

## Allotment and rough grazing habitat for breeding waders score sheet 2019

Agreement reference:	
Survey undertaken by:	
Survey Date (s):	
Field number(s)*:	

**\*please use one survey form to record results on a group of 2 or more RLR fields ONLY if they are managed as a single unit and there is nothing on the ground to separate them such as a fence, wall, hedge or ditch. If in doubt please contact your YDNPA adviser.**

Survey time: March to early June,

It may be necessary to undertake two visits – one in March to assess the habitat features and one in May/June, preferably an early morning visit in order to capture the range of breeding waders using the sites.

- 1. Presence and diversity of birds:** a site visit in May could determine which species were present. A rudimentary count could be undertaken, but no need for a formal bird survey.  
*A good quality habitat should provide suitable breeding conditions for 2 or more species of breeding wader.*

Bird species	Present Y/N	Estimate of number of individual birds using field
lapwing		
Curlew		
Redshank		
Snipe		

Walk around the field ensuring you are able to see all parts of it. Observe the amount of rush cover, tussocks and sward height. At the end of the walk, tick the appropriate boxes on table 2 according to condition of the field, then complete the damaging operations assessment.

### 2. Sward structure

A varied sward height provides cover and nesting habitat for a range of waders and chicks with some preferring to nest in grass tussocks.

Short = below ankle height

Long = between ankle and knee height

### 3. Cover of rush

A scattered tussocky rush cover of between 10 and 30% across a field with a few denser stands in the wettest areas will cater for the broadest range of species.

### 4. Wet features

Wet features such as wet flushes, boggy areas and damp grassland can provide very important feeding areas for breeding wading birds such as lapwings and redshanks, and their chicks, which find lots of invertebrate food in and around the wet muddy edges. It is important to retain and create such features within the field and ensure that these features have some cover near them, contain muddy edges and shallow sides to make access easy for the chicks.

Damp grassland is where you can easily push a 6 inch nail into the soil.

## Breeding wader habitat condition assessment

Feature	Good habitat characteristics	Score: 5 points each	Moderate habitat characteristics	Score: 2 points each	Poor habitat characteristics	Score: 0 points each
2. Grass sward structure	Grass tussocks seen frequently across field		Tussocks limited to small areas of the field		No tussocks seen	
	Varied grass sward height where 25% to 75% of sward is below ankle height		Between 75% & 90% short or between 75% & 90% long		No variation in height, either all short (below ankle height) or all long	
3. Rush cover	Between 10 – 30% ‘standing’ rush cover (excluding mown areas)		Between 30% to 50% of the field is covered with ‘standing’ rush		Over 50% standing rush cover or less than 10% rush cover	
	‘Standing’ rush well scattered across field with no large dense blocks		Rush scattered across field in large dense blocks but with plenty of gaps in between		Blocks of thick dense rush, few if any gaps	
4. Wet features	Over 50% of the field is damp from April to June		Between 10 and 50% of the field is damp from April to June		<10% of the field is damp from April to June	
	Field contains a number of wet pools and/or water filled open ditches with gently sloping edges and are easily accessible by birds (75% of surrounding area short vegetation)		Field contains steep sided pools and/or water filled open ditches which are dominated by thick stands of tall vegetation or rush		Field contains no pools and/or water filled open ditches	
	Field contains exposed muddy areas that are easily accessible by birds (majority of surrounding vegetation is short)		Field contains exposed muddy areas that are virtually inaccessible by birds (majority of surrounding vegetation is long and dense)		Field contains no muddy areas	
	Field contains wet flushes and/or springs where majority of vegetation height is below ankle height		Field contains wet flushes and/or springs where majority of vegetation height is tall and dense.		Field contains no wet flushes and/or springs	
Total						
<b>Total habitat condition score</b>						

## 5. Damaging operations

Severe damage where over 25% of the habitat is damaged will result in an overall score of 0 and no payment will be made that year. Less significant damage may also lead to no payment if scores from other categories are low. See general guidance for further information and below for examples. The list is not exhaustive.

1. Damage to soil and sward from machinery
2. Damage from winter feeding sites that are still clearly seen
3. Damage to soil and sward from poaching
4. High stocking levels during bird nesting season (provide examples)
5. Damage to sward from inappropriate herbicide use
6. Installation of new field drainage system (unless previously agreed with YDNPA/NE)
7. Damage to historic environment features (refer to Historic Features Map)

Damage more severe covering between 10 - 25% of field area	-20
Limited areas covering 5 – 10%	-10
Less than 5%	0
<b>SCORE:</b>	

### Total overall score

Total habitat condition score – Damaging operations score =	
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### Total score matrix

Score / Total points	0 <5 points	1 5 - 9 points	2 10-19 points	3 20 – 29 points	4 30 – 39 points	5 40+ points
£/ha	0	35	69	104	139	174

Farmer observations:

Please add any comments regarding how the birds have fared with breeding, for example a description of the seasons weather conditions, nest numbers, predators observed, chicks seen etc

Management undertaken, for example rush cutting, weed control, creation of wet areas – how has this progressed:

How long did it take you to do the survey and fill out the form for this parcel?