

Species at Risk

Barn Owl

Tyto alba



STATUS

The Barn Owl is protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION

The Barn Owl is generally found in or near areas of human habitation adjacent to fields of dense grass, marsh, lightly grazed pasture, and the margins of agricultural fields. They require open foraging habitat with an abundance of small mammal prey. Nesting occurs in buildings (barns, silos, attics, etc.) and nest boxes, as well as in natural caves, crevices, burrows, and hollow trees. Increasing urbanization and changing agricultural practices have led to declining amounts of suitable foraging habitat. Robust data on population trends are not available but populations have likely been declining due to the reduction in appropriate habitat.

HABITAT FEATURES (BIOPHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES)

Barn Owls require habitat with the following biophysical attributes:

- Open foraging habitat with an abundance of small mammal prey including fields of dense grass, marsh, pastureland, and the margins of agricultural fields; and
- Presence of man-made or natural features for cavity nesting.

CRITICAL HABITAT RANGE

The Western population is resident year-round in southern British Columbia, mostly in the southwest corner of the province. It occurs locally on southeastern Vancouver Island from Victoria to Nanaimo, and rarely north to Campbell River and the Gulf Islands. It is most common in the Fraser Valley east to Hope, but is rare and sporadic in the central/southern interior. A map of habitat range is currently unavailable.



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CRITICAL HABITAT FEATURE LINK TO BC AGRICULTURAL BMPs

This table identifies which Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) may be applicable; other stewardship actions may also be possible.

Habitat biophysical attributes	Activity that would destroy critical habitat	Agricultural BMP for protection or enhancement of habitat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open foraging habitat with an abundance of small mammal prey including fields of dense grass, marsh, pastureland, and the margins of agricultural fields 	<p>Changes in agricultural practices (e.g., loss of habitat as grassland-associated agriculture is transformed to vegetable, berry, and greenhouse production).</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct loss of grassland habitats and foraging areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain uncultivated grassland areas Reduce or eliminate use of rodenticides for control of small mammal species <p>BMPs</p> <p>2006-1004 2006-2501 2006-2601 2018/2019-1004 2018/2019-2501 2018/2019-2601 2018/2019-2801 2018/2019-3501</p>
	<p>Land conversion for human development (e.g. housing and urban areas, logging, agriculture) in core or connectivity critical habitat.</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct loss of grassland habitats as land is converted to housing, commercial, or industrial buildings 	
	<p>Rodenticide (anticoagulants) use in agricultural and pasture lands to control small mammal species.</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct or secondary poisoning of non-target predators such as the Barn Owl. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of man-made or natural features for cavity nesting 	<p>Land conversion for human development (e.g. housing and urban areas, logging, agriculture) in core or connectivity critical habitat.</p> <p><i>How activity would destroy critical habitat:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct loss nesting structures such as old buildings and old trees as land is converted to housing, commercial, or industrial buildings Increased road mortality as urbanization increases in historically rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain nesting features in existing buildings Replace lost nesting locations with nest boxes <p>BMPs</p> <p>2006-2204 2018/2019-2801 2018/2019-2204 2018/2019-3501</p>



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This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
 Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada