

The detailed tables follow at the end

Wicken Fen Group Reedbed CES Results 2019

This was the ninth year of CES ringing at the Reedbed. All twelve sessions were satisfactorily completed. Very many thanks to all those who took part through the summer: Carole, Caroline, ChrisQ, Diana, Jethro, Meg, Sergio and Tony; this is half the number of members who participated in 2018. And particular thanks to the small subset of the above who supervised sessions as RICs, and/or provided essential support with net-erection and ride-management.

This year we caught 345 different individual birds (114 adults, and 231 juveniles) in 419 captures from 162 metres of net open for eight hours over twelve sessions. This is 10% above our previous-eight-year average of 314 individuals but with fewer adults and more juveniles. Our best overall total so far was 415 in our first season, 2011, which was by all accounts an exceptional year nationally; we dipped to 245 in 2013.

Our nine-year CES list comprises 41 species but only 23 were recorded in 2019 – the same as in 2018 – which is about average for most years. For the third year running it was disappointing to catch no Grasshopper Warblers, Whitethroats, Lesser Whitethroats or Bearded Tits. The three warblers don't of course usually breed anywhere close to the CES net-line. Bearded Tits seem to be at their lowest level for some years. By the end of September we had ringed just 14 at the Reedbed; the 2016 total had been 93. It was more unusual for the first time to catch no Garden Warblers or Reed Buntings. The less-frequently recorded CES birds are of course the non-passerines. 2019 brought three Sparrowhawks, two juvenile Cuckoos and an adult Tawny Owl. Jays bred this year after none in 2018, and the female was caught twice.

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These CES reports always comment on the effect (on the overall totals) of intercepting a random tit-chaff flock in July or August. 2019 scores for the three common tits 2016/17/18/19 come out as Blue Tit 31/20/16/22; Great Tit 8/9/9/16 and Long-tailed Tit 18/9/7/34, taking this effect well above the average. A late-morning hit of 24 Long-tailed Tits in August had only one adult. Young fellow-travelling Chiffchaffs also had a corresponding boost from these flock-catches.

As usual, only nine species feature in sufficient numbers to enable some sort of meaningful year-on-year comparison: five residents; the two long-haul sub-Saharan *Acrocephalus* warblers; and the two shorter-range, 'Mediterranean' migrants, Blackcap and Chiffchaff.

Here are their recent numbers.

	Adults						Juveniles					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Wren	10	5	8	10	11	11	21	11	14	9	15	29
Dunnock	4	5	6	2	6	3	8	2	4		8	5
Robin	8		4	2	2	3	20	23	26	16	14	23
Blackbird	5	5	4	3	3	8	3	3	5	3	4	9
Cetti's Warbler	3	4	4	7	4	6	3	8	11	12	16	6
Sedge Warbler	11	8	12	4	3	3	3	7	4	4	3	1
Reed Warbler	35	39	56	40	29	25	17	25	51	27	29	20
Blackcap	16	18	14	23	20	22	26	26	13	18	21	16
Chiffchaff	12	4	5	10	8	8	40	13	29	25	14	32
Bullfinch	9	8	3	6	3	6	9	3	5	2		4

The numbers in the table, even for these species, are really too small to allow much year-on-year comparison.

It is, however, possible to suggest some trends for these nine species by comparing the totals for each of the four years 2016–2019 with the averages of their previous five-year periods (2011–15, 2012–16 etc. respectively).

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The arrows only show significant percentage changes. A single arrow indicates >25%; two arrows >50%; and three arrows >75%. Blanks indicate no significant variance.

	Adults				Juveniles			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Wren	↑	↑↑	↑↑			↓		↑↑↑
Dunnoek	↑↑	↓↓↓	↑	↓		↓↓↓	↑↑↑	
Robin	↑↑↑	↓	↓		↑↑		↓	
Blackbird				↑↑↑	↑↑↑			↑↑↑
Cetti's Warbler		↑↑↑		↑	↑↑↑	↑↑↑	↑↑↑	↓
Sedge Warbler		↓↓↓	↓↓↓	↓↓↓	↓↓↓	↓	↓↓↓	↓↓↓
Reed Warbler			↓	↓				↓
Blackcap		↑			↓			
Chiffchaff		↑			↑↑		↓	↑

