

# Lytchett Bay 1997

Shaun Robson

The format of the report follows that of previous years. The Pool refers to the flooded field at the end of Slough Lane.

The Pool almost dried out in early July but was wet again by the 21st. After which it remained wet until the year end.

The log book was well utilised. The number of entries increased significantly to just over 2,500. This was largely due to the commitment and enthusiasm of James Lidster who moved to the area in the spring. The number of contributors was again 25. Visit days per month are set out below. The Bay was visited every day in 5 months of the year.



Ringling took place on 7 dates. 214 birds were ringed and 3 birds were controlled (recaptured, or seen in the field, with a ring already on). All details are included in the systematic list.

There were 2 "firsts" for the site. Iceland Gull and Woodlark. There were record counts of Little Egret, Brent Goose, Red-breasted Merganser, Greenshank, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Common Tern and Northern Wheatear.

The annual total number of species recorded in each of the last 5 years is as follows;

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
115	129	143	142	144

Chris Button has supplied an excellent birders map to help you make sense of some of the site names used in the report. Please remember that the major part of the site is private and that our access is at the discretion of the farmer and the estate. Please respect this privilege.

Finally we wish to thank the occupants of Olde Quoins Cottage for their assistance with the log and the land owner Sir Thomas Lees for his kind permission to ring at Lytchett Bay.

All records marked with an asterisk are published subject to acceptance by the Dorset Records Panel (DRP).

## **Systematic List 1997**

### **Diver Spp:**

Rare visitor. One thought to be a Great Northern was present on 29th Dec (GD). This is the first diver to be seen in the Bay since 1985.

### **Little Grebe:**

Winter visitor. Present in the first period until 2nd Mar, returning on 5th Oct. Max 10 4th Jan.

### **Great Crested Grebe:**

Occasional visitor. 1, 2nd May; 1, 14th Aug; 2, 22nd Oct with 1 remaining until 27th.

### **Cormorant:**

Present throughout the year with peak numbers in late summer. 13 on 10th Sept.

### **Little Egret:**

Increasingly common visitor. A new record count of 9 was made on 6th July (JL). Recorded on 158 dates. This is the first year that the species has been recorded in every month, not really surprising given the events elsewhere in the harbour.

### **Bay monthly max:**



### **Grey Heron:**

Recorded throughout the year with the biggest numbers occurring in June and July. Max. 6 on 1st June.

### **Mute Swan:**

Irregular visitor to the Bay. Recorded on 32 dates from the 1st Apr. A pair were seen intermittently until the 10th Aug but there was no evidence of breeding. First winter birds were seen on 2 dates at the year end.

### **Bewick's Swan**

Rare visitor. 6 were seen flying north over Rockley Point into the Bay on 1st Jan (IR). The first record in the period 92-97

### **[Pink-footed Goose]**

**1996:** The record published in last years Lytchett Report was not accepted by the DRP.

### **White-fronted Goose**

Rare visitor. One found on the 27th Feb was clearly injured. It remained until 15th June. First seen in flight on only the 1st June, it is presumed to have recovered and moved on.

### **Canada Goose:**

Occasional visitor. 1 or 2 birds were seen on 10 dates between 8th Mar and 3rd June. A typical showing.

**Brent Goose:**

Two previous records. The flooding of the far fields proved to be extremely attractive to this species. All records given; 4, 26thJan; 24, 29thJan; 16, 30thJan; 18, 9thFeb; 35, 16thFeb and 3, 22ndFeb.

**Shelduck:**

Common winter visitor and annual breeder. 2 or 3 pairs bred. 13 juveniles were raised. The max count of the year was 407 on 15th Jan.

*Bay monthly max:*



**Wigeon:**

Scarce visitor, recorded on only 2 dates. Max 8 on 4th Jan.

**Gadwall:**

Very scarce visitor. 1, 15thJan; 2, 19thJan.

**Teal:**

Winter visitor and passage migrant. An average year. The maximum counts for the Pool and the Bay were recorded on the 7th Oct and 15th Jan respectively.

*Pool monthly max:*



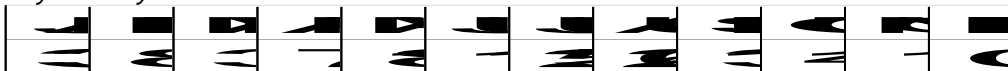
*Bay monthly max:*



**Mallard:**

At least 1 pair bred. This is the first year in the period 92-97 that the maximum count has occurred in winter.

*Bay monthly max:*



**Shoveler:**

Scarce visitor which can occur at any time. Recorded on 4 dates. 5, 15th & 18thJan; 1, 9th & 5, 19thFeb.

**Pochard:**

Scarce winter visitor. 1 male on 31st Oct.

**Tufted Duck:**

Second record in the period 92-97. A female on 18th Sept.

**Goldeneye:**

Common winter visitor in small numbers. Present until 1st Apr and from 31st Oct. The count of 12 on 14th Dec was the highest in the period 92-97.

**Smew:**

Rare visitor. 3 splendid redheads were found on the 4th Jan (CNB et al) among the ice flows! The Bay was 90% frozen on this date. This is the first record since 1990.

**Red-breasted Merganser:**

Common winter visitor. Present until 20th Apr and from 25th Oct. The count of 73 on 3rd Dec (IR) is more than double the pre 1997 record count of 34.

*Bay monthly max:*



**Goosander:**

Rare Visitor. Single redheads were present on 18th Jan & 1st Apr (SR).

**[Honey Buzzard:]**

**1996:** The record published in last years Lytchett Report was not accepted by the DRP.

**Red Kite :**

Second record. One was seen by the Bakers Arms on the 26th Aug (JG).

**Marsh Harrier:**

Irregular visitor. Seen on 8 dates. Imm M, 14th Mar; M, 12th Aug; Ad F, 31st Aug; Imm M, 2nd Sept; M, 4th Sept; F, 21st Sept; J, 17th Oct and F, 13th Dec.

**Hen Harrier:**

An average year. M, 28th Feb; M, 16th Mar; Ringtail, 17th Oct; M, 29th Nov and M, 29th Dec.

**Goshawk:\***

Rare visitor. A female was seen on the afternoon of 25th Oct (PB). The 1996 record is under consideration by DRP.

**Sparrowhawk:**

Common visitor recorded throughout the year. Recorded on 41 dates (23 in 1997). Two birds were seen on several dates in spring, so presumably they breed not too far away.

**Common Buzzard:**

Retains it's status as the commonest raptor of the area. Breeds widely in the vicinity. Probably 2 pairs within the bounds of the recording area. The maximum count of the year was 8 on 26th Sept.

**Osprey:**

Scarce but annual passage migrant. One in spring, 16th Apr (RH). In autumn, singles on 24th Aug and 5 dates between 20th & 26th Sept.

**Kestrel:**

Common resident which breeds. 1 pair raised at least two or three young.

**Hobby:**

Very scarce but annual summer visitor. The best year in the period 92-97. Seen on 9 dates and in each month between 30th Apr and 12th Sept.

**Peregrine:**

Uncommon visitor. 6 records between 29th Apr and 23rd Sept. All aged birds were adults except a juv on 25th Aug chasing waders.

**Pheasant:**

Common resident. At least one pair bred successfully.

**Water Rail:**

Common resident and winter visitor. No effort was made to assess breeding success this year, but juveniles were regularly seen throughout July and August.

**Moorhen:**

An uncommon resident. Status unchanged. Probably 2 pairs. Max count 6 on 19th Aug.

**Oystercatcher:**

A winter visitor and passage migrant. Occurs only in very small numbers at low tide but birds from elsewhere in the harbour roost at high tide on the Turlin Shore.

*Bay monthly max:*



**Avocet:**

A very scarce but annual visitor. Despite the very cold weather early in the year, and the large numbers of this species in Holes Bay, birds were only seen on one date. 10, 4th Jan.

**Little Ringed Plover:**

A very scarce, almost annual visitor. An odd but exciting series of records this year. None were seen on passage but 2 appeared on 31st May. These lingered on the Far Fields until at least the 7th June. The same or another pair reappeared on the 5th & 6th July. Finally a single in autumn on the 16th Aug.

**Ringed Plover:**

Scarcer than the above species. A juvenile was on the Pool 3rd - 8th Sept.

