

**Saturday February 23rd**

Weather: foggy with a fresh south-easterly wind and warm sunshine in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0900

We started the weekend at a foggy Portland Bill but with bright sunshine lighting up the closer birds such as the Rock Pipits on the ground. The Gannets and Fulmars out at sea looked a bit hazy and we failed to pick out any Razorbills amongst the Guillemots. Inland Skylarks were the most obvious birds but we enjoyed the brief views we had of a group of three Stonechats. The Observatory Quarry produced the first Little Owl seen there for nearly a year. On the way back to the bus we had the rare chance to compare Rock and Meadow Pipits at close quarters.



Rock Pipit and Little Owl by Ian West

Portland Castle, 1100

Very quiet here with just a few Red-breasted Mergansers to add to the list.

Hamm Beach, 1130

Checking out the centre section of Portland Harbour we found a distant winter-plumaged Slavonian Grebe and a closer and very smart summer-plumaged Black-necked Grebe.

Ferrybridge, 1200

A flock of several hundred Mediterranean Gulls dominated the view here but the star bird was a Swallow hunting along the edge of Chesil Beach. The far shore held a few Oystercatchers and a couple of Bar-tailed Godwits.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1330

Our main target here was the Penduline Tit, which characteristically vanished just as we arrived. After waiting around for a bit there was still no sign of it so some of us walked out to the West Scrape where we enjoyed a very pleasant half hour watching the ducks

and waders in warm sunshine. Lapwing, Ruff and Snipe were amongst the first birds seen, closely followed by the very elegant Lesser Yellowlegs. A flock of Black-tailed Godwits and a single Dunlin completed a very satisfactory list of waders. Those remaining behind were lucky enough to hear a Bittern booming and obtain a brief view of a hunting Merlin.



Ruff and Teal by Ian West

Portland Bill, 1600

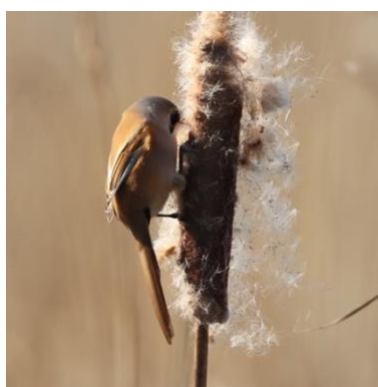
It didn't take long here to find the expected Short-eared Owl but it was a shame it didn't come a bit closer. Much less expected was the Black Redstart which popped up next to us on the roof of a hut.

Sunday February 24th

Weather: much less foggy with less wind and more warm sunshine all day

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 0930

In beautiful conditions it was no surprise that the Bearded Tits were out today, but even so they took a bit of finding and even then only a couple were seen well. First we walked up Radipole Park Drive where we managed to get excellent views of the Ring-necked Duck first found on our November weekend. A Chiffchaff seen distantly from here was later seen at much closer quarters and even heard to sing in the warm sunshine.



Portesham, 1230

A quick stop here revealed ten Cattle Egrets and a single Little Egret feeding amongst a large flock of gulls.

Abbotsbury Beach, 1300

This pleasantly sheltered spot for lunch turned out to be a completely bird-free area. Very pretty though.

Portland Harbour, 1400

Searching the harbour from Bincleaves we soon found a party of Red-breasted Mergansers followed eventually by a distant Great Northern Diver and a Black-necked Grebe. On the shore a heron was feeding with a couple of Oystercatchers and a Curlew.

Portland Bill, 1600

Once again we finished the day with an owl vigil, but today it was unsuccessful. We did get good views of a Buzzard though.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

The weekend list:

Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour
Little Grebe	Radipole, Lodmoor
Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour
Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole, Portland Harbour
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill, Radipole
Cormorant <i>sinensis race</i>	Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Ferrybridge, Radipole
Cattle Egret	Portesham
Grey Heron	Radipole, Bincleaves
Bittern (heard)	Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Radipole
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Wigeon	Radipole
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Ring-necked Duck	Radipole
Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Kestrel	Portland Bill
Merlin	Lodmoor
Buzzard	Portland Bill
Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pheasant	Abbotsbury, Portland

Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Water Rail (heard)	Radipole
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Bincleaves
Curlew	Bincleaves
Snipe	Lodmoor
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Ruff	Lodmoor
Dunlin	Lodmoor
Lesser Yellowlegs	Lodmoor
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Black-headed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Bincleaves
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill, Radipole
Common Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Collared Dove	Weymouth
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Portland
Kingfisher	Lodmoor
Green Woodpecker	Lodmoor
Little Owl	Portland Bill
Short-eared Owl	Portland Bill
Skylark	Portland Bill
Swallow	Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Portland Castle
Wren	Portland, Radipole
Duncock	Radipole
Robin	Portland etc
Stonechat	Portland Bill
Black Redstart	Portland Bill
Blackbird	Portland etc
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Chiffchaff	Radipole
Goldcrest	Lodmoor
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Blue Tit	Radipole
Great Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland, Bincleaves
Starling	Portland Bill

Goldfinch	Radipole
Linnet	Portland Bill
Chaffinch	Radipole
Greenfinch	Radipole
Bullfinch	Lodmoor
House Sparrow	Lodmoor, Radipole, Portland Bill
Reed Bunting	Radipole
Brown Rat	Radipole
Otter (spraint)	Radipole
Water Vole (prints)	Radipole
Roe Deer	Portesham
Bunny	Portland
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	Lodmoor
Peacock	Ferrybridge, Radipole, Lodmoor
Small Tortoiseshell	Radipole