

Alderney Wildlife

EVOLVING INNOVATIVE ECOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY

Introducing the FishIntel project - a collaborative effort to understand the movements of the underwater world!

REWILDING ALDERNEY'S LOST WOODLAND

Learn about how the community's wonderful tree planting will benefit the island's wildlife!



Spring 2023 | Evolve

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

Welcome

Growing alongside the natural world!



I can't believe it's been over a year since I wrote my first editorial for the Trust's membership magazine! As cheesy as it is, it really does feel like last week I moved to this wonderful island and started my

new role as Outreach Officer! And yet, seasons have come and gone along with some of Alderney's amazing fauna and flora (we cannot forget winter's remarkable wildlife). But now...the weather has warmed up again and the sights and sounds of spring are becoming more and more common. As I'm writing this, we're eagerly awaiting the return of Burhou's Puffin colony!

So, will this year be the same as the last one? The answer is both yes and no. Of course, aspects of it will be mostly similar: we'll be carrying out a range of ecological surveys, the Sightings Board will make its weekly appearance and we'll be hosting various outreach events among other things. On top of that, we're looking forward to our annual celebrations and I've already got a few Wildlife Week ideas jotted down. However, there are going to be a few differences, making 2023 its own standalone year.

Firstly, we're welcoming a whole bunch of new staff members and we'll be growing to an eleven-person team! We'll also be building upon the amazing work that was accomplished last year in our Pollinator



Project and further pan-Channel Islands collaboration is in the works following the outcome of 2022's Inter-Island Environment Meeting.

With all these amazing transformations going on, it only seemed fitting to choose 'Evolve' as the theme for this edition of our membership magazine! From this, we'll be pointing your attention to how our organisation and ecological technology are evolving alongside Alderney's environment and reserves!

Rowie Burcham
Outreach Officer



Contents

4 Manager's Report

6 Wild News

From new species recorded on the island to new members of staff at the Trust and even a trip to Jersey - the past few months definitely haven't been quiet here!

8 Top Sightings

Discover our Top Sightings of the season here.

10 **Rising From the Ashes: A Future Centre for Sustainability on Alderney**

Read all about the Trust's future plans for our Essex Farm site.

13 **Wildlife Week 2023**

It's nearly here: this year's Wildlife Week! Come and have a look at what activities we have planned for you!

13 **Species Spotlight**

Find out where you can find the Rustyback fern on Alderney.

14 **The Battle for Alderney's Rockpools**

Which crab species do you think is the best fighter?

16 **Our Wild Lives: Daniel Whitelegg**

Our previous Ecologist, Daniel, left the Trust in February for a new adventure in Norfolk. Farewell Daniel!

18 **Evolving Innovative Ecological Technology**

Introducing the FishIntel project! A collaborative effort to monitor the movement our marine life.

20 **Rewilding Alderney's Lost Woodland**

At the end of 2022, two thousand trees were planted...but what benefits do these have to the island's wildlife?

22 **WATCH**

24 **Visit a UK Reserve**

Our Conservation Officer, Chloe, tells us all about her favourite local walk from back home: Burbage Common and Woods.



Manager's Report

The birds are back, newts are on the move and bats are flying, *spring is here!*

Alderney is at the nexus between the wet, often wild and sometimes cold winter, and the wet, wild and perhaps a little warmer spring. Our wildlife is emerging, Gannets are returning to their colonies, the first puffin sightings have been made and Humming-bird hawkmoths have been seen around St. Anne. Perhaps the most obvious sign for those of us up by 6 am is the strengthening dawn chorus which echoes around the gardens of the town.

In parallel the Trust is experiencing a re-awakening after a far from lethargic winter, welcoming in a new team of staff and volunteers with Abbie, Chloe, Matt and Tara arriving on the island.

We have a sharpened focus on how the Trust delivers its goal to champion, study and protect Alderney's wildlife. Our goals have been refined around establishing the true state of Alderney's Nature and using this knowledge to act through the island's reserves and Ramsar site to put it into recovery.

Through our membership, volunteers, and staff we are looking at creating an Alderney Sustainability Hub (ASH). Here we aim to bring together the island's needs for renewable energy, sustainable practices including recycling and refurbishment, sustainable growing and community learning, in one place. The Trust is also committed in 2023 to better listening to Alderney's community so we can understand its concerns, through the Team Wilder project.

2022 showed how vulnerable Alderney's wildlife can be when faced with global threats. Here at the Trust, we see this as a challenge to awaken from winter even more determined to ensure our island sees its natural environment thrive in the future.

By Roland Gauvain, CEO

WILD NEWS

All the latest news from Alderney Wildlife Trust



2022 WAS the 2nd year of the Bailiwick Bat Survey (BBS) and we can now excitingly announce that during this citizen science project a new bat species was recorded on Alderney...the **Common Noctule!** The project involves residents putting up bat detectors, recording the sounds created by individual species. The data is then uploaded to the BTO's Acoustic Pipeline, which analyses it and informs species names.

The Common Noctule was first recorded last August in Newtown and again in October in Vau de Saou. This brings Alderney's bat species list up to eleven!

To get involved in the project and see what creatures of the night are flying around your area, please contact the Trust.

★ Big Channel Islands Beach Clean ★

THIS FEBRUARY was the 5th Big Channel Island Beach Clean – an event where several cleans happen across the Channel Islands. Here, the Trust led beach cleans on Corblets, Arch, Saye and Longis Bay with forty-eight volunteers turning up to protect Alderney's coastal environment from litter.

In total, we collected **33.2 kg of litter**, including **196 nurdles** – small hard pellets of plastic! Thank you to all the volunteers who participated – here's to the 2024 Big Channel Island Beach Clean!



AT THE end of January, Alex (Ramsar Officer) and Rowie (Outreach Officer) visited our fellow Channel Island of Jersey! This was to participate in the public Marine Mission Event, set up by Jersey Marine Conservation (JMC) and was also attended by a host of other wildlife organisations from the island.

The exhibition was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel and the AWT's stall included a streaming of our Puffin-Cam, a sea glass jewellery making station and a 'Name the Puffin Sculpture' (created by Alex using beach clean litter!).



New Staff Members!



FOR THOSE living on Alderney, you may have already noticed a few new faces around the island wearing our Trust uniform and we'd like to say a big welcome to Tara, Abbie, Chloe and Matt! With four new staff members, our organisation is starting to expand, but what exactly will their roles be within the Trust?



Chloe Blasdale, our new **Conservation Officer**, gained her Level 2 City & Guilds Diploma in Work-Based Environmental Conservation when working at the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. She then developed skills in terrestrial habitat management with Ambios Limited, based in Devon. Now, Chloe can be found helping to maintain the reserves across Alderney and taking care of the Trust's Conservation Grazing Herd, amongst other things.

Matt Lewis has recently returned from Vienna, having worked for the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) as a researcher for the past two years. Matt earned his Masters in conservation in science from Cambridge University having studied the conservation of the Small Heath butterfly. As **Ecologist** for the AWT, Matt will be helping to run the ecological surveys and carrying on last year's cordon-work of protecting Alderney's population of Ringed Plovers.



Dr. Tara Cox, originally from our neighboring island of Jersey, is the new **Lead Ecologist** and completed her PhD at the University of Leeds studying ecology and animal behaviour, specifically, in the small songbird: Seychelle's Warbler. As Senior Ecologist, Tara will be overseeing and delivering on the Trust's ecological monitoring programme.

Finally, we have Abigail de Castella, who will be taking on the new role of **Team Wilder Community Support**; a position created by The Wildlife Trusts to help lead the way in their new approach to working with our communities. Previously, Abbie worked in Training & Development for the NHS and has outdoor qualifications in Nature Therapy alongside being a Lowland Walking Leader. If there is something you would like to see developed, please get in contact.





BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS | ALEX PURDIE

Top Sightings



Bottlenose Dolphins

During a week in mid-March, two pods of Bottlenose Dolphins were seen a handful of times feeding in the waters around Braye, including on Mother's Day! They were seen by the Trust's staff members as well as many members of the public and became quite the talk of the town!

In Alderney, Bottlenose dolphins are the most common of these enigmatic species to be seen; however, it was unusual to see them so close in the bay. They are social animals and can form pods of up to fifteen individuals.

Green-veined White Butterfly

In March, on two consecutive days a Green-veined White butterfly was seen basking on the same patch of Three-cornered Leek. While, this species isn't particularly rare, in flight it can be difficult to differentiate between other white butterflies. This is especially true for the Small White which is a similar size; however, the Green-veined has thick grey-green stripes running on the underside of its wings.

We cannot rule out the possibility that these were two different individuals clearly enjoying the spring sun.



GREEN-VEINED WHITE BUTTERFLY | ROWIE BURCHAM



GREEN ORMER | CHRIS CAUVAIN

A Tagged Green Ormer

Since 2018, the Trust has monitored Green Ormer populations through the tagging of individuals with unique ID numbers. In the Channel Islands, this species is a delicacy and to protect them from overfishing, ormering is restricted to certain times of the year.

For the first time, a tagged Ormer was discovered in Clonque Bay in January which had been tagged there three years prior!

Collared Earthstar

In January, this unusual looking fungi, known as the Collared Earthstar, was spotted near the Zig-Zag. This is one of the larger and more widespread species of the Earthstar family, and they can be found among leaf-litter on the floor.

Its presence, believed by the Native American Black-foot Confederacy, meant that a supernatural event had occurred!



COLLARED EARTHSTAR | ALEX PURDIE



SNOW BUNTING | ALEX PURDIE

Snow Bunting

This male Snow Bunting was seen on the last day of February near the Zig-Zag. This adorable bird species is a rare visitor to Alderney with less than a handful seen every year.

They breed in the arctic, including Scandinavia, Greenland and Canada, and have a dense coat and layer of insulating fat protecting them from the cold. Despite this they travel south in the winter.

Rising from the Ashes; A Future Centre for Sustainability on Alderney



Seventeen Years Ago...

The fledgling Alderney Wildlife Trust made a massive leap by taking on the lease of Essex Farm. At this time the AWT was only four years old, and the costs of the lease made up nearly a third of the AWT's operating costs. The site came with 5 acres of land, a house converted from what we call the Barn, another 300m² of vehicle buildings, milking stalls, manure heaps and defunct stables.

The reason the AWT took this risk was because it was in desperate need. In 2005 it had founded

its internship programme and had to find accommodation for the graduates it was attracting to work on Alderney and, even then, it was obvious that this programme would grow. Today the farm is hosting another four long term residents to add to the 50 interns who have previously stayed there.

There was also a growing group of conservation volunteers who not only had equipment they needed to store but who also wanted to start fabricating signs, bird boxes, benches and all the other paraphernalia needed for the fledgling nature reserves. The barn, for all its original clutter of cattle stalls left over from its previous role as a main barn for the Le Cocq family farm, provided a vitally useful space.

VIEW OF LONGIS BAY | ROWIE BURCHAM



WILDLIFE FAYRE 2009 | AWT VOLUNTEER

The Farm offered a combination of accommodation, storage, workshops and grounds. Thanks to the generosity of the landlords, the Kay-Mouat family, the AWT found itself able to secure and cover the rent, though it's worth noting in those early days volunteers who resided at the site ended up having to pay their own rent to make this possible!

A Site Fit for Purpose?

Like almost every part of Alderney, Essex Farm could not escape the darker history of World War Two, as the main Barn was constructed as a vehicle storage depot for the occupying forces. Post war the buildings had been updated somewhat and had for many years become one of Alderney's few working farms and continued in that role until 1999 when it was part of the island's main dairy as well as being used for poultry.

By the time the AWT took the site on, the buildings needed significant work and this was undertaken with thanks to the physical support of the AWT's volunteers. Financially the support of Veronica and Stephen Hanbury and David and Christine Horton enabled the refurbishment of a section of the farmhouse to create a dormitory room and laboratory area, and many other people helped sponsor everything from retiling bathrooms to providing new carpets.



AWT STAFF

Over the last 15 years

this refurbishment has proven vital support for the study of the island's ecology and history as without the Farm the AWT could not deliver the programme of more than 60 annual surveys which makes up the Ecological Evidence Base.

17 Years of Giving

Whilst the buildings and grounds might be far from what we envision in the future, Essex Farm has become a centre of island activities. The AWT has hosted dozens of major events ranging from weddings to political gatherings as well as inter island political and research meetings. Hundreds of students from DoE groups to academic researchers have stayed at the site; some as full-time residents, with others coming as part of academic research groups or simply stopping and pitching a tent (for free) in order to complete their DoE Award.

Many residents know the Farm from the Alderney Fayres which first started on the site in 2009. The Fayres were set up so that charities, businesses and individuals could come together for a day to showcase what they do, raise money and just have a good time. With the first Fayre being attended by an estimated 1,000 plus people, the event has attracted many thousands of people to the Longis area over the years and has become a main stay of the island's diary.



AWT STAFF



The AWT also uses the Farm as a centre of its walks and tours programme, hosting everything from dawn chorus events to demonstrations and training days for volunteers. The main barn workshop enables equipment to be repaired, trees stored prior to planting whilst acting as a centre point for the Alderney Grazing Animals Project. This herd of Guernsey Aberdeen Angus Cross helps us care for the Longis Nature Reserves grasslands. Given the age of much of the AWT's equipment, having somewhere to work on repairs out of the rain is vital!

A Sustainable Future

Alderney has many challenges to face over the coming decades. Whilst we aren't facing the development and over population threats faced in the larger Channel Islands, Alderney is, and will, see the impacts of climate change, invasive species, increasing costs of importing

produce and fossil fuels. Given Alderney's small size these threats are likely to be even more keenly felt here than anywhere else on earth.

With thanks to all of the continued support, we intend to extend the life of Essex Farm by harnessing this hub for many years to come. Therefore we are focused on creating a more sustainable and community orientated site and it is hoped we can soon start a public consultation on what this might look like.

2023 is set to be a thrilling year for the AWT and we are hoping that Essex Farm can showcase how Alderney has recovered from the ashes of the Second World War and become a truly unique and wild island.

By Roland Gauvain, CEO



Wildlife Week 2023!

May 27th - June 4th



Join us this May & June as we celebrate our annual Wildlife Week! With the theme of **Nature's Classroom**, there really is something for everyone as we head outside to immerse ourselves in Alderney's wonderful wildlife!

Amongst an array of events, we'll be opening our **moth trap over breakfast**, **foraging along the island's shores** and enjoying **watching the stars and moon** with a hot drink. For your diary, the annual **Members Meeting** will take place on Tuesday the 30th at 6:00 PM at our Wildlife Information Centre. Virtual attendance will also be available!



Keep an eye-out for our full programme announcement!

Species Spotlight Rustyback Fern

Rustyback (*Asplenium ceterach*) is a pretty little native fern. It is quite distinctive with dark green leaves encrusted beneath by rusty scales, hence it is well-named. It is found in limestone rocks, rock crevices and on Alderney on old lime-mortared stone walls around St Anne.

Drought resistant, it will curl its fronds inwards so that only the brownish surface is visible but will revive when rehydrated by rain. Originally a species of national concern, it has been downgraded on the most recent Red Data List, but in the Bailiwick it is still one of our rarer ferns.



RUSTYBACK FERN | LINDSAY PYNE



RUSTYBACK FERN | LINDSAY PYNE

The Battle for Alderney's Rockpools

In the miniature world of Alderney's rockpools, the struggle to survive is just as intense as the Serengeti or arctic tundra. A host of species, all equipped with their own unique set of survival skills, battle against violent storms, baking sun, and each other.

There are few better examples of this than our crabs. A host of these armour-plated crustaceans exist in a fine balance. Each species has evolved to fill a specific niche (the role an organism plays in an ecosystem), for example, by feeding on different prey or living in different habitats.



LONGIS BAY | ROWIE BURCHAM

Velvet Swimming Crab

The striking Velvet Swimming crab is by far the fastest of our crab species. They get their name from the velvety texture of their shell and are striking, with red eyes and bright blue claws. They are great sightings, but watch out, they are aggressive and quick to pinch an unwary rock-pooler!

