

LODMOOR AREA REPORT 2016

THE LODMOOR LIST

The revised Lodmoor area list now stands at 302.

Obviously, like any list, it depends on what area it covers and what species you count.

For the sake of completeness the systematic list in this report includes birds seen in the Country Park, Bowleaze-Redcliffe and the Two Mile Coppice/Lorton Valley areas.

But -- for the sake of purists -- **the** list is confined to birds recorded on the reserve and the immediate surrounding area (incl. Preston beach/Weymouth Bay and the Southdown Estate/Horselych slope but **not** the wider area).

Individually some people (me!) might lose a tick or two on their area lists but interestingly only 1 species (Sub alpine warbler) is lost to **the** list by restricting it in this way.

What species to count? I've excluded a number of obvious escapes (Red breasted goose, Hooded merganser, Dalmatian pelican etc), as well as Feral pigeon.

I have also left out a number of more borderline species (Snow goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Great bustard) because of questions about their provenance. I've also followed the IOC definition of species, so Pale bellied brent, Greenland white front, Siberian chiffchaff etc don't (yet) make it as full species here.

But I have included 2 birds (Ivory gull, Little owl) that some lists might exclude under the "not seen for more than 50 years" rule.

2016

Between us we clocked 186 species.

The rarities included a first for Lodmoor, a second for Lodmoor, and a first for 20 years. Amazingly, however, they didn't include a single Brambling or an Arctic tern.

FIRST WINTER

Mainly mild and wet weather didn't do the birding any favours early on. Two confiding **Little gulls** graced Overcombe at the start of January and the month also produced the only **Black necked grebe** record of 2016. Generally, however Weymouth Bay was poor for divers, grebes and auks. Excitement on the reserve was largely confined to the unexpected arrival of a **Goosander** and some unseasonal **Siskin** records. February included a new record count of **Mediterranean gulls**, a wintering **Sandwich tern** and the first of a rash of spring **Spoonbills**. But the headline event arguably wasn't a bird at all but an **Otter** swimming across the sluice.

SPRING

In March 2 **pale bellied brents**, a clutch of fly over **Curlews** and 2 different **Avocets** were among the harbingers of spring. The 'you have wanted to miss this' moment of the month came in the form of 5 departing **Bitterns** calling each other into the evening sky. And, as the first passerine migrants began to arrive the warmer weather prompted a wintering **Siberian chiffchaff** to burst into song.

April is a month that always includes surprises. And **Arctic skua** in a gale and a **Red breasted merganser** in off and north were among this year's. Scarce migrants included an Osprey, Lodmoor's earliest ever **Wood sandpiper** and no fewer than 11 lingering **Water pipits**.

Generally wader numbers were pretty so so. But both **Whimbrel** and **Common sandpiper** passed through in good numbers. The bay was generally quiet again but did turn up trumps with a record count of **Manx shearwaters**.

Is the first fortnight in May the best time of year at Lodmoor? Well, a cast headlined by **Cattle egret**, **Black winged stilt**, **Red rumped swallow** and **Bee eater** and supported by singing **Turtle dove**, a run of summer plumage **Grey plovers** and prospecting **Little terns**, suggests it might have been this year. And just when you thought it was all over a **Hoopoe** flew through late on. But just as there are winners there are also losers and this was one of the worst springs ever for **Garganey** and for **Hobby**.

BREEDING BIRDS

There was some notable breeding successes...not least of all the **Marsh harriers**, and, despite the efforts of the local Herring gulls, about 25 fledged **Common terns** and a single **Black headed gull** chick. Booming **Bittern** tantalised again. For the first time ever 2 pairs of **Oystercatchers** bred successfully.

Other scarcer nesting species that did well included **Stock dove, Jay, Coal tit, Stonechat, Lesser whitethroat, Treecreeper** and **Bullfinch**.

It also seemed to be an excellent breeding year for many of Lodmoor's commoner birds. Reed bed birds including **Bearded tit, Reed warbler** and **Reed bunting** enjoyed good summers. Among the water birds **Moorhens** seemed to do particularly well. **Mute swan, Shoveler, Tufted duck, Gadwall, Pochard, Little** and **Great crested grebe** all bred again. Thanks to some mild winters it also seemed a very productive time for some of Lodmoor's commonest species.

SUMMER

June highlights included a four figure count of **Swift**, a back garden **Golden oriole, Great white egret**, and Weymouth Bay's latest ever **Great northern diver**.

A second **Great white egret** appeared in July, along with really big counts of **Sand martin**.

AUTUMN

August started slowly but got better. Wader passage featured terrific counts -- by Lodmoor standards -- of **Curlew sandpiper, Little stint**, and **Redshank** as well as the only **Spotted redshank** of the year. By contrast it was undoubtedly the worst Greenshank autumn ever. Other highlights included 3 settled **Arctic skuas** and a fleeting **Black tern**.

The quantity and quality of migrant passerines gathered pace in September and included a late **Cuckoo, Wryneck, Pied flycatcher** and run of **Spotted flycatchers**. But they were all eclipsed by a wader. A moulting adult **American golden plover** spent the morning of the 21st by the Hump, but Lodmoor's rarity of the year failed to hang around.

Some years October feels like winter's already begun, in other years you can be knee deep in good birds. October 2016 was definitely a 'knee deep' month. An apparently endless conveyor belt of scarce species meant that you could have seen 130 species in October.

They included **Eider, Cattle egret**, a long staying **Great white egret**, 2 **Cranes**, another **Wryneck**, Tree sparrow, two Woodlarks, a walk up to **Rosy starling**, another **Siberian chiffchaff**, and an unprecedented run of **Yellow browed warblers**.

One of the features of this autumn was a really strong thrush movement including multiple Ring ouzels. Migrants kept coming in November and included the only Crossbill of the year, and Lodmoor's latest ever Sand martin.

SECOND WINTER

A **Purple sandpiper** on Preston beach in November was a contender for one of the more unexpected birds of the year.

Lingering flocks of Goosander and Scaup helped enlivened the dying days of 2016. But the real excitement was provided in late November by a rash of rarer wildfowl. A flock of genuinely wild **Barnacle geese** -- combined in the space of 24 hours with **Bewick's swans** and **White fronted geese** -- were among the birding highlights of the entire year.

December also had its moments. Not least of all in the form of another double figure count of **Water pipits**, as well as another **Eider**, yet another **Great white egret**, a winter **Knot**, 4 long staying **Sika** and a pod of more than 20 **Bottle nosed dolphin** in the bay.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

+ all records Weymouth Bay unless stated

* all records given

PHOTO, in the case of rare/scarce birds, indicates a photograph was taken

Rarities to Lodmoor -- as opposed to very scarce species -- are indicated in red.

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

RSPB: rarely seen past Bovington.

Greylag goose *Anser anser

Feral birds Mch 31st(2), Apr 1st(4), Apr 11th (2), and Oct 6th.

White fronted goose *Anser flavirostris

1 record: 2 over reserve and east Nov 26th.

First records since 2011. One of the few down sides to birding in Dorset is how comparatively badly we do for grey geese.

Canada goose *Branta canadensis*

Breeding: about 5 pairs bred incl. 1 which raised 4 goslings on the RSPB's "tern" island. The breeding population doesn't appear to be increasing.

Max. 650+ early Oct. Also 300+ Overcombe early Nov, 250+ Lodmoor Dec. Part of this flock fed on Weymouth RFC and so badly polluted the pitch with poo that a match had to be cancelled amid fears for the players' health. Really.

Dark bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Just 10 on a handful of dates Jan 1st - Apr. 4th.

But much better later in the year: about 75 Oct 4th - Dec 25th. Nearly half of them, 30, went west Dec 15th. Incl. an individual on Weymouth rugby club that was mercilessly harried by a Jackdaw.

+Pale bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota

3 records :

2 Mch 15th.

11 w Apr 29th.

2 Oct 15th.

Barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis*

A flock of 17 very wary, and flighty, birds spent Nov 25th on the reserve. Part of a Dorset wide arrival of undoubtedly wild birds. PHOTO.

8 east across WB Dec 4th.

Also a feral bird with Canadas on a series of dates Aug - Oct.

The few records of wild birds in recent years have been, like the Dec flock, across WB. So the Nov birds were a major rarity on the reserve itself.

Mute swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding: pretty average year. A pair emerged with 4 cygnets on the rugby club pool Apr 17th. But apparently only 1 survived. A different pair appeared with 5 young on Jun 3rd...their fate isn't known but, unless they dispersed early, they may have perished. Finally a 3rd pair raised a single cygnet on the post box pool.

