

TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2000 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John McMeeking

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I have approached the production of this issue with some trepidation because it is prepared using a new desk-top publishing package. I was completely in control of the old package, but the new one is more powerful and seems to have a mind of its own from time to time. The object of the change is to enable Twitter to be transmitted electronically to those of you who live a long way away. The package (TechWriter+ for the Acorn RISC OS computer) will save documents in HTML or MS Word formats. I hope that the look of Twitter will remain very much as it was before but there is plenty of time for the software to take control! Electronic transmission will mean that you can receive Twitter sooner than before and that any coloured pictures will be reproduced in colour on your computer. On the other hand, Ulli may miss the messages from Postman Pat on the much-used envelopes with which the good humour of the Bundespost has been put to the test. If you live near but would prefer the same electronic version as those living far afield, let us know. The email address is chris@beckingham0.demon.co.uk

In addition to transmitting Twitters electronically, we have been making efforts to computerise the Treswell Wood dataset and to enable easier access to it for members and others. Gradually we are building an archive of all our computerised data which we can write on to a CD-ROM. The contents will include all the ringing data, all the nestbox data, all the CBC territory data, coppice age data, CBC territory numbers, back issues of Twitter and the Nestbox reports, any papers we have published and various other files of information. If you want a copy of the material on CD-ROM, ask Chris. The writable CD-ROMs are amazingly cheap - under £1 - and they will store all our material with most of the disk space still unused. (Compare this with the £2 we used to pay for a single 5" floppy disk which would store only about 6 months' worth of ringing data.) After so many years of experience with computers I am absolutely sure that there will be teething troubles with both transmission of Twitter over the Internet and with the formats of data on the Treswell Wood CD-ROM. Let me know of any problems and we will address them.

There are two major holes in our computerised dataset and both of these are of concern for two reasons. These two holes are the CBC maps and the many handwritten notes on ringing field sheets. The first concern is that there is so much information that is not readily available to us. For instance, Derek Warren recently enquired whether we had recorded any deer in the wood. Of course we have, it is all on the field sheets - somewhere. If only we had all the text computerised it would be the work of seconds to find references to deer, or early purple orchids, brimstone butterflies or even the humble tree slug. The second concern is that much of the information is held as a single copy on paper. The CBC maps, for instance, have no backup, not even a microfiche or scanned image on computer file. Steve is attacking the CBC map problem and has begun to commit the data to a geographical information system (GIS). He estimates it will take two or three years to complete the work. Then we will be able to combine CBC data with habitat information, nestbox data and ringing data all in the same map. Darren Clarke has expressed willingness to begin tackling the textual data on field sheets. We are looking for sources of funding which might even enable us to employ someone to do some of the work - if you know how to tap into sources of funding for such projects, please let us know.

Dave Barritt, after job hunting since finishing his genetics degree last summer, has secured a six month contract with the RSPB in Essex. His work, under the supervision of Will Peach, involves catching Song Thrushes, ringing, radio-tagging and then radio-tracking them. We wish Dave well in the work and hope it leads to similar work for him thereafter. The down-side of his appointment is, of course, his absence from the team. We have just heard from Dave. Seven Song Thrushes marked, 25 to go. His application for C ringing permit has also been successful - congratulations!

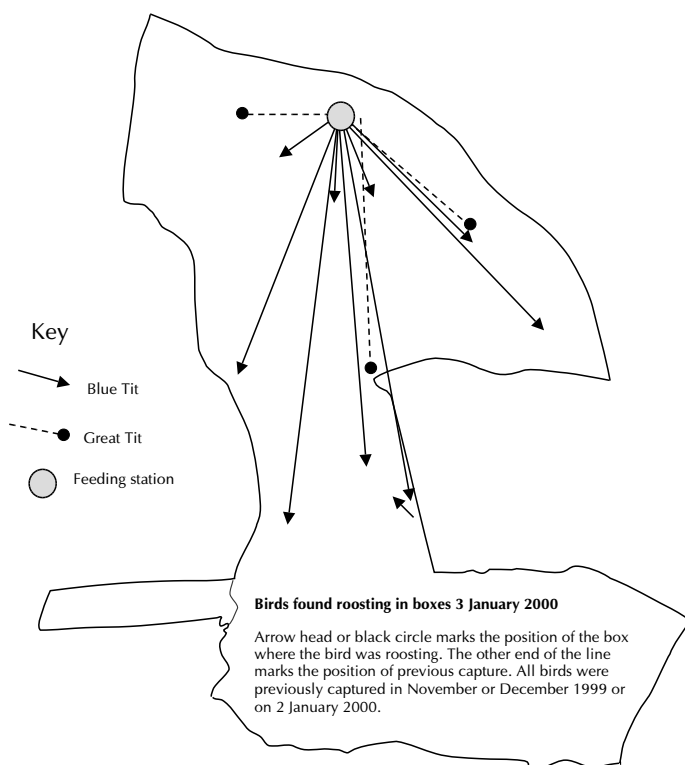
Andrew Joys from the University of East Anglia, who lives in Nottingham, will be working in the wood during the spring. He is engaged in a PhD study of the effects of coppicing on bird populations.

