

BROWN HARE © DAVID TIPLING/2020VISION

Jordans Farm Partnership

THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS' IMPACT REPORT | 2018-2019





In 2019, Jordans oat growers provided more than 4,200 ha of land for farmland wildlife including barn owls, brown hares, turtle doves and vital pollinating insects like bees. That's enough space to play 4,200 football matches all at once!

Nature needs our help

Over 70% of the UK's land is farmed. This means the way our farmland is managed has a big impact on wildlife.

In recent decades, space for wildlife has diminished. As farming practices have changed to drive up food production, in many places we've lost untidy field corners, hedges and ponds – the homes and feeding places of our wildlife.

The 2019 State of Nature report set out a desperate picture: a 41 percent decline of UK wildlife since 1970. Some of our wildlife is at risk of being lost forever – with the report suggesting 15 percent is under threat from extinction. But all hope is not lost.

The Wildlife Trusts believe that a wildlife-rich natural world is vital for our wellbeing and prosperity. Thriving wild places and wildlife underpins our ability to grow food into the future – we need healthy soils, pollinating insects and a stable climate. Nature's recovery must be a priority for us all and it can be done – The Wildlife Trusts are calling for a Nature Recovery Network to put space for nature at the heart of our farming and planning systems; to create a joined-up network of habitats that allow wildlife and people to thrive.

As part of this, by working in partnership with Jordans and their oat growers, we are helping to create more, bigger, better and joined up places for wildlife – and the farmers are playing an important and positive role in a wilder future for people and wildlife.



FARMER AND ADVISOR © MATTHEW ROBERTS

Growing relationships

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships between Jordans Farm Partnership (JFP) growers and Wildlife Trust farm advisors is vitally important in making the most of opportunities on the farms for wildlife.

Initially, a Wildlife Trust farm advisor creates a JFP farm plan for each grower, which sets out how wildlife can be encouraged on the farm. Once in place, the advisor continues to offer support and advice. Once a year, they will visit the farm to review the plan and document progress made. This is a great opportunity to highlight any successes, but also discuss any challenges the farmer might be experiencing and come up with some solutions.

ASSURANCE

Independent assurance

The first independent assessments (by wildlife consultants) of farms in the JFP were undertaken in 2018-19.

These assurance reviews give confidence that the farms are carrying out the biodiversity measures that are required by the JFP wildlife standard.

Six farms underwent the review in 2018-19 – the standard sample number set by auditing good practice. Happily, all six passed with flying colours – guaranteeing the scheme is providing benefits for wildlife.

The JFP will repeat these assessments on five to six of their farms every year.

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ASSURANCE



The farmers involved in the plans were pleased with the positive impacts they were having for wildlife on their farms. The assessments found that the farms contained homes and feeding places for brown hares, dormice, barn owls, lapwings, stone curlews and bees. Endangered turtle doves, corn buntings and skylarks were also found to benefit.

Whilst visiting, the assessors were lucky enough to see the acrobatic display of lapwings and hear the melodic song of skylarks! Although not everyone put on a display, the farmers were able to share their stories of other wildlife they felt were on the increase as a result of measures they had put in place including several farmland birds and brown hares.



*“Watching brown hares grazing in the fields, whilst hearing lapwing calling and skylark singing over and above the drone of traffic in the distance, followed by the calls of two buzzard from the hedges and tree-tops of Halsey Dale, is **testament to the success of the partnership.**”*

JFP Assurance Reviewer

STORIES FROM THE FARM

Nick Rowsell

Manor Farm, Hampshire



“When I’m walking through the crops and I look around me, and everything is great, I have a little moment and think how lucky I am. My favourite sign of summer is when the swallows arrive.”



STORIES FROM THE FARM

Network of habitats

Nick, a 3rd generation farmer in north-west Hampshire, has been growing oats for Jordans on his family farm for several years.

The farm lies within the tranquil landscape of rolling chalk hills. These chalk grasslands are one of the most threatened in the UK, with vast tracts being lost to intensive agricultural production over the last century. Through the JFP and his commitment to wildlife-friendly farming, Nick is helping to reverse this loss by recreating and restoring this important habitat on his farm to benefit the specialised plants and animals that depend on it.

Alison, Nick's Wildlife Trust advisor, has supported him in managing his land to provide food, shelter and breeding sites for dormice and rare birds like woodlark and willow tit – wildlife that is important in the local, wider landscape. The farm's network of woodland, hedgerows, wide field margins and restored chalk grassland also benefit rare arable flowers and grey partridges.

STORIES FROM THE FARM

Insects are essential for a healthy farm, with three out of four crops needing them for pollination. Over the years, Nick has perfected his own nectar-rich flower and bird seed mixes, which he grows with as much care and attention as he does the oats that go into our breakfast cereals. This means his farm supports a wide range of insects, including butterflies such as silver-washed fritillary and mining bees. Small mammals also benefit from the grassland and grassy field margins, which in turn provide food for barn owls and kestrels. These birds of prey use the nest boxes that have been put up on trees and farm buildings.

Nick is also committed to looking after the soil on his farm, believing that good profitable farming depends on healthy, well-structured, thriving soil full of bugs and beetles. Special crops, known as cover crops, are grown at times when the soil would otherwise be left bare, preventing the soil from eroding away. Their deep roots can help loosen up compact soils and maintain soil fungi, which provides vital nutrition for the crops.

Nick's farm – and a second JFP farm, which he manages – lie within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Facombe Woodland to Kingsclere Downs Living Landscape. Within this, the Wildlife Trust is aiming to create more, better managed and joined up wild places, to help nature recover – and Nick is playing a vital role in this.





