

Supporting guidance for farmland waders

Lapwing

Lapwing nest on spring-tilled arable land and short grassland, including moorland margins and in-bye.

Lapwing nesting on arable land tend to move their chicks to adjacent wet areas and suitably short vegetation, such as grazed pasture, to feed.

They avoid nesting and feeding in areas close to tall tree and shrub cover, therefore, you should avoid planting trees, shrubs or hedges within 30 metres of nest and feeding areas.

Lapwing feed mainly on earthworms, leatherjackets, insects and their larvae, which are generally most abundant in wet grassland and grazed pasture.

Key points

- aim to provide bare ground or short vegetation for nesting from mid-March to June
- unimproved pasture should be managed with no, or very limited, use of fertiliser
- create areas of standing shallow water to provide wet flushes, damp grassland and shallow areas for chicks to feed

[RSPB information on Lapwing](#)

Curlew

Curlew nest in areas with a mixture of short vegetation and tussocks on bogs, open moorland, rough and damp grassland and in unimproved hay meadows.

Their chicks need patches of short vegetation so they can feed on surface-dwelling invertebrates, such as adult flies (particularly dung flies), adult crane-flies, beetles, caterpillars, sawflies and spiders. However, they also require tussocks or taller patches of vegetation to shelter from predators.

You need to retain and restore rough, damp pasture and traditional hay meadows. You should extensively graze in these areas to provide taller vegetation through the breeding season. Also provide damp areas, wet flushes or small, shallow pools as feeding areas for chicks. In hay meadows, the timing of cutting is critical to avoid killing young curlew.

Key points:

- aim to maintain areas of short and taller patches of vegetation
- retain and restore traditional hay meadows and rough grazing pasture, delaying cutting to avoid killing young birds

[RSPB information on Curlew](#)

Redshank

Redshank breed on wet grasslands on upland and lowland farms, as well as on saltmarshes. They feed on insects at the edges of pools and ditches, and are found on wet grassland that holds shallow surface water or damp soil until June.

Redshank prefer fields with a mosaic of short, damp grassland for feeding, and grass or rush tussocks for nesting.

Most redshank overwinter on, or adjacent to, mudflats and estuaries where they obtain the bulk of their food.

Key points:

- extensively graze wet grasslands to provide a mosaic of tall and short vegetation
- provide standing water into May and June as insect-rich feeding areas for chicks

[RSPB information on Redshank](#)

Snipe

Snipe breed in wet flushes on moorland, damp pasture and at the edge of watercourses. They require tussocky vegetation 10 to 30 centimetres tall for breeding and even small, wet corners of fields are used.

Snipe require damp ground and feed mainly on earthworms, leatherjackets, beetles and caterpillars.

Young chicks are generally fed on earthworms collected by the parents around the nesting site.

Key points:

- retain and restore patches of wet ground in grassland and moorland areas
- extensively graze wet grasslands to provide a mosaic of tall and short vegetation, and minimise grazing during the nesting period

[RSPB information on Snipe](#)

Oystercatcher

Oystercatcher nest inland on both arable and grassland fields.

They use short grassland, often in bare or stony areas, on tracks and even on top of fence posts and dykes. They will also nest on spring-sown arable land, on bare plough or fields where the crop is just coming through, or on fallow plots with sparse vegetation and bare ground.

Most UK birds spend the winter on the coast, where they feed on cockles. Inland, their main food source is earthworms.

Key point:

- aim to provide bare ground or short vegetation for nesting

[RSPB information on Oystercatcher](#)