

Skylark & Curlew Report

New planting proposal for Rest and be Thankful, A83, Argyll

The area is currently managed as upland grazing for both sheep and cattle. Deer numbers appear to be low in this area. The ground is predominantly vegetated with grasses, rushes and ferns. The ground is extremely wet with shallow soil which has made the ground susceptible to landslips.

There are two open habitat bird species which may be affected by this new planting proposal; Curlew and Skylark.

Curlew *Numenius arguata*.

Current status:

UK; Red

EU; Vulnerable

Global; Near threatened from 1996-2014

Within Cowal there are still small numbers of breeding Curlew which can be found on upland sheep-walk. Within the last three decades they have gone in to a steep decline. The area to be planted has no breeding pairs and has not been used by Curlew in the last three decades; this proposal will have no effect on curlew within this area.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Current status:

UK; Red

EU; least concern

Global; Least concern

Skylarks have been in steep decline within the UK since 1996. Skylark numbers have been steadily declining across the Cowal peninsula for many years; however there are still some very good populations of breeding skylark where habitats are still in good/fair condition. The Rest and be Thankful is not one of those areas. The poor quality habitat and wet condition of the site makes the area poor for ground nesting passerines. There may be a very small number of skylark affected by this planting proposal however this will have no affect locally or nationally on the skylark population.

The proposal in the long term will have many benefits to a wide range of upland species including plants, invertebrates and vertebrate communities across the area, which have all been severely depleted through decades of over grazing.

David Anderson, Conservation Manager, December 2018.