

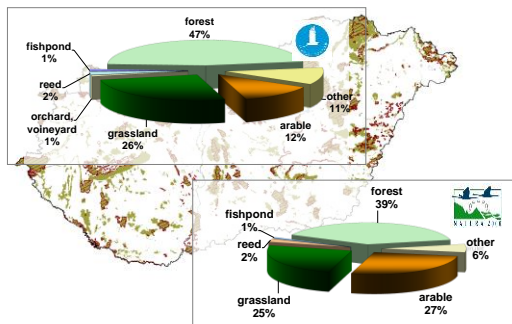
## Mainstreaming nature conservation aims to Common Agricultural Policy

Péter Tóth  
BirdLife Hungary

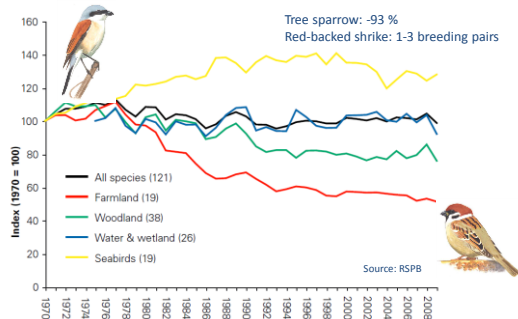
Challenges and bottlenecks of implementation of the EU law  
on nature protection, Budapest, 28/10/2015



### Nature conservation is based on proper land management in Hungary



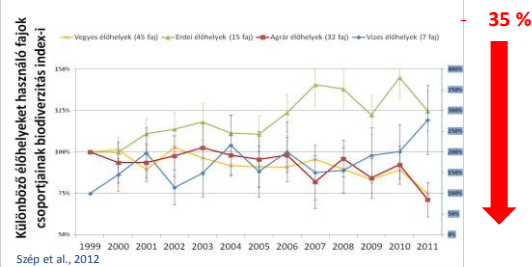
### Loss of agricultural biodiversity in common in the EU *Changes in bird populations in the UK*



Graphics: Sz. Kókay

## Hungarian examples I.

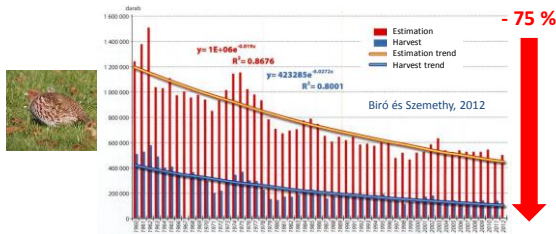
Changes of populations of common birds using different habitat types



- Farmland Bird Index has declined by 35 % in the last decade
- Loss of bird populations represents the overall decrease of farmland biodiversity

## Hungarian examples II.

Changes of population estimation and harvest of brown hare



Brown hare harvest declined by 75 % since 1960s  
Grey partridge population has collapsed

Fotó: <http://info.agt.bme.hu/drupal/node/10892>



## Potential reasons of the decline of agricultural biodiversity

- Intensification:**
  - Increase of input (artificial fertilizer, use of pesticides – more effective chemicals)
  - Technology development (eg. speed of mowing >15 km/h, plastic bales, etc.)
- Decreasing crop diversity:** corn + wheat + sunflower  $\approx 2/3$  of arable lands
- Changes in the agricultural habitats** (decreasing coverage of grasslands, more forest, spread of urbanized areas)
- Climate change**
- Erosion of field margins**
  - Some reasons directly linked to CAP payments: SAPS system forces the cultivation in areas not appropriate for arable



## Changes in grassland coverage and populations of grazing animals



## Possible ways of influencing agricultural management

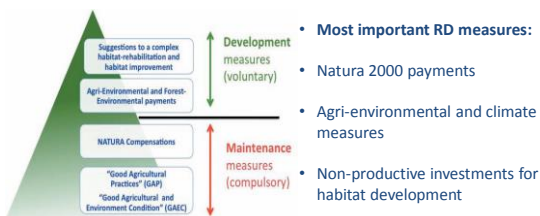
- State ownership of agricultural areas – good examples in protected areas
- Intervention of authorities – not able to motivate farmers
- Payments for the protection of natural values



### Common Agricultural Policy – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

- **Greening:** 30 % of direct payments for greening rules (1307/2013 EC regulation)
  - Maintenance of permanent grasslands
  - Enhancing crop diversity
  - Creation of ecological focus areas
- **Cross-compliance:** creates the links between payments and common standards (bird, habitat, nitrate directives, etc.)

