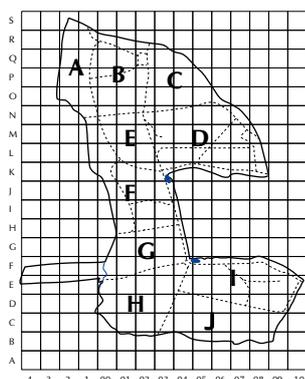


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2011 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

All projects by permission of NWT

Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark & John McMeeking

2011/1

Number 81



With winter still fresh in our minds, we might wonder how the weeks of very cold temperature and snow cover have impacted on the birds. Our ten-week total of standardised captures is, surprisingly, just a little above average. This total, however, masks some differences between species - several of these are commented upon in the Interesting Recaptures section. No doubt we will be in for more surprises as the 2011 breeding season unfolds. Serious though the immediate effects may be on individual birds - bringing death by cold or starvation to many - the effect on the total population will have some positive aspects. Where survival has been low, populations will be left with abundant resources and little competition, leaving the survivors, which are generally the fittest individuals, plenty of opportunity for a productive breeding season. Predator numbers may be down. Summer visitors, which have not suffered the severe winter here, will arrive to find less pressure on resources and they, too, may be able to enjoy a productive season. Time will tell.

For some reason, we seem to have more analyses in progress than we have had for some time - this is very good news. It is a pity to have such a large, long-term and well curated data set not being used. With Andrew MacColl at Nottingham University we are examining the effects of coppice management on bird species abundance. Andrew's analytical expertise seems to be working where our own talents had not led us all that far. Abigail Hearn, a third-year student at Nottingham, is looking at territories of the smaller titmice, trying to assign individual birds to known territories. With Charles Deeming, at Lincoln University, we are looking at the distances that birds forage for nest lining material. Again, this work is at a fairly advanced stage. Sophie Bennett, a PhD student at Lincoln, hopes to look at insect species diversity variation with coppice age which would complement our studies with Andrew MacColl. And, finally, Robin Ward who wrote the paper on ageing Wrens with Richard (du Feu) will be working again with Richard and John (Clark) to examine what Treecreeper total head lengths can tell us.

Congratulations are in order for Ben Bower, who went to St. James Palace in January to receive his Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. Why is this of interest to us? Bird ringing with us was used as a part of the qualification. It fulfilled part of the residential requirement (a Wash Wader session, showing the ability to work with a new group of people from different backgrounds), and the skills development section (showing his long term commitment to developing new skills). Even better is the fact that he is continuing with bird ringing and is a really useful member of our team. He even has the ability (impressively displayed at least once) to drop a mist net on the woodland floor then pick it up without any attached leaves or twigs - a skill we would all like to learn.

Congratulations also are due to Keith Stedman who has been awarded his C permit.

Many of you will know that John McMeeking suffered a minor stroke (known as a TIA) early this year - he thanks all of you who have sent good wishes to him. During his recovery it was found that he was suffering from fluid on the brain - Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus - and it was this which has been the cause of his decreasing mobility. He has undergone surgery for this and seems to be making a rapid recovery. He hopes to be back in action in the wood later this year.

The BTO Atlas appeal - we are still some way short of our £2,000 to sponsor the Treecreeper account as we enter the last breeding season of the Atlas project. Any further contributions to Graham Appleton at the BTO or on the Just Giving website will be welcome. Mark any contributions to Graham specifically for the Treecreeper.

Treswell Wood Common Bird Census 2010

After a delay resulting from the November snow, the Common Bird Census analysis has been completed by Richard Thewliss at the BTO. The maps are still in Thetford but the territory count data are given in the table on page 2. Thanks to all those involved in the CBC team for enabling yet another year of territory mapping to be done - an unbroken sequence of territory mapping since 1973. Richard will welcome any comments and observations from CBC observers that might throw light on these changes.

Richard commented: *There are some intriguing results from this years analysis which result from more than just*

Treswell Wood CBC - 2010 Results

Species	Averages						Recent Annual Totals			
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95	96...00	01...05	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0	1	0	p
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.6	1	0	0	p
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	p	1	p	1
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7	0	1	0	p
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	p	0	0	0
Grey Partridge	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	p	0	0	0
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.0	8.6	8	7	8	7
Golden Pheasant	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	0
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.0	1	1	1	p
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	7.0	1	2	2	7
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	nc	1	nc	nc	nc
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	0
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	0
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	p	0	0	p
Barn Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0	0	p	0
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1.4	3.0	1	3	1	1
Green Woodpecker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.6	1	3	3	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	5.6	4	10	7	6
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Skylark	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	4	3	0	0
Swallow	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Pied Wagtail	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0	0	0	0
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	81.8	76.4	69	67	66	106
Dunnock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	12.6	8.4	11	16	7	10
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	54.0	81.4	85	82	75	51
Wheatear	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	p	p	p
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25.2	27.0	32	35	36	32
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	5.6	6.8	13	12	7	12
Fieldfare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p	0	0	2
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.0	2.8	5	7	4	0
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.2	0	0	p	0
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	6.8	3	6	1	6
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	25.4	27.2	25	28	23	22
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	19.0	18.6	31	27	20	22
Willow Warbler	27.6	44.0	31.4	18.2	6.8	5.0	p	p	4	6
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	0
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	p
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.0	8.2	8	7	4	3
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.2	2.1	p	1	p	3
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.5	p	p	1	p
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7.4	6.4	3	6	2	4
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	70.0	50.6	40	48	32	52
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35.2	46.8	27	31	33	43
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.2	3	3	0	4
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	3.6	3.1	2	4	0	3
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	1.9	p	1	1	3
Jackdaw	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Carrion Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.7	2	1	2	1
Starling	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0	0	0	0
House Sparrow	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p	1	p	0
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	40.6	48.8	42	42	40	62
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.8	0.7	1	p	p	p
Goldfinch	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	p	1	p	0
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0.6	1.8	3	3	1	1
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0	0	p	p
Reed Bunting	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total territories	457.4	457.0	437.6	386.2	426.8	464.8	422	460	381	471

chance. Most species have undergone little or no change, but there have been the following from 2009 to 2010: Willow Warblers increased slightly 4 to 6 territories; Chaffinches increased massively 40 to 62 territories; Wrens increased massively from 66 to 106 territories whilst Robins declined somewhat from 75 to 51.

The increases in Wren and Chaffinch are inexplicable given that we had such a severe winter in 09/10. I was expecting declines here - any suggestions? My analysis method would have been the same.

I expect the 2011 CBC will show a crash in Wren numbers as it will have been two severe winters in a row. Maybe you have supplementary feeding for your Wrens, or maybe they are immune to the cold (thermal undies or something)... Robins - these do seem to have declined, densities are sparser and there are fewer registrations overall and absence in many parts of the wood compared with 2009. Chaffinches and Wrens - there are lot more registrations in areas that were just blank paper last year, so it suggests an increase.

CBC observers, past and present, will be delighted to know that their work is proving very useful in the study of species diversity in relation to coppice age. Obviously the numbers of birds captured varies with many things, not just the coppice age. The abundance of a species in a particular year will clearly have a big impact on captures. We therefore needed an independent measure of species abundance in each year to be able to control for the effects of varying populations. The obvious solution was to use the numbers of territories recorded in the CBC. Thanks to all who have been involved over the years. We call ourselves an integrated population monitoring group and this combined use of ringing and CBC data is what the integrated bit is all about.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5F	CT84438	27/2/2011	F-1

In the previous issue of Twitter we noted Ken Smith's appeal for bill measurements on this species. Naturally, once this appeal was published, our birds seemed to avoid capture. After two months without any captures, this was the first on which we have made the two bill measurements. It was followed closely by a second, retrapped, individual which has also had its bill biometrics recorded. That is two individuals measured - together now representing about 10% of such usable records on the BTO ringing database.

Wren	5	CXN263	27/2/2011	E02
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This was the first Wren to be captured this year. On the same day we also caught two more, like this one both were first winter birds. It is not surprising that few have been caught. Past experience in cold winters has usually shown massive mortality of resident Wrens followed by recolonisation by birds which are apparently new to the wood. Oddly, in spite of the severe winter of 2009/2010 with its following cold, long spring, the Wren population in the wood did not seem to suffer, with 2010 captures being slightly up on those of 2009. The CBC numbers showed a much larger increase. This winter, though, seems to have hit the Wrens much harder. The Wren capture total for January and February is about half the average number, although with such small sample numbers it would be unwise to attribute any significance to this. Typically we have half the January and February birds being retraps - so the one retrap in three birds should not be regarded as a significant departure from normal.

Robin	5	X649840	2/1/11	R-1
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The number of Robins captured so far this year is a little over half the typical number - it would appear that the winter has had an effect. Of more interest is the breakdown of the captures. Normally 30% of our captures at this time are of ringed birds. This year 80% of the captures have been of new birds. The age structure, too, is rather different with all 11 birds caught being first-winter birds. The typical figure is about 60% first-winter birds. This is odd because it might be expected that older birds survive better than the younger, less experienced ones. It may be that, like we suspect with Wrens, older birds have remained in the wood in their known territories only to starve or freeze to death. Meanwhile roving younger birds, not yet with territories, have survived better in villages with abundant food provided by householders. As the winter ends these young survivors begin to spread to prime woodland breeding habitat. Of course, it could be that the experienced adults have done a thrush-like migration to nearby villages and are waiting until they are certain the bad weather has ended before returning to the wood where they will be able to re-establish former territories. Watch this space.

Song Thrush	5	RS78277	9/1/2011	M07
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Song Thrushes have traditionally departed from the wood in autumn to return early in the following spring. In a sense they are the first of the summer migrants - though we suspect their migration takes them little further than nearby towns and villages. This is our first Song Thrush of the year, the first honorary migrant and the harbinger of spring.

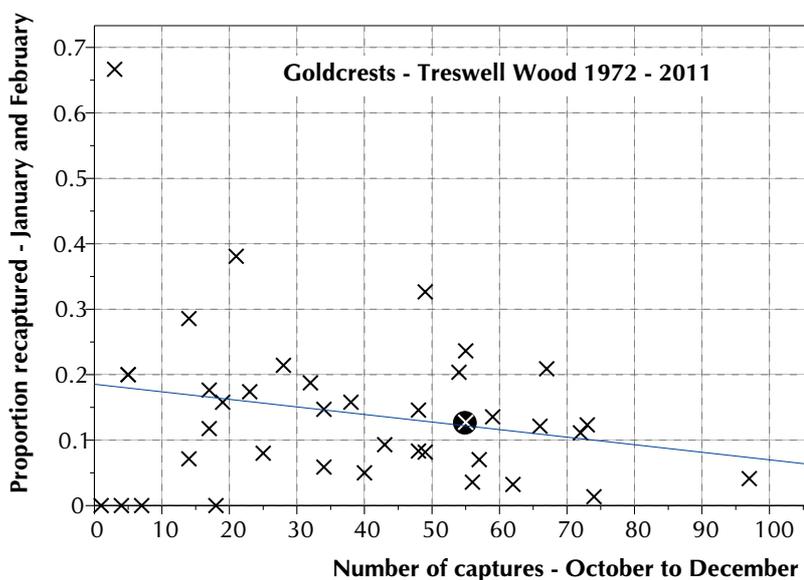
Redwing	5	RS78275	2/1/2011	R-1
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Our first Redwing of the year, although we did catch three last autumn just before the big freeze. They are most

attractive birds in the hand. Happily, it was caught with a second, older bird allowing helpful comparison of ageing features. Svensson, the standard ageing guide is very helpful indeed - but two such birds together in the hand make the notes in the guide fall into place. This winter has been the best for the species since 2003. Prior to that we had not trapped as many in one winter since the mid 1970s (and many of those were caught at the adjacent farm rather than in the wood itself).

