

# TWITTER

## 1995 Number 2



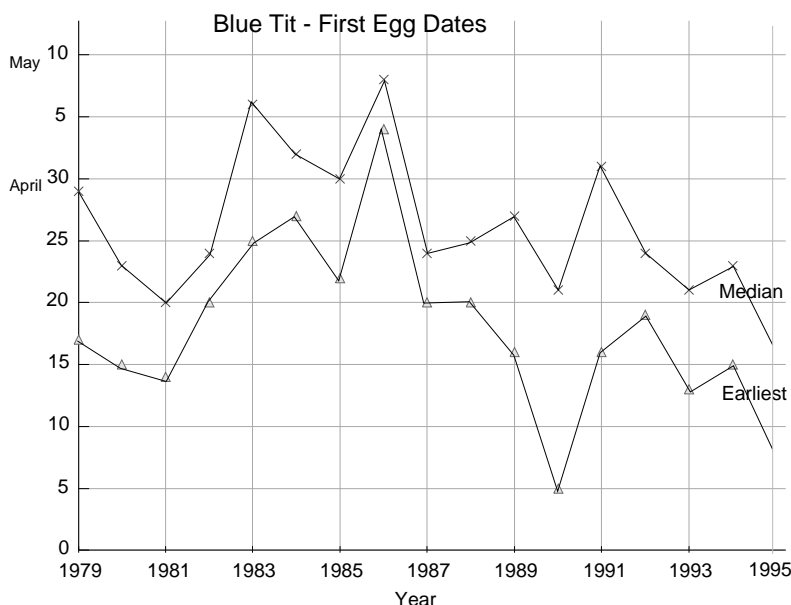
**Ringling:** By permission of NWT  
**Project leader:** John McMeeking  
**Editors:** Richard & Chris du Feu

**Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Ringer.**

The first issue of Twitter was well received - a bargain at the price. Production of Twitter Number 3 begins straight away. If you have a contribution to offer do not wait until the end of the ten weeks; tell us now.

In spite of the ever-present feeling that this year's captures are not as good as those in the past, we have enjoyed a very good 10 week's CE ringing. We have the 6th highest interval 2 total ever. A look at past years' breakdowns by species shows few outstanding changes although Wren, Dunnock, Robin and Chaffinch numbers are somewhat higher than usual and Willow Warblers low. Recently BTO News documented their decline nationally. Is this a part of it?

The breeding season is upon us, and early signs are promising. We have already caught two juveniles, and the number of nestlings ringed is higher than ever. Blue Tits are nesting in good numbers and nests are the second earliest ever. The latest Nest Record News reports a national trend towards earlier nesting over the past 30 years (possibly a result of global warming). The Treswell Blue Tit data reflect this trend. The dates illustrated are those on which the first eggs of the earliest clutches and middle clutches were laid. We have also found more Chaffinch nests than normal, although José's presence in the wood hardly makes for constant effort nest finding! Wrens have built in many more boxes than usual - currently 10 of which 3 have eggs. The others are 'cock' nests. If past performance is an indicator, several of these will have later nests.



### Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b>	<b>XE21577</b>	<b>30/4/95</b>	<b>F04</b>

This bird's first recapture since Neil ringed it at the feeders on 27/1/91. On recapture we thought it was age 5 because the primary coverts were not glossy black. However, with hindsight, we realise that retained juvenile pcs are brownish rather than blackish. Beware! The bird, although a female, had red spots on either side of the nape. These were noted at both captures in spite of the 4 complete body moults between them.

<b>Dunnock</b>	<b>H324913</b>	<b>14/5/95</b>	<b>O05</b>
----------------	----------------	----------------	------------

This bird had not been recaptured, until today, since ringing at the feeders on 31/12/92. This is unusual for Dunnocks: perhaps this is a sedentary bird, living in block C where we net only infrequently.

<b>Robin</b>	<b>F253324</b>	<b>2/4/95</b>	<b>L01</b>
--------------	----------------	---------------	------------

Ringed 27/8/90 as a juvenile in K00. Recaptured 10 times since then, always in or near Windy Ride.

<b>Robin</b>	<b>J639167</b>	<b>9/4/95</b>	<b>D08</b>
--------------	----------------	---------------	------------

Ringed as a nestling 30/6/94 in F01. First recaptured on 20/11/94 in D08 - presumably having already settled there after post-natal dispersal.

<b>Robin</b>	<b>J522878</b>	<b>14/5/95</b>	<b>N02</b>
Our first 3J of the year (which was not caught within the 5 hour CE period and so is not in the 10 week totals).			
<b>Blackbird</b>	<b>RH94537</b>	<b>23/4/95</b>	<b>E00</b>
A case of post-juvenile non-dispersal? This bird was ringed as a juvenile in the same grid square last June.			
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>5F5376</b>	<b>23/4/95</b>	<b>F01</b>
Our first retrap of the year, ringed 14/4/94 in H02.			
<b>Chiffchaff</b>	<b>5W9785</b>	<b>9/4/95</b>	<b>D08</b>
Our fourth bird of the year - retrapped a week after ringing in K00. Where will it settle?			
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<b>5F5390</b>	<b>16/4/95</b>	<b>I03</b>
First ringed on 1/5/94 in I04 - not a great movement between seasons -apart from the presumed travel in between!			
<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>J033397</b>	<b>30/4/95</b>	<b>H01</b>
Our first Blackcap recapture this year from an earlier year. We missed this bird in 1994: is it a resident of Norman's Ride, having been ringed there (in H02) on 5/9/93, or a passage migrant?			
<b>Blackcap</b>	<b>J522039</b>	<b>14/05/95</b>	<b>N00</b>
First captured in O06 on 24/4/94 then in P00 on 11/6/94. This sort of pattern happens often with Blackcaps. The movement from a first early capture in any year to the next later in that same breeding season is much greater than the movement between a capture in one season and one in the next. It is possible that they arrive in the wood, spend a little time moving locally and then settle in a breeding territory.			
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	<b>14/5/95</b>	<b>5W9528</b>	<b>N00</b>
Our second juvenile capture of the year. Caught with one male and two females in breeding condition.			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>F253395</b>	<b>9/4/95</b>	<b>F09</b>
Ringed 25/11/90 in E10, age code 3. Now nearly 5 years old.			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>F485604</b>	<b>7/5/95</b>	<b>F03</b>
A 1989 nestling, ringed in H01. First retrapped 14/7/90 in I04 then nested in box 80 (O03) in 1991 and 1992. Trapped at the feeders early 1993 and 1994. Now breeding in the south of the wood. For a Blue Tit, 600m is a big territory move.			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>F783474</b>	<b>7/5/95</b>	<b>I01</b>
Another golden oldie. Ringed as a nesting female in box 47 (J03)10/5/92. Nested each year since in box 40 (I01).			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>H229178</b>	<b>23/4/95</b>	<b>E00</b>
Only trapped at the car park feeders (4 captures, starting 19/1/92) before today. We do not ring often in the dam area. It may have been living here in the wood, just coming within our grasp when it nips up to the café for a winter snack!			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>H229503</b>	<b>9/4/95</b>	<b>D08</b>
Ringed 5/5/91 in Nightingale Ride, captured once on Bower's Ride, and six times in the first 4 nets of Nightingale Ride.			
<b>Blue Tit</b>	<b>J033771</b>	<b>30/4/95</b>	<b>P01</b>
Captured on the nest, a mere 50m from where she nested in 1994.			
<b>Willow Tit</b>	<b>H229035</b>	<b>13/4/95</b>	<b>P01</b>
Ringed 1/9/91, this is its 18th capture. Oddly for a Willow Tit with such a long recapture history, this bird has never before been caught after March nor before September. Willow Tits are sedentary and, we believe, remain within either the north or the south part of the wood. This bird has always been captured in A or B so why have we not caught it in the breeding season? Today's capture is the first in which we have been able to attempt sexing it using cloaca shape.			
<b>Willow Tit</b>	<b>J522849</b>	<b>24/4/95</b>	
This was caught with Marsh Tit H623701 and retrapped later in the day in a different net, still with H623701. We wondered whether there is mixed species breeding here. As if this was not strange enough, the Willow Tit was intriguing in its own right. It had obvious pale secondary fringes, a tail difference of 7mm and a Willow Tit shaped head. Other characteristics were less obvious. However, its cheeks were nearly as white as its companion's and its wing was 63mm - the largest 'allowed' for British Willow Tits. Retrap cards reveal only 3 others with wings this length.			
<b>Chaffinch</b>	<b>H229093</b>	<b>2/4/95</b>	<b>K02</b>
Ringed 10/11/91 in Windy Ride area. Now a mature, if not ancient, bird.			
<b>Chaffinch</b>	<b>H229371</b>	<b>2/4/95</b>	<b>L00</b>
Yet another Chaffinch waiting for some years before its first recapture. Ringed 20/6/92 in K00.			
<b>Chaffinch</b>	<b>J639004</b>	<b>9/4/95</b>	<b>D07</b>
The first ever recapture of one of our rare nestling-ringed Chaffinches. Ringed 15/5/94 in O02			

