

8.7 Bird and Bat boxes

The provision of nest boxes for birds and roosting boxes for bats can help replace natural locations lost through changes in farming practice.

Nest boxes for small birds

1. A plank 1500 mm long, 150 mm wide and 15 mm thick should be cut into sections as shown in *Diagram 1*. The inside of the box must be at least 100 mm square and the bottom of the entrance hole at least 125 mm from the floor.
2. The entrance hole size depends on the species you wish to attract, that is, 25 mm for coal, marsh and blue tits, 28 mm for great tits and 32 mm for house and tree sparrows.
3. The inside front surface should be rough to allow young birds to clamber up. A drainage hole should be drilled in the base.
4. Only apply wood preservative to the outside of the box and ensure it is completely dried before putting it up.
5. The box should be fitted 2-5 metres up a tree, facing between north and south-east.

Nest boxes for large birds

1. This standard box design is suitable for birds such as stock doves. A plank 2200 mm long, 20 mm wide and 20 mm thick should be cut into sections as shown in *Diagram 2*. The entrance should be 152 mm in length and 100 mm in breadth.
2. The inside front surface should be rough to allow young birds to clamber up. A drainage hole should be drilled in the base.
3. Only apply wood preservative to the outside of the box, and ensure it is completely dried before putting it up.
4. The box should be fitted 2-5 metres up a tree, facing between north and south-east. It should be tilted slightly to give shelter from rain and wind.

Barn owl boxes

1. The box, preferably made of plywood, should measure at least 460 x 460 x 610 mm, but the bigger the better (*Diagram 3*). The entrance should be 230 mm square or more.
2. The box should have a lipped tray at the front to let young owls walk out of the nest.
3. It should be fixed to a beam or wall by brackets or strong nails, in a dark corner away from the building doorway. It is vital that there is a permanently open window or doorway to ensure the owl(s) will not be trapped.

Kestrel boxes

1. The box should be large and solid, of 19 mm or 22 mm timber or 9 mm exterior ply, with a small perch across the entrance made from a small branch (*Diagram 4*). Some 5 mm drainage holes should be drilled in the floor and wood chips added.
2. The box should be fitted at least 6 metres from the ground, to the side of a tree or where the branches fork.

Bat boxes

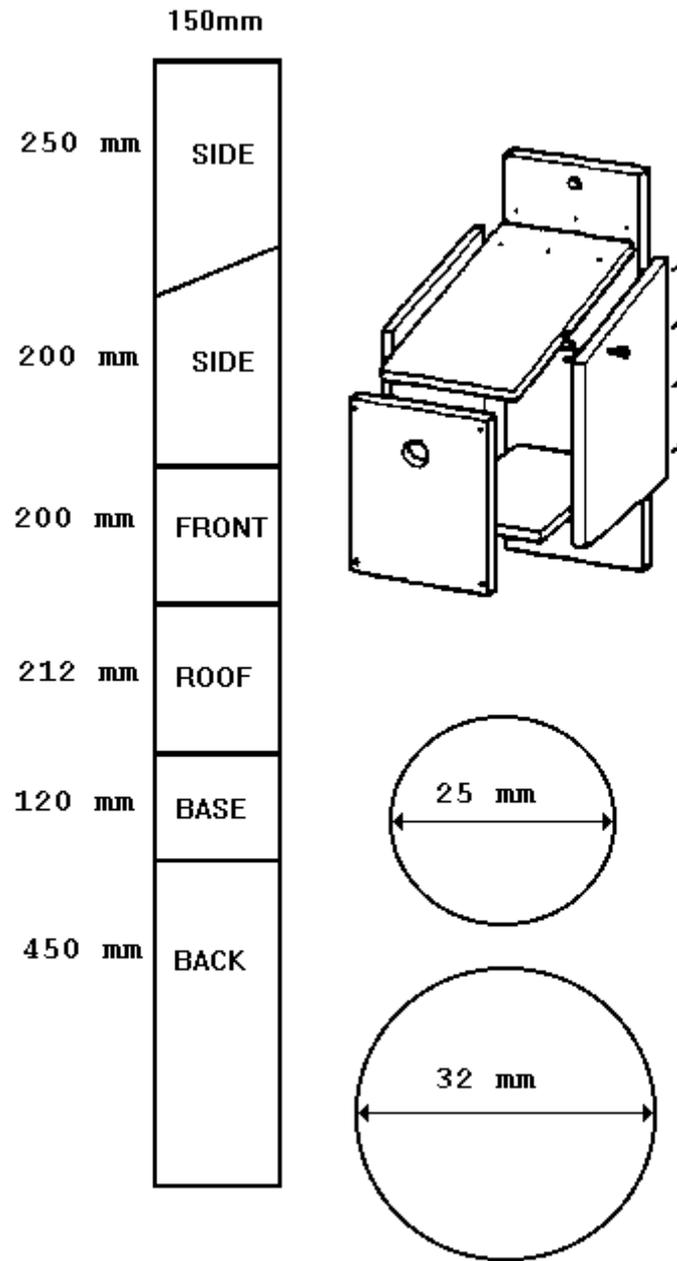
1. Bat boxes should be constructed in a similar way to the bird box, but without the entrance hole. Instead a 15-20 mm slit is made where the box floor joins the back wall (*Diagram 5*). Untreated rough sawn or grooved timber should be used.

The box should then be placed 3-5 metres up the tree facing north, south-west or south-east, so that the box is only exposed to the sun for part of the day.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)

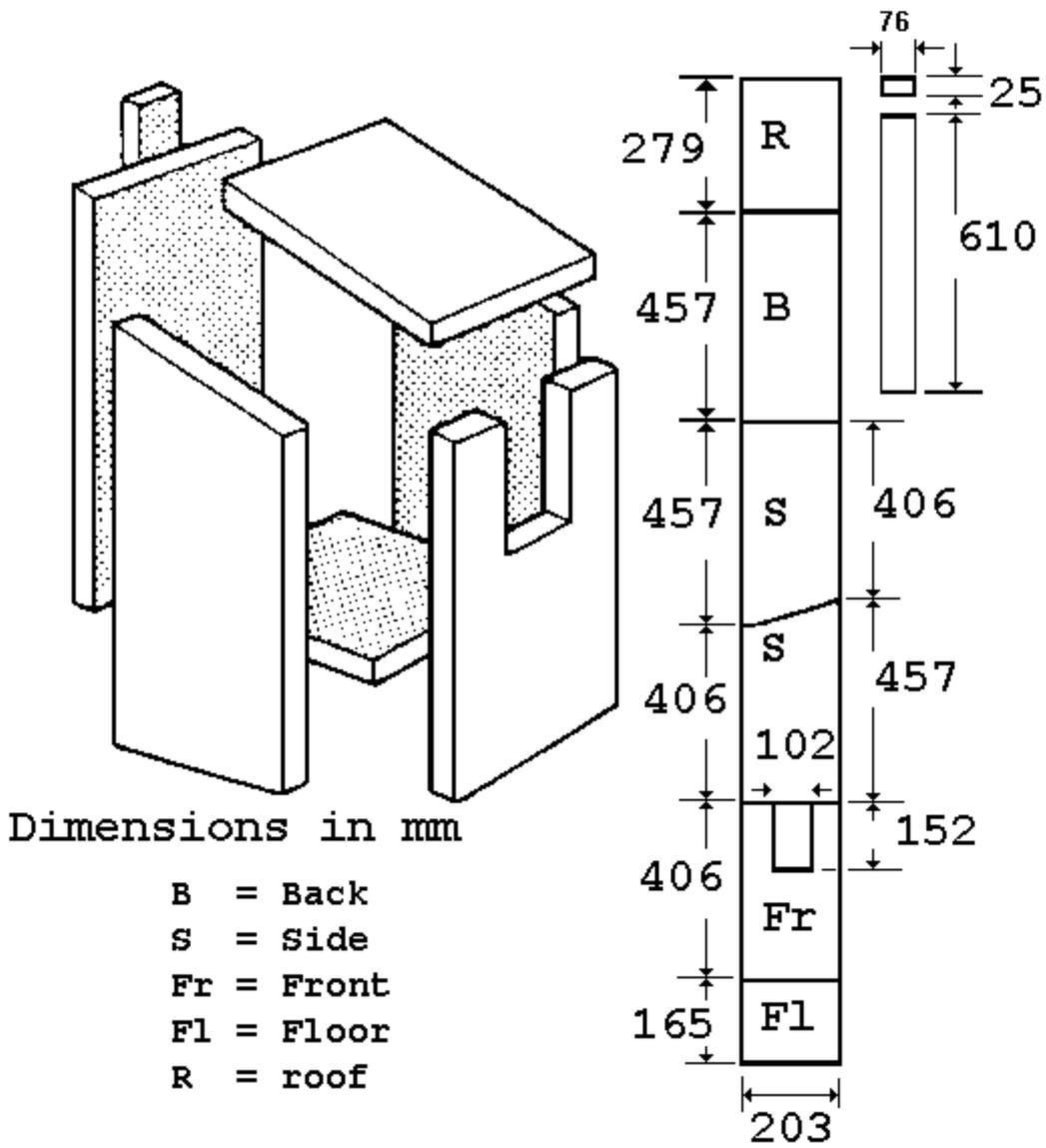
Consent must be obtained from the Environment & Heritage Service (EHS), DOE, before any works are carried out within or along an ASSI boundary. The EHS contact telephone no. for further information is 028 9054 6595.

