

Curlew Action



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Photo: Dirk Perry

Curlew Action is a small charity that largely depends on individual donations. We need your support to continue our unique work for Curlews and the wildlife that shares their habitats.

By donating to us, you are helping us act quickly and efficiently, supporting the conservation of these beautiful, endangered birds.



EMAIL: admin@curlewaction.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: [@CurlewAction](https://www.instagram.com/CurlewAction)

WEBSITE: [curlewaction.org](https://www.curlewaction.org)

DONATE TO SUPPORT CURLEW ACTION

Mary's Ten Year Message



Photo: Richard Bunce

It's hard to believe it has been a decade since my 500 miles for Curlews. I remember the uncertainty of those first steps in Ireland, but what is certain is that I had no idea we would be where we are today. The walk brought me into contact with so many people who cared, from farmers and conservationists to artists, scientists, and an unnerving deep dive into the complexities of the uplands.

It showed me that while Curlews are in trouble, there are a lot of people who care about them. There may be very different roads to preserving them, but we all want the same thing, everyone wants Curlews to be a part of British Natural History in the future.

The challenges remain, although great progress has and still is being made in many areas. The community of people who care has grown to be stronger, more connected and more determined. The 500 miles were the start, the journey is still unfolding, but I feel hopeful because there is so much energy and commitment behind them.

World Curlew Summary

World Curlew Day has become a truly global moment of connection with these beautiful birds, with activities spanning from America to Australia, Norway to Libya. It gives everyone a way to focus on them and to take part, and that matters, because while not all of us can be fieldworkers, landowners, scientists or policy makers, all of us can raise awareness, support the work, create and feel part of something bigger.

WCD is, of course, about Curlews, but it is also about the wider world they represent, the diverse habitats they depend on and the wildlife that lives alongside them. Curlews are messengers, telling us what is happening to our landscapes. Their call is both beautiful and urgent, and World Curlew Day is our collective response that asks us to listen and then choose to act.

World Curlew Day



Photo: Richard Bunce

World Curlew Day 2026 marked a very special year for all of us here at Curlew Action. Ten years ago, our director, Mary Colwell walked 500 miles from the west coast of Ireland to the east coast of England to discover more about the plight of the Curlew.

This led to the book, Curlew Moon, the formation of Curlew Action and the start of the annual celebration of Curlews. This year was the biggest celebration yet with events taking place all over the world. We were overwhelmed with the global support and want to thank everyone for your participation.

We raised a whopping £1,798.57 in the week of World Curlew Day. This came from your donations, fundraising efforts and the many artists who support Curlew Action who donated a percentage of their sales to us. Thank you to everyone.

We love to see how you have been celebrating and one of our favourites was this incredible display from Yorkshire. Carol Grogan came up with the great idea of using the telephone box to highlight World Curlew Day and to raise money for Curlew Action. Happily, the villagers got straight on board.

Local artists created cards, prints & sculptures, some made jam and others provided all sorts of crafty stuff to be sold with all the money going straight to Curlew Action. Thanks Carol and everyone in the village of Wooldale.



World Curlew Day Walk

On 18th April, we started the Curlew celebrations early with an outdoor adventure. With the help of our friends at Walkers Are Welcome, we headed out onto Marsden Moor for an explore and the hope of seeing some Curlews.

We started at Marsden station and did a 6.5 mile loop, and we were fortunate to see and hear breeding Curlew on the Moors! We had 40 people joining us of all ages and we all had a fantastic time.

Special thanks to our guides at Walkers Are Welcome for creating such a special day! [You can check out the highlights here.](#)



Photo: Richard Bunce

Slaithwaite Music Night - 18th April

On Saturday 18th April, we had an amazing treat to celebrate World Curlew Day. We had the joy of collaborating with our friends at Red Deer Club and HebTroCo to bring a night of folk music and conversation to Slaithwaite Civic Hall.

The evening started with pie and peas provided by the Civic Hall (thanks to Andy and team), before an opening extravaganza from the Hebden Bridge Hill Millies with a lively display of Morris Dancing.

We then heard music performances from folk artists, Wychbury, Henry Parker, Johnny Campbell and Frankie Archer.

After a short break to grab a drink from the Zapato bar, we settled down for the evening headliner. We were lucky enough to be joined by author and comedian, Robin Ince, who delivered some beautiful poetry before interviewing our patron and Curlew lover, David Gray about his love for the natural world. David interspersed their conversation with music both old and new.

It was a spectacular evening of music, words and nature and with the help of the audience, we raised funds for Curlew Action on our merch stand which was managed by Flo and Charlie.

Thank you to everyone who helped with organisation, bought a ticket, performed, took photos and videos and made the night a special one to remember.

Big thank you to Verity White and Dom Colwell-Hector for filming the walk and the musical evening. [You can watch the highlights here.](#)



Photos: Richard Bunce



Events Recap

It has been an exceptionally busy few weeks, with World Curlew Day, the launch of the UK Curlew Action Plan, parliamentary engagement, competitions, talks, and now the field visits begin.

Our parliamentary work has taken some important steps forward. On 25 March, a briefing for parliamentarians brought together farmers and conservationists for constructive, grounded conversations. David Gray spoke powerfully about the role of the arts in engaging people alongside science and fieldwork. Then on 22 April, Mary met with Mary Creagh, the Minister for Biodiversity, alongside Geoff Hilton (WWT) and Defra colleagues. Minister Creagh will be visiting RSPB Otmoor, Oxfordshire, in May to see breeding birds for herself; an encouraging development.

World Curlew Day on April 21st saw strong support in Parliament. Around 15 MPs and Lords joined us with Cathy the giant Curlew for photographs and discussions. Chris Hinchliff MP tabled an Early Day Motion, supported by 18 MPs, and submitted a Parliamentary Question on support for the Action Plan.

Beyond Westminster, it has been equally full. Mary gave the keynote at the Lost Gardens of Heligan to open their new nature education centre; British Birds published an overview of Curlew conservation in its February edition; and Mary continues to contribute to the UN AEWA communications and education working group, helping strengthen messaging across the African–Eurasian flyway.

The European Fieldworker Workshop in February was a real highlight, with the session on women's experiences in fieldwork now being taken up by major organisations. We also held the first meeting of the UK Curlew Task Force in late April

There have been moments of outreach and storytelling too, including Mary and David Gray on the Get Birding podcast with Sean Bean, an interview with Radio York and a short reflection on peace and taking time to let things be. And now, as the season turns into full-on breeding activity, Flo and Mary are heading out to visit Curlew sites in Germany, Austria and Scotland; do look out for the blogs as the journey continues.



World Curlew Day Competitions

As we do every year, we ran our World Curlew Day art and poetry competitions this April, with the winners revealed on World Curlew Day! Our new design of Curlew socks (look out for them on our shop soon!), along with our brand new Curlew colouring books for children (which will also be available soon) were the prizes – along with winners' entries being shared with our supporters, and endless bragging rights being granted!

