

## THURLESTONE BAY BIRDS MARCH 2018

An unprecedented month for weather – very cold from 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> with lying snow and blocked access roads, followed by periods of heavy rain and then another disruption caused by snow on 19<sup>th</sup>. One of the wettest March on record. Winds predominated from East. Cold weather movements produced an influx of **DUCK, WADERS and THRUSHES**. 19 new birds for the year – including **POCHARD, RED BREASTED, MERGANSER, GARGANEY, AVOCET, MANX SHEARWATER, WOODCOCK, ICELAND GULL, GLAUCOUS GULL** and early spring migrants of **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER, SAND MARTIN and WHEATEAR**. Total for the year 141 (c/f 2017 – 142, 2016 – 130)

A total of 125 species recorded during the month.

### Main Highlights

#### **GEESE, DUCKS, DIVERS and GREBE**

**BRENT GOOSE - D.B.** – One joined the CANADA flock at South Huish Marsh from 19<sup>th</sup> with 2 on 24.

**BRENT GOOSE – P.B.** – One flew past Bolt tail on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**WIGEON** – Max at South Huish Marsh. 130 on 5<sup>th</sup> when also 80+ at South Efford Marsh.

**HYBRID AMERICAN WIGEON/WIGEON** – Present at South Huish Marsh up to 10<sup>th</sup>.

**TEAL** - On Thurlestone Marsh 32 on 3<sup>rd</sup> was a year high/. On South Huish Marsh max of 65 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> whilst at South Efford Marsh 50+ on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**PINTAIL** – On 4<sup>th</sup> a pair on South Huish Marsh when also a male on South Efford Marsh.

**GARGANEY** – On 4<sup>th</sup> 2 males on South Efford Marsh whilst also a pair on South Huish Marsh stayed until 6<sup>th</sup>. This is the earliest Devon record for this specie.

**SHOVELER** – 2 on Thurlestone Marsh on 2<sup>nd</sup> when also 5M 2F on the sea. On South Huish Marsh 4 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 6<sup>th</sup> with 2 females arriving on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**POCHARD** – A male on South Huish marsh from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> and a pair on South Efford Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup> – These are only the 3<sup>rd</sup> records in the last 5 years

**COMMON SCOTER** – 8 on 6<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 29<sup>th</sup> only records.

**RED BREASTED MERGANSER** – A male in the Bay on 25<sup>th</sup> is the first spring record in the last 10 years.

**RED THROATED DIVER** – 1 on sea on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 m 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**BLACK THROATED DIVER** – Only record 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** – 1 flew east on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 on sea on 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 1 on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** – 2 on the Bay on 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**LITTLE GREBE** – Last sighting on South Huish Marsh was 2 on 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### **SHEARWATERS, EGRET AND SPOONBILL**

**MANX SHEARWATER** – An early spring record of 1 flying east on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**CATTLE EGRET** – 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> reduced to a single up to 11<sup>th</sup>. Not recorded after the second fall of snow.

**LITTLE EGRET** – Up to 6 around the Marshes.

**SPOONBILL** – The bird which has overwintered seen regularly at both South Huish and South Efford Marshes. On 4<sup>th</sup> at South Huish Marsh whilst the regular bird asleep another watched flying south out to sea.

**WADERS** – A total of 21 species recorded during the month compared with 14 on 2017 – A new Marsh record.

**OYSTERCATCHER** – Max 10 on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**AVOCET** – A flock of 8 briefly on South Huish Marsh on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** – Singles on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> on South Huish Marsh.

**RINGED PLOVER** – Max 6 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**GOLDEN PLOVER** – Cold weather movement saw 90 on Thurlestone Marsh on 2<sup>nd</sup> when a flock also at South Huish Marsh. On 19<sup>th</sup> 50 around South Huish Marsh.

