

SANDY POINT HAYLING ISLAND

2017 BIRD REPORT

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Introduction

2017 will be remembered as 'the year of the tern'. As well as the highlights of both spring and autumn being terns (including arguably the rarest bird so far recorded at Sandy Point), several of the regular tern species also had record seasons. The total of 171 species recorded during the year is just below the average since 2005, and amongst the species that were not recorded in 2017 were greylag goose *Anser anser*, barnacle goose *Branta leucopsis*, scaup *Aythya marila*, goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, red-necked grebe *Podiceps grisegena*, turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur* and woodlark *Lullula arborea*.

The number of days on which coverage was achieved in each month in 2017 is shown below, although the amount of recording varies each day. The recording area includes the whole of the Eastoke peninsula, bounded by Fishery Creek to the north, as far west as Eastoke Corner on the seafront (an area of little more than 1km²). Most of the peninsula is residential development/caravan parks, so the bulk of observations come from Sandy Point Local Nature Reserve north to Black Point.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Days:	25	24	27	23	22	21	21	30	30	29	26	24

Highlights of 2017

2017 began rather cold and dry, with over-wintering birds including 14 Sandwich terns, **black brant**, black-throated diver, jack snipe, woodcock, Cetti's warbler and black redstart. There were high numbers of red-throated divers, small numbers of auks, and brief visits from velvet scoters, Egyptian goose, **glaucous gull**, little gull and long-tailed duck.

The first wheatear on 10th March was early, and was followed by records of bullfinch, black-necked grebe, a female **serin** – which lingered for four days in early April – and a male pied flycatcher.

Serin, female, Sandy Point, 8th April 2017 (A. Lewis)



Another reasonable spring sea-watching season saw a number of good days of passage between 17th April and 12th May, with highlights including 23 arctic skuas, ten black terns and 433 common terns on 30th April, a superb **long-tailed skua** on 11th May and five pomarine skuas the next day. Weekly sea-watch totals for selected species are shown in table 1.

	March		April				May		Total
	26-1	2-8	9-15	16-22	23-29	30-6	7-13	26/3 – 13/5	
Brent goose	240	-	108	3	1	4	16	372	
Common scoter	1	-	7	37	54	128	58	285	
Bar-tailed godwit	-	-	18	53	-	-	-	71	
Whimbrel	-	-	3	44	1	85	24	157	
Pomarine skua	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5	
Arctic skua	-	-	-	2	4	23	6	35	
Little tern	-	-	-	3	5	76	12	96	
Common tern	-	-	4	14	57	719	344	1138	

Table 1: Spring sea-watching – easterly totals for selected species for weeks 13-19.

Unusually, the most exciting birding of the year occurred in June, with a series of highly notable occurrences. Pride of place goes to Britain's fourth **elegant tern**, present for little over an hour on 7th, then reappearing for an even shorter spell two days later, before settling down in West Sussex. Other records around this time included another female **serin**, an influx of **storm petrels** and Manx shearwaters, avocet, little gull and an unseasonable long-tailed duck.

Another summer highlight was the successful breeding of a pair of Cetti's warblers in the reserve, previously a rare visitor to Sandy Point. Shelducks also displayed in the reserve in record numbers, although did not breed, whilst lesser whitethroat failed to hold territory for the first time. Cuckoo, crossbill and a good showing of coal tits were also recorded during the summer, along with a dispersing juvenile black redstart in early August.

Moth highlights during the year included **small marbled** *E. parva* on 25th June and 4th July, **boxworm moth** *C. perspectalis* on 6th July and 18th October, **Clifden nonpareil** *C. fraxini* on 19th August, Hampshire's first **Jersey mocha** *C. ruficiliaria* on 24th August, and **Radford's flame shoulder** *O. leucogaster* on 25th October.



Jersey mocha, 24th August 2017.



Roe buck, Sandy Point, 22nd September 2017.

August produced record numbers of Sandwich, common and black terns, bringing with them roseate terns on three dates and the highlight of the autumn: an adult **white-winged tern** for four days mid-month. Green sandpiper and greenshank both had a good season, and there were notable records of nightjar on 20th and an early short-eared owl on 26th, followed in September by two **spoonbills** on 8th and little stint on four dates.

In October, Sandy Point's share of a huge influx of **hawfinch** to the country was brief birds on 13th and 26th, and there were also record numbers of bullfinches. Redpoll and goldfinch enjoyed a good autumn, but many species were in very short supply, most noticeably house martin, swallow, yellow wagtail, whinchat and tree pipit. Visible migration totals for selected species are shown in table 2.

