

PEGWELL BAY BIRD REPORT FOR 2001

Welcome to the forth-annual Pegwell Bay bird report – well sort of bird report. The following pages will try to paint a picture of the year 2001 with all its trials and tribulations included. Hopefully it should come across to the reader that Thanet, although fantastically situated to attract migrant birds actually doesn't get that many of them...and is a pain in the backside to watch. For evidence of this just look what a decade or so birding at Foreness did to the few happy go lucky birders that started watching there back in the eighties. Within just a few months they would stab their own grannies in the back and now they are to a man bitter and twisted with deep psychological scars. Scum...real scum. Anyway I digress – so lets get on with it.

To set the scene Pegwell bay is a smelly muddy spot on the coast of sunny Thanet, which on occasion does attract the odd bird or two – even the odd interesting one. The downside is the amount of things that happen to frighten most of them away! The skies are full of noisy airplanes, the mudflats constantly strewn with bait-diggers, people training greyhounds even riding horses. The reserve itself draws crowds of dog-walkers many of whom are insomniacs and are seemingly ever present. Also there are those poseurs who fly around on windsurfs or even worse those irritating jet skis...I hate them!!! Growl, snarl etc. That aside {calm down Phil} coverage has not been too bad this year, with recording done on an almost daily basis all through the year – with over a dozen people contributing to this rag either directly or indirectly. The one poorly covered area this year has been the visible migration of passerines which usually involves many hours standing bored to death for very little, somewhere along the cliff top. This year I completely lost my patients with it and decided to ignore it. I doubt - judging by the past couple of years if I missed much! Also the recording area has been extended to include Ramsgate harbour in this years report for sea watching only as the birds passing through are the same microscopic dots I can see from my normal foul weather spot (a cave on the western under-cliff – it's as bad as it sounds!) only from this new vantage point some of the birds are close enough to actually identify...which as you will no doubt understand is a real bonus.

I would like to thank all those who have reported their sightings although as with last years report a certain local lister and suppressor has been up to his old tricks again. I suppose I shouldn't moan, as he is a little better these days I must admit. I have now got him to the stage where most of the things he sees he will tell me about which is good for him as he got in the habit of either not telling anyone at all or ringing you up ten minute before it gets dark to tell you about a bird that's been present since first light! Now - I get records off him eventually only he holds back on the dates – even on commonish birds such as spotted flycatcher in 2000 or this year three littoralis rock pipits. You know what they say – once a suppressor always a suppressor!! It must be some sort of illness? As to his identity – well I am going to hold back on that one. Lets just say he has a girl's name and girl's hair – or is that too obvious?

Now I know this report, with its huge circulation – is read by many people the length and breadth of the country that know little or indeed nothing about the people mentioned in its pages. So I thought I would take this opportunity to write a few educational words about each individual to enlighten the ignorant of you out there as to the calibre and expertise of the local birders who show up every now and then in the hope of seeing something at this cesspit of a nature reserve come dog toilet. I hereby welcome you avid readers of tripe to what I lovingly refer to as the gang.

TONY BALL. Short, fat, foul, crass, ignorant northern half-breed who passes wind regularly and with great volume in any company. Calls plovers “PLOOOVERS” and I am sure eats black pudding for breakfast and breeds whippets.

IAN DAVIES. Tony's errand boy, personal assistant and chauffeur and the other half of the tattooed men. Quiet, composed and does as he is told. We all feel very sorry for him - poor chap.

BARRY CHILD. The all action flying doctor come T.V. celebrity who is terribly bullied by his evil wife Irish Iris a recovering alcoholic and Irelands first ladies boxing champion! Barry is very posh and very rich and loves antiques – which is in no way meant to be a dig either at his wife or his automobile.

FRANCIS SOLLEY. A man with an awful lot of local knowledge and local lists. Word has it he has a list of lists – if that makes any sense? His other attributes are wearing hush puppies whilst walking around in thick mud and keeping things to himself such as say for instance – bird sightings etc. Once tried to claim the Muskovey Duck which visits the reserve on and off from the local duck pond as wild. Pull the other one franny! If he had got away with it the scabby old duck could potentially have made 12 of his lists!

PHIL CHARLTON. Wanted by the police to help them with their enquiries since he was reported to them by a local dog-walker who overheard him admit to lurking around the bushes. Second on the most wanted list only to Osama bin Laden who has it.

TERRY PRESTON. A welcome newcomer this year. Terrance, originally from the Midlands weighs in at 32 stone, which makes his other passion – ballet dancing a little tiring, which is why in his later years he has taken up birding. He also has a sticker of a pigeon in his car window. Now Terry admits himself to being a bit deaf which is handy to know about as we were all a little perplexed on our first acquaintance as when asked if there was anything about he answered, “it’s twenty to three.” He is useful to be around in high winds as he makes a remarkably good windbreak!

ALLAN THINGAMEBOB? His surname escapes me at the minute. Another midlander who moved south to Deal for its nightlife! He won the title of Deal village idiot back in the sixties and has held his title ever since. Foolishly claims to have once been on first name terms with the royal family – example “Me and Liz so and so” or the time he “went shark fishing on the Q.E.II with Phil” or something like that - he never stops! If he corners you with his tall tales – humour him at all costs as he looks like he could get violent as he has those mad eyes. I’m safe to write this, as he doesn’t read too well.

DYLAN WRATHALL. The man with the silliest name and second silliest hair in this report.

CRAIG SAMMELS. The baby of the group at somewhere around 8 or 12 years of age – somewhere in that region anyway? A bit of a twitcher – even though he will argue that he isn’t - Craig has been so irregular this year on the bay that none of us can actually remember what he looks like. He was seen in the passenger seat of a speeding car, [allegedly] whizzing along the main road passing the reserve. There must have been a rarity about somewhere else I would wager.

THE OLD CODGERS. Namely Peter Laslett and John Hollyer. They are so old it takes them two and a half hours to undertake the arduous three hundred yard walk from the car park to the bird-hide. Both eternally miserable – especially John who is always whinging over the fact that he lost his highly paid and highly esteemed job as Benny Hills stunt double back in 1967! He is still a very bitter man and best avoided. On the odd occasion Peter can be pleasant enough but I must admit his constant dribbling is rather repulsive. John once slipped in a pool of it and it took twelve people and a small pulley to get him back on his feet. John was also seen on a twitch in 1998 - wearing a tea cosy on his head.

JOHNNY WESTBERE. Or something along those lines?? Often seen wandering around the reserve talking at great length to himself. I once overheard him moaning to himself about how distant all the birds were on an incoming tide. As I approached and got close enough to see him properly I noticed that he was looking through the wrong end of his binoculars! Apparently I have heard that he is a bit touchy about the mispronunciation of his name and spilling mistakes. Also very age conscious so I won’t mention it. All I will say is he is the first birder ever to watch at Pegwell – now I can’t let on how long ago I’m talking about – let’s just say he used to arrive by horse and cart!

TONY JOLLY. Jolly by name but not by nature. Paradoxically he is in the Guinness book of records for having the loudest laugh in the world – on par with the full engine sound of four jumbo jets!!! If the wind is in the right direction he can clearly be heard on the reserve when he is working at Ham Fen many miles away. As I hinted at earlier he is not really a happy man. He had the bad fortune to be born Noddy Holders half brother and has a chip on his shoulder that Noddy was the blue eyed boy of the family as he had all the talent back when they were snotty nosed kids and all the money when they grew up. Whatever you do don’t get him talking about his beloved hobby – plastering – or you will get the full boring repertoire of his old plastering tales...a very boring man indeed!

PETER FOREST. The local warden and Tony’s boss and boy does he take advantage of his position! Thinking about it this is probably the reason that Tony is so miserable? Also he is the unluckiest of all birders in the entire world so if he turns up you are virtually guaranteed to see zilch. Be on your guard though as he leaves though, as this is a good time for a rarity!

JOHN VEAL. Think of a shaven uncle Albert out of only fools and horses and you’ve got a perfect mental image of him. Lives in a tent at Stodmarsh and spends his summer holidays in Stone Lees!

THE PEGWELL BAY BIRD REPORT FOR 2001.

RED-THROATED DIVER/DIVER SPECIES

Most of the divers passing through which are close enough to be identified are Red-Throated Divers. In the early part of the year most of the birds flying through offshore were seen during January and February with odd birds passing through still in March with the last one seen on April 5th.

The total numbers were: JANUARY: 397 south + 35 north. FEBRUARY: 725 south + 26 north. MARCH: 2 south. APRIL: 1 south. Peak day counts were: 74 south on January 26th, 204 south on January 28th, 43 south on February 10th and a very high count of 519 south on February 18th. There were also birds seen swimming offshore on 10 dates during this period, peaking on March 23rd when 3 birds were present.

