An aerial photograph of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The image shows a wide, winding river or estuary system that meanders through a vast, green landscape. The water is a deep blue-grey color, contrasting with the vibrant green of the surrounding fields and marshes. In the foreground, there is a cluster of industrial buildings, including several large, dark-roofed warehouses and smaller structures, situated near what appears to be a railway line. The background shows a hazy horizon with more green fields and a small town or village. The overall scene depicts a natural wetland area adjacent to an industrial zone.

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Annual Report 2005

RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2005

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Cover photos - Castle Water, Camber Castle and Castle Farm

The Nature Reserve address is:

2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU

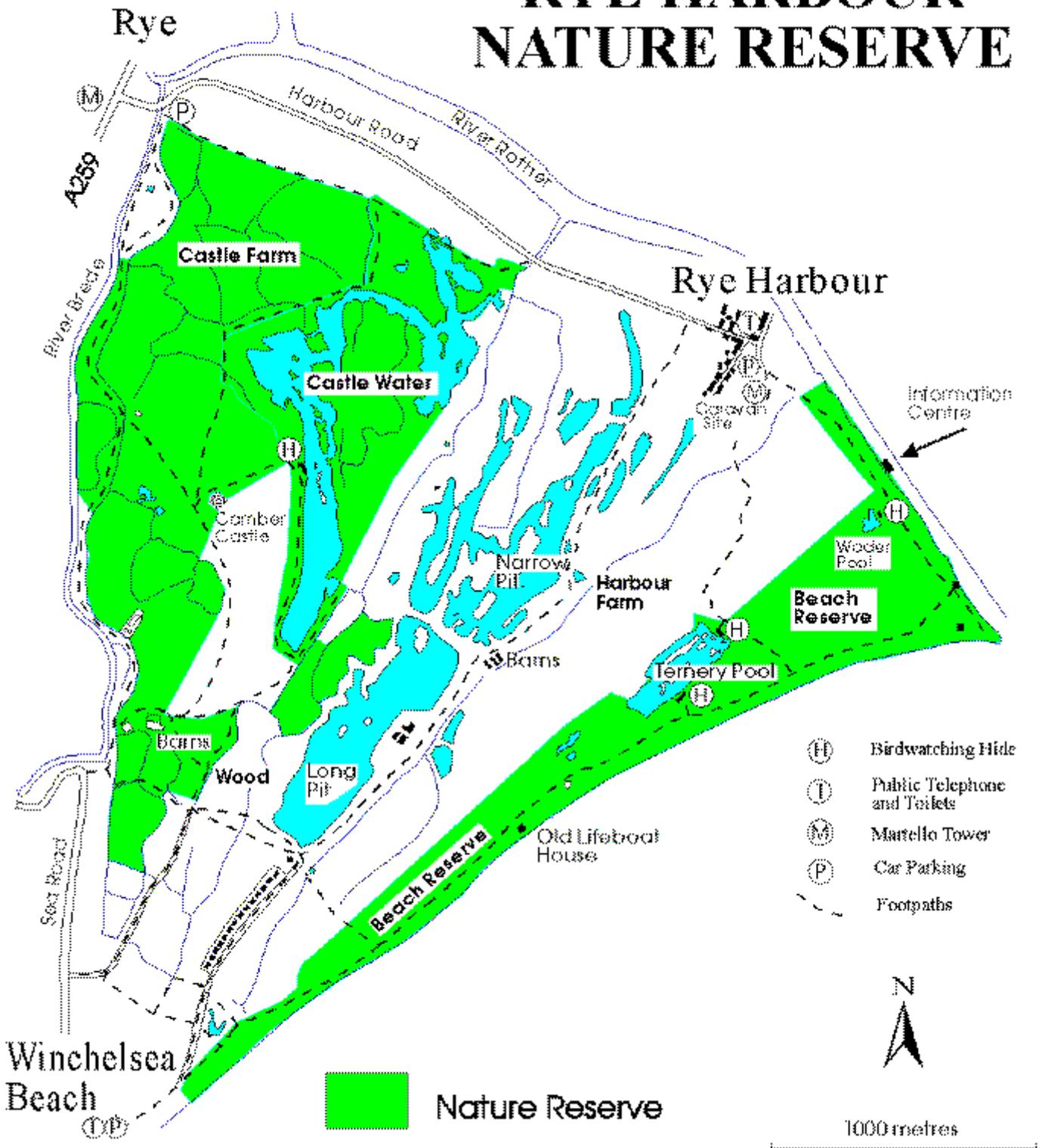
telephone: 01797 223862.

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web site: www.wildRye.info



RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE



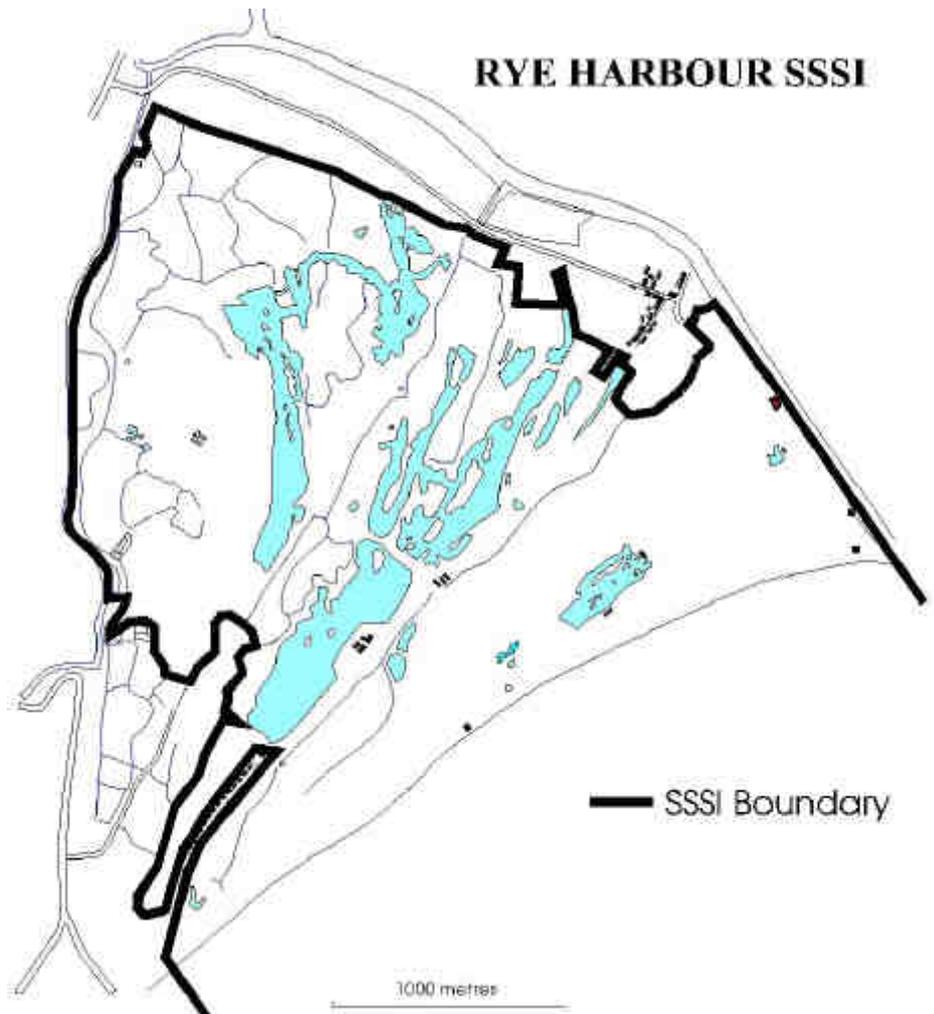
The Nature Reserve

Establishment

The large triangle of land lying between Rye, Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) in 1953. In 1965 the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) published a report on the future development of the East Sussex Coast which included proposals to encourage the establishment of a Nature Reserve over the whole of this 766 hectare SSSI.

In 1970 most of the 101 ha. of shingle beach now owned by the Environment Agency (EA, but originally the Kent River Authority) was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by the County Council, which also appointed a Management Committee to administer the Reserve on its behalf. This was the beginning of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Since then further land has been added by agreement with neighbouring landowners and the Management Committee is hopeful that further areas of the SSSI will also become part of the Reserve. In August 1992 the Sussex Wildlife Trust purchased the 77 ha. of Castle Water and this was incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve in 1993, bringing the number of landowners to four and the area to 326 ha.

The SSSI is also part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Special Protection Area (SPA)** and the Dungeness **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**. It is still being considered for another international designations: as part of the Pett Level to Dungeness candidate **Ramsar site**



Brief Description

The SSSI is generally flat and low lying with no natural feature above 6m. and most below 4m. The high points are the crests of storm ridges (5.5m. at Watch Cottage, 4.5m. at Camber Castle and 6m along shore) built up over hundreds of years by the action of tides and storms. The low points were areas of saltmarsh between the shingle ridges. The influence of the sea has been greatly reduced by sea defences and a drainage system of ditches emptying into the rivers has lowered the natural water table. This has enabled a traditional agriculture of mainly sheep grazing with some arable and, from 1977 until 2003, extensive arable cultivation of Harbour Farm. The loss of wetland has been partly offset by the extraction of the largest shingle ridges creating pits.

Climate

Winds prevail from the south-west and give the area a typically mild and damp maritime climate. Strong winds from south-east to south-west are laden with sea spray and this hostile salinity probably influences the distribution of some species. The proximity to the sea does, however, generally protect the area from extremes of temperature. There are occasional long periods of dominating easterly winds that make the climate drier, more continental and give extremes of heat in the summer and cold in the winter.

The maximum temperature recorded was 32.5°C on 3rd August 1990.

The minimum temperature was -12°C on 10th February 1986.

The greatest daily rainfall was 72mm on 8th October 1987.

The driest year was 1998 with 592mm.

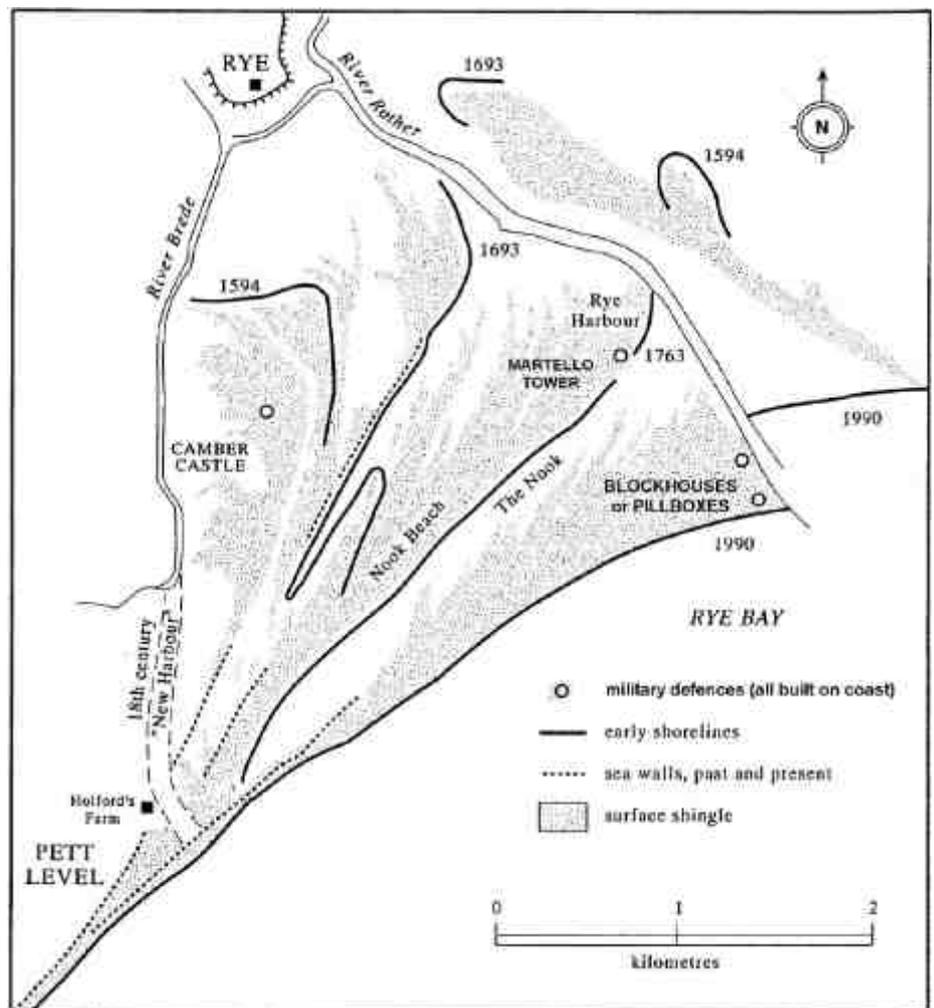
and the wettest year was 1994 with 1131mm.

