

TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 1999 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

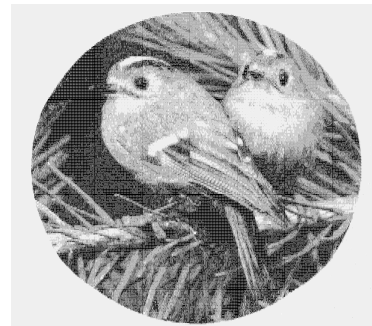
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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John McMeeking



1999/5 - Number 25

Into the new century

*Twitter 25 marks five years of our newsletter thanks to the efforts of the editorial team in Beckingham, plus 27 years of ringing, 26 years of CBC and 21 years of nestbox work in Treswell. Its preparation has overlapped the official 'Millennium' period, even if many of us think that event should have waited another year. But perhaps it **is** a sensible time for some special thank-yous and a quick look to the future.*

We list, on page 6, everyone who has been involved in our work over the last year. Whether they are long-standing members of our core team or occasional visitors, all have helped to build an archive of data which is probably unique. Certainly the BTO recognises Treswell Wood as a site to which they can turn for a long series of records which can help to throw light on many queries - so a major thank-you to every one of you (and your predecessors).

We are now exploring again what topics can be investigated with a view to publication - the effect of coppicing on bird distributions; detailed patterns of local movement within the wood; various aspects of survival; the spring influx of Great Tits; the interaction between the provision of nestboxes and of artificial feeding points. There is plenty of work to do - would anyone else like to be involved?

The longer the work continues, the more valuable are the data, so we are extremely keen to continue (or even increase) our programme. This means we really do need more helpers for every aspect. Present, or previous, helpers able to increase or resume efforts, or new recruits joining the team will be equally welcome. Treswell Wood is a beautiful and rewarding site for your birding. Come and enjoy it with us - and bring your friends to help.

Finally, the Common Bird Census is a special situation: government funding for the BTO analysis team in Thetford is being scaled down and the Breeding Bird Survey will be the main national population monitoring system unless more funding is found. However, for a handful of sites, like Treswell Wood, the BTO will make a special effort to fund the analysis so that CBC can continue: this can be seen as a great honour, but our CBC team is very stretched and we really do need to reinforce it. Will you answer that call, or can you suggest someone else who might do so?

John Mc Meeking

Treswell Wood Common Bird Census 1999

Goldcrests were recorded as being present in the wood continuously and breeding occasionally between 1981 and 1992, then present only in 1996 and 1998. In 1999 there were single records in B and D and, to Stuart Martin's great delight, his first in I - an angry bird.

Willow Warblers look even thinner on the ground than usual, there is a group of registrations in the north-west corner (A/B) which looks like one pair, and another group on either side of Norman's Ride which looks like two. That makes a possible three pairs compared to eight in 1998 - a slow decline from 34 pairs in 1989.

There was one sighting of Woodcock near the car park. Any volunteers for a dusk Woodcock watch in 2000?

Stock Doves were last recorded breeding in the wood in 1983 and recorded visiting in 1985, 1991 and 1994. In 1999, a very late nest was found (see Twitter 24) in a nestbox near Piccadilly Circus but no Stock Doves made themselves known to CBC recorders.

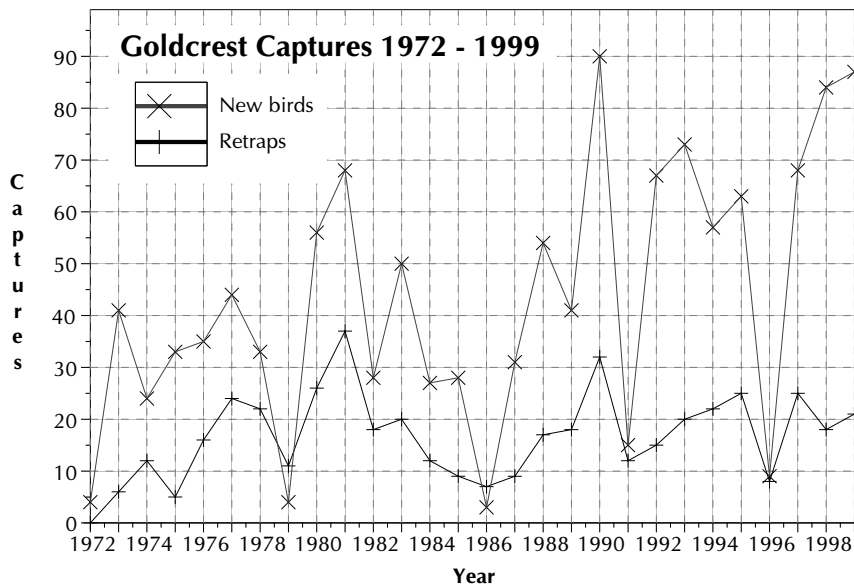
The Wren map is very full of registrations. I will leave it to the BTO experts to interpret it!

Margaret Price

Impressions of increases confirmed

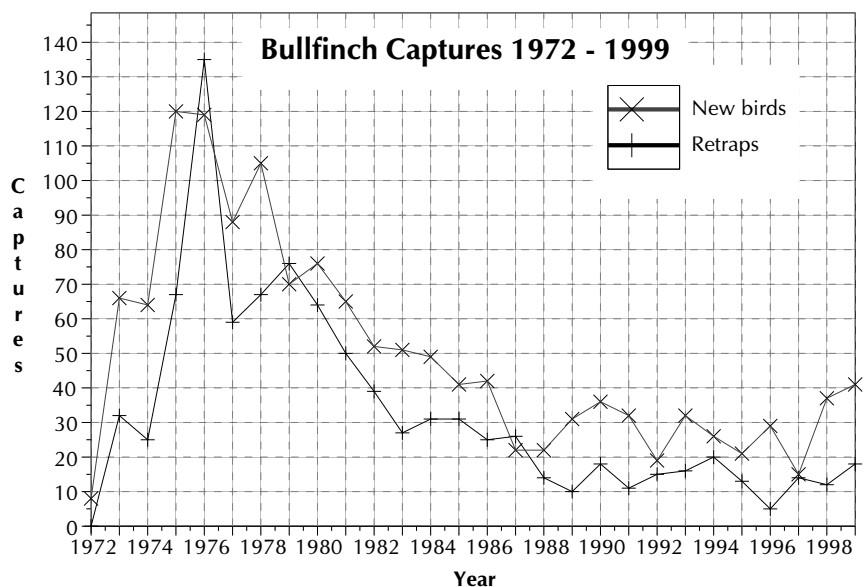
With the Millennium events still in mind, it is interesting to note how many of the 'people and events of the Millennium' are very recent. Newspaper polls of sports personalities of the century are biased towards those of the

past few years. Ringers' memories work much the same, with the most recent years being more firmly etched in the mind than earlier years (apart from the general feeling that things were always better in the long distant past). Fortunately we have a fairly standardised system of trapping birds and our immediate perceptions of abundance or dearth of birds can be corrected or confirmed by perusal of the data from the past. Two species have appeared to be more abundant this year than is normal - Goldcrest and Bullfinch. The two graphs demonstrate the fortunes of these two species since ringing began here in 1972.



We have, indeed, enjoyed a large number of Goldcrests - this year's total of new birds ringed is only three short of the record number in 1990. As would be expected with such small birds, we see very large between-year fluctuations (presumably caused by high mortality in hard winters and high breeding success in Europe in some other years, or perhaps by different patterns of migrations in different years). The general trend seems to be increasing with a low number of retraps (as might be expected with migratory birds). In Twitter 14 we compared numbers of Goldcrests we have ringed with the national totals and this showed a strong correlation between the two datasets. We will be interested to see if this year has been good for other ringers around the country.

Bullfinches have also had a better year than recently. Memory is not failing us - we have not captured so many since 1986. Even discounting the massive 1976 capture total (when many birds came to drink at our pond in the drought), the present numbers (although perhaps increasing), are much lower than formerly. (Note that both graphs had low totals in 1972 - 1974 when effort was much lower than later on.)



The numbers of adult Marsh and Willow Tits ringed in 1999 are interesting - both zero. All new birds of both species have been either nestlings or juveniles. Both species are sedentary as adults so it seems that recruitment to the woodland population is by reproduction and retention or immigration of young birds in their first autumn.

Our House Sparrow numbers, higher than in most recent years, all result from a visit to catch birds at Stanhope Farm adjacent to the wood - none have been captured in the wood since 1983.

Other news

Ulli's paper on her work with Great Tits in Treswell Wood has been provisionally accepted for publication in *Behaviour*, after some time in preparation and revision. We look forward to seeing it in print. Ulli is also hoping to do some analysis of the annual spring influx of Great Tits into Treswell Wood.

José is now married and living in Turkey - Oslam, his wife, is expecting their first child sometime in the spring. All is going well with them. José hopes to visit us in February.

Publications. Ringers in the group will have seen the Ringers' Bulletin leading article on *The role of ringing data in*

conservation. We feature with reports from the other three IPM sites which have been initiated (Chew Valley, Rutland Water and Lower Test Nature Reserve, Hampshire). There is a brief report of our 1998 ringing together with part of the table of CBC data which appeared in Twitter 21, showing results for the most common 9 species).

Treswell Wood work also features in the current issue of Ringing and Migration and its supplement Our method for separating Marsh and Willow Tits (which we suggested in Twitter 2 and which was published in Ringers' Bulletin in 1996) has been supported in a paper by Graham Scott. He says this character should be given most weight when identifying an individual. His data, which confirm ours, are from Dalby Forest in North Yorkshire.

The supplement to R&M contains the proceedings of the JNCC/BTO workshop on the conservation uses of ringing data. Treswell Wood results are mentioned in the introductory papers and in Will Peach's *Ringing to monitor changes in the numbers and demography of birds*.

Computerisation. During 1999 we have made good progress with fuller computerisation of the dataset. Chris has a (rather long) document which describes the Treswell Wood dataset in all its glory. It includes lists of all computerised and paper files, together with who holds them and what their formats are. If you want a copy, ask Chris. 1999 saw the computerisation of our nest record information and a beginning on computerisation of the CBC territory maps. This is a new venture and we have consulted with BTO Staff about how to set about the job. It is much more than just simply scanning the CBC maps. Steve Wain has begun to attack the task and the year 2000 should see big inroads made into the work. We feel it is important that we computerise the information because, at present, there are only single paper copies of each map - if they are lost, the information will be lost forever!

Treswell Wood CES 1999

| Species | 1998 | | | 1999 | | | Change 98 - 99 | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-----|------|
| | Ad | Juv | Prod% | Ad | Juv | Prod% | Ad | Juv | Prod |
| Sparrowhawk | 0 | 1 | X | 0 | 0 | X | = | - | X |
| Woodpigeon | 1 | 1 | 100 | 1 | 0 | 0 | = | - | - |
| Wren | 13 | 19 | 146 | 11 | 19 | 173 | - | = | + |
| Dunnock | 9 | 3 | 33 | 13 | 12 | 92 | + | + | + |
| Robin | 17 | 15 | 88 | 14 | 27 | 193 | - | + | + |
| Blackbird | 19 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 33 | - | + | + |
| Song Thrush | 4 | 1 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 33 | + | + | + |
| Garden Warbler | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 100 | + | + | + |
| Blackcap | 25 | 12 | 48 | 20 | 7 | 35 | - | - | - |
| Chiffchaff | 7 | 2 | 28 | 4 | 1 | 25 | - | - | - |
| Willow Warbler | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | + | - | = |
| Spotted Flycatcher | (1) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | X | - | = | X |
| Goldcrest | 0 | 0 | X | 1 | 0 | 0 | + | = | X |
| Long-tailed Tit | 0 | 0 | X | 1 | 1 | 100 | + | + | X |
| Marsh Tit | 1 | 4 | 400 | 4 | 4 | 100 | + | = | - |
| Willow Tit | 1 | 2 | 200 | 2 | 3 | 150 | + | + | - |
| Coal Tit | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 50 | + | + | + |
| Blue Tit | 6 | 1 | 16 | 3 | 2 | 67 | - | + | + |
| Great Tit | 8 | 2 | 25 | 7 | 8 | 114 | - | + | + |
| Nuthatch | 0 | 0 | X | 1 | 0 | 0 | + | = | X |
| Treecreeper | 4 | 2 | 50 | 5 | 3 | 60 | + | + | + |
| Chaffinch | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | - | = | = |
| Bullfinch | 8 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 3 | 21 | + | + | + |
| Totals | 130 | 67 | 51.5 | 134 | 100 | 74.6 | | | |

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

Our 1999 CES dataset has been safely transferred to the BTO. **Dawn Balmer** has some provisional results for the national scheme and compares them with our own offerings. She writes:

I have recently produced some provisional CES results for 1998-1999 based on about half the CES sites. Nationally, adult catches of Blackcaps were up, and those for Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler were down. Juvenile catches of Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler, Great Tit and Blackcap were all down compared with 1998. Catches of some adult birds in Treswell Wood were down on last year, particularly Blackcap, Robin and Blackbird. Adult Bullfinches

went up, the highest total since 1990. It was a good breeding season for Wren, Dunnock and Robin but poor for Blackcap (around 30% down nationally).

Again, many thanks to all the members of the group for all their hard work this year.

None of the changes in our numbers is statistically significant. This is the second year running in which we have made no CES captures of Great Spotted Woodpeckers but Long-tailed Tit and Goldcrest have been caught in CES nets for the first time since 1997. One feature of the data which is surprising is the tiny catch of Blue Tits. This is our most abundant nestbox species yet we have captured fewer Blue Tits than Marsh Tits which are much less common. Mist-netting certainly does not sample all species equally efficiently - fortunately CES depends upon consistency between years! Overall the CES results mirror our other findings with about the same number of adults overall but a somewhat higher (but not statistically significantly different) number of juveniles.

Robin colour ringing.

We have colour ringed well over 200 Robins but re-sightings of these have been lamentably few. If you have any spare time which you wish to be put to good and enjoyable use, why not spend time in the wood looking for Robins and recording their colour rings? The ringers keep a supply of recording forms, as do John (01636 830389) and Chris (01427 848400).

Gordon Davenport

Group members, and many NWT friends, will be familiar with the nestboxes and bird tables which Gordon produced from 1981 until, through disability, he had to give up his woodworking in 1995. Gordon died on December 26th in a nursing home in Saxilby. We extend our sympathy to Norma, his wife, and to his son, his daughter and her family.

Noteworthy Captures - October - December 1999

| Species | Age/sex | Ring | Date | Grid |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Kestrel | 4M | ES03297 | 21/11/99 | N00 |

Our eighth Kestrel capture only; Twitter 24 listed the others. This makes 1999 a record year for Kestrels with two individuals being trapped during the autumn. Is it chance, or is there some environmental change, or are Kestrels on the increase again? Do Kestrels and Sparrowhawks interact in some way - we have only captured one Sparrowhawk during 1999?

| | | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Robin | 4 | K463710 | 5/12/99 | H04 |
|--------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|

Where has she been? Since ringing her in March 1997 (N02), in breeding condition, we had not seen her again until today. Her new position is somewhat more distant from her previous capture position than we expect from strongly territorial Robins.

| | | | | |
|----------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Redwing | 4 | RX57648 | 17/10/99 | G00 |
|----------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|------------|

One of two Redwings - the first of the winter - trapped in nets set along the hedgerow running by the dyke north of the wood edge near Crabtree Holt. Both birds were new and adults. A third individual, this time a juvenile, was trapped in N99 on 21/11/99.

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| Long-tailed Tit | 2 | 5W9935 | 7/11/99 | L01 |
|------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|------------|

A long-lived bird - we ringed this tit in September 1995 and it has been caught 7 times since then in various places around the north-west quarter of the wood. A ripe old age for such a tiny creature!

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Marsh Tit | 4 | J033353 | 7/11/99 | M00 |
|------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|

Our oldest known bird of the last ten-week interval - ringed as a juvenile in July 1993, he has now been captured 12 times, almost always in blocks E or F.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Great Tit | 4M | K463612 | 19/12/99 | Q02 feeders |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|

A veteran of the Great Tit colour-ringing campaign, a juvenile of the 1996 cohort still wearing his yellow and green leg bands and not captured by us since April 1997. He is one of three such Great Tits which we have captured recently after a gap of over two years (K463716 last captured 16/3/97 and K463304 last captured 21/12/96).

