

BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS, DECEMBER 1988 - FEBRUARY 1989 (NSO)

Seabirds washed ashore in exceptionally large numbers in December. Very large numbers of Guillemots washed ashore in December and January on the Dutch coast (see for details page 22-25 in this issue). From Nov-Apr an estimated 6,500 Guillemots beached in our country, and many hundreds were received into rehabilitation centres. Exceptional was the capture of an adult specimen of *Uria aalge hyperborea* in Zeeland. Razorbills were slightly more numerous than usual in December, but numbers declined again in Jan and Feb. A ringed specimen, found in Dec near Camperduin (Noord-Holland), came from Grimsey, North Iceland. Little Auks (12 in Nov, 30 in Dec) were exceptionally common on the tideline for our standards. 8 Puffins were found in Dec. Just over 100 Fulmars were found in Dec, which is much for that time of year. Most seabirds were, as usual, oil contaminated, but the crash reminds us to similar crashes in the early 1980s. In these wrecks food shortages are now thought to have played an important role in the mortality. The weather changed slightly in Feb, with more offshore winds blowing, and numbers washing up declined considerably.

Winter 1988/89 was a very mild winter and, as a result, relatively small numbers of grebes, wildfowl and waders were found dead. However, many wildfowl were found on the Wadden Sea coast of Groningen. On a 25 km stretch, 90 Shelduck and 14 Brent were found on 24 Dec.

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