

'Boxes for Barnies', SOC Clyde Branch

Project update – August 2022



Three young Barn Owls photographed, under licence, at one of the project's nest boxes, August 2022. © Zul Bhatia.

During the winter of 2020/21, the Clyde Branch launched our [Boxes for Barnies](#) project - a collaborative effort funded by the local group and [Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership](#) (supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund).

We worked with the Lochwinnoch community to construct and install nest boxes for breeding Barn Owl in the area, with the aim of boosting the species' recovery and numbers in the region.

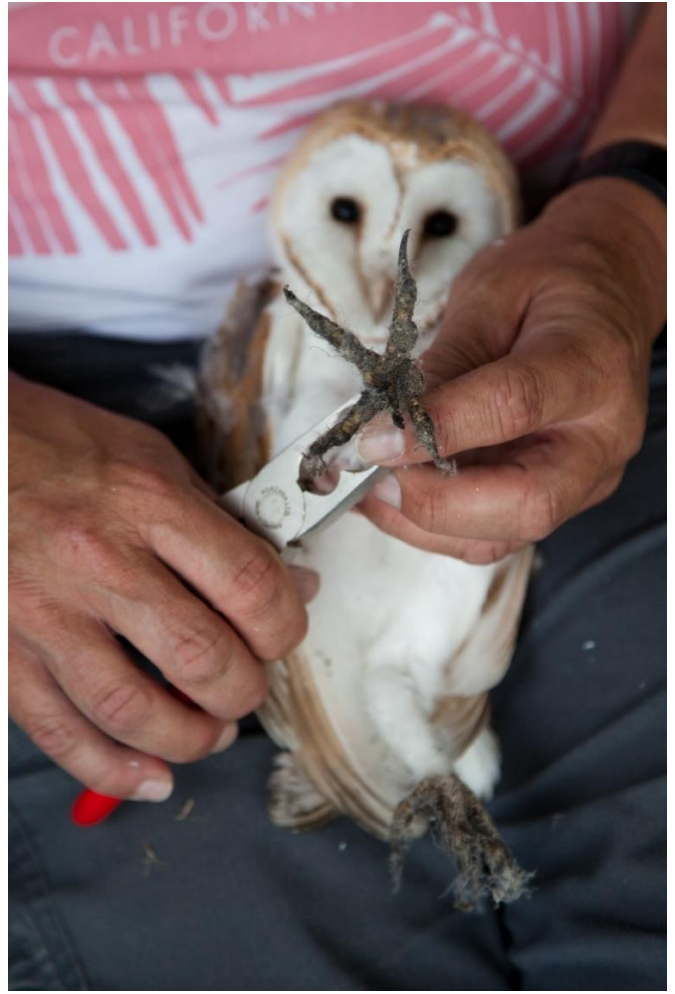
The scope of the project had originally been to install 12 nest boxes (a mixture of ready-made, bought boxes and those constructed by volunteers), but due to the tremendous efforts of the nest box construction volunteers, and the ongoing demand from people wanting to have boxes put up on their properties, we managed to install an incredible 19 nest boxes - all in Renfrewshire, in areas identified as priority for the species. Boxes have been housed in a variety of locations, including farms and suitable private residences.



Three young Barn Owls © Zul Bhatia



A licenced and experienced ringer from the local Clyde Ringing Group inspects one of the nest boxes.
© Zul Bhatia.



A young Barn Owl fledgling being ringed at one of the project nest boxes sites. August 2022.
© Zul Bhatia.

After an excellent Barn Owl breeding season in 2020, we had high hopes that a few of the project's boxes would be occupied in 2021. Unfortunately however, it was to prove a poor breeding year for the species, and only one box was used (box recipients had been made aware that it might take some time before their box was used).

