



NEWSLETTER 124

OCTOBER 2013

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## RESEARCH NEWS

### THE GREAT PUFFIN WRECK OF MARCH 2013 (BUT DEAD PUFFINS STILL WANTED)

Wrecks of seabirds apparently dying of starvation after periods of very rough weather are not that uncommon in the North Sea but they rarely include large numbers of Atlantic Puffins. However, it was immediately apparent that the wreck of auks down the coasts of eastern Scotland and northeast England in mid-March 2013 bucked this trend since the main species involved was the Puffin. The first reports of beached Puffins came from members of the Northeast England Beached Bird Surveys Group and on 24 March the group coordinator Dan Turner put out an alert. Soon reports of dead Puffins came in from beaches from the Moray Firth south to Lincolnshire. Due to the herculean efforts of an army of bird watchers and dog-walkers over 4,600 dead Puffins were reported from this stretch of North Sea coast. This was almost three times the previous record of 1642 counted during a wreck in February and March 1983. Although corpses continued to be reported for several months, the bulk of birds appeared to have died in late March or early April.



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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Seabird-Group/505575036157550?fref=ts>

@TheSeabirdGroup

An initial assessment of 71 reasonably intact Puffins indicated that they were grossly underweight, and had no fat reserves and empty stomachs. A more detailed and systematic examination of an additional 20 more Puffins and 20 other auks by the Defra-funded Diseases of Wildlife Scheme and SAC Consulting Veterinary Services found no evidence of disease or trauma (Duff, Harris & Turner 2013 *Veterinary Record* **173**: 224). Thus the available evidence indicates that the birds had died of starvation. However, it was unclear whether this was due to a lack of food and/or being unable to feed. There are no direct estimates of prey abundance to investigate the former but the weather in the northwest North Sea was exceptionally windy and cold in March 2013 which would have made feeding conditions for the birds challenging. Full details are given in Harris and Elkins (*Scottish Birds* 2013 (**33**): 157-159) but, in brief, between 6 and 11 March there were strong NE/ENE winds reaching gale force with wave heights exceeding 5 m. After a temporary lull, there was another period of strong to gale force ENE/SE winds between 17 and 20 March with wave heights peaking at 7.6 m on 18 March.

This prolonged period of strong to gale force onshore winds resulted in very rough seas along the coasts of northeast England and east Scotland where they caused severe damage to some harbours. The use of time-at-depth recorders has shown that Puffins normally feed within 20 m of the sea-surface (Harris & Wanless 2011, *The Puffin*, Poyser). Turbulence of the water within this zone would probably have made feeding very difficult for Puffins and it is probably no coincidence that Puffins seemed to have suffered far more than Common Guillemots that typically dive much deeper.

The 52 ringed Puffins reported all came from colonies in the Firth of Forth, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island suggesting that most, possibly all, the wrecked Puffins were local birds which were returning to waters near the breeding colonies after wintering well offshore in the northern North Sea and the northeast Atlantic. The first birds had already returned to the colonies by mid-March so possibly they were too attached to the area to move away when conditions deteriorated. Over 1000 dead birds were aged by bill characters and over two-thirds were old enough to be breeding. It was therefore rather a surprise when counts of burrows on the Isle of May (by CEH staff and paid for by Scottish Natural Heritage), Craigleith and Fidra (SOS Puffin Project) and the Farne Islands (The National Trust) showed no decline in numbers since the last counts in 2008. Checks of colour-ringed Puffins on the Isle of May later in the spring indicated that overwinter survival of adults was slightly lower than normal but not dramatically so. Our current thinking is that the Puffin populations had probably increased slightly between 2008 and 2012 and the mortality resulting from the wreck returned numbers to 2008 levels.

Although initially we thought that the March 2013 event was a major mortality, with hindsight it appears as though the numbers dying might not have been exceptionally high. The unusual thing was that the birds died close enough to the coast during a period of onshore winds so that many corpses ended up on beaches. Images of dead and dying Puffins elicited intense public concern and rumours about the species being on the verge of extinction.

The high profile of this wreck and thorough documentation of the birds dying will, however, help shed light on an aspect of Puffin biology that still remains a mystery – namely when birds moult. For the last 40 years I have been collecting the remains of Puffins dying during the winter to assess their moult (during which they are flightless) and the development of the bill and eye ornaments. In a normal winter, I am lucky to get >5 but this spring I checked 840! Of 431 adults aged by bill characters, 47 (11%) were regrowing their primaries and most of the others had recently replaced their primaries. The percentage of immatures in primary moult was much higher (45/210 or 21%) and some birds had not started to replace their flight feathers.

These findings support our views that the main moult of the year and the flightless period occurs in the late winter and immature moult later in the winter than adults. However, things might be more complicated since Harris & Wanless (2011) reported that some adults found dead in the Northern Isles and shot in the Faeroes in October were growing their wing feathers. These records raise the possibility of a very flexible moult or that even birds become flightless twice during a winter.

Despite the wealth of material from this wreck we still need information on the state of moult of birds between the end of the breeding season and February. Wings and the photographs of the heads of the birds concerned from these months will still be gratefully received by Mike Harris ([mph@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:mph@ceh.ac.uk)) Centre for Ecology & Hydrology,

Home address: Pittenkerrie Cottage, Glassel, Banchory AB31 4DD



**Change from winter to summer plumage in the Puffin as shown by heads of Puffins collected by Debbie Russell and helpers at St Andrews in late March 2013 (Mel Froude)**

### SHETLAND (EXCLUDING FAIR ISLE)

Early indications of a dire breeding season, for some species at least, proved correct. Food availability from May to early July was the main problem rather than any weather events. Things improved slightly from mid-July and survival of the few late chicks was often high.

At the time of writing (13<sup>th</sup> September), a few **Red-throated Diver** chicks have yet to fledge and data have yet to be collated fully. Generally it was a poor season, with chicks disappearing at a young age; for the first time on record, none fledged from Hermaness NNR. **Fulmar** numbers were broadly similar to 2012 and breeding success at six colonies using marked photographs was relatively high (mean  $0.51 \pm 0.03$  SE). **Gannets** seem immune from food-related problems, with success of 0.64 at Hermaness and 0.67 at Noss.

At the time of the Seabird 2000 census, Foula held by far the largest **Shag** colony (2,277 AON) in the British Isles, and probably the World, but the species has been in trouble there since 2004, when birds largely deserted the island during the breeding season and numbers have still not recovered. This year, two chicks fledged from 8 AONs in 10 plots. The number of Shags actually breeding on Foula is currently unknown, but only 338 birds were counted around the island on 25<sup>th</sup> July. This was also the third year of extensive non-breeding in southeast Shetland, which has gradually become 'worse'. At Sumburgh Head plots, only half of sites with any nest material (98 c.f. 257 in 2010) progressed to incubation, laying was late and sporadic, only 16% of incubating nests hatched (30% in 2012, 73% in 2010), and success was 0.25 (0.38 in 2012, 1.23 in 2010), with 15 chicks fledging (a provisional maximum) compared to 274 in 2010. Further north along the east coast to Mousa (where eight chicks fledged from 12 AON in five plots), a survey in late June found 178 nests (46% active), 70% fewer than in 2010 (587, 97% active). The situation was different in northeast Shetland, where of 42 nests monitored at Burravoe, Yell, 93% progressed to incubation, 64% hatched, chicks were seen seven weeks earlier than at Sumburgh, and success was 0.92; a boat survey of southeast Yell found 137 nests (91% active) c.f. 176 (99% active) in 2009.

The number of **Arctic Skua** AOT's on Foula continues to decline (35 c.f. 50 in 2010); 26 pairs laid, eight hatched young but the chicks all died after a few days. One fledged on Noss (from two AOTs) but none at Hermaness (two AOTs), Mousa (three AOTs), or in one former study area on Fetlar (three AOTs; monitoring of skuas on Fetlar has now ceased). A census of **Great Skuas** at Hermaness recorded 979 AOTs (c.f. 751 in 2007), but success in a single plot was just 0.16 (38 AOTs). The picture was similar on Noss, with the census count of 465 AOTs (365 in 2007) and success of 0.15 (82 AOTs). There was no island census on Foula but the number of AOTs appeared to be down, possibly by a third, and success was even lower (0.07, 41 AOTs) with much evidence of cannibalism from mid-July.

**Kittiwake** colonies were counted on Fetlar (64 nests, 91% active; most recent count 41 nests in 2002) and southeast Yell (149 nests, 82% active; 154 in 2009). In southeast Shetland, a total of 519 nests (59% active) at the seven breeding stations from Mousa to Horse Island (including Sumburgh Head) was 48% lower than in 2010 (991). The annual census at Foula located 327 AONs (378 in 2012, 997 as recently as 2007). Laying at monitored colonies was again late, with most nest failures occurring in the first half of July, at the late incubation, hatching, and early chick stages. Success was zero in plots at Sumburgh Head, No Ness, St Ninian's Isle, Foula and Noss, 0.08 at Compass Head, 0.29 at West Burra, 0.12 at Burravoe, Yell, and 0.06 at Hermaness; 2013 was the 4<sup>th</sup> successive year of extremely low success.

Data on **Arctic Terns** are still being collated, but birds settled in modest numbers at some colonies, very few young survived to fledge (or even hatched) at most, but some smaller colonies were slightly more productive (e.g. 11 pairs on Hermaness fledged eight young).

At the major **Guillemot** colonies, numbers in plots since 2010 seem to be fluctuating within a gradual downward trend at Noss and Sumburgh Head, although daily variation at the latter was unprecedented this year: 748 birds on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 376 on 4<sup>th</sup> June! Mean plot counts at Hermaness, however, indicate a rapid decline there: 1,787 in 2010, 1,368 in 2011, 1,113 in 2012 and 793 in 2013. There is no recent information from Foula, other than numbers seemed low this year with few chicks seen. In a single success plot at Sumburgh Head (checked daily), median laying (19<sup>th</sup> May) was five days later and the proportion of regularly attended sites (155) at which an egg was laid (98: 63%) was lower than in 2012 (86%). Incubating birds seemed food-stressed from the outset (evidenced by apparent incubation shifts of 3-4 days, and the green colour of faeces compared to the white of non-incubators) and 40% of first eggs had been lost by 25<sup>th</sup> May, of which at least 29% were abandoned *in situ*. The birds' nervousness was highlighted when a rabbit wandered close to the plot on 26<sup>th</sup> May, causing almost complete, temporary desertion and the loss of half the remaining eggs. Hatching success of first eggs (11%) was low, no relay eggs hatched, and no chicks survived to fledge. In other parts of the colony, chicks (presumably mainly from relay eggs) were present until mid August (the last being seen on 16<sup>th</sup>), but many of these were predated by gulls and it is unlikely that overall success exceeded 0.10. At Burravoe in Yell (checked every 3 days), laying was about a week later than in 2012, fewer site-holding pairs (130) were assumed to have laid (75: 58% c.f. 89%), and a lower proportion of these were known to have hatched (40% c.f. 54%). Chick survival was higher than at Sumburgh (gulls don't patrol at Burravoe) with success estimated at 0.36 (0.51 in 2012).

Numbers of **Razorbills** in monitoring plots are now so low, and fluctuate so much that it is difficult to tell what the population is doing. Mean counts were 77 birds at Sumburgh Head (64 in 2012, but a total colony count of 151 birds was 20% lower), 32 birds at Noss (30 in 2012), and 21 at Hermaness (9 in 2012). Breeding success at 43 nest sites at Sumburgh Head was 0.23 (0.56 in 2012), low but out-performing Guillemots. The only information on **Puffins** came from Sumburgh Head, where there was an evening count of 1,469 birds on 26<sup>th</sup> May, and adults were carrying fish in early July to 11 of 50 burrows occupied earlier in the season, suggesting maximum success of 0.22. On Foula, birds were seen carrying larval gadoids but how many chicks fledged was unknown.

**Martin Heubeck** ([martinheubeck@btinternet.com](mailto:martinheubeck@btinternet.com)) & **Mick Mellor** (**SOTEAG**), **Newton Harper** (**RSPB**), **Sheila Gear** (**Foula Ranger Service**), **Afra Skene & Jonathan Swale** (**SNH**).

