

Three Parishes

*(Weston Rhyn, St. Martin's
& Gobowen)*

**Community
Wildlife
Group**



**Bird Survey
Results
2020**



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Three Parishes Community Wildlife Group

covering the parishes of
St Martins, Weston Rhyn and Selattyn & Gobowen

The Group was established in November 2016, with objectives that include actively promoting conservation, encouraging local interest in wildlife, pursuing original research

and making findings available to legitimate conservation organisations

Both Lapwing and Curlew have 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.

One of the aims of the Group, when established, was therefore to involve local people in surveying the area for Lapwing and Curlew, to see if the populations had continued to fall here following the Bird Atlas surveys carried out in 2008-13.

The Group meeting in March 2017 was devoted to a presentation on the methodology and results of similar surveys carried out by Community Wildlife groups in the Shropshire Hills since 2004, and the organisation of a similar survey in the Three Parishes area.

An Introductory leaflet, outlining the reasons for the survey and how it would be carried out, with an appeal for volunteers and publicising the meeting, was sent out by email to all members of the Group. Posters were put up in all three parishes, notices were included in all three parish magazines, and a press release was also sent out. The meeting was well

attended, by 26 people, most of whom agreed to help. Several other people, who were unable to come to the meeting, also volunteered to help.

The survey was successfully carried out in 2017, and the whole process was repeated again in 2018 and 2019. It was intended to repeat it in 2020. This report presents the results, and summarises the results in the previous three years.

The three previous Annual Bird reports can be found on the Three Parishes part of the website of all the Community Wildlife Groups, www.Shrops.CWGs.org.uk

CURLEWS, LAPWINGS AND OTHER BIRDS SURVEY

Introduction

A bird survey has been carried out in the Three Parishes Community Wildlife Group (3PCWG) area shown in Appendix 1 since 2017. The area has been divided up into 28 “tetrads” (2x2 kilometre squares, each made up of four of the one-kilometre squares shown on Ordnance Survey maps). These tetrads, and their reference code, are shown on the map in Appendix 1

It is intended to repeat the survey annually, to monitor long-term population trends for the two main species, as well as establish the current population and distribution, and use the results to promote conservation and attempt to reverse the decline.

The survey normally consists of three visits to each of these tetrads, once during each of three specified two week periods, around 1st April, 1st May and mid-June. Plans were made to carry out the surveys in 2020 as normal, but the first and second surveys were cancelled, after the Government’s advice to people to stay at home to help prevent the spread of the virus, and few people responded to the request to do survey visits when the restrictions in England were eased in mid-May. Very few casual records were received either.

Curlew



Curlew is the “most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK” (Brown *et al*, *British Birds* 2015), because the UK has an estimated 28% of the European, and 19-27% of the world population and is on the national *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern* 4 (Eaton *et al*, *British Birds* 2015), because of a decline of 62% in the UK between 1969 and 2014. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) has found a 48% decline in the UK and a 31% decline in England over the 23 year period 1995-2018.

In Shropshire, it declined from about 700 breeding pairs in 1990 to 160 in 2010 (a loss of 77%), and it disappeared from 62% of the Atlas

survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13. The decline has continued, and there were probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County in 2019. This is almost 30% of the total in southern England (*Saving England’s lowland Eurasian Curlews* Colwell *et al* *British Birds* 2020). At the current rate of decline, the County population will halve in about 13 years, and become virtually extinct in 25. Curlew is on the *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*, recently published by Shropshire Ornithological Society.

One pair was found in 2020, at an apparent nest site near a reedy pool in the southeast corner of SJ23L, just north of Baker's Hill and the Old Racecourse, and close to the intersection of that square and SJ23K, Q and R. The pair were first sighted on 24 March, and seen and heard there on several further dates in March and April. On 29 April one drove off a Raven, suggesting the presence of an active nest.

Curlews with a nest with eggs are usually quiet and inconspicuous, but if chicks hatch the adults become very noisy, and defend them vigorously. However, several visits in early June found no evidence of any chicks. The pair fed quietly in a field with lots of Crows, and did not respond to the observers. They were last recorded on 10 June, several weeks before any young might have fledged.

There were two pairs at this location in 2019, and at least one in 2018 and 2017. There was no evidence of a second pair in 2020, but all observations were at the one site, and the other parts of the four tetrads were not covered.

