

Curlew Action



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Photo: Bud Trainer

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

WEBSITE: curlewaction.org

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A Summer Message from Mary



It has been a mixed summer for Curlews, not least because of the weather. The prolonged heat and dry conditions raise questions about whether this is increasingly the new normal, or whether this year has been particularly influenced by natural climatic cycles such as El Niño. Either way, it will be very interesting to hear reports from across the UK and Europe in our forthcoming round-up webinars and to begin to understand how the conditions have affected breeding birds.

I am already hearing worrying reports from France, quite apart from the devastating wildfires. Hot, dry weather can rapidly dry out the ground and can also affect insect abundance, while extreme temperatures themselves can put chicks under considerable stress. As ever, we need information from people on the ground to build up the bigger picture.

Summer is also festival season, and Curlew Action has been out and about. We were delighted to be at both Global Birdfair and Groundswell Agriculture Festival, two of our favourite events and wonderful opportunities to meet old friends, make new ones and talk Curlews with people from across conservation, farming and the wider countryside. If we met you at either, it was great to see you.

We are now turning our attention to a busy autumn. We are planning the next Curlew Forum, which will take place at Slimbridge in November and will bring together people working on lowland Curlew projects to share their experiences, ideas, successes and problems. These opportunities to learn directly from one another are enormously valuable.

Our regular webinar series continues too, so please keep an eye on our website and newsletter for details. We have also begun planning the 2027 European Curlew Fieldworker Workshop, which will focus on one of the most difficult and important subjects in Curlew conservation: predation management.

I have had articles published this summer in both British Wildlife and British Birds, and this autumn I will be taking the Curlew message further afield, speaking at the All-German Wader Conference in Germany and at an AEWA meeting in Finland focusing on Curlew and Black-tailed Godwit.

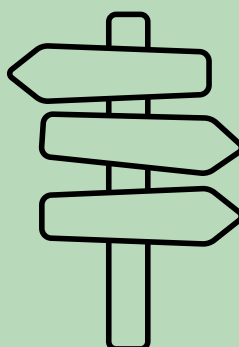
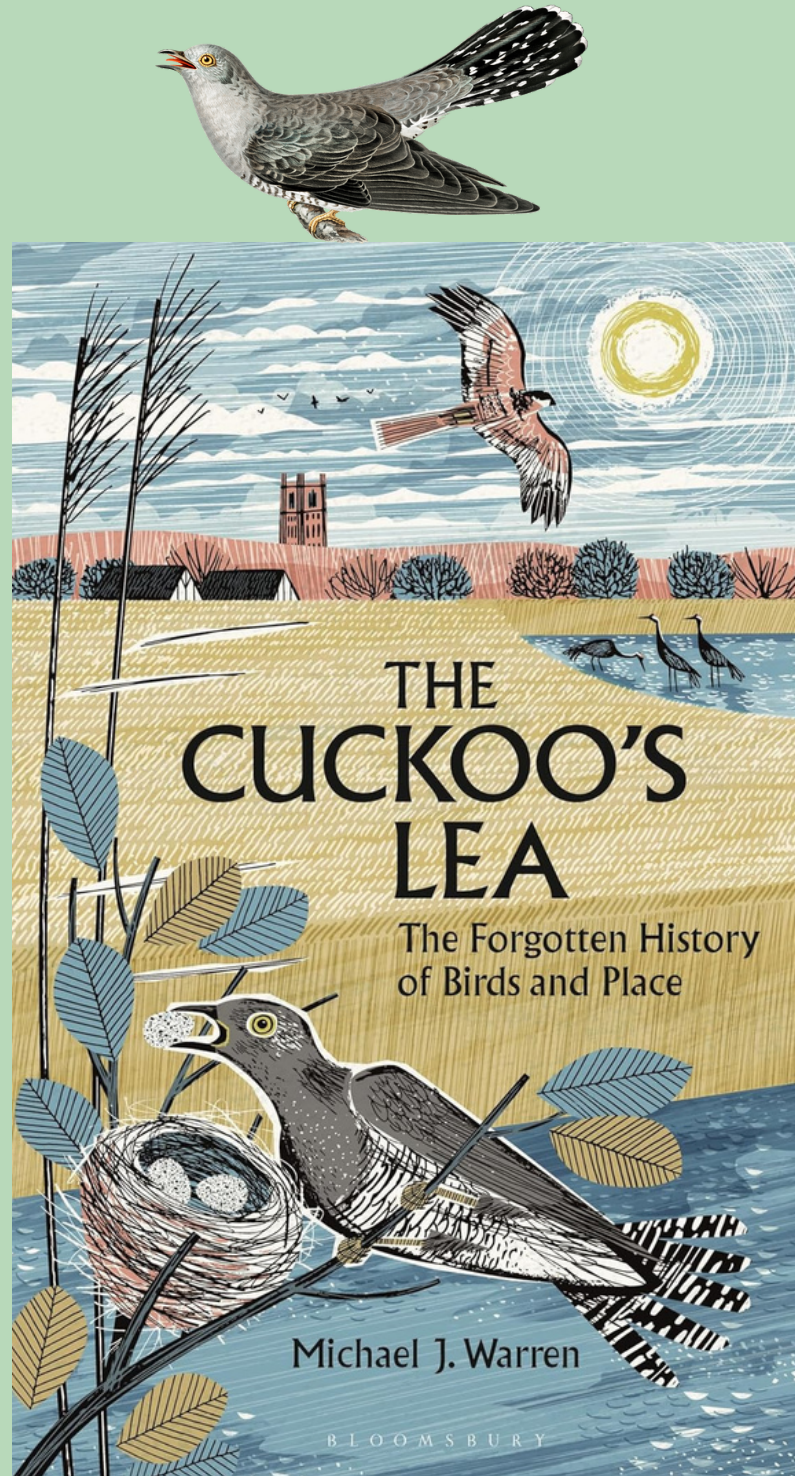
There is, as always, a great deal going on. Please keep checking our newsletter, emails, website and social media for details of everything we are doing.

