Identification of American Herring Gull in a western European context

Pat Lonergan & Killian Mullarney

The first American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus* (hereafter *smithsonianus*) recorded in Europe dates back to November 1937 when a second-winter bird, ringed as a chick on Kent Island, New Brunswick, Canada, in August of the previous year, was caught on a ship 480 km off the Spanish coast (Gross 1940). Nothing was recorded on the appearance of this bird but it is doubtful that the occurrence would have attracted any attention had it not been for the fact that the bird carried a ring. Almost 50 years passed before the next record, a first-winter at Cobh, Cork, south-western Ireland, in November-December 1986 (O'Sullivan & Smiddy 1990). The finder of this bird, Jim Wilson, was sufficiently struck by its unusual appearance to record detailed field notes. It was not until he subsequently visited North America and encountered *smithsonianus* there that he realized the significance of his observation. There followed a remarkable series of records in Ireland in the late winter and spring of 1990 (involving 10 birds, all first-years), which provided many observers with the first real opportunity to study *smithsonianus* alongside its European counterpart (Mullarney 1990). Since then, *smithsonianus* has been recorded almost annually in Ireland (apart from 1993-95), with a total of 42 records up to the end of 2001 (Milne 2003). Of these, four long-staying first-year birds at Cobh and Ballycotton, Cork, from December 2000 (Diggin 2001) provided the best opportunity yet for extended observations of *smithsonianus* in Europe. At least two of these remained throughout 2001 (and were still present in January 2002), constituting the first records of over-summering birds on the European side of the Atlantic. One of these two was present again in the winter of 2002/03 (cf Birding World 16: 119, 2003) the first conclusively identified third-winter bird recorded in Europe.

Outside Ireland, however, there are relatively few records of *smithsonianus*. Surprisingly, there are only 10 records for well-watched Britain where most other North American gull species have been recorded much more frequently than in Ireland. Several reports, however, remain under consideration by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) (Rogers & Rarities Committee 2003) and this, coupled with the observation of several contentious individuals in, for instance, Britain (Ahmad & Elliott 2000, Vinicombe 2000) and the Netherlands (van Duivendijk & Kok 1998), Germany and Norway (Martin Gottschling and Håken Heggland pers comm) certainly suggests that *smithsonianus* is being actively looked for in other parts of Europe. The few records outside Britain and Ireland include four for France (Dubois et al 1995ab, Frémont et al 2000), two for Norway (Solbakken et al 2003), four for Portugal (Moore 1994, de Juana & Comité Ibérico de Rarezas de la SEO 1995, Hoogendoorn et al 2003) and one for Spain (de Juana & Comité Ibérico de Rarezas de la SEO 1995, Álvarez-Balbuena García et al 2000). This clearly hints at the likelihood of regular occurrence of *smithsonianus*, at least along the western seaboard of Europe. The finding of three birds in one weekend during the 5th International Gull meeting in Portugal in 2001 (Hoogendoorn et al 2003) and at least four first-winters in Iceland over a few days in March 2003 (pers obs) are probably good indicators that *smithsonianus* is a regular visitor, at least to certain 'strategic' locations in Europe where up to now they have been largely overlooked. Given the regular occurrence of other Nearctic gulls in Europe during the past c 35 years (Hoogendoorn & Steinhaus 1990, Mitchell & Young 1997), it is difficult to explain the virtual absence, until recently, of records of *smithsonianus*. The sudden surge of records since 1990 may reflect a genuine increase in their occurrence but it seems more likely that the apparent change in the status is largely the result of the dramatically increased interest in 'large-gull' identification in recent years.

Focus

Despite the growing interest in finding *smithsonianus*, comparatively little has been published on its identification in a European context. The aim of this paper is to describe and illustrate what we believe constitute 'identifiable *smithsonianus*' on the European side of the Atlantic and discuss a range of likely pitfalls. The research for

this paper involved five winter visits to the East Coast of the USA (Massachusetts and New York, from mid-January to mid-February) as well as two autumn visits (New Jersey, in mid-September). It is important to bear in mind that most of the photographs of *smithsonianus* shown here are from that area, as even a cursory comparison of *smithsonianus* occurring in different regions of North America suggests there is significant variation in features such as timing and extent of post-juvenile moult and, in adults, wing-tip pattern and tone of grey upperparts. In addition to our North American experience, we have observed at least 18 different *smithsonianus* in Ireland, two in Portugal and four in Iceland (still to be submitted to the Icelandic rarities committee), which has helped greatly in assessing the practical value of various identification features in a European context. While most of our experience of European Herring Gull is in Ireland, involving *L a argenteus* (see the section on taxonomy below), we do see small numbers of *L a argentatus* types in Ireland in the winter months and we both have additional experience of *L a argentatus* in Fennoscandia throughout the year. Observations of Herring Gulls in Iceland in March 2003 provided further useful, albeit somewhat disturbing, experience. Herring Gull is a relatively recent addition to the Icelandic avifauna and the original colonisers, which started to breed between 1920 and 1930 (Gudmundsson 1951), are believed to have derived of *argenteus* stock, rather than *argentatus* (although Snell (1991) argued that the colonisers were in fact *argentatus*). In the course of a six-day visit in March 2003, Killian Mullarney found only one possible *argentatus* (an adult) among the numerous *argenteus*-type adult Herring Gulls, but the first- and second-year birds there included a significantly higher proportion of superficially '*smithsonianus*-like' birds than we have observed in any other part of Europe. To some extent this might be explained by the much higher proportion of hybrids Glaucous *L hyperboreus* x European Herring Gull in Iceland but the appearance of certain birds (plate 18-20) suggested the possibility of genuine *smithsonianus* influence. Is it possible that *smithsonianus*, too has entered the 'Icelandic Herring Gull' gene-pool? The answer to this question will require considerably more investigation than could be attempted in a brief visit, and is beyond the scope of this paper, but it should be borne in mind that Iceland may be a source of confusing *smithsonianus* look-alikes. In spite of the bewildering variation in the appearance of Herring Gulls and apparent hybrids Glaucous x European Herring Gull in Iceland it was possible to confidently identify at least four first-year *smithsonianus* (cf Birding World 16: 120, plate 17, 2003).

We are conscious of the fact that detecting and identifying *smithsonianus* in Ireland, where *argenteus* is by far the predominant Herring Gull, may be significantly easier than in parts of Europe where *argentatus* is more numerous. In addition, we must not forget that it is not only *argenteus* and *argentatus* that need to be considered when identifying *smithsonianus* on the European side of the Atlantic; Lesser Black-backed Gull *L fuscus graellsii* (hereafter *graellsii*) in some of its first-year guises can present a significant source of confusion.

Our experience of large numbers of birds in the eastern USA in winter has indicated to us that well over 90% of first-winter and c 70% of second-winter *smithsonianus* should be identifiable, with some measure of confidence, if encountered in Europe. Most third-winter and older birds are much more difficult to conclusively identify as evidenced by the virtual lack of accepted records of birds of this age in Ireland or elsewhere in Europe (just one, referred to above). It seems very likely, however, that they do occur here. This paper outlines what we believe are key features to be considered when faced with a potential *smithsonianus* of any age, between September and April. It should be noted, however, that it is based primarily upon our personal experience of *smithsonianus* and we have no doubt that in certain respects, particularly in relation to geographical variation within *smithsonianus*, our experience is incomplete.

Taxonomy

Until recently, most authors had treated *smithsonianus* as a subspecies of Herring Gull (Dwight 1925, Grant 1986). The Dutch committee for avian systematics (CSNA), having adopted the Phylogenetic Species Concept (PSC), were the first to propose that *smithsonianus* be recognized as a distinct species (Sangster et al 1998) although it did not expand on the reasons for this decision, other than stating that *smithsonianus* 'is specifically distinct based on qualitative differences in morphology and vocalizations'. More recently, Crochet et al (2002) presented evidence, based on analysis of mitochondrial DNA control region and cytochrome-*b* gene sequences, that *smithsonianus* is more closely related to the North American-Arctic species California

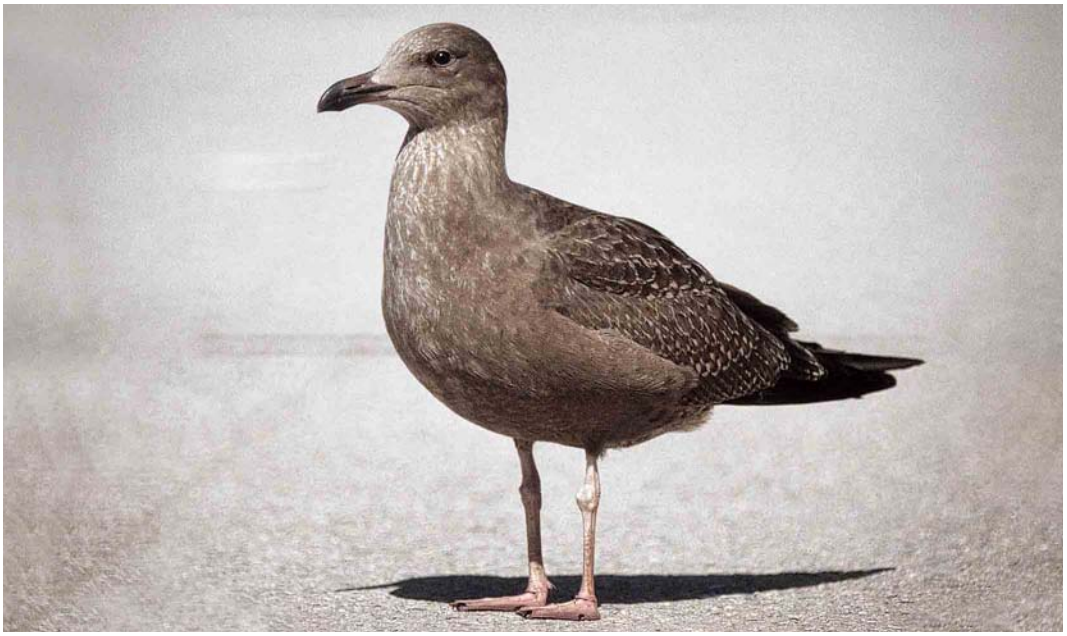
Gull *L californicus*, Iceland Gull *L glaucoides*, Thayer's Gull *L thayeri* and Glaucous Gull than to *L argentatus*, their results thus supporting the CSNA hypothesis. Crochet et al (2002) held back from unreservedly recommending that *smithsonianus* be regarded as a full species, preferring to wait until their results were confirmed using larger sample sizes of all North American taxa. Additional unpublished data gathered by several independent research teams (Pierre-André Crochet in litt) confirm the earlier findings and have led to the formal recommendation by the Association of European Rarities Committees Taxonomic Advisory Committee (AERC TAC) that American Herring Gull be treated as a species, *Larus smithsonianus*.

Commenting on the taxonomic position of European Herring Gull populations, the CSNA (Sangster et al 1998) stated that 'there is no evidence that the form '*argenteus*' is diagnosably distinct from *argentatus*' and concluded that *argenteus* was conspecific with *argentatus*. We question the supposed lack of evidence that *argenteus* is not diagnosably distinct from *argentatus*. From our perspective, *argentatus*-types and *argenteus*-types are often readily separable in the field (plate 23 and 35) and appear to fulfil sufficient 'requirements of diagnosability' to merit taxonomic recognition.

We prefer, therefore, to treat *argenteus* as a diagnosable taxon. While we realise that, in reality, the variation in European Herring Gull seems to be much more complex than the simple '*argentatus*' and '*argenteus*' model, we do not know if much of the yet-to-be explained and quantified variation has a particular bearing on the identification of *smithsonianus* in Europe. In this paper, we follow the conventional arrangement, whereby *L a argentatus* refers to the Herring Gull which breeds in Fennoscandia, around the Baltic and White Seas and *L a argenteus* refers to the on-average slightly smaller and lighter-mantled type which breeds in Iceland, Britain, Ireland and from Brittany, France, to approximately southern Denmark – although it apparently forms a mixed population with *L a argentatus* in the area ranging from the north of the Netherlands to southern Denmark (Barth 1975); the term 'European Herring Gull' is used to refer to *L a argentatus/argenteus*.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss further possible (sub)specific variation within *smithsonianus*, it seems likely, given the complexity of 'herring gull' taxonomy in an area

1 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1996 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Individuals as dark as this one should not pose any identification problems in Europe.



the size of Europe, that the North American population comprises more than just one 'type'. Indeed, Jonsson & Mactavish (2001) suggested that the populations wintering in Newfoundland and in the Niagara Falls regions, respectively, exhibit sufficiently consistent differences in morphology and wing-tip pattern to indicate that they represent distinct phenotypes. There also appear to be differences between East and West Coast birds (Dwight 1925, Sibley 2000, Klaus Malling Olsen pers comm) but most of the published information on the 'West coast type' is rather vague and anecdotal in nature. No doubt further sampling and analysis of mtDNA material, combined with more systematic field observations will improve our understanding of variation within *smithsonianus*.

Moult

Generally speaking, moult in *smithsonianus* is similar to that of *argentatus* and *argenteus* as outlined by Grant (1986) but with important clarifications described by Howell et al (1999). The tendency for some first-years *smithsonianus*, apparently originating in northern latitudes, to postpone their post-juvenile moult until mid-winter, or even spring of their second calendar-year, mirrors a similar strategy employed by a significant number of *argentatus* (Nikander 1996, Howell 2001, pers obs) but overall, moult is of little or no significance when it comes to identifying individual herring gulls.

Structure and character

Smithsonianus averages a large heavily built bird, appearing similar in size and proportions to *argentatus*, thus larger than an average *argenteus.* Many immatures have a demeanour which recalls first- and second-year Glaucous Gull due, perhaps, to the combination of a rather thick, long, bicoloured bill and a tendency to have rather uniformly coloured underparts.

Bill structure averages slightly different too, since many *smithsonianus* have parallel-sided bills with little gonydeal angle. The bill also averages slightly longer than in European Herring Gulls – but there is overlap.

Descriptions

The following accounts treat each age category, juvenile, first-winter, second-winter and so on up to adult, individually and in that order. Obviously, there is overlap in juvenile and first-winter plumages, and a certain amount of duplication in their respective accounts is unavoidable. We restrict ourselves to describing the appearance of *smithsonianus* in the winter period since practically all of our first-hand experience, both in North America and in Europe has been between September and April. Due to the effects of fading, wear and active moult, the summer months are considered a much less rewarding time to study gulls and it may be that this is a significant factor in explaining the virtual absence of summer records of *smithsonianus* in Europe. However, observations of at least two birds that over-summered in Cork in 2001 (Birding World 14: 224, 2001) suggest that detection of birds in first-summer plumage may not be as difficult as might have been imagined.

The extent of age-related, seasonal, sexual and individual variation in large gulls is well known and accounts for many of the associated ageing and identification problems. The potential for individual variation that exists in most large-gull taxa and the consequent overlap in the appearance of many characters has an important bearing on the identification of all 'out-of-range' or vagrant large gulls, and this is particularly true when considering claims of *smithsonianus* in Europe. While it would be unreasonable to expect every *smithsonianus* recorded in Europe to correspond exactly with the most 'classic' examples portrayed in this paper the great majority should, we suggest, be of typical appearance. Although every case should of course be considered on its merits, problematic birds (ie, birds with a mix of 'good' and 'bad' characters) are arguably *more likely* to be unusual-looking European Herring Gulls than aberrant or atypical *smithsonianus*. There will always be cases of contentious birds where it is difficult or impossible to prove that they are not *smithsonianus*, even though birds matching their appearance would be considered unusual, or even exceptional, in North America. At the risk of losing a few records of 'good' birds, we are inclined to recommend that, for the time being, only those birds with the strongest credentials be considered 'acceptable' in Europe.

It is impossible in a paper such as this to cover the vast extent of variation in these gulls. All we can do is try to define what we consider the most useful identification characters for each age group and anticipate the most likely sources of confusion. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of acquiring a comprehensive familiarity with the commoner species of large gull and of always keeping in mind the potential for variation in these birds.

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2 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1999 *(Sean Farrell)*. Note pale window on inner primaries, dark base to greater coverts, densely barred rump and undertail and very limited vermiculation along edges of outermost rectrices. **3** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1991 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note heavily barred rump and uppertail-coverts, barely contrasting with back; also, note almost entirely dark rectrices with contrastingly pale shaft and narrow 'barred' strip along outermost edge. **4** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1991 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note uniformly dark underparts. **5** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1991 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Shape and structure of this bird and, especially, weak bill recall Lesser Black-backed Gull *L fuscus graellsii*. Note, however, suggestion of densely marked ventral area. **6** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1991 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note uniformly dark lower hindneck and underparts. **7** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cape May, New Jersey, USA, September 1996 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Wear on scapulars, tertials and wing-coverts has reduced pale edges to these feathers. Note densely patterned vent and undertail-coverts and apparently all-dark tail. Several juvenile scapulars and mantle-feathers have been replaced with first-winter feathers.

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8 Presumed American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cobh, Cork, Ireland, 8 January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Confusingly similar to some juvenile European Herring Gulls *L argentatus* but upper- and undertail-coverts densely barred dark and tail almost entirely dark.
9 Presumed American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cobh, Cork, Ireland, 8 January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Same bird as in plate 8. Note densely patterned rump and uppertail-coverts and very extensively dark uppertail, with pale 'marbling' restricted to outer web of outermost rectrices.
10 Unidentified gull *Larus*, juvenile, Dublin, Ireland, 30 December 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Tentatively identified as European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *L a (argentatus?)* but other possibilities cannot be excluded. Resembles 'light' *smithsonianus*, but comparatively weak barring on undertail-coverts indicative of European Herring.
11 Presumed European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus*, juvenile, Lauwersoog, Groningen, Netherlands, 12 October 1997 *(Theo Bakker)*. Exceptionally dark bird. Unfortunately, tail pattern, upper- and undertail-coverts were not seen clearly, so identification cannot be regarded as conclusive. While overall darkness is certainly suggestive of *smithsonianus*, pattern of tertials and rather streaked underparts indicate otherwise. Is there anywhere in Europe where birds that look like this are considered 'normal'?

The greatly improved understanding of gull identification over the past 20-30 years has developed hand-in-hand with a wider appreciation of the effects of fading, wear and moult on the appearance of gulls. The systematic and analytical approach to gull identification, pioneered most notably by the late Peter Grant, places great reliance on critical examination of photographic material in resolving and defining the sort of detail that we now employ routinely in the field when attempting to identify more difficult individuals. At this level, we believe that a combination of photographs with dedicated captions offers the most effective means of conveying the kind of information most relevant to identification, hence the emphasis on photographs in this paper.

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12-15 Presumed American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile, Cobh, Cork, Ireland, 8 January 2001 *(Jim Wilson)*. Underparts streaked, not as uniform as underparts of two first-winter *smithsonianus* present at same time. Confusingly similar to some 'dark' juvenile *argentatus*-types, but upper- and undertail-coverts densely barred dark and tail almost entirely dark (see plate 9), strongly indicative of *smithsonianus*.

Juveniles (plate 1-23)

There is wide variation in the appearance of juvenile *smithsonianus*, from the most distinctive type (c 60%) which is very dark and practically uniformly textured on the underparts (plate 1), to less striking birds which have more mottled, or even pale-streaked, underparts and which could easily escape detection among a flock of large gulls in Europe (plate 5). In addition to this variation which can be seen in Atlantic coast populations at, for instance, Cape May, New Jersey, in September, there appears to be another 'type' of *smithsonianus* which deserves particular attention. Unfortunately, we have virtually no first-hand experience with what Howell et al (1999) referred to as 'Pacific coast [American] Herring Gulls' which are presumed to originate from high-latitude populations and apparently perform a long-distance migration to winter mostly in California. Judging from a few published photographs (eg figures 1, 6 and 10 in Howell 2001) and some of the American Herring Gull video-clips featured in *The large gulls of North America* (Dunn et al 1997), the birds that winter in west North America include a much higher proportion of what might be described as 'problematic' first-years than we observed on the east coast. Possibly the closest thing to a 'high-latitude'-type *smithsonianus* we have seen on this side of the Atlantic is a bird, still in full juvenile plumage, at Cobh, Cork, Ireland in January 2001 (plate 8, 9 and 12-15, Diggin 2001). It was one of three

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birds identified as *smithsonianus* present at Cobh that winter and caused quite a bit of debate when it was first observed due to its rather streaked underparts and overall similarity to some *argentatus* types. David Sibley examined images of this bird and commented that, when he was based at Cape May, New Jersey, he would see a very small number of similar-looking birds but that they did not appear there before November. The late arrival of these birds and their tendency to retain juvenile plumage well into the winter suggests a northerly origin. Interestingly, we did not find any that were clearly of this type in Massachusetts in January-February; David Sibley (pers comm) considers this type to be much more frequent in California than anywhere in eastern North America. Apart from the Cobh juvenile, and another juvenile in Galway in December 2000, all of the *smithsonianus* we have studied in Ireland have corresponded well with the more distinctive 'Atlantic coast type' we are familiar with through observations in New Jersey and Massachusetts (plate 27). At the risk of exaggerating a problem which we have not had the opportunity to fully investigate ourselves (due to the absence of so-called 'high-latitude'-type *smithsonianus* in the parts of North America we have visited), we recommend particular caution be exercised when identifying juvenile *smithsonianus* in Europe. We have noticed a disturbing similarity between several putative *smithsonianus* photographed in Europe, including the Cobh juvenile, and some perplexing first-year herring gulls, possibly hybrids, observed in Iceland in March 2003.

Having said that, we suggest that critical assessment of the following characters should help resolve the identification of any suspected juvenile *smithsonianus* in Europe.

Tail pattern An 'all-dark' tail is popularly regarded as the most essential attribute of any candidate first-year *smithsonianus* in Europe and birds possessing one are usually among the most easily identified individuals. Three things must be emphasized here however: ***1*** only

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16 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argentatus*, juvenile moulting to first-winter, Byparken, Bergen, Norway, 20 January 2001 *(Frode Falkenberg)*. Another very dark bird, with very limited pale fringes to tertials, similar to some juvenile American Herring Gulls *L smithsonianus*. This bird was ringed in Bergen, already fully grown. It would be interesting to know if there is a particular geographical source of birds that look like this, and whether they develop into perfectly normal-looking adults?

17 Lesser Black-backed Gull / Kleine Mantelmeeuw *Larus fuscus graellsii*, juvenile moulting to first-winter, Galway, Ireland, 28 December 2003 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Overall darkness of body and wings, combined with pale head, create superficial similarity to first-year American Herring Gull *L smithsonianus*, but such an appearance is not unusual in Lesser Black-backed Gull. Although underparts are undoubtedly dark, they are not as uniform as in most first-year *smithsonianus*.

18-19 Unidentified gull / meeuw *Larus*, possibly a hybrid, juvenile/first-winter, Reykjanes peninsula, Iceland, 17 March 2003 *(Killian Mullarney)*. One of several odd-looking herring gull-types encountered in Iceland. Not as dark as bird in plate 20, this bird too looked distinctly odd. Large size, extensive retention of juvenile scapulars, rather bold uppertail-covert barring and overall demeanour unlike European Herring Gull *Larus argentatus argenteus*. Possibly hybrid Glaucous *L hyperboreus* x *argenteus*, maybe even some American Herring Gull *L smithsonianus* influence?

20 Unidentified gull / meeuw *Larus*, possibly a hybrid, juvenile/first-winter, Reykjanes peninsula, Iceland, 17 March 2003 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Another odd-looking herring gull-type encountered in Iceland, a darker bird than in plate 18-19. Large size, overall darkness and somewhat Glaucous Gull *L hyperboreus*-like bill reminiscent of American Herring Gull *L smithsonianus*, but tail pattern and upper- and undertail-coverts pattern unconvincing for *smithsonianus*. Possibly hybrid Glaucous x European Herring Gull *L argentatus argenteus*, maybe even some *smithsonianus* influence?

