

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD RINGING REPORT 2016

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To quote my 2015 Report: "It seems that all we now need in order to break the 20,000 barrier is a year when the totals both for pulli and full-grown birds are above average."

Nonetheless, the publication by the BTO of the 2016 numbers still came as something of a surprise. Cambridgeshire ringers processed a total of 24,084 new birds, 26% up on 2015\*, easily surpassing the previous record of 19,948 set in 2011. It is only since 2005 that the annual total has been regularly above 10,000.

And I have had some difficulty working out what has been responsible for the increase. Our top three species, the same most years, came in pretty much at their 2015 levels: Blue Tit 2,642 (2,487 in 2015), Great Tit 1,654 (1,639) – confirming continuing high levels of garden and feeder ringing – and Reed Warbler 1,830 (1,585). And there is no suggestion of any new-entry ringers, ringing sites or new projects arriving on the county scene. It does look as if 2016 was indeed rather as intimated in my opening paragraph above: the same sort of ringing activity, just only much more so.

The rankings of individual species ringed remained pretty much unchanged and the table below shows the tallies and rankings of the top twenty species:

	<i>Species (Ranking 2015)</i>	<b>2016</b>	<i>2015*</i>
1	Blue Tit ( <i>1</i> )	<b>2,642</b>	<i>2,487</i>
2	Reed Warbler ( <i>3</i> )	<b>1,830</b>	<i>1,585</i>
3	Great Tit ( <i>2</i> )	<b>1,654</b>	<i>1,639</i>
4	Goldfinch ( <i>6</i> )	<b>1,422</b>	<i>696</i>
5	Reed Bunting ( <i>7</i> )	<b>1,296</b>	<i>667</i>
6	Blackcap ( <i>4</i> )	<b>1,098</b>	<i>1,297</i>
7	Greenfinch ( <i>5</i> )	<b>1,048</b>	<i>852</i>
8	Blackbird ( <i>10</i> )	<b>971</b>	<i>603</i>
9	Sedge Warbler ( <i>13</i> )	<b>831</b>	<i>536</i>
10	Robin ( <i>8</i> )	<b>812</b>	<i>654</i>
11	Barn Owl	<b>776</b>	<i>193</i>
12	Dunnock	<b>718</b>	<i>457</i>
13	Chaffinch	<b>701</b>	<i>539</i>
14	Chiffchaff	<b>700</b>	<i>523</i>
15	Wren	<b>636</b>	<i>526</i>
16	Starling	<b>602</b>	<i>650</i>
17	Long-tailed Tit	<b>591</b>	<i>397</i>
18	Sand Martin	<b>467</b>	<i>195</i>
19	Meadow Pipit	<b>403</b>	<i>193</i>
20	Linnet	<b>370</b>	<i>342</i>

\* 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. Where this is the case, and where earlier Ringing Reports had a different number, the revised total has been shown here in italics.

Results from the BTO's Constant Effort Sites (CES) ringing network show that 2016 was a good year for both short- and long-distance migrants. Blackcap, Chiffchaff and both Reed and Sedge Warbler exhibited statistically significant increases in abundance when compared to the five-year mean (2011–15). Chiffchaff was recorded in the greatest numbers since 1983, when this ringing survey began, and survival rates were also the highest on record, indicating that they fared well over the winter months. Warmer than average conditions across much of the Northern Hemisphere in winter 2015–16 may have helped to bolster survival rates for this species (which winters around the Mediterranean and in North Africa) and may also have benefited Blackcap. The increased abundance of Sedge and Reed Warbler may be related to the wet growing season in the Sahel during 2015, which also produced good harvests for farmers in the region. The resident CES species that benefited most from the 2015–16 mild winter, with little or no snow cover, were ground feeders including Song Thrush, Robin and Dunnock, and species such as Wren and Cetti's Warbler, both of which are particularly sensitive to harsh winter weather. All this is nicely mirrored in our figures; Cambridgeshire Cetti's nearly doubled their ringing total to 83 (44 in 2015), by far the highest ever. By contrast, 2016 was a poor year for Blue and Great Tits, the former in particular exhibiting a significant drop in abundance nationally. The BTO's national five-year mean and trends (as our own) are possibly still inflated following the quite exceptionally good year in 2011, which was also the previous record year for us.

