

Management of Cover for Corncrake

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page.

Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit corncrakes by providing them with suitable habitat to breed successfully by providing early cover for corncrakes returning from their wintering grounds in April and May.

This option also provides late cover at a time when most of the surrounding grassland has been cut or grazed.

Eligibility

Grassland that contains clumps of tall plants such as iris, nettles, meadowsweet, cow parsley, hogweed, reed sweetgrass, common reed and butterbur is eligible.

These clumps of plants must be distributed across the field, and not confined exclusively to field margins or small parts of the field.

Swards matted with dead plant material from previous seasons are not eligible.

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

Assessing your land eligibility

Arable or improved grassland where you propose to create cover for corncrakes is eligible. There is a separate capital item to support this:

- [Creation of Cover for Corncrakes](#)

You must undertake this option immediately adjacent to land entered into the [Corncrake Mown Grassland](#) option, unless you have received prior approval to use an alternative location as part of the application process.

Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Management of Cover for Corncrake \(PDF, Size: 838.7 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Management-of-Cover-of-Corncrakes---Updated-Map---Jan-2022.pdf> This option is available within the target area shown on this map.

You can check if this option is available on your holding using the search targeting tool which can be found on any of the following AECS guidance pages:

[AECS Home](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[How to Apply](#)

[Management Options and Capital Items](#)

[Capital Items](#)

Application requirements

You must identify on a map the locations of the area to be managed.

Management requirements

You must manage the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract.

- where you need to create cover for corncrake, you must do so by 1 June in the first year of your contract
- you must exclude livestock from 1 March until 30 September inclusive
- you must graze the area from 1 October to remove annual growth and prevent the development of rank vegetation
- do not cut the area unless you have prior written approval
- do not spray, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £148.85 per hectare per year.

You can claim for up to one hectare for each individual area managed, subject to a maximum total claim of six hectares annually per contract.

There is a separate capital item to support the creation of cover:

- [Creation of Cover for Corncrakes](#)

Note:

The Stock Fence capital item is not available for this option, however the **temporary electric fencing element** of the Scare and Temporary Electric Fencing capital item is available to new applicants and also to returning applicants proposing to manage new land under this option, where only a part of the field is being managed.

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

You have managed the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract.

- where you have created cover for corncrake, you have done so by 1 June in the first year of your contract
- you have excluded livestock from 1 March until 30 September inclusive
- you have grazed the area from 1 October
- you have not cut the area unless you had prior written approval
- you have not sprayed, unless with prior written notification or approval as appropriate
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this option.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Payment	'Note' added mid February 2022 explaining position on fencing for this option.
Spatial targeting	Updated target area map.

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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