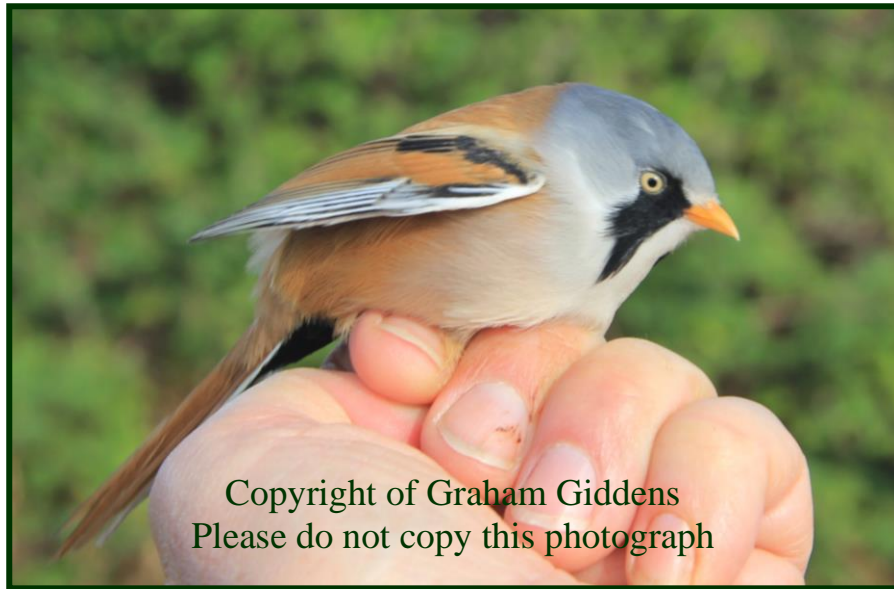


# THE PANS WETLANDS BIRD RINGING REPORT 2022



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Male Bearded Reedling ringed at The Pans in September.

**By GRAHAM GIDDENS**  
BTO Licensed Bird Ringer and Trainer

**INTRODUCTION:** 5 mist net sessions were carried out between July and September in the middle section and at the northern end of the site. This year it was impossible to gain access to mist net at the southern end, near the Observatory, due to high water levels caused by a faulty sluice. There has also been a severe die-back of the reeds in that area, leading to fewer birds.

216 birds of 21 species were ringed. The total includes some of the site's key species such as kingfisher, yellow wagtail, Cetti's warbler, grasshopper warbler, reed warbler, sedge warbler, bearded reedling and reed bunting.

## RINGING TOTALS

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>NUMBER RINGED</b>
Kingfisher	4
Sand Martin	8
House Martin	12
Swallow	17
Meadow Pipit	4
Yellow Wagtail	4
Dunnock	1
Robin	2
Stonechat	4
Cetti's Warbler	4
Grasshopper Warbler	1
Reed Warbler	58
Sedge Warbler	55
Blackcap	1
Chiffchaff	10
Willow Warbler	6
Bearded Reedling	10
Blue Tit	5
Greenfinch	1
Linnet	6
Reed Bunting	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>

## RINGING RESULTS

SEDGE WARBLER: For the 3<sup>rd</sup> successive year one particular sedge warbler was caught at The Pans. Bearing in mind that this species winters in Africa, its repeated return to the site demonstrates how important The Pans is to migrant wetland birds. Below are the capture details:

- First caught and ringed as a fully fledged juvenile on 29.07.2020
- Re-caught as an adult male on 14.08.2021
- Re-caught on 21.07.2022

SEDGE WARBLER: A fully fledged juvenile ringed at The Pans on 27.08.2022 was re-caught by ringers at Litlington, East Sussex on 03.09.2022. This young warbler was dispersing along the coast, prior to heading south for the winter.

SEDGE WARBLER: A fully fledged juvenile ringed at The Pans on 08.08.22 was re-caught by ringers in Gironde, FRANCE on 18.08.22, on its way south to winter in Africa.

LINNET: A juvenile ringed at The Pans in August 2019 was seen near Keyhaven by a bird watcher (ring read in the field) in June 2022.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

During the course of mist netting and visits to the Observatory, the following observations were made of notable species.

WADERS: A greenshank was seen on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. A ruff, a snipe, a green sandpiper and a common sandpiper were seen on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

MARSH HARRIER: Seen on all visits but no fledged juveniles were observed. During the autumn 3 individuals were regularly seen; an adult female, an adult or sub-adult male and a first-winter male.

KINGFISHER: Present from the first visits in July. 4 were ringed and all 4 were fully grown juveniles, presumed to have moved off New Forest streams to winter on the coast.

