

2019 Bird Ringing Report for Trimley Marshes SWT

By Justin Zantboer

Introduction

As during 2018, along with my two children Ellie and Dan, we were able to operate from the end of March through to November although ringing in Spring was cut short from April 20th through to May 6th as I was incapacitated with broken ribs. Operations also stopped from 10-20th August and 20-27th October for family holidays. Otherwise, coverage was fairly constant although poor weather during early September certainly impeded us, with the monthly ringing total reflecting this. As per previous years, netting was restricted to the scrub area between the river wall and the Reserve perimeter so disturbance to both the lagoons and the mudflats was virtually non-existent. We continued to operate the same seven nets although more often than not, we only used one or two.

Ringing details - Spring:

March to May saw the ringing of just 91 birds of 16 species. A female Cetti's Warbler and a female Common Nightingale, both with good brood patches, were caught on May 19th and May 27th respectively giving a strong indication that breeding on the Reserve was taking place and with male birds of both species singing close by, the signs were good.



Female Common Nightingale ringed 19th May 2020



Female Common Nightingale's incubation patch.

Interestingly, especially considering the limited coverage, warbler numbers were up on Spring 2018, as shown in the following table:

Species	March to May 2018	March to May 2019
Cetti's Warbler	1	1
Eurasian Reed Warbler	9	16
Sedge Warbler	15	12
Blackcap	6	16
Common Whitethroat	3	6
Lesser Whitethroat	5	7
Willow Warbler	0	3
Common Chiffchaff	1	9

Reasons for this can only be guessed at but it seems most likely that the weather conditions were more suitable for dropping migrating birds onto the Reserve. Certainly, this was the case on April 20th when it was estimated that 80 Blackcaps passed through in small flocks, all heading inland between 0800-1000hrs. Eleven of these were ringed by us that morning.

Ringing details – June:

Netting was reduced to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. When we did ring, we only used a maximum of four nets and for the most part, just the one so our total of 71 birds of 15 species was very pleasing. The male Common Nightingale was caught on 9th and like the female caught in May, showed signs of breeding with a very good 'cloacal protuberance' (the male appendage being very prominent). The first juvenile Cetti's Warbler of the season was ringed on 22nd with other juvenile birds ringed being Reed Bunting on 9th, European Robin on 10th, Eurasian Reed and Sedge Warblers on 22nd and Lesser Whitethroat and Common Chiffchaff on 29th. Lots of juvenile tits were on site with a flock consisting of at least 100 Blue Tits, 50 Great Tits and 30 Long-tailed Tits being present on 22nd, indicating that, locally at least, they'd had a good breeding season.

Two more unusual dispersing juvenile birds were ringed, these being a Eurasian Treecreeper on 15th and a Marsh Tit on 22nd; the latter being a real rarity for the Reserve and indeed the local area. It was also only the second ringed on the Reserve, with the first being a juvenile ringed on 20th June 2015. This bird was also caught on a day when large numbers of tits were moving through the Reserve.



Eurasian Treecreeper ringed 15th June 2019.



Marsh Tit ringed 22nd June 2019.



Marsh Tit ringed 20th June 2015.

Ringing details – July:

July saw a sharp rise in the numbers with 173 birds of 16 species ringed compared with just 41 birds ringed during July 2018. Most of the birds we caught were juvenile Eurasian Reed and Sedge Warblers with 48 and 85 respectively ringed. We can only speculate as to whether these were locally bred birds. Of the seven Reed and 15 Sedge Warblers ringed up to 10th, none had any fat content, suggesting they hadn't travelled far so these would've most likely have fledged locally and possibly from the Reserve. From 14th onwards, we started to catch a few birds with some fat content so it's difficult to know for sure whether these were birds fledged on the Reserve, building up fat reserves in preparation to migrate, or birds from elsewhere fuelling up on the Reserve. Other recently fledged juvenile birds ringed included one Cetti's Warbler, six Blackcaps, seven Common Whitethroats, one Lesser Whitethroat, two Common Chiffchaffs, three Dunnocks, two Common Linnets and five Reed Buntings. It was felt that all of these birds probably fledged on the Reserve and with adults of each species seen and heard frequently, this would come as no surprise.

