

Cley Breeding Report 2011

Introduction

Once more we have attempted to document the breeding species on Cley Marshes. This report is based on sightings made during visits to the NWT reserve and areas between East Bank and Iron Road during spring and summer 2011. It also includes sightings that have been passed to us by other local observers.

It was not a scientific survey, but most areas were visited regularly. We merely took records of nesting birds and youngsters seen, and tried to follow the progress of each family. All sightings were from the hides and public footpaths around the reserve and eastern area.

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

Summary

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

Species	Minimum Pairs	Min. young fledged	Earliest chicks seen
Mute Swan	1	0	2 nd June
Greylag Goose	44	?	25 th April
Canada Goose	2	8	9 th May
Egyptian Goose	0		
Shelduck	17	34	20 th May
Gadwall	13	24	1 st June
Teal	1	?	7 th June
Mallard	46	52	29 th April
Garganey	1	?	13 th May
Shoveler	7	4	26 th May
Pochard	4	3	3 rd June
Tufted Duck	2	0	8 th July
Little Grebe	1	1	8 th June
Bittern	0		
Little Egret	3	4	7 th June
Grey Heron	4	7	11 th May
Marsh Harrier	5	12	27 th June
Sparrowhawk	0		
Water Rail	?		
Moorhen	14	7	27 th May
Coot	8	8	10 th May
Oystercatcher	10	0	
Avocet	70	9	6 th May
Little Ringed Plover	1	0	
Ringed Plover	1	0	
Lapwing	30	17	5 th May
Common Snipe	0		
Redshank	20	7	13 th May
Black-headed Gull	31	0	27 th May
Common Tern	1	0	

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This year for the first time we have more comprehensive data for the following species. This is mainly due to Sue & Peter Morrison who volunteered to study some of the passerines:

Species	Minimum Pairs
Skylark	12
Swallow	7
Meadow Pipit	16
Sedge Warbler	69
Reed Warbler	48
Bearded Tit	3
Reed Bunting	12

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

Common Pheasant	Pied Wagtail	Goldfinch
Wood Pigeon	Wren	Linnet
House Martin (houses along Coast Rd)	Dunnock	
	Cetti's Warbler	

The following may have bred but we have no evidence

Sparrowhawk	Willow Warbler (N Foreland)
Kestrel (N Foreland)	Great Tit (N Foreland)
Tawny Owl (N Foreland)	Long-tailed Tit (N Foreland)
Grasshopper Warbler	Greenfinch

Each year we have been monitoring breeding has been different and has given us surprises and more insight into breeding behaviour. Again this year was no exception.

The weather this year was again unusual. The cold weather over the winter did reduce the numbers of some species, especially noted were Bearded Tits and Cetti's Warblers. Then we had the hot dry weather in April and May which helped all the early breeders but reduced the water in some areas. However during this period the wardens managed to keep the water levels high on the reserve so that the dryness did not affect breeding. The high water levels on Cricket Marsh made this area extremely good for breeding ducks and waders, but the resulting high grass levels meant they were very difficult to see. Pope's meadows and the Serpentine were again very dry throughout causing any birds nesting there to have to take their young far to find water. The cold, wet weather in summer meant that some of the later breeders didn't do as well.

Two additional species breeding this year were Garganey whose last confirmed breeding was in 2005 and Teal which hadn't bred since we started recording in 2003. Both were seen with small ducklings on Cricket Marsh by single observers but, due to the long grass there, were never seen again.

Little Egrets nested alongside the Herons in North Foreland Wood again, with 3 nests this year. The Bittern failed to breed again and no Egyptian goslings were seen. We had 1 less pair of Marsh Harriers nesting than last year but the productivity was similar to 2010. For the first time since we have been recording, Mute Swans failed to raise any cygnets; no successful nests were found and only 1 brood was seen. The Avocets again added interest, the number of pairs and number fledged were similar to last year but they again experimented with unusual nesting sites, setting up a colony on the shingle behind North Hide.

Of the, normally, shingle nesting birds, Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers both failed to hatch any young.

We had fewer pairs of Lapwing this year but as an early breeder, they successfully raised a lot more young than in previous years.

Ducks seemed to produce plenty of broods but unless we lost sight of a lot of them in the reeds, many more small ducklings failed to survive than usual. Moorhens and Coots once more had a bad year as did Little Grebes.

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By the number of failed nests we had for all species, predation was again obviously quite high despite the efforts of the wardens. However this year we didn't identify a main culprit. Damage to nests and chicks was noted from many sources including Stoat, Shelduck, Jackdaw and Kestrel, and could the presence of Otters in the drains have been the cause for some of the losses of chicks and ducklings there?

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

Species	Minimum Pairs breeding					Minimum Young fledged			
	2011	2010	2009	2008		2011	2010	2009	2008
Mute Swan	1	4	3	2		0	7	7	6
Greylag	44	45	57	c.70		?	c.100	c.150	
Canada Goose	2	1	0	0		8	5		
Egyptian Goose	0	0	5	2		0	0	7	4
Shelduck	17	10	5	3		34	35	33	29
Gadwall	13	17	14	14		24	23	65-73	17+
Teal	1					?			
Mallard	46	33	34	21		52	48	76-94	52
Garganey	1								
Shoveler	7	5	1	5		4	8	4	9
Pochard	4	4	4	1		3	1+	8	2
Tufted Duck	2	4	4	2		0	6	7-17	3
Little Grebe	1	5	3	3		1	3	7	6
Bittern	0	0	0	1					?
Little Egret	3	1	0	0		4	2		
Grey Heron	4	3	4	1+		7	4	5+	4+
Marsh Harrier	5	6?	6	7		12	15	20	21
Sparrowhawk	?	?	?	?					
Water Rail	?	?	?	1+?					
Moorhen	14	21	15	6		7	24	19-31	4
Coot	8	13	19	11		8	5	21-30	16
Oystercatcher	10	13	13	10+		0	0	0	0
Avocet	70	62	96	60		9	10	3	10
Little Ringed Plover	1	1	2	0		0	0	0	0
Ringed Plover	1	3	4	5		0	3	3	0
Lapwing	30	40	35	12+		17	7-10	5	6+
Common Snipe	0	1?	?						
Redshank	20	17	15	10+		7	13	5	14
Black-headed Gull	31	57	77	80+		0	0	11	0
Common Tern	1	0	1	3		0	0	0	0

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Species Details

Mute Swan

1-3 pairs, 0 young fledged

This was a disappointing year for Swans with no young fledging

	N ^o . fledged
A possible nest was sighted west of the cut reeds off E Bank on the 20 th April. But partly due to the growth of the reeds there was no further sighting.	
One pair attempted to nest by the Catchwater Drain between Bishop's Hide and E Bank, where they successfully raised young last year, but the nest was never fully established.	
A pair was seen with 4 small cygnets in the Catchwater Drain by Beach Road on 2 nd June. We don't know where the nest had been but it may have been west of Beach Rd towards the Windmill. The 4 cygnets continued to be seen until 12 th June, often in front of Dauke's Hide. From the 17 th June only 1 was seen. This continued to be seen with its parents on and off either in the Catchwater Drain or by Dauke's Hide until 11 th August. During this time it seemed to grow very slowly and didn't look too healthy. After this it was not seen again	0

Greylag Goose

c. 44 pairs bred, no. fledged unknown

Greylags are always our earliest breeder which means we all get interested looking for the nests but the novelty soon wears off as other birds start to breed and the large Greylag crèches form and we can't keep up with the numbers. Pre-breeding counts in late March indicated at least 44 pairs amongst the many non-breeding birds in our area. The first nest found this year was on 1st April in the reeds at the back of Snipes Marsh. The first goslings, a brood of 5 small, were seen on 25th April on Popes Marsh opposite Walsey Hills. We never did a complete count of goslings on any one day this year but the number present during May was in the region of 130 and more hatched during June.

