

Stanford Ringing Group

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Safari Ride

Winter



Summer



Church Ride

Winter



Summer



Forward and Summary for 2023 by the Group Leader

What a great year we have had again! Last year's bird numbers were unprecedented, but amazingly we have managed to exceed the total, despite terrible weather. July through to December was recorded as the wettest on record and if that wasn't bad enough, we had to contend with strong and persistent wind from the west as well. Despite all of this, we managed to ring 13,482 birds of 58 species. No new species were encountered this year and, along with some glaring omissions of species that were not encountered, this resulted in a relatively low species count.

The annual scrub bash started the year off, running from January till the end of March. If anybody would like to help we are always glad of it, as the more area we can cover the better the site will become. Some of the results of our work can be seen on the front cover. Ringing started in early April as usual but by the end of June we had only ringed 1,065 birds, which is very poor for us, when you consider we had our second best year for both Blue and Great tit pulli, with some 522 young ringed. The next four months produced some 11,558 new birds, with again a poor final two months producing only 824 birds.

Our now annual ringing weeks again took place this year in the 3rd week of August and the 2nd week in October. In August we managed 12 consecutive days from Friday 18th till Tuesday 29th, ringing some 3,093 birds including, for the fourth year running, a Wryneck. The October week ran from Saturday 7th till Sunday 15th which was interrupted by poor weather, resulting in only 695 birds with no unusual species.

Warbler numbers were again exceptional with 10,012 birds ringed. This is the first time we have ringed over 10,000 Warblers! A lot of last year's record numbers were broken, with Blackcap again leading the way with a massive 4,463 birds ringed. However the most surprising total of all for me was probably Redstart, with an amazing 59 birds ringed; more than most English Counties, let alone a single site!

Finally I would like to comment on our new tracking system Motus, as it is now up and running after a few teething problems. Adam and Dave received training during September to fit tags of which 10 were deployed on Blackcaps. We were delighted to learn that one of the birds was detected flying past Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory's Motus installation three days later.

Many thanks to all our ringers, birders and helpers that put in many hours at Stanford Reservoir, both helping the ringing effort and observing the many species that can be observed here. Without you all this just would not happen.

MJTownsend (Group Leader/Ringer in Charge) 18/01/24

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Thanks

- Thanks again to Severn Trent Water (STW) for allowing access to their land for ringing and for financial support of our activities. Thanks in particular to Ian Martindale our ranger and to Briony Harrison, conservation manager at STW.
- Thanks also to Parker Farms for allowing us to use the railtrack which provides access to the reservoir and for their annual financial support. Thanks again for allowing us to camp out during the annual migration festival in August.
- We are very grateful to the individuals who have supported the group financially during the year, including Peter Bateup, Alan Herbert, Chris Hubbard, Bryan McCallion and Ken Reeves, and to the Loughborough Naturalist Club.
- Thanks to all group members who contributed their photos to the annual report.

Introduction to bird ringing at Stanford Reservoir

Birds have been ringed at Stanford Reservoir since 1976. The full story of the ringing and associated wildlife activities can be found on the group's website at www.stanfordrg.org.uk. A blog is maintained which gives an account of our activities throughout the year. It can be found at: <http://stanfordrg.blogspot.com/>



KEM ringing and processing 2023's Wryneck

Most birds were trapped using mist-nets, with occasional use of traps for specialist species such as Meadow Pipit. Most sessions were conducted from dawn until approximately midday. A feeding station is supplied and maintained on a weekly basis in Blower's Lodge Bay with seed, nuts and fat balls. Another is maintained in the Leicestershire Paddock by our birding colleagues.

By law, wild bird ringing in the UK is licensed by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The procedures of the BTO's *Ringers' Manual* (2001) were followed throughout to secure the welfare of the birds. All extraction, ringing and recording was carried out by group members who are either ringers licensed by the BTO, or are trainees under their direct supervision. All data were entered into the BTO's data manager IPMR and were submitted electronically to the BTO.

Totals for 2023

Global Summary:

58 species of bird were ringed.

- A total of **13,447** new birds were ringed.
- A total of **1,947** birds were recaptured.
- A total of **46** birds ringed elsewhere were controlled at Stanford.

Therefore the total number of birds processed by the Stanford Ringing Group in 2023 is **15,440**

Annual numbers ringed over the last decade

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
7,519	7,537	8,207	7,385	6,606	8,377	9,311	8,312	13,393	13,447

Most Commonly Ringed in 2023:

Blackcap (4,468), Whitethroat (1,241), Chiffchaff (1,104), Sedge Warbler (919), Willow Warbler (861) and Reed Warbler (782).

The Ringing Year

New birds ringed per month in 2023

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Conservation work			Ringing								
0	0	0	113	626	326	1,146	5,048	4,069	1,295	427	397

Conservation work ('scrub bashing') is carried out from the first of January until the beginning of April, when the first migrants return and nest building begins. An illustration of what this activity achieves can be seen on the cover of this report.

At the end of August, we had our fourth annual festival to celebrate migration, with 12 consecutive ringing mornings, plus our second week of ringing every morning in the second week of October, a rarity hotspot!

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza continues to affect birds in the UK. Fortunately for the SRG, no noticeable effects were found in our passerines, as it largely affects waterfowl and other sea birds. However, extra precautions were employed from summer onwards, as per BTO policies.

Most ringing took place at five sites:

- **Paddock:** Ranged along the Leics shore of the reservoir, it consists mainly of scrub, willow and shoreline.
- **Leicestershire Reed Bed:** A medium size reed bed, accessed beyond the Paddock.
- **Point:** Mix of reed bed, woodland and scrub on Northants side, situated at the end of the line of poplars, a conspicuous landmark at Stanford.
- **Railtrack:** Again in Northants, gives entry to **Blower's Bay** at the east side of the reservoir. Gives access to approximately 15 net rides. Access is by courtesy of Parker Farms.
- **Top Road:** Two lines of nets along the approach road to the reservoir, an area with beech mast to attract finches and tits

For part of the year, access to sites becomes limited due to waterlogging, so the Railtrack is the main site for autumn into winter.

Tree Sparrow, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler and Whitethroat populations were monitored as part of the BTO's Ringing for Adult Survival (RAS) census. The nest box ringing team was led by our Secretary, AGH, and added large numbers of ringed pulli to the annual totals, specifically regarding our Owls, Doves, Swallows and Tits.

Annual Species Accounts: Key

- **Figures in brackets and bold** show increase or decrease over a 10 year average for all species, where the 10 year average is greater or equal to 10.
- **Bar charts** show breeding birds numbers ringed at Stanford over a period of 10 years, for which the 10 year average number of birds ringed is greater or equal to 10.
- Names in **red** show best ever or best equal year for species
- Names in **blue** show second best
- Names in **green** show third best

Retrapped birds from previous years: The number given for retraps shows the number of birds ringed in previous years, which were re-caught and processed in 2023.

- **Non Passerines**

All the main non passerines were present this year bolstered by a Woodcock, the first since 2004. The use of Potter Traps resulted in four out of the five mallard present, and AGH ringed all 15 Common Tern, the highest count ever! Two Wood Pigeon were ringed in the entrance to the Triangle Ride, which was very welcome for a species that can be surprisingly difficult to access. Both species of owls had low totals, but were proof of their continuing presence as breeders at Stanford. As has been the norm in recent years, we particularly enjoyed our 'annual' Wryneck.

Mute Swan

One ringed 29 Jul, one re-trapped from previous years

Mallard

Five ringed; 06 May, two 23 Aug, 11 and one 13 Sep

Sparrowhawk

Two ringed; 26 and 27 Aug



Young male Sparrowhawk

Common Sandpiper

Three ringed; 26 Jun, 01 and 07 Jul

Woodcock

One ringed 20 Nov

Common Tern

15 ringed, all as pulli

Wood Pigeon

Two ringed 07 Jul as pulli

Barn Owl

Two ringed 02 Sep as pulli, one re-trapped from previous years

Tawny Owl

Two ringed 13 May as pulli

Kingfisher

Four ringed; 24 Jun, 19 and 23 Aug, 04 Sep



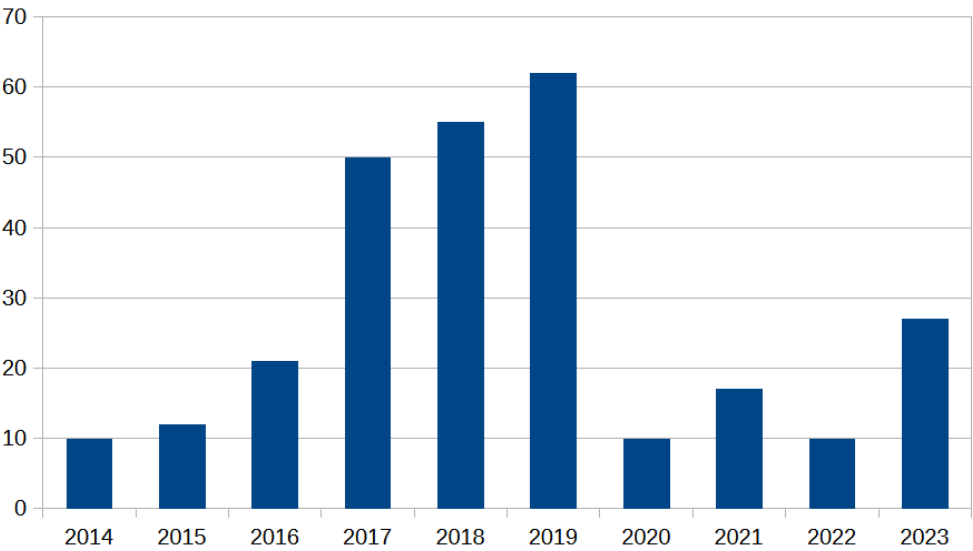
Kingfisher... a few more would have been nice

Stock Dove (-2%)
27 ringed, including 24 pulli



A pair of Stock Dove Pulli

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	1	7	2	6	11	0	0	0



Wryneck

One ringed on 28 Aug



Always a treat- a lovely Wryneck

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Two ringed; 18 Jul and 06 Aug, one re-trapped from previous years

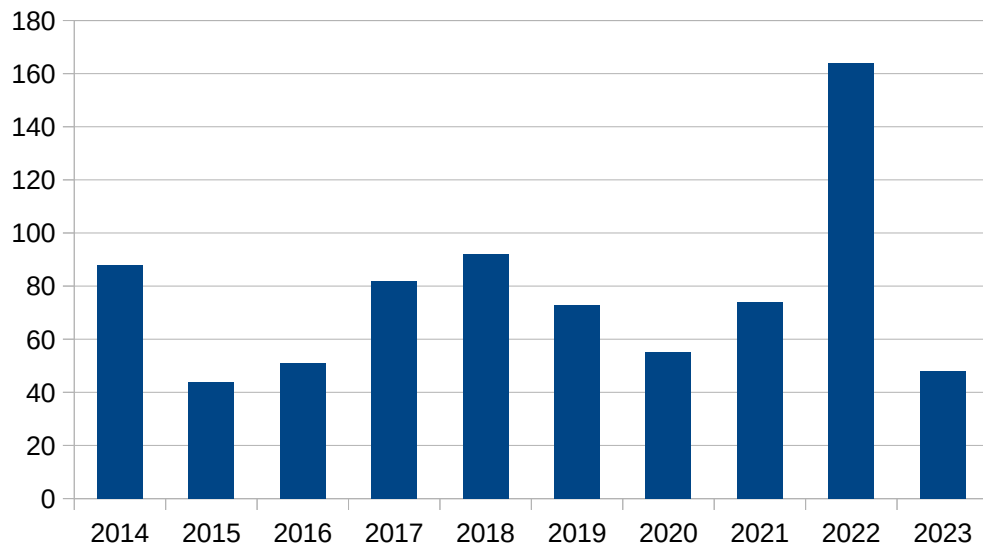
• Hirundines and Swift

The nests in the stables at Park farm again provided the bulk of the Swallows this year, but numbers were down on the 10 year average. Sadly, there were no House Martins (ave= 17) or Sand Martins (ave= 5.6) at all! A poor year, all round.

Swallow (-38%)

48 ringed, including 42 as pulli

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	18	20	1	9	0	0	0



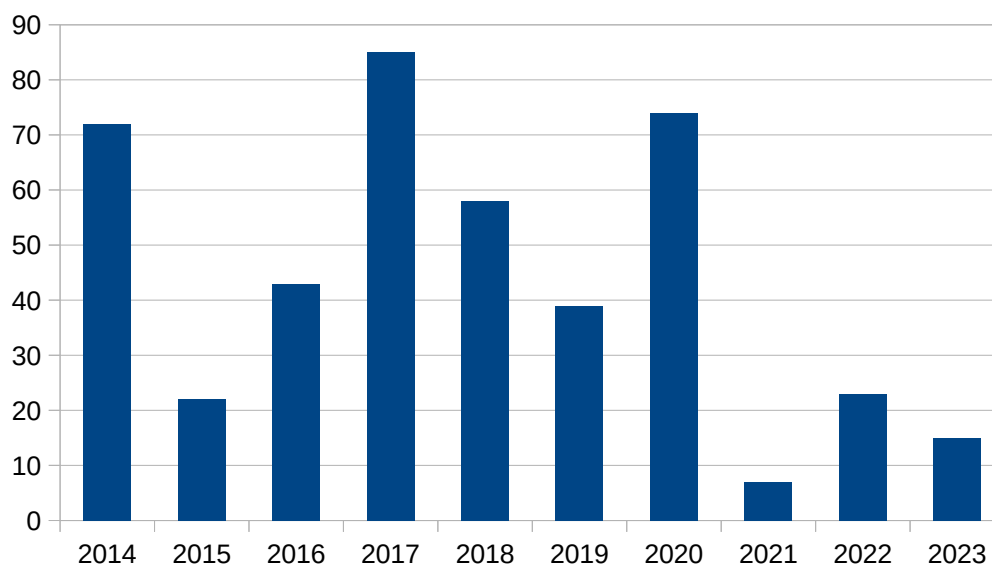
• Larks, Pipits and Wagtails

Meadow Pipits are usually trapped in September, when they readily come to callers, although numbers were poor compared to the 10 year average. An unusual bonus was three Tree Pipits; two on one day! Only 13 Tree Pipits have been ringed at Stanford, all between 20 and 25 of August, clearly a very punctual species. Grey Wagtail continue to be a breeding species as shown by the ringed pulli.

