

Saturday 25th April 2009

A, non-motorised, 12 hour (04.00 – 16.00hrs) day list within the Thanet boundaries

Sad to say, I'm getting too old for the 24hr listing game, or at least the non-motorised caper. The seeds for this particular form of madness were sown after my walk of 2008, what could I record within the Planetthanet recording area in a 12 hour cycle ride? 100 species would be the target. Is it possible? As no one has previously attempted this feat, I really have no idea, yet it seems achievable, in theory, given decent weather and a degree of good fortune.

As it is my game, by definition, they are my rules! I will start and finish at my bungalow, in Dumpton, all species are allowable if they are seen on, over or from within the boundaries defined by the website. Because I am using my bicycle as the transport, a scope is out of the question, I will only have my bins (& my Canon EOS/170-500mm lens) to aid my observations. Quite what I am able to achieve is now in the lap of the Gods. Roll on 04.00hrs!

Dylan (21.20hrs 24/04/2009)

03.55hrs; a **Herring Gull**, on my neighbour's roof, registers its' displeasure as I wheel my bike from the back garden. Turning on my lights, I'm off into another adventure. Can I record 100 species within the Thanet recording area? **Blackbird** and **Robin** were heard singing as I pedalled through the sleeping streets, en route to Minster. A stop to listen for Little Owl; was in vain and remained so for the rest of the day but, as small consolation a **Skylark** sang from the darkness somewhere over Sevenscore. At 04.43hrs I was at the crossing in Minster and the real start of my efforts. Sun rise was at 05.36hrs and the marshes would provide the start of my list. **Song Thrush, Pheasant, Mallard, Nightingale, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Carrion Crow, Wren, Mute Swan, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Gadwall, Common Whitethroat, Cetti's Warbler, Great Tit, Marsh Harrier, Common Snipe, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Peregrine, Magpie** and **Cormorant** were all recorded before the sun appeared in the east. **Shelduck, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat** and **Kestrel** took my total to 31 species by 06.00hrs. Making my way, slowly, towards



Monkton I managed to add **Cuckoo, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Chiffchaff, Dunnock, Collared Dove, Long-tailed Tit, Green Woodpecker, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Grey Heron, Common Sandpiper, Lapwing, Stock Dove, Chaffinch, Starling, Lesser Whitethroat, Swallow, Mistle Thrush, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear** (50th species) and **Grey Partridge** before I

reached the small “private reservoir” near Monkton. It was now 07.20hrs and I was over half way to achieving my target. **Rook, Jackdaw** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were around the surrounding woodland, as I approached the water. Quickly **Great Crested & Little Grebe, Canada & Greylag Geese, Tufted Duck** and **Coot** made it 60 species before 07.30hrs.



I then headed off towards Shuart, and the Reculver Marshes, adding **Blue Tit, Greenfinch, House Sparrow** and **Garden Warbler** as I reached the Monkton Chalk Pit. A **Corn Bunting** sang from an exposed perch beside the dual carriageway and a scan across the fields revealed 3 **Red-legged Partridge**. I was at the Hedgend Industrial Estate by 08.00hrs; a **Common Buzzard** spiralling over a distant wood was a nice result. At the coast by Minnis Riding Stables I quickly added **Black-headed Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Oystercatcher** and, best of all, **Common Gull** – a very difficult species in the spring around Thanet. A **Greenshank** called loudly as it flew overhead and I'd added **Great Black-backed Gull** and **House Martin** before I reached Coldharbour Lagoon. A pair of **Ringed Plover** were displaying along the gravel ridge with another male Stonechat (complete with a prominent streaky white rump!) seen before I bumped into Chris, Anne & Matt Hindle. We exchanged news before continuing on our separate routes. I sat and watched the rising tide adding **Turnstone, Whimbrel, Grey Plover, Dunlin** and **Gannet** whilst chomping on my chocolate and sipping isotonic orange – yuk!

Down to the railway crossing at Chamber's Wall, bumping into the Hindle posse once again. No news, so off towards Pegwell Bay, a **Turtle Dove** singing from the adjacent hedgerow as I left the car park. The long slog, across to Pegwell, being enlivened by **Pied Wagtail** and **Goldfinch** by the “Prospect” round-about at Minster. With time on my side I made a detour back to the water treatment works at Minster. I had hoped to connect with Bullfinch, yet had to settle for **Feral Rock Dove & Jay** as my only additions.

I had mistakenly thought that high tide was at 11.16hrs (I'd not added the hour for BST against GMT) so arrived at Pegwell in plenty of time to watch the falling tide. A **Little Egret** on the "Garage Pools" was a welcome sight, the time now being 11.40hrs. Luckily, a few minutes earlier, Chris Solly had stopped me in Cliffsend Village and told me of the Lesser Yellowlegs that Phil had seen earlier in the morning – something to keep an eye open for!

With the tide still right up against the saltmarsh, I detoured to Stonelees where I easily located the **Willow Warbler** that is holding territory in the tall stand of willows in the centre of the park. Back to the bay and a sit and wait to see what the falling tide would reveal. **Dark-bellied Brent Goose**, **Redshank** and **Sandwich Tern** were soon in the bag, taking my total to 90 species at 12.15hrs. With the best part of four hours to go, surely my target was realistic? A **Curlew** revealed itself at 12.38hrs followed quickly by a group of 5 **Knot**, 4 of which were resplendent in full summer breeding attire. I then waited over an hour before my next addition, an **Avocet**, flew across the bay to land in the river mouth. A **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** had been causing me some id problems, as it swam amongst a large group of Shelduck. Gleaming white flanks provoking thoughts of Black Brant! Thankfully, the id was clinched when the Coastguard plane put the entire avian population of the bay to flight. A smaller wader in a bunch of Greenshank might have been Phil's Yellowlegs, but the distance, angle of the sun (and only having binoculars) meant that it will be forever a mystery. With the time approaching 14.30hrs, I made my way along the cycle track to Ramsgate Harbour, adding **Fulmar** at the under cliff and **Rock Pipit** behind the Maritime Museum. 96 species, with so much time wasted at Pegwell Bay, hindsight suggests that I didn't use my time particularly effectively. I got my last species when a **Sparrowhawk** flew over King George VI Park at 15.26hrs. I was back at the bungalow by 15.34hrs very happy – 39 miles cycled, great fun!



Dylan – 27.04.2009