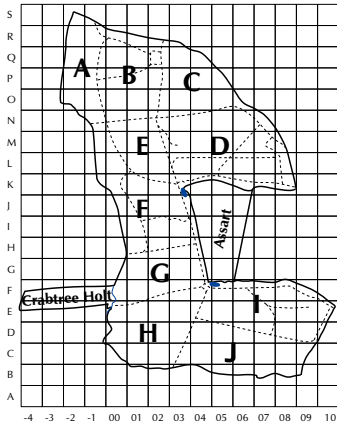


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2017 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

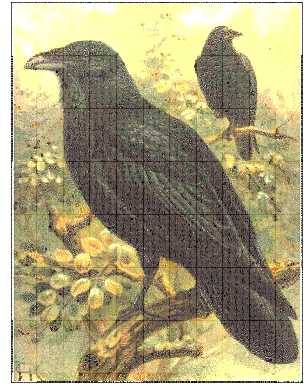
CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

2017/1

Number 111



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In spite of the weather, which has given us several weekends when mist-netting was not possible, we have just managed to complete the standard site visits. Thanks to all for help and patience through this difficult period. We do not recall the beginning of a year in which so many weekends have been unworkable. Our visits, when we could make them, have been, on the whole, very productive. The total of birds caught in the standard site nets has been comfortably above average and also just over that of last year. All well and good so far. Numbers of different species caught show no surprises except for the exceptional number of Great Tits. Most of our tit captures are at feeders rather than in standard sites, so nearly one fifth of standard site captures being of Great Tits is most unusual. Even more odd is that these standard site captures of Great Tits far outnumber those of Blue Tits. Elsewhere in our operations, Blue Tits have been dominating over the past 12 months and, particularly, in this early part of the year. Indeed, our first visit of the year yielded 39 Blue Tits against only 24 Great Tits. All this is described more fully in the section below on Blue and Great Tit numbers.

In spite of (or because of) the mild winter spring flowers do not seem to have bloomed particularly early. The first primroses in bloom were noted on March 12th. This is somewhat later than the exceptionally early date of January 4th in 2016 and just a few days later than the median date of March 7th in our records.

Enough of the past - frog spawn has been seen in the ditches, Great Tits are singing, the Chiffchaffs are here, spring flowers are in bloom. All is set for the start of the CBC visits and nestbox inspections.

Common Birds Census 2016

After some delays the results of 2016 census are here and presented in the table on page 2. Many thanks to the surveyors for their work and to Pat Quinn-Catling for compiling the species maps. John Marchant at the BTO has again taken the species observation maps and turned them into territory maps and we continue to be grateful to him for this work.

The numbers of territories in 2016 were generally very close to those in recent years. Most warblers continued their sad downward trend, counteracted to some extent by increasing numbers of Chiffchaffs. Great Tits were somewhat down and this supports the nest recording findings. Three new species have appeared on the list - not breeding (yet) but sufficiently sound observations to count them as 'present'. They are Hen Harrier, Black-headed Gull and Raven (hence this issue's front cover vignette). A few species which we have not recorded during the last six years have been removed from the table to allow it to fit on one page and, sadly, these include the Turtle Dove - now a rarity in the area.

John Marchant, one of the BTO's longest serving staff members, has now retired. He has, very kindly, expressed willingness to continue to do the CBC territory map analysis for another year or two. This will give us an opportunity to find a volunteer who can be trained in the work of preparing the territory maps. The procedure is very well documented and has to be done with rigorous, systematic adherence to the rules. John says it is about a day's work to produce the territory maps from the combined species observation maps which Pat assembles from the observers' visit observation maps. John will be very happy to spend time with a volunteer to train him or her using the 2017 survey maps. Yes, we are looking for a volunteer. Note that it is not essential (though probably helpful) to be familiar with the wood in order to produce the territory maps. Because the work requires training and practice it is not something which should be taken on just for a year or two, but should be regarded as a long-term commitment. On the positive side, a familiarity with the process of creating territory maps is something which few ecologists can claim: Treswell Wood and Attenborough are among the very few sites still using the original CBC methods of recording and analysing population data.

