

how to book

For all our organised nature breaks & group bookings please call us direct or e mail your request.

For independent bookings please call the reception team who will be happy to help and offer you our best deals.

See enclosed rate sheet for current break prices and dates available.

we welcome groups

We have welcomed many RSPB, walking, geology, gardening & various other groups to the hotel and can tailor make a package to suit your plans. Please call Jenny Eyles at the hotel for more information.

joint painting & birding break

If your partner is planning a Birding break, we can offer you a relaxing Painting Break (*subject to availability*) in the Hotel on the same weekend, with resident artist, Podi Lawrence.

You will share dinner & breakfast with your partner in the bistro, then both go on to enjoy your birding/painting during the days.

For details of Podi's work please see her website, she enjoys sharing her knowledge & expertise with beginners & experienced artists. Everyone is welcome.

www.podilawrenceartists.com



FREE loan of **Swarovski** binoculars for guests to use



PORTLAND PASSPORT



Heights Hotel Nature & Bird Breaks Isle of Portland, Dorset



T.01305 821361 www.heightshotel.com

Isle of Portland - as seen on BBC 'Countryfile'

Wildlife Break Calendar

January - Waders & Wildfowl

Our January weekends often produce the biggest lists of the year with sometimes over a hundred species seen. Most weekends we travel east to Poole Harbour in search of the wintering flock of several hundred avocets at Arne RSPB Reserve. Closer to home the reserves at Radipole and Lodmoor will have a good range of ducks with up to a thousand brent geese at Ferrybridge. Bitterns are also often seen at this time of year.

February - Grebes & Divers

In February we will be concentrating on the sheltered waters of Portland Harbour and will have a good chance of seeing all three divers and all five grebes. Gulls are very much in evidence at this time of year with Mediterranean gulls present in very large numbers at a number of sites.

March - Early Migrants

Wheatears are seen at Portland Bill from the first week of March, with sand martins appearing shortly after at Radipole Lake. Sandwich terns may well be wintering in Portland Harbour anyway, but will be joined at the end of the month by fresh arrivals. Chiffchaff are also present throughout the year but the newly arrived birds are unmistakable as they feed on the ground along the Portland cliffs.

April - Shearwaters & Skuas

Breezy April days are the best times to see seabirds such as manx shearwaters and arctic skuas migrating up the English Channel. Even if it is too calm to encourage these birds to fly close enough in to see, our resident guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes will be nesting on the cliffs at Portland Bill. Wherever we go we will be sure to see lots of migrating land birds as well such as redstarts, whinchats and tree pipits.

May - Terns & Orchids

By the beginning of May the little tern colony at Ferrybridge should be in full swing with another colony, of common terns, at Lodmoor. Over to the east of the county Durlston Country Park will be covered in spring flowers with at least three species of orchid including the very rare early spider orchid.

June - Silver-Studded Blues & Early Gentians

Portland has the last of the limestone race of the lovely little silver-studded blue and most years these are abundant in mid-June. Other blues often on the wing now include adonis and small blues as well as the more usual but equally beautiful common blue. The quarries around the hotel are also home to large populations of the very rare early gentian - one of the few wild flowers found to be found in England and nowhere else.

July - Lulworth Skippers & Wall Lizards

The Lulworth skipper is one of Britain's smallest and rarest butterflies and has one of the smallest ranges of all - the Dorset coastline. Even rarer is the showy wall lizard with just a few isolated colonies along the English Channel, including several quarries on Portland where they are very easy to see at this time of year.

September - Autumn Migrants

In September many of the birds seen in spring return again to Portland, often in larger numbers. Sometimes these are joined by rarities from Europe such as ortolan buntings or melodious warblers.

October - Warblers & Wheatears

The autumn migration will be in full swing by October with wheatears often present in large numbers. Chiffchaffs will be the commonest migrant but rarer warblers will also be passing through, such as the tiny yellow-browed warbler from Asia. Birds of prey can also be most numerous at this time of year with the rare chance to see both hobby and merlin in the same day.

November - Little Owls & Dartford Warblers

Little owls can be seen on Portland at any time of the year but are often most numerous in the autumn with their numbers swelled by the year's young. The same situation applies on the heaths where the Dartford warblers should be easier to find.

December - Reunion break

This weekend we will be going over a remarkable year of wildlife sightings, with visits to all our favourite sites. In the evenings we will be looking at photos of the best sightings made this year. Dinner on the Saturday evening will have a Festive theme with crackers and a gift for everyone!

Break includes accommodation, 3 course dinner each evening, Dorset breakfast, local guide, transport from the hotel to sites, packed lunches & VAT