



MEADOW BIRDS LIFE



Meadow Bird Conservation in Lower Saxony

EU LIFE Project “Meadow Birds”

Layman’s Report



Niedersachsen

MEADOW BIRD CONSERVATION IN LOWER SAXONY

EU LIFE+ NATURE PROJECT „MEADOW BIRDS“

LAYMAN'S REPORT

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Claudia Peerenboom, Silke Haack, Jürgen Ludwig (State Agency for Bird Conservation, NLWKN)
Gundolf Reichert (Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park Administration)
Heidrun Fammler (Baltic Environmental Forum Germany)

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Cover picture © Black-tailed Godwit, K. Trimbos





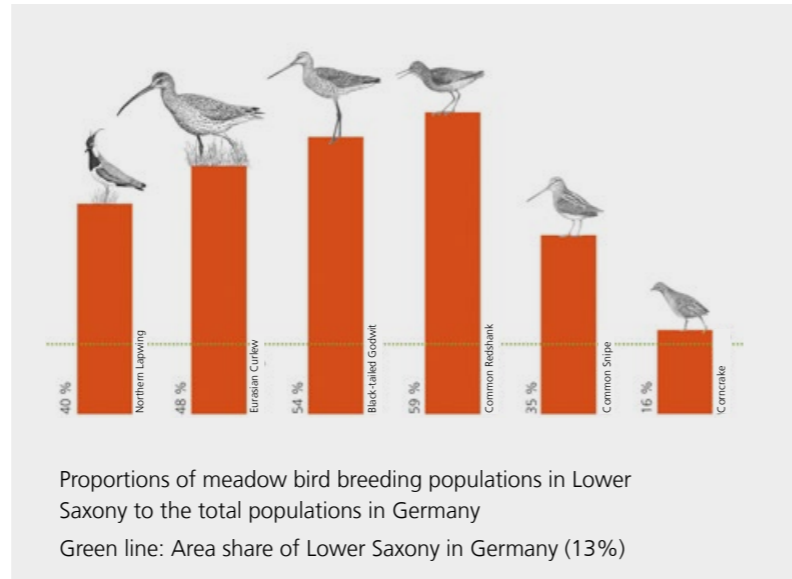
Christian Meyer,
Minister for the Environment,
Energy and Climate Protection

Lower Saxony is the most important “meadow bird state” in Germany. Significant populations of Germany’s meadow birds, such as Black-tailed Godwit, Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Curlew, Common Redshank, Common Snipe and Corncrake, breed here. Therefore, we have a major responsibility to preserve these species, not only for Lower Saxony and Germany, but also for Europe.

With the LIFE+ project “Meadow Birds”, Lower Saxony continues its commitment to bird conservation with the support of the European Union via the LIFE+ funding programme. From 2011 to 2025, breeding areas of meadow birds native to Lower Saxony are being protected and improved.

The Ministry for the Environment of Lower Saxony entrusted the Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Protection and Nature Conservation Agency (NLWKN) with the implementation of the project. Cooperation partners are the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park Administration (NLPV), the Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF) Germany and the Dutch nature conservation association Natuurmonumenten.

The present booklet offers a comprehensive insight into the achievements and challenges faced during one decade of nature conservation efforts in the context of this LIFE project towards an increasing protection of meadow birds.

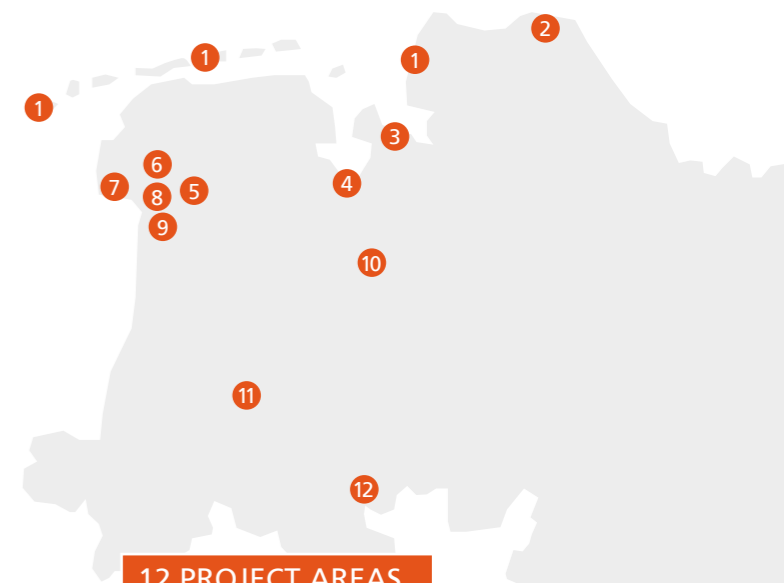


LIFE+ NATURE

With the “LIFE+ Nature” programme the European Union co-finances measures and projects regarding the protection of species and habitats in Natura 2000 areas. The LIFE project “Meadow Birds” provides 22.3 million euros for bird conservation, of which 60% are provided by the EU and 40% by the state of Lower Saxony, with the support of the district of Leer and the Nature Conservation Foundation Emsland.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Improvement of habitats for meadow birds via land purchases (600 hectares), meadow bird-adapted grassland use and rewetting (2.000 hectares)
- Increase the breeding populations of Black-tailed Godwit and Corncrake and ensure the successful rearing of their chicks
- Cooperation between agriculture and nature conservation



12 PROJECT AREAS

The LIFE project focuses on the 12 most important protected meadow bird areas of Lower Saxony with an estimated total area of 80.000 hectares:

- 1 Lower Saxony Wadden Sea
- 2 Unterelbe
- 3 Butjadingen
- 4 Marschen am Jadebusen
- 5 Fehntjer Tief
- 6 Ostfriesische Meere
- 7 Krummhörn
- 8 Emsmarsch from Leer to Emden
- 9 Rheiderland
- 10 Hunteniederung
- 11 Lowlands of Südradde, Mittelradde and Marka
- 12 Dümmer



Typical meadow bird landscapes near Riepe in East Frisia in 1929 (left) and around the Uphuser Meer in 1930 (right).

