

Curlew Action



Issue 03, 2025

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A newly hatched Curlew chick.

(Photo by Conor Mackenzie / Upper Thames Curlew Project)

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)

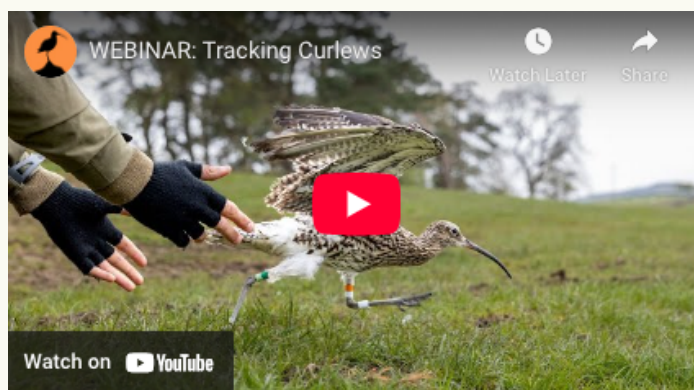
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Webinars

In June we held our final webinar before our summer break and discussed the importance and methods of tracking Curlews - plus, the impact it has on Curlews. We welcomed Graham Appleton, 'waderologist' and author of the [Wader Tales blog](#) as our guest chair, plus three speakers:

- Katrine Eldegard, Norwegian University of Life Sciences.
- Rachel Taylor, BTO Cymru.
- Verena Rupprecht, LBV.

As usual, it was recorded and can be [watched on our YouTube channel](#).



Our schedule for the rest of the 2025 webinars is:

- September - Curlews and Climate Change
- October - 2025 UK breeding season
- November - 2025 European breeding season
- December - 2025 Headstarting round-up

If you have a suggestion for a topic for us to cover in 2026, or are an expert interested in contributing to a webinar, please e-mail admin@curlewaction.org

Events - recap

Festival of Nature

On Saturday 14 June, our Director Mary and our Outreach & Events Lead Charlie, headed to Bristol to join in with the [Festival of Nature](#) fun. It's a jam-packed weekend full of activities and talks in Bristol city centre.

Mary and Charlie took our Curlew stand and engaged with the public about all things Curlew - including sharing our new game, 'Pin the Beak on the Curlew' (right). Look out for it at future events!





Mary also interviewed Charlie in a talk entitled 'The Life Affirming Magic of Curlew', which focused on Charlie's new book, 'The Life Affirming Magic of Birds', and how we can all do our bit to help secure a future for our beloved birds.

Thanks to everyone that came along to the stall and the talk!

Groundswell

This week, Mary attended Groundswell, the Regenerative Agriculture Festival in Hertfordshire.

Mary's session was called "Can Curlews Live on Farmland?" It was delivered to a full audience, despite being placed opposite Prince William, the star guest! She discussed the huge issues of silage production and high levels of predation, subjects that lie at the heart of Curlew recovery. The future of Curlews depends on farmers and land managers, and Curlew Action will attend as many of these excellent events as we can.



Eng Lit conference



Mary and Trustee Michel Warren gave talks at Shared Futures in York on the role of English Literature in supporting nature education. It was a rich and thoughtful session which highlighted the unique relationship between nature and culture. The natural world inspires creativity in art, words and music, and gives us a holistic appreciation of the world around us. We hope a cultural element will form part of the GCSE in Natural History when it is finalised.

Events - upcoming

Stroud Mural

We brought the Curlew to Stroud... and now, we're going beneath the surface!

Thanks to your incredible support, we're thrilled to say the Curlew mural, to celebrate World Curlew Day 2025, was painted in Stroud! Created by the renowned street artist [Mark Anthony \(ATM\)](#), the mural features a Curlew and chick and will raise vital awareness of one of the UK's most endangered birds right here in Gloucestershire with the help of an information board about the Curlew and its plight, which is currently in the works.



And now, we have exciting news, the mural is being extended! During the Stroud Paint Festival on the Saturday 5 - Sunday 6 July, Mark will return to expand the mural with a new addition, a striking soil profile beneath the Curlew scene.

This new section will highlight the complex, living world beneath our feet. From roots and invertebrates to fungi and soil layers, the profile will visually represent the idea that there's far more going on beneath the surface than meets the eye, both in our ecosystems and in the challenges facing our wildlife. It will highlight the reliance of our wildlife on a healthy ecosystem, and that nothing exists on its own.

We want this mural to inspire curiosity, education, and conservation action, and the soil profile takes that message even deeper. Please [donate if you can](#) – and join us at the Stroud Paint Festival on 5-6 July to see this inspiring mural grow!

Events - upcoming

Global Birdfair



We are excited to say we are heading to Global Birdfair in Rutland next week, Friday 11 – Sunday 13 July. Come and meet the team at our stand in the Robin Marquee which will be packed with Curlew goodies. And this year, Curlew Action will be running one of the interactive craft projects in the Discovery Zone - stay tuned for more information!

Don't miss our Director Mary Colwell talking on the Curlew Lecture Stage (of course!) on Friday at 10:30am about 'Curlews of the World' and again at 5pm about 'Creating a Nature-Literate Society'.

She will also be taking part in a panel on the Osprey Main Events stage at 1pm on Friday, on 'The Impact of American Nationalism and Isolationism under Trump on global cooperation to tackle the climate and nature crisis'.



Plus, she will be one of the three guests (alongside Simon King and Megan McCubbin) in the live recording of Ryan Dalton's and Nadia Shaikh's podcast Into The Wild's, Nature Room 101 on Saturday at 6pm, and interviewed on Sunday at 2pm by Suzy from the Casual Birder Podcast in the Whinchat Podcasting Station.



Curlew Action is delighted to be part of the sponsorship scheme at Global BirdFair, supported by WildWings and Limosa. They provide funds to assist smaller conservation organisations attend Global Birdfair. You can visit Limosa and WildWings on their stands in the Swallow Marquee.

Grab your tickets and check the full schedule at the Global Birdfair website, we can't wait!

Events - upcoming

Latitude Festival

Our Director, Mary Colwell, will be at [Latitude Festival](#) on 25 July. She will be in conversation with wildlife and natural history author and Guardian writer, Patrick Barkham in The Bookshop. If you're at the festival why not swing by and hear the interview?

LATITUDE

24 - 27 JULY 2025
HENHAM PARK, SUFFOLK

Spurn Migration Festival (MigFest)



Looking ahead to events later in the year, we are happy to be heading to [MigFest](#) at Spurn from Friday 12 – Sunday 14 September.

We will be there with our merchandise, our 'Pin the beak on the Curlew' game and to chat to you about all things Curlew! Find out more about the event and book your tickets and camping now on the [Spurn MigFest website](#).

International Wader Study Group annual conference

Curlew Action will be travelling to Groningen, Netherlands, to attend this year's International Wader Study Group (IWSG) annual conference from Friday 26 – Monday 29 September. We can't wait for insightful and dynamic discussions about all things wader related!

You can read about our previous visits to the IWSG's conferences on our website:

- [Wading bird scientists flock together at Sylt](#) (2023 conference)
- [An annual migration of wading bird scientists](#) (2024 conference, first blog post)
- [The Yellow Brick Road of Wader Conservation](#) (2024 conference, second blog post)



To invite Curlew Action to give a talk on Curlews or the Natural History GCSE, please e-mail admin@curlewaction.org

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European Curlew Fieldworker Workshop 2026

Following the success of our 2024 European Curlew Fieldworker Workshop in Kings Lynn, Norfolk, we are delighted to announce the date and location of our 2026 workshop.

We are excited to tell you that our next Fieldworker Workshop will be held at Lancaster University (below), Friday 6 – Sunday 8 February 2026.



Lancaster is a beautiful town with excellent links to major UK airports and train lines. The university itself has been awarded a Gold rating for Environmental Impact, and we can't wait to welcome you in 2026. You can expect a series of talks, networking opportunities and an excursion to see some local wildlife including, of course, Curlew!

