



for birds  
for people  
for ever

The RSPB newsletter  
for agricultural projects

# FIELD OF VIEW

ISSUE 4 NOVEMBER 2005



Tree sparrow: David Tolliday, inset: Deborah Hanlon (RSPB)

**Inset: Peter Watson from the Cam Valley Wildlife Group, farmer John Wyatt, Mia Misso from the RSPB and volunteer Brian Roberts-Wray next to the ash tree that supports up to seven pairs of tree sparrows (main image)**

## Tree sparrows thrive on North East Somerset farm

**It was not until John Wyatt decided to have a bird survey on his mixed organic farm that he discovered it was a stronghold for tree sparrows in North East Somerset.**

John had been curious about the birds on his farm but was unable to recognise some species, so invited the RSPB to carry out a Volunteer & Farmer Alliance (V&FA) survey. The results have delighted everyone involved.

Volunteer Brian Roberts-Wray discovered five natural nest sites for tree sparrows. One ash tree alone (above) supported up to seven pairs. It was such an important find that RSPB Wessex farmland bird project officer, Mia Misso, became involved, with the help of Peter Watson from the Cam Valley Wildlife Group, to ensure the survival of the colony. Nestboxes were placed around the farm.

Tree sparrows were once common on British farms, but declined by 94% between 1970 and 2001. The tree sparrow can be easily distinguished from the house sparrow by its chestnut crown and black cheek patches.

Further surveys this year showed that the number of natural nest sites had risen to 14 and the nestboxes, regularly checked by Mia, were being used, with many of the birds successfully raising two broods.

John's traditional mixed farming methods have helped ensure the tree sparrow's survival. The old ash and oak trees in the hedgerows provide natural nest holes, cereals are grown to produce organic feed for the dairy herd and the feeding mangers are outdoors, providing abundant food for tree sparrows. Twice a day, the cattle follow corridors along the field side of the hedgerow, leaving dung rich in insects, ideal for feeding chicks.

John and his family have been farming here for 35 years. Without realising it, they are making a big difference for wildlife. Their way of farming provides nest sites and ensures plenty of food all year for the tree sparrow and species such as the linnet, skylark and yellowhammer.

For more information, e-mail [deborah.hanlon@rspb.org.uk](mailto:deborah.hanlon@rspb.org.uk)

### ***In this issue:***

Sign up for the farming e-newsletter • Buntings in oilseed rape • Monmouthshire turtle dove project • A new champion for lapwings • Local food goes down a storm • Environmental Stewardship • RSPB Hope Farm



Subscribe free to the farming e-newsletter now to find out what you can do for grey partridges

## Sign up for the farming e-newsletter

The RSPB's free quarterly farming e-newsletter is for anyone who cares about farming and the countryside. To subscribe, simply visit [www.rspb.org.uk/farming](http://www.rspb.org.uk/farming) and click on RSPB Plus.

With the changes to the EU agricultural policy still waiting to be finalised and ongoing debates about how the farming pot should be allocated, it is hardly surprising that we are left feeling confused. The e-newsletter can provide some clarity.

The farming e-newsletter offers advice to farmers on how they can farm for wildlife and get paid to do so. It also reports on the latest news from the agricultural policy arena, informing farmers about important decisions that will affect them. In addition, the e-newsletter is a new way of sharing what we have learned through our work with farmers and our arable farm in Cambridgeshire. There are also plenty of opportunities for farmers to share their own experiences.

It is possible to run a successful farming business and help reverse the decline in birds and other wildlife. For ideas on how, subscribe to the farming e-newsletter.

## A new handbook on management to help farmland birds

The RSPB has produced *A management guide to birds of lowland farmland*, which covers the requirements and practical conservation of farmland birds on lowland throughout the UK.

The handbook looks at how changes in farming have affected bird populations and practical measures that can be used to conserve species in modern farming systems. It will be of value to anyone involved with wildlife conservation on farmland, including farm conservation advisers, project officers and farmers or agents who are looking to get the best for wildlife from the use of agri-environment schemes. It draws on scientific research into farmland bird ecology and the experience from a wide range of advisers on practical measures that have been adopted throughout the UK.

It is available for £19.99, plus £4.95 p&p, from the RSPB. If you would like a copy, please e-mail [st.admin@rspb.org.uk](mailto:st.admin@rspb.org.uk) or telephone 01234 211522.





More than 200 farmers took part in Operation Lapwing this year

## A new champion for lapwings

**A Lancashire farmer, who dramatically increased the number of lapwings on his farm, has been presented with the RSPB's Lapwing Champion award and £1,000 for his achievements for conservation.** Simon Stott faced stiff competition from more than 200 farmers who took part in Operation Lapwing.

Simon runs an upland family farm with suckler cows and milk sheep, near Chipping in Lancashire. The family milk around 300 sheep, with the milk entering the sheep's cheese markets.

Simon has created the ideal breeding habitat for lapwings by managing fields that were infested with rushes and creating several scrapes to provide important insect-rich feeding areas for adults and chicks in the spring. He has also put some of his higher altitude land that is most appropriate for waders into Countryside Stewardship.

The judges, Gethin Davies from the RSPB and Roly Puzey from Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), were particularly impressed with Mr Stott's efforts to explain rush management to so many other farmers during demonstration events.

The judges awarded the second prize of £500 to Mr Munns who has an arable farm near Chatteris in Cambridgeshire. Mr Munns now has breeding lapwings in double figures, despite none being present when he first took ownership of the farm. The lapwings breed on set-aside land, following sugar beet. The set-aside is

specifically managed to provide the sparse vegetation and bare ground that breeding lapwings favour. He has also provided high quality feeding areas for chicks by adapting an old ditch to create a 2 ha wetland.

More than 150 pairs of lapwings bred on the six regional winning farms this year. Each of the farmers had an excellent knowledge of how their farming system benefited breeding lapwings. The other regional Lapwing Champion winners were: Mr Edmunds (Southern), Mr Robb (Scotland), Mr Edgar (Northern Ireland) and Mr Anthony (Wales).

We announced the winners at the Royal Show and celebrated the achievements of the farmers who had entered the competition, which is part of Operation Lapwing. The project is sponsored by Jordans Cereals. Both the RSPB and Jordans are delighted to be working together to promote wildlife-friendly farming techniques – an interest that lies at the heart of both organisations.

If you are a farmer and would like to enter the 2006 Lapwing Champion competition, the closing date is 17 March 2006. The winner will receive £1,000 and second and third place £500 and £250 respectively. The remaining regional champions will also receive £200 each. The RSPB has also produced a lapwing management pack for farmers who would like to help lapwings on their farms. For more information, please e-mail [lapwings@rspb.org.uk](mailto:lapwings@rspb.org.uk) or telephone **01767 680551**.

# Down on the farm



David Tolliday

## Breeding birds continue to soar

This year has been another success for breeding birds at Hope Farm – the RSPB's 181 ha arable farm in Cambridgeshire. Measured using the Farmland Bird Index, a nationally recognised measure of breeding bird trends on farmland, the population has increased by a massive 56% in the six years since we bought the farm. Not only has there been a continued increase in skylark numbers, now up to 34 pairs (from 10 in 2000), but yellowhammer numbers have risen to 28 pairs (from 14 in 2000), linnet numbers are up to 16 pairs (from 6 in 2000) and there are now three pairs of grey partridges.

Many other species besides these will have benefited from the provision of habitats, such as wildbird cover and pollen and nectar mixes, under the new Entry Level Scheme as well as our trial work, which is looking at providing essential nesting and feeding requirements.

