

Updates from the Trail: July 2022

This month we wanted to use this space to tell you about a special species of concern in Massachusetts. Stay tuned in the upcoming months to learn what steps BCT is taking to help Barn Owls.

Barn Owl (Tyto alba), Species of Special

Nesting:

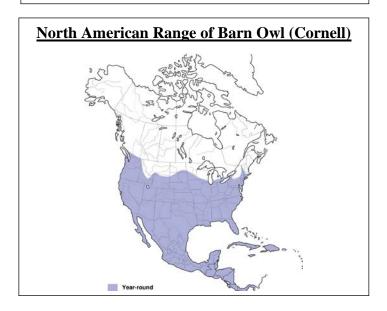
• Barn owls nest in trees or buildings surround by or adjacent to large open areas, including barns, hence their name.

Hunting and Feeding:

- Barn owls feed primarily on rodents, including mice and voles, but they may also eat insects, reptiles, or other kinds of birds.
- Barn owls are nocturnal and hunt excluively at night.
- Barn owls eat their prey whole, and later cough up pellets containing any fur or bones from their kill.

Mating and Offspring:

- Barn owls typically mate for life and are monogamous.
- Females will lay 3-8 eggs which take about a month to hatch. Almost two months after hatching, the chicks are able to leave the nest.





Stacy Howell/Audubon Photography Awards

Population Status:

• In Massahusetts, Barn owls are a Species of Special Concern. Their populations have been decreasing and becoming more concentrated over time. Much of this decline is due to tough winters and loss of nesting areas.

Fun Facts:

- A Barn owl's ears are not equally level on the sides of their head. This allows them to locate quiet sounds more easily and accurately.
- A Barn owl's feathers are incredibly soft, letting them hunt silently in the night. However, this causes them to get extremely wet in the rain.
- Female Barn owls construct their nests out of pellets that they cough up and shred with their talons, shaping into a cup as they go.
- Barn owls screech instead of hooting, making their sound much different from their Great-Horned or Tawny owl cousins.