

THURLESTONE BAY BIRDS SEPTEMBER 2017

Another month with below average sunshine and temperatures. Some days of heavy rain with over 2.5 inches on 3rd causing local flooding. Strong winds on 8th, 10th, 11th and 20th but almost all winds from a W direction.

A total of 131 species recorded (c/f 2016 – 124, 2015 – 122) with 7 new species for the year – **GREY PHALAROPE, BLACK TERN, SABINES GULL, LONG-TAILED SKUA, OSPREY, WRYNECK** and **MARSH TIT** taking the total for the year to an impressive 198 (c/f 2016 – 181, 2015 – 179).

The **GREY PHALAROPE** records are worthy of special mention a total of 10 over 4 days – a patch record.

Main Highlights

DUCKS

WIGEON – Recorded on 3 days max a flock of 7 over South Huish Marsh on 26th.

TEAL – At South Huish Marsh max only 25 on 30th compared with 60+ at South Efford Marsh on 23rd.

PINTAIL – A female amongst the 7 **WIGEON** on 26th.

COMMON SCOTER – Only recorded on 4 days with a max of 8 on 27th.

SHEARWATER, GANNET, GREBES, EGRETS and RAILS

FULMAR – Very few recorded – max 3 on 10th.

SOOTY SHEARWATER – 1 flew east on 8th with 2 west on 10th.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER – Recorded on 4 days, singles on 8th and 21st, 4 on 5th and 8 on 10th.

MANX SHEARWATER – Max of 300+ on 5th last were 35 on 12th.

GANNET – Recorded daily – highest counts – 700+ on 5th, 655 on 20th, 340 on 10th and 205 on 3rd.

LITTLE EGRET – Max at South Huish Marsh 5 on 3rd. Up to 15 regularly at South Efford Marsh.

CATTLE EGRET – Present throughout the month at both Marshes with a max of 3 at South Efford Marsh on 17th to 19th and 2 at South Huish Marsh on 5th.

SPOONBILL – A Juv flew into South Huish Marsh at 12.05 on 27th, last seen at 17.15 same evening.

WATER RAIL – first returning birds were 2 at South Milton Ley on 25th.

LITTLE GREBE – 1 returned to South Huish Marsh on 4th – present for the rest of the month.

RAPTORS

MERLIN – 1 on Thurlestone Golf Course chasing MIPITS on 22nd.

HOBBY – 1 in South Milton Village on 6th and 13th, 2 over South Huish Marsh on 21st.

OSPREY – first of the year over South Efford Marsh on 15th.

BUZZARD, KESTREL, SPARROWHAWK, PEREGRINE, TAWNY OWL and BARN OWL
No change in status – still regularly recorded.

WADERS – September always one of the best months for records this year was no exception with 21 species recorded.

OYSTERCATCHER – Present daily – max 21 on 1st.

RINGED PLOVER – Max 38 on 29th.

GREY PLOVER – A flock of 12 picked up flying in off the sea and straight up the valley early morning of 26th.

KNOT – singles at South Huish Marsh on 21st and South Efford Marsh on 22nd (probably same bird).

SANDERLING – Surprisingly only recorded on 1 date a single on 15th.

LITTLE STINT – first a single on South Efford Marsh on 17th, then a single at South Huish Marsh on 24th – 26th.

CURLEW SANDPIPER – first were 2 on South Huish Marsh on 7th and 8th, then a single on 15th at South Efford Marsh, with 2 on both marshes on 26th to 29th (assumed to be the same birds).

DUNLIN – Max at South Huish Marsh was 45 on the 8th, recorded daily but smaller numbers.

RUFF – Singles at South Huish Marsh on 4th, 8th, 27th, 28th and 2 on 29th.

SNIFE – Recorded on 3 days – max 3 on 5th at South Efford Marsh.

BLACK TAILED GODWIT – Recorded daily at both marshes, max 11 at South Huish Marsh on 2nd.

BAR TAILED GODWIT – Present on South Efford Marsh with a max of 5 on 10th. At South Huish Marsh max 2 on 29th.

WHIMBREL – 3 on the rocks on 3rd.

CURLEW – flock on South Efford Marsh increased from 20 on 4th to a max of 35 on 25th.

COMMON SANDPIPER – Max on the River Avon 7 on 18th.

GREEN SANDPIPER – 1 on South Huish Marsh on 3rd when 1 also on South Efford Marsh, also a single on 15th and 2 on 18th.

WOOD SANDPIPER – A single on South Efford Marsh on 4th, 5th and 6th.

