NEWSLETTER 140

February 2019

Contents

Seabird Surveying

Seabirds Count Update: 2019

Daisy Burnell, Joint Nature Conservation Committee

It's hard to believe that the 2018 season of Seabirds Count ended over 6 months ago but what a season it was. Great weather, coupled with incredible volunteer uptake and effort, meant coverage was better than anticipated.

Attention will be turned to urban gulls in the 2019 Seabirds Count season © Daisy Burnell

There was an initial surge of data entry after the season ended and we estimated that approximately 70% of natural nesting seabird sites had been surveyed to date. Although the rate of data entry has decreased significantly since then, we are still optimistic that this initial estimate of coverage is correct. Census survey planning and estimates of the remaining effort needed to complete this project are based on what has been entered on the database. Therefore, to prevent the duplication of effort, please ensure that any counts you have made over the census period (2015 – 2018) are entered onto the **Seabird Monitoring Programme database** as soon as possible.

This impressive effort was also aided by the kind donation of grant funding from the Seabird Group. Six grants in total were awarded to Seabirds Count volunteers and regional coordinators, to help with expenses such as accommodation and boats for surveying remote islands and challenging coastlines. There is still the opportunity to apply for this funding for the 2019 season and the maximum that can applied for is £2000. The application can be found **here**.

One of the unexpected positive outcomes of this census has been the discovery and recording of 'new' colonies. These colonies have mainly been of inland nesting gulls, terns and cormorants; amounting to over 260 new sites being added to the database. This demonstrates how powerful citizen science projects are at updating and increasing our knowledge of bird distribution, and we would like to thank all of our regional coordinators and volunteers for making this possible.

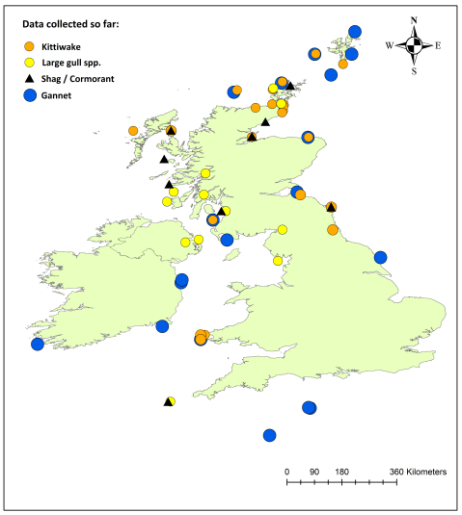
Planning for the 2019 season has now begun, a season where urban nesting gulls will have their chance to be in the spotlight. These urban gull surveys will comprise a mixture of repeat surveys of Seabird 2000 urban sites and a sample-based survey of 1km squares. There will also be a push to get the remaining natural nesting sites covered. All in all, another busy season is ahead of us and we would welcome help from both existing and new volunteers

If you are keen to become involved with any of the surveys, or are aware of a seabird breeding site that we may not know of, please get in touch with the project coordinator, Daisy, by email: SeabirdsCountCooordinator@jncc.gov.uk

Nest incorporation of debris by seabirds

Nina O'Hanlon, Environmental Research Institute, University of the Highlands and Islands

Thank you so much to everyone who submitted data on nest incorporation of debris by seabirds in 2018. We received data (including valuable zero counts) from a range of species across the UK, allowing us to better understand the extent of this issue. With 'Seabirds Count' continuing in 2019, any data that can help fill the gaps in our map would be much appreciated! The monitoring form can be obtained from myself (nina.ohanlon@uhi.ac.uk) or in the Seabirds Count volunteer census pack. Furthermore, we are extending the reach of our data collection into northern Europe so if you are planning a visit to the Faroes, Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia or Svalbard and have the capacity to collect any data/images then please get in touch.



Reports of debris inclusion in nests collected in 2018.

