



# A Guide to Predation Management for Curlew Conservation

The following booklet has  
been created by GWCT  
Wales for the Curlew  
Connections Wales Project



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## Emergency Contacts

WALES HEALTH HELPLINE - 111

EMERGENCIES - 999

REPORT A WILDLIFE CRIME TO NRW -  
0300 065 3000

Please contact [curlewconnections@gwct.org.uk](mailto:curlewconnections@gwct.org.uk) for any advice or support in relation to the information set out in this document.



# Project Contacts

## Curlew and People Officers

### ICA 5: CLWYDIAN RANGE & DEE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE - SOUTH CLWYD MOUNTAINS AND DEE VALLEY



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# Introduction to Predation

## What is a predator?

A predator is any animal that preys on and eats other animals. The term applies to many species - from lions to spiders, species of fish and birds, domestic cats as well as humans. Some predators are very specialised and hunt only one prey species. Others, called generalist predators, are more opportunistic in what they eat, taking advantage of a wide range of food sources.

## What is Predation Management?

Both lethal and non-lethal approaches are widely used. Well-established non-lethal methods include scarecrows, bangers and gas-guns, and the use of fences and electric fences to keep predators out.

## What is the aim of Predation Management?

The aim of predation control is usually to reduce the impact of predation to a population, especially during periods when the prey species are particularly vulnerable, for example the breeding season.

## Why is Predation Management important for Curlew in Wales?

The Eurasian Curlew is listed as Near Threatened on the UK's Birds of Conservation Concern Red List. With no further action they could become extinct as a breeding species in Wales by **2033**. One of the highest threats to Curlew is the predation of eggs and chicks. By conducting targeted predation management in and around Curlew territories, this can reduce the risk of predation and aid chicks in reaching adulthood.



# Countryside Best Practice

## THE BASIC PRINCIPALS

- Firearms & Shotguns should **never** be pointed in an unsafe direction.
- Health and safety should be maintained to a high standard at all times.
- Before passing a gun, ensure open, empty and passed stock first.
- Ignorance of the law is no excuse, if in doubt always ask.
- Always ensure your shotgun or rifle is in a safe servicable condition.

## THE LAW

It is an offence to possess a shotgun or rifle without a current valid firearms or shotgun certificate.

It is essential to have adequate legal liability insurance when shooting.

If unsure - DO NOT SHOOT. If unsure on anything, ask or find out further information using reliable sources.

## THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.
- Guard against all risk of fire.
- Fasten all gates.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Keep to public paths across farmland.
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- Take your litter home.
- Help to keep all water clean.
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Take special care on country roads.
- Make no unnecessary noise.

## SHOTGUN & RIFLE SAFETY

**Safety is the most important rule. Always be aware of the direction in which your shotgun or rifle is pointing. You should always know where the shot/bullet will fall before you pull the trigger.**

**If in doubt - DO NOT SHOOT**

# Safety and Behaviour

## Shooting Safety

- **Never** point a shotgun or rifle in an unsafe direction.
- **Only** shoot when safe to do so.
- **Always** use the safety catch until the moment before you fire.
- **Always** account for the possibility of a ricochet.
- **Never** fire into dense vegetation.
- **Always** maintain a clear fallout zone or clear back drop for your shot.
- **Never** leave a shotgun or rifle unattended, or on the ground loaded.
- **Only** shoot if you have clear view and ID of your target.
- **Always** avoid overhead obstructions and powerlines.
- **Always** remain within the boundary of your permitted shooting area.
- **Always** ensure the shotgun or rifle is empty before passing.
- **Always** ensure the shotgun or rifle is safely stowed and empty before crossing an obstacle.

## Best Practice in the Field

- Inform the landowner and/or tenant when you intend to go shooting.
- Always follow the Countryside Code.
- Avoid disturbance to livestock.
- On picking up or being handed a shotgun or rifle, check immediately that there are no cartridges inside and that the barrels are clear.
- Know your own limitations and those of your firearm and shoot responsibly.
- Be extra careful in cold and wet conditions.
- Remember that all shooters will be judged by your actions and ensure that your conduct is always above reproach.
- Always try to encourage the same attitude in other shooters.





# Use of Traps

7

The traps remain the property of the Curlew Connections Wales project and must be used according to the law and best practice guidelines. If you no longer need the trap, or wish to return it, please contact your local Curlew and People Officer.

There are many conditions that must be complied with when using traps as part of the General Licence 004:

**Highlights of these conditions under the General License 004:**

- Food, Water, Shelter and Perch must be provided for call birds.
- Traps must be checked daily and not exceed 25 hours.
- Caught birds should be dispatched out of sight of other captive birds.
- Traps must be disabled if not in-use.
- Call bird cannot be, tethered, blinded, maimed or injured including wing clipping.

For the full list of conditions visit: [www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/bird-licensing/](http://www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/bird-licensing/)

Please follow the QR code to Natural Resources Wales for up-to-date licensing conditions and requirements.



**Larsen Traps** - can be used under the General Licence and allows an authorised person to keep or confine birds listed on the General Licence in a Larsen cage trap, whose dimensions are smaller than those required by Section 8 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Multi-catch Traps** - There are several types multi-catch traps available. The main trap advised to use for Corvid control is the Ladder trap. Multi-catch Traps can be used in General License 004.



# Use of Traps

## Activating Traps

**Placing trap:** Place trap where you can check it daily. If using a call bird or decoy, place in view of nest or sentinel tree. If using bait, place in farmyard or in slight cover where crows are regularly seen foraging. Try to place trap while dark as crows will be wary and place out of sight of the public.

**Bait:** Use eggs arranged into a “nest”. It will take longer to catch crows using bait alone.

**Decoy/Call Bird:** If a call bird is used, make sure their welfare is maintained. Once a new bird is caught, see if neighbours or other project areas need a call bird.

**Dispatching:** if extra birds are caught and no call birds are needed – dispatch the crow quickly and humanely out of sight of other captive birds. Humane dispatch is carried out by a single, swift action as soon as possible after discovery. Do all you can to make death instant using a hard blow to the head or by breaking the bird’s neck, make certain that you have not just stunned it.

## Trap Checklist

Out of Direct Sunlight	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Source	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Source	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perching post	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labelled Trap	<input type="checkbox"/>

For further guidance visit the  
GWCT website:  
[www.gwct.org.uk](http://www.gwct.org.uk)



# Engagement with the Public



When carrying out Predation Management, you may cross paths with members of the public.

Make sure that when engaging with anyone you refer back to the 'The Basic Principals' and 'The Countryside Code'.

Avoid confrontation at all costs.

Firearms and shotguns must always be unloaded before engaging with the public and if possible packed away. If a situation escalates to violence, always attempt to walk away. In the case of escalation, or you cannot remove yourself, call the police.

**DO NOT** engage with someone who is being violent, Make your safety and theirs a priority.



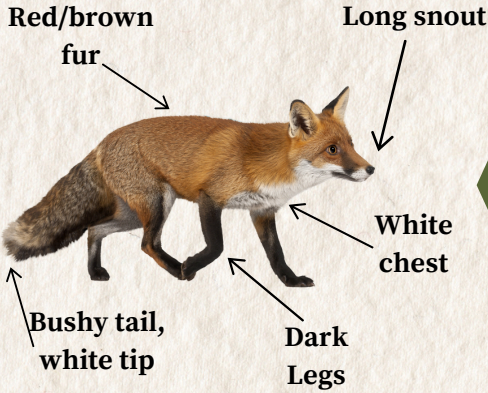
Disclose that Predation Management is carried out for the protection of Curlew as part of the Curlew Connections Wales Project.

