



for birds  
for people  
for ever

The RSPB newsletter  
for agricultural projects

# FIELD OF VIEW

ISSUE 5 NOVEMBER 2006

A typical grassland  
system in Sweden.



Mark Thomas (RSPB)

## The Volunteer & Farmer Alliance moves further afield

**Following detailed discussions with RSPB staff and a trip to Sweden, the equivalent of the Volunteer & Farmer Alliance (V&FA) has successfully been exported.**

A collaborative approach, involving Sweden's Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, the Swedish Ornithological Society, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish University of Agriculture, resulted in a pilot study operating in the south of the country in 2006 with 11 farms being surveyed.

The farming community in Sweden has been very enthusiastic about the project, and volunteers were readily found to undertake the surveys. Each volunteer surveyed 100 hectares between May and June, with positive relationships established between the volunteers and the farmers. All the maps have been produced and the reports completed. These will be sent to the farmers together with a guide on species-specific conservation measures and advice to support the implementation of any such measures.

A study has simultaneously taken place to investigate how the volunteers and farmers communicated environmental issues within the framework of the project. The results of this will be presented at a meeting next year involving all the farmers and volunteers that participated. This will attempt to identify problems and discuss possible solutions to improve the project.

An application for funding to undertake a larger-scale project similar to that of the V&FA in the UK is being written. However, the two projects will differ; our associates in Sweden aim to monitor the farms over several years to study the effects of conservation measures on farmland birds, involving approximately 40 new farms each year.

The project staff from both countries continue to liaise with each other and any support the RSPB can give will be readily provided.

**For further details, please e-mail [jenny.atkins@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jenny.atkins@rspb.org.uk)**

**In this issue: Grand lapwing champions • Putting birds on the curriculum • Scottish corn bunting intervention • Cereal breeders • Survey soars higher • Friends reunited**

# Grand lapwing champions

**Although clearly delighted to have won the Lapwing Champion competition in Scotland, Angela and Alex McColl of Loig Farm in Perthshire were ecstatic to then go on to become UK Lapwing Champions in 2006 and receive more than £1,000 in prize money.**

With presentations at the Royal Highland Show in June and then the Royal Show in July, the McColls have also been very happy to promote lapwing-friendly farming.

More than 200 farmers took part in Operation Lapwing in 2006 and at least 145 pairs of lapwings bred on the six regional winning farms. Five of these were mixed farms; providing an ideal management system for lapwings. This includes the provision of over-winter stubbles followed by spring cropping or spring fallow, the creation of wetland, extensive grazing regimes, pollen and nectar mixes, grass margins, reduced field operations, nest marking and nest avoidance.

However, it was their efforts to restore both wetland and wet grassland within a previously drained area of flood plain that won the McColls the UK award. Because of their work, within a mixed organic enterprise, the farm now boasts 20 pairs of lapwings compared to just one pair in 2000.

The judges were Jim Densham from the RSPB and Bill Jordan from Jordans Cereals. While each of the six regional finalists received £200 and a plaque, John Harrison and his daughter Ruth Russell from North Yorkshire came second and received an additional £500, and Nick Rowsell from Hampshire came third and received an extra £250 in prize money. The other regional finalists were: Sir Richard Sutton (Midlands), Nigel Millar (Northern Ireland) and Mr and Mrs Kehoe (Wales).

The project is sponsored by Jordans Cereals. Both the RSPB and Jordans are delighted to be working together to promote wildlife-friendly farming techniques.

The RSPB has produced a lapwing management pack for farmers who would like to help lapwings on their farms. If you are a farmer and would like to enter the 2007 Lapwing Champion competition, the closing date is 16 March 2007. The winner will receive £1,000, with second and third place receiving £500 and £250 respectively. All the regional champions will receive £200 each.

**For more information, please e-mail [lapwings@rspb.org.uk](mailto:lapwings@rspb.org.uk) or telephone 01767 680551.**



Angela and Alex McColl with Bill Jordan (left).

## RSPB and NFU conference

Earlier this year, delegates from the farming sector attended a joint conference held by the RSPB and NFU entitled 'Celebrations and Challenges: a new future for farming'. The conference focussed on the future of agriculture, and the potential for farmers and environmentalists to work together.

In attendance was Lord Rooker, who launched the next steps of the Government's Sustainable Farming and Food

Strategy. Other speakers represented the Treasury, EU Commission and Eden Project. The event concluded with the NFU President Peter Kendall and the RSPB Chief Executive Graham Wynne addressing the conference.

