

Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association



APPRAISAL OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR

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PART 5 BIRD LIFE

This version DOES NOT contain maps, illustrations and some tables from the 1995 edition.

Please be aware that the report describes the situation in 1994/5, and has not yet been updated. This pdf publication is intended to form the basis of a re-appraisal project.

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5 BIRD LIFE

5.1 SUMMARY AND AIMS

5.1.1 SUMMARY

This section describes the Harbour and surrounding areas and analyses published sources to draw conclusions on the importance of the various Harbour habitats for birds, especially waterfowl. It includes substantial information provided by Jim Cheverton based on regular bird counts, and a tabulation of feeding habits.

5.1.2 AIMS

1. To undertake an investigation of existing information on birdlife in the Harbour.
2. To record information on the species and habitats to be found in the environment of the Harbour.
3. To identify the feeding habits of birds frequenting the area.
4. To make a provisional estimate of the importance of the Harbour for bird life.

5.2 REVIEW OF RELEVANT SOURCES

There is a long tradition of bird watching and recording on the Island. Fox provided the bird lists for *A guide to the natural history of the Isle of Wight* (Morey 1909) and contributed annual bird notes to the *Proceedings* of the IW Natural History and Archeological Society (IWNHAS) from 1923 to 1933. An annual bird report, initiated by Stafford, was included in the *Proceedings* between 1953 and 1983. Thereafter, a separate annual publication *Isle of Wight birds* was produced.

Another annual *Bird report* is published by the Isle of Wight Ornithological Group. Both reports contain systematic lists of birds recorded by observers during the previous year, and articles of specialist interest. Nationally, Wildfowl Counts were instigated in 1947 and since 1954, financed by the NCC, they have been organised by the Wildfowl Trust. Cheverton and Shepard (1987) state that some 1000 volunteers count swans, geese and ducks on the middle Sunday of each month between September to March at about 12,000 coastal and inland sites throughout the UK.

Similarly, since 1969, the Birds of Estuary Enquiry (BOEE), jointly sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) have undertaken synchronised monthly counts to monitor the population of waders and wildfowl in estuaries throughout Britain and Ireland to determine seasonal and annual variations. This data is available to NCC and other bodies when dealing with conservation cases of threatened wetlands. The national results of both *Counts* are presented annually in *Wildfowl and wader counts* and local results appear in *Isle of Wight birds*. Since October 1993 the two counts have been combined into a Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).

The UK is party to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Subsequently, selected *Ramsar* sites were identified with Special Protected Area (SPA) status. Chichester and Langstone Harbours were selected and it was proposed that Southampton Water, the Northwest Solent and Newtown Harbour should be similarly designated.

Interest in bird habitats and species has been increasing over the past 25 years and it was partly public concern at the annual slaughter of migratory birds in Southern Europe that contributed and eventually led to the issue in 1979 of an EC *Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds* with formal compliance required by 1981 (Haigh 1984). Member states were required to preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitat for birds. Great Britain already had protection for certain species of birds, but the Directive laid greater emphasis on protection of habitat. A 1979 Resolution required that within two years member states should notify the Commission of:

- (a) the special protection areas which they had classified under the Directive,
- (b) the wetlands they had designated or intended to designate as wetlands of International importance, and
- (c) any other areas classified according to national legislation for bird protection.

The UK did not notify the Commission that it had complied with the Directive until 1982, after the passing of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in 1981.

The requirements of the Directive led to re-examination of possible sites by the NCC which was already responsible for designating SSSIs and National Nature Reserves. A site is of National Importance if it regularly holds 1% of the estimated British wintering population of one species or subspecies of waterfowl.

The Solent is recognised as being of National Importance for 17 species of wintering waterfowl and 8 of International Importance. Tubbs (1980) identified five groups of birds relying wholly or in part on the littoral and sub-littoral zones of the Solent estuarine system:

- (i) waders,
- (ii) dabbling ducks, shelduck and brent geese,
- (iii) sawbills, sea ducks, grebes and cormorants,
- (iv) gulls, and
- (v) terns.

His information on the bird population in the Solent 1951-77 derived mainly from the Wildfowl Counts in the region since 1952 and the BOEE Counts since 1969. The records quoted were from Chichester, Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours, Southampton Water and the West Solent.

The West Solent area comprised the Medina estuary, Newtown Harbour and the Western Yar estuary on the Isle of Wight and the north shoreline of the Solent westward of Calshot Spit. Bembridge Harbour was not included.

Howard, Moore and Dixon (1988) undertook a comparative survey of Newtown and Bembridge Harbours. In considering the nature conservation importance of Bembridge Harbour they acknowledge that the surrounding areas designated SSSI and the Old Mill Pond and Bembridge Point sand dunes are of conservation importance. They state that:

'the Harbour supports small numbers of waders and wildfowl but there is a fairly high diversity with 22 waders and 16 wildfowl species'.

In their conclusion Howard *et al* reported that Bembridge Harbour is

'not used by many birds'.

This conclusion could not be based on personal observation as the group were only present in Bembridge Harbour on two days in April 1987, but presumably were based on the observations of Prater (1981), the only bird book featured in their references. Prater's work was based on BOEE records from Great Britain and Ireland. In comparison with sites such as Morecome Bay the bird population of Bembridge Harbour may be small. However, it is of local importance and supplies valuable overwintering feeding grounds for migratory birds.

Table 5.1

Lack, who compiled *The atlas of wintering birds in Britain* (Lack 1986) for BTO and Irish Wildbird Conservancy (IWC), undertook a major research project over three winters, mid-November to mid-March 1981/82, 1992/93 and 1983/84. The units of distribution were the 10km squares of the National Grid. BTO Regional organisers co-ordinated the record collecting activities of observers.

On the Isle of Wight, Stafford co-ordinated the field activities of about 50 participants. The 10km square SZ68 includes Bembridge Harbour and Marshes, Foreland and Culver Down and extends from Nodes Point south to Sandown. More than 100 species were recorded in SZ68 area and it figures frequently as having larger populations of individual species found in one day on a national percentage comparison. Study of these records indicate that this area is important for wintering birds. This is confirmed by the Joint NCC (1992) study of Birds in the Solent. Bembridge Harbour is identified as important during the winter months (November-March) for breeding, feeding and roosting sites:

- (a) for wildfowl and waders and
- (b) for seabirds in the Solent (Table 5:1).

