



**LIFE IP**  
GrassBirdHabitats



Niedersachsen

# MEADOW BIRD CONSERVATION

LIFE Integrated Project  
GrassBirdHabitats



This EU-funded project focuses on the protection of grassland breeding birds, such as the Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing and Curlew, as well as their habitats. The aim is to create and connect optimal breeding and non-breeding areas along the East Atlantic Flyway.

The project implements habitat restoration and conservation measures

in multiple areas in Lower Saxony (Germany) and Fryslân (the Netherlands). Additionally, a multi-species strategic conservation plan is being developed for the Atlantic biogeographical region of Europe and West Africa, thereby addressing the entire life cycle of these migratory birds.

Project duration:  
01.11.2020 – 31.10.2030

For more detailed information please visit [www.grassbirdhabitats.eu](http://www.grassbirdhabitats.eu)



Photo Credit: K. Timbos





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## OBJECTIVES & MEASURES

The main objective of the LIFE IP GrassBirdHabitats is to boost the populations of wet grassland breeding birds along the East Atlantic Flyway. This includes measures to increase the reproduction success rates in the Netherlands and Germany and to improve the birds' return rate from their wintering areas in West Africa.



### Conservation Plan

Develop a multi-species strategic conservation plan for wet grassland breeding birds along the East Atlantic Flyway

### Capacity Building

Engage in capacity building activities between Germany, the Netherlands and Senegal



### Rice Cropping Systems

Elaborate and test rice cropping systems that are profitable for both birds and people in Senegal

### Business Model

Develop a sustainable agricultural business model suitable for both wet grassland breeding birds and farmers



### Additional Funding

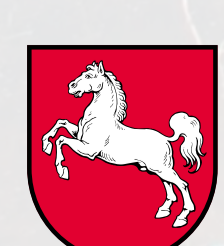
Acquire additional funding for the conservation of wet grasslands, including funds for land purchase

### Habitat Creation and Optimisation

Create 21,000 ha of optimal habitat for wet grassland breeding birds in Fryslân and Lower Saxony



For more detailed information please visit [www.grassbirdhabitats.eu](http://www.grassbirdhabitats.eu)



Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Protection of the State of Lower Saxony



Photo Credit: O. Lange, G. Heinze, J. Ludwig, S. Heack



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## BACKGROUND

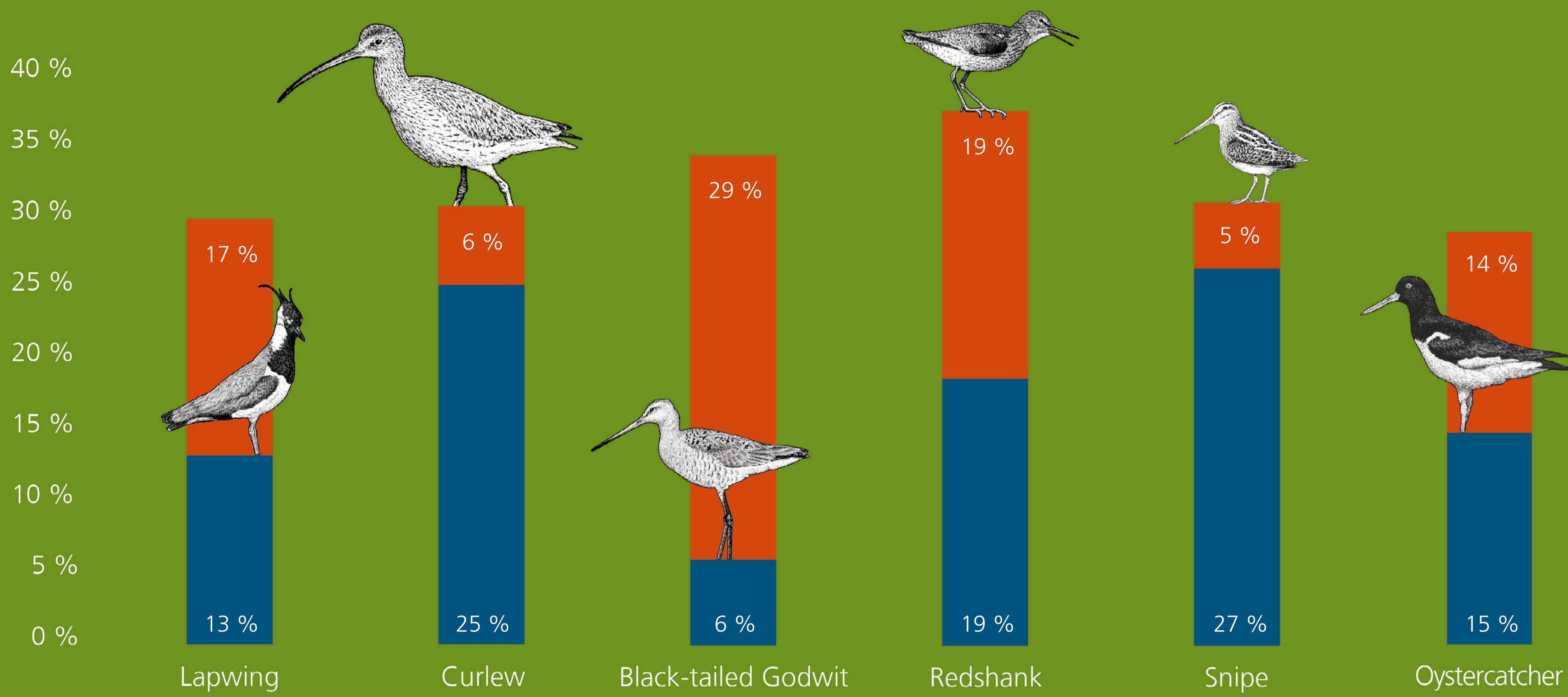
Grassland breeding bird populations have declined dramatically throughout Europe. The main causes of this decline are intensive land use practices, habitat loss and increased predation pressure. Nowadays, these migratory birds face similar threats in their non-breeding areas in Southern Europe and West Africa.

