

TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

May 2000

Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

All projects by permission of NWT

Project leaders:

CBC Margaret Price

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John McMeeking

2000/2 Number 27

Treswell Wood Common Birds Census 1999

The BTO analysis has arrived and brings with it some interesting results. Fiona Sanderson from the BTO writes: *Many thanks to the team for carrying out another CBC on your plot last year and for returning your results promptly. Your survey was completed to the usual very high standard and is a valuable addition to our dataset.*

The 1998 (National) CBC results showed a continued decrease amongst many of the Red-listed species, with a significant drop in numbers for Grey Partridge, Linnet and Bullfinch. However, many small woodland residents were up in 1998 with increases for Wren, Robin, Great Tit and Chaffinch.

Wren and Robin were up again on your plot in 1999 and Chaffinch also did well. Bullfinch returned as a territory holder and Treecreeper did particularly well with a total of seven territories.

Thank-you again for your hard work and support. I hope that you will be able to repeat your survey this year.

Margaret Price noted the highest ever total of Wrens - the previous record was 97 in 1990. This really is a massive increase even for a bird such as the Wren which has such great fluctuations in its populations. Song Thrushes have crept up by one territory to five - perhaps the decrease has come to an end. However, there is a long way to go to reach the levels of the 1970s when we enjoyed a maximum of 33 territories. 1999 brought a new species to our CBC list - Buzzard. We did not claim any breeding territories for it but at least we have the magic tick for 'present'. Robins are increasing again, although the 66 territories are still well below the 1981 record of 83 territories. Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs enjoyed a record year but in return Willow Warblers sank to an all time low of four. Chaffinches also had their best year ever - there do seem to be many more about everywhere than usual. Sadly Cuckoo was only present and there were no Turtle Dove records at all. What a far cry from the 1970s where these two species enjoyed maximum numbers of 11 and 10 territories respectively.

CBC Territories 1976 - 1998

Species	Averages				1996	1997	1998	1999	%change 98 to 99
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95					
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0	0	p	1	x
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	1	1	p	1	x
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	p	x
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	1	x
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Grey Partridge	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	10	5	5	5	x
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	0	~
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	1	1	p	p	x
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	x
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	0	nc	nc	x
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0.0	0	0	p	0	x
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	1	1	p	p	x
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1	2	p	1	x
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	3	2	2	2	x
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0	0	p	p	x
Swallow	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	67	50	82	127	55

Dunnock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	14	12	12	13	8
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	42	36	47	66	40
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25	20	24	31	29
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	3	8	4	5	x
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1	0	1	1	x
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0	1	0	0	x
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	6	6	8	7	x
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	19	17	30	32	7
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	10	17	23	27	17
Willow Warbler	27.6	44	31.4	18.2	8	10	8	4	x
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0	0	p	2	x
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0	0	0	0	~
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	8	3	4	5	x
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	5	4	4	5	x
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	4	3	1	2	x
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7	7	7	5	x
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	83	74	72	62	-14
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35	37	32	42	31
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1	2	p	2	x
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	2	4	3	7	x
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1	1	1	1	x
Magpie								p	x
Jackdaw								p	x
Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0	1	1	p	x
Starling	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
House Sparrow	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	0	x
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	36	24	34	54	59
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1	1	2	1	x
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	p	x
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0	1	p	1	x
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0	0	p	0	x
Reed Bunting	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	~
Total territories	457.4	457.0	437.6	386.2	395	351	407	514	

Footnotes:

nc = not counted.

x = fewer than 10 territories recorded in either year.

p = present but territory not confirmed.

~ = no territories in 1998 or 1999.

Treswell Wood - RAS Site

We have been colour-ringing Robins so as to contribute to the Retrapping Adults for Survival scheme. We must say that our resightings have been rather few and if anyone would like to walk the wood looking for our birds, we would be very pleased. However, our ringing regime allows us to catch large numbers of birds spread widely around the wood. This is different from many ringing operations where netting is concentrated on a small area. Even without resightings of colour-ringed birds, our captures are more than adequate for an RAS operation. When Dawn Balmer heard how many individuals we trapped annually, she requested all our April - July adult Robin capture data from the beginning of time. All the historic Treswell Wood breeding season Robin data are now safely in the RAS system. Dawn also has the complete TWIG ringing dataset in case any other species have enough recaptures of adults. We look forward to the results of her calculations.

