

## February - The South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative



This initiative concentrates on three bird species – Lapwing, Grey Partridge and Corn Bunting. Providing habitat for these birds will also have major benefits for other farmland species like Skylark, Linnet, Yellowhammer, Turtle dove, Brown hare and in many cases rare arable plants. These species occur across the South Downs and Coastal Plain, so habitat creation anywhere in the area will be beneficial. Being relatively high up the food chain, farmland birds are a good indicator of the level of biodiversity on farms. Thriving bird populations indicate that the lower end of the food chain e.g. beetles, spiders, insects, worms, broadleaved weed seeds etc, is also healthy. In order to achieve this, the South Downs Joint Committee, Natural England and the RSPB, are encouraging farmers and land managers to adopt measures that provide the ‘Big 3’ – safe nesting habitat, summer and winter feeding areas. Research has shown that if sufficient quantities of the ‘Big 3’ are provided for farmland birds, their populations can be boosted.

**For information on the South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative contact [rjames@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk](mailto:rjames@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk).**