

Cley Breeding Bird Report 2015

Introduction

Once more we have attempted to document the breeding species on Cley Marshes. The area covered is Norfolk Wildlife Trust's (NWT) Cley Marshes between West Bank and East Bank, the area between East Bank and Iron Road (which includes the land that was purchased by the NWT in 2013) and Snipe's Marsh. We have also noted any breeding activity in areas due south of the A149 including North Foreland wood but, apart from specific species, these were not watched thoroughly.

As in previous years most areas were visited frequently during spring and summer 2015. We took notes of nesting birds and youngsters seen, and tried to follow the progress of each family. Again this year the NWT wanted to do full surveying of the land between E Bank and Iron Rd. to enable them to see the effect their habitat improvements would make over future years, so in addition to our normal monitoring we did some fixed format transect type walks that could be repeated in future years. These were done between mid-April and mid-July. To do these fully we were given permission to go onto the new land and walk along the tracks to monitor the pools and the reedbeds in more detail, otherwise all sightings were from the hides and public footpaths around the reserve.

Once again last winter there were significant changes to the habitat which were likely to affect breeding birds. The Shooter's Pools that had been renovated prior to last year's breeding season and their newly-created bare islands became a haven for Avocets and Black-headed Gulls in 2014. This year there was a lot more vegetation on these islands, resulting in fewer Avocets. In the autumn of 2014 two new pools were dug out of the reedbed along the Skirts just west of East Bank. These initially had bare islands but by spring the reeds had started to grow on them. Swans, geese and ducks very soon found these pools and we were hoping for nesting there but in the end only Greylag Geese took to them. In October 2014 a further high tide caused more change to the shingle by Sea Pool with another large shingle fan being created at the east end. There had always been two smallish scrapes in the meadows just east of the entrance to what was called Pope's Marsh. In early winter these were dug out and extended northwards into one large scrape now known as Watling Water. This scrape has a few islands, some of which were bare at the start of this year's breeding season, and we were hopeful of breeding there. Avocets, Coots and Black-headed Gulls did nest here but the vegetation soon grew high and progress became difficult to follow. A lot of work was done by NWT over the winter to improve the water controls on the eastern meadows. This was very successful and the whole Serpentine area had a good water level all summer, being very wet to the north and moist-wet to the south, which encouraged many more birds than usual to nest there.

Much of the area seemed to be making a steady recovery from the effects of the tidal surge. The regular moth traps produced slightly better numbers of several reed bed species this year as well as many small flies, spiders and beetles, suggesting a better food supply for birds. Dragonflies were also much more in evidence this autumn, reflecting fresher water conditions.

To show the different breeding on both parts of the extended reserve we have, where possible, split breeding records for the Western (Beach Rd, Cley to E Bank – including Snipes Marsh) and Eastern (E Bank to Iron Rd) areas in this report.

The following species notes give our interpretation of this year's sightings together with our best estimates of the total numbers breeding and the young that fledged.

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Summary

Tables 1 and 2 list birds that bred, or attempted to, in our area this year with counts where known.

Table 1. Ducks, Waders etc.

Species	Minimum Pairs		Min. young fledged		Earliest chicks seen	
	W	E	W	E	W	E
Greylag Goose	17	37	7	57	20 April	23 April
Canada Goose	0	2		4		22 May
Egyptian Goose	1	0	2		12 May	
Shelduck	3	4	0	22	6 July	15 June
Gadwall	10	6	17	9	20 June	6 June
Mallard	23	10	32	14	26 April	3 May
Shoveler	3	4	5	6	24 June	29 June
Pochard	2	1	0	0	23 May	26 May
Little Egret	12		?			
Grey Heron	4		?		15 March	
Marsh Harrier	2 nests	2 nests	3	2	17 July	1 July
Water Rail	2		1		9 July	
Moorhen	13	3	8	3	19 May	5 June
Coot	8	7	4	7	15 April	22 May
Oystercatcher	8	5	0	0	16 June	25 June
Avocet	14	50	4	6	28 May	18 May
Little Ringed Plover	3	2	2	0	28 July	
Ringed Plover	2	2	0	0	22 May	
Lapwing	23	28	0	13	3 May	4 May
Redshank	6	12	?	4	16 May	20 May
Black-headed Gull	3	250	0	32		27 May
Common Tern	2	0	0	0		

Table 2. Passerines

Species	Min. Pairs/ singing males		Species	Min. Pairs/ singing males	
	West	East		West	East
Skylark	15	8	Reed Warbler	20	?
Swallow	1	0	Whitethroat	4	1
Meadow Pipit	8	12	Bearded Tit	8	2
Wren	3	0	Goldfinch	4	0
Cetti's Warbler	2	0	Linnet	1	2
Grasshopper Warbler	1	0	Reed Bunting	16	8
Sedge Warbler	30	?			

The following species also bred either on the reserve or near-by, but numbers are unknown/unconfirmed:

Common Pheasant	House Martin (houses along	Duncock
Red-legged Partridge	Coast Rd)	Lesser Whitethroat
Sparrowhawk (N Foreland)	Pied Wagtail	

The following species are thought to have bred in nearby fields/woods but this was never formally confirmed:

Kestrel	Wood Pigeon	Tawny Owl (N Foreland)
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Table 3. Comparisons with previous years

Species	Minimum Pairs breeding					Minimum Young fledged			
	2015	2014	2013	2012		2015	2014	2013	2012
Mute Swan	0	3	3	4		0	2	11	10
Greylag	54	40	35	40		57	?	?	?
Canada Goose	2	3	1	3		3	4	4	7
Egyptian Goose	1	0	0	0		2			
Shelduck	7	10	14	13		22	26	54	64
Gadwall	16	8	17	9		26	19	48	16
Mallard	33	35	30	31		46	23	65	64
Garganey	0	0	1	0		0	0		
Shoveler	7	4	9	10		11	0	26	8
Pochard	3	0	8	1		0		2	7
Tufted Duck	0	0	2	4				0	0
Little Grebe	0	0	2	1				3	2
Little Egret	12	8	2	7		?	?	?	6
Grey Heron	4	3	1	3		?	?	?	4
Marsh Harrier	4 (nests)	3 (nests)	2	4		5	7	6	9
Water Rail	2	2				1	?		
Moorhen	16	9	16	19		11	5	12	20
Coot	15	16	9	18		11	13	9	17
Oystercatcher	13	15	15	10		0	0	0	0
Avocet	64	80	100	80		10	14	37	55
Little Ringed Plover	5	6	2	2		2	2	5	1
Ringed Plover	4	4	5	1		0	1	2	3
Lapwing	51	51	47	77		13	19	14	58
Redshank	18	20	22	25		4	?	6	13
Black-headed Gull	253	121	32	40		32	50	3	0
Common Tern	2	0	0	0		0			
Little Tern	0	2					0		
Skylark	23	18	?	16					
Swallow	1	3	5	4		5	0	9	26
Meadow Pipit	20	15-16	?	17					
Wren	3	1	3	?					
Stonechat	0	0	0	1					9
Cetti's Warbler	2	3	4	6					9
Grasshopper Warbler	1	0	0	1					2
Sedge Warbler *	30	46	60	25					
Reed Warbler *	20	61	44	47					
Bearded Tit	10	12	6	12					
Linnet	3	2	2	2					
Reed Bunting *	24	21-22	22	15					

For many species the level of coverage of the eastern area has varied over the last four years with greater coverage in 2014 and 2015. However, for the species marked with an * detailed surveys have not been done of the interior of the eastern sector except in 2013 when they were surveyed by Reg Land (an NWT consultant) whose figures are included. 2015 counts for Reed and Sedge Warblers are only for the western sector.

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Species Details

Mute Swan

No breeding this year.

There were a lot of swans around the reserve at the start of the year (many first/second year birds). Pairs were seen in the usual areas but no nests were found and no cygnets were seen. This is the first year since we started recording in 2003 that Mute Swans have not bred.

Greylag Goose

c.54 pairs bred, 132 goslings seen, estimated 57 fledged

	No. Pairs	Nests seen	Earliest Chicks Seen	Chicks Seen	Broods seen	No. Fledged
West	17	17	20 April	52	16	7
East	37	11	23 April	80	17	50
Total	54	28		132	33	57

A count of Greylags around the whole area on 12th March gave 54 distinct pairs, this excluded flocks and singletons. The WeBS on 23rd March showed 196 birds. The first nest was seen on 20th March on the small reedbed pool just SW of E Bank sluice. 28 nests were seen but there were probably many more in reeds where we could not see them, especially in the eastern area.

The first young were seen on 20th April, a brood of 6 in the cut reeds west of E Bank. Compared with the lack of goslings last year this was more of a normal year with large crèches, especially on the Serpentine. Very few broods and no crèches of large young were seen on the western meadows so we are not sure what happened there. The figures given as fledged in the table above reflect the number of large goslings seen in each area; we don't know exactly how many fledged.

Canada Goose

2 nesting attempts (1 failed), 3 goslings hatched, 3 fledged

The first nesting attempt seen was on the meadows/reeds north of Walsey Hills on 4th April but was abandoned within days. The only other nest was on an island in the old Shooter's Pools in the new land, first seen on 13th April. 3 goslings hatched around mid-May. They seemed slow to mature but were assumed to have fledged by the end of July.

There was a report of 3 or 4 small goslings on Eye Field but we do not know where these could have come from and they were never reported again nor were any others in the western area.

Egyptian Goose

1 pair 5 goslings 2 fledged

On 12 May a pair was seen with 5 small goslings on one of the new pools west of East Bank. The nest location was not known. The family continued to be seen in this area but the brood reduced to 2 by 22 May. By 5 June they had moved east and were regularly seen around Watling Water and the surrounding meadows in the east. One of the goslings appeared to have much paler primaries than the other. The goslings were expected to fledge by the end of July but remained with their parents until at least 18 August. Since then a rather pale-winged bird has sometimes been seen on the reserve but we do not know if it is one of these juveniles. This is the first time Egyptian Geese have bred in our area since 2009.

Shelduck

7 pairs, 75 ducklings, 22 fledged

	No. Broods Seen	Earliest ducklings seen	No. Ducklings seen	No. Fledged
West	3	6 July	26	0
East	4	15 June	49	22
TOTAL	7		75	22

As usual no nests were seen in the area so we don't know if any pairs actually nested on the marshes or if all nested in nearby areas and then brought their young to the marshes.

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This year the first ducklings were not seen until 15th June which is the latest since we have been recording. This was a brood of 6 on Watling Water in the eastern sector and over the next few days a 'family' of 14 ducklings was seen, but we don't know if this was a crèche including the original 6 or a different brood. Nearby on Pope's Pool what appeared to be a single brood of 23 ducklings was seen on 22nd June. The books say that clutch size for Shelduck is only 8-10 but we regularly see broods much larger than this. It is said that sometimes more than one female can lay her eggs in the same nest which may be the reason for these large broods. Also the ducklings can form crèches within a few days of hatching. So although we have said broods, these may be crèches. In the western area no ducklings were seen until 6th July when a pair with a single duckling was on N Scrape. Within the next week broods of 10 and 15 were seen on Pat's Pool and N Scrape respectively.

By mid-July we were seeing a lot of large or fledged young around but many of these will have come in from elsewhere. Of the small ducklings we had seen in the eastern sector we think 22 fledged but probably none fledged in the western sector. However, since shelducklings can become independent within 15 days of hatching we could easily have lost track of some.

Gadwall

16 pairs bred, 86 ducklings seen, 26 fledged

	No. Broods Seen	Earliest ducklings seen	No. ducklings seen	No. Fledged
West	10	20 June	58	17
East	6	6 June	28	9
TOTAL	16		86	26

After the poor year in 2014 the breeding figures were much better this year. The first brood of ducklings seen was a female with at least 3 tiny on Wigeon Marsh on 6th June but they were never seen again. On the western part of the reserve the first ducklings were a brood of 6 on Richardson's Scrape and 8 on North Scrape, both on the 20th June.

As usual we didn't see any nests so it is difficult to be certain on the number of breeding pairs. The WeBS and other counts in April and May (prior to nesting commencing) suggested a maximum of 16 pairs in the eastern sector and 14 pairs in the west. We saw 16 broods of ducklings (10 West, 6 East) with a total of 86 ducklings.

Gadwall, like most ducks, often spend a lot of time in drains out of view so, especially in the east, we could easily have missed a few broods.

By late July adult Gadwall commence their moult and sit around in large groups. It then becomes very difficult to tell broods of large ducklings from these eclipse adults so we lose track of the broods. However, we think at least 26 fledged but there could have been more.

Mallard

33 pairs bred, 173 ducklings seen, 46 fledged

	No. Broods Seen	Earliest ducklings seen	No. ducklings seen	No. Fledged
West	23	26 April	127	32
East	10	3 May	46	14
TOTAL	33		173	46

Western area

The first ducklings seen this year were a brood of 2 on South Pool on 3rd May; unfortunately these were never seen again. Only 3 further broods were seen during May with most appearing in late June and July. One of these, a brood of 7 first seen on the new Skirts pools included 2 pale ducklings; probably the offspring of one of the white male Mallards that had been on the reserve all winter. These made this brood easy to follow so we know that 4 (including 1 mottled white bird) survived to almost full size and probably fledged. In total we saw 23 different broods (127 ducklings). As usual we had difficulty following the progress of these broods but we believe that at least 32 fledged.

Eastern area

As was the case last year, far fewer broods/ducklings were seen in the eastern area but this could have been because it is much more difficult to see into the network of drains here. The first to be seen were broods of 4 and 7 on the Serpentine on 24th May. The brood of 4 weren't seen again, but the 7 continued to be seen by E Bank and on Snipe's Marsh until they fledged in mid-July. In total only 10 broods (46 ducklings) were seen here and we only have evidence of 14 fledging. Of interest the only broods we followed through to fledging were on the Serpentine where it is easier to see birds than in the rest of the eastern area, so were there more that we didn't see?

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Garganey

No evidence of breeding this year

A very early first-winter drake was seen on the central scrapes from 4-20th February. Single adult drakes were then seen on 17th April, 13-15th May and then from 24th June. On 28th June it was joined by another drake and the two remained moulting into eclipse plumage until July. No females were seen and there was no evidence of breeding.

Shoveler

7 broods, 44 ducklings seen, 11 fledged

	No. Broods Seen	Earliest ducklings seen	No. ducklings seen	No. Fledged
West	3	24 June	25	5
East	4	29 June	19	6
TOTAL	7		44	11

Following the poor year for this species in 2014, this year was fairly average. The first ducklings, a brood of 8, were seen on Pat's Pool on 24th June, 3 weeks later than previous dates. This brood continued to be seen regularly on the central scrapes and 4 or 5 of them fledged in early August. Most other broods were only seen once or twice but one brood was seen a few times in the drains of the eastern meadows including a late sighting when the young were large so it was assumed that these fledged.

Pochard

3 broods, 19 ducklings seen, none fledged

	No. Broods Seen	Earliest ducklings seen	No. ducklings seen	No. Fledged
West	2	23 May	14	0
East	1	26 May	5	0
TOTAL	3		19	0

Pochard do not winter at Cley and this year the first did not return until 13 March. The maximum number seen during spring was 17 birds including 5 females. The number of females being seen reduced during April indicating, we hoped, that they were on nests.

Western area

The first brood of 7 ducklings was seen on 23rd May in the new pools by the Skirts off E Bank but, as is often the case with Pochard at Cley, they were seen the next day but never again. Another brood of 7 were seen on these pools and in the Catchwater Drain from 22nd June. This brood moved east through the drains reducing to 2 medium sized ducklings by mid-July. As far as we know, none fledged.

Eastern area

On the Eastern pools a brood of 5+ were seen on Swan Lake on 26th May. A brood of 4, still small, ducklings in the drains east of Watling Water, seen spasmodically over the next three weeks, were probably the same brood.

Tufted Duck

No evidence of breeding

Tufted Ducks began to return in mid-April with a maximum count of 15 on 18th May. No more than 4 females were seen. They are late breeders with the first ducklings usually being seen in July, but none were seen this year so we must assume they did not breed. This is the second year running that we have seen no evidence of breeding despite young having been seen in all previous years since we started recording in 2003.

Red-legged Partridge

1 pair, may have bred on the reserve

On April 19th a pair was staying near one particular spot in Keeper's Marsh. They were seen the next day further west but no young were visible if present. Other sightings of partridges in the same part of the reserve were on April 25th, May 2nd and 15th.

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Common Pheasant

3 males, 2 broods seen on the reserve

On April 7th a pair was seen on the eastern bank of Pat's Pool and 2 more males had been displaying slightly further east some days earlier. The first sign of breeding came on May 7th near the Saltpans with a female escorting 1 tiny chick. On August 12th a female was seen with 3 medium chicks along the footpath north of the Visitor Centre.

Little Grebe

Again no evidence of breeding

Another disappointing year with very few sightings of Little Grebe around the reserve and, for the second year running, no signs of breeding on Snipes Marsh. A pair was seen on Watling Water (Eastern area) towards the end of the season but we have no proof of breeding. This is the second year running that they did not breed after young had been seen all previous years since we started recording in 2003.

Bittern

Did not breed again this year

There were a few sightings of single birds during the spring (3 in March, 1 in April and 2 in May) then sightings of birds flying over and dropping into the reedbed on 6 days during the first half of June. No booming was heard but there were two reports of booming from Blakeney Freshes on single evenings in early April and late May. This leads us to believe that Bitterns did not breed at Cley again this year. The last time they did breed at Cley was in 2008.

Little Egret

12 pairs nested in North Foreland wood, no. of young unknown.

The first Little Egret reported flying into N Foreland Wood was on 12th March but a visit to the wood on the 15th found no nests. By early April they were being heard from the wood and on the 11th a photographer entering the wood flushed 20. On 19th April there were many Little Egrets in 3 trees with at least 1 on a nest. After this they were regularly reported flying into the wood with bulging crops and by 16th May there were 12 active nests. The first juvenile was reported on the reserve on Pat's Pool on 26th June.

Grey Heron

4 pairs nested in North Foreland wood, no. of young unknown.

Three or four Grey Herons were seen regularly in the area during the winter months. On the evening of 27th February 7 birds were seen displaying over N Foreland Wood. On 12th March 11 birds were flushed from the wood by a Buzzard. Visits found 3 occupied nests on 15th March and 4 on later dates. Young were difficult to see in the tall trees but were seen in at least 2 nests. The first fledged bird was seen with 2 adults on N Scrape on 27th May and at least 4 juveniles were seen together on the eastern meadows on 24th June but these could have come from elsewhere.

Marsh Harrier

4 females (2 males), 2 broods, 5 fledged.

	No. nests	No. broods	No. Fledged
West	2	1	3
East	2	1	2
TOTAL	4	2	5

During the 2014/15 winter up to 16 Marsh Harriers were roosting most nights in the eastern reedbeds. At the same time the dominant female from last year (Blondie) seemed to be ruling the main Cley reedbed and only she and her mate were roosting there.

Western area

One pair (a female known to many as "Blondie" who has been at Cley for a few years and a dark male) wintered on the reserve and they were noted displaying and mating very early in the year. Nesting material was regularly being taken into the reed bed east of Bishop's Hide.

On 12th April a new female arrived and Blondie was seen flying with her (trying to see her off?). On 20th April a female (possibly the same bird) was seen taking reeds into the reed bed north-east of Pat's Pool. There was no sign of Blondie

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so we thought she may be on eggs. In early May Blondie was seen hunting most days, did she now have young? On 16th May a food pass was seen between the dark male and a female (not Blondie) who then took it down into reeds east of where Blondie's nest was. The male now had two females. Next day Blondie and the dark male were flying together over the original nest site then both went off hunting. Later the other female also came up from east of Bishop's Hide and went off hunting.

On 24th May Blondie was watched flying around for at least 30 minutes over Cricket and Keeper's Marshes occasionally drifting further east where she dropped down briefly into the reedbed. She then came up again and flew back to Keeper's dropping down into the reedbed just east of the boardwalk where she stayed. At no time was she carrying prey. Over the next week or so she was often reported dropping into Keeper's reedbed. It seemed that Blondie's first nest had failed (there had been a report of Crows taking eggs from a Harrier nest) and she was now trying again on Keeper's. No mating activity was seen and the male wasn't seen near this nest.

On 17th July a juvenile was seen flying over the reed bed and then perched in a tree with the new female. This youngster was seen regularly over the reserve for the next week or so. On 30th July the male and female were seen with 3 juveniles over the main reedbed. On 1st August the female came in and dropped food to two juveniles both of which looked recently fledged.

Although the situation seemed very confusing we have concluded that two females and a single male were involved. Blondie's first nest failed and she tried to re-nest near the boardwalk but this also failed. The other female fledged 3 young with the first fledging two weeks before the other two.

Eastern area

Positive indication of breeding behaviour was first recorded on 13th March when a classic tri-coloured mature male, was seen displaying in the presence of 2 females – one an all-dark bird and the other a lighter colour overall with a pale head and throat. Courtship display involving these 3 birds continued throughout March though at times another female, thought to be the main reserve resident female Blondie, was present in the area during display. By the first week in April, both the resident females had established their potential breeding areas, the all-dark bird favouring the central reed beds while the other bird known as the white-headed female, chose a site to the west. Both females were seen with nest material by 12th April and by the 18th, both birds quickly returned to their respective nest sites after a food pass from the male – an indication that incubation was under way.

The male continued to provision both females at their nest sites throughout the rest of April and into May and by the third week in May, both females had commenced the tail moult typical of incubating birds and all seemed to be well in the breeding process. However, by the second week in June, concerns were raised over the amount of time the white-headed female was spending off the nest and with her eventual disappearance from the area. It was evident this breeding attempt had failed at the egg stage.

The behaviour of the remaining female gave no cause for concern and by the second week in June, she joined the male in bringing food to the nest and clearly there were young to be fed. The first fledged juvenile harrier was seen on 1st July followed by a second on the 4th and these 2 birds appear to be the only young to fledge from this nest. It was noted that the flight skills of both juveniles were remarkably competent for birds presumed to have only recently left the nest and it may be that the bad weather in the second half of June caused them to carry out their post-fledging exercise routines hidden from view in the reeds. The juveniles remained in the natal area until the end of July with the last sighting on the 30th.

In summary, the situation on the eastern side of the reserve was more straightforward than the west; one male with two females nested, one of the nests failed at the egg stage and the other nest produced two fledged juveniles.

Sparrowhawk

Probably bred in North Foreland wood fledging 2+ young

A pair was seen flying in and out of North Foreland wood from mid-May. Later they were seen taking prey in and also driving off a hunting Marsh Harrier. On 11th August a probable juvenile was seen to fly across Arnold's Marsh to the beach and at the same time another youngster was calling from the wood.

Common Buzzard

Did not breed

Although Buzzards were seen over and around North Foreland wood early in the season they did not breed in our area.

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Kestrel

Did not breed in our area but probably bred in the wood behind Hilltop

A male was seen hunting over the reserve then flying behind Hilltop. Juveniles were seen on the reserve from early August with 2 together on the 23rd.

Water Rail

At least 2 pairs, 2 broods, 3 chicks seen, at least 1 fledged

	Potential Pairs	Broods (young) seen	No. Fledged
West	2	2 (3)	1+
East	0		
TOTAL	2	2 (3)	1+

Each year we believe that Water Rails breed on the reserve but find it difficult to get any proof.

Western area

Throughout the breeding season adult birds were reported from Bishop's Hide/Carter's Scrape and the drain in front of Daukes' Hide. Two adults were seen on Carter's Scrape on 27th May and on the evening of 9th July an adult was seen with 2 medium sized chicks on Carter's Scrape. They weren't seen again. At Daukes' Hide 2 adults were reported on two occasions in late March/early April and on 10th August an adult was seen with 1 fledged youngster.

Eastern area

The only sightings we had of Water Rail in the eastern area this summer was of a single bird on Wigeon Marsh on 11th April. There is no evidence of breeding.

Moorhen

16 pairs/19 nests min. 55 chicks. 11 fledged

	No. Pairs	No. Nests	Earliest date/chicks	Total chicks	No. Fledged
West	13	15	19 May	43	8
East	3	4	5 June	12	3
	16	19		55	11

The number of pairs attempting to breed was better than average although fledging success was poor with many chicks lost at an early stage. Three of the pairs made at least two nesting attempts. Our figures may not reflect the true picture as vegetation quickly spread in the drains, restricting visibility, and young chicks could have remained out of view. However, we do expect to see any larger chicks but very few were found this year.

Coot

At least 15 pairs, 11 broods, 28 chicks, 11 fledged

	No. Pairs	No. Nests seen	Broods seen	Chicks seen	No. Fledged
West	8	4	7	14	4
East	7	6	4	14	7
Total	15	10	11	28	11

Western area

This year in the western area we only found 4 nests which included 2 on Snipe's Marsh from the same pair of birds. The first chicks were seen on Snipe's Marsh on 15th April, a brood of 2 tiny. These 2 were seen regularly until 5th May by which time they were half grown, then not again. The adults then nested again and produced a single chick which did survive to fledging. In total young were seen from 3 of the nests and in addition 4 broods of young were seen that did not come from any of the known nests. Only 4 chicks fledged.

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Eastern area

In the eastern area 6 nesting attempts were seen at Swan Lake, Watling Water and in the drain between Watling Water and Iron Rd. The first chick was seen on Watling Water on 22nd May with 4 there on the 25th. Chicks were also seen on Wigeon Marsh and Swan Lake. In total 14 chicks (4 broods) were seen and 7 fledged. Due to the complexity of drains around this area and the fact that they cannot be seen from the outside we could have easily missed nests and/or other broods.

Oystercatcher

13 pairs attempted to breed, 2 broods (4 chicks) hatched, none fledged

	No. Pairs	Nesting attempts	Successful nests	Chicks seen	No. Fledged
West	8	24	1	3	0
East	5	12	1	1	0
TOTAL	13	36	2	4	0

As always Oystercatchers were noisily displaying in spring and soon birds appeared to be sitting on eggs.

Western area

Up to 8 pairs were seen in the western meadows with 1 pair on the brackish pool just east of E Bank, 3 pairs on the shingle between E Bank and N Scrape and 4 pairs on Eye Field and the meadows beside Beach Rd. Many of these had more than one try, abandoning a nest after a few days. Only 4 nests lasted more than a week and only one, on one of the 'tussock islands' at the north end of E Bank, went full term. Three tiny chicks were seen there on 16th June and we were worried that they would not be able to get off the steep sided 'tussock' safely but they did and were seen being fed in the saltmarsh the next day. Oystercatchers are one of the few species of waders which bring food to the chicks as opposed to leaving chicks to feed themselves. After 3 days only 1 sickly looking chick could be seen and we feared for that but the next day it was being fed by its parents. The young take around 30 days to fledge and this one survived for 19 days, but the next day there was no sign of the chick, the adults were still in the area but food wasn't being brought in; the next day the adults had gone too.

Eastern area

Five pairs attempted to breed here, 1 around Arnold's Marsh, 2 by Sea Pool and 2 alongside the Coast Road. Most nests only lasted a few days then new nest sites were tried. One on the beach by Arnold's survived 2 weeks, despite dog walkers and others going past, before succumbing to the inevitable. Two nests on the shingle inside the fence by Sea Pool both went full term. The first hatched on 19th June and initially no chicks were seen, then on the 25th a single small chick was seen being fed on Wigeon Marsh; this was seen a few more times but by 3rd July there was no sign of the chick and the parents had moved on. No chicks were seen from the second nest at the eastern end of Sea Pool. Another nest was found on the new path along the roadside at the end of May. After the official opening of the path (Attenborough Walk) on 12th June, the path had to remain closed to the public to avoid disturbance to this nest. It went full term and may have hatched around 24th June but no chicks were seen. The final pair was seen sitting in various places in the fields south of the Coast Road during May and then on Watling Water during June but were not successful.

Avocet

64 pairs, 80 chicks seen, at least 10 fledged

	No. pairs	No. Broods	Earliest Hatching Date	No. Chicks seen	No. Fledged
West	14	13	28 May	17	4
East	50	29	18 May	63	6
TOTAL	64	42		80	10
<i>+ from Blak Pt</i>		8		26	0

Overall allowing for birds relaying after their early nests had failed we believe there were 64 pairs that attempted to breed in our full area.

Western area

The first sitting birds this year were reported on Pat's Pool on 22nd April but as usual these were for 1 or 2 days only and it was 2nd May before birds were definitely on eggs. In all 18 nests were seen where the pair was sitting for more than one day and of these 10 lasted more than 1 week with 9 of them hatching young. The first chicks to hatch were seen on Pat's Pool on 28th May but were lost by the next day. Following that 6 more clutches hatched on Pat's Pool, 1 on

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Simmond's Scrape and 1 on Billy's Wash. From these, 11 chicks were seen of which 2 fledged. In addition there were 4 more broods (6 chicks) which could not be associated with known nests and 2 of these chicks fledged.

Eastern area

Last year many Avocets nested on the recently renovated Shooter's Pools. This year the vegetation had grown on the muddy islands and they didn't prove as attractive. Changes to other areas in the eastern meadows, including islands on the newly dug out Watling Water and improved water control on the Serpentine and Pope's Pool, looked as if they should attract nesting Avocets. Apart from the areas viewable from E Bank and the shingle, the Eastern area is still very difficult to watch. We had access to the Shooter's Pools again but the reeds soon grew high and these and the large number of Black-headed Gulls there made seeing Avocet nests difficult.

The first sitting birds were seen on Pope's Pool on 23rd April and the eastern Shooter's Pool on the 24th. In total 47 nests were seen that were occupied for more than a week the main sites being 19 in the Serpentine/E Bank area, 12 on Watling Water and 12 on the Shooter's Pools. Of these, young were known to have hatched from 19 and a further 19 nests went full term from which young may have hatched but were never seen. In all 63 chicks (29 broods) were seen of which 5 chicks (3 broods) could not be associated with known nests. Only 6 of these chicks survived to fledging.

Other

As happened last year, several Avocet families migrated from Blakeney Point to Cley fairly soon after the young had hatched. At least 8 broods (26 chicks) were seen to come across. Once they reached Eye Field those that we could follow appeared to move across Eye Field then try to cross the Main Drain. The first brood (4 chicks) was seen crossing Beach Rd on 26th May and got to N Scrape; where they survived one Peregrine attack but weren't there the next day. Another brood was seen in the drain but not found again. Two chicks from a brood of 4 that crossed to Eye Field on 10th July are thought to have got to N Scrape; 1 was taken by a Harrier but the other survived for a further 9 days. None of these chicks fledged.

Little Ringed Plover

5 pairs, 2 chicks seen, 2 fledged

	Pairs	No. Chicks seen	No. Chicks fledged
West	3	2	2
East	2	0	0
Total	5	2	2

Western area

A single pair was present on the central scrapes on 13th April but no breeding activity was seen until early June when 2 pairs were seen displaying and mating. One pair was seen on a nest on 15th June; it was difficult to see in long grass but appeared to be there until 22nd June, but not after. Another nest was seen on Pat's Pool on 22nd June but this only lasted 3 days. No further breeding activity was seen here.

A pair was seen displaying around N Scrape area in late May and early June. On 14th July an adult was seen on the shingle just east of the N Scrape screen feigning injury to a nearby young Kestrel, so probably had a nest nearby but we couldn't see it. On 28th July a single adult was seen with 1 tiny chick in this same area. On 30th there was an adult with 2 tiny chicks. These 2 stayed on the shingle and in the pool just west of the screen until 20th August when they both had fledged.

Eastern area

On 23rd June an adult was found sitting on a nest inside the fenceline on the shingle north of Sea Pool. We watched it for 12 days after which it was not seen. Another bird appeared to be on a nest on Watling Water on 5th July so there must have been a second pair, but they were not there on subsequent days.

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Ringed Plover

4 pairs, 4 chicks, 0 fledged

	Pairs	No. Chicks Seen	No. Chicks Fledged
West	2	4	0
East	2	0	0
Totals	4	4	0

There was no obvious setting up of territories observed this year; pairs were seen from late March but rarely in the same area for more than a day. The passage of tundra migrants from late April onwards made spotting birds on territory more difficult.

Western area

During April and May pairs were seen displaying on Simmond's Scrape, in Eye Field and on the shingle from Eye Pool to the Brackish. Although this was a wide area there was no evidence to show that more than one pair was involved. On 22nd May another pair was found with 4 tiny chicks in the Brackish Pools just NW of the crash site, the location of the nest was never determined. This brood was watched in the pools and the 4 chicks survived for 4 days before the numbers reduced until only 1 was left on 6th June. There were no further sightings after this, so we presume they were all predated. On 5th July a bird was found sitting in the fenced off shingle between the N Scrape screen and the Brackish Pools but after 7 days it was gone.

Eastern area.

Pairs were seen around Arnold's Marsh, Sea Pool, Watling Water and the meadows west of Iron Road during April, May and early June. On 10th June a bird was sitting on what appeared to be a nest in the samphire in the SW corner of Arnold's but was only present for 2 days. A week later, what was presumed to be the same pair were nesting on the shingle just north of the fenceline by the first gap; this nest was roped off but had gone the next day. We never got close enough to these nests to see any eggs. On 24th June a male was alarm calling on the shingle north of Sea Pool but although a bird appeared to be sitting on the 25th it was probably just resting as it was not there the next day. On 3rd July a bird was seen on the shingle at the east end of Sea Pool on the area where the breach had been. The nest was found on the 5th and the bird was still sitting the next day. However, this nest was quite close to the fence and the bird got up every time someone walked past; the birds could not be found after that. It is believed that 2 pairs were involved but given the timings of the different nests it could have been only one pair.

