

Media Release from Alderney Wildlife Trust

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Spectacular Drone Footage of Bluefin Tuna Feeding in Alderney

This awe-inspiring display of nature in action showcases how the return of an apex predator like tuna can bring huge benefits for marine life.

An epic spectacle known as a "boiling sea" was recorded in Alderney this September (08/09/2025). The water churned into a white circle of breaking waves while hundreds of seabirds gathered above. This "boiling sea" is caused by large numbers of Atlantic **bluefin tuna** hunting together in a feeding frenzy. Tuna have returned to Alderney's waters in recent years, and this footage marks one of the first times such a frenzy has been filmed from above - providing a spectacular view of this natural drama, which is unfolding right now in Alderney and across the British Isles.

Seeing tuna feed in these numbers was once commonplace, before fishing decimated their populations. It is remarkable to see our seas beginning to recover. The tuna round up prey fish into large shoals, known as bait balls, and then charge into them. By forcing the bait balls to the surface, they prevent their prey from escaping. This, in turn, attracts thousands of seabirds, including gannets and herring gulls, which swoop down to feed on the fish from above.

This breathtaking display is also a reminder of the ecological value of apex predators. Alderney's seabirds are under increasing pressure from climate change and must travel ever further to find food. With tuna driving prey to the surface, seabirds gain vital opportunities to feed closer to their nesting sites, allowing them to bring more food back to their chicks. Regional reports suggest the tuna were feeding on garfish migrating through the English Channel. Without the tuna's return, these garfish would likely have passed Alderney without the seabirds being able to benefit.

When the prey fish scatter or are eaten, the tuna vanish into the turquoise water while the seabirds rest on the surface, waiting for the next bait ball to form. As apex predators, tuna play a role similar to lions on the Serengeti. By feeding on migratory fish, they help cycle nutrients in regions like Alderney, boosting productivity and supporting more fish, seabirds, and marine life - creating cascading benefits across the ecosystem.

Bluefin tuna numbers are rising across the UK after being virtually absent in the 1990s, thanks to a recovery plan set up by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). According to the Marine Conservation Society, it is not yet clear whether populations have reached sustainable levels to withstand commercial fishing, though there is potential for small-scale, catch-and-release sport fisheries. Witnessing a

shoal of tuna feeding is an unforgettable experience - our own oceanic equivalent of a pride of lions hunting wildebeest. As the Marine Conservation Society notes: "We must do everything we can to support their recovery and not let history repeat itself through another untimely demise."

The footage was captured by a drone flying at a safe distance of at least 50 metres from the wildlife. More information on tuna research from the Channel Islands can be found [here](#).

[Marine Conservation Society Blue Fin Tuna](#)

[Videos can be found on this link](#)



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Background

About the Alderney Wildlife Trust

The Alderney Wildlife Trust is one of the 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the British Isles. We are the youngest of the Wildlife Trust, forming over 20 years ago and since then the AWT has received incredible support from a dedicated team of wildlife enthusiasts, what we like to think of as the 'TeamWilder'. This team isn't just limited to residents and AWT members, it includes people from all walks of life who have an interest in our island's wildlife, as well as supporters and organisations from around the world. We work with the local community to engage them with their natural environment in order to protect Alderney's wildlife for the future.

Our mission is to study, protect and champion Alderney's wildlife. We wish to see a thriving natural island where wildlife and natural habitats play a valued role in addressing our island's future and the climate and ecological emergencies that face us.

Alderney is a very special place and by helping the work of the Alderney Wildlife Trust you can make a difference. After all, if you love where you live, you'll want to look after it - Dr. George McGavin, Patron AWT

Notes to Media

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