



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: JUNE 2014

Volunteers; Carole Cilia, Tristan Fletcher, Norman Harris, Sarah Harris, John Headon, Kirsty Hibbert, Amy Horn- Norris, Ross Packman, Tamsin Page, Matthew Tickner, Lydia Titterton, Will Scott, and Olly Watts

Firstly, I would like to introduce you to Lydia Titterton, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust volunteer, who will be volunteering on the project 3 days a week throughout summer. With support from staff and other volunteers she will be carrying out the monthly coastal monitoring checks and will join me in writing these monthly newsletters.

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It's been an exciting month for seabird and other wildlife surveys on St Agnes and Gugh and for our control site on Bryher. You will have seen us out and about around the islands in our new orange baseball caps. Dr. Vickie Heaney is our Seabird Ecologist and carries out the seabird surveys. So far her Manx shearwater checks on St Agnes and Gugh show a similar number of 'apparently occupied burrows' to last year. This is what we would have expected, but there is a much greater chance young Manx shearwater chicks will survive and fledge later this summer. Vickie conducts seabird surveys on the other islands too and last week carried out a census on Annet, and a Manx shearwater count on St Helen's. If any of you are interested in volunteering to assist Vickie as part of her work, please get in touch via the project.



IOSWT volunteer
Lydia Titterton



Volunteers taking part in
vegetation surveys, Gugh



RSPB volunteers setting up
shrew tunnels, Bryher



Dr Vickie Heaney explains
the Annet census

The other surveys that we have been carrying out are those designed to monitor any changes to rabbit and shrew numbers, to species of vegetation, invertebrates and land birds. Last year a baseline survey was carried out by Spalding Associates. This May we were joined by RSPB staffer Tamsin Page, RSPB sabbatical staff Olly Watts and Matthew Tickner, RSPB volunteer Amy Horn-Norris and other volunteers Lydia Titterton, Norman Harris, Kirsty Hibbert and Vickie Heaney. A big thank you to all who took part. We will be repeating these surveys this month, July and September. Again, if you are interested in volunteering, please do get in touch.

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For six weeks, we have a new volunteer with us; Edward Marshall. Ed is the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust's photography intern. So if we look like we are being 'papped' as if we were celebrities – it's all about building up our photo library. Next week we'll be joined by volunteers for further ecological monitoring and Paul St Pierre will be over on St Agnes for a couple of days to carry out the June land bird survey on St Agnes. So, again, please come and say hello.

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Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust volunteers Norman Harris and Lydia Titterton, RSPB volunteer Olly Watts, project volunteer Tristan Fletcher and as well as myself, carried out the May monitoring check on all the coastal





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permanent stations. Of rats there was again no sign; just a few nibbles from shrews on the chocolate wax blocks, while some stations have even become home to shrews as they have pulled in grass bedding to make stations nice and cosy!



Ed Marshall, IOSWT photography intern and volunteer Will Scott



Olly Watts checking permanent monitoring stations



Shrew nesting material in monitoring station

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There have been more potential rat sightings, thanks for the report of noises in an Agnes a loft. There was no sign of rats following inspection and monitoring, but there was evidence of shrews and sparrows. Then a visitor saw what they thought may have been a rat by the island phone box, it was dark at the time. But never-the-less, it was good we were told, because we could set up monitoring. You can still see the ink tunnels and chocolate wax in that area, which will be left out for one more week. Thanks to John Peacock, Peter Smith, Rick Legg, Mike Hicks and St Agnes school who checked the stations.

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Thanks 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 stations by the quay and the various bins. John is doing 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 everyone can mark up when they've done their monthly check. By all means check more often if you can.

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Finally, Wednesday afternoon 'seabird safaris' on St Agnes boating have got off to start to a flying start. Our volunteer interpreter, Darren Mason is doing a great job pointing out the various seabirds to the visitors who join the trip to see and learn about what's what off the Western Rocks. Feedback so far has ranged from: "inspiring", "brilliant", "very informative", "great that work is being done to protect the seabirds". Why not come along on one of the trips yourself this summer, that's 1 – 3pm Wednesday afternoons. You can visit www.stagnesboating.com for more information. Myself and Paul St Pierre will be filling Darren's shoes whilst he is on holiday for the next couple of weeks - lets hope the feedback is as positive!

Jaclyn

Comments and queries welcome: Jaclyn.pearson@rspb.org.uk or 07881517047.

In addition to the support from LIFE, The EU's programme for financing key environmental schemes across the continent, and the UK's own Heritage Lottery Fund, the Seabird Recovery project is also being supported by the Defra-funded Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

