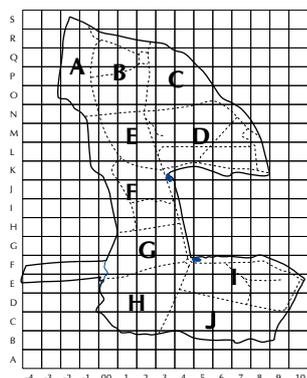


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 2003 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

All projects by permission of NWT

Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John McMeeking

2003/5

Number 45



The past year has seen the development of a rather stronger team than we have enjoyed for some time. We are most grateful for the continued support of so many old friends and new regulars. In addition to making a rather more thorough job of recording events in the large number of dormouse boxes, we have managed to keep up-to-date with data entry and also made some progress with entering the backlog of miscellaneous field notes. All seems to be promising well for 2004 for nest recording, CBC and ringing. Many thanks to all who have helped. Our data set is well known nationally and I do not think there is any other long-term data set as comprehensive as ours, nor one so thoroughly committed to computer media. Nevertheless, there remains a good deal of archival background data to be entered and any more volunteers for this work will be welcomed.

2003 Bird Ringing Year Summary

	Ctrl	New Birds		Pulli	Retraps		Sight	Recvs	Othr	Total
		Adult	Juvnl		Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	.	2	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Kestrel	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Stock Dove	.	.	.	5	.	.	.	.	.	5
Woodpigeon	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Tawny Owl	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	.	3	4	.	8	.	.	.	.	15
Wren	.	30	37	10	36	8	.	.	.	121
Dunnock	.	32	13	.	27	10	.	1	.	83
Robin	.	32	84	.	71	24	13	.	.	224
Blackbird	.	39	16	.	23	5	.	.	.	83
Fieldfare	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Song Thrush	.	13	2	.	5	1	.	.	.	21
Redwing	.	3	5	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Garden Warbler	.	2	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Blackcap	.	35	16	.	14	9	.	.	.	74
Chiffchaff	.	24	6	.	8	5	.	.	.	43
Willow Warbler	.	.	6	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Goldcrest	.	17	57	.	32	9	.	.	.	115
Long-tailed Tit	.	48	4	.	57	6	.	.	.	115
Marsh Tit	.	.	3	7	31	4	.	.	.	45
Willow Tit	1	1	6	.	47	4	.	1	.	60
Coal Tit	.	3	30	36	162	12	.	3	4	250
Blue Tit	.	63	67	90	302	23	.	3	23	571
Great Tit	4	55	39	110	277	55	.	.	9	549
Nuthatch	.	1	.	.	4	.	.	.	.	5
Treecreeper	.	2	19	.	39	3	.	.	.	63
Jay	.	3	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	5
Chaffinch	2	32	43	.	49	5	.	.	.	131
Greenfinch	1	4	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
Bullfinch	.	12	7	.	13	1	.	.	.	33
Yellowhammer	.	5	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	6
Totals	8	463	471	259	1207	184	13	8	36	2649

Key: **Ctrl** - Birds ringed elsewhere and caught in Treswell Wood or vice-versa. **Juv** - juveniles. **Pulli** - birds ringed as nestlings. **Rt** - ordinary recaptures. **SDR** - same day recaptures. **Sight** - observations of colour-ringed birds. **Recvs** - recoveries, i.e. ringed birds found dead in Treswell Wood or elsewhere. **Other** - all in this table are pulli which were ringed but died before fledging; they are not included in the Pulli column.

The end of the year always seems to be a good time to sit back and contemplate what the data gathered during the year tell us. John Clark has looked at some of our nestbox data and reports his findings later in this issue. There are of course, many other things we could look at - and if anyone has the time and inclination, please do not be afraid to ask for the data. Because of pressure of time, I have not attempted any other analyses for this issue but, hopefully, during the next few months we can attempt to do so.

