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AFLEZINGEN VAN GEKLEURINGDE ZILVERMEEUWEN *LARUS ARGENTATUS* EN KLEINE MANTELMEEUWEN *LARUS FUSCUS* IN NEDERLAND

SIGHTINGS OF COLOUR-RINGED HERRING GULLS AND LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Camphuysen C.J. 2008. Aflezingen van gekleurringde Zilvermeeuwen *Larus argentatus* en Kleine Mantelmeeuwen *Larus fuscus* in Nederland, Sula 21(1): 3-32. Several colour-ring programmes became established in The Netherlands, to monitor the dispersal, migration routes, use of foraging areas, annual survival, return rates and other parameters of Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus* and Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus*. One of the more comprehensive studies was launched in the mid-1980s and this involved the annual ringing of c. 100 fledglings in 12 (later 14) colonies of Herring Gulls scattered along the Dutch coastline between 1986 and 1988. Nearly 90 000 documented sightings of Herring Gulls ringed in these years have been processed and are currently available for analysis. The current status of this and other ringing schemes in The Netherlands is described, some preliminary results are provided, and observers are kindly asked to continue reporting documented sightings, even if some schemes are seemingly discontinued with co-ordinators failing to provide life-histories to the observers. In several of the long-running schemes, gulls are monitored that are well over 20 years of age and scheme continuation is of great significance to enhance our understanding of the life-history of these long-lived seabirds.

IN NEDERLAND EN BELGIË GEKLEURRINGDE ZWARTKOPMEEUWEN *LARUS MELANOCEPHALUS* ALS ZEEVOGEL IN PORTUGAL

MEDITERRANEAN GULLS COLOUR-RINGED IN THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM AS SEABIRDS IN PORTUGAL

Poot M. & R. Flamant 2008. In Nederland en België gekleurringde Zwartkopmeeuwen *Larus melanocephalus* als zeevogel in Portugal. *Sula* 21(1): 33-35. *Several thousands Mediterranean Gulls Larus melanocephalus were observed in the winters of 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 at two sites along the west coast of Southern Portugal. Along the Lisbon coast (Guincho-Cascais-Estoril-Parede, west of Lisbon) a maximum of 6000 birds was observed and along the Alentejo coast at least 1000 birds were present in the Mira river mouth, near Vila Nova de Milfontes. With an unknown, but probably considerable number of birds wintering along the Algarve coast, the total number of birds wintering in Portugal south of Cabo da Roca is estimated at a minimum of 7000-8000 birds. This estimate is six times higher than the previous estimate in the nineties of 1200 wintering birds. This increase is likely explained by the increase of the breeding population in Western and Central Europe. Behavioural observations suggest that along the Lisbon coast the birds mainly feed offshore. Sightings of colour ringed birds indicate that birds came from Belgium, the Netherlands and France with a small proportion coming from other countries. The low rate of re-sightings of individual colour-ringed birds suggests that a very high number of ringed birds wintering in Portugal remained unnoticed so far. The Portuguese coast south of Cabo da Roca is clearly the most important currently known wintering site along the European and North-African Atlantic coast, and the data gathered from colour-ring readings highlight the importance of this area as a wintering ground for the Mediterranean Gulls breeding in The Netherlands and Belgium.*

BRUINVIS *PHOCOENA PHOCOENA* OP ZIJN RETOUR IN DE ZUIDELIJKE NOORDZEE

A DECLINE OF THE HARBOUR PORPOISE IN THE SOUTHERN NORTH SEA

Camphuysen C.J. 2008. Bruinvis *Phocoena phocoena* op zijn retour in de Zuidelijke Noordzee. *Sula* 21(1): 39-43. *Following the rapid 'return' of Harbour Porpoises Phocoena phocoena in Dutch nearshore waters, reflected in systematic sightings (seawatching data), 'accidental reports' of sightings by the general public as well as in strandings data (national database Naturalis), a decline in general abundance has been reported. This decline is possibly a retreat from nearshore waters rather than a reduction in the population as a whole in the southern North Sea, but it is possible that Harbour Porpoises do indeed move back to their recently more traditional areas in the northern half of the North Sea. The peak in abundance was in 2006, when many thousands were seen and over 500 washed ashore in The Netherlands. A small resident population became established in the Delta area (Zeeland), the only part of the country where Harbour Porpoises can be seen throughout the year. The initial increase in nearshore waters was probably caused by a shift in wintering distribution, in particular of smaller (young), mostly male Harbour Porpoises. The sexratio flipped from predominantly females to predominantly males around the year 2000. It would be interesting to see if the reverse would happen if porpoises continue to decline in years to come.*

BALLONNEN IN ZEE

BALLOONS AS MARINE LITTER

Franeker J.A. van 2008. Ballonnen in zee. *Sula* 21(1): 44-46. *Releasing balloons seems harmless. However, remains of balloons, especially valves and ribbons are becoming a common and persistent type of marine litter found on beaches. Following Dutch Queens day 2007, large numbers of Dutch balloons were found in Normandy, France. Animals may become entangled in ribbons or ingest the materials. Even though balloon rubber quickly disintegrates, remains are found in 1-2% of stomachs of Northern Fulmars beached in the North Sea area. Children's contests, releasing balloons with name tags, are not the real problem, especially if no plastic valves and short, degradable ribbons are used. However, the vast majority of balloons released is meant for company advertising and provide just a very short moment of joy followed by a nuisance in the marine environment. Environmentally friendly companies may want to reconsider such activities in future.*