# Buzzard attacks prompt temporary outdoor ban at Essex primary school amid conservation challenges



A buzzard has taken a rather aggressive stance in the village of Havering-atte-Bower, near Romford, Essex, leading to a temporary ban on outdoor activities for children at Dame Tipping Primary School. This decision follows a series of alarming incidents that began around Easter weekend, during which locals reported being dive-bombed by the bird of prey. According to the school's headteacher, the ban has been implemented as a precautionary measure, highlighting the challenges posed by wildlife protection laws that restrict intervention in such cases.

Resident Nikki Dix recounted a shocking encounter with the buzzard in March, where she was left with scratch marks on her head. Her experience was echoed by Louise Whittle, a parent at the school, who described a frightening confrontation in which the buzzard appeared to target her head. Whittle noted that while the situation has been alarming, it has also served as an unexpected educational opportunity for students who are learning about buzzards—a species that is recovering from previous declines due to persecution and poisoning.

The local council has been in communication with the RSPCA, who believe the bird may be protecting its nest or chicks. This aligns with seasonal behaviour observed in buzzards, which typically becomes more aggressive during breeding periods. As a result, intervention options remain limited, and the council has suggested the installation of warning signs to alert local residents of the aggressive behaviour until the situation settles.

Concern about the buzzard's aggressive tendencies is not confined to Havering-atte-Bower. Reports from other parts of the UK indicate similar incidents involving buzzards attacking joggers and walkers, often leaving them bruised or bloodied. For instance, incidents near Haverhill in Suffolk resulted in runners sustaining injuries described as resembling being hit with a blunt object. Experts attribute these attacks to territorial behaviour typical during the breeding season, advising joggers to wear hats to deter such encounters.

Moreover, recent history shows that aggressive behaviour from birds of prey is not a novel phenomenon. A rogue hawk in Hertfordshire made headlines last year after injuring numerous individuals in a series of attacks, which reportedly stemmed from hormonal changes. This suggests that buzzard encounters are part of a broader pattern of increased aggression in bird populations during specific times of the year.

As for the buzzard in Havering-atte-Bower, the locals remain hopeful that it will either relocate or that the current trend of aggressive behaviour will diminish once its nesting period concludes. However, as parents and students adapt to life indoors at the school, there is an underlying concern that wildlife is being valued over the safety of the children.

The situation underscores a complex interaction between human communities and wildlife, particularly during sensitive biological periods for birds of prey. While buzzards are a symbol of wildlife recovery in the UK, incidents like these highlight the nuanced challenges that arise when protected species begin to encroach upon populated areas, blending the need for conservation with community safety.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/buzzard-havering-atte-bower-romford-essex-dame-tipping-school-b2761867.html), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-65601462)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/buzzard-havering-atte-bower-romford-essex-dame-tipping-school-b2761867.html), [[2]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/colliding-talons-sounded-like-crashing-cutlery-runners-at-9369376/), [[3]](https://www.essexwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds/birds-prey/buzzard)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/bird-of-prey-shot-thrice-8070705.amp), [[6]](https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/fears-small-children-after-buzzard-7213334)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/colliding-talons-sounded-like-crashing-cutlery-runners-at-9369376/), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-65601462), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-57853325)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/buzzard-havering-atte-bower-romford-essex-dame-tipping-school-b2761867.html), [[6]](https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/fears-small-children-after-buzzard-7213334)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/buzzard-havering-atte-bower-romford-essex-dame-tipping-school-b2761867.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/colliding-talons-sounded-like-crashing-cutlery-runners-at-9369376/> - Runners near Haverhill, Suffolk, have reported being attacked by a buzzard, leaving them bloodied and shocked. The incidents occurred on a country road near Helions Bumpstead, with victims describing the attacks as feeling like being struck in the back of the head. The buzzard, a common UK bird of prey, is known to defend its territory during the breeding season. Experts suggest wearing a hat may deter such attacks. ([suffolknews.co.uk](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/colliding-talons-sounded-like-crashing-cutlery-runners-at-9369376/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.essexwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds/birds-prey/buzzard> - The Essex Wildlife Trust provides detailed information about the buzzard, a widespread UK bird of prey. Once suffering from severe persecution and pesticide poisoning, it has made a stunning comeback to most of the UK. Buzzards are known for their cat-like 'kee-yaa' calls and are commonly found soaring over farmland and woodland. They primarily feed on small birds, mammals, and carrion. ([essexwt.org.uk](https://www.essexwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds/birds-prey/buzzard?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/bird-of-prey-shot-thrice-8070705.amp> - A buzzard was found near Colchester, Essex, with three bullets inside its body, one in the shoulder, neck, and pelvis. Despite the brutal attack, the bird survived and received treatment. Buzzards are the most common and widespread UK bird of prey, often spotted gliding and soaring above fields in search of small mammals, birds, and carrion. ([essexlive.news](https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/bird-of-prey-shot-thrice-8070705.amp?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-65601462> - In Friockheim, Angus, a runner was left with painful claw marks on his head after being attacked by a buzzard. Multiple other runners reported similar attacks, with the bird's talons sinking into their heads. The buzzard is the most common and widespread bird of prey in the UK. Experts suggest such attacks are rare and typically occur during the breeding season when buzzards are defending their nests. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-65601462?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/fears-small-children-after-buzzard-7213334> - In Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, a woman claimed a buzzard or red kite swooped and tried to grab her chihuahua. The incident has raised concerns about the safety of small children in the area. Similar incidents have occurred in other parts of the UK, including Henley-on-Thames and Watlington, where red kites have swooped to grab food from people. ([hertfordshiremercury.co.uk](https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/fears-small-children-after-buzzard-7213334?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-57853325> - In Flitwick, Bedfordshire, several residents were attacked by a bird of prey while out walking or jogging. Eva Ruby suffered a wound to her head after being swooped on by the bird, believed to be a buzzard protecting its nest. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds stated such events are extremely rare and advised residents to avoid the area during the breeding season. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-57853325?utm_source=openai))