

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

POSTBREEDING MOVEMENTS OF FRIGATEBIRDS TRACKED WITH SATELLITE
TELEMETRY

HENRI WEIMERSKIRCH^{1,2,5}, MATTHIEU LE CORRE³, FRANCIS MARSAC¹,
CHRISTOPHE BARBRAUD², OLIVIER TOSTAIN⁴, AND OLIVIER CHASTEL²

¹*Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Centre de la Réunion, UR 109 Thetis, BP 172,
97492 Sainte Clotilde, Ile de la Réunion, France*

²*Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chizé, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 79360
Villiers en Bois, France*

³*Laboratoire d'Ecologie Marine, Université de la Réunion, 15 avenue René Cassin, BP 7151,
97715 Saint Denis, Ile de la Réunion, France*

⁴*Association Arataï, 1 lotissement des Nénuphars, 97357 Rémire-MontJoly, Guyane, France*

Manuscript received 2 April 2005; accepted 13 October 2005.

⁵E-mail: henriw@cebc.cnrs.fr

Abstract. Using satellite telemetry, we studied the postbreeding movements of Great (*Fregata minor*) and Magnificent Frigatebirds (*F. magnificens*) at two breeding colonies in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. After breeding failure, 67% of the birds with satellite transmitters remained on the breeding colonies and continued to perform foraging trips similar to those undertaken while breeding. Two Magnificent Frigatebirds that bred at a colony off the coast of French Guiana moved west along the coast of South America, and one of the two reached Trinidad 1400 km away. One Great Frigatebird moved 4400 km from Europa Island in the Mozambique Channel to the Maldive Islands. It roosted there for at least four months, making foraging trips of up to 240 km, mainly to an area known for its high concentration of tuna. These results show that frigatebirds are able to make rapid and directed long-distance dispersal movements to other colonies or roosting sites, although the majority of birds remain based on breeding colonies.

Key words: *Fregata magnificens*, *Fregata minor*, *French Guiana*, *Indian Ocean*, *satellite tracking*.