Reports supplied for the Waterfowl Counts (Stafford 1992) and BOEE Counts (Cheverton 1992) for Brading Harbour and Marsh, are summarised below in Tables 5:2A and 5:2B.

Table 5:2A Waterfowl counts: Brading harbour and marshfrom: Stafford, J. 'The waterfowl counts 1991/2' in *Isle of Wight birds*

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Mute Swan	4	9	4	5	2	4	3
Greylag Goose			1	3		2	
Canada Goose	59		62			86	11
Brent Goose			21	134	214	260	1
Common Shelduck		2	34	60	101	53	67
Eurasian Wigeon				111	57	100	15
Gadwall						6	2
Common Teal	10	56	112	84	123	91	98
Mallard	54	153	148	62	81	44	26
Northern Pintail						3	1
Garganey	2						
Northern Shoveler	4				8		3
Common Pochard	9	42	59	104	69	37	4
Tufted Duck	25	9	10	21	8	12	16
Greater Scaup		1				1	
Common Goldeneye			1		1		
Red-breasted Merganser			2				
total	167	271	453	586	664	699	247

Table 5:2B Waterfowl counts: Brading harbour and marshFrom: Cheverton, J M. 'The birds of estuaries enquiry, 1991/92' in *Isle of Wight birds*

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	May	Jun
Oystercatcher	1	9			2	17		1			3
Great Ringed Plover		8		65		1	31	4			
Grey Plover				3	11	1	1				
Northern Lapwing	28	38	1	120	19	513	160	900	78		27
Sanderling						1					
Dunlin		5		13	280	280	470	84	17		
Common Snipe						2					
Eurasian Curlew		1		2	1	8	4	17	8		
Spotted Redshank									1		
Common Redshank	9			72	79	79	80	39	83	3	4
Common Greenshank		1	1			1	1	1			
Green Sandpiper								1			
Common Sandpiper	3									4	
Turnstone					1	2	1				
total	41	62	2	275	393	905	748	1047	187	7	34

5.3 THE HARBOUR DEFINED (Map 5:1)

A first task in assessing birdlife in the area is to define the geographical location. Bembridge Harbour lies at the mouth of the Eastern Yar between Bembridge and St. Helens. In addition to the important tidal area, there are other sites of ornithological interest that must be included:

- (a) Bembridge Point
- (b) the sand spit on the Bembridge side of the harbour entrance,
- (c) the immediate seaward area to St Helens Fort
- (d) the saline ponds or lagoons to the south of Embankment Road
- (e) the Brading marshes and low lying areas either side of the Yar river
- (f) the River Yar
- (g) the Old Mill Ponds
- (h) St Helens Duver
- (i) immediate foreshore of the Duver.

Such a definition of the Harbour includes two SSSIs: Brading Marshes, for reasons of flora and fauna, and St Helens Duver for reasons of flora. It does not, however, emphasise the environmental link between the Harbour and other areas. Grey Herons, for instance, breed in the marshes, but find much of their food on the inter-tidal Bembridge ledges. The Harbour mud flats provide important feeding for migrants such as Dunlin, while seasonal visitors such as Brent Geese feed on the eel-grass *Zostera* beds off the St Helens Ledges. Birds will range over a considerable area in their search for feeding, roosting and breeding sites.

Map 5:1 Bembridge Harbour: 1994 SSSIs

Map of Bembridge Harbour showing 1994 boundaries of surrounding SSSIs

5:4 BIRD COUNTS IN THE HARBOUR AND BRADING MARSHES

Jim Cheverton of the IWNHAS and BTO has been keeping records of birdlife in the Isle of Wight for over 40 years. To assist the present study he extracted from his wealth of records those pertaining to Bembridge Harbour and generously allowed the Harbour Association to include them in the Report as Appendix 5:1.

There are 170 species included in this list, some of which have made very occasional appearances, such as a Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* in late August 1993, and common winter visitors, Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* which increased to about 250 in the 1990s.

For many of the species the counts are too numerous to be included in their entirety, but Jim Cheverton has these figures available. Close examination of the records highlights decreases and increases of specific species and at what times of the year they are most frequent. For example, numbers of the Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* reached 59 and 104 in November and December, 1991 respectively, but although a few pairs remained to breed most years from 1979 to 1989 there has been no record of breeding in the last few years. This is a Red Data Book species regarding breeding.

The terminology in this list and in the current issues of *Isle of Wight birds* incorporates the accepted changes to English names recommended for use in county bird reports (BOURC 1988) and (British Birds 1993).

Since 1965 when Jim Cheverton has been undertaking monthly counts for BOEE and Wildfowl Trust he has followed a set route. Subsequently he has filled in habitat maps indicating birds seen in different locations of the very extensive area he covers. Starting at Bembridge Point, he walks along the Embankment Road. Then he follows the path alongside the privately owned East Pond. From here he emerges on to the private road leading to Harbour Farm (access by kind permission of Lt Col and Mrs K G Hicks). Passing through a gate he follows a track passing

West Pond, divided by a causeway from East Pond. (Sheader (1987) refers to East and West Ponds as Harbour Farm Lagoons 1 and 2 respectively). He proceeds across the marshes towards the old sea wall near Brading, and thence across to the north of the River Yar. He follows the course of the river then re-crosses the bridge, through pasture near the dynamite store and returns via Harbour Farm. Once back on the road leading away from Harbour Farm he takes the route of the disused railtrack which then passes behind the workshop buildings near the corner of Embankment Road. Between the railtrack and the buildings is a brackish lagoon (termed by Sheader (1987), Bembridge Harbour Lagoon) and further along the track on the marshes side to another lagoon. He then continues over Yar Bridge, past St Helens Mill over the causeway across the Duver to a point near the cafe, along the seawall to Attrills Point, then back to the starting point. The two sample habitat maps in Appendix 5:2 show the way Jim Cheverton records weather and sightings in a systematic visual form so that monthly or yearly comparisons can be made.

Periodically the owners of Harbour Farm and Marshes allow access to educational and scientific groups such as IWNHAS upon prior request. Appendix 5:3 is a report of sightings on one of these visits.

5:5 DIVERSITY OF SPECIES AND HABITATS

Watching birds in the Isle of Wight (Cheverton and Shepard 1987) conveys both enthusiasm and information, and indicates how a cumulative list of birds may be achieved from common garden birds to species which are more difficult to identify. It also presents a mapped series of Island locations where birdwatching walks can take place. The passage below follows their walk around Bembridge Harbour.

