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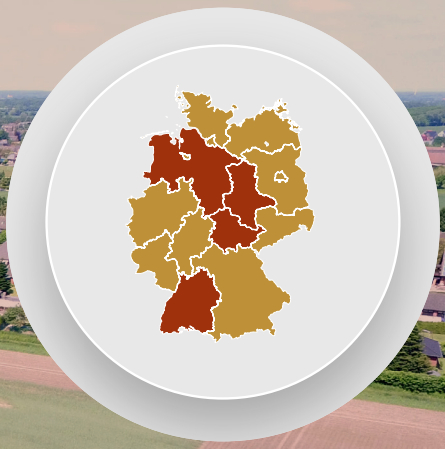
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AUSTRIA

Improving habitat Opportunities for Northern Lapwing on Arable Land and Grasslands



Geographic coverage

- (●) **National: Germany**
- (●) **Regional: So far Upper Saxony, Thuringia, Lower Saxony and Baden-Wuerttemberg, applicable also for other states (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia)**

Focus of the scheme

- ( ) Conservation (i.e. maintaining or improving the conditions of an existing habitat)
- ( ) Restoration (i.e. restoring a degraded habitat or recreating one that has been destroyed)
- (●) **Combination of both**

Type of scheme

- (●) **Prescription – based**
- ( ) Result – based
- ( ) Combination of both
- (●) **Addressing individual farmers**
- (●) **Collaborative scheme**

Novelty of the scheme

Integration and synthesis of existing schemes and instruments into a novel scheme

Photo by: A.Förster

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Photo by: allexxandarx/stock.adobe.com

Target species

Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Birds benefitting

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*, nearly extinct in Germany).

Aim

The conservation scheme aims at improving and expanding Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) habitats on arable land and grassland by adapting and combining existing measures (mostly CAP measures). It also aims at increasing the overall uptake of measures by farmers, especially in ecologically valuable areas.

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More about the conservation schemes developed by the Birds @ Farmland initiative is available at: https://bit.ly/farmlandbirds

Scheme interventions

List of main actions or commitments	Threat that is addressed by the action/commitment	Enhanced component
Establishment of 'Lapwing plots' on arable land in summer and/or winter crops	Loss of habitats	Habitat for the whole season including nesting, rising of chicks, feeding and resting habitat
Establishment of 'Lapwing hotspots' on arable land and grasslands	Loss of nesting and chick habitat; Risk of predation	Successful breeding and chick survival rate in known Lapwing territories
Rewetting and preservation of wet areas on arable land and grasslands	Loss of habitats for nesting and foraging	Nesting and chick habitat
Clutch protection on arable and grasslands	Loss of clutches due to management/cultivation processes or trampling by livestock	Survival rate of clutches (esp. eggs)
Partial area mowing / staggered mowing after June 15th on grassland; Management break between March 15th and June 15th on arable land and grasslands	Loss of clutches and chicks through moving or cultivation/management	Nesting and chick habitat
Guidance on measures for arable land and grasslands	Measures are implemented on unsuitable areas, too far away from each other to successfully raise chicks or create viable populations, or outside current Lapwing habitats	All
Local consultancy and monitoring service by experts	Measures fail due to regional/local variability and complex needs of the species.	Higher uptake of the conservation scheme by farmers

Description

The conservation scheme combines several CAP instruments to enhance the quantity and quality of lapwing habitats on arable land and grassland. It addresses the key barriers a) low uptake by farmers, b) overly-simplified implementation requirements, c) limited opportunities for the species to expand its distribution due to lack of suitable habitats, and d) lack of coherence between CAP instruments that can jointly address the former. The scheme is based on the ecological principles of extensification, heterogeneity, multi-functionality and continuity.

The Conservation scheme includes the following measures:

- **Establishment of 'Lapwing plots'** on arable land in summer and/or winter crops (Eco-scheme or AEC measure). This covers a range of measures, including avoidance of insecticides, herbicides and fertilisers on arable land, avoidance of soil-management on the lapwing plots, and reduced grazing pressure (on grasslands).
- **Establishment of 'Lapwing hotspots'** on arable land and grasslands (Conditionality or Non-productive Investment). Hotspots are larger than 'Lapwing plots' (at least 5 ha), with optimal habitat conditions that include a wet area and fencing against predators. This covers a range of measures, including no use of insecticides, herbicides or fertilisers and flattening of potential drainage edges.
- **Rewetting and preservation of wet areas** on arable and grasslands (Eco-scheme or AEC

CAP intervention(s) applied

- ◉ **Agri-Environment & Climate measure (2nd Pillar)**
- ◉ **Eco-scheme (1st Pillar)**
- ○ Natura 2000 compensation (Art. 67. of CAP SPR)
- ◉ **Non-productive investments (Art. 68. of CAP SPR)**
- ○ European Innovation Partnership scheme Agri (Art. 71 of CAP SPR)
- ◉ **Farm Advisory Service (Art. 72 of CAP SPR)**
- ◉ **Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC 2, 7, 8, 9)**
- ○ Statutory Management Requirement (SMR)

measure and Conditionality or Non-productive Investments).

