

Curlew Country

Breeding Curlew Surveys 2025



New digital reporting system

This year we are trialling a new data entry system that can be done entirely on a smartphone. The aim is to prevent the need for lengthy manual data entry in the middle of the season, as we will be using volunteer-generated data to identify breeding territories and home ranges for further visits. There are two free apps to download: the 'Epicollect5' survey data entry app and the 'OsmAnd' navigation app to import your transect route for you to follow. You will also need to use the OsmAnd app to obtain coordinates of your sightings and copy these into the Epicollect5 app. The setup process is a little bit complicated but should make the surveys easier.

Downloading the Epicollect5 app

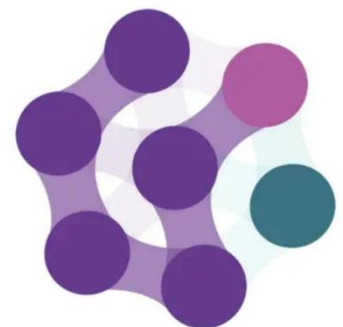
1. Epicollect5 is supported by Android Play Store and the Apple Store for iPhones. Head to the relevant store on your device and download the app.



Apple Store for iPhone



Play Store for Android



2. Once installed, open the Epicollect5 app and create an account using the option to use your email address. Please use the email address we contact you on, even if it's shared with another volunteer, as more than one person may use the same

account. If you need to use a different email, please let us know so we can add you to the survey.

3. Once logged in you should be able to see 'Breeding Curlew Surveys 2025' next to the Curlew Country logo. If not, let me know and I'll find out what's gone wrong. If you can see it, then that's all you need to do for now.

Downloading the OsmAnd navigation app

1. OsmAnd navigation app is supported by Android Play Store and the Apple Store for iPhones. Head to the relevant store on your device and download the app.



Apple Store for iPhone



Play Store for Android



2. Open the app. It will prompt you to download offline maps for your region. If it does not suggest 'West Midlands' you will need to select it manually by going through Europe->United Kingdom->England->West Midlands. Make sure you are on a Wifi connection before downloading as its over 100mb.
3. Once downloaded, keep pressing the back arrow until the map screen opens. Press the target/crosshairs button to zoom to your current location (you may need to grant the app permission to use location services).
4. The default map style is a bit hard to read, so open the menu by pressing the three horizontal lines in the bottom-left corner of the screen and press 'Configure map'.
5. Scroll down to the 'Map rendering' box and select 'Map style'. Change this from 'OsmAnd' to 'Offroad'.
6. That's all you need to do with this for now.

Importing your transect route

Once transect routes have been assigned you will be emailed your route in the form of a .gpx file that can be imported into the OsmAnd app. You can then follow the route through the app while in the field. To import your .gpx file:

1. Open the OsmAnd app.
2. Open the menu (three horizontal lines – bottom-left) and select 'My Places'.
3. Select 'Tracks' and press the 'Import' button.
4. Find the .gpx file you downloaded, which should be in your 'Recent files' or in Downloads. Select the file. The map should open and you should be able to see your assigned transect route on the screen.

Your phone should now be ready to go and do your first breeding curlew survey. Before that, it is a good idea to have a practice run to get to know the survey form and methodology. You don't need to go and walk your transect route (unless you *really* want to). A survey of imaginary curlews in your local area will be fine. The survey form will lead you through what you need to record. The methodology is as follows:

1. Navigate to your starting point using the OsmAnd app. Make sure your phone is fully charged before setting off. The start and end points are interchangeable for many of the routes, so do whatever seems sensible. If working alone you must inform Curlew Country staff by phone when you arrive and when you leave.
2. When you arrive you can open the Epicollect5 app, select the 'Breeding Curlew Surveys 2025' project.
3. Select '+ ADD ENTRY' in the top-right corner of the screen.
4. The form will open and prompt you to answer the following questions (in order):

Name of surveyor – please write your name

Which site did you survey? – a dropdown list of sites will appear. Select your chosen site from the list.

Which visit are you on? – 1st, 2nd or 3rd visit

Date – today's date (date of survey)

Cloud cover – dropdown list – Clear, partly cloudy or overcast

Precipitation – dropdown list – dry, light rain/showers, heavy rain/showers, sleet or snow

Time survey began – time at starting point

Did you see or hear any curlews? – once you reach this question you can switch back to the OsmAnd app to begin your transect walk. Stick to footpaths as best you can and use field gates or gaps in hedges to scan all the fields you can access along your route.

