

Bird Ringing Phoenix Park Dublin: Survey Data for 2022

Prepared by **Alan Maslanka**



Long-Tailed Tit with OPW ring 2022

Report in partnership between (OPW, Phoenix Park, National Historic Properties) With special thanks to the OPW Parks Superintendents Office and prepared by Irish Midlands Ringing Group (IMRG)

February 2023



Contact Details: IMRG, Phone: +353 86 7930990, Email: alan.maslanka@gmail.com

Table of contents

1. Introduction & overview	3
2. Methods	4
a. Mist netting	
b. Nest box	
c. Dazzling/Thermal Camera	
3. Results	6
a. Mist netting	
b. Nest box	
c. Nest box locations	
d. Species observed.	
e. Thermal camera/Dazzling	
4. Discussion	7
5. Recommendations	7
a. Future projects	
6. Acknowledgment	8
7. References	8
8. Appendix	8
9. Key & abbreviations	11

1. Introduction & Overview

Irish Midlands Ringing Group (IMRG), Project Leader Alan Maslanka, “Senior Member” with the kind and invaluable support of the (OPW) National Historic Properties Project Leader Raychel Coyle. IMRG have been studying the bird species in the OPW Phoenix Parks since December 2021 for Mist netting/ringing.

The following yearly report explains the methods, locations, bird species ringed and observed while surveying. And the groundbreaking work carried out at night-time ringing ground roosting birds using thermal imaging.

Each survey session for Mist netting on average lasted 4 hours and each Dazzling session lasted on average 3 hours. Over the last 12 months 56 species has been recorded and a total of 17 species has been ringed, of which 17 were Skylarks.

Blue Tit, Great Tit and Blackbirds were the most common birds ringed using the Mist net method, the increase numbers of Song Thrush viewed and ringed was one of the most significant findings for 2022. One other major finding was the largest abundance of Greenfinch viewed in the park were based at the visitors Center.

The largest number of ground roosting species were found in the section (Fifteen Acres) field, better known as the Popes Cross field, the least, section (Magazine Fort) field, better known as the Sport fields. The most abundant species in Fifteen Acres was Snipe, followed by Skylark and most surprising flocks of Golden Plovers, then Woodcock. The most abundant species in the Magazine Fort field were Golden Plover and then Skylark. We were very surprised not to view any Meadow Pipits.

The initial report findings are very encouraging especially for Song Thrush and Skylark, the Skylark depend heavily on the two large fields in the park, and it is very rare to have this species nesting in such an urban area.

The data collected was then compared to the same data collected for the same species in different locations within Ireland, this data then analysed and reported.

Ringers, the Phoenix Park project was conceived by Alan Maslanka who is one of the senior members of the Irish Midlands Ringing Group (IMRG) who work closely with the National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) in Ireland and the British Trust for Ornithology who hold the data and distribute globally. Mr Maslanka originally started the project at the OSI Phoenix Park on the 5th of November 2017. All the ringers involved are issued a special license from the NPWS and the BTO.

Data, Ireland comes under the BTO ringing standard and all data is entered into the BTO system, that is then connected to other countries systems to share the information when a bird is recaptured in a different country.

The data collected has been very encouraging and over the years we will be able to examine which birds born at a certain site stays within that area, and we will be able to pinpoint 100% their age, which is very important.

2. Methods

a. Mist netting

The main method for the survey and ringing passerines is to erect a removable mist net, that are on average 40 meters long, these are held up with two aluminum 4-piece pipes that do not do any damage to the landscape and or bird.

b. Nest box

In 2023 we would like to try between two and four types of nest boxes, for Blue Tits and Great Tits, the entrance hole is a few millimeters larger for the Great Tit. Both types of boxes are made of wood and fixed to a tree in all cases, at different heights and different directions I.E. North, South, East, West, facing to gauge the best direction using the data over the next 2 to 5 years. And for Long-Eared Owl and Tree/House Sparrows.

c. Dazzling/Thermal Camera

On the 2nd of March 2022 the IMRG team headed up by Mr Maslanka, started the groundbreaking surveying of ground roosting birds at 2 locations in the Phoenix Park. Locations (1) Fifteen Acres field and (2) Magazine Fort field.

The capture method is “Dazzling” Dazzling is used after a bird is identified using the thermal camera to pin-point its position using the heat signature of the birds body, the bird is dazzled by a light and a net gently placed over the bird, this is the best and most successful way to ring nocturnal or ground roosting birds at the Phoenix Park locations that we would not be able to ring during the day.

