



**LIFE 13 BIO/UK/000315**

## **LIFE Waders for Real**

# **E2 – Planning for Real Protocol and Information Pack**

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## **Abstract**

Planning for Real is a community planning process, developed by a UK company of the same name. The approach is focused on engaging communities with neighbourhood housing and development planning and until LIFE Waders for Real had not been applied in a conservation context. We explored and evaluated the application of the Planning for Real model to our area. This document summarises the protocol developed and provides resources for application of this concept to other conservation projects.



# E2 – Planning for Real Information Pack





## *Planning for Real: Origins of the approach*

Planning for Real is a community planning process and outreach tool to allow for residents to organically work together and provide their views. Then in partnership with local organisations and other stakeholders, work towards a plan for sustainable infrastructure and housing development. The process involves an initial 'Project Planning' stage to understand the routes to the community to ensure as many people from the local community can be involved. This can be achieved by setting out methods of raising awareness, how contact will be achieved, what publicity and promotion will be utilised and to develop workshops and meetings. These aspects culminate in a plan of for engagement to achieve change in a collective way.

The Planning for Real Model has been used successfully for over 30 years to engage and mobilise local communities to develop action plans for change. It has a proven track record in enabling local communities to take ownership for improving their local area and creating and delivering the means for change. This enabled by facilitating local communities to register their views in creative ways using 3D models and maps. Communities are engaged through facilitated workshops and seminars to identify priorities and in partnership with local and statutory authorities develop and implement an action plan for change.

## *Planning for Real: From housing to conservation*

Enabling and convincing key individuals, communities and organisations to engage with, own and assist in the delivery of conservation actions is often an issue for conservation projects. If all views are positive and supportive then this can be simple, however, this is rarely the case. This issue is shared with infrastructure planning projects, where it is also necessary to bring together significant numbers of individuals and organisations with sometimes conflicting opinions or views to achieve change. Economic sectors are often inward facing and fail or are slow to realise shared objectives and to utilise strategies already developed and deployed within other business or research areas. This slows the growth, implementation and success of projects which seek to achieve similar outcomes. Consideration of solutions developed in other sectors can be useful to guide how best to achieve community engagement in LIFE Waders for Real. For example, the potential of Planning for Real to achieving wide reaching and measurable community engagement in a conservation project.



## *Planning for Real: The process*

- Project partners should define what they see as the requirements and objectives of the project and engagement activities. Such consideration should identify target audiences and start to consider possible routes of dissemination.
- Hold an initial scoping meeting, with all project partners where previously identified requirements and objectives for the programme of engagement are discussed. Areas of support or disagreement identified, and a unified approach developed.
- Write a proposal to clearly define the “what, who, how and when” for the programme of engagement – what the objectives will be, who target audiences are, how engagement will be delivered and when it will occur.
- Hold initial seminars to launch project and initiate conversation with key audiences.
- Develop a “Theory of Change” document. This document should highlight the desired outcomes over the short, medium and longer term as a result of the project. It should be:
  - Credible – based on experience and insight from stakeholders and research.
  - Achievable – the scope and requirements are within the available resources.
  - Supported – include the opinions and views of stakeholders where appropriate.
- Develop tools and methods for dissemination and engagement including a spatial model of the project area and appropriate option cards (for more information see LIFE Waders for Real case study described later). Depending on the suitability for the target audience these should include innovative and accessible activities, seminars, exhibitions, presentations. Methods should include the ability to collect data on the ideas, uptake and audience partaking in activities.
- Progress with delivery of the programme of engagement, collecting data where possible. Use the data collected and experiences during activities to evaluate and adapt the approach to project delivery, incorporating newly raised views and ideas where appropriate.
- Hold final closing seminar to outline project outcomes, results and future.

