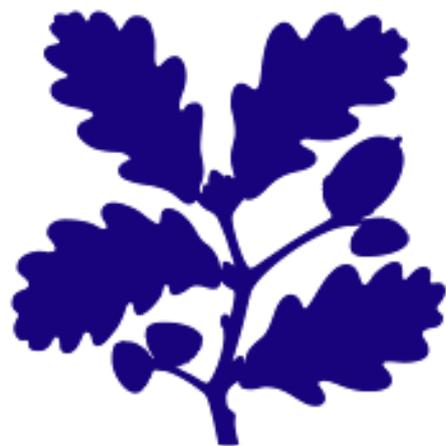


# Blakeney Point Breeding Bird Report 2025



**National  
Trust**

# Introduction

Blakeney Point is a four-mile shingle spit backed by saltmarsh with an expanse of sand dunes at the western end. During the summer the Point hosts important colonies of terns and in winter is home to England’s largest Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus* rookery. The spit encloses Blakeney Harbour, and forms part of the 1,097-hectare Blakeney National Nature Reserve which comprises Blakeney Point, Blakeney Freshes, Chapel Island, Stiffkey Meals and Morston Marshes. It has been owned and managed by the National Trust since 1912.

The Point currently supports three Schedule 1 protected species, Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*, Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* and Little Ringed Plover *Thinornis dubius* with two others, Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* and Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, as potential breeders. It is also important in being one of only two places in Norfolk where Sandwich Terns *Thalasseus sandvicensis* regularly breed.

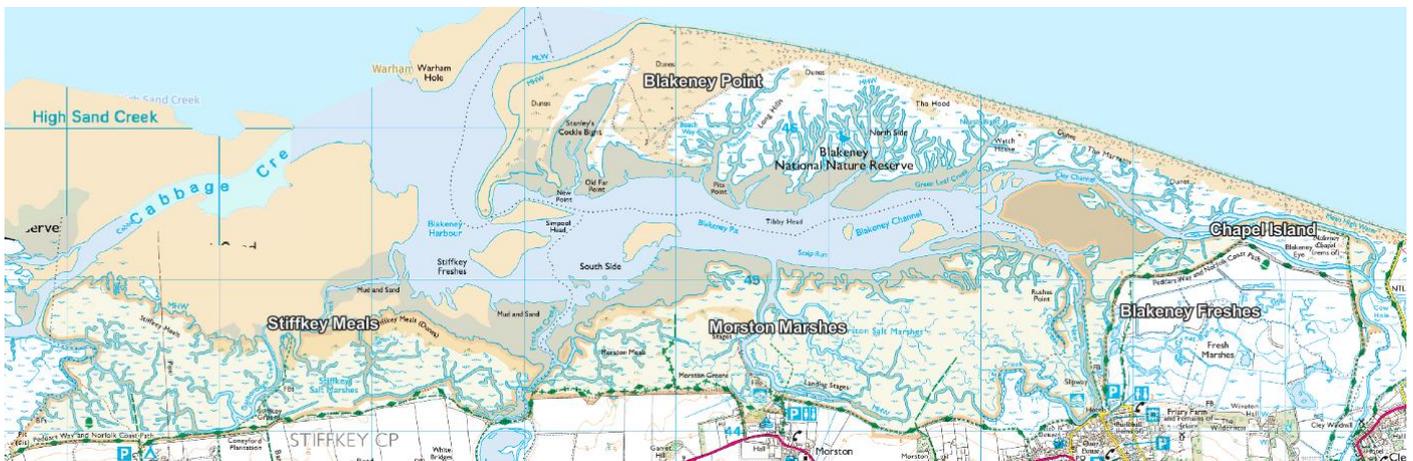


Figure 1. Map of Blakeney NNR

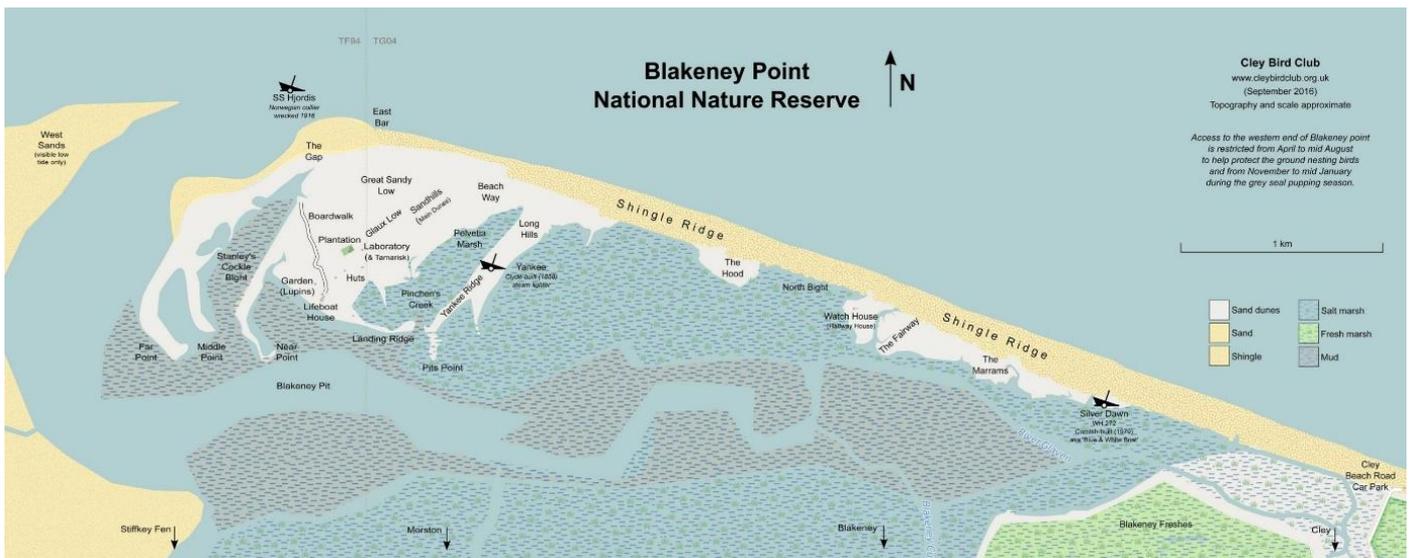


Figure 2. Map of Blakeney Point including some local names



Figure 3. Aerial view of Blakeney Point from the west

## Methods

All species that breed on Blakeney Point are surveyed annually as part of regular breeding bird surveys and specific targeted surveys. All survey work for Schedule 1 species is done under licence.

Terns and gulls are monitored and counted on a continuous basis upon arrival. Walk through counts are conducted once the maximum number of clutches are thought to have been laid. The number of nests of each species as well as the clutch size is counted during walk through counts. Productivity counts are made at approximately weekly intervals once eggs start hatching.

Waders are mapped during the incubation period. Surveys are conducted at high tide to maximise detectability and birds are mapped as pairs, nests (AON) or Apparently Incubating Adults (AIA). Productivity counts are made during the chick rearing period.

Ringed studies add to the above surveys and should improve their accuracy as well as giving continued survival data.

Early morning Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* surveys are conducted in April and May to determine population size and chicks are subsequently counted in crèches. Broods are however notoriously difficult to follow, and counts provide more of a flavour of a successful or poor breeding season rather than an accurate count.

Breeding Bird Surveys for passerines are performed from April to June. Some species, such as Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, are usually picked up later on in the year.

## Summary

2025 was a mixed year for breeding birds. It was disappointing, but not completely unexpected, that no early Black-Headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* colony formed on Far Point, despite electric fencing and the use of decoys. It is also amazing how Sandwich Terns barely need to come and visit the Point to know that this is the case. By the time that there was a roost of 1,500 Sandwich Terns on Scott Head Island in early April (undoubtedly due to the fact that there was already a noisy mass of Black-headed Gulls in the Ternery there) Blakeney was seeing just a handful of birds a day. Eventually some Black-headed Gulls settled around the decoys, but this was not until late May by which time Scott's Sandwich Tern colony was well advanced.

For those birds that eventually did decide to settle on the Point it was a pretty good breeding season. Forty-seven pairs of Black-headed Gulls raised over 60 chicks to fledging. Little Terns had their best breeding season for a few years. In total 142 pairs fledged 120 chicks, giving an overall productivity of 0.85, the highest number of breeding pairs since 2021 and the highest productivity since 2020.

Waders also had a good year with a big increase in the number of breeding Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* (2025: 31 pairs; 2024: 18 pairs) and a productivity of 1.29 chicks per pair. There was a similar increase in the number of Redshanks *Tringa tetanus* (2025: 28 pairs; 2024: 17 pairs). Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* numbers remained stable and breeding success was also about average.

Table 1. Summary of breeding bird population and productivity figures in 2025 with comparison with previous year and mean of previous ten years (2015-2024).

English name	Scientific name	No. of breeding pairs, 2025	No. of breeding pairs, 2024	10-year mean (2015-2024)	No. of young fledged	Productivity	Notes
Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	32	-		?		
Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	0	2				
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	1	6		?		
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	6	9		?		
Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	0	0				
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	1	4		?		Two males present but only one female
Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	?	0				Breeding not proven
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	0	0				
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	1	1		0		
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	97	99	77	34	0.35	
Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	8	8	12	2(?)		2 small chicks led off Point but outcome unknown
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	31	18	13	40	1.29	
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Thinornis dubius</i>	1	0	-	3(?)		3 small chicks led off Point but outcome unknown
Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	28	17	18	?		Fairly good fledging success at western end
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	142	96	96	120	0.85	
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	2	0	2	0		2-3 pairs attempted
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	40	16	122	50	1.25	
Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	0	0	-	-		
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	0	0	812	-		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	47	5	523	61	1.30	
Mediterranean Gull	<i>Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus</i>	0	0	2	-		
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	0	13	4			
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	3	2	39	0		

English name	Scientific name	No. of breeding pairs, 2025	No. of breeding pairs, 2024	10-year mean (2015-2024)	No. of young fledged	Productivity	Notes
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	0	0	10	-		
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	-	-	-	-		2 males present throughout summer. Nest building but no female present
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	1	?		0		
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	50	48				
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	1	2				
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1	0		4		
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	17	12				
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	2	0				
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	6	6				
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	7	6				
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	2	1				
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	88	67				
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	41	45				
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	32	18				

## Management

The Point was wardened between 3<sup>rd</sup> March and the end of October. Staff resident on the Point in 2025 included Area Ranger Eddie Stubbings and seasonal staff Tom Lloyd and Zac Pile. Signage, including 'No Landing' and 'No Further' signs, as well as rope and pin fencing went up in March to prevent human disturbance in and around the nesting areas. Visitors were asked not to continue along the beach down Far Point and a dog restriction was put in place between 1<sup>st</sup> April and mid-August. Signs explaining dog restrictions were put up at Cley and around the Lifeboat House.

