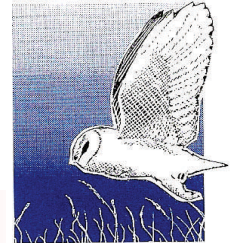


# Operation Barn Owl



WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION  
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WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE



## Ditches and drains provide vital habitats

Rough-grassland provided by the banks of watercourses was recognised in 1987 as a vital habitat for Barn Owls in England and Wales and for the future restoration of its population which, during the previous 50 years, had declined from 12,000 to 3,800 breeding pairs.



## The project begins

In 1988 the Water Management Alliance (formerly - Kings Lynn Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards), Black Sluice Drainage Board together with the Environment Agency, were approached by the Wildlife Conservation Partnership to join forces to assist in a project to aid the Barn Owl's recovery.

So began a partnership which continues to this day, some 20 years later.



## Habitats are restored and created

The project has sought to encourage sympathetic mowing, grazing and dredging regimes to watercourses. These are designed to maintain the rank and tussocky nature of these linear grasslands thereby re-creating this vital Barn Owl habitat.

Connectivity of these riparian grasslands, which had been lost to much of Britain until this project began, are now providing prey-rich habitat highways where Barn Owls can not only feed, but along which young owls can successfully disperse, farm to farm and county to county.



## Nestboxes are installed

On the IDB habitat network the Wildlife Conservation Partnership continues to supply and install artificial nesting sites in the form of pole and pump-house mounted nestboxes (or tree-mounted nestboxes where these are appropriate).

## Achievements

Barn Owl nestboxes are added to the project each year and an ongoing habitat maintenance and monitoring programme conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Partnership, enables the success of this project to be evaluated.

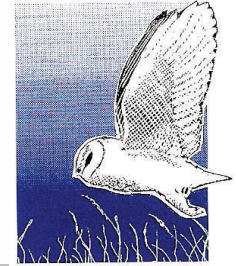


Since our project began with the Water Management Alliance, almost 1000 owlets have fledged from the nestboxes - a major achievement for the conservation of the Barn Owl.



## IDB support

Landowners and farmers, many of whom are Board Members, continue to be hugely supportive of the Barn Owl project. The habitat restoration component of the work also brings other wildlife benefits. Kestrels and Skylark both species of conservation concern as well as Water Voles and Otters, also thrive in these carefully managed grassland habitats.



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### Barn Owl Monitoring Results - 2008

#### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Colin Shawyer, Bob Sheppard and Alan Ball

Drainage Authorities	Total Nestboxes		Used		Used for Breeding		Chicks fledged	
	Barn Owl	Kestrel	Barn Owl	Kestrel	Barn Owl	Kestrel	Barn Owl	Kestrel
Water Management Alliance (formerly KLCIDB)	66	36	44 67%	12 33%	40 60%	10 28%	80	20
South Holland IDB	14	14	8 57%	6 43%	7 50%	6 43%	16	16
Black Sluice IDB	24	24	8 33%	3 13%	8 33%	3 13%	11	7
Isle of Axholme IDB	9	9	4 44%	1 11%	4 44%	1 11%	8	3
Lindsey Marsh IDB	14	14	6 43%	2 14%	5 36%	2 14%	14	4
Middle Fen & Mere IDB	5	5	Not installed					
North Level IDB	12	12	7 58%	5 42%	6 50%	4 33%	6	12
Upper Witham IDB	7	7	2 29%	2 29%	1 14%	0 0%	3	0
Witham First IDB	21	21	8 38%	6 29%	7 33%	6 29%	10	13
Witham Third IDB	16	16	4 25%	2 13%	4 25%	2 13%	6	5
Witham Fourth IDB	11	11	6 55%	2 18%	6 55%	2 18%	9	8
Welland & Deeping IDB	10	10	5 50%	1 10%	4 40%	0 0%	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>102 49%</b>	<b>42 23%</b>	<b>92 44%</b>	<b>36 20%</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>88</b>

## Make a place for Barn Owls and Kestrels in your Biodiversity Action Plan



The Wildlife Conservation Partnership



is the UK's leading advisor to Drainage Boards and the Association of Drainage Authorities in respect of two flagship species, the Barn Owl and Kestrel.

We are currently producing Species Action Plans for Barn Owl and Kestrel tailored to the needs of Drainage Boards and through our continued habitat management and population monitoring, achieve the conservation targets being set for these BAP species.