

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD RINGING REPORT 2017

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After last year's record-breaking result (now bafflingly revised by the BTO to 23,872 from the 24,084 when this Report was published in 2016\*), 2017 settled back down to the average of the previous six years. The year's grand total was 19,671, and that recent average is 19,286. It is only since 2005 that the annual total has been regularly above 10,000.

As an altogether average year for numbers, 2017 was notable for the small range of species ringed – just 88. Most recent years have comfortably sailed past 90, with 2011 and 2012 tied as the best years ever at 98. This simple year-on-year comparative total always conceals a degree of complexity: 14 species ringed in 2016 are not on the 2017 list; and nine species were ringed in 2017 but not in 2016. Among these nine was a Cormorant, which I believe is the first ever for the County, and one of just six full-grown birds encountered nationally in 2017. Regular readers of this Report will not be surprised to learn that this individual made the huge mistake of dozing off outside Tony Martin's back door...

Overall, it was what might be described as the 'scarce regulars' which failed to add glamour to ringing sessions; species such as Hobby, House Martin, Moorhen, Water Rail and Yellow Wagtail all failed to show in 2017. No Bewick's Swans or gulls were ringed; and the MP3 brigade failed to raise another Yellow-browed Warbler. Cambridgeshire (perhaps like most places these days) has become pretty much a county of garden and feeder ringers anyway, and this is reflected as ever in the top species ringed.

The table below shows the tallies and rankings of the top twenty species:

	Species	2017	2016*
1	<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>2,546</b>	2,572
2	<b>Goldfinch</b>	<b>1,582</b>	1,403
3	<b>Great Tit</b>	<b>1,389</b>	1,616
4	Reed Bunting	<b>1,180</b>	1,296
5	Blackcap	<b>1,159</b>	1,099
6	Reed Warbler	<b>892</b>	1,830
7	<b>Blackbird</b>	<b>781</b>	939
8	Chiffchaff	<b>731</b>	702
9	<b>Robin</b>	<b>627</b>	807
10	<b>Dunnock</b>	<b>622</b>	708
11	Sand Martin	<b>618</b>	467
12	<b>Greenfinch</b>	<b>610</b>	1,047
13	<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	<b>587</b>	579
14	<b>Wren</b>	<b>530</b>	635
15	<b>Starling</b>	<b>475</b>	602
16	<b>House Sparrow</b>	<b>469</b>	326
17	<b>Chaffinch</b>	<b>453</b>	705
18	Redwing	<b>423</b>	<b>348</b>
19	Whitethroat	<b>339</b>	<b>295</b>
20	Sedge Warbler	<b>316</b>	<b>831</b>

\*The BTO's online Ringing and Nest Recording Report is subject to revision after first publication. Some of the totals for previous years published in CBR Ringing Reports do not now match those shown online, sometimes by a considerable amount. Where this is the case, and where earlier Ringing Reports had a different number, the revised, current, total has been shown here in italics. Long-term statistical comparisons relate to numbers as published in the CBRs at the time.

Most of these top species are, as usual, the garden and/or feeder birds, which are shown above in bold. Twenty-eight percent of all birds ringed in Cambridgeshire in 2017 were Blue Tits, Great Tits or Goldfinches. Goldfinch numbers continue their inexorable rise; it's only a few years since their numbers rarely exceeded 500 a year. It is also a while since this sort of table told us anything substantive about the relative fortunes – the rises and the falls – of individual species populations. It is now all about ringer behaviour: fishing – as they say – where the fish are. This means specifically targeting species which are easy to catch. Some will be garden feeder species, and some will be particularly responsive to sound-luring in late summer, such as Blackcap and Chiffchaff – or in winter, such as Redwing. Even the big reductions or even non-appearances in this top twenty may not mean much either. Ringers maybe gave less attention in 2017 at critical times of year to Reed and Sedge Warblers, Meadow Pipits (best year ever 2014:530), and Pied Wagtails (2014:438).

Further on trends, this Report has in the past regularly published a long-view table of ringing totals since 1968. An update for 2013–17 is due this year. It can be found towards the end of this Report. The big story told in this 'quinquennials' table is, of course, the growth of ringing in the County, from 18,684 in the five years 1968–72 to 100,113 in 2013–17. The infant Wicken Fen Group accounted for 70% of the total in that first period; it's down to 20% nowadays. Deriving any analysis of population trends from these raw totals would, of course, depend on rendering an individual species' total as a proportion of the total of all species caught during the period, rather than on looking at absolute values. This will still work for a species such as Willow Warbler, which isn't particularly targeted or susceptible to sound-lures. 783 Willow Warblers in 1968–72 isn't very different from 833 in 2013–17. But expressed as a percentage, the first period represents 4% of all birds ringed, and the most recent a mere 0.08%; this shows how much the species has declined. The BTO East of England BBS trend shows a similar decline of 80% just over the 23 years 1995–2016. For most species, however, all the biases inherent in changing ringer behaviour mentioned earlier would probably apply. There was very little farmland or roost ringing before the 2000s, and the intensive use of sound-luring (outside the breeding season) has only taken off much more recently.

