

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Introduction

Once more we have attempted to document the breeding species on Cley Marshes. This report is based on sightings made during visits to the NWT reserve and areas between E Bank and Iron Road during Spring and Summer 2009. This year Kath & Mick Claydon joined the efforts and increased dramatically the coverage of the meadows alongside Beach Road and the coast road. It also includes sightings that have been passed to us by other local observers.

It was not a scientific survey, but most areas were visited regularly. We merely took records of nesting birds and youngsters seen, and tried to follow the progress of each family. All sightings were from the hides and public footpaths around the reserve and eastern area. Billy's Wash, which has been flooded the last two summers is very difficult to view as there are many small channels and long grass for the birds to hide behind. The result is that we often have spasmodic sightings here.

The following species notes give our interpretation of these sightings together with our best guesses of the total numbers breeding and young that fledged.

## Summary

This first table lists birds which bred, or tried to, in our area this year with counts where known.

Species	Pairs breeding	No. young fledged	Earliest chicks seen	Notes
Mute Swan	3	7	21 <sup>st</sup> May	
Greylag Goose	57+	c.150	15 <sup>th</sup> April	
Egyptian Goose	5	7	17 <sup>th</sup> April	
Shelduck	5	33	1 <sup>st</sup> June	
Gadwall	14	65-73	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	
Mallard	34	76-94	5 <sup>th</sup> May	
Garganey	0			
Shoveler	1	4	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	
Pochard	4	8	13 <sup>th</sup> May	
Tufted Duck	4	7-17	18 <sup>th</sup> July	
Little Grebe	3	7	16 <sup>th</sup> June	
Bittern	0			Male booming
Grey Heron	4	5+	6 <sup>th</sup> May (heard)	
Marsh Harrier	6 (nests)	20	16 <sup>th</sup> June	Only 4 males
Sparrowhawk	?			
Water Rail	?			
Moorhen	15	19-30	21 <sup>st</sup> May	
Coot	19	21-30	15 <sup>th</sup> May	
Oystercatcher	13	0		
Avocet	96	3	7 <sup>th</sup> May	
Little Ringed Plover	2			No nests established
Ringed Plover	4	3 (1 brood)	13 <sup>th</sup> August	
Lapwing	35	5	18 <sup>th</sup> April	
Common Snipe	?			1 drumming
Redshank	15	5	18 <sup>th</sup> May	
Black-headed Gull	77	11	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	
Common Tern	1	0		

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The following species also bred, or are thought to have, but numbers are unknown:

Skylark	Sedge Warbler
Swallow	Reed Warbler
Meadow Pipit	Bearded Tit
Pied Wagtail	Goldfinch
Wren	Linnet
Duncock	Reed Bunting
Cetti's Warbler	

The following table shows comparisons with previous years for all species.

Species	Pairs breeding					Young fledged			
	2009	2008	2007	2006		2009	2008	2007	2006
Mute Swan	3	2	3	2		7	6	7	2
Greylag	57+	c.70	c.120	100+		c.150		100+	134+
Egyptian Goose	5	2	4	0		7	4	11	0
Shelduck	5	3	5	8		33	29	26-36	50
Gadwall	14	14	5	11		65-73	17+	6+	28
Mallard	34	21	15+	23		76-94	52	42+	32
Pintail	0	0	0	1					0-6
Garganey	0	0	0	0?					0??
Shoveler	1	5	0	7		4	9	0	17
Pochard	4	1	1-2	1		8	2	2+	3
Tufted Duck	4	2	1	1		7-17	3	0-4	3?
Little Grebe	3	3	2	2		7	6	3+	3+
Bittern	0	1	0	0			?		
Grey Heron	4	1+	1+	1+		5+	4+	2+	3+
Marsh Harrier	6	7	4	5		20	21	8	14
Sparrowhawk	?	?	?	1?					
Water Rail	?	1+?	1+	1+				?	1+
Moorhen	15	6	10	8		19-31	4	15+	10+
Coot	19	11	17	12		21-30	16	32	15+
Oystercatcher	13	10+	7+	10?		0	0	1	0
Avocet	96	60	85	98?		3	10	25	5
Little Ringed Plover	2	0	1-2	0		0	0	0	
Ringed Plover	4	5	9	4		3	0	5	8
Lapwing	35	12+	22	33		5	6+	4	13
Common Snipe	?		?	?					
Redshank	15	10+	15+	25		5	14	12	24+
Black-headed Gull	77	80+	c.100	144+		11	0	22?	54?
Common Tern	1	3	3	2		0	0	0	4

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## Species Details

### Mute Swan

*3 pairs, 7 young fledged*

A pair of swans were seen building a nest on the roadside beside Snipes Marsh on 9<sup>th</sup> April and by the 10<sup>th</sup> were sitting on eggs. They were visible to all driving along the road and soon became famous appearing in the EDP and on TV news. They got a Police Slow sign as they were causing traffic problems with cars and even the Coasthopper bus stopping to look at them. On 21<sup>st</sup> May 5 tiny cygnets hatched and somehow they all safely crossed the road into the Catchwater Drain. By 27<sup>th</sup> May one had been lost and the remaining family moved to the Shooting Pools on Pope's Marsh. They then stayed on Pope's Marsh, either on the pools or in drains. On 17<sup>th</sup> June there were only 3 cygnets left but these stayed together and were still being seen, when fledged, in October.

