

ELY BEET PITS



RINGING REPORT 2016-17

Yearly ringing totals 2015-17, % difference 2016-17

SPECIES	NEW 2015	RT`15	TOTAL 2015	NEW 2016	RT`16	TOTAL 2016	NEW 2017	RT`17	TOTAL 2017	% DIFFERENCE
Hobby				1		1				-
Sparrowhawk							1		1	-
Sand Martin	9		9	1		1				-
Swallow	171		171	64	2	66	1		1	No roost `17
Meadow Pipit				15		15				-
Wren	19	3	22	33	10	43	18	6	24	-44.1
Dunnoek	11		11	18	6	24	10	5	15	-37.5
Robin	2		2	13	3	16	5	4	9	-43.7
Blackbird	2		2	7	1	8	6	7	13	62.5
Song Thrush	2		2	7	1	8	11	6	17	112.5
Redwing				1		1				-
Cetti's Warbler	2		2	7	5	12	6		6	-50.0
Sedge Warbler	72	2	74	33	10	43	70	15	85	97.6
Reed Warbler	244	29	273	242	63	305	201	42	243	-20.3
Lsr Whitethroat	2		2	1		1	2		2	-
Whitethroat	42	5	47	22	16	38	63	7	70	84.2
Blackcap	14		14	13	1	14	18	7	25	78.6
Chiffchaff	1		1	4		4	5	1	6	50.0
Willow Warbler				1		1	6	1	7	600
Bearded Tit				26	6	32	12	18	30	-6.2
Long tailed Tit				10		10	8	1	9	-10.0
Blue Tit	25	2	27	30	11	41	24	11	35	-14.6
Great Tit	7	1	8	18	1	19	11	3	14	-26.3
Greenfinch				3		3	1		1	-66.6
Goldfinch	25		25	46		46	9	1	10	-78.2
Reed Bunting	21		21	54	2	56	28	2	30	-46.4
Water Rail	1		1							-
Nightingale	1		1							-
Kingfisher							2		2	-
Linnet							2		2	-
TOTAL	673	43	716	670	138	808	520	138	658	

What was the weather like in 2016?

Winter 2015–16 was the third warmest since 1910 for the UK as a whole, and the warmest ever for England and Wales (mostly due to exceptionally high temperatures in December 2015). For Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it was also the wettest on record, and it was the second wettest for the UK as a whole.

Mean spring temperatures were more typical, falling slightly below average in April and rising slightly above in May. Breeding season rainfall varied dramatically between countries and months, however. Southern and eastern England experienced a wet March, April and June, with a brief respite in May, whilst heavy rainfall in northern England and Scotland was limited to April. In July and August the trend reversed, with above average rainfall in the north but exceptionally dry conditions in the south, where summer temperatures were also above average.

Migrant numbers bounce back



More Chiffchaff were recorded on CE Sites in 2016
than in any year since the scheme began in 1983

CES results show that 2016 was a good year for both short- and long-distance migrants. Five of the eight migrants monitored exhibited statistically significant increases in abundance in 2016 when compared to the five-year mean (2011–15). Chiffchaff was recorded in the greatest numbers since 1983, when the survey began, and survival rates were also the highest on record, indicating that they fared well over the winter months. Warmer than average conditions across much of the Northern Hemisphere in winter 2015–16 may have helped to bolster survival rates for this species, that winters around the Mediterranean basin and North Africa, and may also have benefited Blackcap. The increased abundance of Lesser Whitethroat, Sedge and Reed Warbler may be related to the wet growing season in the Sahel during 2015, which also produced good harvests for farmers in the region.

Only Whitethroat exhibited a statistically significant decrease in abundance. This is the fourth consecutive season that numbers of this species have fallen significantly below the five-year average. Although recent declines may be exaggerated by an exceptionally good year for this species in 2011 which will have inflated the five-year mean abundance figures; the long-term (1983–2015) CES abundance trend shows that Whitethroat is declining, albeit with large annual fluctuations.



Female Bearded Tit



Male Bearded Tit

What was the weather like in 2017?

Winter 2016/17 was generally dry and mild, and relatively benign, until the second half of February when conditions turned stormy. All parts of the UK experienced drier than average conditions at some point over the winter (December 2016 in southern England and January in Scotland and western areas). March and early April were warmer than average, but there were numerous late frosts in the second half of April. April was also drier than average for most areas, except northwest Scotland, whilst May was generally warm and wetter than average in the southeast but dry in the north and west. Throughout the summer (June to August), rainfall totals were above average for the UK as a whole in every month and mean temperatures were at or above average throughout the summer. June 2017 was the equal fifth warmest and the sixth wettest June since records began in 1910; many places received twice their average rainfall that month.

