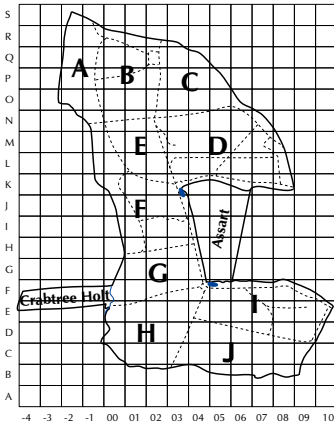
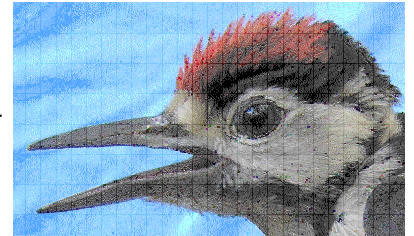


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2024 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Ellen Marshall

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark

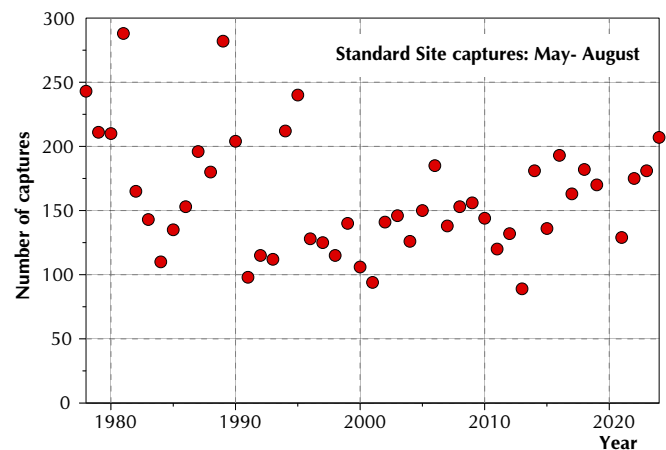
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Yet again the weather has been 'interesting' with rain moving three of the visits to a Monday and one weekend missed. Nevertheless all standard site visits were completed with a large and varied catch. The wood is, at last, starting to dry out. All being well we will be back to boots rather than wellies soon. One thing that the weather has done is to help the grass, nettles and brambles grow. We now face two-metre-high nettles away from the main rides.

Visits which have to be moved to a weekday then usually suffer low 'staff availability'; many of the team do not enjoy the flexitime opportunities offered by retirement. Fewer ringers on the day means that fewer additional nets can be set and the resulting overall total catch reduced – particularly so if there is no opportunity to set a net at the feeding station. On a visit the standard site nets are always set first and it is catches in these nets that enable us to compare bird abundance from year to year. In spite of a lower than average total number of captures, the 207 captures in the standard site nets is well above the average of 161 for this period. The last time we had a total as high was in 1995 and this year's is the 8th highest total in the 45 years of standard site catching. It is a curious feature of human awareness that we often do not fully appreciate the significance of events until later when we have the information to put them into perspective. With catches in the first two intervals of the year also above average, all things being equal, we should have a very good year indeed.

We thought it was worth producing a graph of these standard site numbers. It was only then that we realised what a curious picture it was. Until 1995 the totals for this period were very variable indeed with both very high and low totals. A statistical analysis for that time span would show no trend at all. A statistical analysis for the whole time would show a non-significant linear decline. Consideration of the graph shows that it would be quite wrong to try to look for a single, linear trend. What we have is fairly random fluctuation in the first 15 years followed by a statistically significant gradual rise from 1996 onwards. Statistics has been said to be drawing pictures, then drawing conclusions. Very apposite in this case.



The two Tawny Owl nests, one with two and one with three, young have fledged successfully. Tawny Owls generally nest early in the season but this year they have been much later than usual. Nestlings in the second nest were ringed as late as June 9th. The only later nest was in 1980 when the nestlings were ringed on 13th June. Stock Doves continue their multiple broods in the high boxes. Nesting in the small boxes is over for the season. Overall we think it will prove to be a more successful season than average and we will give a full account in the next issue once the records have been entered and checked. Frass has been collected through the season and the samples are now with Ken Smith for him to analyse as usual.

