

Saturday January 7th

Weather: Bright with a fresh north-westerly wind

The day started, as usual, with an excellent breakfast which was made even more special today by the Raven which appeared just outside the bistro windows and gave us a very impressive dive-and-roll.

Ferrybridge, 0930

Just a few Brent Geese here this morning but luckily one of them was a fine Pale-bellied Brent Goose. Mergansers were out on the waters of the Fleet along with a few Mediterranean Gulls and a Little Egret.

Portland Bill, 1030

Parking at the Bird Observatory we walked up the hill to the Topfields where a Snow Bunting had been present for over a week. We soon found it, lost it and found it again, eventually getting some very good views but having to put up with a vicious north-westerly wind at the same time. We also found a very tame Kestrel and a couple of more distant Buzzards. Several Skylarks were singing despite the cold wind.

Next we walked out the Bill itself to look for the Black Guillemot which has been wintering on the sea off here. After much searching it was found but did not stay put for long enough for any of the group to get on to it. There were plenty of other birds to see though including Gannets, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills.



Grove Point, 1300

The resident Peregrine was at his usual perch on the cliffs and made a particularly impressive sight against the blue of the sea. A lone Fulmar was circling around the cliff-face not far away, already at the nesting colony ready for the coming breeding season.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1400

From our lunch stop overlooking Portland Harbour we found no less than 11 Black-necked Grebes and dozens of Mergansers.

Lodmoor, 1500

Lots of new birds here including plenty of wildfowl and waders including a Green Sandpiper and two Black-tailed Godwits. A Marsh Harrier appeared high overhead and the only Lesser Black-backed Gull of the day was with a large flock of Black-headed Gulls waiting to go the roost in Weymouth Bay. The highlight was probably the Kingfisher which actually stayed put for once. Or perhaps it was the Water Rail ...

Radipole Lake, 1600

A few more Godwits here to finish the day as well as our old friend Hoodie the Hooded Merganser.

Sunday January 8th

Weather: Calm and sunny in the morning, overcast in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0900

No sign of the Purple Sandpipers here but we did add Red-throated Diver to the list with a group of 5 flying west. The highlight though was a splendid Great Skua harrying gulls following a fishing boat just off the Bill.

Wyke Bridging Camp, 1100

Another new bird for the Birdbreak list here in the shape of a rather shy Richard's Pipit which gave all-too brief a view. Nearby was a female Black Redstart and out on the Fleet was a group of 3 Goldeneye. Several more waders were added to the list namely Turnstone, Curlew and Redshank. Flocks of Mediterranean Gulls were arriving from the south all the time we were here, perhaps a hundred or more in total.



Underbarn, 1400

Our second look at Portland Harbour this weekend quickly produced a Great Northern Diver and, after a lot more searching, a distant Black-throated Diver. A few Black-necked Grebes were seen again and we had close views of a pair of Razorbill fishing just off the rocks.

Radipole, 1500

A case of tying up loose ends here with common species such as Greenfinch and Long-tailed Tit added to the list but very little else. We did see Marsh Harrier for the second time of the weekend, this time the adult male which gave us several fairly close fly-pasts from the North Hide. Bearded Tits were a major target here but sadly we could only hear a distant bird right at the end of the day as it was getting dark.

Our final tally of 89 species was perfectly respectable but the 2 new species – Snow Bunting and Richard's Pipit - made this an outstanding weekend for rare birds.

The Tufted Duck with the nasal saddle pictured right was ringed and marked at Saint Suzanne department 53 France on 17/07/2007. Since then it has been commuting between France, Abbotsbury and Radipole.



Birds: 89 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-throated Diver	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-throated Diver	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Grebe	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herring Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole, Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fulmar	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kittiwake	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guillemot	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Razorbill	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shag	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Pigeon	Weymouth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Dove	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kingfisher	Lodmoor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great-spotted Woodpecker	Fleet (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canada Goose	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meadow Pipit	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Richard's Pipit	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Pipit	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Wagtail	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wren	West Bexington
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Duck	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunnock	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pochard	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Redstart	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robin	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hooded Merganser	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stonechat	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldeneye	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kestrel	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Thrush	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peregrine	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparrowhawk	Portland, Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buzzard	Portland, Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Tit	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bearded Tit	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maggie	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Rail	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pheasant	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oystercatcher	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrion Crow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Turnstone	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunlin	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Sandpiper	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Redshank	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curlew	Fleet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linnet	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Snipe	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bullfinch	Radipole (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lapwing	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Bunting	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Skua	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Snow Bunting	Portland

Mammals: 3 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Red Fox	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Rat	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Squirrel	Weymouth	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fish: 1 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Spotted Dogfish	Ferrybridge (dead)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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