

Shoreham and District  
Ornithological Society  
Spring Newsletter  
2020



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## Editorial

Here at Pulborough the flooding has been unusually persistent this winter. Although the flood peak of December 2014 was not exceeded, this winter the valley has flooded on several occasions and the high water has made the visits to our riverbank of an introduced American Mink all the more obvious. Mink escaped from fur farms and were well established by the 1950's. They are believed to be responsible for the disappearance of water voles from many river catchments and also predate ground nesting birds.

Moorhens are another inhabitant of the reedbed at the bottom of the garden. They live in a pond that is connected to the Arun so the water level goes up and down with the tide. It also goes up and down with heavy rain. Very shortly the Moorhens will commence the annual tragedy associated with trying to raise a family in a location where the nest flooding odds are heavily stacked against them. And yet they try and try again and occasionally in the latter months of summer we see a half-grown youngster implying they have had some success. This year they may also have a Mink to contend with – I see little reason for optimism.

Each year we observe various little balls of fluff swimming about on our pond over the course of the summer; Moorhens, Mallards and, one year, Coots but little in the way of success seems to come from all this breeding activity. In contrast the local Mute Swans have a formidable fledgling rate. We typically see five or six cygnets in early summer and in late winter the male will drive off five or six young swans. In the five years we have been here only one cygnet has disappeared. I suppose it is an optimal habitat for Swans but very marginal for Moorhens.

Best wishes to you all.

Roger

# Birding is good for you and that's official

Tony Benton

Most people that enjoy birdwatching (or birding) instinctively know that it's good for you. But recently some high quality research has confirmed the health and wellbeing benefits of birding and connecting with nature.

Not surprisingly birding generally involves getting out into the fresh air, taking a walk, and soaking up some vitamin D. But even watching birds from the comfort of our own home ensures a connection with the natural world, all of which helps to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Birds are fascinating, awe inspiring and frequently beautiful to behold. I recently had the pleasure of watching scarlet macaws in the wild: a kaleidoscope of colours. What's not to like! Birds lift the spirits and affirm that we are part of nature, not separate from it.

At a personal level I quite enjoy birding alone. I get lost in nature, the hours pass, and I forget the constant demands of my phone, laptop, and all of the other pressures of modern day living. But equally birding can be a social pleasure and sharing sightings with fellow enthusiasts, especially beginners, can be deeply satisfying. What I love most about birding is how it makes me so much more aware of nature in general; as well as tuning me into the seasons, the weather, and the sights and sounds of the day. Birding provides me with a lens through which to view the world - and an incentive to travel in anticipation of something rare or new. It also means that I'm always learning, socialising when I choose to, and deepening my understanding of how interconnected the natural world is.

I've also noticed that birding can act as a natural painkiller - and is much safer than opiates! Last year, for example, I was experiencing severe sciatic pain, but two hours of birding at Widewater Lagoon and along Shoreham Beach meant that the pain had almost disappeared until I got back home! The therapeutic value of connecting with nature is now being recognised by the NHS, with

some GPs actually prescribing nature activities to their patients. So the acronym NHS can also stand for the Natural Health Service.

In my role as Community Engagement Officer I plan to organise a couple of impromptu open/public birding events later this year, with the aim of showcasing the benefits of connecting with nature through the conduit of birds. These events will be publicised through the user group and I hope that you will come and join me.

Tony is the Community Engagement Officer for SDOS and can be contacted at [enquiries@sdos.org](mailto:enquiries@sdos.org)



A cheerful photograph: spectacular Scarlet Macaws, Rio Napo, Ecuador

## Brooke Bond Tea Cards

### Simon Moffat

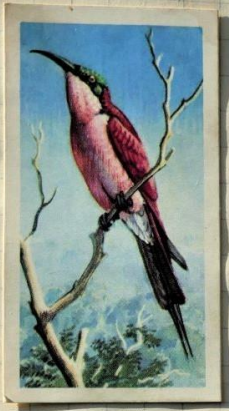
Thumbing through the *Birds of Costa Rica* by Garrigues and Dean for a future trip, I came across an illustration of a Sunbittern. Reading stopped, somewhere I had seen this bird before but where? Gradually and dimly, I pictured a tattered old brown school Maths notebook, used as a scrapbook aged eight. Luckily it survived seven house moves.



Paging through, there it was, Sunbittern beautifully illustrated on a Card included with Brooke Bond Tea. Gently levering up part of the Card, it came from a set of 50 Tropical Birds issued in c.1961. Having originally only collected part of the set, how interesting it would be now to see the full set of Cards.

A few weeks later and £1.50p on eBay, the set arrived complete with No. 31 Sunbittern and a surprise. On the reverse of the card, the beautiful illustration was by Charles Tunnicliffe R.A. Now I knew why the illustrations were so

SOUTHERN LARMINX  
BE-EATER



FISH EAGLE



JAVA SPARROW



VIOLET-FACED  
WAX BILL



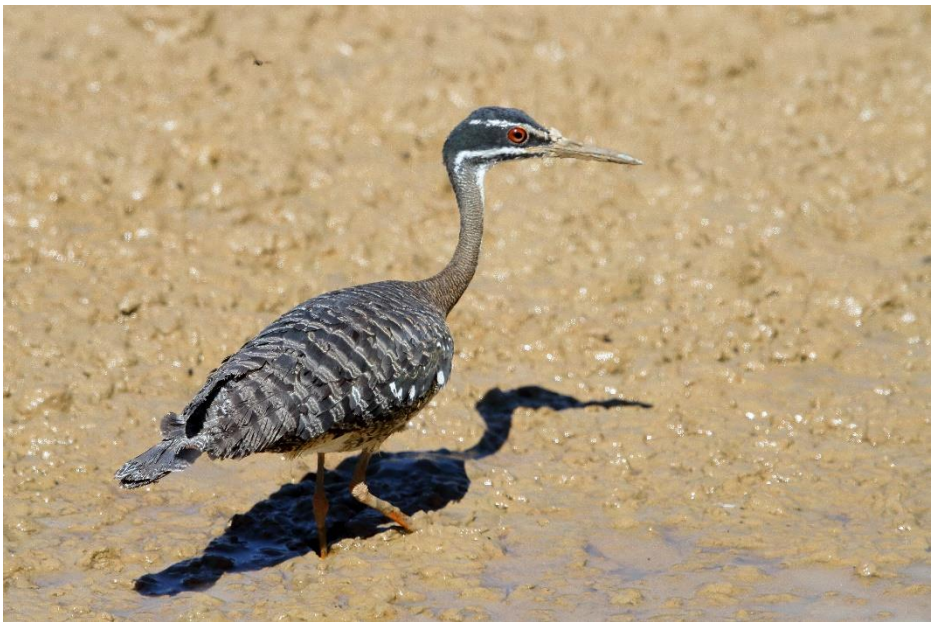
SUN BITTERN



good! Ian Neil in his book about Tunnicliffe says, "His achievement as a wildlife artist, and in particular as a bird artist, is of major importance".

Tunncliffe also wrote the evocative text on the reverse of the Sunbittern Card, “The dim depths of the tropical South and Central American forests are the home of this slim relation of the Cranes (it is not a Bittern). It is a solitary bird haunting forest pools and streams where it feeds on small insects and fish. Normally unremarkable in its plumage it is transformed when it opens its butterfly like wings and tail to sunbathe or display. “

So perhaps my interest in birdwatching dates back to age 8 in 1961, collecting Brooke Bond Tea Cards with text and illustrations by Tunncliffe. To complete the circle, I hope to see the Sunbittern in Costa Rica in 2020, who knows?



