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Het gebruik van zeetrekellingen bij de analyse van populatieschommelingen van duikers Gaviidae langs de kust

THE USE OF SEAWATCHING DATA TO MONITOR POPULATION FLUCTUATIONS IN DIVERS GAVIIDAE IN NEARSHORE WATERS

Waterbirds wintering in low concentrations in large bodies of open water are generally difficult to monitor during standardized waterfowl censuses. Divers, waterbirds wintering mostly in nearshore waters off the Dutch coast, are a prime example of a group of birds that tends to be underestimated during mid-winter waterbird counts. Divers are difficult to count from ships, because they are easily flushed and may take off kilometers ahead of approaching vessels, but also from aircraft, because they cannot be identified with certainty from the air. With the obligation to monitor divers following the Birds Directive (NEM 1), SOVON was interested in other techniques with which (spatial and temporal) fluctuations in wintering numbers could be followed. In this paper, seawatching data were evaluated. The Dutch seawatching programme is unique in Europe, as a result of its highly standardized technique and intensity of observations (100,000 hours of observation since the early 1970s). Not only was the technique standardized, but it remained unchanged over nearly 40 years and still is widely used. In this paper, the baseline data is described (spatial, seasonal and diurnal patterns in observer effort), the seasonal pattern of (small) divers is described, and changes in the ability or preparedness to specifically identify passing divers over the years are presented and discussed.

Divers arrive as wintering birds in autumn and depart in May, with some southbound passage early in autumn (towards more southerly wintering areas) and northbound movements in April-May (back to the breeding grounds). Most recorded movements from November to March are probably compensation flights of resident (wintering) birds that have drifted away from preferred sites rather than directed long-distance movements. As such, high numbers (frequent movements) are thought to reflect high numbers wintering off the coast and the index used, number of divers per hour of observation, could be a valuable estimate of changes in numbers through the season, from year to year, or between areas. Estimates of total numbers wintering offshore cannot be made with this material. Since 1972, spring passage has advanced with nearly three quarters of a month (median 12 April → 20 March) in both areas of intensive observations (Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland). Rather few divers were specifically identified, but the wintering population is thought to comprise for 90% Red-throated Divers. The wintering index should thus not be used for Black-throated Divers. A spring passage of adult Black-throated Divers (in summer plumage) was highlighted, and annual fluctuations in numbers in spring may be used to indicate differences in the use of Dutch coastal waters between successive seasons for that migratory species.

The database is currently incomplete, because many recent counts have not yet been digitized to update CvZ files. Internet portals are currently more practical and are increasingly popular to process data and it is recommended to link these new databases with the old files.

Het raadsel van de Bruinvismutilaties: extreme verminking en frequente strandingen van Bruinvissen in Noord Nederland, winter 2008/2009

MYSTERIOUS MUTILATIONS OF HARBOUR PORPOISES: FREQUENT STRANDINGS IN THE NETHERLANDS, WINTER 2008/2009

From early November 2008 until mid March 2009, a total of 167 dead Harbour Porpoises were found on the Dutch coast. At least 60 of these animals (36%) were mutilated, that is, fins or flippers were cut off or significant parts of the skin was loosened with clear-cut, straight cutting wounds. Since few beachcombers report any details and because many other carcasses were petrified, only 13% of the reported strandings were definitely not-mutilated. For the entire coastline, the percentage of carcasses reported as 'mutilated' ranged from 5.9% in November 2008 (n= 34), 30.3% in December 2008 (n= 33), 22.6% in January 2009 (n= 31), 68.0% in February 2009 (n= 50) and 36.8% in the first two weeks of March 2009 (n= 19). The strandingsfrequency along the entire coastline and over the entire winter period amounted to 1.2 carcasses day⁻¹ and peaked in February 2009 (1.8 day⁻¹). Most mutilated carcasses were found at Texel (10% in November, December 58%, January 57%, February 92%, early March 60%; in all 27 out of 47 stranded individuals) and along the mainland coast of Noord-Holland (IJmuiden-Den Helder; Feb 82%, Mar 38%, in all 17 out of 36 recorded carcasses; no mutilated carcasses known Nov-Jan). The photos illustrate some of the characteristics of the mutilations: clear-cut, straight wounds, fine physical condition (blubber), fresh carcasses, frequent rope marks around the tail stock, and sometimes line-imprints in gum (beak), around flippers, fins, flukes or tailstock. Most animals had bright red eyes, another feature that is common in cetaceans that have drowned. All mutilated animals are probably bycatches, given all the characteristics that point into that direction, but pathological research is currently underway to confirm or reject that suggestion. The frequency of strandings and mutilations are exceptional and in fact un-precedented for the area and for the season, and it is hoped that research will reveal the cause of the mutilations, so that the problem can be solved.

Vale Pijlstormvogels *Puffinus mauretanicus* langs de Hollandse kust in februari 2009

BALEARIC SHEARWATERS ALONG THE DUTCH COAST IN FEBRUARY 2009

On 10 and 14 February 2009 a Balearic Shearwater was observed along the Dutch coast (Noordwijk ZH and Camperduin NH). These observations followed a very good second part of 2008 with 53 observations along the coast of The Netherlands. In this note some details are presented about the status of this species as a breeding bird in the Balearic Islands and the shift in northern direction of the post breeding area along the coasts of western Europe.

IJseendentrips in de Westelijke Waddenzee

LONG-TAILED DUCKS IN THE WESTERN WADDENSEA

Long-tailed Ducks were known to overwinter in the Western Waddensea, but the wintering site was far away from the coast and normally difficult to reach, except for researchers or fishermen by boat. Since 2008, however, dedicated trips are organised from Den Oever in search for Long-tailed Ducks and other characteristic wildlife in the area.