

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD RINGING REPORT 2013

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The year

For the UK in general 2013 was another year of weird weather. It was certainly a breeding season of two halves. Spring was the coldest since 1962 at 1.7°C below the long-term average. May rainfall was 32% above average. Resident species, tits and thrushes, turned the clock back to the 1960s and started laying up to two weeks later than their recent earlier average dates. Migrant mortality during the spring passage was almost certainly high, and although most of the warblers arrived promptly they were also forced to wait until delayed vegetation growth could provide sufficient cover and invertebrate food for them to get started. Tits and the other caterpillar specialists fared particularly badly. Summer, by contrast, was the warmest since 2006, and dry, with rainfall only 78% of the mean value.

All this followed the very poor breeding success of 2012 which had seen migrant productivity drop by between 28% (Sedge Warbler) and 62% (Blackcap). Overall, BTO indexing showed that 2013 adult abundance for Garden Warbler, Willow Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat was at the lowest level since 1983, with Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Reed and Sedge Warbler also showing significant declines.

Perversely, as some sort of silver lining, breeding success and productivity for most of these warbler species (but not Sedge Warbler, which had another very poor season) exhibited significant density-dependent increases. Specific competition for nest sites and food decreased and as a result above-average numbers of young birds were successfully reared in fine midsummer weather.

While falling some way short of 2011's record total (19,886) 2013 was, however, still a good year for Cambridgeshire ringers. 18,209 birds were ringed, making it the second-best year ever. This increase bucks the Great Britain and Ireland trend and that of some of our larger neighbouring counties, as is shown in the table below.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Cambridgeshire	14,717	16,825	19,886	15,385	18,209	9.01%
WFG	4,420	4,743	5,608	3,368	4,112	-9.32%
	30%	28%	28%	22%	23%	
Norfolk	51,973	62,427	55,216	56,731	48,349	-14.56%
Suffolk	50,299	59,421	60,511	60,212	52,539	-8.80%
Bedfordshire	4,521	6,205	7,139	6,345	6,472	6.93%
Hertfordshire	16,293	17,261	16,339	14,926	17,004	4.93%
GB & Ireland	931,794	1,100,713	1,151,461	942,754	950,822	-7.84%

The final column shows the percentage change in 2013 compared with the mean of the previous four years. While the national annual totals probably reflect the true ups and downs in annual adult abundance, survival and breeding productivity, it seems likely that Cambridgeshire's strong recent performance is genuinely linked

to increased ringing activity at an increased number of ringing sites. Figures are also shown in the table for the Wicken Fen Group (WFG), the County's oldest ringing operation, whose share of the overall total consequently continues to decline.

Among principal contributors to this overall increase in activity and numbers one might pick out Tony Martin's busy summer at Dunkirk:

“For the first time, we went over 3000 new birds for the year, helped by a ludicrous 1000+ Reed Warblers and some 750 Sedge Warblers. The Whitethroat total of 218 was also a record – everything reflecting remarkably good late summer and autumn weather for early-morning mist-netting. Although sound lures certainly enhanced numbers, we don't use Reed Warbler or Whitethroat calls, so sheer effort (number of days with nets open) seems to be the most important factor at Dunkirk. As ever, residency time was short during the autumn passage; retraps were few. Tens of thousands of warblers pass through Dunkirk each autumn, which is surprising because no physical features guide them to this little oasis in the middle of Fenland intensive agriculture. Single Redstart, Whinchat and Little Bunting brought welcome variety, and a total of 107 Meadow Pipits reflected concerted effort with two single-shelf nets for the first time at the site. The Sand Martin colony continues to develop; all the pulli were ringed, and all fledged successfully. The expanding Black-headed Gull colony produced over 1000 chicks. Investment in a new state-of-the-art lamp for dazzling birds was a flop. I caught one Snipe, amused a Woodcock and watched countless pipits and Skylarks rise up and settle elsewhere. Ambient light from distant streetlamps and towns is horribly polluting, even out in the middle of the wild Fens.”

There is a full account of the Little Bunting, a first for the County, on pp. 152–153 in this Report.

