

Durlston

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Durlston Country Park Bird Report 2007



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Compiled and written by Jol Mitchell

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

A total of 162 species were recorded at Durlston Country Park during 2007, 12 fewer than in 2006. Highlights in 2006 included European Storm-petrel, Wryneck, Yellow-browed Warbler, Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike, Tree Sparrow, Serin, Twite, Common Rosefinch, Lapland Bunting and Ortolan Bunting.

JANUARY

As normal, January was a relatively quiet month. **Firecrests** in the woods and a **Black Redstart** at Tilly Whim remained from 2006. Also on land, **Song** and **Mistle Thrushes** started to sing from early in the month. The main interest was at sea with a passing **Goldeneye** on 3rd, a **Little Gull** on 19th and a **Velvet Scoter** on 22nd. Also on that day, a **Cormorant** of the Continental race *sinensis* was recorded. **Great Northern Divers** were reported on five days.

FEBRUARY

As in January, the main interest was at sea. **Black-throated Divers**, the scarcest diver seen off Durlston, and in Dorset, passed on 5th and 11th, a further *sinensis* **Cormorant** was recorded on 14th, and an usually large (for Durlston) flock of over 80 **Brent Geese** passed on 20th.

MARCH

March is the month in which migration starts to become apparent. Typical early migrants were the first **Northern Wheatear** on 7th, **Sand Martins** on 11th and **Sandwich Terns** offshore on 15th. Two **Black-throated Divers** also passed on 15th.

APRIL

April saw a flurry of activity with the numbers and diversity of migrants increasing rapidly. Of the local species, nine **Common Buzzards** were seen on 5th. "First dates" for some of the commoner migrants were as follows: **Willow Warbler** (2nd), **Swallow** (5th), **Yellow Wagtail** (7th), **Redstart** (7th), **Hobby** (7th), **House Martin** (10th), **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroats** (15th), **Swift** (20th) and **Cuckoo** (24th). **Northern Wheatears** peaked on 24th with 14 birds present; other passerines of interest included **Pied Flycatchers**, a rare spring record of a **Tree Sparrow** on 16th, **Nightingale**, **Turtle Dove** and **Ring Ouzels**. At sea, the first **Common Terns** passed on 19th, a **Balearic Shearwater** on 24th, and **Arctic** and **Little Terns** on 27th and 30th. Skua passage during the last week included five **Arctic**, two **Great** and one **Pomarine Skua**. Five **Little Gulls** passed on 23rd with a further bird two days later. Waders were also on the move with **Ringed** and **Grey Plovers**, **Dunlin**, **Whimbrel**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Turnstone** all passing offshore, albeit in small numbers. The last three days of April saw a significant passage of **Bar-tailed Godwits** along the Dorset coast, reflected at Durlston where over 20 birds were reported on 27th, 20-30 birds on 29th and 30 on 30th.

MAY

Migration continued into May. **Turtle Doves** (increasingly rare at Durlston and the rest of the country) were recorded on 2nd, 5th and 19th. Other noteworthy land birds included a **Honey Buzzard** passing overhead on 3rd, a **Wood Warbler** on the same day and a **Golden Oriole** seen briefly as it disappeared into dense vegetation on 20th May. At sea, **Arctic** (2nd), **Great** (10th) and four **Pomarine** (28th) **Skuas** were recorded. A **Storm-petrel** was off Durlston Head in the evening of 8th May. Passing waders included **Dunlin** (4th), **Knot** (5th) and **Sanderling** (four days).

JUNE

A **Red Kite** passed overhead on 2nd and five young **Crossbills** passed overhead on 13th. Otherwise, the sea was the main interest in a quiet month. Three **Storm-petrels** passed on 2nd; **Balearic Shearwaters** on 18th and 21st. The latter date also saw a peak passage of 36 **Manx Shearwaters** and two **Puffins** offshore.

JULY

The mid-summer lull continued into July with **Balearic Shearwaters** reported on 2nd, 17th and 23rd. July is the peak month for passing **Common Scoters**; 85 bird-days were recorded.

AUGUST

Balearic Shearwaters were recorded on 15th and 18th; an hour's seawatch in a fresh southerly wind on the latter date was dominated by over 240 **Gannets** heading west, many passing close inshore. On the land, **Pied Flycatchers** were reported on four days; a **Woodchat Shrike** was reported just south of the Saxon Field (a favoured area for Shrikes) on 11th. A **Wood Warbler** was reported on 25th.

SEPTEMBER

An **Ortolan Bunting** was heard on the Downs on 5th and a further bird passed over on 10th. The first **Ring Ouzel** of the autumn was reported on 13th. Two **Wrynecks** were seen on 16th by the Gully and near the western boundary. A **Pied Flycatcher** was reported on 13th. Of the commoner migrants, there was a spectacular "fall" of **Willow Warblers** on 22nd with over 150 birds present. Passing seabirds included a **Great Skua** on 5th, the last **Balearic Shearwater** of the year on 20th and **Sooty Shearwaters** on 18th and 23rd in a poor year for this species.

OCTOBER

October is invariably an excellent month and October 2007 was no exception. A particular highlight was the number of birds of prey. A **Marsh Harrier** passed though on 7th. Noticeable were **Merlins** (recorded on 22 days), **Sparrowhawks** (42 bird-days including five birds on 17th) and **Peregrine Falcons** (three or four birds were recorded on ten occasions between October and mid-November) hunting the migrating passerine flocks. A **Short-eared Owl** was hunting over the hollows and scrub of Round Down on 31st.

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 34 days between 2nd October and 17th November. Of the seven common finch species, totals were as follows: **Goldfinch** (15,370), **Chaffinch** (10,570), **Linnet** (5,580), **Siskin** (1,450), **Greenfinch** (1,420), **Lesser Redpoll** (1,060) and **Brambling** (710). Noteworthy passerines passing overhead included **Twite** (6th and 29th), **Lapland Bunting** (26th and 29th), **Crossbill** (27th), **Serin** (30th), **Tree Sparrow** (on five days) and **Hawfinch** (31st). **Wood Pigeon** migration began around the third week with significant overhead movements reported on 29th (7,850 birds) and 30th (8,900, including over 2,000 in one flock).

A **Woodcock** was seen on 12th. A juvenile **Common Rosefinch** was on the western boundary on 13th, and again on the next day with **Greenfinches**. **Yellow-browed Warblers** were reported on 9th, 22nd and 25th. At sea, **Little Gulls** (reported on four days) and **Mediterranean Gulls** (49 bird-days in this peak month for the species at Durlston) were a feature.

NOVEMBER

Passerine migration continued into November and the accompanying raptors were still in evidence, though not in the numbers of the previous month. A **Short-eared Owl** flying out to sea on 17th, pursued by crows, was an unusual sight. A **Woodcock** was present on 2nd and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** on 5th. **Tree Sparrows** passed overhead on 2nd and 17th; a movement of 8,000 **Wood Pigeons** occurred on 13th and the third **Lapland Bunting** of the autumn passed overhead on 17th. At sea, the peak count of **Mediterranean Gulls** (12 birds) was recorded on 1st and a **Little Auk** was seen on 18th. A **Purple Sandpiper** was recorded on the rocks at Tilly Whim on 26th. An unusual record was of two passing **Tufted Ducks** on 20th.

