

2011 RING OUZEL Sightings

Early arrivals

14th April 2011 (from Jude Lane)

Langden castle, Bowland

3 ring ouzels (2 male singing, 1 female) seen on 14/04/11 at approx 11:30 on United Utilities estate, Bowland. A ring ouzel pair were in the Langden valley up around Langden castle, and there was a lone male low down on the track around Higher dry clough.

10th April 2011 (from Joe Pender)

St Marys, Isles of Scilly

Colour Ringed Ring Ouzel spotted at St Marys. The colour ringed bird has been identified as follows: LB49545 Colour code Dark Green below metal on right leg ,Yellow above Orange on left leg. Ringed as a Juvenile as one of a brood of 3 on 25th May 2010 by Mike Nicoll at NO4578 on the crags above Glen Effock Fm, Glen Esk, Angus. Reported to the BTO as a sighting. [Click here](#) to see a photo.

4th April 2011 (from Stuart Benn)

Glen Lyon, Perthshire

I was on leave last week so this may be old hat by now but I had ouzels singing strongly in Glen Lyon (Perthshire) on Saturday and near Inverness yesterday so I think we can well and truly say that they are back throughout Britain by now. Let the season commence!!

28th March 2011 (from Peter Curran)

Scar House, North Yorks

First Ring Ouzel spotted at Scar House today along with lots of Wheatears. [Click here](#) to see photos of this early arrival.

28th March 2011 (from Bill Gordon via Tim Melling)

Stanage Edge, Derbyshire

Bill tells me there are five birds back on Stanage Edge (Peak District), two pairs and a lone male.

One of the males is lacking a gorget apparently.

First arrivals were about a week ago.

27th March 2011 (Graham Pyatt)

Manor Valley, Tweeddale

A singing male Ring Ouzel in Manor Valley on 27th March is by several days the earliest singing recorded. But I've not found another RZ since that one.

23rd March 2011 (from Ken Hutchinson)

Rosedale, North York Moors

The first RZ landed in Rosedale last Wednesday, 23rd. A day earlier than last year and the earliest recorded.

Spring/Summer Breeding

24th August 2011 (from Tim Melling)

Peak District Moors, Derbyshire. [Click here](#) for photo

I initially thought this must be a recently moulted juvenile but close inspection reveals it is an adult male. Adults have a complete moult before their autumn migration whereas juveniles retain their flight feathers and half of their greater coverts. This is why you sometimes see their cousins Blackbirds with black (male) bodies but with brown wings during autumn and winter. This one has a full set of same-aged greater coverts, some of its secondary flight feathers are still growing, and it has round ended tail feathers. All of these features identify it as an adult, and the large white gorget identifies it as an adult. But that black bill is still a puzzle. This one was feeding with its family on Rowan berries.

I only had my 200mm lens when I took this, hand held, without a hide.

Update from Tony Cross

Not a huge amount of experience handling adult Ouzels but would say this bird is an adult. All greater coverts are uniform age and no contrast between primary colour and coverts. Primaries showing no wear. Outer tail feathers are broad and have a rounded and clean (unworn) edge. Might be wrong but it appears to be still growing its secondaries too? They certainly seem short in relation to inner pps and scapulars.

19th August 2011 (from John Rowlands)

Capel Curig, Snowdonia

Spent yesterday hill walking on Moel Siabod nr Capel Curig, Snowdonia and spent 40 minutes watching, with binoculars, a group of Ring Ouzel on steep south-east facing flank just below summit. 3 adult males, at least 2 adult females and 3+ juveniles all feeding/searching on the ground. Great views. Two Raven circled them and Ouzels dived for cover. Watched for a further 30 minutes but could only hear them

14th August 2011 (from Paul Bayman)

Cauldron Snout in Upper Teesdale, County Durham

A male bird, sitting on a large rock right next to Cauldron Snout waterfall. It flew up the waterfall and sat on a few more rocks right next to the water, before flying away out of sight - NB it wasn't a Dipper as I've seen lots of them before and know what they're like, this was like a smallish blackbird, but with the white upper chest area

July 2011. Report of Ring Ouzel recovery in France (BTO Ringing Recovery Report)

The BTO report contains a reference to a 'ringed' Ring Ouzel being found dead near Montdardier, Gard, France on 15th October 2009. It had been taken by a raptor. The bird was ringed on 13th May 2009 in Glen Clunie. It was a b4 chick from the Baddoch (B5) side glen, and was seen 100m away from the nest on 26th May 2009.

