



Saturday April 9th

Weather: showery in a cold north-westerly wind

Portland Bill, 0900

A wet start to the weekend but an excellent sea watch at the Bill with the Manx shearwaters the highlights but also a strong supporting cast of fulmar, gannet, guillemot, razorbills and kittiwake. Away from the sea the bird life was very sparse this morning but kestrel, rock pipit and a single wheatear were all seen by some of the group.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1100

A search of Portland Harbour for divers produced first a black-throated and then a distant great northern. Good numbers of great crested grebes and red-breasted mergansers were also seen with several sandwich terns passing through and resting on the buoys.

Portesham, 1200

The long-staying Pallas's warbler was our target here and was found pretty quickly giving excellent views as it fed at close quarters in the bushes along the edge of the old Weymouth to Abbotsbury railway line. A video of this lovely little bird from March 2nd can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rblXuFW5O3k>

Abbotsbury, 1300

In impossibly glary conditions the northernmost waters of the Fleet were pretty much in-searchable so we left the Swannery and carried on to the Chesil Beach car park. Here we enjoyed our excellent lunch and we lucky enough to be present when a red kite flew over.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1430

Our old friend Hoodie the hooded merganser was a very welcome sight here especially as he is now in his ninth year at Weymouth! The flock of black-tailed godwits that are often seen here numbered six today and included several very bright summer-plumaged individuals. The walk to the north hide produced a good range of summer migrants, mostly chiffchaffs and willow warblers with singles of blackcap and redstart in the bushes and swallows and sand martins overhead. From the hide we enjoyed good views of a male marsh harrier which was busy keeping a young male harrier away from its nest site.

Ferrybridge, 1630

On an exceptionally low tide everything was very distant here this afternoon but we persevered and eventually managed to add sanderling and ringed plover to the day's list. A great northern diver fishing in the Fleet may have been the same one we saw earlier.

Sunday April 10th

Weather: overcast and windy, a very cold easterly wind increasing all day

Portland Bill, 0900

Our second visit to this famous sea-watching site started with a very brief glimpse of an arctic skua heading east past the Bill closely followed by the first of several flocks of common scoter that passed while we were there. Reaching the Bird Observatory we were lucky enough to arrive just before a male blackcap was removed from one of the mist-nets.



Arne RSPB Reserve, 1230

Soon after arriving at this outstanding reserve we started adding birds to the already very large weekend list while we were still in the car park, with nuthatch, coal tit and siskin seen well by all the group and firecrest by one lucky individual. Out on Coombe Heath it was really too windy to see much but we didn't let that put us off and soon we were watching stonechats and Dartford warblers with singing meadow pipits providing a backdrop. Walking out to the hide overlooking Middlebere Lake we found hundreds of very smart black-tailed godwits along with curlews, redshanks and a couple of very smart summer-plumaged spotted redshanks. We finished the weekend with a walk out to Shipstall Point where we were most surprised to find some late-staying winter visitors in the shape of a small flock of dark-bellied brent geese and a distant female goosander. The walk back to the car park added treecreeper and mistle thrush to the list, bringing the weekend total to an amazing 100 species! Back in the van we were treated to one final memorable sighting when a very tame fox appeared just in front of us and proceeded to search the car park for left-overs!

Altogether an exceptional weekend and one that I very much hope we can all repeat soon.

Bob

Birds:

Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour, Ferrybridge
Black-throated Diver	Portland Harbour
Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour, Radipole, Arne
Little Grebe	Radipole
Manx Shearwater	Portland Bill
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole, Arne
Little Egret	Arne, Porttesham
Grey Heron	Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Brent Goose	Arne
Canada Goose	Radipole, Arne
Shelduck	Abbotsbury, Radipole, Arne
Teal	Abbotsbury, Radipole, Arne
Mallard	Abbotsbury, Radipole, Arne
Gadwall	Radipole
Shoveler	Abbotsbury, Radipole
Pochard	Abbotsbury, Radipole
Tufted Duck	Abbotsbury, Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Goosander	Arne
Red-breasted Merganser	Ferrybridge, Portland Harbour
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Marsh Harrier	Radipole
Red Kite	Abbotsbury
Sparrowhawk	Radipole, Arne
Kestrel	Portland
Peregrine	Portland
Buzzard	Abbotsbury, Portland
Pheasant	Abbotsbury

Coot	Abbotsbury, Radipole
Moorhen	Radipole
Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole, Arne
Oystercatcher	Arne, Ferrybridge
Redshank	Arne
Spotted Redshank	Arne
Common Sandpiper	Radipole
Curlew	Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Sanderling	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Arctic Skua	Portland Bill
Black-headed Gull	Arne
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Common Gull	Portland Bill
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Portland Harbour
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Portesham
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Skylark	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Sand Martin	Radipole
Swallow	Portland Bill, Radipole
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Arne
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Arne
Wheatear	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Redstart	Radipole
Blackbird	various sites
Mistle Thrush	Arne
Song Thrush	Portesham
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Dartford Warbler	Arne
Blackcap	Portland Bill, Radipole
Willow Warbler	Radipole
Chiffchaff	Portland Bill, Radipole
Pallas's Warbler	Portesham
Goldcrest	Portesham, Arne
Firecrest	Arne
Nuthatch	Arne
Treecreeper	Arne
Bearded Tit	Radipole (heard)
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Raven	Portland, Abbotsbury
Rook	Portesham
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites

Carrion Crow
Starling
House Sparrow
Goldfinch
Chaffinch
Greenfinch
Linnet
Greenfinch
Siskin
Reed Bunting

various sites
Portland Bill
Portland Bill
various sites
various sites
Radipole
Portland Bill, Arne
Radipole
Arne
Radipole, Arne

Mammals:

Bunny
Brown Rat
Little Egret
Otter (spraint)
Fox
Sika

Portland Bill
Arne
Arne, Porttesham
Radipole
Arne
Arne