

Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing Group



Devon & Cornwall Wader Ringing Group

Annual Report

2019

Compiled & edited by Keith Grant (Ringing Secretary)

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Group Structure, Members and Other Contributors during 2019

Chair

Tim Frayling

Vice-Chair

Nik Ward

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Chris Dee

Ringing Secretary & Data Manager

Keith Grant

Projects & Logistics Officer

Ryan Burrell

Group Members (as at 16th Feb 2020)

Graham Adnitt
Richard Archer
Chantelle Barry
Louisa Bartlett
Adrian Bayley
AJ Bellamy
Bob Bosisto
Sophie Brown
Malcolm Burgess
Pete Burgess
Lucy Capstick
Andrew Carter
Jodie Case
Phil Chambers
Gary Clewley
Louise Clewley
Lee Collins
Ruth Croger
Emily Cuff
Kate Downes
Dennis Elphick
Joan Ferrer Obiol
Lizzie Grayshon
Miriam Guard
Guy Hayden
Richard Hearn

Chris Heward
Andrew Hoodless
Emma Inzani
Tony John
Sarah Kunzig
Ivan Lakin
Niamh McHugh
Karen Murray
Eleanor Nesh
Josh Nightingale
Alys Perry
Robbie Phillips
Ruth Porter
Pete Potts
David Price
Tamsin Quinn
Judith Read
Pete Roseveare
Ben Rousseau
Dave Scott
Mike Tyler
Noah Walker
Robin Ward
Denise Wawman
Tom Weston
Mark Worden
Sara Zonneveld

Other Contributors & Observers

Rianna Badesha
Becky Garden
Bella Hill
Alan Keatley
Amy Miller
Joanne Morten
Steven O'Donoghue
Martin Overy
Kevin Rylands
Fraser Rush
Alan Smith
Harriet Walters

With apologies for any omissions

Summary of Ringing Operations

Tim Frayling

After a successful cannon-net catch in late 2018 we did not plan the first cannon-net catch of 2019 until the autumn. So the first ringing in 2019 was a mist-netting session in February at Finger Point. The aim was to catch curlew, following reports from Ivan and Lee that curlew were seen leaving Dawlish Warren early in the morning. A recce the previous night confirmed that curlew were moving off their preferred roost site on a strip of saltmarsh on the railway embankment and going over to Dawlish Warren. However, the follow evening the curlew did not roost at Finger Point – probably due to the lower than predicted tide meaning the birds had more options elsewhere on the estuary. The catch was a relatively modest one of a few redshank and oystercatcher, and a surprise knot.

The next catch was a cannon-netting session on 28th September 2019. Up until that date the oystercatchers had not been seen using the ‘re-charge area’ where we had previously set the cannon net. The apparent reluctance of the oystercatchers using the area may be at least in part due to the presence of a fox. The fox unfortunately has benefitted from an individual regularly feeding it at Warren Point. Nonetheless, we decided that this was still the best area to set the net, and we were reassured when 155 oystercatchers roosted in front of the net the night before the catch. However, the next morning the birds settled on Finger Point, and Ivan undertook his usual role of persuading birds to move off Finger Point. With Lee Collins positioned outside the hide to ensure that they did not settle on the island roost, we did get birds to move into the catch area. Although within seconds of landing the flock took off again with some heading back to Finger Point, and some heading towards the Golf Course. We did well to catch 50 as they were reluctant to settle where the net had been set. Of the 50, a total of 47 new oystercatchers were colour-ringed, with 3 already carrying colour rings. Another 10 adult oystercatchers were fitted with GPS tags (see Ryan and Jo’s update below). Surprisingly, we did not catch any juveniles. We know that juveniles typically behave differently to adults and are more likely to forage in fields over high tide and use the top end of the Exe Estuary. As a result we held back the other 10 GPS tags to deploy on juveniles, which we hoped to catch in mist nets later in the season.

On the next mist-netting session at Dawlish Warren on 4th October, the aim was to catch juvenile oystercatchers and deploy the remaining 10 GPS tags. The amount of ambient light was a real issue and it was clear that the birds could see the nets. Consequently, just a single oystercatcher was caught. Fortunately, it was a juvenile and was duly tagged. On 16th November, the mist-netting session resulted in our first 4 dunlin being colour-ringed, which was fantastic. Other birds ringed that evening were knot and greenshank. The final session of the year on the 17th December was very atmospheric. With each step through the water, a luminous green glow would appear from the phosphorescent algae. A thick fog also descended which seemed to change the behaviour of the birds, and partly explained the small catch of 3 redshank, 2 oystercatcher and a dunlin.

In March, I was busy spending the remainder of the grant by purchasing more GPS tags. Unlike the UVF-GPS tags we use on oystercatcher that download data to a base station, the 30 GSM-GPS tags use the mobile phone network to remotely download data. These GSM-GPS tags will be deployed on curlew on the Exe and curlew and oystercatchers on the Taw-Torridge in North Devon.

It has been great to work with Dr Lucy Hawke at University of Exeter, and her PhD student Joanne Morton this year. Jo has done a fantastic job of analysing the oystercatcher tracking data, as well as going down to Dawlish Warren on a regular basis to download the data. Five of Lucy's undergraduate and Masters students joined the cannon net catch in September, this winter all of them have been undertaking various projects on oystercatchers. This has resulted in a boost in the number of ring reads from around the Estuary, outside of Dawlish Warren.

A great deal of time by Chris Dee and Ryan Burrell went into planning a catch on the Taw-Torridge Estuary at Skern towards the end of 2019. So although we didn't attempt a catch in North Devon this year, we have progressed our knowledge of the site and that planning will stand us in good stead for the future. Also we began discussing with the RSPB the options for catching waders on their Exminster Marshes reserve in future, so I look forward to reporting on that in next year's report.

Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report

Chris Dee

Since the relaunch of the group in November 2018, a large part of the group's equipment (including cannons, mist nets, ringing tools and rings) as well as GPS tags have been provided by Natural England through a Defra capital fund grant. We have sufficient stock of metal rings for the foreseeable future. To cover ongoing costs for equipment storage and website hosting, we will be charging a small membership fee from next year. In addition, ad-hoc catch fees may be levied on cannon net catches to cover consumables, such as powder and fuses.

To allow us to comply with GDPR legislation in relation to communication preferences, we do maintain a membership list. As at 16th Feb 2020, the group has 58 members.

To manage subscriptions, donations and purchases in the future, we have set up a bank account for the group, over which selected officers have control. At the end of 2019, the balance in the account stood at £10, comprising a donation from the University of Exeter.