Another factor boosting the numbers was the welcome resumption of gull cannon-net catches for the first time for over thirty years. Two catches were taken on the Milton Landfill site in February and in March, of some 448 birds, mainly Lesser Black-backed (211) and Black-headed (188) Gulls, and including a number of birds carrying foreign rings. Additional interest was provided by three Yellow-legged Gulls and a single Iceland Gull – both species ringed for the first time in Cambridgeshire. In fact the Iceland Gull was only the twelfth ever ringed in Britain and Ireland and this individual has already been re-sighted almost exactly a year later at the northernmost tip of Jutland in Denmark in March and April 2014. Other colour-ringed gulls from these catches have already provided dozens of sightings by gull enthusiasts: Black-headed Gulls, as expected, mainly from Scandinavia and Germany in spring and summer; and Lesser Black-backs in midwinter to points further afield in southern Spain and Morocco. The East Anglian Gull Group has now been formally set up to bring together various gull projects in the region and to build a comprehensive team which can offer cannon-netting and gull-catching training to other ringers. The Group's aim is to take a sampling catch at Milton twice a year. The Group has other projects, including a study of the wintering Mediterranean Gulls on the East Coast.

Garden and feeder ringers had a strong year for Lesser Redpolls and Siskins coming south for the winter; 277 Redpolls (93 in 2012) and 192 Siskins (7 in 2012) were ringed.

On a personal note, my own newly established ringing at Chippenham and Teversham Fens will also have contributed to the overall increase in numbers, if only for Cambridgeshire's bread-and-butter species – the *Acrocephalus* and *Sylvia* warblers, very much personal favourites. In fact, both Reed Warbler at 1,822 and Sedge Warbler at 1,029 more or less doubled their 2012 County totals (971 and 486, respectively). For both species Cambridgeshire is nationally significant, with the third-highest county total for Reed and the fifth- for Sedge; no other county has both in their top four ringed species. Despite, however, spending so much time in reedbeds none of us seems to have much luck catching Marsh, Aquatic, Paddyfield, Savi's, Great Reed or Blyth's!

For 2013 the Cambridgeshire rankings were Blue Tit 1,955, Reed Warbler 1,822, Great Tit 1,396, Sedge Warbler 1,029; these four representing as usual about 35% of the total. Blue Tits and Great Tits, mainly from garden feeders or nestbox pulli, feature at the top of most English county ringing lists. Some 18% of all birds ringed in each of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk were of these two species in 2013.

The year's total of 95 different species ringed was the lowest for several years and as usual the mix of species was significantly different from the previous year 2012, when 101 species were ringed. The Cambridgeshire ringing list now numbers 153 species. Fifteen species, mostly ducks and waders, ringed in 2012, didn't make this year's list, and nine are included for 2013 but not for 2012. Three species were added to the historic list: the Dunkirk Little Bunting; and the Iceland Gull and three Yellow-legged Gulls at the Milton Landfill. None of the other three large gulls, Lesser Black-backed, Herring and Great Black-backed, again at Milton, had been ringed in Cambridgeshire for several decades. Otherwise rather few 'occasionally ringed' species were encountered. The County's 14th Whinchat at Dunkirk, the first since 2004, and our 14th Firecrest, at Wicken Fen, were the only other scarce birds of note.

Last year's Report reflected on the somewhat distorting effect on totals for the most commonly sound-lured species such as Meadow Pipit, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Golderest, Pied Wagtail and Lesser Redpoll. Sound-luring is an integral part of 21st century ringing and without it the results for these species would look very different indeed. Of equal interest, however, quietly in the background is the consistency year-on-year of the numbers caught of untargeted, un-lured, unglamorous and probably stable garden birds – often quite remarkably so.

	2012	2013
Nuthatch	13	13
Treecreeper	46	48
Wren	311	310
Blackbird	754	756
Robin	510	483
Dunnoek	439	318
Long-tailed Tit	343	265

These numbers are only of birds newly ringed in each year, so the actual population will additionally include birds ringed in previous years. Thus particularly long-lived species, such as Bullfinch have not been included. Long-tailed Tit flocks often

also contain some surprisingly elderly birds but the County 2013 total was only 63% of the previous four-year mean. Nationally, Long-tailed Tits were captured in the lowest numbers since 1987. Since the preceding winter temperatures were very similar to average, it is likely that this early-breeding species fared particularly badly in 2013's cold wet spring.

