

Portland Heights Birdwatching Breaks
Friday January 7th – Sunday January 9th 2011

Saturday January 8th

Weather: Strong south westerly winds in the morning, sunny in the afternoon.

Chesil Cove, 0900

We started with a trip to see the enormous waves crashing into Chesil Beach. As well as hundreds of gulls feeding in the surf we saw a couple of Rock Pipits on the sea wall and a Raven overhead.



Weston, 1000

Next was a fruitless search for Waxwings but we did see a good range of birds including Goldcrest, Fieldfare and Redwing. The highlight was when a screeching noise overhead caused us to look up just in time to see a female Peregrine see of another pair of Peregrines, presumably in the wrong territory.

Portland Bill, 1100

Very windy at the Bill this morning with absolutely tremendous seas. There were plenty of seabirds to see, including Razorbills, Gannets and Shags with a couple of Kittiwakes feeding offshore. A group of 4 Purple Sandpipers were a great sight feeding in the spray, which today brought them very close indeed.



Portland Bird Observatory, 1200

It was really too windy to see much in the fields around the Observatory but we did add Buzzard to the day's list.

Grove Point, 1300

With the aid of our unique Peregrine viewing equipment we were able to obtain splendid views of a pair of Peregrines as well as some very close Fulmars.

Portland Castle, 1330

An impressive flock of Red-breasted Mergansers here numbering at least 80 birds.

Ferrybridge, 1400

Dark-bellied Brent Goose and Mediterranean Gull were added to the day's list here.

Sandsfoot Castle, 1430

Here we found around 10 Black-necked Grebes, at least 2 Slavonian Grebes, a Great Northern Diver and a Goosander.

Lodmoor, 1530

A host of new birds here, all of which paled into significance compared to the Long-billed Dowitcher which was the first ever seen on a Heights Weekend.

Radipole, 1630

Our final stop added a number of new birds but the highlight was easily the view of Jupiter and its 4 largest moons through the telescope.

Sunday January 9th

Weather: Calm and sunny all day.

Overcombe, 0930

A quick stop to scan Weymouth Bay for seabirds produced a good view of a Slavonian Grebe and plenty of Great-crested Grebes.

Wareham, 1030

Parking at Bestwall, we walked out to Swineham Gravel Pits in beautiful warm sunshine, although the flooded fields were frozen solid. Lots of birds were seen on the way including Redwings, Fieldfares, Curlew and a really gorgeous Firecrest. At Swineham we found a beautiful drake Pintail along with a huge range of other wildfowl but sadly no Smew. A female Marsh Harrier landed on one of the islands and then gave good views hunting around the reed beds. Walking back we added a different set of birds to the list including an exceptionally close view of 2 Treetreepers. A casual scan across the water meadows revealed a feeding group of 6 Grey Lag Geese with a larger group of geese resting quietly next to them. Careful and patient examination eventually confirmed the presence of no less than 18 White-fronted Geese – a very rare visitor to Dorset and only the second record of this species for a Heights weekend.

Arne, 1400

As usual the car park produced a good selection of birds including Coal and Marsh Tits. Middlebere Lake was covered in thousands of waders with well over 500 Avocets and probably similar numbers of Black-tailed Godwits and Dunlin. A distant Yellow-legged Gull was picked out through the telescope and our second Marsh Harrier of the day was seen. Coombe Heath produced very little today apart from a pair of Stonechats, the only ones seen all weekend.

The final total was an impressive 95 species, with another 5 heard. Surprisingly this did not include a single Turnstone, but please click on the photo below to see a famous individual from 2009!



The Zombie Turnstone, in memory of Nathalie Schorbon

Birds: 100 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Northern Diver	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Grebe	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Crested Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herring Gull	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slavonian Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow-legged Gull	Arne
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-necked Grebe	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fulmar	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kittiwake	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gannet	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guillemot	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cormorant	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Razorbill	Portland Bill
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shag	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feral Pigeon	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Little Egret	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collared Dove	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Heron	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Pigeon	Fleet
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mute Swan	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Woodpecker	Arne (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	White-fronted Goose	Bestwall, Wareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great-spotted Woodpecker	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greylag Goose	Bestwall, Wareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skylark	Wareham (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Ferrybridge, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meadow Pipit	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Pipit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shelduck	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pied Wagtail	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wigeon	Wareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Wagtail	Portland Harbour
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gadwall	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treecreeper	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teal	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nuthatch	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mallard	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wren	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoveler	Swineham, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunnock	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pintail	Swineham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Redstart	Grove
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Duck	Swineham, Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robin	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pochard	Swineham, Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stonechat	Arne
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goosander	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blackbird	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Merganser	Portland Harbour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Thrush	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hooded Merganser	Radipole	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fieldfare	Portland, Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kestrel	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Redwing	Portland, Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peregrine	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sparrowhawk	Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Firecrest	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buzzard	Portland, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldcrest	Portland, Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Harrier	Wareham, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coal Tit	Arne
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moorhen	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marsh Tit	Arne
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coot	Radipole, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Rail	Radipole (heard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Tit	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pheasant	Wareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-tailed Tit	Portland, Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oystercatcher	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bearded Tit	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purple Sandpiper	Portland Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magpie	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dunlin	Arne, Lodmoor, Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackdaw	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avocet	Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rook	Weymouth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Redshank	Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raven	Portland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curlew	Wareham, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrion Crow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-tailed Godwit	Wareham, Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Starling	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bar-tailed Godwit	Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-billed Dowitcher	Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chaffinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lapwing	Arne, Lodmoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfinch	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Golden Plover	Wareham (heard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goldfinch	various sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediterranean Gull	Ferrybridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reed Bunting	Wareham (heard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-headed Gull	various sites	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Mammals: 5 species

<input type="checkbox"/>	Rabbit	Lodmoor, Wareham	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Rat	Radipole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roe Deer	Poxwell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Squirrel	Wareham
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sika Deer	Arne	<input type="checkbox"/>		