Nonetheless the table shows some evidence of our only-too-well-documented species declines and losses — Golden Oriole, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Sparrow and Willow Tit. There are, however, possibly more counterbalancing gains and increases — Avocet, Bearded Tit, Buzzard, Cetti's Warbler, Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers, Grey Wagtail, Hobby, Nuthatch and Sparrowhawk. But what we may have gained perhaps in species-richness we have lost in an appalling attrition of absolute numbers (even though this is not reflected in these ringing totals), in particular those humid-zone migrants — Cuckoo, House Martin, Nightingale, Spotted Flycatcher, Turtle Dove and Whinchat; and our beleaguered farmland specialists — Corn Bunting, Skylark and Yellowhammer.

Attention might be drawn to some highlights:

- The landfill gull ringing at Godmanchester and Milton in the mid-1980s, which was briefly revived at Milton in 2013–14, still produces ring-recoveries and sightings. The EU's Landfill Directive has now put paid to all that.
- There has been a welcome increased focus on project-based conservation ringing: Bewick's and Whooper Swans, Corncrake, Black-tailed Godwit and our struggling farmland specialists: Turtle Dove, Yellow Wagtail, Linnets, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting.
- Cambridgeshire has become a key player in light-level and GPS geolocator tagging, again for conservation research: cutting-edge work on Swifts, Nightingales and Spotted Flycatchers.
- The big-box birds show regular cycles: Barn Owls and Kestrels. There was none of this before 1980. A record 2,787 Barn Owls since 2013 now keeps Cambridgeshire alongside Lincolnshire as the most important counties for this species' conservation and recovery.

- The colonisation and recolonisation of Cetti's Warbler makes for an interesting story. The first Cambridgeshire record was in 1977, with first proven breeding at Wicken Fen in 1980. The very local population at that time, centred on Wicken Fen, failed to pull through the 1984/5 winter and there were subsequently no records before birds reappeared at two different sites (neither was Wicken) in 2004. The rest is history, but there still remain some odd gaps in their distribution. Why are there no Cetti's at Chippenham Fen and so few at Little Wilbraham/Teversham Fens and Kingfishers Bridge?
- Cambridgeshire Redpolls have had changing fortunes. They were once an abundant breeding species but had pretty much been extirpated by 2000. Redpolls are now just a visitor from Northern Britain in winter, when they are widely ringed at garden feeders.

The totals from the last century for this 'quinquennials' table will not be entirely accurate, and will be understated, since they depended at the time on ringers submitting their totals to the CBC annual report. For example, there are no figures included for the extensive WWT duck ringing at Peakirk/Borough Fen Decoy in the 1980s. We nowadays instead have access to the BTO's published database figures. It's possible that even the species list itself, at an impressive 157, may not be complete.

There are singleton ringing records for fourteen somewhat random species. Credit for a disproportionate number of these is shared between the Wicken Fen Group and Tony Martin. They are Cormorant (TM), Egyptian Goose (TM), Golden Plover, Great Grey Shrike, Great Reed Warbler (WFG), Iceland Gull, Little Bunting (TM), Red-backed Shrike (WFG), Red-rumped Swallow, Short-eared Owl (WFG), Spotted Crake (WFG), Tree Pipit (WFG), Turnstone and Wood Sandpiper. One wonders what will be next; we still manage a new species most years.

Nest recording and pullus recording in the County continued at its normal low level. It comprises three main components: the big-box work for Barn Owls and Kestrels from Peter Wilkinson and his network; tits in boxes — some structured studies (such as Madingley Wood and Monks Wood), some less so; and special projects. 2017 came in at a low 2,295 pulli ringed (12% of the total), well below average, because the first two of these categories fared badly (at least it does not seem to have had anything to do with effort). Both Barn Owls and Kestrels had a middling to poor year, due to weather or food or both. Barn Owls (all ages) managed 395 (2016:776; 2015:156) and Kestrels (all ages) 108 (146; 79). Nestbox tit numbers were also low, but for presumably different reasons. Blue Tits dropped to 525 (798; 760) and Great Tits to 229 (608; 835). The two Sand Martin projects, at Dunkirk and at Ferry Meadows improved to 519 (316; 104). The recent focus on Chiffchaffs at Wicken Fen helped that total to 35; otherwise there was very little open-nest pulli ringing anywhere. Five Avocets were the first since 2014. 27 RSPB Corn Buntings were most of the national total (38).

