

WINGSPAN BIRD TOURS

BIRD-WATCHING HOLIDAY TO

WEYMOUTH, DORSET



OCTOBER 11TH - 18TH 2019

TRIP REPORT

Contact: info@wingspanbirdtours.com

PLACES VISITED

FRIDAY 11TH

RSPB LODMOOR – RSPB RADIPOLE LAKE – FERRYBRIDGE – PORTLAND HARBOUR FROM PORTLAND CASTLE

SATURDAY 12TH

FERRYBRIDGE – PORTLAND (EASTERN WEARE (FANCY FARM) – CHURCH OPE COVE – PORTLAND BILL – WEYMOUTH – LODMOOR RSPB RESERVE – ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY

SUNDAY 13TH

FERRYBRIDGE – PORTLAND (EASTERN WEARE (FANCY FARM) – CHURCH OPE COVE – PORTLAND BILL – WEYMOUTH – LODMOOR RSPB RESERVE – ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY

MONDAY 14TH

WAREHAM FOREST AT SHERFORD BRIDGE – LONGHAM LAKES – UPTON COUNTRY PARK – FERRYBRIDGE – SOUTHWELL AND LOWER LIGHTHOUSE, PORTLAND

TUESDAY 15TH

HARTLAND MOOR AND SLEPE HEATH - RSPB ARNE - STUDLAND BAY - BRANDS BAY - EAST FLEET

WEDNESDAY 16TH

PORTLAND - VERNE PRISON ‘DRY MOAT’ – PORTLAND BILL – SOUTHWELL - FERRYBRIDGE RINGSTEAD BAY - MAIDEN CASTLE HILL FORT

THURSDAY 17TH

PORTLAND – EASTERN SIDE AT PENNS WEARE AND EAST WEARE – PORTLAND BILL OLD HILL FORTUNESWELL – FERRYBRIDGE – ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY

FRIDAY 18TH

PORTLAND – PENNS WEARE AND CHURCH OPE COVE – RETURN TO STOFORD SOMETSET

DAY 1 – FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2019

RSPB LODMOOR – RSPB RADIPOLE LAKE – FERRYBRIDGE – PORTLAND HARBOUR FROM PORTLAND CASTLE

WEATHER: Very strong south-westerly wind all day, rain at times temp 11C

Well I finished off my tour to the Isles of Scilly two days ago in windy and wet conditions and I have now started my tour of Dorset in worse conditions, how nice!

I met Mike and Lorna at our guest house in Weymouth late morning and by 12 noon we were out birding at Lodmoor. Despite the very strong wind we managed to find shelter along the west side of the reserve behind the trees and bushes. We quickly found Black-tailed Godwits, a single 'white' Ruff, some Teal, Gadwall, Wigeon, Little Grebe and Canada Geese. The pools were covered in gulls, mostly Black-headed but also Mediterranean, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls.



The 'white' Ruff seen at Lodmoor

Our main target bird was the GREY PHALAROPE which was seen recently on the far side of the reserve, fortunately for us the Phalarope flew over towards us and landed at the far side of the nearest pool. Smashing, we had great views of it, but before we had time to take pictures it was off again, this time it disappeared behind the reed beds back along the path that we had arrived on.

We couldn't relocate the bird, but we did have great views of Cetti's Warbler, Marsh Harrier and both Little and Great Egrets. A light brown flash of colour dashing through the reeds was most probably a Bearded Reedling but we couldn't be certain.

After buying lunch and eating it near the tennis courts along Radipole Lane we looked over the main pool at Radipole Lake RSPB reserve. We added Tufted Duck, Shoveler, Common Pochard and Grey Heron to our list.

Just before we collected Rita and Ann from the train station in Weymouth we took a coffee in the visitor's centre at Radipole. The car park was covered in Black-headed and Mediterranean Gulls and a few Pied Wagtails.

After collecting Rita and Ann we drove across town to our guest house, our two newcomers were too tired to come out birding so Lorne, Mike and I continued without them. A short drive found us at Ferrybridge, we parked the bus and walked from the Ferry Bridge (derelict) pub up to the visitor's centre.



