



National
Trust

**WARDENS REPORT
BLAKENEY POINT
2010**



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CONTENTS

Map and aerial photograph

3

Birds

Introduction

Breeding figures table

Systematic list

Ringling

Ringling recoveries and sightings of ringed birds

Discussion

Marine Mammals

Seals

Cetaceans

Other mammals

Invertebrates

Butterflies

Moths

Other insects

Disturbance

Vermin control

Seasonal wardens and volunteers

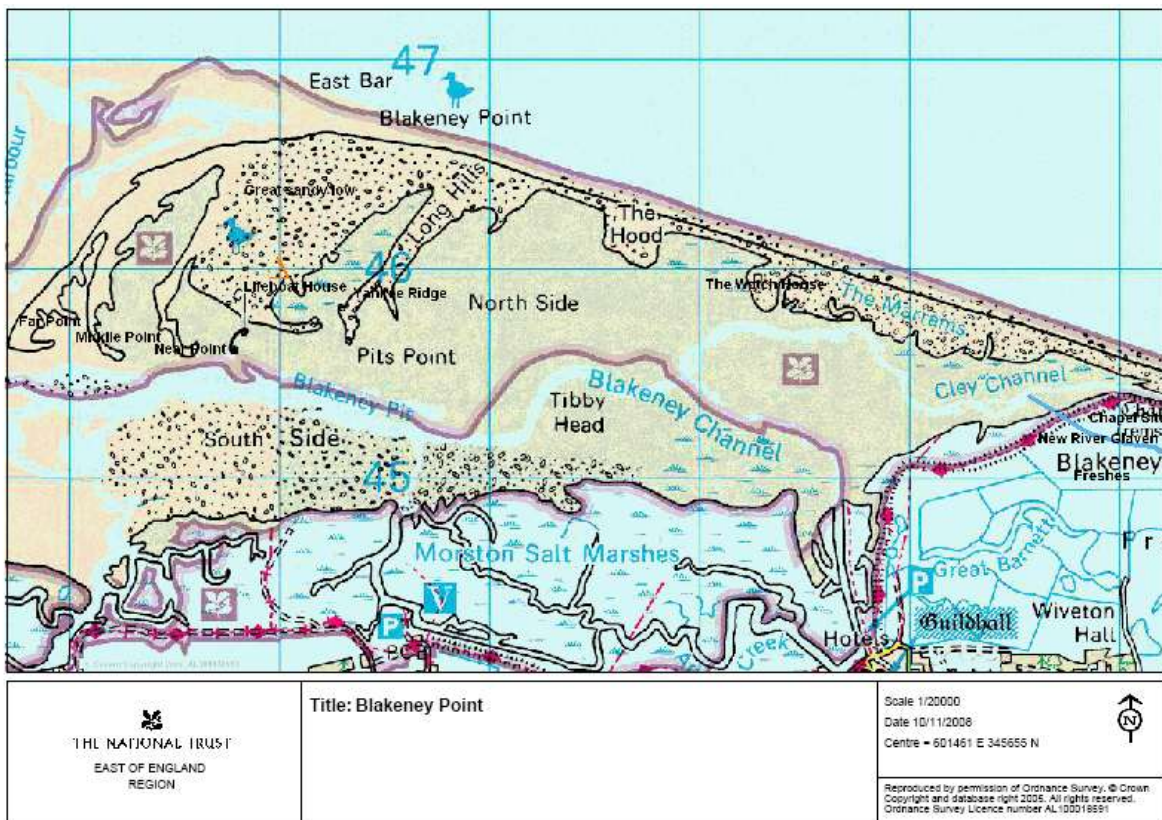
Other activities

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Map

MAP AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



Ordnance Survey/ National Trust, November 2008)

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BIRDS

INTRODUCTION

Life on Blakeney Point is never easy for our breeding birds, with so much depending upon food supply, predation, weather and various other factors, there are so many things that can go wrong.

This struggle for life is observed by the wardens and numerous other naturalists studying the birds and other wildlife of Blakeney Point every year. These iconic birds, especially the terns, are much loved by those who see them as symbols of what makes Blakeney Point special.

The Sandwich Tern colony on the end of Far Point was a little crushed into the one area of bare ground suitable for breeding. It numbered 2500 pairs and produced 900 plus young.

It appears that Common Terns may also have been suffering from a reduction of breeding habitat on Far Point caused by winter storms. A general decline in numbers has been observed year on year since 2005. There were a maximum of 75 pairs of Common Terns breeding on the point in 2010, producing between 23 and 26 young.

Little Terns, locally known as 'Little Pickies', are a wonderful sight to see as they go about their business in summer. Unfortunately they are sensitive birds and were affected this summer by predators and human disturbance. Despite our signs and fences two visitors walked amongst their nests on a stormy day in June causing ten pairs to abandon their nests. Hence 75 pairs produced only 15 young.

Blakeney Point is home to four of the five species of tern that regularly breed in Britain. Arctic Terns are at the southern limit of their breeding range on Blakeney Point, usually breeding at

higher latitudes in the arctic, so the colony here is very small. This year some medium sized chicks were being fed by adults in early July but we think they were all eventually predated and none fledged.

After the terns the next most studied birds on the point are the waders. Oystercatchers, Ringed Plovers and Redshank are characteristic and vociferous breeding birds. Oystercatchers are sturdy and numerous with 118 pairs raising a good number of young. Redshank numbers rose slightly this year with 10-13 pairs raising some young. Their nests and young are often difficult to find making the discovery of five nests and at least two fledged young all the more encouraging. Unfortunately Ringed Plovers are still struggling with 15 pairs raising eight plus young.

Five to six pairs of Mediterranean Gulls also bred on the point in amongst the gulls and terns on Far Point. They are recent colonists, having first arrived here in the 1990s. We think 2010 was a good year for them as 16 plus young were seen around the colony on the 16th of July. All in all, 2010 was not a brilliant breeding season, but it was certainly not disastrous.

Other birds breeding on the point include Shelduck, Gadwall, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Linnet and Reed Bunting. Skylarks, which have had a worrying decline in recent years, seem to have done well in 2010 and were up by roughly four pairs on last year.

2009 was not a great year for passage migrants. 2010, however, was one of the best years for migrants in recent history, certainly the best year that I have known since joining the trust in 2006. Indeed 2010 saw what may well be the rarest bird ever to be seen on the point. An Empidonax flycatcher was found in the plantation by Paul Nichols and James McCallum on the 25th of September. These are a notoriously difficult to identify group of American flycatchers and, although it may never be proven without doubt, it seems most likely to have been an Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum*. Many other rare birds were seen and there were falls of commoner birds reminiscent of the past. A full list of all species seen on the point in 2010 is given in the systematic list, and details given where appropriate.

