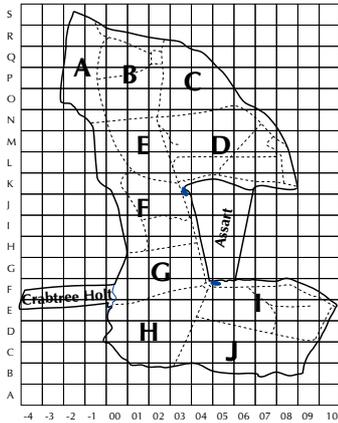


TWITTER

2020/5

Number 130



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 2020 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark



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First of all, a big thank-you to all of you who helped to complete the last couple of standard site sets last year and enabled us to start work on the new BTO winter CES scheme. It has been frustrating having to put some of you off to keep us working safely, but almost everyone has had a chance to keep their hand in, and well done to everyone for managing distancing and mask wearing. Unfortunately things have now changed for the worse, and we have again suspended the ringing in the wood. We look forward to better times as the vaccine rollout takes effect and we can start regular ringing again.

We will be using the time out of the wood to develop and test a PIT tag reader. This is not the system developed by Goldsmith University that we had planned to use as that has suffered continued development delays due to the pandemic. We hope to start tagging the target birds as soon as we can restart ringing, and learn more about the Marsh Tits in the wood.

We were pleased at the end of the year to have at least managed 3 out of the 5 standard visit periods, all the nestbox ringing (but first egg dates missed) and the usual roosting rounds. As you would expect numbers captured during the year were well down at 1,874, compared with an average of the previous four years of just under 2,900. This reflects the missed visits while lockdown was in place and limited numbers of people allowed together since the end of the lockdown. This meant we did not put up as many nets as usual in addition to the standard site nets. The CBC was missed this year owing to the timing of the lockdown and the travel ban. Trainees are also sorely missed. We were unable to return to the wood in time to do the annual frass collection but have managed to do the annual survey of woody growth in the assart - a paper about it is in the process of being written.

One thing we started this year is participation in the trial of the BTO winter CES which we can do in addition to our normal standard site ringing. We completed the first two of the six visits. It looked promising and will complement our 'normal' ringing. However, 2021 visits are now not possible.

After 17 years of plotting the observations of the CBC surveyors, Pat Quinn-Catling is stepping down. We are very grateful to her for her work over these years. This is one of those background jobs that are a vital part of the Treswell Wood project. We are now looking for a successor to Pat. As far as the CBC in 2021 is concerned, it seems that it should be possible for it to proceed because it is done by people working alone.

John Clark

Grey Tits

In April 2002 we ringed Great Tit P400741 and noted that its plumage was very differently coloured from the normal female. Naturally the event was reported in the subsequent issue of TWITTER. It was as if she had been painted by someone following the instructions for the *Parus major cinereus* subspecies which inhabits the Indian subcontinent. (We did not suggest it had come from there - the furthest place from which we have ever controlled a Great Tit is in Shropshire.) We believed it was nesting in one of our boxes and hoped to confirm this and trap some of its offspring eventually. Our thought was that if it was a genetic factor which caused the greyness, we might expect at least some of the nestlings to be similarly grey too. Alas, we did not find where she nested - neither did we catch any juvenile 'Grey Tits'.

In 1979 when we first installed large numbers of nestboxes, the Retford Times printed a short report on them. The non-ornithologist reporter mis-heard the name Great Tit and her article contained references to the Grey Tits which nested in our boxes. The Grey Tit took 23 years to arrive in the wood. A similar event happened recently when Sir David Attenborough was interviewed remotely by The Guardian about wildlife watching during the lockdown. He named some of the species he had seen in his garden and amongst them appeared the 'Grey Tit'. We presume that reporter too was no more familiar with our tit species than was the Retford Times reporter some 40 years before.

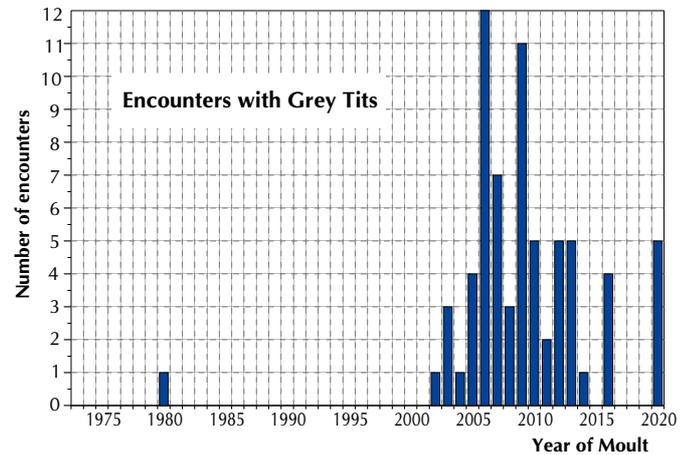
Annual Summary - All ringing records 2020

	Ctrl.	New Birds			Retraps		Sight	Recvs.	Othr.	Total
		Adult	Juvnl	Pulli	Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	2
Stock Dove	.	3	.	20	14	.	.	1	38	
Gt. Spotted Woodpeck	.	2	3	.	3	.	.	.	8	
Green Woodpecker	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Jay	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	3	7	10	30	2	.	.	52	
Marsh Tit	.	.	9	33	59	10	.	.	111	
Blue Tit	2	75	80	155	277	19	.	2	641	
Great Tit	1	37	25	78	158	22	.	1	333	
Long-tailed Tit	.	32	.	.	43	3	.	1	79	
Willow Warbler	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Chiffchaff	.	12	4	.	3	.	.	.	19	
Blackcap	.	14	10	.	2	3	.	.	29	
Goldcrest	.	19	25	.	19	8	.	.	71	
Wren	.	16	32	33	23	1	.	.	105	
Nuthatch	.	5	4	.	10	1	.	.	20	
Treecreeper	.	9	8	.	19	2	.	1	39	
Blackbird	1	29	27	.	33	3	.	1	94	
Redwing	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	3
Song Thrush	.	7	3	.	2	.	.	.	12	
Robin	.	14	40	.	30	6	.	.	90	
Dunnock	.	20	11	.	22	.	.	.	53	
Chaffinch	.	20	4	.	8	1	.	.	33	
Bullfinch	.	11	18	.	6	1	.	.	36	
Greenfinch	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Goldfinch	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	2
Totals	4	333	316	329	761	82	.	6	43	1874
Totals in recent years:										
2019	7	443	440	378	1224	181	.	5	37	2715
2018	10	367	502	547	1398	208	.	5	45	3082
2017	4	446	447	418	1279	254	.	1	31	2880
2016	15	542	470	329	1286	198	.	6	34	2880
2015	15	443	425	286	1143	224	.	5	46	2587
2014	12	328	470	328	934	135	.	3	36	2246
2013	11	352	439	316	1203	222	.	1	11	2555
2012	27	408	326	221	1149	182	0	7	35	2355
2011	12	462	357	331	1097	160	1	8	38	2466
2010	14	437	499	544	1655	243	1	6	13	3412

Key: **Ctrl** - Birds ringed elsewhere and caught in Treswell Wood including all birds from Hillcrest Farm. **Juvnl** - juveniles. **Pulli** - birds ringed as nestlings. **Rt** - ordinary recaptures. **SDR** - same day recaptures. **Sight** - observations of ringed birds. **Recvs.** - recoveries, i.e. our own ringed birds found dead in Treswell Wood. **Othr.** - most in this table are pulli which were ringed but died before fledging; they are not included in the Pulli column.

Since that time we have found the occasional bird in this grey plumage, including one in September this year. We had ringed it as a nestling and retrapped it twice in juvenile plumage which was completely normal in colour. By September she had moulted from this normally coloured juvenile plumage to the grey plumage - strikingly different from a normally coloured bird. A recent post in the Ringers' Forum reported one caught in Northumberland and the ringer asked if anyone had ever seen any like that before. Apart from our reply, there were only two others saying that some had been seen in the past. Clearly it is not a common event. We have looked at all our records of 'Grey Tits' and also any where we noted the plumage was 'very pale'. We have retrapped eight of the 48 'grey or pale tits' after their next moult and, of these, all but one had normally coloured plumage. Together with this year's capture we can see that the appearance is not directly related to genotype. All but one of the birds which was first seen in grey plumage was in its post-juvenile rather than full adult plumage. Ulli Langemann (who worked on the Great Tit song project some 20 years ago) suggested that it was lack of carotenoids during moult which led to the lack of colour in the plumage. However, this does not give the entire picture.

In Jenni & Winkler's new book, 'The Biology of Moulting in Birds' we learn that carotenoids are used for both plumage colour and the immune system (and possibly other processes). During moult (when the feather colour is created) birds must balance these demands. If there are insufficient carotenoids then something must give - and that may be the colour. We should then expect grey tits to appear in years when carotenoid supply is low - which would give greater numbers in some years than others. We would also expect the less-fit birds to be more affected than others. Both these things appear to be true. The graph shows the sporadic nature of the appearance of these tits. (The year axis represents the year in which the grey plumage was grown - thus a bird recorded as grey in Spring 2015 would be counted as a 2014 year of moult.)



The fact that almost all have been first year birds rather than those which have proved their fitness by surviving to the second annual moult suggests it is less fit birds which cannot find sufficient carotenoids for all processes.

In Great Tits the male's colour is important in attracting a mate. The balance between attractiveness and survival may be tipped towards attractiveness. It is no surprise therefore that only one quarter of the grey tits are male.

What about survival? Here is a surprise (or not). The survival rates of our grey tits and normally coloured tits were almost the same - too little of a suggestion of a difference to think that grey tits survived less well. But perhaps there is a trade-off - sacrificing normal plumage to allow a normal immune system and retain normal survivability.

As usual, we have everything documented in the hope that someone is able to undertake a full analysis.

Dormice in 2020

The 2020 dormouse season as a whole was somewhat unpredictable. Despite the first box-check of the season (April) being cancelled because of the national lockdown, the May results set us off to a positive start with a total of 13 dormice recorded, 12 in dormouse boxes and one squatter that was recorded in bird box 34.

Only 2 dormice were recorded in June, and none in July. The early summer months are considered the leanest for dormouse food resources. The pollen/nectar supply is subsiding and the nuts/berries not yet ripened. During this period dormice typically move higher into the canopy to feed on aphids/moth larvae etc. Consequently, dormice are less likely to inhabit the nest-boxes, and instead favour natural tree cavities higher up.

Thankfully, numbers started to pick up again in August with a total of eight dormice recorded, including our first litter of the year. September recorded similar numbers, with a total of seven dormice, including another litter.

During the final check of the season (October) a total of 35 dormice were recorded, most of which were juveniles of the year. These numbers would suggest that wild nesting has played an important role in Treswell this year, since we only recorded two small litters in the nest-boxes.

In addition to the usual nest-box checks, we recorded a couple of wild nests within bramble scrub, one such nest situated along Howard's Ride had an inquisitive juvenile dormouse sitting at the entrance. However, our biggest news of the year was the presence of a male dormouse in the nest-boxes within Lady Wood, situated approximately 0.5km (as the crow flies) from the westernmost tip of Treswell, confirming that the dormice have started to move into the wider landscape.

The full 2020 Nottinghamshire Dormouse Group Annual Report can be read here: https://ptes.org/dormice-on-the-move-in-nottinghamshire/?fbclid=IwAR2132L1ltWzpkIQdXICnDmC8OHRlux3Kf65N24_zAfShAGXQfu3--bbnyo

Lorna Griffiths

Bats

In 2019, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust installed 17 bat boxes (not the type that birds can use) in two areas of the wood. One group is behind the Tardis, and the other overlooks the northern edge of the Assart. The same number and type of boxes were installed at the same time in Eaton and Gamston Woods, and in other NWT woodlands. I inspect the boxes each time I visit and am pleased to report that one of the boxes contained a roosting brown long-eared bat present on two occasions in November 2020. Boxes can take some time to be found and used by bats, so it is very good news that the Treswell boxes have been found at last, and by such an iconic woodland species. The boxes at Eaton and Gamston were used quite quickly in summer 2019 and have recorded at least four species. Hopefully Treswell will catch up this year.

Michael Walker

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Sparrowhawk	3M	DS75979	18/10/2020	K04
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This was the first Sparrowhawk caught this year. The second followed a few minutes later. This is only the second time we have caught two of the species on one day - the first time being in January 2017. Like two thirds of the species we catch, it was a male.

Sparrowhawk	5F	EY42348	18/10/2020	K03
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This bird was a very large female - heavy enough for the ringing software to flag it as worth checking. We suspect that a high proportion of female Sparrowhawks escape from the mist net before we find them because of their large size. This one had little chance - it flew in as we were inspecting the net and we were there straight away. The mist net - a deep-pocketed Spidertech net - helped hold the bird. Perhaps there may be an additional reason for the relative lack of female captures - different habitat usage. Smaller males are more manoeuvrable and more able to hunt in denser habitats. Females operate more in open areas. Of our captures only a quarter of females were caught more than 50 metres from the wood edge whereas nearly half of male captures have been at least this far into the wood. It was very interesting to see this bird in the hand so soon after what then seemed to be a very small male. Excellent for identification of ageing and sexing.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	2M	LE35264	07/12/2020	M02
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A while ago we seemed to lose our old woodpeckers and after that we caught relatively few of the species. Perhaps the population is growing again although it will be some years before we can hope to have any bird approaching the national age record of 11y 326d. This is the oldest of the seven birds we have caught this year - a mere four years since we ringed it.

Wren	3	AXD466	25/10/2020	D09
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Recaptures of nestling-ringed Wrens are relatively few - partly because we do not ring all that many. This year they have performed a little less well than usual with 3/33 being recaptured. However, they do compare very well with the very low recaptures of the tits. This Wren, the third of the three, shows a typical dispersal movement - just 400 metres from its natal site.

Wren	4	EYD667	15/12/2020	Q03
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Once a Treswell Wood Wren held the national age record for the species. This record now stands at 7y 97d. Our own internal record is 5y 115d. This is our third oldest bird at 4y 61d since ringing. As typical for this very sedentary species all its captures, since being ringed in its first autumn, have been within a 100 metre radius.

Blackbird	4M	LK39072	30/09/2020	O06 - road casualty
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A short ringing history - just 10 months since ringing as an adult. In pre-computer days a bird ringed and not ever encountered again provided very little information. Nowadays, even a single encounter provides much more useable information including biometric data - computer power allows for rapid mass storage and analysis of data. However, a recovery adds much more value - cause of mortality (vehicle impact), displacement from place of ringing (200m) and some indication of length of life. Always look for rings on dead birds and report them if found.

Blackbird	3M	LK39147	27/12/2020	Q04
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After catching very few Blackbirds thorough the autumn, they seem to have moved into the wood recently. This was one of five caught on a short post-Christmas visit. Blackbirds from Scandinavia tend to be rather larger than British birds. However it would be as big a mistake confidently to identify a single bird as Scandinavian solely on the basis of wing length as it would be to sex a Blue Tit on wing length alone. But this bird - still in its post-juvenile plumage which is likely to have a shorter wing than after its first adult moult next autumn - was very big - 139mm wing. Altogether only 30 out of the 3,405 Blackbirds we have encountered have had wings of this length or more. All of these (as expected) have been males but, apart from this bird, all the others have been in their full adult plumage rather than this one which still wore its juvenile primaries. This bird is certainly a big one.