Migrant ups and downs



Blackcap exhibited a significant decrease in abundance, but a significant increase in productivity in 2017.

Results from this year's CES survey show that there were significantly higher numbers of adult Chiffchaff and Reed Warbler at the start of the season compared to the five year mean (2012–16). Numbers of Chiffchaffs were high in all regions except the west, while Reed Warbler numbers were particularly high in the north. For the second year running, more Chiffchaffs were recorded than in any year since the survey began in 1983. Survival rates for Chiffchaff and Reed Warbler were low in 2017, although only significantly so for Reed Warbler, suggesting overwinter survival of adult birds was not the driver of these increases. Although productivity for both species was significantly reduced in 2016, one possible cause of the increase is high overwinter survival of those juveniles that did manage to fledge last season.

Blackcap and Garden Warbler were the only migrants to exhibit a significant decrease in abundance compared to the five-year mean (particularly driven by results in the east and west of the country), with fewer Garden Warblers recorded in 2017 than in any previous year. Both species also exhibited low survival rates in 2017, although the reduction was only significant for Blackcap. Productivity was significantly reduced in 2016 for both species, suggesting the reduction in numbers could have been caused by a combination of poor adult overwinter survival and poor recruitment.

Extracts from the CES Survey results 2016 & 17, taken from the British Trust for Ornithology website.



Lesser Whitethroat



1st year chiffchaff

Ringling at EBP

The main 'reed bed' species all seem to show positive signs. Reed Warbler have been consistent all 3 years, Sedge Warbler bounced back after a dip in 2016, as did Common Whitethroat. The new populations of Cetti's Warbler & Bearded Tit continue to expand. Without doubt 'star bird' for 2016 was the capture of a 2nd year male Hobby, a locally nesting bird for sure. New additions during 2017 included Kingfisher, (which have started to nest in exposed mud banks) & Linnet which although common on site are actually quite difficult to catch!! Due to work commitments & holidays the Swallow roost was not covered during 2017, normal service will be resumed during 2018.



Male Kingfisher



Sedge Warbler

Returning Migrants

Species	Year Ringed	Returned 2016	Returned 2017	Total Retrapped
REED WARBLER	2010	1		1
	2011	1		1
	2014		2	2
	2015	17	8	25
	2016	-	10	10
				29 Adults, 10 1 st Year
WHITETHROAT	2013	1		1
	2015	5	3	8
	2016	-	1	1
SEDE WARBLER	2015	2		2
SWALLOW	2015	1		1

The table above shows how Reed Warblers in particular are generally site faithful. With 2 excellent records of birds ringed as adults in 2010 & 2011 returning in 2016, both birds racking up 1,000's of miles in their lifetime. Just the single returning Whitethroat in 2017 suggests the poor breeding season they had at EBP during 2016. The Swallow was a very nice retrap of a juvenile bird trapped at a roost during Sept 2015 that was retrapped a year later in the same net at the same roost.

Selected Controls, (birds ringed elsewhere & caught at EBP)

Species	Ring No.	Age/Sex	Ringed	Ringing Location	Controlled	Dist.	Direct	Dur.	
REED WARBLER	7146819	Adult Male	17-08-2014	Marias-Moisan, Ouest, Messanges, Landes, FRANCE	11-06 & 05-08-2016	946KM	North	664 & 719 days	
	"	"	"	"	11-05-2017	"	"	998 days	
SWALLOW	4L64101	Adult Male	?	SPAIN, Location unknown, waiting ringing details from Spain. (Madrid Address on the ring)	14-09-2016	?	?	?	
REED WARBLER	D970635	Adult Male	14-08-2014	Lithington, East Sussex	25-06-2016	178KM	North	681 days	
	"	"	"	"	11-05-2017	"	"	1001 days	
BEARDED TIT	Z403706	Adult Female	28-05-2016	Wicken Fen Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire	17-07-2017	12KM	NNE	415 days	
REED WARBLER	Z989890	1 st Year	21-07-2017	Pensthorpe Nature Reserve, Norfolk	05-08-2017	62 KM	SW	15 days	
SEDGE WARBLER	D879542	1 st Year	20-08-2017	Orfordness, Suffolk	22-08-2017	94KM	WNW	2 days	

A total of 23 different birds were controlled at EBP during 2016-17. Local controls, (under 5KM) totalled 17, with 2 foreign & 4 from other parts of the UK.