The driest month was August 1995 with just 1mm.

and the wettest month was October 1987 with 275.5mm.

Geomorphology

Although much of the interest in the Reserve is centred upon its varied wildlife, the SSSI as a whole is of considerable geomorphological interest because of the succession of shingle ridges that traverse it. These ridges have been accurately dated because they were established during recorded storms over several hundred years. Herein lies another valuable aspect of the SSSI, as it is possible to put an accurate time scale to the vegetation succession, from the bare shingle of the current storm crest to the stabilised grassland around the historic Camber Castle. For a detailed account see Lovegrove (1953) Old Shorelines Near Camber Castle. The Geographical Journal. 119, 200-207.



Habitats

There are several important factors that increase the diversity of habitats within the area. These include a wide range of:

SALINITY - from fresh water to brackish to saline.

WATER LEVEL - at Castle Water levels fluctuate by up to 1m. from summer to winter.

EXPOSURE TO SALT LADEN WINDS - related to the distance from the coast.

SOIL - from pure shingle to sand to fine marine sediments.

LAND MANAGEMENT - from no inputs to sheep farming to intensive arable farming.

It is possible to differentiate 10 broad habitats within the SSSI:

Intertidal

At low tide there is an extensive area of sand and mud with shallow pools that is continually changing in structure and form, depending on tides and weather. The area varies with the tidal cycle, with about 105 ha. at mean low water. This is an important feeding and roosting site for waders, terns and gulls. The exposed nature of the foreshore means that few plants can maintain a foothold, but there is a rich invertebrate fauna living below the surface, for example, Sea Mouse (right), Baltic Tellin, Lugworm and Slipper Limpets. The shrimp *Crangon vulgaris* is common in the shallow water over sand just offshore and during the spring and summer



people use wide nets to catch shrimps for food. At the River Mouth the sea defences provide a hard substrate for some rocky shore species, for example, the Beadlet Anemone, Serrated Wrack and Channelled Wrack, a regionally rare species. The commercial fish stocks of Rye Bay have declined during the last 50 years following the more efficient methods employed by fishing boats, but there is still a small fishing fleet based in Rye and some shore fishing by rod and by netting.

Saltmarsh

Along the River Rother, at the higher part of the intertidal zone there has developed a saltmarsh habitat that is dominated by Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass, Stiff Saltmarsh-grass, Sea Purslane and Sea Aster. On the highest part of the saltmarsh, only occasionally covered by the sea, grows Sea Heath (right) and Sea Wormwood and on the lowest part, in the mud that is covered by most tides, grow several species of Glasswort. These specialised plants are the food of some scarce invertebrates, including Crescent Striped Moth, many micro moths and beetles. This type of habitat was once extensive, covering much of the river levels and Romney Marshes, but



due to flood defences is now restricted to a very narrow strip along the river. Only 5 ha. lies within the LNR, but at the Wader Pool a further 0.75 ha. was created by controlling the access of the sea into a prepared scrape. This has been successfully colonised by many saltmarsh species including Sea Blite and *Corophium volutator*, a small shrimp that is the favoured food of Redshank.

Reclaimed Saltmarsh

By the construction of embankments and the digging of drainage ditches it has been possible to exclude the sea and cultivate the alluvial deposits of the old saltmarsh.

The major form of agriculture was and remains sheep grazing. Large expanses of grazed grassland attract large flocks of wintering Lapwing, Golden Plover and Curlew. Where the grazing is reduced the tussocky grass is home to many small mammals which in turn attract hunting Barn Owls. Since 1970's there has been an increase in arable agriculture with some ditches filled in and field drainage installed. Although these areas are generally species poor, they provide valuable areas for some species, such as Grey Partridge (right), Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow and Mute Swan.



Drainage Ditches

The reclaimed saltmarsh areas are drained by a network of ditches, some of which follow the line of the old saltmarsh creeks. Most are regularly cleaned mechanically, but still retain an interesting remnant of the wetland flora and fauna. Nearly 5 km. of the ditches have a strong saline influence. Although there has been some infilling of ditches in the SSSI during the last twenty years there is about 22 km. remaining. Some ditches are dominated by Reed, some by Branched Bur-reed and other, more saline ditches by Sea Club-rush. Many ditches dry out in some summers and this keeps the fish population low, which in turn enables a high population of amphibians and aquatic invertebrates to survive, for example more than 100 species of water beetle, including the largest British insect, the Great Silver Beetle. The Marsh Frog (right) is the most common amphibian.

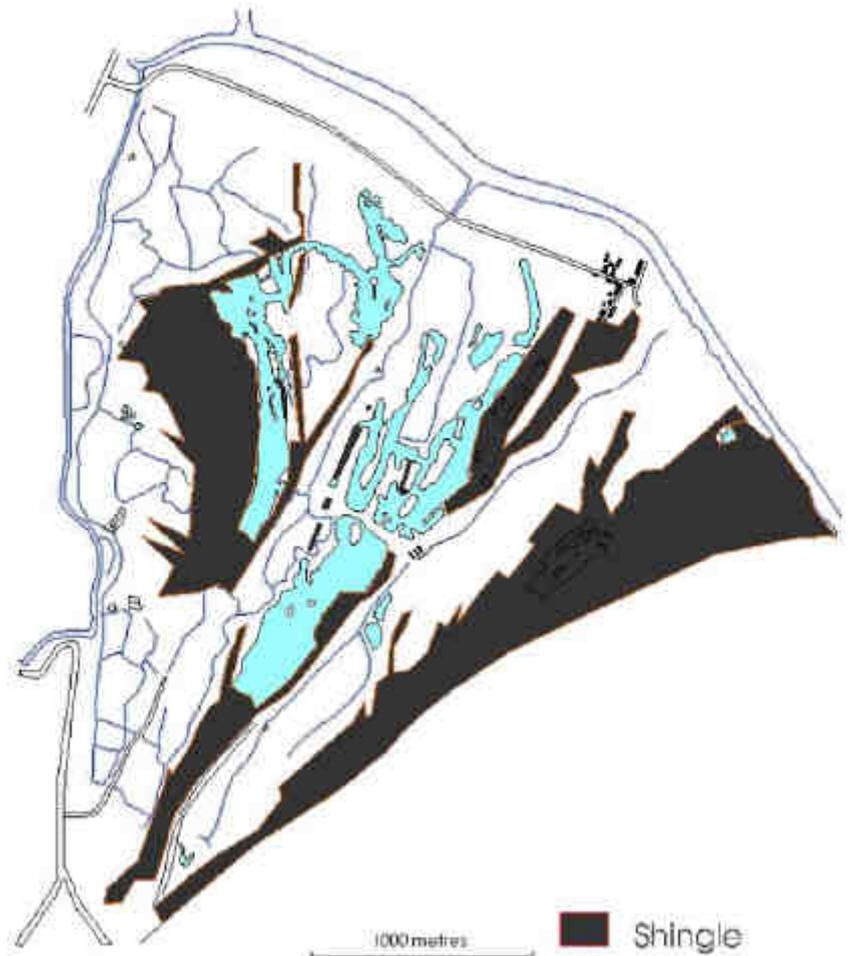


Shingle Ridges

There are three types of shingle ridges within the SSSI, covering 325 ha:

i) Natural, bare ridges

Where the form and structure of the ridges are natural there is very little soil and it is only possible for a very few, highly specialised, plant species to colonise, for example, Sea Kale, Sea Pea Sea Campion and Curled Dock. Similarly the invertebrate fauna is highly specialised, for example, the rare flea beetle *Dibolia cynoglossi* is found only on Red Hemp-nettle. These shingle ridges are also home to the tiny fly, *Megaselia yatesi* that was recently discovered here as a new species, living



about 1m. below the surface. The ridges are also the preferred habitat of nesting Little Tern, Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover. These natural ridges are characterised by a smooth rounded form, a grading of stone size and little material between the stones. Over very many years material accumulates (by exceptionally high tides and wind blown debris), especially at the base of ridges and more species become established, for example, Viper's Bugloss, Yellow Horned Poppy and the maritime sub-species of Herb Robert. The Viper's Bugloss is an important plant for several rare invertebrates, the micro moths *Ethmia bipunctella*, *E. terminella* and *Cynaeda dentalis*, and the weevil *Ceutorhynchus geographicus*. Where the shingle is not disturbed, a rich lichen community develops which builds up the soil for other plants to grow in the shingle. This lichen community is home to many invertebrates including the two rare sub-species of Pygmy Footman.

Along the Beach Reserve there are several sorted piles of blue flints or boulders of around 2-3 inches in length. These once provided a modest living to those who collected them for the manufacture of high grade pottery. Hundreds of tons of these flints were shipped to the Stoke-on-Trent area by sea, either to Runcorn or Selby. The trade petered out in the early 1950's purely for economic reasons, but in some places on the shore it is still possible to see some of the sorted piles of the "blue boulders" that were not collected.

ii) Natural, vegetated ridges

After hundreds of years a thin soil has developed on the old shingle ridges (although this may have been encouraged by past land management to increase the area for grazing) and a variety of grassland plants have established, Buck's-horn Plantain (right), Stemless Thistle, Stork's-bill, Smooth Cat's-ear, Sand Spurrey, Gorse and fifteen species of vetch and clover. A few bare areas do still exist, but in some cases this is due to more recent damage. The thin soil overlying shingle dries out very quickly and consequently the plants must be adapted to regular periods of drought. For the invertebrates, such as the Girdled and the Hairy Legged Mining Bees (both notable species) the thin soils on the ridges warm up quickly and there is a good source of nectar.



iii) Damaged ridges - where shingle has been disturbed or removed to a level above the water table, there is a succession of plants that is different to that of natural ridges. Relatively quickly a wide variety of species colonise so that little bare shingle remains. In a few areas where there is little sand between the stones the shingle does remain quite bare despite the disturbance. In a wide variety of places sand has been added to flattened areas (along old railway, roadway and on the sites of fishing huts) and these are particularly rich in grassland species such as Danish Scurvygrass, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Rue-leaved Saxifrage and the endangered Least Lettuce.

Pits

Where shingle was extracted to a level below the water table there have developed important wetland habitats that have partly replaced the natural wetland that occurred here. An important aspect of their interest is a very wide range of salinity within the SSSI. There is about 85 ha. of open water.



New pits are rapidly colonised by a rich variety of aquatic flora and fauna but, as the vegetation develops around the margin, some of the pioneering species are lost, for example the three rare beetles Spangled Button Beetle (*right*), *Cercyon bifenestratus* and *Heterocerus hispidulus* are dependent on bare sand at the margin of still, fresh water. If left unmanaged the pit margins often develop a fringe of Reed or Reedmace, which in time may become shaded out by willows. These more mature areas are the habitat of the endangered Medicinal Leech (*left*).

The variety of water depth is attractive to a wide variety of wildfowl throughout the year; diving duck prefer the deep

water of the pits, while the dabbling duck prefer the shallows and margins. Some pits have islands which are a safe haven for nesting or roosting birds. At Ternery Pool the islands have been managed to provide suitable nesting sites for terns and gulls. At Castle Water the Nature Reserve has modified the steep margins to create gentle gradients that favour much wetland wildlife.

