



## La Société

For nature, history and science in Guernsey



Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*). Look out for these on coastal grassland. Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.

### From the Président

I am sitting here with the proverbial 'blank paper' in front of me asking myself how we can be at the middle point of the year. In past years we have sent the summer Communiqué out in May, but this year we have decided on June as this will mean the newsletter will be with you every four months, February, June, and October.

I reported, back in February, that the Guernsey Biological Records Centre was in a state of flux, with simpler ways of data inputting and accessing data being finalised. In addition, talks were taking place regarding under whose auspices the records centre would sit, its finances, and premises. Talks are still ongoing, but I hope when I write to you in October, everything will have been finalised.

We have had some changes on Council; both Andy Lane (Archaeology) and Mike Paige (Marine Biology) have stepped down and I am delighted to welcome back Tanya Walls to the Archaeology post, and to welcome Nicky Harris, who has taken on the Marine Biology post; Nicky will also be organising the Bailiwick DolFin project, and helping with BEEP and Guernsey Seasearch.

I would like to thank Andy and Mike for the work they did whilst they were section secretaries.

I would also like to thank Angela Salmon, who has finished her stint as an ordinary member, for all her support and input over the years. We will still be seeing a lot of her as she is now working with the Nature Commission, and of course, she continues to run the Guernsey Conservation Volunteers. Jessi Jennings, who has served on Council as a section secretary in the past, has now been elected as an ordinary member. Jessi is the CEO of the newly formed Nature Commission, and I am sure her presence on Council will enhance what is already a close working relationship between ourselves and the Commission.

Our education team of Becky Ogier and Sarah Allez continue to visit the island schools to present the 'Cultural Enrichment Programme'. They are also busy organising many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes for our corporate members and other groups. These groups not only carry out physical conservation work, but they can also attend 'lunch and learn' sessions or conduct survey work on the reserves. If you think that your company would like to become a corporate member and take advantage of this initiative then please contact the team; details can be found on the back of this booklet. The education team will be heavily involved in surveying and conservation work at the area between Richmond Corner and Le Gélé Road known as Les Dunes. LSG has secured funding for an initial period of five years with an option to renew in the future. We very much hope that residents in the area will get involved in the work we are doing. Surveying the site is the first step; we will be paying particular attention to the botany, but also the insect life associated with it. We will be using sweep nets and running moth traps to help with this. We hope that the area will prove to be as botanically rich as the area at Port Soif, where the Conservation Herd played such a big part in its regeneration.

Talking of the Conservation Herd, you may well be aware that Dave Bartram, who has managed the herd for the past four years, will be stepping down in August. Mike Smith who has been with the herd since its inception (10 years) is also going to be taking a very well-earned rest. They will be a hard act to follow but I hope to be able to report a positive outcome in the October Communiqué. As you will see from the bursary item below the herd is playing a prominent part in one of the studies supported by the LSG bursary.

The Scientific Committee recently considered the applications for the 2024 bursary but was unable to decide between two of the projects, therefore it was decided to share the award between two applicants.

Josh Smith is working on providing 'experimental evidence that explores the interplay between soil carbon sequestration and net biodiversity gain in semi-natural grassland systems, and elucidates whether conservation grazing can achieve ecological, political, and socio-economic objectives and to what extent'. Our Conservation Herd is playing a prominent role in this work.

Henry Strobl, at present a veterinary student at Liverpool University, is researching whether the sort of systemic insecticides that are used in domestic animal flea preparations are harming the wider environment.

Henry sent us the following statement:

'There is emerging evidence that the drugs we use to control parasites in our pets may be harmful to insects, aquatic and other plant life, and possibly even human health. Some of these drugs, described as 'Novichok for insects' by David Goulson, a University of Sussex biologist, have been found in 95 to 99% of sampled UK waterways. Our planet is currently undergoing a 'sixth mass extinction', driven by human activities, and insects are suffering disproportionately. A third of our food relies on insect pollination, so it is crucial we look everywhere we can to protect our ecosystems.'

I aim to investigate and quantify our use of and environmental contamination of these drugs in Guernsey. Next, the project will hopefully effect positive change on the chosen metrics while ensuring the welfare and health of our pets are not compromised. Please do not yet reduce or change how you treat your pets without first consulting your vet, these treatments can be crucial to your animal's welfare!

In the third week of May, the Channel Island Bird Ringing Scheme (CIBRS) arranged a meeting for all members. Unfortunately, due to problems with Condor sailings, the contingent from Jersey could not be present in person. Richmond and Margaret Austin, who have administered the scheme for the last 20 years, have announced that they will be stepping down at the end of this year. We are fortunate that Julie Davis has volunteered to take on the role for five years. Rich and Marg have dragged the scheme, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century, and it is now run via a computer programme called Ring

Access; so very different from the days of snail mail, paper forms and carbon paper, all of which had to be stored! Rich and Marg also undertook to put all historic ringing data on the system, something approaching half a million records! In recognition of their immense dedication grateful members of the CIBRS presented them with two original moth plates [another interest of theirs] by artist Richard Lewington, and a bouquet.



