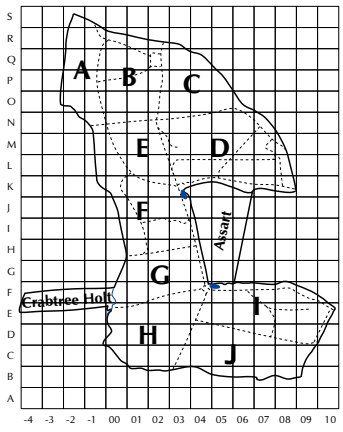

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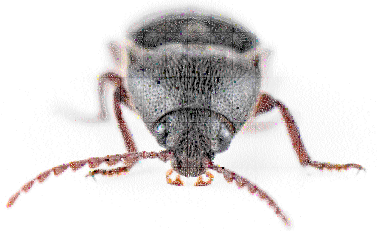

Treswell **W**ood - **I**nformation **T**o **T**ell **E**very **R**ecorde

October 2017 Treswell Wood IPM Group
(Integrated Population Monitoring)

Project leaders:

CBC Pat Quinn-Catling

Nest Records Chris du Feu

Ringing John Clark

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2017/4 Number 114

'Never predict, especially the future.' was the advice of a former BTO treasurer. The previous issue of Twitter's thoughts about the higher numbers of birds in standard sites in earlier parts of recent years, followed by lower numbers later pointed, perhaps, to generally reduced breeding success in the wood. This 10-week interval has shown the wisdom of not predicting as the total number of captures is comfortably above average and the highest since 2004. The species distribution is surprisingly atypical. When captures of all birds are included, not just those at standard sites, and multiple captures of the same bird within the 10-week interval are excluded, we have Blue Tits (87) and Great Tits (64) as our most commonly caught birds (captures at the feeder explain their abundance). Next comes Robin (53), followed by Wren (34). Goldcrests (21) arrived in good numbers and most surprisingly the next two in line are Bullfinch (19) and Marsh Tit (18). Bullfinches do seem to be making a comeback and we cannot recall such a good year for the Marsh Tits. Surprising members in the lower parts of the scale are Blackbird (10), Long-tailed Tit (8) and Chaffinch (7). The proportion of juveniles in this interval is 65% which seems, at first, pleasingly high. However it is exactly the same as our overall average proportion at this time of year since we began ringing in 1972.

The Marsh Tit situation is interesting. It had been a good breeding season with four nests in boxes of which three were successful with a total of 24 fledgelings (probably the old woodpecker causing the fourth nest to fail). Of the 18 individuals captured, 12 were juveniles but only 4 of these were ringed as nestlings in the wood. This suggests either several more nests in the wood in natural sites or else juvenile dispersal from other places nearby. Juvenile dispersal is not particularly likely as the main source of these birds because the species is highly sedentary and there is little suitable breeding habitat near Treswell Wood. Whatever the cause, we are not complaining and hope this year marks a strengthening of the small woodland breeding population.

The pox outbreak of the late summer has subsided and we have caught very few infected birds. Some birds are known to have recovered. We have only caught one infected bird this year which was not a Great Tit - that was a Coal Tit which we have not recaptured. It was also, sadly, the only Coal Tit recaptured from this year's single nestbox-reared brood. We now have a list with the ringing kit of all Great Tits which have been recorded with the pox. If you handle any Great Tit, check to see if it appears on the list and, if so, check to see if there are any traces left of the pox. It will be interesting to see if the pustules, after they shrivel and fall, leave any scar on the skin.

December 17th will mark, to the day, the 45th anniversary of John McMeeking's first ringing visit to Treswell Wood. Weather permitting, we will be ringing in the wood as usual. The plan is to have some cake to celebrate the occasion. We will be delighted to see anyone who can make it on the day. John Clark organises the rota, please let him know if you intend to appear.

We have several students now working with Treswell Wood data. The study by Russell Barnett of Exeter University of Great Tit breeding success and phenology in response to climate change is now being prepared for submission to a journal. A second student from Exeter University, Pip Penny, is to carry out similar work on Blue Tits. Claire Branston from Durham is doing a PhD relating Blue Tit breeding success with the immediate habitats. For her work she is visiting various sites, including Treswell Wood, where Blue Tit breeding data are available. Our own trainee, Max Collins, will be looking at some aspect of species diversity for which we have a long but unexplored data set. We have supplied more Barn Owl pellets to Lincoln University and these should provide more data on small mammal species on the land to the east of the wood including the assart.

Ash dieback and the assart

Michael Gilman (Lincoln University) is undertaking long-term monitoring of the natural regeneration in the assart. In September the second annual survey recording the growth of trees was done. The table gives the numbers of seedlings of each species recorded in the 100 quadrats sampled. The table gives the numbers of trees of various species found in these first two years of the survey. Note that the small reduction in the numbers of hawthorn and

oak could be because some seedlings had died, or because some were still there but hidden by a dense field layer, or perhaps being omitted because they were regarded as just over the edge of the quadrat (observer uncertainty). The sampled areas comprise around 5% of the total area of the regrowing woodland so scaling up the numbers will give a rough idea of the total number of trees of the various species found. At first glance it is clear that ash will be the dominant species - not surprising as ash keys can travel far in the wind and ash is a prolific producer. All other things being equal this would foreshadow a woodland dominated by ash. But all other things are not equal because ash dieback, which is now clearly affecting many trees in the wood, is apparently having a rapid, devastating effect on the ash seedlings in the assart. The disease starts at growing shoot tips and works downwards through the shoots, twigs, branches and trunk eventually killing the whole tree. Whereas a mature tree may take several years to die (it will be interesting to see how many years) the disease can strike and kill a seedling much more rapidly - sometimes it seems even its its first year. Of the seedlings in the assart, at least 60% had obvious signs of ash dieback. Some almost certainly will not survive to spring 2018.

Year	Ash	Birch	Hawthorn	Hazel	Oak
2016	239	0	27	0	10
2017	383	1	24	1	8

Ash dieback will have a major effect on the regrowth in the assart - slowing it considerably because the other species are not colonising as rapidly as ash. However, the resulting species mix will be far more diverse, not dominated by ash as is much of the rest of the wood is. It is possible that some ash seedlings will be resistant to the disease. If so, this will allow a small number of ash trees to grow to maturity in the assart taking their part in a much more natural, balanced species assemblage than we might otherwise have expected.

Blue Tit wing lengths

John Elliott, a ringer from Liverpool continues to work on Blue Tit wing lengths. His studies were prompted by the question of sexing birds using wing length and also the availability of statistical routines in the package 'R' which allow probing into the distributions of wing lengths of the two sexes rather than trying to assign a sex to each bird.

John says that he has seen nothing which convinces him that you can identify an individual Blue Tit's sex from its wing length. Here we are in full agreement. However he can see that the Treswell Wood, first year, Blue Tit wing lengths are a mixture of two normal distributions. That is what we should expect with a species which shows a small degree of sexual dimorphism. The statistical software can then separate these distributions to give average and variation in wing length for each year.

The original objective of the study was to identify years where wing lengths were significantly different from the overall mean. It seems that 1981, 1993 and 2006 are years where the female wing lengths are significantly longer than expected but there are no such differences for male wing lengths. Further analysis may reveal possible reasons for these differences.

The software also gives the proportions of males and females in each year (but, again, without needing to identify the sex of any individual). It appears that there is a steady increase in the proportion of females from about 1989 onwards. This is an unexpected result but a very interesting one, and one that needs further analysis.

We await the next results with interest. Thanks to John for his efforts thus far.

Beetles, bugs and species recording

We have always made an effort to record bird species heard or seen in the wood and, increasingly over the years, tried to record other species where we have time and knowledge. Identification of some groups of species has to be in the domain of the expert and recording both locally and nationally is consequently far from uniform. Even with modern technology in the form of the National Biodiversity Gateway Atlas, we do not have access to complete information. Even though our British track record of species recording is undoubtedly the best in the world, searching various web sites shows that there are sets of records which are not submitted to the NBN. This is to the disadvantage of us all.

We are fortunate to have a contact in Charlie Barnes, of Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership who is a beetle specialist. He has identified two specimens we have presented to him. First was a ground beetle *Pterostichus nigrita.* The species is widely recorded in the East Midlands and Wales with scattered records elsewhere. It would appear to be much under-recorded in most places. This record was (as far as we know) the first for Treswell Wood and also the first for the 10km square SK77. Second, used as our cover picture, is a click beetle *Melanotus castanipes* found in a nestbox. The NBN Atlas does not have any records for the species in Nottinghamshire but the web site www.eakringbirds.com (which, in spite of its name, is dedicated to the county's invertebrate fauna) gives records in Sherwood Forest. Again, it is a first for the wood and for this part of the county. Thanks to Charlie for identifying these two specimens.

