

Belvide Ringing Report 2012

Introduction

Table of new birds ringed at Belvide 2012 compared to recent years

Species	Ringed 2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Sparrowhawk	0	4	0	0	3	2
Kestrel	0	1				
Moorhen	0	0	0	1	0	0
Water Rail	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lapwing	0	0	0	0	1	0
Common Tern	0	0	(3)	0	(5)	0
Swift	58	0	0	3	2	0
Kingfisher	3	1	2	1	7	0
Gr Spot W'peck	1	3	0	0	5	0
Sand Martin	0	45	0	0	1	0
House Martin	5	62	0	31	3	0
Swallow	0	19				
Tree Pipit	0	1	3	0	0	0
Meadow Pipit	2	83	72	0	0	0
Pied Wagtail	0	0	1	0	0	0
Yellow Wagtail	0	1				
Stock Dove	0	0	0	0 + (2)	0	0
Woodpigeon	0	0	1	1	0	1
Tawny Owl	0	0	1	0	0	0
Robin	15	35	31	28	45	33
Redstart	0	1	0	0	2	0
Blackbird	12	15	7	25	28	32
Song Thrush	2	5	1	7	6	6
Redwing	19	16	0	0	13	1
Fieldfare	0	0	0	0	1	0
Pied Flycatcher	0	0	0	0	0	1
Spot Flycatcher	0	1	2	1	4	0

Dunnock	10	56	43	59	51	25
Wren	12	33	42	34	58	27
Goldcrest	7	8	15	0	22	9
Nuthatch	4	0	1	0	3	0
Treecreeper	2	9	10	4	4	1
Cetti's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chiffchaff	89	278	359	211	251	189
Willow Warbler	20	76	136	86	143	71
G'pper Warbler	0	2	1	0	0	0
Reed Warbler	41	138	155+(7)	104	73+(2)	56
Sedge Warbler	41	117	101	35	23	36
Lesser Whitethroat	3	3	12	8	6	22
Whitethroat	5	41	70	13	8	14
Blackcap	64	111	185	83	63	48
Garden Warbler	17	24	40	34	23	34
Blue Tit	62(14)	92	155+(161)	121+(156)	110	37
Great Tit	45(19)	108	108+(61)	75+(59)	67	29
Coal Tit	2	1	4	6	3	0
Long Tailed Tit	12	47	111	25	26	35
Willow Tit	1	2	1	0	1	2
Marsh Tit	1	2	4	0	2	1
Bullfinch	6	19	31	11	8	15
Chaffinch	5	20	31	53	21	4
Greenfinch	11	67	27	9	17	10
Goldfinch	10	38	48	15	41	4
Redpoll	1	0	0	0	4	0
Yellowhammer	0	0	3	0	0	0
Reed Bunting	102	280	83	63	39	19
House Sparrow	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tree Sparrow	11	62	87	37	73	37
Jay	0	2	1	0	0	0
Magpie*	1	0	0	0	0	0
Starling	2	12	0	0	25	32
Total	737 of	1941 of 43 sp.	2219 of	1401 of 31 sp.	1299 of 45 sp.	833 of 32 sp.

	37 sp.		39 sp.			
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*NB species marked * were ringed for the first time in 2012;*

Numbers in brackets refer to chicks (pulli) ringed in the nest.

Results of particular interest

It's perhaps simplest to approach these from the top of the table above:-

Swift

Hirundines:

Meadow Pipit:

Thrushes: Blackbird and Song Thrush numbers look to be on a slight recovery after a very poor 2010. We need more data on this, and clearly we hope that the pattern continues next year. We also noticed good numbers roosting in a dense blackthorn bush which made catching more Redwing than normal relatively easy.

Dunnock and Wren: two common birds which illustrate interesting points. The Dunnocks at Belvide appear to have managed over the bitter winter very well. We even re-caught an adult female which we originally ringed in July 2008—and she was a breeding adult bird back then. Their overall numbers remain high with good numbers of young birds caught throughout the summer. Wrens on the other hand suffered really badly during the winter, and we noticed a lack of this species in our early season catches. However, some must have made it, and/or others moved into the area, because as the season wore on juveniles began to appear—much later than normal. It appears that the survivors took a little while to get into breeding condition/find mates/build nests etc—but eventually they did. We expect them to be well represented next year after such a mild winter- so far!

Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler; Chiffchaffs arrived at the reserve in good numbers during March and April, with many singing birds carrying rings from previous years. We caught quite a few during our early season catches (16-30 April), which showed that most of the ringed birds had been originally caught in 2010, although one had been ringed in July 2009 as a breeding adult. Although we caught almost 300 new birds this year, we were slightly disappointed given the good number which arrived in the spring. This is one of the species referred to earlier for which we have no explanation, but which mirrored a national trend of lower than expected breeding success. We ringed Chiffchaff DDV974 on 7th July 2010 as a juvenile, locally reared bird; it was controlled by some friends of ours at Cuckmere Haven in East Sussex on 1st October this year, obviously on its way south. Many of our Chiffs spend the winter in Spain and Portugal, and the timing here would be consistent with that. We caught our last 3 Chiffs at Belvide on our last seasonal visit on 28th September.

Sedge Warbler and Blackcap: we have put these species together to demonstrate differing fortunes. Sedgies arrived back in force. Our early spring catches retrapped 13 birds from previous years, including one bird originally ringed by us as an adult in July 2007, so this was its 5th breeding season at least. Clearly this got the birds off to a good start and the low water level provided lots of good rank grasses/sedges/brambles in which they bred—resulting in the largest catch in recent years. Sedge Warblers leave us quite early, with the last 2 ringed on 2nd September. Sedgie number Y223027 was ringed as a newly fledged juvenile on 13th July, and was controlled at Titchfield Haven in Hampshire on 14th August—a classic control of a bird on its way to Africa. However, Sedgie number Y223110, ringed only ten days after the previous bird on 23rd July, again as a juvenile, must have had something wonky (technical term!) with its compass mechanism because it was controlled on 18th August at Overton in Lancashire! That's why rarities sometimes turn up in the daftest places and at the 'wrong' times. Let's hope this bird managed to latch on to some others and get back on course.

Blackcap numbers were very disappointing, and perhaps their non-appearance in spring is the answer. By early June, no Blackcaps previously ringed at Belvide had turned up, so those birds which bred were either complete newcomers or returning birds which had eluded our nets previously. Either way, they bred reasonably well but given the numbers from 2010, and the good breeding conditions, we did expect more this year.

Other warblers: nothing really major to report here. Reed Warblers did pretty well and benefitted from good weather and good reed growth. Unfortunately we did not get round to carrying out a nest survey. Lesser Whitethroat and Garden Warblers were a little disappointing, although we did recapture two Garden Warblers which we had originally ringed as juveniles back in July 2006. Whitethroats did well—what did they do that the Garden warblers didn't?

Titmice: we decided for a various reasons not to ring the nest-box chicks this year—although we did monitor all the boxes and produce a report on success. Briefly, it was the best season in recent times with high occupancy and fledging—especially for Great Tits. The free flying birds caught during the summer generally reflect this. Long Tailed Tits fared very well and showed a very similar pattern to Wrens in that they took a long while to 'show' in our catches but eventually they did breed and numbers are on the up again.

Greenfinch and Tree Sparrow. We have brought these together since we generally only ring these species at the Gazebo feeder during late August and through September. Numbers of Tree Sparrow are lower than we would expect—especially given the numbers which can be seen on the feeders. We can only conclude that they are getting better at avoiding the nets...Conversely Greenfinch numbers are much higher than normal, suggesting they had a good breeding season and also became very attracted to the easy food on offer at the feeders.

Reed Bunting: last but not least the exceptionally high numbers of this species need some explanation. We became aware of good numbers dropping into the Scott Hide reed-bed due to a chance count in late October.

Table 3: Reed Bunting catches during Winter 2011/12

	New Birds ringed	Retraps
30 th October	95	5
12 th November	68	9
23 rd November	23	7
28 th November	26	13
12 th December	27	13
22 nd December	17	5
2 nd January 2012	27	10

As we write there are still good numbers dropping in, so clearly this year the reed-beds have been a major asset for these birds to use as a safe roost. Just how many have been using the reeds is probably well over 300, but this looks like it's made up of some birds which stay on (we have lots of re-traps occurring time and again) with another population which moves through. One recovery from last year demonstrated that we pick up birds from at least as far away as Humberside, but our hunch is that they are from a wide area—let's hope some of those we ringed this year get controlled and we can find out more about the movements of this easy to overlook species.

Conclusion:

We hope that all those connected in any way with Belvide have enjoyed both having our group operate at the site, and reading this report. We are very grateful to the management committee, especially Steve Nuttall and Rob Swift for their generous help and support in many ways. Thanks also to the West Midlands Bird Club for allowing access to ring at Belvide. We hope the results continue to be helpful in some way to the management of the reserve, and at least provide an interesting supplement to the systematic sight records.

Colin McShane, January 2012, on behalf of Brewood Ringing Group