

Report to Landsort Bird Observatory Board on the monitoring of nest boxes in the spring of 2018

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Background

By 2008 a significant number of nest boxes had been placed in the woods on Landsort. A total of 261 nest boxes are marked on the protocol (*C:\Users\Landsort\Desktop\Ringmarkning\Holkprojektet Nestboxes\Holkprotokoll*). Only 259 of these are indicated on the electronic maps which show the location of each box (*C:\Users\Landsort\Desktop\Ringmarkning\Holkprojektet Nestboxes\Holkkartor maps*). Boxes '0' and '42' are not indicated on the maps and have never been located whilst walking through the woods.

Until 2016 there had been no recent record of the systematic monitoring of these boxes.

In 2016 monitoring of occupancy took place with young ringed at the nest wherever possible. Seventy-one of the boxes gave some indication of breeding, with a total of 238 young of seven species being ringed in the 48 boxes that produced young old enough to ring.

In 2017 monitoring took place once more with 68 boxes indicating some level of breeding, with 40 of these producing young old enough to ring. A total of 183 young of five species were ringed. During 2017 all boxes were re-visited in autumn and emptied of old nest material. Boxes that had been found on the ground, or in need of minor repair, were repaired and placed back in trees.

Methods

Printed copies of maps were used to locate the boxes during field visits with notes taken in a pocket book which were transferred to the computer protocol at the end of each day.

All nest box work was undertaken in the afternoon/early evenings after the standardised morning mist-netting sessions were completed.

Initial visits were undertaken to all surveyed boxes on ten dates from 19th May to 2nd June, with additional visits undertaken on further dates in June to check progress on late nests.

Results

Of the 259 boxes marked on the map, 18 were not looked for. Sixteen of these were either, Stock Dove (*Skogsduva*), Goldeneye (*Knipa*) or Goosander (*Storskrake*) boxes. Disturbance of breeding females of these species can cause abandonment, so there was little to be gained from visiting these sites. A further two were Tornfalk nests, set high in trees and therefore out of reach.

In total 241 boxes were searched for (95% coverage). Three were found on the ground and need replacing, with a further three having rotted beyond repair. Fourteen boxes were searched for but not found, 12 of which have not been found in any of the years 2016-2018 though two were located in 2016 and 2017, so may have been missed this year, or perhaps have fallen into thick vegetation. Thanks are due to Thomas Wenninger who found three boxes that have previously not been located.

Therefore, a total of 226 boxes were located and in a good enough condition to be used for breeding. This represents 87% of the boxes marked on the map. Of these 67 (29.6%) were occupied this year, though not all were successful.

A summary of occupied boxes where chicks were ringed is shown below:

Species	Number of occupied boxes	Total number of young
Great Tit	26	129
Blue Tit	1	8
Starling	5	18
Tree Sparrow	1	2
Redstart	1	6
Pied Flycatcher	2	9

In the years 2016 to 2018 a total of 143 different nest boxes have been used (out of the 241 searched for in 2018). Ninety-one of these were used in just one year, a further 38 were used in two out of three years and fourteen used in all three years. Maps stored in the folder in the office indicate which boxes have been used in the period.

Discussion

A total of 172 young of six species were ringed from 36 nests.

Less young were ringed this year than in either 2016 or 2017 (238 and 183 respectively) though of more species than in 2017 (seven compared to five). One box had a brood of dead Great Tit chicks in it, thought to be due to the heat. A further box had three/four very recently dead chicks of Pied Flycatcher in it when checked on the 30th June. Overall, fledging success appears to have been high with only a few dead chicks found within successful boxes.