

Let's talk about

Curlews



RED STATUS



The Curlew, one of Ireland's most iconic birds, and is also one of our most endangered bird species

In the 1980's there were about 3,500 - 5,500 pairs of breeding curlew in Ireland. A study carried out between 2012-2017 by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), found that only **148** remain.

The Curlew Conservation Programme was established in 2017 to save Ireland's last breeding Curlew.

World Curlew Day



Curlews have inspired poets, artists, musicians and writers for generations. Their iconic call could be heard in coasts, meadows, mountain slopes and moorlands. Sadly, there are fewer and fewer breeding curlews every year.

World Curlew Day falls on the 21st April each year. It's a special day to help raise awareness about curlews, so we learn more about them, in the hope that we can save these beautiful birds from extinction.

Let's find out more about Curlews and World Curlew Day!

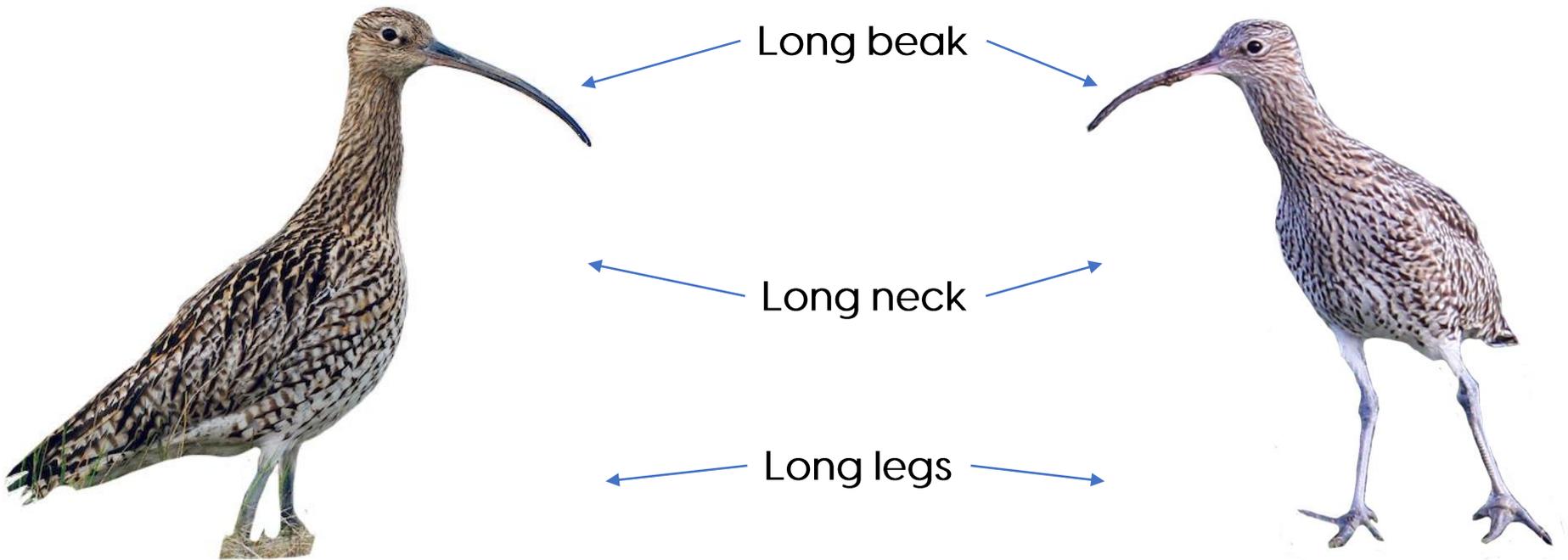
Ireland's Largest Waders

The Curlew is Ireland's largest wader. A wader is a long-legged bird that 'wades' in shallow water or muddy ground to look for food. In Munster Irish, we say *Cuirliún*, but you can also say *Crotach*.



What does a Curlew look like?

Curlews are a large, mostly greyish brown (speckled dark and light) bird, with long greyish blue legs, long dark beak and long neck. The underbelly is more of a creamy colour, lightly speckled.



How big is a curlew?

A curlew can measure up to 60cm tall. That's the length of 2 normal school rulers!



They can weigh between 600g and 950g. That's between 1.5 lbs and 2 lbs of butter!

