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LIFE-IP GrassBirdHabitats

Conservation of wet grassland breeding bird habitats in the Atlantic Region

Heinrich Belting, Theunis Piersma



grassland breeding birds are...



Curlew



Lapwing



Redshank



Black-tailed Godwit

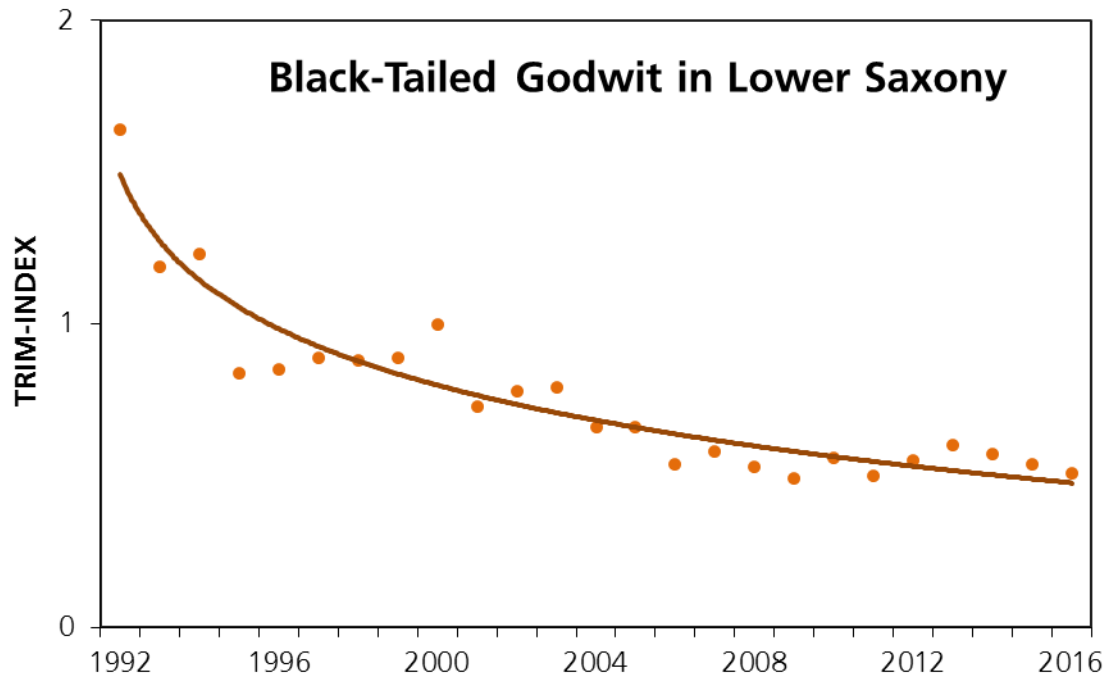


Common Snipe



Ruff

Why this LIFE IP ?



1990-2016: - 70%



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due to change in land use





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**What did we learn from the previous
LIFE project „Meadow Birds LIFE „
(2011-2022) ?**



successful grassland bird conservation

congruently determined by:

- large areas of wet grassland
- high openness
- low disturbance
- high watertables with temporarily flat flooded sites
- low or intermediate trophic level of soil
- mowing and grazing is compliant to nesting distribution
- sufficient farming intensity for optimal vegetation structures
- high heterogeneity on landscape level and parcel level
- moderate predation
- well organized guardianship and monitoring

All parameters have to be accomplished



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Dümmer – a paradise for grassland breeding birds:



Panoramafoto: 08.03.2017

possible only due to various previous LIFE projects

Flowering meadows after perennial flooding:



Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)



Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratense*)

- **>10 disappeared breeding species came back**



White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*)

Corncrake (*Crex crex*)

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)

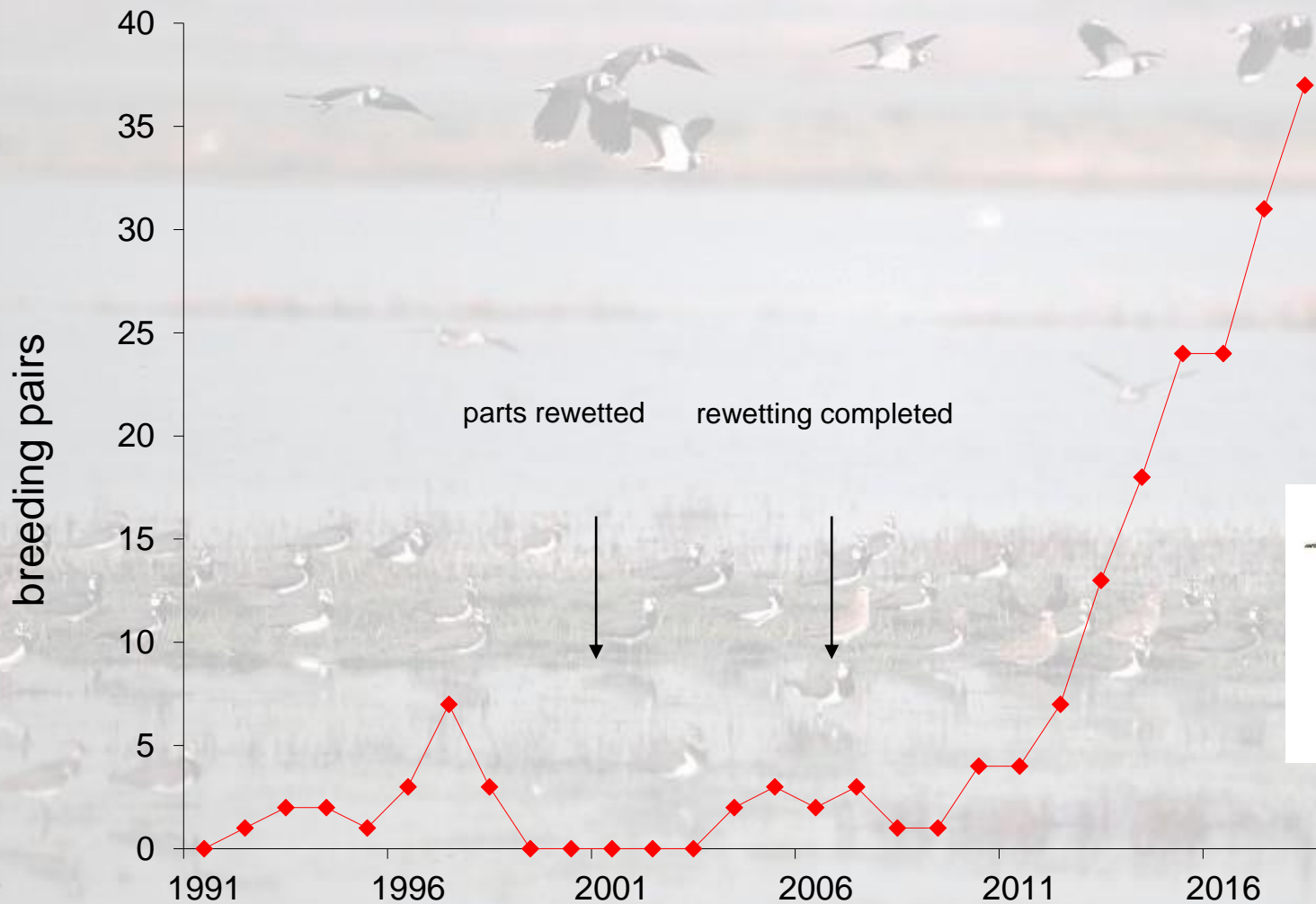
Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)



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Redshank





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Aim of this IP:

- to export this success all across Europe – and beyond !





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International
Wader Study Group

IWSG Annual Conference Workum 2018

Annual Conference
Workum 2018

Friesland –
The Netherlands

28 September –
1 October 2018





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Meadowbirds on the horizon

Een horizon vol weidevogels

in Zuidwest-Friesland / of southwest Friesland



Een horizon vol weidevogels

Meadowbirds on the horizon



International
Wader Study Group



Ruth A. Howison, Heinrich Belting, Jennifer Smart,
Mark Smart, Rob Schuckard, Ole Thorup & Theunis Piersma
+ International Wader Study Group



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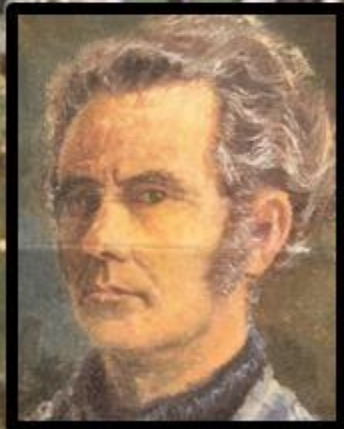


KING
of the Meadows

Meadowbird dystopias
or meadowbird utopias?



