

Project Update: October 2012

Breeding populations of rare farmland waders in the “Homeland of the Crane” are still stable, as indicated by field survey data. Not less than 100 great snipe on several leks, 50 pairs of Eurasian curlews and about 50 pairs of black-tailed godwits were counted there in 2012. However, 50% of pairs of two latter species bred in a single reserve (1/6th of the total farmland area); 80% of great snipe were counted on unprotected floodplain meadows. 75-97% of pairs of target species inhabited grasslands but simultaneous ploughing occurred in 2010-2012 over vast grassland areas both in the reserve and on meadows. Some rare waders attempted breeding on ploughed fields but failed. We tried fencing nests of Eurasian oystercatchers on arable (<http://www.craneland.ru/?p=3558>) and Eurasian curlews on ploughed hay land. Unfortunately, these nests were destroyed by gulls and corvids, attracted by working machinery. Thus, only conservation of grasslands at key wader breeding sites is required to avert adverse impacts of the current agricultural rehabilitation in the region. Negotiations with land users were initiated, aiming to stop destructive management on parts of their lands. More information on the project is available at the Homeland of the Crane website (in Russian, <http://www.craneland.ru/?p=3775>; <http://www.craneland.ru/?p=3866>; <http://www.craneland.ru/?p=3919>; <http://www.craneland.ru/?p=4285>).