Caption Competition

Thanks to all who submitted entries for the caption competition. Eric Palmer has now left the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and will be working for a commercial consultancy in the South-West. Surely it was not the embarrassment of the car-wash incident that drove him away? The winning entry was:

"Its funny that I'd never noticed the automatic car wash here before," thought Eric, "but it is good to have the car cleaned in an environmentally friendly way."



Twitter - for adults only

One of our readers found a message in her email in box saying that there was an email which had been intercepted by the blasphemy and pornography checker. She used her executive privilege to over-ride the interceptor and so was able to read the exciting material. She was also able to give us a clue about what offensive material we had published. Naturally, she could not email the exact words because they would have been intercepted by the checker on the route out. She did, however, suggest that the offensive material was the word which often came after great, blue, willow, marsh or long-tailed. This is the first time that we know of Twitter being classed as pornographic material. We wonder whether we should now increase its price and market it amongst the other top-shelf magazines. Readers who receive copies by post may like to request that we use plain, unmarked brown envelopes in future. We also hope that this month's cover picture will not cause offence.

New C-permit holders

Congratulations to Dan Bardsley and John Black, both of whom have now been awarded their C permits. We wish them well in their ringing careers and look forward to continuing working with them in their new capacity.

The 2003 Nestbox Season - an analysis by John Clark

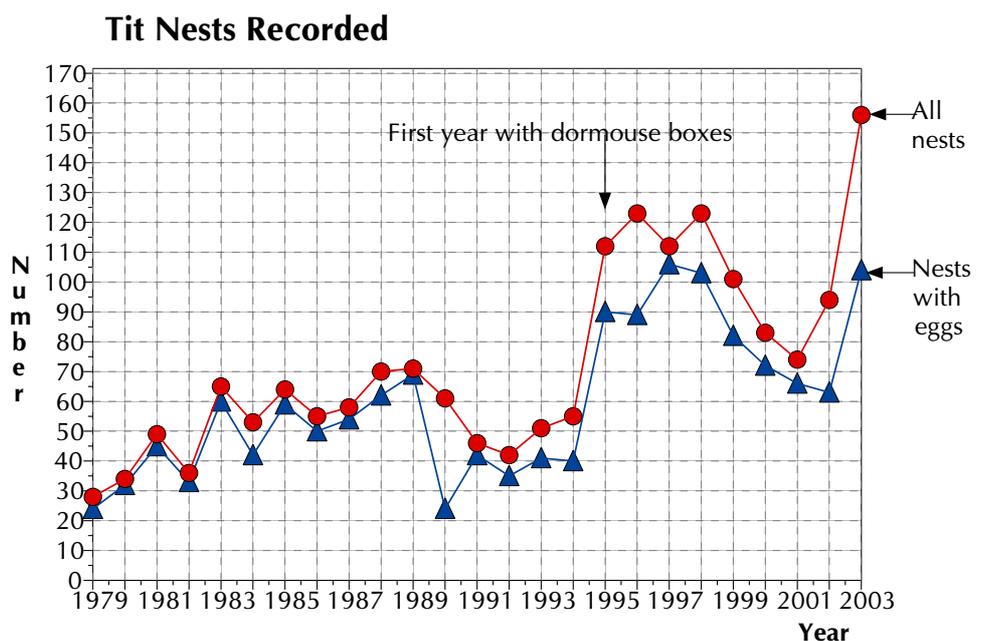
After the basic figures from the Treswell boxes were published in Twitter 2003/3 (Number 43), I thought the occasion of the 25th season deserved a bit more analysis, and a look at the trends shown in Twitter 39 (October 2002). So ...

Number of nests

In 2002 there were 184 old dormouse boxes, many of which were in poor or unusable condition. In both 2002 and 2003 there were about 130 bird nestboxes. Did the new boxes (252 of them replacing the old 184 dormouse boxes) give us more nests to record?

Fortunately they did, with 156 nests started, but only 104 nests had eggs laid in them, just below the 1997 total of 106.