Meadow Pipit (-66%)

15 ringed

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0



Tree Pipit

Three ringed; two 20, one 25 Aug



An unusual sight; two freshly ringed Tree Pipits, note the 'bubble gum pink' feet.

Pied Wagtail

One ringed 22 Nov



Juvenile Pied Wagtail; quite an exciting bird for Stanford

Yellow Wagtail

Four ringed; two 20, one 26 Jul, one 07 Aug

Grey Wagtail

12 ringed, 9 as pulli

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	3	8	0	1	0	0	0	0

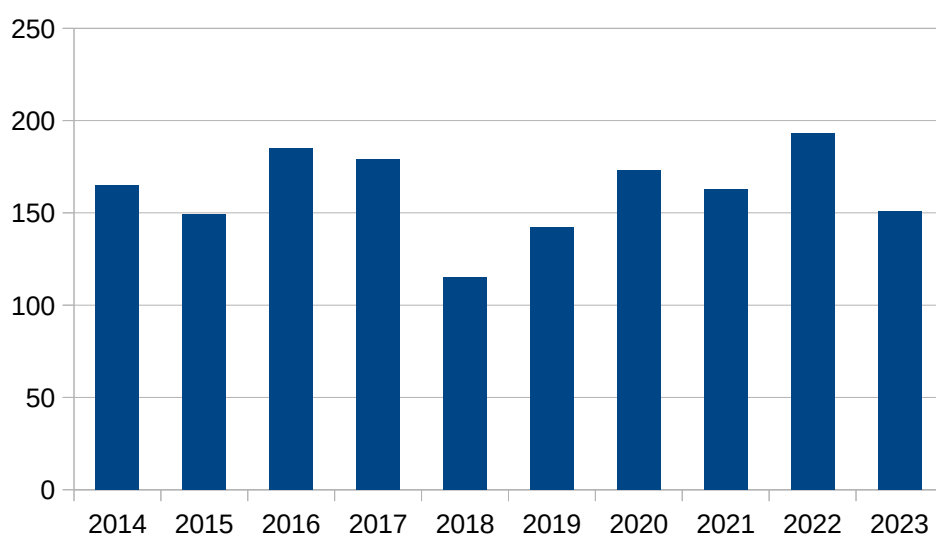
• Wren, Dunnock, Robins and Chats

A good year for our breeding birds. Wren, Dunnock and Robin remain abundant, producing good numbers of youngsters, plus an autumnal influx of migrants. A fabulous year for our migrant chats, with a site record of 59 Redstarts, augmented by a single Whinchat.

Wren (-7%)

151 ringed, 12 re-trapped from previous years

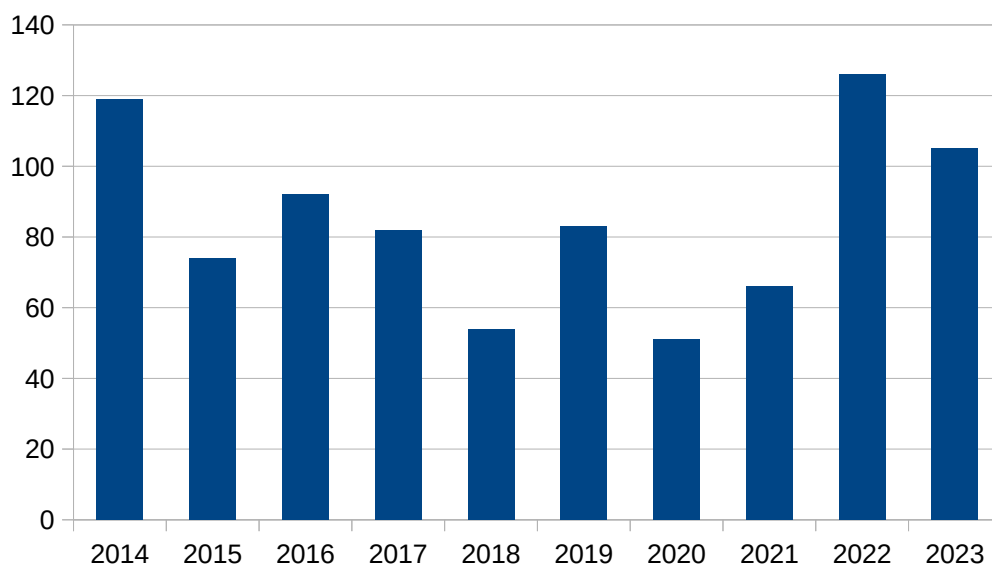
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	8	1	2	38	61	9	27	4	1



Dunnock (+23%)

105 ringed, 32 re-trapped from previous years

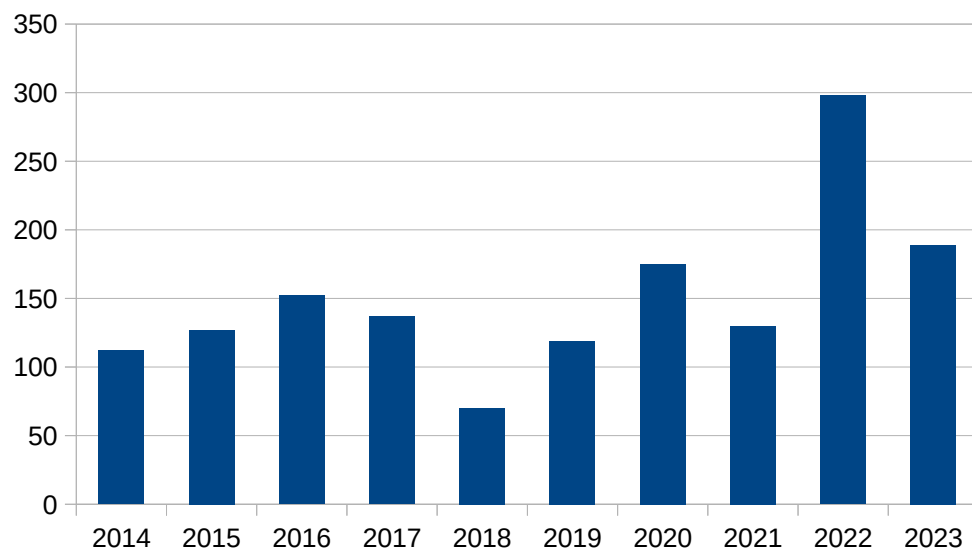
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	6	1	17	44	14	12	6	5	0



Robin (+25%)

189 ringed, 14 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	3	4	22	20	89	34	11	1	5

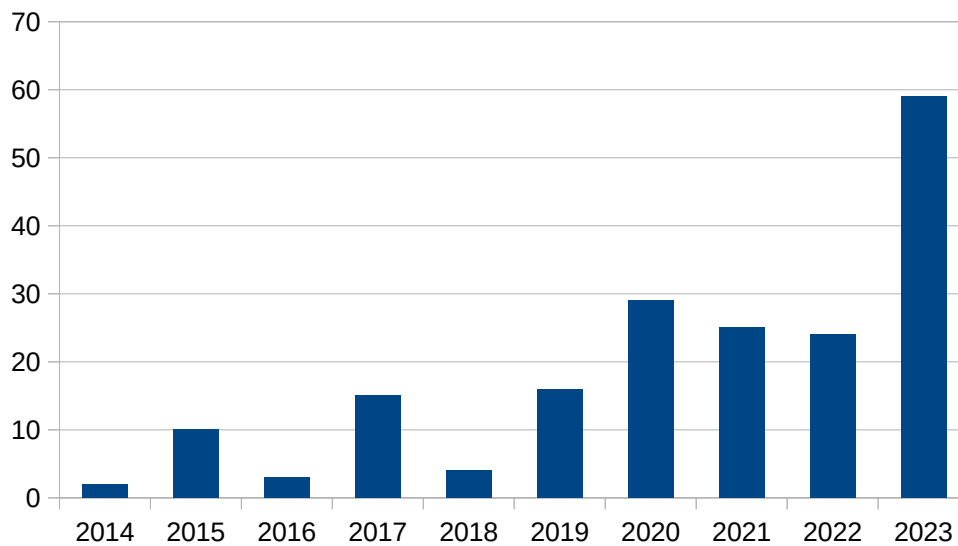
**Redstart (+215%)**

59 ringed

*Perennial ringers' favourites- a lovely pair of Redstarts*

Redstart cont.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	58	0	0	0	0

**Whinchat**

One ringed 27 Aug

*The only Whinchat of the year, a juvenile female*

Spotted Flycatcher
Six ringed



An excellent year for Spotted Flycatchers

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0

- **Thrushes**

An excellent year for thrushes. The resident thrushes have produced good numbers of juveniles; 23 Blackbird, and 14 Song Thrush. Their numbers were augmented by migrants arriving in Autumn, ready to strip the hedgerow berries at Stanford. The single Mistle Thrush pullus was the first ringed at Stanford since 1984! Well done to Steve, one of our birders who spotted the nest. The migrant thrushes, Fieldfare and Redwing were present in good, if not outstanding, numbers.

Mistle Thrush

One ringed as pullus 22 Apr



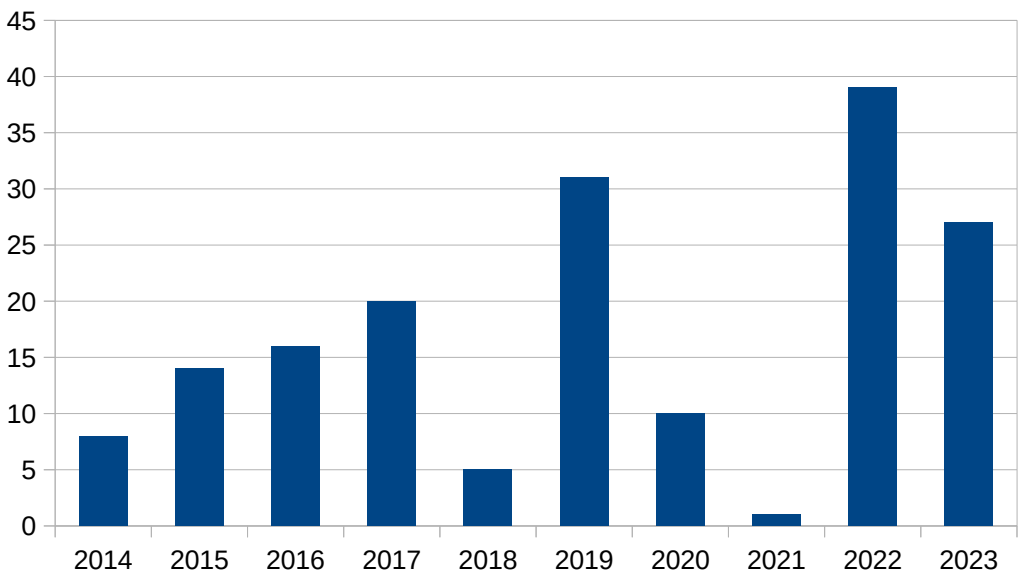
Mistle Thrush nestling, extracted from nest, ringed and promptly returned!

Fieldfare (+58%)
27 ringed



Fieldfare newly arrived from Scandinavia, a harbinger of winter

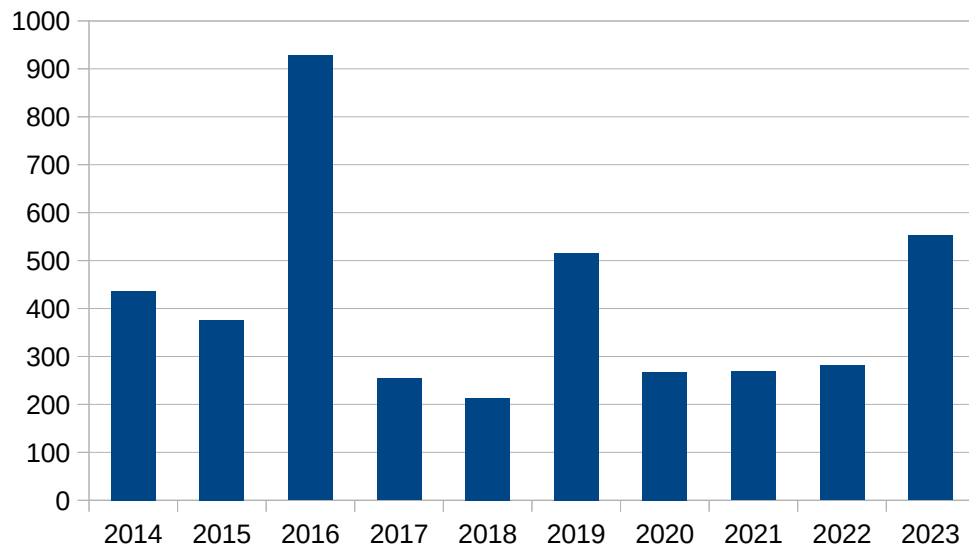
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	15	8



Redwing (+35%)

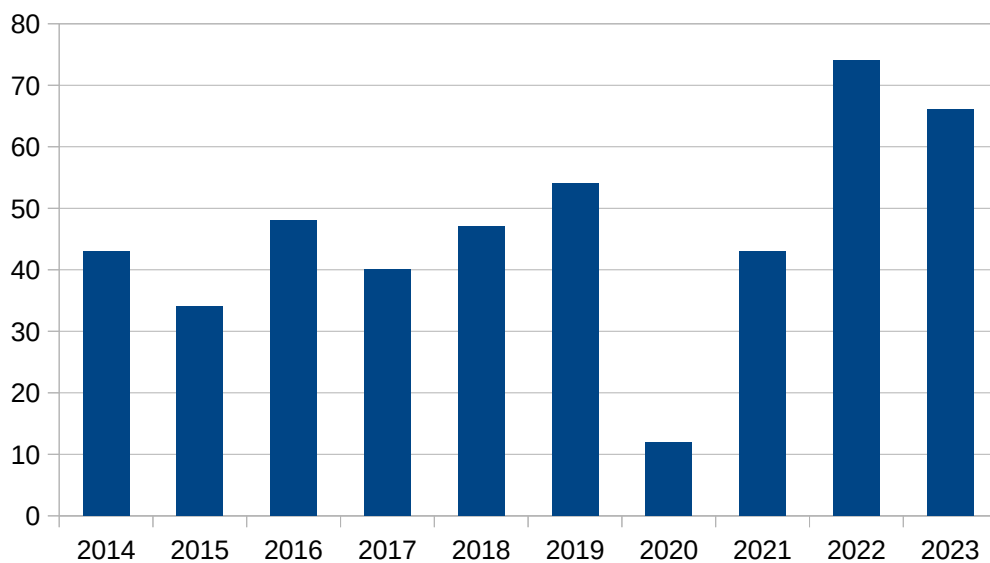
552 ringed, one re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	132	195	225

**Song Thrush (+43%)**

66 ringed, seven re-trapped from previous years

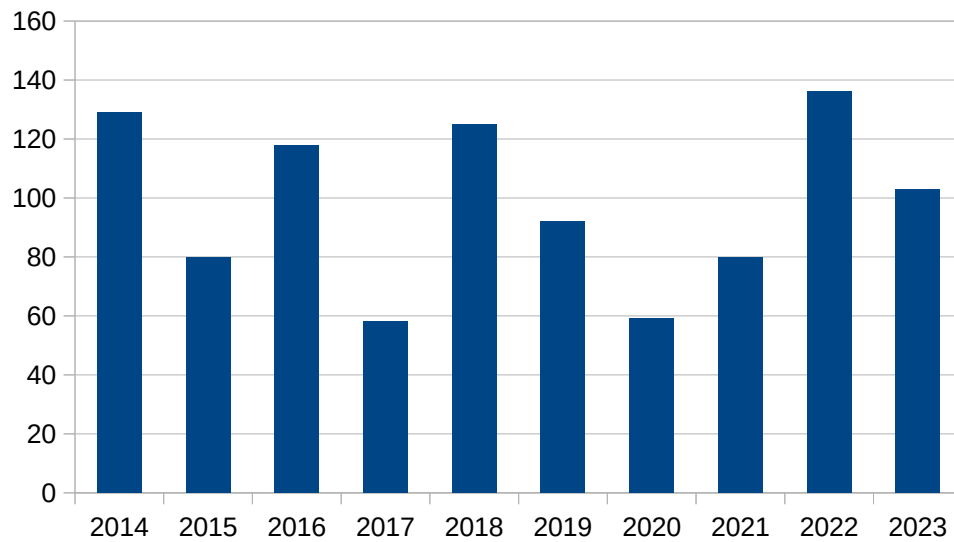
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	3	7	9	14	3	18	9	3



Blackbird (+5%)

103 ringed, 20 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	2	1	5	7	9	4	20	34	21



• Warblers

The SRG manages the ringing sites to promote the scrub that our breeding birds, especially the summer visitors, use to nest and raise their young. It is heartening therefore to see that these efforts continue to be rewarded with excellent numbers of warblers. Last year's report noted '*it was difficult to find the most suitable superlatives to summarise 2022*', this continues to be true for 2023; in fact, it might even be harder.

All the warblers had strong years, well in excess of their 10 year averages. Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat and Willow Warbler all had their best ever year! Of the remainders, Chiffchaff had their second best year, as did our resident Cetti's population. A superb result, let down only by a lack of breeding Grasshopper Warbler, although good numbers did arrive during the autumnal migration.

A female Reed Warbler Z369783 was notable for being the oldest bird captured in 2023, being ringed as an adult in 2016, therefore she is at least eight years old. she has also bred at Stanford for at least four years.

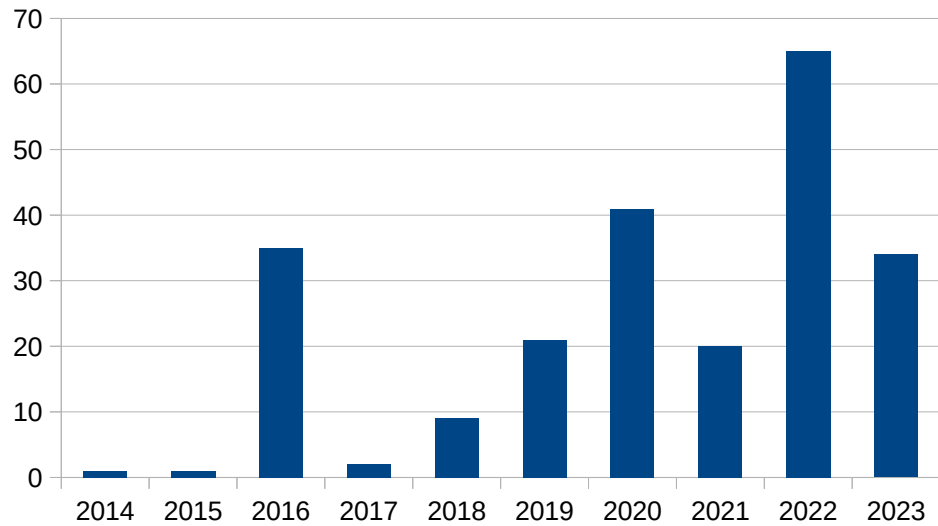
Grasshopper Warbler (+49%)

34 ringed

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	3	0	0	0

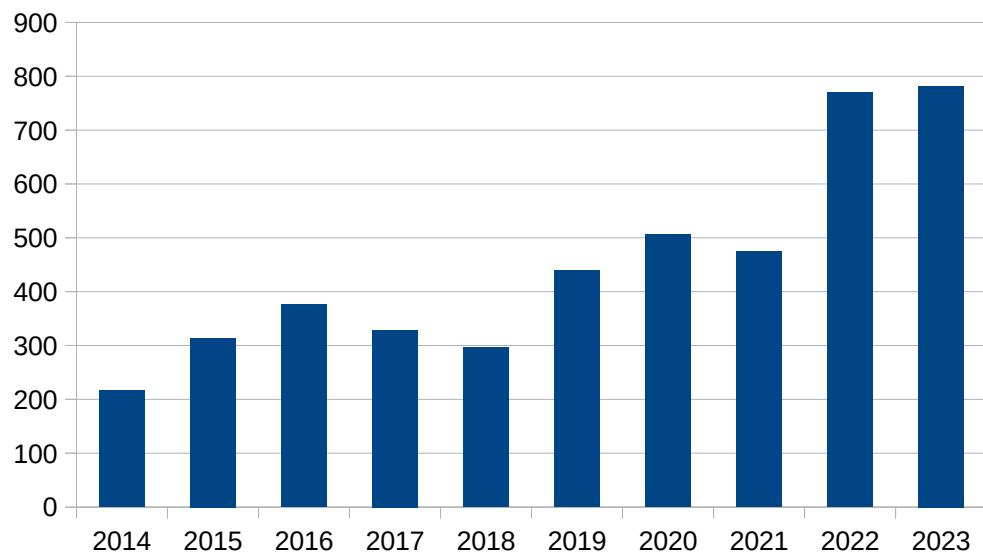


A non breeder this year, fingers crossed for 2024

Grasshopper Warbler cont.**Reed Warbler (+74%)**

782 ringed, 62 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	2	15	26	122	507	107	3	0	0

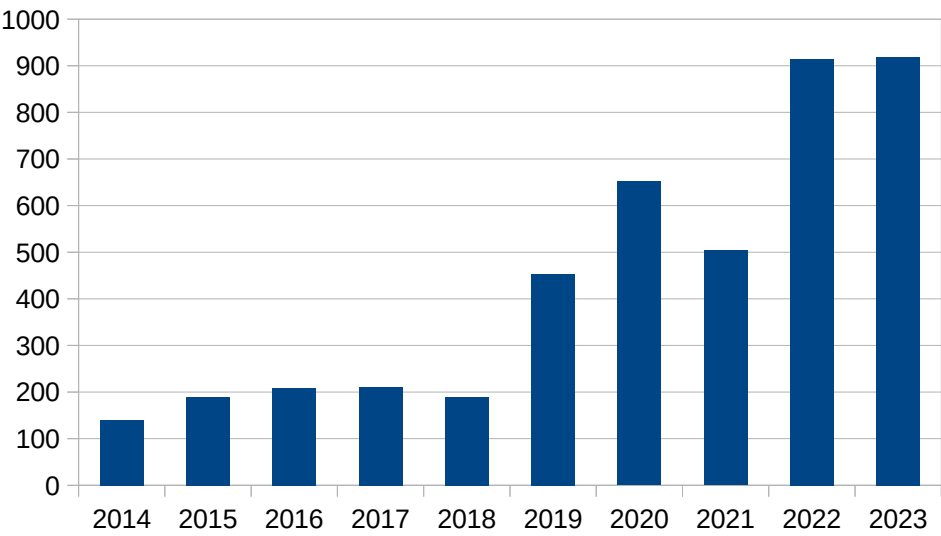


Sedge Warbler (+110%)
919 ringed, 14 re-trapped from previous years



Sedge Warbler, always very welcome

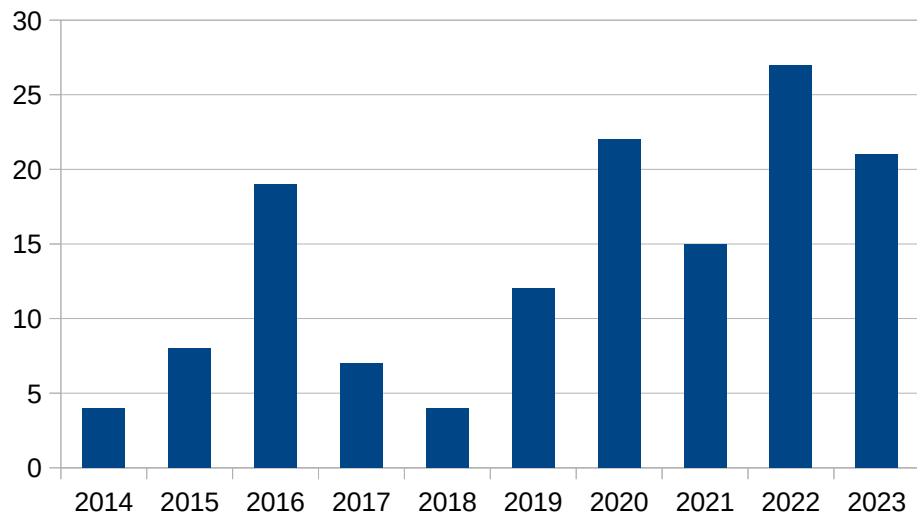
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	4	9	7	107	742	50	0	0	0



Cetti's Warbler (+51%)

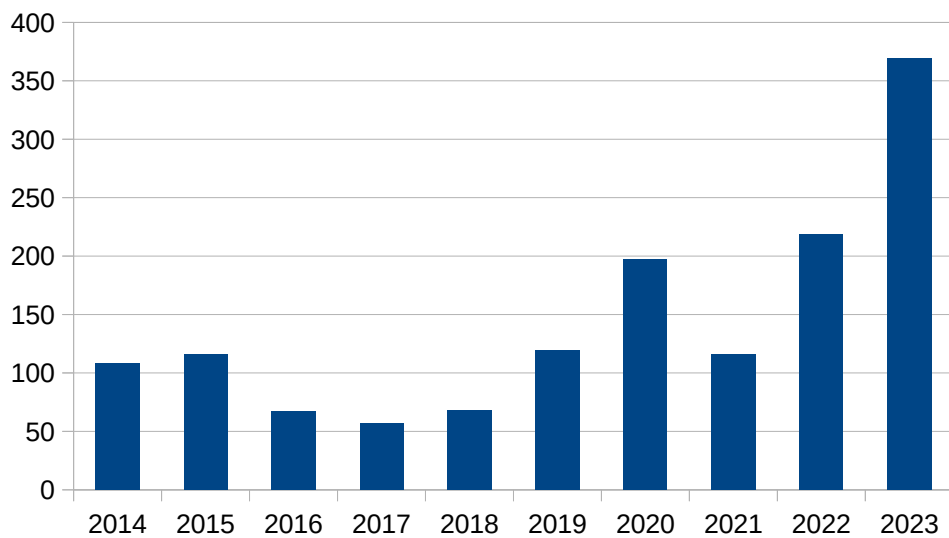
21 ringed, five re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	1	0	12	3	2	3	0	0

**Garden Warbler (+157%)**

369 ringed, 17 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	5	6	80	249	25	4	0	0

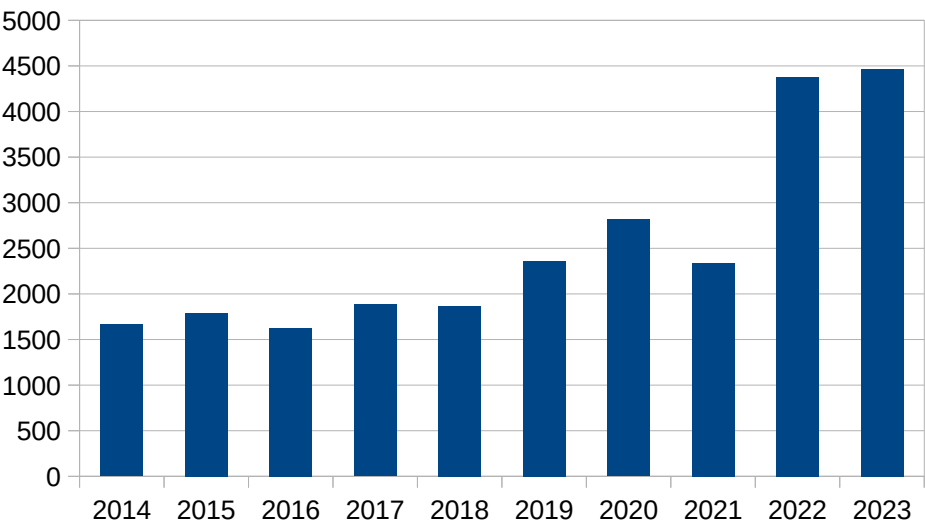


Blackcap (+77%)
4,468 ringed, nine re-trapped from previous years



The most ringed bird every year. A handsome male Blackcap

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	13	13	14	164	1053	2863	346	2	0

