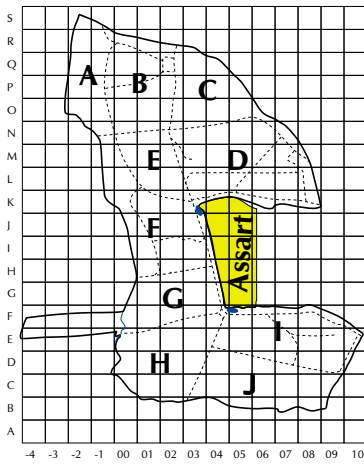
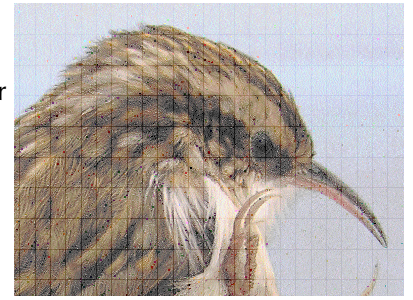


TWITTER



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

December 2013 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

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2013/5 Number 95

December 15th was the 41st anniversary (less two days) of John McMeeking's first ringing visit to Treswell Wood, with Ted Cowley. It was also a significant anniversary for another reason. During the morning we had our 100,000th encounter with a Treswell Wood bird. These 'encounters' include ringing, retrapping, sight records, recoveries of any Treswell Wood-ringed birds together with similar encounters of birds ringed elsewhere but later trapped in the wood. We were hoping that we could contrive events so that this bird could be a Treecreeper. As it was, little contriving was needed for an unprecedented six of this species arrived in a mixed flock at exactly the right time. The vital one was given to an unsuspecting John and the event duly recorded on camera. The picture and brief notes now appear on the BTO 'Demog Blog' for December 2013, btoringing.blogspot.co.uk

The final two visits of the year were productive so, by the end of 2013 we had amassed 100,151 encounters with 50,551 individual birds. This means that around half our encounters are with birds already carrying a ring. This contrasts with the national figures (where currently about 20% of records submitted are of retraps). These retraps help give us a picture of the birds' lives and movements within the wood, insights into their behaviour (such as moult) and (as in the case of Great Spotted Woodpeckers) throw light on our ability to age birds.

The year and the 10 weeks

Like 2012, 2013 will be remembered as a year of below average bird abundance. In 2013 we enjoyed only about 200 more captures than in 2012. The breakdowns of the two years' capture numbers are very similar indeed with the extra captures largely explained by an increased number of nestling Blue Tits and increased recaptures of nestling-ringed Great and Blue Tits. Blackbird was the only other species showing any noticeable change - up from 69 encounters to 117. Standard-site captures are probably the best measure of bird abundance - they are not affected by catching effort. The total of 512 standard-site captures for the year is the fifth lowest ever. This reflects low numbers of birds in the early part of the year (for reasons recounted in earlier issues) but with the numbers in the final ten weeks of the year being the eighth highest ever, and the highest since 2006. This period's high total was, in part, a result of two larger-than-usual mixed parties of tits and Treecreepers with other species totals being very much as usual. At first glance the relatively low standard site captures for some species are at odds with the total mist net captures for the whole year. Some species - notably the tits and Great Spotted Woodpecker - are very often caught at feeding stations. These captures do not count towards the standard site numbers. The overall number of controls/recoveries is almost completely composed of birds ringed at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell village nearby. The number of more distant inward movements is rather smaller than usual. Note that the table does not include captures of our birds in other places. Apart from a number of captures at Hillcrest Farm, only two birds have been reported in 2013 - a Blue Tit in Darlton and a Chiffchaff in Retford. Again, this is a rather smaller number of outward movements than typical.

Overall, this has been a year with considerable weather-related problems, low numbers of birds surviving the winter and a very late breeding season. But catches have increased over the last 10 weeks and the year ends more brightly than it began. We can but hope for a better 2014.

Common Bird Census - 2012, 2013 and 2014

For some reason, all parties involved with CBC map processing have suffered various domestic pressures over the past year. This has meant a delay in producing the computerised 2012 territory maps. They will eventually be done but, for the time, all we have is the numbers of territories (which were given in the May 2013 issue of Twitter). 2013 species observation maps have been prepared but there has been a delay in delivery to Thetford for preparation of the territory maps (we have never committed these maps to the postal system as we think the very small risk of loss is not worth taking - the observers' work is irreplaceable). It is possible that the 2013 territory numbers will not appear until the May issue of Twitter. Apologies for these delays.

Annual Summary - All ringing records 2013

	Ctrl.	New Birds			Retraps		Sight	Recvs.	Othr.	Total
		Adult	Juvnl	Pulli	Rt	SDR				
Sparrowhawk	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	2	
Stock Dove	.	.	.	6	.	.	.	.	6
Woodpigeon	.	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
Great Spotted Woodpecker	.	4	6	.	20	2	.	.	32	
Meadow Pipit	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	.	23	66	.	34	9	.	.	132	
Dunnock	.	15	25	.	30	7	.	.	77	
Robin	1	16	41	.	48	19	.	.	125	
Blackbird	.	49	28	3	31	6	.	.	117	
Song Thrush	.	7	2	.	1	.	.	.	10	
Redwing	.	1	6	.	.	.	.	.	7
Mistle Thrush	.	1	.	3	.	.	.	.	4
Whitethroat	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Blackcap	1	31	10	.	7	5	.	.	54	
Chiffchaff	.	23	11	.	12	5	.	1	52	
Goldcrest	.	9	28	.	16	5	.	.	58	
Long-tailed Tit	1	26	2	.	51	7	.	.	87	
Marsh Tit	.	.	3	17	42	4	.	.	66	
Coal Tit	.	2	17	23	63	3	.	.	108	
Blue Tit	3	36	67	107	258	24	.	.	498	
Great Tit	4	29	46	157	502	116	.	8	862	
Nuthatch	.	4	5	.	25	.	.	.	34	
Treecreeper	.	4	14	.	20	2	.	.	40	
Jay	.	.	2	.	1	.	.	.	3	
Tree Sparrow	.	8	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Chaffinch	.	33	33	.	28	6	.	.	100	
Greenfinch	1	5	2	.	1	.	.	.	9	
Goldfinch	.	14	3	.	4	1	.	.	22	
Bullfinch	.	10	19	.	8	1	.	.	38	
Totals	11	352	439	316	1203	222	.	1	11	2555

Key:

Ctrl - Birds ringed elsewhere and caught in Treswell Wood including all birds from Hillcrest Farm. **Juvnl** - juveniles. **Pulli** - birds ringed as nestlings. **Rt** - ordinary recaptures. **SDR** - same day recaptures. **Sight** - observations of ringed birds. **Recvs.** - recoveries, i.e. our own ringed birds found dead in Treswell Wood. **Othr.** - all in this table are pulli which were ringed but died before fledging; they are not included in the Pulli column.

On the positive side, for the first time a study has been done which uses the CBC maps as the main source of data, (as opposed to the vital but supporting role it has been used for in some other published studies). This work has been done by Mark Edwards at Lincoln University as part of his masters degree and we hope it will soon be accepted for publication (*Long-term patterns of woodland occupancy by two sympatric thrushes in English woodland.*)

That brings things to CBC 2014. Last year we suffered some uncertainty about starting dates and areas covered. It would be very helpful if all CBC observers would confirm to Pat Quinn-Catling that they **will** be covering their areas, as usual, in 2014. She will also advise on starting dates if such advice be needed.

Future developments

We have talked from time to time about a TWIG web site. Having one would be one way of raising the profile of our operation. Certainly the article in British Birds last November has generated a great deal of interest. It is a pity that people wishing to find out more cannot do so through an internet search. All that is needed is a volunteer, able and willing to take on this job in the long term. Things that would be useful to have on the web site, apart from a general description of the group's work, include all our publications and a selection of digital images. Publications would include all the papers that have been produced by us, or others, using our data and all issues of Twitter. We would not see it as a place for the ill-considered, blog-type contributions that can be seen on some ringing-related sites.

The question of digital images raises another important task for which a volunteer would be welcome. The photograph collection is growing rapidly (a result of the digital age) but we have no coherent system for storing or

cataloguing all the images. We still have a number of images from pre-digital camera days which need to be examined and either scanned or discarded as appropriate. Let us know if you are interested in taking on this responsibility.

In recent years we have asked ringers to pay a contribution to costs of rings and food for the feeders. We have suggested annual subscriptions of £10 from students and £20 from others. Keith Stedman is the Treasurer and cheques can be made payable to TWIG, please.

The assart purchase will finally be completed by the time you read this, but more contributions to the Treswell Appeal will still be welcome any Sunday or via the NWT web site.

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Sparrowhawk	3M	DK98430	15/12/2013	D09

Our second Sparrowhawk this year. At 133g it was a very light male although its wing length of 203 mm was amongst the longest we have recorded. We had only once captured one as light as this; typical weights for males in the wood are in the range 145 g to 155 g with the heaviest being 165 g. In spite of its light weight, it was in good condition and flew off strongly after ringing.

Great Spotted Woodpecker	2F	CT95955	24/11/2013	E07
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Most of the woodpeckers we retrap are retrapped frequently. This one is an exception having been ringed in May 2010 and not seen again until this recapture, still in the same part of the wood (where we have ringed several times each year). To the unwary, it could have been aged as a first year bird with alula and primary coverts slightly, but distinctly, paler than greater, median and lesser coverts. Clearly not a first year bird from its history. However, because of the lack of age clues in its plumage, like most of our Great Spotted Woodpeckers, it has to be given the 'unknowable' age code.

Jay	3	DK98428	10/11/2013	M00
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Our second Jay for the year. It had been ringed a month earlier in the same part of the wood. With a total of 83 individual Jays caught in the 41 years of ringing in the wood, this makes 2013 an almost exactly average year for Jay captures.

Dunnock	3	TR47576	22/12/2013	E02
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There is nothing special about this bird except that it was the first we have ringed with a size B ring as required by the revised BTO ring size list. After all these years of using A rings on Dunnocks, it may not prove easy to remember the new size. The reason for the change is that, in a very few cases, rings have been found to be too tight. We may just have seen one such in all the years of Treswell ringing. The B size, though larger, does not look at all over-large for our birds. Old hands, in particular, please try and remember the change in size.

Redwing	3	RW58259	29/12/2013	E00
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A good ending to the year's programme - this was one of seven Redwings caught on the edge of the wood. We had previously heard them flying nearby and, as we were not netting at a standard site at the time, we then played a Redwing call to attract them. However, this was not the only reason for catching them as another call playing elsewhere at the same time failed to attract any. We have only caught more on two occasions - eight on 28/12/2003 and 18 on 24/1/1976. On the 2003 visit it was a frosty day with no snow but on the 1976 visit there was snow cover and it appeared that birds had been driven into the wood to forage where there was less snow.

Blue Tit	3	L327842	15/12/2013	D05
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Our third capture of this 2013 nestling-ringed bird, one of 24 that we have so far recaptured out of the 107 ringed. Interestingly one of its siblings was also retrapped an hour later in a nearby net, both birds having left their natal area in the far north of the wood to be roving around the south. Incidentally, there is no evidence that these have been staying together since fledging because their earlier recapture histories are quite different. This one was retrapped in the south of the wood as early as mid-July whilst its sibling was still in the north of the wood at that time. The recapture rate of nestling-ringed Blue Tits is usually rather lower than that of Great Tits. The 2013 figures are Blue Tit 22% and Great Tit 43% (67/157).

Blue Tit	4	L731391	22/12/2013	Q04
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This Blue Tit was ringed in 2011 as a juvenile in the south of the wood and retrapped there until April 2012, apparently not yet breeding. Its next appearance was in January 2013 at Hillcrest Farm in Treswell village. Today's capture was back in the wood, opposite Wood House on the north edge. Although this is very close to the main car park feeders, it has never been caught there.