These species such as Long-Eared Owl, Skylark, Meadow Pipits, Snipe, Woodcock, Golden Plover, and other species are either ground roosting birds and or only active at nighttime. IMRG have been trialing this method in Ireland and was the first group to use the method to add vital data onto the BTO data based for Irish birds. It will be a crucial part of the Phoenix Park site surveys for the future. Many of the species we will be ringing with the thermal camera are migratory, so again will give us vital new information for the first time, this is ground-breaking work supported by the OPW.

(Fig 3) Heat signature of Golden Plover in Fifteen Acres field



(Fig 3).

3. Results

a. <u>Mist netting surveys</u>	<u>Surveys</u>
1. Phoenix Park Visitors Centre	8
• Full data (Appendix)	
b. <u>Nest box surveys</u>	<u>Surveys</u>
1. Location to be agreed	0
2. Location to be agreed	0
3. Location to be agreed	0
4. Location to be agreed	0
• Full data (Appendix)	
c. <u>Nest box locations</u>	<u>Number of Box</u>
1. To be agreed	0
• Location Reference Numbers OPW IMRG PP01 to PP05	
2. To be agreed	0
• Location Reference Numbers OPW IMRG PP01 to PP05	
3. To be agreed	0
• Location Reference Numbers OPW IMRG PP01 to PP05	
d. <u>Species observed.</u>	
• Full Data (Appendix)	
e. <u>Thermal night-time surveys</u>	<u>Surveys</u>
1. Fifteen Acres/Magazine Fort	37
• Full Data (Appendix)	

4. **Discussion**

IMRG would like to address some of the following points for future discussion.

- Nest Box - Protocols regarding the best method of fixing a nest box to certain species of trees (Tree care) We are currently trialing different straps in the OSI and will report on the best method.
- Ranger participation – The staff and rangers at the park and OPW are very welcome at any of the ringing sessions and if a bird is found or viewed with a ring, a reporting method would be of great help.
- Hirundinidae ringing - Swallow, Swift, Sand Martin, House Martin data (Magazine Fort). The possibility to survey these 4 species at the Magazine Fort

5. **Recommendations**

a. Future projects

- Skylark Nesting – To enhance the night-time thermal camera surveys of Skylark. The IMRG team are going to survey the Skylarks nests and ring the Pulli, this will give us much better aging accuracy and important data on how long the birds are living and if they are staying in the same area
- Skylark nest site management – During the nesting season for Skylarks (Mid-April to Early Sept) research has shown that the species preferred habitat is grass field with the height of the grass/crop is 20 – 50cm. 2 to 3 nests per breeding pair is an average, Skylark populations are in decline, it is very unusual to have Skylark nesting in an urban park, so if we can look at a grass management program during the nesting season, this would help maintain the species in the park and help their numbers increase.
- Owl nest boxes – As there are Owls in the park, a trial of Owl nest boxes would be of great benefit.
- Blue Tit, Great Tit, House & Tree Sparrow nest boxes – a trial of nest boxes for these species would be of great benefit.

6. **Acknowledgement**

All projects and equipment (Mist netting “Bird Ringing” and Nest boxes and monitoring was funded by Alan Maslanka and the IMRG. Once again sincere thanks to the parks Superintendent and Rangers, Raychel Coyle for her care, vision, input, and assistance with liaisons within the park.

- Superintendent’s Office
- National Historic Properties
- OPW
- Phoenix Park Visitors Centre

7. References

Void

8. Appendix

I. Mist netting

a. Figures

Fig 1 (Phoenix Park Visitors Centre) 2022.

SPECIES	LOCATION	WING	WEIGHT	M/F	AGE	RING	COMPARISON	CONCLUSION
Blackbird	Visitors Centre	132	96.3	M	Adult	LL88559	Good	Healthy and on par with other habitats in Ireland
Robin	Visitors Centre	66	19	NA	Juvenile	AAN9296	Good	
Blackbird	Visitors Centre	125	97.3	F	Adult	LL88560		
Song Thrush	Visitors Centre	122	79.6	NA	Adult	LL88561	Good	
Goldcrest	Visitors Centre	54	5.5	M	Juvenile	LNE801	Good	
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	69	17.1	F	Juvenile	AAN9297	Good	
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	70	17.2	M	Adult	AAN9298		
Blackbird	Visitors Centre	130	NA	M	Adult	LL88562		
Wren	Visitors Centre	51	NA	NA	Adult	LNE802	Good	
Robin	Visitors Centre	72	NA	NA	Adult	AAN9299		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	68	NA	F	Adult	AAN9300		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	75	NA	M	Adult	ALDO401		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	72	NA	M	Adult	ALDO402		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	68	NA	F	Adult	ALDO403		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	71	NA	M	Adult	ALDO404		
Great Tit	Visitors Centre	70	NA	F	Juvenile	ALDO405		
Goldcrest	Visitors Centre	49	NA	M	Adult	LNE803		
Robin	Visitors Centre	74	19.6	NA	Adult	ALDO411		
Goldcrest	Visitors Centre	50	4.7	F	Adult	LNE808		
Robin		72	20.2	NA	Adult	AAN9299		This was the first retrap of a bird ringed at the site
Treecreeper		62	9.6	NA	Adult	LNE809	Good	
Wren		45	9.4	NA	Adult	LNE810		
Blue Tit		61	10.7	NA	Adult	ALDO412		
Chaffinch		82	22.9	F	Adult	ALDO413	Good	
Great Tit		70	NA	NA	Adult	ALDO414		
Great Tit		72	NA	NA	Adult	ALDO415		
Great Tit		71	NA	NA	Adult	ALDO416		
Robin		75	19	NA	Adult	ALDO417		
Duncock		68	21.8	NA	Adult	TZ69944	Good	This bird was ringed at the OSI in 2021
Robin		79	18.7	NA	Adult	ARA7183		This bird was ringed in the OSI in 2018
Blue Tit		63	10.2	NA	Adult	S885236		This bird was ringed in the OSI in 2018
Goldcrest		49	NA	NA	Adult	LCA200		This bird was ringed in the OSI in 2021
Treecreeper		60	8.26	NA	Adult	LNE823		
Goldcrest		50	5.7	M	Juvenile	LNE824		
Great Tit		72	16.7	NA	Juvenile	ALDO449		
Great Tit		74	18.3	M	Adult	ALDO450		
Song Thrush		115	69	NA	Adult	RL71407		
Goldfinch		72	17.1	F	Adult	ALDO451		
Blackcap		78	17.7	F	Adult	ALDO452	Good	
Blackcap		70	15.8	M	Juvenile	ALDO453		
Great Tit		81	18.9	M	Adult	ALDO454		
Coal Tit		58	9.4	NA	Juvenile	ALDO455		
Song Thrush		115	66.4	F	Adult	RL71408		
Blackbird		126	98.5	M	Adult	LL88565		
Blackbird		116	90.8	M	Adult	LL88571		
Wren		NA	NA	NA	Adult	LNE810		This bird was originally ringed at the same site 2021
Great Tit		72	17.8	M	Juvenile	ALDO456		
Great Tit		71	17.9	M	Adult	ALDO457		
Goldfinch		71	16	M	Adult	ALDO451		This bird was originally ringed at the same site in 2022
Wren		47	9.5	F	Adult	LNE825		
Goldfinch		79	15.8	NA	Juvenile	ALDO458	Good	
Goldfinch		76	16.4	NA	Juvenile	ALDO459		
Goldfinch		78	15.1	NA	Juvenile	ALDO460		
Goldfinch		78	15.8	NA	Juvenile	ALDO461		
WREN		50	10.2	F	Adult	LNE826		
Wren		46	10.1	F	Adult	LNE827		
Goldcrest		53	5.1	M	Adult	LNE850		
Blackbird		125	95.1	F	Adult	LL88575		
Blackbird		126	96.5	F	Juvenile	LL88576		
Blackbird		122	97.2	F	Juvenile	LL88577		
Robin		71	20.3	NA	Juvenile	AAN4401		
Long-Tail Tit		62	7.3	NA	NA	LNE851	Good	
Long-Tail Tit		57	6.8	NA	NA	LNE852		
Blackbird		123	102	F	Adult	LL88578		
Long-Tail Tit		61	7.7	NA	NA	LNE816		
Long-Tail Tit		59	6.9	NA	NA	LNE853		
Blackcap		70	20	F	Adult	AAN4402		
Song Thrush		112	85.4	NA	Juvenile	RL71409		
Robin		73	20.7	NA	Juvenile	AAN4403		
Song Thrush		116	81.3	NA	Adult	RL71410		
Blackbird		123	110.6	NA	Adult	LL88579		
Song Thrush		114	80.9	NA	Juvenile	RL71411		
Blue Tit		62	10	NA	Juvenile	AAN4404		
Goldcrest		50	5.4	M	Adult	LNE854		
Long-Tail Tit		59	6.5	NA	NA	LNE855		
Long-Tail Tit		60	7.5	NA	NA	LNE851		This bird was originally ringed at the same site in 2022
Blue Tit		65	10.6	M	Adult	AAN4406		
Great Tit		71	17.1	M	Juvenile	AAN4407		
Robin		79	22.5	NA	Adult	AAN4403		This bird was originally ringed at the same site in 2022
Coal Tit		60	9.4	NA	Adult	AAN4408	Good	
Coal Tit		56	8.7	NA	Juvenile	AAN4409		
Goldcrest		52	4.8	F	Adult	LNE856		
Blackbird		120	100	F	Adult	LL88578		This bird was originally ringed at the same site in 2022
Goldcrest		54	5.4	M	Adult	LNE850		This bird was originally ringed at the same site in 2022
Blue Tit		63	10.5	M	Juvenile	AAN4410		