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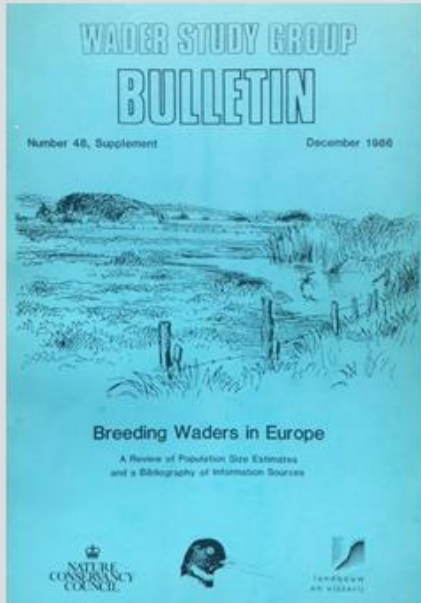


Table 1 Total densities of breeding wader pairs per square kilometre in the surveyed countries of Europe, based on the political boundaries of the early 1980s. Estimates of total numbers of wader breeding pairs (Piersma 1986) were simply divided by the total land surface of the countries (in km²).

Country/province/political unit	Pairs/km ²
Province of Friesland	33.60
Rest of The Netherlands	8.60
Iceland	14.10
Faeroe Islands	10.20
Finland	5.00
Sweden	3.00
Norway	2.20
UK and Ireland	1.50
Denmark	1.40
Belgium	0.60
West Germany	0.40
East Germany	0.30
Portugal	0.20
Hungary	0.14
Poland	0.09
France	0.06
Czechoslovakia	0.05
Austria	0.03
Switzerland	0.03





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HOEFOLLE
WURDEN MOATTE
JE BRÛKE OM 'N
OAR WAT DÛDLIK
TE MEITSJEN

HOW MANY
WORDS ARE
NEEDED TO
MAKE A
POINT?

Henk de Boer
(de Paupers)
in 'Kepler of
de macht fan
'e nullen'

How did we play the Meadowbird Utopia game?

On the one hand

we have an agricultural area, with >3000 fields, established towns, farms and roads, and a soil system that is fixed



On the other hand

we have four meadow-breeding waders with known and particular ecological characteristics





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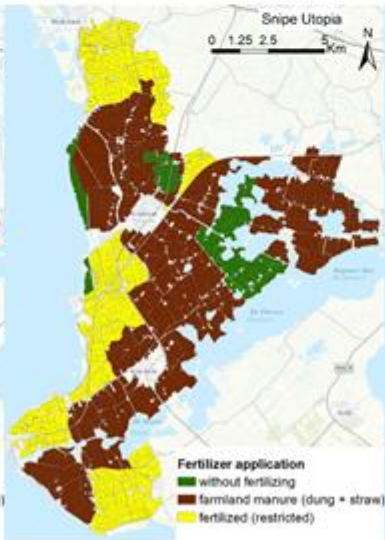
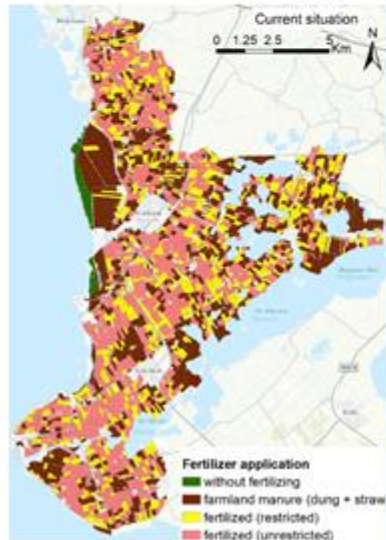
How did we play the Meadowbird Utopia **game**?

1. Based on sound ecological arguments, provide precise management suggestions for all 3000 fields using an existing system of categorizations of water tables, and fertilization, mowing and grazing regimes
2. Avoid questions on practicality and economics; this is the 'stuff' of the governing and management bodies to which we will present the science-based utopic ideas
3. By making the utopias species-specific, we hope to harvest the widest range of ideas and scenarios

fertilizer application

- without fertilizing
- farmland manure (dung + straw)
- fertilized (restricted)
- fertilized (unrestricted)

