

# Cheshire Barn Owl Report 2014



# Introduction

This report collates data from the Wirral and the Mid, South, West, North, East and North East Cheshire Barn Owl groups.

## Summary

A bumper year for Barn owls in Cheshire with 159 breeding pairs and 685 young.

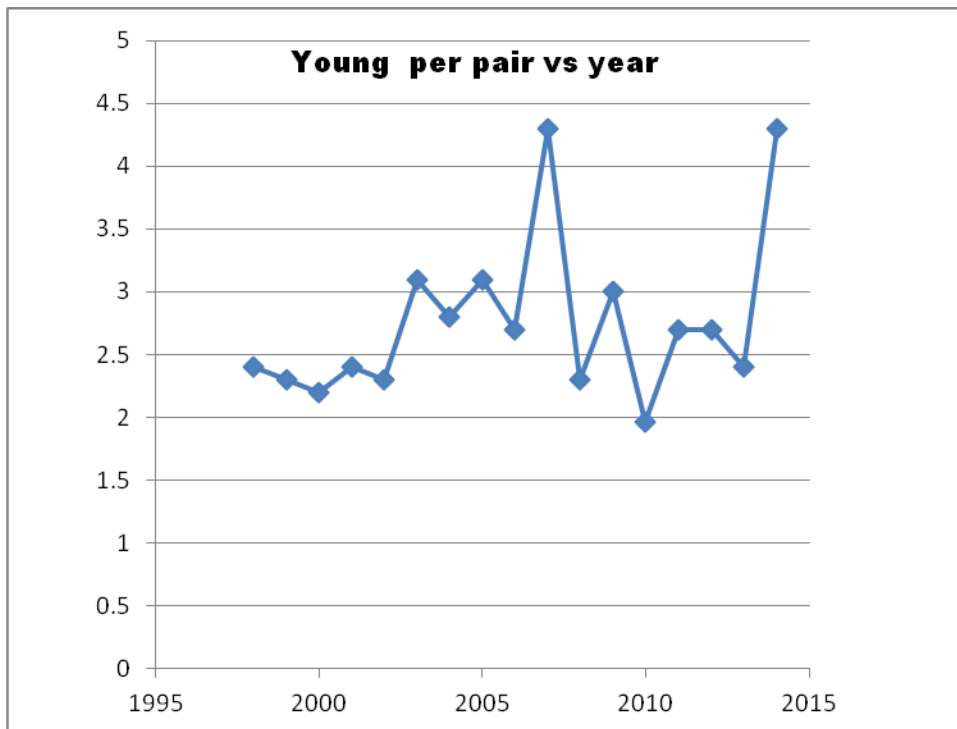
The number of young is a record as is the productivity per pair.

Total successful pairs	159
Total counted young	685
Young per breeding pair	4.3
Boxes installed	1546

Note that in the vast majority of breeding sites the young were ringed and were close to fledging.

Group	Successful Sites	Counted Young +	Young per Breeding pair
Mid	40	174	4.35
North	9	31	3.4
N/E	13	50	3.8
South	18	80	4.44
Wirral	36	155	4.3
West	40	182	4.55
East	3	13	4.33
Total	159	685	4.3

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
2009	141	430	3.0
2010	132	260	1.96
2011	144	392	2.72
2012	225	600	2.66
2013	25	62	2.48
2014	159	685	4.3

