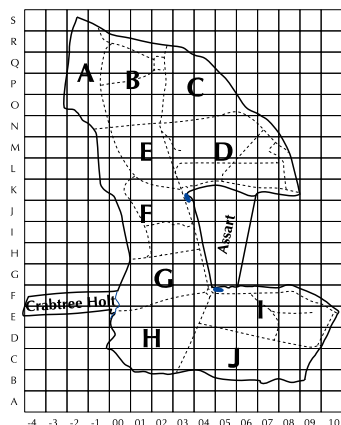




TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2026 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC

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Nest Records

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Ringling

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**2026/1
Number
156**



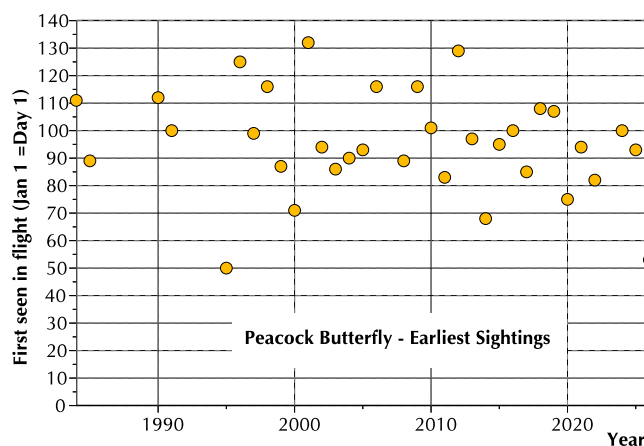
It has been a difficult start to the year with our first visit delayed until the 24th January because of the weather. This was the latest first visit of the year to the wood - the previous latest being 15th January in 1989. Today's weather forecasts are so much more detailed than when the Treswell Wood project began, but are still far from perfect. Perhaps the most frustrating event was on March 1st. For the previous few days the forecast had been for wind and rain making ringing unworkable. Even on Saturday evening the forecast for next day was bad so an unusually large ringing team was stood down. Overnight the forecast suddenly changed and we awoke to weather which would have been workable. Our last visit to complete the first ten week period was a week late, in spite of managing a couple of mid-week visits in March and one covering two standard sites. The BTO Winter Ringling Project should have been easy to complete with just three nets set at the feeding station for three hours every two weeks. The weather prevented us from fulfilling those apparently easy demands.

Appropriately, in recognition of the standing water in parts of the wood, we caught a Mallard on the last visit - a first for the wood although they have often been seen before. In spite of the problems, the total standard site catch of 108 over the ten week period was above the long term mean of 91. The first Chiffchaffs have arrived in the wood, but have so far avoided the nets. Occasionally we have caught a Chiffchaff before we hear them but, on average, it is about 11 days between the first time we hear them and the first mist net capture.

The Wildlife trust has been felling all the ash adjacent to the rides still open to the public as a safety measure, and this has changed the surrounds of two of our standard netting rides, it will be interesting to see if this affects the catches in the future. The felling appears more dramatic than normal coppicing. We hope the remaining vegetation, now with more light and room to expand will rapidly fill the gaps, at least to mist net height.

In spite of the weather, which has been wet and windy rather than cold, we have seen Peacock and Brimstone butterflies on the wing very early. The Peacock was seen on February 22nd - just one day later than its earliest ever in 1995. The Brimstone was the earliest, a week ahead of last year's event which, itself was some 10 days earlier than ever before. Interestingly the Brimstone, almost always the first butterfly to be seen, appeared three days after the Peacock.

The CBC, breeding territory season is upon us. We have yet to find someone to take over the long-serving George Hudson's patch. If you are interested and able to take part in this very-long standing monitoring operation please contact us.



Treswell Wood Bullfinches - continued

Ian Newton's work on Treswell Wood Bullfinch demography is nearing completion. We enjoyed an on-line meeting with him in late February. We agreed that there were more Bullfinch aspects which we could look at. However as his work was almost complete it would be best to work on a another, separate paper about them rather than delaying submission of his nearly completed work.

