

9th June 2009 - Mayo Corncrake Update

(from Tim Gordon – BWI's Corncrake Fieldworker in West Connaught)

The fine weather has provided many good nights for listening and branch members have been out along the north Mayo coast and around Castlebar, while North Sligo Bay, the Mullet, the Connemara mainland and islands have now all been visited at least once, and in the case of the Mullet, many times.

Currently, a minimum of 38 calling Corncrakes have been confirmed in the West, of which at least 17 are "beyond the bridge" at Belmullet, with one in the town and one other in Erris, at Doohoma. Of these, six were heard in and around the BirdWatch meadows at Glebe, beyond Termoncarragh, two at Corclogh West, three at Carne House to Carne football field, two in Emlybeg (north of Binghamstown), one at Tirraun, one at Glosh, one at Tonahulty (Surgeview) and one at Fallmore.

Others have been heard or reported at Mullaghroe, Leam, Drum, Sauleen, Carne Hill, Termoncarragh stripes and Belmullet town, with a possible seventh also at Glebe. Some of these will already have been counted at other, probably later calling locations, but at least one or two must be additional to the 17 confirmed. To help unravel the count in Erris accurate records of where and when for all birds heard will be very gratefully received for throughout June.

Eight were in the South West Mayo coastal enclave between Louisburgh and Killadoon, seven were in Connemara (five on Turbot, two on the mainland – two on Bofin and one on Omev remain unconfirmed) and four on Oyster Island, Sligo Bay.

Nothing has been heard since early reports of one either side of Ballycastle, while one heard at near Castlebar at Rathbaun in late May was subsequently heard less than 2 kms north east of Rathbaun, around Lough Rusheen and Sarnaght townland, by John Milroy. One was reported seen by Peter Jordan on the main Castlebar/Claremorris road at Doogary, near Breaffy, on 1 June. One heard for one afternoon at Mount Falcon, between Ballina and Foxford, wasn't heard subsequently, with the field where it had been calling mown three days later.

In the national census, apart from three, perhaps four in the Callows and one in East Galway, there are three on Valentia, one on Beara, one at Banna Strand, one each in Clare and East Waterford, one reported in Wexford, plus the one heard earlier in Cavan possibly still present there.

The enumerators are still at work in Donegal, where for the next few weeks Anita Donaghy will be covering for BirdWatch's fieldworker Sandy Alcorn.