

TWITTER

Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

August 2022 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

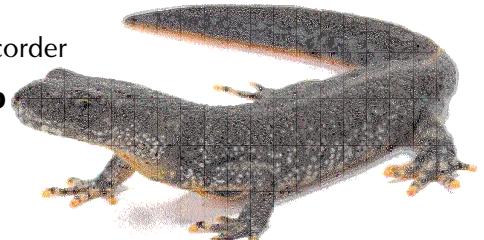
CBC Ellen Marshall

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

2022/3 Number 138

www.treswellwoodipmg.org



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The weather, which caused so much disruption earlier in the year because of persistent high winds has been little problem during the last cycle of standard site visits. It will be difficult to have been unaware of the heat and dryness affecting much of the country recently. Treswell Wood did enjoy some rain on 18th June but on the following day much of the ground was dry. Rain had only penetrated the first couple of centimetres at best. Even Nightingale can be walked in boots without becoming muddy. By mid July parts of the wood were beginning to look parched and making holes for mist net poles is becoming hard work. Rain would be very welcome indeed, not only for the wood but everywhere else (preferably not on a Sunday, though).

In 1976 the long drought brought many birds from the surrounding area to drink at the main pond. This gave large catches. We now have two ponds, the pond at the southern end of the main ride was not excavated until the late 1970s. Neither pond has ever dried completely so we may see another influx of birds, particularly after what seems to have been a productive breeding season.

The nesting season has been very compact, apart from the Stock Doves, of course. Earlier broods have been very healthy, with later broods a rather less successful. This is as expected, the dominant birds nest first; the 'also rans' tend to lay fewer eggs, have reduced hatching success and rear nestlings after the peak of the caterpillar crop. A full account of the nesting season will appear in the next issue once we have entered, checked and analysed the information.

The BTO has circulated feedback for all CES sites (of which Treswell Wood has been contributing from the start). This has been already forwarded to our ringers. As usual our catch rate is very low compared to many sites. Woodland, we know, has a much lower catch rate than scrub or reedbed sites because so much of the habitat is well above mist-net height. However, in spite of that we do catch more Wrens, Blackbirds and Treecreeper adults than average. It seems that other sites catch far more juveniles (as John Clark knows from his site at Langford Lowfields).

We described the damage that grey squirrels did to the feeders equipped with PIT tag readers. It seems most likely that smaller-headed juveniles were able just able to reach in far enough to wreck the aerials. It has taken some time to source the replacement PIT tag readers and squirrel-proof the feeder. One newly modified feeder is now back in operation, and if that stays unmolested, the second reader will be in place in shortly.

Disruption to normal operations caused by covid had ceased after so-called Freedom Day (although with rising infections it is far from clear that restrictions on activities may not need to be reapplied). Meanwhile avian influenza has returned in a very worrying way. Unlike previous outbreaks which have been largely confined to high density poultry production, this variant is having a major impact on northern seabird colonies. All ringing of seabirds and birds in seabird colonies has been suspended in Scotland. The RSPB has suspended all ringing on its reserves throughout the UK unless an exceptional case has been agreed. So far terrestrial birds do not seem to be affected but we are taking extra care with single bird-bag use and cleaning equipment.

May 22nd brought a large catch in the standard site nets, 43 individuals plus some same day retraps. It seemed a long time since a standard site was that productive. For once, gut feeling was right. The last time we had as many birds in the standard site nets was in October 2020. Historically most of our large standard site catches have been in the late summer or autumn when many juveniles are present, often in flocks. In the third week of May, few juveniles have fledged and this large catch was almost entirely composed of adults.

We have enjoyed some exceptionally early captures of juvenile Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps this year and naturally wondered if, over the years, if the date of the first juvenile capture of the year irrespective of species is advancing at the same rate as the Blue and Great Tit egg laying dates have done, about 4 days per decade. The answer is surprising. There is a slight trend to earlier captures but only by one day per decade and even this is far from

statistically significant. Perhaps more interesting is that there is a strong, but not quite statistically significant, movement towards more variability in the early juvenile date. The scatter graph showing the earliest juvenile captures illustrates this.