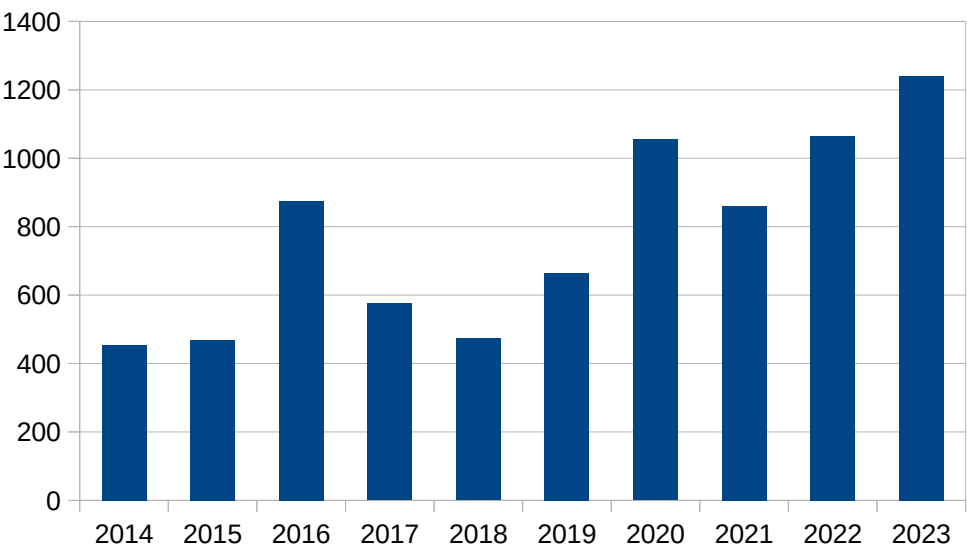


Whitethroat (+60%)
1,241 ringed, 38 re-trapped from previous years



Also common, also handsome; a nice full adult male Whitethroat. What a stonker.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	8	8	31	132	943	119	0	0	0

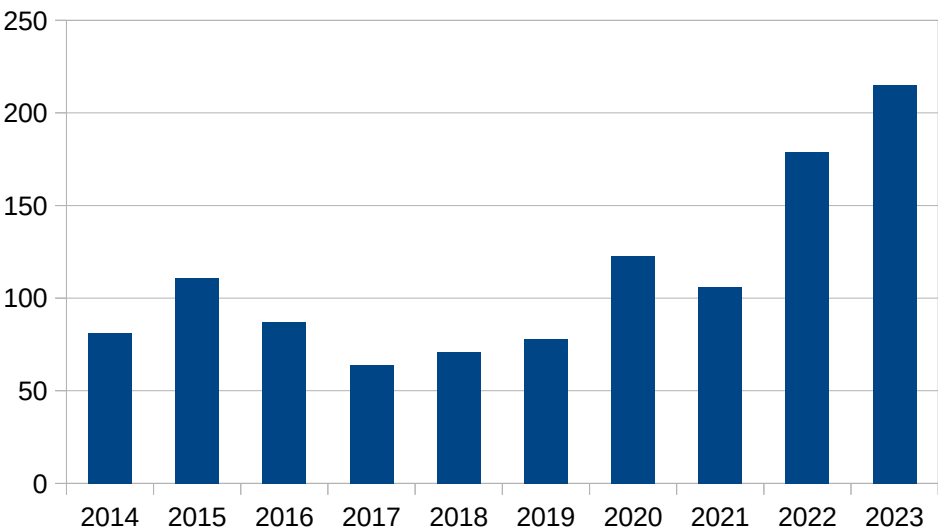


Lesser Whitethroat (+93%)
215 ringed, one re-trapped from previous years



A favourite amongst ringers, a beautiful Lesser Whitethroat

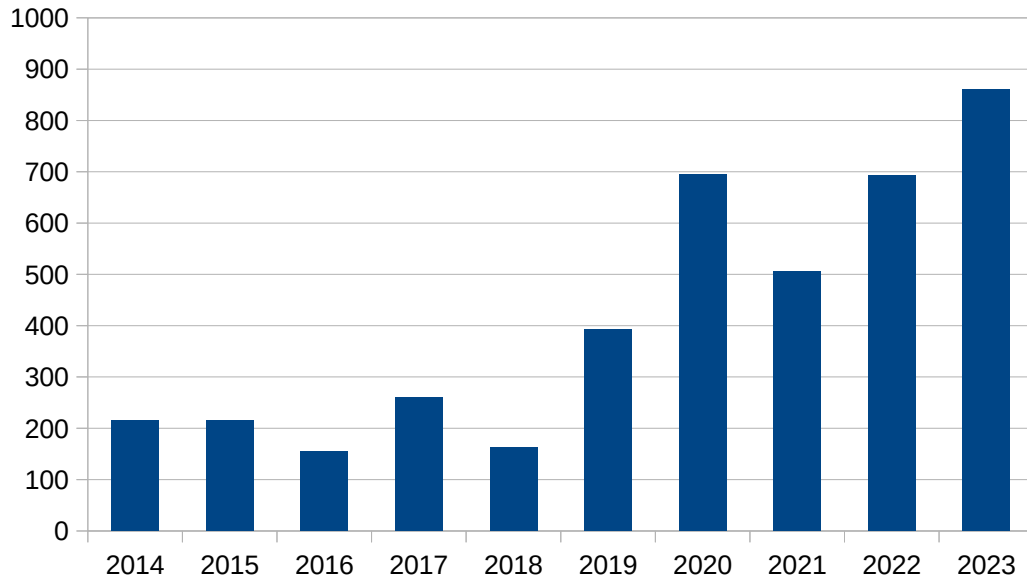
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	4	3	3	15	163	27	0	0	0



Willow Warbler (+107%)

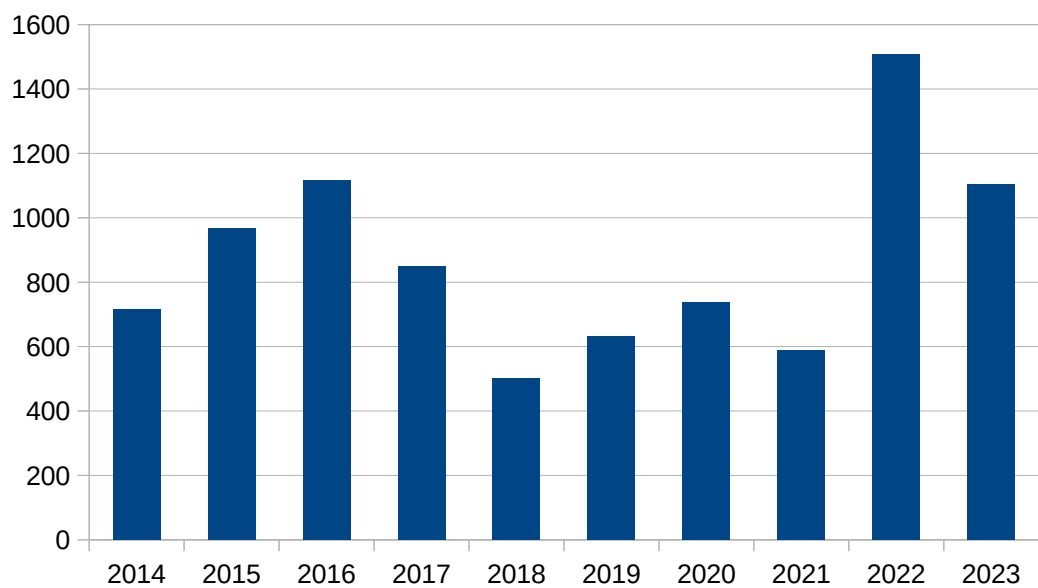
861 ringed, 11 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	2	1	4	36	792	25	1	0	0

**Chiffchaff (+27%)**

1,104 ringed, 16 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	6	9	20	120	98	581	267	1	2



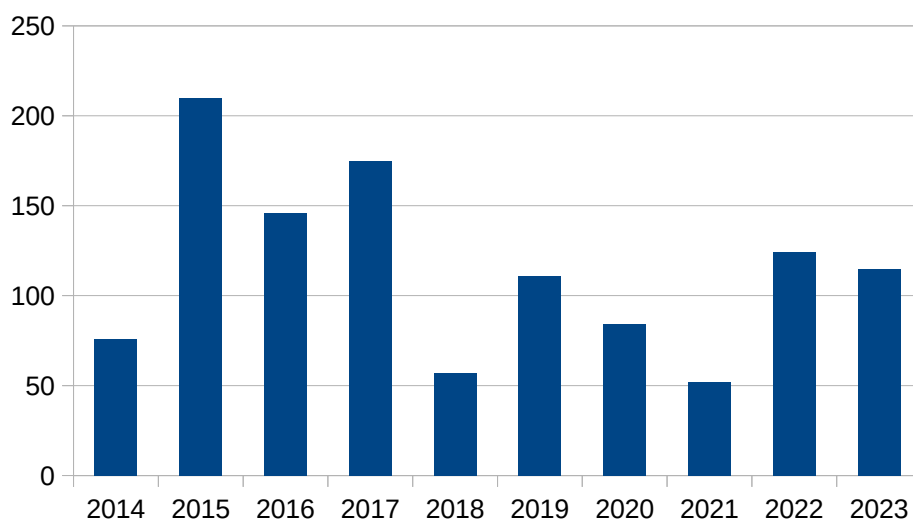
• Crests, Tits and Allies

A very mixed year for this group. Great and Blue Tit continue to breed prolifically at Stanford, their numbers supported by nest boxes and the provision of feeding stations. The other true tits had poor or really dreadful years. The last Marsh Tit was ringed in 2007, the last Willow Tit in 2021, so they really do seem to have been extirpated as breeding species at Stanford. Coal Tit are just hanging on; two were ringed as juveniles in December, which could be due to post breeding dispersion from elsewhere, so there is no real evidence that they are present as a breeding species. On a brighter note, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit and Treecreeper had good years, close to their 10 year averages.

Goldcrest (0%)

115 ringed, one re-trapped from previous years

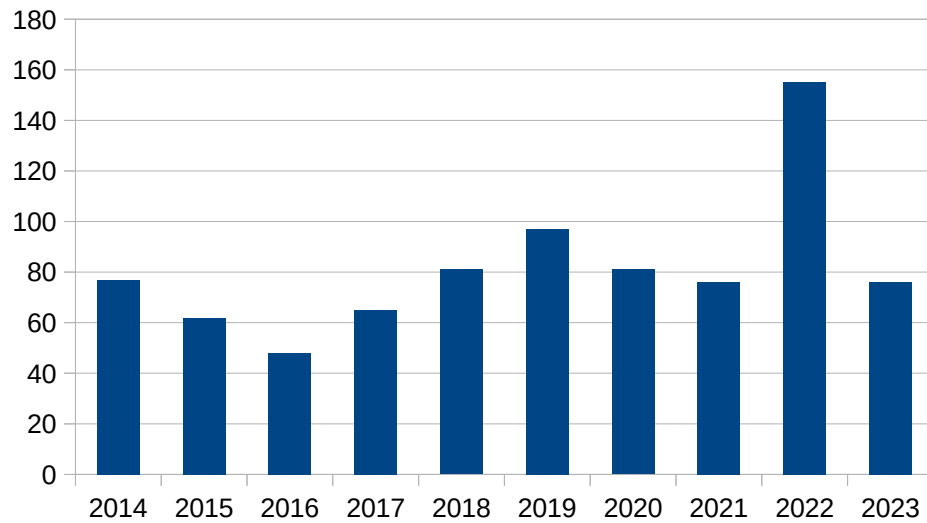
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	27	67	6	2



Long-tailed Tit (-7%)

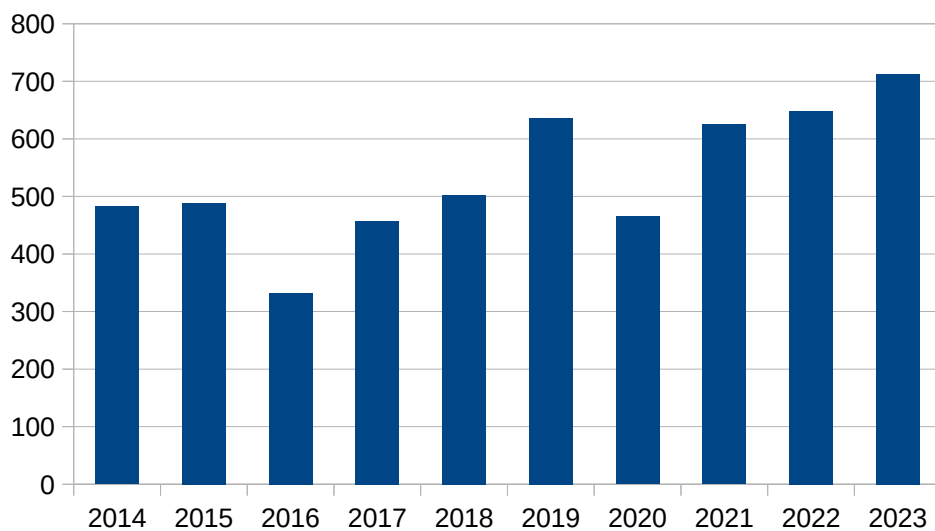
76 ringed, 12 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	6	17	13	17	2	21	0	0

Long-tailed Tit cont.**Blue Tit (+33%)**

713 ringed, including 304 pulli. 78 re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	8	305	38	60	55	82	87	36	42

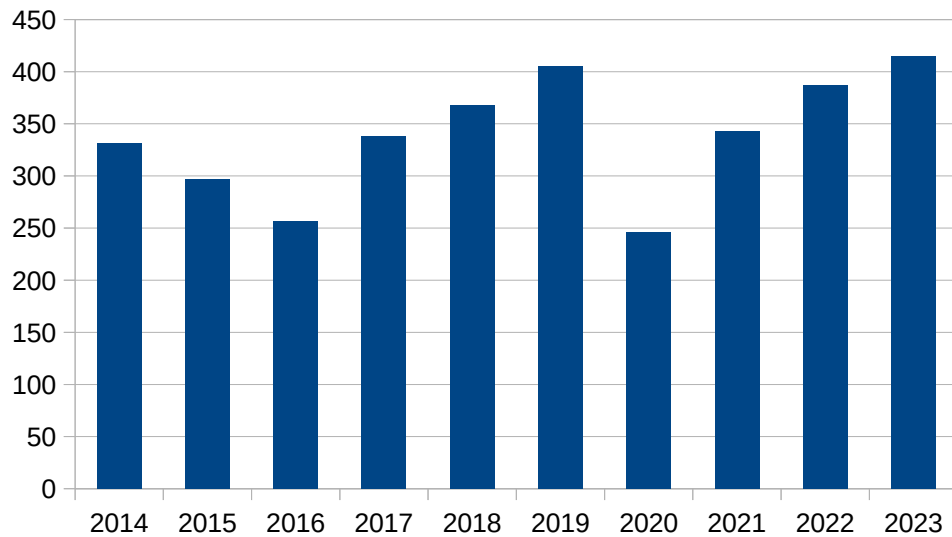
**Coal Tit**

Two ringed 12 and 14 Dec

Great Tit (+22%)