Seventy-three pulli Spotted Flycatchers were a by-product of the geolocator project, as were 17 new adults (since 2017 was a season focussed on tag retrieval, rather than on marking new birds). Nineteen breeding adults of both sexes had been tagged in 2016, together with a control cohort, also nineteen, without tags but colour-ringed, to assess any differential survival effect from the tag harnesses. During the 2017 retrieval season nine of the nineteen tagged birds were re-found, and seven were recaptured. The other two came back to their precise ringing location, one even as a tag/control pair, but then vanished and couldn't be relocated. Eight of the nineteen birds in the control cohort returned. These are astonishing survival rates for a small long-distant migrant passerine. A comparator project in Devon, also 2016–17, run by the RSPB, had tagged 21 birds, of which eight returned, with five of their geolocators retrieved. Ten of these combined project birds had wintered in Angola, and one each in Cameroon and the DRC. A full report on this project and on Cambridgeshire Spotted Flycatchers in general is in preparation. Nineteen more flycatchers were tagged in 2018.

Richard Broughton and Marta Maziarz continued their work at Monks Wood and Holland/Wennington Woods on Marsh and Coal Tits. These projects are now additionally being run as BTO RASs and continue to generate a steady stream of research papers. Their 2017 totals in the three woods were 43 new Marsh Tits and 31 Coal tits. The Marsh Tit study was in its 15th year in 2017, the Coal Tit in its third year. Two colour-ringed Marsh Tits ringed as adults in September 2010 and February 2011, in Wennington and Holland Woods respectively, were still alive throughout 2017, making them both at least eight years old (and one was still alive in March 2018 too, making it almost nine+). There was some evidence of rare local immigration and emigration of Coal tits from Monks Wood: one bird was an immigrant from Woodwalton Fen (5 km in), and another was ringed in Monks Wood and then relocated in Wennington Wood (5 km out). The Blue and Great Tit pulli ringing by Shelley Hinsley has now ended after about 20 years.

The national ringing total in 2017 for Britain and Ireland once again crept just over the one million to 1,020,356 to which Cambridgeshire's totals made a disproportionate contribution both in numbers and in the variety of species processed. Some nationally significant numbers are shown below.

	Cams 2017	Britain and Ireland	County ranking and percentage of national total	Top county and total
Teal	16	719	Fifth – 2%	North Yorks (276)
Black-tailed Godwit	31	152	Third – 20%	Suffolk (59)
Green Woodpecker	15	309	Fifth – 5%	Kent (72)
Sand Martin	618	13,128	Fifth – 5%	Leics (2,450)
Cetti's Warbler	97	1,720	Fifth – 6%	Suffolk (279)
Spotted Flycatcher	90	875	First – 10%	
Pied Wagtail	174	2,973	Second – 6%	NE Scotland (186)
Corn Bunting	29	51	First – 57%	

For two of our project species, Spotted Flycatcher and Corn Bunting, we ringed the greatest number of individuals of any area of the country. We feature for Sand Martin and for Cetti's Warbler for the first time. The table also shows how low the national totals are for some species. Our continuing success with Green Woodpeckers is intriguing, as is the fact that for most species the top-scoring county remains the same each year.

Ringing sessions for the Wicken Fen Group took place at several different sites on 138 different days in 2017, somewhat fewer than in recent years. The year's ringing total was 3,644 new birds of 48 different species. In addition to the new birds, 697 retraps (birds already bearing rings) had been originally ringed at the Fen, and a further 15 were controls ringed elsewhere. Despite the reduced overall effort, several species had totals of over 100, with the highest scores being Blackcap 378, Reed Bunting 371, Blue Tit 359, Chiffchaff 334, Reed Warbler 311, Redwing 261, Great Tit 205, Wren 155, Robin 109 and Meadow Pipit 105. The Redwing and Cetti's Warbler (77) totals are all-time Wicken records. The more unusual species remained much the same as in recent years — Kingfisher 7, Jay 6, Sparrowhawk 5, Green Woodpecker 3, Spotted Flycatcher 2, and one Cuckoo. This is the lowest range of species since 2006 (also 48). Unsurprisingly no new species was added to the Group's overall list, which thus remains at 106.

Apart from Wicken I have received individual 2017 totals for a few additional Cambridgeshire ringing sites (with new bird ringing totals >200) Dunkirk 768, RAF Wyton 675, Chippenham Fen 550, Bainton 528, Ely Beet Pits 520, Great Stukeley 444, Holt Island 441, Kingfishers Bridge 346 and Lordship Farm 317.

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BTO Constant Effort Sites projects continued at Bainton (Chris Hughes), Ely Beet Pits (Dave Culham), Five Arches Pit (Alan Brimmell), the Great Fen (Dave Neal), Paxton Pits (Derek Gruar) and Wicken Fen (now three sites: WFG).

As and when time allows, work continues on the website <http://cambridgeshirebirdringing.org/>. For the moment this is intended as a repository of Cambridgeshire ringing data and analyses rather than an exercise in social media!

### **Ringing totals for 2017**

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). Recovered are reports (captures, field sightings or birds found dead) of birds away from the site of ringing, often by another ringer (a 'control'). Recovered may include either birds ringed in Cambridgeshire and found elsewhere, or birds ringed elsewhere and found in Cambridgeshire. Retrapped are reports of birds found alive (captured or re-sighted) within 5km of their original place of ringing. Species shown in *italics* recorded recoveries without there being any new birds of those species being ringed.