Residents

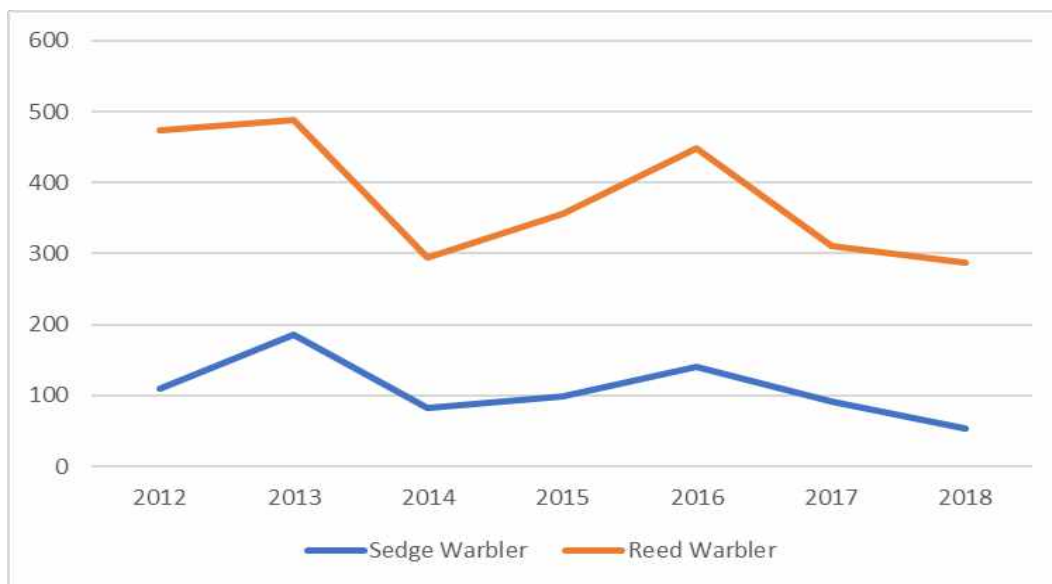
A striking feature of the summer was the abundance of baby Wrens, probably just good success in decent weather from the usual number of pairs. One or two extra pairs of Blackbirds along the Drove produced a corresponding increase in juveniles. While the boom in Cetti's Warblers might appear to have stalled, with only 12 in the CES, this may just have been a feature of the CES net locations. In the whole Reedbed (F) area 29 new Cetti's were ringed by the end of August, compared with 42, 29 and 30 in the three previous years 2016–18; another 12 new birds were ringed in September.

Reed and Sedge Warblers

The numbers for Reed and Sedge Warblers are the lowest ever. And it's unlikely that any gradual habitat change would have impacted the number of either species moving at low level across the Drove. Trends for both species show long-term declines.

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The chart below shows the absolute totals of new Reeds and Sedges of all ages ringed on the Fen in the last seven years. The effort will have varied a bit year on year, and 2018 did record the lowest overall WFG new birds total for all species for the period – 3,025 against an average of 3,980 for the same period.



We should nonetheless probably be worried by these figures. I also have maybe a subjective sense, from the CES and the larger catches at FRE and FRA, that we had many fewer returning ol' timer Reed Warblers again this year than usual: 6 out of 25 adults (24%) in the CES this year, close to 2018's 6 from 29 – compared to 17 from 40 (43%) in 2017 and 16 from 56 (29%) in 2016.

Blackcap and Chiffchaff

A good result for juvenile Chiffchaffs, helped along by the tit flock catches. Otherwise there was rather little change for these two.

Michael Holdsworth

29 September 2019

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	<i>"Old"</i> <i>adults</i>	<i>New</i> <i>adults</i>	<i>All</i> <i>adults</i>	<i>2019</i> <i>juvs</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>birds</i>	<i>"Old" adults' year of ringing</i>							
						<i>5</i> <i>2019</i>	<i>2.4.6</i> <i>2019</i>	<i>5</i> <i>2018</i>	<i>2.4.6</i> <i>2018</i>	<i>6.7</i> <i>2017</i>	<i>6.11</i> <i>2016</i>	<i>6.13</i> <i>2015</i>	<i>6.15</i> <i>2014</i>
Sedge Warbler	1	2	3	1	4		1						
Reed Warbler	7	18	25	20	45		1	1	3		1	1	
Lssr Whitethroat													
Whitethroat													
Garden Warbler													
Blackcap	2	20	22	16	38			1			1		
Chiffchaff	5	3	8	33	41		4	1					
Willow Warbler				2	2								
Bearded Tit													
L-tailed Tit	5		5	29	34			2	2		1		
Blue Tit	2	1	3	19	22			2					
Great Tit	1	1	2	14	16			1					
Treecreeper		1	1	7	8								
Chaffinch				1	1								
Goldfinch													
Bullfinch	4	2	6	4	10	1	2			1			
Reed Bunting													
Total:	51	63	114	231	345	4	9	17	9	6	4	1	1

