



TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 1998 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John McMeeking

1998/5 - Number 20

Treswell Wood IPM Group - it's Official!

The BTO has been talking about Integrated Population Monitoring for some years. It regards the findings of its investigations of the reasons for the decline of the Song Thrush as its prize exhibit so far. The IPM concept is that the work of Common Bird Census workers, ringers, nest recorders and others can be combined to resolve the question - "What causes changes in wild bird populations?"

The value of IPM has been recognised together with the special opportunities offered by long-term datasets built up at Treswell and a handful of other sites. At the Ringing and Migration Conference of 1998, the BTO announced that special grants would be offered to groups prepared to operate such sites. We really did not feel that we should take one of the bigger grants when we had already been doing the job for over 20 years anyway. But we did feel that we deserved the recognition of title: this first arrived in Caroline Dudley's letter thanking us for the 1998 nest record cards which began with the words *Dear all involved in the Treswell Wood IPM Group*.

At the 1999 R&M Conference we were told that our application had been accepted and that we could apply for whatever grant we felt appropriate provided that we would accept *Treswell Wood I G* as our official name, rather than insisting on TWIPMG in full. (The BTO problem is that we can only have four words in a ringing group name!) This really is no problem to us - the acronym TWIG is rather suitable for a group operating in coppiced woodland! We feel that the name of Twitter should remain, rather than Twiglet (short for TWIG Letter) which was suggested.

CBC - workers wanted

You will know that Treswell Wood has been part of the BTO CBC since the Notts. Trust purchased the wood in 1972. Each additional year adds proportionally more value to the data set. Treswell Wood is also valuable because its records are complemented by the ringing and nestbox data. It would be unfortunate if it were not possible to continue the complete survey each year. Margaret Price, who has masterminded the Treswell Wood CBC operation from the start is short of one (or preferably two) volunteers to operate in 1999 and, hopefully, thereafter. The work requires 10 visits to be made to the wood in the spring, during which time you record bird territorial and breeding activity using standard procedures developed over the years by the BTO. At the end of the season, you send your records to Margaret who prepares one map for each species from the sets of 10 visit maps made by the CBC recorders. These species maps are processed by the BTO staff who use them to estimate the number of breeding pairs of each species in the wood. Our data are combined with those from other sites to provide the annual national CBC indices of bird breeding populations.

If you are interested in taking part in this valuable survey work, contact Margaret for more information. Do not be afraid that your identification skills are not up to the job. Margaret will arrange training and ensure that you are fully prepared before you start. For more information contact Margaret Price at 362 Musters Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7DA, telephone 0115 923 2442. If you cannot volunteer yourself, can you suggest someone else?

The Treswell Wood Ringing Dataset

At last! After over a year of historic data entry, followed by all sorts of manual and computer checking, we have all our ringing data in a very satisfactory state on computer file. Thanks to Steve in particular, for his tireless data entry work. We have sent a copy to Andy Gosler who is hoping to do some analyses with a view to joint publication with us (any volunteers?). More details of what is going on will be in the next Twitter. David Thompson at the BTO is also proceeding with work (in his spare time) on our Blue Tit data. Over the next year we aim to computerise more of the Treswell Wood bird data so that, at some point in the not too distant future, we can have a relational database linking appropriate datafiles to enable many powerful analyses. Chris Wernham of the BTO also ensured that she did not leave R&M 1999 without a copy of the dataset so she can begin preliminary analyses.

Editors' Comments

1998, surprisingly, was not our worst year ever - 1991 was even worse! Our year's standard-site total was boosted by a few higher-than-expected captures in the last 10 weeks. Goldcrests have remained in the wood in good numbers and compensated for the lack of Blue Tits. It seems survival of the 52 Treswell Blue Tits which did fledge was very low indeed - we have only retrapped 2 of them so far. This compares badly with the final total of 56 reports from the 91 Blue Tits which fledged in the first year of nestboxes (1979). Captures at the feeders have been variable with few birds on some days. For example, on 30th December, we only captured 5 birds at the feeders. The weather on that day was very mild and it seemed as if some birds were feeding at Wood House. No doubt the massive amounts of Christmas Dinner leftovers put out in nearby gardens drew some birds away from the wood in the mild post-Christmas days. We have noticed Goldfinches on several occasions feeding along the north edge of the wood. We have, as yet, failed to trap any and none have been seen as far into the wood as the feeders.