**Grey Plover:**

A scarce passage migrant. One on 4th Jan in very cold weather.

**Lapwing:**

A common resident and winter visitor which occasionally breeds. 2 territories were established. At least 4 young fledged in early June.

*Pool monthly max:*



*Bay monthly max:*



**Knot:**

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Two records. 2, 19th Jan & 2, 16th Mar.

**Curlew Sandpiper:**

Rare visitor. One in the Bay 15th Oct (IML).

**Dunlin:**

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Birds visited the Pool on 7 dates, the only significant count being 50 on 12th Jan.

*Bay monthly max:*



Recorded in spring until 11th May and in the autumn from 16th Oct.

**Ruff:**

Scarce migrant, usually in autumn. A poor year. Juveniles on 19th Aug & 3rd Oct. Both in the Bay.

**Jack Snipe:**

Rare visitor, undoubtedly under recorded. One on 10th Mar (GJA).

**Snipe:**

Common winter visitor. A dreadful year for this species.

*Pool monthly max:*



Recorded in the first period until 9th May and in the second from 28th July. One ringed on 26th Oct.

**Black-tailed Godwit:**

Common passage migrant and winter visitor. A colour ringed bird was seen feeding in the Canal Bank Field and on Cottage Pool on 19th & 29th Jan. Investigations revealed that it had been rung at Farlington Marsh, Hampshire on 22nd Oct 1996, where it remained until at least the 23rd Nov. This was the first Dorset recovery for a Farlington ringed Black-tailed Godwit.

Spring passage was very poor, with max of 301 on 13th Mar. The nationally important figure of 70 was exceeded on 22 dates (same as 1996).

*Pool monthly max:*



*Bay monthly max:*



**Bar-tailed Godwit:**

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded on 4 dates, all singles. 4th May; 2nd Sept; 15th Sept & 24th Sept. Two of these birds were on the Pool.

**Whimbrel:**

Passage migrant, most numerous in spring. The first of the year was 5 on 14th Apr. Spring passage was prolonged lasting until the 22nd May, but numbers were poor peaking at only 37 on 27th. A straggler was seen on 5th June. Autumn passage is never stunning but was the best in the period 92-97. 20 bird days, max 2, were noted between 21st July and 29th Aug.

**Curlew:**

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Normally seen in the Bay but occasionally flocks roost on the Pool or Far Fields.

*Bay monthly max:*



**Spotted Redshank:**

This area continues to be the key site for this species in the county. Recorded on 148 days. Birds were present at both the beginning and end of the year. Spring passage peaked on the 3rd & 18th Apr with 12. The last record in spring being a single on 20th May. The first returning bird was on 16th June. Autumn passage was the poorest in the period 92-97 with the peak of only 15 on 22nd Oct.

*Pool 7 day max during autumn passage:*



*Bay monthly max:*



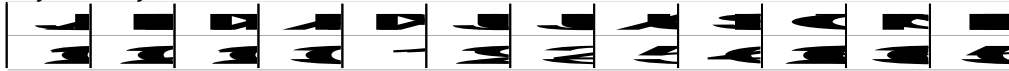
**Redshank:**

A small breeding population. Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Birds were present during the breeding season including 2 pairs on the Far Fields. The latter were not successful and for the remainder the level of success is unknown. A recently fledged bird was recorded in mid July. Interestingly this species is very scarce between mid June and early September. Even breeding birds leave the bay. This absence is an annual feature.

*Pool monthly max:*



*Bay monthly max:*



**Greenshank:**

Common passage migrant which occasionally winters. Recorded on 134 days. None were present at the beginning of the year. Spring passage started on 8th Mar and went on until 24th May. Max 3 on the several dates. The first returning bird was noted on 5th July. Autumn passage was the best in the period 92-97 and continued until 1st Nov. Max 27, 22nd Aug was a record in the period.

*Pool 7 day max during autumn migration:*



*Bay monthly max:*



**Green Sandpiper:**

Common autumn migrant, occasionally winters. The only record in the first half of the year was a single on 9th Apr. However the autumn was very good with birds present almost daily between 6th Aug & 31st Oct. Birds favoured the wet ditches on the Far Fields as well as the Pool. Max counts were 5, 25th Aug; 4, 8th Sept; 2, Oct (several dates). The last record of the year was 2, 11th Nov.

