

NEWBURY RINGING GROUP

British Trust for Ornithology ref:9065

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Constant Effort Site Ringing Thatcham Marsh Local Nature Reserve 2015 Report



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Introduction

The Constant Effort Site (CES) scheme uses captures from standardised mist/netting to monitor key aspects of the demography of common breeding birds. Sites are situated throughout Britain and Ireland and dedicated ringers erect mist/nets in the same positions, for the same length of time, during twelve visits starting the last week in April to the end of August each year, depending on how weekends fall, (sites are visited once during every 10/11 day period).

Changes in the total number of adults caught provide a measure of changing population size, while the proportion of young birds caught forms an index of breeding success. Retraps of adult birds ringed in previous years are used to estimate annual survival rates. Habitat details are updated periodically.

More information on the CES scheme and the latest results can be found at www.bto.org

We have ringed Thatcham Marsh Local Nature Reserve (LNR) since 1967 and operated it as a CES site since 1993. It is Phragmites reed bed habitat with scrub and is good for Warblers / Reed, Sedge and Cetti's in particular. The CES standard nets are set along a grass covered ride with reed beds each side and consist of one ride with 6x18M and another with 5x18M of mist net (198m long and 2.7m high). Additional nets are erected in nearby scrub adding usually up to 75M of net in up to five rides depending on the number of ringers available.

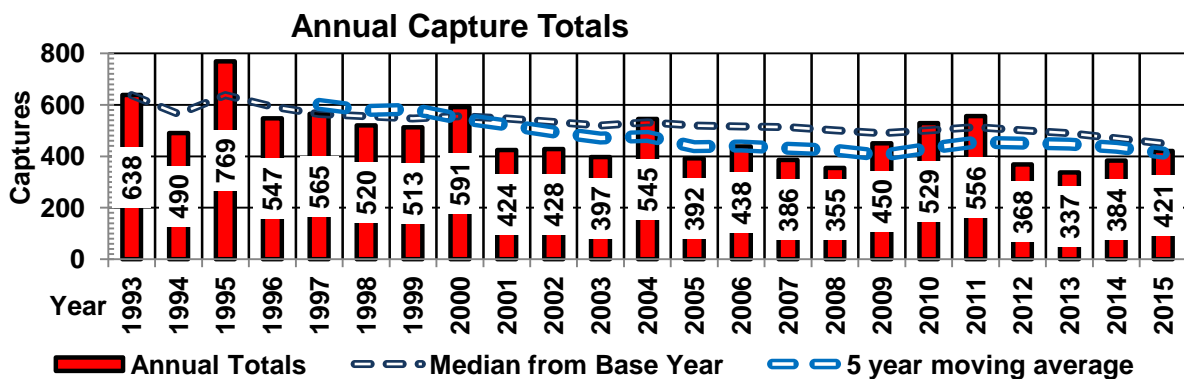
The CES at Thatcham Marsh LNR is 23 years old with all 12 visits completed for each year. This is 276 visits equating to 1380 hours approximately; a considerable commitment of group members' time.

Report on the 2015 CES Seasons at Thatcham Marsh LNR

Schedule of Visits 2015 nets are up from approximately 06:00hrs to 10:00hrs BST (4 hours)

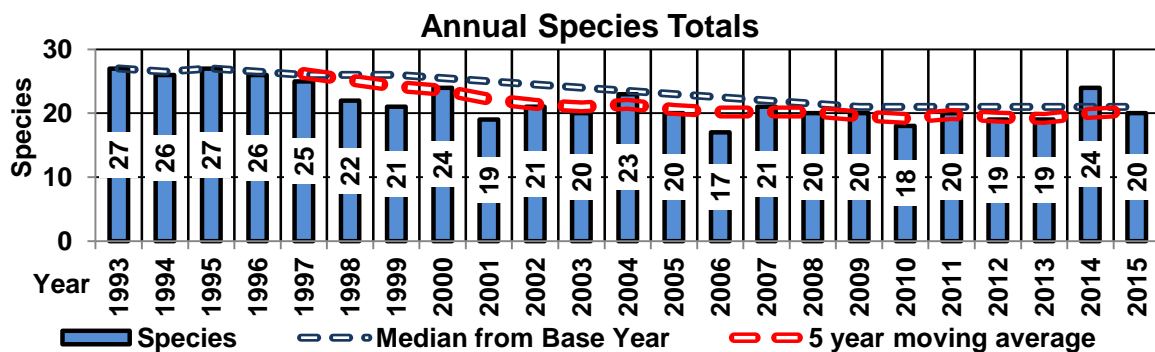
Visit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Date	04/05	16/05	24/05	06/06	14/06	27/06	05/07	18/07	30/07	08/08	16/08	29/08

Aborted/additional visits: made on the: 21/06 (visit 6 aborted due to rain), 26/07 and 23/08



Author Jan Legg

Figure 1 above shows yearly capture totals from the standard nets only. It shows 2015 to be the best year since 2011. It is a little below the average for the 10 year period 2006 to 2015



Author Jan Legg

Figure 2 above shows yearly species totals from the standard nets only and gives an indication of species diversity over the years. 2015 shows a diversity of species around the norm for the last 10 years.

2015 Visits

Summary: In 2015 although overall the relative numbers are at the lower end of the 23 year range, Reed Warbler had quite a good year, and so did Cetti's Warbler. Sedge Warbler continues to decline with only around five pairs attempting to breed on the reed bed. Other species are far less frequent continuing recent trends. As in recent years the cool wet summer and probably low breeding success hastened adult departure to warmer climes.

Note: all statistics are based on 198m of standard nets in one ride; additional netting varies each visit and is not included. Species totals are shown as New/recapture/N/R

Visit 1 (04/06):

Weather: sunny periods, slight breeze but not affecting nets.

Nets: 690' (one Additional 30' net). Up from 06:10 to 10:00 hrs

Capture 31 (2 from additional nets): Blackcap 2/0, Cetti's Warbler 0/3, Chiffchaff 0/1, Dunnock 0/2, Great Tit 0/1, Reed Bunting 1/1, Reed Warbler 1/4, Sedge Warbler 0/3

Notes: 29 from standard nets is a little below 32 average for visit 01; range 1998 7, 2004 63

Visit 2 (16/05):

Weather: overcast with some sunny breaks, breeze affected capture particularly towards the end.

Nets: 700' (one Additional 40' net ride) up from 06:05 to 10:05 hrs

Capture 29 (3 from additional nets) : Blue Tit 0/2, Cetti's Warbler 0/1, Chiffchaff 1/0, Dunnock 0/1, Great Tit 2/0, Long/tailed Tit 3/1, Reed Warbler 4/4, Robin 1/1, Sedge Warbler 6/1, Wren 0/1

Notes: 26 from standard nets is below the 32 average for visit 02; range 1994 19, 2011 52

Visit 3 (24/05)

Weather: sunny, cloudless, calm for first half, cloudy breezy for second half

Nets: 890' (Additional Net Rides of 100', 100' and 30') up from 06:00 to 10:00hrs

Capture 46 (17 from additional nets): Blackbird 2/0, Blackcap 2/1, Blue Tit 0/2, Cetti's Warbler 0/1, Chiffchaff 3/1, Dunnock 1/0, Great Spotted Woodpecker 0/1, Great Tit 4/0, Long/tailed Tit 2/0, Reed Bunting 2/0, Reed Warbler 9/9, Robin 1/0, Sedge Warbler 1/1, Treecreeper 1/0, Whitethroat 1/0, Wren 1/0

Notes: 29 from standard nets is below the 35 average for visit 03; range 2002 18, 1993 51

First juveniles of the year captured a Chiffchaff and a Long/tailed Tit

Ringed elsewhere: Chiffchaff (Wraysbury GPs 21/06/14), Sedge Warbler (Marsh Benham 13/04/14)

Not that many Reed Warblers on the reed bed yet and many of Sedge Warblers captured in visits 01 and 02 appear to have moved on.

Visit 4 (06/06):

Weather: bright sunny light breeze at start, more cloud and very strong winds towards the end of the session affecting the capture for the second half.

Nets: 890' (Additional Net Rides of 100', 100' and 30'), Nets up from 06:00 to 10:00hrs

Capture 35 (2 from additional nets): Blackcap 1/0, Blue Tit 1/0, Cetti's Warbler 0/2, Dunnock 0/1, Reed Bunting 1/0, Reed Warbler 12/12, Robin 2/1, Sedge Warbler 0/2

Notes: 32 from the standard nets is below the 37 average for visit 04; range 2005/2009 21 and 1993 59

The session started off quite well, the light breeze not really affecting the capture however as the session progressed the wind increased; the last 40 minutes being quite impossible as the wind became very strong. There was relatively little avian activity during the session particularly in the scrub probably subdued by the conditions. On the reed bed the impression is of just a couple of pairs of Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting present in the immediate vicinity and fewer returning Reed Warblers so far this year and time is running out. It was somewhat of a surprise when a recently fledging Reed Warbler family turned up in the nets.

Visit 5 (14/06):

Weather: Dull, overcast, cold and occasionally breezy.

Nets: 660' (no additional nets) up from 05:55 to 10:05hrs

Capture 33: Blackbird 1/2, Blue Tit 1/2, Cetti's Warbler 0/1, Dunnock 1/0, Reed Warbler 5/13, Robin 4/0, Sedge Warbler 0/2, Song Thrush 0/1

Notes: 33 from the standard nets is below the 42 average for visit 06; range 2013 15, 1993 78.

The session began in a light drizzle, more like a misting than drizzle, cloud was very low and it was dark, dank and repressive with occasional breezy gusts; a quite unpleasant environment. The reed bed remains relatively quiet so it looks as if we have all the returning migrants we are going to get. Just three Blue Tits, one a juvenile, just about sum it up; usually it would be a good flock near double figures; even less Sedge Warbler activity than visit 04; Cuckoos still active. The weather brightened up a little as we took the nets down.

Visit 6 (27/06):

Weather: bright sunny warm calm at first breezy later

Nets: 760' (Additional Net Ride of 100') up from 06:00 to 10:00hrs

Capture 44 (5 from additional nets) : Blackbird 2/0, Blackcap 3/0, Cetti's Warbler 6/2, Chiffchaff 3/0, Garden Warbler 1/0, Great Tit 2/1, Reed Warbler 7/7, Robin 4/1, Sedge Warbler 3/2, Wren 1/1

Notes: A capture of 39 in standard nets is below the average of 43 for visit 6: range 2014 23 to 1995 61. At halfway through the CES season the cumulative total is 186 (84% of the average for visits 1 to 6); range 2014 167 to 1995 298

A good morning for a change but still lacking Reed Warblers; two retraps captured for the first time this year usually indicates birds beginning to move through. Still capturing a few Sedge Warblers and also the first Garden Warbler juvenile of the year. A 4 year plus Cetti's Warbler and Great Tit, and a 3 year plus Wren. Most captures were juveniles with a few worn looking adults. Some adults appear to be beyond breeding condition

Visit 7 (05/07):

Weather: Overcast calm

Nets: 660' (Additional Nets: None) up from 06:00 to 10:00hrs

Capture 64: Blackbird 1/0, Blackcap 2/0, Blue Tit 1/1, Cetti's Warbler 2/2, Chiffchaff 6/0, Reed Bunting 1/0, Reed Warbler 26/8, Robin 2/0, Sedge Warbler 5/2, Treecreeper 1/0, Willow Warbler 1/0, Wren 2/1

Notes: A capture of 64 is up on the average of 57 for visit 07; range 2007/35 to 1993/109. The weather was ideal for ringing. The visit coincided with a perhaps the main Reed Warbler fledge; some adults still around, some coming out of breeding condition. Only juvenile Sedge Warblers captured showing the regulars may have moved on.

