

ALDERNEY

WILDLIFE



WINTER 2018 | IN THE NIGHT

Protecting Alderney's wildlife for the future

Editorial

This issue of Alderney Wildlife will look at some of the nocturnal creatures that inhabit our island, creatures we may not be particularly familiar with unless we make a habit of going out walking after dusk (or before dawn).

Species that predominantly spend their waking hours in darkness have a whole range of amazing adaptations and characteristics that allow them to navigate, feed and find mates without the aid of daylight. They also present a unique conservation challenge, being comparatively difficult to study and monitor.

Unsurprisingly, human behaviour can strongly affect nocturnal creatures. Our desire for artificial lighting to constantly illuminate our cities and towns can alter migratory routes, disturb sleep patterns and reproductive cycles and interfere with communication to name just a few. More recently, research has shown diurnal mammals especially are switching to increasingly nocturnal behaviour to avoid contact with humans.

At the time in the year when the nights are at their longest, I hope you enjoy this journey into the world of nocturnal wildlife and how we can do more to protect these fascinating creatures.

Claire



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2018: A year full of politics

2018 has been an interesting year, and big and small 'p' politics has definitely been high on the agenda for all. Non-residents might be surprised at how much the wider world stresses such as Brexit bleed into the Alderney day-to-day. The Trust's year has seen an echo of what is perhaps a global trend, with many simple 'local' issues becoming confused and politicised. I have found myself reflecting on what the Trust is to its members and staff.

The Trust was formed by the community of Alderney, with support from the States of Alderney and the Wildlife Trusts, 'for the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation maintenance and protection' of our natural island. This was coupled with the goal to 'advance the education of the public, especially the young, to the importance of Alderney's wildlife, within both a local and an international context ... [and] as to the principles and practice of sustainable development ... and biodiversity conservation'. Finally, the Trust was committed to promote research in all branches of nature study and to publish the useful results thereof.

It is these objectives which drive what we do and against which we must be measured, whether it's in responding to a planning application, working on the island's Ramsar site, or developing a project such as the Bird Observatory. The Trust is not any one person or idea. Rather we are a collective driven by these common goals. As long as we hold to this purpose then personalities and politics (or should that be Politics?) should never divert the Trust from protecting Alderney and its wildlife for future generations.

Roland Gauvain





News round-up

2018 in Alderney's Ramsar site

Highlights from the management of the Ramsar site and associated areas include the establishment of the “Puffin Friendly Zone” at Burhou, improvement in Common Tern breeding, and the start of a new seafloor survey.

The “Puffin Friendly Zone” is a voluntary no entry zone in the southern bay of Burhou in force during the puffin breeding season, limiting marine traffic disturbance to the sensitive seabirds. This year and those to come are crucial for the puffin as for the first time in a few years we have observed a slight increase in their apparently occupied burrow numbers on the islet. By limiting human impact to the colony, leaving them plenty of room to rest in the bay, we give them the best chance of increasing their numbers.

The only Common Tern population on Alderney, comprising about 40 birds, lay their eggs at Houmet de Pies at Saye Bay during the summer. For the three years prior to 2018 no chicks had successfully fledged




by the end of the summer. This was due to predation of the tern's eggs and chicks by rats. A rat den had established on the site which was identified this year.

Before the terns arrived back to their breeding ground Jamie Laband from States Works helped AWT and the ABO come up with a plan to target the rats using bait on the nesting site and at Bibette Head, clearing the area of the threat in the early stages of breeding. By the end of the season between 3 and 6 chicks had successfully left their nest; it might have been more if not for some surprise bad weather. We will continue to proactively manage the site through our Ramsar plan to encourage even more fledglings next year.


A new project for the Ramsar site this year involved the use of baited remote underwater video (BRUV) surveys of marine fauna. With the subsurface cameras deployed for an hour at a time from *SULA*, we have been able to record life below the surface to collect baseline data of fish and shellfish present in different habitat types. So far, many Wrasse have been spotted along with plenty of Pollack,



and interestingly an eggcase of a Nursehound Shark. 