Redwing	3	RW74331	20/12/2020	N03
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Our third Redwing of the year and second of the autumn. The year's total of three is about average although this average conceals a great variation in numbers from zero to 30. In a few years they have been present in large numbers and we have been able to catch them near falls of crab apples or else by using playback calls. This year they have not been particularly numerous in or around the wood. Most of our captures have been at the wood edge. Within wood captures are mainly along Nightingale Ride or in the area near the Main Cross Roads (as was this one) with only scattered captures elsewhere in the wood interior.

Goldcrest 3F JTE721 22/11/2020 D04

The annual influx of Goldcrests is always welcome - boosting numbers of birds captured at a time when summer visitors have gone and the numbers of juveniles have dwindled after the typically high immediate post-fledging mortality. This autumn we have retrapped some which we ringed in the summer - clearly not winter visitors from the north. That is unusual but not unprecedented. The welcome arrival of the winter birds as usual felt to bring good numbers. In fact, the numbers are a little lower than typical. The table shows the capture pattern for the last four months of the year.

Captures in Autumn

Month	September	October	November	December	Total
Average number	7.4	21.2	21.4	10.0	60.0
Number in 2020	5	23	21	4	53

Long-tailed Tit 2 JTE719 22/11/2020 B03

After the lack of Long-tailed Tits in the early part of the year before the national lockdown and relatively few seen in the weeks after we restarted ringing, they seemed to be back in good numbers. This one was one of a small party. We had felt the numbers were rather better than typical. But again, as with Goldcrests, a reasonable catch after a dearth can colour the judgement. The table shows, as for Goldcrests, that this autumn's captures are a little lower than typical.

Captures in Autumn

Month	September	October	November	December	Total
Average number	9.7	15.3	13.9	9.6	48.5
Number in 2020	0	22	12	7	41

Coal Tit 3 AXD9912 27/12/2020 Q03

The fourth capture of this nestling-ringed bird from the only nestbox brood of 2020. Also on same day sibling AXD9915 was retrapped. The overall number of retrapped tit nestlings has been unusually low. The table below shows this year's figures together with comparisons from all past years. Coal Tits appear to be behaving normally but, with small numbers, the capture of one more, or one fewer, would give a very different picture. The other tits have given far lower numbers of recaptures than normal.

Recaptures of nestling-ringed birds - September - December

Species	Wren	Coal Tit	Marsh Tit	Blue Tit	Great Tit
Number ringed 2020	33	10	33	155	78
Recaptured 2020	3	2	2	3	11
Recapture rate 2020	9%	20%	6%	2%	14%
Average rate	11.5%	16.0%	21.3%	12.2%	21.5%

Blue Tit 4 S078963 25/10/2020 D09

This is a 2018 nestling-ringed bird. It has been found roosting in the Nightingale Ride area several times and retrapped there too giving total of eight subsequent encounters. Strangely, an hour earlier we had retrapped a sibling, S078965, in an adjacent net - but this was the first re-encounter of that bird since it was ringed in the nest.

Blue Tit 4 S078872 9/12/2020 P01 Roosting

We ringed this Blue Tit in H01 as a nestling in 2018. Since then we have retrapped it only at the feeders and when roosting in boxes in all three winters of its life. It has always been found in one of two boxes in P01 and its feeder capture positions are in Q03, a mere 200 metres distant. The curious thing is that we have never trapped it in an ordinary mist net even though we fairly often set nets between its roosting site and the feeding station.

Marsh Tit 4 L327798 20/12/2020 M03

We would have given Marsh Tit D309487 a paragraph on its own for its encounter on 11/10/2020 when, at 6y 85d since ringing, it became our second oldest Marsh Tit. However L327798, later in the year and 7y 203d since ringing relegated it to third place. Our record set in 2018 stands at 8y 146d. The national record is 11y 91d. This capture was in the Winter CES operation (which, sadly, is now aborted as a result of the new lockdown).

It has been a very odd year for this species. We ringed 33 nestlings and have retrapped only three which is about a third of the expected amount. However, we also caught a total of nine unringed juveniles in the late summer and autumn. It does look like low survival of our Treswell Wood nestlings - but where have these others come from and why have they survived the immediate post-fledging period in apparently large numbers?

