



Barn Owl Link

Newsletter of the Barn Owl Conservation Network

Issue No 7 - Autumn 2004

FARM GRANT REFORMS TO HELP OWLS?

"farmers will be required to protect hedges and ditches by not cultivating, fertilising and spraying within two metres of the centre line..."

This phrase in Rt Hon Margaret Beckett's ministerial statement (July) about the decoupled Single Farm Payment stirred hopes of success for our work to increase available habitat nationwide for Barn Owls.

We always encourage linked areas of good rough grass habitat for Barn Owl conservation. The HOT Conservation Strategy for the Barn Owl promoted habitat corridors as the key to joining the breeding strongholds identified during their 1982-85 national Barn Owl survey.

Will the latest farming reforms help us achieve this? Will these uncultivated areas be neatly mown or will Barn Owls gain some rough grass, rich in voles?

A Defra spokesperson told us; "The introduction of the new Single Payment Scheme (SPS) next year is part of the implementation of latest CAP reforms. In order to receive their SPS payments, all farmers will need to deliver certain management requirements on their farms (called cross compliance). One of these requirements will be to protect hedges and ditches by not cultivating, fertilising and spraying within 2 metres of the centre line." (Fields less than 2 hectares will be exempt.)

"In addition, 2005 will see the launch of a new Defra agri-environment scheme called Environmental Stewardship. Under this scheme farmers will receive payments for delivering environmental management which goes over and above cross compliance requirements. In terms of field margins, the scheme includes options to introduce additional buffer strips around field edges to widen the gap between the boundary feature and the crop. It is hoped that there will be widespread uptake of



Above. Will nationwide lines of rough grass recover Barn Owl numbers?

Entry Level Stewardship (one of the strands of ES) over much of the country. Experience from a pilot scheme suggests that buffer strip options are amongst the most popular with arable farmers, so introduction of this should be widespread."

"Higher Level Stewardship is another strand, and aims to deliver a high level of environmental management carefully tailored at the farm level. For this scheme, in areas where there are known Barn Owl populations, additional management options (including tussocky grass margins and nest boxes) can be targeted specifically to benefit the owls."

Scotland

The provision of 2m field margins will not be compulsory in Scotland. However, the provision of field margins has been included as an associated good practice measure in relation to Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)

(article continued overleaf...)

Welcome to another BOCN newsletter, with articles about conservation projects across the UK. Many articles, factfiles and discussions also appear on our website www.bocn.org

Contents

Page

2	South Gloucestershire
3	BOCN 2004 Symposium
4	Inspiration at Essex and Wiltshire, Towers in Lincs
5	Sussex, North Wales
6	Cheshire, County Surveys
7	Oxfordshire & Bucks
8	Kent, Yorkshire
9	Northumberland
10	E England & SW Scotland
11	Water Vole, Arrivals Afar
12	The Hawk and Owl Trust

FARM GRANT REFORMS...(CONTINUED)



Left: The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP
Right: The Rt Hon Sarah Boyack MSP

requirements. A number of the GAEC items are designed to avoid deterioration of habitats and ensure the protection of rough grazings and other semi natural areas which are of importance to many bird species, including Barn Owls.

Sarah Boyack MSP, Convener of the Environment and Rural Development Committee at the Scottish Parliament told BOCN that she welcomed these provisions by the Minister.

"I believe that it is important to protect and preserve wildlife habitats, and I therefore welcome the Minister's decision to address the issue of field margins in the good practice requirements. However, it will also be important to ensure that farmers receive

adequate training and advice on how to comply with these requirements, in order to encourage farming methods which help retain important habitats."

Wales

Richard Evans, Senior Ecologist to the Welsh Assembly Government (Dept for Environment Planning and Countryside) told BOCN; "As there is more arable cropping in England than Wales, it is more essential that this measure is included in the English regulations to safeguard wildlife habitats. However we do recognise the value of an uncropped margin in all fields and this has been recommended to Ministers."

Unfortunately soon afterwards, Welsh Environment Minister Carwyn Jones announced that 2-metre margins will not be compulsory, apparently considered too burdensome, and stated that GAEC items 'reflect effective farming practice that is already exercised by the majority...' However 2-metre margins will be an option in *Tir Cynnal* and *Tir Gofal* schemes.

Northern Ireland

As we went to press, DARD (Dept Agriculture and Rural Development) told us that Cross Compliance rules were due to be announced in early November.

Still Down to Good Management

It would seem we almost had a mandate for rough grass margins nationwide, but management requirements are not uniform across the UK, due to differences in priorities, and perhaps awareness.

So those of us involved in the conservation of Barn Owls (and the many species associated with rough grass) must still encourage grass management regimes that help retain good populations of prey.

Following discussion with industry and key stakeholders, Defra will announce specific arrangements and practical details soon. Let us hope that this important step toward more sustainable farming maximises benefit to farmers and wildlife alike.

JPB

SAVING BARN OWLS IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

draw out local interest, and recruit members for The Hawk and Owl Trust.

The South Gloucestershire HOT group has done conservation work right from the start, with many members having the chance to assist in nest box sessions. Founder members had worked with Chris Sperring further south. "When Ian McGuire began the local group, I was glad to get involved with the conservation work." says Ken.

He set up a small working team with brother-in-law Steve, and Simon got involved after one of the group's 'owl prowl' events. The trio have led the group's nestbox installation efforts this year, backed up by other members who manufacture the boxes and maintain a database.

The HOT South Gloucestershire group has now installed 110 nest boxes, comprising 34 Barn Owl, 36 Little Owl, 29 Tawny Owl

and 11 Kestrel. With both Barn Owl and Kestrel on the 'Amber List' Ken's team will be targeting boxes to suit these birds as a priority.

"Out on site the team have a routine and almost work on autopilot now!" Ken told us, "Steve sorts out the box itself, Simon installs the box, and I chat with the landowner." They always set boxes facing East to counter the prevailing winds. When they check out a site they always assess the habitat provision, and encourage habitat creation where it is needed.

The South Gloucestershire conservation team can only be sure of Barn Owl occupancy at a handful of sites, but they are keen to discover what take-up they have. So Ken has now applied for a Schedule 1 disturbance licence, and next year they should have news for us on their project success.



JPB:all

Ken Lloyd, Simon Gibson and Steve Brown head the conservation efforts for their local Hawk and Owl Trust group. "I've always been a practical man," explains Ken, "I like to get out there and do something."

A keen birder, Ken carries out a multiple role in the conservation team; leading one of the group's nest box teams, recording site details, and educating landowners in the conservation needs of Barn Owls and other raptors. Ken regularly deals with enquiries, visits landowners who unknowingly have Barn Owls, and attends shows and fetes with the HOT display to



THE 2004 BOCN SYMPOSIUM

WORKSHOPS, NETWORKING, TALKS AND WALKS LINK CONSERVATIONISTS AND RESEARCHERS

Definitely an organic experience for all 88 delegates, our 2004 BOCN Symposium was the best yet. I would like to thank you all for coming along. It was great to see you all, hopefully everybody got what they came for, whether it was the networking, the excellent presentations, or to get the latest on Defra stewardship; or indeed, perhaps you came for the delicious food..!

Our excellent speakers were not the only contributors - a very important input came from all quarters during the workshops and during the breaks, which seemed to be the favourite time for making contacts and swapping information.

Please send us your feedback and ideas, and keep up the excellent work in your local areas - let's join the gaps between our project areas and keep the ultimate goal in mind - maximising coverage of Barn Owls across the country.

Sincere gratitude also goes out to our funders The Sheepdrove Trust, the kind support of The Kindersley Centre, and finally the hard work of volunteers and staff who made the day run smoothly.

Summary

The 2004 BOCN Symposium took place at The Kindersley Centre, Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Berkshire, on Saturday 20th March. The Symposium takes place every 2 years and is aimed at those involved in practical conservation and research for Barn Owls in the wild across the UK.

Presentations included:

The BTO Barn Owl Monitoring Programme

- by P.Beaven & D.Leech, BTO.

Barn Owls and Major Roads

- by David Ramsden, Barn Owl Trust.

Barn Owl Studies in the Lower Derwent NNR

- by Nick Askew, University of York.

2nd Generation Rodenticide in Barn Owls & other Raptors - by Richard Shore, CEH

An Island Population of Barn Owls

- by Sue Dewar, Wings Over Mull.

The World Owl Trust & Our Projects

- by Jenny Holden, Conservation Officer.

Notable details among the excellent presentations are too numerous to list, but some examples are below:

Jenny Holden's work seemed to show a correlation between Barn Owl breeding success and Short-tailed Vole as prey, which ranged from 50% to 77% of the diet at her key sites.

Richard Shore revealed worrying statistics - the numbers of Barn Owls with detectable rodenticide residues have increased vastly during the last 20 years. (Sheepdrove sells a Pesticide Action Network poster about pesticide pollution in food.)

BTO's results were beginning to reveal connections between habitat type and breeding productivity.

David Ramsden's presentation on road-related mortality in Devon highlighted the impact of trunk roads.

Results in Nick Askew's radio tagging of 6 male Barn Owls showed mean home ranges of 196ha (hectare) and core hunting areas of around 13ha. They flew up to 2.8km (1.75 miles) from the nest and favoured field edges.

Workshops

After the organic lunch, an outdoor workshop on conservation and Countryside Stewardship, led by Ann Conquest, Defra advisor for Berkshire and London, while an indoor workshop discussed local conservation projects and networking.

Major Nigel Lewis chaired the networking workshop which drew out many ideas and fostered the exchange of experience between different groups. We had strong feedback recommending local partnerships, involving the local community in monitoring, and connecting with farmers above all.

Becoming known to local planning officers was recommended because they request developers to commission site surveys - often a 'foot in the door' for BOCN Advisors, but this contact has to be maintained as the officers change.

Peter Kindersley suggested that where Advisors find an unmissable opportunity with great habitat but where landowners had difficulty funding nestboxes, The Sheepdrove Trust could perhaps subsidise boxes in special cases.



JPBall



JPBall



JPBall

Photographs

Top: The stunning organic conference venue - The Kindersley Centre.

Middle: Major Nigel Lewis chaired the networking workshop in The Oak Room with BOCN Advisors & groups.

Bottom: In our conservation workshop Defra Advisor Ann Conquest shared the latest on Stewardship.

STOP PRESS

BOCN Network Box Aid

We are very pleased to announce this project idea HAS BEEN APPROVED, and enclosed with this newsletter is an application form for those of you who have suitable potential projects.

Local BOCN Events 2005

Next year we want local projects to benefit from the experience and expertise within the Network. Could you use a local networking event to develop your volunteers or your conservation strategy? Please get in touch with your ideas.

JPB

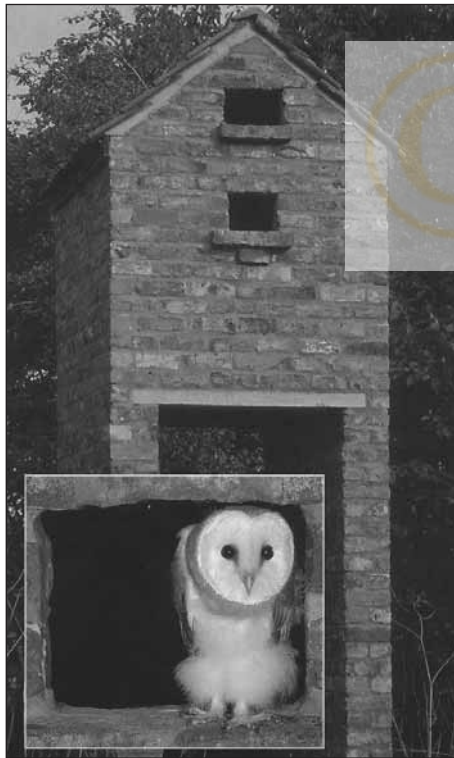


David Wilkin

Photographs

Above: Essex - Casper was upstaged by David Wilkin leg-ringing owlets.

Below: Lincolnshire - Bob Sheppard's owl towers stand 12 feet tall, and he hopes they will last for a century.



Bob Sheppard

2004 has been a good year for all raptors in Lincolnshire. In fact we have ringed record numbers of Barn Owl, Buzzard, Kestrel and Little Owl.

There were good clutch sizes of Barn Owls in June but 3 days of constant rain impaired hunting when most broods were at their crucial 3 week old stage and we lost a few broods. However we have found a significant number of second broods. As in previous years these have often been in a nestbox near to the first brood nestbox.

INSPIRATIONAL DAYS OUT

Essex

David Wilkin certainly inspired people at a farm walk organised by Essex FWAG (Farming Wildlife Advisory Group). David talked about his conservation work, BOCN and The Hawk and Owl Trust. He took nestboxes for people to have a close look at, and Casper his captive bred Barn Owl.

During the evening 120 farmers, their families and friends listened to him explain different boxes, and the habitat Barn Owls require. The highlight of the evening was leg-ringing 3 chicks at a box on the farm, and by the end of the event he had quite a few farmers wanting more information!