For more information refer people to: [www.gwct.wales/curlew-connections/](http://www.gwct.wales/curlew-connections/)





# Fox ID



## RED FOX

*Vulpes vulpes*

Widespread across the UK, one of the last remaining apex-predators. Inhabits woodlands, farmlands, uplands and urban areas.

“Barking, screeching, chattering”

Fox paws features vary between the front and the rear. Front paws have larger pads and wider than the rear paw. The rear paw is smaller, narrow with tighter toes.

## Fox Cub

Cubs will usually be found within close proximity to the earth and usually both parents will be within the same area, protecting or hunting.



BACK PAW PRINT

## Behaviour

Fox behaviour can change depending on the time of year. Their diets vary between seasons depending on food availability. At certain times of year, during periods of gestation and rearing young, the levels of predation will increase. As cubs mature and gain hunting skills, an increased population of foxes in a localised area can be devastating to wild birds. Furthermore, an increased concentration of predation management at this time of year is advised between January and June to reduce numbers of breeding populations.



# Corvid ID

STURDY, SQUARE BILL

93 - 104CM  
WINGSPAN

SQUARE-ENDED  
TAIL



## CARRION CROW

*Corvus corone*

Most common species, is typically wary of people, usually found alone or in small groups. Juveniles can be identified by their brownish plumage and blue eyes.  
“kraa, kraa, kraa”

HEAVY-LOOKING BILL

SHAGGY THROAT  
FEATHERS

120 - 150CM  
WINGSPAN

DIAMOND-SHAPED  
TAIL



## RAVEN

*Corvus corax*

Largest of the corvids species, noticeably bigger than other Corvids. Juveniles have similar plumage with blue-grey eyes.

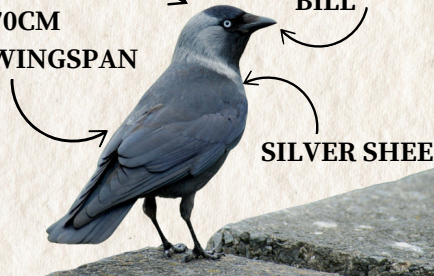
“kronk, kronk, kronk”

PALE-COLOURED  
EYES

SHORT STOUT  
BILL

70CM  
WINGSPAN

SILVER SHEEN



## WESTERN JACKDAW

*Coloeus monedula*

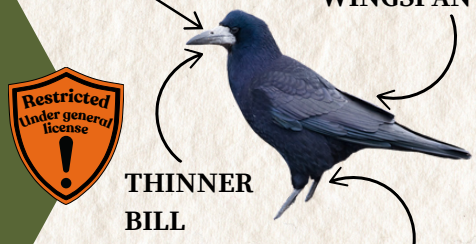
The UK's second smallest Corvid, often found with rooks or in flocks. Juveniles have duller plumage with light blue eyes.  
“kya”

BARE GREY-WHITE  
FACES

81 - 99CM  
WINGSPAN

THINNER  
BILL

TROUSERS'



## ROOK

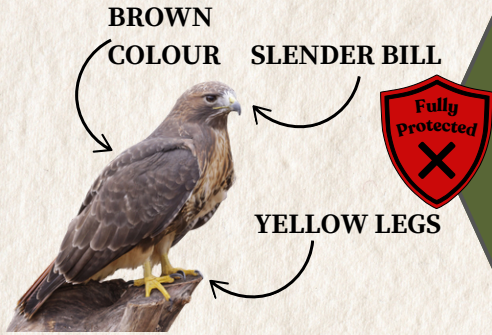
*Corvus frugilegus*

Rooks are very sociable and can gather in flocks, often found with Jackdaws. Juveniles plumage is black with brownish areas and no bare patch on the face.

“caw-caw”



# Raptor ID



## BUZZARD

*Buteo buteo*

Commonly seen in both rural and urban areas. Males put on a 'rollercoaster' display flight.

