

Managing for Redshank on Strathspey Farms

Land managed for redshank will benefit most other farmland waders.



Redshank needs:

- short, damp grassland for feeding (5-15 cm)
- some taller tussocks on which to nest.
- some scattered rush but covering less than 30% of the field area.
- permanent pools or shallow-sided ditches with a muddy edge for feeding.

Farm Management:

- Create a mosaic of vegetation heights to include short grassland.
 - Graze lightly in the breeding season where possible.
 - Graze more heavily from mid-June onwards once the chicks have hatched.
 - Remove stock once a mosaic of short grassland with scattered tussocks has been created and before poaching occurs.
 - if your grassland is rich in flowers, graze lightly in summer or keep stock off until mid-August.
- Cut rush back in August, followed by aftermath grazing (with cattle if possible) to prevent a dense cover developing.
- Aim to maintain small flushes of water until the end of June. Temporarily block drains and small ditches in suitable areas.

An information leaflet from the Strathspey Wetlands and Waders Initiative.

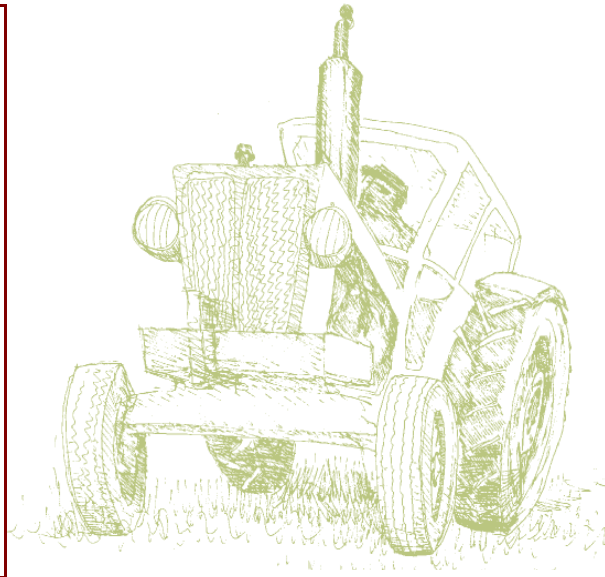


The Strathspey Wetlands and Waders Initiative

The Strathspey Wetlands and Waders Initiative (SWWI) is partnership between the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), The Cairngorm LBAP, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB Scotland) and participating Strathspey farmers.

Protecting species and habitats

The SWWI was set up to work with farmers and other landowners to safeguard wetland habitats and the future of the nationally important wader population in Badenoch and Strathspey, which is the largest of its kind in mainland Britain. This population has thrived thanks to the habitats provided by the mixed arable and stock farming systems within the floodplains of the Spey and its tributaries. However, surveys have shown that the population has suffered serious declines in recent times, particularly the lapwing.



Looking for solutions

The reasons for the wader declines are not fully known but it has been shown that if wading birds have plenty of good habitat available to them, their breeding rate is higher and they are less vulnerable to external threats such as predation and flooding. Therefore, the SWWI aims to work with farmers to maintain and improve management of wader habitats across Strathspey, particularly through management under the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). Increasing and enhancing wetland habitats is a key part of the project.

What We Do

As a group, we are collaborating on the preparation of SRDP plans for Strathspey farms that support waders, particularly those with wetland, wet grassland and arable fields. In the first year, twenty plans were successfully submitted under the SWWI banner. Submitting an application through the SWWI can help to increase its chance of success as the plan will form part of a large-scale collaboration, providing connected habitats across a wide area for a threatened bird population.

If you have a farm within the area and are considering making an SRDP application, please get in touch.

We would be very pleased to help

Karen Sutcliffe, RSPB Insh Marshes Site Manager
01540 661 518 karen.sutcliffe@rspb.org.uk

Bridget England, RSPB Scotland Advisory Officer
01463 228826 bridget.england@rspb.org.uk

