



## Installing a Wild Owl Little Owl Nest Box

Erecting a little owl nesting box is a valuable contribution to little owl conservation. Installed on a suitable tree or building, the box will provide a valuable nest site or roost for little owls.

Here are some tips on installing a Wild Owl little owl box, including maintenance and monitoring.\*

\* This advice is relevant to boxes put up for little owls - boxes for other species may have other requirements.

### Installation

*Nb. Please ensure that all relevant safety precautions are taken to avoid injury when climbing ladders and using tools - safety helmets should be worn at all times.*

- Ideal fixing point for this type of box is on a single tree in field, or a suitable tree in hedgerow, an orchard, large garden, on the side of a building etc. In all situations, ideally facing towards or in close proximity to un-cut grass meadows or margins, livestock paddocks and broken land.
- Ensure that the entrance hole can be seen easily - little owls will be attracted to the 'hollow'.
- If little owls are visiting a barn or similar, this box can be installed internally.
- Do not install within close proximity of major roads or motorways, to minimise risk of road casualties.
- Height of box should be between 6 -12 ft depending on risk from vandalism or predators
- Ensure entrance hole is not obstructed and bird has a clear flight path into box
- Box should face approximately East / N.E. / S.E.
- Placing box near branches will give young owlets extra exercise areas.
- Do not put any nest material inside the box
- Fix box using steel M10 Hexagon headed bolts - one bolt at top and one at bottom on fixing points. Box can also be fitted into the lap of a tree. If necessary, brace box using additional fixings to ensure that it is firmly fixed.
- Avoid placing box above water-filled ditches, which may present a hazard to chicks if they fall or climb from the box.
- Avoid siting box right next to driveway or road as branching young climbing down may be at risk.
- If box is being installed inside a building, ensure that there are at least two means of entry/exit for the owls and that cats or other ground predators do not have easy access to the box.

## Disturbance

- Little owls are very observant birds, and will be very active around the nest site at all times of the day and night. They will get used to people and animals, but should be left alone.
- They are good parents and will be keeping a close watch when they have young.
- Maintenance and inspection should only be carried out in the autumn and box should not be disturbed in spring and summer.

## Signs of Occupancy & Monitoring

- Pellets and/or whitewash below box or on box itself, and around surrounding perches are signs of potential occupancy.
- Watch for owls flying to and from the box at nightfall and roosting in the near vicinity during the day (keep your distance).
- Little owls tend to feed their young a night, so monitoring can be more successful at this period.
- Look for half eaten worms and invertebrates on posts, plus pellets with beetle shells under posts.
- Chicks branch at just a few weeks of age, and will climb around tree and on to the ground - keep pets away from the box area at this time, and if a chick needs 'rescuing' pick it up and put it straight back into the tree or box - do not attempt to feed or handle for any length of time.

## Maintenance

- Annual inspection is recommended to ensure box is clean and ready for the new season.
- Inspections should be carried out in the autumn (Sept - Dec) and it is best to do this work an hour before dark, so that if an owl is flushed from the box, it will have minimal time in daylight, where it may have to endure mobbing from other birds.
- A license is not required to inspect little owl boxes.
- Little owl boxes can become very dirty and smelly with use, so an avian-safe dis-infectant can be used to wipe out the interior if this is felt necessary.
- Wild Owl boxes are treated with an eco-friendly water based preservative. It should not require any additional coatings due to the quality of the timber used.
- All Wild Owl owl boxes come supplied with a camera clip, so an optional camera can be installed to assist in monitoring - please contact Wild Owl for details.



Little Owl



Little Owlet

**If you require free advice on habitat creation, box installation or similar please visit the Wild Owl web site at [www.wildowl.co.uk](http://www.wildowl.co.uk)**