

Oct 2009

31st

A Little Stint was on Restharrow Scrape in the afternoon.

30th

A light SE breeze stimulated a few bits and pieces to appear, including 3 Twite that flew on to Restharrow Scrape, which also harboured a Water Pipit, while Lesser Redpolls seem to be increasing slowly, with about 50 chattering around the Whitehouse and Oasis and 12 Jays and 6 Great Spotted Woodpeckers flew S/W.

29th

With fog lingering until 09.45 it was a day that promised little and delivered even less, although a brief flurry of Blackbirds and Chaffinches took place as the gloom began to lift.

28th

The morning was calm and clear, with wisps of very high cloud; the forecast heavily overcast conditions did not materialise until the afternoon. A Dartford Warbler was found in the gorse at Mary Bax, a Black Redstart and a Snow Bunting were seen along the shore and a Peregrine flew over the Observatory, but it remains very quiet.

27th

Overcast, warm and calm, the morning produced a flock of Crossbills calling high somewhere overhead, 30-odd Chaffinches flying S and a few thrushes, but little else.

26th

Following a quiet weekend on which the only highlights were a Bonxie and 9 Crossbills on the 25th, today was a little bit better. A Lapland Bunting flew N, a late-ish Wheatear was seen along the shore, 3 Crossbills alighted in the Elms and the adjacent gullies held a Bullfinch and 2 Firecrests.

23rd

Autumn seems to be subsiding into the sort of soporific stupor induced in the Flopsy Bunnies by an excess of lettuce, if my memory of Beatrix Potter is correct. Cloudless and calm after overnight rain, there was very little to remark upon, save for 4 Crossbills that flew S, a Black Redstart and a handful each of Chiffchaffs and Song Thrushes.

22nd

Yesterday's rain seems to have persuaded the Jack Snipe either to move on or to become even more furtive and the Estate's only other inhabitants worth remarking upon were 2 Firecrests and a flock of 9 Crossbills that flew S.

20th

Another quiet day on which the main draw was the Jack Snipe on Restharrow Scrape.

19th

A dull morning with very little going on, apart from a gentle influx of 30 or so Blackbirds through the morning, a Ring Ouzel, a Firecrest and a Woodcock.

17th

On another day with a blustery N wind 4 Pink-footed Geese, 2 Shags, 2 Bonxies and an Arctic Skua flew S offshore and 49 Crossbills and 27 Reed Buntings flew N.

16th

1,310 Goldfinches flew along the shore into a blustery N wind with one brief but fairly intense squall, while offshore movement was varied but unspectacular. Best of the bunch were 91 Brents, 26 Shelduck, 3 Pintail and 96 Great Black-backs, which were towing along a couple of large, dark-mantled Herring Gulls that had clearly come from some distance to the north. Otherwise, 2 Firecrests were in the Elms, at least one Jack Snipe was on Restharrow Scrape and the autumn's first Woodcock was flushed from one of the gullies.

15th

Bright and calm, today was very pleasant but, for the most part, very quiet in terms of birds. However, a Spotted Redshank flew in off the sea, 2 Jack Snipe were feeding on Restharrow Scrape, in between bouts of quarrelling, 4 Firecrest were in the Elms and as cloud cover increased and the wind picked up a little from the east around mid day, 30 or so Goldcrests materialised in the Elms and bushes around the Observatory.

13th

Although seabirds were again moving offshore, though in smaller numbers than yesterday, visible migration of passerines was the highlight, including 1,160 Goldfinches, 209 Siskins, 42 Crossbills, which this autumn have assumed record proportions at the Observatory, 57 Greenfinches, 81 Meadow Pipits, 41 Skylarks and 21 Reed Buntings. 5 Pink-footed Geese flew in off the sea early on, there was an influx of 70 Blackbirds, a Firecrest was on the Estate and, last but not least, the Radde's Warbler was showing well in a couple of roadside copses near the end of the Observatory track.

12th

A bright morning with a brisk N breeze induced a mainly northward movement of 1,440 Brent Geese, 315 Wigeon, 17 Pintail, 5 Red-breasted Mergansers, a Pomarine Skua, a Bonxie, 76 Dunlin and 71 Teal, while 19 Pink-footed Geese flew south, 3 Arctic Terns were dancing about offshore and 1,440 Goldfinches flew N along the coast.

