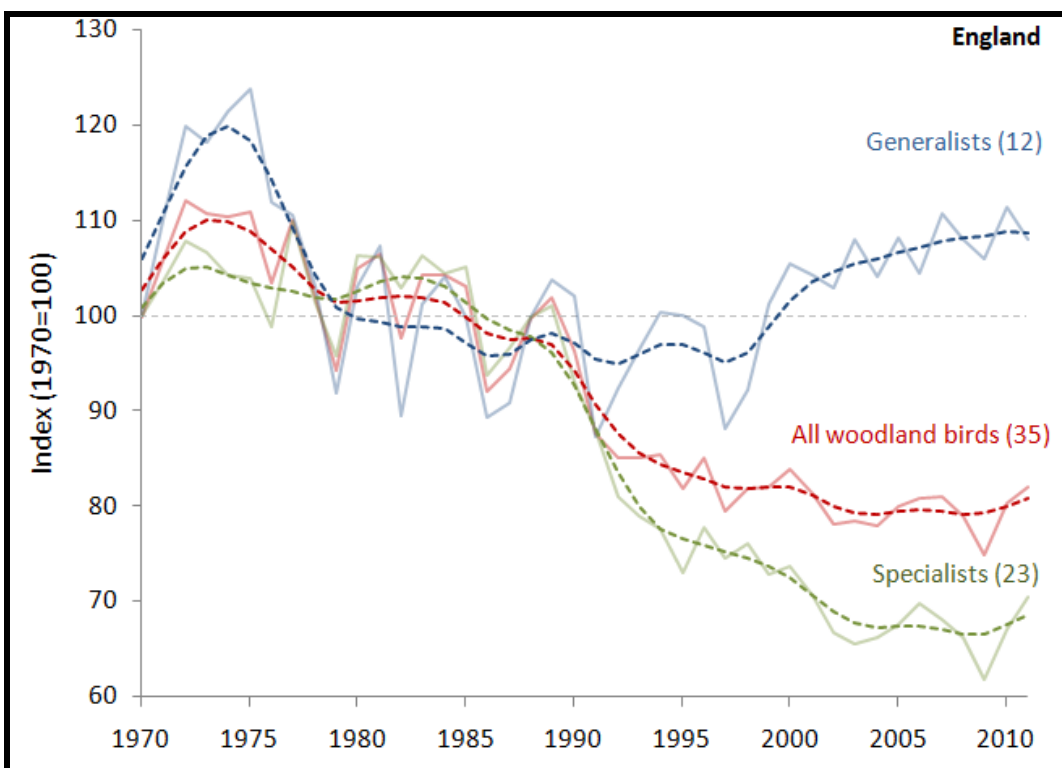


Quakers Coppice Nest Box Breeding Results - 2013

The Met. Office announced at the end of May that the Spring months (March to May inclusive) was the coldest Spring for 50 years. In April, while doing the survey this year we bumped into a friend of Bryan, phenologist¹. Vic 'the beard' Johnson. He's been doing a study for the Woodland Trust; he tells us that the understory² is "running 3 weeks late!"

The publication & launch in May of "State of Nature" (the result of data collation by 25 conservation organisations) mentions the '*concern about our woodland birds, which have declined by 17% overall since 1970. Woodland specialist have fared particularly badly, while more adaptable generalist species have increased*'. It refers to DEFRA's National Statistics Release: Wild bird populations in the UK, 1970 to 2011 - an extract is included (under licence) below:-

Breeding woodland birds populations in England Populations of woodland birds, 1970 to 2011



Source: RSPB, BTO, JNCC, Defra

Note: i) figures in brackets show the number of species,
ii) the dotted line shows the smoothed trend.

Trends in specific species

There are 35 species of birds included in the woodland bird index, and these can either be specialist (highly dependent on the woodland habitat) or generalist (found in a range of habitats, including woodland). The long term decline of woodland birds in England was mostly driven by the decline of specialist woodland birds; the index of generalist woodland birds increased by 8 per cent between 1970 and 2011 while the index of specialist woodland birds decreased by 30 per cent over that same period.

