

TWITTER



Treswell Wood -
Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2002 Treswell Wood IPM Group (Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price
Nest Records Chris du Feu
Ringling John McMeeking

2002/1 Number 36

A new year, with all the promise of better things. The first ten-week period of this year has passed less eventfully than in 2001. Last year, at this time, we were locked out of the wood and the pigs were locked in. This year the pigs, which have done a very thorough job of bramble clearance in G, have been moved out before the spring flowers emerge. Foot and mouth disease has not reappeared although its legacy is still keeping Dan Bardesley in action with DEFRA and out of ornithological action with us.

Captures of birds on some days have been depressingly low, with Goldcrests being notably uncommon this winter. Robins have been relatively frequent and the total catch has been boosted by Yellowhammers in search of Pheasant food. In spite of the poor weeks, however, the total standard-net catch has only been a whisker below average.

Mild weather earlier in the year has been followed by rougher, colder weather more recently. In spite of that, Spring is springing with the first primroses in bloom, the Blue and Great Tit influx well advanced, early purple orchid leaves visible and resident birds engaged in territorial singing. Trees take longer to come into leaf, so now is the best time to observe our colour-ringed Robins - when they are most voluble and visible before the leaves obscure them from view. Come and join us one Sunday or come to the wood any time to hunt for a few of the Robins.

From David Glue

David has, as ever, sent a few comments on the previous issues of Twitter. He says:

The IPM group did exceptionally well in 2001 to complete both CES and CBC work in the wood, with some interesting findings. The ringing endorses BTO Nest record and CES findings suggesting yet another poor breeding season for many species - as detailed by Dawn Balmer, with report to follow in the next issue of BTO News. It now looks, for species such as Blue Tit, that mild winters and good survival of adult birds may not be sufficient to counter poor breeding performance - and hence global warming/climate change may be too rapid a process for certain species to adapt their breeding timetable to compensate. Early, but interesting days.

The BTO relays a large vote of thanks to all Treswell Wood IPM Group contributors for the marvellous support of the Trust's work. The great joy is to see Treswell findings figuring so regularly today in applied BTO research reports, hopefully to the benefit of all the UK's birds. Thanks again for your kind support.*

* This refers to the use of our data in reports prepared by the BTO for government, industry, etc. which are generally not published. Such reports can be very influential in determining policy, affecting the location of new developments and so on. JMMcM

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Wren	5	1M1237	13/1/2002	R00

We only ringed 13 nestling Wrens last year. This is the first to be retrapped. It was ringed in N06 and such a small post-juvenile dispersive movement, of only about 450 metres from its natal site, is fairly common for this species.

Blackbird	6M	RR11930	3/3/2002	L00
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This is a 1998 vintage Blackbird which we ringed as a juvenile in H02 in the Autumn of 1998. Three and a half years is a respectable, rather than outstanding, age for a Blackbird. However, this one has evaded capture for all this time. Where has it been?

Blue Tit 6M J522573 3/3/2002 Q02 Feeder

An ageing Blue Tit, ringed as a juvenile at these feeders in July 1995 and trapped there 14 more times up to his previous capture there just over two years ago in December 1999. Apart from that we have only trapped him twice elsewhere - in June 1998 in the middle of block B. Where has he been hiding since 1999?

Blue Tit 6M K463932 30/1/2002 N05 Roost

An old box-faithful bird. Apart from when it was first ringed as a juvenile in August 1996 in O06, and a few captures at the feeders, we have only found this bird when roosting during winter. He has always been found in the same box - number 90 - and we have found him there in every winter but one since he was ringed. We do not catch many male Blue Tits on the nest so we do not know where he nests. It might, at first, seem likely that box 90 is his nesting site but this is not the case. Box 90 has not been used for nesting since 1996 except once, in 1998, when the clutch was deserted.

