

Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland

Farmland birds in the wider countryside: 1998-2020



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BirdWatchIreland
birdwatchireland.ie
protecting birds and biodiversity

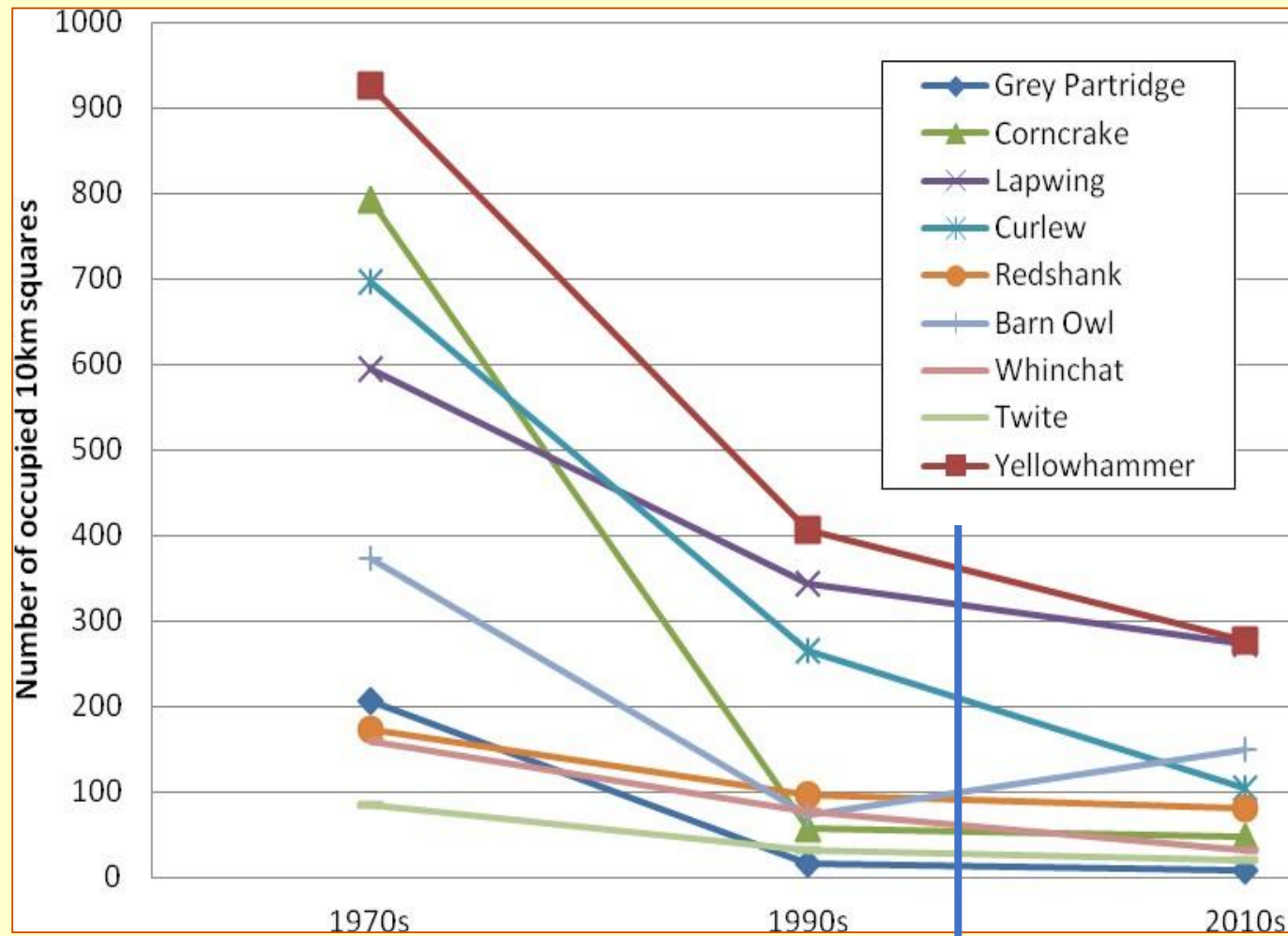
What is BoCCI..?

- Since 1998, ~ 7 yearly assessment of the status of Ireland's birds.
- The 4th Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland assessment (BoCCI 4) issued in 2021.
- Joint publication by RSPB Northern Ireland and Birdwatch Ireland.
- Data collated from across the island of Ireland from a variety of bird studies/monitoring schemes.
- Standard criteria used to determine trends.

Aims

- Trends can be monitored.
- New data are incorporated and emerging threats to existing bird populations are identified.
- Limited resources can be targeted in the most effective way.

