

Bird Ringing at Paxton Pits Local Nature Reserve 2010

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The Constant Effort Scheme (CES) is run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) as part of the Trusts scientific programme to monitor the trends in bird populations and investigate the causes behind increases or decreases in abundance of key species. CES has been running across the British Isles for over 25 years and is specifically designed to monitor changes in the abundance of adults and juveniles between years and over the long-term and can also be used to monitor changes in productivity. The scheme provides high quality data on changes in adult survival rates and productivity, to complement the other scientific work of the BTO and other bird conservation organisations. Paxton Pits forms one of these sites, which are involved in the Scheme. It is focused on a small area within the Pits, comprising dry scrub with reed fringed lakes alongside. This is the fourth consecutive year that bird ringing has taken place here.

The methodology requires 8 to 12 evenly spaced visits between the start of May and the end of August. A small number of extra visits are also permitted within the CES season. The same number of nets are erected and approximately the same amount of time is dedicated each year to allow for comparable data. Similar to the Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) monitoring that the BTO also run (in conjunction with the RSPB and JNCC), it is very difficult to analyse the data collected at a local site scale. However, this data is fed into a much wider analysis at a national scale and has been successfully used to monitor changes in adult survival and productivity; see the BTO website for more details – <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/ringing-scheme>

Twelve main visits were completed in 2010 along with two extra visits, with 114m of standard mist nets erected for each session. The weather during the breeding season was generally benign except for late frosts in early May. This resulted in all sessions reaching the ideal 6 hours starting at dawn. It was a successful season with 388 new birds of 26 species captured during the CES period - see Table 1. Additionally, 56 birds originally captured during 2007, 2008 or 2009 were recaptured during the breeding season in 2010. The total number of birds captured, which includes those caught during additional visits, during the 2010 breeding season was 444, compared to 431 in 2009, 502 in 2008 and 362 in 2007. This is a slight increase in the number of birds captured compared to 2009, but below that of the peak in 2008.

The scientific focus is on the more commonly caught species such as Wren, Robin and Willow Warbler, but other species always make ringing sessions more interesting. In 2010 interesting captures included a juvenile Goldcrest (the second consecutive year that juvenile Goldcrests have been caught in July) and a French ringed Nightingale. A few species appear to have been more abundant in 2010 than 2009 (Whitethroat & Willow Warbler) and two species (Willow Warbler & Long-tailed Tit) appeared to have had a good breeding season. Species that were noticeably less abundant included Wren & Dunnock, perhaps after the relatively hard winter of 2009/10, with both also producing very low numbers of juveniles.

Table 1. The number of birds caught during CES ringing (May – August).

Species	Adults				Juveniles				Unaged				Nestlings				Total Number of New Birds				Retraps from Previous Years		
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009
Water Rail	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodpigeon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kingfisher	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Green Woodpecker	1	2	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Great-spotted Woodpecker	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Wren	4	7	5	4	16	13	20	10	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	20	20	27	15	0	0	1	1
Duncock	11	6	15	3	13	14	24	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	20	39	9	2	2	6	6
Robin	11	8	5	2	39	45	34	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	53	39	40	1	1	2	2
Nightingale	6	5	6	3	1	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	11	6	8	1	1	1	0
Blackbird	15	9	9	6	1	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	16	17	13	10	1	2	2	2
Song Thrush	4	6	3	4	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	9	7	4	0	0	0	0
Reed Warbler	6	4	5	9	2	8	13	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	18	24	0	0	0	0
Lesser Whitethroat	5	14	3	2	5	11	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	25	5	8	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	1	0	1	3	2	2	8	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	9	10	0	0	0	0
Garden Warbler	5	22	14	16	15	20	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	42	20	29	0	2	4	4
Blackcap	13	24	16	29	24	30	10	12	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	37	56	26	41	1	0	1	1
Chiffchaff	5	9	1	5	9	38	41	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	47	42	39	0	1	1	1
Willow Warbler	13	18	16	18	21	17	18	25	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	39	35	37	53	0	2	1	1
Goldcrest	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Long-tailed Tit	9	3	4	2	16	7	4	13	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	25	20	8	17	2	1	5	5
Blue Tit	14	10	8	3	12	11	28	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	21	36	21	0	1	5	5
Great Tit	10	6	5	7	7	10	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	16	19	21	2	0	1	1
Treecreeper	2	0	0	0	6	5	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
Jay	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
House Sparrow	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chaffinch	4	5	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	3	1	0	0	1	1
Greenfinch	0	15	3	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	17	5	1	0	0	0	0
Bullfinch	9	14	11	11	6	5	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	19	12	14	1	3	2	2
Reed Bunting	0	3	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	148	202	133	137	206	254	243	248	1	7	2	1	5	6	0	2	361	469	378	388	11	16	29

Bird ringing also took place during the rest of the year, with particular focus on the autumn migration during September and early October. In total, 895 new birds of 30 species were caught in 2010, and 104 birds were retrapped which were originally caught between 2007-2009 – see Table 2. Record numbers of migrating warblers in particular were caught. Excellent numbers of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs were caught, possibly indicating a good breeding season elsewhere as the majority of these birds were captured whilst migrating through the Pits, although increased ringing effort during the autumn may be partially responsible for the high numbers caught. Barn Swallow was the only new species caught in 2010 and was an expected addition to the capture list, as moderate numbers migrate through the pits and roost nearby. Limited ringing took place during November and December during which time unexpected numbers of Redwings were caught.

