records of Lesser Redpoll in the recording area in recent years, all during the autumn and winter.

The first record was of a flock of 25 birds feeding in the trees on the railway embankment south of the railway on 01 October 2020. 12 birds were observed in the same location on 28 November. Also, 5 birds were ringed on the adjacent Carey House Estate between 05 and 12 October 2020. These early October sighting and ringing records were part of an influx of birds from the continent, with large numbers being seen at a variety of coastal watchpoints in Dorset and an unprecedented 25 being trapped and ringed at Lytchett Bay on 10 October 2020.

The other three records are: 3 birds feeding in the line of trees between Portland Meadow and the main part of the Common on 25 November 2020; a single bird feeding on seedheads by the road outside West Mills on 13 and 14 February 2021; and 2 birds south of the railway on 16 January 2022.





***Lesser Redpoll in the trees on the railway embankment on 01 October 2020***

#### Crossbill

The only record within the recording area is of Crossbills flying over a garden in West Street, Wareham on 04 June 2012. These are likely to have been birds that bred locally in conifer woodland, such as Wareham Forest or Rempstone Forest.

#### Goldfinch



***Juvenile Goldfinch on North West Walls on 06 June 2020***

Goldfinch is resident on the Common all year and birds can often be seen in gardens in the built-up areas of Wareham. Goldfinch breed in the area and larger flocks can be seen after the breeding season and into the winter. Flocks of 20 or more birds have been seen from August until December

and also in January and March. The maximum count was 79 birds on 01 October 2020, comprising 70 birds north of the railway and 9 to the south. The flock of 50+ birds north of the railway continued to be seen until at least 13 October 2020.

An adult was seen feeding 3 juveniles on North West Walls on 06 June 2020. The birds either bred on the Common or in a garden within Wareham town.

### Siskin

Siskin can be seen on the Common at any time of year, but are more frequently encountered in the autumn and winter. They can be seen in small numbers both north and south of the railway and occasionally in gardens in Wareham, with larger flocks seen in the autumn and winter. The maximum count was on 16 November 2021, when a flock of at least 40 birds was feeding in the Alders where the track leaves the Common and enters Ferncroft Farm. On 22 September 2020, 35 birds were seen flying over the Common in flocks of 21 and 14. The largest count south of the railway was 16 birds at West Mills on 02 December 2020.

Siskins breed in nearby Wareham Forest and the higher numbers seen in the autumn may well be local birds dispersing after the breeding season.



***Siskin in the Alders by North Mill on 17 February 2021***

### Reed Bunting

Reed Bunting has been seen on the Common in every month of the year and can be found both north and south of the railway. Breeding birds favour the River Piddle in the summer but use other habitats in the winter. The maximum count was 11 birds on 01 October 2020, including 8 on the southern edge of the arable field between the railway and the oil well. 6 birds were seen there on 04 November, with smaller numbers regularly seen in the same location until February 2021. Ringing on the Carey House Estate shows a significant local population. 108 birds were ringed between 17 July and 17 October 2020, including 85 in August, although only 3 pairs were thought to have bred on the estate. These may be breeding birds from Poole Harbour dispersing to habitats further up the Piddle Valley and beyond. 2 birds ringed on the Carey House Estate in August 2020 were recovered in October and November 2020 at Lytchett Bay, 11 kilometres to the north east.



***Reed Bunting by the River Piddle north of the railway on 15 August 2020***

There were 6 pairs breeding on the Common in 2020: 5 north of the railway; and 1 to the south (see map in the commentary on Reed Warbler). North of the railway, 4 pairs were by the River Piddle with another pair on the main east / west ditch between the railway and the wooden gate. South of the railway, a single pair was in the fenced-off emergent vegetation on the northern bank of the River Piddle below West Mills. Breeding was also confirmed north of the railway in 2021.



***The February 2012 Glossy Ibis in flight (Peter Moore)***

### 3. Summary of Bird Species Recorded

- 3.1 144 species of bird had been recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up until the end of March 2022, as shown in the table below. The table also lists the year when each species was most recently seen. (Records for 2022 only includes species seen up until the end of March).
- 3.2 The last column sets out the breeding status of birds seen in the recording area. Almost all breeding records are from 2020 or later. Birds are categorised as: possible, probable or confirmed breeders. All confirmed breeders were observed with fledged young, except House Martin where adults were seen visiting young on the nest and Woodpigeon which was seen on a nest.
- 3.3 In summary, 43 species have been recorded breeding within the Wareham Common recording area in recent years. 32 species were confirmed breeders; 8 species probably bred; and 3 species possibly bred. The summary table below excludes a couple of species (Lapwing and Mediterranean Gull) that have shown breeding behaviour, but definitely did not breed within the recording area.

