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Dutch Birding is een tweemaandelijks tijdschrift. Het publiceert originele artikelen en mededelingen over morfologie, systematiek, voorkomen en verspreiding van vogels in de Benelux, Europa en elders in het Palearctische gebied. Het publiceert tevens bijdragen over vogels in het Aziatisch-Pacifische gebied en andere gebieden.

Voor taxonomie, volgorde en naamgeving van vogels in Dutch Birding worden de volgende overzichten aangehouden: *Dutch Birding-vogelnamen* door A B van den Berg (2008, Amsterdam; online update 2014, www.dutchbirding.nl/page.php?page_id=228) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke, Nederlandse en Engelse namen van West-Palearctische vogels); *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world* (derde editie, door E C Dickinson (redactie) 2003; vierde editie, deel 1, door E C Dickinson & J V Remsen Jr (redactie) 2013) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke namen van overige vogels van de wereld); en *IOC world bird names 4.1* door F Gill & D Donsker (2014, www.worldbirdnames.org) (Engelse en Nederlandse namen van overige vogels in de wereld; Nederlandse namen door P Vercruijsse en A J van Loon).

Voor (de voorbereiding van) bijzondere publicaties op het gebied van determinatie en/of taxonomie kan het Dutch Birding-fonds aan auteurs een financiële bijdrage leveren (zie Dutch Birding 24: 125, 2001, en www.dutchbirding.nl onder 'Tijdschrift').

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For taxonomy, sequence and nomenclature of birds in Dutch Birding the following lists are used: *Dutch Birding bird names* by A B van den Berg (2008, Amsterdam; online update 2014, www.dutchbirding.nl/page.php?page_id=229) (taxonomy and scientific, Dutch and English names of Western Palearctic birds); *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world* (third edition, by E C Dickinson (editor) 2003; fourth edition, volume 1, by E C Dickinson & J V Remsen Jr (editors) 2013) (taxonomy and scientific names of remaining birds of the world); and *IOC world bird names 4.1* by F Gill & D Donsker (2014, www.worldbirdnames.org) (English and Dutch names of remaining birds of the world; Dutch names by P Vercruijsse and A J van Loon).

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Gull-billed Terns in north-western Europe: breeding results, conservation and post-breeding movements

Sebastian Conradt & Enno B Ebels

Every year in late summer, several 10s of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* have their migration stop-over in the Netherlands, foraging and resting at traditional staging sites. These birds belong to the endangered north-western European population. Formerly also breeding in Denmark and the Netherlands, the last breeding site of this population is now situated at the mouth of the river Elbe in Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany. Here, conservationists and scientists struggle for the survival of this colony and, since 2012, there are reasons to be hopeful. This paper documents the fate of this relict breeding population over the last c 20 years, the current conservation programme and the post-breeding movements through the Netherlands.

Distribution

Gull-billed Tern is a globally widespread species, breeding in Europe (mainly around the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea), north-western Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, Australia and along the east and west coast of North America and South America. Many populations are migratory and, in winter, the range includes large parts of Central Africa, South Asia, Central America and Australia (del Hoyo et al 1996). The world population is estimated at 150 000 to 420 000 individuals and the species is classified as 'Least Concern'. Contrary to many tern species, it is not a strictly coastal species and can be found breeding far inland (Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer 1982, Cramp & Simmons 1985, Biber 1993, Tucker & Heath 1994, Hage-

178 Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, adult, Neufelderkoog, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 28 June 2012 *(Sebastian Conradt)*

meijer & Blair 1997, Wetlands International 2002, Sánchez et al 2004, BirdLife International 2013).

A century ago, Gull-billed Tern was common in central Europe. In those days, breeding colonies of up to 200 pairs were known from stony riverbanks exposed to seasonal flooding in Baden-Württemberg and Bayern in Germany (cf Reichholf 1989), and also along the Donau river in Austria. The species was also breeding at small inland waters in northern Germany. Typically, the species forages on worms, insects, reptiles, amphibians and mice at fields and moorlands. For the protection of their colonies, they rely on the presence of other species and, in northern Germany, their nests are always near breeding Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* or Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*. The latter two species formerly also had a more inland distribution. With the increase in river engineering and the draining of wet meadows, Gull-billed disappeared from many of their breeding sites, eg, from Bayern in the early 1930s and from Austria in 1942 (Bauer et al 2012). Gull-billed remained as a breeding bird in Europe near the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea, while a small isolated population established itself in the second half of the 19th century along the North Sea coast and the adjacent fjords of north-western Jylland in Denmark (Mauscherning et al 2011).

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, Gull-billed Tern was an occasional breeder in the 20th century, the last breeding year being 1958 (at Harderwijk, Gelderland, and Swifterbant, Flevoland; van den Berg & Bosman 2001, Bijlsma et al 2001, van Dijk et al 2007). The most regular breeding site was nature reserve De Beer near Rotterdam, Zuid-Holland (destroyed in the 1960s by harbour expansions), where breeding occurred from the early 1930s to 1956 (van Oordt 1931, Strijbos 1931ab, Thijsse 1931, Kooijmans 1949, de Waard 1950ab, 1952; www.natuurmonumentdebeer.nl/vogels/vogels_lachstern.html). It also bred in the 1940s at Wieringermeer, Noord-Holland (van IJzendoorn 1948). Remarkably, a single pair did a breeding attempt at Balgzand, Noord-Holland, in 2005 but failed in the egg phase, possibly due to predation by Stoat *Mustela erminea* (van Dijk et al 2007; Ruud Vlek in litt). This area is the traditional post-breeding roosting area for birds from Denmark and Germany (see below).

179 Breeding site of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* at Neufelderkoog, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 3 May 2014 *(Sebastian Conradt)*

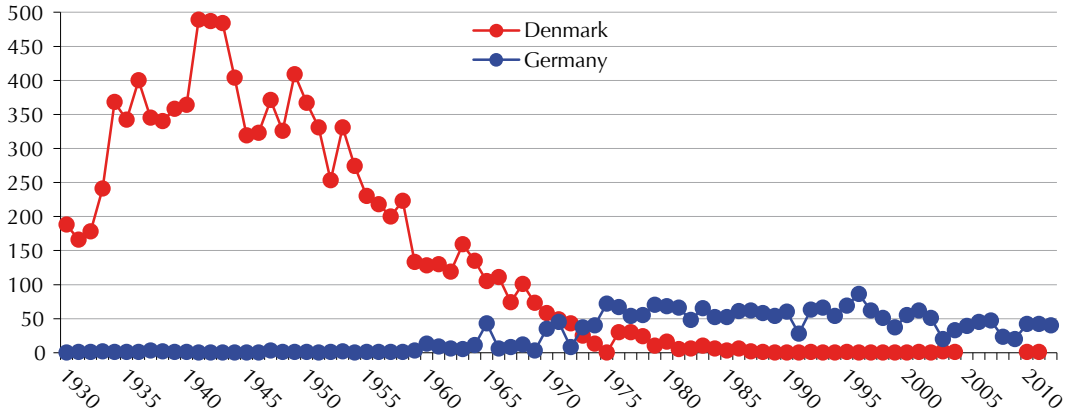
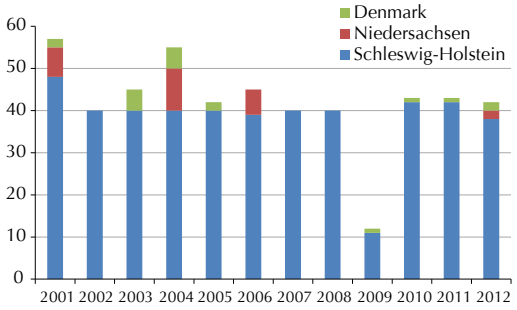


FIGURE 1 Number of breeding pairs of Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Denmark (red) and Germany (blue) in 1930-2013 / aantal broedparen van Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Denemarken (rood) en Duitsland (blauw) in 1930-2013 (figure by Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein)

Denmark and Germany

In the 1940s, the north-western European population in Jylland and Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, numbered up to c 500 breeding pairs. Since the second half of the 20th century, this population has dramatically decreased (figure 1-2). Especially the draining and the agricultural use of once natural wet meadows and heathland but also the enlargement of holiday parks has led to important loss of suitable habitat for the species in Denmark. In 1976-96, the average colony size was only five breeding pairs or less, while, in 1973, the mean size was still c 36 pairs (Rasmussen & Fischer 1997). Small colonies are clearly more vulnerable than larger ones: human disturbance, Red Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and sheep force the birds to change their breeding places often and cause low breeding success. In the last stage of this decrease, egg collecting (which was stopped in Denmark only in 1994) had huge impact. Finally, the population reached a critically low level, which inevitably resulted in the (virtual) disappearance of the species from Denmark in the late 1970s, with in recent years occasionally only one or two breeding pairs (Møller 1975abcd, Rasmussen & Fischer 1997; figure 1).

FIGURE 2 Number of breeding pairs of Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in north-western Europe in 2001-12 (green = Denmark; red = Niedersachsen, Germany; blue = Schleswig-Holstein, Germany) / aantal broedparen van Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Noordwest-Europa in 2001-12 (groen = Denemarken; rood = Niedersachsen, Duitsland; blauw = Schleswig-Holstein, Duitsland)



The remaining Gull-billed Terns moved their breeding sites gradually in a southerly direction into Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. In the 1960s, more than 20 breeding pairs were found at Rantumbecken area at Sylt and in Hauke-Haien-Koog, Nord-Friesland (Schlenker 1966), both just south of the Danish border. In the early 1970s, up to 40 pairs were breeding at Grüninsel in the mouth of the river Eider and, in 1974-91, up to 55 pairs at Meldorfer Speicherkoog in Dithmarschen. So, from the 1960s to the 1990s gradually a southward relocation of the population took place. As usual, the birds preferred areas with fresh or brackish water, which they found in polders and the mouth of rivers. After the species had almost disappeared from Denmark, it also became so rare in Germany that, at the end of the 20th century, it was heading towards local extinction.

Remaining colony in Germany

Since 1995, there is only one colony remaining in Germany. It is located at the mouth of the river Elbe, in some years at the southern side in Niedersachsen but most of the time in Neufelder-

180 Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, chick, Neufelderkoog, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 28 June 2012 *(Sebastian Conradt)*

181 Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, chick ringed with colour-rings, Neufelderkoog, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 28 June 2012 *(Sebastian Conradt)*

koog-Vorland in Schleswig-Holstein. The c 40 breeding pairs prefer places grazed in spring by migrating Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. These short, open salt meadows are also traditionally grazed by sheep. The birds nest amidst c 2000 nests of Common Terns. The Gull-billed Terns are protected from intruders thanks to the aggressive behaviour of the Common Terns. In May, Gull-billed lay two to three eggs in a flat, bare scrape nest. After about three weeks the eggs hatch. The chicks fledge around mid-July. Usually, they start to breed when they are four to five years old (Bauer et al 2012). The breeding success in 1995-2012 strongly varied for each year but showed a strong overall decline (figure 3-4).

Gull-billed Tern appears to be a somewhat forgotten species and the species' fate in Germany has received (too) little awareness. For too long, the dramatic decrease has been overlooked by German nature conservancy and regional authorities and serious protection measures failed to materialize. For instance, a planned windmill park at the mouth of the river Elbe would form a real threat. Red Foxes and other predators, sea-level rise and disturbance of the breeding site by people and live-stock also pose risks. Disturbance by humans, partly deliberately, had a negative influence on the breeding success in the past couple of years. In 2010, several nests were destroyed by playing kids and only one fledged bird could be observed. In 2010 and 2011, a single opponent of nature protection visited the colony several times, once at night, causing a huge disturbance. Especially at night, it took a long time before birds dared to return to their nests and many young birds perished.

Finally, in 2011, a conservation project was started to implement the recommendations from earlier studies in Denmark. Several regional institutions co-operated, by order of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of the Environment and under coordination of the Bündnis Naturschutz in Dithmarschen: the Kieler Gesellschaft für Freilandökologie und Naturschutzplanung, National Park Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea, Schutzstation Wattenmeer and Universität Hamburg, and other co-operating institutes besides. From that year onwards, public awareness was raised by exhibitions, information boards and flyers, and unintended disturbance was prevented.

Predation by mammals and raptors remains a problem for the Gull-billed Terns. In 2011, several young were caught by Red Fox, Stoat, Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* and an escaped falcon *Falco*. Also in 2012, Stoat, raptors and owls caused disturbance.

The colony can now be observed from a cabin on the dike built by employees of the Schutzstation Wattenmeer. With four cameras of the Universität Hamburg, it is possible to have live video footage of the colony at every moment of the day. From May until August, the rangers can react immediately in case of disturbances. They use, eg, crackling PET-bottles and an electric fence around the colony. When necessary, predators are killed prior to the breeding season, in cooperation with local hunters.

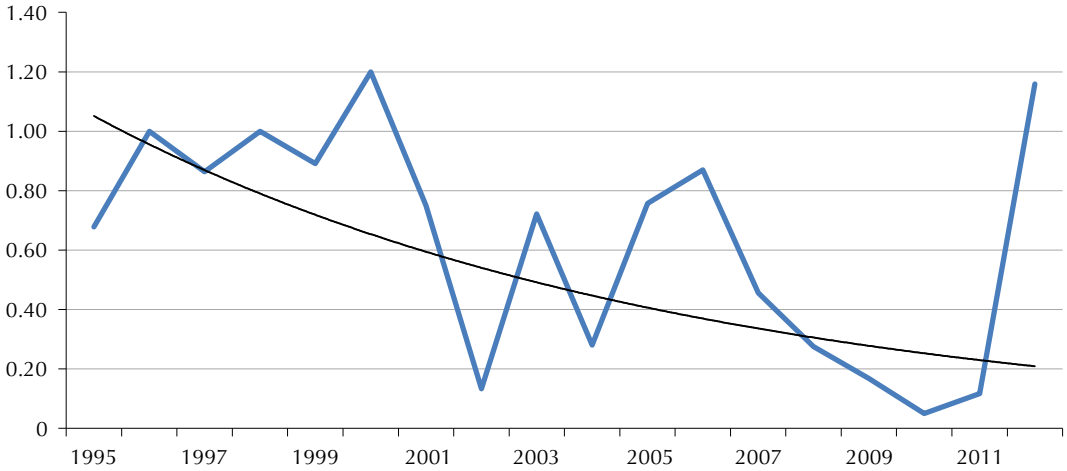


FIGURE 3 Breeding success (number of juveniles per breeding pair) of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in north-western Germany in 1995-2012 quantified by observations in the Netherlands / broedsucces van Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica* (aantal juvenielen per broedpaar) in Noordwest-Duitsland in 1995-2012 berekend aan hand van waarnemingen in Nederland

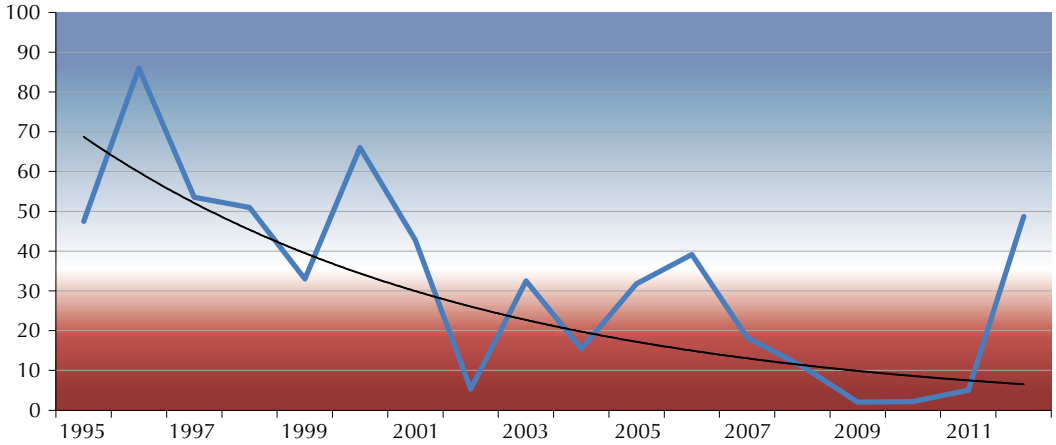


FIGURE 4 Breeding success (calculated number of juveniles on basis of observations in the Netherlands) of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in north-western Germany in 1995-2012 (colour change at 30 indicates estimated number of young required for healthy population) / broedsucces (berekend aantal juvenielen gebaseerd op waarnemingen in Nederland) van Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Noordwest-Duitsland in 1995-2012 (kleurovergang bij 30 geeft geschat aantal jongen per jaar aan benodigd voor levensvatbare populatie)

Conservation results

In 2011, the first year of the conservation project, nine Gull-billed Terns fledged. In 2012, the project was very successful with 32 fledglings. That year, despite bad weather and strong winds, the breeding birds were more fortunate than in earlier years because a high tide, up to 70 cm above normal, did not reach their nests. Previously, extremely high tides washed away the nests many times. In 2007, for instance, all 90 fledglings drowned by high tides.

In 2012, 30 chicks were weighed, measured and ringed. Apart from the normal metal Vogelwarte Helgoland ring, the birds got colour rings in order to follow them on migration and to monitor their breeding success. In earlier years, only in 2007 colour rings were used and some almost full-grown juveniles were ringed. Four years later, one of them was caught on an automatic camera as a successful breeding bird.

In 2013, there were just 31 breeding pairs at Neufelder Koog, raising a total of 20 chicks. In the colony of Common Terns there had been heavy disturbance by some American Minks *Mustela vison* and Red Foxes but the Gull-billed Terns were less affected, and there was no high tide. Nevertheless, breeding success of all terns along the Wadden Sea was not as good as in 2012, due to cold and wet weather in May-June.

Since the beginning of the conservation project, the conservationists can use incubators from a nearby animal park. When there is an extremely high tide, eggs and young are collected and placed in the incubators to keep them warm for a maximum of two days. There is now good hope to prevent the collapse of the German population as long as the birds raise a minimum of c 30 birds a year. Only then, the lack of a significant breeding success in the past 10 years is compensated, because 30 fledged juveniles per year mean c four breeding pairs after 4-5 years, considering the average mortality rate of 30% in the first year and 23% in the following years (Bauer et al 2012). As Gull-billed Terns have a life span of c nine years, a colony of 40 breeding pairs would statistically be extinct after c 10 years if there would not be a minimum of at least four new breeding pairs each year.

Feeding behaviour

To improve and develop the conservation plan each year, data on diet and feeding areas are very important. Gull-billed Terns, contrary to other tern species, need inland feeding grounds such as moors and wet meadows with fresh and brackish water. Prey from the sea or salt marshes is normally not taken, especially when they raise their chicks, as the young birds do not tolerate salt. The adults forage in the vicinity of the colony for worms and insects. This is what the young chicks need in their first days. Later, the adults feed their young with mice, frogs and also various young birds. These are collected at up to 5-10 km distance from the colony. A speciality of the Neufelder Gull-billed Terns is catching (introduced) Chinese Mitten Crabs *Eriocheir sinensis* in the river and the Neufelder harbour, where the birds can be observed extremely well. Because the hinterland of Dithmarschen has less ecological value, the birds fly also to the other side of the Elbe in Niedersachsen, where they can find plenty of lizards.

182 Gull-billed Terns / Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, male (left) and female during courtship, Nordkehdingen, Niedersachsen, Germany, 2 June 2013 *(Gerd-Michael Heinze)*

183 Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, juvenile, Waarland, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 12 August 2013 *(Fred Visscher)*. Note colour-rings.