	Pulli	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2017	Retrapped	Recovered
Mute Swan	3	12	27		42	251	52
Shelduck			2		2	2	1
Gadwall			2		2		
Teal		3	13		16		5
Mallard		2	12		14		6
<i>Pochard</i>							1
Tufted Duck			2		2		1
Cormorant			1		1		
Sparrowhawk	2	10	7		19		
Avocet	5				5		3
Corncrake			4		4	5	
Lapwing	3				3		
Black-tailed Godwit	26		5		31	1	
Ruff			1		1		
Dunlin			1		1		
Redshank	1				1		1
Snipe		2	4		6		
Common Tern	1				1		
<i>Black-headed Gull</i>						1	5
<i>Lesser B-b Gull</i>						25	
<i>Herring Gull</i>							2
<i>Yellow-legged Gull</i>							1
Stock Dove	22		5		27		
Woodpigeon	4	1	11		16	1	
Collared Dove		4	9	1	14	1	
Cuckoo			2		2	1	
Barn Owl	369	1	25		395	19	47
Little Owl	2	1	2		5		
Tawny Owl	10				10		1
Swift	21		7		28	4	
Kingfisher		15	6		21	3	
Green Woodpecker		10	5		15	5	
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	22	23	4	49	22		1
Kestrel	107		1		108	1	3
Peregrine	2				2		1
Magpie		8	1		9		
Jay		2	7		9	3	
Jackdaw	15	1	5		21	2	2
Rook		1			1		
Goldcrest		202	43	33	278	68	1
Firecrest			1		1		
Blue Tit	525	1,537	483	1	2,546	1,237	14
Great Tit	229	784	371	5	1,389	975	5
Coal Tit	9	98	19	7	133	94	
Marsh Tit		55	10	3	68	91	153
Bearded Tit		22	11	7	40	43	3
Skylark	10				10		
Sand Martin	519	16	83		618	114	3
Swallow	98	39	4		141		3

	Pulli	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2017	Retrapped	Recovered
Cetti's Warbler		57	18	22	<b>97</b>	87	2
Long-tailed Tit		75	201	311	<b>587</b>	404	1
Willow Warbler		97	62	17	<b>176</b>	30	1
Chiffchaff	35	475	162	59	<b>731</b>	121	176
Blackcap		906	236	17	<b>1,159</b>	110	3
Garden Warbler		42	35	2	<b>79</b>	19	1
Lesser Whitethroat		51	27		<b>78</b>	2	1
Whitethroat	4	281	54		<b>339</b>	27	1
Grasshopper Warbler	1	6	9		<b>16</b>	1	
Sedge Warbler	3	214	99		<b>316</b>	105	12
Reed Warbler	23	621	248		<b>892</b>	214	10
Nuthatch		4	4	11	<b>19</b>	24	1
Treecreeper	1	44	25	9	<b>79</b>	55	
Wren	5	361	159	5	<b>530</b>	234	
Starling	70	182	207	16	<b>475</b>	78	2
Blackbird	16	283	479	3	<b>781</b>	392	13
Fieldfare		8	11		<b>19</b>	4	
Song Thrush	4	88	44	3	<b>139</b>	43	
Redwing		316	103	4	<b>423</b>		1
Mistle Thrush			3		<b>3</b>		
Spotted Flycatcher	73		17		<b>90</b>	23	2
Robin	15	398	212	2	<b>627</b>	344	4
Nightingale		1	5		<b>6</b>	1	
Redstart		2	1		<b>3</b>		
Stonechat		3	2		<b>5</b>		
Duncock	1	334	282	5	<b>622</b>	421	5
House Sparrow	1	244	142	82	<b>469</b>	137	1
Tree Sparrow			3	9	<b>12</b>		
Grey Wagtail		1	1		<b>2</b>		
Pied Wagtail		71	103		<b>174</b>	6	
Meadow Pipit		179	12	2	<b>193</b>	1	
Water Pipit				2	<b>2</b>		
Brambling		11	3		<b>14</b>		
Chaffinch	4	216	231	2	<b>453</b>	70	1
Bullfinch	2	90	98		<b>190</b>	101	
Greenfinch		325	280	5	<b>610</b>	35	5
Linnet	16	25	33		<b>74</b>	2	1
Lesser Redpoll		98	40	1	<b>139</b>	9	1
Common Redpoll			1		<b>1</b>		
Goldfinch	7	782	787	6	<b>1,582</b>	130	10
Siskin		2	5		<b>7</b>		1
Yellowhammer		71	71	1	<b>143</b>		2
Reed Bunting	4	657	461	58	<b>1,180</b>	110	6
Corn Bunting	27			2	<b>29</b>		
	2,295	10,469	6,190	717	<b>19,671</b>	6,279	602