## LUNDY

In 2013, a full census of Lundy's seabirds has shown substantial population increases in a number of species over the last five years. This year's survey was eagerly anticipated in providing a further benchmark on the recovery of the island's Manx shearwater population following the rat eradication a decade ago, as a well as a general status check on all breeding seabirds.



Lundy Island (David Price)

As we hoped, the most significant change was in the population of Manx shearwaters which has seen the number of occupied nests increase a staggering tenfold since the rat eradication, producing a new breeding population estimate of over 3,000 pairs. Initially the growth in population was due to immigration, but since 2008 this has been bolstered by Lundy-reared birds returning to breed. Full details of the survey will be published (and accessible on-line) in the Lundy Field Society Journal in spring 2014.

Puffins have begun to recover too; after an all time low of just five birds recorded in 2004, 80 were recorded this summer. Guillemots have increased from 3,302 to 4,114 individuals and this followed a previous increase from 2,321 individuals in 2004, prior to which the population was relatively stable. Razorbills have increased by 27% to 1,324 individuals, shags by 78% to 112 apparently occupied nests (AONs) and fulmars by 27% to over 200 AONs. Guillemots, razorbills and shags are now at their highest levels since recording began in 1981.

However, the picture is not so good for gulls, especially kittiwakes which continue to decline, with a five year drop from 151 to 127 AONs. There is also evidence of decline in herring gulls, lesser black-backed and great black-backed gulls.

**Helen Booker (RSPB) and David Price.**

## ISLE OF MAY

Following on from two mixed years, 2013 proved to be another variable breeding season on the Isle of May NNR. Poor weather during the winter and early spring delayed the breeding season for most species and reduced the breeding numbers of some, in particular European shags.

Return rate for colour marked adult shags (43%) was poor with only two lower years previously recorded, in 1993-94 and 2004-05. Return rate for razorbill (77%) was also below average while common guillemot (91%) and black-legged kittiwake (81%) were above average. Despite the wreck just prior to the breeding season return rate for Atlantic puffin (85%) was also above average.

Of the six study species, Northern fulmars (0.47 chicks per incubating pair) had the most successful season since 2002 while European shags (1.20 chicks per pair) had an above average season. In contrast, razorbills (0.48 chicks leaving per pair) had the lowest productivity on record, while black-legged kittiwakes (0.41 chicks per completed nest) were also below average. Atlantic puffins (0.70 chicks fledging per pair laying) and common guillemots (0.69 chicks leaving per pair) had slightly below average seasons.

Lesser sandeels (*Ammodytes marinus*) remained the main food of young Atlantic puffins and Black-legged kittiwakes. Shag chick diet comprised mainly Butterfish (*Pholis gunnellus*, 54% of loads) and Sandeels (31%). Common guillemots fed their young mainly on clupeids. Razorbill chick diet contained slightly more sandeels (56% of loads) than clupeids (44%). For more information on the Isle of May study look up the website:

[www.ceh.ac.uk/sci\\_programmes/IsleofMayLong-TermStudy](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/sci_programmes/IsleofMayLong-TermStudy)

**Mark Newell, Mike Harris, Sarah Burthe, Carrie Gunn, Sarah Wanless and Francis Daunt**  
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Edinburgh. - e-mail: [manew@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:manew@ceh.ac.uk)

## SCOTTISH MPAS CONSULTATION

Scotland's iconic seabird populations have been decimated in recent years, with some parts of Orkney seeing declines of as much as 91%.

The Scottish Government has proposed 33 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) which only protect **one** of Scotland's 24 breeding seabird species.

Whilst MPAs are a great thing for Scotland's marine wildlife, they won't protect the majority of Scotland's seabirds.

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation looking for your views on how MPAs should protect Scotland's sea.

There are three key things the Scottish Government must do:

**Designate all proposed MPAs and include protection for seabirds**

**Designate all six Black Guillemot MPAs**

**Designate the Firth of Forth Banks Complex MPA for sandeels**

Seabirds are protected by European designations but these won't protect all of Scotland's seabirds – only Scottish MPAs can do that.

The proposed MPA in the **Firth of Forth** is one of the most important places in Scotland for seabirds and sandeels. Unfortunately the proposed MPA will not directly protect either. Sands and gravels and the Ocean Quahog, a long-lived shellfish, are what the site is meant to protect. We fully **support the designation of this MPA**, but are campaigning to make sure that sandeels are included, and this site, along with others, will protect seabird feeding areas.

Black Guillemot (or Tystie's) don't migrate, so are not protected by any other designations. This is why they are the only Scottish seabird species to have MPAs proposed to protect them. We **need to support MPAs for Black Guillemot and ensure other seabirds are afforded similar protection.**

**Sandeels are an important food source for seabirds and other marine wildlife.** MPAs will be important to protect sandeels and give seabirds a better chance to produce young – something they've struggled to do over the last decade. Sandeels are an oil rich fish which burrow into soft sands and gravel on the sea floor. They aren't commercially fished in Scottish waters but may be sensitive to disturbance from other marine activities like renewable energy developments.

There are a number of roadshow events organised by the Scottish Government touring the country. These events are a great opportunity to find out more about MPAs in Scotland.

For more information about MPAs please visit [RSPB.org.uk/ChooseSealife](http://RSPB.org.uk/ChooseSealife) or if you have any questions please email [MPACampaign@RSPB.org.uk](mailto:MPACampaign@RSPB.org.uk)

You can submit your letter by emailing it to: [Marine\\_Environment\\_Mailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Marine_Environment_Mailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

The closing date for submission is **13 November 2013**. Please include your name and address in your letter.

**RSPB Scotland Marine Team**





## SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE Merton College, University of Oxford, on 21-23 March 2014

Preparations for the next Seabird Group conference are starting to ramp up now that the seabird fieldwork season is drawing to a close. A series of international and national keynote speakers are being invited and a conference website will be established in the coming weeks. Online registration and abstract submission will be available during November, and full details will be advertised on the Seabird Group website and via other media (including the next Newsletter).

## SEABIRD GROUP AGM

The **48th Seabird Group AGM** will be convened at the Scottish Ringers conference in Carrbridge, which is being held from 15th-17th November 2013. The AGM is scheduled for **1500 hrs on Sat 16th November**.

All Seabird Group members are of course welcome, and talks on recent Puffin and Shag research are listed in the programme. The conference is hosted by Tay Ringing Group, and full details can be found on their website at <http://www.tayringinggroup.org/>

Minutes from the previous AGM can be found at:

[http://www.seabirdgroup.org.uk/files/minutes\\_agm47.pdf](http://www.seabirdgroup.org.uk/files/minutes_agm47.pdf)

The ExCom recently revisited and updated the Seabird Group constitution during its 101<sup>st</sup> meeting, and the revised version is appended below. The proposed changes include the inclusion of a dedicated Website Officer and an ordinary student member on the ExCom, and conversion to email correspondence for most ExCom business. This revised constitution will be proposed at the AGM. We welcome feedback from the membership on these amendments, which are designed to aid the future running of the group and to ensure maximum engagement with the membership.

Ilka Win will be completing her term as Membership Secretary at the next AGM. Ilka has done a fantastic job of recruiting new members (bringing the total membership to over 300) and implementing Gift Aid declarations, which has led to a significant financial return back to the group (and hence to frontline seabird conservation activities). We thank Ilka heartily for her sterling work, but must now turn to the future and recruit a new Membership Secretary to take on this important role. So if you are interested in helping with the running of The Seabird Group as part of an active and enthusiastic Executive Committee, then please contact the Chairman, Dr Russell Wynn, at [rbwl@noc.ac.uk](mailto:rbwl@noc.ac.uk) for further details.



## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SEABIRD GROUP

Agreed at the Inaugural Meeting at New College, Oxford, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1966, *last revised at the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, Carrbridge, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013.*

- 1. Terms of reference.** The Seabird Group is a body devoted to the promotion of study and conservation of seabirds. The Group aims to (1) increase the amount and quality of research on seabirds, particularly in Europe and its waters, (2) educate Group members and others of the importance of seabirds and their environment, and (3) advocate the conservation of seabirds.
- 2. Membership.** Membership is open to all on payment of an annual subscription, due on 1<sup>st</sup> February, to be approved at a General Meeting of the Group. Members are entitled to participate in all Group activities and to receive Newsletters and the Group's journal *Seabird* when published.
- 3. Government.** The business of the Group will be conducted by an Executive Committee of eleven members, comprising the officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Editor of *Seabird*, Editor of the Newsletter, Website Officer) and four ordinary members including one student member. The officers and ordinary members shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting and shall normally serve for four-year terms. The student member shall be elected by co-option and shall normally serve for a one-year term, but may be co-opted for a further one-year term. Officers and ordinary members are not eligible for re-election to the Executive Committee until the Annual General Meeting following that at which their term of office expires, except for the Treasurer, both Editors, and the Website Officer who may be eligible for immediate re-election to a maximum of two full terms (eight years) in their named posts. Ordinary members are eligible during, or at the end of their term of office, for election as officers of the Group but they shall not normally serve on the Executive Committee for more than a total of seven consecutive years. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. when many of the Executive Committee reach the end of their terms of membership together, some officers or ordinary members may be proposed for re-election by the Annual General Meeting for a single one-year term. Should any vacancies occur during the year the Executive Committee may fill them by co-option. Co-opted members shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting. Other Group members may be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings by the Chair but shall not be entitled to vote.
- 4. Decisions.** Decisions relating to the business of the Group should be taken by a majority vote of all members of the Executive Committee. This can either be at a Committee Meeting (including meetings by teleconference), or through electronic mail correspondence. Preferably all members of the Executive Committee will vote on decisions, but the quorum will be six.
- 5. Resolution of disputes.** Decisions may be taken by a majority vote of all the members of the Executive Committee participating in a formal meeting, but in the event of a disagreement any member of the Executive Committee shall have the right to demand postponement of the decision for fourteen days, and then an electronic mail vote of all members of the Executive Committee shall be taken, whereupon a majority decision is binding.

6. **Organisation.** It shall be the duty of the officers and the Executive Committee to organise the activities of the Group. Wherever convenient, such activities can be carried out in co-operation with other groups or organisations. The Executive Committee shall approve any proposed activity of the Group, ensuring that any activity carried out in the name of the Group is properly planned and carried out with adequate resources and support. The Executive Committee shall ensure that the results of any activities are used effectively and where possible published.
7. **Annual General Meeting.** An Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Group will be held at some convenient place, preferably during the winter months and preferably during the course of a large, relevant conference. Twelve shall form the quorum. The Executive Committee shall report on progress during the previous calendar year and present a summary of accounts. Elections shall be made to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall make every effort to advertise the Annual General Meeting to all paid-up Members of the Group at least six weeks in advance, which shall include nominations to the Executive Committee and a provisional agenda. Any Member wishing to make additional nominations or to have other competent business placed on the agenda shall send by electronic mail notification to reach the Secretary not later than one week before the meeting.
8. **Additional General Meetings.** Additional General Meetings may be called by the Executive Committee, or on the electronic mail request of not less than twelve members of the Group to the Secretary, to discuss urgent business. The Secretary shall convene the Meeting as soon as is practicable with at least two weeks' notice to the Membership. At such Meetings the quorum shall be twenty-five members.
9. **Refusal of Membership.** The Executive Committee shall have the right to refuse or terminate the membership of any person who is deemed to have acted in a way contrary to the interests of the Group.
10. **Use of Funds.** All funds of the Group are to be used for the purposes stated in Clause 1 (including such forms of publicity, publication etc. as are required for this), and for no other purpose. No officer may receive payment in any way, directly or indirectly, except for reimbursement of reasonable expenses. In the event of the dissolution of the Group, any assets remaining after settlement of debts will not be disbursed to the Executive Committee or Members of the Group, but will be used for a purpose similar to that of the Group to be decided by the outgoing Executive Committee.
11. **Dissolution of the Group.** The Group may only be dissolved by a two-thirds vote in favour at a properly advertised General Meeting.

**Amendment of Constitution.** This constitution may be amended only by a resolution carried by a two-thirds majority at a properly advertised General Meeting

## SEABIRD GROUP GRANTS

The Seabird Group has the facility to award small grants (up to £500) each year. These are usually related to research projects or censuses. Priority is given to Seabird Group members working on Atlantic seabirds.

The next deadline for applications is **31<sup>st</sup> October**.

An application form and guidelines can be downloaded from the Seabird Group website.

Please email the completed form to the group secretary.

The following grants (£500 each) were awarded in the February round:

- **Sarah Croft – Falklands Conservation** Spatial segregation of Falkland Island cormorants and implications for the design of marine protected areas and environmental risk assessment at the southwest Atlantic.
- **Fair Isle Bird Observatory** - who carry out vital annual breeding seabird monitoring. The grant will go toward updating safety systems on the island, allowing for continued safe access on banks and cliffs and so that safe monitoring of the island's seabirds can continue.
- **Sarah Davis** – to maintain a long-term study colour-ringing study of Arctic skuas on Foula, Shetland.
- **Annalea Beard** - The population size, distribution and movement of Masked Boobies on mainland St Helena, Lot's Wife and Castle Rock Point area of Sandy Bay, St Helena Island, South Atlantic

Previous grant reports can be read in the newsletter.

## CORRECTION

Seabird Group Newsletter 123 published in June 2013 contained a spelling mistake in paragraph 1, page 1:

*When coated in this substance, the birds are prevented from flying or feeding, leading to hyperthermia, exhaustion, starvation and eventually death... "*

should read:

*"When coated in this substance, the birds are prevented from flying or feeding, leading to **hypothermia**, exhaustion, starvation and eventually death. "*

Ilka Win  
Membership Secretary  
The Seabird Group  
10 Broomfield Park  
Portlethen AB12 4XT  
UK



seabirdgroup.membership@gmail.com

## Membership Application Form

(1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014)

**Subscription rates** (please tick box below):

Concession\* £15.00                       Ordinary £20.00                       Institution £35.00

\*only applies to students or retirees from 65 years of age

**Payment options:**

Standing Order (see below)                       PayPal (rate + £1)                       cheque or cash

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*Initials/Forename* ..... *Surname* .....  
*Address*.....  
*Town/City* ..... *Postcode*.....  
*Country*.....  
*Email address (for newsletter)*.....  
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### Standing Order Instruction to Bank/Building Society (for UK bank account holders only)

To: The Manager

*Bank/Building Society*.....  
*Address*.....  
*Town/City* ..... *Postcode* .....  
*Name of account holder* .....

*Account no.*

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Please pay The Seabird Group (account no. 00875481) at the Bank of Scotland (sort code 80-07-24), 174 Byres Road, Glasgow G12 8SW, Scotland, the sum of £15/£20, my membership subscription, *now* and on 1st February each year until further notice.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Overseas members:**

The Seabird Group does not have facilities to process credit cards.

However, you can pay by credit card using PayPal. This has proven to be a quick and safe option for overseas members. An alternative to PayPal is payment via bank transfer.

### **1. PayPal – electronic invoice**

Once you returned your filled out application form we will send an electronic invoice to your email. For this you don't need a PayPal account, you can make a once off payment.

Due to administration costs however, this payment method incurs an additional £1 to the subscription fee.

### **2. Bank transfer**

Our international bank account number and identifier code are:

The Seabird Group  
Bank of Scotland  
174 Byres Road  
Glasgow G12 8SW  
UK

IBAN: GB58 BOFS 8007 2400 8754 81

SWIFT BIC: BOFSGB21329

## Gift Aid for past, present & future donations

**Did you know ....** Gift Aid means the Seabird Group can claim an extra 25% of the value of your membership fees back from HM Revenue & Customs?

### Information about Gift Aid

Gift Aid allows us to reclaim from the Government the tax that you have already paid on your membership subscriptions and donations. You can find out more on the HM Inland Revenue & Customs website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift\\_aid/basics.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift_aid/basics.htm) and how Membership subscriptions paid to a charity are not gifts but can be treated as Gift Aid [www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift\\_aid/rules/memb-subscript.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift_aid/rules/memb-subscript.htm).

### Not a member yet but like to join the Seabird Group?

Please fill in the declaration and send it with your membership fee of £20 (Ordinary rate ), £15 (Concession – student or pensioner from 65yrs) or £35 (Institution) to:

The Seabird Group, Membership Secretary, 10 Broomfield Park, Portlethen AB12 4XT.

