

CES News

No. 2



CONSTANT EFFORT SITES 1987

The second edition of CES NEWS, a news letter produced exclusively for CES ringers. Its purpose has been to keep ringers up-to-date with new developments in the CES programme and current research being undertaken at Bedgegrove with your CES data.

Staff changes

Jane Marchant went on maternity leave from August 1st 1987, and will now not be returning as CES organiser. Jane got the BTO side of the CES off to an excellent start, and I am sure the CES ringers would like to wish her and baby Katie well for the future. We are sorry to have lost her from the permanent BTO staff, but fortunately she is retaining an involvement by doing some recovery checking for us. I took on the post for one year as a sandwich student from Oxford Polytechnic and will be returning to Oxford in September to complete reading for my Degree. So a new CES Organiser will be coming soon! The advertisement for the post which appeared in New Scientist is reproduced below;

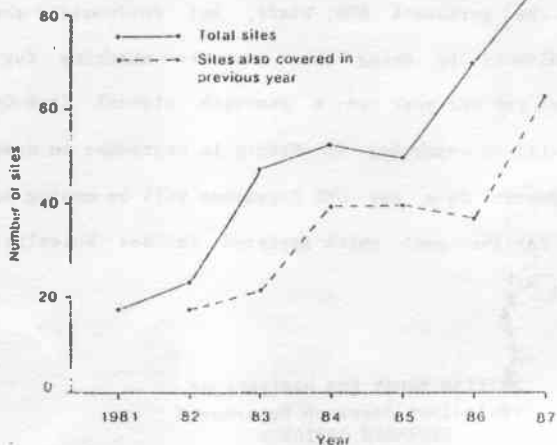
BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY Populations Research Department RESEARCH OFFICERS

Two vacancies concerned with long-term studies of avian population dynamics have arisen. The first is for the development of an integrated monitoring scheme with special responsibility for the Nest Record Scheme. The second is for a research officer within the Ringing Scheme, with special responsibility for the Constant Effort Sites programme.

Applicants should have a good honours degree in biology, ecology, statistics or computing. They should have a strong interest in avian ecology and experience of statistics and computing.

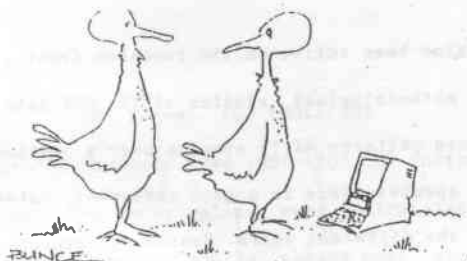
Both appointments will be made on the Scientific Officer scale £8,284 - £10,622. The integrated monitoring post will have the possibility of eventual promotion to Higher Scientific Officer. One post is currently funded by the Nature Conservancy Council. Further particulars are available from The Administrator, British Trust for Ornithology, Beech Grove, Station Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5NR. Closing date Friday, 15 April 1988.

Continued growth of CES scheme



A total of 87 sites was submitted CES data for 1987. 14 more sites than last year. The input and correction of input data was carried out by Robert Jordan of the MSC team and myself. All the data was input and the initial indices calculated by the beginning of December. A report on the population changes between 1986 and 1987 appeared in the February issue of BTO NEWS.

Computer developments



'Good God! You don't still migrate by instinct, do you!!!'

I have certainly made a lot of use of my computing knowledge gained at college for your scheme. Jane's programs have been developed further and documented into a tidy package allowing for easy calculation of the annual indices. This year we have been able to return printouts of your data as soon as they were processed and this has allowed for more efficient checking of the data prior to calculating the indices. Many thanks for all the effort which you put into checking the data.

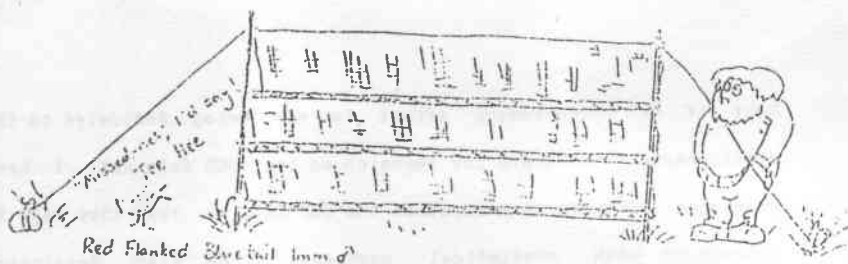
A computer routine that plots maps of all the CES sites from co-ordinates and a routine that plots graphs of CES trends over the years has been developed.

Most of our programming effort is now being dedicated to the development of software for research on the CES data set. I have developed routines to manipulate the CES data so that they may be interfaced with statistical packages. I am also developing programs for the analysis of the long-term capture history of individual birds.

Research

We have also been active on the research front , mainly involving various methodological studies of the CES data. We have analysed the capture patterns of 15 species over a period of four years. For most species there is a good agreement between the patterns shown in the different years. Season recaptures suggest that for many species we catch a similar proportion of the adult population each year. Adult recaptures decline through the season, and we are now making a further analysis to try and determine how much this is due to net shyness and how much is due to behavioural changes associated with different stages of the breeding cycle and with moult.

We have also been making some preliminary comparisons with the Common Bird Census results. It will be several years before we can make detailed comparisons for individual species over a good number of years. However initial results are encouraging , suggesting that the overall picture for both schemes is similar , but that there are some differences we might expect this for there are important differences in habitat coverage for the populations sampled.

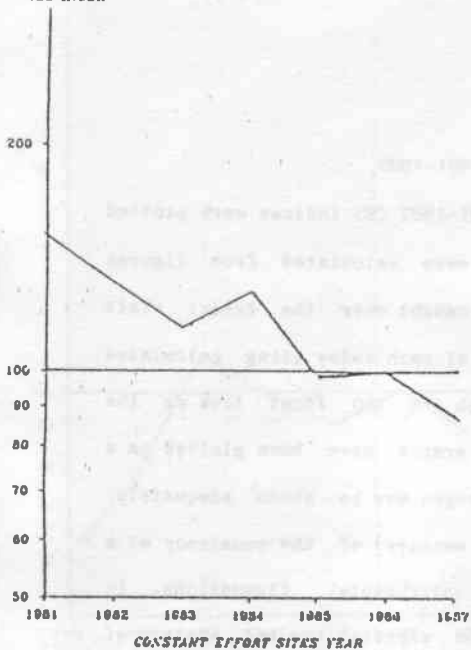


CES Trends for 1981-1987

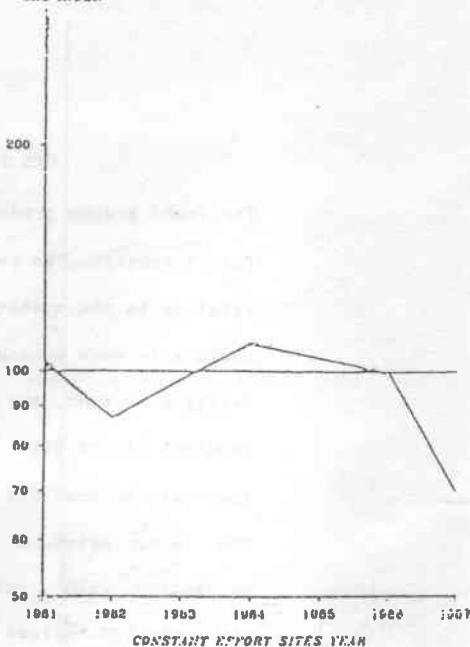
The trend graphs produced from 1981-1987 CES indices were plotted for 17 species. The index values were calculated from figures relating to the number of adults caught over the twelve visit periods in each season. The value of each index being calculated relative to 1986, the year in which the BTO first took on the Constant Effort Site scheme. The graphs have been plotted on a log scale so that the relative changes may be shown adequately. The index gives a reasonable measure of the constancy of a population with respect to environmental fluctuations. In line with CBC indices, as might be expected the bad winter of 1981-82, caused marked decreases in the number of adult birds in a number of resident species. In Robin and Wren the subsequent year shows a marked increase in the number of adults, showing a rapid recovery after the bad winter. The continued long term decline of the Song Thrush charted by the CBC is also reflected in the CES indices. The decrease of adult numbers for Whitethroat and Sedge warbler in 1984-85 maybe attributed to the excessively dry winters in the Sahara and west Africa.