Of interest was a neck-collared Greylag Y64. This male was ringed in Holland in 2009 and was first seen at Cley in March 2010 and has been with the geese in the area ever since. He had a mate last year but they failed to breed. However this year they appeared to successfully fledged 8 young. Another neck-collared goose SXA (a female), which was ringed in the same place on the same day, was first seen in Norfolk (at Stiffkey Fen) in January 2010. We have no breeding record of this until it turned up at Cley this July with 5 fledged young.

Canada Goose

2 pairs bred, 8 young fledged

Two pairs were seen nesting on Billy's Wash from 23rd April. 1 pair hatched 6 small goslings on 9th May followed by 3 from the other pair a few days later. The 3 reduced to 2 by the end of May but both families survived, often being seen together and between them fledged 8 young.

Egyptian Goose

None this year.

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Shelduck

17 pairs, 34 fledged

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

		N ^o . fledged
Main Reserve		
1	A pair with 3 tiny ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 20 th May. By 31 st May only 2 remained. These continued to be seen, sometimes on Billy's Wash, until fledged in early July.	2
2	A brood of 7 or 8 small ducklings were reported on North Scrape on 28 th May with 9 seen the following day. They continued to be seen regularly till the 13 th June when they became 11. It is thought they gained 2 smaller ducklings from brood 4 below. These 11 continued to be seen for a few days but on the 17 th they gained another smaller duckling; this is thought to be the one from 5 below. These 12 continued to be seen on and around N Scrape until mid to late July when fledged.	12
3	A pair with 2 small ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 9 th June. These continued to be seen here and in the Main Drain between N Hide and East Bank until fledged in late July.	2
4	A brood of 7 tiny ducklings were first seen on North Scrape on 10 th June. On the 13 th the brood reduced to 5 (2 joined brood 2). Another was lost by 22 nd June but the remaining 4 continued to be seen till late July when they would have fledged	4
5	A pair was seen with a single tiny duckling on Simmond's Scrape on 16 th June.	0
6	A pair with 7 tiny ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 30 th June. They continued to be seen until the end of July when they were quite large.	7
7	Two small ducklings without parents were seen on North Scrape on 15 th July. 2 slightly larger ones there on the 24 th were probably the same	0
East of East Bank		
8	A pair with 8 small ducklings was first seen on Arnold's Marsh on 28 th May. One was soon lost but the 7 continued to be seen either on Arnold's or in the nearby drain until 13 th June when they were still quite small but were not seen here again.	
9	Another pair with 6 was also first seen on 28 th May on Arnold's but these were only present until 4 th June then lost (to sight at least).	
10	A pair with 4 small ducklings was first seen on Arnold's on 2 nd June. These continued to be seen on Arnold's when they were medium sized and often roaming off. After this only 3 were seen. Later the family moved to a grassy area beside the Main Drain just south of Arnold's where they stayed until fledged.	3
11	2 small ducklings were seen in the Main Drain near Arnold's on the 2 nd June. After that single ducklings, often without parents, were seen in this drain until 16 th June	
12	A pair with 3 small ducklings was first seen on Arnold's on the 7 th June. By the 15 th it had reduced to 2 which continued to be seen on and off until the 29 th when still quite small, but not after that.	
13	A pair with 4 small ducklings was first seen on Arnold's on 13 th June, with 5 seen on the 14 th -16 th . There were only 4 again on the 17 th and they were not seen again after the 21 st .	
14	What looked like a single brood of 11 small ducklings were seen on Arnold's on 19 th June with 12 there on the 20 th but they weren't seen again.	
15	A pair with 2 tiny ducklings was swimming between the Main Drain and Arnold's on 23 rd June. They were still in the area on the 29 th . A single duckling here on the 9 th & 12 th July was probably one of these, as was a single large duckling seen in the Main Drain on the 28 th July	1
16	A pair with 4 tiny ducklings was seen in the Main Drain on the 2 nd & 4 th July but not again.	
17	A pair with 4 small ducklings was seen on Snipes Marsh on 15 th June but not again.	
Odd large ducklings:		
	2 large/fledged ducklings seen in the drain along the east side of E Bank on 11 th July may have been from broods 8 or 9	2
	A single large duckling seen on Sea Pool on 23 rd & 24 th July could have been from brood 13	1
	Odd large/fledged ducklings in late July were assumed to be young from one of broods 1-6.	

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Gadwall

13-14 pairs bred, c. 24 fledged

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

	Notes	N ^o . fledged
Main Reserve		
1	A brood of 4 small ducklings were seen on Billy's Wash on 1 st June. 3 there on the 13 th may have been the same brood. 2 med/large ducklings on N Scrape on 27 th June may have been these as may a single large duckling in the Catchwater Drain opposite the Visitor Centre on 8 th July	1-2
2	A female with a brood of 6 small ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 9 th June and continued to be seen there on and off till the 28 th when medium sized.	
3	Another female with a brood of 4 small ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 10 th June and continued to be seen in various places around the reserve until 3 rd July when medium sized. 4 large ducklings in the Catchwater Drain near Old Woman's Lane on 18 th July may have been these.	4
4	A female with a brood of 10 small ducklings was first seen on Whitwell Scrape on 11 th June. They soon moved to Simmond's reducing to 9 by the 17 th , then 8 by the 22 nd . Only 7, now medium sized were seen there on the 25 th and were not seen there again. However a brood of 8 medium/large ducklings on North Scrape on 18 th July were probably these.	8?
5	A female with a brood of 2 small ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 11 th June. A single duckling seen in the Main Drain east of N Hide on the 13 th may have been one of these. 2 medium ducklings which were probably these were seen on Billy's Wash on the 23 rd & 26 th but not again. However 2 medium/large ducklings on Richardson's on 8 th July could have been these.	2
6	A female with a brood of 6 small ducklings was first seen on Whitwell Scrape on 12 th June. They then moved to Simmond's Scrape where they were seen on and off until 2 nd July when still quite small and weren't seen again	
7	A brood of 7 tiny ducklings were seen on Billy's Wash and North Scrape on the 10 th June. A brood of 5 on N Scrape on the 15 th , 18 th & 19 th were thought to be these. On the 21 st they were in front of Dauke's Hide. They were not seen again.	
8	A female with a brood of 3 small ducklings was first seen on North Scrape on 18 th June. They were seen again there on the 24 th and then on Billy's Wash on 2 nd July. A female with 3 medium to large ducklings seen in the Catchwater Drain on 24 th July could have been these.	3
9	A brood of 5 tiny ducklings was seen on Billy's Wash on 2 nd July with 4 there on the 4 th . Based on their size a female with 2 medium to large ducklings seen in the Catchwater Drain on the 24 th could have been these.	2
10	A brood of 3+ tiny ducklings was seen on North Scrape on 17 th July with 4 there and on Billy's Wash on the 20 th & 21 st .	
11	A brood of 4 small ducklings was first seen in front of Dauke's Hide on 21 st July. They weren't seen again until 7 th August when fairly well grown. They continued to be seen until 19 th August when they were becoming difficult to tell from moulting adults.	4
12	A brood of 7 small ducklings was seen on North Scrape on the 12 th July but not again.	
East of E Bank		
13	A brood of 6 tiny ducklings were seen in the Catchwater Drain W of Iron Rd on 26 th June but not again.	
	5 medium sized ducklings were on the pool between the <i>Serpentine</i> and Arnold's on 20 th July. These could have been brood 13 or an extra separate brood	

Teal

1 pair

Looking from his garden on Hilltop on 7th June, Trevor Davies spotted a female with 8+ small ducklings on Cricket Marsh, they were not seen again. This is the first breeding since we started recording in 2003.

