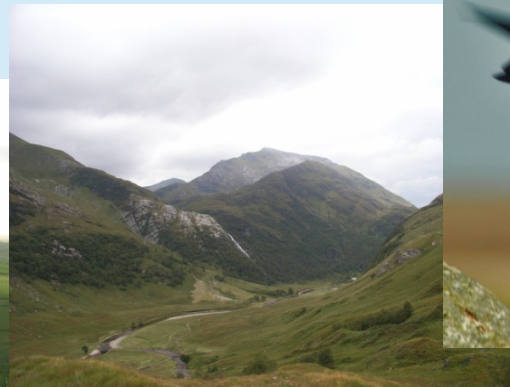
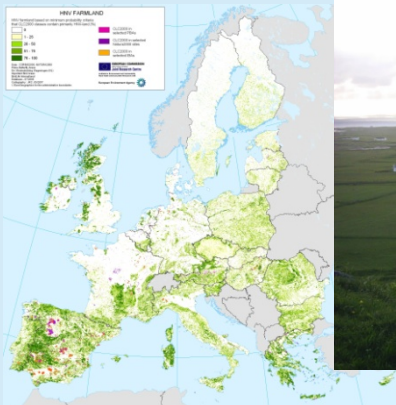


# Farmland biodiversity: where do we go from here?

Davy McCracken

Reader in Agricultural Ecology



*Scotland's changing rural biodiversity:  
policy and action needs*

ECRR conference, Battleby, 13 May 2009

# Farmland Biodiversity

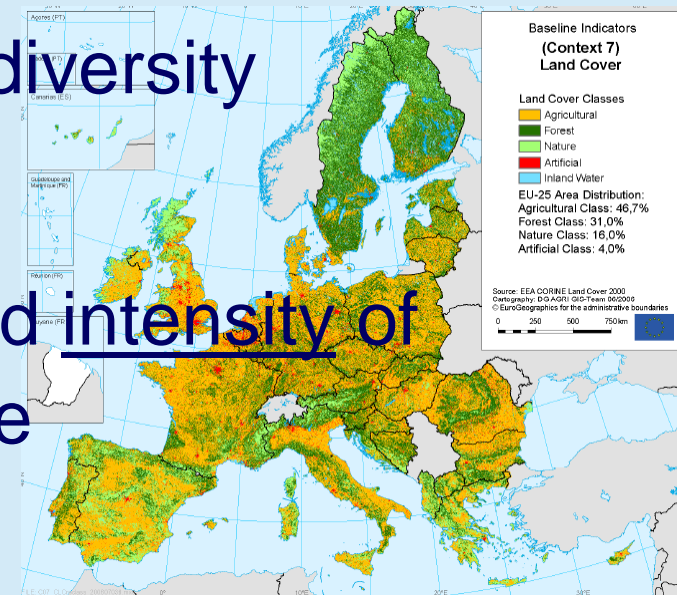


# Why are we interested in farmland biodiversity?

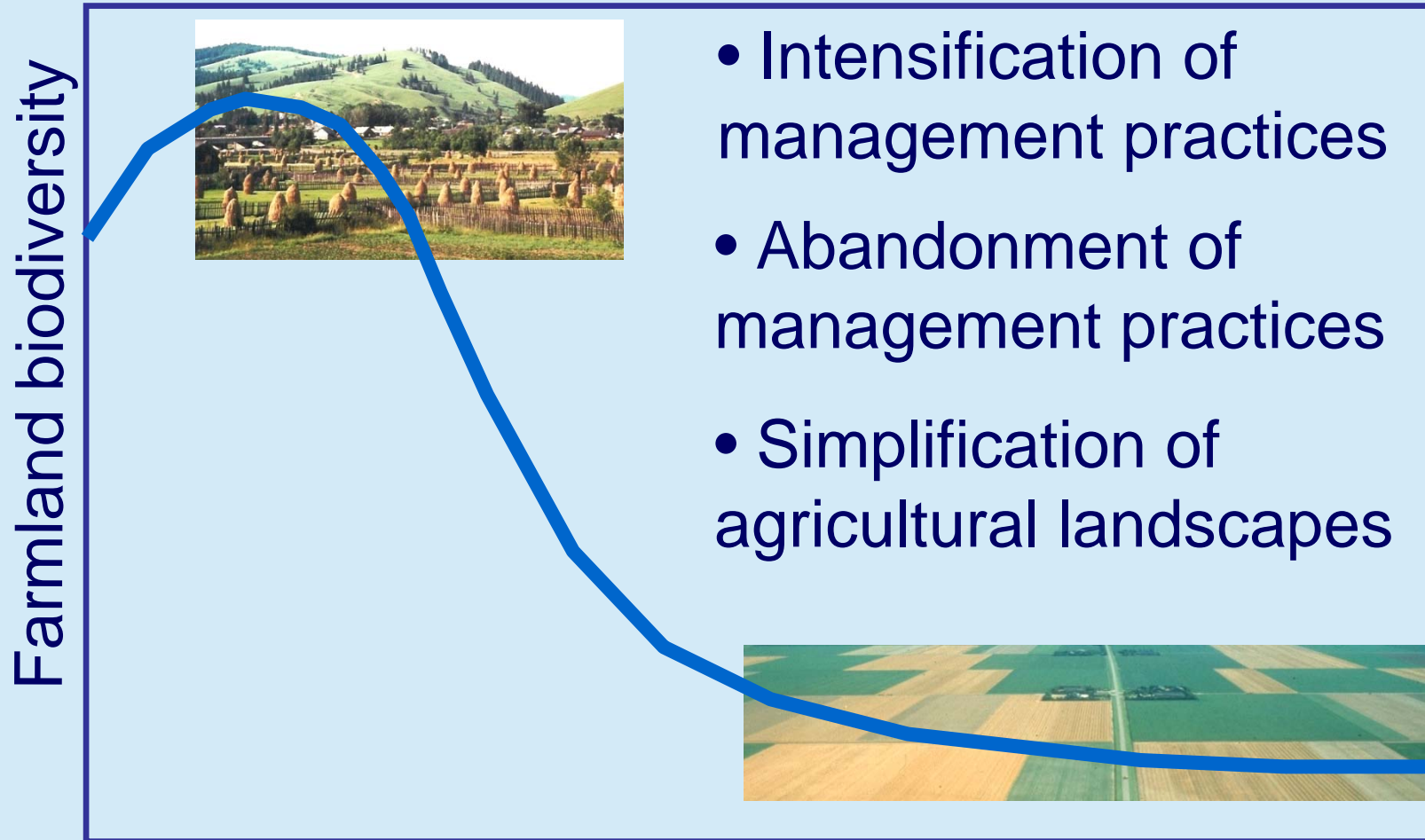
- Over 45% (173 million ha) of EU27
- Recognised that habitats and landscapes of High Nature Value ARE intimately associated with farming practices
- Taking land out of agricultural production is not the answer for farmland biodiversity

RATHER

- it is essential to ensure type and intensity of farm management is appropriate



# Pressures on farmland biodiversity



# Where are we now?

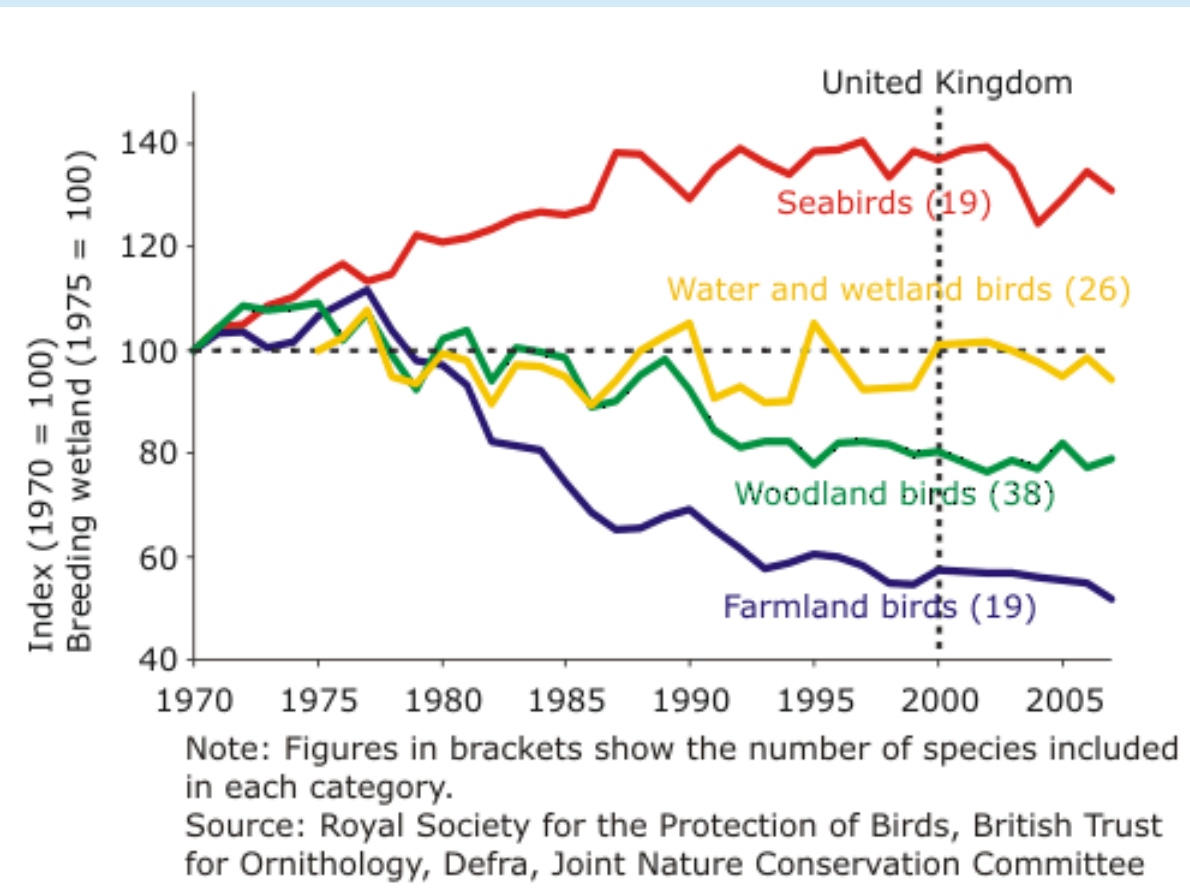
## Scotland: 1994-2007 (BTO)

Stable (but at low levels):

