

Portland Heights Birdbreak Friday April 21st – Sunday April 23rd 2017



Saturday April 22nd

Weather: warm and mostly sunny especially in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0900

Fine weather at migration time usually results in the birds flying straight over Portland to their northerly breeding grounds. Conversely if the weather is too wet and windy they will stay on the other side of the Channel. But sometimes the weather is just right to encourage the birds to stop off on the coast before they carry on. Today was such a day and we were treated to a classic Portland "fall" of migrants. Willow warblers were absolutely everywhere - we must have seen a hundred or more altogether. Swallows were moving overhead constantly and several wheatears were found including one outstandingly bright male. A single swift was a very welcome sight and the first of the year for everyone.

Out at sea there were plenty of resident seabirds with guillemots and razorbills both present in good numbers. A few fulmars and a flock of thirty or so common scoter flew past moving east. The shoreline rocks produced the highlight though with two or three purple sandpipers, a superbly-coloured turnstone and two common sandpipers.

Reaching the Observatory Quarry the resident little owl was present as usual and we saw even more willow warblers. At the Observatory we added blackcap to the list and the Warden Martin Cade caught us a female whitethroat for us to see at close quarters.

Coombefield Quarry, 1200

The car park here produced more blackcaps and a surprise in the shape of an early garden warbler. We then walked in to the quarry looking for a serin that had been reported earlier, but had to be content with a beautiful male redstart.

Next we walked down to the Eastcliffs near Cheyne Point where a brood of four young ravens were being harassed by the resident pair of peregrines. Back at the car park a handsome common lizard was seen basking on a stone wall.

Ferrybridge, 1330

Just a small flock of dunlin here which on closer examination also held a single ringed plover and two sanderling.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1500

In what was now a very pleasant calm and warm afternoon we enjoyed walking out to the new "hide" seeing several Cetti's warblers on the way. A pair of bearded tits were seen by some but managed to avoid most of us. The hide showed us two male marsh harriers, a female-type male and a traditionally coloured male.

Sunday April 23rd

Weather: calm and sunny most of the day with high cloud

Portland Bill, 0900

The seabird colony on the Westcliffs held an unexpected visitor today – a very smart and much-appreciated puffin. The Admiralty Slopes adjacent to the cliffs held even more wheatears than yesterday but with fewer willow warblers in the bushes. Swallows were still moving north along the cliffs but today were accompanied by house martins and sand martins.

Barleycrates Lane, 1100

The first notable find here was a superb male whinchat that gave us close and prolonged views. The same cannot be said of the pair of ring ouzels that tantalised us with a series of annoyingly brief appearances. A male redstart and some very smart wheatears made up the supporting cast of an outstanding hour spent at one of the major migration hotspots on the island.

Ferrybridge, 1300

Nothing different was found here today but there were considerably more ringed plovers present than yesterday.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

This excellent reserve added a number of new birds to our list with some good telescope views of three snipe. Two marsh harriers were seen with the female-type male giving particularly close views. The Chinese swan goose was a unique find but as it was extremely unlikely to be a wild bird it does not warrant a place on the day's list. Butterflies were a feature of this visit with unusually high numbers of orange-tips. We finished the day and the weekend with a greenshank, a species that has become very rare in the Weymouth area in recent years.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

Bird List:

Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole, Lodmoor
Shag	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Radipole, Lodmoor
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor,
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Kestrel	Portland Bill
Peregrine	Portland
Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor
Buzzard	Portland
Pheasant	Portland
Water Rail	Radipole (heard)
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Whimbrel	Portland
Greenshank	Lodmoor
Common Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Sanderling	Ferrybridge
Snipe	Lodmoor
Turnstone	Portland Bill
Common Gull	Lodmoor
Black-headed Gull	Radipole, Lodmoor
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Sandwich Tern	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Stock Dove	Portland
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Collared Dove	Weymouth
Little Owl	Portland Bill

Skylark	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Sand Martin	Portland Bill, Radipole
House Martin	various sites
Swallow	various sites
Swift	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Portland Heights, Ferrybridge
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	various sites
Robin	various sites
Redstart	Portland
Stonechat	Portland Bill
Whinchat	Portland
Wheatear	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Ring Ouzel	Portland
Song Thrush	Radipole, Portland
Blackbird	various sites
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Sedge Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Reed Warbler	Radipole (heard)
Grasshopper Warbler	Portland (heard)
Whitethroat	Portland, Lodmoor
Blackcap	Portland
Garden Warbler	Portland
Chiffchaff	Radipole, Lodmoor
Willow Warbler	Portland
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Radipole, Lodmoor
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	Portland
Magpie	various sites
Raven	Portland
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	Radipole, Portland
House Sparrow	Radipole, Portland, Lodmoor
Linnet	Portland
Goldfinch	various sites
Bullfinch	Lodmoor
Chaffinch	Lodmoor
Greenfinch	Portland Bill
Reed Bunting	Radipole

Reptiles

Common Lizard	Portland
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Insects

Blue-tailed Damselfly	Lodmoor
Brown-tail Moth	Portland
Holly Blue	Portland

Speckled Wood
Small Tortoiseshell
Peacock
Orange-tip
Small White
Green-veined White

Lodmoor
Radipole
various sites
Radipole, Lodmoor
Radipole
Lodmoor

Plants

Brackish Water Crowfoot
Chalk Milkwort
Shining Cranesbill

Portland
Portland Bill
Portland