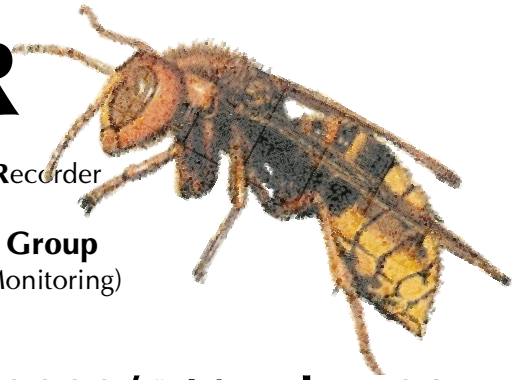


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

October 2000 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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2000/4 Number 29

In spite of the very wet autumn, we have managed to complete the cycle of standard site visits with time in hand. The weather has been, on the whole, kind to us at weekends. Even Nightingale Ride was not as wet as it sometimes has been. For the first part of the 10-weeks, catches were on the low side, with very little bird activity apparent in the wood. Warbler numbers continue to be very low, although Goldcrests arrived fairly early and it promises to be a good winter for them. The mixed flocks of juvenile birds did not seem to be present - not all that surprising after the dismal breeding season. Towards the middle of September, things became more lively. There were good catches of Dunnocks and Chaffinches which seem to have been brought in by Pheasant feeding activity in the southern part of the wood. Coincidentally the mixed tit flock materialised and numbers were boosted. The result has been a total capture comfortably over the average for the fourth interval of the year, although captures at the feeders have been relatively small. Great Tits have been the predominant species at the feeders, with Chaffinch coming second.

The rather dismal nestbox season eventually drew to a close with the removal of the last Stock Dove chick by a predator at the end of September. This year there have been two adjacent boxes for these birds. They have been used almost as expected. Stock Doves seem to prefer to alternate their successive broods between nest sites. A look at the revolting heap of wet droppings with attendant maggots is enough to explain why. This year's four successive clutches were laid in boxes ABAA rather than ABAB. It is possible that the third nest, which held only one young in a box with a large floor area, was clean enough for the adult to reuse for the fourth clutch. Chris Mead told me, years ago, that he had only ever seen two successive broods of Stock Doves in the same cavity once. Even then, the two nests were at opposite corners of the cavity, so the nests were effectively in different places. Our birds did not even nest like that. The fourth clutch was laid in the same nest as the third while the nestling was still in the nest.

With the demise of the last Stock Dove we can now give a summary of the year's events. In the table below, species marked with an asterisk are those where nests were not in nestboxes. Both broods of Swallows were at Stanhope Farm. The number of nestlings ringed is lower than the number of young which fledged because very wet weather prevented us from visiting some boxes until the nestlings were too big to be ringed safely. (Readers should note that it was not wimpish ringers afraid of the rain. If it is wet, birds are under great pressure to feed the young and to keep them dry and warm. The disturbance and additional coldness and wetness which the birds will suffer if nestling ringing takes place in these conditions may be enough to turn a successful brood of unringed chicks into a ringed brood of dead nestlings.)

Nest Records - Treswell Wood 2000

Species	Nests started	Clutches laid	Successful broods	Adults on nest	Nestlings ringed	Success rate %	Nestlings retrapped
Tawny Owl	1	1	0	1	0	0	-
Woodpigeon	-	2	0	-	-	0	-
Stock Dove	4	4	2	0	2	50	-
*Swallow	2	2	2	0	8	100	-
Wren	14	10	2	0	10	20	1
*Blackbird	-	2	1	-	3	50	-
*Song Thrush	-	2	1	-	5	50	-
*Robin	-	1	0	-	-	0	-
Marsh Tit	1	1	1	1	3	100	1
Coal Tit	4	4	3	3	26	75	6
Blue Tit	51	43	26	32	120	51	10
Great Tit	27	10	10	1	43	37	19

There has been a new species nesting in the boxes this year - the hornet *Vespa crabro*. This is not entirely unexpected as we have seen gradually increasing numbers of these fine insects over the years, with the occasional roosting individual in a box. The box was used first by Wrens for a cock nest which was never selected for egg laying by the female, but thereafter a hornet was seen at the box during the last two nestbox rounds of the season. A late visit in October showed the box complete with active hornet nest.

Treswell Wood BTO Constant Effort Site - Summary of events 2000

Our CES data for the whole season have been transmitted (electronically) to the BTO. Below are these provisional CES figures with a comparison of last year's. Even bearing in mind the inherent unreliability of between year comparisons from a single site, it has not been a spectacular season. There are almost universal falls in productivity and many more, bigger falls than rises in numbers. The few increases are either small or based on very small numbers of individuals.

