

TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2011 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark & John McMeeking



2011/3 Number 83

Treswell Wood IPM Group - Invitation Conference - 25th February 2012

We thought it would be a good idea to have a Treswell Wood IPM Group meeting before the next breeding season. The initial aim was partly for different 'branches' of the group to meet each other. It was also for new recruits to the Common Bird Census to meet the retiring old hands in order to plan their apprenticeship ready for the 2012 season. On further thinking, we realised that the group really consists of much more than the CBC observers, ringers and nest recorders. We also have connections, of varying strength, with a number of other people who we may not meet often in the wood (or elsewhere) - for example data analysts or dormouse box workers. It would be good for us to meet with those who do much hard work for the good of the overall operation. By chance, at the same time, as were were thinking about this, the potential value of long-term data sets like ours was commented upon by BTO staff. So, our friendly little meeting has just growed, like Topsy, but much more rapidly. We have booked Treswell village hall - a mere 1 km from the wood. Andy Clements, director of the BTO, has agreed to come to be our opening speaker. We will then have short presentations about the various aspects of the operations in the wood: habitat management, ringing, CBC, nest recording and dormouse monitoring. After a mid-day break we will have presentations from analysts - Charles Deeming from Lincoln University who has been looking at egg success and Andrew MacColl from Nottingham University who is looking at the effects of coppicing on bird populations. After that we will have an open forum where we can discuss the future of this unique, long-standing ecological monitoring project. We anticipate it will last from about 10:30 until 15:30. We will have to make some charge just to cover food and venue hire but we will keep this as low as we can.

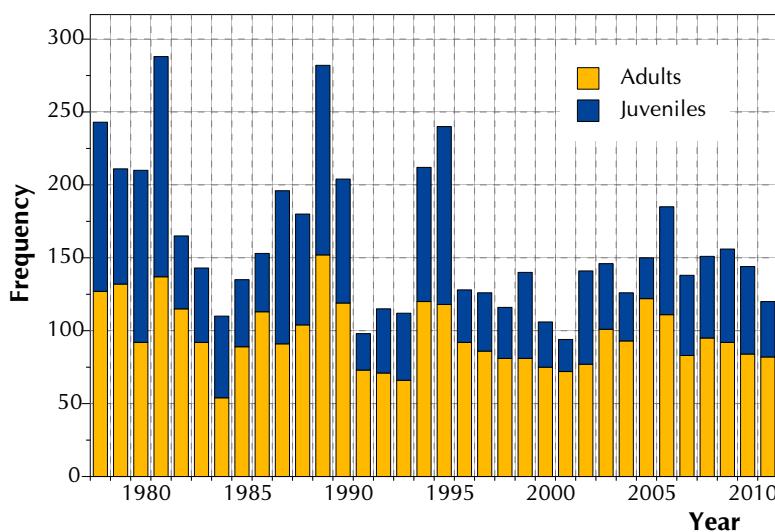
And who is invited? All members of the group - and we regard the group members as anyone who receives Twitter. That means **you** - even if you are one of our distant readers. Put the date in your diary - it will be worth coming. We will give fuller details and a booking form in the next issue of Twitter, but if you have any thoughts or questions in the meantime please contact Chris by email.

The 2011 Nesting Season

The nestbox season seems, for the most part, a long time ago. It was early and short with no late replacement tit clutches and very few Wren nests. Only the Stock Doves continue laying clutch after clutch. We did not have all the nest laying information when the last issue of Twitter was produced, but we do now. As predicted, the first egg dates were amongst the earliest ever. Sadly, this was combined with apparently very late tree leafing and consequent lack of caterpillar food. Examination of the table shows about the same number of nests this year as last - with only minor differences in species composition. Very slightly more eggs were laid but, thereafter, the stories change. The lack of food brought death at all stages from hatching onwards, so the number of birds fledged was much below last year's number. Some comparisons with recent years look good on the whole, typically with more birds fledging from fewer nests. This is likely to result from the reduced number of boxes compared with those earlier years. In that period we found that birds tended to nest close to each other, resulting in smaller clutches and, often, clutches deserted before laying was completed. We also suffered the problem of the weasels of mass destruction which reduced success further. Predation this year has been fairly low - Great Spotted Woodpeckers being the chief nest predator. Nest failure through lack of food did not seem to be evenly spread throughout the wood and it will be interesting to look at this in relation to abundance of caterpillar droppings when our frass trap contents have been analysed. Recaptures of nestling-ringed birds have been much lower than expected with no really big catches yet of juvenile Great Tits at the feeding station.

