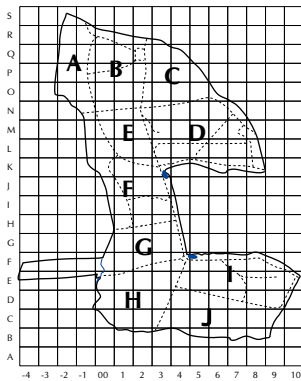


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2005 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

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2005/3
Number 53



The 2005 breeding season

Judging by reports from ringers around the country, the 2005 breeding season has not been very productive. CES ringers are reporting very few juveniles and this is in line with what we are experiencing. Several locals have asked me recently where all the garden birds have gone, so it is not just ringers noticing the lack of birds. Blue Tits seem to be in particularly short supply. Our 10-week, standard site captures, although the highest in the last decade, are still somewhat below average. Our nestboxes have not done well either - the various factors contributing to low productivity were outlined in the previous Twitter. However, nestbox productivity was, overall, marginally better than in 2003 - the year of the Weasels of Mass Destruction.

Species	Nests		Eggs laid	Adults caught on nests	Birds		% Success rate	
	Recorded	Successful			Nestlings fledged	Nestlings recaptured (to Sept. 1)	Nests	Eggs
<i>Sparrowhawk</i>	1	1	4	.	4	.	.	.
<i>Woodpigeon</i>	2	0	3	.	0	.	.	.
Stock Dove	8	5	15	.	10	.	63	67
Tawny Owl	2	2	6	2	4	.	100	67
Wren	12	3	21	.	14	.	25	67
Robin	2	2	11	1	11	1	100	100
<i>Blackbird</i>	1	0	3	.	.	.	.	.
Marsh Tit	2	0	13	3	0	.	0	0
<i>Willow Tit</i>	3	0	.	4	0	.	0	.
Coal Tit	5	1	46	4	8	2	20	17
Blue Tit	36	16	267	22	91	3	44	34
Great Tit	78	19	463	11	103	16	24	22
<i>Chaffinch</i>	1	0	.	.	.	.	.	.
Totals (2005)	153	49	852	47	245	22	32	29
Totals (2004)	141	94	917	41	538	41	67	59
Totals (2003)	133	41	769	29	213	17	31	28

Notes: Nests of species in italics were open nests found incidentally during the nestbox rounds. There may be a few later records of Stock Doves. The numbers of nests recorded, for all species, exclude nests which were abandoned before any eggs were laid. 'Adults caught on nests' includes sight records of colour-ringed individuals at nests. Some data are unknown (e.g. numbers of eggs laid in some Willow Tit nests).

Publications

Charles Deeming has been at work on our Blue and Great Tit egg hatching data. He has produced a poster for the Incubation & Fertility Research Group conference in Lincoln in September and hopes to make this the basis of a paper describing hatching success of eggs. Unlike fledging success, hatching success in wild birds is little studied. The poster is entitled: *Egg productivity and mortality over 25 years for Blue and Great tits (Parus caeruleus and Parus major) in Treswell Wood, Nottinghamshire*. Thanks go to all who have collected nest record data over these years. The poster describes nest success, clutch size, date of laying, egg losses and the (negative) relationship between clutch size and total numbers of nests. The full poster will be on the Treswell Wood CD-ROM.

Yoram Yom-Tov has been using our data, and other long-term data from Wicken Fen, to examine changes in

various measures of body size over the past 30 years and has tried to relate such changes to climate change. There is some evidence to show that some species are becoming lighter (according to Bergmann's Rule). This paper will appear in *Oikos* as *Recent changes in body weight and wing length among some British passerine birds*. Again, thanks to all who have helped gather the data over the years. This paper will also be on our CD-ROM.

RSPB Willow and Marsh Tit projects

The first year of the study is complete with no birds of either species known to have fledged in the wood. However, the project aims to understand more about the ecology of these species. Even failures are instructive.

Alex Lewis, on behalf of the team, sends her thanks to all who have helped in any way, directly or indirectly.

I cannot tell you how wonderful it is to be using Treswell as one of our sites. It is fantastic to be working at a site that has been so well monitored over the past and is still well monitored now. Thank you so much for letting us work there and for helping us so much. As well as being a great site for the project it was also always a welcome relief when the Treswell day came up on our timetable. It is such a lovely place to be. Other sites were pretty grim and certainly not safe to be in alone. (What a reflection on Britain in the 21st century!)

Although I can see that a different outcome may have been preferable, it is really interesting that all three Willow Tit nests at the wood failed this year. And very interesting too that young have already come in to the wood from elsewhere. A pattern is emerging but the sample size is small so must not become too excited...

I hope you have a really good autumn. Looking forward to seeing you and the wood again soon.

Please be kind to data processors

Age codes

Each bird capture record entered on the computer requires an age code. We record age and sex of birds routinely on the field sheets except, sometimes, when the bird is a same-day retrap. On data entry, when SDR age codes are omitted, the long-suffering keyboard operator has to read back through the field sheet to find the appropriate age code. It will be ever so helpful if you can write down the age and sex code for every same-day recapture.

Colour ring codes

It will have not escaped your notice that some colour names begin with the same letter - **B**lack and **B**lue for example. Even using the first two letters would not separate **BL**ack and **BL**ue. Further, just stating Blue would not make it clear if it was dark or light blue being used. Whereas it is a good thing to use codes for field recording, it is not much use if the code is ambiguous. There is a European-wide agreed coding system for colours, a subset of which is described on page 6. Note that use of this coding system does not depend on British ratification of the European Union constitution and has not been affected by the French and Dutch referendums on the constitution.

Some of the codes are not immediately obvious (but they do become easier with practice). It would help if they could be used on the field sheet or, failing that, if colour names could be written in full. A list of codes and examples is included at the end of this issue. Note that the list only includes the colours we use in the wood. The full list is available in IPMR or on IPMR pages on the BTO web site.

Colour ringing

The BTO coding system requires a record of the capture event when the colour combination was applied. A note on the field sheet to this effect is very helpful. Probably the easiest code is to write a capital I in a circle against the colour marks applied. Why I? Because that is the BTO code for *Individual colour mark applied*.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Tawny Owl	5	GF37962	26/06/2005	D07

Our first adult Tawny Owl to be mist-netted since 3/09/1984 and only the seventh bird we have ever caught in this way. In addition we have captured another 9 adults at nestboxes (four caught by John Black in the last two years).

Woodpigeon	4	FC89968	19/06/2005	O06
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Our normal practice is to note all non-passerine captures (except, nowadays, those of Great Spotted Woodpeckers). This is the 73rd Woodpigeon we have ringed, including 10 nestlings. Surprisingly, for a pest species, we have had very few reports of them. Only four have been recovered, all shot (three locally and one 35 km away near Market Rasen). None have been retrapped. Our 74th individual was ringed, five weeks later on 24/7/2005.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 4F	CT84076	15/06/2005	Q02 Feeder
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We have remarked on some tits which specialised in visiting a number of feeders in the spring. This woodpecker

has done much the same. It was first trapped at a temporary feeder, sited to attract Willow and Marsh Tits near the Dam (D00) in March. In April it was trapped at another feeder in Crabtree Holt (F-2). Today it has travelled north to the car park feeder.

Dunnoek **4M** **P400034** **17/07/2005** **F03**

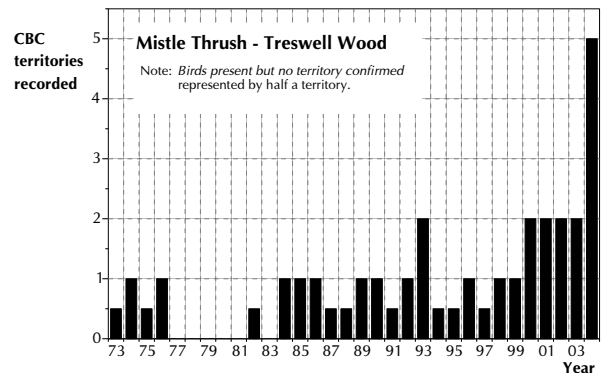
Ringed as an adult in May 2000, well over five years ago and retrapped only in July 2003, this bird must be at least 7 years old. All its captures have been on the periphery of block G.

Dunnoek **6F** **P400710** **29/05/2005** **R-1**

Only the second capture for this bird, ringed a mere 50 metres away in March 2002. Curiously it was one of a handful of moderately old birds, with no intermediate records, captured on the same day. (See also Great Tit K720572.)

Mistle Thrush **4** **CT84201** **21/06/2005** **Q02 feeder**

This is our first Mistle Thrush capture since April 2002 (Twitter 37) and only the 14th we have ever ringed. We do see them more frequently in the wood than we used to and the CBC territories recorded are consistently greater in number than in former years. They were not recorded at all in the CBC in the late 1970s, with only sporadic records before that. For the next decade, breeding seemed to be irregular but over the past 15 years they have become more regular and increased in numbers. 2004 was a very good year indeed, although the ringers failed to catch any. We have yet to make a Mistle Thrush recapture.



Robin **6M** **P400401** **03/07/2005** **Q02 feeder**

This capture would normally qualify for the 'where do they hide?' comment. Last time we captured it was well over a year ago. However, in this case we know rather better. It was colour ringed in December 2001 and has been seen several times since then, including 6 times in the last year, always near the car park. Further, two of these observations were of it feeding young in a nest in the bank of the ditch by the car park. It has now been caught or sighted 18 times since being ringed in June 2001 as a juvenile. Apart from its first capture, which was in M07, all other events have been within 50 m of the car park. Keep a look-out for this bird. All further sight records will be welcome. It wears white over yellow rings on the left leg and a pink/black ring over the BTO ring on the right.

Robin **3J** **R558711** **29/05/2005** **Q02 feeder**

The first of this year's nestling-ringed birds to be recaptured. We ringed it about 25 metres away in a natural nest in a cavity in the side of the ditch by the car park on 1st May (see P400401, above). This is a particularly pleasing capture - Robins fledge at such an early stage that it is sometimes difficult to determine if the nest has been emptied by a predator or if the young have fledged naturally and successfully. Evidence for the latter case here.

Spotted Flycatcher **4M** **T663084** **17/07/2005** **F02**

Neil had remarked earlier in the day that this newly coppiced area looked ideal for Spotted Flycatchers - he was quite right. This is our fourth individual trapped this year - rather better than in recent years.

Coal Tit **3J** **R558507** **21/07/2005** **Q02 feeder**

The first recapture of any of the birds from our only successful Coal Tit nestbox nest this year. It was retrapped again at the feeder a few days later. A second bird of the brood (R558506) was trapped a week later in E01. It had started its post -juvenile moult and had, unusually for Coal Tits, dropped some of its tertials as part of this moult (although the tail was still all in place).

Marsh Tit **3J** **T663076** **10/07/2005** **N-1**

Both our Marsh Tit nests in boxes failed this year (through weather and predation). Alex and Laura of the RSPB found no other Marsh Tit nests in spite of considerable observations of active adults. Where did this bird arrive from? Is it from an unknown pair within the wood or is it from elsewhere having already dispersed from its natal area? Neither explanation seems satisfactory.

Willow Tit **3J** **T663081** **17/07/2005** **F02**

Exactly the same comments apply to this bird as to Marsh Tit T663076. To add to the uncertainty, a second juvenile Willow Tit was trapped on the same day as was an unringed adult (and all three birds caught separately

rather than in a family party). One possible explanation was that the adult was a late comer to the wood and found a breeding territory after the other two Willow Tit nests had failed and after Alex and Laura had abandoned searching for territories. This is unlikely as the adult had already nearly finished its moult - not a sign of a late breeder.

Great Tit **6F** **K720572** **29/05/2005** **Q02 Feeder**

Where do they hide? This is the third longest capture history for any of our Great Tits and also the longest interval between successive captures for the species. We ringed her in the same place 7 years and 103 days previously and had not retrapped her since then: not for want of trapping effort at the feeder.

Nuthatch **3J** **BE88945** **21/07/2005** **Q02 feeder**

Alas, no Nuthatches used the higher, larger sized tit boxes that John Clark arranged for the season. However, it is likely that they bred in the wood and also likely that this, our first juvenile capture of the year, is one of our own birds.

Goldfinch **6F** **R353958** **29/05/2005** **R-1**

The trickle of Goldfinches continues, this being our sixth for the year out of our grand total of 30 captures. Reports locally and nationally suggest there are good numbers of this species this year, possibly helped by provision of niger seed feeders in gardens. All our birds have been caught near the edge of the wood rather than deep inside it.

Jay **5M** **DA51863** **26/06/2005** **D07**

The first Jay ringed since December 2003, and the first Jay capture for nine months.

Chaffinch **6F** **R353319** **05/06/2005** **K04**

Beware of ageing birds on a single character. This bird still had pointed, abraded tail feathers typical of a 1st summer bird. Other plumage features (including wing coverts and outer tail feathers) were of the adult type. It seems as if it just failed to moult its central tail feathers last autumn. Note that juveniles which moult some of their tail generally moult at least the central tail feathers rather than, as here, having broad outer tail feathers with pointed central ones. How can we be sure of its age? It was ringed as an adult in April 2004.

Chaffinch **6M** **P400652** **15/06/2005** **Q02 Feeder**

A regular, but not frequent customer in our mist nets. This is its fourth capture, each one being in the spring or summer over four successive years. We look forward to trapping it again in spring 2006.

Bullfinch **6M** **P400156** **26/06/2005** **D07**

A goodly age for a small bird. We ringed this as a first-breeding season bird in 2000 in L01 and retrapped it three years later in R00. Since then it has remained uncaught until today, it the opposite end of the wood to its previous adult capture. Where does it hide?

Controls and recoveries

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Place
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Robin	2	R123857	21/8/2005	F04 Ring in Tawny Owl nest
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Ringed as a juvenile in November 2002 and last retrapped in January 2005. All its four captures were within 120 metres of the owl nest - again evidence for the very territorial nature of Tawny Owls.

