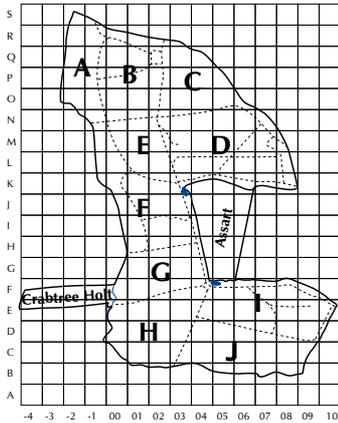


# TWITTER

2021/1

Number 131



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

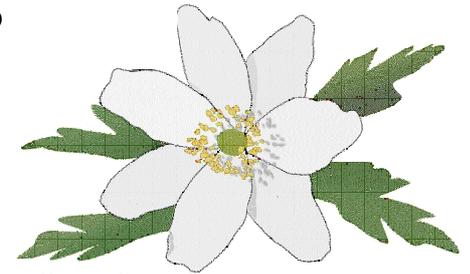
**March 2021 Treswell Wood IPM Group**  
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

**Project leaders:**

**CBC** Ellen Marshall

**Nest Records** Chris du Feu

**Ringing** John Clark



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After the weeks of lockdown, it is wonderful to be back in the wood again, all the better for the wood anemones and primroses in bloom, and the appearance of the first migrants - the first Chiffchaffs are here. The first nestbox rounds have been done and the birds have started their nest building. Unlike last year we should not miss recording any of the vital first egg dates.

We were very pleased to be able to start our second round of standard site visits on time this year, having been unable to do any of the first round. Let us hope the only obstacle we now have to face is the weather.

Last year, the lockdown prevented any Common Birds Census visits and so, for the first time since the Trust bought the wood, we do not have a record of the breeding bird territories. However, this year the lockdown has ended in time and the first CBC visits have been made. Pat-Quinn Catling has retired from her work of compiling the species observation maps and we are delighted to welcome Chris Bennett who, we hope, will take over the work. Ellen Marshall, who turns the observation maps into the territory maps from which territory numbers are derived, now will be responsible for overseeing the CBC.

Working under covid-related restrictions is obviously more difficult than in former times and we see it as vital that we do operate, and be seen to be operating, safely. However, provided the national situation continues to ease we hope to be able to take on trainees again some time in the summer.

The PIT tagging work with Marsh Tits has been delayed by the pandemic - partly because we could not visit the wood and partly because the developers of the system we hoped to use had to suspend their work. We are now working on another system. The PIT tags have been ordered and good progress has been made with the tag reader.

## Crabtree Holt

If you have visited the south-west part of the wood recently you will have found it hard to miss the changes in Crabtree Holt. As usual, when major works of this kind are done, some visitors express concern that the wildlife trust ought to be planting trees rather than cutting them down wholesale. Chris Bray, the northern reserves manager explains.

*The tree felling is part of ongoing management following the traditional cycles that have been in place for hundreds of years and which make our ancient woodlands so special. The restoration of derelict coppice at Treswell in the past 25 years has significantly enhanced the wildlife value of the wood. The cutting and recovery increases the amount of light reaching the woodland floor which promotes spectacular flushes of wild flowers, provides varied nesting habitat for birds and helps ensure a good supply of nuts for the resident hazel dormice.*

*We are currently felling ash trees adjacent to neighbouring farm land. Many have been affected by ash dieback and we have decided to remove them before they become too dangerous to work on. Away from paths, we can leave them to die naturally, but this is not an option in this exposed location. We are leaving oak trees in place and previously coppiced hawthorn and hazel will grow back strongly, as will many of the of the ash. In time some of the ash may prove resistant to disease. The operation was scheduled to be done over three years but we have chosen to do it in one season to minimise the disruption and to allow it to recover without needing to disturb the habitat in subsequent years.*

*We will also be planting new trees once the felling is completed.*

**Chris Bray**

## Stock Doves nests

Two of us managed to check the high boxes in the middle of February, of course keeping within the various lockdown rules. No Tawny Owls were nesting but we did clear squirrel dreys from some of the boxes. A month later we did the next round in the hope of finding Tawny Owl nests. None found. However we did find four Stock Doves sitting on eggs and a fifth guarding a box in which a grey squirrel had begun to build a drey - which we removed in the hope the dove can nest there. Most surprising was that one of the sitting doves had made her nest on top of a drey. That means in the month since clearing a drey from the box, a squirrel had started to rebuild but the Stock Dove had managed to usurp the box. Whether the nest will succeed is another matter - Stock Dove nests very often fall victim to grey squirrel predation. Normally Stock Doves have not nested in the wood early in the season. To have four Stock Dove nests so early is unprecedented.

## Papers and Projects

The group now holds an unparalleled long-term data set and it would be a waste of all the effort that has gone into building it if it were not to be used. It is pleasing to note some analyses that have been published and more are in progress. We have not been able to host students in the wood since covid struck but we have had some successful virtual discussions and hope that some more analyses done by students can be done soon. Thanks to Thomas Bodey in far-away Aberdeen for his enthusiasm.

A year ago we noted that the paper 'Nesting outcomes under anthropogenic change - effects of changing climate and nestbox provision on the reproduction of Great Tits *Parus major*' had been accepted for publication in *Ibis*. A mere year later we are happy to say it is now in print. Thank to Russell Barnett and Thomas Bodey for their work on this. The paper was described last year in issue no. 127.

Jerzy Behnke et al. have been looking again at feather mite burdens on Robins and the paper is its final stages before submission. Jerzy is also having a preliminary look at the Harvest Mite data from the 1970s and 1980s.

With Michael Gillman from Lincoln University we have written an account of the tree regeneration and the severe effects of ash dieback in the assart and hope to submit this for publication shortly.

Fritha West has been using our data, together with data from various other sites for her master's project on bird diversity. We are delighted that she has described her work with our data below. We are also delighted that she is finding our data of such value.

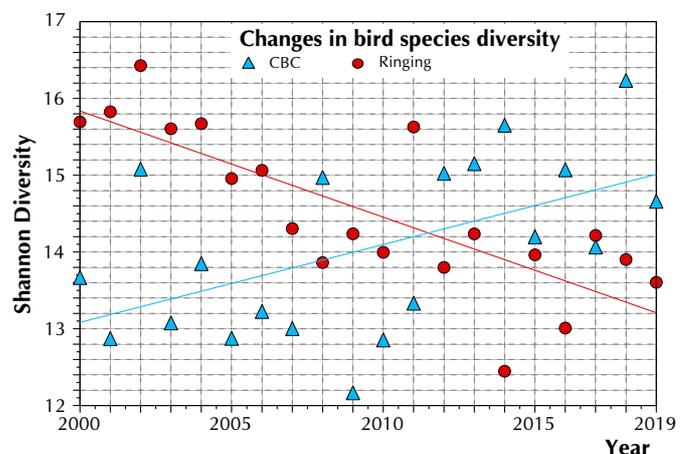
## Treswell Bird Diversity Change in Spring/Summer, 2000 to 2019

As a masters student at the University of St Andrews, I research ecology at the Centre for Biological Diversity. When I reached out to Chris to ask if Treswell Wood could contribute to a study on methods of measuring biodiversity in UK woodlands, I was thrilled to hear about the wealth of monitoring data the team have collated over the years.

By using a range of analytical techniques, we have established that the bird community at Treswell Wood is relatively stable, although differing data sets show differing trends.

The graph shows the Shannon-Weiner diversity index over the years for the bird communities as recorded by the CBC and the standard site ringing. As can be seen, the CBC territories show an increase in species diversity over the years whereas the standard site ringing shows a decrease. This illustrates how different methodologies can give different insights into biodiversity change, and by combining these findings with on-the-ground observations and supplementary data, we can build a more detailed picture of bird community dynamics at Treswell throughout the last 20 years.

From these analyses we can tell the Treswell bird community is undergoing natural cycles in community dynamics, with the hierarchy of abundant species shifting year to year, and rates of species turnover staying relatively consistent. Given the isolated position of the woodland, stability in species turnover is quite a surprising observation, especially if we give credit to the assumption that habitat fragmentation leaves isolated populations vulnerable to change. However, if we consider that the ongoing coppicing work provides an intermediate disturbance which continually creates diverse habitats, and note that woodland cover across Nottinghamshire is significantly declining, these results make more sense. It may well be that the woodland provides a much needed



oasis for woodland birds, with its dynamic woodland habitat continually attracting a variety of species. If this is the case, it goes to show how sympathetic woodland management can compensate for wider scale losses, and provides hope for small woodland projects elsewhere.