	September				October				November	
	3-7	10-16	17-23	24-30	1-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	29-4	5-11
Woodpigeon	-	-	-	-	-	60	390	2650	50	-
Skylark	-	-	3	24	40	19	59	13	19	11
House martin	20	571	202	28	5	15	3	-	-	-
Meadow pipit	690	45	481	425	115	161	14	15	-	-
'Alba' wagtail	3	-	116	93	51	70	-	7	-	-
Jackdaw	-	5	9	13	60	27	23	9	3	1
Chaffinch	3	1	22	16	19	508	30	28	10	4
Goldfinch	12	16	675	600	1000	4211	1159	2021	224	86
Siskin	-	-	6	12	47	241	93	46	5	-
Linnet	-	-	134	47	123	444	84	63	4	-
Redpoll	2	-	8	15	21	44	141	104	20	4

Table 2: Autumn visible migration – weekly totals of selected species for weeks 38-47. The peak for each species is shown in bold.

The second winter period remained largely mild, but saw good numbers of goosander, guillemot, razorbill, black-throated and great northern divers, plus brief reports of **black guillemot** and **spoonbill**. A purple sandpiper was present on 7th-8th November, and eight avocet on 27th, with a black-necked grebe and good numbers of redwings remaining through December.

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Thanks to all other observers who visited the area and passed on their records, and to Kevin Crisp, Richard Ford, Martin Gillingham, Alan Lewis, Dorian Mason and Baz Scampion for the use of their excellent photographs.

Front cover: *elegant tern*, Mengham Salterns high tide roost, 7th June 2017.

Back cover: *elegant tern*, Pagham Harbour (Baz Scampion) and Mengham Salterns (Martin Gillingham).

All photographs by A. Johnson, unless otherwise stated.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Winter visitor and migrant
 Max Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
 SP: 9 3 4 - - - - - - - 2 2
 Regular on the marsh in the reserve until 19th March and from 19th November.
 Six flying east on 6th April was the only additional record.

Pochard *Aythya ferina* Rare migrant
 18th December: three flew northwest through Chichester Harbour.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* Uncommon migrant
 Two flew east on 9th April, followed by three records of 1-4 birds between 25th-30th May. Up to three flew over Fishery Creek on four dates between 15th June and 27th July, and finally a drake was on the sea on 15th November.
 A typical distribution of records.

Eider *Somateria mollissima* Occasional visitor and migrant
 In May there were seven on 1st and two flew east on 6th.
 Incredibly these were the only records for the year.

Long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis* Rare winter visitor
 6th February: one in Chichester Harbour.
 14th June: a male in breeding plumage flew into Chichester Harbour.
 21st December: one in Chichester Harbour.
 A good year, including the first record for June.

Common scoter *Melanitta nigra* Regular winter visitor and migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	-	7	5	116	36	120	36	22	3	1	3	6

 Spring passage totalled 327 east between 18th April and 30th May, followed by up to 120 on the sea from 6th-9th June, and five double figure counts between 3rd July and 5th August.

Velvet scoter *Melanitta fusca* Uncommon winter visitor and migrant
 One on 1st and three on 10th January, followed by two east on 29th April, and singles on 15th November and 22nd December.
 An average year, following a blank 2016.

Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* Common winter visitor
 15 flew east and two west between 23rd March and 5th May, and the first back was on 24th September. The peak in Chichester Harbour was just 27 on 17th February.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* Rare winter visitor
 November: a total of 16 bird-days on seven dates including four west on 6th and five NW on 14th.
 A good year, second only to the record 35 bird-days in 2010 (which included a flock of 27 on 1st December).

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* Resident
 Present at the start of the year, and bred, but then disappeared.

Red-throated diver *Gavia stellata* Winter visitor and migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	35	71	-	9	1	-	-	-	6	2	2	25

 High counts were 28 on 18th January and 26 on 8th February. In spring, up to three between 14th April and 1st May. First back was on 6th September, and the peak was 12 west on 3rd December.
 The best year since the last 'good' winter of 2010-11.

Black-throated diver *Gavia arctica* Scarce winter visitor and migrant
 One remained in Chichester Harbour until 25th February.
 29th April – 1st May: three flew east and one west.
 Two arrived in Chichester Harbour on 14th November, and were seen regularly throughout December, with three present on 23rd.
 A good year, including the first time that three have been present at the same time.

Great northern diver *Gavia immer* Winter visitor and migrant
 Recorded regularly until 1st March, although the only multiple records were two on 1st and 4th January. One present on 3rd April.
 First back was on 20th October, with up to three very regularly from late November until the end of the year.

Great northern diver, juvenile, Sandy Point, 29th December 2017

Richard Ford

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* Frequent migrant, especially in spring
22nd March – 29th June: 31 bird-days, with seven on 10th June the only count over three. One subsequent record on 3rd August.
A better year than the previous two, but still below the average bird-day total of 49.

Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* Rare migrant
7th – 8th June: three flew past on both dates.
In addition, two distant shearwaters flew west on 3rd August.

Storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* Rare migrant
• 9th June: there were four sightings in the morning, whilst in the afternoon at least three were lingering distantly offshore.
Part of an impressive influx – the first since similar occurrences in 2008 and 2012.