Bembridge Point has been partially mutilated by development and mineral extraction and from some viewpoints leaves much to be desired aesthetically. However, the sand dunes are a rare habitat in the context of the Island and Southern England.

Cheverton and Shepard (1987) report that in winter Rock Pipit and Pied Wagtail are common on the shore of the Spit. The immediately adjoining area of sea provides feeding for Red-Breasted Merganser and Eider, Great Crested Grebe and, on occasion, Slavonian Grebe. Cormorants use St Helens Fort as a roost. At low water Bar-tailed Godwit feed at the water's edge. The Sea Buckthorn at the centre of the Spit is often filled with wintering thrushes, finches and sparrows. These bushes are important in providing cover and shelter, producing heavy crops of berries in some years.

Walking clockwise round the Harbour leads past the saline ponds inshore of Embankment Road. From selected positions it is possible to see Coot, Moorhen, Tufted Duck, Pochard, Mallard, Teal, Little Grebe and Water Rail. As previously stated, most of this area lies within the Brading Marshes SSSI. An important area outside the SSSI is the north-eastern tip of East Pond lying immediately behind the Bembridge Sailing Club car park. This is an area of swamp woodland which is valuable for Moorhen and other small birds. Another important area is the strip of saline marsh between Embankment Road and the disused railtrack which attracts waders and other species at certain times of the year.

Brading Marsh extends substantially westwards from the ponds and the line of the disused railway track. The site is an SSSI notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. the following description is included in the record of notification:

Brading Marshes comprises an extensive area of neutral and acid grassland, pools and reedbeds, mainly on the tidal silt of a former intertidal basin known as Brading Haven, reclaimed in 1874-9; and areas of ancient woodland peripheral to the former harbour.

The Marshes are drained by the canalised River Yar and by systems of internal ditches. Much of the area is subject to shallow winter flooding. The distribution of neutral and acid grassland appears to be governed by the former distribution of mudflats and sandflats respectively. though relatively species-poor, the present day meadows represent a habitat now of only local distribution on the south coast. It is the only significant area of such habitat on the Island and the most extensive on the central south coast.

The larger pools are important as an autumn and winter wildfowl refuge. the site as a whole exhibits great diversity of wetland habitats, which support a wide range of aquatic and semi-aquatic macrophytic plants. ... The whole complex is of importance for its populations of breeding wading birds, ducks and other wetland species. and the reedbeds and associated scrub habitats support an exceptionally rich breeding community of warblers and other passerine birds. The site includes two heronries.

Although there are no public rights of way across the land, many of the species can be observed from adjoining footpaths and bridleways of which there are several, or from the Yar Bridge.

Moving on around the Harbour and turning right after crossing the Yar brings one to the northern side of the Harbour where the Mill Causeway carries public footpath R86. The Old Mill Pond is the last area of salt marsh in the former extensive tidal basin of the eastern Yar. It has long since ceased to provide a head of water for the Mill itself but, at low tide, the sedimentary mud provides feeding for a variety of waders including Dunlin, Redshank, Curlew, Ringed Plover, Turnstone, Grey Plover and Greenshank. Larger birds include Brent Geese, Mallard, Shelduck, Teal and, occasionally, Shoveler. Hickman (1991) graphically describes the many birds visible from the Mill Causeway during a January walk. He heard the yelping alarm call of the Redshank 'sentinel of the Marshes' and counted 20 on each side of the Mill wall.

The remains of the old sea wall, a favoured perch for wading birds and the adjacent foreshore may be seen when walking across the Causeway to the Duver and St Helens beach. Sea Buckthorn in profusion separates land from sea and provides cover for small birds as on Bembridge Point. Small migrant birds regularly appear on passage on the Duver and sometimes rarities such as the Hoopoe. There are views of waders and gulls on the St Helens foreshore and, at high water in winter, grebes and red-breasted mergansers feeding in the sea. The St Helens Ledges SSSI can be seen from here. The foreshore at the southern end of the Spit is an important winter feeding site for Sanderling. The area from Ryde Sands to Bembridge holds significant numbers of this species.

5:6 FEEDING HABITS OF BIRDS IN THE HARBOUR AREA

The diversity of habitats already described provide ample feeding grounds for a diversity of birds -- for residents and summer and winter visitors. The mud flats provide essential feeding grounds for waders and seabirds at all seasons. As the tide washes in, birds will feed in line with the water's edge and move in with the tide, each species finding its appropriate food according to bill length (Appendix 5:4). This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in winter and early spring. Species to be seen include Black headed, Common and Herring Gull, Lapwing, Grey Plover, Redshank, Dunlin, Teal, Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Ringed Plover, Mute Swan, Cormorant and, occasionally, Smew and Long-tailed Duck.

Brent Geese and Wigeon feed on the beds of *Zostera* off the St Helens Ledges, but will adapt their feedings habits if supplies become exhausted. Many birds will have preferred food sources but be prepared to compromise when circumstances such as weather conditions or breeding, which restrict movement, occur. Curlews and godwits will feed on mud flats, but are also known to forage on arable and pasture land. A selective list of birds that frequent the Harbour and/or seashore area and sea and those that are found in the Harbour and marshes/ ponds area and their feeding habits is given in Appendix 5:5.

The rich marine life to be found in estuarine mud flats caters for the feeding needs of many species. It has been suggested by the RSPB that 1 sq. metre of mud contains as much as 2 kg of assorted worms, cockles, snails and crustacea and insects. The limited core samples examined by the Marine Ecology group, especially those from near the Mill Pond, revealed considerable quantities of invertebrates and crustacea although there was not a great diversity of species.

Estuarine mud flats are vulnerable to development from differing sources: marina and housing complexes, barrages or industrial development. Research demonstrates that migrants return annually to the same feeding grounds and that if those mud flats are developed or disturbed, then whole groups of a single species are put at risk. It is also now known that for many small shore birds such as Dunlin and Redshank, the best feeding conditions are available only at certain stages of the tide's cycle. Birds disturbed at peak feeding times, as can happen if a marina is constructed with dredged deep water access, or by dogs causing them to expend valuable energy on needless flying, may be forced to look for alternative feeding sites.

In hard winters more birds from Europe come here, increasing the competition for feeding sites and some may starve or freeze.

