LIFE Waders for Real

Standard Presentation

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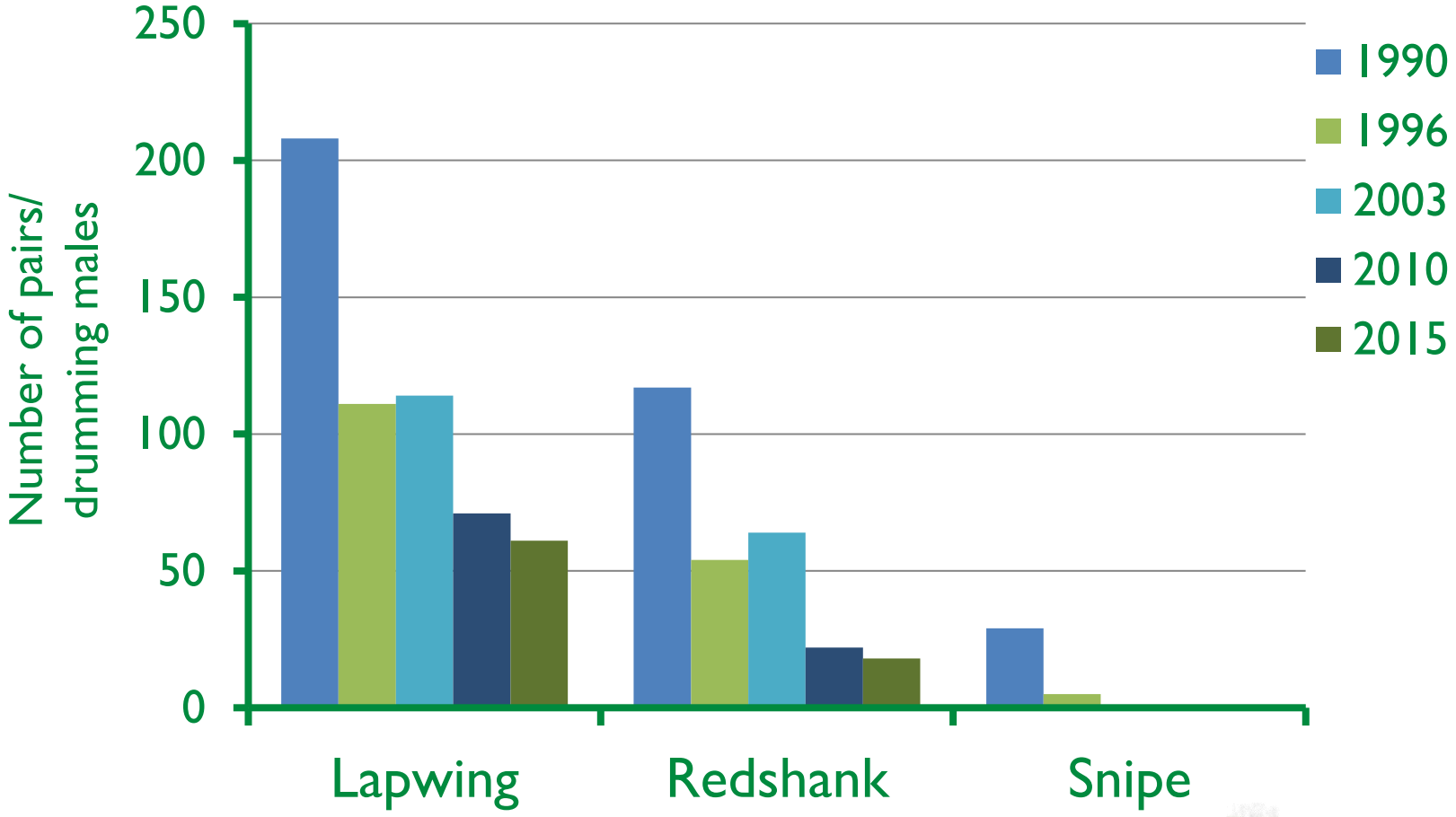
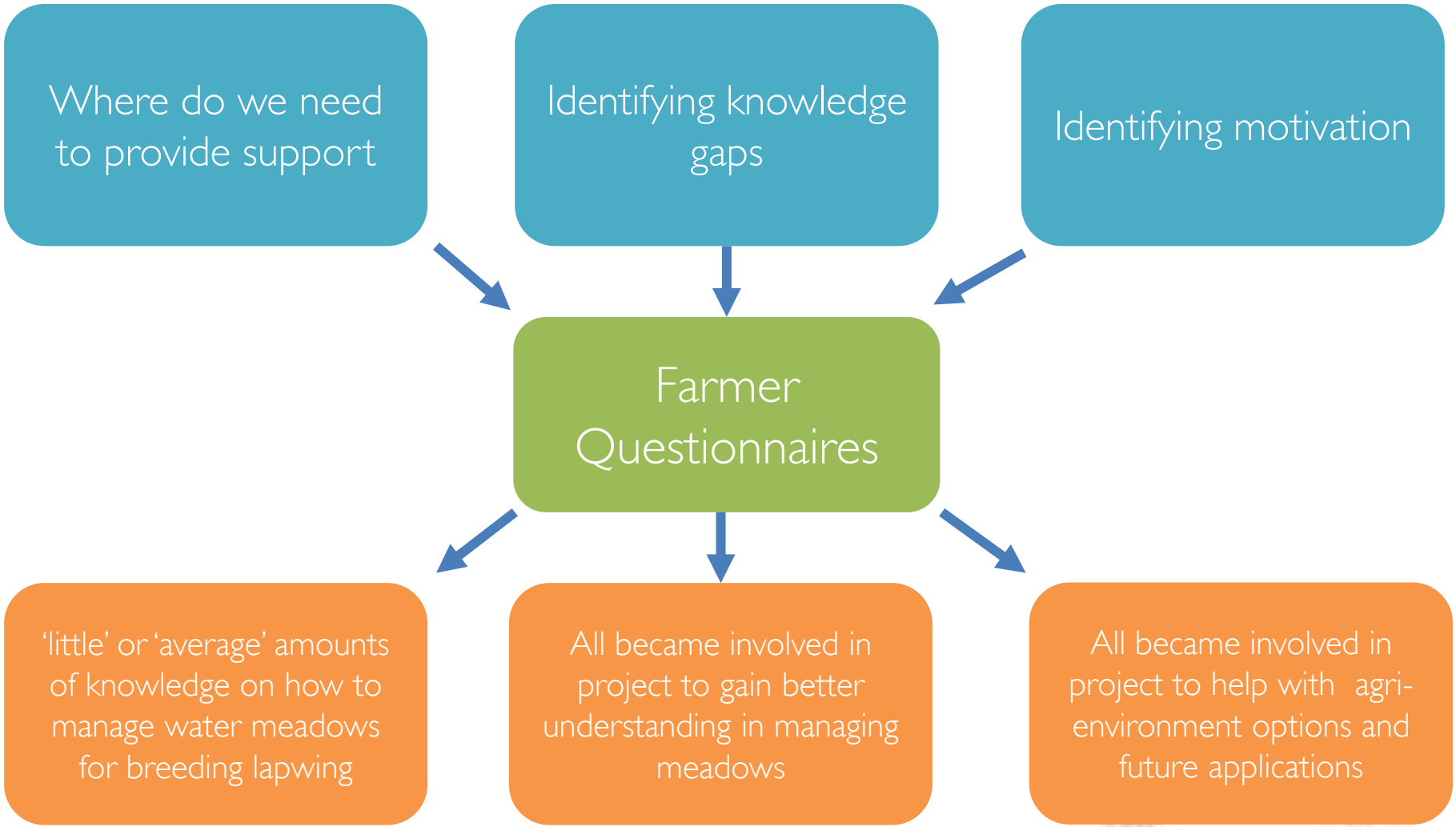
Background to the LIFE Waders for Real project

The Avon Valley

Decline in breeding waders



Understanding the situation



LIFE Waders for Real
our approach to delivering results

Project aims;

- Increase Lapwing pair numbers and breeding success
- Stabilise Redshank population
- Encourage Snipe breed on water meadows

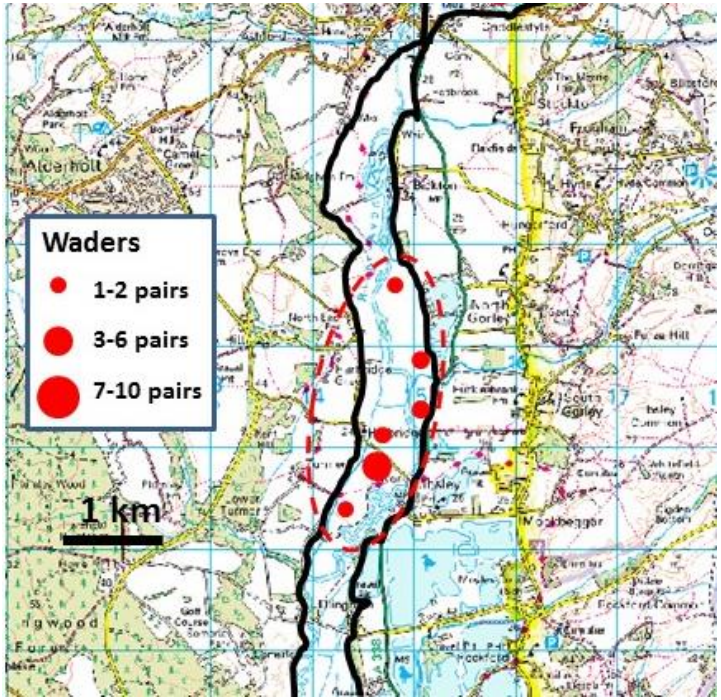
How we plan to do this;

- Habitat restoration on 4 hotspot sites
- Trial predator exclusion methods
- Support and advice for Farmers and Land Managers

What else we hope to achieve;

- Assess methods of calculating predator abundance and behaviour
- Work out costs of increasing wader breeding success
- Assess effects on other key taxa
- Project Dissemination and Communication to wider audience

Our approach to delivery



4 (+2 2018) 'hotspots'
Build on HLS to ensure:

1. Reduced nest predation
2. In-field wet features for broods
3. Nesting 'colonies' of lapwings
4. Increased habitat for redshank and snipe

Support for farmers and continued monitoring are essential

How Hotspot sites were selected

- An existing lapwing population, 5-10 pairs
- Some existing habitat features for breeding waders
- Under agri-environment scheme for breeding waders
- Land managers and farmers who were interesting in improving wader numbers and breeding success

Out hotspot sites

- 4 original sites – 477ha
- Habitat management plans produced
- Regular meetings and management advice provided
- Support for derogations and beneficial farming practices to continue
- Detailed monitoring of lapwing breeding success
- Use of temporary electric fences

Creating better nesting habitat

Creating better brood rearing habitat

Working with local organisations

Exclusion – Nest Cages

- Aim – increase nest survival by restricting the access of predators to active nests.
- Nest protection cages were trialled on selected lapwing nests, slowly introducing the cage, followed by intensive observation.
- Lapwing did not readily accept the nest cages - this work was not continued.
- Temporary electric fencing prioritised.

Reducing predator pressure – temporary electric fencing

- Proving successful in some areas
- Enclosing important nesting and chick foraging areas
- Vegetation maintenance is essential
- Need to be accessible
- Not practical in all areas
- Good option when area inappropriate for lethal control

Temporary Electric Fence Style

- 8 strand fence – previous RSPB design
- Derogation from NE needed for setting fence on SSSI
- Fence setting - structured, efficient, little disturbance as possible during this sensitive time.
- Corner posts put out early Feb before birds arrive
- Wires set late Feb/early March once territories establish
- Birds are monitored before, during and after this procedure.
- Removed once waders finished breeding

2016 – 1 fence (1.4 ha)

2017 – 3 fences (3 ha)

2018 – 7 fences (8.2 ha)

2019 – 8 fences (11.46 ha)