**For more details and a joint position statement from the RSPB and NFU visit:**

**[www.rspb.org.uk/countryside/farming/news](http://www.rspb.org.uk/countryside/farming/news)**

## Farm wildlife website

If you have not yet added [www.farmwildlife.info](http://www.farmwildlife.info) to your favourites, here is an update on what you are missing.

The website now features 22 case studies of farmers undertaking management options for the benefit of wildlife. There are also links to websites with advice on management for all farm wildlife taxa and the use of all agri-environment schemes within the UK. You can also get involved. Since the launch, the discussion forum has received over 300 posts on 120 topics.

**For more information, please e-mail [richard.winspear@rspb.org.uk](mailto:richard.winspear@rspb.org.uk)**

Great yellow bumblebee



Mark Gurney

## Putting birds on the curriculum

The RSPB has recently been working with two large, diverse and respected land based colleges – Myerscough College in Lancashire and Duchy College in Cornwall. Both have commercial college farms that are used in the syllabuses. The aim of the work has been to deliver farmland bird management within the farming operations of both colleges through the use of current agri-environment schemes and best practice methods. The colleges can then use this as a valuable teaching resource for a wide range of students. These practices will also be demonstrated to farmers through existing and new demonstration events.

Both colleges are in the process of submitting Entry Level Scheme applications, and there is potential for a Higher Level Scheme at Myerscough. It may also be possible to

pilot some research projects through the colleges. All of this will improve their standing and the delivery of sustainable agricultural practices.

Richard Griffith, Farm Manager of Duchy College, said, 'This has been an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to farmers and students various entry-level activities suitable in a wide range of situations. These will be of great benefit to the flora and fauna and maintain public perception of how farmers look after the environment. We are delighted to have guidance and work with the RSPB on this project.'

**For more details, please e-mail [gethin.davies@rspb.org.uk](mailto:gethin.davies@rspb.org.uk)**

# RSPB Cymru's Aren't Welsh birds brilliant! project

This year saw the culmination of the three-year Objective One funded Aren't Welsh birds brilliant! (AWBB) Project – an innovative project designed to enhance the conservation status of a number of farmland birds.

During the last three years:

- we have worked with more than 20 landowners in a variety of projects from sowing wild bird crops to managing winter stubbles. We also managed 34 plots amounting to 30 hectares of land for yellowhammers and tree sparrows. Winter food availability for seed-eating farmland birds has been identified as a key requirement in our project areas, and by providing arable options targeted at yellowhammers and tree sparrows, we hope to resolve this
- across Wales, staff and volunteers have put up 211 nestboxes for tree sparrows
- we have created or restored 1.5 km of hedge and traditional boundary

- we have provided supplementary winter food at 37 locations. At some sites, this grain has fed more than 60 yellowhammers and at others more than 20 tree sparrows throughout the winter
- volunteers have monitored most of the work. They have also carried out survey work, collectively walking 150 km across Wales each spring
- through our advisory team, we have provided technical advice to 1,150 landowners/managers and directly influenced 27 farm management plans to benefit priority species.

Though the Objective One funding for the project has finished, we hope to develop the relationships we have built with the landowners and continue to work with them into the future.

**For more information, please e-mail [lesley.cowhig@rspb.org.uk](mailto:lesley.cowhig@rspb.org.uk)**

## Scottish corn bunting intervention

**During 2006, an additional 10 farms were involved in our corn bunting intervention project – the Farmland Bird Lifeline. This takes the total number of farms managing habitats for corn buntings to 21.**

An area covering more than 100 hectares has been laid to late cut grass and is being managed as safe nesting habitat, and approximately 20 hectares each of wild bird cover, extensive cereals and late cut set-aside are also under agreements.

Early signs suggest it has been a successful breeding season for some birds, especially on project farms close to Inverness. There is a small, isolated population of 16 singing males in this area. Some of these birds have been attracted to our late cut grass fields and successfully fledged young.

The corn buntings on farms in Tayside and Fife nested in cereals and grass although in Aberdeenshire, when compared to previous years, fewer birds appear to have nested in grass. This may be related to weather conditions earlier in the year when grass growth was slow. Those birds that nested in late cut grass fields have successfully fledged young, however most used spring cereals during 2006.

This work is being monitored by RSPB staff and will continue for at least the next two years. The results will be translated into practical measures to be advocated in the development of agri-environment schemes in Scotland.

**For more information, please e-mail [hywel.maggs@rspb.org.uk](mailto:hywel.maggs@rspb.org.uk)**



Corn bunting

# DOWN ON HOPE FARM

## Wet features provide early success

Following approval from the Environment Agency, we created three wet features during the middle of February by broadening and constructing bunds in some of the watercourses and ditches on the farm. Through this, we hope to provide more feeding opportunities for a variety of species whilst assessing the abilities of the wet features to clean fertilisers and pesticides from watercourses.

The results so far have been extremely encouraging. During the very dry summer the features continued to hold water, attracting a range of insects including dragonflies, damselflies and midges, as well as a variety of farmland bird species including yellowhammers, linnets, yellow wagtails and reed buntings. Given the relatively cheap cost of installation, it is hoped that this will be another management technique, which, once identified at Hope Farm, could benefit farmers, wildlife and the wider public.



Chris Bailey (RSPB)

Wet feature in July.

## Record breeding year

This year has been the most successful breeding bird season at Hope Farm since we bought the farm in 1999.

Measured using the Farmland Bird Index, a nationally recognised measure of breeding bird trends on farmland, the population has increased by a massive 63% in the last seven years. The highlights from this year include breeding lapwings and grey partridges. Two lapwing chicks were seen on the two year set-aside field throughout June and a covey of grey partridge chicks were seen regularly in the autumn.

## New rotation: Reaping the rewards

Harvest at Hope Farm was completed in August with better than expected results and no additional drying costs. The yields for the first wheat were consistently higher compared to last year at 10.36 t/ha (4.16 t/acre) with the second wheat similar to last year at 8.70 t/ha (3.49 t/acre).

The yield from the oilseed rape, established using a broadcast method, was again disappointing at 2.4t/ha (0.97t/acre), but this is offset to some degree by the relatively low establishment costs. This year we also altered the rotation to include spring beans. The current four year rotation of wheat: spring beans: wheat: oilseed rape has a number of advantages because it allows us to leave more over-winter stubble, which helps farmland birds and maintains the profitability of the farm. Yield from the beans was 3.13 t/ha (1.25 t/acre).

Please find a poster leaflet enclosed with this newsletter.

**If you would like further information about the farm, our open days or more detailed farm accounts, please e-mail [chris.bailey@rspb.org.uk](mailto:chris.bailey@rspb.org.uk)**

## New handbook: Woodland management for birds

A significant number of woodland birds are declining in England, and some of these are declining dramatically. The causes of these declines are, to a large extent, thought to be linked to the changing nature of the character of England's woodlands in recent decades, including loss or changes to commercial markets and increases in deer populations. These have brought about a dramatic alteration in woodland structure and loss of foraging and nesting habitat.

This book, which is co-produced by the RSPB and Forestry Commission England, aims to provide practical guidance on management to benefit these species, that is integrated into wider woodland management. It reviews the ecology and habitat needs of important species, describes the changes in English woodland character and the known causes of the declines in woodland birds and discusses woodland management to help woodland birds.

The guide is softback, A4 and 90 pages long. It is available from the RSPB at £14.95 per copy + £2.00 p&p for 1-3 copies or £5.20 p&p for 4-10 copies.

If you would like a copy, please e-mail [st.admin@rspb.org.uk](mailto:st.admin@rspb.org.uk) or telephone 01234 211522.



Nigel Symes (RSPB)

The decline of woodland birds in England has been significant.



Yellowhammer

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

## Bird Aid

Several years of research have clarified whether the provision of supplementary winter food is associated with an increase in the breeding population of farmland birds the following year.

Bird Aid involved farmers at more than 100 sites across the UK, of which half agreed to provide winter seed for birds from October to March. This took place from 2000 to 2003 and the results indicate that breeding yellowhammer numbers increase in areas where they are fed through the winter on supplementary grain. It only works where fresh grain is provided regularly through the winter in an open location close to cover such as a thick hedgerow, on a part of the farm where yellowhammers otherwise breed.

When the feeding sites worked well and provided a good food supply that was found and used by yellowhammers, their local breeding population tended to show more positive population trends than where the food supply was irregular and/or not used.

This suggests that effective winter food provision can help to increase the breeding population of at least one red list farmland bird, and provides further support for adequate seed provision within agri-environment schemes.

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

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# Cereal breeders

**The yellow wagtail has significantly declined on grassland, and most of the UK population now breeds on arable land in eastern England. The RSPB and its partners funded a PhD to understand the ecology of yellow wagtails on arable land and to identify possible conservation measures.**

Now complete, the study found that in areas dominated by winter cereals, nesting activity declined rapidly by June, as crop height and density increased. The birds moved into more open spring-sown potato crops for second or replacement clutches, and nesting activity in these crops remained high until July.

The tall dense vegetation in cereals even forced birds to nest close to tramlines in the crop, where (as with skylarks) they suffered higher predation rates. Nests in field beans suffered very high predation rates, because as bean crops develop, the under-storey becomes very open, and nests that were initially well hidden become visible and vulnerable.

In addition to these crop type effects, there was a strong effect of soil type on the density of yellow wagtail territories. Softer, more penetrable soils, such as peat, were associated with a higher density of territories. The reason is unclear, but may relate to greater organic matter content of the soils being associated with higher populations of invertebrates with a soil-dwelling life-stage. Therefore, soil degradation might be added to the list of problems facing arable-nesting yellow wagtails on their breeding grounds, not to mention potential problems during migration and on wintering grounds.

Future work will determine: if small unplanted patches, as used for skylarks, could deliver any benefit for wagtails nesting in cereals; how best to create late-season nesting habitat in areas currently lacking suitable crop types; and what links soil type with territory density.

This research on yellow wagtails has involved the RSPB, the University of East Anglia, English Nature (as part of the Action for Birds in England partnership), the British Trust for Ornithology (with funding from Anglian Water) and Mr Nicholas Watts.

**For more details, please e-mail [guy.anderson@rspb.org.uk](mailto:guy.anderson@rspb.org.uk)**



Yellow wagtail

Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com)



Deborah Hanlon (RSPB)

Ben Crisp

## 'It was a real struggle to get out of bed...

... so early at the weekend, but definitely worth it,' says 15-year-old Ben Crisp. Ben enjoys the countryside and has developed his appreciation of wildlife – birds in particular – through his grandparents and parents. When choosing an activity for his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award this year, Ben said his first choice was to join the V&FA and volunteer to undertake a survey. Along with his father Michael, Ben found that two pairs of eyes made the job easier, and before they knew it, they had discovered a kestrel nest and observed a kestrel using its killing post. Birds of prey are Ben's favourite, and he felt it was a real privilege to be allowed onto farmland to enjoy watching these birds.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, gives young people an opportunity for personal development. Ben enjoyed the survey work, and would recommend it to other young people. It has enabled him to improve his repertoire of bird song, gain an understanding of bird behaviour in farmland habitats and has helped with his map reading skills. His hard work has also provided a valuable service to the farmer. Ben hopes to go on and complete his Silver Award, and we wish him all the best with the award and his GCSEs.

# Sowing seeds of success for Scotland's farmland birds

**Farmers in central Scotland are taking part in a two year project to enhance the over-winter food supply for red list species, particularly tree sparrows, skylarks, linnets and yellowhammers. A sufficient seed resource throughout winter is crucial for the survival of these birds, which have suffered a decline in response to changes in farming practices over the years.**

A decrease in the extent of land left in stubble throughout winter and more efficient harvesting of grain has reduced the availability of seeds for farmland birds. Therefore, sowing an area of wild bird cover with a mix of oats, kale, quinoa, mustard and oilseed rape not only increases the abundance of over-winter seed but also provides year-round habitat for invertebrates, birds and mammals.

Each of the participating farms sowed one hectare of a wild bird cover mixture on set-aside in the spring of 2005 with a view to leaving the plots unharvested until 2007. Volunteers undertake winter monitoring to determine which bird species are present on the plots. The first winter's surveys have

shown that tree sparrows, house sparrows, yellowhammers, skylarks and reed buntings are all feeding in wild bird cover and flocks of up to 20 tree sparrows and 120 reed buntings occurred at some sites, which is extremely encouraging!

The project, underway on six farms in known tree sparrow areas in Stirling, is in receipt of funding from the Stirling Council Biodiversity Grants Scheme. The RSPB and Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group have collaborated on the project to encourage farms to take part, to provide advice on sowing the cover and to facilitate the volunteers monitoring the wild bird cover plots.

There is no doubt that these giant birdtables can provide a vital resource for farmland birds. It is hoped that the launch of Land Management Contracts in Scotland in 2007 will provide sufficient funding to continue to allow farmers to establish wild bird cover for the benefit of farmland birds and other wildlife.