Biosecurity for LIFE

Thomas Churchyard, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, National Trust and National Trust for Scotland have started a new project called **Biosecurity for LIFE**. The project has received funding from EU LIFE and will run until end July 2022, focusing on improving the protection against non-native invasive mammals across the UK's 41 seabird island Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Invasive mammalian predators are known to pose a severe threat to island-breeding seabirds worldwide and there is increasing evidence to suggest that their predation on seabirds can have wider ecosystem-level impacts from the complete extirpation of species from invaded islands[1] to disrupting sea-to-land nutrient transfer which can lead to cascading ecosystem impacts[2]. In the UK, several breeding seabird species are vulnerable to predation by invasive mammalian predators at their breeding sites, and the **European Storm Petrel** (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) and **Leach's Storm Petrel** (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) breed exclusively on rat-free islands.

To put a stop to these detrimental impacts caused by invasive mammalian predators it has become increasingly common to undertake island wide invasive species eradications, in particular of rats. In the UK we have a good track record of successfully removing rats from islands. Several islands have been declared officially rat-free following eradications of Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), e.g. from Ramsey (2000), Canna (2006), and St. Agnes and Gugh (2016) in the Scilly Isles, and most recently, the Black Rat (*R. rattus*) was eradicated from the Shiant Isles in 2018. On Lundy (2004), an eradication of both the Brown and the Black Rat was successful.

[1] Jones HP, Tershy BR, Zavaleta ES, Croll DA, Keitt BS, Finkelstein ME, Howald GR. (2008) Severity of the effects of invasive rats on seabirds: a global review. Conservation Biology 22(1): 16-26

[2] Thoresen JJ, Towns D, Leuzinger S, Durrett M, Mulder CPH and Wardle DA. (2017) Invasive rodents have multiple indirect effects on seabird island invertebrate food web structure. Ecol Appl, 27: 1190 - 1198

Top: A flavoured wax block in a bait station. The block is checked for signs of rodent teeth marks as part of biosecurity surveillance.
Bottom: The Shiants was declared rat free on 2nd March 2018 © Tom Churchyard

Removing invasive mammalian predators is only part of the job, and of course some islands have remained free of invasive mammals. Effective island biosecurity is critical for safeguarding predator-free islands, and to prevent reinvasions where eradications have been carried out. In 2016, the RSPB carried out a review of biosecurity measures in place on the UK's internationally important seabird islands. This review, which was completed as part of the LIFE Shiants Seabird Recovery Project, highlighted a lack of measures in place and limited capacity on a UK-wide level to implement island biosecurity. This leaves our most important seabird islands at risk from predator incursions. As a response to this gap in our protection of seabird islands the Biosecurity for LIFE project was developed.

Biosecurity for LIFE is focused on the prevention of invasive mammalian predator impacts on seabird islands. The project will work with those who live, work and manage UK's islands to improve biosecurity through **prevention**, **early detection and rapid response** to incursions. The focus of our efforts will be on the 41 islands and island groups that are designated as SPAs for their breeding seabird populations, aiming to ensure that all these sites have biosecurity plans in place and the capacity to implement them by the end of the project and beyond. This will include measures to reduce the likelihood of invasive mammals reaching the islands through managing pathways (prevention), adequate monitoring on island to ensure early detection if and when an incursion occurs and the formation of rapid response teams around the UK that will be trained and equipped to respond to any incursion.

Alongside the active work on these 41 SPAs, the project will seek to **raise awareness of biosecurity** for anyone who visits or operates close to islands, through an information campaign and targeted training and education. By the end of the project we will have created a resource-rich website that will contain all the information needed for any community, organisation or company to develop and implement their own biosecurity plans for working on islands, as well as providing opportunities to share experiences and information.

One of our core messages is asking that anyone who visits islands to take responsibility for their own biosecurity. Whilst the risks may seem small there are simple steps we can all take when visiting islands to ensure that we do not accidentally introduce a mammalian predator. When you are next lucky enough to visit one of the UK's offshore islands please follow these five steps:

1) Pack food on the day you travel to the island
2) Store food in rat-proof containers
3) Check your baggage/hold/bilges for signs of stowaways
4) Most mammals are good swimmers. If you see a stowaway onboard your transport **do not** push it overboard and **do not** land at your island destination
5) Report sightings of invasive mammals to the owner of the island
6) Take your rubbish home

The project is still in its early stages and we look forward to writing again in the coming years to let you know how we are getting on and any opportunities to get involved. Until then keep an eye out for exciting developments and help make biosecurity part of standard practice when visiting islands.

For more information whilst we are waiting a webpage to go live please contact Thomas Churchyard on thomas.churchyard@rspb.org.uk.

How Good is Human Waste for Gulls?

Ruedi Nager, University of Glasgow

Have you ever been enjoying a bite to eat while strolling by the seaside when suddenly, in a quick and elegant swoop, a **Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*) has grabbed the food out of your hand and, before you realised what happened, is off with it. Irrespective of the loss of your snack, we have to admire the mastery of flight that allows the Herring Gull to make such a daring manoeuvre. It also begs the question of why gulls are increasingly encountered in cities, given that across the British Isles they have declined by more than 50% between 1970 and 2000, and the Herring Gull has now been added to the UK Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern. It is a similar story for other populations of large gulls elsewhere. And is the food Herring Gulls can gather from us any good for them? These are some of the questions we have been looking at over the last few years in the **Glasgow Seabird Interest Group** and together with the Hayley Douglas and Hannah Riley of the **Clydemuirshiel Country Park's Tag'n'Track project** organised a Gull Day in December 2018 to compare notes with others with similar research interests.

Large gulls are typically encountered along the coast. In Britain, about 100 years ago Herring Gulls were rare and used to stay away from humans. From the earliest available reports on the Herring Gulls' diet they seem to have foraged mainly on marine invertebrates from the intertidal habitat. When provisioning dependent young they also feed on fish, presumably to provide growing chicks with a nutritious diet. But one may wonder how they obtain fish because as a surface feeder they depend on fish close to the surface which will be a very unpredictable food source. It helps if others bring fish to the surface or catch the fish and the gulls then take it over from them. Herring Gulls can also patrol seabird colonies and look out for the occasional unguarded food (and also unguarded eggs and chicks), but it is hard to imagine that this is very profitable foraging strategy. Industrial fishery is an activity that brings fish to the surface and it increased at the time the British Herring Gull population started to increase. A large industrial fishery probably meant that gulls might have had a more abundant and profitable food source than before. Waste food from humans (refuse) also started to become increasingly available at the time through large open landfills, but initially gulls seemed to have ignored them. So it might be that abundant waste from prospering industrial fisheries together with the protection of the birds at the breeding sites that helped gulls to flourish in the first half of the 20th century.

A Herring Gull patrolling a seabird cliff at the Shiants
© Ruedi Nager

However, this land of milk and honey for the gulls did not last. Industrial fisheries steadily declined throughout the second half of the 20th century and gulls needed an alternative reliable and abundant food source. That is when they presumably started to forage on landfills and many still do. Yet their numbers declined at least since the 1970s and their distribution shifted. Populations in their former strongholds showed dramatic declines whereas new, but much smaller, populations appeared in and around built-up areas. And increasingly their diet included refuse, yet, it did not seem to be able to maintain the initially high numbers of birds. This it poses the question how good is refuse as a food for gulls? The value of refuse to gulls is usually argued from observations of colonies that fold when a nearby landfill closes. That seems obvious if refuse was the main available source of food for that colony. And indications that sufficient alternative food may not be available are worrying. For instance Anouk Spelt (University of Bristol) studies urban-nesting **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** (*L. fuscus*) where the gulls ignore marine habitat but mainly feed in built-up areas where they pick sweetcorn out of sewage and scavenge on left-over snacks on school grounds. As urban nest sites are relatively safe such a diet might be enough to allow successful breeding. However, a diet of refuse is not always good as has been shown by Nina O'Hanlon (then at the University of Glasgow). Colonies that mainly fed on marine invertebrate bred more successfully than colonies relying on refuse, which had also been found elsewhere. Refuse might be less profitable food than their natural food because of differences in nutritive value and the time it takes to acquire a meal. To look at the former possibility, Becky Lakin (University of St Andrews) started to look at the effects of different diets on chick growth and behaviour. Landfills not only provide potential food but may also pose a risk of harmful pathogens and contaminants. Andrew Tongue (University of Birmingham) is finding elevated levels of contaminants in gull eggs closer to landfills and concentrations are potentially biologically relevant.

So, refuse has become an important food for many gull populations. Gulls may no longer find refuse exclusively on landfills, in particular as regulations increasingly prevent wildlife using this food source, but find a multitude of sources in built-up areas. Scanning a built-up area with their many vertical structures for food either discarded or carried by another consumer may be not that different from patrolling seabird cliffs that they might have used to do. However, whatever the nutritive value and toxicity of that food, it is not as abundant as the rich supply of fisheries waste that used to feed the masses of gulls in the past. One can only admire the ability of gulls trying to make a living from whatever food they can find, and cities may be just one of the best places where they can still find sufficient food as they run out of alternatives in their natural habitats.

The possible demise of one of the UK's most charismatic seafaring birds

Liz Humphreys, John Calladine, Sarah Harris, Chris Thaxter, David Agombar and Dawn Balmer, British Trust for Ornithology

Arctic Skuas (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) are the most rapidly declining seabird species in Great Britain, with notable drops in their former strongholds on Orkney and Shetland. Colonies such as Foula which once boasted over several hundreds of pairs, in their heyday of the 1970s and 1980s, have now fallen by an order of magnitude. Decreases in productivity have also been recorded through annual monitoring based in Shetland. Whilst most of the breeding range across Scotland is poorly monitored, with the notable exception of the small population on Handa, similar reductions in numbers across Caithness, Sutherland and the Hebrides seem likely. The BTO therefore set up a project to investigate what could be driving these dramatic losses and try to establish if there are any opportunities to help conserve this nationally important species.

Would you like to help?

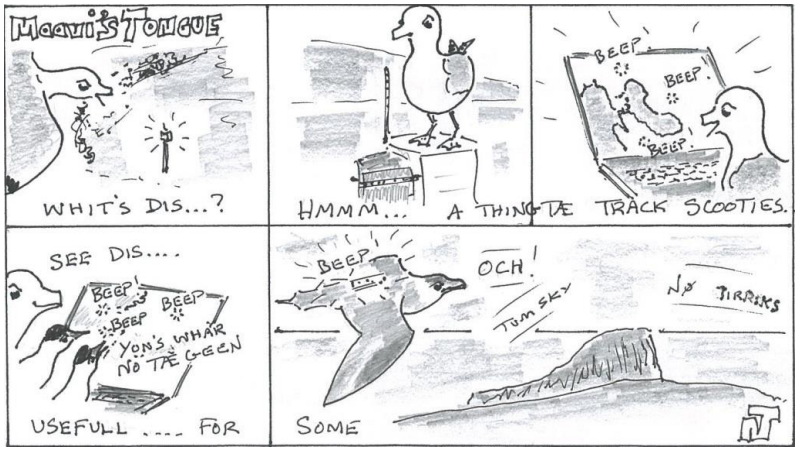
We are actively looking to support volunteers to help monitor nests on an annual basis, set up colour ringing projects or even participate in dietary studies. If you are unable to commit long term, you can still contribute by taking part a one off count through Seabirds Count – the fourth Seabird Census of the UK.

Please contact liz.humphreys@bto.org

Traditionally Arctic Skuas steal fish, through sheer tenacity and amazing flying agility, from a range of other seabird species as they return to the colony to feed their own young. This explains their alternate name of the Parasitic Skua or Jaeger. In addition, direct observations of territorial pairs back in the 1980s indicated birds used to tend to hang around the colony and change over at the nest regularly throughout the day. Consequently it was assumed that most of their food was obtained less than 10 km from the colony.

What could be driving these declines?

The BTO team first headed up to Fair Isle in 2017 to try and understand more about Arctic Skuas foraging behaviour during the breeding season. Using Global Positioning System (GPS) tags, we discovered a very different situation. During the incubation period, birds were travelling astonishing distances of up to 190 km, reaching as far down as the Moray and Aberdeenshire coast. This mirrored the findings made by the RSPB who tracked breeding auks from the same colony in previous years. These unexpectedly long journeys meant that many parents were away for up 2 to 3 days and that the other adult of the pair left at the nest would have become hungry and abandoned the nest in search of food. This resulted in all but one breeding attempt failing and a single chick was the outcome of the Fair Isle breeding season. A similarly catastrophic year was also recorded nearby on Foula where we had also hoped to carry out field work but the last bird failed within a day of our arrival. A number of birds on Fair Isle were also deployed with geolocators, of which four birds were re-caught the following season. Our provisional analyses revealed that birds varied in their wintering locations with birds ranging right across the North Atlantic from West to South Africa and South

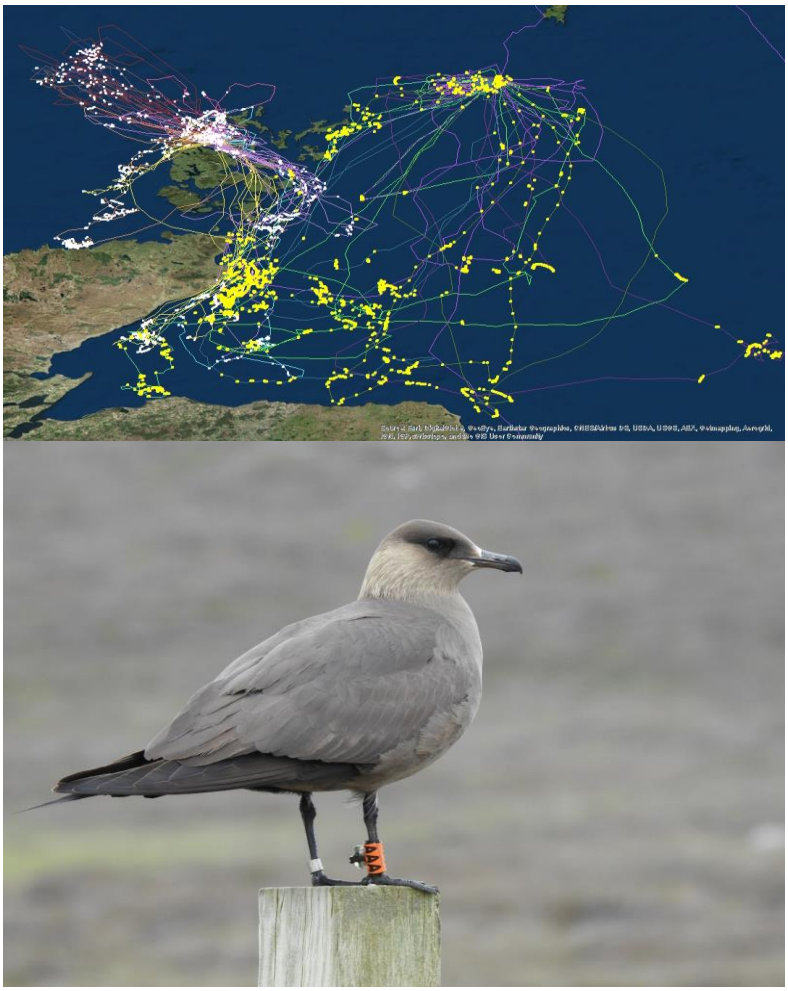


Fame in the Fair Isle Times – Scooties being the local name for Arctic Skuas! *Maavi's Tongue* by Neil Thomson in the Fair Isle Times

America. If such variability between individuals in their non-breeding range is typical, it is perhaps unlikely that conditions experienced at this time of year are contributing to their population declines.

In 2018 we teamed up with Helen and David Aiton who had been monitoring an Arctic Skua colony on Rousay, Orkney for a few years. Together we deployed more GPS tags to compare with a repeated tracking effort on Fair Isle. Arctic Skuas from these two colonies were found to forage in largely discrete areas at sea, particularly in the early to mid-incubation period. The Orkney birds also tended to carry out shorter trips than the Fair Isle birds. This raised the question as to whether this difference in foraging behaviour could account for the higher typical breeding success of the Orkney colony. The Orkney birds were also deployed with geolocators and we hope to retrieve these along with remaining ones on Fair Isle over the next two breeding seasons.

Last summer we also trialled the use of cameras and thermocrons (heat sensors in the nest) on Fair Isle which could provide some insight into why nests were failing, if not at the very least identify when during the breeding season things had gone wrong. Whilst we had limited success with the camera, once we'd checked the birds behaving normally it was possible to show that birds were actually leaving their eggs unattended, and were therefore exposed to predation by gulls and even other Arctic Skuas. We did not witness any predation events via the cameras or directly by Great Skuas, or 'Bonxies' as they are otherwise known.



Top: Tracks from the incubation period in 2018 – those from Rousay are shown in white and Fair Isle birds are indicated in yellow. Dots show birds either foraging or loafing areas.
Bottom: Skootie AAA – our star bird of the 201 Fair Isle breeding season which successfully raised a chick. © Sarah Harris

A range of other factors might also be contributing to the fall of the Arctic Skua population. Great Skua have been named as one of the most likely contenders through predation of fledglings or outcompeting the smaller skuas species from their territories due to their earlier timing of arrival back to breed at the colony. Food availability is also a likely problem, although whether overfishing is the proximal cause is still up for debate. Further, the possibility that since these birds are at the southern end of their breeding range, heat stress associated with climate change could also play a role by exacerbating what are already challenging breeding conditions for them.

What next?

Our next steps are to carry out more detailed analyses of the GPS tracking data to further understand what the key differences between the foraging strategies observed at the two colonies are. We will also look at the extent to which variation between and within individual birds play a role e.g. Are there differences in how males and females behave? Does foraging behaviour change from incubation to chick rearing? Meanwhile, we are helping to building up a network of international researchers who are currently carrying out monitoring, dietary and tracking studies of Arctic Skuas across Northern Europe.

Acknowledgements This project would not be possible without the generous support of donors, some of whom have been able to join us in the field. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and a number of their volunteers as well as Sheila Gear, Richard Boddington, and the SNH licensing team.

Puffins for the pot

Mike Harris, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and Tycho Anker-Nilssen, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research

The development of miniaturized tracking devices in recent years is allowing us to gradually piece together an understanding of where birds go and what they do when they are not at the colonies. However, we are still woefully ignorant of many fundamental aspects of their winter ecology. There is a legal autumn and winter hunt for auks around the Faroe Islands and over many years Jens-Kjeld Jensen, a local taxidermist and naturalist with a wide interest ranging from seabirds to lice[3], has been helping to plug some of these gaps by examining the bodies of birds shot there during the hunt.

Jens-Kjeld Jensen at Bøsdalafossur, Leitisvatn, Vágar, Faroe Islands
© Marita Gulklett

His collection of stomachs has allowed the first detailed description of the winter diet of **Atlantic Puffins** (*Fratercula arctica*) which showed that around the Faroes nereid worms (41% of total biomass), large sandeels (23%) and other large fish (17%) made up the bulk of the diet with the latter two prey types being most important in energetic terms (46% combined despite accounting for only 9% of items[4]). In 2010 he sent me a present of the skull of an Isle of May adult that had been shot in the Faroes, not only that but its stomach arrived in a separate package.

His examination of wings has helped to partly sort out the troubling problem of when Puffins undertake their main moult during which they are flightless. The answer here seems to be that the timing within the population is extremely variable with adults being flightless any time between October and March[5]. Recently, he sent us a picture of an Atlantic Puffin shot near Nólsoy on 5 October 2018 that had been ringed EY52587 as an adult on Sule Skerry, Orkney on 14th July 2015 by the Sule Skerry Ringing Group. As Jens-Kjeld points out one can see that it had already developed the dark head winter plumage, but had still not shed its primaries and was actively growing the body feathers. The feet and legs have also changed colour from summer orange to winter yellow.

