

# 70,000 hectares of new nature needed

**Drastic measures are needed to preserve species and key habitats. Among other things, new nature areas need to be created. WUR researchers and bird organization Sovon came up with an estimate per province for the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.**

Nearly 70,000 hectares of new nature is needed in total. A small proportion (10,000 hectares) should be forest. In addition, 700,000 hectares of farmland, a third of the total area, needs to be managed differently. According to Nina Smits (Vegetation, Forest and Landscape Ecology), that mainly means protecting populations of peewits, godwits and other field birds.

**It is mainly about protecting field birds**

The calculations involved looking at how many birds are needed to maintain a stable population and how much space

they require. The new nature should preferably connect to existing nature areas. Smits: 'It is only logical to have new areas in the places that are most promising. In addition, existing nature areas can be transformed into desirable habitats for certain species.'

The calculations play a role in the elaboration of the plans the provinces need to make to achieve the targets for nature, water and the climate.

Those targets were agreed in the National Rural Areas Programme. One aspect is tackling the nitrogen issue. RK