



2020 Nantucket Barn Owl Nest Box Program Fall Survey Results

October 14, 2020

Hi Friends of Nantucket Barn Owls!

The Maria Mitchell Association's 2020 Fall Barn Owl Nest Box Survey took place from Wednesday to Friday, October 7th to 9th. Tom and Kim Griswold volunteered the entire time and we are most grateful for their help. Colleagues Ginger Andrews and Mitch Blake were there when possible. Together we checked 34 nest boxes, replaced 2 nest boxes and installed 3 new boxes. We kept our social distance and wore masks!

Because many of the owls nested early this year, we suspected that several of them would produce a second fall brood. We found young in 5 nest boxes (25 young in all), and eggs in 2 boxes (5 in all). We found adults in 4 boxes, 2 of which were previously banded. However, the majority of the boxes (23) had no sign of fall breeding, which is more typical.

Fortunately, we found squirrel nesting material in only 3 nest boxes, which is down from previous surveys. We remove all squirrel nesting material to give the owls a chance to recapture those boxes. This usually works. Box 71 was reoccupied by owls after we removed a large squirrel nest in the spring and the owls produced 5 young this fall.

Even though many owls do produce a second brood in the fall, it is not the best time to reproduce. If weather before December is not harsh, we suspect that many young raised in the fall will survive, especially if they are a few weeks old by October 1st. However younger owlets likely will not survive to independence if conditions are harsh. Of the 25 young and 5 eggs we found, we do not believe any of the young that hatch from eggs will make it but we feel that young 20 days or older during the survey dates have a relatively good chance.

The population on Nantucket seems stable and may be increasing a little. Since June 2019, we have banded over 100 Barn Owls, including 2 from Tuckernuck. With the addition of 3 new boxes this fall, and more in production, we are providing optimum housing for the birds and at the same time have an ever increasing impact on the mouse, rat and rabbit populations! Fewer mice also means the owls are helping to reduce Lyme Disease.

Thanks again for your support of the Maria Mitchell Association Nantucket Barn Owl Nest Box Program! Hope to see you in 2021!

Happy Owling!

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Maria Mitchell Association Barn Owl Nest Box Program Report Summary -

Barn Owl Survey - October 7 to 9, 2020

Boxes located east of Town

Box #	Location	Adults	Eggs	# of Young	# of Young Banded	Nest Box Notes
5	Squam	0	0	0	0	NA*
5A	Squam	0	0	0	0	NA
44	Quidnet	0	0	0	0	NA - Recent Activity
41	Wauwinet	0	0	0	0	NA
52	Polpis	0	0	0	0	NA - Cleaned box
30	Quidnet	0	0	0	0	Squirrel Nest removed
79	Pocomo					New Box installed
11 New	Medouie Creek	0	0	0	0	NA - lots of recent activity
39	Polpis	0	0	0	0	Nest Box replaced
76	Polpis					New Box installed
14	Polpis	0	0	0	0	NA - Cleaned box
72	Polpis	0	0	0	0	2 small pellets & feathers
74	Quaise	0	0	0	0	NA
75	Quaise	0	0	0	0	Feathers present
18 Old	Shimmo	0	0	0	0	NA
18A	Shimmo	0	0	0	0	Recent Activity - Squirrel Nest removed
19	Shimmo	0	0	0	0	Squirrel Nest removed
57	Shimmo	0	0	4	4	Young 14 to 24 days old
61	Shimmo	0	0	0	0	Nest Box Replaced
68	Shimmo	0	1	0	0	1 abandoned egg
65	Monomoy	0	4	0	0	Eggs appeared to be freshly laid
66	Monomoy	0	0	3	3	Young 24 to 36 days old
78	Monomoy					New Box installed
58	Madequesham	0	0	0	0	NA
59	Madequesham	0	0	0	0	NA
63	Madequesham	0	0	0	0	Recent Activity
60	Tom Nevers	0	0	0	0	NA
70	Tom Nevers	1♂	0	0	0	Adult roosting, previously banded
71	Tom Nevers	0	0	5	4	Young 20 to 32 days old

Boxes located in Town or west of Town

Box #	Box Owner - Location	Adult	Eggs	# of Young	# of Young Banded	Nest Box Notes
38	Town	0	0	2	2	Young 40 to 45 days old
27	Dionis	0	0	0	0	NA
28	Dionis	0	0	0	0	NA
64	Dionis	1 ♀	0	6	0	Young 1 day to 12 days old, Adult previously banded
35	Madaket	1 U	0	0	0	New band 1947-47396
53	Madaket	0	0	0	0	NA
34	Madaket	0	0	5	5	Young 21 to 31 days old
73	Miacomet	1 ♀	0	0	0	New band 1947-47385
	Total	4	5	25	18	

Previously Banded Adults captured 7 to 9 October 2020

Box #	Box Owner - Location	Adults	Band No.	Date Banded	Age When Banded	Box Owner Where Banded
64	Dionis	1 ♀	1947-47362	6/11/2020	Adult	64
70	Tom Nevers	1 ♂	1947-40100	6/26/2019	Nestling	52

*NA = Not Active