

Project Update: November 2010

Aside from surveying on the open ocean for seabirds aboard the dinghy granted by Rufford, Katharine and David educate local communities about their feathered neighbours. Where do most seabirds nest? What bird has the lightest bones for its size? What is biodiversity? These are some of the topics that the duo discussed with school pupils during their visit to Montserrat earlier this year, where they celebrated presenting to their 1000th person about seabird conservation for 2010.

‘By the end of the sessions, pupils were able to compete in our quiz of ‘Fish and Rat Runs’ and answer the questions, ‘Where do seabirds nest’? Well, most nest on the ground, on a cliff or offshore island. Only the brown pelican, magnificent frigate bird and red-footed booby nest upon low trees such as mangroves. It is the magnificent frigate bird who has the lightest bones in ratio to size of any bird in the entire world! Finally, biodiversity, this is biological diversity; the variety of plant and animal life on our planet. 2010 marks the year for celebrating the amazing diversity of wildlife on earth. Seabirds are part of the planet’s biodiversity which provides us with insects and birds to pollinate our crops; forests to catch and help store our water; coral reefs and mangroves as nurseries for young fish and barriers from storm waves. Seabirds themselves keep marine habitats in a healthy balance and act as early warning systems if fish have been over harvested’.

Education is an integral part of the EPIC seabird project. By enthusing local communities, including school children, about their spectacular seabird assets it is hoped that they will appreciate the value of seabirds within the environment and seek to learn more about them and the wider natural world.