Juveniles are similar in colour to adults but are distinguishable by their paler eyes.

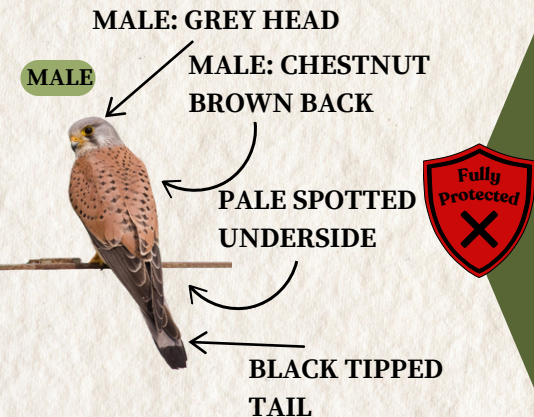
"key-yaaa"

## EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK

*Accipiter nisus*

Sparrowhawks are one of the smaller birds of prey, but females can be up to 25% larger than the males. Females and juveniles are brown, both having a light stomach and chest with light brown markings.

"kek-kek-kek"



## COMMON KESTREL

*Falco tinnunculus*

The only kestrel species within the UK.

Males have a grey head and chestnut-brown back, females are more dull brown and larger. Juveniles appear like adult females with wider underside streaks.

"kee-kee-kee"

# Raptor ID

YELLOW AND  
BLACK BILL

GREY HEAD

LONG FORKED  
TAIL

YELLOW LEGS



## RED KITE

*Milvus milvus*

Male and Female Red kites differ only in weight. Juveniles have a buff breast and underside. Juveniles also appear paler and have a less defined forked-tail.

“weoo eoo eoo”

## PEREGRINE FALCON

*Falco peregrinus*

The Peregrine Falcon is our largest falcon, with a dark slate-grey back and white underneath. It has black bars across its chest and belly. Females are larger and wider than the males.

“ghiii, ghiii, ghiii, ghiii”

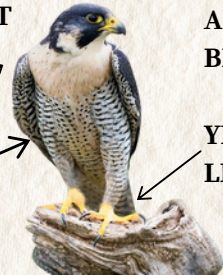
DARK HEAD

PALE CHEST

UNDERSIDE  
BARS

YELLOW  
AROUND  
THE EYES  
AND  
BEAK

YELLOW  
LEGS



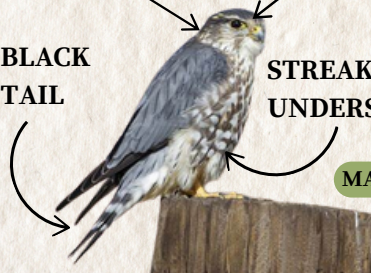
BLUE-GREY  
BACK &  
HEAD

YELLOW AROUND  
THE EYE, BEAK AND  
FEET

BLACK  
TAIL

STREAKED  
UNDERSIDE

MALE



## EURASIAN MERLIN

*Falco columbarius*

The Merlin is the UK's smallest bird of prey. Females and juveniles are a brownish grey to dark brown above, and whitish buff with brown spots underneath. They have three to four black bands on the tail.

“klee-klee-klee” - very fast



# Bird ID - Flight Gait & Silhouette

## Corvids

### CARRION CROW



Carrion Crow have a smaller square-ended tail, visible in flight. Often a green sheen is visible in the light.

**Wingspan:**

84 - 100cm

**Length:** 44 - 51cm

### RAVEN



Ravens are shaggier and scruffier with a diamond shape tail and have long finger-like feathers on their wings.

**Wingspan:**

115 - 150cm

**Length:** 54 - 67cm

### ROOK



Rooks have dense and thick plumage. Easily distinguishable by the pale and featherless section on their bill.

**Wingspan:** 81 - 99cm

**Length:** 45 - 47cm

### JACKDAW



Jackdaws are one of the UK's smallest Corvids. They have widespread wing feathers when they fly.

