

Lapwing Action Plan

Introduction and Vision Statement

Once a common and widespread farmland wader, lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) are usually associated with mixed farming or farms with damp pasture. Lapwings nest on cultivated land or a very short grassland, and feed on invertebrates, particularly earthworms or invertebrates associated with vegetation and soil surfaces.



Lapwing can be seen in the county all year round. They leave upland areas after the breeding season and move to lowland areas for the winter. Large numbers of birds arrive to overwinter from northern Europe in the autumn.

The song flight of the lapwing is spectacular. The males advertise their presence to mates with a distinctive 'pee-wit' call and rolling, diving flight. The birds nest in loose groups but require a mosaic of habitats, because they need different conditions for nesting and for chick rearing.

In the last 40 years, lapwing numbers have declined by about 80% in England and Wales. They are cited on the red list as 'Globally threatened'.

In Carmarthenshire the lapwing is a scarce localised breeder with only one significant colony, currently at the Penclacwydd Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) reserve. Capel Isaac near Llandeilo and Ynys Uchaf in the Gwendraeth Fach valley have had colonies in the recent past, whilst brownfield sites in the south-east of the county often temporarily also host a few nesting pairs. Large wintering flocks of up to 5000 birds are found on Laugharne Marsh and Pendine Levels as well as at the WWT reserve.

The replacement of mixed farms with those specialising in either intensive arable or pastoral management has reduced the availability of suitable breeding sites. Increased use of artificial fertilisers, on grasslands has resulted in a faster spring grass-growth and dense swards, which deter nesting lapwing. A change to autumn sowing of arable crops has reduced the availability of bare and tilled nest sites in spring. High predation levels from ground and avian predators may be significantly affecting some populations.

The vision for lapwings within Carmarthenshire is to have a good understanding of their population size and distribution and to re-establish as much of their range within the county as possible and increase their population size. Ideally this would be through re-establishing self-sustaining breeding populations in the Tywi, Taf and Gwendraeth floodplains, on the Pendine/Laugharne Marsh grazing levels and on semi-natural rush pasture around Capel Isaac and Broad Oak.

Action Plan Objectives

LAP1SP To maintain and increase the population and range of lapwings in Carmarthenshire

LAP2DCM To gather data on the distribution and status of lapwings in Carmarthenshire

LAP3RA To raise awareness of the status of lapwings in the county and their management requirements

Actions

CODE	TEXT	START/END DATE	CONTACTS (lead in bold)	Action goal	Key partners	Funding	Priority L,M,H	Report Jan–Dec 2010		
LAP1SP1	Identify and establish working relationships with landowners within the Tywi, Gwendraeth and Taf floodplains and Capel Isaac/Broad Oak area where sympathetic lapwing management might be possible.	2010–2014	?	At least 2 schemes established	RSPB TAYO, WAG (Tir Gofal), CCW Landowners	✓		Not started – need to establish a lead for the action.		
LAP1SP2	Secure the establishment of a permanent lapwing breeding site on Laugharne Marshes to act as the main source population for south Carmarthenshire. (SN308085)	2010–2014	?	Scheme established	RSPB CCW Landowners	✓		Not started – need to establish a lead for the action.		
LAP2DCM1	Organise a systematic county survey to establish current population size	2010–2014	?		RSPB CCW Landowners	✓		Not started – need to establish a lead for the action.		
LAP2DCM2	Promote the submission of records for lapwing (and other farmland LBAP bird species)	2010–2014	CCC	PR Newsletter item	RSPB CCW			Not started		
LAP3RA1	Provide advice on the management of grasslands for lapwings to land owners and other interested parties in relevant areas.	2010–2014	CCC	Advice sheet produced	RSPB CCW WAG (Tir Gofal)			Not started		