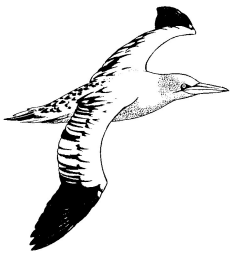

SULA

22(2) - 2009

INHOUDSOPGAVE

Het gebruik van zeetrektellingen bij de analyse van populatieschommelingen (2) Dwergmeeuwen *Larus minutus* langs de Nederlandse kust

THE USE OF SEAWATCHING DATA TO MONITOR POPULATION FLUCTUATIONS (2) LITTLE GULLS IN NEARSHORE WATERS

Waterbirds wintering in low concentrations in large bodies of open water are generally difficult to monitor during standardized waterfowl censuses. Little Gulls, a second example of such waterbirds, are abundant passage migrants and fairly scarce winter visitors in Dutch nearshore waters. With the obligation to monitor Little Gulls following the Birds Directive (NEM 1), SOVON was interested in other techniques with which (spatial and temporal) fluctuations in numbers in Dutch waters 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 an earlier paper, the baseline data is described (spatial, seasonal and diurnal patterns in observer effort; Camphuysen 2009). In that same paper, the seasonal pattern in abundance of (small) divers was described, and changes in the ability or preparedness to specifically identify passing divers over the years are presented and discussed. This contribution deals with Little Gulls.

Little Gulls are migrants in autumn (mostly in Oct-Nov), winter visitors in Dec-Jan and spring migration is mostly confined to Apr-May. Recorded numbers are large and in some years at least 30,000 individuals must move through Dutch coastal waters. Median passage in autumn is slightly later (but not significantly) in recent years, but spring passage is significantly advanced and the passage is less peaked than previously. Much higher numbers are recorded in Noord-Holland than in Zuid-Holland in spring, whereas in other seasons the abundance indices are not that different. There are large variations in numbers between years, these fluctuations are not

necessarily similar in neighboring regions, suggesting that differences in visibility, for example as a result of weather conditions, may have been responsible for some of these differences.

There are numerous uncertainties about the ecological backgrounds of the highly variable numbers in winter. In spring, with the advance in timing of passage and the less peaked nature of the passage, Dutch waters have gained importance for these attractive gulls as a feeding area. Recent ship-based surveys have indeed revealed the presence of substantial offshore feeding concentrations of Little Gulls, often 'out of reach' for coastal seawatchers.

The database is 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.

Vleugelontwikkeling bij grote meeuwen in de kuikenfase: een handleiding

WING DEVELOPMENT IN LARGE GULLS IN THE CHICK PHASE: A MANUAL

Chicks of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls grow rapidly from small downy young to fledglings over a period of just over 40 days. The physiological changes, internally and externally, proceed with different growth rates: a change from a "digestive system on legs" during the first weeks to a feathered flying machine when the colony is about to be abandoned. During studies in a mixed colony of these gulls at Texel, we monitored the growth of chicks by measuring body mass and a number of structural size parameters (including wing length). In the absence of a protocol, we did not monitor for example the development of flight feathers. With hindsight, we regret this, because chick development and chick growth is more than just an increase in length or volume. From a sample of 64 collected chicks (2009 season) we describe the stages of flight feather growth with age and with structural size and suggest a simple coding system, based on the feather score system, to describe the development of wings in the field in future studies. As a result of our collected material (dead chicks, including chicks with growth deficiencies), we expect that our age-windows for each of the stages are too wide. Further fieldwork, using healthy birds that fledge, will refine these windows, after which a good idea of chick age can be obtained when visiting colonies during the breeding season, simply by checking the progress of feather development.