Presentation of flowers and moth plates to Richmond and Margaret Austin by Charlotte Burgoine and John Horton (ABO warden).

Photo courtesy of Julie Davies.

There has been a symbiotic relationship between LSG and the CIBRS since the late 1940s when a group of enthusiasts applied to join the British scheme, only to be told 'You can't join us, because geographically you are French'; on applying to the French we were told 'Non, vous êtes Britannique'. In response to these replies, the CIBRS was formed and is Europe's smallest scheme. The Annual Transactions always contain a ringing report and a list of selected recoveries and controls. All data is shared with the EURING central database.

On Sunday 24th of March, an 'Egg Hunt with a difference' was organised for members. This was a popular family event. We were searching for shark, skate and ray egg cases, and well over 100 were found; they are currently being analysed and assigned, where possible, to a species. An egg hunt has to involve chocolate, and prizes were given in various categories, with all other participants, including adults, receiving easter eggs...although they varied in size.

Finally just to say we will be at the Viaër Marchi on Monday 1st July between 5pm and sunset and we hope to see you there.

**Trevor Bourgaize, President**

## Nature Guernsey Report

To date, three of the six events planned under the Nature Guernsey banner for 2024, have taken place.

The first was the ever-popular Rock Pool Ramble, held this year at Portelet in March. Sadly, it turned out to be a rather damp, blustery morning, but about 20 people braved the weather and were rewarded with some spectacular finds including several species which were new to most of the group, even the 'old timers'! These included an unusual type of 'fish' identified as a Montagu's seasnail, a creature which, instead of scales, has skin covered in tiny prickles; while another amazing find was a crab which, as you can see from the photo, looks exactly like a piece of seaweed... until it moves! It is a type of Long-legged Spider Crab - such amazing camouflage!



Montagu's seasnail and Long-legged Spider Crab.  
Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.



In April we held another seashore event, this time looking for ‘crabs and crocks’. The venue for this was Cow Bay below the Castle Emplacement and it was run jointly with Archaeology Section. It was wonderful to see about 100 people of all ages roaming the beach on a lovely sunny day. To quote Andy Lane, former Archaeology Section Secretary, ‘The beach has had all history dumped on it since prehistoric times, so a great place to find archaeological bits and bobs.’ And indeed, there were some fascinating archaeological finds including flints, pieces of pottery (including a jug handle) and a copper button. All finds will be examined and recorded. The rocky, seaweed-covered shoreline is also a magnet for all types of marine life. At least six different species of crab were found and identified by our amazing volunteers. However, the ‘catch of the day’ had to go to volunteer Andy Marquis who found a very large Spider Crab! I am pleased to report everyone held out against temptation and like all other creatures, it was returned to the sea unharmed! There were many other interesting finds including various species of anemone (Beadlet, Gem and Strawberry), Brittle and Cushion stars, and several Worm pipefish, but the most notable thing about the event was the incredible number of Sea Hares seen. This trend has been replicated on other beaches, although the reason is unclear.

A big thank you to reporter Andy Brown and photographer Karl Dorfner for the fantastic double-page spread in the Guernsey Press, which followed the event.



**Broad Clawed Porcelain Crab and Sea Hare.** Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.

The end of April and the beginning of May is bird migration time, so a bird ringing ‘drop in’ event at La Société’s Le Grand Pré Nature Reserve took place at the beginning of May. A big thank you to the team of ringers, Trevor, Julie and Charlotte, who were out at dawn to set up the nets, with visitors invited from 7.30 am! Weather is important for this activity, as it cannot occur when it is wet and/or windy. However, on this occasion, the weather was too good, as clear skies overnight meant that sadly for us most migrants kept flying and did not stop off in Guernsey! Despite this, a steady trickle of birds were processed throughout the morning, so most visitors saw ‘birds in the hand’. The majority were almost certainly nesting in the area, with a Cetti’s Warbler showing a brood patch, confirming that it was sitting on eggs. Other birds processed included Reed Warbler, Robin, Long Tailed Tit, Blue Tit, Dunnock and Sedge Warbler. The ringers explained the process of gathering and recording data and how it was passed to relevant bodies. One of the birds had already been ringed; the ring number was read and recorded and this data sent back to the ringing scheme.

The bird was a Reed Warbler, a sub-Saharan migrant, which, it turns out, was first ringed as an adult in Jersey at St Ouens Pond on May 18th 2019, making the bird at least six years old. The record for a Reed Warbler making this amazing journey annually, is sixteen years, and this is a bird that weighs around eleven grammes! Nature is amazing! Ringing activities here in the Channel Islands add vital information which helps build a picture of how well or otherwise these species are doing. Ringing research identifies population trends and behavioural changes.

In the photo, you can see a bird being weighed while one of our young visitors watches, clearly fascinated.



We hope to see you at the Nature Guernsey events below.

**Lesley Bourgaize, Chairperson, Nature Guernsey**

## Nature Guernsey Outings 2024

Nature Guernsey organises family-friendly events, aimed mainly at introducing non-members to the natural history of our island and the work La Société carries out to maintain and safeguard important habitats. Existing La Société members are of course also very welcome to attend these events.

The list of this year's confirmed events can be seen below. More may be added!

**Bat Walk**, Thursday 22nd August starting at 8.15 pm, Saumarez Park.

**Late Summer Family Event**, Sunday 1st September between 9 am and 1 pm, Pleinmont Headland.

*A bird being weighed.*

Image courtesy of Emma Boughey.

Nature Guernsey is always looking for volunteers, so if you would be interested in helping with any of the events below, please email [natureguernsey@societe.org.gg](mailto:natureguernsey@societe.org.gg)

## Volunteers Wanted

**Office** - the Secretary is looking for an occasional and flexible volunteer in the office to help with filing, card orders, book orders etc. If you can spare a few hours a month kindly email [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg)

**Scrapbook** - the Secretary is also looking for someone to help with the La Société scrapbook. This involves pasting in Société articles (already cut out) from the Guernsey Press and compiling an index when the scrapbook is full. This could be done at home at leisure or in the office if preferred.

**PayPal** - we are also looking for someone experienced in administering a PayPal account to advise us on some issues we have with the service. Kindly contact our Secretary Kate Lee if you think you can help on the email above.

# Section Reports

## Archaeology

In April Andy Lane stepped down as Archaeology Secretary and passed the baton back to me. Thank you Andy for all your work for the Section over the past two years.

At the beginning of this year members helped with an excavation at Castle Cornet. A new surface was needed for the footpath in Prisoners' Walk and this gave the opportunity to excavate the drawbridge pit outside the lower of the two medieval entrances to the castle. We were able to reveal three sides of the pit - directly below the threshold and to either side - and in each case it is faced with a well built wall. The pit was three metres deep and must have been largely cut through bedrock; the floor is roughly levelled bedrock. About a third of the way out from the entrance threshold a slot was found in each side, these begin just below ground level and run to the bottom of the pit. We think that they were for timbers which would have run across the pit and acted as a stop for the drawbridge when it was pivoted upwards. The fill of the pit was made up of soil, rubble and midden material. There are about 50 trays of finds waiting to be washed and sorted so we do not yet know exactly what has been found in this fill. However, it is clear that there are very large quantities of animal bone, pottery and building waste (such as slate, tile and brick). The date of the pottery indicates that the pit was deliberately filled in around the middle of the 15th century, by which time this entrance would have been superseded by the barbican gate below. Later in the year there will be a presentation on the findings of this excavation.

At the time of writing members are assisting Guernsey Museum and The Alderney Society in the 5th season of excavations on Longis Common. We have opened three trenches to the north-east of Les Huguettes pottery. This late Bronze / early Iron Age site unearthed a very large quantity of pot sherds when it was excavated in 1971 and was interpreted as a pottery workshop. The best of this material is on display at Alderney Museum. We conjectured that the potters probably lived near their workshop and it was to investigate this that we chose to excavate beside it. We also have two trenches open near to the Roman fort (The Nunnery). Here there are the remains of a Roman building and we hope to find out more about its size, period of use and purpose. There will be a presentation on the initial results of this year's excavations in the Frossard theatre on Thursday May 30th. If you would like to know more about the dig in the meantime there are a series of short videos by Philip de Jersey at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBQ7GLuugFdBCAIsE7lwdlg>



Excavation of the drawbridge pit.  
Photo courtesy of Phillip de Jersey.



Excavations at Les Huguettes, Longis Common, Alderney.  
Photo courtesy of Philip de Jersey.

We have put together a programme of field visits on the subject of castles for the summer months. These are events open to all:

**Sunday 21st July at 2:00 pm:** The History and Archaeology of Le Château des Marais.

**Sunday 15th September at 2:00 pm:** The History and Archaeology of Vale Castle

Please see the Events page on La Société website for full details on these and other Archaeology Section events. If you would like to join the Section please contact [archaeology@societe.org.gg](mailto:archaeology@societe.org.gg)

**Tannya Walls, Archaeology Section Secretary**

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## Bat Section

Contact Laura Harrison email [bats@societe.org.gg](mailto:bats@societe.org.gg) for details of the next Bat Section meeting at Candie. New members are always welcome.

If you find an injured bat please contact the GSPCA direct on 257261 or 07781 104082 (24 hour emergency). Any bat queries can be sent by e-mail to [bats@societe.org.gg](mailto:bats@societe.org.gg)

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## Botany Section

**Botany Walks – please meet at 2.00pm.**

**Saturday 6th July** – Port Soif – Perry’s ref page 8, C1. What3words ///amphibious.downloads.intros

**Saturday 3rd August** – Grande Pré Reserve – Perry’s ref page 7, G4. What3words ///binders.sponsors.noble

**Saturday 7th September** – Pulas Pond for Ronez’s Trail – Perry’s ref page 33, F4. What3words ///prestige.forts.convergent.

