

# WINTER NEWS LETTER

2024 / 2025



EATON  
GOLF CLUB



## News from the Environmental Group meeting in December

The Barn Owl Group recommend 4 boxes on the course. 2 have been privately sponsored so we need to raise funds for 2 more. Approximate cost £400 in total.

Phil Woollen (our bird man!) is in process of applying for a Schedule 1 licence for Barn Owls, that will enable him to inspect the boxes during the breeding season.

Jimmi (BBOG) has given the group plans for a new Kestrel box which Phil will make over the winter and Jimmi & he will install it on one of the existing poles holding old Barn Owl boxes, early in 2025.

20 new nest boxes have been purchased from the guy who makes the Barn Owl boxes. Each has metal plate surrounding the hole in the front to prevent woodpeckers from enlarging them. They should be installed before February and, hopefully, Gavin can lend one of his carts to lug them around. These will be installed about head height making them easier to inspect & clean. A metal disc with a number stamped on will be fixed to each one so that they can easily be identified.

After the meeting with Jo Holden (environmental manager for the estate) she got Ellie, who works for the consultants doing wildlife surveys on all the Duke's estates, to contact Phil and they have agreed a protocol for him to join in the full breeding bird surveys between April & July next year. Standard protocols require 5 dawn visits & 1 dusk visit (owls etc).

### Barn Owls

The Environmental group have put up 2 new barn owl boxes, one by the brook, left of the 13<sup>th</sup> fairway, the other to the right of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ladies tee. This 2<sup>nd</sup> one can be seen from the dining room. They are both screwed onto oak trees. We decided that if they were any nearer to the clubhouse then the owls would not use them. The boxes are large, triangular structures, made of marine ply and are very heavy. They were transported to the sites by Gavin's buggy.

Putting a screw ring in the top of the box

allowed a rope to be attached so that it could be hauled up into position. Jimmi,

from Broxton Barn Owl Group then screwed the box to the tree.

The owls not only use boxes for nesting, they also use them to shelter in during the rest of the year.

Left: Job done!

The Barn Owl Group, introduced to the club by Rupert, have put a plaque on one of the boxes, in memory of him.



A number of small boxes are also being put up for birds such as tits and robins.

## National Colour Ringing Scheme for Coots and Moorhens

There is a national scheme to individually colour ring Coots and Moorhens in the UK to find out more about the movements of these little-known species. The project is being administered by the Waterbird Colour- Marking Group (see <https://waterbirdcolourmarking.org>). Coots & Moorhens can both be migratory and ringing recoveries show that our populations are boosted in the winter months by birds flying here from the near continent. Eaton Golf course has a small number of Coots and Moorhens breeding on the ponds around the course. Phil Woollen is a licensed bird ringer with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and hopes to capture some of these birds and fit them with both BTO metal rings and an individually coded darvic ring. Coots will be fitted with white rings with black lettering and Moorhens with an orange ring with black lettering - see photos.



Phil will be using walk-in traps to capture the birds that will then be fitted with their rings, aged, sexed, biometrics taken and weighed. It's hoped this project will start very soon as Phil has recently been focusing attention on catching Moorhens in Grovesnor Park Chester where five Moorhens have been individually marked. See photos.



Coot left



Moorhen right

## Redwing & Fieldfare

These birds were seen in large numbers crossing the course in mid-November, probably from Scandinavia.

Phil ringed a few redwing.



Fieldfare left



Redwing right



*If you did not get an Autumn Newsletter and would like one, let me know.*

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