BREEDING BIRD FIGURES FOR 2010, BLAKENEY POINT

BREEDING FIGURES TABLE

Species	Common name	No. of breeding pairs	No. of young fledged	Comments
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Common Shelduck	35+	?	Some young fledged
<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall	1+	?	One nest found on shingle ridge
<i>Anus clypeata</i>	Shoveler	1?	?	Chapel ground TG0445
<i>Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	2-3	10+	Some young fledged
<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Red-legged Partridge	1	2+	
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey Partridge	3-5	25+	Some large coveys seen
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Common Pheasant	2 males	?	

<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Oystercatcher	118	?	Fairly good fledge rate (40+)
<i>Recurvirostra avocetta</i>	Avocet	10	?	Chapel ground TG0445
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Ringed Plover	15	?	Average fledge rate (8+)
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	?		Birds seen on chapel site TG0445
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank	10-13	2+	5 nests found
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull	1800+	?	Many young seen
<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	Mediterranean Gull	5+	16+	
<i>Larus canus</i>	Common Gull	1	0	
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Little Tern	Max.75	15+	Productivity effected by predators and disturbance
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	Sandwich Tern	c.2500	900+	
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern	Max.75	23-26	
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic Tern	Max.9	0	
<i>Columba oenas</i>	Stock Dove	1	2	
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Wood pigeon	2	1	
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	43	?	Few young seen
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	4	12+	
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow pipit	111	?	Many young seen
<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	Pied Wagtail	1	4+	One mixed alba/yarrellii pair, plus many pairs breeding on boats in harbour+
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	15	?	
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock (Hedge Sparrow)	10	?	
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Sedge Warbler	1?	?	Singing male near blue boat TG035457
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet	30	?	Many young seen
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	21	?	

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Breeding birds

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Roughly 35 pairs of Shelduck bred on the point. These figures were deduced by counting morning gatherings, where both sexes of each pair gather in groups in set places.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

One pair nested in a tuft of grass on the shingle ridge at the Cley end of the reserve. The nest was very close to a well walked track and was present for a couple of weeks with a maximum of eleven eggs within. The outcome of this nesting attempt is unknown as wardening presence at this end of the reserve is limited.

Shoveler *Anus clypeata*

A pair was again present around the chapel ground but breeding was not confirmed.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

There were two or three nests located at the western end of the reserve. One female sat tight on her ten eggs next to the Lifeboat House as we worked around her and was subsequently seen with ten healthy chicks in July.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

One pair is thought to have bred as two chicks were seen but the species is becoming scarcer and harder to detect as a consequence.

English Partridge *Perdix perdix*

This species continues to do well and some large coveys were seen later on in the summer. Three to five pairs are thought to have bred, from the watch house to the end of far point. They are now well spread and can be encountered almost anywhere on the reserve.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

At least two territorial males made their presence felt in spring. Of particular note was a male who had a territory around the blue boat on the shingle ridge. This male was very aggressive towards anyone or anything that wandered into his territory and would not leave them alone until they had left, even jumping up and riding on the quad. No nests or breeding was confirmed.



Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

118 pairs were thought to have attempted to breed and there was a fairly good fledging rate. The population appears to be stable and fledging success has been relatively high in the last few years.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avocetta*

Avocets were not well monitored this year and although there was a maximum of ten nests found on the chapel ground no young were seen and they all could have failed.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Unfortunately there does not seem to have been a miracle turn around in the fortunes of ringed plovers on Blakeney Point. The number of breeding pairs was slightly up on the previous year but the number of young raised was down. The population seems to be hanging on at around 15 pairs, which is vulnerable and more likely to suffer losses.

Comparison table

Species	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ringed Plover	12 (8)	14 (8)	13+ (6+)	13 (13)	15 (8+)

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

As with avocet this species was under monitored and successful breeding ie. chicks were not recorded. There were two nests on the chapel ground but the outcome of these is unknown.

Common Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

It was interesting to find five nests in 2010. Are we becoming better at finding them or were there more nests than in previous years? Breeding activity down in the marrams (Cley end of reserve) was not as well studied as the western end and it is doubtful whether we detected every breeding pair on our three wader surveys. Therefore 14+ pairs should be treated as a minimum. Two plus young were seen but probably some were missed.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The black-headed gulls were back on territory long before the terns returned and a good number bred in the tern colony with c.2500 sandwich terns. They were left unmolested for the entire season and raised a good number of young.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

There were probably more than the mentioned five plus pairs in amongst the gulls on far point, as 16 plus young were seen in the colony on 16th of July. The Mediterranean gulls on the point are dominant over their smaller cousins and enjoy good breeding success, making the fact that numbers are not spiralling upwards difficult to understand. Mysteriously, two dead adults were found side by side in the colony, probably near their nesting site, after the birds had left and we were able to go in and inspect the area.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The number of Little Terns using the reserve for breeding purposes in 2010 was once again low, with a maximum of 75 pairs on Blakeney Point and Six on Stiffkey Meals. Weather was settled enough throughout most of the season. However, some rather rough weather in June combined with big tides, northerly winds and some human based disturbance was detrimental to the colonies eventual success. There were three colonies on Blakeney Point, one on the beach near the end of the point, one on shingle between the hood and the watch house and one containing just two nests just east of the watch house. The watch house colony was wiped out by the attentions of a Kestrel and a pair of Common Gulls and the colony east of the watch house was just too small to be successful, leaving just the beach colony to produce young.