In March, there were 8 Curlews at Rhos-y-gadfa (SJ33H) on 5 March, and three records of four, from Pentekendrick (SJ23X) on 13 March and Ebnal Lodge (SJ33C), twice within a week, the second also on 13 March. These may all have been the same small flock, and all of them were almost certainly passage migrants moving north.

There were also records (two in March and one in late April) of a Curlew heard in the distance in SJ23W. This was probably one of the pair in SJ23L, but may possibly have been one from another pair.

One pair, possibly two, were located in 2020.

In the previous three years, the survey results have estimated 3, probably 4 pairs. The locations where the other pairs were found were not surveyed in 2020.

Over 150 adult Curlews have been colour-ringed since 2016, mainly at Dolydd Hafren Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust Reserve on the River Severn near Welshpool during March, when they are passing through on their way to their breeding sites. Each of these Curlews is individually identified by the two letters on the yellow ring on the left leg. Several of them have been found at breeding sites elsewhere in Shropshire, and seen at the nearby Wood Lane Nature Reserve. In previous years, surveyors in this area were asked to check any Curlews that were seen on the ground at breeding sites for rings, but none were.

Lapwing

Lapwing was added to the national *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern* in 2009, and this status was confirmed in 2015 (Eaton *et al*, British Birds 2015), because of a decline in the UK of 63% between 1969 and 2014, and 57% over the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 43% decline in the UK and a 30% decline in England over the 23 year period 1995-2018.

In Shropshire, it declined from about 3,000 breeding pairs in 1990 to 800 in 2010 (a loss of 73%), and it disappeared from 46% of the



Atlas survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13. The decline has continued, certainly in the areas monitored by several Community Wildlife Groups. Lapwing is on the *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*. The decline is partly obscured by the much larger numbers seen in winter flocks, which comprise birds escaping from the frozen ground in northern Europe.

Lapwings need short vegetation or bare ground to nest on, and those that nest on arable land have to move round to follow the farm crop rotation.

There were three reports of Lapwings in 2020 at likely breeding sites: 4-5 pairs near Hengoed (SJ23W) on 17 March, three near Duddleston Grange (SJ33N) in early April, and a pair seen on a number of occasions elsewhere in SJ23W, which are assumed to have nested nearby, and were probably part of the colony at Hengoed.

There were also reports in June of one Lapwing feeding at a pool near Wiggin ton (SJ33H), and a casual record of one Lapwing in SJ33M, but these were probably post-breeding locations.

As the group has grown, regular participants have gained experience, and some have surveyed the same square(s), gaining local knowledge. However, some participants have dropped out, so coverage in 2019 was not quite as good as 2018, but both these years were better than 2017.

The Lapwing population in the area was estimated at 29 - 32 pairs in 2019, similar to the 24 -30 pairs found in 2018, but more than the 19 – 22 pairs found in 2017.

In previous years, several small flocks of Lapwings were located at pools in and near the area in late June, and July. They form post-breeding flocks at suitable feeding sites, initially of failed breeders then they are joined by successful breeders and their juveniles, then when conditions become unsuitable for the flock to feed there (i.e. the crops grow, and / or the wet ground dries out) they move on to somewhere better. The SWT reserve at Wood Lane is an ideal location for such local flocks to gather.

Unfortunately, two of the best pools were drained by the landowner in the autumn of 2019. It is not surprising that the population is declining so quickly when good habitat is destroyed.

Kestrel



Kestrel is on the national *Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4* (Eaton *et al*, 2015), because of a decline in the UK of 46% between 1969 and 2014, and 33% over the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 35% decline in the UK and a 21% decline in England over the 23 year period 1995-2018.

In Shropshire, records of confirmed or probable breeding declined by 46% in the 870 Atlas survey squares (tetrads) between 1985-90 and 2008-13, and the population probably halved in that time. Kestrel is on the *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*.

Kestrels defend a small territory around the nest, but their home range, where they find most of their food, is at least 1 km square, but can be as large as 10 km square. Most hunting is usually carried out within 1.8km of the nest, but the home range is often partly shared with neighbouring pairs.

The decline appears to have continued in recent years, and the Shropshire Ringing and Raptor Groups have launched a nest box scheme to help improve breeding success, and try and find out the reasons for the decline. To help get a better understanding of the population and distribution, members doing CWG surveys have been asked to make a special effort to record Kestrels.

The population varies from year to year, depending on prey abundance, mainly voles, but Kestrels are much more likely to be observed in good breeding seasons, when they have to spend more time hunting for food for chicks, and travelling to and from the nest. In 2019, the numbers of Kestrels seen were much lower in all the CWG areas than in 2018, suggesting that 2019 was a very poor year for them, probably because of the long period of cold wet windy weather that lasted until their nesting time, followed by a drought.

There was one record of a Kestrel in 2020, seen regularly near Hengoed (SJ23W), including attacking a displaying Lapwing on 17 March.

**In previous years, three pairs were recorded in 2019,
six in 2018 and 4-5 in 2017.**

Cuckoo

Cuckoo has declined considerably in recent years, and was added to the *Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern* in the UK in 2009. By 2015 the decline had reached 60% in the previous 25 years. The BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 71% decline in both England and the English West Midlands region between 1995 and 2018.



In Shropshire, comparison of the 1985-90 and 2008-13 Atlas distribution maps showed it had disappeared from 56% of the tetrads occupied in the earlier period. The population estimate for the later period published in *The Birds of Shropshire* was 90–95 pairs, less than half that estimated in the earlier Atlas.

There was one record of a Cuckoo heard several times north of the Old Racecourse (SJ23K).

Red Kite

There were three reports of Red Kites, one near the Racecourse on May 27th, one in SJ33D during the first period and one 'regular but not frequent' in SJ23W, reflecting their increase and spread.

It was seen in one tetrad in 2019, compared to three in 2018 and two in 2017. These sightings were the often the first time the observers have seen them in the area.



There has been no evidence of breeding.

The first successful breeding in Shropshire for 130 years occurred as recently as 2006, but there are around 40 known pairs now, still mainly in the south-west hills, but a nest north of Shrewsbury was reported in 2017, with others in 2018 and 2019, so it is likely that breeding will become a regular occurrence here in the near future.

Other Target Species

Apart from the four main Target Species listed above, and Red Kite, members are normally asked to record observations of 19 Other Target species. Very few records of any of them were received in 2020, because of the limited extent of the survey work.

The Other Target Species usually recorded are:-

Barn Owl	Grey Partridge	Snipe	Wheatear
Bullfinch	Linnet	Spotted Flycatcher	Whinchat
Corn Bunting	Meadow Pipit	Stonechat	Yellow Wagtail
Dipper	Reed Bunting	Swift (nest sites only)	Yellowhammer
Dunnock	Skylark	Tree Sparrow	

Anecdotal Evidence for the Decline of Lapwing and Curlew

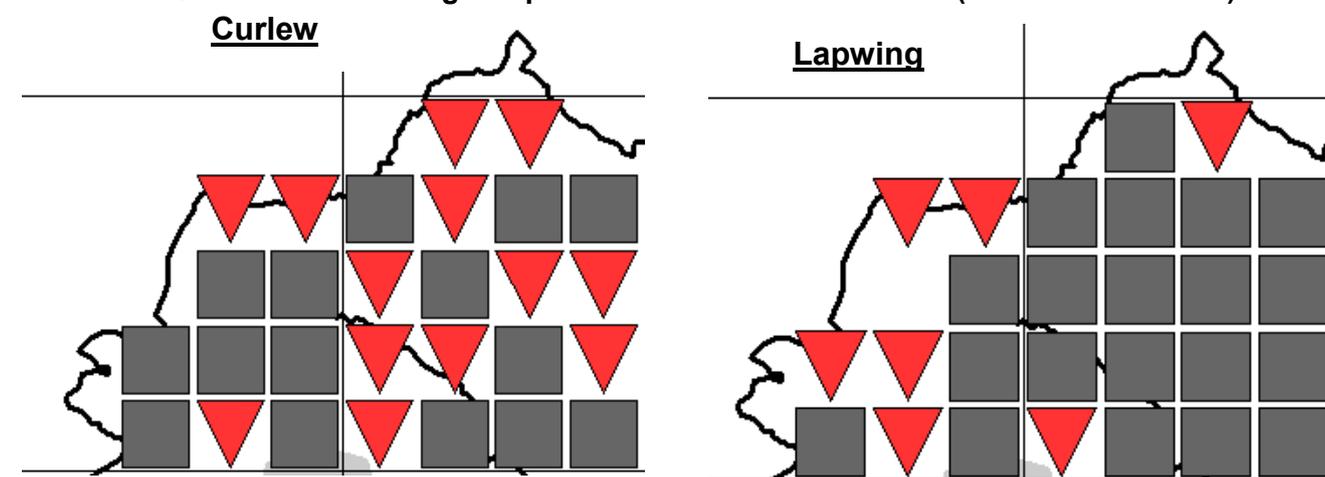
Members of the Bird Group who live in the area, and other local residents, say that Lapwings and Curlews are less common now than they used to be. Some members talked to local farmers in the course of their surveys, in 2018 and 2019, and they too said that Lapwings and Curlew are less common now than they used to be. Lapwings have apparently declined much more than Curlews. Because of the health risks, no efforts were made to engage with farmers in 2020.

Objective Evidence for the Decline of Lapwing and Curlew

In England, Lapwing and Curlew are in decline, nationally, and in Shropshire. Objective evidence for this comes from Bird Atlas work, and the Breeding Bird Survey carried out each year by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), and the summary tables in the annual *State of the UK's Birds*. Figures for the decline of each species are summarised at the beginning of the respective species counts above.

Shropshire Ornithological Society undertook six years fieldwork between 1985 and 1990, and covered all 870 tetrads in the County. The results were published in *An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Shropshire* in 1992. The survey was repeated in 2008-13, with similar amounts of fieldwork effort, and the Atlas maps produced are directly comparable.

Breeding Distribution Change Maps for the Three Parishes area (1985-90 to 2008-13)



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The resulting breeding distribution change maps for the survey area are shown below. Each symbol represents a tetrad (2x2km square on the OS grid), with 25 tetrads in the 10km square, but four in Wales are excluded. Five squares along the northern edge of SJ30 are included at the bottom. These squares are the same as those used for this survey.

Tetrads where each species was found in both Atlas surveys are shown as grey squares, and tetrads where it was found in the earlier period, but not the more recent period are marked with red downward triangles. It was not found in either period in the blank squares, and a gain in the later period is shown as a green upward triangle.

It will be seen that the range of both species declined substantially in this area in that 20-25 year period. Curlew was still present in 11 tetrads, but lost from 14, while Lapwing was still present in 12, lost from 7 and gained in one.

Surveys carried out by several other Community Wildlife Groups suggest that the population has fallen further since 2010.

Other evidence for the decline of Lapwing and Curlew can be found on the website of the British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org

Action to reverse the declines must start by improving the breeding success of the remaining pairs, so conservation action in the areas where they are still found, such as the Three Parishes area, is vital. Such action is being taken, nationally and locally. Both species have been designated as UK Biodiversity Priority Species by the Government, as part of its commitment to international biodiversity targets, precisely because of the rapid decline.

Both species nest on farmland, and the Countryside Stewardship Agri-environment Scheme (part of the system of payments to farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union) includes provision to reward farmers for sensitive management of habitat on their farms, and providing other environmental benefits. ES includes specific prescriptions, and payments, for Lapwing and Curlew habitat, if the farmer wants to apply, and the application is successful.

A new Agriculture Bill has been submitted to Parliament by the Government, and it remains to be seen whether the post-Brexit agri-environment schemes will be effective in reversing the decline of farmland birds.

Comparison of Three Parishes CWG Bird Survey Results with the Shropshire Bird Atlas 2008-13

The next two pairs of maps show, on the left, the results of the Bird Atlas 2008-13 for the 29 tetrads covered by the survey, and, on the right, the results of the survey in the Three Parishes. Each dot represents at least one observation during the Atlas period, or during the 2017 survey, in the appropriate tetrad.

- Large dot = Confirmed Breeding (Bird seen sitting on nest, or chicks seen)
- Middle dot = Probable Breeding (Pair or display seen)
- Small dot = Seen or heard in suitable habitat
- No dot = Not found

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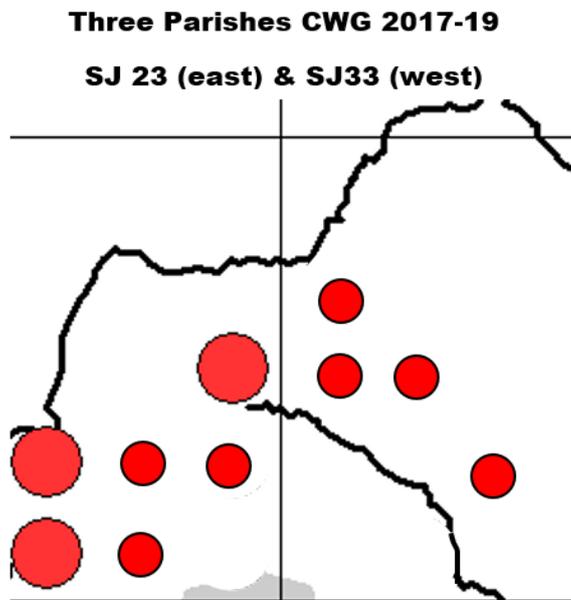
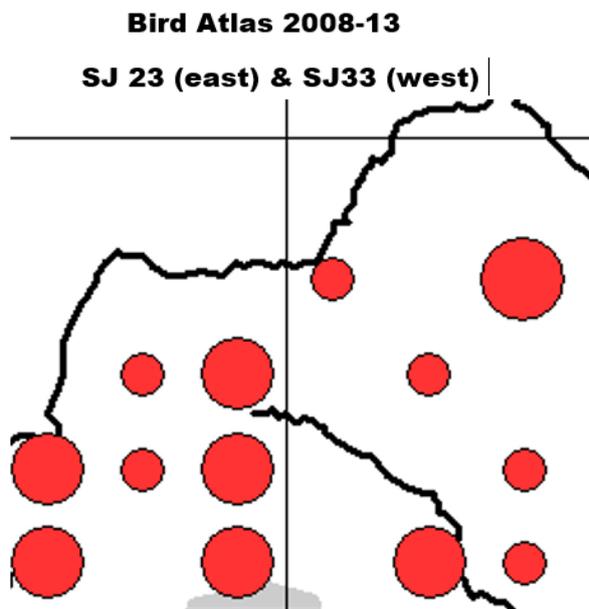
The maps are headed “CWG Survey 2017-19, but there were no observations in 2020 that would have led to either being amended.

It must be stressed that the Atlas map includes survey work over six years, not one, but most tetrads will not have been visited every year, and it was only necessary to find the highest level of breeding evidence once in the six years, and the surveyors were looking for breeding evidence for all species. Even so, it is unlikely that the 2017-19 survey found all the pairs,

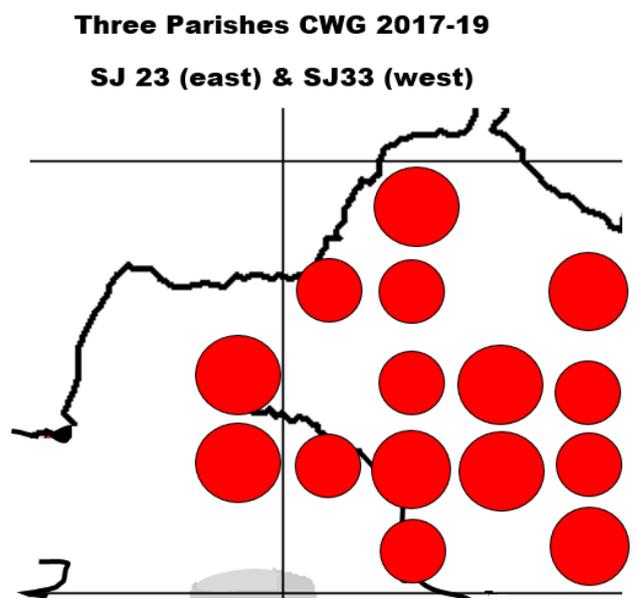
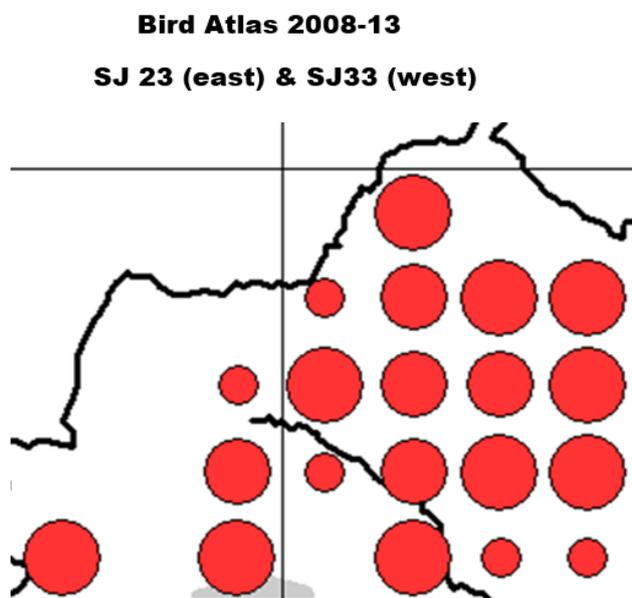
and results should improve as surveyors get to know their squares better, and more people find out about the survey and contribute records or information. It is likely to take another 2-3 years to build up a complete picture.