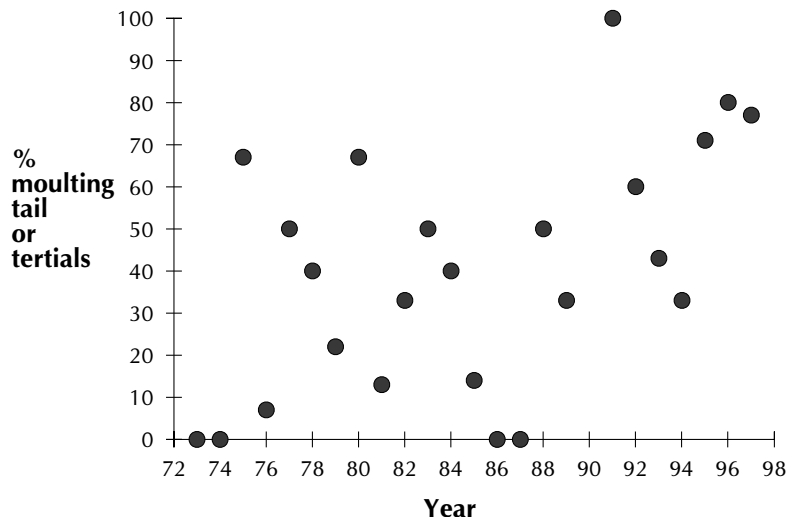
Activity, Sexing Method and Moult Codes (yet again)

Ringers will greet any change to the system with the usual degree of enthusiasm. The BTO Ringing Software Technical Panel has recently made some changes. Although some people might think that these changes are made just for the sake of upsetting the system, in fact there are good reasons for them. Some codes are changed to give consistency between the B-RING codes and the codes which were printed on schedules and which are now submitted on disk. Some codes are altered because there has been confusion in the past and some new ones have

been created because there were holes in the system. Treswell Wood ringers should feel rather pleased that their long-standing, careful recording of moult on juveniles has shown the need for one of the new codes. The latest set of codes is printed, on a separate sheet, for ringers. We will also print and laminate a copy for use in the field. We must begin to use the new codes because it will help with data entry and, eventually, with data collection and recording. However, when you have a temporary lapse into old-speak, do not worry because B-RING will reject the old codes and demand the new version (which the long-suffering data enterer will have to work out).

Ringers will recall how we used to record moult on most juvenile passerines - as a collection of letters to say whether Body, Head, Coverts, Tail etc., were actively moulting. In more recent years we have used the codes P to indicate post-juvenile moult or the (unofficial) code T to stand for post-juvenile moult including tail or tertials. When Steve and Chris entered the past biometric data, they translated the HBC, or BCT into the new P or T code. This meant we had an unbroken series of moult recording, in the same format, from 1973. We had felt that juveniles which moulted any tail or tertial feathers were undergoing a different quality of moult from those which stopped at head, body and coverts - hence our T code. We also noted that ageing birds on tail feather shape only could be misleading if the tail feathers had moulted as part of post-juvenile moult. We also had the gut feeling that more birds were moulting tail feathers in recent years than formerly. Your hard-won data support this feeling, as the graph shows.

Extent of post-juvenile moult in Great Tits



We also had the gut feeling that more birds were moulting tail feathers in recent years than formerly. Your hard-won data support this feeling, as the graph shows. For Great Tits there has been a gradual increase in the numbers moulting tail or tertials. For Blue Tits it has been a sudden increase. One possible cause of this change is the earlier breeding of birds (see Twitter 24 showing the trend for Great Tits. The trend for Blue Tits is less clear). Earlier breeding gives more time for the young to moult in the late summer, so some individuals will be able to replace more of their plumage. Whether this is all a result of global warming is another matter. It is possible that birds which moult tails or tertials are fitter birds and we might expect their survival to be better than those which moult less. There will be more on this in a future Twitter. Any volunteers for the analysis?

Noteworthy captures January - March 2000

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	4M	DA20228	2/4/00	D09

We do not normally mention the same bird in two consecutive Twitters, but we do not usually retrap Sparrowhawks so rapidly. Has this bird settled in the area? Will we retrap it again?

Kestrel	5M	EH28341	16/4/00	F02
----------------	-----------	----------------	----------------	------------

Our ninth Kestrel ever, following on very rapidly after the previous two in 1999. This one, a young male, was trapped on the edge of the open area cleared by the pigs last autumn.

Tawny Owl	8F	GF37967	30/4/00	K03
------------------	-----------	----------------	----------------	------------

The female we captured on the nest last year although, as so often, the bird has moved from one nestbox to another between years. We have already found the remains of two birds in her box (see 5Z1123 and 5Z1156 in Controls & Recoveries) whereas none was found last year. Has the bird changed its habits and started to hunt birds? Has it paired with a bird-hunting male? Is the population of small mammals relatively lower than last year? Does the habitat now favour bird hunting more than it did last year?

Great Spotted Woodpecker	5F	RH94708	9/4/00	Q02 Feeders
---------------------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------	--------------------

A new young female - our first woodpecker of the year, although we often have heard adults calling and heard Green Woodpeckers too.

Dunnock	4	N275441	19/3/00	R00
----------------	----------	----------------	----------------	------------

In the distant past we recorded normally sedentary Dunnocks making big moves through the wood to visit Pheasant feeding stations. This bird is one such - ringed a month earlier in F03 where Dunnocks, Yellowhammers and Chaffinches were cashing-in on the Pheasant food.

Song Thrush **6M** **RX57623** **9/4/00** **Q02 Feeder**

We do not trap many Song Thrushes at the feeders and retraps from earlier years are even rarer. This bird was ringed, in breeding condition, in June 1998 and we have not retrapped him again until now. At this capture he was also in breeding condition, so it may be his presence at the feeder was simply a result of the feeder being in his breeding territory.

Blackbird **6M** **RR11801** **9/4/00** **N-1**

Blackbirds are longer-lived than our smaller woodland birds but, even so, not many make it to the grand old age of 5 years or more. We ringed this one in January 1996 when he was already over a year old. Unlike most of our Blackbirds he moves around a good deal - we have trapped him in rides A/F, E/F and H/J.

Chiffchaff **4** **8Y3311** **2/4/00** **D09**

The first warbler of the season is always welcome, particularly if it carries a ring. Although we heard the first singing birds on March 12th, we had to wait three weeks before one landed in our nets. It had been ringed in July 1998 as a breeding male. Incidentally, the earliest bird we have ever trapped was on March 12th 1995.

Long Tailed-tit **4** **8Y3291** **23/4/00** **L05**

We first ringed this bird in November 1997 and have seen it again only in December 1997 and April 1999. It is now a goodly age for such a tiny bird.

Marsh Tit **1** **N459769** **21/5/00** **O05**

It is believed to be some years since John McM had a 'ringing tick' - so this Marsh Tit nestling deserves to be mentioned. It was one of a brood of only three in the 'stump' box where its mother, N305874, nested last year.

Coal Tit **5F** **N645232** **28/4/00** **L07**

The first of our last year's nestling ringed birds to be found on the nest. Phil ringed it in D05 in May 1999. It was retrapped in N07 in November so it seems it had already settled on a breeding area by that time.

Blue Tit **6F** **K720662** **14/5/00** **L03 On nest**

At this time of year Blue Tits should not be moving very far - this one is a mystery. We had trapped her twice at the feeders then during April in the south of the wood. At that point it seemed clear that she was a southern bird commuting to the feeders from time to time. Why then does she nest in a completely different part of the wood?

Blue Tit **6F** **K463181** **6/5/00** **P01 On nest**

We ringed this Blue Tit as a first winter bird in March 1996 at the feeders. Since then we have trapped her 16 times, always within, or very near, block B. She has nested in our boxes in 1996 (Q03), 1997 (P01), 1999 (P01) and 2000 (P01). In 1998 we failed to trap her at the nest although we did mist-net her in breeding condition in P01. In spite of her age and this year's wet weather, she is still producing good broods of young. (Six young fledged from the seven eggs which she laid.)

Blue Tit **6F** **N305866** **14/5/00** **H04 On nest**

More mysterious movement. This bird had only been caught at the feeders until 23/4/00 when she was one of two females mist-netted near an active nestbox in L06. Some days later the second of these females was, not surprisingly, found sitting in that box. This bird, on the other hand, then nested half way across the wood. At the time of the capture near the box in L06, she had not started building in her chosen nest site. Was there competition for the first box even though the other bird had already laid one egg in it?

Great Tit **6M** **K463714** **30/4/00** **N04**

This bird has a long recapture history, almost always at the feeders. Today we trapped it in N04, not far from its only other non-feeder capture (N07 in March 1997). This is the bird which twice grew over-long mandibles and Ulli trimmed them. Since Ulli has returned to Germany, the bird seems to have mastered mandible self-regulation and is living to a very respectable age - it was ringed in March 1997 as a first summer bird and was part of the spring influx of Great Tits.

Garden Warbler **4** **P400031** **7/5/00** **H01**

One of our first (probable) pair of this species for the year. The other (N768511) was a control and will appear in a later Twitter when we have the full details.

Blackcap **6M** **K463771** **23/4/00** **L05**

Another vintage model, dating from 20/4/97 - three years almost to the day. We missed him in 1998 but trapped him during his 1999 visit. He cannot claim to be first of the year - by the time we caught him, three other birds had been trapped and ringed already that day.

Blackcap **6M** **N275106** **30/4/00** **N06**

Site fidelity! A second early recapture from past years. This bird was first captured last July as a breeding male in the net adjacent to the one in which he was recaptured today.

Jay 6M DA51822 14/5/00 E04

We first captured this bird in November 1994 and retrapped it in May 1996 (Twitter 8), both times at Grove End. This time, after four years, it appears in the southern part of the wood. It is our second oldest Jay ever, being 5 years and 205 days since its first capture. The oldest was EF57083 which lasted 7 years 263 days from 1978 to 1986. For the record, we have now captured 60 Jays of which 18 have been retrapped or recovered.

Chaffinch 6M J522460 30/4/00 Q02 Feeder

A real vintage model! Ringed on 11/12/94 and retrapped reasonably frequently since then, always at the feeders. He is now in at least his 7th year of life and we still do not know where he breeds. Is it near the feeder or some distance away and he just makes regular trips to it at a time of year when food requirements are high?

Chaffinch 6M K463902 26/3/00 Q02 Feeder

Another of our long-absent friends. We ringed him as a young male on 21/5/96 at the feeders and had not seen him again. Obviously he was as pleased to be reunited with us as we were, because he came back for more two weeks later.

Greenfinch 6F VR78751 26/3/00 Q02 Feeder

One of just two retrapped Greenfinches from previous years. We ringed this one at the feeder about 15 months earlier on 13/12/98. The second, VR78888, was ringed in May 1998 and retrapped on 30/4/00. All captures have been at the feeders.

Controls and Recoveries

Wren 4 5Z1123 30/4/00 K03 in Tawny Owl nest

Last year's Tawny Owl nest produced no bird rings at all. Already we have removed this ring from the floor of the nest and this promises more once the young have fledged and the nest remains can be finely examined. This Wren had a short life, being ringed as a first spring bird in L01 on 16/1/00 and retrapped nearby in late March. That area is very open after recent coppicing and makes good hunting ground for the Tawny Owl.

Willow Warbler 4F 5G2976 5/6/99

We gave the ringing date of this bird in Twitter 26 as 16/8/99. Although global warming may be affecting bird life in many ways, this bird does not provide the first evidence that global warming causes time travel. It was just a misprint. Ringing date was 16/8/98 - thanks to readers who noted the error.

Goldcrest 5M 5Z1156 14/5/00 K03 in Tawny Owl nest

Good news and sad news! We examined this bird with some excitement when we ringed it on 30th April this year. It was in breeding condition promising the possibility of the species breeding in the wood rather than just overwintering. Alas, the ring appeared two weeks later in the Tawny Owl nest. It is not unknown for Tawny Owls to prey on Goldcrests, but it is unusual. Richard broadcast a query over the internet which elicited only three responses. The dialogue reproduced below.

- Richard: *Just out of curiosity, has anyone else ever found remains of a Goldcrest or similar sized bird (around 5 grams) in a Tawny Owl nest?*
- Dr David Harper: *Not in nests, but in pellets of Tawny and Long-eared Owls. What an unlucky Goldcrest - was it the male?*
- Chris Mead: *We once had a Tawny Owl pellet with both Goldcrest and Blue Tit rings in it. I have been using the slide in lectures since (probably) 15 years before you were born!*
- Dirk Raes: *We have been watching Tawny Owl nests using infra-red cameras but have not observed any prey items smaller than Coal Tit.*

Footnote

This edition was originally produced on the Acorn computer using Techwriter. Electronic copies were exported into MSWord format from there. For consistency, the document has been transferred to Impression and exported, using RiScript on the Acorn, to a PDF file.

10 Week Summary

2000 Interval 2 Visits 1451, 1453, 1449, 1450, 1456, 1455, 1452

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Wren	2	2	.	5	3	.	12
Dunnock	.	1	.	4	1	.	6
Robin	4	6	.	2	4	.	16
Blackbird	1	1	.	5	1	.	8
Song Thrush	.	1	1
Blackcap	1	1	.	2	.	.	4
Chiffchaff	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Goldcrest	.	1	.	.	1	.	2
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	3	.	.	4
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	3	1	.	4
Willow Tit	.	.	.	4	.	.	4
Coal Tit	.	4	.	2	3	.	9
Blue Tit	2	3	.	3	3	.	11
Great Tit	1	.	.	3	2	.	6
Treecreeper	.	1	.	5	3	.	9
Chaffinch	1	3	.	3	.	.	7
Totals	14	24	.	46	22	.	106

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1978	101	131	243	223	131	829
1979	97	115	180	91	123	606
1980	86	102	211	147	170	716
1981	102	110	288	188	177	865
1982	66	113	142	89	110	520
1983	82	140	143	185	128	678
1984	91	114	110	82	106	503
1985	103	88	135	118	88	532
1986	77	104	153	68	141	543
1987	95	112	196	209	124	736
1988	92	143	180	137	119	671
1989	124	137	282	145	103	791
1990	99	145	204	130	175	753
1991	65	57	99	74	127	422
1992	64	64	115	223	159	625
1993	81	70	112	158	126	547
1994	88	109	209	155	157	718
1995	91	124	240	253	104	812
1996	95	121	128	116	97	557
1997	59	99	126	98	98	480
1998	78	84	116	80	106	464
1999	88	96	140	113	163	600
2000	75	106	---	---	---	(181)
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	87	108	171	140	129	635