

Chelmarsh

Ringing

Report 2002



Little Ringed Plovers Breeding Success

Ringing numbers bounced back to near the 1000 mark again this year, following last years low, which was affected by early Foot and Mouth restrictions.

The 'Highlight' this year was undoubtedly the successful nesting of the Little Ringed Plovers (3 young ringed). This species has been visiting the Reserve on an annual basis since 1998 but failed to nest, due solely to the lack of their favourite habitat, shingle islands.

In 2000, two of the main islands in 'The Scrape' were covered with gravel. This immediately led to nesting attempts in 2000 and 2001, both unsuccessful. The nesting this year was not without its problems. The first clutch of eggs was lost, we think to foxes. However, after taking advice from wardens of Upton Warren Nature Reserve, we covered the replacement clutch with a strong wire cage, securely fixed to the ground. The birds accepted this cage within minutes and went on to hatch 4 eggs. One young, born a couple of days late, appeared very weak and disappeared within a day or so. The other 3 fledged, finally leaving the site on 23rd. August, presumably in a southerly direction to spend the winter in Central Africa.



Little Ringed Plover Chicks at just one day old.



Literally hundreds of Sand Martins roosted in the Phragmites Reedbed.

Phragmites Reed

The reed bed again proved its importance to the reserve., as a late summer roost for high numbers of Sand Martin and Swallow waiting for the right weather conditions to migrate. Winter roosts held Reed Bunting and Starling.

A record number of Reed Warblers chose to nest amongst the reeds (at least 25 pairs). This species is now the target of a special study being undertaken at the site, Retrapping Adults for Survival (R.A.S.).

This study commenced in 2000 and is already proving of great value to the British Trust for Ornithology. A similar study on Sedge Warbler was also started in 2002

R.A.S. Facts.

??Only 5 Reed Warbler and 3 Sedge Warbler projects have been registered in the UK.

??These surveys are of National importance to collate data for these species.



Sedge Warbler



Reed Warbler

Retrapping Adults for Survival

The principle of these studies is to catch the adults annually in their breeding areas to determine their survival rates from retrap data.

This year, 35 adults were caught. The tables to the right show the ages at recapture during the last two years.

2001

1 bird from 1994
1 bird from 1995
4 birds from 1997
1 bird from 1998
6 birds from 1999
9 birds from 2000

2002

2 birds from 1997
1 bird from 1999
6 birds from 2000
11 birds from 2001

Feeding Station



Great Tit feeding on peanuts

The feeding station was used again during the winter months, attracting good numbers of Blue Tits and Great Tits, but disappointingly, Finch numbers were very low (Greenfinch, Chaffinch).

Thrush numbers (Blackbird, Song Thrush) were also remarkably low.

One species which seems to be bucking the national trend at Chelmarsh is the House Sparrow. This once common species has disappeared en-

tirely from some areas of the U.K. The numbers caught on the reserve has increased for the second year running.



Lots of research is being carried out to determine why the House Sparrow is in rapid decline

Nests

One area not covered adequately by the group is the nesting in May and June. This is entirely due to other projects carried out elsewhere (Wheatear and Stonechat breeding surveys on Clee Hill, and Pied Flycatcher studies in Wyre Forest.) A limited number of nest boxes have been tried in the past but were largely unsuccessful due to mice infestation.

Work done on Reserve.

Several hundred hours of work are needed annually to maintain the scrape in its present condition.

Much of the work completed is annual clearance of reed-mace etc. to prevent the scrape being overtaken by vegetation. The islands must also be strimmed each year. This is proving a massive job, and thanks go in the main to Tony and Joe who spend many hours on this clearance.

Baxters Field is also very overgrown and would benefit from grazing/cutting. This field used to be a haven for Lapwing, which prefer short grass for nesting.

The massive leak which was draining all the water from the ponds in this field has at last been located. Once fixed, the water levels in this field should return to normal.



This palatial residence has 64 separate nesting chambers, each approached by a sand covered tube. Our 'Sand Martin' hotel was the work of our recent recruit to the ringing team, Dave Bastion.



