

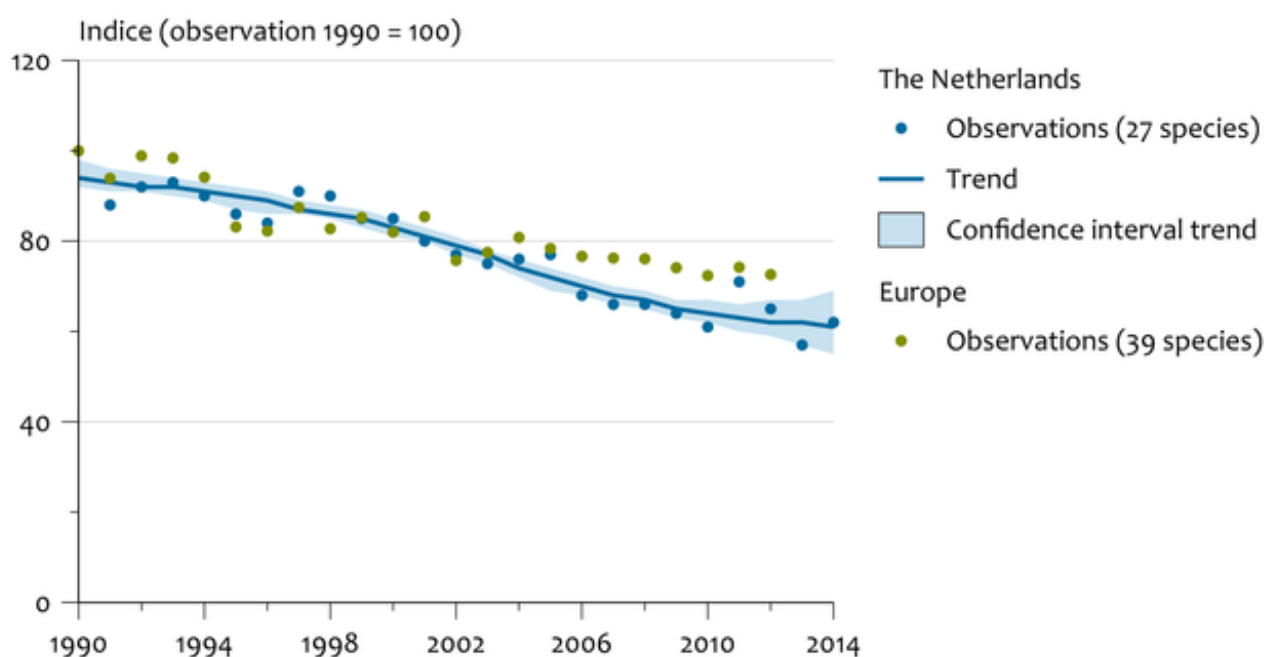
Farmland birds, 1990-2014

Indicator | 14 July 2015

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Changes in agricultural practices have caused the number of breeding birds to dwindle in agricultural areas in the Netherlands. This pattern is found across the entire EU.

Farmland birds



Source: NEM (Sovon, CBS), EBCC.

CBS/Jul15
www.clo.nl/nl147907

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- [Download data \(xls\)](#) [3]

Developments in the Netherlands

Breeding birds typical of agricultural areas in the Netherlands are dwindling. The "farmland bird indicator" has declined by 30% since 1990. This indicator is the national version of the "Farmland Bird Indicator" (FBI) of the European Union. In the EU FBI version, 27 species, which are frequently found in the Netherlands, have been selected. Most of these species are dwindling in numbers, (see Download figuurdata (Excel), table trend indices per species).

Developments in the European Union

Developments regarding farmland birds are largely the same in the Netherlands although in the

European Union since 2004 the decreasing trend seems less steep. The EU FBI covers 39 breeding bird species. The EU uses this FBI as a tool to measure biodiversity in agricultural areas. Changes in the farmland bird population also apply to many other groups of species in agricultural areas.

Causes for the decline in the Netherlands

The decline in farmland birds is predominantly due to more intensive farming methods, changes in the choice of crops and agricultural scale-up programmes. As a result of these developments, many small elements in the landscape, like hedge rows and small pieces of land unused on account of their location have disappeared. Breeding areas are also reduced due to urbanisation, infrastructural projects and busier road traffic. Measures taken in recent years, e.g. management of field edges and agricultural areas have not been enough to put an end to the decline.

Causes for the decline in Europe

In north-western Europe roughly the same factors apply as in the Netherlands. Furthermore, in eastern and southern Europe, natural habitats are lost as agricultural activities in poor agricultural areas are discontinued. Subsequently, the landscape will become more encroached by shrubs and bushes..

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Reference for this page

CBS, PBL, RIVM, WUR (2015). [Farmland birds, 1990-2014](#) [6] (indicator 1479, version 07 , 14 July 2015). www.environmentaldata.nl. Statistics Netherlands (CBS), The Hague; PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, The Hague; RIVM National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Bilthoven; and Wageningen University and Research, Wageningen.

**Links**

[1] <https://www.clo.nl/en/indicatoren/en1479> [2]

https://www.clo.nl/sites/default/files/infographics/1479_001g_clo_07_en.png [3]

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<http://regiebureau-pop.eu/nl/info/1/> [6] <https://www.clo.nl/indicatoren/en147907>