

Scottish Lowland Farmland Curlew Conference  
Battleby, Perth, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018



**Working  
for Waders**

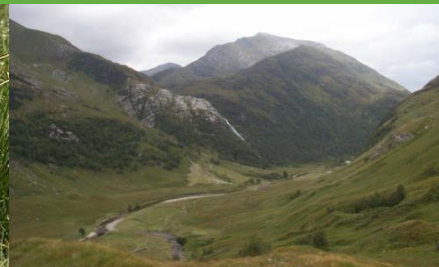


# Do agri-environment schemes work for curlew?

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*Leading the way in Agriculture and Rural Research, Education and Consulting*

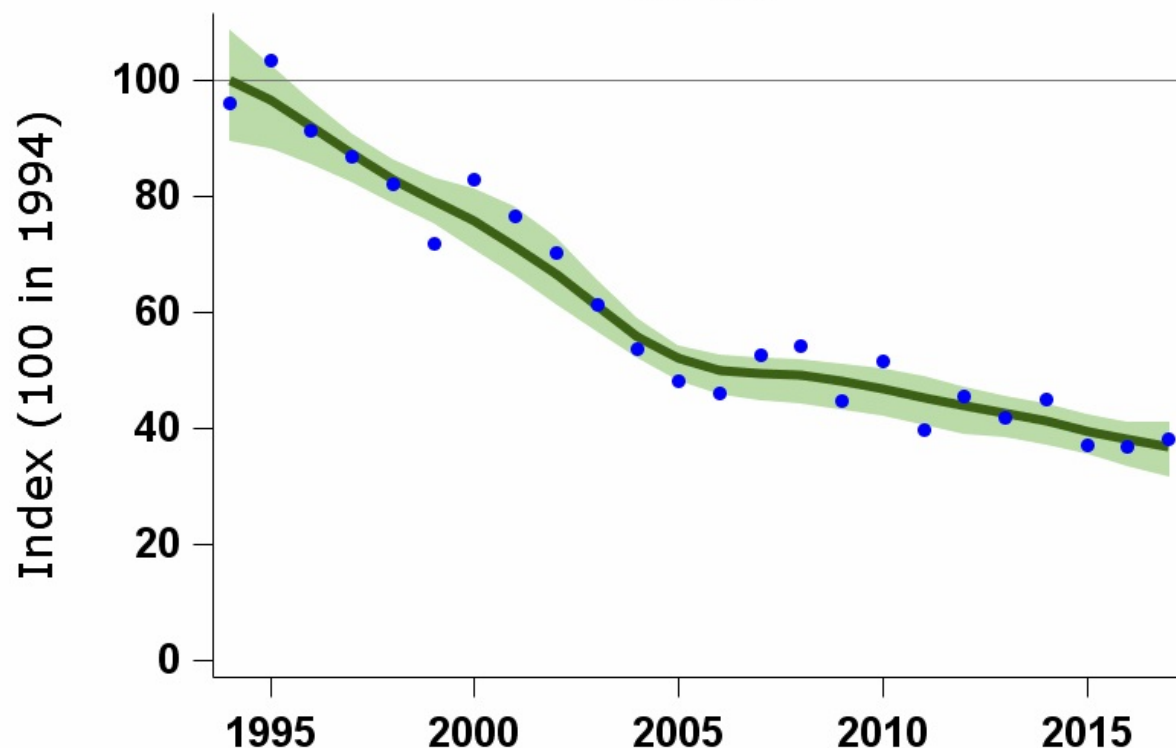
# Extracted from the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey



**Working  
for Waders**



BBS index for Scotland 1994-2017  
Curlew



**But:**

- what type of 'schemes' have curlew had?
- what type of 'schemes' do curlew need?

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/latest-results/trend-graphs>



# Taking action for any type of biodiversity issue involves:



- Recognising what the issues are
- Understanding the processes involved
- Raising awareness of the concern and the issues
- Ensuring they are a policy priority
- Identifying: how much, where and in what condition
- Developing and delivering appropriate funding mechanisms at the relevant scales
- Monitoring outcomes & adapting the approach if needed





# Taking that approach, targeted action can work:

10/11/2017

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## Scottish Corncrake numbers at lowest level since 2003

RSPB Scotland has announced that Corncrake numbers have decreased for the third year running, with 2017's count of calling males being the lowest total recorded since 2003.

Only 866 calling males could be found during the annual survey, a drop of 17 per cent from 2016 and an alarming 33 per cent down from the 2014 high of 1,289 males.

Among the most worrying results was the discovery that Benbecula's population had declined by 64 per cent since last year, while the Durness area of Highland witnessed a 53 per cent drop over the same period. However, there were glimmers of hope: Barra and Vatersay's Corncrake population had increased by 47 per cent on 2016.

The overall sharp decline has prompted concern from RSPB Scotland that the long-term survival of Corncrake as a breeding species in Scotland is now under threat. The organisation is calling for renewed action to ensure that the Scottish government and the conservation community do all they can to work with landowners and crofters to protect the species. Numbers haven't been this low since 2003, when just 836 males were recorded.



<https://www.birdguides.com/news/scottish-corncrake-numbers-at-lowest-level-since-2003/>

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## Record increase in Scottish Corn Bunting population

It revealed a record increase in one of the species'

in Angus and the East on behind the the species.

united by RSPB Scotland record increase in Corn with it also proving an life, Corn Bunting 42 territories recorded, rease noted in 2016.

l by 26.3 per cent. This includes a range expansion towards Montrose, od 2017 was predicted for Angus on the basis that all surviving buntings in factors: safe nesting spaces, winter seed food and summer insect food for g territories.



# Curlew in Scotland?:



- Recognising what the issues are
- Understanding the processes involved
- Raising awareness of the concern and the issues
- Ensuring they are a policy priority

## Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

Report to the Scottish Parliament

2014 - 2016

SG/2017/10  
July 2017



“The decline in farmland waders, such as the lapwing and curlew, is an on-going concern. Several studies have looked at ways to improve breeding success for waders but, so far, not at a sufficiently large scale to affect national trends.”





# Curlew in Scotland?:



- Identifying: how much, where and in what condition

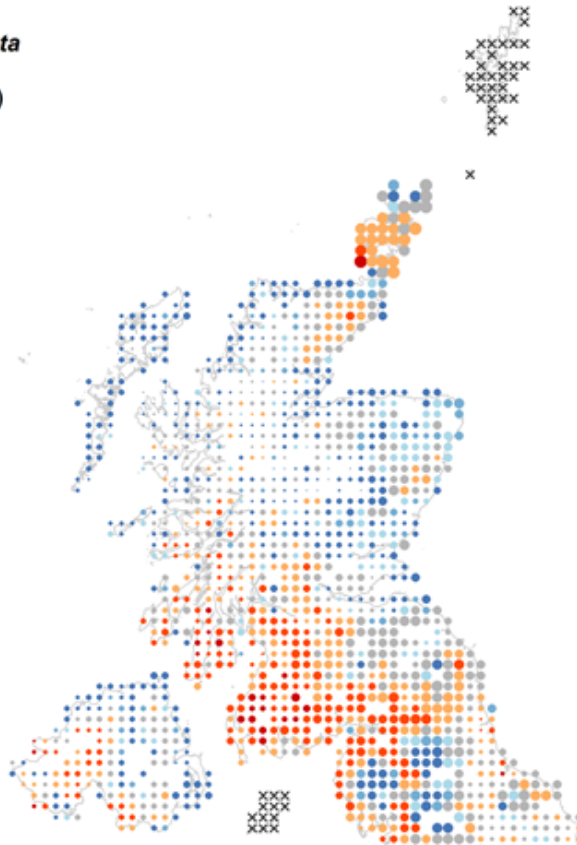
Curlew  
*Numenius arquata*

Density (birds/km<sup>2</sup>)

- > 20
- 10 – 20
- 5 – 10
- 2.5 – 5
- 1.25 – 2.5
- 0.62 – 1.25
- 0.31 – 0.62
- 0.16 – 0.31
- 0.08 – 0.16
- 0 – 0.08

Relative change  
in density

- > 75%
- 50% to 75%
- 25% to 50%
- -25% to 25%
- -50% to -25%
- -75% to -50%
- < -75%
- x insufficient data



Change between 1994-96  
and 2007-09

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/latest-results/maps-population-density-and-trends>

But:

- Lack of detailed survey and monitoring across much of Scotland
- Especially the local level knowledge of issues needed to help target action



# Curlew in Scotland?:



<https://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/SRDP/RuralPriorities/Packages/FarmlandWaders>

- **Developing and delivering appropriate funding mechanisms at the relevant scales**

**But:**

**These Options will help achieve the desired outcome in specific circumstances:**

- [Mown grassland for wildlife](#)
- [Management of species-rich grassland](#)
- [Creation and management of species-rich grassland](#)
- [Open grazed or wet grassland for wildlife](#)
- [Management of wetland](#)
- [Create, restore and manage wetland](#)
- [Management of flood plains](#)
- [Buffer areas for fens and lowland raised bogs](#)
- [Management/restoration of lowland raised bogs](#)
- [Management of habitat mosaics](#)
- [Mammal and bird control - 1 Predator Control](#)
- [Mammal and bird control - 2 Crow Control](#)
- [Off-wintering of sheep](#)
- [Biodiversity cropping on in-bye](#)
- [Cropped machair](#)
- [Skills development](#)

- **Curlew need a selection of complex habitats at a landscape scale**
- **Quite broad-brush often very prescriptive options**
- **Lack of facilitation in many areas to help target appropriate options**
- **Competitive scheme with associated difficulty of getting smaller farms to engage**





# Could agri-environment schemes work for curlew in Scotland?:



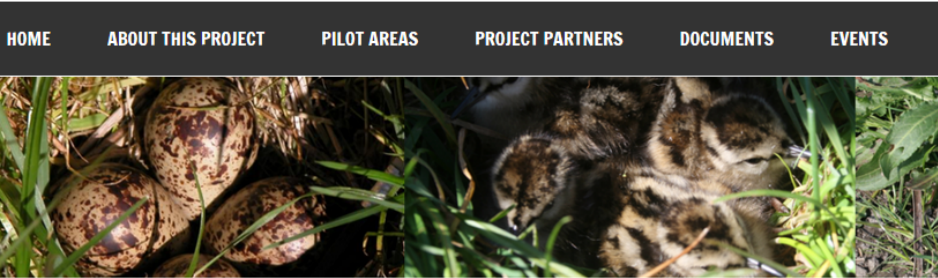


# Could agri-environment schemes work for curlew in Scotland?:



## RBAPS Project

Developing Results Based Agri-environmental Payment Schemes in Ireland and Spain



### RBAPS SHANNON CALLOWS BREEDING WADER MEASURE

A new results-based agri-environment pilot scheme (RBAPS) will be trialled in the Shannon Callows, Ireland. One of the aims of this trial is to test whether results-based schemes can conserve and increase breeding wader populations and their habitats. This breeding wader measure will focus on Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe. Essential breeding habitats for these species include wet grasslands and damp pastures. These habitats provide crucial areas for waders to nest and raise their chicks. The RBAPS Shannon Callows Breeding Wader Option is designed to encourage farmers to deliver results that provide for breeding waders, their habitats and wider biodiversity in the Shannon Callows.

<https://rbaps.eu/pilot-areas/rbaps-measures-in-ireland/shannon-callows/breeding-waders/>

An environment scheme that has really blossomed

<https://www.nfuonline.com/about-us/our-offices/north-east/north-east-must-read/an-environment-scheme-that-has-really-blossomed/>



As a three-year pilot exploring a more flexible and practical approach to environmental delivery in the Yorkshire Dales comes to an end, the NFU's Environment Forum went to see for themselves how it has worked. Regional environment adviser James Copeland writes:

The performance of current agri-environment schemes and the development of new schemes for a post-Brexit landscape are the focus of much debate amongst farmers, environmentalists and politicians.

With the current Countryside Stewardship Scheme under-subscribed, largely thanks to its very prescriptive approach, and farmers still reporting ongoing delays in agri-environment payments, it's no wonder there is real interest in what the next reincarnation could look like. Many members express their concern that the benefits of decades of environmental delivery could be lost if the approach post-Brexit fails to hit the mark, and with uncertainty about the level of support that will be made available to the industry in the future, it's never been more important to come up with a formula that builds on the environmental success of recent years and delivers a workable option for farmers as they move into a new era of 'public money for public goods'.

Of particular interest has been the three-year pilot scheme that has been running in the Yorkshire Dales and in Norfolk and Suffolk funded by Natural England in conjunction with the Yorkshire Dales National Park.





**Working for Waders is taking active steps to reverse the decline of wading birds in Scotland.**

Much of this work will depend upon the support and backing of people across Scotland - whether you are a farmer, forester, birdwatcher or rambler, we need you to **get involved and spread the word!**

If you're involved in work to conserve waders in Scotland, please take a moment to fill out our [online survey](#) to let us know about it.

If you'd like to find out more about the project, send an email to [info@workingforwaders.com](mailto:info@workingforwaders.com) or contact us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

### **1. IDENTIFY WADER PRIORITY AREAS**

This will help to inform decisions about where to focus management and other conservation-related actions for waders.

### **2. PRODUCE A WADER PROJECT MAP**

Develop and expand the map showing local action for waders across Scotland.

### **5. CARRY OUT WADER MONITORING & CONSERVATION IN EAST SCOTLAND**

Based on continued farm survey, advisory, liaison and management planning work.

### **6. DEVELOP WADER FIELDWORK GUIDANCE**

Develop guidance material to help a wide variety of stakeholders select the most appropriate field methods for collecting information on wader numbers



# Working for Waders



### **3. EXPLORE WADER FACILITATION FUND**

Work up concept for 'farmer cluster' working for wader conservation in future agri-environment schemes to inform future facilitation fund.

### **4. IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO BLOCKAGES TO WORKING COLLABORATIVELY**

Produce short report identifying main issues and proposing practical solutions to blockages.

### **7. SCOPE A WADER INFORMATION HUB**

An information Hub will provide a central repository for wader data to allow the outcomes of ongoing management and monitoring to be widely reported and shared.

### **8. PRODUCE BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON WADERS**

Produce Best Practice Guidance on managing land for waders as part of the Principles of Moorland Management.