Some evidence for a successful breeding season comes from the proportion of the standard site captures composed of juveniles. For the last three years, the average proportion for this period was 25%. This year it is 35% which is noticeably higher. When processing juvenile Great Tits it felt as if they were bigger than usual. Looking at past data is surprising. For all of our Great Tit juvenile captures (i.e. those still not completed post-juvenile moult) the average wing length is 71.9mm. For the 2024 birds it is 74.7mm. That is a remarkably big difference. It probably results from a number of causes. We cannot sex Great Tits in juvenile plumage so do not know the proportion of males which are, on average, longer-winged than females. A higher proportion of males would give an increased average wing length, but it would have to be a much higher proportion to give such an increase on its own. Years ago Ted Cowley demonstrated how poor conditions at moulting time in Sand Martins resulted in primary feathers

being shorter than normal. If good conditions during moult can result in longer primaries, then good conditions could similarly lead to nestlings' primaries being longer than usual.

Reports in the newspapers suggest it has been a poor year for butterflies. Most of our own records have been of just a single individual. So far we have only noted eight species with no sightings yet of Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Red Admiral and Tortoiseshell which are normally recorded by this time of year. The first records this year were in mid-April which is much later than some sightings in past years in March and early April and even a handful more in late February.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Stock Dove	5	EM39231	9/6/2024	Q03

We have ringed a total of 248 nestling Stock Doves and 37 adults on nests, several of which we have subsequently retrapped on nests. This bird is only the fourth we have caught in a mist net and, perhaps surprisingly, the only one to be caught at a feeding station. In addition we have three recoveries of our ringed birds – two found dead in the wood and one shot in woodland nearby. This is a very low recovery rate for such a large bird, particularly one which is often shot (mistaken for Woodpigeons of course) as part of crop protection measures.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	LK39135	9/06/2024	Q03
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One of four on the same day – two new juveniles and two retrapped adults, one male and one female. Times of capture at the feeding station were reasonably close so it could well be that this was a family party. We have been recording the length of the red crown on juveniles in the hope of, eventually, being able to separate the sexes according to the red cap. These two had remarkably different sizes of cap – one of length 26mm and the other only 18mm. In the first, the cap extended well beyond the eye. It may be that sex can be determined not so much by the length of the cap but whether it extends beyond the eye. It is our hope to retrap enough of the birds, as adults, which have ringed as juveniles and have measured the cap. Although we have been measuring caps for some years, the number of recaptures as adults is, so far, very small.

Jay	6	DS75982	27/05/2024	R00
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We hear Jays calling very frequently indeed. In Britain it is a sedentary species (although there are sometimes autumn irruptions from Scandinavia when breeding has been prolific but the autumn food crop poor). This bird, though, is a resident. Both its captures have been fairly close in the north west edge of the wood – although almost exactly three years apart. With sedentary behaviour and both its captures in the same run of standard site nets, it seems odd that it has not been captured in between times. Birds of the crow family seem to be more intelligent than most. Perhaps this one is pretty good at avoiding mist nets.

Marsh Tit	3J	AEZ3739	15/07/2024	D08
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The first of two juvenile Marsh Tits caught so far this year. The second was caught later the same morning. Both now wear PIT tags. We did have one successful Marsh Tit nest this year. However, because of difficulty in visiting the box at the right time, the nestlings fledged unringed. These two may be from that box, or not. We shall never know.

Blue Tit	6	AKX1238	24/03/2024	E06 Movement 22km SSE
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This bird was ringed at Finningley on 7th December 2023. It was not yet in breeding condition when we caught it and may have still been moving around in search of a breeding territory. We have not retrapped it since. It is the second Finningley-ringed bird we have caught, the other being Blackcap in 2018. In return we have sent one Blue Tit to Finningley in 1994 and a Blackbird in 2014.

Blue Tit	3J	ALY9778	30/06/2024	Q03
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This was the first nestling-ringed retrapped Blue Tit of the year. As usual, early Blue Tit recaptures are very few compared to Great Tit recaptures. Of the 284 nestling Blue Tits ringed, we have, so far, only retrapped two.

Blue Tit	6F	ANA7094	17/6/2024	O06
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It is 6 years 212 days since we ringed this bird. She is our 11th oldest Blue Tit out of the 13,945 Blue Tits we have encountered but still 1 year 3 months short of our record. Unusually, in spite of its long history it has been encountered only six times. Unlike many of our Blue Tits she does not seem to frequent the feeding station and neither has she been found in a nestbox on eggs.