Returning birds seen in small numbers from October 27th, with a trickle of birds in November totalling 14 south and 2 north plus 1 bird present. Into December a total of 43 south and 174 north with 156 birds north on the 26th and 20 south on the 30th.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER

One present offshore - eventually flying off south on January 1st. {PM}

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Not present in any significant numbers during this year other than the 62 birds present on one day in February. Monthly day count peaks were: JANUARY: 27 on 28th. FEBRUARY: 62 on 9th. MARCH: 6 APRIL: 9 on 2nd. MAY: 6 on 13th. JUNE: none. JULY: 1 on 2 dates. AUGUST: 2 on 6th. SEPTEMBER: none. OCTOBER: 1. NOVEMBER: 7 on 2nd. DECEMBER: 51 on 31st.

All counts of birds present offshore.

RED-NECKED GREBE

One present on October 31st then a second bird present on November 11th and 12th. These were the first records since singles in 1998 and 1999. {PM, BC etc}

LITTLE GREBE

A reasonable year with singles on January 28th, September 30th, October 17th to 19th with up to two birds present in the flooded garage/café pools during late October through to December and a single bird offshore on December 30th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE

One present on February 21st and 23rd probably the same bird {?} as I have only ever seen 2 in the bay before then probably another seen flying north past the harbour on November 14th.

FULMAR

Regular around the west-cliff area from January to July and again from November until the end of the year. 11 breeding holes were occupied and the peak count of 32 birds was recorded during February.

GANNET

Reasonably regular offshore – most at a vast distance. The highest counts of birds moving were: 19 south on May 16th, 17 south on July 1st, 25 south on July 11th and 84 south on July 18th. There were also up to 50 birds seen feeding offshore in May and 60+ in August.

SHAG

1 south on January 22nd, 1 present on January 24th, 1 present on February 19th, 1 south on November 14th and singles present on December 1st and 5th.

CORMORANT p.carbo

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 10. FEB: 16. MAR: 6. APR: 10. MAY: 12. JUN: 15. JLY: 43. AUG: 51. SEPT: 21. OCT: 22. NOV: 14. DEC: 16.

As indicated above highest numbers were recorded during July and August. Best days were during July 41 on 13th, 37 on 23rd, 43 on 27th and 38 on 30th then in August, 33 on 10th, 51 on 14th, 40 on 16th and 32 on 24th.

CORMORANT p.sinensis

Birds in breeding plumage were recorded on 30 dates from February 17th to April 2nd, with peak counts of 3 on February 22nd and April 2nd.

BITTERN

One found in one of the nearby gardens, which was spotted in the gap between a garden shed and a fence! The bird was ringed by someone from Sandwich Bay and flew off strongly when released. Oops ...I nearly forgot the date...all this happened on April 23rd. Then one was seen flying southeast across the salt marsh towards Sandwich on December 1st. These represent the only sightings in the area for at least a decade. {SBBO and PM etc}

LITTLE EGRET

Numbers go on increasing. Around 3 regular wintering birds before they started to turn up in small numbers during April to June with a spring peak of 4 birds on May 12th. After this birds were seen every day during July to the end of October with double figure counts on 55 dates, exceeding 20 birds on 9 occasions with a peak of 31 on August 13th.

Into November birds still ever present though only up to 6 birds present dropping to 1 - 3 present on and off until the end of the year. Also for the first time they have been seen roosting across in the pine trees on the golf course at Sandwich.

To put these figures into some sort of context these are the peak day counts from past years: 1992: 0. 1993: 1. 1994: 1. 1995: 4. 1996: 2. 1997: 3. 1998: 11. 1999: 7. 2000: 24. 2001: 31. Please note: P. Forrest last saw an Egret at Pegwell way back in May 1998.

GREY HERON

1 to 3 birds present on a daily basis {except late December} with 4 to 8 birds' regular July to October.

BLACK STORK

One flying west/northwest on May 11th was a first record for the area...fantastic eh!!! {PM}

WHITE STORK

The Ash Levels bird (present there for a week or two) seen flying distantly on April the 7th and not quiet so distantly on the 18th. After this one seen flying south on June 5th. Both were considered to be wild...wild...I bet they were furious, having to carry all those metal rings about on their legs. I reckon they must have felt like 18th century criminals. I refuse to explain that last statement.

GLOSSY IBIS

One present on the afternoon of October 27th the first record since ...er...the last one! The bird which was almost certainly an adult may have attempted to roost in the deep salt marsh as it was present till near dark – well never know for sure as it was spooked by a Hen Harrier and was last seen flying north reasonably high up over towards Ramsgate. {PM, IH, FS, DW and GB}

SPOONBILL

Two birds flew west on March 30th, {PM} one present on April 5th {PM} then 1 present on September 30th {BC, TP etc} and another on November 24th {?} represents a good tally for the area. It took me years to see a Spoonbill at Pegwell {though I missed a fair few} and I would guess they might be increasing – though coverage is much better these days – so there would be more dummy! Anyway the past few years have turned up the following numbers: 1993-1, 1994-1, 1995-1, 1996-2, 1997-1, 1998-1, 1999-0, 2000-2 and 2001-5.

MUTE SWAN

2 on March 26th, 2 on April 10th, 9 on April 22nd, 1 to 3 birds on 8 dates during May, 5 on June 1st and in October 2 on 3rd, 7 on 4th, 1 on 9th, 2 on 14th and 2 on 22nd.

WHOOPER SWAN

One flying north over Chiltern Lane on November 20th, {PM} only the third record I am aware of in the past 8 years.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

4 flew west on April 3rd. {PF}

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

40 west on February 15th, 2 northwest on February 17th, 200 north in late March then 4 present before flying west on November 10th, 8 west on November 14th and 8 north on November 19th.

GREYLAG GOOSE

1 east on March 23rd and 1 present on December 24th.

SNOW GOOSE

A flock of 4 birds seen flying north on the classic migration date of May 3rd.

CANADA GOOSE

2 birds present in the area and seen on a few dates between April 3rd and May 16th at least.

BRENT GOOSE

Up to 14 birds present during the early winter period with birds moving through the area in decent numbers from the second week of February to early April with 181 north on February 8th, 265 present on March 17th plus 150 north on the same day, 182 on March 22nd, 711 present on March 23rd and 211 present on March 27th. There were also a few records during May and June.

Returning birds from September 12th with highs both in October of 112 present on 21st and 41 on 28th. Other reasonable counts during the late winter period 168 on November 5th, 178 on November 12th and 102 on November 14th. Birds present in small numbers during December with a peak of 19 present on the 31st.

PALE BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *B.Hrota*.

One present in a large flock of dark bellied type birds on March 23rd was the first record since 4 present one March 5th 1996, though apparently they used to be reasonably regular in past years. Then in the autumn quite a few showed with records of 2 present from September 12th to 16th then later on in September 8 on 20th, 2 on 26th and 6 on 29th.

BLACK BRANT *B.Nigricans*.

An adult bird - present in a large flock of Brent geese - on March 17th. {PM} The second record for Pegwell after a bird reported in the mid-nineties.

SHELDUCK

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 229. FEB: 149. MAR: 28. APR: 34. MAY: 51. JUN: 121. JULY: 68. AUG: 28. SEP: 21. OCT: 64. NOV: 169. DEC: 103.

An unusually good breeding year with 4 broods present from mid May to early June {nos.10, 10, 9 and 8 birds} then 2 more new broods during July. {9 and 6 birds}

MANDARIN DUCK

A drake bird was present on December 29th probably the third Pegwell record? {DGn}

WIGEON

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 1220. FEB: 630. MAR: 18. APR: 10. Then none until: AUG: 56. SEPT: 325. OCT: 234. NOV: 710. DEC: 1046.

In the early winter/spring period present in the highest numbers during January with 500+ present on most days with peaks of 877 on 3rd, 1151 on 16th, 954 on 17th and 1220 on 18th. Most of the birds were gone by the second week of February with the last record on April 12th.

Birds returning from August 20th but not seen regularly until September. No big counts until November/December {though 4 to 500 present most days} with 710 on November 23rd, 841 on December 9th and 1046 on December 31st.

MALLARD

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 456. FEB: 120. MAR: 5. APR: 12. MAY: 14. JUN: 12. JULY: 62. AUG: 117. SEP: 129. OCT: 178. NOV: 379. DEC: 422.

GADWALL

Present on 11 dates between January to March 3rd with a peak count of 13 on January 1st. In the autumn /winter period birds from September 5th and most notable in November and December with the highest counts as follows: 19 on November 10th, 27 on November 19th and 15 on December 31st.

PINTAIL

Present on 19 dates during January and February with peaks of 19 on January 1st and 15 on February 17th. Odd birds present from August in the later part of the year with 12 on October 4th, 10 on October 28th and 19 on December 31st the highest counts.

SHOVELER

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 9. FEB: 25. MAR: 5. APR: 3. MAY: 3. JUN: 0. JULY: 4. AUG: 8. SEP: 4. OCT: 9. NOV: 21. DEC: 43.

TEAL

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 574. FEB: 81. MAR: 75. APR: 2. MAY: 0. JUN: 2. JULY: 2. AUG: 54. SEP: 129. OCT: 150. NOV: 216. DEC: 358.

The highest numbers present were 275 on January 3rd, 378 on January 16th, 574 on January 17th, 216 on November 15th and 358 on December 31st.

GARGANEY

A drake hanging around the large flood in the salt marsh on April 17th and a juvenile/female on August 27th.

