

Seawatching, September - October 1990

Seawatching was very popular in these months, and most counts were conducted in Noord-Holland (NH) in Egmond aan Zee, and at the Hondsbossche Zeewering (Hbz), in Zuid-Holland (ZH) in Bloemendaal, Noordwijk, and West-Kapelle, on the Frisian mainland coast in Holwerd and Ternaard and on the Wadden Sea islands (WD) Terschelling, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog (Schier). The stormy weather, which brought many of the rarer seabirds in the vicinity of our coast, has been responsible for the considerable interest in seabirds this autumn. Leach's Petrel did very well late Sep, with over 200 individuals. Even more remarkable was the presence of some tens of British Storm Petrels on 21 and 22 Sep. The maximum, 14 individuals at Hbz, was unprecedented for a species which is not even seen every year along our coast. The best day for Fulmars was 24 Sep, with 214 individuals at the Hbz (two dark morph). Shearwaters were not particularly abundant, with 40 Sooty Shearwaters on 19 Sep at West-Kapelle being the highest figure recorded. Noteworthy were 5 'Balearic' Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus mauretanicus*.

Contrary to the last few years, Gannets were not seen in large numbers. In Sep, many Common Scoters were seen at Terschelling. Thousands of scoters were seen during the second half of Oct in NH. Some passage of Shelduck was reported in Oct in NH and WD. An outstanding total of over 20,000 Eiders were seen in only three days on Ameland during the second week of Oct.

Skuas were not particularly numerous this autumn. Interesting were 2 Long-tailed Skuas at Hbz and 7 in Noordwijk on 21 Sep. Great Black-backed Gulls passed by in numbers in the second week of Oct (Ameland, Hbz). During easterly winds in the second half of Oct, huge numbers of Black-headed Gulls were seen migrating at Hbz. On 21 Oct 14,000 individuals were counted. Most Little Gulls and Kittiwakes were seen late Oct, but numbers were comparatively low. More remarkable were some 20 Sabine's Gulls, including several adult birds, which were seen.

Sandwich Terns peaked in the first week of Sep, when daily totals exceeded 1000 individuals at Terschelling and in NH. The same week produced a couple of hundreds of Arctic Terns.

Auks were seen in numbers during the last week of Oct. Best day was 29 Oct, when 1750 Razorbills/Guillemots were spotted at Hbz. Several Puffins and Little Auks were seen in this week.

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