And finally, thank you. Whether we managed to meet you somewhere this summer or not, your continuing support for Curlew Action means a huge amount to us. We are a small charity tackling a very big challenge, and every donation and every bit of fundraising really does help us continue this work. We are enormously grateful. I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer - and thank you for continuing to stand up for Curlews.

The Cuckoo's Lea Shortlisted for Wainwright Prize

A huge congratulations to our trustee, Michael Warren, whose book, *The Cuckoo's Lea*, has been shortlisted for the 2026 Wainwright Prize.

The Cuckoo's Lea is an enthralling exploration of birds and place throughout English history. From Curlew-haunted marshes to goshawk forests, Michael J. Warren seeks out the ghostly traces of birds in the names of towns and villages, and uncovers a fascinating heritage that matters deeply now so many places and species are threatened or already gone.



Natural History GCSE Update

Michael Warren, Trustee & Mary Colwell



The proposed subject content for the forthcoming GCSE in Natural History (incl. the recommendation that students complete at least 20 hours field work) was revealed for public consultation in June (deadline for comments 4th September), giving all with an interest in this qualification, including the general public, an opportunity to share their views: [GCSE natural history proposed subject content - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#).

This is a significant improvement on the first iteration of the subject criteria, and there is much to welcome. But this is also the moment to get it right. One striking omission is the uplands: moorland, upland heath, blanket bog and montane habitats are an important part of the British landscape and support some of our most characteristic and threatened wildlife. They should be explicitly represented alongside lowland, freshwater, coastal and urban habitats.

We would also like to see much greater emphasis on the use of field notebooks or nature journals. The notebook has always been one of the naturalist's essential tools: a place to record what is seen, heard and noticed, to sketch, question, compare and return to observations over time. Encouraging every student to keep a field notebook throughout the course would help turn the proposed 20 hours of fieldwork from a series of visits into the development of a sustained habit of attention.

There will inevitably be a temptation to load the GCSE with other important concerns – climate change, sustainability, farming and wider environmental issues. These have their place, but they should not obscure the distinctive purpose of this qualification. At its heart, this should be a GCSE about studying nature: learning to identify species and habitats, observing closely, recording carefully, understanding relationships and changes, and developing the skills and habits of a naturalist. If it remains faithful to that purpose, it will offer young people something genuinely distinctive that is largely missing from education today.

The Department for Education will then review this feedback and make further relevant changes to the course content.

Exam boards will then develop detailed specifications and assessments. The expectation is that the GCSE will be available from September 2028/9, in line with the rollout of revised GCSE curriculum generally.

Blogs

Have you seen our blog page?

If not, head straight there to have a read of a range of articles by the Curlew Action and guest authors. We are frequently adding new items to the page.

If you have an idea for a blog, please email charlie@curlewaction.org. We would love to hear from you!

[Click here to read the latest blogs.](#)



Fundraising Update from Sarah

Thank you so much for standing with Curlew Action. The first half of 2026 has already brought plenty to celebrate, and your support has helped keep Curlews, conservation and nature education firmly in the spotlight. As a small charity, we are always amazed by what can happen when funders, supporters, fieldworkers, farmers, land managers, scientists, schools and local communities pull together around one much-loved bird.



World Curlew Day was a real highlight, bringing people together across places and generations to celebrate Curlews and raise vital awareness. In Yorkshire, supporters joined walks on Marsden Moor, enjoyed music and spoken word in Slaithwaite, took part in creative competitions and rose to the Curlew 500 challenge. Together, these activities raised vital funds to support Curlew Action's work. It also marked ten years since Mary Colwell's 500-mile walk – the journey that helped spark the movement which later became Curlew Action – and it was wonderful to see how much the Curlew community has grown since then.

Behind the scenes, your support is helping practical conservation and shared learning move forward. Whether through donations, regular giving, legacies, business introductions or simply sharing our work, you are helping make sure the Curlew's call remains part of our countryside for generations to come.

Why not make an 'In honour of a loved one...' donation to show how much you appreciate them and support our work at the same time – a double whammy for good.

BTO/CRP Wader Monitoring Scheme Reminder

Wader monitoring data due by 16 October!

The BTO/CRP Wader Monitoring Scheme (WaMS) pilot trials a new approach to summarising wader breeding success across local projects. Local wader projects or anyone monitoring breeding waders are welcome to take part. Combining data will allow results to be compared more effectively and strengthen the evidence available to inform wader conservation, policy and management.

If you monitored Curlew or other breeding waders during 2026, WaMS welcomes:

- Breeding-pair records
- Nest records, including outcomes and causes of failure
- Brood and chick-rearing records
- Details of monitoring methods and relevant farming or conservation management

You do not need to have collected every type of information. Partial records are still valuable, and projects can submit data gathered through their existing monitoring methods.

How to submit:

Records can be submitted using either the online form or the downloadable spreadsheet

For more information click [here](#).

For any questions about the pilot or submitting data, please contact waders@bto.org.

Sock Update



Our brand new socks from Hedgy were a hit at Global Birdfair and we had no stock left to upload onto our online shop!

But don't worry, we are awaiting a restock, or resock, and we will let you know across our social media channels when they are ready to purchase.

Global Birdfair 2026

In July, Mary and Flo attended Global Birdfair at Rutland Water, where Curlew Action had a stall and both were involved in panel sessions. Mary was on a debate panel entitled Getting Nature back into the Media, which focused on the challenges and opportunities of the effort to get nature protection issues discussed in the media.

Meanwhile, Flo chaired a panel aimed at young people about what working in Curlew conservation is like, giving real life examples from people working or volunteering in wader conservation, as well as giving advice on how to get into conservation more generally. This panel featured two of our ambassadors – Dexter and George, George having previously worked as Communications Officer for WWT – and Ryan Burrell, the Director of the Curlew Recovery Partnership.

Birdfair felt especially friendly this year, and it was lovely to see how many attendees already knew who we were when they approached our stall. We are also incredibly grateful to sculptors Sarah Brabbin and Woody from Gouge Away Carvings who donated pieces of their work to us to help us fundraise.

Special thanks to our ambassadors, Paul and Joe Storey, who helped on our stand and did a brilliant job sharing the love for Curlews, as well as Jake and George who were also a great help at the stall over the course of the weekend.

The love that people have for Curlew Action was palpable and it made for a very rejuvenating few days (despite the heat)! We hope to see you there next year.

Once again thank you to Limosa and Wildwings for sponsoring our stand and giving us the chance to be at Global Birdfair again.



Upper Thames Fieldwork update August 2026

Anne Cotton, Catchment Lead for the Thames & Curlew Action trustee

The season started off fairly predictably for us, with the first nest found and fenced on time and five others quickly following between 21 and 29 April. We were aware of six other nests which we couldn't fence for various reasons (three predated too quickly, one no landowner permission, one cattle caused the Curlew to abandon, and one too public a site). There was then a bit of a lull, followed by a second flush of three nests between 6 and 12 May (probably re-lays by pairs whose first attempts had failed). We found and fenced nine nests in total this year which was a record for us (in previous years we have only fenced seven) so something to celebrate.



The weather during both the nesting and chick rearing periods was very variable with spells of both heavy rain and intense dry heat. However, although some adult Curlews were seen gular fluttering, we didn't record any obvious impacts on nests or chicks and by mid June we started to see some fledging. Interestingly, the first few we saw were all from nests we hadn't fenced! By the end of June we had recorded nine from unfenced nests. This was exciting, because our previous highest annual total was eight and we had already exceeded that, before even including any fledged chicks we might get from our fenced nests. Amazingly, we went on to record another nine fledged chicks from our fenced nests, bringing our total this year to 18, and of course there could have been a few more that we didn't see! Definitely something to celebrate!

From a total of 18 pairs, this gives a fledging rate of one chick per pair, which gives me hope that, if we get years like this, we may actually have a chance of preventing this small local population from going extinct. The slightly frustrating but also interesting part is that we don't actually know WHY this was a successful year for our Curlew – was it the weather, lower numbers of predators, good availability of alternative prey, good availability of insects, all of the above, or maybe even just luck?! If we could understand that, perhaps we could do more to ensure this happens more often.

Thank you as always to all our wonderful volunteers and landowners along the Thames who are instrumental in protecting this precious population.



Photo: Damian Money

Fundraiser Spotlight

Our wonderful supporter, Judith Bell, is taking on a big challenge this month and fulfilling a long-held ambition: walking the Coast to Coast path, covering 192 miles from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay. Judith is over half way now and has been joined by dear friends and family at different stages of the journey, with some stretches walked solo.

Judith is using the walk to raise money for Curlew Action, a cause that's closely connected to the places she is walking through and one that means a great deal to her. Judith said:

"It was on walks across the moors of Swaledale that I first fell in love with the call of the Curlew. That bubbling, haunting cry drifting across the moor is one of my earliest memories of the dale".

You can find out more about Judith's challenge and donate [here](#)! The fundraiser sits at over £700 currently!

We wish her the best of luck with the last stage of the adventure.



A Request from the University of Edinburgh

We have had a request from the University of Edinburgh to ask if anyone would be interested in filling in a questionnaire helping to demystify job routes into the environmental sector. The researchers are looking for a diverse range of people, particularly those with 'non-traditional' career routes and roles and people from underrepresented groups in the sector. Read below for more information:

About adaptABLE:

My name is Graham Richardson and I'm working on a project called adaptABLE. The project is led by [The Centre for Adapting to Changing Environments](#) (ACE) at the University of Edinburgh, funded by the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC).

