

# Lytchett Bay

Birds and Wildlife 2024

*Shaun Robson & Nick Hull*



*Peter Corbin*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Welcome to the 33<sup>rd</sup> consecutive Lytchett Bay annual report. The data that we have gathered & published over the period constitutes a comprehensive log of the site's ornithological importance since 1992. Since 2014, thanks to work led by **Nick Hull**, we have widened the report to cover a much wider taxa, interest in this section is growing year on year, page 41. **Steve Smith's** plant survey reports are on page 64.

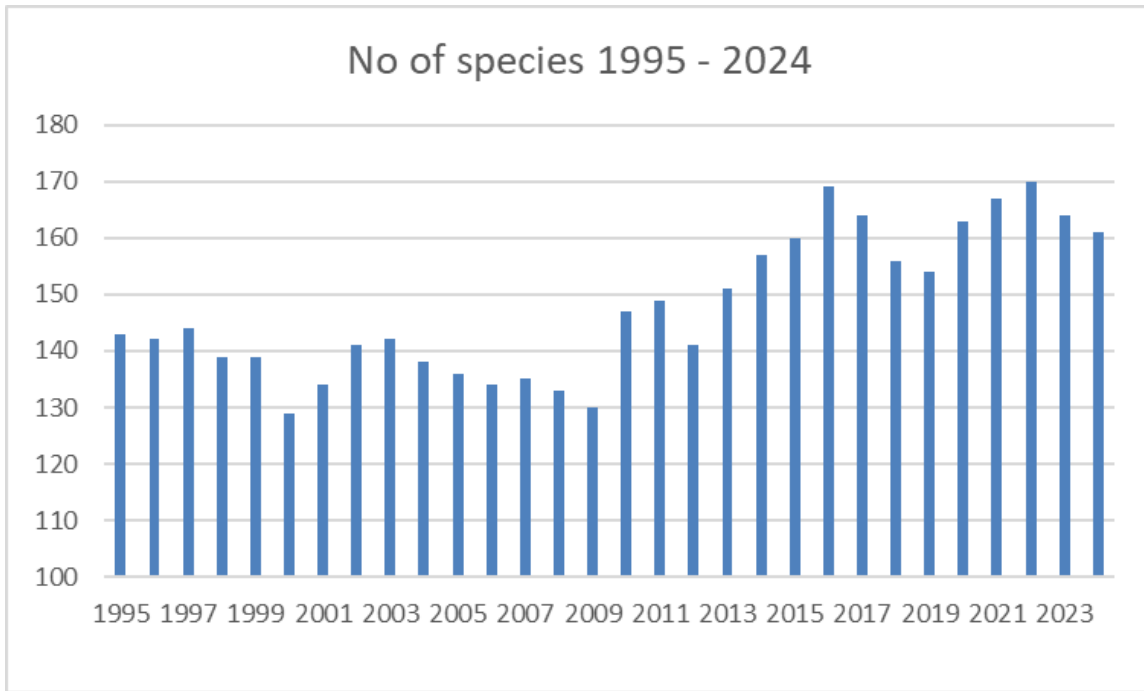
January and February were generally mild with above average rain fall. It was the second warmest February on record. A short cold spell in March was followed by another month that was wetter and milder than average. April continued the theme of the previous few months, being unsettled, wet and dull. After a warm start to the month, temperatures dropped, with the last two weeks of April cooler than average. May was the warmest on record but the weather was unsettled throughout. June was 2 degrees cooler than average due to northerly and northwesterly winds bringing cold Arctic air across the UK. The first two weeks of July were wet again but after this things did improve. In August the winds were often from the west or southwest, bringing moist, sometimes warm air from the Atlantic, exactly what we do not want at this time of year. However it was mainly dry with rainfall 50% of that expected. The unsettled westerly predominated weather returned in September and it was wetter than average. October saw a mix of settled conditions due to high-pressure systems as well as wet and windy weather from a succession of low-pressure systems, including the first named storm of the 2024/25 season. November was a month of two very contrasting halves. The first half of the month was dominated by high pressure, leading to dull, dry and mild conditions with very low sunshine levels. The second half colder brought temperatures and wintry precipitation but it never really amounted to more than a thin and brief covering. December ended the year in conditions reminiscent of much of the year. Wet. Storm Darragh, the fourth named storm of the season, brought significant disruption from the 6th to the 8th, with heavy rain and severe gales. (Source - Met Office).

To watch a video of an impressive spring electrical storm over Lytchett Bay look here - <https://www.facebook.com/fraser.hockey/videos/784632157059249?idorvanity=2469123376495268> with thanks to Fraser Hockey.



Given our high expectations this could only be described as an ordinary year for birds at Lytchett Bay. If the only addition to the Bay list, **Dark-eyed Junco**, had been co-operative our perspective and conclusion would have changed entirely. That is how fickle we birders are! The Bay list is now 238 species. The next best bird, a **Red-backed Shrike**, was only the second. 36 years after the first. This was much more obliging to all except one keen prospective observer! The key species groups which did disappoint this year were migrant waders and passerines. Both of which were in relatively short supply.

Canada Goose, Mallard, Cattle Egret, Jackdaw and Black Redstart occurred in greater numbers than ever before. 161 species were recorded this year.



**Lytchett Bay – people and wildlife**

The facilitation of enjoying wildlife, whilst at the same time, protecting it from disturbance took another big step forward this year with important work on the Turlin Shore. Thanks to leadership by the Parks Foundation, Birds & Recreation Initiative (BARI) and BCP Council, two splendid new viewpoints have been created where views of the Bay in the morning light are unparalleled and a “big sky” make both a good option for raptor watching.

Before

After





In turn we hope they will discourage the disturbance of the Turlin Moor saltmarsh and it is hoped that this will lead to the establishment of a regular high tide roost and encourage the return of breeding birds to the marsh itself.



The use of art has enhanced the quality of the interpretation providing a real connection with the landscape.

Staying at Turlin Moor efforts to draw local attention to the beauty of their immediate locality continued with the installation of a "Blooming Boat".



The team at Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council and friends at Upton in Bloom produced a wonderfully uplifting short film celebrating all that is going on locally for nature. It's a great watch.

[Wild Upton: Creating space for nature](#)



The same team contributed to another Gold award for Lytchett Bay View in the South and South-East In Bloom Large Conservation award.

All of this attracted the interest of the BBC South team and they made a short film to highlight the good work going on at Lytchett Bay View and beyond. Watch it here.

<https://www.facebook.com/LytchettAndUptonTC/videos/1157128532062023>



New fencing at RSPB Lytchett Fields as part of the countryside stewardship scheme both supported conservation grazing and protected our resident Adder population from disturbance. Four work parties at RSPB Lytchett Fields helped us keep on top of fence repairs, hedge management, gate maintenance and pathway clearance. Thanks to Ian Ballam and kind donations the winter feeding station operated in both winter seasons.



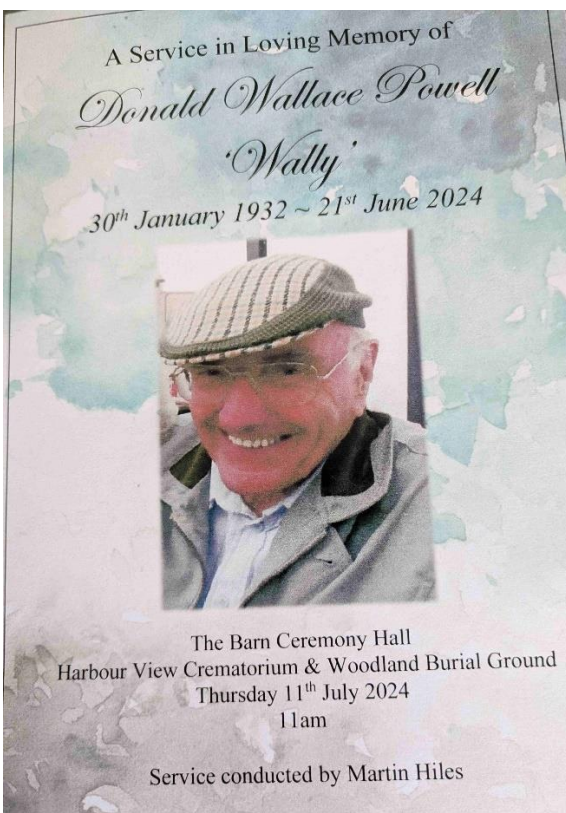


4 guided walks, several “pop ups”, a bird ringing demonstration and a local talk took place across the area in partnership with Upton in Bloom, The Parks Foundation, BARI and The Dorset Club.

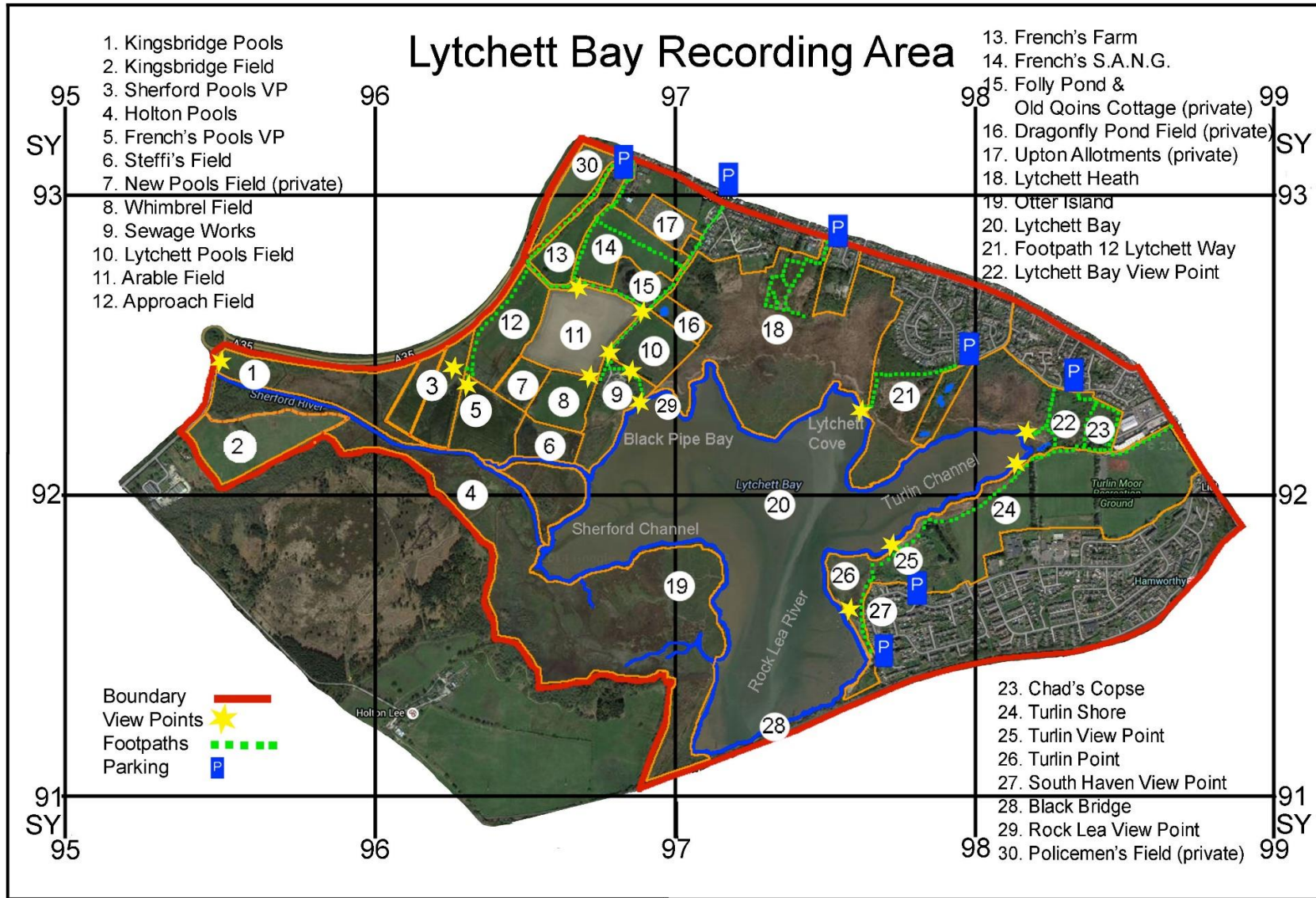
The Turlin Moor litter pickers are out every month. Keeping the area clean is always in our focus.



This year we lost a very long standing resident, Wally Powell.



Wally would entertain passers-by as he leant on his gate with tales from the past. Our favourite’s were memories of him and his father standing at the bar in the original Bakers Arms in their wellies unmoved as flood water ran through the building. He recalled that in his childhood Dunnocks went by their old Gloucestershire name of “Blue Isaacs”. A name and a man we will never forget.



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

## **Bird Ringing 2024**

Collectively, ringing activities took place on only 34 dates, a small improvement on 2023's poor year. A total of 1316 new birds of 41 species were ringed, with more than 100 birds ringed in 2 sessions, 203 on 4th Aug and 172 on 28<sup>th</sup> Sep. Efforts were spread between three sites: Lytchett Fields (RSPB) – Aquatic and Pipit projects, 15 dates, Lytchett Heath (ARC and DWT) – 15 dates and Sandy Close Pond (Private Garden) – 4 dates.

A dreadful year for Aquatic Warbler migration through Britain and Ireland. At the time of writing we are not aware of any confirmed records in the UK. If this is in fact the case it will be the first year with no records!

Our Pipit project was undermined by a lack of birds. The weather was largely helpful but there were just very few pipits around. Only 2 Water and 1 Rock Pipit were colour ringed.

Thanks to again some keen eyed observation, largely by Ian Ballam, we had an excellent number of colour ring reads to supplement the data gathered by conventional ringing. The details are contained within the systematic list.

Appendix 2 summarises species ringing totals. Details of recoveries and controls are detailed under species accounts. Since 1983, at least 36,917 birds of 88 species have been ringed at Lytchett Bay. We continue to research historical data and add new data and discoveries as we find them.

Our ringing data is published on Trektellen. All input data is available at [\[Trektellen.org\]](https://trektellen.org) - [Totals Lytchett Bay RS \(Dorset, England\) -1](#)

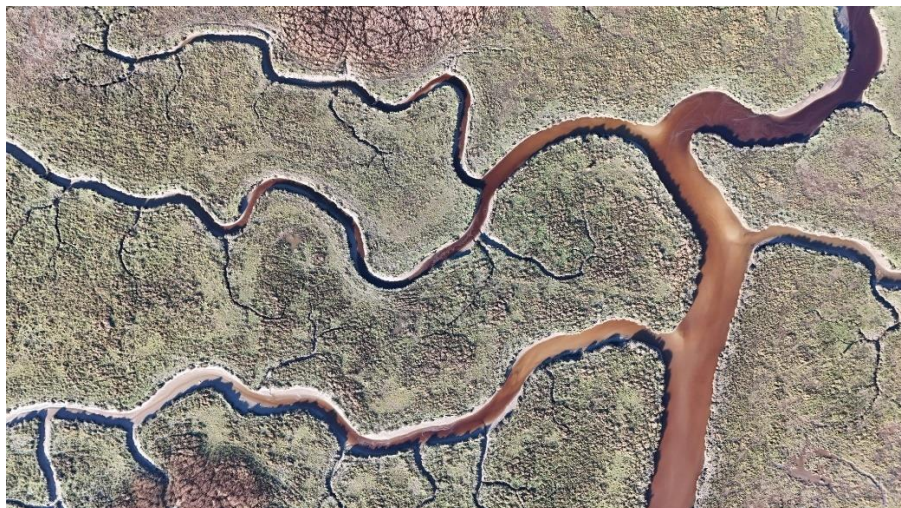
## **Acknowledgements:**

The Birds of Poole Harbour & Dorset Bird Club host this and our previous annual reports on their websites which is hugely appreciated.

SR would like to add particular thanks to Ian Ballam for his continued commitment to birding and bird recording at Lytchett Bay and for his support with various volunteer activity at Lytchett Fields. To Ed Roe and his colleagues at RSPB Arne. To friends at Stour Ringing Group for companionship and support. Many thanks to fellow editor Nick Hull for his survey work and assistance in researching and writing this report. To Stephen F Smith for his work on plants at RSPB Lytchett Fields (see Appendix 3, page 41 for latest survey results). To the Lytchett Fields work party crew for their continued help in managing the reserve.

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

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



*The Lytchett Bay saltmarsh from above. A complex of natural creeks (© Fraser Hockey)*



## **Systematic List 2024 - Shaun Robson**

2799 specific records were collated during the year via the **@BirdTrack** and **@Team\_eBird** databases covering 161 species. In addition, many more records of common species were submitted via “complete lists” to both databases. Each of the main sites at Lytchett Bay have been set up as e-Bird “Hotspots” – including Rock Lea Viewpoint. Users of e-Bird are encouraged to log their sightings against these. If anyone would like advice on the use of e-Bird then SR is very happy to try and support. BirdTrack’s site mechanism is based around 1km squares, again records logged against the actual square are most helpful.

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

Nocturnal sound recording conducted by **Nick Hull** at Lytchett Way continues to provide surprising information about the unseen migration over our area and the highlights of this research are included in the systematic list.

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

Bird records were received from the recording area on all but 3 days in the year.

The systematic list follows the latest IOC list as followed by the Dorset Bird Club.

Species names are followed by 2 or 3 numbers. The first is the record known count recorded at the Bay. This now includes historical counts by observers going back to 1975. The middle figure is the maximum day count in the period since 1992 (if less than the first). The final figure is the number of years in which the species has been recorded since 1992 (max 33), the year in which the current spell of comprehensive coverage began.

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

Each species or sub-species listed in **blue** did not occur in 2024 but has occurred previously as detailed.

### **Dark-bellied Brent Goose:** (148 – 25) ↔

Common winter visitor. Present until 12<sup>th</sup> Feb, max 103 on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1 spring record of 5 on 18<sup>th</sup> Mar. First of the winter 13<sup>th</sup> Oct after which birds were present almost daily until the year end. Max 137 on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec.