184 Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, adult, Waarland, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 12 August 2013 *(Fred Visscher)*

Post-breeding movements through the Netherlands

Already in mid-July, the first families of Gull-billed Terns leave the north-western European breeding grounds (Møller 1975e, Gloe & Møller 1978). They migrate to the Netherlands, mainly to the traditional resting sites in Noord-Holland, where they have their first stop-over during their migration to the wintering areas (Vlek 2002; table 1-2). In recent years, colour-marked birds ringed in Germany are regularly observed. For instance, on 7 August 2012, 13 juveniles with colour rings were observed at Balgzand (www.waarneming.nl). In total, there were a record 570 observations that year (including many double countings because long-staying birds or groups are registered by multiple observers) (www.waarneming.nl, see figure 5 and table 1). At Balgzand, the main roosting site, groups with a maximum of 31 were seen in 2012.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Gull-billed Terns on post-breeding migration from Denmark roosted in the northern Netherlands at tidal beaches and banks on the south-western coast of Friesland (cf Vlek 2002). After the enclosure of lake IJsselmeer in May 1932, the terns gradually relocated their night roost to Balgzand, which was in use for almost 60 years (1937-94), and attracted 100s of Gull-billed Terns, especially from the late 1930s until the early 1950s. This night roost reached a peak in early August 1947, when 442 birds were counted at Balgzand and in Friesland combined, at the time representing c 40% of the Danish-German population. Maximum numbers per five-year period in 1925-2002 are given in Vlek (2002). Parallel to the decrease of the Danish population, the numbers at the Noord-Holland roost in mid-August declined to below 100 from the second half of the 1950s until the early 1970s. In the 1970-80s, maximum numbers decreased further to less than 50 birds, while in the 1990s no more than c 30 used this communal roost (however, total numbers are hard to estimate, since it is difficult to assess individual staging time and turnover). Since 1995, birds have started to use new roosts in the north of Noord-Holland, facilitated by inundation of harvested bulb-fields during summer. From the second half of the 1980s, inundated bulb-fields provided roosting sites nearer to the inland feeding areas. Families with juveniles appear in Noord-Holland in late July and early August, shortly after

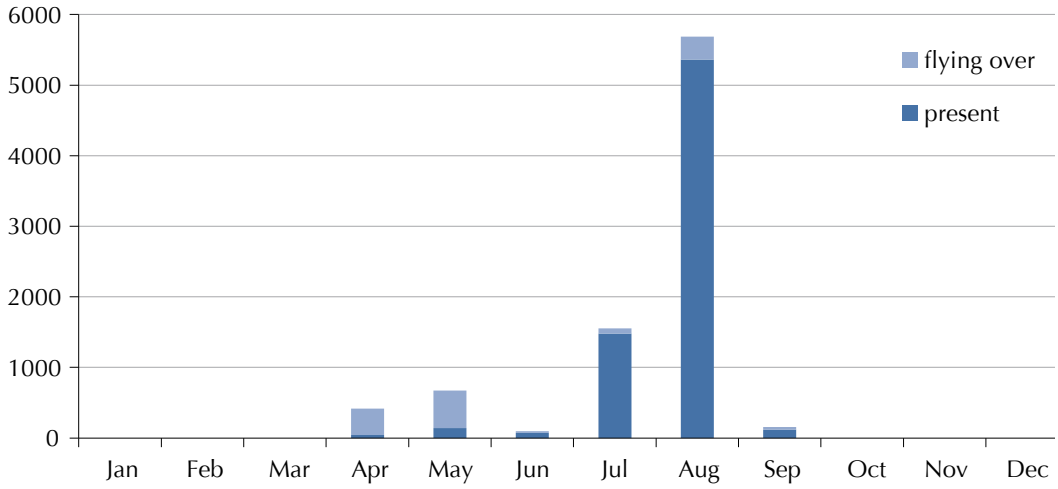


FIGURE 5 Observations (including double countings) of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in the Netherlands in 1970-2012 / waarnemingen (inclusief dubbeltellingen) van Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Nederland in 1970-2012

TABLE 1 Observations and age classification of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* at resting sites in the Netherlands in 1995-2012 / waarnemingen en indeling naar leeftijd van Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica* op pleisterlocaties in Nederland in 1995-2012

Year	Observations	Adult	Juvenile	All birds	% juveniles	Juveniles/ breeding pair
1995	17	59	20	79	25.3	0.68
1996	3	2	1	3	33.3	1.00
1997	21	183	79	262	30.2	0.86
1998	8	12	6	18	33.3	1.00
1999	25	175	78	253	30.8	0.89
2000	11	15	9	24	37.5	1.20
2001	6	8	3	11	27.3	0.75
2002	9	15	1	16	6.3	0.13
2003	32	61	22	83	26.5	0.72
2004	29	57	8	65	12.3	0.28
2005	13	37	14	51	27.5	0.76
2006	24	69	30	99	30.3	0.87
2007	40	79	18	97	18.6	0.46
2008	28	80	11	91	12.1	0.28
2009	32	131	11	142	7.7	0.17
2010	41	120	3	123	2.4	0.05
2011	82	239	14	253	5.5	0.12
2012	268	718	416	1134	36.7	1.16

Number of juveniles among Gull-billed Terns observed in the Netherlands as indicator of breeding success. Numbers include double countings of same birds on different days or at same or nearby sites on single days. Numbers for 1995-2002 collected in Noord-Holland (cf Vlek 2002). Numbers for 2003-12 collected in August in the entire Netherlands (www.waarneming.nl)

185 Gull-billed Terns / Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, with Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Schagerbrug, Noord-Holland, Netherland, 3 August 2008 *(Enno B Ebels)* **186** Gull-billed Terns / Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Nieuwe Pekela, Groningen, Netherlands, 5 August 2013 *(Edzard Osinga)* **187** Gull-billed Terns / Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, adult feeding juvenile, Schagerbrug, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 21 August 2012 *(Fred Visscher)* **188** Gull-billed Tern / Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, juvenile, Schagerbrug, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 11 August 2012 *(Douwe de Boer)*. Note colour-rings.

189 Gull-billed Terns / Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, with Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Nieuwe Pekela, Groningen, Netherlands, 29 July 2013 *(Willem-Jan Fontijn)*

fledging. In 1988-2002, an average of 0.96 young per pair was observed. In five out of eight years since 1995, it has been less than 1.0 young per pair (Vlek 2002). This number diminished to 0.49 in 2001-09 and, in 2010, became as low as 0.05 (table 1). During the day, birds can often be found at inundated bulb-fields around Schagen, Noord-Holland, where they hunt for frogs; regularly, the young are still being fed by the parents, as is normal in large terns on early migration. This is a crucial precondition for survival of recently fledged juveniles on migration.

In 2012-13, another roosting site was discovered in the Netherlands at a sandpit near Alteveer and Nieuwe Pekela, Groningen, where the birds mainly foraged on long-horned grasshoppers Tettigoniidae. In 2012, a maximum of 13 birds was seen on 6 August 2012 (records between 31 July and 18 August).

In 2012, in total, 16 colour-marked (out of 30 juveniles ringed in 2012) and six unmarked juveniles were observed in the Netherlands in August-September 2012. Two of these colour-ringed juveniles were observed as part of a family group in northern Spain on 1 September 2012 (Bernd Hälterlein in litt). An estimated 45% of the German population stayed in the Netherlands in late summer 2012 (cf Koffijberg & Hälterlein 2012).

The rest of the migration of the German Gull-billed Terns presumably takes place along the Atlantic coasts south to Mauritania and Senegal as historic ringing data from the Danish population give reason to expect. Before the 1950s, some birds of the north-western European population were seen migrating through Bayern, Germany, and Italy to the Mediterranean (Reichholf 1989, Dierschke et al 2012). Relatively late in spring, in late April and May, birds return to north-western Europe (see, eg, spring countings at Breskens, Zeeland, the Netherlands (Meininger et al 2014; www.trektellen.nl; table 2)). The tight breeding season of the species is probably determined by peaks in the life cycles of the main prey with which the juveniles are fed. It leaves no time for replacement clutches in case of loss, due to predation or other disasters.

Reporting of sightings

Gull-billed Terns raised in the colony at the mouth of the Elbe are wearing a metal ring and different colour rings (without inscription). The colours used are blue, green, orange, red, white and yellow. When you observe a ringed bird, please read the rings from the left leg from below to the top and then from the right leg from below to the top. Observations can be sent to Klaus Günther: k.guenther@schutzstation-wattenmeer.de.

TABLE 2 Monthly distribution of observations of Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in the Netherlands in 1970-2012 (including double countings; cf www.waarneming.nl) / maandverdeling van waarnemingen van Lachstern *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Nederland in 1970-2012 (inclusief dubbeltellingen; cf www.waarneming.nl)

Month	Staging	Flying over
Jan	0	0
Feb	0	0
Mar	0	0
Apr	44	370
May	138	536
Jun	71	27
Jul	1477	77
Aug	5362	324
Sep	118	38
Oct	2	4
Nov	0	0
Dec	0	0

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Samenvatting
RELICTPOPULATIE VAN LACHSTERN IN NOORDWEST-EUROPA: BROEDSUCCES, BESCHERMING EN VERPLAATSINGEN NA BROEDEN
In dit artikel wordt beschreven hoe de relictpopulatie van Lachsterns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Noordwest-Europa op de rand van uitsterven staat. In Denemarken is de soort al jaren (vrijwel) verdwenen als broedvogel en alleen in Noord-Duitsland (grensgebied van Niedersachsen en Schleswig-Holstein) is nog een kleine maar levensvatbare broedpopulatie te vinden (wereldwijd heeft de soort een groot verspreidingsgebied en is mede daarom niet bedreigd). Het aantal broedparen en het broedsucces van deze populatie van het meest noordelijke deel van Duitsland en Jylland, Denemarken in de periode 1995-2012 is weergegeven in figuur 1-4. Pas de laatste jaren wordt de populatie intensief beschermd en daardoor neemt het broedsucces weer wat toe; in 2011 vlogen negen jongen uit, in 2012 32 en in 2013 20. Voor een gezonde ('self-sustaining') populatie moeten er ten minste 30 jongen per jaar worden uitgebroed. De Duitse vogels trekken in het najaar (bijna) allemaal naar Nederland om daar in de nazomer te pleisteren voordat ze verder naar het zuiden trekken. Het gaat om een totale populatie van c 100 exemplaren. De bekendste slaapplaats is het Balgzand, Noord-Holland (waar in 2005 ook een onsuccesvol broedgeval plaatsvond), en veel vogels pleisteren rondom Schagen, Noord-Holland. Daarvoor was het laatste broedgeval in Nederland in 1958; vanaf begin jaren 1930 tot 1956 broedde de soort onregelmatig op De Beer bij Rotterdam, Zuid-Holland, maar in de jaren 1940 ook in de Wieringermeer, Noord-Holland. De vogels van Balgzand foerageren overdag op diverse plekken in Noord-Holland. In 2012 en 2013 foerageerde in de nazomer ook een aantal exemplaren bij Alteveer en Nieuwe Pekela, Groningen. Sinds het begin van een kleurringprogramma worden in Nederland regelmatig gekleurringde jongen van de Duitse populatie waargenomen.

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Himalayan Vultures in Iran in April 2007 and December 2010

Raffael Ayé, Thomas Stalling & Tobias Roth

Himalayan Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* is a widespread breeding bird in a crescent from central China through the Himalayas to the Central Asian mountains as far north as the Jungarian Alatau and east to the Gobi Altai, Mongolia. In the west, the species reaches Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (del Hoyo et al 1994, Forsman 1999, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001, Ayé et al 2012). The species inhabits mainly high-altitude areas but may descend to as low as 300 m above sea level in winter (Naoroji 2006). Its distribution and movements are not fully understood. Until recently, it was not known from Mongolia nor from central Afghanistan (del Hoyo et al 1994, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001) but has been recorded in both areas since (Busuttil & Ayé 2009, Buchheim 2012, 2013ab). The lack of clarity about its exact distribution and movements may also be related to identification issues. Here we report two records of this species in Iran, in North Khorasan in April 2007 and in Sistan-Baluchestan in December 2010. To our knowledge, these constitute the first records of the species in the Middle East.

North Khorasan, April 2007

In April 2007, Raffael Ayé was guiding a Liberty Bird group on a 19-day birding trip to Iran. The group spent one week in the north-eastern part of the country, between Tehran and the vicinity of Bojnurd, North Khorasan province. On 27th April, just after noon, the group was birdwatching near the village of Surak (c 37°37′30″N, 57°21′37″E), when a large raptor caught the attention. One of the group exclaimed 'Egyptian Vulture' due to the bird's contrasting white underwing-coverts and dark remiges. However, the bird was subsequently identified as Himalayan Vulture and could be watched for 2-3 min in total. It was gliding in a westerly to slightly south-westerly direction. It was north-east of our position when we first discovered it, above hills of whitish soil, which probably accounted for the lightening up of the underparts, even though it was midday and the bird was seen against the clear sky. The bird disappeared behind one of the whitish hills but appeared again further west and was then seen from a different angle, which, however, did not change the judgement of its coloration. During this time, the bird was c 700-1000 m away but could be seen well with binoculars and a Swarowski 30x80 HD telescope. A description was taken.

Description

SIZE & SHAPE Silhouette similar to Griffon Vulture *G fulvus*; heavy, with broad and parallel-edged wings and short tail, seeming even broader-winged than Griffon (however, this was difficult to judge as bird was mostly gliding and making few curves but not circling for extended periods).

PLUMAGE Rectrices and remiges looking black. Remiges contrasting sharply with very white underwing-coverts, not showing any brown markings except for brownish leading edge around carpal bend. Body very pale sandy but discernibly darker on breast than underwing-coverts. Head pale greyish when sun-lit and somewhat duskier below and towards neck. Upperparts only seen briefly, showing contrast between pale coverts and darker remiges (strong sunlight, unfavourable angle and partially reflecting remiges making it difficult to assess exact coloration).

Identification

The silhouette and basic coloration exclude all species of Old World vultures except members of the genus *Gyps*. In Asia, Griffon, Himalayan, White-rumped *G bengalensis*, Indian *G indicus* and Long-billed Vulture *G tenuirostris* have to be considered. White-rumped Vulture can be excluded based on the pale body plumage. The size of the birds and the parallel-edged wings, as well as the white underwing-coverts, are inconsistent with Indian Vulture and Long-billed Vulture. So, the identification can be narrowed down to Griffon Vulture and Himalayan Vulture. The uniformly white underwing-coverts with limited brownish leading edge is typical of adult Himalayan and the pale sandy body supports this identification. The size and heavy silhouette are also consistent with this species. Some Griffon may show extensive pale or white areas on the underwing-coverts (see Forsman 1999, Naoroji 2006, Ayé et al 2012) but even those individuals show pale brownish markings, often in a band parallel to the leading edge, and/or blackish subterminal markings on the greater underwing-coverts which

191-192 Himalayan Vulture / Himalayagier *Gyps himalayensis*, juvenile, near Chahbahar, Sistan-Baluchestan, Iran, 8 December 2010 *(Raffael Ayé)*. Note heavy, broad-winged silhouette and bold creamy streaking of body and axillaries.

reduce the overall size of the white area and the contrast between the white underwing-coverts and the dark remiges.

Sistan-Baluchestan, December 2010

In December 2010, we (RA, Tobias Roth and Thomas Stalling) were travelling in Sistan-Baluchestan province and spent five days birding in the Makran region in the southern part of this province. On 8 December, we saw numerous raptors along the road from Chahbahar airport to Chahbahar town. We stopped to investigate these further and soon found a few Griffon Vultures among the many Black-eared Kites *Milvus lineatus* and Cinereous Vultures *Aegypius monachus*. Circling among Griffon and Cinereous at a distance of probably 3-4 km was another *Gyps* vulture, which immediately struck us by its rather uniform and dark upperparts similar to Cinereous, and by a contrast of paler coverts and darker remiges on the underwing unlike Cinereous. It was impossible to identify the bird at such a distance but the basic pattern made us think of White-rumped Vulture, a species previously known from Makran (Zarudny 1916, cited in Roselaar & Aliabadian 2009, Scott 2008). Luckily, the bird came closer after 5-10 min, circling right above us at a height of c 300 m. A description was taken as well as a few photographs (plate 191-192) and the bird was identified as a juvenile Himalayan Vulture. We later found out that there was a carcass dump nearby, attracting five Long-legged Buzzards *Buteo rufinus*, c 150 Black-eared Kites, c 30 Egyptian *Neophron percnopterus*, c 100 Cinereous and five Griffon Vultures, four Eastern Imperial Eagles *Aquila heliaca* and c 40 Steppe Eagles *A nipalensis*. The next day, 9 December, we returned to the carcass dump in mid-afternoon but found far fewer raptors and no sign of the Himalayan.

Description

SIZE & SHAPE Very large bird, even slightly larger than five Griffon Vultures and about same size as Cinereous Vultures flying nearby (but none of other two species flew directly next to Himalayan Vulture). Silhouette striking with very broad wings and especially broad hand with deeply fingered primaries. Wings rather parallel edged but with tendency of widening from body towards outermost secondaries, where trailing edge of wing showed rather sharp bulge. Trailing edge of wing sharply serrated and regular. Tail noticeably longer than on typical Griffon and wedge-shaped.

PLUMAGE Remiges greyish-black, inner primaries slightly paler than other primaries. Rectrices black. Underwing-coverts cold greyish-brown with narrow white line on patagium, darker grey centre to greater coverts and pale greyish to creamy area on median coverts of central arm. Latter making large part of underwing-coverts seem pale at certain angles. Axillaries blackish-brown with obvious creamy edges or streaks. Area of axillaries considerably darker than underwing-coverts. Upperwing only seen from some distance and looking rather uniform dark. Body-feathers with similar dusky base colour as axillaries but, due to bold and dense creamy-white streaking, looking much paler. Dark base colour best visible on upperbreast.

Identification

The bold and broad streaking of the body, longish tail, very broad wings and sharp bulge near outermost secondary lead to the identification as

Himalayan Vulture. The wing tip is often more prominent and more angled in Himalayan than in Griffon Vulture (Ayé et al 2012). Furthermore, the generally dark upperwing without obvious contrast between coverts and remiges is another character that does not fit Griffon. This bird was aged as a juvenile, based on the regular and strongly serrated trailing edge to the wings.

Discussion

The two records of Himalayan Vulture presented in this paper were accepted by the Iran Bird Records Committee (Abolghasem Khaleghizadeh in litt) and represent the first for Iran and the 'greater' Western Palearctic. They occurred far west of the known breeding areas. The record in North Khorasan was c 900 km west of the known breeding areas in Uzbekistan. It is even more surprising than the record in Sistan-Baluchestan because it concerned an adult or near-adult bird, while Himalayan tends to be more sedentary when adult (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001, Naoroji 2006) and also because the direct flight from Uzbekistan would lead across extensive lowland areas. The record in Sistan-Baluchestan was c 1500 km south-west of the known breeding areas in northern Pakistan (Roberts 1991). Another explanation would be that the birds came from central Afghanistan, where the species was regularly seen during the breeding season in recent surveys (Busuttil & Ayé 2009). From central Afghanistan, the ranges of the Safed-Koh run west to the Hari Rud valley on the Iranian-Afghan border and almost form a continuum of mountainous landscapes into Iran.

Himalayan Vulture is the third *Gyps* species documented for Iran (Roselaar & Aliabadian 2009, Khaleghizadeh et al 2011). Griffon Vulture is a regular breeding species and White-rumped Vulture was recorded on several occasions in the past but not in recent decades (Khaleghizadeh et al 2011). That now two records of Himalayan in Iran and further records in other areas where the species was not known happen within a short time span may just be coincidence, or could be a consequence of the different population dynamics compared with White-rumped: while White-rumped has experienced a population crash in recent decades (BirdLife International 2013), Himalayan has been found in Afghanistan, Mongolia, United Arab Emirates (see below) and South-East Asia in areas where it was not previously recorded (Li & Kasorndorkbua 2008, Busuttil & Ayé 2009, Buchheim 2012, 2013ab, Harrison & Lambsdell 2013; Steve James in litt). However, also Himalayan may be endangered by contaminated carcasses (Das et al 2011), and in some areas has experienced rapid population declines (Acharya et al 2009). In this context, it would be highly interesting to have more information about the species' distribution further west in Afghanistan. Maybe, the recent increase in ornithological interest and activity in Iran (Khaleghizadeh et al 2011) will also provide new data on a more regular occurrence of the species in eastern Iran and particularly in the Kopet Dagh mountains.

Other record in the Middle East

The only other – and most recent – record of Himalayan Vulture in the Middle East and the 'greater' Western Palearctic concerns an immature bird (estimated c 3.5 years old) photographed with four Griffon Vultures at Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, United Arabian Emirates, on 13-16 October 2012 (Harrison & Lambsdell 2013, Steve James in litt; http://worldbirder.blogspot.nl/2013/10/october-round-up.html, www.smugmug.com/gallery/26007634_vtF2QN#!i). It was accepted as the first record for the United Arab Emirates (www.uaebirding.com/rbr_from_2010.html).

Samenvatting

Himalayagieren in Iran in april 2007 en december 2010 Dit artikel documenteert de eerste twee waarnemingen van Himalayagier *Gyps himalayensis* in Iran en het Midden-Oosten. De eerste betreft een adult bij Surak, Noord-Khorasan, op 27 April 2007. De determinatie was gebaseerd op het scherpe contrast tussen de witte ondervleugeldekveren en zwarte slagpennen, alsmede op de lichte kleur van het lichaam en de lichaamsbouw met 'zwaar' silhouet. Op 8 december 2010 werd een juveniel waargenomen bij Chahbahar, Sistan-Baluchestan. Deze vogel werd onder meer gedetermineerd op grond van de lichaamsbouw en op het grijsbruine lichaam met zware crèmewitte streping. Beide waarnemingen zijn aanvaard door de Iraanse zeldzaamhedencommissie en betreffen de eerste gevallen in het Midden-Oosten. Ze worden besproken in de context van gevallen in andere landen en regio's waar de soort tot voor kort evenmin bekend was, zoals Afghanistan, Mongolië en Zuidoost-Azië, en van het inmiddels derde geval in het Midden-Oosten in de Verenigde Arabische Emiraten in oktober 2012. De vraag wordt gesteld of het toegenomen aantal gevallen het gevolg is van uitbreiding van het areaal.

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Titan Storm Petrel

The world of seabirds and seabird taxonomy is in a state of flux. New species are being described, others are being rediscovered, and many subspecies are being (re-)elevated to species status. White-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta grallaria* is traditionally considered to comprise four to five subspecies, although most – if not all – of these taxa may represent distinct species (eg, Howell 2010): nominate *grallaria*, and *segethi* and *titan* of the South Pacific; and *leucogaster* and the enigmatic *melanoleuca* of the South Atlantic, with the latter often treated as a white-bellied subspecies of Black-bellied Storm Petrel *F tropica*. The least known of these subspecies is *titan*, recognized in 1924 and described formally in 1928 (Murphy 1924, 1928). It is known to breed on only a few rocky islets at remote Rapa in the Austral Islands of southern French Polynesia (27°35'S, 144°22'W), with the total nesting population in 1974 considered as 'certainly not more than 100 pairs' (Holyoak & Thibault 1984), updated to at least 308-561 pairs based on a more thorough survey in 1989 (Thibault & Varney 1991).

In September 2013, I was fortunate to be a participant on an expedition to the Pitcairn Island group and the Tuamotu archipelago, French Polynesia, organized by Josep del Hoyo. We travelled on the vessel *Braveheart*, based out of New Zealand. On 4 September, while heading from Mangareva, French Polynesia, to Pitcairn, we stopped to chum for tubenoses at 24°19'S, 132°12'W, c 260 km west-north-west of Pitcairn (sea surface temperature 23.4°C). After 2.5 h, numerous Murphy's Petrels *Pterodroma ultima*, several Soft-plumaged Petrels *P mollis* and a single Herald Petrel *P heraldica* as well as Kermadec Petrel *P neglecta* had appeared – but no storm petrels. Finally, a spectacular Polynesian Storm Petrel *Nesofregetta albigularis* danced in briefly and, in an attempt to bring it back, more fish oil was added to spice up the chum slick. A few minutes later I spotted a large storm petrel on the slick and shouted 'storm-petrel on the slick' before raising my binoculars and realizing in an instant that it was not a Polynesian but was in fact a 'giant' White-bellied Storm Petrel. I yelled 'Titan!'




193-195 Titan Storm Petrel / Titanstormvogeltje *Fregetta (grallaria) titan*, at sea, near Pitcairn Island, 4 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)* **196** Titan Storm Petrel / Titanstormvogeltje *Fregetta (grallaria) titan*, at sea, near Pitcairn Island, 4 September 2013 *(Kenneth Petersen)*

and we watched the bird for perhaps a minute as it made a circuit of the slick, swept once past the vessel's stern and then headed off into the big blue yonder. The sighting was all too brief but luckily Kenneth Petersen and I were able to snap a few images of the bird, although the lighting was not ideal. For most, it was their first White-bellied Storm Petrel of any type but for the cognoscenti on board (including myself, Bob Flood and Kirk Zufelt) it was a grail among storm petrels, a bird we never thought we would see.

The *titan* flew easily with strong, relatively relaxed wing beats, rather than the quicker flight of a 'typical' White-bellied Storm Petrel in similar conditions. It appeared large and slightly rangy compared with the small, relatively compact appearance of typical White-bellied. In fact, it did not seem appreciably smaller than the Polynesian Storm Petrel viewed minutes earlier, which is one of the world's largest storm petrels. Its wings appeared relatively long and proportionately narrow compared with a typical White-bellied, and its feet fell short of the tail tip. The bird was in fresh plumage and the striking silvery edgings to the upperparts contrasted with the blackish hood; conversely, the white rump did not contrast distinctly with the silvery back but it did with the black tail. Photographs show well the silvery-grey upperparts with broad white feather tips, as well as revealing sparse dark flank streaking, a feature noted as a 'peculiarity' of *titan* by Murphy (1924).

Range at sea

Since *titan* was described, it has remained very little known, and the photographs here appear to

be the first published of it at sea. Only two specimens have been collected at sea, away from the breeding island: in June 1906 (identified after *titan* was formally described) at 4°20′S, 93°30′W, c 6850 km east-north-east of Rapa (Loomis 1918, Murphy 1933), and in November 1988 at 5°N, 140°W, c 3000 km north of Rapa (Spear & Ainley 2007). Given these far-flung points, *titan* might be encountered anywhere in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific. In the east of this region, however, its at-sea range overlaps with *segethi* and in the west with migrant *grallaria* (Spear & Ainley 2007). Thus, any 'white-bellied storm petrel' seen at sea in French Polynesia or Pitcairn waters should not be assumed to be *titan*, and nominate *grallaria* may actually be commoner in these waters in some seasons (Murphy 1924, Spear & Ainley 2007).

In addition to our observation, which was c 1250 km north-north-east of Rapa, Hadoram Shirihai (pers comm) has also recorded *titan* at sea in recent years. During 2005-08, HS conducted petrel surveys across much of French Polynesia, mainly around the Marquesas and the Tuamotus, and also in the Pitcairn archipelago. Despite almost five cumulative months in the region, including many mass chumming operations, HS identified *titan* on only two occasions, which reinforces its rarity: one at 22°48′S, 136°54′W, between Tenararo and Morane in the Tuamotu archipelago (c 880 km north-east from Rapa) on 14 July 2006; and one east of Mangareva, Gambier Islands (c 1120 km north-east of Rapa) on 21 August 2007. In both cases, the birds behaved similarly to the bird we saw, giving sudden and very brief visits to chum slicks, not staying to feed and thus not allowing photography. Both individuals were identified by their large size, less rapid wing beats (than typical White-bellied Storm Petrel) on long wings, and bulky, long bodies, approaching the size of Polynesian Storm Petrel. Both birds also showed very broad whitish tipping on the back and upperwing coverts (but see Identification limits below).

Taxonomy of titan

While the plumage of *titan* is similar to other White-bellied Storm Petrel taxa, its very large size sets it apart as something quite different. The wing length of *titan* averages 182 mm (range 177-188 mm; n=27) versus an average of 156 mm (146-163 mm; n=63) in *segethi*, breeding on the Juan Fernandez Islands off Chile (Murphy 1928), and 163 mm (161-166 mm; n=4) of nominate *grallaria* from Lord Howe Island, Australia (Murphy & Snyder 1952). Thus, *titan* averages c 17% longer winged than *segethi* and 12% longer winged than *grallaria*. As our observation suggested, its overall size is comparable with Polynesian Storm Petrel, of which the wing chord also averages 182 mm (range 178-194 mm, n=13; Murphy 1924).

As noted by Murphy (1924): 'The indicated differences [between *titan* and Juan Fernandez birds] are so great that they are not bridged, or even nearly bridged, by individual variation among scores of specimens studied... Fledglings taken at Rapa have down of a much lighter gray than Juan Fernandez chicks of the same stage of growth. The contour feathers of the dorsal surface, which are broadly edged with white, are also lighter in the young Rapa birds. The difference in size is, however, the outstanding distinction, for downy chicks from Rapa have larger bills than adult birds from Juan Fernandez.'

Breeding data for White-bellied Storm Petrels are sparse but of the Pacific Ocean subspecies, *segethi* on the Juan Fernandez Islands (33°42′S), lays eggs in December (Johnson 1965); nominate *grallaria* at Lord Howe Island (31°33′S) in January-February (Marchant & Higgins 1990); and *titan* at Rapa (27°35′S) in February (Murphy 1924).

In hindsight, it seems odd that Murphy did not describe *titan* as a distinct species, although it should be noted that much of his work was undertaken in a period when subspecies were very much in vogue. Thus, despite his numerous publications on seabirds, Murphy often confused and confounded taxonomy simply by swimming strongly in the prevailing taxonomic current. For example, he lumped seven distinct taxa as subspecies of Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* (Murphy 1952) but today all are now treated (as they were before) as well-marked species.

Given the conservative nature of morphological variation among tubenoses, the size and plumage differences of *titan* relative to other members of the White-bellied Storm Petrel complex greatly exceed those between many accepted species of seabirds. Parallels among cryptic tubenoses may be found with Beck's Petrel *Pseudobulweria becki*, a miniature version of Tahiti Petrel *P rostrata*, and perhaps with the enigmatic 'New Caledonia Storm Petrel', a large version of New Zealand Storm Petrel *F maoriana* (Howell & Collins 2008, Collins 2013). Examples nearer home include the 'Fea's Petrel complex', now usually regarded as comprising two or three species (Desertas *P deserta*, Fea's *P feae* and Zino's Petrel *P madeira*), and the saga of multiple species within the Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma castro* complex.

I believe that *titan* is most realistically treated as a distinct species, *Fregetta titan*, for which the English name Titan Storm Petrel seems appropriate (the rendering 'Titanic Storm Petrel', while perhaps more grammatically correct, conjures up unfortunate images of a doomed ship rather than of a true titan among storm-petrels). Sadly, Titan Storm Petrel also qualifies as a species of high conservation concern, being limited as a breeding bird to five small, predator-free islets where it nests amid the rocks at only 3-4 m above sea level (Holyoak & Thibault 1984).

Identification limits

Recent at-sea observations by HS off the Juan Fernandez Islands suggest that two seasonal populations may occur there (distinguished by moult timing); these populations may also differ in size, with some birds appearing rather large and bulky, approaching the appearance of *titan* (Hadoram Shirihai pers comm). Many of the fresh Juan Fernandez birds also have very extensive white tipping above, so this in itself is not diagnostic of *titan*. While HS and I agree that *titan* is distinctive and should be recognized as a species, the variation in (presumed) Juan Fernandez birds (a situation in need of critical study), combined with the difficulty of judging size in the field, indicates caution in identifying *titan* at sea.

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Bait-fishing by Snowy Egret in Dominican Republic in June 2013

During a week at the Iberostar Hacienda Dominicus hotel at Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, in mid-June 2013, Kenneth Mitchell observed passive and active bait-fishing with bread on fish by three heron species (present were one American Great Egret *Casmerodius egretta*, two Snowy Egrets *Egretta thula* and several Green Herons *Butorides virescens*). There was an interspecies hierarchy: the American Great Egrets chased off the Snowy Egret and the Green Herons from the thrown bread and, in the absence of the American Great Egret, the Snowy Egrets chased off the Green Herons, so that bait-fishing behaviour could only be observed for the smaller two species in the absence of the larger. One of the Snowy Egrets regularly present at the pond was observed actively fishing with bait in the absence of the American Great Egret. This Snowy Egret appeared as soon as KM began throwing pieces of bread and it chased off Green Herons if they were in the vicinity. When bread landed on the ground near the bird, it would rush to grab it

and begin fishing with it ('bait bringing'). It would also recover pieces of bread that were floating out of range and drop them closer. And, if bread was sinking too deep, it would again recover it and drop it again ('bait repositioning'). One evening, KM broke up small bread rolls and threw it one piece at a time at the Snowy Egret. The bird diligently picked up each piece, fished with it and then waited for the next. Within less than 10 min, it managed to catch six fishes with the successive pieces of bread. KM attempted to document the bait-fishing behaviour on video but the results were poor and the footage was deleted.

Snowy Egret is a Nearctic heron species, closely related to the Palearctic Little Egret *E garzetta*. While active bait-fishing behaviour has been well described for Little (Post et al 2009), there is only an indirect report for Snowy (Grant 1993). Thus, these observations in June 2013 constitute the first well-observed active bait-fishing behaviour ('bait bringing', 'bait repositioning' and many successful catches) for this species and supports the previous indirect report (Grant 1993), which had not been taken into account by Ruxton & Hansell (2011) in their list of active bait-fishing bird species. Multiple species of herons Ardeidae catch fish using bait. Active bait-fishing involves birds identifying and placing bait (eg, bread, insects) into water to attract fish (eg, Boswall 1983, McCullough & Beasley 1996, Ruxton & Hansell 2011). For example, Green Herons (Keenan 1981, Preston 1986, Higuchi 1988a), Striated Herons *B striata* (Walsh et al 1985, Higuchi 1988b, Robinson 1994), Squacco Herons *Ardeola ralloides* (Crous 1994) and Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (Réglade et al 2013) actively fish with insects as bait. Striated Herons *B striata* and Green Herons also actively fish with bread (Lovell 1958, Sazima 2007) and with lures (eg, flowers, feathers, twigs; Norris 1975, Higuchi 1986). Active bait-fishing with bread as bait has also been documented for Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (eg, McCullough & Beasley 1996, Riehl 2001, Gavin & Solomon 2009, Douglas et al 2011). Passive bait-fishing involves birds waiting by bait to catch fish but not actively placing bait in the water themselves or actively manipulating the bait. For example, American Great Egret (Lovell 1958), Grey Heron *A cinerea* (eg, Post et al 2009) and Great Blue Heron *A herodias* (Zickefoose & Davis 1998) have been documented to passively use bait to catch fish. Even if passive bait-fishing is probably more often observed, this behaviour is rarely published because it did not seem unexpected, contrary to the active one. And indeed there is surely a significant cognitive gap between active and passive bait-fishing behavior (Ruxton & Hansell 2011). Moreover, the reports of active bait-fishing observations are welcome and really contribute to scientific research on tool use and innovation in birds (eg, Overington et al 2009).

Members of the heron family represent half of the dozen bird species actively bait-fishing as reported by Ruxton & Hansell (2011) but since at least two new species – Little Bittern and Snowy Egret – can now be added, the list and consequently the proportion of heron species, are increasing progressively, as previously predicted (Voisin 1991).

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Ship-assisted passage by Iago Sparrows from Cape Verde Islands to Madeira and the Netherlands in May 2013

In May 2013, a group of Iago Sparrows *Passer iagoensis* undertook a ship-assisted voyage from the Cape Verde Islands all the way to the Netherlands. The species is endemic to the Cape Verde Islands, occurs on many islands and is not threatened (cf Hazevoet 1995, 2013a). Their voyage started on 6 May, when the MV *Plancius*, after sailing from Antarctica to the Cape Verde Islands and on its way to Madeira (the 'West Africa Pelagic'), stayed off Raso, Cape Verde Islands. When birders observed Raso Larks *Alauda razae*, endemic to this islet, from zodiacs close to the shore (coming ashore is strictly forbidden), a group of c 30 Iago Sparrows landed on the zodiacs (plate 197). The sparrows were very confiding, even landing on people's heads and other body parts, especially when fresh water was provided. Back on board of the MV *Plancius*, birders were surprised to find c 30 sparrows on the ship, because no zodiac had taken birds from the island.

197 Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, on board of zodiac off Raso, Cape Verde Islands, 6 May 2013 *(Harro H Müller)*

198 Iago Sparrow / Kaapverdische Mus *Passer iagoensis*, male, on board of MV *Plancius*, off Deserta Grande, Desertas, 12 May 2013 *(Nils van Duivendijk)*

199 Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, on board of MV *Plancius*, Atlantic Ocean between Cape Verde Islands and Desertas, 8 May 2013 *(Nils van Duivendijk)*. Note aberrantly coloured male right of centre.

As night fell and the ship was leaving Cape Verde waters, a number of sparrows was still on board, where they were provided with food. On 7 May, while nearing Mauritania, 11 individuals were counted. The group consisted of seven female-types and four males, including one presumed immature male (plumage as female but with bright rufous lesser wing-coverts). They were regularly offered food and water, which they readily accepted. On 10 May, while passing through the Canary Islands, still 11 were present. Although the island of La Gomera was within close sight and birds reacted excited, calling regularly and perching on the railing to view land, they did not attempt to leave the ship. Again, on 11-12 May, while the ship moored off Deserta Grande, Desertas, south of Madeira, the sparrows stayed on board (plate 198). On 13 May, when the ship approached Madeira, only six sparrows were found aboard ship in the early morning and probably (although not proven) five of them had left for Deserta Grande. Later that morning, during a stop at Funchal harbour, Madeira, five birds briefly left the ship to fly to the jetty and one even flew to the quay but all returned and stayed on board (http://observado.org/waarneming/view/76344378; plate 200). All birders left the ship on Madeira, the final port of call of the West Africa Pelagic. Weblogs by trip participants informed birders in the Netherlands that the sparrows were on their way and when they would arrive at the home port of Hansweert, Zeeland, the Netherlands, if they were to stay on board. When the *Plancius* finally arrived at Hansweert on 19 May, still four Iago Sparrows (two males and two females) were on board. Over the next few days, these birds stayed on board but also flew to another ship nearby and to the quay.

Several people helped to arrange permission for birders to visit the ship and, from 19 May, more than 100 birders came to watch the birds. They were allowed on board by captain Alexey Nazarov and his crew. One of the first birders to visit the birds was Kees Moeliker on 19 May. Helped by crew members, he observed one male that stayed inside the steering cabin. This bird was very tame, could be fed by hand, and appeared to be in bad condition, so it was caught by hand by KM and released on the deck. When the other three birds came close by, the weakened bird recovered and started fighting with the other male, ending in mounting and 'copulation', the first case of homosexual pairing behaviour observed in this species and any species of the genus *Passer* (Moeliker 2013, 2014). During their stay at Hansweert, the birds were seen in pairs most of the time, with male and female staying closely together (plate 202-203). Only occasionally, all four birds were seen together. Often, birds roosted behind the bars of the ship's chimney, probably seeking comfort of warm air. From 21 May, only three birds were seen, and the last date was 26 May.

200 Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, on board of MV *Plancius*, Funchal harbour, Madeira, 13 May 2013 *(Paul Borgerding)*

To conclude, the MV *Plancius* offered an unexpected opportunity to study the plumages of this species in detail and to have them extensively photographed, sound-recorded and videoed (see www.dutchbirding.nl, www.waarneming.nl). Males Iago Sparrow are easily identified by their broad rufous supercilium, reaching far beyond the eye, small black bib, dark lore and area below the eye (creating a masked appearance), grey nape and rufous upperparts (scapulars, mantle and rump). Females are less conspicuous and strongly resemble female House Sparrow *P domesticus* but they are slightly smaller and show a more distinctive and often buffier supercilium, darker crown and uniform rufous scapulars (dark centred in House) (eg, van Duivendijk 2011). Note that there is no sound-recording of the species in the extensive online library of Xenocanto (www.xeno-canto.org) and only one on www.observado.org but there are many

sound-recordings in, eg, the archives of The Sound Approach (Arnoud van den Berg pers comm).

Remarkably, one male in the group of 11 showed an aberrant plumage pattern, with the side of the face being rufous-brown; in normally coloured males, this area is pale grey (plate 199). This 'rufous-faced' type is unknown from the literature; some clinal variation has been described for the species (even leading to proposals to recognize different subspecies in the past), but it is now considered monotypic, without strong plumage variability or morphs (Summers-Smith 1988, Clement et al 1993).

After the last day of sightings, speculation started whether the remaining three birds had left the ship for good or that they had been taken into custody. After some time, it appeared that the Dutch government (Team Invasieve Exoten, Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (NVWA), part of the Ministery for Economic affairs) had ordered the captain to capture the birds, to prevent the possibility that the species would settle itself in the Netherlands and become an 'invasive exotic species'. Two birds were caught; one of them died and the other was taken into care (Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit 2013). This action provoked a lot of discussion, since Iago Sparrow has no history of human-assisted expansion (this being the first-ever case of ship-assisted dispersal known for the species) and some considered it odd that action was undertaken against these birds while many other exotic species are much more numerous, with some of them actually being released on purpose (cf Hazevoet 2013b, Leewis et al 2013; www.dutchbirding.nl/news.php?id=841).

Remarkably, in March 2014, a female Iago Sparrow was photographed with Tree Sparrows *P montanus* in a garden at an undisclosed site not far from Hansweert (Pim Wolf in litt). Apparently, this bird had not only escaped the capturers in May 2013 but also survived the (mild) winter of 2013/14.

The voyage in May 2013 is the first documented record of an endemic bird species from the Cape Verde Islands that left its home ground voluntarily (Hazevoet 2013a). It constitutes the first record of Iago Sparrow for the Netherlands and Europe but, based on the currently used criteria with respect to proven ship-assisted passage, the species will not be admitted to the Dutch list.

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202 Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, female (left) and male, on board of MV *Plancius*, Hansweert, Zeeland, Netherlands, 20 May 2013 *(Gerjon Gelling)* **203** Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, male (left) and female, on board of MV *Plancius*, Hansweert, Zeeland, Netherlands, 20 May 2013 *(Luuk Punt)* **204** Iago Sparrow / Kaapverdische Mus *Passer iagoensis*, female, on board of MV *Plancius*, Hansweert, Zeeland, Netherlands, 20 May 2013 *(Karel Hoogteyling)*

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Homosexual mounting of Iago Sparrows after ship-assisted arrival in the Netherlands

On 19 May 2013, four Iago Sparrows *Passer iagoensis* (two males and two females) aboard the MV *Plancius* arrived ship-assisted in the Netherlands from the Cape Verde Islands (Ebels et al 2014). They are the first known wild individuals of the species to have reached Europe. In the late afternoon of the same day, I was aboard the *Plancius*, docked in the harbour of Hansweert, Zeeland, to observe the sparrows. Although new land was open to them for colonization, the sparrows had remained on deck all day. Two females were sitting on a gangway, sheltered from the wind, with their heads tucked away in the feathers of their backs. One male still resided inside the ship, on the bridge, where he had become friends with the captain. This bird was breathing heavily through his slightly opened bill and appeared a bit wobbly (plate 205). I could easily take him in my hand. Because I suspected the sparrow had unsuccessfully attempted to leave the ship and collided with the glass windows, I released him from his confinement. He did not fly from my hand, so I placed him on the ship's deck. Immediately, the other male showed up (plate 206) and attacked the 'captain's sparrow'. I observed this aggressive behaviour from close quarters. Apparently alerted by the *tschurr-tschurr-tschurr* calls of the males, both females joined the scene but kept a distance of c 3 m from the fighting cocks. The fight lasted

205 Iago Sparrow / Kaapverdische Mus *Passer iagoensis*, male, on board of MV *Plancius*, Hansweert, Zeeland, Netherlands, 19 May 2013 *(Kees Moeliker)*. On bridge. **206-208** Iago Sparrows / Kaapverdische Mussen *Passer iagoensis*, males, on board of MV *Plancius*, Hansweert, Zeeland, Netherlands, 19 May 2013 *(Kees Moeliker)*. Males fighting (plate 207) and mounting (plate 208).

for c 50 sec, during which time the 'captain's sparrow' was bitten vigorously and both birds tumbled over each other (plate 207). The moment the aggressive display ended, one of the males (I lost track of the individual sparrows) assumed a crouched position with his wings slightly drooped. Then the other male mounted the crouched male, pecked him in the neck and crown, and tried to copulate. I could not see if cloacal contact was established. The mounting and pecking took c 15 sec; halfway through that time, the soliciting male left the submissive position but the copulation attempt continued (plate 208). Then, all four sparrows calmed down and started to feed on breadcrumbs.