29th July 2011 (from Bill & Flo Gordon)

Ring Ouzel breeding successes on Stanage Edge, Derbyshire

The season has just finished with a pair of Ring Ouzels who have built a nest and successfully fledged young on the 26th July, the latest of any pair in our experience. Most of the rearing was done by the female; the male was busy feeding chicks from an earlier brood which suggests to me a triple brooder. The territory had already a pair with 2 successful nests. In total on the property that I manage we had 5 successful nests, out of 7 territories, 2 pairs abandoned their territories through disturbance and were successful just over our land boundaries. It was one of these pairs that came back to our side of the boundary and fledged successfully on the 26th July. One pair failed completely, having built 2 nests and abandoned in April/early May and moved out of the area. Two pairs successfully built their first nest on the main part of Stanage and both managed to fledge young. Both their second nesting attempts ended in nest predation at the egg stage. Only one pair managed to nest successfully twice, with the second nest fledging in the beginning of July. The last pair were unusual in that they came onto the estate with a successful 1st brood and they built a nest in the bracken beds below Stanage Edge, but were predated at the chick stage. It is possible that their first nest was in bracken in a somewhat overlooked (by us) part of the estate and had been missed by us. It is encouraging that we seem to have an increase in the number of pairs, but the success rate is the same as last year and the cause of failure can be put down to human disturbance and predation. As usual Tim has been a great help and encouragement.

23rd July 2011 (from John Seers)

Scale Force, Buttermere, Cumbria. Above Crummock Water

On a rock near a stream. Flew downstream. Probable Male

Autumn Migration

3rd October 2011 (Barry Welch)

High House Waste, Dartmoor

Ring Ouzel seen at High House Waste on Dartmoor grid reference SX608 628 on Sunday 3rd October around 1.00pm.

14th October 2011 (David Goodwin Low)

Bearsden, Glasgow

Bird seen sitting on bird house in garden; sat for a few minutes and then flew into bushes; sat for a few minutes then flew off

14th October 2011 (Julian Hodgson)

Gwennap Head, SW Cornwall

A pair of Ring Ouzels on the cliffs at Gwennap Head, SW Cornwall (Grid ref: SW 362218). The pair of Ring Ouzels stayed in the same location for more than an hour, though they spent most of the time tucked up underneath the overhanging rock on the left of [this photo](#).

16th October 2011 (Michael Holloway)

Ashley Heath, Ringwood

I saw a Ring Ouzel on the lawn of my neighbour's bungalow at Shelley Close, Ashley Heath, Ringwood, BH24 2JA at around 10.00 on Sunday 16/10/11 and watched it for several minutes until it was chased away by a Magpie.

Having not seen this bird before I looked it up on the internet and arrived at your site

24th October 2011 (Mrs S K Owen)

Ring Ouzel in my garden 8.30am 24/10/2011 for several minutes. Had time to confirm identity with binoculars. Being intimidated by 2 Blackbirds, took 4-5 long drinks of water from trough before flying off.

27th Oct 2011 (Andrew Hynes)

Cave Dale, Castleton, Debyshire

I saw a pair of Ring Ouzels at the top of Cave Dale, Castleton, Debyshire. [Click here](#) for a photo of one of the pair. It's almost a ring ouzel juvenile but I am not certain as the colouring and leg shape is not quite right and the song certainly did not match. The song could only be described as a metallic sound akin to that heard from train wheels on the metal track, not a screech but a very short, almost click. Any ideas and any use to you?

Regards

Andrew Hynes

Reply from Innes Sim:

Hi Andrew

It certainly is a ring ouzel, probably an adult female but possibly a juvenile (they are difficult to distinguish at this time of year).

We would expect most British ring ouzels to have left Britain and be on their way south to Spain/Morocco at this time of year. However, some birds do remain here throughout the winter, and it would be interesting to know if these birds do eventually move on. What you heard was probably just partial song or contact calls, as it's unlikely that birds would be in full spring song at this time of year.

Did you see what they were feeding on (most ring ouzels feed on berries at this time of year)?

Thanks very much for submitting your records – very useful.

Best wishes,

Innes

8th November 2011 (James Owen)

Birmingham City Centre

Male Ring Ouzel unfortunately flew into our office building in the city centre. It was boxed up and taken to the vet. Its survival is unknown.

8th November 2011 (Keith Holland)

Between Holcombe Moor and Saplin wood, nr Bury Lancs.