Some new electric fencing equipment was purchased in April, and all fences had been erected by 8<sup>th</sup> May. Poultry mesh fencing was trialled at the Watch House and new energisers were used in 2025. See under Little Tern for more details on electric fencing.

Any Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover nests that were not within existing fencelines were roped off to prevent trampling. This is especially important around the Landing Ridge that can get busy with boat users at high tide. Ringed Plover cages proved successful in 2025 and were used alongside trail cameras to monitor breeding success.

During the chick rearing period a section of beach near the Lifeboat House was cordoned off to provide a sanctuary for wader chicks that were getting disturbed by people walking along the beach from the Landing Ridge. This proved a very successful means of protecting a small area of beach for chicks to roost in at high tide.

## Predators and predator control

Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* were present on and off for most of the season and four were removed by licenced predator control contractors between late February and late July.

Other ground predators present in 2025 include Otter *Lutra lutra*, Stoat *Mustela erminea*, Weasel *Mustela nivalis*, Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*. DOC traps were deployed at the start of the season and a network of around 35 were in use at any one time. These are spring traps (killing traps) designed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) in New Zealand and intended to replace older spring traps (including Fenn traps) particularly for targeting Stoats, though it remains legal to target rats with Fenn traps [The Spring Traps Approval \(England\) Order 2018](#). These were placed in areas with high predator numbers and around nesting colonies. An additional contractor was employed to conduct further predator control, focusing on rats, with Fenn Mark 4 traps and bait tunnels containing Harmonix (active ingredient cholecalciferol). These were again concentrated around buildings and nesting colonies, including the Watch House.

Nine rats were trapped in 2025 using a combination of trap types. Three were caught in DOC traps, five in Fenn traps and one was caught in a plastic double snap trap (Protecta Evo Tunnel). Historical trapping records are patchy and sometimes difficult to find but it seems that these might be the first rats caught in DOC traps on the Point. The five rats caught in Fenn traps is also an encouraging sign and this may prove to be the best trapping method going forward. Six Weasels were also caught in 2025, five in DOC traps and one in a Fenn trap.

For further information on predators and predation see the account under Little Tern.

## Human disturbance

Around 60 incidents were recorded throughout the season, 30 of which resulted in disturbance being witnessed to birds or seals. Twenty-two of these fell within the breeding season and 15 of these resulted in disturbance to birds. The main causes were people in restricted areas, with and without dogs, people landing by boat in restricted areas and low flying aircraft.

For further information on disturbance to Little Terns see under species account.

## Weather and tides

The spring and summer were generally settled with no big storms or surge tides. Despite this, some wader nests were lost to spring tides at the end of May and again at the end of June. As stated, these were thankfully not backed up by a surge, so losses were minimal.

The spring was relatively cold but dry with winds dominating from the north and east. The summer was warm and, with a few exceptions, rather settled. There were however still one or two troublesome spells of heavy rain in June and July.

## High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI)

In February 2025 a large number of dead birds (mostly Great Black-backed Gulls *Larus marinus*) and Grey Seals were discovered on Blakeney Point. Testing was performed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and both H5N5 HPAIV and H5N1 HPAIV were detected in gulls, alongside concomitant infection of Grey Seals with H5N5. This represents the first recorded instance in the UK of H5N1 and H5N5 being detected as co-circulating at the same location and within the same species, as well as the first detection of HPAIV H5N5 in mammals.

After this winter outbreak all dead birds were recorded on the Natural England epicollect5 app and reported to Defra. Around 60 reports (though not all involving HPAI) were made throughout the season from a number of species that were either washed up by the sea or had died on the Point. The main species involved from March onwards was Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. Some were sent for testing and positive results came back from Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, Herring Gull, Common Tern *Sterna Hirundo* and Black-headed Gull. Negative results were received for tests on Little Tern and an Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*.

See under Little Tern for further information on HPAI in 2025.

## **Systematic list**

### **Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna***

Two early morning counts were made in April and May to determine population size. An estimated 32 pairs were picked up on the April count. This should be treated as a minimum estimate.

Several broods, or crèches, were seen from June onwards. These are notoriously difficult to follow through to fledging but some large chicks (up to 16) were seen in July and August providing an indication that some at least did fledge. The majority of adults departed on their annual moult migration in June and July, returning in September.

### **Gadwall *Mareca strepera***

One nest was found near the Lifeboat House on 20<sup>th</sup> May. Up to eight individuals were seen during the breeding season.

### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

About six nests were found but some may have been missed. This should be treated as a minimum estimate.

### **Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

Two males were present throughout the spring and summer. A very aggressive female with day old chicks appeared on 27<sup>th</sup> May and vigorously defended them for several days between the Lifeboat House and the Plantation.

### **Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa***

A few were present during the breeding season, mostly around the Hood. Breeding was not proven.

No Grey Partridges *Perdix perdix* were seen in 2025.

### **Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus***

A very persistent pair made two nesting attempts in the woodshed in July and September but both attempts were unsuccessful. One of them got stuck in the visitor's centre for a day in July and had to be caught and released.

## Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Ninety-seven pairs nested and around 107 nesting attempts were monitored. This is two less than in 2024 (99 pairs) but 26% higher than the mean of the previous ten years (2015-2024: 77 pairs).

Many nests were predated, either by birds (mostly gulls but also Carrion Crows *Corvus corone*) or ground predators. A Hedgehog was picked up on a trail camera predated a nest from the Landing Ridge over the course of two nights at the end of June. On another occasion a Marsh Harrier was flushed from a predated nest. Several nests were lost to spring tides at the end of May and again at the end of June.

Once chicks hatch, they are vulnerable to further predation and to bad weather. There is a stage when they are too big for the adult to effectively brood and too small to thermoregulate themselves and we were aware of a few chicks that succumbed to cold rainy weather in this way. Despite all these problems it is believed that around 34 chicks fledged on the Point in 2025, mostly at the western end of the reserve.

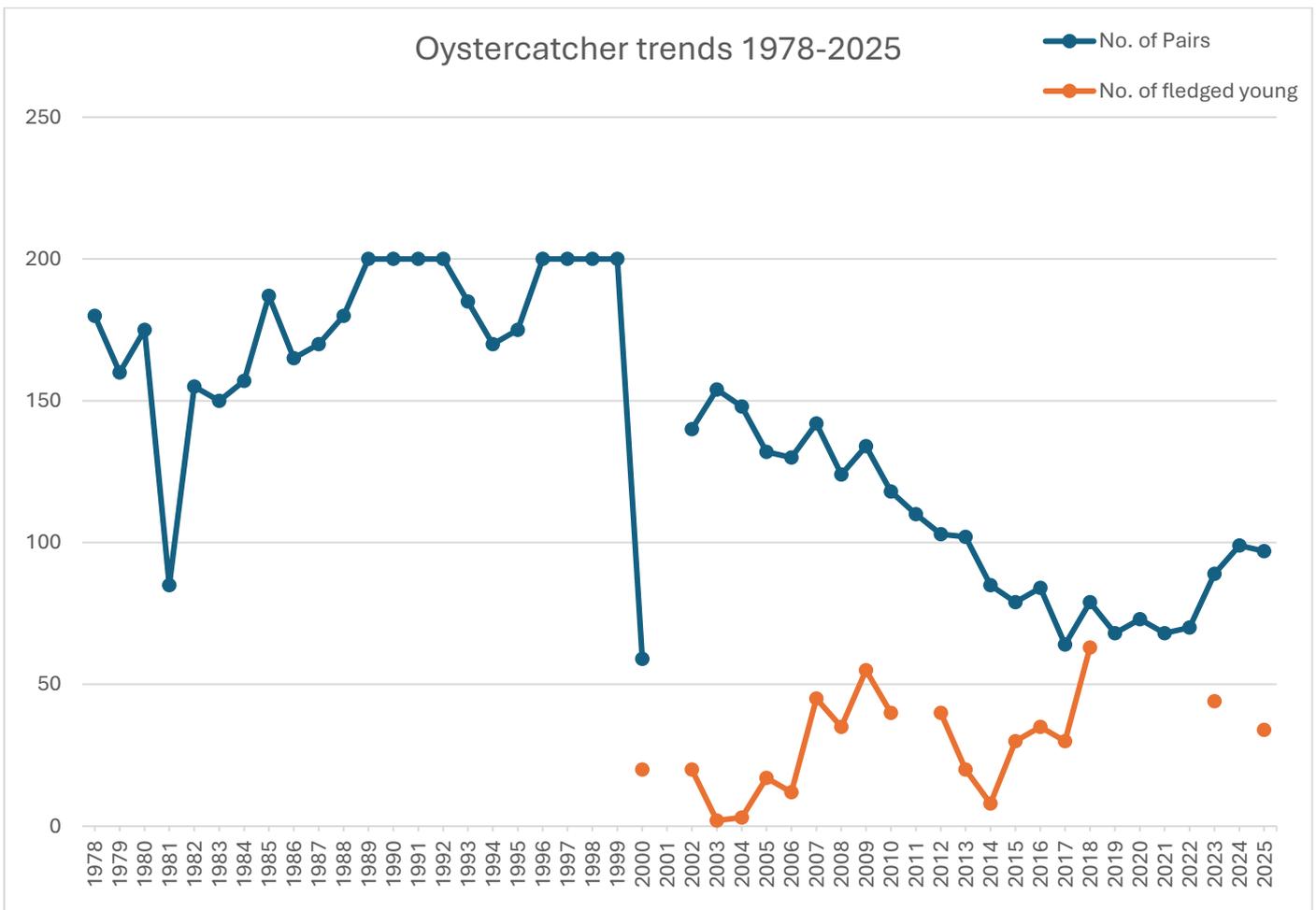


Figure 4. Oystercatcher trends 1978-2025

A colour ringing project was started 2024 and this was continued in 2025. Twenty-three chicks were ringed during the summer and 15 were subsequently resighted in the same year. The longest movements involved C72 who was ringed on Blakeney Point on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and subsequently seen

at Langstone Harbour, in Hampshire on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and C81 who was ringed on Blakeney Point on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and had moved to Wyke Regis in Weymouth, Dorset by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Table 2. Oystercatchers ringing and resighting data 2024-2025