Exe Estuary, showing locations mentioned in this Report

Capture Totals, Sightings & Recoveries

Compiled by Keith Grant

Capture Totals for 2019

	Newly ringed	Reringed	Retraps	Total Captures
Oystercatcher	47	2	2	51
Knot	2	0	0	2
Dunlin	5	0	0	5
Bar-tailed Godwit	1	0	0	1
Redshank	6	0	0	6
Greenshank	1	0	0	1

Sightings, Retraps, Controls and Recoveries 2019

Age when ringed		Finding circumstances	
1	Pullus (nestling)	C	Controlled at another site (usually >5 km)
2	Fully grown, age unknown	Ne	Known to be nesting
3	Hatched during current year	R	Retrapped at or near (<5 km) original
4	Hatched previous year or older		ringing site
5	Hatched previous year	Re	Reringed (original worn ring replaced)
6	Hatched 2 years previously or older	S	Sighting of ringed bird
7	Hatched 2 years previously	XF	Found freshly dead (usually < 1 week)
8	Hatched 3 years previously or older	XL	Found long dead (> 1 week)
I	'Immature bird'	Other Ringing Schemes	
		DEH	Germany (Hiddensee)
		ISR	Iceland (Reykjavik)
		NLA	Netherlands (Arnhem)
		NOS	Norway (Stavanger)

With many multiple sightings of Oystercatchers at Dawlish Warren and elsewhere around the Exe Estuary, I have summarised where possible whilst ensuring the last date in spring and first return date in autumn are noted. Listed below are full histories of 'our' birds which have been sighted elsewhere and summaries of previously-ringed birds which we retrapped during 2019. As in previous years, Lee Collins has done sterling work reporting colour-ringed birds of various species, even managing to read metal rings, and a selection of these are also included.

Oystercatcher

FA71756	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('E5')	
	S	05/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	29/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	06/10/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	XF	16/02/2019	Looe Island, (Cornwall)	78 km WSW, 1 yr 12 days
FA71764	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('E1')	
	S	24/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 7 times until...	
	S	07/12/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	28/04/2019	Baiter Park, Parkstone, (Poole)	104 km E
	S	24/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	

FA71766	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('7E'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	20/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	25/03/2018	Viste, Randaberg, (Rogaland), NORWAY	1,095 km NNE
	S	23/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 12 times until...	
	S	27/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	24/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71769	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('H7')	
	S	11/02/2018	Starcross (golf course)	(2 km NNW)
	S	12/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	18/07/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 19 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	16/02/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	17/02/2019	Larne Harbour, (Antrim)	498 km NNW
	S	08/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 7 times until...	
FA71783	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('N0')	
	S	24/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 11 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	12/02/2019	Exe Estuary (Lympstone Ridge)	
	S	15/07/2019	Nevern Estuary, (Pembrokeshire)	185 km NNW
	S	17/10/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
FA71786	7	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('7J'), then sighted 8 times until...	
	S	27/04/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	15/07/2018	The Ingol, Snettisham, (Norfolk)	365 km NE
	S	04/10/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	10/02/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71787	7	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('5J'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	13/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	13/03/2018	Marston Vale Millenium C.P., (Bedfordshire)	257 km NE
	S	09/06/2018	Marston Vale Millenium C.P., (Bedfordshire)	
	S	04/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 16 times until...	
	S	18/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	24/03/2019	100 Acre Lake, near Bedford, (Bedfordshire)	270 km NE
	S	06/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 10 times until...	
	S	22/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71793	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('8K')	
	S	09/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 19 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	17/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	30/04/2019	Krokur, near Selfoss, (Arnessysla) ICELAND	1,820 km NW
	S	09/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
FA71798	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	5	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('3H'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	29/04/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	05/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	07/09/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	02/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	05/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	15/07/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	02/12/2019	Shaldon, Teign Estuary, (Devon)	9 km SW
	S	10/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	

FA71800	7	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('4M'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	10/03/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	26/04/2018	Gaslandsneset, Bomlo, (Hordaland) NORWAY	1,154 km NNE
	Ne	30/06/2018	Gaslandsneset, Bomlo, (Hordaland) NORWAY	
	S	25/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 19 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	06/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	11/04/2019	Gaslandsneset, Bomlo, (Hordaland), NORWAY	1,154 km NNE
	S	04/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
	S	02/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71883	8	14/09/2004	Dawlish Warren (white WASP thin-thick-thick)	
	S	31/07/2014	Dawlish Warren	
	S	15/01/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	17/09/2016	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	26/12/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	08/07/2017	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	05/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
	S	07/09/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/02/2019	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	298 km NNE
	S	06/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	15 yrs 78 days
FA71904	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('N8'), then sighted twice until...	
	S	08/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	26/04/2018	Oxey Marsh, Lymington, (Hampshire)	135 km E
	S	12/07/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 12 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	11/02/2019	Exe Estuary (off Exmouth)	
	S	13/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
	S	01/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71906	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('N2'), then sighted twice until...	
	S	20/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	05/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 9 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	25/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	26/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until retrapped...	
	R	28/09/2019	Dawlish Warren (GPS tag added), then sighted twice until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71909	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('1M')	
	S	05/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	11/02/2018	Starcross (golf course)	(2 km NNW)
	S	30/03/2018	Lochindorb, Grantown-on-Spey, (Highland)	754 km N
	Ne	26/04/2018	Lochindorb, Grantown-on-Spey, (Highland)	
	Ne	01/05/2018	Lochindorb, Grantown-on-Spey, (Highland)	
	Ne	06/05/2018	Lochindorb, Grantown-on-Spey, (Highland)	
	S	26/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 9 times until...	
	S	04/10/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	27/02/2019	near Lochindorb Castle, (Highland)	756 km N
	S	20/06/2019	near Lochindorb Castle, (Highland)	
	S	29/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	13/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71911	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('N4')	
	S	20/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 11 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	11/02/2019	Exmouth Point, Exe Estuary	(2 km N)
	S	11/08/2019	Walney Island, (Cumbria)	387 km N

	S	17/10/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71922	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('L3')	
	XL	31/07/2019	The Ness, near Uyea, (Shetland)	1,118 km N
FA71923	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('0M'), then sighted twice until...	
	S	08/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	19/05/2018	Grunna Voe, Mainland, (Shetland)	1,094 km N
	S	29/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	13/02/2019	Starcross (golf course)	(2 km NNW)
	S	24/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71928	7	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('K7'), then sighted 13 times until...	
	S	02/06/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	09/06/2018	Goedereede Island, (Zeeland), NETHERLANDS	532 km ENE
	S	04/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 29 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	19/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	19/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	
	S	04/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	



Oystercatcher FA71966 ('7U'), originally caught & ringed on 4th Feb 2018 at Dawlish Warren, then resighted multiple times, last seen at Eastdon Farm fields, Cockwood, on 29th Jan 2019 before being photographed by Mike Peacock on the shore by his house at Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay on 13th May 2019. Resighted back at Dawlish Warren on 4th July 2019, with multiple resightings there until year end.

