

LARGE NEST BOXES AT WEIR WOOD - 2018 SEASON

Of the 33 large nest boxes at Weir Wood, 27 had nests that provided the records for the table below. A comment on the other 6 boxes is given at the end.

	Stock Dove	Mandarin	Jackdaw	Tawny Owl
Failed attempts	17	5	0	0
Successful attempts	14	10	1	1
Eggs recorded	59	225	4	-
Young left nest	26	approx 88	2	3

Mandarin young leave the nest as newly hatched ducklings. So that is defined as success. The very small number of juvenile mandarins seen later in the year shows that more than 90% of these ducklings die before fledging. The number is not precise as the 'empty' nest often contains some unhatched eggs, broken eggs and occasional dead ducklings. For other species of birds the young have flown.

For Stock Doves nearly all the success was in the area where the Plawhatch stream cuts through the far end of the study area and in the boxes on Pintail Point. One box had 4 consecutive successful broods and produced 7 flying young. Over in Whillet's meadows 2 boxes by the stream were predated. The wings of adults were bitten off so that their bodies could be pulled through the hole.

For Mandarins one of the failures was also an adult whose wings were bitten off and left with the eggs. All these 3 adult casualties were in the area that mink are most regularly seen. The largest 'clutch' of eggs this year was 25 and the smallest was 4. One individual that is ringed had a brood that left the nest fairly early. It is assumed that they all died because she soon had another clutch that was successful in the same box. Some individuals are quite 'tame' and have to be pushed off the nest so that the eggs can be counted.

Barn Owl pellets were found in 4 boxes. From January to March some Barn Owls were seen; but no eggs were laid in boxes. The last brood was in 2015.

The 6 boxes that produced no nest records this year have all had a successful nest at some time in the past. This year 4 of them had signs of use - with feathers of Stock Doves, one egg dumped in no nest and another with Jackdaw material. When Jackdaws first bred in 2015 we were worried they could become a nuisance. But the site appears to be somewhat unattractive for them. This year the one brood only produced 2 young. Early in the season one box contained a dead adult. It may be that the same bird has been using the regular box since 2015.