

BIRD RINGING IN 2009

By

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INTRODUCTION

Ringers primarily targeting migrants were on Lundy for three and a half weeks in spring and nine weeks in autumn, while a further four weeks were spent carrying out work on Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels in summer and early autumn. This is the highest level of coverage achieved since there were ringers resident on the island in the 1970s, and the number of birds ringed in 2009 was the highest ever: a remarkable 4924.

Almost a third of the birds ringed were Swallows, with a record total of 1,612. Manx Shearwater chicks were also ringed in the largest numbers ever, with double the 2008 total found. They were not just in the original two colonies that have been productive from 2004, but also on six other slopes scattered along the full length of the island. An impressive 730 Willow Warblers were caught, despite the worrying downward trend shown by this species' breeding populations in southern Britain recently. As usual, Meadow Pipits, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and Chaffinches were ringed in good numbers, all with totals over 300. For many regular migrants, it is often difficult to separate the effect of population trends from that of variable ringing effort on the numbers; however, it is encouraging that the Grasshopper Warbler total of 31 was the highest since 1990. After heading the totals list in 2008, Goldcrests seem to have had a poor breeding season, with only eleven ringed in autumn '09. Two other irruptive species, Brambling and Siskin, also failed to appear in significant numbers.

Among the 54 species ringed during the year, those which have only been ringed in very small numbers on Lundy included Wryneck, Yellow Wagtail, Mistle Thrush, the Island's third Cetti's Warbler and a Red-breasted Flycatcher. With average catches of well under one bird per year in the past, four Black Redstarts and three Ring Ouzels were notable too. A full list of the year's ringing totals is given below.

Among the recoveries and controls received during the year, there was an intriguing find of a Manx Shearwater ring that had been put on a Lundy adult more than fifty years ago, but unfortunately there was no evidence to show when the bird had died. In spring, a Sedge Warbler ringed in France arrived and a Willow Warbler ringed on the Dorset coast reached Lundy in four days. A young Sparrowhawk, which moved from South Wales to Lundy in autumn, stayed for several weeks feeding on the plentiful supply of migrant passerines. Another raptor, making a far longer journey in its first autumn, was a Kestrel that had been ringed as a chick in Finland. Four passerines showed east-west movements in autumn, rather than the more conventional north-south: a Swallow went to Sussex, a Garden Warbler arrived from Norfolk, a Blackcap arrived from Belgium and a second Blackcap – a late record from 2008 – arrived from Helgoland, the island off the German North Sea coast where Heligoland bird traps originated. Given that it is normal for Pied Wagtails to move off the island in winter, it is interesting to obtain evidence of one that may well have returned to breed for at least five summers. Details of all these and other recoveries are listed below.

LUNDY RINGING TOTALS 2009

Manx Shearwater	(145)	188	Mistle Thrush	1
Storm Petrel		28	Cetti's Warbler	1
Sparrowhawk		1	Grasshopper Warbler	31
Woodpigeon		1	Sedge Warbler	76
Cuckoo		1	Reed Warbler	5
Wryneck		1	Blackcap	367
Skylark		2	Garden Warbler	9
Sand Martin		5	Lesser Whitethroat	7
Swallow	(4)	1612	Whitethroat	54
House Martin		21	Yellow-browed Warbler	6
Tree Pipit		2	Chiffchaff	432
Meadow Pipit		357	Willow Warbler	730
Yellow Wagtail		1	Goldcrest	11
Grey Wagtail		1	Firecrest	8
Pied Wagtail		8	Spotted Flycatcher	23
Wren		53	Red-breasted Flycatcher	1
Dunnock		12	Pied Flycatcher	3
Robin	(4)	59	Starling	5
Black Redstart		4	Chaffinch	339
Redstart		6	Brambling	1
Whinchat		1	Greenfinch	3
Stonechat		24	Goldfinch	117
Wheatear		3	Siskin	4
Ring Ouzel		3	Linnet	41
Blackbird		89	Lesser Redpoll	4
Fieldfare		1	Common Rosefinch	1
Song Thrush		66		
Redwing		94	Total	4,924

Numbers in brackets indicate pulli (included in the main totals).

LUNDY RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS 2009

AT14936 **Manx Shearwater**. Ringed as an adult on Lundy, 29.4.57. Ring only found (by using metal detector) at Pembroke, Pembrokeshire, Wales, 29.4.09. (18,993 days; 59 km; bearing 343°).

2424876 **Storm Petrel**. Ringed as an adult at Basset's Cove, Cornwall, 16.7.08. Controlled on Lundy, 26.7.09 (375 days; 112 km; 25°).

DA63697 **Sparrowhawk**. Ringed as a first-year male at Nitten Field, Mewslade, Glamorgan, Wales, 14.9.09. Controlled on Lundy, 3.10.09 (19 days; 51km; 212°). Then retrapped on Lundy, 11 and 27.10.09.

Helsinki S248850 **Kestrel**. Ringed as a pullus at Vesilahti, Hame, **Finland** (61°16' N, 23°41' E), 18.6.09. Controlled on Lundy, 21.9.09 (95 days; 2,070 km; 238°).

X478486 **Swallow**. Ringed as a pullus on Lundy, 3.9.09. Found dead (in poor weather) as a fledged juvenile on Lundy, 6.9.09 (3 days).

X984589 **Swallow**. Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 27.9.09. Controlled at Icklesham, Sussex, 30.9.09 (3 days; 374 km; 95°).

R873893 **Pied Wagtail**. Ringed as an adult female on Lundy, 24.4.05. Found freshly dead on Lundy, 27.7.09. (1,555 days).

Paris 6034085 **Sedge Warbler**. Ringed as an adult at Tour aux Moutons, Donges, Loire-Atlantique, **France** (47°19' N, 2°04' E), 14.8.08. Controlled on Lundy, 20.4.09 (249 days; 468 km; 337°).

Helgoland 90011969 **Blackcap**. Ringed as a first-year female on Helgoland, **Germany** (54°10' N, 7°55' E), 16.9.08. Controlled on Lundy, 1.10.08. (15 days; 911 km; 249°).

Bruxelles 11305869 **Blackcap**. Ringed as a full-grown male at Rijkevorsel, Antwerp, **Belgium** (51°21' N, 4°46' E), 7.9.09. Controlled on Lundy, 14.10.09. (37 days; 657 km; 269°).

V798210 **Blackcap**. Ringed as a second-year male at Broadlands, Braunton, Devon, 21.4.08. Controlled on Lundy, 18.4.09. (362 days; 37 km; 282°).

X883597 **Garden Warbler**. Ringed as a first-year bird at Snettisham Coastal Park, Norfolk, 9.9.09. Controlled on Lundy, 18.9.09. (9 days; 397 km; 242°).

CKB975 **Willow Warbler**. Ringed as an adult female at Portland Bill, Dorset, 20.4.09. Controlled on Lundy, 24.4.09 (4 days; 172 km; 295°).