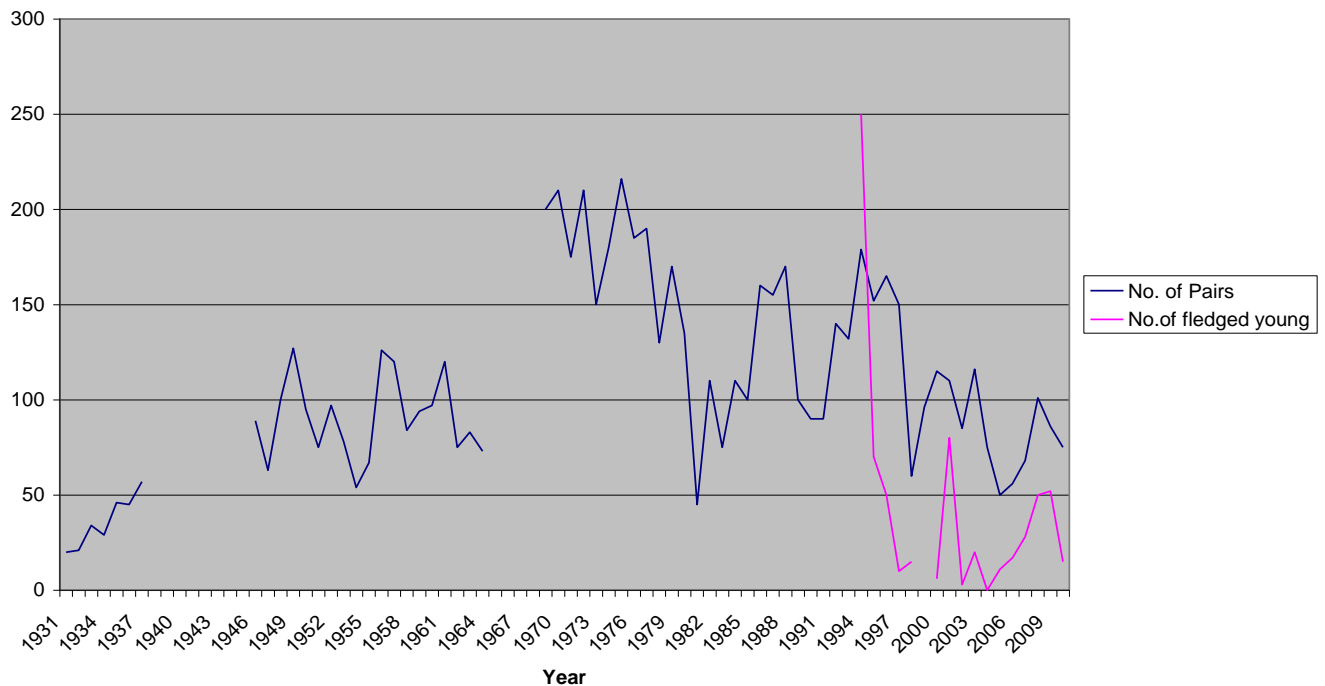
The first birds arrived on the 21st of April and were showing signs of settling by May with scraping and displaying seen over the beach colony. There were 50+ birds at the hood colony by the 19th of May and 20 AIA there by the 25th. The beach colony was building and there were 23+ AIA by the 26th of May. This dropped to just five AIA by the 2nd of June, building again to c25 AIA on the 18th. A couple ignoring signs and fences walked through the middle of the colony (twice!) at high tide during northerly winds, blowing sands and foam on the 19th of June, causing the disturbance of at least 9 pairs, as only 16 birds were still sitting by the next day. After having talked to the couple we decided not to take the matter further as they confessed complete ignorance and appeared genuinely to be sorry for what they had done and to learn from the experience. At the same time the colony at the hood was hatching chicks that were being eaten by a Kestrel just as quickly. By the 26th of June the Kestrel and a pair of Common Gulls had taken all the chicks and any eggs that were left and the colony was deserted. This now left us with a few pairs investigating the watch house colony with just one rather precarious nest and the beleaguered beach colony that was still slowly recovering from the bad weather and disturbance in June. The watch house colony rose to two nests but no eggs hatched. The beach colony rose to peak of 69 pairs on the 8th of July and by the 13th there were 5+ broods. On the 21st of July there were 14 chicks in the colony, three already

fledged birds just outside the colony and 25 AIA. None of the later nests hatched but it is thought that at least 15 young fledged from the beach colony.

Six pairs tried nesting on the high shingle ridge at Stiffkey meals but no young fledged. Half of this colony tried to relay here but without success.

The total number of pairs breeding on the reserve as a whole was 81. Unfortunately productivity was low and only 15+ young were fledged.