Table 2. The total number of new birds ringed during 2010 with comparison against the ringing activities of 2001-2002 and 2007-2010.

Species	2001	2002	2007	2008	2009	2010	Retraps		
							2007	2008	2009
Water Rail	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Woodpigeon	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Sparrowhawk	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Turtle Dove	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kingfisher	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
Green Woodpecker	1	-	3	4	-	1	-	-	-
Great-spotted Woodpecker	-	-	1	2	1	3	-	-	-
Barn Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Wren	29	11	24	29	30	19	-	-	1
Dunnock	26	10	27	27	43	14	1	2	6
Robin	28	10	62	61	53	55	3	2	2
Nightingale	17	4	8	14	6	8	1	1	-
Blackbird	16	5	39	38	19	22	1	2	3
Song Thrush	8	2	12	16	12	7	-	-	-
Redwing	-	-	2	1	1	13	-	-	-
Sedge Warbler	9	6	-	1	-	2	-	-	-
Reed Warbler	17	6	9	36	26	43	-	-	-
Lesser Whitethroat	15	11	15	32	10	27	-	-	-
Whitethroat	7	10	5	5	18	21	-	-	-
Garden Warbler	20	9	24	43	26	42	-	2	4
Blackcap	50	16	172	165	153	202	1	-	1
Chiffchaff	30	15	30	99	78	128	-	1	1
Willow Warbler	25	13	35	45	39	83	-	2	1
Spotted Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Goldcrest	1	-	-	17	2	11	-	-	-
Long-tailed Tit	17	17	34	35	20	17	4	10	9
Marsh Tit	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	-	-
Blue Tit	13	45	39	58	76	73	-	7	11
Great Tit	25	21	21	31	32	44	2	2	4
Treecreeper	-	9	9	5	6	10	-	1	-
Jay	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
House Sparrow	-	-	-	9	-	1	-	-	-
Chaffinch	5	4	6	10	5	2	-	-	1
Linnet	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Greenfinch	5	5	7	32	8	9	-	-	-
Siskin	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Bullfinch	21	19	17	33	26	28	1	3	2
Reed Bunting	2	2	1	3	2	7	-	-	-
Totals	390	252	605	861	693	895	13	35	46

One of the most interesting aspects of bird ringing for many people is the dispersion or migration movements that birds make. Details have been received from the BTO regarding several birds that passed through Paxton Pits or were found dead in 2009 or 2010.

X447120 (dead)	3J 3	Dunnock	21.06.2009 08.12.2009	Paxton Pits, Cambs Little Paxton, Cambs 170 days, 1km, S
X447062 (dead, cat)	3J 4	Robin	24.05.2009 15.04.2010	Paxton Pits, Cambs Great Paxton, Cambs 326 days, 2km, E
X447069	4 4	Reed Warbler	24.05.2009 02.09.2009	Paxton Pits, Cambs Icklesham, E Sussex 101 days, 163km, SE
ICONA N250336	3 4	Garden Warbler	29.08.2005 10.05.2009	Flix, Tarragona, SPAIN Paxton Pits, Cambs 1350 days, 1224km, N

Age codes:	1	chick hatched during the calendar year of ringing
	3J	hatched during calendar year of ringing and still partly in Juvenile plumage
	3	hatched during calendar year of ringing
	4	hatched before calendar year of ringing, but exact year unknown
	5	Hatched the previous calendar year
	6	Hatched 2 or more years ago
	7	Hatched two years ago.

The Reed Warbler and Garden Warbler were recaptured by ringers and released alive. A French ringed Nightingale was also caught at Paxton Pits in May 2010 and a British ringed Blackcap was caught in September, but we are still awaiting the original ringing details of these birds.

No long-lived Nightingales were caught during 2010.

Historical ringing recovery records were requested from and received by the BTO, some of which are very interesting. These birds are included as Appendix 1.

