

# The *Nature* of dairy farming

- Wildlife loss is not just an arable issue
- Environmental management extends beyond RP an CC
- Wildlife management is not just for sucklers or hill farming
- What can dairy farmers do to make a real difference for wildlife



# Dairy farmers 'stepping up for nature'



*Robert Kynaston  
Great Wollaston  
Shropshire*



*Ashton Hawker  
Cotswolds*



*Henry  
Edmunds  
Cholderton estate  
Wiltshire*

# *'Boosting seeds and insects'*



# *Non-farmed areas*

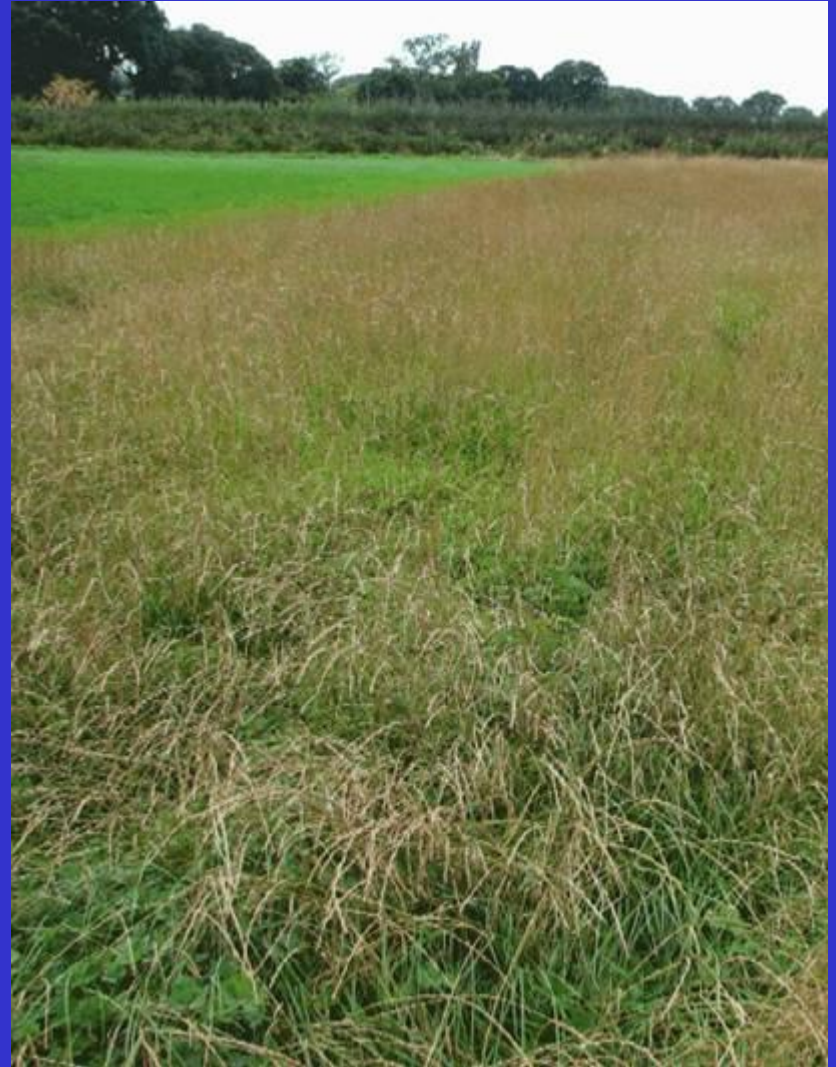


# Grassland: *'diversity of plants and structure is key'*

- Huge variability in type and management
- Focus on efficiency of utilisation is main challenge for wildlife
- Options developed that can provide benefits in range of grasslands and systems



# *Leys - legume/herb mix & seeding ryegrass*



# *Permanent grassland:*

- Appropriately manage remaining grasslands of higher wildlife value
- Grazing regimes that allow taller vegetation to develop



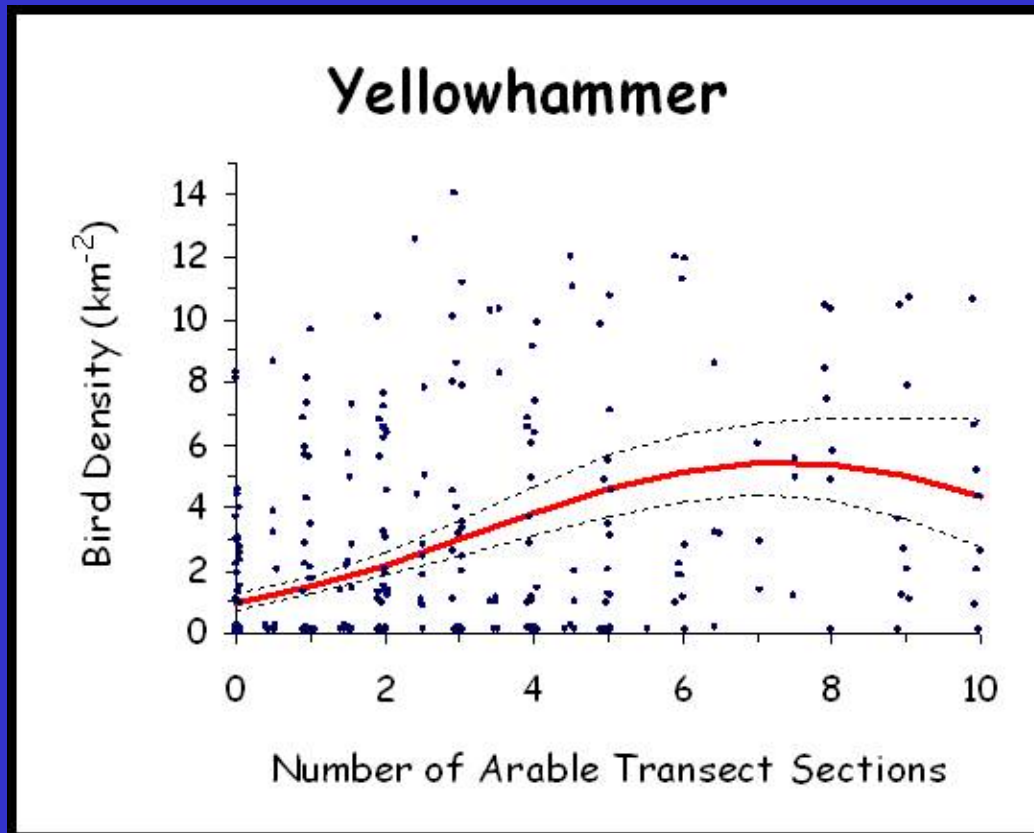
- Creating patches of taller vegetation at field corners and margins
- Wet features





# Mixed farming

Pastoral farmland with 'arable pockets' have higher densities of seed-eating birds



Source: Robinson et al. 2001. *J. Appl. Ecol.* 38: 1059-1069.

*Grain, weed seeds - especially in winter*



# *It's all in the mix.....*

## *'Big 3 for butterflies'*

**1. Structural variety  
in the grass**

**2. Summer  
nectar sources**

**3. Patches of  
scrub**

## *'Big 3 for birds'*

**1. Nesting habitat**

**2. Summer insects**

**3. Winter seeds**



# Cholderton estate



# Is organic dairying *naturally* better?

- Likely to have greater diversity of cropping – focus on home-grown feed
- Arable will generally be better
- Grassland more of a challenge – focus on optimising grassland utilisation. Winter seed food?
- Great starting point – but still need for deliberate management

# *In summary:*

- Different parts of the farm provide different resources:
- Meet lifecycle needs - creating areas rich in seeds and insects good baseline. Range of options in agri-environment schemes to help
- Neat and tidy is not good for nature!!!
- How much habitat is enough to make a difference in a dairy system??