The mudflats at Ferrybridge

Because of the strong wind we didn't find many birds until we reached the shelter of the visitor's centre buildings. We scoped the mud flats and found many birds, there were dozens of Greater Ringed Plovers, fewer Dunlin, three Ruddy Turnstones, two Bar-tailed Godwits and a single Oystercatcher.

All of the waders took to the air as a Merlin dashed across the mudflats, it chased a single bird but missed it. Then the Merlin returned and landed on Chesil Bank, we scoped it and had reasonable, but distant views.

Our last bit of birding was done from Portland Castle where we found shelter to scan the harbour. We only saw Cormorants, Shags, Ruddy Turnstones and a couple of Rock Pipits. It was now approaching 5pm, the light was fading fast and it started to rain again, that was our cue to leave and call it a day.

DAY 2 – SATURDAY OCTOBER 12TH 2019

FERRYBRIDGE – PORTLAND (EASTERN WEARE (FANCY FARM) – CHURCH OPE COVE – PORTLAND BILL – WEYMOUTH – LODMOOR RSPB RESERVE – ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY

WEATHER: Rain, rain and more rain, very little wind

Yes it rained all day, it never stopped once and we got soaked! Isn't that funny? It was raining at 8am when we left our lovely cosy guest house and it was still raining when we returned at 5pm, it was also raining when we left for dinner at 7pm.

We left the Guest House at 8am and stopped at Ferrybridge 5 minutes later, it was raining, but we got out of the bus and tried to find shelter below the eaves of the visitor's centre, which was closed! The tide was high but just turning and a very large flock of Brent Geese were in the shallows not too far out.

We scanned the Geese hoping to pick out a single Black Brant (the North American version) and a few Pale-bellied Brent Geese which are also winter visitors to the UK that normally winter in Ireland. We found two or three Pale-bellied but not a Black Brant. It was quite spectacular when all these geese, 500-600, took to the air when flushed by dog walkers or fishermen. Back at the car park we watched a Raven drop in and steal some food from a Carrion Crow no contest, the crow gave up the food easily.



One of the Pale-bellied Brent Geese with a Black-bellied (right) – see the difference?

From Ferrybridge we drove onto the 'island' of Portland, its not really an island, described by Thomas Hardy as a 'sleeping animal tethered to the mainland by Chesil beach'. After driving up through Fortuneswell and then Verne Common we made our first stop on the eastern side at Fancy Farm, we parked up and walked around Admiralty Quarry. We saw very little, it was raining all the time, Common Stonechat, Linnets, Goldfinches, Jackdaws, Robins, Wrens, Dunnocks and Blackbirds.

Now our waterproofs were soaked we got back in the bus and drove down to Pennsylvania Castle and walked down to Church Ope Cove. It was raining. We saw very little, Blue & Great Tits, Goldfinches and Blackbirds. Not a migrant in sight.

So we decided to drive to Portland Bill and get a coffee in the only café open, the rain eased a little, we scanned the ocean from the café window and saw Rock Pipit, Northern Gannet, Cormorants and Shags and a Red-throated Diver, our star bird.



Some of the 500+ Brent Geese at Ferrybridge – there is a Black Brant out there somewhere

In light rain we walked around the Bill area and found a single Northern Wheatear, a huge flock of Meadow Pipits, Common Kestrel, Common Stonechat and a few Linnets.

My group had had enough, they decided to go down to Weymouth for some retail therapy, so I dropped them off at the famous Weymouth Town Bridge. They went shopping I went round to Lodmoor for an hour. I saw lots of birds at Lodmoor including the almost ‘resident’ Grey Phalarope, also Great Egrets and two new birds for the trip list Common Snipe and Greenshank. I also scanned Weymouth Bay for a Great Northern Diver that had been seen there earlier.



Great White Egret at Lodmoor

For the last part of the afternoon we drove out to Abbotsbury Swannery hoping to see one of a number of Cattle Egrets that are often there. Eight of them had roosted there last night. We saw none of them, but we did add Common Pheasant and Common Buzzard to the list.

Back in Weymouth the light began to fade so we called it a day at 4:30pm a nice cuppa back at the guest house was on everyone's wish list!! What a day, wet, wet, wet! From bedroom window I scanned the garden and found a Chiffchaff and three Blackcaps before it finally went dark.

DAY 3 – SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2019

RSPB LODMOOR – CROSSWAYS WATERCRESS BEDS – MAIDEN CASTLE DORCHESTER – RSPB RADIPOLE LAKE – RETURN TO RSPB LODMOOR

WEATHER: Rain for most of the morning, then clearer weather and finally sunshine

It was windy and the rain was lashing down as we left our guest house at 8am, we headed to Lodmoor as that was the only locally place where you can watch birds from under a shelter of sorts. The visibility was horrendous, it was misty, windy and the rain was coming down in buckets.

However, it did improve over the next hour and we ended up having a great time with plenty of birds to see. Rita and Ann caught up with several species missing from their list and we all added a couple of new species, A Kingfisher showed well, a Grey Wagtail sat on a post just in front of us and two Great White Egrets sat out obligingly. We added both Redshank and Greenshank to the wader list and had great views of a dozen or so of Common Snipe, but we could not find the Grey Phalarope.



Common Snipe with a single Dunlin

The rain eased off and it got brighter so we took a walk and venture along the west side of the reserve where we added Cetti's Warbler to the list and had excellent views of the 'white' Ruff.

From Lodmoor we drove up towards Dorchester and made a detour to the Watercress Beds at Crossways, we were hoping for a Water Pipit or a Green Sandpiper, but we only found wagtails and Meadow Pipits. A small group of Barn Swallows with a couple of House Martins was nice to see.



Lodmoor this morning, we had very poor visibility

The huge Hill Fort just outside of Dorchester was our next venue, Maiden Castle is a massive complex and sits in a prominent position in huge an area of open pasture and grassland. It is a regular spot for wintering birds especially for flocks of Golden Plover, Corn Bunting, Linnets, Thrushes and Corvids.

We found huge flocks Linnets and Goldfinches, Meadow Pipits, Rooks and Jackdaws but no Golden Plover, perhaps it was too early for them, another week or two and they will be there. What we did find was a large flock of Skylarks and a dozen or so of Yellowhammers. Then we spotted a 'large Pipit' on a fence, it was very long-legged and very upright with a longish bill. It had to be a Richard's Pipit or a Tawny Pipit. Unfortunately, the bird was very distant, it took off and dropped out of site, it was too far to walk over to get a closer look and my group were calling out for toilets and coffee.

We drove back into Weymouth via the Wishing Well tea-rooms in Upwey where a large portion of coffee and walnut cake was served with the coffee! My group were sated as we arrived at Radipole Lake RSPB reserve. The rain had stopped and the cloud was breaking up, patches of blue sky appeared!!!!

It was still a little too windy we hardly saw a passerine on the reserve, Cetti's Warbler, Blue Tit, Chiffchaff and a Robin. Weymouth was packed with people and cars, the Old Town Car Park was full, I have never seen that before! A Motor-cross event was going on at the beach, 20,000 spectators had turned up!!

Still we managed to get around to Lodmoor for a second visit and what a great visit that turned out to be! The sun was shining, the wind had dropped and the light was excellent. We stood alongside a good number of birders along the west track, then one of them found and described an unusual snipe and I identified it as a Jack Snipe, it showed very well for a short time and all of us saw it though my telescope, smashing! But better was yet to come!



Jack Snipe (above) and White-rumped Sandpiper (below) with a Dunlin at Lodmoor



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Another group of birders found a WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER, they put it out on the internet with a good photograph, we were standing about 50m meters from the finders so we started checking out the Dunlins in earnest. It took about 20 minutes to find the bird, we seemed to be the only birders looking for it. Eventually we got it, amazing, what a great bird for our trip list, an American Waders, my photographs are just record shots really, but you can see what it is. We left around 5pm just as many local birders were turning up to look at the Sandpiper, it was going to get crowded on that narrow path soon.

We had a lovely dinner, a Sunday Carvery Roast at a local pub, smashing!

DAY 4 – MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2019

WAREHAM FOREST AT SHERFORD BRIDGE – LONGHAM LAKES – UPTON COUNTRY PARK – FERRYBRIDGE – SOUTHWELL AND LOWER LIGHTHOUSE, PORTLAND

WEATHER: Rain, rain, rain and more rain

Here we go again...another day of rain, but it's great to be back birding in the UK despite the rain! What do you on day like this with a group of birders, well, you get wet and try to make the most of it. We set off for Wareham Forest at 8am, the traffic through Weymouth and Dorchester was horrendous but we finally got Sherford Bridge, Wareham Forest, it was still raining when we got there.

A walk under the shelter of the mature pines produced a single Goldcrest, we then bumped into a 'tit flock' which held about 20 birds, mostly Long-tailed Tits, but also Goldcrests, Coal Tit, Blue Tit and Great Tit. We heard a Nuthatch, saw a Jay, a fly-over Cormorant and a Wood Pigeon!



A siskin feeding on Alder seeds at Sherford Bridge, Wareham Forest

The girls had had enough already, the light was dismal and the rain ceaseless and relentless, Mike and I soldiered on, we walked across the road into more open woodland with Silver Birch and Oak trees, we found

a flock of Chaffinches, another Tit flock with the same species as before and a flock of Siskin feeding on the Alder seeds near a stream.

A short walk on the heath produced very little, Common Stonechat and a few Meadow Pipits, it was dismal out there in very poor light and did I say it was raining?

From Wareham we drove to Longham Lakes near Bournemouth, an AMERICAN BLACK TERN had been there for nearly a week so we went to look for it. It took a while because the Tern was feeding along the distant shoreline, it was hard to see in the misty conditions, it was still raining.

We sifted through a large flock of Tufted Ducks and found two female Greater Scaup, we also noted Little and Great Crested Grebes, Mute Swan, Grey Heron, Common Coot, Canada Goose, Common Pochard, Gadwall and Mallard.



The American Black Tern at Longham Lakes – taken by Mike Taylor

Then Lorna spotted a Tern flying over and not long after we established where the AMERICAN BLACK TERN was feeding, so we walked round the second of two lakes and had excellent views of it, the rain eased off for a little while. This American Tern is a sub-species of the Black Tern, but who knows, it may be split in the future.

After stopping off to buy our lunch we popped into Upton Country Park to eat it, but the rain was so heavy we never got out of the bus and aborted our visit after eating our lunch. We decided to go back to Weymouth and visit the warm Centre at Ferrybridge where they serve excellent cappuccinos.

From the centre we saw a nice number of waders including: Bar-tailed Godwits, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstones, Common Ringed Plover and Oystercatcher (35 were sitting in a field). We also saw all the common species of gulls and our first Red-breasted Mergansers of the trip.

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The rain stopped at 4pm, we had news of a Red-breasted Flycatcher on Portland and decided to make a quick visit to the 'Hump' on Avalanche Road in Southwell. It was well worth it, we all got to see this little eastern gem. Then we heard news of a Wryneck sighting near the Portland Bird Observatory and as we were so close we drove round there for quick look. We saw large flocks of Linnets, two Common Buzzards, Meadow Pipits, Stonechats, but not the Wryneck!!



A Common Stonechat at Portland

We were back at the guest house before 6pm and went out for dinner at 7pm. I must say you are spoilt for choice in Weymouth, there are many pubs serving excellent food, we tried the Marquis of Granby, a great place to eat and it did not disappoint.

DAY 5 – TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2019

HARTLAND MOOR AND SLEPE HEATH - RSPB ARNE - STUDLAND BAY - BRANDS BAY - EAST FLEET

WEATHER: sunshine at last, almost a whole day of it!! Just one tiny shower of rain, amazing

No rain today, hooray!! But.....it was foggy until 11:30am. Yes, we left our guest house at 8am, it wasn't raining, we had patchy blue sky with some cloud and no wind. Perfect conditions until we got out of Weymouth and headed towards Wareham where we met thick misty fog!!