Unusually 1 of the immatures from 2015 hung around with its parents on Beachdown for most of the first half of the year.

Winter/passage: 3 pair had returned from the beginning of January. On May 13th 12 went w across WB and 15 were on the reserve Sept 18th. By contrast mainly absent later in the year. Just a few isolated records of 1-2 Nov/early Dec until 1-2 adults erratically from Dec 18th.

Bewick's swan *Cygnus colombianus

1 record:

2 east Nov 25th.

Remarkably these appear to be the first Lodmoor records for 20 years. Earlier they had been happily feeding on the wet meadows at the northern end of Radipole...until a photographer showed up! Minutes later they were flying over Lodmoor.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Breeding: 1 pair definitely nested on the reserve, hatching 2 chicks...but only 1 survived. Two more pairs with 5 and 3 chicks each appeared in early Jun. Both of these family parties may have come across from Portland Harbour breakwaters.

A max. of just 22 were around in spring. A flock of 12 came in off Jly 12th. Subsequently the usual gap in Aug was followed by an adult and 2 locally bred juvs early Spt. But birds weren't regular again until mid Oct with up to 10 but usually 6/8.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Breeding: pr with 8 chicks late May, another 5 chicks mid Jly and finally a third brood of 6 ducklings late Jly.

Lodmoor max. of 94 mid Jun. Also a pair Charlbury Basin, with 12 birds there early Nov.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Once again autumn migrants produced the biggest numbers. 35-50 were intermittently present Spt 30th - mid Oct. They were followed by a brief influx of 50 Nov 2nd. It looks very much as if many of these flocks commute to and from The Fleet.

Early on in the year there were very few: a max. of just 6 WB Mch 2nd. Then an isolated summer record Jun 10th. The first autumn bird appeared Aug 15th.

Late in the year up to 11 but usually just 1-5 were regularly present Nov - Dec 9th. Odd singles were erratically noted after that to the end of the year.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A good year for a species that it is easy to take for granted.

At least 12 pairs bred. First Apr 11th. Subsequently incl. a creche of 20 ducklings from 2 broods in Jun.

Newly hatched birds were still appearing in late Aug.

Incl. a count of 58 by the view shelter Dec 7th.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Breeding: as last year at least 1 pair bred on Overcombe Pool: 7 chicks Jun.

Max. count of 60 Nov 7th. Incl. 1 Charlbury Basin Nov 8th.

Pintail *Anas acuta

10 records featuring about 25 birds is well above average by Lodmoor standards:

6 over Jan 1st.

Male and 2 females west scrape Feb 1st.

Male Feb 20th

Female Jun 27th.

Female post box Spt 16th, 5 there 17th.

2 Oct 4th- 6th.

Female post box pool Oct 19th.

4 females in off Nov 2nd.

Pair post box Dec 28th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula

1 record:

Male May 13th.

And that's all folks. The drake was obliging enough to show in the morning and evening but can't disguise the fact that this was an awful year.

Teal *Anas crecca*

In the spring a pair lingered at Overcombe to May 22nd. A drake 28th may have been an early returning bird. Certainly 20+ were back by Jun 23rd.

The year's max. count came with 300+ in late Oct. Still at least 200 around Dec. Incl. a count of 116 Overcombe Pool 26th.

Birds clearly on the move could be seen crossing WB Nov 11th(35+ & 41) and Dec 7th(36).

Incl. 2 Charlbury Basin Nov 8th.

Pochard *Aythya farina*

Breeding: as usual lots of males were chasing just a few females in the spring. At least 4 pairs went on to

nest, producing about 18 chicks between them. How many survived, however, is another matter.
Winter: a count of 260 Jan 13th was the exception not the rule early in the year. But numbers built up well later on. 185 had arrived by Oct 11th, with up to 287 regularly present on the post box pool from early Nov-early Dec. As ever these winter flocks were overwhelmingly composed of males. They could also at times do a remarkably good vanishing act into the reeds.

Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*

Breeding: good year. At least 7 pairs bred, with the first chicks appearing May 5th. A late brood, unusually on the seaward end of the reserve, in Aug. Also a pair Charlbury Basin.

Winter: not last year's record breaking numbers but 71 Jan and 69 late Nov was nevertheless well above average.

Scaup *Aythya marila

Best year for some time. 3 sets of records:

Male Jan 1st- 3rd and 16th.

Female Oct 16th - 18th, followed by up to 7 21st - 25th.

Up to 7 on many dates from Nov 10th - Dec 9th. Incl. at least 2 males. PHOTO.

Its fairly likely the Oct and Nov/Dec birds were the same, or at least among the same. There's evidence the Lodmoor birds move to and from Abbotsbury.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula

1 record:

2 females west scrape Nov 13th.

Hard to come by on the reserve or in WB in recent years.

+Eider *Somateria mollissima

2 records:

Female with 2 Wigeon Oct 11th.

Imm/female Dec 1st.

No records for 4 years, now 5 birds in last 2 years.

+Common scoter *Melanitta nigra*

In first half of the year about 34 on 25 dates Jan 4th - May 10th.

Just one summer record: a male Jly 20th.

In second half of year about 37 on 12 dates Oct 23rd - Dec 26th. Max 10.

Goosander *Mergus merganser

The series of records of red heads Nov/Dec almost certainly all relate to the same group of 13:

Red head fishing by the tern islands Jan 20th.

Female west scrape and post box pool Nov 11th. Probably same WB Nov 13th, 23rd, 24th.

13 arriving reserve Dec 1st and leaving early morning 4th, 5th, 11th. And 10 arriving evening of 14th.

The Dec influx mirrors a remarkably similar arrival in 2010 when 12 birds frequented the bay/reserve in Nov/Dec.

Red breasted merganser *Mergus serrator

3 records:

1 WB Feb 6th.

1 nr stone pier Feb 22nd. Possibly same as above.

Male in off Apr 8th.

God knows where the Apr bird was going...it was last seen heading north.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Breeding northern end and CVR. Wandering birds incl. female Lodmoor car park Oct, and by Hump Nov. 5 feeding on grain Overcombe end in Dec.

+Red throated diver *Gavia stellata

2 records:
1 Oct 26th.
1 Dec 3rd.

+Black throated diver *Gavia arctica

4 records of singles:
Summ. plum May 2nd.
1st. summer May 21st.
Nov 10th, 11th.
Close in Overcombe Dec 11th.

+Great northern diver *Gavia immer*

Early on mainly confined to just 1-2 on a smattering of dates Jan/Feb, but incl. 4 Jan 16th. 1-2 on 7 dates Mch/Apr. Followed by singles May 1st, 22nd- 23rd, west Jun 16th.
Later almost a rarity: just 5 dates Oct 28th- Dec 6th. Then 1-2 occasionally Dec 18th - 27th.
The second really poor year in a row. Bizarrely there were almost as many records in May/June as there were Oct/Nov. The June record is one of the area's latest ever.

+Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Singles Feb 6th, Mch 1st. Then 1-2 on 9 dates Mch 26th - May 23rd, with 1 Jun 16th.
Then confined to singles Aug 18th, 19th.
Another poor year.

+*Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

A record breaking year.
130+ Apr 28th is by miles WB's highest ever count.
3 other records:
2 Mch 26th.
3 during a se gale Apr 10th.
1 close in -- on a flat calm day -- Spt 19th.
The astonishing Apr record involved what was very much a feeding flock, performing a huge figure of eight across the bay in the evening. By way of comparison in 2015 a grand total of 0 were recorded!

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding: at least 5 pairs -- and almost certainly more -- bred. Another pair were in territory at Charlbury Basin.
Winter: 18 were counted reserve wide in Feb, with 8 congregated on the tern island pool in Mch and 10 there in Oct. Another 7 were counted on the post box pools in Dec.

+Red necked grebe *Podiceps grisegena

2 records of possibly the same bird:
1 Feb 25th.
1 Mch 11th.

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding: another perplexing summer. 4 pairs were in territory in May but once again breeding success seemed incredibly low. Confirmation of nesting was provided by a pair with a single chick in Jun, a pair with 2 chicks Jun 17th and a pair with 1 chick Jly 15th. It's not clear if any survived.
Wintering: like last year WB numbers were really low again(see Great northern diver). A max. of just 25 were counted in Mch, with up to 22 Dec, but mainly single figs.
1 by the tern islands in Mch was unusual. One of the breeding birds lingered on the post box pool until Oct.

Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus

Basically 3 sets of records, incl. a rare bird on the reserve itself:
WB: 1 Mch 8th. Then 2 Mch 11th & 12th.
Tern island pool: 1 Mch 28th - 30th. PHOTO.