As Tunncliffe observed it is a subdued bird with the wings and tail closed: Sunbittern in the Pantanal, Brazil



## September 2019 to February 2020 Sightings

### Clive Hope

#### September

On 1st at Cissbury, two large feeding parties of Willow Warblers, with the odd Chiffchaff, totalled in excess of 50 birds and two other parties of Blackcaps weren't far short of that number. Otherwise, six each of Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher, two smart Lesser Whitethroats, 7 or 8 Whitethroats, a Tree Creeper, 10 House Martins and a few Swallows, one Wheatear, a Kestrel and



five Buzzards made up the rest. At Wild Park there were ten Whinchats this morning all in a group - that is a record count for the 21st century for this area, but nowhere near the record count of 30 in Sept 1992.



On 3rd a Black Tern appeared in the Adur RSPB area alongside 19 Sandwich Terns which had increased to 27 by 4<sup>th</sup>. Three Greenshanks were present there on 6<sup>th</sup>. A Tree Pipit and Swift flew over Ladywell on 5<sup>th</sup>. A flock of ten, or possibly twelve, Mistle Thrushes were at High Salvington on 7<sup>th</sup>. At Findon Gallops on this day, for the SDOS outing, first a Wheatear was spotted on a fence-line and near it two Red-legged Partridges in the field. Then two or three Redstarts and a Whinchat were enjoyed by all as they showed well on the bushes and fences. Crossing the first gallop into the 'bushy' section, there were flocks of Goldfinches, a small group of Linnets and more Redstarts as well as two each of Yellowhammers and Whitethroats. A family party of four Stonechats entertained the party by the adults feeding their well-grown young on another fence. A Buzzard passed over and shortly after the only close two

Swallows of the morning. Another fence-line had five Wheatears strung along it.

On 17<sup>th</sup>, a White Stork flew low over the clubhouse at Hill Barn GC. Two Greenshanks were on the Adur on 19<sup>th</sup> near the houseboats. Ten Yellow Wagtails were near Botolphs feeding by cattle on 25<sup>th</sup>. At Goring Gap on 30<sup>th</sup> there were four Wheatears, two of which looked like 'Greenlands'. The month ended with an all-time record of birds 'processed' at Ladywell, a staggering 247 new birds, 127 of them Chiffchaffs and 72 Blackcaps.!

**Wild Park** sightings this month have been as follows:

On 2 Sept a Hobby, two Redstarts, several Whitethroats; on 5<sup>th</sup> a Quail flushed from long grass, on 7<sup>th</sup> a Sand Martin flew through with Swallows; on 8<sup>th</sup> three Ravens, a Redstart, a Wheatear, eight Blackcaps, six Willow Warblers, six Meadow Pipits; on 10<sup>th</sup> five Wheatears, eight Blackcaps, five Chiffchaffs, two Redstarts, a Spotted Flycatcher, six Barn Swallows; on 13<sup>th</sup> 200+ House Martin flew through in the afternoon, seven Northern Wheatears on golf course 14<sup>th</sup> Raven, two each of Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher, 14 Blackcap, 8 Chiffchaff including one singing, four Whitethroat, Garden Warbler. Fly-overs were 120+ House Martin, 70 Swallow, 6 Meadow Pipit, 2 Yellow Wagtail and on 17<sup>th</sup> 18 Chiffchaff, a Redstart, a Whinchat, and four Blackcaps.

## **October**

At Ferring 'block' and a part of Goring gap on 1<sup>st</sup>, 185 Swallows moved east as well as 16 Goldfinches, a Pied Wagtail and a couple of Linnets. There were c.35 Gannets fishing offshore and on the Gap fields a flock of 40 Linnets and two Stonechats. Ring Ouzels appeared at Wild Park on 6<sup>th</sup> (two) and Cissbury from about the 8<sup>th</sup> with up to eight present as well as 20 each of Chiffchaff and Blackcap. Firecrests became regularly trapped there and at Ladywell. A high count of c.50 'Chiffs' was at Brooklands on 13<sup>th</sup>.

On 19<sup>th</sup> A Short-eared Owl flew in off the sea over Ferring Beach and headed NW and a male Hen Harrier was near Chantry Hill. On 20<sup>th</sup> at Cissbury, a



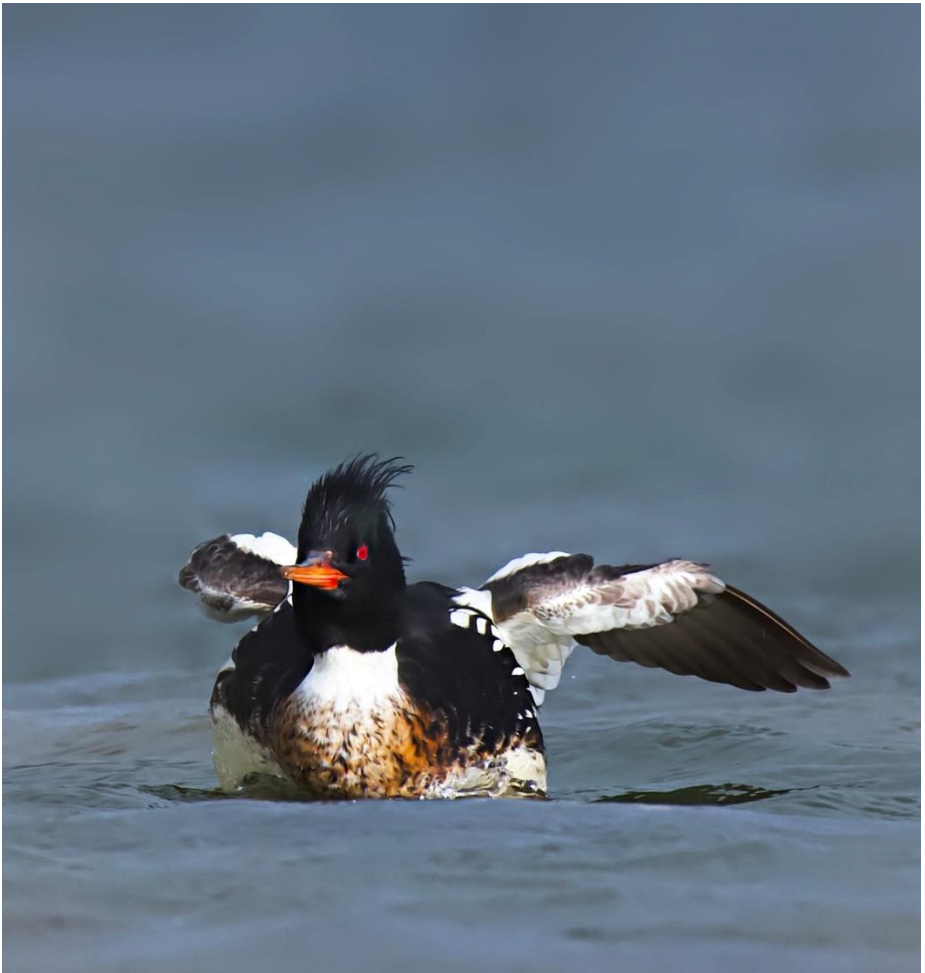
group of five Ring Ouzels burst out and arrayed themselves on tops of trees; two further groups of three Ring Ouzels seen later suggested at least six birds present. Next day, a Black Redstart was on the beach at the west end of Millionaires Row (the east end of Shoreham Harbour canal). A Snow Bunting was on the beach at Shoreham Fort on 22<sup>nd</sup> with three Stonechats nearby. Next day, twelve of the latter were on Southwick Hill. Also on 22<sup>nd</sup> a ringtail Hen Harrier was at No Man's Land (above Steyning) and at Shoreham



Fort late morning a Snow Bunting was eating seeds and running mouse-like in and out of the shingle shifters' fencing, 'as tame as you like'. A Black Redstart was seen at Wild Park this day and was followed by an arrival on 24<sup>th</sup> with a male and female in Crown Road, Portslade and then on 25<sup>th</sup> at Goring, six in gardens consisting of one male and five females with five still there on 26<sup>th</sup>.

