

SWT / SOS Curlew Appeal 2019



SWT / SOS Appeal

An appeal letter signed by the Presidents of SWT and SOS was distributed last year (copy attached). Including the Upper Onny Wildlife Group Curlew appeal (which was transferred to the SWT/SOS Appeal), a donation of £2,500 from SOS, and Gift Aid, the appeal raised enough to fund nest protection and chick monitoring work in Upper Clun and Clee Hill. Curlew Country raised enough funds themselves to continue their project in 2018, and did not apply for Appeal funds.

Results in 2018

i. Upper Clun and Clee Hill

Three nests were found and fenced in each area. None of these nests were wholly predated. The fences were successful in protecting nests from mammalian predators, including foxes. In Clee Hill, definitely one, probably two, of the chicks from one brood fledged, but all the other 10 radio tagged chicks in the two areas are believed to have been predated. Predation rates of the nests that were not found appear to be rather less than that in the Curlew Country area.

ii. Curlew Country

The "Curlew Country" project concentrated on the trialling of Headstarting in 2018. This involves removing eggs from Curlew nests, incubating them artificially, rearing chicks in captivity, and then releasing them into the wild after they fledge: 21 curlew chicks fledged. It is not known whether our local Curlew chicks will survive and return to their natal area to breed, but if they do it will lead to a significant short-term increase in the local population.

iii. Detailed Reports

Full project reports for the work in the Upper Clun and Clee Hill, an overview of all the work, and the results of monitoring by 10 Community Wildlife Groups, can be found on the SOS website www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/
Further information about the headstarting project can be found on www.curlewcountry.org

Plans for 2019

We need more information on where recently hatched chicks move to because maintaining and improving, and possibly re-creating, the right sort of habitat is the key to long term success. We also need to have a better understanding of the different predation pressures, and their timing, which are not uniform across the County.

No scientific study relies on results from one year, which might be atypical for many reasons, and 2018 was certainly atypical weather-wise. As a consequence, the 2018 project work in Clun and Clee needs to be repeated, but it can only proceed in full if a further appeal raises sufficient funds. It also appears likely that Curlew Country will apply for funding to continue their headstarting project. **The SOS Board agreed on 23 January 2019 to contribute £2,500 from its own funds, but we need to raise a lot more if this important work is to continue.**

All charities and conservation organisations are finding funding difficult to come by in these times of austerity and uncertainty. Shropshire's Curlews are in dire straits, but this important work is dependent on funds generated by local residents, SOS members, Community Wildlife Group members and local Conservation charities. Please donate if you can.

You can donate using the form on the back of last year's appeal letter (attached), or online at www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/appeals. If you are a UK taxpayer, please sign the Gift Aid declaration, which increases the value of your donation by 25%.