



**INFORMATION – Leaflet (1)**

**European Cormorant Mid-winter census  
17-18 January 2009**

The strong increase and the development of cormorant breeding colonies is well documented in many European countries - in contrast - not enough information about the actual situation of the migrating and wintering population of Great Cormorants in Europe exist. In January 2003 the first Pan-European Cormorant winter count was organised. At that time we had to build up the network and explain a lot about methods. In total we estimated almost 676,000 Cormorants. The western group was most numerous with 346,500 birds. In central and eastern Europe 214,400 Cormorants were counted. See PDF of the flyer that was published recently. Now the debate about numbers is up again, we plan another count next January, in order to get a recent picture again. As the big countries France and Germany are being counted we like to add to this as many countries as possible.

The aim of a European census is to get a picture about the actual population size and distribution of Cormorants in Europe, as complete as possible. We would like to use the experience of the previous count and collaborate through your national coordinator.

The plan is to count as many cormorant night roosts (inland and sea coasts) as possible in all European countries and North Africa in mid January 2009.

**Therefore we ask for your help and cooperation!**

**HOW to count great cormorants in winter?**

In contrast to the practice of the international waterbirds counts taking place during daytime – **cormorants counts have to be made by controlling roost sites in the late afternoon**. Ideally, counts should take place **at the end of the day - about two hours before dusk or at dawn**. To avoid double counts, cormorants should not be counted during daytime on their feeding grounds or on their day roosts. Cormorants are highly mobile birds used to fly over longer distances (> 40km) between night roosts and feeding grounds.

So it is necessary to organise and carry out coordinated simultaneous **night-roost counts!**

## **WHEN?**

### **Counting date**

Following the recommendations to collect data about waterbirds populations on an international level, we choose as counting date the weekend of 17-18 January 2009

### **First (preferred) counting date :**

**17-18 January 2009**

Due to local bad weather conditions (fog, heavy snow) counting dates may be shifted; we prefer to have focal dates as indicated, but counts between 15-25 January are still valuable.

### **Note:**

Please pay attention to the fact that on adjacent locations within an area or region where shifts of cormorant flocks between roost sites may occur frequently, simultaneous counts on the same date should be coordinated on a national level to assure accurate counting results!

## **WHERE and HOW?**

### **Methology**

1. Three European coordinators have been named to be responsible for contacting potential national coordinators in every country (name of coordinators and relevant list of countries see below).
2. On a national level identification of relevant roosting sites in every country is necessary (big cormorant roost sites are often well known due to research projects, official winter counts or various national reports), list of relevant roost sites with geographical coordinates should be available. As roost counts are more precise than counts during the day when birds disperse over wide areas we prefer this type of count. However, if you have only data from daytime investigations please supply these as well.
3. A national coordinator in every country is organising a national counting team. One person for every location/roost site is needed to count cormorants being present (simultaneous counting date preferred!).

### **Protocols**

4. Please use standard forms for counts; either European form or adapted national form for every country according to their specificity. The European Form used before is distributed in advance by the European coordinators, and, if necessary instructions about details /notes which should be taken and written down on the form-sheets can be sent out together with counting forms.
5. If you are unable to use standard forms, please provide a list with name of roost, position of the roost site (coordinates or nearest village, river section, name of lake etc.) and number of Cormorants counted.

For summing up data collected on a national level to get an European census-result, the following **basic information** from every roost-site count is required:

- date and hour of count
- name of observer (on specific location)
- name of national coordinator
- name of locality (plus name of department or province, geographical coordinates, position of roost sites should be indicated on a joined map of the roosts at a regional scale)
- Total number of Cormorants being present (at the end of observation time)

**6.** Collection, summing-up and analysis of counting results in every country should be made by the national coordinators. The total number of wintering Great Cormorants and the national map of the distribution of the roosts should be addressed to the European coordinators.

Sending results please contact:

- Loïc Marion for West and South Europe
- Rosemarie Parz-Gollner for Central and East Europe and
- Thomas Bregnballe for North Europe

In close cooperation with all national coordinators these three persons will finally take care for realising the European synthesis.

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Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine.