

## 3.2 Lapwing Breeding Sites

**Definition:** lapwing (or peewit) sites are fields of improved or unimproved grassland with at least one breeding pair of lapwing. These sites are likely to be prone to winter flooding or will occur next to areas of wet grassland. Lapwing will nest on sites with a low, closely grazed sward in early spring and where there is damp ground for adults and chicks to feed. Sites with nesting lapwing and other breeding waders (curlew, snipe, redshank) will be classed as breeding wader sites.

**Aims:** this option aims to maintain and increase the breeding success of lapwing nesting on improved and unimproved grassland by providing suitable breeding, nesting and feeding conditions through the implementation of a positive grazing regime.

**Biodiversity objectives:** this option contributes to the proposed Biodiversity Action Plan targets for lapwing.

### Management requirements

- Graze during the winter or early spring to produce a short sward 3cm (1 inch) by mid March.

#### AND

- From 1 April to 15 June stocking density must not exceed 0.75 LU/ha to produce a sward height of between 3 and 12 cm (1 to 5 inches).
- If taking a silage crop from lapwing sites, the fields must not be closed up until 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- Cattle must not be released directly on to lapwing sites after being wintered indoors. Cattle must be outside for at least one week before being put on to lapwing breeding sites.
- Field operations are not permitted between 1 April and 30 June.
- Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser or lime between 1 February and 30 June. When using farmyard manure, do not apply between 1 April and 30 June.
- Rush control must be carried out where rushes cover more than one third of the area. Rushes must be controlled by cutting between 15 July and 15 March retaining 10% uncut. Herbicide control is not permitted. If ground conditions do not permit rush cutting contact Countryside Management Branch for further advice\*.

- No cultivation, reseedling, reclamation, infilling, dumping, drainage or application of lime, herbicide, pesticide, sheep dip or any other material is permitted.
- Installation of new drainage systems is not permitted.
- Supplementary feeding sites require the written permission of DARD and their location should be marked on the scheme management map.
- The spread of scrub/trees must be controlled.
- New tree or hedge planting, or fencing on or next to breeding sites, requires written permission from DARD.
- No poaching.

### **Further advice**

Water levels in sheughs and drains should be maintained as close as possible to bank height during the period 1 March to 30 June to create damp ground if this is within the farmer's control.

Noxious weeds such as thistles and ragwort may be controlled by cutting between 15 July and 15 March or with herbicides, applied using a spot sprayer only.

Cutting dense rushes twice in one year, within a four to eight week period, will help reduce rush cover in the following year. Ideally cut rushes should be removed by baling, raking or burning. Where this is not possible graze with cattle immediately after cutting to help break up the mat of cut rush.

Existing drainage systems can be maintained but not widened, deepened or extended.

***\*Prior written approval must be obtained from Countryside Management Branch if you wish to use any method of rush control other than cutting.***

Management plans are provided for  
participants in the  
**Environmentally Sensitive Areas and  
Countryside Management Schemes**

