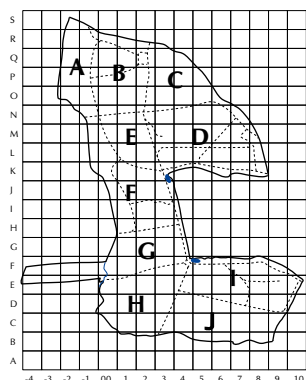


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 2009 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

All projects by permission of NWT

2009/5

Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Number 75

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark & John McMeeking

Annual Summary - All ringing records 2009

	Ctrl.	New Birds			Retraps		Sight	Recvs.	Othr	Total
		Adult	Juvnl	Pulli	Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	1	.	.	.	1	
Kestrel	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Stock Dove	.	.	.	10	.	.	.	.	10
Woodpigeon	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Tawny Owl	.	1	.	4	1	.	.	.	6	
Barn Owl ¹	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	1	4	
Green Woodpecker	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	1	5	.	22	1	.	.	29	
Wren	.	40	59	2	35	20	.	.	156	
Dunnock	.	34	20	.	29	4	.	.	87	
Robin	.	34	56	.	53	21	2	1	167	
Blackbird	.	36	29	4	55	10	.	2	136	
Song Thrush	.	13	6	.	9	4	.	1	33	
Mistle Thrush	.	1	3	.	3	.	.	.	7	
Blackcap	.	43	19	.	17	6	.	.	85	
Chiffchaff	1	21	5	.	10	3	.	.	40	
Willow Warbler	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Goldcrest	.	4	6	.	6	.	.	.	16	
Spotted Flycatcher	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Long-tailed Tit	9	40	.	.	60	9	.	.	118	
Marsh Tit	.	.	9	7	49	7	2	2	76	
Willow Tit	.	.	1	.	6	1	.	.	8	
Coal Tit	.	3	11	11	43	4	.	.	72	
Blue Tit	6	26	39	111	149	10	.	2	356	
Great Tit ²	8	28	57	141	383	62	.	7	686	
Nuthatch	.	.	6	.	11	.	.	.	17	
Treecreeper	.	4	16	.	38	8	.	.	66	
Jay	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Chaffinch	.	27	25	.	37	3	.	.	92	
Brambling	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Goldfinch	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
Bullfinch	.	15	11	.	17	2	.	.	45	
Totals	24	384	383	293	1034	175	4	8	21	2326

Key:

Ctrl - Birds ringed elsewhere and caught in Treswell Wood. **Juvnl** - juveniles. **Pulli** - birds ringed as nestlings. **Rt** - ordinary recaptures. **SDR** - same day recaptures. **Sight** - observations of colour-ringed birds. **Recvs** - recoveries, i.e. our own ringed birds found dead in Treswell Wood. **Other** - all in this table are pulli which were ringed but died before fledging; they are not included in the Pulli column.

Notes:

- 1 Barn Owl - ringed at Forwood Farm adjacent to the wood. These are the only birds ringed outside the wood.
- 2 Great Tit - the large total is a result of the high number of repeated captures of juveniles at the feeders.

Although 2009 appeared to promise us much, with a much better breeding season than in the previous two dismal years, the catches during the autumn have been much below average, giving a standard-site total for the year, even lower than in the last two years. We have not been alone in seeing low numbers of birds. Many householders locally have been asking where all the birds were. Some, undoubtedly, have remained in hedgerows feeding on a good crop of seeds and berries. Only when the weather became much colder, in the last two weeks of December, did birds start to return to gardens in any numbers. One species notable by its almost complete absence is the Goldcrest. Normally our autumn and winter captures are boosted considerably by this species. This year, they seem to have fared badly during the breeding season and numbers are very low indeed - and not just in the wood. However, Goldcrests, like other very small birds, can recover numbers very rapidly when conditions are right. We have no reason to think that this bad year is anything more than an isolated bad year, rather than the start of a serious decline for the species. Lack of Goldcrests alone, though, is not sufficient to explain the very low numbers neither for this last interval of the year nor for the year as a whole.

Away from the wood, we have made exceedingly good progress during the year. Steve has now completed the scanning of all the field note books from pre-field sheet days. This means all our field records from the beginning of the Treswell Wood operation are scanned and secure. The originals of these last sheets to be scanned will be lodged, with others, in the County Archives. We have also had some mist-net mending parties. This has resulted in a larger number of nets available for use than we have enjoyed for some time.

What is left to be done? We still have a good number of mist nets in the pile to be mended. Some just need various holes to be repaired. This can be done in the comfort of your own home during the long winter evenings. Our net repair programme will soon lead to a shortage of net bags. Fortunately we do have a supply of material ideal for making into net bags - again an opportunity for filling the long winter evenings. More bird bags would be useful - again we have material ready for the job. For volunteers better with wordprocessors than with sewing machines, there is also the job of background notes entry - we still have about a dozen years of these notes to computerise. One major task is to load ringing data from the 1970s to mid-1990s into the IPMR program so that those old records can be submitted to the BTO. This task really depends on the background notes having been entered first - the job of loading data itself is fairly straightforward and quick. It would be good if 2010 was the year when all these archiving tasks could be completed. Any volunteers?

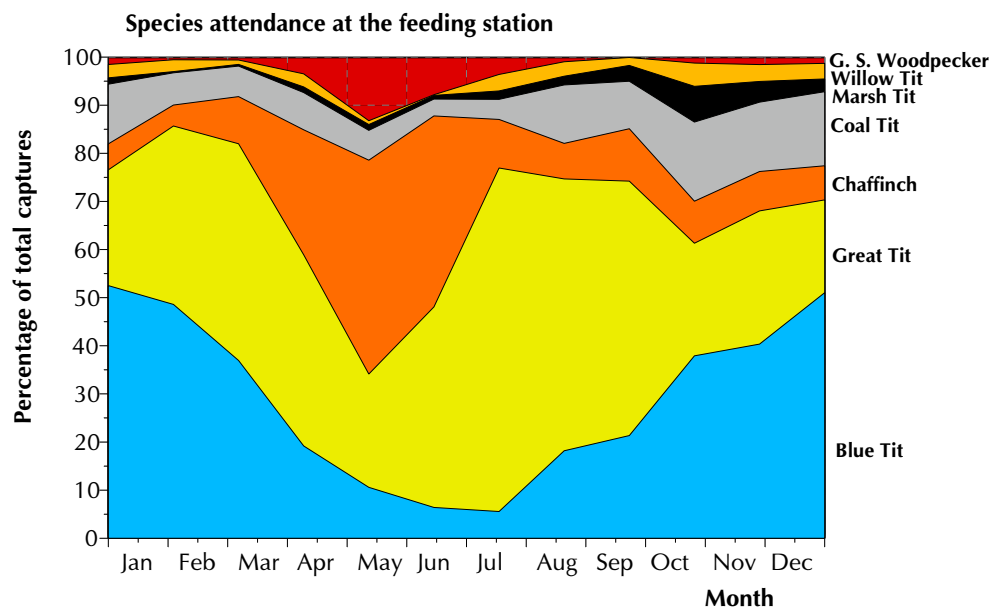
All the tasks mentioned above relate to gathering and computerising data. We have been increasingly concerned that the effort of gathering, storing and curating the data set is so great that we are not able to devote sufficient time to the main purpose of the whole operation - analysis. Here, though, we are making progress. With an initiative from the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, academic expertise from Nottingham University and the BTO, we have submitted a grant application for a PhD student. The study, assuming the application is successful, will examine the effect of coppice management on bird populations. With over three decades of systematic ringing data, habitat information and bird territory maps, the student will have an excellent start - there does not seem to be another comparable data set in the country. We hope that the application will be successful.

Captures at the main feeder - John Clark

I have always had a feeling that there were certain times of year when you would be much more likely to catch a particular species of bird at the feeder, so it seemed worth a proper look at the evidence. Feeder captures analysed go back to 1996, and as there is no set pattern of netting there, the analysis has been done by percentage of species by month. Total numbers caught in a month varied between 240 and 995, with a total of over 7,000 records.

