

LODMOOR AREA REPORT 2017

THE FACTS AND FIGURES

The Lodmoor area list now stands at 305. There were 2 additions in 2017.

The systematic list in this report includes birds recorded on the reserve and the immediate surrounding area -- incl. Preston beach/Weymouth Bay, Southdown Estate/Horselyynch slope, Lodmoor Country Park,, Bowleaze-Redcliff Point, the Lorton Valley.

The list follows IOC. Distinctive subspecies are included but not in the species total. Escapes and birds of dubious provenance (and Feral pigeon) are also included but again not in the main species total.

Between us we clocked 191 species, 6 distinctive sub species, 1 distinctive hybrid and 4 species of escapes in 2017.

RARE, SCARCE AND NOTABLE RECORDS

Yer, its always the first part of a report I read too.

2017 was arguably one the best ever years for vagrants....probably only matched by 2012.

Lodmoor recorded 4 species of National Rarity. The area also played host to no fewer than 9 species of Dorset rarity. In addition 14 other species that could be best described as Lodmoor rarities, along with 2 rare sub-species/phases, were recorded.

Least sandpiper and **Great shearwater** were both additions to the Lodmoor area list.

The **Sooty shearwater** and **Stilt sandpiper** records were respectively only the second ever. **Bonaparte's gull** turned up for the 4th. time. **Spotted crane** and **Lesser yellowlegs** were each recorded for the first time in more than 20 years.

Dorset rarities included a wonderful record count of **Cattle egrets**, Lodmoor's longest staying **Great egret**, the area's first ever summer plumage **Black guillemot**, a much appreciated and showy **Caspian gull**, as well as **Alpine swift**, **Red rumped swallow** and **Rosy starling** and Weymouth Bay's first ever blue phase **Fulmar**.

The supporting cast included a sawbill fest of **Goosanders**, the latest in a run of **Yellow browed warblers**, only the second ever batch of **Hawfinch** records, the first **Corn bunting** for 34 years and the first ever December **Lesser whitethroat**.

There were also record counts of both **Teal** and **Mediterranean gulls** as well as the best ever passage of **Lesser redpolls**.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

Geoff and Sheila Barlow, Jon and Thasoula Campbell, Dave Chown, Daragh Croxson, Nevil Fowler, Geoff Lightfoot, Richard Morris, Jon White and several unaccredited visiting birders

KEY

Species in red are Dorset rarities. National Rarities are also in red and are prefixed N.

Species in blue are Lodmoor rarities. These are defined as species that are less than near annual.

Fyi they'll always be some borderline species that you could argue shouldn't be included but are and some you could say should be but aren't : Manx shearwater and Roseate tern to name but two.

Equally, changing status may mean some species (Yellow browed warbler, Cattle egret) may lose their respective rarity tags.

+ all records Weymouth Bay unless stated

* all records given

PHOTO...means i.d. can be confirmed with a pic.

I've adopted the order of families and species accepted by the IOC. I have also generally used the same English names as IOC. In some cases, however, I have resisted Americanisations. Our birds are Divers not Loons.

WB= Weymouth Bay

CP= Lodmoor Country Park

TMC= Two Mile Copse

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Feral bird with Canadas on several dates Feb, Mch and Apr, with 3 May 3rd.

Subsequently 1-3 -- incl. ringed bird -- were irregularly present with Canadas Spt 9th - Nov 16th.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Breeding: about 5/6 pairs bred again. The first goslings appeared Apr 20th. Subseq. incl. broods/crèches of 13, 6 and 3 chicks.

Max. 500+ mid Spt lingering into Nov. A major clear out during the freeze late Nov but 200+ back by Dec with birds leaving e and others arriving from w each morning.

Dark Bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

A total of about 50 on 14 dates Jan 1st - Apr 11th a distinct improvement on 2016. Max. 25e Feb 3rd.

In the autumn 6w Spt 20tha very early date. Then a total of 63 on 15 dates to Dec 24th, incl. 18w Oct 23rd.

+Pale Bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota

3 records, incl. 2 flocks of classic spring migrants:

1 Jan 18th.

11 Apr 21st.

40+ Apr 29th.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding: at least 3 pairs were in territory in spring (11 adults were present early Apr). Broods of 5 and 4 from May 24th. As ever hard to determine exactly how many survived but at least 2 of the brood of 5 failed to make it. The sight of well grown broods of 4 and 3 in Spt suggests things went well after that.

This species could almost be described as a breeding visitor rather than a resident. Nesting pairs returned, as ever, early in Jan. But once the last cygnet had left by early Nov swans were hard to find, so 6 separate birds in off 26th was noteworthy. This was followed by 4 imms WB 29th, 2 adults e Dec 16th. An adult was back on the reserve from 26th.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus

2 records:

1 -2 Apr 6th, 8th.

1 grey phase Apr 20th.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Breeding: 2 pairs appeared to breed. A brood of 6 first appeared -- fighting off a Great black backed gull -- on Preston beach May 24th. 5 survived and reached fledging by Aug. Once again it wasn't entirely clear if they were born and raised on Lodmoor or simply raised after swimming across from Portland Harbour. A second brood of 2 were seen in early Jun.

The presence of plenty more birds nearby was underlined when a flock of 13 flew in Jly 1st. Earlier a maximum of 22 were around in the spring.

Unusually 3 birds, incl. 2 juvs, lingered on Lodmoor all autumn... instead of joining the rest on their annual moult on Heligoland. A total of 15 were around again by mid Nov. Numbers dipped to just 3 during the freeze in early Dec, but up to 24 were back later in the month.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Breeding: at least 3 pairs produced young. A brood of 9 were seen on Jun 13th, followed by 4 Jun 23rd, and then a different clutch of 4 newly hatched chicks on Aug 2nd. As ever their survival rates are unknown and several other sightings may have related to additional broods or just survivors of the existing ones!

Enthusiasm of the year award goes to a pair mating on Dec 31st.

Otherwise a pretty unexceptional year. In early spring up to 16 were around. The moulting/non breeding flock peaked at 130 mid Jun. Unusually 3 were sat in Weymouth Bay Nov 2nd.

9 Charlbury Basin Dec 1st.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Winter: as usual fairly regularly present but only in modest numbers -- mainly single figures. 1-5 were erratically present Jan 3rd - Feb 17th, incl. 4 sat on the sea Mch 14th. Later incl. 10 sat on the sea Dec 12th. Passage: in spring a drake May 4th, 5th. No big influxes this autumn. The first returning bird appeared Aug 12th, with main passage in Oct, with a max of just 18 Oct 22nd, 23rd. Poor year really.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common and omnipresent. The first chicks appeared Apr 6th, with 2 more broods by early May. One observer described it as a poor breeding season with few broods seen.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Breeding: once again proof that at least 1 pair bred -- 6 ducklings were first seen Jun 17th and 6 well grown juvs -- probably the same brood -- were on one of the Beachdown pools Aug 2nd. Earlier no fewer than 7 pair were displaying in early Mch, so it is possible actual breeding numbers of this notoriously secretive nesting species were higher.

Max. counts of 50 mid Jan and 35 Nov. 1 high w across WB Dec 6th.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta

A terrific year for a species that is often a surprisingly scarce visitor to Lodmoor. The Spt count was exceptional.

Essentially 8 sets of records involving at least 23 birds:

drake Jan 8th.

up to 3 incl. 2 drakes Jan 19th - 23rd.

drake Feb 19th.

female Mch 2nd.

female Aug 31st - Spt 1st.

5 in off Spt 7th, with up to 6 to 10th, increasing to 14 11th.

female(s) Spt 20th - 21st, Oct 5th, 6th.

female Nov 6th - 9th.

Garganey *Anas querquedula

Another lean year.

2 records:

drake Apr 17th.

3 eclipse birds Spt 20th.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Wintering numbers have been gradually increasing in recent years but the Dec total was a record count -- at least in the modern area.

First winter: the impressive counts in late 2016 were reflected early in the New Year. 282 were present Jan 3rd, rising to 385 by 16th. Birds started to move on by Feb: numbers were down to 110 by mid month, falling to 80+ by early Mch.

Spring: at least 50, incl. the usual displaying drakes, lingered through Apr with the last birds May 12th.

Autumn: autumn for Teal at Lodmoor begins with the first returning/non breeding birds in Jun. Numbers stayed low until 70 were counted Spt 3rd. Oct produced the usual surge in arrivals: 115 10th, rising to 250 by Nov 6th.

Second winter: in Dec rising water levels helped trigger a record count of 510(nearly all assembled by the Hump) Dec 15th.

Also incl. an unusual series of records in WB in Dec: 38e 1st, 10 in bay 1st - 3rd, 25 settled 12th, 13 more 23rd.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Breeding: up to 25 drakes were chasing a handful of females in Mch/Apr. Subsequently a confusing series of sightings of females with various numbers of chicks(from the early date of Apr 17th) suggested that once again 5/6 pairs bred. Predation rates, however, seem to be high. One female appeared with 4 ducklings in

late May and two different females were seen with single chicks. On Jun 26th 3 different females were seen with 1 chick each...suggesting high mortality rates. Subsequently a different mum appeared with her 4 young by the tern islands in early Jly.

A study by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust has shown that the population of Pochards is becoming increasingly -- and disproportionately -- dominated by drakes. This may help explain the ratio of males to females at Lodmoor each spring.