© Peter Corbin

*Pale-bellied Brent Goose: 4 records. Last in 2023.*

*Black Brant: 1 record. 2018.*

**Canada Goose:** (800 – 33) ↗

Increasingly frequent visitor. 3 pairs again bred successfully. Large numbers lingering daily around Bay between early Jun and late Oct was unusual. Max 800 on 6<sup>th</sup> Oct. A new record count, Previously 602 on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018.

**Barnacle Goose:** (50 - 13) ↔

Scarce visitor. 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> Oct was probably a feral bird that has been around Poole Harbour for a while.

**Greylag Goose:** (40 – 25) ↔

Uncommon feral wanderer. Recorded on more than 30 dates and in every month except Aug. Max 35 on mud with Canada Geese 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.

*Pink-footed Goose: 1 record. 1981*

*Tundra Bean Goose: 1 record. 2022.*

*White-fronted Goose: Scarce visitor. Recorded in 6 years since 1992. Last record 2021.*

**Mute Swan:** (58 – 33) ↔

Uncommon resident, increases in winter. Bred for the first time since 2015. 4 cygnets hatched but only 2 survived, one being a so called “Polish” bird. Another poor year. 21 on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec was the highest count of the year.

*Bewick’s Swan: 1 record. 1983.*

*Whooper Swan: Rare visitor. 4 records. 2010, 2016, 2017, 2018.*

**Egyptian Goose:** (13 – 11) ↗

Uncommon feral visitor. The first record was in 2011. Bred for the first time, not something to be celebrated! A pair raised 5 young at Lytchett Fields. Recorded throughout much of the year. The breeding pair apart, 6 on 10<sup>th</sup> Apr was the max count.

**Shelduck:** (645 – 548 – 33) ↘

Occasional breeder and winter visitor. 1 family party noted with 6 young chicks in July. After a quiet start to the year, autumn was good by recent standards, with decent numbers from mid Nov. Max 119 on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec.

*Mandarin Duck: 2 records. 2003 & 2011*

**Garganey:** (3 – 9)

Scarce visitor. A drake on 17<sup>th</sup> March (IB) was our earliest ever, previously 20<sup>th</sup> Mar 2022.

**Shoveler:** (32 – 32) ↔

Scarce visitor, which can occur at any time. Slightly above average. Birds seen on 21 dates across 8 months. Max 11 on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan.

**Gadwall:** (73 – 27) ↔

Uncommon visitor and occasional breeder. 1 pair again bred, with chicks seen on 2 dates in Jun. Whilst birds were seen in most months, the remainder of the year was rather poor. 10 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec was the max count.

**Wigeon:** (732 – 33) ↔

Common winter visitor. Absent from 30<sup>th</sup> Mar until 24<sup>th</sup> Jul. Max 622 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.

**Mallard:** (180 – 33) ⇔

Breeds at several sites around the recording area. Very regular on Sandy Close Pond. Fewer in winter. Excellent summer numbers at the Bay and Lytchett Fields peaked with a record breaking 180 on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug, previously 123 on 14<sup>th</sup> Aug 2017.

**Northern Pintail:** (21 - 25) ⇔

Scarce visitor. A much better year than 2023 with 49 bird-days on 16 dates until 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and from 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep. Max 8 on 28<sup>th</sup> Jan.

**Teal:** (1345 – 33) ↗

Winter visitor and passage migrant. 4 juveniles on 20<sup>th</sup> July continue our run of breeding evidence. Max 647 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

*Green-winged Teal: 3 records. 2000, 2016-17 & 2022.*

*Pochard: Scarce visitor. Recorded in 17 years since 1992. Last record 2023*

**Tufted Duck:** (20 – 17 - 20) ⇔

Scarce visitor. 1 on 14<sup>th</sup> Oct was the only record.

*Scaup: 1 record. 1986.*

**Common Scoter:**

Rare visitor. 7<sup>th</sup> record. Recorded over the Listening Station on 17<sup>th</sup> Apr at 22:30. There were lots of calls suggesting a flock was migrating.

*Goldeneye: Previously uncommon winter visitor. Now rare. Recorded in 25 years since 1992. Last record 2018.*

*Smew: 4 records, 1980, 1997, 2001 & 2014.*

**Goosander:** (4 – 12)

Scarce visitor. A redhead was in the Bay on 17<sup>th</sup> Apr. 4 flew west up the Sherford on 30<sup>th</sup> Sep.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** (73 – 33) ⇔

Winter visitor. Recorded on at least 52 dates until 17<sup>th</sup> Apr and from 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. October arrivals were once the norm. Max 6 on 10<sup>th</sup> Jan.

*Ruddy Duck: 2 records, both 2001.*

*Grey Partridge: 1 record since 1992, in 1999.*

**Pheasant:** ⇔

Common resident.

*Red-legged Partridge: Scarce introduced visitor. Recorded in 8 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

**Nightjar:** (3 – 25) ⇔

Irregular breeder. A pair present at Lytchett Heath from at least 16<sup>th</sup> May – 13<sup>th</sup> Aug. Breeding likely. A migrant on 21<sup>st</sup> Sep.



**Swift:** (140 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant and occasional local breeder. Recorded between 5<sup>th</sup> May – 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. Max 80 on 12<sup>th</sup> Jun.

**Cuckoo:** (2 – 32) ↔

Scarce visitor in spring. Another poor year with only 3 records. Singles on 27<sup>th</sup> Apr and 7<sup>th</sup> May. One in autumn on 12<sup>th</sup> Aug was unusual.

**Feral Pigeon:** (- - 33)

Common resident.

**Stock Dove:** (138 – 33) ↗

Common resident, increasing. Again bred in the vicinity of Lytchett Fields. The arable field proved attractive in the first part of the year, max 70 on 21<sup>st</sup> Jan. With the change in management, the second fallow year in a row, numbers were much lower in the second half of the year. Occasional visitor to feeders at Sandy Close Pond.

**Woodpigeon:** (17,785 – 33) ↔

Common resident and autumn migrant. Autumn movements were earlier than usual with the best movements being in mid/late October. Max 3800 over Lytchett Bay View on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1 ringed.

*Turtle Dove: Once scarce, now very rare visitor. Recorded in 12 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

**Collared Dove:** (18 – 33) ↔

Resident. Recorded across the site on a daily basis. Max 15 at Turlin Moor on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.

**Water Rail:** (67 pairs – 33) ↔

Common resident and winter visitor. No perceived change in status after 2013's complete breeding survey found 67 prs. 2 ringed

*Corncrake: 1 record. 1996.*

*Spotted Crane: 4 records. 1983, 1992, 2014, 2016.*

**Moorhen:** (18 – 33) ↘

Common resident. Breeds across the area but after recent increase, now declining. Bred at Lytchett Fields (but probably only 1 pr), Old Quoins and Lytchett Bay View but generally hard to find across the recording area.

**Coot:** (62 – 22)

Very scarce visitor, though night recording is proving that they are very frequent overhead nocturnal migrants. The first was sound recorded on 16<sup>th</sup> Mar at the Lytchett Way listening station and on a further 12 dates in spring until 18<sup>th</sup> Apr. In autumn on 6 dates between 10<sup>th</sup> Sep & 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. There were no field sightings this year.

*Common Crane: Rare visitor, recorded in 5 years since 1992. Increasing. Last record 2023.*

**Little Grebe:** (12 - 33) ↔

Winter visitor. Present in the Bay, and occasionally on Lytchett Fields, on many days until 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar and from 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep. Nocturnal migrants were recorded up to 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. Max 7 on 2 dates.

**Great Crested Grebe:** (7 - 30) ↗

Increasingly frequent visitor. Seen on 56 dates, a more typical year after the surge in 2023 (at least 104 dates). Records from every month except Sep. Max 6 on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug.

*Slavonian Grebe: 1 record. 1989.*

*Black-necked Grebe: 2 records. 1994, 2019.*

*Stone Curlew: 1 record. 2019.*

**Oystercatcher:** (400 – 33) ⇄

A common winter visitor and passage migrant. Turlin Fields and Turlin Shore at high tide remain the favored locations, with fewer birds remaining in the bay to feed at low tide. Increasingly birds are seen on Lytchett Fields, particularly in spring and summer.

Reasonable numbers again at Turlin Moor. Max 218 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan and 165 on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct.

*Black-winged Stilt: 2 records. 2014 & 2016.*

**Pied Avocet:** (327 – 32) ⇄

Increasingly regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Now less reliant on cold weather. Present almost daily until 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr and from 14<sup>th</sup> Sep. Outside this period migrants noted on one day per month in May, Jun, July & Aug. Max 212 on 17<sup>th</sup> Jan and 9<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Monthly max:

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 212 | 18  | 2   | 1   | 1   | 4   | 3   | 4   | 1   | 22  | 101 | 212 |

**BN+GY(8) (FS102622)** – present at Lytchett Bay on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024



*It was ringed at Saline Barelle, Asserac, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE on 10<sup>th</sup> Jun 2016.*

*It has been seen in Wareham in 2017 and returned to France to breed in 2024.*

© Ian Ballam

**RB+YB (EY04836)** - present at Lytchett Bay on 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2024.



*It was ringed at Greenabella Marsh, Teeside on 24<sup>th</sup> Jun 2014 as a pullus.*

*It has previously been seen at Lytchett Bay in 2018 and 2021. Also seen in Yorkshire and Essex.*

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**Bf(AE)Y//Y (EM57724)** – present at Lytchett Bay on 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024.



*It was ringed at Canute, Castletown Est, Cumbria on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jun 2023 as a pullus.*

© Ian Ballam

**Yfl(64)+Y (ER93350)** – was present at Lytchett Bay on 18<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024



It was ringed Condor Green, Lancashire on 18<sup>th</sup> Jun 2021 as a pullus.

© Shaun Robson

**NB+YR (EA07721)** – was present at Lytchett Bay on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024



It was ringed at Chichester Harbour, Hampshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jun 2024 as a pullus.

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**Lapwing:** (3000 – 33) ⇄

Formerly bred, now a non-breeding visitor in smaller numbers. Bred regularly during early 1990's. Last confirmed breeding 1999. Max 500 on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan.

Monthly max:

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 500 | 300 | 0   | 0   | 2   | 36  | 40  | 52  | 50  | 80  | 226 | 330 |

**Golden Plover:** (160 – 19)

Scarce visitor, surprisingly so. 1 at Lytchett Fields with Lapwing on 26<sup>th</sup> Dec was the only sighting. However birds were recorded at the Listening Station on 4 nights between 12<sup>th</sup> Sep and 8<sup>th</sup> Nov, including this lovely recording.

[https://soundcloud.com/two-owls/golden-plover-1?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/two-owls/golden-plover-1?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

**Grey Plover:** (18 – 27) ⇄

Scarce visitor. Recorded on 7 dates as 2023. 3 singles in May, 2 oddities on 27<sup>th</sup> Jun, 1 on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, noc-mig on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov and 2 on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Ringed Plover:** (50 – 29) ⇄

Passage migrant, previously scarce. Like many wader's a much quieter year. 106 bird-days on 28 dates.

Spring migration 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (sound recorded) – 4<sup>th</sup> Jun. Max 11 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun. Autumn migration 9<sup>th</sup> Aug – 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. Max 14 on 26<sup>th</sup> Aug. One on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec was unusual.

**Little Ringed Plover:** (15 – 22) ↗

Increasingly frequent summer visitor, but this was the second poor year in a row, the worst year since 2013. The first was on 19<sup>th</sup> Mar but there were only 8 bird-days until 13<sup>th</sup> Apr, including 2 nocturnal

migrants, and no pairs settled. Max 2 on 20<sup>th</sup> Mar. Return passage was also poor. 9 bird-days 24<sup>th</sup> Jun – 15<sup>th</sup> Jul, max 3 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jul.

**Whimbrel:** (157 – 33) ⇄

Passage migrant, most numerous in Spring. The first was on 10<sup>th</sup> Apr and spring migration lasted until 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun. It was however poor with only 74 bird-days, max 10 on 27<sup>th</sup> Apr.

Autumn passage occurred between 13<sup>th</sup> Jul – 10<sup>th</sup> Oct involving at least 45 bird-days, max 4 on 2 dates.

**Curlew:** (116 – 33) ⇄

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Frequently seen on Lytchett Fields in small numbers.

Monthly max:

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR  | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 42  | 20  | 31  | n.c. | 3   | 20  | 22  | 14  | 16  | 13  | 28  | 30  |

**M//R+R//WR (FP45756)** - present at Lytchett Bay during winter 2023/24 until at least 11<sup>th</sup> Feb, arriving back the following season on 26<sup>th</sup> Jun 2024 and continuing until the end of the year.



*It was ringed as an adult female at Strodgemoor, Burley Street, New Forest, Hampshire, UK on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The bird was fitted with a GPS tag, but unfortunately this fell off one month after fitting. It was seen in the Avon Valley, Hants in Mar 2019, presumably on its way back to its breeding site. First encountered at Lytchett Bay on 16<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018, the bird has returned to over-wintered every year since. Many thanks to Pete Potts for this information.*

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**R//M+W(K1M)** – was still present at Lytchett Bay on 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024. It had previously been seen on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct and 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023.



*It had been ringed as a pullus at Siikalatva, Pohjois-Pohjanmaa, Oulu, FINLAND on 1<sup>st</sup> Jul 2023. This is our first recovery of a bird from that country. Very exciting, even though it is known that a lot of Finnish Curlews move to the UK to winter. Many thanks to the University of Helsinki for this information.*

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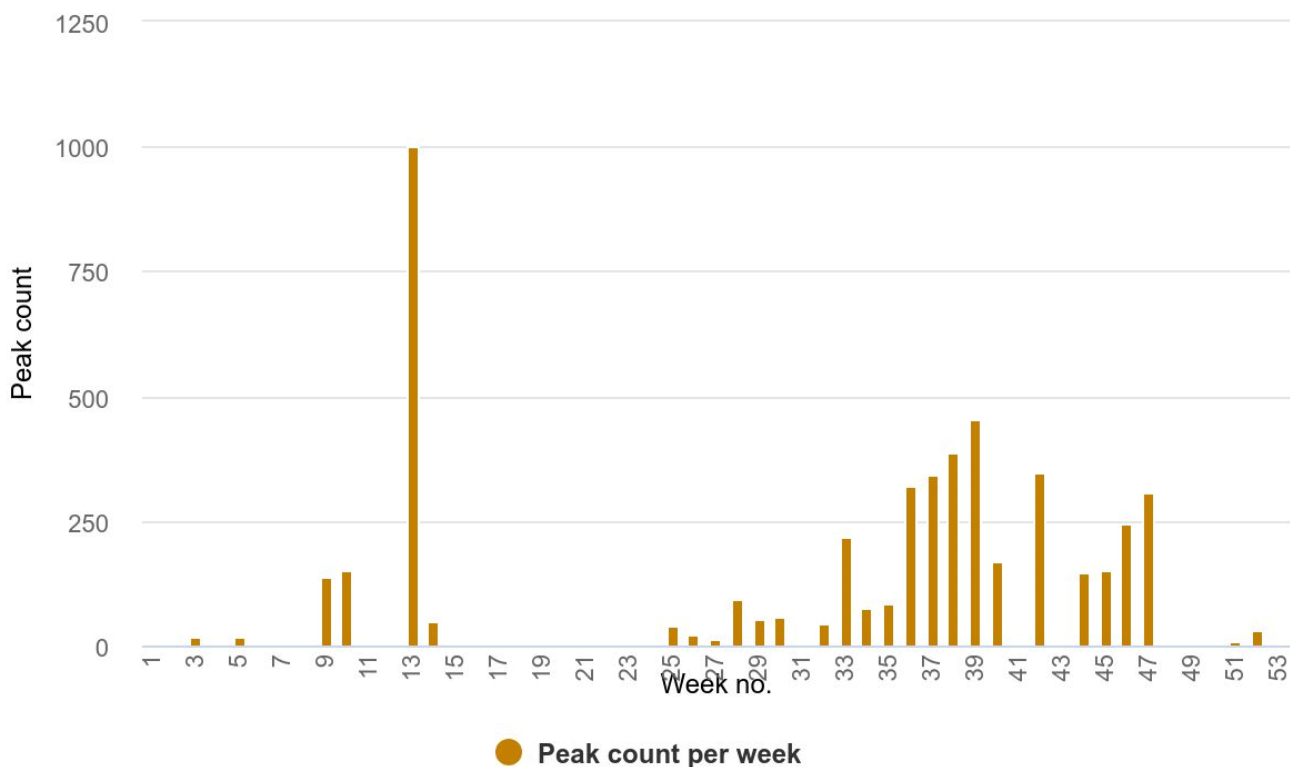
**Bar-tailed Godwit:** (110 – 29) ⇄

Scarce visitor. The second poor year in a row. Only 1 spring record – 4 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr. In autumn singles on 5 dates between 17<sup>th</sup> Sep and 6<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Black-tailed Godwit:** (1240 – 33) ⇄

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. The early half of the year was surprisingly quiet except for one day, 26<sup>th</sup> Mar, when at least 1000 were present including birds flying through. Our best count since the record year of 1996. Autumn was much better with good numbers visiting Lytchett Fields. Max 452 on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep.

## Peak count per week



www.birdtrack.net

Over the last 27 years colour ringed birds have proved that birds visiting Lytchett Bay breed in Iceland (*L.l.islandica*). Birds seen at Lytchett Bay also visit western France, Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, E England as well as many locations along the south coast. Numbers of colour ringed birds detected in the flocks seem to be falling. Presumably ringing effort has declined as the studies are nearing completion?

**LNL+YRY** - present at Lytchett Bay on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2024.



*It was ringed at Axe Estuary, Seaton, Devon on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013. It has previously been encountered at Lytchett Bay in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022 & 2023. All recent records are from Poole Harbour.*

© Ian Ballam

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

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

**Turnstone:** (9 – 13)

Scarce visitor. 2 singles – 9<sup>th</sup> Jul and 21<sup>st</sup> Sep.



**Red Knot:** (300 - 48 – 24) ↔

Scarce visitor. Even worse than 2023. Only recorded on 3 dates. Singles on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug and 5<sup>th</sup> Sep. Then 4 on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Ruff:** (11 – 29) ↔

Scarce visitor. Continuing the theme of a quiet wader year. Only recorded on 7 dates between 4<sup>th</sup> Sep and 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. Max 2 on first date.

*Stilt Sandpiper: 1 record. 2017.*

**Curlew Sandpiper:** (13 – 18) ↗

Scarce autumn migrant. A poor year by recent standards. 10 bird-days between 2<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Sep. All singles.

*Temminck's Stint. 1 record. 2014.*

*Sanderling: Rare visitor. Recorded in 8 years, after first record in 2015. Last record 2023.*

**Dunlin:** (1800 – 1200 – 33) ↔

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant. Good flocks attracted to Lytchett Fields in the first winter period, Max 458 on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan. No records between 27<sup>th</sup> May & 9<sup>th</sup> Jul. Numbers in the second half of the year low, only occasionally exceeding 100.

**Little Stint:** (7 – 18) ↔

Scarce autumn migrant. The run of poor years across the UK continue. 1 at Lytchett Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep was the only record.

*Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 1 record. 2017.*

*Pectoral Sandpiper: Rare Visitor. 4 records. 1992, 2014, 2021, 2022.*

*Long-billed Dowitcher: 1 record. 2020.*

**Woodcock:** (5 – 23) ↔

Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. The number of records of this species is largely a reflection of the effort made to see them. Nick Hopper studied Woodcock during early 2014 on behalf of The Birds of Poole Harbour. Following transects at Lytchett Bay the estimated winter population was predicted to be 8 birds (No more than 5 have ever been seen on one visit). Very little effort was made to survey birds at Lytchett Fields. Only recorded on 2 dates. 3 at dusk on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1 flying around allotment mid-morning on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. Birds have been recorded roding at nearby Holton Lee in recent years.

**Jack Snipe:** (6 - 24) ↔

Scarce but under recorded winter visitor. Like Woodcock, records are to a degree a reflection of birder / survey effort as much as presence. This year, once again, there was relatively little effort. Recorded on 4 dates – 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Jan, 27<sup>th</sup> Sep & 7<sup>th</sup> Nov.

**Snipe:** (160 – 132 – 33) ↔

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded until 15<sup>th</sup> Apr, returning on the 4<sup>th</sup> Jul. Max 60 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan and 47 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

*Grey Phalarope: 3 records. 1978, 1999 & 2020.*

**Common Sandpiper:** (18 – 33) ↔

Uncommon passage migrant. 8 bird-days in spring between 9<sup>th</sup> Apr – 13<sup>th</sup> May. Autumn passage 21<sup>st</sup> Jun – 4<sup>th</sup> Nov. 154 bird-days, max 11 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2 at Rock Lea View on 28<sup>th</sup> Nov were a surprise, at least one of these went on to be our first wintering bird being recorded occasionally into 2025.

**Green Sandpiper:** (30 – 33) ↗

Common non-breeding visitor. Lytchett Fields and western most part of the Bay is the favored area.

Present until 17<sup>th</sup> Apr and from 31<sup>st</sup> May. Max 20 on 28<sup>th</sup> Aug. 4-5 present during both winter periods.

*Lesser Yellowlegs: 1 record. 2016 -17.*

**Redshank:** (608 – 436 – 33) ↘

Common winter visitor. One pair again raised at least 1 young at Lytchett Fields. Max 209 on 19<sup>th</sup> Oct.

Monthly max:

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 137 | 153 | 40  | 2   | 2   | 24  | 183 | 106 | 122 | 209 | 154 | 108 |

**Wood Sandpiper:** (5 – 21) ↔

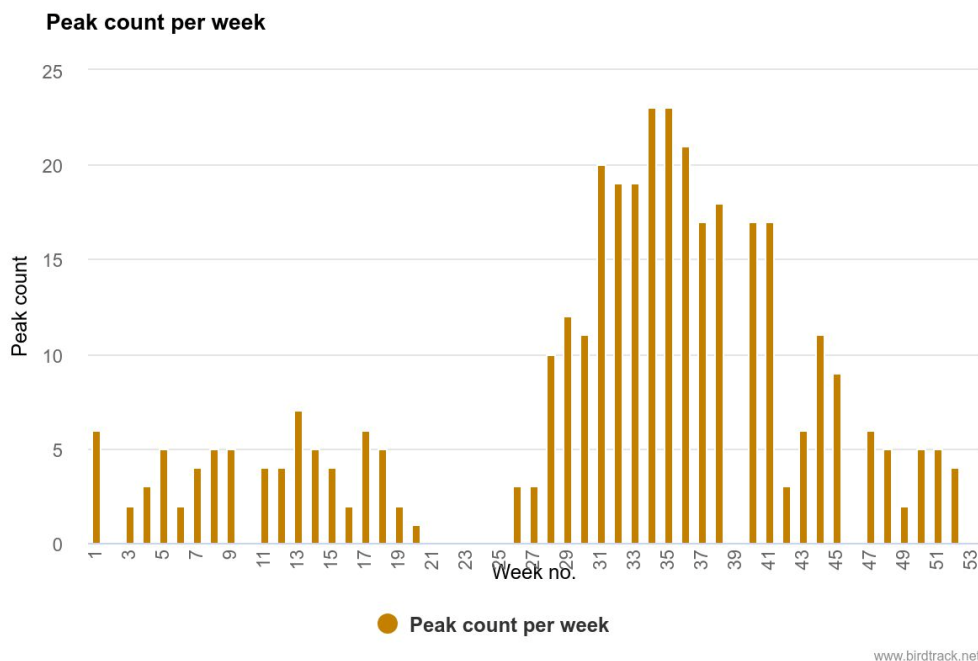
Scarce migrant. 3 records, probably involving 2 birds, 1 over Lytchett Heath and then at Lytchett Fields on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug and another on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug also at the Fields. Neither lingered for long.

**Spotted Redshank:** (68 – 42 – 33)

Scarce passage migrant and scarce winter visitor. The number of individuals remains low but presence is good and improving. 189 dates with 283 bird-days. Present until 28<sup>th</sup> Apr, Max 5 on 13<sup>th</sup> Apr. From 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug till the year end. Max 3 on several dates.

**Greenshank:** (49 – 27 – 33) ↔

Common non-breeding visitor. This species is enjoying a series of good years at the Bay. There were no records between 14<sup>th</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> Jun but present almost daily outside that period. Max 23 on 28<sup>th</sup> Aug. Lytchett Fields was by far the most used habitat.



**RN+GB (DT00415)** was present from the beginning of the year until at least 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024. It returned for its 10th season on 3rd Jul 2024 and continued into 2025.



*It was ringed as a juvenile at Seabrook, Montrose Basin, Scotland on 29th Sep 2015. A seasoned visitor to Lytchett Bay, it was first encountered on 4th–12th Apr 2016, returning for the non-breeding seasons of 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-2024. It was recorded at Steart, Somerset in Dec 2015.*

© Ian Ballam



Juvenile Black-tailed Godwit © Peter Corbin. Winter Redshank © Shaun Robson. Sunlit Snipe © Ian Ballam. Spotted Redshank following 4 Redshank © Peter Corbin



*Kittiwake: Scarce visitor. Recorded in 8 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

*Bonaparte's Gull: 1 record. 2022.*

**Black-headed Gull:** (15000 – 33) ↔

A very common visitor. No significant records submitted.

**TV39 (blue ring)** - present at Lytchett Fields in 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2024.



*It was ringed at Stare Czarnowo, Zachodniopomorskie, POLAND on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022.*

© Ian Ballam

**219E (red ring)** – present at Lytchett Fields on 30<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024



*It was ringed at Farlington Marshes, Hampshire on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jun 2023.*

© Ian Ballam

**25S9 (white ring)** – present at Lytchett Fields on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jun 2024.



*It was ringed at Hose Hill Lake LNR, Berkshire on 4<sup>th</sup> Jun 2016.*

*It had previously been seen at Lytchett Bay in 2019, 2020, 2021 & 2022.*

© Ian Ballam

**Little Gull:** (2 – 19)

Scarce visitor. Another very good year. All 5 records listed. Ad 25<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2cy 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar, 2cy 5<sup>th</sup> Apr, Ad 13<sup>th</sup> Apr, 2cy 15<sup>th</sup> Apr. Shared between Lytchett Bay and Lytchett Fields.

**Mediterranean Gull:** (329 – 32) ↔

Spring and early summer visitor, occasional at other times. Assessing actual numbers in spring is very difficult due to the number of calling birds passing overhead. Max 200 on 1<sup>st</sup> Apr. Another decent year for juveniles bathing at Lytchett Fields throughout Jul.

Monthly max:

| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2   | 19  | 63  | 200 | 6   | 5   | 6   | 3   | 1   | 1   | 3   | 1   |

**3HY5 (white ring)** – present at Turlin Fields, Lytchett Bay on 17th Feb 2024.



*It had previously been recorded there on 15th Mar, 9th Apr & 22nd Apr 2023*

*It was ringed as an Ad on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at Antwerp, Flanders, BELGIUM.*

*The bird has also been observed in FRANCE & Cornwall.*

© Ian Ballam

**3JX5 (White ring)** – present at Turlin Fields, Lytchett Bay on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024.



*It had previously been recorded there on 15<sup>th</sup> Mar & 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2023.*

*It was ringed as an Ad on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at Antwerp, Flanders, BELGIUM.*

*This bird has been seen in Dorset, Sussex and the Isle of Wight.*

© Ian Ballam

**Common Gull:** (3000 – 33) ↔

A common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in spring. Not recorded between 14<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> Jul.

*Ring-billed Gull: Rare visitor. Recorded in 10 years since 1992. Last record 2020.*

*Iceland Gull: Rare visitor. Recorded in 5 years since 1992. Last record 2008.*

**Great Black-backed Gull:** (151 – 33) ↔

Daily visitor throughout the year in small numbers, usually single figures. The max count for the site of 151 was way back in 2003 when Corfe Mullen Tip was in its hey-day. 24 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct was the biggest count of the year.

**Herring Gull:** (2500 – 32) ↔

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Numbers much lower than 90's/early 00's when Corfe Mullen tip attracted large numbers of gulls to the wider area. Max 360 on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct.

**Herring Gull x Lesser Black-backed Gull hybrid:**

*The bird first seen in Dec 2020 finally moved on during late 2023 and was not seen this year.*

*American Herring Gull: 1 record. 2002.*

**Yellow legged Gull:** (65 – 32) ↓

Increasingly uncommon visitor. As feared the decline of records of this species at the Bay appears terminal. Recorded on only 4 dates. Ad on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb, 2 Ad on 11<sup>th</sup> Mar, Ad on 24<sup>th</sup> Jul and 1cy on 6<sup>th</sup> Oct. The worst year since 1992 when there were none!



Three of our commonest raptors. Sparrowhawk and Osprey ©Mark Wright. Kestrel ©John Thorpe. Marsh Harrier has probably ascended to top spot with Common Buzzard dropping down the ranking.

**Lesser Black backed Gull:** (2128 – 33) ↔

Uncommon passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Numbers are much lower now than they were in the 90's/early 00's when up to 2000 would occur associated with Corfe Mullen Tip. Another very poor year. Whilst present on most visits, 10 on 8<sup>th</sup> Aug was the max count.

*Lesser Black-backed Gull (L.f.intermedius): Scarce visitor. Last record 2023.*

**Sandwich Tern:** (14 – 33) ↗

Summer visitor. 95 bird-days on 48 dates between 9<sup>th</sup> Apr – 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. Max 8 on 27<sup>th</sup> Sep.

**Little Tern:** (10 – 8)

Rare visitor. 1 on Lytchett Fields on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep (SR, IB)

**Common Tern:** (26 – 33) ↔



Uncommon summer visitor. 72 bird-days recorded on 37 dates between 29<sup>th</sup> May – 30<sup>th</sup> Sep (latest ever, previously 26<sup>th</sup> Sep 2013). Max 19 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep. Records mainly in the Bay, though the flock of 19 was on Lytchett Fields. Another good year.

© Ian Ballam

*Arctic Tern: Rare visitor. Recorded in 4 years since 1992. Last record 2020.*

**Forster's Tern:** (1 – 2)

Last year's star visitor spent the winter in Brittany, France. In spring it returned to Poole Harbour and was seen from 30<sup>th</sup> Mar until 8<sup>th</sup> May at various locations. On the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> Apr it flew through the Bay and up the Sherford (MB). Remarkably photos then confirmed that the same bird was present in County Louth, Ireland throughout July. On 30<sup>th</sup> Sep & 1<sup>st</sup> Oct it was back, this time at Holes Bay, before returning to Brittany once again. We now wait with hope that we might see it again in 2025.

*Black Tern: Rare visitor. Recorded in 4 years since 1992. Last record 2022.*

*Arctic Skua: 1 record. 2011.*

*Common Guillemot: 1 record. 2021.*

*Red-throated Diver: 4 records. 1985, 1998, 2011 & 2013.*

*Black-throated Diver: 1 record. 1977.*

*Great Northern Diver: Rare visitor. 8 records. Last record 2023*

*Black Stork: 1 record. 2011*

*White Stork: Rare visitor, now helped by reintroduction scheme. 1 record. 2021.*

**Cormorant:** (500 – 33) ↗

Daily visitor. Large feeding flocks now occur frequently in autumn. Max 300 on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.

*Glossy Ibis: Rare Visitor. Recorded in 4 years since 1992. Last record 2022.*

**Spoonbill:** (25 – 15) ↔

Increasingly frequent visitor. Records on 33 dates. 38 bird-days to 27<sup>th</sup> Feb, Max 10. 85 bird-days from 5<sup>th</sup> Aug to year end. Max 15 on 2 dates in Dec.

**B(AE)+W(AE)** was present on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024.



*It was ringed as a pullus at Schiermonnikoog, NETHERLANDS on 19th Jul 2006, and is now 18 years old! A familiar visitor to Lytchett Bay, it has previously been encountered in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023. The bird commutes back and forth between SW England and the Netherlands where it was again recorded breeding at its place of hatching in 2023. In previous years, the bird has also been seen en route at Somme, FRANCE during late Sept and Oct.*

© Ian Ballam

**YmB+YGyfl** – was present in Lytchett Bay on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024.



*It was ringed Onderdijk, Vooroever, NETHERLANDS on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024.*

*It has previously visited the Bay in 2017.*

© Fraser Hockey

*Bittern: Rare visitor. Recorded in 7 years since 1992. Last record 2020*

**Cattle Egret:** (24 – 11) ↗

Increasingly frequent visitor. 60 bird-days on 14 dates. Max 24 on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct (IB) was a new record count (previously 9 on 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023).



**Grey Heron:** (13 – 33) ↔

Daily visitor in small numbers. Max 5 on 30<sup>th</sup> Aug.

*Purple Heron: 2 records. 1992 & 1994*

**Great White Egret:** (7 – 12) ↗

Uncommon but increasing visitor. Recorded on 29 dates, almost double last year's record total. Max 2 on several dates.

**Little Egret:** (67 – 32) ↔

Daily visitor. The largest counts occur in the early morning or late afternoon when birds arrive from or prepare to set off to roost. Max 33 on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug.

**Osprey:** (5 – 32) ↔

Annual passage migrant. Recorded on at least 68 dates. The Poole Harbour pair fledged 4 young.

Our first was on 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar. At least 5 were seen on several dates in Aug. These were migrants and not the locally bred birds. Quite how many individuals were seen on some days can't be answered, probably a good few more than 5.

The last record of the year was 27<sup>th</sup> Oct.

*Honey-buzzard: Rare visitor. 11 records in 8 years since 1992. Last record 2022.*

**Sparrowhawk:** (4 – 33) ↔

Uncommon. Recorded on at least 75 dates throughout the year. Again, a bird carrying food in Jun suggested local breeding.

**Goshawk:** (1 – 7)

Increasing visitor. 6 records.

11<sup>th</sup> Feb, 15<sup>th</sup> Feb (juv), 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, 25<sup>th</sup> Mar, 27<sup>th</sup> Jul (Ad), 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. All from the western side of the recording area.

**Marsh Harrier:** (6 – 32) ↗

Increasingly regular visitor. Probably our most frequently recorded raptor. Noted on at least 161 dates. Recorded in every month of the year. Max 4 on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1 or 2 roosted occasionally at both ends of the year.

**Hen Harrier:** (2 – 32) ↔

Irregular Visitor. Recorded on at least 22 dates, similar to 2023's record year, with almost a 50-50 split between grey males and ringtails. Recorded on 13 dates between Jan and 17<sup>th</sup> Mar and then 8 dates from 10<sup>th</sup> Dec to year end. 2 were seen on 2 dates, a grey male and a ringtail on each.

*Montagu's Harrier: 2 records. 1995 & 2017*

**Red Kite:** (29 – 19) ↗

Scarce migrant, increasingly expected on spring migration. A poor year with records on only 12 dates between 25<sup>th</sup> Feb & 1<sup>st</sup> Jun. Max 4 on 21<sup>st</sup> Apr.

**White-tailed Eagle:** (3 – 4)

Scarce wanderer from Isle of Wight reintroduction scheme. The following news release was made by the project in Nov 2024. "It is now five years since we began the White-tailed Eagle Project on the Isle of Wight in partnership with Forestry England. In that time we have released a total of 37 young eagles and the project reached a major milestone last year when a pair of translocated birds, G405 and G471, reared a chick for the first time. Two further chicks fledged from the same site this year and three other territorial pairs are now established in southern England, including on the Isle of Wight and at Poole Harbour in Dorset." <https://www.roydennis.org/category/latest-news/>

Recorded on 25 dates. Max 3 on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. Rock Lea View is a prime eagle watching location.

*Rough-legged Buzzard: 1 record. 2005.*

**Common Buzzard:** (15 – 33) ↔

For 30 years we have commented that this is the commonest raptor in the area. However this year at times it was rather hard to find and wasn't seen anything like as frequently as previously or as much as Marsh Harrier. It's too early to say if something has changed but certainly worth keeping an eye on. Max 10 on 1<sup>st</sup> Mar.