**Saturday 5th October** – Ruette de Gains and Green Lanes – Perry’s ref page 26, A1. What3words ///jackpot.arson.sympathetic

For further enquiries about the monthly Botany walks please contact Anna or Helen by **email:** [botany@societe.org.gg](mailto:botany@societe.org.gg)

Join the Botany Section’s Facebook page to find details of the monthly walks and recent plant photos. Once you have joined you can add your own images. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310943042297921/>

## Family History

Family History has had two speakers so far this year, Brian de Jersey gave a popular Guernsey photographic presentation and Liz Walton gave a talk entitled “Guernsey Women Went to War too”. Both talks were well attended.

The research room at the Russels, Les Cotils is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday each month and also by appointment at all other times, so if you can't make the Saturdays, email [researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk) and we will arrange to open up for you.

Here are some of the items we collect to help with your research, funeral cards, funeral pamphlets, obituaries from our local newspaper, attendees at funerals also from our local newspaper.

We are always looking for speakers for our indoor meetings, so if this is something that you are interested in doing, please get in touch. Also, if you have an article for our Journal, please email it to the above email address.

**Maria van der Tang, Family History Section Secretary.**

Any general Family History queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG. Alternatively email Maria van der Tang [researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk)

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## Historic Buildings Section

### Events

**Saturday 13th July at 2.30pm** – a visit to Les Galliennes in the Talbot Valley.

**All the talks below begin at 7.30pm and are held in the Frossard Theatre at Candie or in the adjoining Section Room.**

**Saturday 14th September** – a talk by John McCormack entitled “Recognising, phasing and usage in different regions by reference to expertise learned in Guernsey, taking La Perche as an example”.

**Saturday 28th September** – a talk by Callum Tostevin-Hall entitled “Looking at evidence of dating houses through documentary records: Using the livres-de-percharges of Guernsey fiefs.”

**Saturday 12th October** – a talk by Ken Tough entitled “What can be learned about properties from contracts in the Greffe.”

**Saturday 26th October** – a talk by Richard Hocart entitled “Notebooks, diaries and other accounts mentioning properties.”

New members are always very welcome to attend, but should contact John McCormack (tel. 720303; e-mail [mrjam@cwgsy.net](mailto:mrjam@cwgsy.net)) beforehand in case of alterations or final instructions. Those attending regularly should kindly ensure that they are already members of La Société.

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## Marine Biology

Thank you to everyone who has responded to the recent call out to join the Marine Biology Section mailing list. We will be setting out some events and meet ups in short course. If you have not already responded and would be interested in marine focused events please contact [Marinebiology@societe.org.gg](mailto:Marinebiology@societe.org.gg). **Nicky Harris, Marine Biology Section Secretary**

## Related Projects - Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP)



# BEEP REPORT 2023

### BEEP 2023 Activities

**For 2023 BEEP partners, volunteers, stakeholders and members of the public helped complete a variety of amazing eelgrass works across the Bailiwick. This included:**

**Internal workshops**  
During 2023, BEEP partners hosted internal workshops to secure, review and update the projects' aims and objectives for the long term. This included a 'recording' workshop aimed to enhance our citizen science works and a 'outreach' workshop, aimed to increase our engagement activities within the islands' communities.

**Event attendance**  
For 2023, BEEP partners and volunteers attended and presented at a range of UK and Channel Island events, such as:

- UK Seagrass Symposium (Plymouth)
- Inter-islands Environment Meeting (Sark)
- Seafront Sunday (Guernsey)

This could not have been undertaken without the valued support from the Biodiversity Partnership Strategy for Nature Fund.

Green markers showing Eelgrass sightings collated by BEEP →



#### Background

In 2019, the Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP) was developed by project partners The Alderney Wildlife Trust, La Société Guernesioise, Biodiversity Partnership and Seasearch.

The aim of this volunteer led project is to increase knowledge on the presence, location and composition of eelgrass species (*Zostera* sp.) across the Bailiwick of Guernsey, through citizen science. To meet this aim, the project consists of three objectives:

- a) To record the presence, distribution, extent and composition of eelgrass around the Bailiwick of Guernsey.
- b) To promote awareness.
- c) To assess environmental impacts from human activities.



**Savvy navy initiative**  
In May (2023), BEEP developed a new initiative with 'savvy navy' to showcase Channel Islands' eelgrass information on their marine boating app. Eelgrass presence, location and extent information collated by BEEP, the project partners and the Marine Resources Team, States of Jersey can now be accessed via the 'savvy navy' app, with the aim for boaters to reduce their anchoring/mooring activities within the beds.



**Public workshops**  
BEEP partners ran several public workshops to raise awareness of the project, the importance of eelgrass and how to record via citizen science. Workshops were held on Alderney and Guernsey, and also offered to members of the public online.





### Citizen Science

2023 was a wonderful year for citizen science! BEEP partners enabled a variety of citizen science surveys, including:

- Running seven public beach walkover surveys to find and explore the upper boundaries of eelgrass beds across the Bailiwick.
- Supporting volunteer Seasearch snorkellers and divers record within the island's eelgrass beds, through Seasearch.
- Initiating an ecological impact assessment of traditional moorings upon selected eelgrass beds in Guernsey with the Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Dive Club.
- Helping an MSc academic student from the University of Plymouth assess the health of the Channel Island's eelgrass, which was supported by Butterfield Bank Ltd.
- Collating public sightings of eelgrass across the Bailiwick, with new sightings recorded at Moulin Houet, Pembroke, Rousse, Port Grat and Havelet.

### Outreach

With support from the Biodiversity Partnership Strategy for Nature fund, BEEP partners developed its first annual engagement plan. The plan helped initiate several deliverables:

- Monthly social media activities
- Literature for public workshops and events (e.g. information cards, posters)
- Events (see above)
- Articles and press works. This includes segments written in AWT newsletter.

### 2024 Aspirational Action Plan

The key feature of BEEP is that it is a volunteer led, voluntary citizen science project. As such, workstreams for 2024 are aspirational, to suit and support the project's amazing volunteers, when they can. Recommendations for the 2024 plan include:

R1. Implement Strategy for Nature traditional mooring dive Impact assessment (ongoing project 2022 - 2024).

R3. Implement Strategy for Nature for Nature engagement plan (ongoing project 2023 - 2024).

R5. Link to other Eelgrass/Seagrass stakeholders, projects, research activities and bodies across the Channel Islands and beyond.

R2. Deployment of an advanced mooring system (ongoing project 2022-2024).

R4. Select key 'sentinel/reference survey sites' for the long-term assessment of the ecological status of the Bailiwick's eelgrass beds (2024-2027).

R6. Review 2024 with partners, to ensure its success.

## Guernsey Seasearch

Seasearch is a citizen science project developed by the Marine Conservation (MCS) in the UK. Guernsey Seasearch is a Marine Biology Section project in association with the Guernsey Biodiversity Partnership Group and Seasearch in the UK. The aim of the project is to gather information on seabed habitats and associated marine wildlife through the participation of volunteer divers, snorkelers, and visitors to the intertidal zone, directed and advised by experts. In addition to this, the aim of Guernsey Seasearch is to better inform the States of Guernsey 2020 Strategy for Nature, so that data is available to direct various management and conservation workstreams within the identified Strategy goals and objectives.

Guernsey Seasearch enables the collection of quality local marine data in a format comparable to the UK, whilst also engaging, educating, and qualifying local individuals to take part in the project and learn more about our amazing marine environment. It allows for the collection of data where little data exists, where there is a conservation need, and/ or to build on previous data collections.

We have said a sad farewell to George McLellan, the Guernsey Seasearch Coordinator since 2022, who has recently moved away from Guernsey. We welcome back Jessi Jennings as our local Coordinator, who initiated Guernsey Seasearch back in 2014, secured funding from what was then the States of Guernsey Biodiversity Strategy fund in 2018, and who has recently moved back to Guernsey after living in New Zealand for the last several years.

With our first Guernsey Seasearch event of 2024 held on the 6th May bank holiday, and an Observer training course in the diary for 1st and 2nd June, the 2024 season has officially kicked off! Monday 6th May saw us join the Nature Commission, the Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP), the Clean Earth Trust, the Alderney Wildlife Trust, and Nature Guernsey for an event on the Lihou intertidal. Guernsey Seasearch joined lots of enthusiastic volunteers, child and adult alike, to see what we could find, and we were not disappointed. 214 species of seaweed are known to be present just in the Lihou intertidal zone, so it is clearly a biodiverse and important marine ecosystem. All the more reason to ensure we know and record what is there and understand any changes over time. Here are some photos from that event.



Lihou intertidal zone, south of the causeway. Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.



Snakelocks anemone (*Anemonia viridis*) in a rockpool.  
Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.



A pair of sea slugs, or nudibranch (*Aeolidia filomenae*) spotted on the underside of a rock.  
Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.



Wireweed (*Sargassum muticum*) is an invasive species of algae which was found dominating several of the rockpools in the Lihou intertidal during the event. Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.



A brittlestar, from the (phylum Echinodermata), found in a rockpool. Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.



Candy striped flatworm (*Prostheceraeus vittatus*), a highlight of the event!. Photo courtesy of Jessi Jennings.

**Jessi Jennings, Local Seasearch Co-ordinator**

# Ornithology

Spring 2024

## Balearic Shearwater Survey

Funding for the sea-based survey this year was finally guaranteed earlier this spring. Three volunteers will be attending training in Jersey before heading off on the first survey in May. There will be two survey days each month from May through to early autumn, one in Jersey waters and one off Guernsey. Thanks to the States of Jersey, the States of Guernsey and donations from other bodies that has enabled this work to go ahead,

## Outdoor Meetings

The first outdoor meeting of the year was held at Petit Bôt in February. It was well-attended and people enjoyed seeing the returning Fulmars that regularly nest on the east side of the bay as well as some of the resident birds that use this woodland habitat. We met at the Reservoir in March but kept mainly to the lanes as the Millennium Walk was very wet and slippery. Poor weather continued into April: strong winds resulted in the cancellation of the walk at Pleinmont and the day trip to Herm was postponed until early May.

