

Curlew

Research Institution: NPWS

Principal Investigator: Dr. Barry O'Donoghue, NPWS Agri-Ecology Unit.

Undertaken throughout Ireland.

Project Background

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) is one of Ireland's most threatened birds, listed on the Irish red list of species of conservation concern as well as being the only Irish bird species on the IUCN red list (www.iucnredlist.org). The first national survey for breeding Curlew in Ireland was undertaken in 2015 and 2016, with just 122 pairs confirmed, representing a 97% decline since the 1980s.

The results of the survey are very useful towards informing conservation effort; to act as a baseline, to identify requirements and to target positive action.

The Department is establishing a Task Force, which is intended to involve all relevant stakeholders, to work towards addressing this decline. It is intended to draw on existing knowledge and to work with all relevant stakeholders towards minimising the potential for inappropriate practices and maximising the potential for positive practices.

It is also intended to undertake some further research on breeding Curlew in 2017, including establishing the onset of breeding for different territories. More details will follow in due course.

With an informed approach, and cooperation of all stakeholders, we will work towards safeguarding Curlew territories.

Overall Aim

To achieve a national population estimate for breeding Curlew - successfully completed

To map the breeding locations of Curlew in Ireland - successfully completed

To set a baseline for monitoring the population into the future - successfully completed

To identify the pressures acting on Curlew at a site by site basis - successfully completed

To allow targeted conservation effort for one of Ireland's most threatened species - work in progress – existing efforts include [GLAS](#), the national Agri-environmental scheme

Projected benefits of the research project

Knowing how many breeding Curlew we have in Ireland, their locations and habitat use is essential to conservation efforts through the protection and enhancement of habitat.

The data collected as part of this project to date has already been put to direct use in prioritising farmers with Curlew on or near their land for financial supports through GLAS, to manage the land in a manner that benefits this ground nesting wader.

Conservation efforts can be further enhanced by a range of measures including the safeguarding of nests and territories from damaging activities and predators, as well as enhancement measures including improvement of habitats.