

BALLARD DOWN 2017  
BIRD/WILDLIFE AND RINGING REPORT

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Table showing the very first Ringing Session of 2017 at Ballard Down  
 11<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy.

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed	Retraps
1.	Grasshopper Warbler	1	0
2.	Firecrest	1	0
3.	Green Woodpecker	1	0
4.	Willow Warbler	14	0
5.	Whitethroat	8	0
6.	Reed Warbler	2	0
7.	Blackcap	4	0
8.	Wren	3	0
9.	Goldcrest	1	0
10.	Blackbird	1	0
11.	Blue Tit	2	0
12.	Chiffchaff	2	0
13.	Robin	4	0
14.	Dunnock	2	0
15.	Great Tit	2	0
	Daily Total	48	0

The table above shows the potential of Ballard Down as a great location for birds with quality birds such as Grasshopper Warbler, Firecrest and Green Woodpecker all being ringed on the very first day. Also ringing 15 species on the very first day was an impressive species variety.

Table showing The Most productive Ringing day of the Year in 2017 at Ballard Down - 16<sup>th</sup> September Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Chiffchaff	84
2.	Grasshopper Warbler	3
3.	Blackcap	43
4.	Robin	2
5.	Reed Warbler	2
6.	Whitethroat	5
7.	Blue Tit	3
8.	Willow Warbler	4
9.	Sedge Warbler	1
10.	Great Tit	1
11.	Swallow	7
12.	House Martin	2
13.	Sand Martin	53
	Daily Total	210

This was an incredible ringing day at Ballard Down. Very good numbers of Chiffchaff were ringed as were good numbers of Blackcap. An impressive number of Sand Martin were also ringed which helped boost the number. As September has always been known to be a highly productive time of the year for bird migration and this date shows it with 210 birds ringed in total. On the main warbler migration had slowed down late morning Sand Martins could also be ringed as these were caught late morning/early afternoon.

Table showing the 2<sup>nd</sup> most productive Ringing day of the Year in 2017 at Ballard Down and the most productive ringing day of October 2017. 25<sup>th</sup> October  
Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Blackcap	6
2.	Chiffchaff	5
3.	Chaffinch	14
4.	Robin	2
5.	Lesser Redpoll	58
6.	Coal Tit	1
7.	Song Thrush	2
8.	Bullfinch	8
9.	Wren	1
10.	Firecrest	1
11.	Long-tailed Tit	14
12.	Goldcrest	19
13.	Dunnock	1
14.	Great Tit	10
15.	Blue Tit	11
16.	Goldfinch	50
	Daily Total	203

The Table above clearly shows how good Ballard is at peak migration times. It was the most productive day producing excellent numbers of Lesser Redpolls. There were also excellent numbers of Goldfinch ringed with an impressive 50. This is a classic date for large finch movements. The last week of October has always been regarded as a good week for autumn migration. 16 species ringed in a day was a good number of species variety.

Ringed in August - The table below shows a complete list of all species  
 Ringed in the month of August at Ballard Down  
 Species and figures in **bold** are particularly noteworthy

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Green Woodpecker	1
2.	Great Spotted Woodpecker	1
3.	Sand Martin	59
4.	Swallow	1
5.	House Martin	199
6.	Tree Pipit	4
7.	Wren	10
8.	Dunnock	10
9.	Robin	12
10.	Redstart	7
11.	Wheatear	1
12.	Blackbird	4
13.	Grasshopper Warbler	86
14.	Sedge Warbler	49
15.	Reed Warbler	20
16.	Lesser Whitethroat	3
17.	Whitethroat	92
18.	Garden Warbler	7
19.	Blackcap	75
20.	Chiffchaff	28
21.	Willow Warbler	112
22.	Goldcrest	2
23.	Firecrest	1
24.	Spotted Flycatcher	1
25.	Pied Flycatcher	1
26.	Long-tailed Tit	6
27.	Marsh Tit	1
28.	Blue Tit	9
29.	Great Tit	9
30.	Chaffinch	1
31.	Linnet	1
32.	Bullfinch	4
33.	Reed Bunting	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>819</b>

