



TWITTER

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Treswell Wood Ringing Group

Ringing: By permission of NWT

Project leader: John McMeeking

Editors: Richard & Chris du Feu



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder.

Nestboxes

It has certainly been a terrible season. Between-year variation is to be expected but, in general, changes between years are within typical limits. This year has not just been worse, it has been exceptionally worse! David Glue notes that it has been poor for much of the country. Some nest box recorders are reporting to him the worst ever in the last 25 years. In the west country, for example, vegetation was well advanced after the mild winter allowing birds to nest early in the spring. Chris Mead and David drafted a press release which, as printed in the Daily Telegraph, reports the catastrophic breeding season. If it is any consolation, our work has helped to document it! They were hard hit by the cold and wet April. Treswell Wood birds did not begin before the poor April weather and simply waited for it to pass before starting to nest. Alas, the mild winter coupled with what Derek Warren suspects is a predator imbalance within the wood, allowed the wood mouse population to become very large. Tawny Owls have had their nests in boxes destroyed, again, by grey squirrels, so their demand for mammal food for the young is also reduced, further reducing pressure on the mice. The table below gives typical events in the wood and shows how much our tits have suffered this year. David G. wonders whether these species are very highly tuned for breeding and the strain on them is so great that if they fail, even at a fairly early stage, they find it difficult to restart. Some individuals will consider the potential benefit of trying to breed again in that season is not worth the risk. It is better to try to survive the next winter before attempting to breed again.

Nest records 1998

Species	Nests started	Clutches laid	Successful broods	Adults on nest	Nestlings ringed	Success rate	Nestlings retrapped
Tawny Owl	1	1	0	0	-	-	-
*Woodpigeon	-	1	0	-	0	-	-
*Swallow	2	2	2	-	6	-	0
Wren	20	10	4	-	18	25%	0
*Robin	-	2	1	-	5	-	-
*Blackbird	-	1	0	-	0	-	-
*Blackcap	-	2	1	-	3	-	-
Coal Tit	4	2	2	2	11	50%	0
Marsh Tit	2	2	2	2	11	100%	0
Blue Tit	84	70	10	40	41	11.9%	1
Great Tit	34	27	4	8	20	11.8%	4
*Treetreeper	-	1	0	-	-	-	-

* nests not in boxes

Nest Record News.

The Nest Records staff at the BTO produce an annual newsletter for nest recorders. If you would like to see a copy of the 1998 edition, or if you want a copy of your own, ask Chris. Contents include an account of the 1997 season, tables of numbers of cards submitted, advice on completing cards, an analysis of the 1997 season which notes species giving enough cause for concern for the JNCC to be alerted, a note on the effects of global warming on nesting performance, details of a new national bird nest archive collection and much more. A good read!

Wrens - a cautionary tale!

We had felt that our captures had been very low during the early part of the year and, indeed, we had caught very few. However Frank and Liz Tillotson noted that Wrens were very common in their CBC patch (blocks A, B, E, F, G)

Dave Fogg at Cottam provided us with his capture totals over the last few years, and this year's are about average. Why were our ringing numbers so low after the mild winter, particularly when the birds were very noticeable in the CBC? On close examination of our capture records the answer was apparent. Our numbers were indeed low in January and February (4 captures only) but they are always low in these months. In fact, in every month so far our Wren captures have been within 3 captures of the average number for that month. For the record, our captures and Dave Fogg's at Cottam are given below (and they do show different patterns of captures in the two sites). **Moral:** check the facts rather than relying on memory!

Adult Wren captures 1990 - 1998, Jan - Jun

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Average
Cottam	9	10	17	10	6	14	17	6	12	11.2
Treswell Wood	79	29	44	36	63	86	48	34	54	52.6

Study Species

In Treswell Wood we have the opportunity to study some species at a greater depth than is possible in other places. For example, few places have viable populations of both Marsh and Willow Tits. We think it will be useful to put additional effort into a few such species. This will enable a better understanding of the birds and give us reason and opportunity to practise measurements other than the standard wing and weight. The provisional list is below, but further thoughts would be welcome. A fuller list of instructions will be in the ringing kit soon.

