

# HEIGHTS HOTEL WILDLIFE BREAKS

Friday October 5th – Sunday October 7th 2018



BM76, The Vigilance of Brixham

**Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Weather: Wet and windy most of the day**

Wakeham, 0900

Our first stop was just outside Portland's main village of Easton where a Hoopoe had been resident for several days. Needless to say we couldn't find it on this very wet morning but we did enjoy a very dramatic fly-past of a large Peregrine, whose presence probably ruined any chances we had of seeing anything else.

Ferrybridge, 1000

With the rain now combined with a vicious northerly wind we sought shelter next to the Chesil Beach Centre and searched the mud-flats for waders. We soon found a good variety of them with Turnstones and Ringed Plovers quite close and Dunlin, Knot and Oystercatchers further out. Apart from these shorebirds there were several Mediterranean Gulls as well as a Wheatear and a group of Skylarks.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1100

This was a challenging walk in such nasty weather but it was worth it for the huge list of birds that were added to the list. One of the most memorable sightings was a male Marsh Harrier hunting over the reeds just in front of us.

Arne RSPB Reserve, 1400

After lunch at Ferrybridge we drove through increasingly dry weather to Arne on the edge of Poole Harbour. Here we drove out to Shipstall Point and walked out to the double-decker hide. Reaching the hide we found lots of Curlews and a very impressive flock of no less than forty Spoonbills. The second Marsh Harrier of the weekend was seen here as well as a range of waterbirds including Pintail and Great Crested Grebe. Walking back to the van we were able to get good views of a number of Sika deer, one of which was a stag with a very impressive set of antlers.

Wakeham, 1630

Another attempt at finding the Hoopoe drew a blank, but with the wind now not far short of gale force that was not really surprising.



**Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Weather: dry and sunny but cold in the morning**

Portland Bill, 0900

In much more pleasant conditions we explored the most southerly point of Dorset seeing a number of Wheatears and Meadow Pipits before even leaving the car park. Looking south across the Channel a few Gannets could be seen in the distance along with Cormorants and Shags closer in. Various fishermen, both onshore and offshore, enabled to see what fish were in the area when we saw first a fine Garfish caught off Pulpit Rock and then several Mackerel landed on a bass-fishing boat. The star sighting though was a group of three Common Scoter flying east.

Walking along the Eastcliffs towards the Bird Observatory we had good but brief views of Rock Pipits on the shore. At the Observatory the Warden, Martin Cade, showed us a very bright Chiffchaff in the hand. As we left a Merlin appeared overhead but probably more unusual for the site was the Grey Heron that landed in the ancient strip lynchet field system.

Ferrybridge, 1200

Pretty much a repeat of yesterday here but in much better light we enjoyed excellent views of a flock of five or more Skylarks. As we left a small flock of Brent Geese arrived from the east, most likely making their first landfall in the UK since leaving mainland Europe.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1300

We spent all afternoon here, waiting for an Osprey which in the end never did show up. We did see a very smart male Marsh Harrier though, the third sighting of this species for the weekend. Other raptors here included two or three Buzzards, a Sparrowhawk and several Kestrels. Other birds that showed themselves to us briefly were Bearded Tit, Cetti's Warbler and a very late Swift. Particularly good views were had of Snipe and Water Rail, both species that normally do not venture out in bright sunshine. The highlight though were the two Great White Egrets, one at each end of the reserve. Perhaps the most enigmatic sighting of the weekend was not a bird but a string of bubbles, which judging by the reaction of the ducks nearby may well have been produced by an Otter.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

## The weekend's list of species:

Little Grebe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Great Crested Grebe	Arne, Radipole
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Arne, Radipole, Portland Bill
Shag	Portland Bill
Great White Egret	Radipole
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Arne, Portland Bill, Radipole,
Little Egret	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Spoonbill	Arne
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Arne, Radipole
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Arne, Ferrybridge
Shelduck	Arne
Wigeon	Arne, Radipole
Teal	Lodmoor, Arne, Radipole
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shoveler	Arne, Radipole
Mallard	Lodmoor, Arne, Radipole
Pintail	Arne
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Pochard	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Bill
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor, Arne, Radipole
Peregrine	Portland
Merlin	Portland
Kestrel	Portland, Ferrybridge, Arne, Radipole
Buzzard	Portland, Arne, Radipole
Sparrowhawk	Radipole
Pheasant	Wool
Water Rail	Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Arne
Curlew	Arne
Redshank	Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Arne
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Golden Plover	Lodmoor
Knot	Ferrybridge
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Black-headed Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole, Arne
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole
Herring Gull	Portland etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland etc
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge, Radipole
Common Gull	Portland Bill
Kittiwake	Portland Bill

Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Feral Pigeon	Portland etc
Stock Dove	Portland
Collared Dove	Portland
Kingfisher	Radipole
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Wool
Swallow	Portland etc
House Martin	Portland
Swift	Radipole
Skylark	Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	Portland etc
Dunnock	Portland etc
Robin	Portland etc
Stonechat	Arne, Radipole
Wheatear	Portland, Ferrybridge
Blackbird	Portland etc
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Blackcap	Radipole
Chiffchaff	Portland Bill
Goldcrest	Arne
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Arne
Coal Tit	Arne
Blue Tit	Portland etc
Great Tit	Portland etc
Jay	Arne
Rook	Arne, Radipole
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Arne, Ferrybridge, Portland
Starling	Portland etc
House Sparrow	Portland
Goldfinch	Portland
Linnet	Portland, Ferrybridge
Reed Bunting	Lodmoor

### **Mammals**

Grey Squirrel	Arne
Rat	Radipole
Rabbit	Portland
Hare	Wareham
Sika Deer	Arne
Otter (?)	Radipole

### **Fish**

Carp	Radipole
Garfish	Portland Bill
Mackerel	Portland Bill

**Insects**

Small White	Portland etc
Large White	Portland etc
Red Admiral	Portland etc
Speckled Wood	Radipole
Common Darter	Radipole
Emperor	Radipole
Migrant Hawker	Radipole