More information will follow soon, but please save the date and stay tuned for further details.



Merchandise spotlight

Summer is here, and in this warm weather, we're casting aside our fleeces, and updating our t-shirt collections. Fear not, we have a great range of beautifully designed and sustainable t-shirts available in our store, including this one (right), brilliantly modelled by Ethan Devaney from NPWS Ireland, this is just one of our current colourful designs, but you can head to the [Curlew Action shop](#) now to browse the full range.

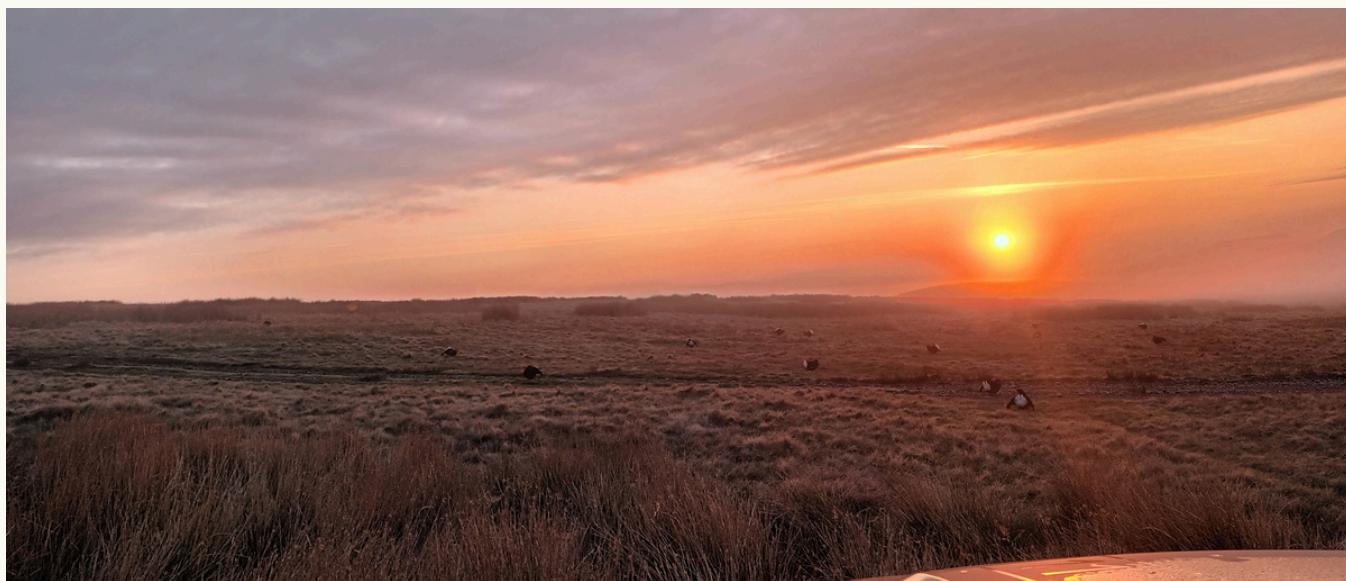
You will be able to view some of our merchandise range at some of our upcoming events! If you're at Global Birdfair in July or Migfest in September, you can come and have a look at our brand new Curlew Action backpacks, waterbottles and enamel mugs! Perfect for adventures in nature!



Why Moorlands Matter trip

At the end of April, just after World Curlew Day, our General Manager Flo and Trustee John Miller attended a 'Why Moorlands Matter' event in the north of England. The trip was a chance to see one of the habitats where Curlews are doing well in the UK, and talk about public perceptions of grouse moors, as well as how better to bring people from different backgrounds together to conserve species like the Curlew.

Curlews could be heard calling all throughout the two day trip, which made it easy to forget how much they are struggling elsewhere. The trip also involved the opportunity to visit a large Black Grouse lek at 5am on a cold, misty morning (right, and below).



