

LARGE NEST BOXES AT WEIRWOOD 2019 SEASON

25 of the 33 large nest boxes had nests that provided records for the table below. A comment on the other boxes is given at the end.

The numbers in brackets are the 2018 data

	Stock Dove	Mandarin	Jackdaw	Tawny Owl
Failed attempts	22(17)	4 (5)	0 (0)	0
Successful attempts *	7 (14)	3 (10)	4 (1)	1
Eggs recorded	54 (59)	109 (225)	19 (4)	2 (-)
Young left nest *	12 (26)	approx 34(88)	7(2)	1 (3)

- For Mandarin the young leave as newly hatched ducklings so that is defined as success – the very small number of juvenile mandarins ever 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, occasional dead ducklings. For other species the young have flown.

For Stock Doves nearly all the success was as usual in the area where Plawhatch stream cuts through the far end of the study area and in the neighbouring boxes on Pintail Point. This year the total number of eggs laid was similar to last year but many did not hatch. In one box a SD laid its eggs on a dead Jackdaw. Like last year full grown SD predated [presumably by Sparrowhawk] have been found.

For Mandarins there were less than half the attempts, eggs and ducklings compared with last year.

Barn Owl pellets were found in 2 boxes and in January to March some Barn Owls were seen. One egg was laid. The last brood was in 2015.

The nestbox Tawny Owl was in the study area this year (Whilletts last year). Still regular calling at Whilletts so probably tree-nesting

Although Jackdaws had their best year they were in boxes next to the one that has been used since 2015 (when they were first recorded in our nestboxes) and the main washout for Mandarin and Stock Doves was well away from this zone so I do not think the decline in SD and MN is related.

Whilletts boxes were apparently totally unsuccessful this year. As the season progressed we looked at them less and less.

The 8 boxes that produced no nest records this year have all had a successful nest at some time in the past. The 2 boxes predated last year (assumed by mink) had no sign of use this year and none of the 3 ‘woodcrete’ boxes were used and these have generally been poor.