BLACK BIRD

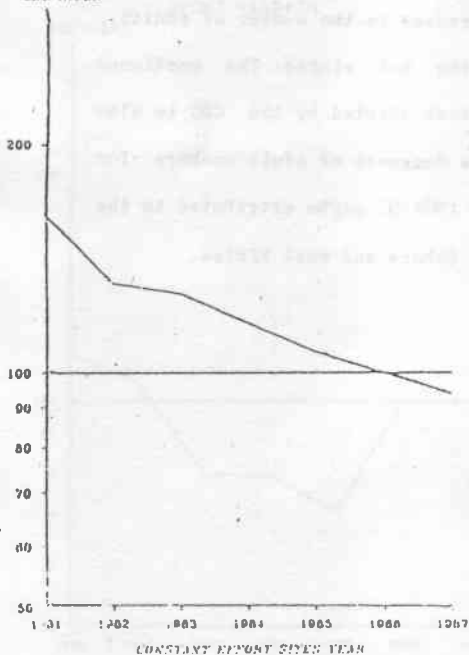
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**BLACKCAP**

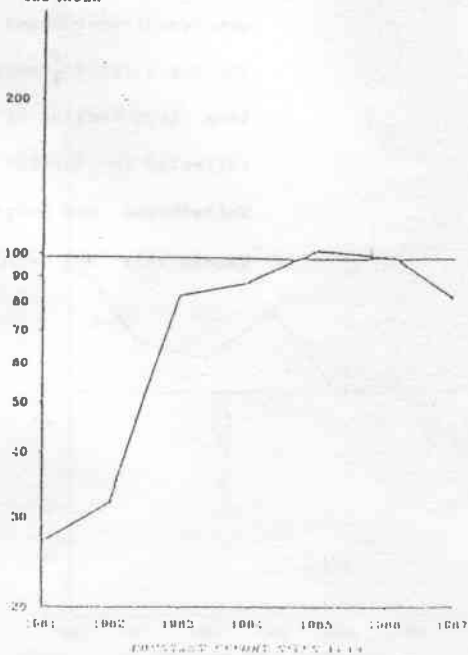
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**BLUE TIT**

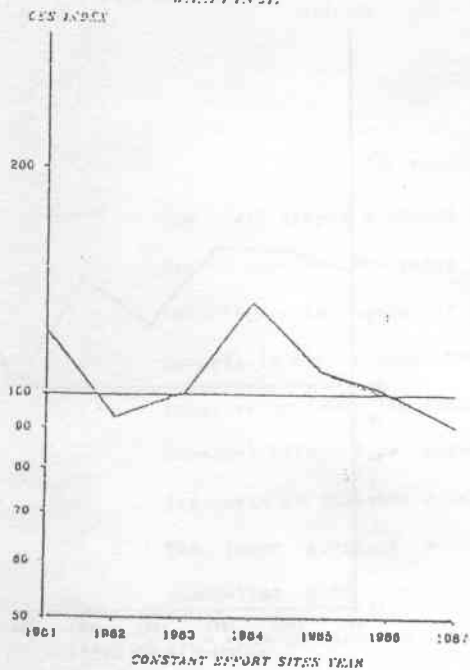
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**BULLFINCH**

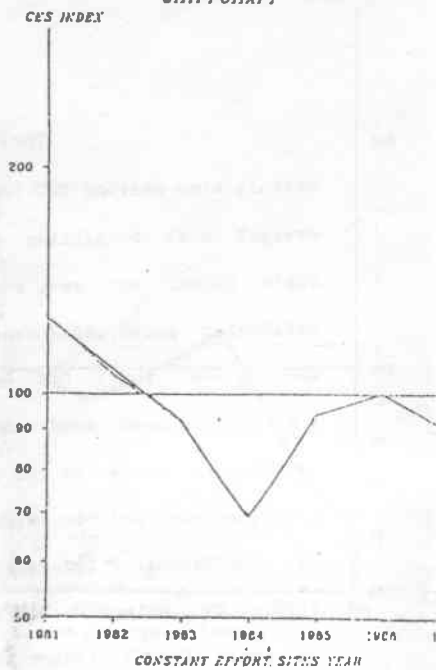
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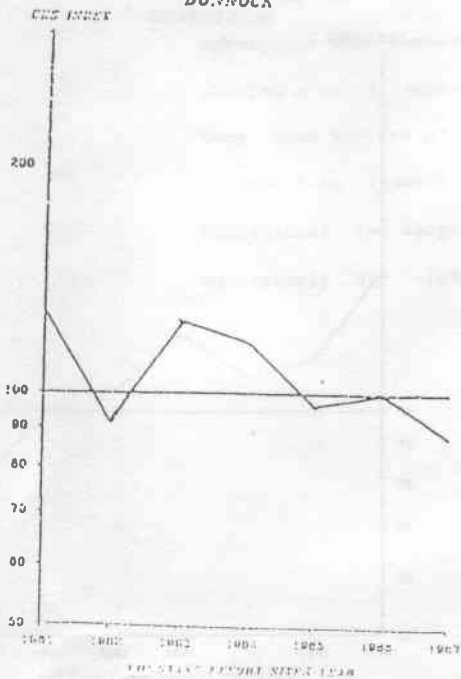
CHAFFINCH



