



**Saturday May 17th**

**Weather: warm and sunny in a pleasant light westerly breeze**

**Portland Bill 0900**

In the unusually calm conditions the bass fishermen were very close inshore this morning, as were the guillemots speeding past on the strong high tide current. A few razorbills were amongst the guillemots with the occasional kittiwake and fulmar joining them as well. Further out just one or two gannets were seen but the best bird was the second-year Mediterranean Gull that flew east. A much closer highlight was the peregrine that was seen cruising directly overhead.

Walking out to the seabird colony on the Westcliffs we almost immediately found a very rare bridled form of the common guillemot below us on a rock. We then spent a very pleasant half hour watching the guillemots and kittiwakes before we walked on towards the Bird Observatory. On the way we found several early purple orchids and the first small blue any of us had seen this year. Soon after we found a common blue and not long after that a holly blue as well.



To see a video of the scene above go to <http://youtu.be/IFfVexO8JmA>

At the Bird Observatory we arrived just as a female blackcap was caught in one of the mist nets (*see photo on right by Alan Yuen*). A pair of stonechats were also seen not far away in the adjoining field. Returning via the Observatory Quarry we were pleased to see that the resident little owl had returned and was showing well on the rock face.

#### **Topfields, 1100**

A longer than expected walk but one that eventually yielded a fine pair of whinchats, along with several good views of whitethroats and a single willow warbler. More butterflies were seen, notably green-veined whites and wall browns with some small tortoiseshell caterpillars as well. Other insects here included a nest of lackey moth caterpillars, a large number of dock bugs, a sloe bug and a tortoise beetle.



#### **Ferrybridge, 1400**

Distant views were the theme here with little terns and dunlins all well out on the far shore. A small group of sanderlings was just about discernible amongst the dunlins and a sandwich tern was seen fishing, also at great distance.

#### **Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1500**

A very successful afternoon here with multiple views of Cetti's warblers and even a flight view of a bearded tit. A trio of buzzards were circling high overhead whilst down at ground level the reeds were full of the song of reed warblers. Reaching the North Hide we had excellent views of a singing sedge warbler and a grey heron but sadly the marsh harrier never appeared. Walking back a lesser whitethroat could be heard singing very close to us but it never showed itself. Insects here included several brimstones and a blue-tailed damselfly.

#### **Sunday May 11th**

**Weather:** sunny all day with a light northerly breeze

#### **Portland Bill 0900**

We had hardly left the car park when a most unexpected great northern diver flew over our heads heading west, oddly. There then followed a most enjoyable hour or so searching through the flocks of guillemots and razorbills just offshore, a search which ultimately paid off when we found a puffin drifting past on the tide. Walking back to the bus we had excellent views of a pair of ravens (*see photo on right by Alan Yuen*).



#### **Ferrybridge, 1030**

As we arrived we could see a birder looking closely at something just next to the car park; it turned out to be a fabulously-plumaged summer bar-tailed godwit in the company of a whimbrel!

**Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1100**

Most of our attention here was paid to the common terns which in turn were very much involved in paying attention to each other as they offered up gifts of sand eels in courtship display (see photo on right by Alan Yuen). The resident male marsh harrier did a good job of distracting us away from the terns as did a flock of five little egrets. A brief view of a busy stoat was a useful addition to our mammal list.



**Tadnoll Heath, 1500**

Our final visit was to this superb Dorset Wildlife Trust reserve next to the atomic energy plant at Winfrith. The first sighting was a beautiful male fox carrying an unidentified parcel of food back to its young. A pair of hobbies were a very welcome sight as we left the woodland and walked out onto the heath in search of Dartford warblers. A distant snatch of song was our first clue that we were in luck, closely followed by a pair of stonechats – the second clue. We were then treated to several views of a very bright male Dartford singing from the tops of birch trees out on the heath. We were happy to take this as the finale of our weekend when we came across a tiny jewel of an insect – a green hairstreak butterfly.

What a weekend! Looking forward to our next one out together,

Bob Ford, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2014



*hovering kestrel by Alan Yuen*

**Birds: 84 species**

Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Little Grebe	Radipole (heard)
Great Northern Diver	Portland Bill
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Lodmoor
Grey Heron	Lodmoor
Mute Swan	Radipole, Lodmoor
Canada Goose	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Teal	Lodmoor
Shoveler	Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Sparrowhawk	Lodmoor
Hobby	Tadnoll
Kestrel	Portland
Peregrine	Portland
Buzzard	Portland, Tadnoll
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor
Pheasant	Tadnoll
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Sanderling	Ferrybridge
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Whimbrel	Ferrybridge
Mediterranean Gull	Portland Bill
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Lodmoor
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Ferrybridge
Common Tern	Radipole, Lodmoor
Little Tern	Ferrybridge
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Little Owl	Portland Bill
Stock Dove	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Skylark	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Portland Bill
Swift	various sites
Swallow	various sites

House Martin	various sites
Wren	various sites
Duncock	various sites
Robin	Lodmoor
Stonechat	Portland Bill, Tadnoll
Whinchat	Portland Topfields
Blackbird	various sites
Song Thrush	Radipole (heard)
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Sedge Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Reed Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Whitethroat	Radipole, Lodmoor
Lesser Whitethroat	Radipole (heard)
Blackcap	Portland Bird Observatory
Dartford Warbler	Tadnoll
Chiffchaff	Radipole, Lodmoor
Willow Warbler	Portland
Goldcrest	Tadnoll (heard)
Spotted Flycatcher	Portland Bill
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor
Coal Tit	Tadnoll
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Raven	Portland Bill
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Goldfinch	various sites
Greenfinch	various sites
Linnet	various sites
Chaffinch	Lodmoor, Tadnoll
Reed Bunting	Radipole

**Mammals:**

Rabbit	various sites
Stoat	Lodmoor
Grey Squirrel	Tadnoll
Red Fox	Tadnoll

**Insects:**

Orange-tip	Lodmoor
Small White	Lodmoor
Green-veined White	Lodmoor
Large White	Lodmoor
Brimstone	Radipole, Tadnoll
Wall Brown	Portland
Speckled Wood	Portland
Small Tortoiseshell	Portland
Peacock	Portland
Red Admiral	Portland
Small Blue	Portland
Holly Blue	Portland
Common Blue	Portland
Green Hairstreak	Tadnoll

Lackey Moth

Portland Topfields

Blue-tailed Damselfly  
Broad-bodied Chaser

Radipole  
Portland Bill

Hornet

Radipole

Green Tortoise Beetle  
Leaf Beetle  
Soldier Beetle  
Seven-spot Ladybird  
Two-spot Ladybird  
Dock Bug  
Sloe Bug

Portland Topfields  
Radipole  
Portland Bill  
Portland Topfields  
Lodmoor  
Portland Topfields  
Portland Topfields