13th December was a rather special day - not only was almost the anniversary day of 17th December 1972, but we also had Tracey Griggs, from *Birdwatching*, to see us in action. The wind was rather stronger than we had hoped, but in spite of this unpromising start, we set the nets as planned in Howard's Ride with extras at the feeders. Tracey arrived on schedule and (surprisingly) Murphy's Law seemed to be suspended for the day. Birds flowed in throughout the morning, in both the main set (a steady trickle) and at the feeders. We managed all 5 species of Parus tit in one netful, together with a respectable range of species. The last bird was our, now regular, friend Great Spotted Woodpecker RR11922 - always a good species to see close up! We are not sure, however, what was the 'Bird of the Day'. Was it F253339 - our oldest Blue Tit ever? Or was it 8Y3449 - our first ever wintering Chiffchaff? The summary of the ringing captures for the whole year is on page 3.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	DA20226	15/11/98	L01
A young male caught in the very exposed nets in the well-coppiced Windy Ride.			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	RR11922	8/11/98	Q02 feeders
This is one of two juvenile birds we have ringed at the feeders this autumn. Both of them have now been trapped three times and look like becoming regulars there. Both this one and the other (RR11936) are females.			
Blackbird	RH94559	15/11/98	K02
Where do they hide? Ringed as an adult female on 9/10/94 (H01) and trapped again on 30/7/95 (K03). This bird had remained out of our clutches for just over three years although it appears to be resident in a very small area.			
Blackcap	N305851	1/11/98	N99
Unlike the Garden Warbler trapped the week before (Twitter 19), this first winter male bird seems likely to be an overwintering individual. Will we be able to prove it?			
Chiffchaff	8Y3472	13/12/98	N00
Our first ever wintering Chiffchaff. It was caught amongst a party of Goldcrests. Is the the herald of more to come? Previous first and last dates for Chiffchaffs have been 12 th March and 16 th November in 1995 and 1986 respectively. (P.S. We trapped another Chiffchaff in R-1 on 2/1/99)			
Goldcrest	8Y3269	22/11/98	L06
The first between-winters retrap of a Goldcrest this season. This individual had a fairly long recapture history last winter (4 captures October 1997 - March 1998) and was always found in block D. Today's capture was again in block D. Are Goldcrests site faithful between winters?			
Goldcrest	8Y3374	1/11/98	R00
We do not have any idea where our Goldcrests come from, nor where they go to. Some, however, do stay a little while rather than using the wood as a brief stopover point. This our first within-winter recapture; he was ringed in R98 on 20/9/98. On both occasions he was captured with the same female (8Y3375).			
Coal Tit	N645302	30/12/98	Q04
The third of this year's nestling-ringed Coal Tits to be retrapped - we now have more of these retrapped than Blue Tits! It was ringed in the south of the wood (E07) and retrapped at the north edge adjacent to Wood House. It is possible that it is a regular at food supplied there.			
Blue Tit	K436932	23/12/98	N05 Roost
Site faithfulness! We have now retrapped this bird four times over three winters roosting in the same nestbox. Other captures have all been at the feeders apart from its ringing which was in O06, fairly near to its roosting site. Male Blue Tits are reputed to roost in their future nest sites. However, the 1998 nest was not successful - abandoned after one egg was laid. Will he try again there in 1999?			

Year Summary - All Records 1998

Many of the numbers below speak for themselves! Perhaps the PDF column needs some particular comment. Normally, if nestling tits grow large enough to ring, most will survive to fledge. We would therefore expect nearly all those we ring in the nest to fledge. This year 47 of the 99 Blue Tits we ringed died before fledging. In part, this was because of adverse weather with some adults failing to keep their young fed, dry and warm. In addition, there was considerable predation on well-grown nestlings, making for this disappointingly high number of 'wasted' rings.