415 ringed, 218 as pulli, 48 re-trapped from previous years

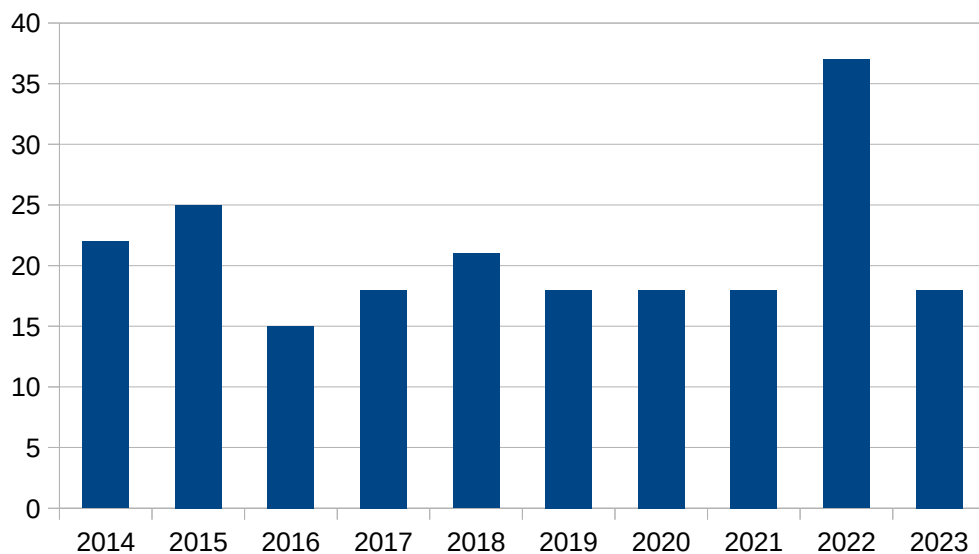
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	10	193	35	33	16	20	39	7	62



Treecreeper (-14%)

18 ringed, two re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	1	3	3	6	1	2	0	2



- **Corvids and Allies**

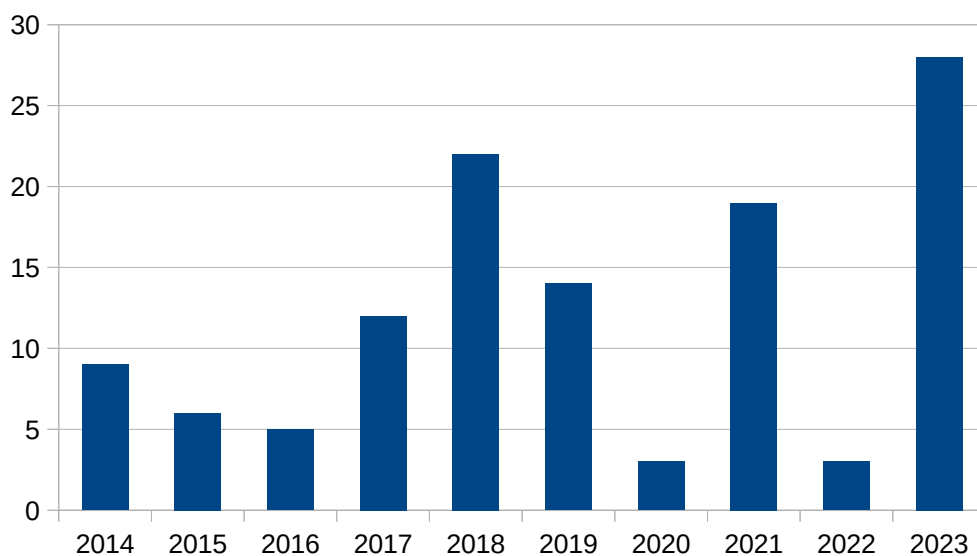
Corvids are highly intelligent and wary, sadly they tend to avoid us and our nets. The only corvids ringed this year were Jackdaw pulli, although they seemed to do very well, the total being a record. Congratulations are due to AGH and the nest box team.

Five forays at dusk into the Northants reed bed produced a record total for Starling. Sadly there was no Hobby pursuing the Starlings this year.

Jackdaw (+131%)

28 ringed, all as pulli

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

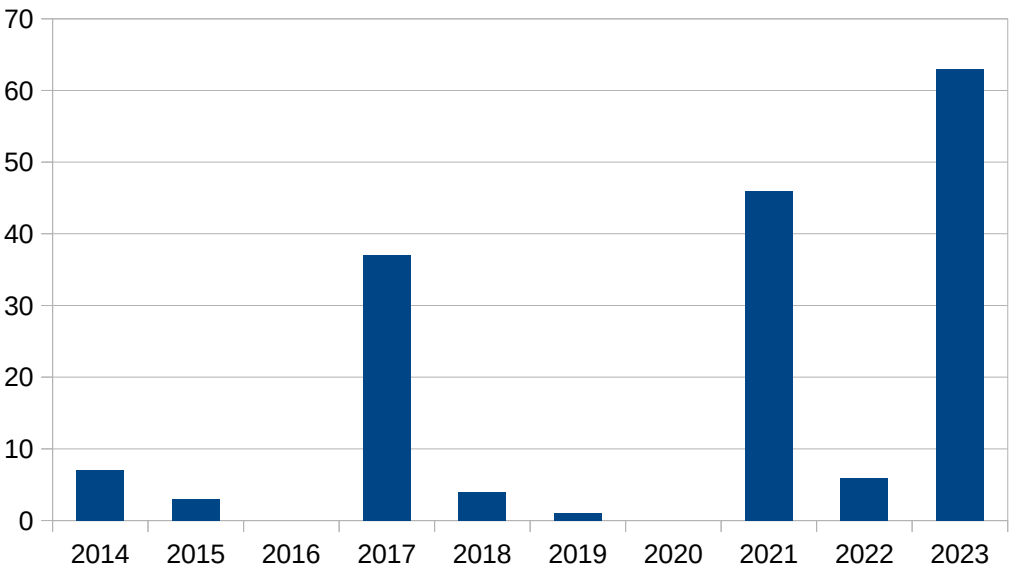


Starling (+277)

63 ringed

[illegible]

Starling cont.



• Sparrows and Finches

A poor year for this group, with two exceptions. Tree sparrows continue their dismal decline. Back in 2014, we had a population of over 600, making full use of the nest boxes which are such a feature of the poplars which run from the feeding station to Point. This year we ringed only 11 birds and there was no evidence of breeding in any of the boxes, a very sad state of affairs. The finches continue to be ringed, albeit in subdued numbers. The exceptions were Linnet, which bred well, with a spring roost around the feeding station, and good numbers at Point. Lesser Redpoll showed up well in the autumn into winter. A single Brambling ringed by a new trainee was a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing year.

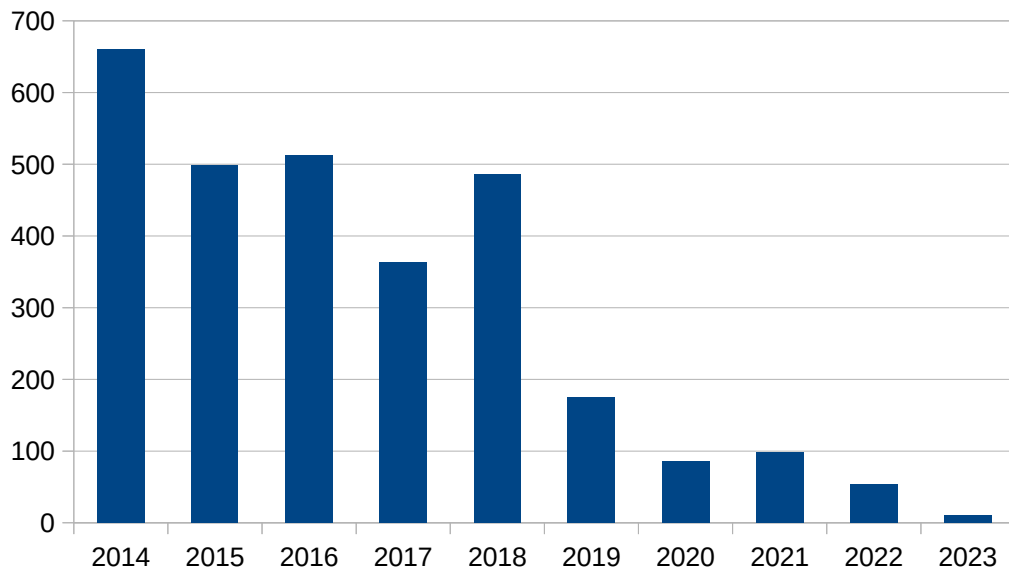
Tree Sparrow (-96%)

11 ringed, three re-trapped from previous years



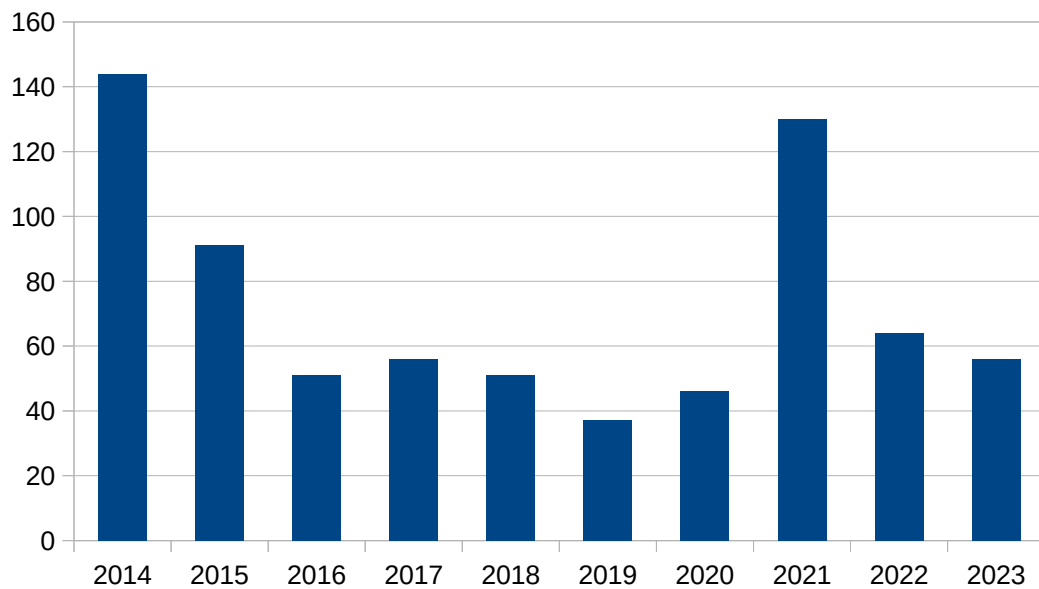
Getting to be an endangered species at Stanford.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0

Tree Sparrow cont.**Chaffinch (-22%)**

56 ringed, three re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	9	0	4	5	7	7	4	4	16



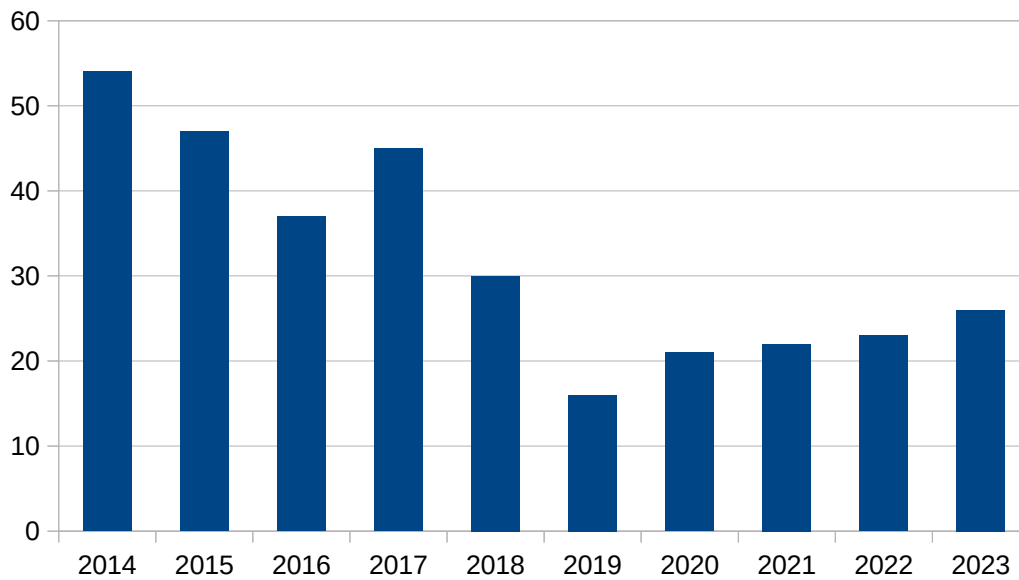
Brambling

1 ringed 05 Nov

*The only Brambling this year, an adult female***Bullfinch (-19%)**

26 ringed, five re-trapped from previous years

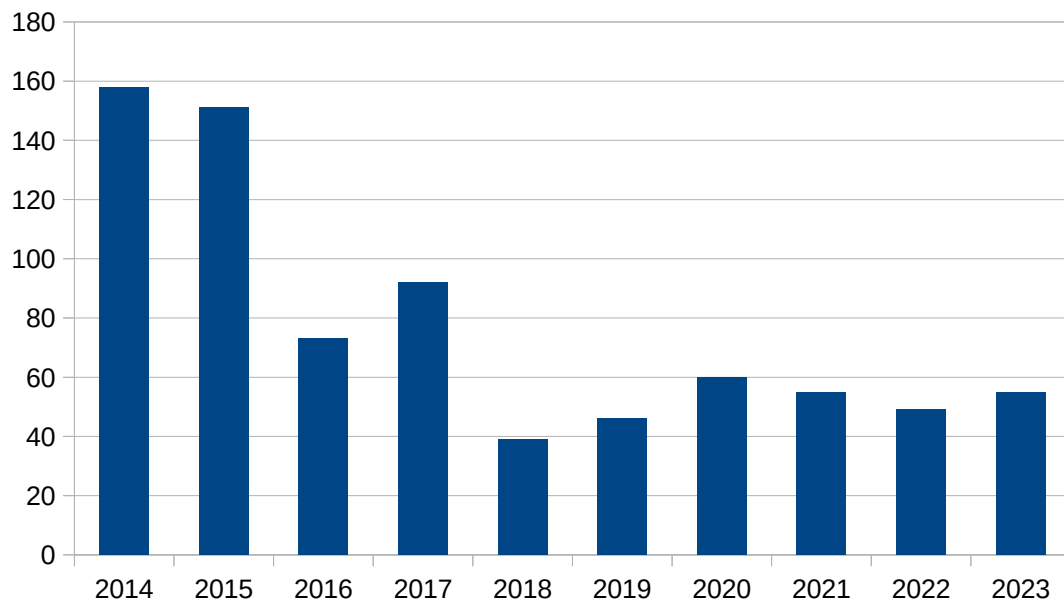
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	5	2	1	4	6	0	5	2	1