## Getting the harvest in

The harvest at Hope Farm was completed with mixed results. This year we grew both wheat and oilseed rape. Wheat yields were fairly consistent across the farm, with first wheats yielding c10t/ha (c4t/acre) and second wheats a respectable 8.8t/ha (3.56t/acre).

The oilseed rape yielded 2.5t/ha (1t/acre), which is lower than previous yields. However, it was established by autocasting this year rather than drilling. This involved broadcasting the oilseed rape seed into the previous standing wheat field last autumn and using the straw to cover the seed and provide a mulch. Although some fields grew a fairly uniform crop, others were more gappy with bare areas. Despite this, we saved over £120 per ha by growing the crop this way, which meant our net return from the crop was consistent with other years. The environmental benefits of retaining the stubble over winter (rather than ploughing it in) mean that we will continue growing oilseed rape this way.

## Seeing is believing

More than 1,000 farmers and farm advisers have visited the farm this year. They will have seen how growing good crops and smart deployment of agri-environment options has helped the farm continue to make a profit and help wildlife flourish. If you would like more information about Hope Farm, our open days or more detailed farm accounts, please e-mail [darren.moorcroft@rspb.org.uk](mailto:darren.moorcroft@rspb.org.uk)

Top: there are now 34 pairs of skylarks at the RSPB's arable farm in Cambridgeshire, middle: harvesting wheat at Hope Farm, bottom: Hope Farm aims to help farmers help wildlife



Darren Moorcroft (RSPB)



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

# Buntings in oilseed rape

**It is thought that reed buntings are choosing to nest in oilseed rape (OSR) and, thanks to V&FA data, RSPB research staff have been investigating the theory.**

Because the V&FA operates across the UK, the available information on reed bunting association with crops provides an ideal dataset from which to undertake preliminary research.

The data relating to territorial reed buntings in 2002 has been analysed and identification of the region within which they occurred enables a comparison of the occupation of OSR by reed buntings on a geographical scale.

In north-west England, 30% of all reed bunting observations were in OSR compared with 17.5% in winter cereal and 5% in set-aside. In the north of England, OSR contained almost ten times the number of reed buntings compared with the other crops studied; 15% OSR compared to 1.7% for both winter wheat and set-aside. In central and southern England, winter wheat was favoured over OSR; 18% winter wheat to 11% OSR and 11% winter wheat to 6% OSR respectively. In eastern England, reed buntings were typically associated with drainage ditches and wet boundaries between arable fields, with only 4% of observations in OSR.

The scientific paper that was written using this V&FA data was based on a long-term study of reed bunting ecology by the RSPB in the Trent Valley, Nottinghamshire. For more information, please e-mail [derek.guar@rspb.org.uk](mailto:derek.guar@rspb.org.uk)



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

**V&FA surveys confirm that reed buntings can favour oilseed rape**

# Monmouthshire turtle dove project underway

**The future for turtle doves in Wales looks brighter, thanks to a Sustainable Development Fund grant from the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to run an 18-month project to assess the status of the species.**

Turtle doves were once widespread across Wales, but since the 1970s they have declined in both numbers and range and are now confined to a small part of Monmouthshire in Wales, where in 2004 only six pairs were thought to remain.

In Wales, turtle doves are found mainly in young conifer plantations. We worked with Forestry Commission Wales and the Wye Valley AONB to undertake a survey to establish current numbers of territorial pairs within the key area. We also provided supplementary food at two sites from May to July to help adults find food on their return from wintering grounds in Africa and studied the foraging behaviour of turtle doves in Monmouthshire.

Eight volunteers, some who had previously taken part in the V&FA, and two RSPB fieldworkers carried out surveys of 16 1-km squares in the core breeding area from May to July. After a slow start, surveyors reported numerous sightings of turtle doves in late June and early July, but many of these were likely to have been the

same birds seen on more than one occasion.

The results suggest that no more than four singing males were present in the core breeding area this season, although it was difficult to be certain due to the local movement of birds. We know of only one male that formed a pair with a female and strongly suspect that they nested, but have no evidence that they reared young.

A turtle dove regularly used the wheat grain that was put out as supplementary food at one of the feeding sites and adults were also seen feeding on chicken feed and food put out for pheasants in private gardens.

Next year we plan to survey more squares that have formerly been occupied by turtle doves, to continue supplementary feeding and to further the investigation into foraging behaviour, possibly by radio tracking.

A bilingual advisory sheet has been produced, which we hope will promote sympathetic management of hedgerows and farmland scrub to farmers and landowners in the area to benefit turtle doves.

For more information, please e-mail [debbie.scott@rspb.org.uk](mailto:debbie.scott@rspb.org.uk)



Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)

Farms with specialist birds, such as the stone-curlew, may be able to get funding from Higher Level Stewardship

## Something for everyone

**For nearly 20 years, grant funding has been available to farmers and land managers to benefit the environment. This has allowed for wildlife-friendly management through schemes such as Countryside Stewardship, the Rural Stewardship Scheme and Tir Gofal.**

The way in which public funding supports agriculture has now changed radically, as subsidy payments are no longer dependent on what farmers produce. Most importantly for the wide range of bird species that depend on farming, a greater slice of this money is provided in return for management that benefits wildlife, and this slice is set to increase in the future.

Across the UK, an inclusive approach is being developed. In England, Scotland and Wales, a tiered approach has been adopted, represented by, for example, Environmental Stewardship in England and Land Management Contracts in Scotland. Within each hierarchy, a new tier of measures has been introduced that means, for the first time, all farmers are eligible to access funding. These are the Entry Level Scheme in England, the Land Management Contract Menu Scheme in Scotland and Tir Cynnal in Wales. We are working across the UK to ensure that maximum benefit to wildlife is provided by the funded options.

## The benefits of Environmental Stewardship

**In England, the new Environmental Stewardship scheme (ES) was launched in March 2004. Although beset by computer problems, which have delayed applications, we hope these will not detract from the opportunities that the scheme provides.**

ES is made up of three tiers. The Entry Level Scheme (ELS) and the Organic Entry Level Scheme (OELS) are available to all farmers and allow them to choose from a wealth of options. The RSPB, together with the University of Hertfordshire, Defra, English Nature, the Game Conservancy Trust and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, have developed a CD-ROM to help farmers choose the best options for wildlife on their farm. For a free copy, please e-mail [farm-advice@rspb.org.uk](mailto:farm-advice@rspb.org.uk) or call 01767 680551.

The third element is the Higher Level Scheme (HLS), which is aimed at farmers who have something, or the potential for something, really special on their farm. This might be catering for stone-curlews (above) or restoring a species-rich hay meadow. Before applying to HLS, farmers must arrange for a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) to be carried out on their farm to map all the environmental features.

Despite the teething problems that ES has experienced, this inclusive approach has the potential to make a real difference for wildlife. This signposts the way for future support of farming, and will help maintain the recent, encouraging trends for several farmland birds, and improve opportunities for others.

# Half of all farmers and crofters involved in Scottish scheme

This year saw the launch of the Land Management Contract Menu Scheme in Scotland, a new tier of agricultural support, complementing the existing Rural Stewardship Scheme. This is part of the development towards full Land Management Contracts in 2007.

The scheme contains a range of agri-environment options, including wild bird seed mix and retention of winter stubbles, alongside things such as membership of quality assurance schemes and animal health and welfare. We welcome the fact that agri-environment measures are available to all farmers on a non-competitive basis for the first time. The scheme is popular, with more than 10,000 applications – half of all farmers and crofters in Scotland.

However, with only a third of all the available money in the scheme going towards direct agri-environment work, there is concern that the conservation value of the scheme may be restricted. We will be publishing leaflets on how to make the most of the agri-environment options available through the Menu Scheme and we are working with the Government and others to improve and refine the environmental potential of the scheme. In the meantime, it is encouraging that of farms surveyed by V&FA in South and West Scotland this year, only 8% were not interested in the Menu Scheme.