5:7 CONCLUSIONS: A PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR

The extensive and long kept records of the BOEE and Wildfowl Counts have enabled fair estimates to be made of the relative importance of different estuarine and inland sites. The Solent has been established as of International Importance and the eastern and west Solent harbours are covered by SPA status. Bembridge is noted as one of 15

Intertidal Sites of Importance for breeding, feeding and roosting for wildfowl and waders, and one of 21 *Intertidal Sites of Importance* for breeding, feeding and roosting for sea birds (JNCC 1992) (Table 5:1). For both groups of birds, Bembridge is particularly important for winter feeding because of the relatively mild winter climate compared to, for instance, Germany and the Netherlands where mudflats can become frozen over.

The wide variety of habitats available within close proximity give protection and plentiful supplies of food. The mudflats in the Old Mill Pond and in the Harbour are well used. Although there may not be the number of birds using the Harbour compared to Newtown, Bembridge has a greater diversity of species. At the present time the level of sailing activity and commercial and residential accommodation seems to be tolerated by the bird population.

Potential threats could come from large scale development of the Harbour, excessive bait digging which could disturb the ecosystem and food chain, or from walkers with uncontrolled dogs. The Old Mill Pond is a particularly valuable feeding area for birds and needs to be recognised as such. Recent examples of bait-digging in this area should be vigorously opposed. The current proposal being considered by English Nature (formerly NCC) that this area should become an Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is warmly welcomed.

The foreshore and shingle bank developing to the south of the Duver Spit are also being considered and this would benefit the Sanderling population that visits in winter. Birds are no respectors of boundaries and Bembridge Harbour cannot be considered in isolation. Surrounded as it is by five Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and with a richness of habitat used by a wide diversity of species, it plays an important supporting role in the Solent estuarine system.

5:8 REFERENCES AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 5:1 BIRDS RECORDED IN BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR AREA BY J M CHEVERTON

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

An unusual winter visitor. One in the harbour on 11/2/93

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Occasional winter visitor to the harbour, or sea off the Duver.

One offshore, 16/1/83.

One in the harbour, 8/12/91 and 5/1/92.

One off the Duver, 19/1/92.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

A common resident, breeding in the freshwater ponds. Often seen feeding in the harbour and in St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be provided.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

An occasional visitor offshore; sometimes enters the harbour.

One offshore, 13/2/72.

One offshore, 23/1/84.

One offshore, 15/12/85.

One in the harbour mouth, 12/1/93.

One off the Duver, 11/12/93.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

An occasional winter visitor.

One off the Duver, 17/1/84.

One off the Duver, 12/11/83.

One in the harbour, 8/3/93.

One in the harbour, 17/10/93.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

An occasional winter visitor.

Three in the harbour mouth, 16/1/72.

One off the Duver, 13/1/74.

One off the Duver, 9/2/74.

One in the east pond, 17/2/74.

One offshore, 12/12/82

One offshore, 30/12/83.

One in the harbour entrance, 23/1/84.

One in St Helen's Millpond, 11/2/90.

Two in the harbour, 5/12/93.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

A scarce winter visitor.

One in the harbour entrance, 22/3/81.

One in the harbour, 12/2/84.

One in the harbour, 18/2/84.

One in the harbour, 11/12/88.

One in the harbour, 19/12/89.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Seen throughout the year. Numbers up to 30 are not unusual. Counts can be provided but sometimes include large numbers seen on St Helen's Fort.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

An unusual offshore visitor.

Two offshore, 27/12/81.

One offshore, 23/1/84.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

A scarce winter visitor, usually when very cold weather is experienced in Eastern England or the Netherlands.

One found dead by the east pond, 9/1/79.

One, east pond reed beds, 11/1/85.

One, east pond reed beds, 16/12/85.

Two, east pond reed beds, 20/1/86.

One, east pond reed beds, 2/2/86.

One, east pond reed beds, 19/12/86.

One, in vicinity of the ponds for several weeks, 8/2/87 to 21/2/87 at least.

One, reed beds by ponds, 16/2/90.

One, reed beds by ponds, 23/2/90.

One, ponds, 15 and 16/12/90.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Until recently this species was classed as a National Rarity. Large numbers occurred in Southern England in the late 80s and the bird was removed from the British Birds Rarities List in 1990. Now seen occasionally, in any month, mostly in St Helen's Millpond.

One, lagoon nr road bridge, 27/4/84.

One, St Helen's Millpond, 10/8/89.

Two, St Helen's Millpond, 29/4/92.

One, St Helen's Millpond, 11/8/92.

One, lagoon by east pond, 27/7/93.

Four, St Helen's Millpond, 24/10/93.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Seen throughout the year. Breeds in the area. Recently nests have been built on tripods, supporting duck nest boxes, at the edge of the west pond. Maximum numbers most years are between 18 and 20. Counts can be provided.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

A rare visitor. A juvenile frequented Harbour Farm for about nine(?) days in late August 1993.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

There was a visit by a number of these birds to St Helens in about 1936. The incident was recorded in the County Press at that time. I believe that one of the birds built a nest but no eggs were produced.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Resident in small numbers. Breeds most years in St Helen's Millpond and on the tideline in the harbour. Has declined in number in recent years. Counts can be provided.

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*

For many years a winter visitor to the ponds. Seen there:

Two and 4 juveniles, 18/12/66.
Two, 30/12/66.
Two and 4 juveniles, 1 to 9/1/67.
One, 3/1/70.
One, 24/10/70 to 15/11/70.
Six, 5/11/72 to 19/11/72.
Three, 11/11/73 to 29/12/73.
Two and 2 juveniles, 15/12/74.
Two, 12/1/75.
Two, 16/11/75 and 13/12/75.
Five and 2 juveniles, 14/12/75.
Four, 20/12/75.
Three, 17/1/76.
Two, 18/1/76 and 15/2/76.
Four, lagoons nr road bridge, 14 to 21/11/76.
Two, 20/11/77.
Two, 17/2/80.
Two and 1 juvenile, 16/11/80 to 22/2/81.
One, 15/11/81.
Four, 14/11/82.
Two, on shore at St Helens, 13/11/83 and 27/11/83.
Four, 11/11/84.
One, 15/12/85.
One, 20/12/87.
Two, 11/12/88.
I have seen none since.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Two flew east over Bembridge on 17/11/68.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

Occasionally seen in the marsh near the road bridge but there is always doubt about their origin as many birds of this species have escaped from collections.

One there, 13/1/80.
Eight of the Greenland race there, 19/9/88.

Grey Lag Goose *Anser anser*

Occasionally seen in the marsh near the road bridge or in St Helen's Millpond. Like the last species, there is always doubt about their origin.

