

Curlew Action



Issue 03, 2026

In This Issue

Natural History GCSE

Mary Colwell MBE

Events Recap

Upcoming Events

Message from Mary

Merchandise Spotlight

Request for Footage

Fundraising Update

Fieldworker Update

Curlew Moment



Photo: Natalie Busch

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

DONATE TO SUPPORT CURLEW ACTION

GCSE in Natural History consultation launched

- *a message from Mary*



The consultation on the proposed GCSE in Natural History was launched on 12 June and will run for 12 weeks. This is a hugely important moment for everyone who cares about young people's relationship with the natural world.

I warmly welcome the progress that has been made. The creation of a GCSE in Natural History is something many of us have hoped for and worked towards for years. But it is vital that the qualification is as strong, rich and meaningful as it can be. For me, there are several areas that need particular attention.

First, I would like to see much greater encouragement of long-term observation through a nature diary or journal. Natural history is not just about learning facts; it is about learning to notice. A diary encourages repeated visits, close attention, spotting change, asking questions and building a lasting connection with nature.

Crucially, young people also need to be introduced to the concept of shifting baselines and recent environmental history. They need some sense of how dramatically nature has changed in recent decades, so they can understand not only what exists today, but also what has been lost and what could be restored.

I also believe the GCSE should give much greater prominence to seasonality and environmental change through short term cycles and annual change. Understanding migration, flowering, breeding cycles, emergence and other seasonal rhythms is fundamental to understanding how nature works.

Above all, I hope the GCSE will articulate a broader purpose - helping young people understand their place within the natural world. Beyond knowledge and skills, it should foster connection, care and belonging. That, in the end, is what natural history has always done at its best.

[Have your say on the Natural History GCSE before 4 September 2026.](#)

Mary Colwell MBE



I was deeply honoured to be awarded an MBE for services to nature conservation and environmental education. It was a very moving moment, and I am enormously grateful to everyone who has offered such kind words and congratulations.

Although the award has my name on it, it really belongs to the much wider community of people who care so deeply about Curlews, nature and the future of environmental education. None of this work happens alone. Curlew Action has grown because of the generosity, commitment and imagination of so many people: fieldworkers, farmers, scientists, artists, teachers, volunteers, supporters and friends.

For me, the award is also a recognition of the Curlew itself – a bird whose haunting call has carried so many of us into deeper concern for the natural world. It is a reminder that speaking up for nature matters, and that education, storytelling and public engagement are vital parts of conservation.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. There is still so much to do, but moments like this help give heart and encouragement for the road ahead.

Events Recap

It has been a busy and rewarding few months, with Curlew Action continuing to build conversations across the UK and beyond. Recent field trips have taken us to Germany, Austria and Scotland (see the blogs on our website), strengthening links with those working for Curlews and wider nature recovery across Europe. Mary has also been talking at events on Butterflies, Bees and Blooms in Bristol (that is a lot of Bs!), and speaking to religious orders about the role faith can play in reminding us all to care for the natural world.

Alongside this, Mary attended meetings on AEWA (Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds) communications across the European and African migratory flyways, exploring how we can better share the stories of migratory birds and the landscapes they depend on. Flo and Mary also both gave talks at the Glasgow Natural History Society's 175th anniversary lecture, which was a special honour.

After several years as Chair of the Curlew Recovery Partnership, Mary made the decision to stand down from the role, although she is very glad to be staying on the steering committee and continuing to support its vital work, and to supporting the CRP on the national Curlew Recovery Taskforce.

Looking ahead, we are very much looking forward to having Mary speak at Groundswell Agriculture Festival on storytelling, nature and farming, and to our annual pilgrimage to Global Birdfair - both in July.

Curlews on the New Bank Note?



The Bank of England's public vote on which species should feature on future bank notes is, on the surface, a great initiative, a chance for national participation and getting the public speaking about British species. But from where we at Curlew Action are standing, it's also a rare chance to do something that is genuinely meaningful for a species in big trouble.

At Curlew Action, we have one obvious winner who we would love to see on the new notes, no prizes for guessing which one.

The Eurasian Curlew is one of the UK's most iconic birds and yet, despite being such a remarkable species, its population has been falling at an alarming rate for decades. It's not a slow decline, it's plummeting towards local extinction in some parts of the UK, including Wales. In 2015, Curlews were added to the UK Red List of highest conservation concern. In Northern Ireland, population numbers have dropped by 82% since 1987.

So when the Bank of England announced a public vote to decide which species gets immortalised on currency and we heard Curlews had made the shortlist, we saw more than a design decision. We saw a once in a generation spotlight opportunity. And frankly, the Curlew has been waiting politely in the corner of the British public's consciousness for far too long, occasionally clearing its throat, hoping someone will notice.

Why are we so bothered about seeing our favourite bird on a bank note? Because visibility matters. Conservation isn't just about habitat management and policy papers. It's also about having a strong presence in the public eye. If people don't see a species, they forget it exists. And if they forget it exists, it becomes much easier for it to quietly disappear. A Curlew on a bank note wouldn't just circulate financially, it would be circulated socially. It would end up in wallets, birthday money given to grandchildren, and paying with cash in cafes for your coffee. Suddenly, the Curlew would be everywhere in our society.

Of course, we at Curlew Action are under no illusion that a bank note will magically reverse population decline. But public awareness is just the beginning. It influences funding. It influences policy. It influences whether people care enough to act. And loving something, inconvenient as it is, tends to be the first step in saving anything.

So yes, we are campaigning for the Curlew. Not just because it is the loudest voice in the marshes, or the most iconic bird in Britain, but because it is one of the most urgent and because it deserves to be seen in places that the general public will stop and notice.

[Read our full blog on the bank note here.](#)

[Vote for the Curlew here](#) before 3 July.

An update on the Amtsvennwiesen (Germany, North Rhine- Westphalia)

~ by Daniela Reich

Daniela Reich is a Research Associate in the LIFE Meadow Birds Project for the State Agency for Nature, Environment and Climate in North-Rhine Westphalia. Here she gives us news from the field.

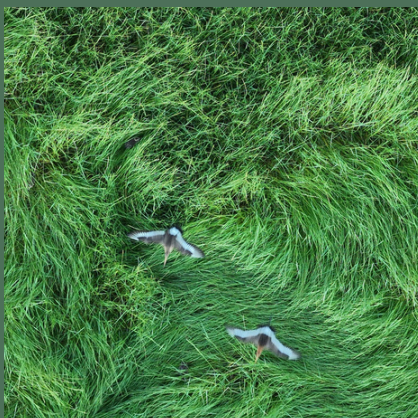
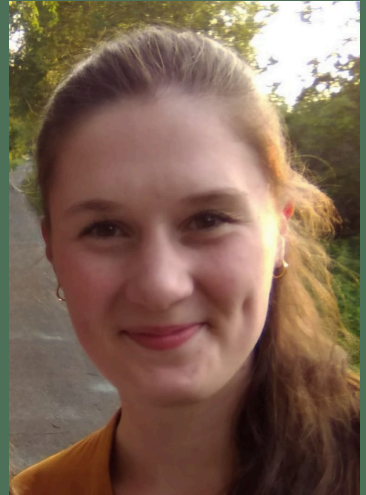
Whilst over the past five years we've usually seen just one or two, or on one occasion six, Black-tailed Godwits fledge, today there are 40 (from 19 breeding pairs)! We've seen similar figures for the Curlew over the years, but currently (out of 14 breeding pairs) 13 chicks have already fledged and three pairs are still rearing younger chicks. Could have been more, but Polecats were quite efficient. Nevertheless, a great success and a first step! The Lapwing has also broken all records - out of 44 breeding pairs, 43 chicks have fledged. And all of this within or right next to an area of 250-hectare.

At last, the measures taken over the past five years are showing results!

We have adapted the management of the state-owned land (now a mosaic of hay meadows, pastures and mown pastures) and, by removing numerous copses, have restored open land and cleared several water bodies. Thanks to a foundation, more land within the nature reserve is now owned by the state. Hunting has also been improved: concrete pipe traps have been purchased, the use of night-vision technology to hunt carnivorous mammals has been made possible this year, and hunting of Carrion Crows is now permitted within the SPA. On top of that, 9 km of wire fencing was installed this year (3 the years before).

At the start of the month, we even had a visit from the Environment Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia. The Environment Ministry had funded the full-time gamekeeper and an additional 6 km of fencing for this year. He wanted to see for himself, at short notice, just how successful we've been.

In other words: that was genuine teamwork! We are incredibly grateful to all the farmers, hunters, local residents and the authorities involved! And, of course, preparations are already underway for further measures to benefit our meadow birds. Fingers crossed, especially for rewetting! And we think this is an example of how important smaller areas are for nature conservation.



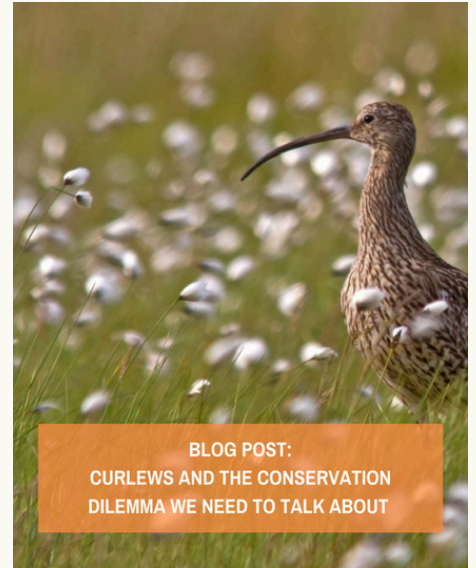
Blogs

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

I'd like to start by thanking everyone who supports Curlew Action. This takes many forms I know and all are welcome. We simply could not do what we do without you. Today I ask you to help us grow. We are ambitious and want to do as much as we can to help Curlews, but this takes money. Regular monthly donations help us to plan ahead, but one-off are always gratefully received.



Are there any significant events you'd like to mark? Consider giving to Curlew Action as a way to mark it and show you care. If you know of any businesses or organisations you believe share our values please let us know and we'll be in touch.

Please also consider leaving Curlew Action a monetary gift in your Will as a continuation of your in-life giving and to ensure Curlews have the best possible chance to not just survive, but thrive! Thank you.

Malhamdale Environment Group

On 11 June 2026 Curlew Action's General Manager, Flo, joined the Director of the Curlew Recovery Partnership England, Ryan Burrell, to give a joint talk in West Yorkshire to the Malhamdale Environment Group. Sixty people made up of local farmers, conservation projects and interested members of the public attended and listened to the talk on Curlew conservation and policy, which was followed by a Q&A from farmer Neil Heseltine before questions were opened to the audience and led by ecologist & botanist, Jane Smart OBE.

The event was followed the next day by a walk of local farmland and moors to see wader habitat and nesting birds, during which Lapwing chicks were seen and several Curlews protecting nests, as well as a small number of Redshank. The trip was rounded up with tea and cakes and the opportunity to talk about wader conservation and nature friendly farming in the local area.



A Summer message from Mary

I'm taking the summer to write, rest and regroup after such a busy period, but I very much hope to catch up with many of you on the road again soon.

And thank you, as ever, for all your lovely messages, comments and support. It means the world.



Global Birdfair - July 2026

We are looking forward to joining the nature community once again on the shores of Rutland Water at this years Global Birdfair, which runs from 10 - 12 July.

Global Birdfair is an amazing gathering of nature lovers. It's a weekend full of talks, workshops, activities, displays and for us, showcasing our work and sharing how the public can get involved with Curlew Action. We will be there with our merch stand where you can stock up on Curlew t-shirts, cards and some brand new products!

We would like to take this moment to thank sponsors, Limosa and Wildwings, who make it possible each year for charities like Curlew Action to attend Global Birdfair.

[Book your tickets here!](#)



NEW MERCH ALERT



For all you Curlew sock fans (and we know you're out there), we have some brand new socks that you will love!

We have teamed up with Hedgy for a brand new design of sock ready for the season ahead.

These socks will be launched at Global Birdfair and will be released on our website soon after, so watch this space!

