



Aspects of conservation - Emmanuel Holder

Emmanuel My job is to manage a reserve, a natural reserve; the first one is in Venec in Brennilis, which is a peat bog, a raised bog, for to be exact, and the second one is a regional nature reserve which is Les Landes du Cragou et du Vergam. You can, you can find it between Le Cloître Saint Thégonnec, Scrignac and Plougouven, and Lannéanou and these two reserves are in the Monts d'Arée, in the monts d'Arée, and with a lot of heathlands and peatland.

Rob Those places are in Finistère?

Emmanuel Yes, of course.

Rob So your job is to manage these places?

Emmanuel Yes, to, to make monitoring with the species like curlew, like Hen Harrier or Montague's harrier

Rob Sorry, Harriers, sorry ...

Emmanuel ... yes, little eagles. And to make monitoring with vegetation, and habitats and we organise during the summer, um, exhibition to travel visitors who come on the reserve to discover the nature and heathland and the peatland.

Rob And there are visitors' centers in these two parks that you mention?

Emmanuel Natural reserve--it is not a park.

Rob Oh, beg your pardon.

Emmanuel There's a visitors' Center in Brennilis between the first July and the fifteen September.

Rob OK, so that's a date for the summer months.

Emmanuel Yes.

Rob For people who want to see something natural.

Emmanuel In the visitors' center, and during July and August we have

exhibition to discover butterflies, dragonflies, peatland, and on the heathland are beavers. We have beavers in Brennilis, so we never see beavers during the exhibition, but we can find some ... "indices" ...

Rob Clues?

Emmanuel Clues, like a dams or youths (?) for the animals

Rob So, do you take people out, into the *lande*?

Emmanuel Yes, with my, uh, the person, the people who works with us, with me, do it every day --- with young or adults.

Rob So you take groups out?

Emmanuel Yes.

Rob OK.

Emmanuel During July and August you can come. You can ask us the programme and you can choose the day when you want to discover something with us.

Rob You are a manager, you're also a guide, you're also a journalist, I understand.

Emmanuel Yes, during my lost time ... , since fifteen years I write papers about nature in the newspaper Poher Hebdo, and I used to write some things on nature, on birds, on everything, and I did a compilation with my paper about heathland and peatland, the habitats and the species, like lizard, like sundew, like everything you can find in heathland and peatland and I make illustration with my photographies and the drawings that I draws ...

Rob The drawings, yeah

Emmanuel ... the drawings that I do sometimes.

Rob In fact, you brought all of these articles together in a book, which has just been published ...

Emmanuel Yes.

Rob ... called "Lande vivante; à la découverte d'un milieu naturel breton." In a way, you're promoting the fact that the countryside is alive ...

Emmanuel Yes.

Rob ... and has to be preserved.

Emmanuel Yes, yes. It's because I think there's a lot of beautiful things that you can find in heathland - every time, every day I go on the heathland, I can feel something different, because the light's not the same. Each season is not the same; each hour is not the same between clouds, between trees, there's every time, something different. Heathland is never the same.

Rob So every day you see your working place in a different light, a different aspect.

Emmanuel I don't earn a lot of money, but my office is very beautiful.

Rob You are very fortunate. Where would you recommend people to visit? I mean, are there -- to see some of the things that you describe in your book?

Emmanuel They are near Rostrenen; it is very easy to, to, to visit something like that. For example, Landes de Lan Bern on the road between Rostrenen and Carhaix at Glomel, you can find a road on the left which will lead you to Lan Bern. It's a very beautiful place with a lot of heathland, a lot of species, very typical about the heathland. You can find deers, for example, it's very rare in Brittany here you can sometimes watch deers. You can watch ... snipers? Snipers, no ...

Rob I don't think snipers, no ...

Emmanuel No, not snipers.

Rob Snipe?

Emmanuel Snipe. Yes!

Rob OK, not "sniper," but "snipe." Big difference.

Emmanuel Yes. You can watch dragonflies, a lot of dragonflies, butterflies. And the place where we manage the reserve with grazing the vegetation, where we have some cattle ...