Results and outcomes

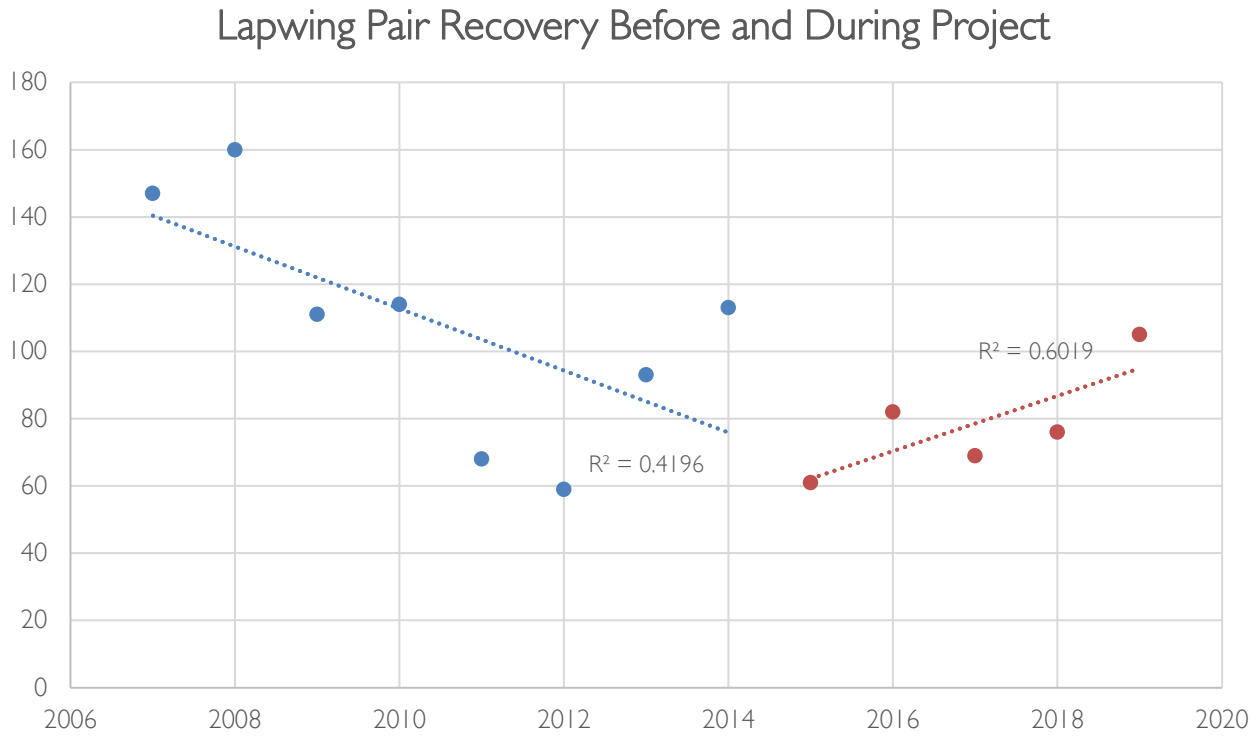
How has this effected Lapwing breeding success?

Detailed monitoring each year

- Pair counts
- Monitoring nests – temperature loggers
- Monitoring broods – radio-tracking and colour ringing
- Vegetation monitoring
- Invertebrate monitoring

