

## Travelling Naturalist Trip Report Dorset May 3rd - 6th 2010

**Leader:**  
Bob Ford



*Our hotel on the shores of the Fleet*

### Tuesday May 4th

Weather: warm sunshine all day but with a cold northerly wind.

#### Maiden Castle, 0930

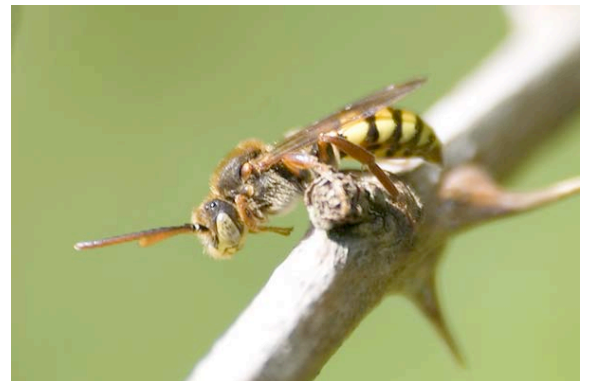
Our first trip was to this Bronze Age hillfort where we had excellent views of Corn Buntings, Linnets and Stonechats, with Wheatears nearby and several Buzzards overhead. Two of the Buzzards were very pale – see right. On the way we made a point of taking the scenic route, driving through the villages of Buckland Ripers, Nottingham, Upwey and Winterborne Monkton. Our return route was via Poundbury and the Travelling Naturalist office after which we drove through Martinstown and Portesham, taking in the Hardy Monument on the way.



#### Fleet, 1200

After a very pleasant coffee break at the hotel we walked south along the shores of the Fleet lagoon to the tiny Fleet church where we had lunch. On the way we saw no less than 19 Whimbrel and several Wheatears and Sandwich Terns. The best birds were the pair of Whinchats on the fence near the church. We also saw a number of Nomad Bees on the wall at the church (see right).

After lunch we returned to the hotel and explored the area to the north, around the island of Herbury Gore. Several more waders were added to the list here including summer-plumaged Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit. A pair of Wheatears on the shore here were easily bright enough to be from the Greenland population.



**Wednesday May 5th**

Weather: cloudy with sunny intervals

Arne, 0900

The early start was worth it as we reached this superb reserve before the crowds arrived. A Wood Lark was found singing at the edge of the reserve and gave good views through the telescope. Walking out onto Coombe Heath we soon found Dartford Warblers but it took a lot of hard work before we all got a reasonable view.

Durlston Country Park, 1300

On a cold and breezy afternoon birds were difficult to find but we did manage brief views of Jay, Bullfinch and Whitethroat. The orchids were the real stars here with Early Spider, Early Purple and Green-winged all seen in good numbers.



*early spider orchid*



*green-winged orchid*



*early purple orchid*

Middlebere Farm, 1530

The resident Barn Owl evaded detection until it we saw it fly out of its barn, but we still got a reasonable view. The hide had a splendid Spoonbill showing well and feeding actively right in front of us. Redshank was a new addition to our very small wader list.

**Thursday May 6th**

Weather: cloudy with sunny intervals again

Portland Bill, 0830

Good views of Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill and Kittiwake with a few fulmars in flight. Offshore was the occasional Gannet passing but little else on the sea in unusually calm conditions. Elsewhere we saw several Wheatears in the Bill Quarry and were able to compare Rock and Meadow Pipits directly. At the Bird Observatory Peter Morgan showed us a beautiful Willow Warbler that he had just caught in the mist-nets.



Grove Point, 1030

The male of the resident pair of Peregrines showed well and we also enjoyed views of Fulmars and a Raven.

Ferrybridge, 1100

Dunlins and Ringed Plovers were feeding on the distant shoreline with a flock of Turnstones taking a rest from their migration nearby. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers on the Fleet were unusually late winter visitors and we found 3 Little Terns sat on the buoys near them.

Radipole Lake, 1130

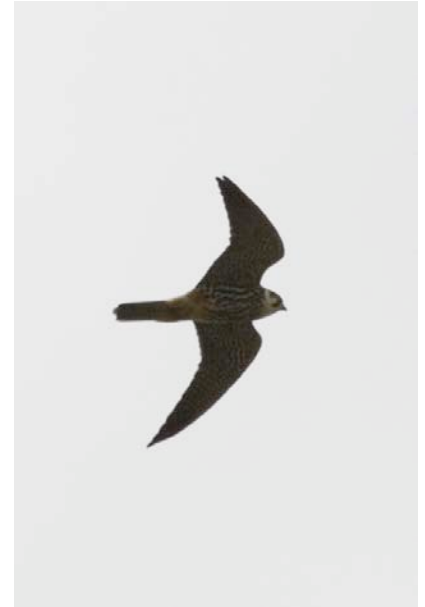
No Bearded Tits here but we had close views of Cetti's Warblers along with dozens of Reed and Sedge Warblers, numerous Reed Buntings and the famous Hooded Merganser.