Captures in the standard sites have also been well down on normal - the sixth lowest since we began constant effort netting in 1978. The number of juveniles is very low for most species - Wren being an exception (which is surprising as there have been few nesting attempts in boxes, none of which were successful). Blackcaps have been caught in good numbers and the catch has included a respectable number of juveniles - particularly good for a

Captures in standard sites - interval 3 - 1978-2011



summer visitor which starts nesting later than the residents.

This unusually low number of captures prompted a look into the breakdown of previous standard-site captures during this interval. The figure is revealing although it may give rise to more questions than answers. Our adult captures have been reasonably consistent, perhaps rather less volatile in the second half than in the first and with an overall general small decline. The juvenile captures, on the other hand, are very variable. In some extreme years, such as 1981, there were more juveniles than adults captured. At the other extreme, such as 2001, the relative numbers of juveniles are very small. The reason for this could be, obviously, a poor breeding season with low nest productivity or immediate post-fledging survival.

Alternatively it could be a result of a late breeding season - even if productivity had been good, this would not have been apparent until later in the summer. In this year's case, where breeding began very early, it seems that low productivity and, possibly, high post-fledging mortality provide the explanation.

Events in Nestboxes - Treswell Wood, 2011

Species	Nests		Eggs laid	Birds			% Success Rate	
	Recorded	Successful		Adults caught on nests	Nestlings fledged	Nestlings recaptured (to Sept. 1)	Nests	Eggs
Kestrel	1	1	5	.	3	1	100	60
Stock Dove*	6	3	13	.	6	1	50	46
Tawny Owl	2	1	5	.	2	.	50	40
Barn Owl*	1	1	2	.	2	.	100	100
Wren	3	0	6	.	.	.	0	0
<i>Song Thrush</i>	2	1	8	.	4	.	50	50
<i>Blackbird</i>	1	1	4	.	1	.	100	25
Marsh Tit	2	2	15	1	12	1	100	80
Blue Tit	29	11	257	23	57	.	38	22
Great Tit	63	40	473	8	220	25	63	47
Nuthatch	1	1	8	.	5	1	100	63
Totals		111	62	796	32	310	29	56
2011		111	62	796	32	310	29	56
2010	112	80	778	25	539	146	71	69
2009	118	54	648	26	300	38	46	46
2008	108	29	589	22	139	17	27	24
2007	129	64	922	52	313	35	50	34
2006	175	37	885	31	225	33	21	25
2005	153	49	852	47	245	22	32	29
2004	141	94	917	41	538	41	67	59
2003	133	41	769	29	213	17	31	28

Notes: Nests of species in italics were open nests found incidentally during the nestbox rounds. The numbers of nests recorded, for all species, exclude nests which were abandoned before any eggs were laid.

* Some additional Stock Dove nests and one Barn Owl at Forwood Farm still active.

Wilkinson Environment Award

Congratulations to David and Stephanie Bell who have won this year's Wilkinson Environment Award in the small farm category. Well deserved - we hope our recording of the Barn Owls and dissection of their pellets has contributed to that. It appears that the birds also approve of the award - the Barn Owl is now on an exceptional second clutch of six eggs and on August 16th we observed a party of about 20 Yellow Wagtails feeding in the close-cropped runway grass.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Sparrowhawk **6M** **DA51862** **19/6/2011** **D06**

A recapture of a bird ringed by us last December. As most often, it was a male. We have speculated before on the reason why most birds caught are males. It could be that the population sex ratio is not 50:50; or maybe female Sparrowhawks, being so much larger, escape from mist nets more easily; perhaps females hunt in more open habitats or nearer the tree canopy; perhaps something else; but probably a combination of all these.

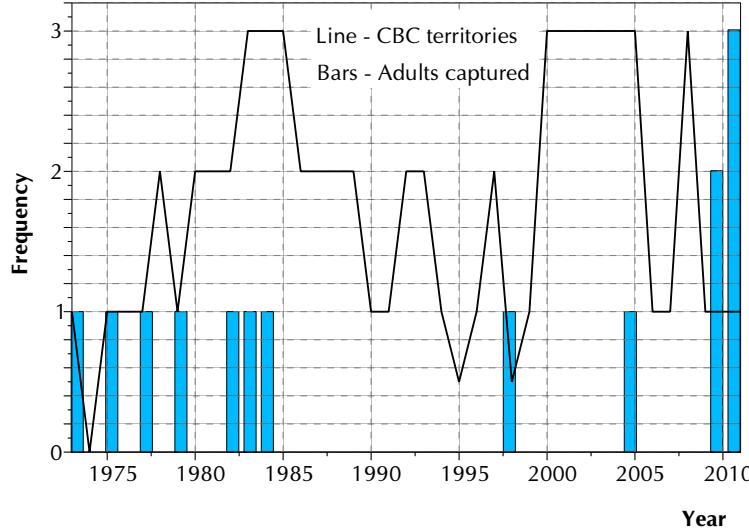
Woodpigeon **5** **FS55220** **3/7/2011** **E02**

