



ISLES OF SCILLY SEABIRD RECOVERY PROJECT

'Working with the local community and visitors on the Isles of Scilly to enhance their seabird heritage'

'RAT ON A RAT' UPDATE: MAY 2014

Volunteers; Ross Packman, Lydia Titterton, Norman Harris, Tristan Fletcher, John Headon, Carole Cilia, Matthew Tickner, Amy Horn-Norris, Tamsin Page and Oilly Watts,

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I expect like me, you are all missing Biz and her Wildlife International team members and volunteers after the winter-removal phase. They send their regards and are busy on their next projects elsewhere in the country and further afield. I have let them know that the Manx shearwaters are back, taking a close look at the wider 'housing market' that has become available this year.



Manx shearwaters are back!



IOSWT volunteers have done a first check on the permanent monitoring stations

So we are now in the biosecurity phase and you will have seen the permanent monitoring stations with chocolate wax inside. Thanks to all those who came along to the training workshops which Biz delivered before she left. Do let me know if you didn't get the crib sheets Biz handed out to households and I can print one off or email you. These sheets explain what to do to help keep the island rat-free. Give me a call if you see any potential sign of rats or would like further details about any aspect of the project. **Tel: 01720 422153 or Mob: 07881 517047.**

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Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Volunteers Norman Harris and Ross Packman have carried out the initial monitoring check of the permanent stations this month. Lydia Titterton entered the data into our database. Of rats there was no sign; just a few nibbles from shrews on the chocolate wax blocks.

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We hope you like the seabird leaflets. They were designed so you and holidaymakers have as much information as possible about the project and how to identify various seabirds when out and about. The reverse side pulls out into a map-poster, something that some of you asked for to put on your visitor notice boards and coffee tables. I also have 'Rat on a Rat' window stickers for you all. I have started handing these out and will continue to do in the weeks ahead.





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Alan Reekie was ahead of the game. He's put a 'Rat on a Rat' sticker on his buggy! He was also quick off the mark to let me know about rat droppings on Gugh. I set up some extra monitoring straightaway and checked it out over the following week with its chocolate and coconut wax, ink tunnels and trail cameras. But the only signs were signs of shrew. As Alan and I indeed expected the rat droppings were old droppings dating back from before the winter removal. Nevertheless it was great that Alan put me in the picture because we all need to be vigilant.

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Thanks as well to all the following people who are checking each permanent station on their land: Rosie, Ross, Mike, Rick, Fran, Johann, Mark and Tristan, Tim and Sam. Also to Rick again because he'll be keeping an eye on the stations by the quay and the various bins. John is checking stations on board the 'Spirit' and the 'Enterprise' while I carry out the job on the 'Lyonesse Lady' and St Mary's Quay. All stations have a plastic card on the front so you can mark when you've done your monthly check. By all means check more often if you can.

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This week sees the arrival of some new volunteers for the project. Amy, Olly, Matt and Tamsin are joining as part of ecological monitoring work on everything other than rats and seabirds. Adrian Spalding and Catriona Neil will be putting on botany training this week too. So please come and say hello when we're out and about. Again you won't miss us as we'll be wearing the Orange Hat Mark II: orange baseball caps for that brilliant summer weather!



Plastic tags on your permanent monitoring stations



Introducing Orange Hat: Mark II (summer baseball cap!)

With regard to the visitor bins on the island, we have asked for assistance from the Council, the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and the Duchy of Cornwall in making the bins more visible. That way, there may be less litter around or less yacht waste left on the sand bar. The Duchy is producing a sign to go on Gugh bar which says: 'Bins this Way'; IOSWT is cutting around the bin on Lousy Bank so it's easier to spot and the Council is coming up with fresh signage for the bins themselves. For the first time they are providing two dog waste bins as well.

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I'm due to be camping on the island for the week from Monday 12th. You'll probably bump into me handing out the 'Rat on a Rat' stickers.

Jaclyn

Comments and queries welcome: Jaclyn.pearson@rspb.org.uk

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