		fledged
1	<b><u>Popes Marsh</u></b> Eastern edge of short drain north (east). Nest with sitting adult found on 10 April; nest abandoned by 21 April (adults remained in general area but never seen on nest again).	0
2	<b><u>Snipes Marsh to Popes</u></b> Nest on roadside from 10 <sup>th</sup> April. 5 cygnets hatched 21 May. 1 cygnet lost after four days, another lost by 17 June. 3 cygnets continued to be seen until October when fledged.	3
3	<b><u>Catchwater Drain</u></b> Nest seen 20 April. 4 cygnets hatched 28 May and continued to be seen together in the drain and on the scrapes until October when fledged..	4

### Greylag Goose

*At least 57 pairs bred raising 150 to fledging*

As usual our earliest breeders. The first nest was seen by Snipe's Marsh on 12<sup>th</sup> March, and the first brood, 3 goslings, were seen between Arnold's Marsh & Sea Pool on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Over the period at least 57 different broods involving 293 goslings were counted but there could have been many more. As Greylags soon form crèches it is difficult to keep track of these broods but probably around 150 of these survived to fledge.

### Snow Goose

2 Snow Geese escaped from the Blakeney Collection in December 2008. On 4<sup>th</sup> June a single adult was seen on Bull Marsh with 3 goslings. On 5<sup>th</sup> June it only had 2 goslings which looked slightly different sizes & brownish, one paler than the other. We could not determine whether they were pure Snow Goose, hybrid with Greylag, or the Snow Goose was gosling-minding them for Greylags. They were still present on 6<sup>th</sup> June but on the 10<sup>th</sup> the adult was seen most of the day with no goslings and they weren't seen again so we will never know the answer.

### Canada Goose

*No breeding*

Although there is an ever increasing flock in the area outside of the breeding season, only a handful remain during April and May and there has been no evidence of breeding.

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## Egyptian Goose

5 pairs, 7 fledged

		fledged
1	A pair with 3 small goslings were first seen on 17 <sup>th</sup> April on pools between Sea Pool and Arnold's Marsh. This reduced to 2 by the 19 <sup>th</sup> and only 1 remained on 21 <sup>st</sup> . This was still with the parents on 5 <sup>th</sup> May but on 8 <sup>th</sup> it could not be seen but there was a pile of feathers nearby.	0
2	On 27 <sup>th</sup> May a pair was seen with 5 tiny goslings between Billy's Wash and Cricket Marsh. On the 30 <sup>th</sup> the family were on North Scrape where they continued to be seen until early August when all fledged	5
3	A pair with a brood of 10 was seen on Pat's Pool at the beginning of June. This brood rapidly reduced and on 9 <sup>th</sup> only 2 could be seen being brooded in long grass. They were not seen again.	0
4	A pair were seen on Pat's Pool on 19 <sup>th</sup> June with 2 tiny goslings. They continued to be seen there until the 30 <sup>th</sup> but not after that.	0
5	A pair were seen with 2 small goslings on Pope's Marsh on 9 <sup>th</sup> July. These were seen on and off until late August when quite large.	2

## Shelduck

5 pairs, 33 fledged

Shelducklings can form crèches when still very young and also can become independent within 15 days of hatching while still quite small. This can make following the progress of individual broods tricky, but the following gives our view of this year's broods.

1.	A brood of 9 small ducklings were first seen on Arnold's on 1 <sup>st</sup> June where they were being hassled by a 'gang' of 15 adults. Reduced to 5 by 14 <sup>th</sup> June. They were then not seen until early July when they were seen on several days in the Main Drain S of Arnold's Marsh.	fledged 5
2.	North Scrape. A pair with a brood of 8 small were on N Scrape on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June.	0
3.	A pair with 10 tiny ducklings were on the Brackish Pools west of E Bank on 4 <sup>th</sup> June. What appeared to be these were on N Scrape on 5 <sup>th</sup> . On the 6 <sup>th</sup> a single pair of adults were present with 18 small ducklings, it looked like broods 2 & 3 had merged. These 18 continued to be seen till the 18 <sup>th</sup> after which up to 15 were seen regularly until mid July by which time, although not fledged, the young had become independent and were only seen in smaller groups.	Assume 15
4.	A pair with 13 ducklings were first seen on Simmond's Scrape on 8 <sup>th</sup> June where they were seen frequently until the end of June. 13 seen on the central scrapes in late July were thought to be these.	Assume 13
5.	A brood of 4+ ducklings were seen on Billy's Wash on 7 <sup>th</sup> June. Between 3 & 5 were then seen occasionally until the 28 <sup>th</sup> when still small. Viewing was very limited here as the grass was long and they were not seen again.	0?

Also a pair with 8 small/medium ducklings were seen west of W Bank on 11<sup>th</sup> August with 5 there on the 20<sup>th</sup>. These were probably from further west so outside our recording area.

## Gadwall

14 pairs bred, between 65 and 73 fledged

Many small ducklings were seen but once they get to three-quarter size they become difficult to tell from the groups of eclipse ducks on the scrapes so can get lost. All broods roam widely around the scrapes and the drains in the reedbeds (which cannot be seen) so often go for days without sightings and ones not seen again could just be keeping out of sight. Therefore these counts are probably an underestimate.