One, 14/3/76.
One, 12/1/86.
One, 21/1/86.
Three circled Bembridge Marsh, then flew over the harbour to the east, out to sea, 14/12/86.
Seven over Bembridge in V-formation, 16/12/90.
Up to nine in pasture nr St Helen's Laundry from 20/1/91 to 17/3/91.
One, 10/11/91.
Three, 8/12/91.

Two, 23/2/92 and 1/3/92.

Two, shot, 14/12/92.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Escaped birds are frequently seen in the area. They are believed to have come from Flamingo Park, Seaview. Both white and blue phases have been noted.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

A resident species first seen in the early 60s. Flocks now number around 200 and breeding in the marsh is reported most years.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Another frequently observed escape. Some 250 birds of this species are free-flying near Flamingo Park at Seaview. Some occasionally stray into the Bembridge area.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

A common winter visitor, mainly to the shore at St Helens and the Millpond. From single birds in the mid-70s, numbers have increased to about 250 in the 90s. Counts can be provided.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Resident but numbers increase in winter. Breeds in Bembridge Marsh most years. Counts can be provided.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A regular winter visitor, mainly to the water meadows along the Yar. Counts can be provided.

Gadwall *Anas strepera*

A winter visitor in small numbers. A pair was seen in Bembridge Marsh in May 1992 and breeding was recorded there for the first time in June 1993 when 8 small ducklings were seen. Counts can be provided.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

Mainly a winter visitor but a pair occasionally stay to breed. Counts can be provided.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

A very common resident, which breeds in the marshes nearby. Numbers increase greatly in winter. Counts can be provided.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

An occasional winter visitor in very small numbers. Counts can be provided.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A winter visitor in small numbers. Counts can be provided.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Mainly a winter visitor to the ponds on the south side of the harbour. Some years a few pairs stay to breed. This is a Red Data Book species regarding breeding. Breeding records are:

1979	8 ducklings seen on 1/7
1980	1 duckling seen on 19/6
1981	4 ducklings seen on 25/6
1982	2 ducklings seen on 24/6
1983	5 ducklings seen on 10/7
1984	3 ducklings seen on 18/6
1985	Nil
1986	three pairs produced 2, 3 and 2 ducklings, seen on 3/7 and 20/7.
1987	two pairs produced 8 and 4 ducklings, seen on 22/6

1988 two pairs produced 4 and 5 ducklings, seen on 13/6 and 18/7
1989 2 large ducklings seen on 21/8
1990 Nil
1991 Nil
1992 Nil
1993 Nil

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

A drake of this very rare species visited the east pond in the first two weeks of January 1965.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Mainly a winter visitor. A few pairs breed most years. Counts can be provided.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

An occasional winter visitor. Counts can be provided.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

An occasional winter visitor. mainly off the Duver but sometimes enters the harbour. Counts can be provided.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

A scarce winter visitor.

A juvenile duck in the lagoons on 16/11/69, 23/11/69 and 14/12/69.

An immature duck in the harbour on 20/2/86.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

A regular winter visitor, often entering the harbour and St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be provided.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

A common winter visitor, mainly offshore but often entering the harbour. Counts can be provided.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

An unusual winter visitor.

A duck in the harbour on 2/12/84.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Seen on two occasions.

A drake in the ponds on 31/1/82 and 14/3/82.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

One over Harbour Farm on 17/10/93 dropped into the reed beds by the ponds there.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A good number of sightings over the marsh

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Seen occasionally near the harbour and St Helen's Common.

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

One flew over the harbour and St Helens on 27/12/81.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One flew due west over the harbour and marsh on 18/9/83.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

A common predator along the edge of the harbour.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A male flew over the harbour on 17/5/88. (There have been many sightings over the marsh.)

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Seen occasionally in the water meadows at the edge of the lagoons.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

Seen occasionally in the water meadows at the edge of the lagoons.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Resident in very small numbers in the reed beds by the ponds and lagoons. Dates of sightings can be provided.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

A common and widespread resident. Breeds in the wet areas near the ponds and lagoons.

Common Coot *Fulica atra*

A common and widespread resident. Breeds in the reed beds at the edge of the ponds. Numbers increase in winter. Counts can be provided.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

One flew west over Bembridge on 3/11/63.

One flew southeast over Bembridge on 3/5/92.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Small numbers feed in the harbour and on St Helen's shore at low water.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

An occasional winter visitor.

Three in the lagoons on 7/5/84.

One in St Helen's Millpond on 11/2/85. Subsequently died. I believe that Mr Spears, of St Helen's Mill, has the preserved body.

One in the lagoons and/or St Helen's Millpond for a few days Dec 1993. Seen personally 5/12 and 11/12.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

A passage migrant seen in recent years mostly in the lagoons, mainly in April.

One, lagoons, 4/4/88.

One, lagoons, 20/4/90.

One, St Helen's Duver, 15/4/91.

One, east pond, 10/5/93.

(there are more records which the IOW Ornithological Group holds)

Great Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Seen on the Point and in St Helen's Millpond throughout the year, but very few in summer. Numbers are increased by passage migrants and winter visitors. Counts can be made available.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

An unusual winter visitor.

One, St Helen's shore on 6/3/71.

One, St Helen's Duver on 26/8/72

One, St Helen's Millpond on 18/2/79.

Four, feeding in mud, Bembridge Harbour on 12/2/84.

One, Bembridge Harbour on 10/4/93.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A winter visitor in small numbers, mainly to St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be made available.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Seen throughout the year. Numbers increase greatly in winter. Breeds in marshland nearby. Counts can be made available.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

This common wader is seen infrequently at Bembridge.

One in summer plumage at St Helens on 3/8/69.

Four in the harbour on 22/11/70.

One in the harbour on 29/12/73.

Eighteen in the harbour on 21/12/80.

One in the harbour on 13/11/83.

Four on Bembridge Point on 12/1/84.

One in St Helen's Millpond on 15/2/87.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Some winters large numbers of these small waders visit the harbour mouth, feeding on the tide-line at high water. The site frequently holds numbers almost large enough for the harbour to qualify as a site of national importance for the species. Since 1984 large numbers have been less frequent although there has been an occasional month when a slight recovery was seen.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

An occasional visitor to St Helen's Millpond.

One on 26/8/73.

One on 18/2/84.

One on 15/11/92.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

An occasional passage migrant.

One at St Helens on 24/9/72.

Two in the harbour on 26/8/73.

One in the harbour on 18/9/77.

One in partial summer plumage on the shore at St Helens Duver on 10/5/93.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Unusual at Bembridge, the habitat being largely unsuitable.