21 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argentatus*, first-winter, Turku, Finland, 18 December 2003 *(Harry Lehto)*. Unusually dark-bodied bird, which might be mistaken for American Herring Gull *L smithsonianus* at first glance. Rather dark greyish second generation scapulars typical of Finnish Herring Gulls, and invite confusion with Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii*. Note comparatively narrow dark bars on undertail-coverts.

22 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argentatus*, juvenile, Tampere, Finland, 16 August 2003 *(Visa Rauste)*. Observers whose only experience of juvenile Herring Gull is with *argenteus* may have difficulty believing a bird like this could ever be a Herring Gull, and insist that it is a Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*! In fact, it is not at all exceptional for juvenile Finnish *argentatus* to have such restricted pale tertial-fringes and virtually no 'notching' in the feathers of the upperparts; such dark examples as this one (and the bird in plate 16) are, however, unusual.

23 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus (argenteus?)*, juvenile, Wijster, Drenthe, Netherlands, 23 January 2000 *(Rudy Offereins)*. Portrait of still juvenile-plumaged European Herring Gull, probably of *argentatus* stock. Compare with plate 11 and 20. It would be interesting to identify the geographical source of birds that look like this.

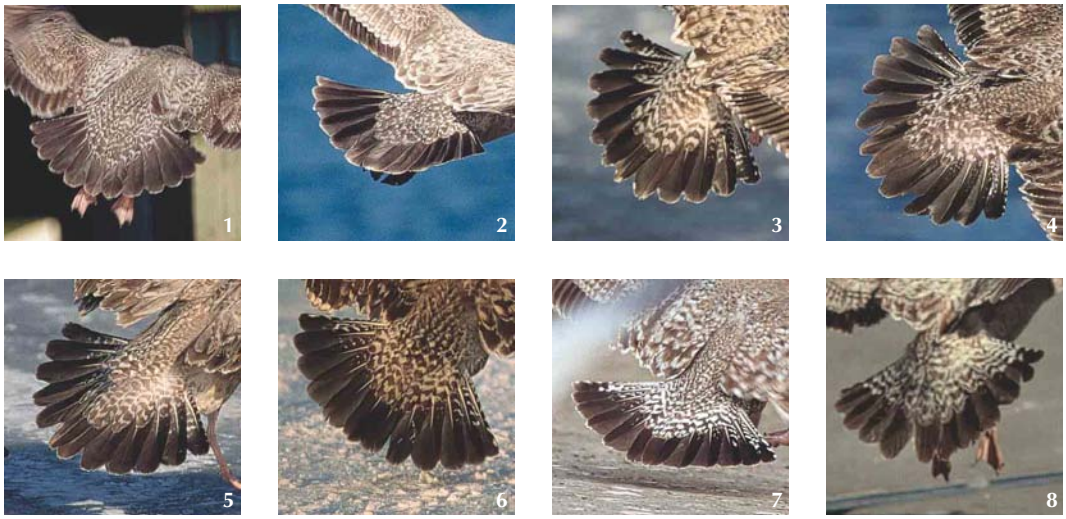

FIGURE 1 Variation in rump and tail pattern of first-winter American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus (Pat Lonergan & Killian Mullarney)*. Note that tail pattern varies from wholly dark at one extreme (**1** and **2**) to, rarely, well-defined tail-band (**8**). More often, however, pattern is intermediate, with obvious vermiculation on both webs of outer two or three rectrices.

a minority of first-year *smithsonianus* really do have what might justifiably be described as an 'all-dark' tail; ***2*** an absolutely all-dark tail (including the outer webs of the outermost rectrices) has been observed in first-year European Herring Gulls; ***3*** the difficulty in establishing the exact tail pattern in the field, as opposed to from critical examination of good photographs, is often underestimated. Many *smithsonianus* have an extent of dark on the tail that is very rarely matched by European Herring. Those with the most extensively dark tails have a solid-dark upper tail surface, as viewed from above (plate 33, figure 1), the only relief being the pale shaft-bases. Close examination will often reveal a very narrow strip, barred black and white, along the outermost edge to the tail (plate 3, figure 1) and it is not unusual for there to be some limited pale barring or vermiculation on the bases to the outer two or three pairs of rectrices. In addition, the fully spread tail (best looked for as a bird takes off or just before it alights), or a view of the tail from below, will often reveal quite extensive areas of pale barring or vermiculation on the bases to the inner webs of the outer rectrices. The variety of tail patterns featured in figure 1 clearly illustrate the point that an 'all-dark' tail should not necessarily be considered a prerequisite of *smithsonianus*. Some European Herring Gulls can show a tail pattern approaching that of classic *smithsonianus* but only exceptionally are the outer rectrices *wholly* dark (Peter Adriaens pers comm). Similarly, it is not exceptional for *smithsonianus* to have extensive white (usually barred dark) at the base to the outer rectrices and it may even be that this variation is more frequent in some populations than in others.

Vent and undertail-coverts The ventral area and undertail-coverts of juvenile *smithsonianus* are generally more densely patterned with dark than in European Herring Gull, in which these areas are sparsely marked and usually appear predominantly whitish. 'Classic' *smithsonianus* are so extensively dark on the undertail-coverts that the white 'bars' may be reduced to little more than paired spots, and the longest undertail-coverts may be almost solidly dark-centred; such bold and extensive dark markings are probably never shown by European Herring, although a few are more heavily marked than usual and may resemble *smithsonianus*. Of course, some *smithsonianus* are not so heavily marked on the undertail-coverts but such birds are very much in a minority in North America, at least in Atlantic seaboard populations. Any suspected juvenile *smithsonianus* in Europe which does not exhibit reasonably dense or bold undertail-covert-markings should be considered very critically before being positively identified.

Pattern of rump and uppertail-coverts In *smithsonianus*, the rump and uppertail-coverts are characteristically densely patterned with dark brown bars, chevrons or large spots, the overall tone being close to that of the rest of the upperparts but clearly contrasting with the often 'all-dark' tail (plate 3). The overall look of the tail and rump may prompt comparisons with that of a pale- or intermediate-morph juvenile Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*. On well-marked birds, this is a striking difference from any typical European Herring Gull but the degree of variation both ways means there is considerable overlap. The longest uppertail-coverts may have a completely dark centre – a pattern similar

to that of the lower scapulars, and very probably not occurring in first-year European Herring.

Uniformity of underparts The strikingly smooth-textured, evenly dark underparts of many juvenile *smithsonianus* (plate 1 and 4) are probably never truly matched by European Herring Gulls. Sometimes, however, European birds are more evenly saturated and darker-looking below than usual (plate 16), so care should be taken not to place too much importance on this feature alone.

Upperparts The pale fringes and notches to the upperpart-feathers average slightly less extensive than in European Herring Gull, contributing to an overall darker appearance. At the darker end of the range (plate 1), the patterns are probably never matched by juvenile European Herring but lighter *smithsonianus* could easily escape detection, at least on the basis of upperparts pattern, among their European counterparts.

Tertial pattern In juvenile plumage, the tertial pattern is rather similar to some *graellsii* (and therefore unlike most *argenteus*) with little notching which is generally 'finer' and is usually confined to the tips of the feathers. Juvenile *argentatus* tertials are often even more extensively pale-notched than in *argenteus* but, significantly, a high proportion of Finnish *argentatus*, which might be described as 'dark type', have much *reduced* pale fringe-markings, their tertials being similarly patterned to *graellsii* (plate 18).

Greater-covert bar Most *smithsonianus* show a variable amount of solid dark-brown at the base of the greater coverts which is clearly visible on the resting bird (plate 28, 36 and 37), forming an additional 'bar' in flight (plate 33), similar to that shown by most first-year *graellsii*. The significance of this feature has, perhaps, been over-emphasized since it is by no means exclusive to *smithsonianus* and is often shown by *argentatus* and sometimes by *argenteus.*

Inner primaries On average, the inner-primary window of first- and second-year *smithsonianus* is slightly duller than in European Herring Gulls of the same age, adding to the uniformity of the upperwing. While there is usually no strong contrast between inner and outer webs on these feathers in either *smithsonianus* or European Herring (thus differing from *graellsii*), the ground colour of the inner primaries is rather dull brownish grey in *smithsonianus*, while more pale greyish (with less of a muddy brown tinge) in European Herring Gull. This is not a terribly useful character, of course, but it may be of some significance in evaluating contentious birds.

Confusion with graellsii

There are many similarities between juvenile *smithsonianus* and dark first-year *graellsii*, some of which can show a confusing combination of rather dark underparts, heavily patterned rump and uppertail-coverts and sometimes an apparently 'all-dark' tail. Most *graellsii* can, however, be quickly recognized by their more lightweight build, narrower, more pointed wings and slimmer bill than *smithsonianus* but, since not all *smithsonianus* are 'heavyweights' (plate 5) and size is not always easily determined, the following characters should be checked:

Lack of pale window on inner primaries Much as in European Herring Gull, *smithsonianus* show a prominent pale window on the inner primaries (plate 2 and 3). In *graellsii*, the inner primaries are almost as dark as the outer.

Uniformity of underparts Generally, never matched by *graellsii* but some of the latter are potentially confusing (plate 17).

Vent and undertail-coverts The ventral area and undertail-coverts of juvenile *smithsonianus* are generally much more densely patterned than in *graellsii* (plate 7).

Pattern of rump and uppertail-coverts Most *graellsii* show an obviously whitish rump contrasting with a black tail-band but a few show a pattern and density of markings that is undeniably close to that of less heavily marked *smithsonianus*. It is all-too-easy, when concentrating too much on this one feature, to overlook the other identification clues and mistake such dark *graellsii* for *smithsonianus*.

First-winter (plate 24-58, figure 1)

With more than 90% of the records of *smithsonianus* in Europe being made up of birds in first-winter plumage, this is certainly the best-represented plumage type on the European side of the Atlantic. At least in Ireland, where the vast majority of European Herring Gulls are of the paler *argenteus* type, first-winter *smithsonianus* can be rather conspicuous amongst a mid-winter gull flock. *Smithsonianus* appears to exhibit even more individual variation than *argenteus* of the same age but even so, we had difficulty finding birds in the eastern USA that would not attract some attention in a routine search of a gull flock on the European side of the Atlantic.

Many of the characters which help differentiate juvenile *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls, most notably those relating to the upper- and undertail-coverts, wings and tail, remain essentially unchanged in first-winters and therefore do not need to be repeated here. Additional characters on which to concentrate when confronted with a possible first-winter *smithsonianus* include:

Uniformity of underparts By mid-winter, many first-year *smithsonianus* are a little faded and less evenly dark than they would have been as juveniles but are still more uniform below than the great majority of European Herring Gulls. The latter generally have paler, more mottled or streaked underparts but can occasion-

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24 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Rather similar to bird in plate 36 but with predominantly first-winter scapulars. Note pale head, contrasting with uniformly dark colouration on lower hindneck, mantle and underparts.
25 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Rather grey individual. Note absence of dark base to greater coverts and overall discontinuous pattern of scapulars.
26 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note uniform, dark underparts and typically densely patterned vent and undertail-coverts.
27 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Cobh, Cork, Ireland, 8 January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note new, more slate-grey coloured feathers on flanks, contrasting with older, faded, brownish juvenile feathers on belly.
28 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note uniformly dark colouration on lower hindneck continuing onto underparts and contrasting with paler head; also, note strongly bicoloured bill.
29 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note uniformly dark upper mantle and base to hindneck, contributing to pale-headed appearance.
30 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Very grey and plain individual.
31 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1998 *(Pat Lonergan)*. On some first-winters, pale-blotched scapulars contrast strongly with rest of plumage; note also very worn tertials and inner greater coverts, almost entirely lacking pale fringes.
32 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1998 *(Pat Lonergan)*. On this individual, first-winter scapular pattern is very regular, reminiscent of typical European Herring Gull *L argentatus*, but note uniformly dark hindneck, mantle and underparts, densely patterned vent and undertail-coverts.
33 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note distinctive rump and uppertail pattern, dark greater-covert bar and pale inner primary window.
34 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argenteus*, first-winter, Cobh, Cork, Ireland, 3 January 2002 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Occasionally, European Herring Gulls can have more saturated and consequently darker-looking brownish-grey underparts than usual. Note comparatively weak undertail-covert barring and hint of white in tail.
35 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argenteus*, first-winter, Dublin, Ireland, 14 October 1998 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Typical bird, exhibiting evenly barred pattern of fully-moulted first-winter scapulars. Note narrow dark bars on undertail-coverts.

36 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Very distinctive individual with bicoloured bill, contrastingly pale head, dark lower hindneck continuous with uniformly dark underparts and many retained juvenile scapulars. Note dark base to greater coverts and dense patterning on vent and undertail-coverts. **37** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note pronounced greater-covert bar, and that, unusually for second calendar-year *smithsonianus*, bill has acquired very little pale at base.

38 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Very dark-headed bird. Note rather 'plain' rear-most (second generation) scapulars; also that one inner median covert has been moulted. **39** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Not particularly pale-headed individual but note very solid-dark colouration on lower hindneck, mantle and underparts.

40 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Very worn individual, with second-generation scapulars having pattern unlike that normally exhibited by European Herring Gulls *L argentatus*.

ally be more uniform (and consequently darker looking), thus resembling *smithsonianus* (plate 21 and 34).

Solid darkness on lower hindneck and upper mantle Typically, *smithsonianus* exhibits a more uniformly brownish lower hindneck and upper mantle that merges with the uniform brownish underparts (plate 28 and 36).

Greyness of breast-sides and flanks As part of the post-juvenile moult of body-feathers, many first-winter *smithsonianus* acquire plain, contrastingly slate-grey-coloured feathers on the breast-sides and flanks, gradually extending to the rest of the underparts (plate 27). Possibly because of their usually more mottled underparts, European Herring Gulls undergoing the same moult show much more subtle contrast between the old (brownish) and new (more greyish) feathers.

Pale-headed appearance Many *smithsonianus* acquire a pale head in late winter as a result of wear (Howell 2001) and due to their dark body this feature may draw attention to a *smithsonianus* among a flock of European Herring Gulls. The importance of this feature has been overstated a little as only a small proportion really is pale-headed (plate 24, 29 and 36) and darker-bodied European birds are likely to also occasionally look pale-headed for precisely the same reasons (plate 16 and 21). European Herring Gulls from the eastern Baltic area are often strikingly pale-headed in winter (Klaus Malling Olsen pers comm).

Scapular pattern The range of individual variation in first-winter scapular-markings exhibited by both *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls, and the degree of overlap, make it very difficult to identify any particular patterns that might be considered 'exclusive'. There are, however, certain characteristic patterns in *smithsonianus* that are not so usual in their European counterparts. It is important, here, to distinguish between often-retained juvenile scapulars (usually, the rearmost larger feathers), which are plain, brownish, somewhat worn and with pointed tips, and (freshly) moulted first-winter feathers, which have broader, more rounded tips. The most distinctive of these (again, usually seen among the larger rearmost and lower row(s) of feathers) are rather dark and plain, with or without a diffuse darker centre (plate 38). Due, perhaps, to a tendency in many *smithsonianus* for the post-juvenile moult of the scapulars (in which the juvenile scapulars are replaced with first-winter feathers) to be a rather protracted process, there is often more of a variety of scapular patterns *in the one bird* than is generally the case in European birds (plate 25 and 31); the explanation for this is that the appearance of feathers in the same generation can change depending on the time of year they are moulted (Howell 2001). In most European Herring Gulls, the pattern of the first-winter scapulars tends to be rather consistent, each individual feather exhibiting much the same markings as the next, the overall effect

being of a series of regular transverse pale and dark bars (plate 35). However, there are many exceptions to these general tendencies and, at best, certain scapular patterns should be regarded as offering little more than marginal supporting evidence in the identification of vagrant first-year *smithsonianus* in Europe.

Underwing-coverts The uniformity of the axillaries (especially) and underwing-coverts, and the general 'smokiness' with a lack of obvious patterning, can be striking in *smithsonianus*. In *argentatus* and *argenteus*, these areas tend to be paler in tone and more mottled in texture. The underwing-coverts of *graellsii*, however, can be very like *smithsonianus* but several other differences from *smithsonianus* (see above) usually preclude serious confusion.

Bill-colour There is a tendency for both *smithsonianus* and *argentatus* to develop a pale base to the bill quite early in their first winter, with the most extreme birds approaching first-year Glaucous Gull in this respect (plate 24 and 36). In *argenteus*, the contrast in the bill pattern tends to be more subdued until later in the winter.

Second-winter (plate 41-58, figure 2)

If it often seems as if no two first-winter *smithsonianus* are quite alike, second-winter birds are even more variable. Some second-winter individuals are, at first glance, extremely first-winter-like, due to a complete lack of clear grey in the scapulars and extensively brownish underparts (plates 41, 48 and 54). Obviously pale-eyed individuals can be more easily aged but some birds do not develop a pale iris until late winter, and even then it may be difficult to discern in poor light or at moderate range (plate 43). In addition, most show more intricately and irregularly patterned greater coverts and tertial-fringes (much as second-winter European Herring Gulls), a clearly pale basal two-thirds to the bill and, at close range, the primary-tips are slightly more rounded than in first-years. Second-winters that differ more obviously from first-winters have at least some clear grey scapulars (plate 51, 53 and 55) and, much as in European Herring Gull, there is considerable individual variation between these two types.

The following characters should help resolve the identity of second-winter type *smithsonianus* in Europe:

Solid darkness on lower hindneck and upper mantle, and underbody As in first-years, there is a much greater tendency for second-year *smithsonianus* to have dense brownish colouration on the lower hindneck and upper mantle, extending onto the underparts, than there is in European Herring Gulls of the same age (plate 45, 51 and 53). This brownish 'wash' is usually less intense, more mottled than in first-years but is often still strong enough to attract attention. Second-winter European Herring Gulls are generally much more sparsely spotted or blotched with grey-brown in these areas (plate 57).

Tertial pattern There is a tendency in second-winter *smithsonianus* for the tertials, especially the outer tertials, to average more extensively and solidly dark-centred than in European Herring Gulls of the same age, with a corresponding reduction in the extent of pale at the tips. In European Herring Gulls, the tertials are often either wholly 'barred' or have a small dark centre and broad pale tip. However, there is variation in both, and considerable overlap, so the tertial pattern should only be used in conjunction with other supporting characters. We are not able to explain why, but our observations of second-year European Herring Gulls in late summer and early autumn (plate 58) suggest that many at this time of year show darker and more *smithsonianus*-like tertials than at other times of the year.

Undertail-coverts As with younger birds, the pattern of the undertail-coverts can be very useful as an aid to identification. Many second-winter *smithsonianus* have an almost unchanged (from that of first-years) pattern of intricate or closely spaced bars, in contrast with the widely spaced bars and spots or almost unpatterned undertail-coverts of most *argentatus/argenteus*. Others have solidly dark-centred feathers (plate 42, 47 and 49), a pattern, so far we know, never found in European Herring Gulls.

Pattern of rump and uppertail Often more obvious than the undertail-coverts (described above), many second-winter *smithsonianus* mirror first-winters in showing a more heavily patterned rump and uppertail-coverts and a practically all-dark uppertail (figure 2). As the season progresses, the rump becomes paler/whiter, the white rump being acquired through moult rather than wear; moulting birds may have a patchy mixture of (new) pure-white and patterned brown feathers. Second-winter European Herring Gulls tend to have less heavily patterned rump and uppertail-coverts and many are predominantly or wholly 'white-rumped'. Paradoxically, they often have a much *more* extensively dark tail than first-winters and this alone may prompt thoughts of *smithsonianus*. While there is extensive overlap in the tail patterns of second-winter *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls, it seems that even the most extreme examples of the latter usually show a narrow wedge (widest at the base) or 'sliver' of white along the outer edge to the tail (shown by some *smithsonianus* too but a definite *lack* of white edges may be significant).

Bill pattern and colour The great majority of second-winters show an extensively pale-based bill, the pattern typically resembling that of immature Glaucous Gull (plate 41, 42 and 45). The colour of the bill-base is variable, sometimes flesh-pink (like most European birds) but often a more neutral greyish or horn colour, with or without a faintly greenish tinge (plate 47). The latter would be unusual in *argenteus* but is not uncommon in *argentatus*. Bill colour remains decidedly 'immature-like' throughout winter and even early spring, being brownish, pinkish or pinkish-white basally.

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41 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Very distinctive individual. Note rather Glaucous Gull *L hyperboreus*-like demeanour and lack of any clear grey feathers in upperparts.
42 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather simple pattern on scapulars and tertials and lack of any barring in plumage apart from vermiculation on greater coverts; also, note diagnostic, practically solid-brown longest undertail-coverts.
43 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. As in plate 42, note simple pattern to scapulars with practically no barring. Unusually for second-winter, note dark bill.
44 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1998 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note extensive brown wash to underparts and dark tertials.
45 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note dark lower hindneck extending onto underparts and rather uniform tertials.
46 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*
47 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Long Island, New York, USA, January 1992 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather greenish-toned bill, extensively dark tail and solid-brown undertail-coverts.
48 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note rather uniformly coloured tertials.
49 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Very dark individual. Note very uniformly patterned undertail-coverts.
50 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Conclusive identification of individuals looking like this bird, and perhaps the bird in plate 52, would pose a challenge in Europe.
51 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note uniformly dark brown lower hindneck and upper mantle extending onto underparts, and tertials with limited pale markings.
52 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1998 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Lightly marked individual, not so different from some European Herring Gulls *L argentatus*.

53 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather solidly dark hindneck, extensively brown underparts and reduced pale markings on tertial-tips. Dark greater-covert panel is not exclusive to *smithsonianus*. **54** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather uniform mantle and underparts and lack of barring in upperparts, a pattern seldom if ever seen in second-winter European Herring Gull *L argentatus*.

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55 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Another difficult individual but note dark lower hindneck and tertials.
56 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, second-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1998 *(Pat Lonergan)*
57 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus argenteus*, second-winter, Dublin, Ireland, 30 December 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Most second-winter European Herring Gulls are rather sparsely marked on underparts, especially undertail-coverts, compared with most American Herring Gulls *L smithsonianus* of same age.
58 European Herring Gull / Zilvermeeuw *Larus argentatus*, first-summer/second-winter, Wexford, Ireland, 27 August 1997 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note dark, *smithsonianus*-like tertials.

Primary pattern Like *argenteus*, but in contrast to a minority of *argentatus*, most second-winter *smithsonianus* lack a mirror on p10.
Underwing-coverts On average, more solidly dark than in European Herring Gulls.
Greater coverts Slightly darker and more uniform (less barred) than in European Herring Gull, although there is considerable overlap.
Upperparts *a* Those birds with entirely or mostly patterned upperparts, often show less regular barring here than European Herring Gulls. The pattern of the second-winter scapulars in *smithsonianus* is highly variable and European Herring Gulls can match most patterns, so these are of little help in identification. However, a few birds have scapulars that are rather plain with a more or less broad dark shaft-streak (plate 42, 43 and 54), creating an overall pattern that we do not recognize as being within the normal range of variation exhibited by European Herring Gull; ***b*** those with entirely or mostly grey (adult-like) upperparts may often show a strong contrast between the pale 'saddle' and surrounding dark hindneck, underparts and wing-coverts.

Third-winter (plate 59-72)

As indicated earlier, the proportion of identifiable birds decreases sharply with increasing age. However, there are characters shown by some (perhaps 40-50%) third-winter *smithsonianus* that appear to be diagnostic. In practice, telling second-winter from third-winter 'herring gulls' is not always easy; different parts of the bird, for instance, the tail, body, wing-coverts and bill do not necessarily develop at the same rate, so a bird with an 'advanced' tail pattern, for its age, might have a 'retarded' bill pattern. Most third-winters will have a more advanced wing pattern

FIGURE 2 Variation in rump and tail pattern of second-winter American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus (Pat Lonergan & Killian Mullarney)*. Note that tail can be as extensively dark as in many first-winters.