**Barn Owl:** (2 – 23)

Bred at French's Farm until 2009. Shortly after this the nest box was removed. Since then the species has been hard to see. One along the A35 on 21<sup>st</sup> Jul was the only sighting of the year. Nocturnal sound monitoring at our Listening Station recorded them on 7 dates in spring and 15 dates in autumn confirming that there are birds in the area but that they are strictly nocturnal.

*Little Owl: Previously resident breeder. Now very rare. Recorded in 12 years since 1992. Last record 2003.*

*Short Eared Owl: Scarce visitor. Recorded in 9 years since 1992. Last record 2022.*

**Tawny Owl:** (2/3 territories – 33) ↔

Uncommon resident. Heard occasionally throughout the year from 3 locations. Successful breeding thought likely but not proven.

*Hoopoe: Rare visitor. Recorded in 4 years since 1992. Last record 2021.*

**Kingfisher:** (5 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant and uncommon, but frequently seen, winter visitor. Almost certainly bred again this year on the Sherford with frequent records in May and Jun. 5 ringed.

*Wryneck: Rare visitor. Recorded in 6 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

*Lesser Spotted Woodpecker: Scarce visitor. Recorded in 11 years since 1992. Last record 2021.*

**Great Spotted Woodpecker:** ↗

Breeding Resident. Seen regularly in most parts of the Bay. Drumming heard in most areas during spring.

**Green Woodpecker:** ↓

Declining catastrophically. Last year we wrote the following text "We noticed this change in 2021 but never expected it to be so quick or severe. This species has gone from uncommon breeder to locally very rare in the space of 3 years. We thought that 17 dates in 2022 was poor but in 2023 we only have two records! Singles on 27<sup>th</sup> Mar & 1<sup>st</sup> Jun. Will 2023 be our first ever blank year?"

The good news is that it wasn't.....but only just. 3 records. 1 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jun, 1 on 20<sup>th</sup> Dec and 1 on 26<sup>th</sup> Dec.

This decline is being noticed across Dorset, where it is confirmed by the sharp decline in records within complete lists on Bird Track, and some other parts of the UK. The reasons are at this stage unclear with various ideas coming forward. We wait and monitor with interest.

**Kestrel:** (3 – 33) ↔

Uncommon resident. Recorded on at least 36 dates (probably under recorded). Scarce in the first part of the year but more frequently recorded from August onwards.

**Merlin:** (2 – 29) ↔

Scarce visitor. As 2023, recorded on only 6 dates. 11<sup>th</sup> Mar, 13<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Oct, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Nov and 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. All singles. The best year was 2020 with birds seen on 27 dates.

**Hobby:** (4 – 31) ⇔

Irregular summer visitor. Singles recorded on 11 dates between 13<sup>th</sup> Apr – 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. Almost identical to 2022 & 2023 and a relatively poor showing compared to the average.

**Peregrine:** (3 – 32) ⇔

Frequent visitor. Noted on at least 35 dates. A noticeable gap in records from late Mar to early Jul. Probably as result of the disappearance of the Poole breeding pair due to bird flu.

*Ring-necked Parakeet: 3 records. 1993, 2002 & 2020*

**Red-backed Shrike:**

2<sup>nd</sup> record. A long awaited bird. A juv showed very well at Lytchett Fields on 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Sep (IB). Thanks to wardening by Ian, of this otherwise private part of the reserve, many people were able to enjoy its visit. The bird was in the same field as last year's Great Grey Shrike and the 2011 Woodchat Shrike and would have been "bird of the year" was it not for a pesky American passerine (see page 38). The last was on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1988 at Lytchett Heath.



*Red-backed Shrike captured by its finder ©Ian Ballam*



*and in flight ©Peter Corbin*

*Great Grey Shrike: 1 record. 2023.*

*Woodchat Shrike: 1 record. 2011.*

*Golden Oriole: 1 record. 1993.*

**Jay:** (20 – 33) ⇔

Resident. Regularly seen throughout the year but most often in autumn.

**Magpie:** ⇔

Common Resident.

**Jackdaw:** (1400 – 33) ⇔

Resident. Recorded throughout the year. A record year. As reported in 2023, in autumn & winter a strong flight at the beginning and end of the day was noted flying towards and from a roost in Holes Bay. This was even bigger this year. Max 1400 on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct, previous record 750 on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2023.

**Rook:** (185 – 33) ↗

Breeds on edge of recording area. The Watery Lane colony was not counted this year. (11 – 25 nests 2010 – 2023).

**Carrion Crow:** (100 – 33) ⇔

Common Resident. Breeds widely across the area.

**Raven:** (15 – 30) ⇔

Uncommon. Recorded throughout the year, in particular during autumn.

**Waxwing: (20 – 5)**

Rare visitor. The big British influx took its time to reach Dorset and never really materialized in the scale that was anticipated. However we did get one of the earliest birds. A single, briefly in Slough Lane on 15<sup>th</sup> Jan (PC). Our first record since 2013. 8 appeared later in the month just outside the recording area and satisfied everyone's appetite.



*Sadly for several local listers this year's bird was only seen by its finder ©Peter Corbin*

**Coal Tit:** ↗

Uncommon resident, increasing. Recorded from most sites across the calendar. 6 ringed.

**Marsh Tit:** (1 – 8)

Rare visitor. 1 was in the hedge near the feeding station at Lytchett Fields on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan.

*Willow Tit: 2 records. 1982 & 1998.*

**Blue Tit:** ↔

Common resident. 74 ringed.

**AXL6085** – An adult ringed on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020 at Lytchett Bay was photographed 1224 days later in Poole on 15<sup>th</sup> Mar 2024. A movement of 7km. The bird was therefore at least 5 years old. The oldest recorded is 9 yrs 8 mnths.

**Great Tit:** ↔

Common resident. 32 ringed.

*Penduline Tit: 2 records. 1998 & 2015.*

**Bearded Tit:** (40 – 33) ↗

Scarce breeder and uncommon passage migrant. The survey in 2019 found at least 4, and possibly 8, pairs east of The Sherford. Bred successfully and lots of juveniles amongst 20 birds seen on 13<sup>th</sup> Jul, the max count of the year. 12 ringed.



Juvenile Bearded Tit © Ian Ballam

**Woodlark:** (15 - 21)

Previous winter visitor. Now scarce migrant. First record since 2021. A bird was heard singing on the western side of The Sherford at Holton Lee from Lytchett Fields on 21<sup>st</sup> Mar. This species had previously disappeared from Holton Lee presumably due to disturbance. Now that the site is now largely closed to the public it appears that they have returned.

**Skylark:** (781 - 33) ↔

Scarce breeder and passage migrant. A singing male was recorded in Mar - Jun with 3 birds seen in Jun, suggesting that they bred successfully. Rather scarce in each winter period, Max 4. Autumn passage was very weak with no counts greater than 5.

**Sand Martin:** (5000 – 33) ↘

Common passage migrant. Recorded from 17<sup>th</sup> Mar until 28<sup>th</sup> Sep. Numbers were poor throughout, not exceeding 25 on any one day.

**Swallow:** (10750+ – 33) ↔

Common passage migrant, breeds at French's Farm. Recorded from 26<sup>th</sup> Mar until 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. Spring migration was unremarkable. Autumn migration was decent. Max 650 on 21<sup>st</sup> Sep. 5 ringed.

*Red-rumped Swallow: 1 record. 2023.*

**House Martin:** (1800 – 33) ↔

Common passage migrant, breeding colony on edge of recording area at Watery Lane. Present from 30<sup>th</sup> Mar until 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. Max 250 on 21<sup>st</sup> Sep.

The colony at Watery Lane continued spread into Seaview Road and has extended into Slough Lane / Beach Road thanks to the provision of nest boxes. The newly installed House Martin nest tower attracted some interest when sound lures were played but no breeding occurred.

No of House Martin nests at the Watery Lane colony 2010 – 2024. No of nest collapsed or destroyed in brackets.

| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 8    | 13   | 2    | 4    | ?    | 7    | 10   | 18   | 17   | 12   | 18   | 11   | 10   | 20   | 22   |
| (7)  | (4)  | (0)  | (1)  |      | (3)  | (4)  | (?)  | (?)  | (4)  | (-)  | (-)  | (-)  | (3)  | (-)  |

**Cetti's Warbler:** (11 males – 32) ↔



Breeding resident. Despite this species rapid and continuing expansion across the UK it continues to struggle at Lytchett Bay. Sika deer grazing seems to be limiting habitat with low scrub being browsed out or severely disturbed. Singing birds were found at only 4 locations around the recording area and again some of these were quite sporadic. At this species peak in 2005 & 2015 it occupied 7 locations with up to 11 singing birds. 15 ringed.

*Juvenile Cetti's Warbler © Pete Corbin*

**Long tailed Tit:** ↗

Common resident. Regularly recorded from most sites at the Bay. 28 ringed.

*Wood Warbler: 2 records. 1998 & 2013*

**Yellow-browed Warbler:** (1 – 9)

Rare visitor. A very good year in the UK, probably the best since at least 2020. One finally made its way to Lytchett Heath and was ringed on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov (ANG, SR et al).



© Shaun Robson

**Willow Warbler:** (60 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant. This species has been lost as a regular breeder. Recorded between 20<sup>th</sup> Mar & 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. One in mid Jun at Lytchett Heath was unusual nowadays but there was no proof of breeding. Autumn was reasonable. Max 41 on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug. 100 ringed.

**Chiffchaff:** (142 – 33) ↗

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

A good series of winter records with 3 birds at Rock Lea View throughout Jan & Feb. The first definite wintering here, odd given the permanent existence of the water treatment plant.

15 on 15<sup>th</sup> Mar was the start of spring migration. The measurement of autumn migration is influenced by the reduced ringing effort. This was a good year. Max 138 at Lytchett Heath on 28<sup>th</sup> Sep. Wintering birds noted at several sites in Dec. 276 ringed.

**HYJ260** – A 1cy ringed at Kessingland, Suffolk on 30<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024 was controlled at Lytchett Bay 29 days later on 28<sup>th</sup> Sep 2024. A SW movement of 320km.

*Siberian Chiffchaff: Rare visitor. 14 records in 10 years. Last record 2022.*

*Aquatic Warbler: Rare visitor. 10 records involving 12 individuals. Last record 2022*

**Sedge Warbler:** (219 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant. Another poor spring. 8 recorded on only 7 dates between 17<sup>th</sup> Apr & 20<sup>th</sup> May. Autumn passage commenced on 20<sup>th</sup> Jul and continuing to 25<sup>th</sup> Sep. Max 129 on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug. 294 ringed.

The Devon bird below is remarkable in being at least 7 years old. The oldest recorded is 8 yrs and 8 months.

**S391617** – An adult ringed on 25<sup>th</sup> Jul 2018 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 2094 days later at Slapton Ley Devon on 18<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024. A SW movement of 137km.

**9992199** – A 1cy ringed on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 2022 at Reserve du Massereau, Frossay, Loire Atlantique, FRANCE was controlled 733 days later at Lytchett Bay on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A N movement of 385km.

**ABX6102** – A 1cy ringed on 28<sup>th</sup> Jul 2023 at Lytchett bay was re-trapped 375 days later at Chenal, Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet, Charente-Maritime, FRANCE on 6<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A S movement of 608km.

**AJZ1994** – A 1cy ringed on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 10 days later at Tour aux Moutons, Donges, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE on 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 2024. A S movement of 380km.

**AJZ1935** - a 1cy ringed on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 8 days later at Tour aux Moutons, Donges, Loire-Atlantique, FRANCE on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A S movement of 380km.

**AYR4795** – a 1cy ringed on 6<sup>th</sup> Aug 2022 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 730 days later at Reserve du Massereau, Frossay, Loire Atlantique, FRANCE on 5<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A S movement of 385km.

**AJZ1734** - A 1cy ringed on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 6 days later at RNR Des Marais de la Taute Marais de Cap, Montmartin-en-Graines, Manche, FRANCE on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A SSE movement of 173km.

**Reed Warbler:** (107 males – 33) ↔

Common summer visitor. Present between 7<sup>th</sup> Apr and 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. 107 singing males were recorded in a full survey in 2019. 151 ringed.

**AYL6795** – a 1cy ringed on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug 2022 at Rostherne Mere, Cheshire was controlled 730 days later at Lytchett Bay on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024. A S movement of 293km.

**BAE1210** – a pullus ringed on 4<sup>th</sup> Jul 2024 at Mockbeggar Lake, Hampshire was controlled 52 days later at Lytchett bay on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug. A SW movement of 25km.

*Melodious Warbler: 1 record. 2015*

**Grasshopper Warbler:** (33 – 26) ↔

Passage migrant, predominantly in autumn. Under recorded. Bred in 1986.

No spring records. 30 between 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug & 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep. All ringed except one field record at Lytchett Fields on last date. Max 9 on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug. *29 ringed.*

**Blackcap:** (75 – 33) ↗

Passage migrant, summer visitor and scarce winter visitor. No breeding survey undertaken but population felt stable at 14 - 18 territories found in 2019.

Seen regularly at Sandy Close Pond, Lytchett Way and Lytchett Fields in the first two months. Max 5 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan.

Spring migration almost undetectable. The first quiet autumn for a while. Max 11 on 28<sup>th</sup> Sep. *41 ringed.*

Occasional sightings in second winter period.

*17367600 – a 1cy ringed on 28<sup>th</sup> Sep 2023 at Oorderen, Antwerpen, BELGIUM was controlled 17 days later at Lytchett Bay on 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023. A W movement of 432km and presumably a continental bird arriving here for the winter?*

**Garden Warbler:** (7 – 31) ↔

Scarce passage migrant. 2 in spring, singles 24<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Apr. 9 bird-days in autumn between 4<sup>th</sup> Aug – 12<sup>th</sup> Sep. Max 4 on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug. *7 ringed.*

**Lesser Whitethroat:** (3 – 30) ↔

Scarce passage migrant, which occasionally breeds or holds territory.

Another thin year. Singles on 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr, 12<sup>th</sup> Jun, 17<sup>th</sup> Aug & 12<sup>th</sup> Sep. *1 ringed.*

**Whitethroat:** (18 – 31) ↔

Uncommon passage migrant. Bred in 2013. 6 bird-days in spring between 19<sup>th</sup> Apr – 15<sup>th</sup> May. In autumn, 8 bird-days between 8<sup>th</sup> Aug – 6<sup>th</sup> Sep. All singles. 30 plus bird-days is more typical, a dreadful year. *3 ringed.*

**Dartford Warbler:** (2 pairs – 31)

1 pair present at Lytchett Heath, bred successfully. *1 ringed.*

**Firecrest:** (9 – 21) ↗

Recent colonist, previously scarce migrant. Present throughout the year and recorded from all parts of the Bay. Thought that 1, or may-be 2, pairs bred. *2 ringed.*



*What thrill it is to encounter these birds on a regular basis © Ian Ballam*



**Goldcrest:** (27 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant, which occasionally breeds. Only one breeding season record this year but might be under recorded. Autumn migration was typical with widespread records of up to 6 on any one date at one location. *20 ringed.*

**Wren:** ↔

Common resident. *12 ringed.*

**Nuthatch:** ↔

Uncommon. Seen occasionally throughout the year from sites stretching from Lytchett Fields to Sandy Close Pond, seen frequently in the summer and autumn. *3 ringed.*

**Treecreeper:** ↔

Scarce resident. Recorded occasionally across the year from Lytchett Way to Kingsbridge. Probably breeds but the population is obviously small. 1 at Turlin Moor on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct was probably our first record there.

*Rose-coloured Starling. 1 record. 2008.*

**Starling:** (35000 – 5600 – 33) ↔

Common resident. A flock of 142 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jul contained approx. 80% juveniles suggesting a good breeding season. 500 were present in a pre-roost on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. *2 ringed*

*LL58843 – An adult ringed on 18<sup>th</sup> Jul 2022 at Lytchett Bay was killed by a cat 666 days later in Hamworthy on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024.*

**Song Thrush:** (1256 – 33) ↔

Breeding resident and passage migrant. Estimated population 11 pairs. No diurnal migration witnessed, though the Listening Station evidenced migration in both spring and autumn. Max 85 calls on 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Mar. *13 ringed.*



*This species now starts to sing in December, this feels like recent behavioral change? © Shaun Robson*

**Mistle Thrush:** (60 - 20 – 33) ↔

Uncommon resident. Another species for which this year's records are a cause of deep concern. Only recorded on 15 dates to the best of our knowledge! The worst year on record by some margin.

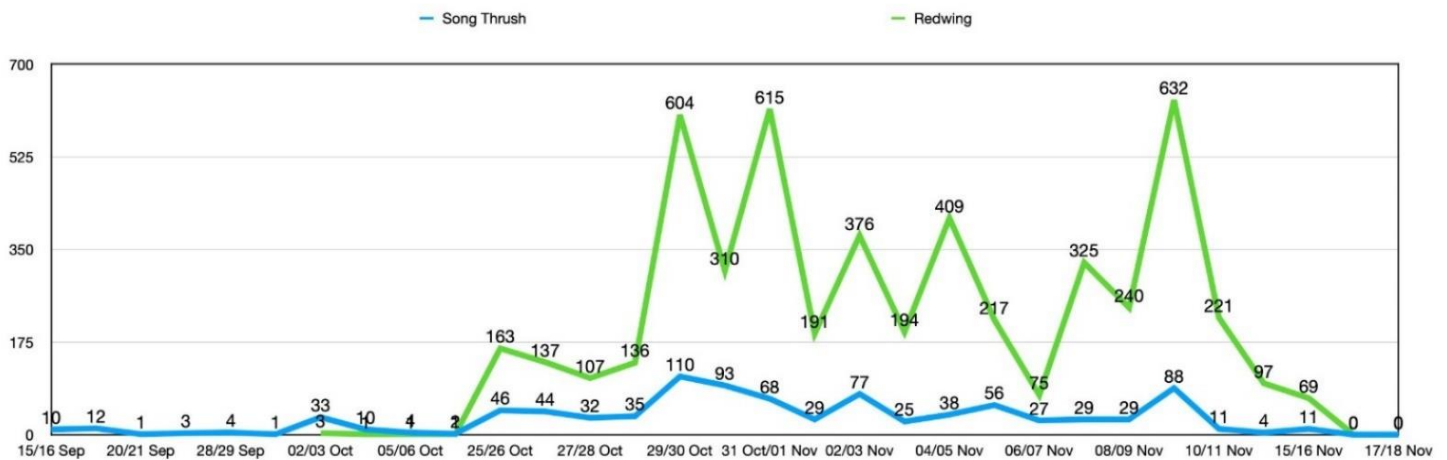
**Redwing:** (1000 – 514 – 33) ↔

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Recorded until 12<sup>th</sup> Apr and from 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct (both noc-mig).

Small numbers around Lytchett Fields in the first two months, max 20 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. Noc-mig recordings were frequent at Lytchett Way Listening Station, peaking with 93 calls on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Mar.

Diurnal migration in Oct - Nov was quite strong with movements noted on 7 mornings . Max 227 at Lytchett Bay View on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.

A very good noc-mig migration was recorded. Nick Hull has prepared this informative graph comparing autumn migration of Redwing and Song Thrush.



24 ringed.

**Blackbird:** (45 – 33) ↔

Common Resident. No significant records submitted. 10 ringed.

**Fieldfare:** (559 – 33) ↘

Uncommon winter visitor. Seen on three dates early in the year, 15 on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2 on 17<sup>th</sup> Jan & 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. Sound-recorded on 17<sup>th</sup> Mar. The first of autumn was 21 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. After which recorded on at least 6 dates in fewer numbers.

*Ring Ouzel: Scarce migrant. Recorded in 14 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

**Spotted Flycatcher:** (8 – 6 – 33) ↔

Passage migrant, previously bred. In spring singles on 8<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> May. Only 10 bird-days in autumn between 21<sup>st</sup> Aug & 29<sup>th</sup> Sep. Max 3 on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Robin:** ↔

Common resident. 25 ringed.

*Bluethroat: 2 records. 1971 & 2015.*

*Nightingale: 3 records. 1970, 1991 & 2012.*

**Pied Flycatcher:** (1 - 14)

Scarce migrant. 3 records, making it the best year since at least 1992. 1 at Lytchett Bay View on 15<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1 ringed at Lytchett Heath on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug (the first to be ringed since 1990) and one seen at the same site on 8<sup>th</sup> Sep.

**Black Redstart:** (2 – 9)

Rare visitor. 2 at Sandy Close Pond on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct showed well throughout the afternoon (SR et al). The first multiple occurrence.



*Pied Flycatcher, Lytchett Bay View & male Black Redstart, Sandy Close Pond. © Shaun Robson*

**Common Redstart:** (2 – 27) ↔

Scarce migrant. 2 singles, both in spring – 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Apr.

**Whinchat:** (11 – 31) ↔

Scarce passage migrant. The best spring fall since at least 1992. 8 were present on 27<sup>th</sup> Apr with 3 the following day. 19 bird-days in autumn between 28<sup>th</sup> Aug – 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. Max 2 on several dates.

**Stonechat:** (23 – 33) ↗



Returning breeding resident (7 pairs in 2002). We never understood why this species disappeared as a breeding species in 2006 and we don't understand why they are coming back. After a gap of 12 years, they bred again in 2018 and each year since. One pair raised 2 broods.

Present in every month of the year and recorded at a wide range of sites around the bay. Max 13 in autumn on 2 dates in Oct. 2 *ringed*.

*Juvenile Stonechat © Ian Ballam*

*AYR3477 – A 1cy female ringed on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021 at Lytchett Bay was photographed at the same site 860 days later on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024.*

**Northern Wheatear:** (39 – 33) ↔

Uncommon passage migrant. Almost every record of this species occurs in the north-west of the recording area where their preferred short grass habitat has declined in recent years.

25 bird-days in spring from 20<sup>th</sup> Mar – 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun. Max 6 on 28<sup>th</sup> Apr.

4 bird-days between 26<sup>th</sup> Aug – 5<sup>th</sup> Sep. All singles. The poorest autumn on record.

*Tree Sparrow: 2 records. 1981 & 1995*

**House Sparrow:** (101++ – 33) ⇄

Resident. Usually recorded around the urban fringe, seems to be doing well in many areas around the Bay. Mx 50 at Turlin Moor on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jul. 7 *ringed*.

**Duncock:** ⇄

Common resident. 9 *ringed*.

**Yellow Wagtail:** (150 – 33) ⇄

Uncommon passage migrant. 3 singles in spring between 16<sup>th</sup> Apr – 5<sup>th</sup> May. Autumn migration was even worse than last year with only 45 bird-days between 5<sup>th</sup> Aug – 19<sup>th</sup> Sep. Max 25 on 6<sup>th</sup> Sep.

*Blue-headed Wagtail: 4 records. 1983, 2013 (2) & 2014*

**Grey Wagtail:** (15 – 33) ⇄

Winter visitor, passage migrant and occasional breeder. 1 pair raised at least 1 brood at the Water Works.

**Pied Wagtail:** (650 – 33) ⇄

Recorded throughout the year, common in autumn. The second very poor year in a row. Very few anywhere at any time. The Lytchett Heath roost eventually appeared briefly in Nov with max 160 on 4<sup>th</sup>. 3 *ringed*.

**Meadow Pipit:** (460 – 33) ⇄

Historic breeder, now common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor. Max 226 on 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. 58 *ringed*.

***BVE2156*** – A 1cy *ringed* on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2024 at Seal Houses, North Yorkshire was controlled 47 days later at Lytchett Bay on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2024. A S movement of 413km.

**Tree Pipit:** (18 – 29) ⇄

Scarce passage migrant, rare in spring. 1 noc-mig on 12<sup>th</sup> Apr & 1 on 15<sup>th</sup> Apr. Autumn was very poor – a theme among many migrant passerines this year. 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug, 12<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Sep plus 3 noc-mig birds in the same period. 1 *ringed*.

**Water Pipit:** (20 – 27) ⇄

Uncommon winter visitor. Records have returned to previous levels since the creation of Lytchett Fields. A 30% decrease in records cp 2023. Recorded on at least 37 dates (likely that birds were present throughout the winter). Present until 1<sup>st</sup> Apr, Max 5 on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb. The first returning bird was on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct but the second period was rather poor. Max 2 on several dates.

Our “Pipitry” produced only two individuals *ringed* and colour marked as part of a national project. A total of 23 birds have now been colour-marked at Lytchett Bay since Nov 2020. No marked birds were seen in the field this year.

An excellent article in British Birds in Jan 25, Vol 118 by Adam Rowlands presents evidence that Water Pipits roost exclusively in typha (*Typha latifolia*) in Suffolk. This opens up a whole new line of enquiry for our work on Water Pipits at Lytchett Bay and the wider Poole Harbour area. We thank Adam for introducing us to the word “Pipitry” to describe our pursuit.

**Scandinavian Rock Pipit:** (50 – 33) ⇄

Common winter visitor. All Rock Pipits at Lytchett Bay are considered to be from Scandinavia of the race *littoralis*. Recorded until 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar and from 5<sup>th</sup> Oct. The autumn was again very wet everywhere and it can only be concluded that birds were thinly spread across a wide area rather than being concentrated in the historically favoured locations. Max 8 on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan at Turlin Moor and 5 on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1 *ringed and colour marked*.

A white *ringed* bird was seen in the field 28<sup>th</sup> Jan but the details could not be read.

**Chaffinch:** (450 – 33) ↔

Breeding resident and winter visitor. Max 35 on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan around the arable field. 3 ringed.

*Brambling: Scarce winter visitor. Recorded in 28 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

**Hawfinch:** (2 – 7)

Rare visitor. The UK experienced another autumn influx. Not as big as the 2017 irruption but impressive nonetheless. Our little slice of this included 1 over Rock Lea View on 25<sup>th</sup> Oct (IB) and 2 over Lytchett Bay View on 8<sup>th</sup> Nov (SR). Noc-mig recorded on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Nov involving as many as 8 birds!

**Bullfinch:** (20 – 33) ↘

Uncommon, in decline after an increase earlier in the century. A much better year than 2023. Recorded on at least 31 dates. Max 5 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct.

**Greenfinch:** (60 – 33) ↔

Uncommon breeding resident, which has declined due to on-going Trichomoniasis disease in the population. This arrived in late summer 2006 and has had a severe impact on English Greenfinch populations. Mostly seen in winter but bred widely in small numbers. Feeders at Lytchett Fields attracted up to 35 in Dec. Otherwise 12 at Turlin Moor on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb.

*Twite: 1 record. 1983.*

**Linnet:** (475 – 33) ↔

Uncommon breeding resident. The arable field again proved attractive in the first winter period. Max 300 on 10<sup>th</sup> Mar. The field was left fallow all year and its interest to this species declined in the second period. Max only 8 in Dec.

**Lesser Redpoll:** (40 – 27) ↔

Scarce passage migrant. Dreadful year. 12 bird-days on 10 dates.

**AJZ1200** – A 1cy ringed on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2023 at Lytchett Bay was re-trapped 170 days later at Middle Hope, Somerset. A NW movement of 98km.



*Siskin in typical acrobatic feeding action on Alder fruits*  
© Pete Corbin



*The Redpolls were finally "lumped" this year, not that it made any difference to us. Lesser Redpoll is our only representative* © Daniel Nash

**Crossbill:** (21 – 18)

Scarce passage migrant. 2 over on 4<sup>th</sup> May was the only record.

**Goldfinch:** (120 – 33) ↔

Common breeding resident and passage migrant. Notable counts included 73 at Lytchett Fields on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep and 40 at Lytchett Way on 30<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**Siskin:** (280 – 30) ↔

Uncommon resident. Recorded throughout the year in very small numbers. No count greater than 5.

*Lapland Bunting: 2 records. 2006 & 2015.*

*Snow Bunting: 1 record. 1993.*

*Yellowhammer: Extinct breeding species. Recorded in 21 years since 1992. Last record 2023.*

*Ortolan Bunting: 2 records. 2018 & 2021.*

**Reed Bunting:** (110 – 33) ↔

Breeding resident, c23 prs found in 2019 survey. Regularly encountered throughout the year. 34 ringed.

**Dark-eyed Junco:**

First record. The 4<sup>th</sup> for Dorset and 60<sup>th</sup> in the UK. Completely unexpected and unpredicted, this North American passerine was bird of the year. A male visited a garden on Slough Lane on 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Nov (WS, JS). Sadly by the time the bird was identified it had moved on. Hopes that it may turn up at the allotments or the local feeding station were unfulfilled. (See finders account on page 39) *\*subject to acceptance by BBRC.*



© Wendy Sargeant

Category E species:

**Bar-headed Goose:** 1 was photographed in the Bay on 23<sup>rd</sup> Apr (PC)

*Red-breasted Goose: 1 record 2020.*

*Great Bustard: 1 record 2014. Wiltshire reintroduction project.*

Records received from: I.Ballam (IB), J Blunt, M Brooks (MB), M Buglar, A.Collyer, A.Copland, P.Corbin (PC), T.Elborn, D.Foster, T.Furnell, R.Gifford, R.Goad, A.N. Gould (ANG), P.V.Harvey M&L Highfield, F.Hockey, J.Hull, N.Hull, S.Isherwood-Harris, P.Kirby, I.M.Lewis, P.Morton, D Nash, G.Owen, R.Pitts, S.Robson (SR), J Sargeant (JS), W Sargeant (WS), S.F.Smith, R.Stephenson, A Stobart, W. Stobart, P.Sutton, P.Swann, A.Taylor, J. Westacott, D.White, M.Wood, L.Woodford. With additional information from Bird Track, e-Bird, Birds of Poole Harbour and the Dorset Bird Club. Apologies for any omissions.

## Appendix 1 – Finders accounts

### Dark-eyed Junco – 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 – Wendy & Jeff Sargeant per Shaun Robson

At around 13:20 on 11th November 2024, Wendy and Jeff Sargeant noticed an unusual small bird on their bird table in their back garden in Slough Lane, Upton. The bird returned on at least three occasions during the afternoon. WS used her mobile phone to photograph the bird through the living room glass on each occasion. It was last seen at 15:14. JS noticed that the bird had white outer tail feathers which it fanned occasionally leading to WS to wonder if it was some sort of wagtail?

The following morning, 12/11/2024, the bird returned for two visits at around 11am.

It was not seen subsequently.

WS & JS are not birdwatchers but they have an interest in birds and regularly walk down Slough Lane to the RSPB Lytchett Fields reserve. Here they regularly bump into the warden Shaun Robson and his colleague volunteer Ian Ballam.

They were intrigued by their mystery visitor which they had never seen before and when they finally bumped into IB on the afternoon of 15/11/2024 they showed him two pictures on the back of the phone. IB immediately suspected that the bird was a male Dark-eyed Junco but due the poor quality of the photo and the light on the screen he could not be 100%. He took a photo of the photo using his phone and Whats app'd it to SR for a second opinion.

SR didn't pick up the message for 40 minutes or so but after a quick conversation with IB decided to visit the Sargeant's at their house.

WS had 9 photos on her phone and these clearly showed that the bird was indeed a Dark-eyed Junco of the Slate-coloured form. WS emailed the original 9 photos to SR. WS & GS showed SR the feeders where the bird was seen, just outside the back window. WS said that each time the bird arrived it came in quickly, fed and then left. It was chased off by a Robin on at least one occasion. JS said that the white in the tail caught his eye and he was struck by this.

The bird was in a private back garden with no access, it backs on to woodland, again with no access. The allotment opposite and local areas were searched frequently over the following days but alas the bird was not seen again.

A gripping and totally unexpected first for the Lytchett Bay recording area.



## Appendix 2 – Bird ringing at Lytchett Bay 2024

| Species Name          | New  | Retrap /control | Total |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------|-------|
| Woodpigeon            | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Water Rail            | 2    | 0               | 2     |
| Kingfisher            | 5    | 1               | 6     |
| Coal Tit              | 6    | 1               | 7     |
| Blue Tit              | 74   | 23              | 97    |
| Great Tit             | 32   | 3               | 35    |
| Bearded Tit           | 12   | 4               | 16    |
| Swallow               | 5    | 0               | 5     |
| Cettis Warbler        | 15   | 7               | 22    |
| Long-tailed Tit       | 28   | 11              | 39    |
| Yellow-browed Warbler | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Willow Warbler        | 100  | 0               | 100   |
| Chiffchaff            | 276  | 0               | 276   |
| Sedge Warbler         | 294  | 1               | 295   |
| Reed Warbler          | 151  | 27              | 178   |
| Grasshopper Warbler   | 29   | 0               | 29    |
| Blackcap              | 41   | 0               | 41    |
| Garden Warbler        | 7    | 0               | 7     |
| Lesser Whitethroat    | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Whitethroat           | 3    | 0               | 3     |
| Dartford Warbler      | 1    | 1               | 1     |
| Firecrest             | 2    | 0               | 2     |
| Goldcrest             | 20   | 12              | 32    |
| Wren                  | 12   | 5               | 17    |
| Nuthatch              | 3    | 0               | 3     |
| Starling              | 2    | 0               | 2     |
| Song Thrush           | 13   | 0               | 13    |
| Redwing               | 24   | 0               | 24    |
| Blackbird             | 10   | 3               | 13    |
| Robin                 | 25   | 3               | 28    |
| Pied Flycatcher       | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Stonechat             | 2    | 0               | 2     |
| House Sparrow         | 7    | 1               | 8     |
| Dunnock               | 9    | 1               | 10    |
| Pied Wagtail          | 3    | 0               | 3     |
| Meadow Pipit          | 58   | 2               | 60    |
| Tree Pipit            | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Water Pipit           | 2    | 0               | 2     |
| Rock Pipit            | 1    | 0               | 1     |
| Chaffinch             | 3    | 0               | 3     |
| Reed Bunting          | 34   | 3               | 50    |
| Total                 | 1316 | 113             | 1429  |



# Lytchett Bay 2024 Non-avian Wildlife Report



Lunar Hornet Moth  
Male Adder

Marbled Yellow Pearl  
© Nick Hull

*Crabro scutellatus*  
Marbled White

## Introduction

As always, recording the wildlife within the Lytchett Bay recording area has continued as normal, though there have been fewer people reporting sightings this year.

This year I've added 1,240 records to the database recording 447 species, with records coming from most areas around the Lytchett Bay. Of the 447 species 43 species have designations of one kind or other.

If you haven't submitted your sightings but would like to it's never too late, you can email me Nick Hull at [nickh4142@gmail.com](mailto:nickh4142@gmail.com) or you can post sightings and photographs on the Lytchett Bay Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2469123376495268> or tweet to Lytchett Bay Nature @LytchettP it's getting so easy to let us know what you're seeing. The more we know about the patch and its wildlife, no matter how small, it is valuable to keep Lytchett Bay and its Heathland, fields and green space for us all to enjoy whatever your interest.

As always I have to thank the following contributors for their contributions and records in no particular order: Shaun and Marie Robson, Ian Ballam, Jackie Hull, David White, Nick Mudge, Liz Woodford, Martin Wood, Ian Lewis, Alison Copland, John Westacott, Paul Swann, Sam Levy, Mark Wright & John Lynford. Hopefully I haven't left anyone out. I apologise now if I have.

I also would like to thank the following people for their help in verifying identification of various species groups. Tony Allen (Beetles); Paul Harris and Phil Sterling (Moths) and members from, Diptera, Hoverfly and various experts from BWARS (Bees Wasps & Ants) FaceBook groups and Britain Arachnid Society & Steven Falk via Twitter; whose help has been invaluable with identifying and advise on some of the more difficult and rare species of bee, wasps and diptera.

