

2013 Lodmoor area report

The birding year

Not a vintage year. Indeed what was arguably the headline event of 2013 was all bad news...when the entire colony of Common terns abruptly deserted without hatching a single egg.

Otherwise, however, a really cold snap in January, followed by a prolonged chilly spell in March and the first half of April failed to deter many other breeding birds. Nesting was in many cases clearly delayed. But better late than never. And by June many common species actually appeared to be enjoying a very productive summer. Freshly fledged Robins and Blue/Great/Long tailed tits seemed to be everywhere, the local House sparrow colonies continued in rude health, record numbers of both Pochard and Tufted duck bred and the depression that had settled over the tern islands was at least partly lifted by the sight of 3 freshly fledged Marsh harriers -- the year in a row harriers have bred.

At the northern end Jay, Treecreeper and Goldcrest all bred again and nesting Bullfinches seem to be spreading further down the western side.

The bad news was that over summering numbers of Canada geese also went through the roof.

2013 was inevitably going to produce some sense of a let down following the procession of outrageous rarities that was 2012. But this year had its moments too.

They included 2 Black storks that quite literally appeared out of a clear blue April sky. They were followed a week later by a Red rumped swallow. In the autumn the star bird was undoubtedly Lodmoor's 3rd White rumped sandpiper (and the first adult) backed up by Great white egret. Finally October and November produced the area's 4th, 5th and 6th Yellow browed warblers.

Sub rarities included 4 Woodlarks in January, 2 Whooper swans in February, a spring Osprey, no fewer than 5 Red kites, and during the autumn Red backed shrike, Red crested pochard, and Lapland bunting. It was also a pretty good year for anyone habitually scanning the often unforgiving expanses of Weymouth Bay. In between the long barren spells the Bay also produced 2 long staying Velvet scoters, record flocks of Balearic shearwaters (two flocks of 12) and Little gulls (90+), and, most dramatic of all, an unseasonal late December Cory's shearwater.

On the land the most memorable events included a late January freeze that produced a striking influx of Golden plover and Skylark, terrific spring passage of both Whimbrel and Sanderling, an exceptional late summer/early summer surge in usually scarce migrants like Redstart, Spotted/Pied flycatchers and Crossbills, and some of the best Kittiwake and auk counts of recent times during the December gales.

The biggest disappointments would probably include much of May, the terns, October/November vis-migging, and the sight of some fishermen gill netting auks in Weymouth Bay.

Award for the most under appreciated part of the recording area went to Weymouth rugby pitch, where for several weeks in late spring you could get prolonged views of a flock of wonderfully confiding Whimbrel, alongside an equally approachable family party of Ravens.

A total of 187 species were recorded (or 188 for those of you unscrupulous enough to include Feral pigeon).

The recording area

See 2012 ! Although I've been a bit creative by including Paul Harris' Black storks. He saw them while standing on the railway bridge at Lorton. I promise not to elasticate the area any further.

The observers

Richard Morris, Geoff and Sheila Barlow, Christine Milner and Neil Arnold, Nevil Fowler, Ian Stanley, Dave Chown, John and Sue Campbell, Paul Harris, and me. There were fewer species compared to 2012 but, thanks to more records, more complete accounts of a number of species.

Daragh Croxson
23 03 2014.

+ all records Weymouth Bay unless stated

* all records given

WB: Weymouth Bay. 2MC: Two Mile Coppice CP: Lodmoor Country Park

Mute swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding: 4 pairs bred hatching 6,5,4, and 2 cygnets. Two perished, but by late Jly 14 had fledged.

In winter 14 had gathered in Feb but later in the year just 3 were left with none at all after Christmas.

Whooper swan *Cygnus Cygnus

2: both flew together north over Southdown Feb 13th.

Greylag goose *Anser anser

3 records of presumed feral birds:

Single(s) Mch 24th, 1 Apr 1st, 4th, and 2 27th.

Canada goose *Branta Canadensis*

Breeding: the number of nesting pairs seems to have reached a plateau at 6/7 pairs...possibly because there's only enough space for that number of territories. Between them they raised around 30 goslings -- about the same as last year. What has dramatically increased, however, is the number of non breeding, over summering birds. Initially these were nearly all paired up but later they coalesced into a single flock of 78. It looks quite likely that these birds caused the Common tern colony to desert(see that species) when they started roosting on the artificial islands.

In autumn the usual influx -- presumably from east Dorset -- peaked at around 450 in late Aug. Fewer wintered. About 50 were around early in the year, 70 at the end.

Barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis

Single feral birds May 30th, Spt 16 - 23rd.

Dark bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Another pretty good year. The spring flock was exceptional.

About 48 birds WB/Lodmoor on 8 dates Jan/Feb, with 4 Mch 22nd.

In spring two flocks totalling 120 birds WB Apr 9th, with another 21 on 5 dates to 26th.

In autumn/winter about 20 on 8 dates from Oct 30th.

+Pale bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota

The Apr records were pretty typical but the May birds were very late:

8 east Apr 15th

70+ Apr 25th.

8 May 11th.

Egyptian goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus

2 records that may well relate to the same feral wanderer Apr 21st and May 30th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Breeding: no evidence of nesting on Lodmoor itself this year, perhaps reinforcing the theory that many of their broods in the past have actually been hatched on Portland breakwater and brought across WB by their parents to feed.

In spring numbers peaked at 26. Several over summered but a group of 3 adults and 8 fledged young Jly 21st. had clearly come from elsewhere.

Subsequently only erratically present. 16 came in off Nov 2nd. But generally only 1-3 were around until early Dec when numbers gradually grew to about 14 by the end of the year.

Mandarin Aix *galericulata*

A female/imm type late Jly/early Aug. This was followed by a full plumage male Nov 2nd and 6th, with a female/imm type 7th. They're unlikely to have from China.

Wigeon *Anas Penelope*

Another good year for a species that is often only intermittently present.

Early on regularly present through to Apr 8th with a max. of 92 Jan 23rd.

In autumn an eclipse male Jly 5th was exceptionally early(or summering nearby). This was followed by 14 records of 58 birds from Aug 6th.

Numbers had built up impressively to 109 by Oct 3rd increasing to at least 170 by 29th. However, most moved on quite quickly to winter elsewhere leaving smaller numbers(1- 20) regularly present from mid Nov to the end of the year.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Breeding: a minimum of 3 pairs bred with broods of 10, 6 and 2 noted in Jly and Aug.

Usual autumn/winter gatherings incl. 80+ early Feb and 150 late Oct, which was a particularly good count.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Good numbers late on with around 250+ late Nov/early Dec. Incl. 12 Littlemoor. Rd pond Jan.

In spring 1-2 lingered through May with one to at least Jun 1st. One 4th either the latest or the first returning bird !

Subsequently up to 30 regularly present with numbers gradually increasing to three figures by Oct.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Generally seemed to enjoy a really good spring judging from the number of chicks in Jun. A single observer diligently noted a total of 43 ducklings in 8 broods between Jun 19th and Jly 12th alone.

Also incl. pair Littlemoor Rd pond.