Lodmoor, 1330

Our final stop took us well over 100 species for the weekend with Common Tern, Bearded Tit, Shoveler and Pochard amongst the new birds seen. The highlight had to be the Hobby hunting insects just above our heads.

Looking forward to our next trip out together,

Bob Ford



**Birds – 104 species**

Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland Bill, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Grey Heron	Lodmoor, Fleet, Radipole
Little Egret	Fleet, Arne
Spoonbill	Middlebere
Mute Swan	Lodmoor, Radipole
Canada Goose	Lodmoor, Arne
Shelduck	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Mallard	Lodmoor, Radipole, Arne
Gadwall	Lodmoor, Radipole
Shoveler	Lodmoor
Tufted Duck	Lodmoor, Radipole
Pochard	Lodmoor
Red-breasted Merganser	Ferrybridge
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Peregrine	Portland
Hobby	Lodmoor
Kestrel	Fleet, Maiden Castle
Buzzard	Fleet, Maiden Castle, Arne
Sparrowhawk	Middlebere
Pheasant	Fleet
Red-legged Partridge	Fleet
Moorhen	Lodmoor, Radipole
Coot	Lodmoor, Radipole
Oystercatcher	Portland Bill, Lodmoor, Arne
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Bar-tailed Godwit	Fleet
Whimbrel	Fleet, Arne
Redshank	Arne
Knot	Fleet
Dunlin	Ferrybridge
Turnstone	Ferrybridge
Black-headed Gull	Lodmoor, Arne
Yellow-legged Gull	Arne
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Radipole
Herring Gull	various sites
Great Black-backed Gull	Portland Bill
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Sandwich Tern	Fleet
Common Tern	Lodmoor

Little Tern	Ferrybridge
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Puffin	Portland Bill
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	various sites
Collared Dove	various sites
Stock Dove	Fleet, Arne
Barn Owl	Middlebere
Swift	various sites
Green Woodpecker	Arne
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Arne
Cuckoo	Arne (heard)
Skylark	Fleet, Portland Bill
Woodlark	Arne
Swallow	various sites
House Martin	Radipole
Sand Martin	Radipole
Meadow Pipit	Fleet, Portland Bill
Pied Wagtail	Lodmoor, Fleet, Portland Bill
Dunnock	various sites
Wren	various sites
Nuthatch	Arne
Starling	various sites
Robin	various sites
Stonechat	Maiden Castle, Arne
Whinchat	Fleet
Wheatear	Fleet, Portland Bill
Blackbird	various sites
Song Thrush	various sites
Mistle Thrush	Arne
Cetti's Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole
Reed Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole
Sedge Warbler	Lodmoor, Radipole
Whitethroat	various sites
Lesser Whitethroat	Durlston (heard)
Dartford Warbler	Arne
Blackcap	Arne
Willow Warbler	Arne, Portland Bill
Chiffchaff	Arne, Radipole
Blue Tit	various sites
Great Tit	various sites
Coal Tit	Arne
Long-tailed Tit	Arne
Bearded Tit	Lodmoor
Jay	Durlston, Middlebere
Magpie	various sites
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	various sites
Raven	Portland
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	various sites
House Sparrow	various sites
Chaffinch	various sites
Greenfinch	various sites
Goldfinch	various sites
Linnet	various sites
Siskin	Arne
Bullfinch	Durlston
Corn Bunting	Maiden Castle
Reed Bunting	Radipole
Yellowhammer	Fleet

**Mammals – 7 species**

Bank Vole	Fleet
Rabbit	Lodmoor, Portland Bill

Grey Squirrel	Arne
Grey Seal	Portland
Roe Deer	Osmington
Sika Deer	Arne
Red Fox	Arne
<b>Fish – 1 species</b>	
Eel	Lodmoor
<b>Butterflies – 8 species</b>	
Small White	Fleet
Speckled Wood	Lodmoor
<b>Notable Plants</b>	
English Bluebell	Arne
Spanish Bluebell	Portland Bill
Horseshoe Vetch	Portland Bill
Early Purple Orchid	Durlston
Early Spider Orchid	Durlston
Green-winged Orchid	Durlston
Chalk Milkwort	Durlston
Adder's-tongue Fern	Durlston