



# Ringer's Roundup

## A Ringer's Year - November 2024

This year we managed to squeeze in one more visit to Howick Ringing Station on the 3/11/24 when we captured 52 birds (27 new & 25 retraps). The retraps included two Treecreepers, one an adult the other a juvenile (flying together so probably an adult and its offspring). Several Long Tailed Tits who continued to 'twitter' to each other while in their temporary captivity see photo and a female Bullfinch first ringed as an adult in 2022. The new birds included a Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*); a very late in the year



catch of this rare migrant; which I was able to colour ring as part of a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) National project. This ostensibly Asian passerine, breeding in the Siberian Taiga forests and normally wintering in Southeast Asia, is being increasingly seen in Britain as individuals are apparently migrating to Africa. If you see a Yellow-brow with colour rings please let me (or the BTO) know about it. I feel it worth noting that we had two overseas research students ringing with us on this morning; one from the Philippines who I think

must take the record of the person who has had to travel the furthest to ring at Howick!

Over the winter the BTO encourages us to participate in a Winter Ringing Project which is often done in gardens (and incidentally being analyzed by my son Hugh, who works at the BTO). Having done a couple of sessions my simple observation so far is that the proportion of adults (as opposed to juveniles of the year) is high this year; notably so in the case of 'tits' rather suggesting they did not have a very successful breeding season. Also interesting was that on the second session there were rather a lot of Robins around, including 3 adult retraps and 2 juveniles.



My compatriot Hilary also did some ringing this month at a woodland site near Longframlington where



## Ringer's Roundup

she captured some of my favourite birds: Marsh Tits. This scarce tit is notable for its habit of caching food. It's then able to remember where it's stored *Beech Mast* or *Black Sunflower seeds* for example and recover them in bad weather. This is not a behavior seen in Blue Tits or Great Tits. She also captured a very personable Nuthatch.

The weather has stopped us doing much with Barn Owls this month but before things took a negative turn, we were able to visit RAF Boulmer for the second time this year. Back in June we



rediscovered a long neglected Barn Owl box which despite years of debris held four young owls, and this month we found another box in an even worse condition. We also located two Barn Owls that are almost certainly the parents of the young owls ringed back in June. One was a new female, probably about four years old and the other a retrapped male [GV97838] that had been ringed near Bilton on the old railway line five years ago.

This male owl has been christened 'Bob' by the RAF and adopted as the new mascot of 144 Signals

Squadron. Needless to say, we have done a major clean-out of these owls living quarters - increasing the amount of nest box space considerably!

We have also managed, dodging the rain, to put up two new Barn Owl boxes; one in a tree near Longhorsley that replaces a box that was coming apart in the weather, and another in a quiet stable.



**Phil Hanmer**

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

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