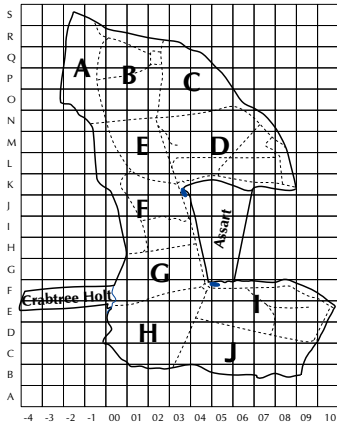


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2014 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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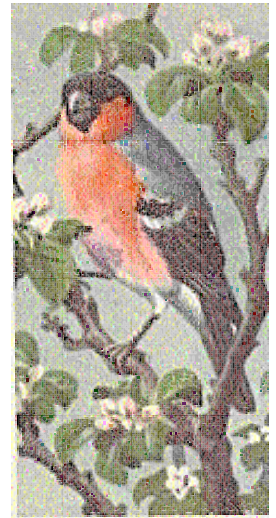
Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark

2014/1
Number 96



Spring is in the air and we do not really seem to have had any real winter. In spite of the mildness so far, spring flowers seem to have been reluctant to show their faces. Dog's mercury, of course, came into its barely noticeable full bloom as usual, early on. It was not until 9th March that the first other spring flower was seen - a dandelion. On the 15th the first primroses were noticed (at the same time as the first Chiffchaff was heard) and on the following day celandines and wood anemones were in bloom. The first butterflies - tortoiseshell and peacock - were seen on March 9th but it was a week later before the first brimstone was recorded.

The mild weather has been accompanied by strong winds and rain at times. These have disrupted our normal ringing with some Sunday sessions cancelled - although we have managed to complete all the necessary standard site visits. Numbers captured in the standard sites are a little below average but rather higher than for the same period in the last two years when populations were so low.

We began this year with a strong team. We are particularly pleased that Richard Anderton has been appointed to serve on the BTO Ringing Committee for two years as one of the two new representatives of C-permit and trainee ringers. Congratulations to Richard - we hope the experience will be beneficial to him, to the Ringing Committee and to the cause of training new ringers.

A significant stage was reached early in the year with the signing of the last bits of paper relating to acquisition of the assart by the Trust. We have continued our observations of the bird life there and it will be covered as part of the CBC operation this season. After seeing a Kestrel hunting on a number of occasions we have put up a nestbox overlooking the assart, with the hope that the birds will use this desirable new residence. We are also contemplating how best to monitor the bird life so that we can maintain our existing programme of standardised captures but also ensure we are able to have a reliable picture of its bird life during its gradual development from meadow to woodland. Coincidentally, at about the same time as the signing, we fixed the new interpretive boards, appropriately framed and mounted, in their permanent position on the side of the 'Tardis' in the car park for all to see. They had been unveiled at the event celebrating the assart purchase in October 2013 but, like the assart purchase itself, there have been delays in finalisation of the project.

The 2014 breeding season is almost on us - CBC visits have started and, by the time you read this, nest box inspections will also have begun. Although it is important to maintain continuity of effort as far as possible, it is also important to develop and improve. To this end, we have a new attack on the difficult problem of nest boxes for Treecreepers. Following a presentation to nest recorders by Dave Francis at the BTO conference about a new design of Treecreeper box, we have built and installed seven. The design, which we are assured has been successful, provides a nesting chamber about 35mm wide and 250mm square, providing them with a space resembling their natural choice. We await the results with interest. Normally Murphy's Law strikes any attempt with experimental boxes and they are occupied by Great Tits. In this case we hope we are safe from this Law - the entrance and nesting cavity seem too small for the tits - but time will tell.

As usual we will be collecting used nests at the end of the season for studies at Lincoln University. We have accumulated a number of 1 litre plastic ice cream containers for these used nests but do not yet have sufficient for the anticipated number of nests we collect. So, keep up the ice cream eating. It is in a good cause.

Mike Hansell, curator of the National Nest Reference Collection, to whom we have donated many nests in the past, has sent a target list of nests for the collection. The species Mike is particularly looking for include: Bullfinch, Cetti's Warbler, Collared Dove, Corn Bunting, Goldcrest, Grasshopper Warbler, Jay, Lesser Whitethroat, Nightingale, Nuthatch, Redpoll, Sedge Warbler, Siskin, Turtle Dove. It is, of course, most unlikely that most of these species nest in Treswell Wood but Mike wants nests from anywhere. If anyone happens to find any nests of these species during the season, Mike would be delighted to have the used nests. We have Mike's instructions for collection of such nests.