Darvic	Record_Type	Metal_ring	Age	Location	Date	Comment
C06	Ringed	FJ77995	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C07	Ringed	FJ77725	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C09	Ringed	FJ77726	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C10	Ringed	FJ77727	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C11	Ringed	FJ77728	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C12	Ringed	FJ77729	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C13	Ringed	FJ77730	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	04/07/2024	
C70	Ringed	FK08561	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	02/08/2025	
C71	Ringed	FK08558	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	22/07/2025	
C72	Ringed	FK08559	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	27/07/2025	
C72	Sighting	FK08559	3	Chalkdock Lake, Langstone Harbour	23/09/2025	Juvenile
C74	Ringed	FK08560	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	27/07/2025	
C74	Sighting	FK08560		Holme Beach	25/11/2025	Feeding on tide line
C75	Ringed	FK08562	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	06/08/2025	
C76	Ringed	FK08563	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	09/08/2025	
C76	Sighting	FK08563		Blakeney Point	29/08/2025	
C76	Sighting	FK08563	3	Blakeney Point	09/09/2025	Still with parents
C76	Sighting	FK08563	3	Blakeney Point	11/09/2025	Still being fed by parents!
C80	Ringed	FK08550	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	08/07/2025	
C80	Sighting	FK08550	3	Blakeney Point	29/07/2025	
C81	Ringed	FK08551	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	08/07/2025	
C81	Sighting	FK08551	3	Blakeney Point	29/07/2025	
C81	Sighting	FK08551		Wyke Regis	28/11/2025	
C83	Ringed	FK08552	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	08/07/2025	
C84	Ringed	FK08553	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	11/07/2025	
C84	Sighting	FK08553	3	Blakeney Point	26/07/2025	
C84	Sighting	FK08553	3	Blakeney Point	09/09/2025	Still with parents
C85	Ringed	FK08554	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	12/07/2025	
C85	Sighting	FK08554		Blakeney Point	08/08/2025	

C85	Sighting	FK08554	3	Blakeney Point	12/09/2025	Still being fed by parents!
C86	Ringed	FK08555	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	16/07/2025	
C87	Ringed	FK08556	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	19/07/2025	
C89	Ringed	FK08557	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	19/07/2025	
C90	Ringed	FK08541	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	28/06/2025	
C90	Sighting	FK08541		Blakeney Point	09/07/2025	
C91	Ringed	FK08542	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	28/06/2025	
C91	Sighting	FK08542		Blakeney Point	02/07/2025	
C92	Ringed	FK08543	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	28/06/2025	
C92	Sighting	FK08543		Blakeney Point	03/09/2025	
C93	Ringed	FK08544	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	29/06/2025	
C93	Sighting	FK08544		Blakeney Point	16/07/2025	
C94	Ringed	FK08545	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	29/06/2025	
C95	Ringed	FK08546	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	29/06/2025	
C96	Ringed	FK08547	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	29/06/2025	
C96	Sighting	FK08547		Blakeney Point	28/07/2025	
C97	Ringed	FK08548	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	29/06/2025	
C97	Sighting	FK08548		Blakeney Point	01/07/2025	
C99	Ringed	FK08549	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	05/07/2025	



Figure 5. Oystercatcher chicks C95, C80 and C81 on beach near Lifeboat House, 29/07/2025

### **Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta***

Avocets had a poor year on Blakeney Point in 2025. Only eight pairs attempted to breed and disappearance of eggs from the shingle ridge during incubation was the main problem.

Avocets started breeding on the shingle ridge in 2012 and appeared to peak in 2016 when 16 pairs bred. This has however fallen below 10 pairs in the last few years. Nesting attempts are now widely spaced and difficult to protect with fencing etc.

Table 3. Avocet breeding numbers 2012-2025

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Pairs</b>	<b>No.of young seen</b>
2012	10	?
2013	10	10
2014	13	17
2015	16	37
2016	17	15
2017	14	9
2018	11	0?
2019	15	0?
2020	11	0?
2021	9	0
2022	15	?
2023	7	?

2024	8	0
2025	8	0

**Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula***

Thirty-one pairs attempted to breed in 2025. This is a large increase on the previous few years and hopefully a sign of recovery after an all-time low of nine pairs in 2018. It was also the best year in terms of productivity (number of chicks fledged per pair) since this sort of data has been collected.

The first eggs were found on 19<sup>th</sup> April near the Gap and at least three more clutches were laid by the end of the month. Around 30 nests were monitored during the season. Eight nests were caged (see fig. 6.) to prevent aerial predators taking eggs. This proved successful in 2025 with 88% of all caged nests reaching the hatching stage compared with 23% for uncaged nests. The main causes of nest failure came from assumed predation and flooding. Flooding and sand blow affected caged as well as uncaged nests. No caged nests were thought to have been predated. Entrances on each side of the cage allows the incubating birds to come and go but the cage protects the nest from aerial predators.



Figure 6. Female Ringed Plover incubating in cage near Visitor’s Centre, 24/06/2025



*Figure 7. Ringed Plover chick hatched from the nest in Figure 6., 17/07/2025*

Around 40 chicks are thought to have fledged from 31 pairs, giving a productivity of 1.29 chicks per pair. This is the highest on record and may reflect the success of caging nests and other protection measures.

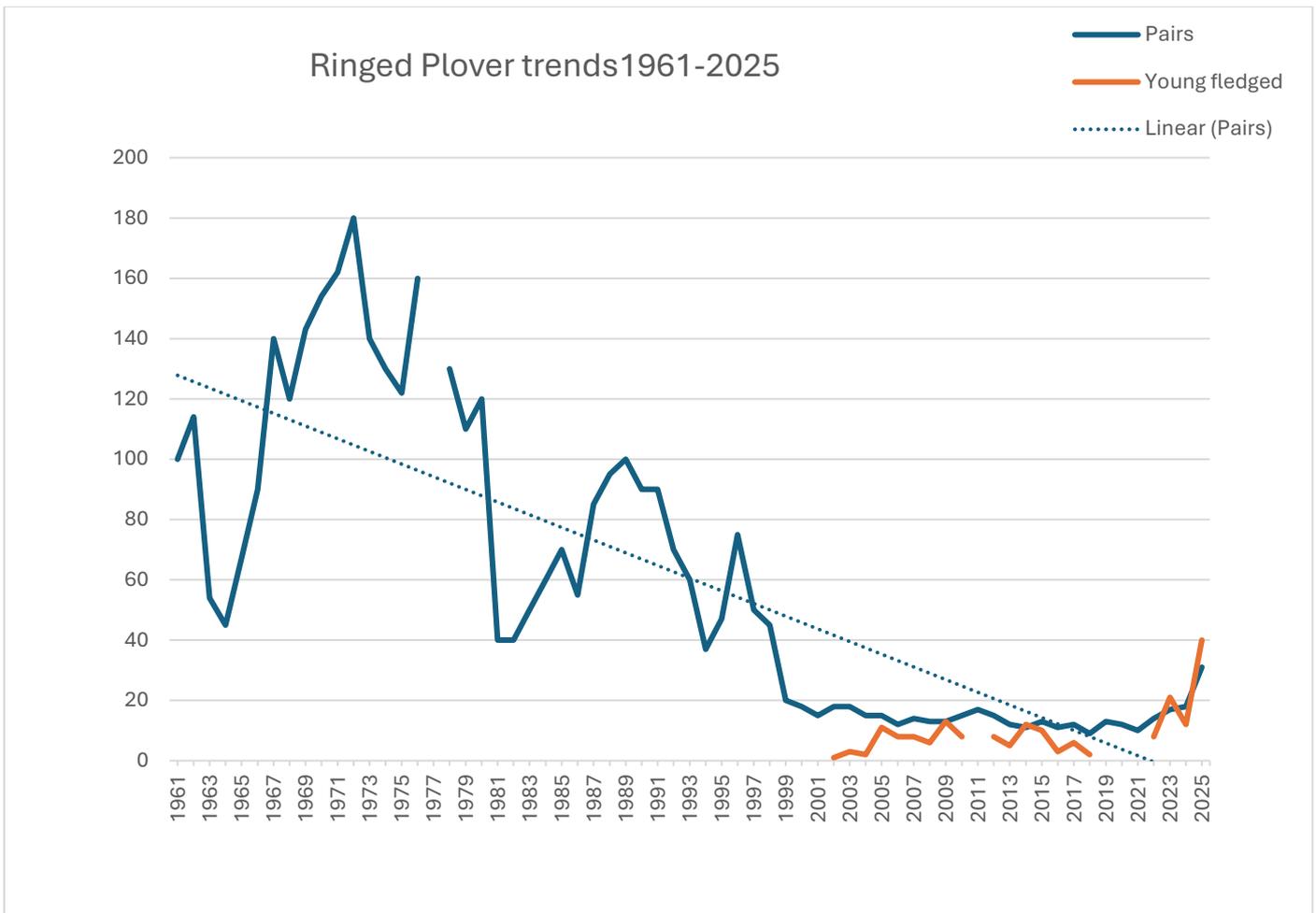


Figure 8. Ringed Plover trends 1961-2025

### Little Ringed Plover *Thinornis dubius*

2025 saw only the third confirmed breeding attempt by Little Ringed Plovers on Blakeney Point. A pair set up territory within a large rope and pin enclosure near Cley intended for breeding Avocets in May. The nest was found on 7<sup>th</sup> June and a cage was placed over the eggs on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The adults were still incubating on 29<sup>th</sup> June and chicks were first seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Three chicks were seen on 3<sup>rd</sup> July but the family had moved down towards Cley. The fate of these chicks is unknown, but it is hoped that birds will return to breed in coming years.

