

28th

Today's goodies included 2 Pink-footed Geese, a Whooper Swan and our first Common Buzzard of the year over Worth, the Great White Egret down by the railway line, at least 23 Redwings at the Observatory feeding station and a pair of displaying Sparrowhawks. A Red Kite was seen just south of us yesterday, so maybe some mid-winter shuffling about is going on.

27th

The morning started well but frosty, with a female Marsh Harrier flying high SW at 08.25hrs. There were 200 Great Crested Grebes offshore along with 17 Common Scoter, 5 Red-throated Diver and over 800 Wigeon flew to the sea from Worth marshes. A male Pintail at New Downs and 2 Gadwall, on the fields were 720 Lapwings and 240 Golden Plover.

25th

There are now 3 dead Porpoises on the beach close to each other, as yet we don't know the cause of death. "Badger" reported a Short-eared Owl at 16.50hrs at Dickson's Corner. Earlier on in the day on the Estate 28 Corn and 12 Reed Buntings, 26 Fieldfare and 3 Woodcock in the gullies.

24th

A male Brambling was re-trapped by the ringers today. Sighted on the beach near Prince's golf course were 2 Lapland Buntings whilst offshore 585 Great Crested Grebes, 80+ Fieldfare on the Estate and a male Blackcap was feeding on the Big Bird Table just outside the obs windows. Sighting of the day was a Bittern over Worth marshes.

23rd

We received a call at the obs to report a dead Dolphin on the beach, after further investigations revealed itself to be a Porpoise. Bird sightings for the day included 17 Common Scoter, 101 Great Crested Grebes, 21 Snow Buntings, 5 Twite towards the Point accompanied by 2 Shore Larks. The Big Bird Table was visited by 14 Reed Buntings and 3 Tree Sparrows along with the usual Chaffinches and Goldfinches.

21st

Although the morning was dull there was little wind, so it was a good deal more tolerable than yesterday. 3 Bean Geese flew over the Observatory and a Snow Bunting was heard along the beach, but most interest was along the Ancient Highway near the Chequers where 13 White-fronted Geese, the Pink-footed Goose, a Ruff and 200 Fieldfares were fiddling about among the molehills and the Great White Egret appeared in the distance near the railway.

20th

An extremely dull seawatch on an utterly cheerless day with a marrow-chilling SE wind was enlivened just as we were about to give up by a sudden burst of 380 Wigeon, heading N in several strung-out parties. This had the effect of persuading us to stay for another half an hour, during which the highlight was a bit off a Christmas tree that floated steadily towards Pegwell. We think it was the top, though no fairy was visible. Otherwise, the Great White Egret and the Pink-footed Goose were seen in their usual spots. All in all, a good day to do some 2009 report writing.

19th

Restharrow Scrape has been pretty much sterile since it dried out almost entirely in August, but the last couple of days have seen a huge improvement, with decent numbers (well, ok, it's not Slimbridge yet) of Teal, Mallard, Tufties and Shoveler, with a few Wigeon and a Pochard for good measure. Well, today brought a new species for the scrape in the shape of a Bittern, which walked into the reeds to the right, then gave staggering views of its eye and, on occasions for the lucky few, its bill as it stomped about before disappearing from view.

18th

Highlights of a walk along the shore on a calm and very pleasant morning included 4 Snow Buntings on the golf course and a flock of 73 Wigeon that flew from inland NE out to sea until lost to view. 80 Fieldfares, 40 Redwings and the Pink-footed Goose were seen near the Chequers, the Great White Egret blundered into view from across the railway line and 3 Lapland Buntings were seen along the Ancient Highway.

16th/17th

The weekend's highlights included the Great White Egret, mostly in its usual place, viewable from the Chequers, a Velvet Scoter and a Pink-footed Goose S offshore on the 16th and, on the monthly boat trip down the Stour on a bright and relatively warm 17th a Common Sandpiper, 4 Whitefronts and a Sandwich Tern, with a Blackcap and our first Brambling of the year at the Observatory.

15th

Despite coverage of the Estate and the shore northwards to the Point the only item of real interest was the Great White Egret, still viewable on occasions from near the Chequers. Be warned, though, despite being great and white it is capable of finding greater and decidedly darker ditches to hide in, so patience may be necessary.

14th

After rain had more or less died away after a thoroughly dreary morning we scuttled off to the north of the area and, reassuringly after so much extended cold, found 4 Firecrests and 8 Goldcrests in a patch of conifers.

13th

Steady but light snow for an hour or so either side of mid day made little impression, even though the thermometer failed to stick its nose much above zero all day. There were 200 or so Redwings on the golf course and adjacent fields and a Barn Owl and the Pink-footed Goose near the Chequers late in the afternoon, but all in all it was a good day to catch up on some moth records from the summer.

12th

Similar to yesterday, though still cold, a walk over Worth proved very rewarding, with exotica in the shape of the Great White Egret and the *erlangeri*-type Lanner that dispatched one of 800 Wigeon that were on the North Stream. With Phil's count of over 1,400 in Pegwell, the total for the area at the moment is comfortably in excess of 2,000. There were also 200 Teal, a Water Pipit, a Peregrine, a Pink-footed Goose, 70 Fieldfares, 30 Redwings, 14 Yellowhammers near the Observatory and a Black-throated Diver with a few Red-throats offshore.

11th

Despite overcast conditions and some flakes of snow around mid day the slow thaw continued. 39 Redwings dropped on to the Estate, where 12 Woodcocks and the ringtail Hen Harrier were still to be seen. Large numbers of Common Gulls were arranged along the shore, there were also 17 Pink-footed Geese not far south of the Chequers along the Ancient Highway and the Great White Egret was back in place inland of the pub.

9th

The winter scaled new heights of deliciousness with increasingly heavy snow showers, driven on by a strong and seriously cold NE wind. It took little to persuade those present to stay in the Observatory, though one brave soul did venture out long enough to record a Jack Snipe and a Sparrowhawk.

8th

Snowy and increasingly icy, today brought a steadily strengthening E wind that was character-building, to say the least. Along the shore 2 Black-throated Divers were seen out at sea, 282 Wigeon flew towards Pegwell and a Short-eared Owl flew in off in mid afternoon. Elsewhere, a Kingfisher was seen at St.George's bridge, a Jack Snipe was flushed from the Haven, 7 White-fronted Geese were seen over Worth and a Water Pipit was on the North Stream.

7th

Overnight snow left a covering of 2-3 inches of snow and more snow showers filtered in from the north from late morning. The most noticeable inhabitants of the Estate were 21 Woodcocks, 15 Song Thrushes, a Chiffchaff and 8 Snipe, while 15 Pintail and 2 Mediterranean Gulls flew by offshore and 2 Bewick's Swans were seen over Worth. With the cold and snow clearly having an effect further afield a Lapland Bunting, a Marsh Harrier, at least 26



Skylarks and 21 Meadow Pipits flew in off the sea; one of the latter sadly perishing in the sea less than 200 metres offshore. The photo on the right is of the Oasis and golf course, not Kazakhstan.



6th

We're in for it over the next few days, if the weather forecast is to be believed. However, for the moment it was calm, dull and cold and a walk along the shore produced a Shag flying S offshore and a Twite with the flock of 13 Snow Buntings, more or less directly opposite the Chequers. Worth held 540 Wigeon and 200 or so Teal, 80 Snipe, a Marsh Harrier and a male Peregrine.

5th

On another toe-twiddlingly cold day 3 Pink-footed Geese flew over Worth marshes and 186 Great Crested Grebes were floating about offshore; a significant influx in the last day or two. 2 Black-necked Grebes were also present closer in, not far off the beach, and 16 Snow Buntings were on the shingle opposite Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club.

4th

The Great White Egret was still in situ and a walk across a snowy and very cold New Downs to the Point was pretty quiet until reaching the saltings near the estuary, where there were 3 Jack Snipe, 41 Rock Pipits and 28 Reed Buntings. On returning to the Observatory, a visitor appeared clutching another Jack Snipe that she had rescued from the road. Last, but not least, the absence of golfers provided a perfect opportunity for a Carrion Crow to do some messing about on one of Prince's fairways, rolling about like a cat rubbing its back on a fireside rug.

3rd

The Great White Egret was still in its usual place, viewable from near the Chequers along the Ancient Highway. Otherwise, the Point was the most productive area, with 2 Woodlarks among the Rock Pipits on the saltings, a Little Stint

with the pre-roost gathering of waders, 2 Marsh Harriers, a Merlin and the Sandwich Tern.

2nd

On a lovely bright, calm and crisp morning there were 6 Chiffchaffs, mostly hopping about on ice at the edge of the Haven, the Sandwich Tern, skipping about offshore, the Great White Egret, Marsh Harrier and Peregrine over Worth, 5 Woodcocks and 2 Sparrowhawks behaving like migrants as they headed inland at some height.

1st

Snow showers, occasionally heavy, moved in from the north throughout the day, although most seemed to focus on the French coast. In Pegwell the usual waders were spooked regularly by a Common Buzzard, a female Merlin and 2 Marsh Harriers, while the Sandwich Tern took up its usual spot among the roosting Oystercatchers. There were 2 Goldeneye on Stonar Lake and Worth marshes was also productive, with pride of place going to the Great White Egret, with a supporting cast of 2 Barn Owls, a different Marsh Harrier, a female Hen Harrier, a first winter Whooper Swan, 9 White-fronted Geese and a Peregrine, which had found something for its lunch. Happy New Year!