

# **PIED FLYCATCHER**

## **RINGING REPORT 2022**

Queensbury Estate



This report is a summary of the Pied Flycatcher and Redstart nest box project started here in 1995, a registered RAS (Re-trapping Adults for Survival) project with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

The aim of the project is to monitor the breeding attempts of Pied Flycatchers using nest boxes provided in the broadleaved woodlands on this part of the estate. All chicks, if large enough, are ringed and attempts are made to catch the breeding adults to establish their ages and origins. This will give us data on the survival of birds over the migration and winter periods back to the breeding sites.

(Photo of adult male Redstart by Rebecca Dickson)

2022 saw us make the usual two visits to the nest boxes in the 4 sections of woodland, listed below. 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June.

**In brief, 2022 was the best year since the project began!**

We recorded a total of 30 active Pied Flycatcher nests, they were all successful (no failures at all) and produced good numbers of healthy chicks. Totals are shown in the table below and compared to the previous five years counts.

### **Pied Flycatcher nests 2023**

<b>Wood</b>	<b>2022</b>	2021	2020*	2019	2018	2017
<b>Aylmerbank</b>	<b>8</b>	9	10	7	1	2
<b>Ardoch</b>	<b>14</b>	7	11+	10	8	8
<b>Lime Cleuch</b>	<b>7</b>	5	n/c	5	4	1
<b>Lime Cl. A</b>	<b>1</b>	2	n/c	2	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	23	21+(28)	24	15	12

- 2020\* Due to the restrictions of the pandemic I was unable to check all four woods in 2020 so we have an incomplete count for this year. I suspect, based on average counts, that an additional 7 nests would have been present.

### **Ringling Totals**

In total we ringed 155 Pied Flycatcher chicks and caught 41 adults, both record totals for the project. Of the adults caught 14 were already ringed, all our birds, and this has given us much more information on their ages and natal sites.

We also managed 7 adult Redstarts and 27 chicks, the highest number of adults we have ever caught. This included 5 new birds and 2 ringed birds, also ours.

We also had one pair of Nuthatches use a box producing 8 ringable chicks.

### **Ages and natal sites of ringed adults.**

For **Pied Flycatcher**, of the 14 ringed birds 9 had been ringed as chicks.

The oldest was a male, S939549, ringed in Ardoch 10.06.2018. He had been caught breeding in Aylmerbank in 2021 and remained in the same site this year.

Four birds were ringed as chicks in 2019 including two males from the same brood, ringed in Lime Cleuch A in June 2019 and both breeding in Ardoch this year. A female remaining to breed in Ardoch in both 2021 and 2022 and finally another Ardoch female moving to Aylmerbank in both 2021 and 2022.

There were two ringed as chicks in 2020, both from Ardoch and moving to Aylmerbank to breed in 2022. The final two were chicks from 2021; one from Aylmerbank returning as a female and the other a Lime Cleuch male breeding at Ardoch.

The other 5 re-captures were of birds ringed as adults all of which had remained faithful to their breeding woodlands.

As in 2021, this data shows we have a young population with the oldest bird being just four years old. However, it is the good productivity and relatively high overwinter survival rates for first years which has driven this recovery of our population. Hopefully they will have another good season in 2023.

### **Redstarts.**

In the 2021 report we mentioned seeing a ringed adult male in Ardoch but were unable to catch him, this year however I suspect we did, as a ringed male was caught on the same territory, and he had been ringed as a chick in Ardoch in 2020.

This is the first male we have had back, the previous two were both returning females. The other re-capture this year was of a 2021 breeding female returning to the same box in 2022, at Aylmerbank.

### **Pied Flycatcher Productivity**

The average clutch and brood sizes give us a good indication of the breeding season. Healthy adult females produce more eggs and good food supplies can ensure the chicks survive to fledging.

This year the mean clutch size was 6.46 eggs/nest.

Mean brood size (at ringing) was 5.70 chicks/ nest.

Both these figures are slightly lower than we have had in most years and may reflect the limits to just how many birds the woodlands can support. All the adults caught were in very good physical condition.

### **Ringling Recoveries.**

#### **Pied Flycatcher**

APL3739 chick 12.06.2021 Ardoch Wood.

Ad F nesting 10.06.2022 Low Carritheth, Northumberland 104km 363days.

This is only our second long distance movement, a female switching to breed in Northeast England rather than returning to the study site.

The other bird was one to Cumbria in 2007 and one from Cumbria 2018, both females as well.

## **Acknowledgements**

Once again, a very sincere, thank you to the Estate, the farmers that permit us to run this project, namely Mr and Mrs Park, Mr and Mrs Anderson, and to Mr Clark the Head Keeper.

I would also like to thank the other members of the Clyde Ringing Group that undertake the fieldwork.

Iain Livingstone [iainlivcrg@googlemail.com](mailto:iainlivcrg@googlemail.com)

24.05.2023.