**Wingspan:** 64 - 73cm

**Length:** 34 - 39cm



# Bird ID - Flight Gait & Silhouette

## Raptors

### RED KITE



Distinct forked tail and angular wings and an orangey-brown body with a light patch at the end of their wings. Their tail is a light colour with grey side.

**Wingspan:** 175 - 195cm  
**Length:** 60 - 72cm

### BUZZARD



Fanned tail with fine stripes. They have a dark border around their broad wings and dark tips with prominent 'fingers'. Also a dark and light varying pattern.

**Wingspan:** 80 - 136cm  
**Length:** 45 - 58cm

### MERLIN

MALE



FEMALE



### EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK

MALE



FEMALE



Both sexes have wings with pointed tips, and dark barring on their short tails. Males are blue-grey, with light underside streaked black. Females are brown with darker streaking underneath.

**Wingspan:** 50 - 62cm  
**Length:** 25 - 31cm

Males have slate-grey backs, pale underparts, and orange tinge to their neck. Females have dark brown back, pale underparts with brown bars and are also larger.

**Wingspan:** 59 - 77cm  
**Length:** 27 - 38cm

# Spoor and Scat ID

## Fox

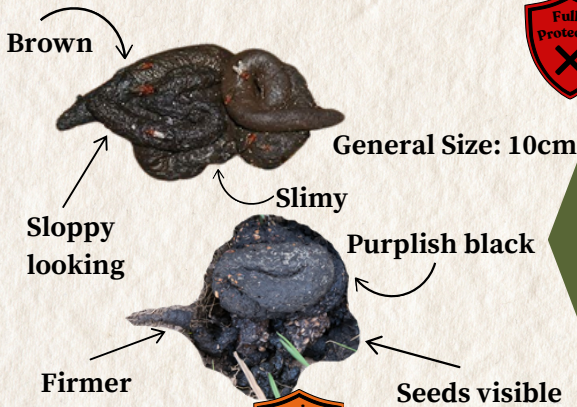


Fox scat is pointed at one or both ends. It contains seeds, berries, small bones and feathers or fur. Colour can vary depending on the environment and Season. Berries provide a purplish hue whilst a diet of small mammals provides a greyish colour.



General Size: 8cm - 12cm

## Mustelids



General Size: 10cm



## Badger

Badgers dig shallow pits known as latrines. Badger scat texture and colour can change depending on their diet, ranging from purple, black or brown. Badger scat can smell oily, sweet or musky.

## Weasel



Weasel scat is narrow with twisted ends. It contains bones, feathers, insects, and fur. Once dried it turns black.

General Size: 3cm - 6cm



## Stoat



General Size: 4cm - 8cm



Stoat scat contains hair, fur, bones, seeds and berries. It appears narrow with twisted ends. Blackish brown in colour and has a musky smell.



# How to Report Wildlife Crimes

## Wildlife crime refers to illegal activities related to:

- Hare coursing.
- Deer and Fish poaching or illegal fishing.
- Badger persecution.
- Bat persecution, or damage/destruction to roosts.
- Bird of prey persecution or egg theft.
- Non-registration of certain birds and animals that require licensing if kept in captivity or sold.
- Pollution of water, land, illegal abstraction, or illegal waste sites.
- Damage to Designated Sites.



You can report wildlife crime to Natural Resources Wales by calling - 0300 065 3000



You can also report a wildlife crime anonymously to Crimestoppers at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)  
Or by calling - 0800 555 111

## Information to collect when reporting incidents:

- Where the incident took place.
- When did the incident take place.
- Detail of what happened.
- Who is or was responsible for the incident.









All information and legislation was correct  
at the time of printing.

Always seek advice from the relevant  
licensing body before proceeding with any  
work.

For more information on the project visit:  
[www.gwct.wales/curlew-connections/](http://www.gwct.wales/curlew-connections/)