Feeder-bird trends continue: the apparent and welcome recovery of Greenfinch numbers as trichomonosis continues to decline; and the apparently unstoppable rise of easily-caught Goldfinches coming to nyjer seed. Otherwise, the main variations as ever follow the fortunes of particular projects or focuses of activity. Local studies of Starling and Linnet continue. Success with roost ringing of Swallows and Pied Wagtails was as ever up-and-down; a transient pop-up roost of Yellow Wagtails from late August at Wicken Fen (73 caught) took that species to its highest return since 2005. The astonishing result for Reed Bunting (1296) is more difficult to unpick. The species is probably much more of a facultative migrant and winter visitor than it is given credit for being. 720 Reed Buntings were ringed at Wicken Fen, of which 520 in a handful of sessions on Burwell Fen in late September as thousands of birds moved inconspicuously through the county. There were good results also for the species from my winter farmland sites (250+), and from roost-catches at Hinxtun (100+). We still know almost nothing about these birds! The same could perhaps be said about their fellow-travellers, Meadow Pipits. Despite over 400,000 having been ringed in Britain and Ireland, there have been only 11 recovery exchanges nationally (in over a century) with Iceland, and 7 from southern Norway (and none further east). How many of our birds originate from these two breeding areas? Burwell Fen pipits (255, over half the 2016 total; with a further 109 from Dunkirk) come in all manner of wing-lengths, colourations and moult strategies. We equally have no idea of the proportion of these Cambridgeshire passage birds which will make it to the species' most southerly wintering areas in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa.

Richard Broughton's Monks Wood (MW) projects continued – his Marsh Tits and the Coal Tit side-project (with Marta Maziarz). Numbers of both were down on previous years – Coal Tits fell from 66 juveniles caught in Aug/Sep 2015 to just 15 in the same period in 2016 (with the same standard effort). The Marsh Tit catch fell from 50 to 29, mirroring the poor season for the commoner tits. There were 28 spring territories of Coal Tits in MW, and 19 of Marsh Tits, demonstrating that Coal Tits were more abundant in this pure deciduous (native) woodland habitat. This is not what you'd necessarily expect with Coal Tits often being considered to favour conifers. There were a further 18 Marsh Tit territories in Holland and Wennington Woods, (Abbots Ripton – H&W), including two males that had reached at least 7 years old (still going in 2017, now 8 years; they were already adults when ringed in 2010). Interestingly, Marsh Tit adult annual survival of ringed adults in H&W was 62% from 2015–16,

compared to 45% in MW. This is a regular difference, and may be due to birds in H&W exploiting the food put down for Pheasants throughout the winter. Shelley Hinsley continued to ring Blue and Great Tit pulli in the Cambridgeshire woods (including MW and H&W) in what may be the final year, after some 22 years.

