Curlew Action

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Photo: Diane Williams

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.

DONATE TO SUPPORT CURLEW ACTION

EMAIL: admin@curlewaction.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: @CurlewAction

WEBSITE: curlewaction.org

A Message from Mary



I love this time of year. There is so much energy in the sky as birds migrate above our heads, a stream of global travellers bringing restlessness to our more sedentary lives. I love the leaves blowing, the sea regaining its strength—and wearing jumpers again. Curlews are now back on their wintering grounds, dotted along coasts and mudflats, and our UK and European round-ups will reveal how they fared through a cold spring and the challenges of hot weather and drought. As the year draws towards its close, it is good to reflect on all that has happened, though there is still plenty to come before Christmas.

It has been a busy and varied few weeks. I chaired a panel of farmers at the Cynefin celebration in mid-Wales and spoke about the importance of storytelling in conservation at the AEWA meeting on Curlews and godwits in Finland. In Norfolk, I caught up with good friends Nick Acheson, Jake Fiennes, Chrissie Kelley and her partner, Martin Hayward Smith. We spent a magical day on the marshes, ending with geese coming into a wetland as evening fell—the stuff dreams are made of. Rewilding was on the agenda too, with visits to Doddington Hall and Hannah Dale's farm in Lincolnshire.

I also recorded a podcast with Joshua Harris for The Wilder Question, which you can listen to here. At St George's in Bristol, I loved interviewing Ed Drewitt about migrating birds and Professor Mike Benton about the furriness of dinosaurs—both fascinating conversations. And David Gray and I were interviewed about our forthcoming event on Curlews and creativity at the Hay Festival Winter Weekend on 26 November.

There is lots more happening throughout November, but that is for next time. As ever, thank you for continuing to support Curlew Action.

We love being in touch with you all.





Upcoming In Person Events

Here at Curlew Action, we are always working hard to create events that bring both the magic of nature to a wide audience, and events that allow people working in Curlew conservation to come together to share skills, updates and network.

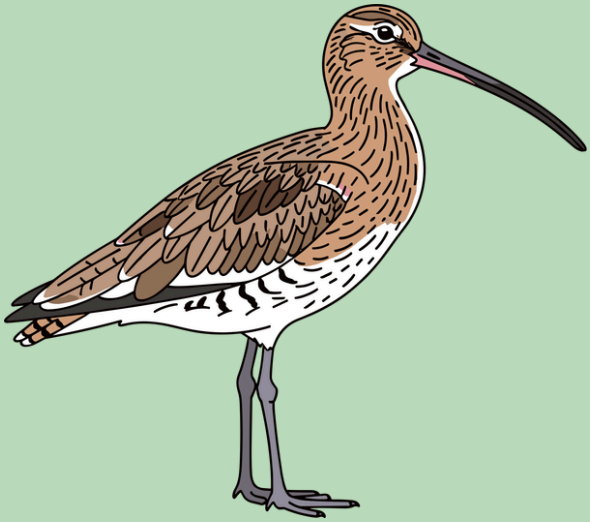
Keep an eye on our social media for details of upcoming events which will be happening throughout the remainder of 2026 and into 2027!

Curlew Forum - 19 November

On 19 November, we'll gather at Slimbridge for the Curlew Forum, bringing together fieldworkers working to protect lowland Curlews.

Despite the often difficult news, it is always such a warm and heartening gathering. It will be a chance to share experiences, learn from each other and find encouragement for the year ahead.

The in-person element of this event is sold out but if you would like to join us virtually, please email charlie@curlewaction.org



World Curlew Day - Save the Date!

We are also deep into planning two special events to celebrate World Curlew Day 2027:

David Gray and Mary will be at Norwich Arts Centre on 20 April, then the following evening, 21 April, at Conway Hall in London, joined by the wonderful Hannah Bourne-Taylor and Caroline Lucas for our event entitled 'Fighting for Nature from the Edge'.