DECEMBER

The year ended as it had begun with the main interest on land being wintering **Firecrests** and **Black Redstarts**. At sea, **Black-throated Divers** passed on 15th and 18th. December was the peak month for **Red-throated Divers** with seven birds passing on 15th (part of a noticeable movement along the Dorset coast) and six birds two days later. **Great Northern Divers** were reported on five days. Two **Pochards** and two **Velvet Scoters** passing on 19th were both unusual records, as was a **Kingfisher** reported from Peveril Point at the north end of Durlston Bay on 30th.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 2007

The records presented in this Systematic List are based largely on the Park Rangers' daily Diary entries with additional information from various websites and other sources. 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; 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).

GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Rare, passing offshore or overhead.

There were three records: two birds in Durlston Bay on 27th February, a bird seen during a seawatch on 17th August and two birds seen passing overhead on 23rd October.

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. A flock of over 80 birds on 20th February was unusual. The last record of the first winter period was on 26th April; the first record of the second winter period was on 2nd October.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.

Shelduck can normally be seen at Durlston (single birds or pairs flying down the coast) at any time of the year, other than in July and August. There were, however, only three records in 2007: on 29th January, 24th April and six birds on 15th October.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Scarce, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.

There were two records: of four birds passing on both 16th and 25th October.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Uncommon, passing offshore.

A pair of Mallard were on the Johnston pond on the farmland on the 15th April, despite its small size.

COMMON POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter.

Two birds passed on 19th December.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter.

Two birds passed heading west on 20th November.

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. Return passage off Dorset normally shows a peak in July, as shown by the figures in the Table.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
29	6	27	39	25	25	85	12	7	25	12	22

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Scarce, passing offshore mainly in winter.

There were two records: a bird passed on 22nd January and a male and female were seen on 19th December.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Rare, passing offshore mainly in winter.

A male was recorded heading west on 3rd January.

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 100) of Red-breasted Mergansers, the second and third 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. All records are given below. In the first winter period, birds were recorded on: 5th (two birds), 7th and 17th January; 5th, 8th, 11th (two birds) and 19th February; 15th March; 24th April; and 2nd May. Records in the second winter period were on: 2nd, 15th and 18th October; 8th and 30th November; and 14th, 16th and 26th December.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*

Scarce visitor.

There was only one record: of a pair on the edge of the meadows on 2nd August.

COMMON PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus***Common feral resident.**

A significant population of this gamebird has become established on the Park. Four to five males held "territory" and females generally outnumbered males. Successful breeding was proven for a third year with two chicks seen on 10th June. Nine birds were seen on 5th January, and ten on 11th October.

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

Red-throated is by far the commonest diver seen at Durlston. The peak month was December with seven birds passing on 15th (part of a noticeable movement along the Dorset coast) with six birds two days later.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
26	20	4	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	5	36

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. All records are given: 5th and 11th February, 15th March (two birds) and 15th and 18th December.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer***Uncommon winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.**

All records are given below. In the first half of the year, birds were recorded on: 1st, 5th, 9th, 13th and 17th January; 10th February; 10th March; 30th April; 8th and 19th May. Records in the second winter period were on: 3rd, 28th and 29th November and 14th, 15th (two birds), 17th, 19th and 30th December. The latter record was of a bird fishing inshore with Shags and Cormorants.

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

There were two records: a bird seen passing on a seawatch on 30th November and a further record on 15th December.

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

Fulmars are seen for most of the year along the cliff-face, although they are generally scarce or absent between mid-September and mid-November. This year, birds were absent from mid-July to mid-November. As usual, breeding numbers were difficult to assess but there were five apparently occupied sites; what was almost certainly a chick was seen from a boat trip on 22nd June.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus***Scarce, passing offshore mainly in autumn.**

A poor year with only two records: on 18th and 23rd September.

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

The species is generally under-recorded at Durlston. The species was first reported on 1st April. There were no further records until 17th April. Numbers of passing birds then continued to increase, with a peak of 36 birds on 21st June, normally the peak month for the species. The last record was of a bird on 18th August.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	17	65	74	44	2	0	0	0	0

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

All records are given: 24th April; 18th and 21st June (two birds); 2nd, 17th, 23rd July; 15th and 18th (three birds) August; and 20th September. The Balearic Shearwater is the rarest bird in the world to visit Britain regularly. 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.

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

The species is generally under-recorded at Durlston. There were only two records this year: a bird off Durlston Head in the evening of 8th May, and three passing birds on 2nd June. This contrasts with 2006 when a period of high winds during the last two weeks of May resulted in a peak day count of 33 birds.

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. The peak counts in 2007 were of over 100 birds on 30th April and 15th June, and an hour's seawatch in a fresh southerly wind on the latter date was dominated by over 240 Gannets heading west, many passing close inshore.

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

There were no breeding Cormorants at Durlston in 2007, 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. Birds of the Continental race *sinensis* were recorded on two dates: 22nd January and 14th February.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis***Common coastal resident.**

Shags are seen throughout the year at Durlston, mostly close into the cliffs. Twelve birds were recorded on 13th February. Six 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 taking place on Brownsea Island DWT Reserve since 1996. Birds seen flying past Durlston or on the rocks in Durlston Bay are almost certainly from the Poole Harbour population. There were eight records: 18th July; 20th September (two birds); 10th, 14th and 17th October; and 3rd, 7th (two birds) and 24th November.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea***Uncommon visitor.**

Grey Herons can be seen at Durlston at any time of the year, although they are not common with only eleven records in 2007. Records are normally of single birds or pairs flying down the coast. Birds were recorded on 10th February, 24th March, 6th April, 28th May, 2nd June, 24th July, 15th August, 16th and 20th September, 7th October and 8th November.

EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus***Rare passage migrant.**

A bird was recorded on 3rd May heading north at 13.30.

