

HEIGHTS HOTEL WILDLIFE BREAKS

Friday October 4th – Sunday October 6th 2019



Saturday October 5th

Weather: beautifully calm and warm in the morning, cloudier in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0900

Our weekend got off to a superb start with a most pleasant hour or so watching the seabirds from the most southerly point in Dorset. Most were a long way out, such as the Manx Shearwaters, Kittiwakes and Common Scoters, but a few of the Gannets came reasonably close. On the land we had much closer views of both Rock Pipits and Meadow Pipits as well as several Wheatears and flocks of Linnets and Goldfinches. High overhead a pair of Ravens were seen to leave to the south as were a pair of Grey Herons, a species much less often seen at the Bill.

Walking north towards the Westcliffs we added Stonechat to the list and were pleased to see and hear a good number of Skylarks. Reaching the Bird Observatory we had brief views of a Chiffchaff and a couple of Spotted Flycatchers. Another Chiffchaff was caught by the Warden, Martin Cade, and shown to us after being ringed by him. After this little bird had been released Martin surprised us by producing another bird from the bag – a female Reed Bunting.



Chiffchaff, photo by Bob Ford



Reed Bunting, photo by Bob Ford



Little Gull, photo by Alan Hurst

Ferrybridge, 1230

The single Brent Goose flying in high from the east may well have just arrived from Europe. A flock of at least ten Skylarks were feeding on the shoreline with a smaller number of Linnets. The mudflats initially only produced a group of five Bar-tailed Godwits and a few Mediterranean Gulls, but as the tide dropped a couple of Ringed Plovers arrived accompanied by a winter-plumaged Dunlin.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

This excellent reserve produced a huge list of birds including two or three Great White Egrets and a lovely brown-type male Marsh Harrier. The star birds though were the Grey Phalarope and the two Little Gulls, both species very rarely seen on these weekends. The supporting cast consisted of a beautifully white male Ruff and lots of Black-tailed Godwits. At one point our group separated into two, one half watching a Water Rail and the other watching a couple of female Bearded Tits.

Sunday October 6th

Weather: windier than yesterday but dry and sunny all day



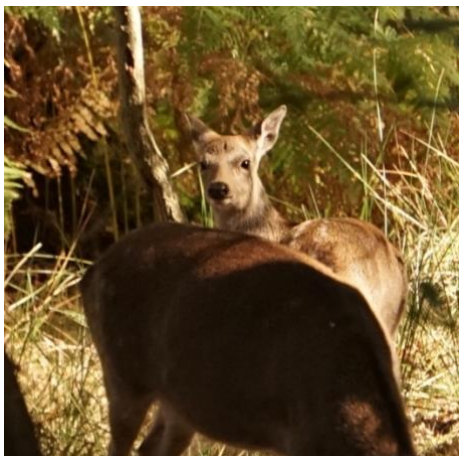
Durlston Country Park, 1030

A gloriously warm sunny morning at this beautiful reserve but not much in the way of birds today. In fact we spent more time looking at butterflies with some particularly smart Painted Ladies seen along with a great many Red Admirals and one or two Commas.



Arne RSPB Reserve, 1230

After lunch we walked out onto Coombe Heath overlooking Middlebere Lake. On the way we saw a fine Raft Spider and a number of dragonflies including an enormous Brown Hawker. The woods gave us good views of a small herd of Sika (Deer). Middlebere Lake held several flocks of feeding Avocets and a distant Osprey but failed to deliver the hoped-for Spoonbills.



Ferrybridge, 1630

Having left Arne early we had time for one more stop on the way back to our cream teas. A determined search of the mudflats added a final two species to our weekend's list – Lesser Black-backed Gull and Turnstone.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

Here is the fund-raising page for Olivia Woodburn, <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/lifeforliv>

In the end I saw 57 species and raised £239 for the appeal.



The weekend list:

Little Grebe	Lodmoor
Manx Shearwater	Portland
Gannet	Portland
Cormorant	Portland, Lodmoor, Durlston
Shag	Portland, Durlston
Great Egret	Lodmoor
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Arne
Grey Heron	Lodmoor
Mute Swan	Radipole
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Canada Goose	Lodmoor
Shelduck	Arne
Teal	Lodmoor
Mallard	Lodmoor
Gadwall	Lodmoor
Wigeon	Lodmoor, Arne
Tufted Duck	Lodmoor
Common Scoter	Portland
Kestrel	Portland
Peregrine	Portland
Buzzard	Portland
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor
Osprey	Arne
Pheasant	Portland
Coot	Lodmoor
Moorhen	Lodmoor
Water Rail	Lodmoor
Avocet	Arne
Grey Phalarope	Lodmoor

Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Durlston
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Redshank	Arne
Greenshank	Lodmoor
Snipe	Lodmoor
Curlew	Arne
Ruff	Lodmoor
Dunlin	Lodmoor, Ferrybridge
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Arne
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Little Gull	Lodmoor
Black-headed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Common Gull	Lodmoor
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge
Kittiwake	Portland
Razorbill	Portland
Collared Dove	Portland
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Feral Pigeon	Lodmoor, Durlston
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Skylark	Portland, Ferrybridge
Sand Martin	Lodmoor
House Martin	Portland, Durlston
Swallow	Portland etc
Meadow Pipit	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland
Pied Wagtail	Portland, Lodmoor
Wren	Lodmoor
Dunnock	Lodmoor
Robin	Portland etc
Stonechat	Portland, Arne
Wheatear	Portland
Blackbird	Portland, Lodmoor
Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor
Chiffchaff	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Spotted Flycatcher	Portland
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor, Arne
Blue Tit	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Great Tit	Portland, Lodmoor
Bearded Tit	Lodmoor
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland, Durlston
Rook	Wareham
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland, Ferrybridge
Starling	Lodmoor
House Sparrow	Portland
Goldfinch	Portland
Linnet	Portland, Ferrybridge
Chaffinch	Arne
Reed Bunting	Portland
Rabbit	Portland
Brown Rat	Portland
Sika	Arne
Wall Lizard	Durlston

Red Admiral	Portland, Lodmoor, Durlston, Arne
Peacock	Durlston
Painted Lady	Durlston
Comma	Lodmoor, Durlston
Large White	Durlston
Small White	Portland, Lodmoor, Arne
Speckled Wood	Lodmoor, Durlston
Bush-cricket spp	Durlston
Wood Ant	Arne
Ivy Bee	Durlston
Hornet	Durlston
Common Darter	Portland, Arne
Southern Hawker	Portland, Arne
Brown Hawker	Arne
Raft Spider	Arne
Tamarisk	Durlston
Holm Oak	Durlston
Tansy	Durlston
White Campion	Durlston
Birch Polypore	Arne
Parasol Mushroom	Arne