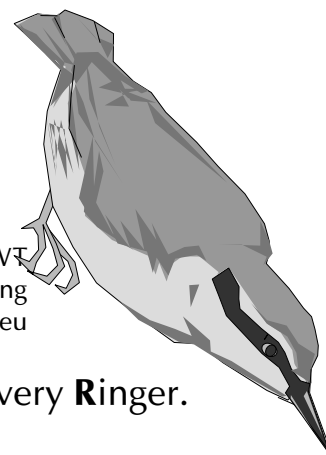


# TWITTER

## 1995 Number 3

**Ringing:** By permission of NWT  
**Project leader:** John McMeeking  
**Editors:** Richard & Chris du Feu



**Treswell Wood —Information To Tell Every Ringer.**

What a season! With the dry weather there is the possibility of another '1976' and large captures around the pond where we have already had our first ever capture of a Green Woodpecker. This ten-week interval has the fourth highest total number of captures ever. It is certainly a year to remember.

Visit 1200 happened on 18/6/95 —an auspicious event in itself. Steve made a gallant solo effort on Nightingale Ride (5hr visit) followed from 0900 by a less hardy team as part of the NWT Treswell Wood open day. The total catch of 65 birds included 4 nestling-ringed Marsh Tits. In addition we ringed a nest of Robins and recovered a Coal Tit ring from the Sparrowhawk plucking post.

Visits 1204 to 1206 had high totals of 83, 63 and 81 captures respectively and included 17 juvenile Blue Tits (visit 1204 16/7/95) and 16 juvenile Blackcaps (visit 1206 on 6/8/95). The catch on visit 1204 included a large collection of mixed juveniles —the usual species for our juvenile flocks although rather fewer Blue Tits than we would have expected. The surprising thing about the flock was that it had made its way across the almost-bare block G and encountered the nets which we would have expected to be only too visible in their exposed position on Main Ride South. The two batches —of 45 and 20 birds —showed yet again how much the birds can surprise us.

Looking back at ten-week totals in previous years show interesting changes. Wrens are well up, enjoying as good a year as ever. Dunnocks, Robins and Blackbirds have returned to former levels in total numbers caught, although there were relatively fewer juvenile Blackbirds. Song Thrush captures are still on the way down in spite of the general feeling that there seem to be more of them about this year. Certainly it is not difficult to find well used anvils in the wood. Willow Warblers, Chaffinches and Bullfinches continue to creep down whilst Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps continue steadily upwards. There were more Long-tailed Tit captures than ever before, but this is probably more the result of a chance capture of a large party than of a massive increase in numbers.

It is difficult to remember the wet weather in May but it had little effect on box-nesting birds. One surprising feature of the last ten weeks is the low number of captures of nestling-ringed Blue Tits —in spite of the record 467 juveniles fledged from boxes.

### Nestboxes

The year's total has been boosted by nests in the 130 extra boxes in blocks I & J. Nevertheless, even without these boxes we would have had an above average season. The previous maximum number of nestlings ringed in a year was under 500. This year's total (752) is somewhat higher! José's frequent visits to the wood have also added to the number of open nests found. The table gives a summary of the nestbox events for the season. The column 'Recaps from' gives the numbers of nests from which we have so far recaptured young. Why there should be so few Blue Tit nests represented?

#### Summary of nestbox events and recaptures of nestlings (correct to 15th August 1995).

Species	Broods		Recaps from	Nestlings		Notes
	Attempted	Successful		Ringed & Fledged	Recaptured	
Tawny Owl	1	0	—	—	—	Grey squirrel to blame
Wren	16	14	5	71	8	Previous best 38
Robin	3	3	0	13	0	
Blackbird	4	2	0	5	0	
Song Thrush	2	2	0	8	0	
Chiffchaff	1	1	1	3	1	First nest ever found
Blackcap	2	1	0	5	0	First nest since 1979
Long-tailed Tit	2	0?	—	—	—	
Willow Tit	1	1	0	8	0	
Marsh Tit	4	4	3	34	8	
Coal Tit	3	3	1	31	2	
Blue Tit	62	55	8	467	8	
Great Tit	26	19	3	103	4	

We were struck by the number of Blue Tit nests found in blocks I & J together with those in new boxes down the extreme east edge of H. The second table gives details showing the variation between the apparent productivity of the two sections of the wood. Why the imbalance in productivity per unit area? Is it better habitat? (More mature oak, no coppicing). Is it density of boxes ensuring that all birds have access to boxes within their territory? Is it a 'first year' effect? Send your answers, on a postcard, to John or Chris!

### Productivity of Blue Tits in nestboxes

Area	Number fledged	Number of broods	Number of suitable boxes	Approximate area (ha)	Fledged per: suitable box	hectare	brood
A-G	186	22	85	30	2.2	6.2	8.5
(H),I,J	281	33	130	12	2.2	23.4	8.5

### Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid Comments
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<b>Green Woodpecker</b>	<b>DA51825</b>	<b>30/7/95</b>	<b>K03P</b>
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We had heard Green Woodpecker calls during the morning. This bird was, by chance, drinking at the pond when we went on our last net round before taking down the nets and it obligingly flew off away from us and into a well sited net. A wet extraction for Phil and a ringing tick for both John and Treswell Wood!

<b>Wren</b>	<b>5F5244</b>	<b>23/7/95</b>	<b>R99</b>
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Ringed 1/8/93 in R00 (what a move!) but was caught 3 times after very local movements. It then disappeared for over a year until today.

<b>Wren</b>	<b>5S9529</b>	<b>4/6/95</b>	<b>K00</b>
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Ringed 30/5/95 in the nest —box 58, N06 and recaptured soon after in N07. This capture was near box 2 from which 5S9558 had recently fledged.

<b>Wren</b>	<b>5S9558</b>	<b>4/6/95</b>	<b>K00</b>
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Our first nestbox recapture of the year of any species. The tits which have generally fledged earlier than Wrens still seem to be high in the tree canopy and have not yet been retrapped in any numbers.

<b>Wren</b>	<b>5W9547</b>	<b>2/7/95</b>	<b>K05</b>
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More post juvenile dispersal. Ringed in D08 on 18/6/95, this bird has already moved half way across the wood.

<b>Wren</b>	<b>5W9615</b>	<b>4/6/95</b>	<b>L00</b>
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Beware! An 11 spot model and aged as a 6, but first caught 7/8/94 as a 3J. The exception to test the rule?

<b>Robin</b>	<b>F253324</b>	<b>6/8/95</b>	<b>K00</b>
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A vintage bird, ringed 27/8/90 as a juvenile in K00. Since then it has been caught as far afield as K03 but its 9 other recaptures were in or adjacent to K00.

<b>Robin</b>	<b>J033684</b>	<b>9/7/95</b>	<b>D03</b>
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This bird had been provisionally sexed as male when first captured on 21/11/93 based on the head pattern. On recapture it was, from BP, obviously a female. Back to the drawing board!

<b>Robin</b>	<b>J522233</b>	<b>25/6/95</b>	<b>N99</b>
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More post juvenile dispersal followed by very little movement during adult life. This bird was ringed as a 3J in D09 on 21/8/94. Since then it has been captured in N99 (either net 1 or 2 of Howard's Ride) on 30/12/94, 5/2/95 and today. Presumably by 30/12/94 it had already found a territory.

<b>Robin</b>	<b>J522358</b>	<b>4/6/95</b>	<b>L01</b>
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Last retrapped 23/4/95 in E01, in breeding condition. A large within-season movement. Also retrapped on 9/7/95 in B03 where it had originally been ringed as a juvenile —this bird shows a very different pattern of movement from normal.

<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>J033333</b>	<b>9/7/95</b>	<b>C03</b>
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The first recapture of this bird, 2 years less two days after ringing in the adjacent net.

<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>J522155</b>	<b>9/7/95</b>	<b>B03</b>
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In contrast to J033333 which had been ringed as an adult, this bird was ringed one year less one day ago in F02. The vast distance between captures (200m) may be post juvenile dispersal.

<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>5S9566</b>	<b>30/7/95</b>	<b>K03</b>
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One of the three birds ringed as a nestling (23/5/95 in M02) in a nest José discovered. It has lasted the first difficult two months after fledging —will we see it next year?



**Robin** **J522053** **19/7/95** **D04**

Yes more! The last found so far. This one was ringed 8/5/94, a local bird, (D03) and recaptured 3 times. We expect to add to this list in Twitter 4.

**Dunnoek** **J522306** **25/6/95** **N02**

This makes a change! Not a Sparrowhawk victim. It was found dead under José's caravan. Ringed 31/7/94 in R00 and not seen again until now.

**Blue Tit** **J898840** **13/5/95** **E07**

Ringed 18/2/95 by Adrian Blackburn at Lound, Retford, she was found in a nestbox.

**Blue Tit** **F253434** **6/8/95** **West Burton Power Stn. 9km @ 031°**

A rather intriguing control. We ringed this bird on 24/2/91 and recaptured her on 3/3/91 —both captures at our feeding station. Since then she has not been captured anywhere. Where did she breed? If she is either a Treswell or a West Burton bird surely she would have been captured in these missing four years. If not, what was she doing at West Burton?