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Great Tit | 3M | VS51039 | 31/10/99 | R99 |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|------------|

This is one of our 1999 nestling-ringed birds and he has already provided a detailed picture of how birds moult during their first summer and autumn. Ringed in N05 in May he was first recaptured at the feeders still in full juvenile plumage in June. Already a long-winged and brightly coloured bird, we could be fairly certain of his sex. A month later he was caught again, this time his juvenile plumage had begun to moult and some adult feathers were showing through. Two weeks later, at the start of August, he was caught in full post-juvenile moult including

tail feathers. By the third week of August moult was nearly over and by mid-September he wore the new plumage he will keep until next July. Finally, today he was caught, not at the feeders but at the north west corner of the wood where he might now settle.

Chaffinch 4M N305574 17/10/99 G00

Chaffinches do not seem to behave like other birds in the wood. This one, as so many, has remained unretrapped since ringing nearly two years ago. Then (January 1998) it was caught at the feeders in the north of the wood. This time, it was with other birds feeding on berries in a hedgerow just outside the wood near the dam.

Controls and recoveries

Blackbird 4 RR11837 16/9/99 Martlesham, Ipswich 119km @ 133°

We ringed this bird as a young juvenile, still too young to be sexed with certainty, in August 1996 and we have not retrapped it in the wood since. It could be a case of very distant post-natal dispersal. The bird was found in poor condition and later died.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 5F RR80062 30/5/99 E01

Ringed at Cottam Power Station by Dave Fogg on 10/8/97 as a juvenile and retrapped there on 21/12/97 now identifiable as a female. This is our third fairly local control - two earlier birds having been ringed by Peter Harrison at Sturton-le-Steeple.

Greenfinch 6F VV92775 4/4/99 Q02 Feeder

Ringed by Peter Harrison in Sturton-le-Steeple on 22/3/98 and not retrapped there since then.

10 Week Summary 1999 Interval 5 - Standard Sites Captures

Visits 1432, 1436, 1430, 1431, 1435, 1434, 1433

| | New Birds | | | Recaptures | | | Total |
|-----------------|-----------|---|-----------|------------|---|-----------|------------|
| | Adult | 5 | 3 | Adult | 5 | 3 | |
| Kestrel | 1 | . | . | . | . | . | 1 |
| Wren | 1 | . | 3 | 2 | . | 3 | 9 |
| Dunnock | . | . | 8 | 6 | . | 3 | 17 |
| Robin. | . | 2 | 3 | . | 4 | 9 | |
| Blackbird | 1 | . | 6 | 3 | . | 1 | 11 |
| Redwing | . | . | 1 | . | . | . | 1 |
| Goldcrest | 6 | . | 24 | 1 | . | 1 | 32 |
| Long-tailed Tit | 24 | . | . | 7 | . | . | 31 |
| Marsh Tit | . | . | . | 4 | . | . | 4 |
| Willow Tit | . | . | . | 2 | . | . | 2 |
| Coal Tit | . | . | . | 3 | . | 3 | 6 |
| Blue Tit | 2 | . | 1 | 3 | . | 2 | 8 |
| Great Tit | . | . | . | 4 | . | 5 | 9 |
| Treecreeper | . | . | . | 4 | . | . | 4 |
| Chaffinch | 8 | . | 4 | 3 | . | . | 15 |
| Bullfinch | . | . | 1 | 2 | . | 1 | 4 |
| Totals | 43 | . | 50 | 47 | . | 23 | 163 |

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 |
| 1990/4 | 79 | 89 | 148 | 148 | 149 | 613 |
| Annual data | | | | | | |
| 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 |
| Max | 124 | 145 | 288 | 253 | 177 | 865 |
| Min | 59 | 57 | 99 | 68 | 88 | 422 |
| Mean | 87 | 108 | 171 | 140 | 129 | 635 |

