



CURLEW ACTION

ACTION NOW FOR
CURLEWS TOMORROW



Our Journey and Impact

Let us share more

From embryonic beginnings, we unfurled our wings and took to the sky. Our call, like that of the Curlew, is being heard across the landscape of nature organisations, government agencies, policy makers, educators, farmers, landowners, scientists, passionate philanthropists and, very importantly, young people. We reach out to anyone who cares for our planet and wants to address our climate crisis and the global decline in wildlife.



Support for Curlew Action has been extraordinary, and our donors are key to who we are, helping us to unite with a common call to action:

Our Vision:

A secure place for Curlews and the wildlife that lives alongside them in a natural world, rich in biodiversity, where people are informed about, and engaged with, nature.

Our Mission:

To give Curlews a secure future through advocacy, supporting conservation efforts, engaging with science and policy, highlighting the cultural importance of Curlews, promoting the connection between Curlew conservation and wider biodiversity benefits, and by promoting natural history education.

Why the Curlew?

The Eurasian Curlew was once a common sight across Ireland and the UK and their evocative calls could be heard along coasts and across farmland, in the lowlands and uplands. It is a bird steeped in folklore and storytelling, art and poetry, and engrained within the hearts of those who know them. They occupy a unique role in our social, political and cultural lives.

Today, widespread changes to our countryside have seen their numbers dramatically decline, especially over the last 40 years. In Ireland, Curlews have decreased by over 98%, in Wales by over 80% and on average we have lost 60% throughout England and Scotland since the 1980s.

The world has already lost 2 species of Curlew, we cannot allow the Eurasian Curlew to follow.

Conservation can feel overwhelming given the challenges we face, but focussing on a much-loved bird helps us tackle the big issues of today. And, by conserving Curlews we also benefit a wide range of wildlife and habitats. Curlews bring people together from across the conservation spectrum, working side by side for a common goal.



98%

decline throughout Ireland

Why we champion Natural History Education

Natural History Education is fundamental to Curlew Action. We believe people will conserve what they love, and they will only love what they know. Whether that be Curlews or any other species or habitat, inspiring people to care is what we do.



DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

"Nobody is going to protect the natural world unless they understand it."

After 11 years of campaigning, Mary Colwell (Curlew Action Founder) succeeded in establishing a GCSE in Natural History, announced by the Department for Education on April 21st 2022. First teaching will be in 2026. This is a vital step forwards, producing a pipeline of nature-literate young people who will be able to make informed, wise decisions that support human and wild life. The skills of the naturalist are essential in all walks of life from economics to politics and conservation. We are proud to be forging this pathway for a green future.

50%

of 9-11 year olds could not recognise a bluebell or a bluetit

$\frac{3}{4}$ of children in the UK spend less time outside than prison inmates

Recent studies at the University of Derby show that many young people lose their interest in nature at around the age of 11 and may not recover it until they are in their 30s. As far back as 1998, Sir David Attenborough expressed dismay at the lack of knowledge about nature revealed by a poll of 700 children between the age of 9 and 11 with only half recognising a bluetit or bluebell. "Nobody is going to protect the natural world unless they understand it." This is happening at a time when nature is fast vanishing from our lives. We must tackle this crisis through education.



Chapter 1 – Our Journey from nest to flight

2015 Preparing the nest

Our journey began in 2015 with a 500 mile walk by our Founder, Mary Colwell - her written account is in *Curlew Moon* (Harper Collins).

Just prior to Mary's walk in 2015, a British Birds paper placed our Curlew as the most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK. In Spring 2016, Mary walked 500 miles, starting in the west of Ireland, through Wales and ending on the Wash in England. It was called the Curlew Walk. Along the journey, she gathered information, science, folklore, anecdotes and met people connected with the Curlew.

- In November 2016, Mary joined with Irish colleagues to convene an Irish Curlew Conference out of which came the Curlew Conservation Programme.
- In February 2017, Mary and now trustee Mike Smart held a similar conference with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, which focussed on English Curlews. It resulted in the Curlew Forum, a highly valued coalition of lowland groups in England.
- In February 2017 Mary established World Curlew Day.
- In January 2018, a Welsh Curlew Conference established Curlew Wales.
- Also in January 2018, the Curlew was one of only 2 birds highlighted in the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan.
- In March 2018 the then HRH the Prince Charles convened the Dartmoor Curlew Summit, a national gathering of experts from across the spectrum of science, research conservation, farming and gamekeeping.
- In September of the same year, Mary and Mike Smart joined with Working for Waders in Scotland to hold a Scottish Curlew Conference and a unity in mission was gathering significant pace.

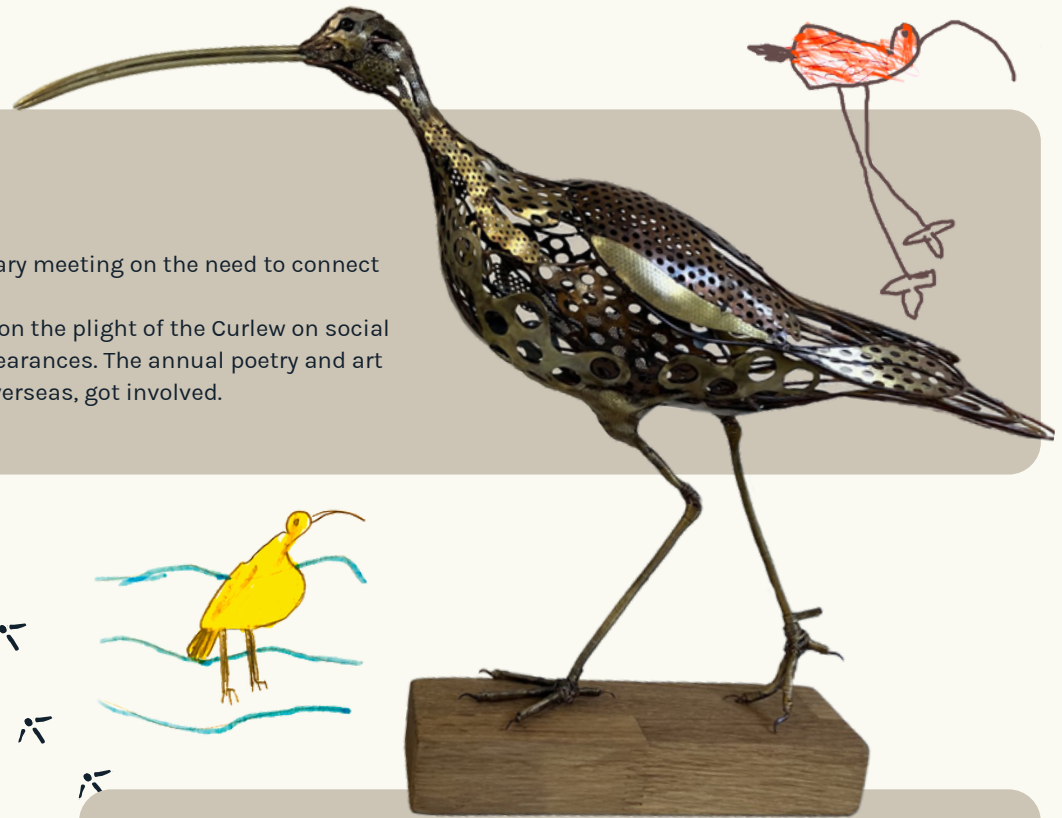
2019 Curlew Action as a fledgeling

- In March 2019, alongside the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Curlew Action team devised and supported the production of the now widely used Curlew Fieldworker's Toolkit, a downloadable resource for people working with Curlews in the breeding season.
- In July 2019, Lord John Randall and Mary held a Curlew Summit at Downing Street. This was attended by politicians, national agencies and nature charities.
- In December 2019 Curlew Action was registered as a charity and we welcomed David Gray as our Patron.
- Curlew Action has a team of experts. Mike Smart was awarded the BTO award for local conservation and is part of the Curlew team in Gloucestershire, Russ Wynn spearheaded the Curlew projects in the New Forest and Roger Morgan-Grenville is involved in head-starting in Sussex.
- In February 2020 HRH The Prince of Wales held a second Curlew Summit at Highgrove. Curlew Action presented the need to connect people to the plight of the Curlew. Prince Charles called for people to work together and the Curlew Recovery Partnership was formed, a roundtable of organisations from across the conservation spectrum. Curlew Action is on the Steering Group and Mary Colwell is the Chair.



2021 Sustenance and First flight

- April 2021, Mary gave a keynote at the British Ornithological Union anniversary meeting on the need to connect people with nature.
- We began our monthly themed webinars, education materials, information on the plight of the Curlew on social media, merchandise, public talks, podcasts, interviews, articles and TV appearances. The annual poetry and art competition widened its reach.. Many more people, from this country and overseas, got involved.



2022 We spread our wings

- Our Chair of Trustees, Roger Morgan-Grenville, walks from Land's End to John O' Groats to raise funds and awareness for our cause.
- David Gray takes the plight of the Curlew and support for Curlew Action on his White Ladder tour, playing to venues of over 20,000 people across 4 continents. He and Mary hold the first of a series of UK based events where he performs and shares his passion for nature, including at Wild Ken Hill, Bath, Bristol and the New Forest.
- Mary Colwell speaks at an international conference in Papenburg, Germany, and we start to cross boundaries.
- We launch our Strategy at the Leica gallery in London in the presence of distinguished individuals, policy makers, conservationists and partners. David Gray performs The Arc, a song written about the call of the Curlew.



Chapter 2 - Our Call

The Curlew is known to many through its beautiful and melodic call, connecting heart and soul. People are united through their personal relationship with this iconic bird and our thanks to their desire to conserve the Curlew and reconnect people with nature, already we have been able in our first few seasons to achieve the following:

Conservation of the Curlew

JAKE FIENNES

“The work of Curlew Action is fundamentally important to raise awareness to the wider public of the impacts we have on our environment, only working together can we facilitate the solutions to ensure species close to our hearts are not lost forever.”