WB: 1 Dec 1st, 6th, 11th.

***+Black necked grebe Podiceps nigricollis**

1 record:

1 WB Jan 16th.

The scarcest of the scarcer winter grebes in the bay...despite being the most regular in Portland Harbour!

***Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia**

Like last year basically 4 sets of records. Birds were present for a total of around 7 weeks.

2 Feb 3rd - 10th, with up to 3 to 14th.

1 Feb 20th - 22nd, with 4 24th - Mch 2nd, then up to 4 to 19th, with 1 to 21st.

2 May 22nd. These were last seen thermalling up into the heavens!

First winter Oct 25th - Nov 8th.

The clutch of spring and autumn records are par for the course but the late May birds were unusual.

Bittern Botaurus stellaris

Spring/summer: booming again. In fact at least 1 bird may have been present most of the spring. The boomer was present near daily at least May 8th - 22nd. Lodmoor's first May record. This is the second time in 3 years a male has held territory.

Winter: early on confined to just a scattering of singles Jan-early Mch. But a disappointing showing was followed by the wonderful sight of no fewer than 5 departing at dusk Mch 21st.

Later in the year 1-2 on many dates Oct 7th - Dec 16th. Got harder to come by as the year drew to a close.

***Cattle egret Bubulcus ibis**

2 records:

Summ. plum May 6th. Last seen flying e.

1 w Oct 17th.

An increasingly regular vagrant but surprisingly the first birds for 4 years.

Grey heron Ardea cinerea

No sign of nesting or prospecting this year. Nevertheless present daily.

A particularly young juvenile Nov 14th had clearly come from close by (Nottingham).

***Great white egret Ardea alba**

4 records of singles:

Overcombe pool Jun 15th.

Main Moor Jly 18th, 19th. PHOTO.

Overcombe pool Oct 19th - Nov 11th PHOTO.

Flying over Littlemoor and then w over Southdown Ridge Dec 6th.

Now recorded in 6 of the last 7 years...and in danger of going from red to black. Many of the records probably explained by the growing nesting colony in Somerset. The Oct/Nov bird was an unusually long stayer by Lodmoor standards.

Little egret Egretta garzetta

Very few records during the flooding in Jan. But 9 arrived Feb 24th. Subsequently regular with 8 around in May, up to 12 in Jun and 10 in mid Jly. For the 3rd year running birds occasionally roosted in the bushes at Overcombe. Their addition as a future breeding species may not be that fanciful.

1-3 regular Nov/Dec.

+Gannet Morus bassanus

No repeat of last year's bumper influx. In fact pretty much business as usual.

Storms helped blow in 2 Jan 1st and 1 7th. But there was then a long gap until the next on Mch 30th. Feeding birds were then frequently noted, although only in small numbers, May 2nd - Spt 7th. Max. just 6.

Towards the end of the year 19 were recorded on 7 dates Oct 1st - Dec 12th, when 10 went w together.

Finally 1 w on a flat calm day 26th.

+Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Early on singles only erratically present Jan/Feb and occasional Apr - Jly.
Better in second half of year. Incl. 5 together Aug 22nd. Then 1-3 regularly present Oct and particularly Nov/Dec.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Ever present WB and reserve. Max. count on the reserve: 11 in Nov.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

1 record:
1 north Apr 12th.

Red kite *Milvus milvus

5 records of singles:
Sw Feb 14th.
N Mch 31st.
May 23rd.
N May 29th.
W Oct 10th.
Oct 12th. Possibly same as above. PHOTO.
Once again a bias in favour of spring birds.

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Breeding: Lodmoor's parents of the year nested successfully up the northern end for the 4th successive time. This species has now nested 7 years in a row.
The first freshly fledged juvenile appeared on May 28th....the earliest date yet. Eventually 3 juveniles were reared with the last one dispersing on Aug 17th.
At various times no fewer than 8 other birds joined the regulars. Later in the year some records may have related to the local juveniles moulted into first winter plumage but clearly there are far more wandering birds around in Dorset these days.
As last year mild weather in Dec saw the resident pair territorialising amazingly early, with the male actually displaying 28th.
Incl. a female impersonating an Osprey by spending 50 minutes circling over the bay Feb 8th.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding: once again at least 2 and maybe 3 pairs bred in the wider area.
Present all year and probably including wintering birds as well as residents.
Arguably the best sighting of the year featured 3 birds clearly hunting cooperatively over the reed bed in Dec. Also incl. one catching and killing a Blackbird on the west path.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Breeding: once again 1 pair were regularly displaying Horselynch/northern end and a freshly fledged juv in Jun was clearly bred locally. Also a pair Redcliff.
What looked very much like passage birds incl. 2 north across WB and in off Redcliffe Feb 4th, singles in off Aug 13th, Aug 16th.
1 irregularly frequenting reserve/Overcombe Oct-Dec.

Water rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Breeding: at least 2 pairs appeared to breed again. As ever probably under recorded. 1-2 calling May and again late Jun - early Aug.
Winter/passage: early on fairly modest numbers. Passage/winter birds back late Aug. 10+ calling early Nov. Also 1 Charlbury Basin Nov, Dec.
1 half way up a bush by the west path Nov was pretty unusual.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding: outstanding. This species is never as numerous a nesting bird as Coot. But this year an absolute

minimum of 9 pairs bred....incl. Charlbury Basin and the pools betwixt the park ride and 2MC.
A striking number of freshly fledged juvs in late Aug and Nov suggests many second broods.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Breeding: once again one of Lodmoor's commonest water birds. And once again plenty of evidence of heavy predation of chicks from a variety of hunters. Breeds early: 6 pairs by mid May, incl. young at Charlbury Basin.

No really notable counts: 89 in Jan was as good as it got.

Crane *Grus grus*

1 record:

2 w Oct 9th. PHOTO.

Another record of fly overs. The last settled bird was back in 2004.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Breeding: for the first time in the 13 years this species has bred here 2 pairs successfully reared young. A pair by the Hump produced 2 chicks on May 27th. And -- after two failed summers -- it was third time lucky, as both youngsters were successfully fledged.

The tern island pair were close behind...hatching 2 chicks Jun 1st, which were also brought safely to fledging.

On Jly 4th a total of 13 birds were on the reserve.

Winter/passage: 1 appeared on Jan 5th and both breeding pairs were back from early Feb. Later the last juvenile left on Aug 12th. Subsequently just one record: Bowleaze Nov 25th.

Black winged stilt *Himantopus bimanous

1 record:

1st/2nd summer w scrape May 10th. PHOTO.

3 in the last 5 years.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta

4 records, all in spring:

1 in off calling Mch 12th & 13th.

1 Mch 19th & 20th.

1 May 27th.

2 Jun 5th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

First winter: 305 Jan and 340+ early Feb. Down to 75 by Feb 27th. Last Mch 17th, apart from a dead bird in the car park 20th.

Autumn: 1 May 24th could have been a very late migrant but was probably the first non breeder returning. And 2 from 27th certainly weren't going anywhere fast. As ever numbers only increased very slowly through the summer.

Second winter: just 80+ early Nov but a big influx early Dec produced the highest counts of the year: peaking at 573. Noticeable early in the mornings how often the entire flock were regularly flushed by mechanical noises from the recycling centres.

By the end of the year milder weather had encouraged many to move on but 300+ were still present.

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria

4 records of mainly fly overs totalling 38 birds:

1 flushed by a Marsh harrier and flying off n Jan 6th.

26 ne Feb 9th.

10 in off and north, incl. a summ. plum bird, Nov 1st.

1 Hump Nov 2nd.

Another blink and you'll miss them year. Apart from influxes during hard weather in 2010 and 2013 this species hasn't habitually hung around on Lodmoor since the turn of the century.

American golden plover *Pluvialis dominica

1 record:

A moulting adult was lurking near the Hump on the morning of Spt 21st. Despite searching it couldn't be found subsequently. PHOTO.

A new bird for Lodmoor, only the 4th for Dorset and, surprisingly, the first for the autumn.

Grey plover *Pluvialis equatorial

Spring: 2 May 4th - 7th, with 5 8th, up to 5 daily to 14th, with 1 to 16th. 1 23rd - 26th.

Autumn: 1 Spt 21st, 5 22nd, 2 24th - Oct 4th. 1 Oct 9th. PHOTO.

An outstanding run of records, featuring a minimum of 11 birds.

Little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius

Spring: 5 singles: Mch 31st, Apr 18th, 28th, 30th, May 2nd.

Autumn: 2 juveniles Jly 7th & 8th, 1-4 juvs 12th - 20th, 1 ad 21st, 2 Aug 10th - 11th, juv 18th - 21st.

The 3rd poor spring in a row, followed by another good autumn. Something of a pattern emerging here.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hateful*

Spring: 1 Feb 26th. Then on 14 dates Apr 19th - Jun 2nd. Max. 9 May 21st.

Autumn: 5 Aug 11th, up to 13 daily 16th - Spt 4th. Then incl. 8 Spt 13th, 9 22nd, 4 juvs 24th. 1-3 on 6 dates Spt 29th - Nov 30th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola

4 records of perhaps no more than 2 birds:

Single(s) west bank Feb 16th and Mch 14th.

1 roding over Southdown Mch 1st.

1 Beachdown Nov 2nd.

Jack snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus

1 confirmed record from a reliable visiting birder:

1 Overcombe Nov 30th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Winter: very modest numbers early in the year...max of just 20 in Feb. A complete contrast to the end of the year. A Dec influx culminated in a count of approx. 150 13th. It meant that on occasions you could see nearly 100 in flight together...thanks to the harrier.

Spring: odd singles to 28th Apr.

Autumn: first back Jly 8th. But only single figures until end Spt, building up rapidly to 80+ late Oct.

Black tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*

Winter: up to 4 early Jan, but just 1 Feb, until 10 arrived in off 24th. Subsequently up to 6 daily Mach and Apr. Much better in the second half of the year. A flock of up to 40 late Spt lingered throughout Oct and Dec. They often fed on the Overcombe wet meadows during their stay.

Passage: another dire spring. Max just 8 May 2nd. Thereafter just 1-5 daily to 23rd, followed by 2 Jun 1st - 2nd.

2 birds were on the way back Jun 18th. Then 9 Jly 3rd, 32 8th. Subsequently 1 - 12 until impressive peaks of 67 Aug 21st and 37 26th.

Bar tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Spring: 6 Apr 18th, then about 35 on 12 dates to May 15th.

In autumn up to 9 juvs, but usually 3/4, with Blackwit flock Spt - Oct 20th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Spring: the first Apr 5th. Then about 160 on 25 dates to May 26th. Incl. 32 Apr 18th, 42 22nd.

Autumn: singles w Jly 17th, Aug 7th, 2 10th.

In contrast to a number of waders the latest in a series of impressive spring movements.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Spring: about 19 on 10 dates Mch 4th - Apr 22nd. Max 5.

Autumn: 1 Jun 22nd (chased off by an Oystercatcher), 3 Jly 23rd, singles e Oct 20th, 21st, n Dec 8th, e across WB Dec 12th.

Spotted redshank *Tringa erythropus

1 record:

1 Aug 19th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Winter: confined to a fly over Dec 9th.

Spring: about 20 on 26 dates Mch 9th - Jun 6th.

Autumn: about 60 from Jun 19th - Nov 26th. Incl. 2 that came in off and flew high inland Aug 31st.

Another excellent year for what used to be a scarce visitor to Lodmoor. Probably the best ever autumn.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Spring: 5 on 5 dates Mch 29th - May 11th.

Autumn: confined to just 1 Jly 8th, 2w 13th, singles Aug 20th, Spt 5th and Oct 4th.

In contrast to the preceding species a very poor autumn. But -- although none of them hung around -- a good run of spring records.

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Winter/spring: early on 1 Feb 9th - 24th, 2 Mch 12th. 1 Mch 31st - Apr 1st may well have been on the move.

Autumn: first back Jun 15th. 1-2 regularly to Jly 23rd. Then 3-6 Aug 6th - 31st, followed by 7 to Spt 6th and 1-2 for the rest of the month followed by singles Oct 7th - 9th, 18th.

Winter: an isolated record of 1 west scrape Dec 6th.

Wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola

2 records of brief staying singles:

Apr 18th.

Aug 6th.

The Apr. bird was Lodmoor's earliest ever.

Common sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Spring: about 30 on 20 dates Apr 18th - May 31st. Max. 8 Apr 24th.

Autumn: first returning birds Jun 23rd and 26th, and near daily from Jly 3rd with 7 15th - 17th. Then up 6 to Spt 6th, with 1-4 until the last Oct 4th.

One of best springs ever. However, record of the year in many ways was one being taken by a Peregrine on the west scrape Aug 8th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Winter: distinct improvement on last year. Up to 31 Jan and still 21 Feb 11th. Then only erratically present but incl. 31 28th and finally 14 Mch 31st.

Later in year 1 Oct 8th. That presaged an excellent run of records on the beach/groynes, rising to 40 by mid Nov and helping to pull in some quality companions incl. Purple sand. and Knot.

Passage: singles Aug 17th, 18th, when one flew over a birder while he was having a swim, and 30th.

Knot *Calidris canutus

6 records of singles:

Summer plumage May 10th - 14th.

Summer plumage May 24th.

Juvenile Aug 25th.

Juvenile Spt 15th.

Spt 22nd.

Winter plumage on tern islands with Turnstones Dec 1st, 5th and on Preston beach 6th, 19th, and by Hump 24th.

The Dec record was a genuine seasonal rarity.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Spring: about 31 passed through May 10th - Jun 4th and incl. 14 Preston beach May 18th. As ever this species was more likely to be found on the beach than the reserve in spring.

Autumn: a series of records of juvs on the reserve Aug 26th, Spt 17th, 19th, 21st, Oct 1st, 8th. Hard to say exactly how many different birds were involved.

Little stint *Calidris minuta

Juvenile Aug 21st - 25th. 8 on 26th. PHOTO. Up to 5 lingered to 31st.

In Spt 2-3 could be seen daily until the last on 27th, with 4 on 18th & 19th and 5 on 22nd.

Excellent -- particularly after a blank 2015 -- and featuring a really high count by Lodmoor standards.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea

3 sets of records, all involving juvs:

7 Aug 19th. PHOTO.

1 Aug 27th.

Single(s) Spt 10th - Oct 11th. It is possible that more than one bird was involved in this final series of records.

Another calidris producing an outstanding count.

Purple sandpiper *Calidris maritime

1 record:

1 Preston beach and Greenhill groyne, with Turnstones, Nov 20th, 21st. PHOTO.

The bird from The Nothe. Only the second Lodmoor area record and the first for 33 years. Much appreciated by anally retentive patch listers.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Winter: 1-4 were irregularly around Jan to late Apr. Later in the year a consistent flock of 14 lingered through Nov to Dec 14th. Then 24 15th.

Spring: 16 Apr 28th were followed by something of a return to form in May: 60+ 2nd, then 70-92 regularly to 24th. Up to 9 to 29th.

Autumn: first returnees Jun 26th. Regular in small numbers from Jly 8th, with 26 Aug 6th. Arrival late Aug/Spt incl. 30-50 Spt 1st- 5th and 35 22nd. Still up to 25 early Oct.

The first half decent spring passage in 5 years.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax

4 sets of records, all in the autumn:

Juv Aug 16th - 24th.

2 Spt 16th, with 1 17th & 25th.

3 Spt 5th.

1-2 Oct 1st- 19th, with 2 together 15th, 16th. PHOTO.

Kittiwake *Rissa pterodactyla*

Early on 5+ Jan 1st and 3rd, with singles Jan 6th, 7th and Feb 8th.

In spring singles Mch 9th, 27th, 16 in se gales Apr 8th and 12 12th.

In autumn singles Oct 15th, 16th.

Later on up to 5 on 4 dates in late Nov, followed by 2 Dec 3rd.

Another pretty good year.

Black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*

Breeding: a happier ending than last year. After a lot of faffing about a pair finally nested on the tern island in late Jun, fledging a single juv. The 2nd successful breeding following 2014.

Passage: the first juvenile from elsewhere appeared on Jly 6th. 300+ passage birds daily in Aug.

Winter: some impressive counts from the WB roost, incl. 1,000 Jan, 3000+ late Mch and 950+ Dec.

Little gull *Larus minutus

7 records is above average:

2 adults frequenting the beach at Overcombe and Bowleaze Jan 1st - 4th. PHOTO.

1st summer Apr 3rd.

Adult WB Apr 10th.

1e Apr 23rd.

1st winter Spt 4th.

Adult w WB Nov 12th.

1st winter WB Nov 22nd.

Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Every year produces a new record count. 1100 is now the score to beat!

Winter: 850 were counted in the bay Jan 26th, hitting 1000 the next day, before reaching 1100 Feb 7th. Later in the year 580 were in the roost Nov 28th. In addition up to 150 could be watched feeding on flotsam along the tideline of Preston beach during storms in late Nov.

