

DURLSTON

COUNTRY PARK & NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE



Durlston Bird Report 2010

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.

We would also like to thank Joan Harrison who painstakingly transfers the daily diary information into weekly summary sheets.

Our gratitude also goes to all those who have provided us with records of the birds seen and heard during 2010.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 2010

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).

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Scarce, passing offshore.

There was one record: a bird passed offshore on 17th April. Birds are likely to be from the resident feral populations in the Avon Valley and Poole Harbour.

BRENT GOOSE (Dark-bellied) *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. The last record of the first winter period was on 28th April; the first record of the second winter period was of seven birds past on 29th September. Maximum counts of passing birds were of 28 on 19th October. Pale-bellied birds were recorded passing on 6th October (one), 13th December (11) and 23rd December (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 2010 conformed to that pattern.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	0	5	9	7	2	0	0	0	5	5	4

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

There were significantly more records of passing Wigeon in 2010 than in recent years. Birds passed offshore (five birds or less) on 19th and 20th January; 3rd March; 28th September; 31st October; and 8th, 18th and 30th November. More unusual were 20 birds past on 30th December, and eight the next day.

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

There were three records of single birds passing offshore: on 11th January, on 21st October and on 30th November. More unusual were seven birds passing over land on 7th January.

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

Three birds were present on the pond at the Visitor Centre on 18th May; five birds passed on 31st December.

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

There was one record: a bird passing offshore on 1st November.

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

There were three records of birds passing offshore: four on 6th September, one on 29th September and two on 31st December.

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

Three birds passed offshore on 8th January.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula***Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter.**

Three birds passed offshore on 30th December.

COMMON EIDER *Somateria mollissima***Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

There were three records of single birds passing offshore, all in December: on 11th, 17th and 25th.

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 count was of 35 birds on 29th March.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
43	31	84	63	28	18	55	79	82	72	32	35	622

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.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser***Rare, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

The four records of Goosander were entirely unexpected. All were of single birds: one on 6th January flying low east along the Coast Path, a redhead low over the cliff tops on 6th November, one past on 12th November and one over the sea on 12th December.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa***Scarce visitor.**

There was a sequence of records in the spring with up to two birds being recorded on eight days between mid-April and mid-May. There was a further record on 26th June; an adult with eight chicks was seen on 11th July, with five birds on 30th August. There was no recorded breeding at Durlston, so breeding is likely to have occurred nearby.

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 2010. Four to five males held territory; females generally outnumbered males other than in winter in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre when males were more common.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata***Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

Red-throated is by far the commonest diver seen at Durlston (and at the other coastal watch-points in Dorset). The last record of the first half of the year was on 14th May; the first record of the second winter period was on 5th October. The peak daily count was on 31st December when 45 birds headed west and eight east. A total of 281 bird-days was recorded, similar to 2009.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
75	49	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	6	7	132	281

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. There were six records: two on 12th January, one off Durlston Head on 25th February, one on 3rd April, one in Durlston Bay on 4th December, three on 30th December and one the next day.

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 26th May. The first record of the second winter period was on 20th September. A total of 29 bird-days were recorded, similar to 2006-09.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
6	2	2	1	6	0	0	0	1	2	5	4	29

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus***Scarce, passing offshore in winter.**

There were three records of passing birds: two on 7th January, one on 26th January and one on 31st December.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis***Common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

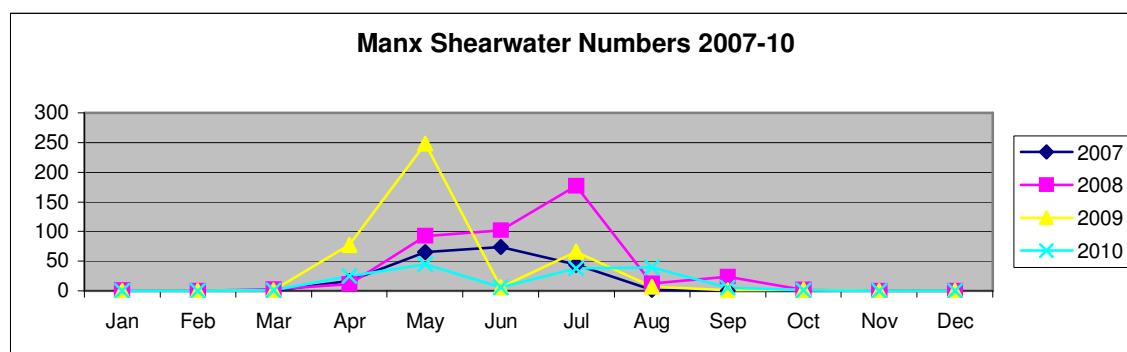
Fulmars are seen for most of the year at Durlston along the cliff-face, although they are generally scarce or absent between mid-July and mid-November. As usual, breeding numbers were difficult to assess, but there were eleven apparently occupied sites.

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 27th March. Spring passage was weak; the maximum daily count was of a raft of 20 birds on 15th May; the peak daily count in autumn was of 28 birds on 4th August. The last record was of two birds on 6th October. Numbers in 2010 were significantly lower than those recorded in 2009 and 2008 - a total of 408 and 424 bird-days respectively (see Graph).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	1	25	45	6	38	40	5	1	0	0	161

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

First recorded on 1st July, numbers of Balearic Shearwater seen from Durlston in 2010 (a total of 17 bird-days) were lower than in the majority of previous years (28 in 2006, 12 in 2007, 97 in 2008 and 29 in 2009). The last record was on 8th November.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

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

The SeaWatch SW Project (<http://www.seawatch-sw.org>) is an initiative designed to collect important information about some of the UK's most threatened marine animals including the Balearic Shearwater. The project is entirely volunteer-based, and is supported by a number of major conservation and scientific organisations, including the National Oceanography Centre at Southampton, the RSPB and the Marine Conservation Society. One of the main aims of SeaWatch SW is to provide a central point for Balearic Shearwater recording in UK waters.

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. Over 60 birds were very close in on 11th January and 200 birds per hour were passing on 1st July.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common coastal resident.

There were no breeding Cormorants at Durlston in 2010, 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. An unusual record was of 15 birds over Lighthouse Field on 10th October; a flock of 22 flew past on 19th October.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Common coastal resident.

Shags are seen throughout the year at Durlston, mostly close into the cliffs. Five nests were noted between Durlston Head and west of Anvil Point.

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 14 records in 2010; six birds flew east on 14th October.

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 25 records in 2010, similar to 2009 and approximately double the number recorded in 2006-08. Records were mainly of single or two birds, but four were recorded on 5th August and three on 11th August.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were five records: one heading north-east on 4th April, one over Durlston Bay and Saxon Field on 12th April, one over the Visitor Centre on 21st May, one on 13th August, and one on 30th August. This represents a significant increase on previous years when one or two records have been the norm.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were three records: one on 17th April, one on 20th September, and one on 1st November.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

Rare passage migrant.

A female was seen near the Western Boundary on 3rd June.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A bird was seen on 8th January quartering the valley to the north of Durlston; a further bird was seen on 13th October.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Birds were regularly seen hunting throughout the year. A bird was observed bathing in the pond by the Visitor Centre on 14th February. Records increased significantly in September and October as birds were observed hunting the migrating passerine flocks (see Graph in Merlin account). Three or more birds were reported on eleven days between mid-September and the end of October; maximum counts were of five birds on 8th and six on 12th October. A bird was seen chasing a Green Woodpecker on 19th December. The total number of bird-days, at 221, was similar to 2007-2009.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
15	11	10	14	8	10	5	14	26	60	22	26	221

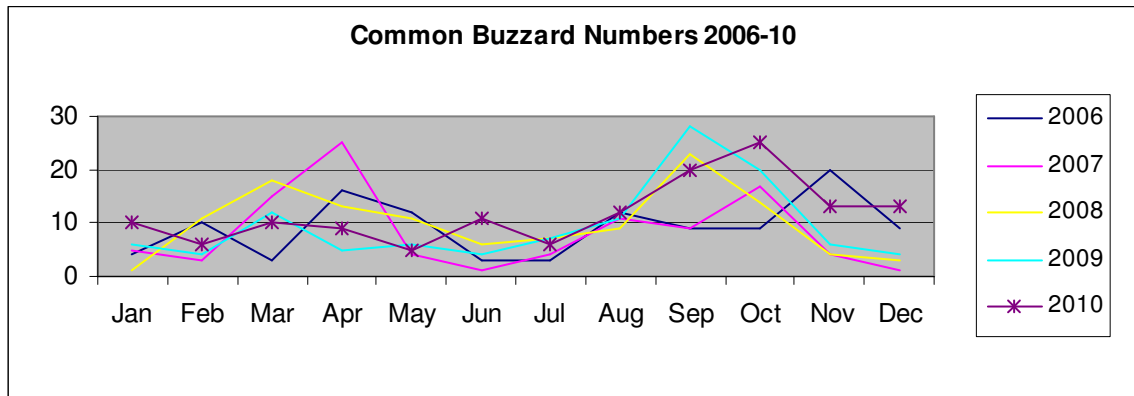
COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

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, a consistent pattern of sightings is now emerging. The annual number of bird-days between 2006-09 has averaged approximately 110; the total for 2010 of 140 represents an increase. Numbers in 2010 showed the normal increase in autumn (see Graph), presumably linked to young birds. However, the normal spring peak and decrease in the breeding season was not apparent in 2010.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
10	6	10	9	5	11	6	12	20	25	13	13	140



OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant.

There was one record: a bird over Peveril Down on 4th April.

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Kestrels were seen throughout the year in all areas of Durlston. Young birds were seen being mobbed by a Peregrine Falcon on 28th June. One of the young was seen eating a fledgling Great Tit in The Gully on 5th July as its siblings circled and called; young birds were perched on telegraph wires on 6th July.

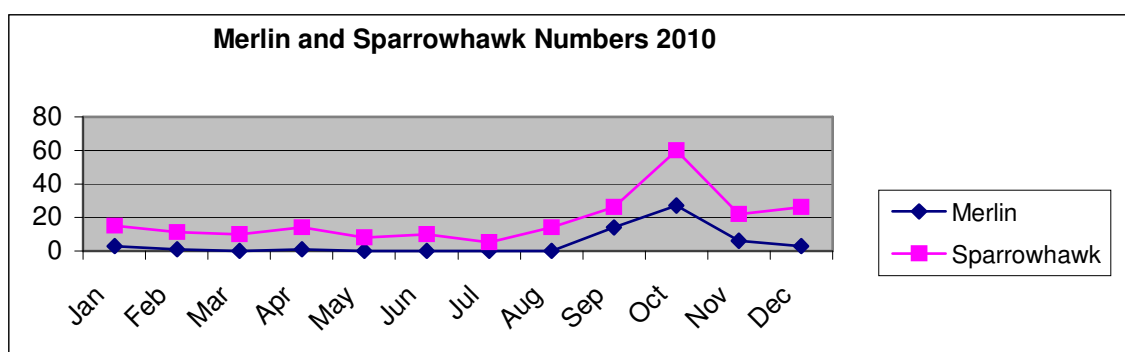
MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

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). As in Dorset generally, there is a distinct peak in October when birds hunt the migrating passerine flocks (see Graph, also shows Sparrowhawk). Records from the first winter period were few in number with the last bird recorded on 9th February; a bird on 7th April was presumably on passage. The first autumn passage bird was on 2nd September; one was seen heading out to sea on 13th September. Three birds were recorded on two days in October: 4th and 14th. Birds were recorded up to 30th December. Total number of bird-days, at 55, was similar to 2008 and 2009.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	27	6	3	55



HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record of the year was of a bird on 17th April. A Hobby was seen interacting with two Peregrine Falcons over Long Meadow on 9th October; this was the last record.

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. One pair held territory along the cliffs west of Durlston Head but breeding was not confirmed. A juvenile bird was seen on 12th July; two juveniles and a parent were seen to disappear into the cloud base on 13th July, before dropping out of it to chase a Pigeon along The Gully. A particularly long hunt on 9th October involved five stoops with another half a dozen chases close to the treetops and cliffs. One chase was directed at a Merlin that had ventured into the Peregrines' hunting area; a nearby Kestrel kept its distance. On 29th October, a pair stooped into the Wildlife Area around the pond by the Visitor Centre to hunt some of the smaller birds feeding there, although without success. As with other raptors such as Sparrowhawk and Merlin, one of the features of the autumn is the number of Peregrines present. Three or more birds were recorded on 12 days in October including four birds on 9th October.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were two records: a bird calling from scrub in Saxon Field on 8th October, and one on 30th October.

CORN CRAKE *Crex crex*

Rare passage migrant.

On 30th September, a bird was seen momentarily on the ground on South Barn path before being flushed and flying into an uncut field to the east. This is only the third time that the species has been recorded at Durlston by the Head Ranger in over 30 years.

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. One was watched being chased by a Peregrine Falcon just below the cliffs on 4th July.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*

Rare passage migrant.

A bird flew over the meadows on 10th October.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce, passing offshore in spring and autumn.

There were two records: single birds on 8th June and 10th October.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

All records were of birds passing overhead unless otherwise stated. There was a sequence of records in the first half of January associated with a significant cold weather movement that was seen in other parts of Dorset: 22 on 6th, 35 on 7th (and 12 present); 15 on 8th (and two present), and two on 9th January. A single bird was recorded on 20th April. There were two September records: four on 20th and two on 29th. In October, single birds were recorded on 7th, 14th, 16th, 20th and 24th with two on 9th and 18th, and three on 25th. In November, single birds were recorded on 8th, 16th and 18th with two on 30th. December records were as follows: two on 1st, four on 2nd, five on 3rd, two on 4th, twelve on 11th, three on 15th, one on 22nd, one on 23rd and one on 26th.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.

There were five records of birds passing offshore: 6th January (two); single birds passed on 13th, 20th and 26th April; 17th May; and 6th December.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Six birds over on 2nd January presaged a major cold weather movement seen in other parts of Dorset: 238 over on 6th, 127 over and four present on 7th, 22 over and four present on 8th, three over on 11th and two over on 12th. Autumn records were as follows: one over on 11th October, two over on 23rd October and two over on 30th November. Low temperatures in December were associated with a sequence of records, mostly of birds flying over: six on 1st and 2nd, 20 on 3rd, one on 4th, two in a field and 42 over on 6th, five on 11th, one on 17th, seven on 19th, six on 22nd, eight on 23rd, 17 on 24th, two on 26th, two on 30th and one on 31st.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Scarce, passing offshore spring, autumn and winter.

There were two records: five past on 8th January and eight past on 30th April.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus***Rare winter visitor.**

There were two records: one on 11th January in Long Meadow and two over The Gully on 11th October. The latter record was the first time that the species has been recorded during visible migration studies.

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

Annual Snipe records normally number five or less. Birds were recorded on an unprecedented 24 days in 2010 with a total of 37 bird-days; some of these records were undoubtedly associated with the cold weather in January and December. Eight birds were recorded on 7th January. In addition to birds flying over or flushed from the meadows, there were two records of birds around the pond at the Visitor Centre: on 17th October and 21st November.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
17	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	5	8

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

As with Golden Plover, Lapwing and Common Snipe, there was a significant increase in Woodcock records in 2010 compared with previous years. Other than two birds on 8th January and 30th December, records were of single birds.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
10	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	3

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

There were two records: a mixed flock of Bar-tailed Godwits and Whimbrel passed on 9th May; four passed on 14th May.

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

The first record was of three birds on 13th April. A mixed flock of Bar-tailed Godwits and Whimbrel passed on 9th May. Return passage commenced with an early bird on 24 June; no birds were seen after 7th September. Autumn passage was light.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	23	9	2	3	5	7	0	0	0

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

There were sixteen records of single passing birds, a significant increase on 2006-2009: on 6th, 7th and 23rd January; 16th and 29th June; 5th and 9th August; 20th September; 5th; 21st and 31st October; 12th November; and 1st, 3rd, 4th and 30th December.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos***Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.**

There were eight records, normally of single birds 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 30th April, 15th May, 17th and 21st June, 6th and 29th July, 9th August and 19th September.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia***Scarce passage migrant.**

There were two records of birds flying over: on 9th August and 30th August.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

There were four records: one past on 7th January, one present on 19th January, one in Durlston Bay on 29th July and one on 30th October.

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. Skua passage past Durlston in 2010 was very light; with reduced numbers of Arctic and Great Skuas, and no records of Pomarine or Long-tailed Skuas. Arctic Skuas were recorded intermittently between 14th May and 5th November with a total of nine bird-days (compared with 26 in 2009 and 60 in 2008).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

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

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua***Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.**

After an increase in 2008 to a total of 42 bird-days (compared with seven in 2006 and six in 2007), eight birds were recorded in 2009. 2010 was similar with only five records of single birds: on 2nd April, 15th July, 26th August, 9th and 31st 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. Peak counts of Kittiwakes were all in January: 120 past west on 12th with 30 offshore, 70 offshore on 15th and 60 on 29th.

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.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus***Uncommon, passing offshore mainly in autumn and winter.**

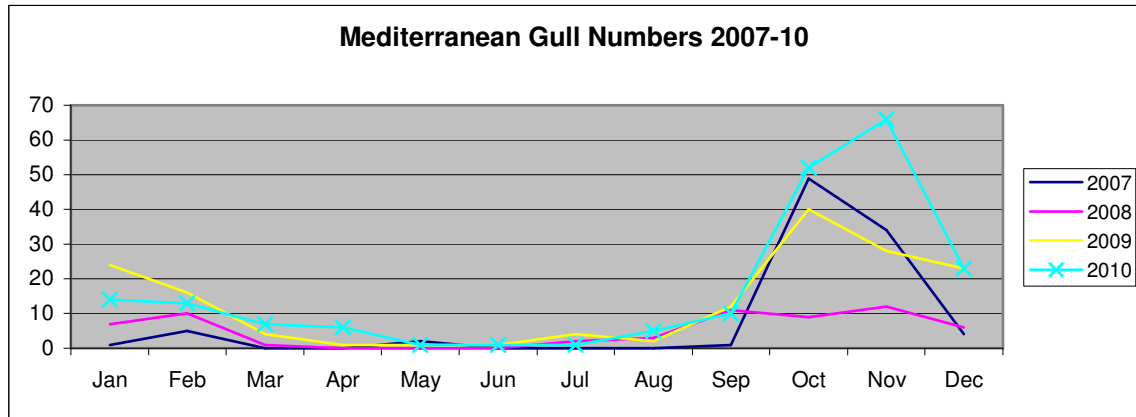
There were ten records of eleven birds. All records were during the autumn passage: on 27th August; 9th, 27th (two) and 30th October; 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 12th November; and 4th December. Durlston Bay is a good site for Little Gulls.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus***Uncommon offshore visitor and passage migrant.**

The number of Mediterranean Gull bird-days in 2010 was 199, a continuation of the trend of increase seen in previous years (96 in 2007, 61 in 2008 and 156 in 2009). The increase was particularly marked in November (see Graph). Birds were recorded in all months of the year, although there is a noticeable drop in numbers in the summer. Peak counts were of 12 birds on 30th October, eight on 2nd November and nine on 5th November.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
13	13	7	6	1	1	1	5	10	52	66	23	199



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. In February, 40 moved west on 4th with an easterly movement on 25th. Two early birds were recorded on 4th August with 65 on 16th November.

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. An easterly movement was observed on 25th February.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Common coastal resident and cliff-nesting species.

There were at least five nests in the Durlston Head to Ragged Rocks area.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis*

Rare offshore visitor.

There were two records of birds offshore: one on 12th November and one on 9th December.

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. There were two nests in the Durlston area.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Scarce offshore passage migrant.

There was one record: one passed offshore on 2nd October.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Fairly common summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.

The first record was of a bird on 22nd March with birds seen from then until 16th November. Some of the birds 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 6th April onwards. Records continued through the summer, including 30 past on 28th August. The last record was on 4th October. Some of the birds may be from the nearest breeding colony, on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Scarce offshore passage migrant.

The only record was during the autumn passage: a bird on 5th October.

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Common coastal resident, winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Three thousand auks (mainly Guillemots) moved east on 23rd January – these may have been a feeding party rather than a movement. Two hundred Guillemots were on the ledges on 3rd January, 280 on 12th (over 90% of which were in breeding plumage) and 300 on 14th. Numbers reached 350 on 2nd March with 350 taking off from the water on 13th March. The first eggs (three on the upper ledge, one on the lower) were recorded on 24th April. Chicks started leaving on 23rd June and only a few chicks were left on the ledges by 29th June, with the remaining father and chick pairs present to the left hand side of the lower ledge. (The increased protection on the lower ledge allows later chicks to survive to fledging as they are less likely to be predated by Herring Gulls). On 8th July, there were 52 adults and at least five chicks on the lower ledge; 33 adults and at least three chicks were present on the lower ledge on 12th July. The final adult and chick left the lower ledge on 17th July – the chicks will not return for four years. Two hundred birds had returned to the ledges by 6th November; 300 were on the ledges on various dates in December.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common coastal resident, winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.

As in 2008 and 2009, there were some spectacular Razorbill movements in January. The first large movement of mainly Razorbills was on 2nd; 1,800 auks, mainly Razorbills, moved west on 12th; 970 Razorbills moved east on 26th and 800 moved west on 29th. It is not clear whether these are local feeding movements, or part of a wider movement. Seven pairs were noted on the cliffs or on water on 1st February; 22 birds were present on 2nd and 13th March, 26 birds were present on 23rd with 32 counted prior to that date. There were nine apparently occupied sites.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor, usually storm driven.

There was one record: a bird briefly offshore Tilly Whim on 30th November.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Uncommon summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Around 10-15 Puffins nest 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 was only one record at Durlston: two flying around and one on the water on 9th June. Birds were seen regularly on the summer evening Seabird Boat Trips to Dancing Ledge.

FERAL ROCK DOVE (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

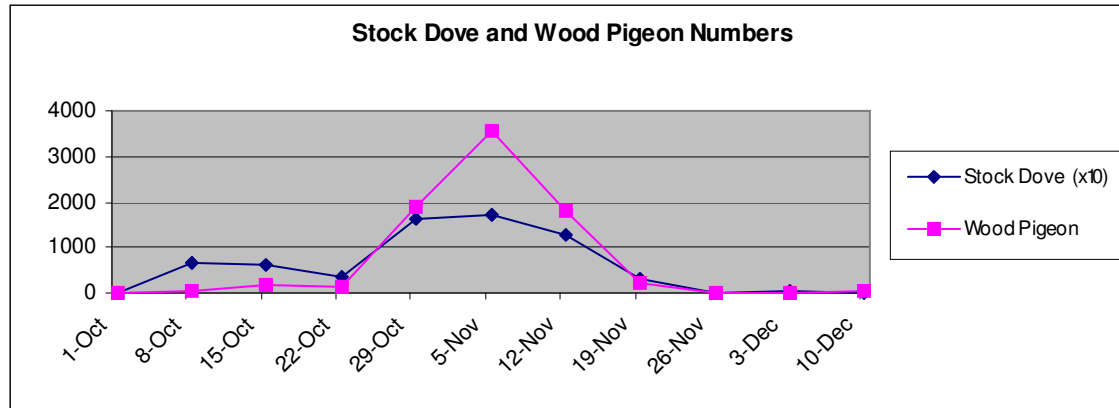
Common coastal resident.

A population of Feral Pigeons live on the cliffs throughout the year, breeding successfully. 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. There is a close relationship between the weekly total numbers of Stock Doves and Wood Pigeons (see Graph). The total number of Stock Doves recorded moving over Durlston between 1st October and 16th December 2010 was 658, less than the 749 recorded over the same period in 2009. Note that the Stock Dove numbers in the Graph have been multiplied by a factor of 10 to give a comparable scale. Peak Stock Dove movements were on 11th October (57 birds) and 3rd November (112 birds).



WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The first real Wood Pigeon movement of the autumn was of 710 birds on 1st November, followed by 1,150 on 7th. The final significant movement of the autumn was on 16th November when 1,200 birds passed over. Three hundred birds were present on 18th November. The total number of Wood Pigeons counted passing over Durlston between 1st October and 16th December 2010 was 7,820, significantly less than the 58,673 recorded in 2009. Consequently, the approximate ratio of Stock Doves to Wood Pigeons was 1:12, compared with 1:80 in 2009.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant

The only breeding season record was of a possible singing bird on the east side of the Castle. There is some evidence of autumn migration: for example, three birds passed over on 16th November.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

There were four spring and two autumn records: one on 28th April, two on 7th May, and single birds on 8th May, 21st May, 13th August and 10th 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.

The first record was on 18th April with two further records in April: on 23rd and 29th. There were five records in May (8th, 16th, 18th, 21st and 24th) and four in June (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 22nd). A young bird was reported on 3rd July. Further records were on 28th August and 7th September. The total of 15 records compares with three in 2009 and an average of six between 2006 and 2008. Whether this represents an up-turn in the fortunes of this declining species is not clear.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Uncommon visitor and resident in the wider area.

There was one record: a bird reported from the Northern Boundary being mobbed by Chaffinches on 4th April.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Uncommon breeding resident.

There are thought to be three pairs resident at Durlston. There were 16 records of birds heard or seen up to 16th May. There were six records between 24th September and the end of the year, including two birds on 30th October. This is similar to 2009.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

A bird was seen hunting near the Western Boundary on 9th May. Single birds were recorded on 29th September and 3rd October.

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Rare passage migrant.

A Nightjar was flushed from The Gully on 14th May.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was on 18th April. An estimated 1,700 Swifts were counted in an hour on 11th June; in total, the easterly movement was estimated to be over 5,000 birds. A circling Hobby appeared disinterested in the potential food. Towards the end of July, Swifts gather in flocks prior to departure after breeding. Records then decline; the last record was of two birds on 5th October.

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*

Rare passage migrant.

The information services reported a bird over heading west on 21st March. A further bird was seen for a couple of minutes on 11th April before flying off towards Swanage over Durlston Castle.

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

Rare passage migrant, mainly in spring.

There were two records of birds flying over: one on 5th May, and one over the Visitor Centre on 28th May.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Rare passage migrant.

One was seen on 26th March in the horse paddock just to the north of Durlston. It flew off east and could not be re-located despite an hour's search.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

A bird was present on the Western Boundary on 30th August; it was seen intermittently up to 9th September, before moving to Belle Vue where it was seen on 11th. A further bird was present on 8th and 9th September in the area near the Northern Boundary.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Green Woodpecker is the commonest woodpecker at Durlston. Four juveniles were seen on 18th August, with seven birds on 25th October. These records are indicative of successful local breeding.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Uncommon breeding resident.

Drumming birds heard in spring (for example on 1st April) suggest the possibility of breeding in the woodland areas, but no young birds were seen. An interesting feature of the visible migration studies undertaken at Durlston in autumn was the number of Great Spotted Woodpeckers recorded. A total of 49 birds were recorded between mid-September and 20th November (when the last bird was reported), a decrease from the 74 recorded in 2009.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos minor*

Rare visitor.

A female was recorded in the Aviaries on 11th and 12th January. There was a further record on 15th September of a bird flying low behind the Visitor Centre into Reservoir Copse. Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers were also seen, making a rare three-woodpecker day at Durlston.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*

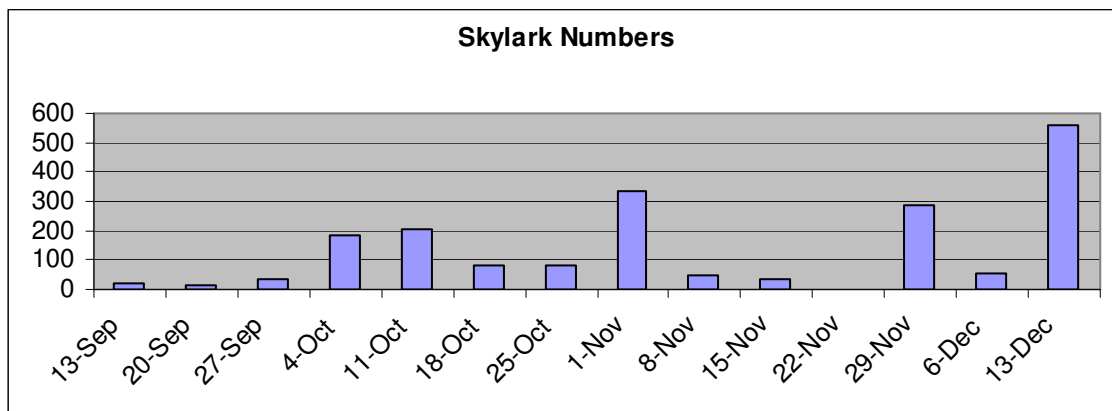
Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

The only records in the first half of the year were of five birds over on 6th January, and ten east on 7th January with one present. The first record of the autumn passage was on 4th October; a total of 12 bird-days were recorded in October; six in November and 22 in December. The December movements included six birds on 3rd and seven on 19th and were probably influenced by cold weather. The autumn total of 40 bird-days was similar to that of 2009.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Fairly common breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

The year started with some significant cold weather movements of Skylarks: 3,210 over on 6th January and 1,880 east on 7th January. The first singing bird was heard on 26th February; birds were still singing on 20th July. Autumn passage initially peaked in the first week of November (see Graph), with 264 birds on 1st, but further significant movements occurred in December with 260 birds on 3rd, 520 on 19th, 550 on 22nd (including 180 birds in one flock) and 164 birds on 31st. The latter birds were heading east low over the sea.



SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

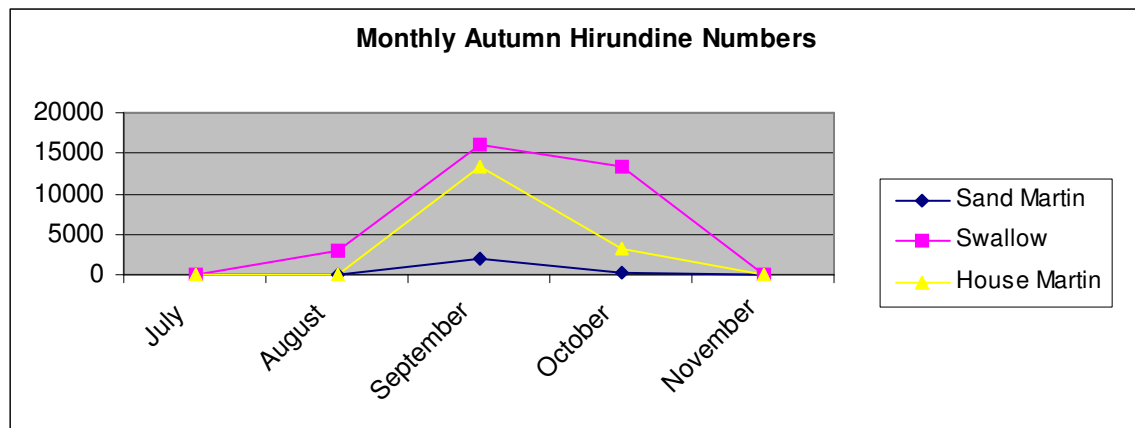
Fairly common passage migrant.

The first record was of ten birds on the typical date of 18th March; 40 birds were recorded on 9th April. Intermittent records in June were followed by the start of the autumn passage with 20 birds on 5th July. One hundred and fifty birds moved east over Durlston on 31st August with hundreds feeding later. The main autumn passage was in September with 340 birds on 2nd, 250 on 3rd, 900 on 12th, 150 on 19th and 120 on 27th. The last record was on 28th October.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was of two birds on 24th March. Spring passage continued with birds coming in off the sea over Durlston Head on 5th April and hundreds still flying in on 15th May. Return passage commenced in earnest on 31st August with 2,800 birds moving east and hundreds still feeding just after mid-day. Peak September counts were as follows: 2,400 on 2nd; 1,000 on 3rd; 2,000 on 9th; 2,400 on 9th; 1,000 on 22nd; and 2,000 on 27th. Peak October counts were as follows: 2,000 on 2nd; 3,700 on 4th and 2,040 on 8th. The last major movement was of 475 birds on 16th October. The last record was of two birds on 20th November. The Graph shows the more protracted nature of the Swallow autumn passage compared with the two martin species, and the greater number of birds involved. Over the autumn passage period, the approximate ratio of Sand Martins to House Martins to Swallows was 1:7:14.



HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was on 6th April. Return passage commenced in earnest on 12th September when 7,000 birds moved west (along with 2,400 Swallows and 900 Sand Martins). Other peak counts were of 3,700 birds on 18th September and 1,000 on 5th October. The last record was on 4th November.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Cecropis daurica*

Rare passage migrant.

The information services reported a bird flying east, 100m west of the Visitor Centre, early in the afternoon of 23rd May.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

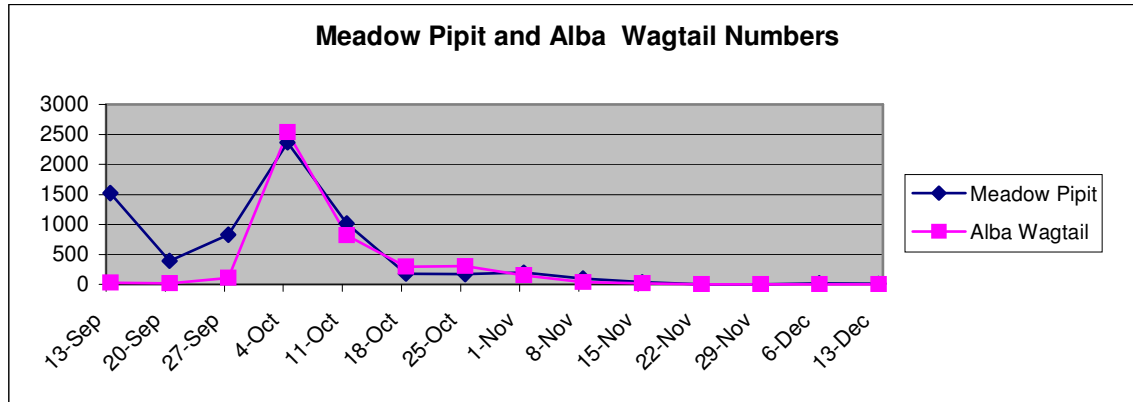
Uncommon passage migrant.

The first bird was reported on 9th April with spring passage birds reported up to 26th April. Return passage commenced on 3rd August with maximum counts of 21 birds on 7th September and 60 on 8th September; the latter represents a very significant movement. The last record was on 14th October. There was a total of 241 bird-days in 2010, of which 227 were in the autumn passage period. This is a significant increase over the 2009 total of 123 bird-days.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Uncommon breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

As with other species, cold weather movements of Meadow Pipits were apparent in early January: 140 passed over on 6th and 100 were present on 8th. Spring passage became apparent in March with a flock on 12th, 100 on the coastal slope on 19th, 25 overhead on 22nd, and 30 north on 29th. Return passage was later than in 2009; numbers peaked in the first half of October (see Graph) with a peak daily count of 1,430 birds on 10th October. The total number of Meadow Pipits counted moving overhead during visible migration studies between mid-September and the end of December was 6,821 (compared with 7,899 in 2009).



ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

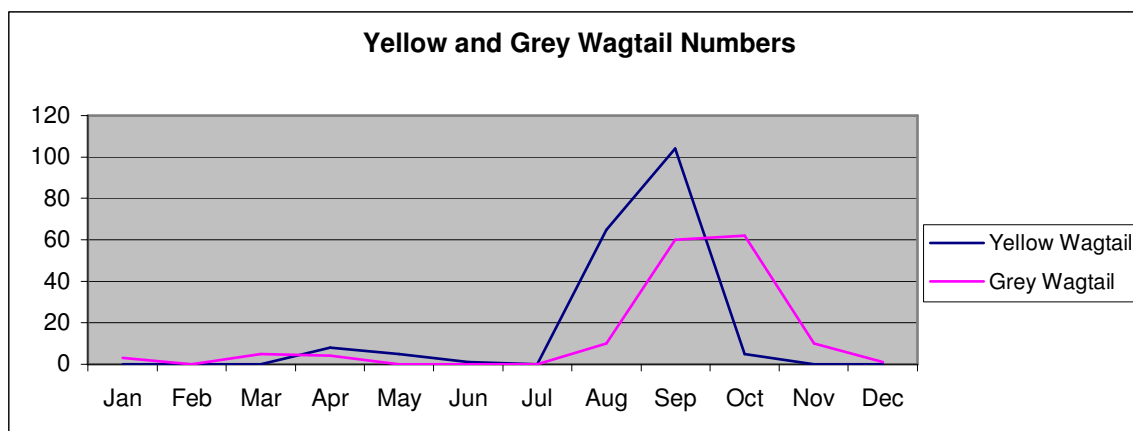
Common coastal breeding resident.

It is estimated that between five and eight pairs of Rock Pipit breed at Durlston. The number of Rock Pipits counted moving overhead during visible migration studies between mid-September and the end of December was 12 birds in September, 68 birds in October, 41 in November and one in December. The overall total of 122 was just over half of the 223 counted during 2009.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first record of the year was on the late date of 19th April with birds passing through in a light spring passage until 9th May. There was a late bird on 18th June. Autumn passage commenced on 2nd August; peak counts were of 25 birds on 31st August and 15 on 8th September. The last record was on 14th October. The total number of bird-days was 188, a reduction from the 224 recorded in 2009.



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 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 14 birds on 7th September. The Graph shows the later autumn passage compared with Yellow Wagtail. The total number of bird-days in 2010 was 155, a reduction from the total of 209 in 2009.

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. Breeding may have occurred in 2010 – a pair was noted around the Visitor Centre throughout the spring and summer, with juveniles seen later; no nest site was found, however. A spring passage movement was noted on 19th March. 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 2010 was concentrated into the first two weeks of October (see Graph in Meadow Pipit account). Peak counts were of 605 birds on 5th October and 1,040 birds on 10th.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Rare winter visitor.

There was a series of records at Durlston during the influx of Waxwings into Dorset in December: up to seven birds were seen in various parts of Durlston (primarily the entrance road and the carpark/Visitor Centre area) on 11th, 12th, 13th, 21st, 23rd and 24th.

(Winter) WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common breeding resident and occasional passage migrant.

There were at least 58 territories. Up to 20 were counted on 29th October.

HEDGE ACCENTOR (Dunnock) *Prunella modularis*

Common breeding resident.

The Dunnock is a common and widespread breeding bird at Durlston with a population of over 50 pairs. There is no real evidence of any passage, although three passed over on 12th October.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Robin is a common and widespread breeding bird at Durlston with a population of over 25 pairs. There is some evidence of autumn passage, particularly during October and November.

RUFOUS NIGHTINGALE (Nightingale) *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce passage migrant.

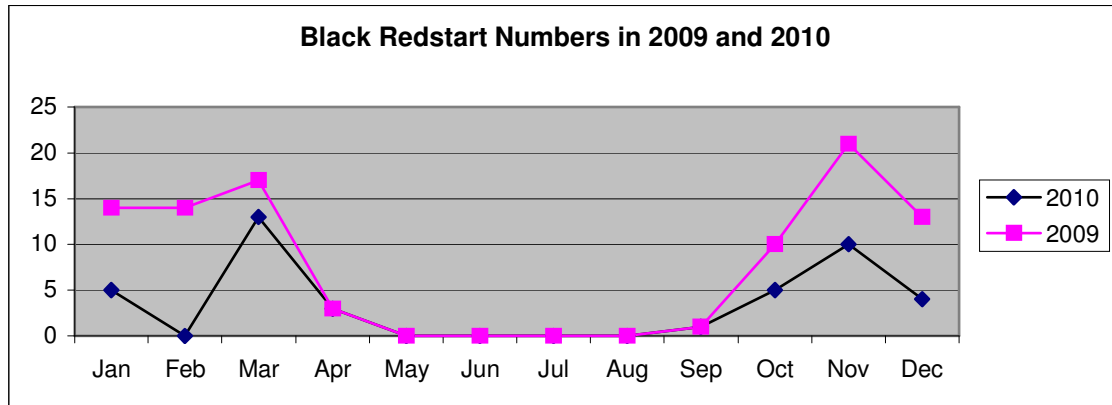
There were two records: on 19th August and on 7th September.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochuros*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

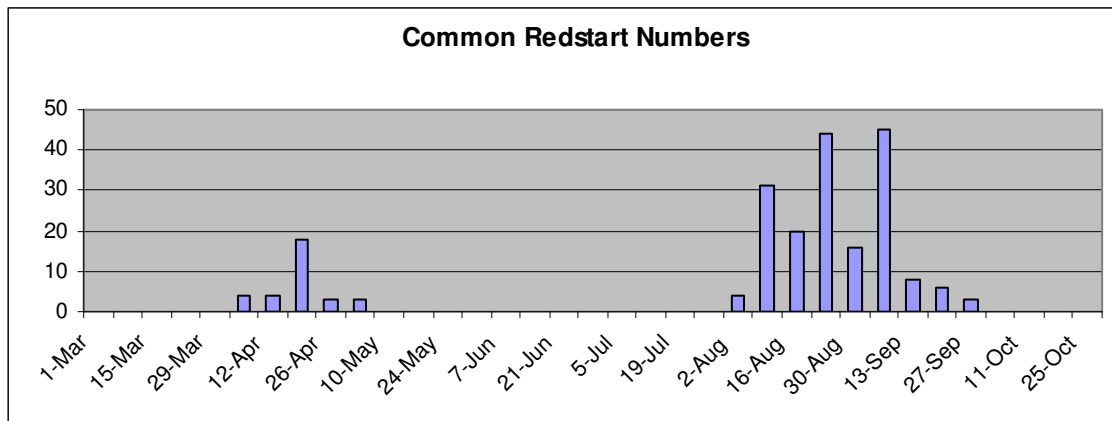
The favoured locations for Black Redstarts at Durlston are Tilly Whim and the grassy slopes of The Gully. Black Redstarts were seen up to 10th April. As always, it is not clear how many birds were involved. There were no more records until the autumn, suggesting that the bird(s) had been wintering and moved on. The first bird of the autumn passage was recorded on

10th September. Records continued up to the end of the year, indicative of wintering bird(s). The Graph shows the significantly reduced numbers of bird-days in 2010 (41) compared with 2009 (93).



COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Fairly common passage migrant.

The first record of the spring passage was on the 7th April; birds passed through until 7th May with a peak count of 12 on 20th April. The autumn passage of Redstarts at Durlston is normally noticeably heavier than in spring and commenced in earnest on 3rd August. Peak counts were: 15 birds on 23rd August, 14 on 28th and 30 on 8th September. The last record was on 30th September. Total bird-days in 2010 were 209, an increase over the 158 recorded in 2009.



WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*
Uncommon passage migrant.

The first spring passage record was on 18th April; the number of bird-days in April and May was six and four respectively. Autumn passage commenced on 9th August and continued until 8th October (the only record in October). The number of bird-days in August and September was 14 (including nine on 28th) and 34 (including nine on 8th) respectively. This represents a significant increase over the 2009 autumn passage period when the August and September bird-day totals were eleven and seven respectively.

COMMON STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*
Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Seven birds were recorded on 27th March. Two to three breeding territories were held. Young birds were seen on 26th May; a second brood of young were seen on 30th June. Autumn passage peak counts were of 25 birds on 21st September, and 15 on 9th and 12th October.

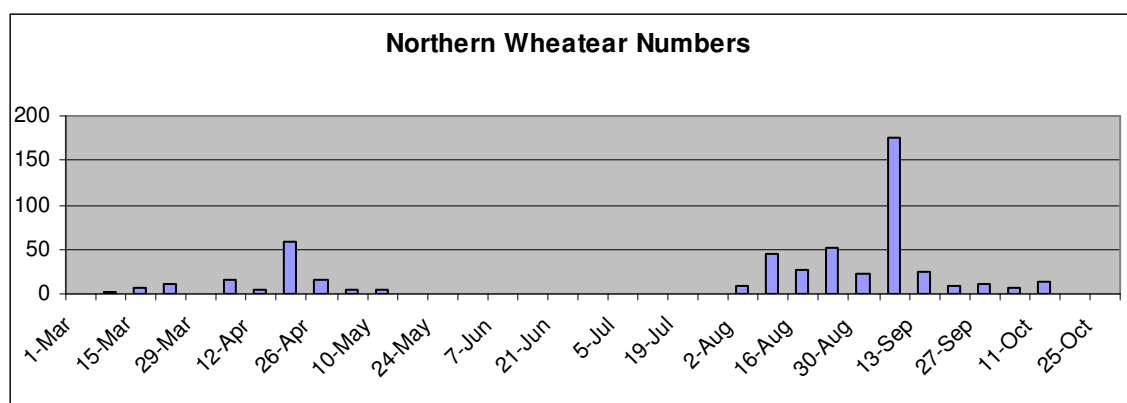
NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

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 9th March; twelve birds passed through on 7th April and a high count of 50 was recorded on 20th. Passage continued up to 17th May. Birds were recorded on 29th June and 22nd July. Return passage commenced on 3rd August with 16 birds on 9th, 14 on 19th and 29 on 18th; 75 on 8th September, 30 the next day, 25 on 11th and 26 on 12th. The last record was on 22nd October. The total number of birds-days in 2010 (525) was an increase over 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	21	92	13	1	1	148	228	21	0	0	525



RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were three spring records: a bird on 29th March, two on 20th April and one on 26th. Autumn passage of Ring Ouzels at Durlston is invariably stronger than the spring passage and commenced on 16th September, continuing until 1st November (the only record in November). The number of bird-days in September and October was eight and 30 respectively, higher than in 2009. Five birds were recorded on 11th October with six on the next day.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Forty birds were present on 7th January and 8th January in the very cold weather. There are estimated to be approximately 37 to 38 territories at Durlston. Peak counts in the autumn and early winter were of over 50 birds on 18th October, plus eight flying over. In December, 24 flew over on 3rd, 50 were present on 4th with 60 on 23rd.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Fieldfares are not generally as common at Durlston as Redwings. There was however a huge cold weather movement in January. The Rangers Daily Diary entry for 7th January describes it. *The last 24 hours have seen one of the most remarkable spectacles of my time at Durlston, with an incredible torrent of thrushes pouring overhead since yesterday morning, as they follow the coast east in search of unfrozen areas to feed. Fieldfare have been easily the most numerous, with tight bands of birds pouring past above the Visitor Centre and along the clifftop, with at least 3,000 seen in an hour this morning (and an estimated 34,000 between 11.30 and 3.30 yesterday). Redwing have also been moving through in huge numbers with more than 1,800 seen this morning and close to 6,000 yesterday, with stragglers settling in the fields and scrub to rest.* Numbers remained high for the next couple of days with 1,000 moving east on 8th, 20 east and 40 present on 11th and 50 present on 12th January. Birds were seen in the second

winter period from 12th October onwards; high numbers were associated with cold weather in the last week of December – a big movement of thrushes on 23rd December included 875 Fieldfares passing over in one hour plus 350 on ground; 300 were present on 24th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

The January cold weather thrush movement contained the following numbers of Song Thrushes passing over: 410 on 6th, 37 on 7th, 24 on 8th with 110 present, and 55 present on 12th. Five breeding territories were held. In the autumn, there was an apparent influx on 8th October with 70 present. As in January, cold weather in December also resulted in an increase in Song Thrush numbers: 220 on the ground on 4th, 80 on 11th, 120 present and 47 over on 23rd and 80 on 24th.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Fairly common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor.

The January cold weather thrush movement contained the following numbers of Redwings passing over: 5,600 on 6th, 1,800 on 7th, 640 on 8th, 30 over and 200 present on 11th, and 120 present on 12th. Birds were recorded during the first winter period up to 30th March. The first record in the second winter period was of four birds on 28th September; birds were then seen regularly until the end of the year. Visible migration surveys between mid-September and mid-December recorded a total of 929 Redwings (compared with 113 Fieldfares). Forty-five birds were present on 12th October with 80 on 16th. A significant movement of thrushes on 23rd December resulted in a one hour count of 490 Redwings and 300 on the ground.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Occasional breeder, common visitor and uncommon passage migrant.

Eighteen birds passed over on 6th January during the cold weather thrush movement. As with the other thrushes, Mistle Thrushes are seen more frequently in the second winter period with passage birds seen regularly from mid-October onwards. Thirty passed over on 23rd December.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first spring passage record was on 7th April. The main passage period was from then until the end of April with further birds passing through on 11th and 14th May. Return passage commenced on 2nd August with five birds on 18th. There was a high count of twelve birds on 8th September; the last record was on 5th October. The total number of bird-days was 54, similar to 2009 and 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 7th April. Passage continued during April and May until 24th May. Return passage commenced on 2nd August with peak passage in August (21 bird-days). The last record was on the late date of 9th October.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Reed Warblers normally arrive later than Sedge Warblers, and the first record was on 20th April. As is normal with this species, spring passage is protracted and lasted until 5th July. Return passage, limited though it is, commenced on 30th 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 12th September.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Totals
Grasshopper Warbler	10	2	0	0	15	26	1	54
Sedge Warbler	7	6	0	0	21	10	1	45
Reed Warbler	2	9	9	3	7	3	0	33

MELODIOUS WARBLER *Hippolais polyglotta*

Scarce passage migrant.

A Melodious Warbler (the first since 2006) was seen on 24th August feeding clumsily on Elderberries with Garden Warblers and Blackcaps in Copse Corner. Brief but good views were obtained in sunlight before the bird flew into a nearby hedge with typically short-winged 'fluttery' flight.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

There were no records of over-wintering birds during January, February and early March. The first spring passage bird was recorded on 22nd March; 25 were present on 20th April. Autumn passage began in earnest in late August and peaked in September; 200 birds were recorded on 8th, 120 on 12th and 200 on 30th. Numbers declined significantly through November and December; a bird was recorded on 28th December. A total of 1,509 bird-days were recorded, an increase from the 1,048 in 2009. This was primarily a result of the strong September passage.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	9	68	10	8	4	92	1108	188	19	3	1509

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Occasional breeding summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant.

The first record was on 19th April. Return passage commenced at the beginning of August, but as usual, birds were never common. The peak counts were of 10 birds on 18th August and 20 on 8th September. In total, there were 140 bird-days, similar to the 130 recorded in 2009 and significantly greater than that recorded in 2007 (66) and 2008 (72). The last record was on 19th October.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	10	8	1	3	59	56	3	0	140

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first spring record was of three birds on 15th April; six birds were present on 20th. Birds were recorded throughout the summer and breeding occurred in hedgerows and scrub in the farmland areas of Durlston. The last record of the autumn passage period was on 5th October. Less common at Durlston than Common Whitethroat (see Tables), there was a total of 149 bird-days, a decrease from the 198 recorded in 2009, but more than the numbers recorded in 2007 (93) and 2008 (126). As with many spring records of warbler species, it is difficult to separate passage birds from resident breeders. However, the frequency of records declined in June and July as birds had either moved through, or had become less evident during breeding.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	24	17	10	1	51	44	2	0	149

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

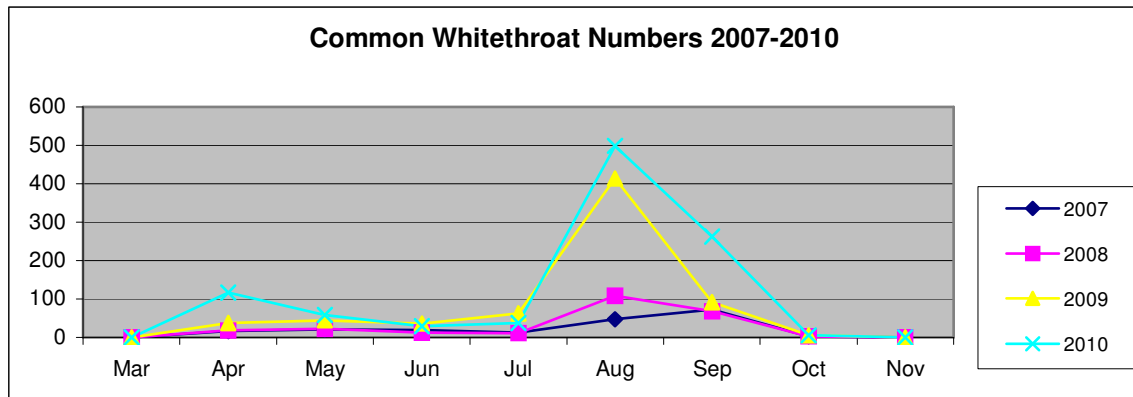
Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first spring record was on 7th April with 25 birds on 20th; birds were seen from then onwards on an almost daily basis throughout May and June, more commonly than Lesser Whitethroats.

Young birds were seen in the hedges and scrub around the meadows and downs. Peak counts were of 40 or more birds on 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th and 28th August; and 8th (90 birds) and 9th September. The last record was on 9th October. In total, there were 1,007 bird-days; this represents a significant increase on the numbers recorded in 2007 (192), 2008 (244) and 2009 (692). This is shown in the Graph which also shows the high numbers of Common Whitethroat in April, August and September 2010, relative to previous years.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	116	58	29	38	499	262	5	0	1007



DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Uncommon breeding resident and autumn visitor.

The first report after the cold weather in January was on 8th February. One pair bred in Gorse on the south side of Round Down. Two birds were present on 27th August; three on 7th, 11th and 12th September; three on 5th October; four on 16th and 22nd October; and four on 1st November.

PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Rare late autumn vagrant.

A bird was seen at the north end of Long Meadow on 21st November and again in a tit flock the next day. This is the first record since 2006.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce autumn passage vagrant.

There was a series of records in 2010 and it is difficult to be sure about how many birds were involved. A bird was in The Gully below the Lighthouse on 24th October. A bird near the Globe on 7th November and in woodland the next day may have been the bird first seen at California Quarry on 6th. A bird was seen in the woodland on 21st November, and it, or a further bird was seen along the woodland walk on 30th November.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were two records: on 7th and 19th May.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

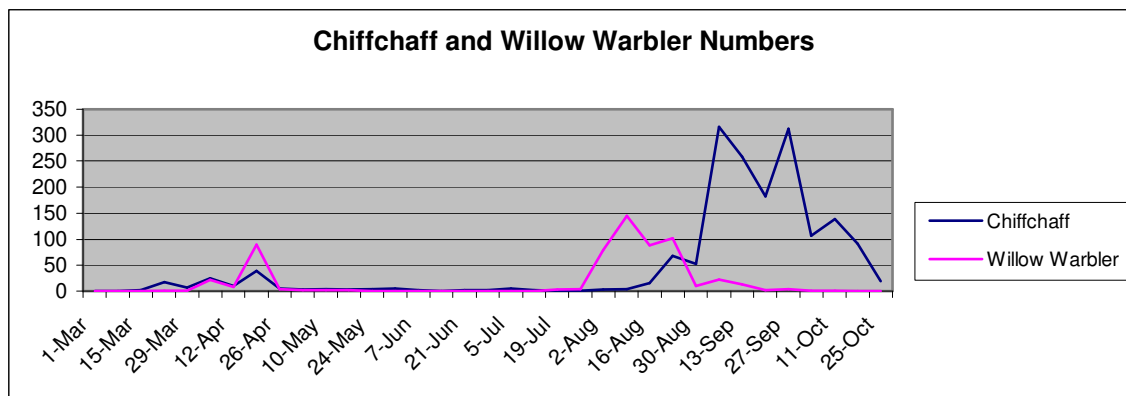
Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant; scarce in winter.

Chiffchaffs overwinter at Durlston with birds generally seen occasionally in January and February (but not in 2010). Spring passage was late, not starting in earnest until the third week in March; 30 birds were recorded on 20th April. 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 155 birds on

12th September, 85 on 8th and 180 on 30th. Chiffchaffs were seen up to the end of the year. In total, there were 1,765 bird-days recorded, similar to 2009 (1,847) and significantly greater than that recorded in 2007 (644) and 2008 (958). A *tristis* type bird was seen at the bottom of the Diagonal Path on 17th December; a further greyish bird was seen on 22nd December.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2	0	20	85	14	10	10	127	1083	359	50	5	1765



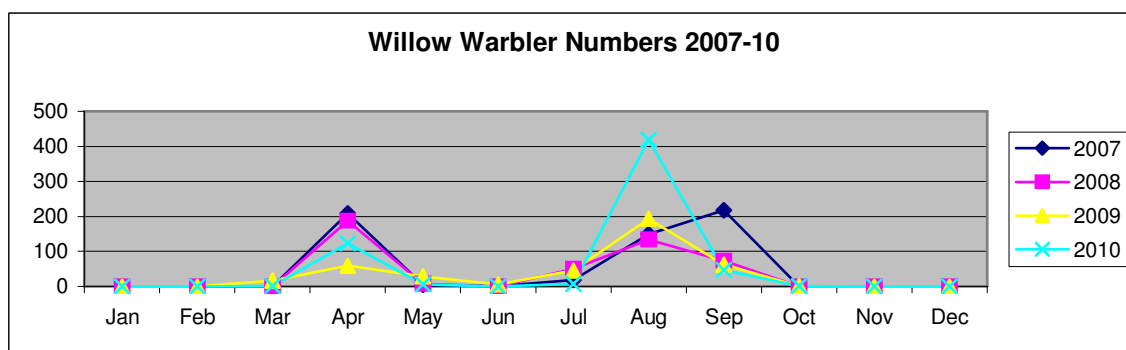
WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Occasional breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first spring record was on 23rd March; 80 birds were recorded on 20th April. Willow Warblers migrate earlier in the autumn than Chiffchaff (see Graph above). Autumn passage in 2010 was stronger than in previous years (see Graph below). Peak counts were in August: 50 birds on 12th, 65 on 18th and 50 on 28th. The last record was on 11th October. The total number of bird-days of 606 was more than 2009 (414) and 2008 (453) and similar to 2007 (601).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	1	124	6	0	7	419	47	2	0	0	606



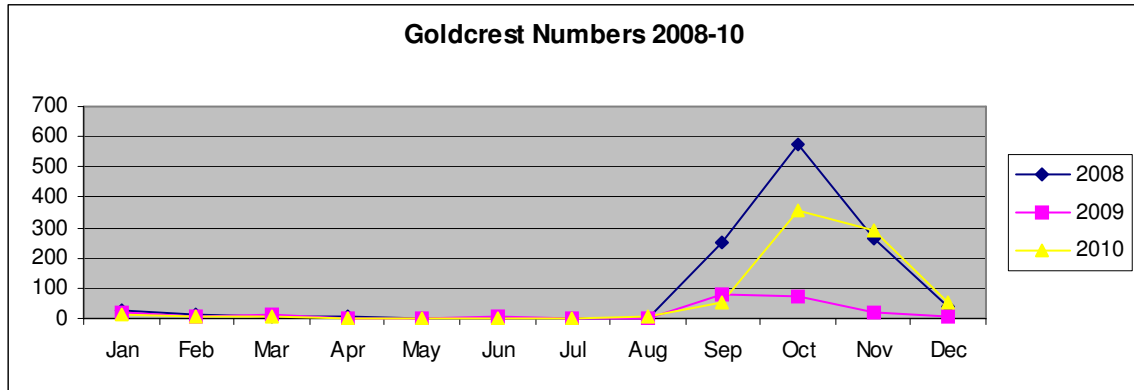
GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Uncommon breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Two to three males held territory. Goldcrests can be seen in any month but the numbers of resident birds are significantly increased by autumn migrants (see Table and Graph). The 2010 autumn passage was stronger than 2009, but weaker than in 2008. The maximum count was of 35 birds on 31st October. The total of bird-days for 2010 was 798 (compared with 226 in 2009 and 1,194 in 2008).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
16	7	7	1	1	3	0	4	55	359	292	53	798



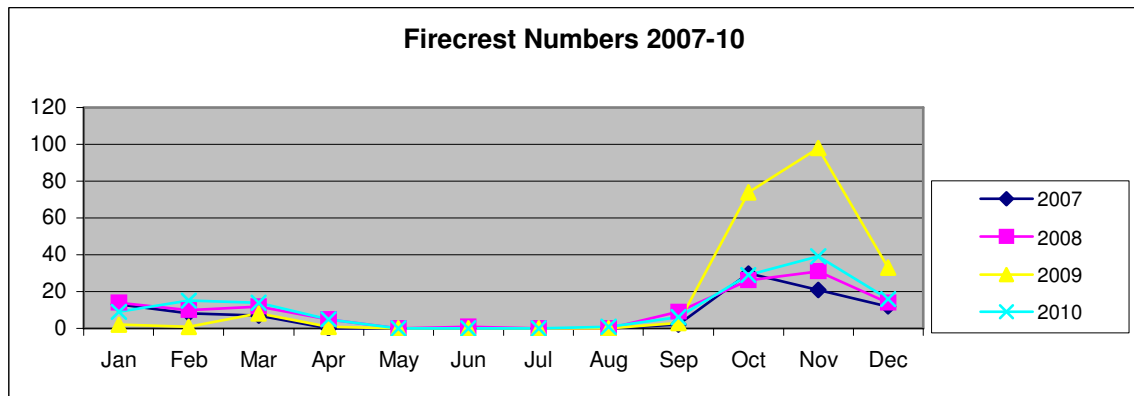
FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor.

Firecrests were seen intermittently throughout the first winter period up to 9th April. The first autumn record was on 30th August. Birds were seen regularly until the end of the year with a peak in sightings in October and November; four were recorded on 8th October and seven on 3rd November. The total number of bird-days was very similar to that recorded in 2007 and 2008, and significantly less than recorded in 2009 (see Graph).

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
9	15	14	5	0	0	0	1	6	29	39	16	134



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Spotted Flycatcher is a late migrant and the first spring passage record was on 6th May with birds seen intermittently up to 21st June. Return passage commenced on 9th August and continued to 8th October. Peak counts were of high numbers of 28 birds on 28th August and 40 on 8th September; many of the latter birds were perched on the ground amongst Wheatears. There was a total of 11 bird-days in spring and 150 in autumn (compared with 47 in 2009).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were four records in spring, all in April: on 7th (two), 12th, 18th and 20th (two). Return passage commenced on 3rd August. There were 14 bird-days in August, and five in September, similar to 2009 and significantly more than in 2006 and 2007 (six and five autumn bird-days

respectively). Four birds were recorded on 17th August and the last record was on 20th September.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident.

At least six pairs held territory and bred. An interesting sight on 8th April was of a pair of Long-tailed Tits taking advantage of the pigeon remains of a Peregrine kill – the birds were rummaging around for feathers to take back to their nest. Over twenty birds were counted on 18 days in October and November; the peak count was of 32 on 1st November.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common breeding resident.

A family were raised in the nest box with a camera attached to the hide wall. Many more broods were raised elsewhere. An interesting record was of 12 plus birds working their way west through clifftop scrub on 2nd September. Fourteen birds moved west on 3rd December.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Common breeding resident.

Great Tits are found all across Durlston – particularly in hedgerows and woodland. Bollards by the Diagonal Path and by Tilly Whim were successfully used for nesting. An unusual record on 2nd March was the bizarre and unprecedented sight of 30 Great Tits (in groups of fourteen, four, five and seven) flying over high heading north, apparently having flown in off the sea. Ten birds flew over on 24th October.

COAL TIT *Periparus ater*

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.

Peak counts were of six birds on 4th October, seven on 5th, and eight on 7th and 8th.

MARSH TIT *Poecile palustris*

Rare visitor.

Marsh Tits are in decline throughout Dorset and have rarely been seen at Durlston in the past. A record of two birds on 30th August in the Small Copse presaged four records in September, one in October, seven in November and nine in December.

EUROPEAN NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Scarce visitor.

The series of records in 2010 (ten in total) contrasts with previous years when it has been recorded on one or no days. Birds (singles unless otherwise stated) were seen as follows: on 7th September in the Large Copse; 7th, 8th (two), 10th and 11th October; 3rd and 22nd November; 4th, 6th and 29th December (a singing bird).

EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Uncommon breeding resident and visitor.

Treecreepers were seen intermittently in the woodland, although not between 24th April and the end of June.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Scarce passage migrant.

A bird was reported on 21st September.

EURASIAN JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Fairly common breeding species and passage / irruptive migrant.

As normal, Jays were particularly evident in the autumn as they collected acorns from the many Holm Oaks around Durlston. Thirty birds were counted on 18th October and 22 on 21st.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

Between three and seven breeding territories were held. A Magpie was seen pulling hair from a Hereford cow on 18th March. Thirty were counted on 5th October. Two flew over very high on 18th October during visible migration studies, with four over on 22nd October.

EURASIAN JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

At Durlston, Jackdaws mostly breed on the cliff-face. Jackdaws move through Durlston in autumn. Peak counts of birds passing overhead in October were 120 on 7th, 105 on 28th and 230 on 30th.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common non-breeding visitor.

Rooks are seen at Durlston primarily in the autumn, and usually in the meadows. The peak count was of 40 birds over on 7th October.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

Ten to eleven breeding territories were held, with breeding confirmed in the Large Copse and south of the Zig-Zag Path.

COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Fairly common visitor.

Ravens are normally seen at Durlston as single birds or pairs, flying over. The maximum counts were of six on 1st February, five on 28th August and eight on 7th November.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

An increase in Starling numbers generally was noticeable by mid-October.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Scarce passage migrant.

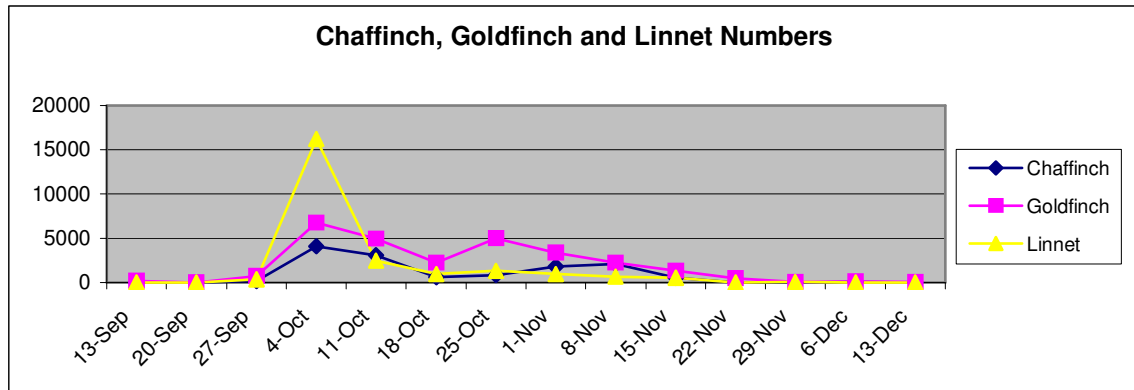
House Sparrows are much less numerous at Durlston than 15 years ago when they bred at the Visitor Centre and Bungalow. There was, however, a significant increase in records in 2010. Birds were present on single days in January, May and September (eight birds), and three days in both October and November and one day in December. In 2009, visible migration surveys recorded a total of four single birds flying over. In 2010, the equivalent figure was 26.

COMMON CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding occurs at Durlston amongst the hedgerows, scrub and woods, and in The Gully. A newly fledged Chaffinch on 13th May was the first of any species. 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 59 days between 13th September and 19th December.

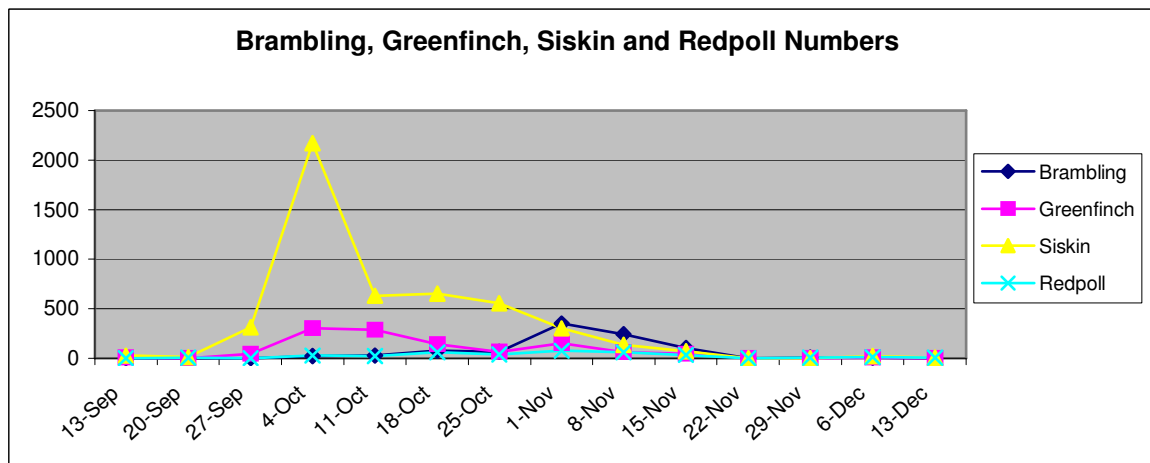
Approximately 13,240 Chaffinches were counted during this period, amounting to an average of 225 per day. Of the seven common finch species (Chaffinch, Brambling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet and Lesser Redpoll), Chaffinches were the third most abundant, amounting to 18.5% of the common finches. Particularly strong movements were noted on 5th (1,260 birds), 7th (910) and 14th October (960) and 14th November (1,470).



BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon passage migrant mainly autumn and winter visitor.

There were four records in the first half of the year: single birds over on 6th and 7th January, nine over on 14th January, and one in the woods on 15th January. As with other finch species, autumn passage is always significantly stronger. The first record of the autumn was on 4th October; records continued until the end of the year. The main passage period was the first two weeks of November (see Graph). Approximately 898 Bramblings were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of 15 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Bramblings were the sixth most abundant, amounting to just over 1% of the common finches. Particularly strong movements were noted on 1st November when 124 Bramblings passed over, and 14th November when 138 Bramblings, 1,470 Chaffinches and 1,280 Goldfinches passed over.



EUROPEAN SERIN *Serinus serinus*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.

There were three records in 2010: one just below the Visitor Centre on 2nd April, one over early morning on 21st April, and one over 22nd October.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris***Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The breeding population of Greenfinches is estimated to be 22 territories. 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 1,094 Greenfinches were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of 19 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Greenfinches were the fifth most abundant, amounting to 1.5% of the common finches. Peak counts were on 10th (75 birds) and 11th October (78), and 1st November (64).

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. Approximately 27,498 Goldfinches were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of 465 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Goldfinches were the most abundant, amounting to 38.1% of the common finches. Peak passage was during October; peak counts were on 4th (1,780 birds), 7th (1,780), 11th (1,990), 28th (2,230) and 30th (2,347); the last major movement was of 1,280 birds on 14th November. In addition to birds passing over, a feeding flock of over 120 birds was noted on 13th September, with approximately 200 birds present between 18th and 21st September; 'hundreds' were also present on 2nd October.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus***Fairly common passage migrant, particularly in autumn.**

There were only intermittent records of Siskins in the first half of the year. The main autumn passage commenced in the last week of September. Approximately 4,894 Siskins were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of just over 80 per day (double that in 2009). Of the seven common finch species, Siskins were the fourth most abundant, amounting to 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 on 4th (520 birds), 6th (460) and 23rd October (365).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina***Breeding resident and common passage migrant.**

The breeding population of Linnets has reduced significantly and is now estimated to be approximately five pairs. Approximately 23,684 Linnets were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of 400 per day (double that in 2009). Of the seven common finch species, Linnets were the second most abundant, amounting to 33% of the common finches. Linnet passage peaked earlier, at the beginning of October, than the other finches (see Graph in Chaffinch section). Peak counts were on 4th (1,150 birds), 7th (1,890), 9th (2,516) and 10th (9,600). A strong finch movement on 14th November contained 980 Linnets, 1,470 Chaffinches and 1,280 Goldfinches.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris***Scarce passage migrant.**

There were three records of single birds passing over: on 12th October, and on 10th and 18th November.

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

There were four records in the first half of the year: on 23rd February, 2nd and 27th March, and 20th April. All other records were from autumn passage; the first was on 18th September. Approximately 337 Redpolls were counted between 13th September and 19th December, amounting to an average of 6 per day (half that in 2010). Of the seven common finch species, Redpolls were the least most abundant, amounting to 0.5% of the common finches. Main

passage was between mid-October and mid-November; the peak count was of 22 birds on 18th October and 10th November (compared with 171 in 2009).

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Uncommon passage migrant and irruptive visitor.

Single birds were recorded flying over on 8th and 17th February and 28th June. There were intermittent records in the second half of the year from 2nd August to 14th December. These amounted to a total of 29 bird-days contrasting with the 281 recorded in 2008 and 521 in 2009.

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rare passage migrant.

A Common Rosefinch was seen amongst the migrants moving along the hedges behind the Bungalow with about 50 Blackcaps, 20 Spotted Flycatchers and many Tree Pipits on 8th September. A further bird was seen on 6th October near the Western Boundary with Greenfinches.

COMMON BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant.

The Bullfinch is a secretive and often under-recorded species; between four and seven pairs bred at Durlston. Bullfinch autumn migration became apparent in the second week of October and continued into November. Peak counts were of 12 birds on 18th October and 6th November. Twelve birds were present on 4th and 22nd December, and 15 on 30th.

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 and none in 2009. 2010 records were all in November and of single birds passing over, unless otherwise stated: on 1st (two), 3rd, 9th, 13th (five) and 16th (one present).

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were nine records of single birds passing overhead; this represents a significant increase over previous years when the following numbers of birds were recorded: 2006 (two), 2007 (three), 2008 (four) and 2009 (two). Records in 2010 were on: 3rd and 19th September; 7th and 28th October (over the Lighthouse Field in a flock of Linnets); 8th, 9th, 12th and 19th November; and 24th December.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare passage migrant

There were three records: two birds flew east along the clifftops on 7th January with one also seen on the ground on the same day; one flew over Boys Brigade on 3rd December.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.

At least five males held territory; some pairs bred. Yellowhammers move over Durlston during autumn passage, but in low numbers. The peak visible migration count was of four birds on 10th October.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

There were a number of records during the cold weather in January: two birds over on 6th, five over and two present on 7th, and one over east and one present on 8th. Other records prior to the autumn passage were on 14th January, 13th and 19th April and 14th July. 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 most days in October.