If you find a dead or injured bird which is ringed please report the ring number to the address on the ring or via the web-site www.ring.ac Please bear in mind that dead birds can carry diseases, so please wear gloves whilst handling the bird to read the ring number and address, and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

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Appendix 1. Historical Ringing Recoveries involving Paxton Pits NR and Little Paxton

Cormorant

5057165	1	07/06/1992	Abberton Reservoir, near Colchester, Essex
Colour rings read		27/06/1994	Little Paxton
			750 days, 90 km, NW
5123891	1	14/05/1995	Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Newark, Nottinghamshire
Colour rings read		07/02/1998	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			1000 days, 108 km, SE
5180508	1	08/05/1995	Little Paxton
Dead		26/05/2008	Gunthorpe, Owston Ferry, Humberside
			4767 days, 140 km, N
5180543	1	04/06/1995	Little Paxton
Dead		20/03/1996	Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk
			290 days, 108 km, NE
5180563	1	05/05/1996	Little Paxton
Dead (hit wires)		30/04/2001	Whitmore Park, Coventry, West Midlands
			1821 days, 87 km, W

Kestrel

EH77728	1	10/07/1983	Shap, Cumbria
Dead (railway)	3	08/11/1983	Little Paxton
			121 days, 300 km, SE
EK64637	1	21/06/1983	Bassingbourn Airfield, Cambridgeshire
Dead (railway)	3	08/11/1983	Little Paxton
			140 days, 22 km, NW

Mute Swan

Z78849	7	27/01/1994	Barford Bridge, Great Barford, Bedfordshire
Dead (hit wires)		20/06/2001	Little Paxton
			2701 days, 13 km, NE

Mallard

937140	2	17/09/1957	Peakirk, Peterborough
Dead (shot)		25/11/1957	Little Paxton
			434 days, 45 km, S

Pochard

GJ567414	4	13/08/1981	Abberton Reservoir, Essex
Dead (shot)		09/01/1988	Little Paxton
			2340 days, 89 km, NW

Tufted Duck

FR39089 Dead (shot)	4	26/01/1982 24/12/1987	Peakirk, Peterborough Little Paxton 2158 days, 44 km, S
FR84847 Dead (shot)	5	27/01/1985 09/01/1988	Peakirk, Peterborough Little Paxton 1077 days, 44 km, S

Ringed Plover

NW16746 Colour rings read	1	13/06/2006 11/08/2006	Snettisham Coastal Park, Norfolk Paxton Pits Nature Reserve 59 days , 79 km, SW
NW33308 Colour rings read	1	01/07/2006 08/08/2006	Snettisham Coastal Park, Norfolk Paxton Pits Nature Reserve 38 days, 79 km, SW

Black-headed Gull

EJ153305 Dead	5	12/01/1980 13/10/1986	Worcester, Herefordshire Little Paxton 2466 days, 134 km, E
NOS 669488 Dead	1	07/07/1980 07/01/1981	Hanangervann, Lista, NORWAY Little Paxton 194 days, 786 km, SW
EN93702 Dead	6	22/03/1986 26/06/1988	Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire Little Paxton 827 days, 9 km, SW
EP40586 Dead	6	31/05/1987 20/06/1987	Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire Little Paxton 20 days , 8 km, SW
EP40613 Dead	6	31/05/1987 20/06/1987	Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire Little Paxton 20 days , 8 km, SW
EP40790 Dead	1	06/06/1987 20/06/1987	Buckden Gravel Pits, Cambridgeshire Little Paxton 14 days, 4 km, S
EP81044 Dead	6	29/05/1988 26/06/1988	Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire Little Paxton 28 days , 9 km, SW

DKC 6217536	1	15/06/1989	Arup Vejile, Thy, DENMARK
Dead		30/12/1990	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			563 days, 794 km, SW

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GA36521	1	15/07/2000	Orfordness, Suffolk
Ring read in field		17/02/2007	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
		24/04/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			3205 days, 126 km, W

GA36906	1	14/07/2001	Orfordness, Suffolk
Colour rings		28/07/2004	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			1110 days, 126 km, W

GN56668	1	14/07/2004	Port of Felixtowe, Suffolk
Ring read in field		24/04/2006	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			649 days, 113 km, NW

Common Tern

CN93976	1	22/06/1974	Rye Meads, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire
Injured		13/07/1981	Little Paxton
			2578 days, 55 km, NW

Woodpigeon

315858	1	05/08/1955	Little Paxton
Dead (shot)		12/02/1956	Exact location unknown, Huntingdonshire
			191 days

3042861	1	24/08/1958	Littlebury Green, Newport, Cambridgeshire
Dead (shot)		06/02/1959	Little Paxton
			166 days, 41 km, NW

Song Thrush

XK41308	1	31/05/1981	Little Paxton
Dead		04/08/1981	Little Paxton
			65 days, 0km

Blackbird

XA20866	4	29/12/1979	near Little Paxton
Released alive		18/02/1981	Little Paxton
			417 days, 3 km, SW

