



English Winter Bird Survey (EWBS) 2018/19

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Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is coordinating a survey of wintering birds and brown hare, commissioned by Natural England, as part of a study to better understand how they use farmland and agri-environment scheme (AES) options in winter. The survey will cover many existing summer Breeding Bird Survey squares and routes, along with new sites this winter.

Environmental & Countryside Stewardship option effects on breeding bird populations have been evaluated successfully with analyses of national-scale Breeding Bird Survey data. However, there has been no national-scale monitoring of the effects AES management on bird populations in winter, which is particularly important because the most successful Environmental Stewardship options for effects on birds have been found to be those that primarily affect birds in winter. Therefore, assessment of AES benefits to birds in winter represents an important gap in monitoring to date.

This survey requires the surveyor to make up to **four visits** to a 1km square, between 1st December 2018 and 31st March 2019. The survey will start no earlier than one hour after sunrise and be finished at least one hour before sunset. During each visit, the surveyor will walk the same two 1km transect routes, which will ideally follow trackways, paths or field boundaries. All observations of birds and Brown Hares will be recorded along with details of farmland habitat (e.g. stubbles, cover crops, etc), if present. The surveyor will need access to paths and trackways to help cover the area.

Any help you can give the bearer of this letter in allowing access to privately owned land would be very much appreciated.

This survey is just one of the many short-term and on-going projects on birds carried out by BTO volunteers. Please do not hesitate to telephone or email if you would like more information about the survey, or the work of the BTO.

Many thanks for your help

David Norfolk & Greg Conway
EWBS Survey organisers