Our visit to Hartland Moor just south of Wareham was disappointing because of the mist, it was cold and dreary and we saw very little. A few Stonechats appeared, a surprisingly late Tree Pipit and a pair of our main target species the Dartford Warbler was all we got.

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The mist shrouded the heathland casting an atmospheric and mysterious scenario, spider's webs, emblazoned with a myriad of water droplets, covered the gorse and heather like a patchwork of silk netting and made it really quite beautiful, like an enchanted wilderness.



Our trip to RSPB Arne was just the same, at times the mist was really quite dense, but we journeyed on. We took the woodland walk finding Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Jay, Coal, Blue and Great Tit. From Shipstal Point we had views over parts of Poole Harbour, visibility was down to 100 metres, we could just make out Brownsea and Round Islands, we saw very few birds. It was high tide and the harbour was like a mill pond not a whiff of air, we scoped Oystercatcher, Curlew, Sandwich Tern and a few of the common gulls.



As we began our journey back to the car park the mist miraculously lifted, the sun broke through the clouds, we could see much further across the water now, so we scanned further afield. We found a huge flock of some 48 Eurasian Spoonbills, lots of Shelduck, Redshank, Wigeon and Teal. On the way back we added both Grey and Pied Wagtails, Linnets, Goldfinches, Meadow Pipits and our mammal list went through the roof with sightings of Sika Deer, Rabbits and Grey Squirrels.

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We sat in sunshine eating our lunch and drinking coffee at the RSPB café, Red Admirals were on the wing and birds were singing.

We then drove round to the Studland Peninsular and our first stop was the 'Middle Beach' car park which gives you a panoramic view of Studland Bay and Old Harry Rocks. The sea was flat calm, we immediately picked out 4 Black-necked Grebes, then a couple of Great Crested Grebes and to our great delight a Slavonian Grebe was out there too. Apart from Cormorants and Shags we saw nothing else except for another mammal, a Wood Mouse walked around our feet picking up scraps of food, it was so cute.



Old Harry Rocks viewed from the 'Middle Beach' car park

From the well-positioned hide overlooking Brands Bay we spent a good hour scanning the grassy islands for new species, the water level was still extremely high (Spring Tide). Lots of Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwits, Redshank and Lapwing were seen and 6 species of Gull, Black-headed, Mediterranean, Common, Herring and the two Black-backed Gulls.

A Peregrine Falcon caused pandemonium amongst the roosting birds, it failed to catch anything but sat on a grassy bank for quite a while. A single Brent Goose flew into the Bay and two Red-breasted Mergansers drifted in, other than a few Common Buzzards, a Raven and a bunch of Barn Swallows we saw nothing else.

We got back to our Guest House around 4:30pm, Mike and I went for a walk down to the fleet, it was very windy there, we saw a flock of Oystercatchers in a field and a Sparrowhawk chasing Starlings but not much else.

We ate dinner in the local pub at 7pm and called the blog when we got back, we have now seen 104 species with two days to go.



The Wood Mouse seen at Studland

DAY 6 – WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2019

PORTLAND - VERNE PRISON ‘DRY MOAT’ – PORTLAND BILL – SOUTHWELL - FERRYBRIDGE RINGSTEAD BAY - MAIDEN CASTLE HILL FORT

WEATHER: A dry day again, windy to start but reducing later

It was quite chilly first thing especially walking along the ramparts of the Verne Prison (on the outside of course) and it did rain for a while. We were looking for Ring Ouzels, the Verne Prison ramparts and ‘dry moat’ are a regular spot for them during autumn migration, we saw none!

At Portland Bill some 15 minutes later we saw plenty of visible migration, many birds were flying over heading south, we saw flocks of Linnets, Meadow Pipits, Wagtails, (White, as well as Pied), Skylarks, Chaffinches and Goldfinches. A small flock of 9 Redwings was nice to see too. Some grounded birds included Linnets and Meadows Pipit flocks and from the ‘Bill’ we saw Gannets, a single Great Skua and several small flocks of auks, we only identified Razorbills.

Our walk around the hut fields and the ‘obs’ quarry produced nothing new, we saw Common Kestrel, Raven, Common Stonechat and more Skylarks, Meadow Pipits and a large flock of Linnets.

A brief stop at the ‘Hump’ along Avalanche Road in Southwell produced a single Chiffchaff, we were hoping for a Yellow-browed Warbler or even a second sighting of the Red-breasted Flycatcher, but it was very quiet.

We stopped at Ferrybridge for a coffee as we made our way to our next destination, we needed a warm up in the café, a couple of hundred Mediterranean Gulls were sitting on the water and shoreline, to think that ten

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years ago this was a rare bird here! We also saw Brent Geese, Bar-tailed Godwit and several of the common gull species.



Two Mediterranean Gulls in the foreground, with a Black-headed Gull at the rear, you can see the black markings on the faces of these gull species are distinctly different.

Next, we drove right across Weymouth to, first Osmington Mills and then Ringstead Bay. At Osmington we never got out of the bus, we sat and ate our picnic lunch inside because the wind was quite strong and cold. We did see both Red Admiral and Peacock Butterflies and a Blackcap, all from the bus.

At Ringstead we took a long walk from the top coastal path all the way down into the village, the path took us near White Nothe through some lovely habitat, the views back to Portland and Weymouth Bay were stunning.

During our walk we saw Northern Wheatear, Common Stonechat, Yellowhammer and a Great Spotted Woodpecker but no warblers in the trees and bushes. Regardless of the lack of sightings we all enjoyed the walk.

Our last venue was the Hill Fort called Maiden Castle just outside of Dorchester, this was our second visit to this site because I thought the 'set-aside' fields had potential for turning up something and we saw a large Pipit there during our last visit.

It was a lovely walk along the huge grass-banks of the fort, we looked down over of hundreds of acres of fields and a strip of set-aside which was full of seeding flowers. We saw dozens of Linnets and Meadow Pipits and a couple of Whinchats were new for our list, but there was no sign of the large Pipit.

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This Northern Wheatear is just about to cough-up a pellet, how nice!

We arrived back at the guest around 5pm and went out for dinner in the local pub at 7pm. Tomorrow is our last full day, we are going to try to see Yellow-browed Warbler, Ring Ouzel and Firecrest, all on Portland.

DAY 7 – THURSDAY 17TH OCTOBER 29019

PORTLAND – EASTERN SIDE AT PENN WEARE AND EAST WEARE – PORTLAND BILL OLD HILL FORTUNESWELL – FERRYBRIDGE – ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY

WEATHER: Rain and more rain, broken by sunny spells

Yes you guessed it, our last day was ruined by the rain, we got soaked when it absolutely chucked it down during our first outing. We decided to walk the old railway track along the east side of Portland, our walk started well it wasn't raining. We saw several Goldcrests, a couple of Chiffchaffs and lots of migrating birds flying over.

Our view of the lower part of East Weare was spectacular as we walked along the old railway track which was high up along the cliffs. We saw Blackcaps, our first Song Thrush and lots of other common species but not the Ring Ouzel we were hoping for. A Peregrine sat out nicely on the cliffs above us, we also saw Common Kestrel and both a Merlin and later a Sparrowhawk were seen by me only.

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Then it started to rain and at one stage it was torrential, it had waited until we were the farthest from shelter before the skies opened up, we got a soaking. When the rain eased off we were wet and cold, we had to wade through deep puddles and some of the group got wet feet. We abandoned our walk.

We then found ourselves in the warm café at Portland Bill drinking cappuccinos and drying out, as we left the café the sky opened again and soaked us some more.

We bought lunch and drove round to Fancys Farm car park to eat it, we watched Wallabys and Rare-Breed Goats through the fences as we ate. The rain stopped but the wind had picked up significantly. Our walk around the Verne Battery and down to the church at The Grove produced two Chiffchaffs and a Blackcap.