Winter: more or less a repeat of 2016...poor numbers early in the year but impressive gatherings later on. A max. of just 78 early Jan soon dwindled to just 1 by 31st. Numbers picked up a little in Feb but remained very modest. This contrasted with an obvious autumn influx, climbing quickly to 75 by Oct 10th, then more than doubling to 180+ by 22nd. This mainly bachelor flock of drakes remained largely settled through Nov and Dec and swelled at times to 240+.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Breeding: another good year. At least 5 and possibly 7 pairs bred. Clutches included separate broods of 8, 6, 5, 3 and 2 in Jun. As with other breeding *Aythya* impossible to gauge how many survived.

Winter: the third year in a row with good count...suggesting that this species may be gradually increasing as a wintering species. 75+ were around early Feb, with 70+ still early Mch....later 70+ mid Nov.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila

The second really good year in a row. Basically 3 sets of records:

up to 12, incl. 8 drakes, Jan 16th - 26th.

up to 9, incl. 2 imm drakes, Nov 3rd - 30th.

2 Dec 9th, drake 18th, 1-2 females 26th - 31st.

The Jan count is an excellent one by Lodmoor standards....only beaten in recent years by 13 in Jan 2008.

Aythya hybrid

A drake showing some characteristics of Lesser Scaup and either Ring necked duck or Tufted duck on several dates Nov/Dec. PHOTO.

+Common Eider *Somateria mollissima

Another terrific year(if you were lucky enough to be there at the time):

3 w Jan 4th may have been the birds from Portland Harbour.

2 settled drakes Apr 30th.

4 e, incl. 1 drake, Nov 7th.

An amazing upsurge in records: none at all for 4 years, now 15 birds in just 3 years.

+Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca

1 record:

3 briefly settled and then e Dec 1st.

+Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A return to decent numbers after a lean year in 2016.

In the first half of the year about 55 on 16 dates Jan 1st - May 18th. Incl. 16 settled birds Jan 13th.

In the summer about 68 on 6 dates Jun 26th - Jly 26th. Incl. 40 w Jly 25th.

In the second half of year about 88 on 21 dates Spt 11th - Dec 16th.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula

2 records of perhaps the same bird:

drake in off and onto Beachdown pool Nov 14th. PHOTO.

drake Nov 22nd.

A disappointingly scarce and erratic visitor to Lodmoor.

Goosander *Mergus Merganser*

This species is usually a very scarce and erratic winter visitor so it was really pleasing to see a regular flock of red heads at the start and at the end of the year. More remarkable was the first August record.

The first set of records relate to the same birds that were around Nov/Dec 2016. The Aug flock and -- despite the long gap -- the birds in Nov/Dec may have related to some of the same birds **and** could even be

the original birds returning for a second winter.

In the first half of the year:

up to 13 on 9 dates Lodmoor and WB Jan 9th - Feb 6th. These birds were seen several times roosting on the reserve, as well as Preston beach (before the dog walkers got up). PHOTO.

In the second half of the year:

6 red heads Aug 11th spent all day on the reserve.

4 red heads Oct 22nd.

up to 6 red heads Lodmoor and WB regularly Nov 1st - 25th. Then 2 drakes roosting Dec 2nd, followed by up to 2 drakes and 5 red heads the beach/reserve to 7th. Finally 6 red heads roosting on beach and reserve 21st, and 1 red head 22nd, 24th. PHOTO.

*+Red Breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

2 records:

drake e just off Preston beach Mch 24th.

3 w and into Portland Harbour Dec 2nd.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Bred again: 4 fledged young Overcombe Jun.

Also incl. a male hanging around Hump Nov/Dec.

As a breeding bird this species appears to be generally declining in the area. It seems to be gone from the w. side and -- apart from a few sightings around the top fields -- seems to have been driven out of the Lorton Valley by a big increase in disturbance from dog walkers.

*+Red Throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Just 3 records but incl. a very early autumn arrival:

1 w Jan 26th.

1 settled bird Spt 8th.

1 w, then settled, Dec 30th.

*+Black Throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

4 records of singles:

off Redcliff Feb 19th.

summ. plum off Overcombe Oct 28th, 29th.

1 Nov 6th...perhaps same as above.

1 Dec 2nd - 3rd and 16th - 17th. ...probably same as Portland Harbour.

+Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Numbers in the second half of the year represented a return to form after two really lean winters in a row.

Early on no more than 1- 3 erratically Jan 6th - Feb 26th.

Amazingly no spring records at all until a summer plumage bird Jun 1st.

Later a very early bird Oct 8th. Followed by near daily sightings from Nov 6th - Dec 21st, incl. 7 Nov 24th and 8 Dec 2nd.

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Singles on Jan 1st and Feb 2nd were something of a surprise. Otherwise confined to just 3 singles Apr 9th - 18th, 2 over the reserve Aug 25th, 1 27th, 4 together Spt 3rd and the last of the year Spt 21st. Rubbish really.

*+Blue phase Fulmar: what appeared to be WB's first record of a dark/blue phase bird Aug 2nd.

*+Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

1 record:

4 shearing w Oct 16th, before appearing to glide over Portland Harbour breakwater.

Only the 2nd WB record, following the first in Oct 2012.

*+Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

1 record:

settled bird just off Overcombe Jly 21st. PHOTO.

A new bird for Lodmoor. It appeared in the middle of a howling mid summer gale and torrential rain and remained sat on the sea -- occasionally gliding up and down Preston beach -- for about 3 hours.

+Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus

2 records:

1 sat on sea with gull roost May 11th.

1 w Spt 21st.

No repeat of last year's record breaking numbers. But the sight of one sat on the sea in Weymouth Bay was a rarity in itself.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Breeding: at least 3/4 pairs. The only proofs of success were a brood near the rugby club Aug 28th, a juv Spt and 2 stripy headed young from the late date of Oct 14th to early Nov. These dates coincide with the end of the harrier breeding season and its tempting to speculate that this species is being hit hard by harriers with several mouths to feed. See also Moorhen...another species which seems to be producing more young later in the season.

At least 8 wintered in the early months of the year. Later on wintering birds were returning in Oct. In some ways the oddest record of the year was 3 together just off Preston beach Oct 28th.

+Red Necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena

1 record:

prtl summ. plum bird Dec 9th.

The first since Mch 2016, following a blank winter 2016/17.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Breeding: at least 2 and probably 3 pair nested. Territorial birds were back and displaying from Feb 18th. But, for whatever reason, breeding success once again appeared miserably low and was confined to a single chick with 2 adults on the post box pool Jun 25th. It, or perhaps another, was seen again in Aug.

Wintering: the third really poor year in a row. In the early months numbers peaked at just 11 in Feb. Later on up to 5 had appeared by early Nov, climbing to just 13 in Dec.

Something of a pattern may be emerging here. Up to 2008 numbers were consistently modest. Then -- from 2009-2013 -- flocks regularly exceeded 30/40, with a record of 99. For the last 4 years, though, numbers have subsided once again to barely double figures.

+Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus

2 records of the same bird:

1 Jan 7th and 10th.

+Black Necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis

1 record:

1 Jan 8th.

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia

Last year birds were around for a total of about 7 weeks. This year this species was present for barely 7 days:

adult Feb 16th, 26th

1 Oct 6th, and perhaps the same 9th, 13th, 14th.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Spring: at least 1, possibly even a second, boomer. One was at it, off and on, Apr 1st - 8th. Then it, or another, almost daily Apr 28th - May 9th. The third time in 4 years a male has held territory. It does seem only a matter of time before one succeeds in attracting a mate. This impression was reinforced by several mid summer sightings again: Jun 23rd, 25th, Jly 1st and 7th. These probably relate to post breeder(s) from Somerset...but you never know.

Winter: a scattering of singles Jan-early Mch, incl. 1 briefly in the same bins as a harrier. Departing birds are now a regular rite of spring passage at Lodmoor: 1 went at dusk on Mch 9th, another 22nd.

Later much harder to come by: confined to several sightings of probably the same bird from Oct 8th into Nov and occasionally Dec.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis

8 records of at least 23 birds! Clearly there was some duplication but the flock of a dozen was a remarkable record:

1 flying w over the parkride at dusk Jan 25th.

1 flying off e Mch 17th.

2 in off and then off w again Apr 27th.

3 -- 2 ads and an imm. with cattle -- by Hump Jly 20th. PHOTO.

2 ads, again with cattle, Overcombe, Aug 2nd.

12 flew in and landed on the main moor before flying w Aug 8th.

2 ads Spt 20th.

1 ad Nov 16th.

Dorset's first breeding records, as well as an over wintering flock, probably went a long way to explaining this unprecedented rash of sightings.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Ever present. A pair were prospecting the north end late Apr. But no evidence of breeding this year.

Great Egret *Ardea alba

3 records of 3 different birds:

1 Aug 25th - Nov 6th. This bird was joined by a second individual on Oct 5th and 28th. PHOTO.

The Aug-Nov bird was easily Lodmoor's longest stayer. Now recorded in 7 of the last 8 years. But before last year's lingering individual the vast majority had been one day jobs.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Single figures present almost daily through the year. Hardest to come by early on -- this species doesn't like it when Lodmoor floods.

But 5/6 could be seen in the spring. The occasional juv. mid summer suggests they breed not too far away.

