

DLR Dalkey Islands News 2020

The Dalkey Island Infographic Launch

The new Dalkey Island Infographic is now available on the DLR Website which tells you everything about Dalkey Islands. It tells the story of the natural and built heritage of the islands especially the bird species of the islands. The infographic was developed by DLR, Birdwatch Ireland, RSPB and was funded by the EU LIFE Roseate Tern Recovery Project. We had a wonderful bright sunny day to launch the infographic with the support of our Cathairleach Úna Power and Birdwatch Ireland Tern Warden Tara Adcock. You can find the infographic on our website [here](#).



Right Úna Power Cathairleach, Centre Anne Murray DLR Biodiversity Officer and Left Tara Adcock Birdwatch Ireland

Disturbance to Ground Nesting Birds on Dalkey Islands

People are always amazed to hear that our protected Tern species are ground nesting birds and that these species are very vulnerable to people walking through the areas they nest in. Throughout the summer of 2020 people have enjoyed visiting Dalkey Islands, however one of the human threats to our protected birds is the disturbance of their nesting areas by people and sometimes dogs (dogs are not permitted on the island).



The tern monitoring cameras have highlighted people walking through the bird colonies and at times over some of the protected birds' nests. Here is an illustrated little animation showing how disturbance can affect ground nesting birds, this animation is about a beach and shows a ringed plover trying to nest but it very much shows the same effects that people have on terns on Dalkey Islands. It is available [here](#)

Our Protected Terns Update



Dalkey Islands viewed from Sorrento Park

For the first time on record, Arctic Terns successfully raised chicks on Dalkey island in 2019, giving a boost to the vulnerable colony and so we were eager to see what happened in 2020.

The efforts of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown staff to manage the island all year round and the unrelenting work of Birdwatch Ireland has assisted the survival of the terns and their chicks on Dalkey Island.

Birdwatch Ireland and their volunteers have managed to remove a large proportion of the rat population on Dalkey Islands, one of the biggest threats to the nesting birds. Canes were also erected across a portion of Lamb Island to exclude gulls from the tern colony. This work was carried out as part of the Dalkey Tern Conservation Project, which is funded by the EU LIFE Roseate Tern Recovery Project and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

As terns are a ground nesting bird, the pressures of sea rise, increased storminess, flooding along with predators such as rats and gulls have taken their toll on our tern populations on Dalkey islands. As we explained earlier most people are careful and each year we ask people to stay away from the colonies, but unfortunately some people ignore the signs and walk straight through the areas disturbing the birds and their new little chicks. There were also a number of drones that were flown across the island that disturbed the nesting terns, despite our signs and requests not to fly drones over this legally protected site. Cooperation from the public is so important and we had great concerns for our tern colonies.



A Common Tern chick on Lamb Island (Tara Adcock)
Photo taken under NPWS licence

Now as we near the end of summer these little seabirds have commenced their long haul flight to the south for the winter. Common Terns migrate as far as south-western Africa, while Arctic Terns will fly a very long distance to Antarctica. Despite all the challenges these tiny creatures faced there were at least 30 tern chicks that survived to take flight from Dalkey Islands and this was all due to the immense efforts of BWI tern warden Tara Adcock and her volunteers. Our DLR Parks staff carried out checks on the island to assist with protecting the birds, the goats and of course the heritage of the island! This along with our Vet who visits the islands regularly to look after our goats.

Trail cameras placed across the colony to monitor the birds provided a lot of information over the breeding season. The cameras picked up on several events that otherwise may not have noted. In June, a trail camera recorded two colour-ringed Arctic Terns on Dalkey Island. One was an Arctic Tern ringed as a chick back in 2017 on Maiden Rock. Now a three year old bird, it was spotted feeding its own young this season. The second was an Arctic Tern with an even more interesting story. At the start of this season, approximately 3,000 Arctic Terns disappeared from the Skerries Island colony in Wales. One of those birds appeared on Dalkey Island this year and bred on here. This highlights the importance of protecting all our safe breeding sites as the birds can 'tern' up in any of them. It will be interesting to see if these birds continue to breed on the Dalkey Islands in the future.

The Dalkey tern colony is largely comprised of Arctic Terns. However, this is the first year since 2017 that Common Terns have nested on Lamb Island and the first season on record that this species has nested on Dalkey Island itself.

So another first for Dalkey Islands !!



And finally, two Roseate Terns were recorded on Lamb Island over two days in early July. They may have failed to nest in other sites on Rockabill and might be looking at Dalkey Island for nesting next year, who knows!! But we would be delighted if they do come to nest on our little island as it has been something BWI and DLR have been working towards over many years. Let's see if that happens in 2021.

Tern originally ringed at the Skerries colony in Wales and breeding on Dalkey Island 2020. (Jan Rod) Photo taken under NPWS licence.

Big thanks to all the volunteers, DLR Parks staff, BWI Tern Warden Tara Adcock, BWI project lead Steve Newton, the EU LIFE Roseate Tern Recovery Project and to the public for their cooperation.

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