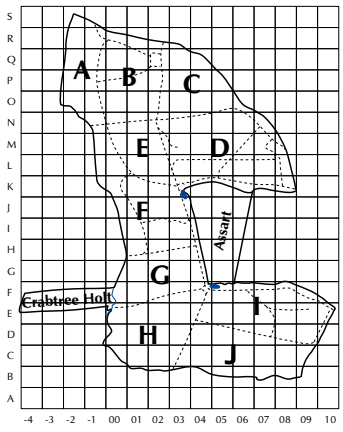

TWITTER

Treswell **W**ood - **I**nformation **T**o **T**ell **E**very **R**ecorder

March 2023 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Ellen Marshall

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

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2023/1

Number 141

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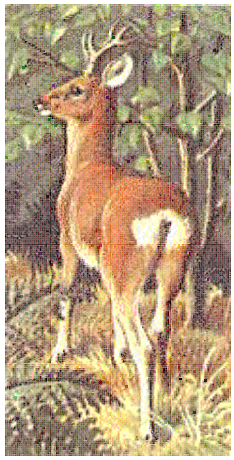


Weather, as always, is of interest. Freezing fog prevented one visit, rain another and colds and lack of available people another. This is to be expected in the winter. Overall it feels as if the period has been a lot drier than usual - not the deep mud we often get in places, no big puddles on the main ride, and Nightingale Ride easy to navigate.

March traditionally comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. This year it arrived as a lamb brought signs of spring with Dog's Mercury in flower (provided you look closely). The springlike weather did not last and mid-March brought the lion back with widespread snow and travel disruption (but fortunately not to this part of the county). We wait to see what the rest of the month has in store. Another sign of spring was a very young Muntjac fawn lying motionless on the ground, well camouflaged and only noticed by us when within a couple of metres of it. Although it has a very high cuteness rating it is bad news for the wood. The increased deer pressure, from both the native Roe and invasive Muntjac, has made it necessary to place deer fencing around newly coppiced compartments. Without such protection from heavy grazing there would be no coppice to harvest in future.

Our Standard Site and the BTO Winter Project (aka Winter CES) visits were completed with time to spare. The Standard Site total of 106 captures was comfortably above the mean of 92 and included both a Buzzard and a Woodcock. We have not yet looked at this winter's data in detail to compare winter standard sites, winter feeder-only captures and winter woodland-with-feeder captures. In TWITTER of March 2022 we showed that captures at feeders and those at woodland-with-feeders were fairly similar but both very different indeed from standard site captures where no artificial attractants are used. We have not yet looked closely at this year's data but expect the picture to be much the same. We are hoping BTO can use our long-running standard site winter data to help understand the impact of winter feeding on capture numbers and species composition. There are not many, maybe no other, such data sets with over 40 years of comparisons.

Using Treswell Wood data

We welcome opportunities for our data to be used in research and education. The last few months have brought more opportunities for collaboration.

Vera Vinken, a PhD student at Newcastle is researching various aspects of tit feeding strategy. She had already requested the BTO ringing data set for Marsh Tits. As we have a small but large enough proportion of the national ringing data, the BTO required our agreement to give Vera our data. We agreed, of course. We also contacted Vera directly and talked about other Marsh Tit data we hold, including the PIT tag data. She now has that and is looking at time spent at feeders an also time between visits to feeders. Richard Broughton, widely known for his studies on Marsh Tits approached us for our Willow Tit breeding territory data in connection with his studies on the decline of this closely related species. Although the national decline and many local extinctions (including that in Treswell Wood) are very disturbing, it is very rewarding to have a long data series which can help throw light on the situation, with the hope of, eventually, being able to restore conditions to allow the species to thrive again.

Lloyd Wyatt, a graduate ecologist with Brindle & Green, is studying for a master's degree. For his dissertation he will be looking at tit breeding statistics (timing, eggs, success etc.) in relation to coppice age. We have studied bird abundance and diversity in relation to coppice age but never looked at nesting success. It is excellent to have a different probe into the rich data set.

Some time ago we contributed a Blackbird biometric data set for use by students following the MEI mathematics curriculum. We were contacted by AQA (formerly Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, an A level & GCSE examination board) asking for more details about the source of the MEI data. AQA wants a large raw data set for students to use as part of their A Level Mathematics/Statistics course. We are now exploring possibilities with AQA. This represents a big step forward in school statistical education. In the past, natural history data have played little part in school statistics, the bulk of the material being human related and often contrived. We hope our data can be used productively and also, maybe, generate wider analyses of our data, perhaps even bringing us new members.

