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ers', Long-tailed tits simply go to an adjacent territory and help those parents to raise their young. Losses are sufficiently high for most broods to have one or more extra birds helping with feeding duties.

This additional parental care means that young birds receive more food and are more likely to survive.

Co-operative breeding is unusual in British birds, but is practiced by a few species, with the breeding behaviour of Long-tailed tits being particularly aberrant. Winter flocks are made up of family parties, but when spring arrives, birds start to pair up, with females moving away from their family group to adjoining territories. Should a nesting attempt fail, research suggests that it is only the males that go to help out at another nest nearby. As such nests lie within the winter territory of the displaced bird's family, the 'new' nest is likely to belong to a brother. In this way, the Long-tailed tit 'helpers' show of brotherly love keeps it in the family!