Blue Tit 6F N459890 3/3/2002 M00

We ringed this bird in May 2001 as a breeding female in box 37, a mere 80 metres from where she was trapped today. Curiously, N645470 was with her in the same net - a first year female bird which is one of her nestlings. Is it chance that this mother-daughter pair were still together after all this time? Why has the daughter not dispersed if the mother is still holding the territory? As usual, answers on a postcard to John, please.

Great Tit 5M P400672 24/02/2002 Q02 Feeder

The spring influx begins! This bird was newly ringed a week earlier in the extreme south of the wood (B03). Has it already settled in to a territory in the south while commuting to the north for fast food? Similar behaviour has been seen in several other Great Tits including P400645, ringed roosting in G02 on 30/1/2002 and retrapped ten days later at the feeder.

Great Tit 5F VS51180 10/2/2002 Q02 Feeder

We ringed this bird as a nestling in D03 during June 2001. It had not been retrapped until now. Had it not been ringed in the nest, it would have appeared as a new bird today and we would have counted it as part of the spring influx. It is possible it has been in the wood all the winter, although as it knows about the feeder it seems unlikely we would have failed to catch it there over the past 6 months. More likely is that it wintered elsewhere, away from the wood and is now returning for the breeding season. How many of the birds we consider 'new' in the spring are, in fact, Treswell Wood natives who were careless enough not to collect a ring before they left for the winter?

Treecreeper 6 8Y3344 24/02/2002 N04

Not yet approaching the Treecreeper age record, but still a good age for a very small bird. This was ringed as a juvenile in August 1998 and has been caught 8 times since then in blocks C and D only. This was its first recapture since December 2001.

Jay 5 DA87120 6/1/2002 F06

The first 'big bird' of the year, on the first visit of the year. See Twitter 32/33 for our overall history of Jay captures.

Yellowhammers 6M P400621 6/1/2002 G04

The first of a series of birds coming in to feed on grain laid down for Pheasants in the centre part of the wood. All new birds so far.

Controls and recoveries

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Wren	5	9Z3087	K00	4/1/2002

The remains of this Wren, consisting of a ring and four primary feathers from the right wing, were found in a nestbox. Presumably they had been left there by a predator. It is not clear what the predator was, although it must have been as small as a weasel in order to enter the box, nor why it took the bird into the box to eat it. We have seen a similar event once before on 29/12/1981 when we found the remains of a Robin in a hole-entrance nestbox. In that case it was clear that the carcass had been transported to the nest because live Robins do not go into boxes with such small hole entrances. In this case, although Wrens will go into these boxes to roost or nest, the box was bare floored. Wrens like to roost in a box insulated by nesting material.

Blue Tit 5F ABY305 3/3/2002 Q02 feeder

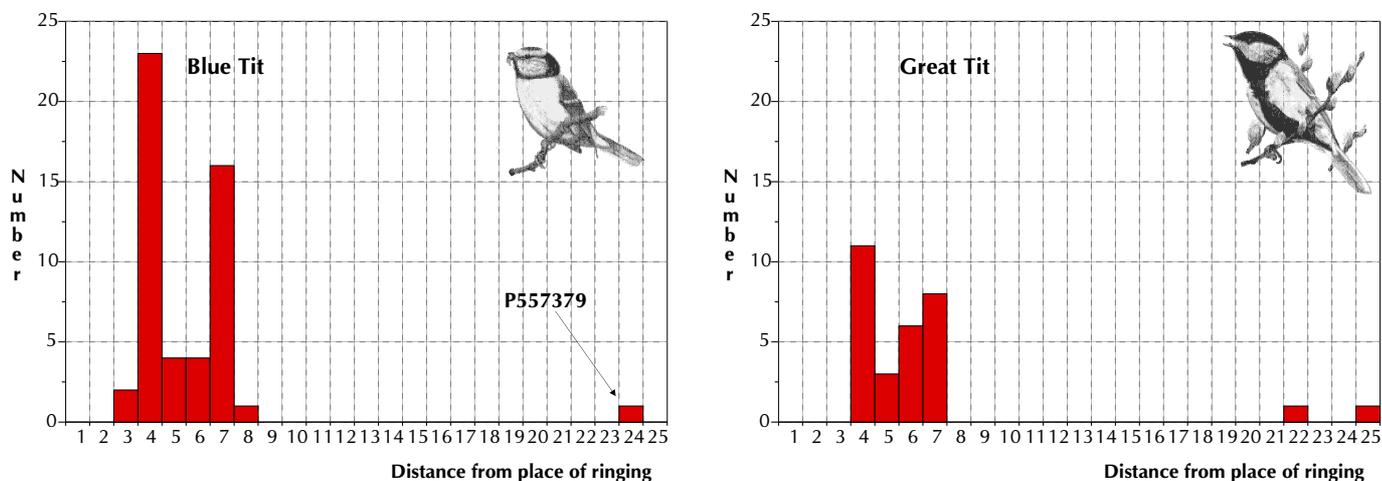
This bird was ringed at Sturton-le-Steeple by Peter Harrison on 17/11/2001. It is the first bird he has sent us since April 1999, although he rings less than 5 km from the wood.