<b>Birds Recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up to 31 March 2022</b>			
	<b>Species</b>	<b>Most recent record</b>	<b>Breeding status</b>
1	Canada Goose	2022	
2	Barnacle Goose	2020	
3	Greylag Goose	2022	
4	Mute Swan	2022	Confirmed
5	Bewick's Swan	1998	
6	Egyptian Goose	2021	
7	Shelduck	2020	
8	Mandarin	2021	Confirmed
9	Garganey	2020	
10	Shoveler	2019	
11	Gadwall	2021	
12	Wigeon	2021	
13	Mallard	2022	Confirmed
14	Teal	2021	
15	Common Scoter	2020	
16	Goldeneye	2001	
17	Goosander	2022	
18	Pheasant	2022	
19	Red-legged Partridge	2020	
20	Nightjar	2021	
21	Swift	2021	Probable
22	Cuckoo	2021	Possible
23	Feral Pigeon	2022	
24	Stock Dove	2022	
25	Woodpigeon	2022	Confirmed
26	Collared Dove	2022	
27	Water Rail	2021	

<b>Birds Recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up to 31 March 2022</b>			
	<b>Species</b>	<b>Most recent record</b>	<b>Breeding status</b>
28	Moorhen	2022	Confirmed
29	Coot	2021	
30	Little Grebe	2022	
31	Lapwing	2022	
32	Little Ringed Plover	2020	
33	Whimbrel	2021	
34	Curlew	2020	
35	Black-tailed Godwit	2021	
36	Ruff	2020	
37	Woodcock	2022	
38	Jack Snipe	2022	
39	Snipe	2022	
40	Common Sandpiper	2020	
41	Green Sandpiper	2022	
42	Redshank	2020	
43	Black-headed Gull	2022	
44	Little Gull	2004	
45	Mediterranean Gull	2022	
46	Common Gull	2022	
47	Great Black-backed Gull	2022	
48	Herring Gull	2022	
49	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2021	
50	White Stork	2020	
51	Cormorant	2022	
52	Glossy Ibis	2012	
53	Spoonbill	2021	
54	Night Heron	2021	
55	Cattle Egret	2022	
56	Grey Heron	2022	
57	Great White Egret	2021	
58	Little Egret	2022	
59	Osprey	2020	
60	Sparrowhawk	2022	
61	Goshawk	2022	
62	Marsh Harrier	2022	
63	Hen Harrier	2020	
64	Red Kite	2022	
65	White-tailed Eagle	2020	
66	Buzzard	2022	
67	Barn Owl	2022	Confirmed
68	Tawny Owl	2022	
69	Hoopoe	2020	
70	Kingfisher	2022	
71	Wryneck	1916	
72	Great Spotted Woodpecker	2022	
73	Green Woodpecker	2022	

<b>Birds Recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up to 31 March 2022</b>			
	<b>Species</b>	<b>Most recent record</b>	<b>Breeding status</b>
74	Kestrel	2022	Confirmed
75	Merlin	2021	
76	Hobby	2021	
77	Peregrine	2021	
78	Ring-necked Parakeet	2020	
79	Red-backed Shrike	2007	
80	Jay	2022	Confirmed
81	Magpie	2022	Confirmed
82	Jackdaw	2022	Confirmed
83	Rook	2022	
84	Carrion Crow	2022	
85	Raven	2022	
86	Waxwing	2019	
87	Coal Tit	2022	
88	Blue Tit	2022	Confirmed
89	Great Tit	2022	Confirmed
90	Woodlark	2020	
91	Skylark	2022	Confirmed
92	Sand Martin	2021	
93	Swallow	2022	
94	House Martin	2021	Confirmed
95	Cetti's Warbler	2022	Confirmed
96	Long-tailed Tit	2022	Confirmed
97	Willow Warbler	2021	
98	Chiffchaff	2022	Probable
99	Sedge Warbler	2021	
100	Reed Warbler	2021	Confirmed
101	Blackcap	2021	Probable
102	Garden Warbler	2021	
103	Lesser Whitethroat	2021	Probable
104	Whitethroat	2021	Confirmed
105	Dartford Warbler	2021	
106	Firecrest	2021	
107	Goldcrest	2022	Confirmed
108	Wren	2022	Confirmed
109	Nuthatch	2022	Confirmed
110	Treecreeper	2022	
111	Rose-coloured Starling	2020	
112	Starling	2022	Confirmed
113	Blackbird	2022	Confirmed
114	Fieldfare	2021	
115	Redwing	2022	
116	Song Thrush	2022	Probable
117	Mistle Thrush	2021	
118	Spotted Flycatcher	2021	
119	Robin	2022	Confirmed

<b>Birds Recorded in the Wareham Common Recording Area up to 31 March 2022</b>			
	<b>Species</b>	<b>Most recent record</b>	<b>Breeding status</b>
120	Nightingale	2021	Possible
121	Pied Flycatcher	2020	
122	Black Redstart	2002	
123	Redstart	2021	
124	Whinchat	2021	
125	Stonechat	2022	Confirmed
126	Wheatear	2021	
127	Dipper	2011	
128	House Sparrow	2022	Confirmed
129	Dunnock	2022	Confirmed
130	Yellow Wagtail	2021	
131	Grey Wagtail	2022	Confirmed
132	Pied Wagtail	2022	Confirmed
133	Meadow Pipit	2022	Possible
134	Tree Pipit	2021	
135	Chaffinch	2022	Probable
136	Hawfinch	2021	
137	Bullfinch	2022	Confirmed
138	Greenfinch	2022	Probable
139	Linnet	2021	Confirmed
140	Lesser Redpoll	2021	
141	Crossbill	2012	
142	Goldfinch	2022	Confirmed
143	Siskin	2022	
144	Reed Bunting	2022	Probable



*Mediterranean Gull north of the railway on 30 May 2021*