



## Birds on the Stanley Allen Panel

Sizes given below are length first then wingspan

### **Black-headed Gulls** 35-39cm/ WS 86-99cm



Usually the most numerous gulls at Widewater. Mature at two years old, the adults have their black head only during the breeding season.

They nest on the ground. As Widewater and local beaches do not provide a safe ground nesting environment these gulls are absent for the breeding season in Spring to early Summer when non-breeding birds start to return.

*Photo: Janet Derricott*

### **Kingfisher** 17-19.5cm / WS 25cm



Often two are present but, being small, are not easy to spot.

Watch out for their rapid flight low over the water. They often dive on their prey from water's edge perches along the gardens or landing stages of the houses.

*Photos: Martin Peacock (L), Dorian Mason (R)*

### **Little Egret** 55-65cm / WS 88-106cm



An almost certain sighting year round moving between the lagoon, the nearby RSPB Adur Nature Reserve and River Adur valley and nesting in trees in the Coombes area. Feathers are what make birds unique in the animal world and the pure white plumes of the Egret were in great demand by the millinery trade.

Consequently this species was becoming endangered by the 19<sup>th</sup> century and led to the establishment of the RSPB. Global warming has led to this continental bird extending its range to the UK and is now a common sight since first appearing in the 1970's. *Photo: Paula Blake*

Watch out for other white Egrets! Its larger relative the Great Egret has now reached our shores and has been fleetingly reported at Widewater. Its smaller continental relative, the Cattle Egret has more recently been seen briefly. Another possible white 'heron like' bird is Spoonbill and occasionally a Grey Heron may visit.

**Red-breasted Merganser** 52-58cm /WS 76-82cm



One of two UK 'Sawbill' species. They are usually encountered off-shore during the winter but up to half a dozen are often seen within the lagoon from mid-winter to March. Enjoy observing their courting displays when they chase each other across the water.

*Photo: Martin Peacock*

**Goosander** 58-68cm /WS78-94cm



Another UK 'Sawbill' species. Mostly seen on freshwater lakes, slow moving rivers and sometimes sheltered estuaries. Less

likely to visit than Mergansers, one or two may visit in January and February. The female Mergansers and Goosanders are very similar. *Photos: Dorian Mason*

The rufous head colour of the Merganser merges into the breast whereas there is a sharp contrast between rufous head and white breast on the Goosander. Often persecuted in its breeding areas by fish farm owners.

**Sandwich Tern** 37-43cm /WS 85-97cm



Summer visitor from March to October. Resembling a small gull, they have a black cap in summer with a ragged crest and a black and white cap in winter. Note the black bill with yellow tip. In bad weather they may roost on posts within the lagoon. Otherwise they may be seen diving from height off-shore where Common and possibly Little Tern may be passing. *Photo: Paul Loader*

**Cormorant** 77-94cm / WS 121-149cm



Apart from a white and yellow face the adults are blackish. Juveniles have variable pale underparts. Regularly present in the lagoon roosting and preening on posts or islands or diving for fish and eels.



*Photos: Ron Bewley (L), Dorian Mason (R)*

**Little Grebe** 23-29cm /WS 40-45cm



The smallest Grebe often known as 'Dabchicks' due to their 'powder puff' appearance. Dives frequently to feed on very small fish and other aquatic creatures. Often lurk under overhanging landings and bushes opposite. They start to appear at Widewater from late September with about thirty present before they leave in Spring to nest in secluded wetland sites.

*Photo: Martin Peacock*

**Great Black-backed Gull** 61-74cm /WS144-166cm



Mature at four/five years old. The biggest and most predatory gull which, combined with other disturbances in this public location, contributes to the lack of nesting wetland birds apart from swans. Note the large size and pinkish grey legs which distinguish it from the Lesser Black-backed Gull with yellow legs and is slightly smaller than a Herring Gull. The LBBG is seen locally but not usually at Widewater.

*Photo: Andrew Hilton*

**Herring Gull** 54-69cm /123-148cm



Mature at four/five years old. Ubiquitous scavenger seen following fishing boats, tractors in ploughed fields, on rubbish tips and taking anything edible including snatching seaside holiday makers' snacks!

*Photo: Martin Peacock*