Did the new boxes affect the number of birds using the 'main' set of around 100 boxes? The good news is that they do not seem to have made a difference; the number of nests in the main set for the last four years was:-



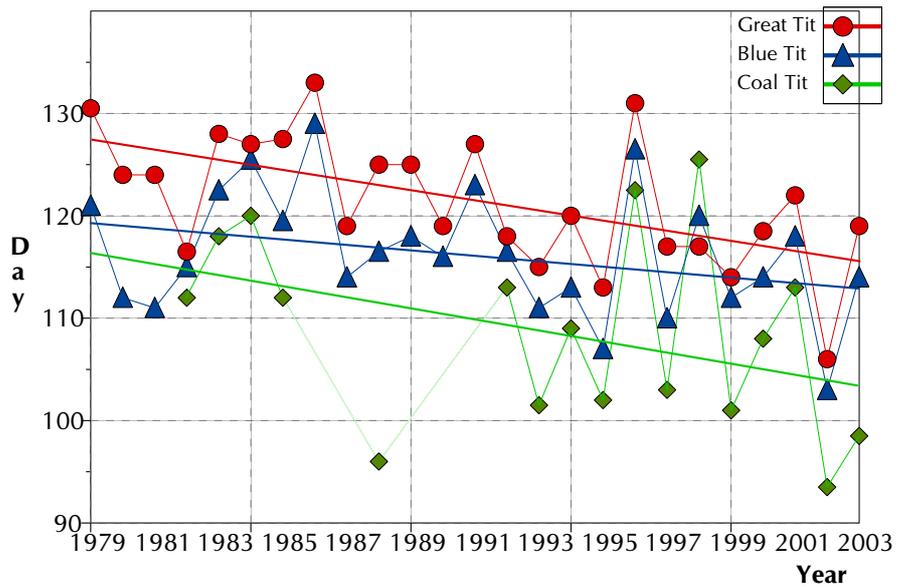
Year	Nests started	Nests with eggs laid
2000	46	36
2001	48	42
2002	52	37
2003	54	37

The number of nests started but not completed seemed rather large this year (see the Tit Nests Recorded graph). Have we given the birds too much choice this year? In the clustered groups of 'Dormouse' boxes, of the 35 nests started but without eggs, 26 had a box in the same cluster with eggs laid by the same species. Is this a case of birds starting more than one nest or is territory overlap leading to abandonment? In the main set of boxes, 5 out of 17 of the nests that were started, but had no eggs laid, were 35 metres or less from a nest of the same species, with eggs.

Egg laying dates

Egg laying dates (first, median and last) were all later than last year (which had the earliest dates so far) by at least 10 days, but the overall trend for the last 25 years gives median dates about 12 days earlier for Great Tits and Coal Tits and 7 days earlier for Blue Tits.

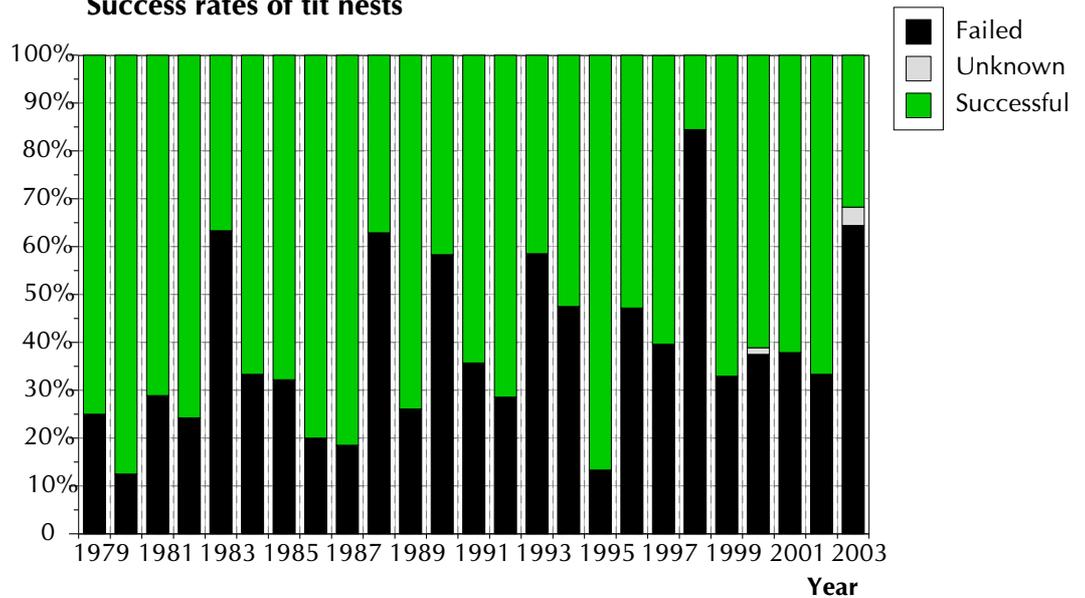
Median First Egg Dates



Success rates

As has already been noted, predation was bad this year at 64 percent of the nests, but as the chart shows, it was not the worst year.

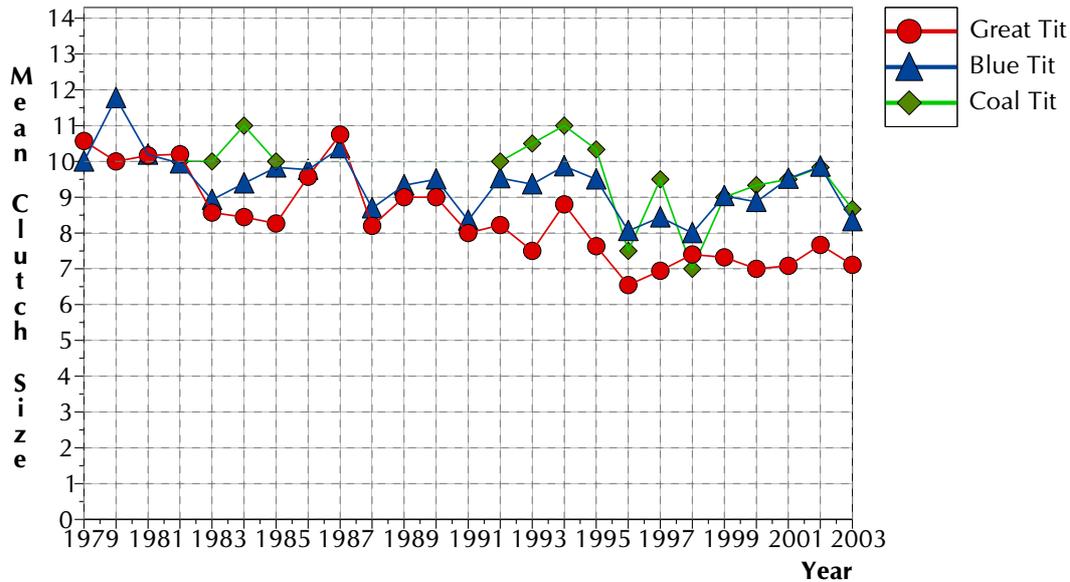
Success rates of tit nests



Clutch sizes

One very clear trend is the reduction in clutch size for all the tits. The graph (Average Clutch Sizes) shows the average size of clutch in successful nests (i.e. where laying was completed undisturbed by predators). While this year did not have the lowest numbers, the trend is quite clear, and over the 25 years the average clutch size has fallen by 3.4 for Great Tits, 1.6 for Blue Tits and around 1.8 for Coal Tits (but note that it is only in the last 10 years we have had more than one Coal Tit nest recorded).