RED-CRESTED POCHARD

2 birds seen this year. A female type present on October 7th found by the tattooed men and incredible as it may sound actually seen by one Peter Forest. Pete's been the warden now for many years and has visited the site most days during his reign of terror and was well pleased with this dodgy duck as it took him on to 50 species seen in the area. I told you he was unlucky didn't I - his 49th specie was White Pelican and 48th Chilean Flamingo! After this there was a stunning drake present on December 1st. Were either of these birds wild - well who cares - though probably not??? The drake did sit on the mudflat for a while and wasn't ringed. I'm bound to say that though...aren't I?

POCHARD

1 on 22nd and then 2 on November 8th the only records.

TUFTED DUCK

In January 1 on 16th, 5 on 16th and 1 on 22nd then 2 on September 9th

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EIDER

Incredibly scarce with singles present on January 14th, January 27th, February 10th, October 4th and November 14th. After this there was a huge flock of 6 seen flying south on December 14th plus 32 north on December 18th.

COMMON SCOTER

Recorded on 6 dates during January and February with 12 south on February 27th then a bit more regular from July to the late winter period with birds on 13 dates with 30 present offshore on September 12th, 29 south on November 8th, 62 south on November 14th, 40+ present on December 26th and 49 south on December 27th the best days.

VELVET SCOTER

2 present offshore on November 12th.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

An out of season bird present in the bay on May 31st and June 1st. {PM} Remarkably the only other one I have heard of at Pegwell was also present in June - on the garage pools many years ago! Even more remarkable – it was Francis Solly who actually told me! He must be going soft in his old age.

GOLDENEYE

Reasonably scarce in 2001, in fact I sat through the whole boring film and didn't see a single one! There were however 2 present on January 27th, 4 present on January 28th, 1 south on November 14th, 2 present on November 26th and last but not least 1 present on December 31st.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

1 north on January 12th, 2 present on January 29th, 1 south on March 31st, 1 present on April 5th, 2 south on May 30th, 1 present on October 27th, 5 present on October 28th, 2 present on November 1st, 3 present on November 4th, 1 present on November 7th, 1 south on November 8th, 1 north on November 14th and 2 north on November 15th.

BLACK KITE

One seen flying north across the bay by the Thanet R.S.P.B. group on April 8th was the second record for Pegwell as far as I am aware? {one in May 1994} Then guess what - the third record flew west on June 4th {CS, PM + DW}...and guess what? {Huge fanfare} I SAW IT!!! HOORAH in fact DOUBLE HOORAH!!! It's taken me years to see one. Mind you as Craig always told me...they're very boring. I can now give up tedious raptor watching!

RED KITE

One seen {by me} flying north on March 2nd. Please note it was the Kite and not me flying north! I also heard on the grapevine that there has been a bird hanging around Ramsgate eating it's way through the local Pigeon population...hilarious eh! What's the word...er...that's it...CODSWALLOP! Like most of the larger raptors, Red Kites would seem to be on the increase though we have indulged in an awful lot of raptor watching in recent years – far more than used to go on anyway. In the past 9 years I have only heard of 7 birds, these being: 1 in February 1996, 3 in 1999, {2 in April+ 1 in May} 2 in 2000, {1 March+1 May} then this years bird. Hey...you can't complain about this can you eh? Entertainment and useful information on the same page! Hang on...I'll have to have a lie down. You've got to admit it...this report is much better than that naff Foreness report that the hairy one used to put out once in a blue moon.

MONTAGUS HARRIER

A ringtail present briefly which then flew off north on April 25th. {PM}

HEN HARRIER

Regular {and recorded on 43 dates} between January to May 18th with peaks of 4 on January 30th, 5 on February 17th and 4 on February 18th plus a couple of birds seen moving in April and May. There were 2 singles in September and surprisingly only 3 birds during October before a flurry of birds turned up in the first 2 weeks of November with between 1 and 5 birds present almost daily. After this they were amazingly uncommon with only 2 singles and a pair reported during the later part of November and 9 singles and a pair during the whole of December.

MARSH HARRIER

Spring migrants from March to May with 1 on March 2nd, 1 on April 8th, 1 on April 14th, 1 on April 15th, 2 on April 19th, 1 on April 23rd, 1 on April 24th, and 3 on May 15th. Most birds were moving north or west.

Odd migrants/wandering birds re-appearing by July with 1 north on 18th and 1 south on the 20th. After this singles on August 31st, September 19th, 2 on October 5th then single birds on October 17th, 18th, 29th, November 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 15th {west} and 21st then other singles on December 16th and 25th.

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SPARROWHAWK

A regular migrant February to May and September to November, winter visitor and nowadays an increasing breeding species in Thanet which makes counting the darn things almost impossible! It was so much easier in the old days when you knew that spring and autumn birds were new arrivals. In the spring this year there were at least 3 displaying pairs seen – though only 1 pair were thought to be breeding within the recording area. There were 1 to 5 birds daily in the winter months with the best days of definite migration noted with 6 birds on March 30th, 12 north on April 12th and 6 south on October 3rd.

COMMON BUZZARD

Following the normal pattern of recent years most of the Buzzards this past year seen during the late March to end of April period with very little autumn migration noted. The dates were as follows: 1 north on March 29th, 2 north and 1 south on March 30th, 1 north on April 9th, 3 north and 1 west on April 12th, 1 south on April 17th, 1 west on April 19th, 1 north on May 12th with the last spring migrant on May 15th. The only other records were of 1 southwest on July 5th and 1 south on November 14th. Though more common than in past years – a fairly average total in truth in view of all the raptor watching that goes on at Pegwell nowadays.

To show the recent increase in Buzzard movement through the area these are the records I have of past year totals for the species: 1994 – 1, 1995 – 2, 1996 – 2, 1997 – 6, 1998 – 12, 1999 – 37 then in 2000 – 28 and this past year a total of 14 birds. Spring birds peaked at 13 birds on March 20th 1999 - {hence the high total} with an autumn peak of only 2 birds on a few dates. Please note that I am well pleased with my bit on Buzzards as it gives the illusion that I know what I am talking about. Whatever you do please don't rely on anything even close to this quality for the duration of this report.

HONEY BUZZARD

Spring records only this year with one north on May 15th and another two {together} also north on June 5th. {PM} In recent years they have been seen annually in the following numbers: 1993 – 3, 1994 – 1, 1995 – 3, 1996 – 1, 1997 – 2, 1998 – 2, 1999 – 3, 2000 – 12* and 2001 – 3.

*2000 numbers unusually high as there were 9 birds south on September 25th of that year.

OSPREY

A fantastic year total of 1 present on March 23rd, 2 flyovers together on May 11th, {eventually one flying north and one west} 2 inland {west} on May 26th which were almost certainly the pair present at Grove for the following few days. After this 1 present on July 26th and singles {both east} on August the 12th and 14th. Easily a record amount of birds in a single year. In past years there have been: 1994 – 0, 1995 – 2, 1996 – 2, 1997 – 0, 1998 – 4, 1999 – 4, 2000 – 3, 2001 – 8.

KESTREL

1 – 6+ birds daily.

HOBBY

Recorded on 40 dates between April 30th and October 10th and were commonest during May, June and September. A peak count of 6 migrants passing through on May 19th.

PEREGRINE

Singles present on 12 dates during January and February with 2 birds present and holding territory from March to June with displaying seen around Richborough Cooling Towers and even seen mating during March but unfortunately not breeding. Reasonably regular from then on to October then scarce in November with singles on the first 3 days of the month only. Amazingly only 2 sightings of single birds during December.

MERLIN

Another unexceptional year with birds nowhere near as regular as they used to be. Seen on 39 dates January to April 19th {which is reasonable} with 2 on 7 dates. A male on January 5th was the only {definite} one of its gender during this period.

Returning passage/wintering birds recorded from September 6th but with 2 records in September and only 2 in October not anything like regular until November with 1 to 2 birds present and seen on and off until the end of the year. There were at least 4 birds on November 15th with 2 males showing, an immature and an adult – one of the males probably present since the previous day.

GREY PARTRIDGE

I love Partridge – in fact I would go as far to say as they are delicious! 2 breeding pairs present with a flock of up to 18 present on the cliff top fields in the autumn. There were also 26 birds present in late November.

PHEASANT

Ever present in smallish numbers...around 1 to 5+ birds.

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QUAIL

One flushed by Peter Forrest on April 30th. I was a little concerned as he said that it was a big one with a horseshoe pattern on its breast...O.K. I'll admit it...I made that last bit up.

WATER RAIL

Regular between September and March – heard calling from the salt marsh or once in a blue moon giving short flight views or a quick scamper across the path. As to how many are present is anyone's guess but I would say winter numbers are somewhere between 10 to 20 birds?

MOORHEN

Normally scarce in the area 2001 turned up a bumper crop of Moorhens. A couple of birds present in the winter months with 6 to 8+ birds present late spring to autumn.

COOT

One present out on the mudflats on June 20th was the first one I have seen on the reserve – ever! How fabulous!

