

# STRETTONS AREA BIRD SURVEY RESULTS 2021 CONTENTS

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# STRETTONS AREA COMMUNITY WILDLIFE GROUP

The Group was established in March 2012, to bring together people interested in wildlife, undertake survey work to establish the status of priority wildlife and habitats, encourage and enhance local interest in wildlife and actively promote nature conservation. A wide variety of surveys have been carried out each year since. The original SACWG area is shown in Appendix 1.

The Annual Public Meeting in early March 2017 agreed to conduct a Lapwing and Curlew survey, to complement similar surveys carried out by Community Wildlife Groups in other parts of the Shropshire Hills. Both species 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. The AGM of the Church Stretton branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society also agreed to support the survey, and it has been carried out each year since 2017. The Bird Survey covers the area shown in Appendix 2.

The Group also carries out surveys on many other aspects of local wildlife. Anyone can join who lives or works in the area, or has an interest in it, and who wants to actively contribute to local knowledge and conservation. Membership is free.

Communication with members is largely by email. An Annual Report is published, and those from previous years can be found on the Community Wildlife Groups website <a href="https://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk">www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk</a> A Facebook Group has also been established.

A project to monitor and protect Swift nest sites has operated since the Group started. Results can be found in the Annual Reports.

A Dipper project started in 2020.

This report contains a detailed account of the Curlews, Lapwings and other birds Survey, and the Dipper project, prepared primarily for participants. Summaries will be included in the Group's Annual Report.

Several projects organised by the Group benefitted from financial support from players of People's Postcode Lottery in 2020, received via the National Trust's Stepping Stones project, and similar funding will be available in 2022 from the Lottery's Green Recovery Challenge fund.

# **CURLEWS, LAPWINGS AND OTHER BIRDS SURVEY**

#### Introduction

A bird survey has been carried out in the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) area shown in Appendix 1 since 2017. It complements surveys carried out by three other Community Wildlife Groups in the Stepping Stones area, the Upper Onny Wildlife Group since 2004, and the Rea Valley and Camlad Valley CWGs since 2014. It is intended to repeat the survey annually, to monitor long-term population trends for key species, as well as establish the current population and distribution.

The area for the bird survey is different from the SACWG area, shown in Appendix 2. It has been divided up into 30 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 2

Two new tetrads were added to the Bird Survey area in 2020, SJ49J and P, to the west of Leebotwood and north of Long Mynd.

The survey consists of three visits to each of these tetrads, once during each of three specified two-week periods, around 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> May and mid-June. The surveys in 2021

were carried out as normal, but the public meeting to recruit and brief new surveyors was cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions. A practical fieldwork training meeting for new helpers was held as usual. Surveyors were briefed by email.

Most squares were allocated to participants in previous years, or volunteers who responded to early publicity, but some squares were not allocated. Particular efforts were made to record Curlews, as "the Curlew situation is critical, with a 77% decline between 1990 and 2010, and a further decline since. There are probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County now, and we have not got long to save them from local extinction.

The main focus of the survey is to locate breeding pairs of Curlew and Lapwing, but surveyors are also encouraged to record Kestrel and Cuckoo, and 19 Other Target Species of Conservation Concern.

Barn Owl Meadow Pipit Stonechat Yellowha	
Linnet Spotted Flycatcher Yellow Wagtail Grey Par	tridge
Snipe Whinchat Dunnock Skylark	
Wheatear Dipper Reed Bunting Tree Spa	rrow
Bullfinch Red Kite Swift (nest sites only)	

Fifty-one local people spent over 340 hours on the survey. This report sets out the 2021 results, and compares them with results from previous years.

## 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 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 2020. 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*, published in 2020 by Shropshire Ornithological Society.

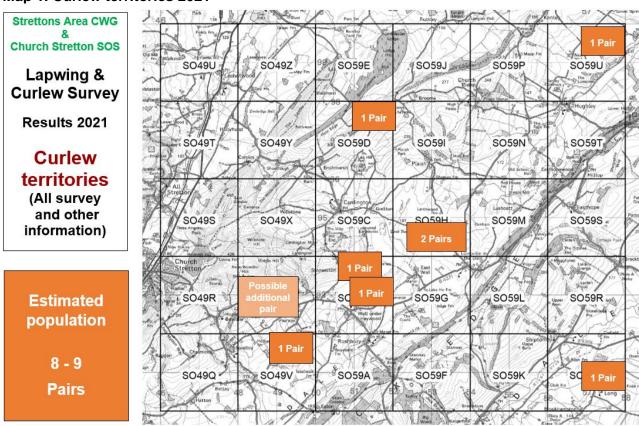
# **Survey results**

The map summarises the estimated number and distribution of Curlew territories in the Strettons area in 2021. The location of all Curlews found during the surveys, or reported on Casual Record maps or by email, is shown on the map in Appendix 3 on p.#..

The methodology requires observations of a pair together, or a territorial display, or a single bird on two of the three surveys, to confirm a territory. However, Curlews often have large

territories, and may be seen a kilometre or more from their nest site. Curlews seen up until early April (including during the first survey) may be passing through on their way to breeding sites elsewhere. Nesting does not usually occur until late April or early May. Therefore, interpretation of the observations is sometimes difficult, unless singing birds are seen or heard concurrently. If that does not happen, the methodology requires the analysis to produce the lowest population estimate consistent with the records, in this case 8 - 9 pairs.

Map 1. Curlew territories 2021



Most pairs present in 2020 were relocated, and new pairs were found near Enchmarsh (SO59D) and Stanton Long (SO59Q). The former is a well-watched square, so it is virtually certain there have not been Curlews present at that location in previous years. The Curlews in the latter square were reported by a local resident, a member of the Abdon District Community Wildlife Group who participates in that Group's bird survey. Curlews were observed far more frequently in 2021 than in the previous five years, so again this is almost certainly a new pair.

Breeding Curlews have been present in SO49W, on Hope Bowdler Hill and farmland to the south, in 2017-20. They were not found there in 2021, but five birds were seen in late June. Most breeding pairs would have failed by then, and they were probably post-breeding movements. However, the pair in the square in previous years has been very inconspicuous, so it may have been overlooked in 2021. It is shown on the map as a "possible additional pair".

There was no evidence in 2021 for the pair in SO49X found in 2017 and 2018, but not 2019 or 2020.

There was some evidence of a probable additional pair south of Rushbury (SO59A) in 2018 and 2019, but there was no coverage of this square in 2020. There was good coverage in 2021, but no evidence of an additional pair was found.

All other squares where Curlews have been found in previous years were covered.

The population estimate, as summarised on the map, is therefore 8 - 9 pairs.

