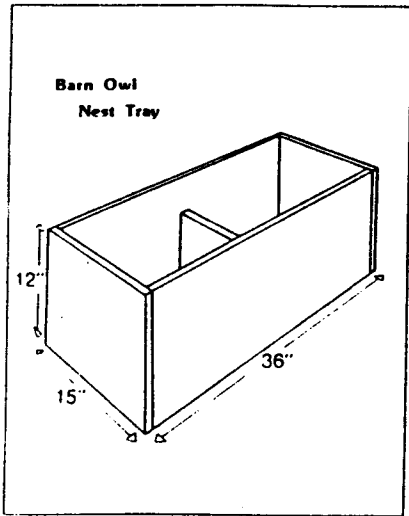


So it is important to know something about the lifestyle of each raptor we are dealing with.

Let's then look at each individual species, see where it lives, what type of nest box it requires and how and where to place the boxes.



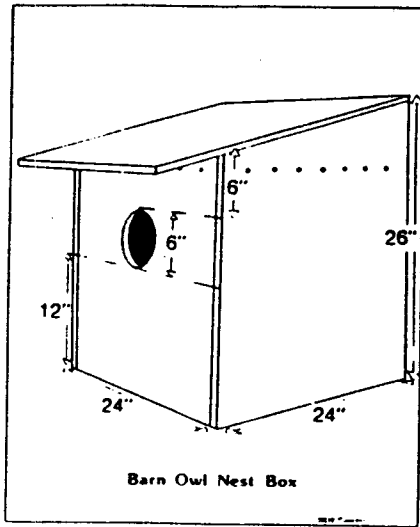
### Barn Owl

Barn Owls live and breed throughout the entire state. Most are migratory, but some birds remain resident year around. They are birds of open terrain, hunting in fields, meadows and farmlands. It is not uncommon to find Barn Owls living in parks, deserted lots and along railroad tracks. These raptors, more than any others, spend their lifetimes in close proximity to man.

They nest in a wide variety of places including church towers, farm structures, semi derelict (and often occupied) buildings, water tanks, under bridges, on drive-in movie screens and in silos and barns. Many potential nesting sites already exist and may only need slight modifications to allow Barn Owls to utilize them. Often, simply affording the birds access by unscreening a window, removing a slat from a steeple, or poking a hole here or there, will create an acceptable site.

Erecting nest boxes not only increases the available breeding sites for resident birds but may attract birds into areas where they have not bred before. It may take a while for the box to be discovered and used, but not always. Two years ago in early June I installed a box in an unused silo where Barn Owls had been roosting. Three weeks later an owl was in the box incubating eggs. She must have been waiting for me to show up with her nest.

Two designs work well for Barn Owls. The open tray type is the easiest and least expensive to construct. This type should be used inside a barn, silo or other building where a roof or covering already exists. Place the box high in the structure where it will be inaccessible to house cats, raccoons, or too much human disturbance. The box can be nailed fast or hung with rope, wire or brackets.



The closed box type can be used in a topless silo, attached to the outside of an existing structure, erected on a pole or placed in a tree. When erecting on poles or trees remember to choose open areas, fields, meadows, etc and face the entrance hole south.

### American Kestrel and Screech Owl

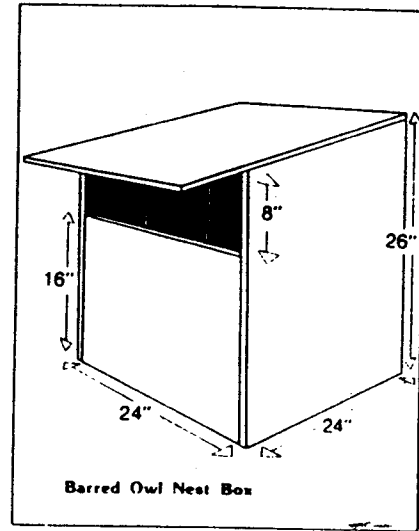
New Jersey's resident falcon, the American Kestrel, and our smallest breeding owl, the Screech Owl, occur statewide. Kestrels are resident throughout the year although some migrate. Screech Owls are basically non-migratory and remain in the same areas all their lives. The habitat in which both birds live is similar and the best boxes made for them are identical.

Kestrels are birds of open terrain, seldom entering woods. They hunt fields, shorelines, meadows, roadsides and other open areas. They are regularly seen perched atop telephone poles and utility wires or hovering in mid-air, searching the ground below for prey. Boxes should be placed in open spaces. Good locations are trees along the edge of a woodlot, a lone tree in a field, on a barn or other farm building, or mounted on a pole. Constructing your own pole offers the advantage of being able to place the nest box anywhere. Open fields and meadows afford the hawks proper habitat to hunt mice, moles and their summer favorites - grasshoppers.

Boxes should be placed 12 to 20 feet above the ground. When using a pole or post for erection, a metal sleeve 30 inches wide should be wrapped around

it and secured, to keep mammal predators from climbing to the box.

Screech Owls live in open woodland terrain. They are found not only in open country, but in lightly wooded areas, city and rural parks, small woodlots, and a particular favorite - apple orchards.



### Barred Owl

This is not a common owl in New Jersey, but occurs rather locally throughout the state. Its status is officially listed as "threatened" (may become endangered if conditions surrounding the species begin or continue to deteriorate). Barred Owls are birds of dense wooded swamps and deep forests. Woodlands which border lakes, streams, marshes or swamps are favored. The woods may be deciduous or coniferous, or mixed. They are sedentary owls and permanent residents in New Jersey.

Barred Owls almost always nest in hollow trees. They are large owls and require large cavities in which to breed. The decreasing number of such natural sites, plus the very specialized habitat requirements of this bird, have caused its numbers to diminish drastically.

Historically, most artificial nest boxes for raptors have been built for Barn Owls, Screech Owls and Kestrels. To my knowledge, very few nest sites have ever been provided for Barred Owls. It may not be possible to expand the distribution of this species to any great extent, because of its habitat requirements, but supplying boxes in areas where these owls do exist could be highly beneficial in maintaining or even increasing their populations. It would be a worthwhile effort on our part to assist this beleaguered bird in any way we can.



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