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Mallard

46 broods were seen, at least 52 fledged

Following Mallard broods is always difficult but seemed even worse this year. Our general feeling was that there were an awful lot of ducklings around but we didn't seem to be watching the same ones every day. Mallard take at least 50 days to fledge but can become independent before this which means that broods can break up before fledging and hence become difficult to follow. Some of the large ducklings are difficult to tell from adults if on their own. In general if ducklings have reached a medium/large size we assume that they will survive to fledging.

No nests were seen so we cannot be certain which part of the reserve they actually bred on but for ease of reporting the following list summarises the broods by the area where the ducklings were first seen. However not much should be read into this as obviously it is much easier to see ducklings on a scrape than in a drain or long grass that is not in easy view. Although some broods seem to stay around the same area until fledged many move around and can move right across the reserve in a very short time, even giving rise to them being seen in different areas on the same day. The first ducklings seen were a brood of 4 tiny on Cricket Marsh on 29th April. The lengthening grass in this area made viewing difficult but occasional sightings make us believe 2 of this brood survived to fledging.

Summary of broods

Area first seen	No. Broods	Earliest date	Total ducklings	N ^o . Fledged
Western Meadows	11	29 April	61	12
Central Scrapes	15	4 May	98	13
North Scrape & Billy's Wash	14	13 May	82	22
Eastern Meadows	6	6 May	33	5
Total	46		274	52

Garganey

1 pair,

A pair was seen regularly during the 2nd half of April with an unconfirmed report of 2 pairs on the 27th. In early May only the male was being seen. Bryan Bland then saw a female with 3 ducklings on Cricket Marsh on 13th May. During the remainder of May & June a male and a female were seen individually and as a pair but there was no further sign of any young. A juvenile was seen on 13th August but this probably came from further afield.

Shoveler

7 pairs, 4⁺ fledged

	Notes	N ^o . fledged
Main Reserve		
1	A brood of 6 tiny ducklings were seen on North Scrape on 26 th May. A single tiny seen on Billy's Wash on 1 st & 3 rd June may have been part of this brood as may have 2 small ducklings there on 7 th June. Birds are very difficult to see on Billy's Wash so there could have been more. A female with 3 medium ducklings, seen on Simmond's on 13 th June with 4 there on the 18 th could also have been these. There was a female with 4 large ducklings on Carter's Scrape on the evening of 19 th June and Simmond's on the 25 th .	4
2	13 tiny ducklings were seen on Cricket Marsh near Whitwell on 1 st June. A brood of 8 small in the Catchwater Drain by the junction bridge on the 7 th and on Whitwell on the 12 th may have been the remains of these. 7 sm/med were on Whitwell on the 18 th .	
3	Another female with a brood of 4 medium ducklings was on Simmond's on 18 th June	
4	A female with a brood of 4 tiny ducklings was at the southern edge of Simmond's on 19 th June.	
5	A female with 2 small/medium ducklings on Cricket Marsh (from boardwalk) on 17 th June and 3 medium ducklings on Cricket Marsh (near Beach Rd) on 18 th were probably the same.	
East of East Bank		
6	A female with 5 tiny ducklings was flushed from the Iron Rd bridge over the Main Drain on 1 st June, they swam west.	
7	A female with 4 ducklings was reported by Iron Rd on 29 th July. A female with 6 medium ducklings in the Catchwater Drain by Iron Rd on 8 th August was probably the same brood.	

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Pochard

4 pairs, at least 3 fledged

At least 4 pairs were present in April this year around the reserve with 8 males and 6 females on the 4th. In previous years females have been seen with small young for a few days then not seen again till the young were large or even fledged. This year very few fledged birds were seen so we don't know how successful they were.

	Notes	N ^o . fledged
1	A female with 7 tiny ducklings was seen in the Catchwater Drain by East Bank car park on 3 rd June.	
2	A female with 2 tiny ducklings was first seen on Snipes Marsh on 10 th June. They were still present on the 11 th & 12 th . On 15 th June they were in the Catchwater Drain opposite Snipes. They were seen again here on the 26 th .	
3	On 30 th July a female was seen with 1 medium sized duckling in the Catchwater Drain between Old Woman's Lane and the Visitor Centre. On the 31 st it was further along the drain towards Beach Road. They were seen again on the 1 st - 3 rd August in the drain just east of Old Woman's Lane.	
4	Another female was also seen with 3 medium sized ducklings in the Catchwater Drain between Old Woman's Lane and the Visitor Centre on 30 th July. They were seen again here on the 1 st & 3 rd August. On 5 th & 6 th August a female with 3 medium ducklings was in the drain in front of Dauke's Hide where they continued to be seen till the 25 th . By the 20 th the female had left them and the young split up around the 25 th when they may have fledged.	3
	5 small ducklings were seen on Billy's Wash on 5 th July; these could have been another brood or either of 3 & 4 above.	

Tufted Duck

2 pairs, 0 fledged

Late breeders, these broods always get lost in the reeds growing in the drains. There were up to 9 drakes and 6 ducks seen regularly during June and July but only 2 broods of young were seen and no large or fledged young were seen.

	Notes	N ^o . fledged
Main Reserve		
	A brood of 7 tiny ducklings were seen on Billy's Wash on 8 th July with 8 being seen on the 12 th . There were no further sightings	
East of East Bank		
	A brood of 4 small was first seen in the Catchwater Drain W of Iron Rd on 7 th August. Only 3 remained by the 15 th and 2 by 27 th when medium sized.	

Red-legged Partridge

No evidence of breeding on the reserve this year, but probably bred in neighbouring fields

A pair seen with 3 large fledged young in the Visitor Centre car-park in late September could have come from anywhere nearby.

Common Pheasant

A few probably bred on or around the reserve

A family of 5 were seen on Beach Rd on 25th May

1 small chick flew off the boardwalk opposite Watchers Cottage on 26th May.

A pair and 10 medium sized chicks were seen beside Old Woman's Lane on 26th May.

Two half-grown chicks were seen on W Bank on 27th June.

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Little Grebe

1 pair, 1 fledged

A poor year. Only one pair was seen in the normal breeding areas, however reasonable numbers were being seen in the drains from September on, so did they breed in areas we couldn't see?

	Notes	N ^o . fledged
	Nesting behaviour on Snipes Marsh from 18 th May. 1 small chick was first seen on 8 th June and continued to be seen till 24 th July when ready to fledge.	1

Bittern

Did not breed this year.

A single bird was seen a few times during spring but was only heard booming once on 4th May.

Little Egret

3 nests, at least 4 fledged in North Foreland Wood

4 well developed young were seen on nests in North Foreland wood on 7th June. On 13th the first juvenile was seen on the reserve. After this ones and twos were reported regularly. On 21st June a group of 5 juveniles were seen together by N Hide and then flew to Billy's Wash; later that morning, 6 were together on the Brackish pools; were these from our nests or from further afield?

