

Wicken Fen Group Reedbed CES Results 2018

The detailed tables follow this introduction

This was the eighth year of CES at the Reedbed. All twelve sessions were satisfactorily completed. Very many thanks to all those who participated through the summer: Alex, Ann, Carole, Caroline, ChrisQ, Diana, Hannah, HannahWh, James, Robin, Sergio, Sophie and Tony. And in particular to the subset of the above who supervised sessions as RICs, and/or provided essential support with net-erection and ride-management.

This year we caught 267 different individual birds (116 adults, and 151 juveniles) in 322 captures from 162 metres of net open for eight hours over twelve sessions. This is 13% below our seven-year average of 321 individuals; and is our third lowest (or fifth highest!) total so far. Our best total so far was 415 in our first season, 2011, which was by all accounts an exceptional year nationally; and we dipped to 245 in 2013.

By now, any addition to the CES species list will have to be something of a rarity (I'm still looking out for a Redstart or a Pied Flycatcher) or something wacky. So into this latter category must fall the juvenile Mallard caught this year; they had bred along the Little Drove ditch somewhere by the Groove. This takes our list to 40 species but only 23 were recorded in 2018, which is about average for most years. For the second 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 too have only rarely been caught along the CES, as they cross between the Four Pools and the Reedbed/Evans proper, but they still seemed to have suffered a very poor

season indeed. They were hardly recorded all summer anywhere on the Fen – no doubt the cold weather at the end of February was to blame.

During the May to August CES season and at the other reedbed sites FRE and FRA, we caught just one pair, and four juveniles (all on the same day in June); that could almost signify just a single breeding pair. We ringed 93 new Bearded Tits at the Reedbed in 2016.

The overall CES total is usually affected by whether or not we intercept a tit flock during the second half of the season. While there was the odd small party around in July and August, most tits caught were random single birds. The key species, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Long-tailed Tit, scored totals of 16/9/7, compared with 40/20/16 in 2014 and 31/8/18 in 2016. The random nature of such flock catches is probably no real indicator of how productive tits have been in any particular year. These encounters will also boost the numbers of fellow-travelling *Phylloscopus* warblers. 2014 had 52 Chiffchaffs and 7 Willow Warblers overall, 2016 had 34 and 15. We caught no Willow Warblers in the CES this year, and none bred nearby.

As usual, only ten species feature in sufficient numbers to enable some sort of meaningful year-on-year comparison: six residents; the two long-haul sub-Saharan *Acrocephalus* warblers; and the two shorter-range, 'Mediterranean' migrants, Blackcap and Chiffchaff (the latter to some extent subject to the tit-flock effect, see above).

Here are their numbers.

	Adults								Juveniles							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Wren	4	7	2	10	5	8	10	11	13	11	12	21	11	14	9	15
Dunnoek		5	4	4	5	6	2	6	4	1	3	8	2	4		8
Robin		1	2	8		4	2	2	13	12	15	20	23	26	16	14
Blackbird	6		1	5	5	4	3	3	2		2	3	3	5	3	4
Cetti's Warbler	4	3	2	3	4	4	7	4	5	2	2	3	8	11	12	16
Sedge Warbler	32	9	12	11	8	12	4	3	28	9	15	3	7	4	4	3
Reed Warbler	70	60	41	35	39	56	40	29	76	47	39	17	25	51	27	29
Blackcap	12	18	11	16	18	14	23	20	32	10	12	26	26	13	18	21
Chiffchaff	4	8	4	12	4	5	10	8	21	11	9	40	13	29	25	14
Bullfinch	6	5	5	9	8	3	6	3	1	3	1	9	3	5	2	

The numbers in the table, even for these species, are really too small to allow much year-on-year comparison. For example, while Bullfinches clearly bred successfully near FRA, with two males, two females and two juveniles caught, a second pair on the CES line probably failed.

It is, however, possible to suggest some trends for the other nine species by comparing the totals for 2016, 2017 and 2018 with the averages of their previous five-year periods (2011–15, 2012–16 and 2013–17 respectively).

The arrows only show significant percentage changes. A single arrow indicates >25%; two arrows >50%; and three arrows >75%.

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

Cetti's Warbler shows continuing improvement, with good productivity across this and the other Reedbed sites, apparently unaffected by the Spring weather. 41 new Cetti's had been ringed by the end of August, compared with 29 in 2017 and 30 in 2016. Sedge Warblers continue their decline while Blackcap and Chiffchaff survival and productivity seem stable. I 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 this year than usual: 6 out of 29 adults in the CES this year, compared to 17 from 40 last year. This maybe needs some further analysis.

The detailed tables follow below.