## Controls & Recoveries

**Blackbird** **RH94501** **6/5/**

Found with 3cm of fresh tail feathers sticking vertically out of the tail. It had failed to pull out of a power dive. Richard excavated it and the wonder we don't often find carcasses - this one had plumage so fresh. It had been ringed on 5/9/93 in H02.

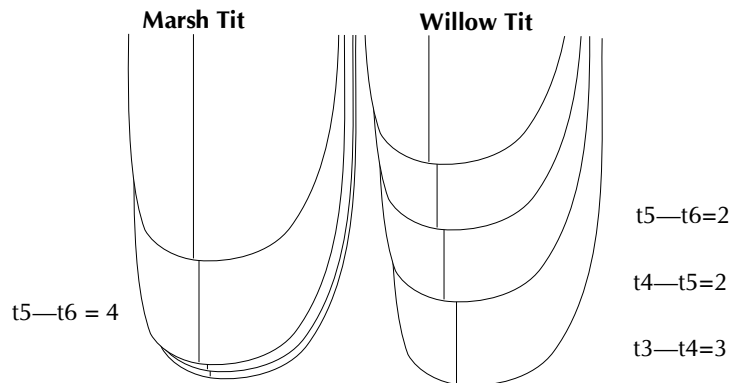
It had  
No  
days.

**Blackbird** **RH94508** **24/1**

Ringed on 14/11/93 in Nightingale Ride, controlled by Doncaster

## Separating Marsh and Willow Tits

Try this method to see if it works. Close the tail of the bird and view it from below. Willow Tits could have the tips of t5, t4 and t3 visible protruding beyond t6 whereas Marsh Tits have only t5 visible beyond t6 with t4, t3 etc. obscured behind t5. When trying the method, it will be best to determine species first in the normal way, then check to see if this tail criterion agrees. Notes on the field sheet welcome!



t5, t4, t3 about equal although

t4, t3 may be a little shorter than t5.

Tips of outer four tail feathers, tail closed, view from below.

Typical measurements in mm.

## Ageing and Sexing

### Juveniles

The first Wrens should be fledging by the time this is printed. Delightful though they may be, they may also cause some identification problems if care is not taken. Last year we produced extra notes on ageing and sexing in summer. If you do not have a copy, ask John or Chris for one.

As ever, beware of juvenile Wrens and Dunnocks, etc., which have bare bellies and could be mistaken for females. Beware also of males whose cloacal protuberance has subsided and bellies have lost feathers through the breeding season. They might look like females. Females should still have very wrinkled skin. If in doubt use (M) or (F).

Towards the end of this ten weeks, some adults will start to moult. Be prepared! Start recording using appropriate codes in the moult column of the field sheets

