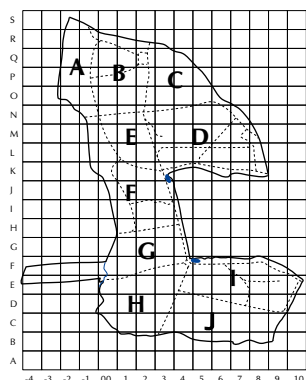


TWITTER

2010/1

Number 76



Treswell Wood - Information To Tell Every Recorder

March 2010 Treswell Wood IPM Group

(Integrated Population Monitoring)

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The winter of 2009/2010 has been the coldest for a long time and has followed two successive, poor breeding seasons. This is an ideal recipe for low bird populations. Our operations have been affected, with the wood sometimes inaccessible and sometimes weather (or an incorrect weather forecast) forcing us to cancel a mist-netting session. We have not managed to do any rounds of the nestboxes in search of roosting birds this year - again rain fell whenever we planned to go. So, overall, a bad ten weeks for ringers; but for the birds? Surprisingly, not so. The numbers of birds trapped in the standard sites is just above average. This is even more surprising because of the almost complete absence of Goldcrests (none caught in the standard site nets) which often make a noticeable proportion of our total catch at this time of year. Blue and Great Tits appear in good numbers - between them making over one third of the total and Blackbirds came in third place. The tits would seem to be part of the spring influx of tits; whether the Blackbirds are residents preparing for a very productive breeding season or visitors passing through, we do not know. Of our very small birds, 11 of the 12 Long-tailed Tits captured are recaptures of birds ringed in the wood before the cold weather. Eight of the 11 Treecreepers are recaptures from before the cold weather but only one out of the three Wrens. These figures suggest that the first two species have coped well but that Wrens in the woodland have not survived well. In the very hard winter of 1978/79, we believe that all the Treswell Wood Wrens died and the breeding population the following spring was composed entirely of incomers that had survived the winter elsewhere where food and shelter was easier to find. This winter may have had a similar (though less severe) affect with survivors from outside moving in to the wood to fill vacant territories in prime breeding habitat. We look forward to the arrival of the Spring migrants and the first nesting attempts to see how, if at all, the winter weather has affected these.

Common Bird Census

Richard Thewliss at the BTO has worked through the 2009 records and produced the breeding territory maps. Our thanks to him for doing the work. He has sent us the numbers of territories; the maps will be collected soon and Steve will do his magic on them to turn them into usable computerised objects.

As usual, the overall picture mirrors that shown by the ringing - a rather worse year than typical. There are the usual differences between the two assessments of relative populations. Some species are easier to census than to trap - perhaps the Green Woodpecker being the chief offender. Others are easier to trap than to census - the Treecreeper being one such. Others species, such as Stock Doves, are neither easy to census nor to trap and the nest records probably provide a better picture of the state of the population. However, as remarked before, consistency from year to year is important and the relative numbers of territories do give an idea of proportional changes between years.

It is interesting to note the number of Pheasant territories - it is higher than in the days of keeping when many were released in the wood but there was also the pressure of shooting. Woodpigeons nationally and locally, are increasing dramatically. What a pity that it is one species that is not covered by the CBC. Dunnocks and Song Thrushes have reduced numbers after recent small increases - it is to be hoped that this is just a blip in their slow recovery. Willow Warblers increased in numbers but Garden Warblers decreased - but both these species' numbers are very, very low compared to the early years. The small tits did not have a good year but they are still there. It is good to see a confirmed Willow Tit territory and we know, from nestbox operations, that Marsh Tits did breed too. Blue Tit numbers are as low as they were before nestboxes were installed in 1979. Great Tits, though down this year, continue to be present in greater numbers than before the nestbox era. No Treecreeper territories were detected - yet we know they had a successful season - perhaps they were just even quieter than usual in their territorial behaviour. With the low number of Treecreeper territories and very variable nature of captures of juveniles in summer, it is difficult to find any convincing connection between breeding success (as measured by juvenile captures) and number of breeding territories as measured by the CBC.