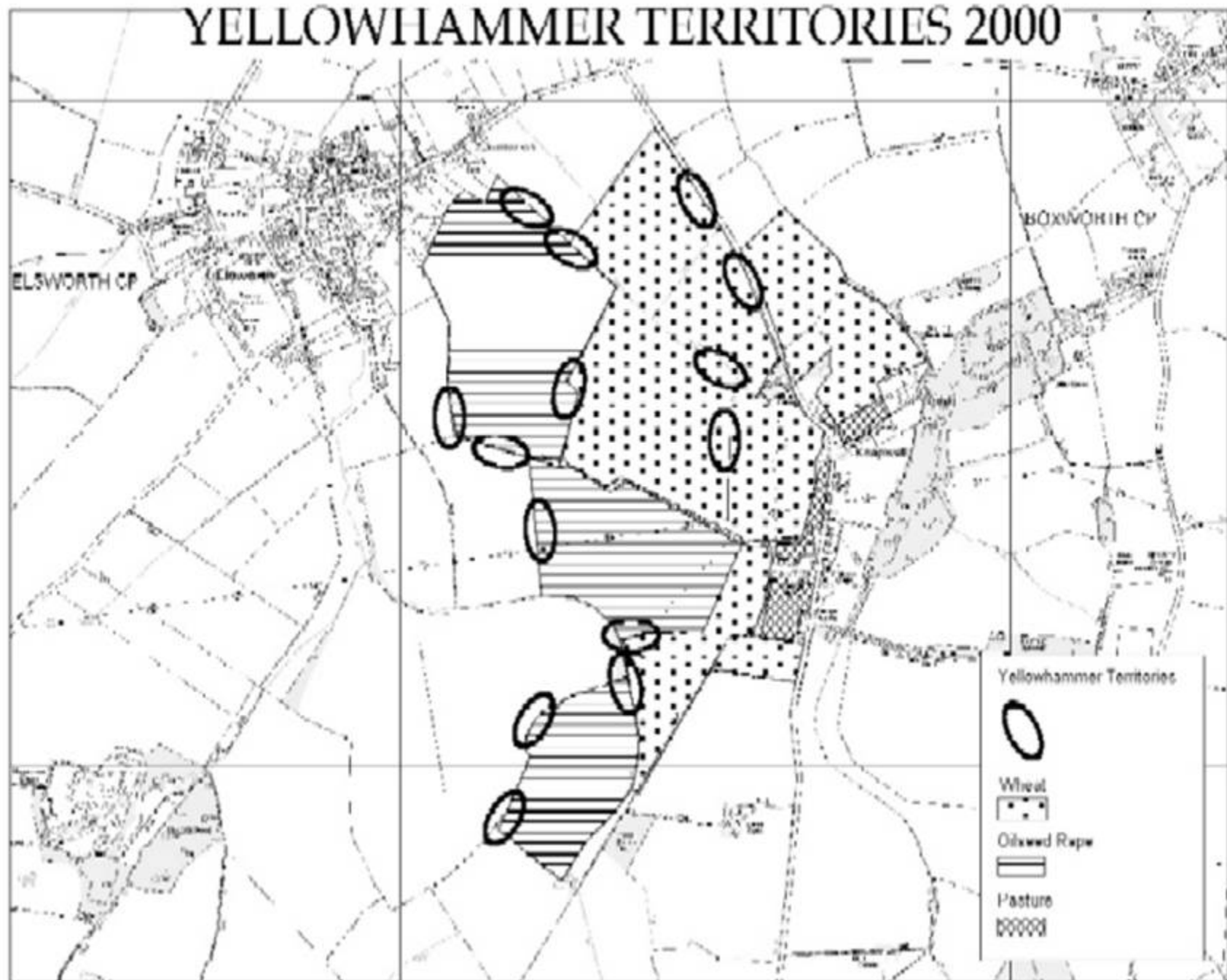


# RSPB Hope farm



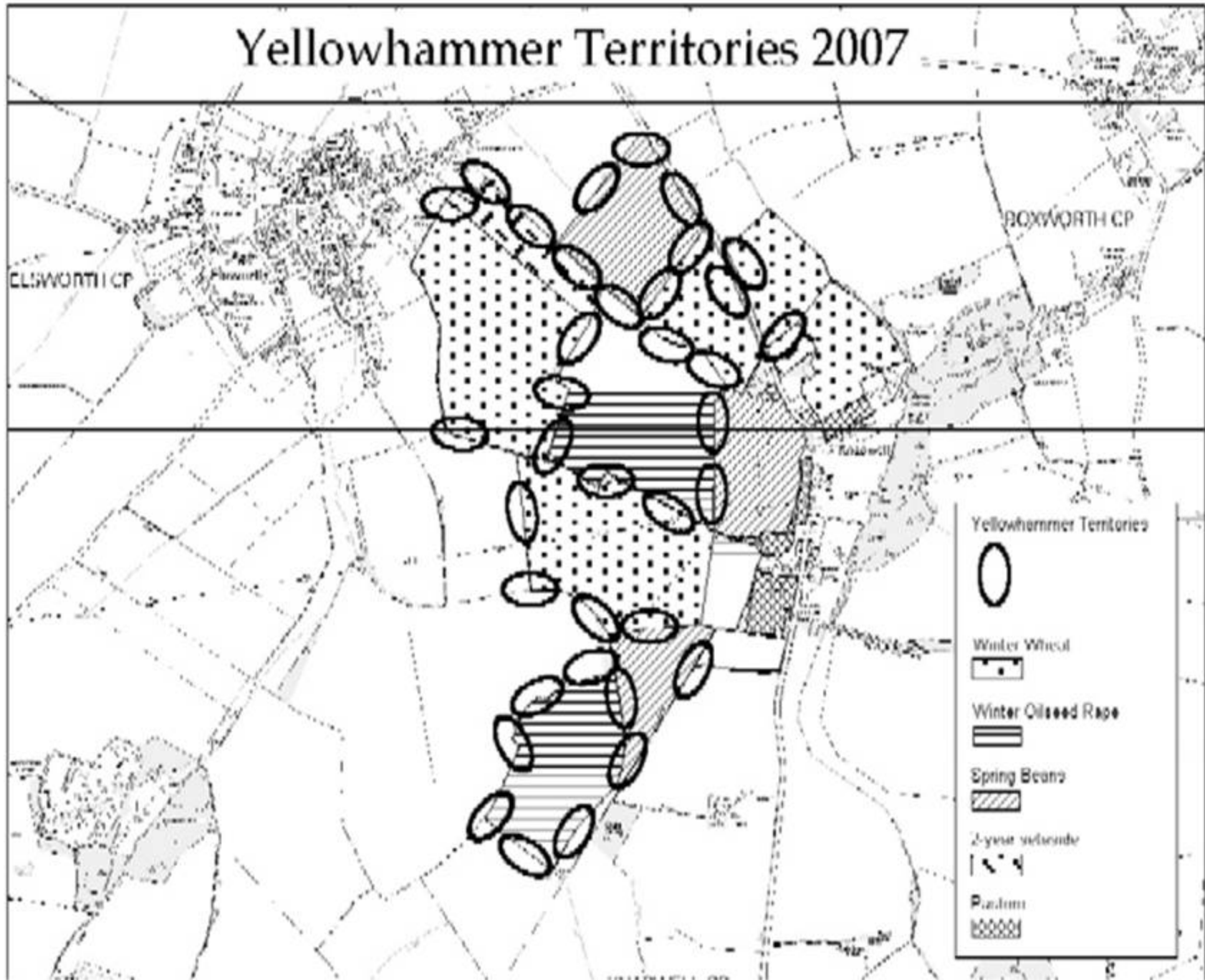
- commercial arable farm
- not a nature reserve
- typical rotation/ yields
- baseline monitoring
- Around 5% habitat provision