© Mike Peacock

FA71946	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('M7')	
	S	10/02/2018	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	298 km NNE
	S	11/02/2018	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	
	Ne	04/06/2018	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	
	S	18/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 14 times until...	
	S	08/12/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	01/02/2019	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	
	S	02/06/2019	Carsington Water, (Derbyshire)	
	S	07/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until...	
	S	11/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71966	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('7U')	
	S	10/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	05/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 12 times until...	
	S	29/01/2019	Eastdon Farm, Cockwood	(2 km NNW)
	S	13/05/2019	Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, (Argyll and Bute)	603 km NNW
	S	04/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 13 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FA71989	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('V9'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	18/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	Ne	08/06/2018	Haaland, Kleppe, (Rogaland), NORWAY	1,078 km NNE
	S	25/09/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until....	
	S	25/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	22/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until....	
FA71995	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren ('U9')	
	S	09/02/2018	Starcross (golf course)	(2 km NNW)
	S	10/02/2018	Starcross (golf course)	
	S	26/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 11 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	31/01/2019	Eastdon Farm, Cockwood	
	S	25/06/2019	Sandside Bay, Deerness, (Orkney)	927 km N
	S	17/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FB22205			then sighted 3 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	10/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	1	29/06/2017	Broadshaw Bottom, Arkengarthdale, (North Yorkshire)	
	S	05/10/2017	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	437 km SSW
	S	04/04/2018	Dawlish Warren	
FC51060	S	09/08/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until....	
	S	13/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	8	05/10/1994	Dawlish Warren	
	S	24/09/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	09/12/2016	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28613	S	09/08/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/11/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	09/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	20/09/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	R	29/09/2018	Dawlish Warren ('6A' added)	
			then sighted 10 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	21/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	27/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 7 times until retrapped...	
	Re	28/09/2019	Dawlish Warren (GPS tag added), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	10/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	25 yrs 66 days
FC51391	8	17/11/2000	Dawlish Warren (green WASP thick-blank-thin)	
	S	27/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	22/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	02/02/2020	Pagham Harbour, (West Sussex)	188 km E

FC51444	7	17/11/2000	Dawlish Warren	
	S	29/03/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/10/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	05/10/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	03/11/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	13/12/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	03/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted twice until retrapped & ringed...	
FJ28610	Re	28/09/2019	Dawlish Warren ('E3'), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FH09733	1	24/06/2011	Harris, Isle of Rhum, (Highland)	
	S	14/08/2014	Dawlish Warren	733 km SSE
	S	21/08/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	20/08/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/11/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	09/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	29/07/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FH52569	S	25/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	8	02/08/2015	Friskney, (Lincs)	
	S	01/02/2016	Dawlish Warren	369km SW
	S	24/03/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	24/12/2016	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	03/02/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	02/09/2017	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	
FH57752	S	12/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	25/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	8	01/04/2012	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire) (yellow 'T24')	
	S	29/03/2014	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	03/04/2014	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	17/10/2014	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	717 km S
	S	21/12/2014	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/03/2015	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire), where sighted 8 times until...	
	S	10/04/2015	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	20/08/2015	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until...	
	S	21/02/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	02/04/2016	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	03/04/2016	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	24/09/2016	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 7 times until...	
	S	05/03/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/03/2017	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire), where sighted 5 times...	
	S	23/03/2017	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	24/07/2017	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	05/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/03/2018	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire), where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	01/04/2018	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	29/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
			then sighted 9 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	21/02/2019	Exe Estuary (Cockwood)	
	S	27/02/2019	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire), where sighted 5 times until...	
	S	04/03/2019	Ballater, (Aberdeenshire)	
	S	24/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	17/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FH73795	6I	02/10/2016	Whiteford Sands, Gower, (Swansea)	
	S	29/12/2017	Dawlish Warren	128 km SSE
	S	03/01/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/04/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	12/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	

FJ28516	5	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	12/07/2018	Dawlish Warren, sighted 3 times until...	
	S	25/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	15/07/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	XF	12/01/2020	Exmouth Point, Exe Estuary	2 km N, 1 yr 342days
FJ28524	8	04/02/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	03/04/2018	Nesna Havn, Nesna, (Nordland), NORWAY	1,971 km NNE
	S	12/04/2018	Nesna Havn, Nesna, (Nordland), NORWAY	
	S	06/06/2018	Nesna Havn, Nesna, (Nordland), NORWAY	
	S	07/09/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	10/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28539	5	29/09/2018	Dawlish Warren ('4A')	
			then sighted 14 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	17/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	11/08/2019	Walney Island, (Cumbria)	387 km N
	S	30/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	
FJ28557	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('3Y'), then sighted 7 times until...	
	S	11/02/2019	Exe Estuary (off Exmouth)	(2 km N)
	S	27/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	18/11/2019	Shaldon, Teign Estuary	9 km SW
FJ28570	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('9V'), then sighted 6 times until...	
	S	26/02/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	XL	03/05/2019	Vasshus, Kleppe, (Rogaland), NORWAY	1,078 km NNE
FJ28578	6I	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('T3'), then sighted 16 times until...	
	S	05/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	06/06/2019	Rockmarshal, Dundalk Bay, (Louth), EIRE	424 km NNW
	S	14/06/2019	Annagassan, Dundalk Bay, (Louth), EIRE	415 km NNW
	S	15/06/2019	Annagassan, Dundalk Bay, (Louth), EIRE	
FJ28580	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('X3'), then sighted 4 times until...	
	S	27/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/02/2019	Zandmotor, The Hague, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	553km ENE
	S	20/08/2019	Ter Heijde, The Hague, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	551km ENE
	S	24/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28589	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('5U'), then sighted 9 times until...	
	S	10/03/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	11/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until...	
	S	17/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	25/11/2019	Shaldon, Teign Estuary	9 km SW
	S	02/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28593	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('4V'), then sighted twice until...	
	S	13/12/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	19/01/2019	Abbotsbury Swannery, (Dorset)	59 km E
	S	27/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 9 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28596	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('2K'), then sighted 5 times until...	
	S	16/02/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	27/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 6 times until retrapped...	
	R	28/09/2019	Dawlish Warren (GPS tag added), then sighted 3 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	