Lapwing recovery

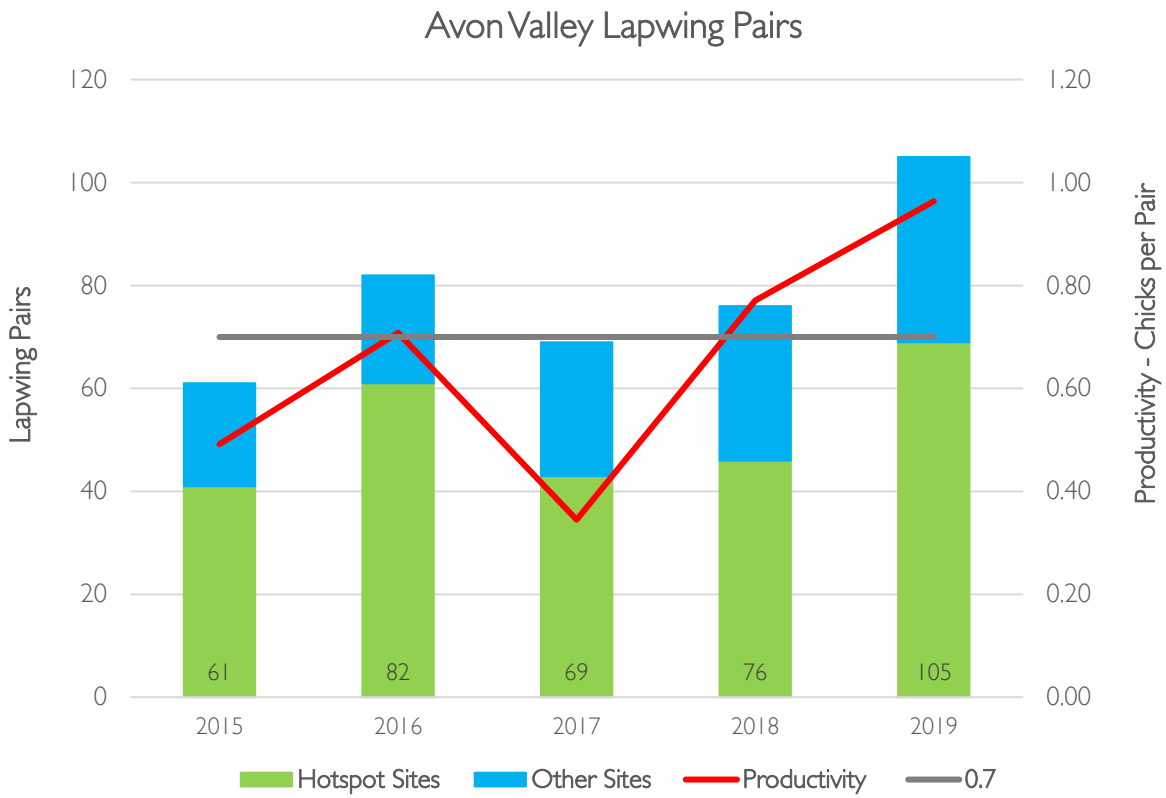
By creating hotspot areas where our efforts have been focused the lapwing population is currently stable at around 70 – 80 pairs.



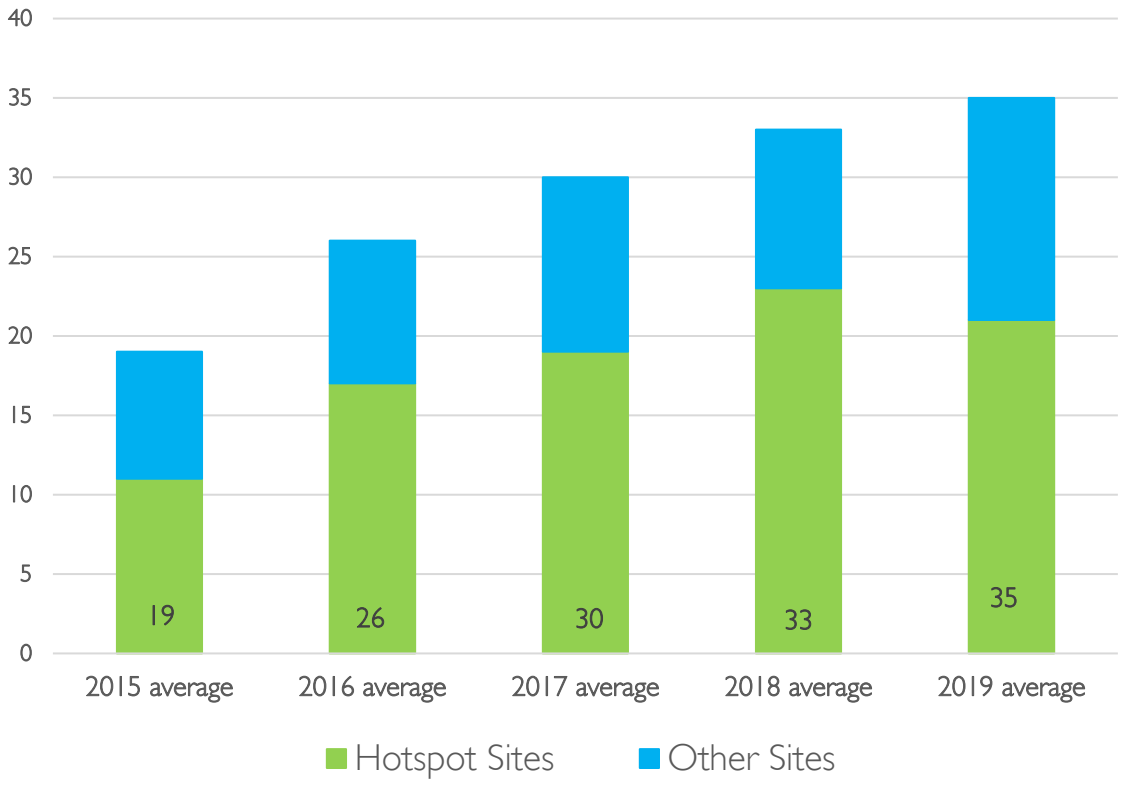
Nest Survival inside and outside electric fences