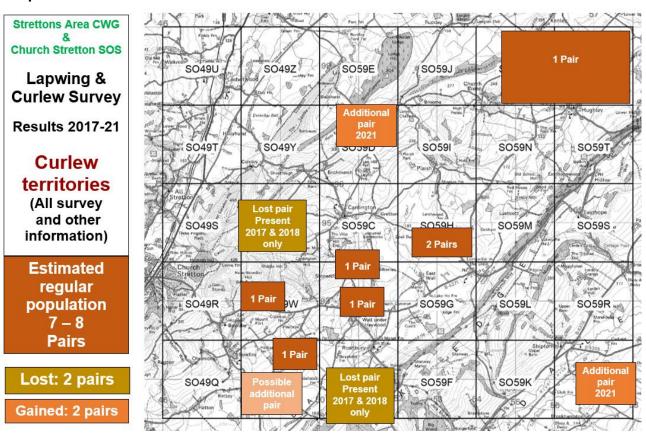
# From the observations and analysis, it is estimated that the Curlew population in the area is definitely 8 pairs, possibly 9.

The 2017 - 21 surveys have been the start of regular annual monitoring to establish the number of pairs actually present, better knowledge of nesting and foraging areas, and the population trend. The survey will be repeated in future years.

# **Population Trend**

Establishing trends is not easy, as some squares have not been surveyed every year, but pairs of Curlews are usually site-faithful, so as the locations of territories become more certain in the light of increased knowledge, it is possible to re-interpret the results of the surveys from earlier years. The all records, and territories, maps published in previous reports have been re-considered, and the composite results for 2017-21 are shown in Map 2.

Map 2. Curlew territories 2017-21



It appears that most of the pairs present in 2021 were also present in all previous years, but two new pairs, described above, were also found, while two other pairs, west of Cardington (SO49X) and south of Rushbury (SO59A) have been lost. Both were present in 2017 and 2018, but not subsequently.

## **Nest Finding and Protection Project**

The Group worked with the Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) *Save our Curlews* nest-finding and protection project this year in the Strettons area, which exceeded expectations by finding and fencing the nests of five pairs located by the Bird Survey, in squares SO59B (2), D, H and U.

The fences worked very well (none of the nests were predated), but one nest was abandoned shortly before the three eggs hatched, and three more of the total of 17 protected eggs did not hatch. Eleven chicks in four broods hatched and were radio-tagged, so they could be tracked to find out how they use the landscape, and what happens to them.

Chicks usually leave the nest within a couple of days of hatching, and are on the ground for 5-6 weeks before they can fly. They are vulnerable for the whole of this period. Failure of chicks to survive and fledge is a major cause of the Curlew population decline, locally and nationally, and we need a better understanding of the reasons so we can develop effective conservation measures.

This happened in our area too: unfortunately, all 11 chicks were predated within a few days of hatching. You can read more about what has been done on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/. This describes the results in detail, our future plans, and the overwhelming evidence that predation by foxes and other predators is the main cause of Curlew's continuing decline. It is clear that the annual release of millions of pheasants for shooting, only a third of which are actually shot, results in an over-abundant food supply which maintains the numbers of the Curlew's main predators well above naturally sustainable levels.

Almost all the landowners we approached were pleased to have Curlews on their land, supported our efforts to protect them, and gave permission for us to look for, and fence, the nests. We are grateful for their support.

The project is expensive, and has been funded by Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS), the Strettons area Curlew Appeal (featured in several Stretton Focus articles), and several grants, including substantial ones from the Stepping Stones project and the Stretton Focus Community Awards Scheme.

# **Colour-ringing**



Around 200 wild Curlews have been caught and colour-ringed by the Mid-Wales Ringing Group since March 2015 at the Dolydd Hafren Montgomery Wildlife Trust Reserve on the River Severn near Welshpool, mainly on spring migration as they make their way back to breeding sites. All the "headstarted" chicks released by Curlew Country near the Stiperstones since 2017, and a large number at autumn and wintering sites in Wales, have also been colour-ringed.

An example of the colour-rings can be seen in the photo, taken in the Upper Clun in 2017.

One colour-ringed bird was seen in the

Strettons area in each of two previous years, but the ring could not be read on either occasion. In 2021, the female at the nest site in SO59D was colour-ringed, at Dolydd Hafren in March 2017.

All 10 birds at the five found nests were checked, and the other nine were un-ringed. However, being able to see rings requires a good view of the bird on the ground, before the grass gets too long, so in practice most of the other birds have not been checked.

# **Recording Curlew Nest Sites**

To improve the value of CWG Curlew surveys, nest site habitat data is being collected to feed into the database being developed by the South of England Curlew Forum. Although nests are not searched for, they are found occasionally. More importantly, the field containing the nest can often be identified (by seeing the sitting bird from a distance, or from the behaviour of the adults defending the nest from potential predators), and as far as defining the habitat is concerned, the precise location of the nest within the field is unnecessary.

Observers have been requested to complete a questionnaire for every case where a nest was found, or the field containing the nest was identified beyond reasonable doubt, but there were no such observations in 2021.

BTO Nest Record Cards have been completed for the five nests found by the SOS project.

#### Curlews in adjacent parts of the Strettons area.

Two additional squares SO49J and P were added to the survey area. Two pairs were located near Picklescott in 2020, one two kilometres to the south-west, near Betchcott Hill (SO49J), and the other a kilometre to the east, near Smethcott Pool (SO49P). Only the pair in SO49J was found in 2021, but the outcome is not known.

There was one pair on farmland near High Park, in the same territory as the pair on Wildmoor near Duckley Nap in 2020, and one on the Long Mynd, near Boiling Well. Both are in the Strettons area, but the former is also in the Upper Onny Wildlife Group area, and is monitored by them, while the latter is monitored by the Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project. Both pairs failed shortly after laying, and presumably the nests were predated.

# 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 year on year to follow the farm crop rotation. They usually lay their first clutch around the end of March, or early April. They often lose their first clutch because the ground they nest on is ploughed or drilled for crops planted during April.

The map summarises the estimated number and distribution of breeding Lapwings in the Strettons area.

Strettons Area CWG **Church Stretton SOS** SO49Z SO59J SO49U SO59E SO59P SO59U Lapwing & **Curlew Survey** Results 2021 SOSOF SO49T SO49Y SO591 SO59N SO59T Lapwing Pair (All survey periods, + casual records) SO49S SO49X SO59C SO59H SO59M SO59S SO59B SO59L SO49R SO49W SO59G SO59R **Estimated** population 0-1 Pairs 59A 1 - 4 Pairs SO49V SO59F SO59K SO59Q Found

Map 3. Lapwing territories 2021

On the survey visits to SO49Z, over three days in mid-April, 1-2 Lapwing were seen on each visit, a possible maximum 4 birds (2 pairs). The field was ploughed later during April, and no Lapwing were seen there on the second survey visit in late April, or subsequently.

During 2020 only one pair was reported, at a then-new pool near Plaish (SO59D), which fledged two young. This pool was visited several times during March and April, but no Lapwing were seen there until 24 April, much later than they normally arrive at breeding sites. It is likely that the pair that bred there in 2021 was displaced from SO49Z. The pair chased off crows on 23 May, and were agitated on 7 June, suggesting presence of hatched young, but no Lapwings at all were seen on subsequent visits on 13, 19 or 27 June, and there is no evidence that any fledged.

There was only one other record, a single near Whitefields Farm (SO59A) on 2 April, but none were located there subsequently.

In 2019 there were 3 pairs east of Leebotwood (in SO49Z), and a report was received in 2021 that there were three lapwings there in March 2020, at the same site in 2021 referred

to above. Also, in 2019 there were two pairs between Rushbury and Eaton (SO59A), again at the same site referred to above, and a single bird was seen near Botvyle (SO49T, where breeding pairs have been found in previous years), but this site was specifically checked in 2020 and 2021, and no Lapwings were seen or heard. Another was seen north-east of Broadstone (in SO59K) in 2019, but this square was not surveyed in 2020 or 2021.

# At least one pair was found, possibly as many as four, but there may have been more

# Anecdotal Evidence for the Decline of Lapwing and Curlew

Participants 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, and they too said that Lapwings and Curlew are less common now than they used to be.

# 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

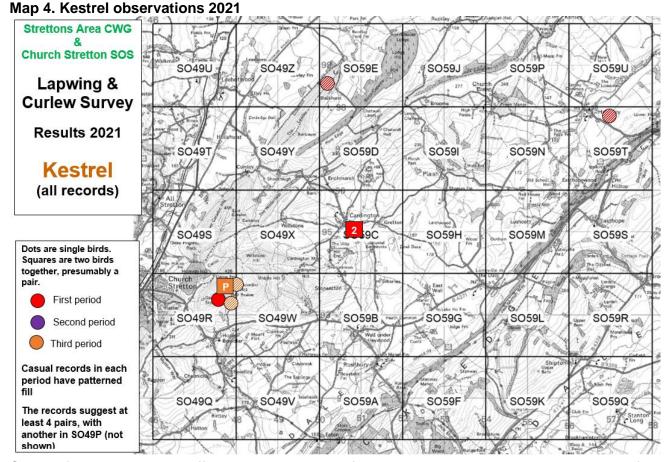
population probably halved in that time. Kestrel is on the Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire.

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 local 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. 2020 appears to have been generally better, but observations in the Strettons area in 2021, shown on the Map, suggest 2021

was the worst season since the local survey started in 2017. This was probably due to persistent cold northerly winds in April and the first half of May, which would have limited the availability of prey.



Some of the dots will be different observations of the same individuals, but the clusters of dots represent around only four pairs. No nest sites were found, nor were any fledged young reported, although young would not have fledged until after the main survey period ended in mid-June.

In 2017, a pair was located near Longville, which produced three fledged young. Otherwise, there was a pair on the edge of SO49V, resident in or near Gogbatch, and another pair near Church Preen, plus sightings indicating additional pairs near Hazler / Ragleth Hills, Caer Caradoc and The Lawley. The status of other sightings near Cardington Hill and Shipton is less clear, and the population was estimated at 6 – 8 pairs

It was estimated at up to 10 pairs in 2018, perhaps a few more than 2017, but 2019 was a very poor year, and the records suggest only 4-5 pairs, although this was probably an under-estimate in a poor breeding season.

In 2020, Kestrels were seen at seven sites, and had been seen at all seven in previous years, but there had also been territories in previous years near Stanway in SO59F and near Shipton / Easthope in SO59R/S, where none were seen in 2020.

Over the five years, in these 30 tetrads, the cumulative results equate to five occupied tetrads, one confirmed and four probable breeding records. There were four confirmed, and seven probable, breeding records in the Shropshire Bird Atlas 2008-13, suggesting a fairly large decline in the last 10 years or so.

Observations in 2021 suggest a population of only 4 pairs, but taken together with observations in previous years it is estimated at 7 – 9 pairs.

#### 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.

It is one of the Other Target Species that members have been asked to record each year, but in 2020 there were more Cuckoo records than usual. It was not clear whether there were actually more Cuckoos about, or that people were better able to hear them in the peace and quiet, or were at home rather than work, because of the coronavirus lockdown. Members were therefore specifically encouraged to submit Cuckoo records.



The characteristic Cuckoo call is made only by the male, and he defends a "song territory" to attract females and deter other males. The female has a different, rarely heard, "bubbling call". Each male will chase other males out of his home patch, but the cuckoo is not strongly territorial, and several males and females have been found to share overlapping ranges.

Each female lays between 10 and 25 eggs per year, each in a different nest. Each female usually selects nests of a single host species, most frequently Meadow Pipit, Dunnock or Reed Warbler.

The home range of each female varies considerably, depending on the ease of finding enough nests of the host species (i.e., parts of the home range will not be suitable breeding habitat for the host species, and the home range needs to include feeding areas for the Cuckoo as well). Thus, the females' home range might overlap the song territory of more than one male, and she will mate with each of them (an estimate of "breeding pairs" would therefore be better termed "male territories").

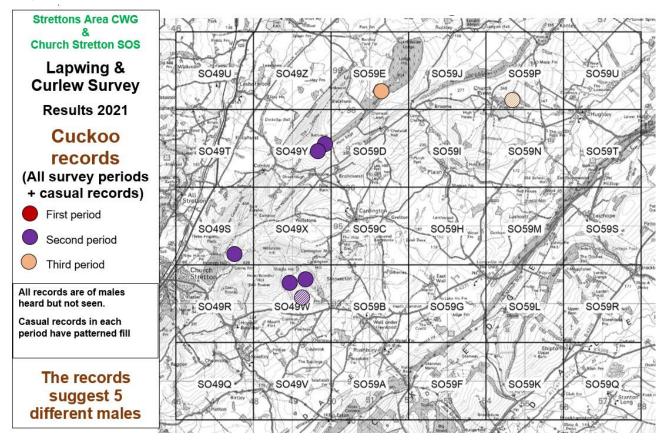
The Population in the survey area in 2020 was estimated at 7 territorial males, substantially more than recorded in previous years. The estimate for 2021, is fewer, 5 males.

In 2019, records suggested up to three males; in 2018 probably one male, and in 2017, again probably just one male.

Elsewhere in the Strettons area, one was heard frequently in May from Longhills Road, Church Stretton (SO49L), there were reports from several of the Long Mynd valleys, and

Pole Cottage; and two were heard concurrently on several occasions above All Stretton (SO49M).

Map 5. Cuckoo records 2021



# Red Kite

At least 34 Red Kites were recorded in 23 squares, reflecting the spread of this species. In view of the limited coverage in 2020, no comparison with last year can be made, but in 2019 substantially fewer were seen on surveys, at least 24 Kites in 14 squares.