- Linnet
- Skylark
- Starling
- Yellowhammer

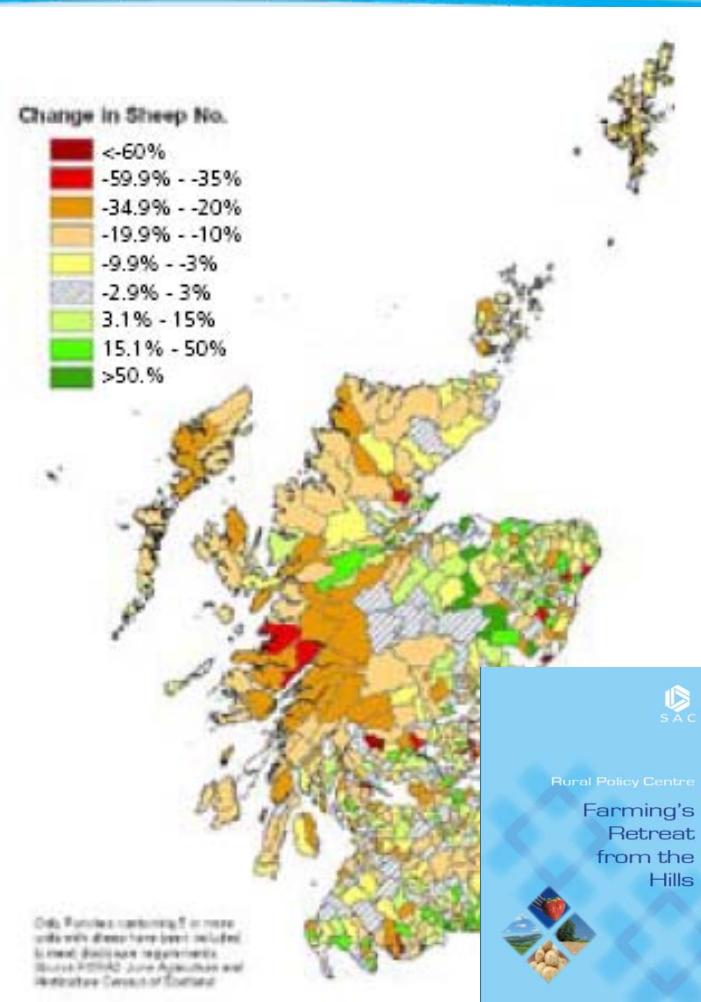
Declined:

- Curlew (-48%)
- Kestrel (-56%)
- Lapwing (-38%)
- Meadow pipit (-23%)




Wild bird population index: 1970-2007

# Where are we now?



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RSS feeds

## The CAP must fit for environment

5 September 2008

Davey Fitch  
Media Officer  
E-mail: [davey.fitch@rspb.org.uk](mailto:davey.fitch@rspb.org.uk)



A better deal is possible for Scotland's environment and the Scottish Government should be fighting for 21st century. A new report published today by the conclusion of the Government's consultation of Policy (CAP), points the way forward for a fairer deal for more farmers as well as the environment cope with countryside.

The current CAP leaves Scotland at the bottom of funding and our farmers receive far lower direct payments than their European counterparts. With the current CAP cost more than £1.5 billion in tax, everyone has an interest in seeing a report, Beyond the CAP – Towards a Sustainable Land Use Policy, which sets out a viable future for the Scottish Government coming back to Scottish farmers and crofters, and custodians for the countryside and biodiversity.

The LINK report calls for payments to be made available to farmers for protecting priority habitats and species, at both the farm and landscape level. This includes preventing habitat fragmentation, securing and maintaining designated nature conservation sites, supporting sustainable rural communities, and sustainable management of vital soil and water resources. Securing the long term future of High Nature Value farmland, and protecting the biodiversity and landscape benefits.


The CAP's huge €40.9bn budget – which began as a means of supporting farmers to produce food – now lacks a clear direction. It is vulnerable to cuts in the current budget; already funds have been diverted to other areas and now is the time for a new Europe-wide policy. Scotland's land managers are particularly in need of a policy that would give the CAP relevance and broad support. This would give the CAP relevance and broad support.

David Mendenhall, Director of RSPB Scotland, said:

## Beyond the CAP

Towards a Sustainable Land Use Policy that works for Scotland



# Where are we heading?



# What more needs to be done?



- Put farmland biodiversity conservation higher up the list of policy priorities

Make existing budget go further:

- Require substantial changes at farm level

e.g. need minimum amount of habitat diversity to qualify for Single Farm Payment?

Pro-actively target agri-environment

Direct additional support to High Nature Value farming



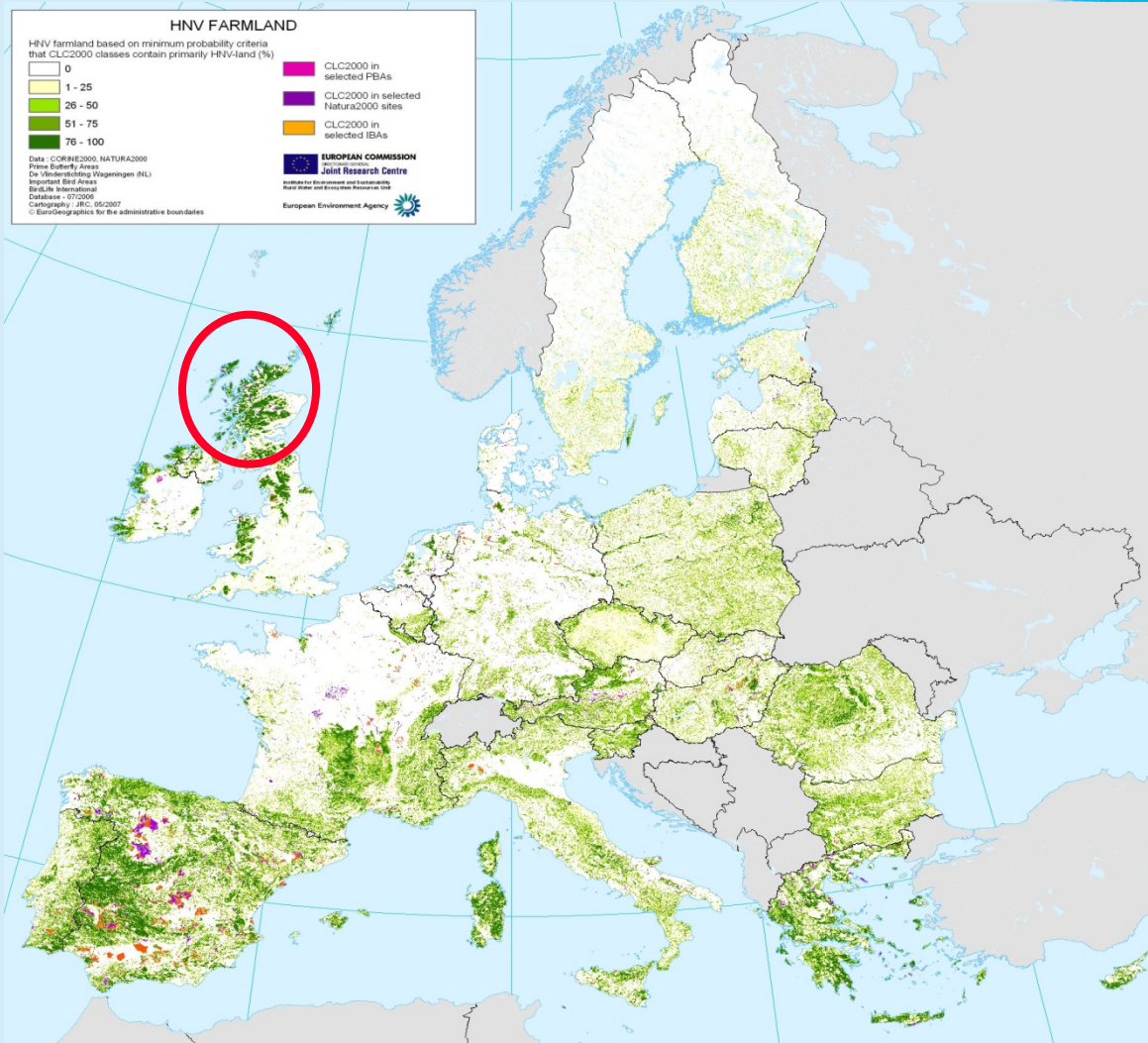
# High Nature Value farming



- The underlying principle to the HNV concept was, and remains, basically:
  - A large proportion (c. 30% of EU farmland) is of particularly high nature conservation value
  - That market pressures are increasingly making these farms economically unviable
  - Intensifying or abandoning farming on these farms would adversely impact the HNV
  - There is therefore a case to direct additional financial support to these farms to help maintain the HNV



# Potential HNV farmland in EU27





# SAC

**S**uccess through **Knowledge**