Also on 26<sup>th</sup>, a first winter Grey Phalarope showed well on the sea close inshore near the rocks adjacent to Brooklands from at least 10.30 until 11.45. The bird was feeding on the sea between short flights that seemed to be taking it slowly west. A female Goosander was on the Adur by the cement works on

30<sup>th</sup> and on the Downs between Sompting and Steyning a Merlin and Hen Harrier were hunting. Next day another Hen Harrier was seen north of Mile Oak.



## **November**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> there were still 25 Chiffchaffs at Brooklands as well as two drake Pochard and two Firecrests were there on 7<sup>th</sup>. A Black Redstart was at Goring

Gap on 8<sup>th</sup> with 20 plus each of Pied Wagtail and Skylark, A Barn Owl inside the Old Rectory at Coombes on 13<sup>th</sup> was a surprise to say the least. Some thirty each of Mergansers and Grebes were on the sea off Ferring on 18<sup>th</sup> when seven Egyptian Geese were near Rye farm, Henfield.

## December

A Siberian Chiffchaff , a Firecrest and 18 Chiffchaffs were at Steyning SF on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A good find on 4<sup>th</sup> was a Great Grey Shrike by the flint-mines at Cissbury. This was re-found some two weeks later and remained, elusively, until Christmas Eve. On 15<sup>th</sup>, 15 Redwings were trapped at Cissbury – a record.

On 18<sup>th</sup> a count of 110 Lapwings on the Toll Bridge island, the most seen this winter. A wintering Whimbrel on the Adur at Shoreham first seen on 12<sup>th</sup>, remained on and off well into 2020. On 28<sup>th</sup> Barrie Watson ringed a Barn Owl on Bramber Brooks Reserve.





## **January 2020**

A seavatch on 5<sup>th</sup> off West Worthing produced the following : Red-throated Diver two W and one on sea that flew off E; Gannet two W; Auk sp (all distant so not specifically identified) 300+ W in flocks of up to 40, a few landed on sea;



Wigeon four W; Red-breasted Merganser 25 on sea; Great Crested Grebe c.ten on sea; Kittiwake a few distant birds W. Next day the star bird of the winter so far was found near Rye Farm, Henfield in the shape of a Glossy Ibis! Also there, three Black-tailed Godwits.

Eight Brent Geese appeared on the Adur near the Ferry bridge on 7<sup>th</sup> with five wader species. Around a 100 Snipe were on Henfield Levels on 10<sup>th</sup> followed by c.150 on the Adur Nature reserve on 12<sup>th</sup>. Next day there were four Purple Sandpipers at the Harbour, four Red-breasted Mergansers at Widewater and a Jack Snipe at Bramber, A confiding Cetti's Warbler was photographed at Brooklands on 16<sup>th</sup>.

Bird racers in the Adur Valley discovered a Green Sandpiper just north of Stretham Manor and good flocks of Redwings and Fieldfares near the latter on two dates, all species that have been generally elusive this winter. A Slavonian Grebe was off Shoreham beach on 23<sup>rd</sup> then a Long-tailed Duck was seen distantly off Goring on 24<sup>th</sup>, 50 Grey Plover and 88 Dunlin were there on 25<sup>th</sup> followed by two Slavonian Grebes offshore on 26<sup>th</sup>. Two Siberian Chiffchaffs were found at Patching SF with five of the common species on 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **February**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> at Goring Gap a Fulmar flew west and a movement of about 135 Dark-bellied Brent Geese (all but four heading east) and a flock of four Pintail west. A Grey Wagtail flew west over the beach and a Red-throated Diver went east offshore. Waders on the beach included c110 Sanderlings, at least 60 Dunlin, three Grey Plovers, two Ringed Plovers, 49 Turnstones and four Oystercatchers. Seven Mediterranean Gulls were there next day. Two Sandwich Terns flying west off West Worthing on 6<sup>th</sup> were presumably from the wintering group in Chichester Harbour. On February 18<sup>th</sup> the first two Grey Herons were on nests in Coombes heronry.

# Ringling in Ladywell 2019

## John Newnham

This was the thirteenth year of ringling and study of birds using the Ladywell valley. A total of 35 mist-netting sessions were undertaken which, as Table 1 shows, is fewer than recent years but very similar to several other years.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number netting session	22	29	33	34	39	31	37	25	38	37	39	40	35

Table 1:- The numbers of ringling sessions in Ladywell in each year (2007-2019).

Like most recent years the ringling effort was not spread evenly across the year with few or no sessions in the early months and a concentration of effort during the productive early autumn season. These features are clearly shown in Table 2.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2007-18 sessions	16	12	18	36	30	31	37	49	60	52	36	27
Average catch (2007-18)	52	43	35	35	46	37	44	71	97	76	62	57
2019 sessions	1	0	2	2	4	3	3	8	6	3	3	0
Average catch (2019)	40	0	37	45	70	49	83	106	143	83	64	0

Table 2:- The number of ringling sessions in each month and the average monthly catch (2007-18 and 2019).

September was clearly again the most productive month with an average catch of 143 birds per outing augmented by the remarkable, and record, 264 individuals trapped on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Indeed the average session catch for each of the months between March and November was higher than the long-term monthly averages. For reasons of poor weather and/or the absence of an available team no ringling was done in either February or December and the same reasons accounted for the relatively poor coverage in the valley during the often productive months of October and November.



Figure 1:- Nightingale in Ladywell on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2019. (Clare Buckle)

Table 3 shows the totals of each species ringed in Ladywell for the years 2007 to 2019 and shows that 2381 birds were ringed in the valley during 2019. This was the second highest annual total following the exceptional year in 2017 and was the fifth consecutive year when over 2000 birds had been ringed in Ladywell. There were no new species ringed during the year but Table 3 shows, in yellow highlight, the five species which were ringed in record numbers. Perhaps the most interesting is Cetti's Warbler but with at least one, and perhaps two pairs, nesting in or near Ladywell it is not very surprising to ring ten individuals. The Nightingale was only the second trapped in the valley and with the increased growth of *phragmites* in the valley, coupled with a good breeding season, it is not surprising that this was the best year for Reed Warblers. The Table 3 also shows 22 species which had previous been ringed in Ladywell but were missed in 2019 and the small numbers of finches and buntings ringed. This table also shows, in red, the species which are currently red-listed as of high conservation concern; Song Thrush is the only 'red' species with more than one or two ringed individuals and although 19 fewer were

Species	20 07	20 08	20 09	20 10	20 11	20 12	20 13	20 14	20 15	20 16	20 17	20 18	20 19	TO TALS
Sparrowhawk			2	3		2	6		2					15
Kestrel		2	1	1		1		2				1		8
Water Rail										1				1
Stock Dove				2			1	1			1	1		6
Woodpigeon	5	4	4	6	3	1	4	2	7	4	9	5	6	60
Tawny Owl				1						1			1	3
Kingfisher	1	2	4	2	5	1	4	8	9	7	10	11	4	68
Green Woodpecker	3	7	6	4	9	2	2	3	1	2		1	1	41
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4	4	5	5	7	9	9	7	5	3	5	10	6	79
Swallow						1	18							19
House Martin		2	34	29	12		62		1	4				144
Tree Pipit											2		1	3
Meadow Pipit							4							4
Grey Wagtail				1			1		2			2	1	7
Wren	24	26	31	43	45	32	33	31	52	64	63	59	52	555
Duncock	34	31	33	38	47	23	37	22	48	34	45	45	60	497
Robin	40	39	44	37	57	37	49	30	59	77	49	52	76	646
Nightingale									1				1	2
Redstart	1				1	1	1			2	1	3		10
Stonechat								1						1
Blackbird	63	29	62	62	68	49	48	26	67	79	41	71	44	709
Song Thrush	9	14	23	19	42	12	23	19	28	43	35	58	39	364
Redwing		2	6	3	1	6		8	6	18	5	9	2	66
Mistle Thrush				2	3						1			6
Cetti's Warbler					4			3	1	4	3	5	10	30
Grasshopper Warbler					3		3			1				7
Sedge Warbler		1		2	6		2			4	7	10	6	38
Reed Warbler	18	26	22	61	51	35	49	23	69	71	10 5	99	11 5	744
Lesser Whitethroat		3	2		4	2		2	6	5	7	4	3	38
Whitethroat	6	3	5	23	43	15	16	3	18	18	28	25	23	226
Garden Warbler	1	1	2	2	3	1	1		10	12	13	14	12	72
Blackcap	25	31	51	14 5	27 9	70	9	80	35 6	32 9	57 5	56 7	61 0	322 7
Yellow-browed Warbler											1			1
Wood Warbler									1			1		2

<b>Chiffchaff</b>	16	22	71	20	20	65	17	14	67	67	10	51	50	<b>428</b>
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	19	9	14	38	64	30	57	4	15	27	35	19	33	<b>153</b>
<b>Goldcrest</b>	1	33	10	25	19	13	11	27	21	8	70	5	71	<b>845</b>
<b>Firecrest</b>		2	1	4	1	2	4	2	10	4	15	7	13	<b>65</b>
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	1			2	3	3	3		2	2	2		1	<b>19</b>
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	21	47	64	47	56	18	14	28	40	30	32	26	47	<b>470</b>
<b>Marsh Tit</b>												1		<b>1</b>
<b>Coal Tit</b>									1	1		2		<b>4</b>
<b>Blue Tit</b>	98	11	14	23	23	11	13	9	63	6	85	11	16	<b>180</b>
<b>Great Tit</b>	45	53	55	68	11	3	57	90	65	61	67	70	9	<b>931</b>
<b>Nuthatch</b>		3	1	3	2	8	6	1			1			<b>25</b>
<b>Treecreeper</b>	7	2	7	11	17	1	7	4	6	6	4	6	10	<b>88</b>
<b>Jay</b>	2	2	2	4		4	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	<b>24</b>
<b>Magpie</b>		1	1	1	2		2	1				2		<b>10</b>
<b>Jackdaw</b>				1	3	1		15	9	1		5	6	<b>41</b>
<b>Rook</b>				1										<b>1</b>
<b>Carrion Crow</b>				1										<b>1</b>
<b>House Sparrow</b>	1													<b>1</b>
<b>Chaffinch</b>	11	42	37	31	82	58	63	19	44	30	17	22	15	<b>471</b>
<b>Greenfinch</b>	5	15	10	20	55	23	14	2	7	6	2	7	8	<b>174</b>
<b>Goldfinch</b>	11	29	9	7	42	7	4	4	15	9	24	71	21	<b>253</b>
<b>Siskin</b>						1			3					<b>4</b>
<b>Lesser Redpoll</b>						1			8	6	17			<b>32</b>
<b>Bullfinch</b>		2		3	1	2	1	2		1	9		1	<b>22</b>
<b>Reed Bunting</b>			1	4	6	3				2	2	1	1	<b>20</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>188</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>25</b>

Table 3:- The annual totals in each year (2007-2019) for each species ringed in Ladywell.

Ringed than in 2018 the 2019 total was still above the annual average of 27 for the years of ringing in Ladywell.

As previously mentioned the most productive day in 2019 was 30<sup>th</sup> September when 264 birds were trapped by a team of three comprising mainly Chiffchaffs (127) and Blackcaps (73) whilst on 1<sup>st</sup> May a team of four ringers caught just 31 birds. There were eleven sessions when 100 or more birds were trapped.

An average of 14 different species was trapped per outing with a range from eight on 10<sup>th</sup> September to 20 on both 20<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> August. In keeping with recent years the highest numbers of individual species caught in a single day were migrants with 127 Chiffchaffs on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 115 Willow Warblers on 8<sup>th</sup> August and 77 Blackcaps on 31<sup>st</sup> August. With another successful year for Chiffchaffs this species has now overtaken Blue Tit as the most numerous species handled in the valley; the top ten are shown in Table 4.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total handlings</b>
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	4550
<b>Blue Tit</b>	4346
<b>Blackcap</b>	3545
<b>Great Tit</b>	2466
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	1549
<b>Robin</b>	1300
<b>Dunnock</b>	1237
<b>Blackbird</b>	1222
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	1113
<b>Reed Warbler</b>	1070

*Table 4:- The total number of handlings (new birds and retraps) for the top ten species in Ladywell (2007-2019).*

Each of the session reports contained a table of mist-net productivity. As mentioned before this has little scientific value and is mainly of interest to those who know the valley well and to see how much birds move about the valley. On most occasions when at least three experienced ringers were present the full set of nets were erected but on days when fewer ringers were present several mist-nets were left in their bags. During the year we experimented with some new net rides resulting with a small number of additional birds including the Tawny Owl and several Cetti's Warblers. Two Potter traps were purchased and deployed in the vain hope of catching a Water Rail. Table 5 shows, like recent years, most birds were caught in net L5 which is set at the east end of the valley near to the *phragmites* fringed stream and a willow stand but K2 set in similar habitat, nearly matched L5 in the number of birds trapped per metre of net.

Net	Central		College portion Ladywell				Applesham pond		
	K	K2	L1	L2	L4	L5	P1	P2	P3
Number caught	271	451	136	84	105	830	400	550	95
Net length(metres)	24	18	18	18	18	30	54	72	18
Birds/metre	11	25	8	5	6	28	7	8	5

Table 5:- The various net productivity in 2019.



Figure 2:- Willow and reeds in K2 Ladywell (left) September 2019 and Reed Warbler (page 24) found in this habitat; this individual with a clear fault in the tail. (Clare Buckle)



Six birds were caught in the year carrying rings applied elsewhere (controls) and the details are given in Table 6.

Ring No.	Species	Date	Age/ Sex	Ring date	Age/ Sex	Ring site	Distance	Interval
AKE6 816	Black cap	14 September 2019	3F	2 September 2019	3F	Stanwell Moor, Surrey	70km S	12 days
AXC 8259	Black cap	10 July 2019	3J	22 June 2019	3J	Mumbles, Steyning	8km S	18 days
JBR2 39	Chiff chaff	10 July 2019	4	24 August 2018	3	Mumbles, Steyning	8km S	320 days
KKH 327	Chiff chaff	14 September 2019	3	16 June 2019	3J	Wraysbury GP, Windsor & Maidenhead	71km SSE	90 days
LDY1 52	Chiff chaff	21 September 2019	3	13 September 2019	3	Kingshill Farm, Worcestershire	203km SE	8 days
SE01 700	Kingfisher	5 September 2019	3	6 July 2019	3F	Litlington, East Sussex	34km W	61 days

**Table 6:** The details of birds caught in 2018 and ringed elsewhere.



However, eight Ladywell ringed birds were recovered or controlled elsewhere; these details are shown in Table 7.