Other aspects we will look at include movements within the wood and any relationship between deer numbers and Bullfinch numbers. This aspect will relate to habitat change (see the paragraph on Natural England's assessment of the condition of the woodland habitat). Our fixed point photographs may be able to be used in some way to throw light on this.

We will also trawl through all issues of TWITTER to see if any references to Bullfinches suggest more lines of enquiry. We wonder whether any useful ideas about Bullfinches were given in the paragraphs we called 'Thoughts of Chairman John' in the days when he was still with us.

There are opportunities to share in this work - do not be afraid to ask.

Habitat quality - Natural England assessment

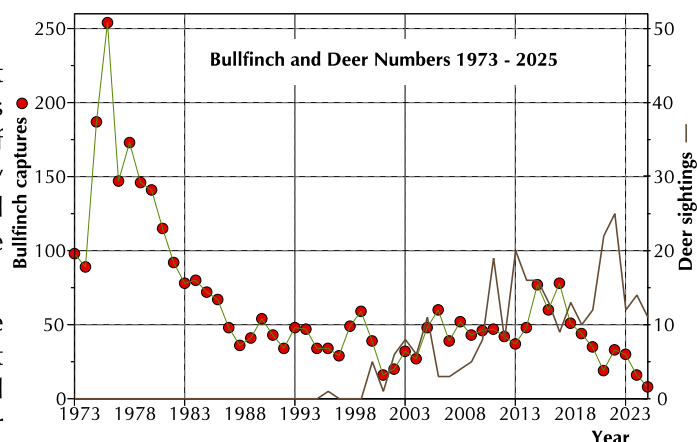
Tom Biddulph, the NWT's Reserve Ranger reports that Natural England has assessed the reserve as 'Unfavourable: Declining' because of the lack of recruitment to the understorey. This is attributed chiefly to excessive browsing pressure caused by deer (Roe and Muntjac) and, to a lesser extent, the effects of climate change.

The Trust has been aware of the problem for some time and has been taking some measures. All newly cut eight-year rotation coppice compartments are protected either by erecting deer fencing around the perimeter for a period of 24 months, or "brashing over" stools to protect new growth in longer rotation compartments. This began in 2023.

Deer culling resumed in 2021, after a period where none had taken place. NE recommend this effort is increased and will apparently be changing legislation and creating new funding streams which may help to facilitate this. NE were fully supportive and appreciative of the mitigation we are undertaking, without which the condition of the wood would be much worse.

Really though it is a national problem that can only be successfully remedied through a concerted effort at much larger scales. While culling may remove individuals within the wood, this undoubtedly creates a vacuum with animals moving in to take their place from the surrounding area - land over which NWT has no control.

Ian Newton, on a recent visit, noted that the understorey in the wood was still much more healthy than in many woodlands - the healthy understorey being important for Bullfinches. In the wood Bullfinches had already declined in number but over recent years in particular. The graph shows the numbers we have ringed over the years together with the number of casual deer sightings recorded. Bullfinches were already in decline when the first deer appeared in the wood. That decline was in line with the rest of the country. This was described in the 1991 BTO Breeding Bird Atlas and was attributed to hedgerow loss and other changes in agricultural practices. The subsequent serious habitat decline caused by grazing deer has been a gradual process and impacts on bird life also gradual. The picture for Bullfinches is much the same as that for Marsh TITS described in the previous issue of TWITTER.



New owl nestboxes

In the last issue of TWITTER we paid tribute to the late Richard Johnson and said that the proceeds from the retiring collection at his funeral, generously donated to the project by his family, would include funding of new wood for producing owl boxes. Our existing boxes formed an ageing, eclectic assemblage and replacements were sorely needed. The new boxes have been designed to make inspection, ringing young and cleaning as simple and quick as possible. The picture shows one but does not do justice to the cunning design to aid end-of-season cleaning.

We had affectionately referred to Richard as Axledeep after an occasion when he kindly moved his car from the ride into the verge to let other vehicles pass. Alas, the grass verge was deceptively soft and muddy. Hence the soubriquet, Axledeep. In his memory these boxes are now known as the Axledeep design. We know he would be both amused by, and delighted with, his boxes.

