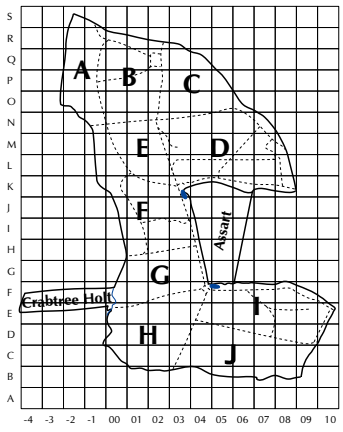

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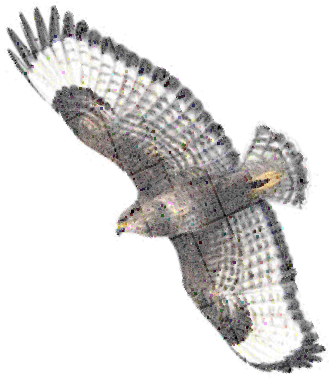

Treswell **W**ood - **I**nformation **T**o **T**ell **E**very **R**ecorder

May 2019 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

2019/2

Number 122

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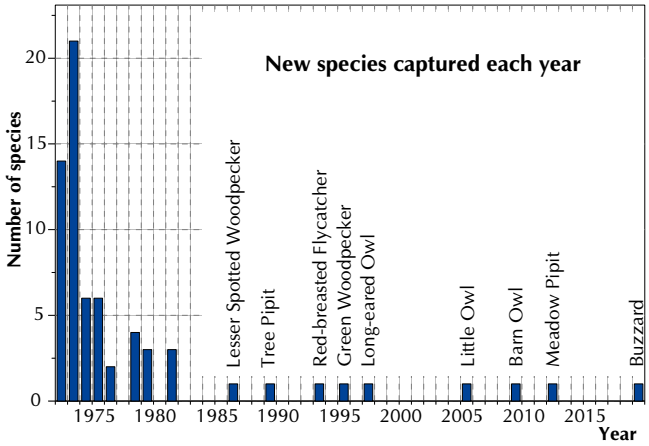
Our second 10-week constant effort interval of the year has produced, like the first, numbers which are comfortably above average. So far, so good. However, the tit nesting season is very protracted and rather later than usual this year. This may lead to lower numbers fledging overall - we will wait and see. The contrast between this year and last is remarkable. Almost all of last year's nestling ringing took place during one week at the end of May. This year the first tits have fledged whilst others are still incubating. The next issue of Twitter will have a full report of events. The CBC season is well advanced now and has included more registrations of Willow Warblers than in recent years and also an early record of a Spotted Flycatcher.

Careful readers of Twitter will have realised that the Noteworthy Captures and capture totals sections have always listed species in the traditional Voous order. Over the past few years taxonomists have been very busy. It seems that for the species we catch the new order is now fairly stable. From this issue onwards we have re-ordered the species in the new accepted order. We have retained the traditional species names and will continue to avoid the really unnecessary Common/Eurasian/European etc. prefixes so often applied.



It is always exciting to catch a new species in the wood - the Buzzard being the 68th we have recorded. The graph shows our record of new species per year. Its general shape holds no surprises - 1972, with only 2 visits, gave 14 new species with another 21 in 1973. Most common species had been caught by then. Only 12 more had been added by 1975 with another 12 in the next decade, these included Sparrowhawk and Nuthatch with expanding ranges. Since then new species have been very rare indeed - about one every three years. Of these, five have been of species which are known in the area but rarely come into woodland (or like the Green Woodpecker seem to dedicate their lives to avoiding mist nets), one (Red-breasted Flycatcher) was a rare vagrant, two resulted from changes in our activity (Barn Owls at Forwood Farm and Meadow Pipits in the assart). Only the last species, Buzzard, is one where its range has increased dramatically and is now commonly seen in the area. Perhaps a graph showing the year of species' last captures would tell us something (probably worrying) about a decline in species diversity.