The sky did clear at times but the strong wind made it hard to enjoy birding - this is Ferrybridge at 3:30pm

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We gave up because of the strong wind and tried one more place where a reasonable amount of shelter could be found. The sycamore trees along Old Hill road in Fortuneswell were pretty much out of the wind so we stopped there. We found our only Firecrest of the trip, also more Goldcrests, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Long-tailed Tits and some Chaffinches.

It was approaching 3pm everyone was cold and damp so we decided to call it a day, we made a short stop at Ferrybridge before retiring for the day. Lots of Dark-bellied Brent Geese were joined a one or two of the Pale-bellied variety, we saw 4 Bar-tailed Godwits, 15 Dunlin, 2 Little Stints and a good number of Greater Ringed Plovers. Lots of the usual gulls milled around couple of Skylarks were feeding on the shore very close to us.



Red Admiral – taken by Lorna Taylor yesterday at Osmington Mills

We called it a day after that and went back to the digs with plans to visit the Swannery at Abbotsbury at dusk hoping to see Cattle Egrets coming in to roost. Well we did just that and saw 1 Great Egret, 3 Little Egrets and 2 Cattle Egrets! We got back to Weymouth dead on 7pm just in time to enjoy our last meal at the local pub.

DAY 8 - FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2019

PORTLAND – PENNS WEARE AND CHURCH OPE COVE – RETURN TO STOFORD SOMERSET

WEATHER: light rain, very windy with a strong south-westerly

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The weather this morning was very apt for this trip, it was raining when we left the guest for our very last birding excursion, what a surprise! A very strong wind was also blowing from the southwest.

We hoped to find shelter on the eastern side of Portland but it wasn't possible. We walked from Penns Weare down to Church Ope Cove and back up to the main road through the ancient church grounds passing Rufus Castle, we saw very little. Just a few Goldcrests, Blue Tit and Great Tit, the usual Robins, Blackbirds, Dunnocks and Chaffinches.



Church Ope Cove - the only beach on Portland, a smuggler's delight in days gone by.

We left at 9:30 and returned to the Guest House where we loaded up the bus and departed at 10:30. The trip was over, I dropped Rita and Ann at the Railway station in Weymouth and Lorna & Mike drove their own car back up north. I then returned home to Stoford, Somerset.

I saw more birds from my living room window this afternoon than I had all morning on Portland!!

Miraculously, the wind had died down and sun came out, the meadow outside our flat had several small pools of standing water. I counted 47 Wagtails in the field, 40 of them were Pied, 6 were White Wagtails and a single Grey Wagtail. Three Buzzards were scouring the bare earth for worms.



a juvenile Common Buzzard - this mighty predator was eating half drowned worms!!!



it has a worm in its mouth in this shot

A dozen Wood Pigeons fed on seeds, 15 Goldfinches were also feeding on plant seeds, a single Meadow Pipit dropped in and I never counted the Jackdaws and Crows.

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The last sighting was made of a Grey Heron, it was getting dull and a ray of sunshine highlighted this lovely specimen.

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CHECKLIST OF SPECIES: The taxonomic order and nomenclature follows **Howard and Moore 4th edition (incl. corrigenda vol.1-2).**

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	11 TH	12 TH	13 TH	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH
	ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae									
1	Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
2	Brent Goose	<i>Brenta bernicla</i>		√			√	√	√	
3	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√		
4	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>					√			
5	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	√		√	√				
6	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	√		√	√	√			
7	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	√		√		√			
8	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	√		√	√	√	√		
9	Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	√	√	√		√		√	
10	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	√		√	√				
11	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	√		√	√				
12	Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>				√				
13	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>				√	√			
	GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae									
14	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		√		√	√	√	√	
	GAVIIFORMES: Gaviidae									
15	Red-Throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		√						
	PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: Podicipedidae									
16	Slavonian Grebe	<i>Podiceps auratus</i>						√		
17	Black-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>						√		
18	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	√		√	√				
19	Great Crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>		√	√	√	√		√	
	COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae									
20	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
21	Common Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
22	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	√	√	√		√		√	
	GRUIFORMES: Rallidae									
23	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>			H					
24	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	√		√					
25	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√		
	PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae									
26	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinereal</i>	√	√	√	√	√			√
27	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	√	√	√	√	√		√	
28	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	√	√	√				√	
29	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulicus ibis</i>							√	
	PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae									
30	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					√			
	PELECANIFORMES: Sulidae									
31	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		√				√	√	
	PELECANIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae									

