

TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 2012 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

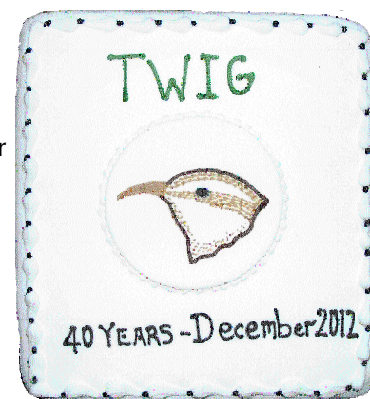
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Ringling John Clark & John McMeeking



2012/5 Number 90

Treswell Wood - the 40th year of population monitoring

The last 10-week interval of this landmark year ended with the second lowest total number of captures in the standard site nets since we began the constant-effort programme in 1978. The total of standard site captures for the year is the equal lowest (with 1998) with the exception of 2001 - which was the only year in which we were unable to complete a full set of visits because of the foot and mouth outbreak. The low captures must reflect the very low populations after two hard winters and the poor breeding season resulting from the very wet summer. Fortunately our object is to record the bird life in the wood rather than to catch and ring as many birds as possible.

Perhaps it is best to dwell on the considerable successes of the year rather than the state of the bird population.

The Conference in February - our first - has had considerable impact. Links with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust have been considerably enhanced to our mutual benefit. The BTO has agreed to continue to support the analysis of our territory mapping by drawing the territory maps from the observers' records. Our contacts with Nottingham and Lincoln Universities have been strengthened. We have planned a programme of action for the assart (assuming NWT is able to purchase it). The year has seen two papers published using our nest record data, and our major work on the effects of coppicing on birds is at the final revision stage. We have two students from Nottingham University working with our data and have a number of students from Nottingham Trent involved with the group. Computerisation of our 'background data' - the notes we make of weather, birds seen and other species seen etc. - are nearly all computerised. We have been fortunate that Michael Walker, the new Living Landscapes Monitoring Officer at the NWT, has found a volunteer, Josh King, who is formatting these records for inclusion in the NWT database. Once this is done it will vastly increase the species records from the wood available to the Trust. Finally, Peter Wilson has taken on the task of entering our old nest record data which will give us computerised access to the individual observations of all 4063 nests we have recorded. At present we have only computerised a summary of each nest. Thanks to Peter for attacking this job. The Nottinghamshire County Archives hold our old field sheets and recently we have lodged the field sheets from 2007 - 2009 with them. We still have immediate access to the data, of course, because Steve Wain makes a scanned copy of the field sheets in case we need to refer to them (and we often do).

Another outcome from the conference was the beginning of fixed point photography. A problem in the distant past when we did a little fixed point photography was that we used trees as reference points. This was not a good plan in a wood where trees are felled as part of the management programme. In those pre-digital days photography was also not an instant process. John Clark has now taken on the task. Instead of using trees as markers, he is using something far more fixed - the positions of mist net poles on our standard sites. Yes, these will suffer less error than current GPS technology which may have an error of several metres under the dense tree canopy in summer. We had initially thought that the fixed point photography would bear dividends after several years. However, by taking photographs at each standard site at each visit, we will have five sets of photographs from each of seven locations each year. Already the photographs are showing massive within-year variation in habitat. Of course we always knew that habitat changed through the year but these photographs now demonstrate how dramatic this can be, particularly in recently coppiced areas.

The Common Bird Census has been able to continue. We now have some new observers - Paul Eady and Andy Goold who have taken over from Frank & Liz Tillotson and Richard Johnson. The observations are now with the BTO where John Marchant will plot the territory maps. We expect that this job will be done by the end of February. Thanks to all involved with fieldwork and analysis for this 39th year of territory mapping in the wood. We have every expectation that the maps will confirm the very poor nature of the 2012 breeding season.

The frass collection operation was successful and productive this year and will continue. We also hope to make progress towards more monitoring of invertebrates because so much of the birds' success or failure depends on the

Annual Summary - All ringing records 2012

	Ctrl.	New Birds			Retraps		Sight	Recvs.	Othr.	Total
		Adult	Juvnl	Pulli	Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	.	1	1	.	3	.	.	.	5	
Kestrel	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	1
Stock Dove	.	.	.	4	1	.	1	.	6	
Woodpigeon	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Tawny Owl	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	.	3	
Green Woodpecker	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	3	5	.	25	3	.	.	36	
Meadow Pipit	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	3
Wren	.	27	47	15	41	16	.	.	146	
Dunnock	.	20	9	.	16	4	.	.	49	
Robin	.	26	42	.	29	12	.	.	109	
Blackbird	.	27	11	4	25	2	.	.	69	
Song Thrush	.	2	4	.	1	1	.	.	8	
Blackcap	.	37	11	.	13	12	.	.	73	
Chiffchaff	.	27	6	.	9	8	.	1	51	
Willow Warbler	.	2	.	.	1	.	.	.	3	
Goldcrest	.	16	68	.	23	13	.	.	120	
Long-tailed Tit	.	16	.	.	69	7	.	.	92	
Marsh Tit	1	1	2	11	40	4	.	.	59	
Willow Tit	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	2	
Coal Tit	.	.	18	.	85	9	.	.	112	
Blue Tit	10	50	36	41	217	13	.	2	19	388
Great Tit	12	52	25	144	422	67	.	2	16	740
Nuthatch	.	3	10	.	41	2	.	.	.	56
Treecreeper	.	6	6	.	37	2	.	.	.	51
Jay	.	1	.	.	1	2
Tree Sparrow	.	1	1
Chaffinch	1	42	11	.	27	4	.	1	.	86
Greenfinch	1	1	2
Goldfinch	2	24	1	.	5	32
Bullfinch	.	16	10	.	16	3	.	.	.	45
Totals	27	408	326	221	1149	182	0	7	35	2355

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. **Othr.** - all in this table are pulli which were ringed but died before fledging; they are not included in the Pulli column.

supply of these small prey creatures. Currently there are only a handful of sites in the country where frass is being collected. It is expected that, in collaboration with the BTO and Edinburgh University, a larger scale study will be initiated to begin in the 2014 nesting season. Our existing data will be used in the pilot studies.

Although we are primarily concerned with the birds, we are very pleased that our group now includes Matt Cook, a bat man. With support from NWT and Nottinghamshire Bat Group he will be starting a bat monitoring operation. Naturally we will ensure bat records are as thoroughly documented as those of the birds. It is also most likely that 2013 will see a new dormouse release programme. We have worked hard with the Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species to minimise the conflicts between birds and dormice. PTES considers the wood is now much more suitable for dormice than it was in 1995 when the first release was attempted. We also have a much better idea of how to manage the problem of over-supply of potential nests sites for birds, which results from the density of boxes required for dormice.

Our operation has enjoyed wider publicity - Chris du Feu was invited to give the annual Bernard Tucker Lecture at the Oxford Ornithological Society in October. The not-very-snappy title was '40 years of integrated population monitoring in Treswell Wood'. The (edited) text of this should appear in British Birds at some point in the next year - again it is wider promotion for our unique operation.

The 40th anniversary visit on 16th December was well attended and also enjoyed a worthwhile catch. In addition to the standard site netting we also managed to place some nets in the same positions that John had used 39 years

and 364 days previously. Thanks to all of you who appeared, even if it was just at cake time. We had some congratulatory messages from old friends - these are reproduced below.

40 years of Treswell Wood. Congratulations & best wishes. Ulli Langemann

Best wishes, Mike Hansell, National Nest Reference Collection, University of Glasgow.

Thanks for the invitation for Sunday. I will still be in Scotland so can't make it - but have a good morning and a very happy Christmas to the group. I'll be in touch in the New Year with book news, which is making slow, stately perhaps, progress .. But coming on. Ruth Atkinson

Cheers Chris - I'd love to join.., but it's a bit of hike from here.., so I'll pass on the cake this time! Treswell Wood has involved some fine achievements in the last 40 years. Here's to the next 40. All the best, David Thompson, Associate Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of Hong Kong

Thank you to you and the rest of the Treswell team for making us feel so welcome - it was good just to chat about birds! What's the going rate for a new handling tick? Dave Fogg (who ringed his first Nuthatch).

Sorry I couldn't join you today. Hope it all went very well - especially the cake. Lynda Milner, Nottinghamshire BTO Regional Representative.