RAS Feedback from Lee Barber (BTO)

Our Robin data are used as part of the BTO Retrapping Adults for Survival project. The 2021 results have now been published and 2022 data soon to be analysed. Lee Barber who manages the project at the BTO writes:

Thank you very much for submitting your RAS results.

It looks like the adult Robins did not do as well as 2021 but there were quite a few juveniles around to compensate. The retrap rate also went down from 14 to 8 last year but there seemed to be fewer birds around in recent years anyway, since the ideal retrap rate of 30 adult-adult retraps occurred in 2016/2017.

The 2022 data will be analysed soon and the results will be published in the spring edition of LifeCycle as well as online. The full suite of 2021 results is available to view online at: http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/surveys/ras/results

Thank you for your continued support for project ringing.

Common Birds Census 2022

Thanks to all of you who took part in this long-standing territory mapping programme last year. Ellen has completed the analysis of the 2022 visit maps and Steve is about to start on digitising them. The results are given in the table together with those for the last few years. (Through an oversight we have not published these in TWITTER

Treswell Wood CBC - Numbers of territories - 2022

Species	2018	2019	2021	2022	Min.	Max.	Average
Whooper Swan	.	.	.	X	0	0	0
Sparrowhawk	X	X	1	1	1	1	0.4
Buzzard	X	X	3	1	1	3	0.2
Reg-legged Partridge	.	.	X	X	1	1	0
Grey Partridge	.	.	X	X	2	4	0.2
Pheasant	8	6	7	8	3	12	6.9
Woodcock	.	.	1	X	1	3	0.8
Stock Dove	9	9	15	17	1	17	3
Woodpigeon	12	6	11	7	1	25	2
Cuckoo	.	.	.	X	1	11	1.2
Tawny Owl	1	2	3	1	1	3	1.7
Green Woodpecker	2	2	3	2	1	3	0.9
Great Spotted Woodpecker	8	7	7	5	1	10	3.8
Skylark	.	.	X	3	1	5	0.8
Swallow	.	.	.	X	1	1	0
Wren	46	81	90	91	16	127	73.1
Dunnock	8	8	12	8	4	37	16
Robin	33	32	50	50	27	98	57
Blackbird	26	26	33	27	16	42	28.6
Song Thrush	10	10	14	18	3	33	14.5
Mistle Thrush	.	X	2	1	1	7	1.2
Whitethroat	.	.	X	1	1	11	1
Garden Warbler	1	.	X	1	1	24	6.9
Blackcap	38	37	37	22	8	38	22.8
Chiffchaff	28	33	47	29	1	47	19.1
Willow Warbler	9	10	1	2	1	54	16.2
Goldcrest	.	X	.	1	1	5	0.4
Long-tailed Tit	4	2	2	3	1	12	4.5
Marsh Tit	6	6	5	2	1	6	2.2
Coal Tit	4	3	3	2	1	11	4.3
Blue Tit	58	55	86	71	25	86	54.3
Great Tit	42	41	48	42	8	58	34.1
Nuthatch	9	8	16	14	1	16	2.5
Treecreeper	6	4	6	3	1	7	3.2
Jay	X	2	5	4	1	6	2.2
Jackdaw	2	1	5	3	1	5	0.3
Carrion Crow	X	3	3	1	1	4	0.8
Chaffinch	44	44	31	21	21	62	40.3
Goldfinch	2	X	1	X	1	2	0.3
Bullfinch	7	3	6	1	1	10	3
Yellowhammer	.	.	X	X	1	4	0.5
Totals	**423**	**442**	**554**	**463**	**319**	**554**	**444.5**

Notes: X: seen but too few observations to determine any territory. No survey in 2020 because of Covid lockdown. Min., Max. and Average refer to all years from 1976 onwards.

since 2018 - possibly a side effect of the lockdown year of 2020 when the survey could not be done). Note that only species recorded in 2022 are listed in the table. Some of the formerly common species such as Redpoll, and infrequent species such as Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, are not listed here. One species listed for the first time is Whooper Swan - it was seen during one visit and therefore recorded. However it is clearly most unlikely that it was even thinking about finding a breeding territory here. Stock Doves and Woodpigeons continue to increase, Willow and Garden Warblers are rarities. Dunnocks remain at a low level but Song Thrushes maintain their slow recovery.

