

TWITTER

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Treswell Wood Ringing Group

Ringing: By permission of NWT

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Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Ringer.

Common Bird Census 1997

In keeping with our aim of establishing the country's first Integrated Population Monitoring group, it is appropriate to include CBC results from the wood in addition to ringing totals. The 1997 Treswell Wood CBC totals are given on page 2. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this 25th year of censusing.

Andy Wilson of the BTO thanks all the CBC recorders and reports:

Our provisional 1997 CBC results show modest decreases nationally for a great many species. No doubt the very poor breeding season of 1996 contributed to the lower number of adults present in 1997. There were a few exceptions to the otherwise bleak picture, notably Chiffchaff and Blackcap, which both returned excellent numbers last year.

In keeping with the national results, most of the residents showed a drop in numbers on your plot this year. For some species, these drops brought the populations to their lowest level for several years, including Wren, while Robin and Chaffinch were in their lowest numbers since the plot area was extended in 1976. There were also notable decreases for Blackbird, Long-tailed Tit and Blue Tit.

Song Thrush was one notable exception to the downward trend last year, making a good recovery following 1996's losses with an increase of 3 territories to 8. The warblers generally had a better year than 1996 with Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler showing some reversal of recent decreases. However, there was a further reduction in the total of territories across all species last year.

We are most grateful for your continued support and hard work. We hope you will be able to continue coverage of your plot this year.

Margaret Price adds:

In the December issue of Twitter, I gave my estimate of the number of breeding pairs of some species. In some cases I was reasonably accurate. In others woefully out!

I thought Wrens were up on 1996's figure of 67 because the map was nearly full of registrations, although there was shortage of dotted lines which indicate males singing against each other. It is presumably for that reason the BTO have estimated only 50 pairs. Where there is a lack of competition their territories must spread out much further than I thought. I thought Blue Tits were up on 1996's 83 pairs, but the BTO estimate 74 pairs in 1997. I estimated 46 pairs of Robins against their 36 and 15 or 16 pairs of Willow Warblers. Presumably BTO paid more attention to shortages of dotted lines than I did. I performed better with Song Thrushes (my estimate 7) and Chiffchaffs (my estimate 16).

Nestboxes

Weather can make a big difference to the birds. The 1998 season started well, although Treswell Wood was a little later than surrounding places, as usual (why?). However, the weather over Easter was cold and wet, and this delayed nesting. Some birds had restarted their efforts by the end of the Easter holiday but the week 19th - 25th was relatively cold again. Again, most tits seemed to suspend nesting operations and wait for warmer weather. One exception was a Great Tit which, in that week, built a nest from scratch in box 48 and laid her first 5 eggs. What a worker!

After 20 years of looking at nestboxes, new things come as no surprise. This year's novelties include a Blue Tit nest lining containing feathers from a Canary or Budgerigar. Her nest is in the middle of the wood, so where did she find them?. A Great Tit has found some loft insulation material - it should do the lining job rather well but will it irritate the young?

More surprises followed in the form of massive predation on nests at the egg stage. Eggs were broken with the contents eaten. It seems likely that wood mice are to blame. Is there a shortage of their normal food? Are they super-abundant this year? Any answers? It is unlikely to be just a few rogue individuals who have 'learnt the nest box habit' because the predation is spread throughout the whole wood. Phil May (Chainbridge Lane, Lound) has

CBC Territories 1976-1997

Species	Averages					%change	
	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	1996	1997	96 to 97
Mallard	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0	~
Sparrowhawk	0	0.4	0.4	0.8	1	1	x
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0	0	0	0	~
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0	~
Grey Partridge	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	~
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8	6.4	10	5	x
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0	0	~
Woodcock	2	1.8	0.8	0.2	1	1	x
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0	0	0	0	~
Woodpigeon	0	1	0.25	0	nc	0	~
Collared Dove	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	~
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0	0	0	~
Cuckoo	5	2.4	1.4	0.4	1	1	x
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1	2	x
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	3	2	x
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0	0.8	0.2	0	0	0	~
Swallow	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	~
Wren	59.4	55.8	69	71.8	67	50	-25%
Dunnock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	14	12	-14%
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48	42	36	-14%
Blackbird	35	29	28.4	20.2	25	20	-20%
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	3	8	x
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1	0	x
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0	0	0	~
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0	0	1	x
Garden Warbler	15	15.4	9.4	4.4	6	6	x
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	19	17	-11%
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	10	17	+70%
Willow Warbler	27.6	44	31.4	18.2	8	10	x
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	~
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3	1.8	0.2	0	0	~
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3	3.6	4.8	8	3	x
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1	2.2	5	4	x
Willow Tit	3	1.8	2.4	2.8	4	3	x
Coal Tit	2	2.6	2	6.2	7	7	x
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	83	74	-11%
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35	37	+6%
Nuthatch	0	0.4	0.4	1	1	2	x
Treecreeper	2	1.8	4	3.4	2	4	x
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1	1	x
Crow	1	0	0.2	0.2	0	1	x
Starling	5.2	4.8	1	0	0	0	~
House Sparrow	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	~
Tree Sparrow	21	10.8	0	0	0	0	~
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39	39	36	24	-33%
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1	1	x
Linnet	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	~
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0	0	0	0	~
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3	1.4	0	1	x
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0	0	~
Reed Bunting	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	~
Total territories					395	351	-11%

Footnotes: The table only includes species where breeding has been proved.

