

CURLEWS, LAPWINGS AND OTHER BIRDS SURVEY

Introduction

Lapwing and Curlew have both suffered a massive contraction in range and population decline in the last 20 years or so, nationally and locally. Curlew has been described as the UK's highest bird conservation priority, as we have an estimated 28% of the European breeding population, and 19 – 27% of the world population.

The Strettons area Community Wildlife Group agreed to conduct a Lapwing and Curlew survey in 2017, to complement similar surveys carried out by other Community Wildlife Groups in different parts of the Shropshire Hills. The Church Stretton branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society also agreed to support the survey.

An area was selected where these species were found breeding in the 2008-13 Shropshire Bird Atlas, comprising 30 2x2 kilometre squares on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, known as "tetrads", shown in Appendix 1. The aim was to locate the territories of breeding pairs, and record behaviour, to estimate the population. No attempt was made to locate nests. Although the survey concentrated on the two main target species, and their habitats, surveyors were asked to also record on their maps any of 20 other target species seen.

Surveyors were recruited for each of the 30 squares, and were asked to make three visits, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June, at times convenient to them, with visits concentrating on habitats where the main target species might be found, and lasting around three hours each. The surveys were conducted from Public Rights of Way, unless individual surveyors obtained landowners permission to leave them. Survey maps and recording instructions were supplied. A practical fieldwork training meeting was held for those that wanted one.

The survey was a success, and all 30 squares were covered. It was agreed to repeat it in 2018, using the same methodology and aiming to cover the same 30 squares. A briefing meeting, outlining the results in 2017, and planning the 2018 survey, was held on 20 March. Most of the people who participated in 2017 attended, plus 11 new helpers. An outdoor fieldwork training meeting was held for those that wanted it, on Saturday 7 April, and 5 people attended.

Almost all the squares (27 out of 30) were surveyed, but one squares were only surveyed once, in early May. There were 34 participants.

A detailed report of the methodology and results will be supplied to all the participants shortly.

Results

The following maps show the distribution of Lapwing and Curlew territories found in 2018. The populations are estimated at:-

- **Curlew: definitely 6 pairs, probably 7, possibly 8 and perhaps more**
- **Lapwing: 8 - 9 pairs, perhaps more**

This compares with the estimates made last year:-

- **Curlew: definitely 5 pairs, probably 6, possibly 7 and perhaps more**
- **Lapwing: 8 - 9 pairs, perhaps more**

Strettons Area CWG
&
Church Stretton SOS

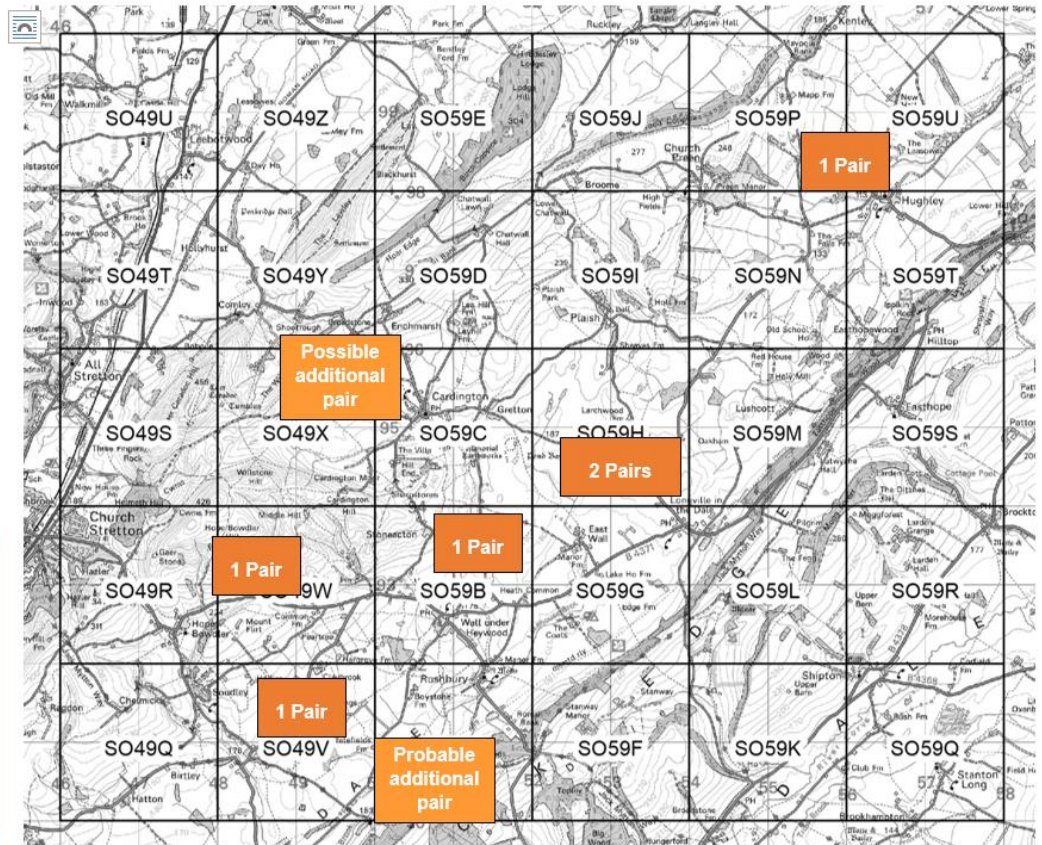
Lapwing & Curlew Survey

Results 2018

Curlew
territories
(All survey
and other
information)

Estimated
population

6 – 8
Pairs



Strettons Area CWG
&
Church Stretton SOS

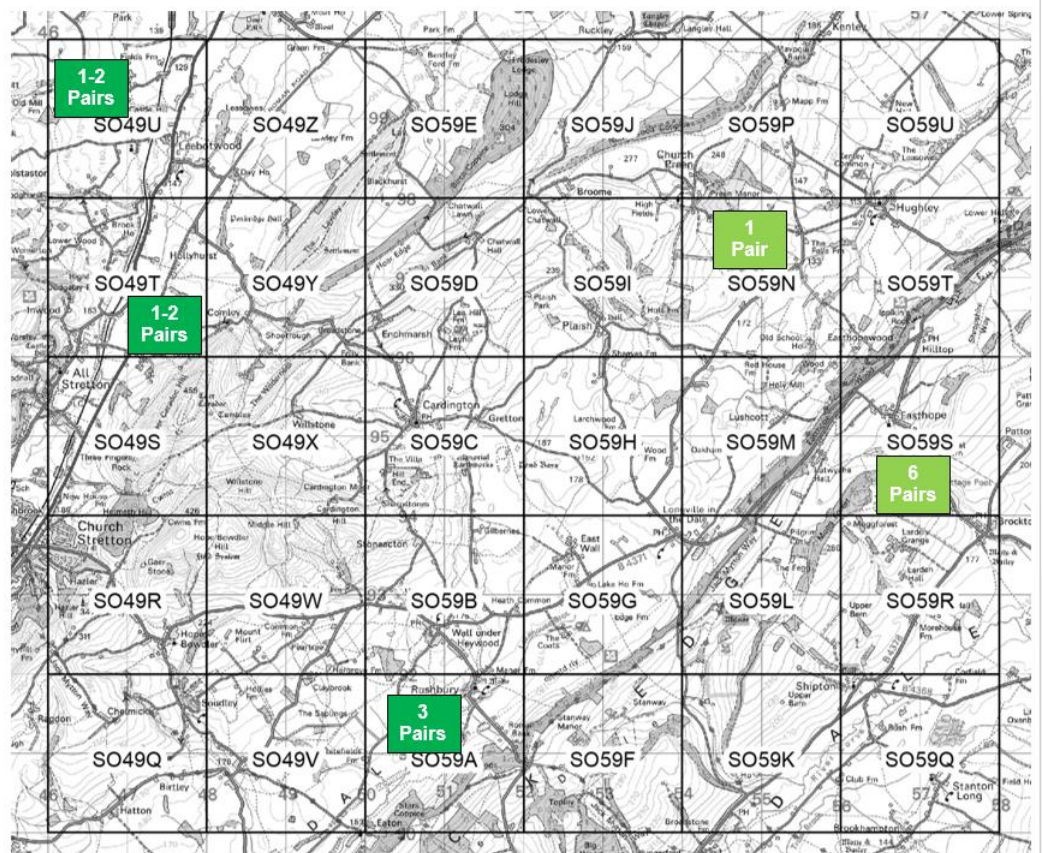
Lapwing & Curlew Survey

Results 2018

Lapwing
(All survey
periods, + casual
records)

Estimated
population

Pairs



Other Target Species

Participants were requested to make an effort to record Kestrels, as a nest box scheme and colour-ringing project is planned for them, as they too have declined considerably in recent years. However there were few observations, and none were recorded where a pair raised

three young last year, near Longville.. The population in the area is estimated at up to 10 pairs, perhaps a few more than the 6 – 8 estimated last year.

All except four of the other target species were found (Grey Partridge, Snipe Barn Owl and Dipper). Swift nest sites were found only at Wilderhope Manor, where there is a substantial colony, but this survey is targeted at habitats where Swifts are unlikely to be found. Spotted Flycatcher (SO59H) and Reed Bunting (SO49S) were also only found in one square. Skylark, Dunnock and Yellowhammer were numerous and widespread, but only Red Kite was found in more than half the 30 tetrads. This reflects the rapid increase and spread of this graceful raptor, which bred in Shropshire for the first time in 130 years as recently as 2006.

The maximum count in each tetrad (in any one of the three surveys) for each of the other target species is shown in the table. The maximum counts are given to avoid double or triple counting of individual birds.

Square (Tetrad)												
	Kestrel	Red Kite	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnock	Wheat- ear	Stone- chat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow- hammer
SO49 Q	1	5	4			6	4		3		4	3
SO49 R	No other target species recorded											
SO49 S	1	1	1	2		3		2		10	1	
SO49 T												1
SO49 U		1	1									
SO49 V		2	5						2			1
SO49 W	1	1			1	1					1	
SO49 X	1				1						2	1
SO49 Y	2	2		2		2	1			3	1	
SO49 Z	No other target species recorded											
SO59 A		1	2			2				2	1	2
SO59 B	1					3						1
SO59 C		3										
SO59 D		1				2					2	1
SO59 E	Square not surveyed											
SO59 F	1	1	6			2				10		2
SO59 G		1	1							1	1	1
SO59 H		2	2								1	1
SO59 I		1										
SO59 J			2			4					2	
SO59 K	Square not surveyed											
SO59 L		1				1					1	
SO59 M			1				1					3
SO59 N		5	7			17				3		5
SO59 P	1	1	10			6						2
SO59 Q						1					2	
SO59 R	Square not surveyed											
SO59 S	1					3						1
SO59 T			1									
SO59 U	1	1	13			6						3
Total	11	30	56	4	2	59	6	2	5	29	19	28

Save our Curlews Campaign

Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Shropshire Ornithological Society are leading a “Save our Curlews” Campaign, funded by a joint Appeal. See <http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/> Members are encouraged to donate to the Appeal.

It is hoped that, once this survey has located the Curlew breeding territories in the area, efforts will be made to find and protect Curlew nests.

Participants

Thanks to the following people, who undertook the survey work:-

John Arnfield, Steve Baker, John Bent, Steve Butler, Stuart Chambers, John Corfield, Mags Cousins, Julie Cowley, Sue Cunningham, Gill Davies, Robin Gilbert, Joe Gomme, Nigel Green, Frank Hinde, June Holloway, Kerri Holloway, Melanie Houlder, Peter Houlder, Jim Jarrett, Tony Jones, John Knowles, Jaclyn Lake, Jaclyn Lake, Graham Lewis, Andrew Morton, Roger Owen, Ron Parnell, Ian Plumridge, Jill Plumridge, Jane Potts, Eric Sant, Anne Schofield, Jenny Vine and Dick Ward, .

Full Report

The full report will be available shortly on the Community Wildlife Groups website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

Plans for the Future

The survey will be repeated in future years, so we can get a better picture of the population and distribution of Lapwing and Curlew, work with farmers to promote conservation, and organise nest protection for Curlews.

New participants are needed in 2019. It's easy and enjoyable, simple instructions will be provided, and there's a fieldwork training session for anyone that wants it. If you want to help, or would like further information, please come to the meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 19th March 2019 at the Methodist Church Hall, Watling Street, Church Stretton, or contact Leo Smith (leo@leosmith.org.uk 01694 720296), Nigel Green (nigel662@btinternet.com 01694 722043) or David John (dalison@hotmail.co.uk 01694 724772).

Leo Smith
February 2019

This is a detailed topographic map of a region in England, showing a grid of 48 squares labeled SO49U through SO49Q. The map includes contour lines, roads, rivers, and various place names. Key locations include Church Stretton, Cardington, and Shipton. The grid is overlaid on a detailed map showing terrain, roads, and settlements.