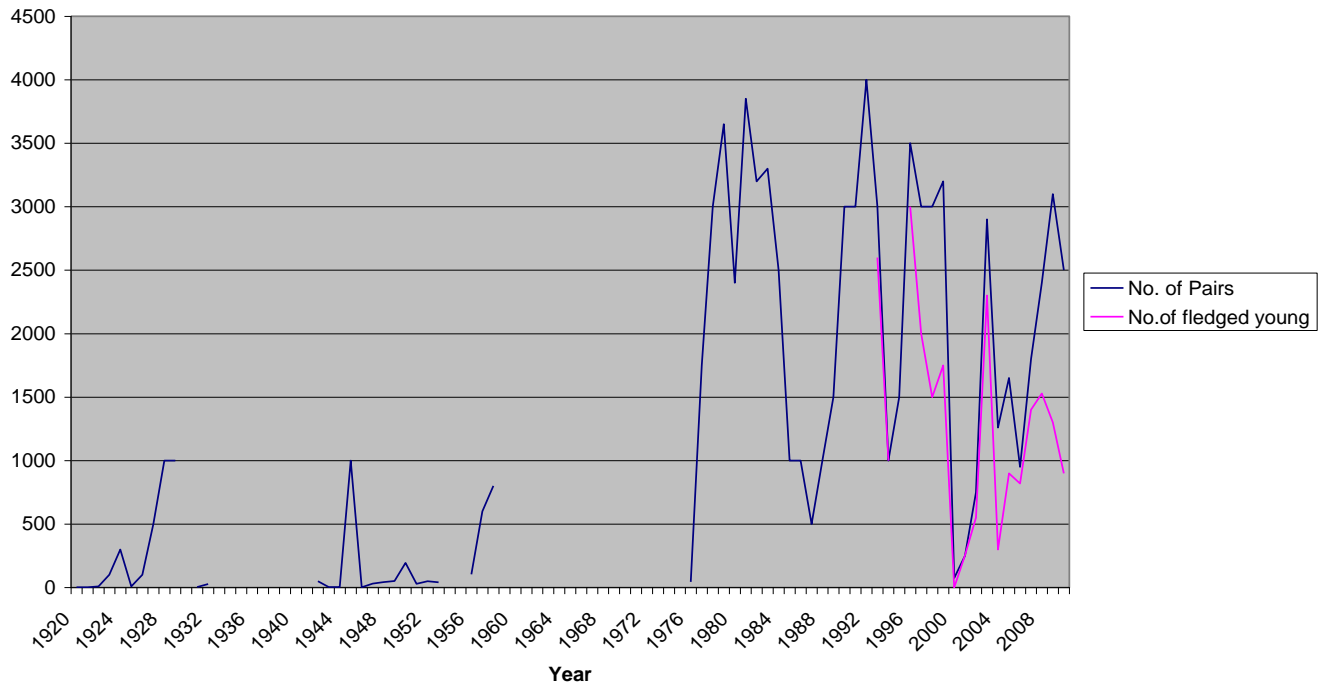
Little Tern Population Trends



Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvisensis*

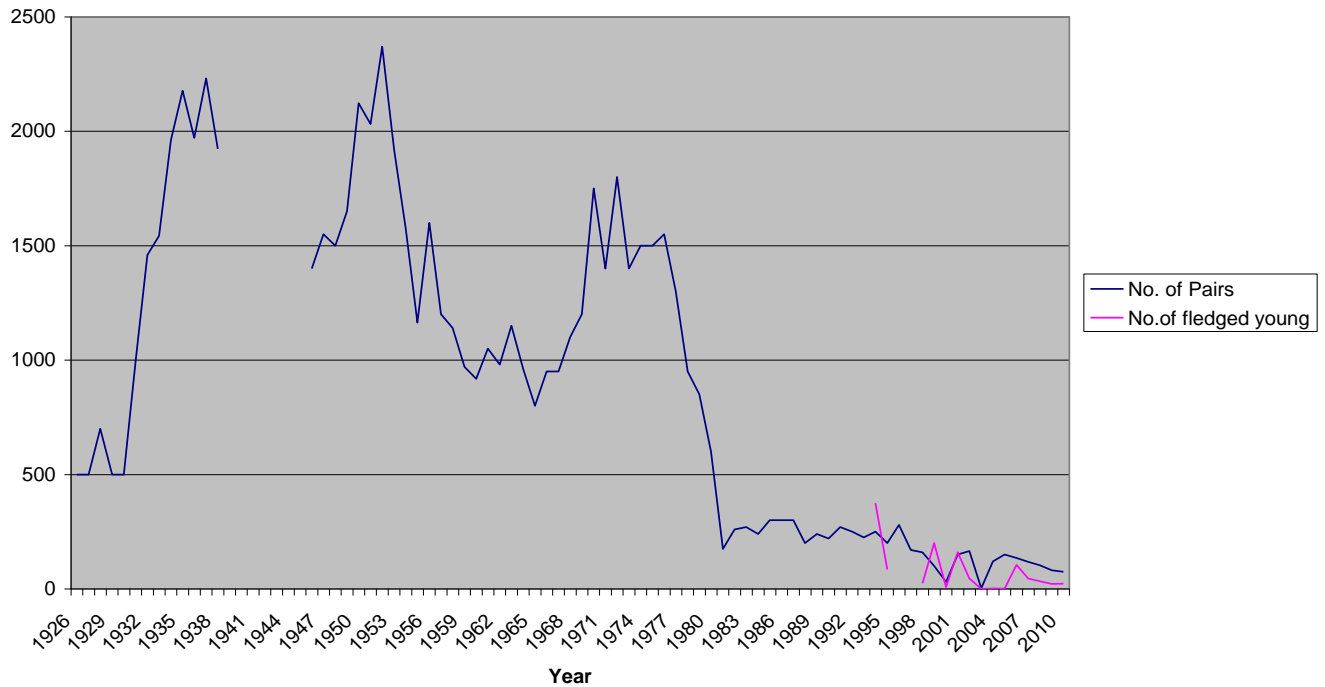
The first birds of the year were seen on the 27th of March and immediately started displaying. Numbers built up and there were c.800 by the 13th and c.4000 by the 19th of April. They were flooding in. Then we started getting a few problems in the colony. The birds would panic and then abandon the colony for long periods. This was probably caused by a combination of carrion crows, rats and foxes. A sandwich tern, blind in one eye, was found on far point on the 10th of May and taken to the RSPB centre at East Winch. This bird subsequently died. The early disturbances were not enough to cause desertion and birds laid there eggs at the usual time. Chicks started hatching from these on the 1st of June and possibly the last few days of May. By the 19th of June chicks were growing well but were affected by bad weather and a couple walking through the colony causing them to form a dense group of chicks. When the chicks have to then get back to there own parents they risk being pecked and attacked by all the other adults on their way. This caused unknown damage. The final chick count was 900+. This figure is probably best treated as a minimum as some chicks began to move away from the colony very quickly and there was no one time when all chicks were present in order to get a simultaneous count.

Sandwich Tern Population Trends



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

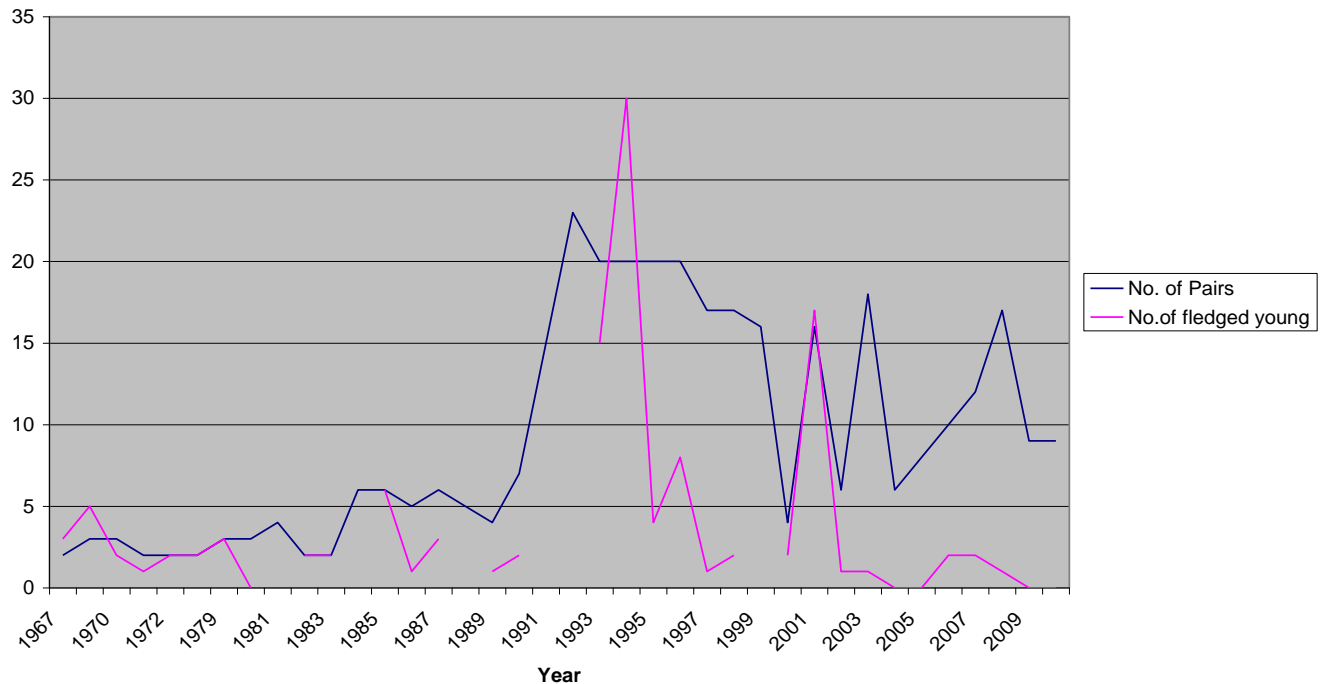
Common Terns are presently a struggling species on the point, as are Arctic Terns. In 2010 there were a maximum of 75 pairs attempting to breed on the point and a disappointing 23-26 fledged. Loss of suitable nesting habitat on the western end of the point is a possible cause, although this is perhaps unlikely as Common Terns used to breed on the sand dunes in large numbers. Peregrines have been seen taking adult Common Terns but this is again unlikely to be causing the present decline. The problem is probably largely out of our hands and more to do with national trends than issues locally.