CRANE

The wintering Ash Levels bird seen flying about on January 7th {BC} and a second bird in off the sea flying west to south west on April 12th. {PM}

OYSTERCATCHER

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 1081. FEB: 817. MAR: 906. APR: 184. MAY: 121. JUN: 92. JULY: 261. AUG: 712. SEP: 850. OCT: 1062. NOV: 1170. DEC: 1015.

AVOCET

JANUARY: singles on 1st to 3rd, 3 on 4th, 4 on 5th to 7th, 3 on 8th to 11th then singles on 14th + 15th. FEBRUARY: 1 on 16th, 3 on 18th, 5 on 22nd and 2 on 28th. MARCH: singles on 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 17th, 2 on 18th, 17 on 21st, 1 on 22nd, 59 on 26th*, 3 on 27th, 1 on 28th, 1 on 29th and 2 on 30th. APRIL: 3 on 4th, 1 on 14th, 2 on 23rd, 1 on 24th and 2 on 29th. MAY: 1 on 2nd, 3 on 3rd, 1 on 5th, 3 on 11th, 1 on 15th, 3 on 16th, 1 on 21st, 1 on 25th, 1 on 28th and 1 on 30th. JUNE: 2 on 4th, 1 on 15th, 3 on 17th and 1 on 18th. JULY: singles on 3rd, 5th and 24th. AUGUST: 4 on 22nd. SEPTEMBER: 1 on 11th, 3 on 12th, 1 on 13th, 13 on 18th, 7 on 20th, 1 on 21st, 5 on 22nd and 1 on 25th. NOVEMBER: 4 on 2nd, 2 on 8th, 2 on 12th, 4 on 14th and 15th, 1 on 16th, 1 on 17th, 1 on 18th, 1 on 23rd and 9 on 25th.

*The 59 on March 26th probably a spring record for the area. {PM}

RINGED PLOVER

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 18. FEB: 26. MAR: 22. APR: 20. MAY: 266. JUN: 52. JULY: 22. AUG: 215. SEP: 640*. OCT: 226. NOV: 52. DEC: 32.

3 displaying pairs seen in spring though breeding was probably put off by constant disturbances, i.e. dog-walkers, kids on motorcycles etc.

*Present on September 8th.

LITTLE-RINGED PLOVER

1 on March 23rd, 1 on April 25th, 1 on May 1st, 1 on May 23rd and 1 on June 4th then in the autumn singles on August 9th, 21st and 22nd, 2 on August 26th and the last one on September 13th.

KENTISH PLOVER

A female on April 5th, a male on May 1st and a female or juvenile on July 31st. Also 2 reported in the November 2001 issue of Birdwatch magazine {the issue Lee Evans makes an idiot of himself in} present on September 12th.

The past year totals are as follows: 1993 – 6, 1994 – 4, 1995 – 5, 1996 – 10, 1997 – 2, 1998 – 5, 1999 – 7, 2000 – 14* and 2001 – 5. Most regular April/May and September.

*8 birds present on September 24th 2000 accounts for the high total.

GOLDEN PLOVER

In the early part of the year 1000+ birds present on a daily basis January to early March with regular counts of 2000 to 4000 which is the norm for the area during the past few years although an enormous number were present in the evening of February 3rd when between 8 to 10,000 or so birds were present, perhaps because most of the southeast region was flooded??? Whatever the true reason for this – at least double the normal peak numbers. Birds started to leave late February to the second week of March with the last record of 16 present on March 18th.

Birds returning in small numbers from the last week of September gradually building up during October {peak 2214 on the 23rd} and 1 to 3000+ birds regular in November/December – peaking at 5000 birds on November 17th, 3270 on November 19th, 6000 on December 6th, 4500 on December 7th and 4466 on December 8th. Numbers dropped dramatically during the cold weather period in late December.

GREY PLOVER

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 319. FEB: 324. MAR: 257. APR: 63. MAY: 66. JUN: 4. JULY: 2. AUG: 23. SEP: 52. OCT: 152. NOV: 163. DEC: 209.

LAPWING

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 10,000+. FEB: 5676. MAR: 1580. APR: 1. MAY: 2. JUN: 6. JULY: 112. AUG: 154. SEP: 830. OCT: 350. NOV: 5000. DEC: 6000.

TURNSTONE

Peak counts of birds present on the mudflat: JAN: 0. FEB: 50. MAR: 98. APR: 84. MAY: 66. JUN: 7. JULY: 4. AUG: 12. SEP: 1. OCT: 70. NOV: 1. DEC: 1.

All of the above counts are of birds moving through the area and were taken from birds feeding on the mudflats. There is however a winter high tide roost present on the beach or rocks below the western under cliff made up of birds which live on the rocks between Pegwell and Ramsgate Harbour. Monthly peaks were 162 in January, 205 in February, 128 in March and 86 in April then 132 in October, 258 in November and 142 in December.

SANDERLING

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 104. FEB: 105. MAR: 128. APR: 98. MAY: 66. JUN: 20. JULY: 31. AUG: 30. SEP: 48. OCT: 22. NOV: 51. DEC: 52.

KNOT

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 607. FEB: 551. MAR: 333. APR: 32. MAY: 30. JUN: 7. JULY: 4. AUG: 38. SEP: 118. OCT: 12. NOV: 157. DEC: 264.

Of note: In recent years most of the common wintering wader numbers have been reasonably stable. The one exception is Knot, which have been wintering in far larger numbers this past two years. In years gone by there were regularly between 130 to 250 or so birds present and since 1998 peak counts have been 166 in 1998, 278 in 1999, 543 in 2000 with 607 birds present on January 22nd 2001.

CURLEW SANDPIPER

The best spring totals I've ever witnessed – as most years we get none at all. The last spring records were in May 1995. The numbers this year were in April 2 on 30th and May 2 on 1st, 1 on 12th, 1 on 13th, 2 on 14th, 1 on 15th to 18th, 9 on 23rd and 1 on 28th.

Autumns counts as follows and are of single birds unless stated. JULY: 20th, 22nd, 24th, 25th and 28th. AUGUST: 2 on 2nd, 2 on 3rd, 5th, 2 on 11th, 2 on 15th, 4 on 16th, 3 on 18th, 22 on 19th, 6 on 20th, 9 on 21st, 4 on 22nd and 2 on 31st. SEPTEMBER: 2 on 2nd, 4 on 4th, 6th, 10 on 7th, 5 on 8th, 3 on 10th, 6 on 11th, 12th, 15th, 18th, 5 on 21st, 2 on 24th, 16 on 25th and 2 on 26th. OCTOBER: 6 on 1st, 4 on 2nd, 5th, 9th, 2 on 10th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th, 27th and 30th. NOVEMBER: 6th. There was also a bird present on the late date of November 29th.

DUNLIN

Peak day count as follows: JAN: 2631. FEB: 2400. MAR: 1720. APR: 142. MAY: 212. JUN: 14. JULY: 180. AUG: 491. SEP: 852. OCT: 916. NOV: 1880. DEC: 2560.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

Probably overlooked, as the areas they seem to be seen in are not checked that often. There were singles seen - all on the western under cliff on January 19th, February 16th and November 14th.

LITTLE STINT

A reasonable spring with in May 2 on 14th then singles on 16th, 18th and 19th then in the autumn: JULY: 1 on 25th. AUGUST: singles on 2nd, 6th and 10th. SEPTEMBER: 1 on 7th, 2 on 9th, 1 on 10th, 2 on 11th, 1 on 12th, 6 on 14th, 2 on 17th, 1 on 18th, 1 on 24th and 4 on 25th. OCTOBER: 3 on 5th, 4 on 9th, 4 on 22nd, 6 on 23rd, 5 on 25th, 1 on 26th and 2 on 30th. NOVEMBER: 1 on 5th, 7 on 6th, 1 on 12th, 1 on 14th, 1 on 15th, 1 on 19th, 1 on 22nd and 2 on 26th. DECEMBER: 1 on 1st.

Birds present much later than normal this year, as they are generally scarce after late October.

TEMMINCK'S STINT

An above average total with singles seen briefly on May 25th and 27th then a slightly longer staying individual on September 8th.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER

A juvenile present for an hour or so seen by the old codgers on August 15th then a second juvenile with a flock of dunlin seen by me and Barry on September 7th definitely first records for the area. These records sandwiched an adult bird seen at Grove also found by the afore-mentioned codgers. No other British birds were reported though there were a few records of this scarce Siberian vagrant reported from mainland Europe though like the Grove bird these were all adults apparently. As a side-note one of the old codgers {the one that dribbles a lot} thought both Pegwell birds could have been the same individual. I would find this difficult to believe as I visited the reserve every day between the two sightings and would surely have noticed the bird as it stood out like a sore thumb! You silly old codger Mr. Laslett! Mind you he is in his late 90s, though he claims 65.

RUFF

JANUARY: 4 on 28th. MARCH: 2 on 30th. JULY: singles on 18th, 22nd and 25th. AUGUST: singles on 10th, 11th, 15th, 18th and 21st, 3 on 23rd, 1 on 25th and 3 on 26th. SEPTEMBER: 1 on 17th, 4 on 24th and 2 on 25th. OCTOBER: 1 on 5th, 1 on 18th and 2 on 23rd. NOVEMBER: 2 on 2nd and 1 on 7th. DECEMBER: 3 on 3rd.

