

# The Bird Observatories Council

Chairman: K. Woodbridge, c/o NRBO, Twingness, North Ronaldsay, Orkney. KW17 2BE.  
Tel. 01857 633267. Fax. 01857 633207. E-mail: kevin@nrbo.prestel.co.uk  
Secretary: P. Howlett, c/o Dept. of Zoology, National Museums & Galleries of Wales, Cardiff. CF10 3NP.  
Tel. 029 20 573233. Fax. 029 20 239009. E-mail: peter.howlett@nmgw.ac.uk

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### Welsh Blue Tit island hops to Ireland

The common or garden Blue Tit is one of the best known of our garden birds, but it turns out that they can also be international travellers! The Bird Observatories Council were surprised recently to receive details of a Blue Tit that had been caught on Cape Clear Bird Observatory in County Cork, Ireland. This was firstly surprising as Blue Tit (present in over 90% of UK gardens according to BTO Garden BirdWatch) is actually a rare migrant to this southwestern outpost of Ireland. Secondly, it turned out that this particular bird had originally been ringed at Bardsey Bird Observatory in West Wales. Amazingly Blue Tit is even rarer on Bardsey, with this bird being one of only eight ringed in 2003! This rare island wanderer was first caught on Bardsey Island on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2003 before being caught on Cape Clear Island just 19 days later, having travelled 354km. Where this bird was heading is a mystery, as if it hadn't found the island it would have had a lot of sea ahead of it!

This is only the second time a Blue Tit has moved to or from Ireland in the 94-year history of the BTO ringing scheme! The previous record was of a bird ringed on St Agnes in the Scilly Isles on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1957 that was found dead 4 days later on a boat off Tuskar Rock, County Wexford, having crossed 261km of sea. Blue Tits are generally sedentary, just touring their same home patch and not migrating at all. Over 85% of recorded movements (shown by ring returns) are of less than 10km, and less than 150 birds (of over 2,750,000 ringed) have made it over the 100km mark!

#### For further information please contact:

**Cape Clear Bird Observatory Warden:** Steve Wing, email: [stevewing@eircom.net](mailto:stevewing@eircom.net)

**Secretary of The Bird Observatories Council:** Peter Howlett, Tel: 029 2057 3233,  
email: [peter.howlett@nmgw.ac.uk](mailto:peter.howlett@nmgw.ac.uk)

**BTO Ringing Unit:** Mark Grantham, Tel: 01842 750050 (office hours),  
e-mail: [mark.grantham@bto.org](mailto:mark.grantham@bto.org)

#### Notes

1. The Bird Observatories Council co-ordinates and promotes the work of the network of 18 Bird Observatories located at prime migration points in Britain and Ireland.
2. The primary purpose of Bird Observatories is to conduct long-term monitoring of bird populations and migration, through daily census work, ringing and other standardised methods of data collection.
3. The Observatories also enable and encourage volunteers to participate in scientific studies of birds and the environment, and the results of these studies are made freely available to researchers and to the public who are also welcome to visit Observatories.