

Cheshire Barn Owl Report 2009



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Introduction

This report collates data from the Wirral and the Mid, South, West, North, East and North East Cheshire Barn Owl groups. There is no data this year from the Manchester Recorder.

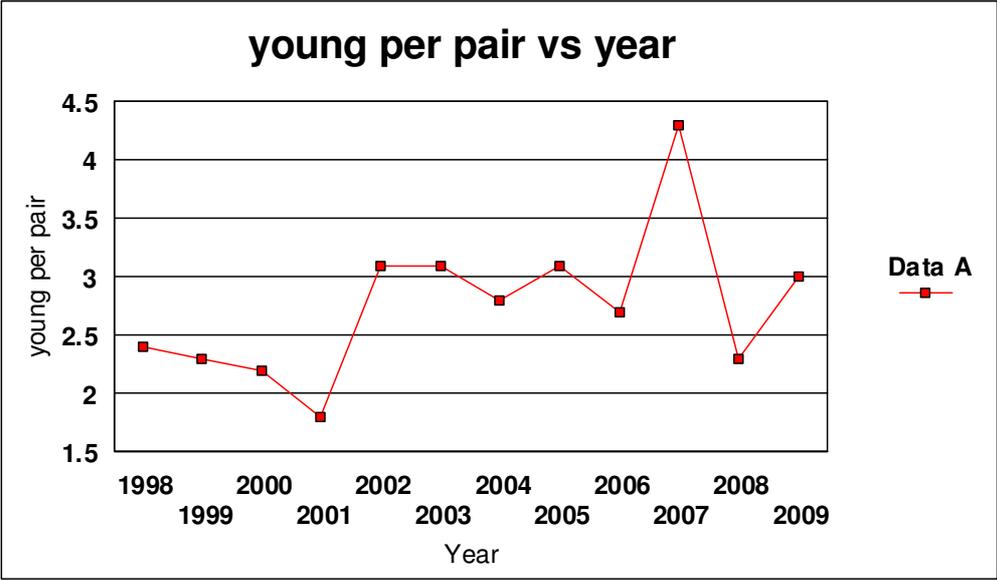
Summary

The groups detected 141 successful pairs of breeding Barn owls in Cheshire in 2009 with 430 confirmed young. All young were confirmed. Seven second broods were reported and are included within the total. Not all the counted young survived to be ringed or to fledge but they represent less than 2% of the total.

Total number of confirmed breeding pairs	141
Total successful breeding pairs	141
Total counted young	430
Average young per pair	3.04
Boxes installed	1237

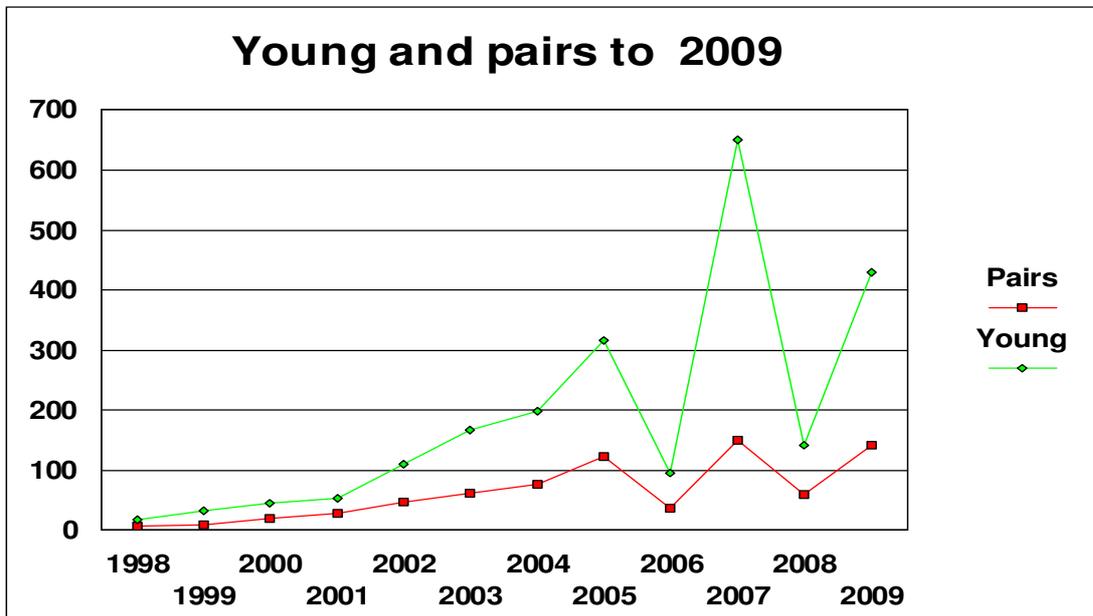
Group	Breeding sites	Successful Sites	Counted sites++	Counted young	Ringed young	Second broods	Young per pair
Mid	42	42	42	124	116	6	2.9
North	4	4	4	13	13	0	3.2
N/E	10	10	10	33	17	0	3.3
South	13	13	13	35	27	0	2.7
Wirral	26	23	23	88	77	0	3.8
West	47	47	47	134	116	1	2.9
East	2	2	2	3	3	0	1.5
Total	144	141	139	430	387	7	3.0