**Ringing totals, five-year periods 1968 to 2017**

	68-72	73-77	78-82	83-87	88-92	93-97	98-02	03-07	08-12	13-17	from 1968		
Mute Swan			2	3		21	13	50	152	319	560		
Bewick's Swan						14	9	11	31	25	90		
Whooper Swan							3	1	4	3	11		
Greylag Goose										2	2		
Canada Goose		14		3					1		18		
Egyptian Goose										1	1		
Shelduck								16	5	3	24		
Wigeon							97	638	23	1	759		
Gadwall							8	185	8	3	204		
Teal				2	6			16	249	241	514		
Mallard		5	29	2	3	2		101	396	312	850		
Pintail								29	5		34		
Garganey							1	1			2		
Shoveler								5	10	2	17		
Tufted Duck					1				1	2	4		
Goldeneye								2			2		
RL Partridge		6	3	1	1		1				12		
Grey Partridge								3		1	4		
Cormorant										1	1		
Shag					2	1					3		
Grey Heron				5					9		14		
Little Grebe				1	1	1			2		5		
Red Kite									27		27		
Marsh Harrier					8	1		1	14	3	27		
Montagu's Harrier						4					4		
Sparrowhawk					2	83	48	21	58	83	373		
Buzzard								1		5	7		
Water Rail		1	2		1		3	2	8	7	35		
Spotted Crake				1							1		
Corncrake									2	27	57		
Moorhen		3	9	4	12	237	3		43	56	374		
Coot					1	1			45	2	49		
Oystercatcher							4			5	9		
Stone-curlew			1	1	10	2				1	15		
Avocet								3	59	25	87		
Golden Plover					1						1		
Lapwing		1	37	34	33	5	1	515	273	198	1209		
Little Ringed Plover			2	5	33	10	1	1	10	9	73		
Ringed Plover			1	6	20	7		5	3		42		
Black-tailed Godwit					9			152	71		374		
Turnstone						1					1		
Ruff				4	9					2	16		
Dunlin				1	12	2				1	17		
Little Stint					2						2		
Common Sandpiper				10	37	9				2	59		
Green Sandpiper			1	4	11					4	26		
Greenshank			2	1	3						6		
Wood Sandpiper					1						1		
Redshank				13	20	10	1		6	6	24	9	89
Jack Snipe		1			1			2	1			5	
Woodcock		3	3	5	8	2	1	1	10	11		44	



	68-72	73-77	78-82	83-87	88-92	93-97	98-02	03-07	08-12	13-17	from 1968
Snipe	30	63	213	505	8	2	1	10	12	46	890
Common Tern					24	30	13		18	48	133
Black-headed Gull		3	1	1755	6344	38		7	7	602	8757
Mediterranean Gull										2	2
Common Gull				67	184						251
Lesser BB Gull				1	64					236	301
Herring Gull				3	140					46	189
Yellow-legged Gull										3	3
Iceland Gull										1	1
Great BB Gull					8					5	13
Stock Dove			9	11	12	5	20	126	235	232	650
Wood Pigeon	10	22	17	62	14	29	15	34	88	62	353
Collared Dove	5	3		9	23	37	42	103	58	50	330
Turtle Dove	13	30	12	9	8	8	3	8	8	15	114
Cuckoo	12	17	6	34	9	20	3	8	26	18	153
Barn Owl				8	15	83	364	1615	2239	2787	7111
Little Owl		1	4	13	7		6	17	33	43	124
Tawny Owl	5	7	9	14	10	12	25	40	63	80	265
Long-eared Owl	2	5			3			3			13
Short-eared Owl			1								1
Swift	2	40	3	343	236	90	151	92	188	126	1271
Kingfisher	68	90	42	17	42	32	22	59	95	126	593
Wryneck		1							2		3
Green Woodpecker		2	3		7	14	17	41	89	93	266
GS Woodpecker	4	4	6	15	26	40	54	115	175	205	644
LS Woodpecker	4	6	18	14	3	1	1	1			48
Kestrel		4	20	44	131	155	152	287	556	653	2002
Hobby					7	3		1	6	7	24
Peregrine									3	5	8
Golden Oriole					11	12	3				26
Red-backed Shrike	1										1
Great Grey Shrike		1									1
Magpie		1	1	1	6	13	2	13	25	33	95
Jay	8	23	22	28	27	52	25	40	79	58	362
Jackdaw			3	2	26	18	6	21	146	346	568
Rook		5	3	11	2	1		3	13	2	40
Carrion Crow			10	3	3	2	1		10	5	34
Goldcrest	76	146	153	171	291	230	169	311	626	1114	3287
Firecrest				1	4		1	2	5	5	18
Blue Tit	1064	1595	2853	2767	3923	6042	6446	7216	10068	12186	54160
Great Tit	338	514	1214	1385	2003	4673	5092	7734	7845	8024	38822
Coal Tit	27	27	27	53	61	176	178	181	312	594	1636
Willow Tit	152	94	55	65	45	54	9	2			476
Marsh Tit	4	3	11	1	45	96	240	586	593	349	1928
Bearded Tit	1	32	8	49	16	4		10	121	376	617
Skylark	7	5	3	17	12	5	145	227	72	119	612
Sand Martin	1	43	44	182	287	672	572	102	601	1963	4467
Swallow	1191	1809	843	1489	503	319	265	1504	1987	2065	11975
House Martin	2	335	238	440	35	4		128	109	169	1460
RR Swallow									1		1
Cetti's Warbler		1	17	13		1		38	166	281	517
Long-tailed Tit	378	506	325	397	910	1369	937	1176	1993	2278	10269
YB Warbler										2	2
Wood Warbler			1			1	1				3

