



Alderney Wildlife

MARINE OUTREACH: AN EXCUSE FOR SEASHORE SHENANIGANS

Alderney's marine world is one of its
treasures...discover how we've brought the
public closer to it!

AVIAN INFLUENZA: A WILDLIFE DISASTER

Learn about this grave disease which has hit
the island's bird populations significantly



Alderney
Wildlife Trust

**Summer/Autumn 2022 | People
and Wildlife**

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

Welcome

Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn



As the sunnier, warmer days shift into cooler breezes with falling leaves, it gives us a chance to take a deep breath and reflect on the past few months we've had here at the Trust.

We've had many celebrations, including Wildlife Weekend, National Marine Week and even hosted this year's Inter-Island Environment Meeting! On top of this, the Trust have been working hard with our ecological surveys to keep up with the changing and endlessly fascinating wildlife around us. Excitingly, we have observed new species in Alderney and over recent months have recorded the first Bedstraw hawk-moth, Skeleton Shrimp and Peanut Worm!

We are now in, as Keats wrote: 'the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness', and with Alderney's wildlife shifting around us, it's important to take in those small moments of appreciation. Why not take a lovely autumnal walk or eat your lunch outside? The warm and vibrant reds, oranges and yellows of the season are believed to bring about positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and cheerfulness! Or even, now the year is slowing down, take the opportunity to expand your horizons and learn a new skill, such as studying mushroom identification (a challenge I have set for myself).

Humans and wildlife are incredibly interlinked and we benefit so much from the natural world around us. In this issue, we are going to bring your attention to the

COMMON DOLPHIN | ALEX PURDIE



ways in which our Trust has brought the two together, as well as, how you can get closer to nature. This includes joining our Conservation Volunteers and helping out with the wonderful work they do or getting involved with rewarding and educational citizen science projects.

Don't forget: as the weather gets colder, there is still plenty of wildlife around us - we just have to keep our eyes open!

Rowie Burcham
Outreach Officer



GET OUTSIDE | ROWIE BURCHAM



CONSERVATION GRAZING HERD | ROWIE BURCHAM



MARINE TANK SESSIONS | ROWIE BURCHAM



Contents

4 Manager's Report

6 Wild News

We're never sat twiddling our thumbs here at the AWT! Read about some of the events that have kept us on our toes

8 Top Sightings

From Bedstraw Hawk-moths to Trumpet Anenomes and even a Common Dolphin! Discover our Top Sightings of the season here.

10 Species Spotlight

Read all about our prickly marine friend the Spiny Starfish here.

11 #TeamWilder: A Wilder Vision

What is #TeamWilder? And what does it mean for Alderney?

12 Justin's Wild Life

Our Avian Ecologist, Justin, has left the Trust after five amazing years. Farewell Justin!

14 Marine Outreach: An Excuse for Seashore Shenanigans

Living Seas Coordinator, Dr. Mel, has made this summer a fun and educational one for residents of the island and visitors too!

16 Landmark Year for Alderney's Moths

Is that a butterfly that flies in the dark? No it's one of over 600 species of moth on Alderney. Discover about these fascinating creatures here.

18 Conservation Volunteers

Find out the many ways our Conservation Volunteers help the Trust and how you can get involved.

20 Avian Influenza

Unfortunately, this summer Avian Influenza hit Alderney. Our staff have been working tirelessly to reduce the impact of this disease and assess the repercussions it has had on our bird colonies.

22 WATCH

24 Visit a UK Reserve

Outreach Officer, Rowie, visited Calke Abbey in Derbyshire and ran into some rather furry and large friends!

Manager's Report

“Looking back, I can see that 2022 has offered some wonderful high points!”

2022 was the 20th anniversary year of the Alderney Wildlife Trust. 20 years of campaigning for Alderney's Wildlife, striving to secure the island's rich biodiversity against the increasing pressures and the growing losses we are recording. 20 years of working with government, businesses and individuals to help build a sustainable Alderney; developing areas activities such as wildlife tourism, creating ways in which we can establish the 'health' of our environment, from the wide range of surveys (more than 40 currently) to new mechanisms such as the founding of the Alderney Bird Observatory and establishing the Alderney Biodiversity Centre.



FEMALE BLACK REDSTART | DANIEL WHITELEGG

The AWT was founded around these core aims and in this anniversary year we anticipate that our staff and volunteers will have undertaken more than 18,000 hours of work towards these goals.