Ringling in September- The table below shows a complete list of all species  
 Ringed in the month of September at Ballard Down  
 Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Kestrel	1
2.	Sand Martin	53
3.	Swallow	29
4.	House Martin	3
5.	Meadow Pipit	209
6.	Wren	5
7.	Dunnock	13
8.	Robin	23
9.	Redstart	5
10.	Stonechat	1
11.	Wheatear	2
12.	Ring Ouzel	1
13.	Blackbird	2
14.	Song Thrush	1
15.	Grasshopper Warbler	22
16.	Sedge Warbler	20
17.	Reed Warbler	14
18.	Lesser Whitethroat	1
19.	Whitethroat	44
20.	Garden Warbler	3
21.	Blackcap	338
22.	Chiffchaff	809
23.	Willow Warbler	51
24.	Goldcrest	14
25.	Firecrest	1
26.	Spotted Flycatcher	3
27.	Long-tailed Tit	12
28.	Blue Tit	10
29.	Great Tit	14
30.	Jay	1
31.	Chaffinch	10
32.	Goldfinch	29
33.	Linnet	1
34.	Yellowhammer	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1746</b>

Ringling in October - The table below shows a complete list of all species Ringed in the month of October at Ballard Down  
 Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Great Spotted Woodpecke	3
2.	Swallow	31
3.	House Martin	1
4.	Meadow Pipit	13
5.	Pied Wagtail	2
6.	Wren	18
7.	Dunnock	10
8.	Robin	20
9.	Redstart	2
10.	Stonechat	1
11.	Blackbird	5
12.	Fieldfare	1
13.	Song Thrush	8
14.	Redwing	1
15.	Grasshopper Warbler	2
16.	Dartford Warbler	2
17.	Blackcap	68
18.	Yellow-browed Warbler	2
19.	Chiffchaff	496
20.	Goldcrest	168
21.	Firecrest	11
22.	Long-tailed Tit	94
23.	Coal Tit	3
24.	Blue Tit	40
25.	Great Tit	37
26.	Chaffinch	42
27.	Brambling	1
28.	Greenfinch	8
29.	Goldfinch	228
30.	Linnet	3
31.	Lesser Redpoll	220
32.	Bullfinch	17
33.	Yellowhammer	7
34.	Reed Bunting	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1566</b>

Ringling in November The Table below shows a complete list of all species Ringed in the month of November at Ballard Down  
Species and figures in bold are particularly noteworthy

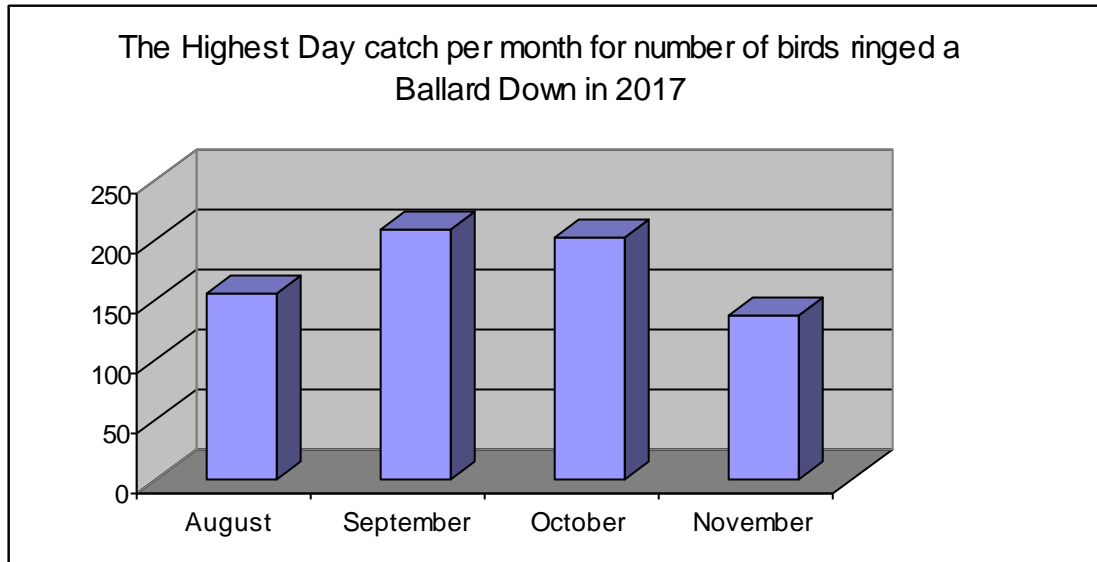
Species Number	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Sparrowhawk	1
2.	Snipe	1
3.	Meadow Pipit	3
4.	Wren	8
5.	Dunnock	4
6.	Robin	5
7.	Blackbird	20
8.	Song Thrush	10
9.	Redwing	5
10.	Blackcap	2
11.	Chiffchaff	12
12.	Goldcrest	25
13.	Firecrest	2
14.	Long-tailed Tit	43
15.	Coal Tit	6
16.	Blue Tit	18
17.	Great Tit	10
18.	Chaffinch	97
19.	Brambling	7
20.	Greenfinch	1
21.	Goldfinch	365
22.	Lesser Redpoll	44
23.	Bullfinch	21
24.	Reed Bunting	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>711</b>

