



giving
nature
a home

**Northern Ireland Curlew
Workshop Sep 12, 2018
CAFRE Greenmount**

Status of Curlew in Northern Ireland

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(with the majority of pictures by Neal Warnock)

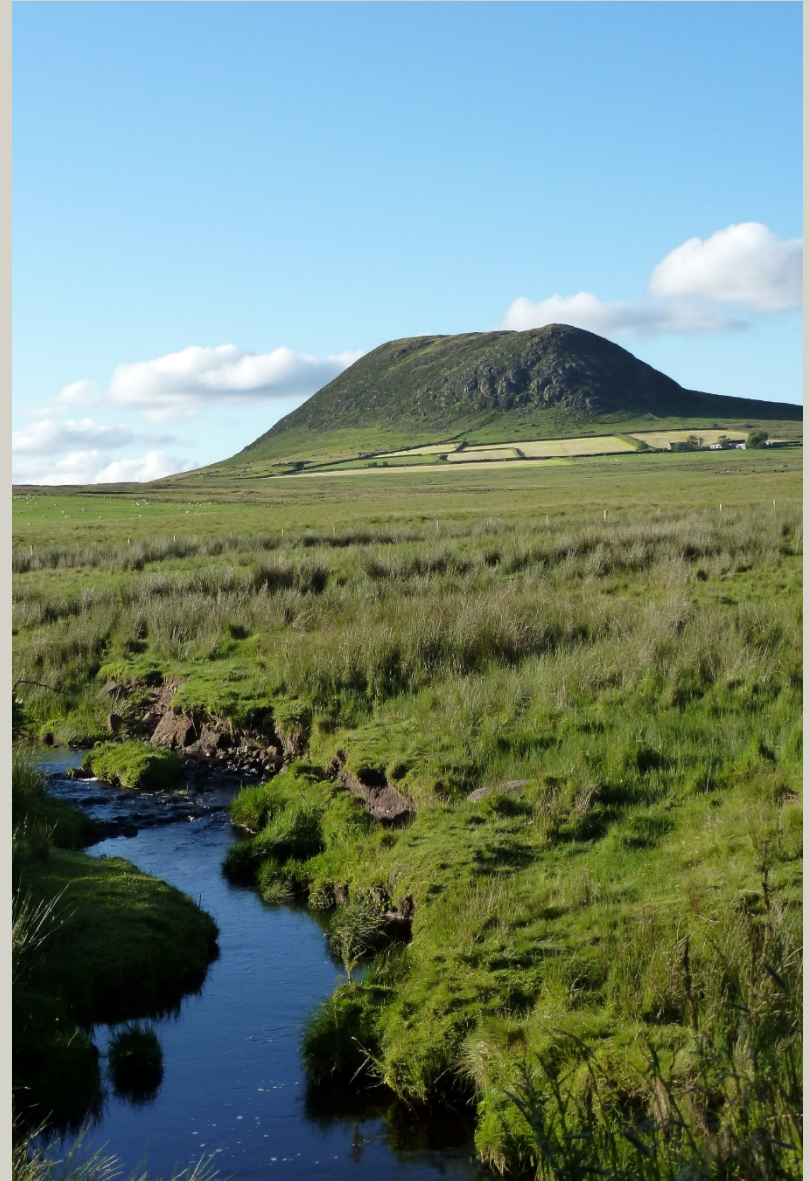


The big picture

- Tribe *Numeniini* comprises 13 species with near global distribution but all breeding in the northern hemisphere
- 7 species of Conservation Concern (2 CE; 1 End; 1 Vul and 3 NT; see review *Pearce-Higgins et al. 2017*)
- Eurasian Curlew *N. a. arquata* is the most numerous of 3 *arquata* subspecies