	No. pairs	Ducklings seen	Fledged
Scrapes	12	84	53-61
Western Drains (reserve)	0		
Eastern Drains (Pope's)	2	15	12

In addition another 2 large (or fledged) ducklings were seen late in the season which could not be linked with any of the above broods.

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## Teal

*No breeding*

About 10-40 birds were present throughout the summer but no sign of breeding.

## Mallard

*34 broods were seen, at least 76-94 fledged*

Mallard take at least 50 days to fledge but can become independent before this. This means that broods can break up before fledged and hence become difficult to follow.

This years figure shows a significant increase on previous years and although this appeared to be a very good year for Mallard this increase may be partly due to better coverage especially in the eastern part of the area.

	No. pairs	Ducklings seen	Fledged
Scrapes	22	127	38
Western Drains (reserve)	6	30	13
Eastern Drains (Pope's)	6	43	25

In addition 18 large (or fledged) ducklings were seen late in the season which could not be linked with any of the above broods.

## Garganey

No evidence of breeding this year.

## Shoveler

*1 pair, 4 fledged*

A poor year again, with only 1 pair breeding, following 5 pairs last year but none in 2007.

1. **10** tiny ducklings were seen in the Catchwater Drain by Pope's Marsh entrance on **22<sup>nd</sup> May**, these were last seen here on 13<sup>th</sup> June. A brood of 8 medium ducklings first seen on Richardson's Scrape on 14<sup>th</sup> June were thought to be these. 4 medium/large in front of Daukes Hide on 27<sup>th</sup> June were thought to be part of this brood. These 4 continued to be seen until 20<sup>th</sup> July when fully grown.

fledged  
4

## Pochard

*4 pairs, 8 fledged*

Numbers continue to increase. This species is interesting in that we don't see them often outside the breeding season, but pairs are regularly seen from early March. As has happened in previous years females are seen with small young for a few days then not seen again till the young are large or even fledged. This year sightings of up to 8 juveniles on Richardson's Scrape in July make us believe that 2 and 6 fledged from two of our broods.

		fledged
1	<b>Catchwater Drain between E Bank and Iron Rd. 13 May</b> female + <b>5</b> Tiny (Estimate hatch 12 May). Reduced → 3 then → 2 by 19 May when still small. No more sightings.	2
2	A brood of <b>9</b> were seen in the drain by <b>Daukes Hide</b> on <b>21<sup>st</sup> May</b> with 8 there on the 24 <sup>th</sup> . 6 seen by Bishop's Hide & Richardson's Scrape on the 25 <sup>th</sup> were thought to be these.	6
3	<b>Snipes Marsh. 12 July 1</b> very small duckling with female (Estimate hatch 10 July). Seen again next day, then no more sightings.	
4	A female was seen with <b>1</b> small duckling on <b>Richardson's Scrape</b> on <b>1<sup>st</sup> June</b> .	

### Juveniles seen:

Female with 4 large ducklings by Daukes Hide on 10<sup>th</sup> July

2 fem/juv on 15<sup>th</sup> July

4 juvs on Richardson's on 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> July

8 juvs on Richardson's on 22<sup>nd</sup> July

4 juvs on Richardson's on 23<sup>rd</sup> July

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## Tufted Duck

4 pairs, 7-17 fledged

A slight improvement on the last few years but still not back to the 2004 numbers

- |   | fledged |
|---|---------|
| 1. <b>6</b> small ducklings were in the <b>Catchwater Drain</b> opposite Snipe's Marsh on <b>18<sup>th</sup> July</b> and again on the 21 <sup>st</sup> . A brood of 6 small ducklings seen on Richardson's Scrape on 21 <sup>st</sup> are thought to be these as were 4 ducklings reported on Carter's Scrape the same day. 2 adults with small ducklings were back in the Catchwater Drain on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> . 2+ ducklings were on Richardson's on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> . with 3, still small, there on the 28 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> . These continued to be seen on and off on the central scrapes until mid September when fledged. | 3       |
| 2. A brood of <b>7</b> small ducklings were on <b>Billy's Wash</b> on <b>19<sup>th</sup> July</b> and again on 25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> . 3 were seen on 29 <sup>th</sup> . 3 medium by Daukes Hide on 11 <sup>th</sup> August could have been the same brood but they weren't seen again.   | 0-3     |
| 3. <b>West and East of Iron Road Catchwater Drain 18 July</b> female with <b>6</b> newly hatched. Continued sightings until at least 16 Aug when perhaps only 5 medium remained. (NB: brood-sharing with 4 below). 4 med on 17 <sup>th</sup> August, 4 large/juveniles on 6 <sup>th</sup> September and 2 on the 9 <sup>th</sup> were thought to be part of this brood.   | 4-5     |
| 4. <b>East and west of Iron Road Catchwater Drain. 19 July</b> female + <b>9</b> newly hatched. Reduced to 7 by 26 July. Continued sightings until at least 16 August when probably 6 only remained. (NB: brood-sharing with 3 above)   | 0-6     |

## Ruddy Duck

None seen this year.

## Red-legged Partridge

Not fully monitored but a brood of 9 tiny chicks were found dead on the boardwalk on 8<sup>th</sup> June after heavy rain. Then on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 12 small chicks were seen by the Visitor Centre. 10+ on the path to the hides on the 23<sup>rd</sup> were probably the same. These continued to be seen around the centre, entertaining visitors and often coming to the back door for food. 2 large chicks still here in mid July were probably from this brood. Had the others moved into the fields or been lost?

