

Barn Owl Boxes

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Calvert County Natural Resources is participating in a research and conservation program to bring Barn Owls back to Calvert County. Barn Owls have only just started coming back to the county after 17 years of extirpation. Although the Barn Owl is distributed world-wide and is labeled least concern by the IUCN, their numbers have still been declining. According to Maryland DNR, they are considered rare because of loss of open habitat for hunting and the use of pesticides. Calvert County Natural Resources is building and installing nest boxes on suitable properties around the county to provide breeding habitat for this cavity nesting species. In addition to building nest boxes, we are periodically monitoring the boxes to collect data for the research program.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

This is a team project. Volunteers will meet at designated locations and complete duties together. Tasks include:

- Building new nest boxes
- Cleaning and repairing older nest boxes
- Helping to install boxes at approved locations around the county
- Assisting with a **nest monitoring team 2-3 times per year**. Includes:
 - Completing provided training on nest box monitoring protocol
 - Driving around the county to different box locations
 - Transporting and carrying nest boxes, mounting supplies, ladders, and other equipment to and from nesting sites
 - Assisting the naturalist to measure, weigh, and band owls of various ages
 - Assisting to record and analyze data
- Promoting the project and the importance of owls to others

REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers may:

- Climb tall ladders to access and mount the nest boxes using hand tools
- Hike across uneven and overgrown terrain to get to box locations
- Be exposed to ticks, chiggers, mosquitoes, bees/wasps, poison ivy, bad weather, and other wild life

Project Dates

Specific dates for each season will be selected by the project leaders based on weather patterns and regional activities of owls, then emailed to volunteers in advance. All activities are completed as a team.

Winter: Build and install new boxes as needed. Refurbish mounted boxes on-site.

May: Monitoring teams check each nest box for owl activity

Early Summer: Assist naturalist with banding owlets before they fledge

Summer/Fall: Build, refurbish, and mount nest boxes as needed. If owls have a late nesting year, monitoring teams may check all boxes for activity again in late summer.