Common Tern Population Trends


Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

No Arctic Terns fledged again this year, although some eggs did hatch and were being successfully fed by parents in July they were all eventually predated. The last time that any chicks fledged was in 2008 and there have only ever been two years when double figures fledged and with such a small breeding population, on the southern limit of their range this is perhaps no surprise. It is, however, lovely to see these elegant birds attempting to breed on the point every year. There was an interesting bird present on the beach on the 10th July with a black bill and a full black cap. Could this have been a second summer bird with a full cap?

Arctic Tern Population Trends



Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

One pair again bred in the roof space above the warden's bedroom. The birds enter through a hole in the soffit and can be quite noisy in the mornings, especially when the male is singing. This pair brought off two young.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Two pairs bred and at least one young fledged. There were nests in the plantation and the NT enclosure next to the lifeboat house at typically late dates.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Skylarks, nationally, are in decline, but one can still be serenaded by their song on a fine day in the dunes. Long may this continue as the Skylark has one of the longest and most poetic histories in English literature, they also provide every visitor to Blakeney Point with the most wonderful summer sound imaginable. There was some cause for hope this year with 43 pairs (up four pairs from 39 last year) detected on our breeding bird surveys, although few young were seen.

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert -
 That from Heaven or near it
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest,
 Like a cloud of fire;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight -

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody: -

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingéd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers -
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh - thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all

but an empty vaunt -
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet, if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear,
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scormer of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know;
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

[Percy Bysshe Shelley](#)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Four pairs are known to have bred, mostly around the lifeboat house and 12+ young were raised. Most pairs double brooded but some broods ended disastrously bringing the total of fledged birds down. In 2010 we erected another three or four Swallow ledges, none of which were used but it is hoped that they might get used in the future.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

111 pairs were detected on our breeding bird surveys, mostly conducted in May. This means that the population is stable if not increasing and may have something to do with the bumper breeding season they had in 2009. 2010 was also a good breeding season with many young seen. Three nest record cards were filled out and sent back to the BTO.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

The same mixed pair *M.a.yarrellii* x *M.a.alba* bred in the lifeboat house. They were double brooded and produced four plus young. An unknown number of pairs bred on boats and in various places in the harbour.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodydes*

2010 was a good year for this species, at least for the number of singing males. 15 territories were detected on the point. The usual nest underneath the downstairs toilet in the lifeboat house was abandoned for a more natural nesting site. The number of fledged young is unknown.

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

There were ten territories on the point and the exact number of young produced is unknown. A brood fledged in the NT enclosure was taken by a male Marsh Harrier. Young were seen at a few other locations.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A male sang from suaeda and sedge at the Cley end of the point, near the blue boat, during the summer but no further breeding evidence was obtained.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Good numbers of linnets bred in 2010. Linnets are semi colonial breeders and, on the point, seem to have breeding populations centred in certain places, like the hood, around the lifeboat house and on the points. A few nests were found and lots of broods were seen, indicating that they probably had a good breeding season as well.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

The number of territories was down by five pairs on last year with 21 located.

Non breeding birds and passage migrants

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

(Dark-bellied) Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

(Pale-bellied) Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

Wigeon *Anas Penelope*

Teal *Anas crecca*

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula nigra*

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Common Crane *Grus grus*

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Auk species, Guillemot/Razorbill

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Swift *Apus apus*

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

British Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*

Blackcap *Sylvia articapilla*

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Redpoll species

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Lapland/Snow Bunting

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Ringing recoveries and sightings of ringed birds

Two Shags were found with colour rings on far point, at the end of the 09/10 winter and the beginning of the 10/11 winter. They were found alive and dead respectively.

<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	Shag	1443805 Colour ring: Blue with 'JPH'	03/06/2009	Nesting	Isle of May, Fife region, Scotland	03/02/2010	Blake ney Point TG0345	7 months (245 days)	Edward Stubbins	Seen alive
<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Pink-footed Goose	Collar: Blue with R88	2002		Denmark	08/03/2010	Blake ney Fresh Marsh TG0344		Edward Stubbins and Ajay Tegal	Waiting for more details
<i>Haematopus</i>	Oystercatcher	FA113	10/08/1	3	Frisk	01/06/2	Blake	26 +	Edward	

<i>us ostralegus</i>	tcher	21	987	years +	ney new marsh , Lincs, England, TF94 52	010	ney Point, TG01 46	years (833 1 days)	d Stubbi ngs	
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	Shag	14523 04 Colour marks left below knee: BW(U PC)	20/06/2 010	Nestl ing	Isle of May, Fife regio n, Scotl and	19/11/2 010	Blake ney Point, TF99 45	152 days	Edwar d Stubbi ngs	424k m from the ringi ng site, direct ion SSE

Discussion

It was a particularly interesting year for birds even if it was more for the migrants than the breeding birds. The numbers of terns (of all species) fledged was disappointing but not completely disastrous. Waders had a fairly good year as did most of the passerines. The colony had a shaky start to the season with a fox visiting on several occasions. There were moments in late April when the colony was abandoned for whole days and things were looking a bit like the birds would desert completely. This was worrying for the wardens and all efforts were made to get rid of any Rats left in the colony and take care of the Fox that was still around. In the end the Fox disappeared without having been controlled by the National Trust. The birds settled back down and returned to the business of breeding. Counts were made of incubating adults and taken as the total number of breeding pairs. Chicks were counted when they became visible. Other problems in 2010 included the worst case of direct human disturbance since the last egg collectors visited the reserve in 2004, even though this time it was just a completely ignorant couple walking through the middle of the Little and Sandwich Tern colonies, hand in hand.