Ring	Species	Ringing date	Age	Recovery date	Age	Recovery location	Distance	Interval
ANA 8959	Blackcap	20 September 2017	3 M	5 May & 9 June 2019	4 M	Llangorse Lake Powys	239km WNW	627 days
S571 316	Blackcap	8 July 2017	3J	16 April 2019	4 M	Cissbury Ring, Worthing	6km NW	647 days
S570 196	Cetti's Warbler	26 October 2016	3 F	July 2019	2 F	Litlington, East Sussex	34 km E	49 days
LDJ2 34	Chiffchaff	29 September 2018	3	28 March 2019	4	Royston Hertfordshire	135km N	180 days
D741 657	Dunnock	7 November 2013	3	20 January 2019	-	Mill Road, North Lancing (? Cat kill)	0km	1900 days
AHE 8125	Goldfinch	8 September 2018	3J	11 May 2019	-	Shoreham-by Sea (hit window)	3km E	245 days
AYE2 664	Goldfinch	17 November 2018	3 M	17 June 2019	-	Steyning (hit window)	6km N	212 days
AJB3 697	Reed Warbler	9 May 2018	4	8 August 2019	4 F	Itchen Abbas, Hampshire	70km WNW	456 days

**Table 7:** Details of birds ringed in Ladywell and recovered (all controlled except those marked '-' in the recovery age column) elsewhere.

The female Cetti's Warbler (S571096) was also trapped at Litlington on six occasions during 2017 where it was considered to be one of the breeding females, again during 2018 on at least seven occasions between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 28<sup>th</sup> July and was still going strong in Charleston Reedbed during 2019. Likewise the male Blackcap controlled at Llangorse Lake was also trapped there on two occasions in the early summer of 2018. Although recoveries and controls are exciting the number reported is relatively small thus few conclusions can be drawn from those movements generated from ringing at a single site. However, when combined with the information across the country, and indeed other countries' ringing/banding schemes a comprehensive picture can be drawn as shown in the BTO's *The Migration Atlas (2002)* Handling birds and ringing provides considerably more information about population size and

structure, species longevity and other aspects of avian biology than just their movements. Each of the session reports gave details of the many birds retrapped and during 2019 there was a total of 636 retrap records involving 442 different individuals. As always most were of birds ringed either in 2018 or 2019 and Table 8 shows the 22 species which were retrapped in 2019 and the time intervals between ringing and retrapping.

Species	< 1 yr	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	5 yr	6 yr	TOTAL S
Woodpigeon	1							1
Kingfisher	2							2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3							3
Wren	14	6	1		1			22
Duncock	20	5	4	2				31
Robin	24	9	2	3				38
Blackbird	13	4	2	5	2		1	27
Song Thrush	10	2	1					13
Cetti's Warbler	7							7
Sedge Warbler		1						1
Reed Warbler	21	10	4	3				38
Blackcap	38	6	3	3				50
Chiffchaff	20	1	1					22
Willow Warbler	2							2
Goldcrest	9							9
Firecrest	2							2
Long-tailed Tit	12	2	2	2	1		1	20
Blue Tit	69	12	4	2		1		88
Great Tit	40	7	8	1	1	1		58
Treecreeper	2	1						3
Chaffinch	1				2			3
Goldfinch	2							2
<b>TOTALS</b>	312	66	32	21	7	2	2	442

**Table 8:** The year interval of birds ringed and retrapped in Ladywell during 2019.

The resident Blue and Great Tits were the most numerous although migratory species such as Blackcap and Reed Warbler provided plenty of re-trap histories. The Table 8 clearly shows the numbers of these migratory species returning to the valley in subsequent summers. Like 2018 ten species accounted for the 32 individuals trapped in 2019 which had been ringed three or more years earlier; these are clearly seen in the table. The bird with the longest duration between ringing and re-trapping was the same individual as in 2018 (Blackbird (LB89384)), details for this and two others over 5 years are shown in Table 9. The ages of these birds, however, are short of the national longevity records of nearly 15 years for Blackbird, nine years for Blue Tit and nearly nine years for Long-tailed Tit. Multiple re-traps are a common occurrence in Ladywell and have frequently been described over the years. The current record holder is a Great Tit (L674455) which has now been handled on 25 occasions since July 2011 but this individual failed to be seen in Ladywell in either 2018 or 2019. Blue Tit (Z378690) now matches Blue Tit (L674614) with 19 handlings but the latter has also not been seen during the past two years.

The female Blue Tit (Y829914) used three different nest boxes in the same part of the wood to nest in successive years 2015 to 2017, was not seen during 2018 but returned to breed in the original site (but with a new box) in 2019.

Each time a bird is trapped as much useful information is recorded as time permits. Most birds trapped have their age, sex, wing length and weight recorded but additionally full moult details of the flight feathers (primaries and secondaries) were recorded on 36 individuals of 13 different species between May and September. This figure was comparable to 2018 and like 2018 Blackbird (8) and Long-tailed Tit (5) were the species with most full moult records. During the same months the group recorded 332 individuals of 17 species undergoing post-juvenile moult with Blackcap (83) and Blue Tit (58) being the most frequently encountered.

Ring No.	Species	Cap	Date	Age	Sex	Subsites	Interval
ELV315	Long-tailed Tit	N	13/08/2013	3J		K	
		R	25/09/2013	2		K2	0y 043d
		R	09/10/2013	2		L4	0y 057d
		R	04/12/2013	2		L4	0y 113d
		R	29/12/2013	2		L1	0y 138d
		R	10/09/2014	2		K	1y 028d
		R	05/11/2014	2		P1	1y 084d
		R	05/04/2016	4		L1	2y 236d
		R	18/06/2016	4		P1	2y 310d
		R	27/08/2017	2		K2	4y 015d
		R	25/11/2017	2		K2	4y 105d
		R	03/06/2019	4		P1	5y 295d
		R	28/10/2019	2		L4	6y 077d
		LB89494	Blackbird	N	01/04/2012	4	M
R	29/05/2012			5	M	L3	0y 058d
R	08/10/2017			4	M	P3	5y 191d
R	14/07/2018			6	M	L5	6y 105d
R	21/01/2019			6	M	L4	6y 296d
Y829914	Blue Tit	N	27/08/2013	3J		P1	
		R	21/09/2013	3		L4	0y 025d
		R	11/12/2013	3		K	0y 106d
		R	04/09/2014	4		K	1y 008d
		R	21/05/2015	6	F	LB08	1y 267d
		R	08/10/2015	4		P1	2y 042d
		R	24/10/2015	4		K	2y 058d
		R	20/05/2016	6	F	LB09	2y 267d
		R	30/12/2016	4		P1	3y 126d
		R	07/05/2017	6	F	LB07	3y 254d
		R	13/05/2017	6	F	LB07	3y 260d
		R	21/05/2017	6	F	LB07	3y 268d
		R	30/03/2019	6		K2	5y 216d
		R	20/05/2019	6	F	LB08	5y 267d
Z378690	Blue Tit	N	25/07/2015	3J		K2	
		R	23/09/2015	3		P2	0y 060d
		R	22/10/2015	3		P2	0y 089d
		R	09/12/2015	3		P3	0y 137d
		R	19/12/2015	3		P1	0y 147d
		R	08/03/2016	5		P2	0y 227d
		R	05/04/2016	5		P2	0y 255d
		R	21/09/2016	4		P1	1y 059d
		R	17/10/2016	4		P1	1y 085d
		R	07/12/2016	4		P2	1y 136d
		R	30/12/2016	4		P1	1y 159d
		R	09/08/2017	4		K2	2y 016d
		R	19/11/2017	4		P2	2y 118d
		R	28/05/2018	6		P1	2y 308d
		R	16/12/2018	4		P2	3y 145d
		R	30/03/2019	6		P1	3y 249d
		R	07/04/2019	6		P1	3y 257d
		R	12/05/2019	4	F	P1	3y 292d
R	20/05/2019	4	F	P1	3y 300d		

**Table 9:** (opposite) Details of birds retrapped in 2019 with 1) a five years or greater interval between ringing and recapture (peach) and 2) the most captures since being ringed (green).

During the autumn the session reports mentioned the estimates of stored body fat and the pre-migratory development of the pectoral muscle. During 2019 these measurements were taken on 648 migrants; this was somewhat fewer than recent years as too few ringers were present on several days. Table 10 shows the average fat scores (recorded on a scale one to eight) for the two commonest species in September and October for the past three years. It seems that less fat was being deposited during September in both species than in the two previous years.

