

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks
Friday January 22nd – Sunday January 24th 2010

Saturday January 23rd

Weather: Overcast and cold in the morning, sunny intervals in the afternoon. Cold easterly breeze.

Portland Bill, 0900

We started the weekend with a splendid hour or two looking at the huge numbers of seabirds feeding off the Bill. Most were Guillemots but we also saw large numbers of Kittiwakes and Gannets along with a few Razorbills and Fulmars. Gulls were much in evidence with 6 species seen altogether including several Mediterranean Gulls. The highlight was when a flock of 8 Purple Sandpipers flew out from the rocks below us.

The fields near the Bird Observatory produced a couple Buzzards as well as flocks of Skylarks and Linnets along with a flock of 16 Stock Doves.

Grove Point, 1100

The cliffs at Grove Point were home to plenty of Fulmars, the resident pair of Ravens and, best of all, the male Peregrines. The Royal Navy were very busy as well with several ships to see including the new stealth destroyer HMS Daring as well as the assault ship HMS Albion with its Chinook helicopter and attendant SBS landing craft.



Portland Castle, 1200

Our first look at Portland Harbour produced a few Red-breasted Mergansers, a Razorbill and some Turnstones.

Ferrybridge, 1300

A handful of Dark-bellied Brent Geese and 33 Mediterranean Gulls accompanied us as we ate our sandwiches.

Butterstreet Cove, 1400

Once we had forded the rapids we were presented with an enormous variety of wildfowl including hundreds of Brent Geese, 4 of which were of the Pale-bellied race. A couple of drake Goldeneye were found on the far side of the Fleet.

Lodmoor, 1500

Here we added Ruddy Duck, Lapwing and Black-tailed Godwit to the day's list with a number of other water birds as well.

Sunday January 25th

Weather: Calm with long sunny intervals throughout. Excellent visibility.

Heights Hotel, 0800

Today we started finding birds even before we left the hotel with some brilliant views of Ravens from our breakfast table! We also saw the only Song Thrush of the weekend in this way.

Portland Bill, 0900

A second visit to the Bill made sure we added Common Scoter to the list but far more remarkable was the sight of no less than 6 Ravens flying over us, calling loudly. The sea was still covered with thousands of Razorbills, Guillemots and Kittiwakes and we were pleased to find 3 Purple Sandpipers on the shoreline.

Wyke Regis, 1030

From this vantage point over Portland Harbour we managed to find a record total of 12 Black-necked Grebes. Several Great Northern Divers were also found but all were very distant.

Bincleaves, 1200

The far north-western corner of the harbour produced a close Slavonian Grebe and some more distant divers.

Newton's Cove, 1300

Our lunch was had here sitting in gorgeous warm sunshine looking at an impossibly blue sea. When we could stand the questions from the dozens of passers-by no more we walked along the sea wall and eventually found a male Black Redstart, but sadly there were too many people around to allow it to settle anywhere that we could see it.



Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1430

A host of wildfowl here all in immaculate breeding plumage, including our old favourite *Hoodie*, the Hooded Merganser. A Marsh Harrier turned up as we walked back and was closely followed by the only Sparrowhawk of the weekend.

To round everything off nicely we went back to the hotel for a cream tea and one of the most colourful sunsets I have seen in a long time.

Looking forward to our next weekend out together,

Bob

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Birds: 85 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Grebe	Radipole, Lodmoor, Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediterranean Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herring Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fulmar	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kittiwake	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guillemot	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shag	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Razorbill	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret	Fleet, Lodmoor, Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stock Dove	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Dove	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan	Fleet, Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Pigeon	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canada Goose	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meadow Pipit	Portland, Newton's Cove
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelduck	Fleet, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Pipit	Portland, Newton's Cove
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wigeon	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Wagtail	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wren	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunnock	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Redstart	Newton's Cove
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robin	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pintail	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stonechat	Fleet, Portland, Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pochard	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Thrush	Heights Hotel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruddy Duck	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cetti's Warbler	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldeneye	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chiffchaff	Newton's Cove
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour, Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hooded Merganser	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Scoter	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Harrier	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magpie	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kestrel	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peregrine	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparrowhawk	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buzzard	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrion Crow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Rail	Radipole (heard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lapwing	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linnet	Portland, Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Redshank	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunlin	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Bunting	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Turnstone	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Snipe	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oystercatcher	Portland, Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Mammals: 3 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fox	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Rat	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Squirrel	Newton's Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Notable Ships: 4 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	HMS Daring	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	HMS Albion	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	HMS Fort Rosalie	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	RFA Wave Knight	Portland

