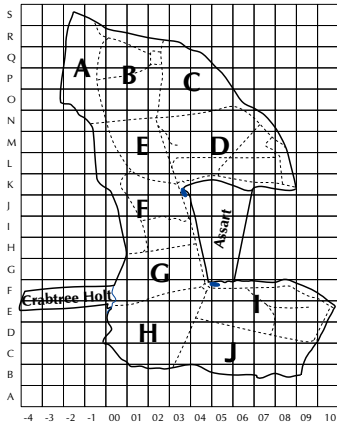


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2016 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

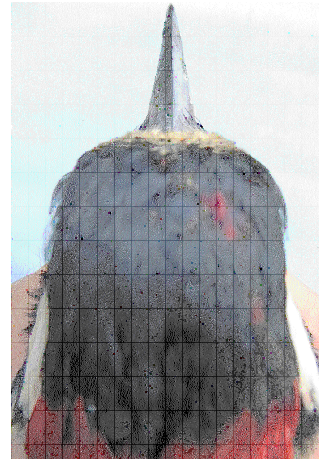
CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

2016/3
Number
108

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After the last autumn and the early spring weather which made fitting in our standard site visits very difficult, the weather during the last three months has been very good to us, with few problems of rain or wind to disrupt the operation. The birds too have responded well and yielded the highest number of captures in the standard site nets for this period since 1995. In addition to these standard site captures, which are tabulated as usual at the end of the issue, we have enjoyed good numbers caught in the extra nets. (This explains the reports of Great Spotted Woodpeckers which have been caught in abundance at the feeding station recently but do not feature at all in the standard site totals.) Whilst ringing we have, several times, remarked on the number of Wrens and Robins caught. They appear to have had an above average number of breeding territories (though that will be confirmed, or not, when the CBC maps are analysed later). They also seem to have bred very successfully judging by the frequency of juvenile captures. One of our number remarked on the apparent lack of Blackcaps, juveniles in particular. It is just as well that we do not rely on feelings, because it has, in fact, been our third best season ever (measured by the number of Blackcap captures up to the end of July) and the proportion of juveniles is about average. Perhaps the relative abundance of Robins and Wrens, together with tits and Chaffinches caught in extra nets, and the excitement of the Great Spotted Woodpeckers dulled the senses to the Blackcaps and other not quite so abundant species.

In the previous issue we noted the apparent sudden shortage of voles which affected the owls' food supply. Three pairs of Tawny Owls nested (which is two more than typical) and, in spite of the shortage of voles, each pair managed to produce one fledged nestling. Overall, a good year for them though low in terms of fledgelings per nest.

The Common Birds Census has finished for the season and the maps are now in the next stage of preparation by Pat. Happily, we have not been subject to the various delays which plagued us last year and we hope the map production can be completed well before the 2017 season begins. We have also managed another season of frass collection - the material is now with Ken Smith for separation of frass from dross and analysis of amounts of frass. In addition to collecting the frass we speculated about the density of leaf coverage and how that might affect the caterpillar crop. We have taken some photographs of the canopy above each frass trap and hope to plan some systematic approach to this before next year's nesting season.

The BTO Bird Ringing Report for 2015 is now available on-line. In the printed report there are now far fewer individual interesting recoveries reported but this is more than made up for by the numbers reported in the on-line report. (www.bto.org then follow the links from the home page through volunteer surveys, ringing and publications to reach the report.) This is a mine of information with details of ringing and recoveries available by country, region, county, species and year. It is worth looking at the Nottinghamshire pages where you will see that Treswell Wood features a good deal in some species accounts - Treecreeper in particular. It is well worth looking at these web pages. Since the greater integration of ringing and nest recording at the BTO, the nest record report is also accessible from these pages - again a mine of information about numbers of nests, productivity and phenology.

The nesting season 2016

The nesting season is over for all species in the wood except Stock Doves, which may continue until October. The observations are given in the table and show, overall, similar numbers to last year. But the overall picture is misleading. Within the grand total is the rise in Blue Tit numbers and the fall in those of Great Tits. Until about 10 years ago, Blue Tits dominated the nest recording and then, for no known reason, Great Tits became the dominant nestbox users. In the last two years Great Tits have slipped back and Blue Tits made a comeback. The cause? Great Tits suffered some predation this year - their nests are noisier than those of Blue Tits and also have larger entrance holes which allow larger predators to gain access. But it is not just nest predation, because the number of nests started is also lower than usual. The season, as measured by the first egg laying dates, was later than it has been in recent years - as late as some of those in the 1980s - perhaps Great Tit nesting is strongly dependent on the timing

of spring and later springs are unfavourable to them.

As usual Great Tit juveniles appear at the feeding station very soon after fledging and captures at the station account for most of those retrapped already - half of the total number fledged. Blue Tit juveniles do not appear so quickly and the total of only seven from the 176 fledged compares most unfavourably with the magnificent return rate for the Great Tits.

Events in Nestboxes - Treswell Wood, 2016

Species	Nests		Eggs laid	Birds			% Success Rate	
	Recorded	Successful		Adults caught on nests	Nestlings fledged	Nestlings recaptured (to Sept. 1 st)	Nests	Eggs
Barn Owl	1	1	3	.	3	.	.	.
Tawny Owl	3	3	10	1	3	.	100	30
Stock Dove*	5	1	10	2	2	.	20	20
Wren	5	5	26	.	26	5	100	100
Robin	2	2	11	.	11	.	100	100
<i>Blackbird</i>	1	0	1	.	.	.	0	0
<i>Song Thrush</i>	2	1	7	.	3	.	50	42
Coal Tit	1	1	11	1	11	.	100	100
Marsh Tit	2	2	17	2	15	2	100	88
Blue Tit	39	24	338	25	176	7	61	52
Great Tit	28	12	183	7	67	35	42	37
<i>Chaffinch</i>	2	2	9	.	7	5	100	71
Totals	91	54	626	38	324	47	59	51
2015	102	59	633	41	283	33	58	45
2014	119	65	791	31	330	33	55	42
2013	80	51	484	26	314	76	64	65
2012	112	50	670	28	219	35	45	33
2011	111	62	796	32	310	29	56	39
2010	112	80	778	25	539	146	71	69
2009	118	54	648	26	300	38	46	46
2008	108	29	589	22	139	17	27	24
2007	129	64	922	52	313	35	50	34
2006	175	37	885	31	225	33	21	25
2005	153	49	852	47	245	22	32	29
2004	141	94	917	41	538	41	67	59
2003	133	41	769	29	213	17	31	28

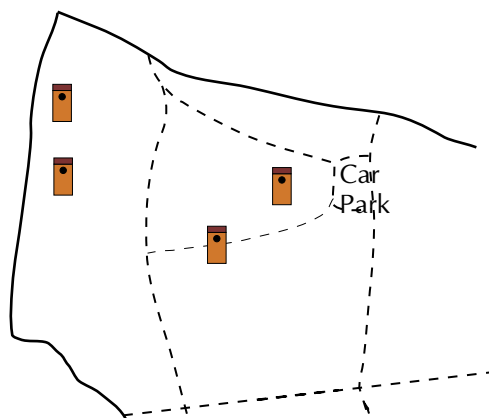
Notes: Nests of species in italics were open nests found incidentally during the nestbox rounds or by other workers in the wood. Wren nests found in dormouse boxes are included in the table.

The numbers of nests recorded, for all species, exclude nests which were abandoned before any eggs were laid.

* Some Stock Dove nests are still active.