August Wildlife Weekend and Alderney Fayre


The Trust would like to say a big thank you to everyone who came out in the less-than-ideal weather for the Alderney Fayre. The grey and drizzly conditions did not dampen spirits, with hundreds braving it to browse the local stalls, have a cream tea or burger or play on the slip and slide! We managed to raise over £1,000 all going towards our conservation work on the island (read more about what we have planned for 2019 over the page).

AWT patron George McGavin was also back over for the weekend, leading a bug hunt in town where many fascinating creatures were found. The winner of George's most interesting find was a harvestman spider with lots of eggs attached. We all enjoyed seeing how many minibeasts there were to find, right under our noses in St Anne. 



Bug hunting in St Anne's churchyard

Brown-tail Moths

The Brown-tail is a very attractive moth, silvery-white with a brown, furry tail, but it is also one of the few species that really can harm humans.  The hairs of the caterpillar can give a nasty rash, and the nests in which they pass the winter each contain thousands of these poisonous hairs.



We usually spend several days in February each year cutting out the 'webs', mainly from bramble, blackthorn and hawthorn hedges, especially in areas alongside beaches. Our tactics seem to have worked, as this year there are fewer than usual, but we should be grateful if readers of this paragraph would pass on to the Wildlife Trust any sites where you reckon the caterpillars may be a problem later on. Please 'phone either AWT on 01481 822935 or David Wedd on 01481 822673.





Looking forward to 2019

January and February - in early 2019 the Trust will be bringing a team from Jersey National Trust to the island to look at the reedbed management programme at Mannez. Reedbed management lets the reeds regenerate and is needed to ensure they continue to be a nesting and wintering site for birds in particular. This will be at the same time as we remake the path down to the hide and alter the hide itself, making them wheelchair (and pushchair) accessible. The end result will be similar to the work done at Longis, keeping the footprint the same while enabling many more people to enjoy the ponds on the reserve and the wildlife they support. We will also be improving the steps down to the pond, whilst keeping them in character with the reserve.



February - the Trust will be bringing Rachel Yates to Alderney in February. Rachel works in Penzance and helped them become the first plastic-free community in the UK. She will be visiting to help advise businesses on how they can reduce their plastic and waste. If you are interested as a business owner in speaking to Rachel please let us know, and make sure you ask your favourite local business to come along.



May - Wildlife Week 2019 will be based on the theme of Alderney: Wildlife Island. As always we will have loads of activities over the May half term so you can learn about and discover Alderney's wildlife. Our special guest this year is Lizzie Daly, a TV wildlife presenter and biologist you might recognise from BBC Earth and CBBC to name just a couple.



September - it will be Alderney's turn once again to hold the annual Inter-islands Environment Meeting, following the meeting in Jersey in 2018. It is still a way off but we expect there to be many environmental challenges for us to attempt to tackle, both new and old. These meetings, which have been held since 2001, are an essential opportunity for organisations from across the islands to work collaboratively on major issues and share what has been working well over the year.



Chough - Mike Snelle

Of course, there is much more to come in 2019 than the events mentioned above, these are just our highlights. You can read about bat work on the next page and rest assured our usual events including the Fayre, Wildlife Weekend and Woodland Week will be back too.

Species Fact File: Nottingham Catchfly (*Silene nutans*)

While some plants lure pollinators with their colours, others attract them with their scent, and those that need pollinating by night-flying insects smell stronger in the evening. Nottingham Catchfly is one of these.



It is a native perennial, in bloom May-June, with loose whorls of pinkish-white flowers, often drooping and all pointing one way. During the day the petals are rolled back almost as if the plant has finished flowering, but in the evening they open and emit a heady alluring fragrance which attracts night-flying insects and moths. Each flower remains open on three successive nights revealing different floral organs each night to prevent self-fertilization.

Nottingham Catchfly was so named as it was first found on the wall of Nottingham Castle, and it is the county flower of Nottingham; however, the best site was destroyed and it no longer grows even in Nottinghamshire. It is classed as nationally scarce and is rare on Alderney, with records from just a handful of sites.





Bats

Pipistrelle peeking out of a bat box - Harry Hogg



Living on an island of only 800 hectares many might think that all the island's wildlife would be well known and understood. Yet when it comes to bats, the most elusive and also most diverse group of mammals, this can prove more than a little challenging.

Up until 2016 Alderney only had records of the Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius Pipistrelle, suspected Noctule and a few very rare records of the Grey Long-eared Bat, sadly normally only as injured or dead animals. These records had been gathered from occasional studies and the work of resident bat specialist, Dr Robertson. However, in 2016 thanks to support from UK based recorder Anna Sutcliffe, a new species was found, one of the Myotis group - a Whiskered Bat. Just a few months later a visiting group of Jersey-based bat specialists led by Ani Binet discovered a single Natterer's Bat hibernating in a tunnel, as well as a suspected Brandt's (which look very similar to Whiskered Bats). Unfortunately, as these Myotis species look so similar and because the bat was also hibernating it was not possible to confirm the Brandt's. 

Thanks to the Trust's then Conservation Officer, Mariko Whyte, the Jersey group was also able to run training on bat identification and do survey work which definitively confirmed the presence of Long-eared Bats on Alderney. 

Our Jersey friends went even further to help us understand and map Alderney's bats in 2018, by long-term loaning two bat detectors which can be left out on sites for weeks to give a much clearer picture of bat presence, species mix and abundance. The Trust started deploying these detectors into sea caves on the south coast and other sites across the island.



A 2018 survey in Barrackmaster's Lane surveys detected the presence of Common, Soprano and Nathusius Pipistrelles and Natterer's as well as a potential 8th species for Alderney, a possible Khul's Pipistrelle were all detected. However, with nearly 4,000, 15 second recordings taken on just one October night there is a huge body of data to review. In a sea cave which extends 120 meters under Essex Hill, another Myotis was recorded foraging. This has helped to demonstrate the presence of all the identified species, with the three Myotis species much more common on the island than previously thought.

We now know that Alderney has a representative cross section of bats, with potentially 9 of the 18 UK species, but there is still so much more to learn. In July 2019 we will be welcoming the Jersey team for a weeklong survey and to help with training for locally interested volunteers. The Trusts conservation volunteers have been building bat boxes (see page 17) which the Trust is selling. If you would like to buy a box all we ask is that you leave the address of the box's future location so we can make occasional checks of which species may be present



We need island residents taking part in this project not only so that we can create a home for, but also protect the diverse array of bats found on the island. We would love to hear from you if you would like to take part.



Natterer's Bat - Tom Marshall



Owls

As the light fades and we begin to settle down for the night, nocturnal species start to become most active. This is particularly true for a group of animals synonymous with dusk and dawn – owls. Owls are the epitome of a night time hunter, with their many adaptations such as big eyes and silent flight, a deadly combination for their chosen prey.



Here in Alderney we've been lucky enough to see many owl species, both resident and passing through but it's thought our only current breeding species is the Barn Owl. Conveniently, they feed at dawn and dusk which can provide great opportunities to watch these spectacular creatures. They're easily identifiable



with a heart-shaped face, cinnamon brown back and wings and pure white underparts, however there is quite a bit of variation in plumage, with some birds being almost white, giving them a ghostly look. Barn Owls are widely distributed across the UK but suffered steep declines through the 20th century due to changes in farming practices subsequently reducing prey availability and increasing disturbance to this species. Alderney has supported breeding pairs regularly in our records and resident populations are thought to be fairly consistent at 2-5 pairs. This year at least two Barn Owl pairs have successfully raised chicks which went on to fledge.



Barn Owl - Andy Rouse

The many forts and bunkers on the island can make perfect nest sites for these owls, barns being in shorter supply. Look for them on a calm evening, particularly on the Longis nature reserve or near the airport fields.

The stereotypical owl, the Tawny, is what most people imagine when picturing an owl; a mottled brown, squat, round-headed bird perched on a branch twit-twoo-ing. Whilst they are only very scarce visitors to Alderney (likely due to their



Tawny Owl

reluctance to cross large bodies of water), Tawny Owls are the most common and widespread Owl species in the UK, found anywhere with trees, even urban parks. This is the most nocturnal of the UK's owl species, however they cannot see in complete darkness. In addition to their large eyes, Tawnys also possess excellent hearing which helps them to locate mice and bank voles from their favourite perch which they use to hunt. This is the opposite hunting style to the Barn Owl which is more adapted

to life on open ground like farm fields, hunting on the wing. This makes them easier to observe than Tawny Owls. Since the late 1980s, the BTO have been surveying Tawnys throughout the UK and they now suspect that Tawnys are undergoing long-term population declines. You can help the BTO learn more about this species by looking at the Project Owl page of their website – and remember if you take part and hear nothing that’s still really important data.

