

REPORT FROM BTO RINGING SCHEME (BRITAIN & IRELAND)

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Organisation

The Ringing Scheme in Britain & Ireland is run by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The Ringing Scheme forms part of the BTO's Populations Research Department. Staff primarily involved in the Ringing Scheme are as follows:

BTO Director	Jeremy Greenwood
Director of Populations Research	Stephen Baillie

RINGING UNIT

Head of Unit	Jacquie Clark (<i>Migration Atlas</i>)
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Secretary	Angie Raven
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Recoveries & Licensing Team:

Leader	Jeremy Blackburn
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Recoveries Officers	Dave Anning
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	Linda Milne
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Data & Sales Team:

Leader	Bridget Griffin
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Ringing Data Officer	Sue Adams
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Ringing Assistant (part-time)	Brenda Read
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Ringing Sales	Anne Trehitt
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NB there is also currently a team of approximately 20 outworkers inputting old ringing data.

DEMOGRAPHY UNIT

Senior Population Biologist	Chris Wernham (<i>Migration Atlas</i> and Ringing Research)
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Research Officer	Dawn Balmer (Organiser of CES & RAS)
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Other BTO staff with a recent involvement in ringing based research are:

Phil Atkinson	(survival analysis)
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Niall Burton	(movements of waders)
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Steve Freeman	(CES analysis, survival analysis)
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John Marchant	(<i>Migration Atlas</i>)
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Rob Robinson	(survival analysis)
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Gavin Siriwardena	(<i>Migration Atlas</i>)
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Mike Toms	(<i>Migration Atlas</i>)
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BTO RINGING SCHEME OPERATIONS

Numbers ringed	Annual (1999)	700,387
	Ever (to end 1999)	28,911,999
Numbers recovered	Annual (1999)	10,586
	Ever (to end 1999)	561,195
Number of ringers (1999)	1,936 (proportion professional less than 10%)	

Computerisation

Recoveries of all BTO-ringed birds and all foreign-ringed birds received since 1979 (some species fully computerised) have been computerised.

Ringings for over 2 million birds have been received from ringers electronically. Data have been accepted electronically since 1996. For 2000, 75% of ringing data were submitted electronically by ringers. About half of the electronic data is received via email. Ringers have been supplied with free programs to allow input and submission of ringing and recovery data.

Back data for certain ring sizes now being computerised by a team of outworkers. Data for about two million Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) are currently being computerised.

Recaptures and biometrics are now also collected from ringers electronically.

Problems

None

Finance

Ringers pay towards cost of rings, pay for equipment and pay an annual permit fee. Other costs are met from a partnership between BTO and JNCC (Government) and by the BTO. Ring prices are based on current conservation concern of species being ringed. Where all, or most species, that have a particular ring size are of conservation concern the ring price is reduced. If only a few of the species taking a particular ring size are of conservation interest a refund is given to ringers at the end of the year. Refunds are only given for data submitted electronically.

Annual Report	Published in BTO Ringing Scheme Journal <i>Ringling & Migration</i> (circulated free to all EURING Schemes).
<i>Ringers' Bulletin</i>	Published three times a year (circulated free to all EURING Schemes).
<i>Ringer's Manual</i>	New edition (with major revisions and additions) currently nearing completion.

BTO RINGING SCHEME RESEARCH - PROJECTS

CONSTANT EFFORT SITES SCHEME (CES)

This scheme monitors demographic changes for 25+ widespread songbird species. Over 140 sites were operated in 2000 (with good geographical spread), the best ever coverage. Coverage may be somewhat lower in 2001 due to Foot & Mouth disease but many sites are operating as usual.

EURO-CES

This is a EURING collaborative project, lead by the BTO and CRBPO, and including constant effort data from Britain & Ireland, France, the Netherlands and Spain, and help from many other European ringing schemes. We have received the results from a detailed questionnaire asking about all existing European schemes and will have a first draft of European guidelines ready for comment in the winter of 2001/02. Steve Freeman (BTO) and Romain Julliard (CRBPO) have made good progress with analysing and comparing trends from the four countries with the longest running constant effort schemes and will be finalising a report/scientific paper this coming winter. An update will be given at this conference.

RAS

This project was started in 1998 to collect mark-recapture data to monitor adult survival rates for a range of species. Ringers choose their own study area and attempt to ring and retrap (or resight) all the breeding adults in the study area each breeding season. The project concentrates on species not well-monitored by CES or other types of ringing. There are now 100+ studies registered, covering around 40 species. Of these species, 50% are of current conservation concern. This year we are carrying out our first piece of analytical work using RAS data (including historical data): an analysis of temporal and geographical variation in the survival rates of Pied Flycatchers (*Ficedula hypoleuca*).

MIGRATION ATLAS

The *Migration Atlas* is now nearing completion. All the species texts (written by expert authors) have been completed and edited and the final supporting chapters are being completed. Publication is expected early next year. A talk about the *Migration Atlas* will be given at this conference.

BREEDING BIRDS IN THE WIDER COUNTRYSIDE THEIR CONSERVATION STATUS 2000

This major report on bird population trends is now available on the BTO Website (<http://www.bto.org/birdtrends>). The report includes abundance and productivity trends from CES (with graphs) as well as information from census schemes and nest recording. The report will be updated annually and we will be looking to include more information from ringing in future editions.

BTO RINGING SCHEME RESEARCH - ANALYSES

Integrated population monitoring analyses combining data from ringing nest records and censuses have recently been carried out on Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*) and Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*). A significant decline in Marsh Tit survival, which is the most likely cause of the decline of this species in Britain, was demonstrated. Willow Tit survival may also have declined. It was not possible to estimate survival trends for Nightingale but the survival rate found (33% per annum) is low for a species of this size.

Further integrated analyses of Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) ring-recovery, developing new analytical techniques, have also been carried out. This work incorporates estimates of post-fledging survival and further work on this is planned for a range of species.

Work will begin in the autumn to analyse the Starling data currently being input by outworkers. This will address the demographic causes of the decline of this species.

Jacquie Clark
24 August 2001