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SOS Church  
Stretton Branch



# Save our Curlews Appeal

We have been monitoring local Curlews since 2017. In 2023 we found eight breeding pairs. At least three pairs have been lost since we started, only seven 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 <https://www.british-birdsongs.uk/curlew/?type1585>

Since 2021, the Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) has 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 fledged to replace the older birds dying off. We need to know why.

In 2023, we found four nests (one a replacement for a predated first nest), but all were predated before any chicks hatched. Since 2021, we have found 13 nests, and fenced 12; 19 chicks have hatched and been radio-tagged, but none have fledged. Most of the chicks were predated, within a few days of hatching.

The project is expensive. In previous years we have received grants from the National Trust's Stepping Stones Project, the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund and Stretton Focus Community Awards, but no grants have been promised yet for 2024. We therefore need to raise additional funds through this appeal to carry out the project.

## 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 2024, the money will be carried forward to 2025.

### 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 still holds almost 30% of the total in southern England. At the current rate of decline, the County population will half in about 12 years, and become virtually extinct in 25. Curlew is on the SOS *Red List of Breeding Birds of Conservation Concern in Shropshire*.

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

The Appeal is  
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