

## A6.63 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (non-breeding)

### 1. Status in UK

Biological status		Legal status		Conservation status	
Breeding	✓	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	General Protection	Species of European Conservation Concern	
Migratory	✓	Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985	General Protection	(UK) Species of Conservation Importance	
Wintering	✓	EC Birds Directive 1979	Migratory	All-Ireland Vertebrate Red Data Book	

### 2. Population data

	Population sizes (individuals)	Selection thresholds	Totals in species' SPA suite
<b>GB</b>	1,500,000	20,000	196,995 (10% of GB total)
<b>Ireland</b>	250,000	2,500	15,839 (6% of all-Ireland total)
<b>Biogeographic population</b>	7,000,000	20,000 (for selection of multi-species sites) 70,000 (for calculation of proportional representation)	212,834 (3% of the biogeographic population)

*GB population source: Cayford & Waters 1996*

*All-Ireland population source: Cranswick et al. 1999*

*Biogeographic population source: Rose & Scott 1997*

### 3. Distribution

Lapwings have a wide global distribution throughout the temperate regions of Eurasia, from Britain, Ireland and Iberia in the west, to the Pacific coast of Russia at the Sea of Japan in the east (Cramp & Simmons 1983). In Scandinavia, breeding extends north to about 70°N but through most of the range, and especially in the far east, Lapwings breed further south, generally between about 35°–55°N. The species is monotypic. Lapwings breed in all European countries, although within the Mediterranean Basin their distribution is highly localised (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

Across most of the range, Lapwings are highly migratory, moving south at the end of the breeding season to winter in south-east Asia, in Pakistan, and locally through the Middle East and north Africa. Lapwings are widely distributed in winter in the western maritime countries of Europe. Britain and Ireland, representing the northernmost regular wintering areas, also form, together with western France and Iberia, the major European wintering grounds of this species. In these countries, resident breeding birds are joined in winter by birds from breeding areas further east.

Within Britain, the Lapwing is the most widespread non-breeding wader. However, it avoids areas of high ground, and is concentrated in central and southern Britain (Lack 1986; Kirby 1995). Although many British breeding Lapwings are resident, a high proportion of the birds that winter in Britain are of Scandinavian, Danish, Dutch and North German origin (Imboden 1974).

Lapwings respond rapidly to cold weather, and the numbers and distribution of non-breeding birds are strongly influenced by weather patterns in the UK as well as in continental Europe (Kirby & Lack 1993; Kirby 1995). With the onset of severe cold in the Low Countries there can be major influxes of Lapwings into the UK.

#### **4. Population structure and trends**

Rose & Scott (1997) define four biogeographical populations of Lapwing. Birds that breed and winter in the UK belong to the European population, currently estimated at 7,000,000 birds (in the non-breeding season).

Tucker & Heath (1994) define the European Lapwing population as secure. However, recent declines in the breeding population have been reported in many parts of north-west Europe, including Britain and Ireland, and these have been attributed to agricultural changes in many of those areas (Snow & Perrins 1998). This trend is reflected in the UK (Hudson *et al.* 1994; Tucker *et al.* 1994; Wilson *et al.* in press).

Despite the declines in the breeding population, numbers of non-breeding Lapwing in Britain have remained relatively stable in recent years (Cranswick *et al.* 1999). Declines in some years can be attributed to short-term southerly or south-westerly movements in response to cold weather (Lack 1986; Pollitt *et al.* 2000). During winter, Lapwings tend to be more concentrated on pasture rather than arable fields (Mason & MacDonald 1999); therefore the population is vulnerable to land use change from pastoral to intensive arable agriculture.

#### **5. Protection measures for population in UK**

##### **SPA suite**

In the non-breeding season, the UK's SPA suite for Lapwing supports, on average, 212,834 individuals (calculated using WeBS January site totals for the period 1992/93 to 1996/97 – see section 4.4.1 and Appendix 2 for further explanation). This total amounts to about 10% of the British population, about 6% of the all-Ireland population, and about 3% of the international flyway population. The suite comprises 38 sites at which Lapwings have been listed as a qualifying species (Table 6.63.1).

