STEPPING STONES TO REPRODUCTIVE SUCCESS: THE ROLE OF GEOMORPHOLOGY IN SEABIRD NEST SITE CHOICE

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Study Description

Having recently discovered the role of small natural features in seabird nesting site locations, we investigated the importance of geomorphology to nest site selection in nine seabird species in northern Brittany, France, at higher spatial scales. A clear, scale-dependent pattern emerged, which was related to seabird species/size and exposure to predation risk. The results highlight the importance of specific geomorphological features, and the resultant geodiversity, to seabird nesting at all relevant spatial scales. This information should help guide the selection and implementation of conservation strategies for already-depleted or rapidly declining seabird populations worldwide.

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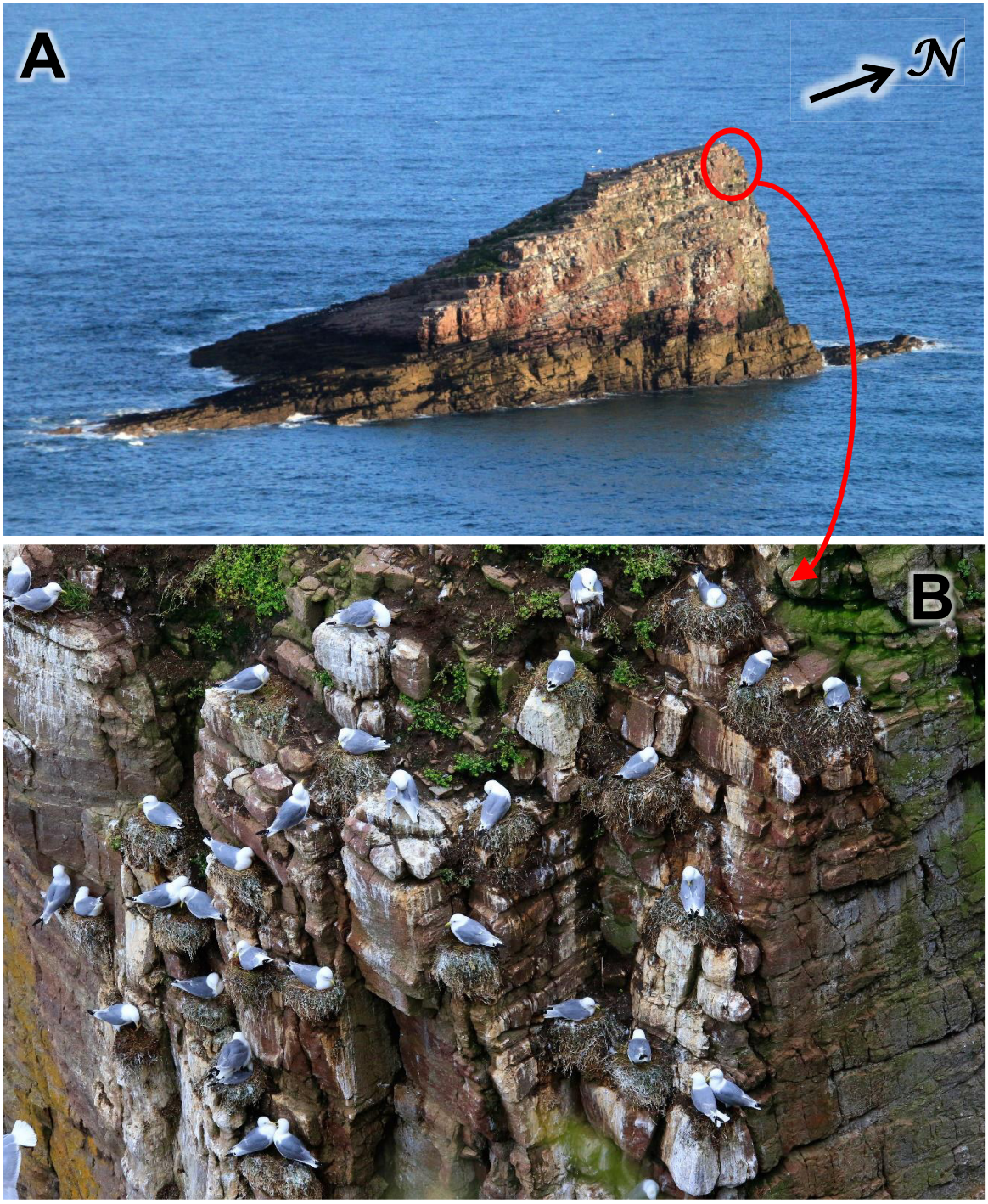

Photo 1. Geomorphological features related to seabird nest sites. (A) L'île de l'Amas off Cap-Fréhel, Brittany, France. The island presents several key geomorphological features at various spatial scales, from largest to smallest: small island (~100 × 50 m at low tide), steep slope (north facing, marked with an N), gentle slope (south facing), low degree of enclosure. (B) Detail of a steep slope face with nesting Kittiwakes. Steep slope-nesting seabirds show no requirement for nest site enclosure, and nest indifferently on large or small islands; the steep face deters both land and seaborne predation. Photo credit: Marie Eveillard-Buchoux.

These photographs illustrate the article "Between a rock and a large place: the importance of multi-scale geomorphological features to seabird nest site selection" by Marie Eveillard-Buchoux and Peter G. Beninger in *Ecology*, https://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.3566.