Five nests were found, the most since monitoring began. A pair that nested in 2019 and 2020 north of Longville, in SO59I, returned to the same nest but failed



during May. Another site, closer to Longville in SO59H, unsuccessfully occupied in 2018 and 2019, was not occupied in 2020, but successfully fledged at least two young in 2021.

The site near Stanway (SO59F), unsuccessfully occupied in 2020, was not reoccupied. A site near All Stretton, occupied previously in 2012 and 2016, was re-occupied and fledged one young, the first successful breeding at this site. Two new sites were occupied, near Marshbrook and near Church Preen. The former was unsuccessful, but the latter fledged at least one young.

Kites were first found breeding in the area in 2012 (two sites, one east of the A49), but only one or two nests were found each year until three were found in 2020. However, there are likely to be other pairs nesting at unknown locations, as wing-tagged birds that are old enough to breed have been photographed in the area. Regular sightings throughout the year near Ragleth Hill (SO49S) suggest that might be one such location.

Given the rapid spread and population increase (over 50 known breeding pairs in Shropshire in 2021 – the first successful breeding for 130 years occurred as recently as 2006), it is likely that breeding will become more frequently observed in the near future.

# **Other Target Species**

Apart from the four main Target Species listed and mapped above, members are asked to record observations of 19 Other Target Species. The numbers of them recorded during each of the three survey periods are listed in the Tables in Appendix #. They are summarised in Table 1.

The summary table shows the maximum count from the three survey visits for each species in each tetrad. This may under-record some species, but the alternative – adding all the counts together – would lead to considerable double or triple counting of some individual birds. The final row shows the number of tetrads in which the species was recorded.

Note that members were asked to record individual birds, not pairs (so at some locations both the birds in the pair were recorded, and in the final survey some recently fledged juveniles may have been recorded as well).

Some members did not send in survey returns, particularly for the third period. This would not have affected the number of records of the main target species. Some of the returns did not include the time spent, and some members sent in returns on casual record sheets, so the total time put into surveys taken from record sheets (over 180 hours) understates the effort put in.

As expected in a survey of this type, the expertise of members, and the time they had available to undertake the surveys, varied considerably. The survey squares also vary considerably, in accessibility and terrain. The "detectability" of the birds themselves also varies considerably, according to prevailing weather conditions, time of day, stage in the breeding cycle, and the normal behaviour of each species. Thus, the survey results will give an indication of the species present, but only a very small proportion will have been recorded.

In addition to the Target Species listed in Table 1,a Barn Owl was recorded in SO59B on each of the first two surveys, and was seen coming out of a likely nest hole.

Four species were not recorded at all: Grey Partridge, Dipper, Swift (nest sites) and Spotted Flycatcher, although the last of these was recorded in SO59D on 2 July. There was only one record of Snipe, 5 in the first survey in SO49P. These would have been passage, not breeding, birds.

There is a separate Swift project, and details can be found tin the Community Wildlife Group's Annual Report.

**Table 1. Other Target Species - Summary** 

Square		901 001				ach Speci	es Record	ed			
(Tetrad)	Red Kite	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Dunnock	Wheat- ear	Stone- chat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow- hammer	Reed Bunting
SO49 Q	2	5		5						2	
SO49 R		8			1	2					2
SO49 S	1		1	2	2	2					1
SO49 T	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded						1	
SO49 U	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO49 V	10			1			1				
SO49 W	1	5	15	1		4		5			1
SO49 X	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded		***************************************		***************************************			
SO49 Y	1		10	1						1	
SO49 Z	1					1				1	
SO59 A	1	7	1	2			2		2	3	
SO59 B	2	2							1	10	
SO59 C	1										
SO59 D		5	1		2	1				2	1
SO59 E		3							2	2	
SO59 F	1	4		2				2	2		
SO59 G	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO59 H	1	3	1					6	2	1	
SO59 I	1	2		1							
SO59 J	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO59 L	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO59 M	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO59 N	1	4		11						8	
SO59 P	1	11		7						2	
SO59 Q	None of	these targe	t species r	ecorded							
SO59 R	Squa	re not surv	/eyed								
SO59 S	1			2						4	
SO59 T	1	12		4				20	1	8	
SO59 U	1	7		6						4	
Max Birds	28	78	29	45	5	10	3	33	10	49	5
Tetrads	17	14	6	13	3	5	2	4	6	14	4

# Lapwing and Curlew on the Long Mynd

Most of the Long Mynd is within the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group area shown in Appendix 2, but it has not been included in the bird survey, as it is covered by a different Breeding Bird Survey.

It is not suitable habitat for Lapwing, and none are known to have nested there during the 1985-90 Bird Atlas, or since.

It is suitable habitat for Curlew and there was evidence of breeding in most tetrads during the 1985-90 Bird Atlas. The Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project surveyed the whole site in 1994-98, and estimated a dozen pairs in 1995. This had declined to only two pairs in 2004, and it has fluctuated between one and three pairs since. In 2017 three pairs were found, on Pole Bank, Wild Moor and near High Park. There have been two pairs each year since until 2021, when there was one nest near Boiling Well, which failed in early May. The pair that nested on Wildmoor in 2020 was on farmland to the east of Duckley Nap in 2021.

# 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

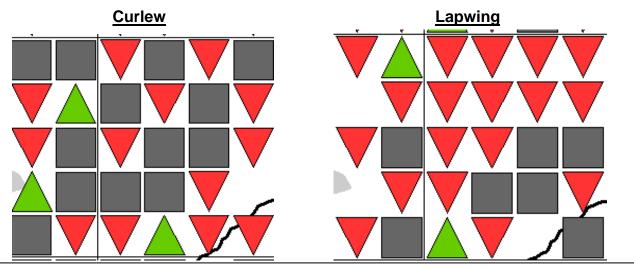
State of the UK's Birds. Figures for the decline of each species are summarised at the beginning of the respective species counts above.

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.

The resulting breeding distribution change maps for the survey area are shown below. The grid lines enclose the 10km squares SO49 and SO59 on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, and each symbol represents a tetrad (2x2km square on the OS grid, 25 tetrads in each 10km square). These squares are the same as those used for this survey. The background pale grey shape on the left-hand side of map is the eastern part of the town of Church Stretton.

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 will be seen that the range of both species declined substantially in this area in only 20-25 years.

#### **Breeding Distribution Change Maps for the Strettons survey area (1985-90 to 2008-13)**



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Surveys including counts complement these maps. The county Lapwing population has fallen from about 3,000 pairs in 1990 to only about 800 in 2013, a decline of around 70%. The Curlew population has fallen from about 700 pairs in 1990 to about 160 pairs in 2010 (a 77% decline).

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 Strettons 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.

