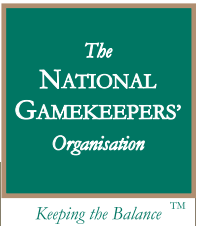


Feature

What wildlife do you have?

Louise Stimson urges gamekeeper members to let us know what wildlife they have on their estates.



SOPHIA GALLIA



Breeding numbers of lapwings can fluctuate hugely. Like all the species pictured, the lapwing is on the Farmland Bird Index.

AS THE SHOOTING SEASON DRAWS TO A conclusion and your minds turn to a few days off and next year's layers, the postman will arrive with a package for all the NGO gamekeeper members. It will contain a survey for you to fill in and return.

This survey is a response to overwhelming numbers of requests from members that the NGO needs to promote the excellent work of keepers. However, to do this effectively, we need to get hard data on what wildlife you have on your land. The questions have been devised

with the help of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust to provide meaningful data for scientific analysis.

The survey will be quick to complete and will come with a stamped, addressed envelope in which to return it.

Please take the time to fill it in as, without the data, the NGO cannot truthfully make the case that without gamekeepers the countryside would be a more barren place. Armed with the data, we hope we can help further protect your careers and our industry.

Gamekeeping in general receives some appalling press from anti-shooting and other organisations, and the information you supply will enable us to counter any untrue claims being made.

It will help you to fill in the form if you start thinking about the wildlife on your land now. The survey will ask the numbers of certain species that you have on your ground, for example yellow-hammers, corn buntings, nightjars (all of which are Biodiversity Action Plan species and the last of which is also on

SOPHIA GALLIA



The corn bunting is uncommon in the UK.

patch. However, as gamekeepers, you are in the best position of anyone in the countryside to estimate these numbers. Also, populations of breeding pairs can alter vastly, so if you supply us with a three-year average that would be the perfect solution.

The NGO is working hard every day to protect your interests, but to do this to the best of our ability, we ask all of you who receive a survey form to fill it in. Please take the time consciously to look in detail at the wildlife that is thriving on your ground, and tell us about it. We can then attack our critics with solid data and help to ensure the continuation of our sport.

NGO SURVEY

The survey is due to arrive with you in early February. For more information or questions, please contact Louise Stimson on 07590 885513 or louise.stimson@nationalgamekeepers.org.uk

the Red Data List). Please look around your estate and try to estimate how many of what birds are visiting over the winter and think about how many breeding

pairs you would expect to see.

We are aware that it is impossible much of the time to know exactly how many of which species you have on your

Although common, the yellowhammer is a BAP species and is a good indicator of the countryside's well-being.

SOPHIA GALLIA