The French Reed Warbler could well be an EBP bird that was caught on migration through France during the autumn of 2014 & trapped returning to breed in 2016 & 17. Again, the Sussex Reed Warbler is probably an example of an EBP bird caught on autumn migration, then returning to breed at EBP. Frustratingly, I am still waiting for the ringing details of the Spanish ringed Swallow some 2 years later. Details will be updated when received. The Bearded Tit seems to show an adult female relocating to Wicken Fen, possibly 'pushed out' by her own offspring as the population grows at EBP. Finally the last two are prime examples of autumn migration, showing that when birds decide to move, they go for it, although the Sedge Warbler seemed to be heading in the wrong direction!! 94KM in 2 days is rather impressive!!

Foreign Controls &

Recoveries 2016-17



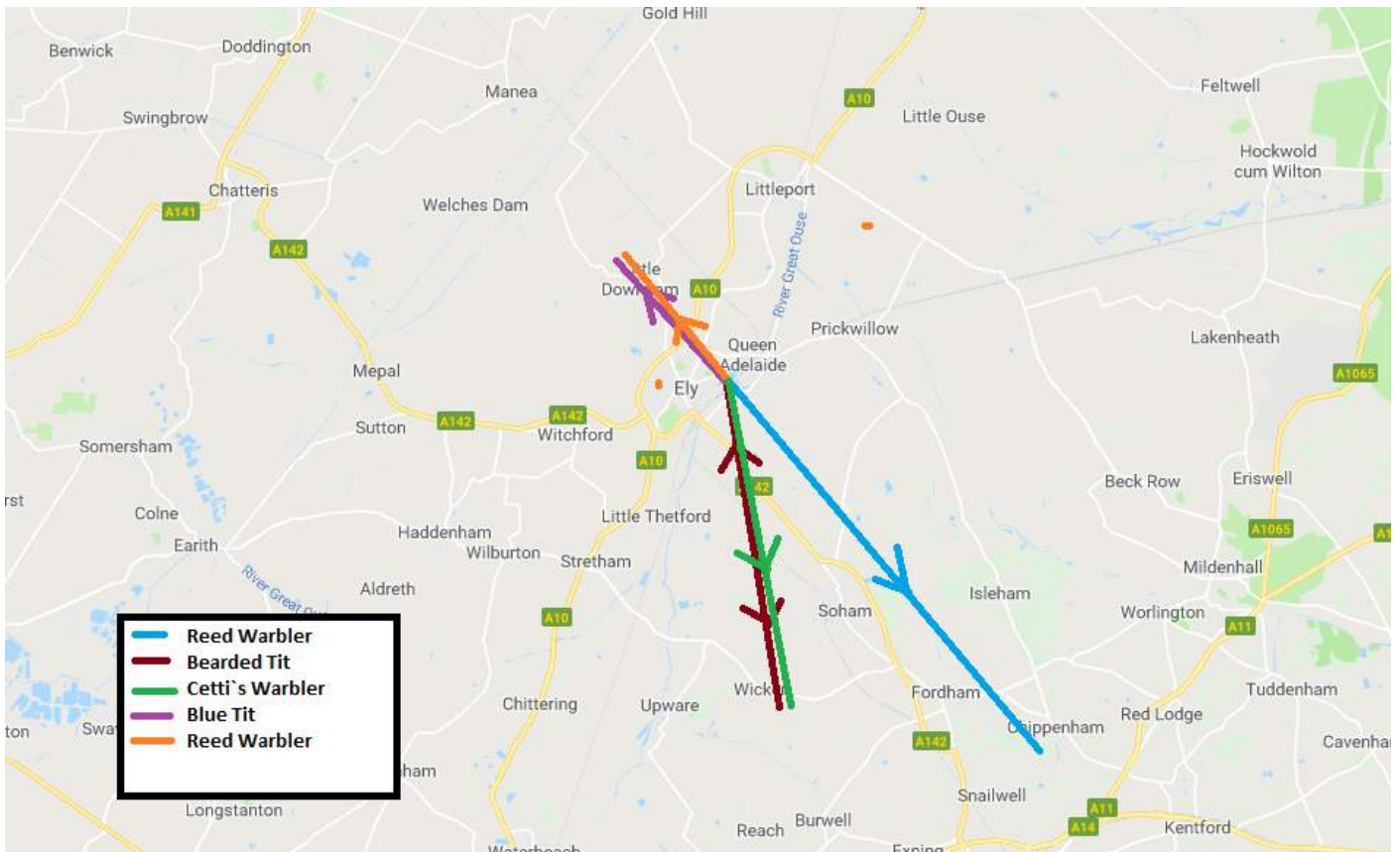
Selected Recoveries, (birds ringed at EBP & caught/found elsewhere)