## *LIFE Waders for Real: An example of implementation*

This section highlights the approach the LIFE Waders for Real project took to delivering the Planning for Real approach along with examples of the activities and resources they developed. The LIFE Waders for Real project brought together local, regional and national stakeholders to deliver a wader-focused management programme. The stakeholders worked together to develop and deliver a unique method for managing breeding waders on farmed wetland areas. Engagement and communication were subsequently one of LIFE Waders for Real project’s core objectives. The LIFE Waders for Real Planning for Real strategy aimed to raise awareness of the project themes and help stakeholders understand environmental issues enabling them to play a better informed and active role, both in the delivery of LIFE Waders for Real and in environmentally focused management generally. The approach to delivery was through stakeholder events and written dissemination, stakeholder meetings to disseminate project information and progress, public participation events, international conferences, online and print media and educational programmes. Efforts were concentrated on target audiences with the messages and approach tailored to the to the level of understanding, likely opinions and desired outcomes of each group. Engagement with and involvement of stakeholders throughout the Avon Valley and wider afield increased the shared understanding of the range of environmental, social and economic threats to waders.

## *LIFE Waders for Real: Target groups and methods of interaction*

- Farmers, landowners and gamekeepers within the Avon Valley – regular group meetings to deliver feedback and share experiences, 1 to 1 meetings and telephone conversations and written annual feedback and newsletters. Questionnaires were also delivered at the start and end of the project initial to gather opinions and ideas then later to assess developments in environmental opinions and knowledge.
- Statutory agency officers and environmental policy makers – meetings and site visits were held when appropriate alongside the provision of documentation.
- Wetland conservation and research community at a national and international level – meetings when appropriate, written documentation, presentations and attendance at conferences.
- Local community surrounding the Avon Valley, schools, public and voluntary interest groups – engagement events with a large stand, interactive activities and data collection on audience demography, opinion and knowledge. Additional, seminars were conducted with conservation and environmental groups. Written articles in press and media were regularly produced.
- Wider general public and relevant audiences – attendance and delivery of activities and materials at large regional and national biodiversity, countryside and farming events.
- Furthermore, all groups were interacted with via online methods of dissemination including social media, a website and regular blogs.





## *LIFE Waders for Real: Planning for Real resources*

This section provides examples of Planning for Real resources, particularly for audience data collection and education. Resources related to the socio-economic impact of the project, such as farmer questionnaires and wider dissemination are found in the corresponding LIFE Waders for Real reports.

### *Resource: 3D-Model – Hardbacked map of the study area and accompanying suggestion/data collection cards*

Description: An interactive questionnaire to gather spatial data on the use and knowledge of the landscape by the local community. A large map of the study area is affixed to hard backing such as polystyrene board and presented accessibly at the event. Suggestion and activity cards should be developed specific to the project in question, with colour-coordinated categories where appropriate. Flags used by LIFE Waders for Real covered 3 categories: wildlife sightings (all relevant species), activity (e.g. I walk here, I birdwatch here) and access (e.g. I use this footpath, I use this gateway). Flags affixed to cocktail sticks or similar material to allow placement into board at desired locations by audience.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community) relevant for all age groups.

Activity: Participant collects and places relevant flags at sites with which they have knowledge. Such as recording where they have seen Lapwing or what footpaths they use.

Example:





## Resource: Audience age and gender record

Description: An interactive questionnaire to gather demographic data for participants of Planning for Real activities. A large printout of the questionnaire is affixed to hard backing such as polystyrene board and presented accessibly at the event. Small drawing pins can be used by participants to log their Age and Gender if they choose. For ethical reasons it must be made clear to participants that completion of this board is not compulsory.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community) relevant for all age groups.

Activity: Participant collects and places pins in board as appropriate.


Example:



### LIFE Waders for Real

#### Age and Gender Record

Age	Male	Female	Undeclared
10 Years & under			
11 – 19 Years			
20 – 30 Years			
31 – 40 Years			
41 – 50 Years			
51 – 60 Years			
61 - 70 Years			
71 Years & over			
Undeclared			






## Resource: Audience perceptions on key project themes

Description: An interactive board to gather data on the knowledge, opinions and ideas of the audience on key conservation themes, such as designations and trends in wildlife. Though, any theme of interest could be applied. A large printout of the questionnaire is affixed to hard backing such as polystyrene board and presented accessibly at the event.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community) relevant for all age groups.

