

TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2002 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John McMeeking

2002/3

Number 38



Until last year, the third issue of Twitter each year contained a summary of the events in nestboxes during the breeding season. The year, as last, the Stock Doves are still nesting - now on their third broods - so the summary of the year's breeding will be deferred until these doves have finished. This is quite a change after an almost complete absence of them as a breeding species between 1983 and 1999.

The weather during the past ten weeks has been fairly kind to the birds, and there have not been torrential downpours at crucial times for the box-nesting birds. Recaptures of the good numbers of Blue Tits which fledged from boxes have been very few indeed although we have retrapped many of our Great, Coal and Marsh Tit nestlings at the feeders. Why they use them so intensively at this time of year and the Blue Tits apparently shun them is not clear. Great Tits (and Chaffinches) are very partial to the black sunflower seeds, barely touching the peanuts and mixed grain. The Great Spotted Woodpecker, on the other hand, tends to go for the peanuts. (The table of captures at the end of this issue, as usual, only includes captures at our constant-effort sites. The large number of captures at the feeder are not recorded there.)

Captures on standard sites continue to be unpredictable. The first visit in June yielded a catch of 35 birds in the standard nets but on the first July visit the wood was very quiet indeed with few birds calling, few seen and only five being caught in the standard nets. Other nets at the feeder, brought the total to a respectable 55 for the day. On both days the weather was favourable to ringers. Where do the birds go on these days? Certainly the Blue Tits were not all drawn to the feeders - the day's total amounted to only one of this species.

Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration Dinner

A reminder that Neil has arranged this event for Friday November 15th 2002 : 7.30 for 8 pm. We have tried to send invitations to all people who are, or have been, involved with the work in Treswell Wood over recent years. If we missed you from the list, accept our apologies. You are welcome to join us anyway. Let Neil know by the end of September. The price, excluding drinks, is £15.00

Contact Neil Taylor at 11a Willingham Road, Lea, Gainsborough, Lincs., DN21 5EN. Tel. & Fax 01427 612933
The venue will be the South Forest Complex, Clipstone Road, Edwinstowe, Notts., Map reference SK628658

Mole Deaths in Treswell Wood

We have, from time to time, seen dead moles on the ground in the wood. They seem to be uninjured but dead. John and Pat Bartley have noticed this too and can throw some light on the cause. John writes:

On 40% of our CBC visits to the wood this year, Pat and I found single dead moles on the pathways. The animals did not appear to be injured in any way and showed no obvious sign of disease. A contact in the Mammal Society told us that this is not an uncommon phenomenon and is most frequent amongst sub-adult moles during dispersal from natal sites.

*Moles of both sexes are known to be strongly territorial. The young are cared for exclusively by the female parent. Juveniles are generally born in May or June, depending on local conditions, and remain in the territory of the mother until they are fully developed at about nine weeks old. Individuals that do not disperse of their own accord will eventually be forced to do so by their mother (see *The Mole* by R D Stone, 1992, Shire Natural History).*

Dispersal take place on the surface. Individuals that inadvertently wander into already occupied territories are quickly evicted. Those animals that do not succeed in establishing their own tunnel system will die of heat loss and starvation - particularly in cold weather when their invertebrate prey tends to be inactive.

All very interesting, of course - but it does not tell us whether the numbers we found this year, which were much higher than in the previous two years, are the result of higher than normal breeding success by the females or lower dispersal success by the sub-adults.

Treswell Wood CBC - 2001 Results

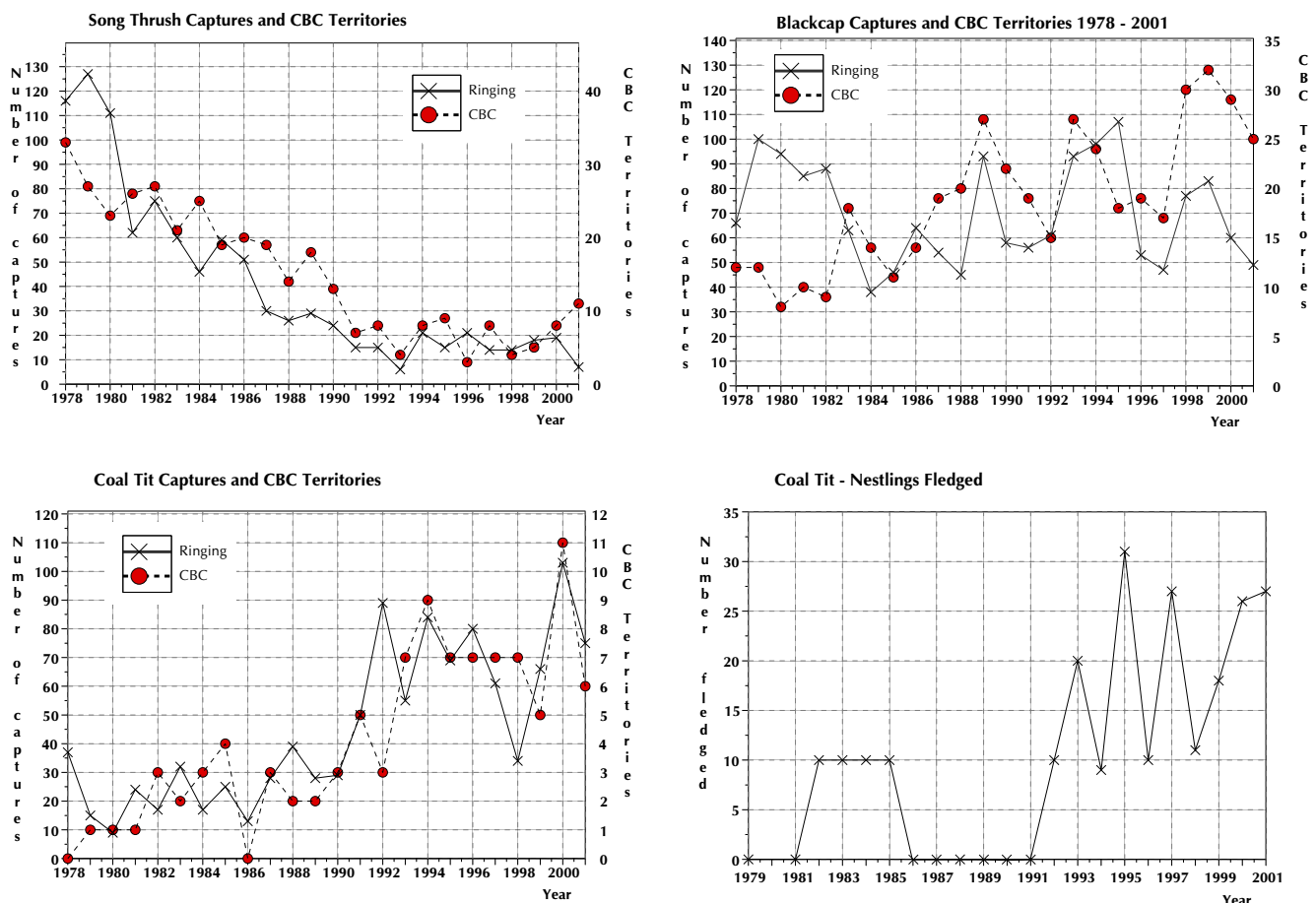
Species	Averages					Recent Annual Totals				
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95	96...00	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	p	1	p	p
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	1	p	1	1	p
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	0	0
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0	p	1	1	p
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Partridge	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	p	0
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.0	5	5	5	5	3
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	1	p	p	p	0
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0	0	1	1	6
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	0	nc	nc	nc	nc
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	p	0	0	1
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	1	p	p	p	1
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1.4	2	p	1	3	3
Green Woodpecker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0	0	0	2	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	2	2	2	3	2
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	p	p	p	0
Swallow	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	81.8	50	82	127	83	45
Dunnock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	12.6	12	12	13	12	4
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	54.0	36	47	66	79	54
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25.2	20	24	31	26	16
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	5.6	8	4	5	8	11
Redwing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	p	0
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.0	0	1	1	2	2
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.4	1	0	0	1	p
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	6	8	7	9	11
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	25.4	17	30	32	29	25
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	19.0	17	23	27	18	12
Willow Warbler	27.6	44.0	31.4	18.2	6.8	10	8	4	4	2
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0	p	2	1	0
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0.0	0	0	0	0	p
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.0	3	4	5	5	2
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.2	4	4	5	3	p
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.6	3	1	2	3	1
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7.4	7	7	5	11	6
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	70.0	74	72	62	59	41
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35.2	37	32	42	30	33
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1.2	2	p	2	1	0
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	3.6	4	3	7	2	p
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	1	1	1	1	p
Magpie	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p	0	p	0	0
Jackdaw	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	0	0
Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	1	1	p	2	0
Starling	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	p
House Sparrow	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	p	0	p	0
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	40.6	24	34	54	55	34
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.8	1	2	1	4	p
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	p	0
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0.6	1	p	1	1	3
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0	p	0	2	0
Reed Bunting	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Total territories	457.4	457.0	437.6	386.2	426.8	351	407	514	467	319