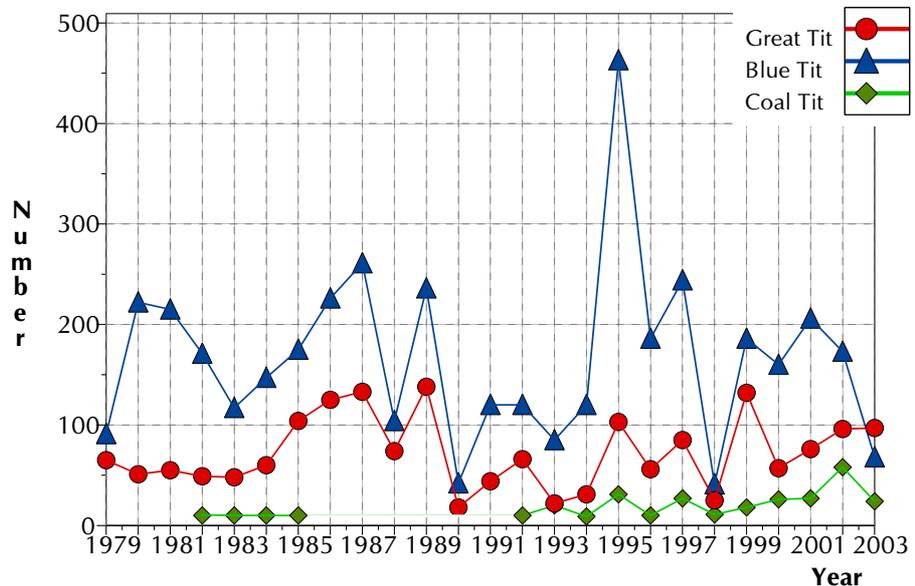
Average Clutch Sizes



Numbers fledging

As you would expect from the reduction in clutch size and the predation this year (although neither was the worst recorded) the total number of chicks fledging was somewhat disappointing, and for the first time there were more Great Tits than Blue Tits fledging. It is a sobering thought that the 208 adults involved in the 104 nests in which eggs were laid produced a total of only 189 fledgelings.

Nestlings Fledged



The Thoughts of Chairman John

It is some time since this section has appeared in Twitter. John Clark's notes have, naturally, triggered a number of questions from John McMeeking - and here they are. John C hopes to look at some of them, but if anyone else would like to try answering these questions, please feel free to ask for the dataset.

- 1 We know that there were 208 adults rearing 189 nestlings in nestboxes. How many other adult birds were in the wood but making no contribution? How many more were nesting in natural holes and what was their contribution?
- 2 Does CBC confirm the 104 territories or does the CBC estimate (which uses the nestbox data as part of the territory analysis) exceed 104 pairs?
- 3 Do summer captures give any clues about the numbers of adult tits in the wood?
- 4 Does the number of nests with eggs laid represent the maximum carrying capacity of the wood (with a small allowance for nests in natural holes)? How can we check this?
- 5 How many active nests in the new boxes were in the northern part of the wood which also holds the main nestbox set?
- 6 What change has there been in the number of active boxes in the south (Blocks I, J and western edge of H) following the redistribution of the dormouse boxes?

- 7 Has clustering the dormouse boxes reduced the apparent tit population, but left gaps between the clusters in which more natural sites are now being used?
- 8 Can CBC throw any light on these questions?
- 9 How well does the Coal Tit captures graph (below) match the numbers of nests in boxes and the number of CBC territories recorded?

Noteworthy Captures

Species **Age/sex** **Ring** **Date** **Grid**

Great Spotted Woodpecker 4F **CF40696** **26/10/2003** **H04**

We continue to capture and recapture good numbers of this species. Most of the individuals have been trapped at the feeders, this one a welcome exception. Also retrapped two weeks later in the south of the wood was CF40691 which was noted in Twitter 44. The issue before that showed the increase in numbers trapped. Our last recapture of the year was RR11975 which we had originally ringed as a young female in November 2001.

Redwing 3 **RS78242** **28/12/2003** **Q02 Feeder**

The first capture of this species since 1999. It was followed later in the morning by another 7 birds together in a net with 5 Blackbirds, near the west edge of the wood. This unusual batch of birds makes 2003 the second best year ever for the species and today the second best day for them ever. The best year (which also had the record day with 24 captures) was 1976.