Finally, a reminder to ringers about the contribution to group funds to cover costs of rings, bird food and equipment: £10 for unwaged members and students, £20 for those in work. We now have an adequate supply of enamel Treecreeper lapel badges (which, we have to confess, do look very like the newly released RSPB fundraising badges). You will know who has paid their contribution as they will be given a badge. No pressure!

David Glue

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of David Glue in early March. David's name will be well known to readers of various BTO publications - his overviews of the seasons have shown a remarkable grasp of the state of Britain's weather and its impact on bird life. This grasp has been even more remarkable as David had been wheelchair bound since a serious car accident in the early 1970s. When the BTO moved to Thetford, David had to remain in Tring to be near Stoke Mandeville hospital for his frequent visits there. Until recently he was able to continue his work for the BTO from an office in the Natural History Museum in Tring. For the last few years, though, he has been confined to his house but still continued to work, much of it from his bed. David has always been a good friend of the Treswell Wood team. He has been keen to receive Twitter (one of his very many windows into the bird world) and always responded with supportive and encouraging comments. His condition deteriorated rapidly during the last part of 2013 and his letter to us in January - his last letter to us - was also the first which he dictated rather than writing himself. In it he said 'Thank you for the copy of Twitter which I enjoyed so thoroughly. Yes, neck problems here and bed rest for long periods with maximum painkillers. Very tiring but work with BTO still ongoing... Please thank all members of the Treswell Wood group for their support of the BTO.'

Dormice in Treswell again

In June 2013, accompanied by a media circus, 32 dormice, all carefully selected for genetic fitness and non-relatedness, were put into 16 cages in Treswell Wood. After two weeks of feeding, the cages were opened and the animals allowed the freedom of the wood, although the food supply continued for another few weeks. Even before the cages were opened it became obvious that some of the pairs of animals had become very friendly and infant dormice were seen clambering around the cages. A wildlife camera was borrowed so that we could continue to watch the goings on at the feeding stations even after lights out.

Just over 200 dormouse nestboxes were positioned around the wood, clustered around the release sites. These were investigated in September and October when litters of animals were found on both occasions - they are not supposed to do that in October. The camera proved its value and an adult female was filmed moving very young dormice out of one box and off to another - some animals are very tolerant of disturbance but not this one. Eventually, a dead dormouse was found in a box at that cage site but whether it was the mother was difficult to say as the female with young did not seem to have a chip (all the adults were chipped) but the corpse did (and it was the dormouse from that release cage).

During the winter, all the cages and boxes were removed from the wood and the boxes modified in two ways agreed with the bird group during a very sunny but rather cold two hour outdoor meeting in the car park. You may see nest boxes with either black plastic tubes or wooden lean-tos fastened to the side. We have no idea whether the animals will use these modified boxes but the first box check will take place in April and we shall find out.

A further development is that a second dormouse re-introduction is scheduled to take place in June 2014, in a wood nearby. The connectivity of hedges between the two woods has been investigated so that remedial action can be taken in the hope that, when they feel sufficiently crowded, dormice can wander around the countryside hereabouts and colonise wherever they see fit.

Chris Holliland

Noteworthy Encounters

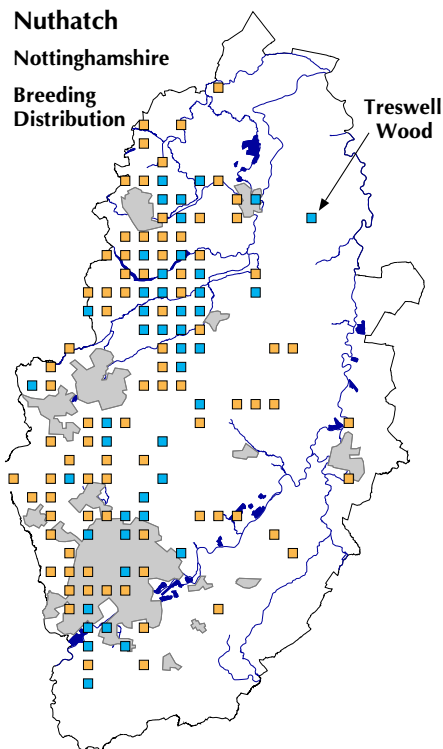
Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CT84287	12/1/2014	J02

We seem to have caught fewer of this species than usual this winter, but this is quality, not quantity. We ringed the bird as one of indeterminate age in December 2006. This is its 17th recapture, seven years and two weeks since ringing. As so often, in spite of its age, it wore some primary coverts which could be mistaken (by the unwary) for juvenile feathers - which they were certainly not on a bird over seven years old.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	4F	CT84472	12/3/2014	Hillcrest Farm, Treswell
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A second capture of some quality for this species. It was ringed in the wood as an adult in April 2012 and not seen again in the wood. This species is generally very sedentary: nationally the median recovery distance from the point of ringing is just 2 km. Had this bird stayed in the wood, we would have expected to retrap it. A move, all of 1 km to Treswell, is not a long movement, even for this species. This is the fifth bird to be found locally outside the wood - the others were at Rampton, Sturton-le-Steeple (2 birds) and Cottam Power Station. In addition we have had one recovery some 45 km distant in Lincolnshire in 2006. Nationally movements over 40 km are very rare indeed.

strongholds in the more wooded western parts of the county. (Blue squares represent probable or certain breeding and orange squares represent presence during the breeding season.)