Little Ringed Plovers are a scarce breeder in the UK, and the population is thought to be stable with some increases in Scotland. They are a Schedule 1 species with added legal protection.

### Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Good numbers of Redshank bred in 2025. Apart from the issue of increased numbers of ground predators, especially rats (thought to be caused by large amounts of carrion, in the form of dead seals, available to rats in late winter), Blakeney Point offers a haven from recreational disturbance and a relatively safe place to breed. Fenced areas and no dogs during the breeding season mean that ground nesting birds are less disturbed and better able to raise chicks to fledging.

Twenty-eight pairs bred in 2025, which is the highest since 1970. Encouragingly, there has been a steady increase on the Point since 2001 when numbers were at a perilously low ebb. Fig.9 shows numbers of breeding pairs since 1962 and gives a moving five-year average trend (dotted line).

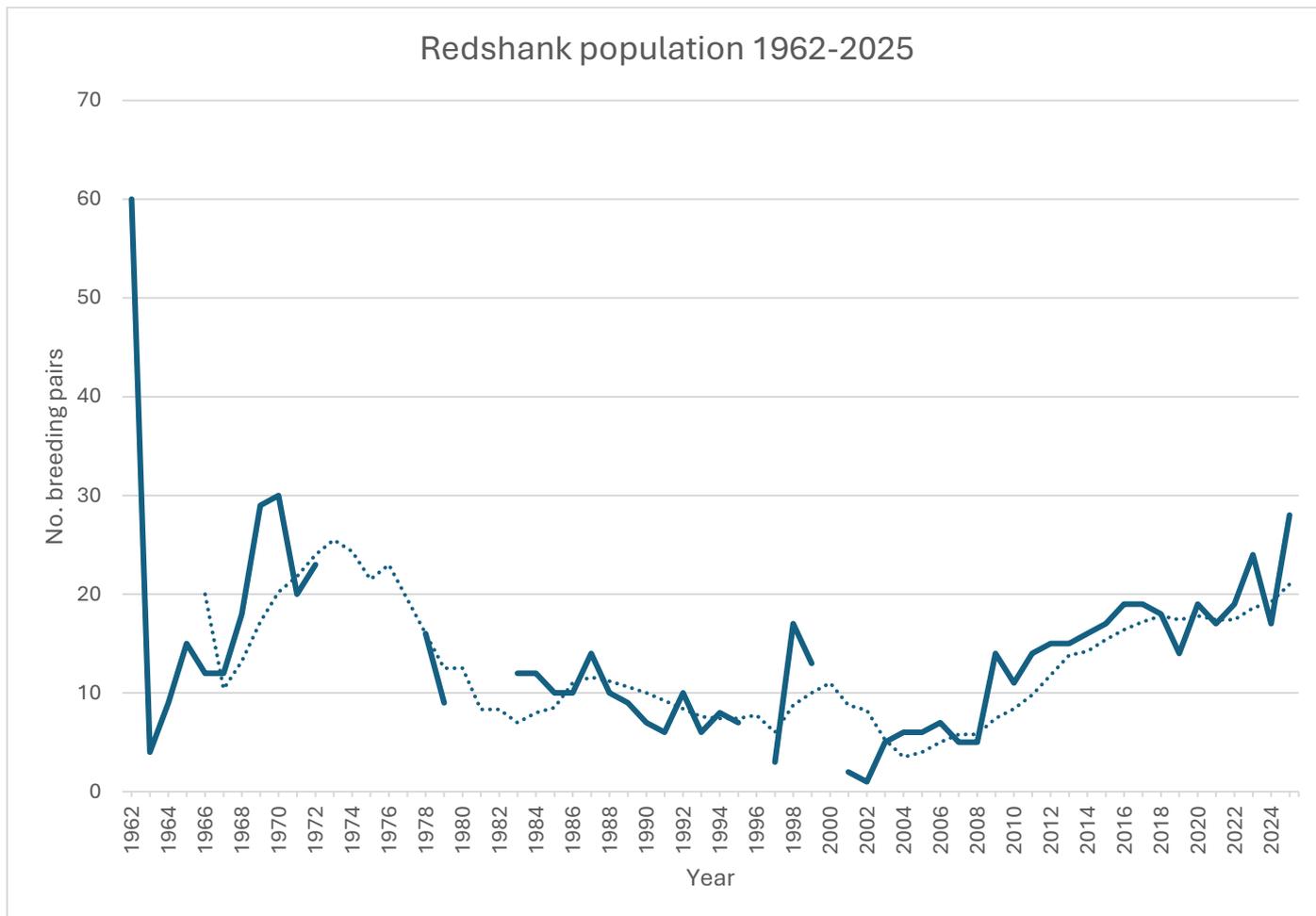


Figure 9. Redshank population figures 1962-2025

Redshanks tend to lead their chicks straight onto saltmarsh where they are lost to view within creeks and vegetation and are thus incredibly hard to follow through to fledging. For this reason, assessments of breeding success on the Point have always been vague. 2025 is no exception but hatching success at the western end of the reserve was good and some chicks, that were visible when out on mud flats, did fledge successfully.

## Little Tern Newsletter, Blakeney Point 2025

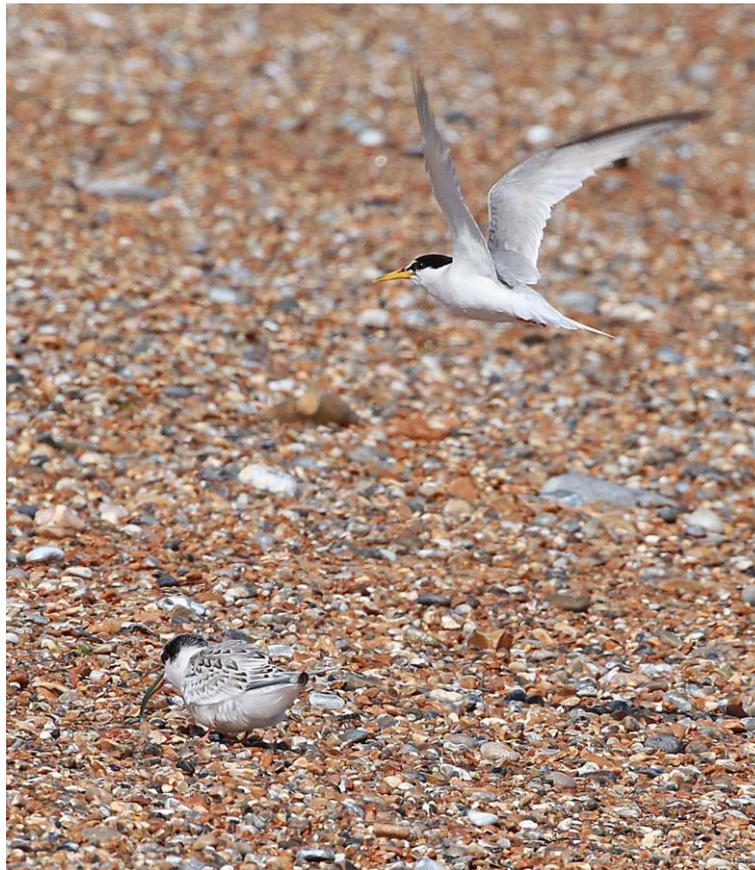


Figure 10. Little Tern chick being fed by parent, Blakeney Point 09/08/2025. Photo by Richard Porter

### Summary

2025 was a good year for breeding Little Terns on Blakeney Point with 142 pairs raising 120 fledglings. This is the highest number of breeding pairs since 2021 and the most chicks raised since 2020. Weather and high tides didn't appear to have any negative impacts in 2025. Pressure mostly came in the form of predation.

This report describes the 2025 Little Tern breeding season on Blakeney Point and covers on site management, timing of breeding, population, productivity, predation and disturbance as well as detailing resightings of marked birds and new birds ringed. A schedule 1 licence was held to enable the team to conduct this work.

### Management

Four enclosures were erected for Little Terns across the reserve at the start of May.

One wire strand and one mesh poultry fence were used at the Watch House. The wire fence worked to prevent ground predators entering but had a rather low voltage later on in the season, possibly due to insulators on corner posts breaking through and difficulties earthing in the shingly ground. The mesh fencing enclosure was used to try and exclude a larger range of predators such as rats and stoats. This fence also had a relatively low voltage output (2.2-2.26KV) and the main problems were keeping it upright (we used a guy on every third upright but discovered that, especially in shingle, one on every other upright would be better to keep it upright in strong winds) and again earthing. Both of these

fences only had small numbers of birds nesting in them. There were ten nests in the wire strand fence, only one nest in the mesh fence and eight nests outside of the electric fencing. The nests that were outside of the electric fencing were within a rope and pin fence that was extended to accommodate some of them.

Two wire strand fences were used on Far Point, an eastern and a western fence. The eastern fence was smaller than the western one and kept the best voltage output of all four fences throughout the season (5.8-8.4KV). The western fence was larger and passed through more vegetation and shifting sand dunes. This, along with a couple of twists in the wires that were discovered at various points of the season, meant that this fence was only putting out 2KV. However, it did still keep out most mammals such as deer and fox that were seen on a live camera circling the fence but not entering it. The eastern fence held at least 26 nests; the western fence held just five nests and there were 92 nests outside of the electric fencing but inside rope and pin fencing.

Overall, only 42 nests (30% of total) were inside an electric fence.

Chick shelters were put out in areas with lots of nests and sparse vegetation but there was little evidence that Little Tern chicks used them. By contrast Common Tern chicks regularly used shelters put out for them. One area for potential future study on the Point is the efficacy of fencing and shelters for increasing Little Tern breeding success.

Predator management was ongoing throughout the season. This involved lethal control of Red Fox and trapping for rats and other ground predators. Poisoning with Harmonix (active ingredient cholecalciferol) was also used for the control of rats. Trail cameras were deployed on individual nests and in other important areas to speed up the detection of predators.