Discussion

Homosexual mounting was unknown in Iago Sparrow. What is known of the sexual behaviour of the species is summarized in Cramp & Perrins (1994) by Denis Summers-Smith: 'Copulation occurs in vicinity of nest. Female becomes dominant at this stage. Male invites copulation by hopping around female in similar position (wings drooped, not held out or shivered and slightly rotated […]) but with wing-feathers and rump ruffled. Unresponsive female pecks at male, but when ready invites copulation by crouching.' Besides the homosexual nature of the display, it is remarkable that the mounting took place outside the breeding season (August-March, according to Summers-Smith 1988), far away from their natural range and not near a nest. Homosexual behaviour (same-sex mounting, courtship and/or pair bonding) is well known in birds. Bagemihl (1999) documents over 130 species as engaging in same-sex sexual behaviour and MacFarlane et al (2010) amassed a list of 93 species from the published literature where homosexual behaviour has been observed under non-captive conditions. In this list, birds range from as large as ostrich *Struthio* to as small as Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* but, remarkably, sparrows are lacking. What is described here, is therefore the first documented case of male-male mounting in any sparrow of the genus *Passer*.

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Steppeklapekster op Maasvlakte in april-mei 2014

Dinsdag 29 april 2014 was met windstil en droog weer een uitstekende dag voor het houden van een vogeltelling. Mark Benders was in het kader van broedvogelonderzoek op de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, toen hij langs de Nieuwe Waterweg in een geïsoleerd struikencomplex een klauwier zag zitten. Het was hem meteen duidelijk dat het niet om een alledaagse soort ging maar de vogel verdween kort daarop in de struiken en daardoor uit beeld. MB was nog net in staat een matige digiscoopfoto te maken. Op dat moment kwamen Marijn Prins en Wouter Thijs langsgelopen en zij konden de vogel op de foto ook niet plaatsen. Ondertussen waren Garry Bakker en Sander Elzerman elders in het havengebied een kolonie Roeken *Corvus frugilegus* aan het bekijken. Marks telefoontje met de mededeling 'ik heb een rare bleke klauwier met een bruine staart' en de daarop toegezonden foto waren reden genoeg spoorslags naar de Maasvlakte te rijden, ook al was de vogel alweer even uit beeld. Een Daurische *Lanius isabellinus* of Turkestaanse Klauwier *L phoenicuroides* zou immers de moeite van het terugvinden waard zijn en er was nog genoeg tijd om geplande werkzaamheden op te schuiven. Eenmaal aangekomen bij de Nieuwe Waterweg dook de vogel al snel op voor de auto in een kale struik, terwijl MB hem samen met MP en WT ook weer in beeld kreeg. De verbazing was groot toen GB en SE hem in de kijker kregen: er zat geen 'izabelklauwier' maar een Steppeklapekster *L lahtora pallidirostris* naast de auto! Het gemelde bleke verenkleed bleek een bleekgrijs (en niet bruin) kleed en de

staart toonde inderdaad wat rossig bruin maar dan als gevolg van de oude en sterk gebleekte middelste staartpennen. Het betrof overduidelijk een klapekster – maar wel een met een relatief lange handpenprojectie, een lichte teugel en een forse, donkere en lange snavel. GB was zich ervan bewust dat adulte Steppeklapekster een zwarte snavel kan hebben, zoals deze vogel, maar vooral de ogenschijnlijk geringe hoeveelheid wit in de vleugel zorgde er voor dat in het hierop volgende uur diverse mensen werden gebeld, foto's werden vergeleken en de vogel toch nog met een slag om de arm werd doorgegeven. Een in de tussentijd gemelde Azuurmees *Cyanistes cyanus* in Groningen (die later 'loos alarm' bleek vanwege een ring) zorgde daarbij nog voor de nodige aanvullende stress... Terwijl de klapekster rustig op korte afstand in het telescoopbeeld zat en inmiddels een opgeprikte muis had verorberd werd gezamenlijk de mogelijkheid nagegaan van een sterk gesleten Klapekster *L excubitor* en van eventuele andere klapekster-taxa. Uiteindelijk gaf een foto van MP waarop de volledig geopende vleugel in vlucht was te zien duidelijkheid: de hoeveelheid wit in de handpennen was uitgebreid en vergelijkbaar met bijvoorbeeld de Steppeklapekster die in oktober-november 2012 op Texel, Noord-Holland, verbleef.

De rest van de dag trok de vogel veel bekijks. Hij bleef tot en met 3 mei langs de Stuifdijk (de laatste twee dagen met een wat grotere actieradius dan de eerste dagen) en is gedurende zijn vijfdaagse verblijf door vele 10-tallen waarnemers gezien.

Beschrijving

De beschrijving is gebaseerd op foto's van onder meer GB, Michiel de Groodt, MP, Albert de Jong, Maurits Martens, Gijsbert Mourik en Co van der Wardt (www.dutchbirding.nl, www.waarneming.nl).

ALGEMENE INDRUK Lichtgrijze klapekster met weinig contrast tussen bovendelen en onderdelen. Afhankelijk van lichtomstandigheden meer of minder 'buffe' tint in verenkleed zichtbaar.

GROOTTE & BOUW Typische klapekster met ronde kop, relatief lange snavel met haakje aan bovensnavel en stevige poten. Handpenprojectie c 80% van zichtbare gedeelte van tertials. Vleugelpunt net niet tot aan punt van bovenstaartdekveren reikend. Staart vrij rechthoekig, weinig getrapt, relatief (voor klauwier) wat korte indruk gevend. Snavel duidelijk langer dan hoog.

KOP Egaal lichtgrijs. Oorstreek donkergrijs (iets lichter dan arm- en handpennen), masker vormend achter oog. Teugel lichtgrijs. Direct boven snavel kleine lichte voorhoofdsvlek. Op voorhoofd lichtbruin waas. Wang licht.

BOVENDELEN Mantel en rug bleekgrijs. Stuit en bovenstaartdekveren vuilwit. Schouderveren bleekgrijs met lichte top, van achteren gezien lichte V vormend (soms bedekt door mantelveren).

ONDERDELEN Keel wit. Borst, buik en onderstaartdekveren wit met, afhankelijk van belichting, gelige tot beige zweem.

VLEUGEL Handpennen bruin en dof met smalle, lichtbruine top en witte basis, in zit rechthoekige handpenvlek meestal onzichtbaar en in vlucht wit vleugelveld vormend; op binnenvlag van buitenste vier armpennen smalle langgerekte witte streep. Armpennen donkergrijs met bruin waas en met smalle lichte top, in vlucht smalle lichte vleugelachterrand vormend. Tertials bruin en dof met lichtbruine top. Linkervleugel met één en rechtervleugel met twee verse zwarte tertials met uitgebreide witte top. Grote handpendekveren en grote armpendekveren donkergrijs tot zwart. Ondervleugel lichtgrijs, met 'doorschijnend' patroon van bovenvleugel. Ondervleugeldekveren wit.

STAART Bovenstaart: t5-6 geheel wit, t3-4 met variabele hoeveelheid wit aan basis en top en t1-2 overwegend donker (met nog niet geruide t1 contrasterend bruin en dof). Onderstaart wit of vuilwit, op centrale gedeelte donkerder.

NAAKTE DELEN Oog donker. Snavel zwart met vaag zichtbare blauwgrijze basis. Poot donkerbruin. Nagels donker.

GEDRAG Als typische klauwier, vaak boven in struik zittend. Ook relatief vaak op grond jagend en vanaf stenen. Ook regelmatig 'verstopt' zittend in dichte bosschage. Vogel tam, tot op c 10 m te benaderen.

Succesvol jagend, onder meer op Veldmuis *Microtus arvalis*, Gewone Bosspitsmuis *Sorex araneus* en Graspieper *Anthus pratensis* (prooien doorgaans voorafgaand aan consumeren eerst in struik gespiest).

ZANG Vogel is op 1 mei zingend gehoord (http://waarneming.nl/waarneming/view/83981474) maar zang niet beschreven (Bert de Jong in litt).

Determinatie

De combinatie van vleugeltekening met veel wit op de handpennen, staarttekening met geheel witte buitenste twee staartpennen, lange handpenprojectie (voor een klapekster), lichtgrijze teugel en forse snavel (met vaag zichtbare blauwgrijze basis) wijzen op een Steppeklapekster. De onderdelen toonden geen bandering en hadden een gelige tot beige tint, kenmerken die eveneens voor Steppeklapekster pleiten (cf Cramp & Perrins 1993, Clement & Worfolk 1995, Lefranc & Worfolk 1997, Tenovuo & Varrela 1998, Harris & Franklin 2000, van Duivendijk 2011). Vergeleken met bijvoorbeeld de verse najaarsvogel op Texel in 2012 was de kleur echter niet uitgesproken zandkleurig, als gevolg van slijtage. Het ontbreken van bandering kan daarom in dit geval niet als doorslaggevend kenmerk worden gezien.

Kleine Klapekster *L minor* valt af vanwege de te

209 Steppeklapekster / Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius lahtora pallidirostris*, Stuifdijk, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 30 april 2014 *(Co van der Wardt)*

210 Steppeklapekster / Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius lahtora pallidirostris*, Stuifdijk, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 1 mei 2014 *(Co van der Wardt)*

211 Steppeklapekster / Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius lahtora pallidirostris*, Stuifdijk, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 30 april 2014 *(Maurits Martens)*

lange snavel, het zichtbare wit in de dekveren en de relatief lange snavel (korter en hoger bij Kleine). Het wit op de vleugel strekte zich niet (zichtbaar) uit tot op de armpennen, waarmee ook Homeyers Klapekster *L e homeyeri* kan worden uitgesloten. Op foto's van de vogel van de Maasvlakte is te zien zijn dat de vier buitenste armpennen een kleine langwerpige witte vlek op de binnenvlag hadden; dit was echter alleen bij een volledig gespreide vleugel te zien. Het wit is in deze veren bij Homeyers veel uitgebreider. Daarnaast bleken alle handpennen, grote dekveren en de meeste tertials oud en sterk verbleekt, waardoor er geen wit meer in deze veren zichtbaar was. Homeyers heeft bovendien een 'volledig' zwart masker, met donkere teugel en doorgaans een smalle witte wenkbrauwstreep.

Andere klapekstersoorten en andere ondersoorten van Aziatische Klapekster *L lahtora* kunnen eveneens worden uitgesloten, met name op basis van de bleke kleur van het verenkleed (minder zandkleurig en donkerder grijs op de bovendelen, vleugel en kop bij andere taxa, en met een scherper afgetekend zwart masker voor het oog). Noordelijke Klapekster *L borealis* verschilt van Steppeklapekster onder meer door de in alle kleden duidelijk aanwezige bandering op de onderdelen. Voor een gedetailleerde beschrijving van de kenmerken van deze andere taxa zie, eg, Clement & Worfolk (1995) en van Duivendijk (2011).

Leeftijdsbepaling

Op grond van het sterke ruicontrast betrof het vrijwel zeker een exemplaar in het tweede kalenderjaar, ook al toonde de vogel een volledig donkere snavel. Van klauwieren is bekend dat de snavel snel van kleur kan veranderen met het vorderen van de leeftijd. Van Duivendijk (2011) geeft aan dat adulte Steppeklapekster volledig zwarte armpennen en tertials heeft. De verse tertials met witte top en witte vlek in de buitenste vier armpennen vormen in dat licht een extra indicatie dat het een eerste-zomer vogel betrof. Ook hebben adulte exemplaren, getuige foto's uit bijvoorbeeld Kazachstan, meestal een donkere teugel en een 'netter' grijs-zwart-wit kleed in het voorjaar, zonder zoveel ruicontrast in staart en vleugel als bij de vogel van de Maasvlakte.

Verspreiding en voorkomen

Het broedgebied van Steppeklapekster strekt zich

uit van de Kaspische Zee, via zuidelijk Centraal-Azië, oostelijk tot in China en Mongolië (Harris & Franklin 2000). Vooral de noordelijke en oostelijke populaties zijn langeafstandstrekkers die de winter doorbrengen in het Midden-Oosten, Noordoost-Afrika en Zuid-Azië. In Europa zijn tot en met 2012 ten minste 73 Steppeklapeksters vastgesteld (zie Ebels 2012 voor een gedetailleerd overzicht van alle gevallen). De overgrote meerderheid (60 gevallen) is in het najaar waargenomen, van eind augustus tot begin december, en er zijn 12 eerdere voorjaarsgevallen, uit (datum van ontdekking) maart (2), april (3), mei (4) en juni (3); één geval stamt uit juli. Van de eerdere voorjaarsgevallen zijn zeven vastgesteld in Fenno-Scandinavië en Estland, drie op Cyprus (in maart-april) en slechts twee in West-Europa, beide in Brittannië (21-23 april 1992 en 17 juni tot 12 juli 2003). Er zijn overwinteringsgevallen bekend uit Cyprus en Italië (beide vanaf november) en er is één midzomergeval, in Zweden in juli-augustus 2011. Bij vrijwel alle Europese gevallen betrof het eerstejaars vogels. Het voorkomen in Europa kent in de afgelopen decennia een opwaartse lijn, met zes gevallen in 1980-89, 20 in 1990-99 en 31 in 2000-09 (Ebels 2012).

Indien aanvaard betreft de vogel van de Maasvlakte het derde geval voor Nederland en tevens het derde voorjaarsgeval voor West-Europa; de twee eerdere gevallen in Nederland waren beide op Texel, van 4 tot 23 september 1994 in de 'Tuintjes' bij De Cocksdorp (Wassink 1997) en van 27 oktober tot 9 november 2012 in het gebied Buitendijk bij Den Hoorn (Ebels 2012).

Summary

Steppe Grey Shrike at Maasvlakte in April-May 2014 From 29 April to 3 May 2014, a Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius lahtora pallidirostris* stayed at Stuifdijk, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands. The bird was most probably a second-calendar-year. Great Grey Shrike *L excubitor*, Lesser Grey Shrike *L minor* and other Palearctic grey shrike taxa were ruled out by, eg, the overall pale greyish plumage with slight buffish tinge on underparts, the absence of a dark lore, much white in the outer pair of tail-feathers, the relatively long primary projection (compared with Great Grey) and the large white primary patch (with some white present but hardly visible on the secondaries). The bill was all-black (first-year Steppe Grey shows a largely pale bill but it can become fully dark in older birds). If accepted, this is the third record for the Netherlands, after birds on 4-23 September 1994 and from 27 October to 9 November 2012, both on Texel, Noord-Holland. Up to 2012, there have been 73 records in Europe, most in autumn (August-December) and 12 in spring (March-June), including just two in western Europe (both in Britain).

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Varia

Bristle-thighed Curlew and Tuamotu Sandpiper: two endangered shorebirds from the South Pacific

Polynesia is far away from all continents and does not have any major wetlands. It is no surprise therefore that only a few shorebird species occur regularly. Among those that do are two remarkable species that rank high on any birder's wishlist: Bristle-thighed Curlew *Numenius tahitiensis* and Tuamotu Sandpiper *Prosobonia parvirostris*. Both species can be seen during a trip through the Tuamotu archipelago, French Polynesia. They both have featured in Dutch Birding before (Meijer 1995, Wijpkema & Wijpkema 1997) but new information on these species has since emerged.

Bristle-thighed Curlew

This species is a remarkable shorebird for at least four reasons. First, it was one of the last North American bird species for which the breeding grounds were found, as recently as 1948 (Kyllingstad 1948). It appears to breed only in western Alaska, USA, where, even now, it is difficult to find (cf Meijer 1995). Furthermore, the species winters on the many islands and atolls in Oceania (Stickney 1943, Marks & Redmond 1994), although much scarcer in Micronesia, the area west of north-western Hawaii and Polynesia (Kennerley & Bishop 2001). The species is much easier to find on its non-breeding grounds (and in an equally good setting) than on its breeding grounds. Because the wintering islands were traditionally free of land predators, some Bristle-thighed Curlews shed most or all of their primaries synchronously, a strategy unique among shorebird species (Marks et al 1990, Marks 1993). Finally, and quite remarkably among shorebird species, Bristle-thighed Curlew has been observed to employ tools on its wintering grounds to open albatross eggs (Marks & Hall 1992). It is the only shorebird species observed to use tools frequently, apart from one captive Eurasian Oystercatcher

212 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, adult-type, Oeno Island, Pitcairn Islands, 10 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Cf plate 216 and note variation in bill length and curvature, along with variable but overall worn plumage (cf also plate 213-214 and 221 showing second calendar-year birds).




213 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, second calendar-year, Oeno Island, Pitcairn Islands, 10 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note overall fresh plumage (cf plate 215-216 showing adult-type birds) and complete primary moult. **214** Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, second calendar-year, Tenararo Atoll, French Polynesia, 12 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note overall fresh plumage (cf plate 215-216 showing adult-type birds) and complete primary moult. Fresher cinnamon underparts and scapular feathers may be incoming second-winter feathers or late-moulted first-summer feathers. **215** Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, adult-type, Henderson Island, Pitcairn Islands, 8 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Foraging inside forest. Note variable but overall worn plumage (cf plate 213-214 and 221 showing second calendar-year birds). **216** Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, adult-type, Oeno Island, Pitcairn Islands, 10 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Cf plate 212 and note variation in bill length and curvature, along with variable but overall worn plumage (cf also plate 213-214 and 221 showing second calendar-year birds).

Haematopus ostralegus (Marks & Hall 1992, Henry & Aznar 2006). The species may in fact be an active egg (and even chick) predator in Polynesia, given the high frequency with which it is chased in flight by a variety of seabirds (especially Murphy's Petrel *Pterodroma ultima* and noddies *Anous*).

Interestingly, a birder looking for Bristle-thighed Curlew on its wintering grounds may find the species after hearing a bird calling from *within* the native forest. In the Pitcairn Islands and Tuamotus, curlews often forage within the forest or under bushes where seabirds are nesting, perhaps looking for eggs to eat. They also forage in the intertidal of sandy beaches, and roost and loaf in groups on rocky shorelines. Especially after being disturbed, birds readily perch in trees. Its local Tuamotu name is *kivi* (Emory 1947), which may be onomatopoeic although the species really gives a loud, three-syllable *too-á-wit*. The call and the largely plain, pale cinnamon rump are the best field marks to distinguish it from any vagrant Hudsonian Whimbrel *N hudsonius* to the area. The diagnostic bristles to its thighs can be difficult

217 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, juvenile, Henderson Island, Pitcairn Islands, 7 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note uniformly fresh plumage. Rump colour varies from pale buff to rich cinnamon (cf plate 219). **218** Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, juvenile, Henderson Island, Pitcairn Islands, 7 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Cf other juvenile in plate 220 to show variation in overall plumage saturation.

219 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, second calendar-year, Oeno Island, Pitcairn Islands, 10 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note relatively fresh plumage (versus worn adult at this season), but not uniformly fresh aspect of juvenile (cf plate 217). **220** Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, juvenile, Henderson Island, Pitcairn Islands, 7 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Cf other juvenile in plate 218 to show variation in overall plumage saturation.

221 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, second calendar-year, Henderson Island, Pitcairn Islands, 7 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note overall fresh plumage (cf plate 215-216 showing adult-type birds) but retained juvenile outermost primary.

to see in the field but surprisingly easy on photographs.

The 'field guide' image of Bristle-thighed Curlew is, not surprisingly, usually based on spring/summer birds as seen on the breeding grounds in Alaska. An observer seeing the species on the non-breeding grounds is likely to encounter a lot more plumage variation. In September, some adults are in worn and overall dull plumage – looking rather similar to a worn-plumaged Hudsonian Whimbrel. Juveniles, however, as one would expect, are in fresh and bright plumage, with larger and bolder pale markings on their upperparts than a typical whimbrel, along with plainer flanks that lack the distinct dark barring typical of whimbrels, especially Hudsonian (plate 217-218, 220).

Bristle-thighed Curlews typically remain on the non-breeding grounds in their first and second summer, and some even stay through the third summer. Their complex wing moults during these periods are not fully understood (Marks 1993, Pyle 1999). The first wing moult (preformative; cf Pyle 1999) occurs during March-September of the second calendar-year, and such birds are in fairly fresh plumage in autumn (plate 213-214, 219, 221). They differ from juveniles in having stronger wear to the scapulars, upperwing-coverts and tertials, all of which lack the uniform-generation as-

222 Bristle-thighed Curlew / Zuidzeewulp *Numenius tahitiensis*, adult-type, Oeno Island, Pitcairn Islands, 10 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Note very heavily worn plumage with some fresher scapulars apparent (cf plate 213-214 and 221 showing second calendar-year birds); extreme wear may indicate oversummering bird.

pect typical of juvenile sandpipers. Most of the second calendar-year birds have completed the wing moult but a few retain the outermost juvenile primary, having become worn, something also found by Marks (1993) and perhaps occurring more often in poor food years (eg, plate 221). Some second calendar-year birds show a slight contrast between older (formative) upperwing-coverts and fresher (first-summer (first-alternate) or second-winter (second-basic) scapulars.

After the first moult and plumage cycle, wing moult is largely synchronized with the adult schedule and ageing can be difficult; thus worn and heavily worn birds in September represent third calendar-year and older birds (plate 215-216). Perhaps, the most heavily worn birds are those that remain in strongly sunny latitudes through their second summer, and some attain new and fresher scapulars (eg, plate 222). Marks (1993) reported that the next (second-summer or second-prebasic) and subsequent wing moult began in late July-early October, although no evidence of active wing moult was observed by Steve Howell on any of c 50 early to mid-September curlews, perhaps related to a longer migration distance than for the Hawaiian birds studied by Marks (1993).

As well as plumage variation, there can be striking differences in bill length and curvature, even of adult-type birds (cf plate 216), perhaps reflecting a subdivision of preferred feeding niches within a relatively small island ecosystem.

Tuamotu Sandpiper

Tuamotu Sandpiper is the sole survivor of the genus *Prosobonia* (Cibois et al 2012). Previously, the species occurred on many atolls (or motu) in the Tuamotu archipelago but recent evidence for breeding populations was found for only four of them, namely on the atolls Morane, Reitoru, Tahanea and Tenararo (Tibbits et al 2003, Pierce & Blanvillain 2004). As recent as 2011, however, a breeding population was discovered on a fifth atoll, Raraka (Kape 2011), which gives hope for yet more populations on atolls that remain unvisited by researchers. It is telling that breeding populations only occur on motu that are free of Black Rats *Rattus rattus* (Tibbits et al 2003).

The species has at least three to four types of vocalizations (Miller et al 2003). Two types are only uttered by adult individuals and seemed to act as contact calls (Miller et al 2003). The third call type has been recorded for a family group and may have been uttered by juvenile birds (Miller et

223 Tuamotu Sandpipers / Tuamotustrandlopers *Prosobonia parvirostris*, pale and dark morph, Tenararo Atoll, French Polynesia, 12 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*

224-225 Tuamotu Sandpiper / Tuamotustrandloper *Prosobonia parvirostris*, Morane Atoll, French Polynesia, 14 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*

226 Tuamotu Sandpiper / Tuamotustrandloper *Prosobonia parvirostris*, dark morph, Morane Atoll, French Polynesia, 14 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*

227 Tuamotu Sandpiper / Tuamotustrandloper *Prosobonia parvirostris*, pale morph, Tenararo Atoll, French Polynesia, 12 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*

228-229 Tuamotu Sandpiper / Tuamotustrandloper *Prosobonia parvirostris*, Tenararo Atoll, French Polynesia, 12 September 2013 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Foraging on nectar in tree.

al 2003). A fourth call resembles the flight call of Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* and is uttered by an individual in some sort of display (Wijpkema & Wijpkema 1997). The first two call types have been ascribed previously to the species by many authors (Miller et al 2003) and may have resulted in its local name *titi* (Emory 1947).

Tuamotu Sandpipers are considered to exhibit two plumage morphs, and most birds can be placed in either the darker, browner morph with a barred breast, or a paler, buffier morph with a spotted breast (Wijpkema & Wijpkema 1997). The darker birds usually have darker, greyish-olive legs, whereas the paler typically have paler, olive-green legs (plate 223). The plumage variation, combined with this endearing little bird's seemingly shape-shifting qualities (sometimes it looks like a wren, then a tapaculo or a chicken!), makes it sometimes hard to believe that only a single species is involved!

Recent studies revealed some aspects of the ecology of this remarkable shorebird (Burle et al 2009). It is a monogamous species in which pairs defend small territories (Burle et al 2009). In fact, the observed territories are the smallest recorded for any territorial shorebird. During September, birds were mostly found in ones and twos, occasionally three birds together, and no clear evidence of breeding was detected. Tuamotu Sandpiper feeds on the ground, from the open beach to the forest understory but, surprisingly, it also appears to be an arboreal, nectar-feeding shorebird (Burle et al 2009), feeding in trees and bushes, as high up as flower stalks in the crowns of coconut palms (plate 228-229). Often, one or two sandpipers will fly down from the trees to 'greet' an observer, uttering a nasal, scolding *yip-yip, yip-yip-yip* call that they give persistently as they walk fearlessly up to one's feet! They have thus adapted to all island habitats, even more so than Bristle-thighed Curlew.

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Trends in systematics

Taxonomy of 'horned larks'

The distinctive 'horned larks' *Eremophila* are usually treated as two species: the monotypic Temminck's Lark *E bilopha* (hereafter *bilopha*) breeding in the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East (from Mauritania in the west to central Iraq in the east) and the widespread Horned Lark *E alpestris*, for which over 40 subspecies have been described (eg, del Hoyo et al 2004). In the Palearctic region, Horned Lark has a rather disjunct breeding distribution, including the Arctic tundra, Asian steppes and Atlas mountains and mountain ranges from south-eastern Europe to China. In the Nearctic region, it occurs pretty much continuously in suitable habitat from the Arctic south to Mexico. A highly isolated population (*peregrina*) breeds in the drier parts of the Altiplano Cundiboyacense near Bogotá in Colombia. This little-known taxon (Colombian Horned Lark) is very rarely seen and must rank as the rarest of all horned larks; it is probably (strongly) endangered (Valencia & Armenteras 2004, Macana & Zuluaga-Bonilla 2006, Botía-Becerra & Echeverry-Galvis 2010; Trevor Ellery in litt). Transatlantic vagrancy of *alpestris* from north-eastern Canada may occur, with possible or probable records in England, Iceland and Ireland, which stimulated European birders to look at distinguishing features between horned lark taxa (Garner 1999, Pétursson & Ólafsson 1999, Small 2001, 2002).

A few groupings within the Horned Lark have been suggested. The southern taxa with masks connected to the breast-band occurring in the Balkans and the mountains in south-western Asia and Central Asia have been noted as a group separate from all other taxa (eg, Cramp 1988).

Genetic differences

Recently, genetic differences within *Eremophila* were studied (Drovetski et al 2014, which also see for a distribution map of the sampled taxa: http://tinyurl.com/oamuchp). In total, 291 samples from a wide range of locations were tested, although coverage in Central Asia for taxa other than *brandti* was scant. Both mitochondrial DNA

230 Shore Lark / Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila flava*, De Koog, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 11 October 2010 *(René Pop/The Sound Approach)*

231 Temminck's Larks / Temmincks Strandleeuweriken *Eremophila bilopha*, Gleb Jdiane, Dhakla, Oued Ad-Deheb, Western Sahara, Morocco, 12 January 2012 *(Arnoud B van den Berg/The Sound Approach)* **232** Colombian Horned Lark / Colombiaanse Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila alpestris peregrina*, Vereda Fute, Cundinamarca, Colombia, 3 February 2006 *(Maria Angela Echeverry-Galvis)* **233** Colombian Horned Lark / Colombiaanse Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila alpestris peregrina*, Tominé, Cundinamarca, Colombia, 2000 *(Thomas McNish)*

(mtDNA) and two types of nuclear DNA were investigated (Drovetski et al 2014). The mtDNA analysis had a surprise in store: the Tibetan form *elwesi* turned out to be the sister group to all other horned larks, split off c 1.5 million years ago (mya). The remaining *Eremophila* split into three groups c 1 mya: ***1*** Temminck's Lark; ***2*** Atlas Horned Lark and the Caucasian *penicillata* group; and ***3*** the remaining Holarctic forms. The latter group could be divided into the tundra-breeding Shore Lark (*flava*), the steppe-dwelling *brandti* and American Horned Lark (*alpestris* group). In American Horned Lark, five mtDNA clades were identified. Four of these were geographically restricted, while one was widespread – and none were linked to single subspecies. It seems likely that the understudied Colombian *peregrina* would be a sixth New World clade. The nuclear DNA was less conclusive: a rather close-knit *atlas/bilopha/penicillata* group could be detected, whereas the other investigated taxa were less defined.

Drovetski et al (2014) proposed to treat the horned larks not as two but as seven species, as they appear to represent independent evolutionary units: *elwesi* (or possibly *longirostris*), *bilopha*, *atlas*, *penicillata*, *brandti*, *flava* and *alpestris* (table 1). With regard to the New World taxa, they announced that more research was required to elucidate their evolutionary history. It is clear from their data that this history is relatively short. This is supported by another recent study, where the joint ancestor of all Horned Larks of western North

TABLE 1 Species of 'horned larks' *Eremophila* following Drovetski et al (2014)

Himalayan Horned Lark / Himalayastrandleeuwerik *Eremophila elwesi*
Temminck's Lark / Temmincks Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila bilopha*
Atlas Horned Lark / Atlasstrandleeuwerik *Eremophila atlas*
Caucasian Horned lark / Kaukasische Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila penicillata*
Steppe Horned Lark / Steppestrandleeuwerik *Eremophila brandti*
Shore Lark / Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila flava*
American Horned Lark / Amerikaanse Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila alpestris*

America lived only 250 000 years ago (Mason 2014). However, what they did not indicate is if these 'new' species have any distinguishing field marks. The songs and calls of horned larks sound rather similar; Chappuis (2000) found that, based on song, *bilopha* should not be treated as a separate species. Maybe, an in-depth analysis of the calls could yield some different insights.

Morphology

To study morphological characters, I compared photographs of summer-plumage males of many taxa as a first step. Most images were found on a wide range of internet sites, with only images for which a location was mentioned considered. For the Himalayan taxa, often only the region was mentioned, which was insufficient for determining the correct taxon. I tried to find multiple photographs for each described subspecies (a list with links to all studied photographs can be viewed at www.dutchbirding.nl or can by requested from the author, see address below). Some of the consulted articles also contained helpful illustrations.

I found that several striking features did not turn out to be helpful: the colour of the supercilium, cheeks and throat (white to yellow), general plumage tone (pinkish brown to grey) and mantle pattern (uniform, streaked or spotted). One feature which is quite consistent among related taxa is the amount and distribution of black on the face and throat. Also, the colour of neck, flanks and shoulders turned out to show similarities within groups of related taxa. Three groups are readily distinguished from the other groups.

Bilopha is very distinctive. It has a broad black forehead and a broad black mask not touching the black breast-band. Otherwise, it has uniform sandy upperparts, flanks and wings.

Likewise, North-African *atlas* shows a broad black forehead and broad black mask not touching the breast-band, or just connecting to the pointed centre of the breast-band (cf van den Berg 2005). The reddish nape contrasts sharply with the rather uniform greyish upperparts, flanks and wings. Although there is no real need to learn these features, given its isolated distribution, it is a highly distinctive taxon.

The Caucasian group (*albigula*, *balcanica*, *bicornis*, *penicillata* and the relatively recently described but not generally accepted *kumerloevei* (Roselaar 1995, Kirwan 2006)) is readily distinguished from all other taxa by the broad black mask obviously connected to the black breast-band. The black above the bill is rather narrow. Although not as obvious as in *atlas*, most taxa in this group show a contrast between the pink-to-orange nape and the greyish upperparts, flanks and rather uniform wings, except for *bicornis*, which is almost uniformly pink above.

The remaining taxa posed some interesting challenges. First, how could the bewildering variation in Nearctic *alpestris* group be captured? At first glance, the differences between these birds are larger than between *bilopha* and *flava*... Second, Drovetski et al (2014) did not investigate the birds from the Himalayas and Tibet so their relationships could not be resolved. Finding salient plumage features could be a first pointer to unravel these.

As it turns out, the Nearctic subspecies (I compared at least 19 taxa, although I did not find good material for most Mexican taxa) indeed show a few constant features. First of all, the black mask does not touch the breast-band. Furthermore, the black above the bill is narrow. In all taxa, the pink-to-rufous colour of the nape is also present on the flanks (often forming an obvious incomplete breast-band), on the uppertail-coverts and most prominently on the scapulars, contrasting with the remainder of the wing and mantle. The face colour varies from white to yellow. Some taxa (such as Californian *merrilli* and Gulf Coast *gireaudi*) also have a yellow upper belly, while the threatened Pacific *strigata* even has completely yellow underparts (see also Drovetski et al 2005). Interestingly, Colombian *peregrina* does not appear to completely match this pattern, as it has a reddish nape and reddish scapulars but dark brown flanks. On the other hand, *flava* fits so well within the standard pattern found for the Nearctic *alpestris* group that it is best treated as part of this group, as already indicated by the DNA results.

All birds from Central Asia east of the *penicillata* group show black masks not touching the breast-band. The steppe taxon *brandti* could be expected to resemble the allied *alpestris/flava* group. It is a

234 Atlas Horned Lark / Atlasstrandleeuwerik *Eremophila atlas*, Oukaimeden, Western High Atlas, Morocco, 26 March 2009 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

235 Temminck's Lark / Temmincks Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila bilopha*, Goulimine, Lower Draa, Morocco, 30 January 2013 *(Arnoud B van den Berg/The Sound Approach)*

236 Caucasian Horned Lark / Kaukasische Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila penicillata*, Kazbegi, Georgia, 26 June 2005 *(René Pop/The Sound Approach)*

237 Caucasian Horned Lark / Kaukasische Strandleeuwerik *Eremophila penicillata*, Aragats, Armenia, 13 May 2011 *(René Pop/The Sound Approach)*

TABLE 2 Groups within 'horned larks' *Eremophila* based on male plumage characteristics. For each taxon, following data are indicated: ***1*** availability of DNA; ***2*** amount of black on forehead; ***3*** attachment of mask to breast-band; and ***4*** colour differences between nape (N), scapulars (S), flank (F) and mantle (M): = no difference, ~ negligible difference (or hard to judge), ≠ obvious contrast**.**

	DNA	**Black on forehead**	**Mask vs breast-band**	**Nape/scapulars/flank/mantle**
elwesi	yes	broad	loose	N = S ≠ F = M
western Chinese mountains	no	broad	loose	N = S = F ≠ M
Indian Himalayas	no	variable	loose	N ~ S ≠ F = M
penicillata group	yes	narrow	attached	N ≠ S = F = M*
bilopha	yes	broad	loose	N = S = F = M
atlas	yes	broad	loose/narrowly attached	N ≠ S = F = M
alpestris group, *flava*, *brandti*	yes	narrow	loose	N = S = F ≠ M
peregrina	no	narrow	loose	N = S ≠ F ≠ M

*in *bicornis* nape = mantle

rather plain and pinkish taxon but, on good photographs, the colour pattern indeed matches. Also, the black forehead is narrow as in the *alpestris*/*flava* group.

The remaining Central Asian taxa are all large with pale faces (Small 2001). Two taxa with long bills that at first glance resemble *brandti* in overall coloration occur to the north and south of the Tibetan Plateau: *nigrifrons* in Qinghai, China, and *longirostris* in the Indian Himalayas. The first shows a broad black forehead; in *longirostris* the width varies. The flanks of *longirostris* are more orange coloured than the nape. In Ladakh, India, the stubby-billed taxon *argalea* shows a similar plumage pattern as *longirostris*. It is a drawback that none of these taxa were sampled, because bill shape differences could indicate separate lineages (eg, Maghreb Lark *Galerida longirostris* and Crested Lark *G cristata*, which most obviously differ in bill length, have been split supported by genetic

238 Steppe Horned Lark / Steppestrandleeuwerik *Eremophila brandti*, Gun Galuut, Mongolia, 20 May 2008
(René Pop/The Sound Approach)

studies (Guillaumet et al 2005, 2006)).

Birds from China (Tibet and Sichuan) and India (Sikkim) have short, rather fine bills: all show a broad black forehead. Birds from Tibet and Sikkim (*elwesi*) show a contrast between the dark pinkish nape/rump and orange-brown flanks/upperparts. The two birds used in Drovetski et al (2014) were from central Tibet. In Sichuan, China (*khamensis* or *elwesi*?), the plumage is more uniform pinkish overall with no obvious contrast between nape and flank colour. A bird from Xinjiang, China (either *przewalskii* or *teleschowi*), shows contrasting scapulars like *brandti* but also a relatively broad black forehead, suggesting it could belong with the Tibetan group. Note that, originally, *khamensis* was described as a subspecies of *elwesi* and *przewalskii* as a subspecies of *brandti* (Dickinson et al 2001). A summary of the features is given in table 2.

Conclusions

The suggested split of Horned Lark into six species, in addition to Temminck's Lark, is supported by plumage details for at least three taxa (Caucasian, Atlas and Himalayan Horned Lark). This is supported by the large genetic differences between these three taxa and the remaining *flava* taxa, which are at least as big as those between Temminck's and *flava*. Steppe Horned Lark (*brandti*), Shore Lark (*flava*) and American Horned Lark (*alpestris*) appear to be very similar, which is in agreement with the close relationship indicated by genetic data. Given the scarcity of material (both genetic, acoustic and photographic), anyone travelling to Central Asia would do well to take photographs and sound-recordings of the local horned larks… and to collect some faeces or lost feathers!

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CDNA-mededelingen

Recente CDNA-besluiten Op zaterdag 11 januari 2014 hield de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) haar wintervergadering. Hierop is Sander Bot als CDNA-lid geïnstalleerd. Hij is de opvolger van Dick Groenendijk die na twee volle termijnen afscheid heeft genomen (Nils van Duivendijk heeft al eerder de rol van Dick als voorzitter overgenomen). Dick is hartelijk bedankt voor zijn bewezen diensten. In augustus 2014 zal Arend Wassink na twee volle termijnen afzwaaien. Als opvolger is Ies Meulmeester benaderd. Hij zal op de volgende vergadering (in de zomer van 2014) worden geïnstalleerd.

De Westelijke Rosse Waaierstaart *Cercotrichas galactotes galactotes* bij Camperduin, Noord-Holland, op 25-27 september 2013 (cf Dutch Birding 35: 380384, 2013) is als nieuwe soort (en ondersoort) voor Nederland bekrachtigd.

De Kumliens Meeuw *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* van Terschelling, Friesland, op 30 januari 2005 is opnieuw bekeken om te bepalen of het geval moet herrouleren. De conclusie is dat er op de foto's diagnostische kenmerken zichtbaar zijn en dat het geval dus niet wordt herzien.

Naar aanleiding van een recent verschenen artikel van Lars Svensson (Br Birds 106: 651-668, 2013) over taxonomie en determinatie van baardgrasmussen (Westelijke Baardgrasmus *S inornata* (inclusief *iberiae*), Balkanbaardgrasmus *S cantillans* (inclusief *albistriata*) en Moltoni's Baardgrasmus *S subalpina*; cf Dutch Birding 36: 40-42, 2014)) heeft de CDNA besloten alle gevallen te laten herrouleren. Tevens gaan alle gevallen van Provençaalse Grasmus *S undata* herrouleren om te beoordelen welke op ondersoort zijn te aanvaarden. Op basis van een recent artikel over de taxonomie van braamsluipers (ondersoorten van Braamsluiper *S curruca* en Humes Braamsluiper *S althaea*) zullen gevallen waarvan DNA beschikbaar is (opnieuw) in roulatie gaan (Mol Phylogenet Evol 67: 72-85, 2013; cf Dutch Birding 36: 40-42, 2014).

Vanwege de hoge aantallen Grote Kruisbekken *Loxia pytyopsittacus* in het najaar van 2013 en de winter van 2013/14 is overwogen om de criteria voor deze periode te versoepelen. Besloten is om dat niet te doen en waarnemers wordt gevraagd om waarnemingen met een zo uitgebreid mogelijke documentatie in te dienen.

De CDNA onderzoekt of een recent gepubliceerde methode (http://tinyurl.com/pryvh9e) om boompiepers *Anthus trivialis/hodgsoni* op geluid te determineren dermate betrouwbaar is dat deze door de CDNA kan worden gebruikt.

Er is gesproken hoe om te gaan met elders geherintroduceerde soorten. Voorbeelden zijn Lammergier *Gypaetus barbatus* (meerdere gevallen van projectvogels uit de Alpen) en Heremietibis *Geronticus eremita* (twee vogels in Groningen in de winter van 2013/14 uit een herintroductieprogramma in Oostenrijk). De CDNA heeft besloten om hier vooralsnog geen beleid op te maken.

De CDNA zal terughoudend om blijven gaan met 'social media'. Wel zullen er nieuwsberichten via de Dutch Birding-site verspreid gaan worden. Deze berichten kunnen dan ook via de Twitter-account van Dutch Avifauna worden verspreid. Willem van Rijswijk & Nils van Duivendijk

Verzoek inzake baardgrasmussen Nieuwe inzichten in taxonomie en herkenning van de baardgrasmusgroep (Moltoni's Baardgrasmus *Sylvia subalpina*, Westelijke Baardgrasmus *S inornata* en Balkanbaardgrasmus *S cantillans*) maken een herziening van alle gevallen door de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) noodzakelijk. Het is van essentieel belang om zoveel mogelijk foto's, geluidsopnamen en gedetailleerde beschrijvingen bij deze nieuwe beoordelingen te betrekken, dus bijvoorbeeld ook foto's die men aanvankelijk te slecht achtte maar wel belangrijke kenmerken kunnen tonen. Daarom wordt men verzocht alle documentatie van baardgrasmussen in te dienen en te zenden aan: Arend Wassink, Postweg 64, 1795 JR De Cocksdorp (0222-311306, 06-12125864, arendwassink@kpnmail.nl).