Blue Tit 5F P557379 10/3/2002 Q02 Feeder

Another spring influx bird. Kyle ringed this near his home in Lincoln on 25/1/2002. It is his first outgoing control since he gained his C permit and began ringing independently last November. He has also captured one incoming

bird in Lincoln - a Beekingham-ringed Greenfinch. His total number of birds handled is still well under 200. We hope his control rate continues to be as high as this for the rest of his career! P557379 has moved approximately 24 km from Lincoln to Treswell and is our second longest incoming movement of a Blue Tit controlled in the Spring. The graph below gives distances which Blue and Great Tits we have controlled in January to May have travelled between place of ringing and Treswell Wood. (These birds can be regarded as representing the influx for the breeding season.)

Birds captured in Spring - Distances from place of ringing.



In addition to the birds illustrated above, one Blue Tit moved 45 km (Sleaford) and two Great Tits moved 60 km (Derby) and 145 km (Shropshire) respectively from their place of ringing to Treswell Wood.

Chaffinch 6F P400310 7/2/2002 Rampton Roost

This bird was first controlled at Rampton by Mike Archer in December 2000, a month after we ringed it at the feeder (see Twitter 30). Mike has recaptured it, again at the roost, fourteen months after its first capture there.

Chaffinch 6M P400227 22/1/2002 Rampton Roost

Another of our birds found at Rampton. This one was ringed in H04 during September 2000 and had not been seen since. It may have been coming in to feed on grain put out for Pheasants when we first captured it, rather than being a resident in the wood.

Other Animals

We have recently taken a collection of non-bird specimens to Sheila Wright at Wollaton Hall. Some, such as the three moles and one weasel, were those that we found dead but otherwise in good condition and will make good museum specimens. Others, usually invertebrates, were those which we collect to be identified. Sheila has, very kindly and rapidly arranged for them all to be identified. Thanks also are due to Prof. Harrison at Nottingham University for looking at the fox tick. For the record, the complete collection was this.

Three moles, *Talpa europaea*. These were found dead on the ground in early June 2001. We see such dead animals quite often at this time of year although it is not clear why. As usual, there was no sign of cause of death. One weasel, *Mustela nivalis*. Found 9/6/2001 as the moles, just dead, uninjured on the ground. This is the first time we have found a weasel like this.

