

Alderney Wildlife

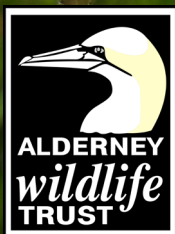
**LONGIS NATURE RESERVE; 20
YEARS ON**

The Longis Nature Reserve holds a special
place in our hearts...find out why here!



**FORAGING ALONG ALDERNEY'S
COAST AND FOOTPATHS**

Discover the food items which hide amongst
Alderney's beautiful environment!



**Spring/Summer 2022 | 20 Years
of the Alderney Wildlife Trust**

**Protecting Alderney's wildlife for
the future.**



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PLANTING A WILDFLOWER SEEDS | ROWIE BURCHAM



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OYSTERCATCHERS | BILL BLACK



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WALKING LONGIS RESERVE | LORNA WEST

Editorial

Spring is here - a time to celebrate!



20 years ago in 2002, the world's population reached 6.273 billion, we spent on average 46 minutes a day online, while listening to Coldplay's 'The Scientist' and for the first time watched Serena and Venus

Williams play against each other in the Wimbledon Women's Singles Final. That same year, a dedicated group of Alderney residents with a passion for protecting the natural environment founded the Alderney Wildlife Trust!

Spring is a season most often associated with rebirth, while summer symbolises growth. This seemed an appropriate time to celebrate the AWT's 20th Birthday as the formation of this remarkable organisation saw a new beginning for Alderney's wildlife.

As one of the newer members of the AWT family, it has been an absolute honour to help plan and organise as well as enjoy the festivities over the past few months which have marked this milestone event.

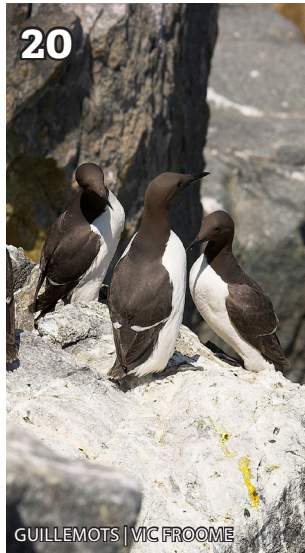
For my first time experiencing the warmer weather on Alderney, it really has been a season to remember, with my weekly butterfly transect around the Community Woodland being a highlight, providing me with a breath of fresh air as I record the dashes of colour that pass by. Another highlight of the season, within all of its organised madness, was Wildlife Week which brought so much joy to our community.

In this issue, we are going to bring your attention to some of the AWT's accomplishments over the past two decades and see what a few past staff members have to say when they reminisce about their time on Alderney. Of course, we will also be talking about all things wildlife as we cannot forget and must appreciate the little things that the past few months has brought us each



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ENJOYING THE FORAGING ALONG FOOTPATHS WALK | ROWIE BURCHAM



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GUILLEMOTS | VIC FROOME



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MAKING SEED BOMBS WITH PLAYGROUP | ELLEN SMITH

day, including longer evenings, rainbows created by fields of flowers and returning animals from their wintering grounds!

By Rowie Burcham, Outreach Officer

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Dr. Mel visited Les Vicheries/ Bridget Ozanne Orchid Fields Reserve and so should you!

Manager's Report

The Alderney Wildlife Trust's 20th Anniversary year is rushing by, with so much happening and so much more to come!

We've welcomed back former members of staff with thanks to our friends from the Tall Ships Youth Trust and their Clipper 70 sail training vessel and from the Aspreys and the Sue Rouse Charitable Trust. This wonderful round the world racing yacht not only brought over passengers for the AWT but, with the support of the Youth Commission for Guernsey and Alderney, it was also possible to provide more than 20 St Anne's schoolchildren with the unique experience of helping to sail a 65-ton steel yacht through some of the strongest tides in the world!