Nest recording remains a somewhat niche (!) activity within Cambridgeshire birding. Nonetheless, while the numbers are small (with the exception of a handful of species, as below), the total of pulli ringed, 3,162, showed a proportionate increase of 25% over 2015 (2,523). After 2015's dire breeding season, for both large and small nestbox species, the year proved a return to form, with Barn Owls bouncing back above average to 752 (2015:156) and Kestrels to 139 (79), demonstrating the resilience of these two species in the face both of fluctuating weather conditions and small mammal populations. May weather kept tit projects at below-average levels of productivity, with 765 nestling Blue Tits (2015: 760) and 603 Great Tits (somewhat inexplicably down from 835 in 2015). Barn Owl, Blue Tit and Great Tit totals have all regularly made it to a 1000 or so in exceptional years. At Dunkirk 221 pulli Sand Martins were ringed, taking the county total to 316 (104 in 2015). This was a welcome recovery for Tony Martin's nuclear bunker colony after a terrible 2015 season. The detailed life-histories of so many individual members of the colony continue to fascinate. Some nesting adults from 2014 returned in 2016 after being absent for one year. Why they, and many others, decided to skip breeding at Dunkirk in 2015 is of course unknown. Did they anticipate the poor weather prospects and abort breeding altogether, or did they simply move to another colony in the UK or elsewhere, perhaps even on the Continent? On top of the improved breeding success there was a return to a much healthier number of adults rearing young (80 different parents being handled). Many pairs were double-brooded, and a few even fledged three broods. A further 94 pullus Sand Martins were ringed at the new artificial bank at Ferry Meadows Country Park, which has recently been upgraded to 81 nesting holes. While the Dunkirk Black-headed Gull colony flourished, with thousands fledged, only eight chicks were ringed there. 66 nestling Spotted Flycatchers represented 18% of the total for England and 53 Black-tailed Godwit young were ringed on the Washes. No adult or pullus Avocets have been ringed in Cambridgeshire since 2014. Of the common resident breeding species, only one nest each of Blackbird, Song Thrush, House Sparrow and Pied Wagtail had its pulli ringed; and not one of any of the common finches.

After the low species tally for 2015 (88), 2016 also represented a return to average form, with 95 different species ringed – again without any large gull landfill ringing to help boost the range of species caught. As usual, however, this simple total conceals a degree of complexity: six species ringed in 2015 are not on the 2016 list (Egyptian and Greylag Goose, Marsh Harrier, Redshank, Carrion Crow and Tree Sparrow); and thirteen species were ringed in 2016 but not in 2015.

Among these latter were Cambridgeshire's first-ever Yellow-browed Warblers at Dunkirk: our small contribution to the 706 ringed in Britain and Ireland, mainly in October. It is worth comparing that number with the GB/Ireland full-grown totals for such resolutely unglamorous species as Corn Bunting (34), Skylark (91) and Mistle Thrush (170). Playback lures will have been used in a high proportion of these Yellow-browed Warbler captures and one might compare the value of this sort of 'focused' (for want of a better word) ringing to that of the repetitive 'general ringing' of common garden birds visiting feeders. There is occasional criticism of a 'ringing tick' mentality among ringers and of the targeting of scarcer species, but such critics might just, however, be mollified by some of the astonishing ringer-to-ringer recaptures (controls) of Yellow-browed Warblers which were recorded within a few days of each other in October 2016. Among these were birds from the mega Heligoland-style Rybachiy traps in Kaliningrad (Russia) to Waterford, Ireland; from western Norway to St Mary's, Scilly; and from St Abbs Head, Scotland to Land's End – two of these movements in under seven days, and all looking as if they were running out of road... Despite the species' low likely survival, we can – with all this

effort – anticipate some fascinating (and vindicating) year-to-year ring-recoveries in the future as we start to track these movements. It would be wonderful to record the Dunkirk duo a second time; and it's just a pity that none of these attractive little sprites will have been ringed at their points of origin way east of the Urals to China and Siberia.

Some less-frequently-ringed species brightened up the list. The Wicken Fen Marsh Warbler was Cambridgeshire's fourth, and the first for over 20 years. The lone pullus Buzzard was our seventh; and the three Peregrines our second-ever brood ringed. Two full-grown Little Ringed Plovers and six Green Sandpipers (all at Dunkirk) were the first since 2011 and 2012 respectively. Six Ouse Washes Water Pipits took the total to 11, following the first-ever five in 2014. Duck-trapping in the county continues to decline, both at Borough Fen Decoy and at Dunkirk, where 2016's only county singles of Wigeon, Shoveler and Gadwall were a pale reflection of that site's earlier glory days, probably mainly due to habitat changes there (which possibly also account for the recent increases in the Dunkirk totals for autumn warblers). Otherwise, scarcer species ringed included Bewick's Swan (2), Water Rail (4), Snipe (12), Cuckoo (5), Hobby (2), Firecrest (2), Nightingale (5), Redstart (4), Whinchat (3) equalling Stonechat (3), Brambling (3) and Corn Bunting (6).

