



Corncrake
Traonach LIFE



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta
agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service

Corncrake/Traonach LIFE

LIFE18 NAT/IE/000090 LIFE Atlantic Crex

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Project overview

Corncrakes (*Crex crex*) are an Annex 1 farmland bird species which have undergone catastrophic decline in western Europe

Corncrake LIFE has contributed to a 35% increase in the population in Ireland since 2020

Major factor was the development and implementation of a pilot **Results-Based agricultural Payment Scheme (RBaPS)**

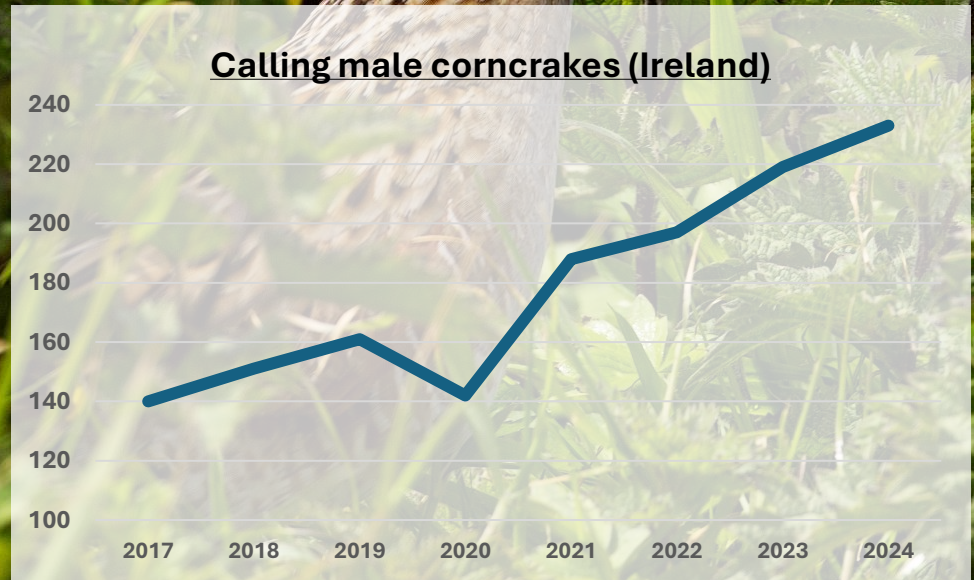
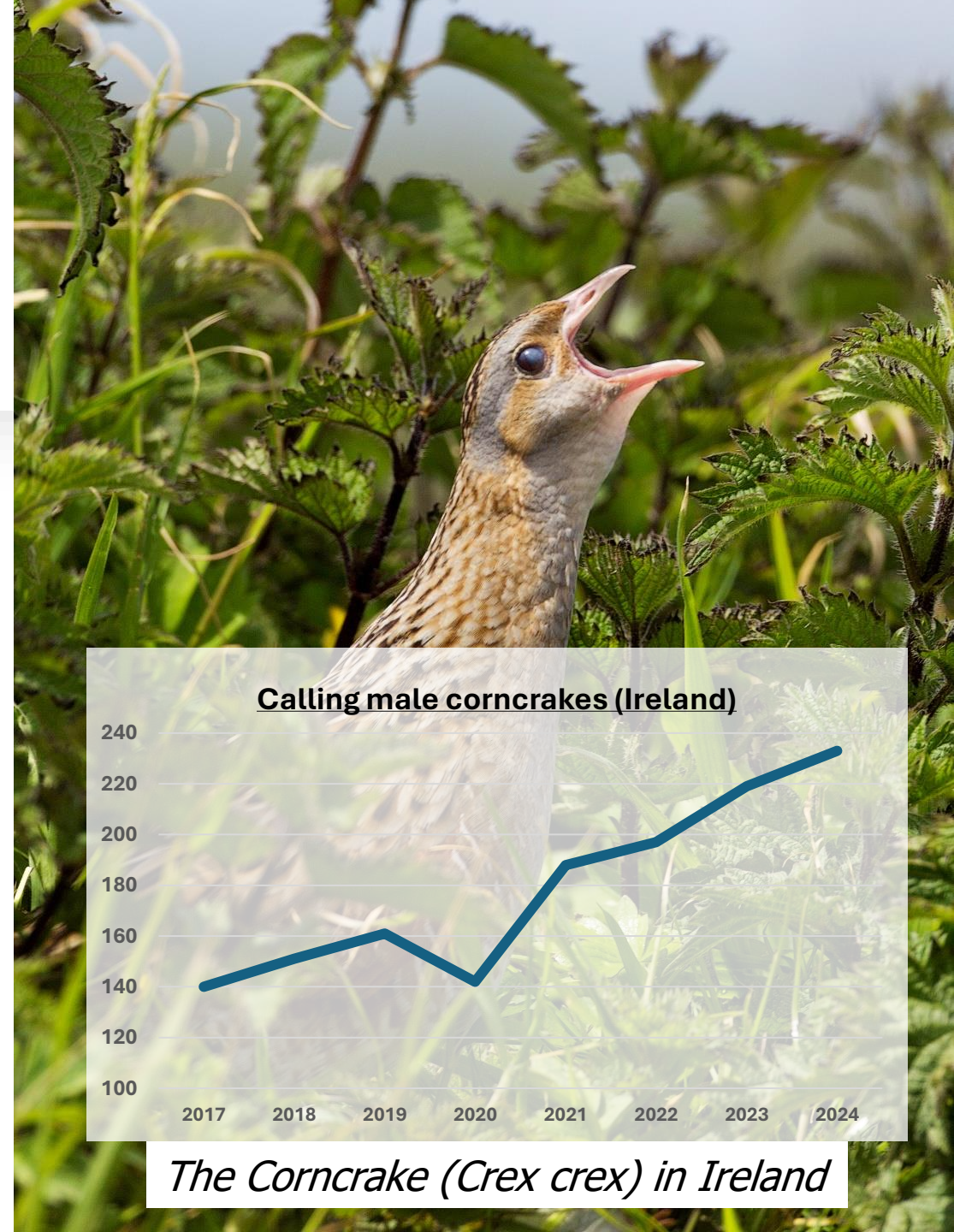