*Fritha West*

## **BTO Equipment Donation Scheme**

The BTO supports young people by supplying equipment to make the most of their bird watching experiences. I think this is an instance of enlightened self-interest (although a very worthy instance, of course). The more we help young people into ornithological monitoring the better for the good of environmental recording and, we hope, BTO membership.

The BTO invites donations of any useful equipment which you no longer use. Bird guides and binoculars are the two most obvious things but the scheme is not limited to them. While covid-related restrictions are in place, transport of anything to the BTO is not easy but we can build a collection of things to go there when circumstances allow. If you have any such things you would like to donate, then please hand them to Chris, John or any of the other members of the group. We will hold on to them until the situation becomes easier.

Thanks.

## **Demography On-line - DemOn**

This is the BTO software for ringers and nest recorders which enables direct entry of data into the BTO database. It allows authorised users access to the data. This means that anyone with access to the Treswell Wood data can view the contents at any time. To gain access, all you have to do is ask the group secretary (Chris). There are various levels of access - ranging from just looking to permission to enter and edit data.

DemOn is a long-term project, still under development. Some new facilities have been added recently, including the addition of some reports. For example you can look at our ringing and encounter totals by year and age category. Our Robin RAS data set summary is available, pleasingly going back to the beginning of our ringing well before RAS was formally begun.

There is a similar option for CES and here we see where there is room for development. Every long-standing data handling system is likely to fall victim to the past. If you look for results under CES site 13 you will find no results available. The reason is that in the past the effort data (number of visits, length of netting, times of visits) were previously submitted in a separate file from the ringing data rather than in the ringing database. Only when data have been entered via DemOn will the effort be integrated into the system. The BTO aims to integrate historic effort data but that is still on the to-do list.

You may notice a further problem if you explore the data related to older rings. Before the group was formally instituted, rings used were mostly registered to John McMeeking for general ringing, to Chris for nestling ringing with a few other rings being used which were registered to others (such as Ted Cowley). Ringing data were not submitted electronically until some time in the 1990s with ringers able to submit data either using the first BTO ringers' software, B-RING, or else IPMR. Data submitted using the earlier format were not linked to the 'ring ownership' data which were then not yet fully computerised. Our data, including back-data from pre-computer days, was in the B-RING format which we used as soon as it was available. Thus many older records are not linked to the group permit number and it is not yet possible for us to access all our historic data using DemOn. We do, of course, have a complete data set held on our home computers. It may be some time before all the glitches in DemOn are ironed out.

This is not a particular criticism of the work done by BTO on DemOn. I was involved with the development of B-RING and also development of the EURING Data Bank. I know that many problems can arise in systems dealing with data and human beings. My solution, which I suggested to the EURING board, was to abolish human beings and ban bird ringing. It was agreed that this would overcome the problems but perhaps would have rather greater negative outcomes.

## **Noteworthy Encounters**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Age/sex</b>	<b>Ring</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Grid</b>
<b>Sparrowhawk</b>	<b>3M</b>	<b>DS75979</b>	<b>16/12/2020</b>	<b>South Leverton</b>

We had ringed this bird a mere two months earlier - one of two caught on the same day. It was found dead, just 3km from the wood, with no other details given. It was in its first winter so still relatively inexperienced in hunting and survival. Juvenile survival in the first year is only 34% so this early demise should not surprise us.

**Tawny Owl**                      **GV40478**                      **5/3/2021**                      **R02 Road casualty**

We had ringed this bird as a breeding female in 2019 nesting in a box in the north-west part of the wood. We were unable to do our usual checks in 2020 because of the lockdown. Later checks showed no evidence of owls nesting in any of the boxes although she might have nested in a natural site. Alas, she will not be nesting again. The bend in the road where her body was found is blind. If all drivers took it at a safe speed, this owl might well still be alive.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker 4F**                      **LK39094**                      **7/3/2021**                      **Q03**

A welcome recapture of this colourful (and noisy) species. This bird was ringed a year less a day previously at the same feeding station and not retrapped between then and now. It was the second woodpecker capture of the day, the first was a new bird, also a female.