Grey Heron

4 nests in North Foreland Wood, at least 7 (probably 9) fledged

7 young were seen on nests on 11th May, the same day that 2 fledged young were seen off E Bank. 8 or 9 juveniles were seen together from the hides on 1st June but these could have come from other nearby breeding sites.

Marsh Harrier

3 nests on main reserve + 2 on Popes Marsh, 8 + 4 fledging

Main Reserve

Nest building was observed on the reserve in the reedbed on 16th April. One nest was south of the Bittern Pool, the other much further north about level with Billy's Clump. A third pair was also regularly seen in late April; we think they nested further west on the reserve but we're not sure where. The first youngster was seen flying on 27th June with 2 on the 28th and were thought to come from the nest south of Bittern Pool. On 6th July they were joined by another two, probably from the Billy's Clump nest. Over the next few days 6 were seen over the reserve so we think this 2nd nest fledged 4 birds. In early August what appeared to be 2 recently fledged birds were seen regularly with a male around Cricket Marsh. We therefore think 2 + 4 + 2 birds fledged from nests on the main reserve.

Pope's

There appeared to be two nests being built with one male with two females on Pope's Marshes during late April. The first sighting of a single juvenile was on 28th June, with 2 together there on 2nd July and 4 on the 3rd. By their behaviour this appeared to be two broods of 2.

Sparrowhawk

Possible breeding

There were frequent sightings of single birds throughout summer but only one with prey on 25th July.

Kestrel

Possible breeding

One or two seen throughout the summer but no evidence of breeding

Water Rail

Possible breeding

Birds were present (heard or seen) during the breeding season but we have no evidence of breeding this year..

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Moorhen

14 pairs producing min.49 chicks, at least 7 fledged.

A poor season following last year's increase. One nest with 5 eggs was apparently predated and several more nesting attempts were noted but failed to produce chicks.

	Location	Brood	First Seen	Notes	N° Fledged
Main Reserve					
1	Catchwater Drain W of Old Woman's Lane	6	20 June	7 eggs in nest at southern end of Beach Road 31st May; 5 hatched on 20th June and another early on 21st. 1 egg failed to hatch. Down to 1 chick by 15th July.	
2	Catchwater Drain Opp Vis Centre	3	27 May	3 tiny chicks in drain on 27 May, seen once only.	
3	Catchwater Drain Opp OW Lane-Vis Centre	5 (6)	14 Jun	5-6 tiny chicks by Bridge opp Old Woman's Lane on 14th and 15th. Down to 3 by 19th. 1 small chick opposite the Visitor Centre on 26th June was probably from this brood. No further sightings.	
4	Catchwater Drain by Watcher's Cottage	1 (2)	26 June	1 tiny chick by Bernard's bridge 26th June. Sightings of 1-2 small chicks on 7th and 8th July were assumed to be this brood as was a single medium sized on 18th. A record of 1 med /lge on 19 July was possibly this brood but no further sightings.	?
5	Catchwater Drain Opp Vis Centre	4	1 Aug	4 tiny chicks opposite Visitor Centre, seen 1st and 3rd August only.	
6	E.Bank/ W.Drain	4	27 May	4 small chicks seen by the East Bank car park on 27th May. Chicks occasionally heard here over following week but not seen again.	
7	Bishop's Hide	4	13 Jun	4 tiny chicks by Bishop's Hide on 13th+15th June; these may have moved when work started on the scrape, although they were not seen to do so. 1 large chick in the Catchwater Drain on 22nd June and 1 large/juvenile on Carter's Scrape on 8th July may have been from this brood and we assume this 1 fledged.	1
8	Dauke's	1	7 July	A large chick by Dauke's Hide on 7th July, a large chick/juvenile by Bishop's Hide on 5th Aug and again by Dauke's on 8th Aug were probably all the same bird. We cannot match this with any known brood and must assume we missed it earlier.	1
Snipes Marsh					
9	Snipes	1	2 July	1 chick was seen from 2-24th July when medium sized. It may have remained here, and fledged, but visibility was restricted by dense reed from end of July.	?
East of East Bank					
10	Catchwater Drain by E Bank	3	15 July	3 chicks were seen in the drain close to East Bank from 15th July to 7th Aug, but only 2 chicks on 8th August. Last seen 29th Aug when large and we assume 2 fledged	2
11	Catchwater Drain by E Bank	3	18 July	Another brood of probably 3 chicks were seen in the drain from 18th-30th July when still quite small; not seen again	
12	Catchwater Drain Popes	6	8 June	Nest on west side of bridge to Pope's Marsh found on 21st April. 7 eggs seen, 6 hatched. Down to 3 chicks by 21st June, 2 by 7th July and 1 by 20th July. This chick seen	1

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	Location	Brood	First Seen	Notes	N° Fledged
13	Catchwater Drain Popes	6	7 June	6 chicks on East side of bridge to Pope's Marsh first seen on 7th June. Down to 3 chicks by 27th, 2 by 7th July. Only 1 seen 20th-24th July. This one probably fledged.	1
14	Catchwater Drain Popes (E)	2	4 Sep	2 small chicks in drain near the Iron Road on 4th Sept, down to 1 by 19th Sept. Last seen on 8th October when large. Assume 1 fledged.	1

Coot

9 broods (8 nests +1 pair produced two broods) 16 chicks hatched / 8 fledged.

Another poor year with no nests, nor chicks, found in the Catchwater Drain.

	Location	Brood/ N° Chicks	First Seen	Notes	N° Fledged
Main Reserve					
1	Billy's Wash	1	10 May	Nest found on 26th April, then 1 tiny chick seen on 10th May. No further sightings.	
2	North	1	10 June	1 small chick at the back of N Scrape on 10th June; seen there most days until 27th June when medium sized. 1 small/medium on Simmond's 15-16th June was probably this bird moving between scrapes.	?
3	Borrow Pit Beach Road	1	20 Jun	20 Jun: 1 small on Borrow Pit. No further records.	
4	Simmond's/ Cricket Marsh	2	25 May	Adult on nest from mid-late May when it became obscured by vegetation. The following records could all be from this nest: 25 May: 1 sm near nest site 27 May: 1 chick Simmonds 2 Jun: 2 small+ Cr1/3. 10 Jun: 1 med chick. 12 Jun: 2 small+ on Cr1/3 prob this. 12 Jun: 1 med on Simmonds prob this 16+18 Jun: 2 chicks reported (no size) 20+22 June: 1 chick reported (no size) Then 1 seen fairly regularly here until 22 nd July when med/large. Assume 1 fledged.	1
5	Richardson's	1	6 June	1 small chick seen on 6th June. Continued sightings of 1 here until 15th July when large and ready to fledge.	1
6	Carter's/ Pat's	2	19 June	2+ tiny chicks on Carter's Scrape 19th June and 1 tiny in drain in front of Bishop's Hide on 24th was probably the same brood. 1 small on Richardson's on 4 July was also likely this brood. No further records.	
7	Simmond's	2	15 July	2 medium/large first seen on Simmond's 15th July were seen regularly till at least 9 August. Assume fledged.	2
Snipes Marsh					
8	Snipes	1st brood 5 chicks	16 April	A brood of 5 was seen on Snipes from 16th April, down to 3 by 6th May. Sightings continued until 17th June when due to fledge.	3
9		2nd brood 1 chick	2 July	2nd Brood. 1 small chick only, seen to 7th Aug when large. Assume fledged	1

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Oystercatcher

10-14 pairs bred, no young seen

As usual we had many Oystercatchers sitting, some for only a day or two, and some for much longer periods with a few for the full period. Some of the very short-lived nests probably don't have eggs and these birds try another spot. Also when a nest with eggs fails after a short period, the birds relay and try again nearby. No young were seen again this year.

