

SOS Buzzard / Website May 2020

Save our Curlews Campaign and Appeal.

Still send in Curlew records

Because of the Government restrictions to help limit the spread of coronavirus, all the Community Wildlife Group (CWG) surveys to locate Curlew territories in 2020 have been cancelled.

However, the Curlew situation remains critical, with a 77% decline between 1990 and 2010, and a further decline since. There's probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County now, and we haven't got long to save them from local extinction. We can't afford a total loss of data on their population and distribution in 2020.



Therefore, while you should obviously comply with the coronavirus lockdown restrictions, please continue to record Curlews, any you see or hear from home, or on your daily exercise.

All records should indicate number of Curlews, behaviour (feeding, in flight, nesting, display (bubbling) call, agitated call, chasing off crows, Buzzards, etc.), and date and place (including OS grid reference).

Please also check Curlews for colour-rings.

Nest Finding and Protection Project

Similarly, the Nest Finding and Protection Project in the Upper Clun and Clee Hill CWG areas has been cancelled in 2020. The Community Wildlife Group members have been unable to travel from home to locate the Curlews, our contractors to find and fence the nests are not able to work, and we have been advised by the British Trust for Ornithology not to approach landowners (who may be self-isolating) for permission to go on their land. The whole project is dependent on finding Curlew nests in May, and obviously the birds' breeding timetable is not affected by human considerations. Therefore, even if the Government restrictions are lifted in the next few weeks, there is nothing we can do to catch up.

The funding contribution from SOS and the proceeds of the SOS Appeal (see below) will be carried forward to fund a similar project next year. A grant of £2,000 from the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund has been approved, and can be carried forward too. Grants of £5,000 from People's Postcode Lottery through the National Trust's Stepping Stones Project to fund project work in the Strettons area, and of £1,000 from the Garreg Llwyd Hill Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund for work in the Bettws-y-Crwyn part of the Upper Clun area, have also been approved. We have asked for them to be carried forward too, but no decisions have been made yet.

Further funding applications will be made between now and spring 2021, as the opportunities present themselves. If anyone knows of any funding opportunities, or grant-making bodies we can approach, please let us know.

SOS Save our Curlews Appeal

The Appeal leaflet, sent out with the February issue of The Buzzard, can be found [here](#). It has so far raised over £3,000 from about 30 SOS members. Gift Aid of about £700 can be claimed on these donations.

This is an excellent result, and all donors are thanked profusely for their generosity. Donors should note that we do not intend to send receipts as a matter of course, but we can provide confirmation of donations by email upon request.

The Appeal has not yet been sent to CWG members, as it was necessary to report back to the CWGs at their March meetings on their efforts last year before sending the appeal to them. Just as the launch was about to start, the impact of coronavirus on peoples' incomes and financial security became apparent. As the postponement of the projects means that we don't need the money this year, it was decided to leave sending the Appeal to CWG members and other public outlets until the situation becomes clearer.

The Appeal will be relaunched when appropriate, in the autumn.

Curlew Projects elsewhere

We work with other organisations to monitor and conserve Curlews, locally, regionally and nationally. Not surprisingly, most of the work in 2020 planned by these organisations in other parts of the country has also been cancelled, and many key staff have been furloughed.

Further information

A brief overview of the status of Curlews in Shropshire, conservation work, and monitoring by the Community Wildlife Groups, can be found [here](#).

In 2019, 320 people in 10 Community Wildlife Groups contributed well over 2,350 hours to surveying 267 tetrads (over 30% of the County total), and identified 94-115 Curlew territories, more than three-quarters of the total.

The Community Wildlife Groups have a joint website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk.

**Please send Curlew records and other information to
Leo Smith (SOS Curlew Campaign Co-ordinator)
leo@leosmith.org.uk 01694 720 296, but please also put records on
BirdTrack if it is your normal recording system.**