# Tragic and triumphant journeys of tagged cuckoos reveal migration challenges



Two cuckoos tagged at Worlingham Marshes near Beccles have provided significant insights into the migration patterns and challenges faced by this endangered species, according to the Eastern Daily Press.

Nick II and Wilfred were fitted with tracking devices at the Worlingham Marshes Nature Reserve last summer as part of a research project conducted jointly by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The project aims to monitor and understand the long-distance migratory journeys of cuckoos, a species that has experienced alarming population declines and is classified as a Red List species in the 2021 UK Conservation Status Report, indicating it is of the highest conservation priority.

Both birds embarked on their migration to Africa, with Nick II undertaking his journey just 11 days after leaving Suffolk in late July. His route took him across the Sahara Desert, reaching the southern border region between Mauritania and Senegal. However, the latest data indicates that his journey ended there. The BTO reported: “His tag has continued to transmit from the same area, suggesting that he died here,” leading to Nick II being marked as “presumed dead”.

In contrast, Wilfred’s migration concluded with a successful return to the UK, making him the first cuckoo tracked by the BTO to complete such a journey back to British shores this year. This milestone provides valuable information on the migratory capabilities and survival of cuckoos on their return trip, which has been less documented.

The BTO’s Cuckoo Tracking Project commenced in 2011 and has since tagged over 100 cuckoos globally. The collected data has elucidated migration routes, showing that many English cuckoos typically travel through Spain before crossing the Mediterranean Sea and Sahara Desert. The current research involving the Suffolk birds allows the public and scientists alike to monitor their movements in real time and compare different migration paths, helping to inform conservation efforts.

Wilfred and Nick II’s journeys highlight both the monumental challenges faced by cuckoos during their migrations and the potential for technology to aid in understanding and preserving this declining species. The findings from this project continue to contribute to the broader understanding of cuckoo migration dynamics, providing crucial data to wildlife trusts, conservationists, and the scientific community.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/news/state-art-tags-tracking-cuckoo-migration-worlingham-marshes> - This page confirms that two cuckoos were tagged at Worlingham Marshes as part of vital research into their trans-Saharan migration, supporting the claim about the tagging of Nick II and Wilfred and the involvement of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and BTO.
2. <https://www.bto.org/cuckoos> - The British Trust for Ornithology's Cuckoo Tracking Project page details the long-term satellite tracking of cuckoos since 2011, the study of migration routes, and links to declines, supporting the historical context and purpose of the tracking project mentioned.
3. <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/cuckoo-tracking-project/updates-our-cuckoos> - This page provides updates from tracked cuckoos, showing migration patterns in real time and illustrating successful journeys and challenges, which corroborates the details about Wilfred’s successful migration and Nick II's presumed death.
4. <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/appeals/worlingham-marshes> - This Suffolk Wildlife Trust resource describes Worlingham Marshes as a nature reserve and mentions the tagging of cuckoos with state-of-the-art devices, supporting the article’s reference to the location and tagging technology used.
5. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DIwb6NcsaYZ/> - An Instagram post from BTO highlights Wilfred as the first tagged cuckoo to successfully return to the UK this year, confirming the milestone achievement and providing evidence of the bird’s survival on migration.
6. <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/cuckoo-tracking-project> - This BTO project overview elaborates on the extensive data collected from over 100 tagged cuckoos globally, illustrating the significance of the data in understanding migration routes and informing conservation efforts, as described in the article.
7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25111983.worlingham-cuckoo-nick-dies-african-migration/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data