Managing Predators for Meadow Birds
Daniel Brown - Senior Conservation Advisor

Recent wader extinctions… a consequence of multiple threats

CR (PE) Eskimo Curlew *Numenius borealis*

Large-scale spring hunting in North America partially explains the species's potential extinction, but there was no recovery after hunting was outlawed and abandoned in c. 1916 (Gill *et al*. 1998). The main cause is almost certainly the near total loss of prairies to agriculture, compounded by the suppression of prairie wildfires and the extinction of *M. spretus* (Gill *et al*. 1998). The widespread conversion of the pampas began after the main decline, but has hindered any possible recovery (Gill *et al*. 1998).

CR Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*

Threats on the breeding grounds are unknown. Within its potential breeding range, the taiga has been little modified, the forest-steppe partially cultivated and much of the steppe modified by agriculture. Habitat loss in the wintering grounds is of unknown importance. There has been extensive drainage of wetlands in the Mediterranean and North Africa and potentially important areas in Iraq. The conversion of European wetlands and central European steppes to arable farmland may have heavily impacted the species by depriving it of important habitats during migration (Gretton 1991). Historically hunting was high, and may have been the key factor in its decline. Following the initial decline, breakdown of social behaviour patterns may have prevented recovery. Historically a gregarious species, smaller groups or individuals may have difficulty in locating suitable stop-over sites on migration (Gretton 1991). Individuals may join flocks of *N. arquata*, being led to unsuitable wintering habitat and rendered unlikely to find a mate (Gretton 1991).

EX Canarian Oystercatcher *Haematopus meadewaldoi*

Its decline was probably a result of overharvesting of intertidal invertebrates and disturbance by people (Hockey 1987), although predation by rats and cats has also been implicated (Collar and Stuart 1985).

Europe's declining waders…

TECHNICAL SERIES No. 58

AEWA

International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Eurasian Curlew

Numenius arquata arquata, N. a. orientalis and *N. a. suschkini*

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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LIFE14 PRE/UK/000002 Project

- Final Draft -

International Multi-Species Action Plan for the Conservation of Breeding Waders in Wet Grassland Habitats in Europe (2018 – 2028)

NABU MAVA BirdLife Vogelbescherming rspb giving nature a home

EU Multi-Species Action Plan for Conservation of Breeding Waders on Wet Grassland Habitats

2 – FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Table 5. Summary Table of Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal	• support the recovery of wet grassland breeding wader populations by maintaining or where necessary improving the habitat and management conditions at a coherent network of large-scale wet grassland areas in the EU • to support public awareness campaigns and education by promoting wide-ranging stakeholder partnerships				
High Level Actions	• to halt further population declines so that, at a minimum, current population levels are maintained (see Annex 7), to achieve sustainable breeding success (within local populations) and to restore (parts) of their distribution range				
5 Objectives	**Ensure sufficient and adequate habitats**	**Increase productivity**	**Raise awareness**	**Fill key knowledge gaps**	**Establish structures for MSAP implementation**
32 Actions	Identify Important Breeding Sites	Minimise Losses to Agriculture	Awareness Raising Campaigns	Learning From Past Experience	Role of NADEG
	Protect Important Breeding Sites	Communicate Role of Agriculture	Environmental Education	Research: Conservation Management	International Coordinator
	Manage Important Breeding Sites	Predation Management	Influencing Consumer Demand	Research: Climate Change	International Working Group
	Monitor Important Breeding Sites	Biosecurity and Predators	Influencing Stakeholders	Research: Pollution	Communication Strategy & Task Force
	Optimise Nature Reserves	Communicate Role of Predation	Forming Partnerships	Cultural Heritage	National Working Groups
	Farmland & Agri-Environment	Update Predation Guidance		Ecosystem Services	National Action Plans
	Other Rural Policies			Improving the CAP	Local Partnerships

Key to the colour of actions

Actions in red: these are actions that have been identified as needing to start immediately i.e. to have started by 2019
Actions in amber: actions with other timescales attached to them – see framework for action for specific details

Local Collaboration Case Study: Clyde Valley Waders

SAC CONSULTING

The Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Clyde Valley Wader Initiative: objectives

1. Identify ‘hotspots’
2. Work with farms and estates to encourage beneficial management
3. Fight damaging developments
4. Monitor local population
5. Promote as partnership project
6. Implement research


Duneaton Water, South Lanarkshire
346 pairs of breeding waders (2011-2015)


South Medwin, South Lanarkshire
100 pairs of breeding waders (2014-2016)
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Watermeetings to Elvanfoot, South Lanarkshire
186 pairs of breeding waders (2012-2015)
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Clyde Valley Wader Initiative: results

Conservation Management

75 farms and estates engaged with through project

Around 40 in agri-environment agreements – over £1 million

Population monitoring

779 breeding pairs from surveyed areas

35 initial and repeat surveys 2013-2018

10% increase across all sites

Highest densities associated with PC – but some exceptions

Local Research - Curlew Trial Management


South Scotland


Caithness, N Scotland


Peaks, S Pennines


Geltsdale, N Pennines


Glenwherry, N Ireland


North Wales Moors

Local Research - Curlew Trial Management

Commencing work for the curlew TMP
Common Farm, East Ayrshire

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Local Research - Curlew Trial Management

