



# *Finest quality birdseed blended on our conservation farm*

*Spring 2017 Newsletter*

## **Big Farmland Bird Count**

In February we hosted a training day for the Big Farmland Birdcount. This count was created to give farmers the incentive to get out on the fields and record what birds inhabit them. Farmers are crucial to the survival of many farmland bird species and the BFBC is an opportunity to demonstrate the positive effect of farmland management. Farmers are vital in helping to ensure the future survival of many of our most cherished farmland bird species such as skylark, yellowhammer, corn buntings and wild grey partridges. They are responsible for managing the largest songbird habitat in this country on their land but frequently their efforts to reverse bird declines are largely unrecorded. The Big Farmland Bird Count was created to help remedy this, and a useful insight of how the birds are faring individual farms.



The day was hosted by Kirsty Branning from the RSPB who gave us some great tips of spotting and identifying birds, even the 'little brown jobs'! We saw great numbers of yellow hammers, corn buntings, chaffinches, skylarks, lapwings and sparrows to name a few, and even had a piece published in the Guardian newspaper about the walk.

## **Cirl Buntings**



Eyebrook Wild Bird Feeds are delighted to support the RSPB Cirl Bunting Project in the South West, by working with the RSPB to produce a specific Cirl Bunting Mix to aid the population recovery. This highly successful project carried out a breeding survey during 2016 which confirmed that the population had grown from a low point of 114 pairs in the late eighties to over 1000. This spectacular growth results from partnerships with many farmers and organisations to provide habitat in Devon and Cornwall full of thick hedges, winter stubbles and grasshopper rich grasslands. A reintroduction project in Cornwall has seen a population return to the Roseland with more than fifty male cirls now singing their rattling song in the hedges.

As well as working on improving habitat, an understanding of the ideal food for cirls enabled the RSPB to develop our Cirl Bunting seed mix, which is despatched to selected hotspots around the two counties. These feeding sites act as insurance against extreme conditions such as prolonged snow cover preventing the birds finding food naturally but they also help ensure that important populations go into the breeding season in good condition. An added benefit is they bring the birds closer to people which allows more of us to appreciate this lovely bird. We are looking forward to working with the RSPB to maintain and grow the population in the future.

## **Eyebrook Wild Bird Feeds**

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## Mealworm Offer Easter Weekend

To celebrate Easter with our customers and provide a delicious Easter treat for your garden birds, we are offering a free 200g pack of our delicious dried mealworms with all orders placed over the Easter Weekend! These munchy, crunchy mealworms provide a great boost of protein to the birds and their fledglings during the breeding season, and the birds LOVE them! They are also a tasty treat for the hedgehogs in your garden, which, with the weather warming up, should be making an appearance any time now...



## Lambing

Our first newborns arrived at the start of March and we are now nearing the end of lambing, it's been a record year for triplets and thankfully the weather has been on our side. Unlike humans, lambs are up on their feet and feeding from mum within the first hour of birth, after a couple of days in the barn to gain strength, the ewe and her lambs are turned out onto fresh pastures. Visit our Facebook page with videos and pictures of the lambs enjoying a run!

We enjoyed having lots of children to visit the lambs including the local playgroup. We took a ewe and some lambs to Hallaton Primary School to teach the children all about sheep farming – two of the lambs were named Tom and Ruby by the pupils who had great fun bottle feeding them!

## Encouraging Children

The RSPB's Big Schools Birdcount ran through January and February. This count is an educational activity that gets classrooms closer to nature. We were very proud to support such a great initiative and to help get children interested in birds and wildlife. To encourage local schools to get involved we sent free bags of bird seed and feeders to local schools. Here is a picture of pupils at Brambleside Primary School in Kettering enjoying feeding the birds with their new feeding station, feeders and seed. It is great to get children out of the classroom and engaged with birds and wildlife.



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