FJ28597	8	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('5H')	
			then sighted 7 times here & elsewhere around the Exe Estuary until...	
	S	12/02/2019	Exe Estuary (Lympstone Ridge)	(4 km NNW)
	S	04/08/2019	RSPB Conwy, (Conwy)	297 km N
	S	14/08/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until...	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FP73313	1	07/07/2004	Easington, (East Riding of Yorkshire)	
	S	25/10/2015	Dawlish Warren	415 km SW
	S	11/11/2017	Dawlish Warren	
FJ28602	Re	12/11/2018	Dawlish Warren ('5N' added), where sighted 5 times until...	
	S	27/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	17/10/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	
	S	02/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	



Oystercatcher FV63885 with faded green WASP ring (thick-blank-thin), so worn after 30 years that lower edge worn away. Photographed at Leidschendam, Zuid-Holland on 14th March 2020, though this bird has been noted here for many years previously – see details opposite. © Kees Dijkstra

FP87353	3	09/10/2010	Whiteford Sands, Gower, (Swansea)	
	S	29/11/2014	Dawlish Warren	128 km SSE
	S	20/12/2015	Dawlish Warren	
	S	01/01/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	11/10/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	24/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	13/12/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	14/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	13/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	
FV63885	7	29/09/1989	Dawlish Warren (green WASP thick-blank-thin)	
	R	28/01/1997	Dawlish Warren	
	S	16/03/2000	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	571 km ENE
			then sighted here during each spring 2001-2005, 2010, 2012 & 2013 until....	
	S	25/07/2014	Dawlish Warren	
	S	25/02/2015	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS, where sighted 5 times	
until		04/04/2015	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	17/07/2015	Dawlish Warren	
	S	18/07/2016	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 5 times until....	
	S	26/12/2016	Dawlish Warren	
	S	08/07/2017	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until....	
	S	19/08/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	09/03/2018	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	12/03/2018	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	12/07/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	08/08/2018	Dawlish Warren	
	S	27/02/2019	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	04/03/2019	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	23/03/2019	Leidschendam, (Zuid-Holland), NETHERLANDS	
	S	01/07/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until....	
	S	01/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	30 yrs 63days
4119029	1	13/07/2017	Hlidarendakot, Fljotshlio, (Rangarvallasysla), ICELAND ('TY')	
ISR	S	17/03/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 19 times until...	1,755 km SE
	S	02/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
??	8	21/04/2018	Westwouderpolder, De Woude, NETHERLANDS (black 'N', blue 'J')	
NLA	S	06/09/2018	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 16 times until...	606 km WSW
	S	25/01/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	15/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 8 times until....	
	S	02/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
Ringed Plover				
80670653	1	15/07/2018	Fehmarn, (Schleswig-Holstein), GERMANY (GRNWW)	
DEH	S	12/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	1,069 km WSW
81371073	1	06/08/2019	Fehmarn, (Schleswig-Holstein), GERMANY (GRWNG)	
DEH	S	25/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until....	1,069 km WSW
	S	29/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	
OB71857	1	23/08/2018	Insel Langenwerder, (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), GERMANY	
DEH	S	06/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	1,081 km WSW
	S	11/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	23/12/2019	Dawlish Warren	
8B80959	3	07/09/2019	Makkevika, Giske, More og Romsdal, NORWAY (yellow 'E48')	
NOS	S	27/09/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until....	1,441 km SSW
	S	30/09/2019	Dawlish Warren	20 days
8B80984	3	25/09/2019	Makkevika, Giske, More og Romsdal, NORWAY (yellow 'E73')	
NOS	S	07/10/2019	Dawlish Warren.	1,441 km SSW, 12 days
	S	12/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	

Knot

7503459	4	26/05/2013	Brenna, Porsanger, (Finnmark), NORWAY (yellow 'PYY')	
NOS	S	26/11/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 3 times until...	2,689 km SW
	S	29/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	6 yrs 187 days

Dunlin

BT84200	3	24/08/2017	Ynylas, near Borth, (Ceredigion) (yellow 'U45')	
	S	04/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	217 km SSE
	S	06/08/2019	Dawlish Warren	
BT84486	3	06/09/2017	Ynylas, near Borth, (Ceredigion) (yellow 'U75')	
	S	24/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	217 km SSE
	S	25/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	
NB28610	3	16/11/2019	Dawlish Warren ('AA'), then sighted twice to year end	
NB28611	3	16/11/2019	Dawlish Warren ('AC'), then sighted twice to year end	
NB28612	3	16/11/2019	Dawlish Warren ('AE'), then sighted 11 times to year end	
NB28613	3	16/11/2019	Dawlish Warren ('AH'), then sighted 5 times to year end	
JT57442	4	05/07/2017	Swibno, Gdansk, (Pomorskie), POLAND (white 'JPY')	
PLG	S	15/12/2019	Dawlish Warren.	1,570 km WSW
JT68909	4	07/08/2017	Swibno, Gdansk, (Pomorskie), POLAND (white '580')	
PLG	S	14/11/2018	Dawlish Warren	1,570 km WSW
	S	15/12/2019	Dawlish Warren, where sighted 4 times until year end	

Whimbrel

EX42160	4	03/05/2011	Llansantffraed, Llanon, (Ceredigion) (yellow 'A21')	
	S	03/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	194 km SSE, 8 yrs 0 days
EZ08040	4	18/05/2015	Llansantffraed, Llanon, (Ceredigion) (yellow 'D63')	
	S	18/04/2016	Dawlish Warren	194 km SSE
	S	06/04/2017	Exmouth	
	S	29/04/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	20/08/2017	Dawlish Warren	
	S	03/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	04/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	3 yrs 351 days
583056	1	01/07/2009	Geiradalssveir, A-Baro, (Austur-Bardastrandasysla), ICELAND	
ISR	S	03/05/2019	Dawlish Warren	1,972 km SSE, 9 yrs 306 days

Turnstone

??	2	30/08/2019	Schiermonnikoog, (Friesland), NETHERLANDS (orange 'HNX')	
NLA	S	20/11/2019	Dawlish Warren	734 km WSW
7323412	3	23/08/2018	Jomfruland, (Telemark), NORWAY	
NOS	S	10/04/2019	Dawlish Warren	1,240 km SW
	S	11/04/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	30/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	
	S	31/10/2019	Dawlish Warren	

What are we learning about Exe Oystercatchers?

- an update on the Exe Oystercatcher Project

Ryan Burrell & Jo Morten

The springboard on which the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringing group was restarted in 2018 was of course the Exe Oystercatcher project. Started after the successful bid for funding for colour-rings and GPS-tags from DEFRA, obtained by Tim Frayling and Andrew Stanger in their roles with Natural England. We will use this DCWRG 2019 report projects article to look back at what the aims of the project are and how it has progressed so far.

