

Curlew Countdown

Curlews are on the IUCN Red List: this means that they are in danger of becoming extinct. They build nests on the ground and are endangered by many possible scenarios. This game helps children (and adults) to understand what these dangers are and what we can do to help this species survive.

What you'll need:

- Space to move (ideally outdoors)

'Nests'

- skipping ropes/hoops/tarp or a long rope to make one big nest.
- Laid in circle/s and spaced out in play area to be the nest/s for the Curlews. Make sure there is enough space for everyone to be comfortable in their nest at the beginning of the game

List of scenarios

- Provided on the next page



To play the game:



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1. The teacher/ group leader explains where the nests are. Children carefully go into the nests.
2. Children pretend to be 'Curlews' and when the leader calls or signals 'Feeding time' the children move around the play area pretending to wade in the thick mud with their long legs to look for their food or flap their wings to fly carefully around the play area.
3. When the leader shouts or signals 'Nests' – the children must calmly return to their nest/s.
4. Have a couple of practice runs to check the children understand the game and are keeping calm.

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1. Introduce scenarios, one at a time – you can choose positive or negative. The children 'Curlews' must work together to help as many as they can to still fit onto a nest.
2. If the scenario has a negative impact on the Curlews: Leader must take away a nest / reduce the area of the big nest (rope circle or tarp). Oh no!
3. If the scenario has a positive impact on the curlews: Leader must add a nest/ increase the area of the big nest (rope circle or tarp). Phew!
4. Any children who can't fit onto a nest can wait in line by the leader until there is a positive scenario and they can re-enter the game.
5. Ideally finish on the positives, so the children are all back in the game and the end result is good for the Curlews. However, the learning is in the negative scenarios as well as the positive.

Negative Scenarios

(take away nest/area)

A dog not on their lead disturbs the nest on the ground (it didn't realise it was doing something bad).

All dogs must be kept on leads between March 31st and July 31st.

Walkers stray off the footpath and disturb the nest.

Please keep to footpaths.

Predator alert! Foxes, crows and other birds are disturbing the nest.

Curlews can fly away but the eggs have to incubate for 28 days and the chicks take another 28 days to fledge.

A wildfire is putting the nests in danger! Carelessness causes fire.

Please follow the Countryside code and only light fires in designated areas.

Positive Scenarios

(add nest/area)

Dog owners are told about ground nesting birds so they all understand why they must keep their dogs on the lead to keep the nests, eggs and chicks safe during April - September.

Walkers learn about the Countryside Code from social media and understand how keeping to paths can save ground nesting birds.

The excellent camouflage of the curlew eggs and chicks are keeping them safe from predators. Long, uncut grass can help the Curlews to stay hidden.

Shop keepers in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park agree not to sell disposable BBQs to try to encourage people to be careful with fire.

Negative Scenarios

(take away nest/area)

The weather is too dry and the ponds and peatlands dry up so there is very little food for the Curlews.

Curlews depend on wet, boggy upland areas to feed. Climate change is making the weather more unpredictable.

Trees are good for the environment, but new trees have been planted in the wrong place taking important habitat the curlews need.

Trees need to be planted in the right place.

Litter has hurt the Curlews.

Please never drop litter, take it home, or even better, recycle it.

Positive Scenarios

(add nest/area)

An electric fence is put up around the nest.

Volunteers are helping the Curlews by gathering data about where they are so they can put up electric fences to deter predators and keep walkers away to protect the nest.

Farmers are working to restore the grassland habitats to help the curlews.

Children all over Wales take part in Wales Outdoor Learning week and learn lots about how to keep our ground nesting birds safe.



**Bannau
Brycheiniog**