#### **6. Classification criteria**

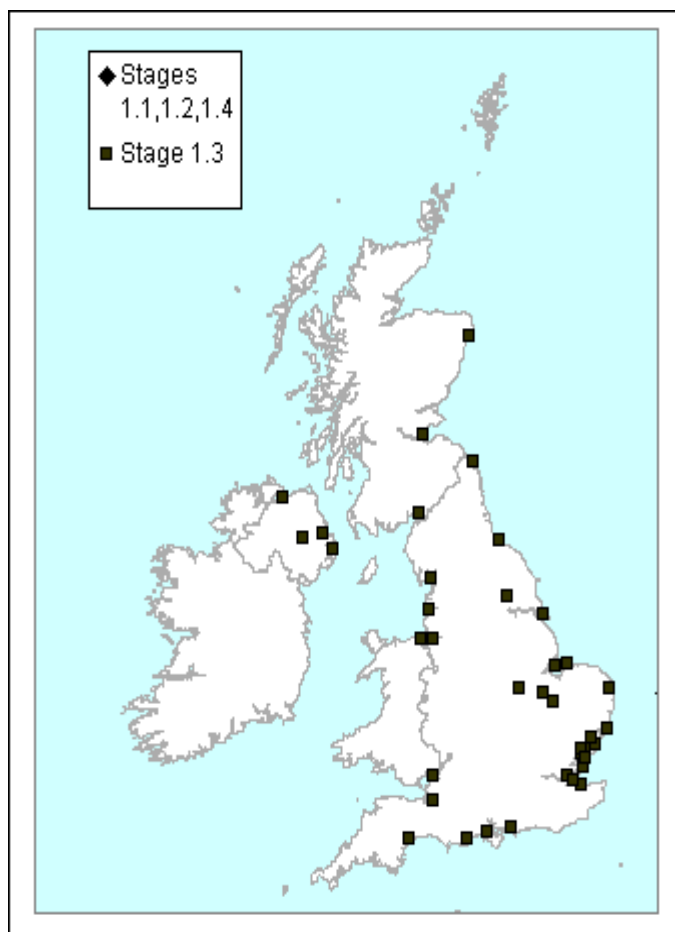
No sites in the UK regularly support more than 1% of the international Lapwing population in winter (Stage 1.2). However, 38 sites were identified under Stage 1.3 (see section 5.3) with Lapwing being an important component of the non-breeding waterbird assemblages at these localities. All sites thus identified were included within the suite. By definition, all are multi-species SPAs, of importance also for a range of other waterbirds. There is a very long recorded history of occupancy at many of these sites (Prater 1981).

As the selection of sites under Stage 1.3 resulted in a suite which gives comprehensive coverage of the population and range of non-breeding Lapwings in the UK, it was not considered necessary to select additional sites using Stage 1.4. With the exceptions of

Abberton Reservoir and Rutland Water, the sites are of high naturalness, and several of them act as severe weather refuges (Kirby 1995).

Lapwings are monitored where they occur on wetland sites, but due to current reliance on the UK's Wetland Bird Survey (the principle monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterbirds in the UK), some important concentrations regularly occurring on agricultural habitats are not routinely counted. Work is being undertaken to address these monitoring needs.

### Distribution map for non-breeding Lapwing SPA suite



**Table 6.63.1 – SPA suite**

Site name	Site total	% of biogeographical population	% of national population	Selection stage
Abberton Reservoir	7,295	0.1	0.5	1.3
Alde-Ore Estuary	4,879	0.1	0.3	1.3
Belfast Lough	2,507	<0.1	1.0 (Ire)	1.3
Blackwater Estuary	21,335	0.3	1.4	1.3
Breydon Water	24,940	0.4	1.7	1.3
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	4,510	<0.1	0.3	1.3

<b>Site name</b>	<b>Site total</b>	<b>% of biogeographical population</b>	<b>% of national population</b>	<b>Selection stage</b>
Colne Estuary	8,187	0.1	0.6	1.3
Dengie	2,539	<0.1	0.2	1.3
Exe Estuary	2,250	<0.1	0.2	1.3
Firth of Forth	4,148	<0.1	0.3	1.3
Foulness	7,687	0.1	0.5	1.3
Hamford Water	6,367	<0.1	0.4	1.3
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast	36,403	0.4	2.4	1.3
Lindisfarne	2,148	<0.1	0.1	1.3
Lough Foyle	3,084	<0.1	1.2 (Ire)	1.3
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg	6,899	0.1	2.8 (Ire)	1.3
Lower Derwent Valley	9,711	0.1	0.7	1.3
Medway Estuary and Marshes	5,040	<0.1	0.3	1.3
Mersey Estuary	11,680	0.2	0.8	1.3
Morecambe Bay	17,669	0.3	1.1	1.3
Nene Washes	6,512	<0.1	0.4	1.3
North Norfolk Coast	4,351	<0.1	0.3	1.3
Ouse Washes	8,589	0.1	0.6	1.3
Poole Harbour	5,258	<0.1	0.4	1.3
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	21,674	0.3	1.4	1.3
Rutland Water	3,744	<0.1	0.3	1.3
Severn Estuary	7,953	0.1	0.5	1.3
Solent and Southampton Water	7,768	0.1	0.5	1.3
Somerset Levels and Moors	36,316	0.5	2.4	1.3
Stour and Orwell Estuaries	6,122	<0.1	0.4	1.3
Strangford Lough	8,359	0.1	3.3 (Ire)	1.3
Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	4,037	<0.1	0.2	1.3
Thames Estuary and Marshes	5,552	<0.1	0.3	1.3
The Dee Estuary	5,478	<0.1	0.4	1.3
The Swale	8,077	0.1	0.5	1.3
The Wash	28,433	0.4	1.9	1.3
Upper Solway Flats and Marshes	8,632	0.1	0.6	1.3
Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch	2,542	<0.1	0.2	1.3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>212,834 (in January)</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>9.8% 6.3% (Ire)</b>	