

Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV) : Use of Nest Boxes, 2021 (Year 16)

The nest boxes in Holt Copse were taken down, checked and cleaned in January 2022. The boxes in one section of the wood were vandalised during the summer when seven were knocked off the supporting nails. Both wooden boxes were destroyed and most of the stone ones were broken, but were repairable and were reinstalled in March 2022. Once again a high percentage (82 %) of the boxes were used and most clutches of tits probably fledged successfully for only one skeleton and the occasional unhatched eggs (1 or 2, and in one nest 3) were found. A higher proportion of the stone nest boxes were used compared with the wooden ones, so although they are more expensive the birds seem to prefer them and last far longer. Nuthatches had used 3 nest boxes, the most recorded. As usual the owl box contained much debris, a rather unpleasant mixture of old food and droppings!

I am grateful to everyone who helped with this survey, particularly Malcolm Dunmore the main 'ladder-man'.

Mike Saynor, HCCV Joint Co-Ordinator

April 2022

Nest Box Type	Used	Not used	Comments
Small hole boxes (Stone)	15	1	One skeleton and occasionally 1,2 or (in 1 nest) 3 eggs. Suggests most clutches fledged successfully.
Small hole Boxes (Wood)	1	2	Less popular than the stone boxes, as found in previous years.
Small hole with spout	3	0	2 occupied by tit species, one by nuthatches.
Open fronted	1	0	Box not found last year, so not sure when it was used.
Tree creeper	2	3	Both nests used by tit species.
Nuthatch	5	0	3 used by tit species, 2 by nuthatches.
Owl	1	0	Full of the debris typically found in owl nests (caked food and droppings). The second box one of those vandalised but repaired and reinstalled in March 2022.
Total	28	6	82 per cent of the boxes were used, comparable with that last year.