Yet 2022 was also the year of the greatest recorded disaster in wild bird populations.

Bird flu ripped through Alderney's Gannet colonies, with estimates of as many as 5000 or more adult birds dying from the disease in 2022. This devastating event was set against the States of Alderney committing for the first time to create a Biodiversity Strategy for its staff and estate. This major move has received significant support but has also been seen by certain sections of the community as a threat to their unalienable rights and it is still far from certain as to whether Alderney will see even this very basic commitment adopted by the government.

Looking back, I can see that 2022 has offered some wonderful high points. Welcoming just a

few of the more than 90 intern staff members back to the island, working with the Tall Ships Trust to deliver marine experiences under sail to Alderney's children and hosting the Inter Island Environment Meeting for the 6th time with its 90 or so delegates, all stand out. Also, seeing the States of Alderney make the first solid commitments to act on renewable energy and carbon reduction is another long-awaited and hopefully positive landmark.

Yet it is perhaps more important to us that 2022 is a benchmark for looking forwards! Given the huge pressures our island and its wildlife face:

It is vitally important that we look forwards to the next 20 years and what the AWT and its members can do to ensure that we still have a beautiful island, rich in wildlife, for the generation of islanders to come.

By Roland Gauvain, CEO



Alderney Wildlife | Summer/Autumn 2022

WILD NEWS

All the latest news from Alderney Wildlife Trust



Inter-Island Environment Meeting

THIS OCTOBER, Alderney excitingly hosted the annual Inter-Island Environment Meeting (IIEM)! His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, Lt. Gen Richard Cripwell, opened the event which was the 6th time that it has taken place here. It saw some sixty delegates visiting our wonderful island with more joining online. The IIEM was hosted by the States of Alderney and AWT, with support from KPMG in the Crown Dependencies and Charles Asprey. It was attended by

delegates from across the Channel Islands, as well as the Isle of Wight, Isle of Man and the central Wildlife Trusts' team. The theme of this year's IIEM was 'Sharing Knowledge and Developing Best Practice' with talks and workshops including topics such as:

- Ways towards sustainability
- Nature-based solutions
- Research collaboration

We look forward to next year's IIEM, which will be held in Sark!



Beach Borrow Boxes

THIS SUMMER, we set up two Beach Borrow Boxes, filled with beach toys and games! The aim of these boxes is to reduce plastic waste on the island and help families save money. Located on Braye Beach and Longis

Bay, it was inspiring to see the public not only use the boxes, but also add to them – increasing the fun for children! The boxes have now been stored for winter, but will be back in spring 2023.

Wildlife Weekend

AT THE end of August, we held our annual Wildlife Weekend! Jam-packed with fun and educational activities, there was something for everyone. From Rockpooling at Longis Bay to a Creatures of the Night walk and a Magnificent Moth Trap Opening – both residents of the island and holidaymakers participated in and embraced the events.

Back by popular demand was our Foraging on Land and Sea walk. We held foraging walks during this year's Wildlife Week and the feedback was so positive that it was automatically put forward for the celebratory weekend. Once again, it was a huge success with participants

thoroughly enjoying the food that was cooked up for them out of the wild ingredients that they had collected.

If you missed this year's Wildlife Weekend, don't worry – it'll be back next summer with more fantastic activities for you to join in with!



Autumn Swish Party

THIS AUTUMN, we held a Swish Party at the Georgian House Hotel! 'Swish' is the term used for a clothes swapping party. With the fashion industry being the second-most polluting in the world, events like Swish Parties are vital to help show that there is such a thing as 'Sustainable Fashion'. It also helps everyone save a few pennies too. Once again, our Swish was a success and those attending left with their smiles big and hands full of new clothing items for themselves. Our staff also got a few gorgeous items as well! Keep an eye-out for future Swish Parties.



Jubilee Woodland



TO HONOUR the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, we have

worked with the States of Alderney to provide every resident of the island with a free tree. With this campaign, there will be 2,000 additional trees in the ground by spring 2023. We are now beginning the tree planting in the Community Woodland with the help of our volunteers. Residents are also able to plant their trees at home. We can happily say, this campaign received extremely positive feedback from Alderney's wonderful community and will have numerous benefits for the island's environment!



Top Sightings



Bedstraw Hawk-moth

This was amazingly a new species record for Alderney! Caught in a moth trap by our ecologist back in August, this species is uncommon in the UK, but resident in France. They are a member of the Hawk-moth family with a wingspan range of 60 – 80 mm. As caterpillars, they are olive green with distinctive bright yellow spots along the body.