As part of the project, we are creating an online resource to showcase the variety of routes people take into the environmental sector. We are looking for participants to fill in our questionnaire, who have different diverse experience of green jobs and career paths. The questions have been written to address barriers that our target audience (school leavers, university leavers and career switchers) face in becoming aware of and accessing the system.

[A pathway to environmental careers – Fill in form](#)

By showcasing real-life stories of people already in the sector, we hope to:

- Showcase the variety of environmental jobs available
- Demystify access into the sector
- Improve access for underrepresented groups

If you leave your e-mail address on the form the university will get back in touch with you when your stories appear on their website and/or with any updates from this phase of the project.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336. Is e buidheann carthannais a th' ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann, clàraichte an Alba, àireamh clàraidh SC005336.



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](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk).



Opportunities

Wildlife Ranger – Space for Shorebirds



Closing Date: Monday 31 August 2026

Northumberland County Council is recruiting a Wildlife Ranger to join their Space for Shorebirds team to help reduce beach goers' impacts on internationally important bird populations and the habitats they use. This role requires experience and confidence with public engagement, ecological survey work, habitat and access management, and excellent verbal and written communication skills. The role will also include managing local volunteers and being involved in numerous different activities to protect birds and nests.

Read more & apply [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.

Curlew Culture

PLEA TO THE CURLEW

Liquid notes of wilderness
Haunts the silver sky
Avian and part spirit
Fluting joy with aching cry
You sail above the world below
Calling out Cur-lew
Beautiful and desolate
Harbinger of storms
To hear your call in darkened hours
One knows one has been warned
As you sail above the restless seas
Calling out Cur-lew
Avian lord of landscape
Sea, sky, moor and shore
Your probing silhouetted stance
Shows the world without a sound
Whispering Curlew
Your song of soul, call of the wild
Has faded over time
The landscape is a lonelier place
Without your languid rhyme
Calling out Cur-lew
Curlew do not leave us
Rise like your crescent name
Take flight into the wildness
And fill the skies again
Sail above this lonely place,
This place that is your home
Calling out your name
Cur-lew

Andy Bottomley

In each newsletter, we are sharing a piece of nature poetry and to start with, we wanted to share one of the winners of our World Curlew Day poetry competition. The winner, Andy Bottomley, was chosen by our trustee, Matt Howard, who said, “there were poems of close observation of the bird and its places, but then also poems as calls to action, rightly aligning our own species with their plight. All of the poems carried something of the vitality and singular nature of curlew that we mark and carry through time, place and ourselves.”

If you would like to share your nature poetry, we would love to see it. Please email charlie@curlewaction.org.



Photo: Julie Smith

REQUEST FOR FOOTAGE

We are trying to build up our bank of Curlew videos and photographs that we can use across social media, advertisements 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 e-mail 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!

E-mail admin@curlewaction.org

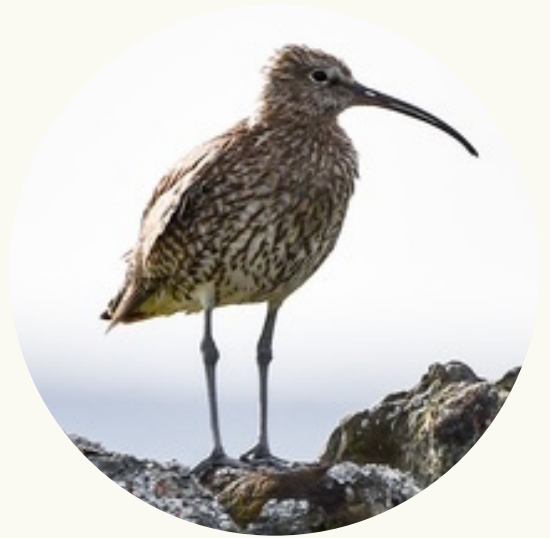


Photo: Julie Smith

Curlew Moment of the Month

Our Curlew moment of the month comes from Bud Trainer who captured this beautiful Curlew in flight.

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



Photo: Bud Trainer