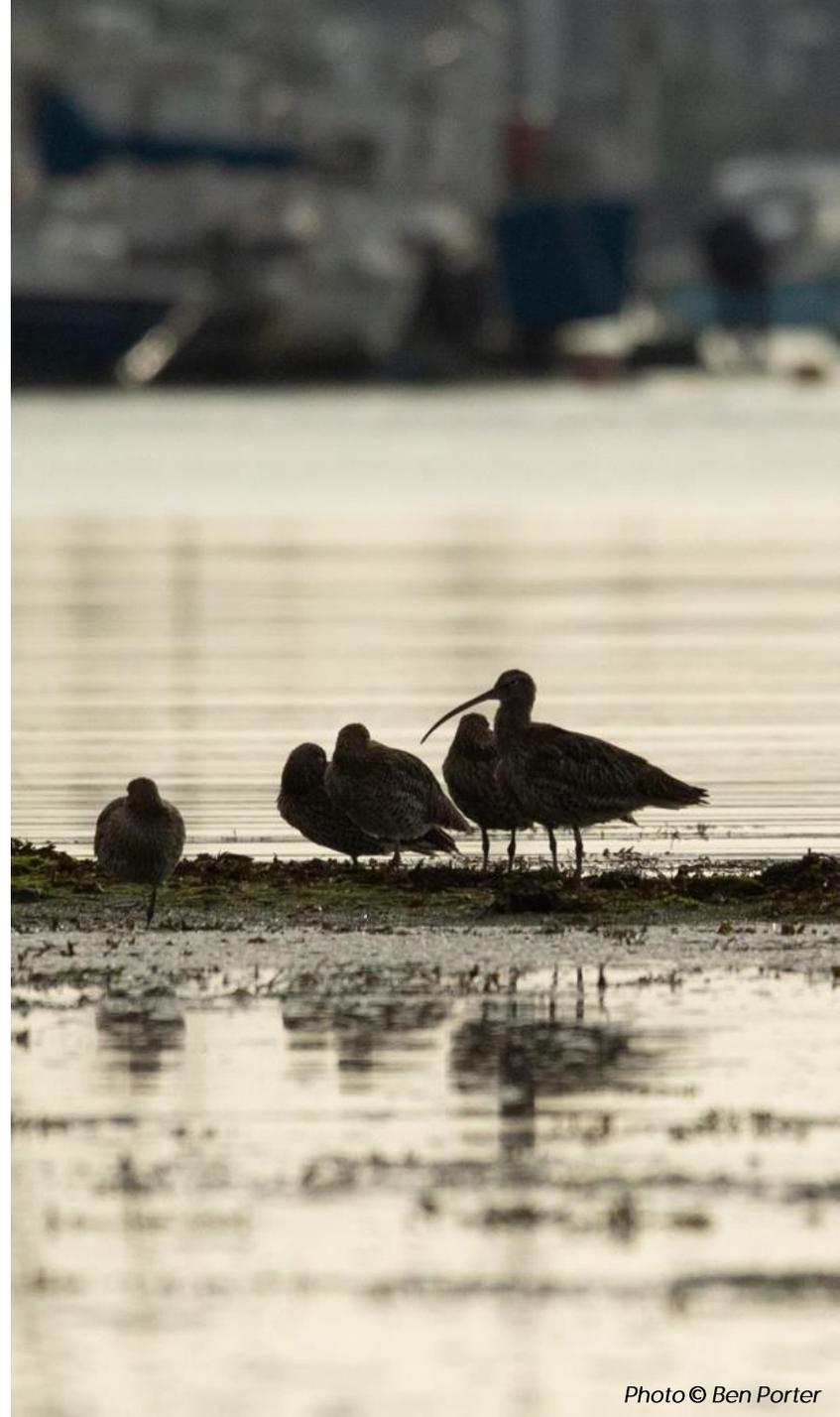


What does a curlew sound like?

Curlews are most well-known for their distinctive 'bubbling' call:

'kur-leeeee – kur-leeeee – kur-leeeee'

Have a listen to [curlew sounds here](#):



Where do Curlews like to live?

Curlews like to lay their eggs in bogs and meadows in the spring and summer.

In autumn and winter, they feed in wetland areas such as estuaries, tidal shores and nearby fields or greens.



Why do Curlews like to live in bogs and meadows?

Curlews, like many other wading birds, make their nests on the ground.

Hidden in long grass, these nests are well camouflaged, and the chicks can feed and hide in the area when they hatch.



What do Curlews like to eat?

