‘Farming with Nature’ set to inspire farmers and policy makers

Monday 17 August, 2020

‘Farming with Nature’ is a new book based on scientific research, which provides a practical guide to how conservation efforts aimed at the grey partridge can benefit farmland biodiversity. The grey partridge is one of the fastest declining farmland birds in Europe – by over 90% since the 1970s. Its presence is an indicator of arable farmland ecosystem health: where partridges thrive, other farmland wildlife will follow.

Set to become an invaluable tool for farmers, shoot managers, hunters and agri-environment policy makers, ‘Farming with Nature’ summarises the leading peer-reviewed research into grey partridge conservation and sets the context of partridge decline and the farmland biodiversity crisis across Europe. It describes techniques developed to reverse that decline and illustrates how they benefit other farmland wildlife. The book details measures, such as planting wildflower mixes, managing hedgerows, maintaining grass margins and conservation headlands, that can be integrated with modern farming systems for a viable farming business.

Minette Batters, farmer and President of the National Farmers’ Union of England and Wales (NFU), says: “I hope this book will inspire farmers and policy makers across Europe and help to shape future UK agri-environment policy.”

‘Farming with Nature’ is published by the PARTRIDGE project, a pioneering cross-border collaboration of 14 partners in six countries, of which the UK’s Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) is the lead partner. The PARTRIDGE project uses ten 500-hectare demonstration sites to show practitioners and agri-environment policy makers how farmland wildlife can be restored by up to 30%.

The aim of ‘Farming with Nature’ was, says co-author Dr Francis Buner, “to explain the approaches used on the PARTRIDGE demonstration sites and the science they are based on, showing how they work for both partridges and other species sharing the farmland.”

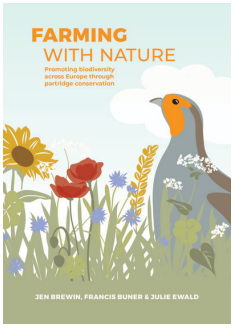
Fergus Ewing, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, comments: “The practical information and guidance in this booklet will be invaluable to those helping to restore farmland wildlife and could help guide agri-environment policy in Scotland.”

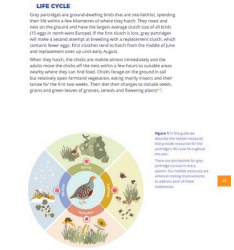
The book examines the cornerstones of partridge conservation: looking at the habitats that partridges need for nesting, raising their young, winter cover and food; and how to manage predation pressures. It then describes the benefits of each measure to other wildlife present on farmland. It also discusses the various roles of farmer, hunter, general public, advisory body and scientist in restoring farmland biodiversity.

‘Farming with Nature’ has been written by two of the GWCT’s leading conservation scientists, Julie Ewald and Francis Buner, and GWCT science writer Jen Brewin. The 104-page book features wonderful illustrations and is produced to the highest printing standards, including lay-flat binding for easier reading.

To order a copy of ‘Farming with Nature’ for just £12, please visit www.gwctshop.org.uk.

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Company Contact:

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E. press@gwct.org.uk
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