	68-72	73-77	78-82	83-87	88-92	93-97	98-02	03-07	08-12	13-17	from 1968
Chiffchaff	261	141	156	154	501	533	431	1005	2423	2876	<b>8481</b>
Willow Warbler	783	593	590	687	1475	1450	609	643	1036	833	<b>8699</b>
Blackcap	483	558	585	679	1274	1312	1157	2319	5270	5779	<b>19416</b>
Garden Warbler	69	84	67	134	357	451	281	386	664	503	<b>2996</b>
Barred Warbler			1							1	<b>2</b>
Lesser Whitethroat	128	203	124	137	318	305	117	239	336	340	<b>2247</b>
Whitethroat	132	83	90	80	467	762	261	680	1516	1494	<b>5565</b>
Grasshopper Warbler	65	44	34	12	31	47	11	36	78	119	<b>477</b>
Sedge Warbler	1304	1191	887	703	1239	1587	677	793	2495	3123	<b>13999</b>
Marsh Warbler		1		1	1					1	<b>4</b>
Reed Warbler	1686	2565	2392	2059	2045	2798	2001	2862	6214	6978	<b>31600</b>
Great Reed Warbler	1										<b>1</b>
Nuthatch				1	1		9	12	42	79	<b>144</b>
Treecreeper	77	109	134	118	150	173	89	152	263	315	<b>1580</b>
Wren	691	906	750	903	1700	1522	922	1324	1723	2474	<b>12915</b>
Starling	102	542	1226	2863	1255	716	584	586	1048	2670	<b>11592</b>
Blackbird	1202	1417	2091	3101	3384	2121	1076	1860	3388	3678	<b>23318</b>
Fieldfare	11	73	320	548	294	9	4	76	374	168	<b>1877</b>
Song Thrush	1058	1205	951	1189	765	450	193	424	651	727	<b>7613</b>
Redwing	95	262	321	241	157	90	65	373	607	993	<b>3204</b>
Mistle Thrush	2	4	16	29	19	8	12	10	15	14	<b>129</b>
Spotted Flycatcher	112	156	147	214	160	43	21	67	26	255	<b>1201</b>
Robin	575	806	1024	885	1593	1627	986	1521	2567	3160	<b>14744</b>
Nightingale	8	3	13	19	18	8	25	53	108	58	<b>313</b>
Black Redstart					2				1		<b>3</b>
Redstart	6	7	1	3	4	9		1	9	17	<b>57</b>
Whinchat	1	4	1			5	1	2		5	<b>19</b>
Stonechat						1		6	2	13	<b>22</b>
Wheatear			1					1	2		<b>4</b>
Pied Flycatcher		5		2		2					<b>9</b>
Dunnock	1077	1432	1361	1241	1662	1343	742	1269	2125	2587	<b>14839</b>
House Sparrow	11	28	159	143	238	340	596	746	717	1415	<b>4393</b>
Tree Sparrow	826	544	446	1922	279	27		66	131	37	<b>4278</b>
Yellow Wagtail	3	3	4	16	6	8	53	307	55	192	<b>647</b>
Grey Wagtail								10	40	38	<b>88</b>
Pied Wagtail	7	72	41	186	83	17	28	140	302	1374	<b>2250</b>
Tree Pipit	1										<b>1</b>
Meadow Pipit	8	16	3	6	4	25	40	82	464	1679	<b>2327</b>
Water Pipit										13	<b>13</b>
Brambling	24	9	17	1	16	11	1	26	46	22	<b>173</b>
Chaffinch	243	339	436	469	1195	1198	638	1692	2629	2636	<b>11475</b>
Bullfinch	1117	1258	892	805	823	636	462	799	1161	1003	<b>8956</b>
Greenfinch	518	845	1856	2743	4925	4214	1759	5817	2787	3682	<b>29146</b>
Linnet	307	337	404	350	382	216	28	124	458	1105	<b>3711</b>
Lesser Redpoll	642	914	454	261	75	19		75	472	653	<b>3565</b>
Common Redpoll								2	28	13	<b>43</b>
Goldfinch	323	492	187	188	305	204	238	1637	3021	4819	<b>11414</b>
Siskin	37	31	6	1	44	87	32	7	80	271	<b>596</b>
Yellowhammer	308	219	242	291	243	253	377	649	889	541	<b>4012</b>
Little Bunting										1	<b>1</b>
Reed Bunting	947	1957	649	332	440	600	433	1078	2573	4464	<b>13473</b>
Corn Bunting	8	41	23		1	5	9	2	271	63	<b>423</b>
	<b>18684</b>	<b>25054</b>	<b>25406</b>	<b>33960</b>	<b>43835</b>	<b>39672</b>	<b>30786</b>	<b>53412</b>	<b>79213</b>	<b>100113</b>	<b>450135</b>

## Ring-recoveries

The full geographical coordinates of the locations listed below can be found in the BTO *Online Ringing and Nest Recording Report*.

