



PO Box 100
TAUNTON
TA4 2WX
Tel: 0870 990 3889
Email: enquiries@hawkandowl.org
www.hawkandowl.org

NEWS RELEASE

August 2008

ADOPT AN OWL BOX FOR CHRISTMAS

Looking for that green present with a difference? A Hawk and Owl Trust 'Adopt a Box' is an ideal Christmas gift and helps wildlife. Owls, kestrels, stock doves, even flycatchers ... there's no telling what might turn up in a nestbox and that's part of the fun. But adopting a box also means that you're helping the Trust's vital conservation work for owls and other wild birds of prey – and their habitats.

"Nestbox adoption makes a superb Christmas present for anyone – of any age – who loves wildlife," points out Mike Coleman, Adopt a Box officer for the Hawk and Owl Trust, Britain's only national charity working solely to conserve wild birds of prey and their habitats.

"As all the nestboxes are checked during the breeding season, we are not only able to give adopters an overview of what's happening nationally but also information on their adopted box. Although the boxes are designed specifically for barn, tawny and little owls or kestrels, other fascinating species may also take up residence.

"About four in every five barn owl pairs in the UK now depend on boxes for breeding as old hollow trees are felled and farm buildings converted for housing. This year we have been finding that nestboxes have been occupied by more breeding pairs than ever before. Sadly, some failed to raise young and we think this may be because of the torrential rain at critical times. This made it extremely difficult for the adults to hunt for prey to feed their growing young.

"This means we have to try harder than ever next year to help the UK's 4,000 breeding pairs of barn owls increase their numbers. After all, there were as many as 12,000 pairs in the 1930s. That's why a key part of the Hawk and Owl Trust's conservation work over the past 20 years has been putting up nestboxes – in areas where there is plenty of prey – to compensate for the increasing loss of traditional nest sites.

"Anyone adopting a box, for themselves or as a gift for a friend or relation, is supporting our vital conservation, research and education work for owls and other birds of prey in the wild."

Putting up large wooden nestboxes, which for barn owls are about the size of an old-fashioned tea chest, is specialist work that is carried out by trained fieldworkers. Then, during the breeding season, specially licensed conservationists monitor the boxes – which is why the Trust is able to send adopters news about their nestboxes.

An Adopt a Box subscription costs £15 a year. Sign up on line – www.hawkandowl.org – or call 0870 990 3889. Adoption forms, including details of gift adoption, are also available from: Adopt a Box, Hawk and Owl Trust, PO Box 100, Taunton TA4 2WX (please enclose a stamped addressed envelope), email: enquiries@hawkandowl.org

- ENDS -

Press enquiries only: Barbara Hall, tel: 020 8858 4154

Images of barn owls are available on request.

Working to conserve wild birds of prey and their habitats

President Liza Goddard • **Chairman of Trustees** John Edwards • **Director** Linda Bennett

Registered charity number 1058565 • VAT number 681 1823 35
A company limited by guarantee and registered in England number 3254207
Registered office: The Corn Exchange, Baffins Lane, Chichester PO19 1GE

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Hawk and Owl Trust

Founded in 1969 to help save the peregrine, the Hawk and Owl Trust is a national charity which now works for the conservation and appreciation of all wild birds of prey and their habitats – both in its growing number of nature reserves and in partnership with others. Working with other organisations, farmers, foresters and landowners, the Trust researches, restores and manages nesting, roosting and feeding habitats and encourages greater understanding and appreciation of these very special birds. www.hawkandowl.org

2. Adopting a nestbox

Adopt a Box subscribers can choose to adopt nestboxes in one of seven regions of Britain. Because it is essential the birds are not disturbed when rearing their young, the Hawk and Owl Trust cannot tell adopters exactly where their adopted nestboxes are. All birds of prey are protected by law and barn owls have additional protection.