current





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Meadowbirds on the horizon



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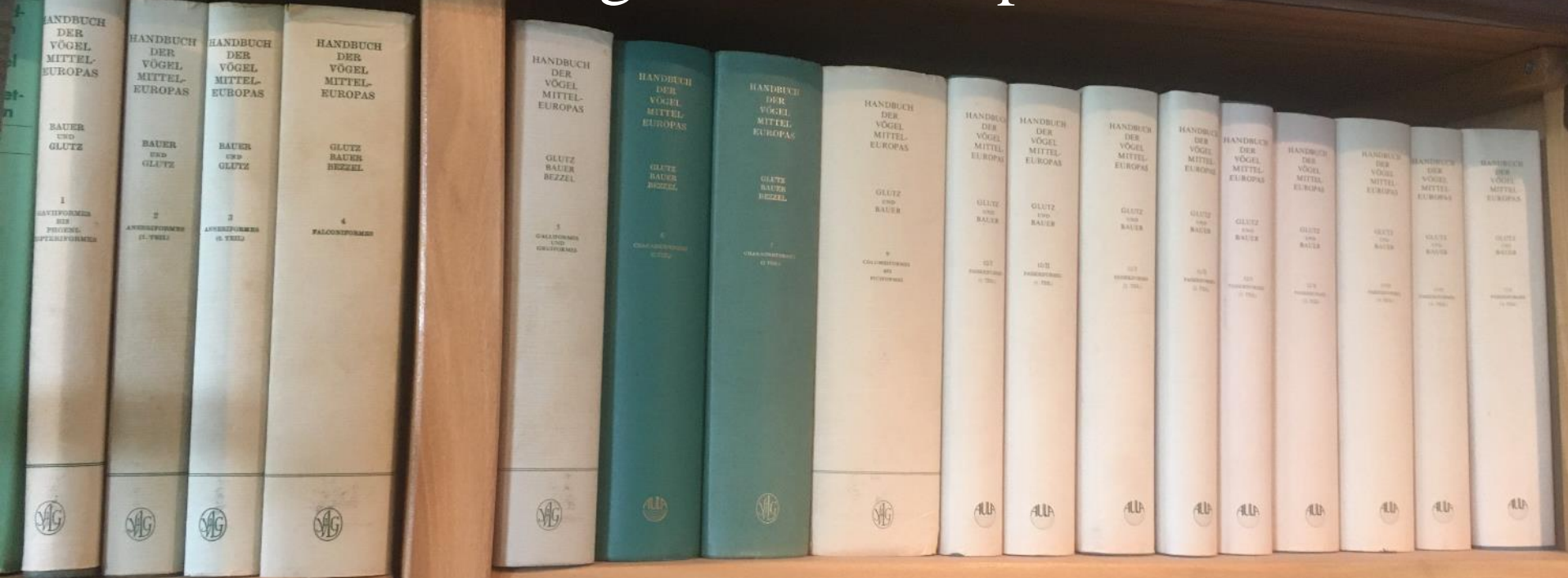
Ruth A. Howison, Heinrich Belting, Jennifer Smart,
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Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas – de ‘Glutz’



