



STANFORD RINGING GROUP – ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Summary

- In 2015 the Stanford Ringing Group processed 10048 birds of 58 species, of which 7537 were new birds.
- We had a relatively poor breeding season with low to medium productivity.
- The numbers of adult Warblers were generally lower than last year.
- Monthly ringing totals were exceptional with 3 months recorded highest ever totals, 5 with 2nd, and 1 with 3rd highest. September was again excellent (2418 birds ringed).
- We recorded our best ever year for controls (19 birds) and recoveries (32).
- A provisional national longevity record for Garden Warbler at 10 years, 1 month & 5 days
- The third year of the BTO Constant Effort Scheme was successful.
- A sponsored bird watch raised £600+ to help fund the feeding station and purchase ringing equipment (many thanks all those people who took part and those who sponsored us).
- Two new breeding species were recorded this year (Cetti's Warbler and Garganey) and one new species ringed (Pied Flycatcher).
- Environmental work continued as usual from January through March.
- Finally, many thanks to all those who helped during the year and to Severn Trent Water and Parker Farms for allowing access to their land and Parker Farms for their financial support.

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Annual Review – Ringing at Stanford Reservoir

Generally speaking we had a very good year at Stanford with a number of unusual species caught and ringed - Pied Flycatcher being a long awaited addition to our ringed bird list. This species has rarely been seen at Stanford let alone caught (probably due to a more westerly migration route through the country). Other species of interest included Yellow-browed Warbler (the second for Stanford) and two Firecrest. We also had a number of Sub-Species with origins in Siberia.

For the second year running Stanford produced exceptional numbers with 10047 processed of which 7537 were new birds (a record total for one year!). Again we exceeded our expectations with Warblers, with 4156 ringed. We feel this is a tremendous number of warblers for such a small inland site - most caught moving through the site during August, September and early October.



Firecrest

Of concern is that all resident Stanford species show a downward trend bar 2 species. Lesser Redpoll migrated this year so we caught more during the autumn migration. Goldcrest do not breed at Stanford so a catch of 30+ during August demonstrated they had a good breeding season and we were catching birds from the post juvenile dispersal. We then caught exceptional numbers for us during the September / October period due to large numbers migrating through Britain in autumn 2015. The table below demonstrates the differences in numbers between this year and 2014 with very similar numbers ringed for the year.

New birds Ringed at Stanford Reservoir 2014-2015

Species	2014	2015	Change
Mute Swan		2	
Sparrowhawk	4		
Kestrel	3		
Stock Dove	10	12	20%
Woodpigeon	1	2	100%
Collared Dove	1		
Cuckoo	1	1	0%
Barn Owl		1	
Tawny Owl	3		
Kingfisher	19	14	-26%
Green Woodpecker	1	1	0%
Great Spotted Woodpecker	14	9	-36%
Sand Martin	2	2	0%
Swallow	88	44	-50%
House Martin	1	2	100%
Tree Pipit	2	1	-50%
Meadow Pipit	72	22	-69%
Wren	165	149	-10%

New birds Ringed at Stanford Reservoir 2014-2015 (contd)

Dunnock	119	74	-38%
Robin	112	127	13%
Redstart	2	10	400%
Whinchat		1	
Blackbird	129	80	-38%
Fieldfare	8	14	75%
Song Thrush	43	34	-21%
Redwing	437	376	-14%
Cetti's Warbler	4	8	100%
Grasshopper Warbler	1	1	0%
Sedge Warbler	140	190	36%
Reed Warbler	216	314	45%
Lesser Whitethroat	81	111	37%
Whitethroat	455	469	3%
Garden Warbler	108	116	7%
Blackcap	1665	1794	8%
Yellow-browed Warbler		1	
Chiffchaff	717	967	35%
Willow Warbler	215	215	0%
Goldcrest	76	210	176%
Firecrest		2	
Spotted Flycatcher	1	1	0%
Pied Flycatcher		1	
Long-tailed Tit	77	62	-19%
Marsh Tit	3	1	-67%
Willow Tit	2	2	0%
Coal Tit	8	8	0%
Blue Tit	482	488	1%
Great Tit	331	297	-10%
Nuthatch	1		
Treecreeper	22	25	14%
Jay		1	
Jackdaw	9	6	-33%
Carrion Crow	1	1	0%
Starling	7	3	-57%
House Sparrow	1		
Tree Sparrow	660	499	-24%
Chaffinch	144	91	-37%
Greenfinch	238	152	-36%
Goldfinch	158	151	-4%
Siskin		3	
Linnet	43	11	-74%
Lesser Redpoll	14	188	1243%
Bullfinch	54	47	-13%
Yellowhammer	83	6	-93%
Reed Bunting	265	117	-56%

