



Different species of seabirds nest and breed in different habitats. Each type of habitat or nesting behaviour benefits the birds in a certain way but can also have its hazards. Below explores some of the nesting behaviours we see on Alderney.

Colonial Nesting

Colonial nesting behaviour is when a group of birds live close together on a breeding site. Over 96% of seabirds are colonial and it can be seen across all sizes of seabirds and equally across diurnal and nocturnal species. This can be beneficial to the birds as the large number of them can intimidate or confuse predators. However, disadvantages include more birds competing for food, diseases and parasites can be transferred between birds easily and more aggressive encounters between birds. Also if predators such as rats are introduced to a seabird island they can wipe out an entire colony by feeding on all the eggs. Reducing predator numbers is an effective way to help protect these birds. In Alderney we can see examples of colonial nesting in a lot of our seabirds such as the Gannets, Puffins and Shags.



Camouflage Nesting

Some birds including the Ringed Plover build nests that are just scrapes in the sand. The eggs they lay and their chicks are very camouflaged to stop them being spotted by predators. However, sometimes they are too camouflaged and can risk being trampled by people or cars. As they nest on beaches nests are often raided by dogs out on walks or destroyed in bad weather. To help



protect these birds people should keep away from nest sites, try not to drive on beaches and walk their dogs on leads.

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Burrow Nesting

Puffins and other seabirds nest underground in burrows. Some dig their own nest whilst others take advantage of rabbit burrows. By nesting underground these birds can avoid bad weather and predators. These nests also create a microclimate for eggs and chicks.



Cliff Nesting



Many seabirds lay their eggs on small ledges on rocky cliffs. Although laying and rearing chicks on steep cliffs is dangerous, it makes it harder for predators to reach the nest and it gives the adult seabirds' easy access to the sea to feed. It is also easier for larger seabirds to take off from cliffs. Climbers should be especially aware where these birds are nesting so they do not disturb them.