

RAF WYTON

BOMB DUMP



RINGING REPORT

2017

Ringling Activities at the Bomb Dump.

Weather permitting; ringing will generally take place on either Saturday or Sunday each week. Activities are carried out by qualified BTO, (British Trust for Ornithology), permit holding bird ringers. The permit covers the holder to trap & handle wild birds under the WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 as amended by the ENVIROMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990 & the WILDLIFE (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985. These permits are always available to see should you wish to confirm. The lead ringer for the site is Mr David Culham, with occasional help from Mr Richard Osborne, Mr Adrian Slater & Mrs Margaret Phillips-Jones. The main method of capture used is mist nets; they vary in length from 30ft to 60ft. Fine mesh polyester netting erected between two poles & standing @9ft high. These nets are checked every 15-30 minutes, (depending on the weather), any birds are safely extracted, bagged & processed before release.

To date; `standard` ringing activities have consisted of a total of 420ft of net being erected. These are broken down into 5 net lanes, (1x60ft, 2x100ft, 1x120ft & 1x40ft). Additional occasional nets are used if required. Nets are erected 1 hour before dawn. Out of the breeding season several mp3 players are used, playing various calls to encourage various species on to the site. A selection of feeders are used from January-April as the natural food diminishes. 2 mixed seed & 2 Niger seed feeders covers the needs of most species on site.



1st year Male Bullfinch



Adult male Goldfinch

Ringling totals RAF Wyton, Bomb Dump 2017

SPECIES	RINGED	RETRAPPED	TOTAL
Sparrowhawk	1		1
Green Woodpecker	1		1
Meadow Pipit	64		64
Wren	11	1	12
Dunnoch	8		8
Robin	17	3	20
Blackbird	12	1	13
Song Thrush	4		4
Redwing	65		65
Reed Warbler	2		2
Lesser Whitethroat	20		20
Whitethroat	56	4	60
Blackcap	55		55
Chiffchaff	24		24
Willow Warbler	13		13
Goldcrest	9	6	15
Long Tailed Tit	13	7	20
Blue Tit	31	23	54
Great Tit	14	2	16
Chaffinch	15		15
Greenfinch	17		17
Goldfinch	48		48
Linnet	20		20
Lesser Redpoll	3		3
Bullfinch	3		3
Yellowhammer	15		15
Reed Bunting	134	2	136
TOTAL	675	49	724



Ringling in 2017

Ringling began on the Bomb Dump on the 13th August. That first session set the tone for the autumn, with lots of warblers being caught as they passed through the site. Excellent numbers of Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, and Blackcap & Willow Warbler passed through during August & September. The lack of retraps showing we were catching passage birds & not summer residents. Without doubt all 4 species breed on or around the bomb dump, this population obviously `tagged on` to the passage flocks as they came through. Around the end of August large flocks of Finches gathered to feed on thistle & weed seeds, flocks up to @200 were present, consisting mainly of Linnet & Goldfinch. Good numbers of both were caught before the flocks dispersed mid-September.