RED KITE *Milvus milvus***Scarce passage migrant.**

A bird came in off the sea in the late morning of 2nd June.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus***Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

A distant bird was noted on 7th October.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus***Breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Birds were regularly seen hunting in the Park throughout the year, although sightings decreased during the breeding season (see Table). Records increased significantly in October as birds were observed hunting the migrating passerine flocks. Five birds were recorded on 17th October, four on 14th and 22nd. A bird was observed being harassed by 18 Jackdaws on 12th December. A pair were seen displaying over the Landslip area above Durlston Bay prior to the breeding season. A bird was seen carrying nesting material into the woods on 22nd April. A freshly fledged bird was seen near the Observation Point on 15th July, and young birds were heard calling on 5th and 9th August. All this is highly suggestive of local breeding.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	10	8	7	4	4	10	9	13	42	17	17

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo***Uncommon resident, breeding in the wider area.**

Although frequently seen in other parts of Purbeck, the Common Buzzard was, until recently, relatively uncommon in the Durlston area. Records are, however, increasing and may be linked to the continuing spread of the species in England where a substantial eastward range expansion has occurred. Common Buzzard is arguably now the most abundant diurnal raptor in Britain. Four were seen together at Durlston on three occasions (7th March and 14th and 29th April) and records peaked in April, possibly linked to displaying birds. Nine birds were seen on 5th April near the large copse and meadows. A bird was recorded coming in off the sea on 20th May.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of records	5	3	9	10	4	1	4	9	8	13	4	1
No. of bird-days	5	3	15	25	4	1	4	11	9	17	4	1

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus***Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Kestrels were seen throughout the year in all areas of the Park. A juvenile was reported on 15th 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. Birds were also recorded in winter on 22nd January and 11th February. There were five spring records: 11th, 26th and 30th March; and 10th and 19th April. The first autumn passage bird was seen on 1st October. October is the peak month for Merlins at Durlston and in Dorset generally, as the raptors hunt the migrating passerine flocks. Birds were observed hunting Meadow Pipits on 22nd and 24th (successfully). Merlins were recorded on 22 days in October, although the numbers involved appear to be lower than in 2006 with only a few days when more than one bird was seen. Merlins were seen on five days in November with the last record for the year on 29th.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record of the year was on the typical date of 7th April. Other spring and summer records were: 8th, 15th, 22nd and 26th April; 5th and 25th May; 2nd June; 17th July; and 2nd August. The bird recorded on 5th May was watched as it came in off the sea, originally seen on the horizon. Autumn records were on 13th September and a late bird on 8th October.

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 of the best places to see a Peregrine in Dorset is from the Coast Path, just to the west of the Dolphin Watch Hut. Birds are often perched on the ledge on Durlston Head to the east of the Observation Point and can also be watched hunting. On the 25th November, the following hunt described in the Rangers' Diary took place - *Both Peregrines in good view up on the Clifftop but not for long as they launched off into a classic attack. The male off high into the sun and soon lost sight of, the larger female staying relatively low and going east. Eventually I saw the target, an incoming flock of Pigeons, just in time to see them scattered by the plummeting male Peregrine closely followed by his mate coming in to take a distracted bird. The subsequent cloud of feathers hardly hitting the water before both Peregrines were back on the cliff with their breakfast.* A food pass between male and female birds was observed on 25th March.

Late summer normally provides good opportunities to see the parent birds teaching their young to hunt; three or more birds can sometimes be seen in the air together. However, although juvenile birds were seen on 2nd August and 2nd September, it was not clear whether these were raised by the resident pair as the normal activity of the parent birds teaching their young to fly was not observed in 2007. One of the highlights of the passage in October was the number of Peregrines present. Three or four birds were recorded on ten occasions between October and mid-November. Birds were seen to take a Chaffinch on 24th October and a Redwing on 3rd November.

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 the rocky coasts in Dorset, they are sometimes seen on rocks along the coast.

GREAT RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce, passing offshore in spring and autumn.

Ringed Plovers were seen passing during seawatches on 25th April, 29th May (five birds) and 17th August.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

All records were of birds passing overhead: on 2nd, 8th (11 birds), 9th, 12th, 19th (ten birds) and 29th October; and 5th and 8th November.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in spring.

There were a series of records from seawatches in April: on 21st (two birds), 23rd, 27th, 29th (three birds) and 30th (four birds); and on 5th May.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were two records: a bird on flying over on 5th October, and four birds passing at sea on 21st December.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Scarce passage migrant, passing offshore in spring and autumn.

A bird passed rather distantly on 5th May.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Scarce passage migrant, passing offshore mainly in late spring.

There were five records of birds seen passing during seawatches: two birds on 5th, 17th and 28th May, three on 21st May and three on 2nd June.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

There was one record: a bird on the rocks at Tilly Whim on 26th November. The nearest regular wintering population is at the entrance to Poole Harbour and the bird may have come from there.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Scarce, passing offshore spring, autumn and winter.

There were three records of birds seen passing offshore: small flocks on 21st (ten birds) and 30th April (12 birds), 4th May and a further record on 17th August.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Scarce passage and winter visitor.

There were five records, mainly of birds flying over: on 10th March, 26th August, 12th October (two birds), 26th November and 26th December.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

There were two records: of a bird emerging from the terrace above Durlston Bay and taking off over the Landslip in silence on 12th October, and a bird on 2nd November.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Uncommon, passing offshore mainly in spring.

There was a significant passage of Bar-tailed Godwits along the Dorset coast during the last three days of April with a peak count of over 1000 birds past Chesil Beach on 30th. This was reflected at Durlston where over 20 birds were reported on 27th, 20-30 birds on 29th and 30 on

30th. The species was also recorded on 23rd (30 birds), 24th and 25th April; 1st and 5th May (eight birds).

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in spring.

The first record was of a bird on 4th April with peak passage during the typical period of late April/early May. Of note, 12 birds were seen on 23rd April. Return passage commenced with a bird on 5th July; there were further records on 10th and 18th July, 17th August and 15th September.

EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were four records of passing birds year: 23rd January (two birds), 17th February (four birds) and 5th and 20th September.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were three records of birds flying over: on 1st August, and 10th and 11th September.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

There were six records, normally of single birds passing offshore, but sometimes on the rocks in Durlston Bay. Common Sandpipers were recorded on the typical dates of 27th and 29th April, 15th May, 6th and 14th June, 4th July and 17th August.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.

There were two records: a bird passing offshore on 30th April and a bird on 20th July.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Scarce offshore passage migrant.

There were two records: two birds were seen passing during early morning fog on 23rd April and four birds passed with other seabirds on 28th May during wet and windy conditions.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Uncommon offshore passage migrant.

Arctic Skuas are the most frequently seen skua species off Durlston, followed by Great, Pomarine and Long-tailed. There were eight records of Arctic Skua during the first half of the year: on 23rd, 27th (two birds), 29th and 30th April; 2nd May; and 2nd, 15th and 23rd June. Records in the second half comprised passing birds on 15th August and 16th and 20th September.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*

Uncommon, passing offshore in spring, autumn and winter.

Single birds were seen on 7th January and 4th March. Two birds were seen unusually close to the cliffs on 25th April, harrying a passing Gannet. A further bird was recorded on 10th May. Autumn records are normally more numerous, but there was only one record in 2007: on 5th September.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Fairly common visitor and offshore passage migrant.

In 2007, around 40 pairs of Kittiwakes bred 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 were as follows: 20 on 3rd and 5th January, 45 on 17th January and 25 on 18th November.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Spring passage occurs between March and April when it is probable that over 1,000 birds move east past Durlston. Over 100 birds were recorded on 10th March and 18th October. Large (250-300 birds) feeding aggregations of gulls, including many Black-headed, were reported on 2nd and 9th November. 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 seven records: 19th January; 23rd (five birds) and 25th April; and 1st, 3rd, 6th and 18th October. April and October are the peak months for Little Gull in Dorset.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*

Uncommon offshore visitor and passage migrant.

The pattern of records of Mediterranean Gull in 2007 mirrored that in 2006 with few records in the first half of the year and the vast majority of records in October and November. The peak count was of 12 birds on 1st November. Records relate to either passing birds, or birds feeding with other gulls.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	49	34	4

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Fairly common winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Common Gulls are seen offshore on most days between mid-September and May. Peak counts were of 40 birds on 14th February, 30 on 17th February, 30 on 21st October and over 30 on 8th 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.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Common coastal resident and cliff-nesting species.

There were ten nests between Durlston Head and Tilly Whim with another five west from Tilly Whim to Ragged Rocks. Six nests were visible from the cliff-top path with a total of seven chicks. Herring Gulls did not nest again on the upper Guillemot ledge. There is evidence of large offshore movements (mainly west) in October.

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. Two nests were noted, with chicks fledging from both.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Fairly common summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.

The first record was of two birds on 15th March with birds seen from then until 10th October. Some of the birds may be from the nearest breeding colony, on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour. Thirty birds were recorded on 15th May and 15 on 21st June.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Fairly common summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Birds were recorded from 19th April onwards with 20 birds passing on 21st and 27th April. Records continued through May and June; the last record was on the very early date of 24th July. 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.

Two birds passed offshore on 27th April with further birds on 30th April (five birds) and 28th May.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*

Scarce offshore passage migrant.

There were two records: on 27th and 30th April (six birds).

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Common coastal resident, winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.

The annual seabird counts recorded 422 Guillemots at Durlston compared with 602 last year. Of the 2007 count, 365 were breeding birds on the ledges (down from 498 last year). This represents a decrease of approximately 30%, a decline that was seen along the Purbeck coast between Durlston and St Aldhelm's Head. It is not known whether the decline is linked to the running aground of the the MSC Napoli on 20th January 2007 near Branscombe, South Devon. Of the 1,020 oiled birds picked up between Torbay in Devon and Poole, 967 were Guillemots. Of these, 467 survived and were released. The first chicks were seen on 26th May via the cliff camera; the last birds had departed by 15th July. Birds had started to return to the cliffs by the beginning of December with 50 birds noted at the beginning of the month and 300 by mid-month.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Common coastal resident, winter visitor and offshore passage migrant.

There was only one breeding pair at Durlston in 2007, down from seven last year. The maximum number of individuals (just below the cliffs) was 11 on 18th February.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor, usually storm driven.

There was one record: of a passing bird heading west on 18th November.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Uncommon summer visitor and offshore passage migrant.

Around 10-15 pairs of 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 were few records in 2007, mainly of passing birds: on 29th April, 20th and 31st May, 3rd July and

26th November. More unusually, a bird was seen just offshore with the Guillemots on 21st June with another seen just off Tilly Whim. Birds were seen regularly in June on the Friday evening Seabird Boat Trips to Dancing Ledge (two on 1st, four on 8th, and nine on 22nd).

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 Peregrines.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Stock Doves are often seen in flocks of migrating Wood Pigeons. The peak counts were of 100 birds on 29th October, and of 50 birds on 30th October and 13th November.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Wood Pigeon migration began around the third week of October with significant overhead movements reported on 29th (7,850 birds) and 30th October (8,900, including over 2,000 in one flock), and 13th November (8,000 birds). These represent much smaller numbers than those recorded in 2005 when there was a peak count of 72,000 birds.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident and uncommon passage migrant

There is some evidence of spring migration. Two or three pairs bred.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

There were four records: of birds in the Gully on 25th April and 2nd May, two birds on the Downs on 5th May, and one near the Visitor Centre on 19th May. This is a declining species at Durlston.

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (Ring-necked Parakeet) *Psittacula krameri*

Scarce visitor from local feral breeding population.

Rose-ringed Parakeets recorded at Durlston almost certainly originate from the small colony at Studland, although this seems to have decreased in size in recent years. Four birds were recorded flying over high on 2nd November.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was of a bird on the relatively late date of 24th April. Further birds were recorded on 8th and 14th May, 1st and 16th June and 9th July. The Cuckoo is a declining species at Durlston.

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Uncommon visitor and resident in the wider area.

There were four records: on 10th and 26th March (the latter of a bird calling from the Castle woodland in the evening with a Tawny Owl), a bird on 2nd November, and a bird near the western boundary on 15th December.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Breeding resident.

Birds were heard or seen during the first half of the year up to 23rd April, and in the second half from 8th October. Birds were recorded on six days in December. There are thought to be between one and three pairs resident at Durlston.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

There were two records this year (compared with seven in 2006): of a bird hunting over the hollows and scrub of Round Down on 31st October, and of a bird flying out to sea, pursued by crows on 17th November.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was on 20th April. Towards the end of July, Swifts gather in flocks prior to departure after breeding; records then decline and the last record was on 31st August.

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Rare visitor.

A bird was reported from Peveril Point at the north end of Durlston Bay on 30th December.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

There were two records this year, both on 16th September. The first bird was seen by the Gully and the second near the western boundary.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Fairly common breeding resident.

Green Woodpecker is the commonest woodpecker seen at Durlston. A family party seen on 5th July and other young birds seen on 29th July and 28th August suggested successful local breeding.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Uncommon breeding resident.

Drumming birds heard in winter and spring (for example on 3rd January and 11th March) suggest the possibility of breeding in the woodland areas, but no young birds were seen.

WOOD LARK *Lullula arborea*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

No birds were recorded in the first half of the year. Autumn passage was concentrated into the last three weeks of October with birds recorded passing overhead on 10th, 17th (two birds), 19th, 20th (three birds), 23rd and 29th. November records were on 2nd (two birds) and 3rd. Numbers (expressed as bird-days) were a third of those in 2006.

SKY LARK *Alauda arvensis*

Fairly common breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Birds were singing from late February until 19th June with a maximum of nine birds heard on 18th April. One individual was singing from an anthill on 13th April. The main autumn passage occurred during the last three weeks of October; with 48, 45 and 54 birds passing overhead on 11th, 14th and 26th October respectively.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first record was on the typical date of 11th March. Fifty birds passed overhead on 17th April. Return passage was evident from mid-August until mid-September with over 50 birds seen on 6th September. The last record was of two birds on 14th October.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was on 5th April and birds kept moving north throughout May. Return movement started to become noticeable in mid-August and continued until mid-October. Birds were reported moving at the rate of approximately 1,000 per hour on 5th September and at dusk that evening, thousands were flying low over the sea. Other particularly strong movements were noted on 1st and 4th October with over 2,000 birds per hour moving. The last record was of a bird over Durlston Bay on the late date of 26th November.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum*

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first record was on 10th April, around two to three weeks later than normal. Movement north continued to the end of May. Return movement became obvious at the end of August and continued until the end of October. The peak count was of 500 birds on 4th October. The last record was of a bird over the Visitor Centre on 26th November.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon passage migrant.