Activity: Participant collects post-stick notes and writes comments relevant to the themes described in the boxes on the board then affixes them to the correct section.

Example:

 	
<h2 style="text-align: center;">LIFE Waders for Real Visitor Perceptions</h2>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Venue: Blashford Lakes 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015</b></p>	
<p>We would welcome your thoughts on the following key issues. Please write your comments on a post it notes and place in the relevant box below.</p>	
<p><b>National and International importance of the valley:</b></p>	<p><b>Key species of importance in the valley:</b></p>
<p><b>Trend of breeding and wintering waders:</b></p>	<p><b>The issues facing breeding waders in the valley:</b></p>
	











## Resource: Visitor methods and timing of use of area of interest

Description: An interactive board to gather the data on the types of interactions the audience has with the area of interest along with when those interactions occur. Interaction categories can be modified as desired according to the areas of interest of a project. A large printout of the questionnaire is affixed to hard backing such as polystyrene board and presented accessibly at the event.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community) relevant for all age groups.

Activity: Participant collects and places pins in board as appropriate.

Example:

 <b>LIFE Waders for Real</b> 						
Venue: Blashford Lakes on 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2015						
We would like to know what you use the area for, and when you use it. Please put a pin in the appropriate box (or boxes).						
Month 	 Family Day Out	 Walking the dog	 Fishing	 Bird-watching	 Jogging / exercise	Other
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						








## Resource: Visitor methods and frequency of use of area of interest

Description: An interactive board to gather the data on the types of interactions the audience has with the area of interest along with the frequency with which those interactions occur. Interaction and frequency categories can be modified as desired according to the areas of interest of a project. A large printout of the questionnaire is affixed to hard backing such as polystyrene board and presented accessibly at the event.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community) relevant for all age groups.

Activity: Participant collects and places pins in board as appropriate.

Example:

 <b>LIFE Waders for Real</b> 						
Venue: Blashford Lakes on 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2015						
We would like to know how often you visit the Avon Valley						
Frequency ↓	 Family Day Out	 Walking the dog	 Fishing	 Bird-watching	 Jogging / exercise	Other
Daily						
Weekly						
Monthly						
Once a Year						

## Resource: Project leaflet

Description: A key piece of project material for the LIFE Waders for Real project was a leaflet to distribute at local events, to local organisations and relevant sites.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community along with scientists, environmental policy makers) and relevant for all age groups depending upon design.

Activity: Leaflets deployed at events and meetings for delivery of key messages.

Example:

**LIFE Waders for Real**  
Breeding wader recovery in the Avon Valley

**Our Approach**

**Partnership working**  
We deliver the project through a partnership between the private sector (farmers, landowners), conservation charities (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust), higher education institutions (Sparsholt College) and the public sector (Natural England & Environment Agency).

**SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE**  
Partnership & line of support  
Wildlife Trust  
Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust  
Environment Agency

**New conceptual approach**  
Considerable investment has been made in the Avon Valley through agri-environment schemes, but this has involved solely habitat management. We are testing whether management of habitat and predation levels at the farm scale, can create 'hotspots' of increased breeding success, and whether this approach is more effective at reversing wader population declines.

**Advice and engagement**  
Detailed, site-specific advice on habitat management and reducing predation is essential to halt further decline in the waders. We have identified groups of important fields and created a network of 'hotspots', where increased resources are targeted to improve productivity.

**On-site actions**  
EU Life+ funding has been used to finance measures that could not otherwise be implemented through HLS. Predator exclusion fencing and nest cages are being trialled to increase wader nest survival. In-field wet features are being created to improve wader chick foraging resources and increase survival.

**Monitoring**  
Numbers and breeding success of lapwing and redshank, abundance of predators and changes in other taxa are being monitored to measure the effectiveness of interventions and provide novel ecological insight.

