

Saturday April 24th

Weather: Mostly sunny in a cold easterly wind

Portland Bill, 0630

Our weekend got off to a great start with a superb hour of sea-watching. A Puffin was found as soon as we arrived amongst hundreds of Guillemots and Razorbills. Offshore a constant stream of Gannets headed east along with dozens of Manx Shearwaters, large flocks of Common Terns and an impressive line of 50 or more Common Scoter. 3 Bar-tailed Godwits came past close in and several Whimbrel were settled inland. The highlight was a dark-phase Arctic Skua which flew past unusually close and was followed by 2 more just as we were leaving.

Barleycrates Lane, 0930

A small party of Yellow Wagtails was the highlight here but we also had good views of Blackcap and Stonechat.

Kingbarrow Quarry, 1100

(Little Owl photo by Bob Harris)

A very charming Little Owl was our best bird here with Whitethroat, Wheatear, Stock Dove and Buzzard nearby. The trees near the hotel also had a good collection of migrants in the shape of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap.



Ferrybridge, 1230

The first Little Terns of the year were seen here along with some late Red-breasted Mergansers and a few Dunlin and Ringed Plovers on the shoreline.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

Here we had the unusual opportunity to compare Bar and Black-tailed Godwits with a Whimbrel and 4 summer-plumaged Dunlin close-by. A Snipe was also seen well and a distant Swift was another first for the year. The highlight though was a superb Lesser Whitethroat singing right in front of us – although the male Yellow Wagtail out on the marsh was a close second.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1530

Our final stop added lots of new birds to the list, in particular a female Bearded Tit and a couple of male Whitethroats. A Common Sandpiper near the car park was entertaining as it flew from perch to perch – this is one of the few waders (Redshank is another) that is happy to settle on posts and sometimes even low trees.

Sunday April 25th

Weather: A cool, cloudy day with some warm sunny intervals. Wind fresh southerly.

Portland Bill, 0630

With the overnight rain and the wind having moved to the south we expected to see a decent “fall” of migrants this morning, but instead we were treated to one of the best sea-watches I have ever experienced. From the outset we were seeing the same birds as yesterday only in greater numbers and mostly quite a bit closer. The first skua was a repeat of yesterday’s dark-phase Arctic but was soon followed by a pale-phase bird that was flying past with a Great Skua (*Bonxie*). The Bonxie sat on the sea and tested our eye-sight for a good 15 minutes but then we were treated to a close Pomarine Skua – with full “spoons”! The spoons are the twisted tail-feathers that make this species so distinctive. The most unexpected sighting though was a male Garganey that flew past going west (the “wrong” way) in the middle of a flock of Guillemots! Apart from these outstanding birds we saw dozens of Whimbrels, Common Scoters and Common/Arctic Terns heading east (the “right” way!).

Before heading back for breakfast we had a quick look round the car park and found a really bright male Whinchat feeding with flock of Wheatears.

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1030

(Tawny Owl photo by Bob Harris)

Next we spent a fabulous few hours exploring this superb reserve. Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Great-spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker and Goldcrest were all soon found with brief views of Siskin and Mistle Thrush as well. Reaching the shore of Poole Harbour we had Whimbrels “coming out of our ears” (to quote Alan) and the first Little Egrets of the weekend. Shipstall Point hide lived up to its reputation as one of the top RSPB hides in the country and showed us Curlews, Redshank, an adult Mediterranean Gull and a very late Brent Goose. Plenty of Sika Deer were to be seen here as well.



After lunch we walked out to Coombe Heath and soon found a singing male Dartford Warbler and another Mistle Thrush. The screen overlooking Middlebere Lake produced a most unexpected male Pintail as well as a superb adult Yellow-legged Gull.

The final count over the cream tea came to an astounding 112 species – an all-time record for a Birdbreak weekend!

See you all again soon,

Bob

Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Little Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Manx Shearwater	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Arne
Grey Heron	
Mute Swan	Lodmoor, Radipole
Brent Goose	Arne
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Shelduck	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shoveler	Radipole
Pintail	Arne
Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Garganey	Portland Bill
Tufted Duck	Lodmoor, Radipole
Pochard	Radipole
Red-breasted Merganser	Ferrybridge
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Kestrel	Portland
Buzzard	Portland, Arne
Pheasant	Wareham
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Curlew	Arne
Whimbrel	Portland Bill, Lodmoor, Arne
Oystercatcher	Lodmoor, Arne
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Arne
Bar-tailed Godwit	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Common Sandpiper	Radipole, Lodmoor
Snipe	Lodmoor
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Redshank	Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Lapwing	Wool
Great Skua	Portland Bill
Arctic Skua	Portland Bill
Pomarine Skua	Portland Bill
Black-headed Gull	Lodmoor, Arne
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Common Gull	Portland Bill, Arne
Mediterranean Gull	Arne
Yellow-legged Gull	Arne
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge, Arne
Common Tern	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Little Tern	Ferrybridge
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Portland
Stock Dove	Portland, Arne
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Little Owl	Portland
Tawny Owl	Arne
Swift	Lodmoor, Radipole
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Green Woodpecker	Portland, Arne
Nuthatch	Arne

Treecreeper	Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Arne
Pied Wagtail	Portland Bill
Yellow Wagtail	Portland, Lodmoor
Skylark	Portland Bill
Sand Martin	Portland, Radipole
Swallow	various sites
House Martin	Portland
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	various sites
Stonechat	Arne
Wheatear	Portland, Arne
Whinchat	Portland Bill
Robin	various sites
Blackbird	various sites
Mistle Thrush	Arne
Song Thrush	Arne
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Sedge Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Reed Warbler	Radipole
Chiffchaff	various sites
Willow Warbler	various sites
Whitethroat	Portland, Radipole
Lesser Whitethroat	Lodmoor
Dartford Warbler	Arne
Blackcap	Portland
Goldcrest	Arne
Long-tailed Tit	Arne
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Radipole
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Greenfinch	various sites
Goldfinch	various sites
Chaffinch	various sites
Linnet	various sites
Siskin	Wareham Forest
Reed Bunting	Radipole

Mammals: 4 species

Grey Squirrel	Wareham Forest
Sika Deer	Arne
Rat	Radipole
Rabbit	Arne

Insects: 5 species

Glow-worm	Arne
Wood Ant	Arne
Orange-tip	Lodmoor
Comma	Lodmoor
Peacock	Portland