Mist nets for mending

Mist nets sometimes need repair. It is a job best done on a calm, warm day on a lawn with no overhanging vegetation. Over the years, John McMeeking had removed mist nets from use when they needed repair and stored them in his garage, replacing them with new nets. It was only when we suggested we could mend some nets that his collection of nets for mending emerged (not all at once). The backlog of nets for mending was big. We did have some net-mending parties but did not manage to keep up with normal wear and tear. We had also recently inherited some nets from retiring ringers and some of these, of course, needed attention. At the peak I think we had around 100 nets of various types and lengths in various states of disrepair. The recently inherited nets included some in very good repair and these have gone straight into our stock of useable nets. That left the 'needing

attention' heap. Far too many for us to contemplate mending ourselves, particularly with the number of inherited 'new' nets. Some were of the superfine material which is not robust enough to withstand the hazards of dense woodland. What to do with enough nets to challenge the boot space of a typical family saloon car?

Happily, through various contacts we are able to donate these nets to other ringers who can make use of them. We are particularly grateful to Alderney Bird Observatory for taking about half the nets which they will use on their bird ringing training courses. When conditions are too wet or windy for mist netting it will be net mending training. The observatory has a secret weapon that enables net mending in these adverse weather conditions - permanent access to a nearby aircraft hangar. We are grateful to Matt Scragg the ABO warden for making such productive use of these mist nets.

We still have a handful of assorted nets which we cannot use in the wood if anyone can make use of them.

Species records - BirdTrack and iRecord

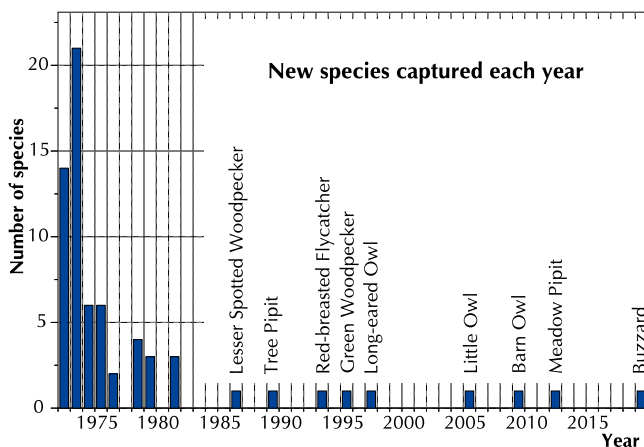
We have now registered with BTO BirdTrack so that we can submit all our casual sightings of birds where they will be freely available. All our records up to the end of 2024 are now safely lodged there. Subsequent records will be submitted as time goes on. At the recent BTO Conference, in the Atlas session, it was stressed that BirdTrack records form one of the sources from which the next bird atlas will be assembled. That is an advance from previous atlases where our casual records had not been submitted - then only our ringing data and nest record data had been incorporated.

We have yet to set up an Activity in iRecord for non-bird species records - that is the next big data operation to deal with.

Noteworthy Encounters

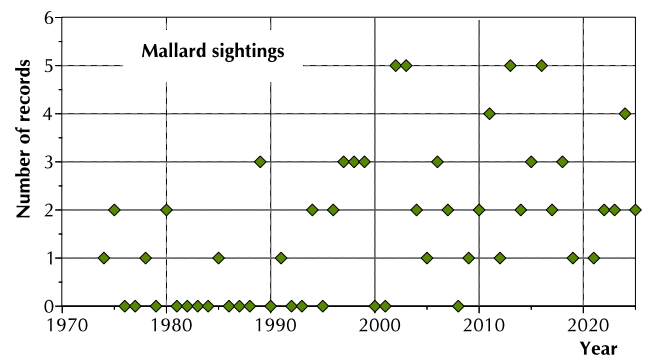
Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Mallard	6M	GV72183	14/3/2026	K00