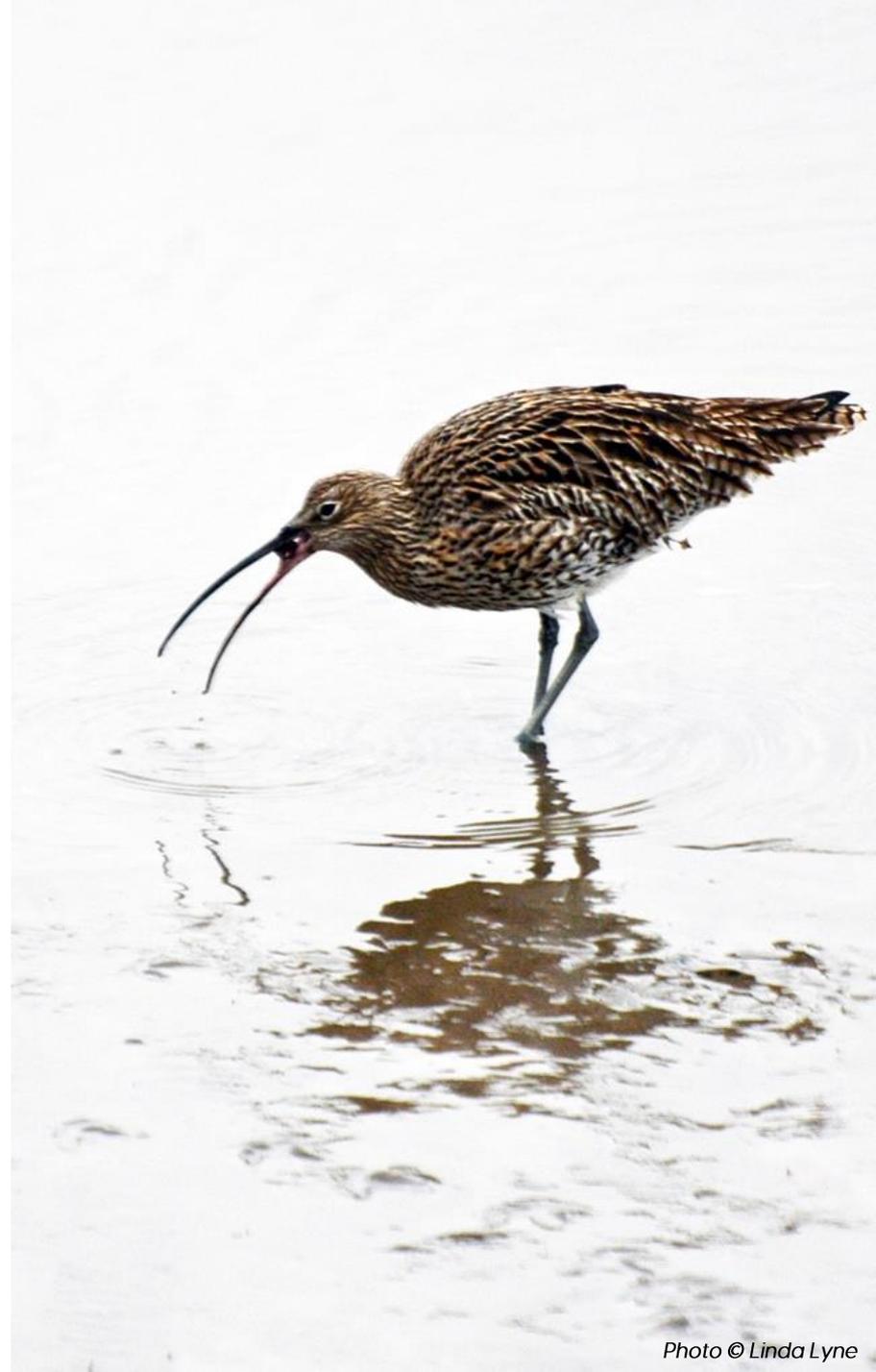
Curlews like to eat worms, caterpillars, crabs, shrimps, spiders, insects, and other types of creepy crawlies.



Why do Curlews have long beaks?

Curlew's have a very long beak (also called a bill). This helps them find food in soft ground, wet mud and shallow water.

The end of a curlew's bill is sensitive and acts like tweezers which enables it to feel around in the mud for food.