The Exe Estuary holds an internationally important assemblage of waterfowl and waders, which led to its designation as a Special Protection Area (SPA) in 1991. The estuary qualified for several reasons, one of which being its significance for wintering Oystercatchers. The species was extensively studied from the 1970s to early 2000s, with large numbers of birds ringed and monitored leading to important publications on foraging, survival, and behaviour.

Unfortunately, despite this historic knowledge, since the designation of the estuary, the wintering Oystercatcher population has declined by 43.5% compared to a national decline of 24% (1991/92 – 2017/18; Figure 1). Although the WeBS trend for oystercatcher in the UK has returned to similar levels to those in the mid-1970s, following a peak in the 1980/90s, the significant and ongoing decline is of conservation concern. Furthermore, widespread declines across many overwinter sites, with no corresponding increases suggest these are true declines rather than a shift to other wintering areas. The trend in the Exe exceeding that of the national trend indicates there may be site specific impacts on the Exe population.

Associated with declines in Oystercatchers are parallel declines in shellfish resources. Previous work on the Exe identified intertidal mussel beds as the key foraging resource, the area of which has declined by over 30% on the 1970 – 1990 values. However, though they run in parallel, one decline is not necessarily being driven by the other. A recent modelling study based on a simulated Exe population of 1,500 exclusively mussel feeding Oystercatchers found that mussel resources were sufficient to sustain this population size. However, a population of 1,650 resulted in 0.4% being starved. The stable level is far below the Exe target of 3,980 individuals. Subsequent mussel crashes and degradation of key foraging sites may have had a further impact. Other factors such as changes in prey composition, the mass and quality of prey, competition with other predator species, and human disturbance, alongside external influences such as the trend of the breeding populations that utilise the estuary in winter may also have a role to play.

As a result, the aims of the project were:

- 1) To better understand the current over-winter and inter-annual survival of Oystercatchers within the Exe Estuary,

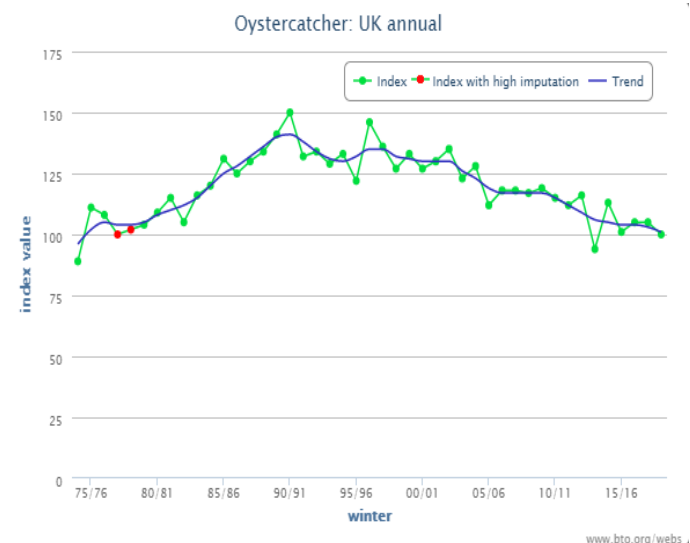


Figure 1 - Oystercatcher wintering annual trend from WeBS Online

- 2) Compare historic data on foraging and fitness to new field data,
- 3) Determine site turn-over and fidelity,
- 4) To identify key Oystercatcher sites, investigate their use and identify potential conflicts.

After deploying 10 tags in winter 2018, we started to receive some fantastic data back, with over 15,000 GPS positions collected until birds began migrating or tag batteries depleted in January/February 2019. The tagging complimented the excellent work being done by Lee Collins, Ivan Lakin, and others to resight colour-marked birds generating over 2,500 resightings in winter 2018/2019 (for more information please see DCWRG Annual Report 2018). The 2018 cohort of tagged birds was the first Oystercatchers fitted with this type of harness, so we were keen to see these birds return hopefully with their tags in winter 2019 and continue to gather more GPS data to accompany excellent resighting efforts. After resightings confirmed the return of several tagged birds back on the Exe in late summer, we finally gathered migration data from three 2018 tagged birds in November 2019, with a further non-migratory bird also downloaded (Figure 2). Two tagged birds migrated to the Netherlands, with **J3** breeding near the village of Zuilichem, 615km east as the Oystercatcher flies and **Y5** breeding just 33km to the north-west of **J3** near Berkenwoude. Though these two birds left a week apart they followed similar migration routes to reach their breeding grounds and back to the Exe. The fourth bird was a Scottish breeder taking residence on the west coast of Skye, flying by an almost straight route out but then returning with short stops in at least the Solway, Ribble, the Conwy and Menai Strait estuaries. Though only a single bird, this movement starts to shed light on the connections between the Exe and other designated sites for our oystercatchers. **6M**, a juvenile when tagged, summered in the Exe providing an opportunity to compare changes in site use and behaviour after the migration of most of the Exe population. **6M** moved from foraging predominately in the north of the estuary (Powderham Sands) throughout the winter 2018/19, to foraging around Bull Hill and the mussel beds near Cockwood over the summer. It remained there once other birds returned.

It is unfortunate that not more of the 2018 cohort transmitted in winter 2019 despite all tagged birds being observed back on the estuary. This may be because of tag or harness failure, slow battery charge or just that birds were not within range of the receiver when transmitting. Unfortunately, the tags have proved extremely difficult to observe on birds in the field so even with the eagle eyes of Lee and Ivan we are unable to confirm exactly the reason for failure. It may be that we receive more data for these tags in the future.