We've launched both the Alderney Pollinator Project and the Alderney Queen's Jubilee Woodland campaigns as part of our celebrations of 20 years of striving to ensure Alderney's wildlife thrives. These campaigns will see 2,000 or more trees planted and dozens of pollinator plots created around the island. Please do get in touch through admin@alderneywildlife.org or visit our website to sign up for your free tree, or visit our Wildlife

Information Centre and also grab your free packet of wildflower seeds.

We've also started the mapping of the island's bays using our 'Badger' Tow Sonar array, sponsored by Alderney Electricity and Charles Asprey. This new equipment will combine with the Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP) work to calculate the extent of Alderney's vitally important eel grass beds and map the topography of the seabed they lie within. Working with the States of Alderney this new understanding will help the island project the extent of these beds and, working with innovative new technologies such as low impact mooring systems, we are hoping to be able to support the expansion of this biodiverse habitat so vital to the sequestering of carbon within the marine environment. We've also joined forces with the SoA and the States of Jersey to install new monitoring devices which will help us better understand the movement of key marine species, including dolphins, as they move past Alderney.



ROLAND LEADING A FORAGING WALK | ROWIE BURCHAM



THE BIG BIRTHDAY BASH | AWT STAFF

BACKGROUND VIEW FROM FORT ALBERT | ROWIE BURCHAM



At the same time, the SoA's General Services Committee is preparing the island's first ever Biodiversity Strategy, which we hope will go to public consultation during the summer months.

So as you can see it's a busy year, and as we come towards the height of summer we hope to see many of our members join us and take part in some of the events we have running during the rest of the year.

Finally, if you get a spare moment do have a quick look at the compilation video we have published on our social media platforms which celebrates just a few highlights of the last 20 years of the Alderney Wildlife Trust.

By Roland Gauvain

WILD NEWS

All the latest news from Alderney Wildlife Trust



A Royal Visit

IN THE lead up to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Their Royal Highnesses, the Earl and Countess of Wessex, enjoyed a tour around the Channel Islands and during Alderney's turn they popped into our Wildlife Information Centre! During their visit, Manager Roland and Ramsar Officer Alex showed them the Gann-

etCam and PuffinCam before delving deeper into the benefits it provides our local community and the wider audience.

For the Love of Plovers

ALDERNEY'S POPULATION of Ringed Plovers, has suffered over recent years from low breeding success. These wading birds, nest on the upper sections of beaches where their eggs and chicks are well disguised amongst the shingle. Unfortunately, this can lead to unsuspecting members of the public accidentally disrupting and damaging the nests, often leading to predation from other birds.

Historically, Ringed Plovers bred across the Channel Islands, but now can only be found nesting on Alderney.

This Spring, the AWT (working with the States of Alderney) stepped in



and set up four cordoned off areas in order to offer some protection and help give them a head start.

After, high tides in May washed away all the nests, we are pleased to report that all six pairs have re-laid. We now have eleven chicks across the beaches - which will be a record if they all fledge. We are being cautiously optimistic about these chicks!

We Said Farewell...

IN APRIL, we said goodbye to Lorna West, the previous Outreach Officer, who is now working as the MPA Marine and Development Officer for the Ascension Island Government! Lorna had been with us since 2020 and she is greatly missed, but we know that she is thoroughly enjoying herself in her new home in the Atlantic Ocean. Good luck Lorna!



LORNA IN HER NEW JOB | IAG STAFF

Pollinator Project Launch



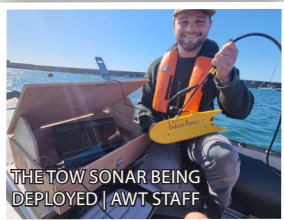
THIS SRPING, we launched the Pollinator Project in partnership with the Guernsey Pollinator Project team. The main

aspects of this project are: education, action and science, in order to expand the public's knowledge of our pollinating species and increase suitable habitat for them across Alderney.