One, on a raft in the harbour mouth, on 16/1/72.

Two, St Helen's shore on 14/1/79.

One, in the harbour mouth on 27/12/81.

Four, on Bembridge Point on 18/12/83.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

A common winter visitor, seen mainly in the harbour mouth or St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be made available

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Seldom seen.

Male in winter plumage in St Helen's Millpond on 18/2/84.

Four males in St Helen's Millpond on 17/2/85.

One in St Helen's Millpond on 8/1/89.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Unusual.

One nr east pond on 16/10/71.

One nr west pond on 18/12/77.

One, edge of east pond on 17/12/78.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 2/12/79.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 20/1/80.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 15/11/81.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 27/12/81.

Two, St Helen's Millpond on 17/1/82.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 27/12/82.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 10/3/85.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 13/2/86.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 8/1/89.

One, St Helen's Millpond on 6/2/90.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Mainly a winter visitor. Most often seen in the salt marsh at St Helen's Millpond, particularly when the tide is falling and insufficient water remains to permit feeding. Counts can be provided.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Once only. One flying strongly east over the ponds on 11/10/92.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Unusual.

12 in summer plumage on the shore on 12/4/68.

6 on the shore on 13/12/69.

One in summer plumage on the shore on 5/4/70.

Two in the harbour on 15/1/71.

One in the harbour on 6/3/71.

2 in the harbour on 18/12/71.

One on the shore on 9/3/74.

One on the shore on 12/11/83.

Two on the shore on 8/1/89.

One in St Helen's Millpond in summer plumage on 22/7/92.

One in the lagoons in summer plumage on 6/8/92.

One nr the west pond on 11/8/92.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Seen frequently wading in the sea at low water. Counts can be provided.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A regular passage migrant in small numbers. Seen on the shore or in St Helen's Millpond. On rare occasions one will over-winter. Counts can be provided.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Resident but non-breeding. Numbers increase in winter but are seldom greater than 20. Counts can be provided.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Small numbers are seen occasionally in the lagoons or St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be provided.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Resident. Numbers increase greatly in winter. Can be seen feeding on the mud in the harbour at low water or roosting on the old retaining wall of St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be provided.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Usually one or two in the lagoons or St Helen's Millpond. Counts can be provided.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

A passage migrant and occasional winter visitor. Counts can be provided.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

An unusual passage migrant.

One, east pond, on 28/8/77.

One, lagoons, very tired, would not fly, on 18/9/77.

One, lagoons, on 6/8/92.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

A regular passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor to the Yar, ponds and lagoons. Counts can be provided.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Seen in small numbers in St Helen's Millpond and shore, mostly in winter. Counts can be provided.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One, off the Point, on 9/3/86.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

One found dead on St Helen's Duver on 18/12/83.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Since 1989(?) this scarce gull has been a frequent visitor to St Helen's Millpond. A maximum of 20(?) have been recorded at one time.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

A very common non-breeding resident. Counts can be provided.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Seen throughout the year but mainly a passage migrant and winter visitor. Counts can be provided.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Not common. Small numbers seen occasionally on passage.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common but numbers have declined in recent years. Counts can be provided.

A bird of the yellow-legged Mediterranean race *michahellis* (by some assigned to a separate species, *cachinnans*) in the harbour on 7/3/93.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Present throughout the year in small numbers. Counts can be provided.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

One found oiled on 27/12/81.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

A summer visitor and passage migrant, seen in small numbers most years.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

A summer visitor and passage migrant seen in small numbers most years.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

A summer visitor and passage migrant. Often overlooked because of similarity to the Common Tern. Birds positively identified as Arctic were:

Two, in St Helen's Millpond, on 12/9/70.

Three, over the harbour, on 29/8/76.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

A summer visitor and passage migrant but seldom seen at Bembridge.

Two on 14/5/72.

Two on 21/7/74.

One, St Helen's Millpond, on 7/5/84.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalga*

One, slightly oiled, in the harbour, on 22/2/81. This bird was of the 'bridled' form.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

One in the harbour mouth on 2/12/84.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Seen occasionally flying over the harbour.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

A very common resident.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Small numbers often seen near the Mill House.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

One, nr lagoons, on 13/1/85.

One nr Harbour Farm intermittently for about a month in November 1990.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Seen or heard in the vicinity of the ponds most years.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Often seen at Harbour Farm where it nested in 1987 and 88.

Little Owl *Athene noctua*

Often heard in the woodland adjoining the east pond.

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Arose from the dismantled rail track near the entrance to Harbour Farm on 18/7/76.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

A common summer visitor, seen mainly on passage as there are few suitable sites around the harbour for nesting.

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

A pair has frequented the harbour for many years.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

One wintered on St Helen's Duver from 20/11/88 to 5/4/89 (or later?).

Green Woodpecker *Pica viridis*

Seen regularly on St Helen's Duver and in woodland by east pond.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*

Seen regularly near east pond.

Wood Lark *Lullula arborea*

One flying east over dismantled rail track nr Harbour Farm on 12/11/83.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

Seen mainly as a passage migrant. Frequent on passage over the marsh.

Eighteen over the ponds on 15/10/78.

Eight feeding in seaweed, St Helen's Millpond on 13/2/86.

Five feeding in seaweed, St Helen's Millpond on 20/2/86.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Only as a passage migrant. The first sightings for the Island each year are often over the ponds.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant.

A particularly late sighting over St Helen's Duver on 11/12/88.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant.

A particularly late sighting over the Point on 15/12/74.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

A common resident and passage migrant. Often seen on St Helen's Duver.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Frequent on the shoreline in winter.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

One near the east pond on 17/3/85.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

A passage migrant.

Four on St Helen's Duver on 29/8/77.

Two on St Helen's Duver on 12/4/80.

Four flying south over St Helen's Duver on 6/9/86.

One flying NE over the harbour on 18/4/88.

Eighteen on St Helen's Duver on 11/9/88.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Seen occasionally.

One over the harbour on 15/2/76.

One, St Helen's Duver, on 12/11/83.
One, marina at St Helens, on 11/11/84.
One, St Helen's Millpond, on 20/2/86.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Common, especially on passage in spring and autumn.

Birds of the continental race alba (White Wagtail) are sometimes seen amongst the migrating flocks.

Six by the lagoons on 4/4/88.
Three with 15 Pied in the lagoons on 25/4/89.
One by the lagoons on 15/4/91.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident.

