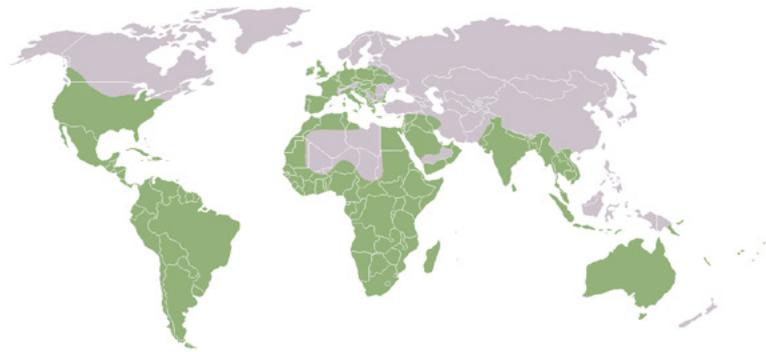


# Coexisting with **OWLS**



*Combined distribution of three species of barn owls*

## Nocturnal and mostly solitary

Owls sleep during the day and come out to **hunt at night**. Barn owls may live in small family groups but most owl species in Malawi **live alone**. Owls eat rats, mice, insects, and sometimes small birds.

## Owls are a part of a healthy ecosystem

If you have an owl in your garden or around your house, it means your yard is **sustaining life**. Owls **eat rodents** that may otherwise be coming into your house.

Owls may have a problematic reputation, but it is all a bit unfair, really. Owls are not aggressive and they play a very important role in the ecosystem, helping control pests around our homes and farms.

## Usually shy and not aggressive

While owls have a sharp beak and talons, they are only dangerous to the rodents that they hunt for food. They **do not attack** humans and would prefer to avoid people.

## Global distribution

Barn owls, like the ones commonly found around Lilongwe, are found on every continent except Antarctica. This makes them one of the world's most **widely distributed** animals!

## Surprising tenants

Barn owls can often be found living in **old buildings**, like barns and storage sheds, giving them their name. They are also perfectly at home living in urban areas, unlike other owl species.

# Ways to live happily with **OWLS**



## **Block access to roof and attic spaces**

Owls will take the opportunity to nest anywhere dark and warm. This makes roof cavities the perfect home. To ensure they don't decide to nest in your roof, block all access holes.

## **Avoid using rat baits**

If you see owls living around your home there is no need for rat baits and poisons. The average barn owl family can eat 1,300 rats per year!

## **Protect trees**

Owls need trees to survive. If we plant trees around our homes and look after existing trees, owls will have no reason to seek shelter in roofs.

## **Help out fledglings**

When owls are first learning to fly, they are clumsy and unskilled. During this stage they may spend time on the ground under their home tree. The parent birds will still be around and feeding them. The best thing you can do is give the new family space and keep domestic pets away.

If the little owl is in a risky spot you can gently place it in the lower branches of the tree. Watch from afar once dusk falls. If you see the parent birds return then the chick is safe. If no parent birds are in sight and the chick is in danger, please call the Wildlife Rescue hotline below.

**Owls are a protected species under Malawi's National Parks and Wildlife Act.**