

Curlew conference in Builth Wells to discuss bird's plight

- 24 January 2018

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Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and conservation groups are gathering to discuss the battle to save one of Wales' most endangered birds.

NRW said **curlew** numbers in Wales fell by 81% between 1993 and 2006. It is estimated 500 breeding pairs remain.

There are fears breeding curlews could be lost from Wales within the next few decades without action.

The conference in Builth Wells, Powys, will hear from bird experts, policy-makers, farmers and land managers.

The decline in curlews is thought to be largely due to poor breeding success and the loss of breeding grounds.

Patrick Lindley, senior ornithologist for NRW, said: "It is vital that we work together to protect the remaining population and reverse these declines," he said.

"This conference will explore previous recovery work and practical ideas that will help us develop realistic actions to improve the numbers of this iconic bird in Wales."

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The UK population of the eurasian curlew, which makes up around 27% of the global breeding population, is declining rapidly in numbers and range.

It is listed by International Union for Conservation of Nature as "near threatened" globally.

RSPB Cymru senior conservation officer Dave Smith said: "If we don't act collectively now the iconic call of the curlew could be forever lost to future generations.

"We need to work together to develop and implement practical measures enabling farmers and landowners to provide habitat for wildlife like curlew alongside profitable operations."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-42802051>