Lapwing

51 nesting attempts 23 broods min.45 chicks min. 13 fledged

The following table summarises nests which we were able to follow through from incubation to fledging:

	No. Broods Hatched	Earliest Hatching Date	No. Chicks Known to Hatch	No. Fledged
West	9	3 May	15	0
East	14	4 May	30	13
TOTAL	23		45	13

The first nest was found close to East Bank on 3 April, 15 days later than in 2014. The number of nesting attempts and broods was similar to last year's figures. Many chicks were lost whilst still very young; in some areas most nests appeared to fail. Last year we noted females foraging away from the nest site but that didn't seem to happen this year, perhaps indicating that invertebrates were more readily available on the meadows. Work carried out by NWT to improve the meadows beside Iron Road was very successful in the early part of the season, as there were several nests in areas not previously favoured by Lapwing. The most successful area was to the east of East Bank where NWT has improved water level control. It is a large area with favourable vegetation that does not grow too tall, there is good all-round visibility for sitting birds and this year it remained wet-moist during the crucial period. The nests are in a loose colony, often quite close together, and more birds means nests and eggs are better protected against predators. Cattle here are not confined within a small field and possibly the nests are disturbed less often. Elsewhere, even though cattle can move freely between several smaller fields, either through a gateway or by crossing a small bridge, they tend to remain in one small field for longer, meaning extended periods of disturbance especially by boisterous calves. Adult birds constantly leave the nest to draw cattle away, leaving eggs or newly-hatched chicks exposed. Corvids in particular may recognise the distraction display and find an exposed nest.

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Common Snipe

No evidence of breeding

Small numbers of birds were seen during April and early May but then none until July. No drumming was heard or other evidence of breeding seen.

Redshank

18 broods 39 chicks 4 fledged

	No. Broods Hatched	Earliest Hatching Date	No. Chicks Known to Hatch	No. Fledged
West	6	16 May	11	?
East	12	20 May	28	4
TOTAL	18		39	4

An average year for number of pairs seen. Displays started later than last year, towards the end of March and the first chicks hatched around 16 May. Although we found it difficult to judge the true number of chicks, seeing 39 was good. We were able to follow a few broods longer than usual, for example in open areas east of East Bank, possibly indicating reasonable food availability on the meadows but more likely it was down to good luck. Just 4 chicks were known to fledge, other juveniles seen around the reserve may have hatched locally but could have originated from further afield.

Black-headed Gull

253 pairs, at least 47 chicks, at least 32 fledged

	No. Pairs	No. chicks seen	No. fledged
West	3	0	0
East	250	47	32
Total	253	47	32

Western area

There were no breeding attempts on the central or North scrapes this year. The only definite nests were on the grassy tussocks at the eastern end of the Brackish Pools; there were a couple of possible sightings on Billy's Wash but these were only for 1 day so they were probably birds just resting. Up to 3 birds sat on the 'Tussocks' over a period of 36 days (one sharing its site with an Oystercatcher) but no chicks were seen.

Eastern area

After last year's successful breeding on the Shooter's Pools, the number of gulls here started to build up in early spring with over 300 birds present by the end of April. Counting nests and chicks was very difficult given the number of birds in a small area and the fact that not all of the area could be seen from any of the viewing points. Ten nests were counted on a visit to the pools on 24th April with a maximum count of 203 nests on 22nd May. Chicks began to hatch in late May with 21 (12 broods) counted on 27th May. Predation of eggs by larger gulls and chicks by Marsh Harriers was witnessed on several occasions. On 10th June 38 chicks (21 broods) were counted and by then only 40 nests could be seen. After that no new small chicks were seen but some could have hatched out of view. Fledged young began to be seen here and on Watling Water from 24th June.

Up to 11 nests were seen on Watling Water but apart from a few early nests it is thought that most of these were pairs resitting after their nests on the Shooter's Pools had failed. Eight chicks hatched from here. Overall at least 27 young fledged from Watling Water and the Shooter's Pools but many may have been missed.

Elsewhere in the east a total of 13 nests were seen on the Serpentine but some were only short-lived and no chicks hatched. Up to 27 nests were seen on Pope's Pool but again there was little success with only 1 chick being seen which only survived for a couple of days. A single bird sat on the stony island on Arnold's for 21 days but no chicks were seen. Short term nests were also seen on Sea Pool and Wigeon Marsh.

Mediterranean Gull

1 pair, did not nest

A pair was seen regularly with the Black-headed Gulls on the Western Shooter's Pool from 8th to 23rd April with a second pair there on the 13th. No nest was seen.

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Common Tern

2 pairs, no chicks

A bird was seen sitting on the vacated Black-headed Gull nest on Arnold's on 16th July. The pair was present for 12 days but then the nest was abandoned. Another pair was present on Watling Water from 20th July to 12th August during which time they appeared to try to nest in a couple of places but without success.

Little Tern

No birds attempted to breed this year

Following last year's attempted nesting on the new shingle fans we had hoped for success this year but no nesting activity was seen.

Wood Pigeon

Present, no breeding on the reserve

A bird was displaying by Bishop's Hide on April 4th but gave up when it became obvious the willow tree had at last died following the tidal surge.

Skylark

23 (15 west, 8 east) singing males, juveniles seen

An increase on last year. Records were kept from February 27th.

Western area

15 males

The distribution of singing males was 8 Eye Field/North Screen, 2 Bull Marsh, 2 main reedbed, 1 each Cricket Marsh, Billy's Wash and South Pool.

The Eye Field is the most fought over in the February/March period and 5 pairs were still present here on April 9th. The first sighting of an adult with food was along the north boundary on May 2nd near the Eye Pool. The fenced off overflow car park is always a good place for pipits and larks to find food and nest in. This year's colder, windier spring meant that the grass grew slowly. No juveniles were found on the Cley reserve.

Of interest, as it was only the second year it had been noticed, was that Skylarks moved into the reedbeds to breed. Two males were singing on June 13th but a pair had previously been seen using a track to the pallets and a second pair to the north of there. The first male would fly towards Pat's Pool and was seen mating there on April 15th. The more northern bird would fly across to the Serpentine and was seen several times landing in the same area in the reeds on the edge of a cut section.

Eastern area

8 males

The distribution of singing males was 2 Serpentine, 2 meadows alongside the road and 4 meadows alongside the Iron Road.

The large open area of the Serpentine is always attractive to Skylarks. This year they found the northern half was kept very wet for the benefit of waders throughout May which meant there were fewer possible nest sites. One nest was found on the southern part on June 4th. The adults were still visiting it later in the month but the outcome is not known. The only juvenile seen on the Serpentine was an independent bird on August 7th.

The meadows along the A149 and the Iron Rd had 6 males singing over them at the end of April. The most popular field was the one known as Swan Lake, just south of the Main Drain where a lot of swans had gathered when it was first flooded in 2014. The larks liked the rougher corners and 2 pairs were seen regularly here, occasionally 3. Another probable nest site was in a tussock on the field to the south of Swan Lake, found on April 23rd.

The first evidence of breeding success was a small wobbly chick/juvenile seen by one of the wardens in mid-June.

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Swallow

1 pair bred, possibly 5 young fledged

Another very poor year for Swallows on the reserve with the only signs of nesting being at the Pillbox.

Car Park Shelter: There was no breeding here this year. The structure had been repaired and ledges similar to those used by Swallows in previous years were in place. Occasionally individual birds were seen investigating the building but no nests were built.