**For further details, please e-mail [bob.dawson@rspb.org.uk](mailto:bob.dawson@rspb.org.uk)**

Skylark







Pen y Bonc

## RSPB choughed with reserve extension

In Wales, choughs are found on wild coasts and mountains where farming plays an important part in providing the special conditions needed for their survival. During 2002, the RSPB acquired 29.5 hectares of improved pasture and grazing marsh adjacent to the South Stack reserve in Anglesey, North Wales.

The site, known as Pen y Bonc, is in a nationally important area for choughs and is managed to provide feeding habitat for them. The management of the site has involved

erecting a new boundary fence, repairing walls, installing a water supply and troughs and a new cattle-handling facility to allow grazing to provide suitable conditions for choughs. Working closely with the local grazier, the RSPB manages the grazing levels on the site to provide short grass, which is rich with invertebrates for choughs to feed on. The birds have been responding well to the management with flocks of up to 80 choughs feeding on the pasture this autumn.

For further details, please e-mail [dave.bateson@rspb.org.uk](mailto:dave.bateson@rspb.org.uk)

## Survey soars higher

**An amazing 470,000 people watched their gardens and local parks during the Big Garden Birdwatch in 2006.**

More than eight million birds and 80 different species were seen, ranging from blackbirds to blackcaps. The total area surveyed was equivalent to 7,000 football pitches.

Despite the Big Garden Birdwatch going from strength to strength, the same cannot be said for some of the UK's garden birds. The RSPB has recorded a sharp decline in the number of some birds seen in our gardens since 1979. Although the house sparrow retained its position as the most common garden bird, numbers are still down. An average of just 4.41 house sparrows were seen per garden this year, compared to an average of 10 in 1979. Having dropped off the top spot in 2004, the starling continued to decline in 2006, with numbers per garden down to a quarter of those recorded in gardens in 1979.

But it's not all bad news. The numbers of greenfinches and wrens have increased over the past 27 years by 67% and 140% respectively, and many people noted larger numbers of blackbirds and song thrushes, probably due to colder winter weather. In fact, the blackbird was also the most widespread species, recorded in 94% of all gardens.

Besides the popularity of the Big Garden Birdwatch, over 1,300 schools took part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch.

More than 35,000 children and their teachers helped by spending an hour counting the number of birds that share the school environment.

These efforts help the RSPB prioritise its conservation work by highlighting which species need our help. The 2007 Big Garden Birdwatch takes place on the weekend of 27–28 January. Everyone who has previously taken part will be sent a form automatically.

Take part online by visiting [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)

Wren



# Do you birdwatch?

The chances are, if you are reading this article then the answer is yes! You may be a farmer who received a V&FA survey and now watches the birds on your farm, or you could be a volunteer who has undertaken bird surveys for the project.

But did you know that in Northern Ireland, while our farmers are keen to learn more about their birds, we actually have a deficit in volunteers willing to undertake surveys?

This is not because in Northern Ireland there are fewer people interested in birdwatching than in other areas –

maybe the Northern Irish birdwatcher, like some of our more elusive bird species, is just a little bit on the shy side!

So why are we asking you, the involved birdwatcher, about surveys? There are two reasons:

Firstly, we would like more birdwatchers in Northern Ireland, and that includes those who have already proven their skills through the V&FA, to consider surveying for the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) as well. Unlike the V&FA, the BBS provides information that is used to determine population trends for our breeding birds, which is an extremely important tool in guiding conservation measures. Getting involved in both surveys will give you your own patch to get to know and still allow you to explore new countryside through the V&FA, not to mention learning yet more about our birds.

Secondly, we would urge you to pass this newsletter on to someone you know who enjoys birdwatching but does not yet survey, whether family, friend or colleague. Ask them to consider taking up a survey, whether for the V&FA or BBS. After all, you are ideally placed to promote the benefits surveying brings! It's a great excuse to get out into the countryside, and a chance to hone your bird identification skills and contribute to wildlife conservation in Northern Ireland. The list goes on!

So, with winter upon us, think of those gorgeous spring mornings and consider getting more involved in survey work or encourage someone you know to, and make the most of our beautiful countryside and wildlife.

**If you would like to become more involved in bird surveys in Northern Ireland, please e-mail [catherine.kelly@rspb.org.uk](mailto:catherine.kelly@rspb.org.uk) or telephone 02890 491547.**

## Organisation of English regional operations

The RSPB's regional structure in England changed from July 2006 to account for the growing need for our operations to mirror those of existing Government Office Regions. Although not a complete match for logistical reasons, the change will allow us to improve our delivery of conservation across our range of work.