	Controls	New Birds			Other handlings					Total
		Adult	Juv	Pulli	Retrap	SDR	Sight	Rec	PDF	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
Woodpigeon	.	3	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Tawny Owl	1	.	.	1
Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	2	.	8	1	.	.	.	11
Swallow	.	.	.	10	.	.	.	.	.	10
Wren	.	36	58	18	30	14	.	.	.	156
Dunnock	.	14	20	.	35	8	.	.	.	77
Robin	.	24	60	5	58	19	2	.	.	168
Blackbird	1	29	20	.	34	6	.	2	.	92
Song Thrush	.	8	4	.	2	.	.	.	.	14
Redwing	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Garden Warbler	.	6	2	.	1	1	.	.	.	10
Blackcap	.	36	28	3	13	11	.	.	.	91
Chiffchaff	.	21	13	.	8	2	.	.	.	44
Willow Warbler	.	5	4	.	1	1	.	.	.	11
Goldcrest	.	26	58	.	18	3	.	.	.	105
Spotted Flycatcher	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Long-tailed Tit	.	20	3	.	22	3	.	.	.	48
Marsh Tit	.	1	7	11	31	4	.	.	.	54
Willow Tit	.	1	7	.	20	7	.	.	.	35
Coal Tit	.	1	7	11	27	1	.	1	.	48
Blue Tit	1	58	39	52	218	12	.	7	47	434
Great Tit	1	28	26	25	239	28	1	1	10	359
Nuthatch	.	1	2	.	10	.	.	.	.	13
Treecreeper	.	4	8	.	17	2	.	.	.	31
Jay	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
House Sparrow	.	7	7	.	.	.	.	.	.	14
Chaffinch	.	38	12	.	40	8	.	.	.	98
Brambling	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Greenfinch	2	31	3	.	7	.	.	.	.	43
Bullfinch	.	11	26	.	12	3	.	.	.	52
Yellowhammer	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Totals	5	412	423	135	851	134	3	12	57	2032

Key to columns in 1998 Year summary

Controls:		Birds caught in Treswell Wood but first ringed elsewhere.
New Birds:	Adult	All birds except nestlings and those known to be juveniles.
	Juv	Juveniles - birds known to be in their first calendar year when ringed.
	Pulli	Nestlings (excluding those which died before fledging).
Other handlings:	Retrap	Recaptures of birds already with rings.
	SDR	Same day retraps.
	Sight	Birds identified by colour rings or other individual marks.
	Rec	Recoveries of birds within the wood.
	PDF	Pulli ringed but died before fledging.

Noteworthy captures - continued

Blue Tit

F253339

13/12/98

Q02 Feeders

Our oldest Blue Tit ever, beating the previous oldest (JE46667; 3/3/73 to 10/2/81) by about 4 months. We ringed F253339 as a juvenile on 16/9/90 near Treswell End (L07) and have captured him about a dozen times - always in the L/M/N 4/6/7 area or else at the feeders. His previous capture was nearly 3 years ago, at the feeders in April

1996. We have not captured him roosting in any boxes, even though it seems he is resident in a part of the wood well provided with boxes. His time between ringing and recapture, 3011 days, makes him the 4th longest-time recapture/control of any species in Treswell Wood. The others are Blackbird CH17417 (9/2/74 - 23/1/83; 3270 days); Blackbird XH33670 (21/06/81 - 26/5/90; 3261 days); Chaffinch KR03217 (28/10/78 - 12/4/87; 3088 days).

Great Tit **K463312** **29/11/98** **D08**

This bird was ringed 2¹/₂ years earlier and not retrapped until today. She was ringed in C07 - not a place where we mist-net often. Today's capture was in the standard nets in Nightingale Ride and it may be that her normal sphere of activity barely touches our netting operations. Unlike K463936, this bird was never recorded by Ulli or José in spite of two breeding seasons of their efforts.

