

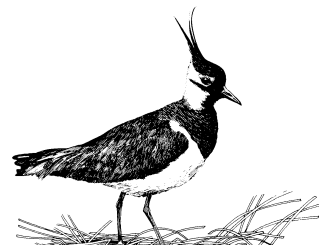


LAPWING

Vanellus vanellus

1. INTRODUCTION

Also known as the green plover or peewit (after its distinctive call), the lapwing is easily recognised by its iridescent plumage and the long, wispy crest on its head. Birds nest principally on arable fields, in wet pastures and around gravel pits. During spring their noisy, tumbling display flights were once a common sight and sound across most of the UK, including the sub-region, but their numbers have plummeted and their range has contracted in the past decade, due mainly to changes in farming practices. Even the wintering population, massively augmented by immigrants from eastern Europe, is much reduced. Lapwings feed predominantly on ground-living invertebrates, including earthworms, and require sparse vegetation during the breeding season to enable them to forage for themselves and their chicks.



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2. OUR OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

	Target
A. To increase the breeding range to its 1988-91 level.	2010
B. To increase the size of the breeding population to its estimated 1990 level.	2010

ASSOCIATED HABITAT PLANS

- Field Margins
- Rivers and Streams
- Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs
- Quarries & Gravel Pits

ASSOCIATED SPECIES PLANS

- Snipe
- Farmland Birds

3. NATIONAL BAP OBJECTIVES & TARGETS

This is now a National BAP species (2007).

4. CURRENT STATUS

The lapwing is said to be stable within Europe, though its breeding populations are poorly monitored. In the UK, it is on the *Amber Alert* list and is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. BTO data show a national decline of 41% between 1974 and 1999, placing it on the threshold of the *Red Alert* list (Gregory et al. 2002).

Within Warwickshire, the breeding bird surveys of 1966-68, 1968-72 and 1988-91 all showed the species to be present in virtually every 10-km. Extrapolating from various estimates, the population around 1990 was probably in the range 1,500-2,000 pairs. Current breeding population is probably of the order of 250-400 pairs, probably nearer the lower figure. The subsequent decline, however, has probably been even more severe than nationally, because the greatest losses have been on arable lowlands, where most of Warwickshire's lapwings used to nest.

4.1 Legal and Policy Status

Protected under Appendix 1 of the Bonn Convention and also by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 .

4.2 Current Factors Affecting The Species

- **Change in agricultural practices:** lapwings prefer to nest in spring cereals where vegetation is sparse, but then move into grass with their chicks as soon as they hatch. Much of the decline in their numbers and range stems from clutch failure, especially at the egg stage. This has been attributed to agriculture change, notably:
 - **the drainage of wet meadows;**
 - **the shift from spring to autumn sowing;**
 - **the disappearance of truly mixed farming**, with cereal and grass fields close to one another;
 - **re-seeding of traditional pastures** and increased stocking rates;
- **An increase in nest predators** has also been implicated.
- **Agri-environment schemes** are resulting in the local increase of lapwings.

5. CURRENT LOCAL ACTION

- Current survey work nationally by the BTO includes sample plots within Warwickshire.
- The Habitat Biodiversity Audit provides detailed information on some habitats (e.g. wetlands), though it would not identify agricultural land suitable for breeding.

Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- The current Warwickshire Breeding Bird Tetrads Atlas will provide an up-to-date and more detailed baseline for future monitoring.
- Nationally the RSPB is undertaking Operation Lapwing to promote appropriate land management techniques by farmers to encourage breeding lapwings and other farmland birds. A five-point plan is available to all farmers free of charge.
- Agri-environment schemes are targeting improving breeding habitat for lapwing (OS1, OS2 and OS3 options).

6. PROPOSED LOCAL ACTIONS (some dates amended - Core Steering Group - Feb 2008)

ACTION	Lead	Partners	By	Meets objective
Policy & Legislation				
PL1. Consider the habitat requirements of lapwing in management agreements under agri-environment schemes.	NE	WM RSPB FWAG	2005	A, B
Site / Species Safeguard & Management				
SM1. Prepare and implement site management plans that fulfil the requirements of nesting and wintering lapwings on land owned / managed by partners.	WWT	BTO NE FWAG HBA LA LBAPSG MO WM RSPB WCC WMBC	2004- 2015	A, B
SM2. Encourage reinstatement/creation of wet grassland and wetlands.	FWAG	WWT	2004- 2015	A, B
SM3. Encourage creation of wet grassland and wetland at mineral site restorations.	NE	MOs EA WCC	2004- 2015	A, B
SM4. Promote take-up of incentive schemes for sensitive farming options that will benefit lapwings.	FWAG	NE	2004- 2015	A, B

Advisory				
A1. Encourage a return to low intensity, mixed farming.	FWAG	RSPB NE	2004- 2015	A, B
A2. Encourage a return to spring sown crops.	FWAG	RSPB NE	2004- 2015	A, B
A3. Promote the Operation Lapwing five-point Plan to local farmers.	RSPB	FWAG NE	2004- 2015	A,B
Research & Monitoring				
RM1. Maintain the Warwickshire Habitat Biodiversity Audit.	HBA	LAs WM WWT	2004- 2015	A
RM2. Support the current Breeding Bird Survey, which will provide up-to-date and more detailed distribution data.	WMBC		2005	A, B
RM3. Establish effective monitoring of range and population.	BTO	WMBC	2004- 2015	A, B
Communication & Publicity				
CP1. Raise the profile of the lapwing as a characteristic bird of wet grassland and arable farmland.	BTO	WMBC RSPB	2004- 2015	A, B
CP2. Seek a champion to promote lapwing recovery in Warwickshire.	LBAPSG	BTO NE FWAG HBA LA MO WM RSPB WCC WMBC WWT	2008	A, B

Abbreviations: BTO – British Trust for Ornithology, NE – Natural England, FWAG – Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, HBA - Habitat Biodiversity Audit, LA – Local Authority, LBAPSG – Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group, MOs – Mineral Operators, RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, WCC – Warwickshire County Council, WM – Warwickshire Museum, WMBC - West Midland Bird Club, WWT – Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

7. REFERENCES

Gregory,R.D., Wilkinson,N.I., Noble,D.G., Robinson,J.A., Brown,A.F., Hughes,J., Proctor,D.A, Gibbons,D.W., Galbraith,C.A. (2002). *The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man: an analysis of conservation concern 2002-2007*. British Birds 95:410-450.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION (see separate **Links** web page for links to web sites)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
British Trust for Ornithology
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

BTO – 2006: a new survey of wintering lapwings and golden plovers. To take part and submit sightings, visit www.bto.org/goto/winter-plovers.htm

RSPB: *'Management Guide to Birds of Lowland Farmland'* (2005) and *'Farm Wildlife Handbook'* (2007), from Publications, RSPB, Unit 17, St Martin's Business Centre, St Martin's Way, Bedford MK42 0LF, tel. 01234 263616 or email: publications@rspb.org.uk.

9. CONTACT

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