Goldcrest **5M** **CXN414** **6/2/2011** **P01**

In spite of the long-lasting cold and snow cover, a good number of the Goldcrests we ringed in the autumn have survived - this bird is one of them. The number of Goldcrests captured in the autumn varies immensely from year to year - the lowest being just one in 1979 and the highest 97 in 2006. Autumn 2010 was well above average with 55 captures. This figure probably under-represents the autumn migration to Britain because we made fewer visits to the wood than usual in late November and December because of the severe weather. With this very cold winter we would expect the tiny Goldcrests to have suffered massive mortality. But this does not seem to be so. Overall the January and February recaptures are 12% of the autumn captures; in 2011 it was a fraction above average at 13%. But there seems to be more going on than just weather related mortality. The graph shows the number of Goldcrests recaptured in January and February as a proportion of the number of autumn captures of Goldcrests. The results are nearly statistically significant and suggest a density dependent effect - the more captures, the lower the mid-winter survival. It could be that higher autumn abundance goes with higher winter mobility so we are seeing lower winter site-faithfulness rather than higher mortality. Whatever the cause, though, it appears that there is likely to be a density dependent effect. Again, in spite of the very severe weather, the winter survival rate has been what might be expected in a normal winter (the 2010/2011 point is plotted as a white cross on a black circle).

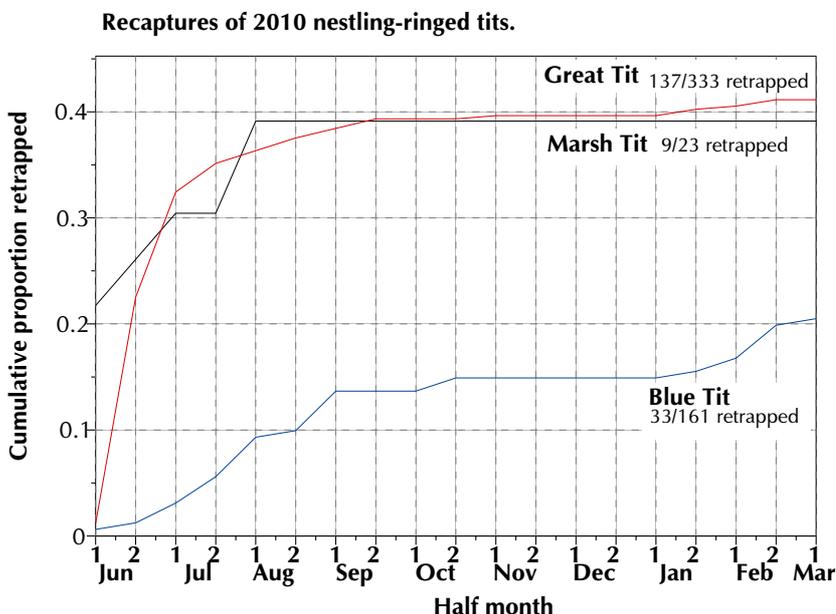


Coal Tit **4** **V053971** **9/1/2011** **Q02 Feeder**

A good age for this small species - we ringed this individual in October 2006. It has been captured every year since then although its previous capture was as long ago as February 2010. It is a survivor having lasted through the last two very bad winters.

Blue Tit **5** **V666944** **2/3/2011** **Q02 Feeder**

The first recapture of this individual since it was ringed in the nest last year. In spite of the large number of nestling-ringed birds captured during the late summer and autumn, 'new' individuals still appear frequently. The graph shows the very different patterns of retrapping after fledging for the three tit species which nested in boxes in 2010. Both Great Tits and Marsh Tits appeared at the feeders and elsewhere in the wood very rapidly after fledging with only a very few 'first timers' after September. Each spring we have an influx of Blue and Great Tits; this year is no exception. The Blue Tits have included several of our nestling-ringed birds which we had not retrapped before whereas very few additional Great Tits returned. The total recapture rate for nestling-ringed birds is high in the case of Blue Tits and exceptionally high for the other two species.