Blue Tit	5F	BAA9803	19/05/2024	E01 Movement 8km N
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Another Blue Tit wearing a ring from elsewhere. It was in breeding condition when caught having been ringed by Peter Cobb on 3rd December 2023 in Darlton.

Blue Tit **5F** **BAA9827** **17/05/2024** **E08 On Nest Movement 8km N**

More of Peter Cobb's Darlton Blue Tits. He ringed it on 5th January 2024 and it was found nesting in one of our boxes. Over the years we have caught seven Blue Tits ringed by Peter in Darlton and, in return he has caught seven Blue Tits we had ringed in the wood.

Great Tit **3J** **PL95921** **09/06/2024** **Q03**

Contrast the nestling-ringed Great Tit recaptures with those of the Blue Tits. This was the first, three weeks ahead of the first Blue Tit. It was one of six caught on the day at the feeders, not all from the same nest. So far we have retrapped 15 of the 153 which have fledged from boxes.

Chiffchaff **4F** **DRA294** **17/6/2024** **O06**

This bird was ringed then retrapped last year with all three captures in the same standard mist netting site. Its last capture last year on 11th June was in exactly the same net as today's capture.

Song Thrush **6M** **RW74343** **9/6/2024** **L01**

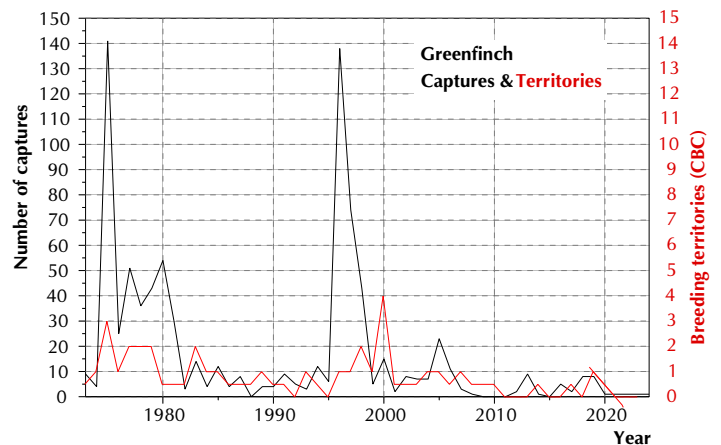
This bird was ringed three years ago and this is its first recapture. Song Thrushes continue to be caught much more frequently than in recent years. So far this year we have 37 encounters of this species. The average annual number of Song Thrush encounters since 1972 is 40 and we still have five months of the year left. If we continue to capture them at this rate we should have amassed over 60 encounters by the end of the year. Numbers that high have not been seen since the early 1980s. The average can be misleading. We are so high above average only because we have suffered so many years of encounters often not reaching two figures. In recent years we have suspected that the decline in the species had been halted and perhaps there had been signs of a slow recovery. Let us hope this now is the start of a rapid full recovery to former abundance.

Dunnock **6M** **TY35420** **27/5/2024** **Q01**

In the 'good old days' Treswell Wood was sometimes referred to as Dunnock City. The species was abundant. Its numbers declined over the years but this day was reminiscent of former times – a total of five Dunnocks caught, which was 22% of the day's catch. Two were new and three retrapped, this one being the oldest at 1y 4m since ringing.

Greenfinch **4F** **NZ53377** **9/6/2024** **Q03**

The first Greenfinch we have captured since January 2023. We caught single ones in 2022, 2021 and 2020. Prior to that numbers were generally greater, although in some years we caught none. The graph shows the decline in captures. This is mirrored by our CBC territory numbers although the fluctuations in territories are less pronounced than in capture numbers. Most Greenfinch captures are outside the breeding season when they come in search of winter food. Many used to come to Pheasant feeding stations in the days when the shoot still had rights in the wood. Very few pairs ever remained to breed in the wood. The national population, as estimated by BTO surveys, has fallen by 70% from its peak in 2005. The severe decline seems to be mainly caused by the trichomonosis disease.