Visit 8 (18/07):

Weather: Bright, sunny, little cloud, calm early, breezy late in session

Nets: 760' (Additional Nets 60' & 40' net rides

Capture 58 (17 from Additional Nets): Blackcap 1/0, Blue Tit 1/0, Bullfinch 5/0, Cetti's Warbler 2/1, Chiffchaff 2/0, Dunnock 1/0, Great Tit 1/0, Marsh Tit 1/0, Reed Bunting 3/0, Reed Warbler 21/7, Robin 3/0, Sedge Warbler 2/0, Song Thrush 0/1, Whitethroat 1/0, Wren 5/0

Notes: 41 is just below the average of 44 for visit 8; range 2012 24 1997 89. Weather was generally ideal if a little bright; it became breezy for the last 30+ minutes. Scrub did well including a Marsh Tit now scarce around the marsh and last captured here the 09-Sep-2012. Just a few straggler Sedge Warbler, still quite a few mostly juvenile Reed Warblers about but not in the numbers expected for this time of year

Visit 9 (30/07):

Weather: Bright sunny windy in second half.

Nets: 660' (no Additional Nets) up from 06:00 to 10:05hrs

Capture 31: Blackcap 2/0, Cetti's Warbler 2/1, Chiffchaff 1/0, Reed Warbler 13/6, Robin 1/0, Sedge Warbler 1/1, Wren 2/1

Notes: We were forced to abort the first attempt at CES visit 9 on Sunday (26th) when heavy rain started at 08:00hrs halfway through the session at which point 33 had been captured. It is a little disappointing that when we were able to do a full visit we captured 31. Potentially, had we been able to complete last Sunday's session, we would probably have captured 50+. 31 is below the average of 47 for visit 9; range 2013/24 to 1998/87. It looks like many birds left during July's rainy season! Have put Sunday's visit as additional and will leave it to the BTO to sort out which visit gives the truest result. I even managed to get the plank across the gap unaided and without falling in thanks to the magic gloves.

Visit 10 (08/08):

Weather: overcast warm and calm; ideal

Nets: 870' (Additional Nets 210' in 3 rides) up from 06:00 to 10:00hrs

Capture 50 (16 from Additional Nets): Blackcap 5/0, Bullfinch 1/0, Cetti's Warbler 3/0, Chaffinch 1/0, Chiffchaff 2/0, Dunnock 0/1, Garden Warbler 1/0, Great Tit 4/0, Great Spotted Woodpecker 1/0, Reed Warbler 10/3, Robin 2/0, Sedge Warbler 7/0, Wren 8/1

Notes: 34 in standard nets is below the average of 42 for visit 10 ; range 2005 22 to 1995 85. Conditions good, a few acrocephalus still on the reed bed, most of the Sedge Warblers probably on passage, still a couple of adult Reed Warblers about, good numbers from the additional nets for a change.

Visit 11 (16/08):

Weather: mostly over cast with sunny periods cold for Aug, calm

Nets: 360' Standard Nets in one reed bed ride of 360', 300' Additional Nets 70' in two rides of 40' & 30' Nets up from 06:05 to 10:10hrs

Capture 42 (8 from Standard Nets): Blackcap 2/0, Blue Tit 1/1, Bullfinch 2/0, Cetti's Warbler 2/1, Chiffchaff 3/0, Dunnock 1/0, Great Tit 1/0, Long/tailed Tit 3/0, Reed Warbler 9/4, Sedge Warbler 4/1, Wren 4.3

Notes: 34 in standard nets is below the 37 average for visit 11; range 2005 11 to 1995 71. Good ringing weather, very little acrocephalus activity on reed bed so the numbers captured unexpected especially Sedge Warblers.

Visit 12 (28/08)

Weather: Overcast and calm, sunny periods and light wind late in session.

Nets: 890' of net, (additional nets 230' in three rides); up from 06:05 to 10:10hrs

Capture 52 (standard nets 31 additional nets 21): Blackcap 2/0, Blue Tit 0/1, Bullfinch 3/0, Cetti's Warbler 3/3, Chiffchaff 12/0, Dunnock 0/2, Jay 1/0, Long/tailed Tit 3/2, Reed Warbler 6/3, Robin 1/2, Sedge Warbler 1/0, Treecreeper 1/0, Willow Warbler 1/0, Wren 2/3

Notes: 31 in standard nets is a little below the average of 33 for visit 12: range 2006/11 to 1995/71. Total capture for the season is 421 below the average of 480; range: 2013/337 1995/769

Very dark when we started, ideal ringing conditions, reed bed relatively quiet as is usual for 2015.

Many of the chiffchaff were captured in one go from additional nets in scrub.

Work for the new pumps did not affect us as only a small amount of clearance work done this week probably due to the weather

Key species (seasons end):

Reed Warbler 201 below the average of 217 range 2008/127 to 1995/325

Sedge Warbler 54 well below the average of 99 range 2014/50 to 1995/215

Cetti's Warbler 33 captures; the second best year ever after 2014 (34)

Species Results

The key species on the CES are Reed, Sedge and Cetti's Warbler. The graphs give some insight into how these key species (and some others) are doing. The graphs apply to the CES standard nets only for the CES period over the required 12 visits.