Please come along, support us and help raise funds for Curlew Action.

Book now here for Norwich Arts Centre.
Conway Hall tickets coming soon.

Upcoming Virtual Events

Online European Curlew Predation Management Workshop

Save the date! We'll be getting down to the gritty business of field conservation with our two-day online workshop on predation management on 3–4 February.

Bookings for this event will open soon, keep an eye on your inbox and our social media.

UK Breeding Season Round Up Webinar

Join us as we hear an overview of the UK Curlew breeding season on Wednesday 11 November at 6:30pm.

In this webinar, we will hear from speakers from across the UK as they give an update on the Curlew breeding season in their areas.

This webinar will be held over Microsoft Teams, and the link for the meeting will be shared in an e-mail to attendees. Tickets are free - donations appreciated!

Book now.



European Breeding Season Round Up Webinar



Join us as we hear an overview of the European Curlew breeding season on Wednesday 9 December at 6:30pm.

In this webinar, we will hear from speakers from across Europe as they give an update on the Curlew breeding season in their areas.

This webinar will be held over Microsoft Teams, and the link for the meeting will be shared in an e-mail to attendees. Tickets are free - donations appreciated!

Book now.

Policy Update

Dr Ryan Burrell, CRP

The Curlew Recovery Partnership continues to highlight the support needed to recover Curlews. Recent developments have created opportunities for farmers and land managers, although gaps remain in available actions, access to funding, and balancing the preservation of open ground with other land-uses such as forestry.

England's Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs) remains the key mechanism for delivering actions for Curlew recovery in farmed landscapes. The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) 2026 offer included the replacement action GRH12 - supporting rough grassland management for upland breeding waders. This was a welcome step towards more targeted support for breeding waders; however, SFI26's second application window closed in less than six hours after demand exceeded its budget. Another offer is planned for 2027, with alternatives to first-come, first-served applications under consideration to prevent the same problem from recurring.

Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier remains open and provides access to broader measures needed for Curlew recovery, such as capital support for electric fencing to protect nests (FG8: Anti-predator temporary electric fencing). Curlews are a relatively recent addition to this option after successful work by the CRP with Natural England. Dedicated funding for coordinated predation management for breeding waders, including lethal control where necessary, remains a key gap in CSHT. Of note, in Wales, guidance was published in March setting out conditions under which predation management within species-recovery projects may receive public funding, including approved plans and monitoring. In Scotland, targeted control to support breeding wader and black grouse conservation, where predation issues are identified, is already available under the Agri-environment and Climate scheme.



However, we should not assume that adding predator control alone would reverse low Curlew productivity in England. A combination of beneficial habitat measures, reduced losses to agriculture, stakeholder collaboration, and effective predation management is essential. Understanding the variation in role of different predator species and what influences their impact between breeding landscapes is therefore necessary. Natural England's Species Recovery Programme for 2026-2029 has funded the WARDEN project, which will support evidence-based approaches to reducing predation and recovering breeding waders. Landscape Recovery projects may bring significant positives for Curlew, although the scheme is closed to new applications.

Other recent funding routes may also bring benefits for Curlew. The £30 million Farmer Collaboration Fund supports farmer groups and facilitators, with Round 2 planned for spring 2027, while Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) has been extended to March 2029. New funding of £26 million will support authorities responsible for England's Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), offering opportunities to include important measures in local priorities. The CRP has input directly and through its partners into several LNRS development processes. As LNRS move into delivery, it will be important to assess how consistently authorities have prioritised Curlew recovery and whether those priorities translate into funded action.

Although there is still work to do, policy is moving in a positive direction for Curlew. The CRP will continue to highlight policy gaps and make the case for effective, coordinated measures to support Curlew recovery. By supporting collaboration, sharing evidence and informing policy, we aim to secure sustained action for Curlew and help more Curlew chicks reach fledging.

International Wader Study Group Conference



On the first weekend of September the International Wader Study Group conference was held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and attended by our General Manager, Flo. Flo delivered a presentation entitled 'When Conservation Strategies Collide: Rewilding & The Future of Waders', in which she spoke about real and perceived conflicts between wader conservation and rewilding and what the two have in common, before emphasising the importance of working together to achieve a shared vision of a richer natural world. This talk led to interesting further discussions over the weekend and to the creation of a guest blog entitled 'Curlews, Rewilding & Dialogue' by attendee, philosopher Kate McFarland. You can read the blog entry here.

The conference included numerous talks detailing recent research in the wader world, from Professor Jenny Gill answering the question of why bird ranges are expanding northwards, to another researcher discussing the temperature-dependent brooding ecology of the Red-wattled Lapwing. Among many, other topics included woodland edge effects on waders, the question of how Black-tailed Godwits found their way to Iceland, the effects of cockle distribution on the movements of wintering Oystercatchers, and of course, there were talks about Curlews, including Curlew nest site selection and telemetry-informed policy for Curlews, perspectives from Curlew nest-fencing practitioners, nest camouflage, and importantly, a talk about lessons to take from the extinction of the Slender-billed Curlew.

As ever, this was a highly interesting and very useful networking event which we were glad to be a part of once more, and hope to continue our involvement with.



Photo: Davorka Meister

Fundraising Update

By Sarah Colwell

Every donation to Curlew Action helps us work towards a future where the Curlew's call remains part of our lives. These birds face serious pressures, and too few chicks survive in many breeding areas. Your support helps us turn concern into action.

Your donations support three essential parts of our work: speaking up for Curlews in policy, helping fieldworkers share practical knowledge, and raising public awareness. They help us bring experience from the field into discussions with ministers and parliamentarians about farmer support and land management. They also make possible our fieldworker workshops and webinars, where people exchange knowledge about protecting nests, improving habitats and helping chicks survive.

Through World Curlew Day, walks, music, art and education, your generosity helps more people discover curlews and care about their future.

Times are difficult for all charities. Curlew Action runs with very small overheads, and every donation is precious to us. Regular gifts help us plan ahead, while individual donations and fundraising events all make a valuable contribution.

We are so grateful to everyone raising money—from David Padmore's Winter Spine Race to those taking part in the Curlew 500 virtual challenge. If you have a fundraising idea, please get in touch. From marathons to coffee mornings, we would love to hear what you have in mind. Contact sarah@curlewaction.org to chat!

Please support us if you can, and thank you for everything you do for curlews.





‘Curlew Conversations’ of 2026

We have come to the end of our new, six-part webinar series this year. Entitled ‘Curlew Conversations’, topics in our newly formatted series are broken up into two sessions – an introductory session with one speaker, and a second session which delves into more detail, and which includes two speakers.

Topics covered this year included An Introduction to Curlew Conservation, Nature Friendly Farming, and Grouse Moors. You can watch the presentations and read their associated blogs in the hyperlinks above.





Have Something to Say?

Do you have something related to our work that you’d like to write a guest blog about, such as Curlews, nature education, or simply your love of wildlife? You might be a fieldworker wishing to reflect on the 2026 season, or a supporter who is hoping that a young loved one might one day take the Natural History GCSE at school.

We have had several guest blogs written for us over the last few months, including on topics such as improving dialogue between rewilders and Curlew conservationists, how our love for a species can turn into meaningful action, and how a farming community in Nidderdale has developed practical tools and collaborative approaches to protect Curlews.

We are now on the look-out for more! If you have an idea and would like to write a blog to feature on our website, contact charlie@curlewaction.org to discuss.







Image: Les Bunyan

Wintering Waders Signs

Winter is coming and Curlews and other waders are back at our beaches and estuaries! They may not be having chicks at the moment, but they are still impacted by disturbance, and should still be watched from a respectful distance. Waders at the beach are fuelling up over the cold winter months, and many will have travelled hundreds of kilometres on migration. Conditions are tough, and disturbance expends unnecessary energy and causes unnecessary stress. The winter condition of these birds can even have an impact on how the following breeding season goes for them, through carryover effects. Read more about the issue and what you can do here.