Pillbox: In late April a pair took up residence in the pillbox near Eye Pool where they have nested for many years. They flew in and out regularly through the two 'windows'. At the end of June, as part of the Cley15 art exhibition, a brightly painted polystyrene 'screen' was wrapped round the pillbox but, realising that Swallows were nesting in there a gap was left in it so that one of the 'windows' was left open. Unfortunately a sign was put up above this 'window' explaining it which attracted people to linger there. Despite this and all the people that regularly gathered round the screen the Swallows did continue to fly in and out. On 11th July a pair was seen feeding 5 recently fledged young on the fence close to the pillbox which, although we cannot be certain, we presume were from there. On the 15th the Swallows were again seen flying in and out of the pillbox early morning when there were few people about. On 17th and 19th they were seen taking mud in but after that there was no more activity. The screen was removed on 2nd August.

House Martin

Did not breed on the reserve

They nested on houses along the Coast Road with 15 pairs on the Warden's House. Overall numbers are not known.

Meadow Pipit

20 (8 west, 12 east) singing males, juveniles seen

An increase on last year

Western area

The distribution of singing males was 5 northern boundary, 2 western boundary and 1 by the central hides. These were recorded from March 9th.

They bred mainly along the northern boundary of Cley where the beach meets the saltmarsh with 2 pairs near the crash site, 1 pair west of the North screen and others by Eye Pool and the overflow car park. One was present for a while by the main hides where one had bred last year. At least 2 pairs seen feeding along Beach Road were nesting on Blakeney saltmarsh the other side of West Bank.

A juvenile was seen on May 30th by the North Screen and the next day adults with food were seen by the Coastguards overflow car park. Adults with second broods were seen with food at the end of June near East Bank and on July 27th by the Eye Field fence.

Eastern area

Singing males were recorded from March but a full count was not done until June 15th when a walk round the northern boundary and the Iron Road revealed 12 males singing or paired up. These were 1 by the sluice (E Bank/Arnold's), 1 by the first gap N of Arnold's along the beach, 1 by Wigeon Marsh and 3 along the northern boundary of Sea Pool. Then on Iron Rd there were 5 north of the Main Drain and 1 south of the Main Drain.

The first pipit seen with food was by Wigeon Marsh on May 18th.

East Bank was mown in the first week of August and a flock of 10 Meadow Pipits of mixed ages were feeding there on Aug 11th.

Pied Wagtail

Probably bred, numbers unknown

As usual a lot of young wagtails were seen on the reserve, but we have not found any nest sites and do not know how many, if any, bred in our area and how many came in from outside.

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Wren

3 singing males. One brood successful.

Western area

Wrens were recorded singing from mid-March and were heard from the main hides, south of Bishop's Hide by the Catchwater Drain and even up East Bank near the new pools and pallet dump.

The male near the main hides was heard most often and a bird was carrying food here on May 27th. This brood may not have survived as the adult was singing again in June. Eventually on July 20th a family of very noisy, young Wrens was seen along the boardwalk.

The outcome of the other Wrens' attempts is not known.

No birds were heard on the eastern section of our area.

Dunnock

4 singing males, a fledged juvenile heard.

On March 20th 4 males were singing close to each other. Three were round the old Visitor Centre and the fourth north of the Catchwater Drain just west of there. This latter bird was heard another day and on April 7th one was singing by the bus stop. Later in spring a juvenile was heard calling from a bramble just west of the bridge which could have fledged from a nest on the reserve.

Stonechat

Did not breed

Cetti's Warbler

2 males singing, 1 probably bred

Most of the breeding activity was recorded close to the Visitor Centre, with one bird singing regularly from bushes by the Catchwater Drain with occasional visits further east. Breeding was suspected as there were two birds seen together on three dates – May 25th, 27th and June 7th. No juveniles were seen.

At Snipe's Marsh and Walsey NOA the reedbed had been cut down in early spring and the adjacent bushes were slow to grow. A bird was present on visits by the NOA ringers on March 22nd, May 24th and 27th but they thought it failed to breed.

Photographers frequently stood close to the Visitor Centre site which may not have helped the Cetti's or Grasshopper Warblers to breed successfully.

Grasshopper Warbler

2 males singing, 1 bred

The first one was heard on April 17th near the footpath south of Bishop's Hide. It was heard and seen over the next few days but after April 21st the weather deteriorated and it was less visible. It was seen again on May 27th and 31st carrying food. No juveniles were seen.

A second male was reported reeling from near the West Bank steps on May 5th.

Sedge Warbler

30 singing males (west), juveniles seen. No complete count on eastern area.

Western area

The earliest bird was found on April 12th between Bishop's Hide and the Visitor Centre.

They were counted on April 25th and May 2nd from the perimeter and 29 were heard singing. A 30th bird was found by the boardwalk on May 15th. This number is very close to last year's figure of 32.

Distribution of singing males was 5 Beach Road, 17 Central Hides to East Bank and 8 East Bank .

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Some continued to sing for several weeks and eventually attracted females. The first food collecting was seen on June 4th. A family was seen by the path to Bishop's on June 11th. More parents were seen with food from the boardwalk and East Bank and juveniles were seen on July 17th, 31st and August 8th.

Eastern area

No complete survey was attempted but a few Sedge Warblers were seen along the Catchwater Drain, the Iron Road and from the main track into the reedbed.

Reed Warbler

20 singing males (west), juveniles seen. No complete count on eastern area.

A very poor year for this species.

Western area

The first two Reed Warblers found in the western area were heard on April 18th. A count was done on June 4th and only 14 were singing. There were 8 along East Bank, 5 along the Skirts and the boardwalk and 1 was singing by Snipe's Marsh. A few more had arrived by June 13th when an estimate of 20 around the perimeter of Cley was made. Very much lower than last year's count of 45! The season had begun cold and windy and there may have been migration problems crossing from Africa. When they arrived the reeds were short and slow to green up and many of their usual haunts had changed. Two new pools had been excavated by East Bank. Warblers here were found singing in the hedge south of the road to start with and later two sang in the reeds south of the path for the first time. Some sections had none at all. In the main reedbed where areas had been cut down some late birds were singing in the remaining stands. Eventually conditions improved and by June 15th a bird was seen carrying a faecal sac near the drain opposite Old Woman's Lane and 3 adults were collecting food at the south end of East Bank, flying into the tall weeds on the bank. On July 10th two juveniles were heard calling near the north end of the bank and later on July 23rd there were three broods calling loudly there.

Eastern area

No complete count was done but 4 males were heard along the central path, with 3 more singing along the Catchwater Drain. 5 more were heard along the Iron Road. Other birds were seen from Walsey Hills.

Lesser Whitethroat

2 singing males (west), probably bred S of A149

Both these males were south of the A149. One by North Foreland Wood which may have visited the Skirts and one in the old Visitor Centre car park. On August 1st a bird was seen with food near the McMeekin seat and on August 15th a family was seen by the Visitor Centre near the picnic tables.

Whitethroat

5 (4 west, 1 east) singing males. Juveniles seen

Western area

3 males were singing this year in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre from early May and a fourth to the east, close to East Bank. By May 30th and early June adults were seen carrying food into the bramble thickets opposite the Visitor Centre and near the footbridge across the Catchwater Drain west of there. A well grown family was seen opposite the Visitor Centre on June 29th.

Eastern area

1 pair was seen on brambles at the beginning of the Iron Road on May 25th.

Bearded Tit

10 pairs (8 west, 2 east) juveniles seen

Western area

During February up to 20 birds were seen along East Bank attracted to debris at the base of the bank by the new pools. Very close views were possible and a few females with the plumage variant of black lateral crown-stripes and mantle patches were in the flock. By April 8th there were still 15 birds along the bank with birds seen right up to the Main Drain. At the north end there was a lot of racing around going on with males chasing the females. The breeding season had

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started. Four pairs were seen regularly by the northern half of East Bank, 2 pairs northeast of Bishop's Hide and a pair each side of the boardwalk to the Main Hides.

The first evidence of breeding was seen on April 24th with a pair carrying large beakfuls of food west across the boardwalk to a site north of Keeper's Marsh. The outcome of this first brood is not known as the weather changed for the worse. Days went by with Bearded Tits not visible and it wasn't until the end of May that the first juvenile was reported.

On June 11th, a much better day, a full size juvenile was seen climbing up reed stems after a male NE of Bishop's Hide. From the McMeekin seat by the road, which gives a view of the main reedbed, it was possible to see 5 adults going to and fro from the drains with beakfuls of food. On June 13th two juveniles were seen with their parents by East Bank and five were seen outside Teal Hide on June 30th.

During July the tits were less obvious and it wasn't until August 8th that a flock of 20 birds of mixed ages was seen by East Bank on a morning with perfect weather.

Eastern area

Visits to the centre of the new land were undertaken between April and June. Viewing was limited to watching the two reedbeds either side of the central track which were productive each time. Additional viewing from Walsey Hills revealed activity along the edge of the reedbed west of the track and that most activity was in the central area with only one sighting from the west-most reedbed next to Pope's Pool and the Serpentine.

April 13th 2 females and 1 male were seen together on the west side of the track opposite some dead bushes that were still standing close to the track on the east side. There was also a fourth bird calling close to the southern edge of the reedbed to the west.

May 22nd A pair was seen up the track at the northern edge by the Main Drain and 2 sightings of males were recorded in the same area as on April 13th.

June 16th Two nests or young families were visited often by the adults taking food to two sites on the west side of the track.

June 29th After watching for an hour 8 juveniles emerged on the east side of the track with a male and perched in the branches of the old bushes. There were some younger juveniles amongst the 8 which were less able to fly so must have come from two broods. Two more large juveniles were with a male on the other side of the track close by.

Goldfinch

4 pairs (west), two nests found, young fledged.

There are feeders next to the reserve in Cley gardens and by the Visitor Centre so Goldfinches are often seen along the hawthorns of the Catchwater Drain and bushes up the boardwalk. Singing was recorded from early April and a nest was first discovered in a willow by Teal Hide on April 15th. 3 pairs frequented the boardwalk and on May 2nd a second nest was found in a bush. On May 12th while an adult was still sitting on this one, the first nest, next to Teal Hide, had 4 large chicks. A pair was also often seen going to the holm oak hedge of the main car park but the outcome here isn't known. By May 15th the Teal Hide nest was empty but a changeover was seen at the second nest. The weather was not favourable for juveniles for much of the spring but young were seen in family groups on the thistles later in the summer.

Linnet

3 pairs (1 west, 2 east). Nesting attempted on west area

Once again Linnets were seen early in the season on gorse by the North Screen. One was singing here on March 8th, March 22nd and April 6th and on April 10th 6 birds were seen here. The gorse is still very dead looking and regrowth has been very slow after the tidal surge. Even so a bird was seen with nest material on April 12th. At the same time 2 pairs were seen north of Arnold's Marsh on the suaeda on April 13th and later on June 20th. There was no sign of activity by North Screen by this time so they are presumed to have failed due to the poor spring weather.

Linnets also bred over West Bank and could be seen feeding near the Eye Field.

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Reed Bunting

24 singing males (16 west, 8 east), juveniles seen

These seem to have increased slightly with more seen in the western area this year. They were recorded from mid-March.

Western area

16 singing males

East Bank: 4 males. Three adjacent to East Bank with a fourth seen singing from Billy's Clump in the northern part of the reedbed.

Cley Beach: 2 males, one by the crash site and the other by North Screen.

Bishop's Hide: 3 males. One by Richardson's Scrape, one by Carter's Scrape and the third NE of Bishop's Hide.

Main Hides: 4 males. Two along the boardwalk, a third to the east of Daukes on bushes in NE corner of Pat's Pool and the fourth in the NE corner of Whitwell Scrape.

Beach Road: 3 males were holding territories close to the road which extended over West Bank onto Blakeney Saltmarsh. They were usually seen between Cricket Marsh and the Borrow Pit.

Evidence that breeding was underway came from a male carrying nest material at the start of East Bank on April 20th. Previous to this, several males were seen close to other pairs hoping to get a chance to mate with the female.

The first juvenile was seen with a male at the south end of the boardwalk on June 6th. Then on June 25th a male was feeding a juvenile in front of Daukes. On July 6th a pair was seen with nesting material near Bishop's Hide, while a pair which had started earlier was taking food into the rough vegetation east of the pillbox on July 16th.

Eastern area

8 singing males

Reedbeds: 5 males seen on June 13th viewed from Walsey Hills.

Sea Pool: 2 males seen together on reeds south of the pool on June 14th.

Iron Road: a single male just south of the main drain in reeds beside the track. Its territory extended east on the Salthouse side.

The first fledged juvenile was seen at the south end of the Iron Road on June 1st. On June 16th a pair was taking food to a nest on the edge of a cut reed section west of the main track.

Notes:

Once more we would like to thank the wardens, Bernard Bishop, Adam Pimble and Carl Brooker, and all local and visiting birders who told us of their sightings of nests and young birds around the reserve thus helping to complete the picture.

Our team this year was made up of Kath & Mick Claydon, Noel Elms, Mike Harcup, Sue & Peter Morrison and Pat & David Wileman.

Each year we try to cover more species in depth and again this year gave greater coverage to the eastern area, but to continue to improve our results we need more people. We would so much like to spend more time on some species. So if you think you could help next year we would love to hear from you now. You don't have to be an expert (but we don't mind if you are!); we weren't when we started and still aren't now but have learnt a lot, and continue to do so. You will just need enthusiasm and some time to spare, then we are sure you will find it rewarding.

This report is sent to the NWT, the county recorders and to the Norfolk Coast National Trust. It is published on the Cley Bird Club website. Copies are also sent to representatives of the BTO, Natural England and the RSPB. A summary is published in the Cley Bird Club newsletter.

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