**House Sparrow** **4F** **NZ53492** **9/6/2024** **Q03**

One of six House Sparrows caught today, probably commuters from Wood House across the road. They behave like the proverbial London buses – you wait ages for one then several come at once. Overall we have recorded only 669 House Sparrow encounters in the wood in 2,724 mist netting visits – that is an average of about one every four visits. However, on 2,573 of these visits none were captured. A single bird was caught on 56 occasions and in another 95 visits we caught 2 or more birds, with a maximum number of 34 on one day. If House Sparrow captures were independent of each other the numbers caught per visit should follow a Poisson distribution. A statistical analysis showed that the chance of getting numbers like we have where captures are independent is infinitesimal. Ignore the technicalities. The result is we have incontrovertible evidence that House Sparrows here do cluster in the manner of London buses, but much more so.

10-Week Summary: 2024 Interval 3, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Jay	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	.	2	.	.	.	2
Blue Tit	.	1	13	1	3	1	19
Great Tit	.	.	5	2	2	1	10
Long-tailed Tit	2	.	4	.	.	.	6
Chiffchaff	9	.	7	4	.	.	20
Blackcap	10	.	11	2	.	.	23
Wren	3	9	13	3	4	.	32
Nuthatch	3	.	1	1	.	.	5
Treecreeper	.	.	2	.	.	.	2
Blackbird	9	5	4	7	2	.	27
Song Thrush	3	2	3	3	2	1	14
Robin	1	10	10	3	.	.	24
Duncock	2	2	3	9	2	.	18
Bullfinch	.	1	1	1	.	.	3
Totals	42	30	80	37	15	3	207

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

Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:

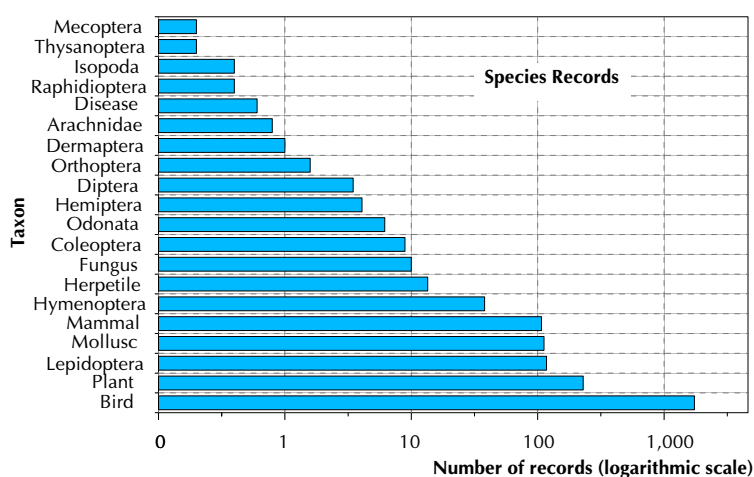
Interval	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Maximum	128	198	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	89	66	59	364
Mean	92	115	159	130	126	611

Species Records

Whereas the main effort of the Treswell Wood project is recording bird life through territory mapping, ringing and nest recording we have always endeavoured to record other species where possible. Without species records we could not know how species distributions change in space or time. We now have amassed a total of 24,083 records of 566 species. The graph shows the number of records in each taxon. This total excludes numbers of records of birds ringed, in nests or CBC territories but does include records of birds observed other than in these specific operations. Great Spotted Woodpecker - resident and noisy at all times of year has the most records – 1441. The Tree Slug has the highest number of non-bird records, 370. The Kingfisher, seen in 1985, is one of the single-record only bird species. All our records will, eventually, appear in the National Biodiversity Network Atlas <https://nbnatlas.org/> - a freely available national treasure.

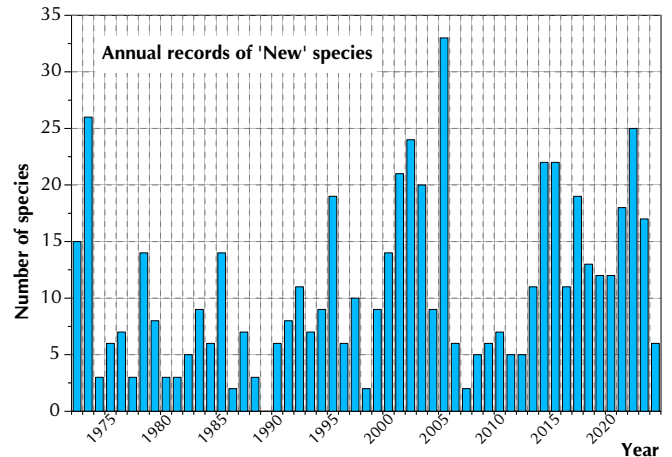
One might question the value of multiple records of various species. In the past when records were kept on paper, time and space were at a premium. Often all that was recorded was the presence of a species in a 10 km square in a given year. Such records formed the basis of the various species distribution maps in the pioneering 1962 Atlas of British Flora by BSBI and the many atlases of various other taxa which have followed since then.