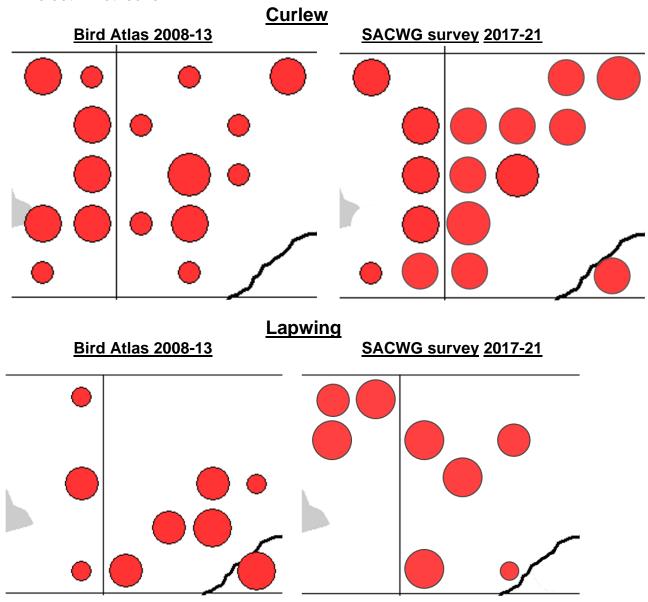
Both species nest on farmland, and the Countryside Stewardship Agri-environment Scheme (part of the system of payments to farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union) included provision to reward farmers for sensitive management of habitat on their farms, and providing other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

The Government is working on a new environmental land management system, but arrangements are not yet clear, and it is likely to be some years before it is introduced.

# Comparison of Strettons Area 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 30 tetrads covered by the survey, and, on the right, the cumulative results of the survey in the Strettons area since 2017, as shown in the Annual Reports. Each dot represents at least one observation during the Atlas period, or during the 2017-21 surveys, 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



It must be stressed that the Atlas map includes survey work over six years, not five, but most tetrads will not have been visited every year, it was only necessary to find confirmed breeding evidence once in the six years, and the surveyors were looking for breeding evidence for all species. On the other hand, the Bird Atlas maps are a record of what was found, and do not include the judgement to eliminate likely passage birds. It is unlikely that the 2017-21 surveys found all the pairs, but results have improved as surveyors have got to know their squares better, and more people find out about the survey and contribute records or information. Most squares have been visited in all years except 2020 (when Covid-19 disrupted activities), at the time when the target species are most likely to be found, so the recent survey is the more intensive.

#### Work with Individual Farmers

The vast majority of 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. As our knowledge builds up, efforts will be made to work with individual farmers to safeguard their habitats. This is particularly important for finding and protecting Curlew nests, through the *Save our Curlews* project in the Strettons area in 2021 and subsequent years (see below, and Appendix 4).

#### Recommendations

Natural England is recommended to encourage farmers with breeding Lapwing or Curlew on or near their land, to join the new Environmental Land Management Scheme, 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, 2020 and 2021. 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 267 survey squares (tetrads), totalling 1,048 square kilometres, which include more than three-quarters of the County's breeding Curlews.

In 2019, 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.

Participation in 2020 was curtailed by coronavirus restrictions, and the total for 2021 is not yet available.

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.

The 2021 results for some of these groups 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, <a href="https://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk">www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk</a>

# 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 introduction of the nest protection and radio-tracking project had to be postponed until 2021 because of Coronavirus restrictions.

The project results in the Strettons area are described above. In total, in the three CWG areas, 16 nests were found, 12 were fenced, 8 of these produced chicks, 21 were radiotagged, and only one of the 21 fledged. The other 20 chicks were all predated, on average within 5.65 days of hatching.

The Strettons area 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, the UK and Ireland Curlew Action Group, hosted by RSPB, and the newly-launched Curlew Recovery Partnership. They help make the case for Government-sponsored conservation work, including future Agrienvironment 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.

A lot more information can be found about the 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 announced a year ago 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 for 18 months to bring about this change. If substantial reform is not

forthcoming in this period, ending in mid-2022, 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 do not 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 of the County 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.

# **DIPPER PROJECT**

# Dipper Habitat



Dippers inhabit fast flowing streams with rapids, small waterfalls and gravelly beds, and the Shropshire Hills, particularly in the Teme catchment, is the County stronghold.

They feed largely on larvae collected on the stream bed (they do not take invertebrates from bankside vegetation, like Grey Wagtails do), and, to a lesser extent, on small fish. They take readily to carefully-sited nest boxes over water.

Several other Community Wildlife Groups have put up boxes, and shown that they help increase the population, partly by

providing new nest sites on suitable stretches of stream which otherwise lack them, and partly by protecting the eggs and chicks from predators, so the average number of fledged young per nest increases.

# Dippers in the Strettons area

Dippers were absent from most of the Strettons area since the 1980s, but the population has increased across the whole of the Teme catchment in recent years, as a result of the nest boxes, which has led to more observations here. The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group has now started its own Dipper Project, covering the Cound Brook north to Longnor, and the Quinney Brook south to Marshbrook, and their tributaries.

Dippers are very territorial, so the first step was getting a better understanding of which streams they inhabit, their favoured locations and the distances between nests, before putting up boxes.

Members were asked to report sightings in 2020, and from previous years, and an appeal for information appeared in *Stretton Focus*.

Nest building usually starts in early April, and young are being fed in late April or early May, so that is the best time to locate breeding pairs. Some pairs raise two broods.

In 2020, the population in the area was estimated at 9 - 11 pairs.

#### 2021

Members were again asked to report sightings, and another appeal for information appeared in *Stretton Focus*.

Sites occupied last year, or known to have been occupied previously, were revisited in 2021, but several were not occupied. A new site was found, with old nests from previous years, but it was unoccupied.

Altogether, 13 sites were checked.

- Five sites were unoccupied, and the nest of another failed early.
- A pair near All Stretton successfully raised two broods. The first brood was ringed, and one was photographed in Batch Valley.

- No nest was found at Little Stretton, but an adult was seen with one fledged young on 15 June
- Two pairs north of All Stretton both lost their first broods close to fledging. One of these
  pairs had well grown young from a second brood in the nest, but the outcome is
  unknown
- It appears that a colour-ringed male in Cardingmill Valley was lost at the start of the season, but the colour-ringed female found a new (unringed) mate, and they raised two fledged young
- The outcome at two other occupied sites is unknown

Water levels were high at the start of the season, and the weather was cold, probably resulting in less invertebrate food in the streams, perhaps accounting for the unoccupied sites and the fewer breeding pairs. The population in 2021 is estimated at 8 pairs. Only four young are known to have fledged, considerably fewer than in 2020.

Two recently-fledged young, with grey back and speckled breast, were photographed.



#### **Nest boxes**

The Community Wildlife Group received a grant from the Stepping Stones project, with the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery, which included funding to install 10 new nest boxes. The nest finding in 2020 identified some sites that will be more secure if boxes are placed there, and other suitable sites have now been identified, some mid-way between nests now known, which may result in a population increase.