Wiltshire

Again this year the Wiltshire BOCN team took members of local Hawk and Owl Trust groups onto Salisbury Plain, where they saw practical Barn Owl conservation first-hand. As Major Nigel Lewis ringed owlets this was the closest most had ever been to wild Barn Owls and some even got to assist with the work. Nigel reckons this year's 32% drop in numbers of breeding pairs on the Plain is influenced by grazing and fires reducing rough grass, and other predators competing for voles, now including reintroduced Great Bustard! Despite fewer Barn Owls on the Plain, Nigel monitored 159 pairs in his project area as a whole, ringing 328 young. JPB

ESSEX UPDATE

By the end of the 2003 breeding season, we ended with 21 pairs of breeding Barn Owls, of which one pair had a 2nd brood. Simon Cox and I ringed 58 owlets.

Numbers of young Barn Owls were down in 2003, due I think to the very dry Spring and Summer, which in turn affected growth of fresh tender grass, which had a knock on effect on vole numbers. We also had 11 pairs of Kestrel breeding and they reared 38 young. We only had 3 pairs of little owl rearing 6 young.

This Year

2004 has been a better year with an increase in breeding pairs of Barn Owls going up to 28. Barn Owls used 16 of last year's boxes once again; 2 boxes used in 2002 were used again this year; 3 other boxes used last year were empty and 2 boxes used last year were not checked due to lack of time; 10 other sites were used for the 1st time.

At the time of writing we had been to one 2nd brood, ringing 3 young, which takes our total young reared to 86. We also monitored 12 Kestrel nests ringing 47 young, 2 Little Owl nests monitored produced 3 young.

Growth and Partnerships

All the nest sites checked this year have been nest boxes! The project continues to grow with well over 100 boxes put up and between 40 to 50 landowners involved. We have worked closely with Essex Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust, Tendring District Council, The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Countryside Project, Essex and Suffolk Water and Anglian Water.

We once again attended the Tendring Hundred Farmers Club Show, promoting our work and also the work of the BOCN and The Hawk and Owl Trust.

David Wilkin

OWL TOWERS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

The female appears to start the second clutch leaving the male to finish feeding the fledglings from the first. Fieldworkers can often encourage this situation by putting up a second nestbox if they have the time.

The Barn Owl towers I designed for Gus Grant near Boston have generated enormous interest. So much so, in fact, that I am in the process of preparing a leaflet for publication which will be available to farmers, landowners and fieldworkers. This year the towers were doing well until the

rain washed out the hunting opportunities and the chicks died.

Once again this year we had the unusual spectacle of a Kestrel sitting on eggs in the doorway of one of our poleboxes, with a Barn Owl sitting inside on a full clutch. Amazingly this Kestrel sat it out for 3 weeks before failing. One can only imagine the scene as the male Barn Owl clambered over the dozing Kestrel every night to get to feed the female!

Bob Sheppard

SUSSEX

WEST SUSSEX

Fellow conservationist Darrin Magdin, and I have looked in 140-150 boxes in barns and on trees this year. 71 were not occupied. There were 9 boxes which had owls last year but not this year. However there were 14 boxes which had a brood for the first time, and 3 of these were only installed in February! Graham Roberts (Environment Agency) also had a first-time owl occupation in a new box.

Habitat success

Six A-frame boxes put on trees on a farm entirely given over to set-aside and Farm Woodland Plantation resulted in 2 pairs nesting 0.6km apart and each rearing 5 young to ringable age, where there had been no owls on the property before. There was a good sprinkling of broods of 4 and 5, and we know of 58 nesting attempts on our patch (most of W Sussex) compared with 41 in 2003, so a fairly good year. Sadly, one of my first time boxes was destroyed by vandals at the egg stage.

Bigamy

At one barn, the male flew out as we approached, and we 'trapped' 2 females, both with active brood patch and primary moult, from the box. There was a clutch of 5 eggs and nearby a clutch of 2 - six young were later ringed.

We ringed around 150 chicks and adults plus 18-20 re-trapped/controlled adults. The ringed female of a pair regularly using a barn box was killed on the road nearby on 17 February. However in due course we trapped a new, 4-year old female at the box and ringed her 4 chicks, calculating the first egg date as no later than 21 May.

Insects

My photograph (*right*) of the common Flat-fly (*Ornithomya avicularia*), became the first county record, despite it being so familiar to all nest monitors. Five of our A-frame pattern boxes on trees had Hornets' nest in them this season. Ringers beware!

Dr Barrie Watson

EAST SUSSEX

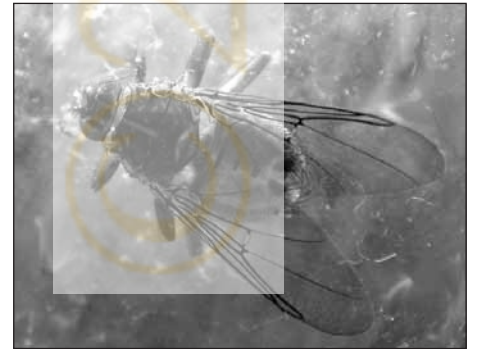
In the past many Barn Owls in East Sussex appear to have used many old hollow elm and oak trees for nesting. The Great Storm of 1987 destroyed large numbers of these trees and the nest sites they provided. The storm coincided with a programme to control Dutch elm disease, which resulted in the destruction of hundreds more elm trees in the county.

In 1994 when Jim and I began the BTO/HOT Barn Owl Survey it became obvious to us that very few natural nest sites remained in East Sussex.

Since 1993 we have erected over 100 nest boxes for Barn Owls, Little Owls, Tawny Owls and Kestrels, financed by landowners, Statutory Organisations and ourselves, with advice and support from Colin and Val Shawyer. This year Jim has ringed 51 Barn Owls in the nest boxes, an increase from the 32 of 2003. Hopefully the numbers will continue to increase each year.

The East Sussex Group of 2 doubled this year, Jenny and Duncan McCutchan (who attended the BOCN Symposium in March) have joined us with their enthusiasm and new ideas, ensuring that Barn Owls will continue to improve their breeding numbers in East Sussex.

Ann Hillman



Dr AB Watson

Above: This photo by Barrie Watson is apparently a first for local records!

NEW BOMP WEB PAGES

The Barn Owl Monitoring Programme (BOMP), now feature on the BTO website.

<http://www.bto.org/survey/bomp/index.htm>
This is linked to our own BOCN home page.

BOMP was piloted by the British Trust for Ornithology in 2000, and aims to monitor the UK Barn Owl population with standardised recording of nest occupancy and breeding success, producing annual trends. Ideally, a minimum of 2 visits per season should be made at each site, although monthly visits through the season will ensure that no breeding attempts are missed. All BOMP participants record box occupancy and nest contents, and ringers are also encouraged to record nestling and adult biometrics. Monitoring should take place for a minimum of 2 to 3 successive years at each site. All participants require a Schedule 1 licence from the BTO.