Peak numbers, as is often the case, occurred in late summer/early autumn. Up to 12 were around late

Aug/early Spt. Gradually dwindling to between 1 and 3 by Nov/Dec.

Also incl. 2 imitating reef egrets on the rocks of Redcliff Point Apr 10th.

+Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

An excellent year culminating in an unseasonal run of records in Dec.

A good run of records early on: 23 on 15 dates Jan 1st - Mch 5th.

And a spring to match. Small numbers: 1-3 -- recorded near daily Mch 21st - May 7th and again May 14th - Jun 2nd.

Recorded fairly regularly from Jun 21st and incl. a juv. which spent several days fishing remarkably close off Preston beach in Oct. In Nov 25+ on 7 dates 12th - 29th.

In Dec what looked very much like the same feeding flock of up to 23 birds near daily to the year's end.

+European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Early on 1-2 recorded up to Apr 21st.

There followed the usual summer gap until 2 Aug 1st and 3 Spt 25th. Subseq. fairly regular Oct to Dec, incl 4 22nd.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

As usual a familiar presence in WB, on the reserve and flying over. Incl. 1 losing a large flat fish in a seaborne tussle with a Great black backed gull.

Max. count reserve: 15 Spt.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus

3 records:

1 over one lucky GP's garden Apr 11th.

1 over one lucky retiree's garden May 31st.

1 n WB.

Hopefully, given the increasing number of Dorset records, Osprey will become as regular as the following species.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus

9 records of at least 12 birds:

1 Feb 16th.

2 w Mch 21st.

2 Mch 27th.

1 Apr 2nd.

1 Apr 7th.

1 e May 23rd.

1 May 25th. Possibly same as above.

1 Jun 19th.

2, possibly 3, Oct 30th.

The spring bias was normal...but the numbers were exceptional. Oct birds are almost rare.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Breeding: another year -- another successful nesting season: 4 juvs were once again reared. But 2017 marked a real sea change. This is the 8th. successive year this wonderful species has nested but the first year pairs have colonised the reed bed on the main moor.

It looks as if the mature female that occupied the northern end for at least 4 years had finally hung up her spurs. Two new females -- served by a single male -- arrived and nested opposite the post box, offering even non birders spectacular views, including on one occasion the male carrying a large Rat into one of the nests .

Full display was noted from mid Feb, with a confusing cast of at least 5 birds involved. Life seemed to settle down with the two females mated with one immature male(perhaps the male from previous years). Both females were clearly building nests but only one managed to bring off chicks. The first appeared Jun 25th, with 4 by Jly 10th. All fledged and had moved on by the end of Jly.

Autumn/winter: a bewildering variety of birds were regularly interacting from late Aug. A minimum of 6 individuals were involved -- perhaps more. A great problem to have! Compare and contrast to as recently as 2008, when the total number of sightings for the whole of the second half of the year was 5.

An interesting role reversal developed late on this year with 2 imm. males daily displaying to a single female in Oct/Nov. This featured male(s) displaying from dawn, noisily calling and sky dancing in mid winter! The female regularly called them in to encourage them before -- amazingly -- she could be seen apparently nest building Dec 12th .

My vote for Lodmoor species of the year.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding: once again at least 2 and maybe 3 pairs bred in the wider area, including TMC where adults were seen taking in prey.

Present all year and probably including wintering birds and migrants as well as residents.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Breeding: no proof of nesting but once again 1 pair were regularly displaying Horselynch/northern end where birds were present year round. A count of 8 over Horselynch Mch 9th was exceptional.

Unlike some years only erratically present over the main reserve, although a wintering bird was present Dec.

1 in off Apr 28th.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Breeding: who knows how many nest. 1-2 were calling in late Apr and May by the west path and the rugby club pool. But this species goes largely silent when it breeds and there was the usual gap(from May 22nd - Jly 4th) before birds could be heard again. 2 juvs. Aug 14th may well have been Lodmoor born and bred.

Winter: at least 6 could be heard early Feb. Later 1-2 were regular from late Aug, building to 5 by Oct and

at least 8 in Nov, although numbers seemed to drop when it flooded in Dec.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana

1 record:

at least 1 singing male from about 22.00 on May 12th - 14th.

The first record for at least 20 years. And a compelling experience to hear its wonderfully ventriloquial song. One conscientious observer is adamant that there were 2 different calling birds.

Also surely the first Lodmoor rarity discovered as a result of moth trapping!

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Breeding: another good year. Ever present and easy to take for granted. But definitely seems to be increasing as a breeding bird. Like last year an absolute minimum of 9 pairs bred, incl. the pools between the parkride and 2MC.

The first chicks appeared May 10th. But a pattern of late (second?) broods is emerging. For the third year in row there was striking series of family parties appearing relatively late. Freshly fledged birds could still be seen in mid Spt.

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

Breeding: first chicks May 2nd. As ever one of Lodmoor's commonest waterborne nesting birds. And, as ever, one of the most heavily predated.

No really big counts but plentiful year round.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Breeding: for only the second time in the last 15 years -- and the first time since 2004 -- no chicks survived. Ironically it came after 2 pairs successfully bred for the first time in 2016. This year no fewer than 4 pairs were prospecting in early May. But, for whatever reasons, only 1 pair managed to hatch any young. The pair on the tern island had 2 chicks on Jun 17th. But they promptly disappeared. ..possibly down the gullets of predatory Herring gulls. Meanwhile a pair by the Hump appear to have abandoned twice. Their eggs were probably predated by Carrion crows.

On Brownsea breeding numbers fluctuate a lot each year, so occasional failures shouldn't be too much of a shock.

Winter/passage: 1e Jan 9th, 1 Bowleaze Feb 2nd, 7e Mch 10th, 7w Aug 1st, 1e Spt 28th, 1 Redcliff Nov 2nd, 1 WB Dec 17th, 18th, 25th.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta

3 records of 5 birds:

2 Jan 6th.

2 Apr 8th.

1 Spt 17th.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

First winter: 250+ early Jan rapidly built up to 617 13th and equally quickly dispersed to 300 15th, before building up again to 443 29th and then an impressive 800+ Feb 4th - 6th.

Even by the standards of the normal spring clear out 2017 produced a spectacular departure. Numbers plunged from 550 Feb 17th to just 30 by 25th !

Spring: the last wintering bird left Mch 9th. Subsequently singles Apr 2nd, 5th-6th, and May 7th.

Autumn: first returnee/non breeder May 22nd. The first double figure count Jun 29th, but, as ever, numbers only rose very slowly to 40 by early Oct.

Second winter: a flock of 90+ late Oct had swelled to 330 by Nov 12th. As temperatures subsequently fell so did numbers....down to 120 by late Nov. However, birds respond quickly to changing conditions and 310 were back by Dec 4th to the end of the year.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria

7 records all year but including a genuine rarity -- a late May record:

5 n -- after being flushed by harrier -- Feb 5th.

1 on deck with Lapwings Feb 18th.

1 Mch 29th.
1 summer plumage May 28th, 29th.
15 nw Spt 8th.
1 n Nov 2nd.
1 n Nov 17th.
It seems a long time since this species could be regularly enjoyed on Lodmoor.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola

The second outstanding year in a row.
Basically 9 records of probably 12 birds:

In spring:
1 Mch 15th - 19th, with 2 16th & 20th.
1 Apr 26th and 2 30th, 1 to May 1st.
2 w Apr 30th...different from above.
1 summ. plum. May 5th - 6th with 2 7th.
1, perhaps same as one of above, May 11th- 12th.
1 winter plumage May 17th.
1 May 26th, 29th.
In autumn:
1 Jly 10th- 11th.
1 Jly 31st and Aug 2nd.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius

The best spring for 4 years.
Spring: 2 Mch 17th, 1 to 20th, 5 27th, 1 to 28th, 1 Apr 6th, 4 18th, 1 May 3rd, 2 4th.
Autumn: 2 ads and a juv Jly 8th, 9th, another 10th, 12th, ad 28th- 29th, 1 Aug 14th, juv 24th - 27th with 2 28th,
4 Spt 2nd.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Spring: 1 on beach Feb 9th. Then about 40 on 14 dates Apr 21st - May 25th. Max. 9.
Autumn: 1 - 9 regularly Jly 26th - Spt 18th, followed by 1-3 more erratically Spt 21st - Oct 21st.
Late winter: 4 beach Dec 11th, 1 Hump 29th.
Pretty predictable numbers on pretty usual dates.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus

7 records of singles, and 2 on one date, probably relating to no more than 4 or 5 birds:
singles Overcombe Jan 20th, 23rd, 2 31st, with 1 Feb 3rd. Lodmoor: 1 Mch 8th.
Even allowing for duplication there was probably a small influx early in the year...reflected in records from elsewhere.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

First winter: really good numbers persisted from late 2016. At least 100 present Jan - early Mch.
Spring: numbers dropped away quickly in Mch but a handful of birds lingered into Apr and early My. The last May 12th was very late by Lodmoor standards.
Autumn: first back Aug 7th. Just single figures until mid Spt when numbers gradually climbed before an obvious arrival Oct.
Second winter: as ever impossible to conduct a proper count but minimum of 120 in Nov dropped briefly in early Dec but had swelled again to 100+ to the year's end.