Great Crested Newts

During the 1990s we began to make more non-bird species records, including casual records of any newts we saw. Over the last 15 years we have made specific efforts to look for newts, particularly Great Crested Newts, in the southern pond. Sadly we had not seen and there since 2017.

Over the last two years the highly toxic chemical fipronil

has been found in very many watercourses in Britain. This is the active chemical in many flea treatments for dogs and cats. It is known to be fatal to very many aquatic vertebrate and invertebrate species, including newts. When we discovered this we wondered if fibronil might have been washed from any treated dogs which dog walkers allowed to drink or, worse, paddle in the pond.

We did look several times in the early spring for newts in the pond at the south end of the main ride where we usually see them. None had been recorded for the last five years. Ellen suggested we could test the water in the ponds for the presence of Great Crested Newt DNA. Neil Crofts, director of Brindle & Green environmental consultancy, very kindly provided the qPCR testing kits and arranged the testing. Happily positive traces were found in the two ponds in the wood and in the southern assart pond confirming the presence of Great Crested Newts this year. The northern assart pond had dried out so testing was not possible there. Many thanks to Neil for his generous help.

Safe for now but we do need to ensure that the ponds can remain free from toxic residues from visiting canines.

Yet More on Mites

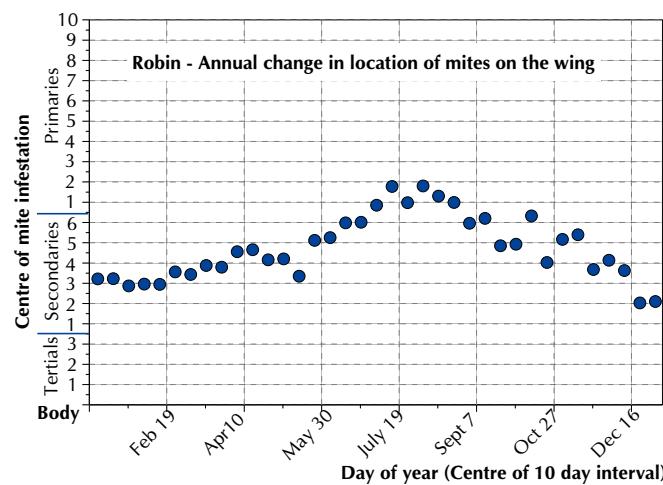
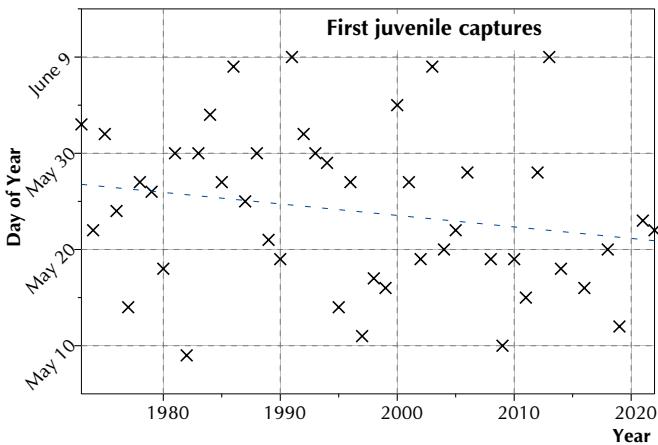
During the process of tidying our material prior to uploading it to the cloud, we found a note, dated 2nd December 2010 from Roy Wiles to Jerzy Behnke. Roy had been identifying some of the mites collected from Robins. (Yes, the species are now recorded in the system.) Roy asked, casually, if there were seasonal differences in distribution across the wing. In the previous issue of TWITTER Andy Kirk did suggest that there were more things to be looked at in relation to seasonal patterns of infestation. I have no idea why we have not looked at this before; it is really a very basic question and easy to address. And the answer?