nc = not counted

x = fewer than 10 territories recorded in either year,

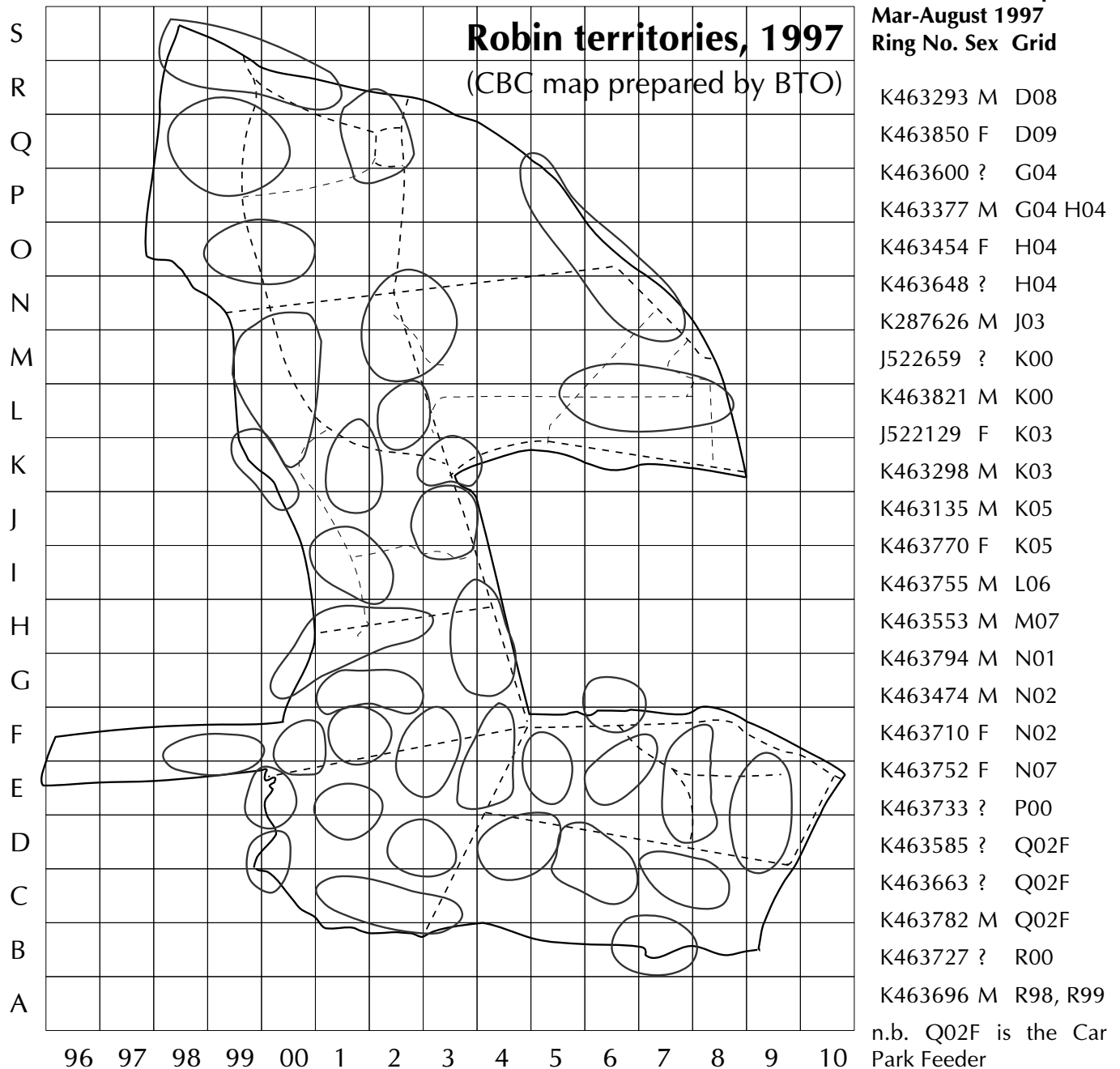
~ = no territories in 1996 or 1997

also suffered higher than normal nest predation, Neil Taylor (Gainsborough) has also reported a poorer season than normal and David Glue (BTO, Nest Records) says that this picture seems to be widespread. A full report on what promises to be an unprecedentedly dismal season will be in the next Twitter.

Robins

We have not yet had any sightings of colour ringed Robins reported, although there have been some near misses. A male was singing from a low branch by ride G/H, exposing both legs in a risqué manner. Alas, no rings on either! David Parkin would have had a wonderful view of a Robin through his powerful binoculars, but as it emerged from the bush wherein it had been clicking in typical Robin mode, it suddenly turned into a male Blackcap. Keep trying! We have, so far, colour ringed 23 Robins. Keep your eyes open for any of them.

For interest, we have reproduced below the BTO's CBC map of the 1997 Robin territories - thanks to Andy Wilson for supplying a copy so promptly. It will be very interesting to compare this map with the record of adult Robins captured in 1997. Can individuals be matched to territories? (We did try this type of exercise some years ago with Dunnock territories and captures. That was in the days before it had been discovered how varied were Dunnock breeding patterns! Our Robins should be more reliable.) If you are intrigued by matching birds to maps, then ask John, Margaret or Chris for data from other years.



DNA and the unsexed Blue Tit

Two of David Parkin's students at Nottingham University, Dave Barritt and Koon Wah, are studying sex ratios in broods of tits. Their study involves taking a single small feather from each bird, looking at the DNA from these feathers, and using it to determine the sex of each bird. There are a number of interesting investigations which they,

or we, can follow once we know the sex of all our nestlings. Are the sexes equally balanced? Is mortality in the nest the same in the two sexes? Do males disperse further than females? Do we recapture a higher proportion of males than of females? It might just be possible to see if the female 'parent' is the bird which laid all the eggs in the nest. More in a subsequent issue.

Computerised Ringing Data

During 1997, the BTO began to accept ringing data submitted on computer disk rather than on the former paper schedules. We have submitted all our 1997 data to them on disk although the initial batches were not without their problems! The BTO system has taken a long time to develop and it was expected that there would be teething problems with it. 1998, however, has started well. The data for our first 10 weeks interval were accepted first time - no data errors detected by, and no hiccups in, the software. A second big step forward happened with the reporting of the recovery of 8Y3083 (Treecreeper ring in Tawny Owl pellet, Twitter 97/5). This was the first control or recovery of ours to be submitted in computerised form. With the advent of the BTO system of storing ringing data on computer, it becomes of greater importance that we do record, as routine, whether birds are in breeding condition, moulting, roosting etc. Keep up the good work!

