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# Yellowhammer



M Lane (rspb-images.com)

The male has a distinctive song, said to sound like 'a little bit of bread and no cheese'.

## CALENDAR

### Breeding season:

April to July, with two or three broods per season.

### Nest:

Built on or close to the ground usually in hedges or on banks.

### Winter:

Yellowhammers form flocks with other buntings and finches.

## HABITAT

In summer, yellowhammers are found in open farmland, particularly arable and mixed farming areas. Thick hedges or gorse scrub are essential for nesting. In winter, yellowhammers form flocks and feed in areas of mixed farmland, particularly stubble fields and farmyards where grain has been spilt.

## DIET

Insects and seeds, as well as some fruits in summer. In winter, their diet relies much more heavily on seeds and grain, hence the importance of stubbles. The chicks are fed mostly on insects for a couple of weeks after hatching.

## HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE YELLOWHAMMERS?

- Manage hedgerows sympathetically to provide good cover, especially at the base.
- Create rough grass field margins adjacent to the hedge for nesting cover and a source of insect food for chicks.
- Avoid cutting hedges, ditches and field margins between March and August to protect nesting birds.
- Sow spring cereals and retain the stubbles for as long as possible over winter, ideally until the end of March. Do not spray stubbles for weeds.
- Create a wild bird cover strip along a field margin to provide seed food through the winter.

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



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## Yellowhammer 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