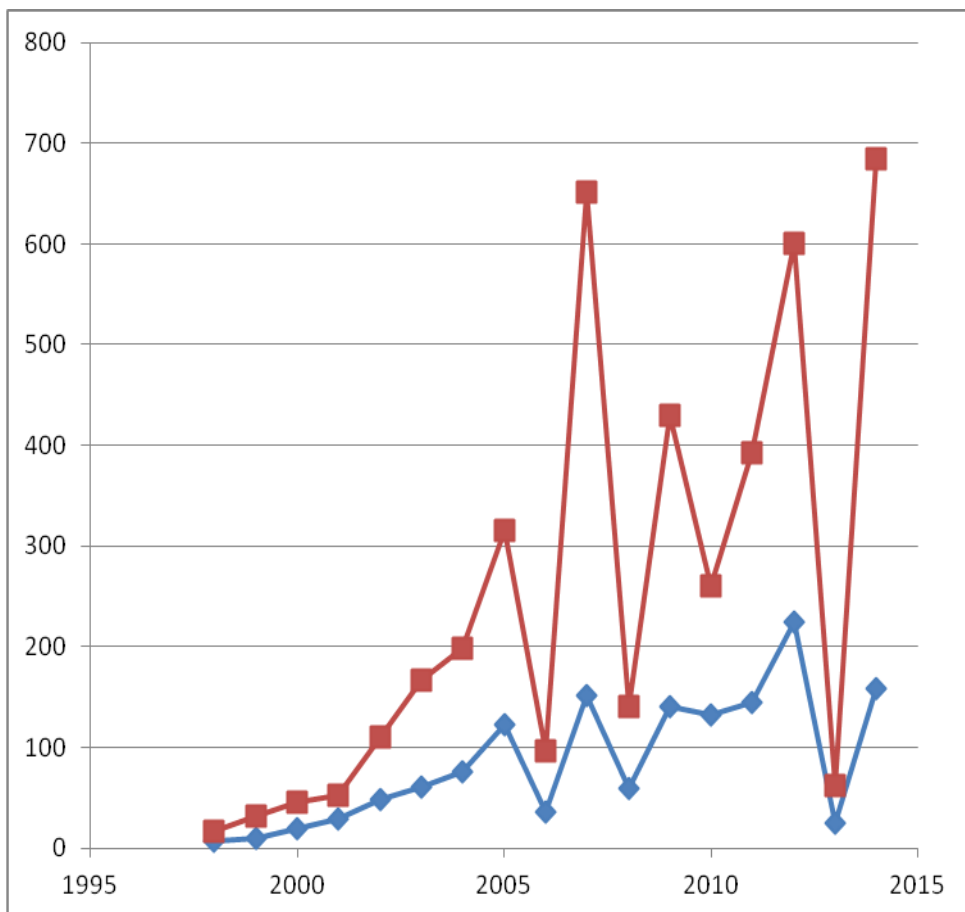


### Type of breeding site

Group	Tree box	Barn box	Pole box	Building	Natural Tree site	Total
Mid	39	0	1	0	0	40
North	3	0	4	3	0	10
East	3	0	0	0	0	3
N/E	9	0	0	3	1	13
South	13	0	3	2	0	18
Wirral	21	0	10	5	0	36
West	6	1	33	0	0	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>159</b>

	Total boxes	Boxes used	% Utilisation
Mid	552	40	7.2
East	58	3	5.1
North	68	9	13.2
North East	146	13	8.9
South	202	18	8.9
West	489	40	8.2
Wirral	No data		

Young and pairs vs year



**The distribution map is not included this year as the author neglected to retain the software when replacing his computer. If anyone has a copy of DMAP please contact the author.**

## **Discussion**

True to form, the Cheshire Barn Owls have followed a very poor year with one which was very good. A much milder spring must have sustained a far higher vole population hence the success of the Barn owls. We seem to have reached a plateau in terms of known breeding sites of around 150. The data suggests that installation of more boxes will not increase the population and the limit on numbers is now likely to be the amount of suitable habitat. Again there is nothing to support the idea of a four year vole cycle and the weather in the spring is a key to Barn owl breeding success.

Finally the data on recovery of adult breeding barn owls from the boxes shows that between one third and one half of all adults are not ringed. This indicates that in the county there are probably another 75-100 pairs which have not been detected.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of A McCreary and B Wright of the West Cheshire Group, Steve Binney of the MRG, Steve Harris of the Wirral Barn Owl Group and J Mycock and A Duncalf of the Mid Cheshire group for providing the data for this report.

It is sad to record the death of Andrew Duncalf. He has carried out a substantial part of the ringing for the mid Cheshire group over the years which has provided much of the data for this report. We owe him a great deal and he will be missed by all of us working for Barn Owls in Cheshire.

J D Wild February 2015