Conservation at the regional level – Lower Saxony, Germany

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Responsibility of Lower Saxony

Proportions of breeding populations in Lower Saxony to the total populations in Germany.

Green line: area share of Lower Saxony in Germany (13%).
GODWIT POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Black-Tailed Godwit in Lower Saxony

1990–2016: -70 %
DUE TO CHANGE IN LAND USE
What did we learn in 30 years of grassland breeding bird conservation?

• Currently,
  - Agro-Environment Schemes
  - Nest- and Chick Protection
  - Designation of SPA
  ➢ are not efficient at all

✓ But, …
SUCCESSFUL GRASSLAND BIRD CONSERVATION

Congruently determined by:

- Large areas of wet grassland
- High openness, almost no vertical structures
- Low disturbance
- High watertables with temporarily flat-flooded sites
- Low or intermediate trophic level of soil
- Mowing and grazing compliant to nesting distribution
- Sufficient farming intensity for optimal vegetation structures
- High heterogeneity on landscape and parcel level
- Moderate predation
- Well organized guardianship and monitoring

All parameters need to be met

Ysbrand Galama (09/2018)
DÜMMER

2.500 ha are purchased and optimized for grassland breeding birds

Panoramafoto: 08.03.2017
... during winter season by adjustable weirs
Rewetted Grassland

Duration of flooding

+/- permanent
long term (2-6 months)
short term (app. 1 month)
without (only partly)
drained (private land)
FLOWERING MEADOWS …

… after perennial flooding:

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)

Lady’s Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*)
REPOPULATION

Over 10 disappeared breeding species came back:

- White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)
- Pintail (*Anas acuta*)
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
- Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)
- Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*)
- Corncrake (*Crex crex*)
- Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
- Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)
- Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)
- Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzing Dümmer e.V.
DÜMMER: POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Redshank

Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmern and Naturschutzing Dümmern e.V.
DÜMMER: POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Snipe population development over time from 1991 to 2021. The graph shows a trend of increasing breeding pairs over the years, with fluctuations. The source of the data is the Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzring Dümmer e.V.

Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzring Dümmer e.V.
DÜMMER: POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Curlew

Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzzring Dümmer e.V.
DÜMMER: POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Lapwing

breeding pairs


Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzring Dümmer e.V.
DÜMMER: POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

Black-tailed Godwit

Source: Data Base of Naturschutzstation Dümmer and Naturschutzzring Dümmer e.V.
AIM

The aim is to export this success across the country and all across Europe – and beyond!
12 meadow bird core areas in Lower Saxony

budget: 30 Mio.€ (including additional funding)

- Additional 2,500 ha optimized
LIFE IP GRASSBIRDHABITATS (2020-2030)

LOCATION: East Atlantic Flyway

TOTAL BUDGET: 400,000,000 €
(INCLUDING COMPLEMENTARY FUNDS):

COORDINATING BENEFICIARY:
• Lower Saxony Ministry for the Environment
• Lower Saxony Agency for Nature Conservation

ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARIES:
• BIO-CONSULT OS
• University of Groningen
• Nationalparkverwaltung Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer
• Province of Fryslân
• Coöperatieve Vereniging Súdwestkust
• Bond Friese Vogelwachten
THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

4 months – Breeding grounds

8 months – Abroad
Targets in Lower Saxony until 2030

- Optimized habitats – 20,000 ha
EXPECTED RESULTS 2030

• Favourable conservation status
• Increase from 1,700 towards 5,500 breeding pairs of Black-tailed Godwit
• Increase from 1,200 towards 2,300 breeding pairs of Curlew
• Reestablishment in abandoned areas
Thanks a lot for your kind attention!

Photo: Trimbos