January to March is the quiet time of the year. Woodland populations are at a low as the winter takes its toll and before spring migrants arrive. Goldcrests have remained within the wood in small numbers and the feeders have provided worthwhile catches. In addition, grain put down for Pheasants has attracted more Dunnocks than usual and a welcome collection of Yellowhammers. Yellowhammers are sometimes difficult to age and sex so we were fortunate on one day to have four birds in one catch, one in each of the four age/sex classes - adult/young, male/female. This allowed a really good look at the ageing and sexing characteristics. Murphy's Law was obviously suspended on that morning! We would like to know why the Yellowhammers have come into the wood this winter. All of them, together with good numbers of Dunnocks and Chaffinches, have been caught at the edge of Block G. Is it the method of Pheasant feeding which has changed, with more grain being scattered on the rides rather than just at feeders? Is it the habitat change resulting from porcine bramble-clearing activity? Is it higher than usual Yellowhammer, Chaffinch and Dunnock populations? Is it that they have found the food because it is on the edge of the wood, rather than deep inside? Is it something else or a combination of all of these factors? On 20th February we made a total of 24 Dunnock captures including enough same-day retraps to enable an estimate of the population using the area to the east and south of Block G. The estimate was 32 (with SE of ± 9). As usual with

Dunnocks, the numbers which are present are greater than the numbers which the casual observer might expect just from the sightings of these unobtrusive little creatures.

We have noted, as usual, birds heard or seen but not captured. This year we have heard Green Woodpeckers on 2nd January and 13th February and seen geese, probably Pink-footed Geese flying over on 2nd January and 6th February. On the latter day there were three waves each of about 200 birds, all flying west.

We managed to carry out one night-time check on all the bird nestboxes early in January. It was a cheap event as far as rings are concerned with no new birds but with 10 retrapped Blue Tits and three retrapped Great Tits. All of these had been trapped within the last two months. It is likely that the place where the birds roost is in their home range so it is interesting to see the distance away from home that some travel to the feeders. The map shows where we found the birds roosting and where they were previously trapped.



station this year. Of these, 39 had been captured as fledged birds during the autumn of 1999, or before. They included a handful of nestling-ringed birds. One more nestling-ringed bird was captured, for the first time since ringing in the nest, on 27th February. The remaining 18 birds, nine male and nine female, had no rings and were presumably new to the wood. The table below shows dates of first captures of these 18 newcomers. Although the sample size is small, it suggests that the males arrive in the wood earlier than the females.

Date	Jan 2	Jan 16	Jan 30	Feb 6	Feb 13	Feb 27	Mar 5
New males	2	0	2	1	2	1	1
New females	0	1	0	1	4	1	2

We continue to colour-ring Robins but have, as yet, few subsequent sight records of them. Now the spring is here many will be very obvious as they defend their territories and attract mates. If you take a walk in the wood, look out for them. Places which would be most valuable to search include any which are not near the main ride. John and Chris have recording forms, but records are welcome by telephone or any any scraps of paper. We need date, position in the wood and colour-ring combination. Happy watching!

Noteworthy captures January - March 2000

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	5M	DA20228	30/1/00	M07
Robin	4	N275213	22/2/00	I01

Our first raptor of the year. Like so often it is a young male, perhaps searching for a territory.

Although we have nine sight records of Robins this year, only one of these is a bird which has not been retrapped since ringing. This bird, engaged in some territorial skirmish, had not been seen since ringing at Grove End (R00) as a juvenile on 1/8/99.

Willow Warbler**4F****5G2976****5/6/99****R99**

News of this control has filtered through at last. It was ringed as a juvenile in Litlington, Sussex on 16/8/98. This is 288 km almost due south of Treswell Wood. It is likely that the bird was trapped while moving south on its first journey to wintering quarters - its natal area is unknown.

10-Week Summary 2000 Interval 1**Visits 1441 1443 1439 1440 1445 1442 1447**

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	1	2	.	.	1	.	4
Duncock	.	2	.	3	4	.	9
Robin	.	2	.	.	4	.	6
Blackbird	1	3	.	1	.	.	5
Goldcrest	2	5	.	1	3	.	11
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	7	.	.	7
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	.	.	3	.	.	3
Blue Tit	3	3	.	5	1	.	12
Great Tit	.	2	.	2	1	.	5
Chaffinch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Greenfinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Yellowhammer	4	5	.	.	.	.	9
Totals	11	26	.	24	14	.	75

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Averages						
1978/9	98	123	212	157	127	718
1980/4	85	116	179	138	138	656
1985/9	98	117	189	135	115	655
Annual data						
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	240	253	104	812
1996	95	121	128	116	97	557
1997	59	99	126	98	98	480
1998	78	84	116	80	106	464
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	---	---	---	---	(75)
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	87	108	171	140	129	635

Footnote

The original version of this issue of Twitter was prepared in Techwriter. It has since been transferred to Impression which now holds the source file. The Impression file has been used to create this PDF file using RiScript on the Acorn computer.