

Lingfield Park's Raptors

The golf course Lingfield Park, Surrey, is situated on the boundary of the world-famous racecourse of the same name, and is one which is jam packed with wildlife, specifically the one's with the sharp beaks and claws.

Kevin Weller, Course Manager, and his team have produced a course of high standard whilst creating many habitats at the same time. These habitats are now excellent hunting grounds for raptors including owls and kestrels, both of which are known to be in decline here in the UK. However, the most impressive thing about all this is the amount of large nest boxes which the team have erected and as a consequence, are habituated with our aforementioned feathered friends.

The boxes, some of which have been used by the RSPB's Amber Listed kestrels, were purchased from the local farm shop in the hope of raising the number of raptors onsite. It appears to have worked with Kevin mentioning that one box produced 13 kestrel chicks over three seasons! Another success story is Kevin witnessed a barn owl use one of their boxes just 24 hours after being installed up a tree, smashing stuff.

At any given time, there are approximately 100 nest boxes on the 200-acre site with the majority being used by something or other. The course is alive with smaller birds including nuthatches, treecreepers, chaffinches, goldcrests and many members of the tit family – with this in mind, I wouldn't be surprised if there were other types of fast moving birds including sparrowhawks and peregrines using the course as a place to hunt.

It is projects such as Lingfield's raptor box programme which make all the difference to our dwindling medium sized bird population. You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of courses which have barn owl's nesting in a box onsite, therefore, excellent work team!

James Hutchinson, BIGGA Sustainability Executive.



Photo: Owl box at Lingfield GC.



Photo: Another owl box at Lingfield.



Photo: Kevin Weller at Lingfield Park GC.