### Why do we need your email address?

A high proportion of gifts we receive are made online. If you can put the same email address in this form as you used when making a donation via your PayPal account it makes it much easier for us to match declarations to gifts. For new member: We will use your email address to send you our three annual newsletters.

### Higher Rate Tax Payers

Don't forget that if you pay Income Tax at the higher rate you are likely to be able to claim further tax relief on your donations, via your tax return. If you're in any doubt please speak to your tax advisor.

### Paying other people's subscriptions

Payments made by an individual for somebody else's membership is not a gift to your charity and will therefore not qualify for Gift Aid, for example a husband pays for the annual membership subscription of his wife. The payment will qualify if it is made by a parent or legal guardian on behalf of a child under the age of 18.

### Please notify the Seabird Group if you:

- *Want to cancel this declaration*
- *Change your name or address*
- *No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains*

### Small Print

The Seabird Group is a registered charity with the Charity Commission: 260907. Our Registered Office is 16 Birch Park, Bangor, County Down, BT19 1RZ.

# Gift Aid declaration form –

for past, present & future donations



*giftaid it*

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made to the Seabird Group.

Please tick **all boxes** you wish to apply.

today                       in the past 4 years                       in the future

- ✓ I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.
- ✓ I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.
- ✓ I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

## Donor's details

First name ..... Surname .....

Home Address.....

Town/City ..... Postcode.....

Email.....

Signature..... Date .....

## Please notify the Seabird Group if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

*Please send this form to:*

*Seabird Group Membership Secretary, Ilka Win, 10 Broomfield Park, Portlethen AB12 4XT*



Website: [www.seabirdgroup.org.uk](http://www.seabirdgroup.org.uk)

Seabird Group Forum:

<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/seabirdgroupforum>

**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 retiral dates (at AGM) are shown in brackets:

|                             |                       |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Chairman                    | Russell Wyn (2015)    | <a href="mailto:rbwl@noc.ac.uk">rbwl@noc.ac.uk</a>                                       |
| Secretary                   | Ellie Owen (2015)     | <a href="mailto:ellie.owen@rspb.org.uk">ellie.owen@rspb.org.uk</a>                       |
| Treasurer                   | Kerry Leonard (2014)  | <a href="mailto:kerryleonard@hotmail.com">kerryleonard@hotmail.com</a>                   |
| Membership Secretary        | Ilka Win (2013)       | <a href="mailto:seabirdgroup.membership@gmail.com">seabirdgroup.membership@gmail.com</a> |
| Seabird Editor              | Martin Heubeck (2015) | <a href="mailto:martinheubeck@btinternet.com">martinheubeck@btinternet.com</a>           |
| Newsletter Editor           | Claire Smith (2014)   | <a href="mailto:seabirdgroup.newsletter@gmail.com">seabirdgroup.newsletter@gmail.com</a> |
| Newsletter Assistant Editor | Mark Newell (2014)    | <a href="mailto:manew@ceh.ac.uk">manew@ceh.ac.uk</a>                                     |
| Ordinary members            | Chris Thaxter (2014)  | <a href="mailto:chris.thaxter@bto.org">chris.thaxter@bto.org</a>                         |
|                             | Mark Lewis (2015)     | <a href="mailto:lewis_sparky@yahoo.co.uk">lewis_sparky@yahoo.co.uk</a>                   |

**Current membership rates**

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Standing Order | £20.00 |
| Concession     | £15.00 |
| Institution    | £35.00 |
| International: | £21    |
| Life           | £300   |

The Newsletter is published three times a year. The editor welcomes articles from members and others on issues relating to Seabird research and conservation.

Deadlines are: 15<sup>th</sup> May (June edition); 15<sup>th</sup> September (October edition) and 15<sup>th</sup> January (February edition).

Submissions for the newsletter must be in electronic format, preferably in word and should be no more than 1500 words. Please email photographs/figures as separate files and with full credits.

Every effort is made to check the content of the material that we publish. It is not, however, always possible to check comprehensively every piece of information back to its original source as well as keeping news timely. Please will readers make further checks at their own discretion, if they have any concerns about any of the information or contacts provided and contact me to allow feedback to other readers if necessary. **We also try to provide a forum for readers' views so that those provided in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Seabird Group.**