Numbers of species captured each year, other than Reed and Sedge Warbler, are significantly low and any analysis should be treated as very general.

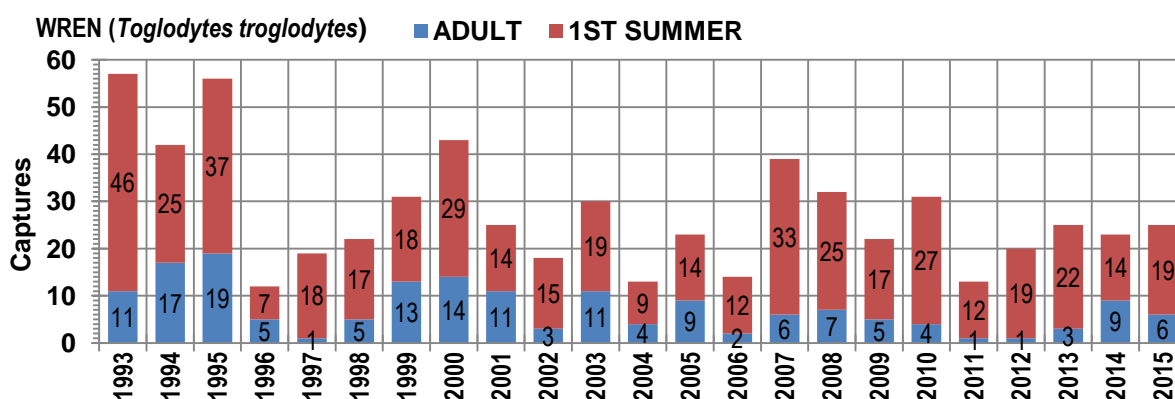


Figure 3 Wren: Average for the recent past.

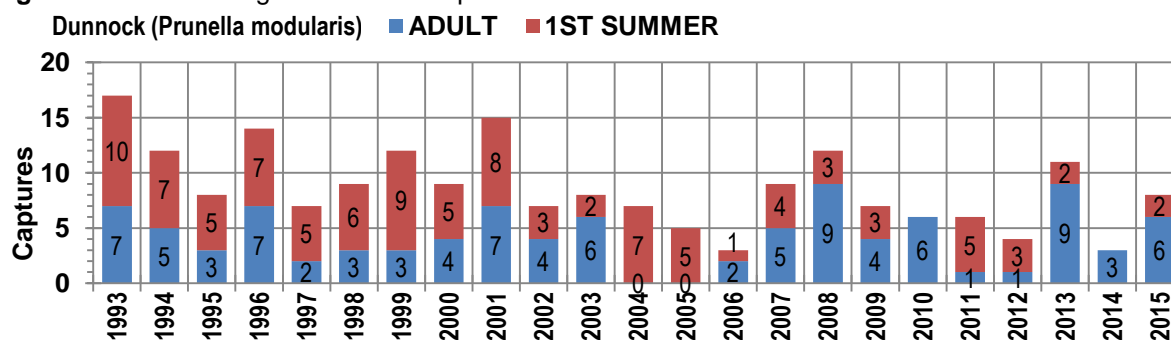


Figure 4 Dunnock: another poor year but not as bad as 2014.

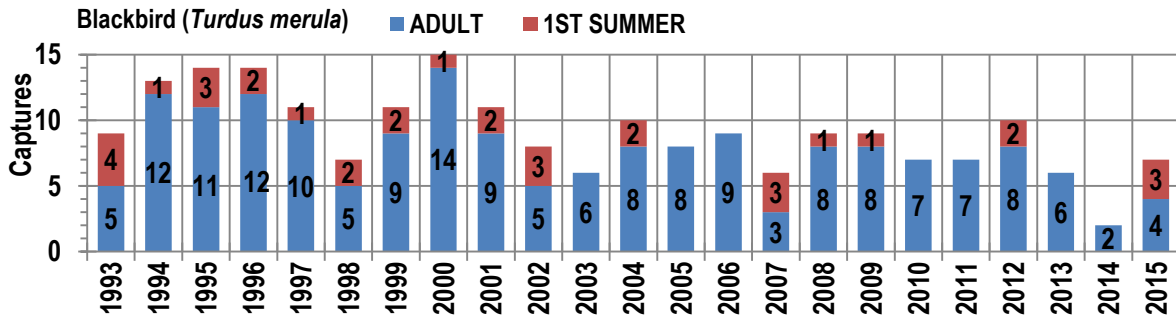


Figure 5 Blackbird: another low number year but with some juveniles.

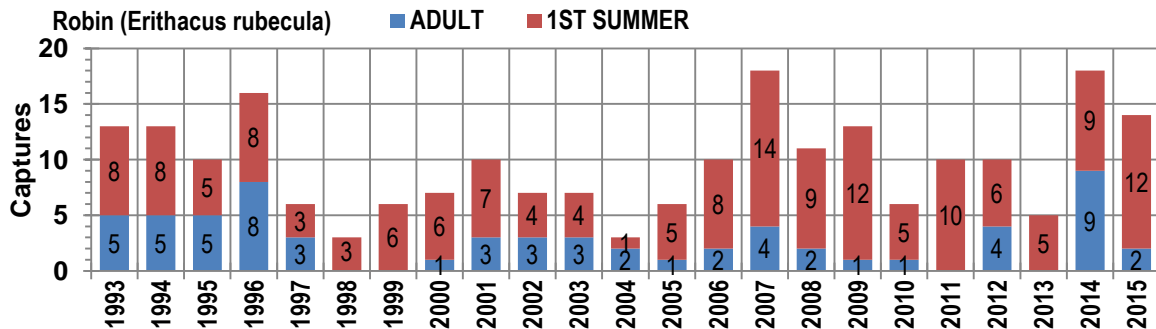


Figure 6 Robin: a good juvenile year but fewer adults; perhaps a pair produced two broods nearby.

