

'SAVE AN OWL FOR £1'



WHAT IS IT?

THE PROBLEM

Recent decades have been marked by the unrelenting loss and deterioration of wild places and the wildlife which once lived in them. Sadly this situation is not improving. Due to the demands of the human population, pressures on land are both high and increasing. The British countryside is now much poorer in wildlife than it was just a few years ago.



All five British owl species have declined dramatically since the 1970's.

The last survey of breeding bird populations in Britain and Ireland took place between 1988 – 1991* and revealed that Barn Owls alone have lost 43% of their breeding birds in the last 35 years. However no British owl species remains unaffected as these figures show:

Barn Owl	DOWN 43%
Long-eared Owl	DOWN 27.9%
Short-eared Owl	DOWN 14%
Little Owl	DOWN 11%
Tawny Owl	DOWN 10.9%

*The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain & Ireland'. Poyser 1993.



WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HEARD AN OWL HOOT?

THE DECLINES



AGRICULTURE

Since the survey was completed, agricultural intensification has further reduced wildlife habitat on farmland and this picture is destined to become even worse. Amongst the worst sufferers are small mammals, and as their numbers have fallen, so have those of the owls which depend on them.

All five species of owl rely on small mammals for food. Two of them, the Barn Owl and Short-eared Owl are so dependent on Short-tailed Voles that if this animal disappears, so do they. The Little Owl needs large insects and earthworms to supplement its diet. Without them, this owl is also unlikely to survive in an area for very long. Like the owls, these prey species need the right habitat to survive.

LOSS OF NEST SITES

Barn Owls, Tawny Owls and Little Owls nest in holes and crevices in old trees and old buildings. For Health & Safety reasons, plus conversion to modern housing, such sites are disappearing. No nest sites means no breeding owls. No breeding owls means no new owlets to replace those that die each year.



CLIMATE CHANGE

No-one needs reminding that Britain's climate is changing dramatically. Severe gales, flooding, droughts and rapid temperature changes are now considered normal. This is particularly serious for Barn Owls. Their plumage is very soft and not very waterproof, so in prolonged wet, windy weather, literally thousands die, especially young inexperienced birds in their first year. This type of weather also causes the vole population to shrink dramatically, and since the Barn Owl has very low body-fat reserves they can starve to



death after just a few days without food. Such weather also kills off the insect food of Little Owls.

LOSS OF HABITAT

Nature Reserves are no longer enough to save Britain's disappearing wildlife habitats. Decades of intense agriculture and development have left them as fragmented isolated 'islands' surrounded by an inhospitable landscape in which wildlife can no longer flourish. Even the few wild areas that are left are increasingly being lost to development.

Only by connecting protected areas together to enable animals, insects and plants to move freely between them can we hope to reverse the ever-increasing list of vanishing species – including owls.



WHY OWLS?

In the old days, miners used to take canaries down the mines with them to warn them of the presence of odourless poisonous gasses underground. When a canary suddenly keeled over, the miners knew they had to leave in a hurry. It was the similar deaths of countless wild birds in the 1960's that led Rachel Carson to write her classic book 'Silent Spring'. Now, wild birds are dying out all over the world. They are our canaries! They are telling us that something is once more going seriously wrong. We need to take notice if we are to avoid the fate of the miner's canaries and wish to preserve our quality of life.



As top predators, owls are perfect indicators of significant changes in a food chain which consists of a wide variety of plants and animals. If owls begin to decline, then clearly something is happening in their ecosystem which could have serious consequences for humans too

POPULATIONS OF ALL FIVE BRITISH OWLS ARE IN DECLINE!

This is why the **WORLD OWL TRUST** is using these charismatic birds as the flagships for this ambitious project.



THE BIG IDEA

‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’ is a totally unique initiative by the WORLD OWL TRUST aimed at restoring Britain’s once glorious countryside.

Our aim is to encourage local communities of caring people to work together to restore lost habitats and provide safe nesting sites for owls in their own locality.

‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’ is not just about restoring rural countryside. While urban green spaces are often regarded as poor sites for nature conservation, many such areas in our towns and cities are not only very attractive, but can also be important havens for wildlife. Unfortunately, due to financial and manpower constraints, all too many are currently poorly managed and undervalued by Councils and local communities, not because they don’t care about them, but because they are unaware of the wealth of wildlife which call them home. The WORLD OWL TRUST is convinced that there is huge scope to improve such areas, not only for wildlife, but for local residents too.

‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’ aims to involve local communities in helping to improve – and enjoy – their own green spaces, not only to enhance the wildlife value of the sites, but to re-connect people of all ages with the natural world. This is particularly important for our children who are losing touch with living nature in the face of an increasingly electronic world. It is our hope that by improving such areas for wildlife by concentrating on owls, local residents will begin to take pride in their own green spaces, and by becoming personally involved, improve their own quality of life immeasurably. Conservation work is also a marvellously social activity where many a new friendship is forged.

We also believe that in the process of carrying out such work co-operatively with local communities, we are providing an invaluable educational resource for local schools, colleges and organizations. Guided walks, interpretation and training days will therefore play a big part in this initiative.

Our first objective is always to survey each site in order to determine which species the sites already support – and this is where local people can play a vital role. Once the surveys are completed, a Site Dossier will be compiled and an Action Plan will come into play in order to enhance the areas for both wildlife and people.

We are convinced that by involving local people we can help to alleviate the typical problems of fly tipping, burning and vandalism which so often blight such areas. Indeed, our research has demonstrated that local communities are often desperate to see their green spaces transformed into areas they can truly enjoy and take pride in. To this end we will encourage public access whenever this is feasible.

THE SOLUTION

‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’ aims to create a network of ‘wildlife corridors’ throughout Britain to serve as the vital arteries to keep our countryside’s heart beating. While our aim is to concentrate on creating owl habitat, by doing so we will at the same time be saving many other much loved species such as wild flowers, butterflies, small mammals and birds.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



Barn Owl Nest Box

There is little doubt that habitat loss and loss of nest sites lie at the heart of Britain’s owl declines, exacerbated by the effects of climate change and the spraying of herbicides and insecticides on farms and gardens.

‘Save an owl for £1’ will aim to counteract these problems by assisting local communities to help owls by:

- Creating 6 metre-wide wildlife corridors and ‘wild patches’ to restore owl hunting habitats.
- Planting miles of new hedgerows and restoring degraded ones – the home for countless wildlife species.
- Erecting and monitoring new owl nest sites in suitable habitats throughout Britain – and with your help, in your area!

By doing these three things alone, we – and you – will be helping to restore Britain’s vanishing biodiversity – and not just owls!

With your help we can make a difference – in *your* area



Tawny Owl Nest Box



Little Owl Nest Box

GET INVOLVED

Many people now feel cut off from the natural world, but while they mourn the disappearance of the countryside they love – and which they once played in and took for granted as children – they feel helpless to do anything about it at a personal level. **‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’** will now give them that chance!

DONATING

At WORLD OWL TRUST we believe that virtually everybody can afford £1

Countless special interest groups exist which champion a myriad ‘good causes’, all of them wanting (and needing) a share of whatever financial resources are available to enable them to achieve their aims and objectives. As a result, all of us are bombarded on an almost daily basis, by requests for donations. Unfortunately ‘the pot’ is not bottomless and few people can afford to support even the causes they believe in or would like to help.

‘SAVE AN OWL FOR £1’ IS DIFFERENT!

It is aimed at addressing this problem – and YOU can help by simply donating £1!

Can you help with any of the following?

MAKING A DONATION – Easy! Donations can be sent to: the World Owl Trust, Muncaster Castle, Ravenglass, Cumbria, CA18 1RQ. (Please do not send cash in the post) For more information ring 01229 717393, or visit www.owls.org



