

Seawatching, August - October 1991

There was almost daily coverage in Noord-Holland (NH) at Hondsbossche Zeewering (Hbz) and Egmond aan Zee (Egm). From Zuid-Holland (ZH) some tens of hours were received, mainly from Noordwijk (Nw) and West-Kapelle (WK). More than a hundred hours of seawatching were carried out at Ameland

(Am), and in Oct also some hours on Schiermonnikoog (Schier) and the Frisian mainland coast.

August was rather boring with only good numbers of Sandwich Terns. In NH almost every day a few hundred of southward flying Sandwich Terns could be counted. Most were seen in the last days of August but fair numbers continued to show up till the third week of September. On Am hundreds of Common Scoters could be watched on their moult migration in the beginning of August. Later on in October, some westward migration was also noticed on Am and on Schier. Eiders were seen in fair numbers during October in the Wadden Sea region. Best day was the 23th when 5200 westward flying Eiders were counted at the Frisian mainland coast. Migrating Brent Geese were mainly seen from sites in ZH and NH. During the second half of October about 10,000 birds flew by. Remarkable was the departure of Avocets witnessed on the Frisian mainland coast on 5 Oktober (660 ind.). The only other noticable wader species was the Dunlin from which some hundreds were seen on a few days in the end of September and in the end of October in NH.

Many seawatchers found this autumn rather disappointing. Many "real" sea-birds did not show up at all or in very small numbers although onshore winds occurred quite frequently. From species like shearwaters, Leach's Storm Petrel and Fulmar only few individuals turned up, while others like Gannet, Kittiwake and Great Skua were far less numerous than normally. For the Arctic Skua, the only reasonable numbers were seen on Am during 6/8 September (155 ind.). The huge influx of Long-tailed skuas, as witnessed in Britain during September and October, did not touch the Dutch coasts; just a few were seen. Pomarine skuas however were noticed quite regularly with 12 as a maximum on 19 October (WK). Unusual was the sudden appearance of four Storm Petrels at Hbz on 19 October.

Information from: NZG/CvZ database, M.O. Bleijerveld, R. Brouwer, J. Bijleveld, G. Dumay, J. van Dijk, K.J. Eigenhuis, N.F. van der Ham, M. Hoekstein, A.A. Kraus, R. de Mooij, W. & R. van Splunder, C. Winter. B. Winters, K. Woutersen, J.N. Ynsen.