



**Owls in agroecosystems: how can they help in conserving biodiversity?**

**In association with Anahi Formoso,  
PhD (IPEEC CONICET)**

**by Vitor Zanelatto**

**Report 2 of 3**



## Report 2

The days of work with the specialist Anahi Formoso were mainly dedicated to field visits in the region of Trelew (Chubut Province, Patagonia, Argentina), in search of individuals of the three species of owl that can be found in this region: *Bubo magellanicus*; *Athene cunicularia* and *Tyto alba*. None of the species are threatened with extinction, according to the IUCN Red List.

Rhodri Hall made the photographic records, documenting the landscapes and habitats of the pairs of owls found, all in anthropized areas, mostly dedicated to rural economic activities, such as fruit production and livestock activity. Another peculiarity of the region is the existence of artificial channels for the irrigation of the plantations on the properties, which can pose a risk to the homes of the owls that dig shelter in the ground.

I also interviewed two landowners who operate in the region: Brian Nicolas D'Angelo and Adrian Davies. The former is dedicating efforts to transform the property to an agroecological production model, while the latter uses the land for the production of plant species that serve as feed for livestock.

Both interviewees said that they perceive a positive impact of owls, especially through the control of rodent populations through predation, which represents a minimum knowledge about the ecosystem services that owls perform. They also said that there are no negative impacts of the owl's presence in areas of human activities. The two also agreed when asked if the owl population is increasing, decreasing, or stable in the region: they said that apparently the population has been declining in recent years.

It is necessary to note that the interviewees maintain a relationship of dialogue with researchers from IPEEC CONICET, which helps to explain the recognition of owls as important animals for the balance of the ecosystem and also the access of our team to the property, as well as the acceptance to carry out the interviews.

Another important aspect perceived in the field activities was the behavior of the owls, apparently accustomed to human presence, indifferent to the approach of people and photographic equipment, an impact of the anthropization of environments and the constant presence of activities with great disturbances to the natural characteristics of the space.



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