

## **Seawatching, February - April 1992**

Again most hours were counted in Noord-Holland (particularly at Hondsbossche Zeewering, Hbz). Other regular manned posts were Scheveningen (Schev) and Bloemendaal (Bloem) in Zuid-Holland, the Frisian mainland coast and Ameland in the Wadden Sea. Just a few hours were received from Maasvlakte, Texel and Terschelling. It seems that not many divers wintered off the Wadden Sea islands. Also northbound migration was less than other years with 243 individuals as a maximum on the 29th of March at Hbz. In the second half of April some summer plumage Black-throated Divers could be seen flying north. Fulmars and Gannets were remarkably common during March and the beginning of April. Best day for the first species was the 28th of March and most Gannets (265 individuals) were seen on the 2nd of March (both Hbz.). Quite 'unseasonal' were observations of Leach's Petrel on the 14th of March (Schev.) and on the 15th of February (Hbz.). Brent Geese did very well with almost 30,000 counted individuals on one site (Hbz.) during spring. Migration took place from the end of February till the first half of April. Highest numbers were seen during bad weather in March like during the 5th (4500 individuals) and the 20th (a staggering estimated 10,000 individuals). Migration of dabbling ducks started at the end of February and peaked in the first half of April. Most striking species were Pintail, Teal and Shoveler. The Pintail showed two migration waves. The first one at the end of February, which took place mainly in Zuid-Holland (400 individuals on the 25th and 27th), and the second one together with other ducks in the first half of April (now mainly in Noord-Holland). Some hundreds of Teal could be seen from the end of February onwards but more than a thousand on one day were seen on the 5th and 8th of April at Hbz. (2000 and 1250 individuals respectively). Normally just some tens of Shoveler can be seen on one day in spring, but last spring produced several days with more than a hundred. Record day was the 8th of April when 540 Shovelers flew north. Highest numbers of Common Scoter (with Velvet Scoter quite scarce) were counted during the first week of April with 9500 individuals being the highest figure on one day. Large numbers were still present at Terschelling. Red-breasted Merganser peaked during

the same time with 440 individuals as a maximum on the 6th at Hbz. Migration of large waders had not started yet in April with the exception of Whimbrel from which 932 individuals were seen on the 18th of April at Hbz. Apart from being the highest number ever seen on a seawatch, this was also surprisingly early in the season. Normally migration takes place together with other waders like Bar-tailed Godwit and Knot in the first half of May. Dunlins were seen in reasonable numbers during many days in March. Also the observation of some hundreds of Black-tailed Godwits in the end of February at Schev. should be mentioned. Large numbers of Little Gulls showed up on fewer days than last years but again a good record total was seen. The second half of April was the best time for this delicate species and Noord-Holland the best place. Numbers of migrating terns were quite low. The last week of April produced just two days with some reasonable numbers of Common Terns. On Terschelling 300 eastward Sandwich Terns were counted in one hour on the 22th of April.

**Information from:** NZG/CvZ database, L. Stegeman, M.O. Blijerveld, F. Cottaar, B.W. van Dijk, D. van Elswijk, S. Geelhoed, F. Geldermans, H. Groot, N.F. v.d. Ham, E. van Huijssteeden, J.N. IJnsen, R. & W. van Splunder, M. Platteeuw, K. Klitsie, A.A. Kraus, A. Remeus, M. Versluys, B. Winters.