

**To: Petit Manan NWR Files**

**From: Jennifer Lynn Megyesi**

**Subject: Trip Report -- Jordan's Delight, 28 June 1993**

After reports of the **double-crested cormorants** (hereafter referred to as **shags**) on Jordan's Delight appearing to be in poor condition, I went ashore to census nests and to look for storm-petrel burrows. The sheep had just recently been removed from the island (on the 26th of June); however, vegetation was at least .5 meters in some places. Raspberry bushes had been grazed back to approximately 1 m in height, but iris and conifers had remained untouched. Also observed on the island were two species of fern (unidentified), three-leaved Solomon's seal, spring beauty, and several species of grass. There were several areas that appeared to be prime tern nesting habitat, especially in the island's saddle, but nesting gulls would deter any terns from nesting here.

Several **Common Eider** broods were observed amongst the raspberries, though **no broods** were observed in the water surrounding the island. **Black guillemots** were also numerous on the north-facing cliffs, and while searching crevices for storm-petrel scent, I observed three incubating guillemots on nests. On the bald crest directly opposite the cave, I found **two burrows** and smelled the scent of **Leach's storm-petrels**. I did not search all of the area thoroughly, as it was densely occupied by nesting **Great black-backed gulls**. I estimated at least 300 territorial pairs on the island, though no direct nest censuses were made. On the south side of the island there are approximately 200-250 territorial pairs of **Herring gulls** nesting. It is also on the southern most side of the island that the **shags** are nesting. It appears that there are three separate colonies nesting, judging by the clumping of the nests and the different, synchronous stages within each of the three areas. In the western-most colony, the chicks are oldest. They have started their secondary flight feathers, and they are approximately .5 meters in height. Many of these chicks were ambulatory, so I stayed 4 meters from the colony and counted the nests. All of the nesting adults stayed at their nests and did not flush.

Many of the eggs in the middle colony appeared to have been newly laid and were bright green and unsoiled. All empty nests in this area appeared to be active and had fresh nesting material in the cups. The shags may have been attempting a reneest after losing their first clutches, or it could have been new birds entering into the colony and nesting for the first time. I observed just one disturbed nest, where the eggs had been kicked out of the nest, possibly by the incubating bird. There were no dead adults or chicks in the colony. However, the birds in the middle and western-most colony did not stay at their nests as I approached, and soon after leaving, herring gulls moved in and ate many of the newly hatched chicks and eggs. The chicks were youngest in the western-most colony, where most were unfeathered and nest-prone. The majority of chicks in the colony were in their earliest stages of development, with the exception of the western-most colony. The total numbers of shag nests are broken down as follows: **147 nests total, containing 132 chicks, 164 eggs, 14 empty, and 2 unknown nests.** Fifty-two

percent of the nests in the colony had yet to hatch, counting the empty, active nests.

There were only gulls nesting down near the shag colony, so the area can be avoided during future censuses for guillemots and storm-petrels.

The raspberry bushes on the southern side of the island were dense with common eider nests, though I suggest that few ducklings are pulled off on this island due to the propensity of nesting gulls.

A yellow warbler was singing from the raspberry bushes on the southern side of the island, and there were several territorial pairs of savannah sparrows island-wide.

Two sheep carcasses remain on the island. The fencing for the sheep roundup is still standing, though the Kausen's plan to remove this as soon as the weather is good.

### Breakdown of shag colonies

#### Western-most Colony

Empty	1-egg	2-egg	3-egg	1-chick	2-chick	3-chick	2-egg,1-chick	2-chick,1-egg	Unknown
5	8	4	5	1	8	4	1	3	1

#### Middle Colony

Empty	1-egg	2-egg	3-egg	4-egg	1-chick	2-chick	3-chick	Unknown
6	4	8	8	1	5	8	6	0

#### Eastern-most Colony

Empty	1-egg	2-egg	3-egg	4-egg	1-chick	2-chick	3-chick	1-egg,1-chick
3	1	5	19	1	7	8	9	3

1-egg,2-chick    2-egg,1-chick    Unknown    Destroyed

1                    2                    1                    1

In summary, the island is unfit as a tern colony due to the overabundance of large gulls nesting there; there are many nesting black guillemots among the cliffs and rock rubble on the north side of the island but not on the southeastern point where the shag colony is located; nesting common eiders are abundant on the island amongst the raspberries and under rock crevices, though it is doubtful that any broods are brought off of the island because of the gulls. The shag colony appears healthy and growing, though it is extremely vulnerable to predation by gulls if nests are left unattended. My presence on the island caused the destruction of at least 10 shag nests. At least a few Leach's storm-petrels occur on the island, though it was undetermined whether they were nesting. The vegetation height on the island has been curtailed by sheep grazing. There is some sign of erosion on the southeastern-most side of the island, probably caused by the sheep.

cc: John Anderson (COA), John Hoffman (Owner)