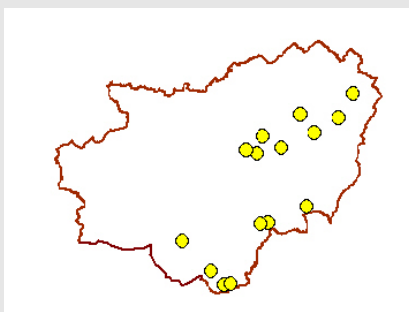


CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

LAPWING/ VANELLUS VANELLUS



Conservation objectives:

- Maintain and re-establish breeding populations in Carmarthenshire.

What you can do to help:

- Report all sightings of lapwings to the county bird recorder.
- If you manage land, seek conservation advice on how to manage areas for lapwings

Further information:

www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk
www.rspb.org.uk

The name Vanellus comes from the Latin meaning 'little fan' and refers to its slow, flapping flight



Ecology

The evocative 'pee-wit' call and tumbling displays of lapwings were once a familiar sight over agricultural land in Wales. However since 1987 the lapwings have declined by about 70% and it is now estimated that there are only about 1700 pairs left in the country, consequently it is on the UK red list of birds of conservation concern. In the autumn though large numbers of northern European birds arrive to overwinter on the coast.

The decline has been largely caused by the loss of mixed farming, spring cropping and the intensification of grassland management (see below).

Lapwings require a mosaic of habitats in the breeding season. They nest on bare ground or in short vegetation (spring sown crops and rough grazing are ideal) but feed on wet rough grassland close by, with a good supply of worms and insects.

Many farmers are helping to try and increase lapwing numbers by managing areas for the bird. It is hoped that this will help halt and reverse the decline in lapwing numbers.

Distribution in Carmarthenshire

Lapwings are now a scarce breeding bird within the county although large wintering flocks of up to 5000 birds are found on Laugharne Marsh and Pendine Levels. These birds return to Europe to breed.

Legal status

Lapwings are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Why have lapwings declined?

- * Agricultural intensification: higher numbers of stock increasing nest trampling; increased use of fertilisers allowing earlier cuts of silage; land drainage decreasing preferred wet pasture; use of pesticides causing a reduction in food availability.
- * Loss of mixed farms to those specialising in either arable or pastoral management, reducing the availability of breeding sites.
- * The autumn sowing of arable crops has reduced the availability of bare and tilled nest sites in spring.

What is being done locally

- * Habitat creation and management at the National Wetlands Centre, Penclacwydd has provided new sites for breeding lapwings.
- * The RSPB's Operation Lapwing and CCW's Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme encourage farmers to manage land for lapwings.

Where you can look for lapwings

See large numbers of wintering birds at the National Wetlands Centre.