

## Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks

Friday March 19th – Sunday March 21st 2010

### **Saturday March 20th**

**Weather: Light drizzle on and off all day in a light southerly wind**

Ferrybridge, 0930

The weekend got off to an excellent start with a Wheatear on Chesil Beach.

Langton Herring, 1000

The rain held off for most of our long walk around this beautiful part of the Fleet. We could find no sign of the Bufflehead which had been there for a couple of weeks but the excellent view of the Hoopoe more than made up for this. A pair of Pintail were with the dozens of Wigeon at Rodden Hive and lots of Mergansers were out on the Fleet. Pheasants were very numerous and we also found a couple of Red-legged Partridges. A pair of Brown Hares running across the road were a great sight as we drove along the back road to Abbotsbury.

Abbotsbury, 1300

After a short coffee break in the sub-tropical gardens we drove on to the car park at Abbotsbury Beach and walked south to the start of the Fleet near Abbotsbury Swannery. The first birds we saw were a fine group of 5 Scaup with another 3 found further out. Large numbers of Tufted Ducks and Pochards were here as well but the most memorable sight was the Water Rail swimming across the water just in front of us. A smart male Stonechat was a welcome sight after such a hard winter.

Portland Harbour, 1500

A quick look for the Red-necked Grebe instead turned up an unexpected late Slavonian Grebe.

Lodmoor, 1600

In very wet conditions we managed a few valuable additions to the weekend list including superb views of a rather tatty-looking Spoonbill and a Redshank, one of the few waders seen today.

Radipole, 1700

A really excellent final visit produced good numbers of very early Swallows and Sand Martins along with our old friend "Hoodie", the Hooded Merganser.

## Sunday March 21st

**Weather: Warm sunshine all day with a cool westerly breeze**

Portland Bill, 0630

We were still in the vehicle when we saw the first Wheatears at the side of the road, and by the time we returned to the vehicle we must have seen 20 of these lovely little birds. The sea produced all the expected sights including at least 2 Puffins, lots of Gannets and a Red-throated Diver.

Great Ovens Hill, 1000

On the edge of Wareham Forest this classic Dartford Warbler site turned up no less than 4 individuals including an exceptionally bright male. A male Siskin gave even better views singing away at the top of a birch tree.

Lawson's Clump, 1100

A short distance down the road this Forestry Commission pull-in gave us some brief views of Crossbills in flight and another lovely singing male Siskin.

Arne, 1200

The Middlebere Heath path was a real pleasure to walk today in the warm afternoon sunshine – making up for yesterday's trial by drizzle! The first of several star birds was a gorgeous male Redpoll, a pale bird that may well have proved to be a Mealy had we been able to examine it for a bit longer. A few yards down the path a couple of Dartfords leapt about in the heather and a Marsh Harrier circled high over the marsh. The Middlebere Lake hide really turned up trumps today with 4 Spoonbills and the best part of a thousand Black-tailed Godwits. A first-winter Mediterranean Gull appeared briefly, flying past the hide on its way to Poole Harbour where they sometimes breed.



Middlebere Farm, 1500

Overlooking the same mudflats but from a different direction showed us a completely different set of birds, with dozens of Grey Plover, 85 Knot and a superb Spotted Redshank. The Yellow-legged Gull was a more expected addition to the list. The barn next to the hide held a sleepy Barn Owl and the trees nearby the first Chiffchaffs of the spring.

Ferrybridge, 1730

A final effort at reaching the hundred for the weekend added 3 new birds in the shape of Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Raven. The Sandwich Terns will have to wait for next time!

**Birds: 93 species**

Red-throated Diver	Portland Bill
Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour
Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour
Little Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Spoonbill	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Little Egret	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Mute Swan	Radipole
Brent Goose	Middlebere
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Shelduck	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Gadwall	Lodmoor
Wigeon	Langton, Middlebere
Pintail	Langton
Shoveler	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Teal	Lodmoor, Langton, Middlebere
Mallard	Lodmoor, Middlebere
Tufted Duck	Abbotsbury
Scaup	Abbotsbury
Pochard	Abbotsbury
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour
Goldeneye	Langton
Marsh Harrier	Middlebere
Kestrel	Portland, Radipole
Buzzard	Langton, Middlebere
Sparrowhawk	Langton
Pheasant	Langton
Red-legged Partridge	Langton
Water Rail	Abbotsbury
Moorhen	Radipole
Coot	Radipole
Curlew	Middlebere
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill
Black-tailed Godwit	Middlebere
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Grey Plover	Middlebere
Knot	Middlebere
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Spotted Redshank	Middlebere
Redshank	Middlebere
Black-headed Gull	various sites
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Langton
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Mediterranean Gull	Middlebere
Yellow-legged Gull	Middlebere

Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	Portland
Hoopoe	Langton
Barn Owl	Middlebere
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne, Wareham Forest
Nuthatch	Arne
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill
Meadow Pipit	Arne
Pied Wagtail	Portland Bill
Skylark	Portland Bill
Sand Martin	Radipole
Swallow	Radipole
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	various sites
Stonechat	Langton, Middlebere
Wheatear	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge
Robin	various sites
Blackbird	various sites
Mistle Thrush	Arne (heard)
Song Thrush	Lodmoor
Chiffchaff	Middlebere
Dartford Warbler	Arne, Wareham Forest
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Jay	Arne
Raven	Ferrybridge
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Langton
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Greenfinch	various sites
Goldfinch	various sites
Chaffinch	various sites
Linnet	Portland Bill
Siskin	Wareham Forest
Crossbill	Wareham Forest
Redpoll	Arne

**Insects: 2 species**

Comma	Arne
Peacock	Arne

**Fish: 1 species**

Ballan Wrasse	Portland Bill
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**Mammals: 6 species**

Grey Squirrel	Wareham Forest
Roe Deer	Radipole

Old Deer  
Brown Hare  
Rabbit  
Common Shrew

Middlebere  
Radipole  
Middlebere  
Abbotsbury

