

Words by
Rosa Rogers

Pictures by
Rosa Kelly

CHASING THE CURLEW'S CALL



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Met Éireann's Weather and Climate Research Programme



CHASING THE CURLEW'S CALL

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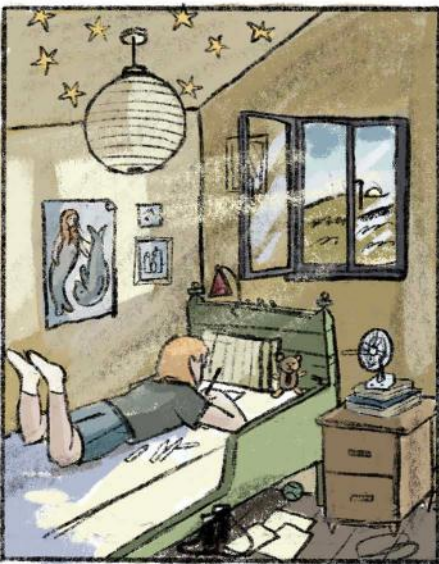
Published by Met Éireann
a division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

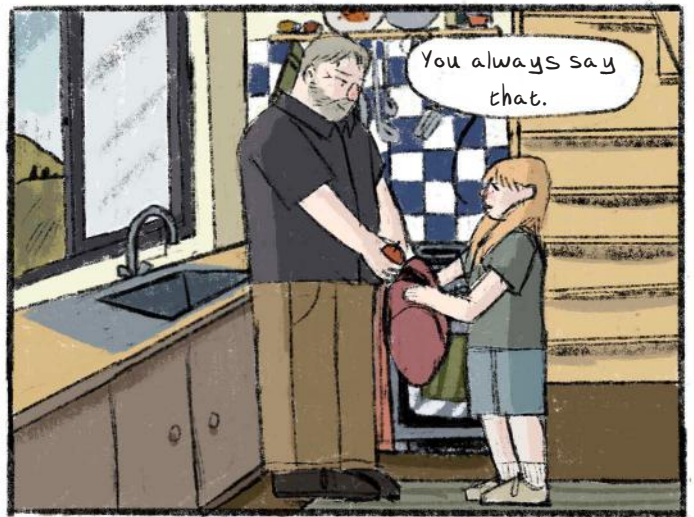
ISBN: 978-1-917198-02-8

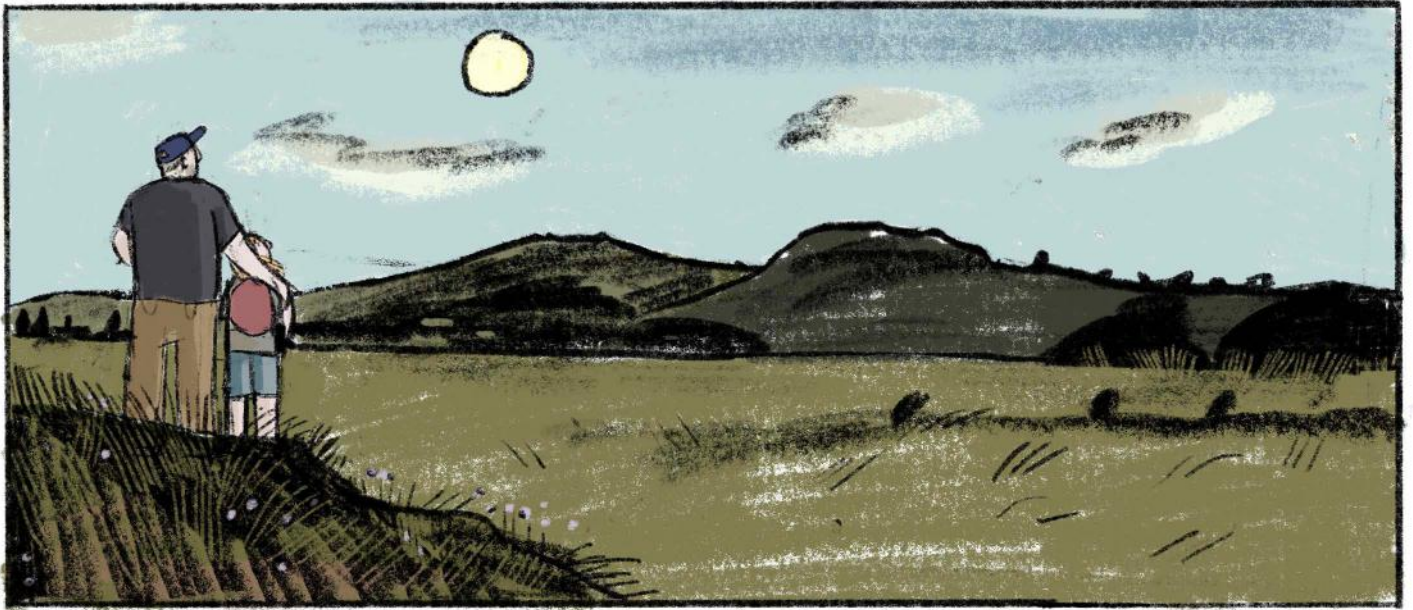
Price: Free
June 2026