It is always rewarding when investigation of our data

reveals a pattern and in this case there is a very clear pattern indeed as shown in the graph. What does it show?

Each flight feather is given a score according to its position with the innermost tertial position 1 and the outermost primary position 19. For those bird where mites were present (1443 records) the average position of mites on the wing is calculated. (i.e. the weighted mean of the feather positions with mite score on the feather as the weight). The day is calculated with January 1st as Day 1 rising to 365 (or 366 in leap years) for December 31st. The pattern is very clear indeed. As the winter closes the mean position moves outwards slightly until around day 150 (mid-May) and continues moving outwards before moving inwards again to its former position by day 250 (early September) and continuing to drop a little thereafter. During the summer autumn months, though, there are a several birds with mites further outboard than might be expected. I have made no attempt to separate the birds into different age classes.

There is definitely room here for much more work. Time of day and age of bird could be included in the analysis. A student needing a project which on which to practice general linear modelling with quadratic factors should look no further.



Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
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Great Spotted Woodpecker 3 LK39254 26/06/2022 Q03

The first juvenile woodpecker to be caught this year. It is an opportunity to record the length of the red cap in the hope of retrapping it after it has moulted into adult plumage and we will then know its sex. We believe that juveniles can be sexed on the extent of their red crowns, but we need considerably more data to be more sure of this. It was retrapped two weeks later providing an opportunity to make an independent measurement of the cap (happily within 1 mm) and to make a second record of the state of its primary moult (feathers showed very little growth in that time).

Marsh Tit 3J AJN3922 19/06/2022 C03

We have not recorded any Marsh Tits nesting in boxes this year but it seems they have bred either in the wood or very nearby - this bird was still in its full juvenile plumage having not started its post juvenile moult. It was retrapped two weeks later, still in the far south of the wood. It now wears a PIT tag. Once the grey squirrel damage to the reading stations has been dealt with we should be able to see if it remains in the south of the wood or migrates to the north during its autumn explorations.

Blue Tit 3J AAL8980 12/06/2022 N06

This was the first of this year's nestbox-ringed cohort of Blue Tits to be recaptured. Unusually it was not at the feeding station but only about 100 metres from its natal box.

The second retrap, AAL8895 on 10th July, was at the feeder about 250 metres from its natal box. Compare this small number of Blue Tits (2/286) with that of Great Tits (11/151) retrapped since fledging this year.

Blue Tit 6 ANE3181 24/07/2022 K02

This is one of the birds with a PIT tag which we fitted as one of the first trial birds to test the tag reading system. The tag was fitted on November 28th 2021. Until this capture, eight months later, it had not been retrapped again - even though it was a bird known to have frequented the feeders up to that point. However, it was still frequenting the feeding station and had been recorded by the tag reader on 12 separate days - readings ceasing after the grey squirrel damage in the Spring. We often wonder how aware birds are of the nets when we set them at the main feeding station. More capture histories, such as this, of PIT tagged birds might illuminate the picture.

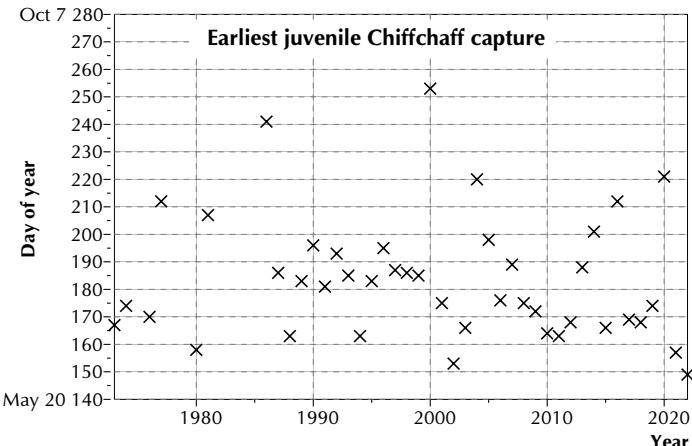
Great Tit 3J PL95002 26/06/2022 Q03

The first of this year's Nestling-ringed Great Tits to be recaptured. It was one of eight retrapped during the morning. They represented four separate broods, all of which were, as might be expected, in the northern part of the wood.