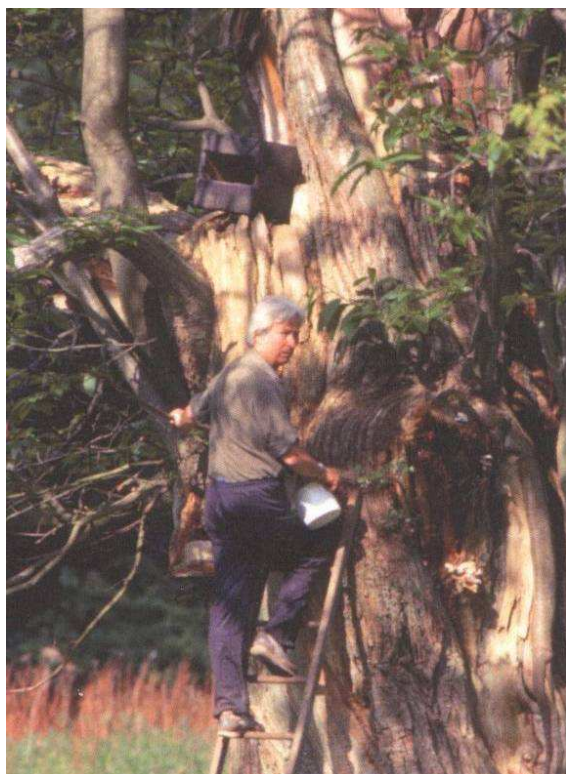
FUNDRAISING

Like any other conservation initiative 'SAVE AN OWL FOR £1' will only be as successful as the amount of funding we can raise. The more we raise, the more we can achieve.



- Spend a few hours fund raising for us with an event. We have many ideas in our fundraising pack which is available from the office. **We will provide posters and leaflets by request.**
- Mount displays, give talks and give out leaflets
- Approaching the company you work for to see if they would consider becoming a corporate sponsor.

DOING



Are you a member of a Community Group, Conservation or Owl Group, a leader of a Youth Group, a Teacher, a Councillor (County, City, District, Borough or Parish – we don't mind!), or simply a caring individual who would like to be involved? We need you all. Or are you someone who could knock up a few owl nest boxes for us and save us spending all our funds on these? Do you have 'green fingers'? We will need shrubs (small wild species) and trees for our hedgerow restoration work. Every one helps.

POTENTIAL SITES – Do you know of an area which could benefit from habitat restoration and good management, or where owl nest boxes could be erected? If so, let us know, and if you know the name of the owner or manager, so much the better. The WOT will then approach them with our proposals.

- Building and erecting nest boxes and informing us of potential sites for these.
- Approaching landowners, land managers and your own Council (County, District, Borough and Parish) to see if they would consider having a funded wildlife corridor, wildlife area or new hedgerow on their property.
- Help in growing and planting new hedgerows.



- Helping as a group. There are already many Barn Owl Groups carrying out nest-box schemes. If you are a member of one of these why not encourage your group to join in with the WORLD OWL TRUST in this epic and unique initiative to reverse the loss of Britain's owl species? **SAVE AN OWL** funds can help your group to help your owls on your patch.



- If you know like-minded people in your area, but no Group exists, why not band together to work as your own group? It's fun and a social outlet too, as well as being something you as an individual can do about biodiversity loss. What more could anyone ask for?
- Are you a landowner or land manager who doesn't know what to do with your land – or even a small area of your land? If so, why not contact the WORLD OWL TRUST to discuss how you can be an integral part of this initiative.

'SAVE AN OWL FOR £1'

GIVES EVERYONE THE CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRONS

“I can think of nothing more deserving of a £1 than an Owl”
Bill Oddie, OBE

“Owls are the most engaging of birds. It is most important that we can save them for future generations. I have no hesitation in giving my whole-hearted support to this project”
The Lord Forteviot

“Make sure that your children and grandchildren can enjoy the spectacle of owls in their neck of the woods. Please support the WORLD OWL TRUST now. “Twit Twoo”. Many thanks.
Prof. David Bellamy. OBE.

“You can be as wise as the owl. WISE UP! Take a £1 (or more!) out of your pocket and give it to help their survival”.
Terry Nutkins

“I believe that most people would love to do something to help wildlife. This initiative is within everyone’s reach and my support goes to the WORLD OWL TRUST for this innovative idea. To see an owl flying freely is such a thrill, and to possess the personal knowledge that your contribution has helped must surely bring joy to your heart”?
Linda Wain



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

TELEPHONE 01229 717393, email us at Barbara@owls.org or write to World Owl Trust, Muncaster Castle, Ravenglass, Cumbria, CA18 1RQ.