

## **BASC Information Sheet**

### **FEEDING STATIONS FOR DECLINING FARMLAND BIRDS**

Because surviving winter is one of the most difficult times in the life cycle of birds, providing feeding stations over winter can be very beneficial.

Feeding stations should be identified around the farm where they are accessible to you and in areas where birds are likely to be found. There are no hard and fast rules about position but if they can be located beside some cover they will be more attractive to birds. Suitable sites could be beside tall hedges or adjacent to game covers. Sites by woodlands can be less attractive to small birds as it can harbour many predators. The overriding objective is to locate them in a position so that if predators do appear birds will have somewhere to take refuge.

Birds like to scratch around for their food and so a round bale of straw with the strings cut is a useful addition. It is also easily seen by birds which quickly associate it with a supply of food. Feeding should start in late September and be continuous through winter into spring. The amount of food you put out will depend on the numbers of birds present. In the autumn and the early part of winter bird numbers may be low, but as natural food diminishes more birds will be attracted to the feeding stations, and so you will need to feed more. It is also advisable to move the stations from time to time to minimise the risk of diseases building up.

Feeding stations will attract a range of birds including tree and house sparrow, corn buntings, linnets, yellowhammer and reed buntings in addition to game birds. By providing extra food you will increase winter survival and ensure that breeding birds enter spring and the nesting season in good condition. Feeding stations will also help increase the survival rate of immature birds which because of their inexperience at finding food are particularly vulnerable over winter.

#### **Further Advice**

The BASC Conservation and Land Management Team will be pleased to discuss any of the above information with you. *We are here to help*, contact us at:  
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