Spring: 120 passage birds were going through daily in early Mch...reduced to a trickle by the end of the month. Then a gap with none at all between Apr 4th and May 9th. Subsequently 12 22nd.

Autumn: just 1-3 irregularly Jun and still just single figures early Jly. As usual numbers rose steeply after that as post breeding dispersal got underway with 187 by mid Jly and 150 mid Aug. The first juv appeared Jly 15th and numbers suggested a successful year elsewhere.

Common gull *Larus canus*

Spring passage incl. the usual sprinkling of late birds: 7w Apr 28th and 4 singles May 3rd - 30th.

The usual mid summer hiatus finally ended when a single appeared Aug 19th. Fairly standard counts after that but incl. 112 in the pre roost on w. scrape Dec 14th.

Great black back gull *Larus marinus*

Ever present visitor to WB and reserve. Incl. pair mating on reserve Apr.

Herring gull *Larus argentus*

What looked a single adult once again predated a number of Common tern chicks.

A pair were in territory on the reserve in May but there was no suggestion of breeding this year....although plenty of birds bred in the surrounding area. Morrison's have now taken to putting nets on their roof to deter gulls.

Despite being an ever present big numbers on the reserve itself are the exception not the rule so a count of 288 on Aug 11th. was impressive.

Finally including a juvenile/first winter successfully food begging from an adult on west scrape as late as late Nov.

+ lots of gulls, mainly Herring, dying or dead around west scrape and elsewhere in Aug/early Spt.

Apparently an outbreak of botulism.

Yellow legged gull *Larus michahellis*

11 records of singles...mainly juvs/first winters. 1 record Feb, 1 Mch, 3 Jly, 6 Aug.

Lesser black backed gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Incl. an adult that spent 2 weeks in late Aug feeding 2 locally fledged young by Hump.

The biggest count of the year was 93 in the WB roost Feb 8th. During migration in early spring 35 adults on the reserve Mch 2nd.

Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Winter: unusually a first winter type hung around the reserve Feb 2nd - 10th. 1 WB Dec 15th.

Spring: very good. The first obvious spring bird arrived Mch 25th. Then 1-8 almost daily to Apr 20th, 1-7 first three weeks of May with 1 or 2 more irregularly through Jun.

Autumn: first juv. on the very early date of Jun 26th. Small numbers then regular from mid Jly through Aug, incl. the usual family parties stopping off on their way south. Last passage bird Oct 4th.

Little tern *Sterna albatross*

1 WB Apr 28th, then up to 6 almost daily on the reserve May 4th - 17th. On several occasions pairs seen prospecting tern islands.

A clue to total numbers was provided by feeding flocks of 12 in WB on both May 7th and May 23rd.

An exceptional spring for what is usually a very scarce visitor. Almost certainly the result of the success of the Ferrybridge colony.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo*

Struggling on.

Breeding: better than last year but in many ways still makes pretty grim reading. What looked like a lone adult Herring gull once again took to preying on the both islands again. This year, however, more young survived. Are the terns getting better at resisting attacks or was this gull less adept than last year's? At any rate about 25 chicks survived to fledging...a marked improvement on last year's massacre but still a poor return for the efforts of at least 40 pairs.

First bird back Apr 3rd. First territorial birds on islands Apr 26th. Sitting by early Jun. First chicks Jun 21st.

Last Spt 8th.

Also a first/second summer type Jly 17th.

Black tern *Chlidonias niger

1 record:

Winter plumage adult over the tern islands before flying back out towards WB Aug 31st.

+*Arctic skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

3 records of 5 birds:

1 in se gales Apr 10th.

Pale phase w Jun 12th.

3, incl. a cracking pale phase, sat on sea off Overcombe Aug 19th.

A very good showing. In some years WB is a skua free zone.

+*Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A total of just 4 singles:

Jan 6th.

Nov 15th.

Nov 25th.

1 potentially poorly bird virtually on shoreline Dec 8th.

The worst year ever?

+Razorbill *Alca torda*

Like Guillemot conspicuous by its absence much of the time. Indeed very few reports at all until Oct 22nd.

Then a run of records featuring up to 3 on 11 dates Nov 13th - Dec 19th, and 5 22nd.

Impossible to say if the dearth of records is down to feeding issues in the bay or a bad breeding season elsewhere.

Stock dove *Columba oenas*

Breeding: An apparently stable nesting population. At least 2 pairs again nested in Horselynch, with at least 1 more pair further up the Lorton Valley.

Passage: just 23 in the Woodie flocks going over on 5 dates Oct 31st - Nov 7th.

Wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Autumn passage was a bit of a non event. Max. 1600 Nov 6th. Also 800 -- going ne and sw -- Nov 3rd.

Turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur

1 record:

Perched and singing in the poplars by rugby club May 11th.

In danger of being redefined as a rarity rather than a scarce migrant.

Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocta*

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

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus

Spring: singles Apr 18th - 22nd, and May 2nd.

Autumn: 1 e Spt 1st.

Spt Cuckoos are a rare bird at Lodmoor but generally this was a poor year....the 3rd in a row.

Barn owl *Tyto alba

1 record:

1 hunting Lorton Valley at dusk Nov 29th.

Apparently the pair in the roof space of the Lorton Visitor Centre failed to breed this year. But 1 bird -- possibly the same as above -- was regularly seen there.

Tawny owl *Strix aluco*

I was regularly calling in a birder's garden near the CP from late Oct to the end of the year. He was lucky. The only other record the rest of us managed was a calling bird in the Southdown area in Oct.

Short eared owl *Asio flammeus

4 records of fly over singles:

E Apr 19th.

Lorton Valley May 10th.

N May 26th.

Oct 8th.

Swift *Apus apus*

Spring: First Apr 20th(a bit late). 80+ by 30th, 100+ May 2nd. But the biggest count of the year came with 1000+ Jun 1st.

Autumn: incl. a late bird Spt 3rd.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Early winter/spring: 1 occasionally Jan and mid Feb to mid Mch, with 2 Mch 16th - 18th. 1 very late bird May 3rd was a genuine seasonal rarity.

Summer/autumn: 1 very early returnee Jun 7th. 1-3 regular from late Jly onwards to mid Spt. Ringing recoveries of post-breeding coastal birds elsewhere has shown a surprisingly high turn over of different individuals, so it may be a mistake to assume we are watching the same long staying birds in autumn.

Late winter: 1-2 regular from Oct to the end of the year.

Bee-eater *Merops apiaster

1 record:

Perched -- briefly -- before flying off north May 14th.

The 2nd year in a row Lodmoorbut between them these birds have been seen by a grand total of 3 people. This one was seen by one lucky birder arriving to twitch the Red rumped swallow. Before he could alert the crowd of listers, who were all looking the other way, it flew off.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops

1 record:

1 flew north over the reed bed early in the morning May 27th.

Serendipitously two observers managed independently to latch onto it as it made the briefest of visits to Lodmoor's air space. Another birder managed to miss it by about 5 seconds.

The 3rd record in the last 6 years...but all of them short stayers. It's 8 years since one hung around.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla

2 records:

1 near Horselynych Spt 7th.

1 Beachdown Way Conservation area Oct 9th. PHOTO.

The Oct bird won't repeat the trick next year...the bush it perched in has been hacked down by a Nimble resident with the blessing of the RSPB.
Two birds is good going for Lodmoor. This species remains rarer here than Red rumped swallow.

Great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

At least 4, and maybe more, pairs bred in general area. Almost certainly nested Horselynch, CP, rugby club area, 2MC and Coffin Wood.

Green woodpecker *Picus viridis*

At least 1 pair almost certainly bred Horselynch again. Present year round.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Breeding: apparently nested Lorton Valley and Bowleaze areas.

Merlin *Falco columbarius

3 records:

1 e WB Apr 6th.

1 e Overcombe Oct 20th.

1 Redcliffe Point Oct 21st. Possibly same as above.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo

3 records of singles:

1 Apr 26th.

1 May 2nd.

1 Oct 7th.

Must rank as the worst year ever. There were more Great white egrets than Hobbies.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

An adult female was clearly hunting for more than one from late Apr to early Jun and again in Aug. But otherwise unaccountably few records. Occasionally present Feb/Mch. But just a few singles Oct - mid Nov. A juvenile in Aug had obviously been fledged from not far away.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Breeding: at least 1, and possibly 2, pair nested in 2MC/Lorton Valley.

This species does sometimes occur on passage but records of fly overs and on the west side of Lodmoor in Jun(1), Oct(4) and Dec(3) may well have all been wanderers from the northern end.