Weather 2015

The weather here in the East Midlands was quite mild during the January to March period with only a handful of frosts. April to June started cool and wet with a warm June. July to September was warm and settled with an easterly airflow during the latter half of September. October continued as September (warm with a dominant easterly airflow). November and December by contrast were just wet and windy with above average temperatures and rain with constant strong south-westerly winds.

Species Accounts

Wren – Dunnock – Robin

A bit of a hit and miss year for these species with Robin again increasing in numbers from last year's high. Wren although showing a reduction in numbers still recorded our second best year total, whilst Dunnock crashed by some 38% on last year's high. The reason for this is not obvious as we didn't have a bad winter to reduce numbers of adults.

Chats-Hirundines-Pipits

We recorded our best ever year by far for Chats with 10 Redstart caught plus an unusual record of Whinchat in September. This is only the second caught on site by us and the first since 1981. This former breeder is now very rarely seen at Stanford.

Again a poor year for Hirundines with only a few caught around the reservoir. Swallows bred in much reduced numbers at the Stables and Farm this year which didn't help the numbers. What happened to the Meadow Pipits in 2015? They just didn't turn up in any numbers at all. However we did manage to catch a Tree Pipit in August for the second year running.

Thrushes

2015 was a poor catching year for most of the Thrushes with Blackbirds crashing from 129 in 2014 to 80 ringed in 2015. Song Thrush also showed a reduction in numbers with Fieldfare just reaching double figures. In contrast Redwing started well with record monthly numbers for October and November but with the poor weather during November-December constrained ringed activity and we missed out on catching many more. Few Redwing were caught in December so we finished with our 3rd best annual total for the species.

Warblers

In 2015 we never expected to get anywhere near 2014's fantastic totals, but we actually did far better with a total of 4156 warblers ringed! Of the 9 breeding species of Warbler recorded at Stanford (Cetti's Warbler new in 2015) 6 were caught in record numbers with the remaining 3 recording their 3rd highest totals. Given the fact that all the warblers arrived in spring in smaller numbers (except for Blackcap and Garden Warbler) and all produced less young (except Blackcap), it's surprising we finished with such a large number of birds.



Yellow-browed Warbler



Cetti's Warbler

A real plus in 2015 was the addition of Cetti's Warbler to the list of breeding species with probably 3 females attempting to breed (2 were successful). We also caught some scarce subspecies during a real purple patch in October. We started the month with Northern Willow Warbler followed by Siberian Chiffchaff. Then, 3 days later we started a ringing session with Yellow-browed Warbler and the last bird of the day was Asian Lesser Whitethroat (later confirmed as Blythi by DNA).

The table below again shows the number of individuals caught between 1st May and 31st July. The area covered is between the silver gate, just past the water tower right around Blowers Lodge Bay to the Northants reed bed.

Warbler species - unique birds caught (Water Tower to Northants Reedbed), 1st May - 31st August:

Year	Sedge		Reed		Les Wh		White		Garden		Blackcap		Chiff		Willow	
	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv	Ad	Juv
2015	40	15	41	10	3	14	42	113	45	36	46	130	10	58	26	27
2014	48	26	60	23	9	36	62	168	35	39	34	39	11	99	36	47
2013	57	40	77	15	10	8	65	143	32	9	22	9	11	37	36	45
2012	32	14	43	4	6	7	64	29	30	8	33	8	13	43	53	55
2011	74	165	60	22	10	13	90	254	51	41	43	41	16	59	52	54

Crests-Tits-Creeper

Goldcrest apparently had a good breeding season with high numbers (for Stanford) caught during August-September. These birds were probably local breeders undertaking post juvenile dispersal. However during October-November we experienced exceptional numbers passing through the Reservoir following the arrival of large numbers into the UK from the continent. Three birds during this period already carrying a ring to show their origins. We also caught 2 Firecrest also with possible origins on the continent.

The Tit numbers were similar to 2014 with no drastic rise or fall in numbers; in fact Blue Tit recorded their best ever year at Stanford. Treecreepers again had a good year with 25 caught.

Sparrows – Finches – Buntings

This group of species have shown a worrying decline since 2014 which is difficult to explain. Whilst Greenfinch is still suffering with Trichomonosis and Chaffinch are suffering from a number of foot/leg conditions it's hard to say what has caused declines in the other species.

Tree Sparrows started the year well but the final 3 months of 2015 were poor. We managed to ring 499 new Tree Sparrow in 2015 compared to 660 in 2014 but retraps were up from 33 to 108 this year so we still managed over 600 individuals.

Finch numbers were not good this year with Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Linnets all showing worrying declines of over 35% whilst Goldfinch numbers were stable and Lesser Redpoll shot up due to the fact they migrated this year

Yellowhammers would appear to have had a complete disaster in 2015 with only 6 birds ringed. Sound lures were deployed as usual but no birds were about, a real worry as this showed a 93% drop in numbers. Reed Bunting has also shown a decrease in numbers (-56%). We only managed to catch 117 birds in 2015 - a real disappointment as we had our highest ever total in 2013 of 315. Hopefully these two Bunting species will bounce back.

A full breakdown of Ringing Totals by species per month and year can be found at http://www.stanfordrg.org.uk/srg_statistics.html

Nest Recording

Some key species failed to breed in 2015 due to a number of reasons. Although a pair of Barn Owls briefly took up residence in one box they failed to breed and were possibly an immature pair. With a reduced number of suitable large nestboxes Tawny Owls and Kestrels also failed to breed. Common Terns did not breed at Stanford due to both rafts having broken free from their anchorage points and which sadly lay abandoned on the bank. However on a positive note, Tree Sparrows bounced back with their best year since 2012. Tit species were at least a week later than those in 2014 with the first Blue Tit pulli ringed on the 16th May, compared to the 10th May last year and Great Tit not till a week later 23rd May, two weeks later than 2014!



- Great Crested Grebe - Two nests were found with three and five eggs respectively. All five young fledged from the latter nest whilst the former was of an unknown outcome.
- Mute Swan - Four nests this year with one nest failing at incubation, one predated and one pair raising five cygnets. The fourth nest was not visited again due to access.
- Greylag Goose - A pair of adults present with four small downy young indicated successful breeding nearby.
- Canada Goose - A pair of adults with two downy young suggested a nearby nest site.
- Mallard - A female noted attending to four small young in April and in May a crèche of ten small young together suggests nearby breeding.
- Coot – Five nests found all contained eggs of which only two had a positive outcome. One nest having four young whilst another with two young. Two nests were predated and one nest was flooded by rising water.
- Oystercatcher – A pair of adults visited the reservoir frequently so it can only be assumed that they successfully bred nearby when they turned up on the dam with a juvenile on the 10th July.
- Stock Dove – The same number of nests as 2014, thirteen nest attempts was again below average however the fledgling survival rate rose from 71% in 2014 to 86% in 2015. The first of fifteen pulli were ringed on the 9th May and the last on the 25th Oct, the latest date of this species to be ringed at Stanford
- Woodpigeon – Four nests were found with one brood of two being ringed. Of the remaining three nests, one was left due to access issues, one had young already sitting outside the nest and another was predated at egg stage.
- Barn Owl - It's not clear how long a pair had set up residence in one of our purpose built boxes but two flew out on the 7th July during a routine inspection and did not return. Perhaps a new replacement box wasn't to their liking or more likely an immature pair.
- Swallow - A terrible year with just seven nests across two traditionally successful sites. It quickly became clear on arrival at both sites that the numbers of adults were down to just a handful of pairs. Only fourteen pulli were ringed whereas we would normally ring over sixty!
- Pied Wagtail - A female sitting on a nest found at a nearby farm was visited again too late to find they had already fledged.
- Wren - The opportunity to ring nestling Wrens doesn't come around very often so when we found a nest on top of an abandoned Swallows nest in nearby stables it was a chance

to demonstrate to the trainees that under the right circumstances this species can be ringed as nestlings without causing any nest damage. Four pulli were ringed at the end of May with one of these being retrapped six weeks later at the feeding station a mile from where it was ringed in the stables.

- Robin - One nest in an open-fronted box on the Leicestershire bank resulted in a brood of four young being ringed in June of which two were later retrapped on the Northamptonshire side in August.
- Reed Warbler - Only nine nests were found either in the Leicestershire main reedbed or in small pockets of Phragmites along the north bank. A small number of eleven pulli ringed was mostly due to availability to find nests than lack of adults. An estimated 25 pairs had been recorded in the main reedbed alone during the breeding season with an estimated 15 pairs in small pockets that are dotted along the Leicestershire bank.
- Cetti's Warbler - After the first adult was trapped and ringed at Stanford in 2005 there has been a gradual increase in numbers from one or two pairs to five adults in 2015. Ringing captures have proven that breeding was successful on site due to newly fledged young being trapped. However, even though the location of the nests were known to us they were well hidden from view and so no attempt was made to venture into deep vegetation to find them despite holding a license to do so.
- Chiffchaff - A nest with 5 eggs was found on the edge of a net-ride after an adult flew from the vicinity. The net-ride was then abandoned for the next six weeks after which the nest was found to be empty. Although the nest was in good condition and showed no signs of predation we had could not be sure so the outcome was logged as unknown.
- Blue Tit - Thirty-five nests were recorded of which 300 eggs were laid. From these, 252 chicks hatched of which 215 pulli reached a size to ring. Despite the loss from infertile/addled eggs, predation or desertion this was the third highest total ringed and only the fourth time over 200 have been ringed in one season.
- Great Tit - Thirty-three nests were recorded of which 250 eggs were laid. From these, 195 chicks hatched of which 163 pulli reached a size to ring. Five nests were deserted at the incubation stage with the loss of thirty-nine eggs and two more nests deserted at juvenile stage resulting in the further loss of fifteen young. It was noted that Great Tits still managed heavy losses despite starting two weeks later than in 2014.
- Carrion Crow - One nest was observed in an Oak tree along the disused railtrack where two young were later seen close to the nest.
- Jackdaw - Game Wood as a rule hosts a handful of pairs during the nesting season but there were none this year. However, one pair used a box on the Leicestershire side and raised three young from four eggs and another pair in a box on the Northamptonshire side raised three young.
- Tree Sparrow - Eight nesting attempts was much better than last year but considering the number of adults around the feeding station it is still way below what we anticipated. However, three pairs managed double broods including one pair having broods of 6 and 7 respectively. One clutch of six eggs was lost to nestbox damage and subsequently predation.
- Reed Bunting - One nest found contained four eggs but when the time came to revisit the nest to ring the young the area grown over considerably so the outcome remained unknown.

Controls & Recoveries

Controls

This year we controlled 19 birds at Stanford our best ever year, this is one control for every 528 birds processed. The species and numbers were :- Mute Swan 1 , Sedge Warbler 3 , Reed Warbler 4, Garden Warbler 1, Blackcap 4 , Chiffchaff 2 , Goldcrest 3, and Lesser Redpoll 1.

3 of the controlled birds wore foreign rings:- 2 from France and 1 from Portugal. Our furthest British control was a Goldcrest originally ringed during 2014 in the Highlands of Scotland (622km distance).