This is what has become expected pattern for Great Tits in the wood, good numbers at the feeders in the summer. Last year was exceptional with very few such recaptures and it signified a poor breeding season with poor post-fledging survival. This year seems much more promising for Great Tit productivity in the wood.

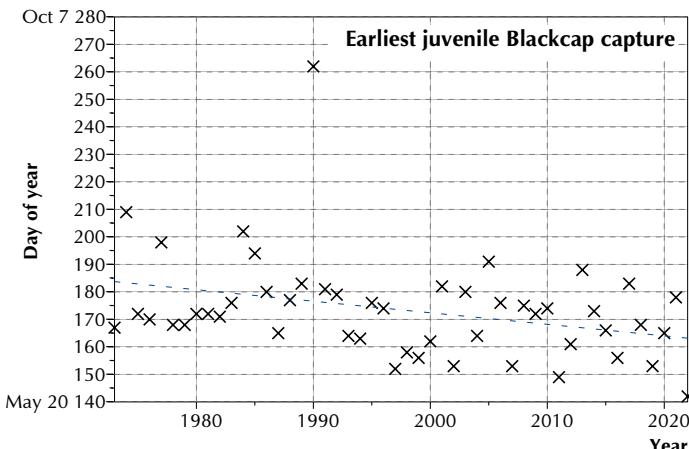
Chiffchaff 3J JTE939 29/05/2022 L00

One of a (presumed) family party of seven juveniles together with a male and a female adult (both unringed). This must represent successful breeding within the wood and is also a very early Treswell Wood record for ringing juveniles of this species. The previous earliest record was in 2002, five days later in the year on June 2. On that occasion it was also an apparent group of newly fledged siblings although no adults were caught at the same time. The graph shows how the earliest capture of a juvenile in the wood has varied through the years. It is rather less smooth than that for the Blackcap. That is because we have caught fewer of this species over the years. Indeed, in a few years we caught none at all in juvenile plumage. With lower numbers, a poor breeding season, however early, may result in no early juveniles being caught.



Blackcap**3J AJN3901 22/05/2022****R-2**

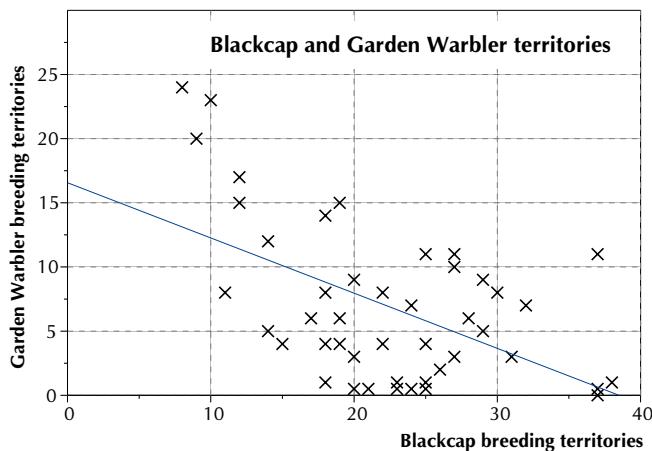
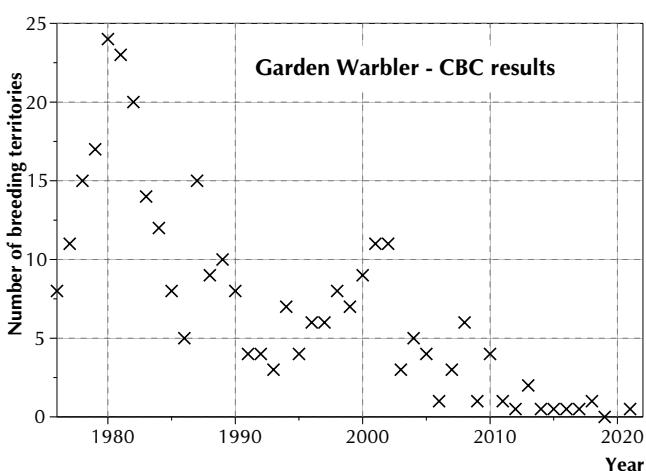
This is a very early record for a juvenile Blackcap but it is very hard to mistake a juvenile with its fresh, fluffy plumage with the brown-capped female with older worn and bleached plumage, particularly when it is caught alongside a breeding female. It is our earliest record of a juvenile Blackcap, the next earliest being on 29th May 2011. That bird was very recently fledged with primary feathers still not fully grown. The graph shows the earliest capture dates of juveniles through the years. There is a steady movement to earlier captures and, unlike with the less common Chiffchaff, no missing years. The graphs suggests an average moving of the season by about one day every two years.