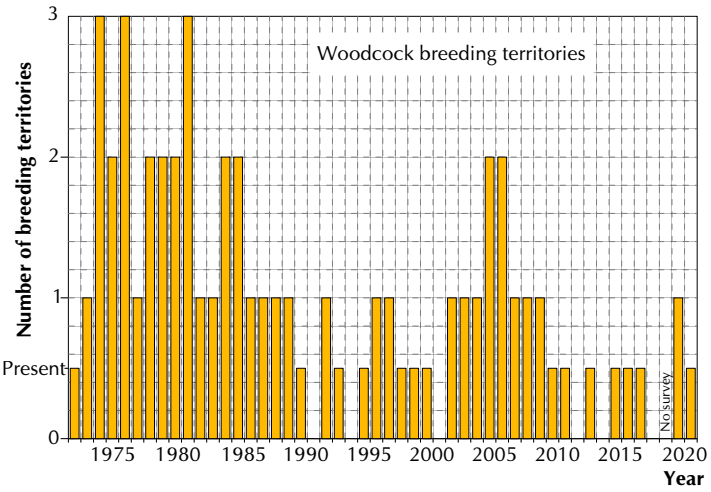
Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Buzzard	**5**	**GM4096**	**19/02/2023**	**C03**

Our third ever Buzzard capture. The first two were in 2019. All three have been birds in their first year of life and all three caught within 50 metres of the wood edge.

Woodcock **6** **EF27894** **12/02/2023** **N00**

The national trend for Woodcock is downwards as a breeding species but possibly slightly upwards as a winter visitor. Our own records are in line with this. Up to 1990 we had caught seven, two in winter and five in the breeding season. After 1990 the total is five (including this one), all of them in winter. The last chick we ringed was in 1995 and our previous adult capture was in 2019.

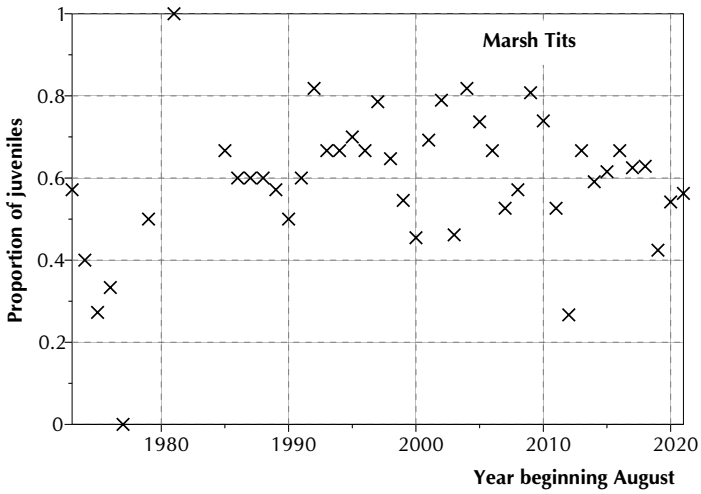


Several Woodcock have been seen in the wood in recent weeks and it does seem to be a good winter for them.

Marsh Tit **6** **S078947** **12/3/2023** **Q04**

The PIT tagging of Marsh Tits continues, this bird is one of 15 Marsh Tits tagged so far. Since it was ringed nearly five years ago it has been recaptured 12 times and its PIT tag has been read on 73 separate days since being PIT tagged in spring 2022.

In conversation about the decline of Willow Tits, Richard Broughton mentioned that Marsh Tits declines in his various study sites had followed years in which the proportions of first year birds in the population declined. It was either low juvenile survival or high juvenile emigration which signalled a decline. On his advice we have looked at our data. The graph relates to the numbers of individual we have encountered, rather than numbers of captures, from August one year to July the next. That gives a measure of the population after one breeding season until the end of the next. This is a more biologically relevant interval than using a calendar year. Sadly the picture is not good. Although the recent figures will have been affected by missed ringing during the covid disruptions, the overall picture is a decline over the last years. Marsh Tits often live to be several years old so it is possible to have an apparently healthy population with capture numbers remaining high but that population made of ageing birds which are not being replaced by enough young.