- Total birds ringed 85
- Species 14

Fig 2 (Fifteen Acre’s Field “Papal Cross”) 2022

SPECIES	LOCATION	WING	WEIGHT	M/F	AGE	RING	COMPARISON	CONCLUSION
Skylark	Fifteen Acres	114	40	NA	NA	TZ69949	GOOD	Healthy and on par with other habitats in Ireland
Skylark		108	39.7	NA	NA	TZ69951		
Skylark		102	33.3	NA	NA	TZ69950		
Snipe		127	NA	NA	NA	LL88573	GOOD	Healthy and on par with other habitats in Ireland
Skylark		110	40.4	NA	NA	TZ69952		
Skylark		102	40.7	NA	NA	TZ69953		
Skylark		109	43.8	NA	NA	TZ69954		
Skylark		110	44.7	NA	NA	TZ69955		
Skylark		107	42.3	NA	NA	TZ69956		
Snipe		128	NA	NA	NA	LL88580		
Skylark		107	45.6	NA	NA	TZ69957		
Skylark		NA	NA	NA	NA	TZ69950		First Skylark we retraped during 2022
Skylark		104	41.3	NA	NA	TZ69958		
Skylark		106	45.6	NA	NA	TZ69959		
Woodcock		203	NA	NA	NA	EA19202	GOOD	Healthy and on par with other habitats in Ireland
Snipe		133	NA	NA	NA	LL88581		
Snipe		130	NA	NA	NA	LL88582		
Skylark		107	45.7	NA	NA	TZ69960		
Skylark		110	49.4	NA	NA	TZ69961		
Skylark		108	42.8	NA	NA	TZ69952		Second Skylark we retraped
Skylark		107	47.5	NA	NA	TZ69962		
Skylark		117	41	NA	NA	TZ69963		

- Total birds ringed 20
- Species 3

Fig 3 (Magazine Fort Field “Sports Grounds” 2022)

SPECIES	LOCATION	WING	WEIGHT	M/F	AGE	RING	COMPARISON	CONCLUSION
Skylark	Magazine Fort field	101	33.2	NA	NA	TZ69946	Good	Healthy and on par with other habitats in Ireland
Skylark	Magazine Fort field	111	40	NA	NA	TZ69948		

- Total birds ringed 2
- Species 1

II. Next Box

a. Figures

Fig 1 (Location to be agreed) 2022.

Species	Age	Box Number	Fledge
Long-Eared Owl (1)			

Fig 2 (Location to be agreed) 2022.

Species	Age	Box Number	Fledge
Blue Tit – Great Tit – House & Tree Sparrow (1)			

Fig 3 (Location to be agreed) 2022.

Species	Age	Box Number	Fledge
Barn Swallow			

III. Species observed at ringing survey sessions.

Species	Species	Species	Species
Blue Tit	Great Tit	Long-Tailed Tit	Coal Tit
Buzzard	Long Eared Owl	Sparrowhawk	
Blackbird	Song Thrush	Mistle Thrush	Red Wing
Blackcap	Willow Warbler	Chiffchaff	
House Sparrow	Hedge Sparrow	Wren	Goldcrest
Greenfinch	Goldfinch	Bull Finch	Chaffinch
Redpoll			
Cormorant			
Coot	Moorhen	Little Grebe	
Mute Swan			
Mallard	Teal	Tufted Duck	
Magpie	Jackdaw	Jay	Hooded Crow
Raven	Rook		
Grey Wagtail	Pied Wagtail		
Skylark	Starling		
Swallow	Swift	Sand Martin	House Martin
Robin	Collard Dove	Wood Pigeon	Treecreeper
Herring Gull	Black headed Gull	Med Gull	
Heron	Snipe	Golden Plover	Woodcock

9. Key & Abbreviations

IMRG	Irish Midlands Ringing Group
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Services
Pulli	Baby chicks
NA	Not available

End.....