**Blackcap****4M ANA7805 22/05/2022****Q01**

This is a well-behaved Blackcap. It was ringed in June 2019 at the feeding station. We missed it in 2020, that was the year of lockdown with its missing ringing visits. In 2021 it was caught on May 23rd in net 9 of standard site 3, that is under 100 metres from the feeding station and well within foraging range. This year, 364 days after last year's capture, it was in net 10 of the same standard site. In between times we presume it has travelled to southern Europe or North Africa at least three times returning not only to the same wood but, also, to exactly the same part of the wood. Hope to see you in 2023.

Garden Warbler**4 AJN3917 12/06/2022****M02**

This species has decreased over the years, now being a rarity. This is the first we have caught since 2019 and before that the previous was in 2011. The CBC breeding territory graph shows the sad decline of this formerly common summer visitor. (At least one has been recorded in this year's CBC operation). This is quite in contrast to the closely related Blackcap which has shown a general increase over the years. Indeed there is a good negative correlation between the recorded numbers of breeding territories for the two species as the second graph reveals. It would be a mistake to conclude that the two species are in competition and that Blackcap is winning. The regional trend, as measured by the BTO BBS, is a slow decline in Garden Warblers and

**Goldcrest****3J JTE95603/07/2022 D09**

Goldcrests are not reliable breeders in the wood. The table shows their breeding territory record. We have full territory records for 45 years - missing years were 1973 to 1975 when the census did not yet cover all the wood and 2020 during the lockdown. In only 10 of these years have there been sufficient registrations to be able to determine a

in continued firm increase in Blackcaps. The Treswell Wood data to a large extent mirrors the regional trend. Our Garden Warblers have declined relatively faster than in general for the region and that may be that other factors are involved. Certainly the dense undergrowth which the species prefers is reduced by coppicing and this effect is increased with the greater numbers of deer present. David Parkin noted the contrast between these two warbler species and discusses it more in Birds of Nottinghamshire.

Goldcrest Territories 1976 - 20

Territories	Years
Not recorded	19
Present	16
1	6
2	3
5	1

breeding territory; and the other years were fairly evenly divided between no records of the species and no records which indicted a breeding territory. Unlike many species there is no long term trend in breeding territories and the number may just depend on external factors. The five territories, recorded in 2017, was exceptional.

This bird, still in fresh juvenile plumage and in company with an adult which we had ringed in the same part of the wood in November 2021 provides good evidence for successful breeding this year.

Wren 4F AXD455 17/07/2022 G04

This is the second Wren we have retrapped this year from the 2021 nestling-ringed cohort, the other was much earlier in the year before the breeding season and before its sex could be determined. This bird was caught about 300 metres from its natal box - a typical post-natal dispersion distance for this very sedentary species.