Peter Beaven, BOMP Coordinator, is grateful for the contributions of data made by many BOCN teams across the country. To discuss registering a site, guidelines or licensing, call 01842 750050 or e-mail:

barnowls@bto.org

NORTH EAST WALES

The North East Wales Barn Owl Project was launched this summer, with the county councils of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham combining the efforts of their Biodiversity Officers with the expertise of raptor conservationists like Ian Spence.

A national media release with BOCN informed the general public, farmers and landowners, and BOCN was interviewed live by Aled Jones on Radio Wales.

JPB

A word from a local expert

This year has been fairly quiet for me, in that I have only had a few nests to check. However, our joint news release about Barn Owl nest boxes and locating them at the best habitat caused a huge amount of public interest, especially in the Wrexham district. Emily Meilleur, the Biodiversity Officer there, had a large number of requests! Despite the habitat details in our article published in the Welsh national Daily Post and the local papers, many people still

think that just a box guarantees a Barn Owl. We have to deal with all the places showing real promise and will do site visits for those, at least. The Biodiversity Officers recently met to see 2 Barn Owl breeding locations and examine habitat on the ground and in aerial photographs to help us determine which are most likely to become new nesting sites.

Ian Spence, Wales Raptor Study Group (North Wales)

Broxton Barn Owl Group



Malcolm Ingham



Photographs

Top: Polebox success in West Cheshire

Bottom: The Wirral owlet shot down while dispersing from its parent site.

CHESHIRE AND THE WIRRAL

West Cheshire 2004

Just a few short 'interim' notes for West Cheshire. Some traditional sites are void but a good number of new sites were taken by breeding birds. Average fledging is above 2 but down from 3.5 in previous years. Total found and ringed has increased compared to last year so results for the 2004 season were good, better than 2003. We even think 2003 was a good year for breeding Barn Owls in West Cheshire.

2004 Results

New adults	14
(2003 was 10)	
New pulli	74
(8 of which were in South Cheshire)	
(2003 was 53)	
Retraps	6
Stock Dove	2
Young Kestrel	35

There were 31 sites with pulli - an average of 2 per site, i.e. more sites but fewer birds per site compared with 2003. Trying to narrow down reasons for this, we note that there are more woodmice than usual found in the boxes and we ask; does the increase in Kestrels limit food supply for the owls? Also, is the 'funny' weather responsible, in part at least?

Deaths

We are still finding owls dead in water troughs - so we emphasise to farmers the need for means of escape by owls.

All Cheshire 2003

In contrast to many other areas, Cheshire's Barn Owls fared well in 2003, and their county report estimated over 3 owlets per nest, more than previously recorded.

BOCN groups in Cheshire also found more confirmed breeding pairs, 61 compared to 48 in 2002, but our team's extra monitoring coverage will account for some of this apparent growth in numbers.

Bernard Wright
Broxton Barn Owl Group

Wirral Barn Owl Trust

The 2004 breeding season has gone very well so far, in terms of numbers of pairs and numbers of hatched young but, as I expect with most areas, the very wet weather has caused us concern and we know that some hatched young did not

fledge. This year we are aware of 20 pairs, as against 15 last year, and we counted 64 hatched young, as against 37 last year.

Robbery

At one site the nest appeared to have been robbed of chicks. The door of the building was found to be open when the observer arrived, when it should have been secure.

Webcam

Fascinating aspects of Barn Owls' lives were revealed by Wirral's Barn Owl Webcam this year, with an online Barn Owl diary by Malcolm Ingham. See www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/BarnOwls/index.asp

Steve Harris - WBOT Secretary

Barn Owl Shot

A young female Barn Owl was found injured in Arrowse Park on Saturday 28th August by a member of the public.

He kindly took it to a vet's, who gave the chick a thorough examination under anaesthetic and found a clear track where the bullet had gone through, shattering the joint before exiting. She was also able to confirm, by the location of the entry and exit hole, that the owl was shot in flight, probably just taking off from a fence post or tree. The large open wound to the underside of the wing had been caused by her falling to the ground and catching the wing on something as she fell.

It was decided whilst she was still under anaesthetic, that the only course of action left to us was euthanasia. Some people may ask the question, could she not have been kept in captivity? Not really! Her quality of life would have been very poor indeed. What a tragic waste.

This bird was one of 4 chicks that hatched in May and had been monitored by means of cameras connected to Wirral Council's Barn Owl Webcam site. It had just reached the age where it had been able to fly away from the nest site to look for its own territory and was only 3 miles away when it was shot. A leg ring fitted to the bird, enabled us to identify it when it was found. Merseyside Police are investigating the incident.

Malcolm Ingham

COUNTY SURVEYS CUMBRIA

Following last year's county survey for Cumbria, the World Owl Trust launched 'Operation Barn Owl' this year. With funding from DEFRA, they published a leaflet to gather reports, especially from farmers, about where Barn Owls are nesting. They now know an extra 50 Barn Owl sites previously unrecorded. Conservation Officer, Jenny Holden said, "This was a great success and puts us in a much better position to monitor the Cumbria population."

DEVON

The Barn Owl Trust and the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society completed a detailed county survey during 2003. They now estimate Devon's population of Barn Owls to be between 350 and 470 pairs, a 37% increase on their own 1993 estimate. (Between 250 and 350 pairs) What a triumph for their hard work!



OXFORDSHIRE AND BUCKS

Reviving projects in Buckinghamshire, Peter Wilkinson, Leanne Thomas and Peter van der Sluijs have reassessed known Barn Owl sites and worked closely with landowners and Aylesbury Vale DC Countryside Service.

Pat Wixey has worked closely with the Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) in Oxfordshire, with volunteers and staff on reserves like Chimney Meadows, where local craftsman Ralph True donated an A-frame box. A joint press release with BOCN emphasised the need for suitable habitat. Elsewhere at the Wychwood Project, inspired by one of Colin Shawyer's talks, Barn Owls occupy 4 out of 10 boxes Pat put up this year!

JPB

Overall 2004 proved to be better than 2003, which was poor for us. The upside was that we ringed 5 species; Barn Owl, Tawny, Little Owl, Kestrel and Buzzard, and we achieved this again in 2004.

Results

We have 48 sites used = 40 boxes 8 natural
176 eggs laid
128 young hatched

118 young ringed

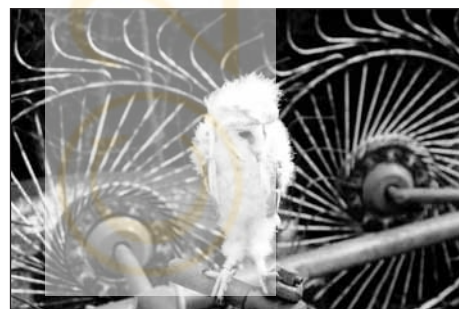
Species are: Tawny Owl -7 sites, Barn Owl -5 sites (plus 2 unconfirmed), Little Owl -10 sites, Kestrel - 23 sites, Buzzard - 3 sites.

BBOWT Sustainable Wetlands Project

Promoting good care of wetland habitat on farmland, Barn Owls are a key species to this project. We met Hannah Graves, the project officer, in mid-July and installed 4 boxes. BBOWT's Barn Owl boxes were very large! Not much fun without a Sherpa team to carry them across the fields! We have given Hannah the HOT's booklet *Boxes Basket & Platforms* so they can move on to using the lighter A-frame design.

These first boxes are already occupied. Needless to say the Wildlife Trust is pleased and can now be sure we know something of what we are talking about! The project had great success in the creation of ideal rough grass habitat with keen landowners. We have 10 more landowners to contact over the Autumn, with more to follow as the project expands. We hope to install up to 20 more boxes on the project, providing we can make them, before next season.

Vincent Cartwright and Gary Cartwright



Cartwright



BOCN

Photographs

Top. This lovely owlet photo by the Cartwright brothers deserves an award!

Bottom. Pat Wixey, Ralph True & Jason Ball at BBOWT Chimney Meadows reserve with Project Officer Lisa Lane.

COUNTRYFILE REOPENS THE RELEASE DEBATE

BBC Countryfile's Miriam O'Reilly went to Cumbria in October to look at the effects that the torrential rains have had on Barn Owl populations in the area, where this year, 25 were found starved to death in just a few weeks.

While those of you on BOCN who monitor owls will know this weather-dependent mortality is a normal and natural phenomenon, the 'shock factor' of figures like this work well for television, and the BBC were keen to rally viewers to the cause. As the Countryfile researchers learned about this, and other issues facing the Barn Owl, BOCN advised them to ensure their report emphasised that habitat and active conservation is key.

The programme hoped to stir viewers to action, so opened the debate on Barn Owl release schemes. Some who used to carry out releases believe strongly that captive-bred birds are an effective way of increasing wild owl numbers, and think it should still be supported by Defra.

In the past, thousands of releases were done every year in an attempt to halt the Barn Owl decline. Birds bred in captivity were released into the wild, but not always into areas where they had been lost. There was varied success, but it must be said, a lot of irresponsible actions took place before licensing was developed, after which they required intensive preparation work such as detailed habitat surveys. Uptake of licences diminished, and following advice primarily from English Nature, Defra stopped issuing licences in 2002.

Miriam interviewed the Barn Owl Trust and the World Owl Trust who are keen for the release option to be re-opened, but English Nature and the RSPB explained why they feel the scheme was rightly discontinued.

There could be a case for investigating the impact of carefully planned projects involving rehabilitated native birds (genetics being a major problem in captive bird stock) targeting areas without a local

population, but without detailed feasibility studies, who is to say how cost-effective this would be? The Hawk and Owl Trust succeeded in the strategic release of rehabilitated wild birds where a large amount of habitat created by the farmer had not been colonised by Barn Owls under their own steam, as reported on BBC Countryfile in 2002 by Chris Sperring.

The argument that released owls can restore populations in areas where they are not viable raises the question - 'why is it not already viable?' Local factors such as lack of habitat, or extreme weather means that even artificially boosted numbers of Barn Owls would be highly unlikely to persist without more permanent changes.

Creative conservation work is key, and that is why The Hawk and Owl Trust always promote the linking and good management of suitable habitat. This should surely take funding priority, for most of the country, above captive release schemes.

JPB



J.P. Ball

KENTISH OWLS

The Kentish Stour Countryside Project (KSCP) works closely with landowners and local communities along the Stour valley. KSCP has assisted over 60 farmers with Stewardship. With Environment Agency 'Operation Riverside Link' scheme, the KSCP obtained and erected 32 boxes in the last 3 years with our volunteer task force.

Under the expert guidance of Colin Shawyer, the first year of monitoring revealed almost all boxes were inhabited - but not always with Barn Owls! Kestrel, Little Owl, wasp nests and plenty of Stock Dove. One pair of Barn Owls cohabited a box with Stock Dove in the Ashford area.

This year their hard work was rewarded. Near Canterbury, we found 2 Kestrel nests with young and a box containing 2 non-breeding adult Barn Owls, and another with a single male. Most excitingly, a breeding pair with 4 young were also found. All these boxes were centred over the Ash Levels - flat drained marshland that provides ideal habitat for Barn Owls and other birds of prey such as Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier, Merlin and Sparrowhawk.

Near Ashford we had 2 females with 2 broods of chicks, one with 3 and another with 5. Both boxes are positioned within metres of the river, and my pellet dissection analysis reveals Water Vole are an important part of their diet during summer.

With such encouraging results, and through continued hard work and dedication from volunteers, landowners and staff, hopefully now the Barn Owl will soon become a more frequent sight along the length of the Stour valley.

Jo Haskett

EAST YORKS UPDATE

Early indications are that 2004 has been a great year for Barn Owls, with an excellent supply of voles. Many owlets felt very heavy when ringed, stomachs well-rounded and full of prey. We saw adults were not spending too much time away from the nest before returning carrying prey. Boxes also often had several uneaten prey items. The gender ratio of 64% males and 37% females is almost identical to last year.

So far we have ringed 219 owlets. This looks favourable compared to previous 5 years:

175 total rings in 2003

292 total rings in 2002

112 total rings in 2001

193 total rings in 2000

175 total rings in 1999

Of the 69 nest sites visited:

3% contained 6 owlets

8% with 5 owlets

21% with 4 owlets

44% with 3 owlets

18% with 2 owlets

4% with 1 owlet

We have well over 200 boxes and to help fill in the gaps we have been encouraging interested persons to set up their own nest box scheme. This has resulted in a cluster of new boxes in a remote area to the west of the Humber Bridge which is already proving productive.

In addition an active group of RAF personnel at a former RAF range are increasing the number of boxes on site. One box with a brood of 6 successfully reared, and other poleboxes due to come into use at the end of the summer. The "quality" of the owlets reaching flying stage is very high - well built and beautifully formed!

The group is hopeful that the build-up of Barn Owls will continue apace.