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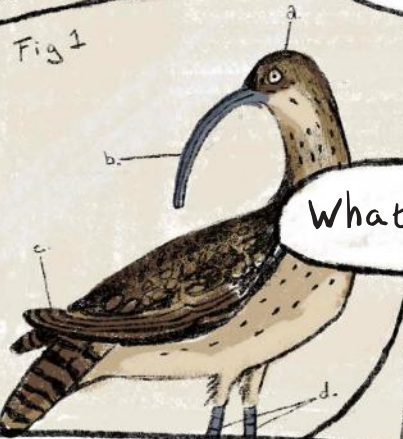


IDENTIFICATION
CURLEW

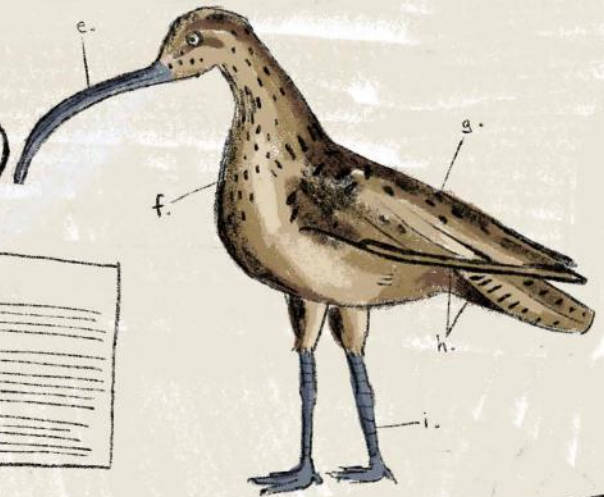
They have long beaks, up to 15cm, which curve down from their face in a crescent moon shape.



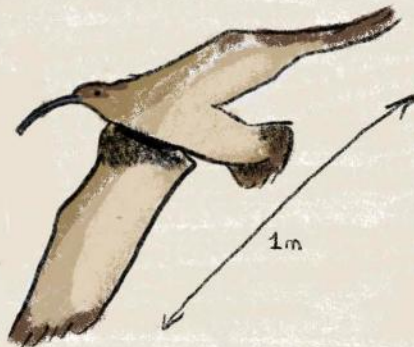
They have grey-blue stilty legs and feathers that are a mixture of brown, yellow, white, black and gold, like the colours of a wild meadow.



What else...



They are known to be Europe's largest wader. So if they spread their wings, they're almost one whole metre wide!



