



Farming for farm wildlife

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

www.naturalengland.org.uk/es



Farmers, land managers and farm advisers all have a part to play in ensuring a healthy natural environment which is essential for sustainable farming.

Your farm has environmental value

Your farm has wildlife, natural resources, farmland birds and historic features that need your protection.

You make a difference

Your land management practices are the biggest influence on farm wildlife and your choices determine the type and quality of wildlife on your land.

Right options, right location, right management

This leaflet helps you choose the right options and put them in the right places to make the biggest difference. If you need additional help locating or managing these options, please contact Natural England for further information.

Marbled white butterfly benefitting from the provision of farmland flowers



Why is your farm important for wildlife?

Farm wildlife needs farmland and farmers. Wildlife is an indicator of a healthy natural environment and can be seen on farms every day. Sights such as brown hare running across winter-stubbles, frog spawn on mill ponds in the spring and bumblebees buzzing over flower-rich summer fields are still familiar across much of the country.

However, studies of farm wildlife over the last 30 years have shown that wildlife has declined. Factors such as loss of farmland flowers (leading to a 75% decline in butterflies and bumblebees), loss of ponds (causing declines in all our frog, newt and toad species) and improvement of grasslands (resulting in the loss of 97% of our unimproved grasslands since 1930) have caused once common species to become scarcer and some species to be lost from parts of England.

Farmers and the farming community play a vital role in reversing the fortunes of farm wildlife across England. The land management skills and knowledge that farmers use to run their farm businesses are crucial to this. Farm wildlife needs your continued help and expertise.

Through the use of Environmental Stewardship, or voluntary options of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE), a number of simple management measures can be put in place that will make a huge difference to farm wildlife.

Common toad benefitting from buffering of farm ponds



What can you do for wildlife?

Wildlife requires a balanced and varied approach to farmland management that will provide a variety of habitats. For example:

- 1 **You can benefit bees, butterflies and a wealth of other pollinators by establishing a network of flower-rich habitats across the farm.** Scientific evidence shows that farmers who plant ELS nectar mixes instead of grass margins can attract up to 14 times as many bumblebees.
- 2 **If you have light free-draining soils then you can benefit arable plants by creating cultivated margins or leaving conservation headlands.** If you choose ELS uncropped cultivated margins evidence shows you can produce habitat for up to 5 times as many arable plants than a conventional cereal crop.
- 3 **By buffering and protecting any water on your farm, you will help protect and provide the habitat for bats, newts, water voles and other small mammals to flourish.** Trials have shown that buffering ditches and restoring farm ponds can treble water vole populations in 3 years.
- 4 **Unimproved or flower-rich grassland are typically of high value, retaining and managing these areas can benefit a range of farm wildlife.** Choosing ELS very low input options will maintain these areas and (if managed correctly) can even enhance their wildlife interest.

Dormouse benefitting from fruit provided by hedgerow management



What are the benefits for you?

Regular farm income:

Financial incentives are available through Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) to provide a six-monthly income for environmentally friendly land management that supports farm wildlife.


Realise the wildlife potential of less productive areas:

Make awkward corners, small fields and wet areas of your farm work better for you by entering them into ELS options. The least productive areas of your farm are often (with the correct management) the best for wildlife.

Contribute to Climate Change mitigation:

Those options which involve creating grass buffers and field corners in arable fields will lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. This is due to reduced nutrient inputs and increased temporary carbon storage within the created grassland.

Work with the Industry's Campaign for the Farmed Environment:

Farming for wildlife using the options labelled  overleaf will help contribute to the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE).

Use the farm illustration overleaf to help you choose the best locations and ELS/CFE options to benefit wildlife on your farm.

Need further help and information?

For details of farm events in your region or further information please contact:

Natural England

Tel: 0300 060 1695

Email: farmevents@naturalengland.org.uk

Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk/farmevents

Campaign for the Farmed Environment

Tel: 024 7685 8892

Email: cfeonline@nfu.org.uk

Website: www.cfeonline.org.uk

Front cover: Brown hare © CFE.

Page 2: Marbled white butterfly © Natural England / Richard Belding;
Common toad © John Wilkinson ARC.

Page 3: Dormouse © P Morris.

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Campaign for the Farmed Environment partners – NFU, CLA, FWAG, LEAF, AIC, GWCT, AICC and CAAV – working in partnership with Defra and its agencies, Natural England and the Environment Agency, as well as the RSPB and other wildlife representatives.



Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

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