

BARN OWL POPULATION ON THE INCREASE IN SHROPSHIRE
Shropshire Nest Box Scheme Helps to Begin a Population Recovery after a Long and Significant Decline

Work by the Shropshire Barn Owl Group, a member of the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership, to install in excess of 200 Barn Owl Boxes across Shropshire since 2002 has helped the population of this striking and beautiful bird begin a recovery after a long and significant decline.

Barn Owl nest boxes provided, installed and monitored by the dedicated team of volunteers who make up the Shropshire Barn Owl Group have produced more chicks since 2002 than natural nest sites monitored by the group. Barn Owls using natural nest sites are breeding well but nest boxes are clearly having a positive effect on the population in Shropshire.

The decline of Barn Owls began in the last 100 years or so is thought to have been due to less nest sites and loss of habitats for hunting. The Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership 'action plan' for the Barn Owl in Shropshire is being led by the Shropshire Barn Owl Group along with The Upper Onny Wildlife Group, Shropshire County Council, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency. The action plan has helped to provide artificial nest sites in boxes matched with suitable habitat which has helped increase the number of Barn Owls in Shropshire.

The Shropshire Barn Owl Group is keen to keep providing nest boxes and can provide advice to landowners. Barn Owl sightings by members of the public are very useful for this work and can be reported to the Shropshire Ornithological Society (www.bto.org/birdtrack) or the Shropshire Wildlife Trust (enquiries@ShropshireWildlifeTrust.org.uk or call 01743 284280).

Notes:

For more information please contact Fran Lancaster, Biodiversity Support Officer, Shropshire County Council at Fran.Lancaster@shropshire.gov.uk or on 01743 252578.

The Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership web site can be found at:
www.NaturalShropshire.org.uk

The Shropshire Ornithological Society Website can be found at www.shropshirebirds.com