Goldcrest 4M **9Z3095** **16/11/2003** **D07**

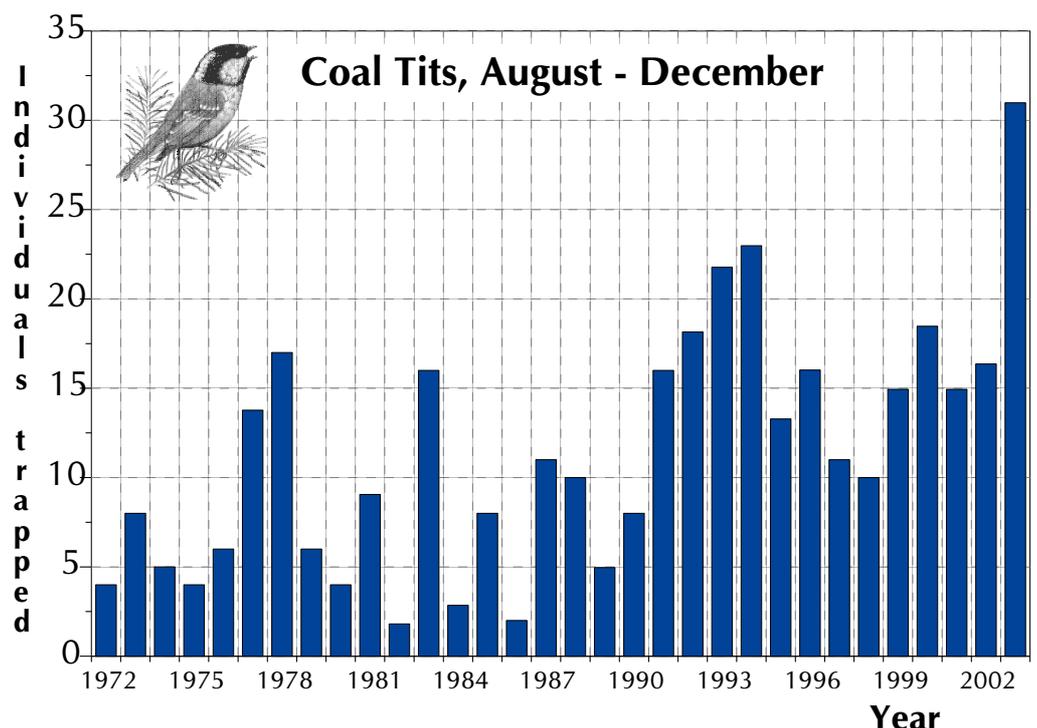
We had already retrapped, this winter, two Goldcrests which we ringed in earlier winters. This is above average - normally we would expect only one every two or three years. However, this bird was icing on the cake - he was ringed in February 2002 and is now starting his third winter. This is only our third ever Goldcrest to be found in the second winter after ringing. For the record, the first was retrapped in 1978, the second in 1983, a mere 20 years ago. 1983 also proved to be a good year with two more between-winter captures of the species. The table shows the infrequency of these between-winter captures.

Goldcrests trapped in Treswell Wood - 1972 - 2003

Not recaptured	Recaptured in same winter	Recaptured in following winter	Recaptured two winters later
1091 (73.6%)	374 (25.2%)	14 (0.9%)	3 (0.2%)

Coal Tit 4M **N305817** **30/11/2003** **Q02 Feeder**

2003 is proving a good year for Coal Tits - the graph shows the numbers of full-grown individuals we have trapped in the last 5 months of each year from 1973 onwards. Although it may have been a good breeding season for the species - we have captured many juveniles - our captures include a good number of vintage birds. This one was ringed as a juvenile in 1998, just over 5 years ago. He has been trapped regularly at the feeders and in the central part of the wood.



Blue Tit 4M N275266 28/12/2003 Q02 Feeder

Where do they hide? This bird was ringed as a juvenile in 1999 and captured another 4 times in the following year. We had not seen him since November 2000. All his captures have been at the feeders. Is he good at evading capture or just a very irregular visitor to the wood or feeder?

Great Tit 4F K463701 20/11/2003 L02 Roosting

Yet another capture for this vintage bird, ringed by Ulli in 1997. She has featured before in Twitter and is now one of our oldest known birds. She was ringed 6 years and 250 days earlier. Although we inspected over 100 boxes during this evening visit we only found a total of 6 roosting tits. Most of these were regular roosters including K463932, a Blue Tit now with over 7 years of recapture history, and another Blue Tit, N275450, ringed in 2000. A third Blue Tit had also been found roosting last year. The last two birds, one Great and one Blue Tit, were first-time roosters. The fact that we found half of this, admittedly small, sample to be of such old birds made us ask whether roosting in boxes conferred some advantage on the birds. If this is so, why are so few birds roosting in boxes? There is a vast surplus of unused roosting sites available for other birds. As ever, any suggestions to explain this would be welcome. Curiously, on the next visit on 17th December, in which we looked for birds in the dormouse boxes in block B, together with some other of the main set of boxes, we found no birds in the dormouse boxes (which all seemed rather damp inside) and the oldest two of the five birds found in other boxes were only birds in their second calendar year. One bird was new (Great Tit R558182) and he was retrapped four days later at the feeders. It seems likely that he is yet another newcomer to the wood, adding to our catalogue of unusual tit movements this autumn.

Greenfinch 3F VS50999 26/10/2003 G04

Our first Greenfinch since March. Most of the Greenfinches we trap have been at the feeders, a few (often pairs) in the breeding season and some at other places where Pheasants have been fed. This one is unusual - being caught nowhere near the feeders nor any other feeding place, now that Pheasant feeding has ceased.

Jay 4 DA20238 9/11/2003 B03

Our third Jay of the year. Richard commented that there had been an irruption of European Jays this year, with reports of birds still following their urge to move south-westwards to find living space, even though it means going beyond the Scillies to almost certain death. The last time such an event gave us additional Jay captures was in 1978 when we trapped 5 during the autumn. This bird, however, although a new bird was clearly an adult. Normally it is juveniles which take part in irruptive movements.

We have captured two more Jays since this bird. We were unable to determine, for certain, the age of either of them. One (DA20239, captured on 14/12/2003) was found in a net near to a dead wood mouse. As it was in a clearing it is most unlikely that the mouse could have jumped into the net on its own, particularly when dead. There was also a groove across the back of the mouse exactly matching the outline edge of the Jay's bill. BWP lists a variety of mammals amongst the Jay's prey items, including yellow-necked mouse but not wood mouse. This could be the first documented occurrence of wood mouse in the Jay's diet.

Controls and recoveries**Species Age/sex Ring Date Grid****Coal Tit 4 P400975 11/11/2003 Rampton**

Mike Archer trapped this bird at Rampton in November 2001 after we had ringed it as a nestling in the preceding June. He has retrapped it again at least once since 11/11/2003. It is not only Treswell Wood that is blessed with ageing Coal Tits.

Coal Tit 3 R558006 11/11/2003 Rampton

The first of this year's nestling-ringed tits to be reported from elsewhere. Although we have retrapped some of its siblings, this one has eluded us - obviously Mike's orchard in Rampton has something which even Treswell cannot provide.

Great Tit 4M P400739 31/12/2002 Lound

This bird was ringed during the spring influx in April 2002 as a breeding male in Nightingale Ride. We did not capture it again before this capture at Lound during the winter. In February 2003 it reappeared in Treswell Wood, being caught in the net adjacent to the one in which it had first been captured. Our last capture of it was a mere 50 metres east on Nightingale ride in September 2003. Back to Lound for winter 2003?

Great Tit 4F R055733 12/09/2003 Q02 Feeder

It is unusual for us to control a Great Tit at this time of year - February is the time when our spring influx often

brings in birds ringed elsewhere. This bird was ringed at Lound on 31 December 2002, some 8 km distant. Coincidentally, the ringers at Lound also captured our Great Tit, P400739 (see above) on the day that they ringed this bird - it looks like a one-for-one exchange.

