



Corfe Castle by Janice Fiske

Saturday November 9th

Weather: wet and windy for most of morning, brighter and calmer through the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0700

A dark and wet start to the weekend, but once the sun had come up we started to see some good birds. Guillemots were quite numerous out at sea and a few gannets and kittiwakes were seen as well. On the land we found several rock pipits and a couple of turnstones on the rocks near the sea. Probably the best bird was the huge raven that appeared next to the lighthouse. Driving back to the hotel and our lovely breakfast we stopped briefly to admire two buzzards perched next to the road.

Portland Heights, 0900

The highlight here was definitely the vegetarian sausages but out of the window we also saw several hundred starlings seemingly migrating east in front of the advancing weather front. A sparrowhawk was also seen flying in the same direction.

Portland Castle, 1000

The star bird here was the red-necked grebe but we also enjoyed seeing a razorbill, two mergansers and a fine black redstart.

Ferrybridge, 1130

A search through the flock of dark-bellied brent geese failed to turn up the black brant but we did find several Mediterranean gulls and some distant bar-tailed godwits. The two skylarks that flew over were the only ones seen all weekend.

Chesil Cove, 1130

The rough seas here held more Mediterranean gulls, with two, probably three, black redstarts feeding around the houses near the beach.

Southwell, 1230

The resident male peregrine gave us a really good performance here with a close fly-past in beautiful light. Nearby were three kestrels and another raven.

Ferrybridge, 1330

With the tide now half out the brent goose flock had increased to well over a hundred and the godwits were much closer. With them were plenty of dunlin as well as a few ringed plovers and turnstones. On the shoreline a little egret was feeding and two others were seen in the distance flying across the waters of the Fleet.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1430

An excellent couple of hours here started with snipe and water rail from the car park, with a good selection of duck including teal, gadwall and shoveler. Reaching the North Hide a female marsh harrier was eclipsed by the first ever sighting of an otter on a Heights Birdbreak weekend. On the way back we stopped at a reed bed platform where we were surrounded by pinging bearded tits. Shame we couldn't see any of them though.

Sunday November 10th

Weather: bright and sunny all day with a fresh northerly wind in the morning

Portland Bill, 0700

In much more pleasant conditions we again started the day at the Bill and saw similar birds to yesterday but in much better light! A few more gannets were out today but the kittiwakes were not so close in with the northerly wind. Several flock of woodpigeons were seen heading south but none plucked up enough courage to make the crossing.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1000

A short stop here to see the bearded tits that we heard last night. This time we didn't have to walk so far as several were visible from the car park!

Furzebrook, 1100

Another very efficient visit with a Dartford seen well within minutes of arriving. A very pale buzzard was another notable sighting here.

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1130

The rest of the day was spent at this superb reserve. We started with a walk through the woodlands towards Shipstall Point. On the way the usual mix of woodland birds were seen but the star sighting was a very late clouded yellow butterfly. At the point we spent a very pleasant half hour looking across to the various islands in Poole Harbour. A grey seal was seen in the distance and a number of new ducks and waders were added to the weekend's list. The journey back was even more productive with both goldcrest and firecrest seen and the splendid stag sika deer pictured below.



After lunch we walked out to Middlebere Lake. From the hide the view out across the creek was dominated by the sight of hundreds of feeding black-tailed godwits and redshank, with smaller numbers of curlew, dunlin and lapwing with a single grey plover. An adult yellow-legged gull was a not unexpected bird at this traditional site for this species.

An excellent weekend, looking forward to our next one together,

Bob

PS don't forget to scroll down to the end to see a selection of photos taken by Janice on the weekend!

Birds: 84 species

Little Grebe	Portland Harbour
Red-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	various sites
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Ferrybridge, Arne
Grey Heron	Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Arne
Shelduck	Radipole, Arne
Wigeon	Arne
Gadwall	Radipole
Shoveler	Radipole
Teal	Radipole, Arne
Mallard	Radipole, Arne
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Pochard	Radipole
Buzzard	Portland, Furzebrook, Arne
Kestrel	Portland
Peregrine	Portland
Marsh Harrier	Radipole
Sparrowhawk	Portland
Water Rail	Radipole
Moorhen	Radipole
Coot	Radipole
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill, Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Grey Plover	Arne
Lapwing	Arne
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Arne
Redshank	Arne
Curlew	Arne
Snipe	Radipole
Black-tailed Godwit	Arne
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Mediterranean Gull	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge, Radipole
Common Gull	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge, Radipole
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Herring Gull	various sites
Yellow-legged Gull	Arne
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Harbour
Guillemot	Portland
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Collared Dove	Portland
Green Woodpecker	Arne (heard)
Great-spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Meadow Pipit	Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	various sites
Skylark	Ferrybridge
Wren	Portland (heard)
Duncock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Furzebrook, Ferrybridge, Arne
Black Redstart	Portland
Song Thrush	Arne
Mistle Thrush	Arne

Blackbird	various sites
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Dartford Warbler	Furzebrook
Goldcrest	Arne
Firecrest	Arne
Long-tailed Tit	Radipole, Arne
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Nuthatch	Arne
Jay	Arne
Raven	Portland
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Chaffinch	Arne
Goldfinch	Portland
Linnet	Portland, Arne
Reed Bunting	Arne

Insects:

Red Admiral	Portland
Clouded Yellow	Arne
Migrant Hawker	Arne

Mammals:

Sika Deer	Arne
Grey Seal	Arne
Red Fox	Arne
Grey Squirrel	Arne
Rabbit	Portland
Otter	Radipole

All photos below © Janice Fiske



Black redstart



Sika deer



Rock pipit



Dartford warbler



Buzzard