Post-juvenile alula and greater covert moult

We have yet to hear results of the national project, to which we contributed data, which is examining various aspects of post-juvenile moult in Blue Tits. This was very much a trial project - partly aimed at understanding more about moult but also aimed at seeing how workable data collection would be. Full records included details of tail, secondary feathers, alula and old greater covert replacement. Of these, the tail and secondaries proved most time consuming (in both the field and for data entry thereafter). Assessing whether feathers were replacements or not also often proved difficult in, even this, the easiest of our species. On the other hand, we often note the number of old greater coverts as part of the ageing process. The alula score - which we had not routinely assessed before, is just as simple for many species.

A further, unstated, aim of the trial was to encourage ringers to record more detail about moult - a much under-studied but vital aspect of bird life processes. It is little trouble to record both alula and old greater covert scores in a routine manner for species such as Blue and Great Tits. It is probably not yet the time to add two more columns on our field sheets for these data. However, it is worth trying to record them whenever practical. I suggest these things be recorded in the notes column in the format O:2 A:1 with the obvious meaning of 2 old greater coverts and alula score of 1 (only smaller feather renewed). All such records would find their way into the BTO database.

Blue Tit nesting - habitat and weather

Claire Branston has completed her PhD which, amongst other things, examined factors influencing Blue Tit nest success. For this she used data from a variety of sources and we are delighted that our nest records and habitat data have been of use to her. We hope her work will eventually produce a published paper.

She found that tree species composition did not affect the first egg dates of Blue Tits. This seems surprising because different trees come into leaf at different times and we might expect the tits to time nesting in order to benefit from the timing of the caterpillar crop which, in turn, depends on the leafing time of the trees. The clutch size, though, was dependent on tree species with clutch sizes increasing with the density of oak (and there is opportunity here for a student project comparing the north and south of Treswell Wood). Perhaps surprisingly, though, the failure rate of nests was not related to the density of oak. Later clutches had higher failure rates than earlier clutches - that was to be expected and can be explained in terms of food supply. What was not expected was the finding that clutch size became smaller with increasing temperature.

BWARS - more on our species records

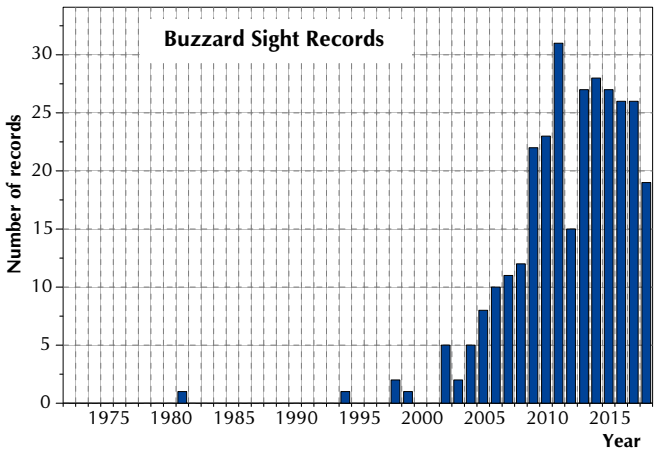
Since computerising our species records, we have submitted all those of Hymenopteran species to BWARS - the Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society. Some of our records, often of unidentified wasp species nesting in a bird box, are not particularly useful on a national scale although can be useful for us for local phenological studies. Mike Edwards at BWARS asked for all the records anyway. Those that are useful for the national species records collection will be used and the others he wants to keep anyway, 'just in case'. He is particularly pleased to have our hornet records (which make up about 60% of the total). As noted in the previous Twitter they give a good picture of colonisation of the wood and will be useful to add to Mike's studies of changes in Vespulid wasp distributions over the last 40 years. Mike has forwarded a guide to identification of these wasps and any records we can make of specifically determined wasps will be very welcome.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid

Buzzard **5** **GV40477** **21/4/2019** **N00**

The first Buzzard we have ever caught. The graph gives the number of times we have recorded Buzzards in or above the wood over the years and shows how they have become increasingly common since their first sporadic appearances over previous years. The CBC record is much the same with a first sporadic records from 1999 until records each year from 2005 onwards and a breeding territory in the wood almost every year from 2008. We certainly would not have had opportunity to catch this species until recently. However, on this occasion luck was also a major factor. John Clark happened to be at the net, which stretched across a ride, extracting a small bird but hidden from view by a bush. Larger birds do not often stay long in nets - their feet are too large to become enmeshed. John was able to move very swiftly and secure the Buzzard before it escaped. We think it was probably hunting along the ride - certainly easier than flying through the shrub layer. We will investigate the possibility of a short, very large mesh net to set across rides, when possible just in case these birds use the rides more often than we thought.



Tawny Owl **6** **GR24218** **23/4/2019** **L02**

This is the seventh year in which we have found three Tawny Owl nests in the wood - all of them since the turn of the century. Today we caught three adult Tawny Owls on nests. Curiously all these have very different histories and none have been caught as nesting adults before. This one had been ringed as a nestling in 2016 near the dam and not seen since. It is the first of our nestling-ringed Tawny Owls ever to be retrapped in the wood (other than four which had been caught by hand soon after 'fledging' from their nests). Another four have been found away from the wood. Of the 16 Tawny Owls we have ever caught on the nest (some caught in several successive years) only one was ringed away from the wood - nearby in Headon as a nestling.

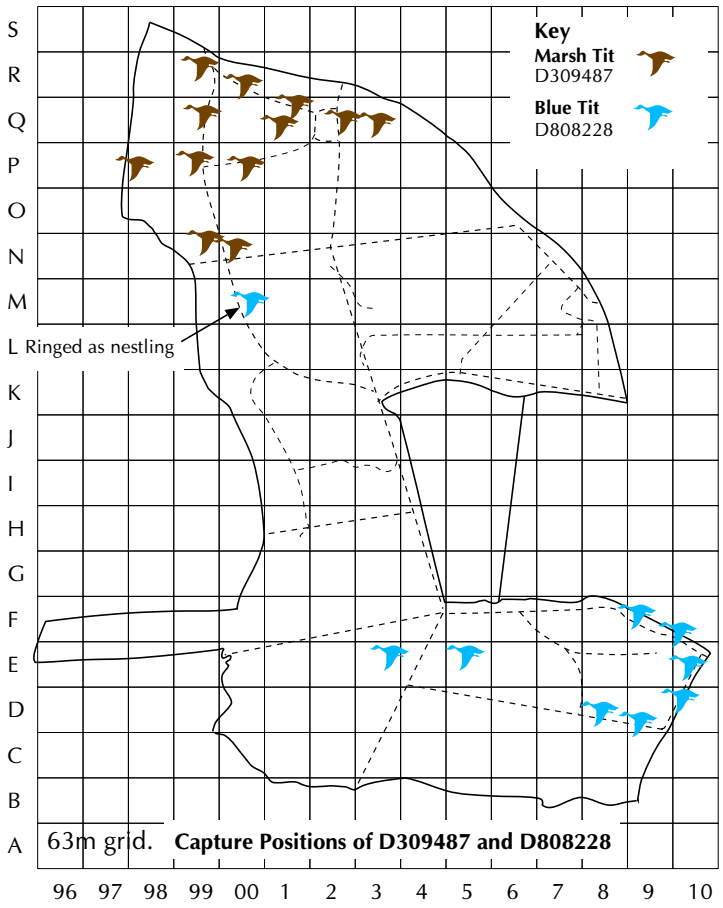
The second bird on the day was GR24215 which had been ringed four years earlier as an adult, caught in a mist net – and we do catch very few in this way. The third bird, GV40478, was an unringed bird.