TREE PIPIT: 2 flew over on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

YELLOW WAGTAIL: The first seen was a flock of 5 at dawn on August 27<sup>th</sup>, coming out of a roost in the reeds. On the evening of September 2<sup>nd</sup> mist nets were set to catch wagtails, swallows and martins and 4 were caught and ringed out of a flock of 13.

HIRUNDINES: A pair of swallows nested close to Vidle Van Farm. From July into the autumn varying numbers of swallows and sand martins roosted in the thicker patches of reeds at The Pans. Most of these birds will have been migrants from all over the UK and Scandinavia. On September 9<sup>th</sup>

several hundred house martins were feeding over the northern end of the site. During that time 12 were caught and ringed.

CETTI'S WARBLER: 4 territories were evident and 4 fledged juveniles were ringed, suggesting that breeding was successful.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER: Locally this species is a scarce passage migrant and rarely seen by Hampshire bird watchers. Mist netting at the end of recent summers at the northern End of The Pans has often revealed the presence of grasshopper warblers. This year one was ringed there and it represents the only record of the species at The Pans this year.

REED AND SEDGE WARBLER: The mist net sessions in the reeds produced a good number of these *Acrocephalus* warblers. A reasonable number of reed warblers and usually one or two pairs of sedge warbler nest at The Pans but the site is also very important for larger numbers of migrants, particularly at the end of the summer. The birds on migration need to feed up prior to migrating to wintering grounds in Africa. The long, settled spells of weather resulted in lots of juveniles fledging from nests in the UK and Ireland. This was reflected during the mist net sessions, when a large percentage of the warblers caught were juveniles.

BEARDED REEDLING: From the numbers of adults and juveniles observed and ringed during the breeding season, it was clear that 1, or possibly 2 pairs, bred in the neighbouring reeds at Avon Water. A total of 10 reedlings were ringed this year at The Pans, demonstrating how important the areas of healthy reed are to this species. On July 27<sup>th</sup> 8 reedlings were ringed; an adult male, an adult female and 6 fledged juveniles. The adult female had an active brood patch, proving that she was nesting. A single juvenile male was ringed on August 6<sup>th</sup> and an unaged male was ringed on September 19<sup>th</sup> (adults and juveniles of this species cannot be told apart after they have completed their end of summer moult).

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, observations from the public car park revealed a flock of 30+ reedlings feeding in the Avon Water reeds. A small part of the flock moved over onto The Pans. It is likely this flock contained a mixture of local birds and others arriving from different reedbeds along the coast. Our local reedlings often move to larger reedbeds to winter, such as those at Radipole near Weymouth and those around Poole Harbour in Dorset.

**REED BUNTING:** No accurate count was made of breeding pairs, but adults and juveniles were noted using the lush areas of reed from the middle of the site to the northern end. 3 fully grown juveniles were ringed, suggesting that successful breeding is likely to have taken place.

**REEDBED HABITAT:** There has been some debate around suggestions made by the Environment Agency for sea defences in the future. One idea is to remove the current slice gates and allow The Pans and Avon Water to flood with sea water. During the course of my bird ringing and observational visits to the site I have seen how important the reeds are at The Pans. They are used for nesting by little grebe, water rail, reed warbler, sedge warbler, bearded reedling and reed bunting. They are used for nocturnal roosting by starling, pied wagtail, yellow wagtail, swallow, sand martin, bearded reedling and reed bunting.

A great deal of government money has already been paid out to allow the area to be taken out of agricultural production and turn into a wetland. The Pans wetland helped double the size of the wetland previously only present on the Avon Water side and greatly helped numerous species of wildfowl, waders, raptors (notably marsh harrier), herons and many smaller birds to expand their numbers. The large areas of reeds which now grow between the mid-section and northern end play a big part in the attraction of the site to wildlife.

The bird ringing has shown that large numbers of *Acrocephalus* warblers visit the reeds at The Pans to feed, prior to crossing the Chanel on their autumn migrations. Without the reeds, these migrants would be hampered.

To needlessly flood the area with sea water would be a travesty. It would cost millions because, in order to protect nearby residences from being flooded, a new and extensive wall would need to be built. The value to wildlife and to us of the new and established reedbeds at The Pans and Avon Water is immense. I feel they should be better appreciated and protected.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Thank you to Belpport Ltd, Simeon Morgan and Natural England for arranging access. MCV Members Keith Metcalf, David Horne, Julie and Andy Hallows, and Chris Barrass passed on sightings and other useful information. Tara Dempsey (BTO Ringer), Helen Schneider (BTO Ringer) and Jack Sheppard (BTO Trainee Ringer) all helped with the bird ringing.

Graham Giddens  
[www.grahamgiddens.co.uk](http://www.grahamgiddens.co.uk)  
January 2023