11th

A good day; overcast but less heavily so than yesterday. A **GLOSSY IBIS** flew over the Observatory early on and a sudden acceleration in overhead movement in mid morning resulted in totals of 2,220 Goldfinches, 206 Siskins, a Woodlark, 2 Bramblings, 67 *alba* wagtails and 38 Crossbills, all flying N. 2 more Woodlarks were found in the Oasis paddock, a Firecrest was in the Elms and good numbers of Chiffchaffs remained to keep our ringers smiling.

10th

Yesterday's rain cleared overnight but the morning remained heavily overcast, creating a good mix of grounded migrants and birds moving overhead. Totals included 45 Crossbills N, 100 Reed Buntings (49 N), 130 Skylarks (89 N), 80 *alba* wagtails (34 N), 79 Chaffinches N, 100 Greenfinches (73 N), 380 Goldfinches N, 2 Yellowhammers N and 2 Tree Sparrows in the Cellars. Down to earth, 6 Firecrests were trapped, confirming suspicions that more were present yesterday, 120 Chiffchaffs were on the Estate and a late-ish Yellow Wagtail was tiptoeing among the cattle near Restharrow Scrape, which now has joined-up water in it. The ringers crowned a very enjoyable day with the capture of a **RADDE'S WARBLER** in the Haven in mid afternoon; the fourth record for the Observatory (photo below).



9th

A brisk easterly induced a movement of 3 Bonxies, 4 Arctic Skuas, a Pomarine Skua and at least 9 Pink-footed Geese in the first hour after dawn, while Brent Geese continued to move into the afternoon, at least 450 flying S. A Brambling flew over, at least 3 Firecrests were in the Elms and Robins were audible all over the Estate - at least 50 were present.

8th

As overnight rain cleared, 2 Lapland Buntings were flushed from the rough on the golf course and as the morning brightened 31 Crossbills, 32 Reed Buntings (with at least 24 more scattered about the area), 38 *alba* wagtails, 2 Rock Pipits, 41 Siskins and 77 Skylarks flew N. There was also a small arrival of 10 Song Thrushes, a Common Buzzard flew N not long after mid day and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen near the tollgate in the afternoon.

7th

A warm, humid start to proceedings turned to much cooler conditions within the space of a few minutes as a cold front moved in from the north in mid morning. Highlights were a flock of 26 Crossbills that headed N, 17 Siskins flying about in various directions and a Yellowhammer in a seaside garden - a notable bird on the Estate these days. A visit to Pegwell at high tide was ended by persistent rain, but not before a Jack Snipe had dumped down into some weedy stuff just behind the hide - not quite classic habitat!

6th

In a brief window of dry weather before rain resumed a couple of Redwings flew over, a small but obvious influx of Blackbirds and Song Thrushes was evident and Restharrow Scrape now has a few puddles in it, sufficient to attract a Dunlin and 6 Teal!

5th

The early onset of rain (remember that?) dampened the enthusiasm of birds and birdwatchers alike, though 3 Fieldfares flew over and Chiffchaffs were still evident in good numbers in the bushes.

4th

After yesterday's wind, it was a benign morning, but with relatively little variety. 602 Goldfinches, 21

Siskins and 15 *alba* wagtails flew over, a party of 10 Pink-footed Geese made their way towards New Downs from the south and 12 Stonechats were on the Estate.

2nd

1,265 Goldfinches, 105 Linnets, 34 Siskins, 63 *alba* wagtails, a Snow Bunting and 3 Grey Wagtails flew N, there were at least 11 Stonechats in the area and 2 Redwings dropped in during the afternoon.

1st

A fairly quiet morning of overhead movement accelerated at mid day to produce totals of 961 Goldfinches, 19 Reed Buntings, a Rock Pipit and 49 *alba* wagtails, all flying N, while 3 Song Thrushes dropped in from altitude, a Common Buzzard flew N over Worth and 2 restive Coal Tits appeared in bushes along the shore. Offshore, our first Brent Geese of the autumn flew by.