Nest Survival	2019	2018
Nest survival Unfenced	67.5 % (n=25)	50 % (n=12)
Nest survival Fenced	100 % (n=14)	60 % (n=3)

Lapwing Pairs and productivity



Redshank Pairs



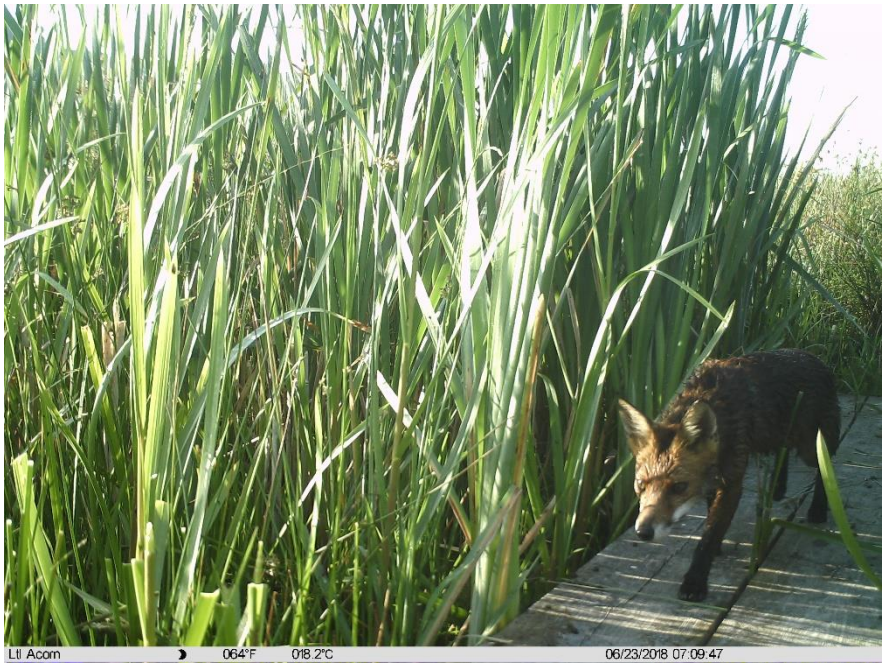
Snipe – returning? (maybe…)

Two drumming snipe were heard on hotspot sites in 2018

One chipping snipe in 2019

Predator Abundance and Behaviour

- Camera traps
- GPS tracking
- Scat analysis
- DNA analysis
- Fox control records



Costs of increasing wader breeding success

- Habitat work – continuous, how often required
- Targeted management advice
- Predator control
- Electric fencing
- Monitoring
- Losses to farming

Assess effects on other key taxa

- Ditch inverts
- Dragonflies
- Breeding meadow birds (ducks, reed warbler, reed bunting, sedge warbler, cettis' warbler)
- Wintering wildfowl and waders
- Vegetation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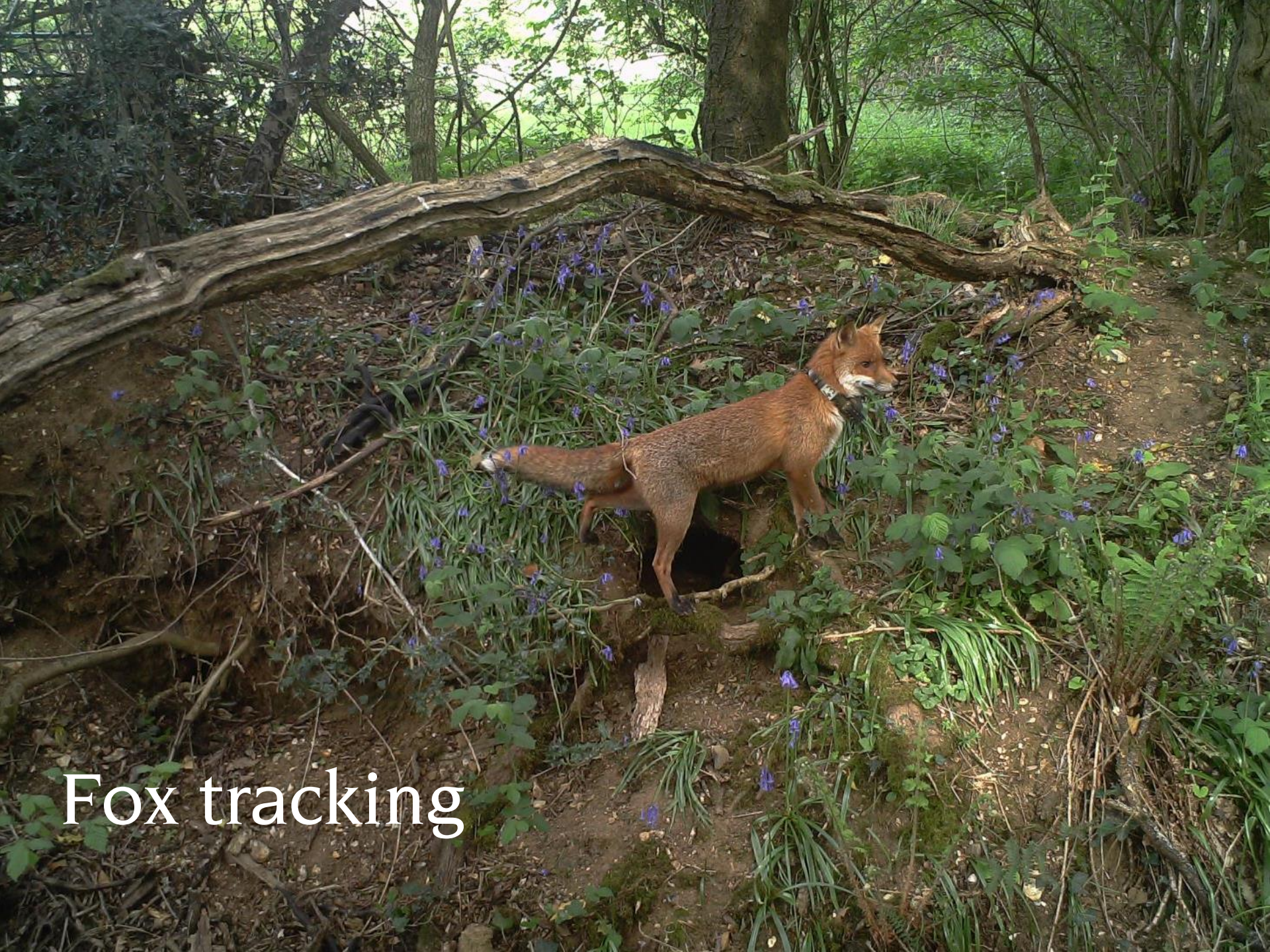
Fox tracking