Nest predation by Great Spotted Woodpeckers

Normally some nests fall victim to Great Spotted Woodpeckers and, until now, we have managed to reduce predation by them to negligible proportions. Because woodpecker attacks are very localised (see notes on the Willow Tit capture), we have 'woodpecker proofed' boxes where attacks have taken place. It is very easy. Woodpeckers have always gained access to the box contents by hacking open a hole in the front of the nestbox at the level where the nest cup lies. We have replaced boxes with some with laminated fronts - wood, rubber (old tractor inner tube) and wood. The bird splinters its way through the outer wooden layer and then its bill just bounces on the rubber layer below and it soon gives up. This has worked for several years but we think one particular woodpecker has developed its tactics and has started to attack boxes on the unprotected sides or roof rather than the front, even when the front is not proofed against attack. The localised nature of the attacks can be seen from the map of the north-west part of the wood and is likely to be the area surrounding that woodpecker's



Locations of nestboxes sustaining non-frontal attacks by Great Spotted Woodpeckers

territory and nest site. They are reputedly drawn to nests by the sound of the nestlings calling for food and often it is Great Tits that suffer more than Blue Tits because the young are so noisy. Not this time - three of the four boxes held Blue Tit nests. Further, all the attacks took place during the first week after hatching when nestlings are still very small and not as noisy as later on. There were other nests in boxes in this area which were not attacked by the woodpeckers - maybe they were quieter or maybe that a difference in timing of the nest of just a few days may be sufficient to avoid the short time when the woodpeckers use tit nestlings as food for their own young. All the attacks took place during the third week of May. We have not examined detailed records of timing of woodpecker attacks on boxes in the past. It would be well worth doing this - we have enough records over the years.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Kestrel	6F	EL01986	31/7/2016	H01

This is the 25th Kestrel we have ringed, of which five were nestlings. Of these 25 birds, only four have been retrapped and two recovered (one in the wood and one killed on the railway near Retford). Apart from the nestlings, we had only ringed 6 birds until 1999 - about one every three years. Since then we have enjoyed an average of one capture per year. This bird was ringed on 10th January 2016 in the centre of the wood and this is our first recapture of a Kestrel since 2004. It was caught just inside the assart. We often see the species hunting over the assart which, with its meadow area, makes much better hunting habitat for this species than woodland with few areas of open ground.

Stock Dove	2	EF57097	31/7/2016	L02
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Although we have ringed 126 nestlings in the wood since we installed nestboxes in 1979, subsequent reports of these birds are disappointingly few. We have heard from only four. This is surprising for a larger bird which is often shot along with Woodpigeons during crop protection. Of these four, one was found dead near its nest soon after fledging, one was retrapped in a mist net near its adult nesting site and one was shot locally. This bird, or at least one leg with the ring, is the fourth and was found in a Tawny Owl nest. We often find remains of the species in owl nests but this is the first time we have found Stock Dove remains with one of our rings attached.

Stock Dove	4F	EL01987	26/5/2016	F04 On nest
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Until this year we had not attempted to catch any sitting Stock Doves in nestboxes because we had assumed them to be liable to desert if handled at the nest. However, some ringers we talked with at the last BTO conference assured us that their Stock Doves do not desert when caught at the nest. We have, therefore, attempted to catch some at the nest. Happily we have found that this does not disturb them. This was the first bird we captured in this way - we were hoping it would be a recaptured nestling-ringed bird - alas not so.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CT84206	24/7/2016	Q03
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We noted this bird in the previous issue of Twitter and remarked on how much it has contributed to our understanding of ageing technique for the species. It was ringed 11 years and 6 days previously in July 2005 and is now only six weeks short of the age record for the species. It continues to surprise us. Perhaps even more interesting than the age were the few, scattered, red-tipped feathers in its crown. This is the second time we have seen an adult woodpecker sporting these, apparently juvenile, feathers in the crown. When we saw the first one some years ago we presumed it was a juvenile which had not completed its post-juvenile moult - but in subsequent years it continued to have the handful of red tipped feathers. This bird is different for, in previous adult captures, it has not carried these feathers but it has only grown them during the current moult. I showed the picture of the crown (on page 1 of this issue) at a talk I was giving shortly after this capture and an experienced ringer in the audience said that he would have aged the bird as being in its first year - good to know that we are not the only people to find difficulty with the species.

