

**SEABIRDS AT SEA, SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1989 (SHIP-BASED OBSERVATIONS
CvZ/DGW, NIOZ)**

On board MV Tridens many weeks were spent observing birds and marine mammals. In September 3 weeks were spent off the English east coast, just west of the Dogger Bank area, during a Herring larvae survey (KB, CJC, HO, PW). The German Bight was visited in October (from IJmuiden to the northernmost tip of Denmark), fishing for flatfishes and shrimps (CJC, GOK, EVK). In November the Dogger Bank and waters off the mainland coast of Holland were surveyed when the Tridens was trawling (CJC, MG, JK, MFL). MS Holland had its monthly MONO'88 surveys in the Dutch sector of the continental shelf, and the ship was manned in October and November (CJC, AMvdN, JdO, TP). Several short trips, or rather attempts for short trips, were carried out by the NIOZ research vessel Aurelia

in Sep and Oct between Texel, the southern Dogger Bank area, the Frisian Front and the Bruine Bank (MFL, MG, PW).

Divers were rare in early autumn. A visit to the German Bight in early October showed that summer plumage Red-throated Divers were not uncommon around Helgoland and off the northernmost German Wadden Sea islands. In Dutch (inshore) waters, divers became progressively more abundant from the second half of Oct and on.

Scattered records of Leach's Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters in Sep and Oct, including 3 swimming Leach's Petrels and one foraging specimen at 53°47N, 04°29E, Terschellingerbank (23 Oct, MFL). British Storm Petrels were exclusively seen off the east coast of England in September. Manx Shearwaters mingled with feeding auks at the same time. Fulmars were abundant in Sep already very near the Dutch coast, but became distinctly more rare inshore later in autumn. Large flocks were seen near fishing fleets in the southern North Sea all autumn. In the German Bight, up to Blåvandshuk, in October Fulmars were not particularly common. LL phase birds predominated always, but the odd dark phase was seen every other day.

Gannets were remarkably abundant on the Dutch sector of the continental shelf, particularly very close to the beach, in early autumn. Even in November considerable numbers could be observed but the majority had now left. It must have been good fishing for Gannets and on 25 Sep, in flat calm conditions, many small fishes were seen to jump out of the water just to the west of IJmuiden, with large gulls and Gannets swimming in the area, looking at the fish without interest, being too full of food even to take wing.

Concentrations of Guillemots in Dutch waters were seen in Oct and Nov around the Frisian Front, where Sprat and young Scad formed good fishing for the birds (MFL). Important concentrations of Guillemots were also found close inshore; i.e. a concentration off Petten (Noord-Holland, area called 'Pettemer Polder') on 26 Oct.

Little Auks were found in the Dogger Bank area no earlier than November, just a few days later than the small influx witnessed at Schiermonnikoog. Puffins were rare in Dutch waters, but good be seen in fair numbers in certain areas off the English east coast during surveys in September.

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