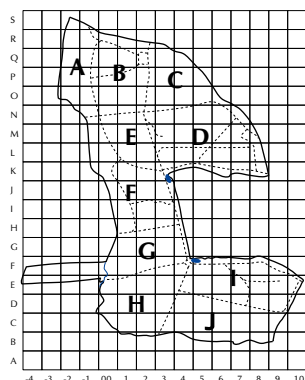


TWITTER

2003/4

Number 44



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

October 2003 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John McMeeking



This summer has been the driest since 1976 and there are many signs of its effects in the wood. Some plants have died or lost their leaves early, large cracks have opened in the dry clay, the water level in the Piccadilly Pond has fallen. However, unlike 1976, there have been no flocks of small birds coming to drink at the ponds. Why? It may be that the species attracted to the ponds are now very much reduced in numbers in or near the wood. Of the 572 birds ringed at the pond in summer 1976 there were 160 Redpolls, 81 Tree Sparrows and 31 Willow Warblers. We have trapped no Redpolls since September 1985 nor any Tree Sparrows since February 1984. There were 67 Blue Tits ringed at the pond - more than we could hope for this year with the weasels at work. Some other species are also much less numerous now - 1979 produced 30 Bullfinches and 26 Blackbirds. Even allowing for these reductions in numbers, there has been little evidence of any mass movement of our current residents to the ponds. Curiously, our captures elsewhere have increased, particularly during October (at the same time as several local householders were reporting a drop in numbers of birds in their gardens). Goldcrests arrived early and in good numbers. Overall our constant-effort capture total for the 10 weeks, although still below average, is somewhat better than we expected after the dismal breeding season.

Caption Competition

Sometimes there are opportunities which are too good to miss. Kyle had his camera handy earlier in the year and we are using his photograph at the head of this issue. Regular visitors to the wood will recognise the Piccadilly Pond. The vehicle is an Austin Maestro. It is a tribute to the quality of British engineering that, after the water had been drained, it was driven away little worse for wear. As the autumn days become shorter and colder, what better than a caption competition to lighten your life? One entry received so far 'If only I had pushed a little harder, it might have gone right under.' Email your suggestions to Chris or give them to any of the team. The winning entry will be printed on an A4 copy of the photograph and presented to Eric Palmer.

Treswell Wood Common Bird Census 2003

Margaret Price is in the process of passing the work of collating the CBC visit maps to Pat Quinn-Catling. There cannot be many (if any) CBC workers who have contributed such a long, unbroken series to the census. We hope Margaret now has time to read her copy of the Migration Atlas (and of course, the strength to lift it). She writes:

The majority of the work of compiling the species sheets has been done by Pat and I am very grateful that she has taken job from my hands - energy goes slowly downhill. We have agreed that I shall hand over to her completely before the beginning of the 2004 season. We will keep you informed.

In the August 2003 issue of Twitter, Chris wrote about the reduced number of Blue Tits ringed and nesting together with the increased number of Great Tit nesting attempts during the 2003 breeding season. The Blue and Great Tit maps follow the same pattern. Sadly Song Thrushes are down - BTO estimated 11 pairs in 2001, 8 pairs in 2002. This year looks like a maximum of 4 pairs. Willow Warblers are down again - BTO estimated 4 pairs in 2000, 2 in 2001 and 11 in 2002. It will probably be only 3 or 4 pairs this year. Happily Wrens were in good heart. We wish BTO workers joy in sorting them out.

Stuart Martin who, with George Hudson, censuses I & J, says that there are far fewer small rodents in the wood since the Pheasant feeding ceased. When the Pheasants were being fed and the ground was wet, it would be criss-crossed by mouse and vole footprints leading from one feeder to another. Hence the weasels of mass destruction have had to turn to other food.

Margaret Price

Treswell Wood Constant Effort Site - 2003

Dawn Balmer has, as usual, thanked us and commented on our data for the year. In her letter she wrote:

Many thanks for your 2003 returns for the Treswell Wood Constant Effort Site. These data transferred to the BTO computer system without any problems.

Following last year's good breeding season, it looks like there has been mixed success this year. Feedback from CES ringers suggests that Blue Tit and Great Tit had a poor breeding season and perhaps early broods of Robin and Blackbird failed to fledge. Blackcap and Chiffchaff had another successful season whilst Reed and Sedge Warblers had mixed fortunes.

Good numbers of Wren, Dunnock, Robin and Bullfinch were caught at Treswell Wood this year; the Wren numbers are the highest since 1995. It is interesting how the Bullfinch numbers vary so much at your site too. It looks like a fairly poor breeding season in Treswell Wood for many species, apart from Robin, which seemed to do really well.

Many thanks for your hard work again this year. Please pass on my thanks to other members of Treswell Wood IPM Group for their help this year. As usual, we are looking for short articles, exciting recoveries/controls or retrap histories involving CES birds for the next issue of CES News. If you have anything to contribute, please send it in by the end of December.

Dawn Balmer

CES Summary, Treswell Wood, 2003

Species	2002			2003			Change 2002 - 2003		
	Ad	Juv	Prod%	Ad	Juv	Prod%	Ad	Juv	Prod%
Kestrel	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Sparrowhawk	1	0	0	1	0	X	=	=	X
Woodpigeon	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Great Spotted Woodpecker	0	0	X	1	0	0	+	=	X
Wren	12	24	200	19	19	100	+	-	-
Dunnock	6	7	117	22	3	14	+	-	-
Robin	9	25	278	13	43	331	+	+	+
Blackbird	13	6	46	14	4	29	+	-	-
Song Thrush	6	2	33	7	0	0	+	-	-
Mistle Thrush	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Garden Warbler	0	1	X	2	1	50	+	=	X
Blackcap	19	17	89	17	5	29	-	-	-
Chiffchaff	2	6	300	6	2	33	+	-	-
Willow Warbler	0	2	X	2	3	150	+	+	X
Goldcrest	0	1	X	0	0	X	=	-	X
Long-tailed Tit	2	9	450	4	2	50	+	-	-
Marsh Tit	2	6	300	1	0	0	-	-	-
Willow Tit	1	4	400	2	3	150	+	-	-
Coal Tit	0	6	X	0	2	X	=	-	X
Blue Tit	17	13	76	5	3	60	-	-	-
Great Tit	4	7	175	9	4	44	+	-	-
Treecreeper	5	6	120	3	8	267	-	+	+
Jay	0	0	X	1	0	0	+	=	X
Chaffinch	8	0	0	4	1	25	-	+	+
Greenfinch	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Bullfinch	4	1	25	13	0	0	+	-	-
Yellowhammer	1	0	0	0	0	X	-	=	X
Totals	116	143	123.3	146	103	70.5	+	-	-

Key Ad - adults caught, Juv - juveniles caught,
Prod% - productivity (Juv/Ad) - down, + up, = no change, X not calculable

Do not read too much into any of these data - with small numbers, the changes in productivity are not statistically significant. Different species may behave differently so, for example, the lack of adult Coal Tit captures in both years is more likely to show they are less likely to be trapped in our nets than are Marsh Tits which are definitely less abundant as a breeding species. For our one site, the overall figures are likely to be reliable indicators of the direction of population and productivity changes. Similarly, the total excess of + over - (or vice versa) is likely to be a reliable indicator. Overall then, more adults about but fewer juveniles giving much lower productivity.

Wrens - Analysis of Wing Markings

A quick update on the Wren data. I've had some fun and games cleaning the data up for use within Excel and Access e.g. separating out the spot and in/out of line information. The biggest problem has been the ring numbers but this is all sorted, I think. A quick scan shows at least 168 birds with retrap histories and spot numbers on two or more captures. Many other birds will also prove useful in various approaches at asking whether spots are valid (within limits). A quick look suggests the extremes work but this is very provisional.

Robin Ward

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	5M	DA87116	14/09/2003	Q02 Feeder

Our second Sparrowhawk capture of the year and, amazingly, followed in the next month by two more. Twitter 40 showed the capture numbers of this species over the years. The two subsequent captures were both also male, but both birds hatched this year.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	3M	CF40693	19/10/02	Q02 Feeder
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Sometimes bird captures are like London buses, coming in batches. This day was rather good for variety with this colourful bird, a Sparrowhawk and a Fieldfare.

Robin	4	R123782	21/09/2003	D10
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We ring few Robins in the nest so it is always pleasing to retrap one of them in a subsequent year. This was ringed in a nest in N06 in May 2002. We retrapped it twice, in May and August, still in juvenile plumage and still fairly near the nest site (N04 and K04). Now it has moved rather further away - all of 650 metres.

