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Re: Calder Town End – Update Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey**Background**

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal¹ (PEA) completed at Calder Town End (the 'site') identified a likely Barn Owl nest site within the 'Stone Barn' (a nest box), along with much evidence of recent presence (pellets/droppings/feathers).

It is proposed to demolish all buildings within the site.

Survey Method

An updated Barn Owl survey was completed on 16 December 2019 by Martyn Owen MCIEEM (Natural England Barn Owl Schedule 1 survey licence number: CL29/00065) with the aim of obtaining updated information on the status of Barn Owl within the site.

To enable building demolition as early as possible in 2020, the (likely) previous nest site/s will need to be removed/access prevented and compensation (in the form of alternative nest site/s) provided. To facilitate this, during this site survey, potential location/s to site Barn Owl boxes as compensation for the lost roost/nest site were identified

Survey Results

A comprehensive survey of the barn was completed. Prior to this survey anecdotal information in relation to Barn Owl was obtained from the site tenant (Mr Penman), who provided the following information:

- Barn Owl have not used the site for around 11 months (February 2019), with no observations in the area during this time.
- The barn was largely cleaned of pellets around 11 months ago (February 2019).
- There have been two nest sites within the barn in the past, in the Barn Owl box and on top of the northern gable wall (or potentially within a ventilation shaft on this wall).

¹ BiOME Consulting Ltd (2018). *Calder Town End, Cumbria. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

Within the barn, around 50 mixed-aged Barn Owl pellets were present although none appeared recent² (i.e. within the last eight months). Two Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* pellets were also present. Three Barn Owl feathers and much dropping evidence was also observed. No Barn Owls were present.

To provide additional information, a survey of the nearby Calder Farm was also completed. No evidence of Barn Owls was identified, although the tenant stated that Barn Owls do use their buildings but that none had been seen for around a year.

Photograph 1. Interior of 'Stone Barn', showing Barn Owl next box



Conclusions

It appears likely that Stone Barn has only been used as a roost site, if at all, during the previous 12 months.

² English Nature (2002). Barn Owls on site; a guide for developers and planners

Recommendations

Two Barn Owl nest boxes should be erected before the end of January 2020:

- on a tree located approximately 30m south of the Stone Barn (**Photograph 2**), and
- within a cowshed at Calder Town End Farm to the northwest of the site (**Photograph 3**), or, on the exterior south facing wall of Stangs Cottage (located to the south of Calder Town End Farm).

Photograph 2. Tree to south of site where a Barn Owl nest box should be sited



Photograph 3. Barn at Calder Town End Farm where a Barn Owl nest box could be sited



Once these boxes are erected, the nest box present within the Stone Barn should be removed, and, if possible access to other potential nesting sites prevented (ensuring that no Barn Owls are harmed, i.e. through entrapment) .

If possible, demolition of the 'Stone Barn' should occur outside the breeding season (March to August, inc.). If this is not possible, prior to demolition works, a survey will be required to ensure that no Barn Owls are present within the building.

During demolition, no steep-sided containers of water should be left uncovered, to avoid the risk of Barn Owls drowning.

Yours sincerely,

Martyn Owen
Principal Ecologist
BiOME Consulting Ltd