Goldfinch (-29%)

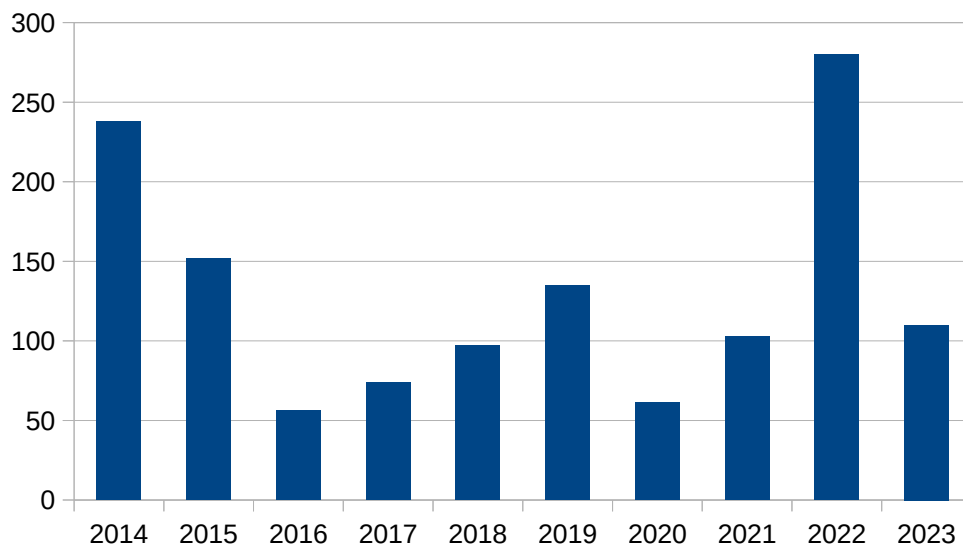
55 ringed

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	1	2	7	12	4	22	4	3

**Greenfinch (-16%)**

110 ringed, one re-trapped from previous years

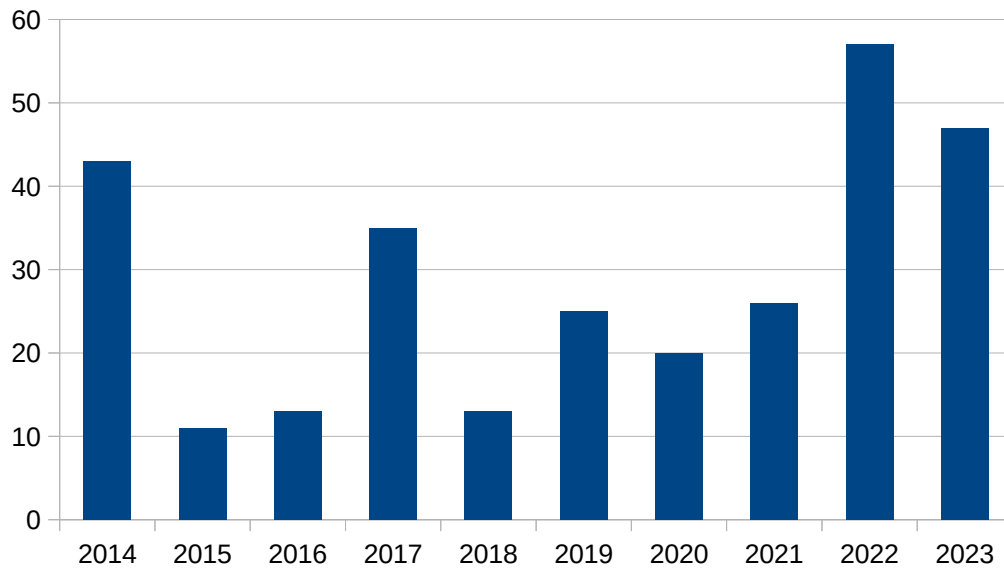
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	4	80	15	2



Linnet (+62%)

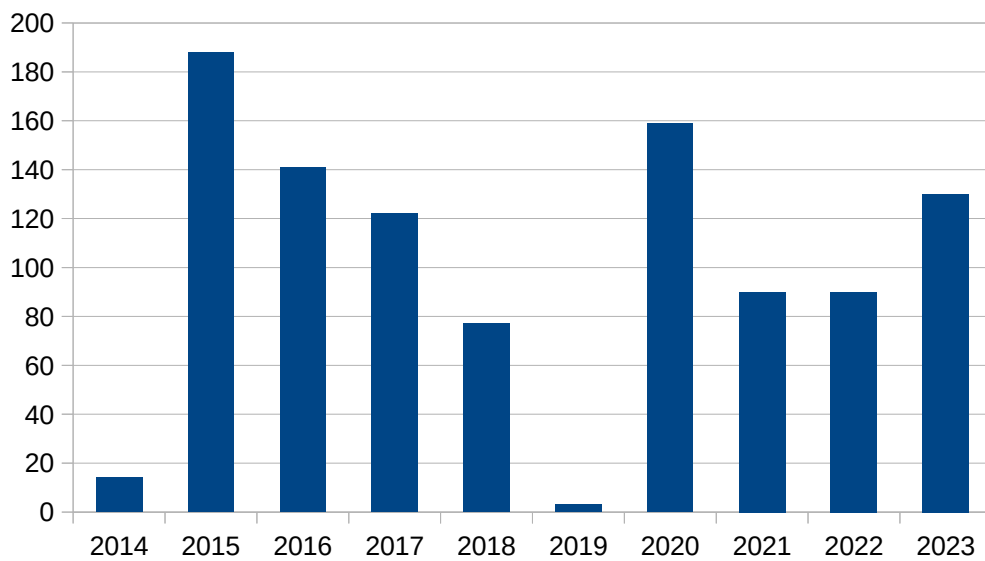
47 ringed, three re-trapped from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	8	6	3	21	8	0	0	1	0

**Lesser Redpoll (+28%)**

130 ringed

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	111	13	0



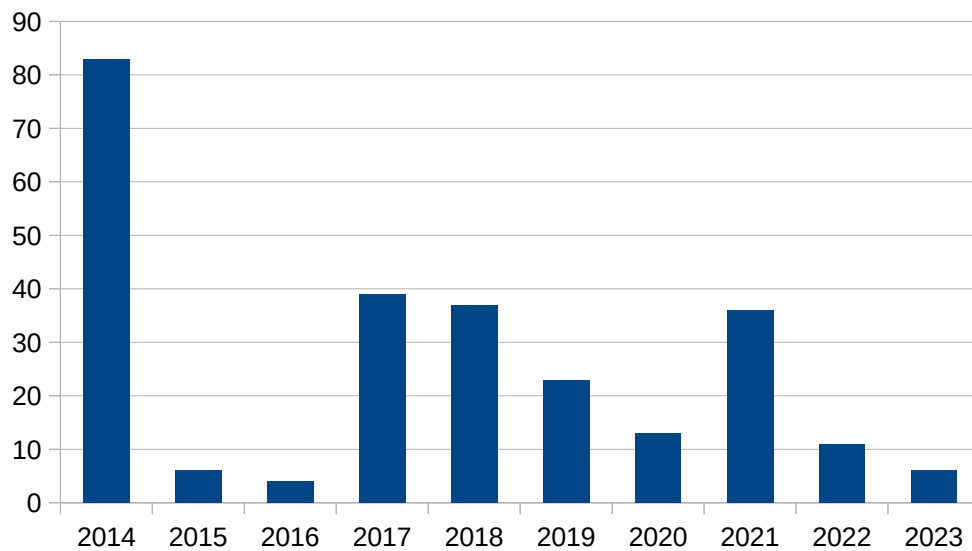
• Buntings

Our two species continue to breed at Stanford, although Yellowhammer had a poor year and over time seem to be in decline. Reed Bunting continue to do well.

Yellowhammer (-76%)

Six ringed

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	0

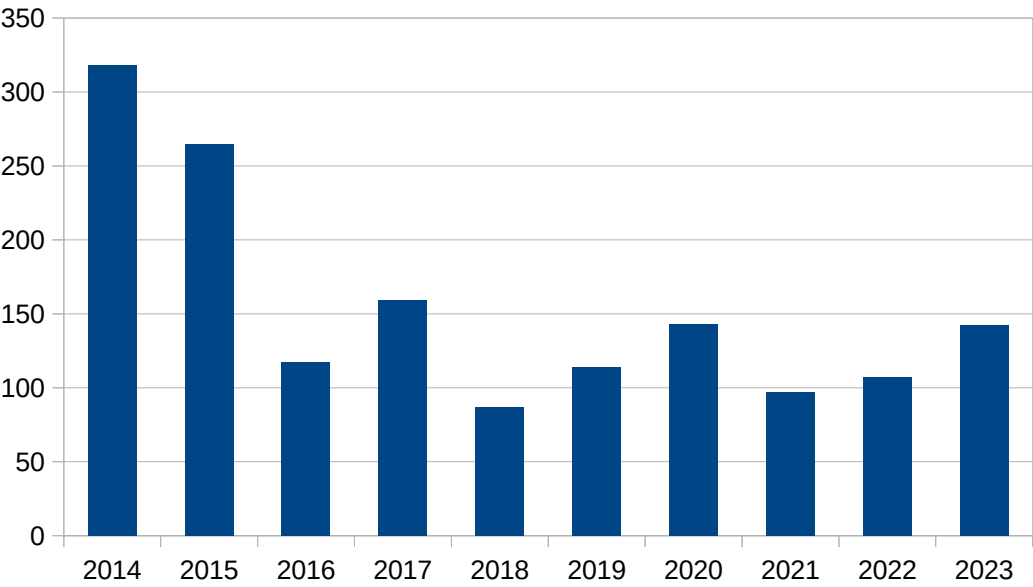


Reed Bunting (+9%)

151 ringed, 31 from previous years

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	7	2	9	57	49	10	10	7	0

Reed Bunting cont.



Nest Recording Report by Adam Homer (AGH)

Introduction

One hundred and fifty-seven nests of fifteen species were recorded including highest counts of **Common Tern** and **Jackdaw**. A record total of six hundred and fifty-two pulli were ringed which included over five hundred **Tit** pulli. The spring weather was fairly settled which allowed April nesting **Blue Tits** and **Great Tits** to produce an excellent number of young. Once again **Swallows** had a productive breeding season with twenty-two nests recorded. **Stock Doves** appear to have bounced back from a three year decline with a fourth highest nest count of twenty-nine. **Tawny Owl** and **Barn Owl** pairs produced just one small brood apiece of two nestlings. A **Mistle Thrush** nest containing just one pullus was our first for this species since 1984. A search of the Leicestershire reedbed found one **Reed Warbler** nest with a Cuckoo egg. Two **Grey Wagtail** nests under the bridge behind the dam produced nine pulli. Sadly, as predicted **Tree Sparrows** declined again to the point where no breeding was detected in 2023. All photos courtesy of AGH

Individual Species Accounts

Moorhen: One nest containing five eggs was located in the middle of a field pond. The outcome was unknown.

Coot: Two nests were found in the Leicestershire reedbed. Both nests were at hatching stage with newly hatched young being observed on the nest from a safe distance on a subsequent visit.



Coot nest with egg hatching

Common Tern: A floating Tern raft in Blowers Bay provided nesting opportunities for several pairs this year. A visit to the raft resulted in fifteen pulli ringed of various sizes from an estimated eight nests, our highest ever ringed in one year. There was originally three rafts and plans to replace the storm-damaged ones are in the pipeline.

Stock Dove: Twenty-nine nests is an excellent total after a three year decline. Twenty-four pulli were ringed with the first on 10th June and the last on 16th September. Three adults were also trapped and ringed after exiting their nest-boxes.



JLG and KEM with Stock Dove pulli

Woodpigeon: One nest found containing two small young which were ringed the following week, and another nest high up in a Hawthorn containing two eggs was found empty some weeks later, presumed fledged naturally. A common but surprisingly frustrating species to get on the list this year.

Cuckoo: A pair of Cuckoos stayed at Stanford for much of May and June so a search of the reedbeds for eggs was started. One egg was found in a nest with three Reed Warbler eggs but unfortunately it was later found predated.



Cuckoo egg in Reed Warbler nest

Barn Owl: A nestbox in a machinery shed at a nearby farm produced the only record this year. Four eggs were laid, but only two of those hatched. The chicks were ringed at the beginning of September.

Tawny Owl: An adult flew from a nestbox in a nearby wood in mid April revealing two warm eggs inside. A visit three weeks later found two healthy chicks at feathers-medium stage which were duly ringed. A quick check a week later found them close to branching-out, a stage where they cannot fly so instead climb out of their nest chamber and sit out on branches awaiting the adults bringing them food. A final visit found the nestbox empty with the chicks presumably having left naturally.



SH and JLG with Tawny owlets

Swallow: Twenty-two nesting attempts was a repeat of last year. Eight of those nests that contained young were not ringed due to no ringers being available. However, forty-two pulli were ringed from twelve nests, one nest was deserted at incubation stage and another was predated.

Grey Wagtail: Two nesting attempts were made on ledges under the bridge behind the dam. Three young from one nest were ringed in May and six were ringed in June.



Grey Wagtail pullus

Mistle Thrush: A pair of adults were observed flying to a nest in a tree in the garden of the house at the dam by one of Stanford's regular birders. After gaining permission from the house owner, we visited the nest to find just one pullus at feather-in-pin stage. This chick, about five or six days old was subsequently ringed and was our first at Stanford since two pulli were ringed in 1984.

Reed Warbler: Nine nests were found in searches of both reed beds. Only five young were ringed from a few of these due to limited availability of ringers.

Blue Tit: Thirty-three nests were recorded this year, a 17.5% decrease compared to last year. A total of 333 eggs were laid giving a 10.1% average per nest. 91.6% of these eggs produced young that were ringed between 13th & 27th May. An inspection of the boxes in June showed 99.7% of all ringed nestlings successfully fledged.