We have run a number of pollinator themed sessions with the younger generation (turn to Page 22 to read more about this), provided free native wildflower seeds at engagement stalls, planted a flagship wildflower meadow at Alderney Roots and are continuing to carry out our ecological surveys on bees and butterflies!

Deployment of a Tow Sonar

THIS MAY, AWT staff were able to deploy an exciting new piece of equipment – a tow sonar. Thanks to the support of Badger and Charles Asprey and Alderney Electricity (AEL), the AWT staff have used it to map areas of Braye and Longis seabed.



THE TOW SONAR BEING DEPLOYED | AWT STAFF

The tow sonar sends off two sonar beams either side of the vessel, creating a detailed picture of the seabed. This is enabling us to monitor key habitats such as kelp and eelgrass on a far larger scale than ever possible before.



ALEX, DANIEL AND ROLAND WITH THE TOW SONAR | AWT STAFF

Top Sightings This



Spring

1



NUT CRAB | LOU COLLINGS

Nut Crab

This species is usually seen in deeper water and is a rarer sighting on Alderney. Our staff spotted this individual during a Shore Search back in March.

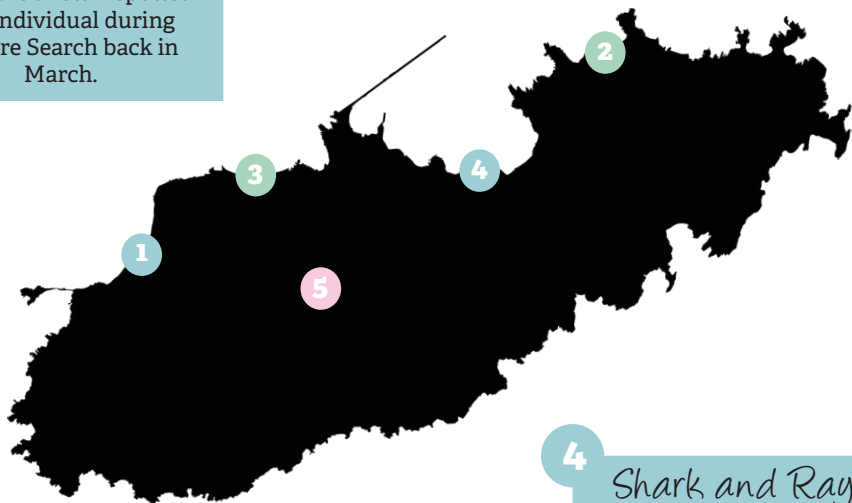
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GREAT BUSTARD | SANDY ROBERTSON

Great Bustard

Spotted in mid-May, this ringed individual also visited the island the same time last year. This female originally came from an egg in the UK which was saved from being destroyed by a haymaker in 2020!



3

Kentish Plover

This species last bred on Alderney in 1974 and this year, amazingly two individuals were spotted in May for the first time in 40 years! The first to be spotted was an immature, while the latter was an adult.



KENTISH PLOVER | DANIEL WHITELEGG

4

Shark and Ray Eggs

During our annual Easter Shark Egg Hunt we hit a new record and found 36 shark and ray eggs. This was part of a citizen science project, with the results being sent over to The Shark Trust who use it for their conservation goals!

Species Spotlight:

Sea Holly

Sea Holly is one of my favourite coastal plants and one I always look forward to seeing once the spectacular spring flowering on the cliffs is over. It grows on sand and shingle above the high tide line by the sea, and is in flower from June to September (making it the perfect species to look out for in summer) with some of the best displays on Alderney being along Platte Saline, although it is found on many of the other beaches too. It is also a favourite of a number of insect species including bumblebees, hoverflies, butterflies and day-flying moths.