Gannet *Morus bassanus* Regular offshore

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	9	6	14	81	103	83	97	155	31	7	3	18
Max:	3	4	7	35	20	16	20	37	15	4	2	10

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Common, especially in winter
Up to 38 present in Chichester Harbour at both ends of the year. Movements included six east on 17th February, 14 west on 23rd July and six west on both 9th and 17th October.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Occasional visitor
Only four records: one flew west on 18th April, followed by a flock of 11 juveniles on the sea on 4th August, six on 3rd September and eight the next day.



Shag, 11 juveniles, Sandy Point, 4th August 2017.

Little egret *Egretta garzetta* Resident
Generally recorded singly in the reserve, although there were two on 23rd April, 30th June, 10th October and 2nd December. Notable high tide counts included five at Black Point on 30th August, ten at Mengham Salterns in September/October, and 49 in Chichester Harbour on 9th October.

Grey heron *Ardea cinerea* Resident in the area

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	1	-	-	8	14	9	3	3	12	4	1	-

Three west on 19th October was the only count over two.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* Rare migrant
• 8th September: two flew west across Chichester Harbour.
• 16th December: one was reported flying west across Chichester Harbour.
The five previous records included two in September (plus one in May and two in October).

Little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Regular winter visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	6	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	9

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus* Regular, mainly in winter
Up to 14 recorded in the first winter period, four in the summer, and 45 in the second winter period.

Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus* Regular winter visitor
Recorded on only eight dates during the year, with three on 1st January, one on 3rd-4th February, and one or two from 23rd November to the end of the year.



Slavonian grebe, 4th February, and black-necked grebe, 18th December 2017.

Black-necked grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* Rare winter visitor and migrant
One reported on the sea on 18th March, and one in Chichester Harbour on five dates between 4th and 19th December.

Marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus* *Scarce migrant*
Singles were seen on 30th September, 5th October and 14th November.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* *Resident and migrant*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	4	5	13	16	9	8	14	20	14	27	8	8

Buzzard *Buteo buteo* *Migrant, and resident on the island*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	7	12	7	3	4	3	8	5	3	3

Four on 15th September was the only count over two.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* *Scarce migrant*
22nd April: one flew in off the sea.
20th August – 25th September: singles recorded on just five dates. A poor autumn.

Water rail *Rallus aquaticus* *Regular winter visitor*
Up to three recorded in the reserve until the end of March and from mid-October.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* *Resident*
Ever present in the drain/marsh in the reserve, nesting multiple times, with up to nine together towards the end of the year.

Coot *Fulica atra* *Rare visitor*
7th February: one heard flying over after dark.
9th October: one in Chichester Harbour.
Still very rarely observed in the harbour, despite being resident at nearby Lakeside (where there were, for example, 74 on 5th November).

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* *Scarce migrant and winter visitor*
12th June: one flew west.
27th November: eight were present off Black Point at low tide.
The June record is the first for that month, whilst the party of eight is the highest number recorded.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* *Common winter visitor; some summer*
See Table 3 (page 13) for maxima at the Black Point high tide roost. 11 flew east between 1st – 11th May. One found dead on 3rd February had been ringed in the nest in Holland in 2004.

Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola* *Common winter visitor and migrant*
Three flew east on 30th April and four on 9th May.
See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima, where it was an above average year.

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* *Occasional winter visitor and migrant*
At Sandy Point, one flew north on 28th February, and one on 27th October, whilst one in the high tide roost at Black Point on 22nd November was extremely unusual. Up to 500 were seen more distantly around Chichester Harbour in the first winter period, and up to 1000 in the second.



Golden plover, Black Point roost, 22nd November 2017.

Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* *Common winter visitor, and breeds*
See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima. A pair nested on the beach, successfully rearing a single chick, which hatched on 12th June. A second pair hatched at least one chick along the seafront on 31st July, but it appears not to have survived for very long.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* *Occasional winter visitor and migrant*
One was in Fishery Creek on 6th July, two flew west on 30th October and 45 north on 2nd December, when there was also one in the high tide roost at Black Point. Regularly noted more distantly in and around Chichester Harbour.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* *Regular migrant*
9th April – 19th May: 287 bird-days, including 211 east, with peaks in April of 41 on 18th and 53 on 30th, and in May 16 on 2nd and 19 on 11th. Unusually, one was on the marsh in the reserve on 20th April, and one was found dead on 9th May. 21st June – 17th September: 91 bird-days, with 23 south on 10th August the only double figure count.
Another above average year.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* Common winter visitor and migrant
See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima.
Spring movements included four NE on 18th March, 25 east on 6th April and 72 NE the next day. Returning birds noted moving west from 8th June.

Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* Winter visitor and migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	18	-	2	-	-	-	7	5	1	3	31	6

The majority were recorded in Fishery Creek/Mengham Salterns, although five juveniles on the marsh in the reserve on 17th August was a very notable record.



Black-tailed godwit, two of five juveniles, Sandy Point marsh, 17th August 2017.

Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica* Common winter visitor and migrant
18th April – 11th May: 75 bird-days, including 18 east on 18th, 26 east on 30th April and 16 east on 6th May. First back was noted on 8th July, and up to 150 were present in Chichester Harbour. See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Common winter visitor and migrant
See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima.
Offshore, two flew east on 30th April and one on 6th May. Last in spring was on 14th June and first back 20th July.

Knot *Calidris canutus* Common winter visitor
See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima, where it was an average year. Two flew east on 5th May, and the first back noted on 24th July.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Oystercatcher:	146	115	55	2	9	10	5	5	10	49	113	134
Grey plover:	57	59	53	-	-	-	-	13	21	69	66	61
Ringed plover:	116	40	17	2	8	5	13	120	257	203	201	82
Curlew:	2	2	2	-	-	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
Bar-tailed godwit:	7	2	2	-	1	-	-	3	9	4	3	5
Turnstone:	21	21	4	-	6	4	24	12	7	17	37	25
Knot:	130	300	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	90	400
Sanderling:	22	100	40	-	-	6	55	7	33	240	180	100
Dunlin:	5000	4000	2500	5	15	2	7	300	188	600	5000	4000
Redshank:	2	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	10

Table 3. Black Point high tide wader roost: monthly maxima.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Scarce migrant
17th October: a juvenile in the high tide roost at Black Point.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Common winter visitor and migrant
See Table 3 (above) for Black Point high tide roost maxima, where it was an average year. Maxima at Sandy Point or along the seafront are shown below:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	-	-	120	116	74	5	320	300	100	120	-	40

There were still 17 in Chichester Harbour on 13th June, with five returning birds on 25th June, numbers building from 22nd July.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Common winter visitor and migrant
See Table 3 (above) for Black Point high tide roost maxima, where it was a low-key year.
In spring there were 67 bird-days at Sandy Point between 17th April and 13th May, including 23 east on 30th April. There were still 18 in Chichester Harbour on 9th June, and the first back on 22nd July.

Purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima* Scarce migrant and winter visitor
7th – 8th November: one along the causeway, later on the rocks at Sandy Point.
A typical record.

Little stint *Calidris minutus* Scarce migrant
15th – 27th September: single juveniles were in the high tide roost at Black Point or the seafront on four dates, perhaps the same bird each time.
The best autumn since 2007 (when there were 20 bird-days).

Common sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Uncommon migrant
In spring, one on 17th April, and four on 10th May.
20th August – 22nd September: 11 bird-days, including three on 20th August and 19th September. An average year.

Green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Scarce migrant
 24th July – 24th August: 17 bird-days, mostly on the marsh in the reserve, including two on 8th and 24th August, and three flying west on 14th.
 This is the best autumn on record.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Uncommon migrant and winter visitor
 11th August – 8th November: singles recorded on 19 dates. A very good autumn.

Redshank *Tringa totanus* Winter visitor and migrant
 See Table 3 (page 13) for Black Point high tide roost maxima.
 Last in spring on 12th April and first back 26th June. There were larger than normal numbers in Fishery Creek in the autumn, with up to 120 during September and October.

Jack snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* Migrant and winter visitor
 Singles present in the sea rush marsh on 6th and 22nd January, 8th and 22nd March and 12th December.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* Scarce migrant and winter visitor
 4th January – 13th March: one at dusk on seven dates.
 9th November – 28th December: singles on five dates.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Winter visitor and migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	2	7

Another low-key year. One in the high tide roost at Black Point on 1st December was a rare occurrence.

Arctic skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* Frequent migrant
 17th April – 12th May: 39 bird-days, including four east on 29th April, 21 east on 30th April and five east on 11th May.
 10th – 11th June: one on 10th, and three the next day.
 2nd July – 4th August: 10 bird-days, with one or two birds on seven dates.
 3rd September: one in Chichester Harbour and two offshore.
 An above average year.

Pomarine skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* Scarce migrant
 12th May: five flew east.

Long-tailed skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* Rare migrant

- 11th May: an adult flew east at 10:13, around 1km offshore.

The first spring record at Sandy Point – and one of the major highlights of the spring – this bird was tracked east along the coast from Hurst, through the Solent, and on past Sussex and Kent.



Long-tailed skua, 11th May 2017 (Dorian Mason) and pomarine skua, 12th May 2017 (Kevin Crisp), both photographed at Selsey Bill, having passed Sandy Point shortly before.

Great skua *Stercorarius skua* Uncommon migrant
 29th March: one flew east.
 23rd April – 1st May: seven bird-days, including two on 29th, 30th April and 1st May.
 6th and 8th June: singles on both dates.
 21st and 23rd August: singles on both dates. An average year.

Razorbill *Alca torda* Regular winter visitor
 8th January – 30th April: singles regularly, with three on 6th February.
 3rd – 31st December: up to three regularly recorded.

Guillemot *Uria aalge* Winter visitor and migrant
 Singles recorded very regularly until 7th March, and from 29th March – 15th May, with two on 30th April. One present on 3rd September.
 14th November – 31st December: particularly regular in December, peaking at five on 23rd.
 Unidentified auks (either guillemot or razorbill) included ten on 4th and six on 10th January, five on 3rd February, and up to three on 30th April, 8th, 14th and 30th May.
 A very good year.

Black guillemot *Cephus grylle* Vagrant

- 23rd November: one reported by visitors in Chichester Harbour entrance before flying out to sea.

Only the fourth Hampshire record.

Little tern *Sternula albifrons* Common summer visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	-	-	-	55	9	4	78	105	4	-	-	-

17th April – 12th May: 109 mostly flew east, with a peak of 55 on 30th April.
 20th July – 11th September: summer gatherings at the Black Point high tide roost peaked at 105 on 3rd August, with a maximum of 27 juveniles on 18th August, including ringed birds from West Sussex, Dorset and Dublin.

Black tern *Chlidonias niger*

Migrant

30th April: a flock of ten was reported offshore.

2nd August – 24th September: 156 bird-days, including a single flock of 39 on 14th August, and up to 18 between 3rd – 8th September.

The best autumn on record, with 89 bird-days in 2006 and 50 in 2013 the previous highest totals.

White-winged tern *Chlidonias leucoptera*

Very rare migrant

- 14th – 17th August: an adult moulting out of summer plumage was present in Chichester Harbour, visiting Black Point at high tide on 16th & 17th.

The second record at Black Point, the first being a juvenile on 29th September 2009.



White-winged tern, adult (with adult common tern), Black Point, 17th August 2017.

Sandwich tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Common summer visitor; a few overwinter

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	9	14	14	140	65	8	130	121	141	22	31	28

28th March – 12th May: 549 flew east, with peaks of 104 on 9th and 140 on 30th April. Summer/autumn peak counts were at the Black Point high tide roost, and included several ringed birds from Holland, Scotland and Northumberland.

Numbers during the autumn and subsequent winter were the highest yet recorded.

Elegant tern *Thalasseus elegans*

Very rare migrant

- 7th & 9th June: a colour-ringed adult male was present with eight Sandwich terns at Mengham Salterns at high tide on the first date. There was no sign the next day, but on 9th the same bird was feeding offshore at Sandy Point amongst a feeding flock of common and Sandwich terns, before flying off east along the Sussex coast.

This bird was first seen in a Sandwich tern colony in France in 2002, and then caught and ringed on 3rd July 2003 (when its DNA was also sampled), returning there in most subsequent years. After visiting Sandy Point it subsequently stayed at Pagham Harbour, West Sussex from 10th – 20th June, before visiting Brownsea Island, Dorset on 21st – 22nd, but was back in France in early July. The first record for Hampshire (and Sussex), there had been only three previous records in the UK and five in Ireland.



Elegant tern (right), with Sandwich terns, Mengham Salterns, 7th June 2017

Roseate tern *Sterna dougallii*

Scarce migrant

8th, 16th and 17th August: a ringed adult at Black Point.



Roseate tern, adult (front), with adult common tern, Black Point, 8th August 2017.

Common tern *Sterna hirundo* Common summer visitor
 9th April – 12th May: easterly spring passage totalled 1138, with a peak of 433 on 30th April, and three other movements just into three figures.
 28th July – 2nd September: regular three-figure gatherings at Black Point peaked at 600 on 2nd August. Very few remained through September, and the last of the year was on 2nd October.
 The autumn peak of 600 is the highest count recorded here.

Arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea* Frequent migrant
 In April one flew east on 17th, and two on 29th.
 31st July - 24th September: 16 bird-days, mostly juveniles.
 Another poor spring, but the best autumn since 2011.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* Occasional winter visitor and migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	1	1	-	-	11	11	-	4	1	-	1	4

Peaks were five on 8th May and eight on 10th June. A rather poor year.

Black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Common throughout
 Little of note recorded; the summer peak at the Black Point high tide roost was 130 on 14th August, a day when around 1000 were catching flying ants over southeast Hayling.

Little gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Occasional migrant and winter visitor
 Singles were recorded on 2nd February, 7th March, 12th May, 21st June, 3rd and 6th September. A very poor year, the average number of bird-days being 37.

Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus* Regular visitor
 Significant counts included 80 NW on 13th April, up to 100 during July and August and 73 in the Black Point high tide roost on 25th September.

Common gull *Larus canus* Common non-breeding visitor
 A small amount of spring passage was recorded, totalling 17 east between 23rd March and 11th May. First back on 3rd July.

Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus* Frequent migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	1	4	19	4	5	2	3	7	8	18	1	1

For the first time, an attempt to record every occurrence was made in 2017. Peaks were seven east on 11th March, and eight west on 24th October.

Herring gull *Larus argentatus* Common non-breeding visitor
 Ever present in small numbers, peaks were 80 in the Black Point high tide roost on 3rd March and 170 following fishing boats on 3rd December.

Yellow-legged gull *Larus michahellis* Migrant
 Single adults on 8th and 30th June and 5th July were the only records.
 Another very poor year.

Glaucous gull *Larus hyperboreus* Rare winter visitor

- 25th January: a second-winter briefly in the Black Point high tide roost.
- 10th February: presumably the same bird flew east across the harbour entrance.