Normally we report all captures of non-passerines in Twitter (except for Great Spotted Woodpeckers) - in this issue we make an exception for Woodpigeons too - we trapped a second, FH22053 on 24/7/2011. Perhaps the surprising thing about Woodpigeon captures is that we do not catch any more now than we used to in the days when they were far less common generally. The BirdFacts pages of the BTO web site show a national tripling in numbers since the early 1970s and in the BTO's Garden BirdWatch survey it is now the third most commonly reported species in gardens (after Blackbird and Blue Tit). The use of the wood by the species seems to have changed too, but with the former very large roost a thing of the past. However, even when they did roost in large numbers, they fed mainly in fields outside the wood and so were not frequently captured within. Woodpigeon productivity must be very low because their flimsy nests are so obvious and vulnerable to predators. However, they can be long-lived and this means that most Woodpigeons are full adults. This one is one of the very few we have ever caught which still carried its juvenile primaries - 9 juveniles compared to 68 in adult plumage.

Tawny Owl **5** **GC65290** **5/6/2011** **K00**

The first of three Tawny owls we have captured recently. The other two were GR24201 on 19th June in E02 and GR24204 on 31st July in O06. Three individuals in such a short time is unprecedented. There seems to be no connection between the number of breeding territories in the wood and number of adult captures in mist nets. Of the 14 individuals captured in mist nets, none have been ringed as nestlings in the wood or trapped as breeding females on the nest. Only one of the 14 was a juvenile and all but one have been captured during May-September. According to BWP, juveniles disperse by late autumn and thereafter there is very little movement away from territories. It is possible that these birds could be Treswell breeding birds but it is certainly odd that none of the 12 birds ringed as adults on the nest features in the cast of these 14 mist-net captures.

Tawny Owls in Treswell Wood - 1973 - 2011



Great Spotted Woodpecker 4M **CT84206** **29/5/2011** **Q02 Feeder**

The 18th capture of an old friend - now aged six years. The Treswell Wood population continues to confirm how difficult it is to determine the age of many birds after they have completed post-juvenile moult. This one had brown eyes, characteristic of young birds according to some sources. Meanwhile, on the same day, CT95979 a mere spring chicken in its first breeding season, sported the ruby red eyes of the supposed full adult.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 3 **CT84457** **12/6/2011** **N01**

The only juvenile woodpecker we have trapped so far this season. This is surprising as we have seen several nests this year and heard the very voluble young. It is also somewhat frustrating because we want to examine the amount of red in the crown as an aid to sexing. This can only be done by capturing the birds as juveniles, then retrapping them after the summer moult when we will be able to identify the sex from the nape colour.

Chiffchaff **6M** **CXN216** **29/5/2011** **R00**

Most Chiffchaffs leave us for the winter but they can be very site-faithful on their return. This one was ringed as a breeding male in June 2010 being caught about 30 metres away from this year's capture point. Contrast this with CXN219, a recently fledged juvenile, also caught in June 2010 but recaptured today as a breeding female about 500 metres from its capture point. In the former case a return to the same spot to breed; in the latter case a natal dispersal; but in both cases negligible movements compared to their (very likely) migration to south-west Europe.

Blackcap**4M X649573****29/5/2011****R00**

Blackcap adults can be very site faithful between years - this one was ringed a year earlier a mere 80 metres away.

Coal Tit**3J L731137****3/6/2011****Q02 Feeder**

The first juvenile Coal Tit to be captured by us this year. It was still fairly newly fledged so unlikely to have moved far from its nest. In spite of sufficient nestboxes, this species has not used them this year (or last) except for one nest where the female died during egg laying. It is good to see they have bred in the wood after all - although numbers do seem to be down on recent years. Perhaps the cold winters have taken their toll on this small species. We hope next year to see them using the nestboxes as they did in former years.