A valuable aspect of the two-day event was the discussions had with people from around England about the risks to not just Curlews, but other ground-nesting birds, which highlighted how huge a problem unintentional nest disturbance is - particularly by dogs, but also by some people working on the land. It was felt by all that more needs to be done to tackle this disturbance if these ground nesting species are to thrive. The difficulties faced when people with very differing views on grouse moors and shooting come together to have discussions about conservation was also brought up, but it was agreed that common ground is always important to find so that targets can be met. The importance of doing more to involve farmers and landowners in discussions for effective solutions was also mentioned.

One of the most poignant topics brought up many times on the trip was the requirement of those working on grouse moors to improve the image of those moors and to create the ability for more people to visit them and understand how they operate. Brainstorming surrounded how to better promote the work done by grouse moors, which provide safe places for ground nesters and other species reliant on the habitat, and how to be more open, removing the air of mystery and often distrust that much of the population feels towards the industry. A general concern about the nation's disconnect from the natural world was felt by all. A desire for greater nature connection and understanding in the UK is a feeling that unites many people who work outdoors and around wildlife.

The fact is, Curlews do well on kept moors compared to much of the rest of the country. How best to help them now and going forward is a conversation that everyone needs to be involved in.

European trips 2025

This year, we extended our outreach to our European neighbours by visiting Poland, Ireland and France. Each trip was fascinating and helped build a bigger picture of how Curlews are faring across the continent, and we have written a trip report on our website for each (follow links below).

Poland has around 200-220 pairs of Curlews left, and things were looking difficult, however, an EU Life fund is injecting hope into the efforts to save them. It is allowing the team to protect nests with electric fences, do more monitoring and tagging and to buy land. Poland is also continuing its headstarting project, the first country in Europe to try this with Curlew.

Ireland is in a similar (arguably worse) situation with only 100 pairs remaining. Their European funding is for 10 species of waders, with Curlews really benefiting. Again, headstarting is getting a boost as is increased predator control and habitat management.

France is a different story. With an estimated 1000 pairs, it is an important country for Curlews. There is no French Curlew Action Plan to persuade governments and no joined up action. But there are excellent individual projects with passionate and skilled people working in diverse habitats scattered across France. They also have the added complication of Curlews being legal quarry in the winter months, although a moratorium is in place at the moment.



We would like to thank everyone who showed us around and for their warm welcome.

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).

Hudsonian Whimbrel update

The world's first global unified checklist of birds has listed the Hudsonian Whimbrel and the Eurasian Whimbrel as distinct species. Previously considered as subspecies by some authorities, they will now be treated as two different species going forward.

The new list is called AviList, and brings together and resolves differences between different lists run by conservation organisations.



A Hudsonian Whimbrel in California, USA. (Photo by Alex Jones)

Representatives from BirdLife International, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the American Ornithological Society, the International Ornithologists' Union (IOU), and Avibase worked together as part of the Working Group on Avian Checklists to create one new checklist which will be updated each year.

Read more on this update, and about some of the other species / subspecies decisions taken by AviList, [in our blog.post](#).

Fieldworker Notes

Our new Trustee Anne Cotton provides an update from the Upper Thames Curlew Recovery Project:

After two years complaining it was too wet, this year we have been worrying it was too dry instead! Whilst on the whole this was an improvement, it has presented some different challenges.



Curlew on nest – this Curlew was very well camouflaged in the long grass as it incubated its eggs. (Photo by Denis Kennedy/ Upper Thames Curlew Recovery Project)

On the Thames we fenced seven nests for the fourth year running, while at Otmoor the team fenced a record of 20 nests! In South Warwickshire however the season proved trickier. This is a largely sheep grazed area and the shortage of grass meant ewes and lambs were having to be moved between fields a lot more often to provide them with enough to eat. Just as the Curlews were thinking of settling to nest the sheep arrived in their field and they had to move again. The Cherwell was also quieter with just one fenced nest this year.

The nest protection has been very effective with 22 of the 28 fenced nests surviving to hatching, giving a 78% success rate.

Fenced nests are monitored with trail cameras so causes of loss could in most cases be determined, and this year included three nests predated by Marsh Harriers! An altercation with a Crow was captured in a shocking series of photos (one included below) but thankfully the Curlew emerged victorious, although unfortunately one egg appeared to have been damaged in the process and subsequently did not hatch.