The Highest Day catch per month for numbers of birds ringed in 2017 at Ballard Down NB: number in brackets is actual date

August	September	October	November
156 (25 <sup>th</sup> )	210 (16 <sup>th</sup> )	203 (25 <sup>th</sup> )	137 (6 <sup>th</sup> )

There were impressive day catches in all four months at Ballard Down. Not surprisingly the highest day catch of the year was on September 16<sup>th</sup>, a classic date for autumn migration when very large numbers of common migrants were passing through. interesting to note that even in the month of November there was a day when well over 100 birds were ringed showing even in late autumn numbers were still very high at the site.



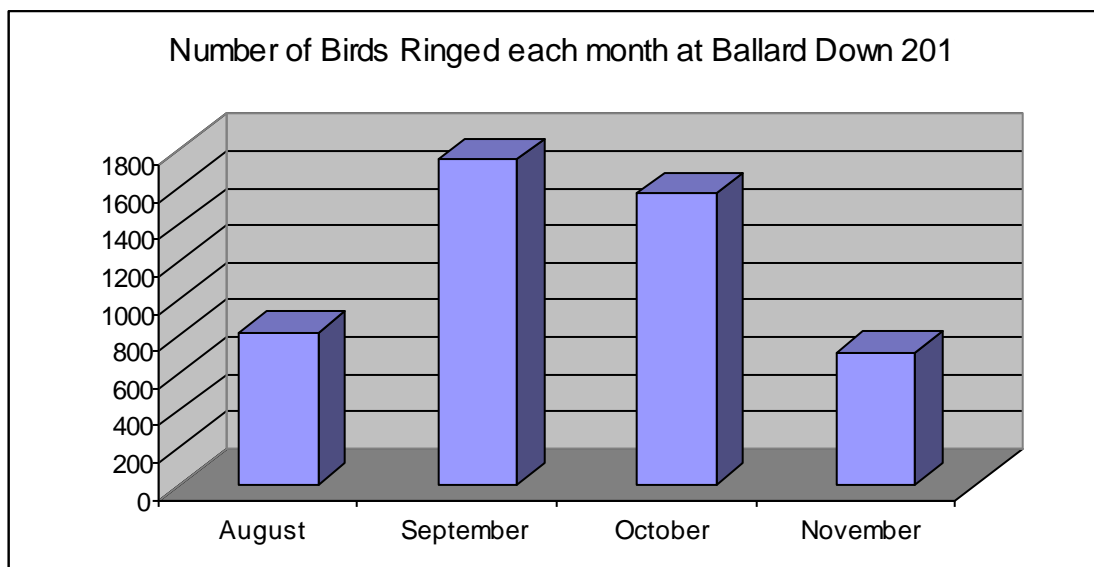


#### Monthly Ringing Totals at Ballard Down 2017

NB: Number in Brackets indicates number of ringing sessions that month.

August	September	October	November
819	1747	1567	711
(15)	(20)	(18)	(20)

September was the best month of the autumn for number of birds ringed with an impressive 1747 birds ringed, closely followed by October with 1567 birds ringed. September and October have always been regarded as possibly the best two months of the whole year for bird migration and this is clearly evident at Ballard Down!



