

GENERAL INFORMATION

author(s)	Dhondt AA, Eyckerman R, Moermans R, Hublé J
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MATERIALS & METHODS

study area	
time period	1959–1978 (1972–1978 for Gontrode)
goal	compare the laying dates between species, years, study areas
set-up	10 different study areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">- urban, in town, suburban, surrounded by villa gardens, rural; not immediately surrounded by human habitation- oak, beech, coniferous, mixed deciduous- nest boxes of the Wagening type with a 3–3.2 mm opening hole
data collection	from the end of March and during the period of first clutches: 1 visit per week: nest content noted
remarks	108 nest boxes in Gontrode, between 1972&1978

RESULTS

Great tit laying dates: earliest in urban > suburban > latest in rural. Blue tits laid earliest in suburban habitat, latest in rural habitat. Overall, great tit laying dates (18.9 April) were earlier than blue tit laying dates (19.4 April). Great tits laid earlier in urban areas; blue tit laid earlier in optimal oak habitat (e.g., Gontrode) and in one suburban area; no significant differences between the species in the other five areas.

The annual fluctuation in laying dates are correlated for the two species and may be related to spring temperature. The differences in laying date between the two species and the study areas are probably caused by differences in the timing of food availability. E.g., the inflorescences of *Populus alba*, which were present in the study area in which both species laid early, or the availability of food in urban parks.