'Occasional' and 'non-feeder' species (Robin, Blackbird, Wren etc) were taken out of the analysis, as well as Greenfinch and Yellowhammer (which were abundant in the first year only), and the pattern in the chart emerged.

This shows an interesting change in the mix of species through the year, with peaks of Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Chaffinch in May, Blue Tit in December, January and February and Great Tit in July and August.



The woodpeckers caught in May were all adults, presumably supplementing their diet when feeding young. In June half the woodpeckers at the feeder were recently fledged juveniles.

The Chaffinches appear in numbers at the feeder in April, May and June, when their food is harder to find elsewhere. The April catches were all adults; in May a quarter of the birds were juveniles, and in June half the birds were juveniles

Blue Tits are relatively infrequent visitors to the feeders from April until August. It is interesting that even though the young are in the majority at the feeder, (over 70% from June, shown in the second chart), the proportion of the species at the feeder is still low. This is in contrast to the Great Tits where the juveniles are a major presence at the feeders from June to August, forming almost 70% of the total captures in July.

While the figures for the BTO Garden BirdWatch are not directly comparable, being an indicator of whether the different species are present in gardens (as opposed to total numbers at a woodland feeder), it is interesting to compare the East Midlands GBW results with the birds at the Treswell Wood feeders. The GBW results can all be seen on the BTO web site at www.bto.org/gbw/results_speciestrends.htm. The Great Tits show rather different patterns, with a lack of them in July and August in gardens when the juveniles are at the feeders in the wood. Patterns for Chaffinch, Blue Tit and Great Spotted Woodpecker are similar to those in the GBW with, perhaps, just a little offset in timing.

What does this tell us? Well, if you want to know what species you are likely to catch at the feeder in any month, the graph gives a good prediction. How these proportions relate to those of our general woodland captures or to attendance at feeding stations in gardens is another matter. Plenty of opportunity here for analyses.

What to record - a reminder

Regular members of the ringing team will know that we record additional data for some species. For instance, we note the numbers of spots on Wrens' fourth primary feathers. This has been useful in helping ageing techniques and we even have a paper published. (Validity of ageing Wrens on fourth primary spots, Ward & du Feu, Ringing & Migration, 2006) Although there is always a good reason for each extra item to record, there is no apparent logic. It can be difficult, even for old hands, to remember what to record. For this reason, we now have a sheet with the ringing kit listing what extra we would like to record if circumstances allow. For the scribe, it will be useful to glance the list before allowing the ringer to release the bird. Easier to record such data with the bird in the hand than in the bush.

CBC volunteers/trainees

Our CBC team has been depleted by John Bartley's retirement although we still can cover the wood during 2010. What would be useful would be to find new volunteers able to make a commitment to taking part in the survey for some years - continuity is important to the CBC operation. Ideally we would like to find a younger person who is a 'good birdwatcher', whatever that means. The ability to identify woodland birds by song and call is important. Treswell Wood is one of the very few places where the CBC is still done so we are important trustees of the skills and techniques for this. Training the next generation to ensure bird territory mapping remains in our collection of monitoring techniques is important. Any volunteers?

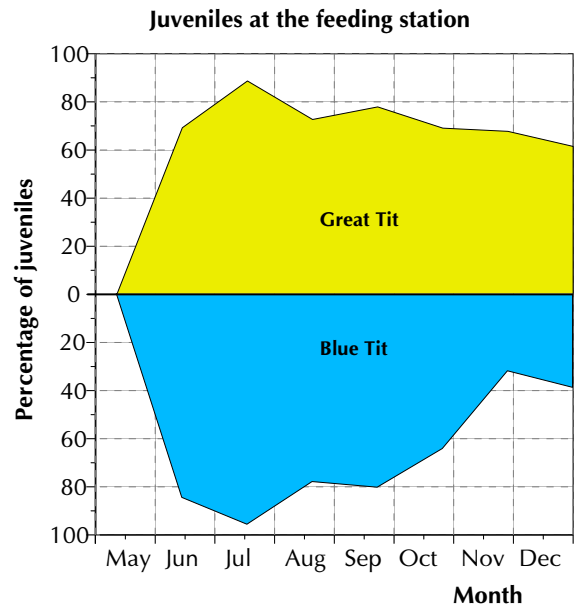
CES 2009 - from Mark Grantham, BTO

Many thanks for your continued support of the CES Scheme in 2009 and in a pre-Swanwick fever we finished the first main run of analyses last week. As you might expect it's generally been a fantastic year and one that must have come as a relief to most CES ringers: it's about time all that effort paid off with some really impressive catches.