A third species of insect, *Coreus marginatus* known as the Dock Bug, has also been recorded. It is closely related to the shield bugs and the first record in the county was in 2007. All records so far have been in or near Nottingham. Although a native British species, it has been spreading in recent years from its stronghold in the south. Another result of climate change? This is (as far as we can tell) the most northerly Nottinghamshire record and well away from its known range. Judging by records of various other species, it seems likely that there will be many more in the county.

On the face of things, three new species for the wood, and for the area, seem pretty good. The down side is that we can see how our national and local recording and storing of species data barely scratches the surface for some species. In the words (almost) of Monty Python: Every record wanted/Every record good/Every record needed/In your neighbourhood.

Dormice - the 2017 season

2017 has been an exceptional 'dormouse year' with animals recorded during every monthly monitoring session. The dormouse nestboxes were unblocked at the beginning of May, and our first box-check on the 24th June recorded seven dormice. Dormice were found in two boxes in Compartment A, a female with a young litter of four, and a single adult male in a box nearby. An adult female was also recorded in Compartment F.

In July, a lactating female with a newly born litter of four was recorded in Compartment F, possibly the same female that was recorded in June. In August, the same female was recorded again in Compartment F, and her four young were almost ready to leave the natal nest, weighing an average of 8g. During the same check, a pregnant female was recorded in Compartment D, and an adult male in Compartment A.

In September, four independent juveniles averaging 9g were found in a box together in Compartment A, and a further three older juveniles were found in boxes nearby; these weighed 14g, 14.8g & 18g. The female from Compartment F was found again, this time with a juvenile male of 9.5g and another litter. Two of the recorders thought they saw a dormouse foraging within the bramble in Crabtree Holt, but it ran off before they could get a closer look. This is a very interesting record since no dormice have been recorded in this compartment before. Footprint tunnels are now installed close to the sighting, and we hope that they prove the presence of dormice.

Our last box check of the year resulted in another four dormice, three juveniles of the year in Compartment E, weighing 31g, 20.5g and 14g, and a juvenile male weighing 16g was recorded in Compartment D.

The majority of the dormouse boxes have now been blocked for the winter, leaving only those showing signs of dormouse activity left unblocked. These will be checked again next month, cleaned out and blocked for the winter.

Although my live-trapping has only recorded three dormice in total, all in Compartment A, I have had far more success with the footprint tunnels, with positive prints in many of the tunnels in Compartment A, and several dormice prints in Compartment L, where we currently do not have any dormouse boxes. A dormouse was also recorded in one of the nest-tubes within Compartment L.

It appears that Compartment A is the dormouse hot spot but with all positive observations located on its western edge. This habitat is far more scrubby than the rest of the compartment, providing plenty of light and supporting an abundance of fruiting trees - ideal for dormice.

Hopefully, this year's results are a sign of things to come. With the coppicing and other woodland management work it is expected that the dormouse population will slowly begin to colonise the newly cut areas, and secure the species' long-term survival in the wood.

Lorna Griffiths

Noteworthy Encounters

Species	Age/sex	Ring	Date	Grid
Wren	**3**	**AVL415**	**10/9/2017**	**D09**

Wrens are highly sedentary at all ages. Compare the movement of this nestling-ringed Wren with that of Blue Tit ANA7035 (see page 5). This bird was ringed in May in F05. Its first recapture was in early July by which time it was about 250 metres from its natal site. Now, two months later it is only 75 metres from the July location. Any future recaptures are very likely to be in this small corner of the wood.

