



# Ringer's Roundup

## A Ringer's Year - August 2024

Pending something exceptional, I ringed the last young Barn Owls of this year on the 19<sup>th</sup> in a box south of Rothbury and at another nest near Longhorsley. Neither of these are second broods (just late) but while I can't be categorical about the figures yet, it does look like they achieved an occupancy of 51% compared with only 36% last year. When all the data has been sorted, I will publish a full summary.

An interesting return from the British Trust for Ornithology reached me this week. This was of a Great Tit we ringed in January 2021 near Longhorsley, which is still alive – and just been 'controlled' by another ringer in Norfolk (over 300 km away)! Not an unusual movement for a migratory warbler but certainly for our normal sedentary Great Tits.

We have continued to try and regularly ring at Howick Arboretum on Friday and Saturday mornings but the weather has been making it necessary to cancel or curtail some sessions. On the 2/8/18 we captured 25 birds (18 new and 7 retraps): these included a Garden Warbler starting to fatten up before it sets off to migrate across the Sahara to Ghana and neighbouring countries (see photo). There was also a Blackcap that will probably only get as far as North Africa.



There was also a very young (hatched locally) Chiffchaff which will probably also go south across the Sahara to the Senegambia region of Africa, and a slightly older Willow Warbler (probably not locally hatched) on its way to the Gulf of Guinea (Ivory Coast and Ghana) (see photo). The more local 'resident' birds captured included Bullfinch, Coal Tits, Dunnocks and Robins. There were also some Goldcrests, which can be migrants but these particular individuals were young birds suggesting they were from local nests.

Ringling again on the 3/8/24 we caught 33 birds (20 new and 13 retraps): these included a young Whitethroat still fattening up before heading off to cross the Sahara and spend their winter in Senegambia. There were three young Chiffchaffs, just one Willow Warbler and three Blackcaps.

We caught the first Swallow of the year (hunting around the cricket pitch), a juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker and a beautiful Treecreeper.

Now I realise most folk think of the treecreeper as just a little brown bird – but take a look at the attached



# Ringer's Roundup

pictures of the wings and tail which show the excellent patterns and shades of brown.



We managed to ring on the 16/8/24 (before the wind stopped us) and caught 19 birds (13 new and 6 retraps).



There were three young local Swallows; two Robins still getting their proper red breasts; three young Chiffchaff and an adult Male Chiffchaff (just nearing the end of its full moult) (see photo). Back again on the 24<sup>th</sup> we caught 23 birds (14 new 9 retraps). This time there was an adult Willow Warbler and three juveniles and it would be nice to say the male was showing them the way to Africa! However, they all travel individually. There were also four young Blackcaps. The new birds included a young Bullfinch and a pair of adults were included in the retraps; one of these was a female first ringed in

2020.

Convening again at around 7:00 on the 30/8/24 we captured 24 birds (15 new and 9 retraps). These included three young Swallows and an adult male (with his long tail streamers projecting out 48mm from his ordinary tail feathers); there were four young Chiffchaff together with an adult female and a young Blackcap. Finally, on the 31<sup>st</sup> we captured 40 birds (32 new and 8 retraps); these included a very violent juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker that seemed quite determined to cause someone an injury (see photo). This is the





## Ringer's Roundup



second one of the month and suggests they nested locally.

There were nine young Blackcaps; some having now moulted into distinctive adult plumage with Black heads (the males) and Brown heads (the females). We also captured some incredibly young Goldcrests (clearly of a second, unusually late brood) which showed no signs of actual 'crests'!

There were the expected young Chiffchaffs (2) and

an adult; and another juvenile Whitethroat rather confirming they nested locally as well (see photo).

Alison and I encountered an adult male defending a territory earlier in the year just a short walk away from our ringing site.



Anyone interested in seeing what we are doing at the Howick Ringing Station is invited call in.

**Phil Hanmer**

S Ringer/Trainer, Natural History Society of Northumbria Ringing Group (Hancock Museum)

Email: [tytoalbas@btinternet.com](mailto:tytoalbas@btinternet.com)