**Common Sandpiper:**

An uncommon passage migrant. The best year since 1992. 45 bird days, Three spring records; 1, 30th Apr; 1, 1st May; 1, 10th May. First bird of the autumn 5th July. Regularly present until 10th Sept. Max counts; 5, 28th July; 4, 30th Aug; 1, Sept ( 2 dates ). Unlike past years none were seen on the Pool, birds preferring the ditches on the Far Fields (see previous species).

**Turnstone:**

**1995:** Despite mention of this record in the introduction to the 1995 report I accidentally omitted it from the systematic list. 3 roosting on spit behind the Pool on 4th May. This remains the only record for the Bay.

**Mediterranean Gull:**

Uncommon visitor. Recorded in 9 out of the first 10 months. 17 bird days, max 2, 14th March. The age split was 11 adults, 1 second year and 5 first years. An almost identical age distribution as 1996.

**Black-headed Gull:**

A very common visitor. The first record of juveniles was on the 13th June after which they were seen daily. The biggest count of the year was 7,000 on 7th Mar, a record in the period 92-97.

**Ring billed Gull:\***

Third record for the Bay. A 2nd winter was seen on the evenings of 19th and 20th Sept bathing off the main sluice. (SR JL TE ).

It is worth noting that on 5 of the 6 occasions that this species has been seen in the Bay the tidal conditions and location of the birds have been identical. Namely the early stages of a falling tide with the bird off the main sluice.

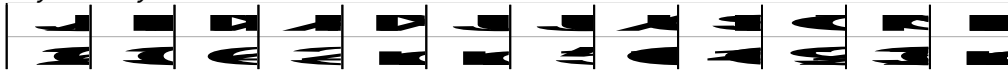
**Common Gull:**

A common winter visitor and passage migrant, especially in spring. The biggest count of the year was 606 on 4th Jan. The species was absent between 22nd May and 9th July.

**Lesser Black backed Gull:**

A very common passage migrant and common winter visitor. Birds which occur in the Bay are *L.f. graellsii* almost without exception. There was one *L.f. intermedius* this year on 18th Mar (SR). This race is a common spring migrant at coastal watch points in Dorset. Quite why these birds do not occur at the Bay in good numbers is a mystery. The count of 1400 on 14th Sept is a record exceeding the previous one of 1050 on 20th Sept 1995 (JL).

*Bay monthly max:*



**Herring Gull:**

Usually present in very small numbers only becoming common in the autumn. Max of 300 on 29th Sept.

**Yellow legged Gull:**

Increasingly frequent late summer visitor. The increases noted throughout the 90's continues. A new max of 65 on 19th Aug was more than double the 1996 best.

In order to allow this analysis to continue could all recorders please note the age of birds whenever possible.

**Iceland Gull:**

First record for the Bay. A 1st winter bird was present for 8 minutes on the evening of 15th Mar (SR).

**Great Black backed Gull:**

A regular visitor in very small numbers. No significant records this year.

**Sandwich Tern:**

Uncommon summer visitor. Just below average showing but our first October record. Seen on 10 dates between 8th May & 16th Oct. Maximum 3 on 11th & 12th Sept.

**Common Tern:**

Uncommon summer visitor. The best year in the period 92-97. Recorded on 33 dates between 9th June & 12th Sept. The max of 12 on 14th July was a record count exceeding 8 on 18th Aug 1994 (CNB).

**Little Tern:**

First records in the period 92-97. The last definite records being in 1985. 7 were watched feeding off the Turlin Shore prior to 8:00a.m. on 11th July (SR).



**Black Tern:**

Second record in the period 92-97. A juvenile on the evening of 23rd Sept (JL TE).

**Stock Dove:**

Presumed resident but only noted in the log between 27th Mar & 24th Sept! One pair probably bred. Max count being 19 on 21st Apr.

**Wood Pigeon:**

Common resident. Under recorded. Max count was 200 on 28th Aug.

**Collared Dove:**

Uncommon resident. Under recorded. No significant records submitted.

**Turtle Dove:**

Very scarce visitor. One around the Cottage on 3rd June coincided with a late fall of common migrants.