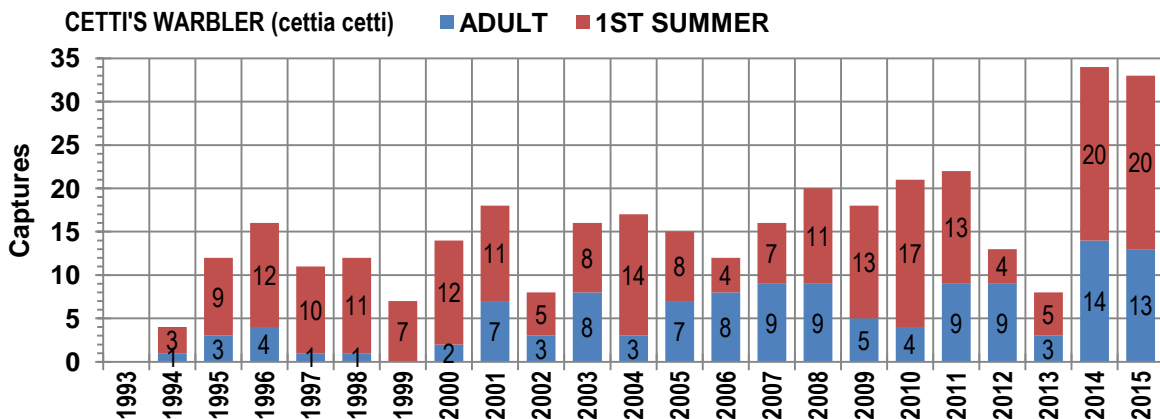


Figure 7 Cetti's Warbler Another really good year, one less adult than 2014

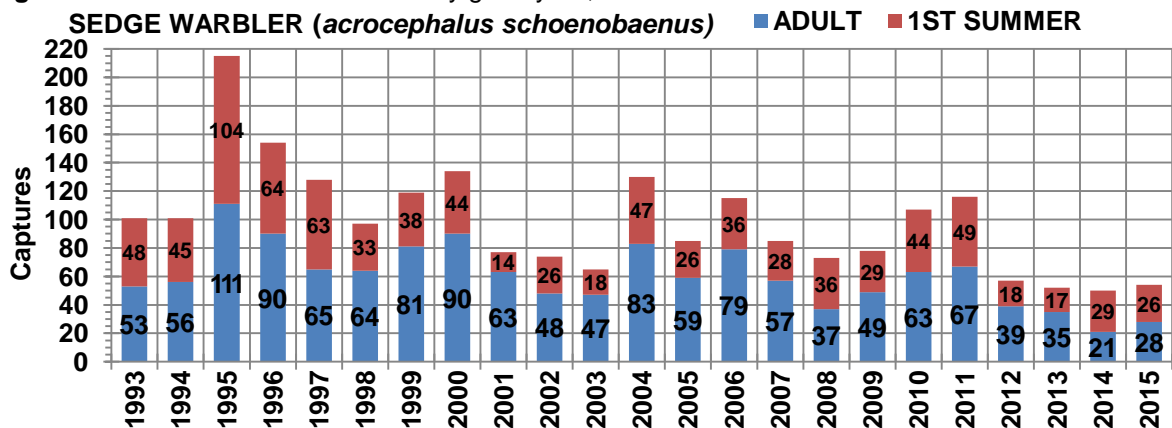


Figure 8 Sedge Warbler: The fortunes of this species in the area are worrying. Although still widespread surveys such as the CES show it to be in decline. A few more adults were captured this year but numbers are considerably less than five years ago. It is thought the species may be moving northwards as a result of global warming; numbers are said to be increasing in the north of the UK.

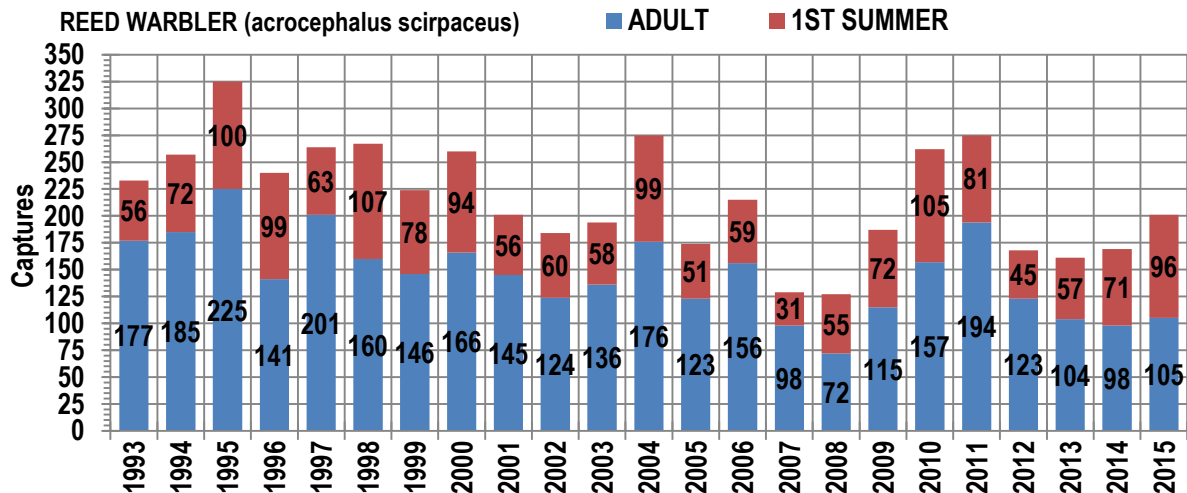


Figure 9 Reed Warbler: The impression gain during this year's season was that numbers for this species were not good. It is a little surprising therefore to find that numbers are the best since 2011 and that the last three years show improvement.