Marsh

here the water table is close to the ground level there is the potential for the development of a marsh habitat. The vegetation is dependent upon the salinity, soil type and the degree of grazing, so within the LNR and SSSI there is a wide variety



of marsh communities: rushes tolerate grazing, whereas *Phragmites* reed (right) grows where there is none. The Reedbed is important for several species of bird - Reed and Sedge Warblers, Bearded Tit, Water Rail and Bittern (right) as well as many species of invertebrates (the notable moths of the reedbeds are; *Schoenobius gigantella* a pyralid, Reed Dagger, Flame Wainscot and Silky Wainscot).

Sand

In a few areas the soil is sandy. On the Beach Reserve, near the saltmarsh, there is a small dune of wind blown sand from Camber Dunes, across the River Rother. At Castle Farm, near the farm buildings there is an extensive ridge of sand. Plants associated with this habitat include Thyme-leaved Sandwort, Sea Sandwort, Sand Sedge and Sand Couch Grass. At Castle Water the extensive sandy areas are mainly man-made, resulting from the large quantity of washings from the shingle extraction process. Here the grassland is particularly interesting and in some areas bare sand dominates with rosettes of Stork's-bill. This is the habitat of the weevil *Limobius mixtus* at Castle Water, it's only known British site.

Scrub

The development of scrub is restricted by management, especially by grazing and cultivation. There are areas of Gorse, Hawthorn (right, berries), Bramble, Elder, Blackthorn and Sea Buckthorn scrub at Castle Water, Castle Farm and the Beach Reserve. These are important sites for invertebrates and birds, including nesting Linnets.



Woodland

Trees would dominate much of the area if it were not for management, especially by grazing and cultivation. Where these activities have not taken place for very many years, for example, on some islands at Castle Water, there is a dense growth of several tree species, including White and Grey Willows and Birch. It is on one of these islands that the Cormorant colony has developed in recent years.

Species And Conservation

With this great variety of habitats it is not surprising that there is such a wealth of wildlife on the Nature Reserve.

The Beach Reserve is recognised as having one of the finest examples of coastal shingle vegetation in the country. Particularly in late May and June the beach is transformed by a colourful array of flowers, the striking Sea Kale, and Viper's Bugloss, the delicate Yellow Horned Poppy and carpets of Sea Pea to name only a few. Along the river's edge is a good example of tidal saltmarsh vegetation and going inland a little, the gravel pits and drainage dykes provide more variety in the form of waterside and aquatic plant life. Around Camber Castle there are the unique ancient shingle ridges that have a very specialised flora. In all more than 430 species of flowering plants have so far been recorded on the Nature Reserve, including 24 scarce species and one endangered species, Least Lettuce.

Where there is a good variety of plant life, there usually exists a correspondingly good variety of animal life. Studies carried out on the invertebrates have shown Rye Harbour Nature Reserve to be of outstanding National Importance. Nearly 2,500 species have been noted so far, including 220 Notable species and 60 Red Data Book (RDB). However, there remains much to learn and there is a lack of detailed knowledge about most of the rare and notable species.

Of the larger animals on the Reserve perhaps the one most commented upon is the Marsh Frog (which was introduced from Hungary to Romney Marsh in 1935), to be heard noisily croaking all summer, while another is the Brown Hare, now an uncommon sight on the beach throughout the year. At night the Reserve is the domain of Badgers, Foxes and Bats.

However, Rye Harbour is most famous for its bird life and in particular its sea-bird colonies. As well as the rare Little Tern, this includes Common Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black-headed Gull and more recently Mediterranean Gull. In recent years the populations of these and other ground nesting birds (such as Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Lapwing and Wheatear) have increased in number and breeding success. This has been achieved through careful habitat management and implementing conservation measures such as the erection of anti-fox electric fencing enclosures and the enlistment of about 80 voluntary wardens. So far more than 270 species of birds have been recorded on the Reserve, of which over 70 have nested. Apart from the interest of the breeding birds, Rye Harbour is also a good place to observe bird migration, while in winter large numbers of wildfowl and waders gather to take full advantage of the relatively undisturbed Reserve area. A complete list of species recorded on the Nature Reserve is available from the Reserve address and on our web site www.wildRye.info

The Rye Harbour SSSI and Local Nature Reserve constitute a unique place and its management is of paramount importance for the future of its communities of plants and animals. It is not just the number of species recorded that is important, but also the large number considered local, notable, rare or endangered. The following table shows the number of species and their national status (according to RECORDER 3.3) on each of the areas within the Nature Reserve, the SSSI and the Rye Bay area.

NUMBER OF SPECIES BY STATUS AND SITE

Sites	British Status				Total Species	Records
	Common	Local	Notable	Rare		
Rye Harbour LNR	2,387	626	271	106	3,685	66,042
Rye Harbour SSSI	2,697	713	310	145	4,117	121,076
Rye Bay	4,416	1,205	565	192	6,378	189,067

Visiting

Access to the Reserve is restricted to footpaths and in order to avoid disturbance to wildlife all visitors are particularly requested not to enter the sign-posted "Wildlife Sanctuary Areas" or any of the other fenced areas within the Reserve. There is no public vehicular access to the Reserve, but cars may be left in the car park at Rye Harbour where there is also a public convenience. Anyone proposing to organise a group visit to the Reserve should consult Appendix 4 of this report.

Information Centres

The Nature Reserve has an unmanned Information Kiosk situated in the Martello Tower car park at Rye Harbour. Some information is displayed on the outside, but inside are a number of illuminated displays that provide background information on the area, its flora and fauna and its relation to the surrounding area. The Kiosk is open to the public during the summer months: 10.00-17.00

There is a vehicle counter at the entrance to the car park providing figures that are useful in estimating visitor numbers. A sample count has indicated that for every car entering the car park there are 2.15 people passing Lime Kiln Cottage (see table below). There are several other access points to the Nature Reserve, so this is not the entire picture of visitor use.

	Cars in Rye Harbour Car Park	Estimated people past Lime Kiln Cottage
JAN	4336	9322
FEB	3290	7074
MAR	4919	10575
APR	5307	11410
MAY	6371	13698
JUN	6353	13658
JUL	6979	15004
AUG	8880	19092
SEP	6233	13401
OCT	5248	11283
NOV	2783	5983
DEC	2611	5615
TOTALS	63310	136115

Further information is available at the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre where there are information boards, leaflets, reports and voluntary wardens to help you discover the wildlife of the Nature Reserve. This is open when volunteers are available, most days 10.00 – 16.00 hrs.

	Hours open	Adults Entering	Children Entering	Total Entering
JAN	163	953	205	1158
FEB	131	693	146	839
MAR	163	956	220	1176
APR	177	1368	296	1664
MAY	185	1307	309	1616
JUN	184	1350	367	1717
JUL	203	1391	296	1687
AUG	210	1790	662	2452
SEP	199	1297	179	1476
OCT	211	1384	285	1669
NOV	164	674	90	764
DEC	143	682	107	789
TOTALS	2133	13845	3162	17007

Birdwatching Hides

There are four birdwatching hides that are always open to the public.

The **Guy Crittall** and **Dr. Ray Parkes** Memorial Hides provide excellent viewing points from which to observe the birds present at Ternery Pool. The Crittall Hide is fully accessible after its reconstruction in 2003 as part of the ALSF project and also has a sound induction loop fitted. Similarly, the Parkes Hide was replaced in 2004 with funding from the Brett Environmental Trust and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

The **Colin Green** Memorial Hide, not far from the car park, provides excellent views of the Wader Pool and the shingle beach beyond. This hide is accessible to most wheelchairs.

The **Castle Water** Hide is sited close to Camber Castle at the edge of Castle Water where it overlooks new islands and shores that have been re-profiled to enhance their value for wetland wildlife. This hide is now accessible to some wheelchairs, but is a challenging route!



The new Parkes Hide

Friends Of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

The FRIENDS was founded in 1973 as a fund raising branch of the Management Committee of the Nature Reserve. The primary aim of the FRIENDS is to raise money in order to improve and enlarge the Reserve and to do so by encouraging interest in the conservation of wildlife and scenic beauty within the area. Monies raised by the FRIENDS have provided materials for fencing and hide construction, tools, notice boards, publications and part-funded the Nature Reserve vehicles, Wader Pool, Watch Cottage and Assistant Warden. There was an important addition to the Reserve in 1992 with the purchase of Castle Water by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. This purchase was only made possible by £40,000 contributed by the "FRIENDS' LAND FUND". In 1998 the FRIENDS took on the lease and modernisation of Lime Kiln Cottage to provide accommodation for staff and volunteers. In 2003 the Friends provided 5% "match funding" for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) project and £25,000 towards the Reedbeds and Bitterns project at Castle Water

In 2005 the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre (below) was opened to the public by a team of volunteers. It was opened for 2,133 hours and provided information about the FRIENDS, the Reserve and its wildlife to 17,007 people.



Newsletters are circulated to the FRIENDS, giving news on the wildlife and progress on the Reserve, dates and details of guided walks, special events, voluntary wardening and the workparties to carry out essential management. Members are encouraged to help support the Reserve in these ways, to benefit the wildlife, learn more about the wildlife and meet people with similar interests.

At the end of 2005 there were 1,302 subscriptions, representing about 1,692 members. The current minimum subscription is £5, but subscriptions received in 2005 amounted to £16,450 due to the generosity of members, plus an extra £3,800 due to the generosity of the Government's Gift Aid scheme.

Publications

The following publications and sales goods are available from the Nature Reserve address (on receipt of the correct payment and a large A5 (10"x 7") stamped addressed envelope), or from the Lime Kiln Cottage Information Centre, when it is open.

	Price	Postage
Rye Harbour booklet – your guide to a shingle Nature Reserve	free	50p
RX Wildlife Booklet - wildlife sites from Hastings to Romney Marsh	free	50p
Annual Report - copies of some previous year's reports.	£2.00	£1
Birds and other vertebrates of Rye Harbour – spiral bound report summarising the occurrence of all species. (also available as a download from www.wildrye.info).	£2.00	£1
Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour – spiral bound report summarising the occurrence of all species (also available as a download from www.wildrye.info).	£2.00	£1
Colour Postcards – Marsh Frog, Rye Harbour 1929, 4 birds, 4 flowers, Shore at Low Tide, Pett Level Shore, Black Hut, shingle, Groynes, Camber Castle, Camber Castle artist's impression,.	20p	21p per order
Writing Paper with envelopes - pack of ten with Little Tern and Yellow Horned Poppy illustration.	£3	50p
Notelets - pack of ten with Nature Reserve illustration.	£2	50p
Illustrated Tea Towel	£3	50p
Illustrated Mug	£3	(not posted)
Oven Mitt	£5	£1
Note Pad	£1.50p	21p
Coasters	£2	50p
Car Sticker	50p	21p
Bookmark	£1	21p
Fleece – dark blue with embroidered logo, full length zip XL, L, M S.	£25	£1
Sweatshirt - dark blue with embroidered logo, XL, L, M S.	£15	£1
T-shirt - white with logo, XL, L, M S.	£5	£1
Sounds CD – sounds recorded by Peter Philpot	£6	free
Virtual Tour CD – to run on PC (not fully on Mac)	£6	free
Archive CD - all the Friends Newsletters plus many reports, species lists, photos	£6	free

Downloads

The following reports and checklists are available as downloads from the reserve website at www.wildRye.info

Booklets

Rye Harbour Booklet (1 MB)

RX Wildlife Booklet (1MB)

Leaflets

Camber Castle (500KB)

Three Circular Walks (600KB)

Rye Harbour's Little Terns (275KB)

Two Bays leaflets

Camber Castle circular Walk

Checklists

A Checklist of the Birds of Rye Harbour (390KB)

A Checklist of the Flowers of Rye Harbour (420KB)

A Checklist of the Spiders of Rye Harbour (300KB)

A Checklist of the Dragonflies and Grasshoppers of Rye Harbour (93KB)

A Checklist of the Butterflies and Moths of Rye Harbour (1.4MB)

Wildlife Reports

The Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour (6MB)

The Birds and other vertebrates of Rye Harbour (4MB)

The Grasshoppers and Crickets of Rye Harbour (1.2MB)

The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Rye Harbour (2.9MB)

Management Reports

Nature Reserve Management Plan 2005-09 (10MB)

2004 Annual Report (14MB)

Wildlife Summary

The following is a monthly summary of the wildlife seen by, or reported to the Nature Reserve for the recording area in 2005. This area covers the whole of the Rye Harbour SSSI, the villages of Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach, the Wood, Camber Sands, the River Rother up to Rye and the Sea.

More details can be found on our web site and in a series of five-yearly species reports “The Birds and other Vertebrates of Rye Harbour” and “The Flowering Plants of Rye Harbour”.

January 2005

With the arrival of the new year, the reserve began to show the first signs of the coming spring. **Corn Bunting**, **Linnet**, **Blackbird** and **Skylark** could all be heard singing around the reserve, and even the odd **Lapwing** was beginning to display! Not to be left out, a number of species of plants were in bloom during the month, including **Common Whitlowgrass**, **Red-deadnettle**, **Shepherd’s Purse**, **Groundsel** and **Field Speedwell**.

However, despite the first stirrings of spring, there were still good numbers of winter visitors present during January. A maximum of six **Bittern** were recorded at Castle Water (plus one on Narrow Pit) on the 26th, while 10 **Smew** were present there on the 16th. A cold spell during the latter part of the month brought large numbers of wildfowl to the reserve, including almost 500 **Wigeon**, 70 **Gadwall**, 98 **Teal**, 206 **Shoveler**, 150 **Pochard**, 189 **Tufted Duck** and three **Goldeneye**. In addition, the small **Scaup** flock on Castle Water rose to 17 birds, a single **Long-tailed Duck** overflowed Ternery Pool on the 15th, and a redhead **Goosander** was present at Castle Water mid-month. Among the passerines, the resident flock of **Corn Bunting** (right) on Harbour Farm continued to swell during the month, reaching yet another record number, with 240 birds present, while there were occasional sightings of **Fieldfare**, **Firecrest**, **Bearded Tit** and **Chiffchaff**. Waders on the reserve during January also still included large numbers of over wintering species, with up to 1000 **Lapwing**, 300 **Dunlin**, 249 **Curlew** and 71 **Sanderling** present on the Beach Reserve. Scarcer species included two **Green Sandpiper** on the Long Pit until the 16th, two **Knot** on the Wader Pool on the 21st, and up to six **Ruff** at castle Water during the second half of the month.



Up to five **Long-eared Owl** were still present at traditional roosts in the area, while there were still a few sightings of **Short-eared Owl** on Harbour Farm and the Beach Reserve, and regular **Barn Owl** on Harbour Farm and at Castle Water. Winter raptors included the usual **Peregrine** and **Merlin**, while at least three **Marsh Harrier** were present on the reserve during the month. In addition, a **Hen Harrier** was sighted at Castle Water on the 3rd.

Offshore, there were at least 150 **Common Scoter**, 17 **Red-throated Diver**, 17 **Gannet**, two **Fulmar** and good numbers of auks, while a **Mediterranean Gull** was present on the shore on the 7th.

February 2005

Despite the wintry weather during February, the lead up to Spring continued apace on the reserve during the month. **Great Tit**, **Blue Tit** and **Grey Partridge** could be heard singing, while on the Beach Reserve, **Ringed Plover** began to set up territory in preparation for the breeding season, and on Castle Water **Great Crested Grebe** could be seen displaying. However, the most striking indicator of spring could be seen from the Bittern

viewpoint, where **Cormorants** were already incubating eggs by the end of the month! Plants in flower during the month included **Scentsless Mayweed**, **Feverfew**, **Lesser Periwinkle** and **Wallflower**.

While not reaching January numbers, **Bittern** was still a regular sighting on the reserve, during the month, with a maximum of two birds seen from the viewpoint on the 28th. It is likely that these are females or young birds, as males leave early to claim territories in preparation for the breeding season. On Castle Water, **Smew** (right) was still fairly regular during February, while the wintering flock of **Scaup** increased to 21 birds and there were regular sightings of **Goldeneye**, with a maximum of four birds present. In addition, a redhead **Goosander** was also present here at the



start of the month. The reserve still played host to good numbers of wintering waders during the month. On Flat Beach, up to 2000 **Lapwing** and 32 **Redshank** were present, with smaller numbers of **Grey Plover** and the occasional **Ruff** and **Knot**, while on the shore, there were 350 **Oystercatcher**, 300 **Dunlin**, 70 **Sanderling**, smaller numbers of **Grey Plover**, **Ringed Plover** and **Turnstone**. Offshore very little movement was observed during February, though there were still good numbers of **Great Crested Grebe**, Auks and small numbers of **Red-throated Diver**, **Gannet** and **Fulmar**. In addition, a recently dead **Great Skua** was found on Camber golf course on the 26th! Passerines included small numbers of **Fieldfare**, the odd **Firecrest**, and on Harbour Farm a record count of **Corn Bunting**; 366 birds! However, by the end of the month this number had decreased to around 60 as birds began to make for their breeding grounds.

A maximum of three **Long-eared Owl** were present at the traditional roost site at Castle Water, and there were still occasional sightings of **Short-eared Owl** and **Barn Owl** on the reserve, while a **Tawny Owl** was heard calling in the Wood on the 8th! Raptors included regular **Marsh Harrier** and **Peregrine** with the occasional record of **Merlin** and both male and ringtail **Hen Harrier**.

March 2005



This month saw the first real flush of spring migrants on the reserve. This included the first **Wheatear** at the river mouth on the 10th, a **Yellow Wagtail** (left) at Castle Water mid-month, and a **Swallow** from the Bittern viewpoint on the 29th. A singing **Sedge Warbler** was heard at Castle Water on the 25th, while singing **Chiffchaff** were regular from mid-month! The first **Sandwich Tern** was seen at Ternery Pool on the 16th, and by the end of the month, numbers here had risen to over 200, with birds already displaying in preparation for the start of breeding. Also on Ternery Pool, the **Black-headed Gull** colony, the largest in Sussex, had grown to over 800 birds, while at Castle Water, the first **Cormorant** chicks were heard on the 20th! At the other extreme, the last of the winter visitors included a **Slavonian**

Grebe on Castle Water on the 4th, two **Bittern** at Carters Pit on the 1st, three **Smew** on Castle Pit on the 4th and two **Goldeneye** on Long Pit the 16th. In addition, up to 25 **Scaup** were still present on Castle Water during the month, and two **Long-eared Owl** roosted here on the 4th, while there were the occasional sightings of **Fieldfare**, **Marsh Harrier** and **Merlin**.

March also saw small numbers of passage birds on the reserve. These included a **Black Redstart** at Watch Cottage on the 18th and Ternery Pool on the 19th, **Green Sandpiper** at Carters Pit on 4th, **Common Sandpiper** at Long Pit on the 7th, up to 13 **Knot** on the Beach Reserve on the 10th, 87 **Brent Goose** on the shore on the 6th, **Avocet** on Flat Beach 10th and the Wader Pool 15th, 13 **Ruff** on Castle Farm on the 6th and a **Little Ringed Plover** over the Beach Reserve on the 31st. Offshore movement included, a **Great Skua** on the

27th, **Arctic Skua** on the 26th and 27th, **Red-throated Diver** (including one bird over the Beach Reserve on the 3rd), and over 50 **Common Scoter**. In addition, five **Little Gull** were present on Camber Sands on the 6th, while a count of **Common Gull** on the shore on the 26th revealed in excess of 10,000 birds!

With the warmer weather, invertebrates were much more in evidence during March. The light trap at Lime Kiln Cottage contained **Grey Shoulder Knot**, **Common Quaker**, **Dotted Border** and **Hebrew Character**, while butterflies included **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Large White** and **Peacock**. There were also the first sightings of both **Common Lizard** (right) and **Slow Worm** on the reserve. Plants in flower included **Coltsfoot**, **Lesser Celandine**, **Blackthorn**, **Hairy Bittercress** and **Grey Willow**.



April 2005

During April the arrival of summer visitors at Rye harbour continued apace. By the end of the first week of the month, both **Swallow** and **Sand Martin** had appeared, with first **House Martin** and **Cuckoo** not far behind, while the earliest **Swift** and **Hobby** had also turned up by the end of the month. Returning warblers included **Whitethroat**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Reed Warbler** and **Willow Warbler**, while on the Beach Reserve, the much awaited return of the **Little Terns** occurred on the 15th, and by the end of the month numbers had risen to 17 individuals. However, while some birds were only just returning during April, others were already well on the way to producing this year's batch of offspring. By the end of the month, **Black-headed Gull**, **Oystercatcher** and **Redshank** were all incubating eggs, while on the Beach Reserve the first **Lapwing** and **Ringed Plover** chicks had already hatched! However, one or two more typically winter species still lingered into April, including a **Short-eared Owl** on Harbour Farm on the 19th and up to 18 **Scaup** on Castle Water.



Passage movement was much in evidence on the reserve during April, as birds breeding in more northerly climes passed through on the way from their wintering grounds. On the Beach Reserve, the traditional roost of **Whimbrel**, one of the largest in the country reached 373 by the end of the month, while other interesting waders included up to 22 **Bar-tailed Godwit** and small numbers of **Little Ringed Plover**, **Greenshank**, **Green Sandpiper** and **Common Sandpiper**. In addition, up to six **Avocet** were present on Flat Beach during the month, raising hopes for a repeat of last year, when a pair on Ternery Pool succeeded in hatching three young, the first time this has occurred on the reserve. Offshore, a substantial movement of birds occurred on the 19th, which included two **Black-throated Diver**, four **Velvet Scoter** and two **Great Skua**, as well as good numbers of **Common Scoter**, **Gannet** and **Brent Goose** and the occasional **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Arctic Tern** and **Arctic Skua**. Other notable passage birds included single **Garganey** (left) on Ternery Pool (1st) and Carters Pit (10th), a **Black Redstart** at the River Mouth on the 2nd, and a **Little Gull** on Castle Water on the 1st. Raptors occurring this month included **Marsh Harrier**, **Hen Harrier** and **Peregrine**.

An increasingly wide range of species turned up in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap during April, including

Oblique Carpet, Reed Dagger, Powdered Quaker, Early Grey and Early Thorn, while butterflies such as **Holly Blue, Orange Tip and Green-veined White** were recorded for the first time this year. Plants in flower during April included **Ground Ivy, Spotted Medick, Shining Cranesbill and Scarlet Pimpernel**.

May 2005

May saw the breeding season at Rye Harbour finally get into full swing, and by the end of the month all of the reserve's important breeding species had made a start on raising this year's compliment of young. Some of these, such as **Sandwich, Common and Little Terns**, had only just began to nest after a late start, and were still incubating eggs, others, such as **Black-headed Gull, Ringed Plover, Redshank and Oystercatcher** hatched their first chicks, while yet others, such as **Lapwing** produced their first fledglings, and had even begun to form small flocks!

Bird of the month at Rye Harbour was a **Gull-billed Tern** which was present on the Quarry on the evening of the 7th and then briefly again on the morning of the 8th. This is the same bird which was present at RSPB Dungeness during May, and probably the same bird seen at Shoreham-by-sea in West Sussex at the end of the month. A close second however was a **White Stork** seen in flight over the reserve on the 8th by a birdwatcher looking for the Gull-billed Tern! A steady stream of passage migrants continued to flow through the reserve during May. Numbers of **Whimbrel** at the traditional roost on the Quarry remained high during the first week of the month, peaking at 301 birds on the 2nd. Up to 36 **Bar-tailed Godwit** and 11 **Black-tailed Godwit** were present during the month, as well as regular **Knot, Common Sandpiper and Avocet** and the occasional **Ruff, Greenshank and Little Ringed Plover**. Offshore, there were up to 300 **Common Scoter** on the 16th, three **Arctic Skua** on the 3rd, and a **Great Skua** on the 17th, as well as large numbers of terns and small numbers of auks, while up to 11 **Little Gull** and eight **Black Tern** were seen onshore during this time. Raptors were somewhat thin on the ground during May, and apart from regular sightings of **Hobby**, the only notable records were of **Marsh Harrier** on the 3rd, 6th and 17th.

