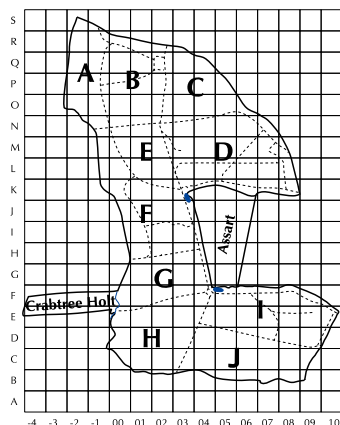




TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

July 2026 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Ellen Marshall

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark

2026/3

Number 158

www.treswellwoodipmg.org

The total number of birds caught in the standard site nets during the third period was pleasingly above average, 200 compared with a mean of 162. Highlights have included a Tawny Owl, Spotted Flycatcher and Whitethroat. The weather has been less of a problem than usual for arranging mist netting visits, the hottest days of the heatwaves falling during the week. The heat and lack of rain is now taking its toll on the vegetation, with brown grass, dried out ponds in the assart, very little water in the ponds in the wood and desiccated fruit on the brambles.

There have been many comparisons made in the press with the drought of 1976. What about the bird catches in the wood? At that time there was just one pond in the wood. It had been fairly recently created. It was deep and fairly clear of vegetation. During the drought very many birds came to drink there. It would have been clearly visible to birds flying overhead so the drinkers were not just the woodland residents. The wood now has four ponds - two in the assart, the original pond and the more recently dug pond at Piccadilly Circus (F04). Alas, the assart ponds are dry. The original pond holds water but has much vegetation and is covered in duckweed so less visible. The Piccadilly Pond is a mere puddle. Nets set near, which would have caught many birds in 1976, are not at all productive. We have not yet seen any roving flocks of juvenile tits which would have come to the pond in 1976 and wonder where our juveniles are doing their drinking.

This year we have enjoyed a new nesting species in one of our high nestboxes sited near the wood edge - Barn Owl. Although we had recorded Barn Owl nests at adjacent Forwood Farm they had not nested in the wood. The nest this year was successful with four young seen leaving the box. We also found an adult occupying another box after it had evicted the Stock Dove inhabitants. It is possible this is one of the pair that nested and it was using this other box to roost quietly away from the offspring. Details of that bird are given below. Barn Owls suffer in competition with Tawny Owls where their habitats overlap - the wood edge is one such habitat. It is just possible that the success of the Barn Owl may be related to the lack of Tawny Owls nesting this year.

We have been pleased to welcome two groups to the wood to see the ringing - a youth group from NWT Idle Valley, and an evening visit by the 7th Retford Cubs. Fortunately the birds rose to the occasion and amongst the more common species each group saw a woodpecker. The NWT group saw some nestling tits being ringed and the Cubs saw some of these being retrapped. These young people struggled with the concept that at three weeks after hatching the tits are adult size. Their leader, Ben Bower, had also arranged for them to hunt insects and identify flowers in the wood - a good evening.

We have sometimes been short-staffed and this has meant that fewer extra nets have been used than at some times in the past. In addition we are still short of someone to take over some of the CBC territory mapping and also someone to record events in nestboxes. We have collected the frass as usual and it is now with Ken Smith for him to do his analysis. Collecting the frass for Ken Smith's long running study on the interaction of nesting success and food supply in relation to changes in the timing of seasons is valuable work which could be done by anyone - you do not have to be a ringer, or even a bird watcher. Contact us if you would like to be involved in any way.

We maintain contact with various ringers who have spent their formative ringing years with us but now live elsewhere. It is very pleasing to hear from them with their comments - often comparing their current ringing operations with those in the wood. In this issue we have comments from Peter Kirmond (first visit November 1974, now in Gloucestershire), Dave Fogg (first visit May 1978, now in Granton-on-Spey) and Phil May (first visit April 1994, now in Sheffield). Thanks to them for their contributions.