Blackbird	**4F**	**LE35391**	**15/10/2017**	**M04**

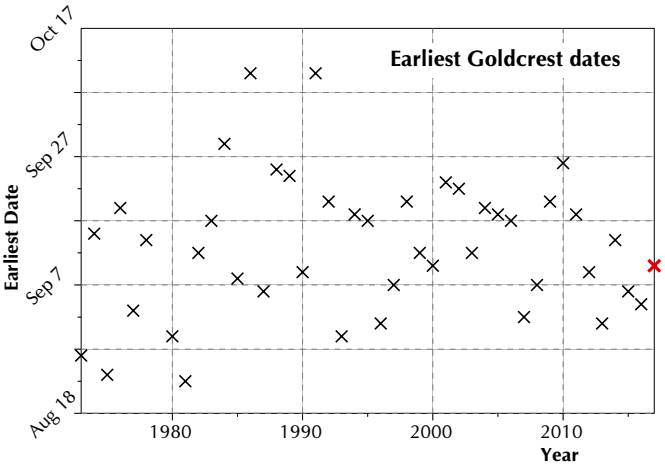
After an apparent lack of Blackbirds in the wood, this was the first of four to be caught on one day. All four (this female and the other three young males) had very dark plumage and bills which tend to indicate foreign birds although their wing lengths were average at best indicating native birds. It certainly appeared to be an influx although from a place unknown.

Chiffchaff 2 JTE035 15/10/2017 M04

This is our fourth latest Chiffchaff capture - two have been November and one in December. These three were almost certainly over-wintering birds. It is not clear whether JTE035 is a late-departing summer visitor or one which will remain over winter.

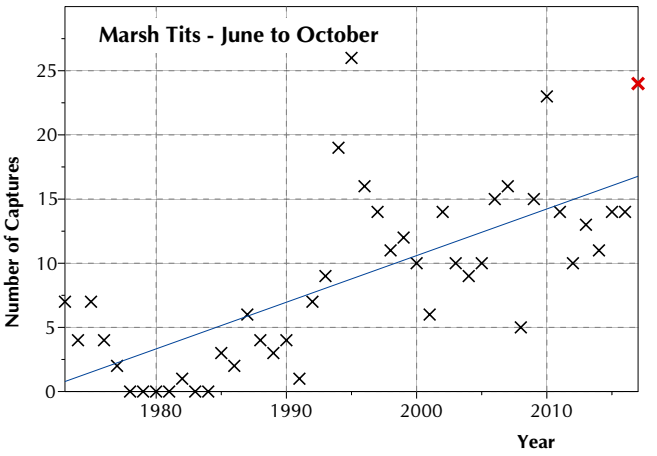
Goldcrest 3F JTE003 10/9/2017 D08

This was our first Goldcrest of the autumn. The graph shows it to be a little earlier than average and we have also captured them in reasonable numbers. BTO BirdTrack data is in line with this with earlier than average arrival and the number of reports a little above average. Perhaps of most interest is that there is absolutely no correlation between year and first arrival date in the wood. Probably Goldcrest arrival is driven more by population size, breeding success and food supply than by lengthening or warming of autumn.



Marsh Tit 4 D309251 17/9/2017 Q03

This is our oldest recently recaptured Marsh Tit, 3yr 9mo since ringing and always captured in the northern third of the wood. We felt that we were catching more Marsh Tits than usual but often such feelings can be misplaced - perhaps by retrapping the same individuals more often than usual. However, feelings are correct this time. The graph shows the numbers of individuals caught from June to October in each year. This is our second highest number of individuals since the exceptional year (for several species) of 1995. The graph also reveals a significantly increasing number of the species - although it must be borne in mind that, with the low numbers followed by the extinction in the late 1970s it would be very difficult to show a long-term decline.



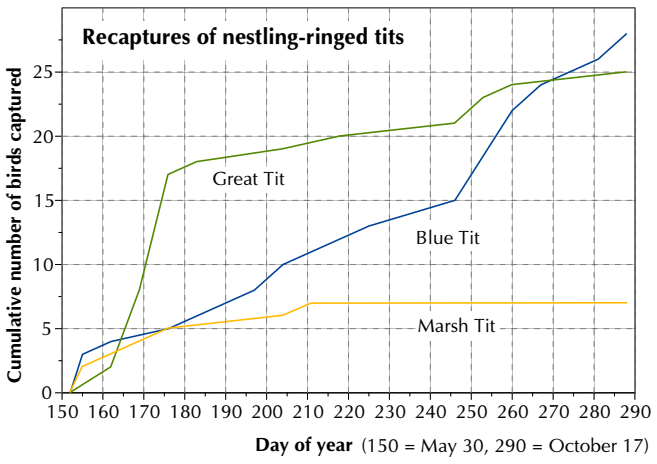
Willow Tit 4 Z782469 3/9/2017 Q03

This is the bird which failed to breed successfully this year. Was it was the lack of a mate that led to failure? Alas, we have caught no juveniles this year so, even if it survives the winter, finding a mate for 2018 may not be easy.

After our appeal to ringers to examine the colours of nasal hairs on Willow Tits, it appears that those on nestlings and juveniles are black. In our experience most, but not all, adults have chocolate brown nasal hairs with just a few individuals retaining the black. Marsh Tits, on the other hand, have not been found with the brown nasal hairs at any plumage stage. If you catch a Willow Tit, do examine and record the nasal hair colour. For Marsh Tits, there is now no further need to record the colour of nasal hair (but recording any white on the bill edge continues to be useful for both species).

Blue Tit 3 S078864 8/10/2017 F01

Yet another first-time recapture for one of this year's cohort of nestling ringed Blue TIts. So far we have recaptured 28 of the 230 which fledged from boxes - a return rate of 12%. We had felt that Great Tits were being retrapped in smaller numbers than usual with Blue Tits winning. Feelings not justified by the data. The return rate for Great Tits so far is 25% and, as the graph shows, Great Tits were retrapped sooner than Blue Tits. Possibly the feeling that Great Tits were not performing in the usual way was simply because far more Blue Tits than Great Tits fledged from boxes. As far as return rates are concerned, it is Marsh Tits which win so far with 29% of the 24 fledged birds having been retrapped, at least one from each successful box. Unlike the other two tits which have less sedentary behaviour it may be that we will catch few, if any, more of the 2017 nestbox cohort.



Blue Tit **3** **ANA7035** **15/10/2017** **Q03**

In contrast to the very sedentary behaviour of some birds, this Blue Tit, like some other juveniles at this time of year, shows wide-ranging behaviour. This is probably part of its post-natal familiarisation with the area in order to be aware of good places to feed in winter and breed the following season. It was ringed only a week earlier, at a temporary feeding point in the south of the wood. Within the week it had moved to the feeder in north - demonstrating knowledge of a large part of the wood. For species such as Wrens, such a movement within a season, let alone a week, would be very uncommon indeed.

Great Tit **4M** **TJ49521** **3/9/2017** **Q03**

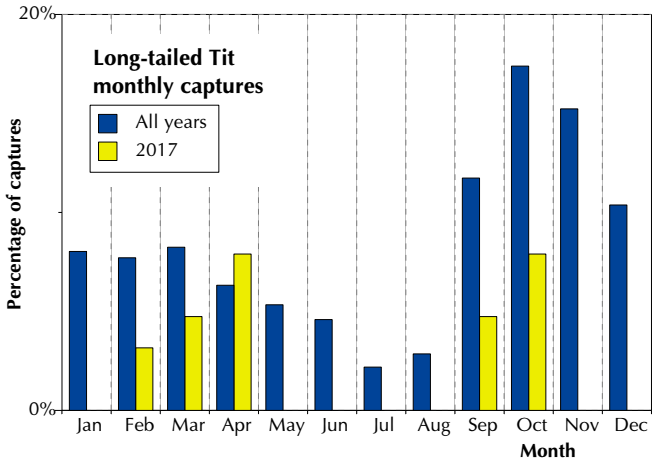
This is our oldest recorded Great Tit - 8 years and 108 days since ringing as a nestling, beating our 1992 record (also of a nestling-ringed bird) by 99 days. However, it is still far off the national record of nearly 14 years. Unlike many of our Great Tits, it seems fairly sedentary, never having been captured in the southern half of the wood.

Great Tit **4M** **TT49087** **10/9/2017** **D08**

Years ago we noted that Dunnocks with wider ranging behaviour tended to survive better in hard weather - presumably because they were familiar with more places where food and shelter might be available. This Great Tit does have wide ranging behaviour and has survived four winters and breeding seasons since it was ringed as a nestling in 2013. It probably breeds in the south-west of the wood but turns up at permanent or temporary feeding stations almost wherever they are and probably also visits feeding stations in the gardens to the north of the wood too.

Long-tailed Tit **2** **EYD649** **8/10/2017** **B03**

After an absence of captures since April we caught three on 24th September and a group of five on 8th October of which this bird was the only one already ringed - its first recapture since ringing almost exactly a year earlier. We have only rarely heard them in the wood and wait with interest to see what the CBC shows when its results are analysed. It has certainly been a low point for them this year. The graph shows how poor the year has been. The higher, dark blue bars indicate the proportion of Long-tailed Tit captures during each month for all previous years combined. The breeding season months normally seem to have fewest captures with a peak in the autumn before typically high winter mortality for this small species. The lighter, yellow bars show the monthly spread of captures, standardised to be comparable to the historic proportions. Even the April figure appears misleadingly high - it merely shows that a relatively high proportion of our captures were in April - the total number was, in fact, a little lower than average for the April. Put another way, April was our least bad month in a very bad year.

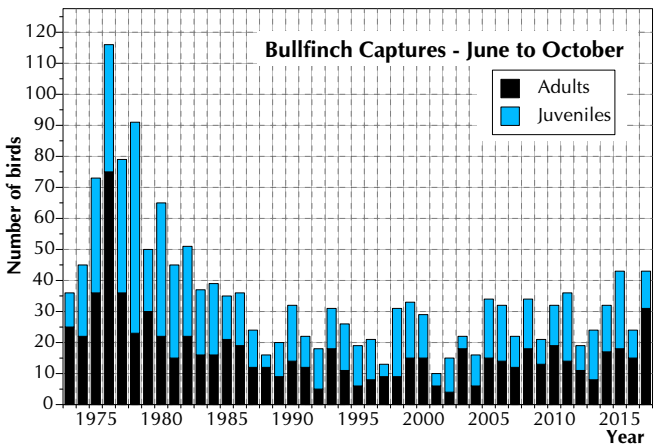


Treecreeper **4** **CXN837** **15/10/2017** **L04**

At 4yr 5mo since ringing, this is a respectable age for a Treecreeper. Like most of the species in the wood it seems to rove widely but within a sharply defined area - compartment D in this case. Curiously, we did not recapture it at all during 2014 or 2015 and have only once captured it during a breeding season.

Bullfinch **4F** **L327955** **20/8/2017** **K00**

Bullfinches seem to be continuing their slow recovery although still far from the abundant state of the 1970s. This is our oldest bird recently caught, 2yr 10mo since ringing. The graph shows our Bullfinch capture numbers during the months June to October since 1973, broken down by age - adult or juvenile. It is difficult to be certain from the relatively small numbers of birds, but it would appear to be a good autumn for adult captures - the best since the 1970s, but relatively poor for juveniles - suggesting a less good breeding season. Of the 43 birds caught, 18 were adults first ringed in or before the 2017 breeding season, 14 were adults first caught after the breeding season and only 11 were juveniles.



10-Week Summary: 2017 Interval 4, Captures in Standard Sites

	New Birds			Recaptures			Total
	Adult	**5**	**3**	**Adult**	**5**	**3**	
Woodpigeon	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Wren	1	1	18	2	.	1	23
Dunnock	.	.	6	.	.	.	6
Robin	2	.	24	3	.	2	31
Blackbird	1	.	3	1	.	.	5
Song Thrush	1	.	2	.	.	.	3
Blackcap	2	.	1	.	.	.	3
Chiffchaff	3	.	.	.	.	.	3
Goldcrest	5	.	5	.	.	.	10
Spotted Flycatcher	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Long-tailed Tit	7	.	.	1	.	.	8
Marsh Tit	.	.	.	4	.	3	7
Coal Tit	.	.	1	.	.	.	1
Blue Tit	1	.	10	2	.	5	18
Great Tit	.	.	3	4	.	2	9
Nuthatch	1	.	.	.	.	.	1
Treecreeper	3	.	5	1	.	.	9
Bullfinch	.	1	4	1	2	1	9
Totals	**29**	**2**	**83**	**19**	**2**	**14**	**149**

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	185	288	253	177	864
Minimum	57	33	89	66	59	364
Mean	90	113	159	130	124	609

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 - 2016)	91	126	149	104	115	561

Totals from 2000 onwards

Year	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Total**
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	100	144	119	143	600
2011	96	112	120	105	101	534
2012	69	125	132	66	72	464
2013	76	90	89	100	157	512
2014	83	132	181	123	120	639
2015	105	123	136	137	158	659
2016	102	185	193	109	109	698
2017	106	198	163	**149**		