

English Summary

Action Plan for Threatened Meadow Birds

The Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), the Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), and the Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) are some of the most threatened meadow birds in Denmark. Also in the 25 EU countries these three species have an unfavourable conservation status.

The conservation status of the meadow birds is so unfavourable that e.g. the Ruff is at risk to disappear from Denmark as a breeding bird during few years. The Danish Forest and Nature Agency has considered it necessary with fast action and to put focus on these species by making and publishing an action plan in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The action plan will contribute to achieve a favourable conservation status for these three most threatened meadow birds. Research has shown that these three species are good indicators for a rich birdlife of meadow birds, which means that by focusing on the breeding localities for the three threatened species the conservation status of the more common meadow birds will be considerably improved.

The 25 most important breeding localities have been selected for focused action and management. They include all existing breeding localities for Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Dunlin and even some localities, which earlier have been known as important breeding sites for these meadow birds.

A background report has shown that even though the three species are migratory birds and are subject to influences by factors outside Denmark it is crucial to implement a good management regime for meadow birds on the breeding localities in Denmark. On localities with a good management regime the threatened species has achieved a significantly better conservation status compared to localities without implementation of a good management regime. Therefore the Danish Forest and Nature Agency considers it as realistic to expect the present action plan to turn out to be effective, and that it will be a valuable contribution to the goal of Denmark and the EU of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Background

In chapter two the most important background knowledge on meadow birds has been summarized concerning conservation status and threats, legislation and protection, the biology of the Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Dunlin, economic incentives for implementing a good management regime for meadow birds, existing monitoring activities, ongoing research activities, methods for implementing good management for meadow birds such as grazing, hay harvest and combination of these, structure and watertable of the meadows, managing predators etc.

Attached as an appendix is an example of a management plan for one of the 25 localities, which can be used as a guideline for elaborating plan for good management of meadow birds.

The Action Plan

The Action Plan itself is outlined in chapter three.

The general objective of the action plan is to achieve and maintain optimal living conditions for Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Dunlin, so that viable populations are achieved and increased in the future for these three species and by that also for other meadow birds.

The objective of the action plan will contribute to:

- Achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for species and habitats in the Natura 2000 sites.
- Improve the understanding of the landowners and the responsible authorities to increase the populations of meadow birds and supply them with knowledge about management of meadow birds, so that an actual effort can be implemented.
- Communicate knowledge about meadow birds to the public and supply possibilities for experiencing the meadow birds.

The actual actions include among other things to realise already known proposals to improve the management of state owned localities for breeding meadow birds and to elaborate plans for other areas, including private localities for meadow birds, in order to integrate good management practices for meadow birds.

The possibilities for a joint application for EU-LIFE support to several localities with breeding meadow birds will be investigated.

Further incentives for economic support from e.g. the agro-environmental programme will be strengthened to involve more private landowners.

Increased protection will among other things be achieved by designating the Ruff and the Dunlin from the lists of the Bird's Directive as species to be protected and managed in the Natura 2000 sites. The latest evaluation by BirdLife International of the conservation status of the Black-tailed Godwit is so unfavourable, that it should be considered seriously to include this species in the lists of the Bird's Directive.

The working group which has assisted in the development of the present action plan will continue it's work in order to follow, evaluate and revise the action plan.

A number of information activities will be carried out such as a web site with information about meadow birds and management of their habitats, a brochure and poster for landowners, and meetings with stakeholders.

Monitoring of the population levels of the Ruff and the Dunlin will take place every third year at all breeding localities in a nation wide programme. An IBA-caretaker project implemented by the Danish Ornithological Society will as far as possible supply with more data e.g. yearly counts and counts of Black-tailed Godwit.

Furthermore, a number of research activities are proposed.

Finally, the conservation status and the future activities for each of the 25 localities are described.