All records from the first half of the year were between 5th April and 6th May. Return passage commenced on 30th July and peaked between the third week of August and the third week of September. The numbers of birds recorded were small with a maximum count of six birds on 10th September. The last record was on the late date of 31st October.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

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

Birds bred on the Downs. A significant spring passage movement occurred on 28th March (60 birds). Return passage became evident from mid-September with over 100 birds passing on 16th September. Passage peaked at the beginning of October (1,250 birds on 2nd October) and declined from mid-October onwards.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

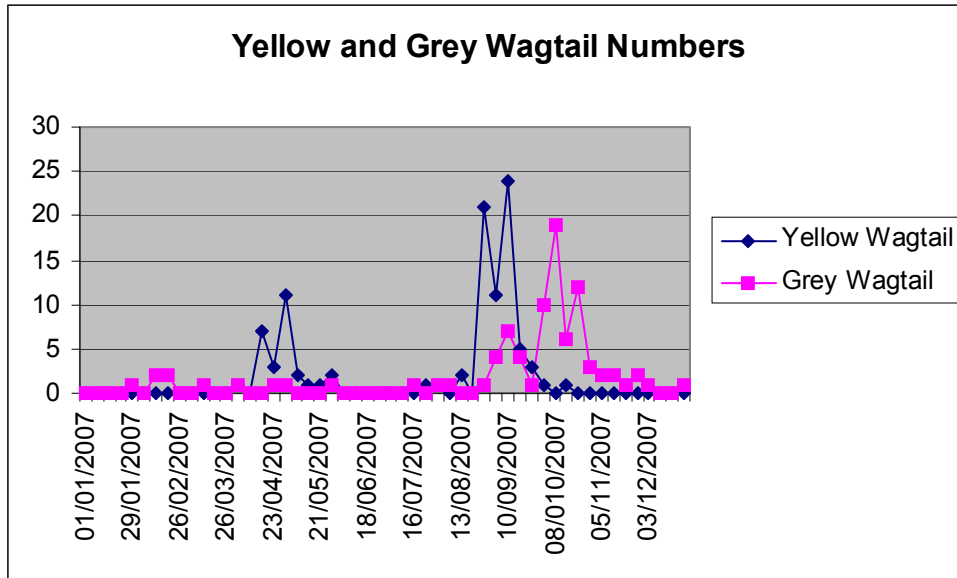
Common coastal breeding resident.

It is estimated that between five and eight pairs of Rock Pipit breed at Durlston.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first record of the year was on 7th April with birds seen passing overhead regularly, albeit in small numbers, from then until the first week of May. There were then no records until the autumn passage which peaked during the end of August and the first two weeks of September (see Graph). Autumn passage numbers were approximately a third of those recorded in 2006. The last record was on 14th October.



GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Grey Wagtails show a different occurrence pattern to the previous species. 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 in October before numbers decline to those of very low numbers or single birds.

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. Autumn passage is noticeable with birds moving through primarily in October and the first week of November. A significant movement occurred on 8th October when 585 birds were recorded in a two hour period.

(Winter) WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common breeding resident and occasional passage migrant.

There are estimated to be approximately 20 pairs of Wrens breeding at Durlston.

HEDGE ACCENTOR (Dunnock) *Prunella modularis*

Common breeding resident.

The Dunnock is a common and widespread breeding bird at Durlston with a population of over 20 pairs. There is no real evidence of any passage.

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. "A large number" of Robins were recorded on 5th October. These could well have been birds from Scandinavia moving to their wintering grounds including those in Spain and the Mediterranean basin.

RUFIOUS NIGHTINGALE (Nightingale) *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Scarce passage migrant.

There was one record: a bird singing near the Visitor Centre on 15th April.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochuros*

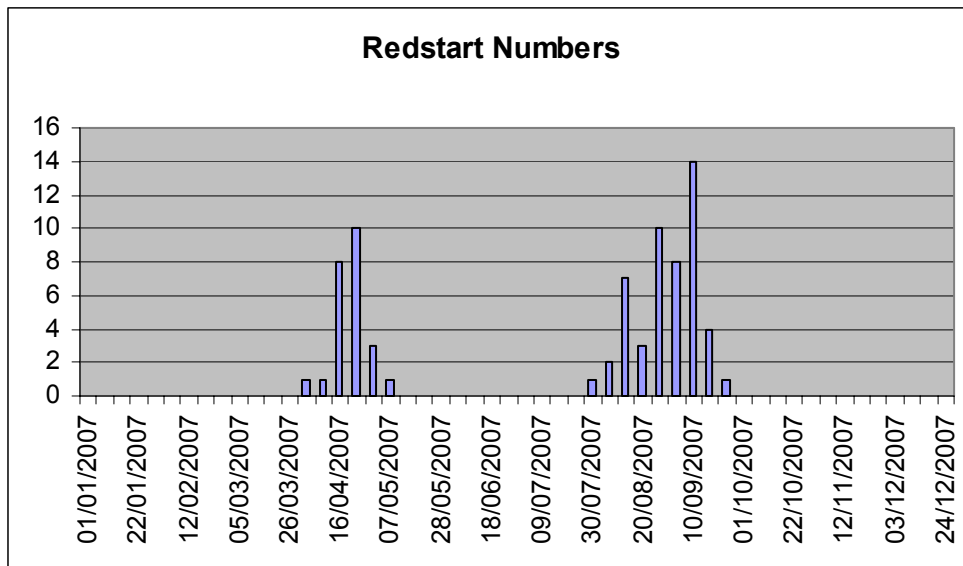
Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Black Redstarts were seen regularly up to 25th March. It is not clear whether just one bird (a male) was involved or whether more than one bird was present. The favoured locations were Tilly Whim and the grassy slopes of the Gully. There were no more records until 14th April, suggesting that the bird(s) had been wintering and moved on. The first bird of the autumn passage was recorded on 6th October. Birds were present on 11 days between mid-October and mid-November, normally the main passage period for this species. Records continued up to the end of the year, indicative of wintering bird(s). In addition to the Tilly Whim/Gully area, at least two birds were reported along the rocky shore in Durlston Bay on 30th December.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first spring passage record was on the 7th April; birds passed through until 6th May with most birds recorded in the last two weeks of April. The autumn passage of Redstarts at Durlston is normally noticeably heavier than in spring, but this was not particularly marked in 2007 (see Graph). The last record was on 25th September.



WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first spring passage record was on 17th April with two birds present. Birds were recorded on a further five days in April including three birds on the 29th. Records continued intermittently though May with a late record on 2nd June. Autumn passage commenced on 18th August and continued until 7th October. Peak passage was between the end of August and mid-September. The Gully is the favoured location for this species.

