



TREND IN THE PEAK DISTRICT:

Severe decline over the last 30 years, for example 72 % on the North Staffordshire Moors between 1985 and 1996.

ESTIMATED POPULATION IN THE PEAK DISTRICT:

Extrapolation from a partial census in 2000 suggests a population of only 700 - 800 pairs.

NATIONAL BAP STATUS:

Species of Conservation Concern

ASSOCIATED PEAK DISTRICT ACTION PLANS:

Habitats: Rush Pasture, Hay Meadows, Heather Moorland, Rough Grazing, Unimproved Pasture.

Species: Curlew, Twite.

INTRODUCTION

The lapwing, or 'pee-wit' as it is locally known, is a wading bird, which returns to the Peak District each summer to nest. In good habitat, lapwings nest in loose colonies where the birds act collectively to drive off predators such as crows. The eggs are laid in a shallow scrape on the ground, in an area of short vegetation. Up to 3 re-lay clutches can be laid but only one brood of chicks is raised. Lapwings nest on a variety of habitats from arable to areas of burnt heather or traditional hay meadows. The bulk of the population, however, nests on in-bye pasture fields. Colonies are largest and most widespread in the northern section of the North Peak, but have become increasingly localised in the South West Peak and Eastern Moors. The lapwing is now virtually absent in the Edale area and is very rare in the White Peak. The largest known remaining colonies occur around the Flouch, Strines, Digley Reservoir, Padfield, Lantern Pike, Ford and Swallow Moss areas.

Over the last 30 years, lowland breeding populations have collapsed. In just 11 years between 1987 and 1998 the breeding lapwing population in England and Wales declined by 47 %. The bulk of England's breeding population is now restricted to the uplands. Once a widespread breeding bird in all areas of the Peak District, colonies are now isolated and often restricted to just a handful of fields.

The lapwing is perhaps the bird most associated with upland hill farming in the Peak District. Its future is intricately linked with the success of agri-environment and other conservation schemes in supporting sympathetic farming systems, as both the loss of upland farms or the further intensification of upland pasture management will accelerate its decline in the Peak District.

ADVERSE IMPACTS	Historic	Current
Land Management		
Continued intensification of in-bye and rush pasture, including high stocking rates in the breeding season, re-seeding and conversion to silage.	✓	✓✓
Reduction in soil moisture content (and consequent decline in availability of invertebrates) due to soil compaction through heavy grazing pressure.		✓✓
Field drainage leading to reduction in soil moisture content.	✓✓	✓
Abandonment of cattle grazing on in-bye pastures due to the economic decline in upland farming. Sensitive cattle grazing can promote a varied sward structure with suitable breeding sites and a rich invertebrate fauna.		✓
High nest losses during spring machinery operations, e.g. rolling, muck spreading and silage operations.		✓✓
Others		
Increasing rates of egg and chick predation owing to increased numbers of predators such as crows. This is particularly significant when lapwing are nesting in sub-optimal habitat.		✓✓
Recent run of wet springs in the 1990s, leading to low chick survival.		✓
Tree planting proposals have threatened a number of important lapwing colonies where the importance of these sites has not been recognised.		✓

An impact ✓

Significant impact ✓✓

CURRENT ACTION

Designated Sites

- The Dark Peak, Leek Moors, Eastern Peak District Moors and Goyt Valley SSSIs are all recognised as being important for their assemblages of upland breeding birds including lapwing.
- Lapwing are considered as being a species of interest within the South Pennines Moors SPA (incorporating all of the above SSSIs) although they are not a qualifying species in terms of the designation. Implementation of the EU Birds Directive in the SPA should impart increased protection for the lapwing's Peak District habitat.
- Owners of SSSI land on the Leek Moors are re-negotiating management agreements with EN to benefit lapwing.

Sites Owned and Managed by Conservation Organisations

- Re-wetting work to encourage breeding lapwing is underway on tenanted farms belonging to both NWW and the NT.

Sites Within Conservation Agreements

- Landowners have brought several key lapwing colonies under Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) management agreements at, for example, Hazel Barrow, Ford Grange, Padfield, Moscar House and Midhopstones.
- The RSPB is working with landowners to bring lapwing colonies into Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreements through the Hade Edge Community Project.