For more information, please e-mail [mandy.gloyer@rspb.org.uk](mailto:mandy.gloyer@rspb.org.uk)

## A vision revisited

In 2002, the RSPB in Northern Ireland published a report, *Achieving the vision*, which highlighted the need for more money to be allocated to agri-environment schemes.

With modulated funds secured, maximising scheme potential is the next big target. With Northern Ireland targeting an impressive two-thirds of farmers in agri-environment schemes, we need to ensure that individual scheme agreements are of optimum quality.

At this year's Balmoral Show, we

launched a leaflet promoting the year-round requirements of farmland birds. This advocates enhanced option uptake, to ensure that each agreement provides year-round feeding and spring breeding habitat.

Encouraging the widespread uptake of options such as rough grass margins, conservation cereals and wader habitats in the Countryside Management Scheme is central to our current campaign.

Following a launch designed to remind the Government of its biodiversity commitments, the RSPB

has produced a document called *A living countryside*, which calls on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to review agreement quality, option uptake and administration, and ensure that public money brings about genuine environmental benefits.

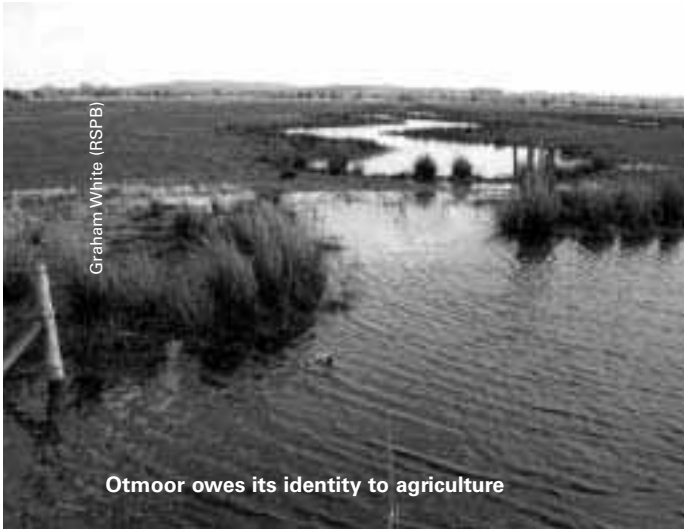
By offering recommendations on how to improve farm funding, the RSPB is once again at the front of the lobbying queue in Northern Ireland.

For more information, please e-mail [giles.knight@rspb.org.uk](mailto:giles.knight@rspb.org.uk)



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

The uptake of options such as rough grass margins is encouraged



Otmoor owes its identity to agriculture

## Otmoor – bogs, beasts and beautiful birds

The RSPB's Otmoor nature reserve, in the heart of the clay vales of Oxfordshire, has been shaped by farming activities for generations. The Romans may have tried to build a road across it, the Edwardians diverted a river around it and motorway developers even tried to put the M40 through it. However, it is the actions of generations of local farmers that have had the most profound effect on this ancient landscape and the wildlife it supports.

Now, a new generation of conservationists are carrying on with this tradition for future generations to enjoy.

Otmoor is as renowned for tales of beasts and ghouls as it is for lapwings and curlews. With less than half a metre of topsoil lying above 100 m of Oxford clay, it is hardly promising for the modern farmer, but it suits waders.

The RSPB began work at Otmoor in the 1990s, reverting pump-drained arable land of the 1960s to pasture and wet meadow. While the combines and crops have been swapped for cattle and grass, the constant theme is still agriculture.

For here is a true partnership between local farmers, who provide the locally-bred cattle to graze the sward to create ideal conditions for ground-nesting birds, and the reserve wardens who control water levels and carry out intensive monitoring of the birds' breeding success. What a success it is, because from just 10 pairs of breeding waders when the reserve was first established, numbers have soared and the reserve now hosts more than 100 pairs.

The RSPB has invested a large amount of time, money and effort to make the reserve such a success, but what is clear is that farming underpins this success story.

If you listen carefully, above the calls of the cows and calves grazing the moor on a moonlit night, you may just hear the cries of something strange and nocturnal. The beast of Otmoor may still be present in spirit, even if other beings of the feathered variety now rule the roost at this glorious reserve.

## The best wildlife conservation information for farmers

The RSPB, in partnership with a wide range of other conservation organisations throughout the UK, has developed a new website for farmers and advisers called [www.farmwildlife.info](http://www.farmwildlife.info)

There are three elements to the site: a discussion forum, a file of farm case studies and a library of information.

The discussion forum will allow farmers and advisers to ask questions about how to manage habitats or conserve species, or to post ideas based on their own experiences. Messages will also be posted from conservation organisations giving details of the latest developments on how to help farm wildlife.

The case studies will feature good habitat management on farms, allowing farmers to learn from the

experiences of others to then provide the best habitats possible. If you have habitat features that you are particularly proud of, and you could explain to others how these habitats are created and managed, please e-mail [richard.winspear@rspb.org.uk](mailto:richard.winspear@rspb.org.uk) to produce a case study for this website.

The library of information will have links to other websites with the best information available on a wide range of subjects, from how to join an agri-environment scheme to how to help butterflies such as the chalkhill blue (left), on your farm.



Chalkhill blue



# Local food goes down a storm

## The issue of food miles was a hot topic this summer.

Few weeks passed without a story getting mileage in the national media. A report from Defra, *The validity of food miles as an indicator of sustainable development*, published in July, cited a dramatic rise in food miles over the last 10 years as a significant and growing factor in climate change, noise and air pollution, traffic congestion and road accidents. The report highlighted that:

- the annual estimated social and environmental cost of food transport is around £9 billion, with more than half the costs due to road congestion
- food transport accounts for 25% of all heavy goods vehicle (HGV) kilometres in the UK
- factors driving the rise in food miles include increased global trade, concentration of power in the hands of supermarkets with centralised systems of distribution, greater car use to shop, particularly in urban areas, and a rise in packaging and processing
- consumers travel an average of 136 miles each by car to shop for food annually
- the quantity of food transported by HGVs has doubled since 1974
- 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide was produced by food transport in 2002.

With this in mind, staff in Central England decided to cater for V&FA thank-you events by providing ploughman's lunches consisting entirely of produce from local farmers' markets, farm shops and independent specialist stores. For one event, held at Rutland Water, the farmers' market at Melton Mowbray was used extensively, with all the cheese made at the local Long Clawson dairy, the bread made from flour milled at Whissendine Mill and the soft fruits and salad vegetables grown and sold by a co-operative of three local farmers. Local apple juice was served as the refreshment, each bottle labelled with the variety of apple used.

Feedback from guests made it clear that the effort involved in providing this lunch had done much to enhance our reputation and the enjoyment of the events by farmers and volunteers alike. At £3.10 per person, it also demonstrated that local produce (including some organic items) does not have to be expensive. We have extended the use of local food at V&FA events across the UK and would welcome any feedback that you have on this subject.

However, the issue is far more complex than simply the distance travelled by our food before it reaches the table and includes production methods and seasonality. As Tim Lang, professor of food policy at London's City University and creator of the phrase 'food miles', stated in *The Guardian*, 'This report confirms that our so-called efficient food supply system is grossly wasteful.'



A V&FA thank you event, where we served locally-grown food

If the Government doesn't take action to tackle this, all its proposals on climate change will be so much nonsense.'