For the V&FA, the change will be implemented by the end of December. This will mean that the responsibility (and your first contact) for overseeing the project in some counties will shift to different project officers. In those areas affected, you will be contacted by project staff, who will advise of the change.

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

**In Northern Ireland, more volunteers are required to undertake surveys.**



Lapwing

Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

## Friends reunited

**A five-year project aimed at helping the bird known as the farmer's friend has been launched by the RSPB. The lapwing has more vernacular names than any other bird and places and pubs have been named after it. The bird is mentioned by Chaucer, Shakespeare and even Mrs Beeton, and is called the farmer's friend because it eats insects regarded as farm pests.**

Its decline, of 46% between 1970 and 2004, has been attributed to changes in farming such as the loss of mixed agriculture and land drainage. So more than 250 farm sites have been chosen to test measures designed to help lapwings. Scientists have been developing measures to support lapwings in Britain's lowlands for some time, but the species is more common in the uplands. Researchers are now assessing how to encourage these birds as well.

The study, in the Peak District in Derbyshire, Lancashire's Forest of Bowland, the North Pennines, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, will compare upland farms where land is being managed to attract lapwings with similar sites without lapwing-friendly management. The project aims to show whether the UK's agri-environment schemes are good enough to increase lapwing numbers or whether extra measures are needed to ensure the right habitat is created.

The lapwing is primarily a farmland bird and only a fraction of the UK's lapwing population breed on nature reserves. That means that the work of farmers is crucial, as is

ensuring that improvements to farmland do not affect farm income. Finding ways of enabling farmers to manage habitats better is a key part of the project. The findings will be used to improve government schemes that pay farmers for environmentally-friendly practices.

Laund Farm in Bowland is one of the sites, and farmer Simon Stott won the RSPB's Lapwing Champion competition in 2005. This year he was named Waitrose Small Producer of the Year after the success of his local co-operative, Sheeps milk UK.

Mr Stott has been helping lapwings for several years and had 16 pairs nesting on his farm this year, compared to five in 2003. He said: 'The RSPB thought the land would be suitable for lapwings and as it wasn't good for anything else, I thought I'd give it a go. I now have a brigade of lapwings, and oystercatchers and snipe too. The lapwings are the first sign of spring for me and if land can be made fit for wildlife I think it's worth doing.'

Because of farmers like Mr Stott, there is a reasonable lapwing population in Bowland. However, the numbers are still declining. We need to safeguard the birds present and increase their numbers in the hope that they will spread. The recovery project should reveal just how we can do that.

**For further information, please e-mail [lapwings@rspb.org.uk](mailto:lapwings@rspb.org.uk)**

## Questionnaire results

In an effort to improve the delivery of Operation Lapwing, questionnaires were sent out to all participants late last year. We received an encouraging response and from this:

- 83% felt that taking part in the project was worthwhile
- 79% found the laminated calendar useful
- 45% had frequently put guidelines into practice
- 36% of farms saw an increase in lapwing numbers.



A V&FA training event.

The questionnaire results from those farmers who participated in the V&FA in 2004 reveal that:

- 100% of farmers felt that taking part in the V&FA was worthwhile
- 98% of farmers found the laminated survey map useful
- 90% of farmers had put into practice farmland bird management guidelines that accompanied the map
- 88% of farmers had species on their farm that they had not previously noticed
- 67% of farmers are now more likely to be involved with other RSPB initiatives.

The results of the questionnaires completed by volunteers who took part in the V&FA in 2005 indicate that:

- 94% were satisfied with the level of support they received from project staff
- 94% thought that the maps provided for their fieldwork were suitable
- 93% enjoyed participating in the project, either a great deal or a fair amount
- 79% were pleased with the V&FA training they received.

Thank you to everyone who returned a questionnaire.

## 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** 46 The Green, South Bar, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9AB  
Tel: 01295 253330

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

#### Northern England Region

1 Sirius House, Amethyst Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YL  
Tel: 0191 256 8200

Westleigh Mews, Wakefield Road, Denby Dale, Huddersfield HD8 8QD Tel: 01484 861148

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

**South West England Regional Office** 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** 10 Albyn Terrace, Aberdeen AB10 1YP Tel: 01224 624824

**S and W Scotland Regional Office** 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.