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59 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note solid markings on tertials and extensive black in tail.
60 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Similar to bird in plate 59. Note solid markings on tertials, extensive black in tail and partially concealed discrete black spot on secondaries.
61 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note dark patch on one tertial and extensive dark in tail.
62 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note very extensive and distinct blackish tertial-markings.
63 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*
64 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Long Island, New York, USA, January 1992 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather dull greenish-coloured bill-base and discrete black spots on secondaries.
65 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note extensive, solid blackish-brown in tertials, with no vermiculation.
66 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*

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67 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*

68 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*

69 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note dark marks on secondaries and extensive dark in tail.

70 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Rather advanced individual in some respects with unmarked adult-like secondaries. Note that tail is still rather heavily marked.

71 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note discrete black marks on secondaries and extensive black tail pattern.

72 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, third-winter, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note extensive black markings on secondaries.

than second-winter birds, and virtually all will have adult-like grey (rather than pale brownish) inner primaries (Martin Elliott pers comm).

Tertial pattern Many show extensive, sharply defined, solid-black/blackish-brown markings towards the bases of some tertials, usually, the middle and/or outer feathers (plate 59, 62 and 65). Such definite, blackish markings as in the best-marked *smithsonianus* are seldom, if ever matched by European Herring Gulls; however, many *smithsonianus* do not have such distinctive markings and those with less well-defined, browner, more vermiculated markings (plate 63) overlap with what is commonly seen in European Herring Gulls.

Secondary pattern Unlike European Herring Gulls, many *smithsonianus* of this age and older have *well-defined black* markings on the secondaries. The extent of this feature varies individually; on some birds, virtually every feather is marked with black (plate 72) while, at the other extreme, the secondaries are entirely adult-like (plate 70). Many, however, are in-between and show a limited extent of *clean black* on just a few secondary-feathers (plate 60 and 71) but are nevertheless distinctive. In European Herring Gulls of the same age, the secondaries are often irregularly vermiculated brownish; they only rarely show such discrete black markings.

Tail pattern The tail pattern varies from being very extensively black, like many second-winter birds, to being practically all white with just one or two dark smudges or spots. On many, an irregular pattern of rather distinct solid-black spots (plate 71) is somehow eye-catchingly different from patterns usually seen in European birds, and can recall the 'piano-key'-type tail pattern of a well-marked second-winter Ring-billed Gull *L delawarensis*. While a few third-winter-type European Herring Gulls may show similar markings, most have less clear-cut, and more diffuse or vermiculated rectrix-markings.

Bill colour Similar to European Herring Gulls of the same age (pinkish/pale straw with a broad dark gonydeal band) but quite a few have a pale greenish-tinged bill (plate 64), a colour not usually seen in *argenteus*, but which is not unusual in *argentatus*-types.

Head- and breast-markings The dark head, neck and breast-markings of third-winter types average heavier and more blotchy than in European Herring Gulls, especially *argentatus*, on which these markings tend to be paler and less extensive. On the most heavily marked birds, the density of dark spotting, especially on the hindneck and breast, is strikingly different from anything usually seen in Europe but a few 'dark' sub-adult *argenteus* can be similar.

Primary pattern ***a*** At rest: In line with their 'retarded' or 'immature' look, many third-winter *smithsonianus* do not show any obvious white primary tips, while these are usually distinct in third-winter *argenteus* (at least on p6) and especially *argentatus*; ***b*** In flight: There is much overlap in the primary pattern, but a few third-winter *smithsonianus*, at least in Newfoundland, already show long grey tongues up to and including p10 (on which the tongue may reach down for half the feather length or even more along the inner web), while also showing a complete black band on p5, and sometimes even dark markings on p4 (Peter Adriaens in litt). If a third-winter bird with this type of primary pattern (best seen from below) also retains a lot of brown markings on the wing-coverts/tertials, the combination of all of these characters may be helpful. For instance, third-winter *argenteus* do not have such long grey tongues on p9-10 (p10 normally does not have much of a grey tongue at all at this age), nor predominantly brown wing-coverts. Third-winter *argentatus* may show the long tongues and brown wing-coverts but will, in

that case, be less inclined to show a complete black band on p5, and may have darker grey upperparts. While the primary pattern in third-winter birds is a complex character (eg, also because intergrades *argenteus* x *argentatus* have to be taken into account), it may be worth looking at and documenting when faced with a suspected third-winter *smithsonianus* in Europe.

We would like to emphasize that some *third*-winter *smithsonianus* can appear very similar to *second*-winter European Herring Gull. The problem/pitfall may be as follows: an observer may encounter a Herring Gull that attracts his attention because of its dark underparts and hindneck, dark greater coverts and tertials, a lot of dark in the tail, contrastingly pale grey saddle, etc. He may be tempted to believe that he is looking at a *second*-winter *smithsonianus*, but when he looks more closely, the tail is certainly not all-dark, and the upper- and undertail-coverts are hardly marked at all. Therefore, he dismisses the bird as an odd (dark) *second*-winter European Herring Gull – while in fact, it was a perfectly typical *third*-winter *smithsonianus*... Correct ageing is a critical first step in the identification process, but in third-winter birds, it may at times only be possible when the bird is seen in flight (when the inner primaries can be seen).

Fourth-winter and older (plate 73-85, figure 3)
A surprisingly high proportion of the essentially adult-like *smithsonianus* we observed in Massachusetts in January-February exhibited features indicative of immaturity such as dark markings on the bill, dark-centred primary coverts or dark spots on the secondaries, tertials and rectrices. One explanation for the comparative abundance of 'near-adult' types amongst the birds we studied in Massachusetts might be that, for some reason, this is a preferred wintering area for four- to five-year-old birds. The high proportion of 'near-adult' types might also indicate that *smithsonianus*, on average, takes significantly longer to acquire a fully adult appearance (without vestiges of immaturity) than does European Herring Gull. Whatever the reason, we have no way of knowing the precise age of these birds but, in view of their overall similarity to adults, we assume that most are at least in their fourth winter and we prefer, therefore, to include them in an 'adult-type' category. At present, these individuals exhibiting certain characteristic vestiges of immaturity in combination with an otherwise essentially adult-like appearance may be the only adult-type *smithsonianus* that can be conclusively identified in Europe.

There has been some suggestion that adult *smithsonianus* have paler upperparts than *argenteus*. Never having had a chance to compare adult *smithsonianus* directly with European Herring Gulls, it is difficult to evaluate the practical usefulness of this feature in the field. In general, the upperparts of *smithsonianus* are pale grey (Kodak grey scale 4.0-4.5), similar in tone to *argenteus* and Ring-billed Gull and clearly paler than mean *argentatus* (Howell & Elliott 2001). However, we did note some variation in upperpart colouration, even in small groups of birds, with a few individuals slightly darker than the majority. The paleness of the upperparts in many *smithsonianus* may, however, be of greater significance when compared with *argentatus*.

The following features may be of more practical use in identification of near-adult and adult *smithsonianus*.

Tertial-spots One feature that was a surprise to us was the presence in a small percentage (5-10%) of near-adults (and possibly a few adults?) of discrete black 'ink-spots' on one or more of the tertials (plate 75, 76 and 79, figure 3). These spots appear to be linked to the extensive dark markings shown by many third-winters, and are similar in extent to the dark spots exhibited by some second-winter Common *L canus canus* and Ring-billed Gulls. They can, at times, be hidden by the overlying tertial(s) and may only become visible if the feathers are displaced by wind or while preening. In other individuals, they are extensive and can form a regular 'stepping stone-like' pattern across the tertials. While this pattern is usually associated with other traces of immaturity, such as a band on the bill or dark-centred primary coverts, a few apparently 'perfect' adults may show one or two small black tertial-spots (plate 75). We have *never* observed equivalent markings in adult or near-adult European Herring Gulls although it appears that similar markings may occur in some forms of Yellow-legged Gull *L michahellis* (plate 22 in Dubois 2001, pers obs). We recommend that any 'light-mantled' herring gull in Europe exhibiting this character should certainly receive detailed scrutiny.

Secondary-spots Occasional individuals in this age category show small, well-defined black spots on otherwise adult-like secondaries (plate 80 and 82). This feature is much more likely to be detected in photographs than in the field but, when present, may be a diagnostic indicator of *smithsonianus*.

Wing-tip pattern Attention has been drawn to a potential difference in wing-tip pattern between *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls (Millington & Garner 1998), with at least some birds, apparently originating in north-eastern Canada, having paler and longer grey tongues along the inner web of the outer primaries than in typical *argenteus* (but not unlike some *argentatus*). Wing-tip pattern of *smithsonianus* is known to be variable: Jonsson & Mactavish (2001) described significant

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73 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note solid-black 'patch' on middle tertial and extensive solid-black on primary coverts.
74 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 1999 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Similar to bird in plate 77 and 83.
75 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note small tertial-spot on this otherwise apparently 'full' adult.
76 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult or near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note tertial-spot and black on primary coverts.
77 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult or near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note rather blotchy head pattern and fine shaft-streaks on primary coverts.
78 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note dark in primary coverts.

differences in wing-tip pattern between Newfoundland and Niagara *smithsonianus* and proposed that these populations represent two distinct types. In the original draft of this paper submitted to the editors of Dutch Birding we made an attempt to identify potentially useful differences in wing-tip pattern between *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gulls. However, aware of the fact that long-term studies of known-age *argenteus* and *graellsii* in Britain (Martin Elliott pers comm) indicate that wing-tip pattern can continue to change well beyond the point at which they acquire 'adult' plumage, we doubted that any of our conclusions on this particular aspect of *smithsonianus* identification would prove to be of much practical value. More recently, we became aware that a detailed paper on wing-tip pattern differences between adult *smithsonianus* and European Herring Gull was being prepared by Peter Adriaens and Bruce Mactavish. We are confident that these authors will demonstrate the potential usefulness of wing-tip pattern differences far more successfully than we managed to do and we eagerly await publication of their findings in a forthcoming issue of Dutch Birding.

Primary coverts A rather high proportion (10-15%) of 'adult' and near-adult birds exhibit dark markings on the primary coverts. These vary from extremely fine black shaft-streaks (plate 74, 77 and 83) to broader, more obvious, black lozenge-shaped marks (plate 76, 78 and 84). Dark primary-covert-markings are sometimes shown by a few adult and often by near-adult *argenteus* (Grant 1986) but they tend not to be as well defined and neat, or as black, as in many *smithsonianus*.

Winter head-markings The pattern of winter head-streaking in adults and near-adults often appears different in *smithsonianus* – being blotchier with less well-defined streaks than in *argentatus/argenteus* (plate 74, 77 and 83). However, as with many of the other features, this is variable and should be used with caution.

Bill pattern A high proportion of the near-adult *smithsonianus* we studied in Massachusetts in January-February had more extensive blackish markings around the gonydeal area of one or both mandibles than we are used to seeing in European Herring Gulls at the same time of year. Dark markings on the bill in all of these large gulls are linked with both immaturity and with season (with adults developing a dark spot in winter), so their significance in the context of identifying a vagrant in Europe is doubtful.

Voice

While at this stage we do not anticipate voice characteristics having a major bearing on the identification of vagrants, we have registered a distinctly deeper tone, and possibly a subtly different repertoire compared with *argenteus* with which we are most familiar. Whether this is primarily a function of body size and whether the differences are as pronounced in comparison with *argentatus* is unclear and requires further research.

Hybrids

While 'larophiles' on the West Coast of North America have had to make sense of an extraordinary variety of hybrid gulls for many years, and have now gained sufficient confidence to be able to guess the parentage of many of them, their equivalent in Europe is lagging behind in this particular field. With presumed hybrids apparently being of much more exceptional occurrence in Europe than on the West coast of North America it is difficult for any individual to gain a broad enough perspective on the problem to begin to make sense of it. The extent to which hybrid gulls in Europe may be complicating our attempts to identify *smithsonianus* on this side of the Atlantic can only be guessed at, and until we have a clearer understanding of the limits of variation within 'pure' *smithsonianus* it is likely to remain so.

Some first-winter and second-winter presumed hybrids Glaucous x European Herring Gull bear a strong superficial resemblance to *smithsonianus*, especially when their mix of characters combines the size, rather uniform plumage, bill colouration and general demeanour of Glaucous with the dark wing-tip and tail pattern of European Herring. Most, however, possess obvious clues in their appearance to their hybrid origin, such as a much reduced or washed-out tail-band and secondary-bar, obvious pale fringes to the primary-tips or, at rest, a lighter overall tone to the tertials than a typical European Herring; others, however are not so obvious and correct identification may require very critical consideration indeed. In North America, hybrids Glaucous x *smithsonianus* (so-called 'Nelson's Gull') occur; these are usually more similar to Glaucous than to *smithsonianus* (Bruce Mactavish in litt) but there is evidence that different populations of *smithsonianus* and Glaucous produce different looking hybrids, some of which look more like pale *smithsonianus* but with low contrast between tertials and folded primaries and rest of upperparts (Bruce Mactavish in litt). At least two birds believed to be second-winter *smithsonianus* recorded in Ireland were initially thought to be hybrids Glaucous x European Herring until more detailed examination indicated that their Glaucous-like character was quite compatible with typical second-winter *smithsonianus.*

Conclusion

With a total of around 70 accepted or likely to be accepted records of *smithsonianus* in Europe

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79 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*. Note diagnostic small but well-defined black 'ink-spots' on two tertials.
80 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, fourth-winter-type, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note solid-black markings on primary coverts and well-defined black spots on secondaries and central rectrices.
81 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note black shaft-streak on outer primary coverts and blackish spot on central rectrices.
82 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note black shaft-streak on outer primary coverts, very well-defined black spot on four secondaries and blackish markings on central rectrices.

since 1986 (most of which have been found in under-watched Ireland), it is clear that *smithsonianus* is occurring regularly on the European side of the Atlantic Ocean. We hope this paper will form a baseline for further study on both sides of the Atlantic. The sporadic nature of our contact with large numbers of *smithsonianus* undoubtedly limits our work but we trust that readers of this paper who have more experience with this taxon will not be reticent about clarifying any aspects we may have unintentionally misrepresented. There is, in particular, a need to develop further and refine the criteria for identifying sub-adult and adult *smithsonianus*, age categories still hardly recorded in Europe but which, surely, must occur more frequently? The other major challenge, we feel, is to gain a clearer picture of variation in juvenile *smithso-*

nianus, particularly the birds at the lighter end of the range. This would help us determine the identity of a number birds already observed in Europe which have closely resembled what might be described as 'light *smithsonianus'*, but which have exhibited an ambiguous, or more *argentatus*-like tail pattern and/or upper- and undertail-covert markings. Some, it appears, may be hybrids but if so, what is the parentage? Is it possible that *smithsonianus* has already entered the European Herring Gull gene pool, and could this be the explanation for the appearance of some of the more perplexing birds? We suggest that a thorough investigation of morphological variation in the Icelandic Herring Gull population, combined with judicious sampling and analysis of genetic material could help answer some of these questions.

It is good to hear that *smithsonianus* is, at last, the subject of some new taxonomic studies being carried out by North American research teams (Pierre-André Crochet in litt). Of course, we do not know what this work will entail, but we can speculate as to the advances that might be made if it attempted to evaluate whether morphologically distinct 'types' (Jonsson & Mactavish 2001) warranted taxonomic distinction. We can also imagine how a large-scale colour-ringing project might stimulate great interest in observing what these (and other, yet-to-be-identified?) types look like as immatures, and where they go outside the breeding season, just as it has in Europe.

Finally, we are very interested in receiving feedback, both positive and negative, from observers whose experience of any of the taxa discussed here is complementary to our own. Increasingly, in recent years, it has been the pooling of information and exchanging of ideas that has been responsible for advancing our understanding of this most challenging group.

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We wish to express our gratitude to the following people who helped in various ways, from providing photographs for reference to stimulating discussion and company in the field: Joe Adamson, Mashuq Ahmad, Paul Archer, Theo Bakker, Martin Elliott, Frode Falkenberg, Sean Farrell, Martin Garner, Peter de Knijff, Diederik Kok, Henry Lehto, Anthony McGeehan Richard

83 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note rather blotchy head pattern and very fine blackish shaft-streaks on primary coverts.

84 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, January 2001 *(Pat Lonergan)*. Note very well-defined, solid-black centre to primary coverts.

85 American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, adult or near-adult, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, February 1999 *(Killian Mullarney)*

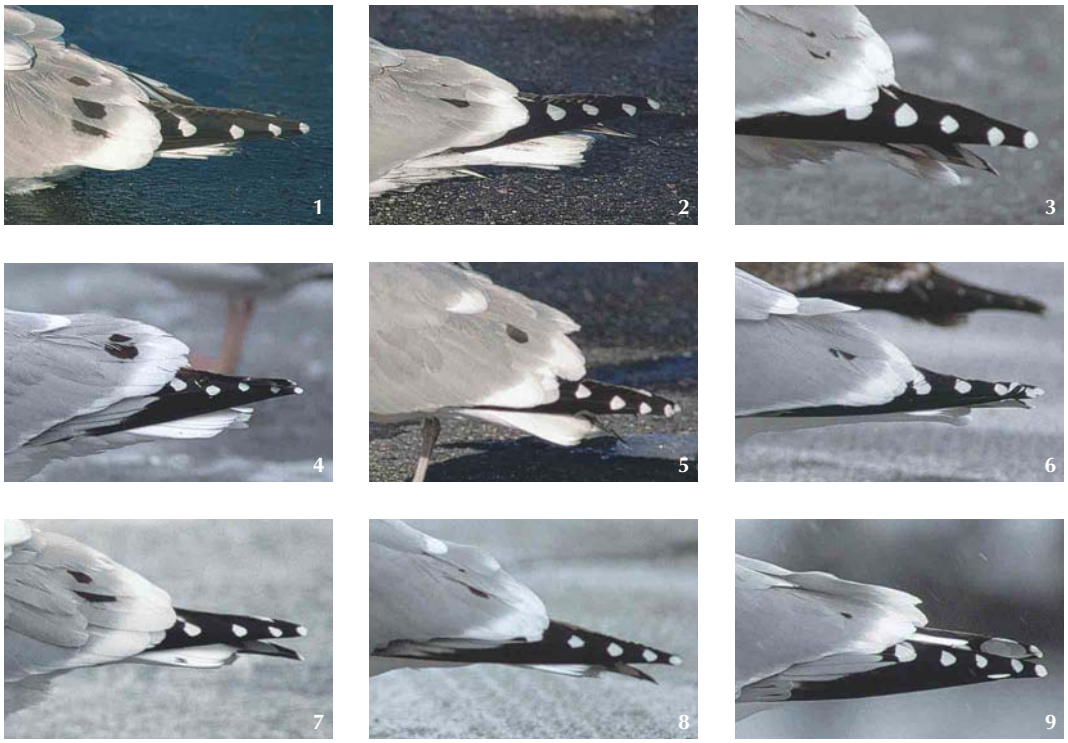

FIGURE 3 Variation in black spots on tertials of adult or near-adult American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus (Pat Lonergan & Killian Mullarney)*

Millington, Paul Moore, John Murphy, Rudy Offereins, Jari Peltomäki, Peter Pyle, Martin Reid, David Sibley, Roy Smith, Norman van Swelm, Alyn Walsh and Jim Wilson. We are especially grateful to Bruce Mactavish, who has been a constant and enthusiastic source of information related to the identification of *smithsonianus*. We also want to thank Peter Adriaens, André van Loon, DK and Magnus Robb who, in performing their duties as members of the Dutch Birding editorial board, suggested many improvements to this paper. Visa Rauste was most helpful in providing an excellent range of photographs of juvenile Finnish *argentatus,* for reference. Pierre-André Crochet kindly advised us on the latest results in the field of mtDNA research on *smithsonianus* and related taxa.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of Peter J Grant, whose life-long dedication to clarifying the problems associated with gull identification was such a powerful inspiration, and 'opened the door' for the rest of us.

Samenvatting

HERKENNING VAN AMERIKAANSE ZILVERMEEUW VANUIT WEST-EUROPEES PERSPECTIEF Met tot nu toe c 70 gevallen in Europa is Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus* hier een vrij regelmatige dwaalgast, vooral in Ierland. Een uitgebreid artikel over de herkenning van deze soort was tot op heden echter nog nooit verschenen. Dit artikel wil deze leegte opvullen en bovendien met een groot aantal foto's een idee geven van de gebruikelijke variatie bij de soort. Er wordt voornamelijk aandacht besteed aan de onvolwassen kleden. Het is belangrijk te onthouden dat de hier beschreven en geïllustreerde variatie uitsluitend betrekking heeft op vogels van de oostkust van Noord-Amerika.

Er wordt ingegaan op de verschillen met Zilvermeeuw *L argentatus*, van zowel de ondersoort *L a argenteus* als *L a argentatus*, en Kleine Mantelmeeuw *L fuscus*. De auteurs schatten dat c 90% van de eerstejaars vogels aan de oostkust van Amerika voldoende verschilt van Europese Zilvermeeuw om herkenbaar te zijn in Europa. Dit is ook zo voor c 70% van de tweede-winter- en c 40-50% van de derde-wintervogels. Om de determinatie hard te maken in Europa, zullen foto's meestal onontbeerlijk zijn.

Juveniel
Naast grootte en bouw (in alle kleden), zijn de volgende kleedkenmerken de belangrijkste:
- een grotendeels donkere staart
- (zeer) dichte bandering op de anaalstreek én onderstaartdekveren
- (zeer) dicht gebandeerde stuit en bovenstaartdekveren, die in grondkleur niet veel bleker zijn dan de rest van de bovendelen
- effen donkere onderdelen
- dunnere lichte randen aan de schouderveren
- donkerdere, meer effen tertials
- een donkere band over de (bases van de) grote dekveren
- uniform donkere ondervleugeldekveren
- iets doffer gekleurde binnenste handpennen

Kleine Mantelmeeuw verschilt door de donkerdere binnenste handpennen, de wittere stuit en bovenstaartdekveren en de meer gestreepte onderdelen.

Eerste-winter
De meeste kenmerken zijn dezelfde als bij juveniel, behalve:
- effen donkere achterhals en bovenmantel
- een variabel aantal vuil-grijze veren op zijborst en flanken (een gevolg van lichaamsrui)
- bleke kop
- meestal geen regelmatig gebandeerd patroon op schouderveren
- soms een opvallend roze snavelbasis

Tweede-winter
Bij nogal veel Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuwen van deze leeftijd lijkt het verenkleed nog sterk op dat van eerste-winter. De iris is vaak echter al bleek, de handpentoppen zijn meer afgerond en de tekening op de tertials en grote dekveren is fijner en 'ingewikkelder'. De belangrijkste verschillen met Zilvermeeuw zijn:
- effen donkere achterhals, bovenmantel en onderdelen
- effen donkere tertials, met slechts smalle lichte toppen
- (zeer) dichte bandering op onderstaartdekveren (zoals bij eerstejaars)
- (zeer) dichte bandering op stuit en bovenstaartdekveren
- een vrijwel volledig donkere staart
- snavel met uitgebreid roze, vuilbruine of vuilgrijze basis, soms met iets groene tint
- meestal geen witte spiegel op p10
- meer uniform donkere ondervleugeldekveren
- donkerdere en meer effen grote dekveren
- ofwel rommelige, 'onvolwassen' bovendelen, ofwel bleekgrijs zadel dat afsteekt tegen de donkere onderdelen en dekveren.