All controls ever recorded at Stanford Reservoir can be found at http://www.stanfordrg.org.uk/srg_controls.html

Recoveries

This year we received 32 recoveries of Stanford ringed birds, this is one for every 235 birds ringed There were 3 foreign recoveries:- 2 in France and 1 in Portugal (hopefully we will hear of more during the coming months).

The best British recoveries in 2015 we have received to date include a Chiffchaff to Fair Isle (we have now had birds recorded at all 3 official Scottish Bird Observatories in the past 2 years - our most recent being 792km distance!) A Lesser Redpoll was also recovered in Scotland at Morar for the second consecutive year suggesting that this particular bird breeds locally there. Other interesting recoveries have been a Sedge Warbler recovered 14 days after ringing in France on the early date of 3rd August. A Reed Warbler returned to Stanford after being recovered last year in France during September. The other two interesting recoveries were of finches caught during their autumn movements. A Greenfinch that was found near Ipswich during the breeding season and a Goldfinch that was caught in Surrey some 12 days after being ringed in late November.

All recoveries ever recorded at Stanford Reservoir can be found at http://www.stanfordrg.org.uk/srg_recovs.html

Oldest Birds Retrapped in 2015

Ring number	Species	Date Ringed	Latest Retrap	Age
T179169	Garden Warbler	02-Jul-05	08-Aug-15	10y 1m 5d
T682272	Chaffinch	29-Jul-06	25-May-15	8y 9m 26d
T682485	Chaffinch	14-Apr-07	22-Nov-15	8y 7m 9d
X247748	Garden Warbler	09-Aug-08	15-Aug-15	7y 0m 6d
CW04277	Blackbird	05-Sep-09	06-Aug-15	5y 11m 30d
X248441	Chaffinch	02-Aug-09	04-May-15	5y 9m 1d
X248778	Reed Bunting	28-Sep-09	27-Jun-15	5y 8m 28d
V733190	Reed Bunting	14-Aug-09	04-May-15	5y 8m 19d
X248545	Great Tit	12-Sep-09	25-May-15	5y 8m 11d
X248634	Chaffinch	19-Sep-09	07-May-15	5y 7m 17d
X248996	Chaffinch	13-Oct-09	09-Apr-15	5y 5m 26d
L430118	Blue Tit	18-Oct-10	13-Dec-15	5y 1m 24d
V733767	Dunnock	24-Apr-10	25-May-15	5y 0m 31d
V733684	Reed Bunting	03-Apr-10	18-Apr-15	5y 0m 15d
V734268	Garden Warbler	03-Jul-10	05-Jul-15	5y 0m 2d
V733757	Tree Sparrow	24-Apr-10	12-Apr-15	4y 11m 18d
X774602	Reed Warbler	19-Aug-10	31-Jul-15	4y 11m 11d
X774120	Garden Warbler	24-Jul-10	05-Jul-15	4y 11m 11d
P697446	Reed Warbler	18-Jul-10	26-Jun-15	4y 11m 9d
V734208	Garden Warbler	26-Jun-10	25-May-15	4y 10m 28d
V734070	Reed Bunting	17-Jun-10	16-May-15	4y 10m 28d
L430391	Great Tit	08-Mar-11	24-Nov-15	4y 8m 17d
X775421	Dunnock	05-Oct-10	06-Jun-15	4y 8m 31d
L430556	Blackcap	28-Apr-11	15-Sep-15	4y 4m 19d
L879006	Dunnock	16-Jul-11	28-Nov-15	4y 4m 14d
DNK885	Treecreeper	02-Jul-11	15-Oct-15	4y 3m 14d
L431014	Linnet	04-Jun-11	29-Aug-15	4y 2m 26d
DXE018	Long-tailed Tit	06-Aug-11	31-Oct-15	4y 2m 26d
LB15669	Blackbird	07-Jun-11	13-Aug-15	4y 2m 7d
L430709	Reed Bunting	25-Apr-11	27-Jun-15	4y 2m 3d
L880987	Robin	03-Oct-11	26-Nov-15	4y 1m 23d
L431134	Whitethroat	09-Jun-11	31-Jul-15	4y 1m 21d
L431577	Garden Warbler	25-Jun-11	09-Jul-15	4y 0m 15d
L430815	Reed Warbler	17-Jun-11	27-Jun-15	4y 0m 11d
L430833	Reed Warbler	17-Jun-11	27-Jun-15	4y 0m 11d

