

Seawatching, March - May 1990

Only a few hours were counted in Zuid-Holland (mainly Noordwijk in March). In Noord-Holland there was an almost daily coverage at Hondsbossche Zeewering (Hbz) and Egmond aan Zee (Egm). Tens of hours were counted at the Frisian coast and on the Isle of Ameland.

In early March, some 100 divers per day could be seen. Summer plumage Black-throated Divers were regularly recognized from the second half of March till the first half of May. The two smaller grebes (Black-necked and Slavonian Grebe) were seen in considerably larger numbers than usually. Fulmars and Gannets were regular passage migrants throughout the period, but 3 March was quite exceptional with 1500 northbound Fulmars during a westerly breeze force 5 (Hbz). Most (dabbling-) duck were seen on a few days in March (Teal, Wigeon) and during the first half of April (Red-breasted Merganser, Teal, Shoveler), but total numbers remained rather low. The Garganey, despite its rapid decline as a breeding bird in Europe, did very well with some 140 individuals in the second half of March and in April (Hbz, Egm). Common Scoters were remarkably scarce this spring, especially in March. Also April produced only a few days with more than 1000 individuals passing by. Remarkable numbers (1000-2000 individuals) were seen swimming near Ameland in the first week of April, together with some 2000 Eiders. Velvet Scoters were scarce as well, with most of them seen in the second half of April. Brent Geese peaked in the first and second week of March, but the maximum count, just 1200 in one day, was rather low. The most numerous wader this spring was the Bar-tailed Godwit. Late April (23-25th) produced a good 7200 individuals heading north (Egm). The first three days of May were quite good for a number of species, including 900 Grey Plovers, 1500 Knot, 200 Whimbrels, 850 Dunlins, 500 Oystercatchers, 490 Redshank, 70 Greenshank and 75 Reeve. Arctic Skuas were seen in small numbers, as usual, particularly in April. The first days of March produced some hundreds of Kittiwakes with 335 at Noordwijk on the 1st as a maximum. Very good was 1990's Little Gull passage. Substantial migration of this attractive gull commenced already in March, while numbers increased in April to more than 1000 birds each day in the end of the month. Numbers declined after the first week of May. 'Commic' terns were common from early April on. Large numbers were seen in the last week of April and the first half of May. On 28th April, almost 1600 Arctic Terns were counted (Hbz), but 7300 'commic' terns on 3th May (Egm) was really outstanding. The last day mentioned produced also 300 Little Terns and an incredible 900 Black Terns as well. The Black Tern was more abundant than ever before. Hundreds of Sandwich Terns were seen in the first few days of May.