During the first half of the 20th century, the habitats of meadow birds in northwest Germany were mostly shaped by spacious, treeless meadows with high water levels.

The extensive land use created a great variety in structure for grasslands, including diverse habitats for flowers and insects, offering enough food for the chicks of meadow birds.

For Black-tailed Godwits and other species of grassland breeding birds the "Meeden, Hammriche and Wische" (wetland meadows) resembled a land of milk and honey. Only fractions of these once biodiverse meadows remain today. In the past 100 years, the landscape has changed dramatically through the construction of highways, wind parks and settlements. Especially damaging for meadow birds was the structural transformation in agriculture: increased drainage of agricultural land, land consolidation, increasing use of fertilisers and the excessive application of pesticides. Habitats of birds were fragmented and deteriorated in a way that induced a dramatic decline of meadow bird populations in northern Germany. The populations of Black-tailed Godwits reflect this decline like no other meadow bird species. Since the 1980s, their breeding population declined by more than 70% across Germany.

MEEDE, HAMMRICH AND WISCH

Between the rivers Ems and Weser – depending on the region – these terms are used for spacious lowlands. Originally, they used to be very wet, and therefore could only be used extensively as meadows and pastures. The word "Hammrich" is common in East Frisia (e.g. Rheiderland). "Meede" (derived from mowing) is being used in the region around the Großes Meer between Emden and Aurich.

In Butjadingen, "Wisch" describes open, mowed grassland (e.g. Stollheimer Wisch). Marshes are plain and fertile lands that have been washed up from the sea, which can be used quite well for arable farming.

In the Oldenburger Land (Friesland, Wesermarsch), "Grodén" is land taken from the sea and protected by a dyke. The foreland the dyke is called "Außengrodén". In East Frisia, the dyked marshes are called "Polder". Areas between main dyke and sea are titled "Heller".

THE KING OF MEADOWS: THE CORNCRAKE – A HIDDEN MAVERICK

He likes to hide, well camouflaged, in high grass vegetation, and is therefore hard to be found. With his short beak he picks food from the ground and from plants. His call can be heard especially at twilight and night in wet meadows that are extensively used. Due to his distinctive call, his scientific name is *Crex crex*. The Corncrake is a species that starts to breed late in the year. The breeding grounds are already being populated in May, but the rearing of the juveniles is usually in August or September; making the Corncrake a late breeding species in agricultural land.



Corncrake in his breeding grounds

NOT ONLY QUEEN, BUT ALSO PATRON: THE BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

Strutting through the wet grassland with her long legs, she is probing the wet soil with her long beak, searching for food.

The Black-tailed Godwit embodies adaptation to her habitat like no other meadow bird species. Her daring courtship in flight is known to be spectacular. In spring, her prominent call "greta, greta" is (or used to be) part of the open landscapes of marshes and lowlands.

As an "umbrella species", she is a key species for conservation: Measures for the conservation of the Black-tailed Godwit benefit the protection of the whole biological community of wetlands with their characteristic fauna and flora.



6 Left picture: "East Frisian Meede (Hammrich) around Riepe", district of Aurich, copyright: State Museum of Lower Saxony, Hannover. Author: Reinhold Tüxen, 1929. Right picture: "Colourful floridity in the Meeden Uphuser Meer near Emden", copyright: State Museum of Lower Saxony, Hannover. Author: Max Hugo Weigold, 11.06.1930.



During the breeding season, meadow birds depend on safe nesting spots and a rich food supply. Adult birds find their food in wet, soaked or flooded meadows. In these habitats, their long beaks are perfect for picking around, probing the soil, and searching for their favourite food items: worms and larvae residing in the soil close to the surface when there are high water levels. This makes them easy to reach for long-beaked meadow birds.



Meadow birds enjoy wet grasslands: High water levels delay the growth of grasses and herbs. A diverse sward with gaps and structure offers cover for the birds. Small-scaled grassland areas with shrubs, reed and megaphorbs are usually avoided because the birds need to have a wide view of their surroundings. A prime example for good meadow bird conditions are the depicted Borringhauser meadows in the project area Dümmer in May 2011.



The chicks of the Black-tailed Godwit, here only a few days old in the beginning of May, need freedom of movement to forage. Therefore, high and dense vegetation constitutes often an obstacle.



For nesting, ground-breeding birds take advantage of flat depressions in low vegetation (as the nest of a Godwit illustrates above). For the protection of nests and chicks (they are mobile right after hatching), it is important that the meadows are not being mechanically mowed during the breeding season. Livestock and breeding birds can coexist well, as long as the herd size stays modest.



The wetland complex Ochsenmoor at the Dümmer in the beginning of the breeding period: Since 1985, numerous interlocking conservation projects, most recently the LIFE project Meadow Birds, enabled a rewetting of 2.500 ha. Prerequisite for the successful implementation of these projects was the extensive land acquisition by public authorities.

LAND FOR MEADOW BIRDS

When developing a nursery according to the taste of meadow birds, one needs adequate "building ground". The demands of meadow birds on breeding grounds include wet areas and adapted low-intensity agricultural management, which nowadays can be found only in very few land use procedures.