CURLEW

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 551. FEB: 646. MAR: 382. APR: 235. MAY: 31. JUN: 191. JULY: 394. AUG: 446. SEP: 335. OCT: 438. NOV: 340. DEC: 211.

WHIMBREL

The first arrival on April 7th with spring migrants recorded regularly from then up to the end of May usually in small groups but there were counts of 25 present on May 9th and 56 on May 10th. There was also a large flock of approximately 130 birds seen flying into the bay past Deal pier on May 5th.

Autumn birds late June to September 22nd with all the highest counts recorded during July and August with 28 on July 26th and 23 on August 5th the best days.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

FEBRUARY: 1 on 10th, 2 on 16th and 3 on 17th. MARCH: 3 on 23rd. MAY: singles on 20th and 21st. JUNE: 1 on 28th. JULY: 1 on 3rd, 2 on 5th, 1 on 8th, 1 on 9th, 1 on 10th, 7 on 11th, 1 on 12th, 1 on 15th, 1 on 16th, 1 on 18th, 1 on 19th, 1 on 22nd, 3 on 25th, 1 on 28th and 3 on 31st. AUGUST: 1 on 7th, 9 on 16th, 6 on 17th, 1 on 18th, 5 on 25th, 9 on 26th, 58 on 27th*, 3 on 28th and 1 on 31st. SEPTEMBER: 1 on 21st, 2 on 22nd, 2 on 24th and 2 on 25th. OCTOBER: 2 on 6th, 2 on 7th, 2 on 9th, 1 on 10th and 1 on 29th. NOVEMBER: singles on 9th, 21st and 22nd then 2 on 24th. DECEMBER: 1 to 4 present most of the month plus 61 present on the 22nd.*

*The 58 on 27th of August were probably an area record the 61 on 22nd of December certainly were!

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 304. FEB: 332. MAR: 245. APR: 34. MAY: 264. JUN: 2. JULY: 4. AUG: 8. SEP: 21. OCT: 19. NOV: 91. DEC: 195.

REDSHANK

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 350. FEB: 421. MAR: 210. APR: 106. MAY: 26. JUN: 37. JULY: 291. AUG: 505. SEP: 450. OCT: 437. NOV: 324. DEC: 122.

SPOTTED REDSHANK

1 to 3+ birds winter in the area {January to early March and November to December} with migrants as follows: JUNE: 1 on 10th, JULY: 1 on 7th, AUGUST: 3 on 5th, 1 on 13th, 1 on 22nd and 1 on 27th. SEPTEMBER: singles on 3rd, 10th and 11th. OCTOBER: 1 on 3rd.

GREENSHANK

Common in reasonable numbers from April 25th to the end of May returning during July with birds regularly recorded until November 4th. Double figure counts taken on only two dates during the spring movement and in the autumn 16 on July 27th, 20 on August 9th, 77 on August 19th, 40 on August 20th, 20 on August 24th and 20 on October 21st - the most noteworthy days. There was also unusual records of one flying around the bay on February 9th but not seen in the area after plus singles present on the very late dates of December 1st and 5th.

WOOD SANDPIPER

Never common at Pegwell, but scarcer than normal this year with only one bird reported - seen flying north on August 19th.

COMMON SANDPIPER

In the spring present on and off between April 25th to May 15th with high counts of 7 on May 9th and 11 on May 13th. 1 on June 18th then regular from July 3rd to late September - mainly 1 to 4 birds with a peak of only 6 on September 24th. A late bird was present in the Turnstone roost from October 2nd to the 19th then it or another bird was seen on November 7th.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Birds present as follows: APRIL: 1 on 2nd. MAY: 1 on 11th, 2 on 13th and 1 on 24th. JULY: singles on 23rd and 27th. AUGUST: singles on 2nd, 13th, 15th, 17th, 20th, 22nd, 25th and 28th. SEPTEMBER: 1 on 4th.

WOODCOCK

Singles on January 2nd and 18th, February 18th, March 29th and November 1st.

SNIPE

Peak day counts as follows: JAN: 66. FEB: 160. MAR: 42. APR: 1. MAY: 0. JUN: 0. JULY: 0. AUG: 10. SEP: 46. OCT: 270. NOV: 147. DEC: 250+.

All 100+ day counts as follows: 128 on February 2nd, 160 on February 3rd, 204 on October 22nd, 120 on October 23rd, 160 on October 24th, 150 on October 25th, 270 on October 26th, 165 on October 27th, 140 on November 7th, 120 on November 10th, 147 on November 12th and 250+ on December 1st.

JACK SNIPE

I still haven't bought any new Wellingtons and I only could only be bothered to risk a wet foot {which I got} on February 4th when I flushed a single bird from the garage pools. They are reasonably easy to flush {1 to 5+ birds} around both the garage pools and the pools near Stone lees from late October to February. Francis, who incidentally also has leaky wellies - flushed 9 on December 24th.

GREY PHALAROPE

One seen flying north - through the bay on November 14th.

GREAT SKUA

1 present offshore on September 4th and 1 south on November 8th.

POMERINE SKUA

An adult north - on May the forth. That rhymes...doesn't it!

ARCTIC SKUA

1 on July 12th, 1 on August 4th, 1 on August 6th, 1 on August 13th, 2 on August 28th, 1 on September 5th, 1 south on September 10th, 1 on September 12th and 1 north on November 14th.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

Single birds unless stated: JAN: 0. FEB: 26th. MAR: 9th, 13th, 14th, 28th and 31st. APRIL: 2 on 3rd, 2 on 4th, 6th, 8th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 23rd and 29th. MAY: 7th, 12th and 14th. JUNE: 16th and 28th. JULY: 6th, 2 on 8th, 9th, 11th, 16th {first juvenile} 18th and 24th. AUG: 11th, 14th, 18th, 19th, 21st, 27th and 28th. SEPT: 10th. OCT: 23rd and 24th. NOV: 18th and 26th. DEC: 2nd and 10th.

LITTLE GULL

Single birds unless stated: JAN: 2nd and 2 on 22nd. FEB: 0. MAR: 23rd. APR: 2 on 14th & 1 on 15th. MAY: 0. JUN: 0. JLY: 24th. AUG: 0. SEPT: 0. OCT: 0. NOV: 0. DEC: 0.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Peak day counts of birds present: JAN: 1700. FEB: 3140. MAR: 2750. APR: 93. MAY: 57. JUN: 117. JLY: 2500. AUG: 7100. SEP: 4500. OCT: 2000. NOV: 3500. DEC: 2200.

COMMON GULL

Peak day counts of birds present: JAN: 1047. FEB: 1477. MAR: 1000. APR: 83. MAY: 12. JUN: 3. JLY: 62. AUG: 350. SEP: 1480. OCT: 1600. NOV: 1200. DEC: 1960.

Of note: Presumably a reasonable number of the wintering Common Gulls are of the eastern race *Larus Canus Heinei* as there are many far darker mantled birds present with the normal birds. These birds originate from Eastern Europe where the Common Gulls are slightly larger with obviously darker mantles. If as suspected these eastern Gulls are regularly present, a Common Gull seen on December 18th might be worth a mention at this point. The size and head shape, bill length as well as mantle colour etc suggested something completely different to the supposed *Heinei*. There is if you go even further east the largest of all the common type gulls – Kamchatka Gull, a bird which needs to be considered as it was quite unlike any Common Gull I have ever seen. Unfortunately they are a pig to identify! I know Francis will be captivated by this bit...especially as it is considered by some to be a full specie! Anyway the bird flew off and was never seen again so we will never know for sure but it's worthy of note if not purely to get up the hairy Gull haters nose.

KITTIWAKE

JANUARY: 7 dates peaking with 4 on two dates. MAY: 5 dates including 21 south on 18th. JUNE: 1 on 16th. JULY: 6 dates. AUGUST: 8 dates. SEPTEMBER: 1 date. NOVEMBER: 4 dates including 50 south on 8th and 13 north on 14th.

RING-BILLED GULL

One of December 2000 second winter birds {first seen on Dec. 31st} present on January 1st and 3rd. {PM} Typically I've waited for years to see one at Pegwell then two turn up in one winter!

HERRING GULL

Peak day counts of birds present: JAN: 2500. FEB: 1489. MAR: 650. APR: 473. MAY: 1260. JUN: 1610. JLY: 960. AUG: 654. SEP: 1500. OCT: 1700. NOV: 600. DEC: 1240.

As well as the normal race {Larus Argentatus} good numbers of the northern race birds {Larus Argentatus} present during the winter months. There were also two adult Herring Gulls with yellow legs {one bird with an amber iris} present on November 21st and 22nd. As there were a fair few of the northern race birds turning up at the time {and present} I think they may have been of the Finnish race Larus Omissus??? This is pure speculation as I can find no literature to substantiate their origins. A bit worrying when you see the next sub-specie.

AMERICAN HERRING GULL {Larus Smithsonianus}

A first winter bird present for a couple of hours or so before flying off south on February 17th. If accepted not only a new bird for Pegwell but a new bird for Kent and probably the east coast of Britain? Hang on...I've just accepted it...so it's in! In all truth - an ugly brute! {PM, BC}

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL (*Larus Michahellis*)

JAN: 13 birds on 9 dates. FEB: 12 on 8 dates. MAR: 1 on 1 date. APR: 0. MAY: 1 second summer on 3 dates – same bird? JUN: 1 second summer. JUL: 3 on 3 dates. AUG: 4 on 3 dates. SEPT: 1 on 1 date. OCT: 3 on 3 dates. NOV: 23 on 14 dates. DEC: 9 on 7 dates.

Mostly present in ones and twos with the best dates as follows: 3 on January 22nd, 4 on January 30th, 3 on February 10th, 3 on November 16th, 18th and 19th plus 3 on December 21st. Please note that birds are probably overlooked during the summer months as the light at this time of the year makes gull watching – especially distant birds – very difficult.

Past years totals as follows: 1998 – 7 birds on 6 dates. 1999 - 19 on 16 dates. 2000 – 21 on 18 dates.

CASPIAN GULL (*Larus Cachinnans*)

The best year to date for these stunning birds. 2 adult birds were present on January 2nd, another adult on February 6th, a probable first winter on February 20th, a first summer on May 13^{th*}, then in the second part of the year a third/forth winter on November 2nd, a first winter on November 19th and a second winter on November 21st.

Not properly identified until a few years ago this represent all the records of Caspian gulls ever reported in the area: 1998: 1 bird. {In December} 1999: 4 birds. {One in November then three birds together on December 15th} 2000: 5 birds. {One in January, one in February, two in November and one in December}

GLAUCOUS GULL

A first winter present December 3rd to 8th, a second winter on December 4th, a first summer on April 13th and a first winter on December 22nd.

The past few winters records are: 1998 –3, 1999 – 4, 2000 – 7 dates and 2001 – 4.

GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL

Peak day counts of birds present: JAN: 421. FEB: 260. MAR: 42. APR: 33. MAY: 60. JUN: 360. JULY: 192. AUG: 198. SEP: 380. OCT: 1000+. NOV: 540. DEC: 890.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL

Peak day counts of birds present: JAN: 32. FEB: 169. MAR: 79. APR: 46. MAY: 46. JUN: 26. JULY: 86. AUG: 297. SEP: 210. OCT: 800. NOV: 65. DEC: 96.

SANDWICH TERN

The wintering bird present January to March and was seen fairly regularly until the first migrants turned up on March 10th. Spring migration day counts between March to June turned up 100+ birds on 14 dates including peak counts of 320 on April 28th, 460 on April 29th and 242 on May 1st.

Autumn passage turned up some spectacular numbers of birds present offshore during July and August with 100 to 400+ birds almost daily, 500+ on 9 occasions plus 876 on July 17th, 739 on July 18th, 660 on July 21st, 717 on August 3rd, 667 on August 8th, 640 on August 11th, 750 on August 12th and 673 on August 13th. Also during this period the highest numbers of juveniles I personally have seen with 134 present on July 12th and 166 on July 13th!

. After this ever present during September with 130 on 4th, 130 on 7th and 150 on 10th with October seeing off the dregs with birds present until the 13th of the month. On the 5th of November the wintering bird returned again and was regular until the end of the year.

Checking back through my notes I first saw a wintering Sandwich Tern way back in the winter of 1993 and as there has been a single bird every winter since it does have good credentials for being the same bird for its 9th winter.

Of note a reasonable number of the autumn birds were colour coded...blue ones, orange and some brown ones.

COMMON TERN

Spring migration mainly April 2nd to May 21st with birds recorded on 22 dates during this period with highs during May of 36 on 5th, 38 on 13th, 27 on 14th and 42 present on 16th. There were a few late May/June records though in small numbers.

Autumn numbers as would be expected much higher with biggest numbers present during July and August - with 96 on 30th and 81 on 31st the July peaks - plus in August 160 on 7th, 187 on 8th, 160 on 11th, 420 on 12th, 360 on 13th and 375 on 16th. After this birds recorded reasonably regularly until the second week in October then a gap until a very late record of one present on October 31st.

ARCTIC TERN

In the spring birds present in small numbers {1 to 7 birds} on 10 dates between April 23rd and May 18th with a peak count of 23 on May 14th. A reasonable total this, as they can be quite scarce in the spring for some reason.

Autumn migrants recorded on 14 dates between July 11th and August 16th with 2 on 2 dates, 3 on July 22nd and peaks of a lowly 4 birds present on July 18th, August 12th and August 16th. Surprisingly there were no records after the end of August. An awful autumn.

ROSEATE TERN

A hatful of records this year. Only one spring record – 2 on May 10th followed by a fantastic autumn with birds present on 11 dates during July and August. They were as follows: In July singles on 10th, 16th, 18th, 19th, 21st and 22nd then 2 on 29th and 1 on 30th. During August singles on 7th and 12th and finally 2 on 16th. Quite a few of the birds were ringed – some with single metal rings others with a metal ring on each leg, which seemed a bit strange? Also of note is that as some of the birds were ringed I can say with some confidence that very few if any of the birds were present on more than one date. Though reasonably regular they have rarely lingered in the bay in past years.

Past year totals are as follows: 1995 – 5, 1996 – 8, 1997 – 4, 1998 – 10, 1999 – 4, 2000 – 9 which puts the 2001 total of 15 birds into perspective. July is by far the most productive time of year.

LITTLE TERN

The spring migration turned up birds on 19 dates between April 25th to May 22nd with peaks of 12 on May 5th, 17 on May 11th, 13 on May 12th and 14 on May 14th.

In the autumn birds recorded on 39 dates from June 27th to October 2nd with double figure counts on 6 dates peaking at 23 birds present on July 18th.

BLACK TERN

2 present on April 25th then in the autumn 32 birds recorded on 13 dates between July 19th and October 7th. All recorded in singles or pairs except for 4 birds on August 11th and 15 birds on August 19th.

The past year totals are: 1998: Only 5 birds on 3 dates. 1999: 89* birds on 15 dates. 2000: 20 birds on 9 dates. Almost all autumn records – not even annual in spring.

*Numbers boosted by 71 birds on August 7th of that year.

LITTLE AUK

4+ birds either present - or north - or both on November 14th. {PM, BC} I do hope this makes sense? If it doesn't ...think about it. Got it yet?

AUK SPECIES

A total of 101 south and 6 north January/February with a peak of 26 south on January 27th then 51 south during November including 31 south on the 14th.

There were also occasional birds {all guillemots} present offshore during the winter months.

RAZORBILL

The only positive identifications were 1 south on November 14th and this was closely followed by no others.

WOODPIGEON

Yes, there were Wood Pigeons. Lets face facts here, in the last few reports I have laboriously recorded my own counts of this rather dull specie {no-one else has given me any of theirs!} and as I sit here at 2.34 a.m. pondering how to present what amounts to boring Pigeon counts – it's just occurred to me – why do I bother? I'm sure no-one gives a monkeys!! I could put anything down under Wood Pigeon and no-ones going to look at it! Can I blame them?...NO. Alright I will begrudgingly write only one sentence to summarise the Pegwell Pigeons. Here it comes: Peak of birds present...620 on January 2nd, plus 300+ north on March 30th, 550 north on April 11th and 80 north on April 22nd. Riveting stuff eh!

STOCK DOVE

142 present on January 6th then peak counts of 75 in February, 58 in March, 36 in April, 20 in May then very few until I saw 60 on September 21st after which I stopped counting them and got a life!

There is just something about Pigeons isn't there.

COLLARED DOVE

A reasonably common bird with 10 to 20 birds present during the winter months with good numbers present on the surrounding fields in late summer/autumn. High counts of 60 on August 10th, 120 on September 22nd and 40 on October 18th. If this bits boring I do apologise.

TURTLE DOVE

Seen regularly from April 25th to late September. The 10 or so territories/breeding areas this year is exceptional as there is approximately half this number in a normal year.

CUCKOO

Common from April 25th to the first week of July with between 1 to 6 birds present. After this only 2 records of single birds on July 28th and August 9th.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET

Present daily in small numbers mainly around the houses at Cliffsend. They roost north of the reserve and can be seen in reasonably decent numbers most evenings. Highest counts taken this past year were in September with 48 on 18th and 25 on 30th.

BARN OWL

A pair of birds were present during January to March and showed on most afternoons when weather conditions were favourable across the river in the 100-acre field. After this single birds were noted on June 1st, September 25th and December 27th.

SHORT-EARED OWL

In the early part of the year wintering birds were seen regularly in the 100-acre field in ones and twos on 28 dates up to March 27th. There were also 3 birds present on January 6th and 27th. Birds were regular again from September 20th to the end of the year with again up to 3 birds seen hunting in the normal area. There were also birds seen migrating on October 10th and November 10th. The most shorties we've seen in the area for many years.

LONG-EARED OWL

2 on January 5th, 1 on January 25th, 1 on April 29th, 1 on August 15th to 17th, {same bird} 1 on October 22nd, 1 in off the sea on November 14th and 1 on November 26th with most of the birds seen along the sea wall/salt marsh area or on the country park.

