

ZINO'S PETREL APPEAL 2010

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<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2010/09/race-against-the-clock-to-save-zino%E2%80%99s-petrel/>

Fri, Sep 10, 2010

Race against the clock to save Zino's Petrel



Staff from SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) and the Parque Natural da Madeira – PNM keep working to restore the areas destroyed by the forest fires which ravaged the island of Madeira and killed several breeding adults and 65% of this year's chicks of Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira* (Endangered). They are now building artificial nests on the ledge which showed higher levels of habitat degradation in order to attract breeding pairs to nest on this area.

Unfortunately two of the chicks who survived the fires died these past days. One died for unknown reasons (he was found dead at the entrance of the nest and another was (probably) killed by a cat. People working on the ground feared this could happen as the ground is barren, food scarce and under these circumstances the petrels become much more attractive and exposed.

BirdLife International and SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) have launched an urgent appeal (click [here](#)) for funds to carry out emergency conservation work needed before the winter sets in.

<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2010/12/supporters-rally-to-save-europes-rarest-seabird/>

Thu, Dec 16, 2010

Supporters rally to save Europe's rarest seabird.



Photo credit: The Tubenoses Project ©H. Shirihai

During the summer of 2010, forest fires ravaged parts of Madeira, a Portuguese island and home to Europe's rarest seabird, Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira*.

On 13 August they hit the heart of the central massif, where many Zino's Petrel nestlings were still in their burrows. Two days later, as soon as the ground and soil had cooled sufficiently, staff from Parque Natural da Madeira (PNM) visited the breeding cliffs to assess the damage. The results were shocking: 25 young and 3 adults were found dead, and only 13 young fledglings were found alive in their underground chambers. But with vegetation burned away, the remaining chicks were exposed to predators, and many more were taken by cats and rats in the following weeks.

Fire and the loss of vegetation had also exacerbated soil erosion, and several nesting burrows had disappeared completely.

Staff from SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) and PNM set to work immediately to stabilise and then restore the breeding area. BirdLife International and SPEA launched an appeal for the

funds needed to carry out the work that had to be done before the winter rains set in, and washed away the remaining soil.

BirdLife supporters from around the world responded quickly, and donations soon reached over £14,000.

Further erosion was prevented using a soil retention ‘blanket’ –a technique PNM had adopted successfully to arrest erosion at the Fea’s Petrel *Pterodroma feae* colony on the island of Bugio. The team then began to install artificial burrows made of fireproof material, first replacing the existing nests, before adding new ones to attract first-time breeders to the colony.



Generous donations by BirdLife supporters have enabled emergency work to install artificial burrows and prevent further soil erosion (PNM)

Plants have already begun to regenerate naturally around the burrows and on the cliffs, but in December seeds of native species will be sown around the site to restore the vegetation cover before the birds begin to return to the breeding colony in late March.

“Thanks to the generous response from BirdLife’s supporters around the world, we were able to act quickly enough to ensure that what could have been a catastrophe for Zino’s Petrel is hopefully no more than a temporary setback in its recovery. Thank you so much”, said Richard Grimmett, BirdLife’s Director of Conservation.

You can still help by donating at <http://www.justgiving.com/zinos-petrel-disaster>

Once on the edge of extinction, with numbers down to a few tens of pairs, Zino’s Petrel is living evidence that conservation works. Europe’s rarest seabird, Zino’s Petrel nests only on a few mountain ledges in the rugged central massif of the island of Madeira. Intense action over the past 20 years, led by the Natural Park of Madeira (Parque Natural da Madeira— PNM) with support from SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal), the Freira Conservation Project and Funchal Municipal Museum, helped its population grow to almost 80 pairs.

<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2012/02/emergency-conservation-work-pays-off-zinos-petrel-bounces-back/>

Wed, Feb 15, 2012

Zino's Petrel was Europe's rarest seabird even before a ravaging wild fire hit the heart of Madeira's central massif, where this globally endangered bird breeds.



The fire, in August 2010, had dire consequences: 25 young and 3 adults were found burnt to death, and of the 13 young birds found alive, only one survived to fledge that year – the others were predated in their now obvious nests on the barren mountain ledges.

Suddenly, the species' population – which had been increasing steadily in recent years, thanks to efforts by the Natural Park of Madeira (PNM) – was jeopardized.

The situation was grave indeed – the fire not only led to a near-complete breeding failure in 2010, but also exacerbated soil erosion, causing several nesting burrows to collapse.

As soon as the smouldering cinders permitted it, PNM developed an action plan to mitigate the consequences of this natural disaster. A team of conservation wardens was deployed to place anti-erosion coconut mesh on the breeding ledges to protect the soil in some of the most critical places.

Then, with financial and logistical support from SPEA/BirdLife in Portugal, the RSPB/BirdLife in the UK and BirdLife International, about 100 natural nests were restored, while 60 new artificial nests were built. A protective cordon was also built around the known breeding areas, with cat traps and bait boxes.

When the surviving adult birds returned from wintering at sea in April 2011, to prospect for breeding, conservationists were expectant. As the summer progressed, the news from Madeira got better – proof once again that adequate investment in conservation pays off. Monitoring of the breeding colony indicated that 45 nests were occupied – with eggs laid in 43 of them.

Although breeding success was lower than before the fire, with only 19 nestlings hatching, the species' prospects looked more positive again. Moreover, fledgling success was good, with 16 out of the 19 young birds eventually flying out to sea in October.

PNM and SPEA are now more hopeful for the future – and will keep fighting the battle to save Europe's rarest seabird species.

This work was funded by the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme, Mark Constantine and many generous donations to BirdLife's online and World Bird Club appeal. Zino's Petrel has also benefitted from [Save Our Species](#) (SOS), a joint initiative of the Global Environment Facility, IUCN and the World Bank, which aims to ensure the long-term survival and well-being of threatened species and critical habitats for biodiversity conservation. These achievements would not have been possible without the funds provided by members and supporters of SPEA, the RSPB and BirdLife International.