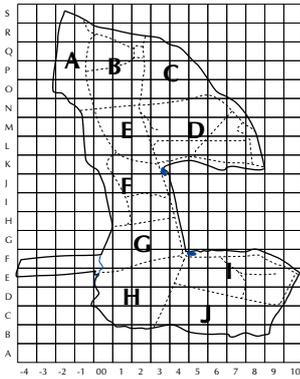


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

May 2008 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John McMeeking

2008/2

Number 67



Spring 2008

Perusal of the standard site capture numbers for the second ten-week interval of this year suggests that we enjoyed a wood with an above average population of birds and all was looking well for the forthcoming breeding season. The tits seemed to expect an excellent year. During nestbox inspections we noticed that very few of them covered their eggs with lining material. We also found very few nests which used our artificial lining material (which we were using to assess distances over which birds will forage for nesting material). It seemed as if they were anticipating a warm spring. Unfortunately, eggs which are not covered with lining material are obvious to a predator and we lost several nests to egg thieves – probably wood mice. The beginning of May brought hot weather and the tits' lack of lining material seemed explicable. However, the end of May brought two very dull, cold weeks with several wet, or very wet, days. Quite apart from high losses to predators – including weasels and Great Spotted Woodpecker – several of our broods, including both broods of Marsh Tits, fell victim to the weather. Parents were unable to provide sufficient food and warmth in the wet conditions and the whole broods died. The few broods that survived weather and predators were small so the total number of birds fledged from boxes will be very small indeed. This will go down as one of the worst breeding seasons for tits. Reports from other places give generally the same picture of poor tit nest success. For the other birds, however, all is not lost. Summer visitors begin breeding later and they will not have suffered the cold, wet weather at the same critical stage of the breeding process as did the tits. Further, most species attempt more than one brood per year – unlike the tits. If the weather warms and if the predators find other sources of food, there is no reason why the tits' terrible breeding season should be repeated with other species. A full list of the season's events will appear in the next issue of Twitter.

Nuthatches in the UK - a biometric investigation - Tessa Carrick

As a student, a very mature one, on the part-time Birmingham M.Sc. Ornithology course, I am required to submit a dissertation at the end of the third year (2009). I have chosen to examine Nuthatches.

One of my starting points is the statement by Brown and Grice (2005): *The Nuthatch looks set to become increasingly numerous in woodlands throughout England. It is surprising, therefore, that it is amongst the least-studied of English woodland birds and much of our knowledge of its population ecology and behaviour emanates from work carried out in Sweden and Belgium.* The species could prove to be a most interesting subject for study in England, especially if current demographic trends continue.

As is well known, Nuthatches are considered to be sedentary, but at the same time their distribution in Britain is expanding northwards. In a sedentary species relatively little genetic mixing might be expected between regions and so regional variation in body measurements may arise. Across Europe, Nuthatches have differentiated into a number of races. My major question, is: Are there regional differences in the measurements of Nuthatches in the UK?

The material I will be using comprises nearly 9000 ringing records from BTO, ringing records from Chaddesley Wood in Worcestershire and ringing records from Treswell Wood to which the group has kindly allowed me access. I also intend to take measurements from skins in the Natural History Museum collection at Tring and in other museums. The skin measurements will not be directly comparable with measurements of live birds; allowance has to be made for shrinkage on drying. There may, of course, be some overlap in the data from the different sources and I will need to use ring numbers to avoid duplication.

Initially, I will analyse data from adult birds only, concentrating on wing measurements and body mass. Preliminary examination of the BTO material reveals that some of the records are incomplete. For instance, information on sex is sometimes lacking. Although 9000 records seem plenty, elimination of young birds, those with incomplete data and re-traps, greatly reduces the usable data. However, there will be a sufficiently large dataset of usable records to give statistically valid results for each region.

My major enquiry stems from two assumptions, namely that a) the birds are sedentary and b) that measurements are consistent. One third of the BTO data are re-traps and the Treswell Wood material also contains multiple records for individual birds. These records will make it possible to investigate whether the assumptions are valid. Finally, I hope to look at data for two or three regions in more detail. At this stage, I may analyse data for numbers of pulli per nest and data on their subsequent growth.

Incidentally, the part-time M.Sc. course at Birmingham is really worthwhile. The course does not run every year but is recruiting for September 2008. The first two years of the course are taught, with monthly sessions on Saturdays, one full weekend and a week at the BTO at Thetford each year. The final year is spent on an independent investigation. In my group people travel from as far afield as Cambridge, Yorkshire, Kent and Cornwall for each teaching day. It is possible to gain a Graduate Certificate by completing one year or a Graduate Diploma for two years' work. Anyone who is interested should look at <http://www.bham.ac.uk> and follow links to Biosciences and Ornithology to find out more.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CF40691	24/5/2008	D08
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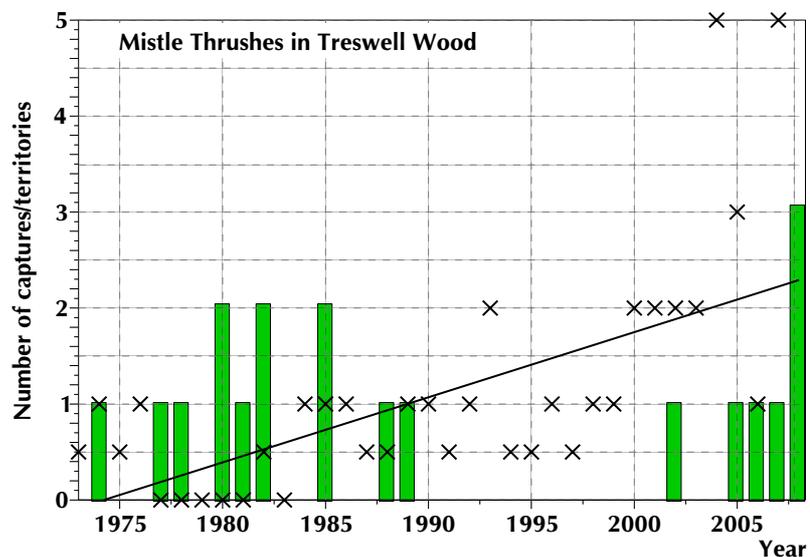
Had we not known what we know now, and had this bird not been a recapture, we might well have aged it, confidently but incorrectly, as a 5. It had clear spots in some primary tips and some unmoulted primary coverts. In fact, it was ringed in September 2003 as an adult, recaptured and mis-aged as a 3 in November of that year. The BTO is to begin a new version of the guide to ageing and sexing non-passerines and has appealed to ringers to contribute information. We certainly can, and will, contribute advice about how not to age this species.

Robin	4	V053947	21/2/2008	F04 Sight record
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One of our small number of Robin sight records for the year. It was ringed in September 2006 and last retrapped in September 2007. Curiously, all our other sight records this year have been of birds we have ringed only recently.

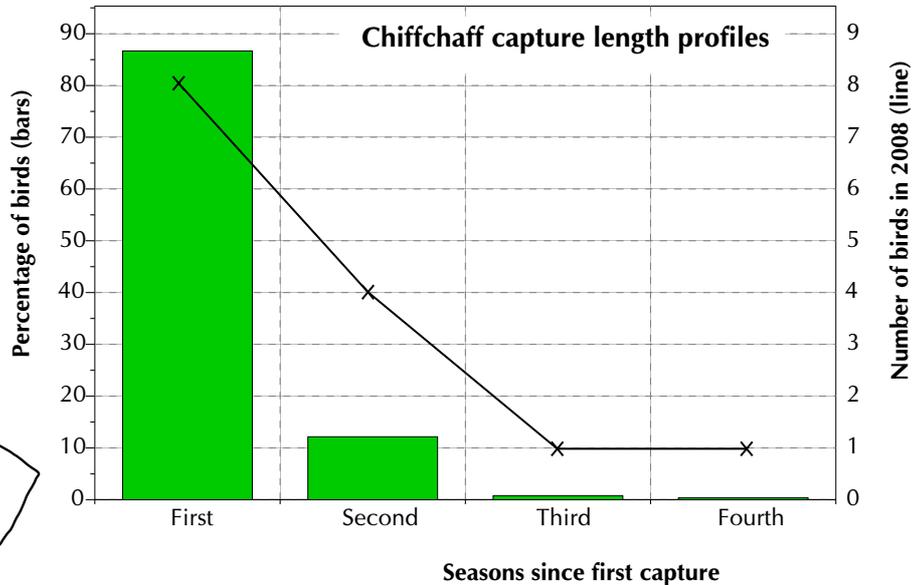
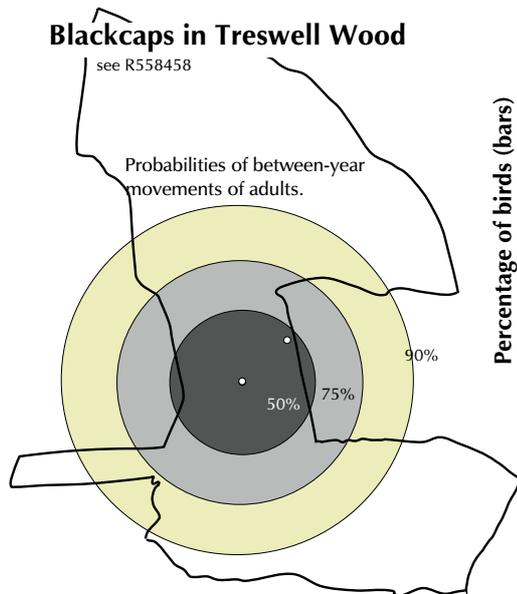
Mistle Thrush	CT84392	4F	11/5/2008	C03
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We have now captured a total of only 19 Mistle Thrushes with none ever retrapped. To catch two at once is unprecedented. This was the female of what appeared to be a pair, the male, CT84394, was captured at the same time in the same net. These two were in addition to another individual, CT84389, trapped early in April. The CBC and ringing data apparently show slightly different patterns over time. There is a continued, steady increase in presence according to the CBC data (points and line of best fit on the graph, presence but no territory determinable indicated by 0.5 territories). Ringing data (bars) show a complete lack of captures in the 1990s. With such small numbers of captures annually, however, chance events play a relatively bigger part in capture patterns than where capture numbers are greater.



Blackcap	4M	R558458	18/5/2008	I04
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We often recapture Blackcaps ringed in a previous season. They seem to be very site-faithful, half of our between-year recaptures being within 130 m of their position in the previous year. This bird was ringed in 2006 as an adult in H02 but not recaptured in 2007. This year it was recaptured in nearby I04 in a standard net site. As we place nets in that position two or three times during the breeding season it is, perhaps, surprising not to have captured it last year. The diagram (page 3), prepared using an analysis for a display at the BTO Ringers' Conference in 2000, shows the typical distances between captures in successive years of individuals of the species. The central dot shows the capture position of R558457 in 2006 and the off-centre dot its location in 2008. The capture probability circles are centred on the 2006 capture location and have radii of 135 m, 235 m and 325 m.



Chiffchaff 6 AXL246 20/4/2008 H03

This is our third longest recapture history of any Chiffchaff. It was ringed as an adult in September 2005, retrapped the following month, still in main wing moult. A year later we retrapped it - again in moult making its third individual contribution to the BTO's growing collection of computerised moult data (see Twitter 54 & 59). We did not see it in 2007. This year it has appeared at the start of the season rather than only at the end. Pleasingly, on the same day as this bird, we also caught AXL418 which we ringed in 2006, BYP586, ringed in 2007 and a few new individuals.

Chiffchaff 4 BYP822 30/3/2008 K00

Our first Chiffchaff of the year – a new bird. It was followed, over the next few visits, by 14 more by the end of May. This represents a good arrival, having been exceeded only in 2007, although the first date was only a little earlier than average with 13 of the previous 36 years having an earlier first capture date. The number of captures from previous years is greater than ever before and the pattern of lengths of capture history in the wood (see figure above) shows a respectable life history curve?

Long-tailed Tit 3J BYP838 18/5/2008 I04

The first juvenile to be captured this year – always a notable occasion. This was in a party of three juveniles and one adult. It was followed later in the day by a second party of five juveniles only, probably from a different brood. As always, we try and release all the family together after ringing. On this occasion we did this very carefully and, in appreciation of our efforts, the five juveniles flew off in different directions fanning out over an arc of 180°. Murphy's Law in action.

Marsh Tit 4 T663076 21/5/2008 L00

This is, presumably, the male of one of our two pairs of Marsh Tits which made nesting attempts in the boxes this year. It was identified by its colour rings with food near the nest and the identity of the female was already known. Sadly both nests failed, both through the very cold and wet weather of late May. In a season where we have had so much predation it is sad that these two nests which escaped the weasels fell victim, at a late stage, to the weather. This particular bird was ringed in July 2005 as a juvenile in the northern half of the wood and all subsequent captures have been in the same part of the wood.

