

Tawny Owl Nestbox

Egg laying: February to mid-April

Incubation: February to mid-May (28–30 days)

Hatching: March to mid-May

Young in nest: mid-april to late June (32–35 days)

Number of eggs: two–five

Number of broods: one

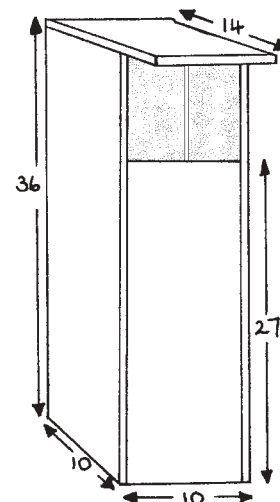
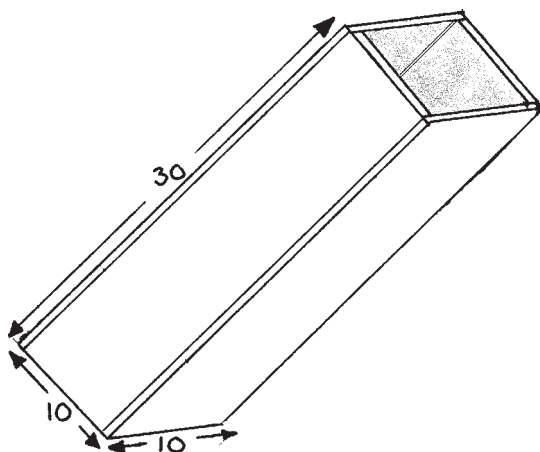


Tawny Owl by Tommy Holden

The Tawny Owl is the most common owl in England, Scotland and Wales but does not occur in Ireland. Although it favours woodland habitats, it can also be found nesting on farmland and in urbanised areas. Breeding may start as early as February and the eggs are usually laid in a tree cavity, although an old crow nest may sometimes be used. Tawny Owls will readily use the large nestboxes of the type shown below. Each of the two different designs is suited to a different location – the angle design can be slung under a 45 degree branch or attached to a tree trunk, while the upright design can be attached to a trunk.

Both boxes should be mounted in quiet locations at least 2.5 metres above the ground with the entrance hole facing away from prevailing weather conditions (wind, sun and rain). Exterior quality ply is ideal for use in the construction of the boxes and non-toxic water-based preservatives can be used on the outside of the box to increase its longevity. The designs shown below have measurement units in inches and both designs should include a series of drainage holes drilled in the based to allow water to escape. The tubular design of each box makes them quite easy to construct.

Do not attempt to inspect Tawny Owl nestboxes during the breeding season. Tawny Owls are notoriously aggressive at the nest and may attack you.



If you are interested in designs for other types of nestboxes, you might be interested in the BTO Nestbox Guide by Chris du Feu (ISBN 1-902576-81-0). This is available from the BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU. 01842-750050 for more details.