Derde-winter
Opnieuw zien nogal wat Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuwen van deze leeftijd er schijnbaar jonger uit, als tweede-winter. Sommige zijn in zit echter op leeftijd te brengen aan de hand van de (kleine) witte handpentoppen. In vlucht is de kleur van de binnenste handpennen een diagnostisch leeftijdskenmerk: bruin of vuilgrijs bij tweede-winter, blauwgrijs met brede witte toppen bij derde-winter. De belangrijkste kenmerken:
- diep-zwarte of zeer zwart-bruine vlekken op tertials
- scherp afgescheiden, zwarte centra op armpennen
- scherp afgescheiden, zwarte vlekken op staart; soms is de staart nog grotendeels zwart
- zeer donkere kop, hals en borst
- bij sommige vogels is het handpenpatroon mogelijk ook van belang.

Vierde-winter
Sommige vogels van deze leeftijd zijn nog herkenbaar aan:
- zwarte 'inktvlekken' op tertials
- scherp afgescheiden, zwarte vlekken op armpennen
- scherp afgescheiden, zwarte tekening op handpendekveren
- donkerdere, meer effen tekening op kop en borst
- mogelijk ook handpenpatroon.

Verder wordt ook nog ingegaan op mogelijke verwarring met hybriden Grote Burgemeester x Zilvermeeuw *L hyperboreus x argentatus*.

Een uitgebreid artikel over de herkenning van adulte vogels zal later dit jaar in Dutch Birding verschijnen.

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Pat Lonergan, La Vienne, Prosperous Road, Clane, Kildare, Ireland (pat.lonergan@ucd.ie)
Killian Mullarney, Redshire House, Redshire Road, Murrintown, Wexford, Ireland (kmullarney@eircom.net)

86 STOP PRESS! American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, juvenile moulting to first-winter, Nimmo's Pier, Galway, Ireland, 24 January 2004 *(Pat Lonergan)*. They don't come much more distinctive than this!

Geelpootmeeuwcomplex van IJmuiden: in hoeverre zijn geelpootmeeuwen echte Geelpootmeeuwen?

Fred Cottaar

Geelpootmeeuwen *Larus michahellis* en 'geelpotige meeuwen' geven veel stof tot discussie. Onderzoek naar zowel de herkenning als de systematiek van de groep vindt plaats op vele fronten. Steeds weer komt er nieuwe informatie beschikbaar, de laatste jaren onder meer door toepassing van DNA-analyses. Recente overzichten van het voorkomen van Geelpootmeeuwen in Nederland worden gegeven door van Swelm (1999) en van den Berg & Bosman (2001). Van Swelm (1999) gaf aan dat tal van studies uitwijzen dat hybridisatie van meeuwen vaak voorkomt bij uitbreiding van het broedgebied. Bij gebrek aan partners van de eigen soort hybridiseren Geelpootmeeuwen in Noordwest-Europa met Zilvermeeuw *L argentatus* en Kleine Mantelmeeuw *L fuscus graellsii* (zie voor herkenning van hybriden Adriaens 2003). Tijdens meeuweninventarisaties in de IJmond, Velsen, Noord-Holland, die vanaf 1987 plaatsvinden, worden jaarlijks Geelpootmeeuwen waargenomen. Door broedvogels en hun jongen te kleurringen zijn interessante gegevens verzameld. Zo kon aan de hand van kleurringen van een aantal sterk op Geelpootmeeuw lijkende vogels worden achterhaald dat het hybriden betrof. Met dit artikel wordt een overzicht gepresenteerd van de bevindingen. Dit heeft vooral als doel om waarnemingen vast te leggen voor de toekomst en een bijdrage te leveren aan de discussie over de plaats van Geelpootmeeuw in de systematiek van de grote witkoppige meeuwen (cf Yésou 2002).

Aantallen 1987-2002

De eerste waarneming van een adult vrouwtje Geelpootmeeuw gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw werd gedaan op het Forteiland, een eiland in de monding van het Noordzeekanaal, in de zomer van 1987, het eerste inventarisatiejaar (Cottaar & Maassen 1988). Vanaf 1991 was een Geelpootmeeuw (gedetermineerd op grond van uiterlijke kenmerken; zie Discussie) aanwezig op het dak van de nabijgelegen IJbunker. Dit exemplaar, eveneens een adult vrouwtje, werd op 23 mei 1994 met behulp van een inloopkooi over het nest gevangen en geringd (Cottaar & Verbeek 1994) (plaat 90). Mogelijk was dit hetzelfde als dat van het Forteiland, aangezien hier alle meeuwen in 1988

87-88 Geelpootmeeuw / Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*, derde-zomer mannetje (wit = / rood 4), IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, 3 juni 1996 *(Fred Cottaar)*. Zelfde vogel als in plaat 88.

[*Dutch Birding 26: 36-42, 2004*]

89 Geelpootmeeuw / Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*, derde-zomer mannetje (wit = / rood 4), IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, 3 juni 1996 *(Fred Cottaar)*. Zelfde vogel als in plaat 87-88. Bovenvleugel met donkere tekening op handdekveren duidt op derde-zomer.

90 Hybride geelpootmeeuw / hybrid yellow-legged gull *Larus*, adult vrouwtje ('stammoeder' wit = / rood 9), IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, 23 mei 1994 *(Fred Cottaar)*. Bovenvleugel; patroon op vleugelpunt vertoont gelijkenis met Geelpootmeeuw *L michahellis*.

door één of meerdere Vossen *Vulpes vulpes* werden verstoord waarna de vestiging van meeuwen op daken in de volgende jaren behoorlijk toenam. Deze vogel heeft ons veel informatie verschaft, omdat zij in ieder geval tot en met 2002 op dezelfde plek broedde. Zo konden gegevens verzameld worden over de eieren en kuikens (die vanaf 1994 allemaal werden gekleurringd). Op 12 mei 1997 werd zij teruggevangen op het nest waarbij bloed voor mtDNA-onderzoek werd afgenomen en kleurringen werden aangebracht (aan de linkerpoot een witte ring met twee bars (dwarsbanden) en aan de rechterpoot een rode ring met inscriptie 9; hierna weergegeven als wit = / rood 9). Verschillende pogingen om haar partner, een Kleine Mantelmeeuw, te vangen en te kleurringen mislukten.

Een tweede Geelpootmeeuw, een derde-zomer mannetje, werd op 3 juni 1996 op de IJbunker gevangen en gekleurringd (wit = / rood 4), eveneens met behulp van een inloopkooi over het nest (plaat 87-89). Ook dit exemplaar kon gevolgd worden tot en met 2002. Zijn partner, een Kleine Mantelmeeuw, werd op 28 mei 1996 op het nest gevangen en gekleurringd. Een ander vrouwtje Kleine Mantelmeeuw, dat in de loop van 2000 zijn partner werd, werd op 19 mei 2001 gekleurringd. Het eerste vrouwtje, te herkennen aan haar kleurringen, was toen nog steeds aanwezig in de kolonie maar heeft sindsdien niet meer gebroed en zwerft in de broedtijd door de kolonie. Ook van deze Geelpootmeeuw werden zoveel mogelijk jongen gekleurringd. Beide Geelpootmeeuwen broedden na het ringen jaarlijks op vrijwel dezelfde plek op de IJbunker (respectievelijk negen en ten minste zeven jaar).

In 1993 werd in het broedseizoen op de IJbunker tweemaal een mannetje Geelpootmeeuw gezien, dat interesse toonde in een vrouwtje Zilvermeeuw. Vervolgwaarnemingen ontbraken echter.

Door de toename in aantallen Zilvermeeuwen en Kleine Mantelmeeuwen op het eveneens in de IJmond gelegen Middensluiseiland waren ook hier waarnemingen van Geelpootmeeuwen te

verwachten. Tijdens inventarisaties van nesten in 1997 werden twee exemplaren alarmerende aangetroffen. Broeden kon niet worden bevestigd maar heeft gezien het gedrag van beide vogels vermoedelijk wel plaatsgevonden. In 1999 werd hier een mannetje met drie half volgroeide kuikens aangetroffen. In 2000 was het weer raak en werden twee Geelpootmeeuwen ontdekt. Een van beide was een vrouwtje met een nest, gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw, en de andere een mannetje, waarvan de partner onbekend bleef (mannetje gedetermineerd op grond van gedrag en zeer grote formaat). In 2001 werden hier maar liefst drie exemplaren gezien. Twee waren vermoedelijk dezelfde als in 2000 en een derde, een geringd vrouwtje, had als partner een Kleine Mantelmeeuw. Tevens werd op de IJbunker een ongeringde aangetroffen. Pogingen om deze te vangen en te kleurringen mislukten maar wel werd zijn partner, een vrouwtje Kleine Mantelmeeuw, gevangen en voorzien van kleurringen. Het paar bracht met succes één jong groot. Elders op het industrieterrein werden dat jaar de eerste gekleurringde nazaten van het gekleurringde vrouwtje van de IJbunker (wit = / rood 9) aangetroffen. Het eerste exemplaar, een mannetje, was gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw en had twee kuikens. Het tweede, ook een mannetje, werd gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw op een dak elders aangetroffen, maar bracht geen jongen groot. Enkele andere gekleurringde hybriden, eveneens haar nazaten, werden op en rond de IJbunker gezien maar waren niet gepaard en hadden geen territorium.

In 2002 werd het geringde vrouwtje uit 2001 gezien op het Middensluiseiland, op vrijwel dezelfde locatie als in 2001. Het derde exemplaar van de IJbunker in 2001, gepaard met het

91-93 Hybride geelpootmeeuw / hybrid yellow-legged gull *Larus*, vijf jaar oud mannetje (wit = / rood 3), nazaat van 'stammoeder' in plaat 90 (wit = / rood 9), 26 mei 2003, IJmuiden, Noord-Holland *(Fred Cottaar)*. Verschilt van Kleine Mantelmeeuw *L fuscus graellsii* door forse bouw en lichtere kleur van bovendelen, hoewel deze wellicht iets donkerder zijn dan bij Geelpootmeeuw *L michahellis*. Kop vertoont gelijkenis met Geelpootmeeuw door oranjerode oogrand en forse, grotendeels oranjegele, snavel met opvallende gonys. Patroon op vleugelpunt van bovenvleugel vertoont gelijkenis met Geelpootmeeuw. Grijs op armvleugel, met name bij voorrand, mogelijk iets donkerder dan bij Geelpootmeeuw.

TABEL 1 Nazaten van 'stammoeder' geelpootmeeuw *Larus* (wit = / rood 9) te IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, in 1994-2002 / offspring of yellow-legged gull *Larus* (white = / red 9) at IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, in 1994-2002

Ringcode	**Geslacht**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**
Wit 2 / Rood 1		G			X	X	X			
Wit 2 / Rood 2	M	G			X	X	X		B	B
Wit – / Rood T			G		X	X				
Wit – / Rood X			G							
Wit 3 / Rood 3				G						
Wit 3 / Rood =	M			G				X	X	T
Wit 3 / Rood –	M			G			X	X	B	B
Wit = / Rood –					G					
Wit = / Rood =						G			X	X
Wit = / Rood 3	M					G			X	T
Groen / CV7	V					G			X	X
Groen / EAV5							G			
Rood / E722	M							G		X
Rood / E729								G		
Rood / E752								G		
Rood / E482									G	
Rood / E485										G
Rood / E486										G
Rood / E487										G

G Geringd als kuiken op nest op IJbunker / ringed as nestling on nest at IJbunker
X Ringmelding uit IJmond / ring read at IJmond
B Broedend in IJmond / breeding at IJmond
T Territoriaal in IJmond / territorial at IJmond
M Mannetje / male
V Vrouwtje / female

TABEL 2 Nazaten van mannetje Geelpootmeeuw *Larus michahellis* (wit = / rood 4) te IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, in 1998-2002 / offspring of Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* (white = / red 4) at IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, in 1998-2002

Ringcode	**Geslacht**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**
Groen / EE65	M	G		X	X	X
Groen / EAM2		G				
Oranje / KRO		G				
Rood / E481					G	
Rood / E489						G
Rood / E490						G

G Geringd als kuiken op nest op IJbunker / ringed as nestling on nest at IJbunker
X Ringmelding uit IJmond / ring read at IJmond
M Mannetje / male

gekleurringde vrouwtje Kleine Mantelmeeuw, keerde niet terug en zij viel voor de charmes van een ander mannetje, dit keer een Kleine Mantelmeeuw. Twee gekleurringde hybriden (nazaten van wit = / rood 9), beide mannetjes, hadden een territorium op de IJbunker, en wederom twee, dezelfde als in 2001, elders op daken van het industrieterrein, waarvan er één (hetzelfde exemplaar als in 2001) met succes twee jongen grootbracht.

Buiten de kolonies worden in IJmuiden regelmatig Geelpootmeeuwen op wasplaatsen (Binnenspuikanaal en Kennemermeer) en in de haven waargenomen. Zeker in een kolonie als op het Middensluiseiland, met 1773 paren van Kleine Mantelmeeuw en 153 paren van Zilvermeeuw in 2002, kunnen exemplaren over het hoofd zijn gezien.

Twee exemplaren nader bekeken

Omdat twee vogels voor het onderzoek in IJmuiden belangrijk zijn, wordt op deze iets dieper ingegaan. De eerste betreft het vrouwtje dat in 1994 werd gevangen. Kleurringen (wit = / rood 9) werden toegevoegd op 12 mei 1997. Vanaf die datum konden we haar vrij gemakkelijk volgen in en om IJmuiden. Waarnemingen buiten deze regio werden in Nederland niet gedaan. Wel werd deze vogel in februari 1998 en januari 2002 door Alain Kim afgelezen op Ile d'Oléron, Charente-Maritime, Frankrijk (46:02 N, 01:24 W) (Alain Kim in litt).

De tweede vogel betreft het mannetje dat in 1996 werd gevangen. Deze vogel kreeg alleen kleurringen (wit = / rood 4). Ook van deze vogel hebben we vrijwel alleen maar waarnemingen uit IJmuiden. Alleen op 16 december 2001 werd hij in het buitenland opgemerkt, door Adrian Dally te Barking Bay aan de Theems, Londen, Engeland (51:32 N, 00:05 E) (Adrian Dally in litt). Opvallende bijkomstigheid was dat zijn gekleurringde partner op dat moment in Zuidwest-Frankrijk verbleef.

In tabel 1 en 2 wordt een overzicht gegeven van de hybriden die beide vogels grootbrachten. Een aantal van deze hybriden werd als volwassen vogel opnieuw in een broedkolonie in de IJmond aangetroffen (plaat 91-93). Een exemplaar dat in 1994 werd geringd met kleurringen (wit 2 / rood 1) werd in juni 2003 gefotografeerd in een meeuwenkolonie bij Holendrecht, Amsterdam, Noord-Holland (plaat 94-96). De vogel was hier gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw en had twee kuikens. In 2000 werd dit exemplaar ook al bij Holendrecht gezien (Martijn de Jonge in litt).

Discussie

Het onderzoek in IJmuiden bracht aan het licht dat sinds 1987 Geelpootmeeuwen en hybriden in een gemengde kolonie Zilvermeeuwen en Kleine Mantelmeeuwen hebben gebroed. De aantallen zijn daarna toegenomen. Vrijwel alle Geelpootmeeuwen en hybriden die territoria hadden of broedden, waren gepaard met een Kleine Mantelmeeuw. In 2002 betrof dat minimaal zeven exemplaren. Hiervan brachten minimaal drie paren met succes jongen groot. Het aantal hybriden zal naar verwachting, gebaseerd op de waarnemingen van gekleuringde individuen, verder toenemen.

Onderzoek aan de Geelpootmeeuw die in IJmuiden als stammoeder (wit = / rood 9) fungeert liet zien dat de vogel uiterlijk gezien een 'phenotypische *michahellis*' is. Zo onderscheidt ze zich van Zilvermeeuw door de heldergele poten, oranjegele kleur op snavel, oranjerode oogrand, grote hoeveelheid zwart op vleugelpunt en donkerder grijze bovendelen en van Kleine Mantelmeeuw door de forse bouw en lichtere kleur van de bovendelen. De vogel heeft echter een klassiek Zilvermeeuw-mtDNA-profiel en heeft dus ergens in haar stamboom een Zilvermeeuw als vrouwelijke voorouder gehad (Peter de Knijff & Dorit Liebers in litt). Volgens Peter de Knijff (in litt) is het zelfs niet uit te sluiten dat zij een Zilvermeeuw x Kleine Mantelmeeuw hybride is of een 'back-cross' (terugkruising van een hybride met een van de oorspronkelijke oudersoorten). Met de huidige mogelijkheden voor DNA-onderzoek zijn geen nadere uitspraken op dit vlak te doen.

Gezien de genetische Zilvermeeuw-invloed is het des te opvallender dat vrijwel alle in IJmuiden waargenomen geelpootmeeuwbroedparen, op één na, bestonden uit een Geelpootmeeuw (of hybride) en een Kleine Mantelmeeuw. Uit dit onderzoek blijkt duidelijk dat het aantal Geelpootmeeuwen en hybriden aan het toenemen is en uitwaaiert over de hele kolonie. Uiterlijke kenmerken pleiten soms zeer duidelijk voor Geelpootmeeuw maar blijken bijvoorbeeld in het geval van het gekleurringde vrouwtje (wit = / rood 9) niet de waarheid te vertellen, omdat we toch te maken hebben met een hybride. Op grond van de ontwikkelingen in de afgelopen jaren lijkt er in IJmuiden een groeiende groep van 'geelpootmeeuwen' (waaronder zuivere Geelpootmeeuwen, hybriden met Kleine Mantelmeeuw en vogels met meer of minder genetische 'vervuiling' van Zilvermeeuw en/of Kleine Mantelmeeuw) te ontstaan en het zal in de toekomst steeds moeilijker worden om zeker te zijn van determinaties in het veld.

Dankwoord

De terreineigenaren van de IJbunker te IJmuiden (CEBO-Holland en VOMAR) worden bedankt voor hun bereidwillige medewerking. Ik ben Kees Verbeek erkentelijk voor zijn hulp bij het ringen en het aflezen en het bijhouden van de database van de gekleurringde meeuwen. Erik Maassen bleef maar aandringen dat een en ander op papier gezet moest worden. Verder bedank ik Peter de Knijff en Dorit Liebers voor het DNA-onderzoek aan onze 'stammoeder', Arie Spaans en Norman van Swelm voor het leveren van de kleurringen, het Vogeltrekstation te Heteren, Gelderland, voor de toestemming om te (kleur)-

94-95 Hybride geelpootmeeuw / hybrid yellow-legged gull *Larus*, negen jaar oud, geslacht onbekend (wit 2 / rood 1), nazaat van 'stammoeder' in plaat 90 (wit = / rood 9), Holendrecht, Amsterdam, Noord-Holland, 25 juni 2003 *(Martijn de Jonge)*. Vogel lijkt op 'forse' Kleine Mantelmeeuw *L fuscus graellsii*; kleur van bovendelen lijkt iets te donker voor Geelpootmeeuw *L michahellis*.

96 Hybride geelpootmeeuw / hybrid yellow-legged gull *Larus*, negen jaar oud, geslacht onbekend (wit 2 / rood 1), nazaat van 'stammoeder' in plaat 90 (wit = / rood 9), Holendrecht, Amsterdam, Noord-Holland, 25 juni 2003 *(Martijn de Jonge)*. Zelfde vogel als in plaat 94-95.

ringen en Martijn de Jonge voor het ter beschikking stellen van fotomateriaal en informatie over de hybride bij Holendrecht.

Afgelezen ringen worden door Kees Verbeek (kees.jose.verbeek@hetnet.nl) bijgehouden; waarnemers ontvangen direct na hun melding, tenzij anders afgesproken, het levensverhaal van de vogel met een begeleidend schrijven over het onderzoek in IJmuiden.

Summary

YELLOW-LEGGED GULLS AND HYBRIDS BREEDING AT IJMUIDEN

Since 1987, small numbers of Yellow-legged Gulls *Larus michahellis* have been breeding in mixed colonies of European Herring Gull *L argentatus* and Lesser Black-backed Gull *L fuscus graellsii* at IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands. Almost all were paired with Lesser Black-backed Gulls, producing hybrid young. By trapping and colour-ringing birds, it was possible to follow them over the years. Some of the adult hybrids returned to the colonies and started to breed, always paired with Lesser Black-backed Gulls. In 2002 the number of breeding Yellow-legged Gulls and hybrids was at least seven. On 12 May 1997, a female that had been breeding and producing hybrids since 1991 was trapped and a blood sample was taken for DNA-analysis. This indicated that she was not a pure Yellow-legged Gull, although she looked like one, but that one of her female ancestors had been a European Herring Gull. With this in mind, and with a growing number of known hybrids and possible backcrosses in the colonies, it has become increasingly difficult to be sure of identification when seeing a yellow-legged gull.

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Fred Cottaar, Lutulistraat 42, 2037 CB Haarlem, Nederland

Pale-throated ('*vittata*') morph of female Pied Wheatear

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* (hereafter *pleschanka*) is widely distributed in the Palearctic, breeding from eastern Bulgaria and eastern Romania in the west to Siberia, Mongolia and northern and western China in the east (cf Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Where the ranges of *pleschanka* and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca* (hereafter *melanoleuca*) meet or overlap, the species frequently hybridize. In Europe, hybridization occurs in eastern Bulgaria (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997, Ullman 2003). In Asia, extensive hybridization is reported from three areas: northern Iran, north-western Transcaspia, and central and eastern Transcaucasia (Cramp 1988). The mixed population on the Magyshlak peninsula, north-western Transcaspia, Kazakhstan, appears to be an ancient product of hybridization between *pleschanka* and *melanoleuca*, resulting in polymorphism. Nowadays, there is no gene flow from the western Caspian region, inhabited by *melanoleuca*, to the population of the Magyshlak peninsula (Eugeny Panov in litt). In the latter population, the pale-throated '*vittata*' morph of *pleschanka* is common (Panov et al 1994). In or near areas where *pleschanka* and *melanoleuca* hybridize, up to 11% of the *pleschanka* males belong to this morph. Further east, pale-throated males are much rarer and may constitute only c 1% of the (male) population (Cramp 1988); they have also been recorded in western China (Svensson 1992). The all-white throat-feathers without any black and pattern of the upperparts of birds studied in the hand (collected or ringed) confirm that these birds are pure pale-throated *pleschanka* and not hybrids or intergrades with *melanoleuca*, in which some black markings on the throat would be expected.

Pale-throated '*vittata*' females of *pleschanka* also exist (cf Cramp 1988). Such females are not

97 Pied Wheatear / Bonte Tapuit *Oenanthe pleschanka*, pale-throated ('*vittata*') morph, adult male, Chokpak pass, Kazakhstan, September 2001 *(Andrei E Gavrilov)*. Whitish throat and upperbreast, small face-mask, limited amount of black above lores, black of lores not meeting above bill and presence of some blackish feathers between ear-coverts and carpal joint indicate that this is a pale-throated ('*vittata*') morph Pied Wheatear. The black lores, without pale fringes, show that it is an adult. **98** Pied Wheatear / Bonte Tapuit *Oenanthe pleschanka*, female, Chokpak pass, Kazakhstan, April 2002 *(Arend Wassink)*. Both in autumn and in early spring, 'normal' females can show a pale throat but even the palest throat still shows a dusky tinge as in this bird.

