

## Sorby-Breck Ringing Group

### June Newsletter 2006

*"To provide data from ringing activities to support the conservation and knowledge of bird species in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire."*

#### Cyprus - April 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> 2006

Bird ringing is primarily a tool to study bird migration. A migrant bird's ability to travel vast distances in a short period is well known and our knowledge is enhanced further each year by recoveries from ringing. Cyprus is on an important migrant route for species travelling to Northern Europe. There are examples too of Eastern and Western routes for species such as Lesser Whitethroat and Cuckoo. With repeated Spring ringing in Cyprus for over twenty years, discussions about migration, its timing and the species involved, has become as common place as discussions about the weather.

On the face of it our visit to Cyprus in 2006 had its share of rarities. The casual bird watcher could not fail to be impressed with Glossy Ibis, Hooded Wheatear, Baillon's Crake, Pied Kingfisher, Marsh Sandpiper etc., etc. By contrast more informed ringing discussion has focused on the lateness of Spring passage and the lack of numbers for more common migrants. Few Blackcaps were ringed in 2006, in fact, our lowest total ever. The Blackcap normally provide our main species total, but not in 2006. Wood Warblers failed to appear in 2006 and for a second year Flycatchers passed over or were later than ever. Speculation highlighted reasons for this. The complete lack of running water (apart from Evertou Reservoir) could be one reason. The reed bed at Polis was completely dry as was the run off at Mandria and Achelia. Dryness influences migrant birds passing over the island. Birds use water reflections as signs of suitable resting places. The riparian habitats providing both water and food. Abundant water also implies good plant growth and with this the subsequent food chain which has its invertebrate life, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Lack of water has a detrimental effect on a bird's ability to successfully migrate long distances. A long preceding explanation perhaps for a later Spring and reduced numbers of migrants, but a necessary observation within the context of global warming. The future of some of our long

distance migrant passerines is clearly in the balance. 2006 has been a year when we hope that passing migrants had enough fuel for their lengthening flights.

Numbers ringed in 2006 were lower than usual, but the number of species again had its surprises. These included Penduline Tit, Red-rumped Swallow, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Sub-alpine Warbler, Black-headed Bunting and Jack Snipe. The Black-headed Bunting travelling from Asia arrived early they are normally expected in late April, early May. The Jack Snipe was a first record for Cyprus in 2006 and the ten Savi's Warblers was our highest ever total.

The Sorby-Breck ringers involved were Phil Lawson, Steve Samworth and Geoff Mawson. It was hard work setting off each day at 05:00am (03:00am our time!), but the results, despite reduced numbers, was refreshingly beneficial. Our experience continues to grow and our expertise enhanced enough to be able to extract and process rare bird species with confidence.

#### An Interesting Day!

Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2006 was due to be our second Constant Effort Session, ringing at Williamthorpe. It was decided at the last moment to switch to Treeton Water Treatment Works because of the wet weather forecast. The previous week at Treeton had similar wet conditions and we managed to ring 73 birds. It had been promising enough to make a return visit. Little did we expect such a memorable day. Phil, Kevin, Stuart, Curt myself and a visiting trainee ringer, Robin Whyman from South Derbyshire processed 232 birds. A breakdown for the two dates is given below. It includes four controls, three yellow Wagtails and a little Owl!

	07.05.06	13.05.06
Yellow Wagtail	2	1
Reed Bunting	5	
Swallow	27	111
House Martin	10	82
Swift	27	13
Grey Wagtail	1	
Pied Wagtail	1	
Blackbird		1
Great Tit		2

Little Owl		1
Lesser Whitethroat		2
Blackcap		1
Whitethroat		1
Chaffinch		3
Goldfinch		2
Yellowhammer		1
Robin		1
Total	73	232

BIRD BANDING AT PRINCE EDWARD POINT  
OBSERVATORY ,CANADA.

SPRING 2006

by

Ray Knock

After an enjoyable visit in the Autumn of 2005 I went back to the Observatory at Prince Edward point to experience the spring migration, and the chance to see the returning birds in their full summer breeding plumage.

The weather was not too good at the start of the visit, the winds were in the wrong direction and numbers started off slowly, but some species new for me turned up in the nets, my first Wood thrush in excellent breeding plumage was a sharp contrast to the rather drab individuals seen in the Autumn, and the most common warbler species, the Magnolia warblers with their black and yellow plumage are really stunning birds.