Tagging foxes

- Foxes caught in neck snares
- GSM-type satellite collars
- Remotely programmable
- 10 minute fixes
- Remote drop-off device

2019

- 4 adult males
- 6 adult females
- tracked April-July

2019

Lapwing

10 pairs
4-6 broods fledged
Av 1.47 chicks p/pair

Redshank

2 pairs
1-2 broods fledged

F4974 F5951 M4972 F6644 M6645 M5546 M5952 F6643 F4973 F5544 M5545 F5543

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04 Jul 2019 21:00

Fox detectability

Delivering the message

Working with farmers and land managers

- Dedicated and enthusiastic advisor
- Detailed management plans provided
- Created buy in to the project
- Regular farmer meetings and updates
- Predator management advice

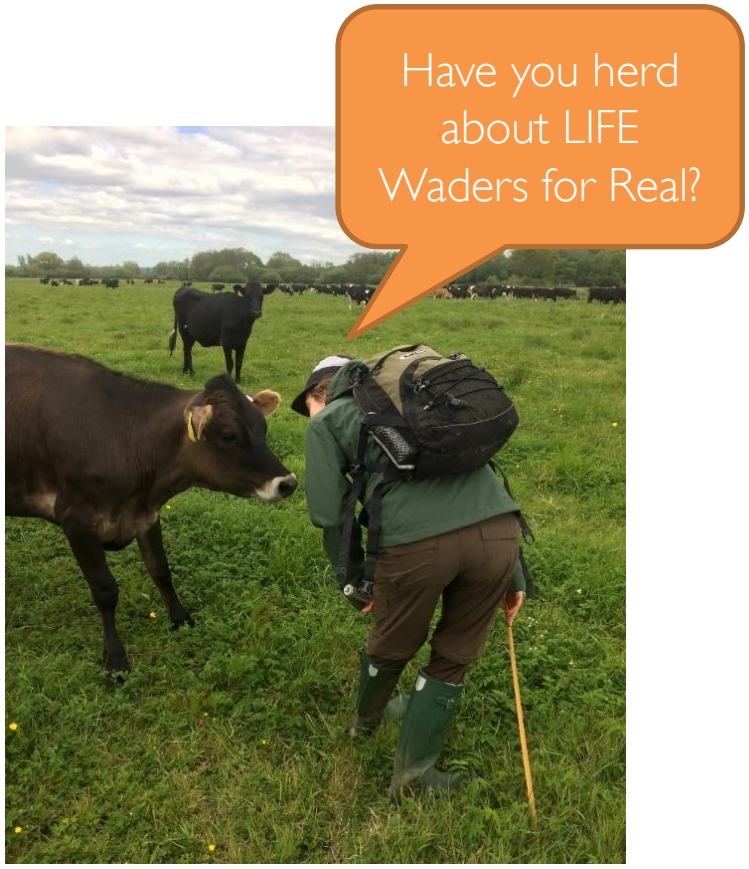
Students and Education

- Key to project delivery
- 24 BSc and MSc/MRes
- Groups from Sparsholt College
- Extending message about conservation for waders and the GWCT approach
- Student Questionnaires

Upskilling

Communications and Community Outreach

- Project leaflets and boards
- Large public events
- Educational visits
- Social media and blogs
- Press releases
- Lectures and talks



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LIFE
for Real?

Exchanging Knowledge

Project Networking

End of Project Conference and Workshop

The Team

From left: Clive Bealey – Wetland Ecologist, Ryan Burrell – Wetland Ecologist, Lizzie Grayshon Project Officer, Mike Short – Predation Ecologist, Jodie Case – Research Ecologist, Tom Porteus - Predation Ecologist, Jonathan Reynolds – Head of Predation, Andrew Hoodless – Head of Wetland Research.

Photo credit, Ellie Jackson-Smith.

Also, a big part of the team have been the 25 students who have worked on the project over their placement years or for their Masters dissertations and our committed farmers, landowners and gamekeepers.

What's next???

Thank you for listening, any questions?

Acknowledgments
Our funders: LIFE and GWCT
Everyone who has worked on the project