



media release

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Blandford soldiers win bird feeding battle **PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY FRIDAY 10 JUNE see Editors' notes**

Army personnel from Blandford camp in Dorset have come out on top in a battle to be the best at feeding farmland birds.

Three MoD camps from across Dorset competed against each other in an event staged by the RSPB to raise awareness of the problems faced by farmland birds.

Numbers of birds such as linnets, corn buntings and yellowhammers have decreased dramatically across Dorset - and the UK as a whole - and the charity says feeding them and improving the sort of places they live and breed is vitally important.

Julia Gallagher, the RSPB's Wessex team manager judged the competition. She said: 'The enthusiasm shown by army personnel during the competition is really impressive, the runners-up deserve a pat on the back as much as the winners for taking the problems our farmland birds face so seriously and doing their bit to help.'

The camps that took place were Blandford, Bovington and Lulworth; they scored 716, 544 and 201 points respectively.

Julia added: 'Blandford started the competition by carrying out plenty of research about where to put their feeding station and bird table and this definitely paid off.'

At one point during the winter, Blandford counted 50 of the 'red listed' yellowhammer at one time as well as attracting other threatened species to feed at the camp.

Steve Davies organised Blandford's winning effort. He said: 'I'm ecstatic that we've won because it's something we always wanted to do and I was keen to see what birds would turn up.'

He added that he and his team were planning to continue their bird feeding efforts.

The RSPB's South West regional director, Tony Richardson, will present the winners with a special plaque at a ceremony at Blandford camp this Friday (10 June).

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