

Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV) : Use of Nest Boxes, 2019 (Year 14)

The nest boxes in Holt Copse were taken down, checked and cleaned in December 2019. This year a slightly lower proportion of the boxes (64%) had been used, although this was mainly because none of the new, home-made wooden boxes installed at the beginning of the year had been occupied. Tit species had nested in 22 boxes, including some of those designed for nuthatches or tree creepers. Twelve of the tit nests contained eggs, usually only one or two, although two contained nine eggs each. Something presumably happened to one or both parent birds here, but more encouragingly none of the nests contained skeletons, so presumably a high proportion of the nests fledged young successfully.

Only one of the 5 boxes designed for tree creepers had been used and that by a species of tit. Nuthatches had nested in one box nest, their nest of leaves and bits of bark differing markedly from those of tits' made from moss, grass, wool, dog hairs and man-made materials.

The colony of bees that had occupied a nuthatch box for the last two years had died out, so the old combs were removed and the box cleaned. One of the owl boxes contained large amounts of debris (dropping and old food etc. - most unpleasant!) hopefully indicating that the young had fledged. Two eggs were present, probably a second, but unsuccessful brood.

A team of us checked the boxes this year, so thank you Ian Hydon, Hilary Jenkins, Paul O'Neil, Mike Smith and Robin Ashton.

Mike Saynor, HCCV Joint Co-Ordinator

February 2021

Nest Box Type	Used	Not used	Comments
Small hole boxes (Stone)	18	2	12 nests with 1 or more eggs; 2 nests with 9 eggs. No skeletons.
Small hole Boxes (Wood)	0	5	Not sure why none occupied, possibly because they were new; interesting to see what happens in future.
Open fronted	0	1	
Tree creeper	1	4	Occupied by tits.
Wren			
Nuthatch	5	1	Only one occupied by nuthatches.
Owl	1	1	Full of detritus and 2 eggs.
Total	25	14	64 % of all boxes occupied. 73.5 % of the original, stone boxes occupied, so comparable with other years.