- **Protection of egg clutches** on arable and grasslands (Eco-scheme or AEC measure).
- **Partial area mowing / staggered mowing after June 15th** on grassland (Eco-scheme or AEC measure).
- **Management break (i.e. no intervention at all) between March 15th and June 15th** on arable land and grasslands (Eco-scheme or AEC measure).
- **Guidance on measures** to ensure their implementation on ecologically suitable arable land and grasslands (Bonus / Point system or combination of instruments).
- **Local consultancy and monitoring service by experts** (Farm Advisory Services).

The proposed measures can be fulfilled at the level of individual farms. However, due to the territorial behaviour and specific habitat requirements of the Lapwing, a landscape approach (i.e. collective implementation by a group of farmers) is more suitable.

https://www.nabu.de/imperia/md/content/nabude/landwirtschaft/naturschutz/foerdermassnahme_kiebitz.pdf

https://www.nabu.de/imperia/md/content/nabude/vogelschutz/200407-nabu-kiebitzschutz-handbuch.pdf

What makes the scheme attractive to farmers and landowners?

- Effective consultation is key to success in order to a) target and regionalise measures, b) accompany the implementation to allow for adaptive management, and c) enhance the uptake by farmers.
- Close cooperation with all engaged authorities (including nature-protection authorities) to avoid risk of sanctions/fines imposed on participating farmers, and to support adaptive management.
- Fostering collaboration among farmers (also through Eco-schemes) is another key factor.

Factors to consider for the compensation of farmers

Opportunity costs:

- Late mowing may reduce grass quality

Income forgone:

- Reduced yield due to increased row spacing.
- Reduced production area due to rewetting and preservation of wet areas, establishment of flower strips, etc.
- Reduced herd size (livestock).
- Possible yield losses when not using herbicides/ pesticides

Additional costs:

- Higher cost of staggered mowing (mowing parts at different times)
- Management breaks disrupt typical management rhythm
- Flattening of drainage ditches' edges
- Clutch protection
- Time needed for training and cooperation with other farmers

Transaction costs:

- The complexity of habitat requirements of Lapwings incurs high transaction costs, including administrative barriers, training in management prescriptions, controls and risk of sanctions. This requires higher payment levels and greater administrative flexibility for implementation.

Preliminary calculation of costs for compensating farmers

As the compensation costs differ greatly between the Federal States, the calculations should be made per Federal State, and should be consulted with the Thünen Institute of Rural Studies.

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Measuring the success of the scheme

Indicator/s to measure success of the scheme	Applicability
Number of applicants applying the scheme	Easy
Surface of land where the scheme is applied	Easy
Increased number of breeding pairs / stabilization or increase of populations	Medium

Benefits to biodiversity

Plants:

Promotes diversity of flowering plants.

Arthropods and pollinators:

Ensures sufficient foraging resources and host plants.

Mammals:

Preserves a diversity of micro-habitats and food resources through higher heterogeneity.

Benefits to farmers

Improved soil quality:

- Better recovery of soils through management breaks, extensification, and fallow land.

Pollination services:

- Increased pollination and better yields (in terms of quality and quantity) for pollinator-dependent crops.

Public recreation and tourism:

- Potentially additional income from direct marketing and improved market access with higher share of income, better image through participation in conservation projects, and opportunities for income diversification.

Benefits to society

Improved water quality:

- Reduced use of fertilisers and grazing pressure (reduced nutrient fluxes, dung pollution, and soil degradation).

Improved soil quality:

- Reduced grazing pressure, with accompanying trampling and soil erosion.

Pollination services:

- Promotion of nectariferous plants and creation of refuge areas for wintering pollinators and pollinator reproduction

Public recreation and tourism:

- Increased attractiveness of more heterogeneous landscapes, ornithological tourism.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions:

- Extensification (reduced herd size, reduced fertilisers, reduced drainage of wetlands/peatlands) contributes to climate change mitigation.


Photo by: A.Förster

This conservation scheme was developed by the Birds@Farmland Initiative. For information on financial support for measures for farmland birds available in your country please contact your Farm Advisory Service.

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