TWIG photograph collection

From time to time we have noted that we have a large, increasing collection of images - some digital and some pre-digital - relating to the Treswell Wood operations. The collection needs to be catalogued and organised in such

Treswell Wood CBC - Numbers of territories - 2016

Species	5-year averages								2016
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95	96...00	01...05	06...10	11...15	
Canada Goose*	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.3	2
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.7	1
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	1.0	1
Hen Harrier	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.8	1
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.0	8.6	8.0	7.2	3
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.0	1.1	0.3	p
Lapwing*	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0
Black-headed Gull	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	7.0	3.1	5.8	5
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	nc	nc	19.0	14
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	p
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	0
Barn Owl	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	p
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1.4	3.0	1.4	1.0	3
Green Woodpecker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.6	2.2	1.8	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	5.6	6.8	4.8	3
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Skylark*	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	2.0	3.8	3
Swallow*	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	p
Meadow Pipit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0
Pied Wagtail	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	81.8	76.4	72.8	68.4	88
Duncock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	12.6	8.4	10.6	6.0	7
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	54.0	81.4	73.2	37.4	41
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25.2	27.0	33.6	21.0	21
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	5.6	6.8	10.2	6.8	12
Redwing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Fieldfare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	p
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.0	2.8	3.8	1.1	1
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	6.8	3.0	0.9	p
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	25.4	27.2	25.8	22.6	20
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	19.0	18.6	21.2	25.0	29
Willow Warbler	27.6	44.0	31.4	18.2	6.8	5.0	4.3	2.1	1
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.3	2
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.0	8.2	6.2	2.8	2
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.2	2.1	1.1	3.0	3
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.5	0.6	0.6	0
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7.4	6.4	4.4	4.4	3
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	70.0	50.6	44.2	41.2	38
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35.2	46.8	34.8	42.4	25
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.2	3.0	6.0	4
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	3.6	3.1	2.4	3.8	4
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	1.9	1.7	1.8	2
Magpie	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.2	0
Jackdaw	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5	3
Rook	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	p
Carrion Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.8	3
Raven	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.1	0
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	40.6	48.8	45.0	40.0	37
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.1	0
Goldfinch	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.5	1.2	p
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0.6	1.8	2.0	2.7	2
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	p
Total territories	457.4	457.0	437.6	386.2	426.8	464.8	427.6	381.0	387

Notes: p - present but too few observations to determine any territory. nc - not counted, * territorial behaviour recorded but extremely unlikely that nesting takes place in the wood itself.

a way that suitable images can be rapidly accessed when they are needed. Two things are needed in order to resolve the issue. First is suitable software and second is a volunteer with time and commitment. The software problem is now within sight of resolution. Dave Fogg is writing software which runs on Excel to do this job. He has written it for his own use but is, very kindly, willing to allow us to use it for the Treswell Wood project. The second requirement is a volunteer. Dave says that it is a relatively rapid and straightforward job. He has incorporated most of his 4,000 images since he began the operation last autumn. A little thought will be needed about how photographs should be categorised but once that is done, adding them to the system is simple. Dave has provided a description and screen shots of his system and, if you are interested in taking on the post of TWIG's photographic archivist then please contact us to discuss it further. We think the work is increasingly important and becoming increasingly urgent as the collection of unsorted images increases.

Habitat monitoring & fixed point photography

John Clark has been taking fixed point photographs for five years. The 10-week cycle of standard site visits provides a temporal and spatial framework for the photographs. At each standard site visits he takes images from the same positions along the net run. The aim of this was to record how habitats change from year to year - and it is doing this very effectively. Growth in coppiced compartments is very rapid so we can see changes even after as short a time as two or three years (and of course, massive change is almost instant when coppicing is done). In addition to changes between years, we have a pictorial record of the remarkable within-year changes as the undergrowth grows then dies back over winter. But there are other opportunities. With ash dieback we will see some particular places which do not appear in the standard site fixed point operation, where trees are dying and will probably be rapidly replaced by growth from nearby non-ash trees which are able to take advantage of extra light and space for growth. We wonder if, and how, we should record these habitat changes. Ideas welcome.

