

The birding year

The year began exceptionally mild but also exceptionally stormy. The gales helped produced some memorable sea watching in Weymouth Bay for the time of year including counts of more than 200 **Kittiwakes** daily in early January and a really good run of **Black throated divers**. The star birds, however, arrived in the next wave of rough weather in Feb. Not one but two **Puffins** -- one of them picked up moribund -- appeared on Preston beach promenade.

On the reserve itself the storms probably helped explain several **Iceland gulls** and an adult **Glaucous gull**. Otherwise, isolated records of **Siberian chiffchaff** and **Red legged partridge** apart, landward birding was pretty standard fare.

The mild winter undoubtedly did many resident birds a favour and a number of common species enjoyed excellent breeding seasons. In addition 2014 produced two breeding firsts: **Grey heron** and **Black headed gull** both nested successfully for the first time. **Mediterranean gulls** displayed on the reserve and **Herring gulls** reared young nearby. But arguably the most exciting event in spring 2014 was Lodmoor's first record of booming **Bittern**.

Elsewhere in the reed bed **Marsh harriers** successfully bred for the 5th year in a row. And, despite the continued attentions of the Canada geese, the **Common terns** raised about 60 chicks following last years desertions. Two species that didn't produce any young this year included the **Oystercatchers** and the world's loneliest, and most confused, **Arctic tern**.

Wader passage in the spring was often pretty average . But a lack of quantity was compensated by some real quality. Top of the bill were the first **Temminck's stint** for 14 years, Lodmoor's 5th **Black winged stilt** and a rare spring **Curlew sandpiper**. And, while counts of most species were relatively modest, **Sanderlings** appeared in near record numbers.

Passerine migration included an early influx of **Lesser whitethroats**, Lodmoor's default rarity, a **Red rumped swallow**, a singing **Nightingale**, and a June **Willow warbler** -- a rarity in itself.

Mid summer is usually fairly predictable so the first **Ruddy duck** for two years was a turn up. Otherwise breeding birds dominated. Both **Shoveler** and **Gadwall** broods were noted, **Treecreeper** and **Jay** nested again in Two Mile Coppice, a family party of **Ravens** again spent several weeks on Weymouth rugby club, and freshly fledged **Great** and **Long tailed tits** seemed everywhere.

Late summer/early autumn included a run of **Great white egrets**, a **Hoopoe**, and a **Honey buzzard**. Return passage failed to produce any rare waders but an excellent variety of more regular migrants included a total of 24 species of shorebirds from mid June to October.

The outstanding feature of the autumn, however, was the wave of what are often scarce passerines. These included -- by Lodmoor standards -- terrific numbers of **Grey** and **Yellow wagtails**, **Skylarks**, **Redstarts** and **Spotted flycatchers**.

Autumn seems to go on longer and longer each year and late October-early November produced some of the most exciting birding of the year. At least one, and possibly two, **Yellow browed warblers** graced the Country Park, a **Great bustard** twice performed a fly past before Lodmoor's latest ever **Whitethroat** was followed by the area's latest ever **Black tern**.

And, last but not least, just when it seemed the year might fizzle out, an adult **Richard's pipit** made Redcliff a popular destination.

A total of 182 species were recorded(compared to 187 in 2013 and 198 in 2012).

Birds not seen this year included Red necked grebe, any skuas, Roseate tern, Grasshopper warbler(!) and Lesser redpoll.

The observers

Richard Morris, Geoff and Sheila Barlow, Christine Milner and Neil Arnold, Nevil Fowler, Dave Chown, John and Sue Campbell, Roy and Maureen, and me.

The recording area

The nature reserve and surrounding area. To the east as far as Redcliff Point. To the south the sea. To the west Greenhill/Cranford Ave(incl. Country Park). To the north west Weymouth RFC, the parkride. To the north Two Mile Coppice, Lorton VC and Coffin Wood. To the north east Southdown Ridge/Littlemoor Road(incl. Charlbury Basin) and round to the Bowleaze/holiday camp areas.

Daragh Croxson February 9 2015

+ all records Weymouth Bay unless stated

* all records given

PHOTO in the case of Lodmoor rarities indicates a photograph was taken

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

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Mute swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding: At least 3, possibly 4, pairs bred, producing at least 13 cygnets. Unlike last year few of them hung around (apart from 4 cygnets in Oct), so it was hard to say how many survived.

Also incl. an arrival of 12 on Jan 5th, and an immature on Charlbury Basin in Apr. Later in the year a single immature appeared in Nov, but by Dec no birds were left on the reserve, with just 2 east WB 5th, 2

Overcombe pool from 24th, 5 briefly Lodmoor 28th, then 2 back 31st.

Greylag goose *Anser anser*

1-3 feral birds on 18 dates Mch 5th - May 3rd. Perhaps more surprisingly 5 went west Nov 29th.

Canada goose *Branta Canadensis*

Breeding: breeding success seemed comparatively low. The first gosling appeared Apr 25th, but only about 20 young were produced.

As last year non breeding birds again invaded the tern islands... crushing the eggs of a pair of Oystercatchers and spooking the terns in late May. But, almost miraculously, this behaviour then abruptly changed. And unlike last year the terns were able to get back down to nesting unmolested.

Autumn numbers were slightly lower than usual, peaking at around 400 in early Spt. At the end of the year numbers had dropped to just 60.

The single individual with a broken wing soldiered on. It has now survived flightless for at least 3 years.

Barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis*

1 record:

2 south out over WB Nov 23rd.

Good candidates these for genuine migrants.

Dark bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

A second pretty good year in a row.

In Jan 1-3 lingered on Overcombe to 5th, with 1 to 22nd. Another 30 went past WB 3rd- 14th, with another 6 on 5 dates Feb 25th - Apr 27th.

The autumn began with 1e WB Jun 25th ...a rare mid summer record. Peak passage, however, came in Oct with 121 moving through 3rd- 28th. Max 45. Subsequently another 25 were noted on 6 dates Nov 8th - Dec 22nd.

Pale bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota

2 records of singles:

1 in off May 13th. Lodmoor's latest ever.

1 west over Overcombe Dec 26th.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Breeding: this year a pair did appear to breed on the reserve itself, producing 3 young.

Otherwise a pretty uneventful year for this species. In spring numbers never exceeded 20 and were often fewer.

Just 6 were left by late summer, falling to just 1 for much of Spt and Oct. Numbers very gradually built up again late in the year, with 10 by mid Dec.

Mandarin Aix *galericulata

1 record:

2 north Mch 21st.

No clue as to where they might have come from or were going to.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A fairly predictable pattern of records for a species that often appears in biggest numbers as a migrant rather than as a winter visitor.

Early on just 1-3 Jan, up to 10 mid Feb and 4 early Mch. This modest showing, however, was followed by an excellent run of spring records: 1-2 on 14 dates Mch 21st - May 31st and 1 Jun 21st.

The first autumn birds showed up Aug 9th. Odd singles thereafter were followed by 26 Spt 13th, increasing to 100+ by 18th. In Oct 200+ were present 6th, with 100+ to 13th. Numbers fell away quickly and just 1-9 were erratically present Nov, Dec.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Breeding: at least 1 pr bred -- 5 chicks seen Jly 16th. Other birds probably nested undetected. Incl. a pair on Charlbury Basin.

Also incl. 90+ loafing around by early Jun and a count of 50 in mid Oct.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Standard numbers in both winters until 270+ during the freeze Dec 29th.

In the spring still 90+ late Mch, with 18 still Apr 18th dwindling to 1-2 off and on through May.

1-2 pair May 30th - Jun 4th could have been late leaving or early returning.

Then a gap to Jun 16th, with small numbers rising slowly to 20+ by early Aug.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Breeding: one of a long list of species that seemed to enjoy a particularly good breeding season.

Began with a particularly early brood of 3 chicks Mch 23rd.

Subsequently many broods through summer(10+) and incl. a brood crossing Preston Beach Road. Another set of ducklings were observed being harassed by Herring gulls in WB.

Pintail *Anas acuta

Basically 3 sets of records of 5 birds:

Fem. Spt 9th - 19th, with 2 to 21st.

Male Nov 5th and female 6th.

Male Nov 30th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula

Just 4 records of 5 birds.

Spring: male Mch 30th and a single date in Apr.

Autumn: 2 over Jly 28th, eclipse drake Charlbury Basin Oct 11th.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Breeding: this is always a really secretive bird in the breeding season. So an adult with 7 chicks on the Overcombe pool on several dates in Jly provided rare documentary evidence of nesting. Surely other pairs are lurking in the reed bed.

Average numbers in winter, but incl. flock of 13(with 5 Wigeon and Golden plover) that flew out and off east Dec 28th.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Breeding: at least 2 broods(of 2 and 2) late Jly.

Early winter: early on 110 arrived Jan 16th. But generally no more than 20 or so.

Autumn: very low numbers and none at all in mid Oct!

Second winter: numbers in the post box flock gradually rose from 41 mid Nov to 72 by Dec 16th and 98 by 18th. Easily the biggest count of the year, however, came on the last day of when 205 suddenly appeared 31st.

Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*

Breeding: 3 broods in Jun of 6, 4 and 3.

Winter: Influx of 50+ Jan 16th and 19 on 2MC pool Feb 26th.

Also what looked like a Tuftie x Scaup hybrid Dec 31st.

+Common scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A strangely poor year for what is often a fairly common migrant in WB.

Early on about 8 on 6 dates Jan. Then 1 Mch 2nd, followed by about 11 on 13 dates Apr 4th - May 6th.

In summer 1 May 28th, 30th, 9 Jun 15th, 2 Jly 30th - Aug 1st, with 25 west 2nd.

Then about 15 on 7 dates Spt 5th - Oct 22nd and 1 Dec 18th.

+Red breasted merganser *Mergus serrator

1 record:

4 settled birds, incl. a drake, off Overcombe Nov 25th.

Ruddy duck *Oxyura jamaicensis

1 record:

male post box pools Jun 23rd and 24th.

First record for 2 years and a target for several Dorset year listers !

Red legged partridge *Alectoris rufa

1 record:

1 nr Hump Mch 22nd ...rare reserve record. PHOTO.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Breeding: incl. male and 2 females Overcombe first half of year and pr in Dec. At least 2 pairs northern end/Lorton Valley.

+Red throated diver *Gavia stellata

Early in year probably 5 different birds: singles Jan 15th, west Feb 17th, Mch 17th, 22nd, Apr 4th.

Then another mid summer record: single in mainly summ. plum. Jun 16th, 19th, 20th.

First the first time ever you could see 3 species of diver in the bay in Jun.

Later just 1 Nov 30th.

+Black throated diver *Gavia arctica

A record year for what is usually the scarcest diver in WB. As many as a dozen different birds may have been involved -- an exceptional total by WB standards.

In Jan what were probably some of Dec's gale blown birds accounted for 3 1st, 4 2nd, 3 again 5th, and 1 10th-15th, 22nd and 23rd. Then 3 Feb 2nd, singles 26th, Mch 23rd, and Apr 24th.

The big surprise, though, was 1 Jun 20th ...WB's latest ever.

Subsequently the same first winter was around off Overcombe Dec 3rd, 10th, 12th, 14th. It or another 30th.

+Great northern diver *Gavia immer*

In common with the other divers an outstanding year.

Early on mainly 1-3 Jan but incl. 6 west 21st. 1-2 regularly mid Feb-Mch, increasing to 7 late Mch and 8 Apr 4th.

1-2 migrants regular through to May 2nd and incl. another case of aqua planning display.

Regular sightings through May incl. a genuine rarity: 1 overflying Lodmoor itself and heading north up the Lorton Valley. 2 summer plumage birds lingered in WB May 28th - Jun 2nd.

Later on a pretty average set of records. First Nov 13th, followed by 1-3 regularly to the year's end with 4 Dec 26th and 30th.

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding: only 2 lots of young seen but about 7 pairs probably nested, with another on Charlbury Basin.

Winter: present in good numbers. As many as 14 early on and in Nov and Dec perhaps as many as 20 on reserve.

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding: very similar outcome to 2013. Once again 3 pairs were in territory/displaying. But once again only 2 of them managed to produce young and once again breeding success was very low: 1 chick each.

Wintering: a disappointing year. Just 12 in WB Jan-Mch and only single figures Nov, Dec.

***+Slavonian grebe Podiceps auritus**

2 records of singles:

Feb 19th .

Dec 30th .

A really poor year for the scarcer grebes.

Fulmar Fulmarus glacialis

Unusually two singles WB Jan 21st, 24th, followed by 4w Feb 12th.

In spring 10 on 9 dates Mch 20th - May 24th, incl. the occasional bird over the reserve. In Jun one had a close encounter with a birder while he was taking a dip in the bay.

Really poor autumn: singles Aug 27th, 29th and --in complete contrast to 2013 -- none at all later on.

***+Balearic shearwater Puffinus mauretanicus**

1 record:

1 providing excellent views as it glided round the gull roost off Overcombe Spt 8th .

+Gannet Morus bassanus

Another seabird seriously stirred up by the gales in Dec 2013, with up to 20 daily Jan 1st- 4th and 1-3 still regular to 23rd.

There was then a gap until birds started to appear regularly, although in only small numbers, from May 14th to mid Aug. Max 6 May 29th .

Numbers increased in late Aug, incl. 10 21st and 5 daily to beginning of Spt. Just a few singles after that until up to 25 daily mid Oct, with the last 26th. Then 1 Dec 26th, 2 31st .

Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo

Ever present WB and regular on reserve, where often gorged on migrating/spawning eels.

+Shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Generally present only erratically and in small numbers. Most obvious in Dec with up to 4 regularly present in WB.

Bittern Botaurus stellaris

It had to happen. The increase in wintering records finally culminated in Lodmoor's first ever boomers: one of the year's most exciting events. No evidence of breeding, but maybe next year?

1 booming Mch 16th- 10th Apr. On at least one occasion joined by a second bird. In addition another individual was seen climbing high and departing one evening...so a minimum of 3 birds present in Mch.

Even more surprising, after nearly two months of silence, was one booming Jun 3rd ...Lodmoor's, and one of Dorset's, latest ever record.

Ironically sightings had been much harder to come by than usual earlier in the year -- during the floods.

More regular later on. 1 Spt 25th may have moved on. Then many sighting of singles, probably featuring at least 2 birds, Nov 15th - Dec 19th .

