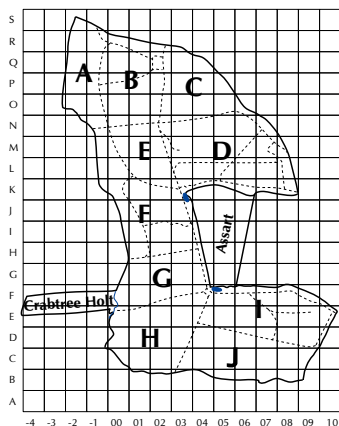
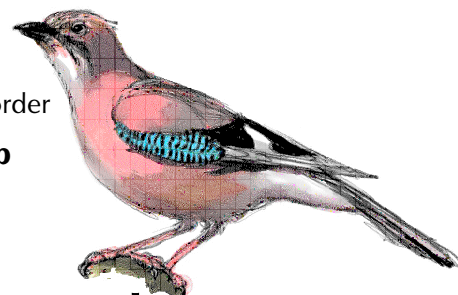


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

October 2018 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

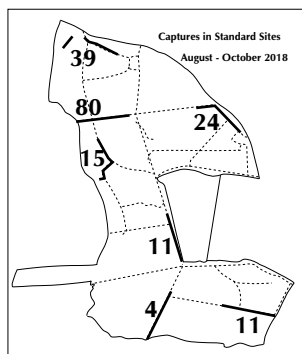
CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringling John Clark

2018/4 Number 119

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It has certainly been an unusual year from many points of view. We know the cold spring weather delayed nesting of our resident birds but the long hot and very dry spell does not seem to have had deleterious effects. Our constant effort captures have, overall, been much higher than any since 1995 (which was an exceptional year). The total of 184 captures is well above the average of only 130 for this interval. However, the overall number hides remarkable differences in captures on different days. Our seven standard site totals have varied from 4 to 80 with larger captures happening in the north of the wood and much lower ones in the south, as shown on the map. This is in contrast to the 'old days' when we used to regard Nightingale Ride in the south as our most reliable and best site with lower catches further north. Explanations would be welcome although it is doubtful that they would

fit on the back of a proverbial postcard. For the record, the catch on 9/9/2018 at Howard's Ride was the fourth highest ever on a standard site visit. The three higher were in August 1987 (83 on Howard's Ride), July 1989 (88 on Windy Ride) and July 1980 (93 on Bower's Ride). Incidentally, the derisory catch of four birds of 22/9/2018 on Bower's Ride in this interval was the 40th lowest out of 1,604 visits to standard sites throughout all years. What a contrast from one week to another and from one part of the wood to another.

The nesting season, though very compact for our small box-nesting species, continues much longer for the multi-brooded Stock Doves. On the last nest visit to 'check that the young had fledged' on October 7th, we found they had indeed fledged, but had been followed by another brood. Provided that this is, indeed, the last brood we will be able to submit a very pleasing total of 122 nest records to the BTO scheme. Thanks to all nest recorders.

The CBC analysis is under way. Pat has compiled the maps of species observations and these are now with Ellen (with help available from John Marchant) for drawing the territory maps. The species totals should be available by the end of the year. Again, thanks to all the CBC team for their efforts.

The Assart and ash dieback

Abbie Edwards from Lincoln University is working on the analysis of ash dieback both on the assart and in the wood. Her poster describing the survey and preliminary results will soon be on the TWIG web site.

In the assart there is an array of 2 metre quadrats which are surveyed annually in order to record the development of the assart into, eventually, mature woodland. In each quadrat all ash saplings were assessed for ash dieback and given a score in the range 0-4. At one end of the scale, zero is no sign of dieback. A score of 1 means that there is evidence of ash dieback but the wilting leaves or stem discolouration is minor and only found if it is being looked for. At stage 2, the dieback symptoms are obvious and at stage 3 some branches are dead. If the whole sapling is dead then it scores 4. The table below shows the mean dieback score in the various height and density categories. Overall about 400 saplings were found in the sampling quadrats and the class sizes in the table have been chosen to give comparable numbers in each cell of the table.

Number of saplings in quadrat

Height (cm)	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-60
1-20	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0
21-40	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5
41-80	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.8
81-200	1.0	1.3	0.7	2.5

Some findings, which are clear from the table but also confirmed by statistical testing, are that the stage of ash dieback is related to height (and, consequently, age) of the sapling and to the density of ash saplings nearby.

Ash seeds are often abundant and, in spite of their aerodynamic shape, often seem to land in clusters. This clustering is related to higher incidence of ash dieback.

New seedlings seem to be relatively free from infection for some time. This is probably related to the the dieback infection period which is mainly from June to September when the spores are released. A sapling germinating early in the spring will have two or three months to grow before the spores arrive to infect it. As the tree ages it has more chance of being infected because spore release is an annual event. Thus as saplings age, they tend to show more symptoms of the disease.

It is thought that, nationally, 5% of ash trees are resistant to the disease. It will be very interesting to see if this applies to the trees in the assart. Whereas many saplings in the assart have died, or will be killed by ash dieback, it is rare for mature trees to be killed by the disease. More often it is the ash dieback which weakens the tree and then allows other diseases to take hold and strike the final blow.

What can we look forward to in the wood and the assart? Undoubtedly the assart will have far fewer ash trees than we might have expected in the absence of ash dieback. This will leave a better balance of species including the hawthorn, hazel, oak and birch which have been recorded so far. The existing wood will gradually lose ash trees but it is most unlikely that either assart or wood will be absolutely devoid of ash. What impact there will be on invertebrates is not clear - some species are entirely dependent on ash, others are more generalist and will be equally happy on whatever grows in place of ash. Whereas the disease is having major, rapid effects in the assart where all ash is very young, its effects within the wood, although they may be major, will be much slower. As mature ash weakens, other species will take advantage of the space created, often filling the ash's space before the ash is completely dead.

Data from the archives - analyses that could be done

Several things have emerged from efforts to sort through archival paperwork. Some of these are things we thought would be useful to study and, indeed, we have even done some preliminary work in the past. All of these would make excellent student projects and also provide material for submission to the ornithological press.

Harvest Mites, *Neotrombicula autumnalis*. These used to be more commonly seen on birds in the wood than they are now. During the times when they were very frequently seen we gathered data on abundance and degree of infestation on birds. We did have discussions with a ringer from the south who had also recorded the parasite but the plan for a joint analysis never came to fruition. We have all the data and various papers. First, obvious, things to look at would be the annual cycle of occurrence of the mite and the relative degree of infestation on different bird species. What we could do now, which we could not do then (because our time series were not as long as they are now), would be to examine the survival rates of birds in relation to the degree of infestation.

Winter transect counts of birds were carried out in the early years. The study was discontinued but the data have remained on paper in an envelope for over 40 years without there ever having been a thorough examination of it. The counts were discontinued because it seemed that not much was being recorded. However, it could be worth repeating the exercise using the same protocols to see if 40 years' passage of time, together with much habitat and phenological change, have brought any changes.

Wren extinction and repopulation. We think the hard winter of 1978/79 saw complete extinction of the woodland Wren population. The 1979 breeding population was a mere 20% of the size of that in 1978. This was in line with the suggestion by the Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers that the overall county population had dropped by 80%. We believe the 1979 breeding population was of non-Treswell Wood birds that had survived the winter in the warmth of places such as the cattle sheds at Stanhope Farm. When the spring came, surviving birds moved from what had been their winter survival ground to a now empty, but ideal, breeding habitat. The BTO director at the time, Raymond O'Connor, said that this was an exceptionally well-documented story of extinction and recolonisation that ought to be published. Again, we have all the data together with a considerable number of hand-written notes. And, of course, another 40 years' worth of data in years where the population did not become extinct.

Biometrics and ageing. A paper in the current issue of Bird Study describes the effects of senescence on Blackbird biometrics. It seems that, up to a point, wing length increases with age (although the most marked increase is between juvenile and first adult plumages). After that point, at around 5 or 6 years old, wing length tends to decrease slowly and this is assumed to be the result of senescence. That study used data collected over a 10-year period with about 800 individual Blackbirds measured, of which nearly 150 were measured at least once before, and once after, a full moult.

In the pre-computer past we did look at Willow Tits and it was clear that first adult wings were longer than juvenile wings and, even with a relatively short time period and small data set, there was some evidence for slight increases in subsequent moults.

Our data set now stretches over 45 years and we have many more individuals captured of several species, many of these have multiple captures over several years. The table below gives various details of the records of some species in our data set but only includes information about birds which have been encountered on more than one occasion. There are several more species with sample sizes comparable to, or larger, than those in the Blackbird study.

Species	Individuals	captures	Longest History (years)
Blackbird	1,077	3,450	c. 8
Blue Tit	2,739	10,478	>8
Chaffinch	678	2,013	>9
Great Tit	2,523	11,477	>9
Robin	1,560	4,915	>6
Treecreeper	434	1,937	>7

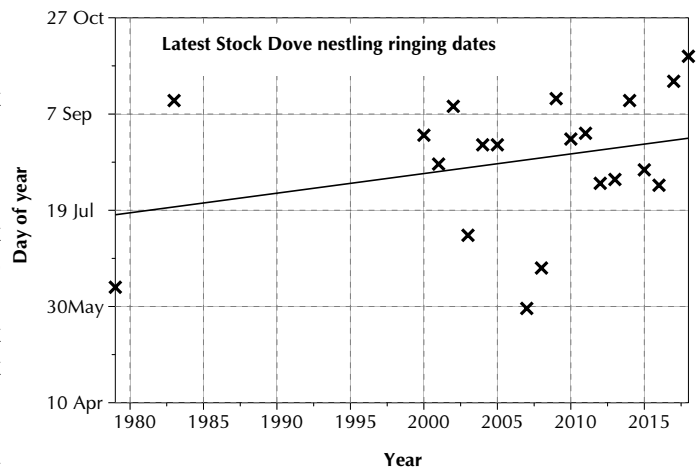
Of course, any analysis would have to control for various things including observer variation, time of year (because wings become abraded) and year (see the note on the 69-er Blue Tits).

When all that is thoroughly analysed, it would be worth looking at any ageing effects in breeding performance of (female) Blue Tits. We have found many over the years, nesting in successive years, so know clutch size and various other nesting related statistics.

Noteworthy Encounters

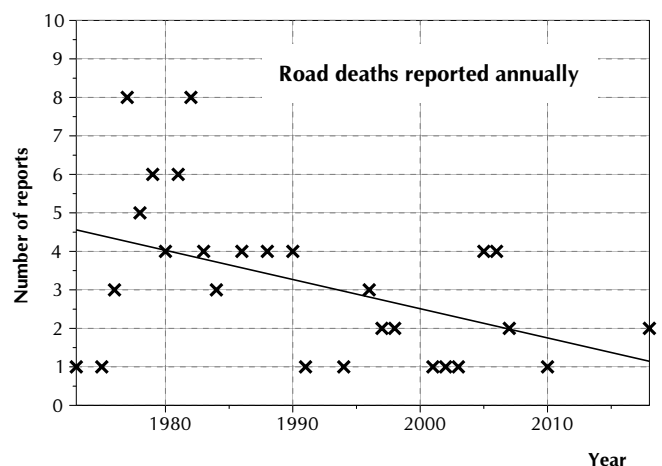
Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Stock Dove	1	EY42354	07/10/2018	D03 In nest

One of the two nestlings of the fourth brood of Stock Doves in this box this year. This is the latest brood we have recorded - the previous late record for ringing nestling Stock Doves was 24th September (in 2017). It is likely that all four broods have been reared by the same adult pair (although we only know the identity of one of the adults on two of the broods). If this pair fledges, it will bring the total from the box for the year to seven. This is a remarkably high number considering the typically high predation rate by grey squirrels. Stock Doves do not seem to be nesting noticeably earlier than they did in previous years but our records suggest that they may be increasing the length of their nesting season gradually. The graph shows the date on which we ringed the latest brood in each year. Plotting first egg dates, as we can do for the tits, would give a more reliable picture. This is because the first egg date is a measure solely of nest timing whereas date of ringing nestlings depends on nest timing but also the age at which the young are ringed. With nest inspections of larger boxes less frequent than for smaller boxes, we often do not know the exact first egg date and, unlike with smaller birds, there is a relatively long 'nestling ringing window' for this larger species. First egg dates would also give a much larger sample because a very high proportion of nests are destroyed by predators before the eggs hatch. A pity we cannot estimate first egg dates reliably.