Great Tit 4F TV35706 20/12/2020 M03

At 6y 222d since being ringed as a nestling, this is still only our tenth oldest Great Tit. It has nearly three years to go before becoming the oldest (also a nestling-ringed bird and last retrapped in 2018 over 9 years after being ringed). This bird is very sedentary - always having been caught in the north-west quarter of the wood. Unusually for a female its natal dispersal movement is very small indeed - about 300 metres. Although we have caught her in the breeding season we have never managed to catch her on a nest.

Nuthatch 2F NZ53091 18/10/2020 Q03

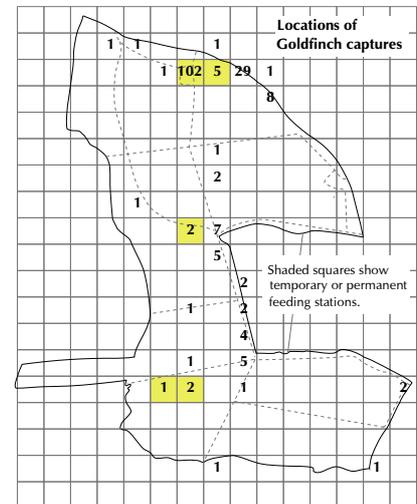
This species is just a little less annoying than the Green Woodpecker which is very vocal, has a mocking laugh but is very rarely caught. We hear Nuthatches calling on most visits to the wood - although their distinctive call does not seem to mock us in the same way - but we catch them far less frequently than we hear them. We have only caught this one in the last three months.

Greenfinch 3F NZ53100 15/12/2020 Q04

The appearance of Greenfinches in the wood is sporadic. In the long-distant past they used to be fairly common at Pheasant feeding stations and were present as a breeding species. Sometimes, such as from 2009-2011, we have had years when we caught none at all. The last ones we caught were in 2019 - a party of juveniles probably commuting from bird feeders in gardens opposite the wood. This bird, again, was caught on the wood edge opposite the same gardens.

Goldfinch 3F ANE3426 16/11/2020 M03

We often see or hear Goldfinches. Mostly they are high in the tree tops, usually just a very small party and far above mist net height. The map shows the locations of all our captures ever. It is clear that feeding stations are a main attraction (although we no longer provide niger seed as birds had stopped eating it). Apart from captures at feeders, most of the birds have been found at or near the wood edge. This bird, and the one with it, were exceptions, both being caught together well away from the wood edge. However, that part of the wood has relatively few standard trees and much lower level growth including plants such as teasel. Quite a good place to descend from the tree tops. We did not catch any other Goldfinches in 2020.

**Bullfinch unringed 2/12/2020 M03**

Bullfinches have collected more than their fair share of problems this year. We have previously noted the individual caught carrying about 30 ticks in the summer. It was followed by two more with ticks - though only a handful on each. No ticks have been recorded during the late autumn. Instead it is the scaly leg mite which has appeared. Three Bullfinches have had small infestations on one leg. This one was very badly affected. Both legs had a spiral of the mite from foot to 'knee' joint - almost like a very steep helter-skelter. It was released unringed being so badly affected that rings would have caused the bird damage. We have not seen the mite recently on any other species.

10-Week Summary: 2020 Interval 5, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	3	.	4	7
Blue Tit	2	.	3	20	.	5	30
Great Tit	1	.	4	15	.	3	23
Long-tailed Tit	17	.	.	13	.	.	30
Goldcrest	7	.	13	4	.	3	27
Wren	1	.	8	1	.	3	13
Treecreeper	1	.	1	5	.	1	8
Blackbird	.	.	5	6	.	1	12
Redwing	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Song Thrush	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Robin	4	.	5	3	.	1	13
Dunnock	.	.	.	2	.	1	3
Bullfinch	1	.	2	.	.	1	4
Totals	35	.	44	72	.	23	174