XK41327	4	01/01/1982	Little Paxton
Dead (hit glass)		04/04/1982	Traslovslage, Varberg, SWEDEN
			93 days, 967km, NE

CS3000- Dead (cat)	4	13/01/1984 01/12/1984	Little Paxton Little Paxton 323 days, 0km
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CS30025 Dead	6	22/02/1984 11/07/1985	Little Paxton Little Paxton 505 days, 0km
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LA32759 Dead (road)	5	21/07/2008 20/02/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Great Paxton 214 days, 1km, E
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Nightingale

P500552 Caught by ringer	3	02/07/2000 05/06/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Bainton Gravel Pits, Cambridgeshire 338 days, 43 km, N
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Robin

V440632 Dead	3	23/06/2007 18/10/2007	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Great Barford, Bedfordshire 117 days, 14 km, SW
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X447062 Dead	3	24/05/2009 15/04/2010	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Great Paxton, Cambridgeshire 326 days, 2 km, E
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Dunnoek

X447120 Dead (hit window)	3	21/06/2009 08/12/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Little Paxton 170 days, 2 km, S
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Pied Wagtail

A044413 Dead	3	31/08/1980 18/12/1983	Little Paxton Little Barford, Bedfordshire 1204 days, 6 km, SW
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C421118 Dead (cat)	3	16/12/1984 19/02/1986	Carlsberg Brewery, Northampton Little Paxton 430 days, 43 km, E
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Sedge Warbler

P837848 Caught by ringer	4	15/07/2001 27/07/2002	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Laguna de la Nava, Fuentes de Nava, SPAIN 377 days, 1180 km, S
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V942786 Caught by ringer	3	23/08/2008 08/09/2008	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve Titchfield Haven, Fareham, Hampshire 16 days, 174 km, SW
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Reed Warbler

X447069	4	24/05/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
Caught by ringer		02/09/2009	Icklesham, East Sussex
			101 days, 163 km, SE
V502176	4	26/08/2007	Icklesham, East Sussex
Caught by ringer		10/05/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			623 days, 163 km, NW

Garden Warbler

N545514	3	04/07/1999	Fen Drayton Gravel Pits, Cambridgeshire
Caught by ringer		12/05/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			659 days, 16 km, SW
N555144	3	23/07/1999	near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire
Caught by ringer		12/05/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			678 days, 11 km, S
T900306	3	25/07/2008	Priory Country Park, Bedford, Bedfordshire
Caught by ringer		17/08/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			388 days, 18 km, NW
ESI N250336	3	29/08/2005	Sebes, Flix, Tarragona, SPAIN
Caught by ringer		10/05/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			1350 days, 1224 km, N

Blackcap

N545848	3	18/06/2000	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
Caught by ringer		05/05/2001	near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire
			321 days, 11 km, SW
P615107	3	21/09/2000	Noss Farm, Wick, Caithness
Caught by ringer		21/04/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			212 days, 713 km, SE
R101874	5	04/05/2002	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
Caught by ringer	4	07/07/2003	Ferry Meadows, Peterborough,
			Cambridgeshire
			429 days, 34 km, N
T694723	3	03/08/2007	Trabboch Loch, Hilhead, Strathclyde
Caught by ringer	3	22/09/2007	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			50 days, 451 km, SE
V378184	3	08/08/2007	Pensthorpe, Norfolk
Caught by ringer	3	09/09/2007	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			32 days, 101 km, SW

V482294	3	04/09/2007	Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Kent
Caught by ringer	3	06/09/2007	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			2 days, 157 km, NW

Chiffchaff

2Y2122	3	16/07/1999	Port Holme, near Godmanchester
Caught by ringer		02/07/2000	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
		24/06/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			709 days, 9 km, SW

4B7373	6	05/01/2002	Menagwins Sewage Farm, near St. Austell, Cornwall
Colour rings		13/04/2002	Little Paxton
			98 days, 382 km, NE

CCT793	3	07/07/2008	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
Caught by ringer		13/04/2009	Wicken Fen NNR, Cambridgeshire
			280 days, 36 km, E

CJC733	3	19/09/2008	Icklesham, East Sussex
Caught by ringer		26/04/2009	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
			219 days, 163 km, NW

Blue Tit

P837828	3	24/06/2001	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
Caught by ringer		12/10/2001	Port Holme, near Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire
			110 days, 9 km, NE

House Sparrow

AA14293	2	27/12/1960	Hartford, Huntingdonshire
Dead		07/01/1962	Little Paxton
			376 days, 12 km, SW

Starling

X32239-	4	15/02/1953	Romford, London
Dead		15/10/1953	Little Paxton
			242 days, 80 km, NW

RE32779	3	02/06/1990	Buckden
Dead (cat)		13/03/1991	near Little Paxton
			284 days, 6 km, S