

RSPB Hope Farm

- 181ha (147 cropped, rest as stewardship, paddocks, woodland, ponds and yard / tracks)
- Hanslope to Evesham clay series (heavy!)
- RSPB owned, contract farmed with MT Lines & Partners
- Demonstrating nature friendly farming with an open book – tracking impact on business and biodiversity on farm
- Including research trials on habitat delivery, regen practices, impact on business, climate, and biodiversity
- 25 years of monitoring in the making



Approaches at Hope Farm to managing pests with reduced synthetic chemical inputs

- Diversity is key (cropping and habitats)
- Connecting habitats for beneficials across the farm
- Spread risk as much as practically possible
- Not organic, but chemical inputs as genuine last resort
- Ensuring economics stack up, with consideration for environmental impacts
- SFI helps with the loss of BPS, but we haven't chased the payments – just using what fits with our system.
- Reducing inputs with monitoring
- Phasing out what's on PAN's highly hazardous pesticides list
- No insecticides
- Aims to de-risk the business but isn't a silver bullet.



Delivery for nature to help us on the farm

- Cutting out awkward / unprofitable areas that grow stressed crops, more susceptible to disease, higher COP/t
- Thinking about what does wildlife need? Being efficient in our delivery for food and wildlife
 - Somewhere to eat, find refuge, breed
- Farm Wildlife key actions help to plan and deliver for nature in general. Saves getting complicated trying to cater for everything individually!
- Payments give guaranteed income to assist with the delivery – make use of it as part of farmed system
- SFI isn't a handout – it's a means to try regenerative techniques and think about the whole farmed system, including habitat delivery. Requires planning to make best use



Helping crops to help themselves

- Soil health is key and in tricky seasons, trumps all
 - Nutrient access – balanced diet
 - Reducing waterlogging
 - Reducing drought stress
 - Reducing risk to pests (and disease)
- Delivered through:
 - Drainage
 - Organic matter
 - Diversify rotation as much as practically possible
 - Maintain flexibility and openness to other options
 - Then start adding in other stuff...
 - (in that order?)



A few things we've been trialling – including agronomic impacts and delivery for biodiversity

- Cover crops and compost
- Growing oilseed rape with trap crops and companion crops
- Inclusion of in field wildflower strips (ASSIST trial)
- Agroforestry