	2017		2018		2019	
	September	October	September	October	September	October
<b>Blackcap</b>	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.8	2.0
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	1.6	2.1	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.5

**Table 10:-** The monthly average fat score for Blackcap and Chiffchaff in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

For eleven of the past seasons nest-boxes sited in the valley have been carefully studied and the details of inspections were recorded for the BTO's Nest Recording Scheme. There were 39 nest boxes in the valley which were first inspected in mid-May and reviewed until all 39 nest boxes in the valley were finally visited on 21<sup>st</sup> June to complete the records for the BTO's Nest Record Scheme and to record any ringed nestlings that have failed to fledge. Finding the way through the face-high nettles in the Ladywell 'wild wood' was a very tiring (and stinging) exercise which took at least three hours to complete. However, it was most encouraging to find, for the first year, that all the nestlings ringed had apparently fledged. The results of the nest box scheme in the valley are shown in the following Table 11:-

	20 08	20 09	20 10	20 11	20 12	20 13	20 14	20 15	20 16	20 17	20 18	20 19
Number of boxes available	11	11	23	23	24	29	32	32	21	37	34	39
<b>Blue Tit</b>	3	3	8	13	11	10	9	9	10	12	15	14
<b>Great Tit</b>			3	5	2	4	7	6	6	6	6	10
<b>Nuthatch</b>					1	1						
Total occupied boxes	3	3	11	18	14	15	16	15	16	18	21	24
Occupancy %	27	27	48	78	58	52	50	47	76	49	62	62
Total eggs laid	19	28	89	149	107	103	126	114	95	120	137	139
Total pulli ringed	19	25	78	130	83	44	88	69	67	95	86	99
Total young fledged	19	23	75	102	56	42	55	25	47	57	79	99
% survival egg -> fledging	100	82	84	68	52	41	44	22	49	48	58	71

**Table 11:** Summary of the Ladywell's nest-box occupancy and success 2008-2019.

Eighteen boxes produced at least one young which apparently fledged and of those clutches which failed two Blue Tits and one Great Tit failed at the egg stage and two Great Tits and one Blue Tit failed at the chick stage. Certainly the results are the best since 2010.

On each visit, including some short visits for stocking feeders or maintenance work, a list of species recorded was logged onto the British Trust for Ornithology's Birdtrack recording system. On most ringing occasions between 30 and 45 species were recorded; a total of 75 species were seen during the year. No new species were noted thus the number of species recorded since 2007 remains at 119. The summary from the 42 lists generated by the team is shown in the appendix below. No species was recorded on each outing although Moorhen, Woodpigeon, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow and Blackbird were only missed on one occasion. When possible notes were made of other taxa. In particular butterflies were recorded by the group whilst the younger members of the team could record crickets by hearing their stridulation.

As noted before the valley is, in parts, a wild wood and mobile telephone signals are very variable thus the team's health and safety policy notes that at least two permit holding ringers should be present at each session and radios carried to allow all to be in touch with each other. Indeed the average number of ringers present for the 35 sessions was just over three, this number in the team makes the task of erecting and dismantling the mist-nets easier and helps cover the ground between the two ends of the valley. The number of ringers varied between two and five with each of the regulars being available at different times and Table 12 clearly shows three ringers was the most frequent sized team.

Number of ringers	Number of sessions
2	8
3	18
4	6
5	3

**Table 12:** *The number of persons present per ringing session.*

During the year the number of sessions each team member was able to attend was John Newnham (26), Mark Mallalieu (26), Clare Buckle (24), Sue Walsh (21), Emily Mustafa (9) and Becky Parangi (1), who only joined us as a trainee right at the year's end. Visiting ringers from the Cissbury team included Val Bentley (1) and Domnhall Finch (1) and although no large outings were arranged during the year occasional visitors joined our sessions. During the

year Clare attended various ringing courses, was assessed and successfully achieved her 'C' permit to ring independently. Throughout the year, but particularly in the summer, considerable 'gardening' is needed to maintain the net rides in operable conditions and my thanks go to all the members of the ringing team for their regular efforts with this and the ringing throughout the year. I would like to extend our continued gratitude and thanks to the college authorities and staff, particularly Jon Hutcheon the farm manager, and to Hugh and Christopher Passmore of Applesham Farm for their on-going interest, help and support with the ringing in Ladywell. Sometimes the landowners visit us during a ringing session and we are always pleased to see them.

During 2019 the team continued inputting all the ringing data into the BTO's on-line recording software (DeMon). Plans to enhance this software to facilitate analysis are still in the pipeline thus the data are still being copied into the old IPMR system to be able to continue using this software to present tables and analyse our records to present to those interested. I thank the team members who take turns keying the data into DeMon. I also thank those who have prepared session reports to feed back to landowners, interested college staff, local birders and ringers who have followed the work done in Ladywell. These reports are copied then to the local Shoreham District Ornithological Society members. Finally I thank Sue, Mark and Clare for correcting this review.





Figure 3 (above):- Grey Wagtail (left) and Tree Pipit ringed in Ladywell in 2019 (Clare Buckle).



Figure 4:- Hawthorn Shield-bug (top) and Painted Lady in Ladywell in 2019 (Clare Buckle).

# Ringling at Cissbury 2019

## Val Bentley

Rather more activity took place at Cissbury in 2019, due in part to a temporary reduction in childminding duties from July, and to additional assistance from C ringers David Campbell, Domnhall Finch, and trainees Mya Bambrick and Peter Denyer. Peter has extensive overseas ringing experience but only started his “official” training in the UK in 2019. During the year 1461 birds were trapped, of which 1275 were new, 179 retraps and 7 controls.

### Table 1: Captures at Cissbury 2018

The first column is the figure for the total captures (including retraps and controls), the second column shows new birds ringed and in brackets the number of different individuals of the species trapped where this is different, i.e. including retraps from previous years and controls. The final columns give totals of new birds ringed during each of the previous four years.

Species	Total Captures	2019 New (New for year)	2018 New	2017 New	2016 New	2015 New
Blackbird	29	20 (28)	18	14	20	29
Blackcap	562	527 (540)	294	335	288	406
Blue Tit	55	39 (44)	21	18	11	20
Bullfinch	19	14 (17)	12	19	23	29
Chaffinch	4	4	10	5	10	6
Chiffchaff	150	142 (145)	97	198	178	150
Coal Tit	1	1	-	-	-	-
Dunnock	53	35 (39)	16	22	24	30
Firecrest	11	9	4	7	2	7
Garden Warbler	10	10	13	9	2	4
Goldcrest	105	92 (93)	36	104	37	87
Goldfinch	3	3	2	5	9	7
Grasshopper Warbler	1	1	-	-	2	-
Great Tit	41	27 (33)	27	11	11	24
Greenfinch	1	1	4	2	13	8
<i>Green Woodpecker</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1

<i>Jay</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1
Kestrel	1	1	-	-	1	
Lesser Redpoll	-	-	-	19	-	2
Lesser Whitethroat	3	3	4	1	4	1
Linnet	-	-	-	-	-	1
Long-tailed Tit	85	61 (72)	25	23	14	10
Magpie	1	1	-	-	-	-
Marsh Tit	2	2	-	1	1	3
Redstart	1	1	-	3	-	1
Redwing	19	19	2	7	1	10
Reed Warbler	5	5	11	11	4	8
Robin	65	47 (49)	43	25	48	54
Sedge Warbler	2	2		1	3	-
Song Thrush	25	17 (20)	17	10	28	22
Sparrowhawk	1	1	-	-	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	2	2	1	1	-	-
Stonechat	-	-	-	1	-	-
Swallow	-	-	-	21	3	-
Treecreeper	6	3	3	2	2	-
Whitethroat	46	45	47	59	23	53
Willow Warbler	118	118	115	124	55	49
Wood Pigeon	2	2	1	-	-	-
Wood Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	1
Wren	32	20 (26)	22	15	21	35
Yellowhammer	-	-	-	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>1275 (1340)</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>1076</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>1059</b>

Species which showed a marked increase over the four preceding years were Blackcap, Blue Tit, Dunnock and Long-tailed Tit. The previous highest annual total for Long-tailed Tits was 43 in 2009. Preliminary results from ringing at Constant Effort sites (CES), released by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), suggest that “the biggest winners in 2019 were the tits (Blue, Great and Long-tailed) each of which recorded a significant increase in (adult) abundance compared with the five-year mean” while “fewer Blackbirds, Dunnocks, Chaffinches and Greenfinches were recorded than in any previous year since CES began”. However, our own Dunnock population seems to have recovered after three leaner years.