Pintail *Anas acuta

8 records of 14 birds:

pr Jan 25th - 26th, female Mch 20th, 1 Spt 12th, 2 28th with 3 29th, 1 Oct 2nd, 2 21st - 22nd, 3 28th - 29th with 1 31st, 1 Dec 24th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Spring: one of the better years with up to 3 males on lots of dates Apr 27th - Jun 7th.

Autumn: the sole record of an eclipse male with Teal Oct 26th was one of Lodmoor's latest ever records.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Present year round and may well have bred. No chicks noted but 6 pairs were around late May/June, incl. pair near tern islands.

Usual autumn build up. Out of context records incl. singles WB Jan 5th and Littlemoor Rd pond Jan.

***Red crested pochard**

1 record:

drake landed on the pool east of Beachdown Spt 4th. Almost certainly the Radipole bird.

This was the 2nd record in 4 years but this species remains very rare indeed on Lodmoor.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Breeding: best ever year. At least 7 and possibly as many as 10 pairs nested. Survival rate of ducklings unknown but plenty of fledged chicks noted. A sign of things to come was provided by a record spring count of 33 males and 10 females late Apr.

Winter: a brief influx of 270 during the freeze late Jan was the exception not the rule. Otherwise numbers remained low at both ends of the year with a max count of 60+ late Nov.

Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*

A record breaking year...see winter count.

Breeding: At least 9 pairs produced broods and incl. a max. clutch of 8 ducklings. Also pair in territory Littlemoor Rd pond.

Winter: in contrast to Pochard record numbers for a duck that is usually only present in relatively modest numbers. A count of 116 late Jan is the first three figure total for Lodmoor.

Scaup *Aythya marila

A slight improvement on 2012 but nevertheless the third poor year in a row:
3 Nov 13th - 19th.

Long tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis

1 record:

a mobile imm/fem west scrape, tern islands and nr Hump Oct 30th - 31st.

Not an annual visitor to WB/Lodmoor...and the first record on the reserve itself since 2008.

+Common scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Early on about 20 on 10 dates Jan 3rd - Feb 21st. Then about 21 on 11 dates Apr 4th - May 23rd.

After that much harder to come by until 14 Aug 15th.

In autumn/winter about 50 Oct 26th to year's end. Max. 22 Nov 11th. Then 2 - 5 virtually daily Dec.

+Velvet scoter *Melanitta fusca

2 records of relatively long staying birds. Both imm males.

1 May 9th - 16th.

1 Nov 24th - 28th and again Dec 4th - 7th.

Like Long tailed duck only an irregular and infrequent visitor so much appreciated.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula

2 autumn migrants:

1 west WB Nov 20th,

Imm/female on pool east of Beachdown Nov 22nd.

Red breasted merganser *Mergus serrator

3 records of probably 2 birds -- all of them unusually on reserve itself:

red head tern islands Mch 23rd, and probably same roosting on the islands Apr 8th - 12th.

red head Oct 24th, 26th, 27.

Goosander *Mergus merganser

3 records of a sawbill that is by no means annual to Lodmoor/WB:

drake east WB Jan 12th.

pair west WB Nov 11th.

red head north over reserve Nov 15th.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Bred northern end and CVR. Also male and 3 females Overcombe end.

+Red throated diver *Gavia stellata*

Another good year incl. a rare mid summer record.

6 records of one day jobs between Jan 2nd and Apr 4th probably related to 4 different birds.

Then 1 Jun 28th - 29th...in summer plumage but only ever distantly.

Finally 1 settled and then flying east Nov 11th and 1 on several dates Dec 27th - 31st.

+Black throated diver *Gavia arctica

An outstanding set of records for what is usually the scarcest diver in WB.

Early on 2 records of 3 birds: 2 Jan 2nd, with 1 3rd. Then singles Feb 23rd - 24th, Mch 19th.

During the Dec storms a real flurry of sightings: 1 Dec 4th, 2 24th, 1 settled 25th, 3 flighty birds 27th - 29th.

+Great northern diver *Gavia immer*

Early on up to 7, but usually 1-2 Jan/Feb.

In spring 1-4 regular Apr 3rd - May 18th. A number of summer plumage birds and, for the second year running, one doing its aqua planing display. 2 Jun 11th were very late(see Red throated diver).

Later on 1-3 regular from Nov 5th with occasionally up to 5.

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding: at least 3 broods in early Jly....and possibly as many as 7 pairs nested. Also pair Littlemoor Rd pond.

Winter: max. of 14 in Nov.

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding: 3 pairs were in territory in spring. But for some reason breeding success is always pitifully poor. Between them they appeared to raise a total of one fledged chick.

Wintering: a really strange year in WB. Generally numbers were pretty poor. But the major exception was an isolated count of 99 Redcliff/Osmington Bay with another 5 WB Jan 4th...a record count. Most had gone by the next day suggesting they were passage birds...perhaps en route from Continental Europe.

+Red necked grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

A series of records that probably related to no more than 2/3 birds:

1 Jan 12th.

1 on a number of dates Nov 27th - Dec 17th may have related to 1 or more of up to 3 birds in Portland Harbour.

+Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus

5 records:

1 Jan 5th with 2 6th,

singles Feb 11th, Mch 1st, Nov 20th, 29th.

2 Dec 1st.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

In the spring/summer just 4 singles May 24th - Aug 11th, then 2 19th.

What would otherwise have been a dire year redeemed a little during the Dec storms which produced unseasonal records of 3 23rd and 1 27th.

+Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea

1 record:

1 west Dec 23rd.

If accepted the first record for the area...and indeed the first for Dorset in Dec. It appeared just ahead of a rain squall in a south westerly gale and was last seen heading towards Portland.

+Balearic shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus

Basically 2 records...the counts of 12 were each easily record flocks for WB, so the annual total easily smashed all previous totals:

a loose group 12 coasting west Aug 12th.

a total of 19 -- a group of 12, 1 and a group of 6 -- Aug 31st.

+Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Early on just 4 singles Jan 2nd - Feb 10th.

In spring/summer more regular than usual, in albeit small numbers, with approx. 55 May 8th - Jun 24th.

In autumn, by contrast, a really mediocre showing featuring just 60+ Jly 1st - Oct 30th.

But, for the second year in row, there was a pulse of late Dec records...thanks to the ceaseless gales.

Between 6 and 30 noted almost daily from 14th.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Ever present WB and regular on reserve. Incl. 1 really strikingly white headed Continental type Feb.

+Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Poor year. Only irregularly present. Max. of 10 Jan.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

As ever impossible to gauge exactly how many actually winter. Certainly more regular than ever. Noted regularly from Jan 1st - Mch 4th. Subsequently a departing bird was noted on Mch 20th with another still Apr 2nd and 5th.

Recorded regularly again from Oct 6th - Dec 31st. Incl. 2 and probably at least 3 Dec 17th.

Little egret *Egretta garzetta*

Max of 9 mid Jly. But generally present less regularly than usual. Mainly 1-3, but for several spells none at all.

Great white egret *Ardea alba

1 record;

adult Jly 19th.

The 6th record in the last 8 years.

Grey heron *Ardea cinerea*

Ever present and as ever good numbers of juveniles from the Nottingham colony in mid summer.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia

4 sets of records during an excellent year:

2 Mch 7th, with 3 by 28th, with 4 Apr 2nd - 3rd and 5 to 6th, with 1 to 8th. Typical early spring pattern.

4 Spt 19th.

7 Spt 28th - Oct 4th, with 2 to 5th, and 1 to 10th.

1 first winter Dec 12th - 18th.

The ringed bird that was around in early April had originally been banded as a nestling in the Netherlands in 2006 and usually winters in Portugal before returning each spring to the country of its birth.

***Black stork**

1 record:

2 heading north Apr 20th.

These birds were spotted from the railway bridge at Lorton -- on the very edge of the recording area. They were watched circling high to the east before sailing over The Ridgeway. A phone call enabled more birders to enjoy them flying over Dorchester.

Extraordinarily the finder had also found the flock of fly over White storks in 2012!

Only the area's 2nd record and the first since 1977.

Red kite *Milvus milvus

4 records of 5 birds:

1 Apr 27th...one of the few birds that's actually hung around...for a few hours at least.

1 west Bowleaze May 7th.

1 east Jun 1st.

2 north Jly 15th.

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Breeding: one of the big pleasures of birding Lodmoor the last few years has been the opportunity to see these fantastic birds on an almost daily basis.

What turned out to be this year's breeding pair were around from Jan with display noted from early as 10th.

A third bird appeared occasionally but didn't hang around into the spring.

Nest building was well underway from mid Apr. There was a suspicion the first nest may have been abandoned. At any rate a nervous wait ended when the first fledged youngster appeared above the reed bed Jly 8th -- within two days of last year's fledging date. A second and then a third bird soon showed and -- just as last year -- all three were soon fledged.

They disperse early...the last youngster was noted Aug 1st.

Subsequently a probable migrant went west Aug 16th and in Oct two males were around, followed by an immature male and a mature female to the end of the year who appeared to be very much a pair..

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

At least 2 and probably 3 pairs probably bred locally(Horselyynch/2MC/Coffin Wood areas). And, even allowing for migrants/winter visitors, the number of sightings from Aug onwards suggest they had a good nesting season.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

A single pair seemed to be in territory northern end but only very late in the spring and there was no real evidence they actually nested this year.

Earlier 4 birds wintered incl. 2 that spend the early part of the year in the pitchnputt course in CP. Later one of these was found dead and badly under nourished.

Passage: 15 over Apr 1st was an exceptional total by Lodmoor standards. Also 1 in off May 25th and 3 in off Oct 10th.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus

1 record:

1 west along Preston beach Apr 13th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Its status seems remarkably stable. Once again a pair nested up the northern end with a 2nd pair resident in Bowleaze/Redcliff area.

Merlin *Falco columbarius

2 records:

1 west Spt 28th.

1 Oct 20th.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Confined to just a handful of singles in May, followed by a smattering of sightings Jly 8th - Aug 30th.

This was followed by a belated influx of 1-3 regularly Spt 14th - Oct 7th, followed by a late bird Oct 20th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Something of a return to form. Fairly regular Jan, Feb, although only occasional subsequently.

Then at least 2 different birds regularly causing mayhem among the Lapwing and wildfowl flocks Nov, Dec.

Water rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Breeding: almost certainly nested again. Calling birds present to May 20th and a juvenile Aug 30th may have been bred locally.

Winter: double figures regularly. And a clue to the true numbers lurking in the reed beds may have come from Radipole where a survey revealed 100 birds.

One foraging in the hedgerows of Lorton Meadows during the Jan freeze was a turn up.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding: despite being a familiar and daily presence this species doesn't usually nest in very big numbers. This year, however, they seemed to be doing very well...in common with a number of other water birds. A minimum of 6 broods were recorded.

Good numbers around Oct-Dec: 30+ feeding seaward end of reserve.

Coot *Fulica atra*

One of Lodmoor's commonest birds. Despite the cold spring they got going early, with the first chicks Apr 23rd. A minimum of 16 pairs bred(total nesting pairs probably higher).

Max count of at least 170 Aug 8th.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostrageous*

Breeding: what's assumed to be the experienced pair nested by the Hump once again. They were sitting by at least May 5th with the first chick appearing 30th, with three out and about Jun 1st. Last year all but one chick was predated by the neighbouring Carrion crows. But happily this year's brood were all successfully

fledged...an indication of the food supply and a testament to the adults parenting skills. The entire family performed a spectacular fly past over the Southdown estate Jly 13th. The last left Aug 30th.

As usual the breeding pairs occasionally had to put up with incursions by wannabe breeders with 7 adults noisily displaying to each other Apr 24th.

A second pair nested (on the tern islands) again and this year, after initially abandoning, actually managed to hatch a chick. But inexplicably it vanished a day later (Jly 17th).

Winter: there were occasional sightings in Jan with 2 pairs back by Feb. At the other end of the year one on the Preston beach groyne Dec 8th was the sole record.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta

A total of only 6 birds all year, but 5 different records is above average for what is always an erratic visitor:

1 Feb 20th.

2 Mch 14th - 17th.

1 Apr 3rd.

1 Apr 9th-10th.

1 Jun 14th.

Little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*

Spring: 9 birds on 10 dates Mch 25th - Apr 26th. Incl 3 4th - 7th.

Autumn: 6, mainly juvs, on 12 dates Jly 8th - Aug 31st.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Spring: a good series of records. In Apr 1 2nd - 6th, 4 25th - 26th, followed by 12 May 8th - 28th, incl. 6 15th.

Autumn: about 22 Jly 25th - Aug 27th. In Spt up to 18 regular Preston beach, with up to 14 Oct. Unusually for this species up to 6 lingered all the way through to Dec 8th, with 2 to 26th.

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

This species has become very much a hard weather visitor to Lodmoor. Last year was one of the worst ever (1 record!). So this year that was terrible weather in Jan for the birds was brilliant for the birders.

1 in off 12th was followed by a spectacular arrival when at least 900 arrived 18th. They spent most of their time on the fields near Horselynch. They didn't stay long. 300 went over 21st as birds started to reorientate. And just 30 grounded birds were left by 23rd. Finally 3 were still off Littlemoor Rd 24th.

The autumn could hardly have provided a greater contrast. 1 in off Oct 27th represented the sole record.

Grey plover *Pluvialis equatorial

3 records of 4 obligingly long staying birds:

1 Jan 26th, 27th, 31st - Feb 6th... a rare mid winter record.

1 Apr 24th - 26th.

2 Spt 25th - Oct 10th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

First winter: along with Golden plover this species featured prominently in the Jan freeze. There were already 300+ on the reserve in January. And by 27th numbers had swollen to 971 between Lodmoor and Littlemoor Road.. On top of that another 800+ went over 21st.

The refugees incl. one with a broken leg being predated by the local Magpies and a Buzzard.

Unlike the Golden plover many of the Lapwing lingered, with at least 400 still around mid Feb, falling to 160 by Mch 6th. Unusually a few loitered into Apr, with 2 to 12th, followed by 1 north 19th.

Autumn: the first returning/non breeding birds appeared Jun 3rd but were only present in modest numbers until late Oct.

Second winter: relatively high counts. Numbers grew to 250+ by mid Nov, climbing to 350 by early Dec, rising again to 560 by 17th, with another 150 north the same day.

Knot *Calidris canutus

4 records of 7 birds:

1 14th - 15th Mch.

1 Spt 7th.

1 Oct 4th.
4 east Nov 5th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba

The second really good year in a row.

Spring: totals reached three figures. The May peak is typical (this species is normally one of the latest waders to move through). But the numbers are exceptional. Almost 150 graced the reserve and Preston beach, many in summer plumage:

singles Apr 16th, 22nd.

Then in May: 2 8th, 21 10th, 20 sw 15th, 40 on Preston Beach 26th, 4 27th, followed by 36 Jun 11th, 10 12th, 7 14th -15th. Surely Lodmoor's best ever spring.

Autumn: 2 sharing the beach with holidaymakers Aug 8th, 1 west 23rd, and finally 1 Preston Beach -- without the sun bathers -- Nov 17th, 18th.

White rumped sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis

1 record:

Ad Jly 17th - 21st. Photo.

3rd Lodmoor record. The two previous records, both juvs, were in Spt 1982 and Oct 2000.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginous

3:

1 partial summer plumage ad Aug 5th.

Juv Aug 27th - 29th.

Juv Spt 19th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The second really disappointing spring in a row.

Spring: 40+ daily from Apr 22nd but the usual May peak just never happened. The monthly max. was a pathetic 14, with 10 Jun 2nd, 2 3rd.

Autumn: routine. Present from Jly 8 on, increasing to 36 daily by end of month. Up to 20 daily Aug and second half Spt.

Winter: this species has become much more regular in winter in recent years. Early on 1-2 (from 2012) increased to double figures regularly by late Jan/Feb. Later up to 11 with the Lapwing flock Nov/Dec, although numbers rapidly dwindled during the floods.

Little stint *Calidris minuta

1 record:

Juv Spt 14th - 17th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax

5 sets of records, featuring at least 7 birds. The Apr. record was unusually late for this species in spring.

1 Jan 23rd-24th, 3 26th, 2 28th-30th. All during freeze.

1 Apr 27th - 28th.

1 Aug 20th - 21st.

Juv Spt 5th.

1 Oct 17th.

Jack snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus

2 singles:

1 Feb 6th,

1 Apr 2nd.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Winter: hard weather early on and flooding later in the year helped produce very high numbers again. In Jan 120+ were around, with 50 in top fields alone 18th - 20th. Peak numbers, however, weren't noted until Feb 1st - 11th with 230+ present.

In Dec a combination of high water levels and regular raptor incursions helped with airborne counts of up to 140.

Spring: Counts of just 20 in Mch, with up to 6 noted daily to mid Apr, followed by odd singles through to May 7th.

Autumn: fairly routine. First back Jly 14th. Single figs only until Oct when an influx incl. 100+ Oct 17th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola

6 records of singles. The 4 during the Jan freeze were predictable but the Apr record wasn't:

2 Jan 19th. 1 flushed nr west path, 1 flushed from stubble field.

1 Southdown Ridge Jan 20th.

1 calling over Brackendown Ave. pre-dawn Jan 21st.

1 Mch 20th.

1 on western side Apr 7th.

Black tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*

The sighting of the year was completely unexpected. 80+ went east Nov 9th, with another 56 briefly on the reserve. This huge influx by Lodmoor standards was followed by 24 the following day.

Winter: just odd records of 1-2 Jan - Mch. Later up to 9 occasionally Oct/Nov. But that was it, apart from 3 Dec 25th.

Passage: apart from the amazing Nov total a distinctly underwhelming year. In spring incl. 8 Mch 31st.

Then 10 dates in Apr incl. 24 26th. 14 dates May - Jun 6th with max of just 8.

In autumn present daily from Jly 4th, but, apart from 23 Oct 12th, only in small numbers.

Bar tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Very much a hit and miss migrant at Lodmoor. Last year was a palpable hit but 2013 was a definite miss.

Just 8 all spring Apr 13th - May 20th. What was unusual was a winter plumage bird that almost over-summered Jun 10th - Jly 7th.

In autumn just 1 Aug 14th, followed 1 north with Lapwings Dec 19th.

Whimbrel *Numenius heaps*

In complete contrast to Barwit a brilliant spring.

Passage featured about 330 birds Apr 10th - Jun 7th, incl. 157 on May 12th alone. Another peak occurred between Apr 15th - 18th.

Without doubt the most appreciated birds were a group of 20 unusually long staying and confiding birds on Weymouth RFC from late Apr. They incl. one with a damaged leg that lingered until Jun 14th. Its injury didn't hinder a voracious appetite. On one occasion it was seen taking 12 prey items, mainly leatherjackets, in just five minutes.

Autumn: 2 west Jun 28th, followed by 3 Jly 12th, with another 8 singles to Aug 21st.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Winter: 1 weather refugee Jan 24th.

Spring: In Mch a total of 14 through on 6 dates 4th - 27th. Then 15 Apr 2nd - Jun 11th incl. a number of late dates.

Autumn: v. poor. 5 singles Jly 7th - Oct 12th.

Spotted redshank *Tringa erythropus

3 records:

1 winter plumage Mch 20th.

1 winter plum ad. Apr 9th - 10th.

juv. Aug 27th - 31st.

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

No repeat of last year's displaying birds. But some compensation in the form of a terrific autumn. This species has enjoyed two relatively good years in a row.

Spring: 1 Mch 7th - 9th, 1 22nd, then 7 singles Apr 9th - May 31st and 3 Jun 11th.

Autumn: 7 singles Jun 14th - 28th were all adults and probably failed breeders. Present daily in Jly with a

max of 8. In Aug another good run of records featured rather more juveniles.
Finally 1 Spt 20th, 3 singles Oct 17th- 29th and 2 Nov 6th.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Not a vintage year.

Spring: just 2 singles: Apr 16th and May 5th.

Autumn: better -- present near daily Jly 2nd - 19th, max 5. More erratic in Aug: 2 8th, 3 10th, 1 16th, last 30th - Spt 4th.

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Winter/spring: odd singles Jan 6th - Feb 19th, followed by 1-2 Apr 2nd - 11th which may have been delayed wintering birds rather than genuine migrants.

Autumn: first returning bird Jun 11th. Present daily by Jly with up to 6 by end of the month. Then 1-5 daily in Aug. 1- 2 regularly Spt 18th - Oct 28th.

Winter: strangely records petered out, with just 4 singles Nov 8th - Dec 12th.

Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola

At least 7 and, for the second year running, an obligingly long stayer.

1 Jun 27th.

Then 3 Jly 30th - Aug 1st, with at least 2 to 7th, and at least 1 staying to 20th.

1 high north Aug 13th was probably additional.

1 Sept 15th.

Common sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The headline event of the year was Lodmoor's first Dec record. One of two adults that had hung around all autumn stayed up to 7th. But, just when it looked set to become the reserve's first over-wintering bird, it moved on.

Spring: late in coming, but eventually appeared in very good numbers: singles on 8 dates Apr 16th - 30th, with 5 on 18th, followed by 2-3 daily May 3rd - 10th and 3 13th - 14th.