# Rings

Ringing has been going on for many years, across the whole of the Teme Catchment, but also on the Cound Brook around Leebotwood and Longnor, but the colour-rings to identify individual birds in the field were only introduced in 2014. A colour-ring on the left leg is shown in the lower photo. The letter and two numbers on each ring are unique, so if the ring can be read it will add to what is known of the life history of the bird.

The smaller ring looks silver, and in silhouette it looks like a small wellington boot (the leg

appears thicker at the bottom than the top). The Dipper in both photos has a small metal (BTO) ring on the right leg.

Members were asked to report colour-rings and the smaller metal rings, and an attempt was made to read the former, by photography with a long lens, or a telescope. Unfortunately, no ringing was allowed at winter roost sites over the winter 2020-21 period, so far fewer Dippers were ringed than in the 2020 breeding season. Four colour-ringed birds were found: three were read, but one did not provide a good enough view.

## One of the three was colour-ringed

in Cardingmill Valley in the winter of 2018, and the other two were ringed in winter 2019, all adults at or very close to the sites where they nested. None of them had ben ringed earlier, as nestlings

By carrying on with the project in future years, it will be possible to build up an understanding of how long Dippers live, how far they move between fledging, roosting and nesting, and fidelity.

If you see a Dipper, please try and see if it has a ring and colour-ring, and report it, with the location, to Leo Smith (01694 720296 <a href="leo@leosmith.org.uk">leo@leosmith.org.uk</a>).

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND FUTURE PLANS

# **Acknowledgements**

Most importantly, thanks to the Group members who undertook survey work, or contributed records:-

Chris Amass Beth & Rob Furlong Sue Pinsent Joe Gomme Ian, Jill & Robert John Arnfield Alyson Harrison Plumridge Meg Bacon Steve Baker Jackie Harrison Jane Potts Alison Bennett Melanie & Peter Houlder Will Priestley Cathy & David Bowler Helen Howes Anne Schofield Lucy Callwood Jim Jarrett Ray Slack Phil Constable Tony Jones Leo Smith Belinda Cousens Claire & Denis Kelly Dee Snape Mags Cousins John Knowles **Carol Thickens** Julie Cowley **David Matthews** Caroline Uff Adrian Cullis Dick Ward Andrew Mav Gill Davies Shirley McNichol **Dan Watkins** Ruth Dennis-Jones Andrew Morton Ron Parnell Alistair Edie Greg & Sue Forster Adrian Pickles

## Thanks also to:-

- Jonathan Groom, previously Shropshire Council Biodiversity Data Officer, who provided the survey maps.
- Adrian Cullis and Gill Davies, for making several additional survey visits to monitor the Curlews
- Adrian Cullis and Lorna Taylor, for making contact with landowners with breeding Curlews, to seek permission for nest finding
- John Bacon, for information about target species on Ragleth Hill

Thanks for records and information about Dippers to

Greg and Sue Forster Pauline Adcock **David Stafford** John Arnfield Sarah Freeman Carolyn Swales Steve Butler John and Anne Hanley Peter Teague Andy Trifonoff Julie Cowley Paul Langford Jane Fallows Dave Pearce Paul Westall Sue and Steve Rooney Sandra Whitlock Bernard Ford

together with several readers of Stretton Focus.

The Curlew photo on the cover is © Gareth Thomas, and the Lapwing is © John Harding. Other photos are © Leo Smith, Allan Bernau, Miles Leach, Celia Todd, John Harding, Mark Hamblin, John Swift and John Hanley. Thanks to them all for permission to use them.

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## Distribution

This report has been emailed to all the participants listed in the Acknowledgements, and it is posted on the website.

A short summary is included in the Community Wildlife Group Annual Report.

#### Plans for 2022

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

A joint meeting of the Strettons area Community Wildlife Group and the Church Stretton SOS branch will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 16 March, at the Methodist Church Hall, Watling St., Church Stretton, for a presentation of the 2021 results, and plan the 2022 survey. New members, and anyone interested in birds, will be very welcome.

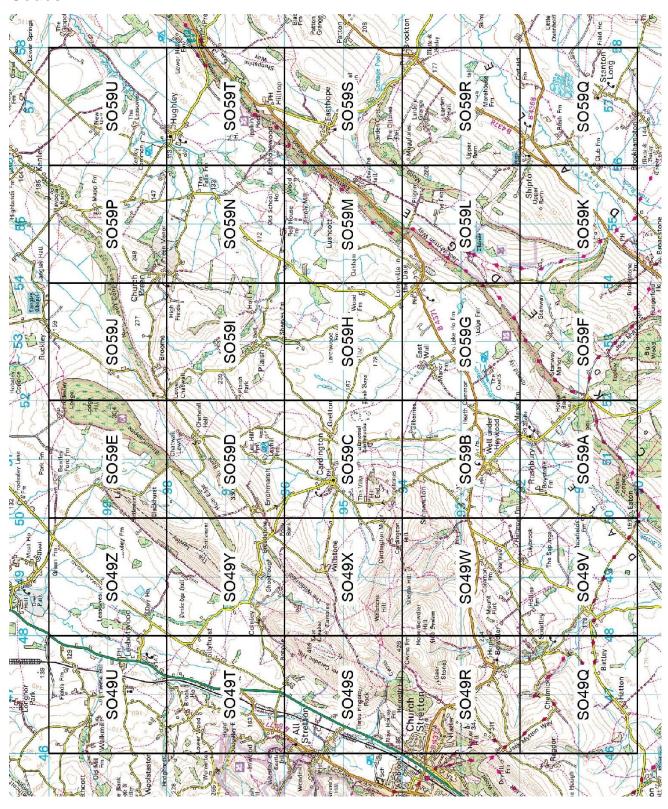
The Dipper project will also continue.

The Save our Curlews project will continue for a second year.

Details can also be found and downloaded from the joint website for all the Community Wildlife Groups in Shropshire <a href="www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk">www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk</a>,

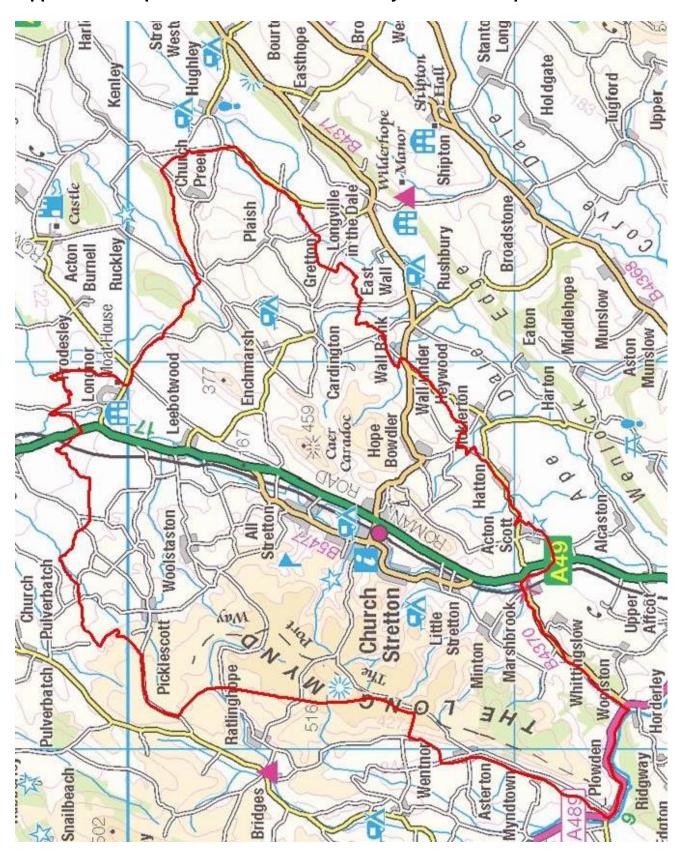
Leo Smith Project organiser January 2022

