

Feb 2011

28th

Predictably enough, winter is back, with a chill N wind and heavily overcast skies that are set to continue all week. There was little to cheer about apart from a gentle procession of Lesser Black-backs along the shore. It's even more sobering to note that it still two months before the start of the cricket season and you know what happens then

25th

With early mist slow to clear, it was very much a case of After the Lord Mayor's Show, although the adult male Hen Harrier put on a good show over the scrape around mid day.

24th

After yesterday's rain, this morning was a real treat, with high, broken cloud, the merest suggestion of wind and, at long last, some warmth. There is always the temptation to pin the word 'springlike' to any such day at this time of year, but there were certainly signs of movement in addition to plenty of birdsong, particularly from the resident Dunnocks. 18 Song Thrushes were sprinkled about the Estate, 3 Skylarks chirped their way in off the sea, a party of 6 Siskins was the first this year and best of all was a Woodlark over Restharrow Dunes.

22nd

It was a benign, calm morning with some watery sun. Although the Estate was quiet, the Great White Egret, 2 Marsh Harriers and a Water Pipit were on Worth and 15 Song Thrushes were scattered about.

21st

A weekend of gloom with the bonus of persistent rain throughout Saturday produced very little, except for 3 Woodcock in the gullies yesterday. This morning was again on the murky side of sombre and highlights were few and far between, though 4 Pintail were on the scrape early on, a Merlin was charging about

enthusiastically, a very elusive Firecrest was seen in the Elms and 13 Barnacle Geese were in Pegwell.

18th

A gloomy, overcast morning with a raw but thankfully light E wind produced a suggestion of movement, very much against the recent run of play. 34 Redwings and 50 Starlings departed to the NE first thing and several parties of Chaffinches dropped in from the low cloud - the total of 120 for the morning was the first real sign of late winter reshuffling. A Woodcock in the gullies was the first since mid January, a sub-adult male Marsh Harrier was floating about over Worth and 53 Kittiwakes flew S in an hour of peering into the offshore haze.

17th

Although it was a pleasant, calm morning with some watery sunshine it remains very quiet. A Coal Tit in the Elms, 4 Tree Sparrows near the Chequers and a Marsh Harrier, perched on a post on an otherwise sleepy Worth marshes, were just about the only things that verged upon the unusual.

16th

Bright and sunny with a gentle SSE breeze, it was a pleasure to be out. In truth, there is still little sign of change, so it remained to soak up the antics of the wintering birds, particularly the adult drake Goldeneye, which was displaying to an admiring (and possibly puzzled) congregation of Tufted Ducks on Prince's reservoir. An increased level of bird song reflected the improved demeanour of the weather, with Skylarks and Song Thrushes in particularly good voice.

15th

Well, at least the morning was better than forecast, rain arriving just after mid day on a freshening SSE wind. A walk across Worth produced a female Marsh Harrier and 2 Water Pipits, but not much else.

14th

The day began promisingly with 2 Egyptian Geese near the scrape, but there was precious little else until mid day, when 2 Marsh Harriers were seen over Worth (the Great White Egret was seen earlier from Fowlmead,

skulking about in ditches) and a Sparrowhawk flapped steadily N along the shore. A Common Buzzard was also seen on New Downs.

11th

It's all a bit In Between Days at the moment, to paraphrase the excellent Robert Smith, and the only notable sightings over the last two dull days have been 2 Avocets and 2 Merlins in Pegwell yesterday and a Common Buzzard and a Green Sandpiper on Worth today.

9th

It was very much after the Lord Mayor's Show, with gloomy conditions having replaced yesterday's sunshine. There wasn't very much to trouble the warden's abacus, but the Great White Egret was seen again over Worth, a Water Pipit was on the muddy fringes of the North Stream and, interestingly, 2 Skylarks flew in off the sea.

8th

A lovely, sunny and calm day was in itself a joy to behold and although the birds weren't a great deal different in the sunshine the Great White Egret was seen from Mary Bax, a Shag was swimming offshore near Prince's old clubhouse and 73 Tufted Ducks had accumulated on the reservoirs on New Downs, where the adult drake Goldeneye was still present. Also on New Downs a Common Buzzard flew N and a ringtail Hen Harrier was drifting about, in addition to the grey male on Worth, and 10 pale-bellied Brent Geese were seen on the saltings.

7th

Today was again dull and windy and consequently very quiet. The only highlight of the last few days has been a Bonxie that flew N offshore on the 6th.

4th

It looks like the next few days are going to be windy (from the south-west, to boot), overcast and mild. Under

the circumstances, a Common Buzzard that flew low across the fields near the scrape was something of a bonus!

3rd

A diligent amount of leg-work on a mostly bright and fairly calm day turned up the Shorelarks and Dartford Warbler along the beach and, on New Downs, a ringtail Hen Harrier, the adult drake Goldeneye and 5 Sparrowhawks, including one that flew N at some height. Interestingly, another Sparrowhawk flew N later in the afternoon, again at height, suggesting some reorientation following the withdrawal of the cold weather.

2nd

There was not much to write home about on another gloomy and increasingly windy day, though the Great White Egret was seen again on Worth.

1st

Before rain set for the afternoon a fairly reasonable morning with some brief sunshine produced 2 Common Buzzards and the first singing Cetti's Warblers on Worth, with at least 16 Tree Sparrows near the Chequers. A flock of 40 Corn Buntings was found on New Downs, where there were also a Brambling and increased numbers of plovers, including 2,500 Lapwing and 1,200 Golden Plover, and the Dartford Warbler was relocated in buckthorn along the beach.