BEDSTRAW HAWK-MOTH | DANIEL WHITELEGG



LITTLE GULL | ALEX PURDIE

Little Gull

In September, the largest flock of Little Gulls was recorded in Alderney's waters with eighteen spotted approximately 22 km off the North-west coast! Before that the largest recorded was seven. The species is Europe's smallest gull and they move through the English Channel in Autumn. They are distinguishable from other gulls not only by size, but also by their completely dark and glossy underwing.



LEACH'S SPIDER CRAB | ALEX PURDIE

Leach's Spider Crab

Another new record for Alderney! This time, this species of spider crab was found while our team were out collecting aquatic wildlife in Longis Bay for the Marine Tank Sessions we held in August. It can be identified by its triangular carapace and slender legs. A second was found a month later in September at Clonque Bay!

This individual (seen 24th of October) was the 4th record of the species for the island! The Crimson-Speckled moth comes from North Africa, however, since the end of October there has been a big upsurge across the south UK. This has been associated with consistent strong southerly winds, so we may be seeing a few more of this species around!

Crimson-Speckled Moth



CRIMSON SPECKLED MOTH | DANIEL WHITELEGG



COMMON DOLPHIN | ALEX PURDIE

Common Dolphin

While in Alderney we're used to being visited by Bottlenose dolphins, towards the end of August a pod of Common dolphins was spotted around five miles off the island's North-west coast. These creatures are especially social and can form 'superpods' made up of thousands of individuals. This pod of approximately six individuals followed the boat for five minutes.



TRUMPET ANEMONE | GEORGE MCLELLAN

Trumpet Anemone

This species of anemone can be found in cold waters around the UK, the Atlantic coast of Europe and also up into the Mediterranean. One individual can have between 48 to 96 tentacles! This autumn, a number of Trumpet Anemones were spotted by divers in Maggie's Bay and this photo was taken by one of our Inter-Island Environment Meeting delegates.

Species Spotlight:

SPINY STARFISH

(*Marthasterias glacialis*)



This year's warm and sunny weather allowed us to head down to Alderney's coastline more frequently, either to complete Living Seas surveys or run marine based public events, such as rock-pooling sessions.

During our time exploring Alderney's shores, we surprisingly came across the Spiny Starfish, a species which we had not stumbled upon for a couple of years.

Spiny Starfish are large starfish, known to grow to 30 cm long, with some actually recorded up to 70 cm long. They show variable colours, ranging from white or blue to purple colouration. As their name suggests, this starfish species is covered in spines, with three rows of spines present along each of their narrow arms (five arms in total). These spines are used for protection but also to collect food. As such, it is a voracious, opportunistic feeder,

preying on live and dead molluscs, crustaceans and fish.

Spiny starfish are found in a variety of marine environments, from intertidal sheltered muddy shores to exposed rocky reefs found 180 m deep. This species' distributional range occurs from the Mediterranean to Norway, including the Channel Islands and Southern parts of the UK. Despite its common occurrence elsewhere, we were still excited to record its rare presence here this summer.

By Dr. Mel Broadhurst-Allen,
Living Seas Coordinator

LONGIS BAY | ROWIE BURCHAM



What is #TeamWilder?

Firstly (and most importantly), TeamWilder is not a project, but rather an ethos and way of working that the Wildlife Trusts are committed to moving towards.

We want to help empower individuals in the community to rise up and take pride of the area they live in.

Enter Community Organising: a process aiming at bringing people together in order to make positive changes to the environments they live in. Through TeamWilder, staff members across the 46 Wildlife Trusts (including myself) are currently undergoing a National Award in this practice. From the first session it has changed the way I look at community engagement and outreach, especially the way in which we listen to and support one another.

Alderney Wildlife | Summer/Autumn 2022



Did you know that spending just **two hours a week in nature** is associated with good physical and mental health? Access to nature can act as preventative treatment against poor mental wellbeing. The Wildlife Trusts' ambition is to get every one in four people to stand up and take action for nature and by doing so we are also helping one another as well.

What does this mean for Alderney?

It doesn't matter if you can't recall the Latin names of every butterfly species on the island, or even whether you consider yourself a wildlife lover at all; we are all part of the same community and we want to know what your concerns are about our island. How would you like the community to look in the future? Who else might be interested in helping?