The water shrew, *Neomys fodiens*, was found fairly freshly dead in a nestbox about 50 m from the main pond on January 4th. At the time, the weather was cold with all surface water, including the pond, frozen. Presumably the normal hunting in the pond (which is the only nearby water), was unavailable so the shrew was looking elsewhere for invertebrates. Roger Cottis, a mammal expert, tells us that water shrews can live in small water bodies such as our pond, and these bodies may be very far distant from any other suitable habitats. When hunting in the water becomes impossible they will switch to land hunting. It may be that this animal had heard invertebrates moving in the nestbox and had gone to investigate before being overcome by cold and hunger. It is the first confirmed record for the species in the wood. (I thought I had seen a water shrew in Treswell Wood about 15 years ago but it was only a fleeting glimpse of it swimming across a ditch. I have never seen any in the nestboxes before in spite of having recorded nestbox events since 1979 and having seen many common and pygmy shrews over the years). The carcass was very well preserved and is now Wollaton Hall's first specimen of this species. We have a cover picture of a water shrew to mark this occasion. (This picture, which you might recognise, is now available 'in the cause of education' from Brooke Bond tea from the internet. If you search there you will also find images of all the tea card collections they have ever produced. This collection, for which we are very grateful to Brooke Bond, will solve the cover picture problem for the foreseeable future. The site is at www.whom.co.uk/squelch)

Various sexton beetles were found last June on the carcass of a predated Stock Dove which I had cleared from a nestbox and dropped on the ground below a week before. Some beetles were of the usual black-with-orange striped type but there were others of a more rounded shape with no orange. The orange-striped beetles were *Nicrophorus vespilloides* which bury carcasses and lay their eggs in them. These are very often seen in nestboxes where young birds have died before fledging. The other species *Oiceoptoma thoracicum*, is an unusual sexton beetle in that it does not bury carcasses; instead it preys on larvae of other beetles. Like other sexton beetles, however, it is often found on carcasses where larvae will be plentiful.

Finally, the large tick was found on 22nd October 2001 attached to the head of a Wren, so large it stuck out of the crown feathers almost like a small brown wattle. Clare used her skills, acquired when she was a veterinary nurse, to remove the tick intact.

Sheila Wright writes:

*Further to our earlier exchange of e-mails below, and to your visit last week, I can confirm that the black Silphid with the red thorax is indeed **Oiceoptoma thoracicum**. The two sextons however, were both **Nicrophorus vespilloides**, and not *Nicrophorus vespillio*. Both species are widespread in Notts, and reasonably common.*

*I gave the tick that you found on a Wren to Professor Harrison at Nottingham University, who looks at all our ticks for us. He rang this morning to say that it was an adult **Ixodes hexagonus** (sometimes called the fox tick), which had been feeding for about two days (they get a lot bigger after a few more days). It occurs on foxes, other mammals, and birds, and is widespread and pretty common in Notts. (The other one we get commonly here is the sheep tick - *Ixodes ricinus*.)*

I showed the water shrew to Don Sharp when he popped in last week, he was most impressed and is looking forward to taxiderming it when he gets back to work - hopefully in a couple of weeks or so.

Once again, thanks for all the specimens. Best wishes. Sheila

Sheila is always pleased to have specimens in good condition for the Wollaton Hall collection. Do not waste any you find. Give them to John or Chris so they can pass them to Sheila.

10 Week Summary - Captures in Standard Sites - January - March 2002

2002 Interval 1 Visits 1528, 1530, 1525, 1532, 1524, 1527, 1529

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	1	3	.	1	1	.	6
Dunnoek	.	2	.	.	3	.	5
Robin	1	5	.	3	2	.	11
Blackbird	.	1	.	2	.	.	3
Goldcrest	1	4	.	.	.	.	5
Long-tailed Tit	3	.	.	6	.	.	9
Coal Tit	.	.	.	.	1	.	1
Blue Tit	2	6	.	5	6	.	19
Great Tit	1	3	.	2	2	.	8
Treecreeper	.	1	.	3	.	.	4
Chaffinch	.	2	.	.	.	.	2
Yellowhammer	3	9	.	.	.	.	12
Totals	12	36	.	22	15	.	85

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	106	159	170	616
2001	(57)	(33)	94	121	59	(364)
2002	85					(85)

Note: Bracketed numbers represent incomplete data sets and are not included in summary figures below. Incomplete data sets in 2001 result from foot and mouth restrictions.

Minimum	59	57	94	68	59	422
Mean	87	108	165	140	127	634
Maximum	124	145	288	253	177	865