Niedersachsen Fryslân

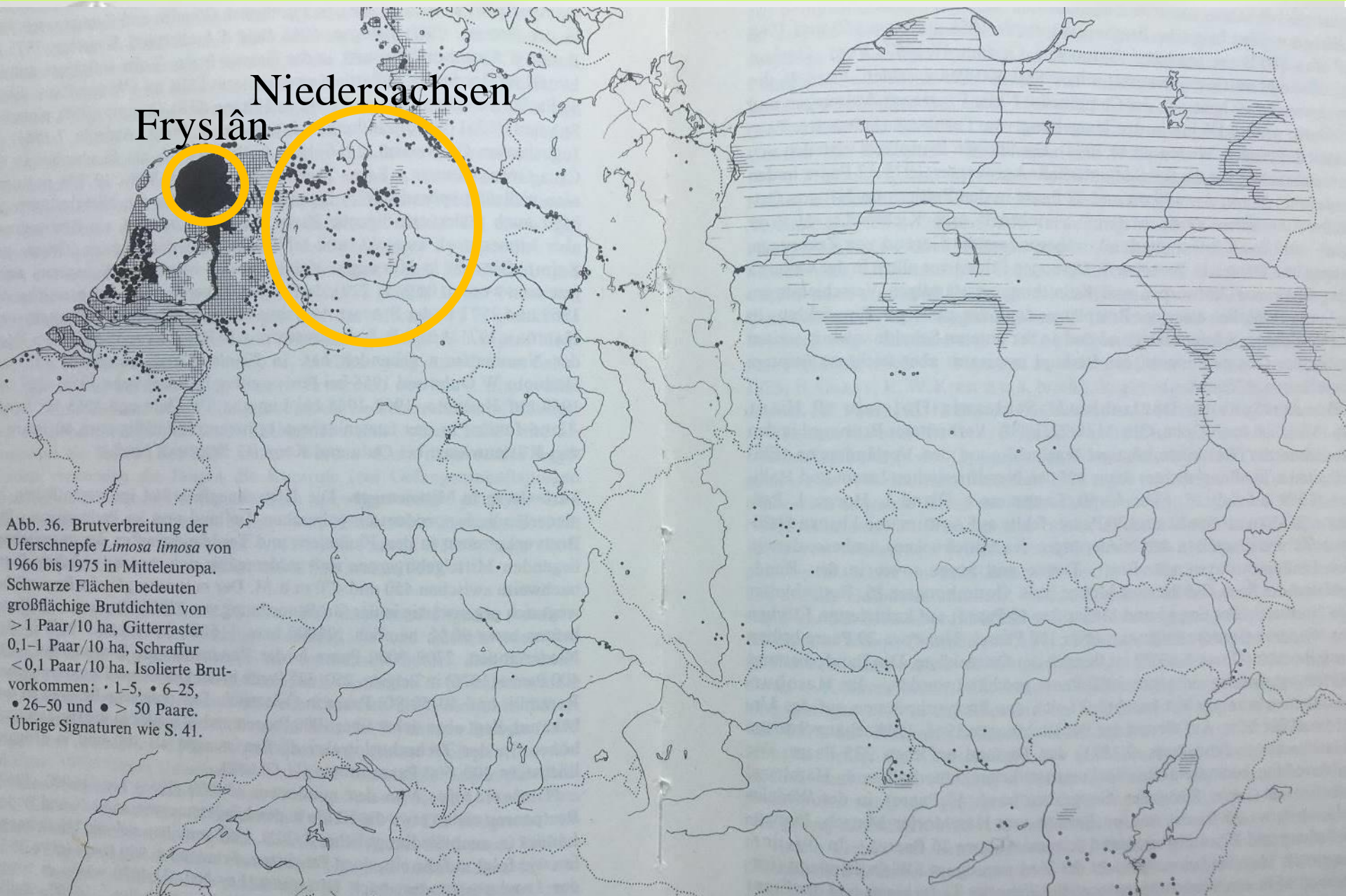


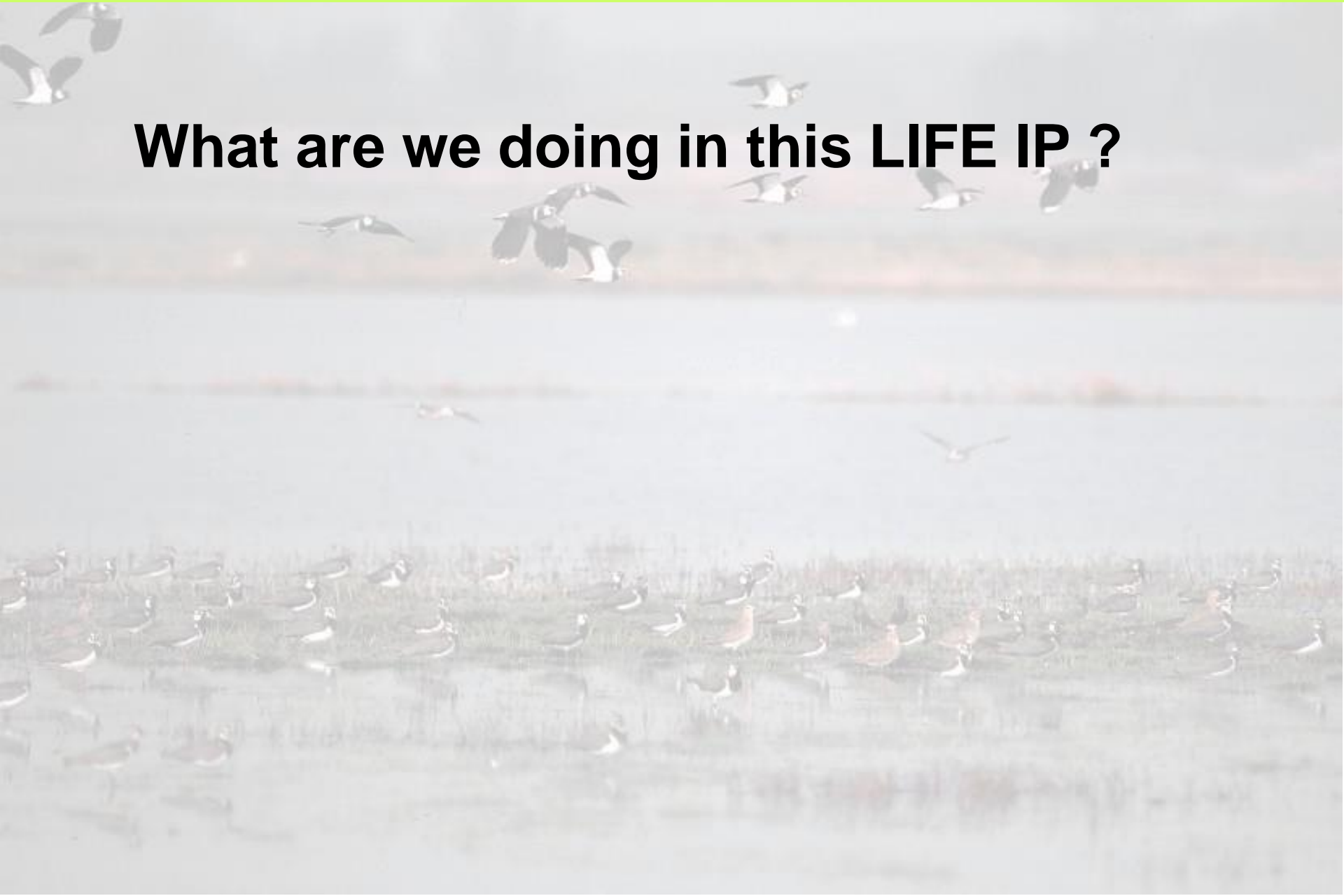
Abb. 36. Brutverbreitung der Uferschnepfe *Limosa limosa* von 1966 bis 1975 in Mitteleuropa. Schwarze Flächen bedeuten großflächige Brutdichten von >1 Paar/10 ha, Gitterraster 0,1-1 Paar/10 ha, Schraffur <0,1 Paar/10 ha. Isolierte Brutvorkommen: • 1-5, • 6-25, • 26-50 und • > 50 Paare. Übrige Signaturen wie S. 41.



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What are we doing in this LIFE IP ?



Conservation of Wet Grassland Breeding Bird Habitats in the Atlantic Region

LOCATION:

East Atlantic Flyway

BUDGET INFO:

Total budget: 27.061.079,- €

Complementary funds: 353.000.000,- €

DURATION:

11/2020 – 10/2030



Coordinating Beneficiary:

- Lower Saxony Ministry for the Environment
- Lower Saxony Agency of Nature Conservation

Associated Beneficiaries:

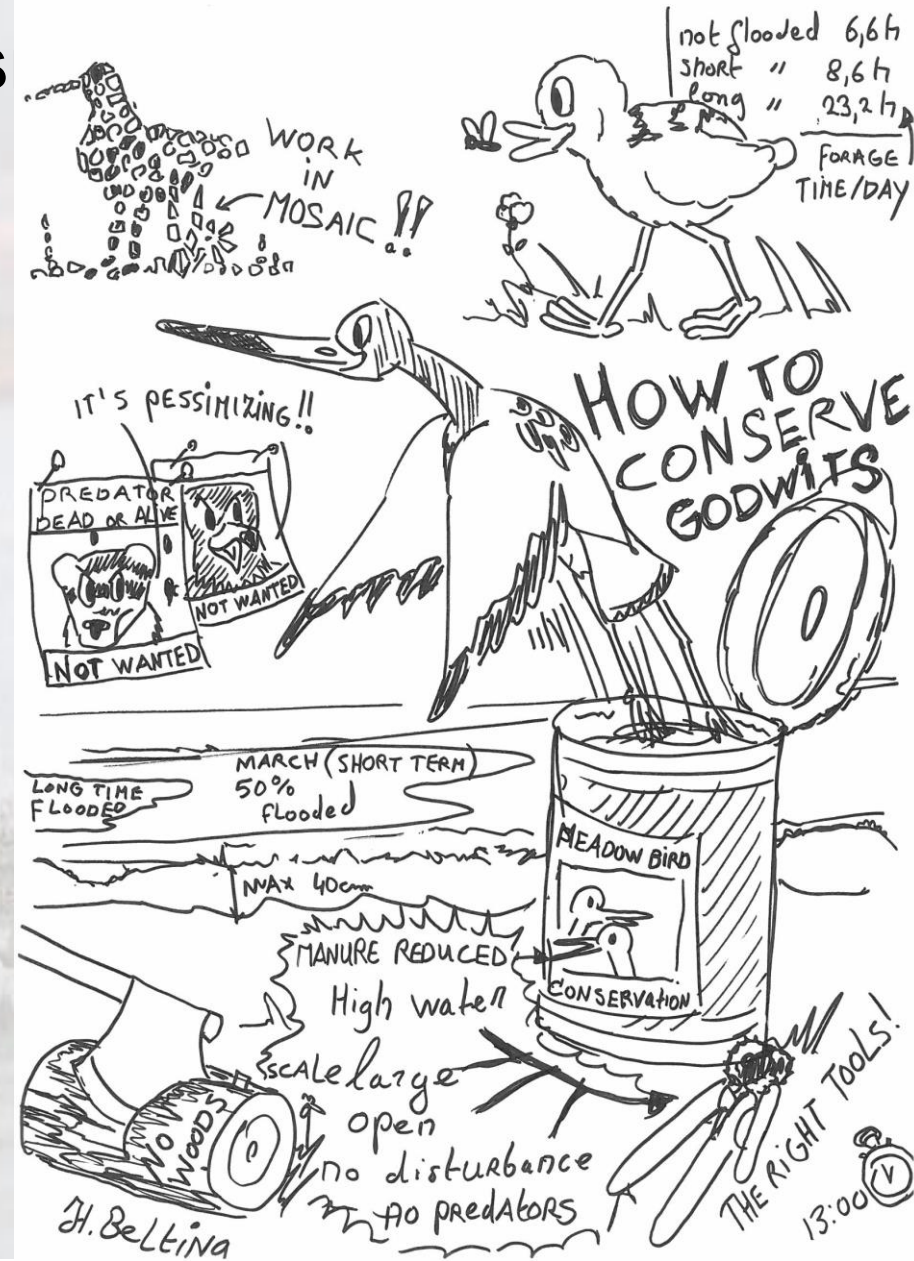
- Nationalparkverwaltung
Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer
- BioConsult OS
- University of Groningen
- Province of Fryslân
- Coöperatieve Vereniging Sudwestkust
- Bond Friese Vogelwachten



main objectives and actions

Implementation of

- PAF
- EU Bird Directive
- EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020
- Green Infrastructure



Cartoon by Ysbrand Galama (09/2018)

main objectives and actions

- improve habitat quality on breeding, stopover and wintering grounds



Unterelbe 23.03.2017, after implementation of LIFE measures

main objectives and actions

- Optimizing of watertables – 20.000 ha



infrastructure for water logging

main objectives and actions

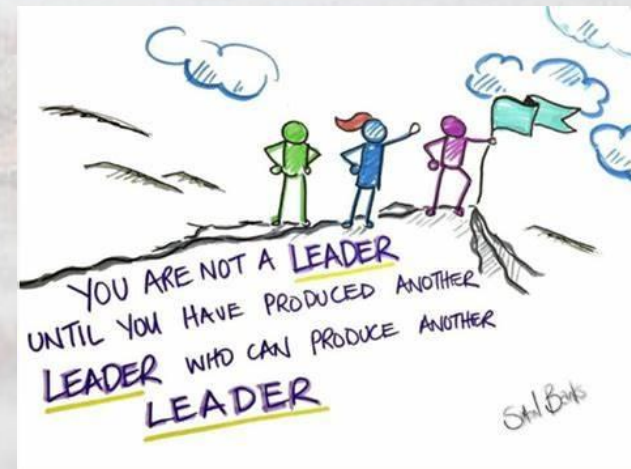
- reduction of predation rate by predation management