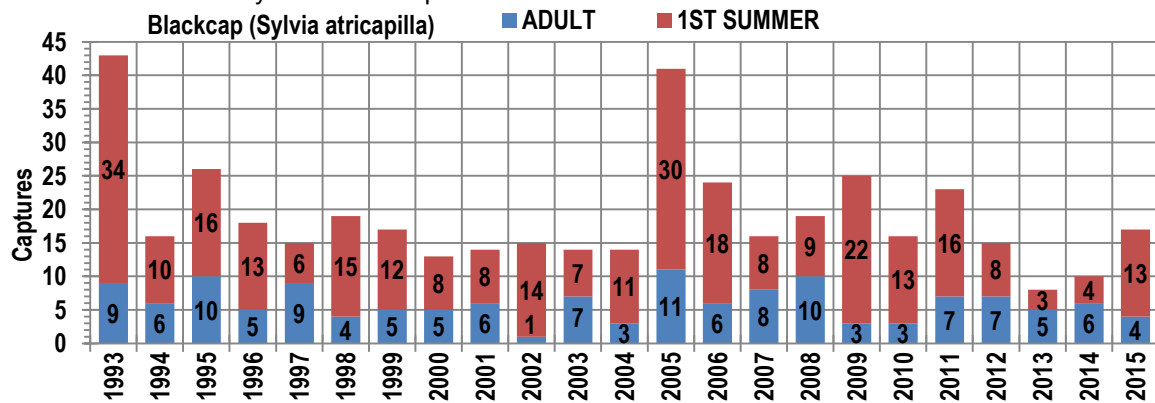


Figure 10 Blackcap: A better year with an increase in juveniles; the best since 2011

Other Once Regularly Captured Sylvia Warblers

Lesser Whitethroat: last captured during the CES in 2005; a very scarce passage species here.

Whitethroat: three juveniles captured this year, probably on post breeding dispersing from the surrounding scrub habitat.

Garden Warbler a juvenile the first capture during the CES since 2009, probably dispersing from the one or two territories that are within hearing range of the reed bed.

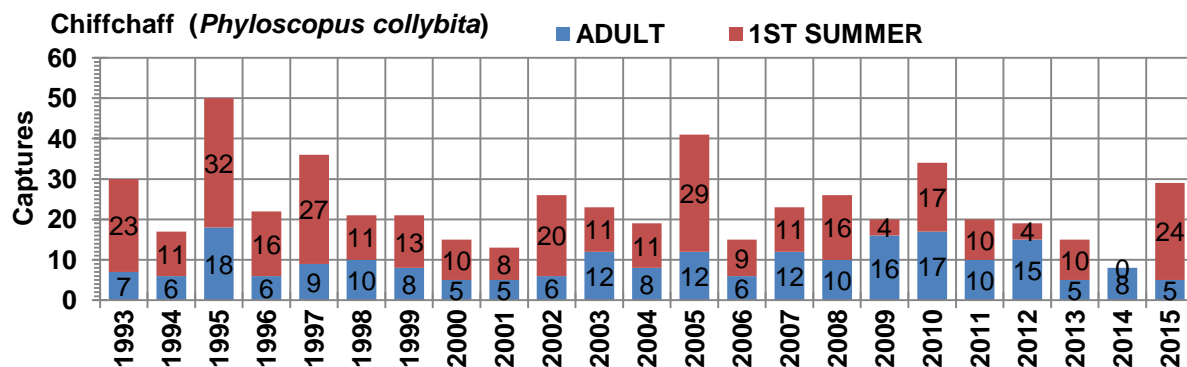


Figure 11 Chiffchaff: A surprisingly good capture; for juveniles one of the best ever and by far the best since 2005. Adults though are down and looking at the dates of capture many of the juveniles are probably passage birds.

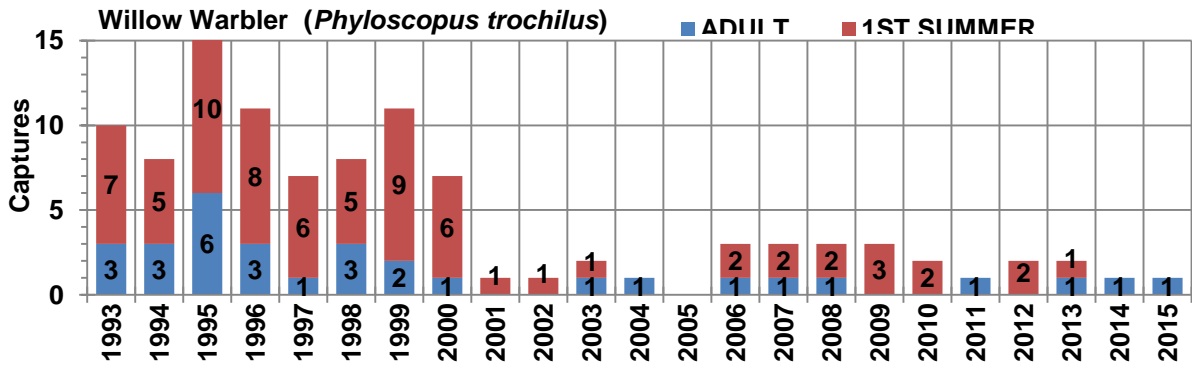


Figure 12 Willow Warbler: This species began its decline here before the CES started and although one or two territories still endure nearby, the changing habitat and the global warming trend mentioned for sedge warbler is also evident in the species. It is becoming an uncommon visitor to the reed bed.

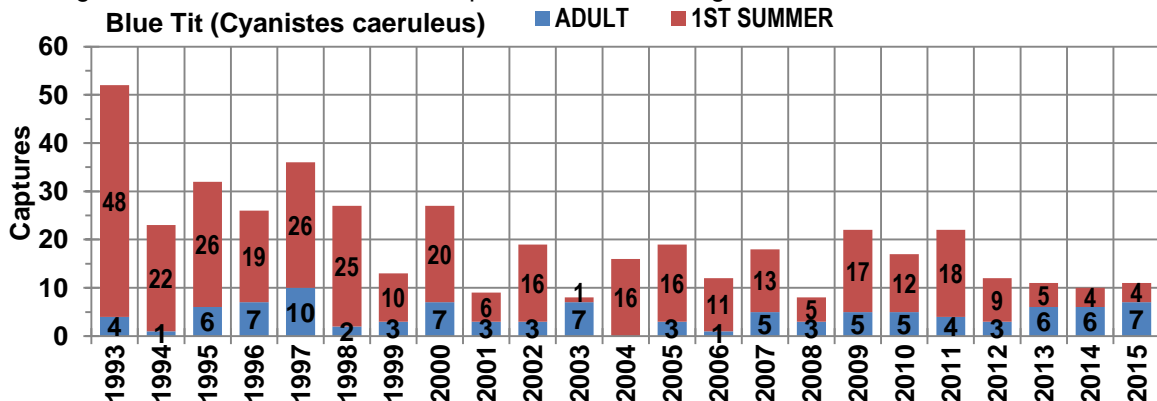


Figure 13 Blue Tit: no flock captures for some years of this usually post breeding visitor to the reed bed.

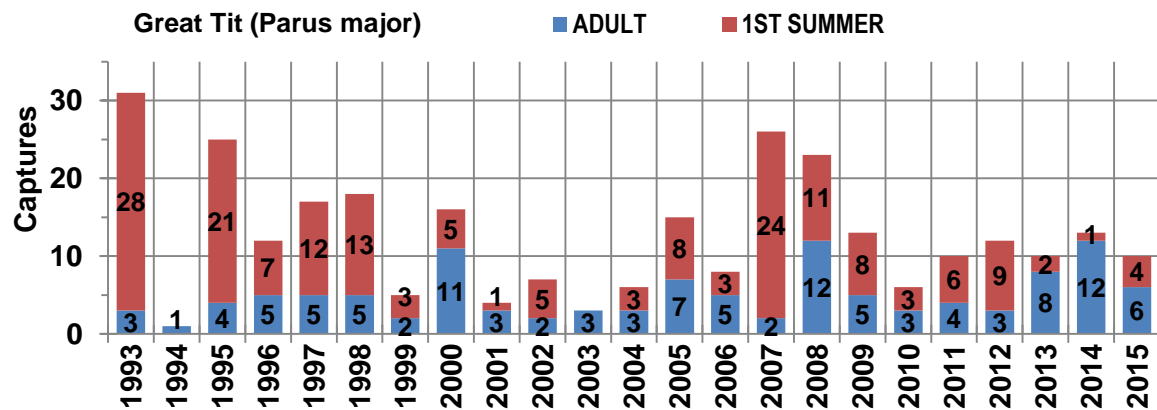


Figure 14 Great Tit: although usually present somewhere nearby, numbers declining and irregular.

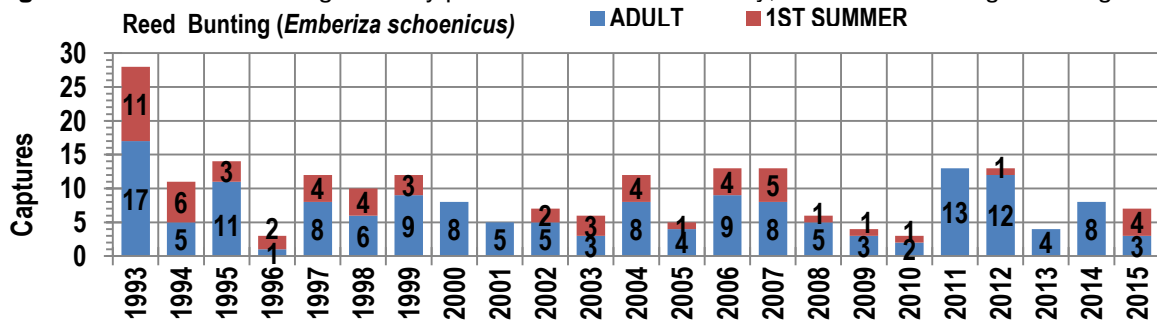


Figure 15 Reed Bunting: a continuing decline with just a few pairs to be found on the reed bed during the season. They probably fledged a few young each year; numbers increase in the autumn.