Commuters between Hillcrest Farm and the wood

We continue to see a steady flow of exchanges of birds between the wood and Hillcrest Farm in the nearby village. Most of these have been Blue Tits and Great Tits with a small number of other species. We were asked why these two species dominated. The answer now is very obvious and not at all what we might have suspected. Their numbers dominate simply because they are species caught in larger numbers than most. Looking at all the birds which have been recorded both in the wood and at Hillcrest Farm since John Clark began ringing there in 2006, we see a rather different picture. In the table, the percentage of individual birds encountered in the wood which have also been encountered at Hillcrest Farm are given. They are arranged in decreasing order of percentage; that is to say those with a relatively higher rate of movement appearing first in the list. Yellowhammers, at the top of the list, may be an anomaly because total numbers are so small. The somewhat larger number of Greenfinches is probably a true reflection of their relatively mobile

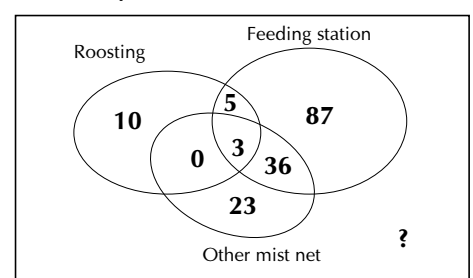
Species	Farm	Wood	%
Yellowhammer	1	3	33.3
Grenfinch	3	26	11.5
Great Tit	126	1566	8.0
Blue Tit	95	1468	6.5
Goldfinch	5	121	4.1
Long-Tailed Tit	11	430	2.6
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	78	1.3
Marsh Tit	1	108	0.9
Chaffinch	7	768	0.9
Coal Tit	2	265	0.8
Blackbird	2	725	0.3
Robin	2	983	0.2
Total - all species	256	13863	1.8

lifestyle. And, yes, the two tits do come fairly well up the list. Long-tailed Tits and Chaffinches we know do rove widely within the local area so their appearance so far down the list is, perhaps, not expected. Likewise the appearance of the very sedentary Great Spotted Woodpecker and Marsh Tit might not have been expected.

Roosting birds - who are they?

We noticed during this winter's rounds of nestboxes looking for roosting birds that there seemed to be a good number of Blue Tits which were found month after month, often in the same, or very nearby, box. We also noted that their recapture histories often did not include captures elsewhere in the wood. It almost seemed as if the roosting population was separate from the general population from which we catch birds in mist nets. We also wonder whether the birds encountered at a feeding station are representative of the general population. Unfortunately the number of individuals found roosting

Blue Tits captured winter 2016/17

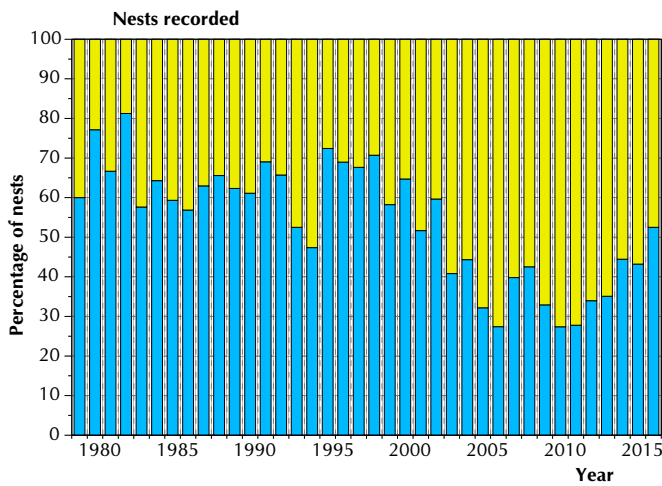


over the winter is too small to do a sensible statistical analysis and, in any case, such an analysis would really need knowledge of the total number of Blue Tits in the wood - that is something we cannot know as we only know about birds we we have ringed and there are certain to be many unringed birds in the wood. The diagram is the best we can do to represent what we have found in the 2-dimensional limits imposed by printed paper You are left to consider the problem. Note that most of the 10 'roosting only' birds had been caught elsewhere in the wood previously but not during this winter period.