- Garden Warbler (T179169) was ringed as an adult female on 2nd July 2005 and has been subsequently retrapped 14 times and during each year except 2006 & 2007. The retrap on 8th August 2015 broke the national longevity record at 10 years, 1 month and 5 days.
- Tree Sparrow (V733757) became the oldest recorded at Stanford at 4 years, 11 months and 18 days. Originally ringed as an adult on 24th April 2010 the bird was retrapped on 12th April 2015.
- A female Linnet (L431014) retrapped on 29th August 2015 was originally ringed at Stanford as an adult on 4th June 2011 (4 years, 2 months and 26 days).
- Stock Dove (EL13476) ringed as an adult on 23rd April 2012 was retrapped 6th June 2015 at 3 years, 1 month and 12 days.

Unusual or uncommon species at Stanford Reservoir during 2015

A **Bittern** was observed walking along a footpath on the Northants side on 29th Nov. Singles of **Little Egrets** were noted on 1st Jan, 4th Apr & 25th Sept with two present on 10th July and its rarer and larger cousin a **Great White Egret** stayed till dusk on 1st Nov. Three **Pink-footed Geese** visited on three occasions during January and a single female **Shelduck** was seen on 1st Jan and again on 15th Sept. A pair of **Garganey** stayed for a period, the male displayed from 17th May but not seen again after 11th June. A maximum of seven **Red-crested Pochards** including six males were seen on 25th Oct and a first winter female **Scaup** was present from 4th to 12th Dec. A drake **Smew** was notable on 21st Dec. The first **Osprey** of the year was on 20th May with further records of singles on 15th June, 15th July & 22nd Aug. Singles of **Red Kites** were seen on numerous occasions during June, August and October and a male **Marsh Harrier** was recorded on 1st May. A male **Hen Harrier** was seen over fields between the reservoir and Kilworth Golf Course on 27th Dec. The first **Hobby** of the year was recorded on 20th April and three were together on 25th July. Single **Merlins** were present during the early winter months of January and February and again during October, November and December. **Peregrines** sightings were few with only three seen throughout the year. **Water Rails** were seen or heard in both the early and late periods of the year with pairs noted on 1st Feb, 6th April & 13th Dec. Waders included a pair of **Oystercatchers** present from 7th Mar till they were last seen accompanied by a juvenile on 10th July. A calling **Avocet** circled the reservoir before flying off on 2nd Oct and singles of **Dunlin** were noted on 18th May, 3rd June, 25th July & 5th Sept. A **Temminck's Stint** and a **Sanderling** on 18th May were both notable and single **Redshanks** were seen on 13th June & 19th July. Several records of single **Green Sandpipers** were logged between 1st Jan & 28th Aug and an estimated seventy **Black-tailed Godwits** briefly settled on the dam before departing on 8th July before a single was observed heading east on 19th July. The only **Woodcock** was a single seen on the morning of the Ringing Groups sponsored birdwatch on 29th Dec and ten **Snipe** was a maximum count on 22nd Sept with further count of five on 5th Nov. Gulls included a first-winter **Mediterranean Gull** on 11th Jan and an adult on 16th Nov. An adult **Caspian Gull** stayed from 25th Oct till 13th Dec and a first-winter was picked out of the roost on 21st Dec. Single adult **Yellow-legged Gulls** were present in the roost throughout the winter periods with two seen on 11th Jan. Two **Kittiwakes** were reported on 20th Nov, a single **Arctic Tern** passed through on 30th April and a **Black Tern** on 15th Sept was noteworthy. Stanford experienced its best year for **Cuckoos** in 2015 with the first male being reported on 22nd April. In previous years males have passed through Stanford on migration without stopping but two males stayed throughout the summer months with one or more calling females in attendance of which one was trapped and ringed on



