

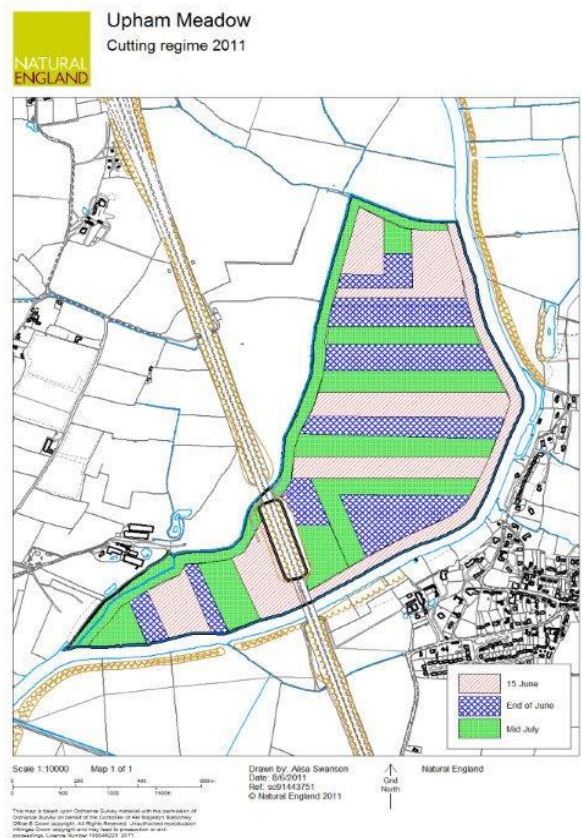


## Case Study 9.3 Staggered cutting times to protect curlew nests at Upham Meadow, Gloucestershire



Upham Meadow is a designated SSSI for populations of breeding waders, including curlew, and over-wintering populations of waders and wildfowl. The site also retains significant botanical interest, including one of the largest populations in Britain of the nationally scarce narrow-leaved water-dropwort, in addition to areas supporting relict floodplain-meadow plant communities. It is a traditional Lammas meadow, managed by a commoners' association.

Historically, this Lammas meadow was always cut in narrow strips and it would have taken several weeks before the whole field was completely cut. More recently, an increasing proportion of the meadow was being cut earlier in June. To manage the negative impacts of more uniform and earlier cutting on breeding curlew, the traditional cutting pattern was enshrined in a new HLS agreement (2009), which now requires commoners to cut a significant portion of the meadow later, on a rotational basis (Figure 9.4). Three cutting times are specified: 15 June, end of June and mid July. Each year the cutting times are rotated, so no strip is cut at the same time for two years running. Curlew surveys are carried out to identify nest sites, and cuts are organised to avoid the se. Since implementation, curlew numbers have remained stable particularly when compared to the wider Severn Vale.



**Figure 9.4** In order to deliver HLS agreement and receive payments, the commoners at Upham Meadow must cut their strips in rotation. © Natural England 1000046223 (2006) with drawn outlines courtesy of Alisa Swanson.