Left: Atlantic Puffin ET70833 ringed as a breeding adult on the Isle of May, Firth of Forth in July 1998 and shot off Streymoy, Faroe Islands in October 2010 © Sarah Wanless
Right: EY52587 ready for the pot © Samson Samson

[3] Palma, R.L. and Jensen, J.K., 2016. Additional records of lice (Insecta, Phthiraptera) from the Faroe Islands. *Norwegian Journal of Entomology*, *63*, pp.50-57.

[4] Harris, M.P., Leopold, M.F., Jensen, J.K., Meesters, E.H. and Wanless, S., 2015. The winter diet of the Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica* around the Faroe Islands. *Ibis*, *157*(3), pp.468-479.

[5] Harris, M.P., Wanless, S. and Jensen, J.K., 2014. When are Atlantic Puffins *Fratercula arctica* in the North Sea and around the Faroe Islands flightless? *Bird Study*, *61*(2), pp.182-192.

Because many seabirds, including Atlantic Puffins, winter far offshore, data on weights of healthy birds outside the breeding season are very scarce. In a recent paper, Anker-Nilssen, Jensen & Harris[6] compare the masses and wing lengths of adult Atlantic Puffins shot around the Faroes with breeding adults on the Isle of May, southeast Scotland and Røst, northern Norway. On average, Atlantic Puffins breeding in Scotland and Norway increase their body mass by 20–30% between the chick-rearing period and winter. These gains in body mass are at least double the decline occurring between incubation and chick-rearing. Three birds had been weighed both at the colony and after being shot – the gains in mass ranged 11–32%. Over a third of the mass of one bird came from fat stored under the skin or around the internal organs. Traditional harvests of wildlife are often controversial; however in this case, thanks to Jens-Kjeld's extraordinary commitment, such killing of birds away from the colonies offers us a chance of extending our knowledge of basic Puffin biology.

Paper review

Holly Kirk, Seabird Group Secretary

Combined measurements of prey availability explain habitat selection in foraging seabirds

Waggitt, J.J., Cazenave, P.W., Howarth, L.M., Evans, P.G., van der Kooij, J. and Hiddink, J.G., 2018. Combined measurements of prey availability explain habitat selection in foraging seabirds. *Biology letters, 14*(8), p.20180348. **Available online here.**

It is well known that borders between stratified and mixed waters (ocean fronts) are strong predictors of seabird foraging behaviour. Here the authors investigate which aspects of prey availability are used by foraging seabirds for habitat selection. By surveying the density, depth and prevalence of clupeids in the Celtic Sea (UK), whilst concurrently monitoring foraging **Common Guillemots** (*Uria aalge*) and **Manx Shearwaters** (*Puffinus puffinus*) Waggit et al. test which aspects of prey availability predict seabird aggregation. The results from seven ship-based surveys in April 2016 (analysed with GLM and GLMM in the 'mgcv' R package) suggest that species foraging in this area trade-off between different prey availability cues when selecting where to forage. Both guillemots and shearwaters were able to target the areas with highest prey availability, which most frequently occurred in mixed water on the edge of stratification. Waggit et al. suggest that patterns of mixing and stratification in this area could soon change as marine renewable energy installations are developed, with implications for the foraging habits of local seabirds.

Understanding population changes in seabirds requires examining multiple causal factors and developing science-based adaptive species conservation plans

Burger, J., 2018. Understanding population changes in seabirds requires examining multiple causal factors and developing science-based adaptive species conservation plans. *Animal Conservation, 21*(1), pp.17-18. **Available online here.**

in response to **Brooke et al, 2018**

In this short comment, Burger responds to "Seabird population changes following mammal eradications on islands" by Brooke et al. (2018), calling on seabird conservationists to develop tools for addressing the multiple, global threats facing seabirds. Burger acknowledges that the eradication of invasive species on islands is a key way to alleviate pressure on seabird populations, but goes on to review other interacting threats such as climate change and sea-level rise in order to highlight that many population level trends are missed due to small, localized sample sizes and short-term studies.

