



**JUNE 2015**

Dear TAG supporters,

We have officially launched T.A.G. today! You can view the LIVE tracks at [www.teachingthroughnature.co.uk/t-a-g/](http://www.teachingthroughnature.co.uk/t-a-g/). This has attracted a lot of media attention with articles in the Daily Telegraph, Metro and the Herald! We are also very excited to announce that we will be deploying a further 8 tags next week and with that announcing who our prize draw winner will be!

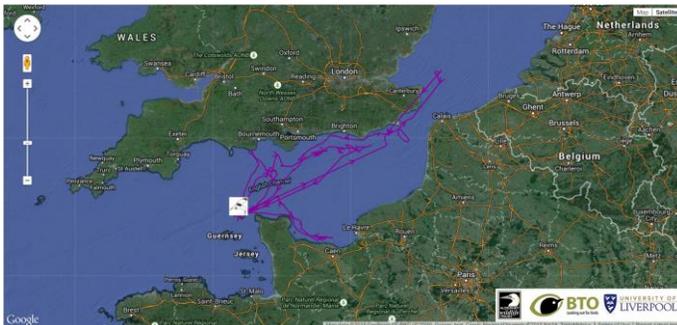
Once again thank you to everyone who has supported us in this project!



### Tagging a Gannet

### Where have they been going?

After deploying the tags we have seen a lot of activity from the gannets. One of our birds, Alderney, likes to go anywhere but the island! We have tracked it all the way past Margate over 338 km away from Ortac! This same Gannet then chose to fly past Courseulles-sur-Mer.



Other tracks have visited Guernsey, Kingsbridge, Caen and Jersey. We are all very excited to see just how far they will travel for food.

**Fun Fact: Gannet chicks are 12 weeks old when they fledge from the nest, almost double the age of all other seabirds that on average fledge at 6 weeks old. The feathers of the fledgling are also entirely black and this is so that the male of the pair doesn't accidentally attack his own offspring!**

On Monday 8th June at the tender hour of 4am Jenni Godber (Ramsar ecologist), Vicky Warwick-Evans who is using the data from the GPS tags to complete her PhD study and Phil Atkinson from the BTO headed out for the first tagging trip of the season! Despite the early start everyone was eagerly anticipating landing on and climbing up the rock. The first bird was captured within minutes of being in the midst of the colony and work to attach the tag began. Each tag was attached to tail feathers of the Gannet by Vicky using electric tape, whilst Phil kept a hold of the bird (they have very sharp beaks and they aren't afraid to use them!) and Jenni scribed. The tags store data of the Gannets movements using satellites and need to be retrieved back in 10-14 days' time in order to re-collect the data before the bird moults the feathers to which the tag is attached. We were on the rock for 3 hours in total and managed to catch an amazing 33 birds. The visit to the rock is timed so that the majority of the birds have newly hatched chicks, because of their dedication to their offspring this means the Gannets are much less likely to fly away when we approach them to tag. It also means that once tagged and released the bird will quickly return back to the nest to tend to its chick. Once the chicks are bigger and the parents can afford leave them for longer, as they start to thermoregulate (maintain their own body temperature as opposed to being kept warm by an incubating parent) by themselves, approaching them to tag becomes much harder! Fortunately we timed our visit well and although we won't expect to retrieve all 33 tags back (due to accidental loss/temperamental equipment) we are all excited to go back on the rock to get the information back on whereabouts of these beautiful birds.

