

Irish charities urge visitors not to disturb nesting seabirds

Title

Two of Ireland's leading conservation charities, [BirdWatch Ireland](#) (BirdLife Partner in Ireland) and the [Irish Wildlife Trust](#) (IWT), are urging people to ensure that birds, their nests and eggs are not disturbed when visiting coastal and island bird colonies, which are among the most important areas in Europe for breeding seabirds. Both organisations have issued a joint [code of conduct](#) highlighting that all breeding birds in Ireland are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 (amended in 2000) and that visitors should keep their distance, even though many coastal birds seem tame. Seabird colonies in Ireland are *amongst the finest in Europe and offer a wonderful opportunity for nature-lovers to see these especial birds at close quarters and to get a glimpse into their otherwise hidden lives?*, states Niall Hatch, Development Officer with BirdWatch Ireland. The charity is asking people interested in watching the breeding spectacle *to put the welfare of the birds first and to ensure that they don't cause any disturbance or distress to them during the nesting season?*. As remembered by IWT Campaigns Officer, Pádraic Fogarty, last year they received *a number of complaints about a minority of people behaving inappropriately, such as photographers walking among Gannet nests and children chasing birds?*. In his view, these colonies are amazing places to appreciate wildlife, *but people need to remember that they are protected sites and that disturbing birds is against the law?*. Irish coastal habitats and islands are ideal areas for breeding seabirds, such as puffins, cormorants, razorbills and a variety of gulls. Every year thousands of people visit the [Saltee Islands](#) in Wexford, [Ireland's Eye in Dublin](#) and the [Skelligs in Kerry](#), breeding grounds that provide wonderful wildlife spectacles.