International Trips

In May, Director Mary and General Manager Flo made two trips to different projects in Germany and Austria, followed by locations in Scotland. The Germany trip included visits to the very north in Schleswig-Holstein, North-Rhine Westphalia, Lower Saxony, and Bavaria, which included an afternoon spent in Munich Airport which, amazingly, hosts almost 100 breeding pairs of both Curlew and Lapwing. Seeing an airport which not only manages but promotes co-existence with nesting birds was a highlight of the trip, along with opportunities over the course of the week to help build electric fences to protect nests, and briefly handle chicks. As is the case with every international trip we have done now, the problems facing Curlews are not dissimilar between sites, but the habitat itself varies a lot, as do the drivers of these problems, with differences in culture, land management, and policy which all play a part in why Curlews are under such pressure.

This is no different in Scotland. The first site visited was RSPB Insh Marshes, where the land is so wet that mammals are hesitant to cross it to get to nests and where predator control therefore isn't seen as being as high a priority as in other areas, such as Forfar's Glenogil Estate – an intensively managed grouse moor where Curlews, along with other ground nesting birds, have success due to a lack of predators, but which may experience disturbance from grazing sheep.

As on all of our trips, the complexity of the issues were made clear, and are difficult to solve. It is clear from meeting numerous fieldworkers that they are driven and passionate, but many are struggling from burnout. However, the beginning of the season saw some success and optimism for the summer ahead (see Daniela's piece above!). We hope that the end of the breeding season will have seen many a chick fledge throughout Europe and a conclusion by many that the season produced a healthy new recruitment of chicks.

You can read our blog entries about the trips [here](#).



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

Isle of Wight Wetland Officer – Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Closing Date: Sunday 12th July 2026

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is seeking an enthusiastic, hands-on employee to help to re-naturalise a river and floodplain as part of a wider delivery of wetland habitat improvements, based on the



**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust**

Isle of Wight at the charity's rewilding site, Wilder Little Duxmore. The role will involve the use of machinery to manage scrub, build and maintain fences, remove non-native plants and more.

Find out more about the role and requirements [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.

REQUEST FOR FOOTAGE

We are trying to build up our bank of Curlew videos and photographs that we can use across social media, advertisement 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 email 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

Curlew Moment of the Month

Our Curlew moment of the month comes from Natalie Busch who captured this beautiful moment of these chicks during her fieldwork in Germany.

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

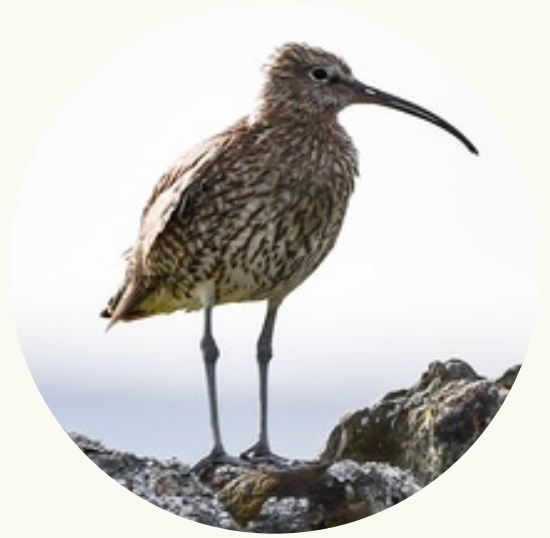


Photo: Julie Smith



Photo: Natalie Busch

Limosa

Four decades of guided birding and wildlife tours

WildWings

Travel the whole wild world

**Comprehensive selection of wildlife
focused tours across all seven
continents**

**Diverse destinations from short breaks
in Europe to holidays to some of the
world's most remote locations**

**Decades of experience in organising
small-group holidays**

Genuinely all-inclusive pricing

**High rate of repeat bookings with many
travellers returning year after year**

**All holidays led by named guides whose
biographies are on our websites**

Small groups ✓

Fully inclusive ✓

Quality accommodation ✓

Fantastic food ✓

Comfortable transport ✓

Expert guides ✓

Flight-inclusive prices available ✓



www.limosaholidays.co.uk

tours@limosaholidays.co.uk | 01692 580 623

www.wildwings.co.uk

tours@wildwings.co.uk | 0117 9658 333



Limosa and WildWings are proud to be the main conservation sponsor for Global Birdfair