Little egret Egretta garzetta

More regular and often in greater numbers than 2013 -- probably the result of nesting at Nottingham. In autumn several birds took to roosting in the bushes at Overcombe. The shape of things to come ?

Very few during floods early on but 5/6 regular Apr onwards.

Also incl. 1e WB Nov 25th and up to 6 again on reserve Dec, followed by one feeding reef egret style on the rocks near Bowleaze during freeze Dec 30th .

***Great white egret Ardea alba**

A dramatic series of late summer records:

1 west scrape Jly 24th .

3 emerging from the reed bed before eventually heading off west Aug 1st.

1 in off and over Overcombe Aug 16th .

An exceptional year. This species has been almost annual since 2005.

Grey heron *Ardea cinerea*

Breeding: Lodmoor's first breeding record. A pair nested in the reed bed opposite the post box and successfully reared at least 2 juveniles.

Otherwise present daily with plenty of juveniles arriving from the Nottingham colony to feed up in late summer. Max. 12+ late Jly, early Aug.

Also incl. 1 regularly visiting a birder's garden pond in Cranford Ave in early spring to prey on breeding frogs. 1 Redcliff Point Dec 30th.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia

Basically 5 records involving 12 birds:

3 Feb 23rd, with 4 24th - Mch 5th, 3 to 9th.

1 Apr 9th

4 Jun 23rd ...an unusual mid summer record.

2 Spt 1st - 23rd.

1 ringed immature Nov 28th.

Honey buzzard *Pernis apivorus

2 records of singles:

in off and north Jun 13th.

a pale phase drifted in from the east and eventually flopped off north Aug 12th.

Outside of eruption years this is a very rare bird at Lodmoor, so two in a year is impressive.

Red kite *Milvus milvus

2 records of singles within 5 days of each other:

east Mch 30th.

north over CP and reserve Apr 3rd.

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Breeding: what looked a lot like last year's breeding pair were displaying from mid Jan and nest building close to last year's site by mid Apr. Food passing noted early May and apparently feeding young by 24th

Subsequently possible to watch breeding harriers while listening to booming Bittern!

The first fledged juvenile appeared Jun 25th, with 2 the next day and at least 3(possibly 4) to Jly. Still present occasionally up to mid Aug.

In the spring a third bird -- a near tailless female -- appeared occasionally in Apr. Subsequently a second year male put in several isolated appearances in Spt, as did a new immature female Oct-Dec.

But the majority of sightings later in the year related to the breeding pair. Indeed they were displaying again and chasing each other low over the reed bed, constantly calling, during several warmer days in Dec.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding: once again at least 2 and probably 3 pairs probably bred locally(Horselyynch/2MC/Coffin Wood areas). And, judging by the number of immatures around they enjoyed a brilliant year. That might have been connected with the feast of common birds that also seemed to experience an abundant summer.

It's never possible to disentangle locals from migrants in the autumn but 7 could be seen daily in Spt, with 2-4 to the end of the year.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Breeding: a better year than 2013. At least 1 pair were regularly displaying Horselyynch/northern end and almost certainly bred.

In winter 1 - 2 regularly hunted around the reserve at both ends of the year. And on any sunny day as many as 4 could be seen thermalling.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus

4 records of singles:

west Apr 5th.

north with 2 Buzzards Apr 10th.
north Jun 11th.
west Spt 28th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

The Lorton Valley pair again nested in their DWT nest box and were feeding 2 fledged young in Aug. A second pair were in residence in the Bowleaze Cove area.

Merlin *Falco columbarius

6 records of singles:

west Apr 8th ...a rare spring bird

singles Spt 29th, Oct 7th, 9th and 15th probably related to no more than 2 and perhaps just 1 bird.

1 past Overcombe Nov 27th probably a different bird.

A good year by Lodmoor standards.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

The second really poor year in a row.

In spring confined to just 8 singles May 17th - Jun 28th.

Without doubt the worst autumn ever: 1 catching insects CP Spt 26th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Only very patchily present. Regular mid Feb, Mch. But only occasional Apr - early Jun. Subsequently amazingly hard to come by until a series of sightings in Spt. But very few Oct onwards...so 3 Dec 18th was an isolated spectacle.

Great bustard *Otis tarda

2 records of the same bird flying over, both seen by the same sole finder:

west over Southdown Ridge Oct 23rd.

east over reserve and Overcombe Nov 9th.

A new bird for the Lodmoor recording area. This individual popped up all over the place in the autumn and had come from the Salisbury Plain reintroduction scheme. But, as its behaviour demonstrated, it is nevertheless effectively a wild bird. If people can tick Red kites why can't the lucky observer add this to his Lodmoor list?

Water rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Breeding: at least 2 pairs bred. Calling birds May and Jun were followed by a number of Jun-Jly sightings at either end of the reed bed culminating in a juvenile and an adult together near the tern islands Jly 17th and 3 freshly fledged youngsters from mid Aug. Who knows how many other pairs lurk in the reed beds undetected.

Winter: at least 6 daily both ends of the year. Again, this may represent only a small proportion of the true total.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding: this is an easy species to take for granted and to overlook. But 2014 may well have been a record year. At least 10 pairs bred and some seemed to have double brooded. On one occasion a well grown immature was seen helping its parents feed a newly hatched sibling.

As well as on the reserve itself pairs bred on the 2MC ponds and on Charlbury Basin.

Remarkably high numbers were around Oct-Dec: approx. 40+ on the reserve.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Breeding: always much commoner than Moorhen. And like Moorhen 2014 seemed an excellent breeding year. First chick Apr 10th. Many by 30th and broods of young constantly appearing through to the end of Jly.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Breeding: this species failed to nest successfully for the first time since 2002.

Two pairs attempted as usual. But the scrape on the tern islands was trampled on by Canada geese May 22nd

and that pair abandoned. The second, more reliable, pair by the Hump were clearly incubating. But, like a neighbouring pair of Herring gulls, inexplicably abandoned.
Winter/passage: 1 returned briefly on Jan 20th, with a pair back by mid Feb. In the autumn one of the failed breeders hung around until Aug 4th. Then 1 in off Aug 31st, 2 Preston beach Oct 14th, 3e WB Nov 27th, single(s) Bowleaze Dec 12th and Redcliff 26th.

Black winged stilt *Himantopus bimanous

1 record:
first summer May 5th. PHOTO.
Only the 5th Lodmoor record but the second in 3 years.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta

Confined to 3 brief records of spring migrants:
1 Mch 8th.
2 Apr 16th.
1 May 8th.

Little ringed plover *Charadrius dubious

A terrible spring but a reasonable autumn
Spring: just 2 singles Apr 15th, 18th.
Autumn: 4 June 30th followed by 5 juveniles: Jly 7th, 16th, 21st, Aug 1st - 2nd, Spt 7th.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Spring: a strong showing for the second year in row. 1 Feb 18th- 19th. Then 16 on 13 dates Apr 1st - May 28th.
Autumn: about 16 Jly 29th - Aug 30th, incl. 7 Aug 25th. In Spt 2 6th, 8 7th, then up to 20 Preston beach from 13th, with up to 15 through Oct and, like last year, a single figure flock lingering into Dec. The massive dog walker disturbance over Christmas eventually proved too much for them and they had disappeared by the last week of the year.

