

# Lapwing



Lapwings are birds of farmlands and wetlands, which particularly thrive in areas of wet grassland.

The UK population of Lapwings has fallen by almost 50% since 1970, largely because of the loss of mixed farming and spring cropping, and the intensification of arable farming.

Lapwings are a Higher Level Stewardship scheme target species and can benefit greatly from appropriate habitat restoration and creation, as well as changes to farm management practices.

## Habitat Restoration & Creation

- Lapwings require a short (<15cm), variable vegetation structure for nesting. This allows adults to detect predators but also provides cover from danger for chicks.
- Introduction of spring cropping in areas used by Lapwings, particularly those next to areas of grazed pasture, can be of great benefit.
- Where spring cropping is not a viable option, or in arable fields already used by Lapwings, create fallow plots through set-aside or Higher Level Stewardship.
- In predominantly arable farms, reversion of large or open fields to grazed pasture will create valuable feeding opportunities.
- Create small wet features, such as scrapes or damp hollows, by blocking field drains or re-profiling ditch banks. However, **do not alter the water table without seeking advice**. Consider any likely impacts on surrounding land from altering drainage and consult with the necessary statutory agency (e.g. Environment Agency/IDB).
- Maintain or restore areas of wet grassland in fields where lapwings nest.

## Management Practice Changes

- Look out for nests during cultivation, muck-spreading or rolling operations between mid-March and June. If a series of works is needed, try to schedule them as closely together as possible.
- Control stocking rates between March and October to maintain a short sward, but using the fewest animals possible to reduce the risk of trampling. Raising stocking rates in late summer will help to keep the sward height down for the following spring.
- Maintaining buffer strips and field margins can provide valuable additional food sources.
- Further information can be obtained from the RSPB ([www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)) and FWAG Association ([www.fwag.org.uk](http://www.fwag.org.uk)).



For further information please contact: