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La Société Guernesiaisie Newsletter



La Société COMMUNIQUÉ

For nature, history and
science in Guernsey



Bottlenose Dolphins cover photo by Becky Dudley



From the Président

As I sit and write my piece for the next newsletter, the winds are 40mph, and the rain is lashing down. An Indian summer does not appear to be on the cards! Although we may have enjoyed a warm, sunny summer, much of our wildlife has struggled under the dry conditions. A lack of new grass shoots has meant that vole populations are much reduced, and we can only hope that the islands' Barn Owls will find sufficient food over the coming winter. As part of a rolling programme, we sent in the diggers to Le Grand Pré to dredge another section of the reserve. It was disappointing to see that by the beginning of July, the newly created areas

had completely dried out. The dryness resulted in considerably fewer insects being recorded, and this was probably responsible for the low numbers of migrant birds using the reserve. Plum Aphid *Hyalopterus pruni*, which appears on species of *Prunus* in the late spring, and Common Reed *Phragmites australis* during late Summer, were non-existent.

While we are on the subject of reserves, I am delighted to tell you that we have added yet another meadow to the Bridget Ozanne Orchid Fields at Rue des Vicherries. We are extremely grateful to Peter J. and Geoffrey T. Martel for donating the land to La Société. The meadow has been gifted to LSG in memory of their mother, Olive M. Martel, nee Corbin (1906- 2005).

Mrs Martel lived at the nearby La Douit Farm when the area was largely undeveloped; what a sight that must have been. With agricultural land prices rising exponentially, often being marketed at £20,000 per vergee, this generous donation is hugely appreciated. The Botany Section is looking forward to next spring when they can record which species are present. Subject to planning permission, an information board will be placed on the field boundary, which will include a sentence about Mrs Martel in Guernesaise.

Reserves Committee is looking for members to act as volunteer wardens, and an article about this appears further on in the Communiqué. Do take a look. I was a warden for Colin McCathie Reserve (Vale Pond) more years ago than I care to remember, and more recently for Jardin de Lorette, our orchard at Capelles. I found this both rewarding and enjoyable, and watching the changes through the seasons and from year to year is fascinating. At the orchard, I mainly chose to spend my time pruning apple trees, although obviously, this is not a prerequisite for wardens!

As you would expect, La Société has made representations regarding the draft planning review. There are some changes to the list of sites designated as Areas of Biodiversity Importance and Sites of Special Significance. However, it is disheartening to note that, in reality, as

recent history has shown these designations offer little protection. We see a similar story with property curtilages. Numerous permissions are given for agricultural land to be included in property curtilages, including land designated as Agricultural Priority Areas. Recently, an area in the Vale, with this designation measuring 4700 square metres, was granted a change of use. If these curtilage extensions are permitted, they must include biodiversity gains; although it is difficult to see how these can be maintained and protected in the long term. Who decides what constitutes adequate net gain; who advises on the species to be planted; who monitors the changes? To be fair, some applicants do care about the environment and often ask our commercial wing, Environment Guernsey Ltd, to create a plan for them, but sadly, these are in the minority.

The Water Lanes have been in the news recently with controversial proposals to either cover over their entirety or to place metal grids over certain stretches. While the plans have been withdrawn at this stage, we will be objecting should they reappear. Callum Tostevin-Hall (Historic Buildings) and Tanya Walls (Archaeology) have researched the history of the site. The first date the lanes are mentioned by name is 1331 in the reign of Edward III; however, they had likely been created by 1248 in the reign of Henry III.

This site should have been listed as an ancient monument many years ago; hopefully, that will now happen.

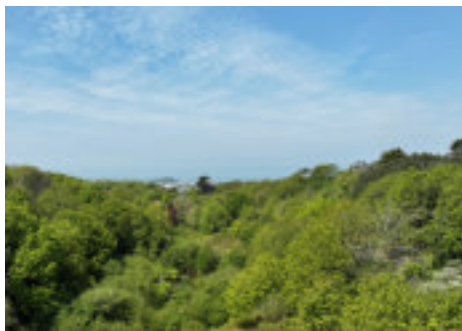
I hope that those of you who attended the Vïaer Marchi and/or the West Show had an opportunity to visit La Société's stand. We attracted a large number of people, and at Saumarez Park, we were able to run sweep netting for youngsters. Sputnik Spider *Paidiscura pallens* proved to be very popular with the younger visitors! We also recruited a good number of new members over the two events. My thanks go to Felicity Quevatre-Malcic (Vice President), Sarah Allez (Education/Conservation Officer), Jackie Ward (LSG Secretary), and Pierre Ehmann (Communications Officer) for the design and creation of the stands.

We are currently in talks with web consultants concerning the creation of a new membership website. The old system is 'clunky' and difficult to use. To keep the cost down, we have joined forces with the National Trust of Guernsey, who also require something more up to date. More information to follow.

Finally, perhaps here is a good place to suggest LSG membership as a Christmas present for family or friends? Jackie and Sarah have volunteered to set up a membership stand in town during late-night shopping, with information about our organisation and the benefits of

membership. Alternatively, just pop into our Candie office on Wednesday or Saturday mornings, when Jackie will be happy to help you.

Trevor Bourgaize
President
La Société Guernesaise



Second hand Book Sale

A second-hand book sale will be held at the Russels at Les Cotils on Saturday 22nd November, from 2 pm to 4 pm. The books for sale comprise our remaining stock of local titles and general fiction and non-fiction.

We are not accepting donations of books, as this is likely to be the last book sale.

All proceeds will go towards the funds of La Société

Zoology Section

The forthcoming Transactions will include a baseline survey for reptiles and amphibians in Guernsey. The slow worm, a legless lizard, is common and the European green lizard has been recorded for over two centuries and is well established below Fort George. However, in April this year Angela Salmon from the Nature Commission contacted John Lihou with a report of lizards seen in a L'Islet garden, he visited the site and confirmed the presence of wall lizards. These had first been seen the previous year. Jersey has an indigenous wall lizard which is brown, but those at L'Islet have both green and brown colouring. Further work has identified our Guernsey species as the Italian wall lizard (*Podarcis siculus*) and



there is now a research grade record for them with iRecord.

Clearly this is a recently introduced alien species; States Agriculture Countryside and Land Management Services (ACLAMS) have assessed its impact and do not intend to take measures other than to monitor the colony. Sightings so far have come from Rue Colin and Les Martins in L'Islet.

Further Sightings should be sent to zoology@societe.org.gg as observations, with or without pictures, along with a location (what3words is ideal). Wall lizards eat a variety of invertebrates and, in turn, are prey to birds and cats; being adapted to semi-urban environments it is likely that they will spread.

La Société's Nature Reserves need you!

A bit of History.

When La Société's Guernesaise [LSG] was established in the late 1800s, there was no thought of it acquiring land, but in 1978, trustees were appointed to hold land for LSG, in the first instance, the Silbe Nature Reserve, which at that time was leased from the owner.

By 1980, LSG was acquiring more land, either owned or managed, and all work carried out on reserves was done by volunteers. 1988 was a milestone in LSG's land management, as Mike Smith was employed for the first time to work on reserves, and in 1998, Jamie Hooper took on the job.



Environment Guernsey, which was formed in 2001 with Jamie as its managing director, now maintains the reserves for LSG, with some tasks being contracted out and others still completed by volunteers such as the Guernsey Conservation Volunteers and CSR groups led by LSG's Education/Conservation Officers, Becky Ogier and Sarah Allez. LSG's Conservation Herd, founded over ten years ago, also plays a major role, grazing some of our most important habitats, including our orchid meadows. The Reserves Committee oversees this maintenance work as well as improvements and upgrades.

So why do we need volunteer wardens?

At various times in the past, volunteer wardens were appointed to help maintain and monitor reserves, the first being appointed to monitor the Colin McCathie reserve [Vale Pond] in 1980. Despite LSG continuing to acquire more land, the practice of appointing wardens gradually fell out of use. In 2020, the Reserves Committee decided to reintroduce the practice and issued a request for wardens for eight of LSG's public reserves, with the first appointments made in November of that year. It has been a huge help to the Reserves Committee to know that people were visiting regularly and reporting back any issues, and in some instances, recording the wildlife. We are very grateful for all their support and the many volunteer hours they have given to

LSG in this way.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the current scheme, some of our existing volunteers are looking to step back to pursue other interests, so we are appealing for new people who would like to take over from them. If you enjoy being out and about in nature, this could be just the activity for you.

How do volunteer wardens support the Reserves committee?

Although each reserve differs in size, habitat, and public usage, the basic requirements of all wardens are the same: visiting regularly, checking paths, collecting rubbish and reporting any issues to the Reserves Committee, or if urgent action is needed, directly to Environment Guernsey. Taking photos and recording wildlife would be welcomed by the committee, but is not essential.

Interested? To find out more, or to chat to one of our experienced wardens about the benefits of volunteering, please email reserves@societe.org.gg

Nature Guernsey

Following the three events reported on in the last Communiqué, the next Nature Guernsey outing was a bug hunt around Lihou headland in June. This event coincided with the near-record breaking heat we had that month, so the environment was very hot and dry for this event. Despite this, we had a wonderful day with lots seen such as a Long-jawed Orb-weaver spider, Conehead crickets, grasshoppers, Red Soldier beetles, a Ruby-tailed wasp, Buff-tailed bumble bees, Gatekeeper butterflies, Meadow Brown butterflies and a beautiful Bright Wave moth.



Andy Smith identifying what's been caught at the bug hunt! **Emma Boughey**

In August, our event was one we hadn't done before and was in collaboration with the Guille-Allès Library. Nature Guernsey teamed up with the Library as part of their 'Summer Reading Challenge' to host a morning of nature-related activities which took place in Candie Gardens. This year's theme for the summer reading challenge was 'Story Garden – adventures in nature and the great outdoors', which we thought aligned perfectly with what we do! The theme aimed to inspire children to explore enchanting worlds and tap into their imagination through stories where the wonders of nature come to life. It was lovely to see so many children getting stuck in, listening to stories about nature, making bird feeders out of natural resources, planting their own vegetables to take home, playing nature bingo and making seed bombs (which used native seeds hand collected by the lovely team at Camp de Rêves). Thanks again to everyone who came along and made this event such a success.



Leah Cottell, our Zoology Section Secretary, showing a Privet hawk moth, **Emma Boughey**



The start of September brought around our annual big event of the year, our Late Summer Family event at Pleinmont. This event showcases lots of our sections at one event. We had representatives from our Archaeology, Bat, Entomology, Ornithology and Zoology sections, as well as the Education Team. Between everyone, there were wonderful displays to be seen, guided walks and talks, and nature related craft activities for the children to engage in.

Despite the early thunderstorm, which was a bit of a worry but thankfully passed over us quite quickly, everything went to plan and it was a great event. It was lovely to see some new faces and we collected a great list of species seen by the end of the event – shown in the photograph below.



A couple of the nature related activities set up for the Story Garden event at Candie Gardens, **Sarah Allez**

The entomology section confirmed they caught over 400 moths of 54 species. Of particular note were a dozen Latticed Heath which is a moth the Entomology section have not caught at that site in the last several years, working there in early September. Thanks again to everyone who came along and supported the event, as well as all our volunteer experts who give up their time to make events like these happen.



A Latticed Heath moth never before recorded from the Pleinmont site in early September, **Stuart Read**

Sarah Allez, Chairperson, Nature Guernsey

Upcoming Nature Guernsey Events:

Nature Guernsey organises free 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 also welcome to attend these events.