**Want to learn more?**  
Email: [info@gwct.org.uk](mailto:info@gwct.org.uk)  
Visit: [wadersforreal.eu](http://wadersforreal.eu)  
Follow us online  
Twitter: [@wadersforreal](https://twitter.com/wadersforreal)

**Wader declines: a pan-European issue**  
Along with many other farmland birds, breeding waders have been declining across Europe for at least the last 30 years. This is primarily due to agricultural improvement of their favoured wet grassland habitats, involving drainage, fertilization of grass swards and increases in livestock densities. Agri-environment schemes in several countries have attempted to address these problems by compensating farmers for maintaining higher field water levels and practicing lower intensity farming. However, there is an increasing body of evidence from scientific studies conducted on breeding waders across Europe that high levels of predation by widespread, generalist predators are likely to be limiting wader population recovery in many situations.

**The decline of waders in the Avon Valley**  
The Avon Valley has historically supported nationally important populations of breeding lapwing, redshank and snipe. In common with other lowland wet grassland sites throughout Britain, the numbers of breeding waders in the Avon Valley have declined dramatically since the early 1980s, with declines of 64% in lapwing, 75% in redshank and 97% in snipe between 1982-2002. Our data for 2007-2014 show clearly that poor breeding success is driving the decline in lapwing and that low nest survival resulting from high levels of predation is the key issue. The Avon Valley is typical of river valley situations where other biodiversity considerations are also important and the feasibility of effectively reducing predator impacts is constrained by the landscape and land ownership.

**Lapwing need to fledge 0.7 young per pair per year to maintain a stable population.**  
Prior to the project, lapwing productivity averaged only 0.41 young per pair

**Lapwing chick in the nest**

**Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust**  
**LIFE Waders for Real**  
[www.wadersforreal.eu](http://www.wadersforreal.eu)

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Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, July 2018. Registered Charity No. 1112023.





We work with farmers to preserve floristically diverse grassland rich in chick food invertebrates

## Project aims

Since 2014, the LIFE+ Waders For Real project has sought to reverse the decline of breeding waders in the Avon Valley. Our objectives are to:

1. Increase lapwing numbers in the Avon Valley, through the novel approach of creating strategic 'hotspots' of optimum habitat with reduced predation pressure.
2. Increase numbers of lapwing chicks fledged at 'hotspots' to the point where breeding densities become sufficient to enable lapwings to better fend off potential predators.
3. Halt the decline of redshank in the Avon Valley by increasing productivity.
4. Create conditions to encourage snipe to return to breed.
5. Using a new approach called 'Planning for Real' to deliver sustainable conservation actions.
6. Demonstrate how far habitat manipulation can be used to push the balance in favour of waders rather than predators. We are assessing predator behaviour in manipulated landscapes.
7. Demonstrate the most appropriate techniques for the efficient assessment and exclusion of predators and quantify any benefit or problems associated with predation control.
8. Quantify the costs of different techniques for increasing wader breeding success and the timescale over which this translates into higher wader numbers.
9. Monitor the effects of restoration for waders on other key elements of floodplain biodiversity.

Please report colour-ringed lapwings to us!  
info@gwctt.org.uk



## What have we achieved?

### In-field wet features

In-field wet features create optimum wader breeding habitat. These habitats provide a rich source of invertebrates on which wader chicks feed and soft soil to facilitate probing. These mini-wetlands also host dragonflies, damselflies, molluscs, important wetland plants, as well as overwintering waders and waterfowl. So far, we have added 31 scrapes, 2km of new ditches and restored almost 3km of historic ditches. Our farmers have modified grazing and cutting regimes to create optimum wader breeding habitat.



