

# BIRD RINGING IN 2011

by

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Ringers focusing on catching migrants were on the island for 11 days in spring and six weeks in autumn. Work on Manx Shearwaters was carried out over two weeks in late August and early September, with another 10 days at the beginning of August spent fitting tracking devices to shearwaters and recovering data from them. The total number of birds ringed in the year was 2,604.

The top three species ringed were Swallow (557), Blackcap (437) and Manx Shearwater (285). Other species with three-figure totals were Meadow Pipit, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest and Chaffinch. After the very low numbers caught in 2009, Goldcrests showed continuing recovery from the effects of the preceding cold winters, with a second big increase in the autumn catch. However, Stonechats seem to have been slower to respond: they are notable absentees from the 2011 ringing list. The totals for Blackbird, Song Thrush and Redwing, usually caught in significant numbers in late October, were also low, perhaps because of warm weather rather than population problems. This was particularly unfortunate in 2011 because the BTO was carrying out a study to see if migrating thrushes were capable of transmitting the fungal spores that cause disease in trees, and had trained a Lundy ringer to take swabs from feet and feathers. The situation was apparently no better at other sampling sites. The silver lining for the LFS was the donation of 500 thrush rings as a thank-you from the BTO, for which we are extremely grateful.

Uncommon species caught in 2011 included a Yellow-browed Warbler, two Common Rosefinches and the first Rose-coloured Starling and sixth Little Bunting to be ringed on Lundy. Also unusual in a Lundy context, with very few ringed previously, were a Jack Snipe, a Woodcock and a Great Spotted Woodpecker. The first two of these were caught at night, along with four Snipe and two Curlew. A full list of the year's ringing totals is given on p.65.

The autumn Manx Shearwater work resulted in slightly fewer chicks being ringed than in 2010, but many more adults. These differences are unlikely to reflect population changes or breeding success directly, because the coverage was a week earlier than in previous years. This meant that more adults were still feeding their chicks, more pre-breeding adults were looking for possible mates and breeding sites, and fewer chicks were old enough to be emerging from burrows. The numbers caught each night suggested that the peak emergence of chicks came at the end of the study period in 2011. Considering only the dates when there were catches in both years, there was a very impressive 29% increase in the number of chicks found in 2011, compared with 2010.

The earlier timing of the shearwater work also resulted in the first confirmation that Lundy-bred birds are returning to the island: two birds ringed as chicks in 2008 were recaptured. At three years old they were likely to be prospecting pre-breeders, but it will not be long before Lundy chicks are returning to breed in sufficient numbers to cause further acceleration in population growth; immigration from other colonies was probably the only relevant factor in the years immediately after rat eradication. A third, older shearwater was found dead in the breeding colony

on Skokholm, Pembrokeshire. It had been ringed on Lundy in 1992 and retrapped on Lundy in 1996. Given that they do not usually swap colonies once they become established breeders, the most likely explanation seems to be that it was ringed as a prospecting pre-breeder and tried breeding on Lundy for a few years, before moving to an established colony because of Lundy's rat problem.

Other recoveries and controls included:

- a Swallow caught on Jersey, eight days after ringing, on its first southward migration;
- a two-year-old Willow Warbler caught in Lincolnshire; and
- a Blackcap caught on Anglesey
- a Siskin caught in Shropshire three-and-a-half years after ringing.

The most remarkable record involved a Dunnock. This is normally a very sedentary species in Britain, but one ringed on Lundy in October 2010 was controlled (captured and released) in Cheshire the following April. There is evidence that some Dunnocks from northern Europe migrate to Britain for the winter, and this may have been such a bird, caught on arrival in autumn and then on its return journey in spring. Details of these and other recoveries are listed on p.66.

## LUNDY RINGING TOTALS 2011

Manx Shearwater	(167)	285	Rose-coloured Starling*	1
Storm Petrel		1	Ring Ouzel	1
Sparrowhawk		1	Blackbird	43
Kestrel		1	Fieldfare	1
Water Rail		1	Song Thrush	5
Jack Snipe		1	Redwing	12
Snipe		4	Spotted Flycatcher	4
Woodcock		1	Robin	19
Curlew		2	Redstart	4
Great Spotted Woodpecker		1	Whinchat	1
Goldcrest		176	Wheatear	14
Firecrest		1	Pied Flycatcher	4
Blue Tit		1	Dunnock	8
Skylark		4	House Sparrow	14
Sand Martin		10	Pied Wagtail	1
Swallow	(7)	557	Tree Pipit	3
House Martin		4	Meadow Pipit	218
Yellow-browed Warbler		1	Rock Pipit	6
Chiffchaff		203	Chaffinch	243
Willow Warbler		134	Greenfinch	3
Blackcap		437	Goldfinch	47
Garden Warbler		8	Linnet	16
Lesser Whitethroat		5	Lesser Redpoll	1
Whitethroat		24	Common Rosefinch	2
Grasshopper Warbler		8	Little Bunting	1
Sedge Warbler		35		
Wren		26	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,604</b>

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

\* Species added to the Lundy ringing list in 2011.

## LUNDY RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS 2011

### **Manx Shearwater** FC37697

Ringed as an adult on Lundy, 7.5.1992. Retrapped on Lundy, 8.5.1996. Found dead (leg and ring only) on Skokholm, Pembrokeshire, 23.6.11. (6986 days; 74 km; bearing: 325°).

### **Manx Shearwater** EF98333

Ringed as a chick on Lundy, 30.8.08. Retrapped on Lundy, 25.8.11.

### **Manx Shearwater** EB66492

Ringed as a chick on Lundy, 6.9.08. Retrapped on Lundy, 21.8.11.

### **Herring Gull** GP54946

Ringed as a chick on Lundy, 23.6.1998. Found dead (not fresh) at Burry Port, Carmarthenshire, 11.7.11. (4766 days; 64 km; 29°).

### **Swallow** L954436

Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 4.10.11. Controlled at roost site near St Saviour Hospital, Jersey, Channel Islands, 12.10.11. (8 days; 287 km; 141°).

### **Swallow** L954743

Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 9.10.11. Found freshly dead (probably starved) on Lundy, 11.10.11. (2 days).

### **Willow Warbler** CVJ608

Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 16.9.09. Controlled at Dunsby, Bourne, Lincolnshire, 3.9.11. (717 days; 348 km; 58°).

### **Blackcap** L037253

Ringed as an adult female on Lundy, 28.4.10. Controlled at Cors Ddyga, Llangefni, Anglesey, 16.6.11. (414 days; 229 km; 6°).

### **Rose-coloured Starling** LC62266

Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 25.9.11. Found dead on Lundy, 15.10.11. (20 days).

### **Dunnock** L037967

Ringed as a first-year bird on Lundy, 14.10.10. Controlled at Meols, Wirral, Merseyside, 8.4.11. (176 days; 267 km; 23°).

### **Siskin** V487649

Ringed as an adult male on Lundy, 20.10.07. Controlled at Cressage, Shropshire, 5.3.11. (1232 days; 216 km; 42°).

### **Details of 2010 colour-ring sighting**

#### **Guillemot** R35370 (with yellow colour-ring 67A)

Ringed as a chick on Skomer, Pembrokeshire, 27.6.03. Seen (colour-ring read) as an adult on Lundy, 22.4.10. (2491 days; 77 km; 144°).