This year however, we're delighted to report that three of the project's nest boxes have been used for breeding by Barn Owl (another was used by Jackdaw!). Barn Owl populations are known to fluctuate widely, mainly in relation to prey availability, and we are hopeful that this local population will increase through the 'Boxes for Barnies' initiative.

All three boxes used by breeding Barn Owl this year fledged three young ('owlets') each. I filmed a clip of one nest box brood, from a respectful distance, which you can [view on Twitter, here](#). Licensed and experienced ringers from local Clyde Ringing Group, ringed the owlets, with the utmost consideration for the bird's welfare. [Ringing](#) provides much useful information on the health of the species, longevity, dispersal, etc and underpins conservation work for the owls.

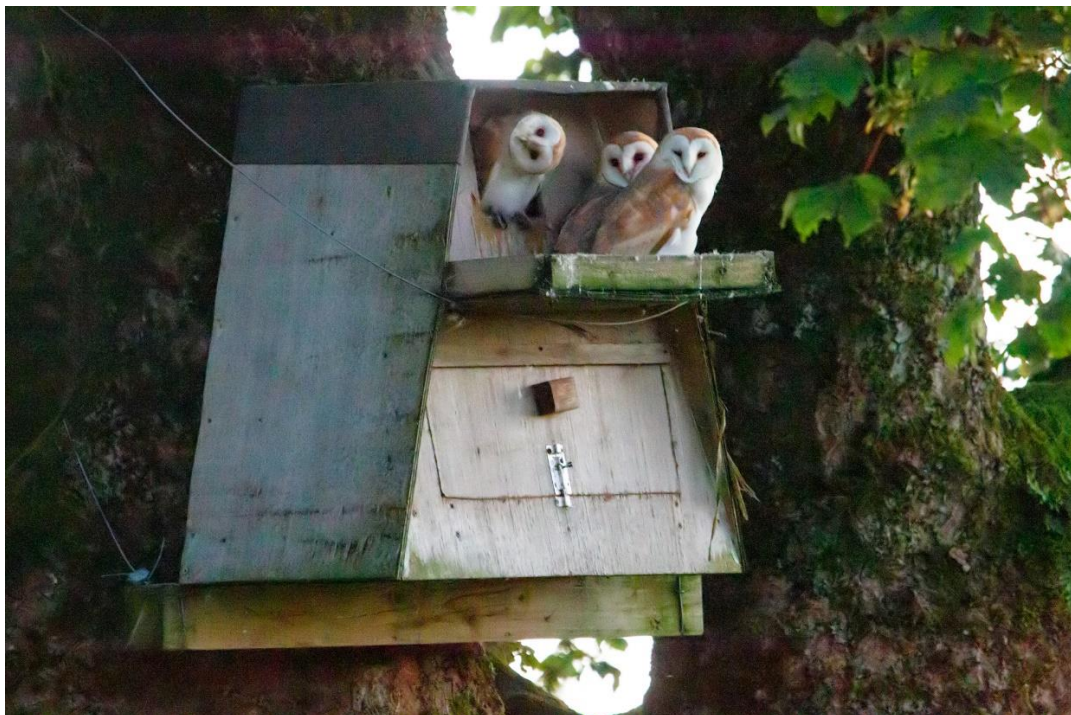
Any Barn Owl sightings in the Renfrewshire area can be shared confidentially with Zul Bhatia, Project Lead and Clyde Branch Chair by emailing zulbhatia1@gmail.com. Records will also be added to the Branch's database of bird records for the Clyde area and to BirdTrack. Breeding season records will be hidden from public view.



Young Barn Owls being held by their nest box hosts after ringing at one of the project nest boxes sites, August 2022. © Zul Bhatia.



A young Barn Owl being held by one of the box recipients after ringing at one of the project nest boxes sites, August 2022. © Zul Bhatia



Three young Barn Owls photographed, under licence, at one of the project's nest boxes, August 2022. © Zul Bhatia.



One of the three recently fledged Barn Owls photographed, under licence, in August 2022.

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