

# CREATING A BARN OWL BOX

## *Introduction*

Barn owls are now rare in the countryside and the present population of around 5,000 pairs is found mainly on farms. Creating a barn owl box is one way you can help to encourage the species to flourish.

## *Selecting the area*

Barn owls hunt for small mammals mainly over rough grassland, ditches, hedgerows and establishing tree plantations. If your box is not sited in an area providing these habitats it will probably not be taken up by a barn owl. Many farm buildings are often located in close proximity to such habitats and attaching a box to a farm building would provide a worthwhile nesting site.

## *Constructing your box*

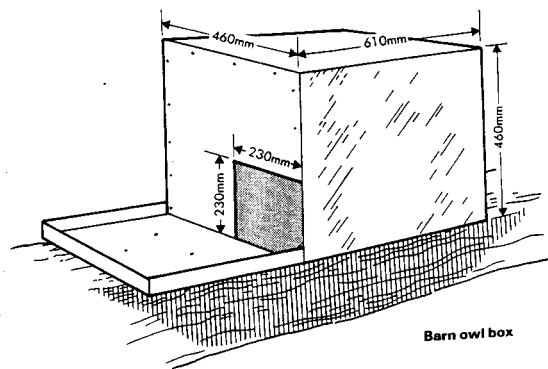
- Indoor boxes can be constructed using 6mm or 9mm plywood. A tea chest would be eminently suitable as long as all the metal fixings are removed. Thin plywood makes the box

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- lighter to erect but is only suitable for indoor locations.

- The size of the box is not critical but 18" x 18" x 24" (see diagram) is suggested. The entrance hole must be at least 4"

- An internal baffle (see diagram) provides an "around the corner" entrance for the bird and is much favoured by barn owls as it darkens



wide and 10" high.

- Good quality roofing felt is required if the box is to be sited out of doors. Some preservatives can be harmful to barn owls so please contact your FWAG Adviser for a list of suitable preservatives to use.

the nesting chamber. A baffle also helps to prevent invasion by jackdaws - sometimes!

- An optional extra could be a 10" platform attached to the front of the box. This provides a feeding site and space for young barn owls to exercise their wings prior to flight.



- Bedding in the form of woodflakes or dry straw may be provided. The barn owl makes no nest and lays its eggs on the surface already present in the box. If the floor is left bare eventually its own pellets make the “floor cover”.

### ***Erecting the box***

Although the box needs to sited as high as possible, please remember that in many modern farm buildings there is little ventilation and the roof space can become

extremely hot in good weather. In a modern building therefore site the box well away from the roof apex.

Avoid facing the entrance hole of the box towards the prevailing wind.

### ***Other organisations***

Barn Own Trust, Waterleat,  
Ashburton, Devon TA13  
7HU

Royal Society for the  
Protection of Birds, The

Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire  
SG19 2DL

British Trust for  
Ornithology, The Nunnery,  
Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU

### ***Further Information***

For details of your local  
FWAG Group please contact  
FWAG at the National  
Agricultural Centre,  
Stoneleigh, Kenilworth,  
Warwickshire, CV8 2RX.

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