

A SUMMARY OF BIRD RINGING AT BAINTON, CAMBS

2014



By

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TERMINOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

THE 2014 SEASON

BIRDS CAUGHT IN THE DAMP SCRUB – 2014

BIRDS CAUGHT ON THE HEATH - 2014

RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS

OLDEST RETRAPS

PLANS FOR 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Cover photo:
Blue Tit – Bainton (Photo: Chris Hughes)*

TERMINOLOGY

Readers may appreciate an explanation of the abbreviations used in this report

BTO

The British Trust for Ornithology

CES

Constant Effort Site

PROCESSED

The processing of a bird for ringing, retrap or control

RINGED

The application of a ring to a bird's leg. Data such as age, sex, wing length, weight etc are also obtained

RETRAP

A bird caught by a ringer at the same site where it was originally ringed or, if sites are close together, a bird caught within 5km of where it was first ringed

CONTROL

A bird caught by a ringer more than 5km away from the site where it was originally ringed

RECOVERY

A bird caught as in control above or a bird found by a third party e.g. reported by a member of the public

RINGING BASE

Birds are brought back to my car for processing

INTRODUCTION

2014 saw a change in the ringing operation with two separate and distinct ringing sites being used. Both were based on the former CES site but with additional netting being used and both were registered as 'new' CES sites from 2014. One site is based on the heath area, the other being predominantly damp scrub centred on the reedbed area.

As covered in previous summaries, Constant Effort Site ringing remains one of the key areas of the BTO's scientific strategy where nets are set in the same place, for the same length of time year on year thus significantly enhancing the value of data gathered. Having re-ordered and expanded both sites, we have, in effect, started again after 23 years. We are not though new to CES ringing and have made a substantial contribution to the scheme since its inception over 30 years ago.

THE 2014 SEASON

A much more productive breeding season was welcome news after the last two poor years, especially 2012. Some species in particular had excellent years – Blackcap, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird and Song Thrush – and Reed Warblers bounced back in the reedbed with 31 being ringed. Nightingale continues to give cause for concern with relatively low numbers being caught. They do appear to be clinging on rather than thriving at Bainton and one factor has to be the burgeoning herd of deer which are munching their way through the birds' favoured habitat – dense undergrowth. Not only are they damaging the habitat, they managed to blast through and wreck two nets on the heath, something that had only occurred once in the last 20 years or so. There was not a single session when they were not seen although once they'd realised someone was around they tended to keep out of the way.

12 CES visits were completed on the heath and 8 completed in the damp scrub. 1200 birds of 33 species from the heath were processed (843 ringed, 357 retraps/controls) with all but 40 caught during the CES season. An interesting session in early April (before CES started) produced a retrap Cetti's Warbler, first ringed on 16 May 2013 and an early Willow Warbler. 155 birds of 19 species were caught in the reedbed (125 ringed, 30 retraps/controls) with new species such as Woodpigeon giving Michelle valuable experience.

Information on ten birds, ringed at Bainton and recovered elsewhere (or vice versa) was received from the BTO. Full details are shown later in the report but special mention should be made of the juvenile Chiffchaff, ringed on 21 July and controlled in France on 27 September.

Tables of birds caught in 2014 are shown below:

BIRDS CAUGHT IN THE DAMP SCRUB – 2014

Species	Ringed	Retrap/Control	Total
Woodpigeon	1		1
Kingfisher	2		2
Wren	4	2	6
Dunnock	1		1
Robin	6	4	10
Blackbird	7	5	12
Song Thrush	5	1	6
Reed Warbler	31	12	43
Garden Warbler	1		1
Blackcap	4		4
Chiffchaff	20	3	23
Willow Warbler	2		2
Goldcrest	2		2
Long tailed Tit	6		6
Blue Tit	10	2	12
Great Tit	6		6
Treecreeper	5	1	6
Bullfinch	5		5
Reed Bunting	7		7
Total	125	30	155

A splendid total of 43 Reed Warblers processed plus a really good number of Chiffchaff was indicative of a good breeding season. Damp scrub/reedbed does provide valuable habitat and as well as the expected species such as Reed Bunting and Reed Warbler, the more wooded areas produced some interesting results. Who for instance would have expected almost as many Treecreeper as Great Tit to be ringed?

The two Kingfishers caught were both juveniles and only the 9th and 10th to be ringed in the last 10 years. The adult Woodpigeon was only the 4th to be ringed over the same period and these real heavyweights are a bit of a handful. Hefty birds, weighing in at over 500g, they certainly make the nets sag whereas the two Goldcrest between them could barely manage 10g in weight.

19 of the 31 Reed Warblers ringed were juveniles, one of which was controlled on the south coast some 24 days after being ringed. Full details of this recovery and another very interesting Reed Warbler are shown later in this report.

BIRDS CAUGHT ON THE HEATH – 2014

Species	Ringed	Retrap/control	Total
Woodpigeon	1		1
Kingfisher	1		1
Green W'pecker	3	3	6
Great Sp W'pecker	3	0	3
Wren	51	15	66
Dunnock	60	54	114
Robin	77	37	114
Nightingale	4	8	12
Blackbird	66	49	115
Song Thrush	42	26	68
Cetti's Warbler	1	1	2
Grasshopper Warbler	1	1	2
Reed Warbler	2		2
Lesser Whitethroat	12	6	18
Common Whitethroat	26	3	29
Garden Warbler	39	18	57
Blackcap	168	25	193
Chiffchaff	61	15	76
Willow Warbler	25	17	42
Goldcrest	9	2	11
Spotted Flycatcher	1		1
Long tailed Tit	29	14	43
Marsh Tit	2	1	3
Coal Tit	3		3
Blue Tit	41	14	55
Great Tit	26	6	32
Treecreeper	9	2	11
Chaffinch	9	2	11
Greenfinch	4		4
Goldfinch	6		6
Linnet	3		3
Bullfinch	54	38	92
Reed Bunting	4		4
Total	843	357	1200

As can be seen from the figures above, most of our resident species had a very successful breeding season, all of which bodes well for the future. Migrant species too had a much better year with, for example, 121 of the 168 Blackcap ringed being juveniles. Blackcap seemed to have a good year in many areas of the UK with record numbers being caught in the autumn. For instance, I ringed 294 individuals, mainly juveniles at one site at Rutland Water in September.

The Suffolk ringed Grasshopper Warbler controlled in 2013 reappeared on 30 April 2014, the first juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker for four years were ringed and two juvenile Green Woodpeckers

had to be released unringed when the ringer discovered he'd run out of the correct size rings! Irritating and rather embarrassing in equal measure but not likely to occur again. In early August the last Nightingale of the year, carrying a considerable amount of fat, was caught as it prepared for the long haul to sub Saharan Africa and on the final ringing session of the year in early September, a juvenile Grasshopper Warbler was ringed together with four juvenile Greenfinch, all in the same net.

It's perhaps worth noting that no Sedge Warblers were caught this year. The species has all but disappeared from the site. Not so long ago, double figure catches were not uncommon on a single net round. How times change!

Birding highlights included regular sightings of Cuckoo and purring Turtle Dove, the latter often to be seen and heard from the overhead wires. One of the more bizarre sights was a Green Woodpecker undulating over the heath yaffling as it flew into the bushes. Almost immediately, the calling became very agitated as it belted out of the bushes, hotly pursued by a male Sparrowhawk which seemed to be just chasing it round for devilment as it soon gave up and soared away over the site. The only near miss was a Buzzard, flushed from low down in a bush that just managed to get enough lift to narrowly avoid the top shelf of a net.

RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS

Details of the following eight birds ringed at Bainton and recovered elsewhere are:

Blackbird - CW57892 – ringed as a juvenile on 21 May 2011 and found dead in Peterborough on 24 May 2014 – 1099 days after being ringed and 11km away.

Reed Warbler – P985825 – ringed as an adult male on 29 May 2012 and controlled at Wicken Fen, Cambs on 7 May 2014 – 708 days and 57km (but presumably via Africa for a couple of years)

Common Whitethroat - Y207678 – ringed as an adult male on 16 May 2013 and controlled at Hollesley Heath, Suffolk on 21 September 2013 – 128 days and 139km.

Goldfinch –X777904 – ringed as a female on 30 April 2014 and found dead at Ashton, near Stamford on 8 October 2014 – 161 days and 2km.

Blackcap –Y115018 – ringed as a juvenile on 6 June 2014 and controlled at Titchfield Haven, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire on 31 August 2014 – 86 days and 211km.

Chiffchaff –EAP106 – ringed as a juvenile on 21 July 2014 and controlled at Dunes de la Slack, Wimereux, Pas –de-Calais, **France** on 27 September 2014 -68 days and 247km. The bird's weight was 7.7g when ringed.

Reed Warbler –Z028546 – ringed as a juvenile in the damp scrub on 8 August 2014 and controlled at Icklesham, Sussex on 1 September 2014 – 24 days and 206km.

Bullfinch –Z028554 – ringed as a juvenile female in the damp scrub on 23 August 2014 and found dead in Stamford, Lincs on 19 January 2015 – 149 days and 3km.

Details of the following two birds ringed elsewhere and controlled at Bainton are:

Grasshopper Warbler – **D047149** – ringed as a juvenile at Walberswick, Suffolk on 18 August 2012, it was controlled at Bainton on 22 May 2013 and again on 30 April 2014 – 620days and 141km.

Reed Warbler - **L510550** – ringed as an adult female at Rye Meads, Hertfordshire on 12 May 2012 and controlled in the damp scrub on 30 May 2014 – 748 days and 100km.

OLDEST RETRAPS

Green Woodpecker – **DE11736** – ringed as an adult male on 19 June 2013 and retrapped on 15 May and 23 June 2014.

Wren - **5U2948** – ringed as a juvenile on 20 August 2013 and retrapped on 30 April and 25 May 2014

Dunnock – **E969967** – ringed (unsexed) on 27 September 2008 and retrapped in 2009 (x2), 2010 (x2), 2011 (x1), 2012 (x2), 2013 (x2) and in 2014 on 9 and 30 April, 15 May and 2 July. This male is no doubt responsible for a good number of juveniles over the years.

Robin – **X688999** – ringed as a juvenile on 12 June 2010 and retrapped on 24 June 2011 and 23 June 2014.

Nightingale – **Y207619** and **Y207620** – both ringed on 22 April 2013. 619 is a female and was retrapped on 16 May and 3 June 2013 then on 15 and 30 May 2014. 620, a male, was retrapped on 2 May 2013 and 18 and 30 April, 15 May and 23 June 2014. Both were ringed as adults and are probably the only pair to breed on the heath. Three other males and one unsexed bird were ringed plus only one juvenile and Y207619 was the only known female to be caught in 2014.

Blackbird – **CW57645** – ringed as an adult male on 12 July 2008 and retrapped in 2009 (x2), 2011 (x1), 2012 (x1), 2013 (x2) and 23 June 2014.

Song Thrush – **RX55392** – ringed as an adult female on 13 May 2010 and retrapped in 2011 (x3) and 30 April 2014.

Cetti's Warbler – **Y207651** – ringed as an adult male on 16 May 2013 and retrapped on 9 April 2014.

Reed Warbler – **X688847** – ringed as an adult male on 13 May 2010, retrapped in 2010 (x2), 2011 (x1) and 18 May 2014.

Lesser Whitethroat – **Y207736** – ringed as an adult male on 19 June 2013 and retrapped on 30 April and 25 May 2014.

Common Whitethroat – **Y207868** – ringed as a juvenile on 6 August 2013 and retrapped on 23 June 2014.

Garden Warbler – **X688838** – ringed as an adult male on 13 May 2010, retrapped in 2010 (x2), 2012 (x1) and 30 April 2014. **L296794**, ringed as an adult male on 15 June 2011 maintained his record of annual appearances, having been retrapped every year since and 3 times in 2014.

Blackcap – **P985899** – ringed as an adult male on 19 June 2012 and retrapped for the first time on 18 April 2014.

Chiffchaff – **5U2833** – ringed as an adult male on 2 May 2013, retrapped in 2013 (x4) and 30 April and 25 May 2014.

Willow Warbler – **5U2679** – ringed as an adult male on 2 May 2012, retrapped in 2012(x1), 2013 (x2) and 30 April and 6 June 2014.

Goldcrest - **5U2765** – ringed as a juvenile male on 1 September 2012 and retrapped for the first time on 30 April 2014.

Long tailed Tit – **CLL483** – ringed as a juvenile on 31 May 2011 and retrapped in 2012 (x1) and 13 June 2014. **5U2857/858**, both ringed as juveniles on 11 June 2013 were retrapped together on 15 May 2014.

Blue Tit – **P985986** – ringed as a juvenile on 27 July 2012 and retrapped on 6 and 23 June 2014.

Great Tit – **P985743** – ringed as an adult female on 2 May 2012, retrapped in 2012 (x1) and 15 May 2014.

Treecreeper – **AKD497** – ringed as a juvenile on 13 June 2012 and retrapped for the first time on 18 May 2014.

Bullfinch – **P985751** and **P985752** ringed as adult male and female respectively on 12 May 2012. Both were retrapped in 2012 (different dates), not caught in 2013 and then retrapped together on 15 May 2014.

PLANS FOR 2015

It is our intention, given good health and a fair wind to operate the two CES sites again in 2015.

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Finally, sincere thanks to Andy and Helen Nutt for their tireless work in keeping the sites in good order. It's much appreciated.

Chris Hughes (Melton Mowbray) and Michelle Househam (Newark)

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