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### Pochard

GF59266	First-year Male	05-02-1996	Borough Fen Decoy
	Dead	25-11-2017	Burgas, <b>Bulgaria</b> 2,354km ESE 21y 9m 20d

There have been several hundred Pochard recoveries north and east to Russia but this elderly male is the third-ever GB&I bird south to Bulgaria. The other two were from Peakirk in the 1980s.

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### Avocet

ET43256	Nestling	31-07-2004	Welney, Norfolk
	Ring read	25-04-2012	Dunkirk, Little Downham 8km S 7y 8m 25d
	Ring read	27-03-2017	Dunkirk, Little Downham 8km S 12y 7m 24d

Avocets aren't very good at rearing young, but, once adult, survival is high. The GB&I longevity record is nearly 25 years.

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### Black-headed Gull

NLA	First-year	05-01-2004	Zuiderhogeweg, Drachten <b>The Netherlands</b>
3612546	Ring read	06-03-2017	Parker's Piece, Cambridge 415km WSW 13y 2m 1d

### Mediterranean Gull

SVS	Nestling	08-06-2016	Norroren, <b>Sweden</b>
6171554	Colour rings	09-11-2017	Ferry Meadows Country Park 1,051km WSW 1y 5m 1d

Gulls provide excellent subjects for enthusiastic ring readers. This elderly Black-headed Gull was a good find in central Cambridge; and the Mediterranean Gull is the first-ever GB&I exchange with Sweden.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

GG77617	Nestling	17-07-2005	Orfordness, Suffolk
	Colour rings	21-05-2008	Blackborough End, Norfolk 101km NW 2y 10m 4d
	Colour rings	03-05-2009	Orfordness, Suffolk 3y 9m 16d
	Colour rings	31-07-2009	Calais, France 129km S 4y 14d
	Colour rings	24-12-2009	Cambridge Research Park 98km WNW 4y 5m 7d
	Colour rings	01-04-2010	Calais, France 129km S 4y 8m 15d
	Colour rings	01-01-2011	Cambridge Research Park 98km WNW 5y 5m 15d
	Colour rings	03-04-2011	Calais, France 129km S 5y 8m 17d
	Colour rings	28-04-2011	Blaringhem, France 168km SSE 5y 9m 11d
	Colour rings	10-10-2011	Cottenham Long Drove 99km WNW 6y 2m 23d
	Colour rings	05-04-2012	Blaringhem, France 168km SSE 6y 8m 19d
	Colour rings	07-04-2012	Umicore, Calais, France 126km S 6y 8m 21d
	Colour rings	13-04-2013	Quai de la Loire, Calais, France 128km S 7y 8m 27d
	Colour rings	02-06-2014	Quai de la Loire, Calais, France 128km S 8y 10m 16d
	Colour rings	04-04-2015	Quai de la Loire, Calais, France 128km S 9y 8m 18d
	Colour rings	19-01-2016	Cambridge Research Park 98km WNW 10y 6m 2d
	Colour rings	10-04-2016	Quai de la Loire, Calais, France 128km S 10y 8m 24d
	Colour rings	19-07-2016	Calais, France 128km S 11y 2d
	Colour rings	20-01-2017	Cambridge Research Park 98km WNW 11y 6m 3d

This is only a selection of the 22 sight-records which track the life-story so far of LBBG GG77617 over its first twelve years. After the usual few years of wandering as an immature, it isn't clear if s/he bred in Suffolk in 2008 or 2009, or was merely checking things out. After that, a clear pattern emerges of a somewhat salt-water-shy bird alternating between summers in urban Calais and winters focussed on the Milton tip. Blaringhem too is a landfill site for Calais; the Umicore factory is a brownfield gull colony in that city; and Quai de la Loire is the ferry port. On the other hand, there might have been clandestine side-trips to North Africa with no-one there to record them.

**Great Tit**

S080129	First-year Female	16-03-2016	Old Weston
	Caught by ringer	31-12-2016	Near Kettlestone, Norfolk 104km ENE 9m 15d

Only ten Cambridgeshire Great Tits have ever moved more than 100km.

**Bearded Tit**

Z992660	Full-grown Male	18-09-2016	Ely Beet Pits
	Caught by ringer	17-03-2017	Wicken Fen 12km SSW 5m 27d
	Caught by ringer	30-04-2017	Ely Beet Pits 7m 12d
	Caught by ringer	21-05-2017	Ely Beet Pits 8m 3d

An interesting excursion, and not by a dispersing juvenile. How did it know to find Wicken? Could it have been there before, or hatched there? Anyway, it didn't like what it found...

**Sand Martin**

Z887927	Adult	27-06-2016	Dunkirk, Little Downham
	Caught by ringer	10-08-2016	Tour aux Moutons, <b>France</b> 594km SSW 1m 14d
	Caught by ringer	09-05-2017	Dunkirk, Little Downham 10m 12d
FRP	First-year	26-07-2014	Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet, <b>France</b>
7283424	Caught by ringer	27-05-2016	Ferry Meadows Country Park 783km N 1y 10m 1d
	Caught by ringer	23-05-2017	Ferry Meadows Country Park 783km N 2y 9m 27d

A couple of examples of Cambridgeshire birds intercepted *en route* south. Tour aux Moutons is better known as an *Acrocephalus* warbler hotspot.

**Chiffchaff**

HYY506	Juvenile	15-07-2017	Wicken Fen
	Caught by ringer	27-10-2017	El Coronil, <b>Spain</b> 1,762km SSW 3m 12d

There have been eight Cambridgeshire exchanges (out of a GB&I total of 167) to and from Spain, which is about as far as most Chiffchaffs will normally go. There are, however, a handful of national ring-recoveries as far south as The Gambia and Senegal.

**Dunnock**

NOS	First-year	02-10-2016	Skjoldastraumen, Tysvaer, <b>Norway</b>
EE40605	Hit glass	17-01-2017	St Ives 864km SSW 3m 15d

Winter conditions force Dunnocks to be facultative migrants in Northern Europe. Most which reach the UK are from Norway (39 in both directions to date in the national database) but this — from just south of Bergen — is the first overseas ring-recovery of the species for Cambridgeshire.

**Chaffinch**

S080095	Adult Male	11-03-2016	Old Weston
	Predated	28-12-2016	West Felton, Shropshire 181km WNW 9m 17d

This hard-to-interpret ring-recovery was the only long-distance movement for Chaffinch in 2017.

**Lesser Redpoll**

Y741881	First-year Male	27-07-2014	Ty Rhyg, Rosebush, Pembrokeshire
	Caught by ringer	23-04-2016	Bardsey Island, Gwynedd 95km N 1y 8m 27
	Caught by ringer	19-12-2017	Oakington 336km E 3y 4m 22d

Popular with garden ringers and thus a reliable source of ringer-to-ringer controls, our winter Redpolls in Cambridgeshire hail from the North and West of Britain.

**Goldfinch**

S08086	First-year Male Caught by ringer	31-10-2016 24-03-2017	Old Weston Wirwignes, <b>France</b> 241km SE 4m 21d
S520214	Adult Male Caught by ringer	11-11-2016 18-01-2017	Meldreth Wirwignes, <b>France</b> 198km SE 2m 7d
BLB 14557078	First-year Female Caught by ringer	08-02-2017 13-10-2017	Bois-de-Lessines, <b>Belgium</b> Wicken Fen 309km NW 8m 5d

58,000 Goldfinches were ringed in GB&I in 2017, taking the species into third place behind Blue and Great Tits, and ahead of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs. This generates a lot of ring-recoveries, mainly at feeders. There remain, however, many unanswered questions about Goldfinch migration. The main direction of movement for GB&I-ringed birds is south-westerly into France and Spain, with only a single recovery ever from Germany. A disproportionate number of ring-recoveries in southern France and Spain have historically resulted from a bias introduced by hunting and trapping. It is possible that most birds just move far enough into northern France to find suitable winter feeding conditions but that relatively fewer of the birds doing this are encountered as ring-recoveries. And, of course, a significant proportion of (or most?) Goldfinches do not move at all, but stay in Britain. Are there age or sex differences in migration strategy? Do birds of more northern origin leapfrog past birds breeding in the south? To what extent are British Goldfinches joined by continental birds? Is each individual hard-wired to a particular (obligate) strategy or do some birds stay in Britain one winter and holiday in Spain the next? Whatever the answers to these questions, the operation — whatever it is (a keen garden ringer?) — in the village of Wirwignes, just inland from Boulogne, seems to produce more than its fair share of GB&I ring-controls, and not just from Cambridgeshire. Are those passage birds, or birds settled locally for the winter?

**Reed Bunting**

S071310	Full-grown Female Caught by ringer	24-03-2016 23-09-2017	Kingfishers Bridge Lund, Steigen, <b>Norway</b> 1,893km NNE 1y 5m 30d
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Compare the Dunnock above. There are 39 ring-recovery exchanges with Norway on the GB&I database. It's likely that birds crossing the North Sea are the exceptions to the general rule that Fenno-Scandian birds mainly move due south through Denmark and the Low Countries to escape the winter freeze. This bird is the first-ever overseas Reed Bunting ring-recovery for Cambridgeshire after some 13,000 ringed in the county. It is probably also the furthest north of the national 39 — from way above the Arctic Circle, on the coast just south of Narvik.