DIAGRAM 1



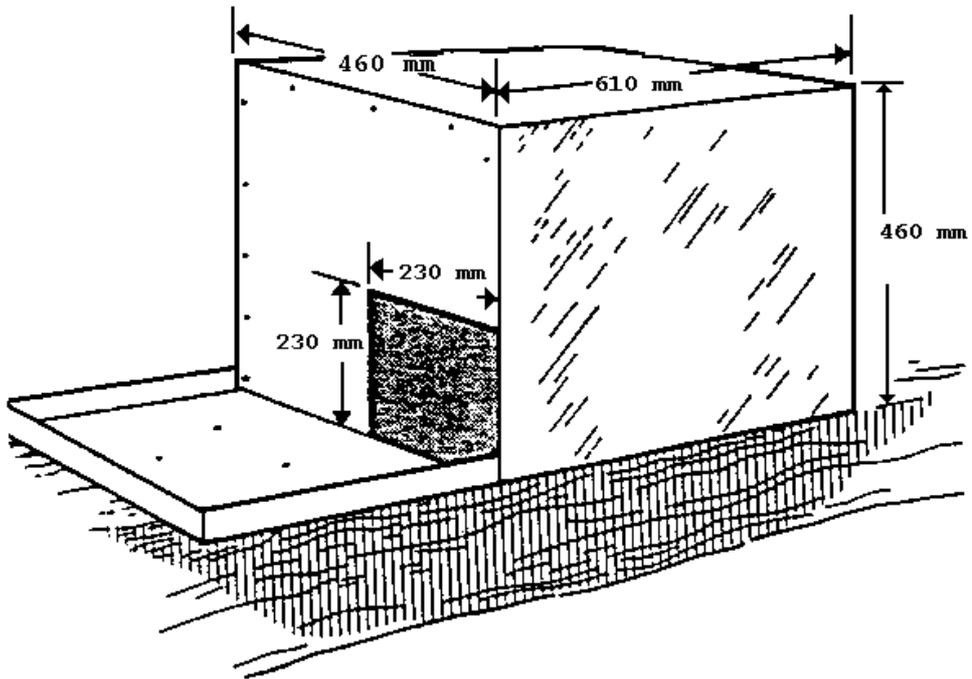
Small bird nest box

DIAGRAM 2



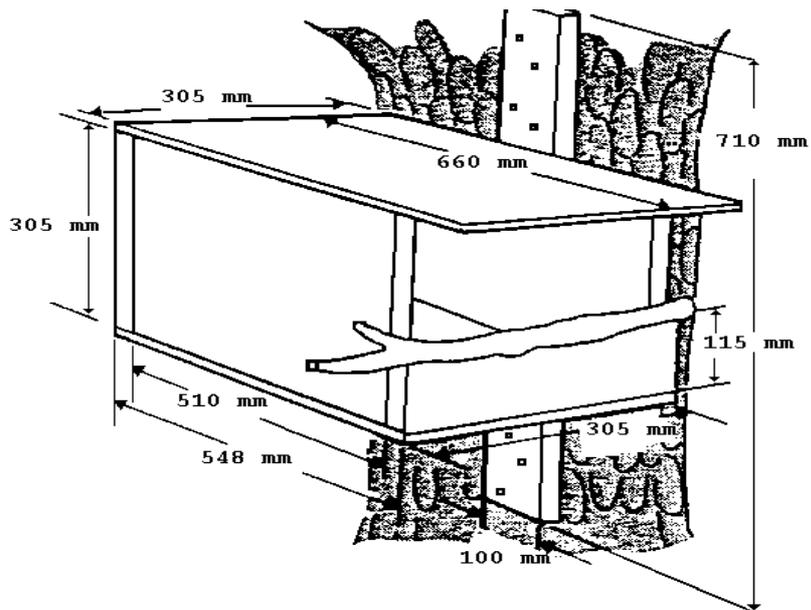
Large bird nest box

DIAGRAM 3



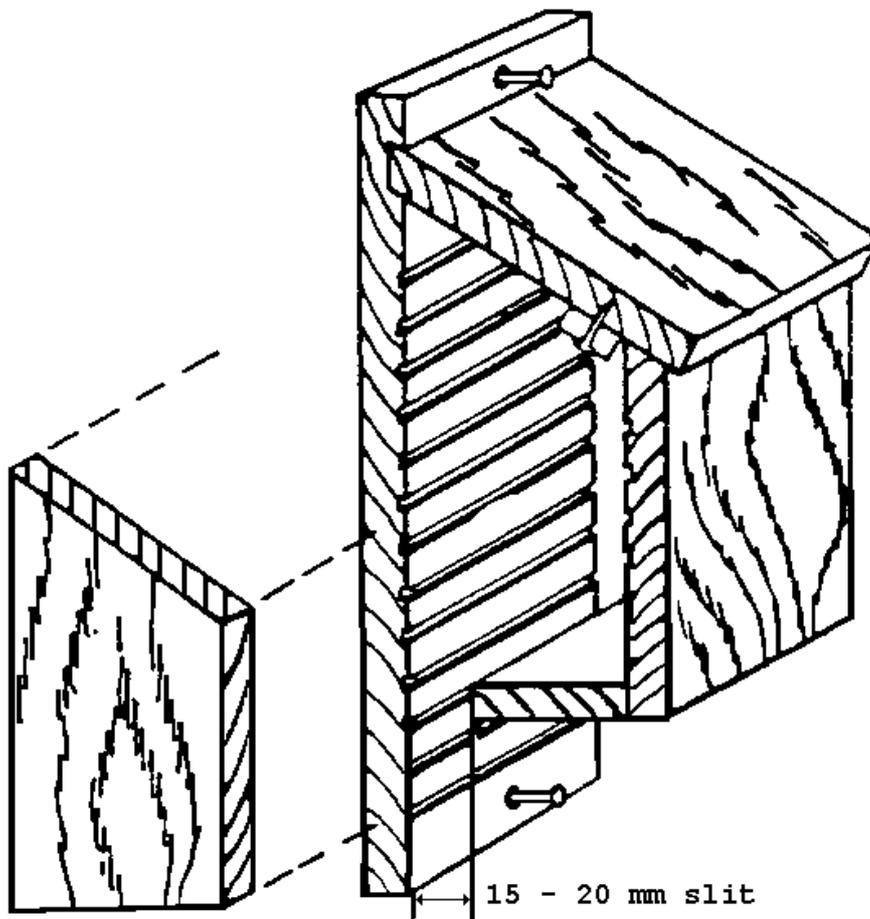
Barn owl box

DIAGRAM 4



Kestrel box

DIAGRAM 5



Bat box

Information sheets are provided for participants in the Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Management Schemes

