

## Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV) : Use of Nest Boxes, 2020 (Year 15)

The nest boxes in Holt Copse were taken down, checked and cleaned in February 2020. A slightly higher proportion of the boxes (almost 80%) had been used compared with last year, mainly because more (3 of the 5) new, home-made, wooden boxes installed at the beginning of 2019 had been occupied. Tit species had nested in 24 boxes, including some of those designed for nuthatches and tree creepers. Only two nests contained more than two eggs and/or skeletons, so tit species would seem to have had a successful breeding season.

Three of the six boxes designed for tree creepers had been used, although only one by the intended species, tits occupying the other boxes. Nuthatches had used one box, their nest of leaves and bits of bark differing markedly from those of tits' that are made from moss, grass, wool, dog hairs and man-made materials.

One of the owl boxes contained large amounts of debris (dropping and old food), typical of tawny owl nests. Three eggs were present, probably an unsuccessful second brood. The second 'owl box' contained clean, dry leaves and twigs so presumably made by a different, but unidentified species.

Because of Covid restrictions only Malcolm Dunmore and I checked the boxes this year. Malcolm did all the dangerous, strenuous work up the ladder for which I am most grateful!

Mike Saynor, HCCV Joint Co-Ordinator

June 2021

Nest Box Type	Used	Not used	Comments
<b>Small hole boxes (Stone)</b>	19	2	Only 2 nests with more than 2 eggs and/or skeletons.
<b>Small hole Boxes (Wood)</b>	3	2	More of these boxes used in this, the second year they have been in position.
<b>Open fronted</b>	0	1	
<b>Tree creeper</b>	3	3	2 occupied by tits.
<b>Nuthatch</b>	4	0	Only one occupied by nuthatches.
<b>Owl</b>	2		Detritus and 3 intact eggs in a box presumed to have been occupied by tawny owls. Dry leaves and twigs in the other box; occupants unidentified.
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Almost 80% of the boxes had been occupied, a slightly higher proportion than average.</b>