

## South Downs

**More.  
Bigger.  
Better.  
Connected.**

**The South Downs Farmland Birds Initiative** is a compelling project and a perfect example of Futurescapes in practice, looking at ways of boosting key farmland bird species by using the management options available through Environmental Stewardship. The initiative concentrates on three priority farmland birds – lapwings, grey partridges and corn buntings. Providing habitat for these species will also have major benefits for other farmland wildlife such as turtle doves, linnets, skylarks, yellowhammers, brown hares, butterflies and wildflowers. The mixed farming, light soils and spring cropping found across the South Downs and Coastal Plain provide a diverse habitat, thus allowing many possibilities for habitat management. In order to achieve a healthier level of biodiversity across these habitats, we are encouraging farmers and land managers to adopt measures that provide the 'Big 3': *safe nesting habitat, summer feeding areas and winter feeding areas.*

Contact: Rachel Whitfield  
South Downs Futurescape  
Community Engagement Officer  
e: [rachel.whitfield@rspb.org.uk](mailto:rachel.whitfield@rspb.org.uk)  
Phone: 07540 121466  
[www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes](http://www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes)

RSPB South East Regional Office  
1st Floor, Pavilion View  
19 New Road  
Brighton  
BN1 1UF



The South Downs includes some of our most iconic countryside, running right across south east England from the chalk hills of Hampshire to the spectacular sea cliffs at Beachy Head. It takes in river valleys, woodlands and heaths as well as flower-rich grassland and rolling farmland. It is a nationally important landscape, recognised by its status as our newest National Park.

The South Downs landscape contains some of the most diverse and yet threatened habitats and species in south east England. It is one of the best places for the RSPB to concentrate our efforts, working in partnership with others, to save declining wildlife. We will focus our work on habitats such as chalk grassland, heathland, farmland and river floodplains, and on bird species such as lapwings, corn buntings, grey partridges, stone curlews and nightjars.

The purpose of Futurescapes is to promote landscape-scale conservation through collective action and partnership. The RSPB will be working in partnership with the South Downs National Park, National Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and Our Land (a sustainable tourism initiative).



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