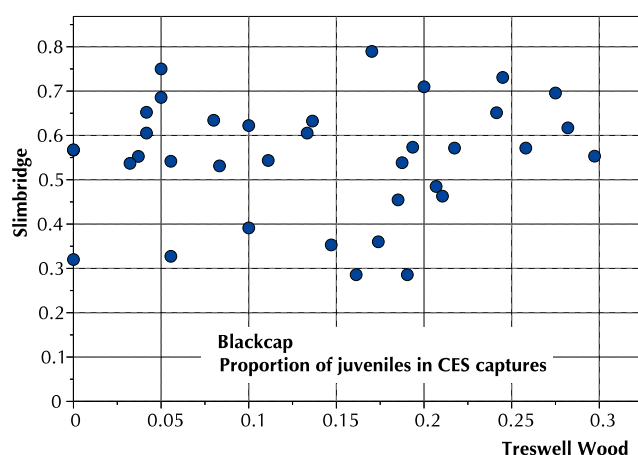
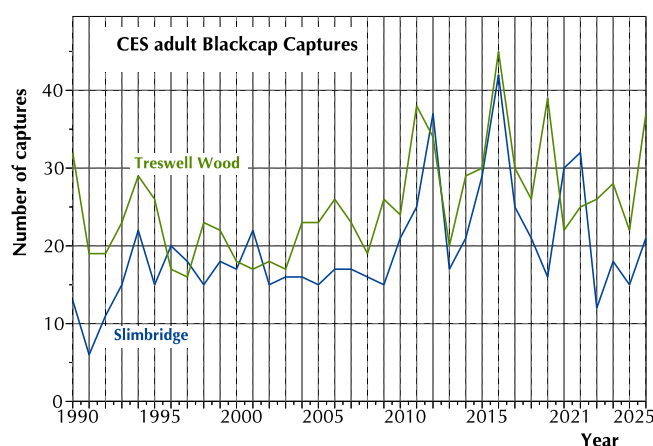
Predation at nestboxes has been minimal. Curiously a large number of Dormouse boxes have been attacked, probably by Grey Squirrels. These boxes were a new design which used marine plywood. It was the boxes themselves which were attacked rather than the contents, in fact several were empty but still attacked. We have very few had such attacks on empty bird boxes but we have never used plywood for them - scrap wood from pallets or similar is cheaper. Phil May commented: *I have found with my nest boxes made from fencing gravel boards that these are not touched by squirrels. However, four bat boxes that I put up made of plywood were gone within months.* We wonder if it is the glue which the squirrels are after.

Good progress has been made with uploading our historical collection of species records. All bird records (up to the end of 2024) are now safely lodged with BTO BirdTrack (and from there they will be made accessible to the National Biological Records Centre). Other species are being uploaded into iRecord. Mammals, Herpetiles, molluscs, beetles, Hymenoptera, Lepidoptera and plants have been uploaded. iRecord verifiers (always overworked) have managed to check some records and give useful feedback. Of the 4,000 non-bird records up to the end of 2024, all but 200 have been uploaded. These last few belong to various taxa including fungi, snake-flies, shield bugs and grasshoppers.

All these records, and others submitted directly by other people can be seen on the National Biodiversity Network Atlas <https://nbnatlas.org> If you are already registered with iRecord, ask to be admitted to the TWIG Activity. That gives you direct access to records from the wood - not just our records but anyone's.

Blackcaps here and there

On two occasions Blackcaps dominated the catch. We happened to mention this to Peter Kirmond and he said *It looks like it has been a good breeding season - at the CES operation at Slimbridge (running since only 1990) we have enjoyed two of the five top Blackcap catches in the last fortnight.* Was there a pattern here? Peter sent us the Slimbridge Blackcap totals for the first eight CES sessions of the year to compare with our own. We should not expect an exact correspondence - the two sites are different habitats and in different parts of the country (dry East Midlands and much wetter south-west). Treswell Wood is coppiced ancient woodland about 4km from the River Trent in the valley below and separated from it by largely arable farmland. The Slimbridge site is a long-standing planted standard trees with scrub which has grown around a duck decoy. It is under 1km from the River Severn and with continuous bankside vegetation and scrub between river and the site. Both the Trent and Severn are major bird flyways so all sort of migrants will travel along them.



There is a fair degree of correspondence between the numbers of adults captured over the years in the two sites. The first graph shows the ups and downs for both sites. (n.b. no data for 2020 - the COVID year) In spite of the differences between the sites this correspondence should not be surprising. The numbers of adults depend largely on the numbers arriving in Britain which, in turn, depends on conditions in the wintering grounds rather on conditions in the breeding grounds.

What is more interesting is the productivity (i.e. proportion of juveniles in the captures). Here there is absolutely no correlation at all - as seen in the second graph ($r^2 = 0.01$ for the statistically minded). But there is a massive difference in apparent productivity with there never being more than 30% juveniles in a season's catch at Treswell where as, at Slimbridge, this has approached 80% some years. Why the difference? It seems unlikely that adult Blackcaps at Slimbridge are so much more productive than those at Treswell. However, the number of juveniles per adult depends on both the local breeding success and also the amount of movement through the site by dispersing juveniles. Slimbridge is adjacent to the Severn flyway about 30 seconds flying time from the river. Treswell Wood is a little further away from the Trent flyway, about 5 minutes flying time. We know that there is very little movement of Blackcaps between the Trent and the wood. We have recorded only two Blackcap movements between the wood and the land immediately adjacent to the Trent (Cottam and West Burton Power Stations) in spite of the large amount of ringing that has been done there over about the same time that we have been ringing in Treswell Wood.

The massive difference between these measures of productivity is a warning about making generalisations from limited data.

Blue and Great Tit abundance and survival

The spring edition of Life Cycle (the BTO, magazine for ringers and nest recorders) gives a table of adult survival and abundance as measured by the national CES scheme. The results for the all the UK and Eastern UK are below together with the corresponding figures for our own CES operation (which contributes to the BTO scheme). The numbers represent the percentage change in the 2025 data compared with the average for the previous five years.

Species	Abundance			Survival		
	All UK	Eastern UK	Treswell Wood	All UK	Eastern UK	Treswell Wood
Blue Tit	-26 ↓	-20 ↓	+87 ↑	-18 ↓	-9 ↓	+5 ↑
Great Tit	-22 ↓	-19 ↓	-68 ↓	-1 ↓	-1 ↓	-55 ↓

With small sample sizes even one or two more, or fewer, captures can make a difference to the percentages. When dealing with small samples it may be more enlightening to look at the direction of change rather than the percentage change. Eastern England, in which the wood lies, seems broadly the same as for the whole of the UK (but this is a little misleading as far as survival is concerned because the north and west of the UK are very different indeed). For Treswell Wood Great Tits the direction of change is the same - survival and adult abundance are down. For Blue Tits, based on a very limited number of records, the picture looks brighter, particularly for adult abundance.

As with so many of the national BTO surveys, their strength lies in the number of contributions from across the country that can be combined to give a reliable overall long-term picture.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species **Age/Sex** **Ring** **Date** **Grid**
Barn Owl **5** **GY22475** **28/06/2026** **K05 in nestbox**

This is the second Barn Owl we have found roosting in a nestbox. The first was in April 2021 but it was not associated with any breeding in the wood. This one, likewise, was not roosting in the box with the young but in a box at the opposite side of the wood (but under a minute's flying time). Happily it already carried a ring. North Notts. Ringing Group had ringed it as a nestling last year in Ordsall. Barn Owls are capable of breeding when one year old. Thus it could well have been one of the breeding pair.

Tawny Owl **8** **GV72188** **21/06/2026** **C03**

Typically we mist net a Tawny Owl about once every two years. It is a welcome capture and an excellent opportunities for widening the experience of trainee ringers. We have mist-netted a total of 22, one of which was retrapped a further five times. Tawny Owls have not nested in our nestboxes this year although we do hear them frequently early in the mornings.

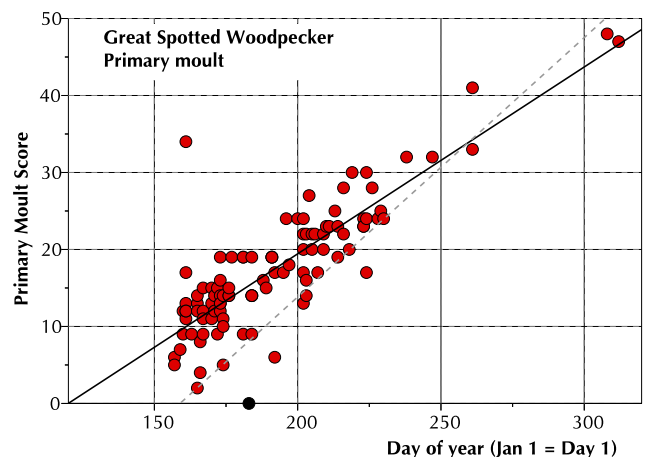
Great Spotted Woodpecker 4M **LK39135** **17/05/2026** **Q03**

Only the third of these to be caught this year just 20 minutes after LK39484 which was the second. This bird has a long recapture history - this is its 13th capture, the first being five and a half years ago in December 2020. It is only half way to the national age record of nearly 12 years. That was set in 2017 by one of our birds. In contrast to this long history, LK39484 was a newly ringed bird, also an adult male.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 3 **LK39498** **02/07/2026** **Q03**

The first juvenile woodpecker we have caught this year - it does not appear to be a good year for them overall. Woodpeckers have moult strategy which is difficult to explain how it came about. Nestlings usually begin to moult their primary feathers before they leave the nest. No one knows why. Normally when we catch recently fledged juveniles they will already be regrowing primaries. This was a first for us - it had not yet begun its primary moult.

Conventionally each of the 10 primary feathers is given a score in the range 0-5. A feather not yet dropped scores 0 and a new one, fully grown scores 5. These 10 scores are added to give a number in the range 0-50 - the Primary Moulting Score. That score is a measure of how far moult has progressed. The graph shows the moult scores for all the juveniles we have examined for moult. (The black dot represents this bird.) Even when considering that fledging



dates vary considerably between years the clustering about a line of best fit (black) is remarkably tight. The steeper, grey dotted line is that given in the BTO Moulting Guide for ringers. The data used came from the BTO Moulting Enquiry which ran from 1960 to the early 1970s. Our data are later running from the early 1980s onwards, with most since 2000. It seems that our birds are generally starting to moult earlier (presumably because of nesting earlier than in the 1960s) but also (as indicated by the gentler slope of our line) taking longer to complete the moult. Other things being equal, slower moult leads to better quality feathers. With a longer time between fledging and winter it makes sense to moult more slowly.

Marsh Tit 3J BVD0386 21/06/2026 E04

One of three juvenile Marsh Tits to be captured this year. We have not recorded any nesting in boxes but it does seem that they have bred successfully within the wood. We have caught four adults this year, two of them males in breeding condition. We wait, with interest, to see what the CBC territory mapping tells us in due course.

Blue Tit 6 ANA7942 31/05/2026 L04

Ringed as a juvenile in August 2019 this bird has now been captured by us 14 times. At nearly seven years since ringing it is only the 10th longest retrap history for the species in the wood. It needs to survive (and be retrapped) another 18 months in order to become the longevity record holder. Curiously it was retrapped in each of 2019 to 2022 inclusive but, until this capture, not seen since December 2022 - more than half its lifetime ago. Given that it is known to frequent bird feeders, we wonder where it has been during 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Blue Tit 5F BBE3495 15/05/2026 E07 On nest

This bird was ringed by Glen Thomas at Bevercoates in January, 8km SE of the wood. It is the first Blue Tit we have caught from there although we have exchanged two Bullfinches with Glen. It is now a bird in its first breeding season and was still on juvenile dispersal travels when it was ringed.

Blue Tit 3J BRH1079 31/05/2026 L00

The first recapture of the year's nestling-ringed birds always seems a significant moment - even if it is, like this bird, recaptured within 25 metres of its natal box. Two hours later it was followed by the first Great Tit nestling to be recaptured, PY79118 - that had travelled further - all of 200m. The number of recaptures of nestling ringed tits so far is lower than usual. This is partly because we have not visited the feeding station as frequently as usual and partly because there seem to be fewer juvenile tits within the wood than usual. At present we have retrapped 7/285 (2.5%) nestling ringed Blue Tits and 8/123 (6.5%) Great Tits. The recapture rate of Great Tits is, as usual by this time of year, much higher than that of Blue Tits.

Blackcap 4F BNF3289 04/05/2026 D08

A welcome arrival of a Blackcap wearing someone else's ring. It was ringed at Titchfield Haven NNR on 13/9/2024 which is 280 km south of the wood. It was, when ringed, probably on passage to its winter quarters perhaps in North Africa. Over the years we have recorded nine long distance movements of Blackcaps. Six, including this one, have been to-or-from the south coast on passage. One was from Belgium, one went to Spain and one to Morocco.

