

### **30th**

Although northward movement consisted of a Marsh Harrier, a Hobby and a gentle procession of hirundines and Swifts, migrants on the ground were again very few and far between.

### **29th**

A mostly calm day with wisps of high cloud and a gentle SE breeze produced 2 Hobbies, a Common Sandpiper at a pond on the Estate, 2 Cuckoos and a pair of Whinchats on the fence line near the gorse at Mary Bax.

### **28th**

Although for the most part it was as quiet as a church mouse, things brightened up briefly around mid day when a Common Buzzard and 2 Kestrels drifted over from the NE and a Sparrowhawk flew in the opposite direction.

### **27th**

Bright, calm and warm, today proved to be fairly pedestrian, though a Marsh Harrier flew N, 3 Jays flew high W or NW, a fairly elusive male Ring Ouzel was in the gullies, 6 Wheatears remained along the shore, including at least two bulky Greenland types and 7 Yellow Wagtails flew N.

### **26th**

Although the morning clouded over and it became quite cool until after mid day, numbers of migrants continued to increase. 11 Wheatears were spread along the shore, a very confiding Tree Pipit was found near Waldershare Gully (photo below by Ian Hodgson), with a Cuckoo and an adult male Black Redstart nearby and cumulative totals on the Estate and



Worth amounted to 17 Common Whitethroats, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 19 Yellow Wagtails, 12 Sedge Warblers, 10 Reed Warblers, a Turtle Dove and a Greenshank.

### **25th**

Although the day turned out to be overcast and cool, rather than sunny and hot, as promised, there were a few birds about. A Garden Warbler, 3 Cuckoos and 14 Wheatears were scattered about and offshore 7 Little Terns and 18 Common Terns flew by, while entertainment value was provided by a Fulmar that was cruising up and down the roads on the Estate.

### **24th**

Sunny and calm, the morning produced 2 Wood Sandpipers N overhead and small numbers of the usual warblers.

### **23rd**

Although a bright and steadily warming day produced only a female Redstart, 3 Swifts and a small influx of House Martins on the Estate, a notable arrival of warblers on Worth included 17 Sedge Warblers, 5 Reed Warblers, 15 Whitethroats and 2 Lesser Whitethroats. Elsewhere, an adult male Goldeneye was displaying (to Tufted Ducks!) on one of the reservoirs on New Downs and 3 Common Buzzards were seen over Worth in the afternoon.

### **22nd**

Although the coast still gave a passable imitation of Lapland in March 8 Yellow Wagtails flew N and at least 6 more were present along Worth track, where our first Reed Warbler of the spring was chuntering away. A Pied Flycatcher was seen further inland along the Green Wall (near Sandwich quay) and a Common Buzzard flew N there and late in the afternoon came the news of a Cuckoo on New Downs.

## **21st**

Today was a good deal quieter than yesterday, although northward movement of hirundines amounted to at least 70 Swallows, 6 Sand Martins and 2 House Martins, with our first Swift for good measure. Whimbrel were also prominent, with parties of 12 on the beach and 13 on the field behind Mary Bax, 2 Greenshanks flew N along the shore and a Firecrest was in the Elms.

## **20th**

The N wind was still cold, but it turned out to be a good day with decent numbers of migrants. It kicked off with a party of 19 Crossbills flying N, then a Long-eared Owl that flew in off the sea before landing in pines near the Point. A Tree Pipit and a Turtle Dove were seen near the shore at the south end of the Estate and at 09.20 a party of 6 Common Buzzards drifted up from the S or SE, soared around for a while and then made their way inland. Next, a Little Ringed

Plover flew over the Elms, where a lovely male Common Redstart was present and other migrants scattered about included 6 Willow Warblers, including a Scandinavian *acredula*, 2 Firecrests and 4 Common Whitethroats, while a walk over Worth marshes in the afternoon produced 3 Greenshanks, a Wheatear and 8 Sedge Warblers. Although it's not entirely relevant to today, here's Pete Findley's photo of 2 Red Kites and a Common Buzzard from the weekend.

### 19th

Today brought our first Pied Flycatcher and Lesser Whitethroat, a Hobby, 3 Firecrests and 2 Fieldfares flying N late in the afternoon.

### 18th

At last, a lovely warm spring day with some migrants to look at! Best of all were 3 Ring Ouzels in St. George's bushes, while other summer migrants included 8 Common Whitethroats and 2 new Sedge Warblers. There were also at least 14 Song Thrushes, 3 Green Sandpipers and a

Greenshank were seen on Restharrow Scrape, a Red Kite drifted over Worth marshes at 09.20 and other raptors included Merlin and an adult male Marsh Harrier. 2 adult Mediterranean Gulls flew SW high overhead and a white wagtail flew N along the shore, along with small numbers of Linnets and Goldfinches.

### 16th

15 Whimbrel were floating around Worth marshes and 102 Linnets flew N, but with the cold NE wind persisting it remains very hard going.



## 15th

Groundhog Day. The alarm goes off, Sonny and Cher are playing on the radio, the wind is still cold and still in the NE, visible migration still consists of a dribble of Linnets and Goldfinches and the Mandarin is still turning up in the weirdest of places. To be fair, today was subtly different, with a noisy Greenshank oscillating between the scrape and Willow Farm, 2 white wagtails on the remaining flooded bit of the turf field, where a Golden Plover was standing rather morosely, a gentle passage of *intermedius* Lesser Black-backs and news of the atmosphere filling with volcanic ash, which definitely wasn't happening yesterday.

## 14th

Although a Hobby flew N early on, a Brambling was more appropriate to the conditions, which were dull and still dominated by a cold NE wind, though it was a bit lighter than yesterday. Otherwise, the Estate was devoid of new migrants, though a Whimbrel flew N and just inland on Worth marshes were singing Sedge Warbler and Common Whitethroat and 3 Cetti's Warblers, suggesting that they have survived the winter reasonably well.

## 13th

The nagging, chilly NE wind won't go away and as a consequence the migratory hiatus continues. The only birds of note on the Estate were 5 Chiffchaffs, while overhead movement amounted to little more than 11 Swallows and 80 Linnets, though it took three hours to get to such dizzy heights.

## 12th

The weekend produced little apart from sightings of Red Kite, Common Buzzard and Water Pipit on Saturday and a Shag and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers offshore on Sunday. Today was little better, with very few migrants on land and only 2 Mediterranean Gulls offshore and 2 white wagtails on the scrape. The female Mandarin is still around, turning up in some unlikely places like garden ponds and the golf course.

## 9th

Beautifully sunny and calm, there was a constant procession of bees along the shore; comfortably more than the 180

Linnets that flew N in about 3 hours. Otherwise, there was not much change from yesterday, though Red Kites were prominent, including one that flew N over the Estate and 2 over Worth village.

## **8th**

Despite hordes of spring butterflies, avian highlights on a lovely, sunny day with a light NW breeze were disappointingly few. There was a gentle procession of Linnets along the beach, 2 Common Terns offshore, 10 Chiffchaffs and a Blackcap in the bushes and 3-4 Wheatears on the fields and golf course.

## **7th**

Following a good overnight catch of moths and plenty of butterflies, a sultry, mainly overcast morning produced a welcome sense that spring might be on its way at last. The bushes held at least 15 Chiffchaffs, 10 Blackcaps, 2 Willow Warblers and our first Common Whitethroat of the spring, while 3-4 Firecrests were present, a white wagtail flew S along the beach and a Wheatear on the golf course was our first for ten days. Other bits and pieces included the female Mandarin, briefly present on the scrape, 8 Swallows, 4 Sand Martins, a Lesser Redpoll and a suggestion that some migrant Robins might be present, annoying the resident birds.

## **6th**

Today was bright and sunny and totals of migrants were almost identical to yesterday's, suggesting that the gates from the south remain ajar, at best, though 4 Great Spotted Woodpeckers flew S over the Estate; a good number for spring.

## **5th**

Finding migrants was again a slow, steady business, but totals for the day eventually amounted to 6 Swallows, a House Martin, 2 Firecrests, 10 Chiffchaffs, 3 Willow Warblers and 2 Blackcaps, while 3 Crossbills flew N. Bird of the day was probably a splendid drake Goldeneye on one of the reservoirs on New Downs, though a Red Kite was seen in the afternoon, heading S across Worth marshes.

## **4th**

The day dawned damp and grey. An early morning jaunt in the car park resulted in 2 Swallows flying north up the Estate

road. An increasing number of visitors covered the reserves producing a Firecrest, 3 Chiffchaffs, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap and 2 Cetti's Warblers. As the day progressed a single male Bullfinch (a scarce bird round here) was seen but excitement was generated by a male Marsh Harrier 09.53hrs, 2 Red Kite 15.40hrs and a female Peregrine 16.00hrs.

## 2nd

Not dissimilar to yesterday, with a strengthening and chilly wind, most of the action was on Worth, where the Sedge and Willow Warblers were still singing, with Blackcap and Chiffchaff close by. 3 Swallows flew over, but star birds were 2 Bullfinches in scrubby stuff by the railway. The Mandarin was seen again on the scrape and later flying over the Elms. After two dry and sunny days we were beginning to miss the rain, but fortunately it teemed down in the afternoon, replenishing an already saturated recording area, as illustrated by the photo on the right of the Big Gully.



## 1st

Clear and crisp, today was a relief from the rain of the last two days, but the gloss was taken off by a stiff and decidedly chilly WNW wind, which made birding rather difficult. 7 Chiffchaffs were singing on the Estate and 2 Common Buzzards flew N between 1050-1055, one of which

arrived from high off the sea, but there was little else to suggest much movement. Still, a walk along the North Stream in the afternoon proved productive, with single Willow and Sedge Warblers singing on the fringes of a well-vegetated pool; both were our first of the year. A female Mandarin turned up on the scrape in the afternoon.