## Use of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development for nature conservation aims in Hungary





## Natura 2000 payments

Name of the Measure	Relevant Article in EC Regulation 1305/2013
Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments	Article 30

„Support under this measure shall be granted annually per hectare of agricultural area or per hectare of forest in order to compensate beneficiaries for additional costs and income foregone resulting from disadvantages in the areas concerned, related to the implementation of Directives 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC and the Water Framework Directive.”

### Legal background:

269/2007. (X. 18.) Governmental Regulation on land use prescriptions of the Natura 2000 grassland areas  
Forthcoming call for proposals for the new period 2016-2020

**For grasslands: 69 euro/hectare/year** (normative, non-refundable, compensatory payment)

## Natura 2000 payments - main prescriptions

- Grazing animals: cattle, sheep, goat, donkey, horse and buffalo
- Grasslands must not be overgrazed
- The surface of the grassland must not be injured
- Nutrient supply for the grassland only through manure of grazing animals
- 5% - 10 % of the area has to be left unharvested by every mowing
- Drainage of inland waters, and irrigation of grassland is prohibited
- Mechanical mowing is prohibited at night
- Winter grazing has to be permitted by the authority
- Bird friendly mowing is compulsory
- Settling and further spread of invasive plant species have to be prevented
- The date of mowing should be reported to national park directorate at least 5 days in advance.
- Storage of fodder plants on grassland is prohibited

**Successful uptake, moderate results, approved by farmers**



## Agri-environment payments

Name of the Measure	Relevant Article in EC Regulation 1305/2013
Agri-environment-climate	Article 28.

„Agri-environment-climate payments shall be granted to farmers, groups of farmers or groups of farmers and other land-managers who undertake, on a **voluntary basis**, to carry out operations consisting of one or more agri-environment-climate commitments on agricultural land to be defined by Member States, ...”

### •Voluntary, area based payments

•5 year commitments, 2004, 2009, 2016

### •Horizontal measures:

- in each land parcel of Utilized Agricultural Area in Hungary
- flexibility in terms of prescriptions chosen by farmers

•Zonal measures – in designated areas (ESA = HNVA program – 8 schemes)



## Agri-environment payments

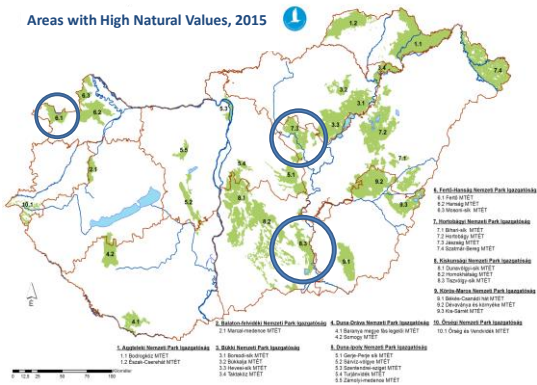
Cultivation type	Schemes	Payment (EUR/ha/year)
Arable	Horizontal arable	270
	HNVA great bustard protection arable	439
	HNVA red footed falcon protection arable	395
	HNVA bird protection in plains arable	407
	HNVA bird protection in hills arable	323
	Erosion prevention arable	292
	Inland water preservation arable	272
Grassland	Drought vulnerable arable	272
	Horizontal grassland	164
	HNVA great bustard protection grassland	295
	HNVA bird protection in plains grassland	183
	HNVA bird protection in hills grassland	201
	HNVA butterfly protection grassland	183
	Inland water preservation grassland	244
Plantation	Horizontal plantation	
	apples	958
	others	723
Reed	grapes	696
	Horizontal reed	50

