

Wader and Wildlife Mown Grassland

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 31 January, 2025

Date superseded: 19 February, 2026

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, particularly VPS waders such as lapwing and curlew.

Extensively managing hay and silage fields will reduce the risk of damage to birds, their eggs and fledglings from field operations.

Leaving an area uncut will also provide cover for the birds. Hares and other small mammals will also benefit.

Eligibility

Grassland that is not rough grazing is eligible.

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 and Wildlife Mown Grassland \(PDF, Size: 968.4 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Wader-and-wildlife-mown-grassland-2018-2.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 targeting tool which can be found in the [Management Options and Capital Items](#)

Application requirements

You must identify on a map the locations of the fields being managed.

For all applications submit a wader management plan using the [Wader Management Plan Template \(MS Word, Size: 1.7 MB\)](#) .

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.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, trees or woodland is proposed for management. The 30 metres “buffer” strips against hedgerows, scrub, 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 \(MS Word, Size: 28.8 kB\)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Wader-survey-template---January-2025.docx)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Wader-survey-template---January-2025.docx>

Management requirements

This option can be moved around the farm within the normal rotation and on an annual basis, however we expect you to keep to the rotation you provide in your application.

To maximise flexibility you can manage a different total hectareage each year as long as the area you manage each year is at least 90 per cent, and no more than 100 per cent, of the area you plan to manage in the first year under this option.

- Do not roll, harrow or graze the area from 1 April until 30 June inclusive
- Do not apply lime, fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure from 1 April to 15 May inclusive
- The area must be mown, but not before 30 June
- The hay or silage must be cut in a wildlife-friendly manner
- A strip of grass at least two metres wide around the field boundary must be left uncut
- This uncut strip must be grazed down before the next exclusion period
- 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 maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £149.75 per hectare per year.

You will only be paid for the area that you manage and declare annually.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- You have not rolled, harrowed or grazed the area from 1 April until 30 June inclusive
- You have not applied lime, fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure from 1 April to 15 May inclusive
- The area has been mown, but not before 30 June
- The hay or silage has been cut in a wildlife-friendly manner
- A strip of grass at least two metres wide around the field boundary has been left uncut
- This uncut strip has been grazed down before the next exclusion period
- You have not sprayed, unless with prior written notification or approval as appropriate
- You have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

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

Recent changes

Section	Change
Spatial targeting	Removed links to archived pages of where to find the targeting tool and simplified stating the targeting tool can be found on the Management Options and Capital Items page

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.