LITTLE OWL

Odd birds heard or seen in Stone lees March to May then singles seen on the Country Park on October the 1st and 30th.

SWIFT

The first bird showed up on April 25th and they were regular up to the end of August. Peak numbers were recorded as follows: 400 north on May 19th, 2000+ on June 4th, 1000 present on June 11th, 2000 south on July 20th, 1000 on July 28th, 1000 on August 12th and 500 north on August 31st. I have no September records at all - though there must have been some and the last stragglers were seen on October 4th.

KINGFISHER

1 on January 24th, 1 on August 17th plus singles on 2 dates in September, 4 dates in October and 3 dates in November.

BEE-EATER

One or more heard calling {but not seen} on May 15th {CS, PM} then one seen flying north {By Barry} on May 18th.

HOOPOE

One spotted on the old Hover port on April 9th. {PM} Frustratingly a dog walker - who was completely oblivious to its presence, was continually flushing it!!! There was also another one seen flying in off the sea from Ramsgate Harbour on April 30th. {Kenton} As it is borderline as to whether or not this second bird is actually in the recording area this record will be put before the Pegwell bay Ornithology and line dancing committee to see if the record is acceptable? I've just consulted myself and the verdict is unanimous...it's in! I've just realised where Lee Evans gets off on his recording lark. I am now you're self appointed judge and jury. Please note the newly appointed committee will now accept any dodgy record - only if your face fits or the bribe is big enough. Amen.

GREEN WOODPECKER

1 to 4 birds present most days during the autumn/winter months with odd ones and twos in-between.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

An increase of birds in recent years. Present throughout the year on most days with around 4 to 6+ birds present in the autumn months. Again the breeding birds across the road from Stone Lees and possibly another pair this year - near Little Cliffsend Farm?

SKYLARK

5 singing males present in the spring, around a dozen wintering birds - with no significant visible migration noted - {only} 30 flyovers on November 14th the peak count.

WOODLARK

One present in a large flock of Meadow Pipits across on Saint Augustine's golf course on March 21st.

SHORE LARK

I flat refuse to call them Horned Lark!! Anyway gripe over...there was a flock of 5 birds in off the sea flying off north and never seen again - on November 14th. {PM, BC}

SAND MARTIN

Seen on only 14 dates between March 23rd and the end of May in the spring with peaks of only 4 birds on 4 dates!

Larger numbers moving from July to September with 170 north on July 15th, 530 north on July 18th, 500+ south on July 21st and 100 north on August 31st. The last record was 3 on October 2nd.

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SWALLOW

Spring birds moving from March 29th to May with 80 north on April 23rd, 60 north on April 28th, 100+ north on May 8th and 80 birds on May 12th the best days.

As usual far larger movements were noted from August to October. The highest numbers were 2000 north on August 31st, 1000 north on September 7th, 500 north on September 9th, 1000 north on September 20th, 1000 south on September 25th and 600 north on October 4th. The last bird was seen on November 4th.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW

One flying around the garage pools area seen by the Doc. on April 27th. {BC} Also a massive flock of none whatsoever not seen on April 29th even though we spent all day trying. It's getting a bit Monty Python this - isn't it? I do apologise.

HOUSE MARTIN

Another awful spring with the first one seen on April 7th with peaks of 10 on April 26th, 20 on May 14th and 30 on May 23rd.

Autumn passage peaks recorded mainly during October with peaks of 120 north on September 25th, 2200 south on October 4th, 2100 north on October 10th and 300 south on October 11th. The last record of the year was on October 23rd.

ROCK PIPIT

Common {on the under cliff mainly} and ever present January to early April and September to the end of the year. Peak numbers were recorded in November with 8 on the 12th then 12 on the 15th.

Littoralis ROCK PIPIT

One on March 12th then 3 on one day later on in March. {See page one}

WATER PIPIT

Another good year with singles on January 18th, November 5th plus possibly another one on November 15th?

TREE PIPIT

Scarce. Singles on April 22nd, April 24th, September 21st and then a huge flock of 2 on September 25th.

MEADOW PIPIT

Present in small numbers during the winter months – between 10 to 20 or so – with 5 or 6 pairs staying on to breed. Best days of spring migration were: 90 present on March 22nd, 60 present on March 23rd and 25 south on March 27th.

Autumn peaks were: 90 present on September 25th, 120 south on October 3rd and 200+ south on October 9th.

TAWNY PIPIT

One was present briefly before flying off north on May 13th. {PM}

PIED WAGTAIL

A dozen or so birds present during the winter months – mainly along the cliff top/beach areas with poor amounts noted moving during both spring and autumn. Peak movements were 18 flyovers on October 4th and 20+ birds present on October 18th though some movements may have gone unrecorded. At least one pair present during the breeding period along the west cliff area.

WHITE WAGTAIL

19 birds recorded on 10 dates between February 19th and April 12th, with a peak of only 4 birds on March 27th. I couldn't be asked to sort the autumn birds out and nobody else reported any.

GREY WAGTAIL

Recorded on 15 dates February 8th to April 7th then July 25th to October 18th. Almost all records of birds flying over {most regular in October} with peaks of 3 on October 4th, 4 on October 5th and 3 on October 13th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL

The first record on April 1st - though not moving regularly until the last week or so of the month. From then on regular movement in small numbers until well into May with highs of only 6 birds on a few dates during this period. As usual a few pairs bred around the top fields. The autumn migration was very poor though there were 30+ birds south on August 16th plus 13 on the following day. The last record was of one present on October 9th.

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL

One present in the car park on April 24th and then a singing/displaying male present on little cliffsend farm fields May 12th to June 18th at least. The first record of breeding behaviour recorded in the area as far as I'm aware?

WAXWING

A flock of 9 birds flew south on January 30th. {PM}

WREN

17 singing males on the reserve in the spring plus about...ooh...er...probably 5 or 6 elsewhere.

DUNNOCK

Approximately 20 pairs within the recording area. Yawn.

ROBIN

7 pairs on the reserve, 6+ others with 200+ migrants on September 24th and 100+ on October 17th.

NIGHTINGALE

Present from April 12th with 3 singing males present around the reserve and Stone Lees through the breeding season, which is an increase as there is normally only one pair. Also it is the first time they have bred on the Country Park.

REDSTART

2 on May 11th, 1 on May 13th, 2 on September 21st, 5 on September 26th and singles on September 27th and October 2nd.

BLACK REDSTART

All the spring birds recorded during March with 15 birds recorded on 9 dates between the 15th and the 31st with 4 on the 24th and 3 on the 30th the best days then scarce in the autumn with singles on October 4th and 18th only. There was also a juv/f. bird present along the western under cliff/harbour area November – December joined by a nice adult male, which was present from December 14th.

WHINCHAT

Singles on April 25th and May 10th then in the autumn 21 birds recorded on 9 dates between September 5th and October 9th with peaks of 6 on September 24th and 3 on October 3rd.

STONECHAT

Are you children sitting comfortably? Good...then we will begin. I know a song about a Stonechat and here is how it goes:

I saw a little Stonechat sitting in a tree, I approached the little Stonechat – but he began to flee,
The silly little Stonechat flew away from me – they're lovely little Stonechats – I'm sure you would agree!

Sorry about that...now where was I???

Regular and seen on most days during January and February { 1 to 3 birds } singles on March 9th, April 9th and May 10th then none until September 22nd { about 11.30 am } then present most days until the end of the year. Peak counts were 6 birds present on November 5th and 12th.

WHEATEAR

68 birds recorded on 17 dates between March 24th to May 26th in the spring with peaks of 19 on May 1st and 9 on May 9th. In the autumn 64 birds recorded on 16 dates August 6th to October 22nd with peaks of 12 on September 21st and 17 on September 25th during this period. There was also a bird present on the western under cliff on the ridiculously late dates of November 6th to the 15th at least.

RING OUZEL

In the spring singles on March 24th, April 25th, April 27th, May 9th, May 14th and 2 on May 15th. Then in the autumn: 1 on September 26th and into October 2 on 17th, 1 on 18th, 1 on 23rd and 3 on 28th.

BLACKBIRD

Blah blah blah ... blah blah blah etc. They breed and migrate...they also eat.

FIELDFARE

2 on February 23rd, 1 on April 25th, 6 on October 18th, 1 on October 24th, 23 on October 28th, 15 on November 5th, 1 on November 7th and 1 on November 15th the only records given to me.

REDWING

Scarce in the early part of the year with a peak of only 12 birds present on March 24th and the last record on March 30th.

The first returning bird was seen on September 22nd and they were present reasonably regular thereafter – mainly around the Stone lees area – again in small numbers. The peak count during this period was 30 birds present on October 28th.

SONG THRUSH

See Blackbird.

MISTLE THRUSH

3 breeding pairs in the area with hardly any migrants noted. The highest count I took was only 6 birds on October 18th!!

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

A good scattering of singing spring birds with singles on April 7th and May 2nd with one present in Stone Lees May 1st to the 3rd at least.

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SEDGE WARBLER

13 singing males counted on the reserve in the spring with 6 more pairs within the recording area. Huge numbers present in the early autumn, but not recorded. First and last dates were April 7th and October 3rd respectively.