Research and Survey

- A survey of lapwing breeding sites on in-bye land in the South West and Dark Peak Natural Areas was carried out in the summer of 2000.
- A joint MAFF/NWW/RSPB project is looking at re-wetting compacted land by mechanical slotting at Padfield in the North Peak.

Awareness Raising

- The RSPB has produced a lapwing management sheet for landowners and conservation organisation staff and has run a course on lapwing habitat management for the PDNPA.

ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

National Targets

There is no national action plan for lapwing in the UK. The RSPB, however, has published an internal Species Action Plan for lapwing. Its objectives are:

- To ensure that the England and Wales breeding population of lapwing in 2008 is no lower than that estimated by the 1998 survey in England and Wales.
- To maintain the lapwing as a widely distributed species (occupying around 1500 ten km squares in the UK).
- In the long term, to see a sustained and measurable increase in the numbers and distribution of breeding lapwings.

A Vision for the Peak District

The lapwing has declined alarmingly in the Peak District in the last 30 years, so that its distinctive 'pee-weet' call and dramatic display flight, once one of the commonest sounds and sights on upland farms, is now absent in many areas and is in danger of disappearing altogether. Intimately linked with farmland, the future for the lapwing in the Peak District rests with everyone - policy makers, conservation agencies, farmers and landowners. Together we need to implement actions which will maintain the existing population in the short term and aim to see a measurable increase in population and range over the next 10 years.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

Objective 1

Maintain the existing breeding population and range, as estimated in 2000.

Target

Bring 50% of all lapwing breeding sites into favourable conservation management by 2005, and 100 % by 2010.

Objective 2

Achieve a measurable and sustained increase in both the numbers and range of breeding lapwing by 2010.

Target

Increase breeding numbers on 50% of targeted sites and increase the number of breeding sites by 10 % by 2010.

Main Factors Likely to Affect Achievement of Targets

Land Management

- Implementation of the Rural Development Regulation and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- Effectiveness of agri-environment and conservation scheme prescriptions.
- High land prices – forcing intensive management following purchase of land.

Resources and Financial Incentives

- Availability of funding for agri-environment and conservation scheme agreements.
- Adequacy of financial incentives within conservation agreements.
- Availability of funding for survey, awareness raising programme and negotiation of conservation agreements.

Planning and Regulation

- Planning policy.

Conflicts with Other Conservation Priorities

- Conflicts between lapwing habitat and other ecological conservation priorities when (a) considering woodland creation proposals in moorland fringe areas, and (b) lapwing breed in botanically high quality grassland or moorland.
- The potential conflicts with archaeology/landscape, for example in relation to any increase in arable/fodder crops.

Others

- Lack of a strategy for safeguarding sites of particular wildlife importance where this cannot be achieved through the normal channels of negotiation.
- Threats to lapwing in its wintering habitat.
- Predation of chicks and eggs.

ACTIONS

Key to the achievement of the proposed targets are the actions relating to:

- survey and compilation of a comprehensive list of lapwing breeding sites, coupled with negotiations to secure appropriate land management (Actions LW1 - 4 and 24 - 28);
- awareness-raising and training measures (LW14 – 21);
- ensuring agri-environment and conservation schemes provide adequate financial incentive and appropriate management prescriptions to safeguard lapwing habitat (LW23);
- the continuation of re-wetting/slotting trials and their expansion if appropriate (LW10), and
- appropriate predator control measures (LW9 and 20).

ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	LEAD AGENCY & Partners
DATA COLLATION AND SURVEY		
Data Collation		
LW1	2001	RSPB/EN/PDNPA WTs/LRCs Voluntary Sector
LW2	2001	RSPB/BBAPG
Survey		
LW3	2001	RSPB/ Bird Study Groups
LW4	2001	RSPB/ Bird Study Groups

EVALUATING THE IMPORTANCE AND CONDITION OF SITES

Evaluating Importance and Identifying Key Sites

LW5	Agree methodology for the evaluation of 'Wildlife Site' status. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	BBAPG
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Defining Favourable Condition

LW6	Agree definitions of favourable condition for the range of lapwing breeding sites in the Peak District. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	BBAPG
LW7	Agree guidelines for the appropriate management needed to achieve favourable condition and enhancement of lapwing breeding sites. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	BBAPG

RESOURCES

LW8	Seek resources to carry out surveys, awareness raising and negotiation of agreements in collaboration with other grassland and bird action plans. (Objectives 1 and 2)	Autumn 2001	RSPB/EN/ PDNPA
LW9	Seek funding to employ a full time gamekeeper on the Leek Moors. (Objective 1 and 2)	2002	RSPB/EN/PDNPA

RESEARCH

LW10	Continue re-wetting/slotting machine research project at Padfield and expand if results are positive. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 - 2004	RSPB/MAFF/NWW
LW11	Ensure that the results of research into the effects of ivermectin on invertebrate communities associated with animal dung are implemented at a local level. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	WEG
LW12	Continue with nest guard trials. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	RSPB

MONITORING

LW13	Repeat co-ordinated lapwing surveys in 2005 and 2010. Ensure that the information is used to update the lapwing 'inventory'. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 - 2010	RSPB/Bird Study Groups
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AWARENESS RAISING

LW14	Share information on the wildlife importance and management needs of key lapwing conservation and restoration sites with the landowners/managers, including feedback from surveys. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	RSPB/EN/PDNPA/NT FWAG/MAFF/WTs
LW15	Arrange bi-annual training days for all farm conservation advisers to update on lapwing habitat requirements and promote proactive targeting of sites within the 'inventory'. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	RSPB/EN/PDNPA MAFF/FWAG
LW16	Encourage, through posters and media publicity, public participation in the co-ordinated survey, e.g. 'lapwing hotline' to report sightings. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	RSPB/BBAPG/MAFF
LW17	Produce a Lapwing Recovery Project leaflet and posters to be circulated amongst landowners and managers. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	RSPB/NFU/MAFF/Bird Study Groups

LW18	Produce a slide pack and talk and use to promote lapwing conservation to farmer/landowner clubs, group branches and organisations e.g. NFU branch talk circuits. (Objectives 1 and 2)	January 2002 - 2005	RSPB/NFU/MAFF
LW19	Organise a series of annual farm demonstration days to promote successful lapwing agri-environment schemes/management agreements. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002- 2005	BBAPG/MAFF/PDNPA NFU
LW20	Run a series of training days for landowners, promoting legal and effective predator control. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 - 2005	BBAPG
LW21	Promote suitable moorland management for lapwing, specifically heather burning and other appropriate rotational management. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002	BBAPG

CONSERVATION ACTION AND INCENTIVES

Designation

LW22	Consider lapwing key sites in any programme of acquisition/lease/management of nature reserves including NNRs and LNRs. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	EN/LAs (joint leads) PDNPA/WTs/RSPB/NT
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Grant Schemes

LW23	Consider recommending a review of all agri-environment and conservation schemes to ensure that: *Management prescriptions include specific benefits to lapwing and include flexible site-specific measures *Payments consider inclusion of financial measures to encourage a shift from sheep to cattle *Management prescriptions and payments encourage an increase in the area of spring drilled crops and bare fallows, where appropriate. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 - 2010	MAFF/EN/PDNPA WEG/BBAPG
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Negotiation and Review of Agreements

LW24	Review management of all lapwing breeding sites within SSSIs. Where necessary agree revised management regimes with owners/managers, through appropriate mechanisms, to ensure maintenance/restoration of favourable condition and site extension. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 - 2005	EN/RSPB
LW25	Negotiate appropriate agreements with landowners and managers of all key lapwing sites outside SSSIs and existing agreements, in order to achieve favourable condition of the site. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 – 2005	RSPB/PDNPA/EN MAFF/FWAG
LW26	Review management of lapwing breeding sites, which are in existing agreements, outside SSSIs. Where necessary agree revised management regimes with owners/managers to ensure that favourable condition is being achieved. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 – 2005	RSPB/PDNPA/EN/MAFF
LW27	Negotiate appropriate agreements on sites adjacent to lapwing colonies or sites with potentially suitable habitat, to facilitate favourable management. (Objective 2)	2003 – 2005	RSPB/PDNPA/EN MAFF/FWAG
LW28	Review whole holding agreements which include unprotected lapwing breeding sites. Consider the opportunities for amending the agreement to incorporate their safeguard, enhancement and extension. (Objective 1 and 2)	2002 - 2005	RSPB/PDNPA/MAFF