Magpie *Pica pica*

A common and conspicuous breeding bird. Gatherings included a squabbling flock of 24 in Mch. Fledged young appearing round reserve from late May.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Ditto. 1500 could be seen going to roost in Horselynch/rugby club in winter.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Freshly fledged birds from the Preston Road rookery very evident from Jly.

Carrion crow *Corvus corone*

Breeding: nest building late Mch. Once again several broods were fledged in the trees and bushes immediately surrounding the reserve. Gatherings incl. up to 34 on the main reserve.

Raven *Corvus corax*

Increasingly regular.

Max of 10 over Nov. But birds could be seen both commuting over the reserve and feeding on it every month of the year.

Like 2014 freshly fledged juveniles loitered in the area in the summer...at least 4, with 2 adults, were

around early Jun to late Aug.

Intriguingly what looked like the/a family party of 6 could be seen displaying or perhaps even playing(!) over Lodmoor in Oct.

Also regular Redcliffe.

Golden oriole *Oriolus oriolus

1 record:

Female type Jun 5th.

It didn't hang around for long. But it did have the decency to show in a birder's garden near the CP before it moved on.

Coal tit *Parus ater*

Breeding: now confirmed as a scarce breeding bird. At least 1 pair frequented the conifers in the CP.

Birds were noted pretty much regularly from Jan. A singing male was seen several times in Mch/Apr, with one watched collecting lichen. Subsequently birds were noted intermittently from Jly until the end of the year.

There were also several sightings in the area around Weymouth Bay Avenue and the rugby club conifers, incl. 2 juvs there in Jun. These could have been birds from CP or an extra nesting pair.

In addition a singing bird was in 2MC, followed by a family party of at least 4 there in Oct.

Finally some evidence of breeding in the conifers in the Charlbury Corner area was provided by a singing bird behind the Preston Road surgery in Mch.

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

Both species -- along with Long tailed tit -- appeared to enjoy a really good breeding season once again.

Doubtless a couple of mild winters has helped keep mortality rates down.

Bearded tit *Panurus biamicus*

Breeding: as ever hard to say exactly how many pairs bred. But judging by the number of juveniles bombing around from late spring onwards it was either 2 very productive pairs or maybe as many as 6 pairs. Certainly noted at 6 different parts of the reed bed in early May.

Winter/passage: early in the year very few were about...possibly because the flooding made feeding tricky. But later in the year much more visible and vocal. At least 23 could be seen pinging above the reed bed in Spt. And peak counts of 30+ in Nov and Dec strongly suggest more had arrived than left.

Woodlark *Alauda arborea

2 records of fly over singles:

Ne Southdown Ridge Oct 13th.

Ne Southdown Ridge Oct 21st.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Breeding: Increased disturbance from dog walkers seems to have put paid to the last breeding birds in the fields at Redcliffe.

Autumn: not bad. A total of about 470 went over from Oct 2nd- Nov 11th. Most subsequent records probably related to the flock wintering in the top fields.

Winter: there were very few in Dec 2015 so not surprisingly hard to come by early in the year: just singles west side Jan 5th, 11th, w Mch 4th and 2 11th. Later, however, a flock of up to 20 lingered in the top fields from mid Nov.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*

Spring: first Mch 14th. Then incl. 30+ daily first half of Apr with 50+ 2nd. Rising to 100+ daily Apr 22nd - May 5th. Then a trickle of records to 25th.

Autumn: the usual mid summer gap in records came to an end Jun 12th. No real numbers again, however, until Jly, when 100 appeared 7th, increasing to 200+ through to 14th. Then peaking at 500 Jly 19th, with up to 150 daily for the next couple of weeks.

Finally 1 very late 1st winter bird Oct 27th - Nov 3rd.

The Jly influx was pretty extraordinary. But the Nov record was unprecedented and was Lodmoor's latest

ever.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Spring: first Mch 29th. Then 30+ daily from Apr 4th, increasing to up to 300 daily mid Apr to early May.
Breeding: nested Overcombe again.

Autumn: part of a big movement of hirundines generally from late Aug/ Spt. 260 went west Spt 15th, followed by another pronounced passage, along with House martins Oct 2nd.

Last Nov 1st.

House martin *Delichon urbica*

Spring: no sign of any improvement in numbers. First Apr 3rd was early by the standards of recent years. In line with recent years peak passage delayed until second half of May, with 100+ 19th - 21st, and 300+ Jun 1st.

Autumn: reasonable numbers through to Oct 10th. Last Oct 25th.

Red rumped swallow *Cecropis daurica

1 record:

Over post box pools May 14th. PHOTO.

9th record in 17 years....6 of them between Apr 25th - May 17th.

Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*

Breeding: nesting population seems stable or perhaps increasing. 4 separate broods were being fed in mid Jun. Several mild winters have probably helped.

As ever birds could be heard away from the reed bed and incl. Charlbury Basin, CP and Lorton Meadows.

Long tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Breeding: two mild winters in a row have done wonders for this species. In the second half of the year family parties seemed to be everywhere. A minimum of 40 birds in several roving flocks could be regularly counted on a circuit of the reserve. And that's not counting very healthy numbers in both the CP and 2MC.

Yellow browed warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus

9 records of singles:

CP Spt 24th. Possibly same Oct 7th, and 20th.

West path Oct 8th, possibly same there 24th. Possibly same as CP.

Reed bed end of Southdown Oct 15th. Possibly same as above.

Beachdown Nov 8th, possibly same Dec 9th and 12th.

It is possible that these series of records could relate to no more than 2 mobile birds. On the other hand there could have been as many 7!

Once a major rarity on Lodmoor. But the run of records in recent years means this species might now be better regarded as a scarce migrant than a genuine rarity.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita collybita*

Passage/breeding: many around late Mch. Several pairs bred 2MC, with juvs by mid Jun.

In autumn really good numbers in Oct and much higher than average counts in Nov incl. 20+ 10th and still 10+ daily to mid month.

Winter: surprisingly hard to come by early on, apart from 3 Jan 13th, just a few singles up to Feb 21st. A different story late on. At least 7 around in the wider area through Dec.

Siberian chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis

Basically 2 sets of records:

1 singing post box hedge near daily Mch 23rd - Apr 4th and 9th. On the final date it was seen displaying. Probably the bird from late 2015.

1 calling west path Oct 28th. 1, probably same, calling west path Nov 10th and Dec 1st.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Spring: First Mch 30th. 25 by Apr 5th and peaking at 30+ 21st. Then, as usual, numbers falling away rapidly late Apr, with just 2 singles May 2nd, 16th.

For the third year running 1 nr rugby club Jun 18th...implying breeding in the area.
Autumn: first migrant Jly 18th and 1-2 from 21st. Then a terrific passage....up to 20 daily from Aug 6th to Spt 3rd. Followed by a very late bird indeed CP Oct 26th.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Spring: first Apr 5th. 10+ in territory late Apr.

Autumn: fairly modest numbers -- in contrast to phylloscs -- until last Spt 6th.

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Spring: First Apr 3rd. 12+ by 16th, good numbers by 20th. 25 were singing by early May, as well as 1 singing Charlbury Basin. Feeding young by mid Jun.

Autumn: good numbers of juvs early Spt. Several singles Oct....last 17th.

Grasshopper warbler *Locustella certhiola

5 records in 2 days:

4 reelers Apr 19th was a good count by Lodmoor standards.

1 reeling in a garden Southdown estate Apr 20th.

***Dartford warbler**

1 record:

2 Redcliffe Nov 5th

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Spring/breeding: yet another excellent showing. 1-2 from Apr 14th, rising to 5-6 18th - 26th. 4 singers to May 7th. Then 1-2 intermittently through May with family party in Jun and a singing male again Jun/Jly.

Autumn: first Aug 8th and incl. 4 30th. Near daily to last on Spt 10th.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Spring/breeding: 2/3 first Apr 12th, 4 daily from 18th and another obvious arrival 23rd - 26th. Fledged young round reserve from early Jun.

Autumn: first obvious migrants from Aug 10th. Good numbers late Aug/early Spt. Last Oct 3rd.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin*

Spring: singers Apr 22nd, 25th & 26th, May 12th.

Autumn: 7 singles Aug 8th - 30th may have involved fewer than a handful of migrants.

An above average spring but a below par autumn.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Winter: early on singles Jan 3rd, Feb 26th and Mch 6th. Later on a run of records of 1-2 in Nov followed by 1 Beachdown Nov 29th and pair there Dec 11th.

Spring/breeding: first singing bird Horselych Apr 2nd, 5 in by 5th. Up to 30 Apr 18th - 22nd...a major influx by Lodmoor standards.

