

Oct 2008[<< Back to Sightings](#) | [Printer friendly version](#)**31st**

Following spectacular thunderstorms late last evening the month ended with some fearsome weather to the north, with lead-grey skies, heavy rain and hail and even a waterspout at one point. Although seawatching was again the main point of interest, with 375 Brent Geese, a Velvet Scoter, 4 Little Gulls and 119 Wigeon offshore, there were also 6 Black Redstarts and 3 Firecrests on the Estate.

30th

Seven hours seawatching in a perishing south-easterly produced totals of 1,862 Brent Geese, mainly flying S, 17 Avocets, 15 Red-breasted Mergansers, a Purple Sandpiper and 3 Little Gulls, all flying S, and a Scaup that was sitting rather incongruously on the sea with a gang of Greylag Geese, while 19 Skylarks flew in off the sea.

29th

With overnight rain in the process of clearing slowly away, the early morning was dominated by birds leaving the area and heading steadily NE. The main protagonists were 78 Redwings, 70 Blackbirds, many of which were again sleek continental individuals, 19 Song Thrushes, 11 Bramblings and 28 Skylarks. 28 Goldcrests, a Firecrest and 5 Chiffchaffs were in the bushes and a Short-eared Owl flew in off the sea, which was also quite productive, with over 500 Brent Geese flying S and nearly 200 heading N, singles of Great and Pomarine Skua and a very smart adult drake Eider.

28th

Bright, calm and cold, movement was similar to yesterday, with 107 Siskins, 6 Bramblings, 30 Skylarks, 31 Chaffinches, 57 Redpolls and 10 Tree Sparrows flying N, and a jaunt over Worth marshes in the afternoon produced a Peregrine and a Short-eared Owl.

27th

A steady procession of birds flying N into a gentle NW breeze, under a clear blue sky, included 53 Redpolls, 84 Siskins and 61 Chaffinches, while 44 Skylarks and a Sparrowhawk flew in off the sea with a trickle of Meadow Pipits. Over 50 more Redpolls and a Firecrest were trapped, but the bushes were generally quiet, with only 6 Chiffchaffs of note.

26th

Visibility was so bad that the morning seawatch was likened to 'staring into a jar of vaseline trying to see the bottom'. However, in slightly better conditions an hour or so after dawn a Long-tailed Skua flew towards Pegwell, an Arctic Tern flew S and a Short-eared Owl ghosted along the beach. As the wind began to slacken it became clear that Blackbird numbers continue to increase, with at least 100 around the Estate.

25th

Today was much better in bright, frosty and calm conditions before the wind began to increase in late morning. 2 Yellow-browed Warblers were seen near the Observatory, a

Black Redstart was the first of the autumn and at least 70 Blackbirds, many of which were continental birds, were scattered about the Estate. Birds flying in off the sea included 6 Barnacle Geese, a Water Pipit and 32 Chaffinches and the ringers trapped a hybrid Tree x House Sparrow, plus enough Redpolls to bring the autumn total to over 700.

24th

Even before the onset of drizzle that lasted most of the morning there was very little activity and apart from the birds that were already in the area everything else did the sensible thing and stayed away.

23rd

A bright and calm start before the wind freshened from the SW saw 81 Redpolls flying N, 8 Skylarks and 170 Starlings arriving from off the sea, while 6 Song Thrushes and 40 Blackbirds departed from the bushes around the Observatory.

22nd

On a bright, frosty and calm morning 100 Redpolls, 80 Chaffinches and 14 Reed Buntings flew N, a Short-eared Owl drifted S, 2 Water Pipits were on the river at Baksand Point and a late Lesser Whitethroat was in holm oaks on the seafront. A session of scanning for raptors at mid day produced 2 Peregrines hunting in tandem and a Common Buzzard flying N.

21st

Overnight rain cleared to leave an overcast morning with little in the way of movement. Still, a Kingfisher was on the Estate, continuing their good run of form, and a Yellowhammer was in a seafront garden.

20th

Despite bright conditions with a freshening SW wind - far from ideal conditions - 375 Chaffinches flew N, 220 Starlings flew in off the sea and a party of 14 Crossbills headed S. It's also worth noting that, having been more or less absent for over a week, around 200 Swallows have been swirling about the Estate for the last couple of days.

19th

Under a blanket of low cloud, 360 Redpolls flew N, 20 White-fronted Geese flew in the opposite direction, 60 Blackbirds, 30 Chiffchaffs and 13 Song Thrushes were on the Estate and the afternoon boat trip down the river was notable for 11 Kingfishers.

18th

Although only a slim residue of yesterday's influx of thrushes remained on the Estate, Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were around in small but increased numbers and overhead movement included an impressive 380 Redpolls, 80 Chaffinches, 31 Siskins and 34 Tree Sparrows. A Water Pipit flew in off the sea, with a smart adult showing vestiges of summer plumage on Restharrow Scrape, a Yellow-browed Warbler was calling in the Elms and at mid day 2 Common Buzzards soared N over the Observatory.

17th

Bright and chilly with a light WNW breeze, things were initially rather quiet, though 103 Siskins flew N, 23 Tree Sparrows flew S and 210 Redpolls were recorded, including enough in the nets to bring the number ringed this autumn to over 550! Thrushes started to pour in off the sea just after mid day, including over 700 Redwings and 7 Fieldfares, followed as they did so by at least 4 Sparrowhawks and 3 Kestrels.

