

Owls offered 'super-sized' homes

A Gloucestershire farm is hoping to encourage barn owls to nest by offering them three 'super-sized' luxury homes.

The 10ft (3m) tall 'Barn Owl Manors' have been erected in Down Ampney on a farm selected to be part of the Co-operative's Habitat Heroes project.

Each box is fitted with a high-tech camera system and its size deters other territorial birds from nesting in them.

The Barn Owl Centre's Vincent Jones said they had created the "perfect environment" for owl pairs on the farm.

Down Ampney farm manager James Taylor had spotted pairs of barn owls circling the trees at different locations around the farm.

He said being part of this project had given them the chance to "look at ways we can really make our land work for local wildlife".

The 4ft (1.2m) nesting boxes, believed to be the first of their kind, stand on 6ft (1.8m) stilts and were created by the Barn Owl Centre in Gloucester.

Six farms across the UK are taking part in the Co-operative's Habitat Heroes project to improve the breeding opportunities for species like barn owls, otters, bats and red squirrels.

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