

October 2021

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Environment Agency are working in partnership to deliver temporary wetlands trials on farmland around the Humber.

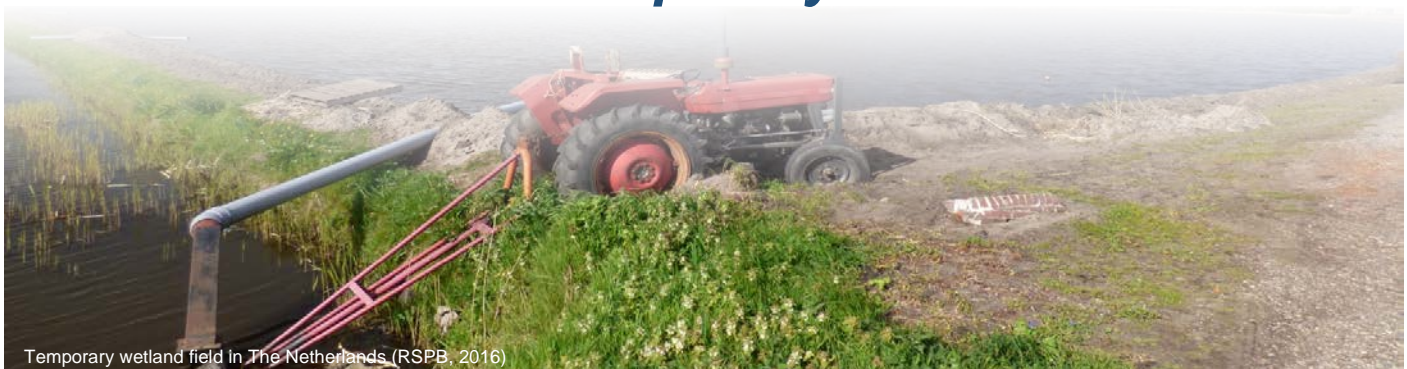
Water for Farmers and Wildlife



The **Water for Farmers and Wildlife** study is exploring opportunities to manage farmland around the Humber in a sustainable way that provides benefits for farmers, wildlife and local communities (through flood risk management).

Rural areas are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. The findings of the Water for Farmers and Wildlife study will support the development of future flood risk adaptation and land management approaches, helping to improve the resilience of communities and ecosystems to flooding and environmental change.

What Are Temporary Wetlands?



Temporary wetlands are large areas of arable land that are flooded to a shallow level for one to four years. Water is pumped onto the land and held within small soil bunds. Once the land is drained again, it can be returned to farming. Temporary wetlands have been tested with success in both the USA and the Netherlands. The technique has been shown to provide financial benefits for farmers and new habitat for migratory birds.

The land around the Humber is amongst the best in the UK for growing crops. The area also supports a large number of breeding and wintering wetland birds. The application of temporary wetlands on the Humber could therefore support profitable and sustainable farming and provide improved connectivity between existing habitats. They also have the potential to reduce the risk of tidal flooding.

Yokefleet Trials



Temporary wetlands are currently being trialled on two sites near **Yokefleet**. The first site has already been flooded in a controlled way by pumping water from the River Ouse, and the second site is due to be flooded very soon. Bunds have been constructed around the trial sites to contain the water within the designated areas.

A team of scientists will be attending the site regularly to collect information about how the temporary wetlands are functioning and how this is impacting the land. The RSPB will be monitoring birds on the sites and so far nine different species have been observed. The trials will run until mid-2022 at which point the field will be returned to arable farmland.

The Wider Project



The Water for Farmers and Wildlife study is a long-standing project that began in 2015. Previous phases of the study have investigated the feasibility of different sustainable land management techniques and explored how temporary wetlands might be applied on land around the Humber, and the potential costs and benefits of doing so.

The current and final phase of the study is trialling temporary wetland techniques to understand the impacts on the land and the wildlife it supports. In addition to the two trials at Yokefleet, four further trials are planned for farmland in the River Idle catchment.

Contact Us:

For further information about the Water for Farmers and Wildlife study, please get in touch with:

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or

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