

5. Farmers feeding birds...the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster...

There is much going on around MuW in support of building back biodiversity, not least the work of the 140+ farms of the NE Cotswold Farmer Cluster... The Wychwoods are right at the heart of the Cluster's area in the Evenlode and Windrush river catchments.

Why are these farmers feeding birds on their farms?

Most farmland bird species are insectivores and play an important role in the biological control of pest populations. ... and they have many other roles in the ecosystem including pollinating, seed dispersing, and nutrient cycling. Overall, farmland birds are good indicators of the quality of the farmed environment. We know the benefits of connected and diverse habitats but still birds need some extra help in the lean times of the year.

For more information - and how you could help - go to

<https://farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org/index.php/aims-and-impact/>

What are these farmers doing?

Matthew Izod (Priory Farm, Lyneham) and Director of the NE Cotswold Farmer Cluster writes;

“Our farming group has distributed and fed 60 Tonnes of Cotswold grown grains this season. The mix has included wheat, barley, beans, peas (Priory Farm, Lyneham), oats (FarmED), linseed (August Farms, Burford), millet (Aston Farm, Bourton on the Water), oilseed rape (Great Tew) and sunflowers (Bruern Farms).



Bird seed crop in September at Lyneham

We feed the birds in areas which we monitor to see how feeding helps bird numbers in the area. Last year was a big success with many farms seeing 16+ different species recorded. Large numbers of yellowhammers, linnets, chaffinches, reed buntings, goldfinches and even a brambling were seen. Bird feeding during the hunger gap (December - April) is a great way to support wildlife on farms.

Also on the farm we are growing crops for birds to forage in over the winter months (the picture above is our birdseed crop in September at Lyneham). They are especially important to provide extra cover on these cold mornings!

For more information on our bird feeding project and all the other great initiatives the members of the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster are doing together, do visit our website:

<https://www.cotswoldfarmers.org/projects>”

Please note - FarmED is one of the 30 Farmer Cluster members feeding many birds as part of this project, and providing oats for the feeding mix. **Book a free visit to FarmED – see below**