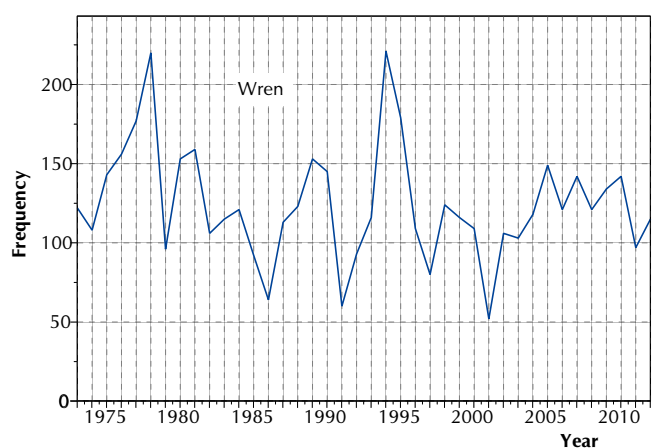
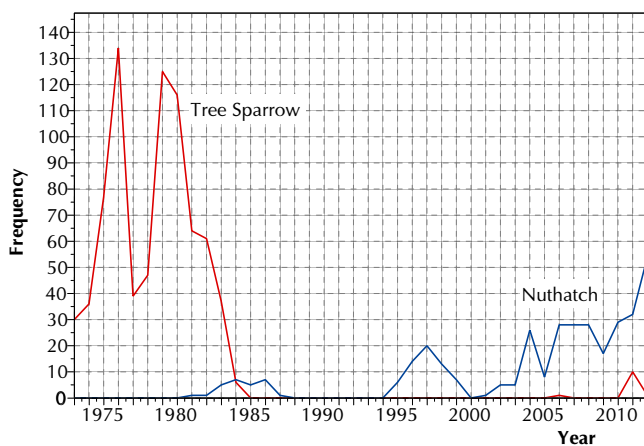
Sorry I wasn't able to make it this morning for this august occasion. 40 years is a truly remarkable achievement: I suspect John would have laughed if anyone had suggested he would be in the same place doing the same thing four decades later. The fact that someone has been there ringing most weekends in the intervening years makes it all the more amazing. I hope the cake was good. Best wishes. Peter Kirmond

And the next 40 years? Let us hope that some now in the group will be present at the 80th anniversary visit. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to the totality of this operation.

Some changes in the last 40 years

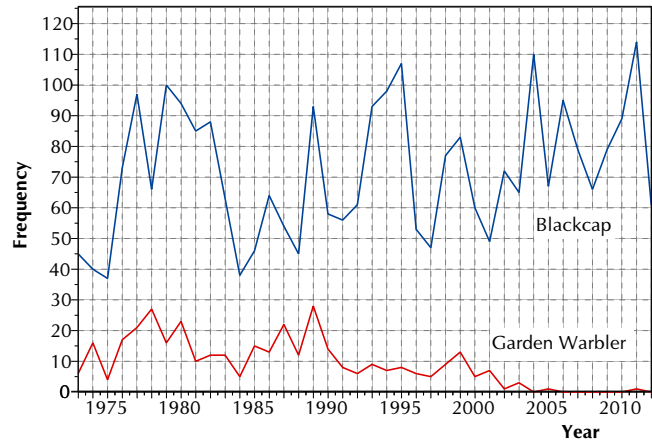
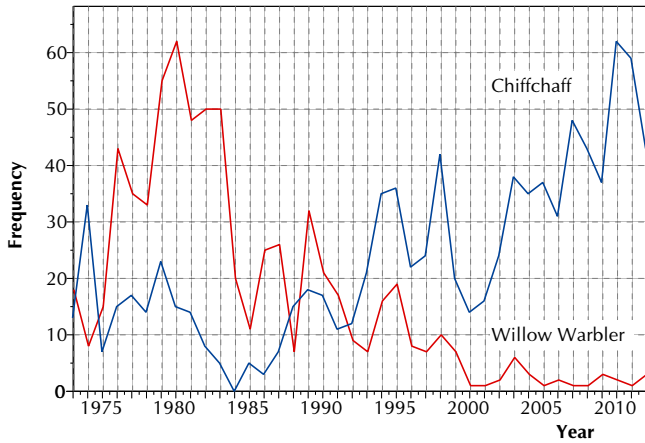
The 40 years in Treswell Wood have seen large changes in the composition of the bird population within the wood. Many of these reflect local or national changes, but there are likely to be some species which have been affected by changes within the wood. As a rough measure of composition we can look at the total numbers of captures of birds of different species through the years. These numbers cannot give a completely true picture because they are influenced by the effort made in catching the birds. Numbers in 1976 were particularly high because of large numbers of birds being trapped at the pond when they came to drink at a very rare watering spot in that year of drought. The 2001 numbers are influenced by lack of visits during the foot and mouth outbreak. The six graphs below show total capture numbers for a selection of species - each graph with a point of particular interest. In each case the numbers are the total numbers of captures in mist nets excluding same-day retraps.

Some species have declined dramatically and suddenly. The Tree Sparrow is one such species, with our nestbox breeding population dropping from around 30 pairs in 1981 to none by 1985. After that it was not until 2006 that we caught one again in the wood. Their numbers are recovering nationally but there are, as yet, none breeding in the wood. Contrast that with the colonisation by the Nuthatch, which is spreading slowly northwards and eastwards. After the initial colonisation in the mid-1980s failed, the second wave in the mid-1990s almost failed but since then the species has become well established. The species is now heard or seen on almost every visit to the wood. In contrast, the Wren shows little long-term change but massive between-year variation. This results, in the most part, from the severity of winters. After a bad winter, the population can recover very rapidly - not surprising if a pair is capable of rearing three broods of about five young each per year.

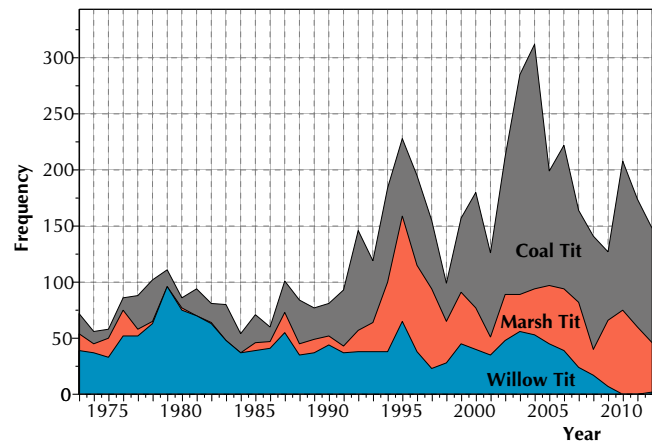
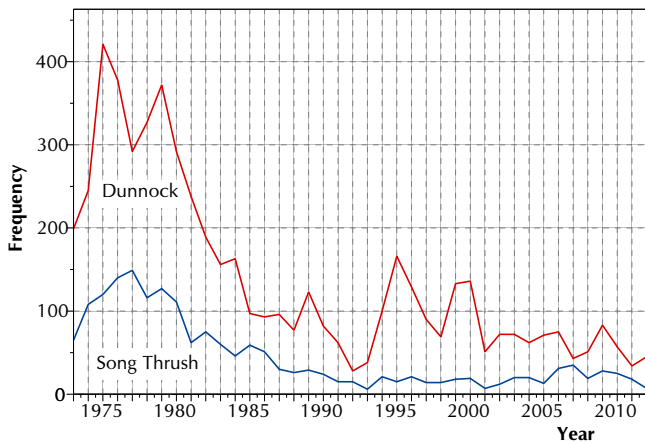


Two pairs of warblers which show contrasting patterns are the Chiffchaff & Willow Warbler and Blackcap & Garden Warbler. The Garden Warbler is another nationally declining species and its slow demise in the wood is

clear. The Blackcap, on the other hand, which has always been commoner in the wood, shows a generally steady increase masked by very great between-year variation. Incidentally, the Treswell Wood Blackcaps are almost exclusively summer visitors. Winter records are very rare. The Willow Warbler, too, is declining in southern Britain and is reputed to prefer coppice to dense woodland. Even so, they have effectively disappeared from Treswell Wood although central Nottinghamshire still has some hot spots for the species. The Chiffchaff, in contrast, has recovered after a very low spot in the 1980s to become almost as common as the Blackcap - and by the time you read this it will be almost time for the first arrivals of 2013 to appear in the wood.



Two resident species have declined steadily. In the 1970s, ringers often referred to Treswell Wood as 'Dunnock City'. Alas, no longer. This decline is rather more serious than the national decline. We wonder whether this decline may be partly related to the cessation of Pheasant feeding in the wood. The Song Thrush decline is more in line with the national decline but it does seem to have stabilised. The final graph, in a different format, shows the fortunes of the three small tits. The graph is 'stacked' so the captures are indicated by the visible width of the band. Willow Tits (lower, blue band) remained reasonably stable until the early 2000s, thereafter declining rapidly - with only one individual caught in the last two years. Marsh Tits (narrow red, central band) became extinct after the hard winter of 1979 (and probably because of it). It took five years for surrounding populations to recover sufficiently for surplus birds to recolonise the wood. Their population remains in a rather better state than before its pre-extinction level. Coal Tits used to be rarities, with fewer caught than Willow Tits until the early 1990s. Since then, their population has increased substantially with a marked peak in 2004.



Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	3F	EL87473	23/12/2012	P00

One of three Sparrowhawks caught this autumn. This one was unusual because it was a female. We have remarked before that we catch far fewer females than males. This may be because their large size means they can more easily escape from mist nets; or it could be that, being larger, they do not hunt so easily in dense woodland. We do not know. The others were both males; DK92847 (a new bird) and DA51900 which we had first ringed in August 2011.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 2F LE35001 18/11/2012 F04

One of five individuals of this species we have trapped this autumn. This one was unringed, all the others retraps. We have, once before, trapped an individual, like this one, which apparently retained a few red-tipped juvenile crown feathers. Then we confidently aged it as a juvenile, and recall with some embarrassment how we pointed out to a trainee ringer how small clues like this could be used to determine the age of birds. That bird was retrapped, year after year, still sporting the same 'juvenile' red-tipped crown feathers. Today's bird wore six such crown feathers. This time we confidently assigned it a code to indicate 'age unknown'. It will be most interesting, if we retrap it after next summer's complete moult, to see whether these feathers are replaced with the same, red-tipped type.

Wren 3 CXN962 11/11/2012 M07

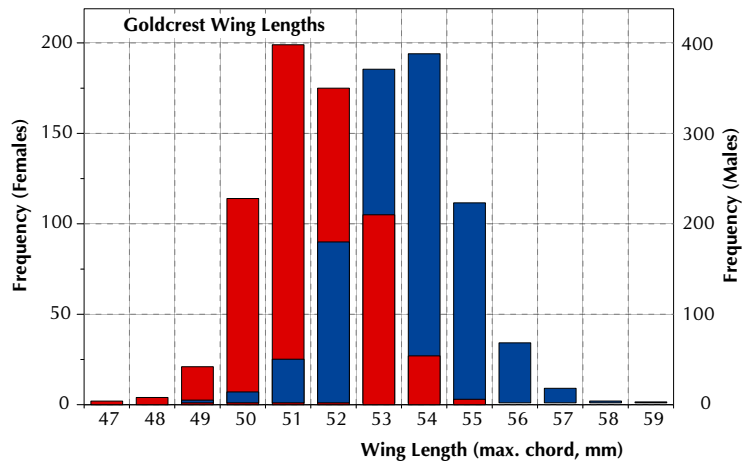
A very pleasing recapture - the second of our 15 nestling ringed Wrens of 2012 to be retrapped. It was ringed in July in a nestbox near the car park.

Song Thrush 3 RS78299 4/11/2012 F04

This is our only Song Thrush capture during the autumn, fewer than the numbers of Sparrowhawks (3) and Nuthatches (9) we have captured this autumn. What a change from 40 years ago when Song Thrushes were relatively common and both Sparrowhawks and Nuthatches were unknown in the wood.

Goldcrest 3M CXN98223/ 12/2011 P00

This is a monster bird - a wing of 59mm (which we double checked before release). For interest, the chart shows the wing lengths of all the Goldcrests we have caught broken down by sex. It is quite clear from the graph how big the bird was - we had only once before caught one approaching this size at 58 mm. It was also of a strikingly different plumage from a normal Goldcrest with greyish shoulders and upper back. The white eye patch was slightly larger than normal and the greater coverts appeared rather grey. Naturally we took some photographs and asked David Parkin about the bird. He contacted Lars Svensson, author of the guide to ageing and sexing European passerines. Lars' reply included the comments: *I have noted a very subtle cline in Europe from NW to SE to become very slightly more greyish and larger, but not enough large, nor enough consistent, to warrant distinction of subspecies. ... these birds might come from NE Europe. Best is to secure biometrics and good photographs of many.* David thanked Lars, noting that biometrics and good photos of 'many' might be a problem...

**Marsh Tit 4 R353196 2/12/2012 F04**

This is the oldest Marsh Tit we have ever caught - 7 years and two months after ringing on 2/10/2005. This is 8 months longer than our previous oldest, J033353 last trapped in 2000. R353196 still wears its colour rings from the RSPB Willow and Marsh Tit project and is one of the few individuals still alive wearing them (or the only one?). We trapped it several times during 2005 to 2007 then did not see it again until 2010. We saw it again in 2011 but this is our first capture of it in 2012. In keeping with known Marsh Tit behaviour in the wood, it has spent all its recorded adult life in the same part of the wood. Since its juvenile wanderings (as far north as the pond in the centre of the wood) we have never trapped it north of the traditional boundary for these tits from H1 across to H4. In spite of its age and long recapture history we have no sight records of it.

It still has three years to go if it is to break the national age record for the species - 10 years and 2 months.

Blue Tit 3 D080226 7/10/2012 F-1

One of the few recent birds ringed by North Notts. Ringing Group which has been caught in the wood. The movement from ringing was quick - we trapped it only nine days after it had been ringed in Retford.

Blue Tit 3 L327564 2/12/2012 E04

We have now retrapped only six of this years niggardly total of 41 nestling-ringed Blue Tits, about the same proportion as our 2/15 Wrens but much lower than the 36/143 Great Tits so far recaptured. Of note was that this bird was retrapped at the same time (but not in the same net) as one of its siblings which was also a 'first-timer'.

40 - year Summary - All encounters with Treswell Wood birds 1972 - 2012

	Ctrl.	New Birds			Retraps		Sight	Recvs.	Other	Total
		Adult	Juvnl	Pulli	Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	5	31	28	6	18	1	0	4	2	95
Kestrel	0	12	5	5	3	0	0	2	0	27
Moorhen	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red-legged Partridge	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Woodcock	0	9	1	7	0	0	0	3	0	20
Woodpigeon	0	75	6	10	1	0	2	5	1	100
Stock Dove	0	3	0	92	1	0	0	2	2	100
Collared Dove	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Turtle Dove	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Tawny Owl	1	21	3	47	19	0	0	6	14	111
Barn Owl	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	1	10
Little Owl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Long-eared Owl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cuckoo	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Green Woodpecker	1	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	8
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4	58	60	6	285	25	0	3	5	446
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Skylark	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	6
Swallow	0	43	16	58	2	1	0	0	0	120
Tree Pipit	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Meadow Pipit	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Pied Wagtail	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Wren	3	1577	1791	575	1636	530	0	25	2	6139
Dunnock	3	1584	1163	4	2755	622	0	28	4	6163
Robin	5	1277	2475	96	2759	898	134	35	5	7684
Nightingale	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Redstart	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Blackbird	10	1795	1017	141	2061	343	0	69	11	5447
Fieldfare	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Song Thrush	2	914	290	227	556	112	2	21	7	21
Redwing	0	82	33	0	0	0	0	1	0	116
Mistle Thrush	0	19	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	26
Grasshopper Warbler	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Reed Warbler	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lesser Whitethroat	0	27	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	34
Whitethroat	0	36	6	0	3	6	0	0	0	51
Garden Warbler	4	231	44	0	83	51	0	1	4	418
Blackcap	24	1539	722	20	590	414	0	6	16	3331
Chiffchaff	12	489	217	3	221	77	0	3	10	1032
Willow Warbler	14	445	127	0	108	60	0	0	7	761
Goldcrest	4	893	1144	0	754	271	0	4	3	3073
Spotted Flycatcher	0	88	33	35	8	2	0	0	1	167
Red-breasted Flycatcher	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Long-tailed Tit	47	1126	294	0	2022	230	0	7	40	3766
Marsh Tit	1	41	127	241	1034	96	38	5	3	1586
Willow Tit	4	181	284	14	1168	182	24	3	5	1865
Coal Tit	22	163	449	469	1946	153	0	13	40	3255
Blue Tit	285	1897	1915	5277	8568	729	14	98	679	19462
Great Tit	176	1366	1039	3348	8082	1192	933	54	500	16690
Nuthatch	0	44	60	5	243	6	0	1	0	359
Treecreeper	7	334	353	8	1334	168	0	12	4	2220
Great Grey Shrike	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Jay	2	57	22	0	37	2	0	8	2	130
Magpie	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Rook	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Starling	2	33	26	8	1	0	0	1	1	72
House Sparrow	0	588	19	20	59	17	0	5	0	708
Tree Sparrow	3	607	65	495	131	11	0	15	23	1350
Chaffinch	43	1228	679	26	1179	172	0	23	19	3369
Brambling	1	18	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	27
Greenfinch	44	562	150	0	85	26	0	8	26	901
Goldfinch	6	85	12	0	15	2	0	0	4	124
Linnet	0	6	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	16
Redpoll	6	113	139	0	95	30	0	0	1	384
Bullfinch	19	788	924	3	1088	135	0	13	12	2982
Yellowhammer	2	476	20	0	47	18	0	2	1	566
Reed Bunting	3	35	8	0	6	0	0	0	2	54
Totals	768	21037	15800	11264	39010	6587	1147	488	1459	97560

Key:

Columns are as for the annual summary except the **Ctrl.** and **Recvs.** columns include Treswell Wood birds controlled elsewhere; **Other** column includes all subsequent recaptures outside the wood of birds controlled elsewhere.

Great Tit 4M V475370 15/11/2012 N05 Roosting

The oldest Great Tit we have caught recently - ringed as a young bird in September 2007, and recaptured since then, mostly in the central part of the wood and, unusually, with only very occasional forays to the feeders in the north. We found it again, roosting in a box close by one month later.

Treecreeper 2 CXN774 16/12/2012 P-1

Most Treecreepers are easy to age - juvenile plumage has large, buff, wedge-shaped terminal marks on the primary coverts, adults have very small marks. Not all Treecreepers have read the books, though. This is one in point. It was ringed as a fluffy juvenile in August but on this capture, the spots were agreed to be small enough to judge it to be adult.

This is an unusual treecreeper but some species - notably Great Tits - do often have individuals which are difficult to age or sex. In the field, the 'bible' with capture histories of recently trapped birds is invaluable. After determining the age of the bird, check in the bible for confirmation. And, if the bible does not confirm the age, then it is a valuable learning experience. The ringer who has 'never misaged a bird' is the ringer who has never looked at recapture histories.

Goldfinch 3F L731824 11/11/2012 Q02 Feeder

This is the only Goldfinch we have caught this autumn. Numbers also seem to be lower in gardens than at this time in recent years. Perhaps the cold spell in early December encouraged many individuals of this partial migrant species to move south, possibly across the Channel, to avoid the cold.

Chaffinch 2 L731529 23/12/2012 Q02 Remains long dead.

We found the long-dead remains of this bird on the ground, at the feeders. Long-dead is a relative term - for small birds where the body can decompose very rapidly. A bird corpse can often disintegrate within a matter of days, particularly if it is in a wet situation - as has been the case this autumn. In fact, this long-dead bird had been ringed as recently as March and, because its remains were in an obvious place it is unlikely they had been there for more than about two weeks. Its death does bring another record to the national ringing recovery data set and each one does add information for current and future analysts to work on. Be on the lookout for dead birds - always look for a ring before the body decomposes and the ring is buried, never to be recovered.

10 Week Summary 2012 Interval 5, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	.	.	2	4	.	3	9
Dunnock	.	.	1	1	.	.	2
Robin	.	.	4	1	.	4	9
Blackbird	2	.	3	2	.	3	10
Song Thrush	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	1	.	9	.	.	3	13
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	10	.	.	11
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Blue Tit	.	.	2	3	.	.	5
Great Tit	.	.	.	5	.	2	7
Treecreeper	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Chaffinch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Totals	5	.	22	29	.	16	72

Treswell Wood Integrated Population Monitoring Group - TWIG

TWIG does not have a formal membership list. We count as a member anyone who is involved in any way - ringing, nest recording, territory mapping, habitat management, nestbox making, territory map analysis, frass weighing, data analysis, advice, data computerising and archiving, administration, donations, species recording. We are very grateful to all members for their contributions in the wood or elsewhere and we look forward to another productive year in 2013.

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