Blackcap 4F BVD0028 21/06/2026 C03

Returning adult Blackcaps, though always welcome, are not unexpected. They are very site faithful. Less common is a bird still in full juvenile plumage when ringed to be found in a subsequent year. Juveniles tend to disperse during and after their post-juvenile moult. This one, possible one reared in the wood, has come back. It was the second such returning juvenile we have encountered this year.

Whitethroat 3 BVD0436 19/07/2026 G04

This is the first Whitethroat we have captured since 2021 and only the fifth this century. They were less uncommon before that with 40 being caught in the first 26 years of the project. It was in post-juvenile moult so probably was moving away from its immediate natal area. It is a passage bird rather than sign of breeding within the wood. There were single breeding territories recorded in 2011, 2022 and 2024 but no others since 2000.

Wren 4M DRA355 31/05/2026 M00

This bird was ringed as a juvenile in 2023 and this is its first recapture. Wrens are normally most sedentary so it is no surprise that it was caught both times in the same standard site. What seems surprising for such a sedentary species is that it has not been caught between times. We have operated that standard site five times each year so why have we not retrapped it sooner?

We have often noted such cases where a bird reappears at the same place in the breeding season after long gap of two or more years. Dave Fogg commented: *You asked why birds which seem to favour a particular location in the wood may be there one year, disappear for a year or two then reappear within a few metres of where they were*

originally caught. I have a suggestion. We humans have our fixed territories and barriers between us and our neighbours - walls, fences and hedges. Birds' territories are much more flexible. We may expect birds' territories to have fixed boundaries too but I think we will find these boundaries are actually fairly flexible both between and even during each breeding season. Thus a bird whose territory includes part of a mist net ride one year or possibly even one day might not include the ride the next, even though they are still in the same area. Incidentally is this finding birds in fixed areas of the wood each year primarily of males? (And here Dave raises another question which is worth examining.)

Blackbird 3J LK39485 24/05/2026 R-2

This was the first juvenile of the year. Normally the first juvenile is a very early bird and we may not catch another one for a week or two. Today was an unusual 'London Bus' day with the first captures of juveniles of four species. In chronological order of time after this Blackbird (07:20) came a Robin (08:00), a Treecreeper (09:20) and a Dunnock (11:10).

Robin 6 AEZ3846 05/07/2026 D07

Another sedentary Robin. This is its ninth capture, the first being in November 2024. All of them, including two as a breeding adult, have been in the central 6 nets of the standard site in Nightingale Ride - a length of a little over 100 metres.

Spotted Flycatcher 3J BVD0375 14/06/2026 O06

In the 1980s Spotted Flycatchers nested in open-fronted nestboxes in the wood. After a few years nesting success dropped to zero because of predation. Grey Squirrels, probably, had learned to recognise Spotted Flycatcher nestboxes. Numbers of the species fell nationally and locally so what had been a reliable but not abundant breeding species became a rarity. The last confirmed territory recorded by the CBC was in 2012 with a possible one in 2019. Since 2010 we have caught a total of 16 birds - one a year on average. Of these, six were adults in breeding condition and only three were juveniles. That lack of juveniles does point towards continued low breeding success. Spotted Flycatchers prefer to nest on a platform with a good lookout and clear approach path. Unfortunately that can make their nests very obvious to predators.

10-Week Summary: 2026 Interval 3, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Tawny Owl	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	.	3	.	.	.	3
Marsh Tit	.	.	3	.	1	.	4
Blue Tit	.	2	5	.	2	3	12
Great Tit	.	1	5	1	2	2	11
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Willow Warbler	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Chiffchaff	9	.	3	1	.	.	13
Blackcap	14	.	12	5	.	.	31
Whitethroat	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Wren	1	6	5	5	2	.	19
Treecreeper	1	1	9	4	.	1	16
Blackbird	6	4	6	8	1	.	25
Song Thrush	2	3	.	3	.	.	8
Spotted Flycatcher	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Robin	1	7	20	5	.	.	33
Dunnock	3	2	.	8	.	.	13
Chaffinch	.	1	.	1	.	.	2
Bullfinch	1	1	.	1	1	.	4
Totals	41	28	74	42	9	6	200