Chaffinch 4F R055590 21/9/2003 D08

Mike Archer ringed this at Rampton. Unlike several of the birds he has sent us, which we trapped in the same winter as he ringed them, this one waited nearly 18 months before being trapped by us. He ringed it, as a first winter bird, on 14/2/2002.

Goldfinch 6F P400562 1/2/2003 Darlton

Avid readers of Twitter will recall that, in issue 38, we reported our first ever control event for a Goldfinch and that we had never retrapped any of the 24 birds ringed so far. Curiously, this same bird has been trapped again at Darlton by Peter Cobb some 9 months after his original capture of it.

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

It is some time since we have published a full table of standard-site captures since the beginning of our throughout-the-year constant-effort operation. To give the full end-of-year picture, here it is.

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	165	89	110	543
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	116	80	106	464
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	106	159	170	616
2001	(57)	(33)	94	121	59	(364)
2002	85	89	141	176	117	608
2003	117	116	146	104	114	597

Note: Bracketed numbers represent incomplete data sets and are not included in summary figures below. Incomplete data sets in 2001 result from foot and mouth restrictions.

Summary data 1978 - 2002

Mean	86	105	164	140	127	622
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	57	57	94	68	59	422

10 Week Summary - Captures in Standard Sites

2003 Interval 5, Visits 1617, 1616, 1615, 1613, 1614, 1619, 1618

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	3	.	3	2	.	.	8
Dunnock	.	.	1	2	.	.	3
Robin	1	.	1	3	.	7	12
Blackbird	1	.	1	4	.	.	6
Song Thrush	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Goldcrest	.	.	16	3	.	2	21
Long-tailed Tit	4	.	.	14	.	.	18
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Willow Tit	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Coal Tit	.	.	1	1	.	7	9
Blue Tit	1	.	2	6	.	6	15
Great Tit	.	.	2	3	.	3	8
Treecreeper	.	.	.	3	.	.	3
Jay	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Greenfinch	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	.	1	.	.	1	2
Totals	13	.	30	44	.	27	114

Treswell Wood Integrated Population Monitoring Group - TWIG

TWIG does not have a formal membership list. 'Membership' seems to result from being involved in some way with the group's work. The list below includes all those who have helped in any way during 2003. (Apologies if any names have been omitted.) We are very grateful to all members for their contributions in the wood or elsewhere. We look forward to another productive year in 2004.

Dan Bardsley	Ringling, Nestboxes
Gill Bardsley	Ringling, Nestboxes
Dave Barritt	Ringling,
John Bartley	CBC, Nestboxes
Jerzy Behnke	Mites
John Black	Ringling, Nestboxes
Kyle Campbell	Ringling
John Clark	Ringling, Nestboxes
Peter Cobb	Ringling
Roger Cottis	Mammal advice
Andy Edwardes	Nestbox making
Chris du Feu	Ringling, Nestboxes,
Richard du Feu	Ringling, Data processing
Jackie Hay	Data analysis
Chris Holliland	Dormouse boxes
George Hudson	CBC

Richard Johnson	CBC
Tony Kennedy	Woodland management
Ulli Langemann	Foreign correspondent
Stuart Martin	CBC
John McMeeking	Ringling
Eric Palmer	Ringling, Mammal recording
Peter Phillips	Ringling
Margaret Price	CBC co-organiser
Pat Quinn-Catling	CBC co-organiser
Neil Taylor	Ringling
Selina Tape	Mites
David Thompson	Data analysis
Frank Tillotson	CBC
Liz Tillotson	CBC
Steve Wain	Ringling, Data processing
Robin Ward	Data analysis

Visitors:

John Barritt, Clare, Emily & Cheridwen Behnke, Paul Canfield, Christine du Feu, Geoff Garrett, Jenny Hawkes, Edie Jolley, Kate Le Ruez, Lynda Milner, Colin Paton,	
John McMeeking	01636 830389
Chris du Feu	01427 848400
Neil Taylor	01427 612933