Blackbird	4M	LE35170	21/08/2018	N08 Dead on road
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This Blackbird was ringed as a young bird in October 2014 and not retrapped thereafter. It was found, dead on the road, just outside the north-eastern corner of the wood. Reports of our ringed birds found dead on the road (and presumed victims of traffic) have reduced considerably in recent years - as shown in the graph with the statistically significant trend line. We know that, nationally, reporting rates of bird recoveries by members of the public are falling, probably for a variety of reasons. As far as our road deaths are concerned it seems most unlikely that road casualties are becoming fewer in these days of more traffic. Perhaps fewer people walk along the roads near the wood. Whatever the reason, it is a pity to waste a recovery - the purpose in putting a ring on a bird's leg is to discover more about its future life and death



in order to contribute to the overall understanding of bird demography. Please do keep an eye open for dead birds, inspect them for rings and report them either by letter or using the on-line system at www.ring.ac

Song Thrush **3J** **RT55972** **26/08/2018** **N06**

One of a total of 11 juvenile Song Thrushes we have ringed this year. Unusually, captures of this species have increased through the late summer and autumn. Normally we expect them to be leaving the wood to travel to their winter quarters (probably in nearby villages rather than anywhere more exotic). However, not this year with a continuing flow of new birds some, but not all, in their first year. Are their fortunes changing?

Redwing **4** **RT55982** **07/10/2018** **H02**

The first Redwing of the autumn. We had seen some fly over a week earlier but not heard any within the wood. This one was a surprise - only one of our 80 autumn-ringed birds has been caught earlier (04/10/1992). Unlike most of our Redwing captures it was not close to the wood edge.

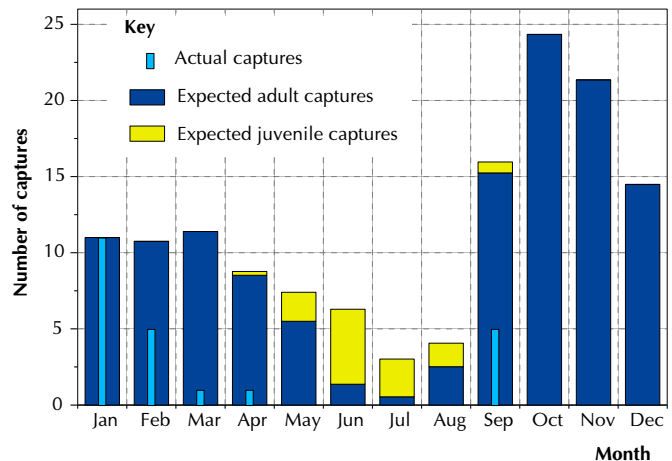
Goldcrest **3J** **JTE320** **30/09/2018** **E02**

Woodland passerine species tend to remain near to their natal area until they have completed their post-juvenile moult. Of 15 Goldcrests ringed this autumn, four have been in post-juvenile moult, this one still being at a relatively early stage. It seems unlikely that it is a traveller from very far away, possibly even being a bird reared within the wood.

Long-tailed Tit **2** **EYD368** **09/09/2018** **N00**

It is good to see at least one Long-tailed Tit has survived a very poor year for them. This one was ringed 3 years and 9 months earlier and has yielded a respectable recapture history. This year started well for the species with 11 captures in January - this is rather higher than the average of 7 January captures. The graph shows how many we might have expected in the following months, all things being equal. But all things were not equal and the very cold spell, dubbed the Beast from the East, struck at a time when this early nesting species should have been at work. This year we have ringed no birds in juvenile plumage. We may have ringed some of this year's birds but only after their autumn moult at which time it is impossible to separate young from older birds. The graph also shows the actual captures as narrow bars within the 'expected' bars. No doubt that it has been a terrible year for them, at least in the wood. Fortunately this small, generally short-lived species, can be a prolific breeder when conditions are right. With a good breeding season next year we could see numbers back to normal.

