



STANFORD RINGING GROUP REPORT 2010

The Group's total of ringed birds for 2010 is 5,285 with 4,520 of these at our main site at Stanford.

Stanford Reservoir - Report For 2010

2010! Wow! What a year!

In 2010 we ringed 5,285 birds (adult & pulli) of which 4,520 (of 51 species) were at our main site at Stanford Reservoir. The total number of birds processed at Stanford was 6,695. This is a fantastic achievement for our relatively small ringing group (we've previously averaged about 2500 birds a year at Stanford). Well done and a big thank you to all involved!

Off to a fast start

2010 started surprisingly well with 24 Fieldfare and 14 Redwing caught early in January during a period of time when snow was on the ground. We do not normally start ringing until April, so these thrushes got us off to a good start but little did we know then just how many thrushes we would go on to catch later in the year!

Environmental work

During the first three months of the year we undertake site maintenance and conservation work. Left unmanaged, the site would quickly become woodland and destroy the valuable habitat that we have managed to create over the last decade or so. The work involves removing certain trees and clearing scrub – all done by our dedicated band of volunteers.

Nest Boxes

The arrival of April saw ringing commence again in a more regular fashion, together with nest recording and the inevitable ringing of pulli. Over the years we have constructed and erected 100+ nest boxes for tits, owls and raptors. These are used with varying amounts of success and 2010 was no different.

The tit boxes produced bigger broods this year with little or no mortality in the boxes, but we noted that the birds generally bred a little later than in recent years. This was reminiscent of breeding start times some 40 years ago and was perhaps a result of the long cold 2009/10 winter delaying insect appearance, which, in turn, delayed the birds.

The owl and raptor boxes on the other hand did not do so well. The comparatively early season Tawny Owls were ok, but the later owls and Kestrels all failed to produce any young at all. As usual a number of the owl boxes were taken up by Stock Doves and one by a pair of Jackdaws providing valuable ringing experience for our trainees.

A Wall of Warblers

May and June ringing totals ticked over in line with previous years and then the warbler numbers just rocketed! "It was like hitting a wall of warblers!" exclaimed a trainee, after we had extracted 100+ in the first net round (and around 200 birds in total) on one particular day.

July, August and September continued in the same way with record warbler numbers being ringed and various species' annual totals not just being beaten but absolutely annihilated! For example 99 Garden Warblers were ringed (previous high was 68 in 2006), 248 Chiffchaff (199 in 2009) and 113 Goldfinch (27 in 1976).

Overall we achieved record annual catches for 15 species, 2nd best for 10 and 3rd best for 6 (improved totals across 30% of the species ever ringed at the Reservoir).

A Good Autumn

October heralded the start of the thrush season with Redwing and Fieldfare starting to arrive along with the usual trickle of Lesser Redpoll. But the year still had one or two more surprises in store for us.

The Yellow-browed Warbler trapped and ringed on 7th October represented a first for Stanford Reservoir, and the 2nd ringed for the Group (the first, a County first, having been ringed at Naseby Reservoir on 18th October 1981).

Later in the month a Great Grey Shrike was observed but unfortunately not caught, whilst we had better luck in trapping a Common Redpoll in November - the first for 16 years.

Out with a Bang

The last tale for the year must be the unprecedented numbers of thrushes we have caught. In previous years we have caught around 15 Redwing and 5 Fieldfare a year. This year we achieved the phenomenal totals of 633 Redwing and 136 Fieldfare! So many in fact that we nearly ran out of rings!

Don't ask me how or why we have caught the numbers we have because I cannot explain! We have not done anything differently to previous years and rather bizarrely we have seen relatively few large thrush flocks in comparison to previous years.

Just to finish the year off nicely, on December 23rd we caught our first Little Owl since 1990!

2010! Wow! What a year! It will be long remembered!

SRG – 2011