Great Tit **K463714** **1/11/98** **Q02 Feeders**

This bird has been a regular at the feeders over three winters. During autumn 1997 it had very long mandibles which Ulli trimmed to a reasonable length. By the spring of 1998 they had grown overlong again and were retrimmed. Since then they have remained at the normal length.

Great Tit **K463936** **29/11/98** **F03**

We have many records of Great (and Blue) Tits which normally live in the south of the wood, travelling regularly to the feeders in the north. This bird is not like that - it was ringed in February 1997 in D07 and not retrapped until now. Ulli recorded it once during the 1997 breeding season in D05, but otherwise it has remained away from our operations.

Great Tit **N305609** **30/12/98** **Q04**

This bird was part of the 1998 Great Tit spring influx although, unusually, it was ringed in the south of the wood rather than at the feeders. Since then it has been retrapped, again in the south, in breeding condition. Today it was at the far north, near Wood House. Does it prefer their food to ours? How could it not have discovered our feeders?

Great Tit **VR78723** **23/12/98** **D07 Roost**

You will recall mention of this bird in Twitter 18 - it was the first of our nestling-ringed Great Tits to be recaptured. Since then (16th July) it has been captured once more at the feeders (22nd November) and again tonight roosting in the south of the wood. Is it a commuter that lives in the south but travels regularly to the north for its fast food?

Nuthatch **VR78889** **1/11/98** **Q02 Feeders**

The only Nuthatch capture during the 10-week period - this young male is now a regular at the feeders.

Greenfinch **VR78748** **6/12/98** **H04**

Although we capture Greenfinches regularly at the feeders during the winter and spring, we rarely trap them elsewhere. This individual is the first captured at a standard site since June 1993.

Controls & Recoveries

Species **Ring** **Date** **Grid**

Blue Tit **N305830** **23/12/98** **O98**

Ringed as a juvenile on 4/10/98 in N99, this bird had only a short life, dying whilst roosting some time during late December.

Greenfinch **VR78860** **14/2/98** **Sturton-le-Steeple**

Greenfinches are fairly mobile during the winter and spring. This bird is no exception. We ringed it at the feeders on 16/11/97. Subsequent to this movement to Peter H's garden in Sturton, we retrapped the bird again at our feeders on 19/4/98.

Greenfinch **VR36491** **12/4/98** **Q02 Feeders**

The mills of the Ringing Unit, like those of God, may grind slow, but at last we have ringing details of this bird captured last spring. It had been ringed at Rutland Water on 4/3/96. (73km @ 353°).

Mites

We have, so far, recorded the mite scores on several Robins. Jerzy would like us to try a second species too. After looking at individuals of several species, it seems that Long-tailed Tits could be a good one to try. We catch them in good enough numbers to allow useful sample sizes. They also often travel in parties, and this would make an interesting other area to look at - does mite infestation travel in parties too? Jerzy quoted some evidence from elsewhere that this may be the case. He also noted that heavier mite loads can go with reduced 'quality' of birds. In the case of Long-tailed Tits, tail length may be a good measure of quality. Thus it is worth trying to record both mite score and tail length on these birds.

1998 - CBC - Summary from Margaret Price

I think that Blackbirds, Blue Tits, Dunnocks, Robins and Wrens will all prove to be down on 1997. Dunnocks in particular look very thin on the ground. Song Thrush, which jumped from 3 on 1996 to 8 in 1997, looks to be 6 at the most in 1998. Willow Warblers are again concentrated in F and the adjoining half of G with very few elsewhere. I think numbers will be down on 1997.

The only Nuthatch records were on April 20th and June 30th so they must have bred outside the wood. I associate the species with groups of trees in parkland rather than in a wood. Stuart Martin tells me that the grounds of Rampton Hospital are park-like with open areas and scattered trees of various species. Does anyone know if there is a member of staff sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to tell us whether any Nuthatches are in the grounds?

