

TWITTER

1997/2 - Number 12

June 1997

Treswell Wood Ringing Group

Ringing: By permission of NWT

Project leader: John McMeeking

Editors: Richard & Chris du Feu



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Ringer.

The warm dry weather lasted for most of April. Some birds began nesting early. The first Blue Tit egg in the nestboxes was laid on April 9th which is the second earliest recorded here. The last week in April was wet and fairly cold. This led to some desertions of nests or temporary suspension of nesting activity. No doubt the rain was very welcome to thrushes and Woodcock which need soft earth for foraging. May has been very variable, with some very hot days interspersed with dull, cold or wet days. The tits, in spite of their early start to the season, are rearing generally small broods and the season, normally over very rapidly, is prolonged.

There has been much mention in the media about the low numbers of songbirds this year caused by last year's disastrous breeding season. Treswell Wood has been subject to both a poor 1996 breeding season and the subsequent low breeding population this year. Our ten-week totals, although not quite as low as in the first part of the year, are still well below average.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	ES03292	4/5/97	F05
A new, large, second-summer female with a brood patch just becoming apparent. Is she nesting in the wood?			
Tawny Owl	GJ80610	7/5/97	K03 on nest
An old Treswell Wood resident - ringed as a breeding adult in May 1992 and retrapped again in May 1994. All three captures have been made at the nest. This year's clutch of one egg is rather smaller than usual (Jenny Kent has said that Tawny Owl broods are generally down elsewhere). Tawny Owls are sedentary and this enables them to know their hunting territory well. On 27/4/97 her nest contained 13 assorted woodmouse/voles and the rear half of a weasel together with the single chick. This chick managed to increase weight by 69gm between 4th and 7th May and the female, at 655gm, was at the top end of the weight range for females. No shortage of food for this wise old bird who must know her hunting ground so well after all these years. Her chick had fledged by the end of May and the empty nest contained no remains of birds (or rings). Obviously she is a mammal specialist.			
Greater Spotted Woodpecker	RH94533	9/4/97	Q02 Feeders
The same pattern may be appearing as we noted last year - as the breeding season begins the woodpeckers come to take more and more easy food from the feeders. This bird was caught at the feeders 5 times last spring and not since then until today. (Stop Press! The rush began in earnest with three individuals caught on 25/5/97.)			
Wren	8Y3127	23/3/97	Q02 Feeders
From time to time we capture a Wren 'by accident' at the feeders. In all cases so far such Wrens have been either those whose normal range included the feeder area or those just passing through and never seen again. This bird was ringed 2 months earlier in O05 which is much further away than a typical within-wood movement of Wrens. Perhaps it is a relatively new immigrant which is still finding a territory?			
Dunnock	J522165	30/3/97	M00
A typically site-faithful Dunnock. Ringed 17/7/94 as a breeding male in N01, it was recaptured in 1995 breeding in N00 and again today in breeding condition.			
Song Thrush	RX57591	23/3/97	Q01
One of our infrequent Song Thrush recaptures - ringed just over a year earlier in Q03. Where has it been in between times?			
Song Thrush	RX57614	27/4/97	G04
In contrast to RX57591, this bird was ringed only one week ago in a net near the top pond (K03).			

- Blackcap** **K463427** **20/4/97** **K03**
 Ringed last year as a 5♂ in L00 this bird is back in the same central area of the wood. Often we recapture them much closer to their previous position, but this capture was at the pond and the bird may just have been out of its territory in order to find a drink during the very dry weeks in April.
- Blackcap** **J522860** **4/5/97** **C03**
 Ringed almost exactly 2 years earlier in the adjacent net on Bower's Ride.
- Chiffchaff** **8Y3066** **20/4/97** **K06**
 A between-year retrap, ringed 21/7/96 in R99. Sexing consistent - a breeding female on both occasions. We have too few between-year retraps to judge whether this distance between capture positions (and territories?) is normal or large for a Chiffchaff.
- Willow Warbler** **0Y5804** **27/4/97** **I03**
 Few of our Willow Warblers are retrapped in a subsequent year. This one was ringed in June 1995 as a breeding male, retrapped in April 1996 (see Twitter 7) and again today. All three captures have been within 100m of each other.
- Willow Warbler** **8Y3027** **27/4/97** **H04**
 A between-year recapture, ringed one year less a day earlier in an adjacent grid square.
- Willow Warbler** **8Y3146** **27/4/97** **F04**
 Although they have been in the wood for some time this is our first Willow Warbler capture of the year - a new bird. It is nearly a week later than average for Treswell Wood and 6 weeks later than the year's first warbler capture (Chiffchaff on 16/3/97).
- Long-tailed Tit** **5F5341** **11/5/97** **N01**
 An old friend, ringed 28/11/93 with seven previous recaptures. This is the first occasion on which we have been able to determine her sex and she was caught with the first Long-tailed Tit juveniles of the year (8Y3156 to 8Y3159) all of which were still with primary feather sheaths still visible.
- Coal Tit** **K463537** **10/5/97** **O05 on nest**
 The 9th recapture of this bird since ringing on 15/12/96. All captures so far have been at the feeder except this one which was, rather pleasingly, at one of the new nest boxes made in the appearance of a tree stump.
- Blue Tit** **J033002** **10/5/97** **L00 on nest**
 The matriarch whose progeny we catalogued in Twitter 8. She is now in her 5th breeding season and we have found her at a nest box in all these years except 1994. As in earlier years her territory is near Windy Ride. We have also recaptured daughters of 1995, K287554 & '558, again (see below) and a daughter of 1996 (K720065).
- Blue Tit** **K287554** **10/5/97** **D08 on nest**
 A much travelled bird (see Twitter 8 for details of its travels to Sturton-le-Steeple) and still on the move. Unusually for Blue Tits, her breeding territory this year is some distance from last year's - about 450m away in H02.
- Blue Tit** **K287558** **4/5/97** **E07 on nest**
 Another intriguing recapture of a descendant of J033002. This bird too has made the journey to Sturton-le-Steeple (caught there 15/9/96) and returned. This year she is nesting in the same grid square as last year, unlike her sister '554. Her journey to and from S-I-S reinforces the idea that this family is predisposed to winter movement in that direction followed by a return in the spring.
- Blue Tit** **K720065** **10/5/97** **F02 on nest**
 A daughter of J033002 (see above) showing a little post-juvenile dispersal. She is nesting about 350m from her natal nestbox in K00.
- Blue Tit** **K463989** **9/5/97** **F01 on nest**
 Was this the most disappointing nestbox capture of the season? In 1995 box 57 contained the clutch of six runt and seven normal eggs (see Twitter 3). Excitement when this year's nest included one runt egg in a clutch of 7. Was it the same bird, or a related bird? No such luck - the female was unringed, age 5. No capture history and no known relations! Curiously, as in 1995, hatching success was abysmal - $\frac{6}{13}$ then and $\frac{2}{7}$ this year.
- Great Tit** **H623765** **17/5/97** **098 on nest**
 A respectably old female - ringed as a juvenile 13/9/92. Today she was with a brood of well grown young which have since fledged.
- Chaffinch** **H623738** **6/4/97** **Q02 Feeders**
 Like many of our Chaffinches, this one has gone a long time without recapture. Ringed as a 4♀ on 29/8/92 in L01 and not recaptured between then and now. Where do they hide?

Chaffinch **K463935** **30/3/97** **Q02 Feeders**

One of several recent short-time recaptures. This one had also moved some distance having been ringed in D09 on 9/2/97. Most of our rapid retraps of Chaffinches are of birds ringed and retrapped at the feeders.

Greenfinch **VJ35001** **20/4/97** **Q02 Feeders**

We have had a trickle of recaptures of Greenfinches this spring, though perhaps fewer than we might expect considering the number we ringed last year. This one is one of the very few we ringed in 1995 at the feeders.

Controls & Recoveries**Blackbird** **RH94564** **22/3/97** **D08**

A corpse found by Ulli - ringed 20/11/94 as a 3♂ in D08 and never retrapped.

Blackcap **K729234** **11/5/97** **M02**

This bird was ringed as an adult male in Sturton-le-Steeple in May 1996. How different is his behaviour from that of site-faithful J522860 whose capture history is described earlier.

Blue Tit **J522481** **24/5/97** **P01 on nest**

A sad recovery. This was the bird which we captured in late December with a withering right leg and so weak she could barely fly. Two weeks later we caught her again at the feeders and she was in good condition, as she was when we trapped her again roosting in February then again as a breeding female on a nest in early May. She had every chance of success for she was an old bird (fledged 1994) and had bred in the same area in 1996 at least. Her nest was near the feeders so food was no problem. Sadly she nested in an area where some predator - probably a weasel - made systematic raids on nestboxes. Her dismembered remains were in the box with those of her young.

Great Tit **K463760** **24/5/97** **E03 on nest**

Ringed as a ♀ on 6/4/97 at the feeders. She nested at the opposite end of the wood where she was killed, with her brood, by some predator - probably a weasel.