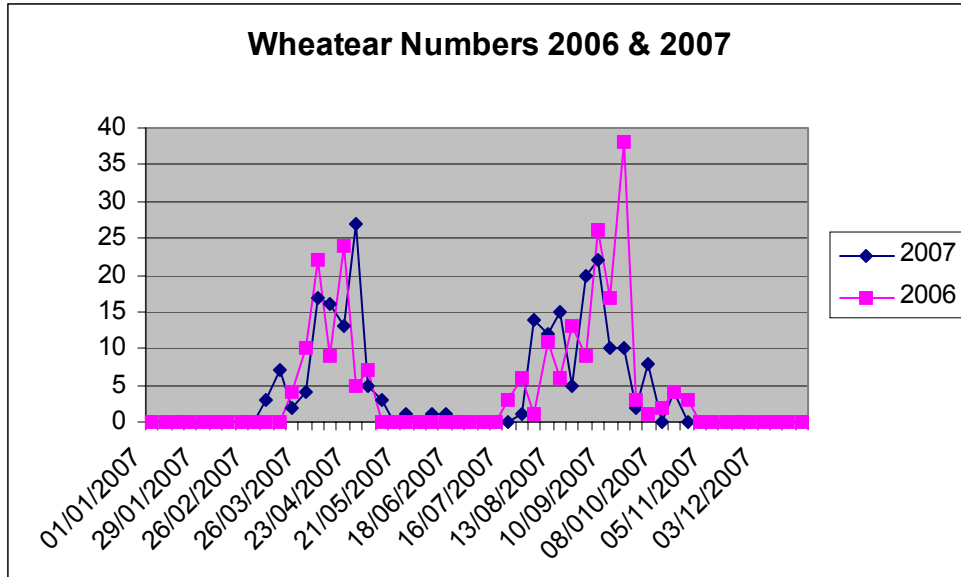
COMMON STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Birds bred on the Downs, in the Gully and along the coastpath west of the Lighthouse. A female was seen on 4th June with a large beak-full of nesting material, probably refurbishing a nest ready for the next brood, but still being harassed by fledged young. Autumn passage peaked between mid-September and mid-October with 10 birds on 14th 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 7th March. Peak spring passage was during the last week of April with 14 birds on 24th. Return passage commenced at the end of July, peaking in the second week of September. The last record was of four birds on 17th October. Comparing the 2006 and 2007 numbers of Wheatears reported at Durlston (see Graph), the magnitude of the spring passage appears similar in both years. However, the autumn passage in 2007 was noticeably lighter.



RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*
Uncommon passage migrant.

There were five records during the spring: on 9th (two birds), 21st, 24th, 26th and 27th April. The first autumn bird was on 13th September with a further bird on the 18th. Autumn passage of Ring Ouzels at Durlston is invariably stronger than the spring passage; birds were reported on 13 days between the beginning of October and the last record on 1st November. Numbers were low with a maximum of three birds on 4th, 8th and 10th October.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There are estimated to be approximately 15 pairs of Blackbirds breeding at Durlston. Over 50 birds were recorded on 21st December feeding on berries and other food sources. The majority of these are very likely to have been migrants from continental Europe.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Fieldfares are not as common at Durlston as Redwings and there were only intermittent records up to 31st March. Birds were seen in the second winter period from 7th October onwards, with the frequency of sightings peaking in late October/early to mid-November, indicating that the Fieldfare is mainly a passage bird at Durlston. The peak count was of 35 birds on 20th November.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

This species has shown an upturn in fortunes in recent years at Durlston with a breeding population now estimated to be over 12 pairs. A bird was heard singing on 5th January.

Autumn movements were light with no significant movements recorded. Over 45 birds were recorded on the fields of the Park on 21st December. Many had a greyish colouration showing that they were continental visitors mixing with the resident population.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Fairly common passage migrant and uncommon winter visitor.

Redwings are more common at Durlston than Fieldfares and birds were recorded during the first winter period up to 1st April. The first record in the second winter period was on 2nd October; birds were then seen regularly until the end of the year. As with the Song Thrush, autumn movements were light with no significant movements recorded. The largest count on the Park was of over 70 birds flitting around the hedgerows on 15th December. Over 200 birds passed overhead on 13th December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Occasional breeder, common visitor and uncommon passage migrant.

A bird was heard singing on 1st January. As with the other thrushes, birds are seen far 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 on 10th April. Four birds were reported on 17th April and birds were then seen or heard almost daily up to 2nd May. Return passage commenced on 12th July; there were three more records in July and eight in August, all of single birds. The last records were on 18th and 23rd September.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first record of the spring was of two birds on 15th April. Passage continued during April and May, albeit in low numbers, until 4th June. Return passage commenced on 24th July with peak passage in August (14 bird-days). There were three records in September with the last on 15th.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Reed Warblers normally arrive later than Sedge Warblers, and the first record was on 27th April. As is normal with this species, spring passage is protracted and lasted until 19th June. A bird was recorded on 9th July; return passage, limited though it is, commenced on 25th 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. However, this pattern was not particularly apparent in 2007 (see Table below). Records continued very intermittently until 16th September.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Totals
Grasshopper Warbler	14	1	0	4	8	2	29
Sedge Warbler	5	10	2	2	14	3	36
Reed Warbler	1	6	8	2	1	3	21

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Uncommon breeding resident and autumn visitor.

A pair held territory west of the Lighthouse with young seen; a further pair was present on the Diagonal Path from Tilly Whim.

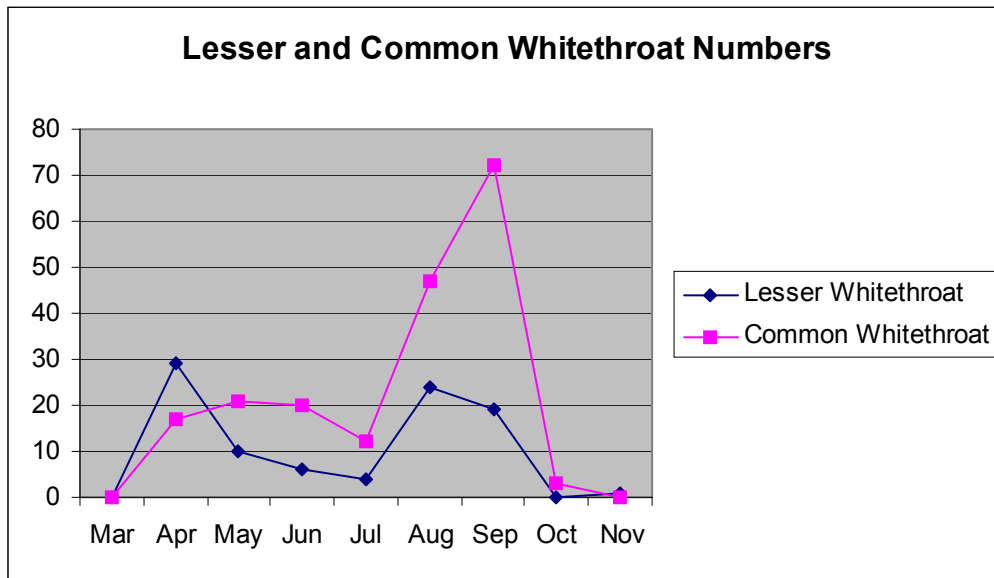
LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first spring record was on 15th April. Birds were recorded throughout the summer and breeding occurred in hedgerows and scrub in the farmland areas of the Park. The last record of the main autumn passage period was on 16th September, although there was a very late record on 3rd November. Less common at Durlston than Common Whitethroat (see Graph), there was a total of 93 bird-days. 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	29	10	6	4	24	19	0	1	93



COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first spring record was on 15th April and birds were then seen on an almost daily basis throughout May and June, more commonly than Lesser Whitethroats. This is particularly evident during the autumn passage. Many young birds were seen in the hedges and scrub around the meadows and Downs. Peak passage was during the first week of September with 25 birds present on 6th September. The last record was on 4th October. In total, there were 192 bird-days

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	17	21	20	12	47	72	3	0	192

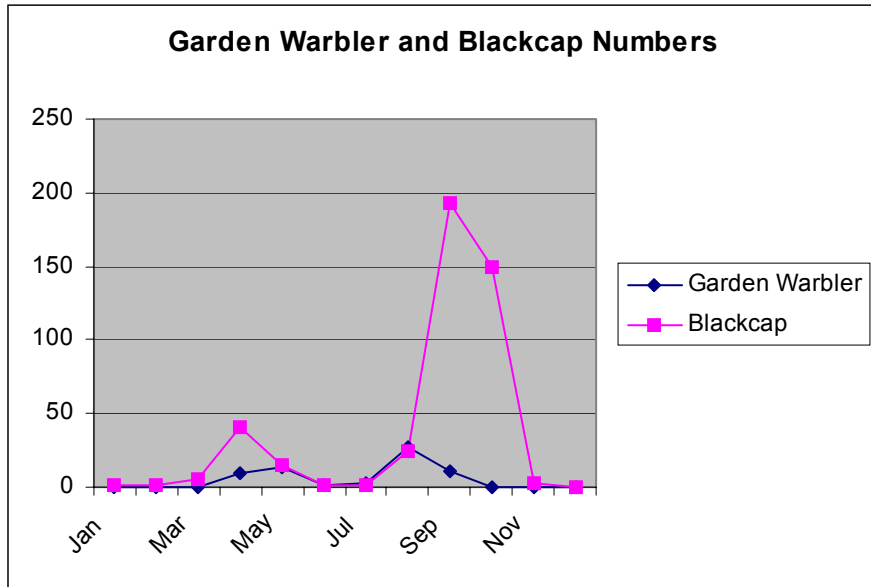
GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Occasional breeding summer visitor and uncommon passage migrant.

The first record was on 18th April; the main spring passage was in May. Return passage commenced in August but birds are never common; in total there were 66 bird-days. The last record was on 17th September.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
0	9	14	2	3	27	11	0	0	66



BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Fairly common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

Over-wintering birds were recorded in January, February and March with the first migrants probably arriving towards the end of that month. Always more common than Garden Warblers, a total of 439 bird-days were recorded. As in spring, the significantly higher numbers of Blackcaps in autumn compared with Garden Warblers are evident from the Graph. The last record was on 10th November.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
2	2	6	41	15	1	1	25	193	150	3	439

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce autumn passage vagrant.

There were four records of possibly three birds. Birds were seen on 9th October, in the Castle Woods on 22nd October, at the top of the Diagonal Path on 25th October and a further bird in the Castle Woods on 5th November.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were three records: on 3rd May, a bird in the Gully on 4th June and an autumn migrant on 25th August.

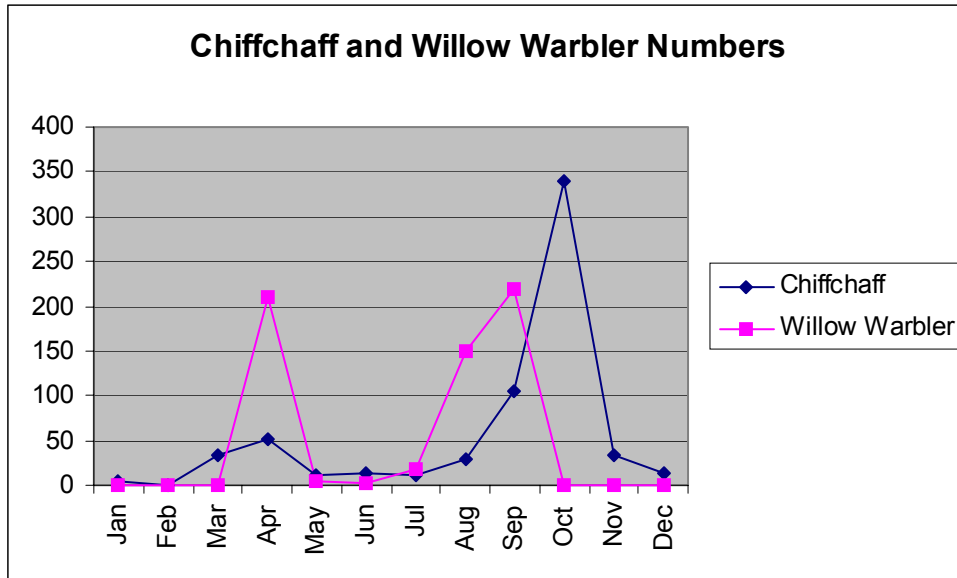
COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Chiffchaffs overwinter at Durlston with birds seen occasionally in January and February. It is never clear when wintering birds are replaced by migrants, but the Graph shows the influx of migrants in March and April. Chiffchaff autumn passage is later than the closely-related Willow Warbler and peaked in October with 55 birds reported on 4th October. Chiffchaffs were seen up to the end of the year.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
5	1	33	51	11	13	11	29	104	340	33	14	644



WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Occasional breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first spring record was on 2nd April and passage continued throughout April with 40, 45 and 80 birds on 9th, 10th and 17th April respectively; there were very sporadic records up to the beginning of June. Willow Warblers migrate earlier in the autumn than Chiffchaff and this can be seen in the Graph above which shows peak passage in August and September. The total count for September was very heavily influenced by a large “fall” of over 150 birds on 22nd September. The last record was of nine birds on 25th September.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
0	0	0	209	5	2	18	149	218	0	0	0	601

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Uncommon breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Two to three males held territory. The highest numbers of Goldcrests are recorded in October and November. Maximum counts in 2007 (of 30 birds on 1st October and 20 birds on 3rd and 4th) were significantly less than the 120 birds reported on 22nd October 2006.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor.

Firecrests were seen intermittently throughout the first winter period up to 11th March, with two birds seen on a few occasions. The first autumn record was on 14th September. Birds were seen regularly between October and the end of the year with a marked peak in sightings in October. Five birds were reported on 25th October.

Monthly counts (bird-days):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
13	8	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	30	21	12

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Fairly common passage migrant.

Spotted Flycatcher is a late migrant and the first spring passage record was on 11th May with birds seen intermittently up to 5th June. Return passage commenced on 7th August and continued to 4th October. There was a total of nine bird-days in spring and 38 in the autumn.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were five records in spring: on 17th (two birds), 19th, 21st, 26th and 27th April. Pied Flycatchers are significantly rarer at Durlston than Spotted Flycatchers – there were just five autumn records: on 7th, 13th, 25th and 27th August, and on 13th September.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Common breeding resident.

At least three pairs held territory. Over 30 birds were seen on 9th September.

