

Saturday February 1st

Weather: frequent showers in a cold westerly wind



click to see video at <http://youtu.be/6ySAXElz3xY>

Portland Bill, 0900

Sheltering as best we could from the vicious wind we enjoyed watching the waves crash onto the cliffs as much as watching the gannets, kittiwakes and auks flying past offshore. A few fulmars were seen as well but the most memorable sighting was the large number of rock pipits around the Lobster Pot cafe. The cafe was quite memorable as well.

Southwell, 1100

Hoping for a good view of the resident pair of peregrines we had to be content with a dramatic but very brief fly-past of the huge female bird, which was clearly on something of a mission. The pair of ravens were a welcome bonus.

Portland Sailing Academy, 1200

We hit gold here with black guillemot, razorbill, great northern diver and red-breasted merganser seen in very quick succession.

Ferrybridge, 1300

With the tide very low all the birds were a fair way off but we did manage to find a close brent goose with curlew, bar-tailed godwit and dunlin through the telescope.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1400

The highlight here was the group of five Slavonian grebes that we had such great views of just offshore. Several great northern divers and great crested grebes were seen as well with a huge flock of at least a hundred Mediterranean gulls moving through from the north.

Lodmoor, 1500

A great many new species were seen here including buzzard, snipe, bullfinch and a good range of ducks such as pochard, teal and shoveler. The flock of around 500 lapwings were

clearly very nervous and soon we found out why when a peregrine flew on and landed on the marsh.



Sunday February 2nd

Weather: mostly sunny

Studland Bay, 1030

We started our day by searching the sea off Studland beach for seabirds and soon found a group of three black-necked grebes, the fourth species of grebe seen on the weekend.

Littlesea, 1130

Walking north from the car park we walked through the heathy sand dunes to the freshwater lake that has formed between the Studland ridge and the advancing dunes. On the way back we found a pair of stonechats and a smart male Dartford warbler (*sorry Liz!*). The woods nearby produced several goldcrests and a great spotted woodpecker.

Sandbanks Ferry, 1300

A quick walk before lunch allowed us to find a distant group of sanderling and a close flock of reed buntings in the dunes.

Brand's Bay, 1400

This superb spot did not quite live up to its reputation due to the very high tide today but we did see a good range of birds including a beautiful flock of avocets returning from their roost.



Middlebere Farm, 1500

Our final visit was to one of the best-sited hides I know about. The walk down to this amazing spot gave us excellent views of a goldcrest, as well as a very entertaining group of young calves. The view from the hide was, as usual, full of feeding waders including hundreds of lapwings and dozens of avocets. A marsh harrier put in a brief appearance and a flock of perhaps a thousand brent geese were in the field next to the hide.



Over our cream tea back at the hotel we added up the total and found that we had seen a very respectable 78 species – without a house sparrow!

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob Ford, Feb 2nd 2014

Birds: 78 species

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Great Northern Diver | Portland Harbour |
| Slavonian Grebe | Portland Harbour |
| Great Crested Grebe | Portland Harbour |
| Black-necked Grebe | Studland Bay |
| Little Grebe | Lodmoor, Littlesea |
| Fulmar | Portland Bill |
| Gannet | Portland Bill |
| Cormorant | Portland, Studland |
| Shag | Portland, Studland |
| Little Egret | Ferrybridge, Brand's Bay |
| Grey Heron | Portland Harbour |
| Mute Swan | Lodmoor, Littlesea |
| Brent Goose | Ferrybridge, Middlebere |
| Canada Goose | Lodmoor, Littlesea |
| Shelduck | Lodmoor, Brand's Bay |
| Shoveler | Lodmoor |
| Wigeon | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Gadwall | Lodmoor |
| Teal | Lodmoor, Littlesea |
| Mallard | Lodmoor |
| Tufted Duck | Lodmoor |
| Pochard | Lodmoor |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Portland Harbour |
| Kestrel | Portland |
| Peregrine | Portland, Lodmoor |
| Buzzard | Lodmoor, Wareham |
| Marsh Harrier | Middlebere |

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|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Moorhen | Lodmoor |
| Coot | Lodmoor |
| Curllew | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Oystercatcher | Portland Harbour |
| Avocet | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Lapwing | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Dunlin | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Sanderling | Sandbanks |
| Snipe | Lodmoor |
| Redshank | Brand's Bay, Middlebere |
| Black-tailed Godwit | Middlebere |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | Ferrybridge |
| Common Gull | Portland |
| Black-headed Gull | various sites |
| Mediterranean Gull | Ferrybridge, Sandsfoot |
| Herring Gull | various sites |
| Great Black-backed Gull | various sites |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | Littlesea |
| Kittiwake | Portland Bill |
| Guillemot | Portland Bill |
| Black Guillemot | Portland Harbour |
| Razorbill | Portland Bill |
| Wood Pigeon | various sites |
| Stock Dove | Middlebere |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | Studland |
| Rock Pipit | Portland Bill |
| Meadow Pipit | Middlebere |
| Pied Wagtail | Studland |
| Wren | Studland |
| Robin | Studland |
| Stonechat | Studland |
| Blackbird | various sites |
| Song Thrush | Middlebere |
| Mistle Thrush | Middlebere |
| Redwing | Studland |
| Dartford Warbler | Littlesea |
| Goldcrest | Studland |
| Long-tailed Tit | Studland |
| Blue Tit | Studland |
| Great Tit | Studland |
| Raven | Portland |
| Magpie | various sites |
| Jackdaw | various sites |
| Rook | Weymouth |
| Carrion Crow | various sites |
| Starling | various sites |
| Greenfinch | various sites |
| Goldfinch | Lodmoor, Middlebere |
| Bullfinch | Lodmoor |
| Chaffinch | Studland, Sandbanks |
| Reed Bunting | Sandbanks |

Mammals:

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Rabbit | Middlebere |
| Grey Squirrel | Middlebere |

Fungi:

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Yellow Curtain-crust | Studland |
| Turkey-tail | Studland |

Plants – in flower:

Hazel

Studland

Winter Heliotrope

Portland

Invertebrates:

Bryozoan

Sandbanks

Hydrozoan

Sandbanks