It is a native plant and is unmistakable with its spiny blue-green leaves and stunning metallic powder blue flowers in rounded teasel-like heads with broad spiny bracts. It is also ideally adapted to its habitat. The leaves have white veins and edges giving the impression of having been frosted: this is caused by the covering

of waxy cuticle which helps to reduce water loss. The blue-green colour of the leaves reflects the heat of the sun better than plain green leaves and the deep tap root, which anchors it firmly in place in windswept conditions, allows it to tap into water deep below the surface.

In the past candies were made from the plant's roots - they were peeled, boiled, and cut into slivers which were twisted together and then covered with sugar and were considered to have aphrodisiac properties!

By Lindsay Pyne



5



Hummingbird Hawk-Moth

Numbers vary each year for this species, depending on environmental factors, and this spring hundreds have been spotted across the island! Starting in the first week on June, many members of the public recorded seeing them, with the species peaking by the middle of the month.

Species Spotlight: Oystercatcher

One of the most recognisable and noisy birds on Alderney, the **Oystercatcher** holds a special place in many islanders' hearts. Its instantly noticeable brash behaviour and simple plumage has helped it be one of the most noticed of our avifauna!

A common resident, they are here year-round, albeit with different birds using the shoreline and sandy beaches depending on the seasons.

Breeding surveys in the last 2 years have indicated just how well distributed they are around the coast, with at least 60 pairs nesting. Pairs are quite faithful to a breeding area, so it allows us to map their territories with a high level of confidence. The nest is very rudimentary, more akin to a scrape in the ground than a traditional lined nest a small bird would construct. Nests are on rock, shingle or bare ground with some small amount of short vegetation surrounding them.

This allows the incubating adults a 360-degree view, which helps with detecting any threats well in advance. 2 or 3 eggs are laid, though exceptionally this can be 4. Once the chicks have hatched, they spend most of their time tucked away amongst the rocks until they are too large to be predated. This is fairly unique in waders as most chicks have to go and find food for themselves, like Alderney's other nesting wader, the Ringed Plover. Adult Oystercatchers bring back mussels, cockles and worms for the chicks until they are big enough to fend for themselves.

As summer gives way to autumn, we see hundreds of these birds passing

“Across the island, up to 650 Oystercatchers can be present. This largely includes birds from further north like Iceland, Scandinavia and northern parts of the UK.”



through on migration. At high tide you will be able to see them packed into the bays as they take a rest. Across the island, up to 650 Oystercatchers can be present. This largely includes birds from further north like Iceland, Scandinavia and northern parts of the UK. Remarkably, the UK holds 45% of Europe's wintering population, showing how important our coastlines are for them. New research has shown that young birds follow their dads to the wintering grounds, so if the father winters in Alderney, some of our chicks may never leave. Added with the fact that they can live for 40 years, they can certainly be called an Alderney local!

Like most of the UK's breeding waders, their winter plumage is almost the same as their breeding plumage, except for a white collar and having duller coloured legs. During these cold months, they spend most of the time feeding using some amazing adaptations. Waders can move the final 1/3 of their bill independent of the other sections, which is called distal rhynchokinesis. This helps them to locate prey far below the mud and sense any movements. They also have the heaviest bill out of any wader, which helps some birds to smash through the shells of their food. Next time you see one of these striking birds, take a moment to watch it feed and observe this behaviour in action.

By Daniel Whitelegg



What has the AWT been up to over the last two decades?

Let's see what two of our previous staff members, Dani Clifford and Jack Harper, have to say about their time on Alderney...



What was your job at the AWT:

D: Ramsar Officer (January 2019 - January 2020)

J: Conservation Officer (November 2020 - September 2021)

What is your job title now:

D: Marine Conservation Officer with The Wildlife Trusts

J: Weald Field Officer and Volunteer Coordinator at the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust

What is your favourite memory of Alderney:

D: Oooh I have so many! Climbing up Ortac Gannetry with a GoPro on my head for the Track-A-Gannet (T.A.G.) Project! And getting out on the boat to show and inspire people about Alderney's amazing marine environment. The list goes on and on...

