

DEPLOY MINK rafts on the waterways around the shoot. Mass kills by mink in your release pen are worth avoiding.



CONSIDER GROWING quick catch crops such as fodder radish and forage rape to enhance your plots.



IMPROVE THE ground cover in your woodlands by using brush piles and dead hedges.



Crop. © Kings

Conservation

Creating the ultimate... *turtle dove habitat*

The iconic purring call of the turtle dove in summer is now a rarity. One of our most threatened breeding birds, this beautiful migrant has suffered a 91% decline in UK breeding territories since 1995. There are various pressures on our turtle doves, including unsustainable shooting on their migration route and habitat loss in their wintering grounds, but of utmost concern to us is their lack of breeding success here in the UK. From the 1970s onwards, turtle doves have produced significantly fewer chicks. Challenges to brood-rearing include lack of seed foraging habitat, fewer suitable ponds for drinking and increased numbers of generalist nest predators.

Create a drinking source

Turtle dove chicks are fed a 'crop milk' of water and seed, so it's important to provide summer-long clean water sources with walk-in access. Seek technical advice before creating a pond.

- Site near suitable nesting and foraging habitat.
- Design a scrape (4m x 4m x 0.75m deep) in a naturally wet area, making sure the margins have a gentle slope. Well-drained sites may need lining.
- For a quick fix, flood livestock troughs regularly to create puddles on the ground.



DID YOU KNOW?

Turtle doves are one of our most threatened birds suffering a 91% decline since 1995.



Jess Brooks is our farmland biodiversity advisor and has an in-depth knowledge of farmland wildlife and habitats.

Create a foraging area

- In pastoral areas/gardens, try supplementary feeding small grain (eg. oilseed rape) on bare ground and tracks near nesting sites.
- On arable land cultivate a strip or plot to encourage small-seeded weeds like annual meadow grass, chickweed and fumitory (no crop or inputs). A mix of autumn- and spring-cultivated plots is best. Injurious weeds can be spot-treated.
- These plots can count towards EFA Greening and are funded under Countryside Stewardship option AB11.



Turtle doves nest in dense broadleaved or coniferous hedges and scrub (at least 4m x 4m), especially with climbers (eg. honeysuckle, wild clematis). Operating a Larsen trap in the spring to remove aggressive territorial magpies from turtle dove nesting areas can give them the best chance of survival.



MORE INFORMATION

For targeted advice please contact us on 01425 651013 or go to www.gwct.org.uk/advisory.

For more information on turtle doves and to report any sightings go to www.operationturtledove.org.