Tree Pipit



Cuckoo

23rd May. **Barn Owls** were recorded all year with a pair present on 9th May and as many as three **Short-eared Owls** hunted over nearby set-aside during December. Although not at Stanford but a good record nevertheless was a **Wryneck** observed 'anting' on nearby Cold Ashby Road just south-west of Stanford on 20th Sept. A single **Tree Pipit** was trapped and ringed on the Leicestershire side on 22nd Aug. Five records of single **White Wagtails** were noted during March & April and three records of single **Yellow Wagtails** during April, May and September. **Common Redstarts** seemed to have a good year. An adult female with a brood-patch was trapped and ringed on 5th July followed by eight juveniles also trapped and ringed throughout September and a further adult female on 9th September. Since all of the juveniles had completed their post-juvenile moult it is difficult to ascertain whether they are the result of local breeding or merely post-breeding dispersal from areas further afield. **Common Redstarts**, in the past, have bred within Stanford Hall estate so the possibility of local breeding cannot be ruled out. A juvenile male **Whinchat** trapped and ringed on 17th Sept was only the second since 1981 and up to three **Stonechats** were observed on a field to the rear of the inlet settling pond during December with a male near the outflow on 7th Mar. Warblers included a juvenile **Grasshopper Warbler** trapped and ringed on 11th Sept. **Cetti's Warbler** is a species which we are striving to encourage breeding at Stanford Reservoir as we consider the habitat, if managed correctly, perfect for this scrub-dweller. 2015 saw the first confirmed **Cetti's Warblers** breeding at Stanford Reservoir. Adults were noted calling during the winter months in the reedbed on the Leicestershire side before eventually moving in Blower's Lodge Bay, Northants in mid-March. Two individuals were heard defending territory after a second male moved into the same area in April. Ringing captures included a single adult male, three adult females and five newly fledged juveniles from two separate broods. On 12th Oct an '**Eastern**' **Lesser Whitethroat** was extracted from one of the mist-nets. Loose feather samples were sent away for DNA analysis which later confirmed it to be of the sub-species Blythi, the first confirmed record for Northamptonshire. Stanfords second **Yellow-browed Warbler** in five years was ringed on 12th Oct and two female **Firecrests** were ringed on 9th & 20th Oct. A juvenile male **Pied Flycatcher** trapped and ringed on 24th Aug was a new and long awaited species for Stanford. Two **Spotted Flycatchers** were observed in the apple trees in Blowers Bay on 29th Aug, a single was trapped and ringed on 1st Sept and another reported on 13th of Sept. **Marsh Tits** were recorded in singles on 11th Jan, 1st Mar & 24th June. **Willow Tits**, also noted singularly, were recorded on far more occasions with eleven sightings throughout the year. Reports of **Ravens** seem to be getting more regular in recent years with pairs seen on 25th Jan, 27th Oct & 31st Oct and three were together on 29th Aug & 20th Sept. Finches included fourteen **Bramblings** feeding with **Chaffinches** in a field south of the dam on 17th Oct and three were noted on 5th Dec. Movements of **Siskins** during the late summer months into autumn were observed with parties of seven on 13th Sept and sixteen on 17th Oct.

Miscellaneous Group Activities

Moths, Butterflies and Dragonflies

Moths

Trying to balance bird ringing, moth-trapping and favourable weather doesn't always work out the way one would like so once again we only managed to organise two overnight moth-trapping sessions which were both followed by a full morning of bird ringing. With the discovery of the introduced plant **Orange Balsam** growing along the margins of the reservoir we decided that we would try and see what species we would catch in the area. Knowing that **Balsam Carpet** had not yet been recorded in Northamptonshire had of course totally influenced our decision to set the moth-trap there so on 5th June David and I set up the trap in the dam carpark with the aim of adding a new species to the Northants county moth list! Although we failed to capture our target species the catch was fair in size and as follows:

Poplar Hawkmoth 1, Flame Shoulder 3, Small Square-spot 10, Lead-coloured Drab 1, Rustic Shoulder-knot 18, Brown Rustic 3, Setaceous Hebrew Character 3, White Ermine 1, Clouded-bordered Brindle 2, Heart and Dart 2, Chocolate Tip 1, Silver-ground Carpet 3, Green Carpet 2, Buff Ermine 1

Our second session was on the Leicestershire side as we had planned to ring in the reedbed the following morning so on 26th June David and I set the moth-trap in a grass margin running up to the reedbed. When checking the trap in the morning it quickly became apparent that the generator had stopped prematurely due to a probable fuel blockage and so the catch was as follows:

Drinker 2, Burnished Brass 2, Straw Dot 2, Brown Rustic 2, Plain Golden Y 1, Marbled Minor 2

Other species recorded during daytime were **Clouded Silver, Six-spotted Burnet** and **Yellowshell**.

Butterflies

Only eighteen butterfly species were recorded at Stanford during 2015. Early species were delayed by the cold and late spring with just two **Commas** braving the elements on the 22nd Mar. As the weather warmed **Peacock, Orange Tip** and **Small Tortoiseshell** all followed on the 6th April with **Brimstone** two days later on the 8th April. April also saw the first appearance of **Green-veined White** on the 18th, **Small White** and **Speckled Wood** both on the 25th. June emergences included **Large Skipper** and **Common Blue** on the 7th followed by **Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Small Skipper, Red Admiral, Large White** and **Painted Lady** on the 27th. Several **Essex Skippers** were noted on the 4th July and last but not least **Gatekeeper** on the 15th July.

Dragons, Damsels, Darters and Skimmers

2015 was a very good year for dragonfly recorders with just one species, **Beautiful Demoiselle**, missing from the list of species reported.

Emerald Damselfly was the first reported species to emerge on 11th May and by 23rd May there were 100's on the wing. 1000's of **Common Blue Damselflies** were joined by two

Banded Demoiselles on 7th June with a further count of c210 of the latter species on 30th June. A **Hairy Dragonfly** was extracted from a mist-net on 8th June and an additional three males were recorded on 30th June. The first **Emperor** was a female seen on 25th June with ten counted on 30th June and the first **Black-tailed Skimmer** was seen on 27th June with a maximum of fourteen also seen on 30th June. A **White-Legged Damselfly**, three **Large Red Damselflies**, seven **Blue-Tailed Damselflies**, c40 **Azure Damselflies**, 20+ **Red-Eyed Damselflies**, six **Brown Hawkers**, a single **Broad-bodied Chaser** and three **Four-Spotted Chasers** were all recorded on the same day in late June. **Southern Hawkers** first made an appearance on 16th July followed by **Migrant Hawker**, **Ruddy Darter** and **Common Darter** on 25th July.

The Team

Two new people joined Stanford Ringing Group this year. Peter Norrie and Max Rayner both joined as trainees to compliment our existing trainee, Jo Underwood. Good luck to you all in the coming year. One of our previous trainees left this year to set up a business. Simon did return during October to film us (in action so to speak) both for use in his new venture and for us to sell to help group funding. Simon made an excellent job of the film and his efforts are now available for a donation of £5 plus p&p. The film, 'Ringers in the Mist' is a must see!

Our two 'C' ringers, Dawn Sheffield and Dave Neal, continue to make steady progress. Mike Haigh (who now lives in wet and windy Wales) continues to oversee our web site. This year due to lots of wet and windy weather towards the end of the year, Mike had time to add maps to our ringing Recoveries and Controls which has added a new dimension to them. Adam Homer continues to be our Nest Recorder / Group Secretary / Trainer and myself Mick Townsend as Group Leader/ Ringer-in-Charge / Trainer.

Finally, in 2015, financial pressures ensured we undertook a Sponsored Bird Watch over the Xmas period. The event was a great effort with some 65 species seen including Short eared Owl and Merlin. We managed to raise £616 towards the cost of ringing and bird food at Stanford Reservoir. A brilliant effort, well done!

Again, many thanks to all of our group members and those who turned up to assist us during the year as, without your commitment, we could not carry on.