

30th

The month ended brightly with a light NW breeze, into which flew a Lapland Bunting, 24 Reed Buntings, 570 Swallows, 128 Goldfinches and 69 Siskins. The Barred Warbler was still showing nicely, with a Common Redstart close by, and a Spotted Flycatcher was in the Elms again. A Common Buzzard was seen over Worth at 10.15 and 4 drifted over the Observatory at 12.30.

29th

On another heavily overcast morning, this time with some light drizzle, overhead movement was rather aimless, though 2 Lapland Buntings flew N, with another was on the track near Dickson's Corner. The Barred Warbler was still present, a Short-eared Owl was being mobbed by crows over Mary Bax and something like 5,000 Swallows and 900 House Martins were evident, either moving N or just milling about. There were also at least 10 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, which have been very numerous in the last few days, and two flocks of Cormorants - 40 in all - flew in from the NE in the afternoon.

28th

Calm and heavily overcast, it turned out to be a good day. 60 Robins were noisily evident, 60 Song Thrushes were either grounded or dropping out of the murk overhead, and the Estate also held a Lapland Bunting near the sailing club, a Ring Ouzel and a skulky Grasshopper Warbler in the gullies, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 7 Great Spotted Woodpeckers and a Spotted Flycatcher, busily scoffing a Common Darter in the Elms, while the ringers were treated to 2 Common Redstarts and a Pied Flycatcher. Northward movement included 25 Reed Buntings, 208 Goldfinches and 16 Siskins, 18 Bramblings flew in from the NE and 7 Pink-footed Geese flew S just offshore. There were also outstanding numbers of Hobbies for so late; one flew out to sea at 07.35 and at 12.30 another 5 circled about over the Observatory before drifting off towards Deal and last, but by no means least, the **Barred Warbler** was relocated in the Cellars in the afternoon.

27th

Pools of mist lingered well into a bright, still morning that suddenly sprang to life with the discovery of a **Barred Warbler** in the Cellars, which showed fairly well for much of the day (photo below by Steve Ray). A party of 6 Lapland

Buntings arrived from out at sea and northward movement included 37 Siskins, 160 Goldfinches, 15 Skylarks and 6 Reed Buntings. 8 Song Thrushes dropped in through the early mist, a Brambling was seen in the Cellars, where southward movement or re-shuffling included 5 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, in a day total of 8, plus 29 Great Tits and 21 Blue Tits, and there was a small influx of 26 Robins.

26th

An overcast day with drizzle and a stiff N/NW wind was good for one thing - seawatching. It wasn't entirely hopeless, as a Black-throated Diver was seen on the sea quite close in and there was a moderately good N movement that included 260 Wigeon, 80 Teal, a Pintail, 61 Dunlin and handfuls of other things that included the first Brent Geese of autumn. 2 Lapland Buntings were also seen along the shore and the river trip was notable for 10 Avocets and 45 Little Egrets, though wader numbers were generally very low.

25th

Although there was a fair variety of visibly migrating birds in bright conditions with a freshening N wind, numbers remained stubbornly low. Best of the bunch were a Snow Bunting, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, a Grey Wagtail and 4 Reed Buntings, all flying N or coming in off the sea. 2 Lesser Whitethroats were in the Cellars and 40 Chiffchaffs remained.

24th



Deep gloom with a NW breeze suggested that some visible migration might be in order, but any likely participants stayed resolutely put, continuing the late start to overhead movement this autumn. Still, 40 Chiffchaffs and 30 Blackcaps were in the bushes, with 16 more Chiffs on Worth in the afternoon, 2 Hobbies and 35 Golden Plover flew N and a late-ish Whinchat and a Lapland Bunting



were seen near the shore.

23rd

An overcast day with not a great deal going on, although 2 Lapland Buntings were flying about near the shore and 2,500-3,000 House Martins

were again circling about over the maize, between the Estate and the Chequers.

22nd

Although the weather was similar to yesterday there had been a major clear-out overnight and birds were very much fewer and further between. However, 6 Great Spotted Woodpeckers included 3 flying S, a Common Redstart was on fences near the Chequers, 5 Siskins flew N, 6 Wheatears were present along the beach, a Lapland Bunting was heard near the sailing club and 4 Sparrowhawks included one flying N high overhead. Those of a sensitive disposition should probably look away at this point, since it is necessary to relay the news that one of our number encountered a very tame ferret in the Elms, which tried to examine his boot laces and then his trouser leg. Happily, he survived unscathed.

21st

A Lapland Bunting was flying around the Oasis with early-rising Meadow Pipits at the start of a bright, glass-calm morning that brought a subtle change in the variety of migrants. Although the Estate was again stuffed with Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps (about 150 of each) at least 53 Blue Tits were bush-hopping along the shore, mainly heading S towards Deal, while 12 Reed Buntings represented a small but significant influx, 100 Meadow Pipits were spread along the coast, including a few that trickled in off the sea and 7 Great Spotted Woodpeckers included one flying strongly S.

20th

After a four-day absence the House Martins returned, with at least 8,000 over the Estate and maize at around 09.00. It was quite breezy, so finding things in bushes wasn't easy, but only about 40 Chiffchaffs remained from yesterday, and there was no visible migration to speak of. 2 Hobbies were seen during the course of the morning and a Little Stint, 20 Greenshanks and 31 Redshanks were on Backsand Scrape.

19th

A grey dawn lifted steadily to reveal a landscape stuffed with Chiffchaffs, which flickered around almost every bush on the Estate and along the shore; 200 would not have been an exaggeration. Their travelling companions appeared mostly to have been Blackcaps and virtually nothing moved overhead, but a Common Buzzard was hovering ponderously just inland from the scrape, ignoring the corvids that were trying to bother it, and at 10.45 a party of 9 Spoonbills flew S before turning inland; almost certainly the flock seen previously at Oare.

18th

The Pectoral Sandpiper was not to be seen on a bright, calm morning that otherwise brought little change, although 3 Lapland Buntings flew N along the shore and a very tame **White Stork** was found in Pegwell car park; presumably the individual that Craig Sammels saw fly S from Manston early on.

17th

A bright morning with a light NW breeze was a bit nippy on the hands early on and despite the French coast being clearly visible immigration was slow, amounting to a dribble of 57 Meadow Pipits from off the sea and a Siskin, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, a Sparrowhawk and a Rock Pipit that flew N. Chiffchaffs were again numerous, including a loose wave of around 40 in the Elms that also included a Spotted Flycatcher, a Coal Tit and 4 Goldcrests and last, but by no means least,



a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** flew on to Restharrow Scrape with a bunch of Snipe in the afternoon (photo on left by Ian Hodgson).

16th

Early morning featured a northward trickle of Meadow Pipits, 2 Grey Wagtails, 4 Siskins and a Hobby, while the bushes were again busy with Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps. A Coal Tit was seen on the Estate, 9 Wheatears were spread along the shore and golf course and an **Osprey** drifted inland at 09.15.

15th

Although it remained bright, after a relatively calm start it became increasingly windy. Birds were similar to yesterday, with 3,000 House Martins over the maize at around 09.30, a Spotted Flycatcher in the Elms, 70 Chiffchaffs, a Tree Pipit, a Cuckoo, 4 Whinchats and 4 Stonechats on the Estate and 45 Meadow Pipits that trickled in off the sea. Unsurprisingly, at least 3 Hobbies were seen, one of which flew strongly south half a mile or more offshore, though none of this appeared to match the excitement generated by the sight of a Spitfire cruising around over Manston!

14th

An overcast day was blustery enough to make observation difficult, though at least 40 Chiffchaffs and a Spotted Flycatcher were present. However, the main feature was the steady increase in numbers of House Martins, which seemed to be arriving from the north and gathering over the maize and golf courses, eventually forming a swarm of over 10,000 at around 9.30. They gradually dispersed as the wind became even friskier, but it seems probable that 12-15,000 were involved during the course of the morning.

13th

70-80 Chiffchaffs remained on the Estate, a small influx of Meadow Pipits was evident along the shore and a Spotted Flycatcher was in the Elms. An afternoon twiddle around Worth marshes was mostly notable for some late-ish autumn dragonflies, but a female Marsh Harrier was floating about and a Kingfisher on the North Stream was nice to see.

12th

A bright morning, initially with a light NW breeze, was very different to yesterday. At least 100 Chiffchaffs had arrived overnight, 2 Lapland Buntings flew N along the shore and bits and bobs around the Estate included 3 Pied Flycatchers and a Spotted Flycatcher in the Elms and 7 Whinchats near Dickson's Corner. The day was rounded off nicely with a Wryneck on one of the islands on Backsand Scrape.

11th

The main focus of attention on an increasingly blustery morning with a fresh W/SW breeze was a flock of 3-4,000 House Martins over the maize, which attracted a good deal of attention from at least 3 Hobbies, hunting together at one point, although a passing Sparrowhawk was rather half-hearted in its attempt to grab a second breakfast. Elsewhere, a Common Redstart was in the Oasis and good numbers of Blackcaps remained in the Whithouse.

10th

It was calm again and heavily overcast with a few spots of rain. Hordes of hirundines swarmed around the Estate and over the maize inland, some moving away to the north, while others remained until the wind freshened from the south-west in mid morning. Probable totals amounted to 5,000 House Martins and 3,500 Swallows, while 2 Lapland Buntings were seen along the shore and the Wood Warbler was still fiddling about in the Elms, heading towards the Guinness Book of Records for long-staying autumn migrants.

9th

A bright, calm start soon gave way to low cloud as a front headed out to sea towards France, precipitating a northward movement of 28 Grey Wagtails, 126 Meadow Pipits and 2 Marsh Harriers that flapped steadily along the shore. A swarm of 700 House Martins remained over the maize for most of the morning, 2 Ruff flew N, as did 9 Sparrowhawks, a Tree

Pipit and 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, a Common Tern flew W inland and 2 more Marsh Harriers flew in off the sea around mid day. The bushes were crammed with 150 Blackcaps, 3 Garden Warblers, 14 Lesser Whitethroats, 30 Chiffchaffs and 3 Common Redstarts, 7 Dunnocks fiddled across the tops of the bushes in the Cellars and 2 Pied Flycatchers were calling near the Elms, where the Wood Warbler and 2 Firecrests were still present. Most of the recent crop of chats appear to have departed, although 14 Wheatears were arranged along the shore between the Chequers and Prince's.

8th

3,200 Swallows flew N before rain set in properly, a good deal earlier than forecast. Subsequent birding wasn't easy as a result, but a few decent bits and pieces were to be seen, including a Common Tern and a Little Gull that dropped in briefly to Restharrow Scrape. Elsewhere, 6 Whinchats and 6 Wheatears were in the Oasis, 4 Common Redstarts were scattered about and the Elms held the Wood Warbler, which shows well when it decides to but is otherwise very elusive, 2 Firecrests and single Pied and Spotted Flycatchers. When the rain eventually cleared in the afternoon another Wryneck was found along the beach towards Deal.

7th

Overnight rain cleared before dawn, leaving a misty, still and cobwebby start to the day that glistened with dew and raindrops in the early sun. Whinchats were just about everywhere, perching on every available stem, bush and fence while others emerged from reed-filled ditches to perch inquisitively on the nearest vantage point. Most of the 56 Whinchats that were on the Estate were concentrated at the north end, between the golf course and the road, though 39 Wheatears were to be found mainly at the southern end. At least 2 Garden Warblers and 30 Blackcaps were in the Whitehouse and 300 or more House Martins swirled about the early golfers, while a Green Sandpiper and a Grey Wagtail flew N, 3 Pied Flycatchers and 7 Common Redstarts were seen and a Spotted Flycatcher and 2 Firecrests were in the Elms. By mid day the wind had got up and tall clouds billowed to the west, creating a wholly different day that enticed 4 Common Buzzards to drift N. Additional counts of 8 Whinchats and Wheatears on New Downs and 4 Wheatears on Prince's beach concluded a memorable day.

6th

Today was a bit of a watered-down version of yesterday, though with a brisk SE wind to contend with finding birds away from shelter wasn't easy. There was no sign of the Wryneck, but the Wood Warbler, 26 Wheatears, 16 Whinchats, 2 Pied

Flycatchers and a Spotted Flycatcher were still present and a Hobby was putting itself about with some gusto early on. Interestingly, a visitor popped in to say that she had seen a juvenile **Purple Heron** on Worth yesterday.

5th

Another bright day with a light SE breeze brought another good selection of migrants. Pride of place went to the Wryneck, still showing on the fence line bordering the golf course and our fifth Wood Warbler of the autumn in the Elms, while at least 44 Whinchats and 60 Wheatears were scattered about, a Pied Flycatcher was in the Elms and other species of note included a Tree Pipit, a Firecrest, 2 Common Redstarts and 2 Spotted Flycatchers.

4th

The Wryneck was showing well all morning on the fences bordering the golf course and with the easterly airflow well established numbers of chats had increased to 27 Whinchats and at least 30 Wheatears. 80 Blackcaps, 30 Common Whitethroats and 7 Lesser Whitethroats were on the Estate, a Pied Flycatcher was in the Elms, a Common Redstart was seen near the Wryneck and 2 Hobbies were recorded, much to the dislike of gathering numbers of hirundines.

3rd

A calm, bright and eventually warm morning was generally quieter than yesterday, apart from an arrival of 8 Common Redstarts, mainly at the south end of the Estate. Most of the 14 Whinchats had moved to the north, decorating the fences bordering the golf course, 3 Pied Flycatchers remained in the Elms and adjacent bushy bits and a Wryneck was discovered in St.George's bushes late in the afternoon.

2nd

Although the morning felt quieter than yesterday there were still reasonable numbers of migrants on the Estate, including 5 Pied Flycatchers, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, a Common Redstart, 9 Whinchats, 45 Blackcaps, 14 Lesser Whitethroats, which sadly amounts to a decent arrival these days, and a Grasshopper Warbler that was kicked up from Restharrow Dunes while doing the butterfly transect early in the afternoon.

1st

On a bright and calm start to the new month there were 4 Pied Flycatchers in the Haven first thing, with another 3 in the Elms, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, at least 15 Whinchats and 6 Wheatears around Dickson's Corner, 20 or so Chiffchaffs scattered about the Estate and at least 6 Common Redstarts, three of which were in the hawthorn hedge close to the Observatory.