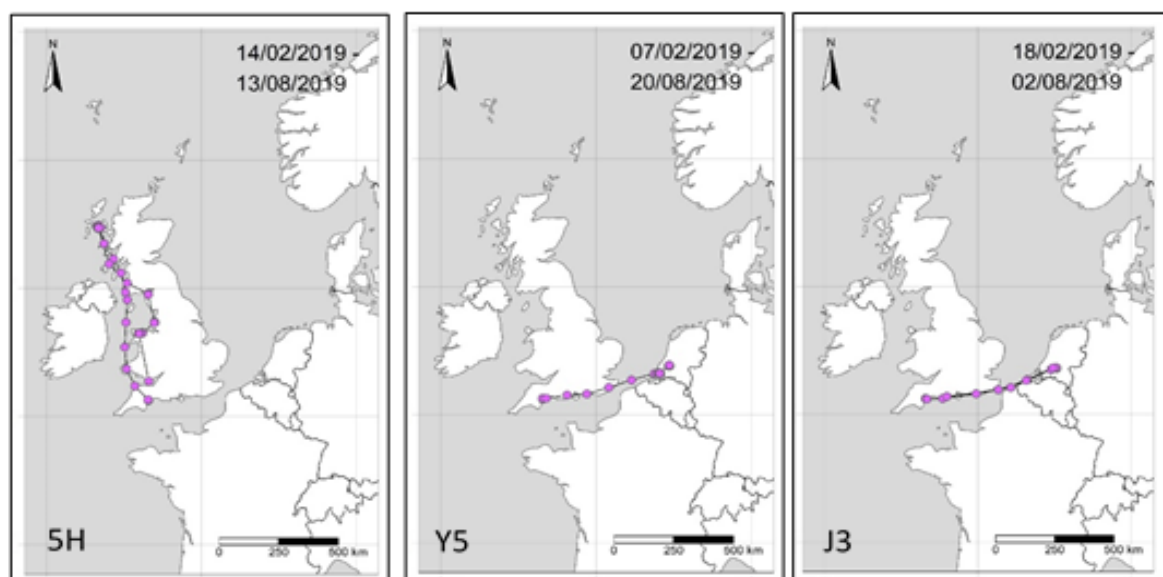


Figure 2 - Migration routes of Oystercatchers tagged on November 2018 at Dawlish Warren

In September 2019, we were able to add to our sample by fitting a further 11 tags to oystercatchers after a successful cannon-net attempt and mist-netting session. To extend the time tags were transmitting data, the 2019 cohort were programmed to give a position every 2 hours rather than every hour. Analysis by Jo Morten confirmed this would have no impact on the representativeness of the tracking data for home range and site use. Nine tags were held back for use on juveniles as none were caught during cannon-netting. Although after the single bird caught during the September mist-netting session, no further juveniles were caught in 2019. Fortunately, the four birds from the 2018 cohort continued to transmit data until the last week in December or first week in January 2019, boosting our sample for 2019/20. In addition, over 2,000 further colour-ring resightings were gathered this winter, building up an excellent dataset for future survival analyses.

The 2019 birds followed a broadly similar pattern to the 2018 cohort, with Lympstone Ridge and Cockle Sands appearing significant for foraging to the majority of tagged Oystercatchers with Finger Point at Dawlish Warren used to roost. That said, the variation in the range of movements of birds in both years covered the breadth of the estuary, as shown in Figure 3. In both years we have had birds leave the estuary for periods, visiting adjacent coastal and estuarine sites. This is excellent data and as with our migration for a national scale, displays the interconnection between local sites outside of the SPA boundary. Oystercatcher **8Y**, regularly left the estuary for the Dawlish coast, **C9** for the River Teign estuary and **E6** to the coastline between Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth.

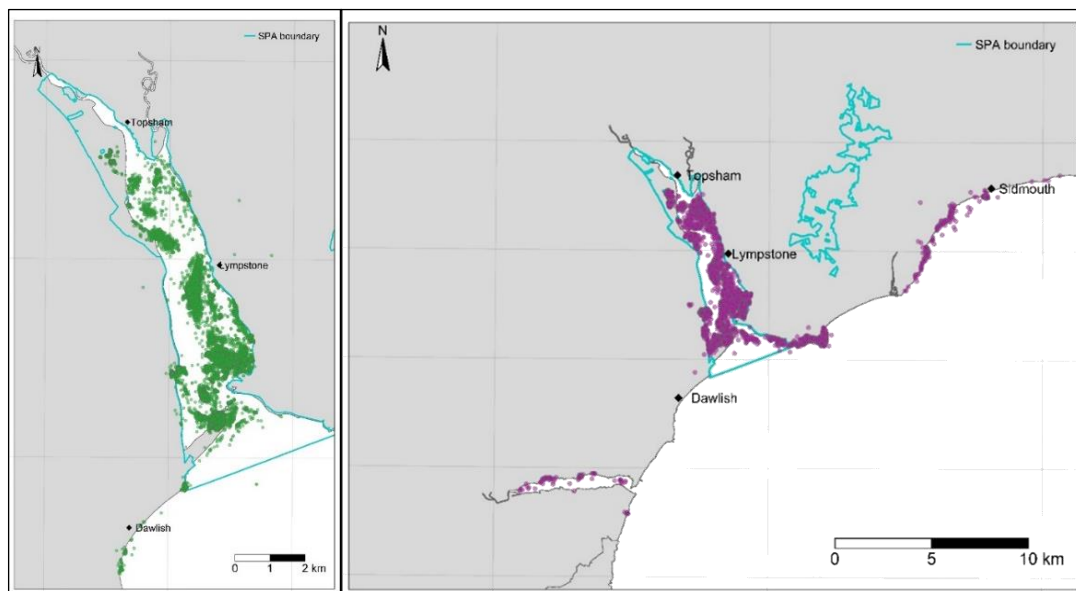


Figure 3 - Maps of all GPS positions from all oystercatchers tagged in winter 2018 and 2019