Long-eared Owls find their breeding sites in dense woodland, usually adjacent to wide open fields and pasture they use to hunt. They breed early, marking out their territory from late January, which they either tend to retain each year or they will find suitable sites nearby. Little is really known about their numbers in the UK, even less long-term trends. Here in Alderney they are sporadically recorded, most recently two pairs are known to have bred in 2011 and 2012. They tend to compete with Tawny Owls for habitat and prey, so are uncommon in areas where Tawnys are doing well.



Long-eared Owl - Stefan Johansson

During the spring and autumn migration or over winter are great times to see species of owl that we don’t regularly have on the island. Perhaps the most commonly seen, either flying over Alderney or hunting in the fields, is the Short-eared Owl. This is one of the more diurnal of UK owls, commonly seen hunting during the day and can be identified by their mottled brown bodies and enchanting yellow eyes. In winter, there is an influx of this species from Scandinavia and Russia looking for somewhere slightly warmer than the freezing temperatures of the high latitudes of Europe.



Snowy Owl

In November 2008 there was a very rare visitor, a Snowy Owl, that stopped in Alderney for almost five months. This extraordinary owl is usually found high in the Arctic, so how and why it appeared in Alderney, we don’t know.

As top avian predators, owls can tell us a lot about our ecosystem and what’s happening lower down in the food chain. Half of the UK’s owl species are amber listed but the Barn Owl is a conservation success story – the provision of nest boxes and efforts to restore habitat have dramatically increased their numbers. That Alderney can support multiple pairs of these nocturnal predators, in addition to day-flying raptors such as kestrel, buzzard and peregrine, shows a healthy population of prey and what must surely be robust habitats. If you are lucky enough to see an owl in Alderney do make sure you let the Trust know by writing in our sightings book or getting in touch online.

Insect update

David Wedd

This has been a good year for Alderney's insects, probably the best for more than a decade. We hear how in the UK wildlife in general and insects in particular have diminished in numbers, and we keep stressing that in Alderney this has definitely not been the case. In 2017-18 this was partly because the weather was so good – hotter in the warmer months and less cold in the winter and spring. It has rained seldom, but in quantity when it has fallen, and all orders of insects seem to have flourished.

Beetles are always numerous in Alderney's varied habitats, and this summer the beautiful Rose Chafer has been particularly common on the southern cliffs, while spectacular red-and-black Burying Beetles have turned up frequently in the moth light-traps.

Dragonflies have had a remarkable summer, despite Mannez Pond being overgrown. The damselflies on Platte Saline and at Corblets Pond have appeared in big numbers, and Migrant Hawkets have flourished, especially at Longis Pond. As we said in our 'dragonflies' article in the Summer edition of



Rose
Chafer
Beetle
Derek
Moore

this magazine, Emperor Dragonflies can be found all over Alderney, and frequently four or five have been viewed at once from the window of the Longis bird hide. They have been noted as breeding in extremely small garden ponds, as well as in bigger stretches of fresh water. Their season is long, and even the reeds at Mannez have not deterred them; a male Emperor was seen flying by the bird hide there as late as 8th November.

Flies, bees and wasps have also had a very successful summer, and have appeared in thousands. There were weeks when the invasive Asian Hornets became alarmingly abundant, but Jamie Laband from the States



Male Emperor Dragonfly

Works Dept. was skilful and effective in eliminating nests. Ant Lions, like delicate dragonflies, have appeared in some numbers on Longis Common, where they breed in tunnels near the stone walls, and spectacular Giant Wood Wasps have been seen in the Bonne Terre. Not insects, but often linked with them, spiders of many kinds have been abundant everywhere, and many visitors have commented on the number of Crab Spiders they have seen on flower-heads in gardens.

Asian
Hornet



Ant
Lion



Above all, it has been a great year for butterflies and moths. Our iconic Glanville Fritillaries had another good season, and the migrants Painted Lady



Crab
Spider


were more-than-average sightings of the rarities Long-tailed Blue and Large Tortoiseshell, and one new butterfly, Black-veined White, was recorded. Of the resident species, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell are not yet back to their numbers of ten years ago, but are holding their own, and Commas have been abundant. Red Admirals have been very numerous, and the 'browns' and 'blues' have appeared in hundreds, even thousands, with Gatekeeper probably our commonest butterfly.

Moths have had a spectacular year. The species that can be seen both by day and by night, in particular Jersey Tiger and Humming-bird Hawk, have enjoyed a successful summer, while moths to the light traps have been very numerous. In our last number we mentioned species new to Alderney: the Druid and the Spurge Hawk-moth, both recorded in July. That would have been enough for one year, but in August and September we had numerous rarities, including several specimens of Radford's Flame Shoulder, dozens of Four-spotted Footman and Flame Brocade, up to 20 a night of Clancy's Rustic and up to five of the beautiful micro *Palpita vitrealis*. On 1st October we had a really exciting new

moth, a pristine specimen of Oleander Hawk-moth, *Daphnis nerii*, brought to us by the staff of the Flower Shop. This huge and beautiful insect was yet another 'first' for Alderney.



Oleander Hawk-moth

We are so lucky in our small island that rarities, whether birds, reptiles, invertebrates, or plants, are so often reported to the Wildlife Trust by islanders and visitors. One cannot stress it too often: a major reason for Alderney's success as a wildlife haven springs from people's ability to 'notice' and then record what they have seen. 

And they start young! Congratulations to Poppy and Theo Gauvain on completing their first year of the Garden Moth Scheme. This has entailed putting on their light-trap every Friday evening and listing the moths attracted to it on the Saturday morning. Every three months they send their records to Bob Smith, the co-ordinator. The last date for 2018 was 2nd



November and they will start again in the spring, after the winter break. It seems Poppy and Theo are the youngest to take part, out of the hundreds involved in the Moth Scheme throughout the British Isles. Their importance is increased because their trap is one of only two operated in the Channel Islands (mine is the other!). Our photo shows them with two huge Convolvulus Hawk-moths which came to their light on the night of 6th October.



Uncommon moths in one light-trap in September; left to right = Green Silver-lines, Barrett's Marbled Coronet, Orache, Maple Prominent



Thank you!

A Big Thank You from the Pyne Family

Lindsay, Richard, Vic and Wilf would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped to make their recent Lundy experience a reality. It took a long time for us to organize ourselves, but it was well worth the wait! A wonderful time was had by one and all. Thank you so much.



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Hedgehogs

Suzy Weir

As the sun sets between April and November a rustling in the bushes and a gentle grunting noise is often the first sign of a hedgehog rooting around for his supper. Looking for small grubs, moths, grasshoppers, insects, caterpillars, leatherjackets, centipedes and worms. Hedgehogs are not fussy and will take frogs, mice and baby chicks and birds when they can find them. They are very much chance eaters and will try most things.



Hedgehog in the autumn - Tom Marshall

They have over 5000 spines which moult then regrow in a similar fashion to the hair on a cat or dog. Using their muscles they can roll up and protect themselves from danger as they famously form a tight spiky ball. Hedgehogs are nocturnal creatures who can wander between 1 and 2 miles of a night picking up food here and there and looking for a mate. They have poor eyesight but excellent sense of smell and hearing.

The gestation period is about 35 days and the babies, hoglets, are born blind and smooth but within two weeks have their eyes open and their spines begin to protrude. They leave their nests at about 5-6 weeks and are left to fend for themselves.



In Britain hedgehog numbers are fast declining and so many people there say they haven't seen a hedgehog in years. Luckily in Alderney the numbers are staying steady and hedgehogs can be seen all over the island. On Alderney they have no predators as we have no foxes or badgers and many of us encourage them into our gardens.

The Alderney hedgehog, *Erinaceus europaeus*, is also found on mainland Britain but we have a very high proportion of the blonde variety. Why this is so we don't really know and many suggestions are put forward. Particularly important may be that Alderney hedgehogs have become quite inbred, meaning a smaller pool for the blonde gene and quicker spreading.

What I do know is that in the last five years blonde hedgehogs have been more numerous than brown ones by about 70:30. By blonde I mean light coloured, blonde spines, blonde snouts with pink noses and legs; rather than albino with pink eyes. Our hedgehogs mate with whatever colour comes along and most litters are now mixed. An average litter appears to be 3 to 4 and in the last few years there seem to be two litters born a year. I think the dry weather this year has resulted in smaller hedgehogs although there are some very large well fed ones particularly around the Newtown area.

To encourage hedgehogs into your garden make sure they can get in and out, for example by cutting a hole in a fence or removing bricks low in a wall. Leave a bowl of fresh water and some meat variety cat or dog food, especially before they head into hibernation.



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WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE IN OUR SURVEYS**



The sea at night

Dr Mel Broadhurst-Allen



Our coastal waters are teeming with life, with marine species busily feeding, reproducing, searching for habitats to live in or migrating away. During the night, these activities do not stop. In addition to the changing tides and waves, weather, water chemistry and interactions with other individuals, species are also influenced by changes in light intensity, particularly when the sun goes down.

For example, a variety of mobile species undergo a process known as Diel Vertical Migration (DVM), which is the synchronised movement of animals moving up and down the water column, on a daily basis. In general, marine life such as fish, crustacea, jellyfish/squid and zooplankton migrate towards the surface of the water during dusk and then migrate back down below before dawn.

This daily migration can range from depths of tens of centimetres to hundreds of metres, depending on the type of species undergoing the migration. It is thought that this process is to enable species to evade predators which would normally use sight to hunt them during the day. Some predators, however, have adapted to prey undergoing DVM and will actively hunt them out at night. Whales such as the Humpback Whale or North Atlantic Right Whale, will search out krill during the night which have migrated to the surface of the water. This is due to krill migrating to deeper waters during the day which are much harder for the whales to find.

Marine species are also attuned rhythmically to the night-time; with some choosing to reproduce during specific hours of the night or to select suitable habitats to settle down and live in after being born. One common example of this is coral, with some colonies and species releasing eggs and sperm simultaneously en masse (known as mass spawning) once a year, on a night after a full moon.

The reason behind this is still not fully understood, but theory suggests that it may increase the likelihood of fertilisation between eggs and sperm which may not last long in the water column (either due to predation or the viability of delicate eggs/sperm).

In general, our knowledge of marine species' activities during the night is, by and large, still a mystery. Technology such as underwater thermal imaging cameras and sonar is beginning to help build a better picture of what goes on in the dark; but whatever the picture is, no doubt it will be full of busy marine life taking part in night-time shenanigans.

Whales will search out migrating krill during the night.

Compass Jellyfish



Acropora millepora spawning - Nature

Stout Bobtail Squid - Alexander Mustard





The night sky

Joshua Copping

There is nothing more mesmerising than taking a minute to look up at the night sky and seeing the stars shine overhead. They create an amazing spectacle in an otherwise black void. The views they provide can be shared by everyone on the planet, even a loved one hundreds of miles away.

Here in the Channel Islands, relatively far from big cities, we get a wonderful view of the stars and planets at night. Sark has even been made an official Dark Sky location for its clear (and very dark) sky, the world's first island to receive such a designation.



However, the predictable cycle of light days and dark nights has been drastically disrupted by humans; our over reliance on artificial lighting in outdoor areas illuminates the environment and brightens our skies at night. Between 2012 and 2016, there was an annual increase of 2% in artificially lit outdoor areas and this will continue to increase with the expansion of urban areas

and new developments. The dark sky is being lost in large areas of the world, making usually easy to spot stars and asterisms such as The Plough and Orion's Belt much harder to see. It is thought that many young people growing up in cities might never experience the sky full of stars. Increasingly astronomers have to battle with light pollution, noting it isn't as easy as it was to view distant space objects. Most major observatories must now be in remote, truly dark areas.

More worryingly, the consequences of lighting up the night stretch further than us not being able to see as many stars; light pollution can negatively impact the normal functions and behaviour of plants and animals.

Amphibians generally synchronise their mating activity with full moon cycles, but it has been shown that light pollution can alter this.

Glare from artificial lights reflecting off the water in wetland habitats imitates the moon, therefore alters breeding cycles and can cause individuals to come out of sync and reduce successful mating.

A Puffling



Birds that migrate or hunt at night navigate by moonlight and starlight; artificial light can cause them to stray off course and towards dangerous urban landscapes where they often face fatalities. Seabirds such as puffins are some of the most affected. When the young pufflings leave the nest they follow the natural glow of the horizon to make their way out to sea; however artificial light guides them towards harbours often leaving them lost, disorientated and at the mercy of the many vessels using inshore waters.

There are countless impacts of bright night skies and we are only now learning the magnitude of these effects on nocturnal ecology.

Luckily on Alderney there isn't a great deal of light pollution; but small things can always be done to make sure the night stays dark. Turning off lights when they're not needed - particularly bright garden lights - can help wildlife. Without these lights you may be able to look up and see the Milky Way in all its glory, one of the finest cosmic spectacles observable without any equipment. The next time you're outside at night, look up and see what you can discover. 🐸



Watch news

During the August Wildlife Weekend we had lots of Watch events; in particular, our rockpooling afternoon was enjoyed by lots of children and we found some unusual species such as a large sea urchin and the first Furrowed Crab for the island! ✨

In September Watch helped with the Great British Beach Clean.

Results showed the amount of litter in the Channel Islands decreased this year, but it is thought that is because of an increased number of beach cleans rather than an actual decrease in litter.



In November we had Woodland Week and despite the wet weather some school classes went on wildlife walks to the woodland and learnt about tree identification.

We look forward to seeing you all for more Watch events in 2019. 🌿

What's in your log pile?

Winter is a great time to build a log pile, making a cosy home for many creatures, especially insects. If you don't already have a log pile, creating one could not be easier! If you have any dead or dying trees/shrubs leave them be - they are the perfect base for your log pile. Bury some logs below the soil adding any trimmings and dead wood from the garden on top, leaving the pieces as big as possible. Make sure your pile is in a shaded area and near the pond if you have one, keeping inhabitants cool and damp. Adding canes or drilling holes makes even more habitats for log-loving creatures.

You could even create your pile on a balcony or terrace, no need for a garden.

Log piles make a home for loads of creatures; nearly 2,000 invertebrates depend on dead wood! These invertebrates provide food for the birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals visiting your garden.

Visiting a UK reserve



Mariko Whyte, 2017 AWT Conservation Officer

Winnall Moors is a hidden wetland oasis in the heart of Winchester. Just a few minutes' walk from the city centre; it is a haven for all kinds of wildlife as well as the many people who come to enjoy its peace. Managed traditionally for centuries as a grazing water meadow system, its history dates to medieval times and is a snapshot of the way many Hampshire river valleys would have looked for centuries.



Here you are greeted by a beautiful stretch of the Itchen, one of Hampshire's

internationally important chalk streams. Walking quietly along the reserve's footpaths, you might hear a distinctive 'plop' and spot a water vole swimming away to the opposite bank. A flash of blue and a distinctive piping call and a kingfisher flashes past.

Heading out onto the boardwalk to the reedbeds in high summer you are greeted by the loud hum of bees and hoverflies buzzing around the vibrant turrets of purple loosestrife and clouds of meadowsweet lining the pathway. The reeds are alive with the song of reed bunting, together with sedge, reed and Cetti's warblers; dragonflies and damselflies zoom through the air in the pursuit of a mate.

The wetlands have been managed carefully by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust since 2008 to reinstate the traditional management and restore this rich mosaic of habitats and species. It really is a fantastic place to explore or just spend 20 minutes enjoying a moment of calm.



Purple Loosestrife - Terry Whittaker



Sedge Warbler



Water Vole - Tom Marshall



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Get in touch

We would love to hear your
thoughts, questions and ideas
Alderney Wildlife Trust
48 Victoria Street
GY9 3TA
01481 822 935
admin@alderneywildlife.org

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Black, Josh Copping, Lindsay
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David Wedd

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