



Icterine Warbler (*Hippolais icterina*) - Stanford Reservoir

14th June 2008

Background & discovery

Members of the Stanford Ringing Group met at 0430 hrs on Saturday 14th June 2008 and commenced erecting mist nets in the areas that we regularly ring on the Northamptonshire side of the Reservoir in Blower's Lodge Bay.

At about 0515 hrs, having already erected several nets, MJT and JGC were in the process of erecting nets in the penultimate net ride when MJT drew JGC's attention to a bird singing from the top of an adjacent Lime tree, some 60 ft in height. Its call was unknown to either of us and JGC remarked that it sounded like a canary. The fact that it mimicked several other species including Blackbird, Song Thrush, Sedge Warbler and Lapwing only added to the confusion.

We continued with what was our main priority of erecting the line of nets in the ride in front of the tree and the single net in the last ride behind it (not far from the birdwatching hide). On passing back under the tree, the bird could still be heard singing from the very top but was not clearly visible as it gave only slight movements amongst the leaves.

On the first round of extracting birds from the nets for subsequent ringing, MJT & AGH approached the tree where the bird could still be. As luck would have it, it joined a party of Long-tailed Tits and flew down, towards and into the line of nets where it was quickly extracted and bagged up. AGH contacted JGC by walkie-talkie to say that the bird was either Melodious or Icterine. JGC, hoping that the bird was now more visible, replied "is it photograph-able?" to be told that it was "in the bag". It was brought back to the ringing base where it was immediately identified as Icterine Warbler.

AGH ringed the bird and on release, it flew to a willow on the water's edge for a while before crossing the water towards the trees on the "Leicester" bank adjacent to the overflow weir.

Biometrics

JGC recorded the bird's biometrics shown below with range data from Svensson for *H. icterina* and *H. polyglotta* for comparison:

The wing length of 83 mm was just outside the range given in Svensson of 73 – 82 mm and so was checked by all the three A ringers for confirmation. [Williamson has 72 – 83 for males and 71- 78 for females, BWP has 76 - 83 for males and 75 - 80 for females].

Biometric	Stanford Icterine	<i>H. icterina</i>	<i>H. polyglotta</i>
Wing Length	83	73 -82	62-71
P1: primary coverts	Shorter by 2.5 mm	-3 to +3 mm	+ 2.5 to 8 mm
Wing Point	P3	P3 rarely P4	P3 = P4 rarely P5
Emargination	P3, P4 and slightly P5	P3, P4 (P5)	P3, P4, P5 (P6)
P2 falls	Between P4 & P5	Between P4 & P5 (rarely = P4)	Between P6 & P7 (rarely between P5 & P8)

The bird was in fresh plumage, did not have a brood patch and weighed 13.8 grams.

Images taken 14/6/08 by John Cranfield

Short first primary ↓



Emarginated

← P3

← P4

← P5

P2 falls between P4 & P5 ↓



Wing Point

← P3