Greenfinch **VN47777** **6/4/97** **Q02 Feeders**

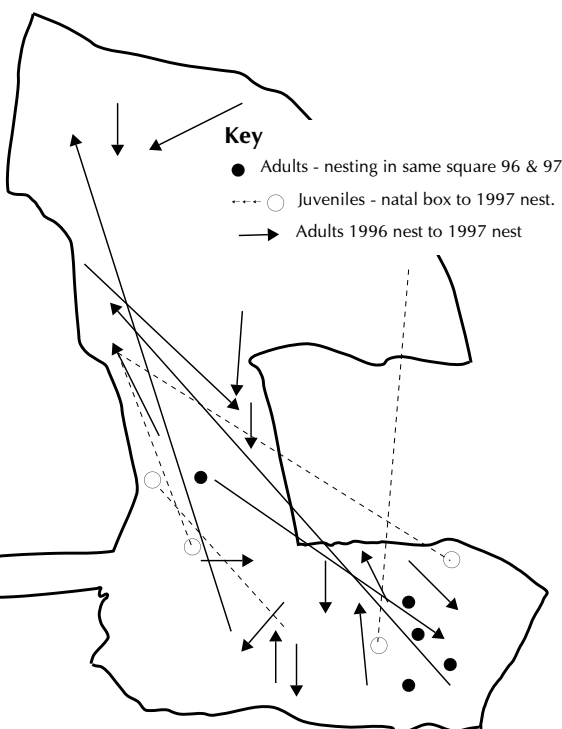
One of two controlled Greenfinches caught in the same net at the same time. Both were 'our own' - this one from Beckingham, ringed 12/3/95.

Greenfinch **VP57019** **6/4/97** **Q02 Feeders**

The second Greenfinch control in the same net. Coincidentally it was also ringed about 2 years previously by one of 'us' (25/2/95 by Peter Harrison) at Sturton-le-Steeple.

Chaffinch **K900652** **6/4/97** **Q02 Feeders**

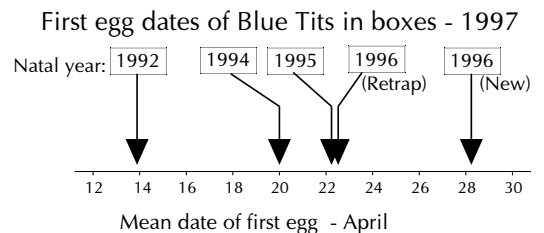
The third control on the same day, ringed at Babworth on 15/2/97.

Nesting Blue Tits

Because we have so many Blue Tits nesting, we can look at many aspects of their breeding behaviour. Generally tits which

survive from one breeding season to the next, nest fairly close to their previous nesting site. The map shows the movements between successive nests of birds captured at a nestbox in both 1996 and 1997. Most movements are very small. Only 4 birds have made major movements (300m, 450m, 750m, 750m). Contrast this with the movements of the four 1996 nestling-ringed Blue Tits (dashed lines) which have been captured at boxes (250m, 300m, 350m, 600m). Their movements represent juvenile dispersal which is typically somewhat greater than between-year territory shifts of adults.

The graph shows that more experienced birds can take advantage of known home ranges to breed earlier than the less experienced ones. The arrows show the mean first-egg date for birds hatched in different years. Perhaps the most interesting feature is that, of the 1996 birds, those which were already ringed when caught at the nest had, on average, begun nesting nearly six days earlier than those which had not been previously captured in the wood.



Have you read?

One Norwegian territory of the Marsh Tit during 35 years. Svein Haftorn. **IBIS 139/2 April 1997**

Nest Record News - Number 13 April 1997. If you take part in the Nest Records Scheme, you should have received a copy. If you don't, you might want to look at Chris's copy.

Sparrowhawks and songbirds. A brief account of the effects of Sparrowhawks on songbird populations. **Birds (RSPB) Summer 1997.** Ian Newton & Chris Perrins.

10 Week Summary March to May 1997

1997 Interval 2 - Visits 1301, 1304, 1297, 1298, 1303, 1299, 1305.

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	2	4	.	2	.	.	8
Dunnock	1	6	.	4	3	.	14
Robin	1	2	.	4	2	.	9
Blackbird	2	2	.	4	2	.	10
Song Thrush	.	2	.	2	.	.	4
Garden Warbler	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Blackcap	1	4	.	1	.	.	6
Chiffchaff	2	1	.	1	.	.	4
Willow Warbler	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	4	2	.	.	6
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	1	.	3
Blue Tit	1	5	.	1	3	.	10
Great Tit	.	2	.	.	5	.	7
Treecreeper	.	1	.	4	1	.	6
Chaffinch	1	3	.	1	1	.	6
Bullfinch	.	1	.	1	2	.	4
Totals	13	33	4	29	20	.	99

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

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	142	89	110	520
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	---	---	---	158
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	88	110	177	147	130	654