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria

4 records:
8 north Oct 13th.
1 west Oct 22nd.
1 with Lapwing flock Dec 16th.
1 departing east with Shoveler/Wigeon flock Dec 28th.
Unless there's a hard weather movement -- like 2013 -- this has become a hard bird to see at Lodmoor.

Grey plover *Pluvialis equatorial

3 records of singles:
May 22nd.
partial summer plum. May 31st.
summer plum. Jun 14th.
west across WB Dec 12th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

First winter: a Jan peak of 440 to 21st may have been connected with flooding elsewhere. The 370 still present mid Feb dwindled with typical speed to just 1 by 27th.
Subsequently spring migrants May 7th - 8th, 15th- 16th, 19th and 21st.
Autumn: returning/non breeding birds began appearing from May 28th with up to 10 mid Jun and 20-30 by late Jly. Incl. one pair belatedly displaying.
Second winter: similar to the end of 2013. Numbers had built up to 200+ by mid Nov, and increased gradually to 335 early Dec and 430 by 21st. But as the weather got colder and Lodmoor froze numbers dwindled to about 250 by 31st.

Knot *Calidris canutus

1 record:
summer plum Jly 26th .
Even worse than last year.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Another excellent spring (for the third year in a row) and in marked contrast to most other waders.
Spring: 71 on 8 dates Apr 27th - Jun 7th , incl. 36 May 20th .
Autumn: 1 Spt 12th- 14th Preston beach, followed by another Nov 29th .

Little stint *Calidris minuta

Basically 4 sets of records in Spt involving probably 4, but possibly 6, juveniles:
1 1st, 2 7th- 12th, 1 18th - 20th .

Temminck's stint *Calidris temminckii

1 record:
partial summer plum. May 30th . PHOTO.
In many ways the star bird of the spring and the first Lodmoor record for 14 years.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginous

Just 2 records, but incl. a cracking near full summer plumage spring bird:
1 May 17th .
2 Spt 11th .

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

The third really disappointing year in a row.
Winter: only very sporadically present. Early on flooding meant just 1-3 occasionally. Later up to 6 very patchily in Nov and just 1 on 2 dates Dec.
Spring: first migrant Mch 27th . Probably no more than another 120 passed through to Jun 7th , with a max. of just 32 May 1st .
Autumn: first back Jun 27th and present daily from Jly 13th . Up to 21 mid Jly increasing to 43 Aug 11th , with up to 23 to Spt 7th . Then odd singles to Oct 15th until a gap to up to 6 wintering birds from early Nov.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax

3 records of singles:
May 30th . This was an outstanding record in its own right -- this species rarely turns up this late in spring... but it had to play second fiddle to the Temminck's stint discovered the same morning.
Spt 2nd, 4th, 5th .
Spt 18th- 25th .

Jack snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus

1 record:
1 flushed off west path Dec 17th .

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Winter: modest numbers early on: max 60+ Jan and generally very few Jan, Feb. Better later in the year and incl. 90+ second half of Nov.
Spring: odd singles to Apr 25th .
Autumn: first back Jly 18th . Then up to 12 to end Aug and up to 8 Spt.

Black tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*

Winter: none early on. Later in year regular with max. 22 Dec 9th but usually only 1-3 on many dates Nov, Dec.
Passage: a dire spring featuring only about 40 Apr 1st - Jun 15th . A flock of 7 appeared Jun 24th but only erratically present Jly/first half Aug. More regular Spt (and may have incl. wintering birds). Max. 25 with up to 29 early Oct.

Bar tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*

An exceptionally early bird turned up Mch 4th . Subsequently about 31 Apr 15th - May 12th . Max. 13 May 6th

In autumn 2 Aug 20th .

Whimbrel *Numenius heaps*

No repeat of last year's record breaking numbers but still an excellent spring.

Spring: about 140 Apr 15th - Jun 1st . Featured the usual late Apr/early May peak, max. 31 Apr 26th .

Autumn: 6 singles on 6 dates Jly 21st - Aug 22nd .

Curlew *Numenius arquata

Apart from a flurry of early autumn records a really lousy year.

Spring: 2 Mch 3rd , 2 Apr 7th , 1 May 23rd .

Autumn: 3 Jun 16th , 2 19th , 1-2 Jly 13th- 16th , 2 Spt 19th .

Spotted redshank *Tringa erythropus

3 records of singles:

Aug 31st .

Spt 8th .

Spt 15th .

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Another cracking autumn by Lodmoor standards. The mid-winter records were also unusual.

Winter: singles Jan 18th , Feb 16th and Dec 6th .

Spring: 8 on 12 dates Mch 17th - Jun 1st .

Autumn: what may be failed breeders are becoming an expected feature of Jun. 7 adults turned up 17th , followed by up to 4 20th- 24th and 29th , with 6 Jly 7th - 9th . Regular in the second half Jly, max. 7 19th .

In Aug several singles before 13 11th , 12 13th , then 1-2 on 20 dates to Oct 3rd , with 3 6th , 1 8th , 15th- 18th .

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia

An excellent spring featuring a total of 9 birds: singles Apr 19th , 25th , 27th , 5 May 16th , 1 23rd-24th .

In autumn singles Jun 30th , Jly 13th- 22nd , Aug 11th- 13th , 4 14th , 1 25th , 3 27th .

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Winter/spring: many sightings of single(s) Jan 19th - Mch 14th . The most favoured spot were the pools in the old composting centre near Wey Bay Ave.

1 Apr 2nd , 2 May 5th may have been genuine migrants.

Autumn: first returning bird Jun 18th . Sporadically around through Jly, incl. 6 19th . Then mainly 1-3 present nr daily Aug and incl. 8 26th . Then 1-5 irregularly to Oct 4th .

Second winter: disappointing...just 1 isolated record on old tip Nov 27th .

Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola

For the second year in a row a group of obligingly long staying birds.

At least 2 , probably 4, birds involved daily Jly 28th - Aug 14th . As usual a number of spurious RSPB inspired reports involved juvenile Redshanks.

Aug does seem to be THE month for Wood sand at Lodmoor.

Common sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Spring: about 11 on 9 dates Apr 14th - May 14th , followed 1 May 31st .

Autumn: 1-2 from Jun 27th , 6+ from Jly 13th , up to 10 by 30th and 1-7 daily to Spt 7th . Numbers dwindled to 1-2 by end of Spt, with the last Oct 28th .

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Winter: the birds on Preston beach proved remarkably resilient in the face of the ever increasing hordes of dog walkers. Up to 13 erratically Jan and up to 22 to Feb 24th .

Later 20-32 regular Nov, falling to single figs mid Dec. Just 1-3 to year's end.

Passage: 4 May 27th , 1 Jly 20th , 3 Aug 27th , 1-3 on beach late Spt. Up to 10 from Oct 6th may have been the start of the wintering flock.

Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*

No record counts this year but another first: 2 displaying and mating birds in Apr. How long before they breed?

Winter: early on incl. 110 arriving from the north in the middle of the day Jan 22nd. Later in the year ever present and incl. 66 west scrape Nov 28th and 170+ WB roost Dec 5th .

Passage: 25+ passing through daily in late Feb, followed by up to 30/day in Mch. Just single figs in Apr up to 27th but incl. the displaying pair. Followed by the usual gap in records to Jun 7th .

Small numbers only in mid summer until the first juvenile appeared in mid Jly. Flocks noticeably declined from mid Aug on before building up again in Spt. Most striking of all was a very late near juvenile bird Spt 22nd . Its parents must have nested very late indeed.

A clue to where many of our autumn migrants come from was once again provided from a ringing record. A banded 1st winter on Lodmoor Spt 9th had been ringed as a nestling at L'île de Noirmoutier in France on Jun 29th .

Little gull *Larus minutus

Just 4 singles, all first summers/immatures:

14th Feb

6th Apr.

12th May

27th May.

Normal service resumed after last year's staggering influx.

Black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*

Breeding: its not often that this species provides one of the headline events of the year at Lodmoor. But history was made when, after several years of trying, a pair succeeded in raising 3 chicks on the tern islands. First Lodmoor breeding record.

A second pair also tried nesting but abandoned.

The other truly striking spectacle was at least 600 appearing in a matter of minutes mid morning from the north before moving west Jan 22nd. In autumn 500 daily in Jly and 600/700 in Aug.

Common gull *Larus canus*

Good numbers early Jan, light passage Feb/Mch, still 30+ daily early Apr. Subsequently 1-2 regular to 28th and singles May 3rd , 5th , 12th .

Then a very long gap to Spt 23rd , with 30+ regular by mid Oct. Nov/Dec up to 2000+ were in the WB roost but only 30/40 on west scrape.

Lesser black backed gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Passage: up to 10 daily mid Feb. Small but steady passage mid Jly, building up mid Aug. Incl. 1-2 regularly on west scrape Dec.

Intermedius: 1 Feb 20th , several other records in autumn. Under recorded.

Herring gull *Larus argentus*

Breeding: for the first time a pair finally tried nesting. After several years of displaying/mating/prospecting 2014 was the year a pair actually laid eggs and incubated. Inexplicably, they eventually abandoned after weeks of sitting. They'll be back.

In addition a second pair did successfully rear at least 2 young from their nest on the roof of a house in nearby Hazeldown Ave. This species had previously colonised the rooves of the newly demolished blocks of flats off Lodmoor Hill. Its possible homeless pairs are now moving to the Lodmoor area.

Yellow legged gull *Larus michahellis*

14 records featuring at least 11 birds. Records spanning Mch - Nov. But a clear peak late Jly to late Aug..

Iceland gull *Larus glacoides

3 records of singles:
east across WB Feb 2nd.
second winter Mch 18th, 20th.
first winter WB May 6th, on reserve 8th.

Glaucous gull *Larus hyperboreus

1 record:
adult west scrape Feb 12th.

Great black back gull *Larus marinus*

An ever present scavenger and killer of Coot chicks.

Kittiwake *Rissa pterodactyla*

A hang over from the Dec storms helped produce an incredible 200+ WB on both Jan 1st and 3rd. Thereafter daily to 18th with a max. of 25 5th.
Still present in relatively good numbers in Feb: and incl. an seasonal total of 67w 12th. Subsequently up to 6 daily to 20th, with a few to 23rd.
In the spring just 1 Mch 20th, 2w Apr 6th, 6 Jun 6th.
In autumn 13 on 8 dates Aug 11th - Dec 14th.
As ever the overwhelming majority came from WB but also incl. an immature in off Aug 11th and 1 on reserve Oct 16th.

Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

First Mch 29th. Last Oct 16th.
Spring: probably strongest ever passage, incl. 35+ daily Apr 26th - May 11th. The oddest bird was a 1st/2nd winter type that hung around Apr 1st - May 11th.
Autumn: small numbers Jun, Jly, early Aug, building up to max. of 30+ 27th. Then 1-4 regularly to mid Oct.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

No repeat of 2013...but a close run thing!
Breeding: first back Apr 22nd. Six breeding pairs back 30th and back in earnest by May 14th.
Then, just like last year, the entire colony of about 45 pairs was spooked by invading Canada geese in late May. The pair of Oystercatchers lost their eggs but, unlike last year, the terns were not yet sitting on eggs. And, against all the odds, the Canadas dispersed, the terns returned, settled, and the first chick duly appeared by Jun 23rd. The first young took flight Jly 16th and eventually about 60 were successfully fledged. Below average -- but 60 more than last year. The last juveniles were very late: the final bird fledged Aug 30th.
Two juveniles were still around Spt 1st.
Then a very late migrant appeared Oct 23rd, 25th.
Finally, the RSPB has at last acted. Before the end of the year the third island was cleared of vegetation and fitted out with special anti-geese borders.

Arctic tern *Sterna paradisica*

First 29th Mch...very early.
The breeding bird returned for its sixth year May 8th. This year he failed to find a mate but forlornly hung around until Jun 24th. Then, after a gap of more than five weeks, he unexpectedly returned on Aug 3rd and was present, off and on, to 23rd.
Finally 2 juveniles were in WB Aug 28th and 29th. They were followed by perhaps the same very late bird off Overcombe Spt 24th and Oct 7th.

Little tern *Sterna albatross

Another good run of records by Lodmoor standards:
2 Apr 22nd, 23rd, 30th, 5 WB May 5th, 3 19th, 2 WB Jun 25th and 2 Jly 16th.
They'd probably not come from much further than the Ferrybridge colony.

Black tern *Chlidonias niger

1 record:

first winter, briefly, tern islands and west scrape Nov 9th.

This record is Lodmoor's latest ever and not far shy of Dorset's latest ever date.

+Guillemot *Uria aalge*

In like a lion, out like a lamb.

The year began with 50+ still sheltering in WB from the New Year storms Jan 1st- 4th. However, only a few lingered to 13th and nearly all were gone by 21st.

Subsequently 3 Feb 14th were followed by a seven month gap to singles Spt 10th and Dec 8th.

+Razorbill *Alca torda*

Another auk caught up in the huge winter storms. Still about 70+ Jan 1st- 4th. But all were gone by 21st.

There was a much smaller influx in Feb, featuring up to 10 mid month.

In spring single Apr 7th, 9th.

In autumn 1 Oct 17th, 1-3 Dec 11th- 15th.

+*Black guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

1 record:

one of the Portland Harbour birds was seen flying into WB Mch 16th.

First WB record since 2001.

Puffin *Fratercula artica

1 record:

2 birds -- 1 moribund -- on Preston beach esplanade in the second week in Feb. PHOTO.

In some ways THE rarity event of the year.

These birds were undoubtedly victims of the procession of gales to hit the Dorset coast in early 2014. The finders had just crossed Preston Beach Road when they discovered one bird cowering in the jetsam on the gangway leading to the promenade. No sooner had they picked it up than they flushed a second bird that was last seen flying strongly off towards the bay. They photographed the weather victim -- a summer plumage adult -- before taking it home to try to revive it, before releasing it on the cliffs overlooking Bowleaze.

This species is highly pelagic away from its few Dorset breeding colonies so it is a major rarity in the Lodmoor /WB area. Indeed the only previous records appear to be one off The Nothe Nov 27th 1984 and a corpse on Preston beach Jan 19th 1995.