There are four previous records; all have been between 12th January and 14th March.



Glaucous gull, 2nd-winter, Black Point, 25th January 2017.

Great black-backed gull *Larus marinus* Common
 Ever present in small numbers.

Feral/racing pigeon *Columba livia* Common
 Ever present.

Stock dove *Columba oenas* Frequent migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	1	6	2	-	-	-	2	-	27	28	-

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* Common resident and migrant
 Very common in the reserve throughout the year, with the first juvenile seen on 5th April, and a count of 180 on 29th November. A total of 3250 flew west between 17th October and 8th November.

Collared dove *Streptopelia decaocto* Common resident
 Present throughout the year in small numbers, 11 on 14th September the only double figure count.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce migrant

One was in the reserve from 20th – 22nd June, and a juvenile was present on 28th September.

Short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*

Scarce migrant

26th August: one flew over Chichester Harbour.

In addition, two were seen from Black Point hunting on Thorney Island on 24th February, and one on 8th October. The August record is the earliest autumn record (previously 2nd September 2015), with most records in October/November.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Rare migrant

20th August: one was seen briefly after dark.

A repeat of a similar record in September 2016.

Swift *Apus apus*

Common summer visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max:	-	-	-	1	10	40	126	12	1	-	-	-

Recorded most days between 30th April – 26th August, with a late bird on 17th September.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Winter visitor

Recorded regularly until 30th March and again from 30th July to the end of the year, including two together on a number of dates.

Green woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Resident

Present throughout the year, and bred.

Great spotted woodpecker*Dendrocopos major* Occasional visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
B/d:	5	1	15	5	-	12
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	11	18	22	25	6	6

A good year, with three together on several dates in March and July. A male was drumming in January and March, and was watched excavating a nest hole in October.

Great spotted woodpecker, juvenile, 4th July 2017.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	3	7	4	3	9	4	3	12	28	4	1

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Scarce migrant

26th October: one flew west. A typical autumn record.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce migrant

Three on 30th April were followed by singles on 8th and 11th May and 14th June. 1st September – 5th October: five singles. A good year.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Occasional visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
B/d:	2	4	2	3	1	-
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	1	3	9	6	6	5

One caught an adult little tern at Black Point on 31st July (see *photograph, right*), and one chased a great spotted woodpecker over Chichester Harbour on 30th September (which escaped by landing on a boat).

**Magpie** *Pica pica*

Resident and winter visitor

Early year peaks included 20 on 20th January and 17th February. Peak counts in the last quarter were 16 on 18th September, 17 on 16th November and 22 the next day.

Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Former non-breeding resident

13th March – 13th April: 11 bird-days.

2nd September – 30th October: seven bird-days.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Regular migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	6	7	16	6	17	1	-	3	17	124	14	5

The only significant count was 44 west on 12th October. Another poor autumn.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Common resident in the area

As usual there were regular dusk movements of around a hundred birds to their roost, and occasional birds recorded flying over the reserve.

Carrion crow *Corvus corone* Resident
Three pairs bred. The highest counts were 25 on 2nd September and 30 on 3rd November.

Raven *Corvus corax* Scarce migrant
15th February – 13th March: nine bird-days, followed by one on 31st August and two on 24th November. A poor showing following a record 50 bird-days in 2016.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* Regular migrant
Present throughout the year, with one male holding territory in the summer.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* Uncommon migrant and winterer

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	8	1	18	2	-	-	-	-	6	21	9	6

There were five on 22nd and 26th March, with the last of the spring on 14th April and the first back on 8th September.

Coal tit *Periparus ater* Scarce migrant
14th, 15th June, 23rd and 25th July: singles on the first three dates and two on the last. A good showing of post-breeding birds, including the first multiple record.

Blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* Resident
Present throughout, with no records of note.

Great tit *Parus major* Resident
Present throughout and bred.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* Regular migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	2	2	6	-	1	-	-	-	3	146	39	1

The peak autumn movement was 36 west on 25th October.
Yet another poor year, the autumn average being 391 bird-days.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia* Regular migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	2	31	-	-	25	24	53	-	-	-

Recorded between 28th March – 30th April and 1st July – 23rd September. The peak count was 22 on 23rd April. The low autumn figure is partly due to lack of recording in July.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common migrant and summer visitor

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	-	133	200	15	28	365	758	138	1	-

4th April – 6th November. There were only three three-figure movements in the autumn, on 16th, 20th and 26th September.

House martin *Delichon urbicum* Common migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	-	9	25	5	3	32	801	51	-	-

7th April – 9th June: the peak was 11 on 6th May.
6th July – 26th October: there were only four three-figure counts all between 17th – 24th September. The worst autumn on record, the average being 2552 bird-days.

Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti* Formerly a rare visitor
The male first heard in December 2016 was recorded regularly, and seen with a female carrying nesting material on 23rd April. Breeding was confirmed with at least one juvenile seen on 8th June. At least one was then recorded regularly to the end of the year.
The four previous records have occurred in March, September and October (two).

