



BRIDE Project
Farming with Nature

BRIDE Project

Newsletter January 2020

PROJECT UPDATE

The first official meeting of our 44 selected BRIDE Project farmers happened in December when they were filled in and updated on progress to date. All have now got their plans to carry out environmental improvements on their farms over the next 2 years and these are already underway. Several mini woodlands and new BRIDE mix hedgerows have been planted. Pond excavation and pollinator plots are on hold until the spring or when the weather becomes suitable. Farm specific bird boxes are being erected this month with 10 barn owl nestboxes being erected along with house sparrow, starling, kestrel, swift, stock dove and spotted flycatcher boxes also going up. Ian Carroll gave a demonstration on the night of an effective rodent trap that the project will subsidise to farmers wanting a rodenticide alternative.

to great trouble to ensure the birds bred successfully.



Skylark photo taken on the farm of Mary Fouhy by Project Administrator Sinéad Hickey

The Results-based Payment system will commence in the summer and improvements to its design and roll-out are being applied all the time to ensure farmers can understand how it will work and how the habitats will be scored. A BRIDE Habitat Management Guidelines booklet is almost complete and will be issued to all farmer participants this month to give guidance and best practice in ensuring all habitats are managed properly for biodiversity improvement.

MONTHLY REMINDERS

December and January are the months to erect bird nest boxes. Barn owl boxes, in particular, should be erected in any old or disused building as they are now looking for potential nest sites. Choose a site at least 3m above the ground, making sure it can't be accessed by predators such as cats. Starling and house sparrow nest boxes should ideally be located indoors, in a shed, as they will last longer and chicks won't be exposed to the elements.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

This is the time of the year when farmers replace broken fence posts. Consider giving something back to nature by moving hedgerow fenceposts out 2m from the hedge to create a **field margin**.



BRIDE Project Farmers at our December meeting

Pride of place on the night went to dairy farmers Batt Sheehan and Mary Fouhy who became the first recipients of the BRIDE Target Species Payment. Both had skylark on their farms in 2019 and went

Over time as old fenceposts are replaced you will have created a new habitat for birds, bees, butterflies and small mammals.

Between now and March is a good time for **planting hedgerows and trees**. When planting hedgerows, allow 3 plants per metre (210 plants per 100m) with a distance of 0.5m between plants in a zig-zag formation. Use as many species as possible in the planting mix – the BRIDE Project uses a minimum of 8 native species from its list. The BRIDE tree planting list contains only native species also, with a planting density of 1600 trees per hectare from the list. Some species are only suitable for specific soil types and conditions – get advice before planting.

BRIDE Hedgerow Mix	
Species	Latin Name
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Purging Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Grey Willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Crab Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Alder Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
Wild Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
BRIDE Woodland Mix	
Species	Latin Name
Sessile Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Grey Willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Downy Birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>

SUSTAINABLE FARMING TIP

McDonnells Grain merchants based in Coolagown in the Bride valley have just introduced a native grain cereal mix ration for livestock. This mix is derived from cereals grown by local farmers and contains no imported ingredients. This pilot initiative is very welcome as



it gives livestock farmers the opportunity to support their cereal growing neighbours and the tillage sector. It also provides an alternative to imported ingredients from abroad that may be contributing to biodiversity loss in other countries. Further down the line it is an opportunity to guarantee full traceability on ingredients that go in to produce milk and beef and thus strengthen the concept of farm to fork. McDonnells deliver all over Munster and can be contacted on 025 31166 for further details.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR . . .

January on farmland can be very much quieter than the other seasons with regard to wildlife. Nevertheless, winter migrant birds such as redwing and fieldfare can be seen in our fields and hedgerows, feeding on berries or worms. Walking through any grass fields could disturb snipe or meadow pipit (possible migrants also). Most berries have now been eaten or have fallen but the berries of the ivy (image below) can still be seen and are a valuable food source for birds.



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