A number of pairs are still actively looking after chicks, including six from nests we hadn't found or fenced, but others appear to have lost theirs. Typically, the rain came just after the chicks started to hatch, but thankfully it has remained mild and the showers have been heavy but short so hopefully this hasn't affected them too much. Exact causes of chick loss are unknown but are likely to include predation and shortage of food.

We are keeping our fingers firmly crossed for all of the remaining chicks as they have another few weeks to go until fledging.



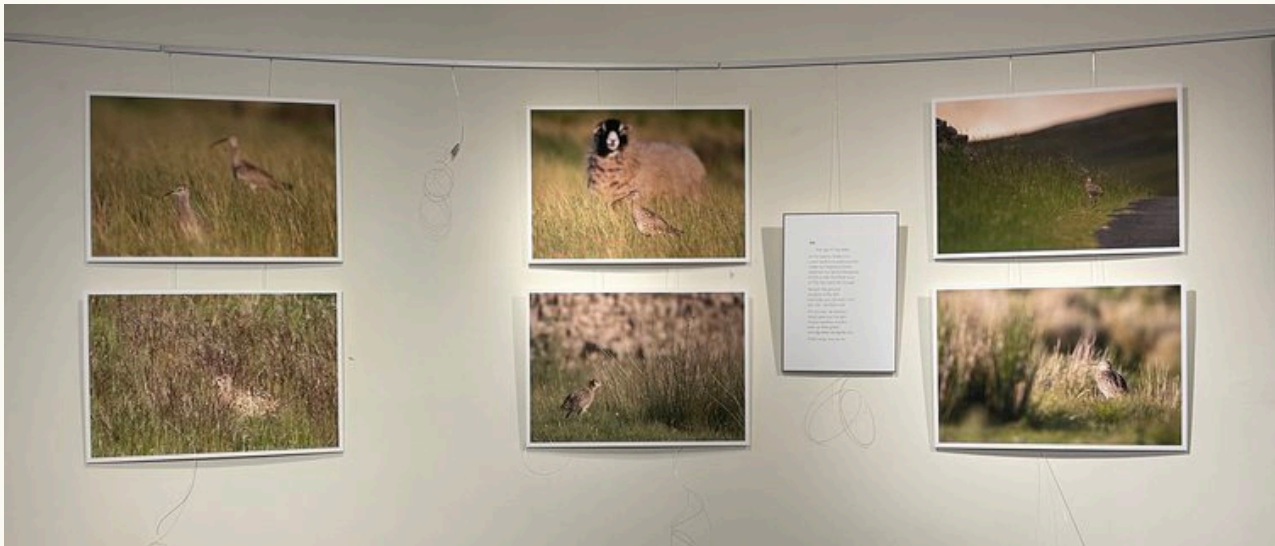
Chick in grass – a newly hatched chick from one of our Thames nests.

(Photo by Conor Mackenzie / Upper Thames Curlew Project)

Exhibitions

Curlew exhibition comes to Redcar!

The '[Cry of the Curlew](#)' exhibition has come to Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar. Running from Wednesday 2 July 2025 until the end of January next year, this exhibition is a celebration of the Curlew, but also a reminder of the issues facing them today and what is being done to help them. The exhibition is made up of photography, poetry, music, and art from multiple contributors.



Photographer Paco Valera says “Our work aims to let “what is” speak for itself through photographic images, poetry and prose. To invite a closer look; to really see and to connect with what is there, and to awaken feeling, meaning and significance in the human experience, perhaps by a sense of renewal, and replenishment”.

You have plenty of time to visit, so go along if you can and let us know your thoughts!

Opportunities



Breeding Waders EIP is recruiting for a [GIS Officer](#) (closing date 5pm Monday 21 July):

“You’ll join a small GIS team who play a key role in managing, analysing, visualising and disseminating spatial data for the project. This includes maintaining high data standards, supporting field staff, producing professional maps, and managing participant data through Microsoft Dynamics CRM.”

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

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