

INTENSIVE CONSERVATION ACTIONS FOR ROSEATE TERNS *STERNA DOUGALLII* IN BRITTANY, FRANCE

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The whole French population of roseate tern is located in Brittany, and since the late 1980s the mixed tern colony of Dames Island held the large majority of the breeding birds. A crash in breeding numbers was recorded in Brittany in the 1960s-1970s, from around 500-600 pairs to only 30 pairs. Recreational activities and human disturbance, as well as gull-tern spatial competition and predation, were identified as factors which had detrimental effect on terns. Then, several tern reserves have been created. Gull control operations were conducted mainly in the 1980s and the 1990s. Daily wardening was set up from May to August around the main colonies since 1989. In recent years, predation by American minks and predation and disturbance by peregrine falcons on the terns of Dames Island became new major threats for roseate terns. To secure the breeding colonies for terns, conservation measures necessarily include the control of predators like mink, rat and gull, scaring attempt of the peregrine and wardening during the breeding season. Essential funding was obtained from a specific European Life-Nature programme 'Conservation of the roseate tern in Brittany 2006-2010'. In 2006, the colony was deserted by roseate terns but they fortunately came back in 2007, and 63-69 breeding pairs were recorded in Brittany. Unfortunately, despite trapping pressure, two attacks of minks occurred in 2008, and 36 adults of roseate terns were killed among the 57 breeding pairs.