

ISLE OF WIGHT BIRD RINGING SUMMARY REPORT 2009

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Summary

This paper gives an introduction to bird ringing, the present position of ringing on the Isle of Wight, and a summary of the results for 2009.

Introduction

Wild birds are marked, normally with a uniquely numbered metal ring fixed around one leg, for the original purpose of discovering about migration. The scientific and conservation values of marking have now been extended to discover whether the overall population of each species is increasing or declining and to evaluate the reasons for the changes, and can also be used to find how long birds survive as well as the annual breeding success of each species. Secondary information, which may be obtained when dead birds are reported, can give causes of mortality. As well as the standard metal ring on a leg, other methods of marking are used on some species. These include wing tags on for instance, geese and some birds of prey, flipper banding on penguins, coloured rings for specific projects, feather colouring on waders to increase the number of sightings and large plastic engraved collars on for example swans and geese for easy reading in the field. Miniaturisation of electronics has now made it possible to attach extremely small transmitters to birds, and satellites can be used to track their flight paths for several months.

Rings (bands in North America and Australia) can be applied to pulli or to birds caught in nets or traps. In the UK bird ringing is carried out by trained and licensed ringers who have a Government licence and under strict rules laid down in relevant Acts of Parliament. The rules and licensing are controlled by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) on behalf of the Government.

Training as a ringer is by the apprenticeship system. After initial visits for assessment of basic knowledge and compatibility, a person takes out a permit as a Trainee under a recognised Trainer. With this permit they may only catch and ring birds in the company of a licensed ringer, and must do so for at least one year. They can then be assessed for promotion to a "C" permit. With this they can catch birds independently, but still under the supervision of a Trainer. A minimum of one year later they can again be assessed for promotion to an "A" permit, and are then independent. Anyone wishing to train, or to see ringing is welcome, and contact can be made with Anthony Roberts at IWRingingGroup@gmail.com. At present on the Island there are four "A" ringers (two with trainer endorsements), two "C" ringers and six trainees (three of whom spend months away working as professional ornithologists). The ringers on the Island have now formed the Isle of Wight Ringing Group which has been recognised by the British Trust for Ornithology.

Records are submitted, normally electronically, by licensed ringers or groups annually and are analysed by professional ornithologists in the BTO. The annual summary results are published in the journal "Ringing and Migration". The journal paper includes the most interesting movements and longevity records for that year. On occasions five year or longer summaries are included for some species. The results are also used in publications such as the Migration Atlas and various Atlases.

The Isle of Wight

Ringing has been carried out on the Island from at least 1958. The long term study on Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) was started by James Gloyn in 1972 and continues. More recently, regular ringing of other species started in 2001 when Anthony Roberts moved to the Island, and was increased when Daphne Watson arrived in 2003. This ringing started at Haseley Manor, Arreton (SZ 545857). The land around the Manor consisted then of approximately of 14.4 hectares (36 acres) of farmland. Half of this was grassland forming the flood plain of the Easter Yar, and the other half arable land some 5 to 10 metres higher. The site is being converted to a nature reserve by the planting of

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approximately 7000 trees and digging of five lakes. These lakes total about 1.6 hectares (4 acres). A long term study to monitor the changes of flora and fauna brought about by these changes is being carried out. Since 2001, new regular ringing sites have been added at Head Down (SZ 505777) and King's Quay (SZ 594936). A specific study (see below) of Pied Wagtails (*Motacilla alba*) is also being carried out at Ryde Pier Head (SZ594936). In 2009 permission was given to ring at Jersey Camp on the east side of the Newtown Nature Reserve, this is becoming a very important site as it has breeding nightingales – a bird in severe decline. Various other sites have also been used and evaluated as possible permanent sites.

Ringling 2009

The safety of the bird is paramount, and therefore catching in mist nets is very weather dependent. Rain and high winds will stop all catching, and light winds and bright sunshine reduce the number of birds caught as the nets are more visible. Ringing days are therefore random, but on average ringing was carried out about once a week. Bird ringing was carried out at five main sites on the Island, and a total of 3,790 new birds of 63 species were ringed. Also trapped were birds previously ringed (a bird recaptured within 5kms of the ringing place is known as a retrap.) A bird ringed or found more than 5 kms from their ringing site is termed a control. Controlled birds are in three classifications. Those caught at another site on the Island by ourselves, those recaptured elsewhere by other ringers, and those found by the general public and reported to the scheme. This can either be done by post to the address given on the ring, or by the internet to www.ring.ac.