16th

On a slightly busier day than yesterday 51 Tree Sparrows flew S and a Yellow-browed Warbler was found on the Estate, quite likely having been present in the same area for a few days. Otherwise, a Water Pipit was on Worth marshes and 2 Short-eared Owls were seen again.

15th

Dull and drizzly with a freshening westerly wind, it was predictably quiet, though 6 Swallow flew rather forlornly N and a Rock Pipit appeared on Restharrow Scrape.

14th

Calm and clear again, the morning was initially very quiet, apart from a busy Coal Tit in a garden by the beach. However, things began to accelerate as a Merlin flew in off the sea, continuing with 41 Reed Buntings, 80 Tree Sparrows, a Short-eared Owl, 7 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 3 of which flew over from the south, and a party of 6 Bearded Tits that flew high over the Estate. Other migrants were generally few and far between, though over 50 Redpolls had been recorded by early afternoon.

13th

Although there were not many migrants about, the morning brought a subtle change as 7 Crossbills and 27 Tree Sparrows flew over. The bushes held about 30 Goldcrests and 15 Chiffchaffs but best of all was a **PENDULINE TIT** that was seen in reeds on the North Stream in the morning, though it failed to respond to subsequent attempts to relocate it.

12th

Overnight fog was even slower to clear than yesterday, ensuring a quiet morning, although a Merlin was seen over the Estate and a Common Buzzard flew N around mid day.

11th

A calm morning with mist that was slow to clear was a good deal quieter than of late, although the ringers trapped a Common Redpoll that had the characteristics of the Greenland race *C.f.rostrata*.

10th

Initially bright and calm again, the morning produced 24 Pink-footed Geese flying S offshore, 700 Goldfinches, 260 Redpolls, a Short-eared Owl and a Little Stint on Restharrow Scrape. Otherwise, numbers of birds on the Estate were well down on

yesterday. To be truthful, the event of the day was the discovery that stoats respond to pishing, but that's another story.....

9th

It was again very good in bright, calm conditions. There were at least 120 Chiffchaffs, 80 Goldcrests, a Cetti's Warbler and a Firecrest on the Estate, where one of the Yellow-browed Warblers was seen again, while overhead movement included 347 Goldfinches and 321 Redpolls, of which nearly a hundred more were trapped, along with a Pied Flycatcher. Raptors were also on the move, including 12 Sparrowhawks and a Common Buzzard.

8th

There was less overhead movement than might have been expected in bright conditions with a light NW breeze, though a total of 207 Redpolls included 170 flying N. There were also 3 Yellow-browed Warblers on the Estate, with at least 40 Chiffchaffs, and at 11.25 a Rough-legged Buzzard flew in from the direction of the sea and headed inland low over the Observatory.

7th

The Jack Snipe was still showing well in front of the Restharrow hide, though at times it was remarkably difficult to pick out amongst the Jack Snipe-flavoured vegetation. Although movement was slow, particularly in early drizzle, a Yellow-browed Warbler was calling in Waldershare Gully in the company of 20 or so Chiffchaffs.

6th

Yesterday's rain and wind had moved away to leave a calm but heavily overcast morning and although things were initially quiet, there were at least 60 Chiffchaffs on the Estate, with arrivals continuing throughout the morning, plus a Short-eared Owl, a Merlin and a Yellow-browed Warbler that turned up in one of the nets early in the afternoon. Overhead, 1,170 Goldfinches and 167 Siskins flew N and 28 Redwings and 11 Song Thrushes were seen and just after mid day a superb Jack Snipe was found right in front of the hide on Restharrow Scrape, giving fantastic views as it bobbed and wiggled its way along the shore of the pool (photo by Phil Thompson).



4th

In a lull before the arrival of the remnants of tropical storm Laura the ringers trapped 3 Firecrests, 38 Chiffchaffs, 15 Goldcrests and 8 Blackcaps, while parties of Siskins and Redwings continued to move over and a Yellow-browed Warbler was present, but very elusive.

3rd

Grey with a cold and boisterous N wind, the morning was a bit of a shock to the system. Still, 379 Goldfinches flew N, a Hobby drifted over the Observatory and a tiny male Merlin almost clipped the tops of the bushes in the Haven as it dashed across the Estate. There was also a small arrival of 13 Redwings and a Fieldfare and lingering summer migrants included a Whinchat and a Common Redstart.

2nd

It was a good deal quieter than of late, though 119 Siskins, 207 Goldfinches and 38 Redpolls flew N, 3 Wheatears and a Whinchat were on Worth marshes and a Kingfisher was seen at a pond on the Estate.

1st

15-20,000 House Martins flew towards Thanet in the first hour and a half before being forced back by the first of a series of intense squalls and 2 Crossbills flew S. Otherwise, seeing much in a fresh westerly was difficult, so we retreated to Pegwell for high tide. Most unusually, a Razorbill was swimming about just in front of the hide, then a Merlin flew across the saltmarsh and 2 sparring Peregrines briefly spooked the roosting waders, but they were all put to shame by a windsurfer who tore across the bay to the Point and did the job properly.