	Hatched
Main Reserve	
2-3 pairs were involved in nests seen on Eye Field. Two nests appeared to be occupied for the full incubation period of 24-27days but no young were seen.	
1-2 pairs were sitting on Bull Marsh at one point but failed.	
1 pair was sitting on Cricket Marsh for 29 days (incubation normally 24-27 days) but no chicks were seen.	
1 pair sat on the shingle just north of N Hide in amongst the Avocets that took up residency here. This nest lasted at least 20 days but was then deserted, no young were seen.	
East of East Bank	
3-4 pairs were involved on and around Arnold's. Of these, 1 pair sat on 2 eggs halfway up the shingle bank behind Arnold's for 11 days and another pair sat on the seaward side of the shingle bank for at least 19 days.	
One pair sat on a nest with 3 eggs on top of the shingle bank just west of Iron Road. The nest was within 1 foot of the path so it was surprising that it lasted for the 18 days that it did,	
1 or 2 pairs were probably involved in nesting attempts seen in the meadows alongside the A149 between E Bank and Iron Rd. None of these lasted more than a few days.	

Avocet

At least 70 pairs bred, 9 fledged

The number of breeding pairs was similar to last year with one less fledged. However the number of nests seen to hatch young and the numbers of chicks seen were much less than last year, but this may have been due to less coverage during early May.

As happened last year there were a lot of birds nesting on Eye Field during late May and early June. They appeared to have moved here following a mass evacuation of nests on N Scrape between the 10th & 13th May, presumably due to predation. Once more none hatched any young. This year's unusual feature was on the shingle just north of N Hide. One pair started to sit there on 10th June. The wardens roped the area off and by the 22nd 9 birds were sitting, together with an Oystercatcher. They had all gone by 3rd July. We don't think any of these hatched but the earliest pair could have gone full term and could have hatched the young which later fledged on N Scrape but this is thought to be unlikely.

Fledged young were present on the scrapes from 26th June, but only two of these were bred on the reserve (on N Scrape), the rest must have come from elsewhere. Another 7 young fledged at the end of July. These were from 2 broods that were probably hatched on the Brackish Pools but immediately taken N Scrape where they stayed.

One nest on Pat's Pool did go full term but no young were seen. All other nests on Pat's Pool and Simmond's Scrape failed fairly quickly.

Despite effort from the wardens, there was obviously still much predation again this year, but we did not identify a main culprit. A pair of Shelduck was seen to chase off Avocets and trample on the nests on one of the islands on Arnold's Marsh.

From the number of nests at various times we have determined the number of pairs attempting to nest on each scrape and then overall.

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The following table shows details of the nests on each scrape.

Avocets	Earliest nest	Max nests at one time	Date max nests seen	Earliest hatchings	N ^o . Broods hatched	N ^o . chicks seen to hatch	Min N ^o . Pairs involved
Pat's Pool	17 Apr	17	8 May		0		17
Simmond's	17 Apr	27	4 May		0		27
Whitwell	20 Apr	7	1 May	6 May	1	3	7
Billy's Wash	18 Apr	7	27 Apr	31 May	1	3	7
North Scrape	18 Apr	35	2 May	11 May	11	20	35
Eye Field/Pool	20 Apr	12	27 May	16 May	1	2	12
Brackish Pool	23 May	5	2 Jun	27 Jun	3	8	5
Arnolds/Serpentine	18 Apr	9	16 Jun	18 Jun	3	9	10
E of Arnold's	24 Apr	6	5 Jun		0	0	6
W Meadows	27 Apr	1	27 Apr		0	0	1
W Bank	1 Jun	3	1 Jun		0	0	3
Beach	10 Jun	9	27 Jun		0	0	9

Note: 'Minimum pairs involved' for an area is taken from the maximum nests on any one day plus any other breeding pairs we knew of that were not on a nest on the day concerned (e.g. if they had hatched young).

From these figures we believe that the minimum number of pairs attempting to nest was 70, but could be much higher if some of the later nesting pairs were not those that were retrying after losing their nests. A total of 20 broods hatched with only 45 chicks being seen. Only 9 of these survived to fledge.

The following table gives details of the successful broods:

<u>All Main Reserve</u>		N ^o . Fledged
1.	We were not sure where the nest had been but 4 tiny chicks were first seen on the large western island on North Scrape on 30 th May. They reduced to 3 by 3 rd June and 2 by the 5 th . They were then seen daily until 26 th June when they were seen to fly.	2
2.	A pair was first seen on a nest on the mud in the SW corner of the Brackish Pools on 7 th June. Despite the nest being nearly swamped they stayed there until 27 th June when they should have hatched but no young were seen. On 30 th June a pair with 4 tiny chicks turned up on N Scrape which we think must have been these. These 4 stayed on N Scrape and continued to grow until fledged on 30 th July.	4
3.	Another pair with 3 tiny chicks appeared on North Scrape on 3 rd July. We are not sure where these came from but may also have come from the Brackish where there had been a few long lived nests or alternatively from the colony on the shingle behind N Hide. These 3 also continued to grow and fledged on 30 th July.	3

Little Ringed Plover

1 pair attempted to breed

A pair was seen mating on Pat's Pool on 6th May and then first seen sitting on a nest there on 8th May. They continued to be seen there until the 30th when Jackdaws predated the nest.

Another pair was displaying on N Scrape on 26th May.

Ringed Plover

1 pair attempted to breed

Pairs were seen displaying around the northern side of the reserve in the second half of March but no nests were seen.

A pair was present on Sea Pool throughout June and appeared to be sitting on a nest on several occasions, but not in the same place for more than a few days at a time. All nests failed.

One or more pairs were later displaying by North Hide on 26th May and by the Brackish Pools on 2nd June but again no nesting activity was seen.

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Lapwing

30 nesting attempts, 19 of which produced chicks, 17 fledged.

A better year for this species. In the past early nests have fared badly in poor weather but this year was a great improvement. The lush, wet areas created around Cricket Marsh provided excellent feeding habitat for many species and undoubtedly this helped boost Lapwing chick survival. In addition to the nests which produced chicks, 11 nests were found which either failed within a short period or went full term but no chicks were seen. Nests are not always easy to see, even in open fields, so a bird could have been sitting for some time before it was located. There was a little less observer-effort this year and undoubtedly a number of nests were missed. As before, there was some evidence of polygyny with males apparently associating with more than one nesting female.