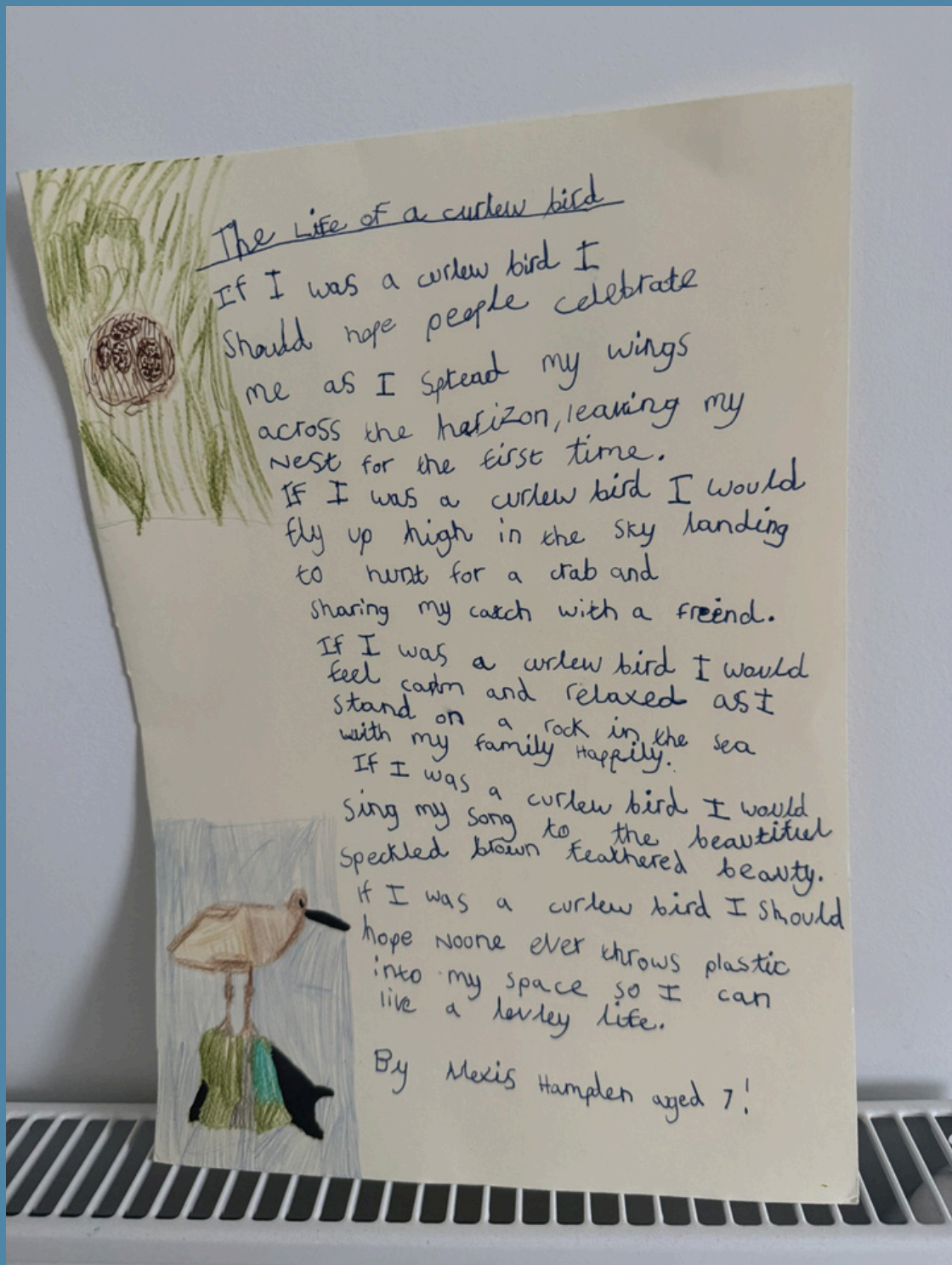
This year, the competition theme was 'celebratory', to mark ten year's since our Director Mary's 500 mile Curlew walk! We are so grateful to get numerous entries which show the love that people of all ages have for Curlews. We are also lucky to have an artist and poet to judge our competitions – it is no easy task and we are glad that it can be left down to the experts!

This year, our over 18s art competition winner was Kevin Harber, with his Curlew sculpture, carved from reclaimed wood, detailed with a pyrography pen and mounted on a driftwood base. We love the use of natural materials in this piece. You can check out more of his work on his Instagram @woodforthesole.

First in our high school category was Daniel Wherry with his wonderful Curlew drawing, and in our primary school age category the winner was Páidí Ó Ruairc, with yet another beautiful Curlew sculpture! Entries were so varied with different types of artistry on show, as evidence by the fact that two sculptures won this year, and of very different materials as well!



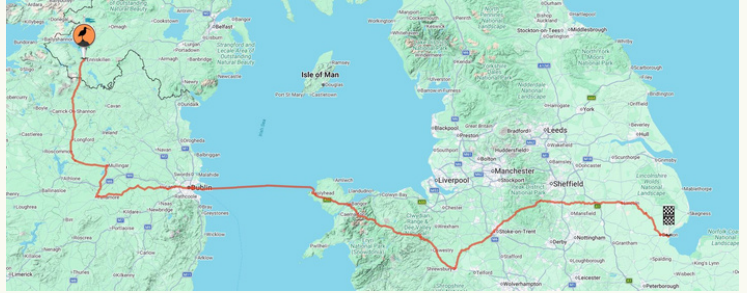
World Curlew Day Competitions Continued



The Curlew 500

Our latest fundraising mission, the Curlew 500, is well underway. Teams from across the world are taking part in our virtual mission, logging their miles until they have completed the 500 mile walk (virtually) that Mary did ten years ago from Ireland to England.

Using the My Virtual Mission app, participants log their miles from swimming, walking, running or cycling, and see their icon move across the map. You can read more and donate to the Curlew 500 Virtual Fundraiser [here](#).



Natural History GCSE Update from Michael Warren

The Department for Education announced in March that fieldwork allocations for the forthcoming GCSE in Natural History have been increased, there are now up to four days across the programme of study. Habitats and ecosystems, and the species they support, are expected to form a core part of the qualification, with a strong emphasis on using local environments as accessible study sites so that all schools can take part, wherever they are based. A public consultation for the qualification is imminent.

A Fundraising Message from Sarah

Hello, hello

I'm Curlew Action's new(ish) Fundraiser. To anyone whose path I have not yet crossed, then I am looking forward to meeting you over time, even if only in written form.

For obvious reasons (World Curlew Day!) it has been a busy few weeks for Curlew Action and its fundraising activities.

Firstly, a very big thank you to everyone who has supported our work with their creativity (artwork, poetry, awareness-raising) activity (walking, running) and straightforward donation to the cause. You are fantastic and make the work we do possible and so worth it.

Please help us to keep raising these vital funds – lend us your brains and goodwill!

Can you organise a bake-sale? Knit? Organise a sponsored activity with friends and family?

A monthly gift helps us to plan but one-off gifts are also most welcome.

Upper Thames Fieldwork update

By Anne Cotton, trustee of Curlew Action and Catchment Lead for the Thames

Our season started bang on time on the Thames with the first nest being found, appropriately, on 21st April, World Curlew Day! For the last 5 years, our first nest has been found between the 20th and 22nd April every single year! This was in contrast to our project partners on Otmoor who found their first nest a week earlier than usual this year (on 7th April). What caused the difference I wonder?

Once the first nest was found, others quickly followed and it has been a busy 10 days of nest fencing on the Thames. We have managed to find and fence 6 so far and are not expecting too many more now. There were at least three other locations where we believe there were nesting attempts, but they seem to have failed – presumably predated – before we could find them. Our project partners in the Cherwell and South Warwickshire area have also done very well, finding and fencing 5 nests.

Usually on the Thames we find and fence nests at the 2, 3 or 4 egg stage. But this year for the first time we found a nest at the 1 egg stage. We were slightly apprehensive about fencing it so early, in case it caused them to abandon, and we weren't sure whether anyone else had fenced at the 1-egg stage before. But we took the risk, and thankfully it paid off – the birds have continued to lay the rest of the clutch safely inside the fence.

We have all learnt more, as always, from many hours of patient field work observing the curlew. On the Cherwell a pair was observed using 3 fields and it wasn't clear which one they were going to nest in. They appeared to have chosen one and were showing signs of being about to lay, but after persistent bothering by a red kite all morning, they suddenly moved to one with a longer sward and laid their first egg there in the afternoon.

Just when you thought I wasn't going to mention it... the weather has been interesting again this year! The wettest January on record meant that a lot of sites were still under water and inaccessible to curlews or our surveyors until mid March! That was followed by an exceptionally dry April where we have had almost no rain at all. It has made fieldwork very pleasant, but it must be making it harder for the curlew to find wet sites to feed which is worrying.

We are now keeping our fingers crossed for a safe and successful incubation period and lots of chicks to come in a few weeks' time.



Merchandise Spotlight

Do you want to look extra stylish this Spring whilst supporting conservation and showcasing your love for Curlews?

Head over to our merch shop now where you will find everything from hoodies to hats! Get in touch if you are an artist who would like to collaborate on any new Curlew merch!



Easyfundraising

We have joined easyfundraising so now your online purchases can make a difference to Curlews. Over 8000 retailers are signed up to be a part of this amazing initiative and all you have to do is sign up for FREE and choose Curlew Action as your cause. Then, for every purchase you make online, the retailers will donate a percentage directly to us! To find out more and sign up, [visit the website](#).



Opportunities

Land of the Curlew Project Manager & Officer

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust is advertising for three full time Curlew conservation roles in Mid Wales – closing date for both: Friday 8th May.