Autumn: first back Jun 28th, then present daily through to the end of Oct. Max. 10 late Aug.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Winter: up to 20, but usually just a handful, were erratically present Preston Beach Jan - mid Mch. Later up to 13, but more usually 1-4 were around Nov, Dec.

Passage: 1 May 27th. In autumn 1 Aug 7th - 8th, 3 beach 25th, 28th, followed by up to 6 on a number of dates late Spt, Oct.

+Arctic skua *Stercorarius

2 singles:

east Oct 21st.

imm. west Dec 21st.

+Great skua *Catharacta skua

2 singles :

Apr 14th.

1 close in and briefly settled before heading west Nov 11th.

Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Winter: more record counts incl. 400 in WB roost Jan 10th and 300 Nov 28th.

Passage: incl. 90+ through reserve Mch 1st. As ever scarcest in spring. Just 7 singles Apr 8th - late May, followed by 3 - 4 summer plumage adults early Jun, although no suggestion of breeding....yet !

In autumn regular from mid Jun with a mid summer max. of 131 west scrape Jly 16th. First juvs Jly 27th. Of 6 colour ringed birds noted on Jly 17th, 5 had arrived from the French Channel coast but the remaining bird had come from further afield -- it had been originally ringed in Serbia.

Little gull *Larus minutus

One of the most remarkable records of 2013 involved an unprecedented influx of 90+ west in WB Nov 11th. A staggering total and easily an area record.
Otherwise 4 singles: 1st summer May 21st, juv. Spt 21st, 1st winter Oct 21st and 1st winter Dec 9th.

Black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*

In spring 2 pairs again tried and again failed to nest on the tern islands.
Otherwise ever present with max. counts on Lodmoor of 700+ Feb 4th and 900+ moving through 28th. In autumn fewer juveniles than average.

Common gull *Larus canus*

Winter: particularly high numbers on Lodmoor itself in Jan, incl. 400+ 4th, and 170+ west scrape 5th. In WB roost at least 600+ Dec.

In spring regularly present in small numbers up to May 8th. Then a gap until a 1st summer Jly 14th, and single adults 30th and Aug 23rd. Another gap followed until the first returning wintering birds Spt 28th.

Lesser black backed gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Passage: incl. 40 east Mch 6th and 60+ migrants daily early Apr, with 1 lingering to 27th. None May. Then 1 Jun 2nd.

Intermedius: under recorded: 6 records of 5 birds scattered from Feb - Spt.

Herring gull *Larus argentus*

An abundant ever present gull. They breed nearby in Weymouth, so displaying and nest collecting regularly noted in spring

Great black back gull *Larus marinus*

The Serengeti has its Lions, Lodmoor has Great black backed gulls. Undoubtedly one of the reserve's top predators these huge gulls spent every month patrolling the reed beds. Incl. one eating a Coot chick and some evidence in winter of them robbing Cormorants on the reserve and even Great northern divers in WB of their fish.

Yellow legged gull *Larus michahellis*

9 records of singles throughout the year but with a usual late summer/early autumn peak.

Kittiwake *Rissa pterodactyla*

What would have been yet another poor year utterly transformed during late Dec storms:
One 15th, 4 21st, 1 22nd followed by 120+ 23rd, 25 24th, 140+ 27th and 28th, 120+ 30th, 31st. By miles the highest counts this century. Despite the big numbers in the bay, however, only a handful turned up on the reserve itself.

Earlier 4 west May 24th was a good record by recent standards. Otherwise just 4 records of 8 birds in Jan and Oct.

Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

First Mch 20th. Last Nov 7th.

Spring: generally poor. Passed through in modest numbers with a max of just 12 Apr 17th.

Autumn: 10+ regular from early Jly. First juveniles 22nd and the usual family parties passing through in Aug and Spt.

A 1st winter Oct 1st had been ringed at Dyfi NNR near Aberystwyth on Aug 25th.

Roseate tern *Sterna dougallii

2 records of 5 birds:

4 roosting on tern islands May 9th.

2 Lodmoor and probably 1 of same WB May 18th.

Common tern *Sterna hurundo*

Disaster. The spring began promisingly enough. A very early migrant passed through Mch 29th. And a total of 65 pairs were in territory by mid May, after the first arrived back Apr 19th.

They took longer to settle this year but eventually all were incubating eggs by late Jun. However, during the night of Jly 10/11th the entire colony abruptly deserted...with just a handful of birds wheeling around in the bay the following morning. One of the saddest sights of the year was watching predatory gulls picking their way through the eggs over the following days.

Theories about the cause abound and have ranged from too few sand eels to too many helicopters ! The jury is still out, but some of the most persuasive circumstantial evidence points towards the big non breeding flock of feral Canada geese. What is clear is that the terns deserted just after this big flock(nearly 80) of large birds took to lumbering onto the tern islands to roost at night.

Small numbers of breeding birds occasionally returned to the reserve/islands but never settled and for the first time the entire colony failed. The last bird were noted Spt 21st. Fingers crossed for 2014.

Arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea*

One of the world's most persistent and optimistic birds returned -- right on cue -- for its 5th attempt to breed with a female Common tern May 9th.

Things seemed set fair when he paired up with a(last year's?) female from 18th and they produced at least 2 eggs. Alas, any hopes of a repeat of last year's hatching vanished with the rest of the colony during the mass desertion Jly 10/11th.

What was almost certainly the breeding male reappeared briefly Jly 19th.

Additionally 3 migrants went west WB Apr 16th, with 6 WB May 7th.

Little tern *Sterna albatross

A good run of records in the spring may reflect the revival in the fortunes of the Ferrybridge colony.

1 Redcliff Apr 23rd, 1 Lodmoor 29th, 2 WB May 7th and 8th, 1 roosting on tern islands 10th, 11th and 16th. Then 3 Preston Beach/WB Jly 22nd, 23rd.

Black tern *Chilidonias niger

1 record:

1 nr tern islands Spt 20th.

+Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Along with Razorbill formed part of a big influx into WB during the late Dec storms. Impossible to make any accurate counts or work out how much turn over there was. But up to 80 daily 27th - 31st.

Earlier a max. of 6 Jan, Feb. An untypical spring single May 12th - 13th. Finally odd singles Oct, Nov.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

See Guillemot. Up to 70 daily Dec 26th - 31st.

Unlike Gull there had also been a large scale influx in Jan incl. 60+ 12th. Subsequently regular in smaller numbers to early Feb. In spring up to 9 May 13th - 17th was unusual.

Later 1 - 2 fairly regular Oct, Nov.

One of the most distressing sights of the year was some of the WB fishermen pulling dead and dying auks out of the water after they had become ensnared in their gill nets.

Stock dove *Columba oenas*

Breeding: At least 2 pair again nested in Horselynch with at least 2 more pairs 2MC/Coffin Wood. Present from early Jan, with 10 counted around Lorton Meadows in May..

Mid summer is the time to see these birds on Lodmoor itself when they regularly visit the main Moor.

Passage: 9 w Nov 10th, 36 west 15th.

Wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Ever present. Passage this autumn pretty hit and miss but incl. 4,000+ over Nov 10th.

Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocta*

Ever present. Count of 20 by Wey Bay Ave. in Jan.

Turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur

1 record:

1 perched in bushes at the end of Brackendown Ave. Oct 10th was completely unexpected. It looked knackered and, as it turns out, was later reported by a non birder to have spent much of the morning in her nearby garden.

Sadly a rare bird at Lodmoor in recent years.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Another excellent spring for a species that seems to be staging something of a comeback at Lodmoor. Hard to say exactly how many birds were involved but perhaps 4 individuals. At any rate 1-2 on a number of dates Apr 18th - Jun 2nd. 1 over Horselynych Jun 20th was probably a separate bird.

Barn owl *Tyto alba

Stunning views of a hunting bird by the post box Apr 5th, 7th. Probably one of the Lorton VC breeding birds.

What was probably one of a different pair near the old barns at Bowleaze Apr 16th.

Tawny owl *Strix aluco

Inexplicably hard to come by considering it's a local breeder. Just 2 records of calling birds Feb 3rd, Spt 20th. Arguably the area's most under recorded species.

Swift *Apus apus*

First Apr 17th. But instead of the usual rush the cold spring delayed big numbers until mid May when 400+ were regularly noted, with 500+ 28th. Also an immigrant feeding flock of 300+ Jun 11th.

As usual numbers started to tail off from mid Jly. Daily to Aug 4th and regular to the last 19th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Some evidence this species may have been taking advantage of some of the freshly cut channels in the reed bed...certainly harder to see at times !

Winter: very erratic at the start of the year. Just 2 Jan, and singles by ambulance station 14th, and River Jordan in Preston Feb 10th. Later one wintered from Nov to the end of the year, although it was had to find during the Dec floods.

Autumn: 1 Jly 12th, then 1-2 regular from Aug 17th through to Oct.

Green woodpecker *Picus viridis*

At least 1 pair bred Horselynych but fewer sightings this year. So the number of breeding pairs may possibly have fallen. Certainly very hard to come by during Jan cold spell.

Great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

In contrast to Green seems to be thriving. Bred Horselynych, CP, 2MC and Coffin Wood. Perhaps as many as 5 pairs locally.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

The headline event of the year for this species came in late Jan when the cold snap triggered an epic influx.

Winter: at the start of the year just 5 birds were wintering in the fields by Horselynych. But things became a little more congested when they were joined by 330 more birds 18th, with numbers swelling further to 550+ by 19th, 20th. 200+ were still present 22nd but most moved on quickly with just 5 (the original birds?) left by early Feb. By late Feb/early Mch this had dwindled to just 1 -2.

In complete contrast no records at all Nov/Dec.

Breeding: The regular territorial bird on Southdown Ridge didn't get going until late May and may not have nested this year. Still breeds close by at Redcliff and Coombe Valley Rd.

Autumn passage: the second distinctly hit and miss year in a row. About 450 Oct 5th - Nov 15th. But more than half that total went through on just 2 dates: 60+ Oct 15th and 176 24th.

Woodlark *Alauda arborea

All this year's birds turned up in the Skylark flock near Horselynych during the Jan freeze:

4 Jan 18th, with at 2 19th, 4 again 20th.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*

Spring: generally poor spring apart 250+ Apr 20th.

Autumn: in contrast to the spring one of the best showings in recent years. Incl. 300+ daily from early Jly, with numbers only gradually falling. Last Spt 30th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Spring: first Apr 4th. A slight improvement on last year's dismal showing. Several hundred by Apr 20th, peaking at 600+ 25th. Good numbers through May incl. incl. 1500 north 17th and an unusual flurry of records of immatures.

Autumn: noticeable from late Aug and significant passage of 15,000 daily from late Spt. Smaller numbers Oct. Last 29th.

Red rumped swallow *Hirundo daurica

1 record:

1 Apr 27th during strong hirundine movement.

The 4th record in the last six years.

House martin *Delichon urbica*

Spring: no real sign of any recovery. First Apr 7th. But not in numbers until mid/late May, with 100+ 25th and 400 28th.

Autumn: the peak passage comes later each year. This year late Spt/early Oct. Last Oct 11th.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Dreadful: none at all in spring and just 8 all autumn Aug 22nd - 26th and Spt 20th, 22nd.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Wintering: at the beginning of the year 40+ frequented the fields by Horselynch. They hung on unusually late -- well into Apr. Later in the year 30+ were scattered around the Lodmoor area in Dec.

Passage: undoubtedly the event of the migrant year took place on Apr 9th when at least 350 appeared in off...an unprecedented movement in spring.

In autumn 400+ passed over daily during the peak Spt 19th - 28th. However, passage Oct and Nov was generally very disappointing.

Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus

3 records of singles:

by groyne on Preston each Feb 6th.

by Hump Spt 20th

feeding on beach at Bowleaze Dec 17th.

Water pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The second pretty mediocre year in a row...particularly later on.

Early on mainly singles on 11 dates Jan 2nd - Mch 5th but incl. an isolated count of 8 Jan 8th. These were followed by a good series of spring records. 1 - 2 were noted daily Apr 2nd - 11th, incl. at least 1 mainly summer plumage.

Subsequently only very erratic: 7 singles Oct 21st - Dec 29th.

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flavissima*

Surprisingly good year by recent standards.

Spring: total of 10 on 6 dates Apr 15th - May 5th.

Autumn: at least 80 between Aug 8th and Oct 25th. These incl. one Aug 30th that had been ringed at Abbotsbury the previous evening.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Occasional early on: 1 Feb 8th, 21st, 27th, Mch 9th.

Autumn: 1 Jly 25th was probably a locally bred bird. Then 1 - 3 on many dates from Aug 30th. The suspicion that a number of these records related to long staying birds was confirmed when at least 2, and

possibly as many as 4, wintered in the area. They ranged anywhere from Bowleaze to the ambulance station and were around to the end of the year. They particularly favoured the old tip area near the end of Weymouth Bay Ave, as well as a birder's garden round the back of Weymouth College.

Pied wagtail *Motacilla yarely*

Locally bred juveniles around from Jly but no evidence they bred on the actual reserve itself this year. On passage up to 50+ went over daily in the second half of Aug.

Alba wagtail: later than, but also better than, average. 14 on 9 dates Apr 4th - May 11th. In autumn 12 Aug 30th - Oct 2nd.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*/Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Both seemed generally to enjoy a good breeding season despite the hard weather earlier in year.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

This species was clearly affected by the cool, late spring. The first fledged juveniles showed up unusually late, around late May/early Jun. However a surge in sightings of juveniles late Jly/Aug suggests that although they took a long time to get going adults took full advantage of excellent breeding conditions mid summer.

Immigrants obvious from early Oct, with another wave early Nov.

Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros

2 records of singles, neither of which hung around:

1st winter Feb 6th.

fem/immature near end of Southdown Ave. Nov 5th.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

None in spring but at least 12 Aug 13th - Spt 16th. These incl. at least 2 regularly Lorton Meadows, and another in a birder's garden near Weymouth College.

All told an excellent run of records by Lodmoor standards.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A total of about 11 Aug 25th - Oct 1st.

A return to form after last year's meagre pickings.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Winter: up to 4 Jan - Mch, at least 5 Nov, Dec.