Treswell Wood CBC - 2009 Results

Species	Averages						Recent Annual Totals			
	76...80	81...85	86...90	91...95	96...00	01...05	2006	2007	2008	2009
Mallard	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0	0	1	0
Sparrowhawk	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.6	0	1	0	0
Buzzard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	p	p	1	p
Kestrel	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7	0	0	1	0
Red-legged Partridge	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	p	0	0
Grey Partridge	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0	p	0	0
Pheasant	8.2	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.0	8.6	10	8	7	8
Golden Pheasant	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0
Moorhen	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	0
Woodcock	2.0	1.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.0	2	1	1	1
Stock Dove	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	7.0	p	1	2	2
Woodpigeon	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	nc	nc	nc	1	nc	nc
Collared Dove	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	p
Turtle Dove	7.6	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0	0	0	0
Cuckoo	5.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0	p	0	0
Barn Owl	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	p
Tawny Owl	1.4	2.6	1.8	1.2	1.4	3.0	1	1	3	1
Green Woodpecker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.6	2	1	3	3
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1.6	3.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	5.6	7	4	10	7
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Skylark	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	3	4	3	0
Swallow	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Pied Wagtail	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0	0	0	0
Wren	59.4	55.8	69.0	71.8	81.8	76.4	56	69	67	66
Dunnock	27.2	23.8	22.2	13.4	12.6	8.4	9	11	16	7
Robin	58.4	60.4	46.6	48.0	54.0	81.4	73	85	82	75
Wheatear	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	p	p
Blackbird	35.0	29.0	28.4	20.2	25.2	27.0	33	32	35	36
Song Thrush	29.6	23.6	16.8	7.2	5.6	6.8	7	13	12	7
Fieldfare	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	p	0	0
Mistle Thrush	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.0	2.8	1	5	7	4
Lesser Whitethroat	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Whitethroat	5.6	1.6	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.2	0	0	0	p
Garden Warbler	15.0	15.4	9.4	4.4	7.2	6.8	1	3	6	1
Blackcap	15.4	12.4	20.4	20.6	25.4	27.2	25	25	28	23
Chiffchaff	14.8	8.2	8.6	15.8	19.0	18.6	17	31	27	20
Willow Warbler	27.6	44.0	31.4	18.2	6.8	5.0	3	p	p	4
Goldcrest	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	0
Spotted Flycatcher	1.6	3.0	1.8	0.2	0.0	0.3	p	0	0	0
Long-tailed Tit	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.0	8.2	9	8	7	4
Marsh Tit	1.6	0.5	1.0	2.2	4.2	2.1	p	p	1	p
Willow Tit	3.0	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.5	p	p	p	1
Coal Tit	2.0	2.6	2.0	6.2	7.4	6.4	7	3	6	2
Blue Tit	32.8	60.2	67.2	59.2	70.0	50.6	49	40	48	32
Great Tit	13.4	26.8	36.8	31.8	35.2	46.8	40	27	31	33
Nuthatch	0.0	0.4	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.2	2	3	3	0
Treecreeper	2.0	1.8	4.0	3.4	3.6	3.1	3	2	4	0
Jay	3.2	3.6	2.4	1.4	1.0	1.9	3	p	1	1
Jackdaw	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Carrion Crow	1.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.7	0	2	1	2
Starling	5.2	4.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0	0	0	0
House Sparrow	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Tree Sparrow	21.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	p	p	1	p
Chaffinch	33.4	38.4	39.0	39.0	40.6	48.8	39	42	42	40
Greenfinch	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	1.8	0.7	p	1	p	p
Goldfinch	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	2	p	1	p
Linnet	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Redpoll	3.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Bullfinch	5.4	3.2	3.0	1.4	0.6	1.8	2	3	3	1
Yellowhammer	1.8	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0	0	0	p
Reed Bunting	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total territories	457.4	457.0	437.6	386.2	426.8	464.8	404	422	460	381

Noteworthy Captures

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Woodcock	6	EL87426	31/1/2010	F02

Our first Woodcock capture since 1995. Individuals are seen fairly often in the wood and this winter seems to have been a reasonably good year for them. It is good to have this capture after such a long wait. Will it be a good breeding season or will the birds we have seen over the winter all depart for more northerly breeding grounds? For the records, this is only the 9th full-grown Woodcock we have ringed; in addition we have ringed 8 birds as chicks. Between them they have produced three recoveries - regrettably all shot (Treswell, 1976; East Markham 1984; Wellow Park 1992).

Great Spotted Woodpecker	CT84020	3/2/2010	Q02 Feeder
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Only its fourth capture in nearly six years since ringing in 2004. All these captures have been at the feeding station. The species is generally sedentary, so why did we not catch it at the feeders in 2005, 2007 or 2008?