Hence, the best precondition for the rewetting and grassland management is land acquisition by public authorities. That way, large areas of connected wet grasslands with ideal breeding conditions can be provided.

A majority of the financial means of the LIFE project Meadow Birds were available for land acquisition. Still, the process of land purchase was not an easy task.

In almost all areas, the purchase contracts were preceded by years of research and negotiations. In some cases, tedious land exchange processes were necessary.

In the context of the LIFE project Meadow Birds, 965 ha of land were acquired. Complementing to the LIFE budget, the state of Lower Saxony provided further financial means of more than 11 million euros.

A great success for meadow bird conservation in Lower Saxony!

NO MEADOW BIRD CONSERVATION WITHOUT AGRICULTURE

Meadow bird conservation only works in cooperation with farmers. After the land is purchased, the previous tenants or previous owners are taken over as tenants, if possible. However, meadow bird conservation comes with a different mind-set on grassland management than conventional farming. By now, it has been proven that, particularly in the drought years of the recent past, rewetting measures for meadow bird conservation is beneficial for agriculture. Together with the tenants, opportunities for the creation of ideal habitat conditions for meadow birds must be developed in concurrence with cost-covering procedures of grassland use. An important tool for the collaboration is the lease agreement.

The following guidelines, defined in lease agreements, have been proven successful:

- No mechanical processing (rolling, dragging, mowing) before the 1st of July
- During the breeding season, livestock grazing is only permitted with a remove limited low stock density (max. 2 animals/ha)
- No fertilisation, no use of pesticides
- No modification of the terrain, no ploughing of grassland
- No reseeding or overseeding
- The fields must enter winter season with short vegetation



Shallow waters in meadow landscapes are popular as safe sleeping spots, while also offering plenty of food.



In a mosaic of habitats, consisting of areas with different water and moisture levels, various plant communities occur. Some offer shelter, others are rather short and sparse, ideal for chicks to forage. Bunder Hammrich, project area Rheiderland.

FAMILY BROUWER practices dairy farming in the Wesermarsch.

Their farm is family owned since the 1970s. The family leases 27 ha under the guidelines for meadow bird-friendly management – among them are fields acquired by conservation authorities through the LIFE project. Also on their own land the farmers are taking special care for meadow birds. Mrs. Brouwer is “crazy for birds”. Already as a child, she protected the nests of meadow birds, and now she passed on her passion to her kids. They know all bird species in the area: “Meadow birds belong to our landscape. We want to operate in a manner that ensures well-developed populations. The rewetting measures, implemented by the LIFE project, represent a major component for reaching our management objectives.”



A LIFE CONSTRUCTION MEASURE IN THE SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA RHEIDERLAND IN NOVEMBER 2017:



1

With temporary sheet pile walls and pumps the water will be kept out of the excavation pit, even though it is placed in the middle of a ditch. To prevent the sagging of the water pump, it is mounted on long steel poles that go down to the firm levels of the bog soil. In the Rheiderland, firm soil levels can only be found at a depth of 15 m or more.



2

The foundation of the wind-powered water pump weighs 4.300 kg and consists of a single component. It is placed on the pole foundation in the drained excavation pit.