	LOCATION	NOTES	* N ^o Hatched	N ^o Fledged
Main Reserve				
1	Cricket Marsh	Nest found early April. 3 chicks hatched c.5 May, seen to at least 10th June when due to fledge.	3	3
2	Cricket Marsh	Nest found 11th April. 4 hatched c.6 May. 3 survived to at least 11th June when large. Assume fledged.	4	3
3	Cricket Marsh	Nest found 9th April. At least 2 hatched c.8 May. 1 survived to at least 11th June when large. Assume fledged.	2	1
4	Cricket Marsh	Nesting suspected from May but site difficult to observe. 2 small chicks seen on Whitwell's Scrape 11th-18th June were probably this brood. One of these chicks seen to be taken by stoat and no definite records thereafter.	2	
5	Cricket Marsh	Nest found 23rd April. At least 2 hatched c.11 May. Seen again on 12th May but no further records.	2	
6	Bull Marsh	Nest found 18th April. 2 hatched 31st May. Intermittent sightings until at least 8 July when large. Assume 2 fledged	2	2
7	Eye Field	Nest found in southeast corner of field and incubation observed until at least 8th May. Probably moved to Billy's Wash soon after hatching where sightings of 2 chicks throughout May-June were believed to be this brood. Assume 2 fledged	2	2
8	Eye Field	Nest found 10th May. 4 hatched c.29 May but soon moved away, probably to Billy's Wash where 2 chicks were seen, then 1 only until 24th June when large. Assume 1 fledged	4	1
9	Billy's Wash	Records from Billy's Wash suggested a brood of 2 hatched mid-May, 1 of which seen until large. Assume 1 fledged.	2	1
East of East Bank				
10	East Bank Meadows	Nest found 21st April. 1 hatched prob. 3rd May; seen to 10 June when fledged	1	1
11	East Bank Meadows	Nesting confirmed 6th June. 2 chicks hatched 14th June, seen next day then no further records.	2	
12	East Bank Meadows	Nest found 8th June. 1 hatched by c.21 June, not refound.	1	
13	East Bank Meadows	Nest found 27th May. At least 1 hatched by 21st June, seen until 23rd June then no further records.	1	
14	Pope's Meadows	Nesting suspected but not found; 2 newly-hatched chicks here on 11th May; seen until mid-June when large. Assume 2 fledged.	2	2
15	Pope's Meadows	Nest found 21st April. 1 hatched 9th May. Seen to 3rd June when large. Assume fledged.	1	1
16	Pope's Meadows	Nest found 12th May. 2 hatched c.31 May. Seen until 2nd June only.	2	
17	Pope's Meadows	Nest found 27th May 1 hatched by 20th June, seen until 22 June only.	1	
18	Pope's Meadows	Nest found 20th May. 2 hatched but not seen again.	2	
19	Pope's Meadows	Nest found 20th May. 3 hatched, 2 survived until 23 June, then 1 until 27th; not seen again.	3	

Cley Breeding Report 2011

Common Snipe

No evidence of breeding

No drumming was heard this year.

Redshank

20 pairs, 42 chicks seen, at least 7 fledged although probably more

As usual Redshank chicks proved almost impossible to track as they spend a lot of time in the reeds and only rarely come into view, but we have attempted to make sense of the sightings we did record. Our general impression was that there were a lot of Redshanks around this year so the above figures are probably an underestimate.

	Broods	Chicks seen
Main Reserve		
1	3 medium chicks were first seen on 17 th May in the wet area of Cricket Marsh . They were still there on the 23 rd but by the 27 th only 2 could be found. 1 large on Whitwell Scrape on 8 th June could well have been from this brood.	3
2	2 tiny chicks were seen on the west side of N Scrape on 13 th May and again on the 16 th but not after that.	2
3	3 tiny chicks probably hatched from the north of Cricket Marsh on 16 th May and were still present on the 17 th . 2 seen further east on the 20 th were probably these but they weren't seen again.	3
4	4 tiny chicks were seen on Whitwell Scrape on 19 th & 20 th May, but not again.	4
5	1 small chick seen on Billy's Wash on 26 th May and 2 there on 1 st June were thought to be the same brood, but they weren't seen again.	2
6	A tiny chick was first seen on the western edge of N Scrape on the 26 th May. It was then seen on and off till 9 th June when medium sized.	1
7	A pair with tiny chick(s) was in long grass on the western side of Eye Field on 20 th June. Despite several glimpses it was impossible to see how many.	1 ⁺
8	2 medium sized chicks were on Billy's Wash on 3 rd July. They were not together so could have been 1 or 2 broods.	2
9	1 small chick was first seen on Billy's Wash on 2 nd July. On the 3 rd it was on N Scrape. A medium chick on Billy's on the 21 st & 23 rd was probably this.	1
10	Another small chick was also seen on Billy's Wash on 21 st July but not again.	1
East of East Bank		
11	3 newly-hatched chicks were seen at the north end of the Serpentine on 14 th May.	3
12	Another brood of 3 tiny but slightly older chicks were also seen in the same area of the Serpentine on 14 th May.	3
13	An adult was seen with 1 tiny chick N of the Serpentine , close to E Bank on 1 st - 3 rd June. A medium chick on Popes near the parallel drains on the 15 th was thought to be this.	1
14	A pair with 1 small chick was on the east side of the Serpentine on 13 th June. On the 15 th they were seen again nearby with at least 1 small chick.	1
15	2 tiny chicks were seen in the mud on Popes Marsh opposite Walsey Hills on 15 th June. A pair behaving as if they had chicks were seen there on the 21 st and 22 nd but the chicks were not seen.	2
16	A pair on Popes near the parallel drains on 15 th June was behaving as if they had chick(s) but these were not seen.	1 ⁺
17	A pair was seen with 2 tiny chicks at the NW corner of the Serpentine on the 16 th June with 4 seen on the 17 th . On the 18 th 1 tiny chick was seen on E bank by the bench, the parents and other 3 could not be found. They weren't seen again.	4
18	1 small chick was seen on Sea Pool on 17 th June and a medium there on the 26 th .	1
19	Another 4 tiny chicks were seen by the Serpentine on 26 th & 30 th June. On 2 nd -6 th July the adults were on the pool to the north of the Serpentine with 3 growing chicks, but neither the adults nor chicks were seen after that.	4
20	1 medium chick was seen beside the island with tall vegetation on Arnold's Marsh on the 2 nd July with 2 there on the 5 th . On days between these sightings an adult was often seen standing on a post on the island calling and watching over the chick. On the 7 th the adult moved the chicks to the samphire on the spit to the north and they weren't seen again.	2

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Most large or medium/large chicks seen could not be specifically allocated to the individual broods detailed above and those seen are as follows:

		Assume fledged
a	A single large on N Scrape on 5 th June and 3 (singles?) there on the 6 th could all have come from any of broods 1-3 above. Up to 3 large or fledged were seen on N Scrape regularly throughout the rest of June.	3
b	A single large chick on Whitwell on 8 th June could have been from brood 4 (or any of 1-3)	1
c	3 medium/large chicks on N Scrape on 9 th June, including one taken by a Kestrel, could have been from broods 5 and 6.	2
d	1 medium/large chick on the meadow near South Pool on 10 th June could also have been 1 of brood 4 (or even the same bird as b above – size estimate being from a different observer)	0-1
e	1 large chick seen on Billy's Wash on 11 th & 15 th July could have been from brood 8.	1
f	Up to 3 other large or fledged chicks seen on Billy's Wash during July could have been the same as any of the above or even birds fledged from outside our area.	

From the above large chicks seen, which we assume will all have fledged, we believe at least 7 chicks fledged. We did not see any large chicks on the lagoons and meadows east of East Bank, so maybe they were all predated or maybe the long grass hid them well. Our general view is that more fledged but we have no evidence of this.

Close by, but outside of our area, a pair was seen with at least 1 (but probably 3) tiny/small chick(s) just west of West Bank on May 27th. A pair looking as if they had chicks continued to be seen in this area until 4th June. These have not been included in our counts.