Blackcap	2	R353395	21/8/2005	F04 Ring in Tawny Owl nest
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Ringed as a first breeding season male in May 2004 and not retrapped since. It was ringed at the feeders (Q02) - a long distance from the owl nest. However, birds which are captured at the feeder often appear anywhere in the wood. In any case, between the time of the first capture of this bird and its recovery, it had, most probably, travelled to north Africa. More likely it was caught by the owl near the owl nest than the owl was venturing to the north of the wood in search of Blackcap Bolognese.

Great Tit	5M	VS50830	24/05/2005	K03 Ring in Tawny Owl nest
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A short life - this is one of last year's nestbox products, ringed in box C70 in square B07. We had retrapped it a number of times since it fledged, mostly at the feeders with its last capture being in September.

Bullfinch	4F	R502793	26/05/2004	Q-1 Ring in Tawny Owl nest
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This bird was ringed as a first breeding season bird in August 2003 in Windy Ride (K04) and retrapped nearby in L00 in April 2004 as a breeding female. Because our Bullfinches are pretty sedentary, it is most likely the Tawny Owl was hunting in this bird's territory rather than that this bird visited the Tawny Owl's territory. This suggests the

owl's territory covered blocks A/B (where the nestbox was sited) and much of block F. This fits in with the locations of the other two Tawny Owl nest sites in 2004, one further south in the wood and the other near the south edge of the wood. The delay in reporting this recovery is simply that last year's nest has been waiting in the heap of jobs to be done - nothing more sinister or exciting.

10 Week Summary 2005 Interval 3 (Standard Site captures only)

Visits 1723, 1726, 1716, 1717, 1719, 1721, 1725

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Woodpigeon	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Tawny Owl	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Wren	1	8	4	3	3	.	19
Dunnock	.	5	2	6	5	1	19
Robin	.	5	6	2	6	.	19
Blackbird	1	3	3	14	3	.	24
Song Thrush	.	1	1	.	1	.	3
Blackcap	8	8	1	1	.	.	18
Chiffchaff	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	4	4	.	.	8
Marsh Tit	.	.	1	1	.	.	2
Willow Tit	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	.	.	1	1	.	2
Great Tit	.	.	.	1	4	.	5
Treecreeper	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Jay	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Chaffinch	1	1	2	4	.	.	8
Goldfinch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	1	5	.	1	5	.	12
Totals	16	38	27	40	28	1	150

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Averages

Interval	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1978 - 1987	90	113	182	140	130	655
1988 - 1997	86	107	170	149	127	637
1998 - 2002	77	82	119	123	123	511

Summary data 1978 - 2004

Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Mean	88	107	162	141	127	623
Min	75	57	94	68	59	422

Annual Data

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1998	78	84	116	80	106	464
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	106	159	170	616
2001	(57)	(33)	94	121	59	(364)
2002	85	89	141	176	117	608
2003	117	116	146	104	114	597
2004	103	128	126	165	132	654
2005	107	140	150	---	---	(397)

Note: Bracketed numbers represent incomplete data sets and are not included in summary figures above. Incomplete data sets in 2001 result from foot and mouth restrictions.

Treswell Wood IPM Group



Colour Ring Codes

The code is composed of two parts, separated by a semi-colon. The first part should be for the left leg and the second for the right leg.

Each part identifies the leg, the position of the rings on the leg and the colours.

In each part the first two letters represent leg and position and will be either LB or RB

Subsequent letters, separated by commas, represent the colours. Each colour has a single letter, or two letters if the ring is a two-colour ring. The first letter represents the upper colour.

Leg

L	Left
R	Right

Position

B	Below tarsus (we will not be using other positions in the wood)
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Colour

Code	Name	Description
K	light pink	This is the only shade of pink we use.
L	Lime	Light green (we do not use dark green)
N	Niger	Black
P	Pale blue	Light blue (the only blue we use within the wood)
R	Red	Red
W	White	White
Y	Yellow	Yellow
M	Metal	the BTO ring

Examples

LBM;RBL	Left leg, below tarsus: BTO ring. Right leg, below tarsus: Light green ring.
LBW,Y; RBR,M	Left leg, below tarsus: White over yellow. Right leg, below tarsus: Red over BTO ring.
LBN;RBK,M	Left leg, below tarsus: Black. Right leg, below tarsus: Pink over BTO ring.
LBKN,M;RBP	Left leg, below tarsus: Pink-over-black two-colour ring above BTO ring. Right leg, below tarsus: Pale blue. The two-colour ring is indicated by the KN without a comma. A pink ring over a black ring would be K,N.

Indicating on the field sheet a bird is colour ringed

When you fit colour rings on a bird, record this on the field sheet next to the colour ring combination. The BTO code is I, for individual colour mark.

It is most helpful if this is circled on the field sheet. ①

If a bird is already colour ringed and is retrapped, do not record the I code because you are not fitting colour rings on that occasion.