For the first five mainly resident species in the above table, however, the numbers remain astonishingly flat and consistent – without any distortions caused by feeding or sound-luring. It becomes immediately apparent why Dunnock has recently and inconspicuously moved to Amber status of conservation concern. We should be worrying about our Dunnocks (down nationally 18% in 2013 against the BTO's 1983–2013 abundance index).

Cambridgeshire nest-recorders were again very active and had a better season than in washed-out 2012. The proportion of pulli (3282) within the total ringed was back to its average 18%, but this is not really any kind of useful measure due to the proportion of special projects, mainly for nestbox species, which dominate the numbers. Perhaps a better comparative measure in future might be to limit it to 'open-nest' passerines (346 pulli ringed) which provide most of the challenges for the nest-finder anyway.

The large-box species had a better year: Barn Owl 416 (from 359 in 2012); Kestrel 119 (99 in 2012) – in fact Cambridgeshire ringed more Kestrels (121) than any other county except (surprisingly) Lincolnshire and Wiltshire; and our 75 Stock Doves placed us in fifth county place for this by-catch species. Other important pulli 'project' totals were 206 (mainly) Dunkirk Black-headed Gulls, 14 Dunkirk Avocets, and 32 raft-born Common Terns. There were 115 (mainly) Madingley Jackdaws, and another 277 pulli Sand Martins, again at Dunkirk. Sixteen Corn Bunting and 32 Yellow Wagtail pulli derived from farmland projects. My 10 pulli Spotted Flycatchers were the first for a year or two, and with Chris Hughes' remarkable six adults at Bainton made a creditable total of 17 for this much-declined species for the year.

Richard Broughton's Marsh Tits had had a disastrous breeding season in 2012, and, as expected, the 2013 season started with a substantially reduced number of breeding birds; in Monks Wood, the number of adults was down by a third. To make matters worse, most of the survivors were male. The actual number of breeding pairs was slashed to just 10 – the lowest total of pairs in 11 years of monitoring, and down by 57% from the maximum 23 in 2007. But the good news was that, like many other species, they managed a decent breeding season, and the number of juveniles ringed in autumn was only one-third down on the average.

This demonstrates what a devastating impact a single poor year can have on a population, something which might become more common if climate change brings more cold wet springs. It also shows how quickly a species can recover afterwards – although if populations are wiped out in more isolated woods then it could take much longer for them to be recolonised, or possibly even lead to permanent local extinction. The picture is emerging that the loss of Marsh Tit, Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker between the first and second BTO atlases has been concentrated in areas of the lowest woodland cover – so where habitat was more fragmented, birds were more likely to be lost.

Ringing sessions for the Wicken Fen Group took place at several different sites on the Fen on 188 different days in 2013, a similar number to 2012. The year total was 4,112 birds, of 62 different species. In addition to these new birds, 721 retrapped individuals had been originally ringed at the Fen in previous years; and a further 21 were controls (birds originally ringed away from the Fen).

Totals for Meadow Pipit (238) and Bearded Tit (41) were all-time Wicken records. The latter, with increasing record totals (mainly of juveniles) for the last three years, demonstrates how prolific this multi-brooded species can be under favourable conditions. The other two juvenile Bearded Tits in the County table were at Chippenham Fen; we think the first record ever (breeding or otherwise) for this species there.

Other WFG ringing records broken or equalled were 14 Stock Doves, 10 Yellow Wagtails and eight Skylarks. One new species was added – a token three young Black-headed Gulls from the thriving new colony on Burwell Fen. The species with the largest increases were autumn catches to sound-lures of passage Reed Buntings (388), Meadow Pipits (238) and Pied Wagtails (47); in each case new catching techniques are paying dividends. The WFG list now stands at 106 species.

WFG members again put on several ringing demonstrations for visitors to the Fen and collaborated with Anglia Ruskin University by showing ringing to its MSc (Animal Behaviour) students. Members also provided support for Hannah Rowland's PIT-tag studies of Blue and Great Tits in Madingley Wood; and for Gabrielle Davidson and Alison Greggor's Cambridge Jackdaw Project also at Madingley.