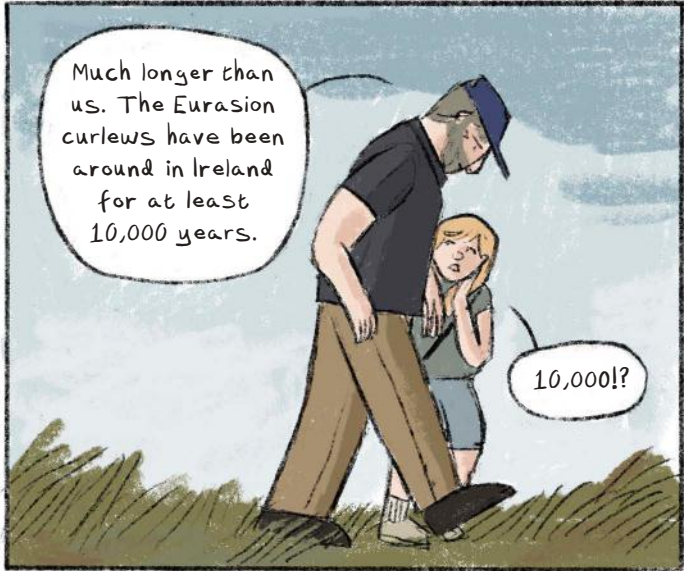
And if one was standing next to you, it'd reach just above your knee.







How long have they been here?



Much longer than us. The Eurasian curlews have been around in Ireland for at least 10,000 years.

10,000!?



There used to be so many, and it's only recently we've started to lose them.

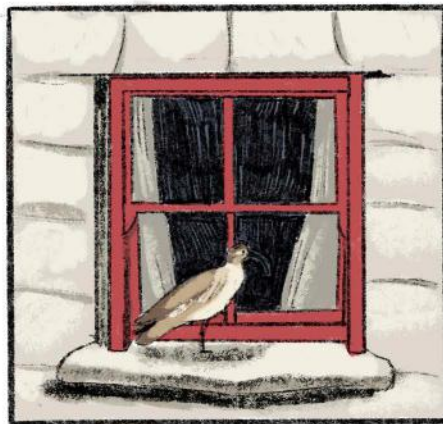
We've lost nearly 98% in the last thirty years.

That's mum's whole life...

And yet, all through time, the curlew has been imprinted in our ancient stories, our Irish folklore and soil...









The weather changes are not helping... Ireland has gotten warmer and this extra heat is changing our weather patterns.



The birds are lovers of wetland areas and the warmer summer months are affecting their families.

How come?

When their chicks are born in June, they have to feed themselves. They put their long beaks into the earth to find their food like worms and insects.



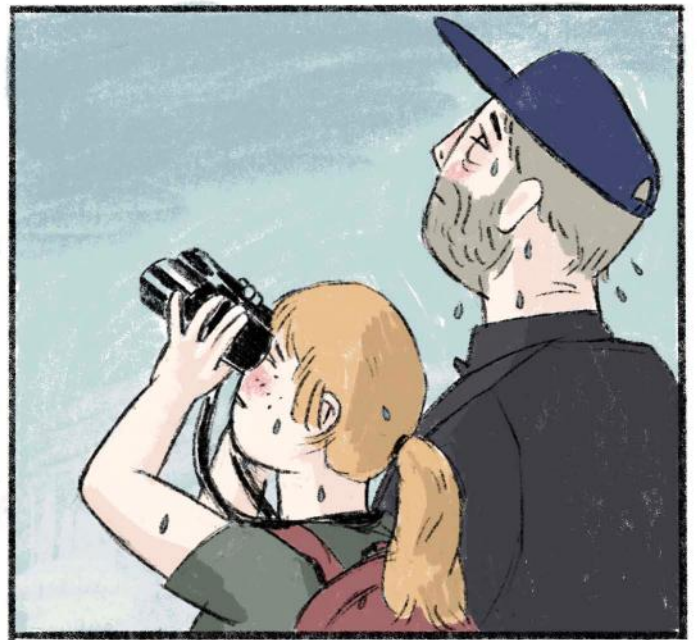
But the ground can be too dry from the heat,



the beaks can't break through,



and they sadly go hungry.





I remember Mam saying she used to hear them all the time.

We did. We'd walk out through the meadows when she was young.

