



Drive Carefully & Conserve our Owls !!

Owls are misunderstood and persecuted because of folklore and strange beliefs. They are the best rodent managers on earth, and are of incredible value to our farmers and home owners. Road kills appear to take out vast numbers of owls, and your careful night driving may alleviate this tragedy.

WHY SHOULD WE CONSERVE OWLS ?

Owls are very beneficial animals. One pair of Barn Owls eats 3000 mice per year, which in turn eat 10 tons of grain in one year.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR THREATS TO OWLS ?

The main causes of owl mortalities are road kills and the irresponsible use of poisons. Owls are being killed on certain roads at an alarming rate.

Rats and mice may reach pest proportions when the ecosystem becomes unbalanced. Uniformed people unfortunately use poison which affects more than the target - often owls get killed inadvertently when the wrong posion is used to kill rodents !

Roadside verges are a major habitat for young owls, especially where grassland is lacking on adjacent farmland. The use of this habitat often leads to collisions with passing vehicles.

OWLS AND OTHER THREATS

We are fortunate in South Africa to have representative species of both owl groups:

The **Tytonid** owls include the:

1. Barn Owl
2. Grass Owl

The **Strigid** owls are represented by the:

1. Spotted Eagle Owl
2. Cape Eagle Owl
3. Gaint Eagle Owl
4. Pel's Fishing Owl
5. Wood Owl
6. March Owl
7. Whitefaced Owl
8. African Scops Owl
9. Pearsponsored Owl
10. Barred Owl

The Grass Owl is the most threatened, and is classified as "Vulnerable" in the Eskom Red Data Book - Birds. Veld fires and loss of habitat to agriculture are the most significant factors leading to their demise.

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