Development of Nature Education

We are relentless in our passion for ceasing the decline of the Curlew across the globe and improving the nature literacy of our younger generation.

We are working with Professor Alastair Fitter FRS to establish nature hubs to support schools teaching the GCSE in Natural History.

We are campaigning for a Nature Pathway which will put nature at the heart of education from primary to tertiary education.

World Curlew Day

Our Founder started World Curlew Day in 2017, it is now internationally recognised as a platform to celebrate all Curlew species

304 Entries into our yearly art & poetry competition from 7 year olds in Yorkshire to 73 year olds in Australia

1500+ Instagram posts

Crossing continents

3 International fact-finding and collaboration trips completed

-> **Germany**
-> **Finland**
-> **Netherlands**

2 Planned for 2024

-> **Iceland**
-> **Poland**

Media outreach

28 Made or contributed to Curlew podcast episodes, **2** Short films

TV Contributed Curlew footage to Wild Isles and featured on Springwatch

OVER 100

Contributions to newspaper, magazine articles and scientific literature

- BTO
- GWCT
- Curlew Forum
- NPWS Ireland
- Curlew Forum
- Natural England
- UK Youth for Nature
- Working for Waders
- Curlew Recovery Partnership

Our work involves partnering with organisations and individuals across the environmental sector and beyond to influence policy, share knowledge and best practice and promote open discussion of complex environmental topics

Partnerships work

Webinars **14** webinars in 16 months

34 Sign ups to 'Predators and Curlew'

KEY TOPICS:

- Curlew on farmland
- Managing the uplands
- Curlew in myths and legends
- Why do we need a Natural History GCSE?
- The biodiversity challenge
- Predators and Curlew
- Curlew and silage
- Cost of a Curlew
- Headstarting
- Forestry

2291 Total sign ups

Nesting posters

101 Physical posters sent across the UK from Cornwall to the Isle of Mull and more downloaded from website



Field worker Toolkit

Spearheaded the development of the Field worker Toolkit, an essential resource for anyone starting or engaging in Curlew fieldwork, which has since been used by volunteers and professional fieldworkers across the UK to monitor breeding Curlew

42

Curlew talks given across the UK to audiences ranging from primary schools to conservation groups to policy makers

Curlew talks & workshops

100,000

Across four continents were played David's appeal to save the Curlew during his White Ladder world tour. Many more watched it online

David Gray events



Value for money

Curlew Action has benefitted from the generosity of many. From Herbie's £7 (below) to the support by David Gray during his White Ladder tour. Our Charity accounts show that in 2020/21 our turnover was just £66,000. We have achieved so much on a shoestring.

However, we can achieve so much more if we can grow our capacity. We are now ready to unlock the opportunities that we've created, but this can only be done with significantly more resource.

Chapter 3 - An invitation to respond to our call

Everything we have achieved has been done so with a small team and the good will and support of many more. We are poised to achieve significant impacts in all our main areas of activity.

You can get involved on so many levels and benefit from a wealth of knowledge, experience and educational resource via the website, our webinar series, our events, championing the World Curlew Day, our art and poetry competitions. And by making a donation or doing your own fundraising events you can contribute even more.

You can contact us as we'd love to hear you're interest and stories from wherever you are.

Herbie, 10 years old, responds to our unique call with one of his own

Whilst Roger Morgan-Grenville was walking from Lands End to John O' Groats, without realising it at the time, he inspired Herbie to offer his support to the cause. Herbie decided to donate £7 of his pocket money to Roger's fundraising efforts. We were so moved by his generosity and had the absolute pleasure to receive a few words from Herbie which described his personal motivation for doing so.



"I wanted to donate my pocket money because I thought it was amazing how far Roger would walk for the Curlews.

I see them flying around the old Beaulieu airfield, they are beautiful birds and they need protecting.

We need to protect all animals and their habitats."

- Herbie Sutton, age 10

Join us

Be this your first encounter with a Curlew or you're already inspired, join us and help Curlews through outreach, raising awareness and through promoting the GCSE in Natural History and the Nature Education Pathway - generating the nature lovers of the future.

- Mary@CurlewAction.org
- Admin@CurlewAction.org

Our Founder - Mary Colwell

Mary is a writer, TV and radio producer and conservationist, whose 500-mile walk across the the UK and Ireland in 2016 became the catalyst for Curlew Action. During her own journey in establishing Curlew Action, she has been recognised and acknowledged for her work at many different levels. In October 2017, Mary is awarded the BTO Dilys Breese Award for Outstanding Communication in Science. June 2018, the National Gamekeepers' Organisation David Bellamy Award for conservation: In October 2019, the WWT Marsh Award for Conservation. Mary wrote the chapter on nature and education for The Economics of Biodiversity (the Dasgupta Review) which was published by the government in in 2020: In 2022 Mary is awarded the prestigious RSPB medal and in 2023 on the ENDS Power list of influential environmentalists.



DOWNLOAD OUR POSTERS

Available on our website home page



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SUPPORT WORLD CURLEW DAY

- Create art
- Spread the word
- Host an event
- Raise funds

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Learn more about our work & Curlew conservation



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