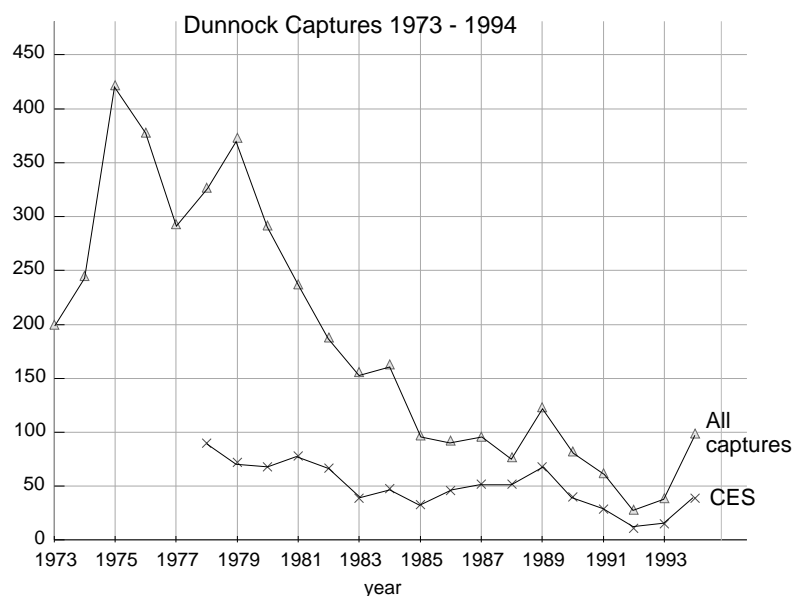
**Ageing Great Tits** - still occasionally a problem Even on those aged 6 the inner gc have greenish edges. 5s are detected, not by greenish colour, but by contrast between dull pc and possibly outer gc, and fresher, brighter (but green edged) inner gc.

**Sexing Blue Tits.** Do not rely on wing length alone. This year there seem to be a large number of big females wing >63. (Does average size vary from year to year?) We have also caught one male with wing 61. A note on the field sheet states that, but for the short wing, it would have been recorded as a male on the brightness of the plumage. It was later re-trapped in breeding condition with an obvious cloaca.

## What are they doing with your data?

Neil is preparing a paper on changes in bird life in the wood since the dawn of time (December 1972). A sneak preview shows how our Dunnocks have fared. Comparison of the two graphs - one for total captures, the other for CE captures only - shows that patterns for the two different capture regimes are different in detail although similar overall. The CE graph is much more likely to reflect the truth of what is happening to our Dunnocks. In 1979, for instance, the high numbers were a result of high catch-effort at pheasant feeders which Dunnocks used in very hard weather. The 1975/76 totals included many caught in fields adjacent to the wood. Both peaks were a result of additional catching effort rather than just large numbers of Dunnocks.

The paper by Will Peach, John & Chris on Wren and Treecreeper survival and movement is at the proof stage and will soon be published in Ibis. Our paper 'Does constant effort netting measure juvenile abundance?' will soon be published in the US Fish & Wildlife Service 'proceedings' of the CES conference in 1993.



## The next ten weeks

**The new field sheets.** The new field sheet is working fairly well. Thanks to everyone for learning to use the new codes in the Activity, Sexing Method and Moults columns. The code which causes most problem is the sexing method code. Use C or P (not CP or BP) only if you sexed the bird on cloaca or patch. If the bird has either, and so is in breeding condition, put B in the activity column. This will be useful (for new and retrap birds) when all data are submitted on disk to the BTO. Even in these cases do not use C or P if the bird was sexed on plumage (as for Chaffinch or Blackbird).

**New moult code.** In addition to the codes given in the list use T for any post juvenile moult which involves any tail or tertial feathers.

## Ten-week Summary - March to May 1995

1995 Interval 2, Visits 1188 1194 1185 1187 1192 1186 1195 (Standard Sites only)

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	3	6	.	5	3	.	17
Dunnock	6	1	.	2	2	.	11
Robin	.	7	.	5	5	.	17
Blackbird	3	3	.	.	1	.	7
Song Thrush	1	1	.	1	.	.	3
Garden Warbler	4	.	.	.	.	.	4
Blackcap	1	3	.	2	.	.	6
Chiffchaff	3	1	.	2	.	.	6
Willow Warbler	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	.	.	.	.	1	.	1
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	5	.	.	6
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	2	.	4
Coal Tit	.	.	.	1	1	.	2
Blue Tit	.	7	.	1	8	.	16
Great Tit	.	.	.	1	3	.	4
Treecreeper	1	2	.	3	2	.	8
Chaffinch	1	1	.	1	3	.	6
Bullfinch	1	2	.	.	1	.	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>124</b>

## Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	Period	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	<b>124</b>				(215)
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865	
Min	64	57	99	68	88	422	
Mean	89	110	180	149	132	659	