

Birds ringed on Holt Island 2020

As we are all aware 2020 has been an unprecedented year with several lockdowns due to the Covid 19 virus. The result was that we were unable to ring on the Island part of March and April, were able to get back on the Island in mid-May. Then again in August/September the bridge needed to be replaced so again there was no access, but in spite of that we have ringed a good number of birds. We particularly concentrated on catching warblers in the spring and summer, this has been the subject in a separate paper.

The beginning of the year had its own problems with the Island being flooded about four times. The year ended in the same way with the highest flood in recent years.

Species	Pulli	New Full Grown	Re-traps	Total
Sparrow hawk		1		1
Woodcock		1		1
Kingfisher		2		2
Green Woodpecker		1		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker		3	3	6
Wren		20	25	45
Dunnock		37	52	89
Cetti's Warbler		3	4	7
Sedge Warbler		11	30	41
Reed Warbler		61	41	102
Garden warbler		5	1	6
Blackcap		76	28	104
Whitethroat		3		3
Lesser Whitethroat		2		2
Willow Warbler		1		1
Chiffchaff		32	2	34
Goldcrest		5	2	7
Robin		35	35	70
Blackbird		31	30	61
Song Thrush		7	2	9
Long tailed Tit		14	15	29
Blue Tit	36	78	169	283
Great Tit	11	55	84	150
Tree Creeper		6	9	15
Reed Bunting		18	3	21
Chaffinch		1		1
Greenfinch		1		1
Goldfinch		3		3
Bullfinch		2	1	3
House Sparrow		3	1	4
Total	47	518	537	1102

There were some nice birds caught during the year notably the Woodcock, it was part of an influx of Woodcocks in the autumn which had been pushed out of Scandinavia due to the freezing conditions. It is always nice to get Kingfishers, a Green Woodpecker and a Sparrow hawk. As ever the most numerous bird to be caught was the Blue Tit followed but the Great Tit, again I have written a note

on the Blue Tits which is on the website. The nest boxes have 36 Blue Tits and 11 Great Tit ringed all of which fledged.



Green Woodpecker



Juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker

During the summer we targeted the warblers and caught nine species, with a new record for the Island with the Lesser Whitethroat, two were caught one was a juvenile. Chiffchaffs have been caught in most months of the year with three in December and a total of 32 new birds. Blackcaps were very numerous with 76 new birds and 28 re-traps. Of the new birds 32 were juveniles suggesting a good breeding season with some 10 – 12 pairs breeding on the Island. Reed Warblers also did very well with 35 new juvenile birds being caught. One of the new adults caught on 15th June was subsequently caught at Woodwalton Fen on 30th July

The success of the warblers was probably due to a number of factors which were in the birds favour, the lockdown in Spain and Italy meant fewer birds were shot and similarly the lockdown here meant less disturbance.



Lesser Whitethroat



Kingfisher



Garden Warbler

In the spring the Cetti's Warbler was heard on a number of occasions but none were caught until September when three were caught, at least two remained on the Island through into December, being both caught in later months and being heard.

Robins had a good breeding season with 30 juveniles being caught particularly in the area round the Meadow. The Blackbirds did not do as well with only 12 juveniles being caught. In the autumn only a couple of the birds caught were continental birds with the longer wings and greater weight. At least two broods of Song Thrushes were noted.

It is difficult to judge the success of the Blue Tits and Great Tits although the nest boxes did well, it was interesting that some of the Blue Tits ringed in town turned up on the Island. The local Blue Tits seem to move round different site not staying in one site for long and moving round according to the time of year. Not so many birds were caught this year probably because we could not get onto the Island in August and generally they did not have such a good year.

We caught a family of Tree creepers in June with five juveniles and one adult..

It has been noticeable that we have caught many fewer finches this year, particularly Chaffinches, Few Goldfinches have visited the Island but their numbers are high elsewhere. The numbers of Reed Buntings have been fairly steady.

It has been a strange year but has brought quite a lot of interest, the Island is still important for the birdlife and regularly brings surprises. We hope next year brings more normality to the world.



Woodcock



Reed Bunting, male

Julian & Sue Limentani

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