A dog restriction exists on the reserve between April and the middle of August and signs were placed out to inform visitors of these restrictions. Other signs were put out to inform people about vulnerable ground nesting birds and of the need to stay away from fenced areas. A team of volunteers maned a small hut near the Watch House colony and were present as often as possible to talk to visitors about the birds and to monitor the small colony there. At Far Point the birds are breeding inside an area with no public access during the breeding season. Large 'No Further' signs are used along the beach to prevent people walking into this area and 'No Landing' signs are used to prevent boat users landing from the seaward side. Regular patrolling and monitoring in this area was performed by the National Trust Ranger team.

### **Timing of breeding**

The first Little Terns arrived on 19<sup>th</sup> April when 25 were seen at the Gap, which is near the Far Point breeding colony. Numbers built slowly at first and the first displaying birds were noted in the first few days of May. Numbers of birds as well as breeding behaviour increased in the second week of May when birds were present in both colonies in decent numbers.

The first clutch of eggs was found at the Watch House on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, and the first clutches were laid on Far Point soon after.

The first chicks were seen on 11<sup>th</sup> June at the Watch House and on 12<sup>th</sup> June on Far Point.

The first fledglings were recorded on 4<sup>th</sup> July at the Watch House. Fledging continued through July and August.

The final two birds of the year were seen on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

Table 4. Timing of breeding for Little Terns on Blakeney Point in 2025 with 2024 to compare

First sighting		First eggs		First chicks		First fledglings	
2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
19 <sup>th</sup> April	26 <sup>th</sup> April	20 <sup>th</sup> May	21 <sup>st</sup> May	11 <sup>th</sup> June	2 <sup>nd</sup> July	4 <sup>th</sup> July	19 <sup>th</sup> July

## Population

Population counts were made in June and July and included walk through counts, where nests were marked with short colour coded pieces of bamboo, and eye counts to add nests that were laid after the walk through counts. Clutch sizes were recorded during the walk through counts.

There were two main colonies on the Point in 2025, one at the Watch House and one on Far Point. The colony at the Watch House has been much the smaller colony in recent years with the larger colony on Far Point being quite spread out and thus sub divided into sections based on areas of fencing as well as geographical features. The Watch House colony held 19 pairs with the remaining 123 pairs along Far Point.

Counts of 200 and 150 individuals were made on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of May respectively. A count of 300 was made on the same day that the first clutch of eggs was found at the Watch House (20<sup>th</sup> May) and there were 200 plus on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Further peak counts were made in June with 200 on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 400 on the 20<sup>th</sup> (highest count of the year) and 300 on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## Productivity

Clutch sizes were recorded on all nests where walk through counts were conducted. In total 82 nests were counted with a mean clutch size of 2.00.

Table 5. Mean clutch size of Little Terns on Blakeney Point in 2025

Clutch size	1 egg	2 egg	3 egg	Totals
Nests	18	46	18	82
Eggs	18	92	54	164
			MCS	2.00

Counts of recently fledged chicks were made at both colonies between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July. Fourteen chicks fledged at the Watch House giving a productivity of 0.74 for that colony. One hundred and six chicks fledged from Far Point giving a productivity of 0.86. In total 120 chicks fledged from 142 pairs across all sites giving an overall productivity of 0.85. This is the highest figure since 2020 when an exceptional 154 pairs produced 201 chicks giving a productivity of 1.31 chicks per pair.

Table 6. Productivity for Little Terns on Blakeney Point in 2025

Location	AIA	Young fledged	Productivity
WH	19	14	0.74
FP	123	106	0.86
Combined	142	120	0.85

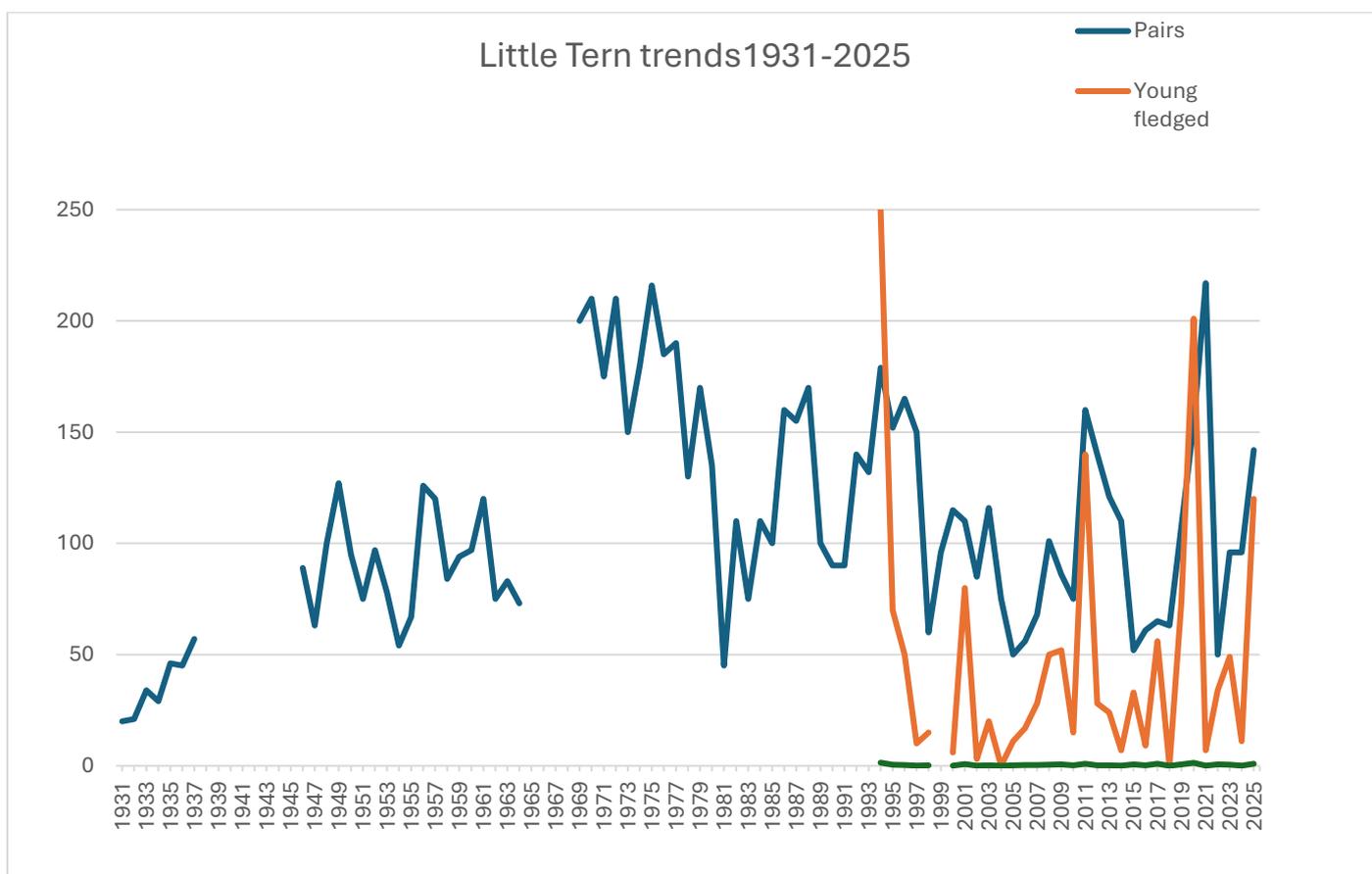


Figure 11. Little Tern population and productivity on Blakeney Point between 1931 and 2025. Note: data on numbers of chicks fledged is only available from 1994 onwards

### Predation and disturbance

Gulls were probably the chief cause of predation this year with Common and Herring Gulls the worst culprits. Fox, Otter, Stoat, Weasel, Hedgehog and Brown Rats were all detected on site during the breeding season and could have been the cause of some losses. However, Hedgehog was the only one of these picked up on a trail camera taking a clutch of Oystercatcher eggs and no other evidence of mammalian predation was found.

Two male Marsh Harriers were resident during the summer, one of which did start to target the gull and tern colony in July. More presence at the colony by the Rangers and some long canes pushed into the ground at various angles to make manoeuvring and landing in the colony more difficult appeared to do the trick. A juvenile peregrine was photographed eating an adult Little Tern near the Gap on the

23<sup>rd</sup> of July. It was probably one of a brood of three ringed on Cromer church in May but unfortunately the code on the ring could not be read from the photograph. Red Kites, Hobbies and Sparrowhawks were also present but were not seen to predate on the terns. A Grey Heron was driven out of the colony by the terns and gulls on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July.

Between one and three individual Kestrels were present throughout the summer but no predation of Little Terns was recorded. In fact, they were rarely recorded near the two main Little Tern colonies.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June an Oystercatcher was observed predated a Little Tern egg. This interaction involved the Little Tern repeatedly attacking the Oystercatcher's chick and the Oystercatcher dragging the Little Tern off its nest to 'destroy' at least one of its eggs.

Muntjacs were present around the colony and were seen walking through the nesting area. It is not known whether any trampling, or even eating, of eggs took place.



Figure 12. Muntjac walking around electric fence on Far Point, alarming a breeding Oystercatcher and then walking through a Little Tern nesting colony, 10/06/2025

## HPAI

Three dead Little Terns were found in the Far Point colony in June. The last of these was tested for HPAI but was found to be negative. No further dead Little Terns were found in 2025. There was a minor outbreak amongst other species in 2025, mostly involving nonbreeding immature Herring Gulls but also affecting at least one juvenile Black-headed Gull (not from the Blakeney Point colony) and one breeding adult Common Tern (Herring Gull and Common Tern confirmed by testing).

## Ringling and resightings

Three dead birds were found in the colony on Far Point between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of June, two of which were ringed. The first was a bird with a green darvic (NAV) found dead on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June. It had been ringed as a second calendar year plus (2cy+) at Rottumerplaat, Nederland on 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 and observed at De Putten, Camperduin, Nederland on 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2025, just before it was found dead on the Point. The second was a metal ringed bird ringed as 1cy at Salinas do Somouco, Portugal on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2010. Due to concerns about HPAI the third of these (the Portuguese ringed bird) was tested for bird flu but was found to be negative.