GREENSHANK – Present on South Efford Marsh all month, usually 5 but a max of 10 on 10th and 10 on 25th.

REDSHANK – At South Efford Marsh a max of 4 on 25th.

TURNSTONE – Max on the rocks 15 on 27th.

GREY PHALAROPE – An outstanding month – On 12th 2 flew east at 9.55 and 10.02.

At 10.10 1 landed on the beach which later flew onto South Huish Marsh where there were 2 at 13.30. At the same time another was on South Milton Ley by the footbridge and 1 on Yarmer Beach. A day total of 7 is a patch record.

On 13th 1 was on South Efford Marsh briefly at 14.50.

On 14th 1 flew east at 9.45 with the last recorded on 19th when I was swimming on the sea off Leasfoot Beach between 9.40 – 10.00.

A total of 10 recorded spread over 4 days.

SKUA, GULLS and TERNS

ARCTIC SKUA – 1 flew east on 6th with a dark phase west on 14th.

GREAT SKUA – 1 flew east on 3rd.

LONG-TAILED SKUA – A Juv flew west close inshore on 14th.

SABINES GULL – Also on 14th 2 Juv flew west together across the Bay.

KITTIWAKE – Max 9 on 7th.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL – Singles on 1st, 22nd, and 6 together on 30th (2 ad 4 1st W)

BLACK TERN – 1 feeding in the Bay (also landed on the Beach) morning of 3rd.

SANDWICH TERN – Only 2 records, 1 on 3rd and 2 on 24th.

COMMON TERN – 4 flew west on 17th.

COMMIC TERN – 17 flew west on 17th too far out to positively identify.

SWIFTS AND HIRUNDINES

SWIFT – Last record over South Milton Village on 14th.

SWALLOW – No big roosting flocks this month – highest passage counts were 370 west on 15th, 250+ on 19th.

SAND MARTIN – Max 25 on 15th.

HOUSE MARTIN – 150+ over Thurleston Marsh on afternoon of 17th.

LARKS, WAGTAILS and OTHERS

SKYLARK – First signs of viz mig were 11 on 18th and 18 on 22nd.

PIED/WHITE WAGTAIL – Max 20+ at both Marshes on 15th.

GREY WAGTAIL – 2 flew NW on 4th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL – two notable counts 11 on 1st and 30+ on 4th. Last were 2 on 24th.

WRYNECK – 1 flushed from path near the hide at South Efford Marsh on 23rd.

MARSH TIT – A scarce bird on the patch, 1 was caught and ringed at South Milton Ley on 16th.

KINGFISHER – Recorded at both Marshes.

FLYCATCHES, CHATS and WHEATEAR.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER – 2 at South Efford Marsh were the last to be recorded.

WHINCHAT – An adult on 2nd and a Juv on 21st at South Huish Marsh.

STONECHAT – Max recorded were 11 on 18th.

WHEATEAR – Poor Autumn passage only counts above 2 were 5 on 4th and 6 on 25th at South Huish Marsh.

PIPITS and FINCHES

MEADOW PIPIT – max was 126 on 22nd.

LINNET – Up to 150 post breeding flock in stubble field.

CIRL BUNTING – Regularly recorded from several sites.

TREE PIPIT – Max 4 on 2nd at South Milton Ley.

GOLDFINCH – Max passage migrant flocks were 95 on 21st and 54 on 23rd.

SISKIN – 6 on local residents feeders most of the month. 10 flew NW on 21st.

WARBLERS

CHIFFCHAFF – Up to 6 in a local garden.

BLACKCAP – Up to 4 in a local garden

WHITE THROAT – Last record from the coast path on 4th.

RINGING – Due to inclement weather and holidays the number of sessions lower than previous years. A total of 178 birds ringed – highlights

MEADOW PIPIT	12	SEDGE WARBLER	11
REED WARBLER	6	BLACKCAP	44
CHIFFCHAFF	37	WILLOW WARBLER	15
GOLDCREST	10	MARSH TIT	1
REED BUNTING	5		

Two recent controls to mention.

1 **CHIFFCHAFF** – ringed on 26th June 2017 at **HARTLAND POINT, DEVON** controlled at South Milton Ley on 16th September 2017 – a distance of 95km.

2 **REED WARBLER** – ringed on 2nd July 2017 at **LIANGEFNI, ISLE OF ANGLESEY** controlled at South Milton Ley on 16th September, 2017, a distance of 330Km

With 3 months of the year still to come the possibility of significantly exceeding our target of 200 species starts to become achievable. Already the 199th species has been added early in October. If only we could get some sustained easterly winds to bring in, some interesting European and possibly Asian migrants!

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