Follow best practice for observation as detailed in ‘Curlew Country – Code of Good Practice for Volunteers’ (separate document). If you see any curlews, switch back to Epicollect5 and select Yes to continue to answer the questions. If you reach the end of your transect route and haven’t seen any curlews, just answer no to this question and it will jump to the end of the form.

You will be prompted to record up to three locations for up to five individuals or pairs seen on the survey. If you see more than two curlews together and they are not bothered by each other, this will be a non-breeding or pre-breeding feeding flock. You will be prompted at the end to record details of non-breeding flocks. The next question checks if you have seen any breeding behaviour.

Did you see any curlews exhibiting breeding behaviour? Please select Yes if you have seen any curlews on their own, in a pair or displaying any other breeding behaviours. If you have reached the end of your transect and have only seen non-breeding flocks, select No and the form will skip to the relevant section.

Location of first individual or pair seen – the Epicollect5 app location form is only capable of updating *your* location. We need the location of the bird, so we must open OsmAnd app to copy the coordinates. Once open press the target button to zoom to your location. Find the approximate location of the bird on the map and place a pin by holding down on the screen. Press ‘Details’ in the bottom-left corner. Coordinates in a lat/long format will appear. Press the arrow to reveal a list of different coordinate formats in orange font. At the top of the list is a format with no units. Hold down on the screen here to copy the coordinates to the clipboard, then switch back to Epicollect5. The three dots in the top-right corner allow you to ‘Edit’ the coordinates. Hold down in the box and paste the coordinates in. You will need to add a comma after latitude for this to work, e.g. ‘52.776800, -2.906420’. When done select ‘Update Location’ then select next to move to the next question.

Was it on its own or in a pair? – self-explanatory

What was it doing? Select all that apply. – there is a list of behaviours to choose from and you can record as many as necessary. See the Curlew Observation Training Film to learn more about breeding behaviours.

Did any of them have colour rings/tags? Check the legs of the bird(s) to see if they have rings or tags on. Only select Yes or No if you are certain, otherwise select Not Sure.

If the bird/s were flushed from where you first saw them, record an approximate location of where it landed. Otherwise, skip this question. – repeat the process above to record a second location for the first individual or pair seen. Otherwise, press next to skip this question.

Record up to one more location for the first individual/pair seen. Otherwise, skip this question – rinse and repeat if needed.

Did you see any more individuals or pairs? Select Yes if you see a second individual/pair and you will be prompted to record details as before. Select No if you've reached the end of your transect and have not seen any more curlews or if you have only seen a non-breeding flock.

This will repeat to allow recording up to five individuals or pairs per survey. I don't expect any more than this on any of the surveys but if there are any issues, please feedback to me so I can add more. When you reach the end of your transect you can enter details and location of a non-breeding flock (if seen).

Did you see more than two curlews together? (Not including territorial disputes/aggressive behaviour) – Select Yes if needed or select No to skip to the end.

How many curlews did you see together? Count of curlews seen together

Did any of them have colour rings/tags? As before, only record Yes or No if you are confident, otherwise select Not sure.

Give an approximate location of the non-breeding flock. Same process as before. You may need to remember where they were if you saw them near the start of the survey. Although I don't expect non-breeding flocks to be picked up regularly on these surveys.

Is there any other information you feel is relevant? Please record it here – your chance to point out anything out of the ordinary, e.g. activity likely to cause disturbance, extreme weather or anything else you might think of.

Time survey finished – give the time you finished your transect walk

SAVE ENTRY

You can submit the form later when on a Wifi connection. Just press the upload button in the top-right corner to upload any unsynced entries.

That's it! It seems very complicated in the beginning, but you will quickly get used to it. I did these surveys on paper last year and I can say from experience that it is a lot harder if you have to carry a clipboard and pencil around, if it starts to rain your paper will be full of holes and your map will be illegible. The amount of data entry involved also makes it difficult to put to good use in the season, so this is the preferred method for me, although I will understand if you prefer to use paper maps. Have a practice go and upload your entries as many times as you like before 31st March, when I will clear the data for the real thing.