Project Manager role:

‘We are seeking an experienced Project Manager to lead the Gwlad y Gylfinir project over three years. As an ambassador for Welsh Curlew, you will drive the project forward by engaging with farmers and rural communities, fostering community stewardship, and linking with wider initiatives such as Gylfinir Cymru. Your role will be central to delivering the Project Plan objectives, promoting long-term sustainability, and supporting the conservation of curlew populations across Wales.’

Project Officer role (2 vacancies):

‘We are seeking an enthusiastic and committed Project Officer to join the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) Cymru / Wales team. The successful candidate will work closely with landowners, farmers, local communities, and partner organisations to deliver practical conservation actions designed to improve breeding success and chick productivity, ensuring viable populations of curlew remain part of the Welsh landscape. Responsibilities will include coordinating and implementing habitat management interventions outlined in the Wales Action Plan for the Recovery of Curlew (2021), leading monitoring and data collection efforts, and engaging stakeholders to raise awareness and encourage participation in curlew conservation.’ Find out more about the manager role [here](#) and officer role [here](#).

If you have a Curlew-related job vacancy or volunteer opportunity that you would like be featured in this newsletter or on our social media, please e-mail admin@curlewaction.org with the details.

REQUEST FOR FOOTAGE

We are trying to build up our bank of Curlew videos and photographs that we can use across social media, advertisement and at events.

If you are a keen Curlew fan and have any images or videos you'd like to share with us and you're happy for us to use with credit, then please email them in.

You don't have to be an award winning photographer or filmmaker, we think sometimes the best footage and images are those captured in the moment of excitement!

Email admin@curlewaction.org

Curlew Moment of the Month

Our Curlew moment of the month comes from Dirk Perry who captured this beautiful moment. We just love the way the water moves in this image.

If you have a Curlew moment you would like to submit for our newsletter, email admin@curlewaction.org.



Photo by Julie Smith

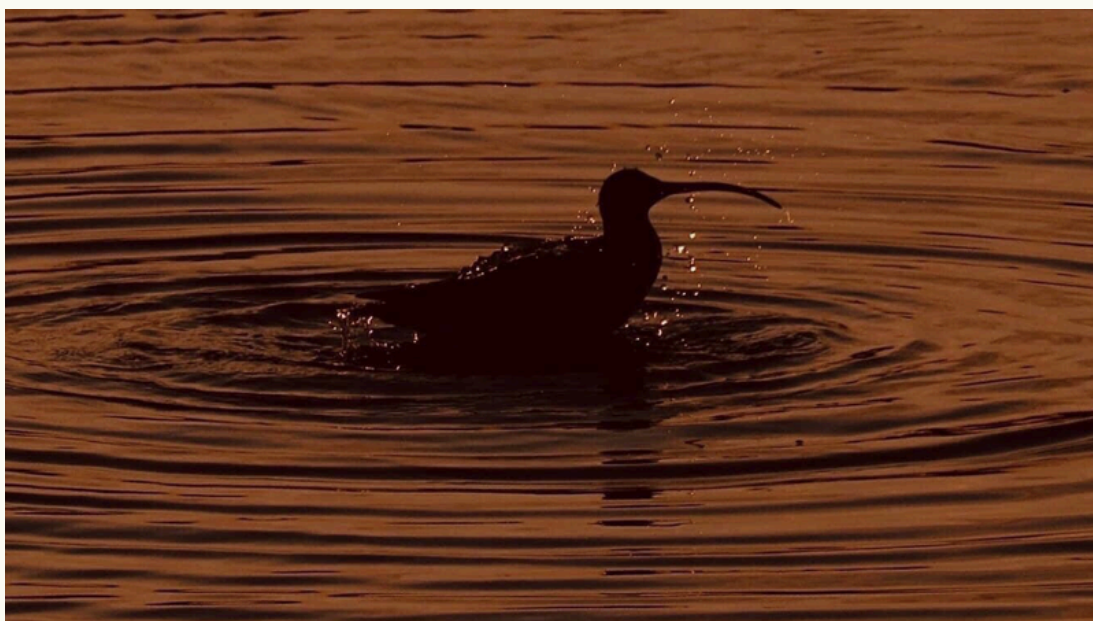


Photo by Dirk Perry