



# Restoration of Meadow Bird Habitats

After LIFE Conservation Plan

LIFE06 NAT/DK000158



## Introduction

Meadow birds are among the most threatened bird species in Denmark and in the rest of the EU. Many species of meadow birds have suffered from serious decline since the 1970'ties primarily due to the lost of suitable habitats. Only 25% of the breeding sites for Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) remain, and for Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) only 15% of the breeding sites remain in Denmark.



Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)



Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*)

The Danish Ministry of Environment has adopted a national action plan for meadow birds covering 25 Species Protection Areas (SPA's). As a contribution to the implementation of the national action plan for threatened meadow birds, four of the most important sites for meadow birds in Denmark were selected to part of the LIFE Nature Project "Restoration of Meadow Bird Habitats" - REMAB.

The main objective of the REMAB project is to restore and maintain a favourable conservation status for Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) and Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) at four key sites for these species in Denmark.

A second project objective is to restore favourable conservation status within the project areas for the habitat types 1330 Atlantic Salt Meadows and 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara spp.* and to improve habitats for Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), and Spotted crane (*Porzana porzana*).

The sites involved in the project are Vestlige Vejler (site 20), Harboøre Tange (site 39), Nyord (site 89) and Vestamager (site 111).



Site	Sitename	Sitecode
20	Vestlige Vøler, Arup Holm og Hovsøer Røn	DK00X020
30	Harboøre Tange, Plet Enge og Djeller Sø	DK00X030
89	Præstø Fjord, Ulvshale, Nyvård og Jungshoved Nør	DK00X089
111	Vestamager og havet syd for	DK00X111



Location of project sites

The key element to improve conditions for meadow birds in the REMAB project are:

- Actions to make the hydrological conditions in the areas more suitable for meadow birds.
- Actions to facilitate predator control and specially to reduce the number of foxes within the project sites.
- Actions to restore meadow bird habitats (removal of trees, scrub and reed).
- Actions to improve and facilitate meadow bird friendly management at the project sites.

The REMAB project lasted from 2006 to 2009.

## Project results

The actions executed in the REMAB project have improved and enlarged the habitats for meadow birds at the four project sites. The project also provided instruments for site managers to improve meadow bird friendly management of the four sites.

The actions taken in the REMAB project have not yet successfully stopped the decline in number of breeding meadow birds at the four project sites. It is still too early to make conclusions on the long term effect of the project as many project activities were carried out in 2008 and 2009 and additional actions can prove necessary to ensure favourable conservation status for Dunlin (*Calidris alpina schinzii*) and Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) at the four key sites for these species in Denmark.



## Maintenance

Funding for maintenance of the installations established in the REMAB-project will be provided by The Danish Forest and Nature Agency, The Danish Bird Protection Foundation and The Aage V. Jensen Foundation.

## Future actions

Implementation of the EU-habitat directive and hereby the elaboration and implementation of Natura2000 action plans will set standards for the future management of the four sites involved in the REMAB-project.

The Danish Forest & Nature Agency is responsible for the elaboration of the Natura2000 action plan at site 111, Vestamager.

Vordingborg Municipality and The Danish Forest & Nature Agency have a shared responsibility to elaborate the action plan at site 89, Nyord.

The Danish Coastal Authority is responsible for elaboration of the Natura2000 action plan at site 39, Harboøre Tange and Thisted Municipality has the responsibility at site 20, Vestlige Vejler.

Action plans for all four sites are expected to be elaborated in 2011 and implemented from 2012.

It is expected that sufficient public funding will be provided to ensure implementation of all of the above mentioned Natura2000 action plans.

## Actions to be taken before 2012

### Vestlige Vejler (site 20)

The management of Vestlige Vejler will be carried out according to the management plan prepared in the REMAB-project and in accordance to the rules for water levels in the streams and canals decided by Thisted Municipality.

The management plan for Vejlerne can be downloaded from the REMAB web side:

<http://www.skovognatur.dk/naturprojekter/projekter/vejstjylland/engfugle/rapport.htm>

Daily operations and funding of these will be provided by Aage V. Jensen Foundation, private landowners and Thisted Municipality.



### **Harboøre Tange (site 39)**

110 ha meadows will be restored by removing reed at Harboøre Tange in 2010. The restored area will subsequently be grassed or mowed in 2011.

The hydrological conditions of the meadows at Harboøre Tange are currently being monitored. The operation of the automatic sluice gate established as part of the REMAB-project will be adjusted in order to create optimal hydrological conditions for meadow birds at Harboøre Tange. Adjustments will be based on monitoring results.



*The automatic sluice gate at Harboøre Tange*

Daily operations and funding of actions at Harboøre Tange will be provided by The Danish Coastal Agency and The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

### **Nyord (site 89)**

The grazing society established as part of the REMAB-project will ensure a proper grazing of the meadows at Nyord.

An automatically operated iron gate is established on the bridge between the islands Nyord and Møn as part of the REMAB-project. The gate will prevent foxes entering Nyord from Møn via the bridge. The impact of the gate in terms of reduced number of foxes on Nyord is being monitored, and the effect of the gate will be evaluated in 2012.

Daily management of the meadows at Nyord will be provided by The Danish Bird Protection Foundation, private landowners and The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Maintenance of the gate and the monitoring of the fox population at Nyord will be provided by The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.





*The "fox blocking" gate at Nyord*

### **Vestamager (site 111)**

The Danish Forest and Nature Agency will carry out all management operations at Vestamager.

The Danish Forest and Nature Agency will ensure that areas restored as meadows through the REMAB-project will remain cleared and suitable for meadow birds.

Predation control and maintenance of footpaths and bird observation platform established as part of the REMAB-project will also be provided by The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.



*The foot path and the bird observation platform at Vestamager*