Positive change can start with one person and we are here to listen to you!

By Rowie Burcham,
Outreach Officer

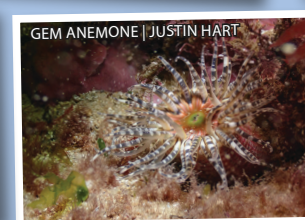
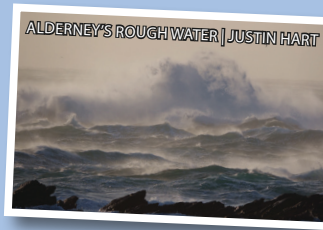


Our WILDLIVES

Farewell Justin Hart

Justin joined the Alderney Wildlife Trust as a volunteer in 2017, primarily to take on the role of Assistant Bird Warden for the recently founded Alderney Bird Observatory, but he also brought a wealth of experience in marine and seabird surveying!

Justin's Gallery



After the Bird Observatory separated from the AWT in 2019, Justin remained with the Trust carrying out terrestrial bird monitoring, notably of the Barn Swallow and Water Rail, as well as contributing hugely to the AWT's Living Seas Programme and seabird monitoring works, particularly for the island's Ramsar Site. He enhanced our knowledge of the island's Grey Seal population, including helping identify specific individuals for our Grey Seal photographic identification catalogue.

Justin had for many years had a real interest in diving and he began increasing Alderney's previously extremely limited records of subtidal marine species as a Seasearch amateur diver. In this role, he identified several locally important marine habitats, including Pink Sea Fan stands, and sea anemones and sea slugs not previously recorded within Alderney's territorial waters.

Our knowledge of the island's marine species and habitats would, in part, be completely unknown without Justin.

In addition, Justin helped crew AWT

boat Sula of Braye, not only for marine based surveys but also for public wildlife tours. Many years of speaking about wildlife meant Justin was very skilled in engaging people with the island's environment and helping to explain the issues affecting our wildlife.

In 2019 Justin took on work looking at the impacts of rodents on Alderney's seabirds. In 2021, he helped secure a one-year contract to carry out a feasibility assessment on the impact of rats on the breeding population of Guillemots and Razorbills. The benefits of this contract are still being felt, especially in our understanding of how both species are struggling to manage on Alderney.

Justin was always willing to drop everything and go that extra mile to help any member of the team when they needed extra support, be it moving cattle, clearing sites, setting up Ringed Plover cordons or supervising / supporting ecological surveys: we are indebted to him for all his help: he is already hugely missed.

From all of us at the AWT!

Marine Outreach; An Excuse for Seashore Shenanigans



ROCKPOOLING AT LONGIS BAY | ROWIE BURCHAM

Our AWT Living Seas Programme follows several core themes, including the theme: **People and Wildlife**. This theme aims to inspire and engage the public regarding Alderney's rich and diverse marine environment. For 2022, it includes running a variety of marine events over the course of the summer.

We kicked off our summer schedule by supporting the Wildlife Trusts' National Marine Week. For this, we created some stunning beach craft with the public, from decorating discovery boxes to building marine-themed sand-castles.

We also took the chance to explore Alderney's amazing rockpools with residents and holidaymakers alike. A hardy bunch even headed out into the blue with me, searching for Eel-grass habitat at Braye Bay with their snorkels.

Once the school holidays started, we began our weekly marine tank sessions at The Moorings Restaurant. This involved showcasing Alderney's marine species to the public. Cushion starfish and crab species were of particular interest to the public. Our personal favourites were showing Alderney's hidden gems, such as marine worms

"We created some stunning beach craft with the public, from decorating discovery boxes to building marine-themed sand-castles."

and Pipefish, as well as sampling the chef's tasty seaweed dishes from our foraging escapades.

Towards the end of the summer, we turned our attention to completing citizen science projects, which included Shoresearch sessions and Seasearch snorkels. The aim of these surveys is to encourage the public to help us record Alderney's marine habitats and species. We found a variety of species, from Green Ormers and Scallops to Squat Lobsters and Sea Scorpions.

To complement these shore-based activities, the AWT regularly provides boat and kayak tours for the



MARINE TANK SESSIONS | ROWIE BURCHAM

public to have an up-close experience with the island's seabird and Grey Seal populations. Some lucky few even managed to spot visiting Bottlenose Dolphins!

Our kit has now been washed down and packed away, but we are already looking forward to our marine outreach activities for the summer of '23!