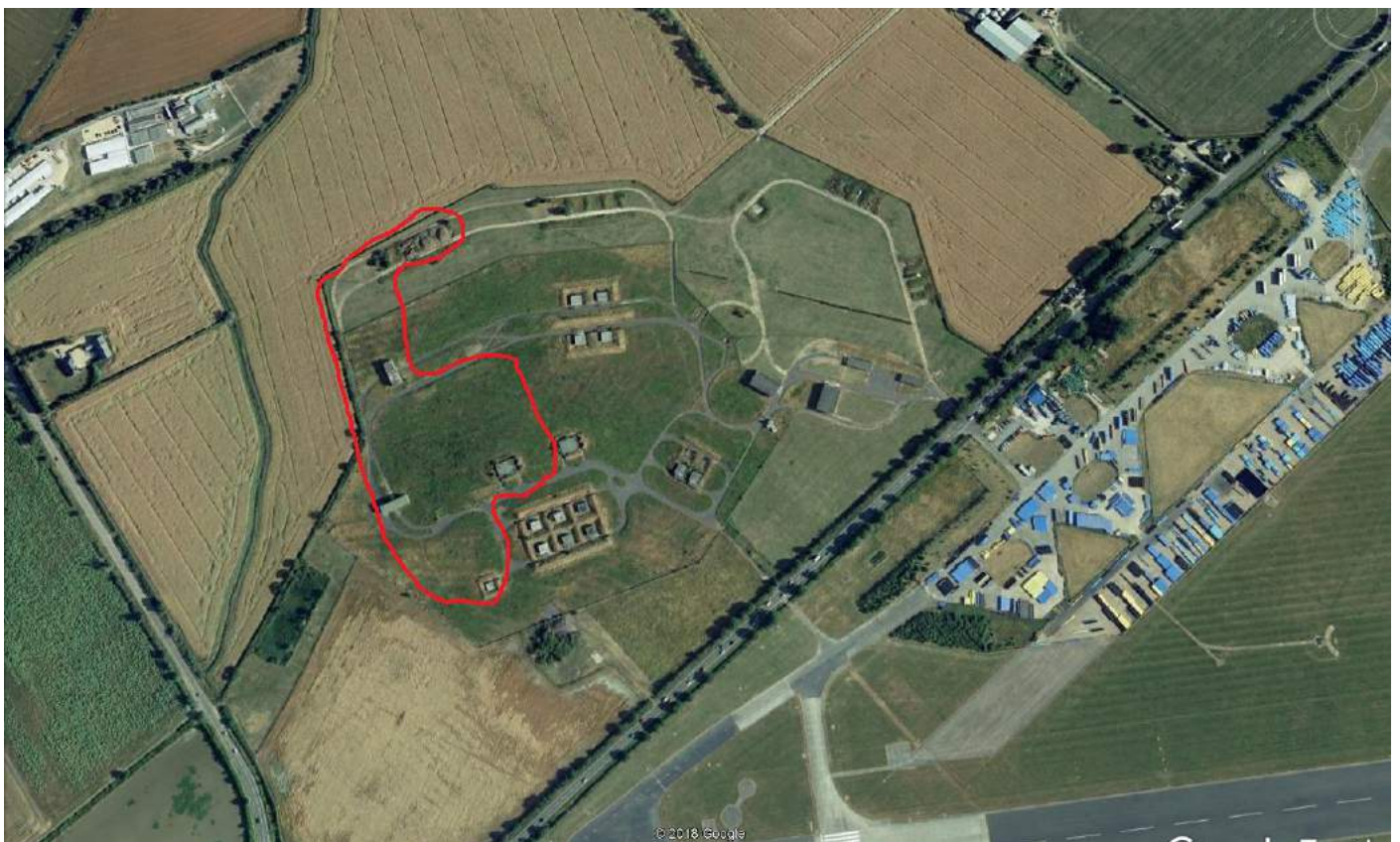
October the site came alive to the sounds of passage Meadow Pipit, Reed Bunting, Redwing & Fieldfare. Excellent numbers of passage birds were caught, the total lack of retraps showing that the birds did not hang around. Two birds ringed elsewhere, (control), was caught during October. Winter Thrushes continued to use the site until the end of December when the berry crop was finally exhausted. The remaining Rosehips attracted several Bullfinches on to site.



1st year Lesser Redpoll



Current ringing sites at RAF Wyton.



Ringing area on the Bomb Dump.

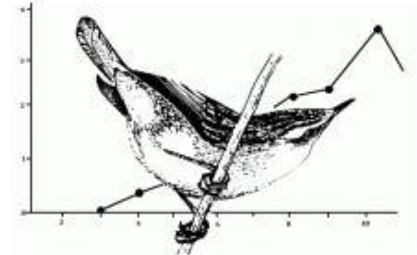
Future ringing projects

Obviously it is very early days with the ringing study at the Bomb Dump. Over time we will collect a lot of data, piecing together the bird populations on site. To aid this I intend to run the site as a CES, (constant effort site), details below from the BTO web site.

The Constant Effort Sites Scheme (CES)

The Constant Effort Sites (CES) scheme is the first national standardised ringing programme within the [BTO Ringing Scheme](#) and has been running since 1983. Ringers operate the same nets in the same locations over the same time period at regular intervals through the breeding season at over 140 sites throughout Britain and Ireland.

The Scheme provides valuable trend information on abundance of adults and juveniles, productivity and also adult survival rates for 24 species of common songbird.



The Partners

The Constant Effort Sites Scheme is supported by a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of: The Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage). It is also part of the BTO Ringing Scheme which is funded by the BTO/JNCC Partnership, The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves.

CES involves 12 timed visits between May & August. Data collected each year will help confirm which species are nesting on site as well as the success and survival rates. Other future projects on the Bomb Dump include; a supplementary feeding project, which will run January-April. Studying which species come to which feed. While hopefully encouraging, Tree Sparrows & Corn Buntings to use the site. Various roost studies are planned through the year as the roost sites are found.

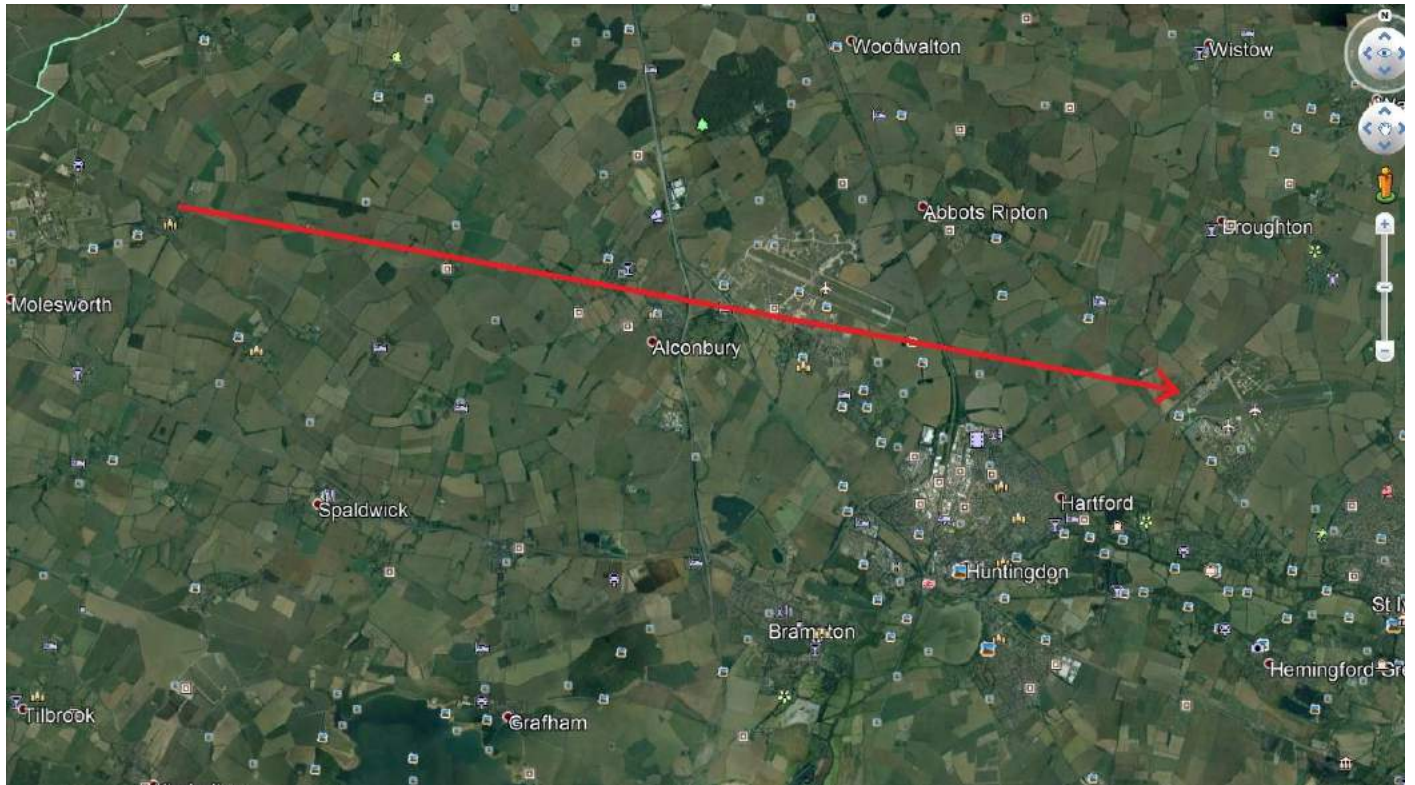
As Barn Owl, Little Owl & Kestrel are resident on site it is hoped to erect nest boxes to encourage breeding, allowing the study of the birds nesting cycles.



1st year Redwing

Controls: (Birds ringed elsewhere then caught at RAF Wyton)

A 1st year Female **Goldcrest** originally ringed at Old Weston in Cambridgeshire on the 14th October 2017 & subsequently trapped on the bomb dump on the 3rd November 2017. A distance of 19km in 20 days! Not bad for a bird weighing less than a pound coin!! This is a prime example of juvenile dispersal. Goldcrest`s have large, multiple broods, therefore the young will disperse as soon as they can feed themselves.



1st year Female Goldcrest

An adult male **Reed Bunting** originally ringed at Holt, Cambridgeshire on the 8th April 2016 was subsequently caught at the bomb dump on 15th October 2017, 555days after being ringed. Timings would suggest a locally breeding bird from Holt, while wintering at the farmland around Wyton.