Pale-throated ('vittata') morph of female Pied Wheatear

99-101 Pied Wheatear / Bonte Tapuit *Oenanthe pleschanka*, pale-throated ('*vittata*') morph, female, Chokpak pass, Kazakhstan, April 2002 *(Arend Wassink)*. Combination of upperparts colour, very pale throat without any dusky colouration, orangy-brown breast-band and brownish smudge on breast-sides makes this bird look extremely similar to a number of female Eastern Black-eared Wheatears *O melanoleuca* and these birds may not be identifiable with certainty. This bird was paired with a 'normal' male Pied Wheatear (see plate 102).

rare in the mixed population on the Mangyshlak peninsula and they can also be found throughout the central Asian former Soviet states and in the Altai (Eugeny Panov in litt). Pale-throated females always have a dark grey basis to the throat-feathers (Panov 1989, contra Svensson 1992), unlike pale-throated males which always have completely whitish throat-feathers (ie, including the basis). In 'normal' autumn *pleschanka* females, the throat colour varies from pale to dark, with even the palest throat still showing a dusky tinge. In spring, although there is some (age-related?) variation, they show a dark throat; the degree of darkness depends on wear (for a discussion of the separation of 'normal' *pleschanka* and *melanoleuca*, see Ullman 1994). In pale-throated '*vittata*' females, the throat is always pale whitish to buffish, never showing any dark colouration because, as already pointed out, only the very bases to the throat-feathers are dark grey. Even in spring, when these feathers are worn, the dark feather-bases are still not showing.

102 Pied Wheatears / Bonte Tapuiten *Oenanthe pleschanka*, Chokpak pass, Kazakhstan, April 2002 *(Arend Wassink)*. Pale-throated ('*vittata*') morph female (right); same bird as in plate 99-101. This female was paired with a 'normal' male Pied Wheatear (left).

Observers should be aware that a number of '*vittata*' females can look extremely similar to pale-throated and plain-faced *melanoleuca* females. Such '*vittata*' females have also been recorded in the eastern part of the breeding range of *pleschanka*, for instance in western China (Hadoram Shirihai in litt), where *melanoleuca* is not present and, if reliably recorded, would be a true vagrant. In the field, they cannot be safely distinguished from *melanoleuca*. Even in the hand, the identification is difficult because of the large overlap in measurements (cf plate 99-102). The only reliable difference in the hand is the colouration of the basis to the throat-feathers, dark grey in '*vittata*' and whitish in *melanoleuca*.

Among the large numbers of *pleschanka* migrating through the Arabian peninsula in autumn and spring (to and from, respectively, their winter range in eastern Africa), pale-throated males have been recorded in Oman (Eriksen et al 2001), Saudi Arabia (Rietkerk & Wacher 1996), United Arab Emirates (Aspinall & Hellyer 1998) and Yemen (Magnus Ullman in litt). So far, no pale-throated '*vittata*' females have been identified in this region. Presumably, some records of pale-throated *melanoleuca* females in the Arabian peninsula as well as further east – where this species is scarce or rare – may in fact refer to '*vittata*' females. Even in western Europe, such '*vittata*' females could turn up, as already pointed out by Ullman (1994).

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Arend Wassink, Postweg 64, 1795 JR De Cocksdorp, Netherlands (arendwassink@hetnet.nl)

Brieven

Origin of presumed African Chaffinch on Maasvlakte in April 2003

When discussing the origin of the presumed male African Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs africana/spodiogenys* present on the Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, on 4-5 April 2003, van Dijl (2003) concluded that, taking into account the 'sedentary behaviour' of these taxa, the possibility of ship-assisted vagrancy should not be ruled out. I disagree with him. In fact, the geographical and seasonal distributions of the reports in Europe support the view that they refer to birds that have travelled unaided from northern Africa to Europe. If African Chaffinches would regularly cross the Mediterranean Sea on board ship, then one would expect a concentration of records at southern European ports. This is, however, not the case. Another point against the 'ship-assisted vagrancy' hypothesis is that eight of the 15 reports in Europe (c 53%) were at inland localities (table 1). Interestingly, three of the four spring reports in 2003 were inland. The seasonal pattern – with 12 of the 15 reports (80%) in April-May (table 1) – also supports the assumption that the birds involved arrived in Europe unaided. It seems unlikely that African Chaffinches would make ship-assisted crossings primarily during a short period in spring. The distinct seasonal pattern is also an argument against the view that the birds might be (or involve) escapes. It should be noted that the three autumn/winter reports may also concern birds that arrived in spring.

Since most reports of African Chaffinch in Europe coincide with the spring migration of northern European Common Chaffinches *F c coelebs*, it is tempting to assume a relationship between these two phenomena. However, before speculating on this, more information is needed, especially on the movements of *F c africana* and *F c spodiogenys* in northern Africa.

Finally, it should be pointed out that ship-assisted vagrancy generally only occurs in migrant birds and not, as suggested by van Dijl (2003), in birds showing 'sedentary behaviour'.

I thank Per Åsander, Arnoud van den Berg, Vegard Bunes (Norwegian rarities committee), Christian Cederroth (Swedish rarities committee) and Killian Mullarney for their help.

TABLE 1 Reports of presumed African Chaffinches / Afrikaanse Vinken *Fringilla coelebs africana/spodiogenys* in Europe. Most reports were found by consulting Birding World, Dutch Birding, Ornithos, Vår Fågelvärld and Vår Fuglefauna, and the Internet. So far, no reports were formally accepted. **C**, coastal record; **I**, inland record.

England (1)
9-25 April 1994 and 2-21 January 1995, Fingringhoe Wick, Essex, male, photographed (Birding World 7: 134, 1994, 8: 8, 1995); **C**
NB1 Identification as African Chaffinch was not accepted by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC), given several 'important' anomalies in the plumage (Ibis 141: 178, 1999).
NB2 The record of an aberrant (partially albinistic) male Common Chaffinch 'thought slightly mimicking' an African Chaffinch at Kendal, Cumbria, in February-March 1998 is not included (cf Birding World 11: 48, 1998).

France (1)
19 April 2003, Mijoux, Col de la Faucille, Ain, Haut-Jura, male; **I**
NB There is also a report in the 1860s.

Ireland (1)
late December 2002 to at least 7 April 2003, Sligo, male, photographed; **I**
NB A bird trapped and photographed on Great Saltee Island, Wexford, on 25 May 1994 was erroneously identified as African Chaffinch. In fact, it was a slightly paler-breasted than normal male or, possibly, a somewhat male-like female Common Chaffinch (Killian Mullarney in litt).

Netherlands (4)
30 April 1999, Eemshaven, Groningen, female, sound-recorded (sound-recording at www.dutchbirding.nl/sounds/nachaffinch.html); **C**
4-5 April 2003, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, male, photographed (van Dijl 2003; Dutch Birding 25: 198, plate 221, 203, plate 226, 2003); **C**
14 April 2003, Grote Praambult, Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, male; **I**
28 November 2003 to at least 6 January 2004, Haren, Groningen, adult male, photographed (Brinkhuizen et al 2004; Dutch Birding 26: 85, plate 144-145, 2004); **I**

Norway (2)
13 April 1998, Jomfruland, Kragerø, Telemark, male; **C**
12 April 2002, Ulvilla, Verdal, Nord-Trøndelag, male,

photographed (photographs at www.nofnt.no/trond/Fugl/2002/africana.htm); **I**

Sweden (6)
9 May 1997, Fjälkvarn, Lit, Östersund, Jämtland, male **I**
5 April 1998, Gällstad, Västergötland, male, photographed (Vår Fågelvärld 57: 48, 1998); **I**
5 April 1998, Sjösagård, Nyköping, Södermanland, male, photographed (photographs at http://w1.155.telia.com/~u15506372/afbof98.htm); **C**
11 April 2001, Trädgården, Ottenby, Öland, adult (at least third calendar-year) male, trapped, photographed (photographs via several links in downloadable file at www.sofnet.org/ofstn/dagbok/filer/ 11_apr_2001.rtf); **C**
14 October 2001, Morups Tånge, Falkenberg, Halland, male, photographed; **C**
9 April to 5 May 2003, Stegelviken, Storfors, Värmland, male, photographed (photographs at http://home.swipnet.se/~w-25648/birds/bofink/bofinke/index.htm and http://home.swipnet.se/~w-25648/birds/bofink/index.htm); **I**

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Gerald J Oreel, Deurganck 15, 1902 AN Castricum, Netherlands (gerald.oreel@planet.nl)

DBA-nieuws

Programma DBA-vogeldag op 7 februari 2004 Op zaterdag 7 februari vindt de jaarlijkse DBA-vogeldag plaats. De locatie is zoals altijd het Hoofdgebouw Diergeneeskunde, Yalelaan 1, Utrecht (De Uithof), Utrecht. Deze locatie is bereikbaar met buslijnen 11 en 12 vanaf Utrecht CS, en met de auto via afslag 'De Uithof' vanaf de A27 en A28. Neem na het UMC-complex de eerste weg links (let op de Dutch Birding-borden). Op het grote parkeerterrein voor het gebouw kan gratis geparkeerd worden.

Het programma ziet er als volgt uit. Vanaf 09:00 kunnen de bezoekers naar binnen. De toegangsprijs voor zowel begunstigers als niet-begunstigers bedraagt EUR 5.00. Het lezingenprogramma begint om 09:45 uur in zaal 2 (de 'grote' zaal) met de opening door DBA-voorzitter Gijsbert van der Bent. Daarna volgen in zaal 2: 10:00-11:00 Mark Constantine, Magnus Robb en Arnoud van den Berg: The Sound Approach (geluiden, determinatie, expedities); 11:30-12:30 Marc Guyt: Kenia; 13:30-14:30 Leo van den Bergh: Geografische variatie van rietganzen, herkenning van diverse populaties, recente en ingrijpende verschuiving in overwinteringsgebieden. Aansluitend hierop een informele 'workshop' door Leo van den Bergh, waarbij iedereen zijn vragen, problemen en foto's aan hem kan voorleggen; 16:00-17:00 Wim Wiegant: Jaaroverzicht 2003.

Zoals de laatste jaren gebruikelijk is er een dubbelprogramma. In zaal 1 staan gepland: 11:30-12:00 Dick Groenendijk en Rob van Bemmelen: mystery bird-competitie (alleen dia's); 13:30-14:30 Bas van den Boogaard: zuidelijke Verenigde Staten; 15:00-15:45 Oplossingen mystery bird-competitie.

Het programma staat ook op de website (www.dutchbirding.nl) en kan via een pdf-file geprint worden. Wijzingen worden bekendgemaakt via deze website en via de Dutch Birding-vogellijn (0900-BIRDING; EUR 0.35 per min).

De foyer/hal doet dienst als ontmoetingscentrum en als 'vogelaarsbeurs'. Er worden zoals altijd ook broodjes, snacks en dranken verkocht. Bij de stand van de DBA kan men terecht voor DBA-artikelen, back-issues en vragen aan bestuur en/of redactie. Met een stand zullen aanwezig zijn (voor zover bekend op moment van schrijven): het tijdschrift Alula, Bever Zwerfsport, Birdsongs, Combi Focus, Cursorius, Wil Heemskerk, Moby Dick, Natura Aragon, Natuur Digitaal, Natuur en Boek, P&M, SOVON en Swarovski. Voor meer inlichtingen en aanmeldingen van stands kan men zich wenden tot Arjan van Egmond (arjan.van.egmond@dutchbirding.nl). GIJSBERT VAN DER BENT, ARJAN VAN EGMOND & ROB OLIVIER

Samenstelling DBA-bestuur 2004 en nieuwe medewerkers In 2003 nam het bestuur afscheid van Rob Olivier. Rob is de afgelopen jaren voor een belangrijk deel verantwoordelijk geweest voor de realisatie, de inhoud en het onderhoud van de Dutch Birding-website. Het bestuur is hem zeer dankbaar voor de grote inspanningen die hij daarvoor heeft gedaan. Samen met Marc Plomp heeft Rob recentelijk Natuur Digitaal opgericht. Wij wensen hem veel succes daarmee. Hij blijft binnen de DBA actief als bestuursmedewerker (organisatie DBA-vogeldag en Dutch Birding-vogelweek). De website www.dutchbirding.nl heeft onder Robs bewind een grote vlucht genomen. In 2003 werd het miljoenste bezoek geregistreerd, het totaal aantal bezoeken kwam in 2003 uit op 558.681 en inmiddels (half januari) staat de teller al op ruim 1.3 miljoen. Robs plaats in het bestuur is ingenomen door Wietze Janse, 'begeesterd twitcher' en erkend specialist in communicatieapparatuur.

De samenstelling van het bestuur en de globale taak-

verdeling voor 2004 zien er dan als volgt uit: Theo Admiraal, penningmeester, begeleiding bijzondere (boek)uitgaven, begeleiding Piepergroep 2000; Gijsbert van der Bent, voorzitter, deels secretaris, organisatie DBA-dag; Wietze Janse, website- en automatiseringszaken; Marc Plomp, secretaris (voorbereiden en verslaglegging vergaderingen), organisatie vogelweek; en Laurens Steijn, advertenties, ledenwerving.

Sander Lagerveld heeft eind vorig jaar het voorzitterschap van de Piepergroep 2000 overgedragen aan Michel Veldt. Het bestuur bedankt Sander voor zijn jarenlange inzet ten behoeve van de semafoonhouders. Als nieuwe bestuursmedewerkers verwelkomden we in 2003 Marcel Scholte (coördinator waarnemingen op de website), Albert van den Ende (webmaster) en Patrick Palmen (invoer waarnemingen op de website). GIJSBERT VAN DER BENT

CSNA-mededelingen

Taxonomische veranderingen Nederlandse lijst De Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA) heeft onlangs een nieuw rapport gepubliceerd met taxonomische wijzigingen die betrekking hebben op de Nederlandse avifaunistische lijst (Sangster, G, van den Berg, A B, van Loon, A J & Roselaar, C S 2003. Dutch avifaunal list: taxonomic changes in 1999-2003. Ardea 91: 281-287). De wijzigingen zijn als volgt: ***1*** van acht soorten is de wetenschappelijke naam veranderd zodat deze grammaticaal juist wordt (Nijlgans *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, Amerikaanse Goudplevier *Pluvialis dominica*, Amerikaanse Oeverloper *Actitis macularius*, Rosse Franjepoot *Phalaropus fulicarius*, Witwangstern *Chlidonias hybrida*, Huiszwaluw *Delichon urbicum*, Aziatische Roodborsttapuit *Saxicola maurus* en Vuurgoudhaan *Regulus ignicapilla*); ***2*** van twee soorten is een andere wetenschappelijke naam noodzakelijk omdat de oorspronkelijke naam gebaseerd was op een verkeerd geïdentificeerd type-exemplaar (Iberische Tjiftjaf *Phylloscopus ibericus* en Daurische Klauwier *Lanius isabellinus*); ***3*** zes soorten worden monotypisch omdat ondersoorten die niet in Nederland zijn vastgesteld nu als aparte soort worden beschouwd (Rode Wouw *Milvus milvus*, Schreeuwarend *Aquila pomarina*, Pontische Meeuw *Larus cachinnans*, Woestijngrasmus *Sylvia nana*, Westelijke Orpheusgrasmus *S hortensis* en Kleine Vliegenvanger *Ficedula parva*); ***4*** twee soorten worden polytypisch omdat daartoe nu taxa worden gerekend die voorheen als aparte soort werden beschouwd (Kleine Mantelmeeuw *Larus fuscus* en Kleine Karekiet *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*); ***5*** 10 wetenschappelijke namen zijn gewijzigd als resultaat van revisies op genus-niveau (Krakeend *Anas strepera*, Bronskopeend *A falcata*, Smient *A penelope*, Amerikaanse Smient *A americana*, Dwergaalscholver *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, Kuifaalscholver *P aristotelis*, Jufferkraanvogel *Grus virgo*, Steltstrandloper *Calidris himantopus*, Sneeuwuil *Bubo scandiacus* en Grauwe Gors *Emberiza calandra*). Het volledige rapport is als pdf-file of print verkrijgbaar bij George Sangster (secretaris van de CSNA), Stevenshof 17, 2312 GM Leiden; e-mail csna@dutchbirding.nl. GEORGE SANGSTER

Taxonomic changes Dutch list The Dutch committee for avian systematics (CSNA) has recently published a new report documenting taxonomic changes to the Dutch avifaunal list (Sangster, G, van den Berg, A B, van Loon, A J & Roselaar, C S 2003. Dutch avifaunal list: taxonomic changes in 1999-2003. Ardea 91: 281-287). Changes in this report fall into five categories: ***1*** eight scientific names are changed to make them grammatically correct (Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*, Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*, Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*, Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*, Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* and Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*); ***2*** the scientific name of two species is changed due to re-identification of type specimens (Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* and Daurian Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*); ***3*** six species become monotypic due to the recognition of extralimital taxa as species (Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Pontic Gull *Larus cachinnans*, Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana*, Western Orphean Warbler *S hortensis* and Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*); ***4*** two species become polytypic due to the inclusion of taxa previously separated as species (Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* and Common Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*); ***5*** 10 scientific names of species are changed due to generic revisions (Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Falcated Duck *A falcata*, Eurasian Wigeon *A penelope*, American Wigeon *A americana*, Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*, European Shag *P aristotelis*, Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*, Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*, Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus* and Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*). The full report is available as a pdf-file or print from George Sangster (secretary of CSNA), Stevenshof 17, 2312 GM Leiden, the Netherlands; e-mail csna@dutchbirding.nl. GEORGE SANGSTER

Redactiemededelingen

Naamgeving van taxa in Dutch Birding

Voor taxonomie, naamgeving en volgorde van in Nederland waargenomen taxa houdt Dutch Birding zich aan de beslissingen van de Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA) (Sangster et al 1999, 2003). Dit is een gevolg van afspraken tussen DBA, Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie (NOU) en SOVON Vogelonderzoek die werden gemaakt in het kader van de publicatie van Avifauna van Nederland (van den Berg & Bosman 1999, 2001, Bijlsma et al 2001).

Voor niet in Nederland vastgestelde taxa wordt vanaf 1 januari 2004 'Howard and Moore' (Dickinson 2003) gevolgd (zie colofon; cf Dutch Birding 25: 398-399, 2003). Tot 1 januari 2004 werd Sibley (1996) aangehouden. In de afgelopen jaren zijn talloze artikelen gepubliceerd met voorstellen tot het wijzigen van bepaalde wetenschappelijke soortnamen, zowel om taxonomische redenen (zoals toekennen van soortstatus) als vanwege afspraken met betrekking tot nomenclatuur (cf David & Gosselin 2002ab, Knox et al 2002). Veel van die wijzigingen zijn te vinden in 'Howard and Moore'. Net als in 2002 en 2003 (Redactie Dutch Birding 2002, 2003) worden in het eerste nummer van deze jaargang van Dutch Birding veranderingen in wetenschappelijke naamgeving van West-Palearctische taxa vermeld die niet in 'Howard and Moore' zijn opgenomen of afwijken van eerder door de CSNA en/of Redactie Dutch Birding gepubliceerde besluiten en per 1 januari 2004 zijn doorgevoerd (zie tabel 1). Deze veranderingen hebben voor een deel betrekking op taxa die op de Nederlandse lijst staan en derhalve door de CSNA zijn bevestigd (Sangster et al 2003; zie ook de CSNA-mededeling elders in dit nummer: Dutch Birding 26: 48, 2004). De wijzigingen van overige taxa werden genomen na consultatie van CSNA-leden maar vallen buiten de formele beslissings-

TABEL 1 Vanaf 1 januari 2004 door Dutch Birding gebruikte nieuwe wetenschappelijke namen van West-Palearctische (WP) taxa. Soorten aangeduid met * staan op de Nederlandse lijst; deze besluiten vallen onder de verantwoordelijkheid van de CSNA / New scientific names for Western Palearctic (WP) taxa used in Dutch Birding from 1 January 2004. Species indicated by * are on the Dutch list; these decisions are delegated to the Dutch committee for avian systematics (CSNA).

(*)Nijlgans / Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* (was *Alopochen aegyptiacus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

*Smient / Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope* (was *Mareca penelope*) (Johnson & Sorenson 1999, Dickinson 2003).

*Amerikaanse Smient / American Wigeon *Anas americana* (was *Mareca americana*) (Johnson & Sorenson 1999, Dickinson 2003).

*Bronskopeend / Falcated Duck *Anas falcata* (was *Mareca falcata*) (Johnson & Sorenson 1999, Dickinson 2003).

*Krakeend / Gadwall *Anas strepera* (was *Mareca strepera*) (Johnson & Sorenson 1999, Dickinson 2003).

Schots Sneeuwhoen / Red Grouse *Lagopus lagopus scotica* (was *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Alpensneeuwhoen / Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta* (was *Lagopus mutus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

*Dwergaalscholver / Pygmy Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* (was *Microcarbo pygmeus*) (Bourne & Casement 1996, Kennedy et al 2002, Dickinson 2003).

Afrikaanse Dwergaalscholver / Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus* (was *Microcarbo africanus*) (Bourne & Casement 1996, Kennedy et al 2002, Dickinson 2003).

Geoorde Aalscholver / Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* (was *Hypoleucos auritus*) (Bourne & Casement 1996, Kennedy et al 2002, Dickinson 2003).

*Kuifaalscholver / European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* (was *Stictocarbo aristotelis*) (Bourne & Casement 1996, Kennedy et al 2002, Dickinson 2003). Ook buiten de WP vervalt de door Siegel-Causey (1988) voorgestelde classificatie waardoor alle aalscholvers weer onder *Phalacrocorax* vallen / also outside the WP the classification proposed by Siegel-Causey (1988) is no longer followed and all cormorants and shags again belong to *Phalacrocorax*.

Mangrovereiger / Striated Heron *Butorides striata* (was *Butorides striatus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Kaapverdische Wouw / Cape Verde Kite *Milvus fasciicauda* (was *Milvus milvus fasciicauda*) (Hazevoet 1995).

Gestreepte Vechtkwartel / Small Button-quail *Turnix sylvaticus* (was *Turnix sylvatica*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

*Jufferkraanvogel / Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* (was

Anthropoides virgo) (Krajewski 1989, Dessauer et al 1992, Ingold et al 1989, Krajewski & Fetzner 1994, Krajewski & King 1996, Livezey 1998, Mooers et al 1999).

*Steltstrandloper / Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* (was *Micropalama himantopus*) (Borowik & McLennan 1999, Dickinson 2003).

*Amerikaanse Oeverloper / Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (was *Actitis macularia*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

*Kleine Mantelmeeuw / Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus graellsii* (was *Larus graellsii*) (cf Crochet et al 2002, Liebers & Helbig 2002, Yésou 2002, Dickinson 2003).

*Baltische Mantelmeeuw / Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus* (was *Larus fuscus*) (cf Crochet et al 2002, Liebers & Helbig 2002, Yésou 2002, Dickinson 2003).

Woestijnoehoe / Pharaoh Eagle Owl *Bubo ascalaphus* (was *Bubo bubo ascalaphus*) (Dickinson 2003).

*Sneeuwuil / Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus* (was *Nyctea scandiaca*) (Ford 1967, König et al 1999, Wink & Heidrich 2000).

Somalische Vinkleeuwerik / Chestnut-headed Sparrow-lark *Eremopterix signatus* (was *Eremopterix signata*) (David & Gosselin 2002b).

Rosse Woestijnleeuwerik / Bar-tailed Lark *Ammomanes cinctura* (was *Ammomanes cincturus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

*Huiszwaluw / Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* (was *Delichon urbica*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Eversmanns Roodstaart / Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus* (was *Phoenicurus erythronota*) (David & Gosselin 2000, 2002a, Dickinson 2003).

Witkruinroodstaart / Güldenstädt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus* (was *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*) (David & Gosselin 2002a, Dickinson 2003).

*Aziatische Roodborsttapuit / Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* (was *Saxicola maura*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003). Buiten de WP / outside the WP: Afrikaanse Roodborsttapuit wordt / African Stonechat becomes *Saxicola torquatus* (was *Saxicola torquata*).

Kaspische Karekiet / Caspian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus* (was *Acrocephalus fuscus*) (Helbig & Seibold 1999, Dickinson 2003). Buiten de WP / outside the WP: Mangrovekarekiet wordt / Mangrove Reed Warbler becomes *Acrocephalus scirpaceus avicenniae* (was *Acrocephalus avicenniae*). *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* (met de ondersoorten / with subspecies *avicenniae, fuscus, scirpaceus*) wordt / becomes Kleine Karekiet / Common Reed Warbler. *Acrocephalus scirpaceus scirpaceus* wordt / becomes Kleine Karekiet / European Reed Warbler.