- Bird Watching Day – Saturday 11th October, drop in between 8am and 5pm, at La Claire Mare Nature Reserve.
- - Join Nature Guernsey for a day of bird watching where we try to spot as many bird species as possible. We're hoping to find at least 50 species throughout the day – come along and be a part of the fun!



The final species list from the Late Summer Family event at Pleinmont, **Emma Boughey**

There is one more Nature Guernsey event scheduled for this year which is a Bird Watching Day at La Claire Mare Nature Reserve on Saturday 11th October. Pop along and help us spot as many species as possible.

Education

The Education Team loved the sunny weather that we enjoyed throughout the summer, so it was a bit of a rude awakening to have autumn arrive so promptly on the 1st of September! We can't complain, however, as we had very little weather-related reshuffling to do over recent months and it was wonderful to see so much sunshine as we enjoyed outdoor activities like beach cleans, rock pooling and nature walks with schools during their activity weeks and worked on our nature reserves around the island with a wide variety of businesses.

We enjoyed a packed summer of educational and corporate activity, with CSR and holiday clubs keeping us on our toes throughout the school summer holidays - the days when August was a very flat and quiet month are long behind us, and we were kept busy with CSR activities including coastal clean-ups, wildlife surveying and reserve maintenance, as well as supporting public events.

We were delighted to attend Le Viera Marchi and the West Show, as well as our own Nature Guernsey Family Fun Day, and to collaborate with the Guille Alles Library on a wonderful event to celebrate their annual Summer Reading Challenge.

It was a great pleasure to work with a holiday club for children with special

educational needs during the holidays, which was based at Le Rondin school throughout August – we hope that this will be repeated next year as it provides a much-needed break for carers as well as a fun and varied programme of activities for the children.

September kicked off the new school year with such varied outings as a reservoir nature walk, an arthropod hunt and an eelgrass survey, and we ended the month by beginning a new cycle of outdoor education sessions as part of the States of Guernsey's Cultural Enrichment Programme, although this year will see a change for us as instead of working with Reception we will be giving lessons to Year 1 and Year 2.

We're looking forward to an autumn of seed identification walks, making leaf crowns and gathering natural resources for our ever-growing programme of wreath-making workshops, including the extremely popular events for members and juniors.

We're astonished (but extremely gratified!) to find our diary filling up as far ahead as July '26, so if you'd like to book us for an event with your school, youth group or company, please get in touch so that we can put you in our diary!

Becky Ogier

ecl@societe.org.gg

Archaeology

At the time of writing we have been assisting in excavations with a team from the UK and France led by Chris Scarre, H  l  ne Pioffet and Ga  l Barracand.

One part of this project follows up on excavations directed by Professor Chris Scarre of the University of Durham in 2008 to 2011: 'Herm - Island of the dead?' looked at the relationship between the island's Neolithic monuments and their contemporary landscape. Beneath the windblown sands which make up Herm Common is a buried land surface with remains from the Roman period back into the Neolithic. The 2025 team spent ten days working in Herm and three trenches were opened on sites selected on the basis of findings made in 2008 – 2011. Two of these were dug just beyond the little cemetery where a track leads down to Bears' Beach; evidence of a Neolithic structure, probably plank built, had been identified here in 2010. Cerny pottery found with the structure dates it to between 4600 and 4300 BC. This year post and stake holes were discovered which may be associated with this early structure. A third trench was dug on the south-west side of the ruined tomb close to the Robert's Cross dolmen. The aim here was to look for further buried stones associated with this very ruinous tomb and to try to find out more about the monument's original form. A series of soil samples were taken for optically stimulated luminescence dating which will add to our understanding of the monuments and the build up of windblown sand which buried them.



Open day at Les Fouaillages, Emma Boughey

The second part of this year's project was a series of test pits in the area around Les Fouaillages. This megalithic monument was constructed on L'Anresse Common around 4800 BC and was buried by windblown sands just like those that cover the north end of Herm. Here the aim is to look for evidence of prehistoric occupation contemporary with the building of the monument. The excavations are not yet complete but a ditch has been identified along with pottery and flint. Quite surprisingly one of the trenches here revealed a wall of medieval date buried below over a metre of sand.



The medieval wall buried beneath layers of windblown sand on L'Anresse Common, Tanya Walls



Excavation beside the ruined dolmen in Herm, Tanya Walls

Last weekend the Section hosted a well-attended open day at Les Fouaillages, one of the two sites where the team has been working.

Upcoming events:

Open Day at the Brothers' Cemetery, Saturday 25th October from 1.30pm

Excavations at Les Huguettes, Alderney, Thursday 27th November at 7:30 pm

If you would like to join the Section please contact archaeology@societe.org.gg

Tanya Walls
Archaeology Section Secretary

Entomology Section

The summer of 2025 has been poor for most insect life, hot and dry conditions have left many areas bone dry with dead vegetation. A few walks have shown that there is very little insect life amongst the dead grasses and plants. On the positive side, areas which have managed to remain green have done quite well. We have also seen good numbers of Blue-winged Grasshopper which prefer dry cliffs as their habitat.

Entomology Section has been working on surveying the land owned and leased by La Société, a weekend job as several of us work full time.

A plan was hatched, all of our land-holding was mapped out and then I realised just how many parcels of land there were to cover. I split this down into 27 areas of land which were geographically close together to allow most of each area to be covered in one visit.

Larger parcels of land such as the Nature reserves at Claire Mare and Grand Pré were made into section events running several moth traps around the reserves with plenty of hands on deck to set up and pack away the equipment as well as more experience aiding in identification of catches. Smaller areas such as La Mare Huchon and Fontenelles Wood were covered by just one or two members.

This had led to members of the section, myself included, discovering new areas of land to survey and explore which are

owned by La Société.

We have this summer run the moth trap with the section generator and a large leisure battery where we needed to spread out further than extension leads would reasonably allow. We ran field traps on Société land seven times accounting for a total of 239 species including moths, beetles, bugs, flies and other orders, all in the moth traps.

This has greatly helped us understand what is present on the land managed and owned by La Société. The weather in the back end of August and into September has not helped, with much more rain and wind than was suitable for moth trapping, but we hope there may still be a few opportunities before the end of the year when conditions are favourable.

Amongst the species found when surveying land, some less common species have been seen including:

Little Emerald in Fontenelles Wood,

Phalonidia affinitana at Claire Mare is a new species for the Channel Islands, it's foodplant is Sea Aster (*Tripolium pannonicum*) which is locally rare.

Chartoscirta cincta, a species of Shore Bug, from Grand Pré is new to Guernsey

White Colon and Ruddy Carpet at La Mare Huchon

Latticed Heath and *Agonopterix umbellana* at Pleinmont.

We hope to continue with the program of surveying La Société land over winter for winter active species and then next spring and summer with the moth traps.

I have created several "Activities" on iRecord which allows us to easily record species found on each parcel of land, anyone with access is welcome to explore and add their own records, simply log into iRecord, go to the activities tab and search for the word "Societe" to locate them.

All members of La Société are welcome

to join the Entomology Section if you have an interest in insects and other invertebrates, there is no membership fee.

Simply email entomology@societe.org.gg to request being added to the email circulars. We generally have several outdoor meetings during the year and indoor meetings if requested or necessary.

