

Chippenham West 'Standards' 2017

The detailed tables follow this introduction

2017 was the fourth year we have run this CES-lite programme at the Fen. Hopefully sufficient birds can be caught to provide a measure of indexation, both of adult abundance and year-on-year survival; and at least an early-season hint of local breeding season fledging productivity. The Standards area is on Snailwell Pools Fen, around Malcolm's Pond, the eastern part of Compartment 4.

Sessions ran on 25 May, 13 June and 5 July. 171m of net was erected the day before and furled. Nets were open for six hours from sunrise, providing 18 hours of ringing in total. No sound-lures were used. The first and second sessions aim to focus on the number of breeding pairs, and the second and third to measure productivity, hopefully before juvenile dispersal starts to confuse the picture. Due to holidays in 2017, the third session ran earlier than in the previous years, and this may have had an effect on the number of young birds caught.

The ringers were Michael Holdsworth and Peter Bircham.

Results

The weather was fine for each of the three sessions. We caught 109 different individual birds (68 adults, and 41 juveniles) in 119 captures. This was 38% fewer birds than our previous three-year average of 176; and from just fourteen species, the same as in 2016, also a lower number than in 2014 and 2015. Song Thrush was a new species for the Standards this year.

Total numbers are always going to be influenced by whether or not we have a random encounter with a tit/Chiffchaff flock. This year we didn't, but that was perhaps offset by an early-season flock of 21 Long-tailed Tits, all unringed.

The usual continuing absent passerines – Dunnock, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch – almost certainly do not breed anywhere nearby.

Overall the numbers of each species encountered are too low to enable any meaningful year-on-year comparison. The chart below, however, shows the four-year tallies for two residents, Wren and Robin; the two sub-Saharan *Acrocephalus* warblers, Reed and Sedge; and the two short-range, 'Mediterranean' migrants Blackcap and Chiffchaff (the latter always subject to the tit-flock effect, see above).

In the table below, the arrows indicate the 2017 variation from the mean of the three years 2014–16. A single arrow indicates >20%; two arrows >50%; [and three arrows >100%].

	Adults					Juveniles				
	2014	2015	2016	2017		2014	2015	2016	2017	
Wren	15	9	13	3	↓↓↓	14	16	9	1	↓↓↓
Robin	2	3	3	1	↓↓↓	5	3	8	4	↓
Sedge Warbler	9	6	4	7	→	5	2	3	6	↑↑↑
Reed Warbler	33	13	25	16	↓	16	18	4	6	↓↓↓
Blackcap	4	4	5	8	↑↑	7	7	3	2	↓↓↓
Chiffchaff	15	14	14	15	→	12	22	16	4	↓↓↓

Wrens –usually very much a feature of these sessions – seem to have had a poor year; and Robins hardly fared any better. Reed and Sedge Warblers showed greater variation; the lower juvenile total for Reed Warbler might have been improved by having had the July session later in the month. Apparent productivity for all species was poor, with the possible exception of Sedge Warbler.

It has been a quiet year for ring-recoveries. Wintering finches were represented by a Siskin from January 2016, recaptured – presumably at its breeding site – in Aberdeenshire in April 2017. Another Siskin, ringed at Brandon in October 2015, had been on the Fen in January 2016. In the other direction, a Chippenham Redpoll from January 2016 was controlled at Brandon in March 2017. An August juvenile Reed Warbler this year was at Lillington, Sussex later in the same month, no doubt *en route* south

The detailed tables follow below.

Michael Holdsworth

30 August 2017

2017 Chippenham Standards

	<i>"Old"</i> adults	<i>New</i> adults	All adults	2017 juvs	Total birds	<i>"Old" adults' year of ringing</i>					
						5 2017	2.4.6	5 2016	2.4.6	6.7 2015	6.11 2014
Wren	3		3	1	4	2					1
Robin	1		1	4	5	1					
Blackbird		1	1	1	2						
Song Thrush				1	1						
Sedge Warbler		7	7	6	13						
Reed Warbler	6	10	16	6	22				2	1	3
Blackcap	2	6	8	2	10				1		1
Chiffchaff	5	10	15	4	19			2	3		
Goldcrest				1	1						
Long-tailed Tit		15	15	6	21						
Blue Tit		1	1	5	6						
Great Tit				1	1						
Treecreeper				2	2						
Reed Bunting		1	1	1	2						
Total	17	51	68	41	109						

Long Run

	Adults				Juveniles				Totals			
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017
Cuckoo	1								1			
Kingfisher					2		1		2		1	
Wren	15	9	13	3	14	16	9	1	29	25	22	4
Robin	2	3	3	1	5	3	8	4	7	6	11	5
Blackbird	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	2
Song Thrush								1				1
Grasshopper Warbler						1				1		
Sedge Warbler	9	6	4	7	5	2	3	6	14	8	7	13
Reed Warbler	33	13	25	16	16	18	4	6	49	31	29	22
Lesser Whitethroat		1								1		
Garden Warbler						2	1			2	1	
Blackcap	4	4	5	8	7	7	3	2	11	11	8	10
Chiffchaff	15	14	14	15	12	22	16	4	27	36	30	19
Willow Warbler						2				2		
Goldcrest					2	1		1	2	1		1
Long-tailed Tit	12	11		15	16	7		6	28	18		21
Marsh Tit	2				1		2		3		2	
Coal Tit						2				2		
Blue Tit	6	5	3	1	22	10	4	5	28	15	7	6
Great Tit	2	2	5		7	5	4	1	9	7	9	1
Treecreeper					2			2	2			2
Jay		1	1							1	1	
Bullfinch		1								1		
Reed Bunting	6	8	2	1			1	1	6	8	3	2
Total	108	79	76	68	111	98	56	41	219	177	132	109