

June 20 Mayo Corncrake Update

(From Tim Gordon – Bird Watch Ireland’s Corncrake Fieldworker in West Connaught)

With the annual census period now more than halfway through, most of the Corncrake areas have been counted at least once in the West. Sometimes a second period of more intense Corncrake calling begins after mid June, before the last few stragglers and late arrivals from earlier nesting elsewhere turn-up early in July. So the next few weeks are the last chance to find new ones this year. At present the Mayo total stands at 30 Corncrakes, 22 in Erris and 8 south of Louisburgh (there were 27 at season’s end in 2008).

The fine weather has encouraged more early mowing than in recent seasons, and as a result there has been some displacement of Corncrakes, and no doubt some nests lost.

The grant scheme hasn’t proved very effective in Southwest Mayo this year. Following silage mowing on [June 5](#) at Aghany, and [June 8](#) again at Aghany and also at nearby Polgloss (a new location where one was heard for the first time in many years), Corncrakes have relocated to some new fields in the area, where they continue to dodge the mower. Two more fields were mown here (Corncrake-friendly) on [June 16](#), and more mowing is expected soon. Three of the seven Corncrakes initially holding territories around Aghany remain in the same locations, two others have moved to new locations. The one at Polgloss may have been the ninth Corncrake in the area, but that’s unlikely to be confirmed now. One at Doughmakeon moved to silage just three days before it was mown on [June 13](#). The male has since returned to the safety of John Tiernan’s garden, although nesting may have been disrupted here too.

On the Erris peninsula, at least four, and perhaps five, are calling south of Aghleam, in Glosh, Surgeview and Fallmore townlands, and in the north, at least 12 between Glebe and Carne Hill, including three at Corclogh West and at least six at Glebe (which remains the best place to hear them). Two fields at Fallmore and one farm at Carne Hill have been mown early, so far. There are at least two Corncrakes between Sauleen and Newtown Clogher, but these each are constantly being moved-on to new silage fields which are subsequently cut. Let’s hope they can soon find a safe haven for the remainder of their breeding season. Perhaps these are the same two heard in the large silage field at Drum (opposite the petrol pumps) in May (a field also probably to be mown this coming week). There are also two at Emlybeg (north of Binghamstown), either side of the bay.

One has moved from near the Broadhaven Hotel to the Irish Wheelchair Association field at Logmore, Belmullet, but one or two heard simultaneously in the usual fields on Church Road in May appear to have fallen silent - has anyone heard one here recently? One continues calling sporadically at Doohoma Head.

Following earlier reports from the Moy Valley at Mount Falcon (where the field in question was mown three days later), Castlebar (first at Rathbaun and later one mile north east), and the north coast (first at Muingelly and then at Ballycastle beach), no further reports from around any of these sites, or from anywhere else in the county, have since been received.

Elsewhere, in Galway there are now nine confirmed in Connemara, plus three in the Callows, while in Sligo there are six, all on islands.

As the season progresses, many birds move. We need to keep tabs on them to give them the best chance of not being mown. Please send reports by phone, 095 44941, or email via the website.