Management considerations for the future include better, more successful, predator control in spring, nest/egg counts on the terns, and better signage and wardening to prevent unnecessary disturbance. In 2009 it was decided to only conduct tern nest counts biannually, this was to minimise disturbance and to not fix what wasn't broken. Ways in which the other objectives can be achieved are either part of the day to day wardening of the point or have been achieved since 2010, like better interpretation on far point. Other problems that we had with locals criticising our wardening techniques have also hopefully been dealt with.

It is hoped that after such a good breeding season over so much of Europe and such an amazing autumn migration that the 2011 spring will be one to remember. It is also hoped that

the migratory breeding birds had good over winter survival and will return to breed in good numbers.

Marine Mammals

Seals

The majority of 2010 will be remembered as a bad year for Blakeney Point's seals. During the 2009/10 winter we started to notice an unusual amount of adult seals washed up with distinctive cut marks around their bodies. Unfortunately we did not inform the police immediately as we were not sure what was causing the injuries. When fresh bodies with the same injuries started washing up again we knew something was seriously wrong. We contacted the local police and an investigation was launched. All bodies found after the 12th of July, exhibiting what we started calling 'spiral cuts' were put into plastic sacs and collected for analysis. The sacs were then delivered to Jason Pegdon, the local wildlife crime officer, who then drove them over to RSPB East Winch for post-mortem. Full post-mortem reports were written as well as reports investigating the possible source of the dead bodies and causes of death. The dead bodies stopped washing up in August and, thankfully, from then on the seals were unharmed and the Grey Seal breeding season was approaching.

The sinister events of the summer took precedence over a project that we had previously agreed to take part in. This would have involved disturbing the resting seals in order to collect their scats which would then be sent off to St Andrews, Scotland for a study looking at the diet of seals. I then started collecting Grey Seal scats in December and, after several collections, sent 70 plus scats off to Scotland on 2nd of March 2011.

Regular seal counts were undertaken during the year with extra counts taken during the summer. These counts were taken at low tide using a telescope and without disturbing the hauled out seals. We also attempted to document all cases of seals with netting or other rubbish attached to them by taking photographs and creating a spreadsheet to store the details. As well as this we documented all cases of disturbance to the hauled out seals on the West Sands and handed the information over to Natural England at Holkham. This is something that happens fairly regularly at low tide as people walk out from Stiffkey and get too close to the seals, sometimes with dogs and sometimes run towards the seals and intentionally put them all into the water. This is becoming more of a problem and will be monitored thoroughly in the future.

The Grey Seal breeding season began in October and by Christmas a staggering 800 pups had been born on the point. 747 of these survived and moulted through in to their second 'sea faring' coat. There were some incredibly late pups born in 2011 when wardening presence was reduced. Some of these would have died due to their being born late in the season and one was taken to RSPB East Winch for rehabilitation on the 6th of March 2011.

Seal counts for 2010 are as follows

Common Seal

29/01/2010	0	
20/02/2010	1	
10/03/2010	1	
15/03/2010	2	
09/04/2010	57	
26/04/2010	13	
30/04/2010	42	
01/05/2010	35	
02/05/2010	59	
04/05/2010	111	
05/05/2010	87	
17/05/2010	22	
25/05/2010	21	
02/06/2010	33	
04/06/2010	47	
09/06/2010	48	
23/06/2010	30	
29/06/2010	83	
30/06/2010	91	
09/07/2010	89	
13/07/2010	135	
14/07/2010	141	
23/07/2010	126	
29/07/2010	137	
31/07/2010	132	
02/08/2010	246	
09/08/2010	130	
10/08/2010	191	
20/08/2010	327	
30/08/2010	318	Including 15+ pups
16/09/2010	205	
29/09/2010	145	
09/10/2010	102	
16/10/2010	90	
27/10/2010	19	
31/10/2010	34	
26/11/2010	1	
29/11/2010	2	
10/12/2010	0	

Grey Seal

29/01/2010	28	
25/02/2010	8	
10/03/2010	3	
15/03/2010	2	
18/03/2010	2	

19/03/2010	1	
30/03/2010	1	
09/04/2010	49	
26/04/2010	11	
30/04/2010	27	
01/05/2010	54	
02/05/2010	68	
04/05/2010	76	
05/05/2010	77	
17/05/2010	19	
24/05/2010	44	
25/05/2010	35	
02/06/2010	19	
04/06/2010	18	
09/06/2010	12	
23/06/2010	8	
29/06/2010	46	
30/06/2010	20	
09/07/2010	4	
13/07/2010	3	
14/07/2010	11	
23/07/2010	16	
29/07/2010	7	Including one with netting around head
31/07/2010	9	
02/08/2010	10	
09/08/2010	10	
10/08/2010	27	
20/08/2010	25	
30/08/2010	53	
16/09/2010	74	
29/08/2010	98	
09/10/2010	114	
16/10/2010	75	
27/10/2010	140	Plus first pup of season
31/10/2010	170	Plus five pups and one being born
10/12/2010	720	

Grey Seal pup counts

27.1 0.20 10	1	First of year
31.1 0.20 10	6	
05.1 1.20 10	2 4	
09.1 1.20 10	5 9	Also 5 dead
12.1 1.20	1 0	

10	8	
17.1	2	
1.20	0	
10	8	
19.1	3	
1.20	0	
10	8	Plus 25 dead and two fully weaned
23.1	4	
1.20	1	
10	8	Plus 11 dead and three fully weaned
26.1	5	
1.20	0	
10	0	Plus 12+ dead
29.1	5	
1.20	7	
10	9	Plus 17 dead
02.1	6	
2.20	0	
10	8	
10.1	6	
2.20	7	
10	9	50 under a week old, 14 dead and 35 fully weaned
18.1	7	
2.20	2	
10	8	49 under a week old bringing total to 728 and 20+ dead
03.0	7	19 under a week old bringing total for 2010/11 season to 747. There was also a rough total of 50 dead throughout the season. This means that a total of c.800 pups were born on the point in the winter 2010/11
1.20	4	
11	7	

Cetaceans

Sightings of cetaceans and strandings are shown below. There were very few Porpoise sightings but one involving multiple animals was exiting. The stranding of a White-beaked Dolphin was unusual.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

18/04/2010	1	Washed up, dead, on shingle ridge
21/09/2010	3	

White-beaked Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*

23/10/2010	1	Washed up dead on far point. Strandings form completed and sent to NHM
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Other mammals

Other mammals recorded in 2010 include

Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>
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Weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>
Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>
Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>
Field Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>
Bank Vole	<i>Myodes glareolus</i>
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>
Common Shrew	<i>Sorex araneus</i>

Large bat sp

Bat sp

Fishes

Sea fishes of note included a Lumpsucker *Cyclopterus lumpus*, Sea Bass, *Dicentrarchus labrax*, Ray's bream *Brama brama* and a Sun Fish *Mola mola*. The Sun Fish was found by Graham Lubbock on the 26th of December on far point amongst the seal pups.

