

Little terns: conservation presentation

Powerpoint slides

Here are the slides from the powerpoint that you can use to find information for your activities.

Conservation

Is the act of protecting and preserving animals, plants and their habitats from extinction and destruction.

The warden and volunteer conservationists at Gronant dunes protect the terns from...

Climate change

- Rising seas
- Increased storm events
- Coastal flooding and high winds can blow sand and bury eggs and young chicks.

Disturbance

- Adult little terns leave the chick if they are disturbed. An example of this is people walking their dogs near the nests.

Predation

Predators like:

- Red fox
- Kestrel
- Herring gull
- Stoat
- Crow
- Weasel
- Peregrine falcon
- Badger

Why is it important to protect the little tern?

The little tern is one of the UK's rarest seabirds. Human disturbance, predation and climate change have threatened the numbers of the little terns.

If the little tern is not protected they may become an **endangered species**.

People have an opportunity at Gronant to protect the little terns and increase the numbers in the colony, so they don't become **extinct**.

Conservation

These are some of the ways conservationists protect little terns:

Nest moving

Little terns build their nests on shingle beaches. During bad weather and rising tides, nests, eggs, chicks and adults are at risk from flooding.

Conservationists lift the nests up and put them on plant pots to stop the nests being washed away. They only do this when they absolutely have to. This gives the birds a better chance of survival.

Please don't try and move nests yourself.

Protecting from predation

Eggs, chicks and fledglings are at risk from predation. Adults can fend off predators.

Predation from the land and sky are ongoing threats to little terns. Foxes can take a whole nest of eggs at one go, eating the fledglings!

Conservationists warden the site in daylight hours to keep away daytime predators.

They build pens and put up electric fencing to keep nocturnal predators like the red fox and badgers away from the nests.

Predation from the sky

Wardens and volunteers employ scare tactics by using a starter pistol and chasing away avian predators.

A feeding station had been installed and baited with poultry chicks so predators will take those instead of the little terns. This has been successful as predators, mainly kestrels, are taking fewer little terns.

Laser hazing

Conservationists use a clever laser device that scares away predators like crows and kestrels.

The birds don't like the light from the laser and when it is used repeatedly they don't come back to the site.

Visitor management

Conservationists put a blue rope around the little terns' breeding grounds so people know that they and their dogs should stay away and not disturb the birds.

The wardens also spend all day at the colony keeping a watchful eye and speaking to anyone who comes too close to make sure they are aware and keep a safe distance.

They put up signs to give visitors information about the little terns and viewing areas.

The viewing area enables people to see, appreciate and learn about the little terns without disturbing them.

They can also learn about other rare and common coastal plants and animals.

People are encouraged to volunteer to help protect the little terns, becoming conservationists themselves.

Ringling

Ringling is an important part of the research about and conservation of the little tern.

Rings are carefully attached to the feet of both chicks and adult birds.

When the ringed birds are caught again, the information on the rings is recorded.

Over time, this information helps conservationists to track where the birds go on migration, where they nest and find out how old the birds are.

An important part of conservation is to make other people aware of the work being done to conserve the little tern.

This is where you come in!

1. Write a letter to your local newspaper telling them why it is important to protect little terns.
2. What is already being done by conservationists at Gronant dunes to protect little terns? Describe at least 3 things.
3. Explain in your letter what people can do to learn about and help conserve the little tern. (See this slide show for help)