## Common Pheasant

Not specifically counted but 2 broods were noted around the meadows.

- |  | fledged |
|--|---------|
| <b>Keeper's Marsh and Parking area by Old Woman's Lane.</b> 30 June female with 13 small-medium chicks. Probably part of this brood seen 1st July (12 chicks) and 3rd July (3). 10 small that could just fly were on the boardwalk on the 6 <sup>th</sup> before flying into the meadows. Female with 7 large chicks at "Car Park Triangle" by Old Woman's Lane on 24 July could have been this brood. No further sightings. | 10      |
| <b>Keeper's Marsh</b> 12 Sept. female with 5 small (c.2-week old) chicks which could just about flutter-fly. 2 small still around boardwalk in late September.   | 2+      |

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## Little Grebe

3 pairs. 7 fledged

- |   | fledged |
|---|---------|
| 1. <b>Snipes Marsh.</b><br><b>1<sup>st</sup> brood: 16th June</b> 2 small chicks with 2 adults. Continued observations of both chicks until 28 July; 1 only from 31 July to 5th August .  | 2       |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> brood:: 27th July</b> 2 small with 2 adults in same spot as first nest. Continued sightings of 2 chicks until 19 August.  | 2       |
| 2. <b>Catchwater Drain west of Pope's entrance. 6th July - 3</b> small chicks with 1 adult in Catchwater Drain. 3 chicks same place on 7th July. No further sightings (except 1 adult carrying small ?fish into reeds East of Iron Road on 9 July may have been this brood?). Adult with 1 juv seen here 7 <sup>th</sup> September. | 1       |
| 3. <b>Catchwater Drain, Bishop's Hide to E Bank. 27th July</b> 2 newly-hatched chicks with adult. Continued sightings of 2 chicks until 19 August.  | 2       |

## Bittern

*Did not breed this year.*

Booming (or grunting) was heard from 14<sup>th</sup> March till 17<sup>th</sup> May. On the 18<sup>th</sup> a bird was seen in display flight then seen daily until 22<sup>nd</sup> with 2 being seen together on the 20<sup>th</sup>. 1 was seen again on Snipe's Marsh on 28<sup>th</sup> May but then not reported again until 11<sup>th</sup> June when it was heard booming. 1 was seen on two later dates in June and twice in July. These sightings were not regular enough to suggest feeding flights, so it is assumed they did not breed.

It or another (some observers said it looked like a juvenile) was seen regularly during August and early September, including putting on a good show for visitors in front of Daukes Hide for 40 minutes at lunchtime on 25<sup>th</sup> August and 30 minutes on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> September.

## Little Egret

*No breeding yet!*

## Grey Heron

*4 nests 5+ fledged.*

Once more Grey Herons bred in North Foreland Wood. It is thought there were 4 active nests this year, but whether 4 pairs actually bred is unknown. Young were heard calling from at least 6<sup>th</sup> May. Feeding activity was noted by the first sighting of an adult plundering the Avocet nests on the scrapes on 7<sup>th</sup> May although earlier lost nests may have been due to these. What looked like a family party of 2 adults and 3 juveniles were seen off East Bank on 5<sup>th</sup> June. The largest number of juveniles seen was 5 on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

## Marsh Harrier

*4 nests on the reserve raising 12 young with a further 2 nests raising 8 young on Popes Marsh*

Territorial defence of potential nest areas at Cley was seen in two areas of the reedbed from the beginning of the year with separate adult females aggressively patrolling away potential rivals and immatures alike as the birds rose from the winter roost before dawn. Both these females then remained to breed. Spring adult male numbers were lower than last year and just two stayed on to nest, one of these mated to no less than three females, the other with one. At Pope's Marsh, a single adult male again mated with two females whilst Blakeney GM held three monogamous pairs. First hatching was considerably earlier than in 2008 and a youngster was sighted wing flexing above the reeds at Cley on 16<sup>th</sup> June with a second flying from a different nest on the 17<sup>th</sup>. For the record, both these early nests had been provisioned by the three-mate male although he was by then already showing minimal interest in anything other than his alpha female.

All the local nests were successful and overall productivity was higher than in 2008 with 32 flying young from the 9 nests situated between Blakeney harbour and the Iron Road at Salthouse (27 from 9 in 2008). More specifically there were 12 juveniles from the 4 nests at Cley (as against 15 from 5 in 2008) whilst the two Pope's females produced 8 (6 from 2 nests in 2008). At Blakeney the three pairs fledged 12 young between them (6 from 2 nests in 2008).

The oldest juveniles began to leave their natal marshes and venture onto the arable fields and neighbouring reedbeds from the second week in July, this being around the same time that at least one adult female appeared to move away from the area. [Peter Hadrill]

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## Sparrowhawk

*No evidence of breeding*

Adults were seen throughout the summer and may have bred in North Foreland Wood but no regular feeding flights seen this year.

## Kestrel

*Bred in area but don't know where*

Two birds were seen regularly throughout the season and from 10<sup>th</sup> April seen carrying food (voles & Avocet chicks). 1 juvenile was seen from 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

## Water Rail

*May have bred*

1 bird appeared to be nest building in the drain by E Bank car-park during March.. One or two birds were heard calling during the summer but no evidence of successful breeding.

## Moorhen

15 pairs, 19-30 fledged

An increase on previous years but probably due to increased coverage of the meadows and drains.

	No of pairs	No of broods	Chicks seen	Chicks fledged
Scrapes	1	2	9	3
Western Drains (reserve)	8	10	28	11-20
Eastern Drains (Pope's)	6	6	24	5-7

## Coot

*19 pairs, 21- 30 fledged*

	No of pairs	Chicks seen	Chicks fledged
Scrapes	11	18	8-9
Snipe's Marsh	2	5	4
Western drains (reserve)	4	9	9
Eastern Drains (Pope's)	2	0	0

A fairly average year although productivity was a little lower possibly due to predation.



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## Oystercatcher

*13 pairs, no young*

Around 30 birds were regularly seen in the area during the breeding period, with at least 13 pairs attempting to breed, but there was no evidence of any success. Other birds were looking as if they were going to nest but were not seen in the same spot on more than one occasion. Once more many of these birds insisted in nesting on the shingle close to the well used footpaths.

### East of E Bank

1. **Sea Pool:**
  - a. Attempt 1: 1 sitting east of Sea Pool on 21<sup>st</sup> April
  - b. Attempt 2: sitting half way up shingle bank behind Sea Pool near W end from 5 June, still 7 June but very wary. Not seen 10<sup>th</sup>
2. **Arnold's**
  - a. Attempt 1: 1 sitting between Arnold's & Sea Pool on 21-24 April
  - b. Attempt 2: sitting near the bottom of the shingle bank behind the east end of Arnold's 25<sup>th</sup> May till 22<sup>nd</sup> June (full term). Not there on 24<sup>th</sup> – may have been disturbed too much by birders looking for the Snow Bunting or could have hatched. No chicks were seen
3. **Arnold's:**
  - a. Attempt 1: 1 possibly sitting on middle spit (between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> gaps) on 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May
  - b. Attempt 2: 1 possibly sitting Arnold's spit 1 W side on shingle patch on 5<sup>th</sup> June not there on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Sitting there some of time on 10<sup>th</sup>. Not 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. Attempt 3: It or another there again on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Not 22<sup>nd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>. Again on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>. On 28<sup>th</sup> it was sitting but disturbed by Stoat which probably raided the nest, the bird didn't go back to nest. Sitting in the area again on 2<sup>nd</sup> July & 5<sup>th</sup> but not thought to be on nest.
4. **Arnold's:**
  - a. Attempt 1: possibly sitting on middle spit (between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> gaps) on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May
  - b. Attempt 2: Possible on Arnold's spit 3 on 28<sup>th</sup> June. Present 30<sup>th</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup> July. Still in area on 5<sup>th</sup> but not sure if on eggs.
5. **Arnold's:**
  - a. attempt 1 - at foot of bank behind Arnold's just W of 1<sup>st</sup> gap 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May
  - b. attempt 2 - half way up bank behind Arnold's just W of 1<sup>st</sup> gap 22<sup>nd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May
  - c. attempt 3 - on beach behind Arnold's just W of 1<sup>st</sup> gap from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June despite getting up off nest every time someone walked along the top path. Fog on 27<sup>th</sup> so didn't visit. Nest was gone on the 28<sup>th</sup>, abandoned or could have hatched? No chicks seen..
6. **Arnold's:**
  - a. Attempt 1: 1 behind pools between Arnold's & Sea Pool 25<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April
  - b. Attempt 2: seaward side of bank at E end Arnold's, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1 egg seen 5 June. Not looked for on 19<sup>th</sup>, gone on 20<sup>th</sup>.
7. **Meadow by E Bank**
  - a. Attempt 1: Sitting from 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May
  - b. Attempt 2: Sitting from at least 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May
8. **Pope's Marsh.** Sitting from 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 8<sup>th</sup> June (17 days)

### Brackish Pools

9. 1 sitting part way up the shingle bank behind Brackish Pools below highest point of path, inside fenced off area, from 4<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June. Not 16<sup>th</sup> June.
10. 1 possibly sitting on a tussock on the Brackish Pools on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> June. Not 12<sup>th</sup>.
11. 1 sitting on westernmost bit of remaining shingle bank just east of N Hide, just above path from 15<sup>th</sup> June till 16<sup>th</sup> July. This bird was very close to the path and spent a lot of time off the nest whenever anyone passed. On 17<sup>th</sup> July the nest was empty, a bird was seen moving an eggshell. No young were seen. A broken eggshell was found by the path which still had yolk in it. Hadn't hatched. Predated or desperate parent?

### W Meadows

12. **Eye Field.** Sitting from at least 17<sup>th</sup> May to 11<sup>th</sup> June when expected to hatch.. But no adults and no chicks seen here nor on surrounding scrapes after this date.
13. **Keeper's Marsh.**
  - Attempt 1 - sitting 31<sup>st</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> June (18 days)
  - Attempt 2 - in same field. Sitting 22-23<sup>rd</sup> June (2 days)

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Avocet

Once again the Avocets had a bad year. 96 pairs were thought to have attempted to breed but only 3 (or maybe 4) young fledged.

### Eye Field

The first pair confirmed on eggs this year were on Eye Pool on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Near to the Beach Car-park, they gave good views to all passing. They continued to sit on the eggs for 21 days hatching 5 eggs on 7<sup>th</sup> May. 2 chicks were lost the first day, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> gone by the 10<sup>th</sup> May, but the remaining 2 thrived and finally **fledged** on 13<sup>th</sup> June.

On 27<sup>th</sup> May a further pair with 4 small chicks appeared on the pool on Eye Field at the N end of Beach Rd and were still there on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Also on the 28<sup>th</sup> another pair were walking in the middle of Beach Rd calling frantically to what turned out to be another 4 small chicks which they proceeded to march on to Bull Marsh. We don't know where these 2 pairs had nested but can only assume they came from west of Beach Rd, in an area we weren't watching. A Kestrel was seen taking a couple of these chicks but one of them continued to be seen on the pool beside Beach Rd until 18<sup>th</sup> June when quite well grown but it then disappeared

### Central Scrapes

Breeding got underway as normal with the first sitting birds being confirmed on 18<sup>th</sup> April. The peak was reached on 6<sup>th</sup> May with 28 nests. A report in the log on 7<sup>th</sup> May told of a Grey Heron trying to plunder the nests on an island on which 8 birds were sitting, the Heron failed this time and all birds went back on their nests but by the 11<sup>th</sup> only 1 nest was left on this island. The first chicks hatched on 19<sup>th</sup> May on Pat's Pool, but all chicks were soon taken by predators feeding their own young (including Grey Herons and Marsh Harriers). The only ones to survive more than 2-3 days were a brood of 3 move from Simmond's Scrape to Whitwell soon after hatching, these continued to be seen for 8 days. By the end of May no chicks remained here.

A pair (probably trying again after an earlier failure) started sitting on a nest on Simmond's Scrape on the island closest to Dauke's Hide on 27<sup>th</sup> June. 2 or 3 chicks hatched on 13<sup>th</sup> July but all were lost within 4 days.

### North Scrape

This proved popular this year with the first nest being seen on 16<sup>th</sup> April and by 6<sup>th</sup> May there were 36 nests. In previous years North Scrape had proved less attractive to the preying Heron, so had the Avocets learnt? The number of nests continued to increase to a peak of 43 on 19<sup>th</sup> May, despite a few being lost. They started hatching on 12<sup>th</sup> May and the chicks were surviving well with the number of chicks reaching 49 on 25<sup>th</sup> May.. On the 26<sup>th</sup> May there was heavy rain and on the 27<sup>th</sup> only 14 nests and 33 chicks remained. Some had been flooded out by increased water levels but others appeared to just have been abandoned or preyed upon. By 1<sup>st</sup> June NO nests remained and only 2 chicks could be found (though some may have been hiding in vegetation as 6 were seen a few days later. A few tried re-nesting but no nest survived for more than a few days. 2 chicks did survive with **1 fledging** by 23<sup>rd</sup> June at which time the other chick was getting quite large but not near fledging and it was not seen again. Around this time there was an influx of adults and some fledged juveniles from other sites, so it became difficult to follow our birds but we don't think this other chick fledged.

### East of East Bank and brackish lagoons

Historically birds have nested east of East Bank on the Serpentine and Arnold's late in the season, which we have assumed have been pairs having second tries after failed nests on the central scrapes. However this year there were a few earlier attempts here.

1 pair were seen to nest on the edge of the Serpentine from 23<sup>rd</sup> April. They were below the bank making them difficult to see from East Bank. They appeared to be there the full 21 days but as the Serpentine dried up they became more difficult to see. On 14<sup>th</sup> May they were seen chasing off cattle that were near the nest area. No chicks were ever seen, so if any did hatch they had probably been predated (or trod on by cattle) very soon.

2 nests were in the middle of the dried out Serpentine from 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June and one survived until 5<sup>th</sup> July. On the 6<sup>th</sup> the nest was deserted and there was no sign of adults or young, either the eggs had failed to hatch, they had hatched and the parents had taken them somewhere else or they had been predated, however we fear it was the latter.

Up to 6 pairs attempted to nest on Sea Pool in early June but fluctuating water levels caused all nests to be abandoned.

On Arnold's Marsh up to 4 pairs were prospecting nest sites in late May but none were sitting for more than a few days so probably not actually on eggs. In early June nesting on here did get underway with a peak of 10 nests on the 15<sup>th</sup> but after that the number of nests decreased rapidly with none left by the end of the month. This was probably due to a Stoat which had been seen raiding an Oystercatcher nest in the area on the 27<sup>th</sup>. No nests hatched.

## Cley Breeding Records 2009

Avocets	First nest	Max nests at one time	Date max nests	Min No. Pairs involved	Broods hatched	No. chicks seen to hatch	Earliest chick	No. fledged
Pat's Pool	18 Apr	13	6 May	13	4	8	19 May	0
Simmond's	19 Apr	15	6 May	17	5	18	21 May	0
Whitwell	25 Apr	3	29 Apr	3	0	0		
Billy's Wash	18 Apr	8	3 May	8	4	5	16 May	0
North Scrape	16 Apr	43	19 May	51	22	55	12 May	1 (or 2)
Eye Pool	15 Apr	1	15 Apr	1	1	5	7 May	2
Brackish Pool				0				
Arnolds/Serpentine	23 Apr	11	15 June	13	1	2		
E of Arnold's	3 June	6	4 June	6	0	0		
Pope's	5 June	3	6 June	3	0	0		
<b>Overall</b>	15 Apr	69	6 May	96	37	90	7 May	3 (or 4)

### Little Ringed Plover

*2 pairs, no successful breeding.*

A couple of pairs were seen around the reserve during May. One pair was seen displaying regularly on North Scrape and by the 18<sup>th</sup> they appeared to be on a nest on the island directly in front of Daukes. One bird was sitting hard on the 19<sup>th</sup>. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the nest was bare and the birds only visiting occasionally, it was abandoned by the 21<sup>st</sup>. No eggs were seen. They had probably been chased off by the Ringed Plovers in the area.