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
Great Spotted Woodpecker	RJ65851	29/3/98	Q02 Feeders
Peter Harrison's woodpecker from Sturton-le-Steeple, still coming to steal our peanuts. Doesn't Peter feed them well enough in his orchard?			
Dunnock	K463419	22/3/98	P01
Our Dunnocks are generally very sedentary. This one is no exception having first been trapped in Q01 on 26/5/96 and not seen again until now. Where has it been? Is it so sedentary that it spends almost all its time in block B, between Grove End and the Back Ride? This is representative of several Dunnocks we have captured recently which have reappeared after a long absence.			
Willow Warbler	8Y3303	19/4/98	O06
Our first Willow Warbler of the year - a new bird already showing signs of being in breeding condition. By the next week, 26/4/98, Willow Warblers had arrived in apparently good numbers and were in full, strong song in their preferred area - the coppice in block F.			
Blackcap	K463818	12/4/98	N01
Our first Blackcap of the year and a welcome between-years retrap. As usual, for such Blackcaps, its retrap position is very near its previous capture position (L01 on 2/8/97).			
Chiffchaff	8Y3043	12/4/98	N00
One of our two (so far) between-years retraps. This bird was ringed in June 1996 as a breeding female in D07. Compared to Blackcaps, we have too few between-years retraps of these birds to know whether the move between these two years is unusually long.			
Coal Tit	K463143	3/5/98	E07
A bird of respectable age - ringed as a first year male in early 1996. It has been trapped on a nest (E08 in 1996) where it was the mate of K181569 (a 1995 nestling of ours). Both birds were mist-netted together in late 1996. We failed to catch the female in 1997 although we caught this bird, still in block I in late 1997. Today both birds were caught in the same net, and in breeding condition. Is this a third successive year in which they are breeding together? Quite an achievement for small birds with short life-spans!			
Marsh Tit	J522325	26/4/98	K03 On nest
An old friend, ringed in 1994 and probably a bird hatched that year. We found her on a nest in 1995 (L03) and think she bred in a nestbox in 1996. This year she has taken to one of Tim Gyles' new 'stump' boxes. Her brood of 9 young has fledged successfully since this capture.			
Blue Tit	J033029	28/5/98	N05 On nest
Older birds are not usually late in nesting: this bird is an exception. She is also one of the oldest birds caught this year. Her nest was started at the same time as other birds were making late re-nesting attempts after loss of first clutches to mice. This old bird was ringed in 1992 as a juvenile and nested in box 89 (same as this year) in 1993, 1995, 1997. We did not catch her on a nest in the other two years but it seems likely she bred in the wood.			
Blue Tit	J639165	9/5/98	O01 On nest
A 1994 nestling ringed in box 80 (P04). She has nested in boxes each year since then - box 47 (J03) in 1995 and 1996 then shifting a little to box 49 (L03) for 1997. This year she has shifted rather further and is in box 65 (O01). Why? Older birds are supposed to be less likely to shift territory between seasons.			

Great Tit **J033177** **19/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

Our oldest bird of the year so far, ringed in June 1993 as a 6♀, so is at least 7 years old. She was last recaptured in April 1995 in I03. José and Ulli observed her in the spring of 1996 (between Howard's Ride and Windy Ride) and 1997 (southern part of block D) and at the feeders in both years. She seems to move home range a considerable distance from one year to the next.

Great Tit **NN18142** **7/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

A welcome retrap of a 1995 nestling. It was last trapped a year and a day earlier and had been seen by Ulli frequently in March 1997 in the area around K03 but not thereafter. Did it breed in the wood?

Chaffinch **H623738** **12/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

Ringed 29/8/92 as an adult female and still going strong. She is likely to be a resident bird as her two-non feeder captures have been near to each other (L01 and M01) in different years (1992 and 1997).