**Cuckoo:**

Uncommon summer visitor. Probably bred. First recorded on 2nd May then almost daily until 5th June. up to 3 calling males were present at any one time. A juvenile was seen between 18th & 23rd August.

**Barn Owl:**

Scarce visitor. One showed well on the evenings of 21st, 27th & 28th Feb. The second bird in the period 92-97.

**Little Owl:**

Breeding resident. One pair, failed to raise any young. Rather worryingly none were recorded between the 30th Aug and the end of the year.

**Tawny Owl:**

Uncommon resident. A pair were present on 2nd Mar. One heard on 17th Aug. Undoubtedly under recorded.

**Swift:**

Passage migrant. Recorded between 16th May & 17th Aug. Max of 40 on 9th June.

**Kingfisher:**

Uncommon winter visitor. Recorded on 54 dates. None were seen in the first half of the year, probably due to the extremely cold weather in January. Up to 2 birds present from 13th July until the year end. One was ringed on 26th Oct.

**Green Woodpecker:**

Breeding resident. Two pairs found during Breeding Survey.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker:**

Breeding Resident. Two pairs found during Breeding Survey.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker:**

Status unknown, certainly scarce. One on 14th Oct in the cottage garden was in keeping with the historical pattern of records for this species.

**Woodlark:**

First record for the Bay. One was found in the Very Far Fields on 9h Apr (GJA). A long awaited addition to the bay's list. This species breeds within a few hundred meters of the recording area boundary.

**Skylark:**

Breeding resident and winter visitor. 2 territories identified during Breeding Survey. This species claim to be a winter visitor is now open to question with only single birds present at

the beginning and end of the year. Small numbers recorded on passage between 18th & 31st Oct. Max 13 on 22nd.

**Sand Martin:**

Common passage migrant. First record of spring was very late - 28th Apr. Spring migration was hardly noticeable. Autumn migration was noted from early July and followed the now well established pattern peaking in mid July with 2,300 roosting on 14th. The last record was of 10 on the 12th Sept. One was ringed on 20th July.

**Swallow:**

Common passage migrant. First record of spring was one on 13th Mar, the earliest in the period 92-97. Migration noted until early May but numbers were poor. Autumn migration was also unimpressive. Max 160 on 16th Sept. The last record was 4 on 23rd Oct.

**House Martin:**

Breeding colony on edge of recording area and common passage migrant. The first of the year was seen on 23rd May. Migration in both migration periods was poor for the second year running. The size of the breeding colony increased slightly to six nests. Last seen on 20th Oct.

**Tree Pipit:**

Scarce passage migrant. Single birds on 24th Apr & 26th Aug.

**Meadow Pipit:**

Breeding resident and common passage migrant. Only one singing bird was found during the Breeding Survey. Passage was poor in both migration periods. Max 45 on 16th Oct. One ringed on 20th July.

**Rock Pipit:**

Scarce winter visitor. Just one this year. 18th Jan.

**Water Pipit:**

Winter visitor and spring passage migrant. Present from the beginning of the year until 16th Mar. 12 in the Very Far Fields on 19th Jan is a record winter total (SR IML). Spring passage was early peaking at 11 on 7th Mar. The first returning birds were 2 on 24th Oct. Birds were then seen on 4 dates up to the 23rd Nov but not later.

**Yellow Wagtail:**

Uncommon passage migrant. The best year in the period 92-97. Seen on 4 dates in April; 1, 12th; 15, 22nd; 1, 24th and 16, 25th. In autumn present on 16 dates between 12th Aug and 25th Sept. Max 25 on 18th Sept.

**Grey Wagtail:**

Breeding resident. A poor year. Very scarce in the first half of the year and no evidence of breeding noted. Common in autumn. Max 7 on 1st Oct.

**Pied Wagtail:**

Recorded throughout the year, common in autumn. Two pairs bred successfully. Max counts were 90, 17th Aug and c140, 26th Oct. Of the latter, 86 were ringed. These included 1 control about which we still await details.

**Wren:**

Common resident. 1 ringed.

**Duncock:**

Common resident. Breeding Survey found 8 singing males.

**Robin:**

Common resident. Breeding Survey estimated 16 territories.

**Whinchat:**

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded on 12 dates. 2 on 1st May were the first spring records in the period 92-97. The remaining birds were all in autumn between 11th Aug & 1st Oct. Max 3 on 27th Aug & 23rd Sept.

**Stonechat:**

Breeding resident. All of the Bay's population moved on (or died) during the cold spell in early Jan. The first record of the year was a male on 28th Feb. Three pairs were identified during the Breeding Survey. At least one of these raised two broods. Max count 10 on 24th Sept.

**Northern Wheatear:**

Uncommon passage migrant. A record year. Seen on 5 dates in spring between 29th Mar & 14th May. 7 on 25th Apr was a record count for the period 92-97. In autumn recorded on 9 dates between 6th Aug & 12th Sept. Max 2, 1st & 7th Sept.

**Ring Ouzel:**

Third record. A male was present from 11th to 13th Apr, spending its time feeding on ivy berries between the Cottage and Canal Bank Field (TE et al)

**Blackbird:**

Common Resident. The Breeding Survey found up to 13 pairs.

**Fieldfare:**

Winter visitor. A very poor year. Max counts of 10 at the beginning of the year and 20 at the end. One late spring record of a single on 27th April (TE)

**Song Thrush:**

Breeding resident. The breeding survey found 3 pairs. Otherwise scarce throughout the year. 1 ringed on 26th Oct.

**Redwing:**

Winter visitor. Good numbers in the first 3 months. Max 200 on 19th Feb. Last recorded on 14th Mar. Few in the second period, first returning birds on 14th Oct. Max 30 on 30th Oct.

**Mistle Thrush:**

Breeding resident. One pair bred successfully.

**Cetti's Warbler:**

Breeding resident. Three singing males, an increase of one on last year. Ringing proved that 1 pair were successful. 2 juveniles and adult male & female were ringed in July. A wandering bird was heard singing in the Far Fields on 18th Sept.

**Grasshopper Warbler:**

Scarce passage migrant. 4 records. A reeling bird was at the Water Works on 2nd June. In autumn singles were seen on 4th Aug, 19th & 23rd Sept.

**Sedge Warbler:**

Passage migrant, might breed. In spring noted from the 13th Apr until 2nd June. Max 2 on any one day. In autumn recorded on 14 dates between 19th July & 19th Sept. 18 were ringed during this period. Max 8 on 27th July.

**Reed Warbler:**

Common summer visitor. First noted on 21st Apr. An estimated 23 singing birds were present during the breeding season. The last bird of the year was on 18th Sept. 56 were ringed.

On 27th July there was an interesting control. It had been ringed as an adult at Wick Fields, Christchurch on 16th Aug 1988, making it at least 10 years old. It had previously been trapped at Lytchett in 1990.

**Dartford Warbler:**

Breeding resident. One pair again this year. A male was seen carrying food in June.

**Lesser Whitethroat:**

Scarce passage migrant. Singing males on 3rd & 14th May. In autumn, singles on 1st & 15th Aug.

**Whitethroat:**

Passage migrant. The best year in the period 92-97. Recorded on 6 dates in spring and 12 in autumn. Extreme dates 25th Apr & 21st Sept. Max 3 on 15th Aug.

**Garden Warbler:**

Scarce passage migrant. Four records, all in August; 2nd, 14th, 15th & 16th, involving up to 6 birds.

**Blackcap:**

Passage migrant, might occasionally breed. The best year in the period 92-97. In spring from 11th Apr to 20th May on 13 dates. There was no evidence of breeding. Noted on 20 dates in autumn. Max 5 on 23rd Sept and last seen on 23rd Oct.

**Chiffchaff:**

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. First spring record on 8th Mar. The Breeding Survey found 4-6 territories. Common in autumn, the maximum at any one site was 15. The last record of the autumn was one on 5th Nov.

**Willow Warbler:**

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. First recorded on 9th Apr (the same as 1996). No birds were found breeding this year. Never common in autumn, maximum 6 on 16th Aug. One ringed on 20th July.

**Goldcrest:**

Passage migrant. A much better year than 1996. First of the year was 2 on 19th Jan. Singing birds were heard at two sites in March but breeding was not proven. Present from the 26th Aug in autumn until the year end. Max 8 on 22nd Oct. One ringed on 26th Oct.