Black Tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

The Nov count was one of Lodmoor's biggest ever winter flocks.
First winter: up to 33 lingered from 2016. Most left during the freeze late Jan. But up to 27 were erratically present Feb- Mch.
Passage: a distinct improvement on last year. Up to 19 daily to Apr 19th, with single figures through to late May when 26 went through 23rd, and 13 to 25th. 29 on w scrape Jun 3rd and another 12 12th were more unexpected.

I was apparently on the way back Jun 19th, with 5 to 26th, and 11 29th. Numbers peaked at 47 Aug 25th. But generally 1-30 were intermittently present Jly-Spt, incl. 1 being chased by an optimistic juvenile Peregrine. Second winter: The autumn flock had swelled to 60+ by late Spt and counts of 60/70+ were regular through to Dec, with a peak count of 71 Nov 22nd. Some birds were clearly commuting...presumably to Radipole... but seemed pretty faithful to Lodmoor. Numbers dropped sharply when water levels rose in mid Dec but 30+ still frequented Overcombe.

Generally the impressive counts -- along with Dunlin -- coincided with a change in the regime south of the bund. More tidal water was allowed in to create more saline conditions. And it seemed to have worked.

Bar Tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

A return to form in spring.

Spring: 2 Apr 21st. Subsequently about 70 went through on 12 dates incl. 43e Apr 29th. Last spring migrant May 7th.

Autumn: 1e Jly 18th. Then, as last year, 1-3 juveniles hung around with the Blackwit flock Spt 6th - Oct 13th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Spring: fairly average. First Apr 9th. Then at about 70 on 22 dates to May 20th. Max 14.

Autumn: 5 singles Jly 23rd, 26th, 28th, Aug 3rd, Spt 3rd.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

This is a regular migrant but only in small numbers, so this was a better than average year.

Spring: about 27 on 11 dates Feb 24th - Apr 26th. Max 7 Mch 3rd.

Autumn: 13 on 12 dates Jun 19th - Dec 4th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Another outstanding autumn...only matched by 2016. A much commoner bird than it once was on Lodmoor.

Spring: 14 on 9 dates Mch 9th - May 18th.

Autumn: about 55/65 Jun 18th - Nov 27th. A remarkably similar spread of records to last year. Peaks incl. 9 by Jun 30th, 8 mid Jly, and up to 7 Aug. Biggest numbers, however, came in Spt with 16 on 1st. Birds then present daily with numbers gradually dwindling to 1 by 29th. 1-2 off and on Oct, early Nov. Then 1, off and on, from Nov 17th to Dec 26th...often offering direct comparison with Lesser yellowlegs.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia

One of the better springs but another distinctly average autumn.

Spring: 1 Apr 17th, 4 21st, with 1-2 daily to May 9th.

Autumn: singles n Jly 22nd, 25th-26th, Aug 2nd, 12th, 18th, Spt 7th, 2 25th.

N*Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

1 record:

juvenile/first winter Oct 5th - Dec 10th, and 15th - 28th. Presumably from Christchurch Harbour. PHOTO. Initially quite elusive it settled down to become -- at times -- amazingly confiding. It was also a pleasingly vocal bird, regularly giving its 'tew tew' call and its 'kip' alarm. Sightings after Dec 28th turned out to be fake news.

Lodmoor's 5th but the first for 24 years. Previous records: Spt/Oct 1963, Spt 1977, Jan-Mch 1981, Spt 1993.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Spring: singles Mch 7th, 28th, Apr 6th, 11th, 2 22nd.

Autumn: 1 from Jun 22nd, with 2 from 26th. Mainly 1-5 daily mid Jly - Oct 27th, with 7 Aug 11th. Finally singles Nov 3rd and 19th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola

2 records:

1 Aug 6th.

1 Aug 24th - 28th.

A fairly disappointing year. But still two more records than any of us managed for Spotted redshank in 2017.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The second really good spring in a row.

Spring: about 20 on 16 dates Apr 14th - May 26th. Max. 5 Apr 29th.

Autumn: first back Jun 26th. From Jun 29th daily to Spt and incl. 7-8 regular mid Jly, up to 8 daily Aug, up to 6 to Spt 20th, then 2-3 to Oct 4th. Finally singles Oct 14th - 15th and 19th - 22nd.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Winter: early on the strong showing from 2016 was reflected in counts of up to 34 Jan/Feb...although, thanks to disturbance, numbers were usually much lower. Up to 3 birds lingered off and on through Apr into early May. These were probably wintering birds rather than migrants.

Later in year what looked like the first wintering bird was back on the groyne Oct 10th. Subsequently a max. of just 19 were around, but usually only 1-5, to the year's end. As usual birds were commuting to and from The Nothe area.

Passage: 10 May 12th, 12 17th. Then 4 Spt 4th, 4 11th, 7 in off Spt 27th.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus

4 records of singles:

Mch 23rd.

summ. plum Apr 30th.

summ. plum. Jly 24th.

Aug 30th.

Sanderling *Calidris alba

A good run of records for a species that can be quite hard to come by in autumn. Most records, as ever, come from Preston Beach.

Spring: 2 Apr 7th, 1 28th, 19 May 12th, 3 17th.

Autumn: 2 Jly 18th, 1 28th, 2 Spt 3rd, 6 Spt 16th, 1 26th, 2 Oct 19th.

Winter: 1 with Turnstones Nov 25th, 1 WB Dec 18th.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta

Another excellent run of autumn records, featuring a rare Nov record.

Singles Spt 14th, 18th- 20th, were followed by the arrival of 4 juvs 26th. This flock increased to 6 Oct 5th - 13th, with 9 on 14th. Numbers then slowly dwindled to 3 by the end of Oct, with 2 Nov 1st and 1 to 4th.

One of the birds gradually moulted its juvenile feathers into 1st. winter plumage by the time it left.

N*Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

1 record:

juv Spt 10th - 19th. PHOTO.

First for Lodmoor. First for Dorset. Part of an autumnal Nearctic wader fest.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea

2 records of single juveniles:

Spt 20th - 21st.

Oct 16th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Winter: before 2009 this species was almost rare in winter. Since then there has been a clear change in status as numbers showed at the beginning and the end of the year.

First winter: up to 19 lingered from late 2016 into Jan. Numbers fluctuated depending on how frozen it was but up to 17 were around until the end of Feb, with 2 hanging on to Mch 7th.

Spring: generally steady but unspectacular passage Mch 27th - May 27th. The exception to this general rule came on May 17th when showers and a south easterly wind conspired to drop 130 in by the tern islands.

Autumn: first returnee Jun 15th. Regular in small numbers from Jly 9th....slowly rising to 52 Aug 11th, with 40 still late Spt. It looks like some or all of these birds stayed to winter.

Second winter: Later in the year what looked like a flock of autumn birds fattening up for passage turned out to be wintering. They were pretty flighty and often hard to count...but up to 43 were regularly present through Nov and into early Dec, with an impressive 62 10th and up to 60 to the year's end.

N*Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama bimanous*

1 record:

juvenile Spt 11th - 15th. PHOTO.

Lodmoor's 2nd record(following the adult Jly/Aug 2011).

This bird often had to play second fiddle to the Least sand. It moved to Poole Harbour before spending early 2018 in Christchurch Harbour .

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax

The best year this century, including a mid summer flock of 17 and a small wintering flock.

Spring:

a male in scorching breeding plumage May 12th.

Autumn:

1 Jun 29th.

17 - mainly summ. plum. - Jly 19th, with 1 to 20th.

1 Aug 25th.

2 Spt 2nd.

1 Spt 5th - 7th.

1 Spt 26th rising to 4 30th, 5 to Oct 4th, 8 to 8th and 7 to 10th. Its possible there could have been as many as 11!

Winter: 5 of the Oct flock(above) lingered to the year's end. Birds occasionally left Lodmoor to feed in the fields to the north. There was also an isolated count of 6 Dec 23rd .

Black Legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Records relate to WB unless stated.

First half of the year confined to just 4 singles Feb 2nd - Mch 7th.

In autumn 2 Jly 21st, 1 Spt 18th, followed by 8 w Oct 16th -- the highest count of the entire year.

Later on 1 e Nov 18th, 2 w 22nd, 4 w 27th, 1 w Dec 10th, ad reserve 11th, 1 14th.

Poor year.

N*Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

1 record:

2nd. winter post box pool and then west scrape Nov 24th. PHOTO.

The 4th Lodmoor record but the first for Nov. Previous records: Mch/Apr 2015, WB roost Apr 2006 and Apr-Aug 1981.

Black headed gull *Larus ridibundus*

Breeding: the colony grows. This species successfully nested for the first time just 3 years ago. This summer at least 5, and up to 9, pairs appeared to be nesting on the tern islands. Success, however, remained abysmally low. The first chicks appeared on Jun 8th, with 5 youngsters from two broods by 12th and other birds still sitting. But just 2 chicks made it to fledging. The rest were presumably predated.

Passage: the first juvenile from elsewhere appeared on the relatively early date of Jun 21st. Obvious passage incl. a spectacular passage of 1600 birds w across WB Oct 21st.

Winter: incl. the Black headed x Mediterranean hybrid in the pre roost Nov 24th.

Little Gull *Larus minutus

5 records of singles:

1st winter e Preston beach Jan 20th.

summ. plum ad. May 12th.

1st summer May 29th.

1st summer Jly 13th.

juvenile Spt 20th.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Another year, another run of record counts.

Winter: numbers in the WB roost built up to a max of 1036 by Feb 8th. Later in the year a count of 1120 Nov 16th was a new record count.

Spring passage: 100+ were still in the bay late Mch. But, as usual, numbers dwindled to a trickle during Apr and early May, until the last 24th. No evidence of display this year.

Autumn: up to 9 were on the way back -- after a 3 week gap -- from Jun 18th. Numbers rose steeply to 130 by Jly 3rd, with the first few juvs appearing from 9th. An influx of 250+ by late Spt probably represented the arrival of wintering birds.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Winter: unlike Black headed and Meds most of the roosting Commons tend to stick to the Weymouth end of the bay. On Feb 26th an impressive 4,000 were gathered off the Pavilion Pier...with 3,000 on Dec 6th.

Passage: in spring 70+ went through daily in the second half of Mch and a good trickle of records in Apr, incl. 20 through 3rd. May birds are hard to come by but incl. singles 12th, 15th and 22nd.

The long summer break in records was briefly broken by a 1st summer w Jly 18th. But the next didn't appear until Aug 25th, with just the odd bird appearing until mid Oct. Not until Nov were any significant numbers of birds regularly present on the reserve or in the roost.

Great Black Backed Gull *Larus marinus*

An ever present predator from its nearby nesting areas.

Incl. one stealing a regurgitated flat fish from a Cormorant in WB. Also 2 birds eating a dinner plate sized flat fish by the tern islands Dec.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides

1 record:

1st. winter post box pool Feb 23rd.

A rare bird on Lodmoor this century. The first record since 2014.

European Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Once again local breeding birds -- probably from the rooftop nests along Dorchester Road -- feasted on the tern chicks (and may also have acquired a taste for baby Black headed gulls). See Common tern account.

Ironically no sign of any nesting attempts on the reserve itself this year. But the success by this species in colonising neighbouring parts of Weymouth is clearly having a real impact on one of Lodmoor's most precious breeding birds.

Additionally a spectacular mixed flock of 300+ gulls -- Herring/Med/Black heads -- could be watched feasting on fry just metres off Preston beach Aug 6th.

Just how stupid are birds? One observer watched about 200 Herring gulls heading out to roost in WB in the middle of a very overcast day on Oct 16th because the light conditions had apparently fooled them into thinking it was bed time.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans

1 record:

second calendar year w. scrape Spt 22nd. PHOTO.

Another gull rare on Lodmoor and therefore much appreciated by those lucky enough to see it. The first since 2011.

Yellow Legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

9 records of singles, although there may have been some duplication among the sightings of juv/first winters in Jly/Aug.

1 record Feb, 4 Jly, 1 Aug, 1 Spt, 1 Oct, 1 Dec.

Lesser Black Backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*

The most striking passage of the year came on Oct 23rd when at least 130 went w across WB. More

followed over the course of the next few days... a much more marked movement than normal for the autumn.

Otherwise a pretty predictable year. The biggest WB roost count came on Mch 5th with 75.

Several intermedius individuals went through in late Feb and Mch with spring migrants... followed by several more in Oct and Nov.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Spring: good numbers passing through again. We had to wait until Mch 29th for the first. But regular from second week in Apr and incl. 11 through May 1st, 12 12th.

Autumn: 5 Jun 25th. First family party, incl. juv, Jly 10th. Subsequently a healthy number of freshly fledged birds on the way south and incl. an influx of 25 during gales Aug 3rd. Small numbers going through regularly Spt into early Oct. Finally 1-2 juvs Oct 27th, 28th were followed by 1 Nov 27th, which may have been a genuine wintering bird.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons

Basically 3 records:

1 Apr 27th.

10 WB Apr 30th.

8 May 1st.

2-4 May 2nd, 4th.

Almost certainly all of them relate to wanderers from the Ferrybridge colony. This is now typical in spring.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii

2 records of what was perhaps the same bird:

1 by tern islands Jly 11th. Ringed(aren't they all).

1 WB Jly 14th.

Two of the last 4 years have been blanks, so hasn't been getting any easier.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Amazingly resilient... and they need to be.

Breeding: grim reading again... although the fact that they got any chicks off at all was near miraculous. Herring gulls once again regularly predated chicks on both islands. Efforts by the RSPB to scare them off with giant laser pointers were only partially successfully... but probably saved at least some lives. If that wasn't enough to contend with there is evidence to suggest birds on one island may have had all of their eggs stolen overnight by a mammalian predator. Oh... and then there was the family of feckless idiots who thought it was o.k. to use the area as a daily doggie paddling pool.

The first bird appeared Apr 11th. 30+ pairs were back on the islands by May 8th, eventually rising to about 45 pairs. The first chicks hatched Jun 15th. Following all the traumas above a total of just 13 successfully fledged by Jly 22nd.

Passage: 100+ Comms e WB Apr 30th. Singles Aug 30th, Spt 10th and finally WB 12th.

A 2nd summer type was present by the tern islands Jun 24th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea

4 records of singles:

e WB May 2nd.

juv/first winter Jly 12th.

ad Aug 2nd.

w WB Spt 21st.

+*Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

2 records:

1 Apr 29th.

1 e Oct 16th.

Bonxie remains almost a rarity in WB and these were the first records since 2013.

***Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus**

3 records:

pale phase WB Jun 8th.

1 over viewing shelter Jun 10th...possibly same as above.

2, perhaps 3, off Overcombe in the gales that produced the Great shearwater Jly 21st.

+Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

A small influx late Dec featured up to 5 birds with larger numbers of Razorbills. Otherwise just a few scattered records, mainly at the beginning and end of the year but also incl. unseasonal singles May 19th and Jly 18th.

+Razorbill *Alca torda*

One of the better years and a massive improvement on last year.

Up to 10 were feeding in the bay daily in the first half of Jan, with 1-3 irregularly though to mid Feb.

In the autumn 3 singles Spt 8th - Oct 26th, followed by a series of records of 1 - 5 Nov 15th - Dec 14th.

Finally a fairly dramatic influx of up to 27 feeding birds Dec 17th - 28th.

+*Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

1 record:

summer plumage bird e Jly 18th.

In some ways a candidate for most surprising record of the year. Only the 3rd record this century and Lodmoor's first for mid summer.

WB can be an unforgiving place to sea watch but this year, as well as the tystie, turned up 2 species of skua, 4 species of shearwater, 5 species of grebe, 3 species of diver, Eider, Velvet scoter, Osprey and Grey seal.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Breeding: an unobtrusive but ever present species. Residents pairs bred Horselynch(2), Lorton Valley(1-2). Birds displaying in Feb and still singing in Nov.

Passage: total of at least 60 sw, during a modest pigeon passage between Oct 28th - Nov 5th, incl. 45 on 5th.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Breeding: ever present. Everywhere!

Passage: another fairly quietish autumn. Birds on the move, mainly sw, from Oct 27th - Nov 17th. Incl. 1300 Oct 27th, 1800 28th, 3600 30th, 1500 nw Nov 15th, 2000+ 17th.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur

1 record:

1 n. Apr 23rd.

Not getting any easier.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Ever present and incl. a wintering flock CP/end of Weymouth Bay Ave, incl. a max. count of 27 Dec.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus

Fourth really poor year in a row. Confined to 3 records:

1 over May 3rd.

1 May 25th.

1 singing CP area Jly 4th.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Breeding: the regular pair in the roof space at Lorton VC successfully raised 4 young. Up to 2 youngsters could be seen in and around the nest site from Jly 16th - 25th. Ad still present in area Dec 1st.

Remains strangely rare over the reserve itself.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco

Birds were calling around the CP/Cranford Ave area Jan-Mch and Oct-Dec, Southdown estate Nov and Overcombe Dec. Undoubtedly under recorded.

Short eared owl

1 record:

1 Feb 16th.

In addition an Asio owl went w Apr 18th but was too high to safely i.d.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba

1 record:

1 flying round post box pool/Southdown estate Jun 24th.

Lodmoor's 6th authentic record -- but the first for 7 years. There were 4 2002 - 2010 but none since. The first for Jun (previously 1 Mch, 3 Apr, 1 May).

Rare birds can be found anyhow....putting out a moth trap or, in this case, looking out the bathroom window during a comfort break.

Swift *Apus apus*

Spring: First -- as last year -- Apr 20th (a fairly consistent average arrival date). Subsequently numbers only built up slowly to 100+ by May 5th. Only other 100+ counts May 18th - 21st and no really big influxes this year.

Autumn: 20+ through Aug 6th, dwindling to single figures later in the month.

Then a series of exceptionally late records of at least 2 different birds Spt 1st - 9th and 12th.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A really good run of records in the second half of the year hopefully implied a good breeding season further afield.

First winter: 1 pretty regularly Jan and more intermittently Feb to Mch 1st. It or another Bowleaze Jan 20th.

Spring: 1 Apr 15th. Spring records on Lodmoor are almost a rarity!

Autumn: the usual run of post breeding records began with 1 Jun 13th. What wasn't so usual were the numbers in late summer/autumn. Up to 4 daily could be seen from late Aug onwards. 2-3 remained through Oct and into Nov. The proximity of several together produced some very vocal squabbles as birds chased each other around the reserve.

Second winter: at least 2/3 of the autumn birds lingered through Nov and into early Dec, with at least 1 and probably 2 to year's end.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla

1 record:

1 bushes beside west path Spt 19th.

Typical date, typical place. The 4th. record in the last 4 autumns but nevertheless Wryneck remains a rare to, at best, a very scarce visitor to Lodmoor.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Breeding: breeding pairs CP, Horselych, 2MC, where feeding young.

Conspicuously present all year. In Oct up to 6 a day around and some overflying birds could have been migrants.

European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Breeding: about 3 pairs held territory in the Lorton Valley and wandered widely...particularly to CP.

Freshly fledged young could be heard calling from the view shelter in early Jly.

Present year round.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Breeding: successfully nested Lorton Valley nest box...raising at least 3 young. 1 freshly fledged bird could be seen foolishly pursuing an adult Wood pigeon in Jun. Pair seen mating Lorton on the odd date of Nov 9th.

Also territorial pair Bowleaze area.

***Merlin Falco columbarius**

Just 1 record and none at all in the autumn:

1 chasing passerine Mch 29th.

Eurasian Hobby Falco subbuteo

Better than 2016...but not by much. Probably no more than a handful of birds all year.

4 records of perhaps the same bird late May were followed by 1 Jun 15th, and 2 more records of probably the same bird late Jun/early Jly.

Then just a handful of records of probably the same 2 birds(a juvenile and an adult) late Aug/early Spt.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus

Recorded in every month but only ever very erratically.

A pair again appeared to nest in the Bincombe area and these may have been responsible for a number of the sightings on Lodmoor. They incl. 1 with prey in Jan, a female dismembering a Coot in Apr and 1 taking a Starling in May.

What was clearly an inexperienced youngster terrorised waders in Jly and early Aug. At one point it was outwitted by a Knot, which simply outmanoeuvred it.

Eurasian Jay Garrulus glandarius

Breeding: perhaps 2 pairs nested in 2MC/Lorton Valley. Fledged young were seen there late Jun and early Jly. Birds were raucously present in and around the wood all year.

Occasional sightings over Lodmoor and around Horselych were probably just wanderers from the northern end. No obvious evidence of genuine migrants this year.

Eurasian Magpie Pica pica

Breeding: common and conspicuous. One of the most surreal sights of the entire year was of a pair energetically nest building along Southdown in the middle of winter on Dec 9th. Max. count 15...surely we can do better than that next year.

Western Jackdaw Corvus monedula

Breeding: common and conspicuous.

Passage: 200 high w Oct 28th and 13 high e Nov 17th looked more like passage birds than locals. The movements coincided with Woodie passage.

Rook Corvus frugilegus

Breeding: the Preston Road rookery appears to be thriving.

Carrion Crow Corvus corone

Breeding: once again several broods were fledged in the trees and bushes immediately surrounding the reserve.

Winter: incl. a regular gathering of 65 on Preston beach in Feb and again Oct. But these counts were eclipsed by a pre roost gathering of 200 on the Pavilion end of the beach on Dec 6th.

The Preston beach birds could often be seen apparently copying each other in what looked like a synchronised stone dropping competition. .

Northern Raven Corvus corax

Recorded with ever growing frequency and, for the first time this year, birds displaying and territorialising around Lodmoor in spring.

Early in year only erratically present but up to 6 Feb and Mch. Displaying birds eventually moved on by late Apr.

Freshly fledged birds with parents appeared later than usual this year but incl. an adult still feeding young by the Hump on Aug 28th. Subsequently up to 5 were knocking around fairly regularly up to the year's end.

Coal Tit Parus ater

Breeding: at least 1 pair nested in the conifers in the CP, where an adult was seen feeding young on May

11th. It was probably these birds that accounted for several records in a nearby birder's garden. This species now seems to be present in CP year round.

In addition 1-2 were noted at the beginning and later in the year in 2MC, where they may also have nested. 1 in the conifers on Hazeldown Ave Aug 6th and another flying w across the reed bed Oct 17th were both unexpected but could easily have been local wanderers from CP/Lorton Valley rather than long distance migrants.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Breeding: young being fed by Apr 11th. Like Great and Long tailed tits -- among other species -- a series of mild winters has definitely seen numbers increase.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Breeding: young being fed by May 25th. Subsequently seemed to have experienced an excellent summer.

Bearded Reedling *Panurus biamicus*

Breeding: this species either nests early or breeds very quickly. Adults were feeding young by Apr 26th and early May. Fledged birds seen by late Jun, with more Jly and early Aug. Hard to judge number of breeding pairs but probably 3/5. Third really good year in row.

Winter/passage: a repeat of 2016 in many ways: early in the year very few were about, but post breeding good numbers were visibly and vocally present. Incl. 14 erupting Spt 17th, 30+ 21st - 26th. Still at least 20+ around Oct- Dec and incl. a party roaming around the Overcombe end.

The clearest evidence you'd need of movement between the reed beds of Lodmoor and Radipole was provided by 2 Radipole ringed birds in Nov, Dec.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Breeding: 1 pair in territory Redcliff and 1 singing top fields Southdown Jly.

Autumn: A total of about 700 went over from Spt 22nd - Nov 25th. Max day count 130. One of the better autumns.

Winter: up to 40 frequented the stubble field at the top of Southdown in Jan, which played host to a wonderful mixed flock of larks, finches and buntings. Numbers fell rapidly to just 8 by Feb.

Later in the year at least 2 were back in the top fields in Dec. 6 s on a freezing morning Dec 19th may have been hard weather refugees.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Spring: 14+ from Mch 16th, rising to 80+ by early Apr. Numbers peaked at 150+ daily late in Apr.

Autumn: the usual mid summer gap in records came to an end Jun 20th. There were, by normal standards, some exceptional mid summer influxes. 300+ were fly catching Jly 5th, with 150+ 18th. Later 150+ could be counted daily in late Aug. Last Spt 25th.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Spring: 1 Mch 21st. Subsequently very poor passage with only modest numbers until late Apr.

Breeding: a pair once again bred successfully in the flats at Overcombe. At least 1 other pair again nested successfully along Greenhill. A pair were also feeding fledged young at Lorton Meadows.

Autumn: in contrast to the spring a strong showing. Peak numbers incl. 3000+ daily mid Spt. As ever most birds has passed through by early Oct, with the last on 28th.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Spring: 1 Mch 14th was one of Lodmoor's earliest ever. Gone, alas, are the days when three figure counts were routine in spring, so 100+ May 15th - 17th were appreciated.

Autumn: birds began reappearing from Jun 20th. This was the beginning of the best autumn passage for many years. In common with Swallow vast numbers gathered over Lodmoor in Spt. These incl. 1000 15th - 17th, with big numbers moving through to 26th.

Red Rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica

2 records:

1 n Apr 17th.

1 Apr 22nd Overcombe Pool and then w.
Lodmoor's 11th and 12th records...all of them in the last 20 years. Neither of these hung around.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Breeding: a succession of mild winters have undoubtedly done this species some favours. A minimum of 9 males were singing Feb 7th. That number had increased to at least 14 Apr 1st.

A brood of fledged young were evident by Jun 13th with a minimum of 5 broods noted. But, judging by the number of young birds practising song in Oct, the real number may have been higher.

Also 1 singing by Redcliff Point Oct 30th. Surprisingly, perhaps, not that unusual for birds to wander that far.

Long Tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Breeding: a common breeding species and therefore easy to take for granted. So, worth noting that this could be its best year ever.

Fledged young first appeared May 12th and seemed to be everywhere by late Jun. Flocks of up to 30 birds were common in both winters.

Yellow browed warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus

2 records of singles:

Beachdown Spt 22nd.

west path Oct 7th.

Now recorded for 5 years in a row but amazingly just 2 records before 2013. The Beachdown bird was Lodmoor's earliest and the first Spt record.

Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix

1 record:

1 CP May 3rd.

Cracking views of a genuine Lodmoor rarity.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Spring/breeding: what looked like genuine arrivals from Mch 10th. 8 were already singing on Lorton Meadows by 25th. The marked arrival late Mch was followed by nest building as early as Apr 11th, young being fed by May (first fledged 17th) and many fledged young around early Jly. Looked like an outstanding nesting season.

Autumn: really good numbers Spt: 50+ around 14th, followed by plenty daily through to about Oct 8th. Thereafter much smaller numbers...often hard to distinguish from wintering birds.

Winter: just 1-2 Jan, Feb. Better numbers at the other end of the year. A minimum of 8 birds around Nov-Dec.

Siberian chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis

Like last year basically 2 loose sets of records:

1 post box hedge Jan 16th, 2 Feb 1st, 1 2nd (w. path), 1 singing Apr 1st.

1 Overcombe Dec 4th, 1 west path 6th ...perhaps same.

Once only a rare visitor...now recorded 4 years in a row. Tempting to speculate that the post box record might relate to the same bird that popped up -- and began singing -- in the same spot in both 2015 and 2016.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Spring: First Mch 28th. But numbers pretty low until a fall on Apr 18th. Potential nesting birds incl. 1 n. end May 10th, 1 still singing Lodmoor 11th and 14th. No repeat, however, this year of the Jun records from Weymouth rugby club. 1 reserve Jun 28th, however, surely implied nesting nearby.

Autumn: first obvious migrant Jly 22nd. Last Spt 14th.

Grasshopper warbler *Locustella certhiola

Good run of spring records:

Spring: 1 Apr 12th - 17th, different bird 18th, then daily 21st - 24th incl. no fewer than 4 24th, followed by 1 28th.

