



# Curlew Action



August newsletter 2023

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Curlew flock. (Photo by Steve Edwards)

## Curlew hunting ban in France

In early August, we were relieved to hear that the ban on hunting Curlews in France had been extended to July 2024, alongside the ban on hunting European Turtle Dove and Black-tailed Godwit.

“Curlew Action is delighted that hunting of Curlews in France has been suspended for another year,” says Curlew Action’s Founder and Director Mary Colwell. “There are so many enormous pressures bearing down on Curlews from agriculture to climate change, problems that are complex and difficult to tackle. Thank you to all the campaigners who have kept up the pressure.”

Learn more about the ban, and the history of hunting Curlews for food in our [blog post](#).



Black-tailed Godwit.  
(Photo by Steve Woodard)

# European Fieldwork Conference

Our visits to projects across the UK and Europe have highlighted that invaluable knowledge and experiences can be shared, yet the voices of fieldworkers are rarely heard. We are delighted to announce that in early February 2024, we will be hosting a conference in Norfolk for fieldworkers from across Europe.

The two-day conference will be a chance to discuss key topics in Curlew conservation including:

- various ways to manage predators to increase nesting success
- working with landowners/ farmers
- observing and monitoring the behaviour of breeding birds
- dealing with loss - the emotional attribution of working with a declining bird.



By meeting and exchanging field techniques, solutions to problems and discovering new ideas, we can better work together to protect this rapidly declining bird.

We are working hard to raise funds and to spread the word to fieldworkers working on Eurasian Curlew across Europe. Please [donate to Curlew Action](#) to support this initiative. If you are a fieldworker who is interested in attending, please email us at: [admin@curlewaction.org](mailto:admin@curlewaction.org).



We will be hosting the conference at the charming [Red Barn](#) near Kings Lynn in Norfolk. An ideal and beautiful setting for promoting collaboration, it is also close to The Wash where we hope to witness the wader spectacle.

**"Curlews are European birds and if we are to save them from extinction we must work collaboratively across their entire range."**

**Mary Colwell, Curlew Action Founder and Director**



# Natural History Education

Following on from our successful campaign to establish a [Natural History GCSE](#), led by our Founder and Director Mary Colwell, we are now looking to ensure that this new subject becomes a stepping stone in a much broader pathway for nature education through schools, apprenticeships and postgraduate study. Tackling the huge environmental issues ahead of us needs an informed, nature-literate society and workforce.

On the 25th of October, the Chair of the Environmental Select Committee, Robin Walker MP, who was the schools minister who said yes to the GCSE, is hosting, with Mary, a roundtable of industry, business, and policy leads to discuss a 'nature pathway' - the onward steps from the GCSE in Natural History.

Professor Partha Dasgupta, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge, will be the keynote speaker at the roundtable. This meeting is the start of the process to ensure that everyone, from entry level to CEO, understands the importance of the natural world to the economy and to the health and well-being of society.



Photo by Richard Bunce

**“If we believe the natural world is central to how we live and who we are, then an understanding of the natural world must be woven into an individual’s life-long learning experience. Inspiring the next generation and instilling both a local and then a global perspective.”**

**Mary Colwell, Curlew Action Founder and Director**

## Merchandise spotlight

Following a trial at the [Global Birdfair](#), we have added a new t-shirt to our [Curlew Action shop](#). This t-shirt has a scoop neck design, and features Sarah Harris’ beautiful Curlew silhouette. It is available in six different colours. We will be bringing a variety of sizes in sage and cherry to Spurn MigFest.



We will soon be restocking our [Christmas Curlews and Barn Owls cards](#), designed for us by Jessica Holm. If you can’t wait for those, our [Winter Curlews Christmas cards](#) (also by Jessica Holm) are currently in stock and available to order now.

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# Webinars

After our summer break, we are returning to our regular free webinar series this autumn.



*Curlews in flight. (Photo by Steve Edwards)*

On Wednesday 13th September, we will be discussing Curlews on the move. The UK is of international importance to Eurasian Curlew, it is home to 25% of the global breeding population and during the winter months our shorelines play host to thousands of Curlew and other shorebirds who have migrated here to escape the colder winters elsewhere. How do they know where to go? How do we know where they are going? Do headstarted Curlew behave in the same way? Get your free ticket.

Our second autumn webinar will take place on Wednesday 18th October, and follows on from September's migration topic to look more closely at Curlews on the coast. How is climate change impacting these vital coastal sites? Is coastal development a serious threat to Curlew? Get your free ticket.



*Curlew flock. (Photo by Liam O'Hara)*

We will soon be sharing the schedule and the topics for our November and early 2024 webinars.

All our previous webinars have been recorded and are available to watch online. Watch the previous webinars.

## Events: Recap

In early July, Mary Colwell and Curlew Action Trustee Mike Smart joined young ornithologist Mya Bambrick for a Curlew walk in the Somerset and Avon Vales. Mya has been undertaking a fundraising project called '21 Wildlife Walks' to raise money for the BTO.

Watch Mya's video, learn more about her project and find out how to donate in our blog post.



*Mary Colwell and Mya Bambrick. (Photo by Mya Bambrick)*





We had a wonderful time at the [Global Birdfair](#) in mid-July, and would like to extend our gratitude to [Leica](#) who hosted us on their stall. Thank you to everybody that came Mary's talks on Curlews and to our stall, it was a joy to chat to you all.

Congratulations to A. Day, the winner of our Birdfair giveaway, and thank you again to wildlife illustrator [Richard Allen](#) (pictured) who donated his original Curlew artwork from the 'Birds of the Western Palearctic' to us.



Curlew Action also attended the 'If Not Now, When? Species Reintroduction & Rewilding UK' symposium in late July. Held at [Rewilding Coombeshead](#), home of author and reintroduction specialist Derek Gow, the event brought together conservationists from across the UK and Europe.



The weekend featured talks on temperate rainforests by Guy Shrubsole, great bustards by David Waters, and bison by Paul Whitfield. Plus, a talk on Curlews by Mary Colwell: "It was an honour to talk to a barnful of passionate rewilders and reintroduction specialists, and heartening to see so many people really interested in the plight of Curlews and what is being done to save them."



## Events: Coming up

On 27th October, [Bannau Brycheiniog National Park](#) will be celebrating “all things Curlew” at Hay Castle with an exciting series of talks and activities. There will be sessions during the daytime and an evening event with speakers including Mary Colwell from Curlew Action, [James Roberts](#) (author and artist), [Rachel Taylor](#) ([BTO Cymru](#)) and Sian Shakespear ([Curlew LIFE](#)), and Nicky Davies (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Ecologist), who will be providing a series of talks about our iconic Curlews.



Hay Castle. (Photo by Nicky Davies)

We will be attending the [Spurn Migration Festival](#) in Yorkshire between 8th-10th September, and will have a range of Curlew Action merchandise to sell, including our new t-shirts. Please note that we will have a limited selection of colours and sizes available of our products. So if you are after something in particular, make sure you come to the stall sooner rather than later! We will also be running a giveaway to win some Curlew artwork.



The event coincides with the launch of the [Curlew Connections Wales](#) project, funded by the Nature Networks Fund; this will be driving Curlew recovery forwards, focussing on three areas across Wales, including the Bannau Brycheiniog.

Tickets will be available soon via Eventbrite - keep an eye out on the Bannau Brycheiniog website.

## Podcasts

In August, Mary Colwell joined Hannah Buschert, of [Hannah and Erik Go Birding](#), to discuss her [Curlew Moon](#) book, the people she met along her walk, and the decline of Eurasian Curlews in the UK and Ireland on the [Bird Nerd Book Club podcast](#). “I was expecting to see far more than I did... It was a big wake-up call. I should've seen hundreds, I saw tens.”

[Head to our website to listen to more podcasts.](#)





## Exclusive artwork

ATM Street Artist offers a unique opportunity to own a bespoke Curlew art piece.

Curlew Action have been gifted a truly magnificent piece of art by London based ATM, a street artist with a lifelong love for nature. He has a particular connection to birds, their songs, calls and habitats and uses his skills as an artist to celebrate the beauty of birds and communicate the extinction crisis. His giant wildlife murals fill walls across London to Bristol and on to Poland and Norway.

The old oak art piece was reclaimed from a church and has subsequently been ordained with two Curlews on its stained glass. It measures approximately 10cm deep, 80cm wide and 127cm tall, and is heavy and solid!



ATM artist, Mark, has donated it to Curlew Action and suggested a reserve of £3,000, an anticipated gallery price. We'd like to offer this to you, our supporter base and readership via a donation matching or exceeding the reserve via an expression of interest. You can do this by simply emailing Ian Proudler at [ian@curlewaction.org](mailto:ian@curlewaction.org) within the month of September. More photos and details are available on request.

I asked Mark of ATM to share why he had wanted to create this totally unique art piece for Curlew Action and he said, "It's heartbreaking to think that the Curlew might disappear from our country without immediate direct action. My art piece is a homage to the Curlew, its magical call and song as well as the beautiful and wild places they live and breed. Curlew Action is working hard to reverse this decline and I know money raised will be put to positive effect."

Find out more about ATM via his [website](#).



## A visit to Norfolk

In August, Mary Colwell and the legendary ornithologist, Prof Ian Newton went to [Pensthorpe](#) in Norfolk to see how the last few remaining headstarted chicks are getting on. Mary says: "It has been a tough year for the [headstarting](#) projects, with quite a few birds developing a mysterious feather development problem. Fortunately, most are recovering, certainly the ones we saw were looking well and ready to go, but it shows how much there is to learn about this crisis conservation technique."



"Headstarting Curlews is a steep learning curve, I have so much admiration and respect for the aviculturalists who look after the birds from egg to fledgling, it is tough when things don't go as well as expected. It is only down to their dedication and care that more birds are flying and, hopefully, adding to the populations in southern England.

Accompanying our trip to Pensthorpe were our patron [David Gray](#), naturalist and author [Nick Acheson](#) and Richard Saunders from [Natural England](#). Ian and I also went to [Wild Ken Hill](#) where some of the headstarted birds are being released (others go to the [Sandringham Estate](#)). Thank you to all at Ken Hill for such a lovely morning." There are now headstarting projects across England in Norfolk, Dartmoor, Sussex, Dorset and Shropshire.

See our [Curlew Action Headstarting webinar](#).

## Threads

Curlew Action recently launched an account on Threads - but what exactly is Threads? Following the uncertainty around the platform formerly called Twitter but recently renamed to X by Elon Musk, the team Facebook and Insta set up another social media site called Threads. It is available as both a phone app and via a [desktop browser](#).



We will continue to share content on X and our other social media platforms, but if you are on Threads, we would encourage you to give us a follow!