### Ringed Plover

*Up to 4 pairs attempted to breed. 1 pair raised 3 young.*

Eye Field/beach: 1 or 2 pairs were holding territory around Eye Pool and the nearby beach area, from mid-April and one was sitting on a nest behind the fence by Eye Pool from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> before abandoning the nest. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1 was seen nesting on the grass just behind Eye Pool and another was reported nesting on the shingle just east of the pillbox at Eye Pool. A fence was put round this second nest to protect it from walkers. By the 8<sup>th</sup> only one of the nests appeared to be occupied and by the 10<sup>th</sup>, after heavy overnight rain, both were abandoned although a pair were seen displaying in the area. At least one of the birds involved here was a young bird, having been ringed as a chick in 2008.

Sea Pool: A pair were often seen displaying, mating and nest building here from late April but no regular nest could be found. In the latter part of July a single bird was seen regularly looking as if it may have had a mate on a nest, but this could not be confirmed. On 13<sup>th</sup> August a pair were finally found with 3 chicks which looked a week or 2 old. These 3 young were then seen regularly until 27<sup>th</sup> August when fledged.

Arnold's Marsh: A pair (thought to be different to the Sea Pool pr) were seen displaying on Arnold's and the grassy areas between it and Sea Pool from late April and finally seen on a nest on the grass path at the E end of Arnold's on 12<sup>th</sup> June. They continued to sit for 7 days but on 20<sup>th</sup> the nest was gone. It is amazing they lasted this long as they were almost on the path where numerous walkers and dogs go.

North Scrape:

1 pair were seen displaying in mid June but this was probably one of the pairs from Eye Field.

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Lapwing

35 pairs, 5 fledged.

	No of pairs	Chicks seen	Chicks fledged
Scrapes	7	7	1
Western Meadows (reserve)	7	10	1
Eastern Meadows (Pope's)	21	17	3

Many of these breeding pairs had 2 or more attempts at nesting before hatching any eggs.

Although the number of pairs seen shows a large increase on last year, the number of young fledged is lower. The higher number of pairs observed may be partly due to extra coverage of the meadows in the eastern part of the area but the low productivity is thought to be due to higher predation, the dry conditions of the summer and disturbance and destruction by cattle and farming activity. Also, many of the areas where they nested were too dry for the young to feed so they had to be moved very soon to find the damp, muddy areas they like. This may have meant we lost track of some birds but we are not convinced by this.

## Common Snipe

*Possibly bred*

At least 1 bird was drumming from 20<sup>th</sup> April till the end of June but no other evidence of breeding.

## Redshank

15 pairs, 5 fledged.

As usual no nests were seen and the young were difficult to follow.

	No of pairs	Chicks seen	Chicks fledged
Scrapes	5	11	4
Western Meadows (reserve)	1	2	0
Eastern Meadows (Pope's)	9	18	1

The number of pairs (broods seen) was about average but the number of young fledged was very low. Once more we think this was increased predation and also the dry conditions of the summer.

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Black-headed Gull

*A maximum of 77 pairs, 11 young fledged*

		fledged
<u>Pat's Pool</u>	3 pairs prospected nest sites but no nesting took place there.	0
<u>Simmond's Scrape</u>	At least 14 pairs nested on the island's on Simmond's Scrape but only one nest hatched with 3 young on 24 <sup>th</sup> May. One was lost the first day and by 27 <sup>th</sup> none remained. There were 2 medium/large chicks here on 18 <sup>th</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup> June along with some fledged birds but we do not think these had been bred on Simmond's.	2
<u>Whitwell scrape</u>	There were 14 nests on 3 <sup>rd</sup> May but this number then reduced and by the end of May none could be seen. The grass was getting long then on the island where most of the nests had been so there could have been 1 or 2 still sitting but not visible from the hides. 1 chick was seen there on 12 <sup>th</sup> June and then on and off till the 19 <sup>th</sup> but not again, this could have been 1 of the medium/large birds on Simmond's.	0
<u>Billy's Wash</u>	At least 27 nesting pairs were seen here on 20 <sup>th</sup> May but only 1 or 2 nests hatched young with only 3 young being seen from 23 <sup>rd</sup> May. 2 of these probably fledged.	2
<u>Arnold's Marsh</u>	The stony island again attracted its 3 nesting pairs and once again they had a rough ride, having to build up their nest with the rising water of each Spring Tide. On 20 <sup>th</sup> May there were 5 nests 3 on the island and 2 more on shingle spits, all were gone on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> . Still they tried again and by 11 June 5 were on nests again, this time 4 on the stony island. 1 large chick was present from 11 June but we don't know where this came from and this fledged on 23 June. On 28 <sup>th</sup> June chicks started hatching from the stony island with 7 there (broods of 3, 3 & 1) on 2 <sup>nd</sup> July. On the 10 <sup>th</sup> with water rising again, the remaining nest (the lowest) was abandoned, 3 eggs could be seen but they were nearly under water. By now only 6 chicks remained (3,2 & 1) and on the 11 <sup>th</sup> one (from the next lowest nest) was seen swimming, we hoped for solid ground but the parents seemed to chase it back to the submerging nest. On the 12 <sup>th</sup> this one could not be found. Amazingly the other 5 survived on the tiny remaining bit of dry ground until the water level started to fall on the 15 <sup>th</sup> . By the time of the next high tide they were large enough to swim off and all 5 eventually fledged.	6
<u>North Scrape</u>	A maximum of 14 nests were seen here but only 1 hatched giving 2 chicks on 23 <sup>rd</sup> May. 1 of these fledged.	1
<u>Serpentine/Popes Pools</u>	Due to low water levels in this area this year no birds nested on the islands on Pope's Pool.	

