

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks

Friday September 25th – Sunday September 27th 2009



Ruddy Shelducks at Radipole Lake, photo by John Workman

Saturday September 26th

Weather: Long sunny spells all day, warm in the afternoon

Portland Bill, 0645

We started our weekend with a visit to Portland Bird Observatory in the hope of seeing some birds in the hand. The ringers soon showed us couple of fascinating birds, a Chiffchaff and a first-year male Redstart, pointing out the features that are used to age and identify them. Near in the Observatory Quarry we had good views of a Little Owl, with a Stonechat nearby.

Admiralty Quarries, 0915

Not long after we arrived here we had a superb view of a Short-eared Owl being mobbed by a young Peregrine and a Raven. Migrants were abundant here but were mostly Meadow Pipits with a few Wheatears. A late Common Blue was one of the first butterflies of the weekend.

Barleycrates Lane, 1200

A reliable spot for migrants with Whinchat, Chiffchaff and lots more Meadow Pipits. Some good butterflies as well – Painted Ladies, Peacocks and best of all a Clouded Yellow.

Ferrybridge, 1300

An adult Mediterranean Gull was about the only notable sighting here – apart from our sandwiches which were also very notable.

Radipole Lake RSPB Reserve, 1400

We could see something was up when we arrived by the crowd of birdwatchers that were assembled. “Shelducks” was all I heard at first, then realised they had actually said “Ruddy Shelducks”. In fact there were three of them, all unringed and presumably genuine migrants from the continent. The rest of the reserve produced a host of memorable sightings including a Water Rail a Kingfisher, the usual Hooded Merganser (unknown origin) and another Mediterranean Gull.



Hooded Merganser and Migrant Hawker, photos by Bob Ford

Sunday September 27th

Weather: as yesterday but with a fresh northerly wind in the morning

Portland Bill, 0700

A visit to the sea produced nothing more than a flock of fishing Gannets, a Turnstone and a few Oystercatchers, whilst the Bill Common was covered in Meadow Pipits and Pied Wagtails grounded by the wind.

Pennsylvania Castle, 0915

As the day got warmer the birds became more thin on the ground with this normally productive site showing us nothing more than a few Chiffchaffs and a couple of Stock Doves.

Topfields, 1100

Plenty of Meadow Pipits were still feeding in the fields along with a Spotted Flycatcher, a Whitethroat and a dozen or so Wheatears. 2 Buzzards were sat on the Admiralty Fence and a pair of Ravens were soaring high overhead.

Southwell, 1230

Although the resident Peregrines weren't at home today the Wall Lizards put on a good show with a female appearing first closely followed a very handsome male. A Comma was the only example of the species seen all weekend.

Ferrybridge, 1430

Again the mudflats were too disturbed to hold any waders, apart from a few Ringed Plovers that dropped in briefly.

Lodmoor, 1500

Waders were the main target here and we weren't disappointed with Redshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Sandpiper and Lapwing all added to the weekend's list. 3 or 4 Buzzards were also seen and a couple of Mediterranean Gulls were present as well.

Bob Ford, 27 Sept 2009



Wall Lizards, photo by Maggie Walters



Mediterranean Gulls, photo by John Workman

See the archive of Birdbreak Reports at <http://www.natureportfolio.co.uk/birdbreak/report/archive>

Birds: 83 species

Little Grebe	Radipole,
Great Crested Grebe	Radipole,
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	various sites
Shag	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor
Shelduck	Radipole
Ruddy Shelduck	Radipole
Wigeon	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Teal	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Pintail	Radipole,
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Shoveler	Radipole,
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Sparrowhawk	Portland Bill
Buzzard	Portland Bill, Lodmoor
Kestrel	various sites
Peregrine	Portland
Water Rail	Radipole
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Lapwing	Lodmoor
Dunlin	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Common Sandpiper	Lodmoor,
Redshank	Lodmoor,
Snipe	Lodmoor, Radipole
Black-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor, Radipole
Bar-tailed Godwit	Lodmoor,
Turnstone	Portland Bill
Mediterranean Gull	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Sandwich Tern	Lodmoor,
Stock Dove	Portland,
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Portland,
Little Owl	Portland Bill
Short-eared Owl	Portland
Green Woodpecker	Lodmoor (heard)
Kingfisher	Radipole,
Skylark	Portland
Swallow	various sites
House Martin	various sites
Meadow Pipit	various sites
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Grey Wagtail	Lodmoor, Radipole,
Pied Wagtail	various sites
Yellow Wagtail	Radipole
Wren	Portland (heard)
Duncock	various sites
Robin	various sites

Whinchat	Portland,
Stonechat	various sites
Redstart	Portland
Wheatear	Portland
Blackbird	various sites
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole (heard)
Whitethroat	Portland Bill
Chiffchaff	various sites
Spotted Flycatcher	Portland Bill
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Portland,
Carrion Crow	various sites
Raven	Portland,
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Chaffinch	Portland
Greenfinch	Portland
Goldfinch	various sites
Linnet	Portland

Insects: 13 species

Small White	Portland
Large White	Portland
Clouded Yellow	Portland
Small Copper	Portland
Common Blue	Portland
Comma	Portland
Red Admiral	various sites
Peacock	Portland
Painted Lady	Portland
Speckled Wood	Portland
Small Heath	Portland
Common Darter	Radipole, Lodmoor
Migrant Hawker	Radipole, Lodmoor

Reptiles/Mammals: 3 species

Wall Lizard	Portland
Grey Squirrel	Portland
Fox	Portland