Species	Ring No.	Age/Sex	Ringed	Destination	Recovered	Dist.	Direct	Dur.
SWALLOW	Z720186	1 st Year	04-09-2015	Brixworth Sewerage Farm, Northampton	18-05-2016	81KM	West	257 days
REED WARBLER	Z436942	1 st Year	11-08-2015	Chippenham Fen, Cambridgeshire	21-06-2016	15KM	SE	315 days
REED WARBLER	Z586919	1 st Year	05-08-2016	Dunkirk, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire	14-08-2016	8KM	NW	9 days
BEARDED TIT	Z992660	Fully Grown Male	18-09-2016	Wicken Fen Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire	17-03-2017	12KM	SSW	180 days
SWALLOW	Z720167	1 st Year	04-09-2015	Southill, Bedfordshire	21-05-2017	56KM	SW	625 days
BLUE TIT	Z586897	1 st Year	27-07-2016	Dunkirk, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire	21-08-2017	8KM	NW	393 days
CETTI'S WARBLER	S868146	1 st Year Female	05-08-2017	Wicken Fen Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire	24-11-2017	12KM	SSW	111 days
SEDGE WARBLER	S868208	1 st Year	22-08-2017	Oorderen, Antwerpen, Belgium	28-08-2017	305KM	ESE	6 days

A total of 17 different birds were recovered during 2016-17. Local recoveries, (under 5KM), totalled 9, with 1 foreign & 7 to other parts of the UK. The two Swallows were ringed together at the same roost both returning to the southern Midlands to breed. The remaining illustrate juvenile dispersal or autumn migration. The most impressive being the Sedge Warbler reaching Belgium, some 305KM away in just 6 days!! It is nice to see our two success stories, Bearded Tit & Cetti's Warbler, dispersing to new locations within Cambridge.



Inter county controls & recoveries 2016-17



Cambridgeshire controls & recoveries, (over 5km), 2016-17.





2nd year male Hobby



Male Kingfisher

Notable sightings

Species	Date 2016	Number/Observations
Cuckoo	16 th June	5 / 4 males chasing a single female around the centre scrub.
Common Tern	27 th May	Up to 3 seen regularly until 5 th August
Bittern	11 th June	Seen regularly until 14 th July, no booming heard, non- breeding female.
Little Egret	24 th July	Max. 4 on site, singles seen occasionally throughout the summer.
Oystercatcher	6 th May	A pair present until 14 th August, failed breeding attempt.
Swift	15 th August	Max. Count, 70+ feeding over the main reed bed
Swallow	22 nd August	100+ at roost in the main reed bed
Hobby	22 nd August	5 hunting Swallows at the main reed bed roost.
Goldfinch	27 th August	70+, Large flock of juveniles feeding on thistles seed heads.
Bearded Tit	29 th October	Flock of 18 seen feeding in the rear reed bed
Gadwall	29 th October	Max. count of 20 on site
Lapwing	29 th October	800+ on the fields south of the site.
Reed Bunting	29 th October	Max. Count 70+, annual autumn movement across the Cambridgeshire Fens.
Tufted Duck	29 th October	Max. count 24 on site
Meadow Pipit	29 th October	Max. Count 50+, annual autumn movement across the Cambridgeshire Fens.
Whooper Swan	12 th November	16, flying NW across the site.
Species	Date 2017	Number/Observations
Osprey	30 th April	A single bird drifting WNW, early morning
Yellow Wagtail	30 th April	A single bird NE
Common Tern	11 th May	2, feeding on the main lagoon.
Cuckoo	11 th May	2, First of the year.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	11 th May	A single bird, W over the site.
Little Egret	11 th May	2 feeding road side of the main reed bed.
Cuckoo	21 st May	Max. 5 on site
Cuckoo	20 th June	Again, Max. 5 on site.
Bearded Tit	20 th June	A flock of 25+, feeding in the main reed bed.
Bearded Tit	17 th July	Flock 14, moving through the rear reed bed.
Greylag Goose	29 th August	Max. Count 30+ on site.
Cormorant	15 th September	Max. Count, 16 in the trees bordering the main lagoon
Teal	2 nd November	Max. Count, 22 on the main lagoon.
Wigeon	2 nd November	Max. Count, 28 on the main lagoon.
Shoveler	2 nd November	Max. Count 11, on the main lagoon



Adult Male Reed Bunting, Autumn/Winter plumage.

Other sightings

On the mammal front, up to 5 Roe Deer are seen regularly. As well as occasional Muntjac. Fox are present most visits, along with a healthy population of Rabbits. Hare are present on the fields bordering the site. Weasel are also resident, often seen working the long grass bordering the track.

Acknowledgements:

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1st Year male Sparrowhawk.