**GREY PLOVER** – 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4 on 4<sup>th</sup> with 2 remaining until 8<sup>th</sup> at South Huish Marsh on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**LAPWING**- Another cold weather movement specie – 150 on South Huish Marsh on 3<sup>rd</sup> with a max of 275+ on 6<sup>th</sup>. At South Efford Marsh 120+ on 5<sup>th</sup>

**KNOT** – A single on South Huish Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**DUNLIN** – Max 15 on 3<sup>rd</sup>

**RUFF** – At South Huish Marsh – 1 on 3<sup>rd</sup> with 2 on 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. 1 at South Efford Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup>

**JACK SNIPE** – 1 watched feeding on South Huish Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**SNIPE** -Cold weather brought 30 to Thurlestone Marsh on 1<sup>st</sup>. Max at South Huish Marsh 35+ on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**WOODCOCK** - 2 in garden at Aveton Gifford on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**BLACK TAILED GODWIT** – Up to 6 at South Huish Marsh throughout a flock of 12 flew into roost on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**BAR TAILED GODWIT** – 3 on South Huish Marsh from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>.

**CURLEW** – Up to 20 on South Efford Marsh.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** – Up to 3 along the tidal road at Aveton Gifford throughout the month.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** – 2 on north marsh at South Efford on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

**GREENSHANK** – Max 3 along the tidal road on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**REDSHANK** – Max 4 along the tidal road on 8<sup>th</sup>, 1 on South Huish Marsh on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**TURNSTONE** – Max of 12 on the rocks on 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **GULLS AND TERNS**

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** - Max of 16 on South Huish Marsh on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**BLACK HEADED GULL** – 400+ on South Huish Marsh on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL** – 100+ on 5<sup>th</sup> increased to 150+ on 8<sup>th</sup> at South Huish Marsh.

**HERRING GULL** – 600+ on South Huish Marsh 10<sup>th</sup>.

**COMMON GULL** – Max of 35 on 10<sup>th</sup> on South Huish Marsh is a record count for recent years.

**GREATER BLACK BACKED GULL** – Max of 35 on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**ICELAND GULL** – An adult flew E across the Bay on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** – A 1<sup>st</sup> W roosted at South Huish Marsh on 24<sup>th</sup> and seen daily to 30<sup>th</sup>.

**SANDWICH TERN** – 1 amongst the GULLS on South Huish Marsh on 4<sup>th</sup>. 2 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 3 on 28<sup>th</sup> were spring migrants.

**SPRING MIGRANTS** – Due to the very cold weather very few records.

**SAND MARTIN** - first at South Huish Marsh on 24<sup>th</sup>.

**CHIFFCHAFF** - most perished in the 2 periods of cold weather.

**WILLOW WARBLER** - A male singing at South Milton Ley on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**WHEATEAR** – 3 on 19<sup>th</sup> were the first with 3 on 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> all around South Huish Marsh area.

## **THRUSHES, LARKS, FINCHES AND PIPITS**

Cold weather movement produced the largest totals for some **THRUSHES** in the last 5 years.

**FIELDFARE** – In Thurlestone a total of 835 logged on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 105 on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**REDWING** – Over Thurlestone 2500+ logged on 2<sup>nd</sup>. At South Huish Marsh 250 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 200 on 4<sup>th</sup>.

**SONG THRUSH** – Max of 16 in Thurlestone on 2<sup>nd</sup>

**BLACKBIRD** – max of 9 on Thurlestone on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**MISTLE THRUSH** – 1 over Thurlestone on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**WOODLARK** – 2 spring records – very scarce at this time of the year, 1 flew north at South Huish Marsh on 11<sup>th</sup> and 1 at Hope Cove on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**SKYLARK** – A flock of 60+ flew over Thurlestone Marsh on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**WATER PIPIT** – 4 on Thurlestone Marsh on 2<sup>nd</sup>, singles regularly at South Huish Marsh.

**BRAMBLING** – 4 in a garden at Aveton Gifford on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3 in a Thurlestone Garden on 3<sup>rd</sup> and singles on 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

**CIRL BUNTING** – A pair regularly visiting a Thurlestone garden throughout the month.

**YELLOW HAMMER** – 2 in a garden at Aveton Gifford on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A male on hedgerows in the lanes on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**REED BUNTING** – Max of 9 in a Thurlestone Garden on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**STARLING** – 270 logged on Thurlestone Marsh on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**BLACK REDSTART** - A female in a Thurlestone Garden on 3<sup>rd</sup>.

A poor weather conditions have continued into the first few days of April with few spring migrants recorded so far.

[Thurlestonebaybirds.co.uk](http://Thurlestonebaybirds.co.uk)