The most productive month of the year/autumn was September closely followed by October. Both these months produced large numbers of common migrants very good species variety. Not surprisingly there were far less birds ringed in November as by the start of this month many species had completely moved through, the autumn migration became much quieter by mid November and towards the very end of the month was very quiet. Many more birds would have been ringed in August but ten days of ringing were missed as the season did not start until August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Ringling Totals at Ballard Down 2017

Species in bold are the top ten most common species ringed

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed	First Date Ringed
1.	Sparrowhawk	1	9/11/2017
2.	Kestrel	1	25/9/2017
3.	Snipe	1	25/11/2017
4.	Green Woodpecker	1	11/8/2017
5.	Great Spotted Woodpecker	4	14/8/2017
6.	Jay	1	6/9/2017
7.	Sand Martin	112	24/8/2017
8.	Swallow	61	22/8/2017
9.	House Martin	203	23/8/2017
10.	Meadow Pipit	225	7/9/2017
11.	Tree Pipit	4	25/8/2017
12.	Pied Wagtail	2	6/10/2017
13.	Coal Tit	9	14/10/2017
14.	Blue Tit	77	11/8/2017
15.	Great Tit	70	11/8/2017
16.	Marsh Tit	1	23/8/2017
17.	Long-tailed Tit	155	14/8/2017
18.	Willow Warbler	163	11/8/2017
19.	Chiffchaff	1345	11/8/2017
20.	Sedge Warbler	69	12/8/2017
21.	Grasshopper Warbler	111	11/8/2017
22.	Reed Warbler	33	11/8/2017
23.	Blackcap	483	11/8/2017
24.	Garden Warbler	9	13/8/2017
25.	Common Whitethroat	136	11/8/2017
26.	Lesser Whitethroat	4	20/8/2017
27.	Dartford Warbler	2	6/10/2017
28.	Yellow-browed Warbler	2	17/10/2017
29.	Firecrest	15	11/8/2017
30.	Goldcrest	209	11/8/2017

31.	Wren	41	11/8/2017
32.	Spotted Flycatcher	4	20/8/2017
33.	Pied Flycatcher	1	21/8/2017
34.	Blackbird	31	11/8/2017
35.	Ring Ouzel	1	22/9/2017
36.	Redwing	6	29/10/2017
37.	Song Thrush	19	22/9/2017
38.	Fieldfare	1	28/10/2017
39.	Robin	59	11/8/2017
40.	Dunnock	36	11/8/2017
41.	Redstart	14	14/8/2017
42.	Wheatear	3	31/8/2017
43.	Stonechat	2	25/9/2017
44.	Bullfinch	42	22/8/2017
45.	Chaffinch	150	13/8/2017
46.	Brambling	8	30/10/2017
47.	Linnet	5	27/8/2017
48.	Lesser Redpoll	264	8/10/2017
49.	Greenfinch	9	9/10/2017
50.	Goldfinch	623	9/9/2017
51.	Reed Bunting	4	27/8/2017
52.	Yellowhammer	8	24/9/2017
		4840 = Total	

Ringling Totals at Ballard Down Ringing Site 2017 in comparison to Durlston Ringing Site 2017. Species in bold are species ringed at Ballard Ringing Station with a higher ringling total than Durlston Ringing Station