Good to see your highest juvenile catch for a fair few years (2002), but some totals are rather odd. How do you manage to only catch eight juvenile Blackcaps from 24 adults?

With generally much improved spring and summer weather (i.e. not torrential rain showers day after day) most species have really bounced back nationally. Of the core 25 species, 15 showed productivity significantly higher than the long term average (at its highest ever level for Reed Warbler and Chaffinch). Doing particularly well were some of the finches, with Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch and Linnet all with productivity over 70% higher than the long term average.

There does look to be some regional variation though, and the one species that stands out is Willow Warbler.



Whilst most species did incredibly well this year, Willow Warbler is a common one that did not. We wonder if this may be because a large proportion of our Willow Warbler sample comes from northern/Scottish sites, where the weather wasn't quite so favourable, hence may pull down the productivity index.

We are also still seeing the effect of the recent poor breeding seasons though, with adult numbers down on last year for most species, and significantly so for Robin, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Long-tailed Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Linnet. Blue Tit and Linnet were also recorded in their lowest adult numbers since the Scheme started.

Once we have Swanwick and press releases out of the way I'll put the preliminary results up on the CES web pages, so do have a look at the complete picture then.

Well I hope you're enjoying your winter ringing, and there's still plenty of time before the next CES season. In the meantime though, if you have any thoughts, articles, news items or photos for the next CES News, please drop me an email or give me a call.

Mark Grantham

The web address for the details, and also for downloading all issues of the CES newsletter is:

www.bto.org/ringing/ringinginfo/ces/index.htm

BTO Conference - Swanwick, December 2009

This event, agreed by many to be the best Ringers' Conference ever, celebrated 100 years of bird ringing in Britain. Many questions were raised which could be addressed with the help of long-term data sets. Here are a few.

For many classic migratory species, males arrive earlier than females in order to secure and hold territories before their potential mates arrive. But what about local migrants, such as our Great Tits which appear at the feeders in early spring? Is there a difference in the time of arrivals of the males and females?

We have already looked at the timing of the breeding season of box-nesting tits and there is a clear trend towards earlier nesting - nearly half a day per year overall. But what about the length of the breeding season - is it longer because the earlier start allows more time or is it shorter because different species are now operating out of synchrony because of different rates of response to climate change?

And moult - we know more juveniles are moulting tail feathers than in former years, but we have not looked at anything to do with timing of moult - is it earlier? Is it taking longer?

Two years ago, Sarah Lewis at Nottingham University examined data relating to breeding success and taking food from the feeding station. Her results showed that Blue Tits which came to the feeder had lower breeding success than those that did not. This could be a result of many things (Fitter birds may not need supplementary food? Feeders might be sited in a low quality breeding habitat within the wood? Is supplementary food bad for breeding birds?). A poster at the conference showed similar results from elsewhere but, again, the apparently obvious conclusion that supplementary feeding is bad is not established. It is a clear case of definite correlation but without causation being established. More work is needed here. Could we design an experiment which could clarify this?

And, finally, congratulations to Richard du Feu on his election to the BTO Ringing Committee to serve a four year term as ringers' representative.