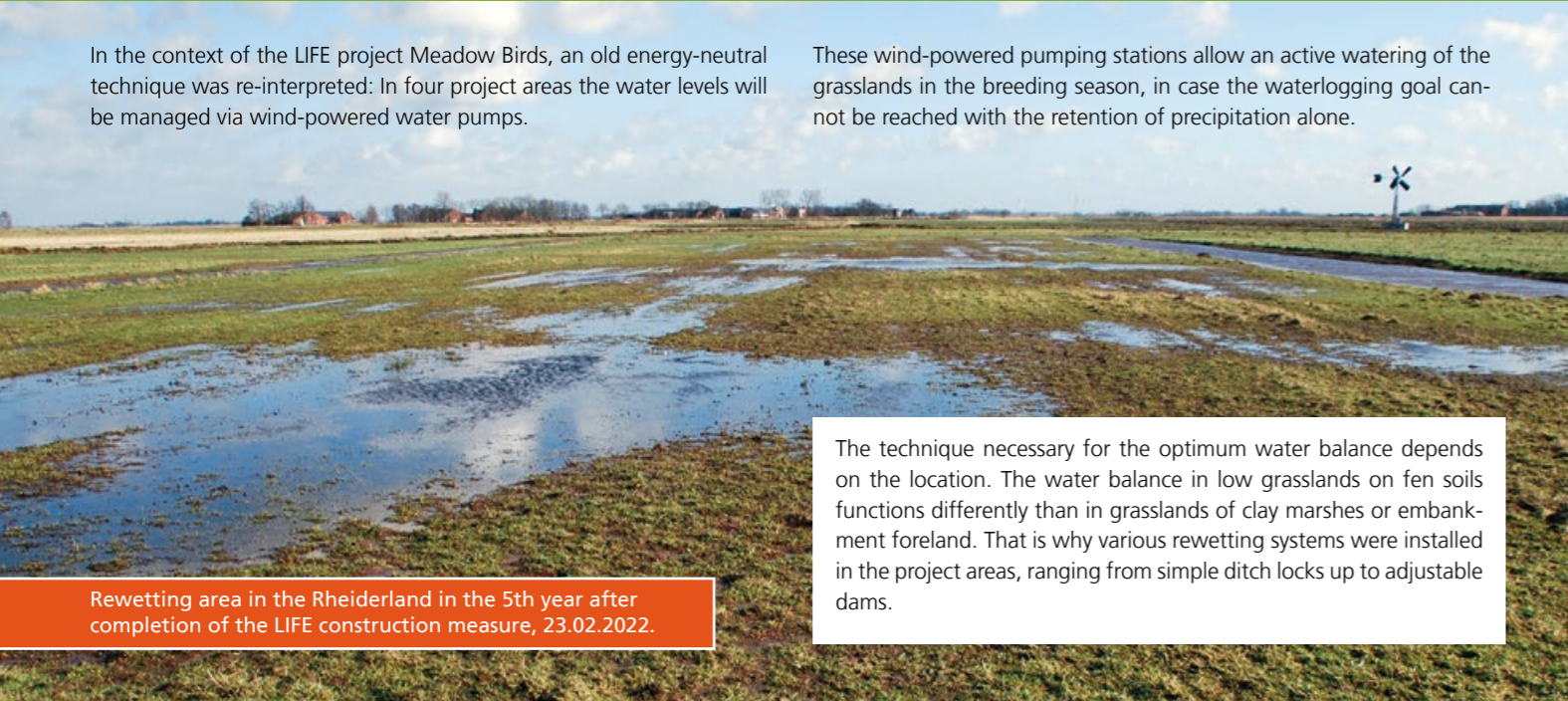


3

The wind turbine activates the gear which pumps water in or out of the ditch system, depending on the configuration.

In the context of the LIFE project Meadow Birds, an old energy-neutral technique was re-interpreted: In four project areas the water levels will be managed via wind-powered water pumps.

These wind-powered pumping stations allow an active watering of the grasslands in the breeding season, in case the waterlogging goal cannot be reached with the retention of precipitation alone.



The technique necessary for the optimum water balance depends on the location. The water balance in low grasslands on fen soils functions differently than in grasslands of clay marshes or embankment foreland. That is why various rewetting systems were installed in the project areas, ranging from simple ditch locks up to adjustable dams.

Rewetting area in the Rheiderland in the 5th year after completion of the LIFE construction measure, 23.02.2022.

In Nordkehdingen in the Special Protection Area Unterelbe, 17 inner-dyke areas of 30 to 70 ha each were rewetted. Such measures were restricted to land owned by public authorities.



With the use of wind-powered pumping stations, 700 ha of grassland can be kept wet for the breeding season, turning the land into breeding hotspots.

The extensively managed outer dykes in the project area Unterelbe regularly have the largest breeding populations of the Corncrake in Lower Saxony.



WITH TIME ... MOWING APPROACHES

Corncrakes are meadow birds that rely on extensively used, rich-structured grassland. It is disadvantageous when fields are being drained and heavily fertilised. Then the grasses grow so densely that Corncrakes and their chicks can no longer search for grasshoppers, beetles, worms and snails.

Also, the ploughing of grassland and early mowing of the meadows are a threat to this late-breeding bird. Therefore, habitats of the Corncrake should not be mowed before August in order to ensure the successful development of chicks.



To improve the habitat of meadow birds and other bird species, 44 tide pools were created in the project area Unterelbe during the LIFE project. These are characterised by depressions in the dyke foreland that get flooded during storm surges of the Elbe and maintain the water for weeks or months.



A flat littoral shore constantly underlies slow alterations and with that changes its character day by day – continuously making water- and mud-inhabiting insects and worms accessible: a true “mud buffet” for juvenile Lapwings, as illustrated here on the side of a tide pool near Balje in April 2019.

The islands in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park are population and reproduction hotspots for sea and coastal birds. They offer undisturbed natural habitats like salt marshes and dunes as well as extensively used grasslands for meadow birds. Despite their small surface, around 8% of all Godwits and 5% of all Corncrakes of Lower Saxony breed in the island polders. As part of the LIFE project, measures for water retention and predation management were implemented on the islands of Borkum and Langeoog.



Dam installation with outlet on Borkum at the Tüskendörsee.

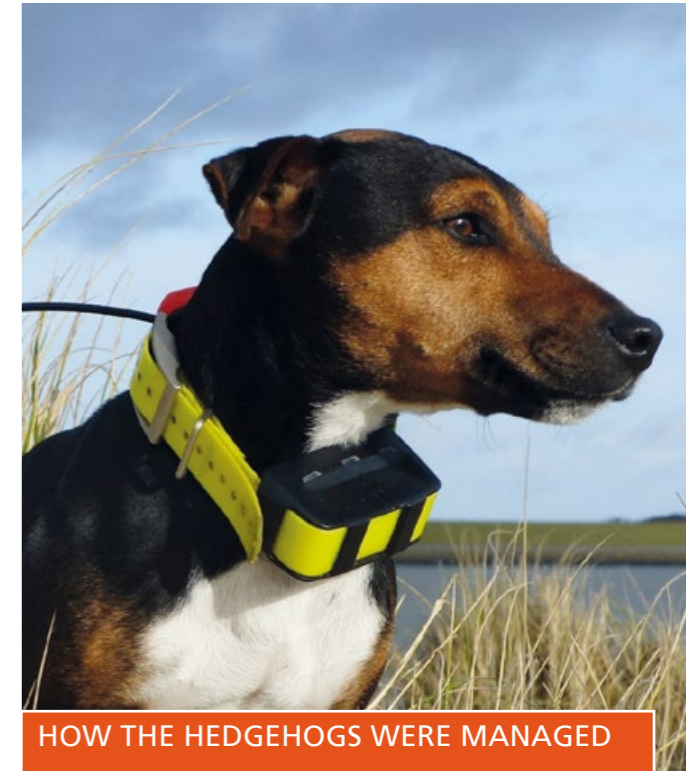


INTRODUCED HEDGEHOGS LOVE BIRD EGGS

The islands in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park are originally free of mammalian predators and thereby an ideal habitat for ground-breeding species, such as Black-tailed Godwits. Studies showed that hedgehogs, being egg-feeding predators, are capable of causing massive damage to the populations of Godwits and other ground-breeding birds. In the case of Godwits, up to 30% of the clutch were lost due to hedgehog predation in some years. Naturally, they do not inhabit the East Frisian islands, but were introduced by human activity. On the islands of the national park, a new approach was developed and implemented by the LIFE project Meadow Birds with the objective of putting a stop to the egg robbers' game.