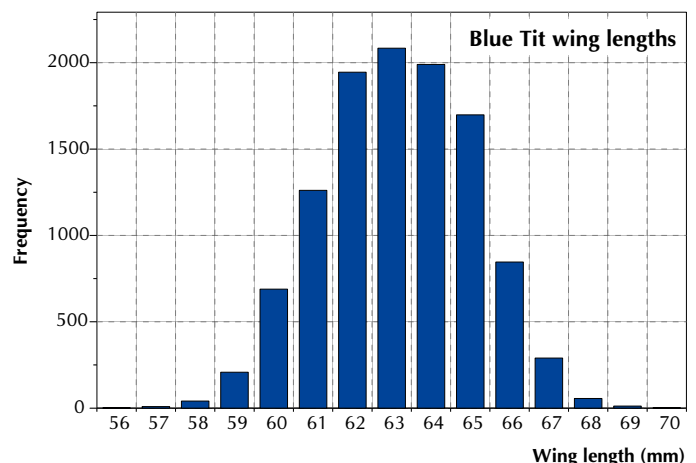
Monthly Long-tailed Tit captures



Blue Tit **4** **S078872** **30/09/2018** **Q03**

When this bird's wing was measured at 69mm it was, rightly, queried. On checking (including using a different ruler) it was found to be correct. Very few Blue Tits have wings as long as this. Surprisingly, later in the morning a second Blue Tit was found with the same length of wing and a third later with a wing of 68mm. Of our 11,133 measurements of Blue Tit wing lengths only 12 have been of 69mm and just two longer at 70mm. The graph shows the distribution of wing length measurements with the bars for 57 and 69 barely detectable and those for the extremes even less so. Incidentally, if Blue Tits were as sexually dimorphic as some people would have us believe, we would not see such an obviously unimodal length distribution as this.

Looking back at the capture histories of these two birds, all adults, their previous plumages were fairly typical at 64 or 65 mm. Years ago, Ted Cowley found that Sand Martin wing lengths were sometimes shorter in a subsequent year and it seemed that poor conditions at moult time were the likely reason. We wonder if we have the opposite here - very good conditions at moult time allowing the birds to grow super-length wings. That would explain why we have three exceptionally long-winged birds at the same time. It would not, of course, explain why it was just these birds



with long wings rather than all adult Blue Tits being long-winged. This is another factor to consider when looking at senescence in birds - wing lengths may need to be adjusted for calendar year.

Blue Tit **3J** **AVC1637** **07/10/2018** **H01**

This is the first capture of the 25th of our 2018 cohort of 347 nestling-ringed Blue Tits. As noted in the previous issue, this is a very small proportion, particularly when compared with the retrap rate of Great Tits. The number retrapped is almost certain to increase with time, particularly next spring when birds return to the wood to breed. However, the retrap rate of 7% now will have to increase a great deal to reach the species' overall recapture rate for all years combined of 19%

Great Tit **4F** **ANA7057** **30/09/2018** **Q03**

We have, happily, not seen any birds with avian pox since October 2017, which saw the end of the outbreak which had lasted from June. This bird, however, did have a scar, similar to those we have seen on birds which have recovered from pox, near the lower mandible. We hope this is not the harbinger of a new outbreak.

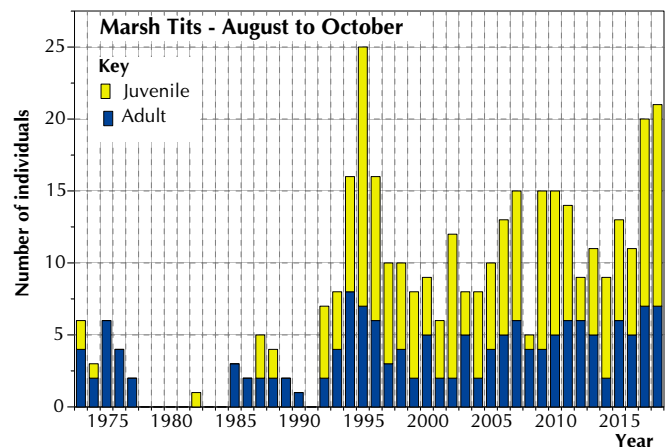
Great Tit **3J** **NZ53278** **21/08/2018** **Hillcrest Farm, Treswell**

As for the Blue Tit AVC1637, this is the first retrap of this member of the 2018 nestling-ringed cohort. It is one of four which have been retrapped at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell village. So far, the retrap rate for the species is very high indeed with 38% of the 173 fledged birds already recaptured at least once. As with Blue Tits, this rate is almost certain to rise over the next few months even though it is already considerably higher than the overall recapture rate of 25% for our nestling-ringed Great Tits.

Marsh Tit **4** **ANA7393** **05/08/2018** **Q03**

Marsh Tits are very sedentary with the greatest movement happening when juveniles disperse from their natal territory in the autumn. Most of the adults in the wood already carry rings and have a relatively high recapture rate. An unringed adult at this time of year is unusual - it is either a rare individual that has evaded captures in the wood for at least a year or else one which has just arrived in the wood. Who knows?

So far, this autumn, we have captured more Marsh Tits than in any year but the exceptional year of 1995. The proportion of juveniles indicates a good breeding season and the number of unringed juveniles indicates either more breeding in the wood in natural sites or else very successful breeding in not far distant woodland.



We do not yet know how many Marsh Tit territories will be revealed by the CBC survey. Historically we have found that the CBC territories, which are derived independently from any nest record data, show an average of about half a territory more than the number of Marsh Tits nests found in boxes. This year we have only found two nests in boxes, one of which failed. If the CBC results show a low number of territories to match the low number of nests found, that would indicate movement into the wood from juveniles elsewhere. On the other hand, if the CBC has a high number of territories, that would show more Marsh Tits nesting in natural sites than normal. We wait the CBC results with interest.

Jay **4** **DK98436** **09/09/2018** **N00**

This is the 86th Jay we have encountered and this is its third capture. It was ringed in November 2017 as a young bird. Only five Jays have been captured more frequently (one with six encounters, one with four encounters and another four with three encounters). However, this is the first to have been captured three times within 12 months. It still has some way to go before reaching the elapsed times of the 7 years 8 months of our longest encounter history.

Chaffinch **4F** **unringed** **30/09/2018** **Q03**

Unlike the avian pox which seems to be lessening, scaly leg mite is on the increase. We have nothing like the problems in some places where up to a third of Chaffinches are badly affected. This year we have already caught birds on seven occasions infected with scaly leg mite. We do not ring birds with the condition so cannot be sure how many of these seven encounters have been with a bird already seen. The condition affects finches more than other birds. So far we have seen five infected Chaffinches and two Bullfinches. This particular Chaffinch was very badly infected, with one leg thick with the mite and the other so badly affected that the leg below the 'knee' joint had fallen off. The bird was able to fly very well but it was noticeable that its plumage was not as well groomed as

typical in the parts normally preened with the foot that was no longer there. Latest BTO research suggests that scaly leg mite rarely kills birds. However, it does increase their chance of death through predation and other adverse circumstances.

10-Week Summary: 2018 Interval 4, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	1	.	17	1	.	1	20
Dunnoek	1	.	4	.	.	1	6
Robin	2	1	10	1	.	3	17
Blackbird	1	.	13	1	1	3	19
Song Thrush	2	.	8	1	.	.	11
Blackcap	2	.	11	.	.	1	14
Chiffchaff	4	.	8	1	.	.	13
Willow Warbler	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	.	.	4	.	.	.	4
Long-tailed Tit	3	.	.	1	.	.	4
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	3	5
Blue Tit	.	.	8	4	.	12	24
Great Tit	.	.	4	10	.	11	25
Nuthatch	2	2
Treecreeper	.	.	8	1	.	2	11
Jay	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Chaffinch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	.	5	1	.	.	6
Totals	18	1	101	26	1	37	184

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

Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978:

Interval	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Maximum	128	198	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	89	66	59	364
Mean	91	113	160	131	125	615

10-year Averages since standard site netting began in 1978:

1978 - 1987	90	113	182	140	130	655
1988 - 1997	86	107	170	149	127	637
1998 - 2007	95	100	134	120	125	574
2008 - 2017	93	133	150	109	120	605

Totals from 2000 onwards

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
2000	75	106	106	159	170	616
2001	57	33	94	121	59	364
2002	85	89	141	176	117	608
2003	117	116	146	104	114	597
2004	103	128	126	165	132	654
2005	107	140	150	88	133	618
2006	128	98	185	125	166	702
2007	107	110	138	73	92	520
2008	125	130	151	86	100	592
2009	57	130	156	85	80	508
2010	94	100	144	119	143	600
2011	96	112	120	105	101	534
2012	69	125	132	66	72	464
2013	76	90	89	100	157	512
2014	83	132	181	123	120	639
2015	105	123	136	137	158	659
2016	102	185	193	109	109	698
2017	106	198	163	149	163	779
2018	95	108	182	184		