Land Acquisition

LW29	Consider negotiating purchase/lease of priority moorland fringe habitats of importance for lapwing where this would be the most effective way of achieving conservation and when a negotiated conservation solution has not succeeded. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	PDNPA/EN/WTs/RSPB NT
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Direct Action

LW30	On land owned by public or conservation bodies, ensure that: *Management maintains and where possible enhances lapwing breeding and feeding habitats *Options for the restoration and creation of lapwing breeding and feeding habitats are reviewed *Opportunities for involvement of local communities in site management are taken where possible (All Objectives)	2001 onwards	PDNPA/EN/LAs/FC NT/WTs
LW31	Consider the opportunities for increased safeguard of wader migratory sites. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	RSPB /PDNPA/EN/WTs NT/Bird Study Groups
LW32	On re-seeded leys, use volunteers to mark and move nests during in-field machinery operations. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002 - 2010	RSPB /Bird Study Groups
LW33	If nest guards prove successful (RSPB trial elsewhere), produce and disseminate nest guards to key sites, where grazing levels cannot be controlled. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2002	RSPB /Bird Study Groups

REGULATION

Planning

LW34	Ensure all planning applications and General Development Orders are adequately assessed in relation to their impact on lapwing breeding sites; that loss or damage is avoided; and that opportunities for the enhancement or creation of key habitat is considered in relevant planning decisions. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	PDNPA/EN/WTs/LAs
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Pollution Control and Waste Management

LW35	Review procedures and consultation processes in relation to the spreading of paper pulp. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001	EA /WTs/PDNPA/EN LAs
LW36	Ensure good practice is followed in disposing of sheep dip, avoiding lapwing breeding sites. Implement by continuing with an awareness raising strategy amongst land managers; continuing the programme of licensing; extending consultation procedures for disposal applications to the whole of the Peak District and, where necessary, by enforcement action. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	EA /LAs/PDNPA

Other Regulatory Mechanisms

LW37	Ensure that all woodland planting proposals avoid planting on lapwing breeding sites. (Objectives 1 and 2)	2001 onwards	FC /MAFF/LAs/WTs EN/PDNPA
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RESOURCES

It is envisaged that many of the actions proposed will be carried out by the relevant organisations using current resources. These include:

- continuing investment by landowners and managers in managing their land sympathetically for wildlife;
- EN's programme of SSSI management and designation and their grant and management agreement schemes;
- MAFF's Environmentally Sensitive Area and Countryside Stewardship schemes;
- the RSPB's surveys and advisory work;
- volunteer surveys;
- the PDNPA's advisory and grants service for landowners/managers and its rolling programme of special conservation projects;
- FWAG and the WTs' advisory services;
- continuing management of lapwing habitat in the ownership of conservation organisations, public bodies (EN, NT, WTs, LAs, PDNPA) and WCs.

Additional resources are likely to be required:

- for survey work (2001) and negotiations (2002 - 2005);
- to provide adequate financial incentives for the conservation and restoration management of lapwing habitat (2001 onwards);
- for a programme of awareness raising;
- to aid in the production of the proposed registers (2001 onwards).

The RSPB, PDNPA and EN are currently seeking resources for a Ground-nesting Bird Habitat Project (to run from 2001 - 2004) which would specifically target lapwing conservation and the safeguarding and restoration of lapwing breeding and feeding habitats. The PDNPA and EN are currently seeking resources for a continuation of the Pastures Project, to run during 2001/2002, aimed at surveying and securing high quality sites within appropriate agreements. This may also have implications for lapwing conservation.