Three unusual juvenile birds were ringed, these being a Yellow Wagtail on 14th, an Eurasian Bullfinch on 25th and a Great Spotted Woodpecker on 31st. The Bullfinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker were presumed to have fledged on the Reserve, but the Yellow Wagtail was more intriguing as no adults had been seen since the Spring, but the plumage of the youngster suggested that it hadn't come very far at all. Both the Great Spotted Woodpecker and Yellow Wagtail were also the first we'd ringed on site.



Juvenile Yellow Wagtail ringed 14th July 2019.



Juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker ringed 31st July 2019

Ringing details – August:

It's fair to say that we certainly didn't expect to ring 601 birds of 26 species, given that we thought that the 265 birds ringed in 2018 was good. The numbers were swelled with an impressive 278 Sedge Warblers, 90 Eurasian Reed Warblers, 35 Common Whitethroats and 20 Willow Warblers, nearly all of which were juvenile birds with the two latter species' numbers exceeding the total number that we've ringed here. With the month being dominated by juvenile birds, it was nice to catch two freshly fledged Common Nightingales on 4th, confirming successful breeding. Of interest, one of these birds was far less developed than the other so we were happy that it was re-trapped on 24th in a much more advanced state.



Juvenile Common Nightingale ringed 4th August then re-trapped on 24th August

Nine juvenile Cetti's Warblers seemed exceptional considering we ringed none during August 2018. It's difficult to say if these were locally fledged birds but with at least two males on territory, we'd like to think

that some were. With their numbers rapidly declining nationally, ringing nine Yellow Wagtails during the month was remarkable, especially as eight were juveniles and that these were all caught during the day, and not coming to roost.



Two of the eight juvenile Yellow Wagtails ringed during August 2019.

Two first year male Common Redstarts ringed on 4th and 28th were the first ringed on site with other unusual species ringed being two Common Grasshopper Warbler on 21st and 22nd and a Kingfisher on 24th but the star bird of the month was a stunning Wood Warbler ringed on 4th which again, was the first ringed on site.



Juvenile male Common Redstarts ringed on 4th and 28th August 2019 were the first ringed by us on the Reserve.



Juvenile Common Grasshopper Warbler ringed 21st August 2019.



Juvenile Wood Warbler ringed 4th August 2019 – a Reserve first?

Ringing details – September:

258 birds of 22 species ringed which given the declining daylight and poor weather during the month, was better than we'd hoped for. Warbler numbers, as would be expected, dropped off with 48 Sedge Warblers, 39 Eurasian Reed Warblers and 27 Common Chiffchaffs leading the way although another 14 Cetti's Warblers was encouraging after this species took a hit during the 'Beast from the East' of 2018. Common Reed Bunting passage started mid-month with 43 ringed.

Surprisingly not a great month for oddities which again, was most likely a reflection of the westerly biased winds. We did however ring four Common Kingfishers throughout the month with each bird being caught in the same net in almost exactly the same position, so we've obviously got their flightpath well covered.



The four Common Kingfishers ringed on 6th, 9th, 12th and 18th of September.

Ringing details – October:

205 birds of 21 species ringed wasn't a bad return as visits were limited to weekends only. As with 2018, Common Reed Bunting numbers were good again with 90 ringed with Long-tailed Tits being the next highest species with 25 ringed. Other local coastal sites recorded big numbers of Long-tailed Tits moving through so although our captures were reasonable, we could've expected a few more.

Warbler numbers were higher than last year with 15 Blackcaps and 12 Common Chiffchaffs ringed but with other local sites reporting much higher numbers of Blackcaps, the belief that we lack their (and lots of other species) preferred food plants, such as Elderflower and Bramble, probably accounts for our lower numbers. Of particular interest were very late records of both Sedge Warbler and Common Whitethroat. Four Sedge Warblers were ringed during the month which is unusual but the last on 19th is particularly

late. A Common Whitethroat ringed on 30th was exceptional and was considered highly unlikely to be of UK origin.



A late Sedge Warbler ringed on 19th October 2019.



A late Common Whitethroat ringed 30th October 2019.

A Yellow-browed Warbler ringed on 7th was a long overdue first site record and certainly a welcome addition to the site's Ringing list, this being the only bird caught that day! Single Bearded Tits ringed on 12th and 20th were the only other unusual species ringed.



Yellow-browed Warbler ringed on 7th October was a long overdue first for the Reserve.



Male Bearded Tit ringed 12th October 2019.



Female Bearded Tit ringed on 20th October 2019.



Ringling details – November:

79 birds of 16 species ringed with the undoubted highlight of our year being our first ever Water Pipit ringed on 17th. Only just over 200 of these have ever been ringed in the UK and a lot of these would've been targeted at specialist sites so for one to turn up unexpectedly in our net, at a site that only rarely records them, is extraordinary. Rather bizarrely, it was also the 1500th bird to be ringed in 2019.

With 20 Common Reed Buntings and 15 Goldcrests being the only significant totals, it was more about quality rather than quantity this month with a Common Stonechat ringed on 9th being our first ringed at the site, our third Bearded Tit of the year also ringed on 9th and an incredibly late Willow Warbler ringed on 3rd; this bird was almost certainly of the northern race *acredula*.

STOP PRESS – News of our first foreign control!

A Sedge Warbler that we ringed on 2nd September was retrapped seven days later 757kms away near Braud-et-Saint-Louis, France! The speed that this bird has covered this mileage shows that once birds get the urge, how quickly they can migrate. With Braud-et-Saint-Louis (north of Bordeaux) being located SSW from Trimley, it's also a useful indication of the route this and other Sedge Warblers take when heading south to their wintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa.



Water Pipit ringed on 17th November



A late Willow Warbler ringed 3rd November 2019.



Female Common Stonechat ringed 9th November 2019.

Cetti's Warblers

After the ravaging of the Beast from the East followed by the Summer drought during 2018, the prospects for Cetti's Warblers didn't look too good so we were pleasantly surprised to ring ten birds, including two juveniles during July that year, which were most likely reared on the Reserve. No birds were ringed during August and only six birds were ringed during September and October.

2019 started a little slowly with seemingly only two males on site. One was singing away from the trapping area and isn't yet known to us but the other was S130747, a male ringed as an adult on 21/04/18 and known by occasionally being retrapped to be holding territory around the Visitor Centre. His partner is D910911, a female ringed as an adult on 04/06/2016. She too has occasionally been retrapped in the same area. Another pair then moved into the trapping area in May. ADE0805 is a male ringed on 20/10/18 and had not been seen since and a new female ringed as an adult on 09/05/18. The unknown songster was still singing so we know that we had three males and at least two females on site. As to where ADE0805 had spent the Winter and why he had chosen to return Trimley seemingly quite late in the season remains a mystery.

Juveniles didn't appear until July, again suggesting that birds breed quite late on the Reserve. Nine juveniles were ringed during August, 14 unaged birds during September and five unaged birds during October so that's a very encouraging improvement on 2018. It's reasonable to assume that some of the juveniles ringed during August were raised on the Reserve but sadly, we can't prove it. Most of those ringed during September were thought most likely to be birds born that summer but unfortunately, both the juveniles and adults moult during August making ageing them very difficult.

2019 Retraps

Species	Ring number	Ringling date	Age / Sex	Retrap date
Kingfisher	SH14334	09/09/2019	Juvenile	03/11/2019
Dunnock	TX97849	21/04/2018	Adult Male	18/05/2019
Dunnock	TX97729			14/07/2019
Nightingale	ADE0954	27/05/2019	Adult Female	07/07/2019
Nightingale	ADE0986	09/06/2019	Adult Male	14/07/2019
Nightingale	AXF5399	04/08/2019	Juvenile	24/08/2019
Robin (continental)	ADE0850	17/11/2018	Adult	17/11/2019
Blackbird	LH17115	21/05/2017	First Summer	18/05/2019
Cetti's Warbler	D910911	04/06/2016	Adult Female	10/05/2019 *
Cetti's Warbler	S130747	21/04/2018	Adult Male	14/07/2019 *
Cetti's Warbler	ADE0805	20/10/2018	Male	22/05/2019
Cetti's Warbler	ADE0944	09/05/2019	Adult Female	27/05/2019 *
Reed Warbler	D910749	08/08/2015	Adult	12/05/2019
Reed Warbler	S130812	28/05/2018	Adult Male	18/05/2019
Reed Warbler	S130835	02/06/2018	Adult Male	09/06/2019
Reed Warbler	S130837	02/06/2018	Adult Male	12/05/2019
Reed Warbler	S130871	07/07/2018	Adult Male	19/04/2019 *
Reed Warbler	S130879	14/07/2018	Juvenile	04/06/2019
Reed Warbler	S130882	14/07/2018	Adult Male	14/07/2019
Reed Warbler	S130890	21/07/2018	Adult Female	18/05/2019
Reed Warbler	S130922	09/08/2018	Juvenile	19/05/2019
Reed Warbler	ADE0885	19/04/2019	Adult Female	22/06/2019
Reed Warbler	ADE0931	18/05/2019	Adult Male	04/08/2019
Reed Warbler	ADE0956	03/06/2019	Adult Male	29/06/2019
Reed Warbler	ADE0960	04/06/2019	Adult Male	29/06/2019
Sedge Warbler	D910876	15/05/2016	Adult Male	07/05/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	S130762	05/05/2018	Adult Male	11/05/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	S130811	28/05/2018	Adult Male	07/07/2019 *