**HT James,
Secretary;**

East Yorks Barn Owl Survey Group

LOWER DERWENT VALLEY

Barn Owls in the Lower Derwent Valley have had a mixed year so far in 2004. Early nest checks confirmed the usual suspects were breeding and fairly synchronous in their timing, with a pleasing number of new birds taking up residence in some recently erected nest boxes.

Things were looking positive for a good year. However, by mid-July several pairs were found to have failed and deserted their nest sites, despite good hunting conditions. By then ringing had started in earnest with some 60 chicks ringed to date, along with a scattering of Little Owls, Tawny Owls, Kestrels, Jackdaws and Stock Doves.

Then came the rain! The downpours in August caused problems for some birds with one notable adult male found damp and very thin in long grass following a particularly severe storm. The bird was given time to dry out and feed up before being released just 12 hours later.

The decision was taken by the group to fit the bird with a small radio-transmitter to follow its progress closely over the next few days, whilst also adding to the information being gathered by York University

regarding the foraging ecology of the species.

Sure enough the bird did very well and, to the delight of the trackers, was soon observed delivering food to a nearby barn. Inside 3 chicks were found - just 200 metres from another active nest site - we found a very thin chick on the floor with a damaged wing resulting from a collision with barbed wire. The chick was taken to a local wildlife rehabilitation centre and the infected wound treated with antibiotics before being placed back in the nest in front of local TV Crew filming for BBC2.

It seems that without intervention this owl family was destined to fail. Now, in early September, there are a handful of late and second breeders just hatching chicks, which should keep us busy till the end of the month.

We would like to thank Jean Thorpe, Dave Tate, Fallon Woodall, and all the numerous landowners for their continuing help this year.

**Nick Askew - University of York
Craig Ralston - English Nature**



NORTHUMBERLAND

2004 has been our most successful year to date. We've increased the number of breeding pairs of Barn Owls resident in our study areas from 8 to 10 and the number of Barn Owls fledging has improved substantially.

From the first broods, 26 young were fledged in total with 2 of these pairs pushing on to have second broods. One of these broods has 4 young around 9 weeks old at the time of writing (early September). But it should be emphasised that the local farmer has been providing supplementary feeding during inclement weather. The other second brood is being fed wholly on prey caught in the nearby fields by the adults.

When the site was monitored recently 2 chicks were found among the 3 remaining eggs. Because of the late time of this second breeding attempt it will be interesting to see if any of this brood eventually fledge from the site.

One of our new sites is in an area which we thought would have a slim chance of supporting Barn Owls. So it was a great surprise to find a pair of Barn Owls in residence in a nestbox we had erected 4½ years ago and had only ever attracted a pair of Jackdaws!

We think it likely that one of the adult birds originated from another study area 1.5 km away. Only 1 owlet fledged from this site which we think may be due to parental inexperience (if 1st year breeders) or the poor quality habitat or a combination of the two. We will be monitoring the site in coming years to see if there is an improvement in breeding performance.

One of our established study areas has 3 breeding pairs within 0.75 sq. km. We were hoping to see an increased density in other study areas during this breeding season but this did not occur. However, in one area where breeding is finished for this year, we have discovered a new pair of Barn Owls in a nestbox about 0.75km from one of our established breeding sites. Whether the new pair will remain in the nestbox over the winter to breed next year remains to be seen but the situation is encouraging.

Breeding density is dependent on (i) food availability and (ii) nest site availability (see Population Ecology Of Raptors - Ian Newton 1979). We have made it our practice for a number of years to provide 6 to 8 nestboxes within a given area (about a square mile) and to site them in the best habitat available - usually on farms with Countryside Stewardship. Nest site availability is similar for all of our study areas and the major parameter which must be varying is prey availability.

In an effort to get a handle on this we have been supplying Jenny Holden - the Conservation Officer for The World Owl Trust - with pellets taken from one of the nestboxes in the high breeding density area. Jenny is investigating the effect of different prey species on the number of Barn Owls fledging from nest sites.

As a control we also supplied pellets from an area which has only ever held 1 breeding pair. Jenny's work may be able to shed some light on the difference between the areas with regard to the quantity/quality and type of prey taken.

Alan Levitt and Nick Atkinson



Photographs

Top. Owlets in a plastic barrel, which Alan and Nick have found to work well.

Bottom. Half a dozen eggs in a wooden interior box

Alan Levitt and Nick Atkinson

WOT/HOT STUDY

Jenny Holden's ecology studies, looking at how the proportion of Short-tailed Vole in Barn Owl diet influences breeding success, has led to a joint research project between The World Owl Trust and The Hawk and Owl Trust, studying the relationship between habitat and diet. At 2 sets of 20 selected sites, habitat will be surveyed and many regurgitated pellet remains from resident owls will be analysed.

NORFOLK

As far as 2004 is concerned I think that it was overall worse than 2003. North West Norfolk Ringing Group had 9 complete failures of hatched young - found dead or the nest was empty when it was time to ring them - we have never experienced that ever. Also brood sizes were small - with only 1 and 2 being the norm, and very few broods of 3 or more.

You can view our distribution map of over 190 nest sites on our website:

<http://www.bmarket.freereserve.co.uk>

Our Results for 2003

Sites were classified as active, potentially active or unoccupied. Active sites had eggs or chicks, potentially active had either a pair or single bird present but they were not actively breeding or it was believed that a first brood had already fledged, unoccupied sites had no Barn Owls present.

Active = 71

Potentially Active = 30

Unoccupied = 96

Productivity 2003

Average number eggs laid per nest = 2.9

Average number of chicks/nest = 2.4

2 nests failed to produce any chicks

12 nests contained only 1 chick

22 nests contained 2 chicks

23 nests contained 3 chicks

10 nests contained 4 chicks

2 nests contained 5 chicks

We ringed 164 Barn Owls of which 155 were chicks and 9 were adults, 2003 was a poor year for Barn Owls compared to 2002.

John Middleton



Brian Morrell - WWT

Above: Owlets of Caerlaverlock, Scotland.

EASTERN ENGLAND

A WELCOME RECOVERY

This year a very welcome but nevertheless predictable recovery in breeding success occurred throughout the eastern half of England after such a poor 2003 when occupancy rates at traditional nest sites were 40% below normal, female body weights almost 100g below that necessary for egg production and fledging success of less than 2.5 for those pairs which did lay.