WP reports

This review lists rare and interesting birds reported in the Western Palearctic mainly from **late March to mid-May 2014**. The reports are largely unchecked and their publication here does not imply future acceptance by a rarities committee. Observers are requested to submit their records to each country's rarities committee. Corrections are welcome and will be published.

GEESE TO DUCKS In south-western Morocco, three **Dark-bellied Brents** *Branta bernicla* were seen at Khnifiss on 21 April. A male **Pacific Eider** *Somateria mollissima v-nigrum* at Varanger, Finnmark, on 19-20 February and on a few days in March until at least 18 April was the first for Norway and the WP. In Iceland, the adult male **American White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi deglandi* at Njarðvík from 20 December 2013 stayed into March and a second calendar-year was at Kolgrafafjörður from 28 February to at least 19 April. In Sweden, an **Asian White-winged Scoter** *M d stejnegeri* flew past Utlängan, Blekinge, on 5 May and an adult male **American Scoter** *M americana* past Ottenby, Öland, on 13 April. For its 10th consecutive winter, the adult male

239 Steppe Eagle / Steppearend *Aquila nipalensis*, third calendar-year, Großkrut, Niederösterreich, Austria, 6 May 2014 *(Leander Khil)*

240-241 Wahlberg's Eagle / Wahlbergs Arend *Aquila wahlbergi*, juvenile, Ras Shuqeir, Eastern Desert, Egypt, 3 May 2013 *(Ahmed Waheed)*

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* remained into May at Barendrecht, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands; a female was present at Hellegatsplaten, Zuid-Holland, from 8 May. The female **Hooded Merganser** *Lophodytes cucullatus* at Hrauntúnstjörn, Reykjavík, Iceland, from 28 January stayed until 3 April. The first **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* for Iceland was a male at Höfn, on 6 May. Male **Baikal Teals** *Anas formosa* were present, eg, at Fen Drayton Lakes, Cambridgeshire, England, from mid-March into May and at Woumen, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, from 30 March to 18 April. A male **Falcated Duck** *A falcata* at Västerstadsviken, Öland, on 16 May was the third for Sweden (after records in 1853 and 1916, both placed in category D). A male **American Wigeon** *A americana* at Wieleckie lake, Wielkopolska, on 22 March was (only) the third for Poland. In Ireland, the long-staying **American Black Duck** *A rubripes* on Achill Island, Mayo, remained through April.

FLAMINGOS TO SWIFTS An adult **Lesser Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus minor* photographed at Kulu, Turkey, on 26 April may have been a returning individual. In Spain, up to seven were reported during April. Long-staying **Pied-billed Grebes** *Podilymbus podiceps* were at Saint-Martin-de-Crau, Bouches-du-Rhône, France, from July 2012 through April; on Achill Island, Mayo, from 16 April after last being seen on November 2013; on North Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, from 6 December 2013 until 19 April; and at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, Azores, through mid-April. Others were at Rutland Water, Leicestershire, England, on 9-10 April and at Loch Thom, Clyde, Scotland, on 20-29 April. A **Holboell's Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena holbollii* was found dead on Heymaey, Iceland, on 3 February. The **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis meena* at Uusikaupunki, Finland, from 7 January stayed until at least 3 April. A female **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* at Meladia on 12 May and at Faneromeni on 14 May was the second for Lesvos. A **Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* over Kvismaren, Örebro, on 10-11 May was the fifth for Sweden.

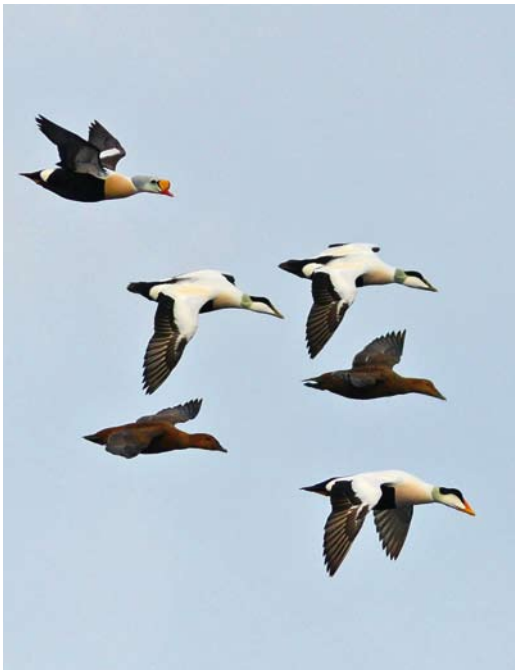
RAILS TO BUSTARDS A **Sora** *Porzana carolina* at Lower Moors, St Mary's, Scilly, England, on 3-10 April was most likely the same as the one here on 19 October 2013 and 2-3 February. In France, 14 **Little Crakes** *P parva* were noted in March-April, mostly in the south-east. In Malta, an adult **Baillon's Crake** *P pusilla* was present at Ghadira on 28-30 March. The sixth **American Coot** *Fulica americana* for Britain at Loch Flemington, Highland, Scotland, from 5 January stayed until 14 April. In the Azores, the one at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, was still present in mid-April. On 27 April, a **Sandhill Crane** *Grus canadensis* was migrating north over Fehmarn, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, and present at Sörsalbo and Västerfärnebo, Västmanland, from 29 April to 5 May, being the first for Sweden. In Baluchestan, Pakistan, 2000 wintering **Macqueen's Bustards** *Chlamydotis macqueenii* (2% of the world population) were shot by prince Fahd bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz al Saud, who had obtained a permit to shoot 100.

LOONS TO TUBENOSES On 5 April, a **Pacific Loon** *Gavia pacifica* turned up at Kilcolgan Point, Tawin Island, Galway, Ireland. **Black-browed Albatrosses** *Thalassarche melanophris* flew past Punta de la Vaca, Gozón, Asturies, Spain, on 26 March (immature, photographed); Laxe, A Coruña, Spain, on 18 April (adult); and Cap Gris-Nez, Pas-de-Calais, France, on 21 April (northward). Remarkably, a **Leach's Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* picked up, taken into care, ringed and released on Tenerife, Canary Islands, in October 1995 was recaptured in a breeding colony on Bon Portage Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, in August 2009 (Wilson J Orn 126: 166-169, 2014). A **Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis* found dead in a forest on Łazy as a possible raptor victim on 23 March was (only) the sixth for Poland. In the late afternoon of 19 May, the second **Bermuda Petrel** *Pterodroma cahow* for the WP was photographed from the RV Celtic Voyager c 170 nautical miles west-north-west of Slea Head, Kerry, Ireland.

HERONS TO GANNETS On 15 April, a **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* was singing along the Red Sea coast of Wadi Lahami, Egypt, where the species was first found in 24 April 2012 (see Limicola 26: 253-278, 2012, Dutch Birding 35, 336-337, 2013). The first-winter **Green Heron** *Butorides virescens* on São Miguel, Azores, from 24 January stayed to at least late April. On 16 April, two **Goliath Herons** *Ardea goliath* were photographed at the Hamata mangroves, Egypt. On 25 March, two **Intermediate Egrets** *Mesophoyx intermedia* and two **Black Herons** *Egretta ardesiaca* were still present at Barragem de Poilao, Santiago, Cape Verde Islands (they were first noted here in March 2013 and March 2011, respectively; cf Dutch Birding 35: 131, 2013). The two second-year **Northern Bald Ibises** *Geronticus eremita* from the re-introduced colony in Grünau im Almtal, Oberösterreich, Austria, wintering at Pageplas, Stadskanaal, Groningen, the Netherlands, from 24 November 2013 stayed together until 22 April and apart into May. A **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* remained through March at Eilat, Israel.

WADERS Two **Black-winged Stilts** *Himantopus himantopus* at Svete river, Jelgava, on 7 May constituted (only) the second record for Latvia. Four pairs were reportedly breeding in England. In France, **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* were present at Gruissan, Aude, on 6 March and at Tancarville, Seine-Maritime, from 30 April to 3 May. In Germany, one stayed on Fehmarn from 22 April to 1 May. **White-tailed Lapwings** *V leucurus* were present in Hessen, Germany, on 26-29 April and 7 May; at Den Helder, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands, on 26-30 April; at Rohrsee, Baden Württemberg, Germany, on 16 May; in Somme, France, on 3 May; and at Réserve de Bergusté, Saint-Martin-de-Seignanx, Aquitaine, France, from 10 to at least 12 May. The first **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* for Iceland was photographed at Garður on 3 April. A **Killdeer** *C vociferus* photographed at Garðskagi on 20-24 April was the fourth for Iceland. The second **Caspian Plover** *C asiaticus* for Finland was an adult male at Pori on 24 March.

242 Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, Gad Hills, Lachish, Israel, 5 May 2014 *(Ezra Hadad)*
243 Dark Chanting Goshawk / Donkere Zanghavik *Melierax melabates*, Yotvata, Israel, 29 April 2014 *(Steve Arlow)*
244 Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, immature, with Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *G fulvus*, Tarifa, Cádiz, Spain, 16 April 2014 *(Javier Elorriaga)*



245 Pacific Eider / Pacifische Eider *Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*, adult male, with Common Eiders / Eiders *S mollissima* and King Eiders / Koningseiders *S spectabilis*, Vardø, Finnmark, Norway, 21 March 2014 *(Tormod Amundsen)*
246 Goliath Heron / Reuzenreiger *Ardea goliath*, adult, Hamata, Egypt, 16 April 2014 *(Kris De Rouck)*
247 Green Heron / Groene Reiger *Butorides virescens*, second calendar-year, São Miguel, Azores, 16 April 2014 *(Gerbrand Michielsen)*

The first and second for Sweden were males at Mörkö, Södermanland, from 25 March to 8 April (which may have been the same individual as the one in Finland) and on Öland on 20-22 April (which, again, may have been the same individual). In Greece, an adult male was seen at Athens airport on 8 April. In France, an adult summer was photographed in Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône, on 12 April. In the Azores, the long-staying **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* and **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* remained at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, into May. A female **Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* stayed at Wedeler Marsch, Schleswig-Holstein, from 16 May onwards.

AUKS TO TERNS A weakened **Thick-billed Murre** *Uria lomvia* arrived ship-assisted in the harbour of Antwerpen, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, on 13 May and was taken into care; after a successful recovery, it was released at Oostende, West-Vlaanderen, on 16 May. An adult **Slender-billed Gull** *Chroicocephalus genei* photographed at Goniądz, Biebrza National Park, on 4 May was the fifth for Poland; the first was in 1998. An adult **Grey-headed Gull** *C cirrocephalus* photographed at Pinto dump, Madrid, on 23-29 March was the fourth for Spain. A second-year **Laughing Gull** *Larus atricilla* was found at Enseada da Insua, Cabana, Galicia, Spain, on 11 April. In Wales, a **Franklin's Gull** *L pipixcan* was first seen at Wernffrwd, Glamorgan, on 17 April and then at Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, on 23-28 April. Another was seen, eg, on Canna, Highland, on 12 April. The second **Audouin's Gull** *L audouinii* for Hungary was a first-summer at Gyál on 27 April. A first-winter **Pallas's Gull** *L ichthyaetus* at Valencia on 21-22 March was the first for Spain. A near-adult at Seewinkel, Neusiedler See, on 2 April was the fourth for Austria. The second **Cape Gull** *L dominicanus vetula* for Spain was a subadult photographed at Ondarroa, Bizkaia, on 22 April. A first-winter **Caspian Gull** *L cachinnans* photographed at Höfn on 7-13 April was the first for Iceland. The **Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri* in Galway, Ireland, was last reported on 11 April. The regular **Elegant Tern** *S elegans*-type bird on Noirmoutier, Vendée, France, returned for yet another year on 22 April.

RAPTORS In Germany, **Black-winged Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* were reported in Bayern on 18 March and Rheinland-Pfalz on 25 April. On 29 April, one turned up at Film, Uppland, Sweden. A **Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* at Mitla Ranch, Kuwait, on 15 April was later shot. A second calendar-year **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* flying over Uvi on 9 May was the fourth for Estonia. The first **White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus* for Morocco was seen in a flock of **Rüppell's Vultures** *G rueppelli* and **Griffon Vultures** *G fulvus* near Tétouan on 25 May. Earlier in the month, already three Rüppell's Vultures had been seen at Jbel Bouhachem c 40 km south of Tétouan on 10 May and four at Jbel Moussa along the Strait of Gibraltar on 11 May. The first for Israel was a third calendar-year photographed on 5 May. On 6-7 April, an early **Griffon Vulture** spent the night at Zaltbommel, Gelderland, the Netherlands. A **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* in Lappeenranta on 10 May was the second for Finland. An eagle *Aquila* photographed near Ras Shuqeir, c 120 km north of Hurghada, on 3 May 2013 has been identified as a juvenile pale-morph **Wahlberg's Eagle** *A wahlbergi*, the first for the WP (Dick Forsman in litt, Ahmed Waheed in litt). The second **Steppe Eagle** *A nipalensis* for Austria was a third calendar-year at Großkrut, Niederösterreich, from 4 May. On 13 April, an immature **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *A heliaca* turned up on Öland. An adult **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* photographed at Yotvata on 29 April was the second for Israel; the first was in April 1979. A second calendar-year male **Northern Harrier** *Circus hudsonius* was photographed at Portland, Dorset, England, on 21 April. In the Netherlands, a subadult male **Pallid Harrier** *C macrourus* paired with a female Montagu's Harrier *C pygargus* started nesting near Finsterwolde, Groningen, from 25 April. The **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* at Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, from 25 September 2013 stayed until 25 March. The one wintering at Narbonne, Aude, France, was last seen on 30 March. The second documented record of **Atlas Long-legged Buzzard** *B rufinus cirtensis* for Malta concerned one at Majjistral on 16-19 April.

OWLS TO FALCONS Last year's breeding pair of **Eurasian Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum* in Wallonia, Belgium, was seen again on at least 23 March. In northern Oman, three pairs of **Omani Owl** *Strix omanensis* were heard in late April in the same wadi where they were found in February (the three territories found in 2013 were in a different wadi). In Essex, England, a **Snowy Owl** *Bubo scandiacus* was disturbed from the sea wall between East Tilbury and Mucking Bay in the late morning of 24 March. A second-year female stayed on île de Ré, Charente-Maritime, France, until 20 April and this or another individual was seen on Ouessant, Finistère, from 25 April into May. The male on North Uist, Outer Hebrides, was seen again on 10-12 May. In Antalya, Turkey, three nesting pairs of **Anatolian Brown Fish Owls** *B zeylonensis semenowi* were again found along the Manavgat river in mid-May; in total, three young were observed (two were sound-recorded and one had just left the nesthole). The first **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* for Portugal was photographed at Piçarras, Castro Verde, on 4 April, when one also turned up at Antigua, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands. A female **Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* photographed at Westplaat, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, on 31 March, was the seventh for the Netherlands and the first along the North Sea coast. A first-summer male **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* was photographed at Mazée, Namur, Belgium, on 14 May. If accepted, a male **American Kestrel** *F sparverius* flying north-east over c 12 birders on the northern tip of Texel, Noord-Holland, on 19 May will be the first for the Netherlands. In Egypt, two very early **Sooty Falcons** *F concolor* were hunting above the Hamata mangroves on 17 April.

SHRIKES TO BULBULS The first **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* for the Netherlands at Azewijnsche Broek,

248 Common Bulbuls / Grauwe Buulbuuls *Pycnonotus barbatus*, adult and three young, Tarifa, Cádiz, Spain, 20 April 2014 *(Deryk Shaw)*

249 Grey-headed Gull / Grijskopmeeuw *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*, adult, with Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *C ridibundus*, Pinto dump, Madrid, Spain, 29 March 2014 *(Delfín González)*

250 Wallcreeper / Rotskruiper *Tichodroma muraria*, male, Basilique de Cointe, Liège, Liège, Belgium, 21 March 2014 *(Robin Gailly)*

251 Cretzschmar's Bunting / Bruinkeelortolaan *Emberiza caesia*, male, Fair Isle, Shetland, Scotland, 2 May 2014 *(Phil Woollen)*

252 Greater Hoopoe-Lark / Witbandleeuwerik *Alaemon alaudipes*, Comino, Malta, 11 April 2014
(Natalino Fenech)

253 Pallas's Leaf Warbler / Pallas' Boszanger *Phylloscopus proregulus*, Lesvos, Greece, 8 May 2014
(Jeff Hazel)




254 Pallas's Gull / Reuzenzwartkopmeeuw *Larus ichthyaetus*, second-winter, with Black-headed Gull / Kokmeeuw *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Sollana, Albufera de València, València, Spain, 21 March 2014 *(Toni Alcocer)* **255** Cape Gull / Afrikaanse Kelpmeeuw *Larus dominicanus vetula*, adult, Ondarroa, Bizkaia, Spain, 21 April 2014 *(Juan Carlos Andrés)* **256** Sociable Lapwing / Steppekievit *Vanellus gregarius*, Fehmarn, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 26 April 2014 *(Martin Gottschling)* **257** Namaqua Dove / Maskerduif *Oena capensis*, Lesvos, Greece, 15 May 2014 *(Derek Charlton)*

Gelderland, from 18 January stayed until 8 May. A first-summer **Steppe Grey Shrike** *L lahtora pallidirostris* at Maasvlakte from 29 April to 3 May was the third for the Netherlands and the first in spring. An adult female **Masked Shrike** *L nubicus* between Mélida and Santacara, Navarra, on 2-14 April was the third for Spain. Photographs of the first **Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* for Iran near Jask, Hormozgan, on 13 February 2011 were published in Sandgrouse 36: 61-62, 2014. In the Netherlands, a reportedly unringed **Azure Tit** *Cyanistes cyanus* was photographed near Maashorst, Noord-Brabant, on 19 April; one wearing a blue ring was found 250 km to the north near Noordpolderzijl, Groningen, on 29 April. A **Greater Hoopoe-Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* on Comino on 8-13 April was the first for Malta since 1984. A **Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* was present at Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire, England, on 11-13 April. Up to two **Streak-throated Swallows** *Petrochelidon fluvicola* at Jahra Pools on 13-15 April constituted the second record for Kuwait. The second breeding of **Common Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus barbatus* for Europe occurred at Tarifa, Cádiz, Spain, where three fledglings were being fed in early April.

WARBLERS TO STARLINGS A **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* at Meladia on 8 May was the first for Lesvos and the second for Greece. An **Eastern Bonelli's Warbler** *Phylloscopus orientalis* was singing at Newbiggin, Northumberland, England, on 3 May. On Menorca, Balearic Islands, a **Marmora's Warbler** *Sylvia sarda* was trapped on 5 April. In France, a male was found at Le Rove, Bouches-du-Rhône, on 11 April. Interestingly, the first three individuals of the subalpine complex ever recorded in Britain appear to involve three species:

258 American Kestrel / Amerikaanse Torenvalk *Falco sparverius,* male, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 19 May 2014 *(Willem Hartholt)* **259** American Robin / Roodborstlijster *Turdus migratorius*, male, Noordhollands Duinreservaat, Heemskerk, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 27 april 2014 *(Hans Brinks)* **260** White-throated Wagtail / Witkeelkwikstaart *Motacilla cinereocapilla*, second calendar-year male, Kroon's Polders, Vlieland, Friesland, Netherlands, 9 May 2014 *(Sander Lagerveld)* **261** Myrtle Warbler / Mirtezanger *Setophaga coronata*, female, Haroldswick, Unst, Shetland, Scotland, 8 May 2014 *(Roger Riddington)*

the first was a **Moltoni's Warbler** *Sylvia subalpina* on St Kilda, Outer Hebrides, on 13 June 1894, the second an **Eastern Subalpine Warbler** *S cantillans albistriata* on Fair Isle on 6 May 1908, and the third a **Western Subalpine Warbler** *S inornata* on Isle of May on 30 May 1924 (Br Birds 107: 282-285, 2014). On Utsira, Rogaland, Norway, two female **Eastern Subalpine Warbler** were found on 21 April and a male **Western Subalpine Warbler** on 4 May. In France, a male **Eastern Subalpine Warbler** was found in Camargue on 10 April. A male **Sardinian Warbler** *S melanocephala* on Dursey, Cork, from 20 April into May was the third for Ireland. The last-seen **Blyth's Lesser Whitethroat** *S althaea blythi* of the c eight in the Netherlands this autumn/winter was the one at Culemborg, Gelderland, from 11 January to 15 April (cf Dutch Birding 36: 129, 135, 143-145, 2014). Along the Baltic coast at Krynica Morska, Vistula Spit, no less than six **Blyth's Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus dumetorum* were ringed on 18 May (the highest number trapped in one day ever in Poland). In the northern Netherlands, three were singing on 22-25 May and one was trapped. A **Moustached Warbler** *A melanopogon* was singing near Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, from 1 to at least 12 April. A **Wallcreeper** *Tichodroma muraria* was seen at the centre of Liège, Liège, Belgium, on 21 March and had been reported previously around Christmas 2013 and once in February. A **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* was present at El Gouna, Egypt, on 7-8 May.

