



# Stone-curlew

## *Burhinus oedicnemus*

### Status

Red listed: BD, BR, SPEC 3 (V)  
Schedule 1 of WCA 1981  
Annex I of EC Wild Birds Directive

### National monitoring

Key areas surveyed annually (RSPB/EN).  
Rare Breeding Birds Panel.

### Population and distribution

The stone-curlew is a rare breeding species in Britain. The current population is mainly confined to Norfolk, east Suffolk, east Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire/Essex, Berkshire/Oxfordshire, and the South Downs. The population and range have declined since the mid-19th century (*Red Data Birds*) because of habitat loss and changes in farming practices. There are currently 166–180 breeding pairs of stone-curlew in the UK (*Population Estimates*).

### Ecology

Stone-curlews are only found on habitats with light, free-draining soil types, ie chalk, gravel, sand or limestone, and sparse, short vegetation, including arable land, heathland, young forestry. Breeding stone-curlews can be present from the end of March until the end of October. They nest on open bare ground, lay a clutch of usually two eggs and two broods are occasionally reared within a season.

### Breeding season survey – population

A survey method has been written for stone-curlew, adapted from Green and Elliott (1995). However, as this text contains sensitive information, it is available only on written request from the Conservation Science Department of the RSPB.

### Reference

Green, R E and Elliott, G (1995) *The RSPB Stone Curlew Wardening and Management Handbook*. RSPB unpubl.