Gewone Babbelaar / Common Babbler *Turdoides caudata* (was *Turdoides caudatus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Bruingele Babbelaar / Fulvous Babbler *Turdoides fulva* (was *Turdoides fulvus*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Zwartkruintsjagra / Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* (was *Tchagra senegala*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

Corsicaanse Citroenkanarie / Corsican Finch *Serinus corsicanus* (was *Serinus corsicana*) (cf Barbagli & Violani 1997, Sangster et al 2002, contra Sangster 2000, contra Redactie Dutch Birding 2002).

Rode Woestijnvink / Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus* (was *Rhodopechys sanguinea*) (David & Gosselin 2002b, Dickinson 2003).

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bevoegdheid van de CSNA. De overstap naar 'Howard and Moore' betekent dat een aantal taxa dat (nog) niet op de Nederlandse lijst staat een andere taxonomische behandeling in Dutch Birding krijgt dan voorheen. Voorbeelden zijn Thayers Meeuw *Larus thayeri* (was *L glaucoides thayeri*) en Woestijnbraamsluiper *Sylvia curruca minula* (was *S minula*). Wanneer dergelijke taxa aan de Nederlandse lijst worden toegevoegd zal de CSNA een nader oordeel moeten geven over de te hanteren taxonomische positie. Alle eerder genomen besluiten van CSNA en/of Redactie Dutch Birding (cf van den Berg & Bosman 2001, Redactie Dutch Birding 2002, 2003) houden prioriteit boven 'Howard and Moore'. Voor de Engelse naamgeving van niet in Nederland vastgestelde Palearctische taxa blijft Beaman (1994) de leidraad, behalve als deze naamgeving door gepubliceerde besluiten van CSNA en/of Redactie Dutch Birding is gewijzigd.

Summary

TAXA NAMES IN DUTCH BIRDING From 1 January 2004, Dutch Birding will use new names or new taxonomic treatments for several taxa (see table 1). For taxa on the Dutch list, these changes follow decisions taken by the Dutch committee for avian systematics (CSNA; Sangster et al 1999, 2003), as is the case for a number of changes introduced on 1 January 2002 and 1 January 2003 (cf Redactie Dutch Birding 2002, 2003). For WP taxa not (yet) recorded in the Netherlands, Dutch Birding follows the advice of CSNA members. Dutch Birding now follows Dickinson (2003) in stead of Sibley (1996) for all other taxa, unless the treatment is overruled by decisions published by CSNA and/or the editors of Dutch Birding, from 1 January 2004. For English names of Palearctic taxa, mostly Beaman (1994) is followed.

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Redactie Dutch Birding, Postbus 116, 2080 AC Santpoort-Zuid, Nederland
(editors@dutchbirding.nl)

CDNA-mededelingen

Recente CDNA-besluiten Op de wintervergadering van de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) op 10 januari 2004 zijn de volgende besluiten genomen. Grote Tafeleend *Aythya valisineria* is officieel toegevoegd aan de Nederlandse lijst, op grond van het geval bij Castricum, Noord-Holland, in januari-maart 2003. De andere potentiële nieuwe taxa voor Nederland die werden gemeld in 2003 of eerdere jaren zijn nog in roulatie of moeten in sommige gevallen nog worden ingediend. Alle gevallen van Fluitzwaan *Cygnus columbianus* gaan in herziening, aangezwengeld door recente gevallen van vermoedelijke Kleine Zwanen *C bewickii* met – op het oog – zeer weinig geel op de snavel. Door nieuwe inzichten ten aanzien van de determinatie van Kleine Mantelmeeuw *Larus fuscus intermedius* is besloten alle eerder aanvaarde gevallen van Baltische Mantelmeeuw *L f fuscus* af te voeren, behalve van geringde vogels waarvan de herkomst met zekerheid kon worden afgeleid. Van Witkopgors *Emberiza leucocephalos* zullen alle gevallen van vrouwtjes-types worden herzien om vast te stellen of er sprake is van eventuele hybride kenmerken met Geelgors *E citrinella*. Vanaf 1 januari 2004 zullen Oehoe *Bubo bubo*, Cetti's Zanger *Cettia cetti*, Huiskraai *Corvus splendens* en Dwerggors *E pusilla* niet langer worden beoordeeld; eerder werd al besloten Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator senator* vanaf die datum niet meer te beoordelen. Deze vijf soorten voldoen niet meer aan de criteria voor beoordeelsoorten, namelijk een gemiddeld voorkomen van minder dan twee gevallen per jaar. Twee (Oehoe en Huiskraai) en mogelijk drie (Cetti's Zanger) van deze soorten zijn inmiddels regelmatige broedvogels, hoewel zeer plaatselijk.

De samenwerking tussen SOVON en de CDNA zal worden verbeterd; zo zijn er al afspraken gemaakt ten aanzien van de omgang met (ex-) beoordeelsoorten in publicaties.

Tijdens de jaarwisseling 2003/04 is er ingebroken in de opslagruimte van het archief van de CDNA. Daarbij is een nog onbekend – maar in ieder geval klein – deel van het archief verdwenen en gedeeltelijk als brandstof voor een nieuwjaarsvuur gebruikt. De CDNA is diep geraakt door dit gebeuren en is bezig een inventarisatie te maken van het verlies en zal met voorstellen komen om het archief weer zoveel mogelijk te herstellen. Voor de toekomst wordt nagedacht over een andere wijze van opslaan. NILS VAN DUIVENDIJK

Aankondigingen & verzoeken

European status of White-rumped Swift Phil Chantler is currently preparing a paper on the European status of White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* for publication in Dutch Birding. It is probable that birders visiting southern Spain or indeed Portugal have encountered this species outside of the range indicated in *The EBBC atlas of European breeding birds* (1997) and that as a result the true status of this swift has been clouded. Please send any records (with location and date) of White-rumped Swift that you may have to: Phil Chantler, 16 Eyethorne Road, Sheperdswell, Dover, Kent CT15 7PB, England, e-mail p_chantler@yahoo.com. Even records from 'traditional' sites are welcomed. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged.

Corrigenda

Bij een foto van een Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator* (Dutch Birding 25: 378, plaat 428, 2003) werd helaas niet de juiste fotograaf vermeld. De foto werd gemaakt door René van Rossum.

In het onderschrift van plaat 450 (Dutch Birding 25: 404, 2003) werd niet de juiste soort vermeld. De foto betrof een Scopoli's Pijlstormvogel *Calonectris diomedea* (cf Dutch Birding 26: 58, 60, plaat 108-109, 2004). REDACTIE

In the caption of a plate of a Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (Dutch Birding 25: 378, plate 428, 2003) unfortunately the wrong photographer was mentioned. The photograph was taken by René van Rossum.

In the caption of plate 450 (Dutch Birding 25: 404, 2003) the wrong species was mentioned. The photograph shows a Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* (cf Dutch Birding 26: 58, 60, plate 108-109, 2004). EDITORS

Masters of Mystery

SWAROVSKI OPTIK

Solutions of sixth round

The solutions of the final mystery photographs XI and XII (Dutch Birding 25: 396, 2003) of the 2003 Masters of Mystery competition appear below.

XI The mostly white outer tail-feathers, plain grey head (just visible at the left side of the bird, right above the leaves in the foreground), black legs and unmarked underparts of this mystery bird are all pointers towards *Sylvia* warblers. Entrants who considered other genera came up with European Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* (6%), Siberian Stonechat *S maurus* (3%), Northern Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (3%), Willow Warbler *P trochilus* (3%), Crested Tit *Parus cristatus* (3%), Eurasian Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* (5%) and Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (3%). With respect to *Sylvia* warblers, Subalpine Warbler *S cantillans* (5%) and Garden Warbler *S borin* (3%) were mentioned as possible answers. All these species differ in one or more of the features mentioned in the opening sentence. The only *Sylvia* warblers showing this combination of features are Arabian *S leucomelaena*, Western Orphean *S hortensis* and Eastern Orphean Warbler *S crassirostris* and Lesser Whitethroat *S curruca* and Desert Whitethroat *S c minula* (which during this round was still treated as a separate species).

Arabian Warbler is most easily ruled out as the outer tail-feathers of this species would show white only on the outer web and the feather-tips. Furthermore, the belly should be clean white. The two orphean warblers can also be ruled out. Both species show white not only on the outer tail-feather (t6), but also on the tip of t4-5. The mystery bird seems to show white only on t6. Eastern Orphean Warbler shows dark-centred undertail-coverts, forming greyish scalloping, while the flank would be more greyish. Western Orphean normally shows darker and warmer grey-brown underparts (especially on the flank). No entrant voted for Desert Whitethroat. Like the orphean warblers, this taxon shows white on the tips of t4-5. In addition, the underparts would be more buff, especially on the flank. Therefore, we are left with Lesser Whitethroat as the only plausible solution.

This Lesser Whitethroat was correctly identified by 59% of the entrants. Other entrants went for Western Orphean Warbler (8%), while no entrant voted for Eastern Orphean Warbler. This mystery bird was photographed by Jan Bisschop on Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, in May 2003.

XII This mystery photograph shows a rather uniformly reddish-brown coloured bird perching in a tree and preening its rump and undertail-coverts. The unstreaked head, back and rump, slightly streaked undertail-coverts, pinkish legs, uniformly coloured upperwing and especially the smoothly curved wing-edge (straight in *Acrocephalus* warblers) point towards one of the unstreaked *Locustella* warblers. Three species of unstreaked *Locustella* warbler occur in the Western Palearctic, of which one is only a rare vagrant in Western Europe. This is Gray's Grasshopper Warbler *L fasciolata* which has been recorded on Ouessant, Finistère, France (September 1913 and September 1933, both *L f fasciolata* and the Sakhalin taxon *L f amnicola* which is often regarded as specifically distinct) and in Denmark (September 1955). The two more regularly occurring species are River Warbler *L fluviatilis* and Savi's Warbler *L luscinioides*. Gray's Grasshopper Warbler is a very large bird, as large as Great Reed Warbler *A arundinaceus*, and should show warm brownish-buff almost plain undertail-coverts. Although the tail of the mystery bird

103 Savi's Warbler / Snor *Locustella luscinioides*, Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, 2 September 2003 *(Jan Bisschop)*

is somewhat hidden in the shadow, it is clear that the undertail-coverts are pale tipped. In addition, the bird does not show the jizz of a very large bird and, therefore, Gray's Grasshopper Warbler is easily eliminated as a candidate.

The choice, therefore, is between River Warbler and Savi's Warbler. To separate these two, a careful look at the breast pattern, colouration of the upperparts and the exact undertail pattern is needed. In River, the upper breast usually shows some distinct streaking normally reaching the throat, whereas in Savi's only a diffuse reddish brown breast-patch is visible which is almost unmarked. In the mystery bird, the upper breast and throat are almost unmarked and only on the lower breast a very few diffuse markings seem to be present. This breast pattern favours Savi's Warbler. Another difference between the two species is the colouration of the upperparts. In River, the upperparts are dark olive grey-brown, whereas in Savi's these are reddish brown. However, the eastern subspecies of Savi's Warbler *L l fusca* shows darker olive grey-brown upperparts, as in River. The mystery bird shows clearly a red-brown colouration to rump, back and upperwing, favouring Savi's. Well known to most observers is the characteristic pattern on the undertail-coverts in River. Normally, these feathers are olive brown and show very prominent and large pale tips. Indeed, the mystery bird's undertail-coverts are pale tipped and this may be the reason why several entrants opted for River Warbler. However, in Savi's, the undertail-coverts can also be slighty pale tipped. In River, the undertail-coverts have large pale crescent-shaped tips, whereas in Savi's (if present) the tips are smaller, much less crescent shaped and more buffish in colouration, as shown by the mystery bird. Furthermore, the ground colour of the undertail-coverts is in River more dark olive-brown and reddish brown in Savi's.

This Savi's Warbler was photographed by Jan Bisschop near Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, on 2 September 2003. Plate 103 shows another photograph of the same individual. In this photograph, the characteristic reddish-brown colour of the upperparts and flank can be seen as well as the greyish-white and smoothly curved wing-edge, which is typical for all *Locustella* warblers. This mystery bird was correctly identified by only 3% of the entrants. Most others went for River Warbler, which received 43% of the votes.

In this final round of the 2003 competition there were 37 entrants. No one, however, managed to identify both mystery birds correctly. In total, 23 entrants managed to identify one mystery bird correctly and Peter Zwaan was the lucky winner of the draw and wins a copy of the new *Atlas van de Nederlandse broedvogels*, edited and donated by SOVON Vogelonderzoek Nederland.

After six rounds, Axel Halley (Germany) is the overall winner of the Masters of Mystery 2003 competition and wins a pair of SLC 10x50 WB binoculars, donated by Swarovski Benelux. He made just one mistake in the final round and, therefore, managed to identify 11 out of 12 mystery birds correctly. Congratulations to him! The runners-up with 10 correct answers were Ruud van Beusekom (Netherlands), Joris Elst (Belgium), Martin Kühn (Germany) and Clemens Portofée (Germany). Tobias Epple and Martin Fichtler both identified nine mystery birds correctly. There are three entrants with eight, and five with seven correct identifications. The final overview of the entrants with five or more correct identifications in the Masters of Mystery 2003 competition can be viewed at www.dutchbirding.nl.

We would like to thank the following people for their help with the Masters of Mystery 2003 competition: Arnoud van den Berg, Jan Bisschop, Nils van Duivendijk, Diederik Kok, Roef Mulder, René Pop, Chris van Rijswijk, Marcel Scholte, James Smith, Arend Wassink, Jan Wierda and Mark Zekhuis for lending their photographs; AvdB, NvD, Enno Ebels and André van Loon for commenting on the texts; Gijsbert van der Bent, Rob Olivier and André van der Plas for taking care of the website and helping in other ways; and above all Gino Merchiers from Swarovski Benelux for sponsoring this competition.

First round 2004

Photographs I and II represent the first round of the 2004 competition. Please, study the rules below carefully and identify the birds in the photographs. Solutions can be sent in three different ways:

- by *postcard* to Dutch Birding Association, Postbus 75611, 1070 AP Amsterdam, Netherlands
- by e-mail to masters@dutchbirding.nl
- from the website of the Dutch Birding Association at www.dutchbirding.nl

Entries for the first round have to arrive by **1 March 2004**. From those entrants having identified both mystery birds correctly, one person will be drawn who will receive a copy of the new *Atlas van de Nederlandse broedvogels*, the massive result of the survey of breeding birds in

Mystery photograph I (July)

the Netherlands during 1998-2000, edited and donated by SOVON Vogelonderzoek Nederland. Swarovski Benelux generously agreed to sponsor this competition again in 2004. This year, the overall winner after six rounds will receive a Swarovski ATS 65 telescope, with a 20-60x zoom eyepiece.

Rules

Only subscribers to Dutch Birding are eligible to enter. Excluded from entry are the editors and members of the editorial board of Dutch Birding and the members of the board of the Dutch Birding Association. Photographers whose work is used in the competition (both as mystery birds or as photographs accompanying the solutions) are excluded from entry in the round(s) in which their work is used. Also, the overall winner (after six rounds) is excluded from the competition in the subsequent year.

Each round usually consists of two mystery photographs, but sometimes only one or more than two can be presented. For each round, only one entry per person is accepted (which will be the first received). Entries have to arrive by the closing date stated. The Dutch Birding Association cannot be held responsible for entries not received or lost. All species in the photographs have been recorded in the Western Palearctic as defined in *Birds of the Western Palearctic* (BWP). Hybrids will not be featured.

Each mystery bird must be identified at the level of species. In this competition, decisions of the Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (Dutch committee for avian systematics; CSNA) are followed (see, for example, Dutch Birding 19: 21-28, 1997; 20: 22-32, 1998). For taxa not dealt with in these references, further

Swarovski ATS 65 telescope

Mystery photograph II (July)

changes adopted by the editors of Dutch Birding from 2002 onwards apply (cf Dutch Birding 24: 22-24, 2002; 25: 49-50, 2003; 26: 49-51, 2004).

In case of any dispute concerning the identity of a bird, the decision of the editorial board of Dutch Birding will be binding on all parties. The overall winner will be the entrant who has correctly identified most mystery photographs during the competition (six rounds). In case of joint winners, one winner will be drawn.

Rob S A van Bemmelen, Gouwzee 20, 1423 DV Uithoorn, Netherlands (masters@dutchbirding.nl)
Dick Groenendijk, Elzenstraat 14, 4043 PB Opheusden, Netherlands (masters@dutchbirding.nl)

WP reports

This review lists rare and interesting birds reported in the Western Palearctic mainly in **November-early January 2004** and focuses on north-western Europe. The reports are largely unchecked and their publication here does not imply future acceptance by the rarities committee of the relevant country. Observers are requested to submit records to each country's rarities committee. Corrections are welcome and will be published.

GEESE TO DUCKS The second and third **Tundra Bean Geese** *Anser serrirostris* for Ireland were at Myroe Levels, Derry, in January. The first three **Lesser White-fronted Geese** *A erythropus* for Cyprus were adults at Akhna dam from 21 November. Maximum November-December totals for the Netherlands were 50 at Anjum, Friesland, on 1 November, 45 at Strijen, Zuid-Holland, on 15 November and 13 at Petten, Noord-Holland, on 20 December. The maximum for Hungary was 33 in the Hortobágy on 7 November and for Greece 52 in Evros Delta in January. Also in the Netherlands, three **Greenland White-fronted Geese** *A albifrons flavirostris* were seen on Texel from 7 December into January and six at Abbegea, Friesland, from 29 December. The first twitchable for Belgium was a first-year at Uitkerkse Polders, West-Vlaanderen, from 14 December. In the Azores, two **Lesser Canada Geese** *Branta hutchinsii* and three **Wood Ducks** *Aix sponsa* (two males and a female) were present at Terra Nostra, São Miguel, on 22 November. In France, four **Black Brants** *Branta nigricans* and five hybrids (with Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B bernicla*) were present on Noirmoutier, Vendée, during November. In Britain, more than 12 were reported by early January alone; a recently published ringing recovery concerned one ringed on 13 July 1965 in Alaska, USA, and found on 15 January 1977 in Kent, England. A mixed pair of a male **Pale-bellied Brent Goose** *B hrota* and a female **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** with three hybrid young was encountered on Texel, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands, from 26 December. A flock of 230 **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* at Evros Delta in early January was the largest ever for Greece. The third **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* for Austria was an adult male at Wetterinkel, Vorarlberg, on 11 January. In Spain, six were seen during November. At Cedre Cidade, São Miguel, Azores, five were found on 23 November. The male **Redhead** *A americana* in Glamorgan, Wales, first seen on 7 November 2001 remained for its third winter from October to at least 11 January at Kenfig Pool. A first-winter female stayed from 20 September until at least 8 January at Loch Tangasdial on Barra, Outer Hebrides, Scotland. **Lesser Scaups** *A affinis* were as regular as in other recent winters in Europe, with c 10 individuals including singles in eastern France, Germany and Switzerland. In France, one Lesser Scaup and a male and a female **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* were present at Grand-Lieu lake, Loire-Atlantique, during December. In Schouwen, Zeeland, the Netherlands, an unringed first-year White-headed Duck was swimming at Sirjansland on 20-23 November and at nearby Prunjepolder on 24-25 November. South of Kairouan, Tunisia, c 400 **Ferruginous Ducks** *A nyroca* and c 400 **White-headed Ducks** were counted on 7 December; a slightly higher number of **Marbled Ducks** *Marmaronetta angustirostris* was also present here. In Sicily, one Marbled Duck was found at Pantano Leone on 7 December. The first **Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima* for Sicily, Italy, was at Capo Peloro, Straits of Messina, on 13 December. The male **Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana* at Llanfairfechan, North Wales, remained from 28 September to at least 17 December; it was first seen on 19-28 January 2001. The 9th record (and 13th individual) of **Surf Scoter** *M perspicillata* for the Netherlands was a second-year male at Brouwersdam, Zeeland/Zuid-Holland, from 18 January. On 5 December, one was found (again) at Oostduinkerke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. At the Kfar Ruppin reservoirs, Bet Shean valley, Israel, a female-type **Smew** *Mergellus albellus* was swimming on 8 December and two female-type **Greater Scaups** *A marila* on 12-13 December. In the United Arab

104 Long-billed Dowitcher / Grote Grijze Snip *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, first-winter, Veerse Meer, Oud-Sabbinge, Zeeland, Netherlands, 3 January 2004 *(Marten van Dijl)*

105 Short-billed Dowitcher / Kleine Grijze Snip *Limnodromus griseus*, adult-winter, Cabo da Praia, Terceira, Azores, November 2003 *(Magne Pettersen)*

Emirates (UAE), six **Cotton Pygmy-geese** *Nettapus coromandelianus* were found at Wimpey Pits, Dubai, on 22 November. The seventh **Falcated Duck** *Anas falcata* for the Netherlands was an unringed male (probably first-winter) often roosting in flocks of Eurasian Wigeon *A penelope* at the Wadden Sea near Harlingen, Friesland, from 23 December to at least late January. Another was discovered with Eurasian Wigeons at El Clot, Ebro delta, Tarragone, Spain, on 16 January. The male **American Black Duck** *A rubripes* at Ria de Foz, Lugo, Spain, was relocated on 6 December. The long-stayers in England in Cornwall and Devon, and the one at Gardur, Iceland were still present in January. In Norway, a female or hybrid was staying through November at Surnadal, Møre og Romsdal. In the first week of January alone, c 15 **Green-winged Teal** *A carolinensis* were reported in Britain.

LOONS TO IBISES The third **Great Northern Loon** *Gavia immer* for the Czech Republic since 1989 was at Jivjany in western Bohemia on 2 November. The fourth for Morocco was an immature 2 km south of Cap Rhir, Agadir, on 11 January. A **Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* was present at Tacumshin, Wexford, Ireland, on 22-30 November. The first **Bermuda Petrel** *Pterodroma cahow* for the WP which was trapped on an offshore islet in the Azores on 17 November 2002 had returned to the same borrow a year later. After studying more photographs, the shearwater flying for two hours at the Wisla river mouth, Bay of Gdansk, on 20 August has been re-identified as the first **Scopoli's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* for Poland (contra Dutch Birding 25: 404, plate 450, 2003); it is tempting to speculate on the course it took from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. Two second-year **Brown Boobies** *Sula leucogaster* turned up at Eilat's north beach on 2 January. In the Azores, a first-year **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* was found at Horta, Faial, on 11 November and another on Flores on 12-18 November. On 14 October, a **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* was seen at Crotte di Strambino in north-western Italy. During November, more than 800 **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* remained between Isla Menor and Brazo del Este, Sevilla, Spain.

RAPTORS The second **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* for the Czech Republic was an adult at Ticha in southern Bohemia and just across the border in Austria from 23 September to 30 October (the first was in March 1938 in southern Moravia). In Germany, one stayed at Radolfzell, Baden-Württemberg, on 2-5 November. The seventh for Israel was an adult *E c vociferus* at Kfar Ruppin from 18 November to late January. In eastern France, one was present in Côte d'Or from 21 November. The third **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* for Spain was an immature at Santoña marshes, Cantabria, from 7 December into January. The decline of the three Indian lowland *Gyps* vulture species, **Indian White-backed** *G bengalensis*, **Slender-billed** *G tenuirostris* and **Indian Vulture** *G indicus*, since the mid-1990s continues at such a rate that all three now face extinction. This fact must seem unimaginable for birders who visited India before 1995 and witnessed the omnipresent masses of vultures. During 2000-03, the overall decline was 99.6% in Indian White-backed and 96% in Slender-billed/Indian (previously lumped as Long-billed Vulture). For instance, at Keoladeo Ghana, Rajasthan, 350 nests were counted in 1985 and none in 2000. Part of the problem is said to be the intensive use since 1994 of a veterinary medicin, Diclofenac, which appears lethal for Indian White-backed Vulture. In addition, symptoms of dying fledglings at colonies of Indian Vulture were thought to be consistent with viral diseases as well. In Spain, an unringed **Rüppell's Griffon Vulture** *G rueppellii* was seen in a large group of Eurasian Griffon Vultures *G fulvus* at Valle de Alcudia, Almodovar del Campo, Ciudad Real, on 8 November (possibly, the same individual as one on 8 January 2000). The first-year **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* at Hillerup Enge, Ribe, Vestjylland, Denmark, stayed from 5 October to 24 November. The regular individual at Mas Neuf, north of Vaccarès, Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône, had returned by 14 October and stayed until at least 5 December. A first-winter at Bregenz, Vorarlberg, Austria, from 6 December to at least 11 January was well photographed. An **African Long-legged Buzzard** *B r cirtensis* flew north over the Straits of Gibraltar on 29 October; others were in Spain at l'Albufera de Valencia, Valencia, from 8 October to 5 November and in Cádiz on 9 November. In northern and central Italy, up to five **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* have been present this winter. On 12 November, two were reported in Niedersachsen, Germany. On 6 December, one was seen at Dashour lake, Cairo, Egypt. In Greece, two were at Porto Lagos in December and five at Evros Delta in early January. A subadult was wintering near Kristianstad, Skåne, Sweden, from 2 November to January. On 14 December, one had returned for its ninth winter at Niederriedstausee, Bern, Switzerland, where it was first seen in February 1996. Another apparently turned up for its sixth winter in Portugal. At the usual sites in France, two were at St Martin-de-Seignanx, Landes, and up to three in the Camargue. In Austria, seven **Imperial Eagles** *A heliaca* (two adults, two immatures and three juveniles) were still present in Nordburgenland on 30 November. An immature **Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* was found at Gruissan, Aude, France, on 14 December.

HERONS TO COOTS In the Azores, a **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* stayed at Porto Pim, Horta, from 13 November onwards. During November, two **Western Reef Egrets** *E gularis* were present in northern Italy. A **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* was found at Al Qurm Park, Oman, on 2 January. The French population of **Western Swamp-hen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* in 2001-02 has been estimated at 18 pairs, of which 15 in Pyrénées-Orientales (first proven breeding record in 1996) and three in Aude (first in 1999), while many recent records at other sites in Aude, Hérault and the Camargue could refer to additional breeding pairs (Ornithos 10: 252-

106 Lesser Scaup / Kleine Topper *Aythya affinis*, Huningue, Haut-Rhin, France, 30 November 2003 *(Daniel Kratzer)*

107 American Coot / Amerikaanse Meerkoet *Fulica americana* (right), with Eurasian Coot / Meerkoet *F atra*, Lerwick, Mainland, Shetland, Scotland, November 2003 *(Hugh Harrop/Shetland Wildlife)*

108-109 Scopoli's Shearwater / Scopoli's Pijlstormvogel *Calonectris diomedea*, Gdansk, Poland, 20 August 2003 *(Cezary Pioro)* **110** Kelp Gull / Kelpmeeuw *Larus dominicanus vetula*, adult, with Yellow-legged Gull / Geelpootmeeuw *L michahellis*, Zira, Mauritania, 28 November 2003 *(Dominic Mitchell)* **111** Ross's Gull / Ross' Meeuw *Rhodostethia rosea*, first-winter, Westerhever, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 29 December 2003 *(Christian Neumann)*

257, 2003). From 24 December, up to three were present around La Capelière, Camargue. An adult **Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo* was seen at the Hula valley, Israel, on 15 November. In Spain, one was found in a flock of 300 Common Cranes *G grus* at Ataquines, Valladolid, on 11 January. In the Azores, an **American Coot** *Fulica americana* stayed at Lagoa das Furnas on São Miguel from 31 October to at least 22 November and two were present at Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, on 20-21 November. The first for Scotland (and the third for Britain), was at Clickimin Loch, Lerwick, Shetland, from 30 November to at least late January. In the UAE, three **Red-knobbed Coots** *F cristata* were found with the long-staying third (since the summer of 2002) at Wimpey Pits, Dubai, on 10 November.

WADERS A record six **American Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis dominica* were reported from western France this autumn. A first-winter trapped at Hindeloopen, Friesland, on 8 December was the second trapped (and the first in December) for the Netherlands; in addition, a second-year stayed at Middelburg, Zeeland, on 12-15 January (briefly joined by a Pacific Golden Plover *P fulva*). If accepted, an American Golden Plover at Sur Sewage Farm from 24 November to 24 December will be the first for Oman. The second and third **Pacific Golden Plover** for Poland were a juvenile at Sarnow near Lodz on 1 October and an adult near Rawicz on 10 November. In Israel, three **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* turned up at the Hula valley, four at Urim and one at Kfar Ruppin during November. Singles were seen at Taraje logoon, Puerto Real, Cádiz, Spain, on 18 December (an adult) and at Fujairah dairy farm, UAE, on 1 January, and at Glandon, Haute-Vienne, France, from 18 to at least 20 January. In Oman, nine were present together with four White-tailed Lapwings *V leucurus* and one Northern Lapwing *V vanellus* at Sun Farms, Sohar, on 18 December. BirdLife International announced that the official conservation status of Sociable Lapwing now changes to the highest cate-

gory of critically endangered (cf Dutch Birding 25: 263, 2003). It means that three Kazakhstan species belong to this category (Siberian Crane *G leucogeranus* and Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* in addition to Sociable Lapwing) and that all areas where Sociable Lapwing occurs regularly can be declared as IBA (Important Bird Area). A **White-tailed Lapwing** was seen at the Hula valley, Israel, on 28 November. In the Azores, two **Semipalmated Plovers** *Charadrius semipalmatus* and up to six **White-rumped Sandpipers** *Calidris fuscicollis* were present on Terceira on 18-21 November, most of them at Cabo da Praia. The seventh **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *C acuminata* for Norway was at Kolnes, Sola, Rogaland, as late as 16-21 November. In the Azores, an adult-winter **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* remained at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, from 3 September to at least 21 November. In the Netherlands, a first-winter **Long-billed Dowitcher** *L scolopaceus* stayed at Oud-Sabbinge, Zeeland, from 30 December into January. The one at Porto Lagos, Greece, was still present on 7 December. If accepted, a **Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola* at Hilf on 18 November will be the second for Oman. Two single **Hudsonian Whimbrels** *N hudsonicus* were seen at Cabo da Praia on 18 November. The first-winter **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* at the Hayle Estuary, Cornwall, remained until at least late January while another was in Pembrokeshire until 7 December. In Spain, one was at Estuario da Insua, Ponteceso, from 16 November onwards. In the Azores, two singles were seen on Terceira on 20-21 November. Also in the Azores, first-year **Spotted Sandpipers** *Actitis macularius* were found at Lajes, Pico, on 10 November and on Flores on 13 November, and an adult was at Porto Pim, Horta, on 25 November. The second for Italy was at Saline di Augusta from 26 October to at least 9 December. The fourth for Madeira was at Machico on 9-10 January.

GULLS TO TERNS A **Pallas's Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* was briefly seen by one observer off Katwijk, Zuid-Holland, on 27 December. In Germany, an adult was present in Sachsen-Anhalt from 10 January. A first-winter **Laughing Gull** *L atricilla* roosted on St Mary's, Scilly, England, on 6 and 8 November. The first for Italy was a ringed individual videoed at San Remo, Liguria, on 18-19 January.The fourth **Sabine's Gull** *L sabini* for Italy was a juvenile at Calambrone estuary, Toscane, on 2 November. The fourth for Hungary was an adult in the Hortobágy on 8 November. A first-winter **Bonaparte's Gull** *L philadelphia* roosted offshore from Inner Farne, Northumberland, on 9 November. Another was seen at Gannel Estuary, Cornwall, from 8 January onwards. A large concentration of 3362 **Relict Gulls** *L relictus* were counted on the north-western edge of Bohai Bay, 15-21 km south of Tanggu, Tianjin, China, on 3 January. A **Slender-billed Gull** *L genei* was last seen on Noirmoutier, Vendée, on 2 December. The more than 33 years-old **Common Gull** *L canus canus* ringed as a young near Copenhagen, Denmark, in June 1970 was seen again in Groningen, the Netherlands, on 17 December. The fourth **Pontic Gull** *L cachinnans* for Norway was a first-winter at Fredrikstad, Østfold, on 30 December. If accepted, a **Heuglin's Gull** *L heuglini* at Simeto on 21 December will be the first for Italy. An adult **Kelp Gull** *L dominicanus vetula* (**Cape Gull**) on Zira, Mauritania, on 28 November may be the same individual that constituted the first for the WP in 1997 and 1998. The Irish Rare Birds Committee recently accepted **Thayer's Gull** *L thayeri* on the Irish list with records in 1990, 1998 and 1999 (the Galway bird in 1989 still pending); in Northern Ireland, the bird in Antrim in 1997 had already been accepted. The second **Audouin's Gull** *L audouinii* for Germany was a second-winter poorly photographed at sea off Sylt, Schleswig-Holstein, on 14 November. In the Netherlands, the **Ring-billed Gull** *L delawarensis* at Goes, Zeeland, remained for its seventh consecutive winter (the first sighting was on 18 January 1998). The ringed bird at Bergen, Hordaland, Norway, returned for its 10th winter (in summer, this commuting bird has been recorded in Newfoundland, Canada). The easternmost record of **Slaty-backed Gull** *L schistisagus* for the USA was in Rochester, New Hampshire, in early January. A first-winter **Ross's Gull** *Rhodostethia rosea* was briefly present at Westerhever, Schleswig-Holstein, on 29 December. The third **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* for Iceland was a first-winter taken into care off Surtsey on 21 January. An **Arctic Tern** *S paradisaea* ringed at Uppsala, Sweden, on 27 June washed up this autumn on Masons Bay, Stewart Island, New Zealand, establishing a record migration distance of c 25 000 km. In Ireland, adult **Forster's Terns** *S forsteri* wintered at Nimmo's Pier, Galway, from 26 November to late January and in Wexford Harbour, Wexford, from 4 January. The second for Spain was a first-winter at Camariñas, A Coruña, Galicia, on 16-21 November.

DOVES TO SWIFTS The first **Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* for Iceland at Sudursveit from 20 April onwards was again seen in November. The seventh **Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis meena* for Israel (if accepted) was a first-winter at the Hula valley on 6 November. The ninth for Finland was a first-winter at Enontekiö Leppäjärvi on 7-22 November. The fifth for Norway (and the second *meena*) was taken into care in Glomfjord, Nordland, on 20 November. A *meena* in Scotland accompanied Eurasian Collared Doves *S decaocto* at Ham, Highland, on 5-9 December. In the Netherlands, a **European Turtle Dove** *S turtur* acted the same at Aalsmeer, Noord-Holland, from November into January. A **Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* was found in the Eilat mountains, Israel, on 3 January. In Scotland, the immature male **Snowy Owl** *Bubo scandiacus* on North Uist, Outer Hebrides, remained from 14 August to at least 16 December. A **Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum* at Kongelunden, Sjælland, on 14 December was the only one reported in Denmark after three until 25 October, following a major influx of this species in Finland. If accepted, a **White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* at East Khawr on 25 December will be the first for Oman.

112 Desert Wheatear / Woestijntapuit *Oenanthe deserti*, male, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, November 2003 *(F Jackman)*

113 Desert Wheatear / Woestijntapuit *Oenanthe deserti*, female, De Cocksdorp, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 9 November 2003 *(René Pop)*

114 Pied Wheatear / Bonte Tapuit *Oenanthe pleschanka*, male, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, November 2003 *(F Jackman)*

115 Pied Wheatear / Bonte Tapuit *Oenanthe pleschanka*, first-winter male, Falkenberg, Halland, Sweden, December 2003 *(Mikael Nord)*

116 Baltimore Oriole / Baltimoretroepiaal *Icterus galbula*, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, 29 December 2003 *(Bill Baston)*

117 American Robin / Roodborstlijster *Turdus migratorius*, Godrevy Point, Cornwall, England, 16 December 2003 *(Mike Malpass)*

118-119 American Robin / Roodborstlijster *Turdus migratorius,* Grimsby, Lincolnshire, England, 4 January 2004 *(Steve Young/Birdwatch)*

LARKS TO WAGTAILS The sixth **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* for Sweden was in Blekinge on 24 November. A late **Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla* was trapped at Heist, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, on 4 December and another wintered at Skanör, Skåne, from 26 December to at least 10 January. In Israel, four **Oriental Skylarks** *Alauda gulgula* were found at Kfar Ruppin, three at 'km19', one at the Hula valley and one at Yotvata. If accepted, an adult **Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* at East Khawr will be the second for Oman. Four were seen at Al Wathba camel track fields, Abu Dhabi, UAE, from 31 December onwards. At the same site, a **Pale Sand Martin** *Riparia diluta* and the second **Streak-throated Swallow** (Indian Cliff Swallow) *Petrochelidon fluvicola* for the UAE were seen on 2 January. The first **Eurasian Crag Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* for the Czech Republic was at Palava hills in southern Moravia from 30 November to 3 December. The fourth **Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni* for Malta was trapped at Buskett on 30 November. On 5 January, one was found in Delta del Llobregat, Viladecano, Barcelona, Spain. In Norway, a record influx of more than 11 **Water Pipits** *A spinoletta* took place from 7 November onwards (until 2003, there were only a handful recorded). In Israel, single **Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits** *A rubescens japonicus* were at Be'er Sheva on 6 November, at 'km19' on 21 November, and at Kfar Ruppin on 4 December. An unprecedented influx of eight eastern **yellow wagtails** *Motacilla* occurred in Norway from late October onwards; on the beaches of Jæren, Rogaland, three remained together with a first-winter **Citrine Wagtail** *M citreola* through November into January. Probably the first **Masked Wagtail** *M personata* for the WP was a first-winter male staying with a few Water Pipits on Lista, Vest-Agder, Norway, from 21 November into January (cf Birding World 16: 464-465, 2003).

THRUSHES The sixth **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* for Italy was trapped at Zanida, Bergamo, on 25 October. An **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* was found on Ouessant, Finistère, France, on 9 November. An influx of five **Pied Wheatears** *O pleschanka* occurred from 26 October to 26 November in Sweden; a first-winter male remained near Falkenberg, Halland, until at least 13 January. In Germany, a male was present on 2-3 November on Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein. In Norway, a male stayed at Sangvik, Vest-Agder, on 9-11 November. A female was on North Ronaldsay, Orkney, Scotland, on 17-26 November. On 9-30 November alone, 10 **Desert Wheatears** *O deserti* were found in Britain, the last of which was at Reculver, Kent, from 28 November to 5 December. Singles were seen on Texel on 9 November (a female), in Halland, Sweden, on 9-13 November, and on Helgoland on 15-22 November. In Rogaland, Norway, first-year males stayed at Jæren on 11-15 November and Sola on 15 November and another was at Mandal, Vest-Agder, on 16-28 November. The first for Latvia was a female at Liepaja from 22 November to 6 December. In Spain, a male was found at Ensenada da Insua, Ponteceso, on 23 November. The second this autumn for France stayed at Hardelot, Pas-de-Calais, on 6-16 December. On 29 December, a first-winter **African Desert Wheatear** *O d homochroa* was trapped on Formentera, Balearics, Spain. The first (Western) **Red-tailed Wheatear** *O xanthoprymna* for the UAE was a male in the Mercure Hotel garden on Jebel Hafit on 18 December (the usual Persian Wheatear *O chrysopygia* was present as well). A **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis* was trapped near Darlowo, Poland, on 26 October and a first-winter male was seen at Sangvik, Vest-Agder, Norway, on 23 November. On 11-12 November, this autumn's first **American Robin** *T migratorius* turned up on Bardsey, Gwynedd, Wales. Others followed in England at Godrevy, Corn-

120 Masked Wagtail / Maskerkwikstaart *Motacilla personata*, first-winter male, Lista, Vest-Agder, Norway, November 2003 *(Martin Eggen)*

121 Dusky Warbler / Bruine Boszanger *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, Simar, Malta, 7 January 2004 *(Raymond Galea)*

122 Hume's Leaf Warbler / Humes Bladkoning *Phylloscopus humei*, Bressay, Shetland, Scotland, November 2003 *(Hugh Harrop/Shetland Wildlife)*

wall, from 14 December to at least late January (a first-winter female) and at Grimsby Lincolnshire, from 1 January onwards.

WARBLERS A presumed **Sykes's Warbler** *Acrocephalus rama* was photographed on Helgoland on 30 September. Close to the long-staying male **Sardinian Warbler** *Sylvia melanocephala* at Skegness, Lincolnshire, a female turned up from 10 November onwards; both were still present in January. The first **Asian Desert Warbler** *S nana* for Latvia stayed from 30 December to 2 January at Akmenrags. Another was briefly seen at Sandwich Bay, Kent, on 20 November. A possible **Desert Whitethroat** *S curruca minula* trapped at Filey, North Yorkshire, England, stayed until at least 19 November. If accepted, another at Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, from 23 November to 1 December will be the first for the Netherlands. On Madeira, a **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* was found in the Botanical Garden at Funchal on 28 November. In Finistère, France, 14 were seen in November on Ouessant alone and late individuals turned up here on 2 and 5 December. No less than 80 were reported from Britain during November and, in the first week of January, at least 11 were still present. One was found in Dublin, Ireland, on 3 January. The first in winter for Spain was at Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, on 3 January. It was (also) the best autumn ever for **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *P humei* for north-western Europe. The record influx in Britain continued with nine in England in the first half of November alone; late individuals stayed at Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, from 30 November to 4 December and at Fairlop Waters, London, from 11 January onwards. The first three for Shetland were on Fair Isle on 13-14 and 17-23 November and on Bressay on 13-23 November. In Wales, one was at Caernarfon, Gwynedd, from 14 December to late January. In France, between 26 October and 15 November, seven were found of which six on Ouessant (there were only five previous records for France). In Norway, two were seen during November. In Sweden, at least 10 were reported this autumn (the same number as in Finland) with seven in November; one was at Kronholmen, Gotland, on 4 January (there were 28 previous records for Sweden). In Denmark, 12 were reported from 12 October onwards, the last one staying until 3 December at Christiansø, Bornholm (there were only 11 previous records for Denmark). In the Netherlands, singles were present from late October to 1 November (Eemshaven, Groningen), on 6 November (Petten, Noord-Holland, and Terschelling, Friesland) and on 14 December (Burgum, Friesland) while another stayed at a Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* roost in the centre of Grou, Friesland, from 1 January. In Belgium, two or three were found in West-Vlaanderen between 23 November and 5 December. In Germany, a total of seven were reported from Helgoland this autumn. The first two for Ireland were wintering into January from

18 December at Knockadoon, Cork, and from 28 December at Hook Head, Wexford. The third **Radde's Warbler** *P schwarzi* for Spain was trapped on Sa Dragonera, Balearics, on 7 November. The third and fourth for Poland were trapped near Darlowo on 29 September and 1 October. The autumn total of **Dusky Warblers** *P fuscatus* for Britain was 25 with 15 in November and long-stayers at Paignton, Devon, from 21 November to at least late January, at Taunton, Somerset, from 4 January, and at Polgigga, Cornwall, from 17 January. The third for Spain was trapped at Ponteceso, A Coruña, on 9 November. The fourth for Malta was found at Simar on 6 January, trapped the next day, and still present in late January (together with a Yellow-browed warbler from 20 January). In the Netherlands, five were seen in November alone and two in Belgium. A very late **Willow Warbler** *P trochilus* was found freshly dead at Kvísker, Iceland, on 20 December.

SHRIKES TO ICTERIDS A **Turkestan Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides* was photographed at Herdlevær, Hordaland, Norway, on 15 November. In Egypt, **House Crows** *Corvus splendens* were (again) seen at Aïn Sukhna (six) on 14 November and at Hurghada (three) on 15 November. The fourth **African Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs africana* for the Netherlands and the third in 2003 was an adult male at Haren, Groningen, from 28 November into January. The third was briefly seen at Grote Praambult, Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, on 14 April 2003; all four are still under consideration by the Dutch rarities committee. In Egypt, c 10 **Red Adavats** *Amandava amandava* at Qarun lake, 3.8 km east of Shakshuk village, included a nest-building pair. In northern Germany, a **Citril Finch** *Serinus citrinella* was reported in Niedersachsen on 4 January. The autumn's last **Hornemann's Redpolls** *C hornemanni hornemanni* in Shetland remained on Foula until 1 November and on Unst until 6 November. In the Netherlands, four **Parrot Crossbills** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* were present at Lemelerberg, Overijssel, on 4-20 October and one was at Nunspeet, Gelderland, on 23-25 November; the last invasion of more than 320 individuals dates back from 1991 and the taxon has been a rarity since. Plenty of individuals were reported from Denmark this autumn, the latest flock being 12 at Skjern, Ringkøbing, on 7 December. In Germany, four **Two-barred Crossbills** *L leucoptera* were reported from Niedersachsen on 16 November. In West-Vlaanderen, a first-year female was trapped at De Haan on 31 December. Possibly the first **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* for Extremadura, Spain, was a male at Benén, Trujillo, on 27 December. Elsewhere in Spain, a total of seven were seen during December in Tarragone (one), Galicia (one) and Asturies (five). In Italy, a total of five were wintering. In Belgium, a first-winter female **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* was trapped at Merksplas, Antwerpen, on 7 November; another female at Hoegaarden, Vlaams-Brabant, from 26 December turned out to be a hybrid with Yellowhammer *E citrinella*. The first flock of seven found at the regular wintering sites in northern Italy was at Megredi Cellina on 11 November. In England, a female stayed at Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire, on 10-12 November. The first for Utsira, Rogaland, was a male on 22 and 26 November. If accepted, a female at Bekkeveien, Vestfold, on 11 January will be the 12th for Norway. An adult female was photographed at Celle, Niedersachsen, on 19 January. Two individuals were present at Le Sambuc, Camargue, from 26 December to at least 11 January and 12 in the Troodos mountains, Cyprus, from 31 December. In Sweden, one was reported from Landsort, Sörmland, on 21 December. At Torrile in northern Italy, up to 15 **Little Buntings** *E pusilla* were counted in December. Based on an evaluation of occurrence patterns, the French and Italian rarities committees recently decided to elevate **Red-headed Bunting** *E bruniceps* to category A, which means that they regard the species as a genuine vagrant, not an escape (Ornithos 10: 249-251, 2003). A first-winter male **Baltimore Oriole** *Icterus galbula* remained in suburban gardens at Headington, Oxfordshire, England, from 14 December to 16 January.

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Arnoud B van den Berg, Duinlustparkweg 98, 2082 EG Santpoort-Zuid, Netherlands (arnoud.vandenberg@planet.nl)

Recente meldingen

Dit overzicht van recente meldingen van zeldzame en interessante vogels in Nederland en België beslaat voornamelijk de periode **november-december 2003**. 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 wordt verzocht hun waarnemingen zo spoedig mogelijk toe te zenden aan: CDNA, Postbus 45, 2080 AA Santpoort-Zuid, Nederland, e-mail cdna@dutchbirding.nl. Hiertoe gelieve men gebruik te maken van CDNA-waarnemingsformulieren die eveneens verkrijgbaar zijn bij bovenstaand adres, of via de website van de DBA op www.dutchbirding.nl.

