

## Friends of The Emm Brook (FOTEB) : Use of Nest Boxes, 2014

The nest boxes along the Emm were taken down, checked and cleaned in January 2015 and one fresh 'open-fronted' nest box was installed under the bridge on Forest Road, hopefully to attract grey wagtails. The results, with comments, are shown in the table.

As in previous seasons most nest boxes (over 85 per cent) were used, mainly by tit species, probably blue, coal and/or great tits. Only one of the four tree creeper boxes was used by the intended species. (The nest was made mainly of small twigs so was very different from the moss-lined nests made by tit species that sometimes use these nest boxes.) The owl box in Riverside Walk was used again, probably by tawny owls, as was a similar box was installed last year in Emmbrook Walk.

Four tits' nests contained more than one egg and/or skeletons, the same number as last year, so a significant number of tits probably fledged successfully last season from these nest boxes - as they did in Holt Copse. Occasional eggs in large clutches are likely to be non-viable, but when skeletons or large numbers of unhatched eggs are present it suggests something untoward happened. If only a few nests are affected something probably happened to one or both the parents, but when many nests contain eggs and/or skeletons seasonal factors (e.g. inclement weather or lack of food) are more likely causes.

Nest Box Type	Used	Not used	Comments
<b>Small hole boxes</b>	16	0	One nest with one skeleton, one with 8 eggs, and two with 6 eggs. One of these nests contained a lot of droppings, so possibly the unhatched eggs were from a second clutch?
<b>Open fronted</b>	2	1	One used nest under a bridge in Emmbrook Walk and probably that of a grey wagtail. The second in a tree, the first time it has been used in 7 - 8 year, probably by a robin.
<b>Tree-creeper</b>	1	3	One unused box re-positioned on a different tree, so it fitted better round the trunk.
<b>Wren</b>	2	0	Both boxes used, as last year.
<b>Owl</b>	2	0	One box put up last year. Both probably used by tawny owls. The nest contents were similar, a grey (revolting-looking!) mixture, probably of droppings and old food.
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Over 85 per cent of the boxes used, as occurs most years.</b>

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