Great Tit **4M** **X649157** **22/12/2013** **P05**

Our oldest Great Tit recently recaptured having been ringed as a juvenile in 2009. It has always been retrapped in the central part of the wood or at the feeding station. Two of its captures have been roosting in a box (the same box in 2013 as 2010). We have visited the nesting boxes three or four times each winter in search of roosting birds so it is clear that birds do not always roost in boxes. However, when they do, most are faithful to a general area and a few, like this one, seem to favour a particular box.

Treecreeper **4** **CXN678** **15/12/2013** **D09**

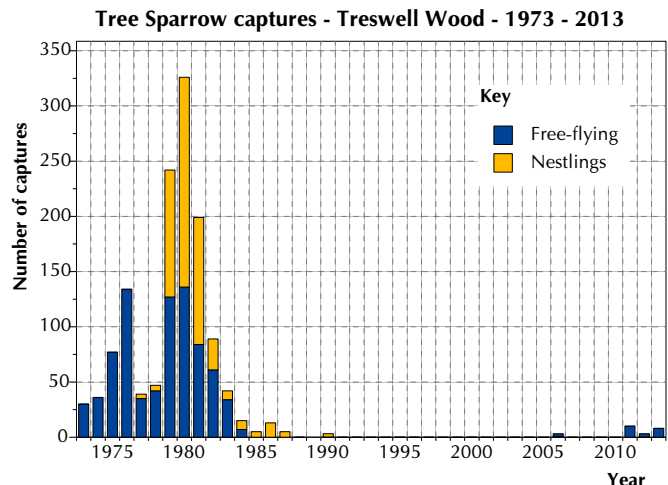
Apparently nothing very special about this bird which we had first caught two years previously. It was caught in a mixed flock including five other Treecreepers - and that is very unusual. Also in the flock was CXN199 which had by now accrued nearly a four-year capture history, an unringed adult and three unringed juveniles. But the real significance of this individual was that it provided our encounter record 100,000. CXN678 is our 'cover bird' for this issue.

Goldfinch **4M** **L731932** **22/12/2013** **P05**

One of five caught during the day - commuting across the road from Wood House. This was the only retrapped bird, having been ringed (and subsequently retrapped) at the nearby feeding station in April. This brings our annual total for 2013 to 17 birds out of the grand total of 117 Goldfinches ringed in the wood. Definitely an above-average year although rather lower than the past two years when we trapped 27 in each. Prior to that the maximum in any year was 13. The numbers caught (up to 2010) were illustrated in Twitter 81 of May 2011.

Tree Sparrow **2** **D309276** **22/12/2013** **Q03**

One of eight caught during the morning, amongst the other assorted Wood House commuters on the north edge of the wood (mostly Dunnocks, Goldfinches, tits and Blackbirds). In 2006 we caught one Tree Sparrow after an absence of over 20 years. It was not for another four years that we caught any more - although we only caught one in 2012. This particular catch was the biggest single daily catch since 1983. It is possible there is a sufficiently large number around the north edge of the wood to make it worthwhile rearranging nestbox locations a little to provide an opportunity for them to found a breeding colony in the wood - that would be welcome after an absence of over 25 years. The graph illustrates the number of Tree Sparrow captures broken down by nestling/free-flying over the period of the Treswell Wood operation.

**10-Week Summary: 2013 Interval 4, Captures in Standard Sites**

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Sparrowhawk	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Wren	.	.	6	1	.	4	11
Dunnock	.	.	2	1	.	.	3
Robin	.	.	3	4	.	2	9
Blackbird	4	.	5	4	.	.	13
Song Thrush	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Goldcrest	1	.	14	1	.	.	16
Long-tailed Tit	13	.	.	22	.	.	35
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	2	.	2	4
Coal Tit	.	.	4	5	.	1	10
Blue Tit	.	.	11	5	.	11	27
Great Tit	.	.	2	5	.	6	13
Nuthatch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Treecreeper	1	.	4	3	.	2	10
Jay	.	.	.	.	.	1	1
Bullfinch	.	.	1	1	.	.	2
Totals	20	.	54	54	.	29	157