- **HABITAT:** Stony sheltered shores
- **IDENTIFYING FEATURES:** Flat back legs, up to ten narrow 'teeth' between their eyes, fast movement
- **HIGH MOBILITY:** They use their paddle-like fifth peropods (back legs) to swim and can even catch swimming prey like prawns and small fish.



VELVET SWIMMING CRAB | DR. MEL BROADHURST-ALLEN



CHANCRE CRAB | ALEX PURDIE

Chancre Crab

Chancre AKA Edible Crabs are heavyweights with tough shells and very powerful crushing claws that make short work of molluscs and even other crabs! Young Chancre live in the intertidal zone before moving into deeper water where the adults can reach weights of 3 kg! Recent disease outbreaks and competition from other species may be impacting Chancre.

- **LIFESPAN:** Chancre can take ten years to reach adulthood, and can live to an impressive 50 years.
- **DEPTH RANGE:** Down to over 100 m with some recorded at depths over 500 m
- **IDENTIFICATION:** Rounded shell with "piecrust" edge, orange to red colour

Furrowed Crab

Warming sea temperatures have allowed these new arrivals to become abundant in Alderney's rockpools. It is very well-armed with huge crushing pincers – sometimes longer than their shells are wide! AWT's crab surveys are aimed at understanding how their arrival may shift the balance of power in Alderney's rockpools.

- **COLOURATION:** Furrowed crabs can vary from bright orange to iridescent purple, and their close relatives, Risso's Crabs' have beautiful patterned shells
- **ADUNDANCE:** In 2022 Furrowed Crab were the most abundant of all crabs, and so far in 2023's surveys over 95% have been this species!
- **REPRODUCTION:** Female Furrowed crabs can be found with thousands of eggs when just 2 cm in diameter!



FURROWED CRAB | ALEX PURDIE

Green Shore Crab

Green shore crabs are highly adaptable and inhabit a wide range of habitats. They can be found high up on the shore and because of this are one of the first crabs many people will encounter. Despite their name, they can be red in colour, and young green shore crabs can have Rorschach-esk patterns!

- **DIET:** A wide range of food from seaweed to snails, and even other crabs! They use a cutting and a crushing pincer (chelipad) to deal with a range of prey.
- **IDENTIFICATION:** Five teeth either side of their eyes, and three blunt teeth in between their eyes.
- **AN INVASIVE ABROAD:** They are native to Western Europe but are highly invasive in the USA, Australia, Madagascar and elsewhere!

By Alex Purdie, Ramsar Officer
[@AlexPurdie6](https://twitter.com/AlexPurdie6)

Our WILDLIVES



“I am especially proud of the progress made with the plovers and how the community came together to provide these iconic birds with a safe space in the last two years.”

VIEW OF LES ETACS | AWT STAFF

Daniel Whitelegg



After an incredible two years with the AWT working as the Ecologist, it has come for me to say ‘Tenki et addi’ (in my best Alderney Patois)! Every day has genuinely been

so different and full of surprises that it is hard to pick out the many highlights of the role. One of the things I will always be grateful for and remember is the warmth and friendly manner in which the island works by.

Coming into the role of focusing on the development of the Alderney Biodiversity Centre (ABC) and studying the breeding of Ringed Plovers, I soon discovered that there was a chance to expand into other areas of the AWT’s work. Throughout the time, I also took up managing surveys for bats, moths, breeding birds and hedgehogs.

One of the most important aspects of this work was working with islanders to improve local knowledge about these species and collecting better data that could be used for conservation. In particular, the Bailiwick Bat Survey and our Moth Mornings down at Essex Farm provided fantastic results with many



RING OUZEL | DANIEL WHITELEGG

volunteers getting enthused about the night time critters. Both of these are ongoing projects where you can still get involved and I will be keeping a keen ear to the ground about any exciting developments.

Seeing a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins

two days in a row after emerging from my self-isolation chrysalis and finding the first Corncrake on Alderney since 1978 a few days afterwards really cemented how remarkable the island was for wildlife. As a birder from birth, one of the many benefits of the job was being outside and seeing some real avian delights, like White Stork and Honey Buzzard circling together over St Anne or waking up to the fluty song of a Golden Oriole outside my window.

