

## **BIRD RINGING AND NEST BOXES AT WEIRWOOD to 2024**

There had been ringing and nest recording at Weir Wood reservoir since the 1970s. The main purpose is to provide data to the national schemes run by the British Trust for Ornithology. Key local results up to early 2020 were used in the book 'The Nature of Weir Wood Reservoir'. A few more recent things are included below. At most Open Days a ringer has caught a few birds to demonstrate to visitors how it is done and on the Bluebell walk we usually show people some nest box activity.

Ringing was originally invented to see where birds migrated and some recent recoveries are-

12/8/2021 Juvenile KINGFISHER – 27/11/2021 found dead in WEXFORD, 482km (*overseas recoveries of kingfishers are few and I suspect this was roosting on a ship in Milford Haven and woke up in Ireland*)

15/9/2019 BLACKCAP - 9/10/2022 trapped by ringer in S. FRANCE (*this is typical of blackcaps which are easily caught by ringers and mostly go to Spain for winter*)

29/4/2018 COMMON SANDPIPER – 5/5/2023 colour rings photographed at ABBOTSBURY (*Spring migration of sandpipers is rapid and the route is weather dependent and they only stop on the way when essential*)

*Ringling also gives information about other life traits like longevity, moult and biometrics. A reed warbler caught as an adult male on the open day in 2015 was caught a few more times in later years up to 2020. A 6 year old is not very unusual as the oldest in the BTO scheme is 12 years.*

*A nest box record is a few visits that enable timing, number of eggs, and chicks fledged (if successful) or likely cause of failure (when unsuccessful). There have been a few thousand records sent to BTO.*

*The most common are for blue tits but stock doves are also numerous these days as we have about ten pairs and they may have up to five attempts. About 50 different species have been recorded though many of these are only a few records some 40 years since.*

*Changes in bird populations are seen clearly. The stock dove was not in the list in the 80s whereas now it is a regular. On the other hand in 1983 which was the highest total of ringed birds there were 158 willow warblers and now there are a handful on passage.*

*Phil Holland*