

HEIGHTS HOTEL WILDLIFE BREAKS

Friday November 3rd – Sunday November 5th 2017



Ruff, left, and lesser yellowlegs, right, at Lodmoor (Bob)

Saturday November 4th

Weather: wet overnight but then dry all day in a cold north-westerly wind

Portland Bill, 0900

Our weekend started with a seawatch at the Bill producing plenty of gannets with some distant kittiwakes and a single common scoter. The highlight was the group of three purple sandpipers sat on the rocks just in front of us. On the land we found several rock pipits and a late wheatear. Even later was the swallow seen flying south overhead. At the Bird Observatory we saw more insects than birds, with a speckled bush-cricket on the lounge window and a very rare Blair's mocha moth brought in by a local lepidopterist. Walking back to the car park we found a pair of love-struck Ravens preening each other in the middle of the Common. Our luck was really in as we drove away when a female merlin landed on a fence post right in front of the bus.

Portland Castle, 1230

A grey heron on the marina breakwater and a smart male red-breasted merganser made this a worthwhile stop before lunch.

Ferrybridge, 1300

Out on the mudflats a single redshank was found feeding near a small group of Mediterranean gulls with a couple of brent geese nearby. Within a few minutes a flock of waders arrived, which on closer examination proved to be dunlins and ringed plovers.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

An outstanding afternoon at this superb reserve started with a goldcrest and several chiffchaffs found just a few yards from the the bus. The reserve proper produced a very impressive range of waders including black-tailed godwits, lapwings, ruff, redshank and snipe. Overhead a pair of marsh harriers appeared and were later seen hunting over the reeds. The real star though was the very rare lesser yellowlegs, all the way from North America.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1600

One of our target birds that had so far eluded us was water rail so we were very pleased when one showed up here at the edge of the reeds.

Sunday November 5th

Weather: a lovely bright and sunny day, although in a cold northerly wind.



Arne RSPB Reserve, 1000

A whole day was spent at this superb reserve with the morning spent around Shipstall Point. Looking out across Poole Harbour we could see a line of large white birds out in the harbour – a flock of fifty-one spoonbills! Reaching the double-decker hide we had excellent views of little egrets and curlew with pintail and great crested grebe in the distance. A great white egret, the second of the weekend, put in a brief appearance.

Lunch was had next to the bird feeders where we had excellent views of nuthatch and coal tit.

Next we walked out onto Coombe Heath where we soon found a pair of Dartford warblers, one of which gave us an unusually prolonged view. The hide on the eastern shore of Middlebere Lake showed us hundreds of avocets and black-tailed godwits but in the strong light they were all just silhouettes, so we moved on to the viewing screen a bit further on. Here there were fewer birds but much better light and as the tide dropped more birds began to arrive. After thirty minutes or so we had enjoyed excellent views of feeding avocets and curlews as well as a male marsh harrier over the reedbeds. Walking back to the bus we disturbed a number of meadow pipits from the heath, looking very yellow in the late afternoon sunlight.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob.



Curlew (Bob)



Avocets (Bob)



Purple Sandpiper (Angie)



Dartford Warbler (Angie)

Birds:

Little Grebe	Lodmoor
Great Crested Grebe	Arne
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Spoonbill	Arne
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Great White Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Grey Heron	Portland, Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Mute Swan	Lodmoor, Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Arne
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Arne
Shelduck	Lodmoor, Arne
Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Shoveler	Lodmoor
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Wigeon	Arne

Pintail	Arne
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Kestrel	Portland Bill, Arne
Merlin	Portland Bill
Buzzard	Portland, Arne
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor, Arne
Pheasant	Portland
Water Rail	Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Curlew	Arne
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge, Arne
Avocet	Arne
Redshank	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor, Arne
Lesser Yellowlegs	Lodmoor
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Arne
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Arne
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Ruff	Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Lapwing	Lodmoor, Arne
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Black-headed Gull	Lodmoor etc
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor, Radipole
Herring Gull	Portland Bill etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill etc
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill
Common Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	Portland Bill etc
Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Feral Pigeon	Portland
Kingfisher	Radipole
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Skylark	Ferrybridge
Swallow	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge etc
Grey Wagtail	Portland Bill
Wren	Portland Bill etc
Duncock	Portland Bill etc
Robin	Portland Bill etc
Wheatear	Portland Bill
Blackbird	Portland Bill etc
Mistle Thrush	Arne
Cetti's Warbler (heard)	Lodmoor, Radipole
Dartford Warbler	Arne

Chiffchaff	Lodmoor
Goldcrest	Lodmoor
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor, Arne
Coal Tit	Lodmoor, Arne
Blue Tit	Portland etc
Great Tit	Portland etc
Nuthatch	Arne
Treecreeper	Arne
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carriion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland Bill, Arne
Starling	Lodmoor etc
House Sparrow	Portland etc
Goldfinch	Portland etc
Chaffinch	Portland, Arne
Greenfinch	Portland, Arne

Mammals:

Grey Squirrel	Portland, Arne
Rabbit	Portland
Sika Deer	Arne
Wood Mouse	Arne
Brown Rat	Radipole

Insects:

Red Admiral	Portland, Arne
Speckled Wood	Arne
Speckled Bush-cricket	Portland Bird Observatory
Blair's Mocha	Portland Bird Observatory

Fungi:

Birch Bracket	Arne
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