

RSPB Coquet Island – a Seabird Sanctuary



Every summer Coquet Island comes alive with the sights and sounds of over 44,000 seabirds. Puffins are the most abundant seabird present and the plateau is riddled with their burrows. Four species of tern also breed here; Sandwich, Arctic, common and roseate tern; the latter being the UK's rarest breeding seabird, for which Coquet is the only remaining colony in the UK.

Meet the rosys

Roseate terns (affectionately known as rosys) have elegant tail streamers and handsome, rosy-hued breast feathers. After wintering off the coast of West Africa, they migrate thousands of miles to Coquet to nest. Unlike other tern species, which nest in the open, rosies prefer to nest in crevices and readily take advantage nestboxes.

Once widespread around the UK, roseate terns nearly became extinct in the 19th Century, because their plumage was prized for hats.



Legal protection saved them, but since the late 1960s, they experienced a dramatic population crash with just 56 pairs remaining in the whole of the UK in 2000.

Management and recent trends

The introduction of innovative nestboxes and tern terraces has helped protect the precious chicks from harsh weather and predators. Management involves controlling vegetation growth, deterring predators and undertaking night shifts to prevent egg thieves. The wardens also carry out careful monitoring to determine the breeding success. As a result, Coquet's rosies have now recovered to 118 pairs in 2018, which is the highest number since Coquet became a RSPB reserve in 1970.

Living on the island

The island is inhabited by a team of wardens and volunteers. Although it sounds like an amazing adventure, working on a remote island with limited drinking water, food supplies and facilities it is not an easy job. Provisions are brought out from the mainland by a boat and some

need be stored as emergency rations on the occasions when crossing is not possible due to bad weather.

The Roseate Tern LIFE Project

Conservation efforts to help this rare seabird has been boosted by the EU-funded partnership project between the RSPB, BirdWatch Ireland and North Wales Wildlife Trust. It aims at safeguarding the last three roseate tern colonies in the UK and Ireland and providing suitable conditions for expansion to sites within their former range.

How to see

The island's habitats and seabird colony are so fragile that landings are not permitted. However, it is still possible to experience the excitement and spectacle of Coquet's fantastic seabird colony.

- Privately-run boat tours from Amble Quayside will take you around the island.
- Watch the roseate terns live from May to August on the Coquet Island webcam: rspb.org.uk/coquetlive

Bird's you can see near Amble



Arctic tern



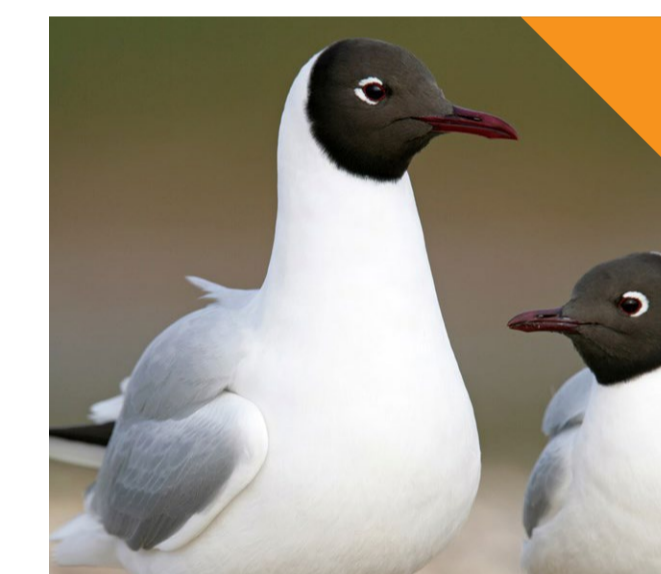
Common tern



Roseate tern



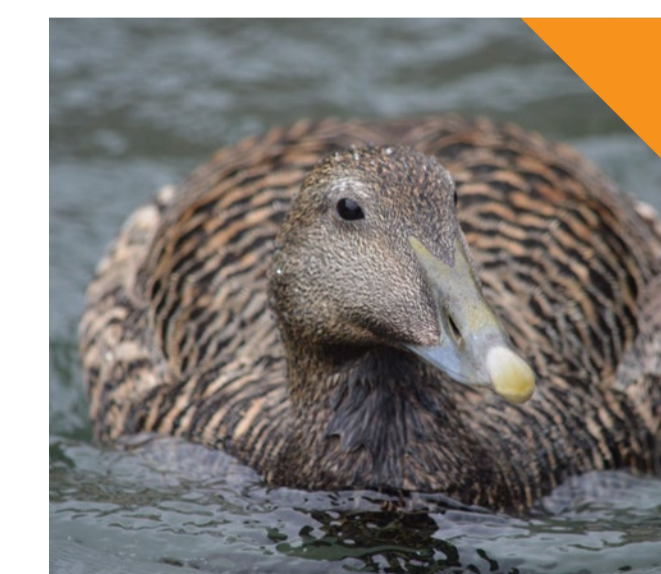
Sandwich tern



Black-headed gull



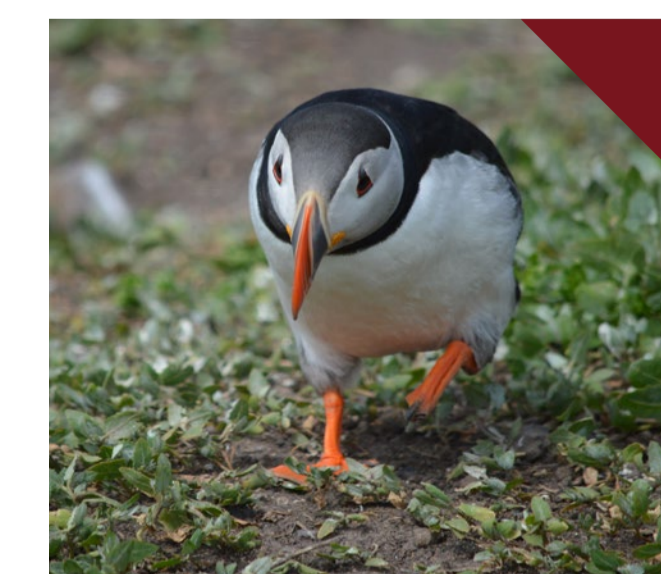
Black-legged kittiwake



Eider (female)



Fulmar



Puffin

Key

Birds of Conservation Concern 4

- Red listed
- Amber listed