To remind people to keep a safe distance from these birds and to ensure they make sure their dogs do the same, we ran a competition in the autumn of 2024 for people to design signs to be put up to encourage people to avoid disturbing over-wintering Curlews and other birds. You can download the designs, one of which is available in Welsh, for your own use here. Or, if you would like to purchase an A4 corrugated sign of either design for £4 per sign + postage, e-mail charlie@curlewaction.org.

Curlew Calendars

Are you thinking about Christmas presents? We have a great range of Curlew merchandise and artwork available on our website. We are excited to show you our brand new Curlew Action calendars, created using images from our Winter Curlew Photography competition earlier this year!

You can purchase now, ready for the New Year!



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.



Opportunities

Working Wetlands Advisory Officer (Tavy) - Devon Wildlife Trust

Closing Date: Sunday 8 November 2026

'Do you want to help farmers in the Tavy lead the way for nature-friendly farming across Devon? This role will work directly with farmers and landowners across the Tavy catchment, supporting practical action for nature, water quality and healthy, resilient landscapes. You will provide practical advice to identify opportunities on farm that improve land management, while recognising the realities, pressures and opportunities of modern agriculture.'

Find out more and apply 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.

Project Filming Request

We are working with wonderful nature photographer, Logan Walker and we are looking for a project that Logan can visit in 2027 to capture some footage for our social media. We are looking for anyone who is ringing, headstarting, nest fencing or running any project involving Curlews. Please get in touch so we can link you up with Logan to chat!



Merch Spotlight

Get ahead with your Christmas shopping and give a gift that helps Curlews! Our Curlew Action shop has something for every Curlew lover, from beautiful artwork and greetings cards to clothing and accessories. Keep cosy on winter walks with our range of hats and hoodies, and show your support for Curlew conservation wherever you go. Every purchase is a wonderful way to celebrate these special birds and support our work to protect their future. Last postage date for Christmas 12th December.













Curlew Culture

In each newsletter, we are sharing a piece of nature poetry or art we love.

If you would like to share your nature poetry, we would love to see it. Please email charlie@curlewaction.org.

Sonnet for a Curlew by Kevin Morris

I walked from Flash, the morning mist lay still
On grassy slopes as I turned north, then hush,
A distant cry came to me, faint yet shrill.
Not blackbird, goldfinch, skylark, nor song thrush
But rising, falling, such a cadence sweet.
As Wolf Edge crested high above the moor,
I watched the Curlew turn to land, deceit
Employed, to draw my eyes from valley floor
She rose again and circled to a wall.
A sentry thus, with fearsome down-curved bow,
Or crescent moon; My gaze was held, in thrall
Of this spring-sent omen. Daybreak now,
This beauty took to flight, and left its song,
A coda, strong a memory ever long.



REQUEST FOR FOOTAGE

We are trying to build up our bank of Curlew videos and photographs that we can use across social media, advertisements 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 e-mail 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



Photo: Julie Smith

Curlew Moment of the Month

Our Curlew moment of the month comes from Diane Williams who captured this Curlew catching a snack!

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



Photo: Diane Williams

With Autumn well and truly here and a chill in the air, now is perhaps time to start thinking about Christmas and the gifts you will give.

This year, why not celebrate those you love with an In Memoriam or In Honour Of donation to Curlew Action?

It's very easy to do. Just go to our Donations page by clicking here, and tick the box 'Dedicate my donation in honor or in memory of someone'. Provide an email address of your chosen honouree and we will let them know.



You get a warm glow and Curlew Action gets to continue the important work of saving the Curlew.

Win, win, win!

Your generosity helps our small charity connect practical conservation, shared learning, campaigning and education.

Thank you for being part of Curlew Action.