Andy Marquis

Section Secretary



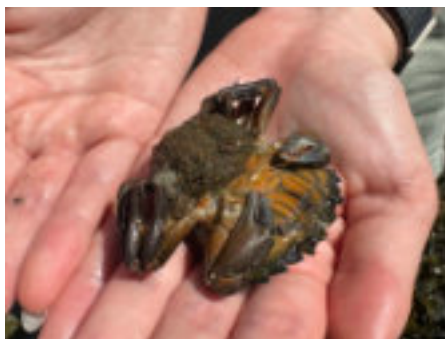
Juniors

The June Junior event was in collaboration with the Marine Biology section and the Nature Commission in celebration of World Oceans Day. Our Juniors were invited to join us for a special screening of local marine films showcasing the beauty and challenges of our underwater world. The screenings consisted of Wild Islands' 'The Blue', Sue Daly's 'Beneath the Seas of Sark' and the 'State of Nature 2024: Marine Focus' by the Nature Commission. It was a great event and we loved seeing so many of you joining us to celebrate our local marine wildlife.



Crab surveying at Portelet Bay in July, **Emma Boughey**

In July, we continued with the marine theme and we had a fab day out in the sun, crab surveying. We found Velvet swimming crabs, Furrowed crabs, Brown crabs (Chancres) and Broad clawed porcelain crabs. Some were berried which was great to see. Marine events always go down well, and this one was no different – what a lovely way to spend an afternoon!



A pregnant crab (berried) found at the crab surveying event, **Emma Boughey**

In August, our Juniors were treated to a bird ringing demonstration by La Société President Trevor Bourgaize. This event was held at Bordeaux Mound where we ringed a good handful of birds – these included a Blackbird, Wren, Great Tits, a Chaffinch, Blackcaps and a Whitethroat. Thank you again to those who came along. It's lovely to see the appreciation of these special creatures being passed down to the younger generation.



The bird ringing event at Bordeaux Mound, **Sarah Allez**



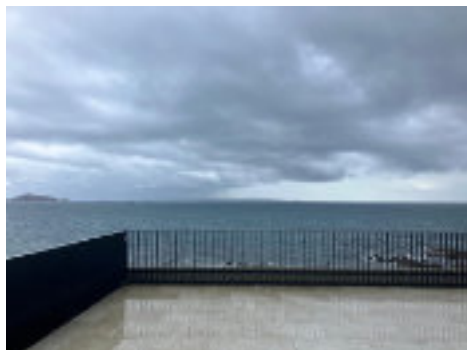
Trevor Bourgaize holding a Whitethroat, **Sarah Allez**

In September, we hosted two Junior events, with the first being a bird walk. We were joined by some very enthusiastic attendees and thankfully we also managed to avoid the heavy downpours! For this walk, we headed along the coastal path at the Shingle Bank and along to the bird hide at La Claire Mare nature reserve. We recorded over 20 species including lots of different waders. Among the highlights were a flock of around 30 Ringed Plover with a few Sanderling foraging on the shingle and in flight. Thanks again to Julie Davis, Trevor Bourgaize and Chris Mourant for helping to lead this event – your expertise is invaluable.



A Ringed Plover, **Tom Marshall**

For our second event in September, our Juniors again had to brace the wind and rain to join us for dolphin surveying at the Bathing Pools. Although this time we sadly didn't see any dolphins, we had a great morning learning all about the cetacean species we have in our waters, how to identify them, and why and how we survey! Thanks again to everyone who came along and we look forward to seeing you at the next one.



The dolphin surveying event at the Bathing Pools, **Nicky Harris**

We have two more Junior events lined up for the rest of year. The next event is an autumn crafts drop in, which is taking

place during half term, where we will be making some crafts which you can take home to help the local wildlife. Then the final event of the year is our famous eco-friendly wreath making workshops. These workshops get sold out each year so if you're interested in coming along, make sure to sign up early!

If you haven't yet come along to one of our Junior events, we'd love to see you soon or if you 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. 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 Officer

Upcoming junior events for 2025:

- Monday 27th October – ‘Autumn Crafts’ drop in, 10:00am – 11:30am, La Société office, Candie Gardens. Join us in half term to make some autumnal crafts to take home to help our local wildlife.
- Saturday 6th December – Eco-friendly Wreath Making Workshops, Workshop 1 – 10:30 – 11:30; Workshop 2 – 12:15 – 13:15; Workshop 3 – 14:00 – 15:00, La Société office, Candie Gardens.

Marine Biology Section

What a fantastic summer of activities we have had for the marine section, including beach sessions, dolphin watches and joining in the Havelet

Regatta.

Below is a list of the events we ran between July and September, we thank everyone who joined in with our surveys and events for all things marine!

Group dolphin watch at Pleinmont	29 th June
Cetacean surveys lead by University of Plymouth	10 th - 13 th July
July Seal Survey	25 th July
Group dolphin watch at Jerbourg	26 th July
Marine “Grand day out” at Lihou with Seasearch, BEEP & Nature Commission.	27 th July
Havelet Regatta stand with Marine Section, Seasearch, BEEP, Guernsey Environment team and Nature Commission	7 th September
Dolphin watch with Nature Guernsey Junior section at Vilette Bathing pools	21 st September

Spotlight on University of Plymouth collaboration

The University of Plymouth Marine Vertebrate Research team has been running multi-day, boat based cetacean surveys around the UK coast since 2018. This year, thanks to renewed interests in the links between bottlenose population crossovers between the UK and France, we were lucky to have a

survey organised around the Channel Islands as part of their annual work scheme. Despite some initial concerns on weather conditions, the survey dates ultimately aligned with one of our July Summer heatwaves – with lower wind and great visibility for sailing on their dedicated survey yacht “Take the Helm”. The work of researchers will focus on assessing the abundance and distribution of cetacean species, particularly bottlenose dolphins,



Cetacean surveys on research boat *Take the helm* with University of Plymouth Researchers, **Becky Dudley**

and if individuals are crossing between locations in the Channel. This leans in heavily to all the work DolFin has done previously, collecting sightings data and fin photographs from the public, and means they can be compared against UK ID databases.

Both bottlenoses and common dolphins did us proud and were seen every day during the surveys, and the university team said one of the bottlenose encounters in particular was likely the best they would have ALL year (despite knowing they had 5 more full weeks of surveys left around Cornwall). The data will be shared between the Channel Islands and Plymouth, and Plymouth are

keen to come back next year for follow up surveys. The lead researchers from University of Plymouth included the department head – Prof. Simon Ingram, alongside PhD candidates Becky Dudley and Beth Harvey. Nicky Harris and Clare Marshall joined as the Guernsey Contingent, alongside MSc candidate Inman.

A great thank you to everyone who has been sending in their sightings, past and present, alongside helping with our surveys from shore, as these can now tie into the continuing work with the University of Plymouth.

Nicky Harris



Having a drink after the surveys at the boathouse, and showing off Guernsey for the Evening, **Simon Ingram**

Upcoming events,

The marine section will be setting up several winter talks throughout this latter part of the year, including with students and research groups such as the Clean Earth Trust.

Please keep an eye out on the Calendar and socials as we continue to plan events for DolFin, BEEP, Seasearch and seal surveys for the rest of 2025 and into 2026.



Pod of bottlenose dolphins observed off the back of *Sark*, **Simon Ingram**

Ornithology Section

We took part in the national Heathland Survey organised by the British Trust for Ornithology. One of the key species was Dartford Warbler, a species that has bred here in the past but is a scarce visitor now. We were able to record one, seen by Mark Lawlor, at Pleinmont in April. While undertaking the survey at La Corbière a previously unrecorded Black-back Meadow Ant nest was found, which was a bonus.



We also promoted a Garden Blackbird survey. The British Trust for Ornithology are concerned that Blackbird numbers have fallen significantly in the London area and the home counties as a new virus has spread across Europe from Africa. Blackbirds in particular are vulnerable. Data is needed to understand better how Blackbirds use gardens. A singing Blackbird is one of the joys of spring and early summer. Let's hope our island population escapes the virus.

