



Forestry England



Supporting Ground Nesting birds in the New Forest - 2021 campaign

Introduction

Later this spring, Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority will launch their annual campaign to support the ground nesting bird season here in the New Forest. Running from 1 March - late July the campaign aims to raise awareness of the critical importance of this habitat to many rare ground nesting birds, and highlight how the public can play their part in supporting them during this time.

Overview

Ground nesting birds such as the lapwing, nightjar and curlew at risk of completely disappearing from the UK as their numbers dwindle due to loss of habitat and disturbance. The New Forest is one of the last places in the UK where these birds can still be found and helping them to breed successfully is now critical to their survival in the UK. This is one of the reasons why the New Forest National Park is a Special Protection Area for birds.

As in previous years, from 1 March special quiet zones will be established around critical breeding locations and a small number of car parks (8) near to these closed. Limiting activity in these small pockets helps reduce the likelihood of birds abandoning nests and exposing chicks. This was clearly seen in the first lockdown when, due to the absence of people, these birds took advantage of normally busy areas such as car parks to nest or feed.

In these areas special signs will be in place highlighting their sensitive nature and giving the public advice on how to avoid disturbing the birds. Orange signs are placed close to the breeding grounds (car parks, on main tracks from these, etc) and red “stop” signs (asking people to choose a different route) will be located in the immediate vicinity of the nesting sites.

Public engagement messages will ask those spending time on the Forest to consider taking a few simple measures to help prevent the disappearance of these birds. During the breeding season from March - the end of July the public will be asked to stick to the main tracks and keep dogs under close control, or where necessary on a lead. If they see a red “stop” sign they will be alerted that they are close to a breeding site and asked to consider another path.

Car park closures

As in previous years, a small number of car parks near to highly sensitive nesting sites will be closed. The locations are chosen based on survey work from the previous breeding season and ongoing analysis of the prime locations for different species of bird.

The car parks affected include those closed in last year’s campaign - Crockford, Crockford Clump, Yewtree Heath, Clayhill and Hinchelsea. Three additional car parks, where birds nested in 2020, have been added to this year’s campaign - Shatterford, Hinchelsea Moor and Ocknell Pond.

Core Message

To raise awareness of the critical importance of this habitat to many rare ground nesting birds. By taking a few simple measures, we can all help protect these rare and threatened wildlife:

- Between 1 March and 31 July, keep yourself (and your dog) to main tracks and keep dogs under close control, or where necessary on a lead.
- Avoid areas where there are red ground nesting bird signs
- Share this information and encourage others to keep to the tracks too.

Further information about the campaign can be found via the links below.

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/time-nest>

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/protecting-nature/ground-nesting-birds>