As far as migratory warblers are concerned the BTO's preliminary CES results show that it was a mixed year, but that "short-distance migrants Chiffchaff and Blackcap, and the long-distance migrant Whitethroat, were encountered in particularly high numbers relative to the five-year mean (2014-2018)." Cissbury saw more Blackcaps than in any of the previous four years, but Chiffchaff numbers were lower than in any of the three years from 2015-17, which is more likely to reflect differing amounts of ringing effort at their peak migration time, rather than an actual decline

### **Spring & Early Summer**

We made an earlier start than we did in 2018. A visit from the Worthing Conservation Group was booked for 9<sup>th</sup> March, and we thought it would be good to show them why we really appreciate all their hard work in helping to manage the site. Twenty birds were captured, including new Redwing and Song Thrushes, and retrapped Dunnock and Blackbird both ringed in 2016; we were also able to show our visitors Goldcrest and Long-tailed Tit. The first Blackcap of the year was a male on 30<sup>th</sup> March, and a retrapped Chiffchaff on the same day had been ringed as a juvenile at Cissbury the previous year.



On 16 April Blue Tit D060727 turned up in net site D3. It had been ringed as a juvenile on 27 July 2014, and only retrapped once before, on 23 December 2017. Into its 6<sup>th</sup> calendar year, its colouring was impressively bright.

There were two sessions in April and only one in May, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, when several females with brood patches were caught, including a Blackcap seen for the first time since she was ringed in her first year on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The first juveniles appeared in the nets too, a group of seven Long-tailed Tits. A visit on 1<sup>st</sup> June only yielded nine birds, despite the full run of nets being set, but there were some interesting birds seen; two Shelducks by the bomb crater, a fly-by Cuckoo and Spotted Flycatcher while, unusually, a Coal Tit was heard. By the end of June we had only ringed 105 new birds, though these included juvenile Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Song Thrush, Treecreeper and Whitethroat.

### **Late Summer and early Autumn**

There were only two sessions in July both towards the end of the month, by which time we had ringed 194 new birds. Eleven juvenile Chiffchaffs were trapped on the 21<sup>st</sup>, but also the first Willow Warblers had started to move through the site on their migration. This latter species has not bred at Cissbury since 2006, which is when the last fully juvenile birds were caught.

During August we made seven visits, and raised the overall total of birds trapped to 700. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> there were 24 Willow Warblers, exceeded by 38 on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but then numbers dwindled and the final one was seen on 8 September. By the end of August Blackcaps took precedence, with a vengeance; you will see from the table below that they comprised over 40% of the birds ringed in the year. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, of 79 birds trapped, 53 were Blackcaps and none of these were retraps.

Five sessions took place in September, and of these by far the busiest was on the 2<sup>nd</sup>; a solo session with 4 nets which caught 118 different birds, 90 of which were Blackcaps. However, the first Goldcrest and Firecrest of the autumn turned up as well.



A Grasshopper Warbler (above) and two Spotted Flycatchers (one below) were also ringed in August.



**Table 2: Totals of Four Passage Species (as percentages of total number of all birds ringed)**

<b>Year/s</b>	<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>Whitethroat</b>	<b>Willow Warbler</b>
2000-2004	25.5	13.7	6.9	6.8
2005-2009	30.6	15.9	5.0	5.8
2010-2014	30.5	18.4	5.5	6.6
2015	38.3	14.2	5.0	4.6
2016	34.4	21.2	2.7	6.6
2017	31.1	18.4	5.5	11.5
2018	34.7	11.5	5.6	13.6
2019	41.3	11.1	3.5	9.3

In 2018 the lower percentage of Chiffchaffs compared with Willow Warblers was no doubt due to fewer sessions during their main passage period; in 2019 the increase in numbers of Blackcaps has pushed the Chiffchaff percentage down. In terms of total number of individuals the figures for the last three years are:

**Table 2: Totals of Four Passage Species (as actual numbers of birds ringed)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>Whitethroat</b>	<b>Willow Warbler</b>
2017	335	198	59	124
2018	294	97	47	115
2019	527	142	45	118

Whatever lifestyle strategy Blackcaps employ, it was particularly successful in 2019!

### **Late Autumn and Winter**

There was another 100+ day on 5 October, one of four sessions that month, when Mya, Peter and I trapped 117 birds, including 26 Chiffchaffs, 25 Blackcaps, 23 Long-tailed Tits, a record number for a day at Cissbury, and 22 Goldcrests. On the 10<sup>th</sup> a Sparrowhawk and a Magpie were found in the same net; possibly the Magpie had been trying to chase the Sparrowhawk away?

Two visits in November brought 38 birds each, and another two in December raised 36 between them, including 15 Redwings and a Marsh Tit on the 7th.

### Residents

Three of our resident species enjoyed greater productivity in 2019 than in 2018, with Blue Tits and Dunnocks doing particularly well, though our sample size is small. The BTO preliminary CES results indicated increases in productivity over the 5-year mean as 34.9% for Blue Tits and 41% for Dunnock.

**Table 3: Productivity of seven resident species**

Species	Number of juveniles and first year birds (to 30/9)						
	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Blackbird	8	6	2	5	12	22	8
Blue Tit	20	8	8	5	12	14	19
Dunnock	22	10	13	11	19	29	24
Great Tit	15	15	4	9	14	16	10
Robin	27	27	12	24	28	43	24
Wren	12	14	6	13	22	22	13

Note: Only juveniles and first year birds trapped until the end of September are included above as these are most likely to have been hatched on or near the site. Long-tailed Tits are not included as adults and juveniles undergo a complete moult in summer and cannot be assigned an age after this has occurred.





This handsome adult male Bullfinch was caught on 30 March. We are fortunate at Cissbury to have a resident population of Bullfinches. During the year we trapped nine different adults, of which six were males and three females, and nine young birds. This latter figure was a little disappointing; however in the first six weeks of 2020 we ringed a further six birds which had hatched in 2019, so they had probably fared better than we thought!

### **Survivors and Movers**

It is always particularly pleasing to retrap birds which have been ringed in previous years, and some of the oldest are shown in Table 4

**Table 4: Selection of Retraps 2019**

Ring No.	Species	Ringed	Recaptured	Minimum Age
JEL569	Wren	4.9.16	14.4.18	2yr 236d (ringed as juvenile)
BJ10984	Dunnock	2.9.15	3.11.19	4yr 62d (ringed as first year bird)
LH18808	Blackbird	17.4.16	28.4.19	3yr 11d (ringed as 2 <sup>nd</sup> calendar year bird)
Z990928	Blackcap	27.8.16	26.5.19	2yr 272d (ringed as first year bird)
D060727	Blue Tit	27.7.14	16.4.19	4yr 263d (ringed as juvenile)
Z306891	Blue Tit	24.10.15	28.4.19	3yr 186d (ringed as first year bird)
Z990372	Bullfinch	21.4.17	31.9.19	2yr 132d (ringed as 2 <sup>nd</sup> calendar year bird)

There were seven controls, i.e. captures of birds ringed elsewhere. Predictably most of these were Blackcaps, and three came from Ladywell though one had been ringed in 2017, and the bird from North Yorkshire had been ringed as a nestling.

