



JANUARY 2015

Dear TAG supporters,

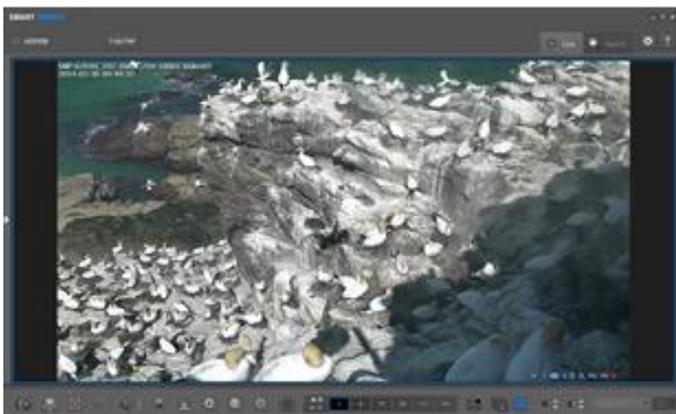
Thanks to your massive support and generosity we have raised over £1600 so far! That gives us enough funds to purchase 4 tags so although there is still quite a way to get to our target of 10 tags we are getting closer every day.

How do they work?

The tags we will be attaching to the Gannets consist of a GPS device, batteries and solar panels making them about 18g in weight. This is nothing compared to a Gannets colossal 3kg weight. The above components are then put in plastic shrink tubing to keep them together and are then ready for attachment! The tags will be attached by trained scientists to the Gannets' tail feathers using waterproof tape and after trial in 2014 it was shown that they last 2-3 months before they are moulted.

When a tagged bird is in the colony, or within approx. 10 miles of England or France, it will download its data via the mobile phone network. The tracks will be presented in real time on an online interactive map on LIVE (burhou.livingislands.co.uk) alongside PuffinCam and, if all goes to plan, GannetCam. You might even be able to spot a tagged Gannet live on camera when it returns to Ortac!

Image taken from Gannetcams 2014 trial



Where did you go?



Usually full of life from February to October, the more eagle eyed residents of Alderney might have noticed an extremely bare and quiet looking Les Etacs and Ortac over the past few months. This is because our incredibly popular resident seabird, the Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), has left its tiny crowded rock in our waters and left for warmer climes in Western Africa and the Mediterranean. But why leave in the first place? Believe it or not, without migration the Gannet would face an even tougher existence than if it stayed on Alderney for 12 months of the year! If the birds didn't migrate; competition for nesting sites would increase, predators would be attracted to the high numbers of breeding birds (and all the tasty chicks that would be produced) and the chance of diseases spreading through the colony would be increased.

Fortunately for us the Gannets are only away for 4 months (most birds migrate for upwards of 6 months, for example, the Puffins leave our shores for 7 months!) Many Gannets have been seen flying west towards the rocks, so who knows, it might not be long before they grace us with their presence once again, for what is sure to be another fantastic breeding season!

Fun Fact: The first breeding gannet was recorded in 1940 on Ortac and now 85 years later we have over 7,000 pairs of these majestic birds!