Black-headed Gull

c.31 pairs attempted to breed, no young fledged.

Only 31 pairs were seen sitting on nests during the spring. Once more they tried to nest on the stony island on Arnold's Marsh this year but, despite up to 6 birds sitting there for up to 40 days, no chicks were seen; the nests were probably water logged at times. Up to 5 birds sat on the grassy 'tussocks' on the Brackish Pools. These did hatch 3 broods of 2 chicks, 2 at the end of May and 1 in late June. None of these chicks lasted more than 3 days, were they predated or did they fall off the tussocks and drown? No other chicks were seen.

Common Tern

1-2 pairs attempted to breed.

One pair was seen sitting on the grassy island at the east end of Arnold's on 25th May. It lasted for 5 days but on the 30th the nest had gone (probably destroyed by the Shelducks that had been seen at the Avocet nests) and the birds were prospecting elsewhere but without success. Another pair appeared to be nest building elsewhere on Arnold's on the 29th but that came to nothing.

Wood Pigeon

Bred in N Foreland wood and attempted to breed on the reserve, numbers unknown

At least 1 pair was seen nest building on the reserve but they did not succeed. Many do breed in N Foreland wood.

Tawny Owl

Possibly bred

Often heard calling from North Foreland and the wood behind Hilltop but never seen

Cley Breeding Report 2011

Skylark

12 singing males

Singing males were recorded from March 27th onwards and by far the best area for them was Eye Field.

Eye Field and adjacent beach. 5 singing males.

On April 3rd, 4 were counted singing on the field – 2 at the west end, 1 in the centre and 1 near the car park. The fifth singing male was on the long grass on the beach. There was subsequently little change to these figures. Evidence of breeding here was seen on May 9th with a pair taking food into a small rough area south of the pillbox and adjacent to an angle in the fence where many birders stop to view the field. On the same day larks were taking food into the NE corner of the rough grass on the beach. Later adults were carrying food to a nest/juveniles just south of the fence on May 30th. This area of long grass by the car park has been a good source of food for Skylarks and Meadow Pipits this year and is also regularly patrolled by the Kestrel.

The rough on the beach proved irresistible to 2 pairs of Skylark during June (perhaps because cattle had grazed the Eye Field down) and they were seen carrying food into the long grass at both ends on June 29th and July 6th. We were not able to see if both fledged young.

North Hide

1 male was singing from April 3rd in front of the window. He might be part of a pair seen on June 26th taking food across the scrape from the southeast into grass and sedge on the northwest perimeter of Billy's Wash.

Bull Marsh

A pair was seen on April 11th and singing on 5 dates up to June 2nd.

Cricket Marsh

1 singing male was present from April 9th to June 2nd and a pair was seen from Avocet Hide on May 17th.

East Bank

One was regularly singing near the north end of the Serpentine, heard from March 27th to June 16th but usually too far off and backlit to see what he was up to.

Fields along A149 and Iron Road

Not so well observed and there was some interaction with larks breeding on the crops inland and east of the Iron Road. On May 11th 3 males were singing between Walsey Hills and the north end of the Iron Road. On June 11th and 16th 2 males were singing and 1 on June 27th. On July 18th a lark was seen with 4 juvs on the meadow opposite the east end of Walsey Hills.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

Swallow

At least 7 pairs bred

Location		N ^o fledged
Beach Shelter	3 pairs bred successfully, each had first broods of 4-5 chicks, with the first fledged young seen being fed on the wires by the car park on 2 nd July. We don't know if they had 2 nd broods.	4-15
Pillbox	At least one pair bred here.	
North Hide	By 23 rd May a new nest had been built on the site of the 2009 nest. On 9 th June this nest was broken down, it looked like human interference. They did not rebuild.	0
Bishop's Hide	In late May a pair set up nest at the entrance to the hide where they had nested last year. At least 3 chicks were seen on 24 th June and on the 27 th 4 recently fledged young were being fed on the 'goal post' on Carters Scrape. On 8 th July the pair was seen repairing the nest. On 22 nd September young were reported being fed outside the hide - 2 nd brood.	2 broods (5+ fledged)
Central Hides	A pair were seen around and <u>in</u> (whenever a flap was open) the hides from late May. From 2 nd June a flap was left open in Teal Hide as they looked determined to build here, but no nest was found, they just appeared to be roosting there. In September a poorly constructed nest was found on the floor with cold broken eggs in it. At the same time another nest was found in the rafters nearby with 1 chick in it. A recently fledged juvenile was seen being fed outside Teal Hide on the 22 nd . This was probably the only chick fledged by this, presumably inexperienced, pair.	Single brood, 1 fledged

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House Martin

Didn't breed on reserve

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

Meadow Pipit

16 pairs/singing males.

East Bank 4 territories at north end.

Male 1 was on the west side from March 27th to June 26th. Thought to enter a nest site on June 16th and seen feeding a juvenile on June 26th.

Male 2 sang by the Serpentine with a nest by a rose bush on the bank on June 2nd – 7th. Two juveniles were seen on the bank with a parent on June 16th.

Male 3 sang persistently just north of the seat and flew up to the northern fence line competing vocally with Male 4 further along the fence by suda scrub. These two may be unpaired and were still singing on July 19th next to Arnold's Marsh.

Sea Pool

One male was singing here May 11-13th. One on June 16th singing over the field to the west of Sea Pool was possibly the same.

Iron Road

There were 3 territories in the northernmost field to the west between May 3rd and June 11th. Birds were collecting food for the nest near the centre of the fence line on May 11th. On June 16th an adult giving anxiety calls at the west end of this field may have had a second brood. On June 11th – a pair was taking food to a nest just north of the Main Drain.

Central Hides

A pair on Whitwell Scrape May 3rd – May 19th.

Coastguards car park Two pairs.

A lot of migrant pipits passed through in early April. The first resident pair was noted on April 11th in NW corner of Eye Field. Nesting was first observed in the rough overflow car park on May 3rd with food going into a nest near the thick 3 post strengtheners. Another male was singing at the east end of this patch. On June 9th the pipits were going to a nest again not far from the first attempt – had they lost the first brood? Further nest attempts took place in this area. On June 29th food was taken into grass by the Half Moon Pool. July 6th a male pipit was singing and accompanying two juvs near the three post fence section while another took small insects into thick grass feet away from the display board.

North Hide

On May 3rd, a pair was taking food to a nest by the west wall of the hide into long grass. June 9th – an adult with large juveniles was feeding them to the NE of the rough area to North Hide entrance with a male singing nearby. The male was still singing here on July 19th.

Brackish Pools

A male was singing halfway between North Hide and East Bank by a bare mud area on June 9th and 16th.

Beach Road

At least 3 pairs used the Cley reserve to gather food and sit on the telegraph wires but we think they must be nesting on Blakeney saltmarsh. 2 pairs used Bull Marsh and one pair the sluice area. Several juveniles were seen feeding on the road itself especially at the north end during June.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

Pied Wagtail

Bred, numbers unknown

It is thought 1 pair nested in the roof of the shelter in Beach Car-park but by the number of young around on the reserve, more must have bred in the area. Young were seen being fed on the reserve from 22nd May

Cley Breeding Report 2011

Wren

Bred, numbers unknown.

At least one bird was singing in the trees behind the Central Hides in May. Recently fledged young were seen being fed in area later on.