Long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus* Resident
A family party was seen on 12th May, and the largest flock was 20+ on 5th November.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* Regular migrant; rare in winter
A wintering bird was present on 4th – 5th January, with the first migrants on 28th February and 10th March. Three males held territory. No significant numbers were recorded during the autumn, and the last of the year were on 4th and 23rd December.

Willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Regular migrant
26th March – 9th May: 175 bird-days, with a peak of 21 on 14th April.
26th July – 4th October: 83 bird-days, with double-figures on only 5th and 20th August.
The spring average is 79 bird-days, and the autumn 139.



Willow warbler, having just made it to the rocks, Sandy Point, 7th May 2017. One which just failed to make it the previous day was eaten by a great black-backed gull.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* *Regular migrant*
26th March – 9th November: three males held territory, but there were no particularly large arrivals of migrants.
A wintering bird was recorded on three dates in December.

Garden warbler *Sylvia borin* *Uncommon migrant*
22nd April and 7th May: two spring singles.
1st and 12th September: two autumn singles.
An average spring, but below average autumn.

Lesser whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* *Summer visitor and migrant*
Singles on 23rd April and 2nd May, followed by five bird-days between 10th and 28th September, including an eastern race bird on 27th-28th.
This is the first time that the species has failed to hold territory at Sandy Point.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* *Common summer visitor and migrant*
14th April – 26th September: at least three males held territory.

Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* *Resident and migrant*
One overwintered, and then held territory from March until 3rd May, but failed to attract a mate. A juvenile was present on 7th July, and one on 1st September, with one resident from 19th September, joined by a second from 26th October, at least one remaining into 2018.

Grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia* *Scarce migrant*
23rd and 24th April: one seen and heard reeling (i.e. singing) in the reserve.
27th September: one seen in the reserve.

Sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* *Uncommon migrant*
In spring, a singing male was present on 17th May.
29th July – 10th September: 11 bird-days, including three on 5th and two on 8th August. An above average autumn.

Reed warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* *Migrant (has bred)*
24th April – 29th May: five singles.
5th August – 17th September: 14 bird-days, with one or two on 11 dates.
An average year.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* *Resident*
Present in small numbers throughout.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* *Common resident and migrant*
The only movements noted totalled 446 west between 25th October and 17th November, including 250 on 27th October.

Ring ouzel *Turdus torquata* *Scarce migrant*
One flew through on 10th October, landing briefly behind the Lifeboat Station.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* *Resident and migrant*
Ever present and bred.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* *Uncommon migrant*
31st October – 27th December: 12 bird-days, including four on the first date, three on 15th November and three on 15th December. An average autumn.

Song thrush *Turdus philomelos* *Resident and migrant*
Present all year and bred. Autumn migrants were noted from 15th September, including double figures on 16th and 29th October.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* *Regular migrant, especially in autumn*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
B/d:	-	-	1	1	-	-
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	-	21	57	160

Last in spring on 1st April, first back 15th October. Unusually, up to 20 lingered throughout the second winter period, and there was an isolated high count of 50 on 21st December.



Redwing, Sandy Point, 28th December 2017

Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus* *Uncommon migrant*
Singles were recorded on 17th January, 14th February and 4th March, followed by two on 1st June.
5th October – 4th December: eight singles recorded. An average year.

Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* *Uncommon migrant*
6th, 13th, 15th and 24th May: four spring singles.
25th August – 28th September: ten bird-days, including four on 9th and two on 22nd September. An above average year.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* *Resident*
Ever present.

Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* Scarce migrant
11th April: a male was reported in the clearing adjacent to Sparkes Marina.
Only the fourth spring record, but a disappointing blank autumn, after six bird-days in 2016 and five in 2015.

Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* Scarce migrant and winterer
25th January – 18th March: records on 11 dates may have referred to one bird.
6th August: a juvenile on the rocks on the seafront.
26th October, 19th, 24th November and 4th December: just four autumn records.
The August bird is the first post-breeding record at Sandy Point.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Migrant
4th April – 9th May: five singles.
14th August – 22nd September: 14 bird-days. An average year.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* Migrant
22nd, 30th, 31st August and 20th September: just four singles. A poor year.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* Migrant (has bred)
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Max: 2 1 2 - - - - 1 5 5 4 2
Two on 12th March were the only spring migrants. A juvenile on 1st August preceded the main autumn passage from 9th September.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Regular migrant
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
B/d: - - 7 52 10 - - 34 57 8 - -
10th March – 15th May: 69 bird-days, with peaks of eight on 10th and 21st April.
6th August – 26th October: 99 bird-days, peaking at eight on 1st and seven on 14th September.
The spring average is 104 bird-days, and the autumn 97.

Duncock *Prunella modularis* Resident
Ever present in good numbers, with little evidence of migration noted.

House sparrow *Passer domesticus* Common resident
Present throughout, with just a hint of visible migration in late September/October.

Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava* Regular migrant, particularly in autumn
7th April – 17th May: 11 bird-days, with one or two on eight dates.
13th August – 26th September: 108 bird-days, with peaks in August of 21 on 25th and 12 on 27th, and in September of 20 on 1st.
An average spring but a poor autumn, the average being 202 bird-days.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Frequent migrant, especially in autumn
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
B/d: 1 2 2 - - 1 - 10 34 22 2 3
The peak count was six on 19th October. A low-key autumn.



Grey wagtail, Sandy Point seafront, 8th February 2017.

Pied wagtail *Motacilla alba* Resident and common migrant
Present throughout the year and bred. In spring, single white wagtails *M. a. alba* were noted on 9th and 24th March.
24th September – 1st November: 335 moved mostly east, with 53 on 26th September the highest count. A below average autumn, the average being 558 bird-days.

Tree pipit *Anthus trivialis* Frequent migrant, particularly in autumn
1st May: the only spring record.
13th August – 9th October: 15 bird-days, with no counts over two.
The autumn average is 30 bird-days.

Meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis* Resident and common migrant
16th March – 12th April: 383 flew north, including 127 on 19th March. Two males held territory.
10th September – 26th October: 1931 bird-days, with peaks of 375 west on 15th September and 258 NE on 27th September. Small numbers recorded during the winter months. An above average spring, but below average autumn.

Rock pipit *Anthus petrosus* Migrant
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
B/d: 4 2 2 - - - - 7 15 5 3
An average year.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* Migrant, particularly in the autumn
 17th October – 8th November: 18 bird-days, including five on 18th October.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* Resident and common migrant
 In another very low-key autumn, there was one significant movement of 485 east on 18th October. No more than 12 were recorded on any other date. The 18th October movement almost equalled the autumn average of 539 bird-days.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*
 Rare migrant

- 13th and 26th October: singles flew west, the latter pausing in trees along Sandy Point Road.

The three previous records, in 2008, 2010 and 2012, all occurred between 9th – 24th October.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Scarce migrant
 12th March: a female in the reserve.
 18th October – 10th November: 23 bird-days, including five on 26th and four on 30th October.

A record autumn, eclipsing the previous best of 15 bird-days in 2005, and seven in 2011.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*
 Common resident and migrant
 Present throughout the year in small numbers, with peaks of 18 on 17th February and 20 on 16th October.



Hawfinch, Sandy Point Road, 26th October 2017.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina* Common breeder and migrant, fewer in winter
 Up to 28 sporadically recorded during the winter, and up to 55 in the summer.
 7th September – 3rd November: 902 bird-days, with peaks of 105 NE on 9th and 156 NE on 16th October. The average autumn bird-day total is 1756.

Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* Migrant, mainly in the autumn
 10th September – 24th November: 360 bird-days, with peaks in October of 61 on 25th, 50 on 27th, 25 on 29th and 43 on 30th. A very good autumn.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Scarce migrant
 27th July: a juvenile associating with linnets on the eastern edge of the reserve before flying off north.

A typical date for this barely annual visitor, but the first time that one has spent any time on the deck.



Crossbill, juvenile, with linnets, Sandy Point, 27th July 2017.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* Resident and common migrant

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	25	45	58	24	28	48	24	8	705	7777	1646	69
Max:	15	12	11	3	5	25	10	2	260	2600	600	14

26th September – 3rd November: in an above average autumn, movements over 300 are shown below:

Oct:	8 th	16 th	18 th	19 th	25 th	30 th	Nov:	1 st	3 rd
NE:	320	2600	303	600	718	400		600	590

Serin *Serinus serinus* Rare migrant

- 5th – 8th April: an elusive and mobile female.
- 1st June: another female, also mobile and elusive, watched leaving northeast at 08.05.

The fifth and sixth spring records at Sandy Point are also the earliest and latest to be recorded, and the first to be photographed. There has also been one in July and two in November.



Serin, females, Sandy Point, 7th April (left) and 1st June (right) 2017.

Siskin *Spinus spinus* *Migrant, mainly in the autumn*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
B/d:	-	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	6	422	23	-

7th March – 6th April: nine bird-days.

25th September – 24th November: 451 bird-days. In October, north-easterly movements of 172 on 16th, 38 on 18th and 55 on 26th were the only counts over 15. The autumn average is 1406 bird-days.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* *Scarce migrant*
 15th February: one flew north.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* *Frequent migrant*
 15th February – 30th March: singles on nine dates.
 After singles on 20th August and 7th September, there were 33 bird-days between 17th September – 24th November, with a peak of six on 17th October.
 An average year.

Escapes

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* *Escape (Australia)*
 27th February: one flew over Chichester Harbour, landing on Snowhill Marsh, East Head.

This was possibly the same bird as that belatedly reported in Fishery Creek in mid-October 2016.

Bar-headed goose *Anser indicus* *Escape (Central Asia)*
 21st September: two with the flock of 250 Canada geese in Chichester Harbour at low tide.

The first record at Sandy Point.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* *Escape (Australia)*
 24th October: a white and blue bird in the reserve/lifeboat bushes.
 The fifth such record.