A number of species listed in the species account may have 'agg' written next to the name, this means for a definitive identification the species requires to be dissected (gen.det) to determine the species. I do not 'gen-det' as we do not believe in killing something that has a purpose on this earth and it should be able to fulfil that purpose before it dies. If I find a dead specimen, I have no problem in carrying out any procedure to find a definitive identification. There may come a time where one or two species may have to be collected to prove identification. If work is required for their conservation we would need to know what species they are to provide information to the various NGO's to be able to help the species if required.

I have included the species designation where appropriate for those species that have them. The designations are explained below..

Thank you,

Nick Hull

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

## Designation and meaning use in this report

|                     |   |  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| W&C (1981)          | - | Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)  |
| UK (2007)           | - | UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species list  |
| HR (2010)           | - | Habitats Regulations (1994) includes those now covered by Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)  |
| NERC (2006)S41      | - | NERC Act (2006), Section 41 list Species of Principle Importance in England  |
| UK BAP              | - | UK Biodiversity Action Plan  |
| Notable A           | - | JNCC Rarity Status Nationally Scarce invertebrate species found in 16-30 10km squares nationwide   |
| Notable B           | - | JNCC Rarity Status Nationally Scarce invertebrate species found in 31-100 10km squares nationwide JNCC Rare  |
| Status              |   |  |
| Nationally Scarce   | - | JNCC Rarity Status occurring in sixteen to one Hundred 10km squares nationwide. JNCC Rarity Status   |
| Nationally Rare     | - | JNCC Rarity Status Occurring in less than sixteen 10km squares nationwide  |
| Vulnerable-GB       | - | National Red Data Book per lists from JNCC web-site  |
| Near Threatened-GB  | - | National Red Data Book per lists from JNCC web-site Lower Risk   |
| Dorset Notable      | - | Dorset Notable Species Lists Species are chosen as indicators of good unimproved or semi-improved habitat to assist in the selection of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. |
| Dorset Rare         | - | Dorset Notable Species Lists Species found in three or less assist in the selection of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. sites in Dorset since 01/01/1990                 |
| <u>Web spinners</u> | - | Dorset Notable Species Lists - Web spinning moths and mites  |

## **Mammals**

This group changes very little from year to year. Sika Deer are our commonest along with Fox, Grey Squirrel, Rat, Wood Mouse, Hedgehog and Mole. Of the mustelids only Otter, and a single record for Weasel were recorded this year. Pipistrelle Bat is the only species that gets recorded annually and the only species recorded in 2024. Though we know there are other species of bat which have been recorded in the area in previous years.

### **Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* - W&C (1981); UK(2007); NERC (2006) S41**

This is the first year that no reports have come in for sightings of this species though I'm sure they are most likely still present. It's just that visitors are not looking for them and that the stream is very overgrown and is very hard to see along.

### **Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* - UK(2007); NERC (2006)S41**

Hedgehog are still regularly seen in around the gardens south of Sandy Lane and the Upton Hedgehog Group are always keen to receive your sighting of live and of road casualties as it adds to the data of their distribution within Upton and surrounding area. The first Hedgehog recorded was on the night of 3rd March by John Westacott in his garden.

### **Otter *Lutra lutra***

**(Hab(1992);HR(2010);W&C(1981);UK(2007);NERC(2006)S41;Near Threatened-GB**

As a rule during the year there is usually at least one sighting of an Otter in or on Lytchett fields. This year we haven't seen one but there have been signs they are still present with spraint being found on the concrete sluice.

### **Badger *Meles meles* Protection of Badgers Act (1992)**

Recorded on Video trap December 2024.

The last time we had positive proof of this species in the recording area was back in 2015. Then it was identified by scat and tracks. This year a neighbouring property started to find that something was digging up their garden and put out a camera trap and soon found the culprit was a Badger. Which is truly wonderful news and a very good record for the Lytchett Bay recording area.

### **Weasel *Mustela nivalis***

A single record on 20th April

Reported from Rock Lea View Point by Liz Woodford. This is a species we seldom see but usually puts in and appears once or twice a year.



Badger *Meles meles* © John Lynford



Polecat *Mustela putorius* © John Lynford

### **European Polecat *Mustela putorius***

We have only recorded Polecat once before this was a dead individual which was just outside the Lytchett Bay recording area. By chance I was chatting nature things in the barbers and the guy I was chatting to mentioned he had recently had Badger and a Stoat caught on a camera trap by his garden fence. It so happened he lived within the Lytchett Bay recording area so I asked if he could send me a copy of the camera trap video, which he duly did. To my surprise the Stoat was a Polecat which is a fantastic record for the patch. From this video shot it is hard to tell if this is a pure Polecat but it appears to have all the features of one.

### **Common Seal *Phoca vitulina* Hab (1992); HR (2010); UK(2007); NERC (2006) S41**

Three records all from the Turlin shoreline of a single Common Seal in the bay on 1st January, 1st March and 31st March.

### **Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* Hab (1992); HR (2010)**

Single record from the Turlin Screen of one in the main channel on 15th December by Shaun Robson, during a viewing of the new viewpoint. This is the fourth record for the patch of this seal species which is a scarce visitor in the harbour as a whole and only usually seen during winter months.

### **Sika Deer - *Cervus nippon***

Many records for this species from all months of the year.

### **Grey Squirrel - *Sciurus carolinensis***

Grey Squirrels are often seen around the bay in the wooded areas and visiting garden feeding stations though the population in the Lytchett Bay patch doesn't appear to have increased very much and stays fairly level throughout the year.

### **Brown Rat - *Rattus norvegicus***

This species is most often found at the Lytchett Fields feeding station but obviously are a common species throughout the area.

### **Pipistrelle Bat - *Pipistrellus sp.* HR (2010)**

The only records received have been from the area around the Junction of Lytchett Way & Sandy Lane and Sandy Close Pond. What species of

pipistrelle couldn't be ascertained.

## **Reptiles & Amphibians**

No surveys took part this year but I have received many casual records from visitors, many of seeing Adder along the Lytchett Fields boundary as well as Common Lizard and also Sand Lizard on Lytchett Heath. The only Frog and Palmate Newt records came from my own pond, though there were no signs of spawn this year. Toad still remains a bit of a mystery species and only a single casual record was received from a neighbour.

If you live in the boundary of the Lytchett Bay recording area and have a pond or see any reptile or amphibian in your garden, or on a walk please let me know as all data is useful. All you need to record is species, location, date and time and drop me an email. If you aren't sure of the identification, take a phone shot and send it to me, it can't be simpler.

**Common Lizard - *Zootoca (Lacerta) vivipara*** (W&C (1981); UK (2007); NERC (2006)S41).

Nick Mudge recorded our first record of this species in the approach Field this year on 23rd March, Ian Ballam photographed one at Rock Lee VP on 12th June this is another new site. This may be due to the construction of the viewpoint as the stone filled cages provide a good habitat with lots of crevices and good areas to warm up in the morning sun. Otherwise sightings came from Lytchett Heath.

**Sand Lizard - *Lacerta agilis*** (Hab (1992); HR (2010); W&C (1981); UK (2007); NERC (2006)S41)

As usual all sightings came from Lytchett Heath though they seemed a little harder to find this year. This is possibly due to higher disturbance from dog walking on this small remnant area of heathland.

**Slow Worm - *Anguis fragilis*** (W&C (1981); UK (2007); NERC (2006)S41)

John Westacott recorded our first Slow Worm of the year on the 3rd of April along Footpath12. Other records came from Shaun Robson of 2 by the Sandy Close pond and reports of individuals from neighbouring garden composters during the summer.

**Adder - *Vipera berus*** (W&C (1981); UK(2007); NERC(2006)S41)

Paul Swann recorded our first Adder this year seeing five on 18th February along the Approach Field margin one of which was a female. Which appears to be the same female that emerged early with the males in 2023. It wasn't until Nick Mudge visited on the 23rd March that a second female was seen along with three males. This is very good news as we have had very few female Adder sightings and it makes this site, much more viable population and hopefully this will continue in the future.

I'm sure many of you will have noticed when entering the Approach Field to walk out to the field viewpoints, that there has been a realignment of the fenceline. This was carried out in the winter for two reasons one to provide a secure fence to prevent the cattle from getting onto the main dual carriageway

and it will provide a space which will hopefully prevent the adder's being disturbed but still allowing visitors to be able to see them and take the odd photograph.



This adder may look like it's yawning but what it's doing is realigning its jaw, this is often done after it has eaten prey or prior to hunting.

**Grass Snake - *Natrix helvetica*** (W&C (1981); UK(2007); NERC(2006)S41)

Only two reports both from the Sandy Close pond, the first was on the 13th June and the second on 5th July.

### **Odonata - Dragonflies and Damselflies**

After a slight improvement in species numbers in 2023 (17 species). This year saw a reduction in numbers and of species being recorded with only 29 records of just 13 species being recorded within the whole Lytchett Bay recording area. Overall the season has been poor and numbers have been low. Most likely affected by the wet spring and summer. Dragonfly larvae have the capability to stay in their larvae state for another year if the conditions are not good enough and postpone their development to adulthood for another year. So hopefully 2025 will be kinder and we will see better numbers and more species over our ponds and wetter areas.

#### **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens***

Single record in 2024 on 17th August from my Lytchett Way garden.

This is just the fourth record of this scarce species on the patch and the first time recorded in my garden. First recorded in 2018, then 2019 and 2023.

#### **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula***

2 records in 2024 the first on 16th April and the second on 10th May from Lytchett Heath. This species is usually the first to emerge and has been more or less annually recorded but with just two records which consisted of a total of 5 males and a single female this has certainly been a poor year.

#### **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella* - 7 records in 2024**

This is possibly the commonest species to be found on the Lytchett patch

being seen in all years since we started recording in 2014 and seemed to be in good numbers over the ponds this year.

**Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans***

1 record on 11th July from Lytchett Heath

Another species which is always recorded in small numbers since 2014 though this year seems to have done poorly here with just one male being seen.

**Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta***

3 records 26th August; 27th August & 14th October.

We never have many records for this species which can turn up anywhere on the patch late in the season. They have been recorded annually since 2016.

**Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea***

4 records in 2024 with 2, 17th August Lytchett Way; 2 on 23rd August in the Approach Field; 1 on 26th August Lytchett Way; 1 on 26th August Lytchett Heath. This is another regularly seen species around Lytchett Bay which has been recorded annually since 2014.

**Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis***

7 records in 2024. This large brown hawker was annually recorded up to 2021 then missed two years and I recorded it again this year over the Footpath 12 pond. Records from 25th June FP12; 23rd July Lytchett Heath; 17th and 18th August Roc Lea VP.

**Emperor Dragonfly *Aeshna imperator***

1 record in 2024 Only a single record this year with 2 males with females seen on the same day over a private pond in the area on 19th June

**Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope***

1 record in 2024.

This is the second area record, One seen from Rock Lea VP by Sam Levy on 11th August. The previous record was in 2023.



Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope* © Nick Hull

**Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* -**

3 records in 2024

This is a species that has been recorded in 8 of the 10 years we have been recording. It's never in big numbers but numbers this year were lower than normal. With only a single record reported on 11th May from Lytchett Heath.



### **Keeled Skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens***

This is one of our commoner species which has been recorded in all 11 years since we started in 2014. They often venture into my wildlife garden on occasions. They were reported on 17th June Lytchett Way; 19th June Lytchett Way & FP12 also on a Private pond the same day and again on 21st July Lytchett Way garden.

### **Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum***

This species is the most common and as a later species to emerge seemed not to have been affected by the wet spring as other species were. Found widely around the bay area and were recorded well into November this year. 19th June Lytchett Way; 18th & 26th August.

### **Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum***

Usually commonly found around the woodland pond off Footpath12 in good numbers. This year was not the best year with just a single record of c12 on 14th June found by Paul Swann. The wet cold spring and summer plus the reed growth reducing the amount of free water in the ponds may also have had an effect on their productivity this year.

### **Orthoptera & Allied Insects**

Of the sixteen species in this family group only three species were reported this year but we added a single species to the group.

### **Tawny Cockroach *Ectobius pallidus***

Two records, the first was found in the moth trap on 29th January then 3 were found again in the trap on 2nd December.

Found locally in southern England south of the in a variety of habitats (chalk downland, heathland, dunes, cliffs and woodland clearings). Mostly recorded south of a line connecting Bristol to London but with outlying records in Norfolk, Lancashire and along the south coast of Wales. listed by S. Falk as Nationally Scarce.



Tawny Cockroach *Ectobius pallidus* © Nick Hull

### **Hemiptera - Bugs**

We have recorded 15 species of Shieldbug since starting recording in 2014 and this year Paul Swann managed to add two more to that list.

### **Bronze Shieldbug *Troilus luridus***

Three records the first two on 23rd August from Watery Lane and Rock Lea

VP and the third on 10th October in Watery Lane.

They are a large predatory shieldbug which has an orange band on the penultimate antennal segment. The legs are brown and the scutellum lacks an orange tip. They have one generation per year, the nymphs feeding on plants as well as other insects, particularly caterpillars. New adults may be found from July onwards in woodland which is associated with both deciduous and coniferous trees and occurs widely across Britain and Ireland.

### **Blue Shieldbug *Zicrona caerulea***

Eight reports were received for this species on the patch bringing us to 18 Shieldbug species:- 25th August Watery Lane: 26th August in the Approach Field; 27th August, 2nd, 8th, 25th September and 17th & 23rd October were all recorded along Watery Lane.

This is a medium-sized dark shieldbug with a deep blue-green metallic sheen and a dark wing membrane. A predatory species, favouring leaf beetles in the genus *Altica*, a case of aggressive mimicry. There is usually one generation per year and new adults are mainly found from July onwards. They occur on low vegetation in many habitats, including heathland, damp grassland and woodland rides. It is widespread throughout Britain, particularly in the north, although absent from Ireland.

### **Miridae sp. *Psallus varians***

Found in my moth trap on 17th May it reminded me of a photograph I had taken in 2013 which I failed to identify at the time. So checking my archive I found the photograph and it was of the same species, found in my moth trap on 27th June 2013.

## **Coleoptera – Beetles**

This is a large group which we have now recorded 137 species so far, including the ten species below. Six of which are designated species and I'm sure as time goes on we will be able to enlarge this group. 32 species have been recorded in 2024 the following ten species were new for the recording area.

### **Diving Beetle sp. *Rhantus suturalis***

Recorded on 24th August in the moth trap  
Quite common and widespread in Britain and found in still water habitats, including newly created pools and pools that dry out in summer.



*Rhantus suturalis* © Nick Hull

**Lesser Diving Beetle *Acilius sulcatus***

Found on the car forecourt on 24th August.

Widespread and fairly frequent in Britain. They can be found in temporary and permanent water bodies such as ponds and streams etc. *A. sulcatus* is able to fly; it is not restricted to a single body of water. It is found in water bodies with high and low levels of vegetation showing no preference between the two.

**Ground Beetle *Bradycellus verbasci***

Found in the moth trap on 1st August.

Widespread and fairly frequent in Britain.

Found in open, usually well-drained habitats such as arable fields and waste ground.

**Ground Beetle *Contacyphon pubescens* - Nationally Scarce**

Appears to be the 2nd Dorset Record.

First found in Britain in 2000 at Rammey Marsh in the Lee Valley Park Middlesex. The first Dorset record was in 2005.

**Soldier Beetle *Cantharis decipiens***

Two records of this species both found in the moth trap on 4th and 5th May.

Fairly frequent throughout England and southern Scotland. Can be found in a range of habitats, particularly where there are trees and shrubs, and particularly fond of Hawthorn blossom.

**Beetle sp. *Variimorda villosa* - Nationally Scarce; Notable B**

Found off FP12 on 11th July.

Local and mainly confined to the southern half of England. They can be found on flowers such as members of the daisy family and on umbellifers.



*Variimorda villosa* © Nick Hull

**Water Lily Beetle *Galerucella sagittariae***

Found along Slough Lane on 11th April.

Widespread and common in England and Wales. They are often found near water habitats where they breed. It is known to feed on the leaves of Strawberries both in the adult and larval stage and can become a pest of this crop. It also feeds on the leaves of various other plant species including Cloudberry.

**Weevil sp. *Hypera arator***

Recorded on the 11th April Slough Lane

Fairly widespread species though few confirmed records in central England

and Southern Scotland. In England and Wales it seems to have a coastal bias.

### **Dung Beetle *Acrossus rufipes***

Recorded on the 27th July found in the moth trap

Widespread and common in Britain and generally thought to be a common species in Dorset. Often found in gardens, pony paddocks etc. Although feeding in cow or horse dung, these beetles fly great distances at night to find new food sources, and regularly turn up around outside lights in gardens, well into towns away from potential sources of food. After their initial crash into the light source, they are most often seen crawling on the ground beneath the light.

### **Dung Beetle *Melinopterus prodromus***

Recorded on 1st August another that popped into the moth trap.

Fairly common and widespread in England and Wales. Where they feed on all sorts of herbivorous dung.

## **Mecoptera & Trichoptera**

### **Caddis Fly *Oecetis ochracea***

Recorded on 29th June again in the moth trap. Widespread and fairly frequent in Britain. Found Ponds, lakes, canals and slow moving rivers. The larvae are predatory and the adults are attracted to light.

## **Lepidoptera – Butterflies & Moths**

The wet spring and summer had a big effect on the spring emergence of both butterflies and moths and it wasn't until the second half of the summer when things seem to improve though not by very much. The variety of species were more or less the same as in 2023 but it was the numbers that were below average for both butterflies and moths certainly here in Lytchett Bay.

### **Butterflies**

I received 195 records of 22 species of butterfly in 2024 but numbers of all species was less than the average for the recording area. Large White and Brimstone were recorded in the highest numbers. Of the 22 species recorded two are designated species.

### **Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus***

Though Silver-studded Blue on Lytchett Heath did very poorly this year with only a single record being received from that location. A second record from the small area of heath off Footpath12 produced a count of 12 individuals for the first time here for many years. Which gives hope for the recolonisation of Lytchett Heath in the future.

### **Grayling *Hipparchia semele***

This species has never been recorded in very high numbers within the recording area and this year there was only a single record from Lytchett Heath.

