

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks
Friday October 15th – Sunday October 17th 2010

Saturday October 16th

Weather: Long sunny spells all day, very cold in the morning in a fresh north-easterly breeze.

Portland Bill, 0700

A very cold early morning at the Bill produced plenty of Meadow and Rock Pipits, a few Wheatears and a single Stonechat. The wind direction was wrong for sea-watching but we did manage a few distant Gannets and one member of the group saw a very distant Sooty Shearwater.

Kingbarrow Quarry, 0930

After some searching we found the resident Little Owl along with an early Fieldfare and a Chiffchaff.

Tout Quarry, 1030

As we walked through the quarry on the way to the Westcliffs a Merlin dashed past at a considerable altitude providing some of us with an annoyingly brief view. Soon after this we were overtaken by a flock of 5 Redwings heading north just above us. Reaching the cliffs we soon located a Ring Ouzel by call and after much searching managed to get a few brief views of a male and a female feeding in the bushes a long way below us.

Perryfields Quarry, 1130

Just a few Chiffchaffs here and the first butterflies of the day – a Speckled Wood and a Red Admiral. A Peregrine gave a good view as it circled overhead in bright sunshine.

Ferrybridge, 1230

Probably the best birdwatching so far with 20 Mediterranean Gulls, a pair of Ravens and a the unusual sight of a Dark-bellied Brent Goose in the company of the much rarer Pale-bellied Brent.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1330

Several new birds were added here including Wigeon and Black-tailed Godwit. Little Egrets were numerous here and were seen particularly well.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1530

This famous reserve produced a host of memorable sightings including a swimming Water Rail, a Kingfisher in flight and our old friend the Hooded Merganser. Plenty of wildfowl were seen from the North Hide with the only Shoveler of the weekend finally appearing just as we were ready to leave.

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Weather: As yesterday but with less wind, warmer in the afternoon

Avalanche Road, 0715

A dawn stake-out in the hope of seeing a Yellow-browed Warbler proved fruitless but did add Goldcrest and Song Thrush to the list with the 2nd Fieldfare for the weekend overhead. A Brambling was glimpsed as it flew calling high overhead.

Wareham Forest, 1030

Several Dartford Warblers out on the heath were an unexpected bonus here with a number of woodland species also being seen for the first time. The warm sunshine seemed to bring a touch of spring to the proceeding with the Dartfords singing from the gorse bushes and a pair of Goldcrests in full display. The Four-spotted Chaser however really was completely out of season, normally being seen in May-June.

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1300

This was just a lunch stop really but we did see Nuthatch and Treecreeper here before escaping the crowds for Middlebere.

Middlebere Farm, 1400

At first the mudflats here were unusually quiet, with just a few Curlew and some distant Oystercatchers, but before long a number of waders were found including 3 Greenshank and several flocks of Black-tailed Godwits. A fine adult Yellow-legged Gull was not unexpected here but the real highlight was the splendid female Marsh Harrier that put on a superb show for us just in front of the hide. Mammals were much in evidence as well with a lovely Red Fox stalking around near the Canada Geese and a couple of female Sika Deer crossing the marsh just in front of us.

So, a great weekend of birding in absolutely fabulous weather!

See you all again soon,

Bob.

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Birds: 95 species

Sooty Shearwater	Portland Bill
Little Grebe	Radipole
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	various sites
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole, Middlebere
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Shelduck	Radipole, Middlebere
Wigeon	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Gadwall	Radipole
Teal	Radipole, Middlebere
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shoveler	Radipole
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Marsh Harrier	Middlebere
Sparrowhawk	Radipole
Buzzard	various sites
Kestrel	various sites
Peregrine	Portland
Merlin	Portland
Water Rail	Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Pheasant	Middlebere
Oystercatcher	Middlebere
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Lapwing	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Greenshank	Middlebere
Redshank	Middlebere
Curlew	Middlebere
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole
Bar-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Yellow-legged Gull	Middlebere
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Common Gull	Radipole
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Portland
Collared Dove	Portland
Little Owl	Portland
Green Woodpecker	Wareham Forest (heard)
Gt Sp Woodpecker	Wareham Forest
Kingfisher	Radipole
Skylark	Portland
Swallow	various sites

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House Martin	Portland
Meadow Pipit	various sites
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	various sites
Wren	Portland
Dunnock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	various sites
Black Redstart	Portland
Wheatear	Portland
Redwing	Portland
Fieldfare	Portland
Ring Ouzel	Portland
Song Thrush	Portland
Blackbird	various sites
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Dartford Warbler	Wareham Forest
Chiffchaff	various sites
Long-tailed Tit	Wareham Forest
Coal Tit	Wareham Forest
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Nuthatch	Arne
Treecreeper	Arne
Jay	Wareham Forest
Raven	various sites
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Middlebere
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Siskin (heard)	Wareham Forest
Redpoll (heard)	Wareham Forest
Chaffinch	Wareham Forest
Brambling	Portland
Greenfinch	Portland
Goldfinch	various sites
Linnets	Portland

Insects: 8 species

Comma	Portland
Red Admiral	various sites
Speckled Wood	Portland
Common Darter	Radipole
Migrant Hawker	Radipole
4-spotted Chaser	Wareham Forest
Hornet	Arne
Mining Bee	Arne

Mammals: 4 species

Grey Squirrel	Portland, Arne
Rabbit	Portland
Brown Rat	Radipole
Fox	Portland, Middlebere
Sika Deer	Middlebere