In-field wet ditches have been restored to provide ideal wader chick foraging habitat (left before and right after)

### Reducing predator pressure

Waders select open landscapes, avoiding places where predators perch and hide. With help from our project partners, we have removed almost 2km of old fences and willow scrub along with an additional 18 dead trees. We have deployed temporary electric fencing, protecting 125,885m<sup>2</sup> of wader breeding habitat. Fences are deployed in areas where nest predation has been identified and typically surround a wet feature where chicks are likely to feed. As well as understanding which predators are present, our intensive camera trap monitoring has improved the efficiency of legal predator control already conducted on parts of the study area by private landowners to assist wader recovery.

### Fox GPS tracking and diet

To efficiently mitigate against fox predation, we must gain a much clearer understanding of fox ecology on river meadows. We have fitted GPS-collars to foxes and obtained tens of thousands of positions from 27 foxes, and collected hundreds of fox scats. In the north of the valley, where foxes are unmanaged and waders no longer breed, our research has revealed that foxes living at surprisingly high densities are being sustained primarily by voles. Our focus in the south of the valley is to investigate how foxes behave around breeding waders and our temporary electric fencing. These novel insights into fox movements and activity patterns will underpin future advice on managing fox predation for wader conservation.



Foxes are caught fitted with a GPS-collar and quickly released

## How are waders responding?

The Avon Valley lapwing population shows variation between years (see graph) but, as a result of efforts to improve breeding success since 2014, our current estimate of the lapwing population is c.70 breeding pairs. We believe with continued investment in habitats, mitigation of predation pressure and commitment from landowners and farmers we are on track to achieve our aim of 80-90 pairs of breeding lapwing by the end of the project. Redshank appear to have remained stable since 2014, with their broods using our newly created wet ditches and scrapes for foraging. We have promising evidence of snipe returning but further work is required to encourage this species.



## Future insights

### Lapwing movement and adjacent habitats

Colour ringing of lapwing chicks, when close to fledging has yielded interesting results. Chicks ringed in the early years of the project have been resighted breeding on arable fields almost 2km away and in the New Forest. As a result, we have expanded our work to include habitats adjacent to the meadows, with a focus on monitoring and providing advice to farmers to improve breeding success alongside investigating the site choice of breeding birds between years.

### Fox diet and population density

We are building on the results of our fox research by using DNA methods to further investigate fox diet variability and assess the density of foxes present in our study areas. Each year, we know there were untagged foxes present, but how many were there?



We collect fox scats and identify the contents under a microscope.