Adult Male Reed Bunting

Autumn/Winter

August saw a strong passage of Warblers, with good numbers of Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap & Willow Warbler passing through, and tailing off by mid-September to a trickle. At this point good numbers of Chiffchaff moved through the site supported by a constant stream of Blackcap.

A large flock of mixed Finches & Buntings roamed the site during late August/early September, feeding on the numerous Thistle heads & weed seeds. Mainly comprising of Goldfinch & Linnet the flock peaked at over 200 on 28th Aug, dispersing by the end of Sept.

Hirundine migration was steady through Sept-early Oct. Peaking mid Sept, with mixed flocks of Swallow, House Martin & Sand Martin in excess of 150. Swifts continued to pass over the site through Aug, peaking at 40+ on 12th Aug.

Strong-gale force westerlies from Hurricane Ophelia during the first week of October seemed to empty the site of summer migrants, while holding back winter migrants on the continent. Sept saw Thrush numbers start to build, with Blackbird, Song Thrush & Mistle Thrush all observed. The 15th Oct saw the first Redwings appear on site along with a number of Blackbirds displaying characteristics of continental, (German), birds. Fieldfare were first observed on the 1st Nov with large flocks passing over & feeding on the numerous berries on site throughout Nov & Dec.

Without doubt the two main species mid-Sept- Oct were Meadow Pipit & Reed Bunting. A constant stream of both moved through the Fen supported by good numbers of Skylark. Goldcrest started to appear late Sept, with @10 wintering on site. Starling numbers grew steadily from Sept, peaking at @130 in Nov.



1st year Meadow Pipit

The appearance of Bullfinch on site from Nov was a nice addition. Probably breeding locally while taking advantage of the Rose hip crop during the winter. The 2nd Dec saw the first retrap Reed Bunting from the 133 birds ringed, proving how important the site is as a `feeding station` for migratory birds.

Migrant arrival/departure dates

Species	Latest Date	Earliest Date
Common Whitethroat	23 rd September	
Lesser Whitethroat	2 nd September	
Blackcap	15 th October	
Willow Warbler	19 th August	
Chiffchaff	8 th October	
Reed Warbler	2 nd September	
Swift	26 th August	
Swallow	8 th October	
House Martin	2 nd September	
Sand Martin	2 nd September	
Redwing		15 th October
Fieldfare		3 rd November
Goldcrest		23 rd September
Brambling		2 nd December



Adult male Common Whitethroat



Juvenile Common Whitethroat

Notable Sightings	
Whooper Swan	5 birds SE 19 TH Dec
Mute Swan	2 birds N 15 th
Mallard	2 on the separator tank 23 rd Sept & 4 NE 19 th Nov
Grey Heron	1 bird N 30 th September
Lapwing	60+ E 2 nd Dec
Golden Plover	20+ E 2 nd Dec
Red Kite	Single birds on 19 th Aug & 19 th Nov
Kestrel	1-2 birds hunting 15 th Oct, 3 rd , 19 th Nov & 2 nd Dec
Sparrowhawk	Up to 3 on site Aug-Oct, all 1 st year birds suggesting local breeding success.
Little Owl	1 pair present on site. Seen or heard occasionally.
Barn Owl	Single bird 19 th Nov & 2 nd Dec
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1-2 birds seen 19 th Aug, 23 rd Sept, 15 th Oct, 3 rd & 19 th Nov & the 2 nd Dec
Rook	Although seen every visit, a flock of 83 birds seen on 8 th Oct was of note.
Mistle Thrush	2 birds 23 rd Sept
Sand Martin	8 birds noted in a large mixed flock on 2 nd Sept
Pied Wagtail	2 birds S 26 th Aug
Reed Warbler	Single birds trapped on 26 th Aug & 2 nd Sept
Lesser Redpoll	3, (1 st year birds), trapped 3 rd Nov & 2 birds SE 2 nd Dec
Siskin	A flock of 8 birds W 15 TH Oct
Brambling	A single bird E 2 nd Dec
Waxwing	A single 1 ST year Female, briefly 2 nd Dec

Adult Willow Warbler





Male Greenfinch



Treecreeper



1st year Lesser Whitethroat



Adult Lesser Whitethroat



1st year male Yellowhammer

Other sightings:

Roe Deer, Muntjac Deer, Fox, Badger, Brown Rat, Common Shrew, Mouse Sp., Vole Sp.

