



*High quality birdseed at farm gate prices*

# Summer Newsletter

August 2016



## The Eyebrook Reservoir

Here at Rectory Farm we are extremely lucky to farm in the most beautiful environment with our fields bordering the Eyebrook Reservoir. As well as spectacular views from the tractor cab we also benefit from the wealth of bird life that frequents the reservoir. We thought you may like to learn a little about this hidden gem of the Welland Valley.

This large reservoir straddles the border between Leicestershire and Rutland and was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1956

It has a famous history as it was the test area for the revolutionary 'bouncing bomb' used in the Dambuster raids during World War Two. It was built between 1937 and 1940 by damming the Eye Brook and the site now covers around 200 hectares. A quiet and largely un-commercialised excellent bird watching area which has produced a number of unusual species. The reservoir is especially important for overwintering wildfowl which to this day still includes numbers of widgeon, pochard, teal and smew. The northern, inflow end is shallow and presents areas of mud that attract numerous waders, including Dunlin and Golden Plover in winter. A velvet scoter appeared in full view of the fishing lodge during December 2013 and many bird watchers were able to get some fantastic views and pictures of this rare large sea duck, one of only five sightings ever recorded at the reservoir. A great northern diver is a rare visitor to Eyebrook and caused a bit of a stir within the bird watching fraternity, the last diver being recorded at Eyebrook some 25 years ago. Amongst other birds that have been seen, a very rare visitor in the shape of a golden oriole, a brilliantly coloured bird with a golden yellow plumage. Reported sightings of otter busy with their day to day activities were photographed at the Stockerston Bridge at the inflow of the reservoir. A large dog otter has also been sighted on occasion at the fishing lodge and unusually one day a dog otter was seen devouring a cormorant! Apart from heron and more recently little, cattle and great egret, the reservoir plays host to another master fisherman, the osprey, which is often sighted by both birdwatchers and anglers alike giving regular flying displays and demonstrations in the art of catching fish.

Another regular and now a very common sight above the Eyebrook grounds are the red kite as they quarter the skies on the look out for carrion. The estate also plays host to numbers of buzzard who reel and cry above the skies, rising high on thermals above the warming waters of the reservoir. Many other birds of prey at times make brief appearances including peregrine falcon, hobby, merlin and the marsh harrier. To discover Eyebrook visit our shop where we will provide you with a map to explore our conservation walks. The walks go over the ridge on the west side of the reservoir providing beautiful views of the water and birdlife. The walks also offer a host of farmland birds, flora and fauna, with brown hares in abundance!





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## British Birdwatching Fair 19th-21st August

It's that time of year again for the great National Bird Watching Fair at Rutland Water which is jointly organised by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. Birdfair encompasses the whole spectrum of the birdwatching industry whilst at the same time supporting global bird conservation. This is the event of the year if you're into birds and wildlife. A wide range of fantastic conservation projects have been supported by Birdfair.

We look forward to seeing our customers and catching up with you all over the weekend. Visit us in **Marquee 6, Stand 19** for amazing show offers on fatballs, suet blocks, suet pellets, mealworms, feeders and accessories! We will be giving away samples of seed and there will be a free prize draw! **Local Customers** can enjoy all the special Birdfair offers at our farm shop! **Mail order customers** won't miss out either - order online or over the phone throughout Birdfair weekend 19th – 21st August and receive 15% off all purchases! Quote BF16 at checkout to apply the discount and enjoy great savings!

Enjoy Great  
Offers over  
Birdfair  
Weekend!

## On the farm

We are now in full flow of harvest, at the time of going to print we have combined the barley and the oilseed-rape, and are poised to cut the wheat. Our barley grains are processed for animal feeds, and the straw is used as cosy bedding for our sheep and neighbours cattle. The oilseed-rape is crushed for the oil for food processing, and the left over meal is used in animal feeds. Our wheat is grown specifically for use in Weetabix! To supply Weetabix we are required to be within 50 miles of the Weetabix factory, grow varieties that taste delicious in Weetabix and farm in an environmentally friendly way. So next time you enjoy your Weetabix it may well have come from Rectory Farm!



As well as selling our crops, they are of course used in our delicious blends of seed mixes at Eyebrook Bird Feeds. There are also birds on our farm that get their food direct by gleaming the stubbles after the combine. Although modern combines are more efficient, we still lose an element of seeds and in addition cleanings from the grain dryer get taken to the fields and spread around the hedgerows for the birds to enjoy!

You may notice a change in the countryside as farmers move to more traditional farming methods such as Spring sowing, later sowing and sowing a wider range of crops, this is to aid the control of weeds and is also great news for farmland birds!