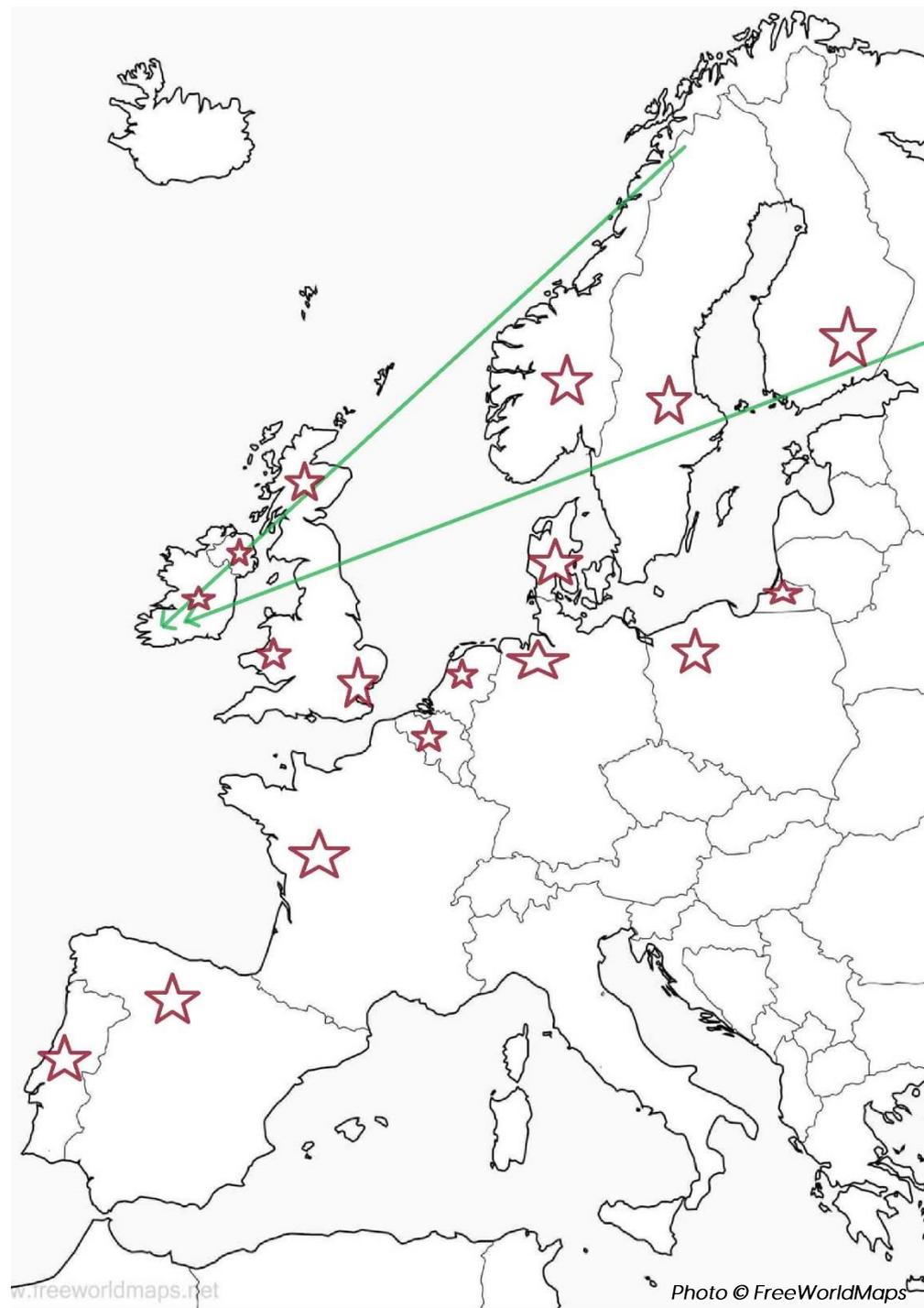


Curlew Migration

Curlews are **migratory birds** - they leave their breeding grounds with their young soon after they learn to fly, typically from the end of July.

Birds nesting in Scandinavia and Russia migrate to Western Europe's milder climates for the winter.

Curlews are present all year in Ireland and Britain and the nearby European coasts.



Curlews in Ireland

Most curlews that you see in winter in Ireland have arrived here from colder northern climates to feed during our milder winters.

They stay from September to April. These curlews migrate back to their countries to have their chicks.



Irish Breeding Curlews

Irish breeding curlews are very rare and very important! They stay here to breed and will lay their eggs in mid-April.

Curlews usually lay **4** eggs in ground nests. They are about the same size as hen eggs. They are usually light green, and speckled brown to help blend in/camouflage into the grasses.



Curlew chicks

Once hatched, chicks leave the nest within a day or so and feed themselves. Damp ground and shallow pools are ideal places for chicks to feed. They are usually full of insects and worms in summer months.

Curlews leave their breeding ground with their young, soon after they learn to fly, typically from the end of July.



Lets have fun with
Curlews



Now that we have learned all about curlews, let's have some fun!

Can you find
the Curlew
in this
picture?



Well
done!



Spot the difference

The **curlew** and **whimbrel** are both large, brown waders with long, down curved bills. Distinguishing them can be tricky from a distance. Can you spot any differences?



Curlew Activity Sheets!

Have some fun using our Curlew worksheets. Simply download and print

1. Colour in a Curlew
2. Can you name the different parts of a curlew?
3. Colour in this curlew mother with her chick
4. What do Curlews eat?
5. Three Things about Curlews
6. Curlew Wordsearch
7. Curlew Poetry
8. Spot the Difference



Share your curlew drawings, poems and more with us!

You can email them to live@ucc.ie, or post online on 21st April, for World Curlew Day.



For more information visit www.ecomuseumlive.eu

#WorldCurlewDay #IrishCurlews #EcomuseumLive #Cuirliún

This Curlew presentation was developed for World Curlew Day as part of The LIVE Project's environmental education programme with the assistance of the Curlew Conservation Programme. The LIVE Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development fund under the Ireland Wales Cooperation Programme. This presentation and its images can be used for educational purpose only, under Creative Commons Licences.

