

# The Upper Rother & Dudwell Farmers' Group



## NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2017

### How to manage your Meadows—5 June 2017



On a rather damp evening in June, Keith Datchler gave members of the Group a tour of the meadows he has created and explained a range of techniques you can use to enhance your grassland areas.

Keith also treated the Group to a sneak peak of The Sounds of the Meadows; an app that plays all the sounds you may hear in a High Weald Meadow setting. The app was launched at the South of England Show and is still in development.

Edwina Moore commented: *“It was the best and most relevant event that I have ever attended. Keith explained the process so well!”*



If

you want to find out more about the different techniques for creating and enhancing meadows on your land, please visit <http://highwealdlandscapetrust.org/weald-meadows-partnership>

### Farmland for pollinators—15 June 2017

In contrast, on a boiling hot day in June Laurie Jackson, Wildlife Advisor from Buglife, held a workshop for Group members at Wadhurst Estate looking at what landowners can do for pollinators; either voluntarily or with support through Countryside Stewardship.



Buglife is undertaking a *Landscapes for Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Project* across Kent and Sussex. The organisation is working with farmers and landowners to implement measures from field-scale to landscape-scale that will benefit pollinating insects.

There are over 4,000 species of insect pollinators in the UK. Insect pollinators have been shown to increase the yield, quality and marketability of many important crop species, as well as supporting pollination of around 80% of our wildflowers.

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## The GWCT Farmland Bird Count Results 2016 are in!

Over 970 farmers took part across the UK—an increase from previous years— recording 112 species across around 900,000 acres.

**What did farmers see?** - The most commonly seen species were blackbirds and woodpigeons, seen by over 80% of our participants. Robins, blue tits, and carrion crows were seen by over 70% of farmers.



In addition, a total of 22 species from the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern were recorded, with 5 appearing in the 25 most-commonly seen species list: fieldfares, starlings, house sparrows, song thrushes and yellowhammers.

For more information on results go to:  
[www.gwct.org.uk/farming/big-farmland-bird-count/2017-bfbc-results/](http://www.gwct.org.uk/farming/big-farmland-bird-count/2017-bfbc-results/)

It was also reported in Chavereys Monthly Farming Update that the population of farmland birds in 2015 was less than half the numbers recorded in 1970, although the majority of the decline occurred between the late 1970's and 1980's due to rapid

### Event to watch out for:

**Meadows Grass and Flower identification workshop —2pm 20 July 2017 at St Dunstons Farm, Heathfield**

**To book call Sam Nicholas 01424 723011**

changes in farmland management in this period. Between 2009 and 2014, 32 per cent of species increased their numbers while 42 per cent showed a decrease.

Grey partridge, turtle dove, tree sparrow and corn bunting have declined by over 90 per cent whereas populations of stock dove and goldfinch have more than doubled.

The yellow wagtail has declined by 65 per cent and the kestrel by 50 per cent while populations of wood pigeon and jackdaw have more than doubled.

### Farewell from Matt!

As many of you know I will soon be moving on to pastures new and taking up new challenges in Kent Downs AONB. I'd like to take this opportunity to say goodbye and thanks all the landowners and farmers I've worked with during my time at the High Weald AONB Unit.

It's been a pleasure and a privilege to be involved with so many brilliant projects over the years, and I'll be watching with interest to see what you all get up to in the future!

All the best,

Matt