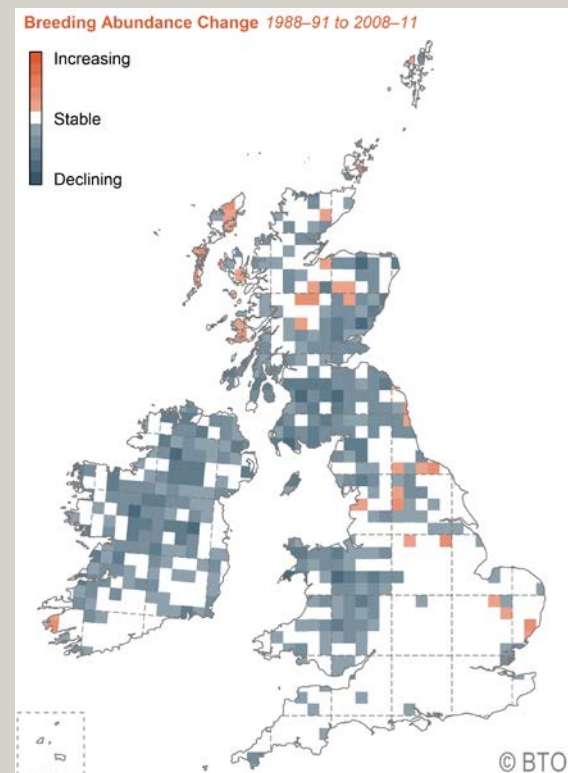
Near Threatened on the IUCN list of Threatened Species; AEWAS SAP prepared (*Brown, 2015*)

- Declines confirmed or suspected across **all** breeding range (10 range states)
- 58% decline in NI since the first SAP published



Closer to home

- UK population declining
- 19-27% of global breeding population and is declining rapidly (43% in the period 1995-2012; *Harris et al. 2013*)
- “The most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK?” (see *Brown et al. 2015*)
- **All-Ireland breeding range has declined by 78% over last 40 years**
Bird Atlas 2007-11 (Balmer et al. 2013)
- Rate of decline in RoI (> 95% since late 1980s) means there is a real risk of extinction



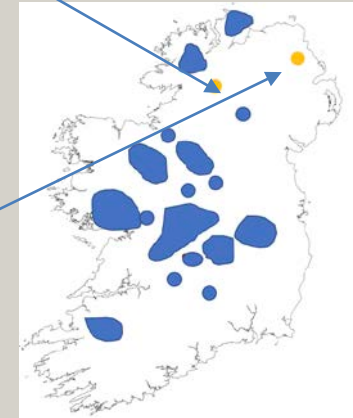
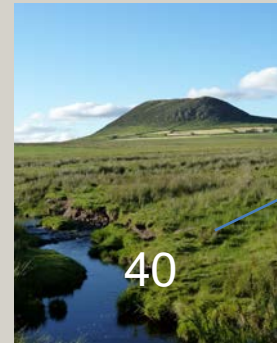
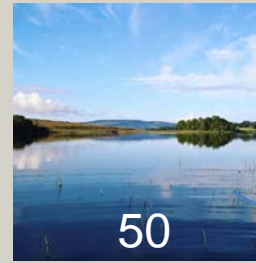
Changes in (N) Irish populations



Br prs	Late 1980s	Late 1990s	Late 2000s	Mid 2010s	
Rol	3750	?	1000	< 200	?
NI	5000	2090		530 (252-783)	?
	< 9000	< 5000	< 2000	< 1000	?

- Considered widespread through 1800s/1900s, breeding in most counties on the island
- 60% decline in NI between 1985/87 and 1999
- **90% decline in estimated number of breeding pairs in NI over c. 25 years** to 2013; 76% decline in tetrad occupancy
- 6 core areas (from 1985-87)
 - (i) Lough Erne basin islands
 - (ii) Lough Erne basin shorelines
 - (iii) Tyrone raised bogs
 - (iv) Lough Neagh basin
 - (v) River Blackwater catchment
 - (vi) Antrim Hills
- By 1996 major declines of CU in Tyrone bogs but not L Erne or Antrim Hills at that time

- Contraction in range through 90s to counties Fermanagh and Tyrone and **now concentrated in two core areas Lough Erne (c. 50 bp) and Antrim Hills (c. 40 bp)**; maybe 50% of breeding pairs in these two areas?
- Selection for bog/upland pasture or less intensively managed lowland wet grassland



- Murray Grant's 1993 – 1995 study investigating breeding success and causes of breeding failure
- **Low productivity** could explain rate of pop decline
- **Nest survival very low** (< 20% hatched in each year) with 85% failures due to nest predation
- Chick survival higher (20-40%; 74% chick mortality due to predation)
- Avian predators L Erne/Foxes in Antrim