As the first week progressed the weather improved and the movements increased, Canada Warblers began to appear and the un-common Hooded warbler was trapped, along with the more common species such as Bay breasted and yellow rumped warblers. The first Blackburnian warblers also started moving through, the males with bright yellow/orange throats and breast are probably the most handsome of the warblers in this part of the world. Towards the end of the first week a film crew from a local Ontario station arrived to make a short documentary about the Observatory and particularly the involvement of the volunteers that are essential to the work during the migration monitoring. Hearing strange accents from the other side of the Atlantic they did full interviews with

myself and Kate and filmed the ringing activities for most of the morning, fame at last!

The numbers of species and individuals were starting to increase, and some unusual birds started to be caught, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Great crested Flycatcher, Savannah sparrow were added to my growing list, along with American Robin and Red winged blackbird, both common but not caught in great numbers.

A flick netting expedition was undertaken one afternoon, near the lake shore, the target being Cliff Swallows; we managed to catch 6 birds, plus a Barn swallow. This is the same species as ours in Britain but the males are much brighter on the breast than the ones we see here.

That evening as we were just getting ready to have our meal, out of the window we saw an Evening Grosbeak feeding on one of the platforms where we have wire ground traps during the day, if we went out and set the traps would it disappear? We set two traps liberally baited with sunflower seed, within 5 minutes I had my hands on the bird!

The next morning we trapped an American woodcock just after dawn, the start of another good day, Indigo bunting, Brown headed cowbird and common Grackle were further additions to my list? About mid morning an odd looking Bunting appeared in the nets. After much searching through the ID guides and Pyle, the ringers bible it turned out to be a Lazuli Bunting, a second year Male, so without the distinctive plumage, and in the field easily confused with a female Indigo bunting. This bird was a first for the point, and only the 4<sup>th</sup> record in Ontario?

The following day the nets were bulging, a really big fall had occurred and the warblers were there in big numbers, myself and Kate set up ringing section on our own to concentrate on the Magnolia warblers, myself ringing and Kate Scribing, in the course of the morning we managed 130 Magnolias, and in between I took time off to ring Blue winged and Golden winged warblers and also the uncommon Cape May Warbler. At the end of the session we had ringed 585 birds a record number for a single Spring day session.

Dave the warden at the point had put up an experimental nest box for Wood duck, the birds had taken to the box and there were eggs in the nest, we checked the nest one day to see if the female was sitting, yes, lifted off the nest and ringed, the first for the point more boxes needed

for next year! The same day produced Baltimore Oriole, and Warbling Vireo, two unusual species, and Dave had a banding tick as we managed to Lure a Bobolink into the nets.

At the end of the second week the numbers had dropped off again, but the seasons total had already surpassed the previous spring record. My penultimate day produced a Black Billed Cuckoo, which I was delighted with, on the day of our departure we were packed and had said our goodbyes and were just about to drive off when there was frantic waving from the banding Lab for me to come over, what had I left behind? Nothing, but was presented with a bird bag containing a yellow billed Cuckoo to ring, just to finish off the holiday in style!

I managed to accumulate another 28 species to add to my ringing list, we have provisionally planned another visit in Autumn 2007, this time to coincide with the main Owl migration period, when up to 1000 northern Saw-whet owls can be caught.

**May 2006 Totals**  
**Monthly Species Totals Report**

	Jan 2006	Feb 2006	Mar 2006	Apr 2006	May 2006	Total 2006	Jan-May 2005
Mute Swan	4		1			5	38
Greylag Goose		1				1	1
Canada Goose	4					4	10
Wigeon		1				1	
Teal	1					1	2
Mallard		1		4		5	2
Goshawk							4
Sparrowhawk							3
Buzzard							7
Kestrel							5
Grey Partridge							1
Moorhen	1					1	4
Coot		2				2	1
Ringed Plover					6	6	1
Lapwing					30	30	11
Jack Snipe	1		1			2	5
Snipe	3	2				5	22
Woodpigeon		2	2	4		8	1
Collared Dove			1	2		3	3

