

Oct 2011

31st

Apart from the lingering Curlew Sandpiper and 2 Whinchats along the Delf Stream in the afternoon it was pretty quiet. In any event, the day was overshadowed by the very sad news that Dave Summerfield passed away yesterday. In a place where we rely very much on volunteers, Dave was a real stalwart and his cheery demeanour and selfless devotion to the Bay will be truly missed. He really was a genuinely good bloke.

30th

A Lapland Bunting was seen on Worth and a late Curlew Sandpiper was on Restharrow Scrape.

29th

Despite a promising start with early drizzle in unseasonably warm conditions it was rather disappointing, with some aimless movement including 30 Crossbills flying in assorted directions, 78 Siskins and 3 Tree Sparrows. Lingering summer migrants included 27 Swallows and a Wheatear, at least 3 Firecrests were present and a Jack Snipe appeared on Restharrow Scrape.

28th

For once in this benighted autumn it felt like a 'real' east coast autumn day, with some early drizzle and a very gentle NE breeze leaving the gloom to linger. Overhead movement included 1,200 Goldfinches, 111 Siskins and a Brambling and the discovery of a Yellow-browed Warbler along the main Estate road did not come as a great surprise. However, things really got going in the afternoon with the discovery of a second Yellow-browed in the Elms, along with a superb little **Pallas's Warbler**, typically tagging along with a flock of Goldcrests that also contained at least one Firecrest.

27th

A gloomy morning with a frisky SE breeze was again pretty hard work, with few birds moving overhead and not a great deal in the bushes. Still, a Lapland Bunting was flushed from the beach, 2 Firecrests were

cavorting with 19 Goldcrests on the Estate and a Yellow-browed Warbler was heard in the Elms in the early afternoon. With reference to the posting on the 16th, informed opinion is that the putative Parrot Crossbill is more likely to be a large-billed Common Crossbill. Whilst on the subject, there has been a minimum of 1,200 bird-days of Common Crossbill this autumn, taking peak counts from either Pegwell or the Estate on each day of movement. Interestingly, there is very little correlation between the two sites, so it is difficult to say how many have actually been involved. Nevertheless, the previous local record for the number of bird-days was 306 in 2009 and this is by far the biggest influx recorded at this time of the year in the county (although 1,500 or so were recorded between June and November in 1997).

25th

The promised overnight deluge failed to materialise and the day began calm and overcast. Movement continued in fits and starts, amounting to 7 Crossbills, 80 Siskins, 66 Redpolls and 90 Goldfinches, but the surprise of the day was a couple of Bearded Tits at a pond on Worth in the afternoon.

22nd

Another Blue Meanie of a day, made all the more difficult by a strengthening S wind that put the lid on any visible movement. Highlights, if that is the right word, were limited to a Great Spotted Woodpecker that flew S along the shore and a couple of probable Mealy Redpolls.

21st

Another frosty beginning, followed by a bright, calm morning was pretty hard work, with those birds that were moving doing so rather aimlessly in the blue above. Still, 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers and 3 Crossbills flew N, a Whimbrel flew S, a Short-eared Owl was drifting about over the golf course and 2 Ravens flew over the Observatory around mid day.

20th

A frosty start, accompanied by a light NW breeze, was made only a touch less chilly by extensive sunshine. Visible migration included 71 Crossbills, 348 Siskins, 77 Redpolls, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, a Lapland Bunting and 5 Tree Sparrows. At least 5 Sparrowhawks were kicking about and as cumulus began to build up

just after mid day a few thrushes dropped in, amounting to 18 Fieldfares and 72 Redwings.

19th

Another cloudless day, eventually with a freshening WNW breeze, produced a record Bay count of 188 Crossbills, all flying more or less NE, accompanied by 162 Redpolls, 5 Tree Sparrows and 314 Siskins.

18th

Heavy overnight rain cleared not long after first light to leave a calm, overcast start to the day. Movement was slow to get off the ground, but as the cloud cleared away from the north 8 Crossbills, 170 Goldfinches, 39 Redpolls and 425 Siskins flew N, with at least 70 more in alders on the Estate, a Lapland Bunting was heard along the beach and a Firecrest was fidgeting about in hawthorns in the Oasis.

17th

Movement was similar to yesterday, in more or less identical conditions. One party of Crossbills flew over the Estate, unseen in the bright blue overhead, 514 Siskins flew N and at least 100 Redpolls were recorded. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were also more obvious than thus far in the autumn, with at least 4 on the Estate and 3 on New Downs, and a Common Buzzard drifted over just after mid day.

16th

Another calm, sunny morning produced a northward movement of 563 Siskins, 425 Redpolls and 15 Reed Buntings, while 70 Skylarks came in off the sea. 8 Crossbills also flew N and a party of 15 or so came down into the Elms, when subsequent inspection of some excellent photographs suggested that at least one was a **PARROT CROSSBILL** (photo to follow).