J: My favourite memory was showing my parents around the island and the great work AWT do. For my

favourite AWT moment - difficult to give just one. I enjoyed every single CV's session - the group are some of the nicest people I've met!

Do you have any advice for those interested in a career in this area:

D: Dive right in! Grab every opportunity to

develop your experience

with two hands. Don't

be afraid to reach out

and network with those

in the field/

with jobs you would

like - building

relationships is important. Read

(publications like Seabird, PMNHS

and even Twitter are great) and develop your field ID skills. Finally, there

may be times when getting a job in the environmental sector can seem impossible, but stick with it and all the hardwork and volunteering will pay off!

J: Try your best not to spread yourself too thin. There will be lots of exciting opportunities but it's best to

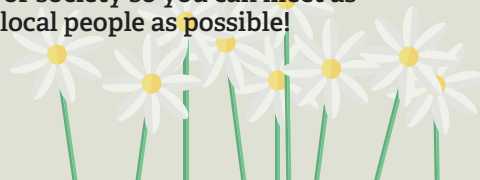
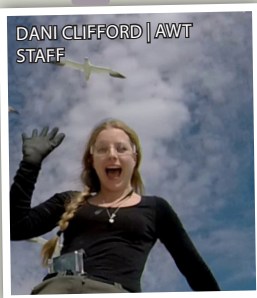
do a few things really well than leave with unfinished projects. A great

thing about the role is you can tailor it slightly to your interests so make

sure you choose projects that are going to benefit your future career as

well as the Trust. Finally, try to join a club or society so you can meet as

many local people as possible!



11,000

Since its establishment in 2009, we have planted over 11,000 native trees in the Alderney Community Woodland!



IMAGES: AWT STAFF

20 KM

The AWT is responsible for ensuring the public have safe and easy access to the Alderney's natural environment and manages managed 20km of footpath across the island!

650,000

In 2020, our Live: Teaching Through Nature website was accessed by 650,000 users - making it one of the most popular wildlife webcams in the region!



750 Members

Today, we celebrate more than 750 members - 54% of which are Alderney residents! Our members are core to helping us carry on the work we do - thank you!

2 New Species

Through the collaborative Bailiwick Bat Survey, we added two new bat species (Serotine and Kuhl's Pipistrelle) to Alderney's wildlife list in 2021!



20 Years of Longis Nature Reserve

Just a year after the Alderney Wildlife Trust was established, the first nature reserve on the island was created!

Founded in 2003, Longis Nature Reserve consists of a varied mosaic of habitats filled with a wealth of plant, animal and insect-life. These unique spaces provide key environmental and recreational services for the island, and were identified as requiring ongoing management to maintain and improve their quality. The designation as a Nature Reserve was made possible through a Memorandum of Understandings and agreements between the States of Alderney, several private landowners and AWT.

Some of the biggest achievements from the last 20 years of the Nature Reserve include:

LONGIS POND

One of the best places on the island to watch birds such as Swallows, Water Rail and Little Grebes. We have created and maintained the bird hide here, a peaceful retreat from the wind!

MANNEZ GARRENE

A hub for wildlife, this is the place to see Dartford Warblers singing



OUR CONSERVATION GRAZING HERD | ELLEN SMITH

years, through preventing scrub encroachment and maintaining the low-nutrient environment enjoyed by many wildflowers and grasses.



SEALAVENDER | LINDSAY PYNE

PROTECTION OF OUR COAST-AL GRASSLANDS

Through removing the invasive sour fig and ensure scrub in controlled, we have protected the rare coastal grassland habitat, home to the endemic Alderney Lavender.

from the gorse, Swallows nesting in the bunkers, Ring Ouzels feeding around the cattle's feet and Glanville Fritillary flying along the paths. We have kept back the bracken to maintain this vital open grassland habitat.

OUR HERD OF CONSERVATION GRAZING COWS

Continuing to preserve our species-rich grassland over the

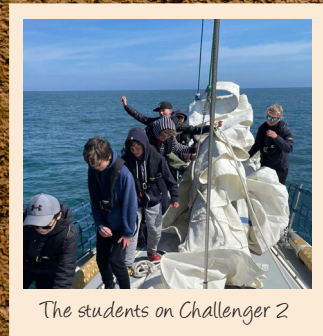
We encourage you to celebrate nearly 20 Years of Longis by visiting these special places, and please do let us know of any interesting sightings you see along the way!

By Ellen Smith

Wildlife Week 2022!



Dr. Mel getting her face painted



The students on Challenger 2



Foraging for Rock Samphire

Wow! What an incredible time Wildlife Week 2022 was! Looking back, it seems a blur of organised chaos, exciting activities and happy smiles from both the public and our staff!

Our AWT family put their bodies and souls into this annual event, and it makes my heart soar with gratitude thinking about the support we had!

To celebrate our 20th Anniversary, this year we went all out with our events, but I believe the memory that will stick out in everyone's minds will be the return of previous staff! We gave a big warm Alderney welcome back to a number of members of the AWT Family – including Alex Gordon-Jones who hadn't been on the island in 16 years! We had a reunion at the Sailing Club, followed by a Big Birthday Bash at the Georgian where we enjoyed a Volunteer Oscars ceremony and a lovely meal made from ingredients we had foraged earlier in the week.

The visitors travelled back to Alderney in a carbon-neutral fashion on a Round the World Racing Yacht and while here the Challenger 2 also gave the students of St. Anne's School



Staff members leaving their mark



Alderney's new Gordon and Gino



Recreating the ANWT logo



the opportunity to climb aboard too!

One of my personal favourite events was the After School Arts and Crafts Party, which we co-hosted with the Youth Commission of Guernsey and Alderney at the Braye Beach Hotel and were joined by a number of Alderney's younger generation. Here, we made birthday cards for the Trust and Discovery Bags (for our beach finds), enjoyed some delicious cupcakes and even recreated the AWT logo out of our thumbprints. Like any good birthday party, we also had games and competitions!

Other highlights of the week include stargazing at Fort Tourgis and

two foraging walks, one of which was followed by a 'wild' cooking demonstration from our very own Gino and Gordon (also known as Roland and Alex).

Browsing through the hundreds of photographs I took over the course of the week I can say for certain that it was one of the highlights of my time on Alderney! The Trust would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped with Wildlife Week this year and for those who enjoyed it, don't worry we'll be back for another next year!

By Rowie Burcham



Around the island ramble



Waiting for the stars to come out



Meeting the Gannets of Les Etacs

Foraging Along Alderney's Coast and Footpaths

One-thousand, eight-hundred and twenty-three.

That is the average distance a food item travelled before reaching UK shelves (source, foodmiles.com). On Alderney, much of our food has to go even further.

This striking figure is representative of how disconnected we have become from

THREE-CORNERED LEEK

A common sight across Alderney in spring - this plant is technically an invasive species. The flowers of this plant make a delicious garnish, and the stems can be used as a substitute for garlic.



LIMPETS

These are notoriously tough, however, this can be remedied by pulverising the limpets once out of their shells. To harvest limpets, you can quickly knock them sideways off the rock! Pop them in a frying pan and they will quickly pop out of their shells.

SEA LETTUCE

This is a very common seaweed, found on the upper shore. This thin green seaweed can be eaten as is, but is at its best when dried and turned into crispy seaweed.



the sources of the food on our plates. Thankfully, on Alderney we do have the ability to get back to these sources through local farms such as Kiln Farm and Alderney Roots.

However, there is another resource right on our doorsteps for those willing to look – Alderney's huge variety of plants and animals which you can forage for yourselves.

By Alex Purdie

ROCK SAMPHIRE

The thick leaves of the Rock Samphire abundant on Alderney can be steamed or boiled but are best when pickled. They also make a good accompaniment to fish.

PEPPER DULSE

This may be the most aptly named seaweed. Its small leaves have a delicious of garlic and pepper flavour. The similarly named 'Dulse' is another edible seaweed, although it lacks the rich flavour.

FENNEL

This plant has a characteristic aniseed taste. The frothy leaves can be chewed for a refreshing taste and are a great accompaniment to fish.

WINKLES

These are one of the most common sights on Alderney's rocky beaches. These sea-snails can be steamed and then hooked out of their shell using a pin or tweezers.

Foraging Principles

- **Never take more than 1/3** of a plant or seaweed, or over 1/5 of the area the plants, seaweed or animals are in.
- **Be aware of your surroundings** – are there **sources of pollution** nearby which could contaminate wild food. Furthermore, it is best practice to wash foraged food.
- **Be certain on your identification** – there are many fantastic guides which can assist with this. Some species are very easy to ID but others may have similar species which are **not safe to eat**.
- **Respect the law** – some species of plants and animals are **protected under law**; this is common for marine animals. If you are harvesting these, ensure that those you are harvesting are of the required size, it is within season, and you have not taken over a threshold.



BACKGROUND: ROCK POOLING IN CLONQUE BEACH | ROWIE BURGHAM

Alderney's Guillemots

Life on the Edge



Guillemots are iconic seabirds and very numerous. Holarctic, they range across the northern seas of both the Pacific

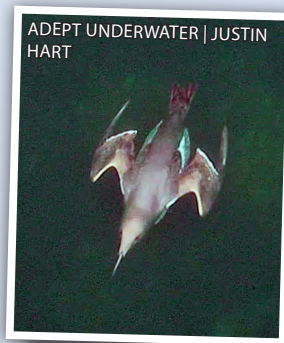
and Atlantic oceans. The British Isles host more than 1.5 million of them and around 12% of the world population. Guillemots may not have the colourful beaks and comical looks of a Puffin or the muscular athleticism of the plunge-diving Gannets, but they do harbour some remarkable hidden talents. For example, they are very adept divers. Feeding primarily on small fish they pursue them underwater using their wings like flippers just as penguins do. Capable of remaining underwater for up to 4 minutes they can regularly dive to depths greater than 100 m but can go as far as 180 m deep if need be.

With these diving skills allied to a foraging range that can extend 100km from their nests, Guillemots can recce a large volume of the marine environment around their

col- onies. This ability has got to be advantageous and has probably allowed them to cope better with food shortages than some other seabirds. Whereas so many species of seabirds are struggling to survive and have suffered population declines, Guillemot numbers are currently on an upward trend.

Famous for nesting in vast numbers tightly packed together in dense nesting groups on precipitous sea cliffs, you could be forgiven for not realizing we have Guillemots nesting around Alderney. But we do, only these days they are a lot harder to spot than they used to be. Once large numbers smothered both Les Etacs and Ortac but since the Gannet colonies became established after WWII the Guillemots got pushed out, progressively usurped by the increasing numbers of the larger Gannets.

Oil pollution events in the southwest of the UK and in the Bay of Biscay in the





1970s and 1980s likely contributed to further local declines, reducing the

population further. Today, only around 100 - 120 pairs of Guillemots remain and each year they try to raise their chicks either on the gannetries or south coast islets. Furthermore, those that do, all do so under siege from an array of predators. Gulls, Crows and Ravens all readily take Guillemot eggs or chicks and are a persistent threat throughout the nesting season. Rats on the tidal islets may also be a problem. To avoid them the Guillemots choose to lay their single egg in nooks and crannies between the nesting Gannets or, on the south coast islets, in spaces under large boulders or fissures.

Choosing to nest among the sharp protective beaks of Gannets or under boulders is a good policy, but Guillemots have evolved other nesting habits that reduce the risk of predation too. Notably, their chicks are fast learners and readily go to sea when

only about a third grown between 18-25 days old. Departure is often dramatic.