Subsequently one by rugby club doing an excellent imitation of Nightingale... close to where last year's Nightingale was singing. Bred 2MC.

Autumn: Really good numbers Oct 7th - 9th. Fewer later in month and impossible to say if Nov birds were late migrants or wintering birds.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Breeding: at least 4 pairs in 2MC, with another 3 singing in the CP Mch 30th. Proof of breeding there was provided by a family party in early Jly. Also 3 singing round Charlbury Corner/Preston Rd in Apr.

Seems to have gradually increased as a breeding species locally.

Passage/wintering: 8+ early Jan. Good numbers again late Oct. Although many had moved on by Nov still 1-5 around daily in Dec and 15 in 2MC.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla

10 records probably relating to no more than 4/5 birds:

West path and/or CP Jan 6th, 10th, 20th, Feb 3rd and Mch 4th, 12th, 23rd.
Lorton Valley Mch 8th. PHOTO.
West path Oct 8th.
In mixed flock CP Nov 23rd and 29th.

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes

First young by late Apr. Like Long tailed tit a species that seems to have benefited from a number of mild winters.

Treecreeper Certhia familiaris

Breeding: singing bird 2MC Apr and at least 1 pair almost certainly bred there again. Present there year round .

Less predictably 1-2 could be found foraging in the CP from late Oct to at least the end of Nov.

Starling Sturnus vulgaris

Incl. 50+ juvs late May and then 150, mainly juvs, on July 9th.
The evening roost reached 3,000 on Oct 30th.

***Rosy starling Sturnus roseus**

1 record:

Juv with Starling flock Southdown Ave Oct 6th - 20th. PHOTO.

This bird occasionally ventured onto the main reserve but spent the vast majority of its time in the housing estate in general and the hedgerow along Southdown in particular. What was presumably it later turned up in Dorchester and may also have been the same bird that had earlier arrived on Portland.

Only the 4th record in the last 17 year...all of them juvs. A spring adult would be nice.

***Ring ouzel Turdus torquatus**

9 records...all between Oct 5th and 30th and involving perhaps 12 different birds:

Male over Southdown Ridge Oct 5th.

Male on deck Southdown Ridge and 2 first winter males by west path Oct 6th.

Imm/female over Southdown Ridge Oct 7th.

Imm/female Southdown Ridge area Oct 10th.

2 n Oct 12th

Male and female type flying around together Southdown Ridge 13th.

1 west path Oct 16th.

Imm/female over Southdown Ridge Oct 30th.

The best year since 2005.

Blackbird Turdus merula

Breeding: a pair were feeding young Overcombe by Apr 9th. Another very productive breeding season with many fledged young by mid Jun. The white headed bird by New Look survived for another year.

Autumn: one of the biggest arrivals in recent years in Oct. Seemed to be Blackbirds feeding in berry bushes all round reserve and surrounding area. Two marked arrivals around Oct 7th and again 25th. Many had moved on by late Nov. However, you could still count 14 feeding out in the open in the overflow car park in mid Dec.

Fieldfare Turdus pilaris

Early winter/spring: 1 Lorton Valley Mch 22nd.

Autumn: 31 through on 9 dates Oct 12th - Nov 3rd. Then what may have the same bird hanging around on a number of dates Nov 11th - 20th. It or another Nov 30th, Dec 2nd, followed by 4 e 4th and 1 post box 12th and w side 19th.

A very good year by Lodmoor standards, particularly in the autumn.

Song thrush Turdus philomelos

Breeding: feeding young mid Apr, early Jun and in Aug.

Autumn: along with other thrushes part of a big movement/arrival Oct/early Nov. On occasions more than

35 grounded birds could be counted in the first half of Oct. But, like Blackbird, many/most had moved on by the end on of Nov. However, still 10+ feeding on pitchnputt course Dec.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Early winter/spring: a mild start to the year made this species quite hard to find. A total of 12 northern end and reserve Feb 19th. 1 by Hump Mch 2nd was almost certainly a migrant. Up to 14 were in CP in Mch with the last 21st.

Autumn passage: very good. A total of perhaps 350 were logged going over after dawn(so excluding the vast majority of overnight migrants) Oct 5th - Nov 16th. Peak passage of up to 40+ daily Oct 27th - 31st.

Late winter: Incl. up to 20 CP and surrounding area and at least 6 Lorton Valley Dec.

Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Another series of records suggesting local wanderers occasionally linger in the area...although hard to disentangle them in the autumn from genuine migrants.

Early on records of 1 Jan 9th, 2 west Feb 9th, singles over Feb 18th, Lorton Valley Mch 8th and CP 12th - 14th, 22nd probably related to just 2 foraging birds.

1 overflow car park Jun 15th was more unexpected but was presumably a post breeding wanderer.

In autumn 7 singles on 7 dates Oct 5th - Nov 10th may have involved a mix of passage birds and a wintering bird.

Certainly one hung around, mainly in the CP, from late Nov into Dec.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Feeding young by early Apr.

An obvious arrival of migrants around Oct 7th. As usual some confiding individuals on the west path entertained the dog walkers, one of whom was convinced one bird was actually the soul of her dead mother.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus

3 records:

1 Aug 26th.

2 Spt 16th and 1, a male, 17th.

Female west path Oct 8th.

Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros

1 record:

Imm/female type in a garden Southdown Ave late Feb.

This record rests on a non birder's sighting...not usually a great recommendation. But this description came complete with a graphic account of the tail shivering and sounds convincing. Anyway she did better than any of the rest of us at spotting one of these all year.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra

3 records:

1 Hump Spt 14th.

2 immatures Hump Spt 17th, 18th.

1 old tip Spt 18th.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Breeding: successfully nested on the Horselynych slope for the second year in a row. The pair there were collecting nest material in Mch and feeding young by early May, with at least 1 fledged youngster by May 21st. Subsequently these birds were hard to find, so may have settled for a single brood.

Passage: 2 migrants Mch 29th. In autumn first birds back Spt 13th, with 2-5 regularly from early Oct. Then 9 16th, and at least 6 around in the second half of the month. 3 still Nov 8th.

Winter: 2 early Jan, 1 Feb. Later 1-3 erratically Lodmoor/Overcombe Dec.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Spring: about 34 Mch 24th - May 5th.

Autumn: quite poor. Recorded between Aug 9th - Oct 31st. Max of just 6 Spt 17th and on a number of dates

none at all.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata

Including a good run of records in mid September:

1 CP May 7th.

1 west path Aug 19th.

1 in garden near CP Spt 14th.

4 Spt 16th and 2 CP 17th, 1 18th.

1 CP Spt 24th.

Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca

1 record:

1 CP Spt 17th.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Still thriving Southdown Ave, CP, Overcombe areas.

***Tree sparrow**

1 record:

1 calling east Oct 11th.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Remains an abundant species. Singing by Feb.

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flavissima*

Spring: singles Apr 11th and May 3rd.

Autumn: 1 very early on Jly 20th. Then total of about 80 Aug 24th - Oct 20th, most of them in Spt. Max. 15.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Early winter: single(s) erratically Lodmoor/Bowleaze Jan-Mch. 2 s Mch 12th may have been genuine migrants.

For the second year in a row a Jun record: 1 in off Jun 18th.

Autumn: 6 singles Aug 15th - Spt 6th. Then a series of records up to 5 daily Spt 13th - Oct 17th.

Later winter: conspicuous and frequent from Nov 5th. Probably 2 flighty individuals wintering in the Overcombe and Wey Bay Ave areas.

Pied wagtail *Motacilla alba yarellii*

Adults with locally bred young on reserve mid Jun.

Passage: in early Oct incl. 100+ through 6th and 150+ roosting Overcombe both in early Mch and in late Oct/early Nov.

Alba wagtail *Motacilla a. alba

3 records of identifiable singles:

Apr 8th, 22nd, May 4th.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Breeding: a pair were in territory in the cliff side field at Redcliffe Mch and may have stayed to breed.

Disturbance by dog walkers here has got noticeably worse in recent years and has made life a lot harder for ground nesting birds.

Wintering: early on very poor. Just 8 Horselynych fields/rugby club Feb. Later on a flock at least 15 were present on the west side of Lodmoor and the Horselynych slope.

Passage: another strikingly good series of counts in the spring. 150+ went through Mch 15th, then 300+ over/grounded 18th.

In autumn incl. an off passage flock of 100+ Redcliffe in Oct, which had moved on by Nov. Also 200+ over on vis mig watch Oct 2nd.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis

Spring: singles over May 4th, 5th.