Species Number	Species	Number Ringed at Ballard Down Ringing Site	Number Ringed at Durlston Ringing Site	Total Number ringling at both sites
1.	Sparrowhawk	1	3	4
2.	Kestrel	1	0	1
3.	Nightjar	0	9	9
4.	Snipe	1	0	1
5.	Green Woodpecker	1	1	2
6.	Great Spotted Woodpecker	4	0	4
7.	Jay	1	2	3
8.	Sand Martin	112	0	112
9.	Swallow	61	54	115
10.	House Martin	203	2	205
11.	Meadow Pipit	225	38	263
12.	Tree Pipit	4	112	116
13.	Pied Wagtail	2	0	2
14.	Coal Tit	9	7	16
15.	Blue Tit	77	52	129
16.	Great Tit	70	36	106
17.	Marsh Tit	1	2	3
18.	Long-tailed Tit	155	42	197
19.	Willow Warbler	163	613	776
20.	Chiffchaff	1345	910	2255
21.	Siberian Chiffchaff	0	1	1
22.	Sedge Warbler	69	45	114
23.	Grasshopper Warbler	111	208	319
24.	Reed Warbler	33	25	58
25.	Blackcap	483	509	992
26.	Garden Warbler	9	72	81
27.	Common Whitethroat	136	114	250
28.	Lesser Whitethroat	4	13	17
29.	Dartford Warbler	2	1	3
30.	Yellow-browed Warbler	2	2	4
31.	Firecrest	15	26	41
32.	Goldcrest	209	368	577
33.	Wren	41	35	76
34.	Starling	0	1	1
35.	Spotted Flycatcher	4	8	12
36.	Pied Flycatcher	1	1	2
37.	Blackbird	31	28	59

38.	Ring Ouzel	1	0	1
39.	Redwing	6	41	47
40.	Song Thrush	19	17	36
41.	Fieldfare	1	0	1
42.	Robin	59	72	131
43.	Nightingale	0	2	2
44.	Dunnock	36	24	60
45.	Redstart	14	19	33
46.	Wheatear	3	1	4
47.	Stonechat	2	0	2
48.	House Sparrow	0	10	10
49.	Bullfinch	42	42	84
50.	Chaffinch	150	15	165
51.	Hawfinch	0	1	1
52.	Brambling	8	0	8
53.	Linnet	5	30	35
54.	Lesser Redpoll	264	18	282
55.	Greenfinch	9	5	14
56.	Goldfinch	623	289	912
57.	Reed Bunting	4	1	5
58.	Yellowhammer	8	0	8
		4840 = Total	3927 = Total	8767 = Total

It is interesting to note that 913 more birds were ringed at Ballard Down Ringing Station than Durlston Ringing Station in 2017. This indicates just how good the site is as a migration hot spot. 32 species were ringed at Ballard Down in 2017 with a greater number ringed than Durlston. What is very impressive is the combined ringing totals of both prime ringing stations. In total 8767 birds were ringed at both ringing stations. 58 species of birds were ringed at both sites combined in 2017.



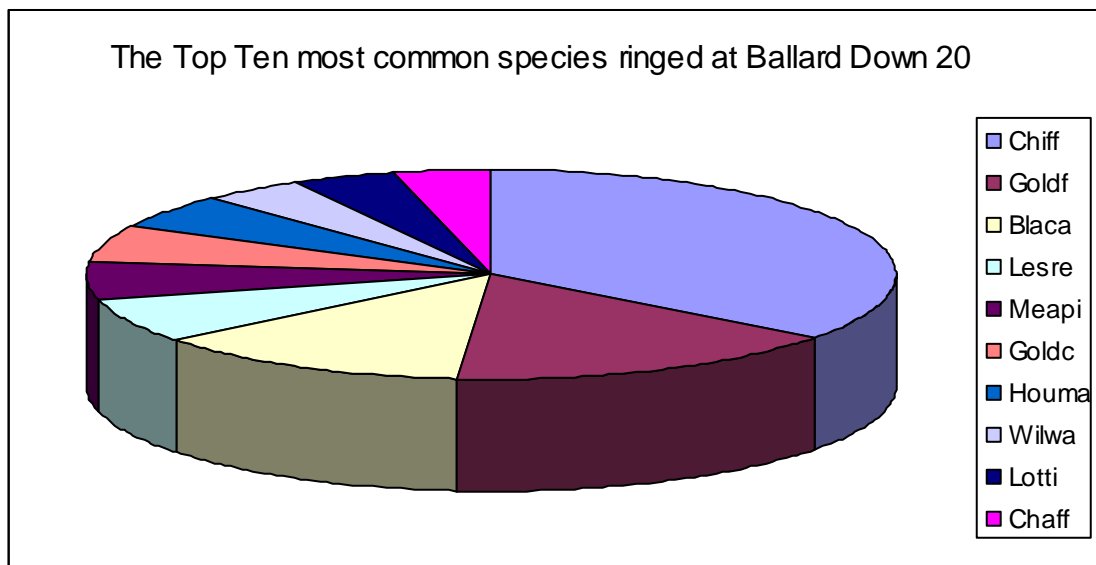
Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* This was an unexpected catch in 2017. Only the one bird was caught and ringed. Ballard Down provides the perfect hunting opportunities for Kestrels. This is a female as lacking the grey crown of the male. It was ringed on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Kestrels were commonly seen throughout the season. Comparing Ballard to Durlston there has never been a Kestrel ringed at Durlston so catching one at Ballard so early on was quite an achievement.



Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* Just the one bird was ringed in 2017. The 51<sup>st</sup> species to be ringed at the site, ringed on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017. This bird is a first year male, note the buff fringing to the mantle/back indicating it is a young bird. It was surprising that a fairly common species such as this was caught for the first time so late in the season and that only one was caught. Durlston managed to catch 2 more with 3 ringed that year.

## The Top Ten most common species ringed at Ballard Down 2017

Rank	Species	Number Ringed
1.	Chiffchaff	1345
2.	Goldfinch	623
3.	Blackcap	483
4.	Lesser Redpoll	264
5.	Meadow Pipit	225
6.	Goldcrest	209
7.	House Martin	203
8.	Willow Warbler	163
9.	Long-tailed Tit	155
10.	Chaffinch	150



52 species of birds were ringed at Ballard Down throughout, 2017 August to November, a grand total of 4840 birds were ringed. This is a very impressive figure and shows just how good Ballard Down is as an autumn migration hotspot on the Dorset coast. Chiffchaff was by far the most common species ringed with an impressive 1345 birds ringed. It is interesting to note that all ten species in the top ten had figures well above one hundred with even number ten on the list, Chaffinch with 150 ringed in the autumn/year.



Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* Dorset's most iconic breeding bird. 2 were ringed all season/year at Ballard Down. This species is continuing to do really well on the heaths of Dorset with numbers on the increase. This is an adult male; the other bird ringed was a first year bird. Both birds were ringed in October; the first one ringed was on 6 October 2017.



Great Spotted Woodpecker 4 were ringed in 2017. 3 were ringed in October and 1 in August. This is an immature bird; note the amount of red on the crown. The first one to be ringed was on 14 August 2017.





Willow Warbler adult *Phylloscopus trochilus* 163 were ringed in 2017 making it the 8<sup>th</sup> most common species ringed although a reasonable total were caught many more would have been ringed had I started the season earlier before the peak passage. Note how clean white below this bird is confirming its age as an adult. Willow Warblers were ringed on the first day of the season, 1<sup>st</sup> August; the first bird of the season to be ringed was in fact a Willow Warbler. The vast majority of birds were ringed in August with 112 ringed; in September 51 were ringed.



Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* This was the number 1 most common species ringed at Ballard Down all season/year with an impressive 1345 ringed. The majority were ringed in September, being 809, quite a few more were ringed in October with 496 ringed in total. Very few were ringed in August, only 28 in total and even less in November, just 12 ringed. Clearly this incredible total shows how Ballard Down is an ideal migration hotspot for migrating warblers notably Chiffchaffs. The first bird ringed for the season was on the first day, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.



Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Just two were ringed all season, one in September and one in October. The first was ringed on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2017. This is an immature The Stonechat is an iconic heathland specialist and this species continues to do well throughout the county.



Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* Just the one was caught and ringed in 2017. It was an unexpected catch and was ringed on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017. Note the small bib separating it from the very closely related Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* This is a species of conservation concern and along with the Willow Tit is in serious decline throughout the UK. The Marsh Tit was once a familiar and common species in Dorset but unfortunately not now.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa* 3 were ringed, all three birds were of the Greenland race being larger bulkier birds than the nominate, longer winged birds. The first bird of the season to be ringed was caught on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017. The other two were ringed in September.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* 60 birds were ringed all season/year in 2017. The first bird to be ringed was on the first day of ringing, 11<sup>th</sup> August. This was the 16<sup>th</sup> most common species ringed; it was a poor year for Robin migration through Ballard Down in the autumn, perhaps due to a lack of easterly winds. Most were ringed in September with 23 ringed, 20 were ringed in October, 12 were ringed in August and only 5 in November.