Butterflies:

Marbled White, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Brimstone, Comma, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Large White, Cabbage White, Green Veined White, Common Blue, Orange-tip, and Skipper Sp.



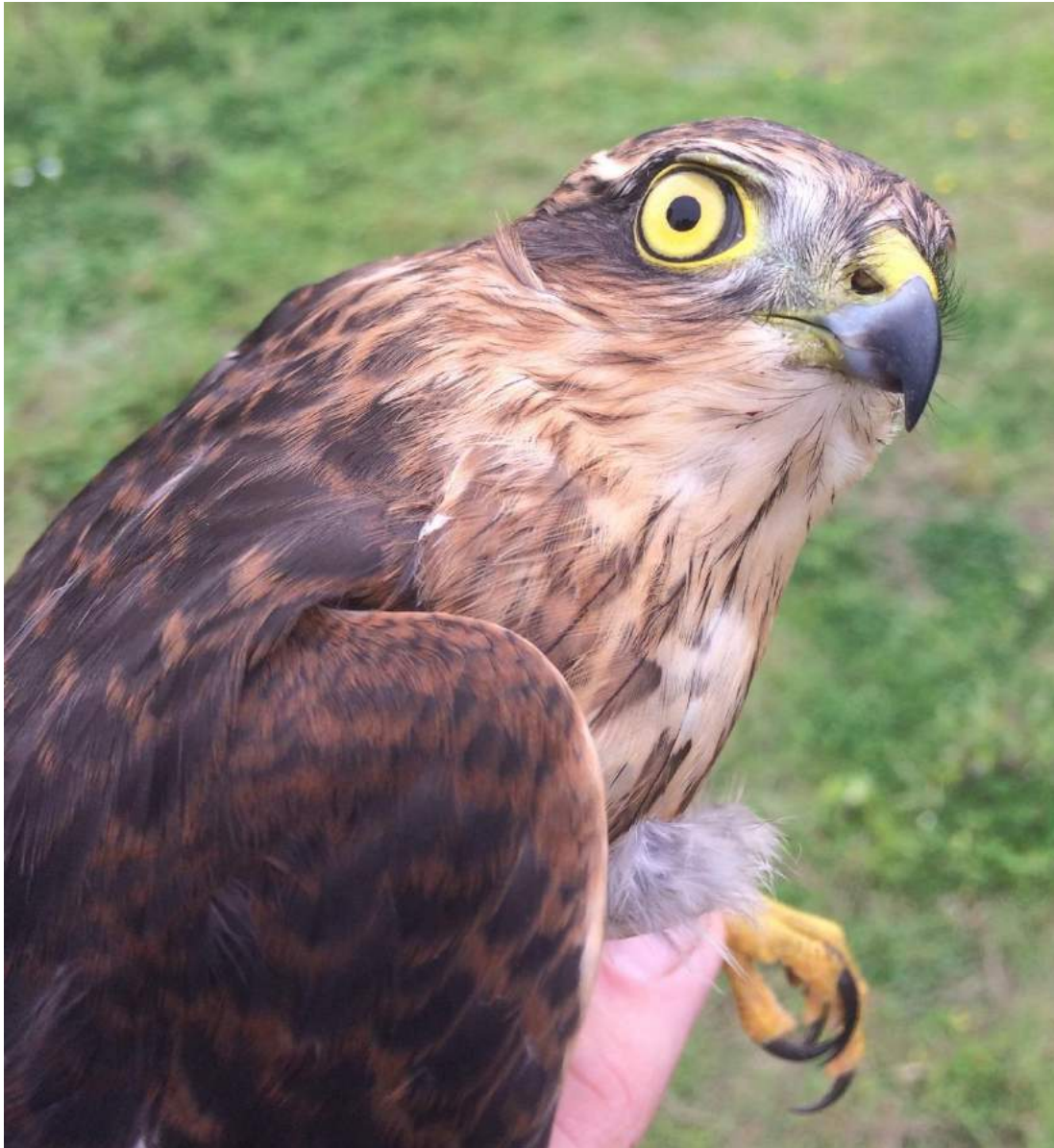
Peacock butterflies.

Dragonflies:

Various unidentified Dragonfly & Damselfly Sp. Were seen, hopefully these will be identified next summer!!

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to the `Head of Establishment` for the permissions to access the site to complete the surveys. To the RAF Wyton Conservation Group for their continued financial support. Without which this work would not be possible, with a special mention for CPO Layton-Matthews & Caroline Hackworth, who ensure the speedy delivery of rings & equipment when it has been required.



1st year Male Sparrowhawk.

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