

Ringling Studies in the BOG area 2003

Ringling studies continued apace in the BOG area during 2003. Andy Jowett developed an interest in ringling and has commenced training. We spent a concerted autumn ringling at Kex Gill where we observed clear patterns emerging in the movement of birds through the site. We have also been granted permission to ring at the Otley Wetlands Nature Reserve at Otley Gravel Pits. Colin Harrison has developed his own ringling sites (including his garden in Menston which provided some valuable data and recoveries). Peter Roe continued to extend his studies and develop his expertise in nestling ringling providing valuable data on many species – especially birds of prey. It must also be mentioned Peter submitted the highest number of nest record cards of any individual within the BTO nest record scheme – only large study groups have submitted more. The nest record card provides highly detailed records of the nests and nesting behaviour.

All in all this has provided a total of over 2700 birds rung during the year.

The Sites

All of the ringlers mentioned work collaboratively working at the various sites although each individual has a specific interest in a site or study such as nestlings (PR).

Kex Gill (TK)

This site provides valuable data during periods of specialist studies include the ringling of Meadow Pipits on autumn passage and wader chick.

Of all the sites KG is probably the nearest to an observatory with nearly all the birds in late summer and autumn on passage – unfortunately one can only ring when time and weather allow – if this site was worked daily during autumn passage then I am sure we would have some very exceptional records.

Autumn passage began with considerable numbers of Willow Warblers during August, his month also produced a couple of Redstarts and early September, late September and early October saw a passage of Chiffchaffs, Coal Tits and Chaffinches, Goldcrest appeared in October as did the thrushes including a Ring Ouzel on the 17th and together with several continental Blackbirds and Song Thrushes (deduced by Wing length and plumage colour) and Redwing.

Fewston Cemetery, Meagill Lane (CH)

The site at the back of the cemetery is a mixture of Hawthorn, Alder and Apple with Gorse, Heather and Brambles. Colin established a comprehensive feeding station and this is reflected in the number of finch species, especially Greenfinch and Siskin, Colin has also been successful in attracting Fieldfare – a wary and difficult species to trap. Ringling here is generally confined to the winter months.

Gallows Hill (TK CH)

Although a public open space there is still sufficient scrub and bushes to hold a good number of warblers including Blackcap, garden warbler and Whitethroat, Willow Tit is also regular here but none were caught in 2003. The most productive time at this site is July and August but being a public place it does place restrictions on ringling activities especially if there are a lot of dogs about,

Menston (CH)

It is surprising the number of birds moving through a suburban garden and Colin garden has proved very productive producing a Siskin recovered in Norway -w we are awaiting further details.

Otley Gravel Pit (Wetlands – Nature Reserve) (TK PR)

Permission was granted towards the end of the year to carry out ringling studies on the nature reserve, and it is anticipated that this will provide a better indication of the presence and status of key species such as Reed and Sedge warblers in 2004. The first exploratory session was undertaken in December produced 16 Siskin one of which was controlled at in CH's garden in Menston in spring 2003

Ringing Recoveries 2003

The raptor species have provide some interesting recoveries this year, both Kestrels travelling south, this has also been found in previous years, one wonders why a Buzzard would be found dead on a beach – but the recovery shows that our young birds range widely in winter. At nearly 10 years old the female Merlin is still going strong, our studies indicate that young Merlins leave the breeding areas soon after fledging whilst the adults remain longer, the date recovered suggests this bird may have been breeding in Wiltshire.

Distance record this year goes to the Sand Martin on return passage from Africa, quite possibly back to Ben Rhydding, as indicated by previous recoveries.

The Garden Warbler recovery shows the bird started travelling south on migration soon after fledging, building up fat reserves on route, whilst the Pied Flycatcher is in line with previous recoveries in indicating that local breeders often only move a few km if they change sites.

Of the commoner species the Blue Tit was obviously passing through Kex Gill whilst the local Blackbird met the fate of many of suburban ringed Blackbirds.

Sand Martin (4M) Ring No R224566

Ringed Nr. Ben Rhydding
Ringing date 09 06 2002
Controlled, Laguna De Chinon, Madrid, Spain
03 Mar 03
Time 267 days, 1535 km, 185 degrees

Buzzard (1) Ring No GN2573 (1)

Ringed: Site within BOG area withheld
Ringing date 12 June 2003
Found dead on beach , Fraisthorpe, Humbersider
18 Jan 2004
Time 220 days, 104 km, 85 degrees

Kestrel (1) Ring No EG56207 (1)

Ringed: Denton Hall
Ringing date 05 June 2003
Found dead – entered building, Fulwood, Nr Taunton, Somerset
28 Feb 2004
Time 267 days, 343 km, 196 degrees

Kestrel (1) Ring No EG56205

Ringed: Denton Moor
Ringing date 06 June 2003
Found ill (bumblefoot -destroyed by vet) –, Rustington, Sussex
20 Jan 2004
Time 161 days, 361 km, 167 degrees

Merlin (1F) Ring No ES55880

Ringed: Site within BOG area withheld
Ringing date 29 June 1994
Controlled, Beckhampton, Wiltshire
06 Jan 2003
Time 3315 days, 282 km, 183 degrees

Blackbird (3JF) Ring No CL23308

Ringed: Gallows Hill
Ringing date 02 Aug 2001
Dead- taken by cat, Otley
22 June 2003
Time 689 days, 0 km, 0 degrees

Pied Flycatcher (1) Ring No K835859

Ringed: Dob Park Wood
Ringing date 31 May 1999
Controlled, Bolton Abbey Estate
22 June 2003
Time 1461 days, 14 km, 295 degrees

Garden Warbler (3J) Ring No R454614

Ringed: Gallows Hill
Ringing date 12 Jul 2003
Controlled, Iklesham, Sussex
03 Aug 2003
Time 22 days, 370 km, 155 degrees

Blue Tit (3F) Ring No R223924

Ringed: Kex Gill
Ringing date 07 Oct 2002
Controlled –, Skipton – East Dales Ringing Group
06 Jan 2003
Time 91 days, 16 km, 264 degrees

Age Codes 1 = Pullus or nestling
2 = Year of fledging unknown
3 = Fledged current year
3J = Fledged current year – still showing juvenile plumage
4 = Exact year of fledging unknown but excludes this calendar year

Sex M= Male F=Female

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the landowners and estate and reserve managers that have allowed us to continue and develop our ringing studies during 2003,

Hansons PLC, Yorkshire Water, Otley Wetlands Trust, Denton Hall Estate, Blubberhouses Estate, H Walker, Mrs F Caton, Harrogate Council, Otley Town Council, Weston Estate, Pool Paper Mills

Many of the sites we use are on private land and therefore not open to the public but if BOG members wish to observe some ringing or learn more please feel free to contact any of the ringers.

Theo Kuechel 2004

Notes on the tables

FG = Fully Grown

Pull = Pullus (Nestling or Chick)