

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks Friday January 23rd – Sunday January 25th 2009

Saturday January 24th

Weather: Overcast and cold in the morning, sunny in the afternoon

Penn's Weare, 0900

Parking in the museum car park at Church Ope Cove we walked along the old railway line to the high cliffs at Grove Point. Here there were plenty of Fulmars on the cliffs as well as fleeting glimpses of the resident pair of Ravens. The Peregrines were sat on their usual perches until a third bird arrived and had to be seen off by the male. A male Sparrowhawk gave us several prolonged views as it sat on rocks seemingly just enjoying the view. A female Kestrel was down on the weares and offshore flocks of Razorbills were fishing.

Portland Castle, 1100

Our first look at Portland Harbour produced a Great Crested Grebe and a few Red-breasted Mergansers. A Great Northern Diver was spotted in the far distance, alongside a mysteriously light-coloured seabird that had us all perplexed.

Ferrybridge, 1230

A good selection of waders here including Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits and a single Curlew. 5 Mediterranean Gulls were on the shoreline with a mixed flock of Pale-bellied and Dark-bellied Brent Geese on the Fleet. A couple of Skylarks were uncharacteristically showy as they fed on the saltmarsh next to the car park.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1330

From the best viewpoint high over Portland Harbour we found a superb range of seabirds including Great Northern and Black-throated Divers, 6 Black-necked Grebes and single Slavonian and Red-necked Grebes. As if all these birds weren't enough, our mammal list got off to a good start with a Grey Seal just off the shore.

Lodmoor, 1500

The first stop at Overcombe car park produced the bird of the day in the shape of a very attractive little Siberian Chiffchaff, with a Common Chiffchaff, a Goldcrest and a Grey Wagtail nearby. A Buzzard was sat in a tree out on the marsh. The second stop immediately added Spoonbill to the day's list soon followed by Snipe, Ruddy Duck and Black-tailed Godwit.



*The
Siberian
Chiffchaff
as
photographed by Bob
Ford, Lyn
Osborne
and Liz*

Taylor

Barleycrates Lane, 1600

We were driving past this area of fields between Weston and Southwell on Portland when a Short-eared Owl was spotted from the vehicle. After a rapid U-turn and a hurried stop we had good views of 2 owls hunting over the long grass.

Sunday January 25th

Weather: Mostly overcast with a strong southerly wind decreasing throughout the day.

Portland Bill, 0900

With the weather far better than had been forecast we enjoyed seeing the results of the gales the previous night. Everywhere we looked were Razorbills, Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Gannets with a few Fulmars and a solitary Red-throated Diver flying past. The highlight however was a very close Balearic Shearwater that flew past and then came back again a few minutes later. Nearby we found 6 Purple Sandpipers on the shoreline.

Chesil Cove, 1100

Rough seas and a lot of gulls, mostly Kittiwakes with a lone Mediterranean Gull. A Black Redstart gave an all too brief view over the sea wall.

Wyke Bridging Camp, 1200

Another female Black Redstart here and another frustratingly brief view. The tide was also very annoying as it should have been out with lots of mud covered with all sorts of waders. But today the southerly wind appeared to be stopping the water leaving the Fleet and we had to be content with a few Curlews and a single Redshank. A group of 3 very distant Goldeneye didn't really make up for all the missing waders.

Ferrybridge, 1330

Pretty much identical birds to yesterday with just a few more Med Gulls.

Radipole, 1430

From the car park we could see a sizeable group of at least 20 Snipe and a good selection of gulls. The North Hide was even better with some very showy Shovelers and a splendid Marsh Harrier that spent a good 15 minutes hunting over the reed beds in front of us. On the way back one of the group heard some Bearded Tits and another saw a Water Rail.

Back at the hotel over another fine cream tea we reflected on a weekend with a whole list of star birds, including Spoonbill, Balearic Shearwater, Siberian Chiffchaff, Marsh Harrier and Black Redstart.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob



*Kestrel at Wyke, and the first Feral Pigeon to ever feature in one of these reports!
photographs by Lyn and Steve Osborne*

Birds: 90 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-throated Diver	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-throated Diver	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Grebe	Radipole, Lodmoor, Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fulmar	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Balearic Shearwater	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shag	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret	Fleet, Radipole, Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron	Fleet, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spoonbill	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan	Fleet, Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canada Goose	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelduck	Fleet, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wigeon	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruddy Duck	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldeneye	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour, Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Harrier	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kestrel	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peregrine	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparrowhawk	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buzzard	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Rail	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lapwing	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunlin	Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Turnstone	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Snipe	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oystercatcher	Portland, Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curlew	Ferrybridge, Fleet

<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Herring Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kittiwake	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guillemot	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Razorbill	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Short-eared Owl	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Dove	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Pigeon	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark	Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meadow Pipit	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Pipit	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Wagtail	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Wagtail	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wren	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunnock	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Redstart	Portland, Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Robin	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stonechat	Fleet, Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Thrush	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cetti's Warbler	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chiffchaff	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Siberian Chiffchaff	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldcrest	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bearded Tit	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Magpie	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrion Crow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		

Mammals: 3 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Rabbit	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Rat	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Seal	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Notable Plants: 1 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Maidenhair Fern	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>		
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