By Dr. Mel Broadhurst-Allen,
Living Seas Coordinator



DR. MEL SHOWING A CHANCRE CRAB | ROWIE BURCHAM



MARINE THEMED SAND-CASTLES | ROWIE BURCHAM



ROCKPOOLING AT LONGIS BAY | ROWIE BURCHAM

PRIVET AND POPLAR HAWK-MOTHS | LOU COLLINGS



Landmark Year for Alderney's Moths

Alderney is a special location to observe moths, given its close proximity to the continent and the habitat diversity which supports so many species.

As far back as 1860, naturalists have been waking up to discover what their light traps had attracted overnight. This year we have managed to update the records for the island to include observations from the last 7 years and restart a comprehensive programme of moth research. Continuing the long-term dataset created by various recorders allows for the creation of abundance and distribution trends. These are vital for understanding how our moths are faring in relation to other places around the world.

We owe much to David Wedd, the previous county moth recorder, for his expertise and dedication to the role. During his tenure, the Alderney moth list was expanded from 250 species to over 600 and we now know a lot more about the emergence periods and local status of species. He still supports us with identification and keeps us on our

toes, as we look to continue his legacy as the new county recorder.

Being that bit closer to Europe than most other recording areas in the UK, we are fortunate to see some species that haven't been recorded there for many years or are rarely seen. When checking the identification guides, we often see 'widespread and frequent in the Channel Islands' as a comment on the distribution of species that are scarce in UK. Some like the Spanish Carpet haven't been seen in the UK since 1996 but are a regular presence in the traps later in the year. Others such as the Orache are scarce immigrants to the UK (formerly breeders) but are still common in the summer months in Alderney.



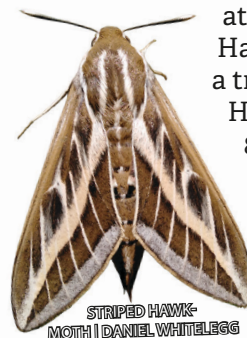
ANGLE SHADES | LOU COLLINGS



SHARK MOTHS | LOU COLLINGS

This year there have been some real highlights, including a new species for the island - the Bedstraw Hawk-moth!

Attracted by nerines (a type of lily) which give off a strong perfumy scent at night, a Bedstraw Hawkmoth was found in a trap, alongside a Striped Hawkmoth (only the 8th record itself). This moth doesn't breed in the UK and originates from southern Europe. There have also been record numbers of some species, with 137 Lunar Underwings recorded from St Anne in one night.



STRIPED HAWK-MOTH | DANIEL WHITELEGG

Opening the trap with members of the public has been a real joy this year and we have enjoyed teaching each other about the different species and what people see in their gardens. Some of the children in particular have amazed us with their knowledge and it is always fun passing a Convolvulus or Privet Hawkmoth around for them to see up close. Everyone has their own affectionate names for moths, like the 'Rhubarb & Custard Moth' (Rosy-striped Knot-horn) and enjoys a good laugh when learning some of the quirky names like Old Lady, Shark & Chocolate Tip.

We are always looking for new moth recorders for Alderney, so if you are interested in anything in this article, please contact ecologist@alderneywildlife.org.

By Daniel Whitelegg, Ecologist
@whiteleggdan

Make Your Own Beginner Moth Trap!

Nature craft

What you need:

- A white bed sheet
- A washing line
- Pegs
- A bright light (torch or lamp)
- Moth ID guide
- Patience

Steps:

- 1) One hour before sunset, hang the bed sheet up and secure with pegs
- 2) Turn off all lights
- 3) Shine the torch or lamp on the sheet
- 4) Wait patiently for the moths to appear
- 5) ID any moths and have fun!



OPENING THE MOTH TRAP | ROWIE BURCHAM



RED UNDERWING | LOU COLLINGS

Conservation Volunteering

Caring for **Nature**,
Caring for Your
Community

We could not compile a 'People and Wildlife' themed magazine without giving credit to the Conservation Volunteers. The work of this fantastic group has undoubtedly contributed a huge amount towards the Wildlife Trust's reserves and events. Twice a week, every week of the year, we meet to tackle a project of varying size and difficulty. These sessions are a testament to the truth that **'teamwork makes a dream work'**.

Whilst it is difficult to narrow down our favourite projects of the year, we have chosen the following examples to demonstrate how varied and fun-filled these sessions are.