Robin	3	R502795	19/10/2003	L02
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A first for us. This Robin was ringed in August, within about 20 metres of where we had set up base for today. We had not yet colour ringed it - we have only been ringing adults. It was extremely tame, coming within arm's reach of us as we sat ringing other birds. Irritatingly, in spite of its closeness, because it only had the metal BTO ring, we could not know its identity. Enter the spring trap - a small trap which we baited with best McMeeking sandwich. As we were watching the trap from a distance of only 2 metres - set for the first time ever - the Robin hopped in and was trapped. It now wears a pink-and-black ring above the BTO ring on the right leg with a yellow over a light blue ring on the left. Off flew the Robin. An hour later it was back again, watching the ringing and waiting for more of the sandwich. The following Wednesday, Tony's team was hard at work at the huts - about 50 metres distant. Following their every move, again within arm's reach, was our, now clearly identifiable friend. It seems to be fond of watching people work. Keep a look-out for it (and also for any others with coloured rings).

Fieldfare	3F	CF40694	19/10/2003	Q02 feeder
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Only our tenth over capture of this species and the first since the autumn of 1983. Most of the others were trapped near the edge of the wood, often feeding on fallen crab apples.

Goldcrest	3F	9G4165	12/09/2003	Q02 Feeder
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Our first Goldcrest of the autumn, heralding the arrival of good numbers shortly afterwards. Already the combined September and October total of 38 is about double the average. Although this bird was trapped at the feeders, it is most likely that she happened to be passing when she was trapped rather than coming specifically to feed on the seeds we provide.

Goldcrest	4M	5Z1484	14/09/2003	O02
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We rarely retrap any Goldcrests in a later autumn or winter - this bird is an exception. We ringed him as a juvenile on 11/08/2002. This was rather earlier than we normally expect Goldcrests to arrive (see Twitter 39). Does he breed locally?

Long-tailed Tit	2	8Y3392	19/10/2003	K04
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Another small bird living to a respectable age. It is now at least five years old. We ringed it in the autumn of 1998.

It had completed its moult so it was not possible to know its year of hatching. At 5 years 15 days it is our 6th longest interval (out of 1061 Long-tailed Tits) between ringing and latest recapture. Our record is 7 years 27 days.

Coal Tit 3J R558002 21/09/2003 D07

In spite of the fairly large number of Coal Tits fledged from boxes this year and the large numbers caught at the feeders, we have retrapped very few of the nestbox young. This was the first, ringed in a box in L03. Possibly there has been high post-fledging mortality with the weasels of mass destruction working their way through the newly fledged and worldly-unwise fledgelings?

Blue Tit 4 K463932 5/10/2003 L06

Our second longest recapture history for any Blue Tit. We ringed him in August 1996 as a juvenile. He is a regular rooster in box 90 (see Twitter 40). He was AWOL on our last night-time spring visit to the boxes and we had assumed he had died. Not so, here he is, alive and well, retrapped within 50 metres of his favourite roosting site.

Great Tit 4F N275476 28/09/2003 N02

We ringed and retrapped this bird at the feeders during the spring influx of 2000. She was trapped again in July 2001 in the south of the wood (E01) and then not seen until this capture, over 2 years later. She must know about the feeder, this capture was not too far from it. Why is she not captured there more often? Where does she hide? Where does she feed?

Great Tit 6F K463701 27/08/2003 Q02 Feeder

Our first capture since November 2002 of this bird which Ulli ringed as an adult in 1997. She still wears her colour rings and is now aged over 7 years.

Treecreeper 4 8Y3344 5/10/2003 L06

We ringed this bird as a juvenile in 1998 and have trapped her 10 times in the 5 years 6 days since then. As with most Treecreepers, she roves widely within a strictly defined area of the wood. Her domain covers the northern part of the wood - blocks A, B, C, D and E. Five years is a ripe old age for this species but she has yet some way to go before equalling our record holder, 8B5230, which lasted 7 years 234 days between ringing and last recapture (and was the runner-up in the British Treecreeper longevity competition).

Jay 3 DA87118 12/10/2003 C03

Our second Jay capture this year and the first we have ringed.

10 Week Summary - Captures in Standard Sites

2003 Interval 4, Visits 1609, 1612, 1602, 1604, 1606, 1605, 1610

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	1	.	8	2	.	.	11
Dunnock	.	.	3	.	.	.	3
Robin	.	.	17	2	.	5	24
Blackbird	.	.	2	1	.	.	3
Song Thrush	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Garden Warbler	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Blackcap	1	.	6	1	.	.	8
Chiffchaff	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	1	.	3	.	.	1	5
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	2	1	.	.	4
Marsh Tit	.	.	1	1	.	1	3
Willow Tit	.	.	1	1	.	2	4
Coal Tit	.	.	2	1	.	3	6
Blue Tit	1	.	5	3	.	.	9
Great Tit	.	.	2	5	.	2	9
Treecreeper	1	.	1	3	.	2	7
Chaffinch	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	1	.	2	.	.	3
Totals	7	2	56	23	.	16	104