Species	Extra data	Objective
Wren	Head+bill, Wing spots	sexing, ageing
Marsh Tit	Tail steps, wing	separation of species, sexing
Willow Tit	as for Marsh Tit	
Blue Tit	Wing, colour	sexing
Treecreeper	head + bill	sexing
Chiffchaff & Willow Warbler	Wing formula	separation of species

Yersy Behnke from Nottingham University is keen to cooperate in a study of feather mites on birds. During the next few months we will practise his method of recording their presence on some birds. The eventual aim is to choose two species which we catch throughout the year in reasonable numbers and which we retrap regularly. Just to document the annual pattern of infestation would be new to science! It would be advantageous if the species we chose were those which we capture elsewhere which could enable comparison of our woodland with other habitats. Robins and Dunnocks could be worth considering.

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
Woodpigeon	FV89997	5/7/98	I04

Our first Woodpigeon capture of the year: an adult.

Wren	0Y5960	13/6/98	Q02 feeders
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One of our 1997 nestbox-ringed birds from an unusually small brood of two. This is its first capture and it has made, for a Wren, considerable post-juvenile dispersal - it was ringed in C04, very near the south edge of the wood. Although it was caught at the feeders it is unlikely that it was using the feeders as a food source. It is more likely to have been captured because its territory included the feeder area.

Chiffchaff	8Y3068	19/7/98	H02
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Retrapped 2 years, almost to the day, after being ringed as a breeding female at the feeders. Was she just feeding there or was it in her territory? Has she moved her breeding territory? Where was she in 1997?

Garden Warbler	K463797	19/7/98	H02
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This is one of our very infrequent recaptures of this species. This bird was ringed as an adult in May 1997 in Howard's Ride and retrapped today as part of the large catch (82 birds) in Norman's Ride about 400m distant.

Marsh Tit	N305916	13/6/98	Q02 feeders
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Our first tit nestling of the year to be mist-netted. Alas, it was a new bird rather than one of our nestbox-reared birds. It was recaptured a week later in N01.

Coal Tit	K181569	18/5/98	E07 On nest
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This female has nested in our boxes previously as was reported in Twitter 17 which also gave details of her former, presumed, mate K463143. Close examination of this year's nest records suggests that the two did not pair together

this year - K463143 was found dead on a different nest from where this bird was starting her second, but unsuccessful, clutch for the year. BWP notes that about 80% of surviving paired birds remain together for the next breeding season.

Blue Tit **J522640** **9/5/98** **C03 On nest**

Our oldest recorded nestbox user this year. In 1995 she was ringed at dormouse box 83 (D03); and she was retrapped in the same box in 1996 and 1997. This year she has moved to an adjacent box in C03.

Blue Tit **J522444** **8/5/98** **F06 Roosting**

An ageing male Blue Tit with a history of winter roosting captures. This time it was roosting in an empty box, presumably leaving its mate to brood the nestlings in some other box. This is our first breeding-season roosting record.

Blue Tit **K287558** **9/5/98** **E08 On nest**

One of two birds ringed in the same box in 1995 with similar histories. Both have been to Sturton-le-Steeple (see Twitters 8 & 12) and returned. Both are regular box nesters ('96, '97 and '98) and both, unusually for this year, are still alive in spite of the massive nest-predation. The sibling is K287554

Great Tit **VN47628** **10/6/98** **F05 On nest**

A 1994 nestling-ringed bird, recaptured in the south of the wood in 1996 (also on a nest) and in both 1995 and 1997 at the feeders. Today she was on a nest which, like many others, failed. However she, we believe, has survived.

Great Tit **VR78723** **16/7/98** **Q02 feeders**

The first of this year's nestlings to be retrapped. It was with others (both unringed and nestling ringed birds) at the feeders.

Great Tit **VV34003** **5/7/98** **F03**

Where has it been? This 1996 nestling-ringed male was last caught at the feeders in December 1996. It has lasted one complete colour-ringing season and the subsequent breeding season without being recaptured. Today is its first capture away from the feeders since being ringed in B08.

Nuthatch **VR78858** **13/6/98** **Q02 feeders**

Our most-frequently captured Nuthatch. This is its 13th capture, always at the feeders. We first captured it there as a juvenile in July 1997. Today it was with two juveniles - presumably its own and evidence of breeding within the wood.