BTO Atlas Project

The Atlas project is in its third winter season out of four. For the latest national results, look at www.bto.org/birdatlas. You will recall that we are sponsoring the Treecreeper for which we have promised to raise £2,000. Donations can be made directly to the BTO at www.justgiving.com/bto_atlas. The web site total is not completely up-to-date at the time of writing this, but we still have some way to go. We hope that many more old and current members will contribute to make it a real team effort and not leave a few of us to make up the remaining balance. All contributions (electronically or by cheque to the BTO) will be very welcome. If you send a cheque to the BTO please state it is for the Treecreeper sponsorship and mark it for the attention of Graham Appleton. Many thanks, in advance.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Kestrel	2M	EL87425	8/11/2009	D03

Our first Kestrel since January 2008 and only the 15th we have ever caught.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 2F	CT84060	15/11/2009	Q02 Feeder
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A fine individual, this is its 35th capture since being ringed in December 2004. It really has been a most helpful bird. It often is caught when visitors are in the wood - few other species provide such good public relations opportunities as this. But, in addition, its long capture history has been most helpful in helping us understand how

to age (or, rather, not to age) the species. We are delighted to note that our efforts will appear in a forthcoming Ringers' Bulletin and will include photographs of birds of known age showing how unpredictable their plumage can be. A case of Donald Rumsfeld's unknown known (or, in this case, an unknowable known). Oddly, on this occasion, possibly for the first time, its plumage was exactly as would be expected in an adult.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 2M CT84336 13/12/2009 Q02 Feeder

Another old friend, also worth noting because of the difficulty of ageing the species. Like CT84060, above, it had exactly the plumage that would be expected of a well-behaved adult (but could also have been that of a well-moulted juvenile). To the unwary ringer, its eyes would have been the give-away - they were pale, nowhere near the deep ruby colouration seen in the adult, so it must be a juvenile. Wrong again! It was ringed in July 2007. Eye colouration is not reliable for ageing these birds - we have seen both pale and deep eye colouration in birds of all ages and with recapture histories for confirmation.

Dunnock 4 R353794 20/12/2009 F04 Feeder

At nearly five years since ringing, this is not a spectacularly old Dunnock but it is nearly two years since we last retrapped it. The day's total catch of birds included several other old friends which we had not seen for some time and rather fewer newer birds than recently. Where do these older birds hide and why do they all appear together?

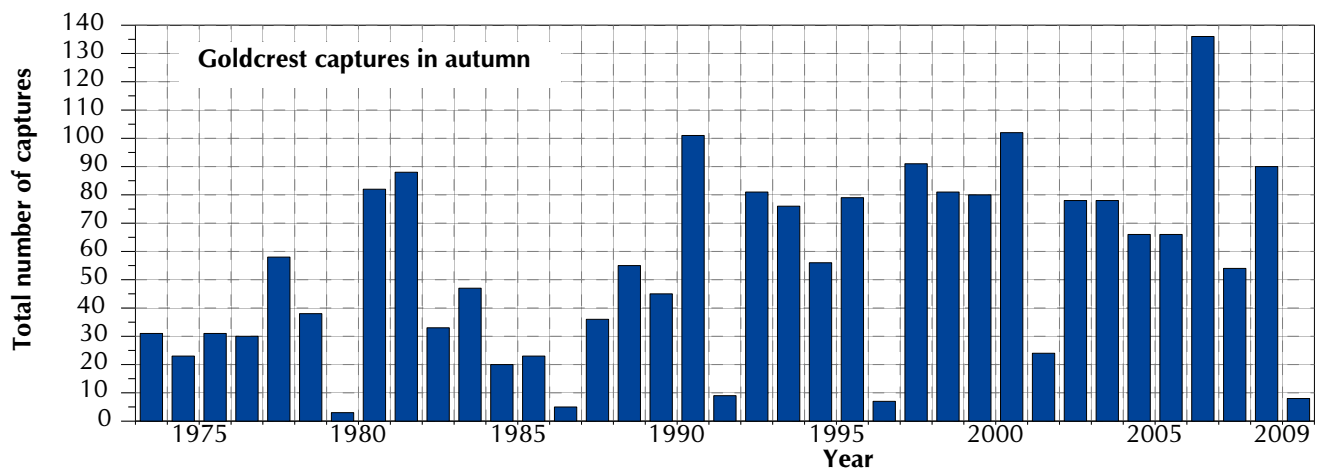
Robin 2 V475051 23/12/2009 F02

This is one of our very few sight records for the year - even fewer now that we have ceased colour ringing. It was seen near the charcoal burner by Sam and Ray Lister. This one was ringed in March 2007 and last retrapped in March 2009. Keep an eye open for any remaining colour ringed birds - there are still a handful of Robins, Marsh and Willow Tits which are lurking in the wood.

