

Farmland Raptor Program 2023 Annual Report

Project Leader: Andy Brown

BARN OWL CONSERVATION GOALS

Goal 1: Assessment of the Current Population.

Intern Alex Pellegrini compiled nest records from Scott Smith historic data, eBird and the three Breeding Bird Atlases. He researched current landowner contacts. He created a narrative to be used for phone inquiries. Inquiries were made in Baltimore, Howard, Frederick, Washington and Carroll Counties. Unfortunately, no calls resulted in nesting confirmations. Further work on this goal will be detailed in the 2024 goals section.

In 2023, 9 adult and 82 chicks were banded in Maryland state-wide from 96 monitored nest boxes and natural nest sites.

Morphological data was collected on 11 adult owls and submitted to the taxonomic review study being conducted by Rachael Daugherty of the University of Walla Walla, Washington. Additionally, Andy and Alex measured approximately 400 museum study skin specimens for the study. Ms. Daugherty completed her thesis and found significant differences between American Barn owls and those found in Europe and Australasia. She is submitting her paper for publication.

Goal 2: Identification, protection and restoration of critical habitats

Alex has begun research on the most effective audio monitoring methods for detecting the presence of Barn Owls at targeted locations. Historic nest sites and eBird and BBA reports will be used to determine target areas. Final methods will be completed by spring 2024 and recordings will be conducted in late March and early April.

All 2023 nesting data were uploaded to NestStory as a centralized data repository

Goal 3: Increase the availability of nest sites within critical habitats

14 new nest boxes were constructed, installed and monitored in 2023.

Goal 4: Public awareness

Presentations were made to the Anne Arundel and Howard County Bird Clubs, Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Calvert Nature Society, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and Irvine Nature Center on Barn Owls in Maryland. \$450 was donated to MBCP Farmland Raptor Program as honoraria.

MBCP was represented at the World Owl Conference in October in LaCrosse Wisconsin through a lecture on the Status of the Barn Owl in the Mid-Atlantic by Andy Brown.

Short-eared Owl

Alex and I have consulted with Denver Holt of the Owl Research Institute, Dr. Robert Miller of Boise State University and The Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Study, David H. Johnson of the Global Owl Project and David Brinker with Maryland Department Of Natural Resources and have developed Conservation Goals and Objectives for Short-eared Owls in Maryland.

We will begin working on some of these objectives this winter.

Supporting Calvert County's nature parks and natural spaces



CALVERT STEWARDS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A partnership between Calvert Nature Society and Calvert County Natural Resources Division

2023 Annual Report

Date of Issue March 2024

CALVERT STEWARDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
c/o Natural Resources Division
2880 Grays Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
(410) 535-5327

Volunteer Portal: <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com/>

Calvert Nature Society: www.calvertparks.org

Calvert County Natural Resources Division:
www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources

