

## MAYO CORNCRAKE UPDATE: June 28, 2011

Very nearly all of Mayo's Corncrakes are on the Mullet this year. Just one has been confirmed near Roonagh, with perhaps one more here, while there are at least 20 on the Mullet, and no other reports in the county. One at Achill in early May stayed at Pollagh, near Keel, just over one week before going quiet, probably moving to the Mullet.

As well as being very reluctant to call in the cold, windy nights, the birds are this year very dispersed on the peninsula. The only place to hear two close together is near the beach at Glebe, Termoncarragh, but hurry if you want to hear these, as this land will probably be mown in the first week of July. Two can also be heard at Caislean football pitch, under Glosch tower, at Cocloch West and at Carne Hill. Others are spread out one each in townlands in Blacksod and from Aghleam through Clogher, Mullaghroe North, Tirraun, Elly, Emlybeg South, Gladree, Tallagh and Belmullet.

Numbers in the West are now expected to increase on last year's 40 calling males, despite the recent collapse in the south-west Mayo population (declining from a peak of nine in 2009, falling to four last year, with just one or two here this year). There are about as many on the Mullet this year as last (when 23 were counted). Thanks to a substantial increase on the north Galway islands, from ten last year to at least 19 this year, the upward trend in Corncrake numbers in the West is likely to resume this year.

Nationally, a good increase in the west Donegal islands, from 71 last year to at least 75 this year so far, is more than offset by a decline in East Donegal, from last year's 20 to just six so far this year. There are three confirmed so far in Sligo. One has been found by birdwatcher Tom Cuffe at Coarsefield, just north of Galway, on the callow land of the Corrib, the first heard here in over 20 years. One has been found in the Shannon Callows. There are no reports from anywhere else in the country, as yet.

All information on where and when birds are heard helps in the application of the NPWS grant fund to protect Corncrake breeding territories, and so to ensure this remarkable and emblematic Irish species is heard in years to come. Please pass on any news of Corncrakes heard outside any of the areas named above as soon as possible. Phone 095 44941, or alternatively, email records via this website.

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