

# DURLSTON

COUNTRY PARK & NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE



Durlston Bird Report  
2011

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Cover photo: Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* by Simon Breeze

## **Acknowledgements**

Durlston are indebted to Jol Mitchell for his time and effort spent going through the weekly summary sheets, Hamish's and the Rangers records and obscure notes, various websites and Dorset bird records to produce this systematic list of birds recorded at Durlston.

Our gratitude also goes to all those who have provided us with records of the birds seen and heard during 2011.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 2011

The records presented in this Systematic List are based largely on the Durlston Rangers' daily Diary entries with additional information from various websites and other sources including Warren Clayton. In comparison with some other Dorset sites (such as Portland Bill and Hengistbury Head), there is little systematic seawatching undertaken at Durlston with the result that sea passage is greatly under-recorded.

In describing the status of species at Durlston, the semantic terms presented below are used.

- Common** occurs regularly at Durlston in large or fairly large numbers during the appropriate period or is widely distributed in suitable habitat; there is a good chance that the species would be seen on most visits during that period.
- Fairly common** occurs in moderate numbers at Durlston during the appropriate period in suitable habitat; there is a reasonable chance that the species would be seen on visits during that period.
- Uncommon** occurs annually in small numbers at Durlston during the appropriate period; the species would not be expected to be seen on most visits.
- Scarce** a species that can be seen in most years at Durlston, but records are few in number (one to ten).
- Rare** a species that occurs at Durlston on a less than annual basis.

These terms are based on those used in *The Birds of Dorset* (Green G., 2004).

The List follows the sequence and scientific names given in the British List: A Checklist of Birds of Britain (7th edition) published in *Ibis* Volume 148 (3), 526-563 by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU), updated by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee: 36th Report (November 2007) published in *Ibis* (2008) 150, 218-220.

Graphs are presented for some species. These show the number of 'bird-days' per week or month (a bird-day is one bird present for one day; hence, two bird-days could be one bird present for two days, or two birds present for one day).

### **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons***

**Scarce, passing offshore in winter.**

Twenty-five birds passed heading west on 14<sup>th</sup> October. Two distant passing birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> February were probably of this species.

### **GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser***

**Scarce, passing offshore.**

There were five records of passing birds: two on 13<sup>th</sup> March, one on 17<sup>th</sup> March, four on 21<sup>st</sup> April, one east on 11<sup>th</sup> October and five on 15<sup>th</sup> October. Birds are likely to be from the resident feral populations in the Avon Valley and Poole Harbour.

### **GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis***

**Rare, passing offshore or overhead.**

There was one record: of a passing bird on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*****Fairly common, passing offshore mainly in autumn and winter.**

The main wintering areas for Brent Geese in Dorset are Poole Harbour and The Fleet. Birds seen at Durlston are probably moving between these and other sites, or taking part in coastal passage during spring and autumn. A total of 308 birds moved east on 4<sup>th</sup> January. Pale-bellied birds were recorded passing on 24<sup>th</sup> February (seven), 20<sup>th</sup> March (two) and 19<sup>th</sup> November (six).

**COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*****Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

Shelduck can normally be seen at Durlston (usually single birds or pairs flying down the coast) at any time of the year, other than in July and August. Records in 2011 conformed to that pattern.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	5	5	4	5	2	0	0	4	0	3	2

**EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*****Scarce, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There were significantly more records of passing Wigeon in 2010 and 2011 than in previous years. Birds passed offshore in the first winter period of 2011 on 2<sup>nd</sup> (12 birds), 4<sup>th</sup> (six) and 22<sup>nd</sup> January (two); and on 3<sup>rd</sup> February (four). In the second winter period, birds passed on 14<sup>th</sup> (two) and 21<sup>st</sup> September (three); 3<sup>rd</sup> (five), 5<sup>th</sup> (two), 7<sup>th</sup> (nine) and 13<sup>th</sup> October (one); 14<sup>th</sup> November (one); and 20<sup>th</sup> December (seven).

**EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca*****Scarce, passing offshore mainly in winter.**

There were seven records of mainly single birds passing offshore: on 30<sup>th</sup> January; 1<sup>st</sup> February; 28<sup>th</sup> March; 14<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August (two); and 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November.

**MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*****Uncommon, passing offshore.**

There were six records, five of passing birds: three on 1<sup>st</sup> January, two on 1<sup>st</sup> April, two on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, one on 5<sup>th</sup> November and one on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Three birds were flushed from Eight Acres on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL *Anas acuta*****Rare, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There was one record: of three birds passing offshore on 31<sup>st</sup> January.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*****Scarce, passing offshore mainly in winter.**

There were four records of birds passing offshore: two on 12<sup>th</sup> March, three on 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> April, and one on 1<sup>st</sup> May.

**COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina*****Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter.**

Fifteen birds passed offshore on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

**COMMON EIDER *Somateria mollissima***

**Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There were four records of birds passing offshore: two on 28<sup>th</sup> January, two on 1<sup>st</sup> May, two on 13<sup>th</sup> November and one on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra***

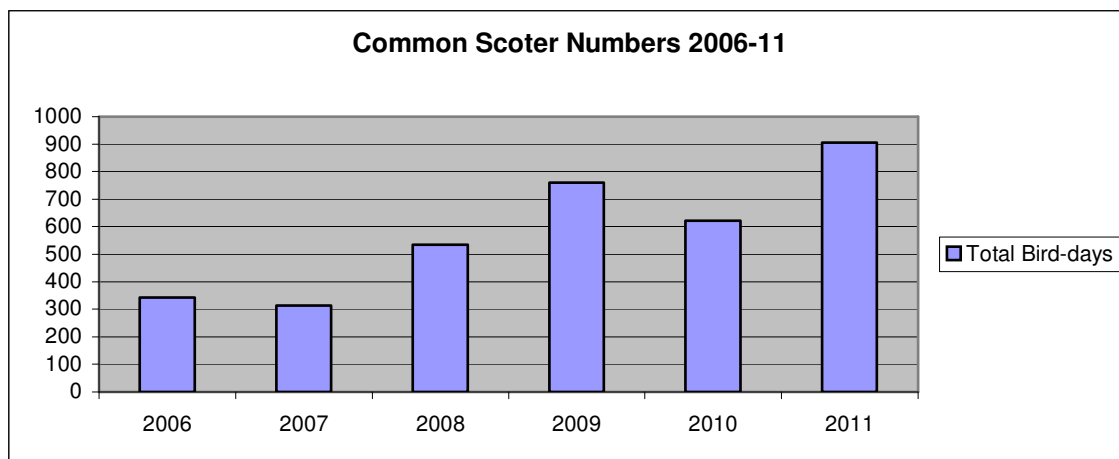
**Fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

This species is generally under-recorded at Durlston; the Table below shows the trends in numbers. The maximum counts were of 72 birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 41 birds on 13<sup>th</sup> August. Two female birds were attacked in flight by a Peregrine Falcon on 30<sup>th</sup> July; both dived into the sea to escape.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
85	42	60	135	17	32	18	188	112	97	61	77	924

The graph shows the annual number of Common Scoter bird-days recorded at Durlston from 2006 to 2011 and illustrates a trend of increasing numbers.



**VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca***

**Scarce, passing offshore mainly in winter.**

There were two records of passing single birds: on 17<sup>th</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula***

**Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter**

Two birds passed on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator***

**Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

The Fleet/Portland Harbour combined site and Poole Harbour hold nationally important populations (over 84) of Red-breasted Mergansers, the second and fourth largest in Britain respectively. Birds seen at Durlston are possibly moving between these and other sites, or taking part in coastal passage during spring and autumn. Birds were seen up to 26<sup>th</sup> April and from 6<sup>th</sup> October.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	7	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	9

#### **GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser***

**Rare, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There was one record: a bird flew west on 15<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa***

**Scarce visitor.**

There was a sequence of records in the spring of up to four birds: on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March; 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> April; 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May; and 6<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix***

**Rare visitor.**

A bird was reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

#### **COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus***

**Common feral resident.**

A significant population of this game bird has become established at Durlston, although there was no evidence of breeding in 2011. Females generally outnumbered males other than in winter in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre when males were more common. A strange sight in the back fields on 11<sup>th</sup> March was of a male bird almost encircled by six females, possibly some form of display?

#### **RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata***

**Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

Red-throated is by far the most common diver seen at Durlston (and at the other coastal watch-points in Dorset) (see Graph below). The last record of the first half of the year was on 21<sup>st</sup> April; the first record of the second winter period was on 18<sup>th</sup> September. A total of 677 bird-days was recorded, significantly in excess of the numbers in 2009 (313) and 2010 (281). The total was heavily influenced by the 423 bird-days in January with peak daily counts of 45 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 40 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
423	66	14	9	0	0	0	0	2	11	21	131	677

#### **BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia artica***

**Scarce, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

Black-throated is the scarcest diver seen off Durlston, and in Dorset. Birds (all single, other than where indicated) were recorded on: 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>; 4<sup>th</sup> (two), 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January; 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> April; 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> May; and 13<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December. The 19 bird-days recorded were more than double the average for the period 2006-10.

### **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer***

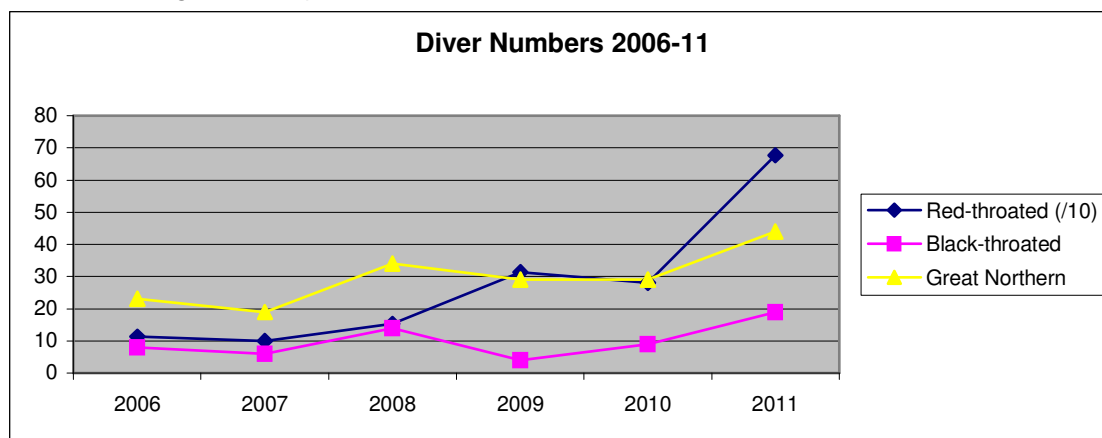
#### **Uncommon winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

During the first half of the year, birds were recorded intermittently up to 23<sup>rd</sup> May when three summer-plumaged birds were seen very close inshore. The first record of the second winter period was on 21<sup>st</sup> October. A total of 44 bird-days were recorded, an increase over the numbers seen in previous years.

#### **Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
19	5	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	44

The Graph shows the increase in the numbers of all three diver species recorded at Durlston between 2006 and 2011. Note that the Red-throated Diver numbers have been divided by a factor of 10 to give a comparable scale.



### **GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus***

#### **Scarce, passing offshore in winter.**

There were nine records of a total of ten passing birds: on 1<sup>st</sup> (two birds), 7<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January; 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November; and 9<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December. This represents an increase over previous years which had an average of three records.

### **SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus***

#### **Rare, offshore in winter.**

Two birds were seen off Durlston Head on 9<sup>th</sup> February. There is a small wintering population in Poole Bay and Poole Harbour; the birds may have originated from there.

### **FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis***

#### **Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Fulmars are seen for most of the year at Durlston along the cliff-face, although they are generally scarce or absent between mid-July and mid-November. As usual, breeding numbers were difficult to assess, but the 2011 Purbeck Seabird Survey identified eight apparently occupied sites.

**MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*****Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, summer and autumn.**

Manx Shearwaters are generally under-recorded at Durlston. The species was first reported on 1<sup>st</sup> April. On first examination, the total of 1069 bird-days appears to represent an exceptional year for the species (compared with 161 in 2010, 408 in 2009 and 424 in 2008). However, over 700 birds were recorded on three days: 90 on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 525 on 31<sup>st</sup> August and 110 on 6<sup>th</sup> September. The movement on 31<sup>st</sup> August was also seen at Portland Bill where 10,000 birds were estimated to have moved past into Lyme Bay. The last record was of two birds on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	0	40	102	109	8	561	254	2	0	0	1069

**BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus*****Uncommon, passing offshore mainly in late summer and autumn.**

First recorded on 21<sup>st</sup> June, numbers of Balearic Shearwater seen from Durlston in 2011 (a total of 45 bird-days) were higher than in the majority of previous years (28 in 2006, 12 in 2007, 97 in 2008, 29 in 2009 and 17 in 2010). Peak counts were of six birds on 31<sup>st</sup> August, and on 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September. The last record was on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	0	0	0	3	0	11	29	2	0	0	45

**EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*****Scarce, passing offshore mainly in summer and autumn.**

The species is generally under-recorded at Durlston. There were four records: eight birds passed close in-shore on 13<sup>th</sup> February; twelve birds passed on 28<sup>th</sup> May with a further record the next day; and a bird was off Durlston Head on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

**NORTHERN GANNET *Morus bassanus*****Fairly common, passing offshore.**

Gannets can be seen off Durlston at any time of the year but are most abundant in spring/early summer (April to June) and autumn (August to October) with slightly fewer birds in mid-summer (July) and a much smaller population offshore in winter (November to March). Birds involved in feeding movements during the summer months almost certainly come from the closest colonies on Alderney and Sept Iles in Brittany. Peak counts of passing birds were as follows: in January, 300 on 24<sup>th</sup>, 335 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 315 on 27<sup>th</sup>, 440 on 31<sup>st</sup> (and 200 present offshore); in February, 860 on 1<sup>st</sup> (and 300 present offshore), 660 on 4<sup>th</sup> (and 90 present offshore), 420 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1210 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 790 on 7<sup>th</sup> (and 150 present offshore); 200 on 16<sup>th</sup> June; 224 on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 729 on 23<sup>rd</sup> October; and 573 on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

**GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*****Common coastal resident.**

There were no breeding Cormorants at Durlston in 2011, but there were regular sightings of birds on the rocks below the Observation Point and flying past on the way to and from their breeding sites on the cliffs at Ballard Down.



**SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***

**Common coastal resident.**

Shags are seen throughout the year at Durlston, mostly close into the cliffs. Nest building activities were first noted on 27<sup>th</sup> January. The 2011 Purbeck Seabird Survey identified three nests between Durlston Head and west of Anvil Point. Peak counts were in the first week of February with up to 23 birds recorded, and of 25 birds on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

**LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta***

**Scarce, passing offshore.**

The Little Egret was a national rarity until 1990; it is now more numerous than the Grey Heron in Poole Harbour with breeding now taking place, or attempted, there and at a number of other sites in Dorset. Birds seen flying past Durlston or on the rocks in Durlston Bay are almost certainly from the Poole Harbour population and can be seen at any time of the year. There were 17 records in 2011; five birds flew past on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

**GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea***

**Uncommon visitor.**

Grey Herons can be seen at Durlston at any time of the year, although they are not common. There were 20 records in 2011, similar to 2009 and 2010 and approximately double the number recorded in 2006-08. Records were mainly of single birds, but three were recorded on 16<sup>th</sup> September and two on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

**EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus***

**Rare passage migrant.**

There were two records: a bird over on 27<sup>th</sup> May (the same day as a Red Kite) and a bird heading west over the Western Boundary on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

**RED KITE *Milvus milvus***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There was only one record: a bird over on 27<sup>th</sup> May, first reported over Townsend.

**MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus***

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were six records: on 11<sup>th</sup> March; 2<sup>nd</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September; and 10<sup>th</sup> October.

**HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus***

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were five records: on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 17<sup>th</sup> October, and 9<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November.

**NORTHERN GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis***

**Rare visitor.**

There was one record: a female bird flew west at 1230 on 4<sup>th</sup> January with a very distinctive flight – ‘a straight flightline with nine or ten metronomic flaps, followed by a glide’.

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus***

**Breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Birds were regularly seen hunting throughout the year. No breeding territories were identified with no evidence of birds staying loyal to specific areas. The total number of bird-days, at 309, represents a significant increase over the period 2007-2010 (an average of approximately 200 bird-days). Counts of four or more birds were as follows: four on 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August; six on 16<sup>th</sup> September; four on 4<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, five on 22<sup>nd</sup>, six on 23<sup>rd</sup> and eight on 28<sup>th</sup> October; and four on 5<sup>th</sup> November. The August records contributed to a total of 42 bird-days in that month, approximately three times the number recorded in 2007-10.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
37	19	19	13	5	4	4	42	29	67	48	22	309

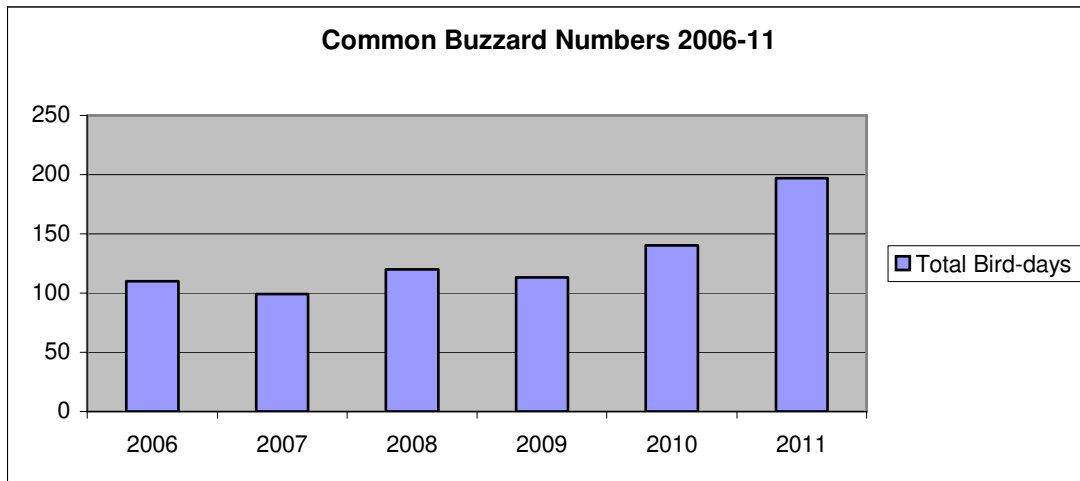
**COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo***

**Uncommon resident, breeding in the wider area.**

Although frequently seen in other parts of Purbeck, the Common Buzzard was, until relatively recently, somewhat uncommon in the Durlston area. However, Buzzards were regularly observed feeding around Durlston Bay and returning to a central point within the woodland. Further evidence is required to confirm nesting and identify the territory. The annual number of bird-days between 2006-09 averaged approximately 110, increasing in 2010 to 140 and almost 200 in 2011 (see Graph) . Numbers in January, August, September and particularly October increased over previous years. Numbers in September and October were influenced by movements of 15 birds on 16<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> respectively.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
24	8	11	16	4	5	1	25	34	49	10	10	197



**OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There was one record: a bird heading west on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus***

**Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Kestrels were seen throughout the year in all areas of Durlston. Three young fledged and were regularly seen feeding along the cliff faces. The actual nest location was not confirmed, although it is suspected to be somewhere between Tilly Whim and the Observation Point. There was an apparent movement on 7<sup>th</sup> April when three birds passed.

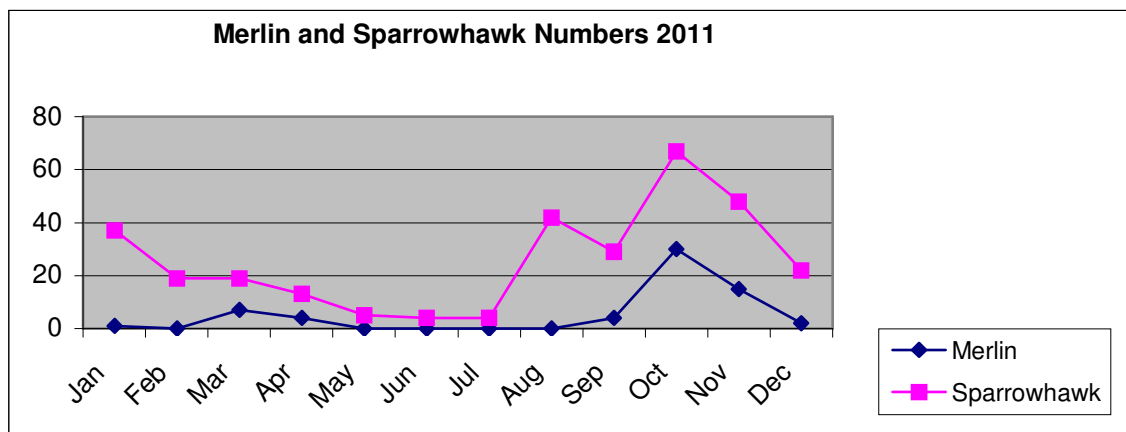
**MERLIN *Falco columbarius***

**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Merlins are most likely to be seen at Durlston during the passage periods, particularly in the autumn (see Table). The last bird of the first winter period was seen on 14<sup>th</sup> April; the first autumn passage bird was on 6<sup>th</sup> September. As in Dorset generally, there is a distinct peak in October when birds hunt the migrating passerine flocks (see Graph, also shows Sparrowhawk). Three birds were recorded on 14<sup>th</sup> October. Birds were recorded up to 28<sup>th</sup> December. Total number of bird-days, at 63, was similar to 2008-2010.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	0	7	4	0	0	0	0	4	30	15	2	63



**HOBBY *Falco subbuteo***

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.**

Single birds were seen between 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 4<sup>th</sup> October.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	4	7	3	0	5	3	5	0	0

**PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus***

**Fairly common breeding resident.**

Peregrines can be seen throughout the year at Durlston and are the most regularly seen bird of prey.

**WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus***

**Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There was one record: a bird in Saxon Field on 28<sup>th</sup> September. (On the same day, a Corncrake was flushed in the old quarry to the north, unfortunately outside Durlston's boundary).

**OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus***

**Uncommon visitor and passage migrant.**

Oystercatchers are the commonest wader seen at Durlston. Birds are normally seen passing offshore at any time of the year, either singularly or in twos or threes. However, as the only wader species to occur in any numbers along rocky coasts in Dorset, they are sometimes seen on coastal rocks.

**AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A flock of 39 flew east on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula***

**Scarce, passing offshore in spring and autumn.**

During the period 2006-10, the annual number of records of Ringed Plover were three or less. In 2011, there were nine records of single (unless otherwise stated) passing birds as follows: on 8<sup>th</sup> January; 15<sup>th</sup> March; 24<sup>th</sup> April; 3<sup>rd</sup> (four birds), 11<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August; and 9<sup>th</sup> (five), 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (four) September.

**EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria***

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

All records were of birds (singles, twos or threes) passing overhead. There were five bird-days in January, 18 in October, and nine in November.

**GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola***

**Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

There were nine records of birds passing offshore: on 24<sup>th</sup> January; 24<sup>th</sup> February; 24<sup>th</sup> (two) and 29<sup>th</sup> April; 1<sup>st</sup> (two) and 11<sup>th</sup> May; 19<sup>th</sup> September; 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus***

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were nineteen records of single (unless otherwise stated) birds passing over: on 2<sup>nd</sup> (two), 3<sup>rd</sup> (eight), 14<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January; 5<sup>th</sup> March; 22<sup>nd</sup> August; 5<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> (four), 19<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> October; 8<sup>th</sup> (11), 9<sup>th</sup> (three), 12<sup>th</sup> (two), 14<sup>th</sup> (26) and 24<sup>th</sup> November; 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> (two) and 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**KNOT *Calidris canutus***

**Rare passage migrant, passing offshore in spring and autumn.**

There were two records of birds passing offshore: 12 on 12<sup>th</sup> May and a bird on 28<sup>th</sup> October. These are the first records since 2007.

**DUNLIN *Calidris alpina***

**Scarce, passing offshore spring, autumn and winter.**

There were six records of passing birds: one on 30<sup>th</sup> January, two on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, two on 9<sup>th</sup> May, six on 12<sup>th</sup> September, one on 29<sup>th</sup> October and one on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

**SANDERLING *Calidris alba***

**Scarce passage migrant, passing offshore mainly in late spring.**

There were seven records of single birds unless otherwise indicated on: 6<sup>th</sup> (four), 16<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> (two) May; 19<sup>th</sup> August; 2<sup>nd</sup> September; and 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minimus***

**Rare winter visitor.**

There was one record: a bird over on 29<sup>th</sup> April. This was only the second time that the species has been recorded during visible migration studies.

**RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*****Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There was one record: a bird heading east on 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

**COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Over the period 2006-09, annual Snipe records numbered five or less. In 2010, birds were recorded on 24 days with a total of 37 bird-days; the equivalent figures in 2011 were 25 and 30. In addition to birds flying over, flushed from the meadows or in the Gully, there was a record of a bird around the pond at the Learning Centre on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	1	0	0	3	0	0	2	3	8	7	2

**WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*****Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.**

2011 continued the trend of 2010 of increasing records of Woodcocks compared with previous years. Birds were recorded on eleven days in November, including five on 8<sup>th</sup> (two over and three present).

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	4

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*****Rare, passing offshore on passage and winter.**

Twelve birds passed on 24<sup>th</sup> April. There were three August records of passing single birds: on 15<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*****Uncommon, passing offshore mainly in spring.**

There were five spring records of passing birds: three on 21<sup>st</sup> and 30 on 29<sup>th</sup> April; 43 on 1<sup>st</sup>, one on 6<sup>th</sup> and three on 17<sup>th</sup> May. The birds passing at the end of April and beginning of May were part of a significant movement seen at Portland Bill where over 6,000 birds passed on 28<sup>th</sup> April, the highest total ever. Two birds passed on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*****Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

The first record was of a bird on 7<sup>th</sup> April; there was a stronger spring passage in 2011 compared with 2009-10. Autumn passage was light; no birds were seen after 18<sup>th</sup> September.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	38	25	2	1	6	6	0	0	0

**EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata*****Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were fourteen records of single passing birds: on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January; 5<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February; 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March; 2<sup>nd</sup> April; 22<sup>nd</sup> September; 17<sup>th</sup> October; 19<sup>th</sup> November; and 28<sup>th</sup> December.

**COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos***

**Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.**

There were eleven records of single birds (unless otherwise indicated) passing offshore, but sometimes on the rocks in Durlston Bay or in the Tilly Whim area. Common Sandpipers were recorded on the typical dates of 24<sup>th</sup> April; 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> (two), 15<sup>th</sup> (two), 16<sup>th</sup> (two), 22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> (three) and 30<sup>th</sup> August; and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September.

**GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird flew over on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

**GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There were three records of birds flying over or past offshore: on 30<sup>th</sup> June; 31<sup>st</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> September.

**REDSHANK *Tringa totanus***

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were fourteen records of single birds, a significant increase over previous years: on 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February; 30<sup>th</sup> April; 23<sup>rd</sup> June; 24<sup>th</sup> September; 23<sup>rd</sup> October; 7<sup>th</sup> November; and 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December.

**TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres***

**Scarce, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There were five records of passing single birds: on 14<sup>th</sup> January; 21<sup>st</sup> February; 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March; and 29<sup>th</sup> April.

**GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius***

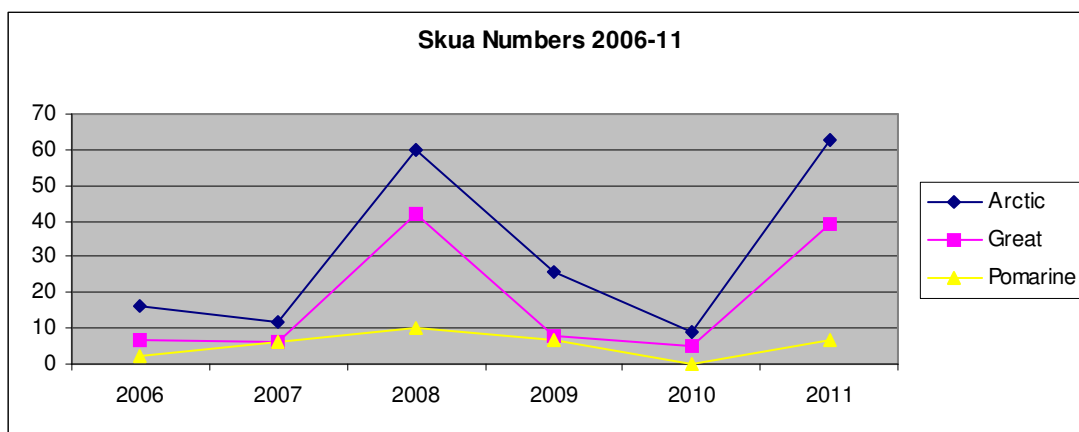
**Rare autumn and winter visitor.**

A bird was recorded in Durlston Bay in the early evening of 12<sup>th</sup> September during a period of high winds. This is the first record since 2008.

**POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus***

**Scarce offshore passage migrant.**

Five birds passed heading east on 1<sup>st</sup> May; single birds headed west on 10<sup>th</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> October. The Graph shows the total number of Pomarine (and other) Skuas passing Durlston for the period 2006-11.



### ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

#### Uncommon offshore passage migrant.

Arctic Skua is the most frequently seen skua species off Durlston, followed by Great, Pomarine and Long-tailed. Arctic Skuas were recorded intermittently between 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 23<sup>rd</sup> October; a bird was recorded on 19<sup>th</sup> December. Highest daily counts were of nine birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and five on 10<sup>th</sup> September. The Graph above shows the total number of Arctic and other skuas passing Durlston for the period 2006-11; 2011 was comparable to 2008.

#### Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	0	4	7	4	2	18	18	9	0	1	63

### GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*

#### Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.

As with Arctic Skua, numbers of Great Skuas passing Durlston in 2011 were comparable to 2008. Two birds were seen on 24<sup>th</sup> January; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February; 21<sup>st</sup> April; and 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October; four birds passed on 18<sup>th</sup> September. All other records were of single birds.

#### Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
8	8	0	3	0	0	0	4	8	6	0	2	39

### SABINE'S GULL *Xema sabini*

#### Rare passage migrant.

A bird flew west close-in past Durlston Head on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

### BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

#### Fairly common visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Kittiwakes breed to the east of Durlston at Blackers Hole, a large sea cave near Dancing Ledge. Some of the birds seen passing Durlston, particularly in the summer, are no doubt these local breeding birds, but others are on passage or wintering in the area. There were some significant movements of Kittiwakes in January: 110 west on 4<sup>th</sup>, 105 west and 70 present on 5<sup>th</sup>, 720 east on 21<sup>st</sup>, 125 east on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 490 east on 24<sup>th</sup>, 145 east and 50 present on 25<sup>th</sup>, and 270 east on 27<sup>th</sup>. This continued into the first week of February with 210 west on 4<sup>th</sup>, 230 west on 5<sup>th</sup>, 335 west on 6<sup>th</sup>, and 330 west on 7<sup>th</sup>. An unusual record was of a bird flying down Long Meadow on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Four hundred birds headed west on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

### BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

#### Common visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Spring passage occurs between March and April. Some birds seen passing Durlston may be from the breeding population in Poole Harbour. One hundred and twenty birds were present offshore on 1<sup>st</sup> February and 147 birds headed east in an up-Channel movement the next day. Six hundred birds were sheltering in Durlston Bay on 11<sup>th</sup> September during a period of high winds; 240 were present on 12<sup>th</sup> and 200 on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus***

**Uncommon, passing offshore mainly in autumn and winter.**

There were twelve records of 16 birds. Records are of single birds unless otherwise indicated: on 2<sup>nd</sup> (two), 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April; 1<sup>st</sup> May (two); 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September; 8<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> (three) and 24<sup>th</sup> October; 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November; and 10<sup>th</sup> December.

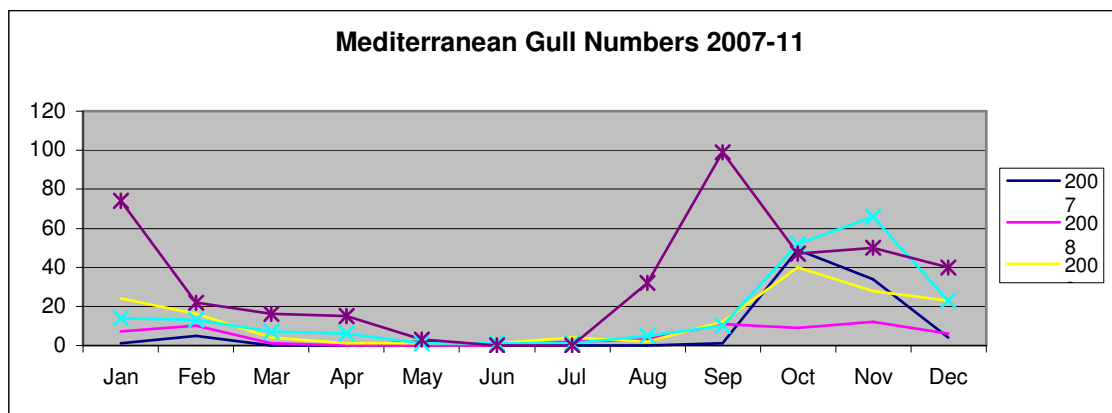
**MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus***

**Uncommon offshore visitor and passage migrant.**

The number of Mediterranean Gull bird-days in 2011 was 398, a continuation of the trend of increase seen in previous years (21 in 2006, 96 in 2007, 61 in 2008, 156 in 2009 and 199 in 2010). In 2011, numbers were higher in January than in previous years; the autumn peak was in September rather than in October or November (see Graph). The September total contained the highest daily counts of 21 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 17 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 14 on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
74	22	16	15	3	0	0	32	99	47	50	40	398



**COMMON GULL *Larus canus***

**Fairly common winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

Common Gulls are seen offshore at Durlston on most days between mid-September and May. Peak counts were all in the first half of the year and were significantly greater than those recorded in the period 2006-10. Highest counts in January were as follows: 90 east and 20 present on 20<sup>th</sup>, 245 past and 120 present on 24<sup>th</sup>, and 100 east and 50 present on 25<sup>th</sup>. As with Kittiwakes, high numbers continued into the first week of February: 105 west on 4<sup>th</sup>, 165 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 215 west on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus***

**Fairly common visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

This species is seen in small numbers throughout the year, peaking in late summer and autumn.



**HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus***

**Common coastal resident and cliff-nesting species.**

The 2011 Purbeck Seabird Survey identified at least 11 nests in the Durlston Head to Ragged Rocks area. In common with Kittiwakes and Common Gulls, there were high numbers of Herring Gulls present offshore and passing in January: over 200 birds were present on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 500 flew east on 24<sup>th</sup>, 230 flew east with 200 present on 25<sup>th</sup>, 220 flew east with 200 present on 29<sup>th</sup>. As with Kittiwakes and Common Gulls, high numbers continued into the first week of February: 240 flew west on 5<sup>th</sup> with 200 present the next day.

**YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis***

**Rare offshore visitor.**

There were two records of single birds offshore: on 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus***

**Fairly common coastal resident and cliff-nesting species.**

Great Black-backed Gulls are seen on, and around, the cliffs throughout the year. The 2011 Purbeck Seabird Survey identified one nest in the Durlston area.

**LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons***

**Scarce offshore passage migrant.**

There were two records of passing birds: birds on 21<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May.

**BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger***

**Scarce offshore passage migrant.**

There were four records: two flew east on 1<sup>st</sup> May, singles flew west on 27<sup>th</sup> August and 11<sup>th</sup> September; a single bird flew east on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

**SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis***

**Fairly common summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

The first record was of a bird flying west on 24<sup>th</sup> February with a bird the next day. Regular records commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> March and continued until 9<sup>th</sup> October; there was a further October record on 24<sup>th</sup>, and a very late bird flew west on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The highest day counts were of 39 birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 22 on 5<sup>th</sup> April and 21 on 15<sup>th</sup> August. Some of the birds seen may be from the nearest breeding colony, on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour.

**COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo***

**Fairly common summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

Birds were recorded from 5<sup>th</sup> April onwards. Forty birds passed on 1<sup>st</sup> May and records continued through the summer, including 125 on 18<sup>th</sup> September. The last record was on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Some of the birds may be from the nearest breeding colony, on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour.

**ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii***

**Rare offshore passage migrant.**

A bird off Durlston Head on 16<sup>th</sup> May was the first since 2008.

**ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea***

**Scarce offshore passage migrant.**

The annual number of Arctic Terns passing Durlston is variable. In 2006 and 2010, only one bird was recorded; in the period 2007-09, there was an average of five records, totalling 10 bird-days. In 2011, there were 12 records, totalling 35 bird-days, of single birds unless otherwise indicated: on 1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> (two) May; 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> (three), 11<sup>th</sup> (four), 12<sup>th</sup> (eleven), 13<sup>th</sup> (five), 14<sup>th</sup> (three), 18<sup>th</sup> (two) and 24<sup>th</sup> September; and 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

### **COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge***

**Common coastal resident, winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

Three hundred and ten birds flew east on 21<sup>st</sup> January. Three hundred and fifty Guillemots were present on the ledges on 1<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January, with an additional 50 birds present two days later. Counts in February and March were of approximately 350 birds on the ledges. The first egg hatched on 21<sup>st</sup> May; 40 chicks were counted on 5<sup>th</sup> June, with fledging noted from 16<sup>th</sup> June onwards. There was one chick left on 8<sup>th</sup> July. Three hundred birds had returned by 8<sup>th</sup> November, with 350 birds present by the end of the year.

### **RAZORBILL *Alca torda***

**Common coastal resident. winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

As in 2008, 2009 and 2010, there were some spectacular Razorbill movements in January and the first week of February; these are tabulated below. It is not clear whether these are local feeding movements, or part of a wider movement. Sixteen displaying birds were present on 31<sup>st</sup> January with 21 present on 21<sup>st</sup> February. There were nine apparently occupied sites. At the end of the year, 680 birds flew west on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, along with 500 unidentified auks.

	Passing RB	Passing Auks	O'shore RB	Total		Passing RB	Passing Auks	O'shore RB	Total
1-Jan	1450	500	200	2150	24-Jan	9400			9400
2-Jan	1000			1000	25-Jan	12000	2000		14000
3-Jan	560	120	450	1130	26-Jan	3400	400		3800
4-Jan	4200	500		4700	27-Jan	20000	3000		23000
5-Jan	1600	150		1750	28-Jan	2200	700		2900
7-Jan	600	150	130	880	30-Jan	2100	600	700	3400
9-Jan	105	45	500	650	31-Jan	1100	200	1000	2300
10-Jan	260	30	400	690	1-Feb	11200	2000		13200
14-Jan	1400	300		1700	2-Feb	1250	345		1595
15-Jan	620	125		745	4-Feb	4300	700		5000
16-Jan	2000	320		2320	5-Feb	1100	200		1300
19-Jan	5000			5000	6-Feb	7500	2500		10000
20-Jan	2200	300		2500	7-Feb	2600			2600
21-Jan	7500			7500	8-Feb	3550	600		4150
22-Jan	1500		3000	4500	9-Feb	1250	400		1650
23-Jan	4000			4000					

O'shore - Offshore  
 RB – Razorbill  
 Auks- not specifically identified

### **LITTLE AUK *Alle alle***

**Rare passage migrant and winter visitor, usually storm driven.**

There was one record: a bird flying west on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

### **ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica***

**Uncommon summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

The 2011 Purbeck Seabird Survey identified around five pairs of Puffins nesting to the west of Durlston, primarily at Dancing Ledge. The majority of the birds seen at Durlston are likely to be from that population. There were six records: single birds on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> and

29<sup>th</sup> May, and two birds on 11<sup>th</sup> April and 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Birds were seen regularly on the summer evening Seabird Boat Trips to Dancing Ledge.

**FERAL ROCK DOVE (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia***

**Common coastal resident.**

A population of Feral Pigeons live on the cliffs throughout the year, breeding successfully. There are estimated to be 10-15 pairs nesting within the caves and rocky outcrops around Tilly Whim. Many are taken as prey by the resident Peregrine Falcons.

**STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas***

**Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.**

Stock Doves are often seen in flocks of migrating Wood Pigeons. The total number of Stock Doves recorded moving over Durlston between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011 was 482, less than the 658 and 749 recorded over the same period in 2010 and 2009. Peak Stock Dove movements were on 14<sup>th</sup> (108 birds) and 17<sup>th</sup> November (89).

**WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus***

**Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Wood Pigeon is a widely distributed and commonly found breeding bird throughout Durlston. It is suspected that there are many more territories than recorded during the 2011 monitoring. The first real Wood Pigeon movement of the autumn was of 1,240 birds on 6<sup>th</sup> November. The major movements of the autumn took place during the following week, between 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November, when 3,100, 1,700, 1,250, 1,150, 1,540, 54,500, 800 and 1,200 birds respectively flew over. The total number of Wood Pigeons counted passing over Durlston between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011 was 70,659, almost ten times the number recorded in 2010 (7,820), and more than the 58,673 recorded in 2009. The movement of 54,500 birds on 17<sup>th</sup> November represented almost 80% of the total number of birds recorded in the autumn. Two observers' accounts give some idea of the spectacle – *'As the rhythm of autumn migration moves on, an extraordinary spectacle this morning. Wave after wave of Wood Pigeons hurtle by overhead, low-flying with a clatter of wings, or swirling high above the sea like smoke'. 'Vis mig dominated by Pigeon movement this morning. It was quite odd really, up until about 8.45 we had only had a handful of reasonably sized flocks. We moved from Long Meadow to the Milepost area whereupon an almighty flock of Pigeons appeared from over the woods to the north. It was large, but also long, and it kept coming. We reckoned there were over 8,000 birds in that flock. From then on, they just kept on coming, and coming, and coming! Then, as quickly as they had appeared, they had disappeared. By 9.30 it was all over. The total - over 54,000 birds.'*

**COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto***

**Uncommon visitor and uncommon passage migrant**

There is some evidence of autumn migration.

**TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur***

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.**

There were ten records of twelve birds: on 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> (in off the sea), 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May; 22<sup>nd</sup> June; 21<sup>st</sup> August; and 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> (three birds) and 29<sup>th</sup> September. This represents an average year for this species which continues its long-term national decline.

**COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus***

**Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.**

A bird was reported to the Rangers on the early date of 27<sup>th</sup> March. There were nine other records: on 11<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April; 1<sup>st</sup> May; 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> July (a juvenile bird); and

2<sup>nd</sup> August. The ten records compare with 15 in 2010, three in 2009 and an average of six between 2006 and 2008.

**TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco***

**Uncommon breeding resident.**

There are thought to be three pairs resident at Durlston. Territories appeared to be the same as 2010 with birds heard calling within the same localities. No nests were found, so areas with calling birds (such as the upper Gully) could have been occupied by unpaired males. Birds were heard or seen in most months with 10 of the 24 bird-days recorded in October.

**SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus***

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn.**

2011 was an excellent year for Short-eared Owls at Durlston. The only spring record was of a bird flying west on 20<sup>th</sup> April. Autumn records commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> September. There was a series of records in October: on 17<sup>th</sup>, on 18<sup>th</sup> (four west, of which three were out at sea, and two present), 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. In November, birds were recorded on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> (when six were flushed off the Swanage landfill site and flew over Durlston) and 28<sup>th</sup>.

**EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird was seen at dawn, hawking for insects over the pond in the Wildlife Area on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus***

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first record was on 24<sup>th</sup> April. Birds started to be noticeable in mid-July with a strong movement or feeding party noted on 14<sup>th</sup> July. One hundred and twenty birds were recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August. The last record was on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

**PALLID SWIFT *Apus pallidus***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird was recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> November, the first for Durlston and third for Dorset. One of the observers reported - '*star of the show - a cracking Pallid Swift which we initially only had quite brief views of before it disappeared behind trees. After a sprint to the Visitor Centre and a bit of a wait, it appeared again to the west, giving much better views before again drifting west*'.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster***

**Rare passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

A Bee-eater was heard flying over on 21<sup>st</sup> April. On 31<sup>st</sup> May, a bird was heard delivering a soft rolling call from the woodland near Durlston Head. Unfortunately, an electric saw started up shortly afterwards within the Castle building compound, halting the Ranger's chances of finding the bird on the fringes of the wood. On 27<sup>th</sup> June, a bird was heard calling from Boys Brigade Meadow, subsequently flying over the Visitor Centre towards the Coast Path.

**WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla***

**Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.**

Birds were seen on six days, although as always, the number of individuals involved is hard to assess. A bird was seen near the Drove on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, with it, or another bird, in the Gully the next day. A bird was also seen in the Gully in the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> September and again the next day. A bird was seen on the east side of Long Meadow on 1<sup>st</sup> October, with a further record on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis***

**Fairly common breeding resident.**

Green Woodpecker is the commonest woodpecker at Durlston. It is a difficult species to map breeding territories for as most sightings were of birds travelling between feeding and nesting sites. However, because of the frequency of sightings, it is believed that two territories were held – one in the Aviaries and one by the Large Copse.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major***

**Uncommon breeding resident.**

One territory was held at the north end of the Aviaries. An interesting feature of the visible migration studies undertaken at Durlston in autumn was the number of Great Spotted Woodpeckers recorded. A total of 77 birds were recorded between mid-September and 17<sup>th</sup> December (when the last bird was reported), an increase from the 49 in 2010 and similar to the 74 recorded in 2009. A total of seven flew west on 11<sup>th</sup> October, a record count at Durlston.

**WOODLARK *Lullula arborea***

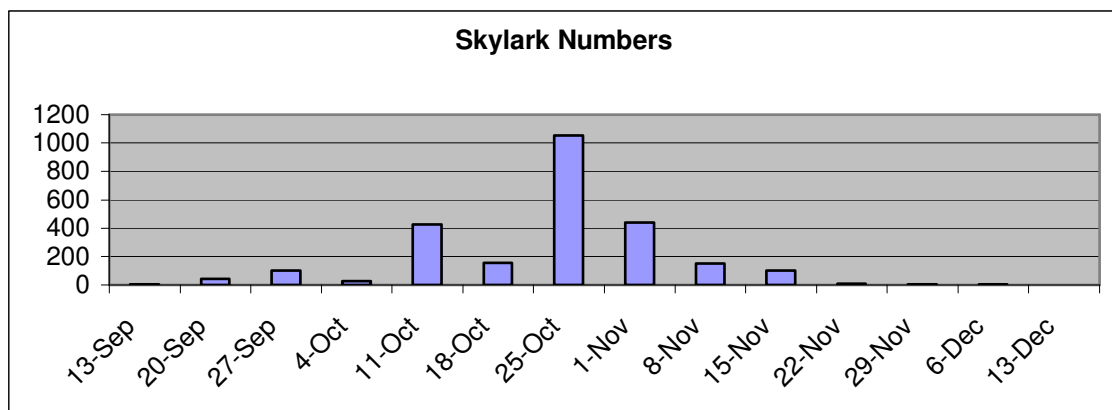
**Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.**

The only records in the first half of the year were of two birds present on 16<sup>th</sup> January. The first record of the autumn passage was on 6<sup>th</sup> October; a total of 49 bird-days were recorded in October (including 19 on 14<sup>th</sup>), 20 in November and one in December. The autumn total of 70 bird-days was significantly greater than in previous years (32 in 2006, 12 in 2007, 22 in 2008, 47 in 2009 and 40 in 2010).

**SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis***

**Fairly common breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Five singing males were observed throughout the spring, denoting territories. Twelve were recorded on 12<sup>th</sup> April. Autumn passage exhibited a very 'peaked' nature (see Graph): of the 2,519 Skylarks recorded passing over Durlston between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1,052 were in the last week of October with 598 birds counted on 25<sup>th</sup>.



**SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia***

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

The first record was of ten birds on the typical date of 15<sup>th</sup> March. Intermittent records in June were followed by the start of the autumn passage with 20 birds on 4<sup>th</sup> July. One hundred and forty birds moved over Durlston on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 350 four days later, and 800 on 29<sup>th</sup>. The main autumn passage was in September with 1,050 birds on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 375 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 6,500 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

The last record was on 15<sup>th</sup> October. A total of 10,837 Sand Martins were recorded during autumn passage (compared with 2,243 in 2010).

**BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica***

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first record was of two birds on 17<sup>th</sup> March. Return passage commenced in earnest on 29<sup>th</sup> August with 5,300 birds over. Peak September counts were as follows: 4,550 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3,850 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 45,000 on 16<sup>th</sup>. Peak October counts were as follows: 2,900 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 2,050 on 6<sup>th</sup>. The last record was on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Of the 85,301 Swallows counted moving over Durlston during the autumn passage, over half were on one day (45,000 on 16<sup>th</sup> September).

**HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum***

**Common summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first record was on 6<sup>th</sup> April. Return passage commenced in earnest on 2<sup>nd</sup> September when 1,400 birds passed over. Other peak counts were of 9,500 birds on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2,900 on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 1,100 on 5<sup>th</sup> October. The last record was on 6<sup>th</sup> November. A total of 24,194 House Martins were counted moving over Durlston during the autumn passage period, (compared with 16,440 in 2010). Over the autumn passage period, the approximate ratio of Sand Martins to House Martins to Swallows was 1:2:8.

**RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus richardi***

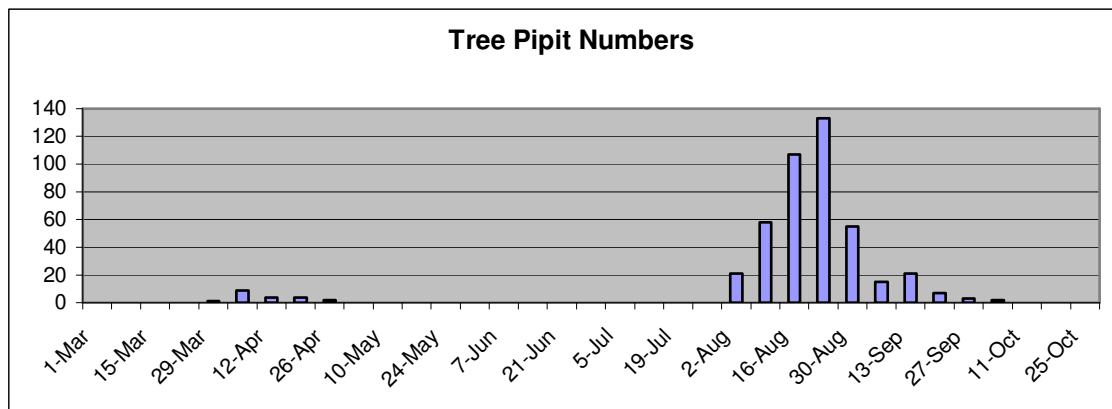
**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird flew over on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

**TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis***

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

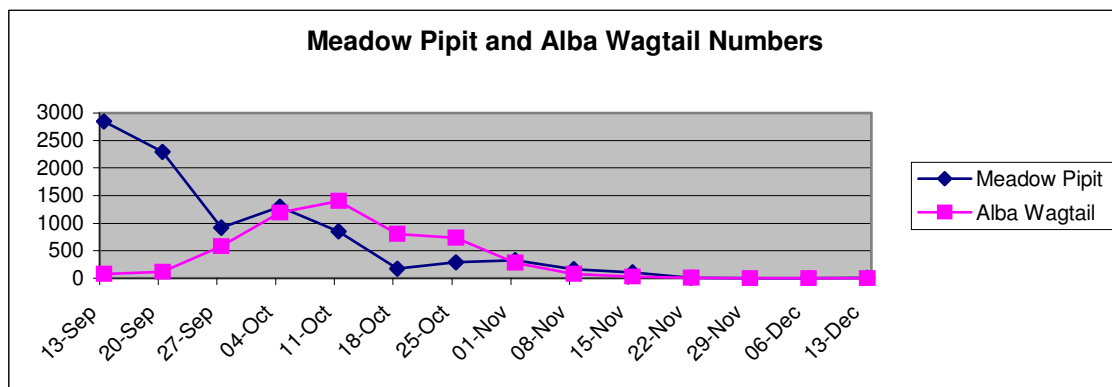
The first bird was reported on 4<sup>th</sup> April with spring passage birds reported up to 1<sup>st</sup> May. Return passage commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> August with maximum counts in that month of 27 birds on 12<sup>th</sup>, 57 on 19<sup>th</sup> and an exceptional 70 on 24<sup>th</sup> including a flock of 30 in one meadow. The Graph shows the peaked nature of the autumn passage. The last record was on 5<sup>th</sup> October. There was a total of 442 bird-days in 2011, of which 422 were in the autumn passage period. This continues a trend of increase in numbers (241 bird-days in 2010, and 123 in 2009).



### MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

**Uncommon breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Spring passage became apparent in March with 55 birds on 15<sup>th</sup> and 290 on 25<sup>th</sup>. Three hundred and forty five birds flew east on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Return passage commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> September with 120 birds. Peak counts in September were of 1,900 birds on 19<sup>th</sup> and 850 on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Peak counts in October were of 550 birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 560 on 5<sup>th</sup>. Passage then declined (see Graph). The total number of Meadow Pipits counted moving overhead during visible migration studies between mid-September and the end of December was 9,292 (compared with 6,821 in 2010 and 7,899 in 2009).



### ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

**Common coastal breeding resident.**

Five territories were held along the cliffs between Durlston Head and Anvil Point. Peak counts of birds present on the Reserve were of 14 birds on 12<sup>th</sup> August and 13<sup>th</sup> December. The number of Rock Pipits counted moving overhead during visible migration studies between mid-September and the end of December was 10 birds in September, 69 birds in October, 30 in November and two in December. The overall total of 111 was similar to 2010 (122) and half the 223 counted during 2009.

### WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

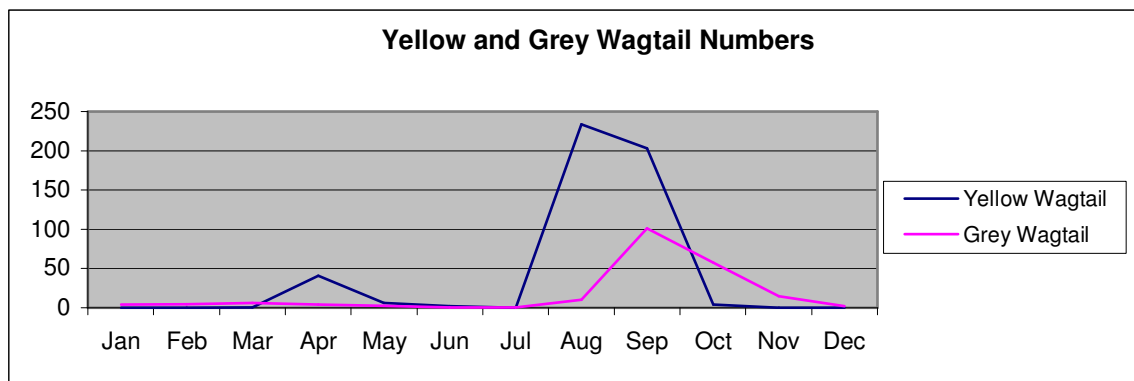
**Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.**

There were two records: two birds flew east on 19<sup>th</sup> November, and a bird was reported on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava***

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

The first record of the year was on the late date of 27<sup>th</sup> March with birds passing through until 1<sup>st</sup> May (including eight on 21<sup>st</sup> April). There were intermittent records in the remainder of May and June. Autumn passage commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> August; peak counts were of 21 birds on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 105 on 29<sup>th</sup> August (75 over and 30 present) and 49 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The last record was on 28<sup>th</sup> October. The total number of bird-days in 2011 was 491, significantly up on the 188 in 2010 and 224 in 2009. This was primarily because of the strong passage in August (234 bird-days) and September (203) (see Graph).



**GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea***

**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Grey Wagtails show a different occurrence pattern to Yellow Wagtails (see Graph above). Birds may be seen at any time of the year, although they are normally absent, or very scarce, from mid-May to mid-July. There is a marked autumn passage before numbers decline to those of very low numbers or single birds. The peak count was of 18 birds on 5<sup>th</sup> September. The Graph shows the later autumn passage compared with Yellow Wagtail. The total number of bird-days in 2011 was 210, compared with 155 in 2010, 209 in 2009, and 200 in 2008.

**PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii***

**Occasional breeding resident, common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor.**



Pied Wagtails can be seen at Durlston at any time of the year, commonly around the Visitor Centre. Spring passage peaks were of 16 birds on 5<sup>th</sup> March and 24 on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Birds of the Continental race *M.a.alba*) move through on migration but it is not possible to distinguish them from the British race as they pass overhead; birds are collectively referred to during visible migration studies as 'alba wagtails'. Autumn passage of alba wagtails in 2011 peaked in the first two weeks of October (see Graph in Meadow Pipit account). Peak counts were of 465 birds on 5<sup>th</sup> and 331 on 11<sup>th</sup>. The total number of alba wagtails counted moving overhead during visible migration studies between mid-September and the end of December was 7,323 (compared with 6,332 in 2010 and 7,196 in 2009).

**WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus***

**Rare winter visitor.**

Six birds flew west on 28<sup>th</sup> January, part of an invasion in Dorset in that month.

**(Winter) WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes***

**Common breeding resident and occasional passage migrant.**

There were at least 51 territories, although it is expected that many more undetected breeding sites were present because of the secretive behaviour of the males when not holding territory.

**HEDGE ACCENTOR (Dunnock) *Prunella modularis***

**Common breeding resident.**

The Dunnock is a common and widespread breeding bird at Durlston with at least 41 territories held. There is normally no real evidence of any passage; in 2011, an increase in numbers was noted on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Dunnocks were regularly caught whilst ringing in spring and autumn in areas close to breeding sites.

**ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula***

**Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The Robin is a common and widespread breeding bird at Durlston; 38 territories were held across the Reserve. There is some evidence of autumn passage, particularly during October and November. In 2011, there was a noticeable influx of over 40 birds at the beginning of September, with a further increase on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**RUFOUS NIGHTINGALE (Nightingale) *Luscinia megarhynchos***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There were five records of single birds in April, although it is not clear how many individuals were involved: on 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. There was one autumn record: a bird in the Gully on 17<sup>th</sup> August.

**BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird was reported (on the information services) on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

**RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL *Tarsiger cyanurus***

**Rare passage migrant.**

Durlston's first Red-flanked Bluetail was present in the hedges around Saxon Field from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April. The bird, a female, was initially found by one of the Rangers during the 'early rounds' and attracted a steady stream of visiting birdwatchers. This is the second Dorset record; the first was in Winspit in 1993.

**BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochuros***

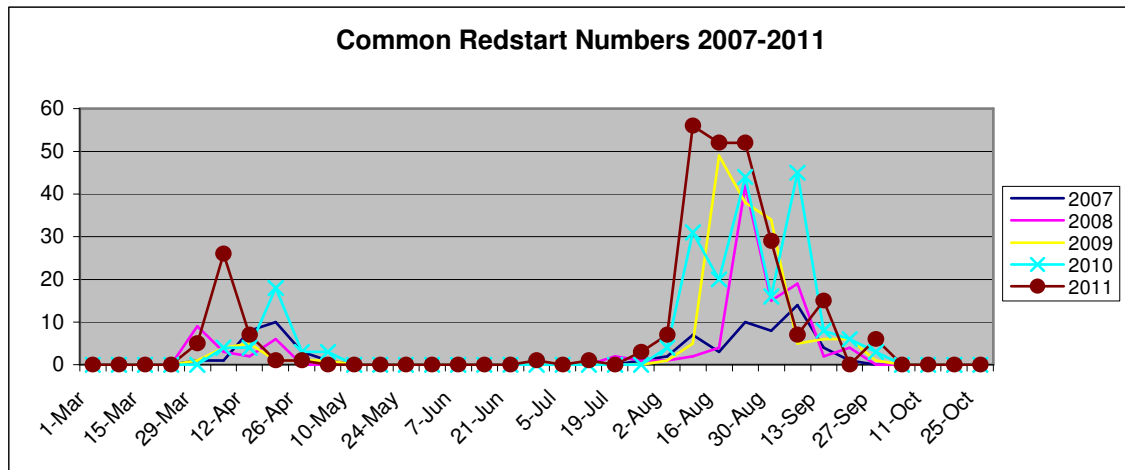
**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The favoured locations for Black Redstarts at Durlston are Tilly Whim and the grassy slopes of the Gully. Black Redstarts were seen up to 7<sup>th</sup> April. As always, it is not clear how many birds were involved. There were no more records until the end of July, suggesting that the bird(s) had been wintering and moved on. Two immature birds were reported on 1<sup>st</sup> August; there is no evidence that they had fledged locally. The first bird of the autumn passage was recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Records continued up to the end of the year, indicative of wintering bird(s). Total bird-days in 2011, at 84, was similar to 2009 (93) but an increase on 2010 (41).

**COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

The first record of the spring passage was of three birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> April; birds passed through until 26<sup>th</sup> April with a peak count of 12 (including 11 males) on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The autumn passage of Redstarts at Durlston is normally noticeably heavier than in spring and commenced in earnest at the end of July. Peak counts were all in August: 25 birds on 15<sup>th</sup>, 20 on 19<sup>th</sup> and 23 on 24<sup>th</sup>. The last record was on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Total bird-days in 2011 were 269, an increase over the 209 in 2010 and 158 recorded in 2009 (see Graph).



**WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra***

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

The first spring passage record was on 11<sup>th</sup> April; the number of bird-days in April and May was four and eight respectively (including seven on 1<sup>st</sup> May). Autumn passage commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> August and continued until 11<sup>th</sup> October. The number of bird-days in August, September and October was 26, 41 and eight respectively, making a total of 75 for the autumn passage

period. This represents a significant increase over 2010 and 2009 when the totals were 49 and 19 respectively.

**COMMON STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata***

**Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Eleven birds were recorded on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. A total of six territories were recorded: three along the southern edges of the downland, one around the southern end of the Gully, one in the scrub around the western border of Lighthouse Field and one along the Coast Path. Young were seen on 31<sup>st</sup> May. There was a noticeable peak of dispersing and passage birds in the first two weeks of October with peak counts as follows: 36 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 35 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 30 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>; numbers dropped to just over 20 in the second week.

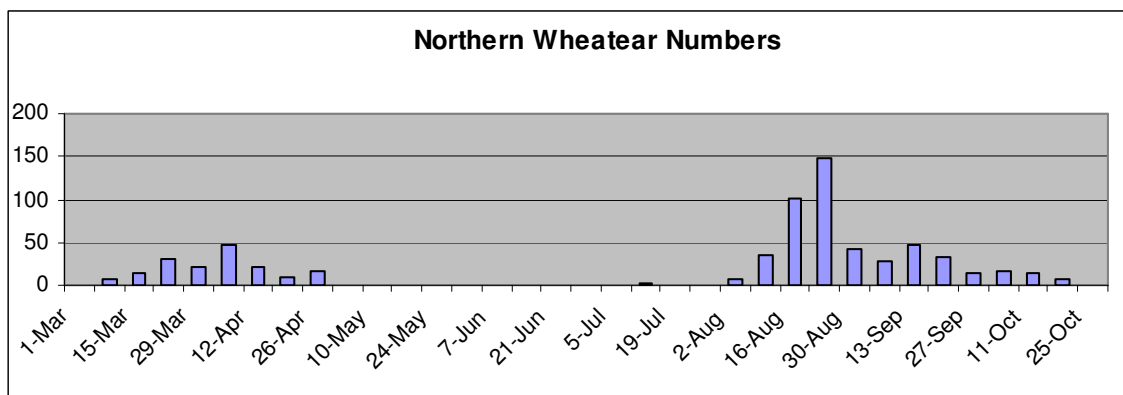
**NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe***

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

Northern Wheatear is one of the commonest passerine passage migrants at Durlston and normally the first to arrive from Africa. The first spring record was of a bird on 10<sup>th</sup> March; 19 birds passed through on 27<sup>th</sup> March with 22 on 11<sup>th</sup> April. Birds were recorded on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July. Return passage commenced at the beginning of August. Peak counts were primarily in the second half of August (see Graph) with 20 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 30 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 53 on 24<sup>th</sup>, 35 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 30 on 29<sup>th</sup>; 21 birds were present on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The last record was on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The total number of birds-days in 2011 (667) was an increase over the 2010 total of 525, and the 2009 total of 443 which in turn was double that in 2006-08 (an average of 235).

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	62	93	10	0	2	296	147	52	5	0	667



**RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus***

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

There were five spring records: a bird on 31<sup>st</sup> March, two on 1<sup>st</sup> April and singles on 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Autumn passage of Ring Ouzels at Durlston is invariably stronger than the spring passage and commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> September, continuing until 16<sup>th</sup> November. Five birds were recorded on 16<sup>th</sup> October. The number of bird-days in September, October and November was two, twenty and six respectively.

#### **BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula***

##### **Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Thirty-five birds were present on 17<sup>th</sup> January. With just 16 territories recorded (compared to 37 in 2010), it is assumed that breeding Blackbirds were under recorded for 2011 although it cannot be ruled out that the species had a poor year. Peak counts in the second half of the year were of 40 birds on 17<sup>th</sup> October and 35 on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris***

##### **Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Fieldfares are not generally as common at Durlston as Redwings, although the number of bird-days in November 2011 of both species was very similar (at around 800). In the first winter period, the peak count was of 32 birds on 2<sup>nd</sup> January; birds were seen up to 15<sup>th</sup> March. Birds were seen in the second winter period from 23<sup>rd</sup> October onwards; peak counts during visible migration surveys were of 210 birds on 14<sup>th</sup> November and 435 on 16<sup>th</sup>. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of Fieldfares recorded during visible migration surveys between mid-September and mid-December 2011 compared with 2010 (831 compared with 113 respectively).

#### **SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos***

##### **Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

There were five territories across Durlston in approximately the same locations as in 2010. Around 25 birds were recorded on various dates in the middle two weeks of January. Twenty-four birds were present on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, with 30 on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **REDWING *Turdus iliacus***

##### **Fairly common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor.**

Birds were recorded during the first winter period up to 12<sup>th</sup> April. Redwings are normally more common at Durlston than Fieldfares; in the first winter period, four times more Redwings than Fieldfares were recorded. The first record in the second winter period was on 5<sup>th</sup> October; birds were then seen regularly until the end of the year. Peak counts were of 190 birds on 12<sup>th</sup> November and 135 on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus***

##### **Occasional breeder, common visitor and uncommon passage migrant.**

As with the other thrushes, birds are seen more frequently in the second winter period with passage birds seen regularly from mid-October onwards.

#### **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia***

##### **Uncommon passage migrant.**

The first spring passage record was of four birds on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The main passage period was from then until the third week of April with further birds passing through on 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May. Return passage commenced at the end of July with five birds on 1<sup>st</sup> August. There was a high count of twelve birds on 15<sup>th</sup> August and ten on 27<sup>th</sup>; the last record was on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. The total number of bird-days was 127, primarily because of high numbers in August. The total was a significant increase over 2010 and 2009 (54 and 58 respectively) which in turn were approximately double that of the numbers recorded in 2007 and 2008.

**SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*****Uncommon passage migrant.**

The first record of the spring was on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Passage continued during April and May until 22<sup>nd</sup> May. There were two records in July, but return passage commenced in earnest at the beginning of August with peak passage in that month (41 bird-days). As with Grasshopper Warbler, the August passage was significantly greater than in 2010. The last record was on the late date of 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*****Uncommon passage migrant.**

Reed Warblers normally arrive later than Sedge Warblers, and the first record was on 18<sup>th</sup> April. As is normal with this species, spring passage was protracted and lasted until 20<sup>th</sup> June. Return passage, limited though it is, commenced on 28<sup>th</sup> July. Reed Warblers are normally significantly less common at Durlston than Grasshopper and Sedge Warblers, primarily because of the lack of the favoured reedbed habitat. Records continued very intermittently until 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Totals
Grasshopper Warbler	16	2	0	5	85	18	1	127
Sedge Warbler	10	8	0	4	41	9	2	74
Reed Warbler	1	13	6	2	10	8	2	42

**BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*****Fairly common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.**

Birds were recorded from 1<sup>st</sup> January onwards. Spring passage appeared to commence during the last week in March with seven birds on 27<sup>th</sup>. Twenty birds were recorded on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Eleven territories were held across Durlston, an increase of five from 2010. Autumn passage began in earnest in late August. Peak counts were of 108 birds on 26<sup>th</sup> and 110 on 29<sup>th</sup> August; 125 on 13<sup>th</sup>, 245 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 160 on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. A total of 3,023 bird-days were recorded, an increase from 1,509 in 2010 and 1,048 in 2009. This was primarily a result of the very strong autumn passage.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
9	2	17	106	24	8	6	463	1457	864	52	15	3023

**GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*****Occasional breeding summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant.**

The first record was on 13<sup>th</sup> April. Return passage commenced at the end of July, but as usual, birds were never common. The peak counts were of 15 birds on 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August. In total, there were 242 bird-days, an increase over the 140 in 2010, 130 recorded in 2009 and significantly greater than that recorded in 2007 (66) and 2008 (72). The last record was on the late date of 12<sup>th</sup> November.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	9	12	1	9	164	42	4	1	242

**LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*****Fairly common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first spring record was of three birds on 11<sup>th</sup> April; seven birds were present on 26<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May. As with many spring records of warbler species, it is difficult to separate passage birds from resident breeders. The frequency of records declined in June and July as birds had

either moved through, or had become less evident during breeding. However, birds were recorded throughout the summer and breeding occurred in hedgerows and scrub in the farmland areas of Durlston. At least four territories were held across the central scrubby areas of the meadows. Wandering males tended to move across potential territories so it is assumed that there were some unrecorded territories. Peak counts during autumn passage were of 14 birds on 19<sup>th</sup> August and 16 on 26<sup>th</sup>. The last record of the autumn passage was on 14<sup>th</sup> October. Less common at Durlston than Common Whitethroat (see Tables), there was a total of 269 bird-days, an increase from the 149 recorded in 2010 and 198 in 2009.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	46	22	8	4	141	45	3	0	269

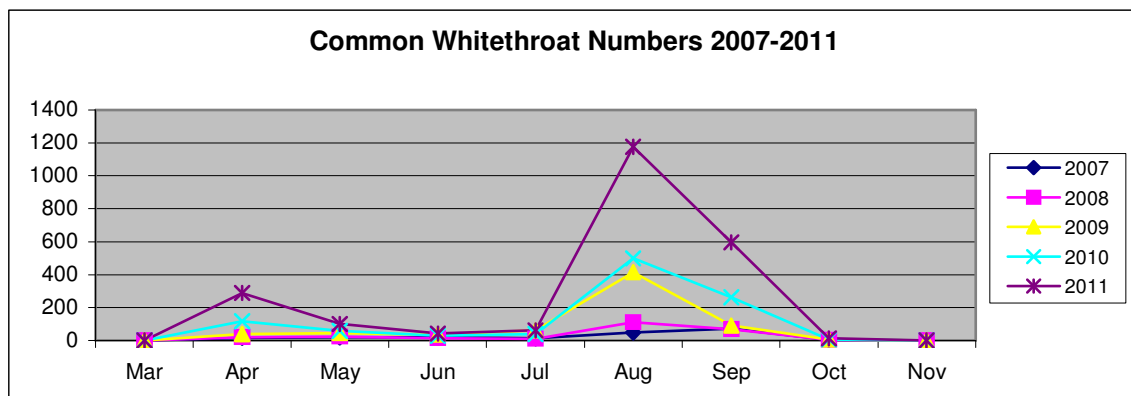
**COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis***

**Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first spring record was on 2<sup>nd</sup> April with 40 birds on 21<sup>st</sup>; 42 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 40 on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Birds were seen from then onwards on an almost daily basis throughout May and June, more commonly than Lesser Whitethroats. Common Whitethroat is the most common breeding bird found at Durlston; an exceptionally good breeding year in 2011 resulted in 69 territories. Young birds were seen in the hedges and scrub around the meadows and downs. Peak counts in August were: 120 birds on 15<sup>th</sup>, 115 on 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and 120 on 26<sup>th</sup> August. Peak counts in September were 95 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The last record was on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. In total, there were 2,278 bird-days; this represents a significant increase on the numbers recorded in 2010 (1,007), 2009 (692), 2008 (244) and 2007 (192). This is shown in the Graph which also shows the high numbers of Common Whitethroat in April, August and September 2011, relative to previous years.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	290	99	41	63	1175	596	14	0	2278



**DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata***

**Uncommon breeding resident and autumn visitor.**

The severe winter of 2010-11 reduced numbers of Dartford Warblers across Purbeck; no birds bred at Durlston in 2011. A bird on 5<sup>th</sup> August was the first seen since the spring; four were present on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

**PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus***

**Rare late autumn vagrant.**

A bird was present on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus***

**Scarce autumn passage vagrant.**

There were four records. A bird was reported in the Gully on 27<sup>th</sup> October. A bird was present with a tit flock on 31<sup>st</sup> October. A bird was in Reservoir Copse with Long-tailed Tits on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The last record was on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

**WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

There was one record: on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

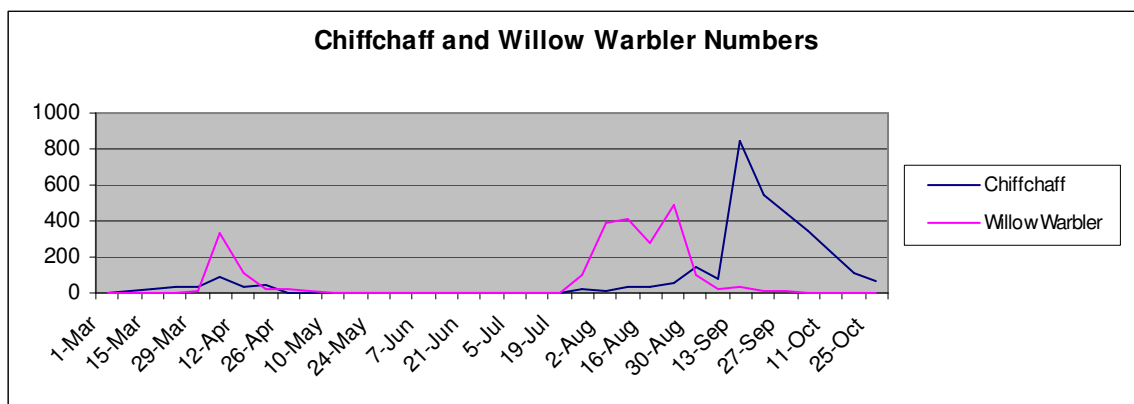
**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita***

**Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant; scarce in winter.**

Chiffchaffs overwintered at Durlston with birds seen in January and February. Spring passage was late, not starting in earnest until the third week in March; 40 birds were recorded on 7<sup>th</sup> April. Twenty-five territories were noted across Durlston, an increase over previous years. Chiffchaff autumn passage is later and significantly stronger than the closely-related Willow Warbler (see Graph) and peaked in September (rather than October as is normally the case); peak counts were of 395 birds on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 170 on 19<sup>th</sup> and 360 on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Chiffchaffs were seen up to the end of the year. In total, 3,384 bird-days were recorded, significantly greater than in 2010 (1,765), 2009 (1,847), 2008 (958) and 2007 (644).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
13	10	68	183	17	15	15	183	1739	1020	101	20	3384



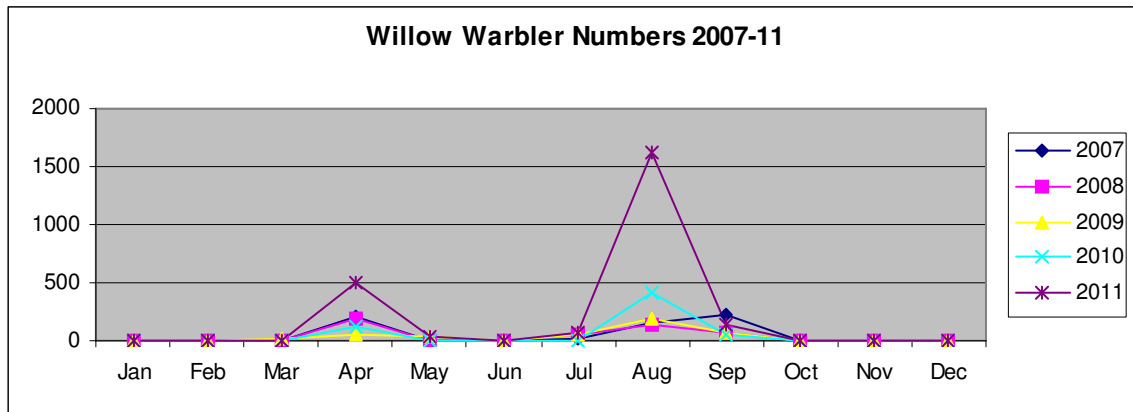
**WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus***

**Occasional breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.**

The first spring record was on 14<sup>th</sup> March; 140 birds were recorded on 7<sup>th</sup> April with 80 the next day and 100 on 11<sup>th</sup>. Willow Warblers migrate earlier in the autumn than Chiffchaff (see Graph above) with autumn passage starting in earnest in the last week of July. Peak counts were all in August: 260 birds on 6<sup>th</sup>, 190 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 136 on 26<sup>th</sup> and 150 on 29<sup>th</sup>. The last record was on 4<sup>th</sup> October. The total number of bird-days of 2,373 was significantly more than in 2010 (606), 2009 (414) 2008 (453) and 2007 (601).

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	5	492	30	0	77	1629	136	4	0	0	2373



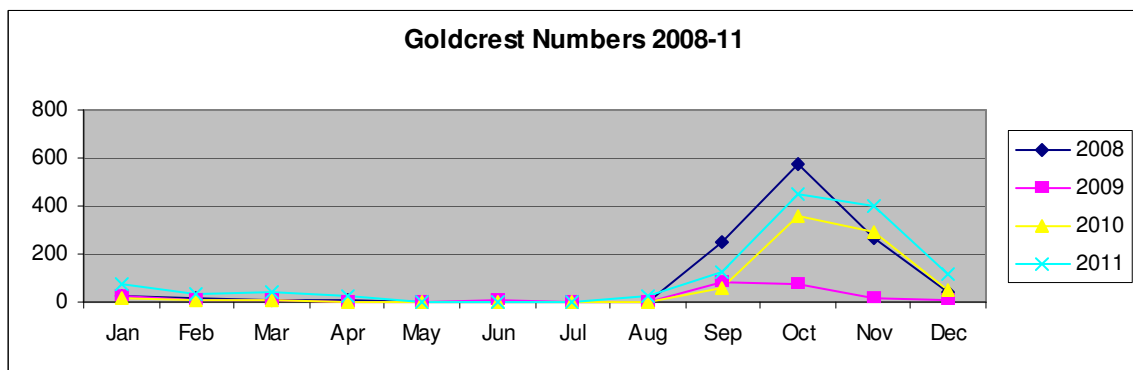
**GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus***

**Uncommon breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Goldcrests can be seen in any month but the numbers of resident birds are significantly increased by autumn migrants (see Table and Graph). The 2011 autumn passage was stronger than 2010 and 2009, but weaker than in 2008. The maximum count was of 35 birds on 12<sup>th</sup> November. The total of bird-days for 2011 was 1,307 (compared with 798 in 2010, 226 in 2009 and 1,194 in 2008). This was influenced by relatively higher numbers during the first four months of 2011.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
78	34	44	24	1	3	0	27	128	454	398	116	1307



**FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus***

**Uncommon migrant and winter visitor.**

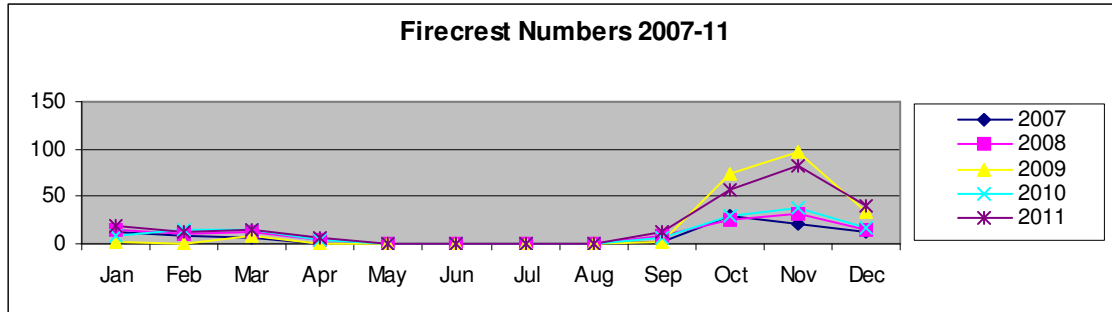
Firecrests were seen intermittently throughout the first winter period up to 12<sup>th</sup> April. The first autumn record was on 30<sup>th</sup> August. Birds were seen regularly until the end of the year with a peak in sightings in October and November; peak counts were of six birds on 13<sup>th</sup> October,



eleven on 31<sup>st</sup> October, and ten on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The total number of bird-days was similar to that recorded in 2009, and greater than in 2010, 2008 and 2007 (see Graph).

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
18	12	14	6	0	0	0	1	13	57	83	40	244



**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata***

**Fairly common passage migrant.**

Spotted Flycatcher is a late migrant and the first spring passage record was on 26<sup>th</sup> April with birds seen intermittently up to 6<sup>th</sup> June. Return passage commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and continued to 1<sup>st</sup> October. Peak counts were of 17 birds on 24<sup>th</sup> August and 12 on 13<sup>th</sup> September. There was a total of 17 bird-days in spring and 125 in autumn (similar to 2010 and greater than the 47 in 2009).

**PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca***

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

There were five records in spring: on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May. Return passage commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> July. There were eight bird-days in August, and five in September, less than in 2010, 2009 and 2008, but more than double the numbers recorded in 2007 and 2006. The last record was on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

**BEARDED TIT *Panurus biarmicus***

**Rare visitor.**

Usually a bird of reedbeds and wetlands, flocks disperse in the autumn across the south coast. A calling bird flew high over Long Meadow on 19<sup>th</sup> October. This is the first record since 2006.

**LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus***

**Common breeding resident.**

The breeding bird survey identified eight territories in hedgerows in a predominantly central distribution with other territories located around the woodland edge. The peak count was of 25 birds on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

**BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus***

**Common breeding resident.**

The breeding bird survey identified 22 territories located throughout the woodland areas and mature scrub; pairs also used nest boxes. Eight birds moved west on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

**GREAT TIT *Parus major***

**Common breeding resident.**

Great Tits are found all across Durlston – particularly in hedgerows and the woodland areas. Bollards were successfully used for nesting. The breeding bird survey identified 21 territories.

**COAL TIT *Periparus ater*****Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.**A bird of the Continental race was recorded on 31<sup>st</sup> October.**MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*****Rare visitor.**

Marsh Tits are in decline throughout Dorset and have rarely been seen at Durlston in the past until 2010. The 22 records in that year were eclipsed by the 40 in 2011 (16 in January, seven in February and March, four in April, one in September, three in Oct and two in November).

**EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*****Scarce visitor.**Records of Nuthatch at Durlston continue to increase. The ten records in 2010 contrasted with previous years when it has been recorded on one or no days. In 2011, there were 24 records including two birds on four days. Birds were recorded up to 30<sup>th</sup> April, and from 31<sup>st</sup> October.**EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*****Uncommon breeding resident and visitor.**Treecreepers were seen intermittently in the woodland areas, although records decline significantly during the breeding season. Two territories were found of this secretive bird, one in the Large Copse and one in the Aviary Glade. Three birds were present on 11<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> November.**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
21	9	6	8	2	2	0	3	3	12	24	18	108

**EURASIAN JAY *Garrulus glandarius*****Fairly common breeding species and passage / irruptive migrant.**Sixteen birds were present on 12<sup>th</sup> January with similar numbers also seen on various dates in the first two months of the year. A bird was seen with nesting material on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The breeding bird survey identified five territories, widely distributed across Durlston. Jays are normally particularly evident in the autumn as they collect acorns from the many Holm Oaks around Durlston. However, in 2011, numbers were less than in previous years with the peak count being 15 birds, noted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October.**MAGPIE *Pica pica*****Common breeding resident.**

The Magpie is a difficult species to monitor in breeding surveys because of the unpaired flocks found across Durlston in the breeding season. Up to eight territories were thought to be present.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*****Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

No Jackdaw nest sites were identified during the breeding bird surveys. Jackdaws move through Durlston in autumn. Peak counts of birds passing overhead in October were 105 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 150 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 120 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>; 80 birds were present on 27<sup>th</sup>. One hundred and twenty birds passed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, with 94 on the next day.

**ROOK *Corvus frugilegus***

**Common non-breeding visitor.**

Rooks are seen at Durlston normally primarily in the autumn, and usually in the meadows. However, peak counts in 2011 were all in January with around 30 birds present on four dates.

**CARRION CROW *Corvus corone***

**Common breeding resident.**

In common with Magpies, Carrion Crows are another difficult *Corvid* species to monitor because of the presence of non-breeding birds found across Durlston. Only six territories were found, an apparent decrease from previous years. Twenty four birds moved west on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

**COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax***

**Fairly common visitor.**

Ravens are normally seen at Durlston as single birds or pairs, flying over.

**COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris***

**Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

An increase in Starling numbers generally was noticeable by mid-October. Peak counts of passing birds were of 615 on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 455 the next day, and 465 on 15<sup>th</sup> November.

**HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

House Sparrows are much less numerous at Durlston than 15 years ago when they bred at the Visitor Centre and Bungalow. There was, however, a significant increase in records in 2010 and this continued in 2011. Birds were present on two days in March; six in April; one in July; two in August, September, October and November; and three in December. Six birds were present on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September, and on 20<sup>th</sup> October. In 2009, visible migration surveys recorded a total of four single birds flying over. The equivalent figures for 2011 and 2010 were 24 and 26 respectively.

**TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus***

**Scarce passage migrant.**

A bird flew over on 27<sup>th</sup> August; five birds flew over on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Autumn passage was similar to the last couple of years.

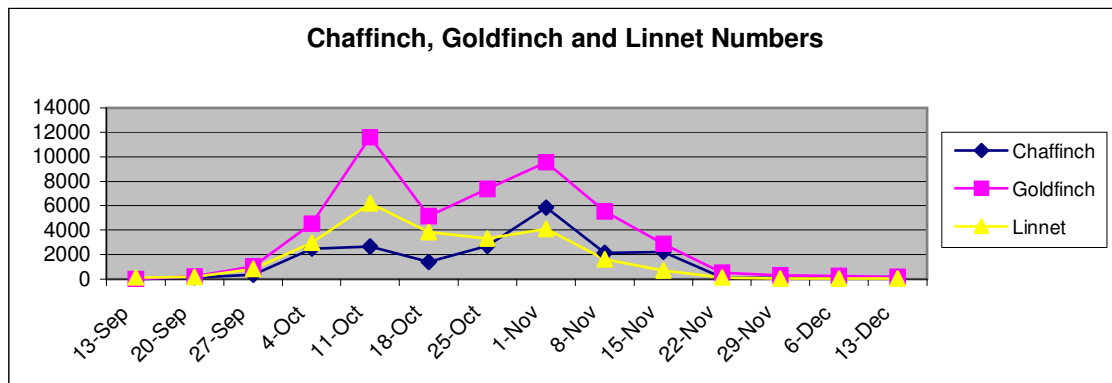
**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2011	0	24	3	1	28
2010	1	24	6	0	31
2009	7	30	4	0	41

**COMMON CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs***

**Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

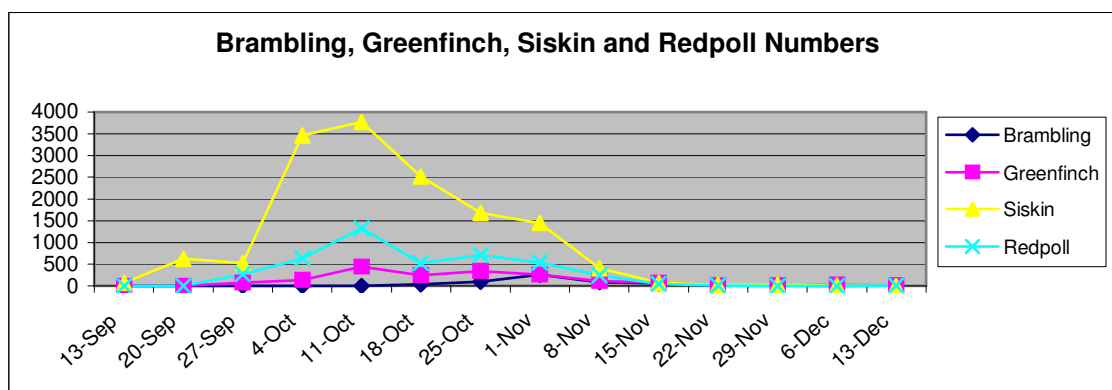
Breeding occurs at Durlston amongst the hedgerows, scrub and woodland areas, and in the Gully. Breeding bird surveys identified 28 territories, similar to 2010. This is considered to be an under-estimate. Visible migration (the overhead daylight passage of migrating species such as pigeons, larks, hirundines, wagtails, pipits and finches) is an annual occurrence at Durlston and other Dorset headlands. Passage lasts from September until December, but the main period for finches is from October until mid-November. Counts were undertaken on 72 days between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December. Approximately 20,460 Chaffinches were counted during this period, amounting to an average of 285 per day. Of the seven common finch species (Chaffinch, Brambling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnets and Lesser Redpoll), Chaffinches were the third most abundant, amounting to 17.8% of the common finches. Particularly strong movements were noted on 7<sup>th</sup> (1,255 birds) and 29<sup>th</sup> (1,224) October; and 4<sup>th</sup> (1,410), 5<sup>th</sup> (1,125), 6<sup>th</sup> (2,014) and 15<sup>th</sup> (1,040) November.



**BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla***

Uncommon passage migrant mainly autumn and winter visitor.

There were ten records in the first half of the year, all of single birds unless otherwise indicated: on 11<sup>th</sup> (three), 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January; 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> (two), 25<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> (two) and 31<sup>st</sup> March; and 7<sup>th</sup> April. As with other finch species, autumn passage is always significantly stronger. The first record of the autumn was on 6<sup>th</sup> October; records continued until the end of the year. The main passage period was in the first week of November. Approximately 600 Bramblings were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of 8 per day (half the rate in 2010). Of the seven common finch species, Bramblings were the seventh most abundant, amounting to 0.5% of the common finches. Peak counts were of 54 birds on 29<sup>th</sup> October and 162 on 9<sup>th</sup> November.



**EUROPEAN SERIN *Serinus serinus***

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.

There were two records: a bird over the Gully on 26<sup>th</sup> April, and a bird over on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

### **GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris***

#### **Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Breeding bird surveys identified 15 Greenfinch territories, a decrease of eight from 2010. It is not clear whether this is because of a poor breeding season, or because of survey timings. Although still numerous as a passage migrant, Greenfinches do not move through Durlston in the numbers associated with species such as Chaffinch, Linnet and Goldfinch. Approximately 1,745 Greenfinches were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of 24 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Greenfinches were the sixth most abundant, amounting to 1.5% of the common finches. Passage peaked in mid-October with counts of 105 birds on 13<sup>th</sup> and 109 on 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis***

#### **Breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Although small in comparison with the autumn passage, spring migration of Goldfinches is noted as birds move north from their wintering grounds in France and Iberia. Eighty birds were present on 7<sup>th</sup> September. Approximately 49,265 Goldfinches were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of 685 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Goldfinches were the most abundant, amounting to 42.8% of the common finches. There were two peaks in passage (see Graph in Chaffinch section): in the second week of October and the first week of November. Peak counts were of 2947 birds on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2646 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2270 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 2420 on 29<sup>th</sup> and 2746 on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

### **SISKIN *Carduelis spinus***

#### **Fairly common passage migrant, particularly in autumn.**

There were intermittent records of Siskins in the first half of the year (but significantly more than in the last couple of years). The main autumn passage commenced in the last week of September. Approximately 14,625 Siskins were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of just over 230 per day (compared with 80 in 2010 and 40 in 2009). Of the seven common finch species, Siskins were the fourth most abundant, amounting to 12.7% of the common finches. Siskin autumn passage exhibits a more marked peak than the other finches (see Graph in Brambling section). Peak counts were in October: 625 birds on 5<sup>th</sup>, 918 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 905 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1046 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 655 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 624 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 712 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 644 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **LINNET *Carduelis cannabina***

#### **Breeding resident and common passage migrant.**

The breeding population of Linnets has reduced significantly and breeding bird surveys identified three territories in similar locations to previous years. Approximately 24,055 Linnets were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of 335 per day (less than in 2010, but more than in 2009). Of the seven common finch species, Linnets were the second most abundant, amounting to 20.9% of the common finches. The peak Linnet passage lasted from the middle of October to the first week of November. Peak counts were as follows: in October - 870 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1070 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1676 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 951 on 12<sup>th</sup>, 1318 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1060 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 1514 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 1790 on 29<sup>th</sup>; in November - 1638 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 825 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris***

#### **Scarce passage migrant.**

There were two records of birds passing overhead: one on 29<sup>th</sup> October and two on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

**LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis carbaret*****Fairly common passage migrant mainly in late autumn.**

There were twelve records in the first half of the year: on 25<sup>th</sup> February (three birds); 2<sup>nd</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> (four), 25<sup>th</sup> (three), 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> (two) March; 4<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> (two) April and 1<sup>st</sup> May. All other records were from autumn passage; the first was on 21<sup>st</sup> September. Approximately 4,235 Redpolls were counted between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December, amounting to an average of 60 per day (ten times that in 210). Of the seven common finch species, Redpolls were the fifth most abundant (compared with seventh in 2010 and 2009), amounting to 3.8% of the common finches. Main passage was in mid-October; the peak counts were of 213 birds on 14<sup>th</sup>, 364 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 326 on 16<sup>th</sup>, and 326 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*****Uncommon passage migrant and irruptive visitor.**

Three birds were recorded on 28<sup>th</sup> June and heralded unprecedented numbers (see Table). Peak counts were in October: 154 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 118 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 111 on 12<sup>th</sup> and 101 on 17<sup>th</sup>. This compares with 2010 when there was a total of 29 bird-days, 539 in 2009, 281 in 2008 and eleven in 2007.

**Monthly counts (bird-days):**

Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
3	3	25	0	1096	178	30	1335

**COMMON BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*****Breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant.**

The Bullfinch is a secretive and often under-recorded species. Breeding bird surveys located four territories across the centre of Durlston in mature scrubland. Despite its secretive nature, there were high counts of Bullfinches in 2011. Double-digit numbers of bird were present on 20 days up to 1<sup>st</sup> May with a peak count of 15 on 15<sup>th</sup> March. Counts of over 20 birds in the second half of the year were as follows: August – 20 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 30 on 21<sup>st</sup>, and 21 on 26<sup>th</sup>; September – 24 on 2<sup>nd</sup>; October – 27 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 21 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 25 on 25<sup>th</sup>, and 39 on 28<sup>th</sup>; November – an unprecedented and record count of 118 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 41 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 44 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 60 on 6<sup>th</sup>, and 21 on 17<sup>th</sup>. These numbers resulted in monthly visible migration count totals between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> December as follows: September – two bird-days; October – 294 bird-days; November – 402 bird-days; and December– 11 bird-days.

**HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*****Scarce passage migrant.**

There has not been a significant autumn passage of Hawfinches at Durlston since 2005; passage is annually very variable. There were three bird-days in 2006, one in 2007, 17 in 2008, none in 2009, ten in 2010 and seven in 2011. The 2011 records were of birds flying over: on 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October (three), and 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (two) November.

**LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*****Scarce passage migrant.**

A Lapland Bunting was seen feeding amongst a few Skylarks on Lighthouse Green on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Birds were recorded flying over on 23<sup>rd</sup> September; 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October; and 6<sup>th</sup> November.

**SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis***

**Rare passage migrant**

There were six records: a bird was reported on 19<sup>th</sup> October, other records were of birds flying over on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November (two birds on both days), and 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November.

**YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella***

**Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Peak counts in the first part of 2011 were of nine birds on 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April and eleven birds on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Once a common breeding bird found throughout Durlston and the Wares, the Durlston population of this Red-listed species has remained constant over the last few years with only three nesting territories recorded. A pair was observed feeding recently-fledged young on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Future nest recording studies are underway to establish the productivity and breeding success, along with a farmland bird project to provide winter food and ideal nesting habitats for Yellowhammers and Linnets. Yellowhammers move over Durlston during autumn passage, but in low numbers. There were 42 bird-days in October and 16 in November.

**LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla***

**Rare passage migrant.**

A bird flew over on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

**REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus***

**Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.**

There were sporadic records up to 17<sup>th</sup> April. As with other finch species, autumn passage is always stronger than in spring. Records consisted predominantly of small numbers of birds moving overhead, although birds were also occasionally seen around Durlston. Reed Buntings were recorded on almost every day in October and the first three weeks of November; records then declined with the last on 27<sup>th</sup> December. September, October, November and December bird-days were 2, 67, 46 and 6 respectively.

**CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra***

**Rare passage migrant.**

There were two records: a bird near the Lighthouse on 8<sup>th</sup> April, and a bird which briefly visited the Learning Centre garden on 15<sup>th</sup> October.