

Sorby-Breck Ringing Group

November 2006 Newsletter

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

Ringling – a trainee's perspective

Before I wrote the following piece, I reminded myself of the contributions in last year's annual report. A little daunted by reading of exotic destinations and vibrant reports of exciting species recounted, I none the less, took 'finger to keypad' to offer you the following personal 'take' on our common subject matter: ringing. Here goes.

It was not without some trepidation that I set off one cool October morning last year at a time that saw my family still asleep; to meet three men I'd never laid eyes on before. I arrived at Bondhay Golf Club and identified Stuart and Steve from Whitwell Wood Group as the two likely suspects in the car park. We walked on to the Common to find Geoff already erecting nets and I guessed I wasn't as early as I could have been. The first bird I rang that morning was a Robin and it proudly wears its ring on its left leg (in case you should ever retrap T530310, you now know why) and after being told my mistake, I learned my second lesson: namely, that there is a *lot* to learn.

That said, it has been a thoroughly enjoyable eleven months. I can honestly say that the early mornings, nasal 'delights' of sewage farms, nettles at Williamthorpe, marsh and midges at Ramsley and all that the elements can throw from the sky; have been no problem at all. When I was writing this I asked myself why exactly I have enjoyed the experience of ringing so much, apart from the obvious one of being privileged to study such amazing creatures in the hand. I concluded that one of the overriding reasons is that I have had the opportunity of seeing birds in environments at such glorious times of the day when I otherwise wouldn't be able to. I don't mean simply

because I'm with ringers who have landowners permission, but of course, that is important too, but because of a more significant reason than that to me.

In the past I have bemoaned to a fellow female lover of birds that unless accompanied, we rarely got out to places individually where we would feel 'safe' to birdwatch alone. Some of the prime birding habitats are naturally isolated and remote. Not having a fellow birder to share my time with has meant that I sometimes felt thwarted in my trips out in the field, when my safety conscience annoyingly got the better of me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank wholeheartedly the members of Sorby Breck Ringing Group who have been nothing but thoroughly gentlemanly and unselfish in their accepting attitude towards a trainee such as me. I would particularly like to thank Geoff and those who ring regularly with him; I won't list you all in case I should omit anyone and unintentionally cause offence. You are unselfish in your pursuit to assist trainees to improve and you have been a decent lot in a male dominated hobby and I hope I haven't spoiled all your fun too much (in the way that women unwittingly can!)

I have made friends and learned much about a subject I knew little about a few years ago. I have rung and handled over 300 birds and over 45 species in the last year. I *never* thought I could have even extracted one when watching at Bondhay that October morning. I write this in the knowledge that most readers of this annual report may have long forgotten the first thrill of ringing the most humble passerines. I suspect many 'A' ringers may have started with a similar sense of nervousness. I marvel at the individual bird's struggle for survival and often incredible migration story, whilst understanding its need for respect when caught and examined in the hand.

I have since rung Barn Owls in Lincolnshire, Marsh Tit at Whitwell, Siskin at Center Parcs and Teal on the Lower Derwent Valley. My best efforts to ring this summer at A Rocha observatory on the Algarve were only thwarted because our family holiday coincided with the resident 'A' ringer's absence. What bad luck. My recent highlight has undoubtedly been closer to home: on Ramsley Moor. In the triangle of nets on that still autumn morning we caught

over 35 of our target species, Meadow Pipits, the only exception being a gorgeous juvenile Stonechat, which happened to fly in on my turn at a net round. What a thrill for a novice like me to return to the others with that in the bag! I'm sure you can remember such a 'lightbulb' moment in your journey as a trainee, however long ago.

In addition to Geoff's tireless patience and support, a special thanks goes to Stuart of Whitwell Wood Group for his continued help and encouragement. I hope that the last year has proven we are a step closer to seeing regular ringing taking place again in this fabulous ancient woodland.

Eleanor J Wilkins

October 2006 Totals
Monthly Species Totals Report

	Jan-Mar 2006	Apr-Jun 2006	Jul-Sep 2006	Oct 2006		Total 2006	Jan-Oct 2005
Mute Swan	5	14	23	11		53	38
Greylag Goose	1	1	1			3	1
Greater Canada Goose	4	31	3	1		39	13
Wigeon	1					1	
Eurasian Teal	1			3		4	2
Mallard	1	6	3			10	4
Hen Harrier		8	1			9	
Goshawk		10				10	8
Sparrowhawk		1	2	2		5	7
Buzzard		2				2	28
Kestrel		13	4			17	14
Merlin		13				13	19
Hobby			42			42	24
Peregrine		6				6	4
Grey Partridge							1
Moorhen	1		1	1		3	5
Coot	2					2	1
Oystercatcher		2				2	
Little Ringed Plover		3	7			10	6
Ringed Plover		6				6	1
Golden Plover							1
Lapwing		65	1			66	22
Jack Snipe	2			2		4	6
Snipe	5			2		7	25
Curlew		2				2	1
Common Sandpiper		1	2			3	
Black-headed Gull							17
Common Tern		4	4			8	9
Stock Dove		5	17	2		24	

	Jan-Mar 2006	Apr-Jun 2006	Jul-Sep 2006	Oct 2006		Total 2006	Jan-Oct 2005
Woodpigeon	4	9	9			22	3
Collared Dove	1	2	1			4	11
Barn Owl		6	5			11	7
Little Owl		10	1			11	3
Tawny Owl		9	2			11	6
Long-eared Owl		4	1			5	
Short-eared Owl							6
Swift		96				96	103
Kingfisher		3	7			10	4
Green Woodpecker		1				1	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	5	2	1		9	19
Sand Martin			2			2	
Swallow		521	329			850	81
House Martin		220	48			268	174
Tree Pipit		8	3			11	11
Meadow Pipit	1	7	91			99	131
Yellow Wagtail		3				3	
Grey Wagtail	12	31	22	1		66	167
Pied Wagtail	22	39	26	1		88	94
Waxwing	39					39	203
Dipper	10	21				31	39
Wren	18	43	112	47		220	189
Dunnock	29	71	107	35		242	242
Robin	29	106	90	30		255	250
Redstart		14	1			15	4
Whinchat		3				3	
Stonechat		9	5			14	7
Ring Ouzel		51	6			57	14
Blackbird	47	107	112	31		297	304
Fieldfare							1
Song Thrush	11	16	20	6		53	57
Redwing	6			4		10	30
Mistle Thrush		7				7	10
Grasshopper Warbler		3	1			4	4
Sedge Warbler		32	48			80	57
Reed Warbler		50	119			169	100
Lesser Whitethroat		4	10			14	13
Whitethroat		39	53			92	48
Garden Warbler		33	27	1		61	68
Blackcap	1	45	115	5		166	186
Wood Warbler		9				9	7
Chiffchaff	1	14	185	1		201	158
Willow Warbler		101	196			297	247
Goldcrest	30	7	2	24		63	52
Spotted Flycatcher		6				6	3
Pied Flycatcher		118				118	107
Long-tailed Tit	43	235	37	39		354	354
Marsh Tit	2			1		3	2
Willow Tit	3	5	16	6		30	42
Coal Tit	33	44	10	11		98	42
Blue Tit	168	474	189	85		916	956
Great Tit	81	442	119	47		689	766
Nuthatch	5	13	3	1		22	25
Treecreeper	3	14	17			34	25
Jay		1				1	4