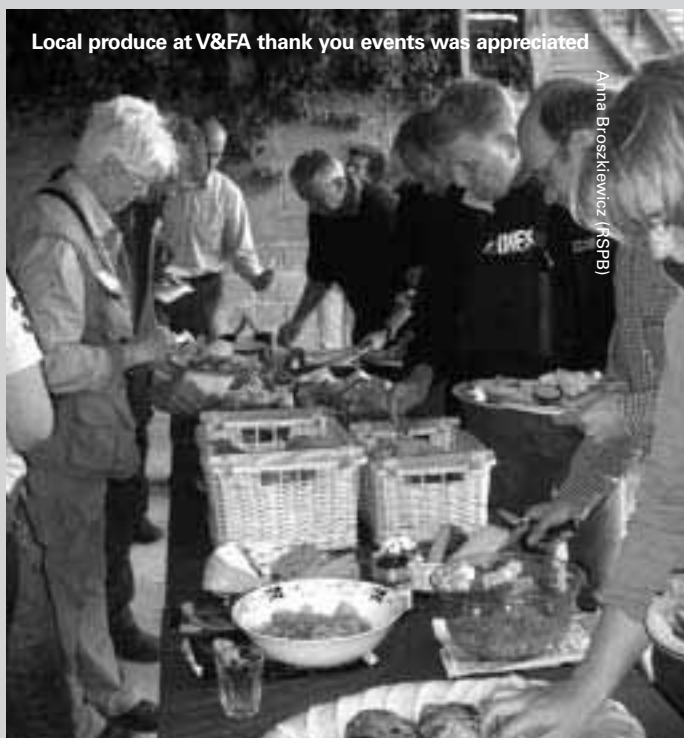
For more information, please e-mail [anna.broszkiewicz@rspb.org.uk](mailto:anna.broszkiewicz@rspb.org.uk) or visit:

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

[www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)

[www.bigbarn.co.uk](http://www.bigbarn.co.uk)

[www.local-food.net](http://www.local-food.net)



Local produce at V&FA thank you events was appreciated

David Tolliday

Mark Hamblin (rspb-images.com)



The greenfinch (above) was the fifth most common species in the 2005 Big Garden Birdwatch. The starling (left) has seen a 71% decline in numbers since 1979

## Big Garden Birdwatch a success

**A total of 392,000 people watched their garden or school grounds for an hour in January 2005. The RSPB's biggest event proved once again that people love their garden birds.**

More than 6.7 million bird records were submitted and from this we have been able to calculate which species were most commonly seen and more importantly work out whether individual species have increased or decreased in numbers.

Since the survey began in 1979, house sparrows and starlings have been the most common species. However, despite being the most common of species, the numbers recorded each year are fewer and fewer. The house

sparrow population has declined by 52% and the starling population by 71%.

This information identifies those species in need of help and allows the RSPB to prioritise its work. We can then respond by undertaking detailed research leading to measures that we hope will reverse these declines. At the moment, there is much concern about house sparrows and a great deal of work is taking place to determine quite what it is that this much-loved bird needs.

The 2006 Big Garden Birdwatch takes place on the weekend of 28–29 January. Everyone who has previously taken part will be sent a form automatically. You can also take part online by visiting [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)

## Hollie's efforts bear lots of fruit

**Warwickshire college student Hollie Byrne has been stretching her wings this summer by spending three months working on the V&FA in Central England.** Hollie is studying for her National Diploma in

Countryside Management and her work placement with the RSPB has meant that she has learned a lot about birds and survey techniques, not to mention becoming rather adept at using Geographical

Information System software. Her help has been absolutely crucial to the V&FA this season and we wish her all the best as she continues with her academic studies.



Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Nearly all farmers were satisfied with the V&FA

## What farmers think of the V&FA...

The questionnaires sent out to farmers continue to provide vital feedback on customer satisfaction and project success. We now have information from 835 questionnaires, which is a response rate of over 45%. The responses from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, where the V&FA began in 2002, comprise nearly a quarter of these.

The analysis of the data shows that:

- 99.9% of farmers felt that taking part in the V&FA was a worthwhile experience

- 99% of farmers found the laminated survey map useful, with almost 80% finding it very useful
- 93.9% of farmers had put into practice farmland bird management guidelines that accompanied the map, and more than 40% had done so frequently
- 82.8% of farmers had at least a few species on their farm that they had not previously been aware of
- 68% of farmers are in an agri-environment scheme
- 61.5% of farmers are more likely to be involved with other RSPB initiatives following the V&FA survey.

## ...and what our volunteers have to say

Did you know that 2005 was the Year of the Volunteer, celebrating the amazing work that volunteers do and a call to encourage more to volunteer?

May was nominated as the month to make space for wildlife and people. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) worked with partners, including the RSPB, on a programme of activities and events to suit everyone. Throughout May, more than 500 farms were surveyed by the V&FA.

The questionnaires sent out to volunteers last year showed that:

- 97% were satisfied with the level of support they received from project staff

- 95% thought the maps that were provided for their fieldwork were suitable
- 94% enjoyed participating in the project, either a great deal or a fair amount
- 88% were pleased with the V&FA training that they received.

All the staff involved in the project would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has volunteered their time, commitment and enthusiasm to the project, whether it is survey work or those who help with administration and data entry.

# Working for birds

We produced a new display for the Royal Show this year (right) to demonstrate how farmers and the RSPB can work together to benefit farmland birds.

We would like to thank farmers Edward Cross from Norfolk, Einion Davies from Denbighshire, David Knox from North Antrim and Alastair MacLennan from Speyside for their enthusiasm and allowing us to use them as case studies on the display.

The display promotes the achievements of the work we all undertake and will be used at other shows across the UK.



If you farm and would like to help in future work promoting how farmers and the RSPB can work together,

please contact local project staff – see the contacts below.

## Keeping you informed

The RSPB has names and addresses of farmers and volunteers who have participated in agricultural projects. This information, and other details that you have given us in connection with each project, is held by the RSPB's regional and country offices on paper and computer. All details are kept confidential.

We will **not** make your name, address or any other information available to external organisations without your permission. Through projects such as the V&FA and Operation Lapwing, the RSPB is continually finding new ways to help farmers conserve wildlife. We may wish to contact you from time to time with such information. If you prefer **not** to receive this newsletter and/or any other information, please contact project staff in your area – contact details below.

### Please contact V&FA project staff at the following RSPB offices:

**UK Headquarters** The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL Tel: 01767 680551

**Central England Regional Office (CERO)** 46The Green, South Bar, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9AB  
Tel: 01295 253330

**Eastern England Regional Office (EERO)** Stalham House, 65 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1UD  
Tel: 01603 661662

**North England Regional Office (NERO)** 1 Sirius House, Amethyst Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YL Tel: 0191 256 8200

**North West England Regional Office (NWRO)** Westleigh Mews, Wakefield Road, Denby Dale, Huddersfield HD8 8QD Tel: 01484 861148

**South East England Regional Office (SERO)** 2nd Floor, Frederick House, 42 Frederick Place, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4EA Tel: 01273 775333

**South West England Regional Office (SWRO)** Keble House, Southernhay Gardens, Exeter, Devon EX1 1NT Tel: 01392 432691

**Northern Ireland Headquarters** Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast BT8 7QT Tel: 028 9049 1547

**East Scotland Regional Office (ESRO)** 10 Albyn Terrace, Aberdeen AB10 1YP Tel: 01224 624824

**S and W Scotland Regional Office (SWSRO)** 10 Park Quadrant, Glasgow G3 6BS Tel: 0141 331 0993

**North Wales Office** Maes y Ffynnon, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DW Tel: 01248 363800

## GET MORE INFO

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

or e-mail: [v&fa@rspb.org.uk](mailto:v&fa@rspb.org.uk)



The RSPB is the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and wildlife, helping to create a better world for us all. We belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

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