Blue Tit **6** **S078587** **3/2/2023** **E05 Roosting**

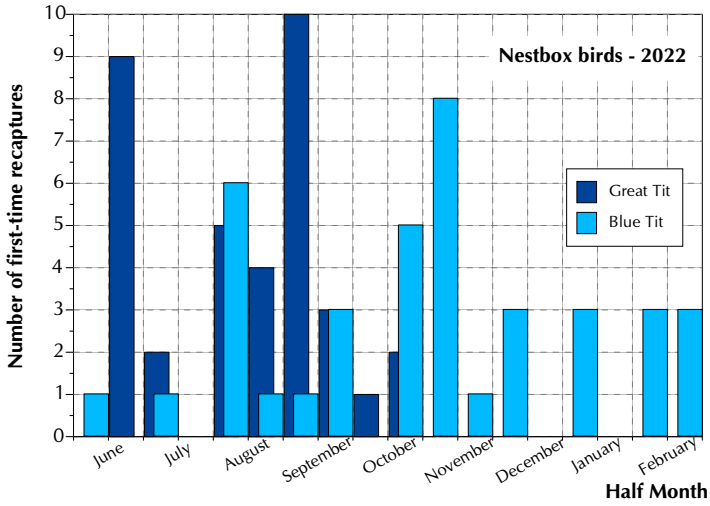
It is nearly seven years since this bird was ringed as a nestling in compartment I in the south of the wood. Since then it has been encountered seven times, always in the same compartment, twice in mist nets, three times as a nesting adult and twice roosting in a box. It was one of 13 Blue Tits found roosting during the late winter roosting round. Looking at the capture histories of these roosting birds it seemed they were of above average vintage. This one was the oldest but others had capture histories of between 2 and 5 years. Comparing this with mist net captures around the same time (a week either side of that event) confirmed that there was an unexpectedly high proportion of older birds. The table gives the breakdown of the 16 roosting birds and 25 mist netted birds. Even on this fairly small sample there is a statistically significant difference in the proportions of younger and older birds.

	First year	Adult
Mist net	18	6
Roost	7	9

We have the feeling that birds we have found roosting are less likely to be caught in mist nets than other birds but have not yet been able to work out a statistical procedure to analyse the data we have. If only we knew the total number of birds in the wood it would be easy but we do not - we only know the number we have ringed and, in any case, that number changes continually. (A statistical challenge there for someone.) The fact that we have here such a difference in age structure does add weight to the idea that the birds found roosting are different in some way from the masses.

Blue Tit 5 AAL8890 19/02/2023 F06

Yet another 2022 nestling-ringed tit to be recaptured for the first time. Blue Tits and Great Tits show very different recapture patterns. Normally we recapture a good number of Great Tits soon after fledgeing but Blue Tits do not appear in any quantity. However, as the time passes more Blue Tits are caught for the first time whereas very few, or no more, Great Tits first appear. The graph showing first captures of the 2022 Great and Blue Tit cohorts shows this pattern which is much the same each year. Documenting the pattern is one thing. Explaining it is quite another.



Blue Tit 6 S831349 05/02/2023 M00

Peter Harrison ringed this tit 5km to the North in Sturton-le-Steeple in January 2021 and we caught it in the wood in March the following year at a feeding station. Even though it is, therefore, familiar with the feeding station where we often net birds, it did not appear again until this capture, 11 months later. Does it live in the wood or is it a short-distance migrant passing through the wood each spring?

Great Tit 6M AJN3687 12/3/2023 Q04

Another piece of evidence that the 'grey tit' plumage we record from time to time is related to conditions at the time of moult rather than to genetics. After its partial post juvenile moult in 2021 it was trapped several times and noted as a 'Grey Tit' - that is one where there is very little or no yellow pigment in he feathers. It has since then undergone a full adult moult and the plumage is of typical colour. Definitely not genetics - the cause has to be environmental at the time of moult.

Long-tailed Tit 4 JTE362 19/02/2023 E06

Long-tailed Tits, like other very small birds, can suffer high mortality in winter. So four years and three months since ringing is a good age for the species. However, compare the times since ringing of this species with that of Goldcrests. This bird has a ringing history three and a half times as long as that of the old Goldcrest (JTE862, see below), and a year and a half longer than that of our very oldest Goldcrest. Even so, this Long-tailed Tit falls nearly three years short of our internal age record and not quite half way to the national age record.