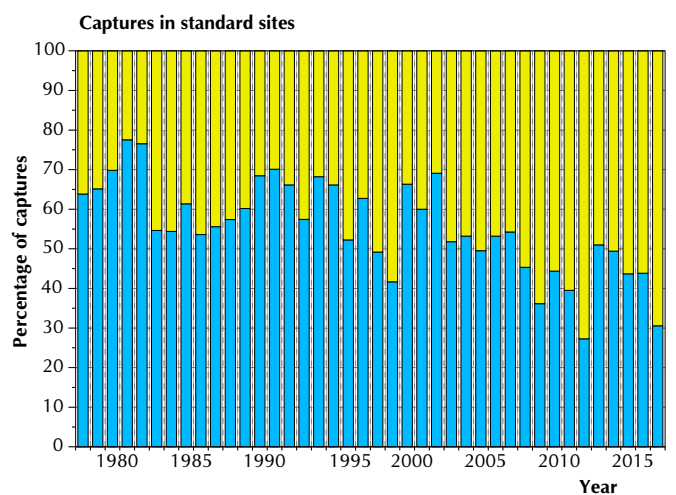
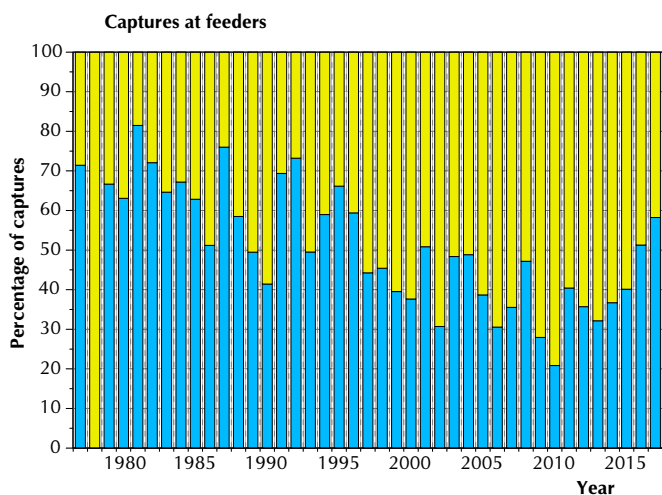
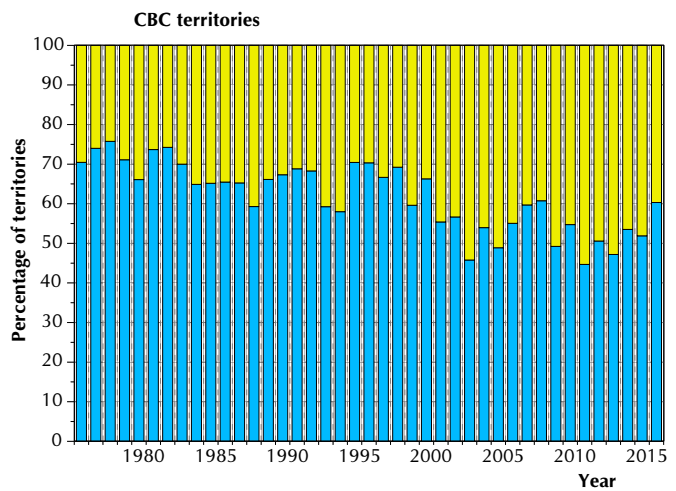
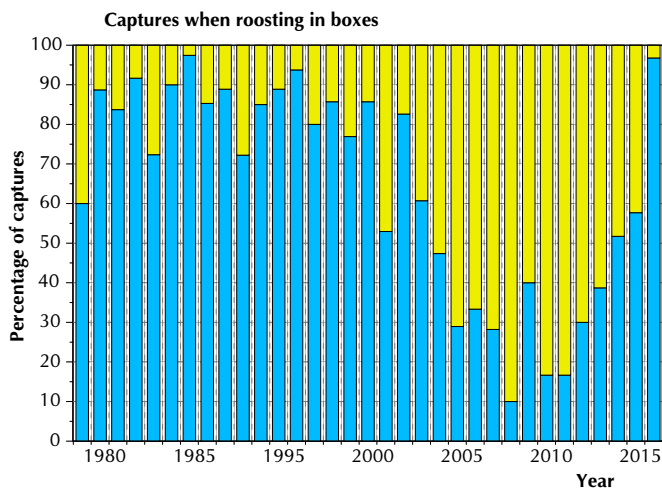
Great Tit and Blue Tit numbers through the years