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*The Corncrake (*Crex crex*) in Ireland*

Selecting Meaningful Indicators

- Scorecards designed to reward for ideal habitat
- Actions supported to reduce risk to the birds
- Whole farm plan assessment applied to ensure compliance and implementation



The three keys to corncrake conservation:

Early

Early season cover in the form of patches of wildflowers or crops

Middle

Middle-out mowing to give the birds a chance to escape

Late

Leaving meadow management as late in the season as possible to afford the bird's time to nest



Early and Late cover plot creation (Nettles and Common Hogweed)



Wildlife-Friendly mowing (centre out) using a game flushing bar



Late season mowing/grazing

The scorecard includes sections for:

- Ecological Integrity:** A1 (Species richness), A2 (Cover of all POSITIVE indicators), A3 (Cover of all grasses/sedges), A4 (Cover of all large rushes), A5 (Cover of agriculturally favoured species).
- Agriculturally favoured species:** A list of species like Ragwort, Thistles, and Pteridium.
- Structure & functions:** B1 (Sward density and structure).

Each section has a table with 'Score' and 'Total score' columns, and a 'Total score A:' calculation at the bottom.



Think corncrake- Act landscape

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.

Connectivity

It is important to leave 'connected' strips to give corncrake and other wildlife continuous cover.

Mosaics

Adding crops to farming landscapes helps to create habitat mosaics that can benefit corncrakes and other wildlife.

Nettle & hogweed patch

Early & late cover

Ground nesting birds like the corncrake are quite shy and like to hide among vegetation.

Early & late cover (ELC) provides suitable tall vegetation throughout the breeding season, especially at the beginning and end when grazed or cut vegetation in grass fields is too short for the birds.

Yellow Iris area

Wetland

Wetter areas can be really important for corncrakes and should be retained.

Wildlife friendly mowing

The purpose of Wildlife Friendly Mowing (WFM) is to provide birds with continuous cover as they escape from the mower into a neighbouring field or into a selected refuge zone.

Refuge strips

Refuge strips are areas along the edge of plots which are left un-mowed. Birds & animals can escape to these strips and take refuge when the field is being mowed.

Late season meadows

Leave meadow management as late in the season as possible to afford the bird's time to nest

Oats & kale

Kale

Oats



Outcomes:

- 250 participants across a range of schemes including RBaPS
- Over 1,000 ha of land managed annually
- Our RBaPS measures incorporated into our Ireland's national agri-envi programme (ACRES)
- A 35% growth in corncrake numbers in less than 5 years

RBaPS- top tips

- Results-based in an approach- not a panacea
- A hybrid model is often the key
- Acknowledge the risk- Reward the outcome
- At the end of the day- this is always about people



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