Passage: in spring incl. a singing male at Overcombe in the first half of May but it failed to find a mate and moved on. In autumn up to 4 daily first half of Oct.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Spring: first Mch 10th. Subsequently about 80 to May 29th. But this total was hugely inflated by 50+ on Apr 29th....so generally actually rather poor.

Autumn: an unspectacular series of records Aug 7th - Nov 6th -- one of a number of very late last dates for a range of autumn migrants this year. Incl. at least 2 Greenland types Aug 31st.

Ring ouzel *Yurdus torquatus

1 record:

male in bushes by west path Oct 14th.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

The most striking bird of the year was undoubtedly a partial albino behind the ambulance station in Dec. An immaculately all snowy white head contrasted spectacularly with a largely black body and white wing linings.

As a resident breeding species appeared as common and as widespread as ever.

Otherwise most obvious during the normal late Oct-early Nov arrival of Continental immigrants.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Only the epic movement of Jan 2010 has bettered this year's hard weather influx in late Jan.

130 turned up around Lodmoor 18th, with 200 19th, followed by 300+ grounded birds and 600 going west 20th.

The next day 1800 passed over, initially south west, but then as the weather changed, north east -- a graphic example of visible migration.

100+ were still present by Littlemoor Rd 23rd, but they had all gone by 26th.

Autumn passage: 8 over Oct 29th, 1 Lorton Meadows Nov 21st, finally 2 north 22nd.

Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Breeding: probably under recorded but at least 9 pairs Lodmoor/CP/Lorton Valley.

In the spring a flock of 30+ Continental type birds remained in the fields by Horselynych up to the second week in Apr(see Redwing).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Winter: predictably most obvious during Jan freeze. Incl. 200+ 18th, 400+ 19th, 20th, when another 400 went west. A separate flock of 400+ foraged in the fields north of the Littlemoor Rd...but like the Fieldfares and Skylarks all had moved on by 26th.

Otherwise 10+ CP Jan/Feb and a probable migrant over Feb 25th.

Later up to 12 lingered in fields by Horselynych to Apr 11th...an exceptionally late date for Lodmoor and a testament to how cold early spring was.

Autumn passage: poor. Just 18 Spt 30th - Nov 9th. Then 7 Lorton Meadows Nov 21st, 1 north 24th and 4 east Dec 3rd.

Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus

7 scattered records.

3 over during freeze Jan 20th, with 1 21st.

1 CP Feb 8th - 12th.

Singles over Oct 5th, 6th, Nov 9th, 13th.

Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*

Breeding: not systematically counted but despite a run of relatively hard winters the breeding population seems to be holding its own, with at least 8 sets of fledged young.

Many birds were late to start singing regularly but that was almost certainly a product of one of the coldest springs on record. Later on they seemed plentiful enough, with a fair numbers of immature males learning song in autumn.

Grasshopper warbler *Locustella certhiola

Just 3 short staying migrants this year: Apr 26th, 29th, May 21st.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Spring: first Apr 11th followed by some significant arrivals in the second half of the month incl. a fall of 30+ 26th. Unlike Reed warbler many of the spring singers birds are merely migrants.

In autumn a good fall(25+) Aug 6th and good numbers through to Spt. Smaller numbers continued to turn up until the last Oct 8th.

As ever impossible to disentangle passage birds from locally bred juveniles, but although this is a fairly common breeding species it never seems quite as common as Reed warbler.

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

First Apr 13th. Like Sedge very good numbers pitching in during the second half of the month with an obvious arrival 26th. Despite the late, wet spring this species appeared to enjoy yet another excellent breeding season. 44 singers were counted in mid May and by late Jly the reed bed seemed alive with juvenile and family parties.

The autumn incl. a good run of records late Spt(incl. one in a garden near Weymouth College), and into Oct with the last 17th.

Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*

1 record:

a male in the bushes near the Hump Feb 24th must have been an early spring migrant.

This species last bred in the Lodmoor area in 2006.

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Spring: first Apr 18th -- one of the few spring migrants to turn up on schedule. Then up to 6 daily 24th - May 7th. But the vast majority must have moved on because only 1-2 pairs appeared to breed Lodmoor and/or Lorton Valley. A family party of 2 ads and 2 freshly fledged juveniles by the west path Jly 25th and 29th had surely not come far.

Autumn: mainly 1 -6 Jly 16th - Aug 29th, but incl. 10 Aug 10th. Last Spt 21st.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

An excellent year.

First Apr 17th followed by an obvious arrival, culminating in a record fall of 90+ 26th !

Most were obviously migrants but the breeding population held up well. First fledged young Jly 6th.

A much better autumn than 2012. Up to 20 daily in Aug. Last Oct 4th.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin*

Spring: 5 singles -- Apr 27th, 30th, May 1st, 5th and 16th. That's good going for this species on Lodmoor in spring.

Autumn: just 6 Aug 10th - 29th, with a very late bird Spt 21st. The second poor showing in a row.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Like many summer visitors the main arrival in spring was delayed but during the second half of Apr they appeared in decent numbers and incl. 15+ during the fall on 26th.

Breeding: at least 4 pr bred 2MC, at least 1 pair Horselync and 1 was singing in CP in May.

Autumn: 20+ daily Aug, 40+ late Spt-early Oct and a run of mainly singles through to Nov 19th.

Winter: at both ends of the year several added a ray of sunshine to birders' gardens.

Yellow browed warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Just like buses....none at all for ages and then three come along at once.

1 Bowleaze caravan park Oct 2nd.

1 CP Oct 29th - 31st.

1 behind ambulance station Dec 1st(possibly the CP bird).

This sequence doubles the Lodmoor area total from just 3 to 6. Since 2 singles in the CP in 1998 the sole record was one of a calling bird near Bowleaze 2012. Unlike Dusky, Pallas's, Barred and Melodious yet to be reliably recorded within the reserve boundary.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Spring/breeding: 100+ Apr 9th and really impressive numbers second half of the month. As ever about 8 pairs nested Lodmoor/Lorton Valley. The first obvious migrants were noted from Mch 23rd.

Autumn: good numbers incl. 50+ Oct 5th and good run of records of migrants as well as wintering birds through to Nov.

Winter: up to 3 Jan and at least 7 Dec incl. 2 Bowleaze.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

First very late Apr 9th. However, subsequently good numbers, in common with many other warblers, and at least 50 during the fall of 26th. Last of the spring May 11th.

In autumn the first returning bird Jly 23rd and daily from 28th. Some very good counts in Aug incl. 40+ 6th, 50+ 10th, 13th. Last Spt 1st.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Breeding: at least 2 pairs in territory 2MC.

Passage/wintering: only small numbers during autumn and at both ends of the years just 4-6 seemed to be wintering around the reserve itself.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla

1 record:

probable migrant near Weymouth Bay Ave entrance Mch 9th.

This species has been hard to come by in the last couple of years.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

A truly outstanding year by Lodmoor standards. Exceptional numbers also incl. one of the earliest and one of the latest ever dates.

Spring: 2 Apr 26th, incl. one in a birder's garden near Weymouth College that stayed until the next day.

Autumn: a total of about 30 individuals. The peak arrival occurred between Aug 22nd - 31st with a minimum of 18. In Spt almost continuously present in CP, with at least 4 still 29th. Last: Oct 5th.

Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypotenuse

5 records of 6 birds-- definitely an above average for a species that is often scarce, or completely absent:

1 Aug 13th

1 Aug 20th.

1 Lorton Meadows Aug 22nd.

1 CP Spt 9th.

2 CP Spt 29th.

Bearded tit *Panurus biamicus*

Breeding: another terrific year for what is arguably Lodmoor's most enchanting species. The Jan freeze and Apr floods seem to have left these birds remarkably unaffected. Given how cold the spring had been it was astonishing to see adults feeding fledged young along Beachdown by May 14th. Later 9 newly fledged juvs were noted Jly 5th. A minimum of 3, and possibly as many as 5 pairs, seemed to have bred.

Good numbers were also in evidence outside the breeding season...although in autumn a significant number seem to have emigrated. Up to 30 could be seen regularly spiralling up. And on Oct 15th 10 very vocal birds went high north over Lorton VC.

However, at least 3 pairs stayed until year's end.

Long tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Not the kind of species that you would normally associate with 'firsts'. So the sight of 11 birds coming in off and heading high north Oct 30th was a red letter day....a rare record of Long tailed tits actually migrating.

Breeding: the resident population is clearly thriving, judging by the number and frequency of post breeding and wintering flocks

Coal tit *Parus ater

1 record:

1 CP Aug 29th.

This species is only ever noted infrequently and erratically in the CP. But do the records there over time imply that there might be a breeding pair lurking in one of the many conifers there.

Blue tit *Parus caeruleus*/Great tit *Parus major*

For the second year in a row a cold, wet spring meant a slow start to the breeding season for both species. But they once again proved very resilient judging by an obvious flurry of fledged juveniles appearing in Jly. And by Nov, both species seemed as common as ever.

Treetreeper *Certhia familiaris

Confined to 3 records of singles 2MC Jan 15th, Mch 6th and Apr 19th when singing. Almost certainly bred there again.

Red backed shrike *Lanius collurio

1 record:

juvenile in the field by Horselych Aug 31st.

One of the finds of the autumn.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

The spring passage records are unprecedented

Breeding: at least 1 -- and possibly 2 -- pair bred again in 2MC with young once again noted in Jun.

Winter: up to 4 were feeding in the CP during the Jan freeze, with 2 still in early Mch. Later up to 5 were noisily present in the Lorton Valley Nov, Dec.

The headline event of the year, however was a spring passage involving at least 14 birds through Apr 10th - May 3rd. This seems to have been part of a national movement.

Magpie *Pica pica*/Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*/Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Such a familiar, daily sight that no one made any comment on any of them.

Although not counted this year impressive numbers of Jackdaws and Rooks again roosted up the northern end/park ride area in the winter.

Carrion crow *Corvus corone*

Breeding: once again 2 opportunistic pairs appeared to deliberately choose to nest in the piddling trees at the edge of the reserve in order to prey on the banquet of young birds and eggs available on the Moor.

Gatherings of between 20 and 50 birds on the Main Moor were not uncommon outside the breeding season.

Raven *Corvus corax*

This species has become increasingly regular on/over Lodmoor in recent years. But this year produced a first in the form of a family party of 2 adults and 3 freshly fledged juveniles that turned up around Jun 10th. They then appeared virtually daily -- often on Weymouth RFC -- until Aug 7th. They only moved on when all the young were clearly independent.

Earlier 5 went over Jan 8th but most records related to just 1 - 2 birds. More erratic late in the year but odd singles popped up through to early Dec.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

The first juveniles from the nearby breeding population in Weymouth appeared on Jun 1st. An impressive count of 70 juveniles was noted on the rugby pitch by 6th.

The day time flock started building up in late June, with the evening roost rapidly increasing in Oct and peaking at around 25,000 in Nov. Numbers had fallen away sharply by Dec implying that many of these birds move on during the winter and may actually be autumn migrants temporarily off passage.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

An easy species to take for granted. But this is one of Lodmoor's success stories. The breeding colony along Southdown seems in rude health with more breeding birds evident on the western side, near Weymouth Bay Ave and the CP area.

Some local residents continue to block up potential nest sites in their eaves. However, a single flock of 60 along Southdown Ave. in Aug demonstrates how well this species is doing.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Incl. a regular wintering flock of 40+ in the hedgerows along Southdown Ridge in Jan.

In autumn just a disappointing trickle of overhead migrants.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

A poor year: with just 5 singles:

1 CP Spt 29th, possibly same Oct 10th, 3 overhead migrants Oct 24th - Nov 10th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Ever present.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Incl. 100 off passage birds western side Spt/Oct. A good proportion seemed to stay, with at least 70 around reserve Nov, Dec.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

6 over Jan 21st, 1 through Mch 1st and 4 over 5th were all well out of their normal date range for Lodmoor. More typically about 50 went over in the autumn between Spt 27th - Nov 24th.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Breeding: the birds that nest in the gorse on the western side are summer visitors only. They arrived back slightly late in early Apr but eventually seemed to breed in usual numbers (about 6 prs).

Winter: not always regularly present in winter so up to 77 early on in field by Horselynych is worth noting. At least 20 lingered there until late Apr. There were also 80+ foraging in the fields north of Littlemoor Rd during the freeze Jan 24th but these moved on quickly.

Later in the year 50+ had returned to the top fields in late Oct but this flock dispersed leaving just 15+ near the ambulance station, and occasionally on the west side, in Dec.

Passage: in common with other finches a really poor autumn. Incl. 130 west Oct 24th.

Lesser redpoll *Carduelis cabaret

4 records of 6 birds. The stand out sighting was the Mch bird...a really rare species at Lodmoor in spring: female feeding on seeds near the pumping station by Weymouth Bay Ave Mch 7th.

1 west Oct 31st.

3 over Nov 7th.

1 north Nov 16th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhoea*

Further signs of colonisation around the western side of the reserve. For the first time freshly fledged young were seen there Aug 3rd and what looked very much like 2 family parties, involving up to 9 birds, were present in the area all year.

Also remains a regular breeder Horselynych/Lorton Valley, where there were at least 3 pairs.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra

Small but pronounced late summer/early autumn influx:

Fly overs Jly 19th, 20th, Aug 7th(4), 10th, 27th, 28th.

Lapland bunting *Calcarius lapponicus

1 record of a Lodmoor rarity:

1 flew north over Brackendown Ave calling loudly Oct 12th.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella

This species breeds nearby in Coombe Valley Rd and just east of Redcliff, so a single record all year -- and none at all in autumn -- is disappointing:

1 in the fields by Horselynych at the start of the freeze Jan 18th.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Breeding: yet another species that seems to have done very well this year. At least 6 pairs nested and judging by the numbers around in early autumn were very productive.

Winter/passage: incl. at least 30 around the reserve and surrounding fields in late Nov but many appeared to be dispersed by the floods in the second half of Dec.

ESCAPES etc**Bar headed goose**

1 late May, 3 mid Spt.

Black swan

2 early Nov.

Ruddy shelduck

What was clearly a feral wanderer with a hybrid mate Jly 29th.

Species NOT recorded in 2013 included: Ruddy duck, Black necked grebe, Manx shearwater, Short eared owl.