Nocturnal predation on the clutch of a Godwit by a hedgehog.



HOW THE HEDGEHOGS WERE MANAGED

The hedgehog management was planned by the national park administration and carried out by experts. The hedgehog trapping consisted of nocturnal searching with headlights, live traps and – the innovation of the project – specially trained hedgehog dogs. They proved themselves particularly effective in complex habitats, e.g. shrubby dunes. Trapped hedgehogs were collected, cared for and released in woody areas on the mainland. On Borkum and Langeoog, 400 hedgehogs were trapped during the project period, making the breeding area of the meadow birds close to hedgehog-free. Since then no more losses of Godwit clutches to hedgehogs were found – a great success!

MEADOW BIRD CONSERVATION RELIES ON ACCEPTANCE – COMMUNICATION CREATES ACCEPTANCE!

The king and his queen are popular figures – anyhow, the implementation of meadow bird conservation measures has potential for conflict; especially when changes in land use occur, causing farmers to fear economic losses.

“The LIFE project wants everything a farmer does not like”, summarises Heinrich Belting (project manager of the LIFE project Meadow Birds), getting to the point of the situation.

Acceptance for meadow bird conservation increases when everyone puts their cards on the table from the beginning. Therefore, part of the LIFE project were numerous round tables, public information events, workshops, coordination meetings, on-site inspections and expert discussions. Local, national and European perspectives on potential measures in meadow bird conservation were reported and new ideas and concrete actions discussed, respectively. All these events were aiming for one objective: increasing the transparency of the project measures by including participants, affected persons, stakeholders and the public, gaining acceptance and their will to assist. This is the only way to anchor responsibility for the protection of meadow birds in public awareness.



Informative event on Borkum in June 2017: Island inhabitants and tourists are being informed on the measures for the conservation of meadow birds.

A little stocktaking: Since 2011, more than 160 events with over 2.500 participants took place – between 2 to 250 people participated in each event: in all project areas, inside and outside, in different settings, sometimes in cooperation with politicians and the press.

HANS-HERMANN MOHRMANN –
Landscape guard in the project area
Hunteniederung

“The EU LIFE project complemented and supported the measures for meadow bird conservation that are being realised in the Bornhorster Huntewiesen since 1991. But the conservation effort can fulfil its purpose only when the majority of stakeholders on-site get together and exchange. If any disputes or violations of the conservation regulations arise, it is always the first step to request one-to-one talks.”

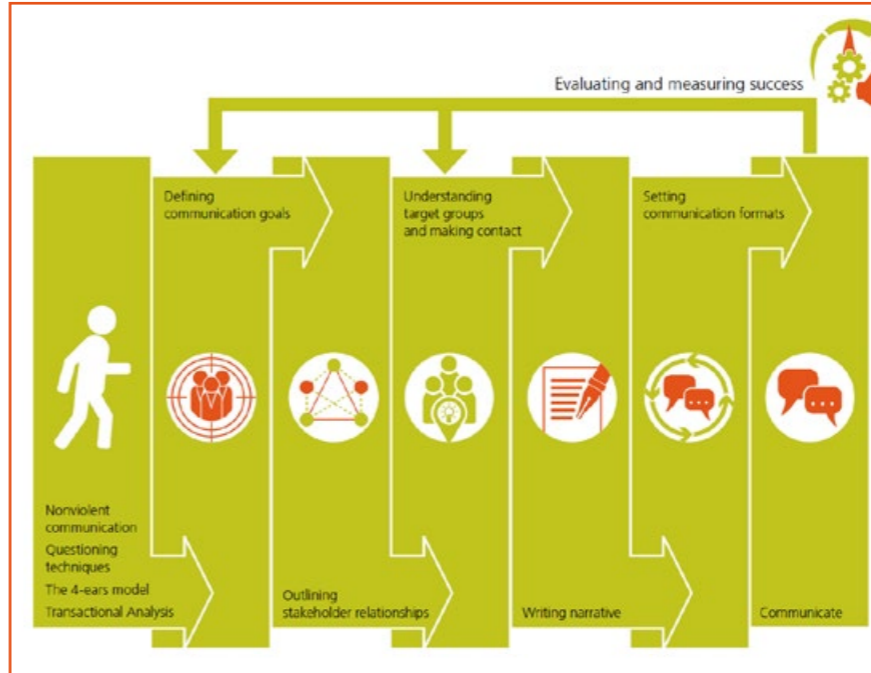


TARGET GROUP ANALYSIS – A CRUCIAL STEP FOR CREATING ACCEPTANCE FOR MEASURES

Measures for the reduction of predators are a delicate topic. Hence, the LIFE project not only invests in active communication, but also performed an accompanied target group analysis by BEF Germany for sounding out acceptances for the measures. Respondents included local stakeholders as well as selected target groups, e.g. tourists and cat owners. Further coordination processes in other German nature conservation areas were also studied.

