

Mar 2007 Avian Sightings - Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory

31st

80 Chaffinches and a Chiffchaff were on the Estate but in a frisky easterly wind most of the interesting birds were on Restharrow Scrape. They included a colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwit, the LRP and a Water Pipit in just about full breeding plumage that gave fantastic views in front of the hide.

30th

Rain, mist and a chill NE wind made for a pretty cheerless morning, during which highlights amounted to an overflying Grey Wagtail, the LRP and 10 Song Thrushes.

29th

160 Chaffinches flew in off the sea in the early gloom, which never really lifted, and grounded migrants included 7 Chiffchaffs, 18 Song Thrushes and a superb male Black Redstart on the beach near the yacht club. An adult male Marsh Harrier flew W, summer migrants included single Swallow, Sand Martin and Wheatear, the LRP is still on the Scrape and the female Merlin was seen again near the Point.

28th

Early fog cleared to reveal a beautiful spring day that featured substantial numbers of butterflies, including 12 Peacocks, 2 Commas and a very early Speckled Wood. Some avian migration was apparent, including a steady trickle of Linnets and Meadow Pipits, heading N, and a Sand Martin over Restharrow Scrape, which again held a Little Ringed Plover, with another on the beach. The local Corn Bunting flock has increased to a very respectable 37 and the afternoon produced a Marsh Harrier flying out to sea and 3 Wheatears near the Point.

27th

A few Fieldfares and Redwings were audible in early fog, which eventually burnt off around 9.30, revealing 3 Chiffchaffs, one Firecrest and the Little Ringed Plover. The female Merlin was seen again, missing a Meadow Pipit by a whisker over Restharrow Dunes, our first Greenshank of the spring was on one of the floods on Worth marshes, a Brambling was seen just outside the Estate and 2 Common Buzzards drifted NE over New Downs towards Pegwell in the afternoon.

26th

The Little Ringed Plover and Firecrests are still present, with one of the Firecrests singing lustily around mid day. There was also a suggestion of movement, including at least one Wheatear, a Chiffchaff, 3 Goldcrests, 4 Redwings and 16 Goldfinches in the area, while Green and Common Sandpipers were seen at Backsand and at least 33 Corn Buntings were present.

25th

A good deal warmer today, with a stiff onshore easterly. Most things seem to be marking time - the Little Ringed Plover and 2 Firecrests were still present and the Merlin was chasing early on, but 136 Lesser Black backs moving N continued the movement that began yesterday.

24th

At least 2 Firecrests remain in the Elms and the Little Ringed Plover is still on the Scrape. Apparently it will be warmer in a few days, which will be jolly nice.

23rd

Miserable as sin, my old gran would have called this morning. The Little Ringed Plover was still on the Scrape, looking forlorn in the rain and chill N wind and virtually nothing was singing. However, on a return visit to the Elms, 3 Firecrests were mousing through the conifers, which brightened the day, metaphorically at least, and a ringtail Hen Harrier flew past the Observatory in the afternoon.

22nd

A much better day, though apart from a Merlin and 3 Chiffchaffs there was no sign of migration apart from 15 Magpies flying north high over the Estate and out of sight beyond the river and a Little Ringed Plover that appeared on the Scrape in the afternoon.

21st

The wind was lighter this morning, but still fresh and chilly, and 5 Chiffchaffs and a Firecrest were in the Elms, which are just about the only reasonably sheltered bit of the Estate. A Little Egret was still on Restharrow Scrape, where it has been for a week now.

20th

A strong to gale force N wind with heavy squalls put paid to the morning, but in brighter conditions in the afternoon a Firecrest and 3 Chiffchaffs were flitting about in the relative shelter of the Elms.

19th

What a difference a couple of days makes! Snow showers overnight left a sprinkling on the fields and the wind, already a chilly NW, veered steadily into the N as the morning passed by. The Merlin was charging about again and 5 Chiffchaffs were still evident on the Estate, including a couple in song, but the bird of the morning was a Short-eared Owl, flapping steadily north offshore, pursued by a pack of gulls.

