



Saturday December 12th

Weather: a dark, overcast day with a strong westerly wind

Portland Castle, 0930

We started the weekend with superb views of at least two great northern divers, with merganser, guillemot and razorbills providing a strong supporting cast. It was a bit windy to see much in the castle grounds but we did get a brief view of a chiffchaff.

Ferrybridge, 1000

The flock of dark-bellied brent geese were quite close to the car park this morning and we were pleased to see that they had a couple of light-bellied birds with them. Hundreds of gulls were present as well, consisting of Mediterranean, common, black-headed, herring, great black-backed and lesser black-backed in that order. Waders were represented by a couple of oystercatchers, a single dunlin and some very tame turnstones. Five skylarks were a surprise when they flew up from just in front of us.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1030

A quick stop here produced more Mediterranean gulls and several duck species, including everyone's favourite, Hoodie the hooded merganser. As we were getting back into the van a peregrine dashed overhead.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1100

The target here, a drake scaup, was found quickly in a flock of several hundred pochard.

While we were watching it a female marsh harrier passed low over the duck flock, none of which seemed to notice it!

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1200

Starting at Shipstall Point we looked out over Poole Harbour and found a large number of roosting birds, mostly wigeon and teal along with oystercatchers, redshanks, curlews, black-tailed godwits and a single grey plover. Out in the harbour some very distant goldeneye could be seen, as well as another peregrine, this time a bird still on a shingle bank. Walking back towards the van we came across a small group of sika deer including a very impressive stag.

At the car park we sat outside eating our lunch so that we could watch the bird feeders, where nuthatch, coal tit and siskin could be seen.

After lunch we drove round the corner to Middlebere Farm. From the National Trust hide overlooking Middlebere Lake we could see huge numbers of avocets and dunlins, as well as many of the other species seen earlier, such as wigeon and teal. The highlights here were a pair of marsh harriers and no less than four spotted redshanks.

Sunday December 11th

Weather: a much brighter day, almost calm



Portland Bill, 0900

Starting the day with a very productive seawatch we added a good number of birds to the list including gannet, fulmar and kittiwake, with great skua and red-throated diver the highlights. Walking along the Eastcliffs we found a purple sandpiper on the cliffs with several turnstones and oystercatchers. A little owl in the observatory quarry was a very popular find, as was the short-eared owl that turned up shortly afterwards near the car park. Black redstart and stonechat were also seen here.

Portland Castle, 1130

One of the great northern divers was still present, and this time we had brought our cameras! Several chiffchaffs were seen in the castle grounds, one of which was the Siberian chiffchaff we had searched for yesterday. A strange insect crawling across the

ground turned out to be a western conifer seed bug, a recent colonist from Canada via Europe.



Ferrybridge, 1300

Very few birds here today, but then we were somewhat pre-occupied with the chocolate muffins.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1400

One of the best sites overlooking Portland Harbour, but we were a bit disappointed to see no more than a couple of distant black-necked grebes here today.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1430

We finished our weekend with bearded tit and water rail added to our heard but not seen list, along with better views of snipe and shoveler as well as the huge female marsh harrier that has been resident here lately.

Enjoying our cream tea back at the hotel we found that we had seen or heard exactly 100 species!

Bob

Birds: 100 species

Great Northern Diver
Red-throated Diver
Great Crested Grebe
Black necked Grebe
Little Grebe
Fulmar
Gannet
Shag
Cormorant
Little Egret
Grey Heron
Mute Swan
Canada Goose

Portland Harbour
Portland Bill
Arne, Portland Harbour
Sandsfoot
Radipole, Lodmoor
Portland Bill
Portland Bill
Portland Bill
Portland, Radipole, Arne
Ferrybridge, Arne
Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Radipole
Osmington

Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Arne
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Pintail	Arne
Wigeon	Arne
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pochard	Lodmoor
Scaup	Lodmoor
Red-breasted Merganser	Ferrybridge
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Goldeneye	Arne
Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Kestrel	Radipole, Portland, Arne
Peregrine	Radipole, Arne
Buzzard	Portland
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Water Rail	Radipole (heard only)
Avocet	Arne
Curlew	Arne
Oystercatcher	Arne, Portland
Redshank	Arne
Spotted Redshank	Arne
Black-tailed Godwit	Arne
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Arne
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Snipe	Radipole, Arne
Grey Plover	Arne
Lapwing	Arne
Turnstone	Ferrybridge, Portland Bill
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole, Portland Bill
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge
Common Gull	Radipole
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Little Owl	Portland Bill
Short-eared Owl	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Stock Dove	Sandsfoot
Feral Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Portland
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne, Radipole (heard only)
Nuthatch	Arne
Skylark	Ferrybridge
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill, Radipole
Grey Wagtail	Portland Castle
Pied Wagtail	Portland
Wren	various sites

Dunnock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Portland Bill
Black Redstart	Portland Bill
Blackbird	various sites
Song Thrush	Portland Bill
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Chiffchaff	Portland Castle
Siberian Chiffchaff	Portland Castle
Goldcrest	Arne, Portland Castle (heard only)
Bearded Tit	Radipole (heard only)
Long-tailed Tit	Arne, Radipole
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Raven	Portland
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Goldfinch	Portland, Arne
Chaffinch	Portland, Arne
Bullfinch	Arne
Greenfinch	Arne
Siskin	Arne
Linnet	Portland

Mammals:

Grey Squirrel	Arne
Sika Deer	Arne

Insects:

Buff-tailed Bumblebee	Portland
Western Conifer Seed Bug	Portland