Fancy trying some willow coppicing? Or becoming a cow herder for the day? Then contact conservation@alderneywildlife.org to join in! Everyone is welcome!

By Ellen Smith, Conservation Officer

Sour Fig Removal

Sour Fig is an invasive species which threatens our native flora and monopolises the landscape. We have held numerous removal sessions with our volunteers over the years and want to thank them for their continuous help in the Big Fig Fight!

Rebuilding Pooh Bridge

We collated our knowledge on woodwork to replace, rebuild and reinstall the bridge which connects Essex Farm to Longis Bay. Using recycled materials, we are pretty happy with the finished result!



Willow Coppicing

Having planted a handful of willow cuttings five years ago, we created a source of willow for a number of purposes. A group of volunteers headed to Bonne Terre to coppice the trees. The cuttings will be used for deadwood habitats and firewood.



Clearing Footpaths

The AWT is responsible for maintaining 20km of footpaths, many of which are difficult to reach with our tractor. And so, en masse with trimmers and hand tools, we keep these trails open for the people of Alderney to use and enjoy.



Planting Trees

Last winter seems like a long time ago, but it is worth looking back on the impressive feat accomplished by the volunteers and members of the community (including the playgroup) to plant several thousand trees in the Community Woodland. It is great to see the growth of trees planted in previous years!



Reedbed Clearance

A great chance to don the waders and pitch forks and head into the pond! A dedicated group of volunteers, old and new, have helped to maintain open water habitats for birds, dragonflies and damselflies.



Moving Our Herd

We maintain Longis Common using our herd of conservation grazing cows which needs regular moving to ensure the optimum grazing intensity. This requires a group of people to shoo and move them along. Again our volunteers have made this possible!



IMAGES | AWT STAFF

Bird Hide Maintenance

At the centre of Longis Nature Reserve within the reedbed is a bird hide which offers an insight into the birds and dragonflies of Alderney. This requires a significant amount of maintenance, including painting and keeping reeds back.



Avian Influenza

A Wildlife Disaster

The world's ecosystems are on a pathway to collapse. The decline is generally gradual but visceral events sometimes bring the peril of our natural world into focus – think of the collapse of Cod fisheries in the 90's or coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef. The ongoing Avian Influenza outbreak is one such moment, and one we have felt deeply here on Alderney.

Background on Avian Influenza

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), AKA 'bird flu', is a disease commonly associated with poultry farms. Most outbreaks die off by winter's end, but in 2022 the outbreak continued into spring, when hundreds of thousands of seabirds return to colonies across the Northern Hemisphere to breed.

In early 2022, the disease jumped into these densely populated breeding grounds - a perfect environment to spread. It made short order of northern colonies, with tens of thousands of birds dying. Particularly impacted was the Great Skua population, an occasional sight around Alderney, which saw up to 90% mortality. The Northern Gannet population was also badly impacted, and Alderney was home to 17,000 breeding adults, just over 1% of the world's population.



DEAD GANNETS AND EMPTY NESTS WERE A COMMON SITE DURING THE OUTBREAK | ALEX PURDIE



A CASUALTY OF AVIAN INFLUENZA - A 13-YEAR-OLD RINGED GANNET | ESME COLES

HPAI in Alderney

In June, the disease was spreading south fast. In response to this, Alderney was able to prepare measures which included a testing protocol and biosecurity for visiting colonies.

Immature Gannets travel between many colonies when deciding where to nest. This improves genetic diversity across colonies, improving disease resilience, but in 2022 it was the perfect vector for HPAI. On the 12th of July HPAI was detected in a Herring Gull in Guernsey, with hundreds of Gannets seen dead in the following weeks.

Tracking the Outbreak in Alderney's Gannets

With AWT's ongoing monitoring and a high historical ringing effort, Alderney is

uniquely positioned to assess the impact of HPAI on Gannets. Thanks to Margaret and Richmond Austin (CIBRS) providing ringing data, Dr Phil Atkinson was able to estimate the number of adult gannets (+4yr) which have died; between 3,800 to 5,700 individuals. Many of these birds washed up around the Channel, with reports of hundreds of gannets on the Cornwall coast.

In addition to adult mortality, 2022 has seen horrifying losses in chicks. Productivity was over 20% lower than in previous years. Interestingly, the outbreak was asymmetric - some areas were particularly impacted whilst one area seemed to escape infection! By late-August, large swathes of the colony were deserted.