Stock dove *Columba oenas*

Breeding: at least 2 pairs again nested in Horselynch, with at least 1 more pair 2MC/Coffin Wood areas. As part of a subtle change in status this species is now present all the year round.

Passage confined to 11 west 1 Nov 8th.

Wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Ever present. Bred.

Some spectacular overhead movements of passage birds incl. 3,000w Nov 1st, 6,000 4th and 20,000 5th and 400e 24th.

Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocta*

Ever present and incl. small wintering flock CP/end of Weymouth Bay Ave. Bred.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus

Just 5 records of perhaps no more than 3 birds:

Single(s) May 1st, 8th, 14th, 18th, Jun 23rd and 24th.

A disappointing showing after several good springs in a row.

Barn owl *Tyto alba*

Breeding: Brian and Brenda again nested in the roof space at Lorton VC.

Tawny owl *Strix aluco*

Presumably bred locally again but records remain infrequent and erratic.

Short eared owl *Asio flammeus

1 record;

north Oct 28th.

Perhaps the same bird seen off Portland's East Cliffs the same day.

Swift *Apus apus*

Spring: similar arrival pattern to 2013. First Apr 19th. But numbers subsequently only building up gradually to 100+ May 3rd. The main passage was generally late and incl. 150 May 9th, 350 11th, 300+ late May, 100+ Jun 24th.

Autumn: excellent run of records for what is normally one of the earliest departing migrants. Still 50+ late Jly - Aug 9th and up to 4 most days to 24th. Last 30th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Early winter: very erratic at the start of the year: just singles on fewer than 10 dates Jan 11th - Mch 1st.

Autumn: impossible to know exactly how many different birds were involved but 1-2 regular from June 16th all the way through to Spt, when at least 3 could be seen. A run of records that hopefully reflects a good breeding season locally.

Late winter: 1-2 regularly until at least Dec 28th.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops

1 record:

1 in and around the old tip Aug 2nd.

Fortuitously it hung around just long enough for nearly all the regulars to see it.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla

1 record:

a fairly elusive individual Spt 19th, 20th. PHOTO.

Green woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Breeding: at least one pair bred. Proof was provided by an adult and 2 juveniles together in CP Jly 14th -- perhaps having nested in Horselynch.

Nevertheless, the feeling that this species has declined a little in the last couple of years was reinforced by fewer sightings.

Great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Breeding: in contrast to Green seems to have actually increased in recent years. Almost certainly bred Horselynch, CP, 2MC and Coffin Wood. Probably 4/5 pairs locally and a juvenile in CP by May 30th.

In Feb incl. the arresting sight of a flying individual that had lost its tail.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

In autumn an extremely good passage (only bettered by 2010 and 2011 in recent years). At least 680 went over Spt 8th - Oct 25th and then 40+ Nov 15th-30th.

Winter: none early on but up to 25 on Southdown Ridge Nov/Dec.

Woodlark *Alauda arborea

A total of 4 records relating to 5 birds represents a return to form after a blank autumn in 2013:

1 over CP Oct 12th.

1 over Oct 20th.

2 over Oct 22nd.

1 over Nov 15th.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*

Spring: first Mch 11th. Up to 20 daily by early Apr with a dramatic arrival of 200 7th. Subsequently peaks of

just 70+ 18th and May 2nd. Otherwise a generally poor spring, in line with the last few years. Hard to come by in summer: just 3 singles May 23rd - Jun 17th.

Autumn: only gradually appearing late Jly, with 75+ daily in Aug, increasing to 100+ end of month.

Migration tailed away dramatically in Spt with just small numbers, mainly single figures, to the last 26th.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Spring: first Apr 2nd, up to 15 by 4th. Pretty mediocre spring but incl. 200+ May 1st, 250+ 9th.

Breeding: nested Overcombe.

Autumn: movement from Jly 24th. Subsequently some spectacular influxes, incl. 750+ through in 30 minutes Spt 5th, 2000+ 17th, 900+ evening of 23rd. In Oct max. of no more than 100. Last 25th.

Red rumped swallow *Hirundo daurica

1 record:

1 Apr 5th- 8th. PHOTO.

Near annual! The 5th record in the last 7 years. Seven of the last eight have fallen between Apr 5th and May 17th.

House martin *Delichon urbica*

Spring: this is now becoming almost a scarce migrant in spring. First Apr 7th. But then just single figures to May when no more than 15 daily.

Autumn: passage from mid Aug, with 100+ 31st. This species is now moving through later as well as arriving later: peaks 600+ Spt 20th and 21st. Up to 20/day Oct, Finally 2 birds appeared on Nov 5th.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Spring: just 1 over mid Apr.

Autumn: excellent autumn by Lodmoor standards. About 25 on 18 dates Aug 20th - Spt 28th. Incl. 8 grounded birds Aug 27th and Spt 2nd.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Breeding: 1 singing bird Redcliff probably nested but this area has become increasingly disturbed by dog walkers.

Wintering: in Jan 12+ rugby club, 20+ nr Horselynch Feb.

In Nov/Dec 30+ Redcliff, 15+ Southdown Ridge and 2 Bowleaze...up to 6 on reserve itself.

Passage: in spring confined to 15+ in off Mch 19th. In autumn 2 in off Aug 3rd, 1 7th were both very early.

Passage started to really get going in early Spt, and incl. 100+ CVR 13th, 500 over 19th- 21st and 300+ Oct 12th, 100 15th.

Richard's pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae

1 record:

adult Redcliff Dec 4th- into 2015. PHOTO.

The 6th Lodmoor area record and the first since a one day job in Oct 1994 at.....Redcliff Point.

Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Good run of records towards end of the year. Began with 2 on Preston beach Oct 11th and 12th Oct. Then 1-2 regularly Bowleaze Nov 17th - Dec 13th. Almost certainly the result of fresh jetsam washed up on the beach by gales. Once the detritus had dried out (and the insects had gone) the birds departed.

Water pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The fourth poor year in a row.

Early on just single(s) on fewer than 10 dates Jan 2nd - Feb 23rd.

In the autumn singles on just 4 dates Nov 21st - Dec 30th, with 2 Dec 28th.

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flavissima*

A terrible spring followed by a very good autumn indeed by Lodmoor standards.

Spring: just 1 Apr 28th Apr !,

Autumn: about 200 Jly 24th - Spt 23rd, with a clear peak late Aug/early Spt. Max. 37 Aug 24th.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

A record breaking autumn.

Early on: just 1 Bowleaze Jan 17th, 2 old tip 19th-21st.

Exceptional autumn passage: no fewer than 70 records Aug 18th - Oct 22nd. Some were likely the same birds hanging around off passage. But even so this represents one of the best passages ever at Lodmoor.

Late on still very visible. 1-2 CP area late Nov/early Dec, with another Bowleaze.

Pied wagtail *Motacilla yarely*

Breeding: pair successfully bred in roof of flats at Overcombe, rearing at least 3 young.

Passage noted from Jly 24th. Clear peak in Oct, incl. 100+ 5th, 50+ 7th, 100+ 20th.

In Mch up to 75 birds roosted in the northern reed bed.

**Alba* wagtail: singles Apr 15th, May 14th, Spt 1 4th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A dead bird Spt 10th was in marked contrast to this species fortunes in 2014.

Breeding: as with many common residents this species seemed to enjoy a very fruitful breeding season.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Breeding: fledged young by Apr 12th and many juveniles subsequently.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Breeding: fledged young by early May and, like Dunnock, many juveniles subsequently.

Usual arrival of immigrants Spt.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos

1 record:

a singing male, apparently in territory, around the end of Wey Bay Ave/near Weymouth rugby club May 17th - Jun 13th.

This species is rare on or around the reserve itself.

Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros

4 records:

fem/immature Overcombe corner Apr 10th.

fem/immature Brackendown Ave Oct 24th. At one point feeding under a caravan.

1 by CP Nov 3rd.

fem/immature Bowleaze Dec 1st and 2nd.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

An above average year.

Spring: fem Apr 22nd, another in Cranford Ave 24th.

Autumn: In Spt about 19 2nd- 21st, incl. 8 Lorton Valley 2nd, and 3 in a Cranford Ave garden.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Spring: 1 May 15th.

Autumn: about 11 Lodmoor/Lorton Valley Aug 27th - Spt 24th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Breeding: one pair bred Redcliff.

Winter: early on at least 5 Lodmoor. In Nov/Dec at least 6 Lodmoor, incl. 2 Overcombe as well as 2 Charlbury Basin in Oct.

Passage: a juvenile by the northern reed bed Jun 19th obviously hadn't come far. More predictably migrants appearing from Aug 27th, with up to 5 regular Spt/Oct.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

One of Lodmoor's best ever autumns(see Grey and Yellow wagtail).

Spring: about 60 Mch 26th - May 15th .
Autumn: about 80 Aug 7th - Oct 21st. Max. 20 Spt 21st .

Ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus

1 record:

female type Spt 24th .

A first winter at Coombe Valley Road Dec 29th and 30th was an amazing record for the dates...but fell just outside the recording area.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Breeding: feeding young by early Apr.

In the autumn the usual mid Spt influxes. Particularly pronounced arrival this year. Featured at least 120+ in area Nov, Dec, incl. at least 40 in Lorton Meadows.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A famine to follow last year's feast. None at all until autumn and then just 2 records of singles:

1 west Oct 5th .

1 perched bird Beachdown Nov 20th .

Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Breeding: continues to thrive with pairs in CP, around reserve and up Lorton Valley. A sign of how good, and how long, this summer's breeding season has been was provided by an adult still feeding freshly fledged young on Aug 14th .

Incl. a territorial male imitating the Wey Bay Ave Nightingale in May/June.

As with Blackbird, departing wintering birds noted late Feb, with a small autumn arrival mid Spt. In Dec flock of 12+ nr Horselynch.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Winter: early on an isolated count of 16 in CP Feb 4th . Otherwise confined to just 8/9 CP/northern end.

The equally mild conditions at the other end of the year meant that just 7 were noted in the CP, single figures on the west bank and 6 up Lorton Valley Nov/Dec.

Autumn passage: poor...small numbers over from Oct 13th - late Nov.

Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus

Another species that just scraped onto this year's list:

1 west Spt 20th .

2 over Nov 9th .

1 Redcliff Dec 13th .

Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*

Breeding: no one undertook a proper survey of the number of singing males. But the population seems pretty stable and must surely have benefited from another mild winter. One feeding freshly fledged young on Aug 12th was surely a second brood.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Spring: first Apr 2nd , 6 by 12th and numbers in by 18th , many by 25th .

Breeding: hard to gauge but never as numerous as Reed warbler.

Autumn: migrants started to appear end Jly with a peak to Aug 23rd , numbers falling off with mainly 1-3 Spt. Last Oct 8th .

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

First Apr 10th . 8 by 15th , many by 25th .

Breeding: another superb nesting season with lots of fledged young by mid Jly.

In autumn many migrants and locally bred birds to Aug 26th Aug. Smaller numbers regular Spt. Last Oct 6th .

Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata

1 record of what is becoming a Lodmoor rarity:
1 west bank Oct 13th - 15th.

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Spring: exceptional. One singing Apr 8th - 10th was very early. Another 12th, then an influx of 5 13th -15th, with 2 northern end by 18th. In late Apr up to 7 Lodmoor, another 2 Redcliff.

Breeding: at least 2 pairs stayed to breed in Lorton Valley, with at least one other pair at Redcliff.

Autumn: probable passage birds from Jly 22nd, with the usual peak of 1-2 daily from Aug 12th, with up to 3 to 26th. Then odd singles in Spt, followed by 4 25th. Last Spt 28th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Arguably the star bird of the year was a very tardy migrant indeed that turned up in the bushes by the west scrape Nov 5th. Not just Lodmoor's latest ever but one of Dorset's latest dates. Clearly something was going on....2 very late House martins turned up the same day.

Spring: first Apr 12th. Many in by 25th.

Breeding: healthy breeding population incl. pair nesting in brambles at Overcombe.

Autumn: the second bumper year in a row. Migrants started appearing late Jly, with 25+ daily through Aug, increasing to 30+ daily early Spt.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin*

Spring: 3 singles: Apr 21st, singing May 2nd, and 15th May.

Autumn: in common with a number of regular migrants an excellent showing. First Jly 31st, then 1-2 near daily to Aug 25th, then 1-2 Spt 2nd until the last 19th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Winter: red head Jan 20th. Then 1-2 Southdown Ave. area Dec 7th, 15th, 16th.

Spring: 2 singing 2MC by Mch 27th. Good numbers in by Apr 8th and many in by 25th.

Breeding: bred 2MC and Horselynych.

Autumn: migrants started appearing late Jly. A typically prolonged passage. Good numbers in Aug and plenty Spt, with max. 40+ 6th. Smaller numbers through Oct. 3 Nov 15th may have been the last genuine passage birds.

Yellow browed warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus

Hard to tell if one or two birds were involved in the CP sightings:

single(s) Oct 17th, 30th, Nov 15th - 18th, 21st.

None at all for 14 years after 1998....followed by about 6 different birds in the last 3 years. We are still, however, waiting for the first reliable record on the reserve itself.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Spring: 5 singing by mid Feb were almost certainly over wintering birds. By late Mch, however, many undoubted migrants were, as usual, moving through. Also typically numbers started to fall away after mid Apr.

Breeding: up to 4 pairs again bred 2MC and at least 2 more Horselynych.

Autumn: the usual numbers, on the usual range of dates !

Winter: more than ever. Early on 3 around most of Jan. The in Nov/Dec record numbers. At least 8, and possibly 10, different birds wintered in the area with individuals popping up daily.

Siberian chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis

1 record:

1 calling by west path Jan 13th refused to show itself properly.

A probable second bird on Beachdown in late Nov did show itself but stubbornly refused to call.

A rare bird at Lodmoor and the first record since the 3 that wintered in 2009.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Spring: First Mch 23rd. Good numbers from Apr 3rd through to 24th.

Then 3 late singles May 6th, 9th, 19th. But the most striking record was of one by the rugby club Jun 9th, 15th ... a potential first breeding record.

Autumn: first returning bird Jly 25th. In common with a number of species terrific numbers appeared in Aug with up to 35+ daily to 24th. In Spt 1-3 nr daily to the last Spt 14th.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Breeding: definitely breed in CP. An adult and 2 juveniles were in the conifers by Sealife on Jun 10th. In addition a family party, incl. freshly fledged juveniles, were in CP in Jly. Also males singing 2MC late May and rugby club second half of Jun.

