

# Wader Grazed Grassland

**Date published: 31 January, 2025**

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

## Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit breeding ground nesting birds in Spring and Summer, particularly VPS waders such as lapwing, redshank, snipe and curlew.

Excluding or reducing the number of livestock in fields where birds are nesting will reduce the risk of damage to their eggs and fledglings from trampling or field operations.

## Eligibility

Permanent, established grassland is eligible, except hill-rough grazings. Areas proposed for this option **must** be in grass at the point of application.

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

[Assessing your land eligibility](#)

## Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Wader Grazed Grassland \(PDF, Size: 1.0 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Updated-targeting-map---Wader-grazed-grassland-16-12-2015---2.pdf>

This option is available within the target area shown on this map. It may be possible to apply for this option outside this area where there is strong justification as endorsed by NatureScot.

You can check if this option is available on your holding using the search targeting tool which can be found on any of the following AECS guidance pages:

[AECS Home](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[How to Apply](#)

[Management Options and Capital Items](#)

[Capital Items](#)

## Application requirements

You must identify on a map the locations of the area to be managed.

Submit a [Wader Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 1.7 MB\)](#) using this template and complete the online grazing calendar.

If each block that you wish to manage covers more than one field parcel, you need only identify each block with a single map letter.

Where the option is undertaken to benefit lapwing or curlew, each block must extend to at least one hectare. Adjacent fields can be put together as a management area to reach the 1ha requirement.

**Note:**

If your application is to benefit VPS waders, you may score VPS points if you complete and submit the VPS Recording form, before the application deadline (template below). This can be completed by the land manager and is a record of all VPS species found on the farm that may benefit from proposed AECS management. (Further information is on the [VPS guidance page](#) )



[Vulnerable Priority Species recording form \(MS Word, Size: 116.5 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Vulnerable-Priority-Species-recording-form-2.docx>

VPS wader points will only be awarded where the 'best practice' as described in the supporting guidance for this option under 'which fields to choose' has been followed in relation to proximity of hedgerows, scrub, trees or woodland and fields proposed for wader management. For clarity, we will only award VPS points for waders where no land within 30 metres of any hedgerow, scrub, trees or woodland is proposed for management. The 30 metres 'buffer' strips against hedgerows, trees or woodland must be clearly shown on your management map with the width labelled.

### Scoring Additional Points for Waders

You may score additional points if a full wader survey has been carried out and submitted with your application proving that there are breeding waders on your land. This **must** have been completed by a NGO/Project Officer/Ecologist within the last 5 years.

The template to be used for the wader survey is provided below. In addition, surveys following standard methodology (O'Brien & Smith (1992) or Brown & Shepherd (1993)) will also be accepted as long as there is an accompanying map of the farm:



[VPS Wader Survey Template \(MS Word, Size: 28.8 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Wader-survey-template---January-2025.docx>

## Management requirements

You must manage the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract.

You must either:

- Exclude livestock from 1 April to 12 May inclusive, followed by a period of grazing, or
- Exclude livestock from 15 April to 26 May inclusive, followed by a period of grazing, or
- Restrict livestock by stocking with up to one LU/hectare from 15 March to 15 June inclusive

and:

- Do not harrow, roll or top grass from 15 March until 30 June inclusive
- Do not apply lime, fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure from 15 March to 15 May inclusive
- You must graze the sward down to remove annual growth to avoid a build-up of matted dead plant material. The sward may contain occasional tussocks of taller vegetation
- Do not spray, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- You must not establish new drainage
- If you wish to undertake drainage maintenance, you must have prior written approval
- You must maintain a diary

## Payment

You can claim £80 per hectare per year.

The following capital items are available to support waders:

- [Creation of Wader Scrapes](#)
- [Wetland Creation – Field Drain Breaking](#)

- [Wetland Creation – Pipe Sluices](#)

## Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- You have managed the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract

You have either:

- Excluded livestock from 1 April to 12 May inclusive, followed by a period of grazing, or
- Excluded livestock from 15 April to 26 May inclusive, followed by a period of grazing, or
- Restricted livestock by stocking with up to one LU/hectare from 15 March to 15 June inclusive

and:

- You have not harrowed, rolled or topped grass from 15 March until 30 June inclusive
- You have not applied lime, fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure from 15 March to 15 May inclusive
- You have grazed the sward down to remove annual growth to avoid a build-up of matted dead plant material
- You have not sprayed, unless with prior written notification or approval as appropriate
- You have not established new drainage
- If you have undertaken drainage maintenance, you have prior written approval
- You have maintained a diary

## Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this option.](#)

## Recent changes

Section	Change
<a href="#">Aim</a>	Revised text
<a href="#">Eligibility</a>	Revised text
<a href="#">Application Requirements</a>	Revised/added text regarding scoring points for waders Updated Vulnerable Priority Species recording form Updated Wader management template and wader survey form from 2024 onwards

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

## Download guidance

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