

CORNCRAKE UPDATE

26 May 2012

After a late start to the season, with just one record and virtually no reports of calling crakes in April, numbers are picking up, but remain low. The best place to hear crakes in Mayo at the moment is the Mullet village of Corclogh West, where one crake has once again conveniently set-up shop just across from Lavelle's *Eagle Inn*, with two calling crakes within 200m on either side. Two are calling against each other in the rough vegetation around Carne House, and at least one is audible on Carne Hill from the golf course. Others are at Barhauve, Tallagh (opposite Carne church, in a field of silage likely soon to be mown) Muing, Emlybeg and Gloshe, a minimum of 11 in all on the Mullet.

In South-west Mayo, crakes have returned in better numbers than last year to Aghany, where three can be heard at once near the crossroads and towards Roonagh. As before, early cut silage is a problem here, and this year is no exception, with one calling crake in safe fields and two in grass that will be mown within the next fortnight.

Elsewhere, numbers are also down so far, for instance on Donegal's Inishbofin (14 heard compared to 22 last year) and Inishturbot, Galway (six so far this year, ten last year). Of the four heard so far on Galway's Inishbofin, two calling males at the East End are putting on a good show around the boats at Rusheen pier, offering some photographic opportunities.

One Corncrake has been confirmed in the Shannon callows, and one heard on the Beara Peninsula.

It's hoped the prevailing northerlies and cold conditions held-up the migrating and perhaps even encouraged some of our crakes to make their first nests somewhere in the south of Europe. We will be hoping more show-up or begin calling here in the coming weeks. As ever, if anyone hears one in Mayo not listed above, please pass on the news, on the Corncrake hotline (095 44941) or via the BirdWatchMayo web-site.

Tim