



Ymddiriedolaeth
Natur
Gwent
Wildlife Trust

Barn Owl

Tyto alba

Species Action Plan

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The barn owl is widely distributed across Britain and Ireland, as well as Gwent, where the coastal strip and Usk Valley appear to be the county strongholds. It is a bird of open habitats, especially lowland farmland with rough grazing and young plantation woodland, where their key prey - the field vole - can be found in abundance. Studies suggest that a pair of barn owls may require approximately 20–25km of edge habitat, along with suitable nesting and roosting sites. It is a cavity nesting bird, with common nesting sites including buildings, cavities in rock faces and trees, as well as purpose-built nest boxes.

Barn Owls are generally very sedentary, with juveniles normally dispersing less than 10km from the nest site, and adults being faithful to a breeding area. Barn Owls are vulnerable to a number of factors: lack of suitable habitat limits population distribution; quality of habitat limits breeding productivity; rodenticides can lead to poisoning; barn conversions can reduce available nest sites; and road mortality is also a significant factor.

Status

- ❖ Schedule 1 Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended
- ❖ Green List – Birds of Conservation Concern Wales

Threats

- ❖ Lack of suitable habitat
- ❖ Low quality of habitats impacting breeding success
- ❖ Rodenticide poisoning
- ❖ Barn conversions reducing nest site availability
- ❖ Road mortalities
- ❖ Fluctuations in prey population (3yr cycle)
- ❖ Poor weather - cold/wet winters

Current Action

- ❖ BTO ringing and nest record schemes
- ❖ Nest box installations in Gwent
- ❖ Agri-environment schemes

	Objectives	Action
A	No net loss of occupied area for existing populations	1,2,3,5
B	Populations increasing in occupied area, abundance and viability	1,2,3,5
C	Barn Owl habitats increased in size, quality, resilience and connectivity	1,2,3,5
D	Knowledge and understanding of the species increased, leading to appreciation, sense of responsibility and action	1,-5

	Key Actions	Target
1	Facilitate the provision and protection of natural and artificial (e.g. barns, nest-boxes) nesting sites in Gwent	2030
2	Produce/distribute advice booklet and work with key stakeholders to ensure appropriate habitat management	2025 2030
3	Undertake survey and mapping to identify populations, key areas and opportunities to build connectivity	2027
4	Increase awareness through media and publishing platforms, talks, events, training	2030
5	Respond to potentially damaging developments through the planning process; campaign for better site protections	2030

Lead: Gwent Wildlife Trust

Key partners: TBC