Goldcrest 3M CXN166 13/12/2009 N00

This is a very bad year for Goldcrests - not just in the wood, but over most of the country. We have trapped only six. Of these, we have retrapped two with times of 4 weeks and eight weeks between captures - these two do appear to have remained in the wood rather than being mere transients. The chart shows our autumn capture record since the first full autumn of ringing in 1973. Only three years have given lower numbers of captures. Interestingly, years with very low numbers seem to happen unpredictably and are not followed by years with particularly low numbers. Goldcrests, being so small, have volatile populations so numbers can crash for a number of reasons (poor breeding success or hard weather for example). However, because they have fairly large clutches and can be double brooded, numbers can recover very rapidly indeed.

It is, of course, quite likely that the first wintering Goldcrests choose the best quality habitats. Later arrivals have to make do with less good habitats. In a year with low numbers overall, this would mean that the best habitats could have normal numbers, but sub-optimal habitats might have almost none. Treswell Wood, with lack of conifers, could be such a sub-optimal habitat. In that case, the low numbers we have would reflect a poor year rather than a terrible one. Reports from elsewhere, however, suggest that a terrible year is more likely than just a poor year.



Chiffchaff 4 CXN157 31/10/2009 K03

Not our latest capture for this species, but well after the time when we would expect migrants to have left. Our latest was 13th December 1998 and this bird is our third latest ever.

Willow Tit 4 T663083 31/10/2009 J03

Our first adult Willow Tit capture for some months - numbers have been worryingly low during 2009. We have trapped only one juvenile this autumn but are unsure if it was a Treswell Wood native or an incomer. This bird we

tarsus length on this species. This latter measurement is not particularly easy on a bird with such long claws which seem to do all they can to prevent the leg being placed correctly along the rule. It is pleasing to note that our leg measurements are pretty consistent - twice measured as 23 mm and once as 24 mm. Incidentally, the weekly report of capture histories which is emailed to various group members includes the various measurements we have taken. It is worth perusing this in order to check on the consistency of your own measurements.

Goldfinch **2** **X649344** **8/11/2009** **E04**

This species is behaviourally very close to London buses - even the head colour is the same. You wait a long time for one and then they arrive in batches. Today two arrived in the nets, with several other small birds just as the net removal party was starting work prior to dismantling the nets. Although we have heard them in the wood from time to time, it is some 18 months since we caught any previously.

Controls and Recoveries

Great Tit **5F** **X359435** **18/01/2009** **M01**

This was ringed at Headon by Glen Thomas on 1st January 2009 and rapidly came to Treswell Wood. We trapped it again in the wood later in January, and in the autumn of 2009.

Movements between Hillcrest Farm and Treswell Wood

We have enjoyed a good number of movements of birds between Treswell Wood and Hillcrest Farm in the village. We traditionally treat all these as controls - they are birds which have moved to or from the wood. For the sake of compactness, all these movements are reported below, but comments are generally briefer than usual.

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Notes
Long-tailed Tit	2	ARB150	22/11/2009	D03
Long-tailed Tit	2	ARB151	22/11/2009	D03

These birds were ringed with ARB152 at Hillcrest Farm, Treswell by John Clark on 2 October 2009. We caught ARB152 in the wood 9 days later. Today it was trapped again in company with both these individuals. Birds of this species do rove fairly widely and tend to remain in family groups so it is not surprising, although very pleasing, to catch the three in the wood on the same day.

Blue Tit **6** **R558535** **5/3/2009** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

A nestling-ringed Blue Tit from the 2008 cohort which evaded capture in the wood. This is its only subsequent recapture record.

Blue Tit **3** **V666887** **9/12/2009** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

Yet another of our nestbox-ringed Blue Tits which has been found away from the wood. The score for this year's nestling-ringed Blue Tit is Hillcrest Farm 5½:Treswell Wood 4½ with the scores of ½ being allocated to one individual which has been caught both at the farm and in the wood.

Great Tit **5M** **TJ49644** **14/1/2009** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

Ringed as a nestling in June 2008 and never yet recaptured within the wood.