Andy Bosen

Westwood Farm, Norfolk

"If the birds are doing well, this indicates all wildlife on the farm should be doing well too."

STORIES FROM THE FARM

Born and raised

Andy has a special connection with his farm - he was born and raised on the land here.

Birds are a real passion for Andy, he has been recording his sightings on the farm for many years. His ever-growing handwritten list now boasts close to 100 bird species.

Barn owls are a favourite – but sadly disappeared from the farm for five years. Andy was delighted when, this year, barn owls returned and successfully bred.

Andy knows that winters can be tough for farmland birds – so he has been doing what he can to help them to survive on his farm. Alongside growing oats for Jordans, he has also sown a three-hectare field with a special seed mix including red millet, sunflowers, kale and fodder radish. Once they have flowered, these plants 'go to seed', providing a vital food source for farmland birds over winter. On many other farms, increased efficiency has led to a reduction in 'spilt' or lost grain, which has greatly reduced food availability – so Andy is providing an important lifeline for these birds.

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CORN BUNTINGS © TERRY WHITTAKER/2020VISIONPH



BARN OWL © JON HAWKINS SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

STORIES FROM THE FARM



Many UK birds have seen dramatic declines: the turtle dove was once common but numbers have dropped by almost 97% in just 20 years, making them the UK's fastest declining bird species. Although they had been seen around Andy's farm, they had not been recorded there.

Andy has created good nesting and feeding habitat for the turtle doves, with an abundance of thick hedgerows and grass strips on the farm, as well as cultivating grassland with a low input of fertiliser, allowing wild plants to flourish. The large number of ponds on Andy's farm also provide a vital water resource for turtle doves raising chicks, which they feed with 'crop milk' (a nutritious milk-like substance that they produce).

With help from his Wildlife Trust farm advisor, Andy has encouraged areas of scrub on the farm and along woodland edges to help boost the number of suitable areas for wildlife. He was delighted when earlier this year, his hard work paid off – a pair of turtle doves were seen feeding on the farm for the first time. Andy hopes that through continued wildlife-friendly management, they will return again next year to breed and raise a brood of turtle dove chicks!

ACTIONS ON THE GROUND

Habitat management

In 2018-19, JFP farmers managed more than 4,200 hectares of wildlife-friendly habitats to support nature's recovery on their farms. These are just some of the wild places they have created or maintained.

"The wildlife stuff is the best part of my job!"

JFP Farmer, Hertfordshire

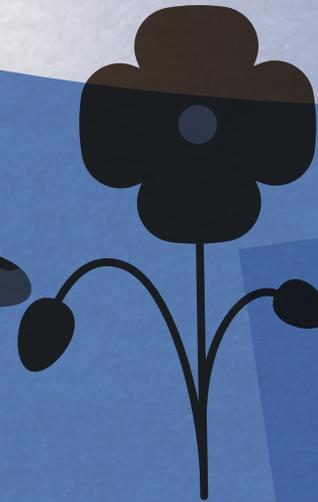
738ha
of woodland

90
ponds

482ha
of field margins

730km
of hedgerows

148km
of waterways



ACTIONS ON THE GROUND

Conservation focus species

Each JFP farm plan identifies at least four focus species (or groups of species) for their wildlife-friendly farming measures. These are examples of some of the wildlife that they have been helping.



Bees & pollinating insects

- Maintaining flowering hedgerows, which provide pollen and nectar
- Establishing wildflower-rich field margins, which are a good food source

"I've not seen barn owls use the barn for five years. This year they're back!"

JFP Farmer, Norfolk

Bats

- Keeping mature trees, which provide important roost sites
- Maintaining hedgerows, which provide routes to fly and forage for food along



Brown hares

- Creating rough grassland, which provides shelter for baby leverets
- Keeping overwinter stubble, which allows for good foraging

Lapwings

- Keeping uncropped areas in fields for nesting
- Creating 'scrapes'; wet muddy areas, good for food



Grey partridges

- Growing bird seed plots for adults to feed
- Maintaining wildflower margins for insects, on which chicks feed



Barn owls

- Installing nesting boxes on the farm
- Maintaining grass margins, which are good for hunting



Yellowhammers

- Managing hedgerows, which provide nest sites
- Keeping tall hedgerows and trees, which provide song posts



COMMUNICATIONS

Sharing the good news

We've been busy sharing the great stories from the JFP farms and all the work they are doing for wildlife, so that more people can be inspired to do their bit for the natural world!

"The JFP is important for what it does and for showing what can be done."

Simon Barnes, Wildlife Journalist

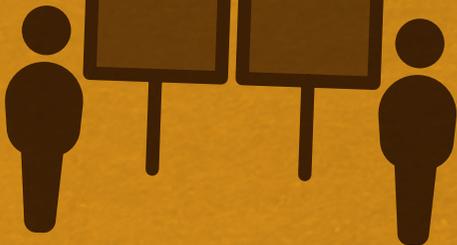
Hosted a JFP stand within the TWT area at **Birdfair**. Engaged with 7,500 visitors about the partnership.
16-18/08/2019

Arranged for JFP farmer to be interviewed for **Channel 4's** State of Nature coverage
03/10/2019

ITV Anglia covered the JFP in evening news and online following the launch of last year's JFP annual report
29/11/2018

More than 20 Tweets over the year about JFP habitats, species and farmers. Each tweet reached out to 187,000 TWT Twitter followers.

The story was also picked up by **Farming UK** and included in **Birdwatch Magazine**. Positive comments came from **Iolo Williams** and other influencers increasing the reach of the report
28/11/2018





NICK ROWSELL © JORDANS

“I like the little moments that happen, like when you walk across a field and find a rare flower that has never been there before.”

Nick Rowsell, Manor Farm, Hampshire