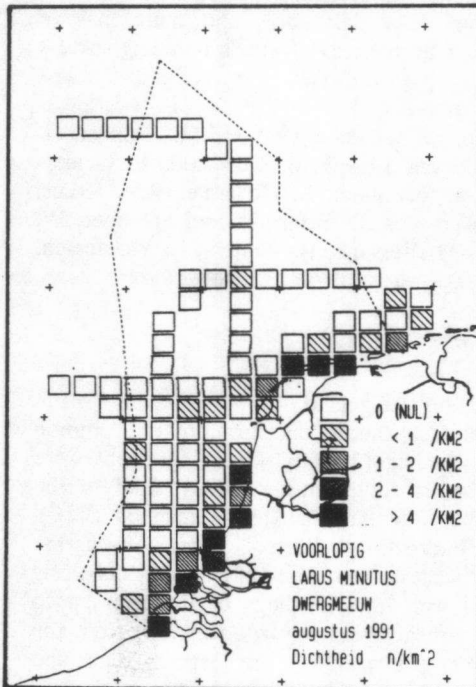


### **Seabirds at sea, June - August 1991**

MV Navicula sailed to, from, and around Helgoland 29 May-5 June (MFL, HO). Guillemots were numerous around Helgoland. Concentrations of Common Scoters near Texel (3300) and off Terschelling (36,000). Migrating Brent were seen regularly in the German Bight. On its survey in the eastern half of the North Sea (Ijmuiden-Skagen), 3-12 June, MV Tridens II was manned (CJC). During this cruise, being part of the International Bottom Trawl Survey, the German Bight and Danish waters were well studied. The only species occurring in numbers was the Fulmar. Interesting were mass-feedings of Fulmars, up to 5000 individuals together, picking small particals (probably zooplankton) from the surface. High densities were also encountered in places in the German Bight and

off Noord-Holland. Coloured specimens were seen quite frequently (though <1%). Auks were extremely rare. Gannets, Kittiwakes, and Larus-gulls were seen frequently, but in very small numbers.

June's aerial survey was delayed well into July due to bad weather technical improvements which were being made on the plane. It is now equipped with a GPS navigation system, probably the most precise position indicator to date. On July 3rd the coastal flight (for routes and details see *Sula* 5: 16-23) again proved to be useful for mapping foraging gulls and terns. North of the Waddensea islands several groups of scoters were found, totaling up to 13,600 Common Scoters and 200 Velvet Scoters. Hardly any birds with male plumage were seen in any of the groups. This could mean that they were largely non-breeding subadult birds spending the summer on the Dutch coast. Fair weather on July 8 and 9 enabled us to survey the Dutch sector of the Continental Shelf (DCS) further offshore with the Texelflight on 8th and the Borkumflight on 9th. On both flights few birds were seen once we got further offshore which is normal for this season, with only 2 Great Skuas, few Gannets, Fulmars and Kittiwakes and low numbers of Herring Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Only 20 large auks (Guillemot or Razorbill) were seen. A Great Northern Diver in winter plumage seen 30 nm west of Europort may have been a summering immature bird (HB).



*Little Gull distribution on the Dutch Continental Shelf (preliminary results, aerial survey 13-15 August 1991, HB).*

Three species of auks (Guillemot, Razorbill, and Puffin) were seen in very large numbers of NE Scotland, 1-18 July (MV Tridens II; HO, TG). In the northwestern North Sea, Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels were seen in fair numbers.

The aerial survey on 13-15 August showed that Fulmars were present in numbers in the northern half of the DCS. Gannets were scarce, Kittiwakes were seen in small concentrations. Large auks (probably mainly Guillemots) were seen in numbers in the Frisian Front area and further to the north ('Oestergronden'). For the entire DCS, it was estimated that 78,500 auks were present during the survey (extrapolation from survey results; for details contact HB). Similar estimates for other seabirds were: 62,500 Fulmars, 2800 Gannets, and 43,400 Kittiwakes. Coastal waters were remarkable rich in Little Gulls (DCS estimate 55,000 individuals!; see map on page 122). Most were feeding or resting in small groups. Total numbers of Sandwich Terns in Dutch coastal waters were estimated at 8600 individuals. A concentration of moulting Common Scoters was found north of Terschelling (10,500 individuals).

**Information from:** NIOZ, DGW, NZG, H.J.M. Baptist (aerial surveys; HB), C.J. Camphuysen (CJC), T. Gras (TG), M.F. Leopold (MFL), H. Offringa (HO).