

Birds at Borough Fen Decoy, 1964

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This is an account of observations on birds at Borough Fen Decoy from January to December 1964. More of the available time was spent on counts and nest records than on ringing, so that it is rather surprising that the total of 1,480 birds marked (Table I) is the highest since ringing started in 1960. This may be due to the higher number of pulli (439) ringed. Recoveries reported in 1964 are listed in Table II. A Bullfinch trapped on 12th January, 1964, had been ringed at Cleethorpes, Lincs., 62 miles north, on 18th November, 1963.

The weather in January was as open and mild as 1963 had been cold. Only one small flock of 16 Pinkfeet fed near the Decoy, on 16th. Three Bramblings were seen from 22nd to 27th. Fieldfares never reached double figures and Redwings were irregular, with a maximum of 7 on 10th.

February showed little difference in the general pattern except for an influx of 25 Yellowhammers in the last week. Two Garganey appeared on the pond for one day only in March. Fieldfares were more plentiful towards the middle of the month, 75 on 17th dropping to 15 by 31st. Eyes

and ears were cocked for the first warbler which did not oblige until 12th April, when three Chiff-chaffs were seen and heard in the wood. These were followed by Willow Warblers on 13th, Blackcap the next day and Whitethroat on 21st. A new species for the Decoy, a Grasshopper Warbler, was seen on 26th and 27th April. Another first for the Decoy was a Buzzard on 15th April. On this same day 30 Redwings settled in the top of an oak and stayed for about an hour. The last recorded Fieldfares were three on 19th. Swallows were late (28th), Cuckoo average (20th), and Turtle Doves early (20th). Swifts on 30th April were followed by Spotted Flycatchers on 12th May.

Most of the summer migrants had left by mid-September, latest dates being Sedge Warbler 3rd, Whitethroat 18th, Willow Warbler/Chiff-chaff 24th. Stragglers into October were three Blackcaps and five Reed Warblers on 5th. A very late Turtle Dove was seen on 9th. Long-tailed Tits made a welcome re-appearance on 18th September, a small flock of five being the first since December 1962. This built

Table I. Birds other than Anatidae ringed at Borough Fen Decoy in 1964

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	total
Moorhen	1		1				1	1	1	5	1	1	12
Wood Pigeon			2			2	3	4	2	10	4		27
Great Tit		1		2	11	1	9	3	2	4			33
Blue Tit	6		1	1			2	3	3	11	4		32
Song Thrush	2	8	8	22	31	10	15	6	4	14	8	1	129
Blackbird	4	18	43	11	53	15	10	16	17	50	27	5	269
Robin		1		1	1	6	3	2	2	3	1		20
Reed Warbler						6	2	1	1				10
Blackcap				4	6	2	12	9	6	1			40
Garden Warbler							3	6	3				12
Whitethroat				4	7	12	5	2	1				31
Spotted Flycatcher					2	7	1	4					14
Duncock	1	7	4	17	6	8	13	10	5	6	6	1	84
Starling			5		5	3							13
Greenfinch	1		6	6	6	11	15	21	5	22	10		103
Goldfinch		4	3			24	27	21	1	2	6		86
Linnet		1	1	4	32	48	54	7		1	1		149
Bullfinch	1	1		2		3	4	2	5	8	7		33
Chaffinch	12	1	3	1	4		1	9	11	7	8		57
Reed Bunting		1	3	11			1		1	8			25
Tree Sparrow	8	11	8	36	15	38	20	12	8	31	35	1	223
19 others	2	10	8	3	2	11	6	15	7	5	6	1	76
Total	38	64	96	125	181	207	207	154	85	188	124	11	1480

Species of which less than 10 were ringed: Stock Dove 1, Turtle Dove 6, Cuckoo 1, Great Spotted Woodpecker 4, Swallow 9, Jackdaw 1, Willow Tit 5, Long-tailed Tit 4, Tree-creeper 2, Wren 4, Fieldfare 4, Redwing 9, Redstart 1, Sedge Warbler 9, Willow Warbler 8, Goldcrest 1, Brambling 1, Yellowhammer 5, House Sparrow 1.

Table II. Recoveries of birds other than ducks ringed at Borough Fen reported in 1964

	<i>age</i>	<i>date ringed</i>	<i>where found</i>	<i>date recovered</i>	<i>movement</i>
Moorhen					
AJ 32047	FG	21.11.61	Throckenholt, Crowland, Lincs.	31.3.64	6m.W.
Moorhen					
AJ 32062	Juv	26.5.62	Elsham, Brigg, Lincs.	10.1.64	65m.N.
Wood Pigeon					
3080681	FG	25.1.63	Easton on the Hill, Northants.	23.3.64	10m.W.
3092555	1st W	1.4.63	Ickleton, Saffron Walden, Essex	14.11.64	80m.SSE
Turtle Dove					
2037512	Pull	6.7.61	Bouliac (Gironde) France 44°54'N, 0°30'W	7.9.64	
Swallow					
AK 87522	Juv	15.8.63	Maxey, Peterborough	27.4.64	5m.W
Blue Tit					
AK 87802	Juv	10.10.63	Moulton Marsh, Spalding, Lincs.	20.8.64	12m.NE
AH 25219	FG	4.5.64	Haxey, Epworth, Lincs.	2.12.64	62m.NNW
Redwing					
59128 R	FG	24.10.62	Legazpia, Spain 43°03'N, 2°20'W	13.1.63	
Blackbird					
67542 X	1st W	6.11.60	Dogsthorpe, Peterborough	20.1.64	5m. S
Linnet					
AK 87035	Pull	23.5.63	Malaga, Spain 36°43'N, 4°25'W	3.11.63	
AH 25032	FG	10.12.63	Elm Park, Romford, Essex	11.1.64	77m. SSE
Chaffinch					
AH25141	FG°	19.3.64	Kenilworth, Warwicks.	22.12.64	57m. WSW

Only recoveries more than five miles distant are listed. There were in addition 7 local recoveries, of 5 species, during the year.

Table III. Nests found in use in Borough Fen Decoy, 1964

<i>species</i>	<i>number of nests found</i>	<i>unsuccessful nests</i>			<i>successful nests</i>	
		<i>deserted</i>	<i>eggs lost</i>	<i>young lost or died</i>	<i>some reared</i>	<i>complete success</i>
Mallard	1		1			
Moorhen	4	1			1	2
Woodpigeon	15	6	1	2	1	5
Turtle Dove	8	2	1		2	3
Swallow	1					1
Great Tit	1					1
Blue Tit	2				1	1
Wren	3					3
Mistle Thrush	1		1			
Song Thrush	34	6	6	3	6	13
Blackbird	37	2	9	4	11	11
Reed Warbler	3					3
Sedge Warbler	1				1	
Blackcap	3			1	2	
Whitethroat	4			1	1	2
Duncock	10	1	2	2	2	3
Spotted Flycatcher	2				2	
Starling	1					1
Greenfinch	15	1	2		4	8
Goldfinch	18		3	2	1	12
Linnet	74	5	10	14	20	25
Linnet/Cuckoo	1			1		
Bullfinch	1				1	
Chaffinch	1				1	
Tree Sparrow	35	1	2	7	15	10
Total	276	25	38	37	72	104