15th

Despite wall-to-wall sunshine and no wind until past mid morning, a steady influx of thrushes continued, amounting to 45 Blackbirds, 24 Song Thrushes and similar numbers of Redwings. Redpolls were also numerous, with at least 190 having been recorded by mid afternoon. Yesterday's Yellow-browed Warbler was

re-trapped, though only 2 Crossbills were apparent and a Merlin was seen tearing about over the Estate.

14th

The highlight of a bright day with a continuing easterly breeze was a **Yellow-browed Warbler**, trapped in the Haven, which may or may not have been the same as one heard earlier near the Elms. Otherwise, 40 Blackbirds, 21 Song Thrushes and 24 Redwings represented a moderate influx of thrushes and a Common Buzzard drifted N early in the afternoon.

13th

Heavily overcast and with the wind in the SE, today's only Crossbills amounted to 2 in the Haven first thing and a noisy party that flew unseen over the Estate in the afternoon. Nevertheless, 34 Redwings arrived from high overhead, there was an influx of 50-60 Robins, 2 Ring Ouzels and 3 Bramblings were seen, 76 Chaffinches flew S and 2 Short-eared Owls included one that arrived from off the sea in mid morning.

12th

The wind had fallen back a touch, but movement continued much as before, with 76 Crossbills, 158 Siskins and 96 Redpolls flying N, while 2 Little Egrets flew S and 14 Blackcaps and 21 Chiffchaffs remained in the bushes.

11th

In a feisty W wind and mostly bright conditions 89 Crossbills, 168 Siskins and 26 Redpolls flew N and at least 25 Chiffchaffs were in the bushes. What was unusual about today was that many of the Siskins and Crossbills were visible in trees around the Estate, when under normal circumstances they are only visible as overflying migrants. So far as the Crossbills were concerned, a large proportion of those that were seen well enough were orange males.

10th

Although a rather brisk WSW wind and bright conditions made detection of migrants a bit tricky, 57 Crossbills and 143 Siskins flew N, a Sparrowhawk and a female Marsh Harrier looked as if they arrived from off the sea and the best of a motley bunch in the bushes were 14 Chiffchaffs and 6 Goldcrests.

9th

In steady rain and a WNW breeze 1,611 Brent Geese flew N, with another 948 moving in the opposite direction, while 100 Wigeon and 121 Teal and a Red-breasted Merganser flew south. Overhead, 59 Redwings arrived from the NE and 374 Siskins and 104 Goldfinches flew N.

8th

Although the conditions were very similar to yesterday, visible movement continued apace but with subtle differences, as a record 122 Crossbills and 527 Siskins flew N and 255 Redwings arrived from the NE, accompanied by a few Blackbirds and Song Thrushes. Offshore, a Sparrowhawk and a Little Egret flew N and 8 Chiffchaffs remained in the bushes.

7th

The wind had swung further into the NW and movement followed a similar pattern to yesterday, with 94 Crossbills, 420 Siskins and 84 Goldfinches flying N, while 2 Little Egrets flew S and a Sparrowhawk, 22 Skylarks and 33 Meadow Pipits came in off the sea. In the chill conditions most of yesterday's warblers had clearly decided to move on, though 7 Wheatears remained along the shore.

6th

A brisk WNW wind made the morning distinctly chilly, but some notable visible migration more than compensated for the resulting shock to the system. The N movement consisted almost entirely of 109 Crossbills and 768 Siskins, though a trickle of Skylarks and a few Meadow Pipits arrived from off the sea and around 30 Chiffchaffs were scattered about.

5th

At least 40 Chiffchaffs were evident before the wind got up in late morning and 12 Wheatears remained at the south end of the Estate.

4th

A further search for the Buff-breasts proved fruitless, although a Lapland Bunting was heard over the golf course and 32 Wheatears were scattered along the shore and on New Downs, many looking bright and northern in disposition. Otherwise, a Common Buzzard flew N over Worth and a Rock Pipit was walking along the verge of Waldershare Avenue, but migrants were generally few and far between.

3rd

A walk along the shore to Deal in search of a possible Buff-breasted Sandpiper that had been seen on the golf course produced a N movement of 91 Pied Wagtails and 23 Crossbills, while 7 Wheatears were hopping about and 3 Pink-footed Geese flew N over Worth. Although there was no sign of the sandpiper, later amplification of the details suggested that 2 had been present from 24th September until the 30th.

2nd

It was more or less a repeat of yesterday, with soaring temperatures, invisible birds and much muttering about it not being like this when we were lads. Highlights included 3 Crossbills and 60 Siskins, mostly flying N, and a Firecrest in the Elms.

1st

In temperatures and a blue sky that would not have been out of place in Bangalore, the start to this October was uncharacteristically pleasant. Birding continued to be hard work, though there was an influx of 25 Blackbirds, 7 Song Thrushes, 10 Goldcrests and 40 Robins, while 8 Crossbills, 40 Siskins and 28 Pied Wagtails flew N, a Spotted Redshank flew S and around 30 Chiffchaffs and 40 Blackcaps were in the bushes.