

# THE CORNCRAKE

Corncrake are a very rare bird that visits some parts of Ireland during the summer to nest and raise chicks. They spend the winter in Africa (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania) and make the long journey in the summer to nest. Corncrake nested on Inis Mór in 2023 and hopefully they will come again... the first time in over 30 years!



## What do Corncrake look like?

Corncrake are small birds that are members of the Rail family like Coot and Moor hens. They are bigger than blackbirds but smaller than pheasants. They are brown in colour.

They are very secretive birds and very difficult to see, but you will hear them!!!

The sound they make is **CREX CREX**... which is their Latin name!!! ...and they can make a lot of noise especially at night!

## What do Corncrakes need?

Corncrakes nest on the ground and make their nest from stems and leaves. They need long vegetation (20cm) like grasslands to hide their nests. They like nettles and hogweed and wild carrot, Yellow flag Iris as well, which provide cover for the bird overhead but is open underneath so that they can travel around but stay hidden.

Plants like nettles and hogweed provide good cover in April and May when other grassland plants are not tall enough to hide in.

They also like some tall crops like kale and oats.

They need for their nest site to be undisturbed from April to August. So all grazing and cutting should be avoided in fields where there are corncrake during this time.



## What do Corncrakes feed on?

They are **omnivorous**, they feed mainly on insects (slugs, snails and worms) and seeds.

## Why are Corncrakes threatened?

- Loss of suitable habitats
- Intensification of Farming and use of machinery
- Natural Predators

## When do they arrive?

- They can arrive in April (last year they arrived to Inis Mór in June)
- They make nests in May and may have a second brood in June. There may be 8-12 eggs in each nest. After they hatch the chicks are looked after by their mother for 12 days and then are sent on their way!



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircanna  
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúla  
National Parks and Wildlife  
Service



ACRES BURREN ARAN



Corncrake  
Traonach LIFE