Autumn: singles Aug 28th, Spt 13th, and, surprisingly late, Oct 6th, 7th.

Another poor year.

Water pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The last couple of years have seen a return to form after a run of lean winters. Most records came from the Overcombe wet meadows.

Early on up to 3 early Jan followed by 7 mid Feb. Then in Mch numbers seemed to be swelled by migrants as counts rose to 11 by Apr 5th - 8th. These incl. several smart spring plumage jobs.

Excellent again autumn/winter: at least 1 irregularly from Oct 22nd. Numbers slowly rose to at least 11 by late Nov to year's end. They could at times be amazingly confiding and at others amazingly elusive!

Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus*

2 sets of records from the Preston beach/Greenhill groyne areas incl. what looked like a regular bird(s) at end of year:

1 Greenhill groyne Mch 12th.

Single(s) beach/groyne 9 dates Nov 14th - Dec 21st.

Some, if not all, of these birds probably come over the bay from The Nothe/Portland Harbour.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

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

Passage: in autumn just a light overhead movement Spt 30th - Nov 8th.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhoea*

Breeding: at least 2 pairs almost certainly bred over the western side. Birds were present all year round and are more regular than ever along the west path. The presence of up to 5 males suggests more than just 1/2 nesting pairs. Flocks of up to 10 birds are now regularly present on the west bank. These included several juveniles in family parties in the autumn and early winter.

Also still regularly present Lorton Valley and 2MC.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Breeding; 6+ pair were displaying/nest building early Apr. At least 8 hung around west path all year.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Breeding: about 7 pairs continue to breed in the gorse on the western side. They return as summer visitors in Mch.

Autumn: on the move from Spt and incl. 200+ over Oct 5th, 100+ off passage top fields Oct.

Winter: 14 w side early Jan. Later 30+ were mixed in with the Goldfinch flock in Dec.

Lesser redpoll *Carduelis cabaret

15 on 6 dates:

Singles ne Oct 6th, 19th.

6 ne Oct 23rd,

1 27th.

1 perched nr Wey Bay Ave Nov 3rd. PHOTO.

5 ne Nov 5th.

The perched bird was a genuine rarity for a species that is nearly always a fly over:

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra

1 record:

1 ne Nov 6th.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Small breeding population dwarfed by autumn migrants/wintering birds.

Incl. 600+ overhead(mainly ne) Oct 6th.

Wintering flock of 50+ west side Dec.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Early winter/spring: 2 ne Jan 20th, 17n 28th, 16e Feb 11th, 2e 14th, 2 perched with 1 singing(!) 18th, 2 e Apr 20th, 1 w 21st.

Autumn: about 100 Spt 13th - Nov 1st. Max. 15. Finally 1e Dec 5th.

It was always going to be a case of 'after the Lord Mayor's feast' following the record breaking numbers in 2015. But, by Lodmoor standards, this was still an excellent year. Most, if not all, the records early in the year were undoubtedly left overs from the previous year.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella

Spring: 1 over Apr 20th.

Autumn: 1 ne Horselych Oct 22nd, 1 over Southdown Nov 4th and 11th may have related to the same bird.

The 3 landing in bushes by view shelter Dec 11th before noisily taking off west. Finally 1 flying around Dec 16th, 17th.

Probably the best ever run of records on/over Lodmoor. Still very scarce but has definitely increased around Lodmoor in last 2 years. The Dec. records turned out to be the shape of things to come in 2017.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Breeding: at least 6 pairs bred. The feeling that this may have been an underestimate was reinforced by very good numbers hanging around later in the year.

Including up to 14 along west path as well as another 10+ Horselych fields.

Also 3 apparently wintering Redcliffe Nov/Dec.

ESCAPES etc

Hooded merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus

The plastic sawbill undertook long distance movements from Radipole Mch 30th, Oct 18th, Nov 17th. There's no gainsaying it is a very pretty bird.

Feral pigeon *Columba livia*

The feral flock of Speckled Jims continued to be corn fed by a lady near the play area. They, the local Pheasants and the Brown rats thrive on it.

MAMMALS

Grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

Most records from CP, where seems to be thriving.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Almost certainly bred again. Certainly present all year.

Sika deer *Cervus nippon*

A group of 4 stags frequented the Overcombe end daily Nov, Dec. They could be seen feeding out in the open at dawn and dusk but spent much of the day hidden in the scrub between Overcombe and Beachdown.
PHOTO

Badger *Meles meles*

At least 1 active sett still and groups of up to 4 could be regularly seen after dark worming along the verges on Southdown.

Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*

The presence of fawns showed that they bred again. Sadly second hand reports of individuals being chased by dogs in the Lorton Valley.

Stoat *Mustela erminea*

Only occasionally reported. May have declined locally.

Weasel. *Mustela nivalis*

Pair watched fighting on the west path. PHOTO.

European water vole *Arvicola amphibious*

Several sightings through the year including one prolonged view opposite the tern islands. Has been hard to come by in recent years.

Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra

One swimming across the sluice in Feb before disappearing up the west bank. A major rarity, and a thrill to see, on Lodmoor...despite the regular sightings at Radipole.

+*Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*

1 close in off Preston beach Aug.

+*Common bottle nosed dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

A pod of at least 6 Nov 19th. Then about 20 feeding up and down the bay Dec 6th.
New research, by the way, shows that there are in fact 3 species of Bottle nosed...hence the prefix Common.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Ever present.

Brown rat *Rattus norvegicus*

An elderly lady outs grain out daily for the Feral pigeon flock up the Overcombe end. The unwitting result of her kindness is a thriving colony of Brown rats.
Pipistrelle sp. Could be seen hunting every month of the year..incl. Jan and Dec.

Common noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula

1 Apr 4th. Under recorded.

Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*

Could be seen hunting over the post box pool on spring evenings.

BUTTERFLIES

Large skipper *Ochlodes venatus*

Recorded Jun and Jly.

Small skipper

2 Aug 4th.

Clouded yellow

Several sightings in Spt, incl. 3 18th.

Brimstone

From March - May 26th and Jly to early Aug.

Large white *Pieris brassicae*

Series of sightings from May - Oct 4th.

Small white *Artogeia rapae*

Recorded regularly from Mch 23rd - Oct 17th.

Green veined white *Pieris napi*

Series of records from Apr 23rd - Jun and again from Aug 6th - Spt 30th.

Orange tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

May 7th - Jun 11th.

Common blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Singles on May 27th and Aug 15th.

Holly blue *Celastrina argiolis*

Singles May 13th - Aug 4th.

Red admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

Common, conspicuous and frequently encountered Apr 28th - Dec.

Painted lady *Vanessa cardui*

1 Jan 6th was pretty amazing. 1 May 13th followed by a scattering of record Jly 7th through to early Oct.

Small tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

A modest series of records Mch 12th - Spt.

Peacock *Aglais io*

Regularly recorded from Mch 31st to Nov.

Comma *Polygonia c-album*

1 Apr 2nd. Then regular Jun 27th - Jly 28th, and again Spt - Oct 8th.

Speckled wood *Pararge aegeria*

Commonly encountered from Apr 14th - Oct 31st.

Wall brown *Lasiommata megera*

Several sightings in Aug.

Marbled white *Melanargia galathea*

Recorded in Jly.

Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*

Regularly noted Jly 14th - Aug 13th.

Meadow brown *Maniola jurtina*

Erratically noted from Jun 19th - Spt.

Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*

Jly 2nd - 14th.

ODONOTA

Common blue damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Jly

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*

May, Jun

Emperor *Anax imperator*

Max. 3 in early Aug and incl. female ovipositing.

Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*

Aug and Spt, with an obvious emergence featuring up to 9 individuals two evenings running Spt 12th & 13th.

Southern hawkler *Aeshna cyanea*

Spt.

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

Aug, Spt and still flying Nov 11th.

DAY FLYING MOTHS

Magpie Moth *Abraxas grossulariata*

1 August 23rd

Five spot Burnet *Zygaena trifolii*

Many dates

Brimstone Moth *Opisthograptis luteolata*

Sept 7th

Garden Tiger Moth *Arctia caja*

10 July 3rd (with others seen on subsequent dates)

Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria*

Singles August 15th and 16th.

Silver Y *Autographa gamma*

Several Spt.

OTHER CREATURES

Common frog

Smooth newt

Slow worm

OBSERVERS

Geoff and Sheila Barlow, Richard Morris, Jon White, Nevil Fowler, Jon and Thasoula Campbell, Dave Chown, several uncredited visiting birders, and me.

Daragh Croxson 30/01/2017