Although the data from about 1000 sites in England has not yet been looked at in detail, Barn Owls were back at about 90% of traditional sites, and a good number of new pairs occupied boxes for the 1st time. At most sites, egg laying began about 5 days earlier than usual, between the 2nd and 3rd week of April, with egg clutches averaging 6 and brood sizes of 4 to 5. Everything looked good until the last week in June, when unusual weather with 3 days of incessant rain and gales prevented hunting - after which brood depletion of well grown young was rife. Overall fledging success in badly hit areas will probably be little better than in 2003, although many more pairs (about 650) produced young. As this goes to press our team are still monitoring nests with young and some with eggs, the result of about 15-20% of pairs producing 2nd broods averaging 4 to 5, most now near fledging. In one of our well studied areas a staggering 90% of the 25 pairs have produced a second brood!

As a result of concerted research and conservation efforts by ourselves and many others, breeding numbers in the Eastern and Midland counties thankfully seem much healthier both in their distribution and abundance, than during the period 1985-1995.

Colin Shawyer

CAERLAVERLOCK

It has been a poor year for Barn Owls breeding in Dumfriesshire compared to 2003. Instead of 3 or 4 chicks only an average of about 2 with some established pairs not breeding.

There was some success with a sponsored nestbox in a tree at Shore cottages on the eastern end of our reserve, used by Barn Owls for the first time since I put it up in 1994. They have fledged 2 chicks who are now flying. Previously it had been occupied by Jackdaws and for 2 seasons a pair of Tawny Owls.

The regular pair at Caerlaverlock did not breed this year at the usual time. It looked promising as we had the CCTV cameras as usual in the nestbox in the barn where a pair have bred since 1992. However no eggs were laid. We speculated that it could be the weather or maybe it was the same female (ringed) that had been in this pair at the Wetland and Wildfowl Trust (WWT) site since 1992 and was getting a bit old. We ringed her about 6 years ago when we ringed the chicks. Since then, I have not caught her to check if it is the same bird but

her behaviour is the same. They then took up residence in one of the owl lofts built into our visitor centre, which we also had wired for CCTV. Again there was no clutch of eggs and only the odd day roosting, until Thursday 26th August when the female laid an egg and started to incubate. By early September there were 6 eggs, which seemed to be a complete clutch.

We have never had a 2nd clutch here, even in a good vole year and always the eggs are laid in the last week of April or the first week of May. This is a very late clutch and there must be severe doubts as to the survival of the chicks and any that go on to fledge at Christmas!

Does this happen often? We have never contemplated supplementary feeding but as our visitors see these birds daily, we may have to consider it.

Brian Morrell
WWT Caerlaverlock

PHOTO NOTE: It is illegal to disturb or handle Barn Owls without licences and qualifications, such as those held by trained bird ringers.

GALLOWAY FOREST FC

My general impression was that 2004 was not as bad as we might have expected; there was a vole crash, as anticipated, but it did not seem as drastic as some have been.

The productivity figures are on the low side, but by no means dire. Also, the crash didn't come until the spring, so overwinter survival was quite good.

Low productivity

Occupation rate was almost identical to 2003, and 87% of sites laying is quite high, especially for a low vole year. Clutch size was down, and one bird incubated c/2, and two c/3; there was just one c/6.

Some female weights were good - one was still over 400g after laying her 4 eggs, but another was only 316g about 3 weeks into the fledging period.

In fact, everything this year was highly variable - weights, timing of laying, clutch size, brood size, etc. There was a distinct impression, though, that the earlier birds did better - the last few in July had only ones and twos, or had failed to rear any.

Breeding activity virtually ceased by the end of that month - an unusually abrupt end.

Sites Checked 36

Sites Occupied

By single 0

By Pair 23

Treeboxes 14

Buildings 9

Unoccupied 13

Sites not laying = 3 (13%)

Sites Laying eggs = 20 (87%)

Mean clutch = 4.2; n = 9; range = 2-6

Sites hatched 19/20 (95%)

Mean brood = 2.8; n = 8; range = 1-5

Sites with large young = 18/20 (90%)

Mean brood = 2.7; n = 16; range = 1-5

Sites fledging young 16/20

(80% sites laying)

(70% occupied sites)

Young Produced 39

Young/occupied site 1.7

So summing up - things were all over the place, but it could have been worse.

Geoff Shaw
Forestry Commission Scotland



A RUSH TO RUSHCLIFFE?

ARRIVALS FROM AFAR

On 21st Feb this year, I found a dead Barn Owl in our box 91 in South Nottinghamshire. The owl had been ringed in Cambridgeshire on 18th June 2002.

On 8th June this year, we found a pair of Barn Owls in the same box, we caught the female which was ringed and we recently learned that this owl was also banded by the same ringer in Cambridgeshire on 20th Aug 2002. So 2 Barn Owls from the same area travelled 70km and ended up in the same box. What are the odds on that happening?

2003 SUCCESS

Last summer saw an amazing increase in the number of young owls fledged from Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project boxes. According to the project founder, Clive James, "Barn Owl numbers have gone through the roof".

The project - backed by Rushcliffe Borough Council - has been running for about 8 years but only had its first breeding success in 2000 when Barn Owls raised 4 chicks from 2 of their boxes. The following year was disappointing when only 1 of the project's 100 boxes was used and 3 chicks were fledged from a box at Tollerton. Then 2002 was much better, with 16 owls fledged from 4 boxes but 2003 showed a remarkable increase with a fledging figure of 36 young from 9 occupied boxes.

An added bonus for 2003 was that for the first time ever, Barn Owls bred in one of the project's showpiece boxes at Rushcliffe Country Park, raising 2 chicks.

We had a good start to the year and early season box maintenance inspections revealed that over 30 of our boxes had seen some use by Barn Owls. We either saw an owl leave the box or found owl pellets inside. Subsequent inspections proved disappointing though when we found that many of the boxes had been taken over by either Jackdaw or Stock Dove.

Owls in springtime tend to range around searching for mates and breeding is determined by the availability of the small mammals that they eat. These were very late this year, causing the Barn Owls to be late with their egg laying. We were finding newly hatched young in nest boxes as late as the middle of August and we still have some young to ring in September. The owls breeding in the Rushcliffe Country Park was an exciting find but not really a surprise, as we'd earlier found a Barn Owl using a nearby barn as a winter roost.

The Nottinghamshire Bird Reports still conclude that Barn Owls are very scarce, with sightings from only about 24 locations per year in the whole of the county, and with the top breeding figure estimated at around 19 pairs in 2000.

Other local groups reported a very poor 2003 for their boxes so it is a mystery why we did so well. With the project putting nearly 60 Barn Owls back into our countryside in the last 4 years, the future of the Barn Owl in Rushcliffe looks to be in good hands.

Howard Broughton
Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project

NORTHANTS

A moderately successful breeding season this year, with about 50 breeding sites in this region (Northants, Cambs, Bucks) and 190 pulli ringed to date with more double broods expected. Average per young fledged per female is 3.7 for all attempts. Breeding success has picked up as the year has progressed in response to improving food supply.