A small group were able to make the rescheduled date to Herm. We had a real spring day with warm, calm weather. Around five Sand Martins were seen around the breeding area north of the common and it appears that this colony is shrinking. There were plenty of warblers, particularly Blackcap, Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and at least three Cetti's Warblers. In the patch of reeds at the back of Fisherman's Beach, a Reed Warbler was clearly heard, as it has been in recent years. One highlight was a close view of Greenland Wheatear. They pass through later than Northern Wheatear, are lightly larger and have a more upright stance.

## Indoor Meetings

Our AGM took place on 7th March. I was voted in to continue as Section Secretary and Mary Simmons agreed to continue as Minuting Secretary. After many years of serving as Treasurer, Jamie Hooper stepped down as Tracey Ozanne volunteered to stand in his place. Many thanks to Jamie for all his work as Treasurer.

The section is holding meetings most months at Candie. We were fortunate to have Andy Marquis and Henry Rowe who gave illustrated talks about their photography of local bird life. We are lucky to have so many talented photographers in the island, who are very generous in sharing their images, many of which we use to promote Section events.

In March, Keith Betton gave an online talk, 'Birds and How They Live'. This was a first for the Section. It was well attended and very informative. Keith is chair of the Hampshire Ornithological Society and has also been instrumental in setting up an email group of bird groups across the UK. This is a valuable resource of ideas and an excellent means of sharing information.

In May, Nick Moran, training officer of the British Trust for Ornithology, gave an online talk, 'Birding by Ear'. It included explanations as how and why birds sing and call, understanding how to describe a song which can help to distinguish between species that sound similar, such as Reed Warbler and Sedge Warbler, and some apps (Merlin) and online resources (Xeno-Canto) which can help to identify a species from its song or call.

### Barn Owl Survey

The survey is well underway for its third and probably final year in its present form. We know of a couple of sites where an adult has died and although the remaining adult may find a new partner, so far there has been no evidence of a pair. The owls overall seem to have survived the poor weather over the winter and early spring much better than expected. As I write these notes in early May, we know of breeding at several sites and chicks have been heard in one box.



Barn Owl. Photo courtesy of Andy Stoaling.

### Looking ahead

**Thursday 4th July** – Indoor Meeting at Candie starting at 7.30pm.

**Friday 16th August** – 7.00 pm meal at the Imperial Hotel followed by an Owl Watch at Pleinmont.

**Thursday 5th September** – Indoor Meeting 7.30 pm, online talk by Harry Ewing of the BTO talking about his work with Curlews.

### Interesting Sightings

**Gadwall** (Scarce) La Claire Mare, 11th January (JH, VF, AJB).

**Night Heron** (Vagrant) Rue des Bergers, 15th April (JH).



Night Heron.

Photo courtesy of Andy Stoaling.

**White Stork** (Very Rare) Various location by several observers. 18th - 20th April.

**Spoonbill** (Scarce) La Claire Mare, 13th April (DE); Vale Pond 30th April (PJV).

**Jack Snipe** (Uncommon) Rue des Hougues, 15th February (JH).

**Little Gull** (Scarce) L'Erée/Rocquaine (JH, DS).



Little Gull. Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.



Spoonbill. Photo courtesy of Chris Wilkinson.

**Turtle Dove** (Scarce) Le Bigard, 12th April (VF).

**Nightjar** (Very Rare) Rocquaine, 5th May (JH et al).

**Bee-eater** (Very Rare) St Martin's and Pleinmont, 14th - 18th April (RAF).

**Hoopoe** (Scarce) Plaisance/St Peter's, 27th March EDA

**Grasshopper Warbler** (Scarce) Creux Mahié, 13th April (VF); Pleinmont, 26th April (MAG)

**Golden Oriole** (Scarce) Rue des Hougues, 14th April (APL et al); Fauxquets Valley, 24th April (JH, EDA)



Golden Oriole. Photo courtesy of Dave Carré.

#### List of observers

EDA Eleanor Atkinson, AJB Tony Bisson, DE David Earl, VF Vic Froome, RAF Rod Ferbrache, MAG Mark Guppy, JH Jamie Hooper, APL Anthonhy Loaring, DS Dave Spicer, PJV Peter Vaudin

**Julie Davis, Ornithology Section Secretary**

## Education and Conservation Team

It's the busy season for the Education Team! We have a packed schedule over the summer term, joining schools for nature walks, rock pooling, wildlife surveying and more, with ages ranging from 4 to 18. We're also very much looking forward to students from the Sixth Form Centre and Elizabeth College joining us for work experience.

Since our last update we've delivered Outdoor Education sessions at Notre Dame and La Mare de Carteret followed by St Martin's and Forest schools and will visit St Anne's in Alderney shortly, before moving on to Amherst and Le Rondin. As always, it is wonderful to recap the previous week's topic during each session and see how much knowledge the children have retained.

Over the past few month's we've also worked with schools throughout the island on their individual projects, including Vauvert, Les Beaucamps, St Mary and St Michael and the College of Further Education as well as receiving an unusual request from Acorn House, who asked for a lesson on turnips. We were very happy to oblige and, although we couldn't locate any turnips in April, we learned an awful lot about them to pass on to our audience!

Corporate volunteers have been assisting us with reserve maintenance, beach cleans and removal of invasive species and the team from SG Kleinwort Hambros did a fantastic job at Edible Guernsey's headquarters, setting up the Learning Area where we intend to run activities during school holidays, particularly over the winter months, for our younger members.

It's always great fun to join in with Nature Guernsey events and this spring's activities were no exception, including the rockpool ramble, crabs and crows event and bug hunt – look out for more coming up! We were also delighted to join in with a special members' event at Easter – an egg hunt with a difference, where members and their families searched for shark, ray and skate eggs at Vazon, with all our young participants receiving a (chocolate!) egg as a reward for their hard work. Several families found an astonishing number of 'mermaids' purses'!

Don't forget to contact us if your company, school or youth group would like to take part in any of the activities we offer as we continue to capitalise on the sunny days and light evenings! Contact Becky at [ecl@societe.org.gg](mailto:ecl@societe.org.gg)

**Becky Ogier, Education and Conservation Leader**

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## Juniors

Our first Junior event of the year was a beach clean in April. Our group spread out along Richmond, Vazon, Albecq and all around the headland where we collected a full black sack of rubbish within 40 minutes! Our most notable find was a significant amount of fishing line caught up in the seaweed. At the end of the event, we had a look at the rubbish collected and spoke about the impact the items have on our environment, as well as how long some items would have taken to break down in the ocean had we not collected them. Thank you again to everyone who came along and helped make an impact cleaning up our beaches.

Our second Junior event in April was a Spring botany walk around Port Soif headland. This was kindly led by Helen Litchfield of the Botany Section. We had a fantastic turn out and were lucky to have the sun shining on us as we learnt all about the native plants and wildflowers in that area.

The total weight of all the rubbish collected at our beach clean event in April on the west coast.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.



Photograph from our Botany walk around Port Soif headland. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.



Photograph from our Botany walk around Port Soif headland. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

We have a jam-packed diary of events planned for the rest of the year with at least one Junior event coming up each month, all of which cover a wide variety of different interests and topics relating to the environment and nature conservation.

If you are interested in joining the mailing list or have any suggestions as to what sort of events you'd like to see in the future, please email Sarah at [eca@societe.org.gg](mailto:eca@societe.org.gg). The details of our events are sent out to all members of La Société for whom these activities are free of charge.

**Sarah Allez, Education Conservation Assistant**

#### **Upcoming Junior events for 2024:**

**Sunday 14th July, 10:30 – 12:00** – Dolphin Surveying at La Vallette Bathing Pools.

**Saturday 20th July, 14:00 – 15:00** – Invasive Species Removal with Guernsey Conservation Volunteers, at Rocquaine.

**Saturday 10th August, 14:00 – 15:00** – Bug Hunt at Lihou headland.

**Saturday 28th September** – Bird Walk (location and time TBC).

**Sunday 13th October, 10:00 – 11:00** – Bird Ringing Demonstration at Le Grande Pré.

## Asian Hornet Update – Spring 2024

Guernsey's Asian Hornet Team (AHT) have been busy coordinating their annual "Spring Queening" programme. This successful campaign was first implemented in 2019 and has been rolled out each spring for 10 weeks during April-June. The aim of this ambitious trapping programme relies on 265 volunteers looking after a specially modified trap and checking regularly to see if any Asian hornet queens have been captured. Each spring sees an annual incursion of hornets arriving in the Channel Islands from Normandy. Trapping these queens in the spring reduces the numbers of Asian hornet large secondary nests that need to be located and destroyed in the autumn months.

During late spring, any surviving queens are actively building their primary nests and raising the first worker hornets. Typically, these small nests can be found in sheds and outbuildings. It is vital that these nests are reported so that the AHT can remove them in a safe and timely manner.

As of May 30th, the numbers of Asian hornets captured in Guernsey was 11 (compared to 17 at the same date in 2023), this total includes one queen found at her primary nest in a swimming pool pump shed.

Please report nest or suspected hornet sightings to [asianhornet@gov.gg](mailto:asianhornet@gov.gg) or 07839 197082.



Asian hornet queen building her primary nest. Photo courtesy of David Jarolik.



A typical nest site in a shed.  
Photo courtesy of David Jarolik.



An Asian hornet queen trapped at Jerbourg.  
Photo courtesy of Francis Russell.

## Some More Dates for your Diary

**Seafront Sunday** - Sunday 30th June between 10am and 4pm - Marine Biology Section and it's various projects will hold a stall at St John's Seafront Sunday event - do come along and learn more about the Bailiwick Eel Grass Project, Guernsey Seasearch and the DolFin project.

**West Show 2024** - Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th August between 10am and 6pm - La Société will have stall at this popular show and we hope to see you there!

Please keep an eye on our website [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg) for details of all events. Event details are sent out by Mail Chimp email - if you are not receiving these emails and would like to please contact our Secretary - email [secretary@societe.org.gg](mailto:secretary@societe.org.gg)

## Associated Groups

Name of Group	Contact	Contact Details
Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Bailiwick of Guernsey Guild of Accredited Guides	Margaret Murphy	margaretmgsy@outlook.com bdsac.server@gmail.com
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club	Delga Arnold	delga20034@yahoo.co.uk
Channel Islands Occupation Society (Guernsey)	Sue Sweet	info@friends.org.gg
Friends of the Priaulx Library	Angela Salmon	721163
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Martin Crozier	237766
Guernsey Meteorological Observatory	Steve Byrne	257261
G.S.P.C.A	Jo Birch	832788
La Société Serquaise	Chris Dye	chris.dye@mailmcgill.co
Le Cercle Français	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Andy McCutcheon	07781 110180
Guernsey Trees For Life	Jemma Charlotte Field	07781 106461
National Trust	Tattie Thompson	239444
Plant Heritage (Guernsey Group)	Karen Hill	823222
The Alderney Society & Museum	Damian Harris	07911 721785
The Guernsey Beekeepers' Association	Cathy Morgan	07911 732912
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Michael Paul	253858
The Guernsey Society	Roy Bisson	07781 100296
The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society		

## Legacies and donations in lieu of flowers

Members are reminded that it is possible to make La Société a beneficiary of their will. Money or property can be left for general use, or if desired for a specific purpose.

They are also reminded that donations in lieu of flowers can be made in memory of members who have died.

**Guernsey Environmental Services Limited,**  
1 Trinity Cottages, Torteval,  
Guernsey, C.I., GY8 0QD

Tel: (07781) 166924

Email: [jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net](mailto:jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net)  
[gsybiorecords@gmail.com](mailto:gsybiorecords@gmail.com)



**Environment Guernsey**  
Environmental contracting & consulting

## Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesiaise

We manage La Société's nature reserves and undertake numerous land management contracts for various States of Guernsey Departments, the National Trust and private individuals. We also run the Guernsey Biological Records Centre and provide an environmental consultancy service.

For all aspects of conservation advice and contracting, please contact us.

## Officers & Council Members

Title:	Name:	Telephone:	Email:
<b>Officers:</b>			
President	Trevor Bourgaize		president@societe.org.gg
Vice President	Vacant		
Secretary	Kate Lee		secretary@societe.org.gg
Honorary Treasurer	Dave Christopher		treasurer@societe.org.gg
Membership Secretary			membership@societe.org.gg
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Communications Officer	Pierre Ehmann		communications@societe.org.gg
Land Management & Conservation Officer	Jamie Hooper	266924	jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net
Volunteer Co ordinator			
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Archivist & Librarian	Richard Hocart		editor@societe.org.gg
Science Committee Chairperson	Trevor Bourgaize		science@societe.org.gg

### Education Officers:

Education & Conservation Leader	Becky Ogier		ecl@societe.org.gg
Education & Conservation Assistant	Sarah Allez		eca@societe.org.gg

### Section Secretaries:

Archaeology	Tanya Walls		archaeology@societe.org.gg
Astronomy	Jean Dean		astronomy@societe.org.gg
Bat Section	Laura Harrison		bats@societe.org.gg
Botany	Anna Cleal & Helen Litchfield		botany@societe.org.gg
Entomology and Zoology	Andy Marquis		entomology@societe.org.gg
Family History	Maria van der Tang	248538	researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk
Geology and Geography	Andrew Dorey	252123	geology@societe.org.gg
Historic Buildings	John McCormack	720303	mrjam@cwgsy.net
Marine Biology	Nicky Harris		marinebiology@societe.org.gg
Natural History	Lesley Bourgaize		naturalhistory@societe.org gg
Ornithology	Julie Davis		ornithology@societe.org.gg
Philology	Vacant		

### Projects:

Conservation Herd	Dave Bartram		conservationherd@societe.org.gg
Guernsey Seasearch	Jessi Jennings		guernseyseasearch@gmail.com

Other Council members are: Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Jessi Jennings, Hubertus Lau, Yvonne Burford & Will Harford-Fox

### Office hours:

Our office at Candie is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am.

**Address:** La Société Guernesiale, Candie Gardens, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1UG.

**Email:** [societe@cwgsy.net](mailto:societe@cwgsy.net) **Website:** [www.societe.org.gg](http://www.societe.org.gg) **Tel:** 01481 725093

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