## **Moths**

As I mentioned above the spring catches were poor in numbers and it wasn't until mid-July that they improved but not by much. I only had a single trap where I caught a hundred moths, though the variety of species was good. There was an improvement in the later part of the season where I caught a number of migrant species and a few new species for the site.

In 2024 I recorded 258 species of moth 31 of those were new for the garden and the Lytchett Bay Recording Area.

## **Micro's Moths**

### **Common Spring Jewel - *Dyseriocrania subpurpurella* (2.001)**

Trapped on 12th June.

This species is a very widespread and common species in the UK. They are a leaf miner of Oak tree leaves.

### **Common Bagworm - *Psyche casta* (11.012)**

Found in the house 21st June and Trapped on 22nd June.

A widespread and common species throughout the British Isles. The moth is found in most woodland, heathland and grassland habitats. Oddly the first record was found dead on my office windowsill and then the next evening one was in the trap. The males are winged but the females aren't. In Dorset they have an Eastern bias when you look at their distribution.

### **White-marked Stilt - *Calybites phasianipennella* (15.017)**

Trapped on 09th August.

This is considered a local species in Dorset which has two generations and feeds on various plants such as Water-pepper, Redshank, Black Bindweed, Common Sorrel, Sheep's Sorrel, Broad-leaved Dock, others.



[Calybites phasianipennella](#) © Nick Hull

### **Common Birch Leaf-miner - *Phyllonorycter ulmifoliella* agg. (15.075)**

Trapped on 18th July.

This is a common species whose food plant is Birch and they have two generations in May and August. As gen.det. is required to determine this species from its close relatives it has been agg'ed.

### **Willow Ermine - *Yponomeuta rorrella* (16.005)**

Trapped on 18th July.

A relatively local species, occurring sporadically in much of England, though with an eastern and coastal bias. As suggested by the vernacular name, the larvae feed on species of willow, especially white willow (*Salix alba*) and grey willow (*S. cinerea*). They feed gregariously on the leaves in a silken web, between May and July.

**Copper-fringed Drab - *Swammerdamia pyrella* (16.017)**

Trapped on 9th August.

This is a common species which has two generations May/June and July/August and their food plant is Apple, Hawthorn and Pear.

**Dingy Concealer - *Borkhausenia fuscescens* (28.012)**

Trapped on 1st August.

A common species that feeds on dried plant matter and has a flight period of July to August.

**Common White-barred - *Aproaerema taeniolella* (35.004)**

Trapped on 29th June

Considered a local species whose food plant is Bird's Foot-trefoil who's main flight period is July.

**Heather Grey - *Neofaculta ericetella* (35.017)**

Trapped on 29th June.

This is a common species that feeds on Bell and Cross-leaved Heather which has a flight period of April to June.

**Obscure Snout - *Anarsia spartiella* (35.020)**

Distributed throughout much of England, local in Scotland and mostly coastal in Wales and Ireland, this species is on the wing between June and August. The wings may be relatively plain, or have darker and paler mottling. The long, upwardly curved, labial palps of the female protrude from a large tuft of scales, but the shorter palps of the male are concealed in the tuft. In May and June, the larvae spin the shoots of gorse, broom or Dyer's greenweed feeding within.

**Sea-lavender Case Bearer *Coleophora limoniella* (37.003) - (Nationally Scarce B)**

Trapped on 29th June

I may have missed this species in the past as we have plenty of Sea Lavender on the saltmarsh which is only 100m away from the trap. As in the past I concentrated on macro moths and it is only fairly recently I have been looking at the micro moths more intently. This species has a flight period of July to August.



Sea-lavender Case Bearer *Coleophora limoniella* © Nick Hull

**Buff Mompha - *Mompha eilobiella* (40.001)**

Trapped on 18th July.

This is a common species that flies all year but hibernates in the winter. Its food plants are Great, Broad-leaved and Marsh Willowherb.

**Large Pale Masoner - *Blastobasis lacticolella* (41.003)**

Trapped on 07th June.

Another common species which has two generations May-August and September-November. They feed on a variety of vegetable matter.

**Brown-barred Tortrix - *Epagoge grotiana* (49.005)**

Trapped on 03rd July.

This is a common Tortrix species that flies in May to July and feeds on Oak and Hawthorn.

**Fleabane Drab - *Phtheochroa inopiana* (49.092)**

Trapped on 03rd July

Locally common and feeds on Common Fleabane and flies from June to August.

**Saltern Lance - *Bactra robustana* (49.197) Nationally Scarce, Notable B**

Trapped on 07th June

This species is to be found in salt marshes around the coasts of southern and western England and Wales, where it can be locally common. Habitat is a good indicator of the species. The flight period is June and July, and the moths can be attracted to light. The larvae feed internally in the stems of sea club-rush.



Saltern Lance - *Bactra robustana* © Nick Hull

**Common Knapweed Tortrix - *Eucosma hohenwartiana* 49.266**

Trapped on 07th June.

A common species that feeds on Common Knapweed which we have plenty in our wildlife garden. The flight period is June to August.

**Rest-harrow Piecer - *Cydia microgrammana* 49.327 Nationally Scarce, Notable B**

Trapped on 09th Aug.

A fairly local species, distributed mostly in the southern English counties but with scattered records further north, this is a relatively pale moth, the males having light-coloured hindwings. The adults fly in June and July, and the larvae feed on common Restharrow, feeding inside the seed heads.

**Marbled Yellow Pearl - *Evergestis extimalis* 63.058 Nationally Scarce, Notable B**

Trapped on 25th October.

A rare species in Britain confined to the Breck district and along the Thames estuary, In Dorset, the moth has been recorded in all but one of the past seventeen years, but there are no records prior to 1987. With the exception of singletons from Puddletown and Gaunts Common, all examples have been

from the coastal fringe, and most have coincided with immigration events. The status of the moth is therefore a regular but infrequent immigrant.

Larvae feed on various plants of the Cruciferae, the seed-heads being preferred. The national norm is a single-brood in June and July, but the Dorset records suggest two broods, the first in June, and a much larger second brood between early-August and mid-September. This bivoltine pattern is more a reflection of the cycle abroad rather than that experienced in the UK. Both charlock and white mustard 'arable weeds', have declined considerably in response to the widespread use of herbicides, and consequently there appears to be little scope for this species to gain a permanent foothold in the county.



Marbled Yellow Pearl - *Evergestis extimalis* © Nick Hull

***Parornix* sp. agg. 308x**

Trapped on 09th May

One of nine species in the family that requires Gen.Det to determine species. This is a new family group to be recorded for the Lytchett moth list.

**Macro Moths**

**The Gem - *Nycterosea obstipata* 70.047**

Trapped on 04th November (1) & 07th November (2)

A strongly migratory species with a global distribution (apart from Australasia) occurring annually across southern districts of England, the larval foodplant is unknown. Like the Vestal, this species does not seem to be able to survive the UK winter in any stage. The markings and light brown colouration of the adult male are in stark contrast to the much darker, purple-hued, female. In Dorset, the moth has been recorded in sixteen of the past twenty years. In favourable seasons, immigrants spawn up to two resident broods, and these are undoubtedly supplemented by further influxes from abroad whenever suitable weather conditions arise. Brood peaks double or treble in size with time. The moth has been recorded in twenty-four of the past twenty-seven years.

**Winter Moth *Operophtera brumata* 70.106**

Trapped on 27th December.

Common in Britain, the larva feeds on most trees and shrubs. The female is practically wingless. Nurserymen paint sticky substances around the circumference of fruit trees to prevent females reaching the buds to lay eggs. In Dorset, the moth is practically ubiquitous, and ranges from abundant in deciduous woodland and un-strimmed hedgerow habitat, and frequent to common elsewhere. Flight period October to January.



**September Thorn - *Ennomos erosaria* 70.236 UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41**  
Trapped on 19th August.

A frequent species in southern Britain, more local further north, the larva feeding on oak (*Quercus* spp.), lime (*Tiliae* spp.) and birch (*Betula* spp.). In Dorset, the moth is restricted to old birch and oak woods; it is seldom found in open country. It has also been trapped in suburban areas such as Wimborne, where lime (*Tilia platyphyllos* x *cordata*) is likely to be the host plant. September Thorns between mid-July and mid-August are smaller and paler than their late-summer/early-autumn counterparts; debate surrounds the possibility that the two forms are in fact two ecologically separate races.

**Dark Spectacle - *Abrostola triplasia* 73.002**

Trapped on 19th August.

A thinly spread species in England and Wales, local in Scotland, the larva feeding on nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and hop (*Humulus lupulus*). In Dorset, the moth until fairly recently was rare and at low density in river valleys where hop festoons hedgerows, notably on the Stour, the Moors River, and the Piddle, but has increased quite dramatically of late. Originally there was little evidence to support a resident status for the species, but currently, the moth seems to be regularly recorded from a few sites, notably those close to river valleys. The national norm is for a single-brood in June and July, but the Dorset records indicate a double brood pattern, with the peak of the mid-summer brood one-third higher on average, than that of the early autumn peak. Coupled with this are the suspected immigrant peaks in late May, late July and early October, reflecting a trivoltine cycle abroad.

**Green-brindled Crescent - *Allophyes oxyacanthae* 73.058 UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41**

Trapped on 25th October.

A widespread species in Britain, the larva feeding on blackthorn and hawthorn. In Dorset, the moth is common amongst hawthorn and blackthorn, and locally abundant among blackthorn thickets on coastal undercliffs; it is largely absent from open heathland and scrub-free habitats. The industrial melanic, ab. *capucina* is seldom seen; "the variation in Dorset consists in the greater or lesser development of the iridescent green scaling, and in the colour of the pale subterminal area, which varies from cream colour to being strongly suffused mars orange.



September Thorn - *Ennomos erosaria* & Green-brindled Crescent - *Allophyes oxyacanthae* © Nick Hull

**The Crescent - *Helotropha leucostigma* 73.119** UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41  
Trapped on 18th July.

A local marshland species in Britain, the larva feeding on the inner stems of yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), greater fen-sedge, pond-sedge and related plants. In Dorset, the moth is local and at low density, confined mainly to coastal fens at Radipole, Lodmoor, Poole Harbour and Christchurch Harbour, but also colonising fens inland plus several river systems where robust marsh plant species grow in profusion.

**Small Wainscot - *Chortodes pygmina* 73.144**

Trapped on 24th September.

A widespread species in Britain, the larva feeding on the inner parts of various grasses, sedges and rushes. In Dorset the moth is local and confined to marsh and fen habitat where it is generally at low density. A partial second brood is suspected during the early autumn.



The Crescent - [Helotropha leucostigma](#) & Barred Sallow - [Tiliacea aurago](#) © Nick Hull

**Barred Sallow - *Tiliacea aurago* 73.180**

Trapped on 25th October.

A species restricted to south-east England becoming rarer further north, the larva feeding on the buds, flowers and leaves of beech and maple. In Dorset, the moth is frequent in woods on chalky soils containing beech and field maple and recorded occasionally elsewhere where isolated mature beech and field maple grow. Larvae have been found on field maple in Chase Woods.

**Broad-barred White - *Hecatera bicolorata* 73.279**

Trapped on 16th July.

A species found mainly in south-east Britain, but local elsewhere, the larva feeds on the buds and flowers of compositae species including ox-tongues, hawkweeds and hawk's-beards. In Dorset, the moth is most often seen on dry grassland on both chalky and sandy soils; in such places it is local and at low density.

## Designated species which were caught in 2024 and which have been caught in previous years.

| Scientific Name                 | Common Name             | Code   | Adult | Larva | Designation                                |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|--|
| <i>Yponomeuta rorella</i>       | Willow Ermine           | 16.005 | 3     |       | WebSpinner                                 |
| <i>Cossus cossus</i>            | Goat Moth               | 50.001 |       | 2     | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Sesia bembeciformis</i>      | Lunar Hornet Moth       | 52.003 | 1     |       | Dorset Rare                                |
| <i>Synaphe punctalis</i>        | Long-legged Tabby       | 62.070 | 8     |       | Nationally Scarce, Notable B               |
| <i>Eudonia delunella</i>        | Pied Grey               | 63.072 | 3     |       | Nationally Scarce, Notable B               |
| <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>       | Oak Hook-tip            | 65.002 | 4     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Idaea degeneraria</i>        | Portland Ribbon Wave    | 70.017 | 1     |       | Nationally Rare                            |
| <i>Timandra comae</i>           | Blood-Vein              | 70.029 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Cyclophora pendularia</i>    | Dingy Mocha             | 70.030 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41<br>Nationally Rare |
| <i>Ennomos erosaria</i>         | September Thorn         | 70.236 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Spilosoma lutea</i>          | Buff Ermine             | 72.019 | 4     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>    | White Ermine            | 72.020 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Euplagia quadripunctaria</i> | Jersey Tiger            | 72.030 | 10    |       | HAB (1992)                                 |
| <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>          | Cinnabar                | 72.031 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>        | Knot Grass              | 73.045 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>    | Green-brindled Crescent | 73.068 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>       | Mottled Rustic          | 73.092 | 2     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Helotropha leucostigma</i>   | Crescent                | 73.119 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>          | Large Wainscot          | 73.134 | 5     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Cirrhia icteritia</i>        | Sallow                  | 73.182 | 5     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |
| <i>Orthosia gracilis</i>        | Powdered Quaker         | 73.247 | 1     |       | UK(2007) NERC(2006) S41                    |

## Hymenoptera

This is a large order with many sub-families, some of which are very hard to identify which often means I have to refer to experts for help with identifying some of these groups. Such as the ichneumon wasps, as Dorset doesn't have a County Recorder for this sub-family but fortunately the FaceBook group is very helpful but for some species it is impossible to identify from photographs. None-the-less we have recorded 172 species of Hymenoptera, including all the sub-families we have identified over the ten year period. We have a long way to go as there are 7764 species within the 62 families in the UK.

## **Sawflies & Woodwasps - Suborder Symphyta**

### **Plantain Wasp-sawfly - *Tenthredo omissa***

Recorded 12th August Watery Lane. This species was formerly found in East Anglian fen habitats, but a significant range expansion seems to have occurred and it has since been found across much of England and Wales, north to Cumbria and Yorkshire. One of the smaller yellow and black species of *Tenthredo*. The flagella of the antenna are entirely black as are the tegulae. The hind tarsus and apex of hind tibia is reddish-brown in both sexes. Yellow bands on the tergites do not broaden laterally. Adults of both sexes visit

blooms especially white umbels such as cow parsley and yarrow. This larvae, feeds on plantains and possibly other herbaceous plants.

### **Loosestrife Sawfly - *Monostegia abdominalis***

Recorded on 30th June RSPB Approach Field. Found widely in England and Wales north to Yorkshire, and more sparingly north to Ayrshire. A frequent visitor to gardens with yellow loosestrife. The head and thorax are predominantly black but the clypeus, labrum, tegulae and edge of the pronotum are a drab orange. Mesopleura may also be tinged with orange. The legs are predominantly orange but bases of the coxae may be dark. Abdomen orange. Stigma and venation is dark except for the extreme base of. Previously thought to be parthenogenetic in Britain, a single male was caught in Norfolk in 1982. *Monostegia abdominalis* larvae feed on yellow loosestrife, creeping jenny and scarlet pimpernel. Females cut pockets into the leaf margin and oviposit several ova in each pocket. The larvae cocoons in the ground. In summer generations, adults may emerge as quickly as two weeks after burying.



Plantain Wasp-sawfly - *Tenthredo omissa* & Loosestrife Sawfly - *Monostegia abdominalis* © Ian Ballam

### **Ichneumonidae - Ichneumon Wasp**

These family groups are somewhat problematic for me as the recorder of the Lytchett Bay project as there isn't a county recorder to verify our records and many are extremely difficult to identify. Of the 490 genera of ichneumon wasps many of which we have to refer to experts on the FaceBook page who are very helpful but some species cannot be identified from photograph alone. We have so far recorded 30 of the 2,586 species on the British List so we have plenty to lookout for. In 2023 we added a single species.

### **Parasitic Wasps - Apocrita**

#### **Hedgerow Darwin Wasp *Heteropelma amict***

Recorded on 17th July in the Whimbrel Field.

is one of our more conspicuous ichneumonid wasps in late summer and autumn, often seen in rather slow flight over bushes and shrubs with its clear yellow extremities nearly glowing. Found in various habitats, but particularly more open areas with shrubs, *H. amictum* has been reared from a variety of medium-sized caterpillars of the families Erebididae and Noctuididae. As with

other Anomaloninae, the female oviposits in the host when it is a larva, with the wasp larva completing its development in the host pupa. All Anomaloninae of known biology are solitary parasitoids and the long legs and petiolate metasoma seem to be used to jab the caterpillar with the ovipositor from a distance, with the metasoma swung beneath the wasp's body.

### **Bees - Apidae**

#### **Pantaloen Bee - *Dasypoda hirtipes* - Nationally Scarce; Notable B**

Recorded 11th July on Lytchett Heath

This is the sixth year that this species has been recorded. *D. hirtipes* is a southern-biased bee of very sandy habitats such as coastal dunes, heathland, sandpits, sandy brownfield sites and saltmarsh edge. Nesting occurs in flat, sandy ground, even well-trodden footpaths, where colonies can reach great size and strike fear into walkers (these bees cannot sting humans).



The nest holes have a characteristic fan of sandy soil beside them. They attract the attention of cleptoparasitic 'satellite flies' of the genus *Miltogramma*, both *M. punctatum* and *M. germari*. These enter the nest when the female is away foraging to lay eggs in the nest cells. Pollen is obtained almost exclusively from yellow-flowered Asteraceae, including Cat's-ear, hawkbits, ragworts and Fleabane. Where plants such as Cat's-ear are being used, foraging tends to be concentrated in the morning before the flowers close up. Adults fly from late June until early September.

### **Social, Potter & Mason Wasps - Vespidae**

#### **Willow Mason Wasp - *Symmorphus bifasciatus***

Recorded on 24th July in my garden

One of two small *Symmorphus* species with a transverse ridge along the front edge of the pronotum. Distinguished from the other (*S. connexus*) by the denser punctures on the mesonotum, mesopleuron and frons, and usually by the presence of yellow patches on the pronotum and scutellum. This is our most widespread and frequent *Symmorphus* species with records extending north to the Edinburgh area. Adults fly from June to August, usually in woods and wetlands with plentiful willows. The recorded prey is larvae of the Blue Willow Leaf Beetle *Phratora vulgatissima*. This species was previously known as *S. mutinensis*.