Automatic live trap with mobile sensor

main objectives and actions

- capacity building within an international framework

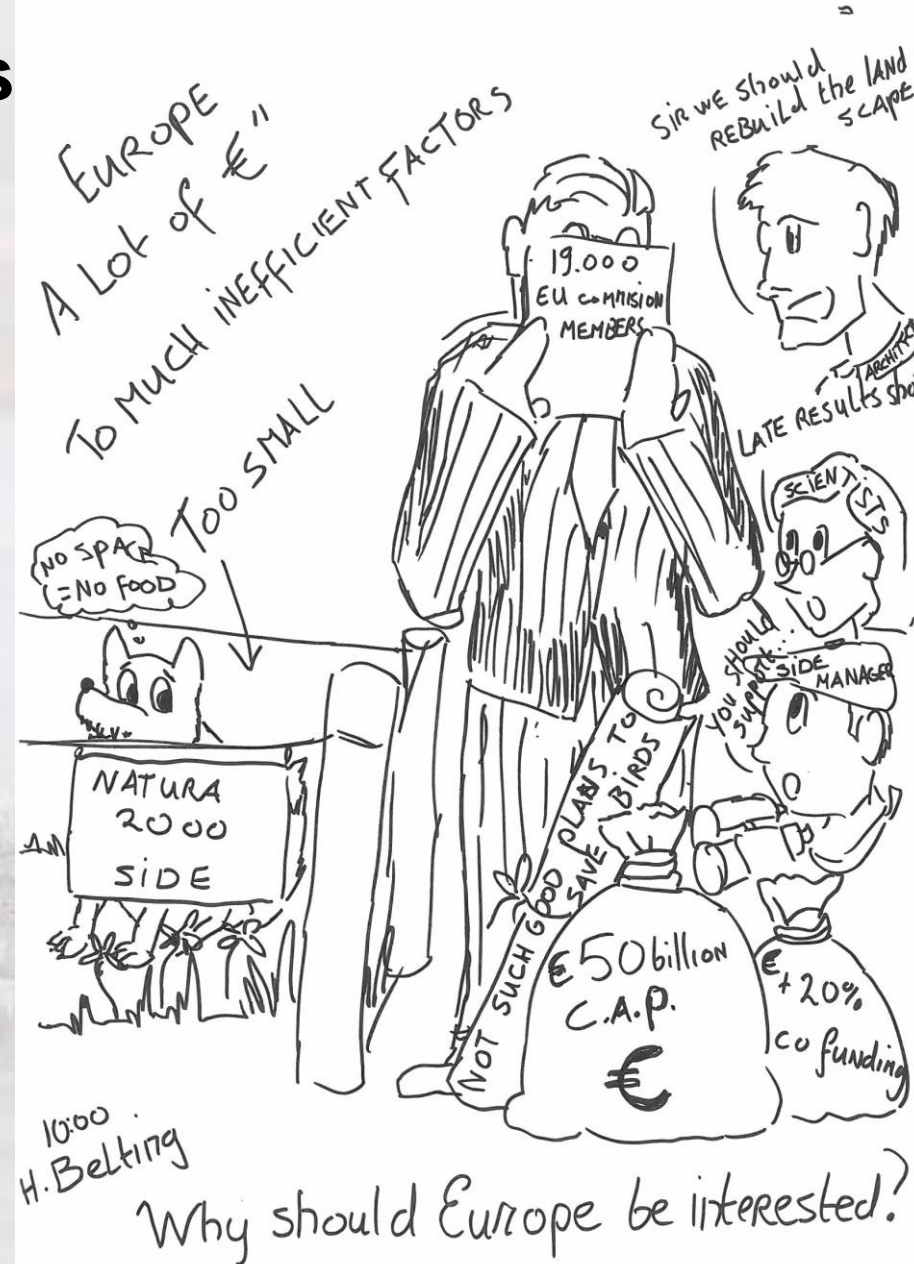


In spring 2014 Khady Gueye visited Friesland during her PhD on Black-tailed Godwits.

Now, she works with Wetlands International in Senegal.

main objectives and actions

- increase ERDF and EAFRD funding for wet grassland management from less than 10 up to 353 million €, 50 million € for land purchase



Cartoon by Ysbrand Galama (09/2018)

main objectives and actions

- strategic plan for the Atlantic Region for grassland bird conservation
 - connected with a plan for West Africa



main objectives and actions

- farming business model for wet grassland bird habitats.

ERDF + EAFRD to support infrastructure and equipment in meadow bird farms



suckle-cow stable for meadow bird farming: 80% cofunded by CAP; Dümmer, April 2008

main objectives and actions

- business model for sustainable rice farming compliant to birds



SAED, rice farming consortium aside the Djoudg National Park, Senegal, Dezember 2018



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Designation of a Biosphere Reserve in Gambia and Senegal (180.000 ha) - for local people and birds





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Concrete conservation measures in West Africa



Saloum nature reserve, Senegal, 12/2018

expected results

- favourable conservation status
- reversal of negative trends towards increasing populations
- increasing fledging success
- stabilised returning rates from wintering areas and a stabilisation of returning rates from second year birds back into the breeding grounds after their stay abroad in the first summer





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Thanks a lot for your kind attention !