Year	Breeding Pairs	Young	Young per pair
1998	7	17	2.4
1999	10	32	2.3
2000	19	46	2.2
2001	29	53	2.4
2002	48	110	2.3
2003	61	167	3.1
2004	76	199	2.8
2005	123	316	3.1
2006	36	96	2.7
2007	151	651	4.3
2008	59	141	2.3



Location of nest sites

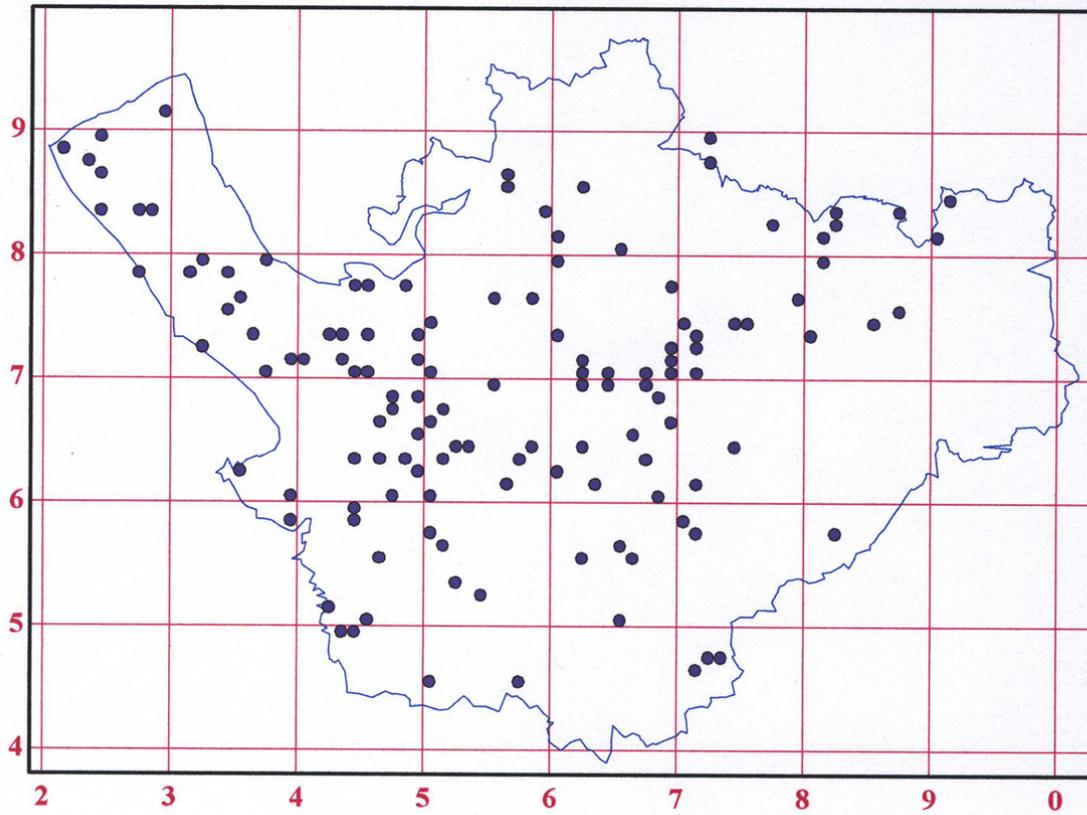
	Tree box	Barn box	Pole box	Building	Natural Tree site	Total
Mid	38	0	1	2	1	42
North	2		2			4
East	1			1		2
N/E	7			1	2	10
South	9		4			13
Wirral	9	3	8	2	1	23
West	2		37		8	47
Total	68	3	52	6	12	141

