



Case Study

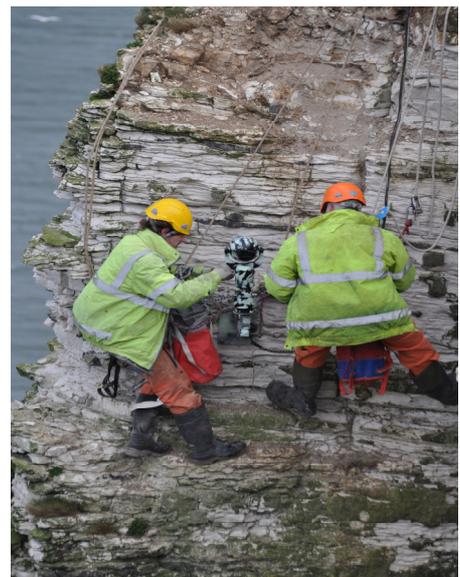
Project Location: RSPB, Bempton Cliffs Reserve, East Yorkshire
Client: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Date: February 2011

Project Description

The Bempton Cliffs reserve is on the east coast of Yorkshire just north of Bridlington. At well over 100 metres high in places the chalk white cliffs are a commanding and exposed feature of Britain's coastline. At the height of the season the cliffs are home to over 200,000 seabirds including 9,000 pairs of Gannets at Staple Newk.

As the chalky cliffs are prone to crumbling it is dangerous to get too close to edge which can limit the best viewing locations for visitors. The RSPB asked Outersight to design a camera system that would allow them to show close up images of the cliff nesting birds on big screens at the visitor centre. Staff and volunteers can move the cameras and interpret the bird behaviour for people at the visitor centre.

One camera is located amidst the gannet colony and provides some very impressive images of the nesting pairs from just a few feet away. Being able to see the breeding cycle from nest construction to final fledging of the gugas is very impressive and many visitors return day after day to keep an eye on development. The second camera is located to the North of the reserve on an outcrop and is ideally placed to view a range of species arranged precariously on ledges high up on the cliffs. We had to make two attempts at installing this camera as the position a section of the cliff (about the size of a shipping container) above the initial camera position became unstable.



Mounting the cameras on chalk required fixings to be drilled over 600mm into the substrate to enable the camera to survive the gale force winds that frequently batter this part of Yorkshire.

Due to the distances involved we specified armoured optical fibre from each camera this allows very high quality uncompressed images to be transmitted back to the visitor centre. As the reserve is open to the public 24 hours a day there was no secure option for solar or wind power so we installed armoured low voltage power cables to each camera. This is the most reliable and cost effective method of powering the cameras and through the use of 'green' power tariffs the RSPB can ensure that they are being environmentally responsible.

We also provided recording and editing facilities as well as the provision to live stream the live images although currently the Internet connection at the visitor centre is not fast enough to sustain a quality stream.

The camera system has allowed many more visitors get really close up views of the birds at Bempton and with the help of one to one interpretation the visitors become really engaged with nature which is one of the core aims of the RSPB. You can also get a cup of coffee there after a bracing cliff top walk!



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