



Media Release

PuffinCam Breeds a ‘GannetCam’

EMBARGOED TILL 26th April 2020

Alderney hosts one of the British Isles longest established wildlife webcams, ‘PuffinCam’ and in 2021 PuffinCam is back with a new partner, ‘GannetCam’.

‘GannetCam’ is a brand-new Wildlife Webcam that puts the focus directly on the Les Etacs gannet colony. This rocky outcrop is home to around 6,000 pairs of Northern Gannets between February and October. A true seabird city and one of the most spectacular displays of nature in the English Channel. ‘GannetCam’ promises to showcase the live soap opera that is the life of the largest breeding seabirds in the British Isles from majestic courtship to fledging – in real time. The webcam will go live online on Monday 26th April.

GannetCam:

- High definition video will be streamed in real time 24 hours a day until the end of the Northern Gannet breeding season through a dedicated page at www.teachingthroughnature.co.uk/gannet-cam. There are very few webcams covering such large seabird colonies and GannetCam will be the most southerly.
- The powerful zoom lens will focus primarily towards ‘Pyramid Rock’, the closest of the rocks at the Les Etacs Gannetry to mainland Alderney sitting 350 meters from our South West coast. We’re placing the spotlight on the full breeding story as well as the complex behavioral interactions between individuals in a harsh environment for the world to see for the first time, with regular interactions from the scientists on island.
- Just as is successfully undertaken with ‘PuffinCam’, video captured using ‘GannetCam’ supports the ongoing long-term scientific study of Alderney’s Gannets within Alderney’s Ramsar site – a site of international importance – managed by the Alderney Wildlife Trust on behalf of the States of Alderney. Detailed surveys provide data for breeding success and also informs the impacts of plastic pollution in our seas, the work receiving national attention in recent years.
- ‘GannetCam’ supports future pioneering research into the impact of climate change, fisheries and human pollution gathering data from over 1% of the world’s Northern Gannet population. This research is of international importance, not least in light of growing evidence that Gannets occupying the same eco-region as our own are beginning to experience significant population pressures. This work takes center stage in the long-term monitoring undertaken by the AWT.
- Members of the public are being invited to add their own observations from the live video feed through the embedded link in the web page. The cameras cannot be monitored 24/7 by our ecologists so we must also rely on members of the public to report unusual events or interactions. This also increases the speed and accuracy of the review of data recorded throughout the year.

The webcams are setup and operated by the Alderney Wildlife Trust, as part of the States of Alderney's long term strategy for the island's Internationally Important Wetland (the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Island's Ramsar Site).

The team of largely volunteer experts studying the site are working with a broad range of other scientific organisations and are dependent on the support of the general public and sponsors to make this project possible. None of this would be possible without partners such as Sure who have provided free broadband access for the project for the last 10 years and NWSystems which enables high definition streaming of the cameras which saw almost 700,000 views in 2020.

Quotes:

Roland Gauvain, Manager of the Alderney Wildlife Trust said "PuffinCam has been a great Channel Islands' project, running for over a decade, and GannetCam brings a whole new insight into lifecycle of largest of British breeding seabirds. This project is vital if we are to succeed in halting the decline of our wildlife and put nature into recovery, join us in this battle to secure the future of these iconic seabirds."

Annie Burgess States of Alderney (Member for Environment): "It will be wonderful to see the gannets interactions within the colony. To watch them nest and feed their young is going to be so interesting. Seeing the birds living in close proximity and watching all the daily challenges they face is going to be a fascinating insight into the life of these beautiful seabirds."

Justin Bellinger, chief executive of Sure Guernsey said: "Sure supports a range of charity initiatives across the Bailiwick and is proud to play its part in helping the public connect to the natural environment. That's why we are providing the Alderney Wildlife Trust with free high-speed broadband to power live-streaming from both PuffinCam and the new GannetCam, and hope that people across the world will enjoy watching the Gannets and Puffins that live on Pyramid Rock in real time."

"It's a privilege to live alongside the wildlife that makes our islands so unique and to play a part in its conservation."

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For further press details, to receive images and footage, or to arrange interviews please contact:

Alderney Wildlife Trust

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Facts about

Northern Gannets –

Famed for its super-fast fishing dives into the sea, the northern gannet (or 'gannet') is a distinctive white bird with a yellow head and black wingtips. It nests in large, noisy, smelly colonies on cliffs around our coasts.

Statistics

Length: 86-96cm

Wingspan: up to 2m

Weight: 3kg

Average lifespan: 17 years

Conservation status - **Classified in the UK as Amber under the Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds**

When to see

January to October

About

One of our largest seabirds, gannets feed on fish, which they catch by diving head-first into the sea, their wings folded right back. Diving from heights of 30m, they can hit the water at speeds of up to 60mph. They have an extensive network of air-sacs between their muscles and skin to help cushion this impact.

How to identify

The gannet is easily identified: a big, white bird with black wingtips and a yellow head. It can be spotted circling high above the waves before performing its characteristic fishing dive.

In our area

The two gannet colonies on Les Etacs and Ortac are some of the most impressive wildlife spectacles in the Channel Islands. They are also unique within Europe as they are the only Gannet colony to reside within such a short distance of each other (less than 3km) and creating a meta colony with unique characteristics. In 2016 the bird names Cosmo became the longest ranging breeding Gannet, foraging all the way to Norway in the space of 6 days.

The Alderney Wildlife Trust has been working with the States of Alderney to better understand these populations since 2005. You can read more about our work on the gannet colonies on our [Track.A.Gannet](#), and [Ramsar](#) pages.

Distribution

Nests on coastal cliffs around the north of the UK, sometimes in large colonies like those on some Scottish islands, and at sites in Wales, North East England and the Channel Islands. Can be seen around most of our coasts during migration.

Did you know?

220,000 pairs of Gannets nest around our coasts - that's 60-70% of the world's gannet population, with the nearly 9,000 pairs nesting in Alderney's colonies being some of the most accessible in the world

Wildlife Webcams

The public can discover the fascinating lives of Alderney's seabirds through our live [webcams](#) from the heart of the puffin colony on Burhou. On the webcams you will be able to see Puffins, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls, plus the odd rabbit or two hopping about. In recent years we have also spotted peregrines, buzzards and curlew on the cameras. The cameras are infra-red (harmless to wildlife), meaning you can watch Burhou's nightlife - try and catch a glimpse of Storm Petrels at night too.

The cameras are live during the breeding season, April-July.

[Watch the cameras](#)

The webcams are part of the [LIVE: teaching through nature](#) programme, an interactive educational project for schools in the UK and Channel Islands. This brings the life of the puffin (and the nature and wildlife of Alderney) into classrooms via our live webcams and regular blogs. Find our free teaching resources on the site, covering aspects of the curriculum including science, literacy and maths for Key stage 1 and 2 students.

LIVE aims to educate and inspire a love of nature in pupils, while helping to promote creativity and confidence.

The Technology

Gannet Cameras relies on the cutting-edge technology and engineering contained within Axis Q6075-E pan tilt zoom camera.

The transmitter and receiver arrays are powered by solar arrays and built on island by the Alderney Wildlife Trust team. Please contact us if you would like to know more about our systems and capabilities.

