

## **Short Notes**

### **Ringling cormorants in Normandy - Gérard Debout**

The GONm (ringer: Guillaume Debout) start a new cormorant colour ringing scheme in 2002. 64 birds in each of the colonies of Saint-Marcouf and Chausey were ringed.

The colony of Saint-Marcouf is in a GONm reserve : "L'île de Terre ". This is one of the two islands of a small archipelago which lay five kilo meters on the east coast of the Cherbourg peninsula. This colony is known since the late fifties but was probably established just after the second world war. Almost 400-450 pairs breed on the 3 ha island among gulls (great black backed, lesser black-backed and herring gulls), little egrets and others. The birds of Chausey breed on four to six small islets in the Chausey archipelago. These islands lay on the south-west coast of the Cherbourg peninsula, just at the north of the Mont-Saint-Michel. Almost 200-250 pairs breed in Chausey, but the number decrease slowly. The other nesting birds are great black-backed, lesser black-backed and herring gulls. This is one of the few French breeding sites of the eider, the only French one for the red-breasted merganser. Chausey reserve is also the most important breeding colony of the shag in France: more than 1000 pairs.

The birds of Saint-Marcouf are ringed with a metallic ring (Museum Paris) and a combination of 2 colour rings among 4 colours (dark blue, white, red and green) on one leg and on the other leg with a dark blue ring with a white letter M and a white number, 2 for 2002, 3 for 2003, and so on with a bar between the letter and the number. For some birds M is on the top, and for the others the number is on the top.

The birds of Chausey are ringed on one leg with a metallic ring (Museum Paris) and a combination of 2 colour rings among 4 colours (dark blue, white, red and green) and on the other leg with a white ring with a black letter C and a black number, 2 for 2002, 3 for 2003, and so on with a bar between the letter and the number. For some birds C is on the top, and for others the number is on the top.

The first purpose of the study is to know the dispersion area of the birds of each colony and to compare this distribution with the results obtained in the late sixties. Some interesting results (for " pure marine " cormorants) have been already obtained : one bird of Chausey was spotted in the Loire Valley and a bird of Saint-Marcouf was seen in Buckinghamshire!

The second aspect of the study is to know if the conditions of nestlings affect their prospecting abilities when they become adults: are the birds from early or late nests different or not? Are the birds from isolated nests or from a nest in a dense group of nests different? Results will come in the next years.

If you see these birds, please contact us at the following address:

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