By the end of the month, the increasingly warm weather saw a steady rise in the numbers of moths occurring in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap. Interesting species included the rare micro moth *Ethmia bipunctella*, as well as macro moths such as **White Colon, Elephant Hawk moth, Chocolate Tip** (right) and **Chinese Character**, while butterflies such as **Small Copper, Brown Argus and Common Blue** were recorded for the first time. May also saw dragonflies such as **Hairy Hawker** and damselflies such as **Red-eyed Damselfly and Variable Damselfly** emerging, while plants in flower this month included shingle specialities such as **Sea Kale, Sea Pea, Sea Campion, Viper's Bugloss and Yellow Horned Poppy**.



June 2005

For the second year running a pair of **Avocet** nested on the reserve, taking up residence on Flat Beach late in June. Unfortunately, torrential rain later in the month flooded the nest out, and despite the best efforts of the birds, even extending to rolling the dispersed eggs back into the scrape, the nest was abandoned soon afterwards. On Ternery Pool, activity at the **Black-headed Gull** colony began to wind down as fledged birds began to disperse. Both species of larger tern had a late start at Rye Harbour this year, but by the end of the month, a record number of **Common Terns** (around 140 pairs), and around 180 **Sandwich Terns** had been recorded, with both species producing their first fledglings by the end of the month. In addition, 18 pairs of **Little Tern** on the shore Ridges and Flat Beach had produced around 20 chicks, with the first fledglings due at the start of July.

As the season moved on, the first inklings of passage movement began to be more evident during June, as



birds breeding further north began to move away from their breeding grounds. Among the waders this included up to 89 **Curlew**, and smaller numbers of **Turnstone**, **Dunlin**, **Grey Plover**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Green-shank**, and **Little Ringed Plover**. Seabird movement included up to three **Roseate Tern**, eight **Black Tern** and five **Little Gull** on Ternery Pool, while offshore sea watching produced **Gannet**, **Common Scoter** and the occasional **Arctic Skua**. Other signs of the advancing year included flocks of up to 400 **Lapwing** and 280 **Starling** at Castle Water, and a gradual increase in the number of **Little Egret** recorded at Carters Pit, their traditional winter roost site.

The rise in the number of both species and individuals in the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap continued apace during June. Interesting species recorded this month included **Schoenobius gigantella**, paradoxically one of the larger micro moths, **Dotted Fan-foot** and **Water Ermine**, while species such as **Scarce Footman**, **Buff Arches**, **Privet Hawkmoth**, **Uncertain**, **The Flame** and **Ingrailed Clay** were recorded for the first time this year. Plants in flower this month included **Common Spotted Orchid** (left) , **Pyramidal Orchid**, **Bee Orchid**, **Bristly Oxtongue**, **Grass Vetchling** and **Trailing Bell-flower**.

July 2005

Bird highlight of the month at Rye Harbour was undoubtedly a **Glossy Ibis** which passed over Castle Water on 9th. This was only the fourth reserve record for this very rare vagrant from southern Europe, the last of these being ten years ago! The individual in question was originally found at Pett Level to the west of Rye Harbour, before making its way east, much to the delight of a very select group of birdwatchers, including about 20 members of the Sussex Ornithological Society on a guided walk!

By the end of July the breeding season for many of our birds was effectively over. This was a good year for nesting seabirds, with record numbers of **Common Tern**, a bumper crop of fledged **Little Tern** (18, with several chicks still present within the fence) and good numbers of **Sandwich Tern** and **Black-headed Gull**. However, probably our most exciting breeding seabird is **Mediterranean Gull**. This species has nested at Rye Harbour for several years, but its presence has been kept quiet due to worries about egg-collectors. However, with a national increase in breeding pairs and extra protection measures, this secrecy is no longer necessary. This year 37 pairs of this splendid bird nested on the reserve, the highest total yet, fledging around 40 young.

Passage movement picked up discernibly on the reserve during July. The early part of the month saw over a 1000 **Swift**, 150 **Sand Martin** and smaller numbers of **House Martin** and **Swallow** moving south, while the same period also saw two **Spoonbill** on Ternery Pool and two **Garganey** on Carters Pit. Interesting passage waders included **Wood Sandpiper** at the beginning and end of the month, a maximum of 15 **Avocet**, and up to 20 **Common Sandpiper** and 11 **Green Sandpiper**, as well as regular **Little Ringed Plover** and the occasional **Knot**. Wet or misty weather during this time of the year can often ground waders passing over on migration and just these sorts of conditions occurred on the 27th of the month, bringing in 150+ **Greenshank**, 22 **Curlew Sandpiper**, 31 **Black-tailed Godwit** and seven **Bar-tailed Godwit**! Seabird movement included regular **Roseate Tern** (right), with four on the 15th, up to 520 **Gannet**, 50+ **Common Scoter** and the occasional **Arctic Skua**, **Black Tern** and **Little Gull**.



Interesting moths in the Lime Kiln Cottage light trap during July included several rarities such as

Pygmy Footman, Crescent-striped, Kent Black Arches and the micros *Cynaeda dentalis* and *Donacaula forficella*, the latter a first for the reserve, while new species for the year included **The Coronet, Small Waved UMBER, Dusky Sallow** and **Least Carpet**. Amongst the plants in flower this month were these rarities... **Marsh Mallow, Red Hemp-nettle, Marsh Helleborine, Stinking Hawksbeard, Sea Heath, Least Lettuce** and **Lesser Water Plantain**.

August 2005

During August, despite the presence of late broods of **Ringed Plover, Great Crested Grebe** and **Little Grebe**, interest on the reserve turned increasingly towards the passage migrants which began to move through in increasingly large numbers. With so many birds on the move, this time of the year always brings with it the chance of something out of the ordinary, and this month the most unusual visitors were single **Ruddy Shelduck** on the 13th (Wader Pool) and 21st (Carters Pit). At it's closest, this species breeds in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, but there are feral populations in Holland.

Offshore, large shoals of White-bait in Rye Bay mid-month attracted huge numbers of sea-birds, including



1063 **Gannet**, a record number for the area, over 230 **Cormorant**, a **Shag, Kittiwake** and large numbers of terns. During this period, over 750 **Sandwich Tern** roosted on Flat Beach, and this abundance of fishing birds attracted the attention of up to eight **Arctic Skua** and the occasional **Great Skua** intent on stealing someone else's hard-won meal!. Other interesting sea-birds during the month included up to five **Black Tern** and the occasional **Arctic Tern** and **Little Gull**. Interesting passage waders during August included **Wood Sandpiper** on the 17th (Long Pit) and 20th (Bittern Excavation), **Spotted Redshank** (left) on the 21st (Ternery Pool) and 31st (on the shore), a **Little Stint** on the Quarry on the 13th, an **Avocet** on Ternery Pool on the 3rd, up to 19 **Knot** and regular **Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit,**

Ruff, Little Ringed Plover, Whimbrel and **Greenshank**. August also saw the first records of **Golden Plover**, a bird which will become a feature of the reserve as the season heads into winter, with numbers reaching 380 by the end of the month. Passerine movement during August saw up to 350+ **Sand Martin**, 150 **Yellow Wagtail**, 70 **Swift**, 40+ **House Martin** and 39 **Swallow**, while an increase in abundance of species such as **Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Grey Wagtail, Whinchat** and **Stonechat** was noted as these species began to move south in greater numbers. The pick of the passerine migrants however was an immature **Pied Flycatcher** on the Beach Reserve on the 21st, only the second time this species has been recorded there, and the first was 20 years ago!

Rarities recorded from the Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap during August included the micro moths *Cynaeda dentalis*, *Oncocera semirubella*, *Evergestis extimalis* and *Sitochroa palealis*, while new species for the year included **Nutmeg, Straw Underwing, Square-spot Rustic** and **Orange Swift**. This month also saw the addition of a new species of bush-cricket to the reserve list, with the discovery of a singing male **Roesel's Bush-cricket** at Castle Water on 23rd. **Least Lettuce, Large Flowered Evening Primrose, Marshmallow** and **Autumn Lady's Tresses** were in flower.

September 2005

September is a good month for seeing birds of prey at Rye Harbour, as it is a time when both departing summer visitors and arriving winter residents supplement those species found here all year. Hence the reserve played host to both **Hobby** and the first of the winter's **Merlin** and **Short-eared Owl** as well as **Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Little Owl** and the occasional **Peregrine, Marsh Harrier** and **Barn Owl**, all taking advantage of the abundant food supply. The highlight however was a **Honey Buzzard** seen in flight over Rye Harbour village and the Beach Reserve on the 14th of the month, a very scarce visitor indeed!

Passerine movement was a big feature of the reserve during September, with a significant influx occurring mid-month. This included 2000+ **Swallow**, 1000+ **House Martin** and over 1400 **Meadow Pipit**, as well as small numbers of more notable species such as **Tree Pipit**, **Firecrest**, **Pied Flycatcher** and **Redstart**. The most interesting visitor however was a **Wryneck** found at Winchelsea Beach on the 6th, one of a small influx of this species on the south coast during early September. Offshore movement was also in full swing, with good numbers of seabirds passing through Rye Bay. These included over 200 **Gannet** late in the month, large numbers of terns and the odd scarcer visitor such as **Black Tern** and **Little Gull**. This attracted the inevitable **Arctic Skua** and **Great Skua**, though the highlights this month were sightings of **Pomarine Skua** on both the 3rd and 4th of the month. Wader movement included good numbers of **Golden Plover**, **Dunlin** and **Curlew**, with smaller number of **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Knot** and **Little Ringed Plover**, while the best of the bunch was a **Little Stint** at Castle Water on the 1st.

With the waning year, both numbers and species of moths in the Lime Kiln Cottage light trap dropped off sharply. By the end of the month, those species which did occur, such as **Black Rustic**, **Lunar Underwing**, **Feathered Ranunculus** and the rather uncommon **Feathered Brindle** tended to be typical of the autumn months, though small numbers of migrant species such as **Humming-bird Hawk Moth**, **Silver Y** and **White Point** also turned up. Butterflies still on the wing included **Clouded Yellow** (right), **Painted Lady**, **Red Admiral** (also notable migrants), **Comma**, and large numbers of **Small Copper** and **Small Heath**, all taking advantage of the autumn sun. Plants still in flower this month included **Lesser Water Plantain**, **Bristly Oxtongue**, **Autumn Lady's Tresses** and **Celery-leaved Buttercup**.



October 2005

Bird migration continued in earnest during October, with large numbers of birds moving through the reserve. The highlights were a **Great White Egret** on the shore on 15th and a **Spoonbill** in flight over the Beach Reserve on the 24th, and **Ring Ouzel** on the 18th and 20th, part of a large influx on the south coast at this time. However, perhaps the most unlikely 'reserve rarity' was a **Coal Tit** in the Wood on the 20th, the first record of this species at Rye Harbour since 1999! Passage finches supplemented the already abundant finch and bunting flocks feeding on the reserve at this time of year. During October Rye Harbour played host to over 450 **Linnet**, 300 **Goldfinch**, 100 **Greenfinch** and 61 **Corn Bunting**, while transitory visitors included 59 **Redpoll**, 17 **Siskin** and even four **Brambling** on the 23rd. Offshore, **Brent Goose** became a familiar sight during October, with up to 51 birds recorded, many of these moving inland to take advantage of the open water on Flat Beach and the excavations on Harbour Farm, while **Sandwich Tern**, **Gannet**, **Common Scoter**, **Arctic Skua** and **Fulmar** also passed by in small numbers, and a **Razorbill** was present at the River Mouth on the 7th.

This month also saw an increasing number of our winter visitors making an appearance. The first **Bittern** of the winter was seen at Castle Water on the 20th, and the first **Long-eared Owl** at Carters Pit on the 25th, while **Bearded Tit** became regular at Castle Water from mid-month and flocks of both **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** had put in an appearance by the end of the month. Similarly, there was a very wintery feel to the birds on the shore during October, with up to 115 **Sanderling**, 140 **Dunlin** and 102 **Ringed Plover** feeding on the sand and mud, while the **Golden Plover** flock on Flat Beach increased to over 1100 birds, and numbers of both **Snipe** and **Jack Snipe** increased. This cornucopia of birds attracted raptors such as **Merlin**, **Marsh Harrier** and **Peregrine**, while up to five **Short-eared Owl** were hunting on the reserve by the end of the month.