There was only one sighting of Woodcock, on March 15th in I. One evening during May 1981 several census workers and others positioned themselves around the wood before dusk and plotted the flight-lines of roding Woodcock. From that information, the BTO calculated that there were three pairs. The exercise has never been repeated and since then 2 pairs were estimated to be breeding in 1984 and 1985 but in other years only one pair of this species has been recorded, not necessarily breeding. Does anyone feel like organising a team to assess the position in 1999?

From the BTO

Caroline Dudley has written to thank us for our nest record cards. As with feedback from our CES data, it seems our dismal season was not the only one in the country! ... *long-term nestbox operators from Grampian to Devon report a poor year in terms of numbers of young raised.*

David Glue, after reading the last Twitter, noted that it has also been a good autumn elsewhere for Goldcrests and that our notes on the House Sparrow add more evidence of the sad and continuing population decline.

Ringling and Migration - free back issues

Richard has rescued a number of back issues of the journal of the Ringing Scheme. Some issues date back to the 1970s, and they are all free! If anyone (ringers, CBC workers, or anyone else interested) would like to have these back issues, let Chris know. The more that go to good homes, the more leg-room I will have in my study!

For the past few years, Steve has printed annual listings of retrap histories of all birds captured in the wood. We have used these, in the wood, to look up details of some birds we capture (e.g. birds we think may be particularly interesting, or birds which are proving particularly tricky to age). Copies from previous years are now surplus, so if you want any for bedtime reading, please ask.

Treswell Wood IPM Group

We form a rather nebulous group, never having had a formal business meeting, nor a membership list, nor fees nor anything else. The list below gives names of all those who are currently, or have recently been, involved in the Treswell Wood bird population operations in any way, together with their particular involvements. Treswell Wood's CBC, ringing and nestbox operations are the longest running continuous throughout-the-year integrated operations in the country and our computerised dataset is second to none. Thanks are due to all who have contributed to this long-running dataset. If we have omitted any names in the list below, please accept our apologies and tell us so that we may include you next time.

Dave Barritt	Ringing, DNA analysis	Richard Johnson	CBC
Jerzy Behnke	Ringing, Mites	Tony Kennedy	Woodland management
The Bower Family	Equipment storage	Ulli Langemann	Ringing
Sally Clough	Visitor	Stuart Martin	CBC
Peter Cobb	Ringing	Phil May	Ringing, nestboxes
Ted Cowley	Visitor	John McMeeking	Ringing
Andy Edwards	Nestbox making	Eric Palmer	Visitor
Susan Fallows	Visitor	David Parkin	DNA analysis
Chris du Feu	Ringing, nestboxes,	Peter Phillips	Ringing
Richard du Feu	Ringing, data processing	Richard Platts	Visitor
Daniel Flack	Visitor	Margaret Price	CBC organiser
Koon Wah Fok	DNA analysis	Neil Taylor	Ringing
Andy Gosler	Data analysis	David Thompson	Data analysis
Tim Gyles	Nestbox making	Frank Tillotson	CBC
Peter Harrison	Ringing	Liz Tillotson	CBC
Andrew Heaton	Ringing	Steve Wain	Ringing, data processing
Shirley Hutchinson	Ringing, CBC		

10 Week Summary October - December 1998

Interval 5 Visits 1385, 1388, 1381, 1383, 1386, 1384, 1387

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult		3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Wren	1	.	5	2	.	1	9
Dunnock	1	.	3	4	.	.	8
Robin	.	.	4	3	.	5	12
Blackbird	1	.	5	.	.	.	6
Song Thrush	.	.	2	.	.	.	2
Blackcap	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Chiffchaff	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	8	.	21	1	.	3	33
Long-tailed Tit	2	.	.	5	.	.	7
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	2	4
Willow Tit	.	.	.	.	.	2	2
Blue Tit	.	.	4	.	.	.	4
Great Tit	1	.	.	6	.	1	8
Treecreeper	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Chaffinch	1	.	2	.	.	.	3
Greenfinch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	.	3	.	.	.	3
Totals	16	.	52	23	.	15	106

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods - 1978 to 1998

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	126	98	98	480
1998	78	84	116	80	106	464
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	87	109	172	141	127	637