BTO Constant Effort Sites projects continued at Wicken, Bainton (Chris Hughes) and Paxton (Ian Dillon). Cambridgeshire CES results largely mirrored the national picture, with adult numbers of migrants down, but above-average juvenile productivity. Alan Brimmell took a year off from his CES at Five Arches Pit in 2013 but has now resumed in 2014.

Ringing totals for 2013

There are three age categories in the following summary table. Pulli are birds either ringed in the nest or as not-fully grown dependent juveniles where the place of ringing will definitely be the place of birth. Juveniles are birds in their first calendar year. Adults are birds in their second or any later calendar year. Unaged birds are fully grown flying birds where plumage characters do not allow first calendar year to be excluded (for example, a November Tree Sparrow or Long-tailed Tit). Recoveries are reports (captures, field sightings or as found dead) of birds away from the site of ringing, often by another ringer (a 'control'). For most species, birds caught within 5 km of their ringing site are excluded.

Recoveries may include either birds ringed in Cambridgeshire and found elsewhere, or birds ringed elsewhere and found in Cambridgeshire. Four species, shown in italics, recorded recoveries without any new birds of those species being ringed.

	Pull	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	Total	Recovered
Mute Swan		31	108		139	38
Bewick's Swan			2		2	
<i>Wigeon</i>						4
<i>Gadwall</i>						2
Teal		16	35		51	2
Mallard		23	69		92	6
<i>Tufted Duck</i>						3
<i>Red Kite</i>						1
Sparrowhawk		5	5		10	2
Water Rail			4		4	
Corncrake	18	6	1		25	
Moorhen			3		3	
Avocet	14				14	84
Lapwing	39				39	
Redshank	1				1	
Snipe		1	9		10	
Common Tern	32				32	
Black-headed Gull	206		185		391	11
Lesser Black-backed Gull			207		207	96
Herring Gull			41		41	15
Yellow-legged Gull			3		3	1
Iceland Gull			1		1	
Great Black-backed Gull			4		4	
Stock Dove	68	1	5	1	75	
Woodpigeon			9	1	10	
Collared Dove		1	6	1	8	1
Turtle Dove	4		6		10	1
Cuckoo	1				1	
Barn Owl	416	1	29		446	41
Little Owl	6		1		7	
Tawny Owl	18	1	2		21	1
Swift	20		16		36	
Kingfisher		10	1	1	12	
Green Woodpecker		11	7	1	19	
Great Spotted Woodpecker		25	19		44	1
Kestrel	119		2		121	8
Hobby	3				3	
Magpie		4			4	
Jay			6	1	7	
Jackdaw	115		5		120	2
Goldcrest		51	20	11	82	
Firecrest		1			1	
Blue Tit	715	825	415		1,955	9
Great Tit	671	448	274	3	1,396	9
Coal Tit	9	32	37	3	81	

	<u>Pulli</u>	<u>Juvenile</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Unaged</u>	Total	<i>Recovered</i>
Marsh Tit	8	41	11	2	62	1
Bearded Tit	6	31	5	1	43	
Skylark	38		5	8	51	
Sand Martin	277	7	41		325	41
Swallow	91	172	75		338	1
House Martin			131		131	
Cetti's Warbler		14	6	3	23	1
Long-tailed Tit	1	50	102	112	265	6
Chiffchaff	28	260	85	48	421	2
Willow Warbler	6	102	52	9	169	1
Blackcap	9	717	233	37	996	8
Garden Warbler		49	42	2	93	2
Lesser Whitethroat		38	14	2	54	
Whitethroat	9	320	75		404	39
Grasshopper Warbler		16	17		33	
Sedge Warbler	5	926	98		1,029	16
Reed Warbler	24	1,553	245		1,822	22
Nuthatch		1	4	8	13	
Treecreeper		37	10	1	48	1
Wren	5	208	86	11	310	
Starling	87	78	163	6	334	3
Blackbird	37	192	517	10	756	13
Fieldfare		3	76		79	2
Song Thrush	4	66	45	1	116	
Redwing		24	16	4	44	1
Mistle Thrush			1		1	
Spotted Flycatcher	10	1	6		17	
Robin	26	300	155	2	483	3
Nightingale		2	12		14	2
Redstart		1			1	
Whinchat		1			1	
Duncock	1	180	135	2	318	1
House Sparrow	9	37	43	41	130	1
Tree Sparrow			13	1	14	
Yellow Wagtail	32	2	19		53	
Grey Wagtail		1			1	
Pied Wagtail		111	46		157	
Meadow Pipit	9	291	23	37	360	
Brambling			3		3	
Chaffinch	5	170	321	9	505	8
Bullfinch	9	60	95	1	165	1
Greenfinch		264	289	8	561	9
Linnet	15	1	53	1	70	1
Lesser Redpoll			277		277	13
Mealy Redpoll			7		7	

	Pull	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	Total	Recovered
Goldfinch	6	139	459	8	612	9
Siskin			192		192	5
Yellowhammer	6	49	22		77	1
Little Bunting				1	1	
Reed Bunting	28	384	258	14	684	7
Corn Bunting	16			2	18	1
	3,282	8,392	6,120	415	18,209	560

Ring-recoveries

This section of the report is once again derived from the online BTO Summary of Ringing Recoveries.

The number of ring-recoveries reported by the public continues to fall. Once again the recoveries section is dominated by exchanges between ringers (controls). A high proportion of these are always Reed and Sedge Warblers, where some 80% of all recoveries are controls. Self-evidently this means that recovery patterns for many species are very much influenced by the distribution of ringers.

Avocet

EL81884	Nestling	06-06-2009	Dunkirk, Little Downham, near Ely: 52°27'N 0°14'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Colour rings	07-07-2009	Cley: 52°58'N 1°3'E (Norfolk) 80 km NE 1m 1d
	Colour rings	18-02-2010	St-Brevins-les-Pins: 46°14'N 1°30'W (Charente-Maritime) France 702 km SSW 8m 12d
	Colour rings	09-05-2013	Frampton Marsh: 52°56'N 0°1'E (Lincolnshire) 56 km NNW 3y 11m 3d
	Colour rings	01-10-2013	Alkborough Flats: 53°41'N 0°41'W (Humberside) 151 km NNW 4y 3m 25d

The Dunkirk Avocets continue to produce multiple re-sighting records as they circulate between regular UK flocking sites and breeding colonies (such as Snettisham, Cley, Frampton Marsh and Titchfield Haven); and overseas in the Low Countries and wintering centres further south to southern Spain.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GA37303	Nestling	14-07-2002	Orford Beach, Orfordness: 52°3'N 1°29'E (Suffolk)
	Colour rings	01-10-2002	Tostock: 52°14'N 0°50'E (Suffolk) 49 km WNW 2m 17d
	Colour rings	05-01-2003	Oued Souss, Agadir: 30°21'N 9°36'W Morocco 2,578 km SSW 5m 22d
	Colour rings	01-07-2004	Cley: 52°57'N 1°3'E (Norfolk) 105 km NNW 1y 11m 17d
	Colour rings	22-10-2004	Westkapelle: 51°31'N 3°25'E (Zeeland) The Netherlands 146 km ESE 2y 3m 8d
	Colour rings	31-03-2005	Gijon, Asturias: 43°31'N 5°37'W (Oviedo) Spain 1,086 km SSW 2y 8m 17d
	Colour rings	03-02-2006	Stanton Harcourt: 51°44'N 1°25'W (Oxfordshire) 202 km W 3y 6m 20d
	Colour rings	17-09-2007	Earsham: 52°26'N 1°23'E (Norfolk) 44 km N 5y 2m 3d
	Colour rings	17-01-2010	Drinkstone: 52°13'N 0°51'E (Suffolk) 47 km WNW 7y 6m 3d
	Colour rings	06-02-2012	Milton, Cambridge: 52°14'N 0°9'E (Cambridgeshire) 94 km WNW 9y 6m 23d
	Colour rings	26-01-2013	Cottenham Long Drive: 52°18'N 0°10'E (Cambridgeshire) 94 km WNW 10y 6m 12d
	Colour rings	15-03-2013	Ipswich: 52°3'N 1°8'E (Suffolk) 24 km W 10y 8m 1d

The combination of durable modern colour rings and the patience and skills of enthusiast gull-watchers has made it possible to track some astonishing life-histories, of which this bird – going full circle Suffolk to Suffolk – is a prime example.

Black-headed Gull

EK47126	Adult	23-03-1985	Godmanchester: 52°19'N 0°9'W (Cambridgeshire)
	Ring read	18-04-1993	Kauppatori, Helsinki: 60°10'N 24°57'E (Uusimaa) Finland 1,772 km ENE 8y Om 26d
	Ring read	15-04-1997	Kauppatori, Helsinki: 60°10'N 24°57'E (Uusimaa) Finland 1,772 km ENE 12y Om 23d

There have been 876 recoveries/sightings of Cambridgeshire-ringed Black-headed Gulls abroad, and 281 records of foreign-ringed birds here. What is surprising is that there are birders still succeeding in reading deteriorating metal rings from the 1980s. Another Godmanchester Tip bird similar to this one has had its ring read at a breeding site in Schleswig Holstein, Germany every summer since 2001.

Common Tern

ESI	Adult	02-09-2011	Parque Natural Marismas Del Odiel, Huelva: 37°16'N 6°55'W (Huelva) Spain
1V019430	Ring read	15-07-2013	Dunkirk, Little Downham: 52°27'N 0°14'E (Cambridgeshire) 1,777 km NNE 1y 10m 13d

After last year's Belgian bird, this sighting further hints that recent colonists may be of European origin. There is also an ancient recovery of a Cambridgeshire Common Tern to Ghana.

Cetti's Warbler

Y207826	Juvenile	15-07-2013	Bainton Gravel Pits: 52°38'N 0°22'W (Cambridgeshire)
	Caught by ringer	25-09-2013	Grimston: c. 53°48'N 0°3'W (Humberside) 132 km N 2m 10d

This is the second juvenile, of only four ever ringed at Bainton, to be controlled. The previous bird, ringed in June 2010, was retrapped (twice) by ringers at Rhoscrowther, Pembrokeshire in November of that year – about as far west as it is possible to go without crossing the sea. Most other Cambridgeshire Cetti controls have been to the west. This one is another example of juvenile (probably female) dispersal and potential colonisation.

Willow Warbler

CYY674 First-year 11-08-2012 Merton Grange, Gamlingay: 52°9'N 0°11'W (Cambridgeshire)
 Freshly dead (cat) 10-04-2013 Rennes: 48°6'N 1°4'W (Ille-et-Vilaine) **France** 455 km S 7m 3od

While there have been ten foreign ring-recoveries of Chiffchaffs from Cambridgeshire, mainly in Iberia, this is the first recorded for Willow Warbler except for an ancient recovery in Mali. This may reflect the reedbed bias of French, Spanish and Portuguese ringers, who mainly concentrate in autumn on their Atlantic estuaries. And presumably rather few Willow Warblers are taken by cats.

Grasshopper Warbler

Do47149 First-year Male 18-08-2012 Walberswick: 52°18'N 1°38'E (Suffolk)
 Caught by ringer 22-05-2013 Bainton Gravel Pits: 52°38'N 0°22'W (Cambridgeshire) 141 km WNW 9m 4d

BTO statistics suggest that you need to ring 550 Grasshopper Warblers to have a chance of a recovery or control, which makes it one of the very least recovered species (at 0.2%). By contrast, just 50 Cetti's Warblers, apparently moving from reedbed to reedbed (and thus ringer to ringer) ought to be sufficient statistically to record a movement (a 2% recovery rate). This otherwise unremarkable Grasshopper Warbler control is the second-ever for the County. According to my records, only 391 have been ringed in the County since the 1960s, so it may be a while before we see another.

Reed Warbler

D262860 First-year 25-08-2013 Chippenham Fen: c. 52°18'N 0°25'E (Cambridgeshire)
 Caught by ringer 11-09-2013 Lagoa de Santo Andre: 38°5'N 8°47'W (Baixo Alentejo) **Portugal** 1,734 km SSW 17d

2013 was an average year for Reed Warbler movements. There were 27 ring-recoveries within the UK, with the majority as usual to and from the Rye Bay RG at Icklesham in Sussex. There were two exchanges with France, one bird to Spain, and two to Portugal. The Chippenham juvenile above is only of interest because I myself had flown back from ringing at Santo Andre on the 10th, thereby narrowly avoiding re-handling my own bird.