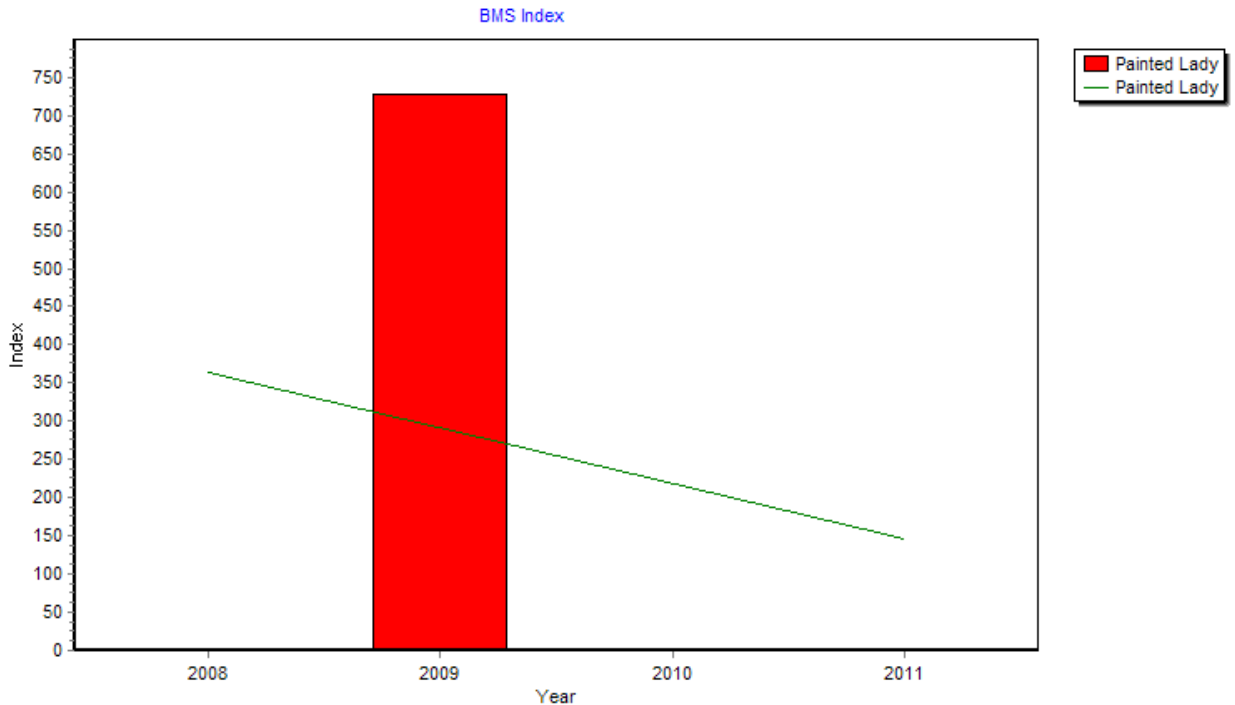
The Muntjac record is an interesting, though unwanted, one, as it involved a pregnant female and the first record of a fawn born on the point ever. In July the female gave birth to her fawn underneath the Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* in the plantation and the fawn hid in the Spindle *Euonymus europaeus* for it's first week of life.

Invertebrates

Butterflies

The Blakeney Point transect was in it's third year and it is exiting to think of what can be achieved by cumulative transect data. All the chart below really shows is that Painted Ladies

Vanessa cardui had a bumper year in 2010, however, it shows what can be achieved by collecting systematic data over many years.



Resident species had an average year but Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas* had the third bad season in a row, so we will be looking at their populations with interest in 2011.

Moths

Moth traps were set at irregular intervals depending on whether the generators were working, weather and work schedule between April and September. As usual all records were sent into Jim Wheeler, the county moth recorder. Marbled Clover *Heliothis virescens* was a notable record and it is hoped that breeding could be taking place. Hummingbird Hawkmoths *Macroglossum stellatarum* were seen on several occasions. The first sighting was on the 9th of July and the last was seen on the 29th. Several roosted around the lifeboat house and one was found tucked underneath Paul Nichols bedroom windowsill.

Other insects

Dragonfly numbers were low and no rare migrants were found.

Disturbance 1

2011 saw the most devastating case of ignorant disturbance by members of the public that I have ever witnessed in my five years with the trust. Luckily we have been untroubled by egg collectors during those years. I documented the incident on the same day but after discussing the incident with the Head Warden David Wood decided not to take matters further.

Disturbance to Little Tern colony caused by two people walking through colony at high tide on a day with foul weather, 19/06/2010.

At 13.00 on the 19th of June 2010 Paul Nichols received a phone call from Jimbo, from Temples seal ferries, saying that a couple were walking through the Sandwich Tern colony. They were seemingly unaware of the massive disturbance they were causing to the birds, who all had dependant chicks still near their nests. Paul rang me and went up to the tower. I ran over to far point. By the time I got there the couple were in the process of walking straight through the middle of the Little Tern colony on the beach just east of the Sandwich Tern colony (this colony had 24-26 incubating Little Terns in it, counted on the previous day). I screamed at them to get out but the damage had already been done.

I asked what they thought they were doing and they replied that they had walked up from Cley and had thought that the signs were not compulsory.

At the time that they crossed the fence line it was high tide and there was a strong northerly wind blowing, which was forcing water up the beach. The first corner of fencing near the gap had been knocked over by the surge but the water was over the affected area and almost right up to the dunes, the signs would also have been clearly visible to them both.