Quite a few interesting recoveries, retraps and controls though not all details have come through from BTO yet. We have a bird in Cambridgeshire that was ringed in Warwickshire. Apparently 2 birds from adjacent sites near Peterborough turned up in the same box near Nottingham.

(see Rushcliffe story to the left! - ed.)

The value of ringing and subsequently capturing adults is providing a lot of valuable information on the dynamics of the Barn Owl population. This is possibly an area that needs more effort, a more structured approach and good guidelines to establish best practice and ensure that the welfare of birds is foremost. I wonder how frequently people leg-ringing Barn Owls are 'capturing' Adults.

We are also looking in depth at double brooding and its importance to Barn Owl population dynamics and results so far are fascinating. It is an under-researched area. I wonder how many people are checking for double broods on a systematic basis. We should have a lot more data by next symposium and should be in a position to present a paper on this subject.

Paddy Jackson
Northamptonshire Barn Owl Project

WATER VOLE PARTNERSHIP

A groundbreaking project by Bristol Zoo Gardens and The Hawk and Owl Trust continues to increase Water Vole numbers and also Barn Owls as a result! HOT Conservation Officer, Chris Sperring MBE, points out, "Creating habitat for Water Vole is very much the same as our Barn Owl work." The habitat management also benefits other associated species like Short-tailed Vole. They reintroduced 37 Water Voles into areas with new and rejuvenated rough grass habitat in North Somerset, and now estimate there are well over 300.

MANCHESTER AREA

For various reasons, this year hasn't been as good as last year. We found one double-brooded pair (3 almost fledged with the female on eggs at another site about 300m away - almost normal for this pair) at the end of June. All the other sites we checked were negative.

Judith Smith - County Bird Recorder



The Hawk and Owl Trust Registered Charity No: 1058565

MEMBERSHIP AND ADOPT-A-BOX

The Hawk and Owl Trust works to protect and conserve all wild birds of prey and their habitats. We work to achieve this through:

- * creative conservation
- * practical research
- * imaginative education

The habitat theme runs through all our work, because by conserving the places where owls and other wild birds of prey nest and feed, we also support many associated species in a variety of places.

Join us and help

If you care about birds of prey and their future in our countryside, then please join The Hawk & Owl Trust. Your involvement, membership fee and donations to the Trust will help to continue our dedicated work to conserve them.

The Barn Owl Conservation Network is just one of many projects which can benefit, and with every new supporter we can achieve more.

Adopt-A-Box

When people living in urban areas ask about setting up a Barn Owl box, please ask

them to consider this way of supporting the work of The Hawk and Owl Trust.

When they Adopt-a-Box, or adopt as a gift for a friend or relation, they can choose the region for the nestbox, and news about what has been happening in the boxes will be sent in November at the end of the breeding season. We also send:

- *an attractive adoption certificate
- *owl facts - an illustrated guide to Britain's six species of owls
- *a colourful sticker (one of a series)
- *information about how your money helps us to help owls and other birds of prey.

Group adopters get all the items listed above, plus:

- *an exciting activity pack
- *photographs to collect
- *ideas for teachers and group organisers (related to the National Curriculum)
- *a pack of colour slides with helpful speaker's notes.

Please visit www.hawkandowl.org for more details on membership, our projects, online donations, and to request supplies of Adopt-A-Box forms.

EDUCATION



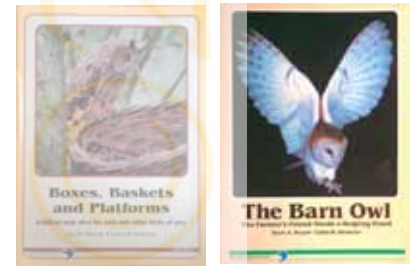
photo by Jacqueline Wyatt

Leanne Thomas, Education Officer for the Hawk and Owl Trust, runs a dedicated centre for inspiring tomorrow's conservationists. Barn Owls in the camera-linked polebox added to the experience again this year, with visitors witnessing owl behaviour from a nearby hide. Connecting the topics of food webs and habitat, Leanne often uses the pellets regurgitated by owls to educate thousands of youngsters every year.

To keep up the supply, she needs your help! If you carry out monitoring under licence and have pellets that you can spare, we can use them, so please give generously! Send to: **The Hawk and Owl Trust, Chiltern Open Air Museum, Gorelands Lane, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4AB.** Tel: 01494 876262.

LONG-EARED OWLS NEED GOOD LISTENERS

The Month-of-the-Long-Eareds (MOTLE) survey is now a partnership between The Hawk and Owl Trust, and The World Owl Trust. The project needs volunteers for March 2005. "The Long-Eared Owl is difficult to study" says the Hawk and Owl Trust's Conservation Officer, Chris Sperring MBE. "The Best way to survey for it is to listen for calls, such as the pre-breeding calls of adults during February and March, usually late at night." **Anyone wishing to help should please contact Chris Sperring on 01275 849287**



PUBLICATIONS

Hawk and Owl Trust publications
PO Box 530, Windlesham GU20 6XZ.
E-MAIL: hawkowlpub@tiscali.co.uk

BOOKLETS (prices include P&P)

Boxes, Baskets and Platforms £5.75
(Colin Shawyer and Sue Dewar.)

All about how to make and successfully use artificial nesting sites for raptors. (Revised 2001. 40 Pages)

The Barn Owl; The Farmer's Friend Needs a Helping Hand £2.99
(Mark Brazil & Colin Shawyer.)

Background to the Barn Owl plight and its conservation needs. (18 pages)

LEAFLETS

- * **The Barn Owl and Its Habitat**
- * **Planning for Barn Owls**
- * **Building for Barn Owls**

Please send S.A.E. and 35p in stamps for single leaflets. We can supply you with larger numbers and we will only charge postage as required.



Barn Owl Conservation Network

Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 7UU Tel 01488 674727 www.bocn.org

The Barn Owl Conservation Network is a project of The Hawk and Owl Trust, Registered Charity Number 1058565 and funded by The Sheepdrove Trust, Registered Charity Number 328369. Barn Owl Link is the newsletter for Advisors on the Barn Owl Conservation Network, and is published by the Hawk and Owl Trust,

c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY.



Our sincere thanks go to all contributors to the newsletter
Editing and design by Jason Ball, UK Coordinator of the BOCN
Printed on recycled paper by Tekprint. 01793 643291



Artwork and all original creative works including illustrations and photographs remain the copyright of their contributors.

Articles featured in this newsletter do not always reflect the policy, opinions or views held by the Barn Owl Conservation Network or The Hawk and Owl Trust.