



Curlew, people and recovery action in Ireland

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Builth Wells



Background

- Declines in Ireland's breeding Curlew populations evident since the early 1990s (Gibbons et al. 1993)
- Extent and severity of declines was not apparent until Bird Atlas surveys 2007-2011 undertaken (Balmer et al. 2013)

Background contd.



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TODAY'S STORIES

The haunting cry of the curlew may disappear from the Irish countryside'



Saturday, October 16, 2010

By Lynne Kelleher



Initial Actions

- The Halting Environmental Loss Project (HELP)-
INTERREG funding
- From 2015 inclusion of specific prescriptions
under the Irish Agri-Environment Scheme
(Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme)



Ireland's breeding Curlews are in Crisis

We need your help to find all the remaining pairs

Please send us records if you see a BREEDING PAIR of Curlews:-

- Two birds together or 1 "guard" bird (the other may be sitting on the nest out of sight nearby)
 - In upland or wet grassland habitat, Between April and early June.
 - You may hear the typical bubbling call or song
- To listen to the call, or to report a record of a breeding Curlew, go to <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Ourwork/CryoftheCurlewAppeal/tabid/1106/Default.aspx>

A flock (three or more birds together) seen from late July onwards, especially at the coast, is likely to consist of WINTERING birds, from Britain or Scandinavia; we are not currently looking for records of these flocks.

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European Region
Leopoldo de Calvez
Director General
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Initial Actions contd.



- Irish National Survey conducted between 2015-17: reality hit!
- Coincided with the Curlew walk in 2016
- Through these processes a Curlew Workshop was organised in Higginstown, Co Westmeath: November 2016



To Whom the Curlews Call

Twice daily calls the tide
Up valleys where the sea clouds ride
To where high meadows touch the sky
And wild curlews cry.

No thoughts of day or night
Nor if the bubbling shore's in sight
Disturb the ebbing, distant sea
Or emptying estuary.

Yet curlews always hear,
Be it windy, wet, dull or clear,
Perhaps by some aquatic sigh
When muds emerging dry.

Then to the air they spring
And off to the sea they eager wing,
Sweet soul-sounds of the gathering sky
That down the darkness fly.

No weaving journey here,
No anxious aims inspired by fear,
But just obedience to the tide
That sun and moon provide.

So why does man invent
Then everlastingly lament
The plastic and the trash galore
Which litter every shore?

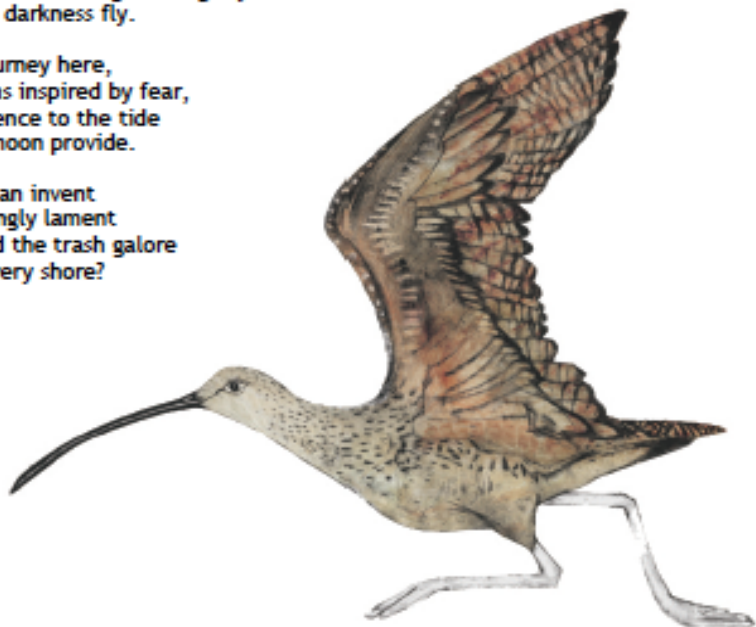
Or sickly, twisted tales
Whose squalid, booming bookstall sales
Confirm he heeds no tide
Nor longer seeks his guide?

But the curlews' calling flight
Crossing estuaries through the night
Recalls to haunted man
The shores from which he ran.

For the spirit of winds and tides
Whose face the earth mist hides
Shall one day restore to all
To whom the curlews call.

Written by Gordon Knight sometime in the 1980s

Illustrations by Beatrice Forshall



Irish Curlew Workshop 2016



- Stakeholder driven workshop
- Over 80 stakeholders responsible for Curlew conservation and management in Ireland
- Interviews were carried out with ten of these stakeholders to obtain insights in motives etc.

Information from Workshop



Why did the stakeholder attend the workshop?

- The main reason was a “conscious desire to save the bird”

What are the perceived barriers to conservation?

- “Funding” and land-use policy surrounding “forestry”

Information from Workshop



From a socio-political perspective, why has it taken so long to react to declining curlew numbers in Ireland?

- “Ireland’s Government is slow to fulfil its obligations in relation to halting the decline of biodiversity” and “people are concerned but not concerned enough to do something”



Conclusions

“My big point of view on curlew and any conservation on peatlands is from the bottom up is the way to go and not from the top down and try to push for that and get everyone [...] to understand that”



Questions?

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