BLUE TIT *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Common breeding resident.

A family of nine young were raised in the nest box with a camera attached to the hide wall. Many more broods were raised elsewhere in the Park. A mixed flock of around 50 Blue and Great Tits was seen on 17th October.

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. A mixed flock of around 50 Blue and Great Tits was seen on 17th October.

COAL TIT *Parus ater*

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.

Breeding occurred in the woodland. Two continental birds were seen on 21st October.

EURASIAN TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Uncommon breeding resident and visitor.

Treecreepers were seen fairly regularly in the woods up to 19th May, and then from 8th August onwards. Young birds were seen on 17th July.

EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare passage migrant.

A bird was seen fleetingly in flight before it disappeared into dense vegetation on 20th May. Unfortunately, despite a 20 minute wait, the bird did not reappear.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*

Rare passage migrant.

A bird was reported just south of the Saxon Field (a favoured area for shrikes) on 11th August.

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 the Park. Numbers started to increase from mid-October onwards with 20 birds seen on 13th October and 30 on 3rd and 16th November.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident.

Magpies were recorded daily with regular counts of eight to ten birds together. There was successful breeding again.

EURASIAN JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

At Durlston, Jackdaws mostly breed on the cliff-face. Forty birds were recorded on 28th March. Jackdaws move through Durlston in autumn and 250 birds passed overhead on 30th October and 13th November.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common non-breeding visitor.

Rooks are seen at Durlston primarily in the autumn, and usually in the meadows.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident.

Carrion Crows nest in the Gully and various wooded areas.

COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Fairly common visitor.

Ravens are normally seen at Durlston as single birds or pairs; the maximum counts were of six birds on 3rd March and five birds on 17th October.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Uncommon breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

An increase in Starling numbers generally was noticeable by mid-October with 60 birds passing overhead on 26th October. A flock of 50 birds had a lucky escape on 5th November when they disturbed one of the resident Peregrines from its cliff-face roost.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.

There is some evidence of autumn dispersal. Only one pair was known to have bred - House Sparrows are much less numerous at Durlston than 15 years ago when they bred at the Visitor Centre and Bungalow.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Scarce passage migrant.

There was a rare spring record: of a bird on 16th April. Tree Sparrows are more common in autumn, passing overhead on migration, and there was a good series of records in 2007: on 9th, 11th (two birds), 18th (three birds), 24th and 29th (two birds) October; and on 2nd and 17th November.

COMMON CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding occurs on the Park amongst the hedgerows and in the Gully. 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 34 days between 2nd October and 17th November. Approximately 10,570 Chaffinches were counted during this period, amounting to an average of 310 per day. Of the seven common finch species (Chaffinch, Brambling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnets and Lesser Redpoll), Chaffinches were the second most abundant, amounting to 29% of the common finches. Particularly strong movements were noted on 26th (810 birds), 29th (2,440 birds) and 30th (1,150 birds) October and 2nd November (780 birds). Birds were still passing through in December – 520 passed overhead on 11th December.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla***Uncommon passage migrant mainly autumn and winter visitor.**

There were three records in the first half of the year: 7th January, 7th February and 1st April. As with other finch species, autumn passage is always stronger. The first record of the autumn was on 2nd October; records continued until the end of the year. Approximately 710 Bramblings were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of 20 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Bramblings were the least abundant, amounting to just 2% of the common finches. A particularly strong movement was noted on 29th October when 275 birds passed overhead.

EUROPEAN SERIN *Serinus serinus***Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.**

There was one record: of a bird passing overhead on 30th October. Serins are more often seen at Durlston in spring than autumn.

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

The Greenfinch is a commonly-seen species throughout the year – 30 birds were present on 29th January. The breeding population is estimated to be over ten pairs. 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 1,420 Greenfinches were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of 40 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Greenfinches were the fifth most abundant, amounting to 4% of the common finches. Peak counts were on 14th (120 birds), 29th (130 birds) and 30th (80 birds) October.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis***Breeding resident, common passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Breeding occurred with young noted during July and August. 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. Fifty birds passed overhead on 25th April, 40 birds on 5th May. Approximately 15,370 Goldfinches were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of 450 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Goldfinches were the most abundant, amounting to 42% of the common finches. Peak counts were on 18th (950 birds), 22nd (1,350 birds) and 29th (1,510 birds) October.

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

In the first half of the year, Siskins were recorded from 1st February to 5th May. Birds were seen from 4th September onwards; early passage birds may have been from local breeding populations. Approximately 1,450 Siskins were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of just over 40 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Siskins were the fourth most abundant (just marginally more so than Greenfinches), amounting to 4% of the common finches. Peak counts were on 4th (125 birds) and 29th (135 birds) October.

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

The breeding population of Linnets has reduced significantly and is now estimated to be approximately six pairs. Approximately 5,680 Linnets were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of 170 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Linnets were the third most abundant, amounting to 16% of the common finches. Peak counts were on 2nd (380 birds), 7th (540 birds), 10th (290 birds), 14th (390 birds) and 29th (290 birds) October.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were two records: of single birds passing overhead during autumn passage on 6th and 29th October.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis carbaret*

Fairly common passage migrant mainly in late autumn.

There were two spring records: of birds on 10th and 31st March. All other records were from autumn passage: the first was on 3rd October. Approximately 1,060 Redpolls were counted between 2nd October and 17th November, amounting to an average of 30 per day. Of the seven common finch species, Redpolls were the sixth most abundant, amounting to 3% of the common finches. Main passage commenced in mid-October with 48 birds on 14th, 105 on 18th, 110 on 19th and the peak count of 210 on 29th. These numbers are significantly higher than those recorded during 2006. Birds continued to be recorded throughout November, and at a decreasing frequency, during December.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Uncommon passage migrant and irruptive visitor.

There were only two records in 2007 (compared with seven in 2006). Five young birds passed overhead on 13th June; six birds passed overhead on 27th October.

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rare passage migrant.

A juvenile was seen on the western boundary on 13th October, and again on the next day 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. A family party of seven was recorded on 31st July; young birds were also noted on 30th August. Peak passage movements were in October with 14, 27 and 12 birds noted on 19th, 29th and 30th respectively.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce passage migrant.

A bird was reported flying over the Castle and Landslip on 2nd January. There was only one autumn passage record this year: a bird passing overhead on 31st October. This contrasts with 2005 when unprecedented numbers passed overhead Durlston in October.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were three records: of birds passing overhead on 26th and 29th October, and on 17th November.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citronella*

Fairly common breeding resident and passage migrant.

At least ten males held territory. Young birds were seen on 30th October.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*

Scarce passage migrant.

There were two records: of a bird heard on the Downs on 5th September and a bird passing over on 10th September.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

There were six spring records: on 3rd and 26th February, 11th and 14th March and 17th and 21st April. Birds were recorded on 10th and 11th August. As with other finch species, autumn passage is always stronger than in spring and records consisted predominantly of small numbers of birds moving overhead. Reed Buntings were recorded on twelve days in October, eight in November and two in December.