What did it sound like?

Some people say it's a bubbling-water cry, like liquid joy. But I think it sounds silver...

Silver?

Like thread unspooling.



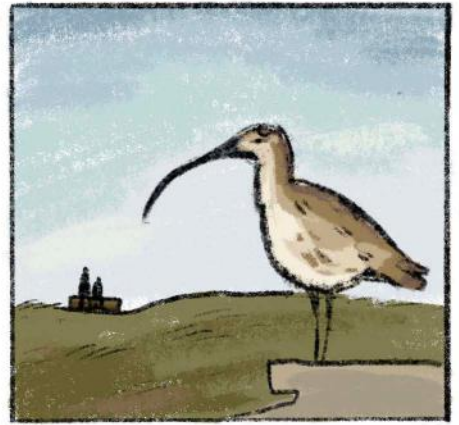
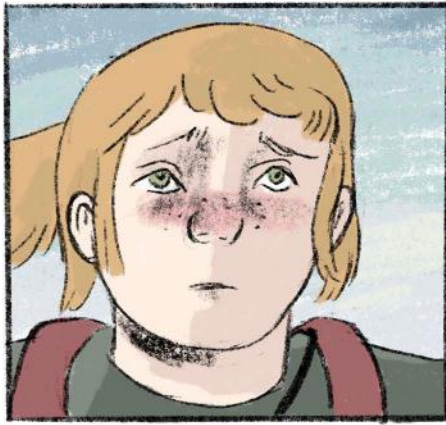
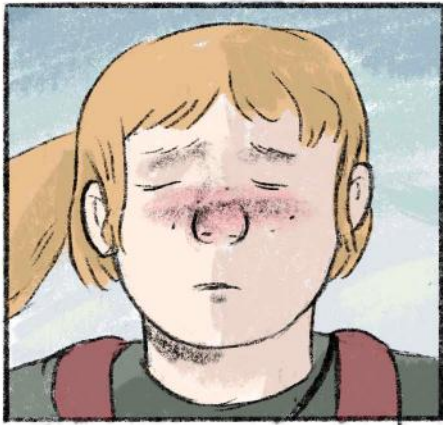




Close your eyes, Lou. And listen...

It's... beautiful.