Overall, this indicates that around 2,000 chicks died due to

AWT Staff visited Burhou following biosecurity protocols after the breeding season to assess the impact there.

the outbreak, bringing the total number of Gannets lost from Alderney to around 6,000-8,000.

There was some hope - young birds were seen moving onto some abandoned nest sites. However, we will only know the full impact of this catastrophe on the colony in the coming years when census and productivity monitoring inform us of the colonies' condition.

To enable recovery, our Gannets populations must be made resilient and safeguarded against other threats. Otherwise, this species and eventually the whole ecosystem, will collapse.

By Alex Purdie, Ramsar Officer

[@AlexPurdie6](https://twitter.com/AlexPurdie6)

Make a Paper Helicopter Seed

What you need:

- Printed out helicopter seed template (can be found online)
- Scissors
- Stapler
- An adult to help

Steps:

- 1) Cut out the template
- 2) Cut along all solid lines
- 3) Fold along the dashed/ spotted lines
- 4) Staple the bottom to give the 'seed' some weight
- 5) Throw it high in the air and see it fly!



Watch

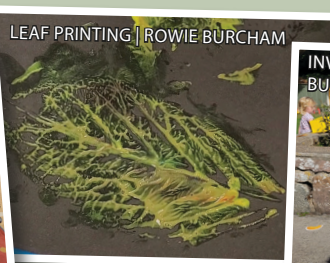
Over the past few months, we've focused our time with Playgroup towards more autumnal-based activities; showing the children that while the weather is getting colder there is still plenty of nature around us and excuses to go outside!

Firstly, we investigated a variety of seeds we found around us as well as some from the shop and had a look at what was inside them. We cracked open some tulip bulbs, walnuts and (carefully) sweet chestnuts as well as using kid-safe knives to cut into a few butternut squashes. The children particularly enjoyed this activity, especially seeing all the seeds inside the squash.

Over the weeks, we have also created mushrooms out of paper bowls and cups, leaf prints with colourful paints (displaying the stem and veins) and threw some helicopter seeds in the air. For this session, we also created and decorated our own helicopter seeds out of paper, which also flew successfully in the air!

Finally, for Halloween we decided to use the celebration to teach the children about what is possibly considered the spookiest of animals...bats! We created hanging bat decorations using the children's hands as templates for the wings. While the children were creating new multi-coloured species of bat, we told them some interesting facts about the animal. They found that a Common Pipistrelle weighs the equivalent of a 20p coin particularly fascinating!

By Rowie Burcham, Outreach Officer



Visiting a UK Reserve

"Calke's spotlight shines on the 'Old Man of Calke' a 1,200-year-old oak tree!"

While recently revisiting my homeland back in the Midlands, I planned to make the most of my time over there and see a university friend based in Derbyshire. Despite the rainy morning, we decided to take a walk around the Calke Abbey country estate before finishing off in the market town of Melbourn (not the Melbourn down under – we would have had to get very lost to end up there!).

Calke Abbey was built between 1701-1704 on a former priory and is now considered an 'un-stately home'. The estate itself covers over 600 acres and holds the status of Site of Special Scientific Interest with approximately 650 veteran trees. While many of the trees across the estate are believed to be over 400 years old, Calke's spotlight shines on the 'Old Man of Calke' a 1,200-year-old oak tree! Other species frequently spotted on the reserve include: Beech, Ash and Lime.

My favourite part of Calke Abbey is the 67-acre deer park originally created in 1774 and now home to 80 fallow deer and 25 red deer. Seeing these elegant creatures up-close was incredibly refreshing, especially as Alderney's largest terrestrial mammal is the Hedgehog (weighing approximately 780g). With red deer weighing on average 200kg, they are 260 times bigger than our largest land mammal!

Deer rutting season begins in October and, unfortunately, we missed seeing most of the behavioral changes that occur during this time, such as the incredible spectacle of stags or bucks fighting for females. Nevertheless, observing the charming animals with their autumnal pelts making their way through the lush greenery, definitely made the walk in the less-than-desirable weather that morning worth it!

By Rowie Burcham, Outreach Officer

Thank you

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



FRONT COVER: GANNETS | VIC FROOME
BACK COVER: COMMON BLUE BUTTERFLY | ROWIE BURCHAM

Love Alderney • Love Wildlife

An Alderney Charity (Guernsey Charities Register No. CH261)

Tel: 01481 822 935