Hedge Accentor *Prunella modularis*

A common resident.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A common resident.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

An occasional visitor.

A female on the shore by St Helen's Duver on 17/11/74.
Two on Bembridge Point on 15/11/81.
One, St Helen's Old Church, on 27/12/82.
One, north side of harbour entrance on 23/1/84.
A male on the dismantled rail track nr Harbour Farm on 16/10/88.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

An occasional passage migrant.

Two by the east pond on 15/9/74.
One, St Helen's Duver, on 11/9/88.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

An occasional passage migrant.

One, St Helen's Duver, on 11/10/69.
One, St Helen's Duver, on 18/9/77.
One, St Helen's Duver, on 9/5/82.
One, St Helen's Duver, on 11/9/88.
One, St Helen's Duver, on 13/10/91.

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Seen mostly in winter when the birds wander from their normal habitat.

A male, by the harbour, on 15/10/67.
Pair on the foreshore, 26/12/72
Two, by the east pond, on 16/10/76.
A male, opposite Brading Haven Yacht Club, on 21/11/76.
A juvenile male, Bembridge Point, on 13/11/83.
Two males, lagoons nr St Helens, on 26/1/86.
A male, dismantled rail track, Bembridge, on 12/11/89.
A female, near lagoons, on 10/11/91.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Seen regularly on passage.

- Six, St Helen's Duver, on 8/8/65.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 11/4/70.
- Two, shore at St Helens, 12/9/70.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 10/10/70.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 23/8/71.
- Three, St Helen's Duver, on 26/8/72.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 15/10/72.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 26/8/73.
- Six, St Helen's Duver, on 15/9/74.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 13/10/74.
- Two, St Helen's Duver, on 20/9/75.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 18/10/75.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 10/10/76.
- One, shore at St Helens, on 17/4/77.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 8/9/79.
- Four, St Helen's Duver, on 12/4/80.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 9/5/82.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 17/10/82.
- Two, on shore N side of harbour entrance, on 16/8/83.
- Six, St Helen's Duver, on 12/8/84.
- One, St Helen's Duver, on 20/3/88.
- Two, shore at St Helens, on 26/3/88.
- Ten, St Helen's Millpond & shore, on 18/4/88.
- A female, St Helen's Duver, on 17/5/88.
- A male, St Helen's Duver, on 10/4/89.
- One, N side of harbour mouth, on 15/4/91.
- Four females, moving N, St Helen's Duver, on 21/5/91.
- Six, St Helen's Duver, on 13/10/91.
- Six, N side of harbour mouth, on 22/3/92.
- Three, on wall of Millpond, on 17/8/92.
- One, on groyne, St Helens, on 11/10/92.
- A juvenile male, St Helen's Duver, on 15/11/92.
- Two, N side of harbour entrance, on 10/4/93.
- A male, N side of harbour entrance, on 10/5/93.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A common resident, often seen along the dismantled rail track.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

A winter visitor, numbers varying from year to year. Often seen in the fields bordering the dismantled rail track.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Resident in quite small numbers. There has been a decrease in recent years but this has been noted throughout Britain. Most often seen in the fields adjacent to the dismantled rail track or on St Helen's Duver.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

A winter visitor, numbers varying from year to year. Most often seen in the fields bordering the dismantled rail

track.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

A resident and passage migrant. The two or three pairs of resident birds are spread around the harbour. As an example of the small increase in numbers during the autumn and spring passages, seven were seen on overhead wires nr Harbour Farm on 11/10/92 and a party of nine flew north over the estuary on 19/5/93.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

A summer visitor and passage migrant. Not seen or heard in recent years.

Four singing by the east pond on 30/8/70.

One singing by the east pond on 19/9/70.

One singing by the east pond on 19/8/73.

One singing by the east pond on 15/9/74.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant. Although usually numerous in the marshes, small numbers occur in the vicinity of the ponds and, occasionally, the lagoons.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

A scarce summer visitor, recorded only once, singing by the east pond on 27/5/78.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant, breeding in the reed beds by the ponds.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant. Most often seen in the hedgerow bordering the road, near the east pond.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant. Often seen along the dismantled rail track and on St Helen's Duver.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

A summer visitor and passage migrant but not common, the habitats being unsuitable.

One, by the east pond, on 17/9/78.

Two, edge of marsh, nr lagoons, on 23/5/89.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

A regular summer visitor and passage migrant. Seen or heard in the wood by the east pond, along the dismantled rail track and in St Helen's Common woodland.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant, occurring almost anywhere around the harbour.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

A common summer visitor and passage migrant. Often heard near the east pond and on St Helen's Duver.

On 24/8/86 approximately 80 were seen, by the east pond, in a flock of 80 Blue Tits, a few Great Tits and Long-tailed Tits.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Seen very occasionally, mostly by the east pond.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscipapa striata*

I have been told that this species is seen annually on the old buildings just north of St Helen's Mill House.

Personally I have seen it only in the grounds of Harbour Farm. In recent years, in Wight, has declined in number

greatly.

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

One calling in the reed beds by the ponds on 8/5/91.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Seen occasionally along the dismantled rail track where it has nested.

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Recorded once, along the dismantled rail track, in July 1987. Generally, the habitat is unsuitable.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

A numerous resident, widespread around the harbour.

Great Tit *Parus major*

A numerous resident, widespread around the harbour.

Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*

Seen occasionally flying from the woodland south of the east pond.

Magpie *Pica pica*

Several pairs are resident around the harbour. Most often seen on St Helen's Duver.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

An abundant resident, frequently seen in the fields adjoining the dismantled rail track.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

An abundant resident. There is a rookery in St Helen's Common wood. A few pairs still nest in the remains of the former rookery in trees west of the dismantled rail track.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

A numerous resident. Does not appear to nest in the vicinity of the harbour. Occasionally flocks on the shoreline.

Twenty-three on the sands on 15/3/81.

Fifteen feeding on shore at St Helens at low water on 15/6/92.

An aberrant bird with completely white wings on 13/11/88.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

An abundant resident, often flocking in the fields by the dismantled rail track.

About 1000 there on 12/10/69, 1100 on 6/10/90 and 3000 on 21/10/90.

About 800 on St Helen's Duver on 17/10/82.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Not numerous but resident around the buildings on the north side of the harbour.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

A resident, numerous along the dismantled rail track.

Thirty on the beach at Bembridge on 15/1/78.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

A resident, numerous along the dismantled rail track.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Small parties seen along the dismantled rail track, mostly in autumn and winter.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Seen occasionally, usually in winter, on alders near the ponds.

