



Thank You For Purchasing a Wild Owl Premium Tawny Owl Nesting Box

Erecting this nest box is a valuable contribution to tawny owl conservation by providing a nest site to encourage wild tawny owls to breed in a Wooded area where natural hollows may not be available.

Here are some tips on installation, maintenance and monitoring for this type of box *

Installation

* This advice is relevant to boxes put up for tawny owls - boxes for other species may have other requirements.

Nb. Please ensure that all relevant safety precautions are taken to avoid injury when climbing ladders and using tools - safety helmets should be worn at all times.

- External installation only (not inside buildings)
- Ideal fixing point for this type of box is on the trunk of a large tree on the woodland edge, a copse or in a stand of trees in a garden or similar.
- Avoid installation within close proximity to major roads or motorways, to minimise risk of low flying owls becoming traffic casualties.
- Height of box top fixing point should be approximately 10 -16 ft
- Ensure entrance hole is not obstructed and bird has a clear flight path into box
- Box should preferably face approximately East / N.E. / S.E. This is not critical in dense woodland.
- Tawny owl chicks will leave the box at approx. 3½ weeks of age, to branch into the upper tree canopy, where they will grow up. Therefore, it is important that there are branches close to the box entrance to assist the young in climbing up to the canopy.
- Do not put any nest material inside the box - this is not needed.
- Fix box using steel M10 Hexagon headed bolts - one bolt at top and one at bottom on fixing points. Ensure bolts are tightened securely to avoid the box moving, but make allowance for the natural bend in the tree trunk and do not over-tighten against the bend, as this may result in damage to the box and/or fixing point. If necessary, brace box using additional fixings to ensure that it is firmly fixed.
- Avoid placing box above water-filled ditches, which may present a hazard to chicks if they fall from the box.
- It is not recommended that tawny owl boxes are installed close to areas of regular family activity, as tawny adults can be very protective in the breeding season and may attack humans and/or pets in defence of their young.

Disturbance

- Tawny owls will tolerate a certain amount of regular human activity around the box and will usually sit tight, as long as there is no contact with the box or tree itself. However, any disturbance should be minimised in the first year, when there is the greatest risk of desertion.
- Tawny owl chicks that have branched out of the nest box, sometime fall from the safety of the trees. This puts them at risk of being attacked by ground predators. If you find a chick on the ground, the parents will be very close by, so the chick should be put into the nearest tree, where it will be able to climb back up to safety. Do not take the chick in and feed it, as the chicks 'imprint' very easily, and a tame chick cannot be released and will have to spend a lifetime in captivity.

Signs of Occupancy & Monitoring

Tawny owls are more discreet when using boxes than other species. Avoid climbing ladders to open the box - there are other clues to find out if they are at home!:

- Look for wear on the front lip of the box entrance
- Pellets on the floor beneath the box.
- Watch for owls flying to and from the box at nightfall or sat in box entrance (keep your distance).
- If the box is near your house, there will be a lot of noise near the box in the early spring, indicating the pair bonding between male and female.
- Owlets will often sit on the box perch when just a few weeks old.
- Tawny owls are early breeders, usually breeding just once in a year, with eggs being laid as early as February/March, although typically late April - May is the time most young are seen as they leave the nest and branch at just under a month old
- As eggs are laid and hatch a few days between each other, age of young owlets will vary.
- Tawny owl boxes are sometimes used by squirrels, jackdaws etc. (see below)

Maintenance

- Annual inspection is recommended to ensure box is clean and ready for the new season.
- Inspections should be carried out in the autumn (Sept - Dec) and it is best to do this work an hour before dark, so that if an owl is flushed from the box, it will have minimal time in daylight, where it may have to endure mobbing from other birds.
- Remove all nest material from other species when cleaning out boxes,
- Wild Owl boxes are treated with an eco-friendly water based preservative. They should not require any additional coatings due to the quality of the timber used.
- All Wild Owl owl boxes come supplied with a camera clip, so an optional camera can be installed to assist in monitoring - please ring for details.



Tawny Owl



Tawny Owllet

If you require free advice on habitat creation, box installation or similar please visit the Wild Owl web site at www.wildowl.co.uk or call Ian McGuire on 07770 684200.