

Saturday April 27th

Weather: bright sunshine most of the day with a gale force westerly wind



Teal and Whimbrel at Lodmoor

Portland Bill, 0900

In very windy weather indeed we started our weekend at the Bill with a seawatch in the shelter of the Lobster Pot café. Razorbills and Guillemots were much in evidence on the sea with Fulmars and Gannets flying past all the time. The highlight was the flock of Manx Shearwaters that flew west close past the Bill. A single Bottle-nosed Dolphin was glimpsed further offshore while a number of Rock Pipits were seen at very close quarters around the benches outside the café.

Portland Castle, 1100

A single drake Red-breasted Merganser was seen here with just a few Goldfinches and Blue Tits in the Castle grounds.

Ferrybridge, 1200

A dozen Bar-tailed Godwits were seen distantly feeding on the shoreline along with singles of Whimbrel, Sanderling and Ringed Plover. A small group of Little Terns were sheltering on the edge of Chesil Beach not far from an enormous Barrel Jellyfish.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

An unforgettable bird-watching session here as we waited at the West Scrape for birds to drop in. While we were waiting we found Black-tailed Godwit and Dunlin with a pair of Marsh Harriers hunting overhead. The bushes held a multitude of warblers with Common and Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, Reed Warbler and Cetti's Warbler all heard. Even a Cuckoo put in a brief appearance. The highlight came when a flock of four Whimbrel dropped in out of the sky and landed right in front of us. Walking back to the van an early Swift was seen as well.

Sunday April 28th

Weather: bright sunshine for most of the day in a fresh north-westerly breeze

Portland Bill, 0900

It was quite cold stood next to Pulpit Rock seawatching but we knew it would be worth it in the end. After half an hour of searching through the Guillemots and Razorbills for a Puffin (which never did turn up) a cry came up from a nearby seawatcher alerting us to a flock of four Pomarine Skuas way off to the east. A few of us managed to get on to them but they were already very distant and sadly they never returned. Other sightings on the sea included a few Manx Shearwaters and singles of Whimbrel and Purple Sandpiper. Walking back to the bus we stopped to look at Wheatears in the Bill Quarry and were alerted to the presence of a female Black Redstart by a couple of other birders.

Ferrybridge, 1130

A chance decision to stop of here to look for waders on the way to Abbotsbury produced the bird of the weekend (and the year?) when a female Kentish Plover turned up with a couple of Ringed Plovers conveniently close to the observation platform. Checking back through my records I find that the last one I saw was 23 years ago!

Abbotsbury Swannery, 1200

A very pleasant spot for lunch made even more pleasant by the four Cattle Egrets in the next field! A calling Green Woodpecker was new to the list as was Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge both seen from the bus.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1400

We finished our weekend with a leisurely tour around this superb reserve, stopping to hear, and often see, the very vocal Cetti's Warblers. Sand Martin was a new species seen by most, here as was Lesser Black-backed Gull and Sedge Warbler. One lucky observer found a Bearded Tit and pretty much everyone (except me) saw Swifts, several times.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

The weekend list:

Birds:

Great Crested Grebe	Abbotsbury, Radipole
Little Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Manx Shearwater	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Lodmoor
Cattle Egret	Abbotsbury
Grey Heron	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mute Swan	Radipole, Lodmoor, Abbotsbury
Canada Goose	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor, Abbotsbury
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pochard	Radipole
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Castle, Ferrybridge
Kestrel	Portland, Lodmoor, Abbotsbury
Buzzard	Portland, Abbotsbury
Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pheasant	Abbotsbury
Red-legged Partridge	Abbotsbury
Water Rail (heard)	Lodmoor
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Kentish Plover	Ferrybridge
Curlew	Lodmoor
Whimbrel	Portland, Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Dunlin	Lodmoor
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Sanderling	Ferrybridge
Redshank	Lodmoor
Pomarine Skua	Portland Bill
Black-headed Gull	Lodmoor
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill, Radipole
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Ferrybridge
Common Tern	Lodmoor
Little Tern	Ferrybridge

Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Green Woodpecker (heard)	Abbotsbury
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Abbotsbury, Lodmoor
Cuckoo	Lodmoor
Swift	Lodmoor, Radipole
Skylark	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Swallow	Portland Bill etc
House Martin	Lodmoor
Sand Martin	Radipole
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	Lodmoor, Radipole
Dunnock	Lodmoor, Radipole
Robin	Portland etc
Blackbird	Portland etc
Wheatear	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Stonechat	Portland Bill
Black Redstart	Portland Bill
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Common Whitethroat	Lodmoor
Lesser Whitethroat (heard)	Lodmoor
Garden Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Blackcap	Portland etc
Reed Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Sedge Warbler	Radipole
Chiffchaff (heard)	Lodmoor
Willow Warbler	Radipole
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor
Blue Tit	Portland etc
Great Tit	Portland etc
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Rook	Abbotsbury
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland Bill
Starling	Portland etc
Goldfinch	Portland etc
Linnet	Portland Bill
Chaffinch	Abbotsbury
Greenfinch	Lodmoor
Bullfinch (heard)	Radipole
House Sparrow	Portland Bill
Reed Bunting	Lodmoor, Radipole

Mammals:

Brown Rat	Radipole
Rabbit	Portland
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	Portland Bill

Insects:

Brimstone	Radipole
Green-veined White	Lodmoor
Small White	Radipole
Orange-tip	Lodmoor
Peacock	Radipole
Small Tortoiseshell	Radipole
Speckled Wood	Radipole
Brown-tail Moth	Portland
Scarlet Tiger Moth	Radipole

Also:

Barrel Jellyfish	Ferrybridge
Spider <i>Araniella cucurbitina</i>	Abbotsbury