The national ringing total in 2016 for Britain and Ireland crept just over the one million to 1,051,629 to which Cambridgeshire's totals made a disproportionate contribution both in numbers and in the variety of species processed. For some, we ringed among the greatest number of individuals of any area of the country; including the only Bewick's Swans anywhere (2).

	Cambs 2016	Britain and Ireland	County ranking and percentage of national total	Top county and total
Black-tailed Godwit	64	263	Second – 24%	Suffolk (104)
Green Sandpiper	6	60	Fifth – 10%	Herts (8)
Cuckoo	5	57	Fourth – 9%	Norfolk (10)
Barn Owl	776	7,888	Second – 10%	Lincs (991)
Green Woodpecker	21	313	Fourth – 7%	Kent (47)
Marsh Tit	71	1,159	Fifth – 6%	Norfolk (130)
Bearded Tit	168	850	Second – 20%	Suffolk (273)
Sedge Warbler	831	20,047	Fifth – 4%	Dorset (2,802)
Reed Warbler	1830	26,738	Third – 7%	Suffolk (2,824)
Spotted Flycatcher	107	996	Second – 11%	Devon (151)
Yellow Wagtail	76	894	Second – 9%	Dorset (660)
Pied Wagtail	205	3,911	Fourth – 5%	NE Scotland (356)
Water Pipit	6	24	Second – 25%	Suffolk (7)
Reed Bunting	1,296	14,991	Second – 9%	Norfolk (1,648)
Corn Bunting	6	36	Second – 17%	Wilts (23)

The influence of special projects, both in Cambridgeshire (as outlined earlier) and in other areas can clearly be seen in these figures. Spotted Flycatcher features for the first time in this table as a result of my participation in the BTO's geolocator project. The RSPB in Devon – where the species is still relatively abundant – are partnering in this initiative as a south-western comparator. Will tagging results reveal differential migration strategies between these two populations: theirs flourishing, ours in free-fall decline? 2017 should tell us more, and may even take Cambridgeshire to the top of the league. The table also demonstrates how a relatively small number of birds ringed can make a significant contribution to the national totals. In this respect, our continuing success with Green Woodpeckers continues to surprise!

Ringing sessions for the Wicken Fen Group took place at several different sites on 155 different days in 2016, exactly the same as in 2015. The year total was 4,761 birds, again of 59 species. In addition to these new birds, 692 retrapped individuals had been originally ringed at the Fen in previous years; and a further 34 were controls (birds originally ringed away from the Fen). Reed Bunting was the highest individual species total at 720. The Reed Bunting, Redwing (208), Bearded Tit (93) and Yellow Wagtail (73) totals are all-time Wicken records, while the Grasshopper Warbler ringing total (14) was the highest since 1973 when 23 were ringed (along with 17 Snipe, 22 Kingfishers, 111 Willow Warblers and 258 Song Thrushes that year – which particularly demonstrates the decline in these latter two species over time).

Apart from Wicken I have received individual 2016 totals for a few additional Cambridgeshire ringing sites (with new bird ringing totals >200): Dunkirk 2,100, Kingfishers Bridge 787, Chippenham Fen 734, Bainton 703, Ely Beet Pits 670, Five Arches Pit 269, Meldreth 336, Paxton Pits 417 and Hinxton Hall 256.

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 Guar) and Wicken Fen (two sites: WFG).