A bird ringed as a chick at Blakeney Point on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 (YN/BCL) was observed on two occasions in 2025, once on the Landing Ridge near the Lifeboat House on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May and once within the breeding colony where it was hatched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.



Figure 13. Little Tern (YN/BCL) on the Landing Ridge on 27/05/2025. Ringed on Blakeney Point in July 2023 and seen twice in 2025

Records of chicks ringed on Blakeney Point in previous years and resighted at staging or wintering areas include YN/BAH which was ringed as a chick on Blakeney Point in July 2023 and observed in Abelgh Eiznaya, Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2025 and YN/BCN, also ringed as a chick on Blakeney Point in July 2023 and seen at Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Four birds (YN/BAJ; YN/BAL; YN/BAV and YN/BCH) ringed as chicks on Blakeney Point in July 2023 were all seen at Beacon ponds, East Yorkshire at various point during the 2025 summer. YN/BCH was also seen at Gronant beach, Wales in its first summer in July 2024.

Table 7. Little Tern ringing and resighting data 2023-2025

Darvic	Record_Type	Metal_ring	Age	Location	Date
BAA	Ringed	NW12702	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAB	Ringed	NW12703	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAC	Ringed	NW12704	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAE	Ringed	NW12705	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAH	Ringed	NW12706	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023

BAH	Sighting	NW12706		Abelgh Eiznaya, Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania	22/11/2025
BAJ	Ringed	NW12707	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAJ	Sighting	NW12707	4	Beacon ponds, East Yorkshire	13/08/2025
BAK	Ringed	NW12708	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAL	Ringed	NW12709	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAL	Sighting	NW12709	4	Beacon ponds, Kilnsea	09/08/2025
BAN	Ringed	NW12751	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAP	Ringed	NW12710	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAS	Ringed	NW12711	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAT	Ringed	NW12712	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAV	Ringed	NW12713	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAV	Sighting	NW12713	4	Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, E. Yorks	18/06/2025
BAV	Sighting	NW12713	4	Snettisham sailing club bay	31/07/2025
BAX	Ringed	NW12715	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BAZ	Ringed	NW12716	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBA	Ringed	NW12717	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBB	Ringed	NW12741	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBC	Ringed	NW12742	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBE	Ringed	NW12744	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBH	Ringed	NW12745	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBJ	Ringed	NW12746	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBK	Ringed	NW12747	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBL	Ringed	NW12748	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBN	Ringed	NW12750	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBP	Ringed	NW12752	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBS	Ringed	NW12753	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBT	Ringed	NW12754	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBV	Ringed	NW12759	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BBX	Ringed	NW12769	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCC	Ringed	NW12721	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCE	Ringed	NW12722	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCH	Ringed	NW12723	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCH	Sighting	NW12723	4	Gronant beach, Wales	21/07/2024
BCH	Sighting	NW12723	4	Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, E. Yorks	24/05/2025
BCH	Sighting	NW12723	4	Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, E. Yorks	11/06/2025
BCH	Sighting	NW12723	4	Beacon Ponds, Kilnsea, E. Yorks	21/06/2025
BCJ	Ringed	NW12725	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCK	Ringed	NW12727	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCL	Ringed	NW12728	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCL	Sighting	NW12728	4	Landing Ridge, Blakeney Point	27/05/2025
BCL	Sighting	NW12728	4	Far Point, Blakeney Point	04/07/2025
BCN	Ringed	NW12729	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCN	Sighting	NW12729	0	Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania	05/11/2023
BCP	Ringed	NW12730	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCS	Ringed	NW12731	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCS	Photographed	NW12731	3	Eccles-on-sea, Norfolk	21/07/2023
BCT	Ringed	NW12732	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BCV	Ringed	NW12737	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023

BCX	Ringed	NW12738	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEE	Ringed	NW12733	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEH	Ringed	NW12734	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEJ	Ringed	NW12735	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEK	Ringed	NW12736	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEL	Ringed	NW12756	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEN	Ringed	NW12755	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEP	Ringed	NW12757	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BES	Ringed	NW12758	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BET	Ringed	NW12718	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEV	Ringed	NW12720	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	01/07/2023
BEZ	Ringed	NW12739	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	05/07/2025
BHA	Ringed	NW12740	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	05/07/2025
BHS	Ringed	NW12799	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	05/07/2025
BHL	Ringed	NW12800	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	05/07/2025
BJA	Ringed	NW12779	1	Blakeney Point, Norfolk	19/07/2025

In 2025 a walk though was conducted on Far Point on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July to ring chicks. Unfortunately, only four chicks of the required size were found and ringed. A fifth chick was ringed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July at the edge of the colony. Soon after this there was an outbreak of bird flu at Scott Head Island and to a lesser extent on Blakeney Point so no further attempts were made to ring chicks in 2025.

### **Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea***

The first two birds were recorded on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

Two to three pairs of Arctic Terns attempted to breed in 2025. A pair laid eggs in the eastern enclosure on Far Point in late May but this nesting attempt had failed by the start of June. Possibly the same pair relocated to the tip of Far Point towards the end of June. By the start of July two pairs were present, one on the edge of the Far Point dunes and one on Bonus Point (an outer sand and shingle bar on Far Point). Both pairs were incubating by 12<sup>th</sup> July. Unfortunately, the egg from the pair on Bonus Point had a crack in it and was subsequently abandoned. The pair near the Far Point dunes hatched two chicks on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. These two chicks were seen being fed by the parents for the next few days but had disappeared by 25<sup>th</sup>. The adults remained in the area for a few days after the chicks had gone and appeared to be confused by the disappearance of their chicks.

A pair were seen displaying and courtship feeding at the Watch House in May, but these probably relocated to Far Point to breed.

An adult was seen and photographed (see Fig. 15) feeding a chick on the beach east of the Gap on 22<sup>nd</sup> August but was not hatched on the Point so must have been migrating with its parent.

The last sighting was of a late migrant flying west on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

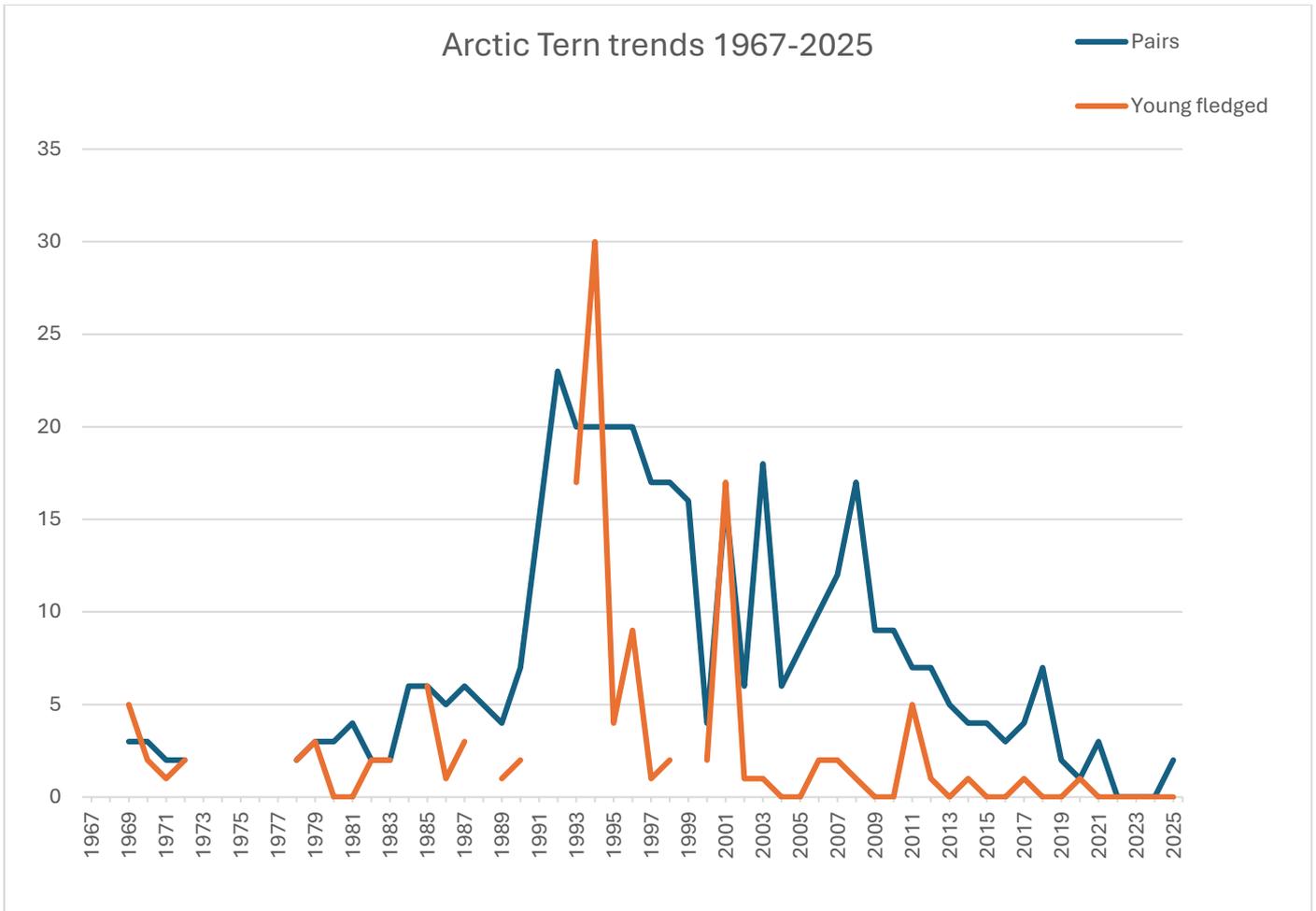


Figure 14. Arctic Tern trends 1967-2025

Arctic Terns have been declining as a breeding species on Blakeney Point since the 1990s. Only a few pairs are hanging on and there has been no successful breeding since 2020.



