

Seabirds at sea, December 1989 - February 1990 (Ship-based observations)

Surveys at sea were rather scarce this winter, partly because of the turbulent weather and partly because the 'new' Tridens was not yet available. A.M. van der Niet 'manned' the MV Holland in the first week of January. Most common species seen were Common and Herring Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Kittiwakes and Guillemots. Guillemots outnumbered Razorbills by 3.5 : 1 (n= 85). Gannets (6) and Fulmars (5) were scarce. Interesting was yet another record of a Yellow-legged Herring Gull (*cf.* Camphuysen & Platteeuw 1988, Sula 2(4):119-132). From 11-20 December the MV Tridens was manned with birdwatchers on its trip into the English Channel. Three adult winter Mediterranean Gulls were observed on 13th Dec. Gannets were rather common and 7 Great Skuas were spotted. Guillemots were numerous at certain places; scattered concentrations were found. A Great Northern Diver was observed on 19th Dec, a Leach's Petrel one day thereafter. A mass-movement of Kittiwakes was recorded on 20th Dec (heading S), in reaction of a low pressure area (996 MB). On board MV Navicula from 29th Jan-6th Feb a trip was made along the Dutch and German Wadden Sea islands in the German Bight. Divers (both, Red-throated and Black-throated) were numerous, as were Little Gulls, but really large were the numbers of Common Gulls in these waters. Common Scoters were not particularly numerous and a concentration of 7,000 off Schiermonnikoog was present in an area with a bottom rich in *Spisula*. Remarkable were 8 flocks of Shore Larks heading E/NE (in all 43 individuals) between 30 Jan and 2 Feb.