## Ringing totals for 2016

There are three age categories in the following summary table (overleaf). *Pullis* 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	2016	Retrapped	Recovered
Mute Swan	2	4	47		53	318	75
Bewick's Swan			2		2		
Wigeon			1		1		
Gadwall			1		1		
Teal			58		58	39	4
Mallard		2	40		42	20	9
Shoveler			1		1		
<i>Tufted Duck</i>							8
Grey Partridge				1	1		
<i>Marsh Harrier</i>							2
Sparrowhawk		5	10		15		1
Buzzard	1				1		
Water Rail			4		4		
Corncrake			1		1		
Moorhen		1			1		
<i>Avocet</i>							2
Lapwing	4				4		
Little Ringed Plover		2			2		
Black-tailed Godwit	53		11		64	1	
Green Sandpiper		4	2		6		
<i>Redshank</i>							1
Snipe		2	10		12	1	
Common Tern	4				4		
Black-headed Gull	7	1	1		9		8
<i>Mediterranean Gull</i>							8
<i>Lesser B-b Gull</i>							52
<i>Herring Gull</i>							4
Stock Dove	46		5		51		
Woodpigeon		2	9		11		1
Collared Dove	1	1	6		8		
Cuckoo			5		5	1	
Barn Owl	752	1	23		776	22	50
Little Owl	11				11	1	1
Tawny Owl	14		1		15		
Swift	22				22	3	
Kingfisher		25	9	1	35	7	
Green Woodpecker		11	10		21	3	
Gt Sp Woodpecker		14	15	3	32	29	1
Kestrel	139	3	4		146		6
Hobby	1		1		2		
Peregrine	3				3		
Magpie		1	3		4		
Jay		4	13		17	2	
Jackdaw	16		3	1	20	6	1
Goldcrest		271	54	22	347	68	1
Firecrest		2			2		
Blue Tit	765	919	957	1	2,642	1,724	20
Great Tit	603	560	489	2	1,654	920	10
Coal Tit	16	56	57	4	133	63	1
Marsh Tit	5	45	20	1	71	38	26
Bearded Tit		88	38	42	168	84	2

	Pulli	Juvenile	Adult	Unaged	2016	Retrapped	Recovered
Skylark	10				<b>10</b>		
Sand Martin	316	41	110		<b>467</b>	59	5
Swallow	107	180	32	1	<b>320</b>	1	2
House Martin		1			<b>1</b>		
Cetti's Warbler	1	47	20	15	<b>83</b>	55	4
Long-tailed Tit		85	211	295	<b>591</b>	394	8
Yellow-browed Warbler				2	<b>2</b>		
Chiffchaff	22	450	169	59	<b>700</b>	219	6
Willow Warbler		148	69		<b>217</b>	43	3
Blackcap		774	300	24	<b>1,098</b>	86	4
Garden Warbler	1	43	47	3	<b>94</b>	28	
Lesser Whitethroat		36	34	1	<b>71</b>	9	3
Whitethroat		249	46		<b>295</b>	31	
Grasshopper Warbler		15	19		<b>34</b>	3	
Sedge Warbler	5	676	149	1	<b>831</b>	114	16
Marsh Warbler			1		<b>1</b>		
Reed Warbler	10	1,318	501	1	<b>1,830</b>	312	13
Nuthatch		5	10	8	<b>23</b>	18	
Treecreeper		39	24	2	<b>65</b>	62	1
Wren	6	433	191	6	<b>636</b>	256	
Starling	78	308	191	25	<b>602</b>	158	9
Blackbird	1	477	487	6	<b>971</b>	359	7
Fieldfare		24	12	1	<b>37</b>		
Song Thrush	5	134	75	4	<b>218</b>	33	1
Redwing		286	56	6	<b>348</b>	1	
Mistle Thrush		2	2		<b>4</b>	1	
Spotted Flycatcher	66	1	40		<b>107</b>		
Robin	21	552	230	9	<b>812</b>	478	10
Nightingale	1	1	3		<b>5</b>	11	
Redstart		2	1	1	<b>4</b>		
Whinchat		2	1		<b>3</b>		
Stonechat		1	2		<b>3</b>		
Duncock	10	403	290	15	<b>718</b>	443	2
House Sparrow	5	120	88	113	<b>326</b>	79	1
Yellow Wagtail		70	1	5	<b>76</b>		
Grey Wagtail	4	3	6		<b>13</b>		4
Pied Wagtail	3	77	125		<b>205</b>	8	13
Meadow Pipit	13	357	28	5	<b>403</b>		
Water Pipit			6		<b>6</b>	1	
Brambling		1	2		<b>3</b>	1	
Chaffinch		197	501	3	<b>701</b>	120	6
Bullfinch		119	121		<b>240</b>	98	2
Greenfinch		418	623	7	<b>1,048</b>	108	20
Linnet		7	362	1	<b>370</b>	81	3
Lesser Redpoll		10	64	1	<b>75</b>	40	4
Common Redpoll			1		<b>1</b>		
Goldfinch		707	707	8	<b>1,422</b>	156	9
Siskin			33		<b>33</b>		
Yellowhammer		76	104	1	<b>181</b>	4	
Reed Bunting	10	818	435	33	<b>1,296</b>	170	9
Corn Bunting	2		2	2	<b>6</b>		1
	3,162	11,737	8,443	742	<b>24,084</b>	7,390	460