18th

Despite a strong westerly wind, 2 Sandwich Terns flew north this morning and the female Merlin was seen around the Observatory again.

17th

This morning produced a Merlin, chasing Meadow Pipits around the Observatory, 3 Chiffchaffs on the Estate and a Common Seal offshore. There was also an obvious influx of Blackbirds, perhaps anticipating the return of winter in the next few days.

16th

Under an overcast sky with a chilly breeze, 25 Fieldfares flew N first thing, but not much else. However, warm sunshine soon revealed 6 Chiffchaffs and a Black Redstart on the Estate, then a Marsh Harrier flew in from the NE and over the Observatory.

15th

Grounded migrants were few and far between on a still, clear morning. Best of the bunch were 3 Redwings, a Fieldfare, a Chiffchaff and 6 Song Thrushes.

14th

Though yesterday was rather quiet, apart from 2 Wheatears on the golf course, the rather chilly N breeze seemed to have grounded an assortment of migrants that departed this morning, including 11 Redwings, at least 100 Chaffinches and six Song Thrushes, though a Red-legged Partridge on Restharrow Dunes probably

didn't fall into the same category!

12th

The Black Redstart was seen early this morning in Waldershare Gully and in the Whitehouse Paddock 6 Mistle Thrush, 16 Corn Bunting and a Brambling keeping company with a flock of Chaffinches. Later on in the day a Marsh Harrier was seen flying in from the sea heading towards Worth marshes and a pair of Wheatear were near Prince's old clubhouse.

11th

A lovely calm spring day with a developing SW breeze with Skylarks and Meadow Pipits abundant on the Estate, 4 Chiffchaffs calling one of which was caught by the ringers as well as a female Bullfinch - an unusual bird for our area. A Sand Martin flew over, 1 Black Redstart, 21 Corn Buntings all on the Estate and 5 Kestrels counted at the Point.

10th

Hooray our first Wheatear was spotted today in the usual haunt of Princes' old clubhouse. Elsewhere was a single Short-eared Owl seen flying across Restharrow Meadows to Restharrow Scrape, at New Downs 18 Snipe were counted and coming in offshore a female Peregrine.

9th

Overnight rain soon cleared to leave a heavily overcast morning with a gentle W/SW breeze. A procession of birds flew in off the sea, including 137 Chaffinches, a Merlin and a Marsh Harrier, while 2 Siskins flew over as the weather cleared and the breeze veered into the N/NW. At least 30 Great Tits were on the Estate, including a continental individual caught by the ringers.

8th

On a lovely springlike morning, a steady procession of migrants flew N, including a Woodlark, 21 Fieldfares, a Brambling, 63 Chaffinches and a few Meadow Pipits of which more than 80 were in the area. A Little Ringed Plover was freshly arrived on Restharrow Scrape, a Peregrine was tearing about over the marshes and a Chiffchaff was on the Estate.

7th

A Sand Martin arrived off the sea this morning, equalling the earliest observatory record, a Chiffchaff was singing on the Estate and a Short-eared Owl was seen near the Point.

4th

On a cloudy morning with a light SE breeze, nearly a hundred Chaffinches were evident, including 62 flying south overhead, on the Estate four Chiffchaffs and four Goldcrests.

3rd

With so many volunteers supporting the conservation weekend not many birds were recorded today, but 2 Snipe could be found on Restharrow Scrape and Chaffinch numbers are still high.

2nd

The restless Chiffchaff remains on the Estate and has been joined by a single Goldcrest, in addition 2 Siskin were seen flying northwards and 19 Corn Buntings were counted across the Estate area.

1st

The subtle start to spring movement continued this morning with a very restless Chiffchaff on the Estate in addition to 2 wintering individuals, and a Crossbill and 2 Tree Sparrows flying over. Overnight rain had grounded 9 Song Thrushes, which ticked off northwards, and a handful of Chaffinches arrived from off the sea at some height.