

## One-page briefing on Shiant Isles LIFE project

- 'LIFE Shiants - Protecting and restoring the Shiant Isles SPA through rat removal, and safeguarding other seabird island SPAs in the UK' is an RSPB-led project which is partially funded through the EU LIFE+ environmental funding programme.
- The Shiant Isles is a Special Protection Area (SPA) classified for breeding populations of guillemot, fulmar, kittiwake, razorbill, shag, puffin & seabird assemblages; and non-breeding populations of greenland barnacle geese.
- The main objectives of the LIFE project are:
  - Removing invasive black rats from the Shiants to eliminate pressure on the existing seabird population;
  - Promoting colonisation of the Shiants by storm petrel and Manx shearwater, for example, through the use of call playback;
  - Protecting the Shiants through improved biosecurity;
  - Building expertise within the UK (and elsewhere in the EU) in island restoration, thereby reducing reliance on expensive external contractors.
- Scottish Government (SG) gave their support to the project through an A8 form, noting that the aims of the project could further enhance the classifying features of the SPA, as well as leading to other species (Manx shearwater and storm petrel) colonising the Shiants.
- The outcomes of the project would contribute to the SG's conservation priorities of improved habitat for seabirds and healthy seabird populations.
- The project proposal was submitted in 2013 and funding was confirmed in April 2014. The project is scheduled to run from 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2018.
- The total budget is 1,116,088 euros, with 558,044 euros (50%) provided by LIFE match funding.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) are a co-financier of the project (around 253,000 euros).
- The project [REDACTED] [has been viewed](#) as controversial by some [REDACTED] [who would like to conserve the black rat in the UK, although it is not a native species anywhere in the British Isles.](#) [REDACTED]