Conclusion: Every measure, every locality and every stakeholder remains unique and needs to be addressed and attended individually. All stakeholders derive from diverse social contexts. Their needs, opinions, motivations and networks are human factors, leading towards either acceptance or conflict when implementing measures. A goal-oriented communication is, therefore, key. Only when you know the respective stakeholders and understand their interests, you can address their sensitivities and convince them of the necessity of nature conservation projects.

MANUAL FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION



The LIFE project showed: Communication is an important instrument for successful conservation work – it is a craft that requires expertise and finesse.

For guidance and as a source of inspiration for nature conservation agencies and organisations, a handbook for successful communication in conservation projects was created. The statements of the manual were reinforced by interviews with stakeholders from 47 international LIFE conservation projects sharing their communication experiences.

For download (available in EN and DE), visit: www.wiesenvoegel-life.de/en/downloads/



THE CENSUS OF GODWITS

The success of implemented measures in the project is monitored by the development of breeding population and breeding success. Data for both parameters were collected and evaluated in a standardised manner. In selected areas, research methods using telemetry and coloured rings were applied.

Breeding population:

- How is the development of the breeding population (= number of breeding pairs) in each area?

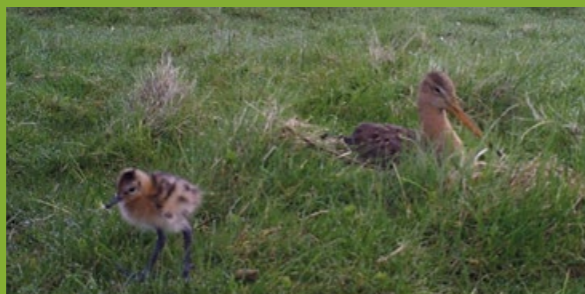
Breeding success:

- Is the breeding successful and are the chicks hatching?
- How many chicks reach the age of fledging?
- Overall, it needs to be assessed if the population can survive in the long term.

HOW TO DETERMINE THIS?



During the breeding season, breeding pairs are **counted**.



Cameras around Black-tailed Godwit nests monitor and document the hatching (as illustrated) and potential losses.



For individual recognition, the Black-tailed Godwits are marked with **coloured rings**. Here the "German Godwit" during the European Football Championship 2016.



The **radio telemetry** of chicks provides information on habitat decisions, movement patterns and causes of losses. The pinpointed localisation of chicks equipped with tracking devices is conducted with a loop antenna.



Juvenile Black-tailed Godwits are equipped **with satellite transmitters** to record their flight and identify stopover and wintering areas.



SATELLITE TELEMETRY



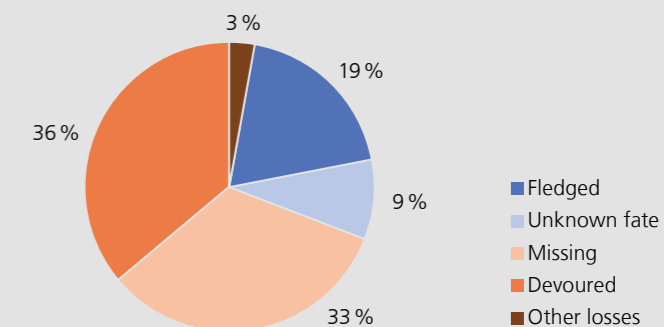
Black-tailed Godwits in their wintering grounds in Mauretania.

Most of the Black-tailed Godwits breeding in Lower Saxony spend the winter in West Africa.

Between 2018 and 2021, 30 juveniles were equipped with satellite transmitters in the context of the LIFE project Meadow Birds. Their flyway goes through the Netherlands, France and the Iberian Peninsula to the West African wintering grounds.

One juvenile bird performed a 55-hour non-stop flight covering 4.100 kilometres to Mali (West Africa).

RADIO TELEMETRY



At the Dümmer, 272 Black-tailed Godwit chicks were equipped with radio telemetry transmitters – here are some of the results:

- Around a fifth of the chicks fledged, a third of the chicks got preyed on before fledging
- Missing birds were likely preyed on for the most part
- Chicks walk up to 2.6 km per day



For further information on the journey of the Black-tailed Godwits, visit:

<https://www.wiesenvoegel-life.de/en/meadow-birds/black-tailed-godwit/transmitter-birds/>



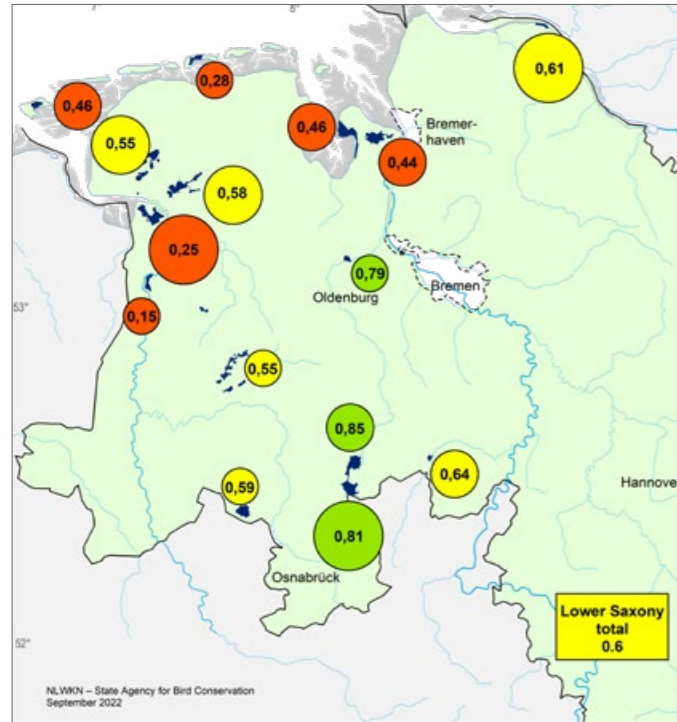
BETTINA HÖNISCH AND NADJA HOFMANN – Biologists at Bio-Consult Osnabrück

"The LIFE project enabled an individual monitoring of the birds via telemetry. That way new findings could be made concerning the areas preferred by the chicks, their fate and the threats they experience during migration or wintering.