Nine of the woodland specialists have at least halved since 1970, with five species (Willow Tit, Tree Pipit, Spotted Flycatcher, Lesser Redpoll and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker) having declined by over 70 per cent relative to 1970. The smoothed index showed that three woodland specialists (Spotted

Flycatcher, Willow Tit and Wood Warbler) declined by over 30 per cent between 2005 and 2010. By contrast, the populations of five woodland specialists (Blackcap, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Sparrowhawk) have more than double since 1970. Populations of five woodland generalists (Blackbird, Bullfinch, Dunnock, Song Thrush and Tawny Owl) have declined relative to 1970, whilst populations of the other seven generalists have increased, with Long-tailed Tit and Great Tit by more than 50 per cent. Trends for a small number of species, including Wren and Robin, have shown very recent downturns which may be related to harsh winter weather.

Woodland (35)

Generalists (12)

<i>Blackbird</i>	<i>Dunnock</i>	<i>Robin</i>	<i>Blue Tit</i>	<i>Great Tit</i>
<i>Song Thrush</i>	<i>Bullfinch</i>	<i>Chaffinch</i>	<i>Lesser Whitethroat</i>	<i>Tawny Owl</i>
<i>Long-tailed Tit</i>	<i>Wren</i>			

Specialists (23)

<i>Blackcap</i>	<i>Jay</i>	<i>Chiffchaff</i>	<i>Sparrow hawk</i>	<i>Lesser Redpoll</i>
<i>Spotted Flycatcher</i>	<i>Coal Tit</i>	<i>Treecreeper</i>	<i>Lesser Spotted Woodpecker</i>	
<i>Garden Warbler</i>	<i>Marsh Tit</i>	<i>Tree Pipit</i>	<i>Goldcrest</i>	<i>Nightingale</i>
<i>Willow Tit</i>	<i>Green Woodpecker</i>	<i>Nuthatch</i>	<i>Willow Warbler</i>	<i>Redstart</i>
<i>Hawfinch</i>	<i>Wood Warbler</i>	<i>Siskin</i>	<i>Great Spotted Woodpecker</i>	

How have our nesting birds fared?

As usual we start the survey on the 3rd weekend in April, but we have had to return each week until 29th June - this supports the theory raised above that things are running three weeks later than usual.

Another initial observation we have made is that (as far as we can tell), this year is the first year that **all 22** 'small hole' nest boxes have been occupied! All but one by Tits, the remaining one being occupied by Nuthatches. Interestingly, not the same box as occupied by Nuthatches last year.

The tables below are a summary of the data compiled. In keeping with tradition in this Newsletter, we offer the last five years data for comparison ...

Blue Tit

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatched	Fledges	Productivity (i.e. fledges ÷ nests)
2013	13	122	99	85	6.5
2012	12	115	95	74	6.2
2011	15	131	110	73	4.9
2010	15	149	135	83	5.5
2009	10	111	94	59	5.9
average (since '85)					6.6

Great Tit

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatched	Fledges	Productivity (i.e. fledges ÷ nests)
2013	8	47	44	34	4.3
2012	8	51	45	28	3.5
2011	5	40	35	21	4.2
2010	4	27	25	14	3.5
2009	7	50	45	38	5.4
average (since '85)					5.1

Stock Dove

Year	Nests	Eggs	Hatched	Fledges	Productivity (i.e. fledges ÷ nests)
2013	4	8	8	4	1.0
2012	5	13	5	4	0.8
2011	7	16	14	8	1.1
2010	9	19	10	7	0.8

Stock Doves breeding season extends beyond our recording period, so the data is incomplete

As you can see from the tables above, the poor weather we have been experiencing has not affected 'productivity'.

The average 'first egg date' (data collated since 2001) are 20th Apr and 23rd Apr for Blue Tits & Great Tits respectively; this year the date is 7 and 2 days earlier than the average. Did the birds know something we didn't?

Bill Fox and John Thompson

Reference: -

Wikipedia

1. Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and interannual variations in climate, as well as habitat factors (such as elevation).
2. Understorey (or understorey) in forestry and ecology refers to plant life growing beneath the forest canopy without penetrating it to any extent.

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