



for birds
for people
for ever

Skylark



This brown farmland bird has a distinct crest. It is best known for its loud, continuous warbling song high in the air.

CALENDAR

Breeding season:

Mid-April to August, with up to three broods per season.

Nest:

On the ground in grass or arable crops.

Winter:

Skylarks form flocks and will leave upland areas in favour of lower ground nearer the coast.

HABITAT

Skylarks are still common, but probably declining in Ireland. In spring and summer, they nest in pastures and meadows in both upland and lowland areas, as well as in arable crops, dunes and moorland. In winter, they can be found on stubble, root crops and permanent pasture.

DIET

Adults feed on a range of insect and plant food taken on the ground. Seeds and shoots such as those of nettles, dock and knotgrass are taken as well as invertebrates such as beetles, grasshoppers and spiders. Chicks are fed almost entirely on insects.

HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE SKYLARKS?

- Avoid rolling meadows after March.
- Avoid applying fertilisers or slurry to unimproved pastures during the breeding season.
- Delay the first silage cut until the end of May and leave at least seven weeks between successive silage cuts to allow for successful nesting.
- Set-aside can provide safe nesting habitat if it can remain uncut and unsprayed until August.
- Keep winter stubbles for feeding. Skylarks prefer those that are left untouched and contain plenty of annual broadleaved plants.
- Unsprayed fodder crops, such as turnips, which are strip-grazed through the winter, can be particularly beneficial to skylarks.

You can get further information on this and other ways of managing your farm for wildlife from:



The RSPB,
Northern Ireland HQ,
Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast BT8 7QT.
Tel: 028 9049 1547



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Skylark distribution

Data provided by *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland 1988–1991*. British Trust for Ornithology, Scottish Ornithologists' Club and Irish Wildbird Conservancy (now known as Birdwatch Ireland).



Filled dot = breeding

Open dot = present during the breeding season