Great Spotted Woodpecker 5M LK39021 7/4/2019 E02

This is the fifth Great Spotted Woodpecker we have caught this year. In the last issue of Twitter we noted that it was unusual to catch only unringed birds. This has continued with this and one more new bird. Interestingly four of these have been clearly ageable as last year's birds, showing contrast within the greater/median/lesser coverts. In recent years many of our woodpeckers have been unageable, showing no contrast in colours within these tracts. It seems that last year was not a good season for moulting, with many, perhaps most, juveniles not managing to complete the moult of these feathers. It would be interesting to look at the proportion of unageable birds each year and compare that to the conditions at the time of moult. Weather? Food supply? Timing of nesting?

Marsh Tit 6F D309487 23/4/2019 Q00

What a history – this is the 23rd capture of this bird which was ringed as a juvenile in 2014. All its captures, including all three captures as a juvenile, have been in the north-west section of the wood. The capture locations are shown on the map but note that only one symbol is given in each of the grid squares even though that symbol may represent several captures. Often juveniles will be found first in either north or south of the wood and then all adult captures will be in the opposite part. This one has not bothered to switch ends. It has been captured at all times of the year, including as a breeding female, in every year since 2014. This capture was when she was on a nest. Marsh Tits in the wood tend to have longer lives than Blue Tits. (see Twitter 115) This is probably because their sedentary behaviour allows them to know their home range very well and so be aware of good sources of food and shelter in hard times. The downside of this is when very hard times, such as winter of 1978/79, strike. If they cannot survive in their normal range their chances of surviving in an unknown area nearby are very limited indeed, A small, relatively isolated population, such as this one, is then in danger of complete extermination as we witnessed in winter 1978/79.



Blue Tit 6F D808228 5/5/2019 D10 on nest

What a history again. This is one of our 2015 cohort of nestling ringed Blue Tits. It has been found roosting during three winters and nesting in boxes both last year and this. Of its 14 post-fledging encounters, only one has been at a feeding station (very unusual), three more in mist nets and the rest either nesting or roosting in boxes. It has always been found in the south of the wood except for when ringed as a nestling. The map illustrates the compactness of its capture locations except for the more distant location of its natal site.

Blue Tit 5M AKE9232 28/4/2019 H02

This bird was ringed just 3km to the south in Headon in January. This is only a short movement but it demonstrates how Blue Tits will move around in the early part of the year until they find a place to breed. When we caught it, it was clearly a male in breeding condition.

Blue Tit 6F AVC1853 30/4/2019 F10 on nest

It is well known that birds tend to nest in the same small area year after year. Once they have found a good nesting area their chances of subsequent successful nesting are greatest if they stick to the familiar. This means that birds found nesting in boxes are either young birds which are nesting for the first time (either with a ring or not) or else older birds with a previous history (often of breeding) in the wood. Not so this year. The first three unringed birds we found on nests were adults. Given that we catch almost all the female Blue Tits on nests, it looks as if we have several older birds which are newcomers to the wood.

The table below gives the age structure and nesting history of the nesting female Blue Tits this year. Overall the proportion of older birds (i.e. 2nd or subsequent breeding season) to first breeding season birds of 56% is rather

higher than the typical 46%. In the table, the columns indicate the number of years in which individuals have been found nesting in boxes. Those nesting for the first time are subdivided into those with no previous history in the wood (i.e not wearing a ring when found on the nest) and those which already have been ringed in the wood. The two rows are for younger and older birds.

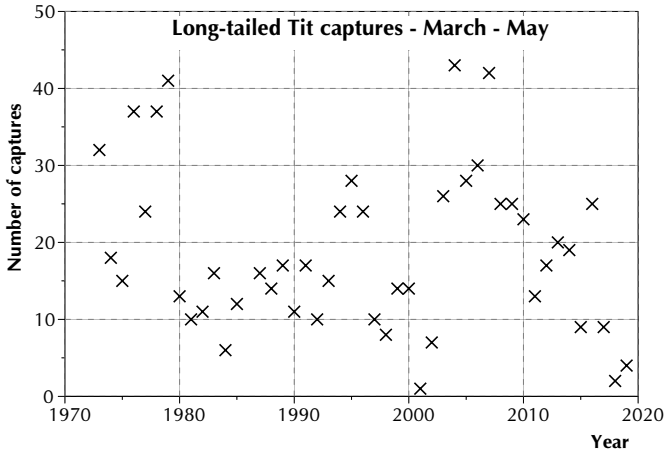
	1st (New Birds)	1st (Retraps)	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
First breeding	4	18	-	-	-	-
Older birds	3	7	17	1	0	1

Great Tit 5M NZ53101 31/03/2019 K01

A troublesome individual. It was ringed as a nestling in 2018 and retrapped whilst still in juvenile plumage and a note made about its very bright primary coverts. No surprise to retrap it after its post juvenile moult and find it was male. On this occasion, the brightness of its juvenile primary coverts showed negligible contrast with its adult greater coverts and so appeared to be an adult. Some individuals are just difficult non-conformists.

Long-tailed Tit 4 JTE37724/3/2019 Q03

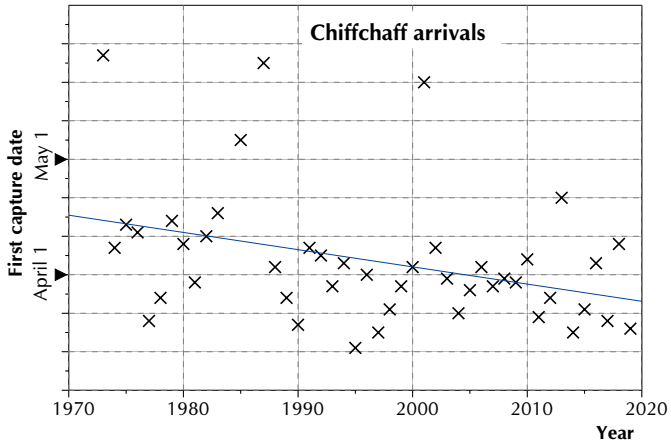
One of only four Long-tailed Tits to be captured in this 10-week interval. This is much lower than normal and has been lower in only two previous years. The low 2001 total was not because of low numbers of birds but a result of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease which prevented access to the wood for some vital weeks (the only time when we have failed to complete our 10-week cycle of standard site visits). The lower number in 2017 seems to be a result of the spell of bad weather - the Beast from the East - which came at a time to cause high mortality to these small birds and to disrupt the survivors' early, single broods. This year it seems that these tits may still be suffering the consequences of that short spell of very bad weather.

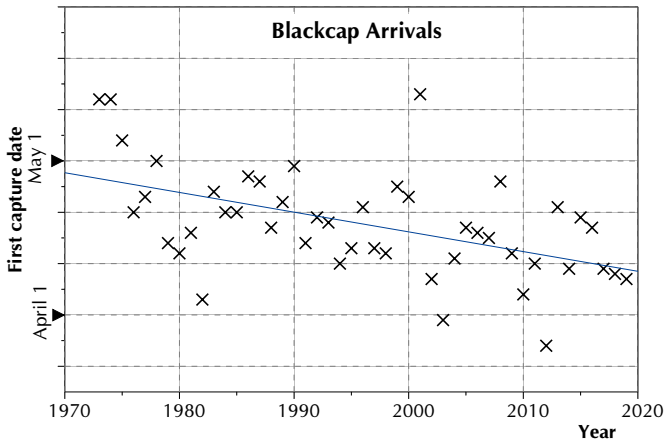


Chiffchaff 4 EYD859 28/4/2019 H01

Our first Chiffchaff of the year was caught on March 17th. It was not the earliest first capture, but very nearly so. The graph of first capture dates shows a significant downward trend, becoming earlier by nearly half a day per year.

Our first retrap of the year appeared one week after the first bird. This bird was the third retrap and perhaps the most interesting one, with a history similar to that of Blackcap Z782509. Ringed late March 2017, retrapped in June as a breeding male but not seen in 2018.





Blackcap 4M Z782509 28/4/2019 H01

The first Blackcap of the year was caught on April 7th. As with the Chiffchaff, it was earlier than typical, although not the earliest ever and almost exactly on the long-term trend line. As with Chiffchaffs, Blackcap arrival dates are advancing by nearly half a day a year on average.

Usually our first Blackcap captures of the year include some old friends which have been captured in the same place during the previous year, or two, or three. Not this year. This was our first retrap - three weeks after the first Blackcap was caught. We had ringed this one in 2016 as an adult but not retrapped it. Maybe it has been back in

the wood each year but breeding in a part of the wood where we only set mist nets infrequently. The second retrap, on the same day in the same part of the wood, was of Z782788, a female which we had ringed in 2017 but had also not been seen again until now.

The 'missing' years for these two and the Chiffchaff, EYD859, may be simply a result of three captures being on a non-standard site location where we only net infrequently rather than the birds breeding elsewhere in 2018. The solution for us is obvious.

Goldcrest 5M JTE333 5/5/2019 D08
Most Goldcrests we catch are autumn and winter visitors. This bird was in breeding condition and this is only the sixth year in which we have caught any in breeding condition. CBC records show confirmed territories in only 10 of the 45 years of the survey, so this is a rare event.

Song Thrush 4 RT55958 23/4/2019 Q02
A bit of a mystery here. This bird was ringed as an adult just over a year earlier and not retrapped since. Its fairly fresh but squashed remains were found in the car park. It appeared to be victim of collision with a car – typical of squashed remains which are often seen on a road. But the wood's car park is not noted for car movements fast enough for even the slowest of birds to be unable to avoid.

Robin 5 ANA7239 17/3/2019 O06
We ring very few birds in open nests and post fledging survival (of all small passerine species) is relatively low. This means it is unusual for us to have a recapture of an open-nesting, nestling-ringed bird in a subsequent year. We ringed this Robin as a nestling in May 2018. The nest itself was rather special being one that John McMeeking himself discovered as he was sitting at the ringing station.

Robin 4 ANA7449 17/3/2019 O05
Beware of over-confident ageing of Robins. This bird was ringed in 2018 in full primary moult and, therefore, cannot have been a juvenile. It has been retrapped 4 times since then and, on three of these occasions has been incorrectly aged because the pale coloured ‘wedges’ at the primary tips were so large. Some Robins do have these large tips as adults. However, they should be either uniformly large or else become smaller gradually towards the body. Large juvenile tips will end suddenly where the smaller adult ones begin. Unfortunately in spite of these rules being well defined, it seems that some of our Robins do not adhere to them.

House Sparrow 4M NZ53002 24/3/2019 Q03
A new House Sparrow which we could have aged as 5.However our few recent recaptures have shown that the criterion suggested in Demongin does not seem to work well with House Sparrows here. Better to assign a certain 'unknown age' code than an uncertain more precise age code

10-Week Summary: 2019 Interval 2, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	**5**	**3**	**Adult**	**5**	**3**	
Buzzard	.	1	.	.	.	.	1
Coal Tit	.	.	.	1	.	.	1
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	1	3	.	4
Blue Tit	.	2	.	7	7	.	16
Great Tit	.	4	.	5	8	.	17
Long-tailed Tit	2	.	.	.	.	.	2
Chiffchaff	6	.	.	1	.	.	7
Blackcap	7	.	.	1	1	.	9
Goldcrest	.	.	.	.	3	.	3
Wren	1	3	.	4	5	.	13
Nuthatch	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Treecreeper	.	2	.	3	3	.	8
Blackbird	5	3	.	9	3	.	20
Song Thrush	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Robin	.	3	1	4	4	.	12
Dunnock	2	2	.	2	2	.	8
Chaffinch	1	1	.	2	.	.	4
Bullfinch	1	1	.	.	.	.	2
Totals	**27**	**22**	**1**	**42**	**39**	**.**	**131**