



21 August 2009

Media Release

Ten in a Hundred as Peterborough Bird Stops Off in France

A Peterborough-based nightingale ringed near Bainton has been re-trapped in France on its way to its African wintering home. This is only the tenth ever nightingale ringed anywhere in the UK and recovered abroad in 100 years of bird ringing!

Nightingales are one of the best known birds – everyone has heard of them, but few have heard them. In Peterborough we are lucky to have several sites that support flourishing populations of this symbolic bird of summer evenings. This bird was ringed as an adult female at Bainton on land managed by the Langdyke Countryside Trust on 5 June 2008 by Chris Hughes as part of the British Trust for Ornithology's Constant Effort Sites scheme. It was caught by French ringers south of La Rochelle on the south-west coast of France. The distance flown was 745km but she still had a long way to go to sub-Saharan Africa for the winter.

Amazingly we still have no information about where in Africa nightingales spend the winter. Chris Hughes said, 'A lot of the important information we get from bird ringing relates to annual changes in productivity and survival but movements like this add real excitement for the trained volunteers who give so much to their hobby. It's only a matter of time until some lucky ringer receives news that his or her Nightingale is the first to have been found in Africa. Until then, all we can do is guess where they go - and worry about the ever-declining numbers that arrive back in England each spring.'

Richard Astle of the Langdyke Countryside Trust, which works in the rural areas west of Peterborough and runs four nature reserves, said, 'Many of our African migrants - such as Nightingales, Cuckoos and

Spotted Flycatchers - appear to be in real trouble nationally. Nightingales seem to be doing well around Peterborough, but we have seen a real reduction in the numbers of cuckoos in our area recently.'

The British Trust for Ornithology, which runs all ringing activity in the UK, has recently launched an appeal to find out what is happening to our migrant birds in Africa, the 'Out of Africa' appeal. More details can be found on their website http://www.bto.org/appeals/out_of_africa_appeal.htm

- Ends-

Notes to Editors

The Langdyke Countryside Trust is a voluntary, membership based organisation that through community action aims to preserve and enhance the natural heritage in the area between Peterborough and Stamford, including, where possible, through the restoration of the lost limestone grassland landscapes described by John Clare. We have three principal theme areas of activity

1. **Places** – working with landowners, or if appropriate managing land ourselves, to enhance or create habitats in order to increase both the diversity and the numbers of our local wildlife species. In particular, and working with the John Clare Trust we will focus on the restoration of the lost landscapes as described by John Clare, including areas of limestone grassland.
2. **People** – working with schools and other community groups and wildlife charities, we will offer opportunities for people to learn about and appreciate and support the natural environment on their doorsteps.
3. **Projects from Poems** –we will establish specific programmes of conservation activity designed to support increases in population of certain species that feature in the poetry and writing of John Clare.

The Trust has managed Swaddywell Pit as a community nature reserve since 2003 and has over 150 members in the villages west of Peterborough. It has also recently announced the creation of a heritage and nature reserve at Torpel Manor Field, Bainton. It now actively manages nearly 130 acres of land in the interests of nature and the local community.

The Constant Effort Sites (CES) scheme is the first national standardised ringing programme within the [BTO Ringing Scheme](#) and has been running since 1983. Ringers operate the same nets in the same locations over the same time period at regular intervals through the breeding season at 120 sites throughout Britain and Ireland. The Scheme provides valuable trend information on abundance of adults and juveniles, productivity and also adult survival rates for 25 species of common songbird.

Media contacts

For media requests please contact Richard Astle on (01733) 207331 or e-mail richard@athene-communications.co.uk