However, the two target species are conspicuous and noisy, so most will not have been overlooked, and these maps suggest strongly that the decline of both species has continued since the Atlas started in this area too.

Curlew



Lapwing



Work With Individual Farmers

The Lapwing and Curlew populations in the area nest on private farmland. The active support of farmers is therefore essential if the declines are to be reversed. Several members talked to local farmers while conducting their surveys, who were friendly and helpful. As our knowledge builds up, efforts will be made to work with individual farmers to safeguard their habitats, when it is safe to do so.

The field where the concentration of Lapwing were found in 2017 in SJ23X had become ideal habitat, as a result of a blocked drain and planting of spring crops. The farmer was approached and requested to leave the drain as it was, and continue to plant spring crops, preferably spring barley, in future years. He agreed, but in 2018 cold, windy wet weather in spring affected grazing, so the wet area had become too overgrown, and delayed the field preparation, so it was not as suitable. Similarly, the weather in 2019 affected field preparation, and it was grazed by cattle. No Lapwings were seen by the farmer in 2020. Cows grazing on wet pasture does create good conditions for Lapwing nests, and it is hoped they will return there in 2021.

The same farmer owned another field, which included an overgrown scrape, and two overgrown ponds, and where silage was grown in 2017. He agreed to clear the vegetation from the scrape and ponds, create muddy margins, and plant spring barley rather than silage, in future years. This should have created substantially more Lapwing habitat, fairly close to the hotspot described in the previous paragraph.



Natural England made a one-off grant to pay for the scrub removal and re-profiling of the pond and scrapes, and the work was carried out early in 2018. The photo shows the site just after the work was completed. It produced an immediate result – a Lapwing nest with eggs was found nearby. However, the removal of the willow scrub was not completed properly, and the scrub has regrown rapidly. The matter has been referred back to Natural England, but in spite of several reminders from the Group and the farmer, satisfactory completion of the work is still awaited. Thankfully, the farmer still intends to plough around the ponds in 2021 and plant spring barley. There were no sightings of Lapwings in 2020, but of course we were in lockdown so surveys were not done.

A leaflet about the work of the Wildlife Group and the results of the surveys has been distributed to some farmers in the area, encouraging them to take the habitat needs of Lapwing and Curlew into account in their farm management, tell us about the birds that nest on their land, and, if appropriate work to secure financial support for creating and managing Lapwing and Curlew habitat through Natural England's Countryside Stewardship agri-environment scheme.

The chair of the Community Wildlife Group, the Bird Survey organiser, and some of the surveyors have visited individual farmers, or made contact with them during survey work. Contact with farmers is very important, and will be maintained in future, although little of this was possible in 2020.

Lessons Learnt, to be Applied in 2021

More emphasis will be placed on noting the behaviour of Lapwing and Curlew, to try and ascertain whether birds are part of the same breeding pair, or different ones, and whether they were defending nests or chicks, indicating the nesting field and level of breeding success.

Recommendations

Natural England is recommended to encourage farmers with breeding Lapwing or Curlew on or near their land to join appropriate agri-environment schemes, when available, utilising the appropriate options to maintain and enhance the habitat for these priority species

Other Community Wildlife Groups

The first Group, the Upper Onny Wildlife Group, first surveyed Lapwing and Curlew in 2004, and has done so every year since. Upper Clun CWG started in 2007, Kemp Valley in 2009, Clee Hill CWG in 2012, and Rea Valley and Camlad CWGs (part of the Stiperstones-Corndon HLF-funded Landscape Partnership Scheme) in 2014. Strettons Area CWG was launched in 2012, and surveyed Lapwing and Curlew for the first time in 2017. The Three Parishes CWG, covering Weston Rhyn, St. Martin's and Gobowen (north of Oswestry), also undertook a Bird Survey in 2017. All these groups continued with a Lapwing and Curlew survey in 2018, when they were joined by new CWGs covering Oswestry south (Tanat to Perry) and Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence. A further Group, centred on Abdon (near Brown Clee), also started in 2018, the initiative of a local resident.

All these groups (except Kemp Valley, which has no breeding Curlews) continued with their surveys in 2019. Clee Hill and Abdon extended their areas, to close the gap between them and monitor known additional Curlew territories. Between them, the 10 groups cover around three-quarters of the County's breeding Curlews. They covered 267 survey squares (tetrads), totalling 1,048 square kilometres. There were 320 participants, who spent a total of more than 2,350 hours on survey work, and 94 - 115 Curlew territories were identified. This is a clear indication of the concern that local people have for the decline of Curlew, and their willingness to support action to do something about it.

The Curlew distribution map from the County Bird Atlas 2008-13, overlain with the Community Wildlife Group areas, and their 2019 results, can be found on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/

The Groups all also survey Lapwing, but they monitor a much smaller proportion of the County population, which is concentrated in north and north-east Shropshire.

In 2020, all these groups did some Curlew survey work, but it was truncated because of the Coronavirus restrictions. These results are still being analysed, and will be supplied separately to Bird Group members when they are available.

Further information can be found on the joint website for all the Community Wildlife Groups in Shropshire, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

The SOS Save our Curlews Campaign

Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) launched its *Save our Curlews* campaign in February 2020, with the intention of building on, and supporting, the Curlew monitoring work of the CWGs, and working initially with CWGs in the Upper Clun, Clee Hill and Strettons area to find nests, put an electric fence round them to protect the eggs, and then attach radio tags to the chicks just after they hatch, to track them to see how they use the landscape and what happens to them. Unfortunately, although the CWGs were able to monitor and map their populations, the nest protection and radio-tracking project had to be abandoned because of Coronavirus restrictions.

The Abdon District CWG Curlew results, together with those from other CWGs, are fed into the monitoring of the County Curlew population by SOS, which then form part of the County data forwarded to the South of England Curlew Forum and the national Curlew Species Recovery Group, hosted by RSPB, and help make the case for Government-sponsored conservation work, including future Agri-environment schemes.

This is a long term campaign, and it is hoped to extend the nest protection and chick monitoring work to other CWG areas in future years.

The project work is expensive, and SOS has launched an Appeal to help pay for it. Members are requested to consider contributing.

A lot more information can be found about the Appeal, and Campaign (including project work in Shropshire and elsewhere to find out the causes of the decline, and reverse it), on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/

A contributory factor to the decline is now being increasingly understood, the impact of releasing large numbers of Pheasants into the countryside for shooting.

Curlews and Pheasant Release

The RSPB has just announced the results of the review of its policy on game bird shooting, which it undertook partly because of the effect of releasing large numbers of Pheasants on the landscape and other wildlife. It is now seeking improved environmental standards, a reduction in the number of gamebirds released and better compliance with existing rules about reporting releases. The RSPB is committed to working with the shooting industry over the next 18 months to bring about this change. If substantial reform is not forthcoming in this period, then the RSPB will press for tighter regulation of large-scale gamebird releases. For further information see www.rspb.org.uk/gamebirdreview

The number of Pheasants and Red-legged Partridges released in the UK EACH YEAR has increased from 4 million in 1961, the first year for which there are figures, to almost 60 million now. Only 35% are shot, and the remainder don't live very long, so they provide a year-round supply of food for every other predator and scavenger. While the number of Pheasants released since 2004 has increased by one-third, the number shot has not increased since the 1990s.