Chaffinch **K463342** **13/6/98** **Q02 feeders**

A recapture from two years ago, again at the feeders. There have been several Chaffinches caught at the feeders during the late spring. This demonstrates that the birds are happy to use artificial food sources throughout the year, not just in the winter. Indeed it may be that they need extra food even more in the stressful breeding season than they do in the winter cold.

Notes from Ulli about her 'old friends'.

NN18142 (LGn/Bk) is still around, that's very nice to know. One of the real old ones. LYw/De (K463599) is also an old friend (not as old as LGn/Bk, of course), an experimental bird - not a very successful breeder, but maybe interesting male. He has paired with the former mate of Pink/White Left. It would be interesting to know whether they stay together. One of our 'early' last year's nestlings, VV34074, is still around: very good.

Controls & Recoveries

Species	Ring	Date	Grid
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Tawny Owl	GJ80614	16/7/98	D06
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This bird had been ringed as a nesting adult in a box near Piccadilly Circus (F04) in May 1994 and not recaptured since then. Its remains were found on the ground, decomposing, still recognisable as an owl but too far gone to know the cause of death. Because Tawny Owls are very territorial, it is likely that this one has been the one which has attempted to nest in recent years but has been evicted from its nests, year after year, by grey squirrels.

Robin	K463486	9/8/98	Q02 Feeders
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One of our first colour-ringed Robins, found dead at the feeders - cause of death unknown. Ringed 21/7/96 at the feeders as a juvenile, he was caught there frequently thereafter, and probably including the feeders in his territory.

Blackbird	RH94914	6/9/98	Q05 Dead on road
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Ringed 13/8/95 at Treswell End (O06) as a moulting adult and not recaptured since. Another victim of the motor car.

Long-tailed Tit **5W9685** **16/3/98** **Eakring**

It is some years since we have had a Long-tailed Tit control from further afield than the nearby power stations. This one, 18km distant, is our third longest ever.

Coal Tit **K463143** **12/7/98** **E08 Dead on nest**

Ringed 4/2/96 in Nightingale Ride and recaptured there regularly, this was the mate of K181569 (one of our 1995 nestlings) and yet another victim of the 1998 nestbox predators. Details of its history were in Twitter 17.

Blue Tit **K720058** **28/5/98** **M07 Dead on nest**

Like K720172 (below) this bird was ringed as a nestling in 1996 but unlike that bird this one had always been retrapped at the feeders. This recovery was our first indication of its breeding area.

Blue Tit **K720172** **16/5/98** **C07 Dead in nest**

A 1996 nestling which had been retrapped three times in Nightingale Ride, but never anywhere else. A nestbox predator victim.

Blue Tit **N305578** **23/5/98** **C09 Dead on nest**

Another nestbox victim, killed in its first breeding season before passing on its genes. Ringed 25/1/98 at the car park feeders and not recaptured since then.

Blue Tit **N305585** **18/5/98** **D08 Dead on nest**

A first year female, ringed at the feeders on 1/2/98 and subsequently retrapped near its chosen nesting area.

Great Tit **VV34068** **23/5/98** **F05 Dead on nest**

A 1997 nestling-ringed bird which had become a regular at the feeders before being caught roosting in the Nightingale Ride area. Alas, she too has been a victim of this year's predator.

10 Week Summary May - August 1998

1998 Interval 3 Visits: 1363, 1365, 1358, 1359, 1364, 1360, 1362

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Woodpigeon	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	3	2	8	3	.	.	16
Duncock	2	.	2	2	.	.	6
Robin	1	4	6	1	1	.	13
Blackbird	3	4	1	4	4	.	16
Song Thrush	3	1	1	.	.	.	5
Garden Warbler	2	.	.	.	.	.	2
Blackcap	6	7	8	3	.	.	24
Chiffchaff	4	1	2	2	.	.	9
Marsh Tit	.	.	1	1	.	1	3
Willow Tit	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Blue Tit	.	.	1	.	2	.	3
Great Tit	.	1	2	3	1	.	7
Treecreeper	.	.	1	2	1	.	4
Chaffinch	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Bullfinch	.	3	.	1	1	.	5
Totals	25	23	34	23	10	1	116

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week Periods

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1996	95	121	128	116	97	557
1997	59	99	126	98	98	480
1998	78	84	116	---	---	(278)
1979 - 1998						
Max	124	145	288	253	177	865
Min	59	57	99	68	88	422
Mean	88	109	172	144	128	645