



## **Dorset, Thursday - Sunday 11-14 May 2015**

Sixteen members enjoyed a weekends birding in Dorset.

We met on Thursday morning just before lunch at Ham Wall RSPB reserve on the Somerset Levels and highlights either side of lunch there included long flight views of Bittern, Great White and Little Egret, Marsh Harrier and Hobby. We then proceeded to Swanage and after checking in at the guesthouse, went out for our evening meal. After eating we drove to Studland where we heard two or three Nightjar churring but no sightings.

On Friday, after a hearty breakfast, the group travelled up to the New Forest where our first port of call was Acres Down. The weather was warm but overcast and highlights included Woodlark, Linnet, Stonechat and Tree Pipit. Lunch was taken here and we then moved on to Boldenwood where the best birds were Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush and Common Buzzard plus a herd of Fallow Deer. Our last destination was Eyeworth Pond near Fritham and highlights here were Nuthatch, Redstart, Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Mandarin Duck. It started to rain steadily and a decision was made to have an early evening meal at a local hostelry. The rain was still falling after our meal and we had a good hours drive back to Swanage.

On Saturday, after another excellent breakfast, we travelled the brief distance to Durlston Country Park on the outskirts of Swanage. The weather was fine but with a strong onshore breeze. Highlights included Gannet, Fulmar, Razorbill, Guillemot, Kittiwake, Shag and Rock Pipit and we also found some Bee Orchids. We drove the short distance to Arne RSPB reserve at the other end of Purbeck, had our lunch, and then did a circular walk on Coombe Heath down to Middlebeare Lake where we had excellent views of Dartford Warbler carrying food to a nest, two Spoonbills in the channel along with Little Egret, Linnet and Stonechat plus Sika Deer. We had a short refreshment break and then walked the other half of the reserve down towards Shipstal Point where highlights were Green Woodpecker, Mediterranean Gull, Redshank, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit and Hobby. After our evening meal, a few of us returned to Arne where we successfully saw the Barn Owl and Tawny Owl.



Stonechat



Kestrel



Dartford Warbler

After another great breakfast on the Sunday, we said our goodbyes to the hotel and travelled to Weymouth and on to Portland Bill where we spent the first part of the morning. Highlights here included Peregrine, Kestrel and more seabirds including auks and Fulmar plus a Marbled White butterfly. On the way back to Weymouth we stopped at Ferrybridge and had flight views of Little Tern in extreme heat haze conditions. Our last destination was Radipole RSPB reserve in Weymouth and highlights included Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Common Tern, Reed Warbler and Reed Bunting. The rarest species of the weekend was seen here where a group of entomologists were surveying an area for a rare spider, the Wicken Fen Vanishing spider. This spider had not been

seen for about 100 years until one was found in the last couple of years at Radipole and they found 6 that afternoon very close to one of the paths.



The Group

We ended with 92 species and all agreed that it had been a great weekend's birding.

Photos courtesy of Simon Smith and Graham Haspey.

Ray Evans

### **Dorset, 19th - 22nd May 2022**



The Group

Over the weekend of the 19th-22nd May, 13 members enjoyed a weekend's birding in Dorset. We stayed at the Castleton in Swanage, a new hotel for us but it didn't disappoint. We were extremely well looked after by Katherine and her staff.

We met on Thursday, late morning, at Ham Wall RSPB reserve on the Somerset Levels and highlights here included long flight views of Bittern, Great White and Little Egret, Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Cetti's Warbler and a brief glimpse of a Glossy Ibis. After having a late lunch, we carried on to Swanage, checked in at the hotel, and then went out for our evening meal. After eating we drove to Studland where we heard and saw two or three Nightjar plus Stonechat, Little Egret, Kestrel plus a few Sika Deer.

On Friday after an excellent breakfast, the group travelled up to the New Forest. Rain in the morning changed our itinerary for the day and we started off at Eyeworth Pond near Fritham where highlights included Redstart, Mandarin Duck, Spotted Flycatcher, Grey Wagtail and a small group of Fallow Deer. We then moved on to Bolderwood where we had our lunch, and the best birds were Goldcrest, Blackcap and Raven. Our last destination for the day was Acres Down and we walked across the heath to the raptor viewing point. It was sunny, but a little windy and the only raptors we saw were Common Buzzard. Other highlights included Stonechat, Bullfinch and

Tree Pipit. Having seen Nightjar well the previous evening, we had our evening meal followed by a get-together for a few drinks back at the hotel.

On Saturday, after another hearty breakfast, we travelled the brief distance to Durlston Country Park on the outskirts of Swanage. The weather was fine but with a strong onshore breeze. On the walk down to the lighthouse we had excellent scope views of a Green Woodpecker together with Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and Rock Pipit. Highlights along the clifftop walk included Fulmar, Razorbill, Guillemot and Shag plus some of the group got very excited when they found a Lulworth Skipper butterfly. We drove the short distance to Arne RSPB reserve at the other end of Purbeck and had our lunch. On the recommendation of a volunteer we walked a new piece of heathland that the RSPB have purchased recently. We had excellent views of Dartford Warbler carrying food to a nest, together with further Stonechat, Spotted Flycatcher, Common Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk. Sadly, we were unable to find any Woodlark that had been reported there. Our final destination on the Saturday was a new reserve for all of us, RSPB Lytchett Fields on the edge of Poole where highlights included Little Egret, Oystercatcher, Shelduck, Stock Dove and Linnet. We didn't have a great deal of time there as we were booked into a pub some distance away for our evening meal. Our meal was followed again by a little social gathering back at the hotel.

On the Sunday morning after yet another excellent breakfast, paying our dues and saying goodbye to the hotel we drove towards Weymouth and our first port of call was Portland Bill. After a long time trying to sort out the parking charges at the carpark there, we walked to the cliffs and added Kittiwake and Gannet to our list of seabirds and other highlights included Wheatear. We travelled back towards Weymouth and stopped at Ferrybridge where we had our lunch followed by distant views from the Visitor Centre of Little Tern from the colony which is on the beach there. The majority of the group then moved on to RSPB Radipole Lake in the centre of Weymouth. Highlights here included Black-tailed Godwit, Common Sandpiper, Bearded Tit in flight, Cetti's Warbler and Sand Martin.

We had a great weekend, excellent accommodation, good food and good company. The weather kept mostly fine if not a little windy at times. Our final list of birds was 101.

Paul Kenyon