We had noticed that the number of Great Tits nesting in boxes had been declining over the past few years (although still higher than in the first years after installation of nestboxes in the wood). In the first years with nestboxes, Great Tits suffered from a number of problems - competition for nestboxes from Tree Sparrows, predation by Great Spotted Woodpeckers, weasels and grey squirrels. And in years when they did not strike, there would be rainy weather at the critical nestling period. After those pressures eased the numbers nesting increased dramatically. Why they should now be declining when we do not see any evidence of undue pressure from these species (indeed, sadly, no pressure at all from Tree Sparrows) is not at all clear.

We had also found almost no Great Tits roosting in boxes this winter whereas in the past decade they have been found more frequently than Blue Tits. The overall picture of the balance between these two most common tit species, given by numbers roosting mirrors the picture given by the numbers of nests recorded in boxes except that the changes over time have been more volatile. Again, looking at the number of CBC territories recorded we see the same pattern with a gradual increase in percentage of Great Tits with a suggestion of recovery by Blue Tits in 2016. Captures at feeding stations again show the same pattern (apart from the anomalous year of 1978 when few birds were caught at the Pheasant feeding stations before we had



Key to all charts Blue Tit Great Tit



established a permanent feeding station for non-game birds). Finally the captures in standard sites numbers - which should be the most reliable as they result from a rigid trapping regime. These certainly show the gradual increase in Great Tit numbers in relation to Blue Tits. However, there is no sign yet of the apparent recent reversal of proportions which is apparent in the other measures for the two species.

The overall long-term picture is clear. Great Tits have become relatively more common over the years but now seem to be declining. All that is needed now is an explanation why.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	5M	DK98435	8/1/2017	Q04

A good start to the year but, surprisingly, closely followed by a second Sparrowhawk on the same day - also an unringed male. It is the first time we have caught two on one day. By chance the captures of these birds coincided with the arrival of some human visitors to the wood - it made their day.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	4F	CT95960	8/1/2017	R00
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Most of our woodpecker captures are at the main feeding station. This bird has been captured there several times but this capture was on a standard site. Obviously the birds have to come down low to feed at feeders whereas in other places they tend to forage and fly at higher levels. This will explain the relatively infrequent non-feeder captures. This bird was ringed 6 years and 8 months previously as an adult. Even at this age it is still only our fifth oldest, 4 years 6 months short of the longest survivor's age.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	LE35216	27/1/2017	Darlington
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A very pleasing encounter of this normally very sedentary species. We ringed it as a juvenile in June 2015 and had not retrapped it since then. It is one where we had measured the extent of the juvenile red cap in the hope of retrapping it after its moult when we would know its sex. Peter Cobb, who controlled the bird at Darlington, has identified the sex - that is one more piece of the puzzle - the 28mm red capped bird is known to be a male.

Wren	6	EYD168	5/2/2017	N06
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Wrens are very sedentary and this is a fine exponent of that behaviour. It was ringed in May 2014 and has been retrapped six times. Every capture has been within a circle of radius of 100 metres.

Blackbird	6M	CT84182	5/3/2017	Q04
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In its eighth year, ringed 2009 as a juvenile and retrapped seven times, always in the north-east quarter of the wood. It is clearly a resident with captures in all four seasons. In spite of its age its wing length (which we double checked) was a very short 129 mm. Adult primary feather lengths are longer than juvenile primary lengths. At each successive moult thereafter wing lengths tend to increase slightly so a bird of this age would be expected not to be so short-winged. Residents tend to be smaller than migrants - compare this wing length of this resident with that of the probable migrant LE35181.

Blackbird	6M	LE35181	8/1/2017	R00
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This was a very large Blackbird - wing length of 140 mm. It was ringed in December 2014 and retrapped the following February, then again in January 2016. From its size it would appear to be a continental bird and its appearance only in winter tends to confirm it is a migrant.

Marsh Tit	6	X649251	8/1/2017	Q04
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Another well behaved sedentary bird. This bird, now well into its 7th year has been retrapped several times but always in the north of the wood - blocks B, C and D. It is likely that its entire adult life has been spent in this very small area. It is our longest-lived Marsh Tit, beating the previous Treswell Wood record by two months. The sedentary behaviour allows birds to know their range very well indeed and this has advantages when conditions are hard. Their food storing habits can help further in short spells of shortage. On the other hand, when conditions are very hard, the same sedentariness which has helped them in better times will inhibit their ability to seek more favourable places to survive. With a run of several winters without long cold periods, the sedentary behaviour is working in their favour and we find Marsh Tits can survive years longer than might be expected for birds of this size. Whereas 0.4% of the Marsh Tits are known to have reached their eighth year, only 0.02% of the similarly sized Blue Tits have done so. On the other hand, in the very hard winter of 1978/79 the woodland population of Marsh Tits was exterminated whereas the Blue Tit population, although reduced, did survive.

Blue Tit	5	S078512	21/1/2017	Sturton-le-Steeple
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This is one of the 2016 cohort of nestling ringed Blue Tits, controlled by Peter Harrison. It is its first recapture and adds to the slowly increasing number of that cohort which are re-encountered for the first time since ringing in the

nest. Interestingly a sibling of this bird, S078515, was encountered at Hillcrest Farm in December, again as its first capture since fledging.

Great Tit 5F Z782272 5/2/2017 Q03

Pox was most prevalent in the wood in 2014 with 11 Great Tits found infected. the next two years produced only four birds. This year we have seen two birds with pox. This one had a lesion very well hidden below the plumage high on the thigh. The other had a small lesion inside the base of the bill. We had seen one like this before - but on that other bird, the lesion had grown so large that it seemed to block the throat. Amazingly that bird was the only Great Tit we subsequently retrapped clear of the condition. Whether this year's two captures herald another large outbreak we wait to see.

Chaffinch 5F S078611 19/2/2017 D03

A very pleasing recapture indeed. Last year we recorded and ringed two successive broods of Chaffinch in the same nest site in the rafters of the workers' shelter- presumably both from the same female. The first brood was of four young, all of which we recaptured soon after they had fledged. Second broods, in general, have much lower survival than earlier broods and the fledgelings tend to disperse further. It is pleasing, therefore, to recapture one from the second brood so long after fledging. It is the second of the brood to be recaptured; a sibling was retrapped about three weeks after fledging.

Chaffinch 6M X649453 5/3/2017 Q04

This bird was ringed in 2010 in its first breeding season and recaptured twice in 2010 then not seen again until 2015, retrapped again in 2016. It is now 1 month short of 7 years since it was first ringed. It is two years short of our internal record and still only half way to the national age record.

Chaffinch 5M Z782621 18/1/2017 Darlton

Another bird caught by Peter Cobb. We ringed it in mid-December in the wood and had not recaptured it since. It is pleasing to hear from it again but not as surprising to have a report of this species as was Peter's report of the woodpecker noted earlier.

Goldfinch 5F Z782648 8/1/2017 Q04

This is our 12th Goldfinch to be captured this year. All have been captured on the north edge of the wood, probably commuting between the wood and gardens opposite. It is curious that, although we see and hear the species throughout the wood, it is only in this part of the wood that we currently catch them.

House Sparrow 5M TT49284 8/1/2017 Q04

One of three House Sparrows trapped so far this year. All, as the Goldfinches, were caught on the north edge of the wood and obviously associated with houses and gardens. In the 1970s the species nested in the wood. Even then, it was generally found in the northern or south-eastern part of the wood nearer to houses and farm buildings. In addition there were other captures associated with Pheasant feeding stations or at the pond in the drought of 1976.

10-Week Summary: 2017 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult			Adult			
Sparrowhawk	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Wren	1	7	.	2	4	.	14
Dunnock	.	6	.	1	.	.	7
Robin	2	4	.	5	7	.	18
Blackbird	4	4	.	4	1	.	13
Song Thrush	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Goldcrest	2	3	.	2	4	.	11
Long-tailed Tit	.	.	.	2	.	.	2
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	2	.	3
Blue Tit	.	.	.	6	2	.	8
Great Tit	.	7	.	8	5	.	20
Treecreeper	1	.	.	.	1	.	2
Chaffinch	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	1	.	1	1	.	3
Totals	12	34	.	33	27	.	106