In Shropshire, 726,000 Pheasants were released in 2018 alone, so predation of Curlews (collateral damage from foxes hunting Pheasants) is very high, and the Curlew population is heading for extinction (down 80% since 1990). Conversely, the feral breeding population of Pheasants increased by 62% between 1997 and 2014 (County BBS results), and it is now the tenth most common breeding species in the County (and far and away the biggest in

terms of biomass). They have spread from the release sites to virtually every part of the County now.

BTO has published research showing a disproportionate increase in the Buzzard and Crow population in areas with a high number of released Pheasants (Pringle *et al* 2019).

The massive increase in Pheasant carrion has allowed Buzzard and Raven to spread eastwards across most of England since 1990, and is undoubtedly the food source that has allowed Kites to spread into, and right across, Shropshire in only 15 years.

In 2014 there were an estimated 44,000 pairs of breeding Pheasants in Shropshire, all descended from previous releases (Pheasant is an introduced species), compared to 160 pairs of Curlew and 800 pairs of Lapwing.

Again, further information about this can be found on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/

Use of CWG Survey Results

In addition to feeding into the monitoring and conservation of the County Curlew population by SOS, the survey results are made available to Natural England.

They show the importance of particular areas for these species, which will hopefully encourage farmers to manage their land more sensitively, and provide Defra with objective evidence to judge individual farm applications to join agri-environment schemes in future, enabling them to target the use of their limited resources more effectively.

The results also reinforce and supplement the results from other Community Wildlife Groups operating in the Shropshire Hills, which together now cover well over 500 square kilometres, around two-thirds of the Shropshire Hills AONB. These results help inform the AONB Management Plan, which has now been revised to cover the five years 2019 – 24.

Coupled with the results of other surveys, the results may also contribute to the identification of potential new Local (County) Wildlife Sites. These sites are monitored by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, which encourages the landowners to manage them so they retain their value for wildlife.

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Rachel Harding

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Polly Smith

Henry Thomas
Celia Todd
Kit Twigg

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Polly Smith (Chair of the Group), Celia Todd and Kit Twigg have also visited or contacted individual farmers to promote the Group's work, and conservation of Lapwings.

Thanks also to:-

- Jonathan Groom, then Shropshire Council Biodiversity Data Officer, who provided the survey maps.
- Robin Gilbert, of Natural England, for following up the Group's survey results and arranging funding for the clearance of willow scrub and re-profiling of the scape and pond (see p.11).
- Celia Todd, for the photos of Lapwing and Curlew on the cover, and the Lapwing on p.4.
- Credits for other photos: Leo Smith (Curlew), Eric Davies (Cuckoo) and Mark Hamblin (Red Kite),

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Report

A copy of this report has been supplied to all people who contributed to the surveys in 2020 or previous years, or who supplied additional records, and to Natural England.

Copies, and the reports from 2017, 2018 and 2019, can be downloaded from the Three Parishes part of the Shropshire Community Wildlife Groups website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

Alternatively, copies are available (electronic .pdf versions) from Leo Smith, The Bryn, Castle Hill, All Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6JP. Phone: 01694 720296 email leo@leosmith.org.uk.

Summary 2020

This report summarises the fourth year for the Group, which was severely disrupted by Coronavirus restrictions.

We now have a good understanding of the population and distribution of Lapwing and Curlew, and the status of the Other Target Species. There is no evidence that any young Curlews fledged in 2020, or in either of the previous three years. This is valuable information to promote its conservation.

Further survey work in future years will continue to establish population trends in the area.

Plans for 2021

The Group intends to repeat the Bird Survey next year. New participants are needed, so we hope to recruit new members.

It will not be possible to hold the usual Group meeting in March, primarily to plan the bird survey, as current Covid-19 restrictions are unlikely to have been eased by then. We will therefore need to develop new ways of promoting our work in the local community. New members, anyone interested in birds, will be very welcome.

We hope to be able to hold a training session for new participants in late March or Early April.

Details can also be found and downloaded from the joint website for all the Community Wildlife Groups in the Shropshire Hills, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk,

Further Information

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Further copies of this report can be obtained from Leo Smith

Leo Smith
February 2021

Appendix 1. Map of Survey Area, showing Square Boundaries and Tetrad Codes