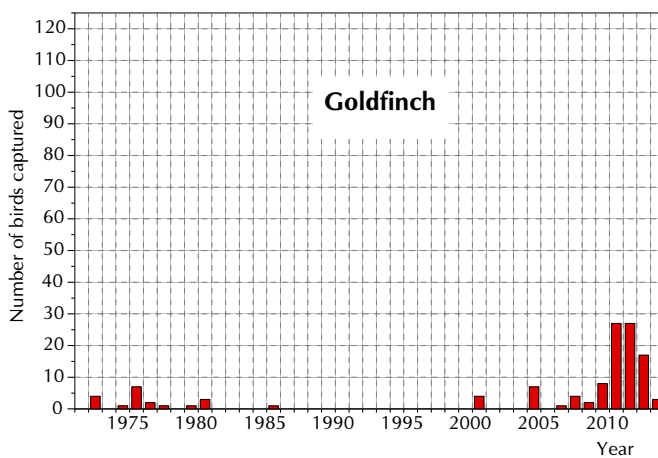
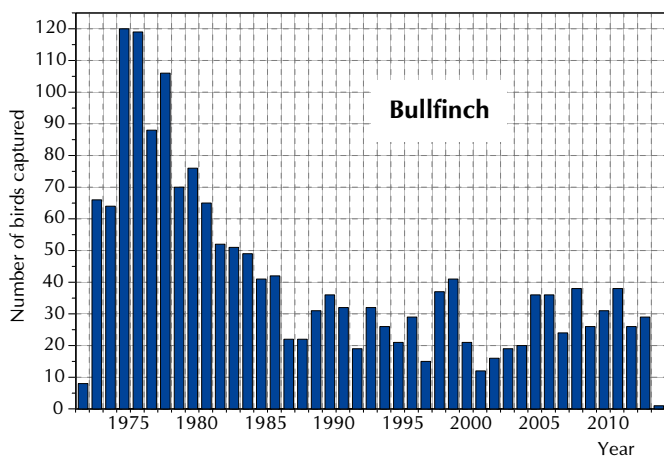
Goldfinch **5M** **D309346** **9/3/2014** **Q02**

Our third Goldfinch capture for the year. Most of our captures are at feeding stations or, in the case of those in the 1970s, largely captures at the pond in very dry weather. It is interesting to contrast the patterns of captures of this colourful finch with the the equally colourful Bullfinch. Their captures are, almost exclusively, in mist nets set in the wood not at feeders (although the pond in the drought of 1976 did attract good numbers). Whereas the Bullfinch is a permanent woodland resident, Goldfinches are more mobile and can arrive in parties which may generate sudden multiple captures in contrast to the steady trickle of Bullfinch captures. It is also clear that there are more Goldfinches in the wood than at any time since the Trust acquired it. The CBC data show the same picture - with evidence of presence but only one confirmed breeding territory before 2003. Since then one or two territories have been recorded in most years.

Bullfinch **6M** **L731974** **5/1/2014** **P05**

The first capture of a Bullfinch this year. The chart giving numbers of individuals captured each year illustrates the decline and partial recovery of this species. In the BTO Bird Atlas species account it says: *Bullfinches declined steeply during 1977-82 ... The decline eased since the mid 1980s with evidence of an upturn since 2000, but UK numbers are still 39% lower than in 1967.* Note that in 1972 - 1974 we made fewer visits to the wood than in subsequent years and that 1976 captures were boosted by extra visits to the pond area. With that in mind, our numbers are remarkably consistent with the national picture.

Annual captures in Treswell Wood - 1972 - 2014



10-Week Summary: 2014 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult			Adult			
Wren	1	4	.	2	.	.	7
Dunnock	1	3	.	.	1	.	5
Robin	.	3	.	2	1	.	6
Blackbird	3	3	.	9	.	.	15
Goldcrest	3	2	.	1	.	.	6
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	3	.	.	3
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	3	.	5	7	.	15
Great Tit	.	3	.	3	11	.	17
Treecreeper	.	.	.	1	5	.	6
Chaffinch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Totals	9	22	.	27	25	.	83