Joe, Tony, and Andy repairing the bund



Recently strimmed island

A fairly significant area of the bund wall was breached this year, preventing normal water levels being maintained. Tony has repaired this for the time being, and 'normal service' has been resumed.

One area we are unable to control is the marsh at the north east end of the scrape. This desperately needs grazing to provide decent nesting habitat for waders (Redshank, Lapwing, etc.) If grazing cannot be arranged, some assistance to strim or mow this area would be much appreciated.



Each nesting compartment is accessible from the rear to enable nesting activities to be monitored and re-recorded. Young can also be ringed.

Dinney Farm awarded Countryside Stewardship Grant

The adjacent 'Dinney Farm' has been successful in applying for a Countryside Stewardship Grant which should greatly benefit the wildlife of the area. Under this scheme, the fields next to the reed bed are to be specially managed to attract breeding Lapwing.

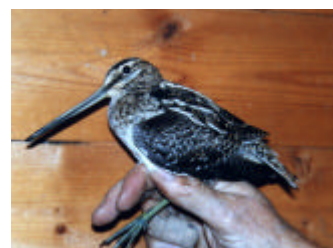
The Lapwing is a species in national decline, mostly brought about by modern farming practices, winter wheat and early silage cuts etc. which are detrimental to the success of Lapwing.



Adult Lapwing

Birds ringed at Chelmarsh

SPECIES	78/97	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
MANX SHEARWATER	1						1
GREY HERON	14						14
MUTE SWAN	13	1	7	4		3	28
CANADA GOOSE	0		1	1			2
TEAL	3		1				4
MALLARD	5		1	1	6		13
SPARROWHAWK	8				1		9
KESTREL	0	3	2			2	7
WATER RAIL	7	9	7		3		28
LITTLE RINGED PLOVER	0	2				3	5
SPOTTED CRAKE	0		1				1
MOORHEN	19	2	3	1	3	2	30
COOT	0				1		1
LAPWING	13	4	8		1		26
KNOT	1						1
LITTLE STINT	1						1
DUNLIN	2			1			3
JACK SNIBE	36	3	8	1			48
COMMON SNIBE	115	2	7	1		1	126
CURLEW	0		2				2
WOODCOCK	1						1
GREENSHANK	0	1	1				2
GREEN SANDPIPER	2	4	1			1	8
COMMON SANDPIPER	3		1				4
GREY PHALAROPE	1						1
BLACK HEADED GULL	1						1
HERRING GULL	1						1
WOOD PIGEON	7	6	5			1	19
SWIFT	0		2		1		3
COLLARED DOVE	4						4
TURTLE DOVE	6						6
BARN OWL	6	3		2	3		14
LITTLE OWL	2						2
TAWNY OWL	16			2			18
KINGFISHER	13		4		1	1	19
GREAT SPOT.WOODPECK	1	2	2		1		6
LESSER SPOT.WOODPECK	2						2
SAND MARTIN	262	26	20	248	58	141	755
SWALLOW	99	1	10	82	16	139	347
HOUSE MARTIN	9	6	1	4			20
MEADOW PIPIT	16	1	6				23
YELLOW WAGTAIL	10		2	1			13
GREY WAGTAIL	10	5		1			16
PIED WAGTAIL	353	21	13	28	9	23	447
WREN	226	19	23	12	13	20	313
DUNNOCK	276	29	47	31	30	17	430
ROBIN	190	20	14	12	16	11	263
REDSTART	6				1	1	8
WHINCHAT	4		4				8



A common snipe after ringing.

12,518 birds of 90 different species have been ringed on the reserve during the last 25 years.