THRUSHES The 10th **Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus* for Britain and third in spring turned up on Fair Isle, on 13 May (previous ones in spring were also on Fair Isle in early June 1975 and on Fetlar, Shetland, in April-May

262 Caspian Stonechat / Kaspische Roodborsttapuit *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*, adult male, Fair Isle, Shetland, Scotland, 30 April 2014 *(Chris Bromley)*

263 Caspian Stonechat / Kaspische Roodborsttapuit *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*, second calendar-year male, Morups Tånge, Halland, Sweden, 16 April 2014 *(Lasse Olsson)*

264 Masked Shrike / Maskerklauwier *Lanius nubicus*, adult female, Mélida, Navarra, Spain, 13 April 2014 *(Juan Sagardía)*

265 Rosy Starling / Roze Spreeuw *Pastor roseus*, second calendar-year male, El Gouna, Egypt, 7 May 2014 *(Edwin Winkel)*

1998). A second calendar-year male **American Robin** *Turdus migratorius* at Noordhollands Duinreservaat, Heemskerk, Noord-Holland, on 27 April was the first for the Netherlands; it was twitched by 100s of birders. Between 30 March and 5 April, a **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* was seen on Fair Isle. On 16 May, the sixth for Poland and first in spring was ringed at Kuźnica, Hel Peninsula (previous records were in 1995, 2001, 2007, 2010 and 2012). A male **Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* photographed at Neot Semadar, Israel, on 26-29 March was the seventh for Israel. The fourth **Caspian Stonechat** *S maurus hemprichii* for Sweden was a male photographed at Morups Tånge, Halland, on 15-16 April; remarkably, probably the same bird was rediscovered at a distance of c 370 km on Lista, Vest-Agder, Norway, on 19 April. On Fair Isle, a male stayed from 27 April to at least mid-May. An **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* was present at Lötfälten, Sörmland, Sweden, from 31 March to 2 April. If accepted, an **Eastern Black-eared Wheatear** *O melanoleuca* at Westkapelle, Zeeland, on 20-22 May will be the fourth for the Netherlands.

ACCENTORS TO AMERICAN WARBLERS The sixth **Black-throated Accentor** *Prunella atrogularis* for Sweden stayed at Gräsö, Uppland, on at least 20-22 March. In Germany, one was reportedly singing at Radolfzell, Baden-Württemberg, on 24-25 April. An **Alpine Accentor** *P collaris* at Suursadam, Hiiumaa, on 20 April was the second for Estonia. In Germany, up to three were present in Hessen on 10-24 April. On 26 April, one turned up at Holme, Norfolk, England. At Awserd, Western Sahara, Morocco, a **Sudan Golden Sparrow** *Passer luteus* was seen again on 23 April. A male **White-throated Wagtail** *Motacilla cinereocapilla* photographed and sound-recorded on Vlieland, Friesland, on 9 May was the fourth for the Netherlands. In April, 10 male **Black-headed Wagtails** *M feldegg* were seen in France, mostly in the south-east. A group of 13 **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* occurred at Hyères, Var, on 4 March and a total of 14 was reported from other sites in France in March-April. **Paddyfield Pipits** *A rufulus* sound-recorded and photographed in Sistan-Baluchestan at Dargas in the Sarbaz valley and at Keshari on 12 December 2010 have been accepted recently as the first two for Iran (Zool Middle East 60: 183-185, 2014). The first **American Buff-bellied Pipit** *A rubescens rubescens* in summer plumage for Britain was photographed at Cockersand Abbey, Lancashire, England, on 4 May. The first **Trumpeter Finch** *Bucanetes githagineus* for Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, was found on 20 May. The first **Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolnii* for Iceland at Hafnarfjörður from 7 December 2013 stayed until at least 19 April. On 12 April, a **Rock Bunting** *Emberiza cia* was briefly seen at Poupehan, Luxembourg, Belgium. An adult male **Cretzschmar's Bunting** *E caesia* on Fair Isle from 27 April to 2 May was the fifth for Britain. In Scotland, a female-type **Myrtle Warbler** *Setophaga coronata* was first seen on North Ronaldsay, Orkney, on 6 May and then on Unst, Shetland, on 7-8 May.

For a number of reports Birdwatch, British Birds, Go-South Bulletin, Sovon-Nieuws, www.birdguides.com, www.netfugl.dk, www.rarebirdalert.co.uk and www.trektellen.nl were consulted. We wish to thank Mohamed Amezian, Steve Arlow, Riky ten Berge, Richard Bonser, Dušan Brinkhuizen, Rolf Christensen, Dirk Colin, Martin Collinson, Mark Constantine, Mo Constantine, José Luis Copete, Andrea Corso, Kris De Rouck, Klaas van Dijk, Philippe J Dubois (France), Enno Ebels, Lee Evans, Natalino Fenech, Thijs Fijen, Dick Forsman, Tommy Frandsen, Raymond Galea, Geert Groot Koerkamp, Marcello Grussu, Ricard Gutiérrez, Klaus Hubatsch, Zbigniew Kajzer, Leander Khil, Łukasz Ławicki (www.clanga.com), Vincent Legrand, André van Loon, Gerby Michielsen, Dominic Mitchell, Geir Mobakken (Norway), Paul Morton, Killian Mullarney, Gert Ottens, Yoav Perlman, Stuart Piner, Magnus Robb, Luciano Ruggieri, Michael Sammut, Michael Schmitz, Roy Slaterus, Roland van der Vliet, Jorrit Vlot, Peter de Vries, Edwin Winkel, Steven Wytema and Ahmed Waheed for their help in compiling this review.

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Recente meldingen

Dit overzicht van recente meldingen van zeldzame en interessante vogels in Nederland beslaat voornamelijk de periode **maart-april 2014**. De vermelde gevallen zijn merendeels niet geverifieerd en het overzicht is niet volledig. Alle vogelaars die de moeite namen om hun waarnemingen aan ons door te geven worden hartelijk bedankt. Waarnemers van soorten in Nederland die worden beoordeeld door de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) wordt verzocht hun waarnemingen zo spoedig mogelijk in te dienen via www.dutchavifauna.nl.

Na een extreem zachte winter diende de lente zich vroeg aan. Van verscheidene zomervogels werden vroege waarnemingen gedocumenteerd, zoals Blauwborst *Luscinia svecica* (10 maart), Tapuit *Oenanthe oenanthe* (15 maart), Gekraagde Roodstaart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (25 maart), Snor *Locustella luscinioides* (27 maart), Kleine Karekiet *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (30 maart), Sprinkhaanzanger *L naevia* (1 april), Koekoek *Cuculus canorus* (4 april), Nachtegaal *L luscinia* (4 april), Paapje *Saxicola rubetra* (5 april) en Wespendief *Pernis apivorus* (21 april). Op enkele uitzonderingen na was van spectaculaire zichtbare trek nauwelijks sprake.

266 Steppekiekendief / Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*, mannetje, Finsterwolde, Groningen, 13 mei 2014
(Co van der Wardt)

267 Steppekiekendief / Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*, mannetje, Buinerveen, Drenthe, 5 april 2014
(Jan den Hertog)

268 Heremietibis / Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, onvolwassen mannetje, Pageplas, Stadskanaal, Groningen, 14 april 2014 *(Dušan M Brinkhuizen)*

269 Roodkeelduiker / Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*, Eemshaven, Groningen, 30 maart 2014 *(Jan den Hertog)*

270 Ringsnaveleend / Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, mannetje, met Kuifeenden / Tufted Ducks *A fuligula*, mannetjes, Vlaardingen, Zuid-Holland, 20 maart 2014 *(John van der Graaf)* **271** Vale Gier / Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, met Buizerd / Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Rossum, Gelderland, 7 april 2014 *(Co van der Wardt)* **272** Sneeuwuil / Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*, tweede-kalenderjaar vrouwtje, Formerum, Terschelling, Friesland, 20 maart 2014 *(Arie Ouwerkerk)*

EENDEN **Witbuikrotganzen** *Branta hrota* waren schaars, met hooguit enkele 10-tallen. In totaal werden c 20 **Zwarte Rotganzen** *B nigricans* waargenomen, zoals gebruikelijk in de Delta, Zeeland/Zuid-Holland, en het Waddengebied, Friesland/Noord-Holland. Op c 30 plaatsen verspreid over het land werden **Roodhalsganzen** *B ruficollis* gezien. De hoogste aantallen verbleven nog steeds op Texel, Noord-Holland (maximaal acht), en op Ameland, Friesland (maximaal zeven). Alleen in de eerste dagen van maart waren nog redelijke aantallen **Dwergganzen** *Anser erythropus* aanwezig, waaronder 22 bij Strijen, Zuid-Holland, en vijf bij Petten, Noord-Holland, op 1 maart. Langs de Noordzeekust van Terschelling, Friesland, verbleef vanaf eind maart een groep van maximaal 68 **IJseenden** *Clangula hyemalis*. Daarnaast werden 24 langsvliegende exemplaren genoteerd vanaf telposten, waaronder twee op 5 april langs de IJmeerdijk bij Almere, Flevoland. Mannetjes **Brilzeeeend** *Melanitta perspicillata* verbleven tot ten minste 1 maart langs de Noordzeekust van Schiermonnikoog, Friesland, en van 20 maart tot 1 april voor de kust van Ouddorp, Zuid-Holland. Op 11 april was er bovendien een melding vanaf telpost Castricum aan Zee, Noord-Holland. Het mannetje **Buffelkopeend** *Bucephala albeola* was de gehele periode aanwezig op de Gaatkensplas bij Barendrecht, Zuid-Holland. Van c zeven **Witoogeenden** *Aythya nyroca* werden vogels op het Dwingelderveld, Drenthe (gehele periode), en vanaf 26 maart in Amsterdam, Noord-Holland, het meest bezocht. Het terugkerende vrouwtje **Ringsnaveleend** *A collaris* werd tot 20 april af en toe gemeld bij het gehucht Nederland in de Weerribben, Overijssel. Mannetjes lieten zich bewonderen in Zuid-Holland van 9 tot 20 maart bij Vlaardingen, op 28 maart en van 13 tot 15 april bij Zevenhuizen en op 29 en 30 maart in Papendrecht en Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht. Hybriden **Ringsnaveleend x Kuifeend** *A collaris x fuligula* verbleven tot 8 april bij Woerden, Utrecht; op 16 maart bij Staphorst, Overijssel; op 13 februari in Meijendel, Zuid-Holland, en mogelijk dezelfde van 26 februari tot 24 april op de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland. Een vrouwtje **Blauwvleugeltaling** *Anas discors* (of mogelijk een ontsnapte **Kaneeltaling** *A cyanoptera*) bevond zich van 30 maart tot 10 april bij Nieuwkoop, Zuid-Holland. Op 20 maart werd het (ongeringde) mannetje **Siberische Taling** *A formosa* opnieuw gemeld bij Driel, Gelderland. Mannetjes **Amerikaanse Smient** *A americana* verbleven op 8 maart bij Woerden, van 15 tot 21 maart bij Kinderdijk, Zuid-Holland, en van 4 tot 16 april bij de Lepelaarplassen bij Almere. Een recordaantal **Amerikaanse Wintertalingen** *A carolinensis* werd ontdekt. Er waren meldingen van 8 maart tot 2 april op Texel; op 22 maart bij Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht; van 23 maart tot 5 april in De Onlanden, Drenthe; van 29 maart tot 13 april bij Zwolle, Overijssel (met metalen ring); op 31 maart bij Everdingen, Utrecht; van 6 tot 23 april in Polder Hardenhoek, Noord-Brabant (twee op 12 en 13 april); van 10 april tot 1 mei bij Vlaardingen, Zuid-Holland; op 12 april bij Marken, Noord-Holland; op 13 april bij Stadskanaal, Groningen; van 14 tot 25 april bij Breskens, Zeeland; en van 16 tot 30 april bij Azewijn, Gelderland.

GIERZWALUWEN TOT STRANDLOPERS Een **Alpengierzwaluw** *Apus melba* vloog op 19 april over Noordhorn, Groningen. Een 'witte' **Roodkeelduiker** *Gavia stellata*, mogelijk een verder verbleekte 'ino', verbleef van 26 maart tot 9 april in de Eemshaven, Groningen. Het aantal van 191 **Parelduikers** *G arctica* dat bij zeetrektellers in notitieboekjes verdween, was voor deze periode aan de lage kant. **IJsduikers** *G immer* bleven tot 1 maart langs de Brouwerdam, Zeeland/Zuid-Holland, en tot 24 maart bij Heel, Limburg (twee). Andere werden gezien op 13 en 24 maart en 10 april op de Oosterschelde, Zeeland; op 23 en 26 maart weer (of nog) langs de Brouwersdam en op 14 april op de Waddenzee nabij Rottumeroog, Groningen. **Koereigers** *Bubulcus ibis* waren met c 15 exemplaren goed vertegenwoordigd. De twee geringde en gezenderde Oostenrijkse **Heremietibissen** *Geronticus eremita* werden tot in mei gezien in de omgeving van Stadskanaal; na 22 april werden beide vogels van verschillende plekken gemeld. Er werden c 25 **Zwarte Ibissen** *Plegadis falcinellus* waargenomen, waaronder bekende honkvaste exemplaren bij Leidschendam (vier) en Nieuwkoop (twee). Op diverse andere plekken verbleven ook voor langere tijd eenlingen. Een waarneming van een **Griel** *Burhinus oedicnemus* op 26 april bij de Ackerdijkse Plassen, Zuid-Holland, werd pas een dag later doorgegeven. Vanaf april bereikten mooie aantallen **Steltkluten** *Himantopus himantopus* ons land; in totaal ging het om c 100 vogels. Op diverse plekken werden broedpogingen ondernomen. Een **Witstaartkievit** *Vanellus leucurus* liet zich van 26 tot 30 april bewonderen bij Den Helder, Noord-Holland; het betrof het 10e geval en het eerste in april. In de tweede helft van april werden ruim 80 **Morinelplevieren** *Charadrius morinellus* waargenomen, waarvan c 30 langdurig op Texel. Een vroege **Temmincks Strandloper** *Calidris temminckii* werd op 21 maart gefotografeerd bij Westdorpe, Zeeland. Slechts twee **Gestreepte Strandlopers** *C melanotos* werden gezien, op 26 april in De Onlanden en op 26 en 27 april in de Ezumakeeg, Friesland. De enige **Grauwe Franjepoot** *Phalaropus lobatus* van deze periode verbleef van 24 tot 29 april op Texel. Vanaf 12 april werden in totaal c zeven **Poelruiters** *Tringa stagnatilis* waargenomen. **Poelsnippen** *Gallinago media* werden gemeld op 19 april bij Apeldoorn, Gelderland, en op 20 en 21 april bij Middelburg, Zeeland.

ALKEN TOT STERNS De eerste-winter **Zwarte Zeekoet** *Cepphus grylle* van de Brouwersdam werd onregelmatig gemeld tot 26 maart en op 8 maart vloog een exemplaar langs Camperduin, Noord-Holland. Vanaf telposten langs de kust werden 65 **Kleine Jagers** *Stercorarius parasiticus*, één **Middelste Jager** *S pomarinus* en vijf **Grote Jagers** *S skua* gemeld. Een tweede-kalenderjaar **Vorkstaartmeeuw** *Xema sabini* die op 15 maart langs Den Helder vloog, was uitzonderlijk voor de tijd van het jaar. De in Finland geringde tweede-kalenderjaar **Baltische Mantelmeeuw** *Larus fuscus fuscus* die in februari in Noord-Brabant en Zuid-Holland verbleef, werd op 3 maart in Dordrecht, Zuid-Holland, en van 22 maart tot 12 april bij Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht waargenomen. Een op 29 juni 2004 bij Kuhmalati, Pirkanmaa, Finland, ge-

273 Balkanbaardgrasmus / Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, eerste-zomer vrouwtje, Reddingsboothuis, Texel, Noord-Holland, 27 april 2014 *(Eric Menkveld)* **274** Witstuitbarmsijs / Coues's Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*, Het Twiske, Noord-Holland, 29 maart 2014 *(Eric Menkveld)* **275** Ortolaan / Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*, mannetje, Ruigenhoekse Polder, Utrecht, 30 april 2014 *(Rob Halff)* **276** Kuifleeuwerik / Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, Breskens, Zeeland, 5 april 2014 *(Johnny du Burck)* **277** Veldrietzanger / Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, Bergumermeer, Friesland, 13 april 2014 *(Vogelringgroep Bergumermeer)* **278** Brilzee-eend / Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*, adult mannetje, Ouddorp, Zuid-Holland, 29 maart 2014 *(Bas de Bruijn)*

279 Grote Pieper / Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*, Texel, Noord-Holland, 18 april 2014
(Jos van den Berg)

280 Kuifleeuwerik / Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, Haverleij, 's-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant, 5 april 2014
(Roland Wantia)

281 Witstuitbarmsijs / Coues's Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*, Het Twiske, Noord-Holland, 28 maart 2014 *(John van der Graaf)* **282** Witstaartkievit / White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*, De Nollen, Den Helder, Noord-Holland, 28 april 2014 *(Hans Brinks)* **283** Grijskopspecht / Grey-headed Woodpecker *Picus canus*, vrouwtje, Westplaat, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 31 maart 2014 *(Peter Soer)*

kleurringde adult (wit CJJE) bevond zich op 4 april bij Medemblik, Noord-Holland. Er werden nog c 10 **Kleine Burgemeesters** *L glaucoides* waargenomen, waaronder de honkvaste vogel bij IJmuiden, Noord-Holland (tot in mei). Ten minste één onvolwassen **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* verbleef de gehele periode in de (wijde) omgeving van Katwijk, Zuid-Holland. Ook op enkele andere plekken langs de kust werd de soort vastgesteld. In de laatste dagen van april werden op telposten zes langsvliegende **Lachsterns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* genoteerd. Een exemplaar dat op 20 april langs Breskens trok, nam even de tijd om een pul van een Kievit *V vanellus* soldaat te maken. **Witwangsterns** *Chlidonias hybrida* verschenen op 22 april bij Blauwestad, Groningen; op 27 en 28 april in de Brabantse Biesbosch, Noord-Brabant; op 29 april in de Reeuwijkse Plassen, Zuid-Holland; en vanaf 30 april in de Kropswolderbuitenpolder, Groningen.

SPERWERS TOT UILEN Een **Slangenarend** *Circaetus gallicus* die op 18 april bij Grevenbicht, Limburg, over de landsgrens vloog, was de vroegste ooit. Datzelfde gold voor een **Vale Gier** *Gyps fulvus* die de nacht van 6 op 7 april doorbracht bij Kerkdriel, Gelderland, en zich daar 's ochtends door veel vogelaars liet bekijken. Vanaf telposten werden in totaal 2042 **Bruine Kiekendieven** *Circus aeruginosus*, 156 **Blauwe Kiekendieven** *C cyaneus,* 34 **Grauwe Kiekendieven** *C pygargus,* 20 **Zeearenden** *Haliaeetus albicilla*, 105 **Rode Wouwen** *Milvus milvus*, 125 **Zwarte Wouwen** *M migrans*, 27 **Velduilen** *Asio flammeus*, één **Roodpootvalk** *Falco vespertinus*, 294 **Smellekens** *F columbarius* en 201 **Slechtvalken** *F peregrinus* doorgegeven. Van ruim 25 meldingen van **Steppekiekendieven** *C macrourus* in april gingen er 13 gepaard met fotografisch bewijsmateriaal. Slechts een enkeling was twitchbaar: van 4 tot 8 april bij Exlooërveen, Drenthe (subadult mannetje, mogelijk de vogel die hier in 2012 als tweede-kalenderjaar overzomerde); van 25 april tot in mei een derde-kalenderjaar mannetje (gepaard met een vrouwtje Grauwe Kiekendief *C pygargus*) bij Finsterwolde, Groningen; en van 28 april tot 1 mei bij Azewijn. De **Arendbuizerd** *Buteo rufinus* van de Maasvlakte bleef tot ten minste 25 maart en maakte daarmee een verblijf van zes maanden vol. De (overgebleven) **Sneeuwuil** *Bubo scandiacus* bleef tot 15 maart op Vlieland, Friesland, en werd vervolgens van 17 tot 21 maart op Terschelling en op 23 maart op Ameland gemeld.

HOPPEN TOT ZWALUWEN Ongeveer 15 **Hoppen** *Upupa epops* werden doorgegeven, waarvan de meerderheid in de laatste decade van april. De meeste aandacht kregen vogels langs Kamperhoek, Flevoland, op 30 maart; bij Ede, Gelderland, op 22 april; op de zuidpunt van Texel van 26 tot 28 april; en bij Ooststellingwerf, Friesland, van 29 april tot 3 mei. De eerste **Bijeneter** *Merops apiaster* van het jaar vloog op 25 april langs Breskens. Van 26 april tot in mei verbleven drie exemplaren op Texel en op 28 april was er één aanwezig op Schiermonnikoog. Vanaf 1 april werden op 10-tallen plekken doortrekkende **Draaihalzen** *Jynx torquilla* opgemerkt. Onverwacht was de (kortstondige) waarneming (met foto's) van een vrouwtje **Grijskopspecht** *Picus canus* op 31 maart bij de Westplaat bij Oostvoorne, Zuid-Holland; de eerdere zes gevallen waren ver in het binnenland. De **Bruine Klauwier** *Lanius cristatus* van Azewijn bleef tot blijdschap van maandlijsters tot 8 mei op zijn vertrouwde stek. De derde **Steppeklapekster** *L lahtora pallidirostris* voor Nederland (en de eerste in het voorjaar) bevond zich van 29 april tot 3 mei langs de Stuifdijk op de Maasvlakte. Op 19 april werd een **Azuurmees** *Cyanistes cyanus* gefotografeerd bij telpost Brobbelbies-Zuid bij Uden, Noord-Brabant. Indien aanvaard betreft dit een nieuwe soort voor Nederland. Opmerkelijk genoeg werd deze waarneming op de voet gevolgd door een melding van een ontsnapt exemplaar (met blauwe ring) op 29 april langs de Waddendijk bij Noordpolderzijl, Groningen. **Kortteenleeuweriken** *Calandrella brachydactyla* werden op 22 april opgemerkt op de Vliehors op Vlieland (eerste voor dit Waddeneiland), en langs telpost Noordkaap, Groningen. In Haverleij bij 's-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant, bleek toch nog één **Kuifleeuwerik** *Galerida cristata* aanwezig; de laatste waarneming hier kwam uit september 2013. Daarnaast doken op 5 en 28 april exemplaren op bij Breskens. Vanaf 20 april werden c zes langsvliegende **Roodstuitzwaluwen** *Cecropis daurica* opgemerkt, waaronder op 22 april langs telpost Noordkaap en op 25 april langs Breskens en Kamperhoek.

BOSZANGERS TOT WATERSPREEUWEN De zingende **Pallas' Boszanger** *Phylloscopus proregulus* bij Ouwerkerk, Zeeland, werd tot 2 april gehoord en gezien. De overwinterende **Humes Bladkoning** *P humei* in Den Haag, Zuid-Holland, werd voor het laatst op 20 maart gemeld. Een zingende **Bergfluiter** *P bonelli* op 21 april bij Vaals, Limburg, was de vroegste melding ooit. Een handvol **Siberische Tjiftjaffen** *P tristis* werd gemeld, waaronder één tot ten minste 23 maart in Hardinxveld-Giessendam, Zuid-Holland. Een zingende **Iberische Tjiftjaf** *P ibericus* hield zich van 12 tot 15 april op bij begraafplaats Westgaarde in Osdorp, Amsterdam (vorig voorjaar bevond zich een zingend exemplaar op ruim 3 km afstand elders in Osdorp). Een eerste-zomer vrouwtje **Balkanbaardgrasmus** *Sylvia cantillans* verbleef op 26 en 27 april op de noordpunt van Texel. De mogelijke **Humes Braamsluiper** *S althaea* (sensu lato) in Groningen, Groningen, werd voor het laatst op 23 maart gemeld. De **Siberische Braamsluiper** *S a blythi* in Culemborg, Gelderland, bleef tot 15 april. Een **Veldrietzanger** *A agricola* die op 13 april werd geringd bij het Bergumermeer, Friesland, betrof het eerste april-geval. Vier **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* bleven tot 9 maart in Hoofddorp, Noord-Holland, en één tot 4 maart in Hilversumse Meent, Noord-Holland (de in Schotland geringde vogel). Verder waren er meldingen op 4 april in Almere en op 19 april in de Amsterdamse Waterleidingduinen, Noord-Holland. Uit het Geuldal in Zuid-Limburg kwamen in maart enkele meldingen van **Roodbuikwaterspreeuwen** *Cinclus cinclus aquaticus*.

VLIEGENVANGERS TOT GORZEN **Beflijsters** *Turdus torquatus* waren er vroeg bij, met in maart 39 exemplaren

over telposten, tegenover nul tot negen in maart in 2009-2013. In april werd door trektellers een normaal aantal van 483 genoteerd; dat is exclusief een hoog aantal van 110 over Terschelling op 21 april. Spectaculair was de ontdekking van een tweede-kalenderjaar mannetje **Roodborstlijster** *T migratorius* op 27 april in het Noordhollands Duinreservaat bij Heemskerk, Noord-Holland; enkele 100-en vogelaars konden deze nieuwe soort dezelfde dag nog aanschouwen. Een mannetje **Roodsterblauwborst** *L s svecica* werd op 29 april gemeld op de noordpunt van Texel. Door trektellers werden in totaal vier **Grote Piepers** *Anthus richardi*, 25 **Duinpiepers** *A campestris* en twee **Roodkeelpiepers** *A cervinus* opgemerkt. Een **Siberische Boompieper** *A hodgsoni* werd op 11 maart kortstondig gezien bij Maarn, Utrecht. Een **Frater** *Linaria flavirostris* (van 5 tot 17 maart) en een **Europese Kanarie** *Serinus serinus* (van 6 tot 16 maart) in een groep Groenlingen *Chloris chloris* trokken heel wat bekijks bij Pijnacker, Zuid-Holland. Van 22 maart (en mogelijk al 15 maart) tot 2 april verbleef een **Witstuitbarmsijs** *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes* in Het Twiske bij Oostzaan, Noord-Holland; de vogel liet zich bij tijd en wijle goed bekijken door een groot aantal vogelaars. Er werden nog enkele **Grote Kruisbekken** *L pytyopsittacus* waargenomen; op de Hoge Veluwe, Gelderland, werd zelfs een succesvol broedgeval gedocumenteerd. Vanaf telposten werden in april slechts drie overtrekkende **Ortolanen** *Emberiza hortulana* gemeld. De soort is nu zo schaars dat een mannetje dat van 29 april tot 1 mei in de Ruigenhoekse Polder bij Utrecht, Utrecht, verbleef ten minste 150 twitchers op de been bracht. **Dwerggorzen** *E pusilla* werden gefotografeerd op 22 april bij Waddinxveen, Zuid-Holland, en op 27 april op de noordpunt van Texel. Een mannetje **Bruinkopgors** *E bruniceps* dat op 10 april in de Dordtse Biesbosch, Zuid-Holland, werd ontdekt droeg helaas een paarse kwekersring om zijn rechterpoot… Buiten Limburg werd een 10-tal **Grauwe Gorzen** *E calandra* gemeld, waaronder een zingende vanaf 29 april bij Wageningen, Gelderland.

Voor het samenstellen van deze rubriek is dankbaar gebruikgemaakt van de websites dutchbirdalerts.nl, waarneming.nl, trektellen.nl, sovon.nl en lauwersmeer.com.

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DBA-nieuws

Versterking bestuur In de ruim 35 jaren dat de Dutch Birding Association bestaat is de organisatie flink gegroeid. Dat is niet alleen te zien in de geleidelijke verbetering in de kwaliteit van het tijdschrift (Dutch Birding) maar ook in het snel groeiende belang van website en sociale media, waarmee de achterban sneller dan voorheen wordt geïnformeerd en betrokken bij evenementen zoals de Texelweekenden en jaarlijkse Vogeldag.

Deze schaalvergroting heeft het bestuur doen besluiten om versterking te zoeken en we zijn verheugd om te melden dat in Marten Miske die beoogde versterking is gevonden. De appel valt bij Marten niet ver van de boom want hij is niet alleen de zoon van een Groninger vogelaar maar ook de schoonzoon van voormalig redactielid Karel Mauer. Na een kennismakingsperiode heeft hij per 1 april 2014 de functie van secretaris overgenomen van Han Zevenhuizen. Daarnaast zal Marten zich gaan bezighouden met de steeds belangrijker wordende communicatie met andere vogelorganisaties en de (sociale) media. Wij wensen hem veel succes met de invulling van deze voor de Dutch Birding Association belangrijke taak. Arjan van Egmond & bestuur Dutch Birding Association

Dvd-jaaroverzicht 2013 komt er aan! Menigeen zal al hebben gedacht 'waar blijft het dvd-jaaroverzicht?'. Afgelopen jaren was het gebruikelijk dat deze met het tweede nummer van het jaar werd meegestuurd. Dit jaar wordt echter gewerkt aan een speciale uitgave (dubbeldvd) en dat vergt meer tijd dan gebruikelijk. Naast een compleet overzicht van 2013 ontvangen onze begunstigers in Nederland en België namelijk een compilatie van de hoogtepunten van 2004-12. Het betreft een speciale uitgave in het kader van 35 jaar Dutch Birding! Naar verwachting zal deze uitgave met nummer 4 worden meegestuurd.

Vanaf volgend jaar komt er geen dvd-jaaroverzicht meer maar worden videobeelden van recente zeldzaamheden via de website aangeboden. Iedereen die dit jaar filmmateriaal van zeldzame en interessante waarnemingen verkrijgt wordt verzocht om dat zo spoedig mogelijk op te sturen naar Marc Plomp (info@natuurdigitaal.nl). Arjan van Egmond & Marc Plomp

DB Actueel

Azuurmezen zorgen voor commotie Op zaterdag 19 april 2014 stond Gerard van Aalst – zoals al vele jaren en op vele dagen – vanaf de schemering op de telpost Brobbelbies-Zuid in natuurgebied Maashorst bij Uden, Noord-Brabant. Al wekenlang was er behoorlijk weinig trek en het wachten was daarom ook deze dag weer op aardige soorten. Om 07:55 was de eerste leuke soort een vrouwtje Beflijster *Turdus torquatus* en rond 09:20 vloog een luid roepend paartje Slechtvalken *Falco peregrinus* over die gezien hun capriolen het voorjaar in de bol hadden. Rond 10:15 kwam vanuit het zuiden een mees over de telpost gevlogen. Hij viel in bij de bomen achter de telpost. GvA nam aan dat het een van de Pimpelmezen *Cyanistes caeruleus* moest zijn die regelmatig in deze bomenrij zitten. Doordat hij de roep wat vreemd vond klinken (als een Pimpelmees, drielettergrepig, maar scherper en afwijkend genoeg om er aandacht aan te besteden) liep hij naar de vogel toe. Toen hij hem in de kijker had zag hij meteen dat het een overwegend witte mees was. Helaas vloog de vogel meteen weg maar viel toch weer in, in de bomenrij 150 m ten oosten van de telpost. Doordat de staart wat lang leek, dacht GvA aan een Staartmees *Aegithalos caudatus* maar vliegbeeld en geluid klopten niet. Hij vond hem vrij snel weer terug doordat hij ook daar weer ging roepen. In dezelfde boom zat ook een witkoppige Staartmees. Met de verrekijker zag GvA meteen dat het een afwijkende Pimpelmees, een Azuurmees *C cyanus* of een 'Pleskes Mees' (hybride Pimpelmees x Azuurmees) moest zijn. Hij maakte zo snel mogelijk een serie foto's; helaas bleef de mees hoog in de boom zitten. Ondanks de adrenaline besefte hij dat hij hem goed moest bekijken en allerlei kenmerken moest noteren, gedurende c 5 min dat hij hem met de kijker kon bekijken. Omdat GvA nog nooit eerder een afwijkende Pimpelmees, Azuurmees of Pleskes Mees had gezien, had hij alle kenmerken niet exact in zijn hoofd en hij had ook geen vogelboek bij zich. Voorzichtigheidshalve gaf hij hem daarom eerst via de whatsapp-groep van Uden door als mogelijke Pleskes. Door de slechte verbinding met internet bij de waarneemplek (dit is al jaren zo) lukte het niet om een foto door te sturen. Helaas kwam er geen snelle reactie. Omdat hij een dringende afspraak had kon hij niet langer bij de plek blijven en liep hij snel terug naar de auto, terwijl de mees nog steeds in de bomenrij naast de telpost zat. Naast de opvallende roep had GvA in het veld nog de volgende kenmerken waargenomen: een zuiver witte pet, een opvallende grote witte vleugelvlek, bijna witte tertials, zwarte poten (zonder ringen), grote witte zijvlaggen aan de staart en een kleine zwarte snavel (http://waarneming.nl/waarneming/view/83495410).

Bij de auto aangekomen lukte het gelukkig wel om een foto te versturen. Toen pas begonnen de reacties. Toy Jansen belde vrijwel meteen op met de mededeling dat er volgens hem een Azuurmees op de foto stond en hij zou zorgen dat de waarneming op Dutch Bird Alerts zou komen; dat gebeurde uiteindelijk om 11:30. GvA verspreidde ondertussen nog zo veel mogelijk informatie via diverse kanalen en reed naar huis waar hij de korte tijd die er nog was gebruikte om de waarneming, plekinfo en hoogst noodzakelijke informatie in te voeren op www.waarneming.nl. Vanaf 12:00 kwamen vele 10-tallen vogelaars op de melding af en werd de omgeving van de telpost grondig uitgekamd – maar zonder succes. Pas 's avonds was GvA in de gelegenheid om de foto's en in het veld waargenomen kenmerken in te voeren. De dag erna had hij zijn telpost verplaatst naar de plek waar de Azuurmees de dag ervoor was gezien maar ook toen liet hij zich niet meer zien, ondanks intensief zoeken.

Nadat de foto's op internet waren geplaatst kwam de discussie op gang of Pleskes Mees uitgesloten kon worden. Omdat Pleskes in West-Europa minder zeldzaam is

284-285 Azuurmees / Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus*, Brobbelbies-Zuid, Maashorst, Uden, Noord-Brabant, 19 april 2014 *(Gerard van Aalst)*

286 Roodborstlijster / American Robin *Turdus migratorius*, eerste-zomer mannetje, Noordhollands Duinreservaat, Heemskerk, Noord-Holland, 27 april 2014 *(Lonnie Bregman)*

287 Roodborstlijster / American Robin *Turdus migratorius*, eerste-zomer mannetje, Noordhollands Duinreservaat, Heemskerk, Noord-Holland, 27 april 2014 *(Jaap Denee)*

dan een zuivere Azuurmees ligt er een zware bewijslast om Pleskes uit te sluiten (voor een compleet overzicht van gevallen van Azuurmees en Pleskes in Europa, zie Dutch Birding 34: 219-231, 2012). Op basis van de foto's en beschrijving lijken alle kenmerken te kloppen voor Azuurmees maar het verschil kan erg lastig zijn en daarom zal de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) het definitieve oordeel moeten vellen. Indien aanvaard zou het de eerste Azuurmees voor Nederland betreffen. Er zijn wel drie gevallen van Pleskes (november 1968 en twee in november 2007).

Het verhaal nam een wonderlijke wending toen Jacob Bosma op 29 april rond 12:00 op de kwelders ten oosten van Noordpolderzijl, Groningen, in een geïsoleerd plukje van vier bomen een Azuurmees ontdekte; ook hier speelde de opvallende roep een belangrijke rol bij de ontdekking. Hij kon gelijk een aantal foto's maken en gaf de waarneming snel door (http://waarneming.nl/waarneming/view/83903056). Toen de foto eenmaal was verspreid werd geconstateerd dat de vogel aan de rechterpoot een blauw ringetje droeg. Het was dus een escape en vogelaars die al in de auto waren gesprongen voor de rit naar de Groninger Waddenkust konden rechtsomkeert maken. Deze waarneming bevestigt het gegeven dat Azuurmezen niet onbekend zijn in gevangenschap en werpt dus helaas ook een schaduw op de vogel van de Brobbelbies. Gerard van Aalst & Enno B Ebels

Azure Tits On 19 April 2014, an Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus* was observed and photographed by a single observer at Brobbelbies-Zuid, Uden, Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands. The bird was reported to be unringed. Based on the photographs and description, it looked like a pure Azure rather than an Azure x European Blue Tit *C cyanus x caeruleus* ('Pleske's Tit'). It could not be refound after the news had been spread. If accepted, this would be the first record (there have been three records of Pleske's). On 29 April, an Azure Tit wearing a blue ring on its right leg was photographed by a single observer c 220 km to the north near Noordpolderzijl, Groningen, the Netherlands; this bird was considered an escape.

Roodborstlijster bij Heemskerk Ondanks de naweeën van Koningsdag besloot ik (Lonnie Bregman) de volgende ochtend, zondag 27 april 2014, vroeg op te staan om te gaan trektellen bij strandopgang Heemskerk, Noord-Holland. De opbrengst viel tegen, op een Velduil *Asio flammeus* na. Na twee uur tellen in regenachtig weer was de trek wat stilgevallen en ging ik de duinen in om Beflijsters *Turdus torquatus* zoeken. Die waren snel gevonden en toen ik een eindje verder was gelopen zag ik in de bomen langs de Meeuwenweg op grote afstand een vogel invallen. Toen ik mijn kijker erop zette schoot vanwege de rode onderzijde eerst de gedachte Goudvink *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* door mijn hoofd maar vrijwel direct was duidelijk dat het een lijster was. Ik moest meteen aan Roodborstlijster *T migratorius* denken. De andere kenmerken die ik kon zien waren een zwarte kop en bruinachtige rug. Toen dit klopte met het plaatje uit de gids begon de adrenaline pas echt te stromen! Met mijn telescoop leunend op wat takken probeerde ik de vogel beter te bekijken. Hij was inmiddels iets gedraaid waardoor ik een grijze stuit en zwarte staart kon zien. Toen raakte ik hem kwijt. Eigenlijk wees alles op Roodborstlijster maar ik durfde de waarneming nog niet wereldkundig te maken. Omdat de vogel ver weg zat en ik mijn statief niet bij me had, rende ik naar mijn fiets om vervolgens naar de plek te racen. Daar aangekomen besloot ik toch Hans Schekkerman te bellen met de vraag of hij mijn waarneming met een slag om de arm in de regionale whatsapp-groep wilde zetten, aangezien mijn eigen internetbundel op was. Na 20 lange minuten zoeken kwam er een einde aan de onzekerheid en zag ik de vogel plotseling voor me in het topje van een struik zitten! Hij werkte gelukkig mee waardoor ik de tijd had om mijn telescoop op te zetten en hem met mijn mobiele

telefoon te 'phonescopen'. Snel meldde ik de vogel met een foto en de GPS-locatie in meerdere whatsapp-groepen, waarna Jorrit Vlot hem om 10:25 kon doorgeven via Dutch Bird Alerts. De vogel trok op met twee Beflijsters en een mannetje Merel *T merula*, waarbij hij zich vrijwel uitsluitend ophield in topjes van struiken. Hierdoor konden de eerste c 10 vogelaars, allemaal op de fiets uit de directe omgeving, hem bij aankomst direct zien. Om 11:50 ging hij waarschijnlijk op de grond zitten (dat had hij vlak daarvoor ook al even gedaan) en raakte uit beeld. Hij werd pas om 12:40 weer goed gezien door c 50 man, die te voet of op (huur)fietsen de 3-5 km vanaf de ingang van het duingebied hadden overbrugd, om na een paar minuten hoog richting het oosten weg te vliegen. Onverwacht en tot opluchting van velen werd hij een uur later terwijl het nog altijd regende teruggevonden door August van Rijn, c 800 m ten oosten van de oude plek. Gedurende de rest van de dag hebben meer dan 400 vogelaars hem uiteindelijk waargenomen. Er was vaak geduld nodig omdat hij soms meer dan een uur uit beeld was, vermoedelijk foeragerend op de grond of lang stilzittend op een tak tussen bladeren. Ook was voor sommigen de juiste weg moeilijk te vinden, waardoor het lang duurde voor ze de plek bereikten. Dit alles zorgde er dan wel voor dat de ontlading na het terugvinden des te groter was. Tegen zonsondergang bleek hij nog steeds aanwezig maar zoekacties de volgende ochtend waren vergeefs.

Op grond van het kleed werd geconcludeerd dat het een eerste-zomer mannetje betrof; een vrouwtje zou minder egaal gekleurde roodoranje onderdelen vertonen en de lichte toppen aan de dekveren en niet geheel uitgekleurde donkere kop duidden op een onvolwassen exemplaar. Roodborstlijster is een veel voorkomende broedvogel in grote delen van Noord-Amerika en Mexico en is te beschouwen als de Nearctische equivalent van 'onze' Merel, want hij leeft zowel in bossen als dichtbij mensen in tuinen en parken. Het is een trekvogel die afhankelijk van het voedselaanbod grootschalige bewegingen kan laten zien. Transatlantische gevallen zijn bekend van de Azoren (2), Brittannië (27, waaronder een aantal overwinterende), Ierland (13) en IJsland (6). Op het Europese vasteland zijn er gevallen in België (1), Denemarken (1), Duitsland (6), Finland (1), Noorwegen (1), Oostenrijk (3), Spanje (1), Tsjechië (1) en Zweden (2, beide in april). Een belangrijk deel van de gevallen van het Europese vasteland stamt uit de 19e eeuw, mogelijk samenhangend met de toen intensieve lijstervangst. Indien aanvaard betreft dit een nieuwe soort voor Nederland. Lonnie Bregman

American Robin On 27 April 2014, a first-summer male American Robin *Turdus migratorius* was discovered in the extensive dune area west of Heemskerk, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands. During the rest of the day, the bird proved mobile and elusive but was eventually seen by more than 400 birders. If accepted, this is the first record for the Netherlands. There are 65 previous records in Europe, of which 48 in the Azores, Britain, Iceland and Ireland combined and 17 in mainland Europe.