The outcomes of the LIFE project are vital for the site management and international conservation."

DECLINE OF GODWITS: A TREND REVERSAL IS POSSIBLE!

Since 2008, the population of Godwits in Lower Saxony has decreased by 32%, from 2.500 to 1.700 breeding pairs. This negative trend contrasts with the developments in the LIFE project areas: Here, the populations are stable overall, but vary considerably from area to area (cf. table).



Area	Breeding pairs at project start	Breeding pairs 2021	Trend 2009-2021
State Lower Saxony	2500	1700	↓↓↓
All project areas	1189	1089	=
Borkum, Langeoog, Wursten coast	83	79	=
Untereibe	258	220	=
Butjadingen	86	56	↓↓↓
Marschen am Jadebusen	77	48	↓↓↓
Fehntjer Tief	101	87	=
Ostfriesische Meere	110	77	↓↓↓
Krummhörn	96	36	↓↓↓
Emsmarsch from Leer to Emden	81	23	↓↓↓
Rheiderland	146	198	↑
Hunteniederung	5	20	↑
Lowlands of Südradde, Mittelradde and Marka	38	16	↓↓↓
Dümmer	108	229	↑

↑ significant increase (> 25%)
 = stable / slightly fluctuating (decrease ≤ 20% or increase < 25%)
 ↓↓ strong decline (> 20%)
 ↓↓↓ very strong decline (> 50%)

BREEDING SUCCESS OF THE GODWIT BETWEEN 2012 AND 2020

With a life expectancy of 18 years, Black-tailed Godwits can have quite a long life. Mathematically, between 0.5 and 0.7 fledged juveniles per breeding pair per year are sufficient for a preservation of the population. If the rate is below 0.5, not enough chicks were able to grow old enough. The annual breeding success is characterised by great fluctuations that are significantly influenced by water levels and predators present in the breeding territory.

In the period between 2012 and 2020, three areas reached sufficient breeding success above 0.7. In six areas, the breeding success was moderate and in the other six too few chicks fledged.

In total, the development in the project areas is slightly positive. The breeding success assessment is also conducted in further areas of Lower Saxony that are not part of the LIFE project areas.



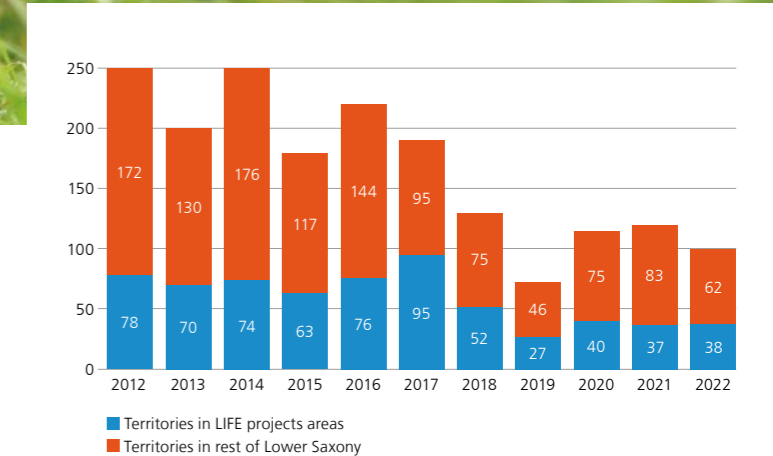
EVERY BIRD COUNTS! – CONSERVATION OF THE CORNCRAKE

The conservation of Corncrakes turned out to be very challenging.

The reasons are:

- Its hidden, nocturnal lifestyle
- Its erratic appearance
- The distinction of breeding birds and vocal migratory birds
- The late and long breeding period of the species

In the project, a special monitoring technique was developed for this species. This technique made it easier to detect breeding territories based on the calling behaviour. As a result, mowing dates can be adjusted to the breeding schedule on the respective field. Juveniles have time to learn how to fly and even the moulting flightless adults gain better chances of survival.



At the beginning of the LIFE project around 250 breeding territories were known in Lower Saxony, a third of them located in the project areas. Currently there are only a few significant occurrences. Among them, the Special Protection Area Untereibe plays a crucial role with a 35% share of the entire population. In the years 2018 and 2019, the population faced a collapse due to causes still unknown.

RALF BECKER –

Employee at the District Nature Conservation Authority of the town Oldenburg

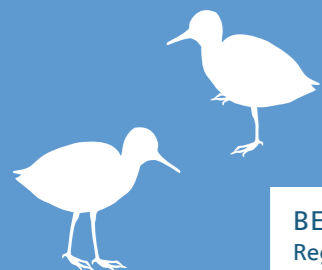
“The LIFE project significantly contributed to the improvement of meadow bird conservation in the nature conservation area Bornhorster Huntewiesen. Especially the construction of the dam to adjust the water levels, in combination with the acquisition of grassland and complementing measures of the town Oldenburg, e.g. the creation of ponds, already proved to be of lasting value. A great success: In contrast to the national trend, the number of breeding pairs of the target species Black-tailed Godwit increased in the area since 2013. So did the numbers of other meadow bird species – the population of Northern Lapwings even quadruplicated, reaching up to 66 breeding pairs!”



