

BOW17_1451: Barn Owl Advice Note

Introduction

Bowland Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Kirkwells Planning Consultants to undertake a pre-works nesting barn owl check as part of Condition 10 FUL/2023/0332 (see condition below) at Crow Wood, Holme Road to the North of Burnley, Lancashire (NGR: SD 83095 34205). An inspection of the existing barn owl box was carried out by Mark Breaks BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, Natural England licence: CL29-00184 and Sam Robinson BA (Hons) on the 28th February, the weather was dry, light south easterly breeze (F1), 8/8 cloud cover and 6 degrees Celsius. A further pre-works nesting bird check of plantation woodland surrounding the site was undertaken within nesting bird season on the 4th March by Sam Robinson BA (Hons) the weather was dry, light south easterly breeze (F1), 1/8 cloud cover and 5 degrees Celsius.

Condition 10:

'No works shall commence between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey of the adjacent plantation and barn owl box by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to development and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA. Reason: To ensure that there is no harm to nesting birds which are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in accordance with Policies NE1 and NE4 of Burnley's Local Plan (July 2018).'

Survey data

Survey results, constraints are provided in table 1. Recommendations are highlighted in bold. Ecological features and photographic evidence are provided in table 2.


Table 1: Survey results, constraints and recommendations.

Ecological Feature:	Constraint:	Action:
A barn owl box mounted to a mature oak tree off site approximately 35 m to the southwest (NGR: SD 83090 34095)	<p>Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Schedule 1 it is an offence to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kill, injure or take any wild bird - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird - Intentionally or recklessly disturb barn owls at an active nest site with eggs or young or before 	A barn owl was found to be present during the nest box check. On inspection three relatively fresh barn owl pellets were found at the base of the tree under the nest box. On access to the box one adult barn owl was disturbed, flying from the box over the rough ground and through the woodland to the northwest. Internal inspection of the nest box found no evidence of nesting activity though there is a good covering of barn owl pellets indicating regular use. No

	<p>eggs are laid and to disturb the dependent young.</p>	<p>evidence of nesting behaviour was observed. Since the previous inspection more pellets have been found showing that there is activity in the barn. Following the assessment that no breeding is currently taking place as part of the Condition 10 the nest box entrance was temporally closed to allow works to commence without causing any potential disturbance.</p> <p>As barn owl presence was confirmed on site it is strongly recommended that alternative nesting opportunities are provided as soon as possible, on site in the form of a nest box on a tree or on/inside suitable building, at least 100m from proposed works.</p>
<p>During the pre-works nesting bird survey of surrounding potential bird nesting habitat (4th March) no nesting activity was observed. One large inactive nest structure was noted in a hawthorn tree at the north. During the nesting bird survey of 4th March, the barn owl box mounted to a mature oak tree off site approximately 35 m to the southwest (NGR: SD 83090 34095) was noted to have been reopened.</p>	<p>Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Schedule 1 it is an offence to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kill, injure or take any wild bird - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird <p>Intentionally or recklessly disturb barn owls at an active nest site with eggs or young or before eggs are laid and to disturb the dependent young.</p>	<p>No nesting bird activity was noted in habitats surrounding the site however the barn owl box previously closed was found to have been reopened.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that the barn owl box be subject to an additional nesting bird survey by suitably experience ecologist. Should the box be found to be free of nesting bird activity this may be reclosed ensuring no disturbance to nesting birds during the works. Should nesting be confirmed within the box further advice from the project ecologist will be issued.</p> <p>No nesting activity was noted within suitable potential nesting bird habitats surrounding the site. However, bird nest may become active following the survey and disturbance to bird nesting</p>

		<p>occur.</p> <p>As per recommendations outlined in BOW17_1451 Crow Road Solar Array PEA_June 2023_FINAL: if works are carried out during the nesting bird season (March – August inclusive) within 5 m of the woodland habitat this will be subject to a pre-clearance bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist.</p> <p>No works will be carried out within 5 m of an identified nest until the young have fledged and are no longer returning to the nest site. Works will only be undertaken once a scheme ecologist has declared the nest to be no longer in use.</p>
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Table 2: *Ecological features and photographic evidence*

Feature	Photographic Evidence
Barn owl pellets on floor under nest box.	

Barn owl nest box.



Barn owl pellets located inside the nest box.



Temporarily closed nest box.



<p>An inactive nest structure within hawthorn tree located at the north of site.</p>	
<p>Nesting barn owl box found to be open on the 4th March following its temporary closure on the 28th February 2024.</p>	

References

BOW17_1451 Crow Road Solar Array PEA_June 2023_FINAL – Bowland Ecology – 2023

Author: Mark Breaks

Title: Crow Wood, Solar Array, Barn Owl Advice Note

Date: 8th March 2024

Document Title: BOW17_1451 Crow Wood, Solar Array, Barn Owl Advice Note	Author: MB	Version: 1	Date: 08-03-2024
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