Single bird seen with a flock of around 70 Fieldfares in field between Holcombe Moor and Saplin wood (off Moorbottom Road) on Tuesday 8th November 2011. Grid ref SD 77250 16182

12th November 2011 (Rod Hutchinson)

Clayton Le Woods near Leyland/Chorley, Lancashire

Had thought I saw last week, but for certain this morning in back garden. Clearly visible for a good minute. In a bush and then on a roof.

22nd November 2011 (Steven Black)

Willow Tree Fen nr Spalding, Lincs

One Ring Ouzel seen.

Winter sightings

A number of Ring Ouzel sightings have been reported during the Winter months, with most sightings being seen in gardens. Seeing Ring Ouzels in gardens at any time of year is unusual, but especially in December, January and February. But the mild conditions this winter have probably prompted a few to stay on in the UK and seek out food in gardens.

Some of the Ring Ouzel sightings described below 'may' be leucistic blackbirds, as some of these can be very 'Ouzel like', with a white gorget/bib. See [these photos](#) of a leucistic blackbird which looks very Ouzel like! But we have received sightings from Calne Wiltshire, Shoreham West Sussex and Dunstable Bedfordshire with photographs that clearly show Ring Ouzels.

1st/2nd week December 2011 (Kevin Mitchell)

Exeter, Devon

Has been visiting our garden / railway embankment for the last two weeks - seen on most days. Seems quite placid and calm. We still have various berries to be eaten on the railway embankment, but worry this bird may run out of food!

20th December 2011 (Charles Walker)

Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

Several times coming into a town garden for the rotting grapes on the pergola. Is it very unusual in West Yorkshire (Huddersfield) in the third week of December?

26th December 2011 (Patricia Mallett)

Dartmeet, Devon

I think I saw a ring ouzel at Dartmeet, Devon, on 26 or 27 December 2011. It flew to the top of a conifer, and 2 chaffinches flew off as it approached. I got a pretty good view of it, and am pretty sure it was a female. But I'm no real expert (though very good at spotting birds, I'd say), and I

know they aren't meant to overwinter in the UK. I'd love to know if anyone else has seen them there.

17th January 2012 (Robert Kay)

Upper Heyford, Northamptonshire

Single bird seen at Upper Heyford Northamptonshire at about 11:30 on Tuesday January 17th. It was visible for about 2 minutes on the roof of a house.

24th January 2012 (Lyn Duncan)

Brimpton Common, West Berkshire

Have just seen a ring ouzel in my garden in West Berkshire - Brimpton Common. It looks tired and is being harried by the local blackbirds.

25th January 2012 (Robert Turner)

Calne, Wiltshire

Ring Ouzel seen in garden in Calne Wiltshire over three day period

[Click here](#) to see a photo of this bird

10th February 2012 (Susan Yannakopoulos)

Dunstable, Bedfordshire

Saw what I'm pretty sure was a Ring Ouzel for two consecutive days feeding in my garden. Slightly larger than the blackbird in size with a white collar at the front which didn't go all the way round, the under feathers did have a scaly appearance and noticed some white on tips of wings. Made a distinct rattling noise rather like a magpie, very aggressive and terrorised all the other birds in the garden. Took photos as it was feeding on apple.

[Click here](#) to see a photo of this bird

15th February 2012 (Jenni Abraham)

Shoreham, West Sussex

First sighting in my back garden in Shoreham, West Sussex was Wednesday 15 February 2012 at 10.59am, and again a second visit at 11.02am. Next sighting was on the 17 February 2012 at 3.13pm. And we have had several more visits since to take the ivy berries and drink from the bird bath in the garden. It is still here now on Sunday 19 February 2012 and seems to be taking refuge in our overgrown ivy on our shed. I have taken a few photos of it and my husband has also.

[Click here](#) for two great photos of this bird

17th February 2012 (Tim Hewett)

Westgate, Kent

Pair of 'small' blackbirds, both 'browner' and with a collar on one, the collar was slightly yellowy rather than pure white. Male blackbird in same tree (definite yellow beak and eye rings) ignored them but has spent all day chasing away other blackbirds.

18th February 2012 (Denise Morphet)

Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire

On an RSPB group visit to Caerlaverock on Saturday Feb 18th, from the Campbell Hide looking northwards, I saw an adult male ring ouzel in a hawthorn tree clearly in my scope. The white crescent was very distinct, but the bird lifted out of my field of view after about 1 minute, so no time to get any more detail.