



Christmas Crafts

Activities for Young Seabird Ambassadors

Introduction

This activity aims to teach the children about the lifecycle of the Manx Shearwater in a fun craft activity. We will learn about the life cycle of the Manx Shearwaters and, as they migrate to Argentina, we will compare Christmas on Scilly to Christmas in Argentina so children understand more about cultural world differences.

Learning Objectives

- That 40 % of the world population of Manx Shearwaters nest in the UK, and that Scilly is one of only 2 colonies in England (the other is Lundy).
- They migrate to South America (Argentina) in winter, chicks migrate this great distance by themselves with no parents.
- They spend Christmas off the Rio plate in Argentina as there is a large source of food for them there in winter.
- The birds need to be protected wherever they are in their life cycle. In Argentina this could be done with fishing measures and steps taken to avoid the birds being caught as bycatch. In Scilly the biggest threats for the Shearwaters is predation from rats but with these now removed from St Agnes and Gugh the birds are protected.
- The children in Argentina have Manxies during the winter and we will learn about the differences between Christmas in Argentina and the UK.

How to Run the Session

Manx Shearwater Life Cycle

- Talk the children through the life cycle of the Manx Shearwaters
- Use the map to show them the migration route.

Christmas in Argentina

- Read the facts of how Argentineans around the region where Manx shearwaters live in coastal towns celebrate Christmas
- Ask the children to help you make a table of 'things the same' things which are different'.

Making a Card

- After learning all about Christmas in Argentina, ask each child to draw a Manx shearwater doing something Christmassy.
- All these pictures will be placed on a big card and can be sent to a school in Argentina (or a photo of the card is sent) and to ask them to wish the manxies 'Feliz navidad' at Christmas



Manx Shearwater Life Cycle and Migration

- Eggs are laid in the burrows and parents take turns incubating the eggs whilst the other goes out searching for prey.
 - The parents will incubate the egg for 47-55 days
 - The chick will then be left by itself in the burrow where it will strengthen its wing/flying muscles and lose its downy feathers.
 - During this time it will also 'stargaze' in order to fix the position of the stars so that they can re-find their native burrows when they return.
 - The chicks will fledge between 62 – 76 days after hatching.
 - They will then migrate to the good feeding grounds in Argentina
 - Between 2 and 4 years they may return but will not breed until they are 5-7
 - They will prospect nests and look for a mate during the time when they return.
- There is still very much to learn about the Manx Shearwaters migrating from Scilly so one day we may know more about their behaviour and migration routes.



The migration route of the Manx Shearwater



The life cycle of a Manx Shearwater.

- Check out this video explaining what a Manx Shearwater chick does when preparing to leave the burrow and migrate. <https://vimeo.com/138402352>

Christmas in the UK and Argentina

Argentine Traditions

- Warm at Christmas
- Decorate many types of tree
- Main meal on Christmas eve (sometimes this is a parilla or barbeque)
- Presents opened on Christmas eve
- Fireworks on Christmas eve
- Midnight mass on Christmas eve
- People say 'Feliz Navidad!' (Happy Christmas)
- Many people are Catholic so Christmas is a very important time.
- People release 'globos' which are paper balloons that contain a candle which is lit and floats into the sky (this is bad for the environment and wildlife though!)
- Children may leave their shoes under the Christmas tree to be filled with presents, a tradition which comes from 'Three Kings Day' on January 6th where children would also receive presents and leave their shoes on their porch.
- Many put cotton balls on their trees to look like snow.
- Wreaths of red, white, green and gold are out on front doors.
- The 'presebre' (nativity scene) is an important part of many household decorations.



What can you do for seabirds?

- Visit the website to find out about opportunities on the island to help the Seabird Recovery Project.
<http://www.ios-seabirds.org.uk/>
- Report and signs of rats on Agnes, Gugh or uninhabited islands by calling the number 01720 422153.
- Avoid disturbing seabird colonies.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Dispose of waste properly and help keep beaches clean.