Great Tit **6M** **T663192** **25/2/2009** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

Ringed in the wood as a 5M in February 2006 during the spring influx and not seen in the wood, or anywhere else since then, until this capture.

Movements from Hillcrest Farm to Treswell Wood

Great Tit	4M	V414596	18/1/2009	M01	Ringed 12/11/2008
Great Tit	5M	X497509	1/2/2009	F07	Ringed 14/1/2009
Great Tit	5M	X497517	15/2/2009	Q02 Feeder	Ringed 21/1/2009
Great Tit	5M	X497527	22/2/2009	F04	Ringed 4/2/2009
Great Tit	3M	X497598	23/12/2009	Q02 Feeder	Ringed 6/8/2009
Great Tit	3M	X497659	29/11/2009	E07	Ringed 25/9/2009

10 Week Summary 2009 Interval 5, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	1	.	3	3	.	.	7
Dunnock	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Robin	.	.	3	2	.	5	10
Blackbird	1	.	2	2	.	1	6
Song Thrush	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	21	.	.	21
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	3	5
Coal Tit	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Blue Tit	.	.	4	.	.	4	8
Great Tit	.	.	.	3	.	6	9
Treecreeper	.	.	3	1	.	3	7
Bullfinch	1	.	.	.	.	1	2
Totals	4	.	17	35	.	24	80

Treswell Wood Integrated Population Monitoring Group - TWIG

TWIG does not have a formal membership list. 'Membership' seems to result from being involved in some way with the group's work. The list below includes all those who have helped in any way during 2007. (Apologies if any names have been omitted.) We are very grateful to all members for their contributions in the wood or elsewhere. We look forward to another productive year in 2009.

Treswell Wood IPM Group members 2008

Rob Atkinson	Notts Wildlife Trust
Mike Archer	Data entry
Dan Bardsley	Ringling, Nestboxes
Gill Bardsley	Ringling, Nestboxes
Dave Barritt	Foreign correspondent
John Bartley	CBC, Nestboxes, Mammal recording
Pat Bartley	CBC
Jerzy Behnke	Mites
Ben Bower	Ringling
Justine Bower	Celebratory cake maker
Abi Burns	Ringling
Kyle Campbell	Ringling
Jacque Clark	Ringling
John Clark	Ringling, Nestboxes
Peter Cobb	Ringling
Roger Cottis	Mammal advice
Charles Deeming	Lincoln University - egg research
Paul Eady	Lincoln University
Andy Edwardes	Nestbox making
Markus Eichorn	Nottingham University
Lucy de Wesselow	Nottingham University project
Chris du Feu	Ringling, Nestboxes,
Richard du Feu	Ringling, Data processing
Haydn Griffiths-Jones	Nottingham University
Peter Harrison	Ringling
Sarah Hill	Nottingham University
Chris Holliland	Mammals, Dormouse boxes
George Hudson	CBC
Richard Johnson	CBC
Andy Kirk	Ringling

Tony Kennedy	Woodland management
Ulli Langemann	Foreign correspondent
Joy Leaford	Ringling
Sarah Lewis	Nottingham University
Ray Lister	Woodland management
Stuart Martin	CBC
Phil May	Scottish correspondent
John McMeeking	Ringling
Lottie Morrell	Nottingham University
Carrie Musson	Nottingham University
Tim Newbould	Nottingham University
Peter Phillips	Ringling
Pat Quinn-Catling	CBC co-ordinator
Tom Reader	Nottingham University
Keith Stedman	Ringling
Jo Surgey	Ringling
Neil Taylor	Ringling
Frank Tillotson	CBC
Liz Tillotson	CBC
Dave Valentine	Woodland management
Steve Wain	Ringling, Data processing, 'Bible' production

Visitors: Sorrel Bartley, Alastair Borrowman, The Bower family, Adele du Feu, Christine du Feu, Mark Isaacs, Lynda Milner, Clay's Cloggers, Retford Ramblers, BBC Countryfile team,

Contacts

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John McMeeking	01636 830389
Chris du Feu	01427 848400
Neil Taylor	01427 612933