



Curlew *Numenius arquata* are large wading birds, with a distinctive curved down bill and a “coorlee” song. They require damp grassland and rough pasture, where there is abundant invertebrate prey. They are ground nesting birds and dependent on open landscapes for successful breeding, where they have good visibility and can defend their nest.

Curlew are a UK BAP species and on the RSPB Amber list of birds of concern. Their numbers have been affected by agricultural intensification and loss of suitable habitat. BTO surveys recently found a 39% decrease in the birds in wet meadows in England. Furthermore, their range was found to have decline 17% in Britain (Breeding and & Wintering Atlas 2007-2011).

In Herefordshire Curlew are mainly found in the center and south-west of the county, particularly in the area between the River Wye and Dore. Their preferred habitat is alongside and on the floodplain of main rivers including the Lugg, Monnow and Arrow. The estimated county population is 60 breeding pairs.

### Threats

- Disturbance of ground nesting birds by recreation pressure, particularly dogs
- Agricultural intensification
  - Land drainage
  - Intensive management of grassland
  - Increased use of pesticide
  - Reduction of habitat diversity due to increased specialisation
- Isolated and fragmented populations.
- Switch from late hay to early silage cuts
- Nest predation by corvids

### Current Action

- Agri-Environment Schemes – options for management and creation of wet grassland for wintering and breeding waders (NE)
- Lugg Living Landscape project, to enhance the quality and connectivity of wetland habitat in the floodplain of the River Lugg

	Objective	Action
<b>A</b>	<b>Locate and map existing populations and suitable habitat</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Maintain and protect viable populations</b>	<b>2,3,4,5</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Increase suitable habitat</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Reduce recreational pressure on breeding birds</b>	<b>5</b>

	Actions	Target
<b>1</b>	<b>Map distribution; Locate populations through public surveys and collation of HWT and HOC records</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Work with landowners to increase areas of suitable breeding habitat</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Maintain existing populations and increase numbers through Agri-Environment Schemes and the planning process</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Increase suitable feeding habitat through creation of pools and scrapes in floodplain of the River Lugg</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Raise awareness of the impacts of recreational pressure on breeding populations and seek ways to warden areas where disturbance to breeding curlews occurs with recreational pressure</b>	<b>2020</b>

<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>HOC</b>
<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>HWT, NE</b>