

#CAP4NATURE.

BREEDING BIRDS

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1. Status

- Many bird species and habitats have suffered long-term depletion due to agriculture and afforestation. Ground-nesting birds are most vulnerable to a combination of machine-operations, habitat loss/change and predation. Breeding productivity under 0.8 is unsustainably low. Without effective conservation policy or plans, this has led to severe population declines over the last 50 years. Gibbons et al, 1993; Kelly, S. & Donaghy, A. (2015) ; O'Donoghue et al, 2019; Crowe, O. (2019); Lauder, C. & Donaghy, A. (2008); Balmer, et al 2013; Lynas et al, 2007; ; Colhoun K. & Cummins, S. 2013; NPWS-GOV Article 12 reports in draft. Copland, 2018; BWI 2013; Colhoun K. & Cummins, S. 2013; Last Chance CAP Delegate Handbook (2019); Lauder, C. & Donaghy, A. 2008; Suddaby et al, 2010; Fernández-Bellón, D & Donaghy, A. 2011; Eglington et al 2008; Thompson et al 2006; Cummins, S. 2014; Sheldon et al, 2004;
- Worst declines in Ireland's breeding wader populations since 1990:
 - Curlew now 138 pairs = 97% decline
 - Lapwing now 520 pairs = 95% decline
 - Redshank now 250 pairs = 94% decline
 - Dunlin estimated 20 to 50 pairs = >70% decline (no recent survey)
 - Golden Plover 90 pairs = > 50% decline, but no full survey since 2002Woodcock, Snipe and Red Grouse also in sharp decline.
- All are red-listed and many face extinction unless trends can be reversed in the coming years.

2. Trends

- Range and numbers of Corncrake continue to decrease (except on offshore islands). Recently became extinct in Shannon Callows and Moy River meadows; these were two of the four remaining strongholds following severe decline in 1990's
- Poor implementation of AE schemes in Ireland has failed to deliver benefits for the most threatened birds. Mainland Corncrake numbers fell further from 30pr in 2015 to 12pr in 2018 when just 11ha or 7% of eligible habitat was entered in GLAS or FPS, although the CGS worked better. Duffy, M 2019, Copland, 2018; Last

Chance CAP, 2019, BWI (2013); ; Balmer, et al 2013;

3. Drivers/Pressures

- Intensive farm management, operations with machinery; farm restructuring, changes like tillage to dairy, and even further loss of habitats Sheldon et al, 2004; Sheldon et al, 2007; MC DEVITT, A.-M. & CASEY, C. 1999
- Unsympathetic grazing of wet grassland, machair, wetlands or habitat loss due to improvement or changes. McDonald et al, 2008; Laidlaw et al, 2015; Eglington et al 2008.
- Predation of residual breeding waders takes a high toll. Donaghy, A, 2019
- Lapwing, Curlew not Annex I; lacking policy or legal provision protection for habitat, nests, chicks.
- No conservation action for GP or DN (Annex I) in or outside SPA network. No Species Action Plans (SAPs).
- Bird data is limited and many gaps e.g, forestry, predation. Bad monitoring of AE schemes, so its not progressive. Article 12 (draft)

reports (NPWS); Copland, 2018; Last Chance CAP, 2019

4. Solutions

Include stakeholders' views. Locally led, participatory approaches to AE need to be developed, better targeted for the given species, and adequately resourced. AE baselines, objectives, monitoring and evaluation requires scientific data and (statistically) robust methods. Byrne *et al* 2018 (RBAPS).

Increase the role, quality, and capacity of ecological advisory support in the design and delivery of future AE schemes and across the agricultural production landscape.

Establish many good models of farm systems incorporating heritage and appraisal of traditional methods alongside shared experience and best practice approaches, such as AE management for Corncrakes in Scotland that has enabled the recovery of numbers to double that of 1994. Beaumont & England 2015

Model farm systems are essential for innovation, to develop and showcase successful working examples of HNVf and extend successful measures to the broader farming community via good advisory services. EIPs are now in operation and can be used more widely for extension of AE solutions for endangered bird species.

Full implementation of policy and legal protection. Lapwing and Curlew can be afforded stronger protection through Article 4 (2) of the EU Birds Directive in existing SPAs. Targeted measures are needed for Annex 1 like Golden Plover and Dunlin. Incentives must be adequate and attractive; so farmers adopt new approaches that involve long-term commitments and risks.

Need functional cross-sectoral integration on strategies and delivery for nature protection under the CAP; and must work more objectively with partners and NGO's to build more effective ways to achieve solutions and remedies to the current problems and issues.