	Jan 2006	Feb 2006	Mar 2006	Apr 2006	May 2006	Total 2006	Jan-May 2005
Little Owl					2	2	1
Tawny Owl					2	2	6
Long-eared Owl					3	3	
Short-eared Owl							2
Swift					93	93	6
Kingfisher							1
Great Spotted Woodpecker		1				1	8
Swallow				1	182	183	12
House Martin					213	213	11
Tree Pipit							3
Meadow Pipit		1				1	7
Yellow Wagtail					3	3	
Grey Wagtail	1	5	6		15	27	40
Pied Wagtail	6	13	3		4	26	20
Waxwing	38	1				39	204
Dipper		5	5	1	14	25	27
Wren	7	10	1	2	10	30	42
Duncock	7	11	11	12	3	44	102
Robin	9	14	6	5	21	55	99
Redstart							4
Stonechat				1	8	9	5
Ring Ouzel					31	31	7
Blackbird	23	11	13	18	30	95	163
Fieldfare							1
Song Thrush	2	6	3	2	2	15	35
Redwing	5	1				6	29
Mistle Thrush				4	1	5	10
Grasshopper Warbler					1	1	
Sedge Warbler				5	13	18	6
Reed Warbler				1	2	3	1
Lesser Whitethroat					4	4	3
Whitethroat				3	17	20	6
Garden Warbler					6	6	11
Blackcap	1			5	12	18	21
Wood Warbler					2	2	1
Chiffchaff		1		3		4	20
Willow Warbler				13	9	22	48
Goldcrest	13	13	4	2		32	26
Spotted Flycatcher							2
Pied Flycatcher							1
Long-tailed Tit	26	11	4	4	2	47	218
Marsh Tit			2			2	2
Willow Tit	2		1			3	13
Coal Tit	9	7	17	10	10	53	31
Blue Tit	82	49	37	12	41	221	481
Great Tit	35	18	27	13	80	173	459

	Jan 2006	Feb 2006	Mar 2006	Apr 2006	May 2006	Total 2006	Jan-May 2005
Nuthatch	2	2	1	1		6	20
Treecreeper	2	1				3	9
Jay							3
Magpie				1	1	2	2
Jackdaw							2
Carrion Crow							3
Raven				4		4	9
Starling	4	1		5	14	24	65
House Sparrow		2	4	10	1	17	74
Tree Sparrow	6	11	9	4	92	122	188
Chaffinch	22	50	84	56	12	224	168
Brambling			1	11		12	
Greenfinch	24	90	45	57	6	222	180
Goldfinch	54	49	17	29	4	153	63
Siskin	30	99	290	324	1	744	5
Linnet				1	1	2	1
Common Redpoll	2					2	
Lesser Redpoll	5	1				6	3
Bullfinch	5	1	2		1	9	31
Yellowhammer	3	14	6	5	4	32	11
Reed Bunting	7	12	2	8	7	36	18
Grand Total	446	520	606	643	1016	3231	3171
Total Species	35	37	30	37	45	71	79

## RECENTLY REPORTED RINGING RECOVERIES AND INTERESTING RETRAPS

### Swift

SB83179      05/06/1999      6      Treeton SF, S Yorks (RAK)  
                   21/05/2006      R      Treeton SF, S Yorks (DJH)                      6 yrs 350days

### Swallow

R981546      11/08/2004      1      Upper Whiston, Rotherham, S Yorks (HV)                      3km, 1 yr  
                   13/05/2006      R      Treeton SF, S Yorks (KB)                      275days

### Garden Warbler

N967973      25/07/1999      3J      Williamthorpe, Derby (SS)  
                   14/05/2006      R      Williamthorpe, Derbys (SS)                      6 yrs 293days  
                   21/05/2006      R      Williamthorpe, Derbys (PH)                      6 yrs 300days

### Goldcrest

BBP744      15/10/2005      3M      SBO Kilnsea, E Yorks  
                   07/11/2005      X      Chesterfield, Derbys                      113km, 23days

### Chaffinch

N871788      25/08/2001      4M      Bondhay Farm, Whitwell, Derbys (DF)  
                   06/02/2006      XF      Whitwell, Worksop, Notts                      3 km, 4 yrs

165days

**Lesser Redpoll**

T530398	22/10/2005	3	Williamthorpe, Derbys (GPM)
	22/02/2006	X	Amersfoort, Utrecht, NETHERLANDS

470km, 123 days  
*Taken by cat*

*David Williams*