Wren	5	AXD414	3/7/2016	D08
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This is one of last year's nestling-ringed Wrens, now retrapped for the fifth time since being ringed. It demonstrates very clearly the typical sedentary behaviour of the species. It was ringed in F03 then retrapped, still in its juvenile plumage, in D07 - a mere 250 metres from its natal site. Since then it has always been retrapped in one of three adjacent 18 metre standard site nets all in the same grid square, D08.

Robin	4M	L731704	12/6/2016	O06
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Determining the age of Robins is supposed to be easy - look at the tips of the greater coverts. If there is a sudden break between the unmoulted, outer coverts with big wedge-shaped yellow marks and the old inner coverts with very small, or no, wedges then it is a juvenile. Otherwise it has to be an adult. Of course 'exceptionally' a bird may not quite follow these instructions. This bird is one such. Because we often recapture birds we have ringed, we can sometimes realise that they are older than the plumage would suggest. The standard work by Jenni & Winkler,

Moult and Ageing in European Passerines does show one bird similar to this bird and it is there that it is stated as 'exceptional'. This year we cannot agree with the word 'exceptional'. We have had several birds which, on first (and often very careful examination) appear to be juveniles but are, in fact, adults. This is not confined to the wood - I have retrapped an old bird with similar plumage at Beckingham this year. Interestingly I showed a picture of the Beckingham Robin to an audience at the same time as the picture of the Great Spotted Woodpecker noted above. Again, the experienced ringer's opinion was that the bird was a juvenile. So, determining the age of Robins is not so easy after all.

Blackbird **6M** **CT84182** **24/7/2016** **Q03**

It is always rewarding to retrap a very old friend. We ringed this Blackbird as a recently-fledged juvenile in May 2009. At just over seven years old it only our third oldest and still two years to go before it becomes our oldest Blackbird. The national record for a Blackbird, though, is well over 14 years - twice the age of this bird.

Blackcap **4M** **D309403** **29/5/2016** **R-2**

Blackcaps are usually very site-faithful - reappearing the next year within a few metres of where they were caught the previous year. This one has not behaved quite like that. It was ringed and retrapped in 2014 at one end of a set of standard site nets. It was not trapped in 2015 although it was, now very obviously, still alive. It reappeared this year at the other end of the standard site, some 200 metres away from its 2014 capture positions. This may not seem a great distance away - the bird has, presumably, travelled far to the south and back again, twice, and has returned to the same woodland. But our experience with the species makes this change in location within the wood further than typical for a returning Blackcap.

Blackcap **4M** **L731654** **22/5/2016** **K04**

A second non-conformist retrapped Blackcap. It was ringed as a juvenile in 2012 and had not been seen since. That was not surprising because juveniles disperse and often do not return to breed in exactly the same place as their natal area. Indeed this one may not even be a Treswell Wood native but merely encountered on its post-juvenile wanderings. What is surprising is that it reappeared as a breeding adult after an absence of three breeding seasons.

Chiffchaff **4M** **EYD484** **29/5/2016** **R-1**

A welcome between-years recapture of a Chiffchaff. It was ringed as a juvenile in the wood in August 2015 and has returned to breed.

Willow Warbler **3J** **EYD800** **31/7/2016** **H01**

As has happened several times in recent years, our Willow Warbler catch consists of one or two juveniles in the late summer, presumably on their southward wanderings before leaving for Africa. It is just possible this bird is a native of the wood as the species has been heard singing in the wood less infrequently than in recent years and we have ringed and retrapped one adult in the breeding season. Two birds in the year is not a high total but it is seven years since we caught more than one in a single year. A far cry from the numbers in the 1970s and early 1980s when we captured anything from 25 to 50 annually.

Spotted Flycatcher **4M** **Z782414** **17/7/2016** **E02**

A welcome capture of this increasingly rare summer visitor. As with last year's single capture of the species it was in a fairly recently coppiced area with open areas for hunting and plenty of perches from which to spot the insects. The last recorded nest in a nestbox in the wood was in 1990 and, apart from one territory in 2012, the previous territory recorded by the CBC observers was in 1994.

Long-tailed Tit **3J** **EYD737** **22/5/2016** **K04**

Long-tailed Tits had been more conspicuous by their absence than by their presence during the early part of the year. It was a surprise to catch a family party and an even greater surprise to catch a second family party in the same place later in the day. As usual, we measured the tail lengths and they were all typical. It was as long ago as 2011 that we caught the family party which had exceptionally long tails. On subsequent retrapping of some of those individuals, their regrown adult tails were of typical length. We have been dutifully measuring all Long-tail Tit tails since 2011 but never again caught such well endowed birds. I did see (but not catch) a juvenile Long-tailed Tit on my home feeders in July which did have an exceptionally long tail - this was obvious when viewed alongside the adult and other juveniles on the same feeder. We wonder whether the exceptionally long tail is something which can only be found on juveniles and wonder, even more, what is its cause and why the replacement, adult tails seem to be normal in length.

Marsh Tit 3J Z782288 3/7/2016 D07

Although we have recorded two Marsh Tits nests in nestboxes this year, we have also trapped six unringed juvenile Marsh Tits. Whereas they may not have been reared in the wood it is most likely that they were because their dispersal movements are so short and tend to happen after the post-juvenile moult is completed. In addition we have retrapped just two of our 15 nestling-ringed birds.

Willow Tit 3J Z782469 7/8/2016 Q03

Willow Tits have apparently been absent from the wood as a regular breeding species since 2005. CBC work recorded single territories in 2013 and 2015 and, interestingly, both of these were along the western edge of the assart rather than in the heart of the wood. Ringers did not catch any adults in these years. The species' main problem in the wood seems to be nest predation by Great Spotted Woodpeckers. They appear to have better success in scrubland and hedgerows where woodpeckers are far less abundant or absent. It would seem that this bird, like one captured in 2015, is a product of a breeding site outside the wood and is now exploring the area searching for a likely place to settle next year. Whereas we would like them to settle in the wood, that would seem futile. But we have a plan. Woodpecker predation seems to be very localised happening only within a few tens of metres of their nesting sites (as seen in the map above showing locations of boxes attacked by a woodpecker). The hedgerow along the eastern edge of the assart presents possible breeding sites which are inconveniently far from woodpecker nesting sites. We will place a number of 'stump' boxes along the hedge line in the hope of attracting Willow Tits in 2017. The stump boxes are logs, with a cavity excavated at the top and then stuffed with soft, rotting birch. This allows the tits to excavate their own nest cavities and prevents other tits (which do not excavate their own cavities) from using the sites.

Blue Tit 6M V666961 26/5/2019 J01 On nest

A nestling-ringed Blue Tit with a long history - he was ringed in 2010 in exactly the same nestbox as he was using this year for nesting, six years after fledging from it. We recaptured him a few times from 2010 to the spring of 2012 and, thereafter he was not seen for three and a half years until he reappeared at the feeding station. Alas, his nest was attacked, probably by a weasel, and all the young killed. We believe he escaped and look forward to recapturing him again. It is not unknown to capture an adult nesting in its natal box, but it is not common.

Blue Tit 6F Y235949 15/5/2016 E07 On nest

It is unusual for the first capture of a Blue Tit in the wood to be anything but a bird less than a year old. Once they have found a breeding territory they tend to stay with it for life. This one is an exception. She appeared as a first year bird in Headon at the beginning of 2015 and was not encountered again anywhere until 1st May 2016 when we caught her in a mist net in the wood. Two weeks later she was found again, nesting in one of our boxes. It is unlikely that she nested in the wood in 2015 - had she done so we would have been most likely to catch her either on the nest or else at some point in a mist net. It looks like a big shift of breeding territory between years.

Great Tit 4F TJ49843 12/6/2016 M03 On nest

This is our oldest Great Tit captured recently, ringed just over 7 years previously as a nestling in a box less than 100 metres from its nesting site here. Details of her captures should be included in next year's Nottinghamshire's 'roll of honour' in the BTO ringing report, along with the five others already published which have histories over seven years in length (of which another, K720572, is also a Treswell Wood bird). Her capture history includes four captures when nesting in boxes (always within 100 metres of each other) and four appearances in the winter nestbox checks for roosting birds.

Great Tit 5F TV35551 23/3/2016 Babworth Hall, Retford

In 2015, 104 Great Tits fledged from the nestboxes. Of these, 26 now have at least one subsequent encounter (and that is a respectably high rate of re-encountering for nestling-ringed birds). Just two of these have been found outside the wood - one was at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell Village and this one, mist-netted in Babworth, 8 km away, is the second and longest reported movement for that cohort. We had previously retrapped it in the wood soon after fledging.

Great Tit 3J TV35575 22/7/2016 Hillcrest Farm, Treswell

This is the first of our 2016 nestling-ringed Great Tits to be found outside the wood. John Clark trapped it, along with two others and two nestling-ringed Blue Tits at Hillcrest Farm. All three Great Tits were from the same brood which was in the south of the wood - nearest to the village. Likewise the two Blue Tits were from the southern part of the wood. By no means all the 'southern' birds head further south as we have caught a number in the feeders in the north of the wood.

Chaffinch 3J D808473 12/6/2016 Q03

A pair of Chaffinches chose to nest in the rafters of 'Tonyvik' (the workers' shelter). We followed progress of the nest and ringed all four nestlings. On checking that they had fledged it was not clear if they had. The nest was dislodged and in disrepair as if it had been attacked by a predator. Happily, a little later we retrapped this bird. One of the four, at least, had escaped. To our surprise we retrapped the rest of the brood later that morning. I removed the remains of the nest and saved them for Charles Deeming's nest structure analyses in Lincoln. But that is not the end of the story. The convenient-for-Chaffinch place in the rafters was now clear of debris - ideal for building a nest...

Chaffinch 3J S078610 10/7/2016 Q03

... and within a few days a new nest appeared. A second clutch was laid, the eggs hatched and the young were ringed. This is the first recapture of a bird from the second brood. Very pleasing indeed.

Goldfinch 3J Z782426 24/7/2016 Q04

The last juvenile Goldfinch we trapped was in 2013, with others caught in 2011 and 2010. Prior to that we had to go back to 1981 for a capture of a juvenile. This bird was caught along the northern edge of the wood and it may be it is a product of the gardens opposite the wood rather than from a nest in the wood. Typically we record one Goldfinch breeding territory in every four years in the CBC with a maximum count of two territories in some exceptional years. The species is one of woodland edge rather than interior.

House Sparrow 3J TT49241 12/6/2016 Q03

We continued to catch small numbers of House Sparrows at the feeders and opposite the houses on the north edge of the wood into the breeding season. This is the first juvenile House Sparrow to be captured this year and, indeed, the first juvenile to be ringed in the wood since 1978.

10-Week Summary: 2016 Interval 3, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Woodpigeon	1	1
Wren	3	7	9	5	8	1	33
Dunnock	1	.	2	.	6	.	9
Robin	3	6	9	11	4	.	33
Blackbird	.	5	3	3	2	.	13
Song Thrush	1	.	.	2	.	.	3
Blackcap	17	7	4	6	2	.	36
Chiffchaff	9	.	.	7	.	.	16
Willow Warbler	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	.	3	1	.	1	5
Blue Tit	.	.	3	.	.	.	3
Great Tit	.	3	8	2	5	1	19
Treecreeper	.	.	5	2	.	.	7
Chaffinch	.	3	.	3	.	.	6
Bullfinch	2	2	.	1	3	.	8
Totals	37	33	46	44	30	3	193

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week periods

Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:

Interval	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Maximum	128	185	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	89	66	59	364
Mean	90	111	159	130	124	609

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 - 2015)	90	119	144	103	116	561
2016 only	102	185	193			