

Curlew Facts

- Curlew are now considered to be “vulnerable” on the European **Red list**, meaning that the species face a high risk of extinction.
- The UK plays an important role in shaping curlew conservation, what happens to the curlew in the UK will have substantial consequences for the future of the species.
- The famously evocative and previously familiar call of the curlew is becoming increasingly rare, and may very soon be lost in southern England and Wales.
- Curlew belong to a group of birds known as “waders”, because they spend parts of their life wading in shallow waters.
- Curlew spend the winter in coastal areas - around the UK they can be found on mudflats and estuaries in large flocks, sometimes numbering into the thousands. But these apparently large numbers mask a serious conservation issue.
- In the summer, curlew migrate to their breeding grounds.
- Historically, curlew were found breeding across Britain - in meadows, marshes and arable fields where they are now rarely seen.
- Today, their breeding range has contracted and they are more often thought of as a bird of the uplands, breeding on moorland areas and farms around the hill edge.
- The UK’s breeding curlew population has halved in the last 25 years. This decline has also been recorded in most of the other countries where curlew breed.
 - It is estimated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) that worldwide there has been a 20-30% reduction in curlew breeding numbers in the past 15 years.

Did you know?

A group of curlews is called a ‘curfew’, a ‘salon’ or a ‘skein’.

