

SOS & THORNHAM WILD OWL BOX SCHEME

Suffolk Owl Sanctuary

March 2014

The Suffolk Owl Sanctuary at Stonham Aspal in Suffolk was established as a registered charity in 2001,

Our Sanctuary operates a comprehensive facility for the care & rehabilitation of owls and Birds of Prey from the region, and the promotion of owl conservation throughout the UK and beyond.

The Suffolk Owl Sanctuary is supported by voluntary donations and admission charges from members of the visiting public. We are wholly reliant on these donations and admission charges for the upkeep of the Centre, the welfare of the birds and the funding of our many education, conservation and rehabilitation projects. All monies collected are used only for this purpose.

We run the East Anglia Wild Owl Nest Box Scheme in conjunction with The Thornham Owl Project to build, erect, maintain, repair, monitor & finance a growing network of over 260 wild owl nest boxes. These man-made boxes are replacing the many old wooden barns now either demolished or converted for humans to live in, and replace the natural nesting sites like the tall elm trees that used provide a preferred secure nesting environment.

As we published in back in May 2013, S.O.S. were amongst the first to report the disturbing news regarding the recent severe decline in wild Barn Owl and Tawny Owl progeny this year. This was attributed to the extended run of cold weather which ran through to late March, this on top of the severe mortality rates of young progeny caused by the prolonged rain of mid-2012, a season which beforehand had looked like being a very positive one across the country for Barn Owls in particular.

The sharp decline in population, which for Barn owls is in some quarters is estimated at being less than 1000 pairs nationwide, was due to the adult birds being unable to maintain the body weight they needed for successful breeding - for females to be able to produce eggs, and for males to be fit enough to hunt and provide sufficient food for both parents and newly-arrived progeny. Sad to report, we saw a decline of nearly 80 % of young Barn Owlets compared to 2012 and even worse, almost 100% in the decline of Tawny Owlets year-on-year.

NEST BOXES WE HAVE ERECTED with funds raised so far.

Barn Owl	161	(mainly A frame, Plus pole mounted and interior boxes)
Little Owl	24	
Kestrel	41	
Tawny Owl	45	(Both upright and chimney boxes)
TOTAL	271	