

FACTS ON THE BARN OWL IN BERMUDA

1. The Barn Owl is Bermuda's only resident breeding owl.
2. The Barn Owl was not present on pre-colonial Bermuda, due to the lack of rodent prey.
3. 318 years passed between the introduction of rodents and the natural colonization of Bermuda by Barn Owls.
4. Confirmed nesting of the Barn Owl on Bermuda was first observed in a cliff-hole on Nonsuch Island In June 1931, by Dr. William Beebe.
5. The majority of Barn Owl nest sites on Bermuda are in holes and caves in coastal cliffs.
6. There are approximately 12-15 breeding pairs of Barn Owls nesting in any one year in Bermuda.
7. Nests are generally about 2 miles apart, or wherever there are suitable nesting sites or hunting habitat.
8. The hunting territory of a breeding pair ranges from 0.6 to 1.2 square miles.
9. The main prey items of Barn Owls on Bermuda are immature Norway and Black Rats and House Mice (85%). Birds (mostly Starlings and House Sparrows) make up most of the remaining 15%, while the Antiguan Anole lizard is also a significant prey item in some areas during the summer months.
10. The value of the Barn Owl as a pest control agent in Bermuda is considerable, as a breeding pair can consume more than 3000 rats and mice annually.
11. Although the Barn Owl still appears to be surviving fairly well on Bermuda, the continued decline of suitable hunting habitat through development, and increased disturbance of some nest sites, gives cause for alarm.
12. Increased public awareness and sensitivity, the provision of nest-boxes, and the protection of suitable habitat are all needed to help the survival of this beautiful and useful species on Bermuda.

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