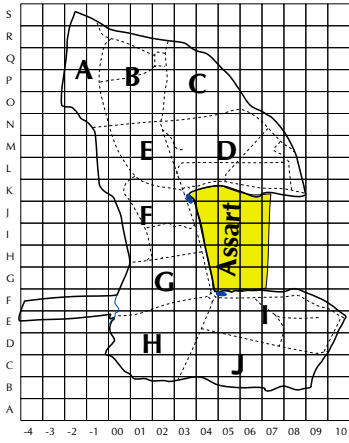


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

May 2013 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

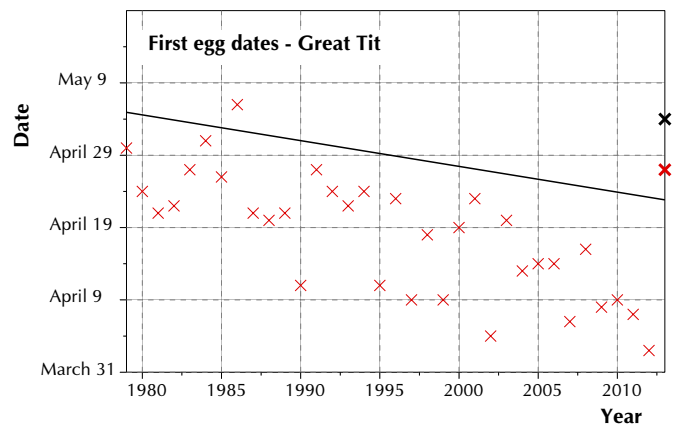
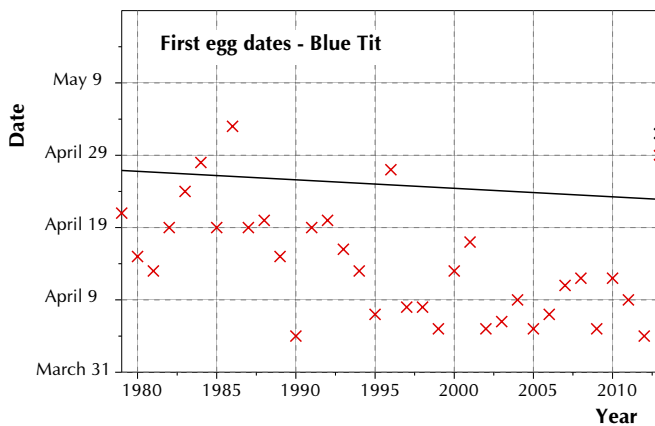
Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark



2013/2 Number 92

Never predict, especially the future. This was the advice of Peter Wilkinson as Treasurer of the BTO when beginning one of his annual reports. This is excellent advice (perhaps a pity more of his fellow bankers did not heed it.) After many years of advancing of the tit breeding season, albeit with noticeable annual variation, this year's season is further out of line than ever before, with laying dates being as late as those of 30 years ago. Our 2013 dates are, of course, provisional as we expect more nests to be started (making the median date even later). However, there are one or two nests where we cannot yet calculate the first egg date and this may just shift the earliest date a day or two forwards. The overall picture will remain the same - an unexpectedly very late season indeed. The two graphs illustrate this for Blue Tits and Great Tits. The earliest first egg date (i.e. the date on which the first egg is laid in the earliest nest) is plotted for each year with a red cross. In black is the trend line for the median first egg date (date of the middle nest of the year) and this gives a measure of the average timing of nesting. The provisional dates for this year are given in red (earliest) and black crosses (median).



The weather has certainly been unusual. January brought cold and snow followed by a very wet period in February and bitterly cold easterly winds through March. This was followed by less unseasonable weather in April with almost a promise of spring by the third week. By the end of the month most of the wood had dried on the surface and the lack of rain through the month prompted some forecasters to predict a drought in May (they, too, should have taken Peter Wilkinson's advice). The drought failed to materialise and mid-May has been cold and wet.

Our standard site captures reflect low numbers of birds - probably resulting from the poor breeding season in 2012 and the recent hard winters which have reduced over-winter survival. The 90 captures represent the eighth lowest capture total for this period of the year since we began the standard site protocol in 1978. Oddly, Wrens which are usually hit hard by cold weather, are well represented in our standard site captures.

There are winners and losers. Early winners appeared to be frogs with many pools and ditches apparently suitable for spawning. Alas, with the drought, some of these dried leaving all tadpoles dead - though no doubt a rich picking ground for scavengers. With particularly bad timing, the rain of May came just two or three days too late to save these tadpoles.

The weather has also affected the ringing programme. There have been more weekends than we can remember where ringing has not been possible - either wet or too windy, or both. We have just managed to maintain the required number of standard site visits, but it has been a close thing. The Common Bird Census has continued and is now in its 40th season and the only remaining CBC site in the country. This year we have added a new patch - The Assart. Recording in there are not difficult but also not particularly interesting at present. The few species recorded include Woodpigeons and Pheasants with almost nothing away from the hedgerows of the wood edge.

However, it is important to begin this operation now - otherwise we will not have a complete picture of how the habitat develops over the next decades. The interest of this year's not-exciting survey will lie in the comparisons to be made by our successors. Thanks to all the CBC team for their continued efforts.

With such a different year we might expect flora, too, to be different from normal. It has seemed to be an excellent year for wood anemones and primroses whereas bluebells have not given as spectacular shows as sometimes. It seems that yellow archangel - an attractive ancient woodland member of the dead nettle family - is having a good year with many more patches appearing in the north-west part of the wood. But all these observations are anecdotal. The only species for which we have numeric data is the early purple orchid where we count the spikes in various patches most years. It has been a very good year - the patch at the east end of Nightingale Ride held a maximum of around 350 spikes - the same as in 2000, 2001, 2005 & 2008. It was only exceeded in 2003 (400 spikes) and was well over the average count of 250. Another patch in the west of the wood held 70 spikes which is not unprecedented but somewhat above the normal 40-60 recorded. Overall, then, a good year for this species.

Dormouse release - June 2013

June 2nd and 3rd are set as the dates for erection of the dormouse release cages which will be spread around the wood, each with accompanying dormouse boxes. We are making every effort to ensure that this release does not have the negative impact on the nesting tits that the earlier project did (see Twitter 91 for more details). So far our trial bird-proof boxes have not been used by any birds (which is good) but neither have they been used by nesting rodents or shrews (which is not so good). However, release cages will each contain two boxes - a conventional dormouse box and one based on this experimental design. This will give the dormice a chance to learn about the bottom-entrance. Even if this fails, we will ensure that dormouse boxes remain plugged and inaccessible to birds until well into the tit breeding season by which time they are unlikely to be selected even by the latest nesting individuals. Interesting times.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CT84336	19/5/2013	Q02 Feeder

After a slow-down in the rate of recapturing these charismatic birds, we seem to be blessed with them coming into our nets again. This one has an odd recapture history. It was ringed as a juvenile in 2007 and recaptured frequently at the feeders or nearby for the next three years. Since May 2010, no captures. The species is highly sedentary so it is quite remarkable that it has evaded capture for three years.

Mistle Thrush	4F	LE35028	28/4/2013	M07
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The first Mistle Thrush we have captured in the wood since 2009 (when we encountered 6 individuals). They do seem to be heard and seen more frequently in the wood than in earlier years. We were fortunate to see this bird's nest near where it was netted and have ringed its three young - the first nestling Mistle Thrushes to be ringed in the wood. Mistle Thrushes remain an uncommonly captured species in the wood - with the four nestlings our total is 27 birds - fewer than one per year on average.

Chiffchaff	6	CXN557	28/4/2013	N07
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Recapturing summer migrants in a subsequent season is always interesting. This one, sad though was its ending, was of more than average interest. It had been ringed in the wood as a juvenile in 2011 but not retrapped since. This is not unexpected - juveniles are not particularly likely to return to exactly the same place in the following year. Adults, in contrast, do tend to return to the same territory as they held in the previous year (see CXN710 below). Three weeks later we found its bedraggled remains at the feeding station. The state of decomposition was such that it was not possible to identify the species - except by the ring. It shows how quick decomposition can be. We suspect it was driven from its home range to the feeders in search of food during the recent cold and wet weather.

Chiffchaff	6M	CXN710	21/04/2013	N00
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This was the first Chiffchaff of the year, a retrap from 2012 when it was captured as a breeding male about 25 metres from today's capture location. It is a very late first Chiffchaff date - presumably summer migrants were severely delayed by the strong north-easterly winds this spring. Of the 516 adult Chiffchaffs we have ever caught, 150 have been first trapped earlier than 21st April and the earliest ever capture date was 12th March in 1995.

Blackcap	6M	L731926	21/04/2013
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Much the same can be said about the Blackcaps as for the Chiffchaffs, although they are slightly less late than that species. Our earliest ever record is March 25th in 2012. Of the 1594 adult Blackcaps we have ever encountered, just 65 have been captured earlier than this year's first arrival date. That is a rather lower proportion than for

Chiffchaffs indicating a less-late arrival than them. Unusually, and unlike the Chiffchaffs, we have not yet retrapped any Blackcaps from previous years.

Goldcrest **5M** **CXN842** **28/4/2013** **L05**

A very late capture for this species. We have only ever captured two birds later in the spring than this individual - one in May 1989 and one in June 1976. It is most likely that these latter two birds were breeders within the wood. Typically CBC records one territory every two years in the wood and there have been recently fledged juveniles trapped in the wood in 1981, 1983, 1999 and 2006. In all the years mentioned here, except 2006, the CBC team recorded Goldcrests in the wood during the breeding season. It is difficult to say whether this bird will remain to breed or whether it was a late migrant, delayed by the hostile prevailing wind.

Marsh Tit **6M** **V666916** **28/4/2013** **M07**

A respectably old Marsh Tit with a Treswell Wood pedigree - ringed in May 2009 in a 'stump nestbox' in the south of the wood and recaptured in the northern half of the wood fairly frequently in every year since then. It is typical of Marsh Tits that juveniles disperse from the south of the wood to spend their adult lives in the north or vice versa.

Blue Tit **6F** **X650000** **22/5/2013** **I03 On nest**

One of the few birds so far well into the incubation process. This is her second breeding season. Last year she attempted to nest in the same box but the attempt ended in failure. A predator - probably a rodent - destroyed the nest and ate the eggs. She then made a second attempt in a nearby box but this was too late to succeed and the young hatched but died in the unusually wet weather of the summer. We hope she will succeed in passing on her genes this year.

Blue Tit **5** **L731796** **22/1/2013** **Darlton**

Peter Cobb has ringed birds at Darlton for many years and it seems surprising that we have so few recorded movements between there and Treswell Wood. This is only the thirteenth overall. In view of the number of Blue Tits we ring it is surprising that this is the first movement of the species recorded between the wood and Darlton. The other species involved have included Green Woodpecker and Willow Tit. This is much more mundane.

Great Tit **5M** **TR47790** **7/4/2013** **D02**

It is always pleasing to recapture our nestling-ringed birds, even more so if they are building an interesting recapture history. This one was ringed last year in a nestbox in the north-west corner of the wood and retrapped a few times until the end of June. Presumably it then started its post-natal dispersal movements. Its next appearance was at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell in early January. We did not recapture him again until today, back in the wood but at the opposite end to where he had begun his life.

Goldfinch **4F** **L731518** **28/4/2013** **Q02**

One of a sudden rush of this attractive species caught at the feeders in late April. We trapped 12 during this time of which this one was a recapture from a year previously. We have now ringed a total of only 112 Goldfinches - a batch of 12 in two weeks is unprecedented.

10-Week Summary: 2013 Interval 2, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	3	4	.	2	3	.	12
Dunnock	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Robin	.	1	.	3	4	.	8
Blackbird	2	2	.	2	.	.	6
Song Thrush	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Mistle Thrush	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Blackcap	4	3	.	.	.	.	7
Chiffchaff	2	2	.	4	.	.	8
Long-tailed Tit	4	.	.	2	.	.	6
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	3	.	.	3
Coal Tit	.	.	.	.	2	.	2
Blue Tit	.	1	.	3	4	.	8
Great Tit	.	1	.	9	6	.	16
Treecreeper	.	1	.	2	.	.	3
Chaffinch	3	2	.	1	.	.	6
Bullfinch	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Totals	22	18	.	31	19	.	90

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

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1978	101	130	243	223	131	828
1979	97	115	211	109	123	655
1980	86	102	210	147	170	715
1981	102	110	288	187	177	864
1982	66	113	165	89	110	543
1983	82	139	143	185	128	677
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	98	74	127	421
1992	64	64	115	224	159	626
1993	81	70	112	158	126	547
1994	88	110	212	155	157	722
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
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	176	117	608
2003	117	116	146	104	114	597
2004	103	128	126	165	132	654
2005	107	140	150	88	133	618
2006	128	98	185	125	166	702
2007	107	110	138	73	92	520
2008	125	130	151	86	100	592
2009	57	130	156	85	80	508
2010	94	100	144	119	143	600
2011	96	112	120	105	101	534
2012	69	125	132	66	72	464
2013	76	90				

Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:

Maximum	128	145	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	94	66	59	364
Mean	90	108	160	131	123	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