

Newsletter



[f Search 'Falklands Conservation'](#) [@FI_Conservation](#) [justgiving.com/falklandsconservation](#)

Variable Season for Seabirds

By Andy Stanworth

Once again FC staff, volunteers and landowners undertook the annual Falklands Island Seabird Monitoring Programme providing estimates of breeding pairs and breeding success for a number of globally important seabird populations around the Islands. Now in its 27th year, the value of long-term monitoring programmes in tracking population trends continues to be demonstrated when we need to ask – ‘when is a poor season cause for real concern’? It’s an important question because this year has been highlighted as one of very mixed fortunes for many seabirds around the Islands.

Sadly, this season there were accounts of adult penguin mortalities due to starvation (particularly during the moult for the Southern Rockhopper Penguin which appeared delayed and prolonged) and probable avian pox outbreaks. Low breeding success, starvation in chicks, abandonment of chicks by parents, and emaciated fledglings in some locations were also reported. Thankfully indications are that impacts were very regional rather than island-wide, with the north/west regions seemingly more affected more than the south/east.

Yet, despite these reports, the Monitoring Programme provided indications of stable or increasing breeding populations of most seabirds monitored. The majority of Gentoo penguin colonies continued to show upward trends from last season (pairs at monitored sites increased by 6.4%) in what has been an apparent increasing population trend since 2003. The total

breeding pair estimate of Southern Rockhopper Penguins for monitoring sites continued to increase and reached another new high since monitoring of current sites began in 2005. Black-browed Albatross breeding pairs at monitoring sites showed an increase from the previous season, and despite some annual fluctuations the overall trend since monitoring began in 2005 suggest a stable population. Magellanic Penguin occupancy rates for Gypsy Cove were the highest recorded and well above previous seasonal averages. The exception to the trends was that after an apparent steady upward trend in populations of Southern Giant Petrel since the early 2000s, declines were observed at all the monitored colonies during the 2015 season.

Although the results of estimated breeding pair counts were generally positive, monitoring results later in the season for breeding success were highly variable, substantiating landowner reports. Average estimated breeding success for Gentoo Penguin, Rockhopper Penguin and Black-browed Albatross all fell below the seasonal average. Again Southern Giant Petrel was the exception with breeding success

improved on last season.

Overall then it looks a reasonable start, but quite a poor finish to the season. So is this cause for concern? With so many factors influencing population numbers, we may not see simple short-term responses to a poor breeding season, or indeed to apparently higher than normal adult mortality. We do know for example from our monitoring that Gentoo and Rockhopper penguin populations can fluctuate considerably over longer-timescales with periods of decline and recovery, and that populations recently have been faring well, so we shouldn’t jump to conclusions just yet. Continued monitoring into the future is vital in helping us to further understand more about the natural limits that populations may fluctuate in, and when indeed we should have real cause for concern. Not a great end to the season, but let’s not take it in isolation and see what happens over the next few years...

Gentoo counting between snow squalls at Lagoon Sands



Falklands Conservation is a charity that takes action for nature in the Falkland Islands. We work in conjunction with local and international partners to preserve and protect the unique wildlife, plants and natural features of the Islands. It is only through your support that our work is possible. Thank you.

Issue 7
Winter 2016

falklandsconservation.com

2016 Conservation Grants

Conservation Grants of up to £1,000 per project are awarded each year for a variety of projects promoting practical conservation, research and/or wildlife education projects in the Falkland Islands.

This year we also have an additional £1000 grant under the theme
“Habitat Restoration for Conservation”

Some examples of appropriate projects:

- Restoration/protection of native plants through planting, management or fencing;
- Control of rodents/cats to reduce impacts on wild birds;
- Control of invasive plants (gorse, thistle etc.) where these are damaging native habitats;
- Native plant gardens or interactive outreach projects for schools, or community groups.

Applications will be accepted until **15 August 2016**. Projects should be completed within one year of award. Projects should aim to contribute towards the total cost - this can be payment in kind such as labour, fuel, accommodation, transport, etc. For application forms and further information, or to discuss your projects suitability please phone: 22247 or email Angie - adminasst@conservation.org.fk. For any advice with Habitat Restoration projects please call or email

Frin - habitatsrestore@conservation.org.fk

The Falkland Islands *Conservation Grants Scheme* was established from a bequest to Falklands Conservation by the late Mrs Joan Kenneally. The *Habitat Restoration for Conservation Grant* was donated by Stewart McPherson (Redfern Natural History) – makers of the recent BBC’s Britain’s Treasure Islands.



Habitat Restoration workshops have been held across the Islands this year.

On 25th May, Andy visited the Year 2s at IJS to talk to them about nocturnal animals. They enjoyed the visit so much we even featured in the school Newsletter!
Thanks for having us!



Photo taken one year on from 2015’s Earth Day tussac planting day. The tussac on Hooker’s Point is thriving! Thanks to all who helped out last year, your hard work on a wet and windy day has paid off!



AGM Notice

Thursday 1 December 2016, 6pm
The Chamber of Commerce, Stanley

This will be a short meeting to approve the audited accounts, elect Directors of the Board, to outline our strategy and conservation priorities for 2016-2019 and to encourage feedback from members. Followed by presentations updating our current work.

We look forward to seeing you all.

