

HEIGHTS HOTEL WILDLIFE BREAKS

October 6th – October 8th 2017



Saturday October 7th

Weather: a wet morning with a strong north-westerly wind, drier in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0900

Our weekend started wet but with a good variety of seabirds passing the Bill. Dozens of gannets were seen, some very close, and a group of twenty common scoter passed on migration flying west. The highlight of the seawatch was when a pair of great skuas were found out in the rough waters of Portland Race. On the land we found lots of rock pipits and a couple of wheatears. Surprisingly a number of swallows were seen to brave the weather flying south.

Topfields, 1030

Parking near Southwell Business Park we searched the ancient fields in the only part of Portland that has never been quarried. A pair of stonechats were the only birds of note here in very blustery conditions.

Thumb Lane, 1130

This hidden spot in the village of Weston produced several more migrants for our list with goldcrests and chiffchaffs feeding in the sycamores.

Pennsylvania Castle, 1200

The wind and rain were now making it very difficult to find any birds and we only managed to add chaffinch to the day's tally here.

Portland Castle, 1230

A grey heron on the marina breakwater was a bit of a surprise but again the weather prevented us from finding any migrants in the trees around the Castle.

Ferrybridge, 1300

As we arrived an arctic skua was seen to fly over by a few of the party but we all saw the huge flock of at least 700 dark-bellied brent geese out on the mud-flats with dunlins, ringed plovers and bar-tailed godwits. Further out on the mudflats a curlew was feeding near a small group of Mediterranean gulls.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

Once again this outstanding reserve saved the day with a very impressive range of birds here starting with a great white egret in the reeds. Black-tailed godwits were everywhere along with lapwing, dunlins and snipe. Further searching produced no less than six beautiful ruff and a similar number of little stints. Moving on to The eastern side of the reserve we found even more waders including a green sandpiper and a redshank. A kingfisher was seen briefly and a pair of marsh harriers were seen hunting overhead.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1600

A lovely end to the day here in the most pleasant weather experienced all day. A water rail was probably the best bird seen but a brief view of a beard tit was also very welcome. The long-staying hooded merganser showed up once again, now in its tenth year!

Sunday October 8th

Weather: calm, warm and sunny all day

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 on an exceptionally high tide we could see hundreds of roosting curlews along with lots of redshank and little egrets. Next we walked over Arne Hill from where we could see a line of large white birds out in the harbour – a flock of thirty or so spoonbills! Reaching the double-decker hide we had excellent views of redshank and curlew with pintail and great crested grebe in the distance. The walk back to the bus produced very few birds but we did see some interesting fungi.



Left: Yellow Staghorn



Right: Fly Agaric

Lunch was had next to the bird feeders where we had excellent views of nuthatch and coal tit. We were just getting ready to leave again when we counted no less than eight buzzards high overhead.

After lunch we walked out onto Coombe Heath stopping off at some ponds on the way where there were a number of very impressive raft spiders. The screen on the eastern shore of Middlebere Lake showed us very little but the hide a bit further on looked out onto a view of hundreds of avocets and black-tailed godwits. The second great white egret of the weekend was seen from here as well. The walk back was disappointing in that we could still not find any Dartfords but on a such a lovely afternoon we were still all

very pleased with how the weekend had gone – especially when we add up the list and found that we had seen an amazing 103 species!

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob.



Birds:

Little Grebe	Radipole
Great Crested Grebe	Arne
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Manx Shearwater	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Spoonbill	Arne
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Great White Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Arne
Mute Swan	Lodmoor, Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Radipole
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Arne
Shelduck	Lodmoor, Arne
Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Shoveler	Lodmoor
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Wigeon	Lodmoor, Arne
Pintail	Arne
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Kestrel	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Peregrine	Verne Ditch
Sparrowhawk	Lodmoor, Arne
Buzzard	Lodmoor, Arne
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor

Pheasant	Portland
Water Rail	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Curlew	Ferrybridge, Arne
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Arne
Avocet	Arne
Redshank	Lodmoor, Arne
Green Sandpiper	Lodmoor
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Dunlin	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor, Arne
Little Stint	Lodmmor
Ruff	Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Arctic Skua	Ferrybridge
Great Skua	Portland Bill
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, Lodmoor
Common Gull	Ferrybridge
Sandwich Tern	Arne
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	Portland Bill etc
Stock Dove	Portland
Collared Dove	Portland
Feral Pigeon	Portland
Kingfisher	Lodmoor, Arne
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Skylark	Portland Bill
Swallow	Portland Bill etc
House Martin	Portland, Arne
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill etc
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	Arne
Duncock	Portland, Arne
Robin	Portland Bill etc
Stonechat	Portland, Arne
Wheatear	Portland Bill
Song Thrush	Portland
Blackbird	Portland Bill etc
Mistle Thrush	Wareham
Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole
Blackcap	Portland, Arne
Yellow-browed Warbler	Lodmoor
Chiffchaff	Portland etc

Goldcrest	Portland, Arne
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor, Arne
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	Portland etc
Great Tit	Portland etc
Nuthatch	Arne
Treecreeper	Arne
Jay	Arne
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland Bill, Arne
Starling	Lodmoor etc
House Sparrow	Portland etc
Goldfinch	Portland etc
Chaffinch	Portland, Arne
Greenfinch	Portland, Arne
Linnet	Portland Bill
Siskin	Arne
Reed Bunting	Arne

Mammals:

Grey Squirrel	Portland, Arne
Rabbit	Portland
Sika Deer	Arne
Roe Deer.	Arne

Insects:

Red Admiral	Portland etc
Comma	Arne
Peacock	Arne
Small Tortoiseshell	Lodmoor
Speckled Wood	Portland etc
Small White	Arne
Large White	Arne

Common Darter	Arne
Emperor	Arne
Migrant Hawker	Arne

Ivy Bee	Arne
Velvet Ant	Arne
Wood Ant	Arne

Spiders:

Raft Spider	Arne
Garden Cross Spider	Portland etc

Fungi:

Fly Agaric	Arne
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Horse Mushroom	Arne
Parasol Mushroom	Arne
Earthball	Arne
Birch Bracket	Arne
Yellow Staghorn	Arne
Blackening Waxcap	Arne