**Terms of Reference**

**UK and Ireland Curlew Action Group**

**Purpose of the group**

In 2015 the Eurasian curlew was recognised as the UK’s highest conservation priority bird species, based on the species adverse global conservation status (IUCN Near-Threatened), the importance of the UK breeding population (19-27% of the global population) and the rapid decline in the UK (-46% since 1995). The population in the Republic of Ireland is now critically low (<150 pairs), down from an estimated 12,000 pairs in 1985.

The group will shape, drive and integrate programmes of conservation and research activity across UK and Ireland with the aim of improving the conservation status of the curlew and to support international obligations to that end.

**Key Tasks**

The group will act as an advisory group for interested parties and the statutory bodies or the organisations they represent on all matters relating to curlew.

The group will link devolved national programmes of conservation work for the curlew with wider UK, Ireland and International obligations to contribute to the delivery of the AEWA International Single Species Action Plan for Eurasian curlew (see Annex 1) and requirements under the EU Birds Directive.

The group may recommend (as necessary) research and reviews essential to further conservation action for the curlew.

Group members will be the recognised first point of contact for their respective organisations – as such, group members are expected to be champions for the curlew, promoting awareness of the need for action to drive recovery of the species.

The group will actively seek to identify funding opportunities to support the delivery of actions for curlew conservation.

Group members will share the results of curlew research, survey and monitoring when available to ensure that group members are fully informed about ongoing and emerging work. The group will produce a succinct 6-monthly update (coincident with meetings) that summarises relevant activity.

**How the group will operate**

The RSPB will provide the secretariat to oversee the administrative needs of the group.

The Action Group will comprise representatives of statutory nature conservation bodies and NGOs actively engaged in the conservation and associated research of the curlew in UK and Ireland.

**Decision making**

Record of meetings – meeting notes will be drafted, circulated and signed off by the group no more than one month after the meeting.

Frequency – the group will meet every six months or as otherwise determined. Participants may attend in person or join remotely[[1]](#footnote-1). Meetings will comprise a formal session and may include an additional site visit to see the delivery of action on the ground. Possible meeting dates will be shared (e.g. by Doodle Poll) with date of next meeting and location confirmed by correspondence.

Agenda – the Action Group will identify/agree future agenda items with a draft agenda circulated 3-weeks in advance of each meeting. The final agenda and supporting papers will be circulated at least one week before the meeting takes place.

Chair - the group will be chaired by Pat Thompson (RSPB).

**Communications**

Group members may be asked to contribute to media releases (for example through drafting press releases and/or provision of a quote) and/or as a spokesperson to talk to media contacts.

When producing publications, press releases, presentations etc. about curlew, the following strapline must be used:

XX (name of organisation) is a member of the UK and Ireland Curlew Action Group which brings together five statutory agencies, Birdwatch Ireland, BTO, GWCT, RSPB and the Southern Curlew Forum to shape and drive a co-ordinated programme of research and action to improve the conservation prospects for curlew and to support international obligations, particularly the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement.

**Resources**

The group may ask their respective organisations to contribute resources (for example staff time) to research, compile reviews and report as agreed.

**Group Membership**

***UK***

British Trust for Ornithology

Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (Corresponding member)

Natural England

Natural Resources Wales

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Scottish Natural Heritage

Southern Curlew Forum

***Republic of Ireland***

Birdwatch Ireland, Republic of Ireland

National Parks and Wildlife Service, Republic of Ireland

Additional participants (specialists and sector representatives) may be invited, as agreed by the Action Group, to attend/contribute to specific agenda items.

October 2017

**Annex 1**

**AEWA International Single Species Action Plan**

The International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Eurasian Curlew was adopted on November 2015 at the 6th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to AEWA. A full copy of the Action Plan is available [here](http://www.unep-aewa.org/en/document/draft-international-single-species-action-plan-conservation-eurasian-curlew-1).

The plan aims tostabilise breeding population declines of *N. a. arquata*; to improve knowledge relating to the population and conservation status of *N. a. orientalis* and *N. a. suschkini*; and for any hunting activity to be undertaken within the context of an adaptive harvest management process.

In the longer term, the plan seeks to restore the favourable conservation status of the Eurasian Curlew throughout its international range, as demonstrated by its assessment as Least Concern (LC) against IUCN Red List criteria by 2026.

The plan presents a framework for action to guide signatories in implementation. The overarching objectives and their associate results are presented below.

**FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION – *The 4 objectives & their associated results***

**1. Ensure sufficient and adequate habitats**

1.1. Important breeding sites for Eurasian Curlew are appropriately protected and managed.

1.2. Important staging, stopover and wintering sites for Eurasian Curlew are appropriately protected and managed.

**2. Increase productivity**

2.1. The impact of farming operations on breeding success is minimised and beneficial farming practices are supported and encouraged.

2.2. Land management techniques that reduce levels of nest and chick predation to those associated with stable or increasing populations are promoted and investigated

**3. Increase survival rates**

3.1. Any harvest, if undertaken, is sustainable

**4. Fill key knowledge gaps**

4.1. The necessary data and information required to make an informed assessment of the conservation status of *N. a. suschkini* is obtained. [Not UK]

4.2. The necessary data and information required to provide a better understanding of *N. a. arquata* and *N. a. orientalis* populations in Russia is obtained. [Not UK]

4.3. Survey, monitoring and research activities on *N. a. arquata* are undertaken to address knowledge gaps and improve population and demographic estimates.

4.4. The impact of other poorly-understood threats is investigated.

A full list of actions that are expected to be implemented in the UK can be found here

1. Note – the need to provide VC/TC facilities may constrain where meetings can be held [↑](#footnote-ref-1)