

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks September 16th – 18th 2016



Saturday September 17th

Weather: warm and sunny with a cool north westerly breeze

Portland Bill, 0900

We started our weekend with a very pleasant circuit of Portland Bill taking in the Eastcliffs, the Bird Observatory and the Observatory Quarry. Several wheatears were seen along the cliffs along with both rock and meadow pipits. On the sea we enjoyed watching a sleepy grey seal with a few gannets further out. At the Observatory we spent some time searching through the warden's moth trap before a lovely sedge warbler was caught and shown to us in the hand. The highlight was still to come though in the shape of a wryneck which gave good views in the Observatory Quarry. The biggest surprise though was when a young peregrine appeared on the ground right next to us. This bird was later caught and ringed, see <https://twitter.com/PBOprof/status/777107228016971776>

Weston Windmills, 1130

In increasingly warm weather we explored the centre of the island where we found several whinchats and wheatears as well as enjoying excellent views of a hovering kestrel and more distant views of a passing buzzard.

Ferrybridge, 1400

Distant views were had here of a good range of waders including dunlins, ringed plovers and a very brief sighting of a curlew sandpiper. Much closer views were had of knot and bar-tailed godwit as well as a rather sickly turnstone which was so tired it allowed itself to be picked up.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1530

Lots of new species were seen here with a particularly good variety of ducks – eight species in all. Waders were represented by several black-tailed godwits and a fleeting glimpse off a green sandpiper. The ducks were very much alarmed by two different marsh harriers, the resident adult male and a passing juvenile bird.

Sunday September 18th

Weather: as yesterday but even more sunny and with less wind



Osprey at Arne, video at <https://youtu.be/WRQsxO80rf8>

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 0930

A quick examination of the dunlin flock here soon revealed a couple of little stints, which were later joined by a third stint and a sanderling. While we were watching these a most attractive group of yellow wagtails arrived and soon afterwards a kingfisher flashed past and landed on a distant post.

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1200

Our first destination after a very pleasant lunch watching nuthatches on the feeders was the new Raptor Hide at the end of Middlebere Lake. Here we saw very little at first but eventually our patience was rewarded when an osprey flew in and proceeded to eat a very large fish on a dead tree in front of us. As if this wasn't good enough another kingfisher appeared and started bathing nearby.

Walking out onto Coombe Heath we had a closer view of Middlebere Lake and soon added greenshank to the list. The black-tailed godwits were present in their hundreds but there were very few other waders here this afternoon. From the Middlebere hide we found a small group of pintail and enjoyed a distant view of a female sika with, unusually, two fawns following here.

Finally we walked back across the heath, pausing to scan the distant shores and at the same time listening out for Dartford warblers. The latter technique yielded absolutely nothing but the former did off when a tiny white speck in the distance turned out to be a great white egret.

Back at the hotel munching on our cream teas we totaled up the list and, if we count the unidentified shearwater, a remarkable 100 species were seen or heard over the weekend!

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

Birds:

Shearwater spp	Portland Bill
Little Grebe	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor, Arne
Great White Egret	Arne
Grey Heron	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor
Shelduck	Radipole, Arne
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Shoveler	Radipole
Pintail	Arne
Wigeon	Radipole, Arne
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Marsh Harrier	Radipole
Osprey	Arne
Kestrel	Portland, Arne
Merlin	Arne
Peregrine	Portland
Buzzard	Portland
Sparrowhawk	Lodmoor
Pheasant	Somewhere between Weymouth and Arne
Coot	Radipole, Lodmmor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Water Rail	Arne (heard)
Curlew	Arne
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge
Redshank	Lodmoor
Greenshank	Arne
Green Sandpiper	Radipole
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Curlew Sandpiper	Ferrybridge
Knot	Ferrybridge
Little Stint	Lodmoor
Sanderling	Lodmoor
Snipe	Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Sandwich Tern	Lodmoor
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Stock Dove	Portland
Collared Dove	Portland
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Kingfisher	Lodmoor, Arne
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne

Wryneck	Portland
Nuthatch	Arne
Sand Martin	Radipole
Swallow	various sites
House Martin	Radipole
Meadow Pipit	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland
Yellow Wagtail	Portland, Lodmoor
Grey Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Wheatear	Portland, Lodmoor
Whinchat	Portland, Lodmoor
Blackbird	various sites
Song Thrush	Lodmoor
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Sedge Warbler	Portland
Whitethroat	Portland
Blackcap	Radipole
Chiffchaff	various sites
Pied Flycatcher	Portland
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Radipole, Arne
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	Arne
Great Tit	Arne
Raven	Lodmoor
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	Portland
Rook	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Goldfinch	Portland
Chaffinch	Radipole, Arne
Greenfinch	Arne
Linnet	Portland
Reed Bunting	Radipole

Mammals:

Grey Squirrel	Arne
Grey Seal	Portland
Sika Deer	Arne
Rabbit	Portland
Brown Rat	Arne

Insects:

Wood Ant	Arne
Speckled Wood	Portland
Small Heath	Portland
Large White	various sites
Small White	various sites
Clouded Yellow	Arne
Comma	Lodmoor

Red Admiral	various sites
Small Tortoiseshell	Radipole
Small Copper	Arne
Common Darter	Arne
Brown Hawker	Arne
Migrant Hawker	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Flounced Rustic	Portland Bird Observatory
Rosy Rustic	Portland Bird Observatory
Gold Twinspot	Portland Bird Observatory
Canary-shouldered Thorn	Portland Bird Observatory
Brimstone	Portland Bird Observatory
Angle Shades	Portland Bird Observatory
Beautiful Gothic	Portland Bird Observatory
Large Yellow Underwing	Portland Bird Observatory
<i>Palpita vitrealis</i>	Portland Bird Observatory
Feathered Brindle	Portland Bird Observatory
Lunar Underwing	Portland Bird Observatory
Orange Swift	Portland Bird Observatory
Setaceous Hebrew Character	Portland Bird Observatory
Small Square-spot	Portland Bird Observatory
Silver Y	Portland Bird Observatory
Common Wainscot	Portland Bird Observatory
L-album Wainscot	Portland Bird Observatory
Light Emerald	Portland Bird Observatory
The Vestal	Portland Bird Observatory