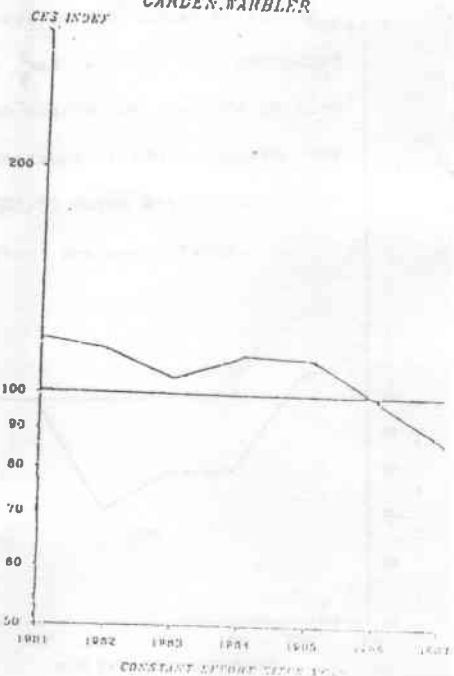
CHIFFCHAFF



DUNNOCK

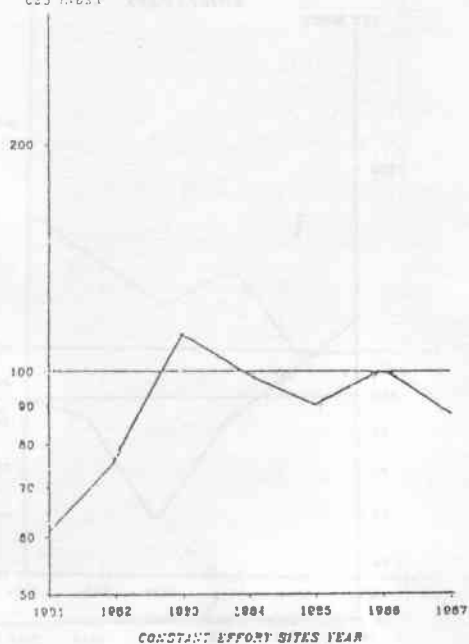


GARDEN WARBLER



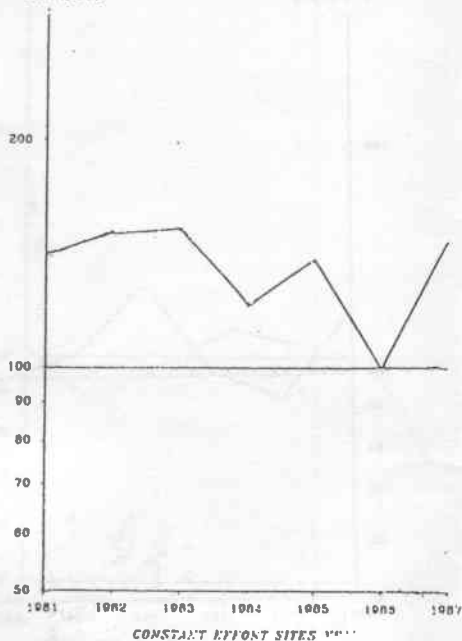
GREAT TIT

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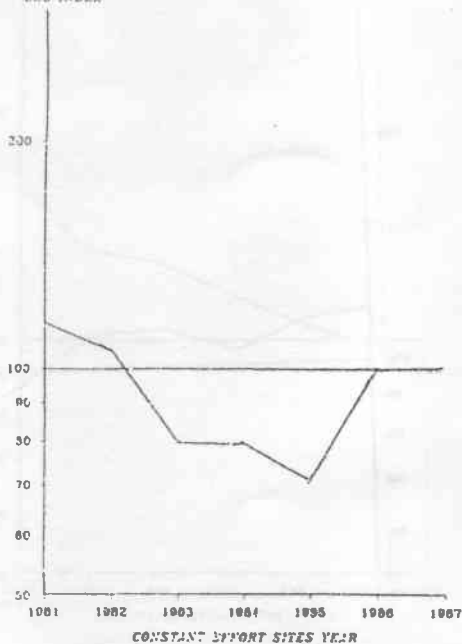
LONG-TAILED TIT