Dunnock

Possibly bred

A few pairs were present alongside the Coast road but no evidence of breeding was recorded.

Wheatear

Did not breed

Male and female Wheatears were seen regularly near the rabbit warrens in Eye Field in late May and early June. Some hoped that they may have stayed to breed but they were just lingering birds and were last seen on 11th June.

Cetti's Warbler

Probably bred

The only bird heard singing after mid-April was from the Snipe's Marsh / Walsey Hills area and a fledgling was seen there on 11th June. It is assumed the cold winter reduced the numbers from last year. A juvenile bird was seen in brambles opposite Old Woman's Lane on 29th June, but this could have come from anywhere.

Grasshopper Warbler

Possibly bred.

At least 3 males were present in spring and also singing again briefly in July, but no other evidence of breeding

1. One bird was singing from West Bank on 9th April and again from the 19th – 29th. Later it was singing again between 11th & 21st July.
2. Another was singing along the Skirts and opposite the Visitor Centre between 11th & 19th April and again on 4th July. A bird singing near the boardwalk to the central hides on 23rd & 25th April and again on 1st May could have been the same bird.
3. Another was singing near East Bank car park on 14th – 20th April, again on the 12th & 20th May and then on 16th & 17th June. The bird singing near Arnold's Marsh between 30th April and 11th May was probably the same.

Sedge Warbler

At least 69 singing males present, recently fledged young seen

Singing males were counted between first arrival date and when they were beginning to breed and had reduced their level of song. It is especially important to count Sedge Warblers soon after arrival as they can quickly go quiet if paired up.

On several days only part of the reserve was counted when looking for other species but the main counts for Sedge and Reed Warblers were done early in the morning on fine, windless days.

The first Sedge Warbler in 2011 was found on April 3rd. The first fledged young were seen on East Bank on June 7th. Prime areas are along East Bank and along the A149 as far west as the boardwalk. Smaller and drier areas of reeds and scrub such as the West Bank attracted later arrivals that sang for weeks and probably failed to breed. On May 4th a complete circuit walk gave 69 singing males. This includes 10 singing males along the Catchwater Drain by the A149 from East Bank to the Iron Road.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

Cley Breeding Report 2011

Reed Warbler

At least 48 singing males present, recently fledged young seen

The first Reed Warbler for the year was by Dauke's Hide on April 13th. Full counts were made in the area from West Bank to Iron Road from then until June 2nd when it was surprising how many Reed Warblers were still singing. Partial counts were made after this but no further full circuits. According to the literature Reed Warblers are hard to census accurately, also it is impossible to estimate how many might be on the central areas of Cley and Popes reedbeds. Looking from East Bank only the mature reedbeds immediately adjacent to drains seemed to attract many pairs and there did not seem to be an even distribution of singing males across the reedbeds. The first fledged young were seen on June 15th.

Counts in early June gave a total of 48 singing males.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

Willow Warbler

Do not breed on reserve, but probable in N Foreland woods

Great Tit

Do not breed on reserve, but probable in N Foreland woods

Long-tailed Tit

Do not breed on reserve, but probable in N Foreland woods

Bearded Tit

3 pairs bred, each having at least 2 broods

East Bank

Individuals were seen along East bank on April 7th in two places. More sightings over the next few weeks led us to think two pairs may be present along the bank.

The first breeding evidence came from the northern pair which was very active on May 11th when a juvenile, with a half-length tail, was seen to emerge. On June 2nd five juveniles were seen in the same area and again on June 9th when they could be sexed as 3 males and 2 females by their bills. Also June 9th a female Bearded Tit was seen to strip a piece of reed off and take it to a probable nest site, just south of where they were so busy on May 11th.

We may have missed a successful fledging of the other pair but more activity noted near the old Bittern Hide path on June 1st and again here on 2nd, 7th and 9th June.

Later sightings of the five juveniles came on June 26th when they were seen feeding at the base of the reeds at the north end of the bank. By July 2nd the flock of 5 had increased to 8 as the juveniles had joined up with others. The last sighting of interest was of a juvenile 'pair' going around together in the reeds on Brackish saltmarsh still by East Bank on July 22nd.

Boardwalk to Central Hides

These were less easy to watch and the only sightings were birds on May 8th and May 12th. A pair was later seen over West Bank. Bernard Bishop said he'd seen food-collecting near the concrete cattle crossing in May. After a long gap we were delighted to see the parents with a very new juv, which even had dark streaks either side of its crown and a short tail, being encouraged to cross the boardwalk on July 11th. Another tit was calling from the other side, so a second juvenile was maybe in the party.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

Greenfinch

No evidence of breeding in our area

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Goldfinch

1+ pairs bred

1 was singing behind Dauke's Hide on 8th May. Adults with at least two broods of recently fledged young were seen in the bushes here.

Linnet

Probably bred

Linnets were present in good numbers all summer and family parties were seen, but no counts were done.

Reed Bunting

12-13 singing males

East Bank 2 pairs.

In April a male was seen a lot at the northeast corner of the reedbed and on East Bank itself north of the sluice. Later it was singing west of the bank opposite the Serpentine. A female was seen taking food to reeds in the Brackish Pool next to the beach on June 1st. A second male was often along the old Bittern Hide path area. A female was seen with food right by the sluice exit/Catchwater Drain on June 6th. The male was later seen singing from the large dead tree on June 26th.

East Bank to Central Hides 2 pairs and a male.

A male was seen twice singing along the east side of Carter's Scrape. On the second occasion a pair was seen at the same time along the path to Bishop's Hide, the male of which flew to sing from reeds by Richardson's Scrape. In early May a male sang near the 'swan' bridge along the Catchwater Drain halfway to East Bank which could have been either of these two.

A third pair was seen several times up the boardwalk to the Central Hides between Keeper's Marsh and the hides. A female was seen with food outside Avocet Hide on May 10th.

Snipes Marsh

1 male heard twice singing by Snipes Marsh.

Beach Road 3-4 males.

3 males fed and sang on the reserve and then flew over West Bank from the wires: one male by the north end of Bull Marsh, two males often singing at south end of Bull Marsh and north end of Cricket Marsh on wires and feeding in reed belts next to Cricket Marsh. A fourth male or one of the Cricket Marsh ones sang behind Keeper's Marsh opposite Stone Runner.

North Hide 1 pair.

One male at the south end of North Scrape was seen from Dauke's Hide early in the season and later seen singing on the east side of North Scrape up to July 5th. On June 26th the male was next to the west side of North Hide and from the hide, a female was seen feeding two juveniles in front of the window.

Pope's Marsh 2 singing males.

One male was seen south of Sea Pool on April 18th, June 11th and June 16th. On June 11th a second singing male was seen nearer the Iron Road along the Main Drain.

(Sue & Peter Morrison)

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Notes:

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

Our results this year have been enhanced by the assistance of Sue & Peter Morrison with their studies of some of the passerines and it is obvious that we could get much better results if we had more observers to concentrate on other individual species. We specially noticed that our observations of the Harriers this year were much too scanty and to ensure certainty on breeding numbers we need someone to spend more time watching them.

Due to holidays we had gaps in April and May when we could not keep watch. Mike Harcup stood in here getting many early records, without which we would not have been able to produce this report – so many thanks to him.

If you think this report is worthwhile and would like to help next year we would love to hear from you. You don't have to be an expert; we weren't when we started and are still not now but have learnt a lot. You will just need a little time to spare and we are sure you will find it rewarding.

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

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