Year Summary - All Records 1999

| | Ctrl. | New Birds | | | Retraps | | Sight | Rec | PDF | Total |
|--------------------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| | | Adult | Juvnl | Pulli | Rt | SDR | | | | |
| Sparrowhawk | . | 1 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1 | |
| Kestrel | . | 1 | 1 | . | 1 | . | . | . | 3 | |
| Stock Dove | . | . | . | 4 | . | . | . | . | 4 | |
| Woodpigeon | . | 3 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 3 | |
| Tawny Owl | . | 1 | . | 2 | 1 | . | . | . | 4 | |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | 1 | 1 | 1 | . | 2 | 1 | . | . | 6 | |
| Swallow | . | . | . | 5 | . | . | . | . | 5 | |
| Wren | . | 36 | 44 | 48 | 35 | 16 | . | 1 | 180 | |
| Duncock | . | 25 | 40 | . | 68 | 14 | . | . | 147 | |
| Robin | . | 33 | 70 | . | 77 | 28 | 9 | 1 | 218 | |
| Blackbird | . | 37 | 23 | . | 33 | 5 | . | . | 98 | |
| Song Thrush | . | 8 | 5 | . | 5 | 1 | . | . | 19 | |
| Redwing | . | 2 | 1 | . | . | . | . | . | 3 | |
| Garden Warbler | . | 5 | 5 | . | 3 | 1 | . | . | 14 | |
| Blackcap | . | 44 | 24 | 3 | 15 | 14 | . | . | 100 | |
| Chiffchaff | . | 9 | 4 | . | 7 | 1 | . | . | 21 | |
| Willow Warbler | 1 | 4 | 2 | . | . | 1 | . | . | 8 | |
| Goldcrest | . | 31 | 56 | . | 21 | 9 | . | . | 117 | |
| Long-tailed Tit | . | 61 | 5 | . | 29 | 18 | . | . | 113 | |
| Marsh Tit | . | . | 1 | 23 | 48 | 5 | . | . | 77 | |
| Willow Tit | . | . | 8 | . | 37 | 5 | . | . | 50 | |
| Coal Tit | . | 5 | 11 | 19 | 51 | 4 | . | . | 90 | |
| Blue Tit | 2 | 34 | 34 | 182 | 217 | 6 | . | 5 | 32 | 512 |
| Great Tit | 1 | 28 | 30 | 131 | 285 | 32 | . | . | 20 | 527 |
| Nuthatch | . | . | . | . | 7 | . | . | . | . | 7 |
| Treecreeper | . | 4 | 12 | . | 26 | 2 | . | . | . | 44 |
| House Sparrow | . | 14 | 9 | . | 2 | . | . | . | . | 25 |
| Chaffinch | . | 34 | 12 | . | 30 | 1 | . | . | . | 77 |
| Greenfinch | 1 | 4 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 5 |
| Bullfinch | . | 22 | 19 | . | 18 | 3 | . | . | . | 62 |
| Totals | 6 | 447 | 417 | 417 | 1018 | 167 | 9 | 7 | 52 | 2539 |

Key to columns in 1999 Year summary

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Controls: | Ctrl. | Birds caught in Treswell Wood but first ringed elsewhere. |
| New Birds: | Adult | All birds except nestlings and those known to be juveniles. |
| | Juvnl | Juveniles - birds known to be in their first calendar year when ringed. |
| | Pulli | Nestlings (excluding those which died before fledging). |
| Other handlings: | Rt | Recaptures of birds already with ringed or controlled in Treswell Wood. |
| | SDR | Same day retraps. |
| | Sight | Birds identified by colour rings or other individual marks. |
| | Rec | Recoveries of birds within the wood. |
| | PDF | Pulli ringed but died before fledging (see Twitter 20 for fuller explanation). |

Treswell Wood Integrated Population Monitoring Group 1999

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Dave Barritt | Ringling, DNA analysis | Richard Johnson | CBC |
| Marion Bartley | CBC | Tony Kennedy | Woodland management |
| Jerzy Behnke | Ringling, Mites | Ulli Langemann | Ringling, data analysis |
| The Bower Family | Equipment storage | Stuart Martin | CBC |
| Sally Clough | Ringling | Phil May | Ringling, nestboxes |
| Peter Cobb | Ringling | Kath Maddison | DNA analysis |
| Andy Edwards | Nestbox making | John McMeeking | Ringling |
| Chris du Feu | Ringling, nestboxes, | Eric Palmer | CBC |
| Richard du Feu | Ringling, data processing | David Parkin | DNA analysis |
| Koon Wah Fok | DNA analysis | Peter Phillips | Ringling |
| Andy Gosler | Data analysis | Richard Platts | Visitor |
| Peter Harrison | Ringling | Margaret Price | CBC organiser |
| Andrew Heaton | Ringling | Neil Taylor | Ringling |
| Chris Holliland | Dormouse boxes | David Thompson | Data analysis |
| Shirley Hutchinson | Ringling, CBC | Frank Tillotson | CBC |
| | | Liz Tillotson | CBC |
| | | Steve Wain | Ringling, data processing |