JAN ROODHART –

Employee of the LIFE project Meadow Birds at the project partner Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, the Netherlands

“This project is of great importance for the project species in Western Europe, this project gives those species some good habitat back in an area where there has been only loss of good, wet habitat for these species. We could all learn from each other and have made quite a number of assessments!”



BERNHARD BRUNS –

Regional Nature Conservation of the NLWKN in Oldenburg, site manager in the LIFE project Meadow Birds

“The project shows that time, patience and persistence are a necessity for the implementation of measures in meadow bird conservation. Particularly when it comes to convincing all on-site stakeholders. Land acquisition, coordination processes, approval procedures and the implementation often consume more time than expected.”



GUNDOLF REICHERT –

Coordinator of the LIFE project Meadow Birds at the project partner Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park Administration

“The project was an important initiator for the further development of meadow bird conservation in the breeding territories of Lower Saxony and in the Netherlands. In many project areas, new ideas were discussed and evolved, e.g. the ideas concerning the farm conversions or the management of predators. Stakeholders, such as the district administrations, associations, the NLPV and the NLWKN, provided their own land or financial resources for the purchase of land or for the implementation of meadow bird conservation measures.”



HEINRICH BELTING –

State Agency for Bird Conservation at NLWKN, project manager of the LIFE project Meadow Birds

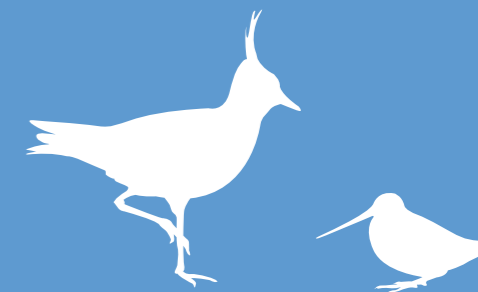
“The project showed that an intensive and continuous support of the project areas is crucial for the long-term success of measures. We hope that the inspirations from the LIFE project will be incorporated by the nature conservation authorities in the breeding areas. We also hope that the work will be continuously ensured by financial means and the use of subsidies in the future to make sure that the meadow bird conservation remains a success. A key factor is land acquisition. Without land in public ownership, permanent restoration of wetlands as habitat for meadow birds is not possible.”



HEIDRUN FAMMLER –

Project manager of the LIFE project Meadow Birds at the project partner BEF Germany

“The project was a panel for the exchange of experiences, e.g. at team meetings, seminars, workshops and many on-site visits. The exchange of experiences is the basis for new ideas. The international cooperation, but also the cooperation with communication experts, created completely new perspectives.”



MANY EMPLOYEES CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE LIFE PROJECT WITH MUCH COMMITMENT:



The team of the LIFE project at NLWKN and the national park administration. From left to right: Walter Schadt, Gundolf Reichert, Annette Hillebrand, Martin Wendeburg, Uwe Mosig, Claudia Peerenboom, Bernhard Bruns, Christiane Hinck, Heinrich Belting, Peter Bartz, Jürgen Ludwig.

Missing: Martin Backhaus, Jörn Bunje (†), Silke Haack, Talke Hinrichs-Fehrendt, Franziska Hohnholt, Heinz-Hermann Kathmann, Sebastian Keller, Markus Nipkow, Heinrich Pegel, Frank Penner, Robin Pilling, Simon Potthast, Silke Rödiger, Jochen Runar, Anke Schmidt, Jan Skorupa.

And the employees of the project partner Vereniging Natuurmonumenten: Andries Stoker, Jan Roodhart.

As well as the employees of the project partner Baltic Environmental Forum Germany: Heidrun Fammler, Tamer Fawzy, Hannah Sophia Weber, Fee Widderich, Matthias Grätz, Daniela Leitzbach, Philipp Engewald, Martin Krekeler, Parvina Samadova, Annabell Maahs, Janne Harnischfeger and Solveig Lux.

**An essential part of the success of the project!
Thanks to each and every one of you!**

PART OF THE SUCCESS OF THE LIFE PROJECT RELIED ON FURTHER CLOSE COOPERATIONS WITH MANY MORE PARTICIPANTS (A SELECTION):



Excursion to the LIFE project area Dümmer on 12th April 2017. From left to right: Ole Thorup, Heinrich Belting, Frank Apffelstaedt, Marcel Holy, Johannes Melter, Walter Schadt, Jan Skorupa, Holger Schürstedt, Inga Deck, Hans-Hermann Kathman, Ulrike Marxmeier, Hermann Hötker (†), Ernst Oosterveld. Right front row: Jan Sliva, Jan Roodhart, Jürgen Ludwig.



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veroeffentlichungen@nlwkn.niedersachsen.de
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Click here or scan this code to visit our short film about the project and discover the implemented measures from birds' perspectives – all while enjoying the spectacular meadow bird scenery!



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TITLE: "Waterlogging and grassland extensification in Lower Saxony to improve habitats of the Corncrake and the Black-tailed Godwit" (LIFE10 NAT/DE/011)

COORDINATING BENEFICIARY : Lower Saxony, Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Protection

IMPLEMENTATION: Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Protection and Nature Conservation Agency (NLWKN) – State Agency for Bird Conservation

DURATION: 01.11.2011 to 31.12.2025

FUNDING: 22.3 million euros; European Union (60%), state of Lower Saxony (40%) with financial support of the Nature Conservation Foundation Emsland and the district of Leer

PROJECT PARTNERS: Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park Administration; Baltic Environmental Forum Germany; Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, the Netherlands