Usually at dusk and sometime in mid-June the chick literally throws itself off the cliff and parachutes down to the sea on stunted wings still without flight feathers. Greeted on the water by its father the chick is then swum far out to sea where it can be fed more directly and away from the eyes of its avian and land-based foe.

In combination, these nesting strategies seem to work, but to be sure AWT has begun monitoring local Guillemot productivity, so we can better understand the status of our population and whether it can

remain secure, albeit 'living on the edge' as it has been - between a rock and a hard place.

By Justin Hart



GUILLEMOT | ADAM JONES

POLLINATING | ROWIE BURCHAM



LOOKING AT MOTHS | ROWIE BURCHAM



A COMPLETED BEE HOTEL | ROWIE BURCHAM



SHOWING PLAYGROUP MOTHS | ROWIE BURCHAM



HANGING UP BEE HOTELS | ROWIE BURCHAM



GETTING MESSY WITH THE SEED BOMBS | ELLEN SMITH



A POPLAR HAWK-MOTH | ROWIE BURCHAM



CREATING BEE HOTELS | ROWIE BURCHAM



THROWING SEED BOMBS | ELLEN SMITH



Watch



This Spring we have been kept busy as bees by our Pollinator Project! With a focus on community engagement, we have run some fun and educational activities with the local playgroups and Youth Group focusing on helping to increase both knowledge and suitable habitat for bees, butterflies and moths!

Our first activity was making Seeds Bombs out of wildflower seeds, compost, mud and water with the playgroups. The children not only had fun getting messy making the small balls of earth, but also throwing them about! This activity was so much fun we ran additional sessions!

We also taught the children about the importance of pollinators and what they do, getting them to reenact the pollination process with paintbrushes.

Using our moth trap, we took in a variety of moth species for the children to look at. They were particularly fascinated by the three Poplar Hawk-moths - a large species with a wingspan of 65 – 90 mm!

Finally, we visited Alderney's Youth Group and made a number of bee hotels! Using pieces of pipe and plastic bottles as the main body, we filled them up with various materials, such as bamboo canes, hollow reed, twigs and cork. The participants created and took their own home, and we even made some which are now hanging up in the AWT's office garden!

If you would like more information on how to make Seed Bombs or Bee Hotels, please visit the Wildlife Trust website.

By Rowie Burcham





Visiting a Guernsey Reserve

“For a marine ecologist, even I was taken aback by the sheer beauty of these terrestrial plants!”

I recently had a wonderful opportunity to spend the weekend with several friends in Guernsey, to help celebrate my 40th birthday. With a few hours left before heading back to Alderney, we opted to check out the Les Vicheries/ Bridget Ozanne Orchid Fields Reserve, situated on the South-West coast of Guernsey (just further inland from Rocquaine Bay).

The reserve is a collection of species-rich grassland fields, brimming with a variety of orchids, flowers and grasses. For a marine ecologist, even I was taken aback by the sheer beauty of these terrestrial plants! The fields were densely packed with species such as the Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Loose-flowered orchid (*Anacamptis laxiflora*) and other plant species including the Ragged Robin (*Silene flos-cucli*).

Collectively, this mix of species

helps classify these fields as wet meadow habitat type, which provides a haven for wildlife, such as insects. This reserve currently comprises the largest concentration of orchid fields within the Channel Islands to date. To maintain these biologically diverse fields, Guernsey’s natural history organisation, La Société Guernesaise have progressively bought and leased from landowners the fields within the area, since the late 1970s. They actively manage the fields through traditional farming methods, such as the removal of hay in late July/August, using cattle for grazing and preventing the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

If you have the chance to visit Guernsey, I thoroughly recommend including a visit to this beautiful and well-managed reserve.

By Dr. Mel Broadhurst-Allen

Thank you

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BACK COVER: VIEW OF LES ETAC | ROWIE BURCHAM

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