Nuthatch 4M TT49223 22/05/2022 R00

An old friend, ringed in March 2016 and retrapped 10 times since then. It just breaks our internal history length record for the species (set last autumn) by one month but even at 6y 64d since ringing still has five years before it exceeds the national age record. We have only caught two birds this year with longer capture histories, both of which have been noted in the previous issues of TWITTER. One was a Jay at 6y 231d and the other a Marsh Tit at 7y 155d.

Treecreeper 6 JTE162 19/06/2022 E04

Whenever possible we take a picture of the primary coverts of Treecreepers. We now have about 250 such pictures held 'in the cloud'. Charles Deeming has been given access to them in order to look at differences between juvenile and adult feathers. At present ageing Treecreepers on the patterns on these feathers is the best we can do but is not absolutely reliable. This bird is exemplary. It has given us three images: its juvenile feathers, its juvenile feathers after a winter's wear and now its full adult feathers. What a fine species and what a fine individual.

Blackbird 3J LK39246 22/05/2022 R00

The first juvenile capture of the year always seems like a significant event. We might expect early breeding Long-tailed Tits to perform here, although in recent years their breeding does not seem to have been so successful. This year the honour (i.e. this honourable mention in TWITTER) goes to this Blackbird, but only just. Blackcap AJN3901 was caught a mere hour and a half later.

The table gives the full list of first juvenile species of the year. Only Robins have more first juvenile records than Blackbirds.

Spotted Flycatcher 4 AJN3898

22/05/2022 Q01

Although this species has obvious physical differences it has behavioural similarities to the proverbial London buses. You wait a long time for one to arrive then there is a batch of them. True to form, the last we caught was in July 2018 but today three arrive. None were yet in breeding condition and none have been retrapped. in the wood so it is likely they were passing through.

First Juvenile species of the year

Species	Number of years
Robin	17
Blackbird	13
Song Thrush	6
Long-tailed Tit	5
Dunnock	3
Chaffinch	3
Treecreeper	1
Coal Tit	1
Mistle Thrush	1

Dunnock 3J TY35083 10/07/2022 N00

This is one of five juveniles caught on the same day. That is unusual but, looking back to see when this last happened it was only on June 12th this year. Memory can be, indeed, short. Up to mid-July we have ringed 11 juveniles. The last time we exceeded that number was in 1989 and it was only in the 1970s that we generally caught as many. There is a difference between then and now. In those days, Treswell Wood was often referred to by the ringers as Dunnock City. Our adult captures in spring were much higher than they are now, usually over 100. This spring (April onwards) we have captured 21 adults which is typical for recent years. The spring average for all years is 40 adults and only six juveniles. If the ratio of juvenile to adult captures during this period can be regarded as a measure of productivity this year 11:21, has far exceeded the all time average of 6:40. This is another indication of a generally good breeding season.

10-Week Summary: 2022 Interval 3, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Marsh Tit	.	.	2	1	.	1	4
Blue Tit	1	.	3	2	3	1	10
Great Tit	.	.	2	3	2	1	8
Chiffchaff	10	.	6	2	.	.	18
Blackcap	17	.	6	5	.	.	28
Goldcrest	.	.	1	1	.	.	2
Wren	4	3	13	3	2	.	25
Nuthatch	.	.	1	1	.	.	2
Treecreeper	.	.	2	2	.	.	4
Blackbird	10	.	5	8	1	.	24
Song Thrush	2	1	2	1	.	.	6
Spotted Flycatcher	3	3
Robin	.	1	14	.	1	.	16
Dunnock	1	1	7	5	1	.	15
Chaffinch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	3	.	4	2	.	9
Totals	48	9	64	39	12	3	175

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	92	115	159	130	126	611

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	151	109	120	606

Recent Years

2018	95	108	182	184	119	688
2019	113	131	170	152	129	695
2020	120	---	---	93	174	(387)
2021	...	163	129	90	109	(491)