

Corinne the Curlew Speaks Out Against Calderdale Wind Farm



Corinne the Curlew

‘Hello, Corinne the Curlew speaking. My fellow Curlews and I were dumbfounded to hear that some developers have come up with the bonkers idea of building a huge wind farm on Walshaw Moor above Hebden Bridge.’

‘We, and our avian associates from the Lapwing and Golden Plover communities, wish to inform you humans that we strongly object to this misguided proposal. Call us Nimbys if you want, but we actually *live* on Walshaw Moor, so this really *is* Our Back Yard!’

‘We love this place and come back here every year to exactly the same nesting spots to breed and rear our chicks on this magnificent moor. We’ve been doing it for centuries and want to continue for ever moor (excuse the pun). The boggy peat suits us Curlews perfectly as it’s full of juicy worms which we root out with our long curved beaks! Not everyone’s cup of tea, I appreciate, but it’s what we like and what we need to survive.’

‘If the hard-hearted humans who are promoting this wind farm knew what a tough time we Curlews have been having, they would never support this crazy scheme. We’re an endangered species, for goodness sake! Our numbers have plummeted in recent years and we’ve disappeared completely from most of the UK. In fact, there are so few of us left now that we’re on the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern, which means we’re in danger of extinction – just ask our friends at the

RSPB, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. And for what it's worth, we're also a Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Bit of a beak full, I know, but these things matter.'

'At the risk of blowing our own trumpet – but with beaks like ours who wouldn't? - we have right (and the law) on our side. Walshaw Moor is not just a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it's been singled out by the boffins at the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). Too many complicated acronyms, I know, but in a word (thrice repeated), we Curlews and our comrades from the Ground Nesting Birds Alliance (GNBA) are not just Special, we're Extra Special - and Walshaw Moor is our Special Place.'

'As you may have noticed if you've been out walking over the last week or so, we Curlews, Lapwings and Golden Plovers (as well as our friends the Skylarks and the Oystercatchers) are just arriving back for the breeding season and settling into our Spring quarters on the moor. It's great to be back and we'll be busy raising our families on the Walshaw Moor creche until July.'



Left: Lapwing



Right: Golden Plover

'The only problem is that we're all worried sick about this wretched wind farm, which threatens us with annihilation. You see, if the developers get their wicked way, they will carve up this lovely moor – all 9 square miles of it – and replace this wonderful watery bog with concrete and crushed stone. How are we supposed to stick our beaks in that? Our nests will be crushed by the diggers, lorries and cranes anyway. And if any of us survive this onslaught, we'll probably be sliced to bits by the whirling blades of the 65 turbines or driven away by the deafening noise. You see, we like the peace and quiet on the moor. That's exactly why we come here, so that we won't be disturbed.'

'So, to cut a long story short, this is a shout out to the good people of the Upper Calder Valley and Brontë Country to Stop Calderdale Wind Farm and Save Walshaw Moor. We've heard about your campaign and we're really grateful, thank you. We particularly like all the lovely photos of us on your website:

www.stopcalderdalewindfarm.co.uk and we're happy to pose for more photos to post on your Tweet of the Day and to tweet @YorkshireNature.'

'We agree with you that this massive industrial development is a Hostile Act against Us – the Birds of Walshaw Moor – and the special moorland habitat that we rely on for our survival. For what it's worth, we think this wind farm would also be an environmental catastrophe for You, the People of Calderdale. When you're blessed with such incredible biodiversity as you have on Walshaw Moor – that means us, by the way - why on earth would you destroy it?'

As our comrades at the RSPB tweeted when the proposal was announced: "Of all the places to propose the largest windfarm in England, Walshaw Moor must be one of the WORST given the sensitivity of this location, with important carbon-rich peat soils, peatland habitat, wildlife interest and protected wildlife sites."

'Thanks for listening – and do come and listen to us Curlews on Walshaw Moor this spring. Free concerts every day! Though we say it ourselves, our lyrical bubbling calls are one of the most beautiful sounds in the natural world – surely not something that anyone would wish to lose.'

Corinne the Curlew

www.stopcalderdalewindfarm.co.uk
@YorkshireNature

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Curlew