## Ring-recoveries

This next section of the report is once again derived from the online BTO Ringing and Nest Recording Report.

### Black-headed Gull

EC78584	Adult	12-02-2013	Milton Landfill Site
	Colour rings	23-05-2016	Ptasia Wyspa, Wejdyki, <b>Poland</b> 1,438km E 3y 3m 11d
EC78632	Adult	12-02-2013	Milton Landfill Site
	Colour rings	21-02-2016	Pont Georges V, Orleans, <b>France</b> 502km SSE 3y 9d
EC78664	Adult	12-02-2013	Milton Landfill Site
	Colour rings	16-04-2016	Zaborze Stawy, <b>Poland</b> 1,356km ESE 3y 2m 4d

Whatever the future of the EU Landfill Directive, it looks as if it's the end of the road for cannon-netting on tips. With over 400,000 Black-headed Gulls ringed, and 25,000+ ring-recoveries/sightings recorded from Russia to Senegal, these additional sightings don't tell us anything we didn't know, but they nonetheless show that a single catch can make a valuable contribution to migration mapping.

### Mediterranean Gull

EY66225	Nesting	07-06-2014	Dunkirk, Little Downham
	Colour rings	30-03-2015	Oeud Souss, <b>Morocco</b> 2,584km SSW 9m 23d
		26-05-2015	Lasne, <b>France</b> 584km SSW 11m 19d
		13-08-2015	Camel Estuary, Cornwall 415km WSW 1y 2m 6d
		14-01-2016	Trevoze Head, Cornwall 421km WSW 1y 7m 7d
		17-07-2016	Camel Estuary, Cornwall 415km WSW 2y 1m 10d

It's good to know that at least one of the only two Mediterranean Gulls ever to be ringed in Cambridgeshire was still alive in 2016. If/where it may have bred remains a mystery.

### Goldcrest

CNT756	First-year Male	08-10-2016	Theddlethorpe St Helen, Lincolnshire
	Caught by ringer	03-11-2016	Woodwalton Fen 108km SSW 26d
JER747	First-year Male	06-10-2016	Marsh Barn Carr, near Burnham Deepdale, Norfolk
	Caught by ringer	09-10-2016	Wicken Fen 78km SSW 3d

Most of the migrant Goldcrests tracking south-west across the country in October seem to be juvenile males. Larger and longer-winged, there is some evidence that they are more likely to have made a successful North Sea crossing from Scandinavia than females, which are also believed to winter further south.



### Garden Warbler

X688838	Adult Male	13-05-2010	Bainton Gravel Pits
	Caught by ringer	26-06-2012	Bainton 2y 1m 13d
		30-04-2014	Bainton 3y 11m 17d
		30-05-2015	Bainton 5y 17d
		23-06-2016	Bainton 6y 1m 10d

Last year's report had a male Garden Warbler returning to Bainton from 2011 to 2015. Here's another – a seven-year-old; they are remarkably site-faithful. The longevity record for Garden Warbler is 10 years 1 month 6 days.

