

TRIAL LAUNCHED TO REPOPULATE ENDANGERED BIRD AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY ON WHEAT FARMS

- The project with UK wheat farmers aims to increase the population of the 'red list' yellowhammer by up to 30 per cent¹
 - Bird experts enlisted to help make pilot a success

A new three-year trial is underway which aims to bring back the yellowhammer – one of the iconic farmland bird species under severe threat in the UK.

Since 1970, the yellowhammer population has dropped by over 50 per cent¹ due to there being fewer food sources available to them.

Mainly found on farmland, due to its need for thick hedges for nesting, ready supply of grains and insects for food, modern farming practises have resulted in the species depleting.

The native bird is known for its distinctive song, which is rumoured to sound like “a-little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese”. Amongst the farming community, hedgerows without farmland birds are believed to be indicative of a degraded landscape.

Now a new three-year pilot has been launched by Kellogg's which aims to increase the population of the yellow-breasted bird on participating farms by up to 30 per cent¹.

The cereal giant will work with a number of its British farmers who supply it with wheat to create prime nesting habitats, introduce winter bird food mixes and will encourage later hedge trimming, to avoid disturbing the bird's late breeding throughout August and September. In total the pilot will cover 150 hectares of wheat fields.

The impact will be measured by birdwatching – taking a count of yellowhammers at the start of the trial and then at regular intervals as it progresses.

If successful, the initiative will result in increased biodiversity on the farms, more sustainable farming practices and consequently improved soil health. It will see farmers go back to more traditional practices, as Kellogg's works towards its goal of supporting one million farmers globally.

John Smith, a wheat farmer from Northampton who supplies wheat to Kellogg's, said: “This is a really exciting initiative to be a part of. It has the potential to make a huge difference not only to yellowhammers, but also other insects and wildlife, via an increase in biodiversity across our farms.”

Kate Prince, agricultural lead at Kellogg's, said: “This project is all about helping to bring back the birdsong to British hedgerows.

“The hard reality is that yellowhammer numbers are at crisis point. So, this project is about exploring the practical steps we can achieve together with farmers to encourage this native bird back to our countryside. If successful, we will be able to roll this out across a number of UK farms.”

The pilot forms part of the cereal giant's Origins programme, launched in 2013 to support sustainable agriculture projects on wheat farms in the UK.

The Origins programme aims to protect and enhance the natural habitat where Kellogg's grains grow, resulting in the best quality ingredients for cereal through the development of new techniques and technologies.

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¹Kellogg's is aiming to see a 20-30% increase in yellowhammers on the farms that are taking part in the trial

²Data source: [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#)