



Gannet Fact Sheet 6

Reproduction

. The older birds are always the first ones to return back to the breeding colony and the duration of the breeding season depends on the location of the colony. Here on Alderney the colonies on Les Etacs and Ortac often arrive back within a few weeks of each other in early to mid-February (with the Les Etacs colony often landing back onto their site first). This is compared to the colonies on Iceland that don't return until April! Most birds return to a colony at the age of 2 or 3 years old and it isn't necessarily the colony they were born in, although once a Gannet has successfully bred it will not change colonies.

Immature birds will stay on the edge of the colony and may attempt to build a nest but they will not breed until they are 4 or 5 years old. Some immature birds have been seen to occupy empty nests and will aggressively defend them if they have been sat on the nest for 2 or 3 days. If an owner of the previously thought empty nest returns then the immature bird will abandon the nest without any struggle.