*Figure 15. Arctic Tern feeding its chick (not hatched on the Point) on beach at Blakeney Point on 22/08/2025, photo by Monica Doshi*

## Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*



Figure 16. A pair of Common Terns brooding and feeding newly hatched chicks. Nest boxes to encourage Roseate Terns *Sterna dougallii* to breed and long canes to discourage large gulls and raptors can also be seen in this image, which was taken by a trail camera

The first bird was seen on 17<sup>th</sup> April and there was a slow increase in numbers through the month with a peak of 60 on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

There were further influxes of adults throughout May, but the first nests did not appear until early June. At least 40 pairs went on to breed but some nests were widely spread and difficult to monitor. At least 50 chicks fledged, which is a decent return and undoubtedly aided by electric fencing and other protection measures. Where nests were most dense, near the Black-headed Gull colony, chick shelters and nest boxes (placed out to try and encourage Roseate Terns to breed) were used by chicks.

During the nineteenth century Common Terns were the dominant species on Blakeney Point and the population peaked at more than 2,000 pairs between the mid-1930s and the early 1950s. However, since 1980 the population has shown a significant and worrying decline. In some recent years very few pairs have bred and the population has come close to extirpation (in 2003 only 3 pairs bred and there were only ten pairs in 2022). Exceptions to this came in 2020 and 2021 when 289 and 324 pairs bred respectively and this may reflect a larger pool of birds moving between nearby breeding grounds at Stiffkey and the Point depending on predation pressure and disturbance. Three hundred and four pairs bred on Stiffkey Binks in 2025.

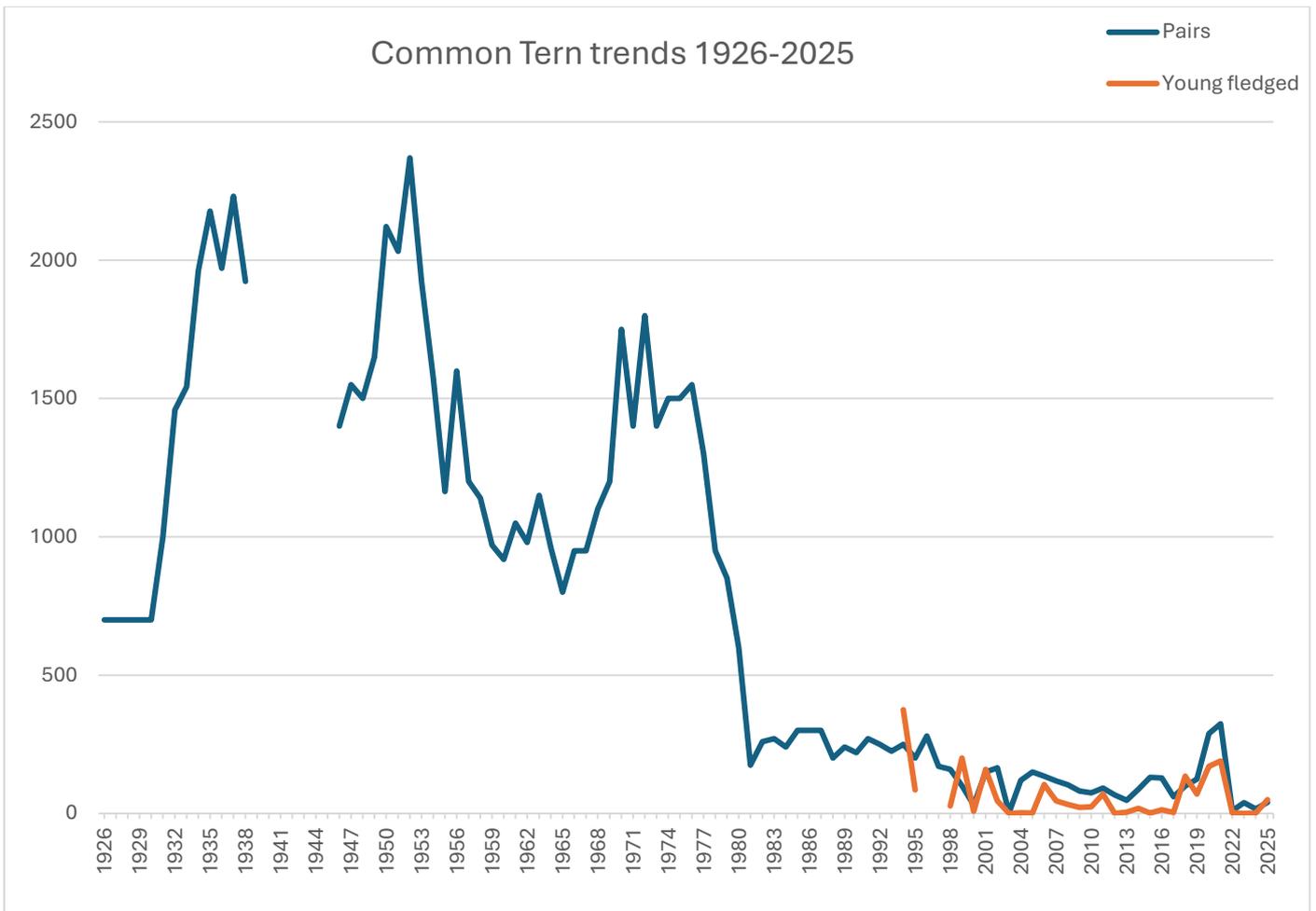


Figure 17. Common Tern trends 1926-2025

### Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Several nest boxes were placed amongst Marram Grass inside the eastern enclosure on Far Point to encourage Roseate Terns to breed. The last time Roseate Terns bred was in 1998.

The first record of the year was of one flying over the Little Tern colony at the Watch House and calling on 30<sup>th</sup> May. There were further records of birds flying over and checking out the Far Point colony (where the nest boxes had been placed) in June (one on the 11<sup>th</sup>) and July (singles on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>). Despite these encouraging signs there was no further evidence of breeding in 2025.

### Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Unfortunately, no Sandwich Terns attempted to breed in 2025. This is thought to be because Black-headed Gulls did not settle on Far Point until very late. The best way to encourage Sandwich Terns to breed again will undoubtedly be to encourage Black-headed Gulls to settle on Far Point a lot earlier in the season. On the plus side there were times during the summer when Sandwich Terns, that had been gathered on intertidal sand bars and on the beach, did move into the colony, especially when the tide pushed them up in that direction. Mating was also observed on several occasions but obviously involved birds breeding on Scott Head.

The first birds (two) were seen on 11<sup>th</sup> April, long after several hundred birds had gathered at Scolt Head Island ten or so miles to the west. Peak counts occurred in June (400 on 11<sup>th</sup> June) and July and August, post fledging from Scolt Head Island (400 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 600 on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 400 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Aug and 800 (highest count of year) on 20<sup>th</sup> August).

Work is ongoing to improve the suitability of Blakeney Point as a breeding location for Sandwich Terns in collaboration with a windfarm company (Equinor), other partner organisations and led by an Expert Panel and Steering Group. The project is focusing on predator management and is currently in the monitoring and research phase in order to inform implementation of improvement measures.

**Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus***

Although there were thousands of Black-headed Gulls present in and around the harbour throughout March and April they did not settle to breed in any numbers early on. A few pairs attempted to breed at the Little Tern colony at the Watch House in May, but these nests all failed. By the end of May a small colony was starting to form inside the western enclosure on Far Point and the first eggs were laid around the 29<sup>th</sup>. Encouragingly, these were around the decoy birds that had been put down earlier in the season to attract Black-headed Gulls to breed there. Numbers built slightly through June with 43 nests counted on the 28<sup>th</sup>. During this walk-through count all clutch sizes were noted down. Some were incomplete clutches of one, but most contained two or three eggs. Mean Clutch Size (MCS) was 2.12 across all nests.

Table 8. Mean clutch size of Black-headed Gulls on Blakeney Point in 2025

Clutch size	1 egg	2 eggs	3 eggs	Totals
No. nests	11	16	16	43
No. eggs	11	32	48	91
			MCS	2.12

Four more nests were found and 47 pairs bred in total on the Point in 2025 and fledged a minimum of 61 chicks. This productivity (1.30 chicks per breeding pair) was important as it is hoped that successful breeding in 2025 will lead to a colony forming earlier in the year in 2026.

Extremely early chicks were seen on Scolt Head in late May and on the Point on 7<sup>th</sup> June, presumably having come from colonies further south!