### **Sphecidae - Sand Wasps**

Seven species occur in the British Isles, but three of these are only known from the Channel Islands (*Ammophila campestris*, *Podalonia luffii* and *Sphex*

funerarius). We have identified two species on the Lytchett Bay heathland. Red-banded Sand Wasp *Ammophila sabulosa* and Hairy Sand Wasp *Podalonia hirsuta*. Though these species have been recorded since 2019 neither species were recorded in 2024.

### **Crabronidae - Digger Wasps**

#### **Digger Wasp sp. - *Crabro scutellatus* Nationally Scarce; Notable A**

Recorded on 11th July & 13th July on Lytchett Heath and on private land 19th July. This is the seventh year we have recorded this species. Also to record them in a different area was also nice even if it is privately owned. *Crabro scutellatus* is a very local inhabitant of the diminishing lowland heaths of southern England, its range confined to suitable locations.



Males are best sought as they fly around and settle on the foliage of trees and bushes within the habitat. The species flies from mid-June to mid-August. Requirements are very narrowly defined, and are mainly associated with dry, sloping exposures adjacent to damp heathland and bogland, the habitat of its principal prey. In such areas the nest burrows often form small aggregations. Some nesting sites may be a considerable distance from a source of suitable flies.

### **Arachnids - Spiders**

#### **Running Crab Spider *Philodromus albidus***

Recorded 13th March in my garden

Mostly confined to south-east England but probably spreading north west. Adults are found from May to July with a peak in June. Usually found in woodland or hedgerows on the lower branches of broad-leaved trees such as oak at the edge of clearings or rides.

#### **Spider sp. *Arctosa leopardus***

Recorded 20th March RSPB Lytchett Fields.

Widespread in Wales, scattered in England. Near water, in moss and humid ground litter. I found this small spider running along the barrier to French's Viewpoint. Luckily I had my camera and quickly took a shot not knowing it was a new species at the time.



Spider sp. Arctosa leopardus & Labulla thoracica © Nick Hull

**Spider sp. *Labulla thoracica***

Recorded on 27th July Lytchett Way garden Moth trap. Widespread and fairly frequent in Britain. Adults of both sexes are found mainly between August and October, but females and occasionally males can be found in most months. The spider has been recorded from damp, shady places in a variety of habitats, including woodlands, limestone pavement, unmanaged grassland, overhanging banks, gardens, and houses. It is found under loose dead bark, in hollow trees and at the base of trees, in holes, in ivy, under logs and stones, in bird boxes, in cellars and outhouses, in webs across drains and rocks.

**Harvestman sp. *Opilio canestrinii***

Recorded on 19th August Lytchett Way garden

This species has become more widespread and common in Britain. It is often found in gardens and around houses and is an invasive species. Adults can be found from June up to December. The species is an invader that is quickly colonising Britain. It was first seen in the UK in October 1999 beside a reservoir in the Lea Valley, Essex. The species has been expanding northwards from Italy, Austria and Switzerland. Where it has colonised Denmark and Germany, it has displaced the other two species of *Opilio* so this may also happen here.

## Plant surveys at Lytchett Bay RSPB Reserve, 2024.

Stephen F Smith [thesmiths@southroad.plus.com](mailto:thesmiths@southroad.plus.com)

### The Arable Field, 2024

Dates of visits: 30<sup>th</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> July

The Arable Field looked very different in 2024 after a break in the ploughing regime. In previous years the field had been ploughed in spring, so that the summer flora had been characterised by arable 'weeds' dominated by Corn Marigold in its millions, and with a rich understorey of Corn Spurrey, Small Bugloss, Weasel's-snout, Sun Spurge, Common Rampion-fumitory and Common Hemp-nettle. The 'star' species in the years 2019 – 23 was Small-flowered Catchfly, which appeared in numbers up to 1,000 flower-heads mainly in the north-eastern corner [the triangular area bounded by the overhead telegraph line].

All the above species depend on spring ploughing to stimulate their growth, but even so it was surprising that in June and July 2024 not one specimen of any of them was found. The three photos below show typical views across the field in 2024:



[1] View of the central parts of the field dominated by Scentless Mayweed, with some stems of Garden Radish breaking the skyline.

[2] Some dense patches of Sheep's Sorrel.



[3] The lime-green stems and leaves of the invasive alien Canadian Fleabane [or one of its close relatives] were much in evidence along the eastern boundary.

On the positive side, several species appeared in greater numbers this year than previously: the impressive hybrid Marsh Woundwort remained plentiful in its usual areas in the south-west of the field, and it had also spread to the eastern edges. Marsh Cudweed appeared also to have increased substantially, and Field Pansy was very common among the Scentless Mayweed.



It was good to record five additions to the site species list: Smooth Hawk's-beard, Hoary Willowherb, Square-stalked St John's-wort, Greater Plantain and Wall Speedwell.

### 2024 site species list in alphabetical order by scientific name

Dorset notable species are given in red, with the habitat type that they indicate in brackets:

|      |                        |
|------|------------------------|
| AG   | Acid grassland         |
| AG/H | Acid grassland / heath |
| CG   | Calcareous grassland   |
| NG   | Neutral grassland      |
| RP/F | Rush pasture / fen     |

|                                     |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Agrestis stolonifera</i>         | Creeping Bent                 | present                               |
| <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>        | Sweet Vernal-grass            | present                               |
| <i>Briza media</i> [CG, NG, RP/F]   | Quaking-grass sp.             | fairly widespread in eastern parts    |
| <i>Carduus nutans</i>               | Nodding Thistle               | one plant noted                       |
| <i>Cicerbita macrophylla</i>        | Common Blue Sow-thistle       | one plant near metal gate             |
| <i>Cirsium arvense</i>              | Creeping Thistle              | widespread and increasing             |
| <i>Conyza canadensis</i>            | Canadian Fleabane             | plentiful along eastern edges         |
| <i>Crepis capillaris</i>            | Smooth Hawk's-beard           | scattered plants in central areas     |
| <i>Elymus pungens</i>               | Sea Couch                     | present                               |
| <i>Epilobium parviflorum</i>        | Hoary Willow-herb             | several plants found in east          |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> [AG]      | Common Stork's-bill           | a few plants found                    |
| <i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>        | Marsh Cudweed                 | widespread in NE                      |
| <i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>        | Square-stalked St John's-wort | numerous along eastern edge           |
| <i>Juncus bufonius</i>              | Toad Rush                     | present in eastern parts              |
| <i>Lolium perenne</i>               | Perennial Rye-grass           | present                               |
| <i>Persicaria maculosa</i>          | Redshank                      | one plant found                       |
| <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>         | Reed Canary-grass             | present                               |
| <i>Phleum pratense</i>              | Timothy                       | present                               |
| <i>Plantago major</i>               | Greater Plantain              | one plant noted                       |
| <i>Poa trivialis</i>                | Rough Meadow-grass            | present                               |
| <i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i> [RP/F] | Common Fleabane               | widespread in east                    |
| <i>Ranunculus repens</i>            | Creeping Buttercup            | very common                           |
| <i>Raphanus sativus</i>             | Garden Radish                 | numerous in central parts             |
| <i>Reseda luteola</i>               | Weld                          | one plant noted                       |
| <i>Rumex acetosa</i>                | Common Sorrel                 | numerous                              |
| <i>Rumex acetosella</i> [AG/H]      | Sheep's Sorrel                | present in thick patches              |
| <i>Rumex crispus</i>                | Curled Dock                   | quite widespread                      |
| <i>Stachys x ambigua</i>            | Marsh Woundwort hybrid        | plentiful in SW, and numerous in east |
| <i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>    | Scentless Mayweed             | plentiful in central areas            |
| <i>Veronica arvensis</i>            | Wall Speedwell                | one plant found                       |
| <i>Vicia cracca</i> [NG]            | Tufted Vetch                  | scattered plants found                |
| <i>Viola arvensis</i>               | Field Pansy                   | plentiful in central areas            |

Total 32 species

As always I am grateful to Tom and Jean Smith of the Dorset Flora Group for sharing their knowledge, especially with the identification of the grass species.

## Botanical survey in the Approach Field, 2024

I have listed 55 flowering plant species alphabetically by scientific name, as is normal practice in botany, with a gap after every fifth line to make the list easier on the eye. A separate list of 18 Sedges, Rushes, Grasses and Ferns is given at the end; I am very grateful to Jean and Tom Smith of the Dorset Flora Group for identifying them.

Dorset notable species are given in red, with the habitat type that they indicate in brackets:

NG Neutral grassland  
 RP/F Rush pasture / fen

### Flowering plants

|                                     |                           |   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>              | Common Alder              | scattered seedlings in grass                                      |
| <i>Apium nodiflorum</i>             | Fools'-watercress         | present in stream and pools near SW corner of arable field        |
| <i>Callitriche sp.</i>              | Water-starwort sp.        | several patches in stream   |
| <i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>           | Wavy Bitter-cress         | present   |
| <i>Cardamine pratensis</i> [NG]     | Cuckooflower              | several hundred plants in mid-May                                 |
| <i>Cerastium fontanum</i>           | Common Mouse-ear          | present beside approach path                                      |
| <i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>         | Sticky Mouse-ear          | present in grass  |
| <i>Cirsium arvense</i>              | Creeping Thistle          | widespread  |
| <i>Cirsium palustre</i>             | Marsh Thistle             | scattered plants  |
| <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>              | Spear Thistle             | scattered plants  |
| <i>Cotula coronopifolia</i>         | African Buttonweed        | invasive alien, widespread in mud channels                        |
| <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>           | Great Willowherb          | present   |
| <i>Epilobium tetragonum</i>         | Square-stalked Willowherb | – a few plants near stream  |
| <i>Filipendula ulmara</i> [RP/F]    | Meadowsweet               | numerous near stream  |
| <i>Galium palustre</i>              | Marsh Bedstraw            | present beside stream   |
| <i>Geranium dissectum</i>           | Cut-leaved Cranesbill     | numerous in NE corner near metal gate                             |
| <i>Iris pseudacorus</i>             | Yellow Iris               | plentiful in stream   |
| <i>Lamium album</i>                 | White Dead-nettle         | common in grass in drier areas                                    |
| <i>Lathrus pratensis</i> [CG, NG]   | Meadow Vetchling          | one plant found on western bank of stream                         |
| <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> [NG]      | Common Birdsfoot-trefoil  | – widespread  |
| <i>Lycopus europaeus</i>            | Gypsywort                 | some patches on western side of stream                            |
| <i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i> [RP/F]   | Yellow Loosestrife        | fairly numerous on western side of stream                         |
| <i>Lythrum salicaria</i>            | Purple-loosestrife        | numerous beside stream  |
| <i>Mentha aquatica</i>              | Water Mint                | plentiful beside stream   |
| <i>Myosotis laxa</i>                | Tufted Forget-me-not      | one plant found on western side of stream                         |
| <i>Oenanthe crocata</i>             | Hemlock Water-dropwort    | numerous and widespread   |
| <i>Oenanthe lachenalii</i> [RP/F]   | Parsley Water-dropwort    | one plant found near wooden footbridge [others in Sherford Field] |
| <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>          | Ribwort Plantain          | widespread  |
| <i>Polygonum maculosa</i>           | Redshank                  | numerous beside stream  |
| <i>Potentilla anserina</i>          | Silverweed                | present in grass  |
| <i>Ranunculus acris</i>             | Meadow Buttercup          | fairly common   |
| <i>Ranunculus flammula</i>          | Lesser Spearwort          | common and widespread   |
| <i>Ranunculus repens</i>            | Creeping Buttercup        | widespread  |
| <i>Ranunculus sardous</i>           | Hairy Buttercup           | fairly widespread along the approach path                         |
| <i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i> | Watercress                | present in stream   |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>             | Bramble                   | common in surrounding hedges                                      |
| <i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>          | Clustered Dock            | fairly numerous beside stream                                     |
| <i>Rumex crispus</i>                | Curled Dock               | widespread in small numbers                                       |
| <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>           | Broad-leaved Dock         | present in hedges   |
| <i>Senecio aquaticus</i>            | Marsh Ragwort             | scattered plants beside approach pat                              |

|                                  |                     |  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>          | Common Ragwort      | plentiful  |
| <i>Silene flos-cuculi</i> [RP/F] | <b>Ragged-robin</b> | two patches near centre of field, totalling about 500 flower-heads |
| <i>Sonchus asper</i>             | Prickly Sow-thistle | a few plants beside stream   |
| <i>Spergularia marina</i>        | Lesser Sea-spurrey  | numerous in Aug on immediate approach path to viewpoints           |
| <i>Stachys sylvatica</i>         | Hedge Woundwort     | scattered plants present by stream                                 |
| <i>Stellaria holostea</i>        | Greater Stitchwort  | plentiful near Brambles  |
| <i>Taraxacum</i> agg.            | Dandelion sp.       | common   |
| <i>Trifolium dubium</i>          | Lesser Trefoil      | widespread   |
| <i>Trifolium pratense</i>        | Red Clover          | fairly numerous  |
| <i>Trifolium repens</i>          | White Clover        | common and widespread  |
| <i>Ulex europaeus</i>            | Gorse               | a line of bushes near stream                                       |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i>             | Common Nettle       | present  |
| <i>Veronica beccabunga</i>       | Brooklime           | widespread in stream and adjacent mud                              |
| <i>Vicia hirsuta</i>             | Hairy Tare          | some patches near kissing-gate                                     |
| <i>Vicia sativa</i>              | Common Vetch        | numerous between approach path and A350                            |

### Sedges, Rushes, Grasses and Ferns

If the status is given simply as 'present', the species was identified on our brief visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, but no attempt was made to assess its status on the site. Other species included here were tentatively identified by me, with the help of the PlantNet app.

|                                |                      |   |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| <i>Agrestis stolonifera</i>    | Creeping Bent        | present                                 |
| <i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>  | Marsh Foxtail        | present                                 |
| <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>   | Lady Fern            | present on western bank of stream       |
| <i>Bolboschoenus maritimus</i> | Sea Club-rush        | numerous                                |
| <i>Carex hirta</i>             | Hairy Sedge          | present                                 |
| <i>Carex pendula</i>           | Pendulous Sedge      | a few clumps                            |
| <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>     | Crested Dog's-tail   | present on eastern side of stream       |
| <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>      | Cocksfoot            | present                                 |
| <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>   | Tufted Hair-grass    | a few patches                           |
| <i>Glyceria fluitans</i>       | Floating Sweet-grass | present                                 |
| <i>Holcus lanatus</i>          | Yorkshire-fog        | widespread in drier areas               |
| <i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>      | Sharp-flowered Rush  | present                                 |
| <i>Juncus bifonius</i>         | Toad Rush            | a few patches on eastern side of stream |
| <i>Juncus conglomeratus</i>    | Compact Rush         | present                                 |
| <i>Juncus effusus</i>          | Soft Rush            | widespread                              |
| <i>Lolium perenne</i>          | Perennial Rye-grass  | present                                 |
| <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>    | Reed Canary-grass    | present beside stream                   |
| <i>Phragmites australis</i>    | Common Reed          | present in wetter areas                 |

### Photos and notes on selected species



**Water-starwort** *Callitriche* sp.

Some half-dozen species in this genus have been recorded in Dorset, but they are only identifiable to species if fruits are present [not the case here]. The 'default' species in case of doubt is Common Water-starwort *Callitriche stagnalis*.



**African Buttonweed** *Cotula coronopifolia*

This invasive alien has become a problem in many saltmarsh habitats, as it covers the bare mud needed by waders for feeding.



**Ragged-robin** *Silene flos-cuculi*

It was good to find about 500 flower-heads of this declining species.



**Gypsywort** *Lycopus europaeus*

The plants shown here are not yet in flower, but the strongly serrated leaves identify the species.



**Parsley Water-dropwort** *Oenanthe lachenalii*

A moderately uncommon species. One plant was found near the wooden footbridge, and five more nearby in the northern corner of Sherford Field.

It was identified by the shape of the fruits [photo lower left], which taper towards the base, unlike those of the similar Corky-fruited Water-dropwort, which are wider at the base.



The photo right shows the very slender and pointed leaves.

[This photo was taken in situ against a card background so as to avoid damaging the plant.]



**Lesser Sea Spurrey** *Spergularia marina*

These attractive little plants with their mauve flowers are a feature of the Whimbrel Field as well as the immediate approach to French's and Sherford Viewpoints, between the cattle-trough and the wooden barriers. Easily overlooked as the plants are only a few centimetres tall.



**Brooklime** *Veronica beccabunga*

This semi-aquatic member of the Speedwell family with its distinctive blue flowers is a feature of the stream and adjacent mud in the Approach Field. The leaves and stems are noticeably thick and fleshy.

**Sea Club-rush** *Bolboschoenus maritimus*

An odd-looking species, misnamed as it is actually a sedge, with stems sharply triangular in section. As we know from the rhyme:

“Sedges have edges, rushes are round,  
and grasses have joints all the way to the ground.”





**Common Cord-grass** *Spartina angelica*

Formerly abundant all over Poole Harbour, but now greatly reduced in extent. Several patches were found.

[For a detailed historical account of the status of *Spartina* in nearby Holes Bay, see Nick Woods’s scholarly article in the Holes Bay wildlife report for 2020:

Birds of Poole Harbour > Surveys > Poole Harbour site-specific annual reports > Holes Bay 2020 > page 60.]

**Final word**

This was primarily a plant survey, but a few species of fauna were noted in passing, in particular the spectacular Wasp Spiders, which were numerous in August along the stream:

Not to mention the ticks in the vegetation bordering the stream, which were attracted to my person in unprecedented numbers!

**References**

Bowen, H., 2000, *The Flora of Dorset*. Pisces Publications  
<https://wildflowerfinder.org.uk>



*Majestic sunset over the Bay © Fraser Hockey*