

## **Wicken Fen Group Reedbed CES Results 2013**

All twelve sessions were satisfactorily completed again this year. Very many thanks to all those who got involved through the summer.

### **Results**

See the attached table, in a new format. This year we caught 245 different individual birds (109 adults, and 136 juveniles) in 287 captures from 540 feet of net open for eight hours over twelve sessions.

### **The season**

2013 nationally was another weird year for weather. It was the coldest spring since 1962, with temperatures 1-2° below average in the period February to April. Returning migrants clearly suffered on their northward passage, and found conditions very difficult on arrival. The long distance migrants arrived pretty much on time, but Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs, wintering around the Mediterranean, held off for several weeks. Migrants and residents (such as tits) both delayed laying by almost two weeks. The summer, however, when it finally arrived, was the warmest since 2006, and drier than average – with rainfall almost 50% lower than in recent years.

### **Fewer adults**

From the weather outline above, you'd have expected reduced numbers of adults, particularly after the disastrous 2012 breeding season which had produced so few young birds. You might also have expected reasonable productivity with those drier and warmer midsummer months. Even with Wicken's small sample, this is exactly what we find. The 2012 CES had equal numbers of adults and young 137/136; this year we still had 136 young, but only 109 adults. Neither year made it even to two-thirds of what we had had in 2011, so it's still difficult – after just three years – to know yet what an *average* Reedbed CES year might look like.

Some comparative figures are now available from some nearby CES sites:

	2011	2012	2013
<b>Wicken</b>			
Adults	169	137	109
Juveniles	246	136	136
<b>Paxton Pits CES</b>			
Adults	119	166	127
Juveniles	330	209	160
<b>Rye Meads North</b>			
Adults		108	123
Juveniles		93	323
<b>Rye Meads South</b>			
Adults		69	62
Juveniles		129	146

### **Acrocephalus warblers**

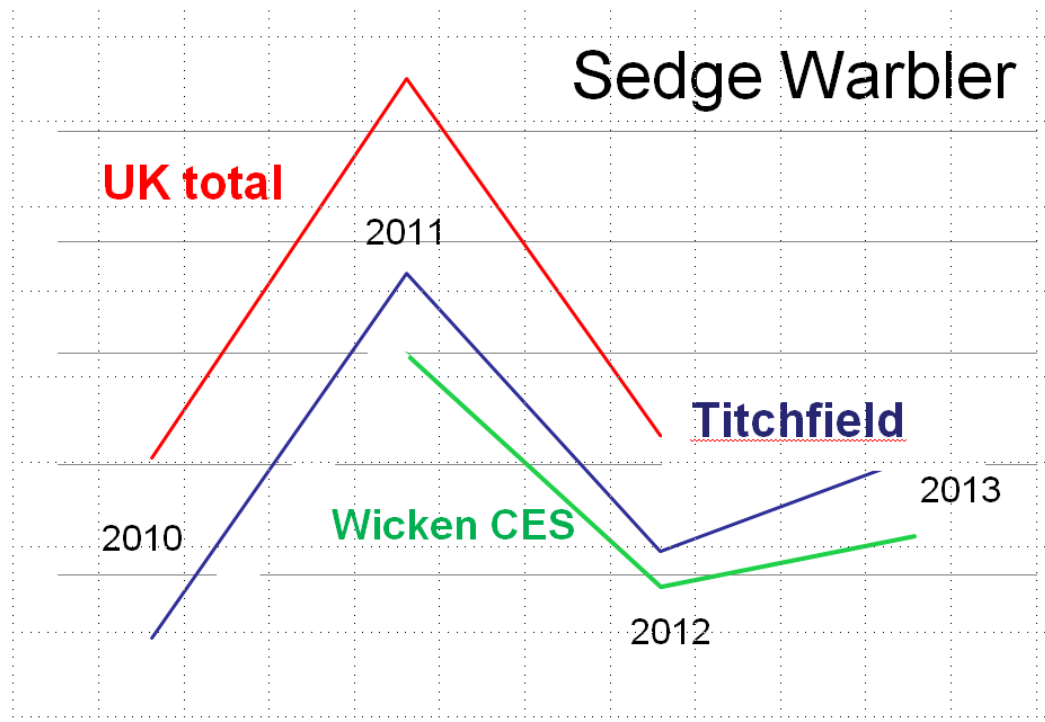
One of the striking features of 2012 was the absence of adult Sedge Warblers; and predictably very few young were produced. 2013 could only really have been a better year for Sedges. Reed Warblers, on the other hand, did equally badly each year.

	2011	2012	2013
Sedge adult	32	9	12
Sedge juv	28	9	15
Cambs Sedge totals	997	486	
<i>Reed adult</i>	70	60	41
<i>Reed juv</i>	76	47	39

Extending the comparison further afield for Sedge Warbler, the following table adds figures for the WFG whole-fen (different individuals) and new-bird totals for the guys at Titchfield Haven, Hampshire and the Rye Bay RG at Icklesham, East Sussex,

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Wicken CES		60	18	27
Whole WFG		295	119	192
Titchfield	878	1436	635	1431
Rye Bay	9870	11640	7714	
UK	32368	35169	20812	

What is remarkable is how this very small sample within the Wicken Reedbed CES catches (105 birds over the three years) shows more or less exactly the same pattern, when plotted to scale, as these much larger samples.



### The 'Mediterranean' warblers

The samples are small, but the same overall pattern would seem to hold true, but with better adult survival:

2011 – good overwintering survival, good productivity

2012 – OK overwintering survival, poor productivity

2013 – OK overwintering survival, better productivity

	2011	2012	2013
Blackcap adult	12	18	11
Blackcap juv	32	10	12
Chiffchaff adult	4	8	4
Chiffchaff juv	21	11	9

### Leaf-litter-foraging residents

Finally, as a control, there are the ground-level feeders, which don't migrate, and which are less dependent on the insect food which was in such short supply in the cold and wet of 2012 and 2013. Their productivity at least looks pretty consistent even if their adult survival may have been variably affected by differences in the intervening UK winters.

	2011	2012	2013
Robin adult		1	2
Robin juv	13	12	15
Wren adult	4	7	2
Wren juv	13	11	12
Dunnock adult		5	4
Dunnock juv	4	1	3

Michael Holdsworth

4 December 2013

	Old adults			New adults			Total adults			Juveniles			Total birds		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Water Rail						1			1						1
Woodcock				1			1						1		
Woodpigeon						1			1						1
Cuckoo					1			1						1	
Tawny Owl											1			1	
Kingfisher		1						1		2	5	1	2	6	1
Gre Woodpecker											1			1	
G S Woodpecker			1		1			1	1	1			1	1	1
Yellow Wagtail									1						1
Wren	2	5	2	2	2		4	7	2	13	11	12	17	18	14
Dunnock		4	2		1	2		5	4	4	1	3	4	6	7
Robin		1	2					1	2	13	12	15	13	13	17
Blackbird	4		1	2			6		1	2		2	8		3
Song Thrush	2						2			4	1		6	1	
Cetti's Warbler	3	3	2	1			4	3	2	5	2	2	9	5	4
Grasshopper W	1						1			1			2		
Sedge Warbler	12	3	1	20	6	11	32	9	12	28	9	15	60	18	27
Reed Warbler	28	15	10	42	45	31	70	60	41	76	47	39	146	107	80
L Whitethroat												1			1
Whitethroat		1	1	5	2	1	5	3	2	19	2	1	24	5	3
Garden Warbler				3	3	1	3	3	1		1		3	4	1
Blackcap	2	3	5	10	15	6	12	18	11	32	10	12	44	28	23
Chiffchaff	4	6	4		2		4	8	4	21	11	9	25	19	13
Willow Warbler	1			1	1		2	1		8	4	3	10	5	3
Bearded Tit			1	1			1		1	1		2	2		3
Long-tailed Tit	4		6				4		6	4			8		6
Blue Tit	2	1	2	1			3	1	2	3	10	9	6	11	11
Great Tit	3		2				3		2	2	3	4	5	3	6
Treecreeper		1						1		2	2	3	2	3	3
Chaffinch		2	1					2	1					2	1
Goldfinch	1			1	1		2	1					2	1	
Bullfinch	6	3	4		2	1	6	5	5	1	3	1	7	8	6
Reed Bunting	1	6	2	3		4	4	6	6	4		2	8	6	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>245</b>

