

Farming for birds

Make the most of Environmental Stewardship and the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

In-field nesting habitat

1



Skylark plots boost skylark numbers in winter cereals. Lapwings can also benefit from larger one-hectare fallow plots.

Overwinter seed food

2



Most birds associated with arable farming are seed-eating birds that require plenty of seed food throughout the winter and early spring.

Insect-rich foraging habitats

3



Many farmland birds are dependent on insect food for their chicks in the spring and summer.



For illustrative purposes only, to help you choose the best ELS options and the most suitable locations.

ELS Code	Options	Which farmland bird species benefit	ELS/OELS points	CFE code
1 In-field nesting habitat				
EF8/OF8	Skylark plots	Skylark, yellow wagtail	5 per plot	◆ C4
EF13*/OF13*	Un-cropped cultivated areas for ground nesting birds on arable land	Lapwing, skylark, yellow wagtail	360 per ha	◆ C5
EF22*	Extended overwintered stubbles	Grey partridge, skylark, corn bunting	410 per ha	◆
	Overwintered stubbles followed by spring/summer fallow	Lapwing, skylark, yellow wagtail	-	◆ C6
2 Overwinter seed food				
EF2/OF2	Wild bird seed mixture	Grey partridge, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	450/550 per ha	◆ C9
EF6/OF6	Overwintered stubbles	Grey partridge, skylark, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	120/150 per ha	◆
EG4/OG4	Cereals for whole crop silage followed by overwintered stubbles	Grey partridge, skylark, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	230/250 per ha	◆
	Game strips	Grey partridge, yellowhammer (only appropriate if seed bearing crops are included in the mix)	-	◆ C10
	Overwintered stubbles	Grey partridge, skylark, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	-	◆ C7a
3 Insect-rich foraging habitats				
EF4/OF4	Nectar flower mixture	Tree sparrow, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	450/550 per ha	◆ C12
EF9	Unfertilised cereal headlands within arable fields	Grey partridge, tree sparrow, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	100 per ha	◆
EF10	Un-harvested cereal headlands within arable fields	Grey partridge, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	330 per ha	◆ C11
EF11/OF11	Un-cropped cultivated margins for rare plants on arable land	Turtle Dove, yellow wagtail, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting	400/460 per ha	◆ C8
EF15*	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubbles	Grey partridge, skylark, yellow wagtail, tree sparrow, linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	195 per ha	◆
EG1/OG1	Undersown spring cereals	Grey partridge, corn bunting	200/150 per ha	◆
	Sown wildflower headlands	Grey partridge, tree sparrow, yellowhammer, reed bunting, corn bunting	-	◆ C13

The 10 most wanted farmland birds

* New options from 2010. At time of printing, these options had not received final approval and therefore may be subject to change.



Grey partridge – uses field margins and headlands rich in seeds and insects



Lapwing – breeds in areas of short vegetation, such as spring crops, fallow plots or extensive pasture



Turtle dove – needs areas of seed-rich habitat close to undisturbed scrub or mature hedgerows



Skylark – skylark plots in winter cereals will increase breeding success by 50%



Yellow wagtail – nests in open crops and grasslands where there is plenty of insect food



Tree sparrow – nests in holes, including nestboxes, but must have a good supply of insects nearby



Linnet – needs overwintered stubbles or wild bird mixes near to thick hedges



Yellowhammer – requires overwintered stubbles, thick hedgerows and wide margins to thrive



Reed bunting – nests in insect-rich crops and damp grassland, feeding on stubbles in winter



Corn bunting – late nests are often caught by harvest, but will use cereal based seed mixes



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