The Lime Kiln Cottage moth trap continued to run during October, and while both numbers of species and

individuals was small, a number of interesting species were present. These included **The Satellite**, a species which is only adult during the autumn and winter, **Feathered Brindle** and **L-album Wainscot**, both relatively rare moths, **Delicate**, a migrant species and **Light Brown Apple Moth**, a micro which was originally introduced to Britain from Australia! Butterflies on the wing during the month included **Red Admiral** and **Comma**, while **Migrant Hawker** and **Common Darter** dragonflies was active right up to the end of the month.

November 2005

November still saw small numbers of passage migrants moving through the reserve, taking advantage of the unseasonably mild weather. This included the last of the years **Wheatear** on the 5th and **Swallow** on the 19th, up to three **Dartford Warbler**, regular **Brent Goose**, and small numbers of **Grey Wagtail**, **Siskin**, **Redpoll** and **Brambling**, while a rather late **Arctic Tern** was present on Ternery Pool on the 1st.

As might be expected, winter visitors formed the most important feature of the reserve during the month. At Castle Water this included up to two **Bittern**, a maximum of 44 **Little Egret** on the traditional roost, regular **Bearded Tit** and the first **Goldeneye** of the winter on the 12th, while the Beach Reserve played host to good numbers of winter waders, including 1200+ **Golden Plover**, 500+ **Oystercatcher**, 178 **Curlew**, 150+ **Dunlin** and 70 **Sanderling**. Offshore, the wintry theme was continued, with the occasional **Red-throated Diver**, **Eider** and **Guillemot**, over 100 **Common Scoter**, and good numbers of **Great Crested Grebe** towards the end of the month. The highlight here, however, was a pair of **Velvet Scoter** on the 12th. Spells of particularly cold weather at this time of the year can bring in birds from the surrounding area as shallow waters on levels and ditches freeze, often concentrating large numbers of birds on the reserve. Weather of this nature towards the end of the month resulted in good numbers of waterfowl congregating on the ice-free areas of Castle Water, including several hundred **Coot**, 114 **Gadwall**, 99 **Wigeon**, 96 **Tufted Duck**, 55 **Shoveler** and small numbers of **Pintail**. A pleasant surprise for birdwatchers during a cold spell mid-month was a group of three **Snow Bunting** on the Beach Reserve.

Birds of prey continued to be an obvious feature of the reserve during November. As well as residents such as **Kestrel** and **Sparrowhawk**, there were regular sightings of **Merlin**, the occasional **Peregrine** and **Marsh Harrier** and a **Hen Harrier** on the 5th. Up to three **Short-eared Owl** were present on the Beach Reserve by



the end of the month, while up to five **Long-eared Owl** frequented the regular roosts at Castle Water and the Narrow Pits, and there were also sightings of both **Barn Owl** and **Little Owl**.

Despite the lateness of the season, there were still some invertebrates on the wing during November. Hence there were several records of **Red Admiral** up to the 7th of the month and **Ruddy Darter** was active up to the 17th, while the unusual micro moth *Em-melina monodactyla* (left) was also recorded.

December 2005

Bird highlight of the month was a **Great Northern Diver** which was present briefly at the northern end of Castle Water before flying off east on the 6th. This is only the eighth record of this essentially maritime species at Rye Harbour (the last in 1999), and one of the few times it has been recorded inland on the reserve.

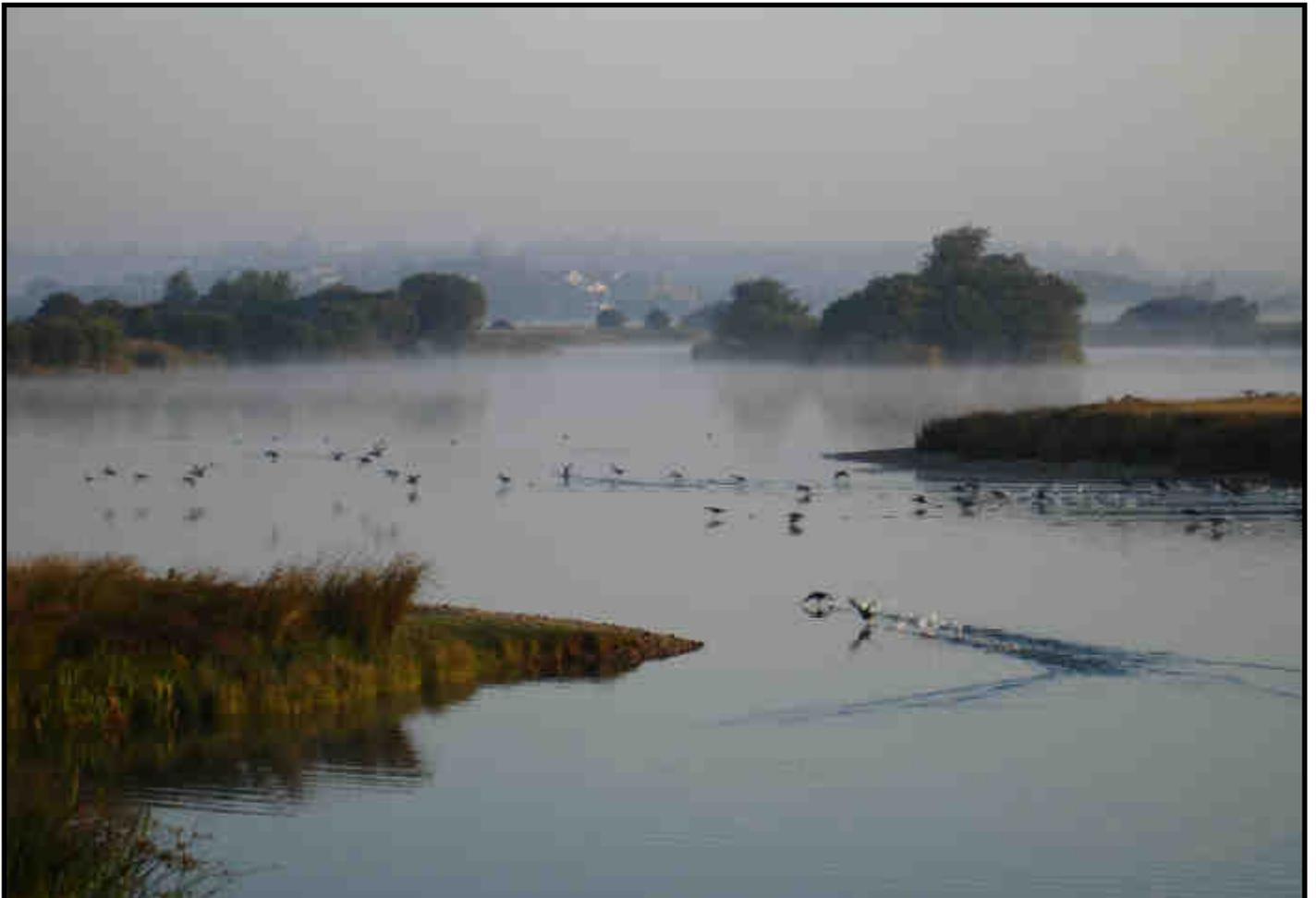
Despite the unseasonably mild weather during December, winter visitors continued to put in an appearance on the reserve. The first **Smew** of the winter was recorded at Castle Pit on the 12th, and by the end of the month, up to eight individuals of this species were present on the reserve, including five spectacular males on the 29th. Other winter visitors included two **Bewick's Swan** at Castle Water on the 27th, up to two **Slavonian Grebe** on Long Pit from the 10th to the end of the month, a maximum of four **Goldeneye**, the occasional **Bittern** and



large numbers of more familiar waterfowl including over 600 **Wigeon**, 264 **Tufted Duck**, 200 **Teal**, 100 **Pochard** and 70+ **Shoveler**. Winter waders included over 1500 **Lapwing**, 200 **Curlew** and 715 **Oystercatcher**, the last of these an all time record for the reserve. Best of the bunch, however, were a **Woodcock** flushed on West Beach on the 2nd, part of a small influx of this species on the south coast at this time, and a **Jack Snipe** at Castle Water on the 31st. Passerines included 16 **Snow Bunting** on Camber Sands on the 5th, over 300 **Fieldfare** and 100 **Redwing** on the 27th, and the occasional wintering **Chiffchaff**, while on Harbour Farm the resident flock off **Corn Bunting** topped 250. Offshore, numbers of birds were limited, though up to 200 **Common Scoter**, 19 **Great Crested Grebe**, 11 **Red-throated Diver**, six **Eider** and small numbers of auks

were present during the month. Among the birds of prey the highlight was a ringtail (a female or immature male) **Hen Harrier** over Flat Beach on the 2nd, while there were occasional sightings of **Marsh Harrier**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine**. A maximum of three **Short-eared Owl** continued to roost on Harbour Farm opposite the Old Lifeboat House during December, up to two **Long-eared Owl** were present at the Castle Water and Narrow Pit roosts throughout the month, and there were also occasional sightings of **Barn Owl** (above) on both Harbour Farm and Castle Farm.

While birds constituted the main interest on the reserve during December, there were also a couple of notable mammalian sightings during the month. A **Common Seal** was seen swimming down the River Rother on the 17th, while a **Water Shrew** was found at Ternery Pool on the 12th.



Castle Water from the south with Rye in background

Moths of Rye Harbour

by Chris Bentley

A total of 7629 individuals from 214 species were recorded during 2005, mainly from the moth trap run at Lime Kiln Cottage, but also through casual observations. The following annotated list highlights the most notable migrants and scarcer resident species.

Ethmia bipunctella RDB – A total of 74 individuals between the May 2nd and August 12th.

Schoenobius gigantella Nb – Singles on August 12th, 14th and 17th.

Evergestis extimalis Nb (right) – A total of 22 individuals between July 13th and September 6th.

Cynaeda dentalis RDB – Up to two on four dates between July 22nd and August 12th.

Sitochroa palealis N – A total of seven individuals between July 22nd and August 22nd.

Dolicarthria punctalis Nb – Up to three between August 20th and 28th.

Synaphe punctalis N – A total of 111 individuals between July 12th and August 12th.

Oncocera semirubella Nb – A total of 20 individuals between July 12th and August 6th.

Pterophorus spilodactylus RDB – Up to 27 larvae were recorded on May 16th at Bourne's Field, with further records of adults/larvae from castle water and Saunder's Pit and Fields up to August 27th.

Least Carpet *Idaea rusticata* – Up to two between August 16th and 20th.

Oblique Striped *Phibalapteryx virgata* Nb – Singles on six dates between April 23rd and August 4th.

Dark tussock *Dicallomera fascelina* Nb – One on July 22nd.

Pygmy Footman *Eilema pygmaeola* RDB – Seventy two between July 10th and August 12th.

Water Ermine *Spilosoma urticae* Nb – A total of 11 individuals between June 13th and 28th.

Kent Black Arches *Meganola albula* Nb – Thirteen between July 10th and August 1st.

White Colon *Sideridis albicolon* Nb – Six individuals on five dates between May 28th and June 21st.

Shore Wainscot *Mythimna litoralis* Nb – Singles on July 14th and 17th.

L-Album Wainscot *Mythimna l-album* Nb – immigrant – Singles on July 3rd, September 21st and October 6th.

Star-Wort *Cucullia asteris* Nb – A total of six between July 12th and 17th.

Feathered Brindle *Aporophyla australis pascuea* Nb – 38 between September 15th and October 11th.

Reed Dagger *Simyra albovenosa* Nb – Fifteen between May 1st and August 17th. In addition larvae were recorded from Castle Water, the Beach Reserve and Harbour Farm

Marbled Green *Cryphia muralis* Nb – One on July 17th.

Crescent Striped *Apamea oblonga* Nb – A total of 26 between July 12th and August 9th.

Webb's Wainscot *Archanara sparganii* Nb – Four on three dates between July 24th and August 12th.

Cream-Bordered Green Pea *Earias clorana* Nb – Singles on June 24th and July 17th.

Dotted Fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis* Na. One on June 30th.

White-Point *Mythimna albipuncta* immigrant, recent colonist – Nineteen between June 13th and September 19th.

Dark Sword-Grass *Agrotis ipsilon* immigrant – Five between August 6th and 12th.

Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* immigrant – Singles on June 17th and September 7th.

Humming-Bird Hawk-Moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* immigrant (right) – Singles on June 6th and September 7th.

Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* immigrant – Singles on June 9th and October 11th.



Management Summary

The work of the Nature Reserve during 2005 was, as ever, varied and unpredictable. The following is a brief summary of what we achieved.

Species and Site Monitoring

We carried out general wildlife recording and the regular monthly Wetland Bird Surveys and water level and salinity measurements. The annual surveys of breeding birds of SSSI and the plants in the 10m. permanent quadrat on the shingle beach. There was regular moth trapping throughout SSSI. Specialists continued to visit the reserve because of the ALSF project, see below. All records were added to our wildlife database, RECORDER, now with 121,076 records of 4,119 species in the SSSI.

Species, Habitat and Site Management

Volunteer workparties took place on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, and additionally on the first Saturday of every month from January to March.

At Castle Water volunteers erected reed enclosures and planted reeds on the Bittern Excavation, maintained fencing, weeded islands to encourage breeding birds, assisted in the removal of tree from the Cormorant colony on Carter's Pit, cleared willow and constructed fish shelters from cut willow, while on the Beach Reserve work included, clearance of Red Valerian, removal of sea-buckthorn from Flat Beach, removal of old fencing, construction of screening, re-profiling of pit edges and weeding of islands at Ternery Pool to encourage wildlife. We also held the Annual Beach Clean in December to clear the winter's rubbish blown in off the sea. The Tern Watch looked over the Little Terns and the rest of the wildlife of the Beach Reserve. At Castle Water we made sure the paths, stiles and hides were clear and safe for visitors.

Concerns over ground pollution at Castle Water lead to the construction of a fence behind Bourne's to restrict public access, and the provision of explanatory signs. As this cut off access to the popular viewpoint, a 55m boardwalk was also constructed to restore access. Cost of the work was £2,299 for the fencing and signs and £11,000 for the boardwalk, both of these being paid for by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

During 2005 there were increasing concerns over the effect of the Castle Water Cormorant colony on water quality at the site, with knock-on effects for the important communities of plants and animals which occur there. Testing had shown that there was a high level of Phosphate, as predicted from the theoretical inputs by the hundreds of Cormorants that nest and roost in the trees. This led to the decision to remove the trees in which the birds both roost and nest in order to reduce numbers and bring about an improvement in water quality. After removal of the trees a small number of individuals did begin to use a nearby smaller wooded island nearby, as did the locally important Little Egret roost which had previously used part of the original colony island. The Nature Reserve consulted widely on this matter and had the consent of English Nature, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee.

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

During 2005 a successful bid was made for further funding through ALSF. The project, *Rye Harbour, A Shingle Community*, will provide almost £250,000 to cover a number of projects. The bulk of the funding will go towards projects during 2006/2007, particularly further excavations at Castle Water, but a proportion (just over £30,000) was available for projects during the latter part of 2005.

This funding allowed specialists to visit the reserve to undertake surveys for shingle species, including;

- Mark Telfer - saline invertebrates
- Martin Allison - fungi survey
- Paul Harmes – clover survey.

This has added a considerable amount of knowledge of the shingle flora and fauna and generated a great many extra records that we are still adding to our database, Recorder, which has now been upgraded to Recorder 6.

The project also continued to support Sam Smith in the position of Nature Reserve Assistant, working on management of shingle species, including looking after the goats and tidying up the old and new fences and undertaking surveys.

The funding also helped us pay for the provision of new sliding door gear at the Wader Pool Hide, which has made entry easier for wheelchair users, the construction of three new seats around the Beach Reserve, and a range of interpretation material, including computer hardware/software, a digital camera and posters for the hides and information centres. We were also able to promote interest in the Nature reserve through the production of monthly wildlife articles by Dr Patrick Roper in the local paper.

In addition, around £15,000 was earmarked for the Rye Harbour Heritage project, which aims to record the experiences of local people and store the information for future use. During late 2005 much valuable ground-work was done, including identifying possible sources of information, investigating potential data capture/storage methods and undertaking initial interviews with local people.

We were able to promote interest in the Nature Reserve through a photographic competition on the theme of 'Wetland Wildlife'. It attracted 50 entries and an exhibition of the winners lengthened its impact on the public.

Saffron Summerfield, a local audio-visual artist and musician, continued to participate in our events programme through 'Sounds Natural', helping members of the public record and mix their sounds from natural elements.

Interpretation

As part of our English Nature Wildspace! Project we produced a booklet called "*Rye Harbour – your guide to a shingle nature reserve*", and this has now been updated. In addition the reserve has since produced an additional booklet, "*RX Wildlife - Wildlife Sites from Hastings to Romney Marsh*", and both have been widely distributed.

We continued the monthly Wildlife Column in the local paper, the Rye Observer, completed the Annual Report and three Newsletters for the Friends and developed the new web site, www.wildRye.info. The Monthly Wildlife Summaries were produced and posted around the Nature Reserve, on the web site and sent to many individuals by e-mail. We also maintained the Rye Bay Wildlife newsgroup that has 130 members exchanging views via e-mail.

We conducted 42 Guided Walks, booked in 18 visiting groups, gave 7 illustrated talks, opened Camber Castle on 26 days with 859 people entering, guided 24 school groups and 3 university groups and took our Nature Reserve display to 9 events.

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Volunteers 2005

As always the projects around the Nature Reserve are dependent to a large measure on the support of volunteers and there is a summary below of their contribution.

Number of volunteer hours ...

Tuesday + Saturday Work Parties	752
Beach Cleans	177
Lime Kiln Cottage	2,133
Tern Watch/Patrolling	1,078
Recording	70
Friends Committee/Events	265
Total	4470

Rye Harbour Farm

In August 2005 Environment Agency contractors commenced work on the secondary sea-defences on Rye Harbour Farm, a 3 km earth embankment running from Rye Harbour to Winchelsea Beach (right, marked in brown). Material used in the construction of the embankment was sourced from within the farm itself, requiring the excavation of a number of 'borrow pits' which subsequently filled with water, creating a series of pools. There are currently 11 pits varying considerably in size and salinity, though this



number may change once work has been completed. Construction of the embankment was discontinued due to unsuitable weather conditions October, and work will now re-commence in August 2006. This will include initial landscaping of some of the pits and construction of fencing. It is envisaged that Rye Harbour Farm will be part of the Nature Reserve sometime in the near future.

The pits created by the work have a huge potential to attract wildlife and provide enjoyment for the public, some of which is already being realised. Since commencement of the excavation, over 34 species of seabird, wildfowl and wader have been recorded on the excavations, including Whooper Swan, all three species of our breeding terns, Roseate Tern, Mediterranean Gull, Avocet and Little Ringed Plover. Further landscaping once the bund has been completed in late 2006 can only increase their attractiveness. In addition it is intended that a culvert will be constructed under to road to allow entry of the sea at high tides (with associated creek recreation and embanking to prevent ingress to Flat Beach). This has the potential to create up to 27 ha of saltmarsh, a fivefold increase on the area of this habitat currently existing within the nature reserve, further increasing the areas attractiveness for wildlife.



The completed embankment at Winchelsea Beach

Appendix 1 – Nature Reserve Management

Management Committee

The Nature Reserve is managed and administered by a committee of voting members nominated by and representing various bodies. The committees and their members at 31st December 2005 were:

East Sussex County Council	Cllr. J. Barnes Cllr. K.J. Glazier (Vice-chair) Cllr. P. Scott Cllr T. Webb
Substitute member:	
Environment Agency	Mr. J. Morgan Nr. N. Paige
Sussex Wildlife Trust	Mrs. E. Lambert Mrs. A.H. Moore DL Mr. M. Pearson
Substitute member:	
Landowners	Mr. F. Langrish Mr. J. Davis
Rother District Council	Mr. A.H. Lloyd (Chair) Cllr. S. Souster Cllr. R H Patten
Substitute member:	
Icklesham Parish Council	Mrs. C. Merricks
Rye Town Council	Cllr. P. Carey Cllr. F. Palmer
Substitute member:	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Mr. R. Gomes
Sussex Ornithological Society	Mr. J. Trowell Mr. R. Harris
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Mr. C. Saunders Ms. H. Doe
Substitute member:	
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve	Mr. J. Gooders Mr. S. Denny Mr. R. Holmes
Substitute member:	

Invited Members

County Ecologist	Dr. A. Tait
Rye Bay Countryside Office	Mr. S. Fathers

Officers

The Management Committee appoints its own honorary officers;

Hon. Secretary Mrs. A. Gibbs
Nature Reserve address.

Hon. Treasurer Mr. R. Robinson
Nature Reserve address.

Management Sub-Committee

The Sub-committee meets quarterly to consider matters concerning the management of the Nature Reserve. The members at 31st December 2005 were;

Mr. J. Burgess, Mr. A.H. Lloyd, Ms. A. Parfitt, Dr. P. Roper, Dr A. Tait, Ms. E. Thompson, Mr. J. Willsher and the Nature Reserve staff.

Nature Reserve Staff and Address.

East Sussex County Council provides the Management Committee with a Nature Reserve Manager and Warden who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve under the guidance of the Management Sub-committee. The Warden is also funded by the Friends and the Management Committee. Nature Reserve Assistant was funded for part of the year by English Nature's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and the Friends.

Nature Reserve Manager	Dr. Barry Yates.
Nature Reserve Warden	Chris Bentley.
Nature Reserve Assistant	Sam Smith
Community Officer	Miriam Inskip

The Nature Reserve address is: 2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex. TN36 4LU

telephone: Rye (01797) 223862.

e-mail: yates@clara.net

web site: www.wildRye.info

Finance

The detailed accounts of the Committee for 2005/06 are given in Appendix 2.

The main sources of funding for the running of the Nature Reserve are from East Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, Rother District Council, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Icklesham Parish Council and the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. There was additional funding this year from English Nature through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (for many projects associated with shingle habitats) and from the Brett Environmental Trust (for the replacement of the Parkes Hide).

The Management Committee would like to express their gratitude to all who have contributed to the funds or helped with work for the Reserve during the year.

Management Objectives

Despite some external constraints the Nature Reserve is managed in such a way that the populations of rare and endangered species are safeguarded and the scenic attraction of the whole area enhanced. This is described in a Management Plan that is updated and agreed every five years.

The Management Plan has nine "**Ideal Management Objectives**" :

- 1. To maintain and where appropriate enhance the mosaic of all potential habitats at all stages of succession.**
- 2. To manage habitats to benefit the species that are Nationally rare or notable.**
- 3. To preserve the remaining geomorphological features of interest.**
- 4. To encourage public appreciation of the area's wildlife and scenic value.**
- 5. To improve the scenic value of the area.**
- 6. To encourage routine monitoring, educational use and research.**
- 7. To comply with all legal and other obligations to landowners, neighbours and visitors.**
- 8. To extend the LNR to include all the other land within the SSSI and interesting adjacent areas.**
- 9. To inform National, Regional and Local bodies empowered to make decisions affecting the site.**

Appendix 2 - Revenue Account and Balance Sheet for 2005/06

BALANCE SHEET

31ST MARCH 2006

	<u>2005/06</u>		<u>2004/05</u>
	£		£
FIXED ASSETS			
Information Centre		7,094	7,094
Land Rover			
Cost brought forward	6,500		6,500
	-----		-----
	6,500		6,500
Depreciation brought forward	4,444		5,758
Provision in year	514		686
	-----		-----
	4,958	1,542	4,444

			2,056
Equipment			
Cost brought forward	26,100		11,464
Purchased in year	206		14,636
	-----		-----
	26,306		26,100
Depreciation brought forward	12,574		8,066
Provision in year	3,433		4,508
	-----		-----
Less: Depreciation	16,007	10,299	12,574

		-----	-----
		18,935	22,676
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	9,656		37,947
Prepayments	5,167		4,642
Cash at bank and in hand	79,369		18,563
	-----		-----
	94,132		61,152
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due			
Within one year			
Other creditors	57,260		-
	-----		-----
NET CURRENT ASSETS		-----	-----
		36,872	61,152
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
		-----	-----
		55,807	83,828
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
Accumulated Reserves		54,045	82,066
Repairs and Renewal Fund		1,762	1,762
		-----	-----
		55,807	83,828
		-----	-----

