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Barn Owl Investigations

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: VIRGINIA PROJECT NO.: W-77-R-5

PROJECT TYPE: Research and/or survey STUDY NO.: X

PROJECT TITLE: NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES INVESTIGATIONS JOB NOS.: A-C

STUDY TITLE: BARN OWL INVESTIGATIONS

JOB TITLE: Evaluation of Barn Owl Habitat Use, Provision of Nest Boxes, and Survey of Breeding Population.

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1987 - June 30, 1988

JOB X-A OBJECTIVE: To determine the habitat requirements of barn owls so that the selection of sites for nest boxes can be made efficiently and effectively.

JOB X-B OBJECTIVE: To determine the status of barn owls in Virginia, select suitable locations for nest boxes, construct and erect nest boxes in appropriate areas.

JOB X-C OBJECTIVE: To monitor and evaluate the use of erected nest boxes.

SUMMARY:

Studies on habitat requirements of barn owls were completed. Additional records were compiled of active barn owl nest sites in the state.

Sixty three barn owl nest boxes were examined for evidence of utilization. Of 32 nest boxes located in old dairy barns, tobacco barns, or hay barns, 4 (12.5%) showed evidence of nesting activity. Of thirty nest boxes placed in unused or lightly used grain silos, 13 (4.33%) showed evidence of nesting activity. Of the total of 63 boxes examined, 17 (27.0%) were used by barn owls in 1987, a slight increase from use in 1986.

JOB X-A - To determine habitat requirements of barn owls in order that the selection of sites for nest boxes can be made efficiently.

All work on this job was completed and results are available in Rosenberg, C. P. 1986. Barn owl habitat and prey use in agricultural Eastern Virginia. M. A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. 114 pp.

JOB X-B - To determine the status of barn owls in Virginia, select suitable locations for nest boxes, construct and erect nest boxes in appropriate areas.

Barn owl nest box placements were completed at the beginning of the reporting period with two final boxes being erected on the Eastern Shore.

Reports were received and verified on six active barn owl nests which were added to the nest file.

Broods were banded at two nest locations on the Eastern Shore.

JOB X-C - To monitor and evaluate the use of erected nest boxes.

Three types of barn owl boxes were erected as part of this project. Sixty three of the boxes were checked in 1987 to determine utilization by owls. Since the survey was done late in the summer, several criteria were used to determine utilization. Among these were the presence of pellets or of owls and information provided by the landowner.

Results of the nest box survey for the 1987 breeding season are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Virginia barn owl nest box survey, 1987.

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>SITE TYPE</u>	<u>NESTING ACTIVITY</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Albemarle	Easter	silos	no	adult male present
Amelia	Va. Game Comm.	silos	no	
Appomattox	Thornhill	barn	no	
Botetourt	Bailey	barn	yes	adult female present
Charles City	Presquile NWR	barn	no	barn destroyed/fire
Clarke	Shephard	barn	no	
Culpeper	Willis	barn	no	pigeon nest in box
Fairfax	Leigh	barn	no	pigeon nest in box
Fauquier	Messick	barn	no	nest box moved
Fauquier	Olinger	barn	no	nest box fallen
Fauquier	Stinson	garage	no	
Frederick	Bowman	barn	no	
Frederick	Saville	barn	no	pigeon nest in box
Greene	Overstreet	barn	no	
Hanover	Broadus Farm	barn	no	
Henrico	Watkins	barn	no	
Henrico	Watkins	silos	yes	adult female present
Henrico	Thompson Realty	silos	yes	
James City	Duffeler	silos	no	box destroyed
Loudon	Opeka	barn	no	
Louisa	Day	barn	no	
Louisa	Cole	barn	no	
New Kent	Butler	silos	no	one adult present

Table 1 - continued

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>SITE TYPE</u>	<u>NESTING ACTIVITY</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Newport News	Bevins	silos	yes	one adult present
Page	Kite	silos	no	pigeon nest in box
Page	Long	silos	yes	1 adult/3eggs/ 2-2 day old young
Prince George	Upper Brandon Plan.	barn	no	barn destroyed
Prince George	Brandon Plan.	barn	yes	
Prince William	IBM	silos	yes	4 young produced
Prince William	Galloway	silos	no	
Prince William	Fowler	silos	yes	3 young produced
Prince William	Bagley	silos	no	
Prince William	Stone	barn	yes	4 young produced
Prince William	Smith	silos	no	
Prince William	Colvin	barn	no	
Prince William	Cowne	silos	no	
Prince William	? NB367	barn	no	
Prince William	Colvin	silos	no	
Prince William	Sandmire	barn	no	
Prince William	? NB3240	barn	no	
Prince William	Smith	barn	no	
Prince William	Rollins	silos	no	
Prince William	? NB#65	silos	no	
Prince William	? NB#231	silos	no	pigeon nest in box
Prince William	Mauck	silos	no	box fallen
Prince William	Whetzel	barn	no	

Table 1 - continued

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>SITE TYPE</u>	<u>NESTING ACTIVITY</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Prince William	Wood	silos	yes	3 young produced
Prince William	Hersch	barn	no	
Prince William	Smith	barn	no	
Prince William	Smith (NB#249)	silos	yes	1 adult, 4 fledged young present. 1 dead nestling found- FWS 987-75576.
Prince William	Lang	barn	no	
Prince William	Newcomer	silos	yes	1 adult, 4 fledged young present. 1 female fledgling captured- FWS 816-54337.
Prince William	Flemming	silos	yes	
Pulaski	Steele	barn	no	
Rappahannock	James	silos	yes	2 owls present
Roanoke	Huffman	silos	no	pigeon nest in box
Roanoke	Strauss	barn	no	
Rockbridge	Moore	barn	yes	1 adult, 3 young
Rockingham	Wampler	silos	yes	1 fledgling present
Rockingham	Cox	silos	yes	3 fledglings present
Rockingham	Gaster	silos	no	
Rockingham	Eye	silos	no	
Tazwell	Hanes Corp,	barn	no	

A total of 63 barn owl nest boxes in 26 counties was checked for evidence of nesting activity from August 12 through August 22. Of 32 nest boxes located in old dairy barns, tobacco barns, or hay barns, 4 (12.5%) showed evidence of nesting activity during the 1987 breeding season. Thirty nest boxes were located in unused or lightly used grain silos. Of these, 13 (43.3%) showed evidence of nesting activity during the 1987 breeding season. Of 63 boxes examined, 17 (27%) were utilized by barn owls as nest sites, a slight increase over the 23.6% utilization in 1986.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: Continuing

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATION IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue Study

COST THIS SEGMENT: Federal \$4,355.25 : State \$1,451.75: Total \$5,807.00

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DATE: August 1, 1988

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