

### **Beached Bird Surveys, June - August 1991**

Beached bird surveys were conducted in Noord-Holland (NH; WB, AB), on Ameland (Wadden Sea islands; JNY) and the Frisian coast (JNY). As usual, the number of surveys is rather small. A Fulmar stranding occurred late May (between 25-28 May; AB, JNY, WB). Most specimens were light phase (LL), few were oiled, and most corpses were rather old when stranded. Similar strandings have been witnessed many times during the last 15 years. Densities did not exceed 1.0/km in most areas, which could mean that only a few hundreds washed ashore. Remarkably are 17 Cormorants found on Ameland in June and July (JNY). Between 1969 and 1983, on average some 3.6 Cormorants per year washed up in the Netherlands: it was an 'unimportant' species in beached bird surveys (Camphuysen 1989). From 1984-1990, this figure increased to 16.0 per annum (maximum 32 in 1985; NZG/NSO files). During Jan-Aug 1991, 38 Cormorants were found on the Dutch coast. More and more Cormorants, from the rapidly expanding Dutch population, nowadays use marine habitats. As a result, larger numbers are found stranded and more Cormorants are at risk for oil spills in coastal waters. Eiders continued to die in large numbers. Most birds are unoiled, and starvation is the proximate cause of death. Weakened birds could be seen all along the coast, south to the Delta area. Acute food shortage, a result of overexploitation of Cockles and Mussels in the Wadden Sea, has caused this mass mortality. Gulls and terns washed up in small numbers. One Herring Gull was found entangled in nylon thread (WB). Late May, 11 heavily oiled Razorbills and Guillemots (100% covered in oil) washed up in NH. The corpses were not fresh, indicating a relatively long stay in the water. Strandings like these are rather rare this time of year.

**Information from:** NZG/NSO database, A. Barnhoorn (AB), J.N. Jnsen (JNY), De Windbreker (WB).