Species Totals Report for 2015

2015 Season Thatcham Marsh LNR Species (all dates)	Total Capture in 2015 (New & Recaptures)	Initial Ringing Year								
		2015	'2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Kingfisher	1	1								
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2	1								1
Wren	56	45	6	3	1	1				
Dunnock	26	21	2	2	1					
Robin	41	36	4				1			
Blackbird	12	9	1	2						
Song Thrush	5	5								
Cetti's Warbler	45	34	10							
Sedge Warbler	63	63				1				
Reed Warbler	192	164	13	10	4		1			
Whitethroat	4	4								
Garden Warbler	2	2								
Blackcap	88	88								
Chiffchaff	115	112	2	1						
Willow Warbler	2	2								
Goldcrest	40	40								
Spotted Flycatcher	1	1								
Long-tailed Tit	24	19	2	1	2					
Marsh Tit	3	3								
Blue Tit	54	45	5	1	2	1				
Great Tit	28	23	1	1	2	1			1	
Treecreeper	6	6								
Jay	1	1								
Chaffinch	3	3								
Bullfinch	22	20	1	1						
Reed Bunting	41	38	1		1		1			
Totals	877	786	48	22	13	4	3	0	1	1
Species Totals	26	26	12	9	7	4	3	0	1	1

Figure 17 Initial Ringing Year Report for Thatcham Marsh LNR. This schedule covers all ringing sessions made throughout 2015 including CES visits. Overall survival of birds ringed in 2014 is double the 2014 previous year total. Numbers of returning Reed Warbler are up on the 2014 equivalent. Sedge Warbler is not a site loyal species and unsurprisingly just one returning bird from 2011 recaptured. Cetti's Warbler shows good survival of 2014 ringed birds and none from years before. September audio lure sessions produced a good Blackcap and Chiffchaff passage but other summer migrant species fared less well. Blue and Great Tit numbers show a significant increase on the past two years. In September audio lures got a good response from Reed Bunting, something we have not really tried before, and boosted their numbers significantly. Probable the star bird of the year is the Spotted Flycatcher. Once a few were ringed by the group each year to the mid 1980's, since then only 15 have been ringed; the last time one was captured at this site was September 1996, prior to this July 1983. A 2007 ringed Great Spotted Woodpecker and a 2008 Great Tit show that the ringers are not the only superannuated participants.

Thattham Marsh LNR Recoveries

From 2013 to December 2015 received to date (January 2016)

Records in **Bold** additional to 2914 report

The following table shows recoveries of birds ringed or recaptured from elsewhere (more than 5 kilometres)

Ring	Species	1st Date	ORIGPLNAME	2nd Date	Place	Km	Days
D047206	Sedge Warbler	19/8/12	Walberwick Suffolk	02/6/13 26/5/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	223	287
D166934	Reed Warbler	10/7/13	Brimpton Gravel Pit	22/6/14	Thattham Marsh LNR	6	347
D483035	Sedge Warbler	08/9/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	29/9/13	Renedo de Esgueva, Valladolid, ESP	1113	21
D483314	Reed Warbler	03/8/14	Thattham Marsh LNR	12/9/14	Lagoa de Santo Andre, Setubal, POR	1592	40
D501354	Reed Bunting	06/3/14	Lower Denford Hungerford	26/5/14	Thattham Marsh LNR	16	81
D502581	Sedge Warbler	13/4/14	West Meadows, Newbury	24/5/15	Thattham Marsh LNR	10	406
D738877	Blackcap	18/8/14	Brimpton Gravel Pit	12/4/15	Thattham Marsh LNR	6	237
D873705	Blackcap	19/9/14	Brimpton Gravel Pit	13/9/15	Thattham Marsh LNR	6	359
EBX469	Chiffchaff	19/9/13	Chobham Common, Surrey	28/9/14	Thattham Marsh LNR	45	374
EHV344	Chiffchaff	01/4/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	16/9/13	Queen Mary Reservoir Surrey	54	15
EHV383	Chiffchaff	22/9/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	25/5/14	Hose Hill Nature Reserve Theale	14	245
ETH282	Chiffchaff	21/6/14	Wraysbury GP	24/5/15	Thattham Marsh LNR	50	337
HJL765	Chiffchaff	08/8/15	Padworth Common	20/9/15	Thattham Marsh LNR	11	43
L912894	Sedge Warbler	05/5/12	Thattham Marsh LNR	24/7/13	Itchen Abbas Hampshire	35	445
Y118304	Reed Warbler	31/7/11	West Meadows, Newbury	24/6/13 14/7/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	10	714
Y544024	Reed Warbler	13/5/12	Thattham Marsh LNR	19/8/14	Conchemarche, Mortagne-sur-Gironde,FR	658	828
Y544097	Sedge Warbler	07/7/12	Thattham Marsh LNR	30/4/13 16/5/13	Farmoor Reservoir Oxfordshire	39	313
Y544135	Reed Warbler	28/7/12	Thattham Marsh LNR	26/4/13	Irun, Guipaozcoa, ESP	1034	272
Y544276	Reed Bunting	15/6/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	02/12/13	Brimpton Gravel Pit	6	170
Y544293	Reed Warbler	24/6/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	06/6/15	Hungerford Marsh	19	712
Y544331	Reed Warbler	14/7/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	04/8/13	Icklesham East Sussex	146	21
Y544401	Sedge Warbler	25/8/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	27/8/13	Titchfield Haven Hampshire	65	2
Y544426	Reed Warbler	01/9/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	08/9/13	Titchfield Haven Hampshire	65	7
Y590361	Reed Warbler	13/5/12	Kintbury	12/5/13	Thattham Marsh LNR	13	364
Y847399	Reed Warbler	16/3/13	Fleet Pond Hampshire	14/6/14 26/7/14	Thattham Marsh LNR	34	375

Some 2015 contributors:



CHIFFCHAFF



REED WARBLER



SEDGE WARBLER



BLACKCAP (female)



ROBIN



LONG-TAILED TIT



WHITETHROAT



WILLOW WARBLER



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

The Team: JanLegg, Ian Weston, Duncan Long, Jon Wilding, Pat Martin, Reg Smith, John Claridge