Farmland bird declines in Ireland

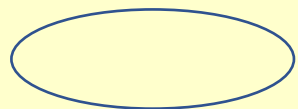


BOCCI started



BoCCI 1: 1998. Farmland spp on Red List

Meadows	Arable/mixed farmland	Damp pastures	Upland/Coastal
Corncrake	Grey Partridge	Curlew	Red grouse
	Barn Owl	Lapwing	Twite
	Yellowhammer		Chough
	Corn bunting		Hen Harrier



= Annex 1



The list keeps on growing...

- Added to BoCCI 2 in 2008

- Golden Plover

- Lapwing

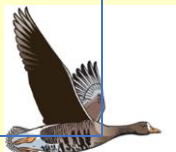
- Redshank

- Added to BoCCI 3 in 2012

- Dunlin

- Meadow Pipit

- Whinchat



BoCCI 4: 2021: $n = 16$: 8 spp new to Red and 1 extinct

Meadows	Arable/mixed farmland	Damp pastures	Upland/Coastal
Corncrake	Grey Partridge	Curlew	Red grouse
Meadow Pipit	Barn Owl	Lapwing	Twite
Whinchat	Yellowhammer	Redshank	Golden plover
	Stock dove	Common Snipe	Dunlin
	Common Kestrel		

Kestrel and **Stock Dove** are 2 species included in the Common Farmland Bird Index used as a monitoring indicator of the CAP. Their decline is directly linked to the impact of agriculture and its intensification. Since BoCCI 1, Corn Bunting became extinct as a breeding species in Ireland and Hen Harrier moved to the Amber list.

- **1998-2021: 45% increase in no. of farmland birds on Red List**
- **Most of these 16 species were once common and widespread**



What happened.....?

Not enough was done to protect them - widespread loss, damage and fragmentation of their habitats occurred

*Ireland relied heavily on AE measures, esp GLAS,
to protect declining farmland birds*

-Targeted actions within GLAS for **corncrake, Grey partridge, breeding waders and twite...**

-Hedgerow measures will benefit ... **owls and kestrels.**

-Wild bird cover will... benefit **yellowhammer.**

-LIPP/THM will benefit **snipe & whinchat."**

Farmland birds on Red List

Meadows	Arable/mixed	Damp pastures	Upland/Coastal
Corncrake	Grey Partridge	Curlew	Red grouse
Meadow Pipit	Barn Owl	Lapwing	Twite
Whinchat	Yellow -hammer	Redshank	Golden plover
	Stock dove	Snipe	Dunlin
	Kestrel		

BOCCI 4 INDICATES THESE MEASURES ARE NOT WORKING

These measures have not reversed declines...

- Successive iterations of AE schemes have not delivered protection and restoration of farmland birds in the wider countryside. **EIPs are very promising and need to be scaled up and out.**
- Other aspects of CAP measures –failure to enforce SMRs and GAECs (cross compliance), production supports, TAMS are all driving further biodiversity loss and offsetting gains from AEC measures.

Predation of ground nesting birds also huge problem

- Abundance of generalist predators taking nests and chicks.
 - Further afforestation/intensification = more crows and foxes.
- = More declines of Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank.



Policies are driving declines

- Agri-food strategy 2030 will drive further intensification.
- Afforestation policies driving planting of trees on important areas for birds and other biodiversity (semi-natural grasslands, wildflowers important for pollinators)
- EIA Regs - thresholds too high to prevent most drainage works.

SOLUTIONS ARE BEING TESTED/DEVELOPED



- **Significant ramping up of predator control and nest protection measures needed to save ground nesting birds such as Curlew, Lapwing and Snipe.**
- **More professionally trained conservation keepers.**

Curlew EIP training farmers in predator control could help with background levels.

RSPB CURLEW WORK IN CO ANTRIM

Through

- Advice to landowners
- Nest monitoring
- Predator control
- Habitat Management



2021

- 57 PAIRS OF CURLEW
- 9 NEST PROTECTION FENCES
- 10 NEST CAMERAS
- 28 FLEDGED YOUNG
- ENOUGH CHICKS TO LEAD TO POPULATION GROWTH



Next CAP:

Proposed Delivery Mechanisms include: EIPs, Eco Schemes, next AEC Measure. Some promising initiatives.

But will they be of sufficient spatial scale, have the breadth of measures, staffing AND MOST IMPORTANTLY be financially attractive enough for sufficient farmers to join and avoid further intensification...?

A robust scheme for waders is critical in the CAP plan.

THE RESTORATION OF WIDER COUNTRYSIDE SPECIES REQUIRES BIODIVERSITY-RICH LANDSCAPES