Marsh Tit**4F R353196****3/7/2011****C03**

The second oldest Marsh Tit we have captured, 5 years and 9 months since ringing about 6 months short of our oldest but still over 4 years short of the national record. We ringed this individual as a juvenile in the autumn of 2005 and have retrapped it 14 times since then - with an unexplained gap in recaptures during 2008 and 2009.

Marsh Tit**3J L327704****26/06/2011****P01**

One of our nestbox-ringed juveniles trapped in the north of the wood. It was reared in the south and it has already crossed the invisible line separating the southern adult Marsh Tits from the northern ones. On its subsequent recapture, at the end of July, it was still in the far north and it will be interesting to see if it remains there. On the second recapture it was in post-juvenile moult including tail feathers. Great Tits now almost invariably moult all their tail feathers; many Blue Tits moult just the central pair of tail feathers but, so far, we have previously recorded only two Marsh Tits doing this. This means we must be doubly careful not to call a bird an adult in the spring just because it has a rounded, adult tail shape.

Blue Tit**4F V475391****1/5/2011****N06 On nest**

Often the same Blue Tits will be found in successive years nesting in the same, or a nearby box. This one, now at least a respectable 5 year old, nested in a box about 150 metres away in 2008 and was not seen again - nesting or otherwise - until January 2010 when she appeared at the feeding station. After that, no sign again until this appearance in a nestbox. Did she breed in the wood in the intervening two years? Indeed, did she breed at all in those years?

Great Tit**3J TR47912****3/6/2011****Q02 Feeder**

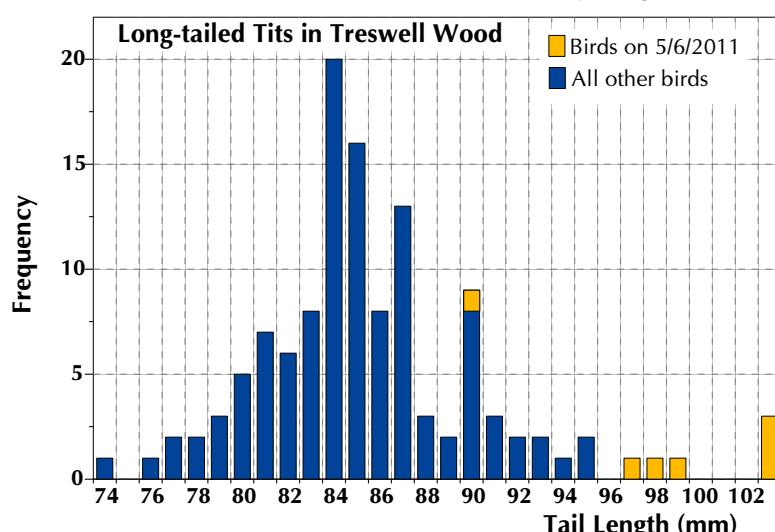
The first of our nestling-ringed birds to be recaptured this year - it is always a special event after the work of looking after the nestboxes, recording events and ringing the young. It was ringed 24 days earlier in a box some 200 metres distant.

Great Tit**3J TR47928****15/6/2011****Q02 Feeder**

A pleasing recapture of a nestling-ringed bird. Some days after the brood had been ringed, a Great Spotted Woodpecker attacked the nest. It was not clear if the attack had resulted in the young being killed or if any had been well enough grown to fledge safely. We now know that at least this one escaped, but none of the others has yet been recaptured.

Long-tailed Tit**3J CXN497****5/6/2011****K03**

Long-tailed Tits, not surprisingly, have long tails. This bird, one of a party of juveniles, appeared to have a very long tail indeed - even before it was measured. Measurement confirmed that it was, indeed, very long. The rest of the party appeared much the same. The graphs show the tail lengths we have recorded in the past together (blue) with the tail lengths of birds in the party (orange). It is likely they were a family group and the very long tail could be a family trait. Certainly, these tail measurements were very different from typical (and we did double check them, of course). It is worth measuring lengths of all Long-tailed Tit tails to see if the trait is now present in the woodland population as a whole. It will also be very interesting to recapture these individuals after they have undergone full post-juvenile moult to see if the new tails are still long - which would indicate something genetic - or normal length which could indicate diet. If it is genetic we



wonder if it is a deleterious mutation which may lead to higher mortality. Time may give more insights.

Nuthatch

3J F TR47774 8/6/2011 Q02 Feeder

An exciting 'first' - the first recapture of a bird from our first ever nestbox-ringed Nuthatch brood, just over two weeks after fledging. Since then we have captured another unringed juvenile with an adult (probably a parent) so it seems as if we have had at least two pairs breeding in the wood this year.

Treecreeper

3J CXN507 5/6/2011 J03

The first of a total of eight juvenile Treecreepers that we have ringed so far this summer. After two very cold winters, it is pleasing to see that these very small, highly sedentary birds have survived and reproduced in good numbers. Nestlings are fed on a diet of invertebrates, similar to that of the adults. This is quite different from that of nestling tits which are fed on small caterpillars on leaves so this species has not suffered the same food problems as have the tits.

Spotted Flycatcher

4M R558859 29/5/2011 R-1

Spotted Flycatcher captures in the wood are now very rare indeed; recaptures even rarer. And this recapture is quite remarkable. We ringed the bird as a juvenile in August 2006. It was only just starting its post-juvenile moult so is likely to have been a bird reared fairly locally. Since then we had not seen any more of it until today - nearly five years later.

Between its first capture and now, we presume it has made its five return journeys through increasingly difficult conditions across the Sahara. What about the intermediate years? It is quite likely that it returned to the wood each year, probably even to the same part of the wood. However, the species is notoriously difficult to catch. They have extremely sharp eyesight and are very agile in the air (they have to be, in order to catch their prey as they do). They are quite capable of seeing a mistnet only a few centimetres in front of them, changing almost instantly from horizontal to vertical flight in the manner of a Harrier jump-jet, and clearing the top of the net before resuming horizontal flight. But that was not all - on the same day, we captured two more individuals in the same north-western part of the wood.

Spotted Flycatchers, of course, are associated with glades rather than dense woodland. The map shows the locations of all our mist-net captures ever of the species. Obviously the numbers are likely to be higher along standard sites where we net most frequently and at the pond (K03) where we can capture birds coming to drink in dry weather. But this does not explain everything. The standard site, Nightingale Ride, is never coppiced

whereas Bower's Ride is sometimes much more open but has fewer captures. Main Ride South, which is open on one side has few captures. Grove End seems to be the hot spot, although the glade is only in R-1 and the other parts are well wooded. Another hot spot is around F03 - again there is now a substantial glade here but these captures were almost all of juveniles on one day in 1976 before the glade was created. Mystery all!

Controls and Recoveries

Species

Age/sex

Ring

Date

Grid

Kestrel

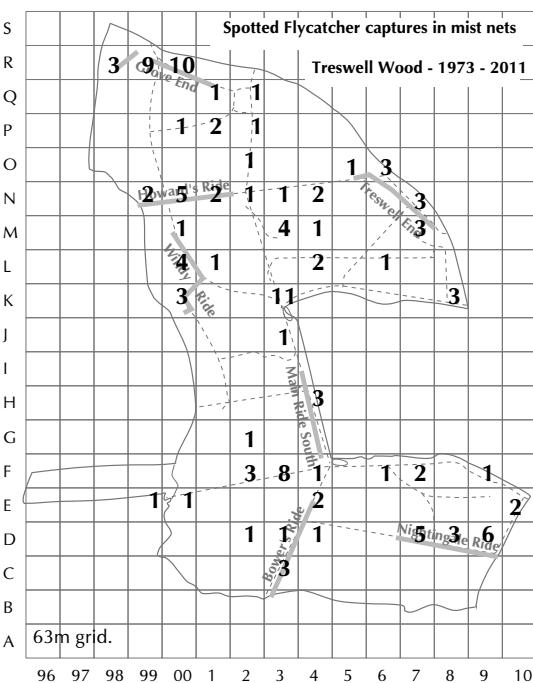
3 EL87433 6/7/2011 N02

Our second ever recovery of a Kestrel and, curiously, both have happened during this year. The first, reported earlier, was of an eight-year old which had been hit by a train. This one lasted more like eight days from fledging. Its remains were found in the glade near the nestbox where it had been reared. It is possible that one of its siblings may have died before fledging - we will not know until the remains of the nest have been examined. This examination of the nest contents (which we hope will yield rings of various bird prey items) will have to wait because a Stock Dove moved into the nestbox almost as soon as the Kestrels had fledged.