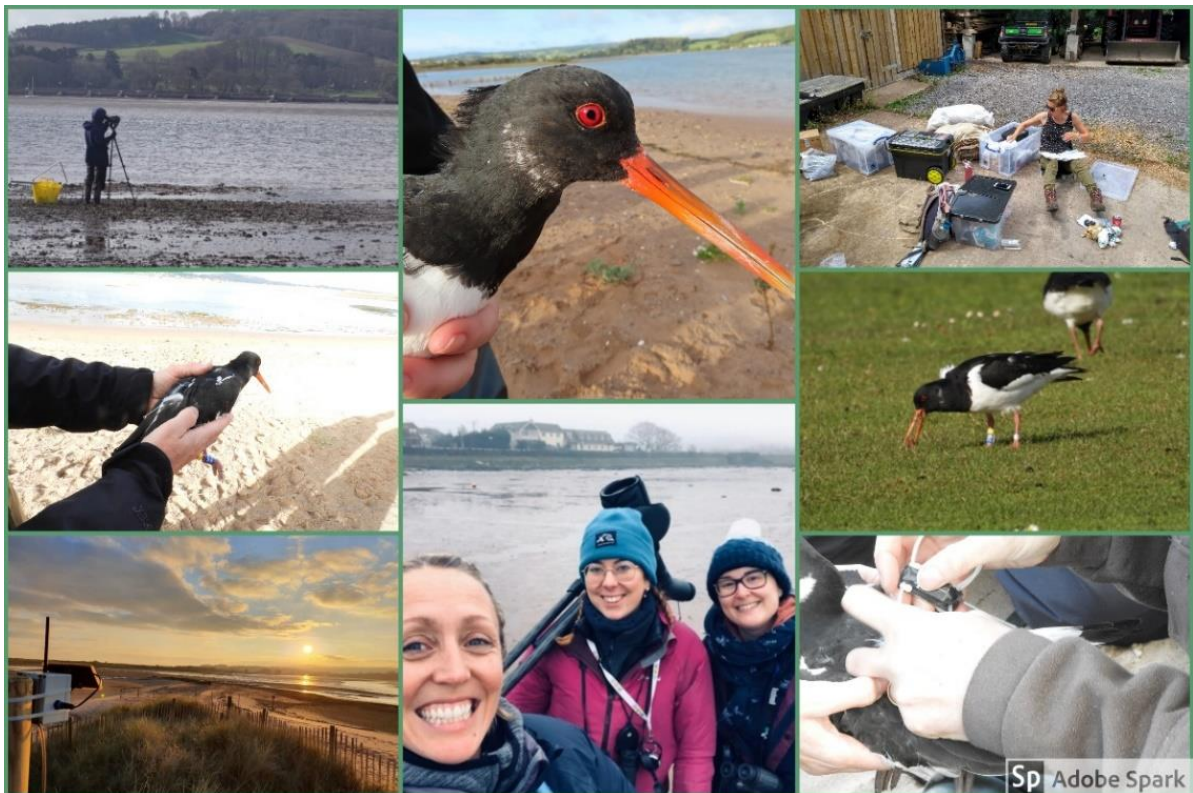
With the success of the Oystercatcher colour-marking and tracking study, DCWRG has been able to forge a fantastic collaboration with University of Exeter (UoE) and other organisations. In 2019, we were able to extend the reach of the Oystercatcher work with the recruitment of undergraduate and masters students supervised by Dr Lucy Hawkes and Oystercatcher PhD student Jo Morten with guidance in resighting and observation from Humphrey Sitters and Lee Collins. Each student conducted a research project over winter 2019/20, with suggestions for projects contributed by the project team, including NE, GWCT, DCWRG and UoE and of course our resident Oystercatcher expert Humphrey Sitters. This is a fantastic achievement for the group, allowing us to contribute towards the education of future wader ecologists. In addition, it provides an opportunity to gather further data to support the groups work within the estuary. Thanks must be extended to all our 2019/20 students, they have spent a significant amount of time digitising footage, conducting

resighting and recording behaviour. These great projects are still being written up so brief introductions are given here.

	<p>Differences in the foraging ecology of adult and juvenile Oystercatchers</p> <p>Bella Hill (UoE BSc student)</p> <p>The key questions for Bella's project have been: 1) do juveniles manage to consume as much prey per day? 2) Do they consume different prey? 3) Do they have similar intake rates? Bella observed the foraging behaviours of both adults and juveniles at various sites within the Estuary to compare (i) prey type, (ii) handling time and (iii) inter-catch interval.</p>
<p>How has foraging ecology of Oystercatchers on the Exe changed over time?</p> <p>Rianna Badesha (BSc student) & Amy Miller (MSci student)</p> <p>Rianna and Amy have compared historic foraging behaviour in video footage from 1994/95 kindly contributed by Humphrey Sitters to current foraging behaviour at Lypstone Ridge. They compared differences in diet and consumption and related this to food availability where possible. Interestingly, they have observed multiple birds eating invasive Pacific Oysters <i>Crassostrea gigas</i>.</p>	
	<p>Foraging specialisms of Oystercatchers on the Exe Estuary</p> <p>Harriet Walters (BSc student)</p> <p>Oystercatchers show specialisation in bill morphology based upon an individual's foraging strategy. Our colour-marking allows identification of known bill types in the field. Harriet's project involved observing the prey intake rate and handling time of round tip, chisellers, and hammerers to compare foraging in these different bill types.</p>
<p>Intra-specific aggression – Does Oystercatcher density and site quality impact the rate of aggression?</p> <p>Becky Garden (BSc student)</p> <p>We all know Oystercatchers can be scrappy little birds, but what impact does this have? And what drives it? Becky observed aggressive incidents (chasing and piping) at low, medium, and high-density sites and quantified the quality of a site based around food quality. A key question being whether aggression is related to site quality and bird numbers.</p>	

The Exe Oystercatcher project continues to provide fascinating and important insights on the behaviour of one of our often-overlooked declining waders, within an estuary where they experience continuing declines. We still have further tags to deploy in winter 2020/21, hopefully on juvenile Oystercatchers to increase our insights on the activity of this age cohort. The data collected by the GPS-tracking, colour-ring resighting and behavioural studies will be used to produce scientific papers and reports to inform future conservation actions for Oystercatchers within the estuary.

Renewed thanks must be extended to all those involved from DCWRG, Natural England, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Teignbridge District Council and the University of Exeter for continuing to make this project a success. Fingers crossed for further insights in 2020/21.



Ring Reading at Dawlish Warren – an introduction and brief summary for 2019

Lee Collins

Why do we ring birds? We all have an answer to that question, but let us ponder it again a moment longer and think of the bigger picture. With the application of a ring, is our role finished? To some the answer will be yes but to complete the process subsequent recoveries are of course essential.

For those unfamiliar to me let me first introduce myself. My name is Lee Collins and Dawlish Warren has been my local patch since 1984. Nowadays I'm extremely passionate about ring recovery work, so although not a ringer I still have an important role to play. This all began quite by chance in 2012 when finding a colour-ringed Sanderling and discovering it to have been ringed in Ghana. From that moment on I became addicted, looking for more. Nobody to my knowledge was actively doing this at the time and for me this held great appeal as it served as a method of generating more interest in the hundreds of hours I commit each year to birding Dawlish Warren. I've always been a strong advocate of getting something out of any visit and found that sighting a ringed bird and making a read helped fulfil that role. I would also like to say that by doing so, I became much more targeted to looking harder at the common shorebirds onsite, something I had neglected before. A direct consequence of this was the discovery that I could better understand species on a level like never before. Migratory movement was the initial draw but as my interest developed, aspects of longevity and site fidelity began to unfold. All species were targeted, and to date I've positively identified over 1,150 marked individuals of 31 different species (37.6% being Oystercatchers), by the end of 2019 boasting over 5,700 ring reads!