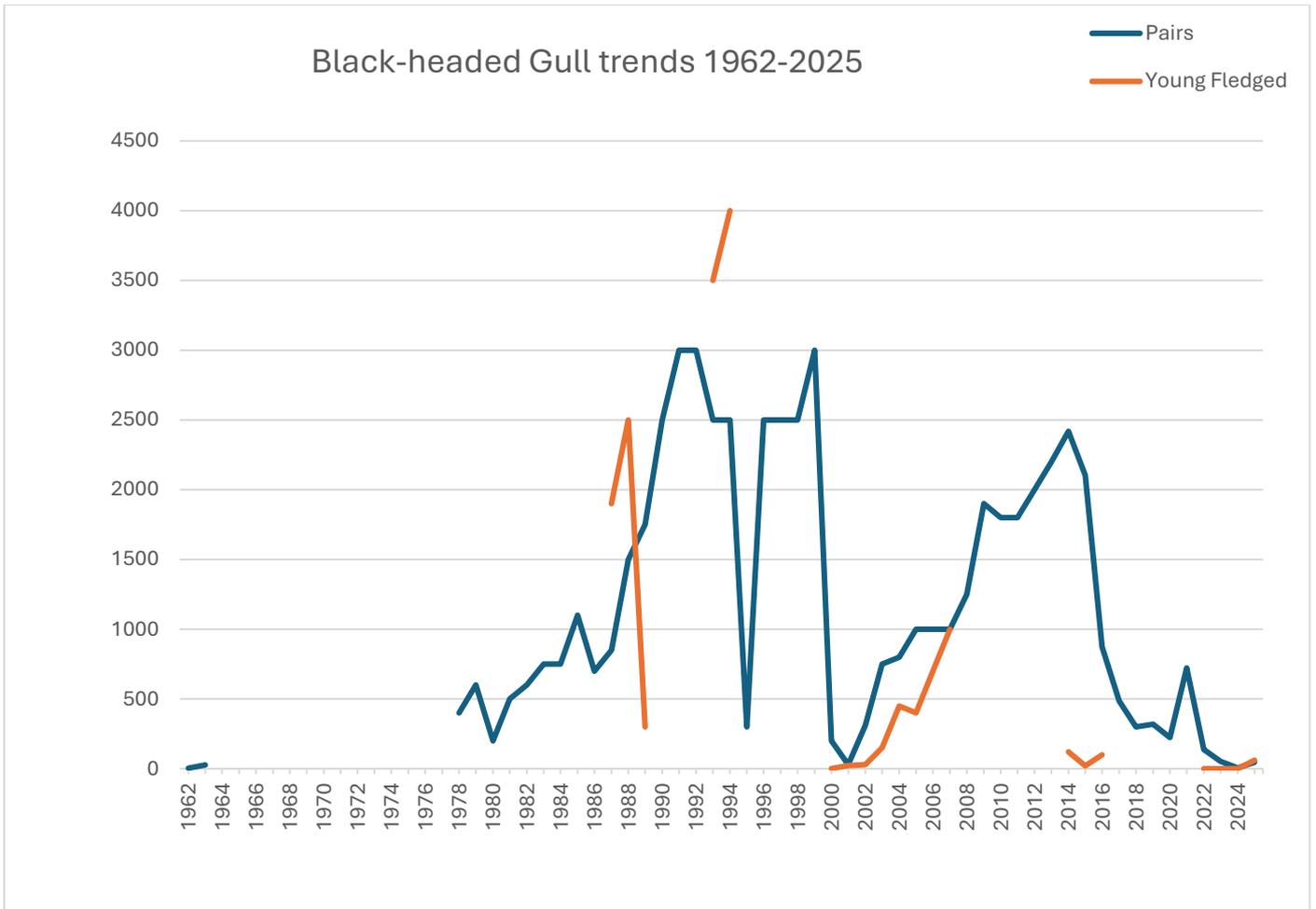


Figure 18. Black-headed Gull trends 1962-2025

**Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus***

No Mediterranean Gulls bred in 2025. They were seen in the colony on several occasions, but numbers were generally very low, and none settled. Mediterranean Gulls, once a regular breeder, have not bred on the Point since 2021.

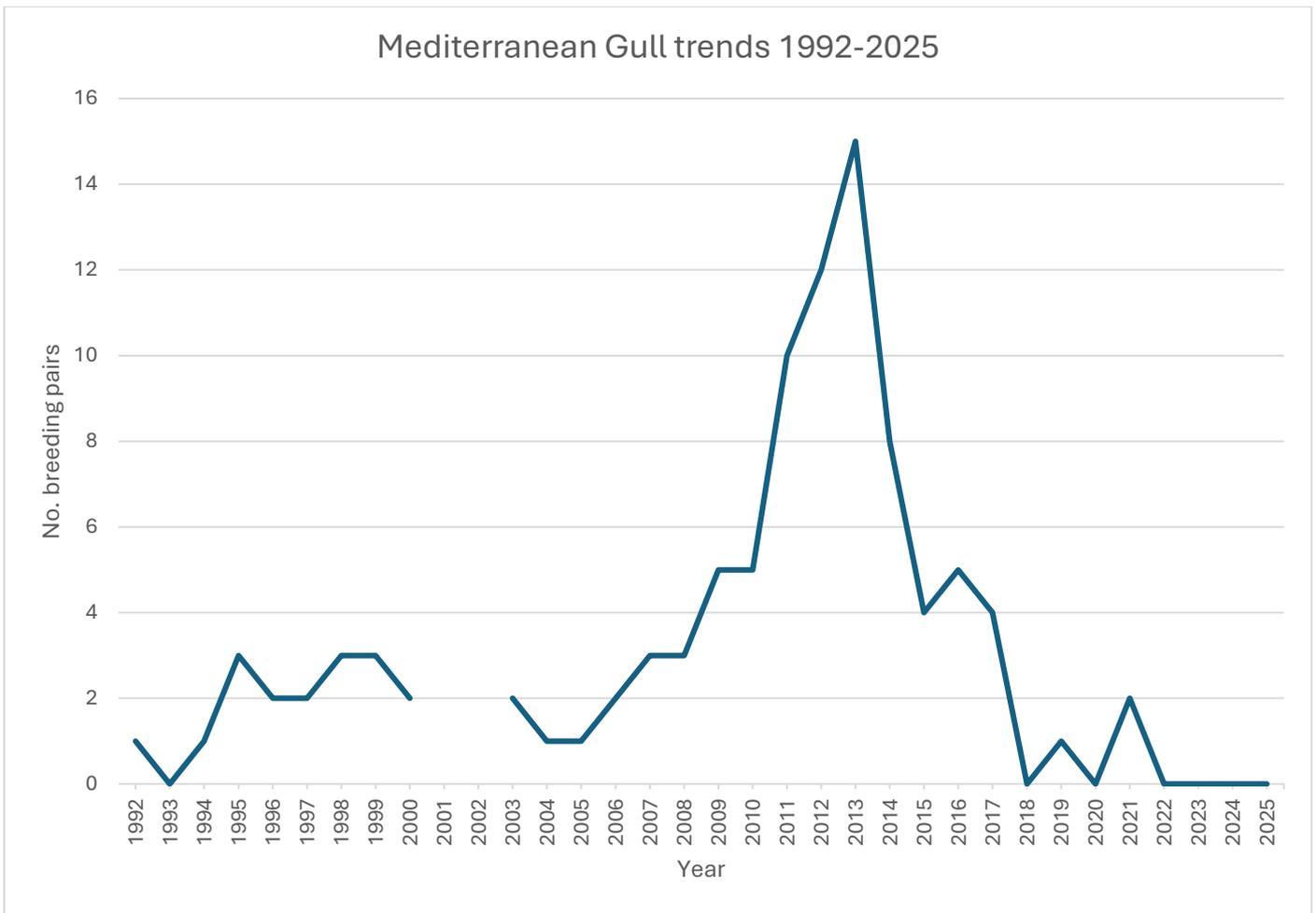


Figure 19. Mediterranean Gull trends 1992-2025

**Common Gull *Larus canus***

A few pairs attempted to breed west of the Gap, but none were successful. Predation on the eggs of other species by Common Gulls was once again a problem.

**Herring Gull *Larus argentatus***

At least three pairs attempted to breed but a licence [A09](#) was granted by Natural England to take or destroy up to 15 nests and all eggs were removed. The licence also allowed for up to five Lesser Black-backed Gull nests to be destroyed but none attempted to breed in 2025.

**Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus***

Two males were present throughout the spring and summer, an adult male and a sub adult male. The sub adult male spent a lot of time displaying and even built two nest platforms on the northern side of the Sand Hills. Despite his best efforts he could not attract a female and no breeding occurred. Both males also spent a lot of their time hunting on the reserve. This had an impact on other nesting birds and presented another problem for sensitive colonies of seabirds and waders. At one point in July, the sub adult started hunting over and landing in the Black-headed Gull and Common Tern colony on Far

Point. Increased human presence and some long bamboo canes pushed into the ground at different angles seemed to put it off and thankfully this behaviour did not persist.



Figure 20. One of the two Marsh Harriers that spent the spring and summer on the Point

### **Carrion Crow *Corvus corone***

A pair were present for most of the spring and summer and may have been responsible for the loss of quite a few Oystercatcher and Ringed Plover eggs. A nest in the Plantation was removed under general licence [GL40](#).

### **Skylark *Alauda arvensis***

Fifty pairs bred across the reserve. There were 17 territories between Cley and Yankee Ridge and 33 territories at the western end.

### **Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus***

A single pair raised three chicks in the reeds by the old River Glaven channel. There was another territory nearby but just outside of the Blakeney Point recording area.

### **Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

One pair raised four young from a nest inside the visitors' centre. The nest was originally placed with nothing underneath for support. Out of concern that the nest would fall off the wall once chicks got too heavy a ledge was screwed to the wall underneath the nest. Unfortunately, this caused the birds to abandon this nest and build another one a few meters away but this time on top of a pillar which

gave the nest support. Four young eventually spilled out of the nest and made use of the metal joist by the nest before moving on to handrails outside the visitors' centre.



Figure 21. Two Swallow chicks just after leaving the nest, on handrails to Lifeboat House, photo by Monica Doshi

### **Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes***

Seventeen pairs bred across the reserve which is five more than were recorded breeding in 2024. There were eleven territories between Cley and Yankee Ridge and six more at the western end. Many young were seen later in the summer.

### **Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Both swift boxes attached to the outside of the watch tower on the Lifeboat House were occupied by Starlings in May. At least five chicks fledged in June.

### **Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola***

Six pairs bred in 2025, the same number as in 2024. Four pairs bred between Cley and Yankee Ridge, one pair bred just east of the Plantation and there was a pair along the boardwalk between the Lifeboat House and The Gap. The pair along the boardwalk had three broods, the last of which was active well into September.

### **Dunnock *Prunella modularis***

Seven pairs bred in 2025. All of these were between Cley and Yankee Ridge.

### **Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii***

At least two pairs bred. A rather secretive pair at the western end of the reserve probably had a nest deep inside the big Yucca in the dunes near the Lifeboat House. A second pair at the Cley end of the reserve fledged chicks from a small disused boat on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May and probably the same pair fledged five chicks from an old crawler tractor in the same area near the fishing boats at the Cley end.

Counts of juveniles peaked in July and August with a count of 30 on 15<sup>th</sup> July and counts of 25 on 16<sup>th</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> August.

### **Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis***

Around eighty-eight territories were recorded across the reserve in 2025, with the majority (57), as one would expect, in the Sand Hills at the western end of the Point. This total is 21 more than were recorded in 2024.



Figure 22. Meadow Pipit eggs and chicks

### **Linnet *Linaria cannabina***

Linnets are another species that are difficult to monitor and estimates of the number of breeding pairs should be treated as thus rather than an absolute measure of abundance. Forty-one pairs were recorded in 2025 which is four less than in 2024.



Figure 23. Linnet nest

### **Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus***

Thirty-two pairs bred in 2025. This is 14 more than were recorded in 2024 when 18 pairs were recorded. Twenty-four of these were between Cley and the Long Hills and most of the remainder were along Yankee Ridge.



Figure 24. Reed Bunting nest

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