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2019 Wicken Reedbed CES: Long Run

	Adults								Juveniles								Total birds								
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Mallard															1									1	
Sparrowhawk							1	2			1					1			1					1	3
Water Rail		1																1							
Woodcock																									
Woodpigeon		1	1															1	1						
Cuckoo	1															2	1								2
Tawny Owl								1	1								1								1
Kingfisher	1		4	4	3				5	1	2	1	1	2	1	6	6	1	6	5	4	2	1		6
Hobby				1															1						
Gre Woodpecker						1	1		1								1					1	1		
G S Woodpecker	1	1	1		1			1		1				2	1	1	1	1	2		1	2	1		2
Magpie					1															1					
Jay				1				1											1						1
Carrion Crow											2								2						
Yellow Wagtail		1																1							
Wren	7	2	10	5	8	10	11	11	11	12	21	11	14	9	15	29	18	14	31	16	22	19	26		40
Dunnock	5	4	4	5	6	2	6	3	1	3	8	2	4		8	5	6	7	12	7	10	2	14		8
Sp Flycatcher												1							1						
Robin	1	2	8		4	2	2	3	12	15	20	23	26	16	14	23	13	17	28	23	30	18	16		26
Blackbird		1	5	5	4	3	3	8		2	3	3	5	3	4	9		3	8	8	9	6	7		17
Song Thrush			1	2		1	2	3	1		3	1	2	2	2	3	1		4	3	2	3	4		6
Swallow													2								2				
Cetti's Warbler	3	2	3	4	4	7	4	6	2	2	3	8	11	12	16	6	5	4	6	12	15	19	20		12
Grasshopper W				1															1						
Sedge Warbler	9	12	11	8	12	4	3	3	9	15	3	7	4	4	3	1	18	27	14	15	16	8	6		4
Reed Warbler	60	41	35	39	56	40	29	25	47	39	17	25	51	27	29	20	107	80	52	64	107	67	58		45

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	Adults							2019	Juveniles							2019	Total birds							2019
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
L Whitethroat										1	2						1	2						
Whitethroat	3	2	1						2	1	1						5	3	2					
Garden Warbler	3	1		1	1	1			1		1	2	2		1		4	1	1	3	3	1	1	
Blackcap	18	11	16	18	14	23	20	22	10	12	26	26	13	18	21	16	28	23	42	44	27	41	41	38
Chiffchaff	8	4	12	4	5	10	8	8	11	9	40	13	29	25	14	32	19	13	52	17	34	35	22	40
Willow Warbler	1				1				4	3	7	2	12	4		2	5	3	7	2	13	4		2
Bearded Tit		1	5		1					2	11		2					3	16		3			
Long-tailed Tit		6	2	2	5	7	5	5			14		13	2	2	29		6	16	2	18	9	7	34
Blue Tit	1	2	7	3	7	1	4	3	10	9	33	7	24	19	12	19	11	11	40	10	31	20	16	22
Great Tit		2	4		4	1	5	2	3	4	16	1	4	8	4	14	3	6	20	1	8	9	9	16
Treecreeper	1		3	1	3	2	2	1	2	3	9	1	3	2	2	7	3	3	12	2	6	4	4	8
Chaffinch	2	1	3	2	2		4						1			2	2	1	3	2	3		4	2
Goldfinch	1		1														1		1					
Bullfinch	5	5	9	8	3	6	3	6	3	1	9	3	5	2		4	8	6	18	11	8	8	3	10
Reed Bunting	6	6	7		3	1	3			2	1	1		1	1		6	8	8	1	3	2	4	
Total:	137	109	153	114	148	122	116	114	136	136	254	138	228	158	151	231	273	245	407	252	376	280	267	345