Fieldfare

LA77927	Adult Female	03-01-2011	Aldreth Road Orchard: 52°21'N 0°8'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Long dead	01-05-2013	Nordby Jevnaker: 60°15'N 10°22'E (Opland) Norway 1,080 km NE 2y 3m 28d
LE77565	First-year Male	03-12-2012	Knapwell: c. 52°14'N 0°3'W (Cambridgeshire)
	Freshly dead	17-05-2013	Asmarka: 61°1'N 10°45'E (Hedmark) Norway 1,177 km NE 5m 14d

Redwing

RF28163	First-year	09-11-2011	Wicken Fen: c. 52°18'N 0°16'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Freshly dead (shot)	14-12-2013	Valeyrac: 45°23'N 0°53'W (Gironde) France 774 km S 2y 1m 5d

Most winter thrush recoveries are from birds shot when wintering in southern Europe (east to the former Yugoslavia). There have been many fewer records from the breeding grounds where few pulli seem to be ringed, and few are mist-netted in summer. Cambridgeshire Fieldfare summer records are from Norway (12), followed by Finland (9), Sweden (6) and one each from Russia and Poland. These two May Fieldfares were found remarkably close to each other. For Redwing, Cambridgeshire recoveries from France (14), Spain (8), Portugal (2) and Italy (2) likewise demonstrate that sport 'hunting' is alive and well in these countries. This midwinter record above provides a typical example.

Meadow Pipit

D387933	First-year	16-09-2013	Spurn Head: 53°34'N 0°6'E (Humberside)
	Caught by ringer	23-09-2013	Burwell Fen: c. 52°17'N 0°17'E (Cambridgeshire) 144 km S 7d

Many thousands of Meadow Pipits move south across Cambridgeshire from late September on their way to winter in Iberia and North Africa. These birds originate in Iceland and northern Britain. Some Scandinavian populations are possibly involved, but it is thought that most of these track directly due south, avoiding the UK. Meadow Pipit (see Grasshopper Warbler above) is another species with a vanishingly low recovery rate (helped only slightly by Mediterranean hunting) of 0.2% or one in 295, which is not far from the number ringed by the WFG on Burwell Fen in 2013. Spurn BO is almost exactly geographically due north of Burwell.

Siskin

Do66081	Adult Male	14-10-2012	St Johns Pool: 58°38'N 3°21'W (Highland Region)
	Caught by ringer	02-03-2013	Oakington: 52°15'N 0°3'E (Cambridgeshire) 741 km SSE 4m 16d
Y899732	Adult Male	25-03-2013	Harston: c. 52°8'N 0°5'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Caught by ringer	26-04-2013	Leswalt: 54°56'N 5°5'W (Dumfries & Galloway) 462 km NW 1m 1d
L536785	Adult Male	04-09-2011	Selkirk: 55°32'N 2°51'W (Borders Region)
	Caught by ringer	24-02-2013	Glebe Road Barrington: 52°7'N 0°2'E (Cambridgeshire) 425 km SSE 1y 5m 20d
L212990	Full-grown Male	24-02-2013	Glebe Road, Barrington: 52°7'N 0°2'E (Cambridgeshire)
	Caught by ringer	29-03-2013	Kemple End: 53°51'N 2°28'W (Lancashire) 256 km NW 1m 5d
L988302	Adult Male	03-03-2012	Staindale Lake: 54°18'N 0°39'W (North Yorkshire)
	Caught by ringer	02-03-2013	Oakington: 52°15'N 0°3'E (Cambridgeshire) 233 km S 11m 27d
	Caught by ringer	10-04-2013	Branch End, Stocksfield: 54°56'N 1°54'W (Northumberland) 107 km NW 1y 1m 7d

Siskins are increasingly attracted to garden feeders (and particularly nyjer seed) and the species is becoming a rewarding source of ringer-to-ringer controls for those ringers who specialise in them. The five garden records above provide a nice illustration of to-and-fro seasonal movements between Cambridgeshire and northern Britain.

Please send any comments on this report and any 2014 records to m.holdsworth@ntlworld.com or to 4A Cavendish Avenue, Cambridge CB1 7US.