Greenfinch 5F TC61296 13/4/2008 Q02 Feeder

Another relative rarity for the wood – the first Greenfinch we have trapped for just over a year. It is odd that we trap so few, particularly at the feeders which are relatively close to the houses across the road at the north of the wood.

Goldfinch 4F V475601 13/4/2008 Q02 Feeder

One of four Goldfinches trapped this spring after catching only one in the spring of 2007 and none in 2006. This bird was retrapped two weeks later, still using our feeding station. The long-term pictures given by ringing and CBC data are very similar, with an almost complete absence of the species in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s. This is in line with the national picture, with a steep drop in numbers between 1975 and 1985 followed by a slower, but fairly steady increase from the low of 1985. Note that, as mature, dense broad-leaf woodland is not the prime habitat for the species, we would expect increasing numbers nationally to have an impact only once primary habitats were repopulated - this would explain the time lag between national and woodland recovery.

Goldfinch CBC total territories and captures by 5 year interval

Years	73 - 77	78 - 82	83 - 87	88 - 92	93 - 97	98 - 02	03 - 07	2008
CBC territories*	2	1.5	1	0.5	0	0	5	--
Number caught	14	6	0	0	0	3	8	4

(* present but no confirmed CBC territory are counted as 0.5 territories).

Controls and recoveries

Several of the reports here refer to birds controlled over a year ago. There has been a hiatus in the system, related to transfer of data to IPMR, which has caused this delay in reporting. In addition, there is the usual annual crop of recoveries of birds killed at the nest by weasels.

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Wren	6	BYP674	18/62008	Q-1 Ring in Tawny Owl nest

The only ring to be found in either of this year's two Tawny Owl nests. The bird was ringed as an adult in July 2007 in Q02, some 150 m from the owl nest. As both Wrens and Tawny Owls are highly sedentary, it is no surprise that this ring is found so near to the place where the bird was ringed.

Chiffchaff	4	4S8522	29/4/2007	P00
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It appears that this bird was an early arriver, having been ringed at Rampton on 28/3/2007. We have not retrapped it again so it could have been a bird still in search of a territory, one month after arrival here.

Chiffchaff	4M	6U6395	10/6/2007	P-1
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This was ringed by Dave Fogg on 5/5/2007 at Cottam Power Station. It has reappeared this year. Dave has asked us if we could send him some of our abundant crop of Chiffchaffs as he now has very few at Cottam. In turn, we have suggested to him that he might send us some of his Willow Warblers.

Blue Tit	4F	V475088	19/5/2008	P00 Dead on nest
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A victim of the weasel attacks. Typically it is the females which suffer most because they spend longer on the nest. This bird nested in our boxes last year, successfully fledging 7 young, none of which have been retrapped.

Blue Tit	6F	R558986	21/5/2008	M-1 Dead on nest
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This is a rather unusual death. This female, together with her brood, were all dead in the box but with no sign of any disturbance or predation. It appeared to be death through weather related events – cold and lack of food. This bird, ringed as a first breeding season bird in 2007, had nested in a nearby box in 2007 and reared 6 young, none of which have been retrapped since.

Great Tit	6F	T005041	7/1/2007	R00
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Captured as part of our 2007 spring influx, this bird is a little unusual in that it was ringed over a year before. Most of our incomers are birds in their first breeding season. This one was ringed at Rampton on 12/1/2006 as a 5F.

Great Tit	5M	T352680	15/4/2007	M04
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One of the spring influx birds of 2007, ringed at Rampton on 24/11/2006.

Great Tit	5M	T663174	2/6/2008	C00 Dead on nest
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Found dead on the nest - another victim of the marauding weasels. We ringed this bird in January 2006 and retrapped it, always in the far south of the wood, another five times.

Great Tit	4	TC61425	6/1/2008	Bourne Wood 67km @ 153°
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Ringed by John Clark 31/5/06 in a brood of 6. Controls of nestling-ringed birds are particularly valuable as they give a reliable record of natal dispersal. A movement of 67 km is not unprecedented but it is in the national top 5% of Great Tit dispersal movements nationally. Two of its siblings are known to have survived and remained in the wood at least until the spring of 2007.

