



Harvest Mouse at Radipole, © Sonia Jupp

Saturday December 13th

Weather: bright and cold all day, wind light north-westerly

Portland Bill, 0900

The weekend got off to an outstanding start with a short-distance "twitch" to see the long-staying barred warbler at the Bird Observatory. We had great views of it as it chased the goldfinches around its personal supply of apples put out for it by the warden. Walking back to the Bill we found entry of rock pipits and a surprising number of kestrels. Out at sea not much was going on but we did see guillemots, shags and a few Mediterranean gulls. Reaching the obelisk we soon found the purple sandpipers, four of them being unusually cooperative sat on the top of a close rock in the bright sunshine.

Portland Castle, 1130

The always-reliable black guillemot performed well yet again, giving prolonged and reasonably close views out in Portland Harbour.

Ferrybridge, 1230

Before lunch we called in to Hamm Beach to see the three eider which were found there a few days ago. A single turnstone flying past was the only one seen all weekend. Lunch was had in warm (ish) sunshine not far from a large flock of Mediterranean gulls and a number of dark-bellied brent geese. Several of the Mediterranean gulls had colour-rings on them, one of which, white E928, we were able to read through the scope.

Update: it turns out this bird was ringed in 2012 near Antwerp, Belgium.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1330

We had seen the flock of black-necked grebes from Hamm Beach but now we were much closer and very much enjoyed watching them swim back and forth across the sheltered waters of the harbour. After much searching we finally found a very distant great northern diver, which we had better views of when we walked up to the very pleasant viewpoint of the castle gardens. Amazingly the diver was joined by a friend while we were watching it!

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1430

This lovely afternoon's birdwatching will always be remembered not for a bird but for the beautiful harvest mouse which was found by a couple of visitors walking their dog. However the main target here was bearded tit, which took a great deal of finding but eventually we had good views of a pair of them, accompanied by a reed bunting. The north hide produced the resident female marsh harrier, along with a buzzard and three stonechats.

Sunday December 14th

Weather: cloudy, with several heavy showers, wind strong south-westerly

Pennsylvania Castle – East Weares, 0900

Hoping for a firecrest to start the day we had to be content with a goldcrest – as well as a great-spotted woodpecker and a chiffchaff. We then walked the railway line coastal path out to Grove Point where we saw seven fulmars, a very close raven and an even closer Peregrine.

Chesil Cove, 1130

After a lot of hard work we finally found the black redstart that we had been searching for all weekend, along with lots of rock pipits and the most odd bit of flotsam I have ever seen – a hamster cage complete with wheel!

Ferrybridge, 1230

Much the same as yesterday with the addition of a few lesser black-backed gulls, and some very fast wind-surfers out in the harbour.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

This brilliant reserve added quite a few new birds to the list including lapwing, gadwall and snipe. A very smart adult Mediterranean gull was the best example seen all weekend and we finished with a much-needed addition to the wader list in the shape of a black-tailed godwit.

Very much looking forward to our next outing together,

Bob

Birds: 78 species

Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour
Little Grebe	Lodmoor
Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour
Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour
Fulmar	Grove Point

Gannet	East Weares
Cormorant	Portland Harbour
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Sandsfoot, Lodmoor
Grey Heron	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Eider	Portland Harbour
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Marsh Harrier	Radipole
Peregrine	Grove Point
Kestrel	Various sites
Sparrowhawk	Lodmoor
Buzzard	Portland, Radipole, Lodmoor
Water Rail	Radipole (heard)
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill, East Weares
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Redshank	Radipole
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
Snipe	Lodmoor
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Mediterranean Gull	various sites
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Common Gull	various sites
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Black Guillemot	Portland Harbour
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Radipole
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Pennsylvania Castle
Skylark	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	various sites
Wren	various sites
Duncock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Radipole

Black Redstart	Chiswell
Blackbird	various sites
Song Thrush	East Weares
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Blue Tit	Radipole
Great Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Radipole
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Barred Warbler	Portland Bill
Chiffchaff	Radipole, Portland
Goldcrest	Radipole, Portland
Raven	Portland
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	Portland
Goldfinch	Portland
Linnet	Ferrybridge
Greenfinch	Portland
Chaffinch	Portland
Reed Bunting	Radipole

Mammals:

Brown Rat	Radipole
Harvest Mouse	Radipole
Bank Vole	Radipole

Photos by Bob Ford:





