

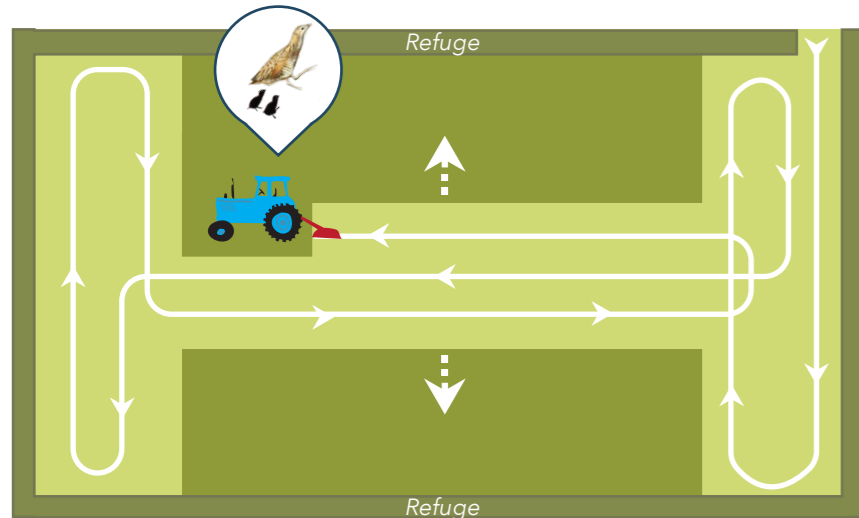
Wildlife-friendly mowing (WFM)

WFM has two key components:

1. Maintaining a low mowing speed (between 5-7km/hr), allowing adult birds and chicks to escape from the front of the mower.
2. Carrying out mowing in such a way that birds are pushed to the edges of the field.



Under no circumstance is it allowable to cut any rounds around the outside of the field before starting centre-out mowing, as this defeats the purpose of providing birds with continuous cover.



1. Cut a small area for turning at either end of the field.
 2. Mow down the centre of the field.
 3. Continue to mow from the centre outward.
- Must maintain low mowing speed (5-7km/hr)

Refuge areas

Leaving a 5m strip (two widths of the mower) along the side of the fields creates an important area for corncrakes to hide safely.

It also creates a wildlife corridor for a wide range of other creatures.

Refuge areas should be left uncut for a period of 2 weeks to a month.

Flushing bar

Mowing fields 'wildlife friendly' from the centre-out can also be enhanced through the use of a flushing bar fitted to the front of the tractor.

This bar scares wildlife out of the way of the on-coming mower.



How to create early cover for corncrakes (ELC)



The ELC area...

- ... must be within or connected to a meadow or pasture which will be managed later in the summer i.e. after August 15th.
- ... should be located away from trees or scrub.
- ... should be sheltered from prevailing winds as much as is possible i.e. in the lie of a stone wall, ditch or bank or even near an older farm building.
- ... should be cultivated prior to seed sowing to reduce the grass cover.

HOW TO PLANT THE TWO KEY TYPES OF EARLY CORNCRAKE COVER:

Natural herbaceous plants

1. Prepare the ground by ploughing or harrowing to remove grass.
2. Place nettle rhizomes on the prepared ground.
3. Cover with a layer of farmyard manure, old rotten bales or suitable compost to a depth of at least 10cm (6 inches).

Seeds such as Common Hogweed, Cow Parsley or even nettle seeds can be added on top of the manure/bales/compost.

Best early cover! Requires the least long-term input.



Crops* *Including Reed Canary Grass

1. Shallow plough fresh ground.
2. Power harrow and prepare a fine seed bed. Seed bed prep is 90% of success.
3. Sow crop seeds as directly as possible. Where a spreader is used the seeds must be covered by a light harrowing and then rolled to ensure a good strike rate. Exposed seeds will not stike.

Do not use herbicides as this will kill beneficial plant species.

If fertilizer is being applied this should be done 3 weeks post sowing and only where advised.



Harvesting nettle rhizomes

1. Cut down last year's established nettle stalks.
2. Dig out a manageable sized sod using gardening fork or spade.
3. Turn the sod over to expose the nettle rhizomes. The mature rhizomes are yellow and generally quite shallow. Smaller pink rhizomes are new growth.
4. Shake off any excess soil from rhizomes.
5. Bring nettle rhizomes to your yard and wash well with hose to remove any invertebrates and/or unwanted plants or seeds.

FARMING with CORNCRAKES

A guide to habitat management



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FARMING *with* CORNCRAKES

An illustration of an idealised farmland that allows farming practices & corncrakes (*and other wildlife!*) to live together in harmony.

Just a few small adjustments to your farming practices can greatly increase the survival rate of these endangered, iconic birds. In fact, without farming practices the land will grow inhospitable for the corncrake to breed on.

The corncrake need you!

Planting some crops and allowing natural areas to develop can make a huge difference.



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OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEP

Early cover creation
October to mid-April: Now is the time to start creating new early cover areas when corncrakes are not present on their breeding grounds.

Corncrake breeding
Mid-April to mid-September: Corncrakes are nesting, and are most vulnerable to loss of habitat and risks associated with grass harvesting.