In the summer and autumn, I was often able to share these moments with visitors on wildlife tours, creating for them many long-lasting moments in the memory of the island’s natural environment. Watching a group of Pied Flycatchers feeding in a misty Bonne Terre valley by one of the oldest buildings in the Channel Islands was definitely a special moment, where human and natural heritage met in a moment in time.

Alderney is a place where there is enormous potential for real and long-lasting conservation and protection of the environment. Amongst the looming backdrop of a widespread nature and climate crisis, action taken now can safeguard habitats that will protect the island against detrimental future effects. This is already

being done with securing the protection of Ringed Plovers and Puffins, work I have been involved with in my position. I am especially proud of the progress made with the plovers and how the community came together to provide these iconic birds with a safe space in the last two years.

The roles such as mine that the AWT provides

are up there with some of the best for young professionals in the wildlife sector and have set me up well for full-time employment with the RSPB working with beach nesting birds.



RINGED PLOVER EGGS | DANIEL WHITELEGG

I am particularly grateful to David Wedd, Justin Hart and Mel Broadhurst-Al-len who taught me so much about biodiversity monitoring. I will miss the nature and people of Alderney greatly, but am also excited to hear about the new projects and research that will be taking place over the coming year.

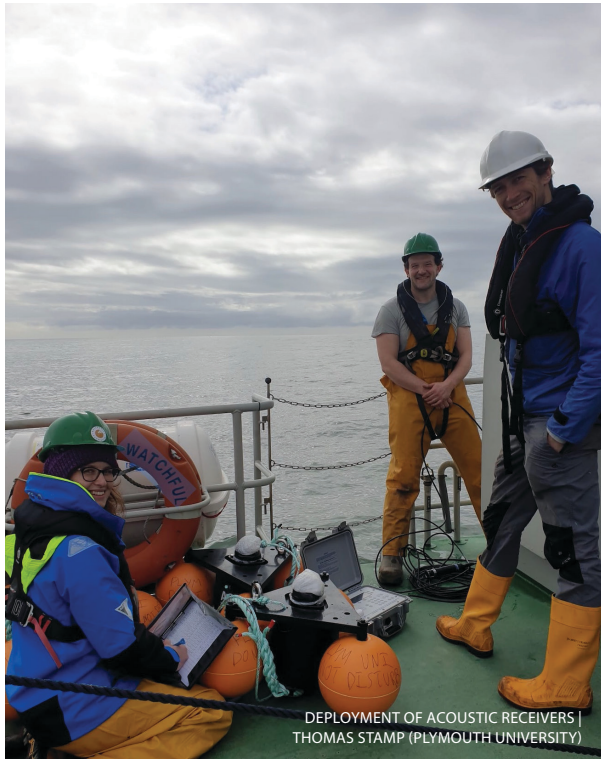
By Daniel Whitelegg, Ecologist

[@whiteleggdan](https://twitter.com/whiteleggdan)



LITTLE STINT | DANIEL WHITELEGG

DANIEL AND JUSTIN | ALEX PURDIE



DEPLOYMENT OF ACOUSTIC RECEIVERS | THOMAS STAMP (PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY)

Evolving Innovative Ecological Technology: Introducing the FishIntel Project

Understanding species movements in the marine environment is a key goal for conservationists, scientists, government bodies and non-government organisations, including the Alderney Wildlife Trust. Quantitative information on species movements can help manage long-term issues, such as the impact of climate change upon marine populations and, also support ecosystem-based fisheries management techniques.

Developing equipment that can accurately record underwater and collate usable, appropriate ecological information, such as species presence, abundance, behaviour and movement patterns is a technological feat.

Such technology often involves a range of expertise and collaboration between engineers, mariners, academics and biologists.



CRAWFISH | THOMAS STAMP (PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY)



DEPLOYMENT OF ACOUSTIC RECEIVERS | THOMAS STAMP (PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY)

“These receivers, in combination with others deployed across Europe and UK waters, will be able to accurately map marine species movements on a wider geographical scale in the near future.”

Since the 1970’s, a variety of equipment has been developed to try to record species underwater, including; waterproof cameras, acoustic recorders, tags (internally and externally attached to individuals) and baited video systems.

Recent technological innovations include work developed for the FishIntel Project (coordinated by the University of Plymouth), which aims to record marine species movements and identify how they utilise habitats across European, UK and Channel Island waters. Within the Channel Islands, this project currently comprises of eight acoustic receivers deployed across the island’s territorial waters, with two deployed within Alderney’s waters which are sponsored by the States of Alderney and the AWT. The receivers have been designed to ‘listen out’ for tagged

fish and shellfish species, and signature whistles by passing cetaceans, such as visiting Bottlenose Dolphins. These receivers, in combination with others deployed across Europe and UK waters, will be able to accurately map marine species movements on a wider geographical scale in the near future. For example, the project is currently monitoring the movements of new, highly migratory species, such as the Blue Fin Tuna. Information regarding this priority species within Channel Islands waters is extremely poor, but with several individuals now tagged through the FishIntel Project, their recorded movements and migration patterns will help enhance our current knowledge base of Alderney’s marine environment.

By Dr. Mel Broadhurst-Allen, Living Seas Coordinator



BLACK BREAM | THOMAS STAMP (PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY)



DEPLOYMENT OF ACOUSTIC RECEIVERS | THOMAS STAMP (PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY)

Rewilding Alderney's Lost Woodland



TREE PLANTING | ROWIE BURCHAM



HOLLY BLUE | PHILIP PRECEY

You may remember that, in honour of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee last year, the Alderney Wildlife Trust, supported by the States of Alderney, was able to provide every resident of our wonderful island with a free tree! There was a choice of sixteen native species, including English Oak (the most popular), Holly, Silver Birch and Field Maple which could be planted at home or in the Alderney Community Woodland (ACW).

The ACW was established in 2009 and now covers 17 hectares of land which is managed by the AWT. Since its creation, our volunteers have worked hard to keep footpaths cleared, maintain the Woodland Bunker, conduct wildlife surveys and (last but not least) plant trees! Trees have numerous benefits to the environment and our island, notably they help increase biodiversity and tackling climate change - but how do they do this?

CARBON STORAGE

Planting trees is one of the best tools for capturing carbon dioxide! During photosynthesis, trees will remove carbon from the atmosphere and (with water) use it to make glucose, helping it to grow. The amount of carbon a woodland can capture depends on the tree species within it as some are more efficient than others, such as:

- Hazel and Blackthorn which are **quick to grow and mature**, meaning it doesn't take as long for them to start capturing carbon compared to other species.
- Oak and Beech (also known as the King and Queen of the trees) are **long-living**, so they can capture and hold carbon for hundreds of years!
- **Bigger trees with large leaves** require more photosynthesis to occur for them to grow, and therefore more carbon to be captured.



ROWIE BURCHAM



ROWIE BURCHAM

BEING A FOOD SOURCE

Once mature, Holly, Rowan and Guelder Rose will bear fruit, attracting **Song Thrush**, **Redwing** and **Greenfinch** among others. Silver and Downy Birch will provide seeds for **Siskins** and **Goldfinches** to enjoy. Insects will benefit from these food sources as well! **Holly Blue** butterfly caterpillars will eat the leaves of (you've guessed it) the Holly tree. Numerous moth caterpillars will feed on the foliage from Hawthorns and Small-Leaved Limes, including the **Light Emerald** and **Small Eggar**. Additionally, flowering trees will provide sources of pollen and nectar. The Blackthorn flowers earlier in the spring than other species, acting as a reprieve to **pollinators** after the winter.

BLACKTHORN | PATRICK JEFFERIES



GOLDFINCH | AWT STAFF

PROVIDING NESTING SITES & SHELTER

The woodland environment makes suitable habitats for a variety of wildlife. **Bird species** may use cavities within Common Beech and English Oak to safely build nests and care for their young. Similarly, Hawthorn and Holly create dense foliage which can also be an ideal nesting site. Hawthorn can also support over **300 species of insect** and amazingly a single English Oak can support **2,000 species** of wildlife. The prickly **hedgehog** can use dry leaves and twigs provided by trees as materials for a cosy home during hibernation.



ROWIE BURCHAM



ROWIE BURCHAM

DEADWOOD HABITAT

While a dead or dying tree or stump may not look healthy, they are actually fundamental in ensuring a thriving and biodiverse environment. Deadwood creates an abundance of microhabitats which become the perfect location for numerous **highly diverse wildlife and fungi**. Invertebrates (such as **wood-boring beetles** found on the Small-leaved Lime) and fungi, find their home within dead/dying wood and help to break it down. This process returns the tree's nutrients to the earth, thus promoting further growth in the surrounding flora. The presence of invertebrates will also attract **insectivorous bird species**, some of which (along with a few **bat species**) will use the cavities in the deadwood to build nests.

By Rowie Burcham, Outreach Officer



SONG THRUSH | DANIEL WHITELEGG

Watch

The beginning of this year was not only the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, but also the Big Schools' Birdwatch! We took this as inspiration and, with the local playgroup, carried out bird-based activities in the lead up to completing a bird-watch with the children.

To begin with, in order to attract species to the garden, we created bird feeders. Using pine cones, we added lard and a selection of nuts, corn and seed with a bit of string ready to hang up. The children loved mixing the ingredients together and eagerly waited for their turn. However, the next step got a bit messy...Taking handfuls of the mixture, we pushed it in between the gaps in the pine cones, spreading the feed about. Each child got to take their feeder home, but we made a few extra to hang up in the playgroup's garden for the birds to use.

The following week, we wrapped ourselves up in coats and scarves and headed outside to look for garden birds. We sat quietly and at first it didn't seem like many birds would appear, but before long one of the

children let out a small gasp and pointed in the air. It was a Great Tit...and once one appeared, we suddenly saw Blue Tits and Chaffinches as well.

Next, we took an egg and nest-based approach to the activities and painted some wooden eggs in a rainbow of bright blues, yellows, greens and reds. During this activity, we discussed the differences between animals which lay eggs and those which give birth to live young. The children proudly knew that rabbits and cows don't lay eggs while chickens and dinosaurs do!

Finally, using clothing pegs as beaks, we showed the children how adult birds build nests to protect their eggs. With a large pile of twigs, sticks and shredded paper, the children loved trying to pick sections up and carry them just using the pegs. This interactive activity was so popular that a number of the children were quick to help tidy up any bits that had fallen on the floor with their 'beaks'.

By Rowie Burcham, Outreach Officer



Visiting a UK Reserve

"I always loved to see the carpet of bluebells in the woods in the spring. It is quite a spectacle!"

Burbage Common and Woods (located in Leicestershire) is somewhere I visited as a youngster where my family and I would walk my grandma's multitude of dogs. It is, in fact, a very popular local dog walking spot for the dog owners and walkers of Hinckley, Earl Shilton and the surrounding areas.

One memory from my early childhood was of my grandma's dogs jumping into and swimming in the pond right where there was a sign saying, 'Please do not let your dogs swim in the water'. As it is a pond used for children's pond dipping activities and ID/surveying activities. I always loved to see the carpet of bluebells in the woods in the spring. It is quite a spectacle!

There are many paths and routes walkers can take within the common and adjacent woods, as well as having

paths which connect with the wider urban localities of Barwell, Elmesthorpe, Hinckley, Burbage and Earl Shilton. Personally, my family and myself prefer to remain on rural routes, to totally get away from urban hustle and bustle, and fully immerse ourselves in the sights and sounds of nature – birdsong, wood anemone, ancient oak, elder and elm. Not to mention the small herd of cattle on the small holding through which one of the public footpaths crosses.

I am glad that I rediscovered this area just on my doorstep (so to speak) in the weeks leading up to my departure from Leicestershire to join the Trust here in Alderney, as it gave me the opportunity to share this site with you all.

By Chloe Blasdale, Conservation Officer

Thank you

Your support is vital for protecting Alderney's wildlife
alderneywildlife.org/donations



FRONT COVER: ELYSIA VIRIDIS (SAP-SUCKING SLUG) | ALEX PURDIE
BACK COVER: 7-SPOT LADYBIRD | LOU COLLINGS

Love Alderney • Love Wildlife

An Alderney Charity (Guernsey Charities Register No. CH261)

Tel: 01481 822 935

The 
Wildlife
Trusts

