



Curlew Action



February newsletter 2023

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Where are Curlews now?

After spending the winter months on the coast, Curlews are arriving at their breeding sites across the grasslands, moors and marginal habitats of the UK. This is a very exciting time, the next few months will be important in contributing to or reversing their decline, every chick is precious. If you live in an area where Curlews nest, please remember to keep to paths and keep dogs on leads during the nesting season (March – July). Download Curlew Action's ground nesting birds posters from our website. With Curlews returning to their breeding grounds, our partners are providing an update on their survey and monitoring guidance on Thursday 2nd of March 19-21:00. Join via the [Zoom link](#), no sign up necessary. For more guidance on Curlew monitoring, visit the CRP website.



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download



Curlew in Europe

The Eurasian Curlew is such an important indicator of the health of landscapes, not just in the very western end of its range in the UK and Ireland, but right across Europe. This is a bird that breeds on the wet peat bogs of Southern Ireland and across the wild steppes of Siberia; it is at home in a wildflower-rich meadow in Gloucestershire and on the wet mires of Finnish forests. In the winter months curlews can be found feeding on the mudflats of southern Portugal, along the rocky coasts of Cornwall and on golf courses in Ireland. These large wading birds use landscapes, they live across whole continents, and for that reason we need to look out for them right across Europe. Read the full blog post by Mary Colwell [here](#).

World Wetland's Day

The 2nd of February was World Wetlands Day, a day to celebrate and raise awareness around the importance of wetlands. The definition of 'wetland' is very broad: a land area that is saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally. Inland wetlands include marshes, peatlands, lakes, rivers, floodplains and swamps. Coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs! Many of these habitats are important for Curlew. Find out how you can protect wetlands by visiting the [World Wetlands Day website](#). In case you missed it, we showed our love for Curlews on Valentine's Day by creating a [Curlew dating profile](#)!



World Curlew Day: 21st April



Created in 2017 by Curlew Action founder and Director, Mary Colwell, World Curlew Day is a global grass-roots initiative which highlights the plight of Curlew species around the world. The 21st of April was chosen for world curlew day because it is St Beuno's feast day, the patron saint of Curlews. Mary also began her 500 mile walk for Curlews on this day in 2016.

Art and Poetry competition

The World Curlew Day art and poetry competition is open once again! The competition includes four categories: under 16 poetry, under 16 art, over 16 poetry and over 16 art. The deadline to submit your entries is the 11th April 6pm, please email all entries to ellen@curlewaction.org.

Want to get involved?

You could hold a talk on Curlews, arrange a Curlew coffee morning, run a Curlew themed poetry evening, create Curlew art or even gather to share your stories of Curlews with others. If you would like to raise money for World Curlew Day, consider donating to Curlew Action.

Webinar series

For the first webinar of 2023 we took a deep dive into the outcomes of COP15, the biodiversity COP held in Montreal in December 2022. Panelists discussed how the targets signed up to as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework could be turned into action. Watch the webinar recording [here](#).



The call of the Curlew is beyond the Pound, Dollar, Yen or Euro, but our economy is intertwined with nature. During our webinar, Cost of a Curlew, we looked into the economics of nature and discussed the positives and negatives of putting a price on the natural world. Watch the recording [here](#).



Sign up to our next two webinars, Curlews and silage and Curlews in myths and legends [here](#).

Good news stories

Curlew award

The Farmland curlew Award recognises and celebrates the work of farmers in northern England who create a safe haven for Curlew. The award will help to raise awareness about the plight of the Curlew and to highlight good farming practices that increase breeding success. Nominations are now open and will close on March 31st, with the winner being announced on July 12th at the Great Yorkshire Show. Find out more [here](#).

Fledging success in Northern Ireland

RSPB Northern Ireland announced encouraging results for its 2022 Curlew breeding season, with the number of chicks successfully fledged reaching more than double compared to previous year. This news is well timed, only ~104 breeding pairs remain in Ireland so every chick counts. These results are due to the hard work of farmers, landowners and RSPB NI conservationists working together on habitat management and conservation practices. Read more [here](#).

Podcasts and articles

Curlew Action's small team works hard to raise awareness about the plight of the Curlew and the need for better natural history education. February has seen Curlew Action featuring in two podcasts: our Director spoke about her 11 year-long campaign for a GCSE in Natural History on [The Journal of Biophilic Design](#) and the John Clare podcast. Mary also wrote an article for [Farming Life](#) about how [farming holds the key to Curlew survival](#). Keep your eyes peeled for the next edition of BirdLife International magazine. Upcoming articles from other team members include an opinion piece in The Niche and a Eurasian curlew feature in Birdwatching Magazine.

A note on ELMS

Over 70% of the UK is farmland and a majority of our Curlews nest in this habitat, so changes in the way this farmland is managed will inevitably have significant impacts on Curlews.

Post-Brexit, Defra has committed to a major transformation in the way in which farmers are supported by government subsidy through agri-environment schemes. The old scheme of basic payments, which were linked to the amount of land owned or managed, is currently being phased out, and a new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme focussed on delivery of environmental and climate goods and services is gradually replacing it, with the process due to be complete by 2027 See more [here](#).

The middle tier of ELM, now called Countryside Stewardship Plus, is under development and potentially holds the most promise for Curlew conservation, as it aims to deliver co-ordinated action across multiple farms and landowners, and is intended to target species recovery with suitable packages of measures. In addition, existing Countryside Stewardship options are being expanded and enhanced, which have the potential to deliver additional habitat improvements for Curlews, e.g. uncut field margins that provide food and refuge for Curlew chicks. The latest update from Defra is at the link below. However, we still await details of how the major blocks on Curlew productivity such as early grass cropping and predation will be tackled in these schemes. This is a fast-moving and complex field, so watch this space! See more [here](#).



David Gray

Did you see our patron on Winterwatch? On the 17th of April, David will be doing a special event with our Director, Mary Colwell, in Bristol. David and Mary will discuss the magic of Curlews, how they have influenced his music and why he became patron of Curlew Action. The audience will also be treated to live performances of his music. Tickets are available [here](#).

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