I talked to them for about two minutes before telling them to get out of the fence line and went to check on the damage they had done to the Little Terns. I followed their footprints through the nests and found a large footprint just an inch from a Little Tern egg, which was partially buried by the sand displaced by the print. The wind was still blowing very strongly and there was a lot of sand being blown over the remaining nests so I decided to get out myself.

After a quick call to Dave Wood I decided that they had not acted in malice and not to call the police or press charges, and that the best thing to do would be to catch up with them and have another talk to them about the damage they had done and try my best to educate them so that they would know in future that signs on nature reserves need to be obeyed and that they should not disturb any breeding birds.

We were already concerned about the effect the weather would be having on our breeding birds, especially the Little Terns, who don't like excessive sand blow or the foam that was being blown up the beach. There were also some cold showers throughout the day. The next chance I had to check the colony properly (with a telescope) was the next day and I found 16 Little Terns still sitting on eggs. Therefore we believe that this disturbance event, innocent though it was, caused the abandonment of ten pairs of Little Terns and possibly a few pairs of Common Tern. The Little Tern colony had also contained c.75 pairs of Common Terns and some Black-headed Gulls, Oystercatchers and Ringed Plovers. The Sandwich Terns seemed to be back in the area and feeding young again but the number of young lost because of the incident is difficult to guess at.

Edward Stubbings, NT Coastal Warden, Blakeney Point

Another incident worth mentioning occurred whilst Graham Lubbock and I were on a field trip to the Farne Islands in Northumberland. A man, with his family in toe, picked up a cane that was marking an Arctic Terns nest and struck the nearest tern with it. He broke the wing of a healthy adult Arctic Tern. Graham took the tern to a vet but it had to be put down and obviously the eggs were lost. Arctic Terns are long lived birds and the loss of a breeding adult is devastating, as National Trust warden on the farnes David Steele fully appreciates. The man claimed that he was defending his family from the bird's aerial attacks.

The dog policy is working very well to protect the breeding birds during the breeding season and other disturbance events were recorded and sent in via the incident recoding process.

Predator control

Foxes were controlled in March and at least one was shot on the point. Traps were set for smaller ground predators during the summer around the tern colonies. Due to a very cold winter in 2009/10 the number of Rats on the reserve was low and they seemed to cause very few problems.

Seasonal wardens and volunteers

Paul Nichols was back for his forth year and was joined by Joe Cockram, who had worked with Jason Moss (ex point warden from 2008) on the Farne Islands in 2009. Joe was a good team member and, like Richard Berridge the previous year, spent most of his time on the point, so was always in position to deal with problems and issues and got to know the reserve very well. Ajay Tegala was with us again for most of the year and was paid for work that he did at Morston as well as volunteering, both on the mainland and on the point, in his spare time. Ajay became a massive asset to the work done at Blakeney and helped me personally with many computer issues and with interpretation for the Lifeboat House. He left us in September to restart his degree at Nottingham Trent University. I hope that Ajay learned

something by working with us and gained something from the experience. He has been back since and taken part in volunteer days and litter picks. Three cheers for Ajay!

Other activities

Spring litter pick

Guardianship

Working with police and RSPCA

Acknowledgements

Richard Porter

David Wood

Graham Lubbock

Chris Everitt

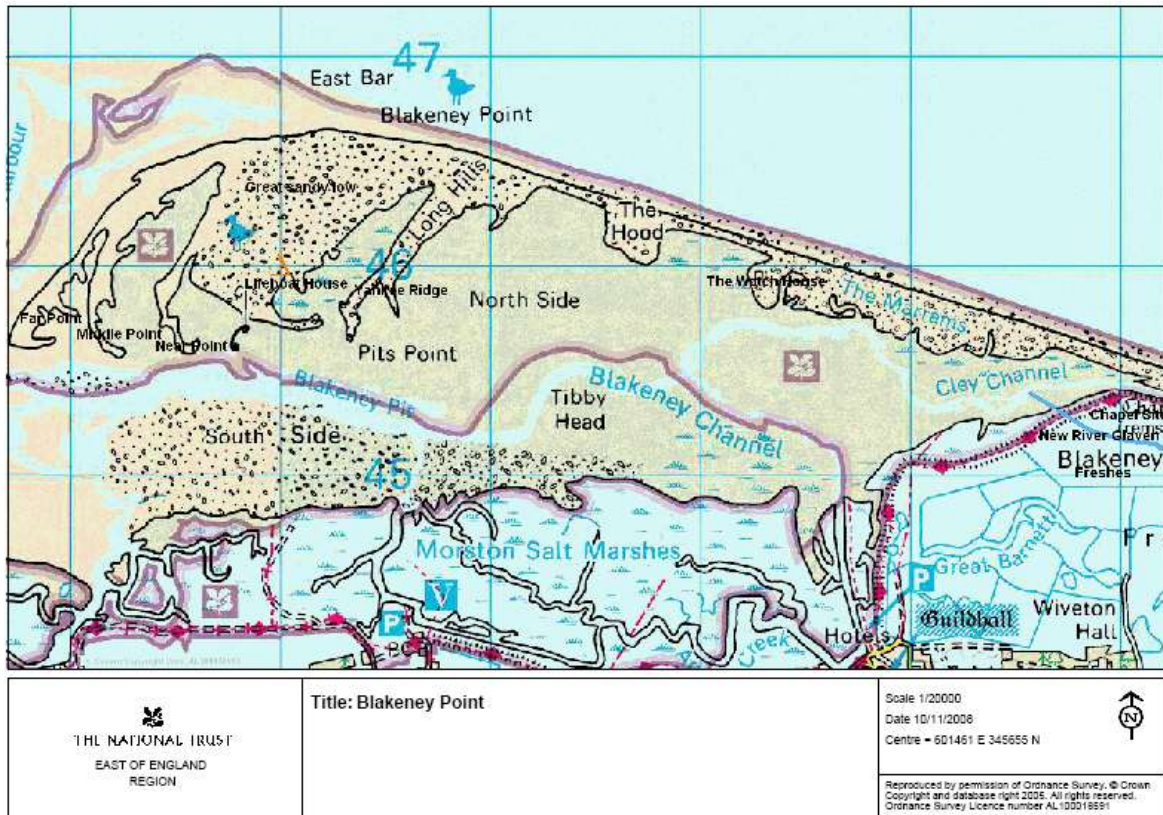
Iain Wolfe

John Sizer

Marilyn Lubbock

On a personal level I would also like to thank Simon Aspinall for agreeing to let me live in his house in Cley during the 2010/11 winter. This allowed me to remain close to work and get to know Simon (who is a very inspirational character) better.

Map



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