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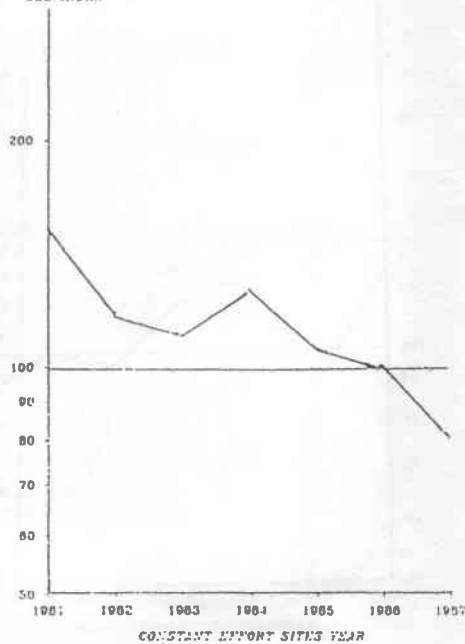
SEDFE WARBLER

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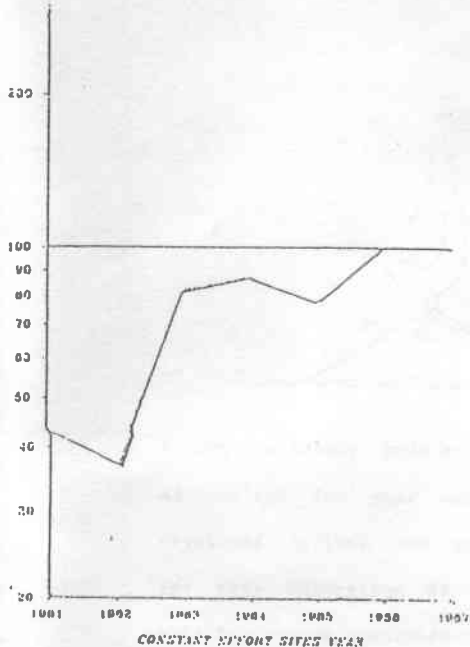
SONGTHRUSH

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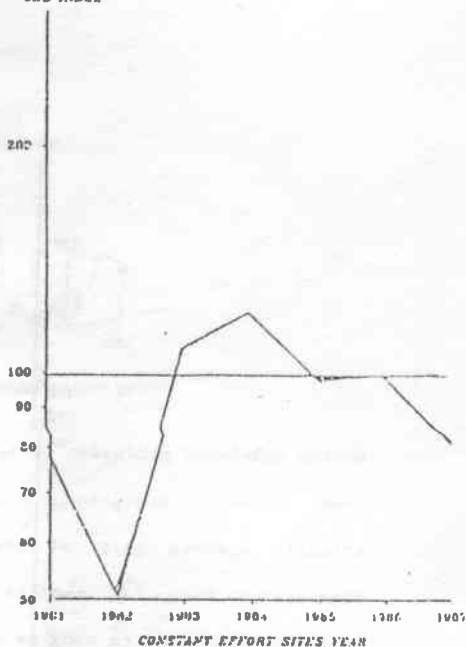
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WILLOW WARBLER



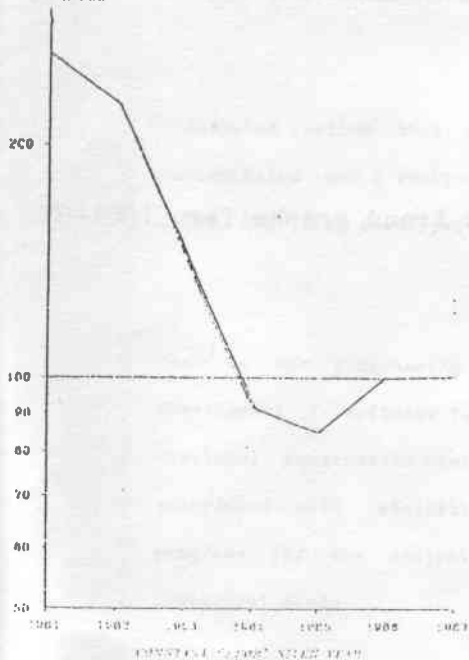
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ROBIN



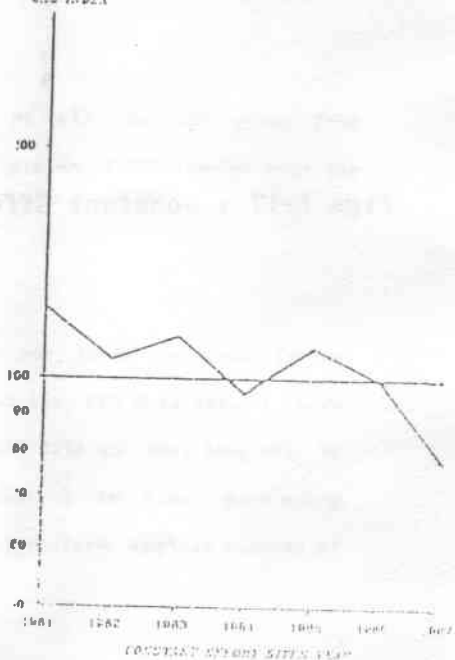
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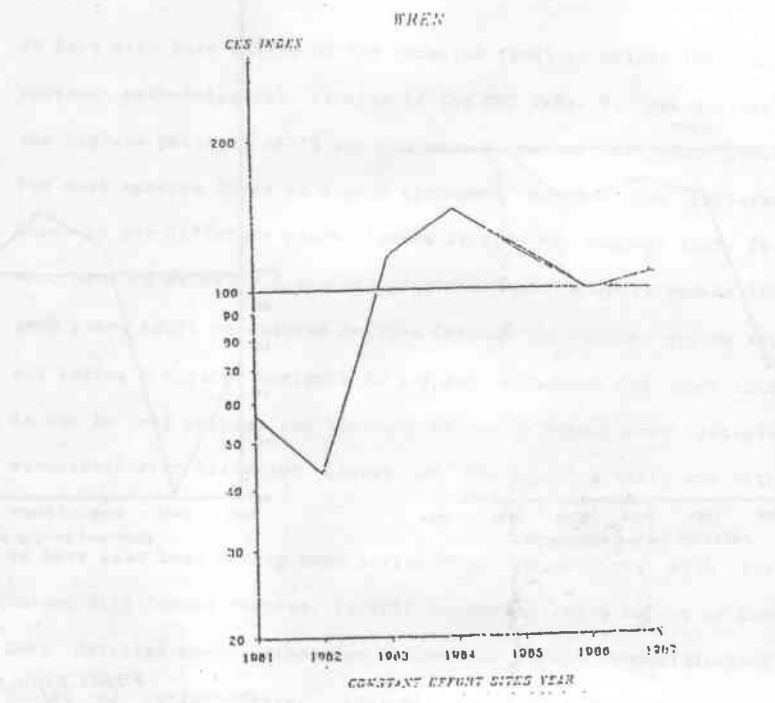
WHITETHROAT



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WILLOW WARBLER





Figs 1-17 : Constant Effort Sites trend graphs for 1981-87

Rarities

A number of new species for CES found their way into the mist nets this year including ;

Savi's Warbler , Barred warbler , Cettis warbler,
Greenshank and Red-backed shrike.

And finally.....

Thank you for your support during the season the feedback was again excellent though the scheme still needs more CES sites, as we still have not reached our magical 100 site target. So please persuade all your ringing friends to join. Particularly those of you ringing in the north, as we urgently need more sites from the northern regions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Stephen Baillie for his invaluable supervision of the work I have done towards your scheme this year , and for a thoughtly interesting year out from college. Also to thank you , the ringers for making the scheme continue to grow so successfully.

Hoping for another excellent CES season,

Brian J Holden

March 1988