The 71st species to be ringed in the wood. Our previous new species was the Buzzard in 2019. The graph, reproduced from TWITTER of May 2019 (issue 122) shows the timing of ringing new species. The difference in



circumstances between these most recent firsts is stark. When we began ringing in the wood Buzzards were infrequent vagrants in Nottinghamshire. The first confirmed breeding in the county was in the late 1980s. We recorded Buzzard sightings in the wood and these increased over the years so it was no surprise when we caught one - more have followed. The Mallard, on the other hand, has been with us all along. We even managed to record one unsuccessful nesting attempt in 1994 - well away from any pond. The graph shows our casual records over the years. In the early years we probably were less diligent about recording sightings and that explains the years with no records, but over the last 25 years there is no apparent increase. So why

catch one now? It was an unusual combination of circumstances. After the rainfall over the past few months a wellington-challenging pool had formed under one of our standard site nets. The previous week two Mallards had been seen on the pool. By chance it was then the turn of this standard site and the Mallards were still using the pool. Even that was not enough. One Mallard struck the mist net just as we were doing a net checking round. Birds of that size are not entangled in mist nets and can usually just walk out - but with a ringer on the spot it had no time to escape. Unlike the Buzzard capture, this Mallard is unlikely to herald further captures of the species.



Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Redwing	6	RW74354	24/1/2026	Q01

Only the second Redwing of the winter and quite probably the last - now that spring is here. Normally we expect about four Redwing captures over the winter. Perhaps it has been a bad year for them; the lack of ringing visits will also have played a part.

Robin 6 AEZ3446 10/3/2026 N00

Robins are are very territorial - although they may shift territories in winter before returning next breeding season. Often, like most small birds, they will move some distance from their natal site before finding a suitable place to establish a territory.. How far do some move? In this case not very far at all. It was ringed in August 2025 having completed its post-juvenile moult so may have already moved some distance from its natal site. In November it was encountered under 50 metres away and now, in mid-March it is encountered again in exactly the same net as on its previous capture.

Goldcrest 6M RCA519 1/2/2026 O06

Ringed in December 2024 this is one of our infrequent between-winter retraps of this short-lived, largely-migratory species. Of the 30 Goldcrests we typically ring annually only 1.5% are re-encountered in a subsequent winter.

Treecreeper 6 JTE653 10/3/2026 N01

This is the seventh encounter since we ringed the bird 5y 186d ago. It has always been in compartment E (see map at top left of page 1) or immediately adjacent to it. This is an unusually small area for this species which normally roves much more widely within the wood. Treecreepers are relatively long-lived for such a small bird so, even at this age, it is only the 9th oldest we have recorded.

Treecreeper 6 JTE978 22/2/2026 D08

This Treecreeper was ringed as a juvenile in 2022 in the very North of wood. Its subsequent captures, all since it moulted out its juvenile plumage, have been well in the south of the wood. This seems to be typical for our Treecreepers - spend the juvenile time in the North of the wood and then use the southern part during adulthood - or vice versa. We only very rarely catch an adult Treecreeper both North and South of the line separating compartments F and G.

Dunnock TY35424 6 1/2/2026 M07

Nothing special normally about a Dunnock retrap in exactly the same net it had been ringed. What is odd about this one is that the capture position is on a standard site, visited five times a year. This bird is of a normally very sedentary species. It was ringed almost exactly three years earlier but had not been retrapped since. Curiously a Blackbird, LK39354 was also retrapped in the same set of standard site nets on that day, having been ringed in an adjacent net two years earlier and not seen since.

10-Week Summary: 2026 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Mallard	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	15	.	5	6	.	26
Great Tit	.	6	.	3	5	.	14
Long-tailed Tit	3	.	.	3	.	.	6
Goldcrest	1	.	.	3	.	.	4
Wren	3	.	.	4	1	.	8
Treecreeper	2	3	.	3	.	.	8
Blackbird	6	9	.	3	.	.	18
Redwing	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Song Thrush	.	2	.	1	.	.	3
Robin	2	.	.	4	3	.	9
Dunnock	2	1	.	3	.	.	6
Chaffinch	2	.	.	.	.	.	2
Bullfinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Totals	23	38	.	32	15	.	108