

Concise Survey Instructions - Breeding Waders of English Upland Farmland 2016



Summary of instructions to take into the field.

Background information and detailed survey methods, together with recording forms are available from: www.bto.org/bweuf-resources

Definitions

In-bye is all farmland up to 1km from the edge of unenclosed moorland.

Tetrads (2km x 2km squares) are the survey units and will contain at least 80 and 200 hectares of potentially suitable habitat.

You will need the following:

- 1) A printed copy of the detailed Tetrad Map showing labelled fields - downloaded from the website.
- 2) One copy of the Tetrad Visit Recording Form
- 3) Sufficient copies of the Habitat Recording Form. Ideally, we would like bird and habitat data for all labelled In-bye fields - please aim to cover as many as possible.
- 4) Sufficient copies of the Bird Recording Form
- 5) A copy of the Letter of Introduction
- 6) These concise survey instructions

Time of visits

Visit 1: 1st April to 31st May & **Visit 2:** 1st June to 15th July, with at least two weeks between visits.

Aim to cover the same fields on both visits. Start at least 30 minutes after sunrise and aim to finish before midday.

Fine conditions wherever possible, with good visibility and wind below Force 4 (13-18mph), avoid snow cover over 10%

Private land

Landowners need to be contacted to arrange access to fields. Alternatively, see if the fields can be viewed from public rights of way or adequately surveyed from a vantage point using a telescope.

Survey coverage

As many as possible of the priority In-bye fields (shaded grey on the tetrad map) should be covered. Coverage of X and M fields is optional. For each field try to survey as much as possible. With tussocky or long vegetation you may need to walk within about 100m of each point in the field, but if there is good visibility there may be no need to enter the field. Prolonged disturbance of breeding birds must be avoided. If you find yourself in an area with a number of active nests, please retreat carefully.

Field boundary changes

If field boundaries have been removed please still record the two areas as separate fields. If there have been more substantial changes, please mark changes on a printed copy of the map and renumber the fields. Send amended maps to the Survey Organiser as soon as possible, so that field boundaries can be changed online before subsequent visits.

Visit recording

Use the Visit recording form to record date, start time and finish time of each Tetrad visit. Also record the mammalian predators (seen or known to be present) and signs of game keeping activities – details on recording form.

Field coverage and habitat recording

On the first visit, record habitat details on the Habitat Recording Form for In-bye fields (unless they could not be viewed) and for any X and M areas where birds have been recorded. Print sufficient copies of the Habitat Recording Form so that all the field numbers (labelled on map) can be listed in order (e.g. 1 to 87),, regardless of whether each was actually surveyed or not. No need to repeat this on the second visit, unless there have been changes. Use your judgement to record an estimate of the percentage of the field you have covered on the form.

Record habitat and boundary features of every field, even if no waders are observed or surveying was not possible. Enter ticks in the appropriate columns to indicate features of the grassland and other habitats. If the field contains unsuitable wader breeding habitat (e.g. woodland, scrub, urban, etc.), please record it as 'Other unsuitable'.

Habitat Recording information (see form for all categories)

Coverage:

- **Type:** - Tick whether coverage was **Complete** or **Partial** (give % covered).
- **Method:** - Tick whether the field was **Walked** or **Viewed** from outside the boundary.
- **Not covered:** - Tick if it was **Access denied** or **Not viewable** (not viewed or not visited)

Boundary type: (tick all that make up more than 20% of the total field boundary):

Field features:

- Rush/juncus cover - estimate to nearest 5%.
- Standing water - estimate to nearest 5%.
- Waterlogged - Tick if Yes, otherwise leave blank
- Mown (within 4 weeks) - Tick if Yes, otherwise leave blank
- Bare ground - estimate to nearest 5%.

Grazing (only record livestock if observed):

Grassland type (See Habitat Guide on the Resource page):

- Improved - typically a uniform height sward and green in colour.
- Semi-improved - green in colour, often with areas of tussocks/rushes
- Rough grass - usually enclosed grazed land (not moorland) with an uneven, tussocky, rank green-brown sward; any grazing at low density.
- Hay Meadow - Tall uneven (or mown) sward with many wildflowers, light green in colour.
- Silage - Tall uniform thick (or mown) sward, with few, wildflowers, dark green in colour.

Sward height - use majority, grass only – excluding rushes.

Sward structure (grass only – excluding rushes):

- Uniform - nearly all the same height
- Tussocky - more than half short with minority tall
- Patchy - more than half tall with minority short

Crop type:

- Cereal - Winter/spring cereal - uniform height/colour, typically bluish green, planted rows.
- Root / Other - including Maize, fodder crops, ploughed or emerging crop/re-seeded

Other Habitat:

- Moorland - above the moorland line, typically unenclosed (containing heather moor, blanket bog, Molinia or other rough grassland).
- Other unsuitable - includes scrub, woodland, urban and other land uses.

Bird recording

On the form record:

- 1) **Total adults** using the field (All species), including birds that may have moved from other fields.
- 2) **Total chicks & young** (Key species only), including birds that may have moved from other fields.
- 3) **Estimated pairs** (all species), based on the number of adults apparently holding territory (excluding feeding flocks), displaying/territorial males and active nests. **DO NOT** include birds that are known, or strongly suspected, to have moved between fields and have been counted already.

Counts of adults and young should also include birds that are not nesting in the field, such as feeding flocks, or in flight above the field (excluding high flying commuting species, such as gulls, etc.), including either hunting/foraging or song/display flight. Please also record any of the target species seen or heard elsewhere in the tetrad.

Entering you Data

After each visit, login to the survey page (www.bto.org/bweuf), under the Visit tab you will find a list of your Tetrads. Then select the Visit number which will take you to the data entry section. If you do not have, or are unable to find, suitable internet access, please contact the Survey Organiser to discuss the options for entering your data.

For more information, please visit the Resources page (www.bto.org/bweuf-resources) or contact the **Survey**

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