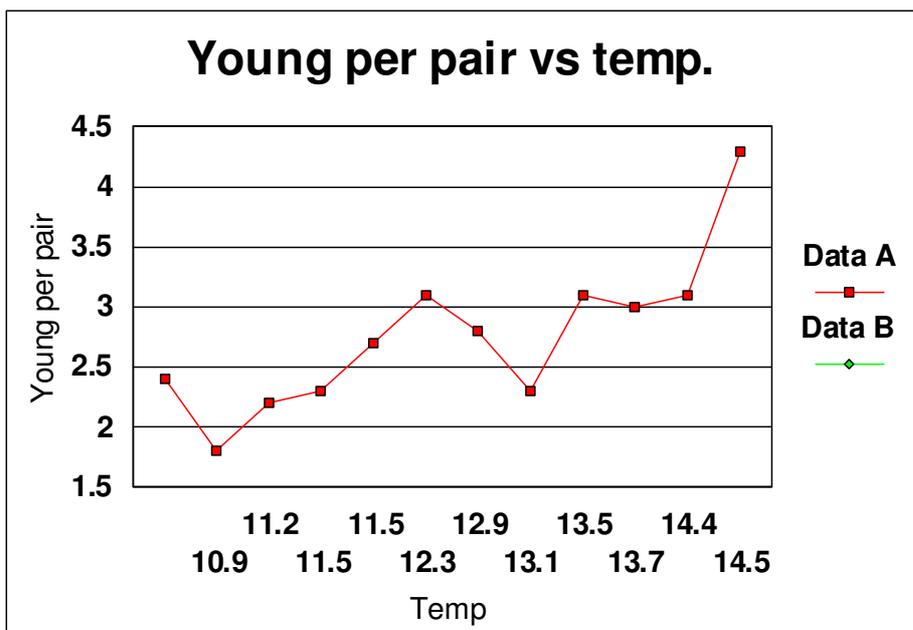
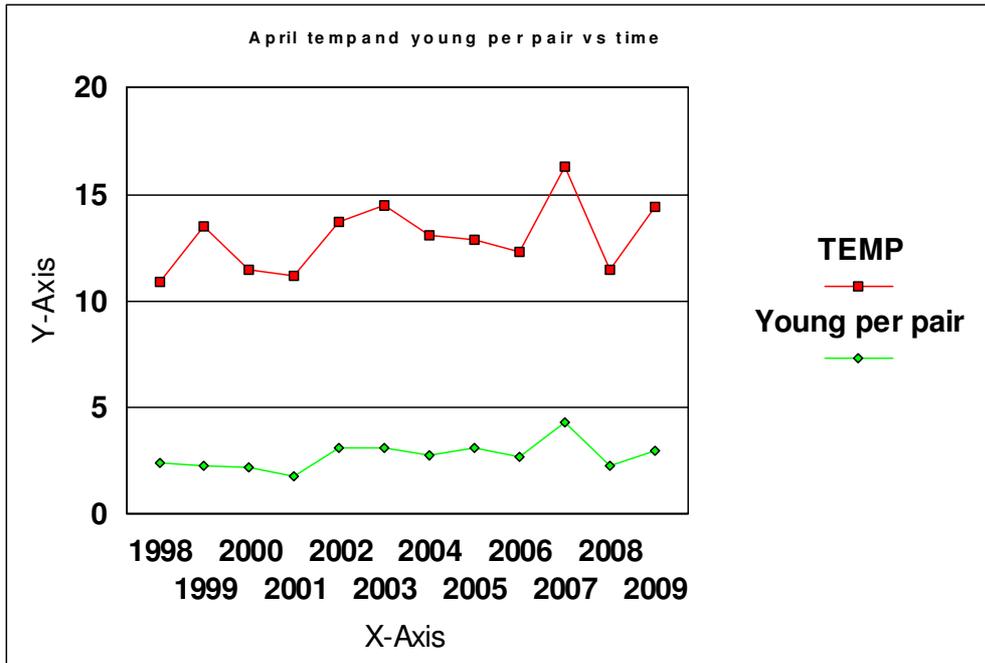


Box Utilisation

	Total boxes	Boxes used	% Utilisation
Mid	420	42	10
East	44	2	5
North	45	4	9
North East	101	10	10
South	94	13	14
West	355	44	12
Wirral	178	26	15
Totals	1237	141	11.3

Distribution Map





Discussion

2009 represents a good breeding year for Barn owls in Cheshire. The number of breeding pairs is well up on 2008 and is the second best ever. The productivity at 3.0 young per pair is good and is at the level required to sustain the population.

Some of the increase in number of breeding pairs detected is probably due to an increase in boxes particularly in the north east where there appear to be at least 8 new pairs. The rate of increase of pairs appears to be levelling out however and we

may eventually settle down to about 150 -170 detected pairs in Cheshire .Although increased effort in the east of the county may boost that figure .

I have included the plots of young per pair and April average day temperature at Shawbury in Shropshire which were also shown in the last report(Shawbury is the nearest site for which there is continuous data) .The increase in temperature over 2008 has been reflected in a substantial increase in breeding success and there is a reasonable correlation between the temperature and young per pair over the past ten years .

Finally, I suggested in one of the previous reports, that the proportion of unringed adults recovered in nest boxes might give an estimate of the proportion of the barn owl population which remains undetected. 3 years ago the West group was recovering only 50% ringed birds whereas in 2009 the ringed birds were 60% of the total. This indicates that there is still a substantial breeding population which remains undetected which is quite reassuring and suggests that there might be up to 230 pairs in Cheshire .

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of A MCreary and B Wright of the West Cheshire Group,M Maher of the Wirral Group and J Mycock of the Mid Cheshire group for providing the data for this report .