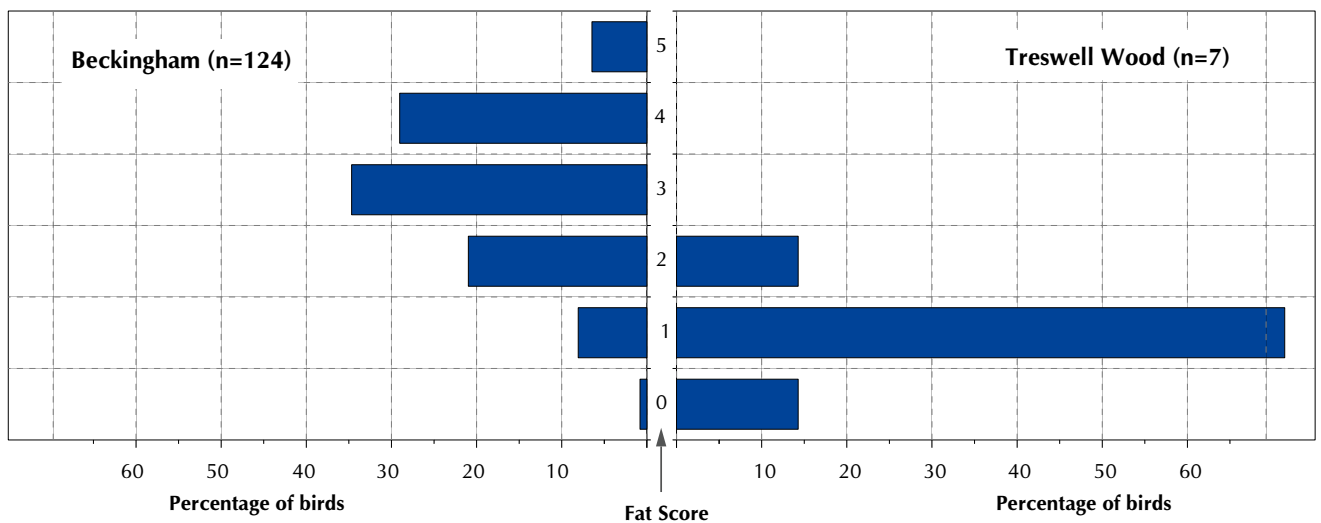
Song Thrush	5	RS46090	17/1/2010	N-1
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Song Thrushes (or at least the few that still breed in the wood) generally depart in the autumn and return early in the spring. Although they are unlikely to be long-distance migrants, they do apparently exhibit a genuine winter migration behaviour (even if they only migrate as far as nearby towns or villages). This was our first Song Thrush capture of the year - an unseasonably early capture of a summer visitor in the worst of winters for some years.

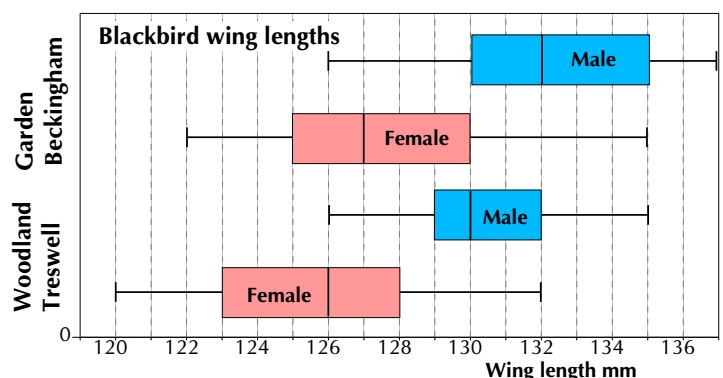
Blackbird	6F	CT84272	7/3/2010	L04
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This particular Blackbird had been ringed in the same part of the wood in the summer of 2006 as a breeding adult, recaptured there in the autumn of 2006 with no further recaptures since then until now.

Fat Scores of Blackbirds, January - February 2010



This winter we have recorded fat scores for most of our Blackbirds. It is interesting to compare these woodland fat scores with those of Blackbirds feeding in the not-too-distant Beckingham garden over the same cold period. Garden birds often have a plentiful supply of food provided by householders. Woodland birds have to survive on naturally occurring food, much of which may be snow-covered. Fat is put on by the birds as an insurance against food shortage during cold spells. Generally, they will only accumulate fat when they are forced to - the cost of being fat is slower take-off and flight and this may prove fatal when the cat or Sparrowhawk attacks. Incidentally, garden Blackbirds are at least as good at predicting cold spells as are weather forecasters - when the fat increases cold weather is only a couple of days away. Even in the coldest winter days, the garden Blackbirds have found energy to defend food resources against others and have not had to spend all daylight hours feeding. Presumably, the woodland Blackbirds have to spend more time searching for food, less time in aggressive interaction and have been unable to accumulate the same reserves as do the garden birds. The chart speaks for itself. It is no wonder that birds can



desert woodland for towns and village gardens in winter. Perhaps the surprise is that any of these very mobile Blackbirds stay in the wood at all.

Other comparisons of the woodland and garden birds are also interesting. The age and sex structure was similar in both places with a few more males than females and more first winter than older birds. The sizes of the birds, though, were very different with the garden birds being larger than those in woodland. The larger birds are more likely to be continental migrants and, indeed, one of the Beckingham birds did carry a Dutch ring.

Goldcrest **5M** **CXN160** **17/2/2010** **E01**

What a terrible winter for Goldcrests. It started badly with a late arrival of very few birds. The cold, snowy weather will have done them no good. This is the only capture of a Goldcrest so far this year. It is also the only one of the six ringed last autumn to be recaptured after the hard winter weather.

Marsh Tit **6** **R353196** **17/2/2010** **E01**

Marsh Tits seem to be surviving fairly well, with six individuals captured so far this year. This is the oldest at 4 years and four months since being ringed as a juvenile in 2005 and, surprisingly, not seen by us since December 2007.

Blue Tit **6** **R502745** **7/3/2010** **N04**

Most Blue Tits which survive to fledging can expect to live only a few weeks. Those that survive this immediate post-fledging period may expect to live, perhaps, another 15 months. If they survive their first breeding season they can expect another year. For many small birds, unlike with humans, future life expectancy remains fairly constant after the first year of life. Death strikes by accident, predation or the elements rather than from ageing. The Blue Tit that lives long enough to start showing signs of age has been very lucky indeed. In spite of its 6 years and 8 months since ringing, this bird has still been outlived by seven of the 9100 Blue Tits we have ringed. Our oldest lived 8 years and 3 months between first and last capture; the national record is 9 years and 9 months.

Great Tit **5M** **X649099** **3/2/2010** **Q02 Feeder**

This bird, if we recapture it, is likely to be one of our problem birds for sexing. Its plumage has just sufficient black on the belly to consider it a male, yet its wing is small - only 71 mm. Because it was such a short wing, we did check its wing length carefully at the time - so it is not a recording or measurement error. If we sexed Great Tits on wing length this one would be an undoubted female. Examination of the spread of wing lengths (all our male captures ever with no adjustments made for age nor time of year.) shows a very satisfactory distribution with the few extremely short wing lengths, such as this one, falling within the tail of distribution, rather than being far-outliers, separated from the next shortest wing by a gap of some millimetres. For comparison, the female wing lengths are also shown. Again they show the same smoothness of distribution with a very few extremely large or small.



Treecreeper **6** **AXL483** **3/2/2010** **Q02**

At three years and seven months since ringing, this is the oldest Treecreeper captured so far this year. We have not yet seen the very old one but it seems its chances are good. Survival through the hard winter seems to have been good and we have captured 15 individuals so far, 12 of them first winter birds. Although we have suffered cold, it has not been accompanied by wetness. Tree trunks have remained free from snow - as described in the previous issue of Twitter. Ice-glazed tree trunks prevent this species from finding invertebrates. Thankfully the tree trunks have remained dry and accessible throughout the cold weather.

Nuthatch **4F** **TC61197** **7/2/2010** **E07**

Often heard, but not so often caught - this is one of four of this attractive species captured so far this year. This is our oldest, having been ringed three and a half years previously. The other three are all first winter birds.

Chaffinch **6F** **P400853** **2/1/2010** **Q02 Feeder**

An old friend - now seven and a half years since being ringed as a juvenile. She has been kind enough to be captured at least once in each calendar year since then, almost invariably at the feeding station but with captures

scattered randomly during the years - appearing sometimes in winter, sometimes in the breeding season and sometimes when moulting.

