

The PROGRESS Project

New Forest Wading Bird Survey

2006

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The valley mires and the wetter heathlands have long been recognised as valuable habitats for waders breeding in the New Forest. Estimates of the populations of Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) were made at various times between 1960 and 1985, in 1994 and 2004. These surveys showed that the New Forest holds relatively large populations of the above species.
- 1.2 The aim of this survey was to provide some base data on breeding waders as part of the PROGRESS Project. This project is primarily looking at the balance between recreation and ecology, in particular sensitive bird habitats. The eight survey areas are next to car parks which are prone to disturbance caused by various recreational pursuits. Seasonal and possibly permanent car park closures are planned at some of the sites from March 2007. This survey is to be repeated in future years to assess the effect of these closures. The Forestry Commission intends to continue the monitoring for five years.

2. SURVEY METHODS

2.1 Field Methods

- 2.1.1 Eight areas were surveyed for breeding waders. See map at Appendix 1. The eight survey areas were :-

Crockford
Pig Bush
Hincheslea
Longwater Lawn
Clayhill
Longslade View
Stonyford Pond
Godshill
- 2.1.2 Each area was visited twice. Visit 1 was made between 10 and 19 June and visit 2 between 22 and 29 June. Almost all visits were carried out in the evening within three hours of dusk.
- 2.1.3 Cold, wet and windy conditions were avoided. This year during the survey period such conditions were very infrequent.
- 2.1.4 The survey methodology was to walk within 100m of all suitable habitat within the survey area. This was aided by the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) personal navigator. Locations of birds were recorded using GPS and plotted on maps.

2.2 Population Estimates for the survey areas

2.2.1 The standard method used to estimate breeding wader populations is shown in the table below.

Method for deriving breeding wader population estimates from the eight survey areas in the New Forest (O'Brien and Smith, 1992).

Species	Data collected	Method of Estimation
Lapwing	Total birds seen in each survey area on each visit	Halve the highest count from visits 1 and 2
Snipe	Total drumming or chipping in each survey area on each visit	Maximum number of drumming or chipping birds on any visit so long as there were drumming or chipping birds in May
Curlew	Total pairs in each survey area recorded on each visit, where 'pairs' = paired individuals, displaying birds, nests or broods or other single birds not in flocks	Maximum number of pairs during the three visits
Redshank	Total birds seen in each survey area on each visit	Add total recorded on visits 1 and 2 and divide by two

Due to the late start date of this survey and that the standard methodology is based on three visits to each site between 10 April and 22 June, it was impossible to follow this strictly. No surveying was carried out during May, therefore the population estimate for Snipe was the maximum number of drumming or chipping birds on either visit. For Lapwing and Redshank, the number of territories was recorded on each visit, the population estimate being the total number of territories recorded on the two visits.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Numbers of breeding waders

3.1.1 The numbers of Lapwings, Snipe, Curlews and Redshanks registered on each visit to the eight survey areas are shown at Appendices 2A –2D.

3.1.2 Population estimates for waders in the eight survey areas

Survey area	Lapwing	Snipe	Curlew	Redshank
Crockford	6	7	3	2
Pig Bush	0	2	1	0
Hincheslea	1	4	4	0
Longwater Lawn	0	2	0	0
Clayhill	0	3	1	0
Longslade View	0	2	0	0
Stonyford Pond	2	3	0	1
Godshill	0	0	0	0

4. DISCUSSION

The population estimates for the survey areas may not be a true reflection of the numbers of waders attempting to breed. Any pairs that had failed early to mid season and moved away will not have been recorded. It is also possible that some pairs fledged young before the survey commenced. I personally saw fledged Lapwings in the Avon Valley several days before starting the survey. At three of the survey areas, waders were recorded earlier in the season but were not present during the survey period (see Appendix 3).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Breeding waders were recorded in all the survey areas with the exception of Godshill.

The timing of the survey means it is probable that some wader breeding attempts were missed, especially Lapwing. This was certainly the case in three of the survey areas.

Snipe were the most numerous species recorded during the survey. They are possibly less prone to disturbance than the other species because they choose the wetter, less accessible parts of the mire systems.

6. REFERENCES

O'Brien, M. & Smith, KW. 1992. Changes in the Status of waders breeding on wet lowland grasslands in England and Wales between 1982 and 1989. *Bird Study*. 39, 165-176.

APPENDIX 2A

Numbers of Lapwing found during two visits to eight survey areas in the New Forest, June 2006, with population estimates for these squares.

Survey Area	Visit 1 (territories)	Visit 2 (territories)	Population Estimate (pairs)
Crockford	5	3	6
Pig Bush	0	0	0
Hincheslea	2	0	1
Longwater Lawn	0	0	0
Clayhill	0	0	0
Longslade View	0	0	0
Stonyford Pond	2	1	2
Godshill	0	0	0

APPENDIX 2B

Numbers of Snipe found during two visits to eight survey areas in the New Forest, June 2006, with population estimates for these squares.

Survey Area	Visit 1 (displaying birds)	Visit 2 (displaying birds)	Population Estimate (pairs)
Crockford	7	4	7
Pig Bush	2	2	2
Hincheslea	4	3	4
Longwater Lawn	2	2	2
Clayhill	2	3	3
Longslade View	2	0	2
Stonyford Pond	1	3	3
Godshill	0	0	0

APPENDIX 2C

Numbers of Curlews found during two visits to eight survey areas in the New Forest, June 2006, with population estimates for these squares.

Survey Area	Visit 1 (pairs)	Visit 2 (pairs)	Population Estimate (pairs)
Crockford	3	1	3
Pig Bush	1	1	1
Hincheslea	3	3	4
Longwater Lawn	0	0	0
Clayhill	1	0	1
Longslade View	0	0	0
Stonyford Pond	0	0	0
Godshill	0	0	0

APPENDIX 2D

Numbers of Redshanks found during two visits to eight survey areas in the New Forest, June 2006, with population estimates for these squares.

Survey Area	Visit 1 (territories)	Visit 2 (territories)	Population Estimate (pairs)
Crockford	1	2	2
Pig Bush	0	0	0
Hincheslea	0	0	0
Longwater Lawn	0	0	0
Clayhill	0	0	0
Longslade View	0	0	0
Stonyford Pond	0	1	1
Godshill	0	0	0

APPENDIX 3

Waders recorded in the survey areas prior to the survey

Survey Area	Species and number	Date
Pig Bush	One pair of Lapwing at cSU 359 048	4 April 2006
Hincheslea	Two pairs of Lapwing at cSU 284 021	22 April 2006
Longslade View	Three pairs of Lapwing at cSU 267 005	14 April 2006