

## HEIGHTS HOTEL WILDLIFE BREAKS

Friday November 1st – Sunday November 3rd 2019



### Saturday November 2nd

**Weather: wet and very windy all day**

Portland Castle, 1100

With winds gusting up to Hurricane Force 12 we stayed in the hotel until it was safe to go out and we knew that the road was open. Arriving at the southern end of Portland Harbour a local birder told us that one or two Leach's Petrels had been seen earlier. We weren't so lucky but we did find a small flock of Red-breasted Mergansers and a close Turnstone.

Hamm Beach, 1200

Driving north up to our next vantage point on the shore of the harbour we were escorted by a hunting Peregrine flying just in front of the van. The harbour produced some distant Gannets and a few Rock Pipits in the car park.

Ferrybridge, 1230

The flock of Dark-bellied Brent Geese close to the car park contained about five Pale-bellied birds, luckily the ones closest to us.

Lodmoor RSPB Reserve, 1400

After receiving a tip-off that a flock of Barnacle Geese were at Lodmoor we drove through Weymouth to this excellent reserve just on the edge of the town. We soon found the geese but they were never easy to see out in the middle of the marsh. Better views were had of a range of ducks and a few Snipe, with a Marsh Harrier showing several times as well. The uncharacteristically slow Kingfisher that flew in front of us must have been having difficulty flying into the wind!

Sandsfoot, 1500

Our third look at Portland Harbour added Common Scoter to the list along with a few more mergansers.

Ferrybridge, 1530

Now that the tide had dropped some waders were feeding out on the mudflats. At first we could only see a couple of Bar-tailed Godwits, but then a large flock flew in comprising a mix of Ringed Plovers and Dunlin.

Portland Bill, 1600

We finished with a quick look at the rough seas in anticipation of a return visit tomorrow morning.

**Sunday November 3rd**

**Weather: dry all day with some sunny intervals, wind still strong in the morning**



Portland Bill, 0900

In much better conditions we made the start we had to postpone yesterday and drove down to Portland Bill, the most southerly point in Dorset. The sea was fairly quiet apart from a large movement of Great Black-backed Gulls westwards and a single Common Scoter. The less windy conditions allowed us to catch up with a few small birds missing from yesterday's list including Linnet, Skylark and Goldfinch. A Black Redstart was a predictable find at the Coastguard Cottages, with so many being seen in the area this autumn.

Pennsylvania Castle, 1030

The sheltered "wood" at this historic site added lots of garden birds to the list, mostly Chaffinches but also Blue and Great Tits and a very smart female Blackcap. A small yellow warbler that dashed through may well have been the one that got away, with several Pallas's Warblers being seen recently.

Portland Castle, 1130

Our second visit to this site but this time we explored the Castle grounds looking for warblers. A single Chiffchaff was the only result though.

Ferrybridge, 1200

Little Egret and Raven were the only new birds here but we did enjoy very close views of the Brent Geese again and a huge flock of several hundred Mediterranean Gulls.

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1330

A pleasantly calm afternoon here producing a brief view of a small group of Bearded Tits and much better views of a smart male Marsh Harrier. Several Snipe were seen and a couple of Goldcrests finally gave us reasonable views after a great deal of patience on our part.

Portland Bill, 1630

A final drive-by search for owls produced negative results but we did enjoy a quick look at the still very rough seas off the Bill.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

The weekend list:

Little Grebe  
Great Crested Grebe  
Gannet  
Cormorant  
Shag  
Little Egret  
Grey Heron

Radipole  
Radipole  
Portland  
Portland, Lodmoor, Radipole  
Portland  
Ferrybridge  
Portland Harbour, Radipole

Mute Swan	Radipole
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Pale-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge
Barnacle Goose	Lodmoor
Canada Goose	Lodmoor
Shelduck	Lodmoor
Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shoveler	Lodmoor, Radipole
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Common Scoter	Portland Harbour, Portland Bill
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Kestrel	Portland, Ferrybridge
Peregrine	Portland Harbour
Marsh Harrier	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Water Rail	Radipole (heard)
Oystercatcher	Portland Harbour, Portland Bill
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor
Bar-tailed Godwit	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Portland Castle
Black-headed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Herring Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Great Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Common Gull	Ferrybridge etc
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Collared Dove	Lodmoor
Wood Pigeon	Portland etc
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Stock Dove	Portland Bill
Kingfisher	Lodmoor
Skylark	Portland, Ferrybridge
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland
Pied Wagtail	Portland, Lodmoor
Grey Wagtail	Radipole
Wren	Lodmoor etc
Dunnock	Radipole
Robin	Portland etc
Black Redstart	Portland Bill
Redwing	Lodmoor
Blackbird	Portland etc
Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole (heard)
Chiffchaff	Portland, Radipole
Blackcap	Portland
Goldcrest	Radipole
Long-tailed Tit	Portland
Blue Tit	Portland, Radipole
Great Tit	Portland, Radipole
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Magpie	Portland etc
Jackdaw	Portland Bill
Rook	Radipole
Carrion Crow	Portland etc
Raven	Ferrybridge
Starling	Lodmoor etc

House Sparrow	Portland
Goldfinch	Portland
Linnet	Portland
Chaffinch	Portland
Reed Bunting	Radipole
Grey Squirrel	Lodmoor
Brown Rat	Radipole
Red Admiral	Portland, Radipole
Muslin Moth	Radipole
Buff-tailed Bumble-bee	Radipole
Wasp	Portland
Harlequin Ladybird	Portland
Caddis Fly <i>Limnephilus lunatus</i>	Radipole