Brambling **N305657** **12/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

Our first Brambling for 11 years (to the day!) and only our 22nd Brambling capture ever. It was a smallish young female. The table gives our pattern of captures over the years.

	Year	73	75	79	80	81	82	84	87	97	Total
Month	Jan	.	.	.	.	2	3	.	.	.	5
	Feb	.	.	.	1	.	1	1	.	.	3
	Mar	.	.	.	4	.	.	.	.	.	4
	Apr	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	2
	Nov	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
	Dec	.	5	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Totals		1	6	1	5	2	4	1	1	1	22

Greenfinch **VR78825** **12/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

Greenfinches tend to come to feeders later in the year. This is one of our relatively infrequent between-years retraps. It was trapped twice last spring, both times at the Feeders and in breeding condition the second time. Greenfinches may travel a kilometre or two away from their nest in order to feed, so the presence of a bird in breeding condition may not signify breeding in the wood. Again this year, it may simply be using the feeders as a source of high protein food at a time of high demand.

Bullfinch **J639343** **10/5/98** **F03**

Where do they hide? Ringed 27/8/95 - nearly three years ago in H04 and not recaptured again until today.

Controls & Recoveries**Species** **Ring** **Date** **Grid****Blackbird** **RJ19292** **17/5/98** **L02**

A rather intriguing bird. She was captured here in breeding condition having been ringed at Cottam Power Station on 1/5/94 in breeding condition. Thereafter she has been recaptured every year there. It seems that, after all that time at Cottam, she has shifted her breeding territory to Treswell Wood. Why? What has Dave Fogg done to send her away?

Blue Tt **K720148** **26/1/98** **Grove**

A victim of a domestic cat. This was a 1996 nestling which we had only retrapped at the Feeders during early spring of 1997.

Blue Tit **K720058** **28/5/98** **M07 On nest**

One of the relatively few adults recovered from depredated nests. This male was ringed as a nestling in 1996 and has been a regular at the feeders since then. This recovery is its first record away from the Feeders.

Blue Tits **N305670 & N305671** **9/5/98** **E07 On nest**

Both these birds were ringed on 3/5/98 in E07 as breeding adults. Their ringing histories are very short - within a week they had both fallen victim to a nestbox predator.

Great Tit **K720578** **21/4/98** **N02**

A short history - ringed 17/2/98 at the feeders as a 5♀ and recaptured there once each in March and April. The body was found, recently dead with no external signs of injury, in a heap of brushwood near the main crossroads.

Greenfinch **VV23260** **19/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

Ringed by Peter Harrison in Sturton-le-Steeple as a juvenile in August 1997.

10 Week Summary March - May 1998

1998 Interval 2 Visits 1355 1356 1349 1350 1354 1353 1352

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	.	10	.	2	3	.	15
Dunnock	1	2	.	2	.	.	5
Robin	4	6	.	3	2	.	15
Blackbird	2	2	.	6	1	.	11
Blackcap	3	3	.	1	.	.	7
Chiffchaff	2	.	.	2	.	.	4
Willow Warbler	2	.	.	.	.	.	2
Goldcrest	.	2	.	.	.	.	2
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	.	.	1	3	.	4
Great Tit	.	.	.	4	2	.	6
Treecreeper	.	1	.	1	2	.	4
Chaffinch	3	.	.	1	.	.	4
Bullfinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Totals	18	27	.	26	13	.	84

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1978	101	131	243	223	131	829
1979	97	115	180	91	123	606
1980	86	102	211	147	170	716
1981	102	110	288	188	177	865
1982	66	113	142	89	110	520
1983	82	140	143	185	128	678
1984	91	114	110	82	106	503
1985	103	88	135	118	88	532
1986	77	104	153	68	141	543
1987	95	112	196	209	124	736
1988	92	143	180	137	119	671
1989	124	137	282	145	103	791
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				(162)
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	88	109	175	144	128	645