



Lesser Yellowlegs and Ruff at Lodmoor by Don Donald

Saturday March 16th

Weather: gale-force westerly all day with intermittent drizzle

Portland Castle, 0900

A quiet and very windy start to the weekend here with just a distant Gannet and a few Red-breasted Mergansers seen. The chance to compare Cormorants and Shags was appreciated though.

Ferrybridge, 1000

An interesting variety of gulls here, mostly immature Mediterraneans with a few Herring, Black-headed, Great Black-backed and Common Gulls. The only wader seen was a single Oystercatcher but the star sighting was a distant female Goosander out on the Fleet with a small group of mergansers.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1100

An unforgettable bird-watching session here starting at the West Scrape with Ruff and Lesser Yellowlegs seen almost immediately at very close quarters. These outstanding birds were closely followed by the bird of the day, an adult Little Gull, which was also seen remarkably close. Nearby was a flock of 60 Black-tailed Godwits including several fine summer-plumaged birds. A pair of Marsh Harriers were seen well with the female bird spending most of her time nest-building. These birds were continuously putting up Snipe with upwards of twenty birds seen during the morning. We were just walking away from this amazing selection of birds when a group of Sand Martins appeared overhead accompanied by a single Swallow. A third migrant species was seen here in the shape of a very grey Chiffchaff. Finally we found the beautiful male Ring-necked Duck which had recently come across from Radipole. Lunch drew us slowly back to the bus with the Ruff and Lesser Yellowlegs showing well once again.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1300

It was always going to be very difficult to follow that morning and Radipole did indeed seem very quiet in comparison. The third Marsh Harrier of the weekend was seen and a Cormorant at the end of Buddleia Loop looked very like it was one of the European *sinensis* race. The North Screen added Wigeon to the list along with excellent views of Gadwall, Shoveler, Shelduck and Teal.

Portland Harbour, 1600

Parking in Wyke Regis we walked down onto the Rodwell Trail for our last session of the day. Mergansers and Great-crested Grebes were seen well with the latter treating us to a rare multiple fly-past. Very distantly a Peregrine could be seen flying across the harbour back to Portland, presumably after a failed hunting attempt.

Sunday March 17th

Weather: much less windy with warm sunshine most of the day

Portland Bill, 0900

In much brighter weather than yesterday we spent a very windy hour or so walking round the Bill seeing mostly seabirds and a few Rock Pipits on the land. The seabirds were largely Razorbills with a few Guillemots mixed in and one or two Fulmars and Gannets in the distance. A small flock of waders that flew past us turned out to be Purple Sandpipers when we located them feeding on the shoreline below us. A Grey Seal was seen by some of us further along the coast but sadly it was intent on fishing and didn't hang around.

Ferrybridge, 1030

Even less than yesterday here but we did enjoy the Skylark that was singing at the edge of the car park.

Maiden Castle, 1130

An almost complete blank here with just a distant Buzzard and a small flock of Linnets added to the weekend list.

Portesham, 1230

A quick stop here revealed 16 Cattle Egrets feeding amongst a herd of cows.

Abbotsbury Beach, 1300

This pleasantly sheltered spot for lunch produced good views of a number of Buzzards and a couple of fleeting views of Peregrines.

Underbarn, 1400

The clear highlight of the day was had here as we searched the harbour in warm sunshine finding a distant Great Northern Diver closely followed by a couple of much closer Slavonian Grebes.

Newton's Cove, 1500

Walking east along the coast from Underbarn we finished the day with a female Eider feeding out in Weymouth Bay.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

The weekend list:

Birds:

Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour
Little Grebe	Radipole, Lodmoor
Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole, Portland Harbour
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill, Portland Harbour
Cormorant	Portland Bill, Radipole, Portland Harbour
Cormorant <i>sinensis race</i>	Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill, Portland Harbour
Little Egret	Ferrybridge, Portland Harbour
Cattle Egret	Portesham
Grey Heron	Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor
Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor
Shoveler	Radipole, Lodmoor
Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor
Wigeon	Radipole
Tufted Duck	Radipole, Lodmoor
Ring-necked Duck	Lodmoor
Pochard	Lodmoor
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Goosander	Ferrybridge
Eider	Newton's Cove
Kestrel	Abbotsbury
Peregrine	Portland Harbour, Abbotsbury
Buzzard	Maiden Castle, Abbotsbury
Marsh Harrier	Radipole, Lodmoor
Pheasant	Abbotsbury
Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor
Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge
Snipe	Radipole, Lodmoor
Black-tailed Godwit	Radipole, Lodmoor
Ruff	Lodmoor
Dunlin	Lodmoor
Lesser Yellowlegs	Lodmoor
Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill
Black-headed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill, Radipole
Common Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole, Abbotsbury
Little Gull	Lodmoor

Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Portland
Skylark	Ferrybridge, Maiden Castle
Swallow	Lodmoor
Sand Martin	Ferrybridge, Lodmoor
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Portland etc
Wren	Portland, Radipole
Dunnock	Radipole
Robin	Portland etc
Blackbird	Portland etc
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole, Lodmoor (heard)
Chiffchaff	Lodmoor
Blue Tit	Radipole
Great Tit	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Lodmoor
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland etc
Rook	Portesham
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Portland, Underbarn
Starling	Portland etc
Goldfinch	Radipole etc
Linnet	Maiden Castle
Chaffinch	Lodmoor
Greenfinch	Lodmoor
House Sparrow	Lodmoor, Radipole, Underbarn
Reed Bunting	Lodmoor

Mammals:

Brown Rat	Radipole
Otter (spraint)	Radipole
Water Vole	Radipole
Grey Squirrel	Lodmoor
Grey Seal	Portland Bill

Insects:

Buff-tailed Bumblebee	Radipole
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Plants:

Alexanders	Ferrybridge
Sea Purslane	Ferrybridge
Shrubby Seablite	Ferrybridge
Tree Mallow	Ferrybridge
Scurvy Grass	Newton's Cove
Sweet Violet	Radipole
Blackthorn	Radipole
Cherry Plum	Radipole

Sea Beet

Portland Bill

Lichens:

Parmelia sulcata

Radipole

Flavoparmelia caperata

Radipole

Xanthoria parietina

Radipole

Ramalina farinacea

Radipole

Ships:

RFA Tiderace

RFA Sir Tristram

RFA Argus

USNS Medgar Evers