



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

outstanding scilly

nature access beauty heritage

Scilly's Special Seabirds....

By Nikki Banfield, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Communications Officer

The Isles of Scilly are regionally, nationally and internationally important when it comes to breeding seabirds. Consequently a huge amount of the work carried out by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust is to promote the health, well-being and continued success of our salty feathered friends as well as residents and visitors understanding of them.



This comes in many forms; from the land management work carried out by our Ranger Team primarily on the uninhabited Islands, to the educational events and activities we provide. This year it's extended further as we now have our very own Seabird Ecologist, Dr Vickie Heaney.

Vickie joined our team in April 2018, tasked with monitoring, in more detail than previously gathered, the numbers and productivity of our islands' seabird species. Moving beyond the Manx shearwater & Storm petrel which have historically been the key focus as a result of the five year funded Seabird Recovery Project, which ended in 2017.

Our Studies this year have included Terns, Kittiwakes, Puffins and Gulls, with the hope to expand further over the coming years as a part of our wider remit to monitor and protect all of Scilly's seabirds.

Whilst monitoring is still taking place for this years breeding season (currently Manx shearwater "chick checks" are in progress) we have a few headlines from data gathered so far:

- Storm petrels have again been found breeding on St Agnes & at two new sites on Gugh (only found on Annet & outer rocks prior to 2015);
- No common terns have bred at all this year in Scilly;
- Puffins numbers look good this year bucking the national trend for declines in this species;
- 35 pairs of kittiwakes bred on the east side of Gugh; sadly it appears that none of them successfully fledged young;
- The number of Lesser black backed gulls breeding on Gugh has increased this year to 416 pairs reversing a 25% decline last year in this globally declining protected species.



So to date it has been a mixed bag with some really positive news regarding our seabirds and some sadly not so positive. Once all the data has been collected and collated for this year we hope to be able to share a lot more, so watch this space!



@ScillyAONB

@ScillyWildlife

Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust registered charity number 1097807
www.ios-wildlifetrust.org.uk