Why the difference between the small Long-tailed Tit and the even smaller Goldcrest? The Goldcrest is often a migrant, many crossing the North Sea and its weight (typically 5 g) is much lower than that of the Long-tailed Tit (typically 8g).

Goldcrest 6M JTE862 12/2/2023 M02

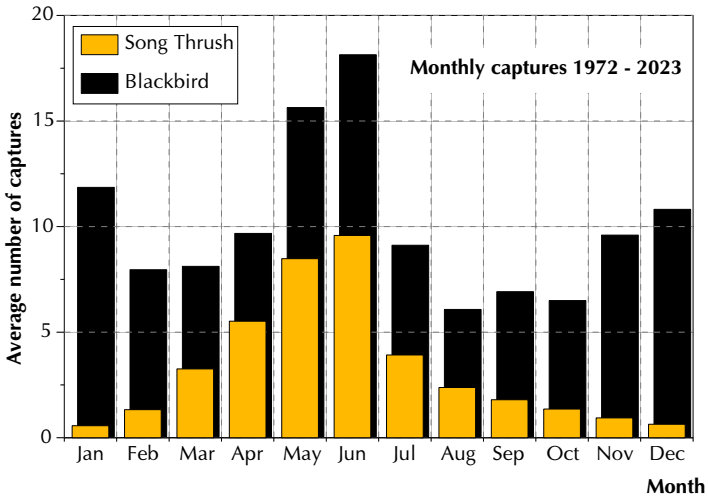
Not quite our oldest Goldcrest but one of only nine of the 2,495 Goldcrests which we have ringed which has survived at least two winters and been recaptured. Only one of those nine survived a third winter.

Blackbird 6F NLA.L491358 2/1/2023 Q03

What a good start to the year - this was the the third bird to be captured on the first visit of the year. It was ringed as a first year female in Reddingsweg, Schiermonnikoog, in The Netherlands (53°28'N 6°10E) in October 2021. This is only the second foreign ringed wintering Blackbird we have caught (the other being Norwegian). Two of our Blackbirds have been controlled (Norway and Sweden).

Blackbirds show a distinct monthly pattern of captures. After a peak in January numbers fall. This marks the departure of wintering birds from across the North Sea and some winter mortality. Numbers rise from March - this will be some returning adults who have wintered elsewhere (perhaps further south in England). Juveniles will be caught from May onwards with a peak of captures in June. Moult then begins, adults become less active until their plumage is renewed in the autumn when capture numbers increase again. Some of our breeding birds may leave but the influx of European winter visitors increases the capture rates to bring us back to the January peak. January and February brought a total of 28 captures, rather higher than the long-term average of 20.

Song Thrushes are quite different from Blackbirds Our three foreign reports are from birds wintering on the continent - two in France and one in Germany. Traditionally we think of Treswell Wood Song Thrushes as largely summer migrants. The low winter captures and handful of foreign recoveries support this. The graph shows our mean monthly captures and, again, this supports the idea that they go elsewhere during the winter. This year, though, numbers have been a little higher than average although it would be unwise to draw any conclusions from such low numbers as five captures compared to an average of just under two.



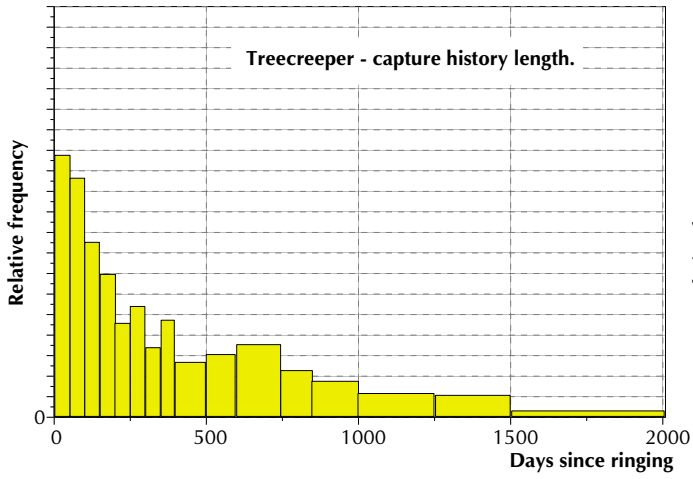
The other thrush species which is present throughout the year is the Mistle Thrush. They are recorded each year by the CBC, generally having enough registrations to determine a breeding territory (or territories). However they tend to remain high in the trees, above mist net height. We have heard them singing this January but the last one we caught was nearly eight years ago.

