

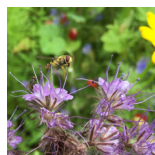
# Grassland for Waders Management Calendar



Enhancing the biodiversity on your farm is a year-round job, and this calendar has been designed to help you with annual tasks related to managing different habitats on your farm. You can print it off, put it on the wall and refer to it throughout the year.

With so much record keeping and form filling to do already, a quick look at this calendar will hopefully remind you of jobs which need to be carried out in order to maintain and enhance some of the biodiversity on your farm.

To help you with biodiversity efforts, we recommend:



Visiting the Biodiversity  
section on the FAS  
website



Subscribing to the  
Natural Capital Podcast



If you have any further questions, you can also contact the FAS advice line for support by calling 0300 323 0161 or emailing [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot)



Rush cutting is important to keep fields open for species like Lapwing. They need to have good open views to see predators.



Soil pH is important. The best pH for grass growth is also the best for worms and nematodes which adult birds feed on.



Wader scrapes should be at least 20m<sup>2</sup> and no deeper than 45cm with gently sloping edges.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you carried out soil testing recently? The best pH for grass growth is also the optimum pH for a more prolific population of worms and nematodes living in the soil profile. These invertebrates become a food source for adult waders probing in the soil. Think about testing now to see if you need to lime to promote better grass growth and at the same time help the waders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult birds will be heading back inland now if they haven't already so keep an eye out to at least make a mental record of when/where and what species you've seen.</li> <li>Think ahead to spring and whether or not you're excluding stock completely or grazing at a very low level.</li> <li>Plan ahead for predator control. Foxes and corvids can decimate breeding waders. If carrying out your own control make sure you are aware of the latest legislation regarding trapping and licensing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breeding season start: avoid disturbance as far as possible.</li> <li>Total stock exclusion is preferable to even low stocking rates.</li> <li>If in AECS check your grazing dates and stocking arrangements.</li> <li>Record grazing in your AECS diary (if applicable).</li> <li>To help breeding success for waders, livestock numbers are normally reduced or excluded during April and May.</li> </ul>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check to see that wader scrapes are holding water.</li> <li>They may dry out in summer but it's important that they are holding water in the breeding season to provide insect habitat and feeding opportunities for birds. Check the field for injurious weeds and plan your management strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check to see wader scrapes are holding water. They don't need to have a constant water level. As the water levels go up and down this exposes the shallow pond edges and allows birds to probe for food in areas previously covered by water.</li> <li>Check AECS agreement for stocking dates (if applicable) to see when to re-introduce grazing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At some point the wader scrapes may dry out but in summer this is normal and part of the annual cycle.</li> <li>Grazing can be re-introduced if not done so already.</li> <li>Grazing is essential to keep the sward open and short. Waders need to see the ground and sky around them to avoid predators both on land and in the air.</li> </ul>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any tractor work required such as rolling or topping can now be carried out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you've soil tested and intend to apply lime, this would be a good time to apply.</li> <li>Carry out any rush cutting that may be required if ground conditions suit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out rush cutting if not already done.</li> <li>Using a flail will break up vegetation better and it will decompose quicker.</li> </ul>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain appropriate grazing regime.</li> <li>Prepare for winter work, contact contractors if relevant for wader scrape creation.</li> <li>Rush cutting can still be carried out if ground conditions allow. If too wet consider leaving things until later and take advantage of frozen ground.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between now and February is the time to create wader scrapes or dig new ponds.</li> <li>Recce the area where new scrapes will be of most benefit and mark their location for the contractor.</li> <li>Choose low-lying areas that are most likely to hold water for much of the year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If using a contractor to create wader scrapes work closely with them to ensure the new scrapes are of maximum benefit.</li> <li>Scrapes should be a minimum of 20m<sup>2</sup> and no deeper than 45cm. The edges should slope gently and the scrape edge should be as irregular as possible.</li> <li>Excavated material needs to be removed or made as flat as possible so that birds have an unhindered view to see predators.</li> <li>Stock should have access to the scrapes – a small amount of trampling and dung is good for insect life.</li> </ul>