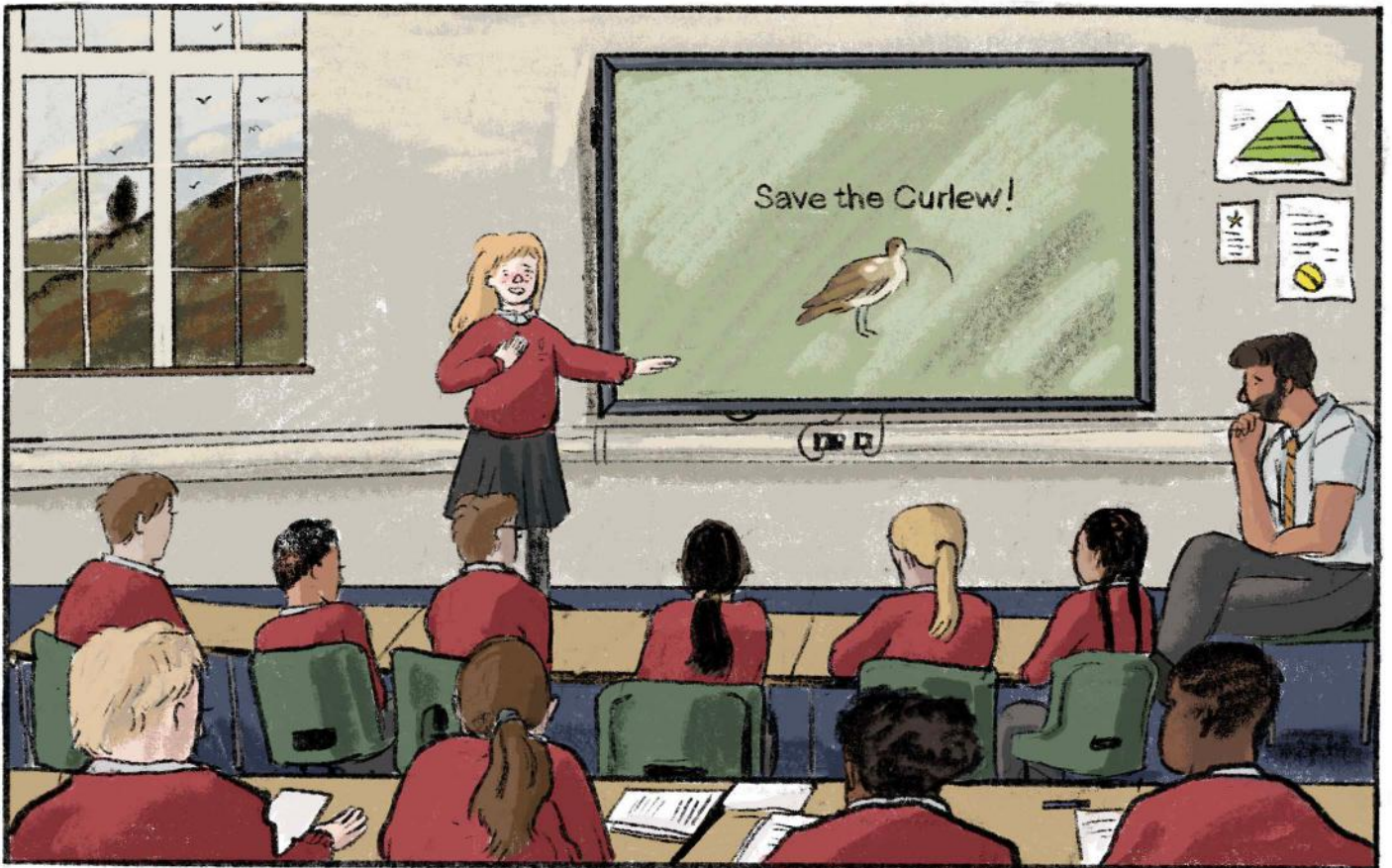








Three months later...





Scan this QR code to watch my school presentation!



Thank you for listening (and reading!!!)

Lou

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CHASING THE CURLEW'S CALL

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by University College Cork

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication is funded by Met Éireann's Weather and Climate Research Programme, administered by Met Éireann, a division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The authors would like to acknowledge research support on climate information by Dr Claire Scannell and Dr Catriona Duffy, production support by Gráinne Connolly, Eurasian Curlew research by Dr Paul Holloway and also the 200+ participants at our creative storytelling workshops for their advice, support and inspiration.