Great Tit 6F R558567 2/1/2011 P00

The oldest Great Tit we have captured recently - four and a half years since being ringed. It was trapped at the same time and in the same net as R558893, a male with a ringing history some two months shorter. A long-standing pair we might wonder? Also caught with this 'pair' was R558998, another female of similar vintage. Maybe a ménage à trois?

Great Tit 5F TJ49872 21/2/2011 P00 Roosting

One of three Great Tits which have been found roosting on all four of our monthly winter visits to nestboxes. All three have always roosted in the same areas, often in the same nestboxes as before. Remarkably, two of them - this one and male bird TJ49871, are siblings.

Great Tit 6F X649159 2/1/2011 P00

This Great Tit was ringed as a juvenile in July 2009. Shortly afterwards it appeared at Hillcrest Farm, Treswell. It was recaptured there again in August 2009 and in September 2010. Now it has reappeared again in the wood, apparently as part of our annual spring influx.

Treecreeper 6 AXL483 20/2/2011 N-1

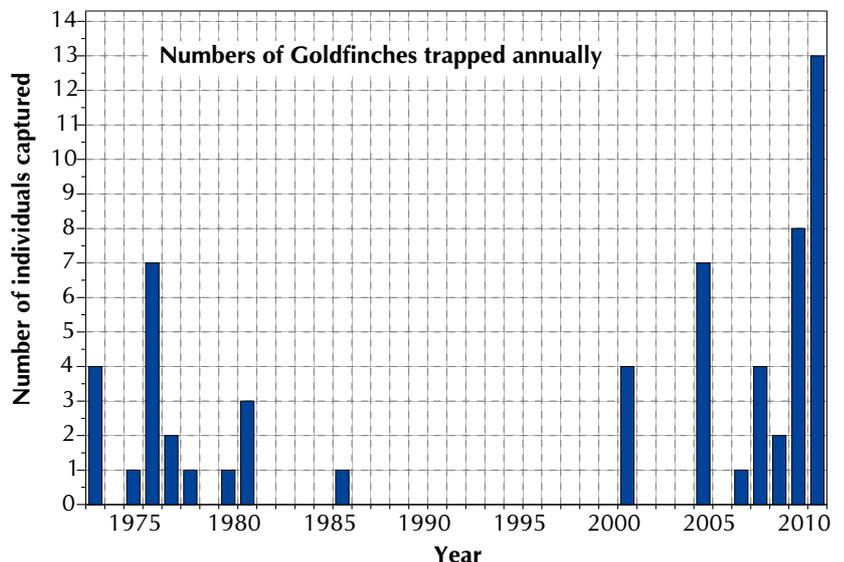
The long, cold winter which seems to have treated Wrens so severely may not have proved so difficult for this species. Probably the dryness and consequent lack of glazing on tree trunks will have allowed Treecreepers continued access to live food. We have, alas, not recaptured our old friend, 5Z1452 for nearly a year so it looks as if it did not survive the previous winter. This bird, a male, was ringed as a juvenile in 2006. To have hope of becoming the oldest known Treecreeper, this bird will need to last another three years. Also caught at the same time, but in an adjacent net was female BYP661 now also nearly 5 years old.

Jay 6 DA51861 2/1/2011 R00

A recapture of a bird first trapped in October 2010. We have now captured a total of 79 Jays. This bird is the 28th of those to be recaptured or recovered.

