

PEAK DISTRICT BIRD OF PREY INITIATIVE- INTERIM REPORT 2020

Covid-19 provided some initial challenges to monitoring and there was welcome co-operation between landowners, keepers and raptor workers to help overcome this. The vast majority of nesting attempts which have been monitored have now concluded, although the possibility of late reports cannot be ruled out. This report therefore presents interim results on the basis that the final end-of-season results, which will be reported more fully in the autumn, are unlikely to be significantly different.

2020 SEASON TO DATE

Peregrine

- 6 known nesting attempts, all successful, resulting in 14 fledged young. Pairs of peregrine were sighted at other traditional nesting sites but did not settle. Best year for Peregrine so far for the Initiative, and the first year when all known nesting attempts have successfully fledged young.

Goshawk

- 9 recorded nesting attempts, 7 successful with 16-17 young fledged. There were 2 failures at egg stage (cause unknown). Other sites were prospected but did not result in nesting. Overall similar number of nesting attempts and successful nests to last year, with a slightly higher number successfully fledged.

Merlin

- 15 known nests, all of which fledged successfully. At least one further possible successful pair. Estimate is 50+ young. Early sightings at other sites but no sign of nests. Overall similar number of nesting attempts and successful nests to last year (with a higher number successfully fledged), though that was a drop from an average of 22-23 occupied territories the previous 7 years.

Hen harrier

- Occasional sightings but no signs of breeding.

Short Eared Owl

- Evidently a poor vole year so few owls present. 1-3 possible nesting attempts but no successful nests confirmed.

SUMMARY

The overall picture has been very few nest failures, with an increase in the number of successful Peregrine nests (twice as many as any other year since the Initiative began in 2012) and a sustained number and success rate for Goshawk following last year's improvement. Merlin showed a slight improvement on last year's low numbers, but hopes that Hen Harriers would return to breed for a third successive year did not materialise. The impact of the Covid-19 lock down is difficult to assess but one peregrine nest may have established as a result of the access restrictions early in the season.

Several incidents of bird of prey deaths are currently being investigated within the area covered by the Bird of Prey initiative and will be reported on more fully in the end-of-season report. Elsewhere in the Peak District in areas not covered by the Initiative, several Peregrine nests were the victim of theft of eggs or young.

12 August 2020