Five there on 14/11/71.

One there on 18/1/76.

Five over Bembridge Point on 15/10/78.

Five on an oak nr the ponds on 17/2/80.

Five nr the ponds on 17/1/82 and 12 there on 31/1/82.

Twenty-five there on 2/2/86 and 9/2/86.

One there on 29/11/86 and two on 27/11/88.

One there on 12/11/89.

Three in a tree nr the harbour mouth, St Helen's Duver, on 9/4/90.

Six in the lane leading to Harbour Farm on 13/10/91.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

A few are resident on St Helen's Duver but larger numbers are seen on passage, usually in spring and autumn.

Forty-six on St Helen's Duver on 15/7/91.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

An unusual winter visitor.

A female on a small plant, waste land, north side of harbour entrance, on 10/11/91.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

An occasional winter visitor, mainly to the alders nr the ponds.

A juvenile there on 12/10/69.

Two there on 1/2/70 and five on 14/11/71.

Three in Sea Buckthorn on Bembridge Point on 27/12/81.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Seen occasionally along the dismantled rail track.

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*

A female in Sea Buckthorn on Bembridge Point on 7/11/89 and 9/11/89.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A female on Bembridge Point on 17/11/83.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

A female in Sea Buckthorn on Bembridge Point on 9/11/89.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Occasionally seen in or near the lagoons

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*

An unusual sighting in Sea Buckthorn on Bembridge Point on 9/11/89.

ESCAPES

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

One in St Helen's Millpond from 17/12/67 to 18/2/68.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

Up to three in the harbour, ponds or St Helen's Millpond from about 18/6/84 to 7/2/93.
One, found dead, nr the west pond on 13/12/92.

Grey Lag Goose *Anser anser*

One, possibly a hybrid, in St Helen's Millpond from 14/11/93 to 13/2/94 at least.

Sharp-winged Teal *Anas flavirostris oxyptera*

Two on St Helen's Millpond on 29/12/85.
One on the east pond on 9/2/86.

APPENDIX 5:2 SAMPLE HABITAT MAPS

Monthly sketch maps recording weather and species sighted by J M Cheverton (reproduced by permission)

APPENDIX 5:3 SAMPLE SIGHTINGS REPORT

Example of report by IWNHAS group of birds seen at Harbour Farm and Brading Marshes

APPENDIX 5:4 EFFECT OF BILL SIZE AND TYPE ON FEEDING HABITS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Cormorant: | powerful bill, dives for fish, eels, crabs. |
| Grey Heron: | powerful stabbing bill, fish, frogs. |
| Sea Ducks: | dive deeply, fish, crabs, shrimps; bills adapted to catching fish |
| Red-breasted Merganser | |
| Golden Eye | |
| Eider | |
| Scoter | |
| Oyster Catcher: | strong bills, either prise open molluscs or smash them on stones. |
| Small Sandpipers | feed at tidal edge, small fish, crabs, plankton and invertebrates near surface. |
| Ringed Plover | |
| Sanderling | |
| Dunlin | |
| Turnstones: | literally turn over stones, insects, small molluscs. |
| Godwits: | long bills, penetrate deeper than Sandpipers. |
| Curlew: | long curved bill, penetrate deeply, e.g. lugworms. |
| Whimbrel, Redshank, and Grey Plover: | longer bills, feed at edge and wade in shallows. |
| Gulls: | powerful bills, feed at sea and shoreline, seaweed, sandhopper, etc. |
| Terns: | dive for fish, crabs, marine insects |

APPENDIX 5:5 FEEDING HABITS OF BIRDS

Feeding Habits of Birds -- Harbour and/or Seashore/Sea

BIRD		FOOD							
		Invert	Fish	Insects	Larvae	Crustac	Amphib	Mollusc	Veg
Red T Diver	W		Y			Y		Y	
Black T Diver	W		Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
G Northern Diver	W		Y			Y		Y	
Great C Grebe	W		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Slavonian Grebe	W		Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
Red-necked Grebe	W		Y	Y			Y	Y	
B N Grebe	W		Y	Y		Y		Y	
Cormorant	R		Y			Y			
Grey Heron	R		Y	Y			Y		Y
Brent Goose	W				sometimes		sometimes		Zostera
Common Eider	W					Y		Y	
Common Scoter	W	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y
Golden Eye	W					Y		Y	
R B Merganser	W	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	
Oystercatcher	R	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Ringed Plover	W	Y		Y	Y			Y	
Grey Plover	W	Y		Y				Y	Y
Knot	W			Y		Y		Y	
Sanderling	W			Y	Y	Y		Y	
Purple Sandpiper	W					Y		Y	Y
Dunlin	W	Y		Y				Y	Y
Bar-tailed Godwit	W	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Whimbrel	R			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Curlew	R	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Spotted Redshank	R			Y		Y	Y	Y	
Redshank	R	Y		Y		Y		Y	Y
Turnstone	W			Y				Y	
Black-headed Gull	R		Y	Y	Y		Y		
Lesser B B Gull	R		Y	Y		Y		Y	
Herring Gull	R		Y	Y				Y	Y
Great B B Gull	R		Y	Y		Y			
Sandwich Tern	S	Y	Y					Y	
Common Tern	S		Y	Y					
Arctic Tern	S		Y	Y		Y		Y	

Feeding Habits of Birds - Harbour and Marshes/Ponds

BIRD,		FOOD							
		Invert	Fish	Insects	Larvae	Crustac	Amphib	Mollusc	Veg
Little Grebe	R		Y	Y	Y			Y	
Little Egret	OC	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	
Mute Swan	R		Y	Y			Y		Y
Common Shelduck	R			Y		Y		Y	Y
Wigeon	W								zostera
Gadwall	W	Y						Y	Y
Teal	S	Y		Y				Y	Y
Mallard	R								Y
Pintail	W	Y		Y				Y	Y
N Shoveller	W			Y		Y			Y
Avocet	OC			Y	Y	Y			
L Ringed Plover	S	Y		Y				Y	
Northern Lapwing	R	Y		Y					
Ruff	W	Y		Y				Y	Y
Common Snipe	R	Y		Y	Y				Y
C Greenshank	S	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		
Green Sandpiper	W	Y		Y				Y	Y
C Sandpiper	S	Y		Y			Y		Y

Key:

W = Winter

S = Summer

R = Resident

OC = Occasional visitor