Goldfinch 6 X649464 9/1/2011 Q02 Feeder

The increased captures of Goldfinches in the wood mirrors the increase locally and nationally. At last, we have captured more than just the odd one or two. This one is our first recent recapture - a bird ringed in March 2010. A total of 6 individuals were trapped on 20th February - more than the annual total for all but three past years. Why are capture numbers increasing so rapidly? It cannot be only the provision of niger seed in the wood for it is only in the past few months that they have begun to use it to any great degree. Furthermore we see and hear the species all over the wood, well away from the feeders, far more frequently than a few years ago.



Andy Lowe has suggested that the numbers of tail feathers with white spots can be used as an aid to sexing. Outer three feathers with spots will be a male; outer feather only will female. Only a few birds have two outer feathers with spots. We have looked at the birds we have caught since then Andy mentioned the tail spots. Some Goldfinches are easy to sex on the amount of red on the crown. However, based on the few birds looked at so far, the ones that are hard to sex on red-head are the very same as those with the indeterminate two-spotted tail feathers. Murphy's Law in action again. (Incidentally, some time ago we did examine the shape and size of the white spot on the outer tail feather - a few minutes in the skin collection of the Natural History Museum soon showed that our speculation that these could be used for sexing was entirely without foundation.)

Controls and Recoveries

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Kestrel	2	ET87920	2/3/2011	Retford

We have only ringed 15 Kestrels in total and, of these, only three have been retrapped in the wood. This is the first

to be reported elsewhere. Sadly it was struck by a train and killed. However, it has had a respectably long life, having been ringed in the wood as a first-winter bird in February 2003. Eight years as a full-time rodent control officer is a record not to be sneezed at.

Barn Owl **5** **GC65282** **8/7/2010** **Upton**

Our first report of any Barn Owl we have ringed. It is one of just three that fledged from a nestbox at Forwood Farm adjacent to the wood. Happily, this report is of a live recapture - half of Barn Owl recoveries and controls nationally are of road casualties. This looks like a typical local breeding dispersal movement - the national median dispersal distance is 3 km.

Chaffinch **6M** **R353829** **16/2/2011** **Q02**

Found very freshly dead at the feeding station with no apparent injuries or disease and not underweight. It was ringed in 2005 and recaptured twice in 2005 and 2006. Since then no sign of it in spite of the many times that nets have been set at the feeders. Where do these Chaffinches go? And what makes them return?

Blue Tit **5** **X649831** **6/1/2011** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

An interesting local wanderer. It was ringed as a first year bird in the wood on 10th October last year. Ten days after this capture in Treswell village we retrapped it again in the wood.

Great Tit **5F** **TJ49751** **27/2/2011** **F-1**

Another wood/village commuter or short-distance migrant. This is one of the woodland nestbox birds which was first recaptured at Hillcrest Farm in July, still in juvenile plumage. It was last captured there in January and is now back in the wood. We often speculate about the origins of the 'new to the wood' birds which appear in spring. Had we not ringed this bird in the nest it would appear to have been a village bird new to the wood in the early spring. As it is we know this 'new' bird is, in fact, a native. With an almost identical history was TJ49984 - nestling-ringed in the wood but first retrapped at Hillcrest Farm on the same day as TJ49751 and recaptured back in the wood at the end of January.

10 Week Summary 2011 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Robin	.	1	.	.	2	.	3
Blackbird	2	5	.	5	.	.	12
Song Thrush	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Redwing	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Goldcrest	.	1	.	1	7	.	9
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	13	.	.	13
Coal Tit	.	.	.	.	1	.	1
Blue Tit	.	5	.	5	8	.	18
Great Tit	.	5	.	8	11	.	24
Nuthatch	1	.	.	2	.	.	3
Treecreeper	1	1	.	4	2	.	8
Jay	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Totals	5	21	.	39	31	.	96

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week periods - Summary table

Recent years:

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:						
Maximum	128	145	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	94	68	59	364
Mean	90	108	162	133	125	619

10-year Averages since standard site netting began in 1978:

1978 - 1987	90	113	182	140	130	655
1988 - 1997	86	107	170	149	127	637
1998 - 2007	95	100	134	120	125	574