## Common Tern

*1 pair, no successful breeding*

1 pair were prospecting nest sites on Arnold's Marsh and tried to build a nest on the stony island but failed due to lack of room and 5 pairs of Gulls. No other attempts were seen.

## Tawny Owl

*unknown*

These are regularly heard calling from North Foreland wood and other patches of woodland around the village but we don't know if and where they may have bred this year.

## Skylark

*Bred. Numbers unknown*

## Swallow

*3+ pairs bred*

At least 1 pair nested in the pillbox near Beach car park and fledged 2 or 3 broods.

Another pair nested in the beach shelter and raised 2 broods, the first in the N side, and 2<sup>nd</sup> the E side.

Another pair nested on the ledge in the entrance to N Hide and raised 2 broods, fledging 6 and 5 young respectively.

## House Martin

Nested in the houses along the Coast Road, numbers unknown.

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Meadow Pipit

*Bred but numbers unknown.*

## Pied Wagtail

*Bred, numbers unknown*

It is thought 1 pair nested in the roof of the shelter in Beach Car-park. Young were seen being fed on the reserve from late May but we don't know where these had come from.

## Wren

*Bred, numbers unknown*

An adult was feeding young behind Daukes Hide on 24<sup>th</sup> May

3 fledged young were being fed by an adult low in the Catchwater Drain by Watcher's Cottage on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

## Duncock

*Bred*

1 adult with 1 juvenile in the Catchwater Drain between Watcher's Cottage and the Visitor Centre on 30th June

## Cetti's Warbler

*Probably bred*

3 or 4 males were singing in spring and early summer. There was 1 at Snipe's Marsh, 1 ranging from E Bank to North Foreland and 1 behind Daukes Hide. Another was singing regularly in bushes opposite the Visitor Centre in late May and early July but this may have been one of the other birds. No young were seen.

## Grasshopper Warbler

*Possible breeding*

2-3 birds were singing in late April and May, 1 ranging between E Bank and the bushes opposite the Visitor Centre and the other 1 or 2 along W Bank. 1 on W Bank was singing again in mid June. No other evidence of breeding was seen.

## Sedge Warbler

*Bred, numbers unknown*

A total of 42 singing birds were recorded in spring. At least 25 birds were singing on a loop of the reserve from Old Woman's Lane via Skirts, E Bank, shingle bank & Beach Rd in early May, with another 5 between the road and the central hides. A further 12 were singing in the area east of E Bank. Young birds were seen at several points around the area.

## Reed Warbler

*Bred, numbers unknown*

A total of 17 singing males were recorded in spring. 12 birds were singing on a loop of the reserve from Old Woman's Rd via Skirts, E Bank, shingle bank & Beach Rd in early May with a further 2 by the boardwalk out to the central hides and 1 east of E Bank. A further 2 were on territory by the end of May. 1 pair definitely bred in the reeds behind Daukes Hide with young being seen here on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

## Bearded Tit

*Bred. Numbers unknown*

Several family parties were seen throughout the summer and huge numbers of birds were flying around on the reserve in late September but exactly how many pairs were involved we could not tell.

## Goldfinch

*1 + pairs bred*

A pair bred behind Daukes Hide with young being fed in late July and early August.

# Cley Breeding Records 2009

## Linnet

*Probably bred*

## Reed Bunting

*7+ pairs bred*

1. A pair were by the boardwalk with 4+ young seen on 27<sup>th</sup> July.
2. A pair was on Beach Rd where young were also seen.
3. A pair nested in the reeds just east of Pat's Pool
4. A pair nested in the grass in front of N Hide
5. A pair with young were seen at the north end of E Bank
6. Iron Road, S of Main Drain: 1 pair were seen frequently from mid-May through June; food-carrying on 29 May
7. Iron Rd, N of Main Drain: A male was regularly singing at the same spot from 12 June into July. Pair together here on 20 June

## Notes:

Once more we would like to thank Bernard Bishop and all local birders who told us of their sightings of nests and young birds around the reserve thus helping to complete the picture. The details for Marsh Harriers were again provided by Peter Hadrill and his regular dawn observations. Unfortunately he has now moved out of the area so we will have to cover these next year, but doubt we will do as thorough a job.

We hope to repeat this exercise again next year so any observations or other input will be gratefully received. There are still many species, especially the passerines, for which we never manage to collect enough data to give firm results and would like to improve on this in the future. So if you think it is worthwhile and would like to help we would love to hear from you.

Copies of this report are sent to interested local birders, the County Recorder, the NWT and RSPB. A summary is published in the Cley Bird Club newsletter.

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