Sedge Warbler	S130816	28/05/2018	Adult Male	09/07/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	S130817	28/05/2018	Adult Male	09/06/2019
Sedge Warbler	S130844	02/06/2018	Adult Female	19/05/2019
Sedge Warbler	ADE0897	20/04/2019	Adult Male	28/07/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	ADE0907	06/05/2019	Adult Male	29/06/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	ADE0908	07/05/2019	Adult Female	07/07/2019 *
Sedge Warbler	ADE0911	11/05/2019	Adult Female	09/06/2019
Sedge Warbler	ADE0916	12/05/2019	Adult Female	09/06/2019
Sedge Warbler	ADE0926	12/05/2019	Adult Female	22/06/2019
Sedge Warbler	ADE0928	12/05/2019	Adult Male	22/06/2019 *
Reed Bunting	ADE0695	14/09/2018	Adult Male	23/03/2019
Reed Bunting	ADE0785	14/10/2018	Juvenile Male	03/07/2019
Blackcap	ADE0701	22/09/2018	Juvenile Male	14/07/2019
Great Tit	S130889	14/07/2018	Juvenile	19/09/2019
Great Tit	ADE0925	12/05/2019	First Summer	22/06/2019
Blue Tit	S130824	01/06/2018	Pulli	11/05/2019
Blue Tit	S130846	02/06/2018	First Summer	09/11/2019
Long-tailed Tit	HRE923	23/03/2019	Unknown	06/05/2019

* Birds marked were retrapped on more than occasion during the summer suggesting breeding activity.

Those birds marked in orange were ringed prior to 2019.

Controls (birds ringed elsewhere and retrapped at Trimley Marshes)

Species	Ring number	Ringling date	Recovery date	Ringling details
Stonechat	S084856	02/06/2019	09/11/2019	Orfordness, Suffolk, UK 160 days / 23km / 235deg SW
Reed Warbler	Y149931	13/06/2012	12/05/2019	Trimley Marshes. Ringed as an adult making this bird at least eight years old.
Reed Warbler	D473680	09/08/2014	10/05/2019	Levington, Suffolk, UK 1735 days / 6km / 138deg SE
Reed Warbler	S085542	07/09/2019	16/09/2019	Orfordness, Suffolk, UK 9 days / 23km / 235deg SW
Sedge Warbler	S913408	04/09/2018	12/05/2019	Squire's Down, Dorset, UK. 250 days / 278km / 67deg ENE
Sedge Warbler	AEB1494	08/08/2018	23/05/2019	Levington Lagoon, Suffolk, UK. 288 days / 6km / 138deg SE
Sedge Warbler	ANF8110	12/08/2019	30/08/2019	Church End, Woodwalton, Cambs, UK 18 days / 116km / 116deg ESE
Sedge Warbler	S085149	13/08/2019	31/08/2019	Orfordness, Suffolk, UK 18 days / 23km / 235deg SW
Sedge Warbler	AJD9483	20/08/2019	21/08/2019	Charity Farm, Shotley, Suffolk 1 day / 4km / 119deg ESE
Chiffchaff	JKD995	24/03/2019	06/05/2019	Landguard Bird Observatory, Suffolk, UK. 43 days / 4km / 343deg NNW
Blue Tit	S742477	19/09/2019	22/09/2019	Landguard Bird Observatory, Suffolk, UK. 3 days / 4km / 343deg NNW
Blue Tit	S742594	03/10/2019	05/10/2019	Landguard Bird Observatory, Suffolk, UK. 2 days / 4km / 343deg NNW
Reed Bunting	AKE7128	23/07/2019	30/09/2019	The Haven, Thorpeness, Suffolk, UK. 69 days / 31km / 223deg SW
Reed Bunting	AZH5679	30/09/2019	05/10/2019	Levington Lagoon, Suffolk, UK. 5 days / 6km / 138deg SE
Reed Bunting	AKE7456	03/10/2019	30/11/2019	The Haven, Thorpeness, Suffolk, UK.

				58 days / 31km / 223deg SW
Reed Bunting	S150245	20/10/2019	03/11/2019	Orfordness, Suffolk, UK 14 days / 23km / 235deg SW

Recoveries (birds ringed at Trimley Marshes and retrapped elsewhere)

Species	Ring number	Ringling date	Recovery date	Recovery details
Robin	ARJ7205	26/08/2019	26/09/2019	Marlesford, Suffolk, UK. Taken by a Cat. 31 days / 24km / 18deg NNE
Sedge Warbler	AXF5230	26/07/2019	29/07/2019	The Haven, Thorpeness, Suffolk, UK. Retrapped by another Ringer. 3 days / 31km / 43deg NE
Sedge Warbler	AXF5100	21/08/2019	26/08/2019	Orfordness, Suffolk, UK. Retrapped by another Ringer. 5 days / 23km / 55deg NE
Sedge Warbler	ARJ7156	02/09/2019	09/09/2019	Terres d'Oiseaux, Braud-et-Saint-Louis, Gironde, France Retrapped by another Ringer. 7 days / 757km / 192deg SSW
Blue Tit	ADE0962	09/06/2019	24/07/2019	Gate Farm Rd, Shotley, Suffolk. Retrapped by another Ringer. 45 days / 2km / 270deg W
Reed Bunting	ARJ7699	20/10/2019	02/12/2019	Levington Lagoon, Suffolk, UK. 43 days / 6km / 318deg NW

2019	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	Totals
Common Kingfisher						1	4			5
Great Spotted Woodpecker					1					1
Barn Swallow						55	28			83
Sand Martin						5	1			6
Water Pipit									1	1
Meadow Pipit							6	4	2	12
Yellow Wagtail					1	9				10
Winter Wren						7	2	10	3	22
Dunnock			1		3	3	3	2		12
European Robin		1		1	1	10	5	15	6	39
Common Nightingale			1	1		2				4
Common Redstart						2				2
Common Stonechat									1	1
Song Thrush								2	1	3
Redwing									7	7
Common Blackbird						1		2	8	11
Garden Warbler						1	1			2
Blackcap		13	3	1	7	14	17	15	1	71
Common Whitethroat		1	5		7	35	5	1		54
Lesser Whitethroat		1	6	3	1	2	2			15
Cetti's Warbler			1	1	1	9	14	5	1	32
Sedge Warbler		4	8	4	85	278	48	4		431
Eurasian Reed Warbler		2	14	13	48	90	39	2		208
Common Grasshopper Warbler						2				2
Wood Warbler						1				1
Willow Warbler		3				20	5	1	1	30

Common Chiffchaff	2	7		1	2	5	27	12	3	59
Yellow-browed Warbler								1		1
Goldcrest	1						1	12	15	29
Great Tit	1		1	9		3	4	1		19
Blue Tit				20	7	42	2	7	11	89
Marsh Tit				1						1
Long-tailed Tit	3		1	12		1	1	25		43
Bearded Reedling								2	1	3
Eurasian Treecreeper				1						1
Common Chaffinch								2		2
Eurasian Bullfinch					1					1
Common Linnet					2	1				3
European Goldfinch		2	3	1	1		2			9
Common Reed Bunting	4	1	1	2	6	10	43	90	20	177
Monthly totals	11	35	45	71	174	601	258	205	79	1502

Summary

A total of 1502 birds ringed of 40 species with our top three species being 431 Sedge Warblers, 208 Eurasian Reed Warblers and 177 Common Reed Buntings. Species added to the Ringing List were: Great Spotted Woodpecker, Water Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Common Redstart, Common Stonechat, Wood Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler. We're still awaiting details on two birds caught at Trimley bearing foreign rings during 2018 and 2019.