Song Thrush

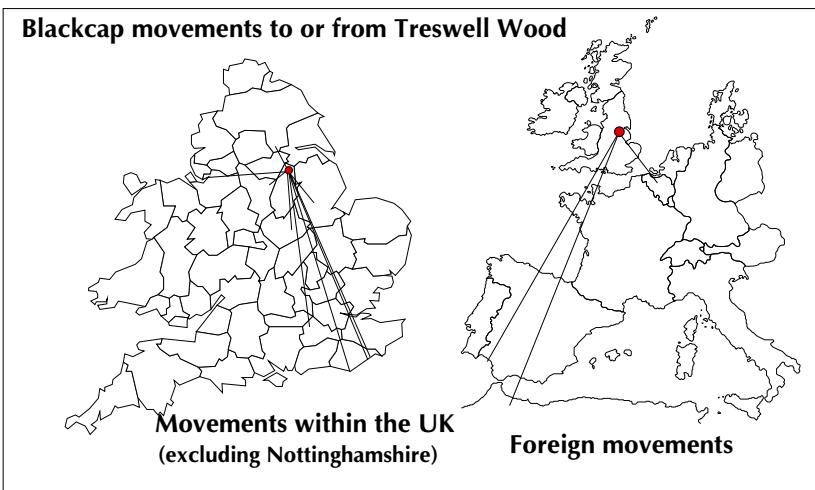
2 RS78279 8/6/2011 H03 Ring in Tawny Owl nest

Ringed on 1st May in E04 as a nestling, this bird had a very short life. The ring was recovered in a Tawny Owl nest after the owls had fledged. It is quite possible that the owl took this bird from its nest - this has happened before. However, in that case we would have expected the rings from the others in the brood also to be in the nest. On balance, it looks like predation very soon after fledging.



Blackcap**3F L393631****29/8/2010****Icklesham**

Our second report of a movement between Icklesham, Sussex and the wood. We captured the bird on 5/6/2011 as a breeding female in the wood. Icklesham is the departure point for many British migrants but they are also ringed there in large numbers. The two Icklesham movements represent, in some part, the migration route of our birds, but also the trapping effort at the Icklesham site. The map illustrates all reported movements of Blackcaps to or from Treswell Wood within the UK excluding the 13 local movements within Nottinghamshire.

**Blackcap****3F X649628****19/09/2010****Donana National Park, South-west Spain**

This is the third international movement reported of a Treswell Wood Blackcap and also the second most southerly report of any of our birds. The other two Blackcaps have been a Belgian-ringed bird found in Treswell Wood and one of our birds found in Morocco. This bird was ringed, still in juvenile plumage (so likely to have been reared in or very near the wood) in June 2010. The second Blackcap map shows these three movements. It was captured by a ringer and released, so there is just a small chance that it may appear again.

Great Tit**5F L793847****16/3/2011****Ussleby Plantation, Market Rasen**

This is a rather unusual movement for a Great Tit. Normally our non-local movements are of birds ringed in their first autumn and captured in a later breeding season. This year in particular, when tit nesting has been so early, it is surprising to find a bird still not settled in a breeding territory in mid-March. It seems quite likely that it was still on the move when we caught it as it has not been trapped again within the wood.

Great Tit**2 TR47814****8/6/2011****H03 Ring in Tawny Owl nest**

Like Song Thrush, RS78279, this nestling-ringed bird had a very short life - it was ringed on 19th May and fledged about a week later so lived, at most, for two weeks. Unlike the Song Thrush, though, we can be sure that this nestbox ringed bird was not removed from the nest by the Tawny Owl but taken after fledging.

Chaffinch**4F X649524****25/5/2011****Treswell Wood**

This bird was found by a visitor to the wood and reported directly to the BTO. We have no others details than it was taken by a Sparrowhawk. It had been ringed in May 2010 but not recaptured since then.

10 Week Summary 2011 Interval 3, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Tawny Owl	1	1	2
Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	.	.	.	1	.	1	2
Wren	2	5	9	1	4	1	22
Dunnock	.	1	1	1	.	.	3
Robin	1	2	4	1	.	.	8
Blackbird	2	3	1	8	.	.	14
Song Thrush	2	1	.	1	.	.	4
Blackcap	9	9	6	3	1	.	28
Chiffchaff	.	.	3	1	2	.	6
Spotted Flycatcher	2	.	.	1	.	.	3
Marsh Tit	.	.	3	2	.	1	6
Blue Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Great Tit	.	.	1	1	1	3	6
Nuthatch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Treecreeper	.	.	2	.	.	1	3
Chaffinch	.	.	.	5	.	.	5
Bullfinch	.	3	1	1	1	.	6
Totals	19	25	31	29	9	7	120