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME								
			11 TH	12 TH	13 TH	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH
32	European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	√	√			√	√	√	
33	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
CHARADRIIFORMES: Haematopodidae										
34	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	√			√	√	√	√	
CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae										
35	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	√			√				
36	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	√	√	√		√			
CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae										
37	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>					√			
38	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	√			√	√	√	√	
39	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	√	√	√					
40	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	√			√				
41	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	√		√					
42	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	√	√	√	√			√	
43	White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>			√					
44	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>							√	
45	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		√	√					
46	Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>			√					
47	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>			√	√				
48	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>		√	√					
49	Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	√	√						
CHARADRIIFORMES: Alcidae										
50	Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>						√		
CHARADRIIFORMES: Stercorariidae										
51	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>						√		
CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae										
52	Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
53	Mediterranean Gull	<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
54	Mew (Common) Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		√	√		√			
55	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		√	√	√	√		√	
56	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
57	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
58	American Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias n. surinamensis</i>				√				
59	Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	√	√			√			
ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae										
60	Western Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	√	√	√					
61	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					√		√	
62	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	
PICIFORMES: Picidae										
63	Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>					√			
64	Gt Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>				√	√			
CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae										
65	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	√		√					
FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae										
66	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	√	√		√		√	√	

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME									
			11 TH	12 TH	13 TH	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH	
67	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	√							√	
68	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>						√	√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae											
69	Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarias</i>				√	√				
70	Common Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
71	Eurasian Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
72	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			√	√	√	√			
73	Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>		√		√	√	√			
74	Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PASSERIFORMES: Prunellidae											
75	Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		√	√			√	√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae											
76	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae											
77	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>						√			
78	Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus prtaensis</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
79	Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	√	√					√	√	√
80	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			√			√			
81	Pied/White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla motacilla/alba</i>	√		√			√	√		
PASSERIFORMES: Fringillidae											
82	Common Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
83	European Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	√		√			√	√		
84	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
85	European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
86	Siskin	<i>Carduellis spinus</i>				√					
PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae											
87	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citronella</i>			√				√		
PASSERIFORMES: Paridae											
88	Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>				√	√				
89	Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
90	Great Tit	<i>Parus major excelsus</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae											
91	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			√				√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae											
92	House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>			√						
93	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Phylloscopidae											
94	Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		√	√				√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Scotocercidae											
95	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	√		√	√					
PASSERIFORMES: Aegithalidae											
96	Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>				√			√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Sittidae											
97	Eurasian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta Europaea</i>				H	√				
PASSERIFORMES: Sylviida											

	SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME									
			11 TH	12 TH	13 TH	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH	
98	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		√	√				√	√	
99	Dartford Warbler	<i>Sylvia undata</i>							√		
PASSERIFORMES: Regulidae											
100	Firecrest	<i>Rugulus ignicapilla</i>								√	
101	Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		√		√	√			√	
PASSERIFORMES: Certhiidae											
102	Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>					√				
PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae											
103	Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae											
104	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae											
105	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>				√					
106	European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
107	Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>						√			
108	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
109	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		√				√			
PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae											
110	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			√					√	
111	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>						√			
112	Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
113											
BUTTERFLIES-MAMMALS-CETACEANS-REPTILES – AMPHIBIANS – OTHER INTERESTING SPECIES											
			11 TH	12 TH	13 TH	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH	
114	Rabbit						√	√			
115	Sika Deer						√				
116	Grey Squirrel				√			√			
117	Wood Mouse					√					
118											
119	Red Admiral			√			√	√	√		
120	Painted Lady							√	√		
121	Speckled Wood							√			
122	Peacock							√			
123											
124	Migrant Hawker			√							
125											