

Heights Birdwatching Breaks Friday October 14th – Sunday October 16th

Saturday October 15th

Weather: Calm and sunny most of the day

Kingbarrow Quarry, 0730

As soon as we stepped out of the hotel into the car park we could see that a significant movement of birds was underway. Finches and pipits were streaming overhead, with little groups of thrushes amongst them. Linnets, Goldfinches and Meadow Pipits were the majority of the birds seen with Pied Wagtails, Redwings and Siskins making up most of the rest along with a few Redpolls and Song Thrushes. A single Merlin dashing overhead in pursuit of the migrating flocks and accompanied by a very cross Peregrine was the highlight in terms of rarity value. This kept up for the whole hour that we were out and must have involved several hundred birds altogether. Strangely, as soon as we were back in the hotel eating our breakfast the movement appeared to come to a halt.

Portland Bill, 0930

The sea off the Bill was fairly quiet this morning in the calm conditions with just a few Gannets fishing offshore and the occasional group of Guillemots flying past. Another Merlin was seen which along with the first Sparrowhawks and Buzzards of the day brought our raptor list to no less than 5 species.

Walking round to the Bird Observatory we were stopped in our tracks by the appearance of a Short-eared Owl flying over the fields to the west. Shortly after this we were shown a recently-caught Linnet by the warden Martin Cade. Our return route back to the car park took us past the Observatory Quarry where we could just about see the resident Little Owl staring at us from the depths of its home between the rocks.

Ferrybridge, 1300

The bird of the day was seen here when a Honey Buzzard flew over us as we ate our lunch. Nearby 10 Common Buzzards were soaring on the thermals but our bird was single-mindedly heading south. Out on the Fleet an amazing 120 Mediterranean Gulls were counted with a few Common Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls amongst the Black-headed Gulls.



Lodmoor, 1400

Several new waders here with a flock of 16 Black-tailed Godwits, Lapwings and a single Common Sandpiper. The best bird here was the resident male Marsh Harrier hunting over the reed beds but the Water Rail a close second for those of us that managed to see it before it vanished into the sedges.

Radipole, 1600

A female Pintail was a significant find here, feeding along with Shovelers and Gadwall. The North Hide added Green Sandpiper and Kingfisher to the list, with brief views of Bearded Tits in the reeds. Back at the car park we ended the day with several Snipe feeding at the edge of the reeds.



Sunday October 16th

Weather: calm again, cloudy in the morning, warm and sunny in the afternoon

Tout Quarry, 0730

Very few birds around this morning apart from raptors, with Peregrine, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk all giving good views.

Southwell, 0930

Our search for the Yellow-browed Warbler was not helped by Strimmer-man but we did manage to hear it calling through the noise. Another Short-eared Owl gave good views high overhead and yet more Sparrowhawks were seen. The only Blackcap of the weekend showed up as well.

Barleycrates Lane, 1100

Usually a reliable site we only managed a distant Stonechat here and also got rained on for our efforts.

Ferrybridge, 1200

A few more Brent Geese were here today and we had a much better look at the Mediterranean Gulls without any pesky Honey Buzzards to distract us.

Abbotsbury, 1300

Absolutely gorgeous weather here for our lunch stop but not many birds, apart from all the raptors of course (Buzzards mainly). News of a Short-toed Eagle in Devon had us looking longingly westwards.



Langton Herring, 1400

The Fleet was full of hundreds of Wigeon and Coot today but the highlight was a close fly-past of a splendid female Merlin. A couple of ridiculously tame Wheatears were good too and we really enjoyed the close telescope views of a flock of Linnets looking relieved that the Merlin had gone. One very surprising sight was the Cowslip that we found in full flower! See <http://www.ispot.org.uk/node/229914> for details of this remarkable observation on iSpot.

At the concluding cream tea our total of 94 species seen did justice to a remarkable weekend's birdwatching. Here's looking forward to the next time...

Bob Ford

Birds: 94 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Grebe	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guillemot	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Crested Grebe	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stock Dove	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Dove	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shag	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Owl	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Short-eared Owl	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kingfisher	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canada Goose	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Woodpecker	Langton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pintail	Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wigeon	Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swallow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Martin	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meadow Pipit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Pipit	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Wagtail	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Duck	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Wagtail	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wren	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunnock	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparrowhawk	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robin	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kestrel	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stonechat	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peregrine	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheatear	Portland, Langton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Merlin	Portland, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Honey Buzzard	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Thrush	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buzzard	Portland, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Redwing	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pheasant	Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackcap	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Rail	Lodmoor, Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chiffchaff	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldcrest	Portland (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oystercatcher	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bearded Tit	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Sandpiper	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Sandpiper	Radipole, Langton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Tit	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Snipe	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magpie	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lapwing	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook	Ferrybridge, Langton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Turnstone	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrion Crow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Herring Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Black-backed Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linnet	Portland, Langton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kittiwake	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Siskin	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandwich Tern	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Redpoll	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Bunting	Radipole, Lodmoor

Mammals

<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Cat	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Vole	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Rat	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bunny	various sites

Invertebrates

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clouded Yellow	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speckled Wood	Langton
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red Admiral	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>		