Chaffinch 6M X649383 31/1/2010 F04

We have now captured a total of 1,525 male Chaffinches. This one's wing length of 96 mm has never been exceeded, and equalled only once before, in the wood. Generally speaking, more northerly populations tend to have larger birds than more southerly ones. This bird, with wing length big enough to be queried by the data entry software, would seem to be a visitor from much further north. We did recognise its unusual length in the field and double check before release.

Jay 6 DA51896 2/1/2010 M07

A good bird for the first visit of the year. Like Nuthatches and Green Woodpeckers, these birds are heard much more often than they are trapped. However, so far this year we have not heard them as often as sometimes and, in spite of that have trapped two.

Jay 6 EL87423 17/1/2010 N-1

It is nearly three years since we ringed this bird which was, at that time, already at least two years old. It was retrapped in 2008. This is the 77th Jay to be captured in the wood and, although having the seventh longest time between ringing and recaptures, still has not reached half the length of our oldest known - seven years and eight months between ringing and last recapture.

Controls and Recoveries

All the movements to or from the wood recorded this year have been involved either Hillcrest Farm in Treswell village or Rampton. We have had no reports of dead recoveries. The least expected movement is that of Great Spotted Woodpecker, CT84384. This species is normally highly sedentary.

Movements from Treswell Wood to Hillcrest Farm

Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date (Treswell)	Date (Hillcrest)
Great Tit	5F	TJ49863	24/1/2010	3/2/2010
Blue Tit	5	X649299	27/9/2009	19/1/2010
Blue Tit	5	X649358	9/12/2009	3/2/2010
Great Tit	5	X649400	7/2/2010	17/2/2010

Movements from Hillcrest Farm to Treswell Wood

Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date (Hillcrest)	Date (Treswell)
Blackbird	6M	CF17654	25/2/2009	2/1/2010
Great Tit	5F	X497586	6/8/2009	3/2/2010
Blue Tit	5	X497657	25/9/2009	7/3/2010
Blue Tit	5	X497691	19/1/2010	7/2/2010
Great Tit	5M	X497692	19/1/2010	7/3/2010
Blue Tit	5	X497697	26/1/2010	7/2/2010
Great Tit	5M	X497702	26/1/2010	1/3/2010

These birds are part of the Spring influx and, unlike so many which arrive unringed, these have at least some part of their past history known. The apparent movement into the wood, though, is just part of a wider redistribution of birds of which the individuals which have moved from the wood may be a part.

Movements from Treswell Wood to Rampton

Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date (Treswell)	Date (Rampton)
Great Spotted Woodpecker	4M	CT84384	27/2/2008	26/11/2009

Retrapped again at Rampton on 10/2/2010.

Movements from Rampton to Treswell Wood

Species	Age/Sex	Ring	Date (Rampton)	Dates (Treswell)
Blue Tit	5F	X110129	8/10/2009	14/2/2010 & 7/3/2010
Great Tit	5F	X110140	8/10/2009	1/3/2010
Great Tit	5F	X110160	8/10/2009	31/1/2010

10 Week Summary 2010 Interval 1, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	5	3	Adult	5	3	
Wren	.	.	.	1	2	.	3
Dunnock	.	2	.	1	.	.	3
Robin	.	3	.	3	6	.	12
Blackbird	2	8	.	5	1	.	16
Long-tailed Tit	1	.	.	10	.	.	11
Coal Tit	1	.	.	1	.	.	2
Blue Tit	.	9	.	4	7	.	20
Great Tit	1	3	.	5	9	.	18
Treecreeper	.	1	.	2	4	.	7
Jay	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Chaffinch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Totals	7	26	.	32	29	.	94

Treswell Wood Standard Site Totals in 10-week periods - Summary table

Year	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1988	92	143	180	137	119	671
1989	124	137	282	145	103	791
1990	99	145	204	130	175	753
1991	65	57	98	74	127	421
1992	64	64	115	224	159	626
1993	81	70	112	158	126	547
1994	88	110	212	155	157	722
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	106	159	170	616
2001	57	33	94	121	59	364
2002	85	89	141	176	117	608
2003	117	116	146	104	114	597
2004	103	128	126	165	132	654
2005	107	140	150	88	133	618
2006	128	98	185	125	166	702
2007	107	110	138	73	92	520
2008	125	130	151	86	100	592
2009	57	130	156	85	80	508
2010	94					
Summary Data since standard site netting began in 1978						
Maximum	128	145	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	94	68	59	364
Mean	90	108	162	134	125	619
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