Breeding: records of reeling birds from different parts of the Lorton Valley Jun 16th, Jly 1st had presumably nested. One of the above or another Jly 25th.
Autumn: 1 flushed nr Horselynych Spt 19th. Almost certainly under recorded in autumn.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Spring/breeding: an early outlier on Apr 1st had to wait until 2 more showed up 11th, with good numbers by 15th. As usual fewer seemed to stay to breed than Reed warblers, although at least 3 pairs on the west bank.

Autumn: apparent migrants from Jly 25th with prolonged passage through to mid Spt with 2 late records on 28th, 30th.

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Spring/breeding: Lodmoor's earliest ever Mch 31st. Followed by at least 4 by Apr 3rd, 7 by 9th... a really good run of early records. Good numbers in by 15th and once again appeared to enjoy an excellent nesting season, with many fledged young by end Jun.

Autumn: small numbers moving through Aug and Spt. Last: Oct 17th.

Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata

Hard to say if more than just 1 bird was involved but single(s) w path/bank Oct 17th, 25th, 29th, Nov 10th. Then 1 Overcombe Nov 18th and 1 again w. side Dec 3rd, 5th.

In addition a migrant was recorded just beyond the boundary -- east of Redcliff Point -- Oct 30th.

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Another good year incl. a Dec bird!

Spring/breeding: 1-2 from Apr 13th, rising to 4+ daily late Apr. At least 2 were still singing late May and may have stayed to breed. 1 w side mid Jun and another singing Lorton Meadows late Jun/early Jly were clearly in territory.

Autumn: first apparent passage bird Jly 25th. 1 29th- 31st, Aug 5th. Last migrants: 2 Spt 25th.

Winter: 1 in gardens Southdown Estate on a number of dates Oct 27th - Dec 2nd. Extraordinary. Not trapped so no examination in the hand but on views there was nothing to suggest this was anything other than a nominate curruca.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Spring/breeding: 2/3 from Apr 12th(exactly the same arrival date as last year). Good numbers in by late Apr. At least 8 pairs in territory in general area. Some of their habitat in Lorton Valley has been grubbed up but generally they still seem to be doing alright.

Autumn: small numbers near daily Aug through to last Oct 3rd.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin

Rather poor year.

Spring: singer May 19th, 21st.

Autumn: just singles Jly 23rd, 28th- 31st, 2 Aug 1st, 1 5th, 2 29th.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

First winter: 1 was already singing Feb 12th/13th. Subsequent singers Mch 10th, 22nd probably related to over-wintering birds rather than genuine migrants. Later in the year a series of both males and red head sightings Nov 9th - Dec 17th clearly related to several different wintering birds.

Spring/breeding: singer Mch 31st probably first real summer arrival. Good numbers in by Apr 15th. Bred again Horselynych(2 pr), 2MC(3+ pr), nr rugby club(1).

Autumn: peak passage Spt 21st - Oct 4th, with a good run of records, mainly singles, through to Nov 2nd.

Second winter: a series of sightings of both males and red head Nov 9th - Dec 17th clearly related to several different wintering birds.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Breeding: at least 4 pairs in 2MC again(where pair in territory by Feb 28th), with at least another 2 pairs nesting in CP. 1 singing Beachdown Mch 10th was probably a wintering bird.

Passage/wintering: lots around early and late in the year. At least 15 were in 2MC in Jan, with another 4+ around Lodmoor. Later in the year there was an obvious arrival/passage from Spt 19th through to mid Oct. A legacy of this was approx. 10 around Lodmoor into Dec, with another 10 in 2MC.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

A really good year by Lodmoor standards...or at least a really good end to the year.

Just 1 early in the year: CP Feb 22nd.

But in the autumn/winter 1 on Oct 8th was followed by more than two dozen sightings Oct 18th - Dec 24th from w. side, CP, Overcombe, Southdown, Lorton Meadows and 2MC. These incl. no fewer than 10 records in Dec.

There was a major influx of autumn migrants along coastal Dorset and some of these undoubtedly trickled through to Lodmoor.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Breeding: another good year.

Winter: generally mild weather meant there appeared to be healthy numbers around.

Nuthatch *Sitta europaea

4 records that may well have related to just 1 wandering bird; singing Lorton VC Jly 3rd, 1 2MC 7th, Spt 18th, 20th.

Only the 7th set of records in the last 18 years...and only the 2nd in midsummer/early autumn.

Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*

Breeding: regular sightings of 1-2 2MC implied that at least 1 pair bred there again. Recorded there Jan-Jun and Spt, Dec.

Also recorded in CP Oct -Dec where probably a winter wanderer and in Horselyynch in Nov, where has bred in past.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Incl. the usual flock of freshly fledged juveniles coming to feed on Lodmoor from late May onwards.

Subsequently a flock of 200/300+ foraged on the reserve daily Aug-Oct.

The only big count this year came on Jan 21st with 7,000 in the pre roost.

Rosy starling *Sturnus roseus

1 record:

juvenile Spt 23rd, 25th.

Claims on later dates fall into the category of fake news.

Lodmoor's 6th record -- 5 of them in the last 17 years. Surprisingly the first Spt record.

Ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus

2 records:

1 Southdown Ridge Oct 4th.

1 reserve mid Oct.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Breeding: fledged young by rugby club Apr 18th, and CP by 19th. Subsequently as common as ever.

Autumn/winter: migrants started arriving from Spt 9th, with numbers building as the month wore on. Peak arrival occurred from Oct 4th -- with an obvious influx -- to Nov 1st, with big arrivals 12th, 15th, 24th - 27th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris

Records confined to the final two months of the year.

Singles Nov 4th, 6th, 17th, and Lorton Meadows 19th, then 4 over Dec 1st, 1 8th.

Song thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Breeding: feeding young by Apr 11th, freshly fledged bird 2MC late Jun. Several pairs feeding young w. side/CP areas Jly.

Winter/autumn: early on 15+ feeding in CP mid Jan. In autumn several big influxes incl. 60+ arriving Oct 9th, another obvious arrival 24th - 27th. Later 40+ were feeding in top fields Dec 12th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Early winter/spring: good numbers from late 2016 were reflected in counts of up to 22 CP and 2MC, up to Feb 28th, and incl. 3 n. Feb 22nd.

Autumn/winter: no repeat of last year's bonanza. First Oct 4th. Subsequently just small numbers logged through to the first half of Nov. Later incl. up to 20 knocking round Lorton area, another 20+ top fields Dec and a handful CP.

Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Early on confined to singles CP Jan 2nd.

1 Lorton Meadows May 16th turned up on an intriguing date but this species is an early breeder so maybe it was just a summer wanderer.

No more records until 4 singles in autumn Oct, followed by up to 2 on a number of dates Nov-Dec, which were probably birds hanging around the CP/Horselynych areas.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Breeding: feeding young by Apr 6th. First fledged bird May 25th.

Autumn: obvious arrival from Spt 16th. Quite good numbers stayed to winter in the area.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus

4 records of 5 birds:

2 graced a birder's garden near CP Apr 18th.

1 CP Apr 29th.

female/imm Horselynych slope Oct 3rd.

female/imm west path Oct 18th.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra

5 birds represented a distinct improvement on the blank autumn of 2016:

2 Spt 1st.

1 Spt 15th.

1 Horselynych slope Spt 27th, 28.

juv. Hump Oct 3rd.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Breeding: Once again probably an ex-breeding bird around Lodmoor. The pair that nested in the gorse on the Horselynych slope for the last two years didn't seem make it a hat trick. Disturbance from dog walkers has markedly increased in recent years. A pair did appear to be in territory by the parkride late Mch/Apr but didn't seem to stay to nest. Or if they did none of us noticed!

Nearby at least 1 and maybe 2 pairs may have been successful in the Bowleaze/Redcliff area.

Passage: in the spring a male Hump Mch 3rd was a candidate for a passage bird. In the autumn juveniles Overcombe Aug 3rd, n. end 31st, and Horselynych slope Spt 2nd may not have had to come far.

Subsequently 4/5 migrants were present daily from Spt 19th, building to at least 12 by early Oct, with at least 8 still about early Nov.

Winter: 3 frequented the Horselynych slope in Jan. Most of the autumn birds moved on but in Dec 2 could still be found Horselynych slope with another pair at Overcombe.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Spring: average. About 43 Mch 22nd - May 12th.

Autumn: also distinctly average. About 25 Aug 25th - Oct 24th.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

In complete contrast to Wheatear(above) one of the best ever autumns for this species.

A total of at least 14 birds on 12 dates Aug 15th - Oct 6th.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

1 record:

male CP Apr 14th.

Now recorded in 4 of the last 5 years but a spring bird remains the exception not the rule.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Breeding: the Southdown Avenue colony is still thriving. Despite the RSPB's efforts to destroy their roosting hedge counts of 50+ were regular. There was clearly some interchange between here and the birds around Sealife and CP but some was also additional. Feeding young by late May.

Individual of the year undoubtedly a partial albino on the west path in Jly that looked like a Snow bunting!

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Remains an abundant resident.

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flavissima*

Including Lodmoor's latest ever.

Spring: 1 over Apr 18th.

Autumn: 3w Aug 6th. Then about 140 Aug 14th - early Oct. These incl. near daily movement in Spt, with 30+ through 17th and small numbers of off passage birds providing lovely views by Hump.

