



Fact sheet 1

Restoring wild grey partridges to your farm

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust is leading the way in restoring sustainable numbers of wild grey partridges to the UK's farmland. We are the Government's appointed lead partner to see that the targets to restore grey partridges are achieved by the 2010 deadline. These published Government targets are:

1. To halt the decline by 2005.
2. Ensure the population is above 90,000 pairs by 2010.
3. Enhance the current geographical range of this species, where biologically feasible.

Full details of the grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) action plan can be found at www.ukbap.org.uk

We are acutely aware that delivery of these targets can happen only with the full co-operation of farmers, land managers and gamekeepers. To help encourage them, we have produced a series of fact sheets to help create and improve habitats, provide food and shelter, and protect partridges from predators.

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

For over 75 years our scientists have been researching why species like the grey partridge, water vole, corn bunting and black grouse have declined. We are continually developing practical measures to reverse these declines.

Our aim is simple - a thriving countryside rich in game and other wildlife.

We are an independent charity reliant on voluntary donations and the support of people who care about the survival of our natural heritage.

Help ensure the grey partridge population is above 90,000 pairs by 2010. © Alexis de la Serre



Why should you read this fact sheet?

This series of fact sheets explains how to restore grey partridges on your farm, based on the results of our practical research. Restoring these birds on farmland will help us to achieve Biodiversity Action Plan targets for this and other BAP species, including other ground-nesting birds and rare arable wildflowers. It will also allow you to achieve the best out of your wild gamebirds.

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What do you need to do?

Grey partridges need certain resources (food, habitats to live in, to be free of predator pressure) at crucial times of the year. Each fact sheet gives you a simple guide to what is needed and how it can be achieved. Some of the issues addressed are more important than others, but all should be considered if you want to restore grey partridges to your land.

The habitats you will need to create on your farm are:

1. Nesting cover:
2. Brood-rearing cover for food and shelter:
3. Winter cover for food and shelter:

You may also choose to:

4. Control predators.
5. Provide additional winter and spring food.

Information on all these issues is covered in the fact sheets, but if you require more detail, a professional, on-farm Advisory Service is available, that can give one-to-one advice about the best way forward on your individual farm. To book a visit, please call the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's Advisory Service on 01425 651013.

Points to remember

- If you have a wild stock (even at a low density) you should strive to increase this stock by implementing the measures outlined in these fact sheets. If you have only two pairs per 100 hectares, very soon you could have four, then six and so on. With enough people doing their best we will soon achieve the national target. Remember, every one counts!
- The grey partridge lays more eggs than any other British bird. The average number of chicks hatched is 15. Therefore the ability of this species to recover quickly is huge. You only need a few more successful coveys or a few more chicks per covey to increase your partridge densities greatly. Small changes can make big differences.
- Don't rush into releasing reared birds until you have explored the idea of increasing your wild stocks. Releasing will probably do more harm than good.
- We are working on ways to release reared greys to re-stock farmland for those who have no wild stock left.

Count your birds

If you do get started and try to restore your grey partridges, please join our Partridge Count Scheme (PCS) and let us have your count data. If we are to report in 2010 on the state of grey partridges in the UK we will need good quality data from as many contributing farms as possible.

Steps to take

1. Join the Partridge Count Scheme.

2. Get a target for your farm (just send us a map of your farm, we will send you your personal target).
3. Get advice (contact our advisory team - see box below) and attend your regional grey partridge group.
4. Start managing for grey partridges.
5. Let us have the data.
6. Good luck and remember, every one counts!

Also remember, the prescriptions for the sympathetic management of farmland to encourage grey partridges (provision of food, shelter, habitats etc) will benefit a whole range of other farmland wildlife including many other BAP species, so the good you do will be of immense value. Be proud of your achievements!

Manage your land for grey partridges and help us achieve the national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) target.



More information

To join the Partridge Count Scheme contact 01425 651066 or email partridgecountscheme@gct.org.uk

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's Advisory Service can provide further advice on feeding systems for gamebirds, and on all aspects of game management. For information, please contact 01425 651013.

