

BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS, DECEMBER 1987-MARCH 1988 (NSO)

Low densities in December. The National Survey showed an overall density of 2.3/km, with few oiled birds included. Most numerous were Larus-gulls (32.5%, n= 627), Eider Duck (19.1%) and Guillemot (15.6%). Extremes were a count in Zuid-Holland on 19th December (Noordwijk-Zandvoort, AS) with no birds found at all, and a count on Schiermonnikoog two days earlier with 8.2/km on a 10km stretch (AvdS and others). On Schiermonnikoog mainly Eiders (29.3%), waders (14.6%) and Larus-gulls (31.7%) were found. Daily surveys by car on Terschelling resulted into 60 Guillemots caught alive (PdJ, data not included in analysis).

In January 1988 an oil spill off Zeeland resulted into mass-mortality of (mainly) Great Crested Grebes, Eiders, Common Scoters and Guillemots. A full account of this incident, referred to as the "Borcea-incident" is to be found elsewhere in this issue. Densities in other parts of the country (north of Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland) remained rather low. Mortality caused by another oil spill in Zeeland, in the Oosterschelde, on 24th January, as a result of a collision of the Dutch MV Vlaardingen and the Belgian MV Rapide Vier, was not studied by us. Also nothing is known about any mortality related to again another incident in Zeeland this month, an illegal oil spill on the Westerschelde on 28th January.

Rather small numbers again during the (Inter-)National Survey in February. Highest density (so far received) was 5.6/km on a 7km stretch in Noord-Holland (Callantsoog-Petten, WvG). Most remarkable were scattered specimens of Fulmars, often heavily oiled, especially in the northern parts of the country and, unusually, Razorbills clearly outnumbered Guillemots this month all over our coastline. An estimated 4 to 600 Razorbills washed ashore during the second half of this month (about 1/km), most of them being oil-fouled.

In early March quite considerable quantities of oil washed up at many places (e.g. Schouwen, IJmuiden, Petten, Texel) and following the huge

numbers of Fulmars seen during seawatching, many of these birds were found dead on our beaches. Maximum density, so far reported, was 3.0/km from Camperduin-St.Maartenszee, Noord-Holland (RC). Many Little Auks and Puffins were reported from Schouwen to Texel (SH, RvH, MFL).

Names mentioned: RC Ruud Costers, RvH Ron van Houwelingen, WvG Wim van Gelder, PdJ Piet de Jong, MFL Mardik Leopold, SH Simon Hart, AvdS Aart vd Spoel. Important data from: S.Hart, K.Engelen, R.Costers, A.van der Spoel, C.J.Camp-huysen.