Farmers Week

This year's Farmers Week was a busy week for all at Conservation. The Expo on Sunday was a great opportunity to talk to all members of the community about our work, including the various projects, Watch Group, Small Grants Scheme and the Herbarium, with a main focus on Habitat Restoration using native plants.

Wednesday was a jam packed day, with the Herbarium open morning, visits to Frin's Habitat Restoration trials (sponsored by Darwin Initiative) at Cape Pembroke, and the annual 'Conservation Curry Night' at the Stanley Arms. Thanks to all staff for giving up their time to make it a successful week, and also to Glynis and Kevin for hosting our curry night at the Stanley Arms.



Building for the Future Campaign events at St. James' Palace and Government House.

In June, two events were held to launch our 'Building for the Future' campaign. The first was hosted by His Royal Highness the Duke of York, patron of FC, at St James' Palace in London, and the second was hosted by the Governor of the Falkland Islands at Government House in Stanley.

Our campaign is to raise money to construct a Falklands Conservation Nature Centre adjacent to the award winning Museum and National Trust buildings at the Historic Dockyard.

The Centre will provide an indoor activity and learning space for the Watch Group and others. It will showcase the conservation work of FC, as well as the local community. It will provide interactive displays of the unique wildlife of the Islands, and the work done by many to conserve it, as well as house the FC headquarters and the National Herbarium.

(Photos below clockwise from top left, Esther gives her speech, Esther chats to Prince Andrew, artists impression of the new Falklands Conservation 'Nature Centre', local Falkland Islands residents and the Governor mingle at Government House.)



Our Work Experience Week with Falklands Conservation

Darby Newman

During my work experience I was given the opportunity to help with a number of incredible things that I never thought I would get to do. Such as meeting Squeak the Southern Rockhopper and Dali the Gentoo! I have learnt how to feed a penguin safely and how to clean a penguin enclosure. Looking after Squeak and rescuing Dali gave me a sense of responsibility that will benefit me for the future, seeing as my dream is to become a vet. After this experience, I have been greatly swayed towards a future working with penguins, in the Falklands and hopefully other places around the world.

Before I started my work experience, I only knew about a few of the things that F.C do. However, after being there for a week, I have learnt about the different and interesting projects that are carried out there. We got involved in a number of activities, like counting penguin photos, looking at types of moss under microscopes and learning about their properties with Daf, collecting different seeds from the seed hub with Frin, and going out on penguin rescues! I'm very grateful to the Conservation team for giving me the chance to do these things and teaching me about the different jobs they do.

Emmaleigh and I were also given the opportunity to create a Rocky's News, a magazine that is produced for the Watch group members. This was very enjoyable and fun, and we hope the readers think so too!

Another interesting thing that we did was attend two talks about 'Climate Change' and 'Shetland Marine Spatial Planning'. This was very helpful for me as it means I can apply the things I have learnt from these talks to my school work, and after being at Conservation we could actually understand what they were talking about!

However, it wasn't all just about the biological side of things. We also learnt how to conduct a stock take, enter the information into a spreadsheet, and organise bank slips from the till. Again this was very helpful for me as it is a skill I can know for the future that I might not learn in school.

I would like to say a very big thank you to the Falklands Conservation team for making my week so interesting and enjoyable!

Emmaleigh Middleton

My weeks work experience was amazing. We were given the opportunity to do so much and the Conservation staff were very welcoming and helpful. Darby and I were that at the perfect time as the team had a little Rockhopper penguin in named Squeak. Our first task of the week was to feed Squeak. Having never got that close to a penguin before, let alone feed one, it was a wonderful experience that I never thought I would get the opportunity to do. Just before releasing Squeak, a phone call came in about a Gentoo by the sea wall and me and Darby tagged along for the ride. We took him up to the rehab centre where he would stay for 24 hours, just to regain his energy. He was ready to go on Friday, so we took him down to York Bay and released him. Looking after both penguins was an incredible job and I can see why the Falklands Conservation staff are so enthusiastic about their jobs as it is so rewarding to see them being released.

Darby and I were given the task of writing a whole 'Rocky News' paper. It was surprisingly difficult, but the end product was well worth it. We were also shown the Seed Hub by Frin, who gave us the job of collecting seeds from a Button Weed plant, which was a very therapeutic activity.

Throughout the week we have experienced most of the aspects on Falklands Conservation and it has been very eye-opening. I have left this week wishing work experience was longer as it was so interesting and enjoyable, and there is so much more I would like to learn from FC.

Everyone at FC would like to thank Darby (l) and Emmaleigh (r) for their enthusiasm and hard work!



Student £15

Individual £30

Household £50

Gold £100

Life £1000



Become a FC Member

Chief Executive Officer: Esther Bertram
Conservation Manager: Andy Stanworth
UK Director: David Spivack
Office Manager: Farrah Peck
Conservation Officer: Sarah Crofts
Community Engagement Manager: Liz Milston
Habitat Restoration Officer: Frin Ross
Administrative Assistant: Angie Clarke



www.falklandsconservation.com
E: adminasst@conservation.org.fk

Trustees:
Roger Spink (FI Chair)
Keith Biles (FI Treasurer)
Henry Robinson (UK Chair)
Tym Marsh (UK Treasurer)
(A full list of trustees is available on request)

Not all opinions expressed in this newsletter are necessarily those of Falklands Conservation