Rare Spotted Crake ringed on the reserve in 1999

BIRDS RINGED AT CHELMARSH

SPECIES	78/97	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	TOTAL
STONECHAT	3	1			2	1	7
BLACKBIRD	263	23	16	17	11	4	334
FIELDFARE	18	1	3				22
SONG THRUSH	57	7	8	9	3	2	86
REDWING	12	1	3				16
MISTLE THRUSH	8						8
GRASSHOPPER WARBLER	12						12
SEDGE WARBLER	380	28	34	53	48	58	601
REED WARBLER	263	55	50	59	58	70	555
LESSER WHITETHROAT	69	1		1	3	2	76
WHITETHROAT	455	9	34	26	16	15	555
GARDEN WARBLER	93	1	2	1	4	1	102
BLACKCAP	201	14	20	28	12	15	290
CHIFFCHAFF	139	20	30	22	22	28	261
WILLOW WARBLER	559	10	32	11	6	12	630
GOLDCREST	9	4	4	3		2	22
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER	9						9
PIED FLYCATCHER	1						1
LONG TAILED TIT	167	15	27	29	7	21	266
MARSH TIT	27	3	2	4	1	1	38
WILLOW TIT	55			3	1		59
COAL TIT	4		1		4	2	11
BLUE TIT	1042	157	64	54	74	96	1487
GREAT TIT	440	50	18	20	28	36	592
NUTHATCH	7	1		1	1		10
TREECREEPER	22	1	4	4		2	33
JAY	4				1		5
MAGPIE	7		1				8
STARLING	72	18	48		16	10	164
HOUSE SPARROW	10	4	3	4	8	13	42
TREE SPARROW	10	27	32	4	1		74
CHAFFINCH	76	47	51	16	24	6	220
BRAMBLING	0	2	5				7
GREENFINCH	89	186	110	28	47	6	466
GOLDFINCH	63	6	22	20	20	8	139
SISKIN	1						1
LINNET	51		2		2		55
REDPOLL	16	1	2				19
BULLFINCH	157	18	8	21	8	13	225
YELLOWHAMMER	157	15	32	7	8	19	238
REED BUNTING	1215	145	59	60	88	101	1668
TOTALS	8008	1041	931	938	688	912	12518
					F & M		
No. SPECIES							90

This is purely the numbers and species of birds actually caught and ringed at Chelmarsh.

Selected Ringing Controls

Ring No.	Species	Age/Sex	Ringing Location	Ring Date	Control Location	Ctrl. Date	Duration	Dist.	Details
P364238	Reed Warbler	3J	Walcot, Wellington	30/07/00	Chelmarsh	07/07/02	707 days	28 km	Controlled
P104535	Chaffinch	6F	Chelmarsh	02/01/00	Thornton, Leicester	07/04/02	826 days	75 km	Hit window
Z56813	Mute Swan	1	Chelmarsh	02/07/00	Crewe, Staffs	26/02/02	604 days	61 km	Controlled
GF69944	Barn Owl	3M	Chelmarsh	11/11/01	Chelmarsh	09/01/02	59 days	1 km	Road casualty
K989037	Reed Warbler	3J	Walcot, Wellington	28/07/97	Chelmarsh	23/06/02	1791 days	28 km	Controlled
P705184	Sand Martin	3J	Stretton Sugwas, Hereford	02/07/01	Chelmarsh	15/07/01	13 days	54 km	Controlled
RV15156	Redwing	3	Chelmarsh	24/10/99	Estramadura, Portugal	02/01/00	70 days	1507 km	Shot
4333120	Sedge Warbler	3	Loire Atlantique, France	07/08/98	Chelmarsh	10/07/99	337 days	584 km	Controlled

CHELMARSH RINGING GROUP
Dave Fulton A ringer & trainer
Joe Jordan A ringer
Tony Crossman C ringer
Andy Spencer C ringer
Dave Bastion Trainee



The 19th. Kingfisher ringed at Chelmarsh

Mute Swans reared 3 signets this year. Sadly the pen had to be humanely destroyed following a collision with the overhead phone cables.



Another rarity ringed in 1997, Grey Phalarope. Spending most of their life at sea, these seldom venture this far inland.

The group would like to express their thanks to South Staffs Water Authority, and Shropshire Wildlife Trust for allowing access to the reserve for ringing studies.