**Coal Tit**                      **5**                      **AXD9912**                      **7/3/2021**                      **Q03**

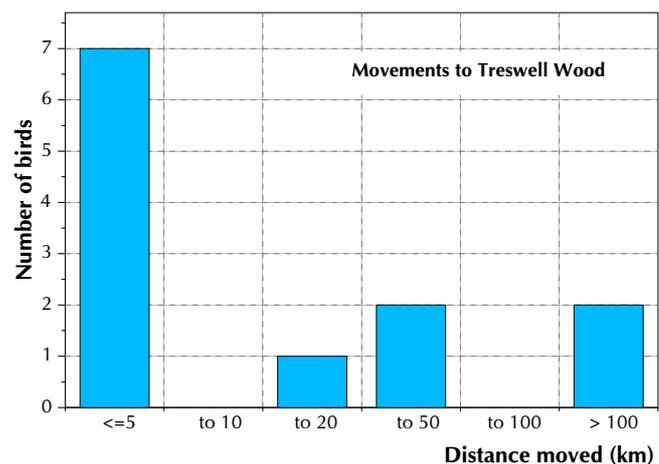
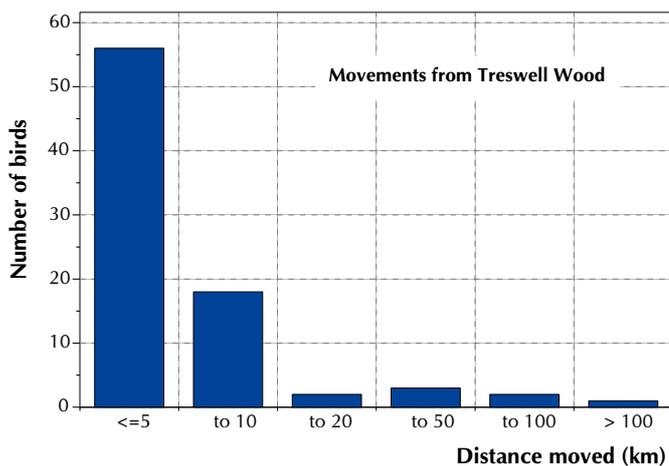
One of two of the single brood of nestbox Coal Tits which fledged last year which we have since retrapped. Its sibling, '915, was also retrapped both now having been retrapped five times (but never retrapped at the same time, even if on the same day).

**Great Tit**                      **5M**                      **AXD9896**                      **7/3/2021**                      **Q03**

Of the 36 Blue and Great Tits trapped on the day, which included birds nearly four years old, this is the only one which has ever been found roosting. We have noted before how the roosting birds seem to be caught in mist nets less often than do those we never find roosting in boxes. Why? A mystery.

**Great Tit**                      **4M**                      **NZ53358**                      **17/1/2021**                      **Abermule, SO1496**

This was a welcome surprise after no ringing activity in the wood - news from 182km westwards in Montgomeryshire where the bird was caught by a ringer. This is one of our 2021 nestling-ringed cohort and the only one so far reported away from the wood. It is by far the longest recorded movement of a Great Tit to or from the wood. The runner up travelled a mere 127km from Telford in the 1980s. We now have reports of just over 80 of our nestling-ringed Great Tits being found, alive or dead, away from the wood. The graph shows how local most of these movements are with just a few moving more than 20km. The graph showing distances moved by incoming nestling-ringed Great Tits is rather different with a wider spread of longer distances. Why? It is probably because long-running, large nestbox operations are not very common and the area around Treswell Wood has been well endowed with ringers, mostly from the North. Notts. Ringing Group. Thus our birds are more likely to be caught locally than we are likely to catch birds ringed in widely scattered, distant nestbox schemes. The exception is of birds moving very locally between Hillcrest Farm in Treswell and the wood. Half the nestling-ringed birds caught in the wood have originated from John Clark's few boxes on the farm and his captures of the wood's nestling-ringed birds make up around a third of the total.

**Great Tit**                      **6F**                      **TV35693**                      **7/3/2021**                      **Q03**

It seems as if we have missed this year's influx of new Great Tits. Of the 15 birds caught on the day only 6 were new. This was the oldest of them all at 3y 8m since being ringed as a nestling. It has now been recaptured 23 times. Most of these have been at feeding stations. Unlike many Great Tits, though, it seems to patronise temporary feeding stations anywhere in the wood rather than moving only in a more limited range. With its long recapture history most of the team of ringers have processed it and it is, sadly, the only bird of the day to have the distinction of having been processed by John McMeeking himself.

**Goldfinch**                      **6M**                      **ANE3477**                      **7/3/2021**                      **Q04**

What attractive birds Goldfinches are, all the more so after the months with no ringing. This one is, like most we catch, on the wood edge possibly commuting between wood and feeding stations at houses just across the road.