

Community Wildlife Group Bird surveys

More helpers needed, please

Surveys in 2024

The 10 Community Wildlife Groups all monitor their local Curlew populations (around 100 pairs each year), and have done so for many years. Between them they cover more than three-quarters of the County population. Surveys also monitor several other target species. A map showing the areas covered by each group, overlain on the Curlew breeding distribution map from the 2008-13 Bird Atlas, can be found on the SOS website.



More information about each CWG, a map showing the area covered by each CWG, and the results of their individual bird surveys, can be found on the CWGs website, www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk

We are particularly keen to recruit helpers around Oswestry, to locate territories for the nest-finding project.

Bird Group meetings

Each CWG is planning to hold a Bird Group meeting in March to plan the survey. The 10 Community Wildlife Group areas, in order of formation, together with the date of their planned meeting, and venue, are

- 1 Upper Onny (Monday 11 March, Bishop's Castle Town Hall)
- 2 Upper Clun (no meeting – contact Leo Smith)
- 3 Clee Hill (Monday 18 March, Recreation Rooms, 22A, Clee Hill High Street)
- 4 Rea Valley (Monday 25 March, Minsterley Village Hall)
- 5 Camlad Valley (Tuesday 19 March, The Horse and Jockey, Chirbury Road, Churchstoke)
- 6 Strettons area (Joint meeting with Church Stretton SOS branch: Wednesday 13 March, Methodist Church Hall, Watling St., Church Stretton)
- 7 Three Parishes (Weston Rhyn, St. Martin's and Gobowen) - no meeting – contact Leo Smith
- 8 Tanat to Perry (Oswestry south – Wednesday 6 March, Morda Social Club, Pleasant View SY10 9NS)
- 9 Severn-Vyrnwy Confluence (Wednesday, 20 March, Alberbury Village Hall – contact Tony Comley 07940 817300 or email svccwg@shropscwgs.org.uk)
- 10 Abdon (to be arranged – contact Miles Leach (milesleach712@gmail.com))

To volunteer to help with one of the CWG surveys, come to the meeting, contact the relevant group via the website, or email [Leo Smith \(leo@leosmith.org.uk\)](mailto:leo@leosmith.org.uk).

SOS Save our Curlews

In 2023, the Tanat to Perry, Three Parishes and Strettons area Community Wildlife groups worked with the SOS *Save our Curlews* campaign, to find nests, protect them with electric fences, and radio-tag and track chicks, to find out what happens to them. Failure of chicks to fledge is a major cause of the decline, and we need a better understanding of the reasons so we can develop effective conservation measures.

We have analysed the results of the Campaign and project work since it started in 2018. In summary, fencing nests is effective, saving 74% of all fenced nests from predation. However,

once chicks leave the protection of the fence, within 36 hours of hatching, they are vulnerable to predation, and most live for less than eight days.

A report of the Campaign 2018-22, the results of project work in 2023, and evidence that the main reason for the decline is the high level of predators, maintained by the release of millions of gamebirds for shooting, can be found on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/

Plans for 2024

It is vital that we continue with the project work in the same three areas as we covered in 2023, if we are to have any chance of halting the decline. We want to see if project work finds the same disastrous productivity results in all parts of the County. The CWG surveys locate the Curlew breeding territories for the nest-finders in the project areas, and provide evidence of the lack of breeding success across the rest of the County, so they are vitally important.

SOS Save our Curlews Campaign Appeal

Project work is expensive, so SOS members, volunteers in Community Wildlife Groups, and the general public are being encouraged to donate to the SOS Appeal, if they feel able to. If, like us, you think that Shropshire will be a much poorer place without Curlews, please support the appeal. Details on the SOS Web-site, or from Leo Smith.

Leo Smith
SOS Save our Curlews Campaign Co-ordinator,
(leo@leosmith.org.uk).
February 2024