With computer technology, storage space and data handling time are no longer the severe constraints they were. There is no practical limit to the number of records that can be handled. Species records can, and should be, made to as fine a resolution as is meaningful and possible in space and time. Even so, the time spent in making some records would not be time well spent. For instance making a weekly record of tree species present in Treswell would tell us very little in the short term but at the cost of massive effort. On the other hand some records contain



more information than just the basic Species, Date and Location. A record of Oak, if accompanied by a comment such as 'buds opening', gives phenological information. We have, in the past, produced graphs showing our recorded first dates of some butterfly sightings and plant flowering and these help demonstrate that spring is arriving earlier.

From time to time we encounter a 'new' species. The graph shows the numbers of new species by year. As one might expect, in the early years there were many – mainly because they had not been recorded by us before the NWT purchased the wood. What exactly is a 'new species'? Essentially there are two sorts. First are those which have been there for some time, maybe even since the end of the Ice Age, but have not been recorded. These may be common, sometimes obvious, species which people do not bother about because they are so common (rabbit), cryptic (soprano pipistrelle), subterranean (worms) or require expert identification (some beetles). Second are species which have, previously, not been present in the wood but which are now (Nuthatch).



Many of our 'new' species are of the first type. They tend to come in batches. Sometimes it is that we have a visiting expert looking at some under-recorded taxon. The cluster in 2005, for example, was the result of a field visit by members of the Conchological Society in search of molluscs. Sometimes it is a newcomer to the group with a particular interest in some taxon. In very recent times the advent of AI identification of photographic images has generated more new records. A word of caution about these. AI verification is not completely reliable. Good AI systems give a probability of the identification being correct. Wise users of the technology always double check in books. We submit our AI generated records to iRecord where they are verified (or not) by a species expert. Perhaps the most surprising new record of 2024 is the Yew. There has been a Yew, which we often refer to and even sometimes have a PIT tag reading station there. It is well known and has been used as a landmark by group members since the Trust purchased the wood in 1972. It once attracted a group of pagans from Manchester to do whatever mystic things they do around Yew trees (the event had not been cleared with the Trust). Yet we have never made a formal record of the species. However, this year a seedling was found not too far from it and a record made of this because of the additional interest of this new seedling in the wood. Perhaps this is our most outstanding example of a species so obvious that it had not been formally recorded.

Through our recording we have been able to document the arrival and subsequent history of several species. In many cases the arrival has been natural (if anything in such a human-influenced world can be thought of as entirely natural). These include, for example, the Hornet, Muntjac and Tree Bumblebee. Some have led to permanent populations. Others, such as the Cetti's Warbler in 2015, have not. Some have been an accidental or indirect result of human activity – a redcurrant bush probably brought from gardens as seeds in bird droppings, or garden snails found near the entrance in dumped garden waste. Some have been deliberate such as the daffodils planted within the wood edge, no doubt, to 'beautify' the road verge. Himalayan Balsam we think arrived on its own, possibly in bird droppings or possibly on the boot of a visitor or worker in the wood. Both these unwelcome plant species have been eradicated.

These thoughts on species records were prompted by a recent record of a Green-soled Slug *Arion flagellus*. The species may be a native of Britain – no one is quite sure – but it was not recognised as a species in Britain until the 1950s. It has been confused (and often still is) with various other large slugs. It was present in the west of the UK until about 30 years ago when it began to spread eastwards – no one knows exactly why. It is now present across the UK. Much of the spread has been from garden to garden. The arrival in Treswell Wood is one where we can be pretty sure of the source. It was first found in 2007 under a caravan which a coppicer had brought from his home in Derbyshire to live in while he did the coppicing work in the wood. At that stage it was known in Derbyshire and there were a few south Nottinghamshire records – all in gardens and none in the wild. Thereafter specimens were found near the caravan with occasional records over the next few years. Not many people bother to look at slugs so it was pleasing to have a record of it this year a mere 50 metres from where the caravan had been 17 years previously.

John McMeeking used to advise: *What is recorded is history, the rest is mystery*. We hope our species recording reduces the mystery.