REVENUE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2006

	<u>2005/06</u>		<u>2004/05</u>
	£		£
INCOME			
Grants and Contributions			
English Nature - ALSF	27,179		41,558
East Sussex County Council	65,013		90,716
Rother District Council	-		2,250
Icklesham PC	300		-
Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve			
- ALSF	4,242		2,166
- Contribution to Parkes Hide	-		1,727
- Accommodation costs	12,600		12,600
- Staff costs	4,658		-
Brett Environmental Trust - Parkes Hide	-		14,033
Environment Agency (including HLF)	21,000		34,821
English Heritage	1,749		3,499
Sussex Wildlife Trust	4,825		4,825
Wetlands for Wildlife	2,390		-
Total Grants and Contributions	<u>154,638</u>		<u>208,195</u>
Other Income			
Harbour Farm Land Management	7,000		-
Consultancy income	-		5,203
Guided walks and school visits	3,682		3,348
TOTAL INCOME	<u>216,546</u>		<u>216,546</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Staffing costs	82,483		69,999
- Arrears for 2004/05	30,241		-
Housing Accommodation	12,600		12,600
Information Centre & Interpretation	147		399
Nature reserve			
ALSF - Grazing and fencing	1,593		664
- Access work	-		6,772
- Machinery	-		2,399
- Interpretation	3,883		20,771
- Staff costs	9,375		12,418
- Wheelchair	-		854
- Local Heritage	12,457		-
- Surveys	2,603		-
Other	10,334		7,721
Transport	5,323		2,273
Administration & communication	2,984		3,195
Insurance	5,312		4,613
Depreciation of Capital Expenditure	3,947		5,194
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>(183,082)</u>)	<u>(149,872)</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(28,444))	66,674
Add: Interest received	423		8
	<u>(28,021)</u>)	<u>66,682</u>
RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD	<u>83,828</u>		<u>17,146</u>
RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD	<u>55,807</u>		<u>83,828</u>

Appendix 3 - Bird Populations at Rye Harbour

Breeding birds in SSSI during the last 10 Years

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Pairs										
LITTLE GREBE	4	5	9	8	9	11	10	7	6	6
GREAT CRESTED GREBE	10	11	8	5	10	6	6	8	4	3+
CORMORANT	2	7	45	80	75	107	120	125	132	134
GREY HERON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	5	7	6	4	7	3	6	6	3	3
GREYLAG GOOSE	2	0	2	2	2	3	6	7	6	10
CANADA GOOSE	30	34	30	11	13	9	15	14	13	15
SHELDUCK	10	12	10	8	3+	3	8	6	3	1
GADWALL	3	1	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	0
SHOVELER	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
TUFTED DUCK	15	10	10	10	4+	7	17	15	12	16
RUDDY DUCK	3	3	3	2	0	3	4	6	8	10
OYSTERCATCHER	19	23	18	21	20	27	18	25	31	24
RINGED PLOVER	40	51	40	51	40	50	40	39+	41	34
LAPWING	16	10	15	11	10	14	15	25	29	31
REDSHANK	13	11	9	18	15	17	10	10	13	12
MEDITERRANEAN GULL	2	2	0	0	0	2	13	25	27	37
fledged MEDITERRANEAN GULL	2	0	0	0	0	4	5	22	36	40
BLACK-HEADED GULL	335	350	80	180	33	300	700	800	1075	1500
fledged BLACK-HEADED GULL	150	60	150	0	0	400	700	1000	1050	1900
HERRING GULL	13	9	9	9	5	1	2	5	10+	4
SANDWICH TERN	12	30	13	26	0	24	150	250	300	200+
fledged SANDWICH TERN	0	0	12	0	0	3	150	300	400	300+
COMMON TERN	80	120	120	70	57	40	34	86	105	153
fledged COMMON TERN	20	15	180	0	0	55	50	120	175	200+
LITTLE TERN	30	35	29	24	0	26	19	25	18	18
fledged LITTLE TERN	0	4	0	16	0	20	1	31	5	20
SAND MARTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YELLOW WAGTAIL	23	25	12	20	13	11	15	12	12	6
WHEATEAR	8	9	8	7	7	7	7	8	10	13
SEDGE WARBLER	86	92	50	67	80	52	70	81	104	48
REED WARBLER	200+	200+	200+	153+	200+	150+	150+	120+	200+	206
LESSER WHITETHROAT	7	3	3	5	6	2	5	6	7	11
WHITETHROAT	36	36	37	48	45	46	55	62	69	58
REED BUNTING	40	40	37	50	40	37	25	64	66	77
CORN BUNTING	3	5	5	4	4	4	2	2	5	2

Population estimates for these species start in 1970 and details are given in the report "Birds and other Vertebrates of Rye Harbour".

Monthly peak bird counts in during 2005

Most counts are within the Rye Harbour SSSI, unless stated

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
LITTLE GREBE	21	12	4	5	7	6	8	13	7	7	7	14
GREAT-CRESTED GREBE (Rye Bay)	6	165	13	50+	25	7	11	20	9	13	60+	29
CORMORANT	165	92	139	145	178	300	379	465	168	162	113	33
GREY HERON	15	10	0	3	3	4	5	4	8	5	10	5
BITTERN	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
LITTLE EGRET	36	22	18	15	9	12	32	51	56	44	44	30
MUTE SWAN	36	74	4	63	46	82	74	22	15	12	5	2
GREYLAG GOOSE	25	38	40	41	15	6	125	15	187	0	38	56
CANADA GOOSE	231	198	35	39	28	31	74	222	194	39	139	175
SHELDUCK (inc.estuary)	6	8	7	22	13	13	5	14	6	0	0	9
WIGEON	491	80	500	32+	1	1	0	1	43	27	175	600
GADWALL	70	33	10	12	10	0	2	22	60	44	114	45
TEAL	98	27	28	7	0	0	8	35	39	53	105	200
MALLARD	188	96	47	34	73	54	85	304	215	117	121	120
PINTAIL	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	0
SHOVELER	206	57	36	45	4	7	7	58	95	84	67	70+
POCHARD	150	145	75	2	1	0	0	0	43	45	53	116
TUFTED DUCK	189	102	112	90	79	110	51	56	67	74	126	264
SCAUP	17	17	25	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LONG-TAILED DUCK	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COMMON SCOTER (rb)	150	35	50+	390	300+	28	50+	80	60	60	100	220
GOLDENEYE	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
SMEW	10	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
RUDDY DUCK	7	17	4	9	9	9	9	16	13	3	5	5
COOT	418	238	232	64	64	181	259	251	294	351	247	316
OYSTERCATCHER	390	363	339	167	161	124	177	155	193	493	515	715
AVOCET	0	0	1	9	4	2	15	1	0	5	0	0
RINGED PLOVER	44	34	35	27	36	14	20	148	145	102	54	37
GOLDEN PLOVER	4	10	9	11	1	0	0	380	492	113	120	200
GREY PLOVER	36	11	15	8	4	3	1	5	9	15	16	41
LAPWING	100	200	1400	55	12	400	400	15	159	726	400	15
KNOT	2	0	13	0	2	0	4	21	11	9	0	0
SANDERLING (Rye Bay)	71	89	9	14	10	0	10	27	17	115	81	60
DUNLIN (Inc. Estuary)	300	164	304	35	58	6	186	160	233	140	240	400
RUFF	6	2	13	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	5
SNIPE	38	10	23	4	0	0	2	20	14	30+	24	19
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	0	0	0	0	11	1	27	4	2	0	0	0
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	0	0	1	22	38	1	7	8	20	6	3	3
WHIMBREL	0	0	0	373	301	1	10	3	1	0	0	0
CURLEW	249	214	47	33+	18	89	133	115	229	217	178	348
REDSHANK (Inc. Estuary)	12	32	31	27	18	64	5	5	2	8	33	20
GREENSHANK	0	0	0	1	2	1	150	3	1	0	0	0
GREEN SANDPIPER	2	1	1	2	0	2	11	10	4	2	1	0
COMMON SANDPIPER	0	0	1	1	4	0	20	11	6	1	0	0
TURNSTONE	21	17	23	29	15	22	20	29	24	28	44	24

Appendix 4 - Notes For The Guidance Of Visitors.

A) Any society or individual wanting to visit the Reserve with a group of ten or more people **MUST** obtain a permit from the Reserve Manager at least three weeks before the proposed visit. This will try to prevent overcrowding in the hides. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with any enquiry.

B) No charge is made for a permit but visitors are requested to consider a donation towards the essential running costs of the Reserve. A donation box is located at Lime Kiln Cottage, or you can send a cheque!

C) If groups exceed 20 in number they should be split into smaller groups to go around the Reserve.

D) The Reserve Manager is prepared to meet all parties before they enter the Reserve and to accompany them round **if this has been arranged beforehand**.

E) Leaders of groups are reminded that they will be held fully responsible for the conduct of their members. The leaders of school parties are urged to ensure that the staff to student ratio is such that adequate control can be maintained over the whole group.

F) Access to the Reserve is by designated footpaths. Visitors must keep to these routes and under no circumstances enter the fenced **Wildlife Sanctuary Areas**.

G) There is no public vehicular access to the Reserve and cars should be left in the public car park at Rye Harbour. However, vehicular access may be allowed, by prior arrangement with the Reserve Manager, for any disabled visitor unable to manage the walk to the hides.

H) There is an Information Centre in the car park with toilet facilities nearby. From the car park the four birdwatching hides are 4 km, 1½ km., 1 km. and 600 m. (the latter with access for wheelchairs).

I) The Reserve is an exposed area – even in summer - and suitable, warm, windproof clothing is recommended on all but the warmest days.

J) To avoid disturbing the wildlife near the hides please do not extend arms through the viewing slots. Photography of nesting birds, picking of flowers and other disturbance of wildlife is prohibited.

K) Anyone wanting to carry out ecological fieldwork on the Reserve must make prior application to the Reserve Manager in writing, giving full details of the proposed work.

L) All dogs should be kept on a lead or under **STRICT** control.

M) Visitors must comply with any proper request of the Reserve staff and volunteers.

thank-you

Appendix 5 - School Visits.

It may be possible to book a pre-visit to Rye Harbour Nature Reserve with a member of staff. We can also assist with running educational visits, depending on demand.

There is a pack called Rye Bay – Resources for Children which includes ideas and worksheets for visits to the Nature Reserve and surrounding area. It was produced as part of the Two Bays, One Environment INTERREG II project.

Programmes of study

There are many subjects which can be studied on the Nature Reserve including: Science, Geography, History, Art, English and Mathematics. Visits are appropriate for Key stages 1-4 and A-level visits. There are environmental education resources available for Key Stage 2. Please contact Nature Reserve staff for a pack and for details of possible study topics.

Cost

Self-guided group visits are free. Visits involving a member of the Nature Reserve staff cost £2 per student; however educational visits to Camber Castle are free.

Wet weather facilities

There are very limited wet weather facilities at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. It is possible for groups to shelter in the Information Kiosk, birdwatching hides or the blockhouses in heavy rain.

Toilets

There are no toilets on the Nature Reserve; however public toilets can be found in Rye Harbour village, near to the car park.

Food

Visitors should bring food and drink appropriate to the length of the visit and the season. There are no consumables for sale at or near Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

Equipment

We can provide clipboards, pencils and some binoculars for escorted groups.

Clothing

It is important that visitors bring suitable clothing with them. Windproof and waterproof coats and also sturdy shoes are appropriate all year round. In summer hats and sunscreen are also necessary. In winter warm clothes will make a visit to the exposed beach much more comfortable.

Health and Safety

Children must remain under teachers' control at all times and teachers remain responsible for the children during a visit. Teachers are also responsible for all First Aid arrangements and must carry the necessary First Aid Kits and a mobile telephone. We require a ratio of one adult to ten or fewer children (not including any Nature Reserve helpers). Your party must have insurance to cover your own potential liabilities. Our Public Liability insurance covers the legal liability of the Nature Reserve for loss, damage or injury to third parties. Risk Assessments can be provided.