Great Tit: Another good breeding year for Great Tits with thirty-four nests which is the third highest since 2007. 264 eggs were laid resulting in a nest average of 7.8%. Of those eggs 234, or 88.6% produced young that were ringed between 13th May & 10th June. A later inspection showed a 93.2% fledging rate. This low rate was influenced by the desertion of a full naked brood in one box and two near fledged broods in another.

Jackdaw: Eleven nests is the highest total since our first record in 2005. Twenty-eight pulli were ringed this year which is also the highest since 2018. Thirty-three eggs were laid which is an average of 3.7 per nest, although due to a high mortality rate in this species only 68% of those progressed to fledging. This may look like quite a poor outcome but it can be as low as 50% or even 20% in some years. Mortality in this species is likely to be by predation from Tawny Owls or Grey Squirrels.



Jackdaw chicks with, surprisingly, a Cardinal in the background!

Adam Homer (Group Secretary/Nest Recorder)

The Birding Year at Stanford Reservoir by Chris Hubbard (CH)



Little Gull on a choppy reservoir

2023 was another excellent year for birding at Stanford Reservoir. The overall total number of species recorded was 150 compared to 147 in 2022 and above the 10-year average of 146 species. 13 species were recorded in 2023 that were not recorded in 2022. There were no new additions to the overall site list which remains at 254.

Below is a summary of the 13 species recorded in 2023 that weren't in 2022. The finder's name is included in brackets.

Kittiwake: Two records on January 9th and April 10th (CH).

Ruddy Duck: A drake on March 26th (CH), the first record since 2018.

Common Scoter: one on April 7th (CH), one on April 23rd (CH & Jon Cook) and 13 on May 31st (CH).

Little Gull: two on April 21st (Steve Nichols) and two on October 20th (CH).



Sanderling: two on May 31st (CH).

Marsh Warbler: the star bird of 2023 with one found in full song on June 7th but only present for the one day (CH).

Golden Oriole: One briefly in song on June 7th (found by a visiting birder, Trevor Ellery, who had travelled to see the Marsh Warbler).

Crossbill: A fly over on June 25th (CH), the first since 2020.



Black-necked Grebe: A juvenile around the dam on July 15th (CH), the first since 2020.

Shag: One on August 15th, the first since 2020 (CH).

Short Eared Owl: One on October 10th seen initially near Blowers (Ashley Hiatt) and then over the rail track (Adam Homer), the first since 2020.

Grey Plover: One on November 17th (CH).

Barnacle Goose: 46 briefly on December 5th (Steve Nichols), the first since 2021.

Incredibly, a **Wryneck** was ringed in 2023 which was the fourth consecutive year that this species has been ringed. **Cattle Egret** was recorded for the second year running (a new species for the site last year) and just like **Little** and **Great Egret** one would expect sightings of this species to continue to increase. A singing **Quail** was recorded on July 20th for the second year running.

Shelduck bred in 2023 raising six young which we believe is only the second known breeding record at the site. There were no records of **Grasshopper Warbler** in the spring (and therefore no confirmed breeding this year) but the ringing group did ring 34 birds in the autumn.

Despite the lack of mud at the site in 2023 there was still an excellent selection of waders. These included **Sanderling**, **Whimbrel**, **Ringed Plover**, **Woodcock**, **Green** and **Common Sandpiper**, **Grey Plover**, **Greenshank**, **Ruff**, **Redshank**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Dunlin**.

The gull roost was actively watched resulting in good numbers of **Mediterranean Gulls** over the year – this species was recorded on over 30 different days. **Caspian Gull** was also recorded on a regular basis over the winter months. As always, there was a steady passage of terns with **Common**, **Black** and **Arctic** all recorded. Two rings were read on **Common Terns**. One was from Poland (only the 11th ever to be recovered from this country) and another from London. Neither of these individuals had been reported from any other sites.



It was another good year for **Marsh Harrier** including two wing-tagged birds, this is the first time we have been able to study the length of time this species stays at the site with orange 'ZC' being present for 45 days.

Unusually **Osprey** sightings were in very short supply with only three records – May 15th and 28th and September 5th. **Merlin** was recorded on four separate dates, with **Hobby** being seen regularly over the summer and **Peregrine** recorded periodically throughout the year. **Red Kite** were seen carrying nesting material and is highly likely to have bred in 2023.

Two female **Garganey** were recorded on May 1st and October 3rd. There were several records of **Red-crested Pochard** with a high count of four in the autumn and three records of **Mandarin**.



Whooper Swan made it eight years running with birds in March, October and November totalling eight overall.

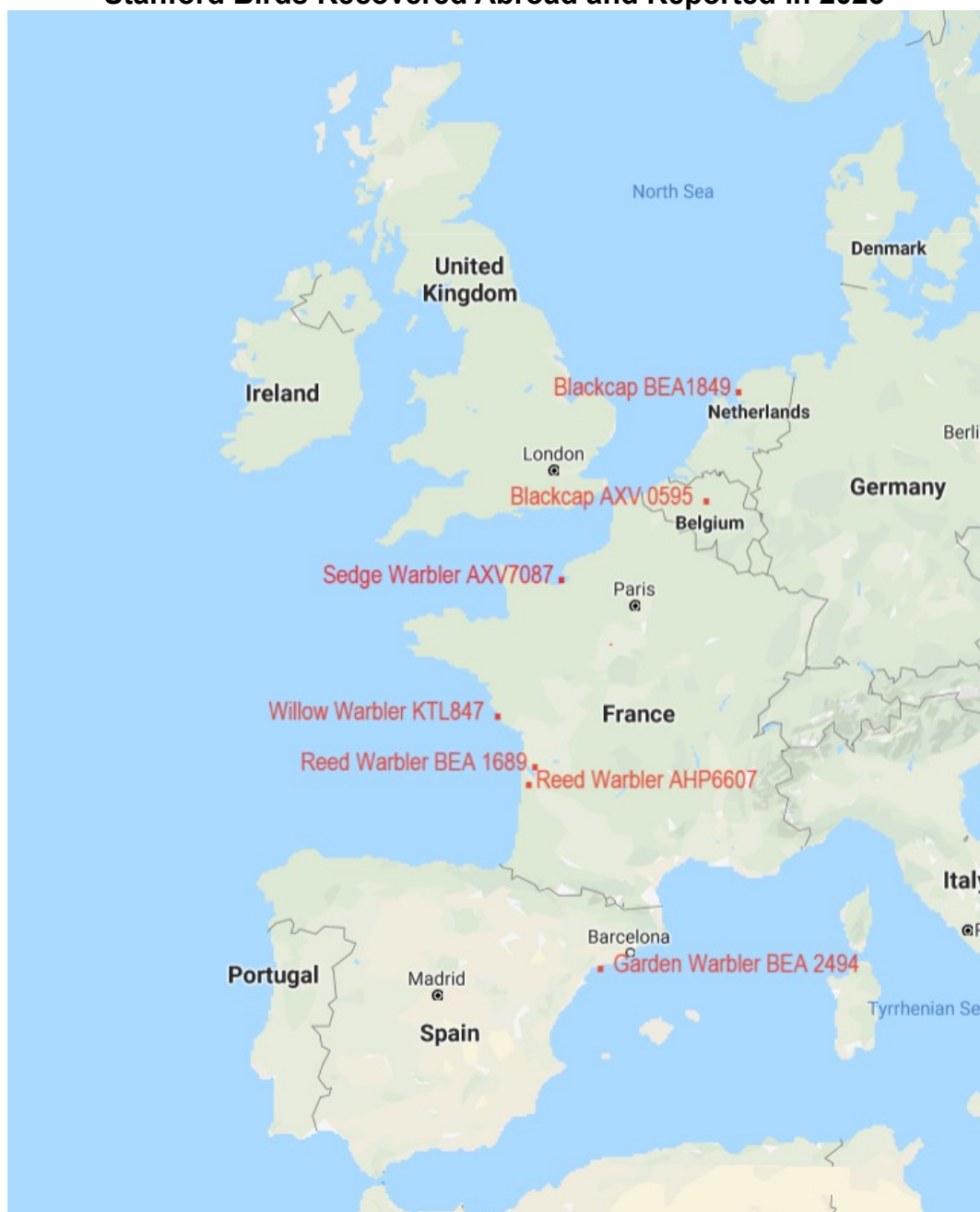
Thanks as always to the Ringing Group, Severn Trent and to all observers who have shared their sightings during 2023.

Chris Hubbard (Sightings Officer)

Stanford Birds Recovered at Other Sites, Reported in 2023

This section details the birds that were ringed by the SRG, and which were subsequently trapped and processed (*'controlled'*) by other sites; or Stanford birds which were found by members of the public and were subsequently reported to the BTO. The map shows where our birds were controlled outside the UK. Over the years, our international migrants have generally followed the edge of Europe, heading south towards Africa. This is largely the case in 2023, albeit with two Blackcaps taking an initial detour to the east, but most birds were picked up along the French Atlantic coast.

Stanford Birds Recovered Abroad and Reported in 2023



Total List

Species	Ring number	Date ringed	Site Recovered	Date retrapped	Time taken (days)	Distance to Stanford (km)
Blackcap	BEA1849	04-SEP-2023	Reddingsweg, Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands	01-OCT-2023	27	502
Blackcap	AXV8602	07-AUG-2023	Icklesham, Sussex, East Sussex	06-OCT-2023	60	208
Blackcap	BEA3476	09-SEP-2023	Marston Sewage Works, Lincs	15-SEP-2023	6	69
Blackcap	AXV0593	20-AUG-2022	Sint Huibrechts-Hern, Limburg, Belgium	04-MAY-2023	257	486
Blackcap	ADF9920	26-AUG-2021	Coton Lakes, Lea Marston, Warks	09-JUL-2023	682	42
Blackcap	AXV5208	19-SEP-2022	Holystone, Northumberland	01-JUN-2023	251	329
Blackcap	AXV1600	25-AUG-2022	Landguard Point, Felixstowe, Suffolk	29-APR-2023	247	174
Blue Tit	AXV6588	15-NOV-2023	Engine Sheds, Recreation Ground, Rugby, Warks	15-NOV-2023	179	11
Chiffchaff	PKV762	09-SEP-2023	Queen Mary Reservoir, Surrey	27-SEP-2023	18	118
Chiffchaff	NEV894	07-SEP-2023	Dunton, Bucks	10-SEP-2023	3	60
Garden Warbler	BEA2494	09-SEP-2023	El Vendrell (Les Madrigueres), Tarragona, Spain	08-OCT-2023	29	1265
Garden Warbler	BEA1209	28-AUG-2023	Icklesham, Sussex	14-SEP-2023	17	208
Great Tit	AXV8042	21-AUG-2023	Hoby, Melton Mowbray, Leics	29-NOV-2023	100	40
Great Tit	BEA5785	05-OCT-2023	Hanging Houghton, Brixworth, Northants	25-NOV-2023	51	17
Greenfinch	TX27716	31-OCT-2022	Yelvertoft, Northants	31-AUG-2023	303	4
Greenfinch	TX27592	11-OCT-2022	Wasps Nest, Nocton Fen, Lincs	24-JUN-2023	256	97
Greenfinch	TX27408	19-NOV-2022	Swinford, Leics	06-MAY-2023	167	4
Long-tailed Tit	KTN274	12-OCT-2021	Kelmarsh Hall, Northants	16-JAN-2023	461	14
Long-tailed Tit	KTN278	12-OCT-2021	Kelmarsh Hall, Northants	16-JAN-2023	461	14
Long-tailed Tit	KTN272	12-OCT-2021	Kelmarsh Hall, Northants	16-JAN-2023	461	14
Mallard	GJ74702	23-AUG-2023	Stanford on Avon, Northants	27-OCT-2023	65	3

