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LANDSKILL FARM MANAGEMENT CALENDAR FOR WADERS



	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Landskill Farm Grazing Plan	Graze during winter months to achieve a short, tussocky sward similar to that shown in Plate 1 by mid March (when lapwings and other waders return to breed). Short grass with 10-20% scattered cover of short rush and longer grass tussocks, offers ideal conditions for nesting lapwing and redshank. A light application of FYM will also help.		If possible remove or reduce stock in number in fields where waders are nesting. This will help to avoid nest trampling and predation through disturbance of sitting birds.			Gradually increase stock numbers. Grazing will help to maintain an open sward for waders to feed in (see Plate 2). Aim for a density of 0.5 lu / ha		Graze during the autumn and winter to achieve a sward similar to that shown in Plate 1. Leave cattle out for as long as possible to help create a tussocky sward, assist with managing cut rush and lightly poach up edges of scrapes and ditches. Use sheep in the winter to keep grass sward short. A density of around 2 lu / ha should achieve this.				
			Try to use beef cows instead of sheep whenever possible during this period but try to avoid stocking with or turning out, lively cattle					Any topping of rushes should be done in this period. Consider weed wiping rush re-growth in the autumn if rush cover is extensive or quick to re-grow.				

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General farm management to help breeding waders	Try to ensure any machinery works are completed by mid March. If ground conditions allow, cutting rush will encourage waders. Avoid supplementary feeding livestock where waders usually nest - this can attract crows and other predators.		WADER BREEDING SEASON – try to avoid machinery works during this period					Cut rushes – target ditch and scrape edges too to ensure these remain open to grazing stock to help maintain open mud feeding areas for waders next spring.		Weed wiping and / or heavier stocking ideally with hardy native beef cows will help control rush re-growth. Cattle will graze and help trample new rush shoots and create lightly poached areas – excellent feeding and hiding places for wader chicks.		
			This is the breeding season and care should be taken. If machinery works are essential, carry them out as early or as late as possible during this period, and complete as quickly as possible (ideally within a week) to allow birds to lay replacement clutches of eggs. When using a vehicle to check stock try to avoid areas where birds are nesting. This will reduce the chances of running over nests and disturbing incubating birds.									



Plate 1 Ideal sward for lapwing in spring - Very short & tussocky with lightly poached 'bumpy' wet areas.



Plate 2 Ideal summer sward for lapwing, short and open with a few tussocks for chick cover



Plate 3 Ideal vegetation structure around a wader scrape, open and muddy with a few tussocks.



Plate 4 Muddy, poached scrape edges offer vital lapwing chick feeding areas and good camouflage in summer.



Graze with cattle, ideally hardy, native breed, suckler beef cows. This will help control rush re-growth after cutting and also encourage a diverse sward for nesting lapwing and other waders such as Redshank.