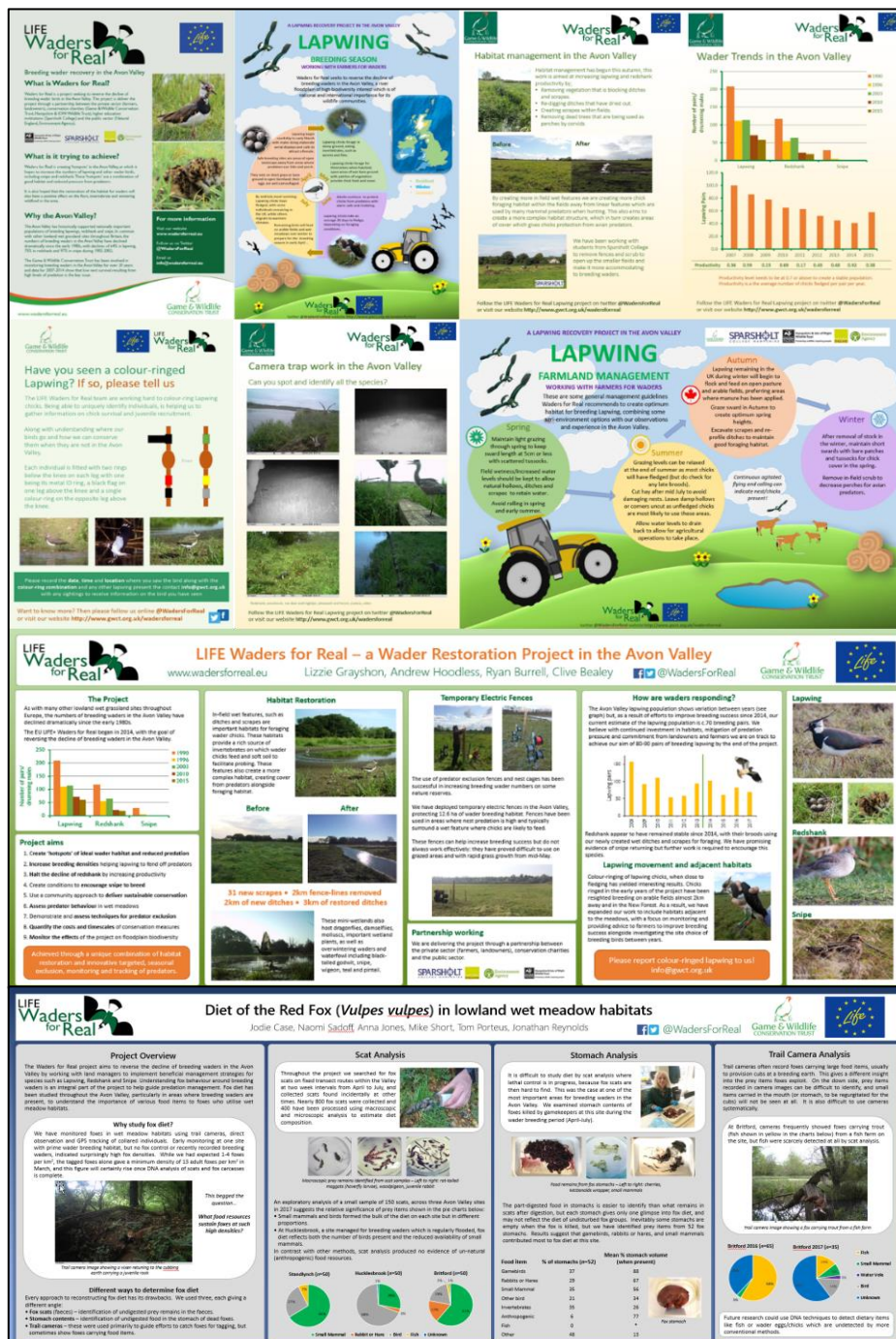
## Resource: Various dissemination posters

Description: Posters and written materials can be used to deliver a range of information to different target audiences. Deployment of these at events and meetings allows for audiences to read and absorb the content at their own pace and ask questions where appropriate. This is an effective method of message delivery.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community along with scientists, environmental policy makers) and relevant for all age groups depending upon design.

Activity: Posters deployed at events and meetings for delivery of key messages.

Example:





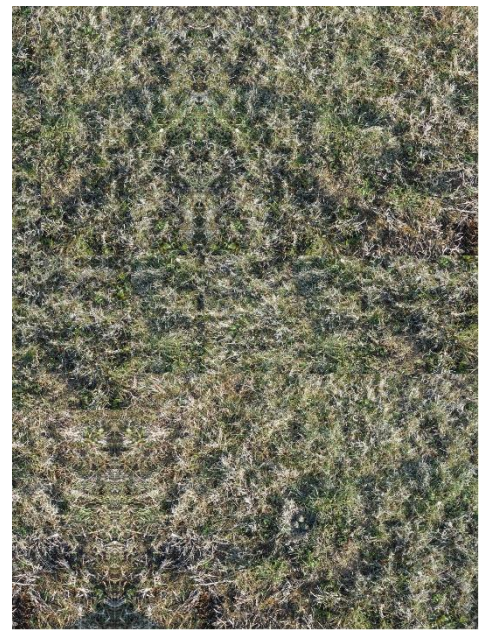
### Resource: Educational Games – Find the lapwing nest example

Description: Various interactive educational games can be developed and used to deliver messages to a range of audiences. In total, LIFE Waders for Real developed 6 such educational games for use at Planning for Real events. One example, is “Find the Lapwing nest”, which showed several large format images of Lapwing nests in different habitats. This demonstrated that Lapwings are ground nesting birds, their choice of habitat for nesting and the camouflage they employ to avoid predation. The more cryptic a nest the higher the level and so the photographs presented could be adjusted depending upon the age and knowledge of the audience. Recording the abilities of participants from such activities allows for a baseline information in relevant skills for wetland bird monitoring.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community, education). Designed for a range of ages and levels of understanding by developing several levels of difficulty within each game.