Thanks to all of you who helped in the CBC during that rather difficult year. Richard Thewlis of the BTO's CBC team has written:

Many thanks indeed for carrying out your CBC in Treswell Wood in 2001. Your maps were of an excellent standard and I had no trouble in analysing them. As you say, it is unfortunate that the Foot and Mouth Disease had such an impact on the number of visits you were able to make, as the number of territories recorded was reduced as a result. Not to worry, though: yours was one of half of all the CBC plots on which the disease had an impact. Although the results may not be compatible with previous years, the results are valuable for the time series continuum of data for this site.

We are very keen to see your plot continue as part of the core group. I hope you continue to enjoy the valuable census work at Treswell Wood, and hope that this season's survey has been a good one.

Examination of the CBC data is interesting. As Richard Thewlis notes, the numbers of territories recorded are lower than usual because the restrictions on visiting the wood allowed fewer observations to be made rather than because there were, in fact, fewer territories. (The total number of recorded territories is the lowest ever.) Some species, however, seem to have done better than recently in spite of the expected lowering of numbers. Garden Warblers and Song Thrush territories were up and Blackcap territories more-or-less on a par with recent years. Are these supported by the ringing data? The relationship between CBC territories and ringing data would provide material for a major study (any volunteers out there?), but below are details for three species. Bear in mind that the 2001 data for both ringing and CBC are affected by Foot and Mouth restrictions and that ringing data consists of captures in the whole year, not just in the breeding season. Coal Tits may be captured in large numbers in winter at the feeders, Blackcaps are almost exclusively summer visitors and Song Thrushes, too, tend to be absent in the winter.



In all three cases, the scales of the two data sets have been adjusted to make the comparison between ringing and CBC more clear. There are, as expected, small differences between ringing and CBC data from year to year but overall, in each case, the broad picture is the same. Song Thrushes have suffered a steady decline which has, possibly, been halted. Blackcaps have possibly enjoyed a slight increase overall. Earlier, the ringing totals were relatively higher, in the last few years they have been relatively lower than CBC territories. Note, however, that in the last six years the year-on-year pattern has been the same with a peak in 1999. Coal Tits are a success story. The numbers of nests recorded in boxes each year and the number of nestlings fledged from these boxes (illustrated) shows a similar picture to both the ringing and CBC data.

Identifying Juvenile Marsh and Willow Tits - A Cautionary Tale

The problems of separating Marsh and Willow Tits in the hand are well known. Our method of looking at the tail feather pattern (Twitter 2) which is now also in the Ringers' Manual works well, but even so there are a very few intermediate birds. If you catch a 'family party' in a mist net, however, it might be assumed that all will be of the same species. The more difficult juveniles can be assigned to the same species as the easier adult. Beware of doing this! Some years ago we did catch a known adult Marsh Tit with a handful of young juveniles. All were examined, ringed and recorded as Marsh Tits, the same as their 'parent'. One of the birds was retrapped a number of times as an adult and always identified as a Willow Tit. Once we had realised it was a problem bird we looked at it very closely indeed on its next recapture. Indeed, it was a Willow Tit.

We captured a similar 'family party' in mid-June - a known adult female Marsh Tit with three juveniles, all still in complete juvenile plumage. The female had abandoned her first clutch at an early stage so it was no surprise that some of the juveniles were still with some feathers not fully grown. However, the third juvenile was rather older and already carrying a ring. It was one from another brood of Marsh Tits at the opposite end of the wood. Already it had started its post-natal dispersal and apparently joined with this other family party.

Do Marsh Tits make a habit of collecting birds from other broods in their entourage, or are the instances noted just coincidences?

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Sparrowhawk	7M	DA87112	5/5/2002	L05
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Yet another unringed male Sparrowhawk. It was retrapped two weeks later in O-1. It was carrying one of our Blackcaps - see Controls and Recoveries.

Kestrel	6M	EH28342	15/5/2002	H04
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This is our 13th capture of a Kestrel. The previous capture was in 2000.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	CF40629	7/7/2002	Q02 Feeder
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We have had a total of 7 captures of 4 individual Great Spotted Woodpeckers during this interval, all at the feeder. All except this bird have been recaptures of breeding adults with birds from at least two pairs captured. This, a new bird, is the only juvenile trapped so far this season.

Wren	3J	1M1282	23/6/2002	N07
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Although there has been a good number of Wren nesting attempts this year, overall success has been mediocre. This is the first and, so far, the only one of this year's 27 nestling-ringed Wrens to be retrapped. It was ringed in Q00 a month earlier. Already it had moved well beyond the typical home range of an adult Wren in its post natal dispersive movement.

Dunnoch	6M	N275415	2/7/2002	P02
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On recapture John noted how dull coloured were its eyes, appearing to be those of a young bird. From its ring number it was clearly older. We had previously noted it as a problem bird. In spite of being at least two years old, its eyes and tail are still more like those of a juvenile than of an adult.

Robin	3J	R123782	23/6/2002	N06
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This has been a better year than usual for Robins in nestboxes, although numbers that use the boxes are so small that this should not be taken as an unequivocal sign of a good year for Robins. We ringed this bird a month earlier at its nest a mere 30 metres from where it was mist-netted. We also recaptured a sibling, R123786, later in the day nearby. Contrast this lack of movement in their first month with that of Wren 1M1282, Chiffchaff 5Z1436 or many of our nestbox-ringed tits.

While we were ringing the brood in May, both parents appeared close by. Richard had a good view of both birds' legs which would have enabled their identity to be known. However, neither bird was colour ringed in spite of having a territory so close to our regular Treswell End mist-netting site.

Chiffchaff	3J	5Z1436	2/6/2002	R00
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One of very few juvenile warblers captured so far. We also recaptured it two weeks later at the opposite end of the wood in D08. See the note about movement of juveniles under Robin R123782.

Coal Tit	4M	J639033	5/5/2002	L07
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Our oldest recent recapture and one whose age we know exactly. He was ringed as a nestling, having hatched on May 13th 1994 making him 7 years and 357 days old. Steve Wain ringed the bird on 21st May 1994. This is one of the country's oldest known Coal Tits. If it can survive yet another winter and last to 15th March next year, it will break the national longevity record.

Coal Tit 3J R123535 2/6/2002 Q02 Feeder

The first recapture for the year of a nestling ringed bird is always a special event, marking the changing of the seasons. This is one harbinger of summer. It was ringed nearby in O03 a month earlier but was not one from our very earliest Coal Tit nest. Birds from that earliest brood waited another three weeks before appearing.

Blue Tit 3J R123584 9/6/2002 L01

We have, so far, retrapped very few of our nestling-ringed Blue Tits. This was the first. It had been ringed a month earlier in the south of the wood.

Great Tit 3J VS50719 2/7/2002 Q02 Feeder

In the last Twitter we noted the Grey Tit, P400741. We have not been able to identify which box she nested in but this bird had plumage markedly greyer than most. It was also very much smaller than most - nearly mistaken for a Blue Tit as it emerged from the catching bag. The whole brood grew very slowly and were smaller than most when they fledged but, as they were at the opposite end of the wood to where we had trapped the Grey Tit, it did not occur to us that this might be her brood.

Greenfinch 5M VR78766 26/5/2002 N-1

Most of the Greenfinches we capture are at the feeders. This one had been ringed there 6 weeks earlier but was recaptured today in breeding condition - a mere 250 metres from the fast food outlet.

Chaffinch 6M K463175 2/6/2002 Q02 Feeder

A golden oldie which has been absent for some years. We ringed him in February 1996 and he was last retrapped in March 1997. All his captures have been at or near the feeders. Where has he been for the last five years?

Yellowhammer 4M P400679 15/5/2002 H04

The last of our 'winter' yellowhammer captures - we presume this one was still coming into the wood searching for grain put out for pheasants. It was in the same net as Kestrel EH28342 who was, presumably, hunting in the wood for Yellowhammers hunting for grain.

Controls and recoveries

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Wren	4	1M1242	25/2/2002	West Bridgford, Nottingham

This bird was found, killed by a cat, in West Bridgford. At 44 km from the wood, this is the furthest known traveller amongst our nestling-ringed Wrens. We ringed it on 17/6/2001 and had not recaptured it since. Adult British Wrens are highly sedentary and most juveniles disperse only small distances. The Migration Atlas (have you ordered your copy yet?) gives 1 km as the median natal dispersal distance but notes that dispersal may be up to around 50 km. This, then, is one of the real long-distance dispersers. A pity it had to end in the jaws of a cat. We have, in the past, also had recoveries of juvenile (but not nestling)-ringed Wrens at similar or longer distances including 4B8815 (flew into a window, Rugby, 110 km, 1980), 5B0045 (killed by cat, Ripley, 47 km, 1983). Our previous longest-distance nestling-ringed Wren was noted in Twitter 26 of March 2000, a road casualty in Metheringham, 38 km from the wood.

Blackbird 2 CF40604 22/5/2002 F04

The first nestling-ringed recovery of the year. Its leg was in the debris in the bottom of the Tawny Owl nest near Piccadilly Circus. We had ringed it nearby in G04 some five weeks earlier.

Blackcap 4M N275033 19/5/2002 O99

A bird we ringed in spring 1999 in his first breeding season in Q02. We retrapped him in 2001 rather further from his first capture position than is usual for Blackcaps - in E01. He was killed by Sparrowhawk DA87112 which dropped the carcass when it was intercepted by a mist net.

Long-tailed Tit 2 9Z3037 1/9/2002 Darlton

Peter Cobb has been netting birds recently in the willow which is being grown as a renewable fuel crop in Darlton. This is the first Treswell Wood bird found there. We ringed it nearly a year ago as a bird which had completed its summer moult and was of unknown age. We have not retrapped it since in the wood.

Great Tit 4M VS51192 29/5/2002 P04

Most small birds which survive their first winter can expect to have just one season in which to breed and pass on their genes. This bird, like its mate, failed at the last hurdle. Its healthy brood was almost ready to fledge when some predator - probably a weasel - attacked the nest. The whole brood and both parents were killed. Why they were not eaten is not clear - the predator certainly had ample opportunity as the bodies had decayed enough when found to have been located by several sexton beetles. These had done their best to bury the carcasses in the nesting material. This bird had been ringed as a nestling last year in the south of the wood.

Great Tit 4F P400457 29/5/2002 P04

The mate of VS51192, described above. We ringed her in August last year as a juvenile at the feeder and had not recaptured her since.

Chaffinch 4F P400511 2/7/2002 Q02 Feeder

We ringed this bird in September 2001 and noted it in Twitter 35 after it had been controlled by Mike Archer in Rampton in November 2001. It is now back with us. It was not in breeding condition but had just begun its annual moult. Perhaps it bred elsewhere but is coming back to the feeder now that it is no longer tied to a breeding territory.

Chaffinch 5M P671219 19/5/2002 P01

Mike Archer has captured several of our Chaffinches at the Rampton roost. This is the first of his birds that we have trapped. Kyle ringed it with Mike in December. This bird was in breeding condition when we trapped it.

Goldfinch 6F P400562 12/4/2002 Darlton

We have only ringed 24 Goldfinches over the years. Of these we have retrapped none. This is, therefore, the first of our Goldfinches to be recaptured by anyone, anywhere. It was trapped by Peter Cobb at his impressive feeding station at Cobb's Country Stores. Twitter 35 gave details of our Goldfinch captures up to the end of 2001.

10 Week Summary - Captures in Standard Sites - May - August 2002

2002 Interval 3 Visits 1547, 1550, 1545, 1546, 1551, 1548, 1544

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Woodpigeon	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	2	3	6	4	2	1	18
Dunnock	1	1	4	3	.	.	9
Robin	.	1	10	2	3	2	18
Blackbird	.	5	2	2	1	.	10
Song Thrush	2	2	2	1	.	.	7
Blackcap	8	5	5	2	1	.	21
Chiffchaff	2	.	5	.	.	1	8
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	9	3	.	.	12
Marsh Tit	.	.	2	2	.	1	5
Willow Tit	.	.	3	.	1	.	4
Coal Tit	.	.	4	.	.	.	4
Blue Tit	.	2	.	1	1	2	6
Great Tit	.	.	2	.	.	1	3
Treecreeper	1	.	1	1	1	.	4
Chaffinch	3	.	.	2	1	.	6
Greenfinch	.	.	.	.	1	.	1
Bullfinch	.	2	1	.	1	.	4
Totals	20	21	56	23	13	8	141

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1996	95	121	128	116	97	557
1997	59	99	126	98	98	480
1998	78	84	116	80	106	464
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	106	159	170	616
2001	(57)	(33)	94	121	59	(364)
2002	85	89	141	---	---	(315)

Note: Bracketed numbers represent incomplete data sets and are not included in summary figures below. Incomplete data sets in 2001 result from foot and mouth restrictions.

Summary data 1978 - 2002

Minimum	59	57	94	68	59	422
Mean	87	107	164	140	127	634
Maximum	124	145	288	253	177	865