

Barnacle geese with leg rings

Since the first ringing expedition to Dunøyane in 1962, **coloured plastic (darvic) leg rings** have been fitted to the Svalbard Barnacle Geese almost every year.

- All rings should be read vertically up the leg (although a few rings have been fitted upside-down).
- The colours and codes that are currently extant in the population of this flyway include:
- **three letter green rings** with the characters A-Z excluding E, G, K, M, O, Q, R, W
- some **two digit alphanumeric green rings** which can also have the numbers 3, 4, 6, 7 or 9
- **three letter yellow rings** are generally on older birds, and the only series remaining begin with E, S, U, V or X and contain the letters as specified for green rings including E, G and K. Some two digit codes also remain for combinations A-Z with the numbers as for green rings. Unfortunately, some other three letter codes and a proportion of the two letter codes have faded to white (non-darvic rings), and the latter are thus indistinguishable from the true white rings
- **white rings** which include the A-Z combinations given for green rings plus numbers 6, 7 and 9.
- Most of these rings have been fitted during the breeding season in Spitsbergen to adults, yearlings and goslings, with most **green-ringed birds** representing those caught near Ny-Ålesund.
- Birds caught in the winter on the Solway Firth, Scotland, have been fitted with **orange rings** with the A-Z sequence as given for the green rings. By the end of the 2007/08 winter on the Solway, three letter ring combinations starting with A-D only had been used.
- Up until 2007, a couple of **two-letter blue rings** still remained in the population; however these now appear to have gone.
- Birds from the other two flyways occasionally turn up on the wintering grounds, as do others from feral/naturalised flocks elsewhere. A variety of ringing schemes exists for these birds and are summarised at <http://home.scarlet.be/~pin02658/cr-BarnacleG.htm>

If you observe birds from the Svalbard population, please make a note of

- **Ring code and colour**
- **the date, time, location (preferably Lat/Long although UTM is fine),**
- **an estimate of flock size**
- **if possible an assessment of whether or not the bird appeared to be paired (and indeed whether or not this bird had leg rings) and/or, through association, to have a family.**

If the information could be sent to larry.griffin@wwt.org.uk or mailed to **WWT Caerlaverock, Eastpark Farm, Dumfriesshire, DG1 4RS** this would be much appreciated, and it will be added to ~500,000 sightings currently held on the long-term database, made available to all other researchers working in this field.