Passage/wintering: a year of two halves! Early on pathetic. None at all 2MC Jan and just 1 Feb. Equally hard to find Lodmoor/CP with just odd singles.

But the year was transformed in the last 4 months. Passage birds started appearing Spt 18th. In late Spt and Oct 1-12 were noted daily as part of the best passage for some years. This undoubtedly contributed to excellent wintering numbers in Dec, with small numbers round Lodmoor, up to 15 CP and another 10+ 2MC.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla

3 records of perhaps no more than 2 birds:

1 Spt 9th.

1 CP Nov 30th.

1 Southdown Ave Dec 15th.

Not an easy bird to see on Lodmoor in the last few years.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata

The second outstanding autumn in a row included a record day total on Spt 2nd.

Spring: 2 singles in May: 10th and Lorton Valley 14th.

Autumn: at least 20 Aug 13th - Spt 28th. This incl 13 Spt 2nd, an astonishing day total by Lodmoor standards. 11 of these were in Lorton Valley. This and the CP were the favoured haunts.

Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypotenusa

Just 1 record this year:

CP Spt 3rd and 4th.

Bearded tit *Panurus biamicus*

Breeding: continues to thrive. Fledged young being fed at both ends of reserve in Jun and probably 3/4 pairs bred.

Once again excellent numbers were evident outside the breeding season. At least 10 were around early in the year. Later at least 30 were pinging around the reed beds in Spt. Some were starting to erupt in late Spt/early Oct and likely incl. a number of juveniles. About 15 stayed to the end of the year.

Long tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Breeding: another bumper year judging by the number of juveniles and family parties from mid May. One of a number of common species that seemed to benefit from a mild winter.

Coal tit *Parus ater*

Breeding: the jury may still be out but this looks increasingly likely to be nesting.

This species sporadically crops up in or near suitable habitat in the CP in autumn. But this year the sight of an adult and juvenile in conifers around the pitchnputt course in Jly provided pretty persuasive evidence in favour of breeding.

Subsequently noted on odd dates in CP Oct-Dec and 1 nr 2MC Dec.

One at the junction of Coombe Valley and Littlemoor Rd Spt 17th may well have bred in the conifers there.

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

Breeding: these species are often taken for granted. But this could have been a record breeding season in and around Lodmoor. Great tits in particular seemed to be producing young in impressive numbers. During

the late spring and summer family parties of both species seemed everywhere.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Breeding: noted more regularly in 2MC than it is some years. At least 1, and possibly 2 pairs, bred there again. One watched collecting nest material in May.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Breeding: once again at least one pair definitely bred again in 2MC and up to 4 birds were present in the area all year.

Passage: last year there was an unprecedented movement in spring. This year migrants were on the move in autumn.

Up to 3 hung around the Horselynch/Lodmoor/CP areas for much of Spt and Oct. Some may have come from no further than 2MC. But definite overhead migrants incl. 3n Spt 25th, 2w 30th Spt, 3 Oct 1st, 6 over 2nd, 1 3rd, 4w 5th, 1 over Littlemoor Rd 16th and 4 over 20th.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A ubiquitous species.

Breeding: freshly fledged and remarkably clumsy young frequented the west path in early June.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Another abundant corvid. Breeding: young noted from early Jun.

This species is almost certainly an under recorded autumn migrant. So good to report that one observer counted up to 200 going west over Southdown Ridge Oct 28th.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Breeding: the Preston Road rookery appears in rude health.

Carrion crow *Corvus corone*

Breeding: as usual 2 pairs nested right by the reserve, where the pickings are often richest. Each pair had fledged 4 voracious young by early Jun.

It's impossible to separate locals from potential migrants but 12 high west Spt 30th and 8 more Oct 5th were good candidates for passage birds.

Raven *Corvus corax*

What may well have been last year's adults returned with their freshly fledged young once again to Weymouth rugby club in the summer. A pair were regularly present with 2 juveniles from Jun 17th - Aug 8th. Clearly they are breeding not far away.

Further evidence of nesting locally was provided by a series of fly over records during the rest of the year. Odd singles were only occasionally noted Jan, Feb but from Oct on 1 or 2 birds were noted going over on a number of dates to the end of the year.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

This species breeds in some numbers in the wider area. Juveniles started to appear on the reserve from mid Jun with a flock of 32 immatures by mid Jun.

Only comparatively modest numbers in the winter roost this year, peaking at 10,000 in early Nov.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Breeding: thriving colonies in the Southdown Ave, CP and Overcombe areas.

Tree sparrow *Passer montanus

1 record:

1 west calling Spt 19th while we were waiting for the Wryneck to show.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Breeding: a fairly common breeding bird in and mainly around Lodmoor.

In autumn -- like last year -- just a disappointing trickle of overhead migrants.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla

1 record:

1 over Oct 15th.

Even worse than last year's poor showing. Either we're not trying hard enough or this species has suddenly becoming a lot rarer in autumn.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Bred. Ever present again but late in the year some signs that the local population had again been hit by disease.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Breeding: small numbers nest in the area.

But, as ever, most obvious as an autumn migrant and a winter visitor. Passage incl. 200+ over Oct 20th. At least 70 wintering by year's end.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus

Two more unexpected spring records, followed by the most disappointing autumn for a number of years.

Spring: 1w Apr 5th, 2n 14th.

Autumn: 1 Spt 3rd, 8 2nd, 11 20th, 5 Oct 22nd.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Breeding: despite increasing disturbance and wilful habitat destruction about 5 pairs continue to breed in the gorse on the western side. But you'd imagine they are not fans of plans by Weymouth FC to destroy one of their main breeding banks to make way for one of the world's worst football team.

Birds also bred Redcliff.

Passage: some good movements incl. 80w Oct 5th, 250 over 20th.

Winter: more regular in recent years. 30+ from 2013 remained nr the ambulance station. Later in the year a settled autumn flock of 35 stayed on Southdown Ridge to the end of the year.

***Crossbill**

2 records of singles:

west Jly 22nd.

1 over Aug 22nd.

A very erratic late summer/early autumn migrant.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhoea*

Breeding: an increasingly common and regular presence on the western side. Either bred on the west bank or in nearby gardens. Probably 2 pairs involved and definitely a change in status. What remain unaltered is the presence of about another 3 nesting pairs up the northern end.

Passage: this species appears occasionally during vis migging. This year what looked a lot like migrants as follows: 1 high west Oct 8th, 3n 14th, 2w 22nd.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

1 record:

1 over Oct 20th.

No records of singers from the Redcliff area this year but several pairs bred again just outside the recording area off Coombe Valley Road.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Breeding: one of a long list of species that seemed to do well in 2014. At least 6 pairs nested and were busy feeding fledged young by late Jly.

Winter/passage: like last year very good numbers were around on the reserve and in the surrounding fields and hedgerows in autumn and on into winter. Possibly as many as 25 wintering in the area. And incl. 3 Charlbury Basin.

Passage: what looked very much like overhead migrants incl. 3 Oct 5th and 4 20th.

ESCAPES etc

Bar headed goose

1 with his feral Canada goose friends Aug 27th- 29th .

Parakeet sp.

1 north Aug 9th. Not Ring necked.