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

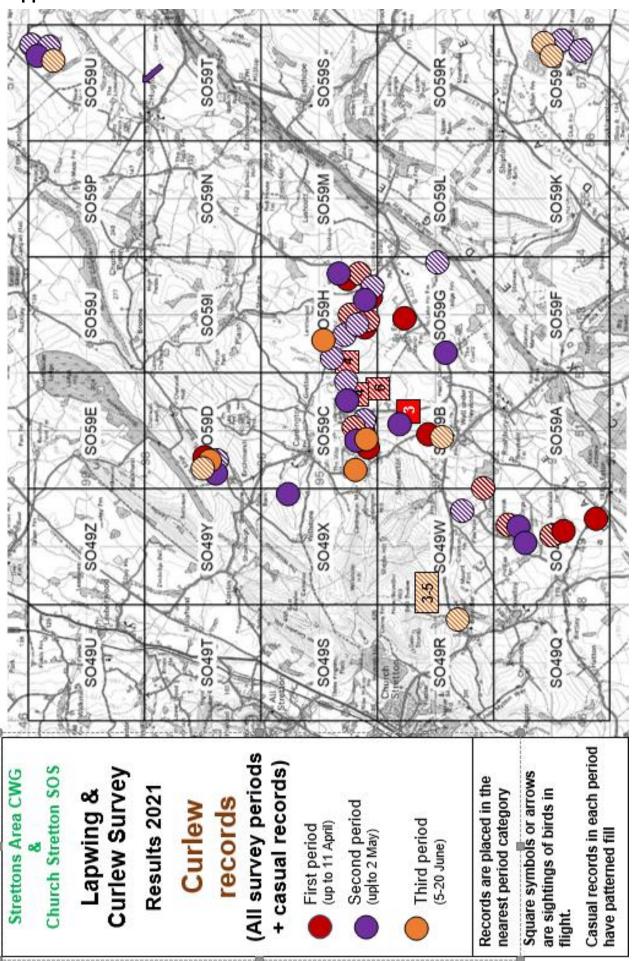


The two squares to the west of SO49U (SO49J and SO49P) were added to the survey area in 2020.

Appendix 2. Map of Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group area



**Appendix 3. All Curlew Observations** 



## Appendix 4. Survey results - Other Target Species

Strettons area Community Wildlife Group & Church Stretton SOS Branch Lapwing, Curlew and Other Birds Survey 2021

SO59 U lan & Jill Plumridge

Total

First survey period (27 March - 11 April) Number of Each Species Recorded (Tetrad) Surveyor Kestrel Red Kite Skylark Cuckoo Dunnock Bullfinch Yellow-SO49 J Claire & Denis Kelly 4 30 3 SO49 J Lucy Nickless & Alyson Harrison 1 30 SO49 P Claire & Denis Kelly 3 0 SO49 P Tracey & Chris Amass 25 3 No target species recorded SO49 P Alistair Edie 2 30 No target species recorded SO49 Q Caroline Uff 3 20 2 5 2 SO49 R Ron Parnell No target species recorded SO49 R Adrian Pickles 3 1 30 SO49 S Dick Ward 3 n 2 2 2 SO49 T Mags Cousins 2 10 1 SO49 T Jackie Harrison 2 45 No target species recorded SO49 U SO49 V Rob and Beth Furlong 2 0 No target species recorded Julie Cowley 3 0 SO49 V Alison Bennett 3 0 1 SO49 V Pat & Ruth Dennis-Jones 0 2 No target species recorded SO49 W Julie Cowley 3 n 1 SO49 W Ron Parnell 4 0 No target species recorded SO49 W Andrew May 5 15 1 1 SO49 X Steve Butler & Jim jarrett 2 45 No target species recorded SO49 Y Square not surveyed SO49 Z 9 0 SO49 Z Helen Howes 4 30 SO59 A Adrian Cullis 2 3 0 1 1 3 SO59 A Shirley McNichol 5 35 1 7 2 2 SO59 A David Matthews 4 35 SO59 B Adrian Cullis 0 10 3 1 2 1 SO59 B John Knowles 2 50 3 2 1 SO59 C Dan Watkins 4 0 3 1 SO59 C Jane Potts 0 1 3 1 SO59 D 4 2 Gill Davies 0 SO59 D Greg and Sue Forster 1 30 1 SO59 E 50 Anne Schofield 2 SO59 F Andrew Morton 5 30 3 2 SO59 G Cathy and David Bowler 4 40 3 SO59 H Gill Davies 2 45 4 1 2 SO59 H Alison Bennett 3 0 2 2 SO59 I Will Priestley 3 0 1 SO59 I Steve Baker 3 45 1 SO59 J Ray Slack 2 No target species recorded SO59 K Square not surveyed SO59 L John Arnfield 2 50 No target species recorded SO59 M Anne Schofield 2 45 1 lan & Jill Plumridge SO59 N 3 30 8 8 SO59 P lan & Jill Plumridge 3 7 2 30 1 1 SO59 Q Square not surveyed Square not surveyed SO59 R SO59 S Melanie & Peter Houlder 30 1 Phil Constable SO59 T 1 45 1 1 12 4 14 8