Michael Holdsworth

31 August 2018

2018 WFG Reedbed CES

	<i>"Old"</i> adults	<i>New</i> adults	All adults	2018 juvs	Total birds	<i>"Old" adults' year of ringing</i>					
						5 2018	2.4.6	5 2017	2.4.6	6.7 2016	6.11 2015
Mallard				1	1						
Sparrowhawk		1	1		1						
Kingfisher				1	1						
Green Woodpecker	1		1		1				1		
Gt Sp Woodpecker				1	1						
Wren	6	5	11	15	26	1		2	2		1
Dunnock	3	3	6	8	14	1				1	1
Robin		2	2	14	16						
Blackbird	3		3	4	7	1		1		1	
Song Thrush		2	2	2	4						
Cetti's Warbler	4		4	16	20			4			
Sedge Warbler	1	2	3	3	6		1				
Reed Warbler	7	22	29	29	58		1		1	3	2
Garden Warbler				1	1						
Blackcap	3	17	20	21	41				1	2	
Chiffchaff	1	7	8	14	22		1				
Long-tailed Tit	3	2	5	2	7		1		1	1	
Blue Tit	3	1	4	12	16	1		2			
Great Tit	2	3	5	4	9	1		1			
Treecreeper	2		2	2	4					2	
Chaffinch	1	3	4		4					1	
Bullfinch	1	2	3		3				1		
Reed Bunting	1	2	3	1	4					1	
Total:	42	74	116	151	267	5	4	10	7	12	4

2018 Wicken Reedbed CES: Long Run

	Adults								Juveniles								Total birds							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Mallard								1								1								1
Sparrowhawk								1				1								1				1
Water Rail			1																1					
Woodcock	1																1							
Woodpigeon			1	1															1	1				
Cuckoo		1																1						
Tawny Owl										1								1						
Kingfisher		1		4	4	3			2	5	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	6	1	6	5	4	2	1
Hobby					1																1			
Green 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
Magpie						1																1		
Jay					1																1			
Carrion Crow												2								2				
Yellow Wagtail			1																1					
Wren	4	7	2	10	5	8	10	11	13	11	12	21	11	14	9	15	17	18	14	31	16	22	19	26
Dunnock		5	4	4	5	6	2	6	4	1	3	8	2	4		8	4	6	7	12	7	10	2	14
Spotted Flycatcher													1								1			
Robin		1	2	8		4	2	2	13	12	15	20	23	26	16	14	13	13	17	28	23	30	18	16
Blackbird	6		1	5	5	4	3	3	2		2	3	3	5	3	4	8		3	8	8	9	6	7
Song Thrush	2			1	2		1	2	4	1		3	1	2	2	2	6	1		4	3	2	3	4
Swallow														2								2		
Cetti's Warbler	4	3	2	3	4	4	7	4	5	2	2	3	8	11	12	16	9	5	4	6	12	15	19	20
Grasshopper W	1				1				1								2				1			
Sedge Warbler	32	9	12	11	8	12	4	3	28	9	15	3	7	4	4	3	60	18	27	14	15	16	8	6
Reed Warbler	70	60	41	35	39	56	40	29	76	47	39	17	25	51	27	29	146	107	80	52	64	107	67	58
L Whitethroat											1	2							1	2				

	Adults								Juveniles								Total birds							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Whitethroat	5	3	2	1					19	2	1	1					24	5	3	2				
Garden Warbler	3	3	1		1	1	1			1		1	2	2		1	3	4	1	1	3	3	1	1
Blackcap	12	18	11	16	18	14	23	20	32	10	12	26	26	13	18	21	44	28	23	42	44	27	41	41
Chiffchaff	4	8	4	12	4	5	10	8	21	11	9	40	13	29	25	14	25	19	13	52	17	34	35	22
Willow Warbler	2	1				1			8	4	3	7	2	12	4		10	5	3	7	2	13	4	
Bearded Tit	1		1	5		1			1		2	11		2			2		3	16		3		
Long-tailed Tit	4		6	2	2	5	7	5	4			14		13	2	2	8		6	16	2	18	9	7
Blue Tit	3	1	2	7	3	7	1	4	3	10	9	33	7	24	19	12	6	11	11	40	10	31	20	16
Great Tit	3		2	4		4	1	5	2	3	4	16	1	4	8	4	5	3	6	20	1	8	9	9
Treecreeper		1		3	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	9	1	3	2	2	2	3	3	12	2	6	4	4
Chaffinch		2	1	3	2	2		4						1				2	1	3	2	3		4
Goldfinch	2	1		1													2	1		1				
Bullfinch	6	5	5	9	8	3	6	3	1	3	1	9	3	5	2		7	8	6	18	11	8	8	3
Reed Bunting	4	6	6	7		3	1	3	4		2	1	1		1	1	8	6	8	8	1	3	2	4
Total:	169	137	109	153	114	148	122	116	246	136	136	254	138	228	158	151	415	273	245	407	252	376	280	267