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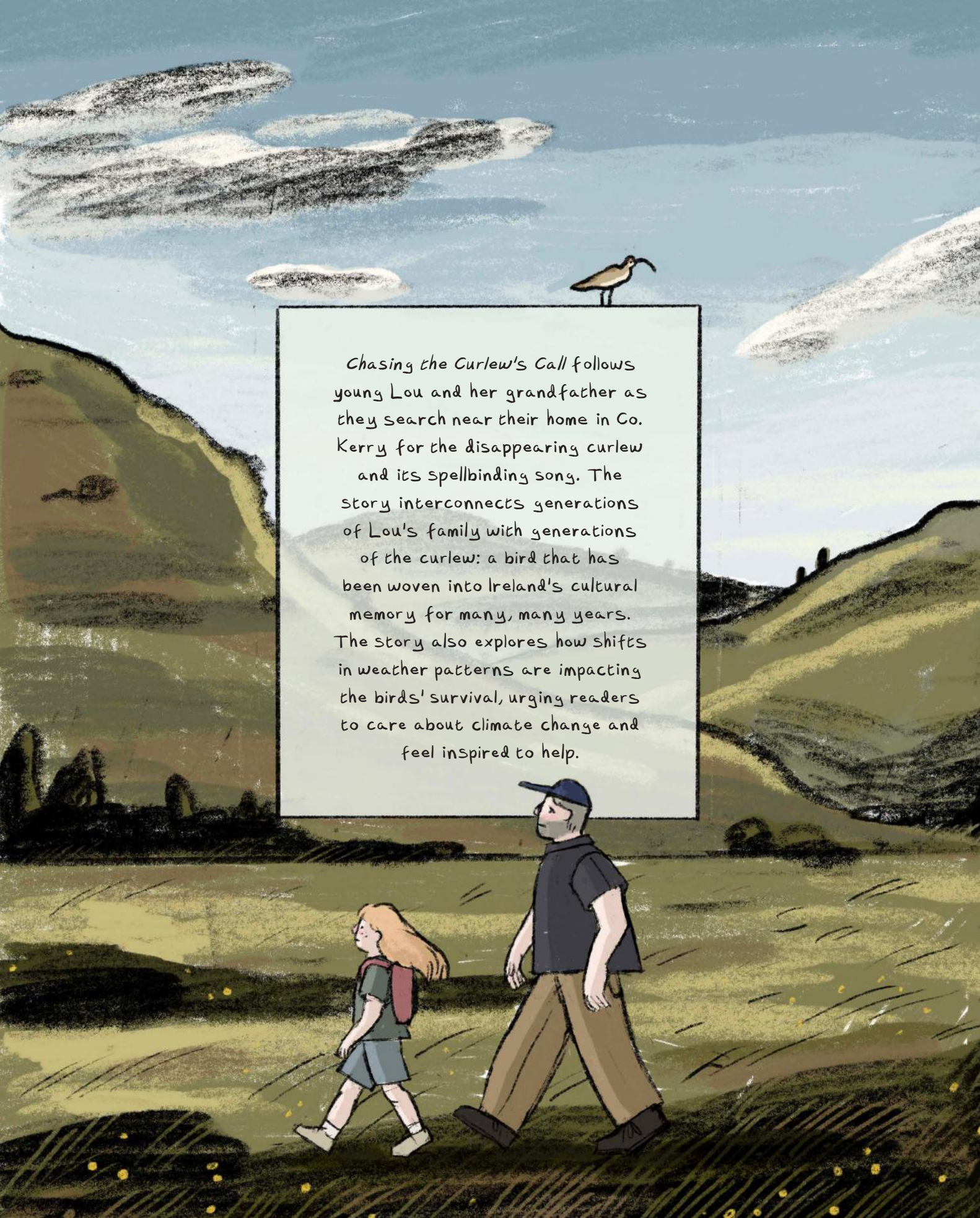
Met Éireann, Ireland's National Meteorological Service maintained by the State under the Convention of the World Meteorological Organisation, monitors, analyses and predicts Ireland's weather and climate. We do this to provide Irish decision-makers with world-class weather, climate and flood services to protect life and property, and to promote wider societal and economic wellbeing.

Research funding is a key component of Met Éireann's strategy and is central to Met Éireann's Weather and Climate Research Programme.

Met Éireann's Weather and Climate Research Programme underpins the expertise and knowledge needed to enable the delivery and continuous improvement of national predictive capability in the areas of weather, climate and hydrology and to ensure that, particularly in the climate context, research outputs provide the evidence and tools necessary to inform government policy and action.

Met Éireann's Weather and Climate Research Programme's mission is to contribute to the development of national research capacity and to address key scientific questions in response to the challenges and opportunities facing Ireland from an extreme weather and changing climate's perspective.

Met Éireann welcomes research in the spirit of diversity, inclusivity, cooperation, co-creation, collaboration, open data and multidisciplinary.



Chasing the Curlew's Call follows young Lou and her grandfather as they search near their home in Co. Kerry for the disappearing curlew and its spellbinding song. The story interconnects generations of Lou's family with generations of the curlew: a bird that has been woven into Ireland's cultural memory for many, many years. The story also explores how shifts in weather patterns are impacting the birds' survival, urging readers to care about climate change and feel inspired to help.