Even prior to the relaunch of the Devon & Cornwall Wader Ringing Group in 2018 Oystercatchers were pivotal to my work. Many of you will probably be unaware that Oystercatcher studies were prolific here between 1976 and 2004, with well over 3,000 caught and ringed, many of the later birds applied with additional wasp [*] and colour rings to enable easy identification at a distance. Most of course are now long dead, but not all. Oystercatchers are a long lived species and prior to our first ringing session in February 2018, I'd identified 149 individuals. Most of these (78%) were ringed locally and this brought into sharp focus the importance of my work in regards their longevity. It may surprise many but this dedication has seen me find 43 individuals that were at least 20 years old, two of which were over 35 years old.

Now with well over 200 of our own colour-ringed Oystercatchers regularly wintering around the Exe Estuary the chances of encountering at least one should not prove difficult. Unfortunately the majority of the many birders dotted around this fabulous estuary don't show any interest in doing so. Sadly only a few contribute, most of whom are centred around Dawlish Warren. I unfortunately cannot give direct praise to all those who have contributed during 2019 so this account is a brief summary on my own efforts and findings [**].

So to 2019, this is merely my own account of documented observations which I hope shows what's genuinely achievable, given the ambition to do so. I'm often to be found at Dawlish Warren, 169 tidal visits during 2019 are testament to that when not working or away bird-guiding or doing Arctic Tern recovery survey work in Iceland.

Much of this time was devoted to studying Oystercatchers with every marked individual found identified where possible. Great emphasis was put towards monitoring returning individuals during late summer onwards. Unfortunately being in Asia during February

meant a similar undertaking, that of last dates before departure to their breeding destinations, wasn't achieved. It's also worth noting that from September to year-end, rightly or wrongly, I made a conscious decision to only record each marked individual once per calendar month. This was merely to avoid repetitive administration obligations.

I'll start by first focusing on the colour-coded birds, these being easiest and indeed the most abundant source of material. Given my omission of multiple monthly reads throughout the second winter period, I recorded 1,388 reads, confirming the presence of 232 individuals, representing over 88% marked during 2018/19. Seven of these had been retrapped and held greater significance. Longevity results confirming **7A**, originally ringed in October 1994, remained to year-end. While **5C** and **U1**, both ringed in November 2000 and **5N**, **8Y** (both GPS tagged) plus **2M** and **V2** caught in 2004 still remain.

I would also like to touch upon the additional 40 in our February 2018 catch which were not colour-ringed. The very readability of these are of course a far harder and challenging proposition, yet not neglected. Much closer views are necessary to confirm a read of a metal ring and although the recovery rate will never match those of the better marked colour-ringed individuals, finding 15 during 2019 (21 during both 2018/19) is statistically a far higher return rate at 37.5% than would ordinarily be expected.

Of additional interest are the 39 historically marked Exe birds which were recorded, the oldest five being around thirty years old, ringed in 1989 (1) and 1990 (4).

Another species that drew my attention from mid-November to year-end was the Dunlin. Five were caught whilst mist-netting during this period, each applied with a blue colour-coded ring plus an additional uncoded red ring. Given the lateness in the year along with the magnitude of finding one within such a large wintering population of about 1,600 birds and then to achieve a ring read, my own expectations weren't overly optimistic. 21 tidal visits during this six week window of opportunity arose, in which I not only managed to find each individual, yet more remarkable still was a collection of 20 confirmed reads during this time. At least one bird would be found on virtually every visit, along with two similarly marked Polish birds. Evaluating a successful field read (24) to tidal visit rate (21) was an unimaginable success rate, given that prior to 2019 a quick calculation from 2013/18 this rate barely reached 4%, with 37 reads (12 individuals) from some 900 visits. The one major underlying factor behind this was the red uncoded ring. Although identification to an individual on this alone is impossible, it was this ring that on every occasion caught my eye and thus shows the importance of this additional ring (see photo below).



(left) Dunlin 'AA' mist-netted 16th Nov 2019 at Dawlish Warren
(right) Dunlin 'AE' photographed 3rd Dec 2019 at Dawlish Warren

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© Lee Collins

So the single chance encounter of a ringed Sanderling back in 2012 has radically changed my whole birding outlook. From that moment, I went out of my way to find other marked birds and eight years later I'm very pleased to be one of the UK's most prolific and accomplished 'ring-readers'. This has brought me huge satisfaction, to date having identified over 1,150 individuals (37.6% being Oystercatchers). Breaking this down further, it confirmed that 189 of the 212 ringed in 2018 (89%) remained present, whilst the percentage dropped to 86% for 2019 marked birds, noting 43 of the 50 ringed this year.

My own annual reports may be found on the Dawlish Warren website if interested - dawlিশwarrenblogspot.

** WASP rings are tall colour rings with up to three horizontal black bands, either thick, thin or none at all. Thus, reading from top to bottom with thick, thin or blank bands in different orders, and using an additional coloured ring, multiple combinations are available to identify individual birds. [Eds]*

*** Observers are credited in the List of Contributors on page 3, and my apologies for any omissions [Eds]*

I have included Lee's sightings of waders in the listings earlier in this report, but he has also accumulated this year an impressive array of other species, including colour-ringed Mediterranean Gulls from Belgium, Poland & Germany, a Yellow-legged Gull from France, Common Tern from Dublin, 6 Roseate Terns from Ireland, an amazing selection of Sandwich Terns from UK, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and even 2 birds from South Africa, and a Rock Pipit from Norway. Hopefully this will encourage everyone to take particular note of any colour-ringed birds they find, and more importantly, please to report them. [Eds]

Acknowledgements

The group operates with the excellent support of Teignbridge District Council and Devon Wildlife Trust as landowners of Dawlish Warren, and Warren Golf Club kindly allows access across their land.

The value of the current project would not be fully realised without the excellent re-sighting work undertaken by the Dawlish Warren Recording Group.

We are grateful to Natural England/Defra for funding the rings , GPS tags and other equipment, and for providing staff time for ongoing management of the project. We are also grateful to the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) for staff time for fitting the GPS tags, organising the project and dealing with data. Devon Birds has also generously provided some funding for colour rings.

Our thanks should also be extended to Humphrey Sitters, Roger & Barbara Swinfen and all past members of DCWRG, to Humphrey for gathering WASP ring data from the original catches between 1989-2004, and the team at Dawlish Warren, particularly to Lee Collins who has produced amazing results from reading and recording metal ring numbers and WASP colour rings over many years, enabling us to have such a wealth of historical data.

To report a sighting

Please see the *Report A Sighting* drop-down menu in www.dcwrg.org.uk .

Further Information

For further information regarding the activities undertaken by the group, please see: www.dcwrg.org.uk

Any other queries or to join, please contact:

Tim Frayling (Chair)
chair@dcwrg.org.uk

Chris Dee (Membership Secretary)
join@dcwrg.org.uk