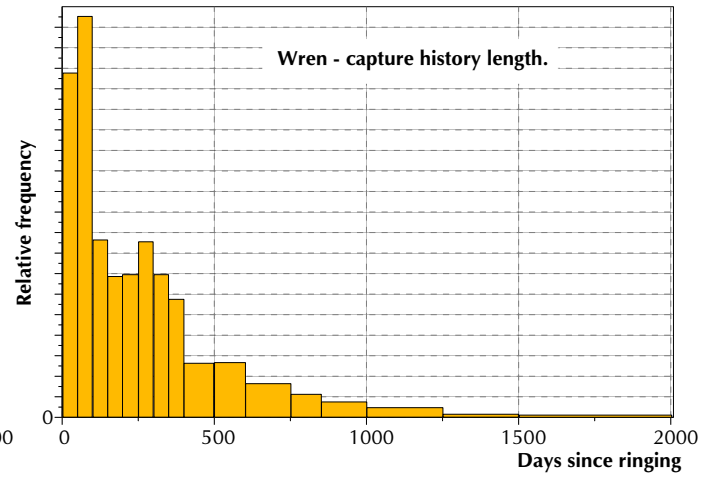
Blackbird 6M LE35304 29/01/2023 R-1

At 6 years and 5 months since ringing this is our sixth oldest Blackbird, just 18 months short of our record. It is one of the few remaining birds that John McMeeking himself ringed. It appears to be a locally bred bird, having first been captured in its unmoulted juvenile plumage and since then has only been caught in the breeding season. Curiously we did not see it between 2019 and this capture - a gap of nearly four years even though its capture locations as an adult have all been in a part of the wood which we net reasonably often. Perhaps another 'covid gap' non-capture? On 12th March we retrapped another Blackbird of the same vintage, LE35410. Again it had not been seen by us for three years since its last appearance in 2020.

Treecreeper 6 JTE232 8/1/2023 D09

This is our sixth oldest Treecreeper record, 5years 191 days just over two years short of the record holder which, itself, is just one year short of the national record (which at one time was held by a Treswell Wood bird). It is interesting to compare the longevity of Wrens and Treecreepers. At first sight it might be thought that they should have similar life spans. They are both about the same size, both highly sedentary and have long, curved bills for their specialist live invertebrate diet. The graphs shows that the Treecreeper typically has a much longer life span. Why? Our recapture data shows a major difference in their life styles which is not apparent without very many recapture records spread over time and space. Treecreepers in the wood have very large ranges typically five hectares. Wrens have tiny ranges, typically only half a hectare. The wide ranging behaviour of Treecreepers allows them to know and access many more resources than Wrens. It also ensures there are fewer birds competing for resources. This gives them far better chance of survival throughout the year - and it shows.





10-Week Summary: 2023 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Buzzard	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Woodcock	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	2	.	8	11	.	21
Great Tit	.	2	.	3	4	.	9
Long-tailed Tit	2	.	.	6	.	.	8
Goldcrest	1	4	.	2	2	.	9
Wren	.	2	.	1	.	.	3
Nuthatch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Treecreeper	.	1	.	4	1	.	6
Blackbird	7	5	.	5	.	.	17
Song Thrush	2	2	.	2	.	.	6
Robin	.	3	.	5	2	.	10
Dunnock	4	1	.	4	1	.	10
Chaffinch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Bullfinch	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Totals	**19**	**23**	**.**	**43**	**21**	**.**	**106**

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

Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:

Interval	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Maximum	128	198	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	89	66	59	364
Mean	92	115	159	130	126	611

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
2008 - 2017	93	133	151	109	120	606

This millennium

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
2004	103	128	126	165	132	654
2005	107	140	150	88	133	618
2006	128	98	185	125	166	702
2007	107	110	138	73	92	520
2008	125	130	151	86	100	592
2009	57	130	156	85	80	508
2010	94	100	144	119	143	600
2011	96	112	120	105	101	534
2012	69	125	132	66	72	464
2014	83	132	181	123	120	639
2015	105	123	136	137	158	659
2016	102	185	193	109	109	698
2017	106	198	163	150	163	780
2018	95	108	182	184	119	695
2020	120	---	---	93	174	(387)
2021	...	163	129	90	109	(491)
2022	83	120	175	99	131	608