3

153

45

0

5 23

5

7

21 69

19

0 31

2

3

1 14

38

Square		Ti	me						Number of Each Species Recorded												
(Tetrad)	Surveyor  Hrs Mins Lapwing Curlew							Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnock	Wheat-	Stone- chat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow- hammer	Reed Bunting			
SO49 J	Claire & Denis Kelly	3	0		2			1													
SO49 J	Lucy Nickless & Alyson Harrison	3	0		2		1	3										6			
SO49 J	Belinda Cousens & Carol Thickens	2	0		2																
SO49 P	Claire & Denis Kelly	3	0	No	No target species recorded																
SO49 P	Chris Amass	3	20	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 P	Alistair Edie	2	15	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 Q	Caroline Uff	3	0					4			4						1				
SO49 R	Ron Parnell	1	40									1	2					2			
SO49 R	Adrian Pickles	2	58																		
SO49 S	Dick Ward	3	0							1			1					1			
SO49 T	Mags Cousins	1	30	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 T	Jackie Harrison	2	45	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 U	Rob and Beth Furlong	1	0	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 V	Julie Cowley	2	15	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 V	Pat & Ruth Dennis-Jones	4	30		2																
SO49 W	Julie Cowley	2	15	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO49 W	Ron Parnell	1	35						1				4		5						
SO49 W	Andrew May	5	5					3	4	1											
SO49 X	Jim Jarrett	2	0																		
SO49 Y	Joe Gomme	3	0				1		10	1	1						1				
SO49 Z	Tony Jones	9	0																		
SO49 Z	Helen Howes	3	30	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO59 A	Adrian Cullis	3	0																		
SO59 A	Shirley McNichol	2	8				1	4						1		1					
SO59 A	David Matthews	4	20	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO59 A	Sue Pinsent & Meg Bacon	12	0					1			1					1	2				
SO59 B	Adrian Cullis	3	0		4																
SO59 B	John Knowles	2	50		1																
SO59 C	Dan Watkins	3	30		4																
SO59 C	Jane Potts	3	0		1		1														
SO59 D	Gill Davies	10	30	1	2			5	1	1		2	1				2				
SO59 D	Greg and Sue Forster	1	30	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO59 E	Anne Schofield	2	30													2	2				
SO59 F	Andrew Morton	4	30				1	4							2						
SO59 G	Cathy and David Bowler				Square	not su	irveye	d													
SO59 H	Gill Davies	5	25		3		1	3	1						6	1	1				
SO59 H	Alison Bennett	3	0					***************************************										***************************************			
SO59 I	Will Priestley	2	30	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO59 I	Steve Baker	2	45		<u> </u>		1	2													
SO59 J	Ray Slack	2	20	No	target	specie	s recor	ded													
SO59K						notsu											<b>†</b>				
SO59 I	John Arnfield	2	30			snecie				l	İ				l	l	t	·			

No target species recorded

No target species recorded

Square not surveyed

 Third Survey period (5 - 20 June)

Second Survey period (17 April- 2 May)

Square		Т	me	Number of Each Species Recorded														
(Tetrad)	Surveyor	Hrs	Mins	Lapwing	Curlew	Kestrel	Red Kite	Skylark	Meadow Pipit	Cuckoo	Dunnock	Wheat- ear	Stone- chat	Tree Sparrow	Linnet	Bullfinch	Yellow- hammer	Reed Bunting
SO49 J	Claire & Denis Kelly	3	30					3										
SO49 P	Claire & Denis Kelly	3	0	No	target s	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO49 P	Alistair Edie	2	0	No	target	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO49 Q				Square not surveyed														
SO49 R	Ron Parnell	1	15			1												
SO49 R				Square not surveyed														
SO49 S				:	Square	not su	ırveye	i										
SO49 T	Jackie Harrison	2	15	No	target	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO49 U					Square	not su	ırveye	i										
SO49 V	Pat & Ruth Dennis-Jones	2	0				10											
SO49 W	Ron Parnell	1	15		4	1							3		2			1
SO49 X					Square	not su	irveye	i										
SO49 Y				,	Square	not su	ırveye	i										
SO49 Z	Tony Jones	7	30	Square not surveyed  No target species recorded														
SO49 Z	Helen Howes	3	0														1	
SO59 A	Shirley McNichol	2	13				1	2						2			2	
SO59 A	David Matthews	4	30	No	target	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO59 B	John Knowles	2	0	No t	target s	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO59 C	Dan Watkins	3	30		2													
SO59 D	Gill Davies	8	30	2	1			2										1
SO59 E	Anne Schofield	1	45					3		1								
SO59 F	Andrew Morton	3	15				1	2								2		
SO59 G				Square not surveyed														
SO59 H	Gill Davies	2	0		3													
SO59 I				,	Square	not su	ırveye	i										
SO59 J				:	Square	not su	ırveye	i										
SO59 K				;	Square	not su	urveye	i										
SO59 L	John Arnfield	2	30	No t	target s	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO59 M	Anne Schofield	2	0	No	target	pecie	s recor	ded										
SO59 N	lan Plumridge	2	30					4			8						6	
SO59 P	lan & Jill Plumridge	2	30					6									2	
SO59 Q	Dee Snape	3	0															
SO59 R					Square	not su	irveye	1										
SO59 S	Melanie & Peter Houlder	3	0								1						3	
SO59 T					Square	not su	irveye	i										
SO59 U	lan, Jill & Robert Plumridge	3	30				1	6			6						4	
	Total	72	28	2	10	2	13	28	0	1	15	0	3	2	2	2	18	2

# Appendix 5. Save our Curlews appeal 2022



# Save our Curlews Appeal



We have been monitoring local Curlews since 2017, and found 9 - 10 pairs, similar to previous years. However, we think that at least two pairs have disappeared since we started, only five years ago.

There is a real danger that we will lose these iconic birds for ever, unless we can find out why they are disappearing, and take action to halt and reverse the decline. Remind yourself of what we might lose, by listening to the Curlew's evocative and mournful song on www.british-birdsongs.uk/curlew/?type1585

In 2021, the Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) worked with the Strettons area Community Wildlife Group to find nests, put an electric fence around them to protect the eggs from predators, and then fix radio-tags to the chicks and track them to see how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Not enough young birds fledge to replace the older birds dying off. We need to know why.

Five nests were found and fenced, with landowners help. Eleven chicks were radiotagged and tracked, but all 11 were predated within a few days of hatching.

Circumstances change each year, so we need to do the research for three successive years to draw reliable conclusions. It is expensive, but we have another grant towards the cost from the National Trust's Stepping Stones Project, via a Green Recovery Heritage Lottery grant, but we need to raise much more to carry it out.

# Please use the form overleaf for your donation.

If you pay income tax, please complete the Gift Aid certificate too. This increases the value of your donation by 25%, because SOS can claim the Gift Aid from HMRC.

If the appeal raises more than we need to complete the planned work in 2022, the money will be carried forward to 2023.

#### Curlew Facts and Figures

Curlew is the "most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK", because we have an estimated 28% of the European, and 19-27% of the world, population. It is on the national Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 4, because of a decline of 62% in the UK between 1969 and 2014.

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, but the County holds almost 30% of the total in southern England. At the current rate of decline, the County population will half in about 13 years, and become virtually extinct in 25. Curlew is on the *Red List* of *Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*, published by SOS in 2020.

You can find more information about local Curlews, including details of how to make donations and where to send them, on our website <a href="www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/">www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/</a> or contact Leo Smith (01694 720296, <a href="leo@leosmith.org.uk">leo@leosmith.org.uk</a>)

The Appeal is supported by