Activity: Participant aims to solve the game under guidance from event organiser. In reference to Find the Lapwing nest, the participant aims to find and point to the nest of each example, with the objective of achieving the highest level possible.

Example












## Resource: Educational Resources – Lapwing chick timeline example

Description: Various educational resources can be developed and used to deliver messages to a range of audiences. In total, LIFE Waders for Real developed 4 such educational resources for use at Planning for Real events. One example, is “The lapwing chick timeline”, which showed several large format images of Lapwing nests then chicks at different ages along with key messages for each stage. This demonstrated that Lapwings are ground nesting birds, their choice of habitat for breeding and vulnerability of their chicks to predation. Recording the abilities of participants from such activities allows for a baseline information in relevant skills for wetland bird monitoring.

Audience: Various (general public, local stakeholders, local community, education).

Activity: resources deployed at events and meetings for delivery of key messages. In this example, the participant gains the ability to identify the ages of lapwing chicks along with learning key messages from the interpretive boxes accompanying each photo.

### Example

	<p>Day 0,</p> <p>Here, 1 chick has just hatched and the other has just begun to hatch. The 'egg tooth' is still visible on the hatching chick; this is a hard-white cap on the top of the bill. This is used to break into the air sack inside the egg and then to break the eggshell in order to hatch. The egg tooth can be retained for around 24 hours after hatching.</p>		<p>Day 25,</p> <p>The flight feathers are around half grown. The chicks are now able to fly short distances to avoid capture and predation. The type of terrain and vegetation often determines whether chicks will hide or run. If there are areas of high vegetation they will hide and rely on their camouflage, this is very effective.</p>
	<p>Day 1,</p> <p>Weighing only around 15-17g they start to forage by themselves. However, they do rely on the female lapwing to brood them as they are unable to regulate their own body temperature. They are particularly vulnerable at this age, they rely on the parent birds to alarm call at the sign of danger and then their camouflage to protect them from predation.</p>		<p>Day 30,</p> <p>Once the chicks are close to fledging, we aim to re-capture them to fit them with colour rings. Each individual gets a unique combination of colour rings along with a black flag identifier that is unique to the project. These will stay with them for the rest of their lives and it enables us to distinguish between individuals without needing to re-capture them.</p>
	<p>Day 9,</p> <p>The lapwing chicks are starting to develop their feathers are a little better adapted to getting around the water meadows. They foraging around the edges wet pools and ditches on invertebrates. These areas also provide vegetation cover good for hiding in.</p>		<p>Day 35,</p> <p>The chicks can fly well as their wings are fully developed. Chicks often stay in the fields where they have fledged for several days and sometimes weeks after fledging. They then begin to group up with other birds into post breeding flocks.</p>
	<p>Day 21,</p> <p>They have begun to lose their downy fluff and their juvenile feathers are growing well. They are very well camouflaged at this stage. Lapwing chicks can move quite far to find good feeding areas, however if the conditions are good they may stay in the same ditch or pool until they fledge.</p>	<p>As always, all catching and ringing is done under strict licence by trained individuals. We aim to catch chicks at hatching and then once again in order to fit colour rings, this does not have any effect on the fitness or survival of the chicks.</p>	





**AGE AND GENDER BOARD**

Age	Male	Female
10 Years & under	1	2
11 - 19 Years	1	1
20 - 30 Years	0	0
31 - 40 Years	1	1
41 - 50 Years	0	1
51 - 60 Years	0	1
61 - 70 Years	1	1
71 Years & over	1	1

