

Wildlife of the North Atlantic: A Cruising Guide (Bradt Travel Guide Wildlife of the North Atlantic: A Cruising)

By Tony Soper

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The latest edition to Tony Soper's successful wildlife series, *North Atlantic: A Guide to the Wildlife*, is beautifully illustrated throughout with watercolour paintings by renowned wildlife artist Dan Powell. This full-colour guide covers the surface wildlife that inhabits the waters of the North Atlantic. It’s an ideal companion for anyone at sea or exploring the coast between Brittany and the British Isles, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland and Maine. Sail the region and experience the company of gannets, fulmars, pigeons, leaping dolphins and sociable seals.

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- Rank: #240497 in Books
- Published on: 2008-07-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .80" w x 5.40" l, .75 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 176 pages

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Editorial Review

Review
'Bradt Travel Guides simply have the best wildlife coverage of any of the popular guide books.' BBC Wildlife 'Recommended reading' Wanderlust

About the Author

Tony Soper has written numerous books on birds and other natural history topics.
Dan Powell is an artist best known for his studies of birds.

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The largest and most spectacular of North Atlantic seabirds, the gannet appears ‘whiter than white’ at a distance and ‘pointed at both ends’ when close, with conspicuous black wing-tips.

Their bodies are cigar-shaped and they have long, fairly narrow wings, wedge-shaped tails, stout bills and forward-facing eyes. Gannets are plunge-divers, are powerful in flight, and are double-breasted, with air sacs between the skins to absorb impact when they dive from a great height (which can be as much as 30m, but is more usually around 10m) in pursuit of fast pelagic fish like mackerel. First marking their chosen prey from the air, they close their wings to drop vertically into the water. Specially adapted for this activity, with forward vision and slit nostrils, gannets strike the surface with great force, sending up a tremendous splash and continuing their dive underwater using their feet and wings. The catch may be swallowed underwater or it may be brought to the surface. Usually the dive is brief and the buoyant bird rises, takes off, then circles to dive again.

Though you may see them close inshore, especially in stormy weather, gannets usually hunt far out to sea. With their long white wings tipped with black, they are as big as a turkey and are easily recognised. The white plumage, so strikingly conspicuous in a plunge-dive, probably serves to alert other gannets to the fishing potential of a surface shoal.

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