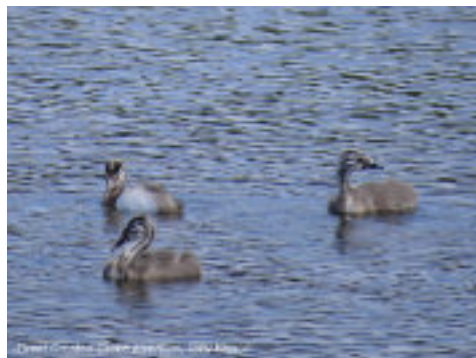
We had several outdoor events. A boat trip around Herm over to Sark was very enjoyable with good views of seabirds. The maximum Puffin count was just over

50 this year. We helped with the annual trips to Jethou, with visitors having close up views of nesting Shag. The pelagic trip in August was well supported. A highlight was Sabine's Gull.

We held an owl watch at Pleinmont in August. It has been a difficult year for Barn Owls as the very dry summer has meant fewer small mammals. The owls did not show this year, although Trevor and Lesley Bourgaize saw one on their way home.

First Spring Arrivals

Wheatear – Jaonneuse on 10th March.
Swallow - Cobo on 17th March. Cuckoo - 12th April at Rocquaine. Swift - Pleinmont on 21st April. New swift boxes have been put up at Deslises so that small colony has a good chance of expanding.



Selected Sightings

Little Grebe -seen at the Reservoir, La Claire Mare, La Grande Mare, the Vale Mill Quarry and Le Gallotin Quarry where they bred.

Great Crested Grebe - a pair nested successfully for the first time and produced three broods. Sadly, the second brood did not survive. Many people enjoyed seeing the chicks grow. Usually, this species is seen on the sea as a winter visitor. It will be interesting to see if they return next year.

A Night Heron was recorded over a few days in May in a private quarry.

A flock of ten Cattle Egret roosted at the Reservoir in April before dispersing with the onset of the breeding season.

Great White Egret are being recorded more often, with sightings at Fort Hommet, L'Érée, the Reservoir and the Vale Pond.

Work to increase the wet areas at Le Grand Pré has paid off as a Purple Heron was recorded over several days. Thanks to the Reserves Committee and Environment Guernsey for all their hard work looking after our reserves.



White Stork is gradually expanding its breeding range in the UK. An individual was seen at several island locations over 8th and 9th May and was probably heading north to England.

Red-breasted Merganser are scarce, usually seen between the shingle Bank and Rocquaine over the winter. It was very unusual to have one recorded at Pembroke between 6th and 8th June.

Black Kite was a spring migration highlight. Probably one individual was seen in Fauxquets Valley, Les Grantez and other areas between 16th and 19th May.



A Dotterel came in off the sea on 24th August at Pleinmont and then moved to the grassy area at Mont Herault where it stayed for a few days.

Curlew Sandpiper sightings are on the wane – only one was seen in the spring in Herm. Mouisonnière in Herm is well worth a day's (or even morning's) visit during migration as waders can feed and rest with little disturbance.

Wayne Turner added a new species to the Guernsey List and a first record for the Channel Islands with a juvenile American Herring Gull at Perelle on 8th March. It stayed until 12th April.

Compared to the European Herring Gull, the juvenile in the photo shows a darker tail and a solid dark neck. Its bill is longer and the angle at the bottom of the bill is less pronounced.



A Bluethroat was a rare highlight for a lucky few at La Claire Mare on 23rd March.

To see a comprehensive list of sightings and recorders, please visit our website <https://www.guernseybirds.org.gg> where you can also find information about some of our upcoming events.

Julie Davis

Section Secretary



Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesaise

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

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

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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.

Our office at Candie will be open on **Wednesday** and **Saturday** from **10.00 to 13.00**.
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Guernsey Bat Group

IPWS of La Société



Soprano Pipistrelle



Serotine



Whiskered/Brandt's



Noctule



Natterer's



Nathusius Pipistrelle



Lesser Horseshoe



Brown Long-eared



Greater Horseshoe



Common Pipistrelle



Grey Long-eared



Kuhl's Pipistrelle



Leisler's