



Shropshire Ornithological Society

# Save our Curlews

## Campaign & Appeal



*The Birds of Shropshire* estimated that the Curlew population declined by 77% between 1990 and 2010, down to around only 160 pairs, and had disappeared from 62% of the area they occupied in 1990. They have continued to decline since, down to below 120 pairs. At the current rate of loss, the population will halve in 12 years, and virtually disappear within 25. There is a real danger that Curlew will become extinct in the County, unless urgent and effective action is taken to save them.

Shropshire Ornithological Society 2005 (SOS 2005)\* has recently extended its commitment to support a long-term County-wide *Save our Curlews* Campaign, by providing funding for three more years, promoting an Appeal to SOS and Community Wildlife Group (CWG) members, and the general public, hosting banking facilities, and supporting grant applications and other funding requests. The Campaign will continue to undertake nest finding, protecting nests with electric fencing, and radio-tagging and tracking chicks to find out how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Understanding the reasons for low levels of chick survival is part of the key to an effective conservation plan.

Campaign work also involves ten independent CWGs from across the County, over 300 people who are monitoring almost all of the County Curlew population. 88-98 pairs were located in 2023.

Last year, project work continued in the Strettons CWG area, and started in the Three Parishes and Tanat to Perry CWG areas, around Oswestry. Four nests were found in the former, which were all predated, and one nest was found and fenced near Oswestry. Three chicks hatched, but all were predated. However, chicks fledged from two other nests near-by, a very welcome success.

**More funds are needed to continue with this ground-breaking work. In 2024, it is intended to continue in the same areas, to obtain results that are not distorted by abnormal years.**

The results are sent to the South of England Curlew Forum, the UK and Ireland Curlew Action Group and the Curlew Recovery Partnership for England, so the work is an integral part of the case to Government for effective Curlew conservation measures.

You can read more detail about campaign and project results since 2018, and future plans, on the SOS website [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/). It also describes 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 all the Curlew's main predators at well above naturally sustainable levels. We must continue to produce the evidence and call for immediate action to reduce the release of gamebirds.

Donations to the Appeal are vital, both to help pay for the work, and because they demonstrate to potential funders the commitment of local people to saving Shropshire's Curlews. You can donate by sending a cheque, a bank standing order, an internet banking or a bank transfer payment (see details overleaf). Please note that it is essential that whilst donations should be made out to Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) they should be clearly marked "Curlew Appeal." If you are a UK taxpayer, you can increase the value of your donation by 25% if you sign and send in the Gift Aid certificate (also overleaf), so please do so.

\* SOS 2005 is the not-for-profit limited company created to handle SOS's financial and property affairs.

**Shropshire will be a much poorer place without Curlews.  
Please support the Appeal**

**For further information, please contact Leo Smith  
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