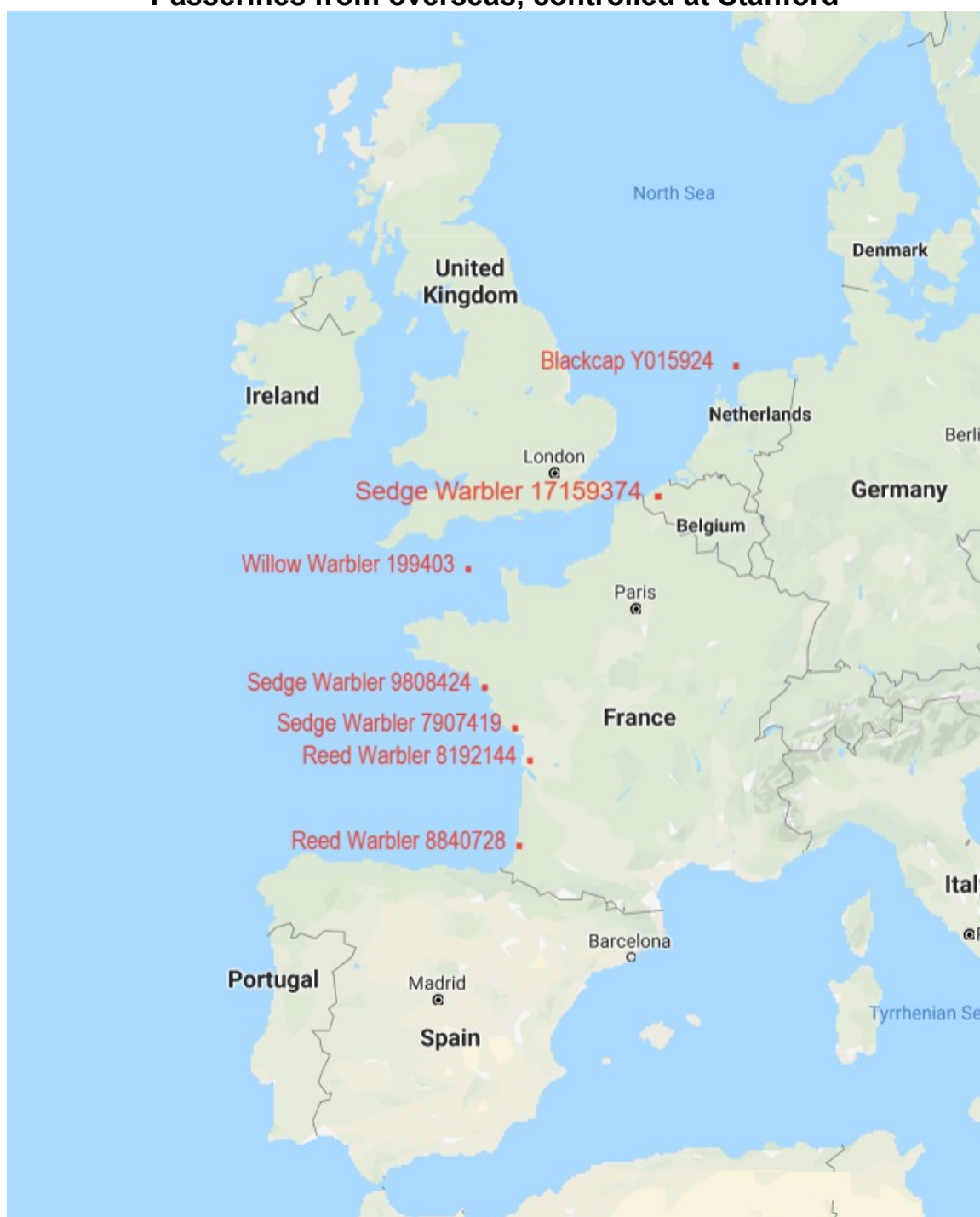
Reed Warbler	BEA1689	31-AUG-2023	Terres d'Oiseaux, Braud-et-Saint-Louis, Gironde, France	14-SEP-2023	14	794
Reed Warbler	AHP6607	10-AUG-2022	Cabanot, Audenge, Gironde, France	17-AUG-2023	372	860
Reed Warbler	AXV7408	19-AUG-2023	North Luffenham Airfield, Rutland	25-AUG-2023	6	43
Reed Warbler	AXV7459	20-AUG-2023	Lagoon 3 CES site, Rutland Water, Rutland	25-AUG-2023	4	41
Reed Warbler	AHP7268	30-JUL-2022	Lagoon 3 CES site, Rutland Water, Rutland	28-JUL-2023	363	41
Reed Warbler	ADF8688	31-JUL-2021	Marston Sewage Works, Lincs	23-JUL-2023	722	69
Reed Warbler	AXV8292	29-JUL-2023	Beachy Head, East Sussex	15-AUG-2023	17	208
Reed Warbler	AHP6266	28-JUL-2022	Brandon Marsh, Warks	14-MAY-2023	290	22
Sedge Warbler	AXV7087	09-JUL-2023	Pontorson, Manche, France	08-AUG-2023	30	427
Sedge Warbler	BRA7665	21-AUG-2023	Gatwick Airport, Brockley Wood, West Sussex	26-AUG-2023	5	155
Sedge Warbler	BEA1317	28-AUG-2023	Chew Valley Lake, Bath and N. E. Somerset	07-SEP-2023	10	195
Sedge Warbler	AXV9264	18-AUG-2023	Litlington, East Sussex	23-AUG-2023	5	200
Whitethroat	AHP6689	13-AUG-2022	Kilnsea, East Riding of Yorks	07-MAY-2023	267	157
Willow Warbler	KTN337	06-AUG-2022	Winterset Reservoir, Wakefield, West Yorks	10-AUG-2023	369	137
Willow Warbler	KTL847	26-AUG-2021	Plaisance, Saint-Froult, Charente-Maritime, France	17-SEP-2022	383	723
Willow Warbler	NER815	16-APR-2022	Waterloo Farm, Everton, Beds	12-JUN-2022	57	65

Birds from Other Sites Recovered at Stanford in 2023

This section details the birds that were ringed at other sites which were subsequently controlled by the Stanford Ringing Group. All details were reported to the BTO, who then contacted the original ringing sites, both in the UK and abroad.

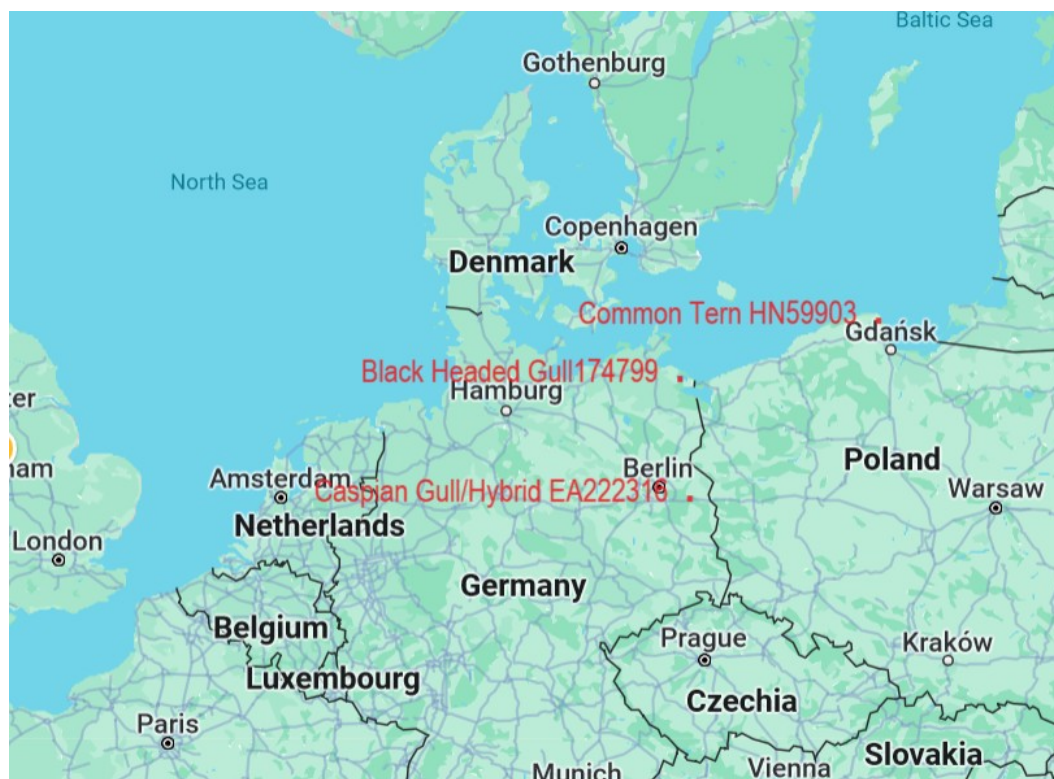
This first map shows where passerines from outside the UK controlled at Stanford were originally ringed. The picture is almost identical to the previous section, two birds headed east, the rest were picked up along the French Atlantic coast.

Passerines from overseas, controlled at Stanford



Gulls and Terns ringed abroad, controlled at Stanford

Unlike our warblers, our migrant gulls have been shown to typically breed near or along the Baltic/ North European coast and to disperse west, towards Stanford.



Full List

Species	Ring number	Date ringed	Site of Origin	Date controlled at Stanford	Time taken (days)	Distance to Stanford (km)
Black Headed Gull	EM31137 Colour Ringed	25-JUN- 2022	Kingfishers Bridge Nature Reserve, Wicken, Cambs	28-JAN-2023	217	93
Black Headed Gull	IA 174799 Colour Ringed	19-MAY-2017	Riether Werder, Luckow, Germany	26-JAN-2017	2,078	1,037
Blackcap	BBB1413	08-OCT-2023	Walsey Hills, Salthouse, Norfolk	22-OCT-2023	14	159
Blackcap	ADX7351	08-SEP-2023	Hollow Farm, Worplesdon, Surrey	11-SEP-2023	3	133
Blackcap	AJK3771	08-JUL-2023	Wicken Fen, Cambs	27-AUG-2023	50	96
Blackcap	BXB3070	15-SEP-2023	Rectory Farm, Tingewick, Bucks	08-OCT-2023	23	45
Blackcap	ATZ1140	20-AUG-2023	North Luffenham Airfield, Rutland	22-AUG-2023	2	43
Blackcap	AXY0932	28-AUG-2023	Nunnery Lakes, Suffolk	11-SEP-2023	19	126
Blackcap	BAB2824	24-JUN-2023	Sewage Treatment Works, Swindon	16-SEP-2023	84	106

Blackcap	ALN7934	07-AUG-2023	Wymondham, Leics	15-SEP-2023	39	47
Blackcap	BLA9785	08-SEP-2023	Pitsford Reservoir, Northants	16-SEP-2023	8	21
Blackcap	AEZ8754	09-JUL-2023	Coton Lakes, Lea Marston, Warks	24-AUG-2023	46	42
Blackcap	AKX7952	23-AUG-2023	Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve, Hamps	24-AUG-2023	1	178
Blackcap	AXT4738	18-JUL-2023	Anglers Country Park, Wakefield, West Yorks	28-AUG-2023	41	137
Blackcap	ADE7366	06-JUL-2023	Langford RSPB reserve, Notts	28-AUG-2023	53	85
Blackcap	Y015924	26-JUL-2022	Reddingsweg, Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands	22-SEP-2022	66	502
Blue Tit	ANP8641	06-MAY-2022	Stortons Gravel Pits, Northants	22-OCT-2023	534	23
Caspian Gull/ Hybrid	EA222316 Colour Ringed	12-JUN-2019	Reddern, Oberspreewald- Lausitz, Brandenburg	22-JAN-2023	1,336	1,043
Chiffchaff	JXJ304	07-JUN-2023	Fire Tower, Birklands, Warsop, Notts	08-OCT-2023	123	88
Chiffchaff	PDX316	10-SEP-2023	Budby Corner Plantations, Carburton, Notts	30-SEP-2023	20	93
Chiffchaff	JHN773	10-JUL-2022	Gosforth Park, Newcastle-upon- Tyne, Tyne and Wear	27-SEP-2023	78	293
Chiffchaff	NPL146	17-AUG-2022	Pitsford Reservoir, Northants	01-JUL-2023	318	21
Common Tern	HN59903 Colour Ringed	09-JUL-2020	Gdansk, Polnocny, Pomorski, Poland	01-JUN-2023	1,057	1,331
Common Tern	ST47020 Colour Ringed	30-JUN-2020	Bedfont Lakes, East Bedfont, London	03-Jun-23	1,068	117
Herring Gull	GY47407 Colour Ringed	28-JUN-2022	Stonehouse, Gloucs	12-MAR-2023	257	108
Lesser Redpoll	BBA0699	30-OCT-2022	Grewelthorpe, North Yorks	25-OCT-2023	360	200
Lesser Redpoll	ADT6230	13-NOV-2022	DJW, Rainsbrook Valley, Rugby, Warks	25-OCT-2023	345	11
Marsh Harrier	GY17833 Wing Tagged	19-JUN-23	Breydon Water Yarmouth, Norfolk	09-SEP-2023	80	222

Marsh Harrier	GN79438 Wing Tagged	02-JUL-2023	Welney WWT, Norfolk	09-Sep-2023	67	131
Reed Warbler	APT3834	31-JUL-2021	Pepper Arden, North Yorks	12-AUG-2023	742	225
Reed Warbler	BTA8290	13-SEP-2023	Lagoon 3 CES site, Rutland Water, Rutland	16-SEP-2023	3	41
Reed Warbler	ATZ1421	23-AUG-2023	North Luffenham Airfield, Rutland	28-AUG-2023	5	43
Reed Warbler	ATZ1004	16-AUG-2023	North Luffenham Airfield, Rutland	25-AUG-2023	9	43
Reed Warbler	BTA8138	20-JUL-2023	Lagoon 3 CES site, Rutland Water, Rutland	07-AUG-2023	18	41
Reed Warbler	ANX5635	09-JUL-2023	Besthorpe Gravel Pits, Newark, Notts	12-AUG-2023	34	89
Reed Warbler	8840728	24-AUG-2020	Marais-Moisan-Buissons, Messanges, Landes, France	30-JUL-2022	705	956
Reed Warbler	8192144	14-AUG-2018	Chenal, Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet, Charente-Maritime, France	28-JUN-2022	1414	767
Reed Warbler	AAK9206	30-JUL-2020	Hanson Environmental Study Centre, Milton Keynes	04-JUL-2023	1069	45
Sedge Warbler	17159374	27-AUG-2021	Beveren (Roeselare), West-Vlaanderen, Belgium	12-AUG-2023	715	335
Sedge Warbler	9808424	27-AUG-2022	Donges, Loire-Atlantique, France	07-AUG-2023	345	571
Sedge Warbler	AYZ9852	24-AUG-2023	Westdown Plantation, Wilts	31-AUG-2023	7	142
Sedge Warbler	ARL0113	02-JUN-2023	Loch Spynie, Moray	29-JUL-2023	57	601
Sedge Warbler	7907419	18-AUG-2016	Le Bonhomme, Saint-Philbert-de-Grand-Leiu, Loire-Atlantique, France	11-AUG-2018	723	594
Whitethroat	APX5852	28-JUL-2023	Bomb Dump, RAF Wyton, Camb	24-AUG-2023	27	69
Willow Warbler	NLR407	24-JUL-2023	Cove, Highland	16-AUG-2023	23	672
Willow Warbler	199403	11-AUG-2022	Mannez Quarry, Alderney, Channel Islands	16-AUG-2023	370	307

Willow Warbler	NCD394	11-AUG-2020	Anglers Country Park, Wakefield, West Yorks	21-AUG-2023	1105	137
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Group Members in 2023

Key:

A permit holder:

Fully qualified, can ring independently

S (supervisor) permit holder:

As 'A', can also train and assess ringers

C (conditional) permit holder:

Can ring without supervision with agreement of S permit holder

- Mick Townsend (MJT) Co-founder, S permit ringer, Ringer in Charge
- Adam G Homer (AGH) Group Secretary, S permit ringer, Nest Recorder
- David Neal (DMN) Group treasurer, S permit ringer
- Dawn Sheffield (DS1) A permit ringer
- Peter Norrie (PMN) S permit ringer
- Gavin Bennet (GBE) A permit ringer
- Kate Moore (KEM) C permit ringer
- Ed Tyler (ERT) C permit ringer
- Stuart Heath (SH) C permit ringer
- Jo Underwood (JLU) C permit ringer
- Heather Gilbert (HJG) C permit ringer
- Theo De Clermont (TDC) Trainee ringer
- Jade Gunnell (JLG) Trainee ringer
- Beth Newark (BKN) Trainee ringer
- Isla Botting (IB) Trainee ringer
- Emily Bertin (EMB) Trainee ringer
- Chris Hubbard (CH) Sightings Officer
- Group Helper Chris Begley
- Group Helper Peter Bateup

Credits

- Report compiled by PMN
- Posted by Mike Haigh