### Sedge Warbler

Ringed in Cambs	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Belgium</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Spain</u>	<u>Portugal</u>
2016 found in			10		
All-time total found in		4	47	3	1
Ringed abroad, from					
2016 found in Cambs					
All-time total, from	1	5	17	4	1

2016 was an average year for Sedge Warbler ring-recoveries overseas. The assumption must be that these are all our breeding birds en route in or out of the UK. For obvious reasons, these recoveries are predominantly ringer-to-ringer recaptures, rather than birds found dead or otherwise reported by the public. Most are exchanges with coastal ringing projects around the coast of France, from the Channel to the south-west, focussed on Aquatic Warbler studies.

### Reed Warbler

Ringed in Cambs	<u>Swe</u>	<u>Germ</u>	<u>Neth</u>	<u>Belg</u>	<u>Fra</u>	<u>Spain</u>	<u>Port</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Mor</u>	<u>W Africa</u>
2016 found in					1					
All-time total found in			1	7	19	11	10	1	4	3
Ringed abroad, from										
2016 found in Cambs			1	1	3					
All-time total, from	1	1	1	8	7	3	1			

Reed Warbler migration strategy differs from that of Sedge Warbler. Our Sedge Warblers put on fat in the UK and France before migration and then undertake rapid long-haul flights across Iberia and North Africa. By contrast, Reed Warblers migrate in short stages, often moulting as they go, using regular stopover sites. This accounts for the lower number of Sedge Warbler ring-recoveries in Iberia. South of Morocco the chances of ring-recovery for either species decline to almost zero, and the main source of recaptures has historically been from expeditionary ringing in Senegal and the Gambia. UK birds of both species appear to winter in West Africa, with no records further to the east or south. The European distribution of recaptures may also have something to do with the distribution of ringers, particularly concentrated in autumn along the large estuarine reedbeds of the French Atlantic coast; by contrast there is very little structured migration ringing in Spain and Portugal.

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**Song Thrush**

RV93761	First-year	11-10-2010	Wicken Fen
	Freshly dead (shot)	07-10-2016	La Sentinelle, <b>France</b> 311km SE 5y 11m 26d

It looks as if this likely Scandinavian migrant may have made a fatal error in its 2016 choice of wintering area

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**Grey Wagtail**

Z890429	First-year	17-07-2016	Great Chesterford Sewage Works, Essex
	Ring read in field	03-11-2016	Pleubian, <b>France</b> 427km SW 3m 17d

A small number of Grey Wagtails move south-west across the Channel in winter; there is a cluster of ring-recoveries in milder Brittany. Numbered BTO metal rings on wagtails are self-evidently easier to read or photograph than rings on other species! For some reason the BTO still considers this site as Cambridgeshire.

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**Pied Wagtail**

Z853725	First-year	15-01-2016	near Whittlesford
	Hit by car	22-07-2016	Dumfries, Dumfries and Galloway 414km NW 6m 7d

**Meadow Pipit**

S098877	First-year	21-09-2016	Kilnsea, Yorkshire
	Caught by ringer	01-10-2016	Burwell Fen 147km S 10d

**Linnet**

Z062941	Full-grown Female	18-04-2015	Elsworth
	Caught by ringer	05-04-2016	Kilnsea, Yorkshire 153km N 11m 18d

**Goldfinch**

BLB	First-year Female	27-02-2016	Wezembeek-Oppem, <b>Belgium</b>
14248637	Sick	21-05-2016	Thorney 372km WNW 2m 24d

**Reed Bunting**

D383800	Juvenile Female	27-08-2013	Retford, Nottinghamshire
	Caught by ringer	20-12-2016	Wicken Fen 139km SE 3y 3m 23d

The return from ringing hundreds (in Cambridgeshire, many thousands nationally) of these five common facultative migrants has always been pitifully low, but just occasionally we get confirmation of the origin of some of the huge numbers which flood through the county in September and October. Kilnsea is of course Spurn BO. All five species can get as far as southern Spain. The Goldfinch was probably a local breeding bird; significant numbers of British Goldfinches move to the near-Continent for the winter. Some press on further south, where shameless trapping and shooting still provide an annual harvest of ring-recovered UK birds.