Long Term Studies

As well as general ringing, the two long term studies continued. The first study; of nesting barn owls (*Tyto alba*) by James Gloyn was successful in 2009, and 1 adult and 27 pulli from nests were ringed. In the second study of colour ringing pied/white wagtails (*Motacilla alba*) roosting on Ryde Pier, 193 were ringed and 19 retraps were caught. 3 controls were also caught. There were several sightings from the Island during the winter months. The wagtails have either a red or yellow plastic ring on the opposite leg to the BTO metal ring and reports of any birds seen would be gratefully received either by email to IWRingingGroup@gmail.com. The information should, if possible, give the place and date observed, together with the colour of the ring, and on which leg is the plastic ring.

Training

At the request of the British Trust for Ornithology, a fully recognised training course was held in September 2009 for 12 trainees and 7 trainers from England and Ireland. A total of 1276 birds of 31 species were trapped, ringed, weighed and measured before release. Four of the trainees were recommended for advancement through the scheme.

Summary

2009 was a successful year, both for the long term studies, for general ringing, and especially for training. We are extremely grateful to the various landowners for permission to ring on their land. Three of the sites are areas of Special Scientific Interest, and one a National Trust site. These sites need special permission and again these were obtained with the full backing of Natural England, the National Trust and the Ministry of Defence who clearly appreciate the conservation and scientific values of the national ringing scheme.

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Results

The following table gives the list of the birds ringed on the Island in 2009. Details of the recoveries and controls are listed in the Isle of Wight Bird Report 2010.

Species	Full	Pulli	Retraps/ Controls	Total
Canada Goose	6	0	0	6
Eurasian Teal	1	0	0	1
Mallard	3	0	0	3
Sparrowhawk	7	0	0	7
Kestrel	0	9	3	12
Moorhen	4	0	4	8
Coot	1	0	0	1
Snipe	1	0	0	1
Stock Dove	0	2	0	2
Woodpigeon	8	0	0	8
Barn Owl	1	27	0	28
Little Owl	2	3	0	5
Kingfisher	6	0	4	10
Green Woodpecker	5	0	6	11
Great Spotted Woodpecker	6	0	1	7
Sand Martin	19	0	0	19
Swallow	703	5	0	708
House Martin	5	0	0	5
Meadow Pipit	215	0	0	215
Pied/White Wagtail	195	0	22	217
Wren	108	0	148	256
Dunnock	121	0	133	254
Robin	149	0	191	340
Nightingale	12	0	5	17
Black Redstart	3	0	0	3
Redstart	5	0	0	5
Stonechat	2	0	0	2
Blackbird	139	0	246	385
Fieldfare	1	0	0	1
Song Thrush	53	0	33	86
Redwing	7	0	0	7
Mistle Thrush	5	0	2	7
Cetti's Warbler	2	0	0	2
Grasshopper Warbler	1	0	0	1
Sedge Warbler	21	0	0	21

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Species	Full	Pulli	Retraps/ Controls	Total
Reed Warbler	28	0	12	40
Lesser Whitethroat	21	0	3	24
Whitethroat	129	0	64	193
Garden Warbler	12	0	0	12
Blackcap	249	0	25	274
Chiffchaff	322	0	32	354
Willow Warbler	90	0	0	90
Goldcrest	12	0	17	29
Spotted Flycatcher	1	0	0	1
Long-tailed Tit	100	0	102	202
Coal Tit	1	0	0	1
Blue Tit	342	0	325	667
Great Tit	199	0	179	378
Treecreeper	6	0	1	7
Jay	5	0	1	6
Magpie	4	0	1	5
Jackdaw	2	3	1	6
Rook	26	0	1	27
Carrion Crow	1	0	0	1
Starling	1	0	0	1
House Sparrow	2	0	0	2
Chaffinch	86	0	30	116
Greenfinch	102	0	15	117
Goldfinch	160	0	26	186
Siskin	5	0	0	5
Linnet	19	0	0	19
Lesser Redpoll	1	0	0	1
Bullfinch	16	0	4	20
Yellowhammer	27	0	2	29
Reed Bunting	4	0	0	4
Totals:	3790	49	1640	5479

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