Great Tit	5F	V368802	21/1/2007	R01
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Another of our spring influx in 2007, ringed locally at Rampton on 24/11/2006.

Great Tit	4	V475498	16/4/2008	R01
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The remains of this bird were found in a nestbox. It appeared to be victim of a weasel which had attacked it whilst it was roosting or else taken it to the nestbox which it used as a larder. It was ringed just two months earlier during the spring influx.

Treecreeper 5 6Z2616 11/2/2007 Q04

This bird was ringed at Rampton on 24/11/2006. Nationally, Treecreeper movements are very restricted indeed, with 96% of juvenile controls and recoveries being under 20 km and 55% under 1 km. This is only our eighth recorded movement of a bird to or from Treswell Wood. Four of these have been movements outwards and four inwards. All birds have been ringed as juveniles, except for one where the age was not determinable (but, given the sedentary nature of adults, it seems more likely it was a juvenile). The table shows the details of these movements.

Ringing	Finding	No of birds	Distance (km)
Treswell Wood	Gamston Wood	2	5
Rampton	Treswell Wood	2	4
West Burton Power Station	Treswell Wood	2	7
Treswell Wood	Babworth	1	7
Treswell Wood	Askham	1	5

Jay 2 DD54429 14/10/2007 H02

We have controlled a few Jays in the past, all of them ringed locally. We expected this bird to be no different. However, we have learned it had been ringed only two months earlier as a juvenile in Uppermill, Manchester 83km away. The migration Atlas states that only 5% of recoveries of the species are over 40 km making this an exceptionally long movement. Closer scrutiny of the map in the Atlas makes it appear that there may be only five movements recorded greater than this one. We hope this will qualify for inclusion in the BTO Ringing Report for the year (as our Great Spotted Woodpecker, CT84274 has just done).

Chaffinch 4M R962918 23/9/2007 Q02 feeder

We often retrap Chaffinches with a gap of a year or two after a previous recapture. This bird had waited nearly three years and had also moved from Rampton where it was ringed on 1/12/2004.

10 Week Summary 2008 Interval 2, Captures in Standard Sites

Visits 1900 1898 1888 1891 1892 1897 1896

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Gt.Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Wren	3	3	.	6	4	.	16
Dunnock	1	3	.	3	.	.	7
Robin	2	7	.	7	1	.	17
Blackbird	3	5	.	7	1	.	16
Song Thrush	.	2	.	1	.	.	3
Mistle Thrush	2	1	.	.	.	.	3
Blackcap	4	1	.	3	.	.	8
Chiffchaff	3	.	.	3	.	.	6
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	8	.	.	9
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Coal Tit	.	.	.	1	1	.	2
Blue Tit	.	1	.	2	4	.	7
Great Tit	.	1	.	3	4	.	8
Nuthatch	.	.	.	3	.	.	3
Treecreeper	1	.	1	6	1	.	9
Chaffinch	.	4	.	6	1	.	11
Bullfinch	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Totals	21	29	1	62	17	.	130

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2008	125	130	---	---	---	(255)
Summary Data	since standard site netting began in 1978					
Maximum	128	145	288	253	177	865
Minimum	57	33	94	68	59	364
Mean	90	107	163	136	127	623

Blank page

Anyone who has seen recent GCSE or A Level examination papers will be familiar with the procedure now adopted by examination boards. The words **Blank page** appear in the middle of any last pages of the paper which are, otherwise, blank. This is, presumably, to indicate that the questions have ended and these blank pages result from all sheets of paper having two sides. (It is paradoxical this indication that the page is blank makes the page blank no longer.) Older readers will probably remember how difficult it was to answer questions which were not there and how much easier it must be now that candidates are told that the page is blank.

This issue has filled five pages. Rather than printing **Blank page**, page 6 is used to give details of the coppicing regime. Computerised readers will be able to cut and paste the image to other documents but note that it is a vector graphic object. Pasted into Microsoft products, it may become pixellated if copied at a small screen scale.

Coppice management

The traditional coppice compartments are subdivided into panels. Compartments B, C, I, J and Crabtree Holt are being left to become climax woodland. In the 2008 season the panel ages of coppice regrowth are given in the table. Note that there are some approximations as we record coppice age using the McMeeking grid which does not always match the panel divisions.

