

**Saturday April 21st**

Weather: cloudy at first, then warm and sunny but in a cold northerly wind

Portland Bill, 0900

In surprisingly cold conditions we started the weekend with an excellent sea-watch the highlight of which was a rather distant puffin, seen both in flight and at rest on the sea. Gannet, shag, cormorant, fulmar razorbill and guillemot were seen close in with Manx shearwaters and common scoter further out. Several wheatears were on the rocks of the Bill Quarry along with a number of rock pipits. Overhead swallows were frequently seen flying north.

On the way to the Bird Observatory we searched the Obs Quarry and found the resident little owl sheltering deep its hole in the rocks. At the Observatory we could see the mist nets waiting to catch any passing migrants but none were caught while we were there.

Barleycrates Lane, 1030

This migrant hot-spot lived up to its reputation today producing distant views of both yellow wagtail and whinchat.

The Grove, 1200

A quick stop here to look for a hoopoe added willow warbler and buzzard to the list and started off our butterfly list with speckled wood and peacock.

Ferrybridge, 1330

With lots of disturbs out on the mud-flats there was very little to see here but our minds were really on our packed lunches anyway, which were excellent. Driving away we had close views of sandwich terns as we drove over the waters of the Fleet.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1500

As usual this outstanding reserve added a host of species to the day's list including whimbrel, water rail and snipe. A pair of marsh harriers gave excellent views as they hunted over the reeds, giving every impression that they had young to feed already.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1700

A final stop to look for bearded tits drew a blank so we returned to Portland after a really impressive day's birding.

Sunday April 22nd

Weather: warm and sunny most of the day

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1030

Leaving Portland in dense fog we arrived at Arne in beautifully calm and warm weather. Our walk out to Shipstall Point was pleasant but not very very productive with just some good views of coal tit to enjoy. Reaching the shores of Poole Harbour we only had distant views of curlew and redshank but were quite happy to enjoy the lovely views in the warm sunshine. Walking across Arne Hill we had the best bird of the day when a male Dartford warbler popped up right in front of us. Next we stopped at Shipstall Pools to look at a fascinating little toadstool, the bog beacon. A male large red damselfly was also found here. Nearby the hide at Shipstall Point gave us distant telescope views of curlew and whimbrel.

Returning to the car park for lunch we had an unusual opportunity to compare song thrush and mistle thrush side by side. After lunch we walked out to Coombe Heath where we found a very smart male stonechat. The screen on the shore of Middlebere Lake showed us a number of summer-plumaged black-tailed godwits along with smaller numbers of whimbrel. The walk back to the car park was very quiet with just a few long-tailed tits to delay us.

Ferrybridge, 1630

Our final stop of the weekend was Ferrybridge, where we found a lone bar-tailed godwit in resplendent breeding plumage. Behind it on the waters of the Fleet were no less than a dozen sandwich terns sat on mooring buoys.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

The weekend list:

Little Grebe	Radipole
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Red-throated Diver	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Manx Shearwater	Portland Bill
Grey Heron	Lodmoor
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Arne
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor, Arne
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Kestrel	Portland
Buzzard	Portland, Arne
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor
Sparrowhawk	Portland
Pheasant	Portland
Water Rail	Lodmoor
Coot	Radipole
Moorhen	Radipole
Oystercatcher	Lodmoor, Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Common Sandpiper	Ferrybridge
Snipe	Lodmoor
Redshank	Arne
Whimbrel	Lodmoor, Arne
Curlew	Arne
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Arne
Black-headed Gull	Lodmoor, Arne
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole, Lodmoor
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Portland Harbour
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Little Owl	Portland Bill
Barn Owl	Portland Heights (heard)
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Green Woodpecker	Arne (heard)
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc

Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Portland
Skylark	Portland Bill
Swallow	Portland etc
Sand Martin	Portland, Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Yellow Wagtail	Portland
Wren	Portland etc
Duncock	Portland etc
Robin	Portland etc
Stonechat	Arne
Whinchat	Portland
Wheatear	Portland Bill
Mistle Thrush	Arne
Song Thrush	Arne
Blackbird	Portland etc
Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor
Reed Warbler	Lodmoor (heard)
Dartford Warbler	Arne
Blackcap	Portland, Arne
Whitethroat	Lodmoor
Lesser Whitethroat	Lodmoor
Willow Warbler	Portland
Chiffchaff	Portland, Arne
Goldcrest	Arne (heard)
Long-tailed Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	Portland etc
Great Tit	Portland etc
Coal Tit	Arne
Nuthatch	Arne
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland Bill
Rook	Ferrybridge
Starling	Ferrybridge
House Sparrow	Portland
Chaffinch	Portland
Siskin	Arne
Linnet	Portland, Ferrybridge
Greenfinch	Lodmoor, Arne
Goldfinch	Portland etc
Reed Bunting	Lodmoor
Grey Squirrel	Arne
Sika	Arne
Sand Lizard	Arne

Peacock	Portland etc
Red Admiral	Portland
Comma	Arne
Small Tortoiseshell	Arne
Brimstone	Arne
Small White	Portland etc
Orange-tip	Lodmoor
Speckled Wood	Portland etc
Brown-tail Moth	Portland Bill
Large Red Damselfly	Arne
Bog Beacon	Arne
Birch Bracket	Arne