**Willow Warbler** **5F5416** **5/8/95** **West Burton Power Stn. 9km @ 031°**

We ringed this bird on 12/6/94 and recaptured him a year later in an adjacent square on 11/6/95. On both captures he was in breeding condition. Why did he move slightly northwards at the end of the breeding season?

### Runt Eggs

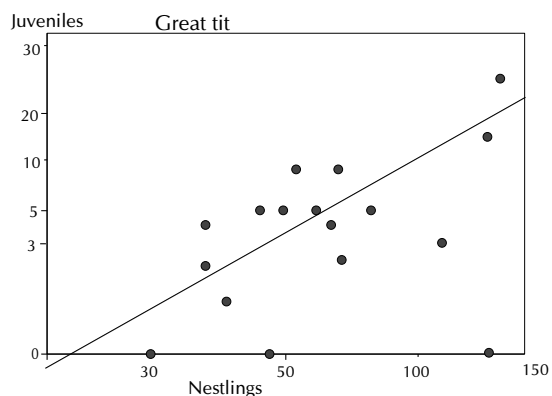
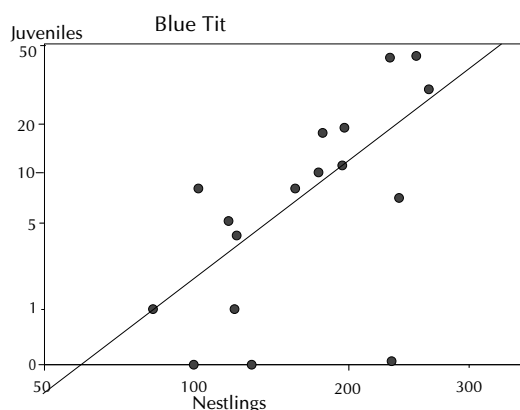
Humphrey Crick, in a timely article in BB, concluded that *runt egg production was not associated with weather, age, position in laying sequence or time of year but individual birds may illustrate proneness to laying runt eggs*. This year we have recorded four nests with runt eggs —two each of Blue and Great Tits. This contrasts with the total of four nests recorded in total in all other years since 1979. The Blue Tit nest in Box 57 was *most remarkable* (to quote the curator of eggs in the Natural History Museum, Tring where the unhatched eggs have been lodged). Of the 14 eggs laid, 6 were runt eggs. Of the 8 ordinary eggs, 2 slipped into the nest structure and failed to hatch, 3 were incubated but failed to hatch and the remaining 3 hatched with the young eventually fledging. The smallest ever Blue Tit eggs known to the museum measured 10.0 x 7.0. Ours were somewhat bigger at 13.5 x 10.5 compared to the typical size of 15.5 x 12.0 (all measurements in mm).

### Constant Effort Works OK —continued.

That was to be the title of our 1991 paper but we were advised by Jeremy Greenwood to go for the rather less snappy 'Does constant-effort netting measure juvenile abundance?' The table below gives the latest additions to the story. Older readers will recall that we showed a strong correlation between the numbers of nestlings we ringed and the number of juveniles caught in the constant effort nets in the third ten-week interval. The 1995 figures include only Blue and Great Tits ringed as nestlings in blocks A-G where we have had boxes since 1979 —in order to make the nestling ringing constant effort too. In spite of the low number of Blue Tit nestlings recaptured, the total number of juveniles caught is in line with past years. This year's table is very pleasing indeed —for the first time there is a significant correlation between numbers of nestlings fledged and numbers of juveniles captured, without removing the anomalous 1986 data (when we had very high post fledging mortality). (Blue Tits  $r=0.607$ , Great Tits  $r=0.433$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $n=17$ .  $\text{Log}(n+1)$  transformed data.) For those readers who dislike such esoteric reporting of results, the pictures are given below the table.

#### Nestlings ringed and Juvenile captures in Interval 3, 1979-1995

Year	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<b>Blue Tit</b>																	
Nestlings ringed	101	240	231	171	117	155	189	233	272	103	258	174	120	129	85	124	186
Juveniles captured	0	7	45	10	5	8	11	0	30	8	46	17	1	0	1	4	18
<b>Great Tit</b>																	
Nestlings ringed	65	53	56	50	48	61	104	126	133	77	126	38	38	67	30	40	70
Juveniles captured	4	5	9	0	5	5	3	0	30	5	14	2	4	9	0	1	2



## The Next Ten Weeks

### Activity and moult codes

Thanks for efforts to come to terms with the new field sheets with the activity, sexing method and moult code columns. We are improving. We cannot stress too much the value to us and soon to the BTO (when data are submitted on disk file) of full and accurate recording of these codes. The next ten weeks will be comparatively simple now the breeding season is over we only need concentrate on moult codes. To remind you of the codes, below is a list of those we are likely to need.

### Moult Codes

- J** wholly Juvenile plumage - this applies to most 3J's. PJ moult not yet started.
- P** undergoing partial Post juvenile moult not involving flight feathers. (Use M, F, A, T or R for fuller PJ moults).
- T** post juvenile moult which includes Tail or Tertials. Note that this is a new code.
- B** active Body moult only, but not post-juvenile moult or as part of full moult. (n.b. body moult includes all body, head and wing and tail covert moult)
- O** Old plumage, use code until end of moulting season.
- S** Starting body moult as part of complete but wings/tail not yet moulting.
- E** Ending body moult as part of complete moult, wings and tail completely new.
- N** New plumage, no active moult remaining. Use this code until the end of the season.
- M** Main moult, active moult of wings and/ or tail.
- F** as M but moult card Filled in.
- A** Arrested wing moult.
- R** As A but moult caRd completed.

### Ring finding

The Sparrowhawk post has been very productive so far. If anyone has a powerful metal detector I could borrow for a day or two I would be very grateful. Thank you for your help in ring finding —Richard.

### Public access

You will be aware that the wood is open to the public. This means we must be more aware of PR particularly when netting on or near the nature trail. The NWT will soon provide notices which we can put near mist nets. Please use them when you site nets anywhere where the public may come across them. The notices will be stored with the ringing kit.

### John's globe-trotting

John will be away during the first two week-ends in November. We would be grateful if you could earmark those week-ends to help in the wood. Thanks.

### Marsh/Willow Tit separation

The method shown in Twitter 2 seems to be working well, including on juveniles. We would be grateful if you would record your observations on field sheets. I have recorded them simply as 3-1-1 or 2-0-0, for example, to show the differences, in mm, between the first 3 outer pairs of tails feathers. Incidentally Chris and Richard have arranged to spend a day in the Tring museum measuring tails on Willow and Marsh Tit skins.

### Data analysis

Putting Twitter together five times a year is very exciting, as you can imagine. The biggest problem is, perhaps, deciding what to report and in how much detail to report it. Even a little table of information —such as the one above showing numbers of Blue Tits fledged —poses many questions which it would be interesting to follow up. Analysis of our data is easier now than ever before because of Steve's and Chris's computer systems. You can have data on disk or paper. Please feel free to attempt any analysis you want to carry out. Ringing & Migration is always ready for your thoughts!

As ever, we are very grateful and deeply indebted to all of you have helped over the past weeks and look forward to an interesting and productive autumn.

# Ten-week Summary — May to August 1995

1995 Interval 3: Visits 1200 1203 1197 1198 1204 1199 1201 (Standard Sites only)

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	8	4	16	4	2	6	40
Duncock	3	5	10	7	1	.	26
Robin	2	4	23	4	4	1	38
Blackbird	5	5	5	5	4	1	25
Song Thrush	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Whitethroat	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Garden Warbler	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Blackcap	9	6	5	5	1	.	26
Chiffchaff	1	.	5	1	.	.	7
Willow Warbler	2	.	.	1	.	.	3
Spotted Flycatcher	2	.	.	.	.	.	2
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	21	.	.	.	21
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	.	.	2	2
Willow Tit	1	.	2	2	.	.	5
Coal Tit	.	.	2	.	.	.	2
Blue Tit	.	.	9	2	2	9	22
Great Tit	.	.	1	3	2	1	7
Nuthatch	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Treecreeper	.	.	1	.	2	.	3
Chaffinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	.	1	2	1	.	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>240</b>

## Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1978	101	131	243	223	131	829
1979	97	115	180	91	123	606
1980	86	102	211	147	170	716
1981	102	110	288	188	177	865
1982	66	113	142	89	110	520
1983	82	140	143	185	128	678
1984	91	114	110	82	106	503
1985	103	88	135	118	88	532
1986	77	104	153	68	141	543
1987	95	112	196	209	124	736
1988	92	143	180	137	119	671
1989	124	137	282	145	103	791
1990	99	145	204	130	175	753
1991	65	57	99	74	127	422
1992	64	64	115	223	159	625
1993	81	70	112	158	126	547
1994	88	109	209	155	157	718
1995	91	124	<b>240</b>			(455)
<b>Max</b>	124	145	288	253	177	865
<b>Min</b>	64	57	99	68	88	422
<b>Mean</b>	89	110	180	142	133	619