

Management advice for lowland floodplain meadows with confirmed breeding curlew present

Curlew are in serious decline and your help is critical if they are to have any chance of survival. Floodplain meadows are one of their main breeding habitats in lowland England, and a sensitive approach to the management of a field with breeding birds in it is required.



How to spot if you have curlew on your land

When you're out, keep your eyes and ears open to signs of curlew. Hearing the alarm call of a curlew is a pretty sure sign they have chicks or a nest nearby (listen to a curlew alarm calling [here](#)). For more advice on curlews and reporting them please get in touch with www.curlewrecovery.org

How to manage a floodplain meadow with breeding curlew

We hope you will consider the recommendations set out below, designed to protect breeding curlew whilst also providing a good quality hay crop.

In years when breeding curlew are confirmed:

- Ideally delay your hay cut, at least around the nest, until mid-July or when the chicks have fledged. If practical, cutting in strips over a few weeks can be mutually beneficial for plant diversity, hay quality and curlew. Aim to rotate strips between years so different strips are cut at different times each year.
- If areas of longer grass cannot be retained within a field, then leaving the neighbouring field uncut is the next best thing.
- If possible, avoid cutting in inward circles as this can push and trap curlew chicks in the centre of a field.
- Exclude grazing livestock from the end of February to ensure there is sufficient cover for nests and to reduce the risk of trampling/predation.

This advice was produced through the Flourishing Floodplains project, a partnership between Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (South-West) and the Floodplain Meadows Partnership. March 2023.