Species	1999			2000			Change 99-00		
	Ad	Juv	Prod%	Ad	Juv	Prod%	Ad	Juv	Prod%
Kestrel	0	0	X	1	0	0	+	=	X
Woodpigeon	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Wren	11	19	173	10	12	120	-	-	-
Dunnock	13	12	92	9	2	22	-	-	-
Robin	14	27	193	17	17	100	+	-	-
Blackbird	15	5	33	11	2	18	-	-	-
Song Thrush	6	2	33	9	2	22	+	=	-
Garden Warbler	2	2	100	1	0	0	-	-	-
Blackcap	20	7	35	21	4	19	+	-	-
Chiffchaff	4	1	25	4	0	0	=	-	-
Willow Warbler	4	0	0	1	0	0	-	=	=
Goldcrest	1	0	0	1	0	0	=	=	=
Long-tailed Tit	1	1	100	1	2	200	=	+	+
Marsh Tit	4	4	100	4	2	50	=	-	-
Willow Tit	2	3	150	2	2	100	=	-	-
Coal Tit	2	1	50	1	3	300	-	+	+
Blue Tit	3	2	67	7	0	0	+	-	-
Great Tit	7	8	114	5	1	20	-	-	-
Nuthatch	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Treecreeper	5	3	60	5	4	80	=	+	+
Chaffinch	2	0	0	5	0	0	+	=	=
Bullfinch	14	3	21	8	0	0	-	-	-
Totals	134	100	74.6	117	59	50.4	-	-	-

Key Ad - adults caught, Juv - juveniles caught,
Prod% - productivity (Juv/Ad) - down, + up, = no change, X not calculable

People and papers and other things

Ulli and José have published their paper based on the Great Tit playback experiments. John and Chris have copies for anyone who wants to read the text in full. The paper is Response of Great Tits to escalating patterns of playback. (Behaviour 137, pages 451-471). The summary concludes: This study supports the idea that Great Tits can extract information from short-term changes in singing patterns about a willingness to escalate conflict. The birds seem able to adjust their response depending on the perceived level of threat.

Sally Clough has left us (at least during term time) to study mathematics at Cambridge University. Dave Barritt is back with us until the next breeding season, we hope, after working for the RSPB with Song Thrushes.

A sad end to the year's collection of nests for the National Nest Reference Collection. Chris' car, complete with collection of 95 nests, was stolen while on its way to deliver the goods. It seems likely that the vehicle was stolen for its engine rather than its contents. We will never know. Neither will we know of the reaction of the thieves if they did open the cardboard packing cases.

Darren Clarke and Dave Barritt are boldly pressing on with the work of entering the hand-written notes and comments from the ringing field sheets to computer. Nearly two of the thirty years' work are completed. Steve Wain is continuing with the work of computerisation of the CBC maps. The software he uses has been funded by the BTO from their Ringers' Projects fund and we most grateful for this support from them.

Blue and Great Tits at the feeders and elsewhere

Since we introduced the bird feeders some years ago, we have gradually extended the feeding period from winter only to the whole year. We have mentioned before the influx of Great Tits during February just prior to the breeding season. We have also recently noted the apparently greater proportion of Great Tit juveniles caught at the feeders compared to those elsewhere in the wood. Many questions could be asked. Does the presence of the feeders in the summer and autumn draw Great Tits away from the rest of the wood (thereby reducing standard site captures), or does it increase the number of Great Tits the wood can hold (thereby not affecting, or even increasing standard site captures)? Do the feeders tend to encourage Great Tits to remain through the winter? Do the Great Tits at the feeders deter smaller tits from feeding there? Do Blue Tits prefer to feed on natural foods in the wood, whereas Great Tits prefer the peanuts and sunflower seed? (This is a possibility because Great Tits like beech mast, a food which is not available within the wood. For the record, the table below gives the numbers of captures of juvenile Blue and Great Tits at the feeders and elsewhere in the wood this season. The massive difference in proportions of captures between the two species is highly statistically significant. What its significance is as far as the tits' behaviour is concerned is another matter.

	Blue Tit	Great Tit
At the feeder	18	128
Elsewhere in the wood	19	16

Noteworthy captures August - October 2000

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Great Spotted Woodpecker	5M	RH94711	27/8/00	G03
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We ringed this bird as an adult in F09 during May with rather scruffy plumage which we thought resulted from frequent trips in and out of the nest hole in the wet. The plumage is still scruffy and, like many of our Great Spotted Woodpeckers, this bird does not seem to moult its plumage according to the official guide.

Dunnock	4M	N275362	10/9/00	N06
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This bird appeared, at first, to be in the wrong place. All its previous 4 captures have been in H04. Why move so much now? (H04 to N06 is a big move for a Dunnock.) Captures of other Dunnocks and Chaffinches (see P400210) on 17/9/00 may help explain this. The Pheasant keepers have begun putting down grain for this year's Pheasants. On the 17th we had many more Dunnocks and Chaffinches than usual on Main Ride South. We presume they were homing in on the new grain supplies. Treswell Wood used to be known by ringers from the south of the county as Dunnock City. Are those good times on the way back?

Robin	4	N275113	17/9/00	H04
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From time to time we catch a bird which reminds us how sedentary some species can be. This bird was ringed in June 1999, still in its juvenile plumage, in F05. Three months later it had moved all of 200 metres to I04 where we captured it in full adult plumage. Since then we have captured it four times, always in H04.

Lesser Whitethroat	3J	P400150	6/8/00	K08
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The first Lesser Whitethroat to be reported in any Twitter - the last one we captured was on 2/5/1993 in the days before Twitter. This bird was a juvenile, still in its post juvenile moult and caught near the hedge just inside the south-eastern corner of block D. This is only the 31st Lesser Whitethroat we have ever caught.

Goldcrest	3F	5Z1220	10/9/00	Q02
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This bird heralded a fairly early arrival of these winter visitors. Since this capture we have caught others regularly and numbers are well above average for the season. Twitter 14 gave a full table of numbers caught by month. So far the numbers are August 0, September 15, October 26.

Marsh Tit	4	N305874	6/8/00	K07
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Ringed as a probable juvenile in the autumn of 1998, this bird has nested successfully in one of our 'stump' boxes for the past two seasons. After her first two captures in the south of the wood, she has only been captured north of Norman's Ride (H01 to H04) which seems to be a non-crossable boundary for adult Treecreepers, Marsh and Willow Tits. This bird makes use of most of the northern sector of the wood, having been trapped everywhere except the far north-west corner of the wood. Her nesting site is in O05.

Great Tit	4M	VS51069	24/9/00	D08
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One of our 1999 nestlings, ringed in D00 and recaptured regularly at the feeders. However, two captures (November 1999 and this one) were in the D08 in the south of the wood. It seems this bird has made its home in the Nightingale Ride area but is a regular commuter to the north of the wood for the easy food.

Great Tit **4F** **J033075** **10/9/00** **Q02 Feeders**

A golden oldie. We ringed this elusive creature in February 1993 at the feeders and have retrapped her fairly regularly there since then. Her most recent capture, prior to this was, was in May 1998. She has also been captured on a nest in 1993, 1996 and 1998, always near the feeders. She was present before, during and after José and Ulli's operations of 1995 - 1997 but managed to avoid capture during the periods of the year when colour rings were being fitted.

Chaffinch **3J** **P400210** **17/9/00** **H04**

We ringed this bird a week earlier at the feeders (Q02). It was one of several captured, presumably drawn to Main Ride South by the Pheasant keepers' supplies of grain. Chaffinches are not as sedentary as Dunnocks, but this movement, across two-thirds of the wood is nevertheless, a rather unusual one.

Controls and Recoveries

Species **Age/sex** **Ring** **Date** **Grid**

Blackbird **4M** **RH94537** **24/9/00** **F02**

The fresh, but partly eaten, corpse of this bird was found still in good enough condition for us to determine the primary moult score. There were no clues about the cause of death. The bird had been ringed as a juvenile near the dam (E00) in June 1994 and recaptured several times around the east and north edges of block H.

10 Week Summary - Captures in Standard Sites - August to October 2000

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	1	.	15	.	.	2	18
Dunnock	.	.	11	2	.	.	13
Robin	1	.	5	3	.	3	12
Blackbird	.	.	3	1	.	.	4
Song Thrush	.	1	1	.	.	.	2
Blackcap	3	.	4	1	.	1	9
Chiffchaff	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Willow Warbler	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	.	.	14	.	.	.	14
Long-tailed Tit	8	.	.	1	.	.	9
Marsh Tit	.	.	2	2	.	.	4
Willow Tit	.	.	2	.	.	2	4
Coal Tit	.	.	2	2	.	4	8
Blue Tit	4	.	11	2	.	4	21
Great Tit	.	.	2	4	1	3	10
Treecreeper	3	.	5	1	.	.	9
Chaffinch	3	1	8	1	.	2	15
Bullfinch	.	.	3	1	1	.	5
Totals	25	2	88	21	2	21	159

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	106	159	---	(446)
1978 – 1999						
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	87	108	168	141	129	635

Footnote

This issue of Twitter was originally produced on the Acorn computer using Techwriter which exported copies for electronic distribution in MSWord format. For consistency with other issues, it has been transferred to Impression and exported as a PDF file using RiScript on the Acorn.