

MEDINA VALLEY *Wildlife* – 2000 Report

Welcome to the Report for the year 2000, which we hope you will find interesting and informative.

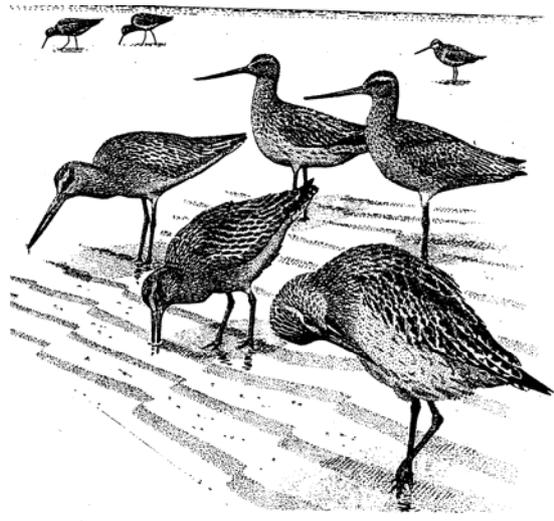
As usual, this issue contains a Bird Report for the Medina Estuary; the 15th consecutive issue put together by Keith Marston, with additional records submitted by local birdwatchers. Other biological records are also included in the form of shorter reports and nature notes.

Particularly notable this year has been the exceptional rainfall during the autumn months; recorded at our weather station here at the Centre and by Mr Denis Simmons of Shide. Meteorological observations are vitally important to any biological time-series as they can help to interpret other environmental data. For example, was the reduction in numbers of butterflies recorded in the Valley this year due to land use change or the exceptionally wet spring? – most likely the latter. Yet longer term environmental monitoring may help us differentiate between the background ‘noise’, created by random changes in weather and vagaries of species life-cycles, from the anthropogenic ‘signal’. Of course separating natural change from that due to human influences is not easy as there are many potential causes. They may be local or regional, while yet others are due to global conditions, such as high levels of greenhouse gases. Comparing data with others may help to identify genuinely local environmental changes. The exchange of information between environmental networks (e.g. *Wetland Bird Survey*) is thus essential for the satisfactory analysis and interpretation of data, which will hopefully enable a more objective approach to environmental management.

It is hoped that the information contained in this report, and that collected and collated by the Centre for more than 20 years, will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of the Medina estuary and its environs.

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