Nederlandse Kleine Mantelmeeuwen *Larus fuscus* in Italië

DUTCH LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS IN ITALY

A re-sighting in Italy in autumn 2009 of a Lesser Black-backed Gull colour-ringed at Vlieland (The Netherlands) in 2006 triggered the interest in cases of Dutch LBBGs seen in Italy. With 95% of all winter sightings south of 51°N in a narrow band to the SW of the ringing grounds (median direction of migration 207°, range 95% 188°-219°), including the west of Belgium and France, the entire Iberian peninsula and the west coasts of Morocco and Mauritania, the five colour-ringed LBBGs in Italy were clearly off limits (Fig. 1, Table 1). Colour-ring programmes have frequently demonstrated how site-faithful wintering LBBGs actually are, and the fact that three LBBGs in Italy have been seen in two or even three different winter seasons suggests that these birds did not necessarily travel too far east by accident, but as a general, albeit individual pattern. Four further sightings are highlighted, roughly in the same unusual direction as the Italian records: a young bird ringed at Texel in 2006 and observed from Dec 2006 to Jan 2007 in Annaba, Algeria (36°55'N, 07°47'E), a young bird from Vlissingen-Oost (Zeeland) and an adult female captured in Moerdijk were both also seen in Annaba in 2007. Finally, the most easterly sighting of a Dutch ringed LBBG thus far, another bird from Moerdijk was ringed in 2007 and observed in the salinas Sebkhet Al Mangoub near Zuwarah (32°54'N, 12°07'E) in Libia. The existence of an eastern (L.f. fuscus*) and a western flyway* (L.f. intermedius/graellsii*) is briefly discussed. The Italian, Libian and Algerian sightings do not fit in these general flyways, but these birds should perhaps not be considered as vagrants sensu stricto. A single satellite tagged case from Denmark was found to migrate via France over the Balearic islands or Sardinia towards and from NE Algeria at least in five consecutive seasons. An increase in observer effort in the central Mediterranean could thus result in a larger number of colour-ring reports of LBBGs from these areas.*

Partnerruil bij Zilvermeeuwen *Larus argentatus* in IJmuiden

MATE-SWOPPING IN HERRING GULLS IN IJMUIDEN

This note describes how a nine year old, apparently experienced and in 2008 certainly successfully breeding male Herring Gull, colour-ringed Y.AAH in 2008, broke up with its partner (colour-ringed Y.AAC in 2008) in the next breeding season (after having been seen together in the pre-breeding phase), and bred successfully again with another (unringed) female in 2009. At least one chick successfully fledged in either season (Y.ACU in 2008, Y.ALK in 2009). The partner (Y.AAC) was eventually relocated in 2009, together with an unringed partner, but it is unclear if this bird did nest again in 2009.

Alk *Alca torda* met halfwas jong op het Friese front, juli 2009

RAZORBILL WITH CHICK ON THE FRISIAN FRONT

On 29 July 2009 we observed an adult Razorbill with chick in the Frisian front area. This record constitutes the second (known) record of a Razorbill chick in the Dutch North Sea. The strandings data of juvenile Razorbills found in autumn suggest an increase in frequency in recent years.

Zuidelijke Reuzenstormvogel *Macronectes giganteus* met misvormde snavel

SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL WITH DEFORMED BEAK

J. Gonzales-Solis, Univ Barcelona Spain, collected the skull of a Southern Giant Petrel Macronectes giganteus *at Livingstone Island (South Shetland Islands, Antarctic) which turned out to be malformed. Whereas the cutting edge of the upper mandible normally runs on the outside of the lower mandible left and right, a deformity caused the right cutting edge of the upper mandible to run inside that of the lower mandible. The bill tip is normal, meaning the tip of the lower mandible is within the cutting edge of the upper, so that a hole is visible in both the bone and in the horny layer in the cutting edge of the upper mandible where the beak is crossing. Deformations are frequently found in bird beaks. The cause is briefly discussed and it is speculated that as a young bird, the petrel may have been involved in an accident where the parents were feeding rather forcefully, leading to a dislodgement of the lower jaw.*

Albatrossen tonen menselijk wangedrag
Albatrosses illustrate human misbehaviour

Ingestion of litter by the North Pacific Laysan albatross was known as early as 1969. In the mid-1990's 97.6% of chicks from Midway Atoll had plastic in the stomach with an average mass from 10 to 20g plastic per bird. Recently, strong publicity around the Pacific Garbage Patch has strengthened the attention for the problems of the Albatrosses. A short film on Youtube, and especially pictures made by Chris need no further words to illustrate the shameful behaviour of mankind