Eligible area:  
cca. 1 M hectares

Contracted:  
210.000 ha



## Areas with High Natural Values, 2015



## Agri-environment payments

### Characteristic prescriptions in HNVA-s Arable lands

- Crop structures
  - Habitat (lucerne, cereals)
  - Winter forage (winter rape, corn)
  - Maintenance of fallow lands
- Limited pesticide use
  - rodenticides, insecticides
  - Chemical-free field margins (3-6 m)
- Buffer zones around nests (1 ha)
- Mosaic-like management methods
- Obligatory communication with national park directorates (nest, harvesting)



## Agri-environment payments

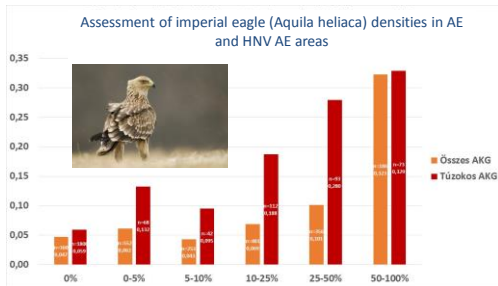
### Characteristic prescriptions in HNVA-s Grasslands

- Late mowing (15th June-31st July)
- No overgrazing
- No pesticide use
- Bird friendly harvesting methods
  - Game-detering chains
  - No spiral mowing
- Buffer zones around nests
- No water drainage
- Obligatory communication with national park directorates (nest, harvesting)



## Results of the AE monitoring surveys

### Target species



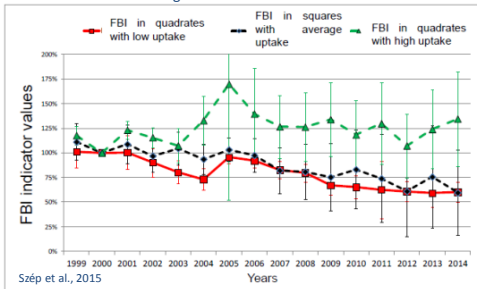
Special HNVA measures may have higher impact on eagle densities

Photo: Bence Máté – BirdLife Archive

Horváth et al., 2015

## Results of the AE monitoring surveys

### Changes in the Farmland Bird Index



Decline of farmland biodiversity seems to be slower on AE contracted areas

## Non-productive investments

Name of the Measure	Relevant Article in EC Regulation 1305/2013
Investments in physical assets	Article 17.

„Support under this measure shall cover non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives, including biodiversity conservation status of species and habitat as well as enhancing the public amenity value of a Natura 2000 area or other high nature value systems ....“

### Supported activities in HU between 2016-2020:

1. Grassland plantation
2. Creation of long term green fallow
3. Creation of pollinator margins
4. Creation of hedgerows

Close links to AE measures

Attempt to rebuild the missing elements of the agricultural ecological network




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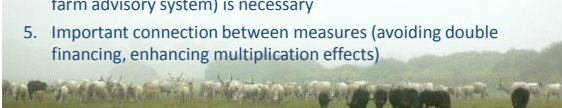
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## Using RD measures for nature conservation –

### Lessons learned

1. Financing of prescriptions of Natura 2000 management plans was not feasible (administrative gaps, slow management planning procedure)
2. Common N2000 prescriptions not able to handle regional differences
3. Contradictory prescriptions (ban on overgrazing vs. bird species nesting on ground surface)
4. Importance of information flow – involvement of different levels of payment structures (implementing authority, paying agency, farm advisory system) is necessary
5. Important connection between measures (avoiding double financing, enhancing multiplication effects)




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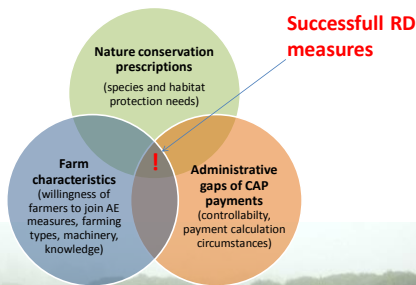
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## Using RD measures for nature conservation –

### Lessons learned




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