# YELLOWHAMMER TERRITORIES 2000

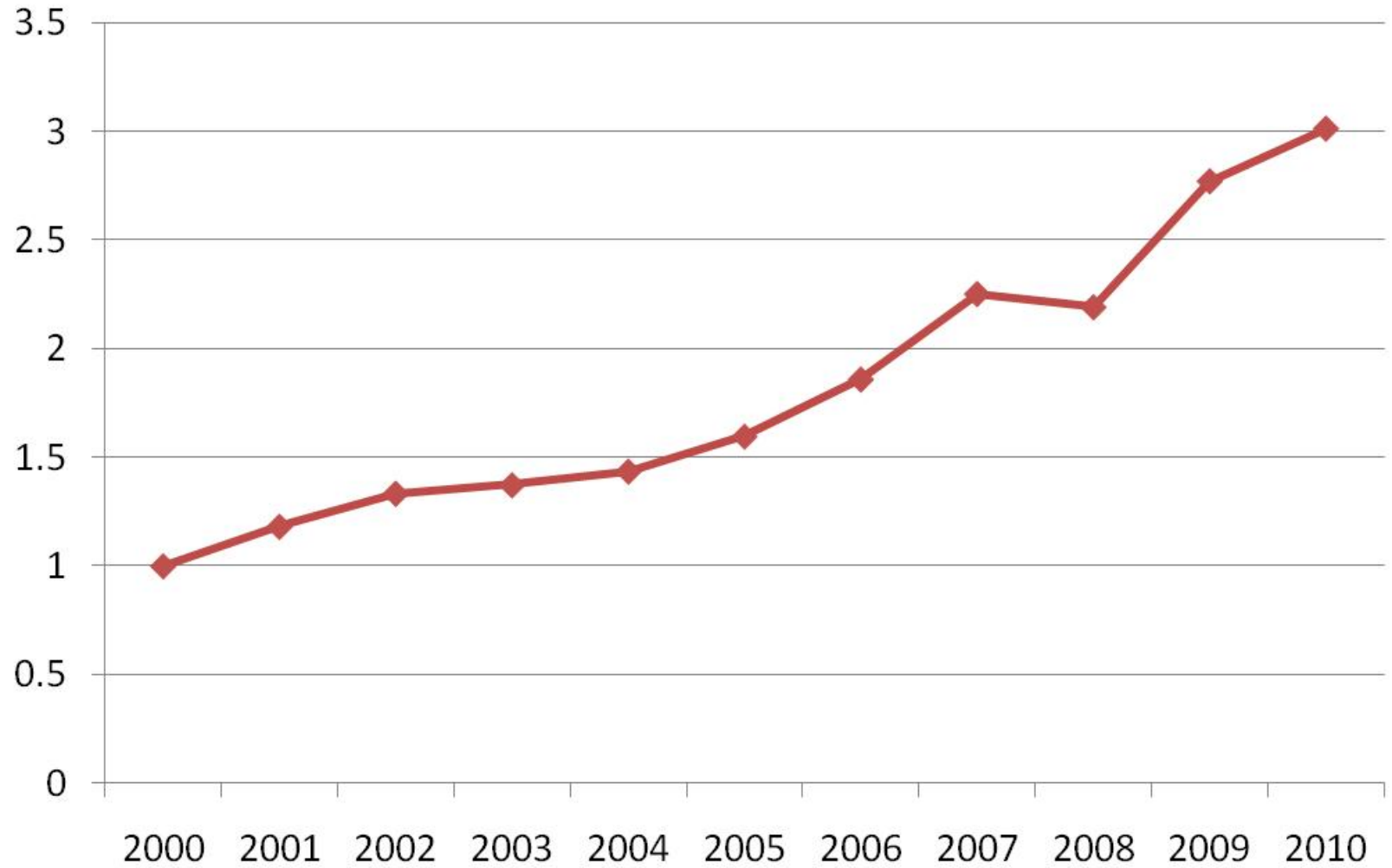




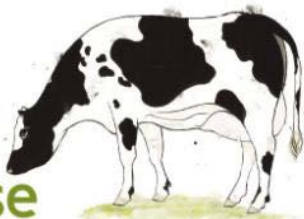
# Yellowhammer Territories 2007



## Hope Farm Farmland Bird Indicator



# Selling a nature friendly story to consumers



Waitrose  
dairy farmers





**Nature of Farming Award 2012**  
**VOTE NOW**  
for the UK's most wildlife-friendly farmer

**VOTE NOW** and you could win a luxury break for two!

These farmers all step up for nature by farming with wildlife in mind. Show your support by voting for the UK winner, and you'll be entered into our prize draw. Pick up the voting form or go online to find out what they are doing for nature.



a million voices for nature



**Rob Allan**  
from Oxfordshire  
farms sustainably, delivering food for us and for wildlife. He is passionate about the huge range of diverse habitats supporting wildlife on his estate such as barn owls, corn buntings, skylarks and tree sparrows.



**Henry Edmunds**  
from Wiltshire  
has spent over 30 years balancing agriculture and the preservation of the countryside. On his farm, corn buntings, lapwings and grey partridges thrive amongst the crops, alongside rare arable plants.



**Jack Kelly**  
from County Down  
successfully integrates conservation into the management of a small mixed farm, using traditional methods. Hens, linnets, reed buntings, tree sparrows and yellowhammers all thrive.



**Peter Knight**  
from West Sussex  
runs a mixed farm that sees conservation at its core. Farming and conservation complement each other here, through an ethic of 'more output, less input'. Peter uses his knowledge and passion to affect lasting change.





The EU LIFE Programme funds RSPB work that supports wildlife-friendly farming, which furthers sustainable development in the European Union.

Vote now at [www.rspb.org.uk/farmvote](http://www.rspb.org.uk/farmvote)  
Voting closes: 5 September 2012

## Would it be beneficial if a 'dairy' version of the arable package below was developed ?

Resource	ES options	ELS (minimum per 100 ha)	HLS (minimum per 100 ha)
Winter seed food	Wild bird seed mixture <u>or</u> Weed-rich stubble (or a combination)	2 ha <u>or</u> 5-10 ha	2 ha <u>or</u> 5-10 ha
Spring-summer invertebrate food	Conservation headlands, low input spring cereals, field corners, beetle banks, blocks/strips of nectar mix/flower-rich margins	1 ha	2-3 ha
Places to nest in-field	Skylark plots  Fallow plots	20 <u>or</u> 1 ha	20 <i>plus</i> 2 ha (if appropriate)

- **Any ideas on other practical things dairy farms can do to help wildlife?**
- **What forms of advice provision would best help you to deliver management to help wildlife on your farms ?**

➤ Encourage farmers entering agri-environment schemes to use the most beneficial measures

➤ Provide means for farmers or their adviser to get answers to problems

➤ Decision support tool to deliver a basic package - identify the positive practices that farms already doing, an guide to most practical additional measures.

➤ Web-based postcode search tool to identify species in local area

➤ Economic calculator to work out viability of different management

➤ Provide opportunities for farmers to learn from the experiences of other wildlife-friendly farmers in their area or with the same farming system

➤ How to communicate – web, e-mail, booklet??