Rob "Cattle"? Yeah.

Emmanuel But, it's a special breed ...

Rob "breed," yeah.

Emmanuel Which are called Nantaise. These cows are used to graze les marais de bruyère near Nantes, and so we take it to manage our reserve. We have a lot of water, a lot of vegetation, so they do a good job and we have Dartmoor ponies that you can know perhaps if you know the country around Plymouth -- when you cross the Channel, you have Plymouth and around a lot of heathland, which is Dartmoor, and a lot of ponies in liberty, and

here we have ponies too, but pure, pure ponies, you know, because in Dartmoor, sometimes they do ...

Rob A little mix.

Emmanuel Yeah, a little mix, little match.

Rob So you've actually imported other animals to do the management of the sites for you?

Emmanuel Yes, because you know ecologists are -- don't like to work. When you have animals who can do it for you ...

Rob But, be careful. I understand in some places this has been a big mistake, because the animals have taken over. For example, rabbits in Australia.

Emmanuel Yes, yes of course, but we manage cows. We talk with the bull so we can, we can control the births. Ok? And, it is the same for the ponies. And it's to manage, because some heathland are very, very wet and if you take a tractor, perhaps you can lose it in the ...

Rob ..in the mud?

Emmanuel Yes, yes. So we have animals. With cattle you can manage it. But, for the heathlands which are dryer, you can use tractor. Last summer we ... two farmers from the central Brittany bring their cattle on the Cragou to manage Cragou and to feed the cattle too. OK? It's good for the animals ...

Rob For both sides.

Emmanuel Yes, and when you cut heathland, you can use the litter to put in the stables.

Rob We hear a lot about climate change and the effect it has on nature. You've been in this area, you've been working for fifteen years, you say -- in this area. Have you seen a difference?

Emmanuel Yeah.

Rob And what kind of differences have you seen?

Emmanuel I don't even remember what is the English name of this little bird, it's I think a warbler, but, a little warbler and this little bird is in the limit of repartition (distribution) in the South. There's a lot of little bird in England, in the United Kingdom, you know, and the limit is in Brittany.

Rob I see. The southern limit, do you mean?

Emmanuel Yes, and since ten years I know on the Cragou less and less birds of this species and on Venec, which is a little more "fresh," (cooler) still are a lot of these birds. It is because we have monitoring on these birds. You know. And we can see on one, Cragou, less and less.

Rob And for the flora? Any difference, do you find?

Emmanuel For the moment, no, no difference.

Rob Because you monitoring that as well, I understand.

Emmanuel Because, we have a moss, very, very rare, which is *sphagnum austinii*, the single station in France.

Rob The only place in France to find this?

Emmanuel Yes, yes, and in the north of, near the Hadrian's Wall, ...

Rob In northern England.

Emmanuel Between the two country have this moss too. And we know with the connection, this moss are more and more rare, and more and more in the north of the world.

Rob OK

Emmanuel ... of the planet.

Rob So there is an effect ...

Emmanuel Yes.

Rob ... that you have noticed in your experience.

Emmanuel Yes. and the experience of the English specialists too.

Rob It's not just what is happening in Brittany, but elsewhere as well, OK. Emmanuel Holder, it has been fascinating listening to your experience and your job ...

Emmanuel Thank you.

Rob I'll just remind listeners that your writing, and drawing and photographs are available in this new book you've written, "Landes vivantes" and it's available in all of the very good bookshops. And also through the website, "coop-breizh", which is the publishing company which obviously is very, a local one.

Emmanuel OK.

Rob Thank you very much for talking with us today. I hope we'll speak

with you again sometime soon.

Emmanuel Perhaps.

Rob Thank you very much.

Emmanuel Thank you.

Transcribed by Jane Crisler

Useful websites:

<http://www.reserves-naturelles.org/venec>

<http://www.reserves-naturelles.org/landes-et-tourbieres-du-cragou-et-du-vergam>

<http://www.reserves-naturelles.org/landes-de-lan-bern-et-magoar-pen-vern>

<http://www.coop-breizh.fr>