**Table 5: Controls 2019**

Species	Date	Details
Blackcap	03/10/18 22/08/19	Old Stores Meadow Nature Reserve, Capel, Surrey Cissbury (32 km, S, 323 days)
Blackcap	19/07/19 31/08/19	Wraysbury Gravel Pits, Slough Cissbury (66 km, S, 43 days)
Blackcap	07/07/19 02/09/19	Chelmarsh Reservoir, Shropshire Cissbury (227 km, SE, 57 days)
Blackcap	03/07/19 26/08/19	Lancing College, Lancing, West Sussex Cissbury (6 km, NW, 54 days)
Blackcap	08/07/17 16/04/19	Lancing College, Lancing, West Sussex Cissbury (6 km, NW, 1 yr 282days)
Blackcap	19/05/19 02/09/19	Skipworth Common Nature Reserve, North Yorkshire Cissbury (331 km, S, 106 days)
Chiffchaff	22/08/19 15/09/19	Lancing College, Lancing, West Sussex Cissbury (6 km, NW, 24 days)

Only one of our birds was recovered elsewhere in 2019, a Blackcap ringed on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017 found dead in Wiltshire on 11<sup>th</sup> April.

## The More Unusual

During the months when birds are moving through on migration, you never quite know what to expect. Although Cissbury is not their breeding habitat, Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers are trapped in most autumns, and in addition we ringed one Grasshopper Warbler, one Redstart and two Spotted Flycatchers. Of UK residents, six years had passed since a Sparrowhawk capture (below left), and three since a Kestrel (below right), but both were ringed this year.



Marsh Tits (overleaf above) are ringed in small numbers most years, but a single Coal Tit (overleaf below) was a surprise on 17 November, the first ringed here since 1989.



On a rather frosty morning on 3 November Peter noticed, and managed to identify, what must have been the most unusual species recorded in 2019, a torpid Vagrant Emperor dragonfly.



### **Summary**

We were able to carry out 30 ringing sessions during the year, six more than in 2018. The first, with a limited run of nets, was on 9<sup>th</sup> March, when we ringed 11 birds and retrapped nine; the final one was on 23<sup>rd</sup> December when the totals were ten and nine respectively. There were two ringers on site for 17 of these visits and three ringers for six visits; there were six occasions where I was on my own, and one where Sue Walsh from the Ladywell team brought two of their trainees Emily Mustafa and Becky Parangi. Clare Buckle, who also rings at Ladywell, was the second ringer on one session.

With more team members to call on during 2019, more sessions were undertaken, and we enjoyed an increase in the number of individual birds and variety of species encountered.

Thanks are due to our Group Secretary, Brian Clay who oversees the return of data to the BTO; to Mya, David, Finch and Peter for their involvement with the ringing operations during the year; to the Worthing Conservation Volunteers for their efforts in clearing young ash and sycamore trees; to my husband Roger for carrying out tree and scrub clearance with me in winter and ride clearance in summer; to the National Trust for their permission to ring at the site; and to the owners of the track for allowing vehicular access so a car can be parked near the ringing area.

## RSPB Adur Estuary Nature Reserve – Action Plan

Tim and Jenny Holter, Jess Aidley, Tony Benton (RSPB Volunteer Wardens)

In the last issue we outlined our concern at the increasing level of disturbance affecting birds within the Adur saltmarsh nature reserve. The RSPB has owned this 149 acre site since 1987 but during that time no reserve signage or other public display information has been provided. As a result of the lack of signage the general public, including a significant proportion of local residents and river-based leisure organisations, are unaware of the status of this reserve as a wildlife sensitive area within the Adur Estuary Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI). In consequence people involved in leisure activities on the river regularly cross the saltmarsh when water levels are high as there is nothing to discourage them from doing so. Such activity has a significant impact on the waders and wildfowl roosting or foraging there. Disturbance has for some time mostly been from kayakers but more recently there are increasing numbers of paddleboarders. The latter have a greater impact on the birds due to their height and visibility.

The Adur Reserve is the responsibility of staff based at RSPB Pulborough Brooks. Last September, following increasing disturbance on the Adur Reserve during Summer 2019, we secured a meeting at Pulborough Brooks with Julianne Evans, an RSPB manager who has overall responsibility for a number of local reserves, and John Oliver who oversees volunteering.

Following the meeting an action plan was drafted which incorporated our request to move forward towards the erection of signage and information panels. On our part we undertook to assist where appropriate with the signage and to facilitate public engagement and educational events. Between September and February we have hosted visits to the reserve by four groups – two groups from Brighton and Shoreham U3A respectively, together with two groups from the RSPB – a fundraising team based in Brighton and a group of volunteers from Pulborough Brooks. Due to popular demand, a further visit by RSPB volunteers is programmed for March

In the past we answered to the Head Warden at Pulborough but a new Assistant Warden, Chloe Bradford, now has specific responsibility for the Adur Reserve. Chloe, Julianne and John have visited the reserve enabling us to discuss disturbance problems and our signage wish list. An information panel has been available since Summer 2018 but has not been erected because of difficulties obtaining approval from Adur & Worthing District Council (AWDC). The Council were concerned that placing a ground supported plinth at Coronation Green might interfere with buried electrical cabling. We assisted with research into alternatives. In October we met on-site with AWDC and the Pulborough personnel and we have been assured that there is now agreement for the erection of the panel using a system which fixes the lectern onto the railings overlooking the river and reserve.

A quote has been obtained and we now have to wait until the RSPB have funds available, hopefully in their new financial year or by sponsorship. It was fortuitous timing that we were able to agree an action plan last autumn as currently Pulborough are drafting a new five year plan which should include signage requirements and finance for the Adur Estuary Reserve. We have also

presented detailed suggestions for a revamp of the RSPB's website for the Adur reserve. These suggestions include improved access information, a request for photographs that more obviously relate to the reserve, and for the featured species to be updated to reflect those currently present across the seasons.

Other possible initiatives which involve the RSPB reserve and local wildlife organisations are a Shoreham Nature Trail and creating of a Code of Conduct for the estuary. The latter would need to be moved forward by some tier of local government and will require contact with all river users. Our model for this is the Exe Estuary Code which was negotiated by East Devon County Council but in these times of public financial austerity an AWDC or County Council led initiative may be unlikely. We will explore this further once our other objectives are moving forward.





## Photograph acknowledgments

The source of photographs is often clear from the context or other attribution and those are not listed here. Note also that some of the bird photographs are illustrative; they may not be of the actual bird referred to in the account.

Front cover: Goldcrest - Dorian Mason

Page 5: Scarlet Macaw – Roger Smith

Page 21: Sunbittern – Roger Smith

Page 23: Eurasian Treecreeper – Ian Redman

Page 10: Common Stonechat – Dorian Mason

Page 12: Firecrest – Ian Redman

Page 13: Hen Harrier – Ian Redman

Page 14: Red-breasted Merganser – Ian Redman

Page 15: Great Grey Shrike – Ian Redman

Page 16: Common Snipe – Ian Redman

Page 51: Water Rail & Kingfisher – Dorian Mason

Back cover: Dartford Warbler - Ron Bewley



## Society officers and the User Group

(Officers in post following the A.G.M. of 10th March 2020)

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If you use an email address but are not a member of the User Group then please consider joining (<https://groups.io/g/sdos/join>) to make sure you receive up-to-date information about SDOS activities.