With this project, Lower Saxony and Fryslân take on their responsibility to protect wet grassland breeding birds.

## Responsibility

The grassland-rich lowlands of Fryslân and Lower Saxony are home to the main breeding populations of Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Curlew and Redshank in Europe.

About 90% of the Black-tailed Godwit subspecies *Limosa limosa limosa* breed in Germany and the Netherlands. This shows why Fryslân and Lower Saxony have a great responsibility for meadow bird conservation.



Proportions of breeding populations in **Lower Saxony** and **Fryslân** to the total populations in Germany and the Netherlands combined. Based on data from 2016 (Germany) and 2018–2020 (the Netherlands). The area share of Fryslân and Lower Saxony in the Netherlands and Germany combined is about 13%. This shows how important these two regions are for meadow birds in the two countries.

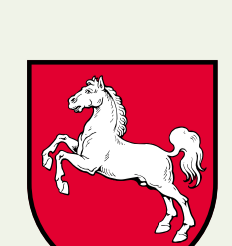
## Threats

Wet grassland breeding birds like the Black-tailed Godwit depend heavily on biodiverse cultivated meadows. However, the intensification of land use practices has created species-poor meadows that are mostly unsuitable for these birds. Combined with increased predation pressure, this leads to insufficient breeding success and population decline of almost all grassland breeding bird species in Europe.

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Photo Credit: J. Luning



Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Protection of the State of Lower Saxony





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## EAST ATLANTIC FLYWAY

The East Atlantic Flyway connects the breeding sites of the Black-tailed Godwit in the Netherlands and in Germany with stopover sites in France and the Iberian Peninsula, and with wintering sites in West Africa.

Core breeding sites in Germany and the Netherlands

Stopover sites in France

Stopover sites in Portugal and Spain



Wintering sites in West Africa



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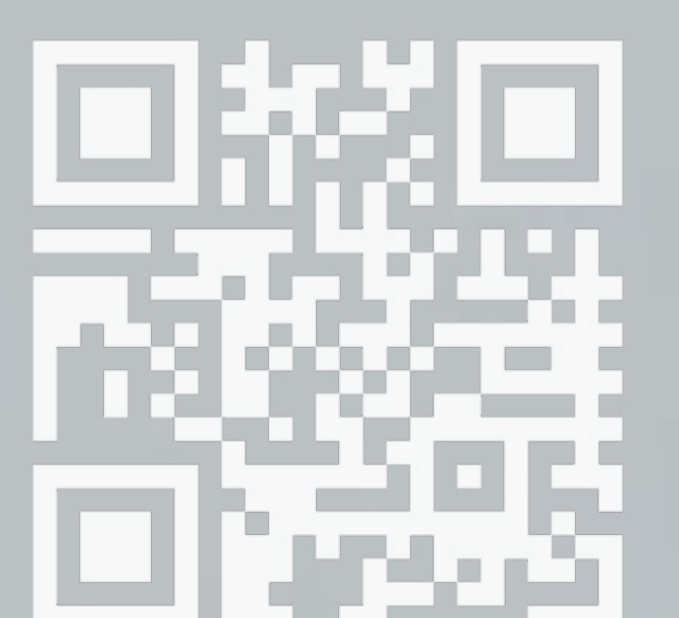


Photo Credit: C. Marlow, J. Ludwig, G. Reichtert

