

May 2007 Avian Sightings - Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory

31st

The month concluded with confirmation of successful breeding by a pair of Jays in the Elms, in some much appreciated sunshine, but little else apart from a small influx of Reed Warblers on the Estate.

30th

Restharrow Scrape continues to be the main focus of interest, with a Wood Sandpiper having arrived overnight, although the Avocet, which has been present early in the morning for the last four days, departed again at 7.30. Elsewhere, the local Stonechats were feeding 3 young, 6 Yellow Wagtails flew N, a sparse collection of other migrants included singles of Reed and Willow Warbler and 2 Marsh Harriers were seen, but the award for the most bizarre bird of spring must surely go to a drake Long-tailed Duck on the rising tide in Pegwell Bay.

29th

Waders have provided the main interest over the last couple of days, with a Little Stint, up to 6 Dunlin, 2 Common Sandpipers and 3 Ringed Plovers on Restharrow Scrape, in addition to the resident species. Overhead (actually, almost underfoot in yesterday's foul weather) Swifts have been passing through in substantial parties, totalling 220 yesterday and at least 160 during the morning today, and a Marsh Harrier drifted in off the sea just after mid day. In calmer, bright conditions with dark shower clouds in the afternoon, at least 500 Swifts, 500 Swallows and 600 House Martins were circling overhead in a huge swarm, while at least 21 Sand Martins moved N and a calling Quail and a Wheatear were present near Prince's old clubhouse.

27th

Before rain set in to bring an end to proceedings, an adult male Golden Oriole was heard calling in the Elms at 08.10, but it was seen to fly off to the NE after only a few phrases and was not seen again. The Avocet on Restharrow Scrape was in a similar mood, having disappeared in the same direction a little while earlier, leaving 2 Willow Warblers as the only new migrants of the day.

26th

A change to cooler conditions produced a very quiet day on which the only fresh arrival was an Avocet on Restharrow Scrape.

25th

On a still and increasingly humid morning a Grey Wagtail flew N along the beach, singles of Lesser Whitethroat and Willow Warbler had freshly arrived and 2 Hobbies were seen.

24th

Another lovely calm, sunny day produced a most unexpected Firecrest, singing outside the Observatory and, on Worth marshes, a Hobby and at least 3 Marsh Harriers.

23rd

On a lovely, calm and sunny morning a Peregrine flew low over the fields towards Pegwell at 0730 and a Red Kite drifted from inland over the Observatory at 0850. 2 Avocets had arrived on Restharrow Scrape and at least 2 Hobbies were hunting over the adjacent farmland and marshes, but the event of the day was the discovery of 3 Red-eyed Damselflies on the North Stream; these appear to be the first records for the area.

22nd

After a very quiet day yesterday, warm, calm and overcast conditions gave rise to a much better day today. Singles of Spotted Flycatcher and Garden Warbler were trapped, 140 Swallows moved N and 5 Wheatears were still present, while Worth marshes held 3 Hobbies and 2 Marsh Harriers, plus 2 blue-headed wagtails.

20th

2 Marsh Harriers flew N at 06.45 but this encouraging start to proceedings fizzled out under a clear sky with no wind, although a few Swallows trickled N, 7 Turtle Doves were on the Estate and another Marsh Harrier flew N at 10.00. In the afternoon, a female Montagu's Harrier drifted over Worth marshes, probably having arrived from off the sea, and 3 Hobbies were hunting over the golf courses.

19th

A Spotted Flycatcher was present this morning and Wheatears continue to move through, with 8 in the area.

18th

Before the wind freshened the morning produced a probable 3 Hobbies, one of which was tearing around the Restharrow area after House Martins and Skylarks, a singing Garden Warbler and confirmation of successful breeding by the local Stonechats. A rather hopeful look at the sea turned up 2 Arctic Skuas, 12 Common Scoter, 2 Eider and 2 adult Mediterranean Gulls heading S offshore.

17th

Warm and humid, but mainly heavily overcast, today was rather quiet, although a freshly-arrived Garden Warbler was mumbling away in the bushes, a Chiffchaff was our first on the Estate for nearly three weeks, two adult Mediterranean Gulls flew S and a Marsh Harrier was seen over Worth marshes, where a blue-headed wagtail seems to have taken up residence.

16th

Despite a cold northerly wind and a leaden sky, the morning was not without its compensations. There was a small arrival of 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 130 Swallows and a few Swifts moved north along the beach and just offshore, heading slowly towards Pegwell, was a Bottle-nosed Dolphin, which gave superb views for 15 minutes or so before slipping out of sight. Later in the day, 2 Crossbills flew N just outside the Estate.

15th

There was evidence of a small arrival of migrants before the weather disintegrated once again, including a Spotted Flycatcher and 4 Willow Warblers, while a Hobby was perched on the Elms and the first Lapwing chicks were visible on Restharrow Scrape, where 2 Little Egrets arrived from the north.

14th

57 Swifts slipped in off the sea between showers and 17 Gannets and 12 Fulmars headed S offshore, but apart from an obvious increase in numbers of Reed Warblers in the dykes it was a quiet start to what looks like being a very unsettled week.

13th

At least 17 Wheatears were present along the coast and around 30 Sandwich Terns

were mooching about offshore, while 7 Little Terns and a Black-throated Diver flew N. However, the bird of the morning was a male Montagu's Harrier that flew in off the sea at 0820 and headed directly inland without a sign of pausing. Later on, a female Marsh Harrier was seen over Worth marshes.

12th

On another windy morning a Pomarine Skua flew N offshore, with at least 2 Razorbills out at sea and around a hundred each of Swift, Swallow and House Martin heading in the same direction.

11th

The morning rattled in on a westerly gale and although the wind soon abated some offshore movement included 74 Dunlins, 20 Common and 2 Arctic Terns, 12 Ringed Plovers and a Sanderling, while a dozen or so Sandwich Terns patrolled close inshore. Although visible migration was lighter than yesterday 220 Swifts flew N, accompanied by at least 60 House Martins and a similar number of Swallows.

10th

A sudden influx of 880 Swifts dominated the day, followed off the sea and northwards by 3 Hobbies, 2 Turtle Doves and 80 House Martins, while overnight rain had produced a small arrival that included 2 Tree Pipits and 6 Willow Warblers.

9th

A dull and unspectacular day produced a Greenshank and a Greenland-type Wheatear at Pegwell and at least 60 singing Whitethroats, but at least the rain mostly stayed somewhere else.

8th

The day produced rather more than it initially promised, with a Redstart on the Estate, a Marsh Harrier on New Downs and 2 Garganey over Worth marshes being the highlights. Most Common Whitethroats have stayed more or less where they arrived at the start of the month and at least 20 singing males are holding territory on the Estate; well up on last year.

7th

Despite a freshening W wind with occasional showers, a Pomarine Skua and 3 Little

Gulls flew N offshore. 28 Bar-tailed Godwits and 18 Whimbrel were still on the golf course and 2 Mediterranean Gulls were on Restharrow Scrape in the afternoon, but otherwise the land was predictably quiet.

6th

A welcome switch in wind direction to W/SW precipitated an arrival of 24 Common Whitethroats and 4 Lesser Whitethroats, plus a male Ring Ouzel and 2 Wheatears on the cattle field near the yacht club. A female Common Redstart was trapped and 10 Yellow Wagtails and a Hobby flew N, but the star bird of the day was an adult male Golden Oriole in St. George's bushes, unfortunately seen only briefly.

5th

The Temminck's Stint was still on Restharrow Scrape and an Arctic Tern flew N offshore.

4th

The Temminck's Stint was still on Restharrow Scrape this morning and just about every grassy surface in the area was covered in Whimbrels and Bar-tailed Godwits. Totals for the day amounted to 91 Whimbrels and 680 Bar-tailed Godwits, many of which were on the golf courses and even in a beachfront garden in the case of one Whimbrel! Otherwise, a white wagtail flew N, 7 plump Greenland-type Wheatears were on Prince's practice ground, a Marsh Harrier flew N over New Downs and a Hobby was chasing House Martins over one of the fairways.



3rd

The overcast sky and chilly NE wind made life particularly unpleasant until the discovery of a Temminck's Stint on Restharrow Scrape and a drake Garganey on Worth marshes, which cheered the day considerably.

2nd

Activity was adversely affected by the strengthening E wind, but a male Ring Ouzel - our ninth individual of the spring - was on a seafront garden fence and 580 Bar-tailed Godwits were roosting in Pegwell.

1st

Yesterday's Hoopoe had the good grace to appear on the Estate this morning, at the edge of the Elms/Restharrow Scrape, but it then decided to disappear, possibly into local gardens, and was not seen again. Other birds on the Estate included 40 Bar-tailed Godwits, 3 Greenshanks and a 1st summer Mediterranean Gull, mostly on Restharrow Scrape, and 3 Wheatears, while 10 Swifts flew N.