**Firecrest:**

Rare Visitor. Undoubtedly these birds were lingerers from the previous autumn's record influx. Singles on 9th, 13th & 16th Feb and 2nd Mar.

**Spotted Flycatcher:**

Passage migrant, might occasionally breed. One in spring on 23rd May. A very poor autumn, only seen on 6 dates. All singles between 13th Aug and 29th Sept.

**Bearded Tit:**

Rare breeder. One of the surprises and successes of the year. After a few sightings between April and June, ringing revealed a more accurate status in July. 16 were ringed. These included 1 adult male, 2 adult females and 13 birds of the year. The latter being from at least 2 differently aged broods. Following this there were regular reports until October of up to 7 birds.

**Long tailed Tit:**

Uncommon resident. The Breeding Survey found 2 pairs. Parties of up to 12 were seen in mid summer.

**Coal Tit:**

Uncommon resident. Breeding Survey found one singing bird.

**Blue Tit:**

Common resident. 5 ringed.

**Great Tit:**

Common resident. 1 ringed.

**Nuthatch:**

Uncommon resident. Seen around the cottage throughout the year but not proved to breed.

**Treecreeper:**

Uncommon, presumably resident. Just two records submitted; 2nd Aug & 13th Dec.

**Jay:**

Resident. Regularly seen throughout the year, presumably bred but no evidence found.

**Jackdaw:**

Resident? Recorded throughout the year with max counts in October. 40 on 22nd. Small numbers were present in May & June but breeding not proven.

**Raven:**

Rare visitor. 2 flew west over Lytchett Way on the morning of 12th Apr.

**Starling:**

Common resident. The post breeding flock peaked at 700 on 17th July. In autumn birds roosted in big numbers. Max 5000 on 26th Oct.

**Chaffinch:**

Breeding resident and winter visitor. Breeding Survey found 11 singing males. As 1996 there were very few in both winter periods. Max 50 in last week of Jan and 20 in Oct.

**Brambling:**

Scarce but annual winter visitor. 2 records of single birds; 8th Mar & 12th Nov.

**Greenfinch:**

Common breeding resident. Breeding Survey found 9 singing males. Max count was 15 at the cottage in Aug.

**Goldfinch:**

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant. One pair bred successfully. Max counts were on autumn migration, 60 on 20th Oct and 50 on 22nd Oct.

**Siskin:**

An exceptional year. A flock of up to 19 were present in Jan. The main action started in early Sept when a major irruption led to birds flooding into Britain. Recorded virtually daily between 5th Sept & 24th Oct. Max 280 on 20th Sept.

**Linnet:**

Uncommon breeding resident. Difficult to assess the breeding numbers, but breeding confirmed at 2 locations. The distribution of records was completely different to 1996. Max counts were during autumn migration, 40 on 20th Oct and 60 on 22nd Oct (cp Goldfinch). 1 ringed.

**Redpoll:**

Scarce visitor. A good year with birds on 3 dates. 1, 10th July; 40, 25th Sept; 13, 16th Oct.

**Common Crossbill:**

Rare visitor. This was an irruption year and birds were found widely along the Dorset coast. 3 on 16th and 2 on 17th Oct (JL MC) were the first in the period 92-97.

**Bullfinch:**

Scarce visitor. The best year in the period 92-97. Present in January (1 on 3 dates), March (1 on 1 date), May (2 on 1 date) and daily from 14th Oct until the year end. Max 6 on 31st Oct.

**[Yellowhammer:]**

Bred as recently as 1993. This the first year in which there have been no records of this declining species.

**Reed Bunting:**

Breeding resident. Breeding Survey found 7 singing males. 19 were ringed.

The following species were also recorded: Magpie, Rook and Carrion Crow.

List of contributors: I.Alexander, G.J. Armstrong, D.Banfield, P.Benham, E.Bowman, E.S.Brodie, C.N.Button, P.Christian, C. Conroy, M.Constantine, G.Dunquin, T. Elborn, R.Gifford, J. Grove, R.Heawood (RH), R. Howell, J.Hull, N.Hull, I.M.Lewis, J.Lidster, E.Lloyd, I.Prophet, I.Rabjohns, S.Robson, S.F.Smith and N.Symes.