REED WARBLER

A decent amount of breeding pairs - with 9 pairs on the reserve and 4 more in the other areas. No migrant counts taken with birds present from April 18th to late September.

MARSH WARBLER

One heard singing {from thick cover near the Viking Ship} on May 27th. {PM}

MELODIOUS WARBLER

A singing male present in the trees on Little Cliffsend farm on May 9th. {PM} As far as I am aware this is probably the first site record?

GARDEN WARBLER

Present from May 1st with 2 pairs breeding - with a peak count of 5 present on May 5th and the last record on October 3rd. That's it!

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Poorly recorded though noted first on April 22nd and the last on October 10th with 8 singing males present during the breeding period. The highest count of migrants I have was 6 birds on May 7th.

WHITETHROAT

Again migrants poorly recorded. There were 35 pairs counted on the Country Park/Stone Lees plus at least 10 more pairs within the rest of the recording area. 100s present around the reserve in the early autumn but we were all too lazy to try and count them! First and last dates were April 7th and October 3rd.

BLACKCAP

About 8 breeding pairs {which is more than normal} with the first record on April 1st and the last one on October 23rd. Again little effort was made to count migrating birds. Oh yes I've just remembered there was one on...er...um...when was it now???...that's it...no...er...etc. It's not easy all this remembering stuff you know.

WOOD WARBLER

One singing in Stone Lees on May 7th the first spring record since the last one in the spring.

DUSKY WARBLER

One present in the hedgerow along Chiltern Lane on November 14th. Another new bird for the area methinks? {PM}

WILLOW WARBLER

Recorded between March 30th to late September. About 10 pairs bred which is about normal, and they were about in very low numbers during migration time with no large numbers present -especially so in the autumn. Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish...rubbish...times one million! Not a very scientific assessment I'll grant you but one which sums up the past year perfectly I'd say.

CHIFFCHAFF

In the early part of the year 2 wintering birds with spring arrivals from mid March. The highest spring count was only 10 on April 10th with a few pairs staying on to breed. Regular during autumn up to mid - November with a peak count of 60+ birds present on October 8th.

TRISTIS - CHIFFCHAFF

A well marked Siberian race bird {with no tail} present on the Country Park on November 5th.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER

A report of one in the sunken garden on the weekend of the 20th/21st of October then 1 in Stone Lees on October 23rd {PM} and one heard calling by Dylan on October 27th. We've been debating as to why anyone in their right mind would name one of their offspring Dylan? We did ask both his mother Ermintrude Wrathall and his father Zebedee Wrathall but they both declined to comment.

GOLDCREST

Probably the worst year ever - a big statement and one I have no proof of, but I would bet I'm right! A few scattered records March to April with a peak of only 6 on March 24th and 26th and in the autumn, though admittedly a tad more regular a laughable best day count of only 8 present on October 3rd. There was a pair...singing male etc. hanging about around an area at the north end of the cycle path - though possible breeding was dismissed by the hairy one...he is a misery isn't he? Along with breeding Goldcrests in Thanet he also knows very little about lots of things he makes out he does, such as moths - for instance - of which he has a huge and very dodgy list...also everything else! Thank you.

FIRECREST

Only 2 in the spring both on March 30th then scarce in the autumn - all during October with 1 on 18th, 1 on 23rd and 24th, 2 on 26th and the last one on the 28th. Rubbish!

PIED FLYCATCHER

Only 2 records this year and both – unusually - in the spring, with one in Stone Lees on May 7th and the other one on the cliff top on May 14th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

A decent spring with in May 1 on 12th, 3 on 14th, 5 on 15th and 1 on 27th then 1 on June 5th. Back to normal in the autumn though with only a few records-all in Stone lees...sorry no dates! Sometime between August and October let's say.

BLUE TIT

7 to 9 pairs?

GREAT TIT

7 to 9 pairs?

LONG-TAILED TIT

4 breeding pairs with 20 or so present in the winter months - which is around average though there were incredible numbers present in the autumn with around 60 or so present one day in late October! There was also a pair breeding in Tattooed Tony's beard – I think that's what they were anyway? I suppose they could have been huge fleas? No...no...I will stick with long-tailed tits. Fleas don't build a huge fluffy nest. He does have fleas though.

STARLING

Counts of 15 to 20,000+ birds seen flying in to roost in Ramsgate in January and February - then in slightly smaller numbers in November. Breeding numbers again ignored though I did take the time and effort to record the following: March peak – 1000+ {roost} April 120, May £\$%”, June 600, July 6000, August 7500 {roost} September *&^>? October lots, November even more lots and December @~### I do hope you lot appreciate these counts.

Past year totals as follows: 1995 – 14,565,779. 1996 – 18 {I couldn't be bothered that year}

1997 – 13,654,890. 1998 – 12, 296,471. 1999 – 6,584.231. 2000 – 21,841,345*

* I was well pleased with the 2000 totals as this beats F. Sollys all time record of 21,841,343 birds he claimed back in 1978. With tears welling up in his eyes he actually tried to insinuate that some of my birds were probably Waxwings and therefore rendered my fantastic and hard earned year total as dodgy - before stomping off in a huff! Clear off back to Foreness you whinging tart!

JAY

1 to 4 birds seen on and off {mainly} around the Hover-port/cliff top areas or in Stone lees.

MAGPIE

5 to 10 or so birds present daily. A peak of 15 birds present in March also one breeding pair.

JACKDAW

Occasional birds either present on the farm fields {up to 6} or odd singles or pairs flying across the reserve. No double figure counts of migration noted.

CARRION CROW

Counts only taken from January to April and again from September to December. Peak day counts during this period were: JANUARY: 35. FEBRUARY: 83. MARCH: 73. APRIL: 56.

Then: SEPTEMBER: 70. OCTOBER: 113. NOVEMBER: 121. DECEMBER: no counts taken.

ROOK

A peak count of 20 birds present in the farm fields in March.

TREE SPARROW

A pair breeding and seen in the normal area in April and May plus single flyovers on October 4th and 25th.

HOUSE SPARROW

10 to 20 present with a flock of 80+ present around the fields in August.

CHAFFINCH

Although regularly recorded in the area only present in very small {and insignificant} numbers with almost no migration of any note, in fact the highest count I recorded was a paltry 50 birds north on March 27th! Even though the best visible migration spot was under-watched this still represents an incredibly low number for a coastal watch point. What's happened to all of the finch migration this past few years? There were however up to 5 pairs breeding in the area.

BRAMBLING

Only 5 single birds recorded on April 12th and 22nd, then October 9th and 29th and finally one on November 5th. Pathetic!

SERIN

A female present on the cliff top path on April 9th. {PM}

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SISKIN

13 birds on 3 dates in the spring {6 on April 10th} then in the autumn 166 north and 31 south on 14 dates from September to November with 25 north on September 18th and 24th plus 50+ north on September 21st the best days.

GREENFINCH

5+ pairs breeding with 5 to 20+ birds regularly present. Very little visible migration noted of any interest whatsoever!

GOLDFINCH

7 breeding pairs with a few birds wintering plus highest numbers recorded in March/April and September/October. Of note 40 north on April 17th, 92 south on October 3rd, 120 present on October 9th and 80 present on October 19th.

BULLFINCH

Regular and present in small numbers in Stone lees - with only occasional sightings in other parts of the area.

REDPOLL

7 birds south on 3 dates in April then in the autumn 15 birds on 10 dates {mainly October} with a peak of only 4 on October 29th.

TWITE

2 on January 8th and 4 on February 2nd were the only records in the early part of the year. There were also 5 birds present from November 2nd to the 15th at least, then 8 on the 16th but these did not linger. There was also a single bird west on December 30th.

LINNET

20+ breeding pairs in the area. The best days of migration noted in the spring were 138 north and 46 south on March 23rd and 225 south on April 12th. There were also 140 birds present on March 27th and 260 present on April 3rd.

No decent movements were noted in the autumn but there were up to 70 birds present around the Country Park during this period.

CROSSBILL

One north on September 13th.

CORN BUNTING

Reported on only 21 dates throughout the year in very small numbers, mainly 1 to 4 birds. The peak count of only 13 birds in to roost on April 18th reflects the serious decline of Corn Buntings around the reserve in recent years.

REED BUNTING

You'll have to make do with peak day counts...so there! JAN: didn't count any. FEB: 30 on 21st. MAR: 6. APR: 5 pairs present. MAY: no counts...in fact none until: OCT: 20 south on 9th and 50+ present on the Country Park on 27th. NOV: 40 on 15th. DEC: three and a half.

YELLOWHAMMER

Another bird in decline in the area with birds reported on only 2 dates – 1 on October 26th and 2 spotted in the third week of December.

SNOW BUNTING

2 on November 14th, 6 on November 17th, 1 on November 18th, 10 on November 24th, 1 on December 1st and 6 on December 29th. All birds except the 1 on December 1st were seen across on Shellness Point.

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*Please note: Tattooed Tony's real name is Billy Ball...or should it be William? It is now everybody's duty to start addressing old Billy Boy by his real name.

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