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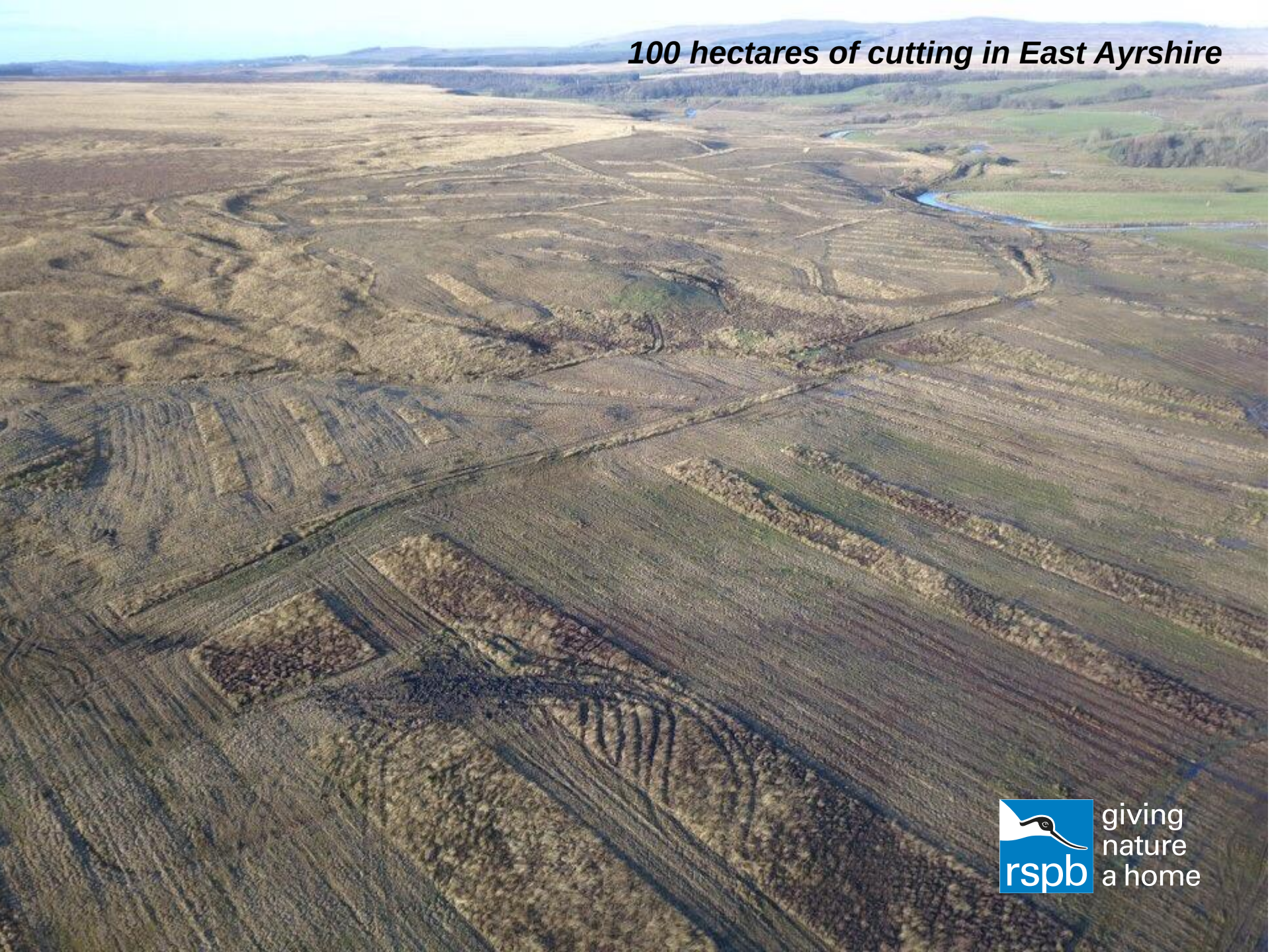
100 hectares of cutting in East Ayrshire
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£700/ha


£120/ha


NEW HOLLAND
£190/ha


£/ha

Local Research - Curlew Trial Management

Useful evidence of factors likely to be influencing high predation rates

- **Fragmentation by forestry**
- **Plantation use (shelter) for foxes during worst weather**
- **Fallen stock**
- **Fly tipping and anti-social behaviour**
- **Use of nest cameras**

National Collaboration Case Study: Scotland

Working for Waders

Preventing the Loss of Scotland's Wading Birds

Working for Waders

- Working for Waders started in 2017 to tackle the decline of wading birds across Scotland.
- The project is actively seeking input and support from anyone with an interest in waders, from farmers and gamekeepers to conservationists and bird watchers.
- Current Working for Waders partners are shown below, but the project is always keen to hear from people and organisations with an interest in wader conservation!

Action!

Working for Waders aims to:

- Raise awareness of wader decline
- Show that declines can be reversed
- Demonstrate the importance of working in partnership

International Collaboration: How do we do it?

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Thank You for Listening