[6] Anker-Nilssen, T., Jensen, J.K. and Harris, M.P., 2018. Fit is fat: winter body mass of Atlantic Puffins *Fratercula arctica*. *Bird Study*, pp.1-7.

Events

The 3rd World Seabird Conference

Patrick Jodice, Chair of the World Seabird Union Executive Board

Dates: 19 - 23 October 2020

Venue: Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart, Tasmania Australia

The 3rd World Seabird Conference (WSC3) will build on the progress and success of the 1st and 2nd World Seabird Conferences and will once again place seabirds on the global stage. Our goal is to provide a hub for seabird scientists from across the world to gather with colleagues and discuss research, conservation, and innovative technology as they relate to the study of seabirds and their marine environment.

World Seabird Twitter Conference

Agnes Olin #WSTC5 chair

The World Seabird Twitter Conference, a conference on seabird research and conservation taking place entirely on Twitter, is returning for the 5th year in row on 9-11 April as #WSTC5 and abstract submission is now open! This is a great opportunity to get your seabird research or conservation work out to a wide audience, free and with minimum carbon emissions. Don't worry if you are not on Twitter yet – there are plenty of people and resources to help you get started. For more information and to submit your abstract, **visit our website**.

Abstract submission closes on the 15th of February.

Website: **www.seabirdgroup.org.uk**

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/pages/TheSeabirdGroup/**

Twitter: **www.twitter.com/TheSeabirdGroup (@TheSeabirdGroup)**

Registered charity No. 260907

The Seabird Group promotes and helps co-ordinate the study and conservation of seabirds. Members also receive the journal *Seabird*. The Group organises regular conferences and provides small grants towards research.

CURRENT SEABIRD GROUP COMMITTEE

Current retirement dates (at AGM) are shown in brackets:

Chairman	Stephen Votier (2019)	S.C.Votier@exeter.ac.uk
Secretary	Holly Kirk (2020)	secretary@seabirdgroup.org.uk
Treasurer	Ian Cleasby (2022)	ian.cleasby@rspb.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Danni Thompson (2022)	membership@seabirdgroup.org.uk
Seabird Editor	Richard Sherley (2019)	journal@seabirdgroup.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Katherine Booth Jones (2022)	newsletter@seabirdgroup.org.uk
Website Officer	Jeff Stratford (2016)	jeff.stratford@pms.ac.uk

Ordinary Members:

Assistant Newsletter Editor	Vivienne Booth (2020)	Vivienne.Booth@rspb.org.uk
Early Career	Beth Clark (2019)	b.l.clark@exeter.ac.uk
Seabird Census	Stuart Murray (2022)	murraysurvey@yahoo.co.uk
Social Media	Saskia Wischnewski (2022)	saskia.wischnewski@rspb.org.uk
Assistant Membership Secretary	Zoe Deakin (2022)	DeakinZ@cardiff.ac.uk

Current membership rates	
Standing Order	£20
Concession	£15
Institution	£35
International:	£21
Life	£300

The Newsletter is published three times a year. The Editor welcomes articles from both members and non-members on issues relating to seabird research and conservation. We aim to provide a forum for readers' views so that those provided in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Seabird Group.

Submissions for the newsletter should be emailed to the newsletter editor: newsletter@seabirdgroup.org.uk. We recommend a maximum of 1500 words and ask that photographs and figures are sent as separate files and with full credits, where appropriate. **Deadlines are: 15th January (February edition); 15th May (June edition); and, 15th September (October edition).** Every effort is made to check the content of the material that we publish. It is not, however, always possible to check thoroughly every piece of information back to its original source as well as keeping news timely. If you have any concerns about any of the information or contacts provided, please contact the Newsletter Editor.