Finally a late bird Oct 17th was eclipsed by Lodmoor's latest ever Nov 3rd.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

First winter: 1-3 Jan, Feb.

Autumn: 1 early bird over Jly 10th. Then 1-2 almost daily from Aug 25th through Spt into Oct.

Second winter: in Nov 2/3 around regularly. But in Dec records unaccountably had all but dried up.

Pied wagtail *Motacilla yarely*

In the autumn an obvious passage late Spt/Oct coincided with at least 350+ roosting on the reserve. But later in the winter many seemed to have moved on.

Alba wagtail: identifiable birds incl. 1 Redcliff Apr 10th, and in autumn up to 4 daily nr Hump Spt 17th - 30th.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*

The spring counts were remarkable.

Breeding: at least 1 pair were in territory at Redcliff in the spring.

Wintering: early on up to 18 in top fields Jan, with 11 northern end Feb 27th. Scarcer at the end of the year with just 8 Horselych fields.

Passage: an amazing spring movement incl. 80+ over Mch 24th, 150+ 25th and an extraordinary 800+ 26th...record breaking numbers.

For the first time ever fewer in the autumn than the spring ! Noted from Spt 7th, with peak daily counts of just 100+ over Spt 15th, 16th.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Just when you think records of this species can't become any sparser....they do..

Spring: singles over Apr 18th, May 2nd.

Autumn: singles Spt 4th(Lorton Meadows), 6th and 10th.

An awful year

Water pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

The renaissance in records continues. As usual most records came from Overcombe. The increasing vegetation makes them harder to see but the area still seems to be very much to their liking. Occasionally calling birds could be heard crossing Beachdown as they commuted to the centre of the reserve.

First winter: 1-9 could be seen fairly regularly up to Feb 22nd. After that records become much more erratic... with the last Apr 6th.

Second winter: 3 back from Oct 29th. Numbers remained generally low with a max. of just 4 and usually no more than 2 to Dec 24th. But this was then followed by an isolated count of 8 27th.

Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus*

6 records of single(s) Oct 5th - Dec 3rd, all from Preston beach or the seaward end of the reserve.

A fairly typical set of records in terms of both dates and locations.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Breeding: still regularly recorded towards the Weymouth Bay Ave. area and northern end but generally the nesting population around the reserve appears to have suffered a sharp decline. The only proof of breeding were fledged young near the end of Southdown which may have wandered from Horselych.

Passage/wintering: birds joined the mixed flock in top fields in Jan. Overhead autumn passage was generally quite modest. Small numbers were wintering round the main reserve in Dec.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla

9 records of 11 birds is, by Lodmoor standards, good going and a welcome return to form after a rare blank year in 2016. Strange that the run of records should have coincided with a relatively poor year for Chaffinch.

1 w Oct 6th, 2/3 27th, 2 on deck 28th, 1 29th, 1 n Nov 6th, 1 perched 8th, 1 over 19th, 1 e 28th and finally a rare Dec record when 1 turned up with small Chaffinch flock top fields Dec 12th.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Breeding; about 4 pairs were displaying/nest building again in spring. And 5 juvs were seen on the west path in Jun. Certainly on the western side of the reserve this species doesn't seem to be declining or disease stricken in the way it is elsewhere.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Breeding: freshly fledged birds were evident late Jly.

Passage/winter: birds formed part of the excellent mixed flock in top fields in Jan. In the autumn overhead migrants began going over from Spt 14th. No outstanding counts this year. Later at least 40/50 appeared to be wintering.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Like last year a relatively modest autumn passage. But the odd spring records have now become almost expected.

Spring: singles w Feb 24th, e Mch 25th, Apr 2nd.

Autumn: about 85 Spt 7th - Dec 12th, with more than half of them in the second half of Oct and incl. 19 26th.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Breeding: displaying birds were back in the car park/w side from late Feb and at least 4 pair bred in the gorse again. Another 10 pairs were also in territory in the gorse around Redcliff in Apr.

Autumn: overhead migration underway from Spt 14th with peak counts of 300+ w Oct 15th, 275+ 16th. 5 went through Overcombe on the surprisingly late date of Dec 1st. Otherwise 50+ lingered on the w. side well into Nov and some may have stayed to winter in the general area(see below).

Winter: for a species that can be hit and miss in winter good numbers were around. A flock of up to 40 joined the mixed flock in the top fields through Jan. Later in the year just 2 were in top fields but up to 5 irregularly appeared by the west path into Dec as well as 10+ nr ambulance station 14th and 1 Overcombe 28th.

Lesser redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

A record breaking autumn: probably the biggest numbers ever recorded at Lodmoor(almost equalling Siskin this year), and incl. the biggest single flock and the highest ever day total.

A total of about 75 went over Spt 22nd - Dec 16th. They incl. 39 Oct 26th, largely thanks to a single flock of 34. Also incl. that genuine Lodmoor rarity: perched redpolls....4 of them on Nov 6th.

For a species that occasionally doesn't get recorded all year this was an impressive showing.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhoea*

Breeding: one of Lodmoor's most striking success stories. At least 2 and possibly as many as 4 different pairs now breed on the w. side, which meant pairs and family parties could be enjoyed virtually any day of the year. The presence of at least 20 birds in Nov surely indicated an outstanding nesting season. The northern end -- as ever -- also holds at least 4 breeding pairs. So -- particularly compared to Chaffinch -- a brilliant year.

Passage: candidates for genuine migrants incl. 1 n Oct 25th and 4 high w 30th.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes

3 records of 4 birds:

2 e Hump mid Oct

imm e Hump Oct 22nd.

1 w post box Nov 3rd.

The first records since this species was added to the Lodmoor list during the autumn influx of 2005. The immature flew so low that you clearly see some of the juvenile scaling.

In addition 1 was noted just beyond the boundary at Coombe Valley Road Nov 16th.

Corn bunting *Emberiza calandra

1 record:

1 with the mixed bunting/finch flock top field Southdown Jan 11th.

A long overdue record. Remarkably this appears to be the first since the first series of records in 1983. Corn bunting has significantly declined as a Dorset breeding bird since the 1980s. But this species still nests almost within sight of Southdown -- at the start of the White Horse Hill bridleway. So it's strange there haven't been more records.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Winter: an unprecedented influx early in the year featured a flock of up to 30 in the stubble field at the top of Southdown Ridge in Jan through to early Feb. Later in the year at least 1 mobile bird had returned to the same area Nov 28th - Dec 12th.

Passage: 2 ne Spt 18th, 1 w Oct 12th.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Breeding: 3 territorial males were singing by early Feb. At least 6 pairs bred again. And, judging by the number of juveniles around in Jly, they enjoyed a successful summer.

Winter: 25-30 spent Jan in the same mixed flock that graced the top fields in Jan and early Feb. Good numbers too at the other end of the year. At least 20 birds were wintering around the reserve/top fields in Nov/Dec.

Passage: 6 w Spt 18th and several more nw Oct 27th may have been genuine overhead migrants.

ESCAPES etc

Swan goose *Anser cygnoides*

1 spent several weeks on the reserve Mch/Apr.

Yellow billed teal *Anas flavirostris*

1 on pool off Beachdown Mch 7th.

A long way from South America. This and the above species represented Lodmoor firsts...of sorts!

Hooded merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*

The wandering drake from Radipole May 13th.

Now an annual visitor.

Feral pigeon *Columba livia*

The artificially fed feral flock near the play area are in danger of getting too fat to take off. In addition you can tell it's a weekend based on the number of birds going over that have just been released from baskets!

MAMMALS

Fox, Sika, Roe deer, Stoat, Weasel, Water vole, Rabbit, Badger, Brown rat, Grey squirrel, Grey seal. + a dead Harbour porpoise calf on Preston beach.

OTHER(RANDOM!) CREATURES

Portugese man owar(dead), Golden rudd, Thick lipped mullet, Grass snake, Common newt, Slow worm.

BUTTERFLIES

20 species recorded: At least 1 species of butterfly was recorded in every month of the year.

Red admiral, Speckled wood, Painted lady(incl. 1 Mch 25th), Orange tip, Brimstone, Peacock, Small tortoiseshell, Small white, Large white, Green veined white(9 on Apr 6th), Large skipper(singles Jun 14th, 15th), Small skipper, Meadow brown, Holly blue, Common blue, Wall brown, Comma, Gatekeeper(singles Jly 5th, 25th), Ringlet(Lorton Meadows Jly 2nd), Marbled white(Lorton Meadows Jly 2nd) .

Notable records included a pronounced westerly movement of Red admirals late Oct(incl. 12 w 25th) and a count of 120 Meadow browns in the Horselynych fields Jun 15th.

DRAGONFLIES, BEES, DAY FLYING MOTHS ETC

Southern hawkler, Migrant hawkler, Common darter, Blue tailed damselfly, Scarce emperor(Lorton Meadows), Emperor, Black tailed skimmer(1 May 30th PHOTO), Broad bodied chaser, Four spotted chaser, Common darter, Beautiful demoiselle(Lorton VC Jly 2nd).

Buff tailed bumblebee, Garden bumblebee, Common carder bee, Western honey bee, Ivy bee.

Dotted bee fly, Dark edged bee fly, Hornet hoverfly.

Six spotted burnet moth, Hummingbird hawk moth, Jersey tiger.

Dark bush cricket, Spotted bush cricket, Harlequin ladybird, Hairy shield bug.

Daragh Croxson 03/02/2018