Nederland

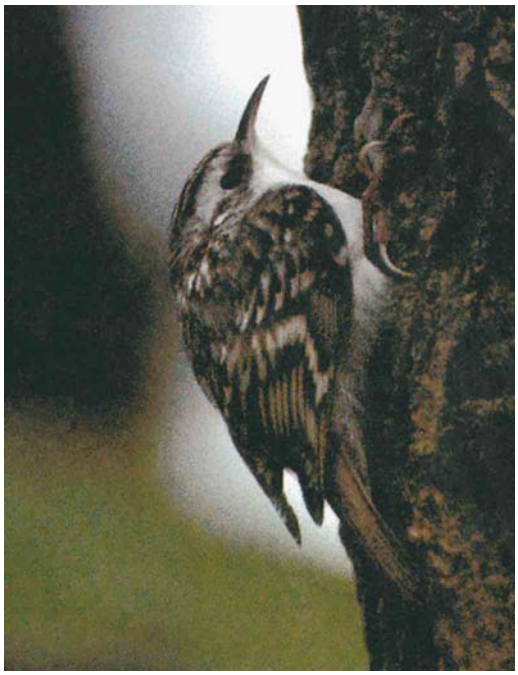
GANZEN TOT ZEEAREND Slechts enkele **Sneeuwganzen** *Anser caerulescens* werden doorgegeven, waaronder drie witte eind december bij Blauhus (Blauwhuis), Friesland. Een **Ross' Gans** *A rossii* pendelde vanaf 2 november tussen de Korendijkse Slikken, Zuid-Holland, en het Rammegors, Zeeland. Grote aantallen **Dwergganzen** *A erythropus* werden begin november nog steeds gezien in de Anjumerkolken, Friesland. Op 1 november verbleven er hier ten minste 50 en op 8 november 35, en tot 30 november werden er hier nog maximaal 16 gezien. In het Oude Land van Strijen, Zuid-Holland, verschenen de eerste op 8 november (zeven) en op 9 november waren dat er al 33; tot het eind van de periode bleef daar een grote groep aanwezig met een maximum van 45 op 15 november. In de omgeving van Petten, Noord-Holland, waren er vanaf 20 december maximaal 13 aanwezig. Daarnaast werden verspreid over het land nog 14 exemplaren ontdekt, waaronder drie onvolwassen in de Neerkant bij Heusden, Noord-Brabant. Drie **Groenlandse Kolganzen** *A albifrons flavirostris* liepen vanaf 7 december in polder Waal en Burg op Texel, Noord-Holland. Daarnaast werden er ten minste zes opgemerkt op 29 december bij Abbegea (Abbega), Friesland. Een **Hutchins' Canadese Gans** *Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii* verbleef vanaf 17 december in de omgeving van Doniaburen, Friesland, in gezelschap van grote aantallen van de ondersoort *B h minima* (**Kleinste Canadese Gans**) en hybride exemplaren van gevarieerde oor-

123 Groenlandse Kolganzen / Greenland White-fronted Geese *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (links en rechts), met Kolgans / Siberian White-fronted Goose *A a albifrons* (midden), Westerkolk, Texel, Noord-Holland, 7 december 2003 *(Marco Witte)*

124 Parelduikers / Black-throated Loons *Gavia arctica*, adult (voor) en juveniel, Brouwersdam, Zeeland, 23 november 2003 *(Marc Plomp/Natuur Digitaal)*

sprong (voornamelijk Brandgans *B leucopsis* x Kleinste Canadese Gans). Er werden c 16 **Roodhalsganzen** *B ruficollis*, acht **Witbuikrotganzen** *B hrota* en vier **Zwarte Rotganzen** *B nigricans* gemeld. Bij het Wagejot op Texel werd vanaf 26 december een Witbuikrotgans gepaard met een Rotgans *B bernicla* en drie hybride jongen gezien. Een paar Rotgans en Zwarte Rotgans bij Oosterland op Wieringen, Noord-Holland, had één hybride jong. In de Haagse Waterleidingduinen, Zuid-Holland, werden op 3 december niet minder dan 27 **Krooneenden** *Netta rufina* geteld. **Witoogeenden** *Aythya nyroca* werden gezien tot 6 november bij Naarden, Noord-Holland, op 1 november op de Berkel bij Lochem, Gelderland, en bij De Blocq van Kuffeler, Flevoland, van 14 tot 16 november een mannetje en op 6 december een vrouwtje in de Botshol, Utrecht, vanaf 23 november op de plas Aquabest bij Eindhoven, Noord-Brabant, met op 10 december hier zelfs twee, op 7 en 31 december bij Heel, Limburg, en op 10 en 11 december bij Alphen aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland. Een eerstejaars **Witkopeend** *Oxyura leucocephala* verbleef van 20 tot 23 november op het Dijkwater bij Sirjansland, Zeeland, en op 24 en 25 november werd naar wordt aangenomen dezelfde vogel gezien in de Prunjepolder, Zeeland. Een – mogelijk eerste-winter – mannetje **Bronskopeend** *Anas falcata* werd vanaf 23 december onregelmatig binnen- en buitendijks waargenomen ten zuiden van Harlingen, Friesland. Een mannetje **Amerikaanse Smient** *A americana* pleisterde van 5 tot 7 december op de vloeivelden van de suikerfabriek bij Hoogkerk, Groningen. **IJsduikers** *Gavia immer* zwommen bij Westkapelle, Zeeland, op 15 november (hier langsvliegend op 26 november en 6 en 12 december), van 16 tot 22 november op het Veerse Meer, Zeeland, op 6 december langs Ameland, Friesland, en op 7 december bij de Brouwersdam, Zuid-Holland. Een totaal van 40 **Kuifduikers** *Podiceps auritus* werd op 15 november geteld langs de Brouwersdam, Zeeland/Zuid-Holland. De laatste en enige **Grauwe Pijlstormvogel** *Puffinus griseus* van deze periode vloog op 21 december langs Westkapelle. Op 13 december werd een dood **Stormvogeltje** *Hydrobates pelagicus* gevonden bij Langevelderslag, Zuid-Holland, en op de stormachtige dag 21 december vloog er één langs Lauwersoog, Groningen, en was kortstondig een exemplaar ter plaatse in de buitenhaven van Stellendam, Zuid-Holland. **Vale Stormvogeltjes** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* vlogen op 6 december langs Ameland, en op 14 december twee en 21 december één langs Westkapelle. **Kuifaalscholvers** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* werden gemeld op 15 november bij Westkapelle, op 19 november op de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, van 22 tot 30 december bij IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, op 30 november één en 31 december twee bij Neeltje Jans, Zeeland, en vanaf 30 december twee bij de Ketelbrug, Flevoland. Hoge aantallen **Grote Zilverreigers** *Casmerodius albus* waren 19 op 7 november in de Sliedrechtse Biesbosch, Zuid-Holland,

125 Siberische Tjiftjaf / Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, Lauwersoog, Groningen, 17 november 2003 *(Oane Tol)* **126** Vermoedelijke Westelijke Orpheusgrasmus / presumed Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*, Middelburg, Zeeland, 1 november 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)* **127** Bronskopeend / Falcated Duck *Anas falcata*, mannetje, Zurich, Friesland, 3 januari 2004 *(Rob Versteeg)* **128** Witkopeend / White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, eerstejaars, Dijkwater, Zeeland, 21 november 2003 *(Marten van Dijl)* **129** Stormvogeltje / European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* (dood gevonden bij Langevelderslag, Zuid-Holland, op 13 december 2003), Amsterdam, Noord-Holland, 29 december 2003 *(Vincent van der Spek)* **130** Hutchins' Canadese Gans / Hutchins's Canada Goose *Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*, Doniaburen, Friesland, 29 december 2003 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*



131 Taigaboomkruiper / Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*, Makkum, Friesland, 26 december 2003 *(Huub Lanters)* **132** Zeearenden / White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Vossemeer, Flevoland, 15 november 2003 *(Ronald van Dijk)* **133** Woestijntapuit / Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*, vrouwtje, De Cocksdorp, Texel, Noord-Holland, 9 november 2003 *(René Pop)*

31 (!) op 12 november in De Banen, Limburg, 14 op 21 november langs het Vossemeer, Flevoland/Gelderland, en 17 op 9 december bij Polsmaten langs het Veluwemeer, Gelderland. **Rode Wouwen** *Milvus milvus* vlogen op 1 november bij Apeldoorn, Gelderland, bij Son en Breugel, Noord-Brabant, en bij Warnsveld, Gelderland, op 6 november langs Camperduin, Noord-Holland, en later op de dag langs de AW-duinen, Noord-Holland, en op 15 november bij Lopikerkapel, Utrecht. Van niet minder dan 12 locaties kwamen er meldingen van **Zeearenden** *Haliaeetus albicilla*. Tweetallen verbleven in de omgeving van het Vossemeer en in de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, waar er eind december zelfs drie werden gezien.

KRAANVOGELS TOT ALKEN Tot 9 november werden c 300 **Kraanvogels** *Grus grus* op trek waargenomen, waarna nog groepen volgden van 22 op 29 november over het Rutbekerveld, Overijssel, en 17 op 1 december over Heidestein, Utrecht. Een late **Morinelplevier** *Charadrius morinellus* werd op 2 november op Texel gezien. Wilsterflappers vingen een eerste-winter **Amerikaanse Goudplevier** *Pluvialis dominica* bij Hindeloopen, Friesland, op 8 december. Eveneens laat was de **Gestreepte Strandloper** *Calidris melanotos* die op 9 november aanwezig was in de Keersluisplas, Flevoland. Een leuk totaal van 26 **Bokjes** *Lymnocryptes minimus* werd op 1 november vastgesteld in het natuurontwikkelingsgebied Lentevreugd bij Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland. Een eerste-winter **Grote Grijze Snip** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* werd op 30 december ontdekt bij het Veerse Meer en bleef daar tot ver in het nieuwe jaar aanwezig. Een groep van 230 **IJslandse Grutto's** *Limosa limosa islandica* werd op 20 november geteld in de Braakman, Zeeland. **Rosse Franjepoten** *Phalaropus fulicarius* verbleven tot 6 november bij West-Terschelling, Friesland, bij de Noordpier van IJmuiden op 1 november (twee), van 12 tot 23 november op de Vogelplas Starrevaart, Zuid-Holland, en op 16 november (twee) en 18 november (één) bij de Brouwersdam. Op 27 december werd een dichtbij langsvliegende adult-winter **Reuzenzwartkopmeeuw** *Larus ichthyaetus* gemeld bij Katwijk aan Zee, Zuid-Holland. De laatste **Vorkstaartmeeuw** *L sabini* van het seizoen was op 6 november enige tijd ter plaatse bij de Zuidpier van IJmuiden. De **Ringsnavelmeeuw** *L delawarensis* werd de gehele periode gezien bij Goes, Zeeland. Hij was alleen soms even weg! **Kleine Burgemeesters** *L glaucoides* werden gemeld op 6 december langs Ameland en op 14 december kort ter plaatse bij Westkapelle. De adulte **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* van Den Helder, Noord-Holland, verbleef daar in ieder geval tot 6 december. Onvolwassen exemplaren werden gezien op 18 december bij Camperduin, op 22 december bij IJmuiden en op 27 december bij Katwijk aan Zee en later die dag bij Scheveningen, Zuid-Holland. Een zeer late **Zwarte Stern** *Chlidonias niger* verbleef van 6 tot 13 november bij de Keersluisplas. Vanaf eind november zwommen regelmatig een of meer **Alken** *Alca torda* langs de Brouwersdam. Een **Zwarte Zeekoet** *Cepphus grylle* vloog op 28 november langs de telpost van de Eemshaven, Groningen. In deze periode werden slechts vier **Kleine Alken** *Alle alle* doorgegeven; **Papegaaiduikers** *Fratercula arctica* leken algemener met waarnemingen op 1 november langs Huisduinen, Noord-Holland, op 3 november kort ter plaatse voor de kust van Ameland, op 26 november en 6 december langs Westkapelle, op 8 december langs Camperduin, op 21 december (twee) bij Scheveningen en op 26 december (één) langs Katwijk aan Zee.

DUIVEN TOT GORZEN Een **Zomertortel** *Streptopelia turtur* poogde te overwinteren in Aalsmeer, Noord-Holland, wat in ieder geval tot diep in januari lukte. Een late **Gierzwaluw** *Apus apus* vloog op 4 december langs Den Haag, Zuid-Holland. De laatste **Boerenzwaluw** *Hirundo rustica* vloog op 17 november rond bij Enkhuizen, Noord-Holland, en de laatste **Huiszwaluw** *Delichon urbicum* op 15 november langs de Eemshaven. Tot 10 november werden nog 12 **Grote Piepers** *Anthus richardi* waargenomen. Van een overvliegende **Siberische Boompieper** *A hodgsoni* op 5 november bij IJmuiden werd het geluid opgenomen. C 230 **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* werden gezien tot 9 december, waarna nauwelijks nog waarnemingen volgden. De hoogste aantallen werden gezien op 15 november in 's-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant (50), en op 6 december te Zoelen, Gelderland (60). Een **Waterspreeuw** *Cinclus cinclus* werd op 2 november opgemerkt bij de bloemenveiling van Bleiswijk, Zuid-Holland. Een verlaat **Paapje** *Saxicola rubetra* was op 27 november aanwezig op de Maasvlakte. Een vrouwtje **Woestijntapuit** *Oenanthe deserti* werd op 9 november gezien op Texel en was de enige zeldzame tapuit van het najaar. De **Westelijke Orpheusgrasmus** *Sylvia hortensis* – althans, zo staat hij voorlopig te boek – van Middelburg, Zeeland, werd tot 5 november gezien. Op twee plekken waren late **Braamsluipers** *S curruca* aanwezig. In Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, verbleef van 23 november tot 1 december een exemplaar met kenmerken van **Woestijnbraamsluiper** *S c minula*, en bij Starum (Stavoren), Friesland, van 23 november tot 1 december een exemplaar met kenmerken van de ondersoorten *S c blythi/halimodendri* (**Siberische Braamsluiper**). **Pallas' Boszangers** *Phylloscopus proregulus* bleven 'algemeen' met tot 17 november nog negen exemplaren en een late op 2 december in Hoogkerk. Het staartje van de invasie **Bladkoningen** *P inornatus* leverde tot 22 november nog 10 exemplaren op. Ook van **Humes Bladkoning** *P humei* waren nog waarnemingen, en wel tot 1 november in de Eemshaven, op 6 november bij Petten en in West-Terschelling en op 14 december in Burgum (Bergum), Friesland. In aanvulling op de vorige rubriek was er nog een vangst van een **Bruine Boszanger** *P fuscatus* op 22 oktober bij Gorredijk, Friesland. In déze periode waren er waarnemingen van 1 tot 4 november in Nes op Ameland en op 29 en 30 november bij Rozenburg, Zuid-Holland. Vangsten vonden plaats op 5 november op Vlieland, Friesland, op 6 november bij Zandvoort, Noord-Holland, en op 9 november (de derde voor dit

134 Klapekster / Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*, Gasterse Duinen, Drenthe, 27 december 2003
(Eelke Schoppers)

najaar) bij Castricum, Noord-Holland. De eerste **Siberische Tjiftjaf** *P collybita tristis* werd gemeld op 1 november bij de Makkumerzuidwaard, Friesland. Daarna volgden waarnemingen van 16 tot 22 november bij Lauwersoog (maximaal twee), op 21 november in Groningen, Groningen, op 23 en 24 november bij Starum en vanaf 29 december in Harlingen. Een late **Grauwe Vliegenvanger** *Muscicapa striata* werd op 1 november gezien bij Lauwersoog. Een groepje van drie (of meer) **Witkopstaartmezen** *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* dat vanaf 1 november op camping de Holle Poarte bij Makkum verbleef, trok veel bekijks. **Taigaboomkruipers** *Certhia familiaris* werden gemeld op 2 november in Nes op Ameland en bij Ridderkerk, Zuid-Holland, en vanaf deze datum op de Holle Poarte bij Makkum, op 3 november op de Dwingelose Heide, Drenthe, op 6 november in Groningen, op 8 november in de Amsterdamse Waterleidingduinen en in Norg, Drenthe, en op 20 december bij Callantsoog, Noord-Holland. Een **Notenkraker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* verbleef van 3 november tot 7 december in Norg en een andere vloog op 23 november langs Balk, Friesland. De laatste **Roze Spreeuwen** *Sturnus roseus* van dit opnieuw goede jaar voor deze soort betroffen een exemplaar dat tot 2 november in Goes verbleef en een ander dat op 6 november langs de Blauwe Kamer bij Rhenen, Utrecht, vloog. De derde **Afrikaanse Vink** *Fringilla coelebs africana* voor dit jaar en – indien alle meldingen worden aanvaard – het vierde geval voor Nederland betrof een adult mannetje dat vanaf 28 november tot in januari verbleef in de bebouwde kom van Haren, Groningen. Het vermelden waard is de grote groep van c 200 **Fraters** *Carduelis flavirostris* die op 6 december werd waargenomen bij Zwarte Haan, Friesland. Een nog veel groter aantal werd op 4 november gezien bij Hollum op Ameland, waar 1000 exemplaren in gezelschap van ook nog eens c 500 **Sneeuwgorzen** *Plectrophenax nivalis* verbleven. Een **Grote Kruisbek** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* werd op 23 en 25 november gemeld bij Nunspeet, Gelderland. Ook van **Geelgors** *Emberiza citrinella* werd een recordaantal geteld, en wel in het hamsterreservaat bij Sibbe, Limburg, waar er op 18 december c 2000 aanwezig waren, in gezelschap van niet minder dan 88 **Grauwe Gorzen** *E calandra*. Ten slotte waren er nog meldingen van langsvliegende **Dwerggorzen** *E pusilla* op 7 november langs de Nolledijk bij Vlissingen, Zeeland, en op 9 november (twee bij elkaar) langs het Westduinpark te Den Haag.

Ruud M van Dongen, Taalstraat 162, 5261 BJ Vught, Nederland
Klaas Haas, Turkooisstraat 8, 9743 KZ Groningen, Nederland (klaas.haas@dutchbirding.nl)
Peter W W de Rouw, Schoolstraat 3-bis, 3581 PM Utrecht, Nederland (prouw@magmagroup.nl)

België

ZWANEN TOT FLAMINGO'S Er waren waarnemingen van **Wilde Zwanen** *Cygnus cygnus* in Beerse, Antwerpen (vier); Brecht, Antwerpen (twee); Bredene, West-Vlaanderen (zeven); Destelbergen, Oost-Vlaanderen (twee); bij het Lac de la Plate-Taille, Hainaut (vijf); Rijkevorsel, Antwerpen (twee); Roly, Namur (maximaal 14 op 6 november); Waremme, Liège (twee); en Welden, Oost-Vlaanderen (drie). De eerste twitchbare **Groenlandse Kolgans** *Anser albifrons flavirostris* voor België was een juveniele vogel die van 14 tot ten minste 22 december in de Uitkerkse Polders, West-Vlaanderen, verbleef. Op 25 december was een juveniele **Dwerggans** *A erythropus* aanwezig bij Zuienkerke, West-Vlaanderen, en de dag daarop werd een adulte gezien bij Doel, Oost-Vlaanderen. Een vanaf 21 december geclaimde eerste-winter **Zwarte Rotgans** *Branta nigricans* in de Uitkerkse Polders bleek toch tekenen van hybridisatie te vertonen. Op 8 december werd een adulte **Roodhalsgans** *B ruficollis* opgemerkt in de Uitkerkse Polders en vanaf 21 december waren hier twee adulte aanwezig. Op 10 november verbleven vier **Casarca's** *Tadorna ferruginea* te Lier-Anderstad, Antwerpen. Een hybride **Amerikaanse Smient x Smient** *Anas americana x penelope* werd op 12 november waargenomen in de Uitkerkse Polders. Op 18 en 19 december zwom een mannetje **Amerikaanse Wintertaling** *A carolinensis* op het Damvalleimeer in Destelbergen, Oost-Vlaanderen, en van 19 tot 23 december was een tweede te zien in de Bourgoyen bij Gent, Oost-Vlaanderen. In november werden in totaal negen en in december zes **Krooneenden** *Netta rufina* gemeld. Het mannetje **Ringsnaveleend** *Aythya collaris* dat op 16 en 31 december werd gezien op de Meerdamplas in Dendermonde, Oost-Vlaanderen, was wellicht dezelfde vogel die eerder verbleef bij Waasmunster, Oost-Vlaanderen. De vogel van Blokkersdijk, Antwerpen, keerde na 13 jaar niet meer terug. **Witoogeenden** *A nyroca* werden gezien in Harelbeke en bij Maaseik, Limburg, op 1 november; te Lier-Duffel vanaf 9 november; in Boorsem, Limburg, op 11 november; in Zevergem, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 4 december; in Brecht (twee van dubieuze origine vanaf 10 december); en in Boom-Niel, Antwerpen, van 13 tot 19 december. Van 1 tot 10 november verbleef een **IJseend** *Clangula hyemalis* op de Skiput in De Pinte, Oost-Vlaanderen, en op 25 december één bij Pommeroeul, Hainaut; op 29 december trok er één langs Oostende, West-Vlaanderen. Een mannetje **Brilzee-eend** *Melanitta perspicillata* zwom op 5 december weer op zee voor Oostduinkerke, West-Vlaanderen. Enkele goede trekdagen in Oostende resulteerden in 286 **kleine duikers** *Gavia stellata/arctica* op 27 en 398 op 29 december. **Parelduikers** *G arctica* werden gezien bij De Panne, West-Vlaanderen (32, met 14 op 29 december); Heist, West-Vlaanderen (twee); Hensies, Hainaut; Kruibeke, Oost-Vlaanderen; op het Lac de la Plate-Taille; in Lier;

135 Groenlandse Kolgans / Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, juveniel, Uitkerke, West-Vlaanderen, 22 december 2003 *(Koen Verbanck)*

Oostduinkerke (twee) en Oostende (22, met 17 op 29 december). Op 11 november zwommen twee **IJsduikers** *G immer* op het Lac de la Plate-Taille. Op 27 en 29 december trokken er telkens drie langs Oostende. Een niet nader gedetermineerde **grote pijlstormvogel** *Puffinus/Calonectris* passeerde De Panne op 22 december. Op 10 november vloog een **Grauwe Pijlstormvogel** *P griseus* langs Oostende en op 21 december werden er twee gezien. Langs Oostende trok op 27 december bovendien een **Noordse Pijlstormvogel** *P puffinus*. Op 15 december vloog een **Stormvogeltje** *Hydrobates pelagicus* langs Oostende en op 22 december één langs De Panne. Langs Oostende trokken **Vale Stormvogeltjes** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* op 15 en 22 december en langs De Panne vloog er één op 22 december. **Jan-van-genten** *Morus bassanus* kwamen nog gespreid door langs de Belgische kust maar er waren trekpieken van 153 langs Oostende op 10 november en 749 langs De Panne op 14 december. Op 27 en 29 december trok steeds één **Kuifaalscholver** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* langs Oostende. Op 27 december waren nog steeds twee **Kwakken** *Nycticorax nycticorax* aanwezig in het Malensbroek in Geel, Antwerpen. Op 20 plaatsen waren er waarnemingen van **Kleine Zilverreigers** *Egretta garzetta* met de klassieke concentraties in Het Zwin te Knokke, West-Vlaanderen (maximaal 29 op 21 november), en bij Lissewege, West-Vlaanderen (maximaal 45 op 22 november). De hele lijst waarnemingen van **Grote Zilverreigers** *Casmerodius albus* wordt de lezer bespaard: op 54 plaatsen werden er waarnemingen verricht met een topaantal van 49 in het vijvercomplex van Midden-Limburg op 12 november. Verder zijn ook de 12 vogels van Harchies op 6 november en 19 december en de zes van Roosbeek, Vlaams-Brabant, op 14 december een aparte vermelding waard. Op de andere plaatsen werden één tot twee exemplaren waargenomen. In de nacht van 7 op 8 november overnachtte een **Ooievaar** *Ciconia ciconia* bij Gent en van 13 op 14 november gebeurde hetzelfde in Wilrijk, Antwerpen. Een koppel dat tot 24 november bij Horion, Liège, pleisterde, werd op 3 december teruggevonden bij Jeneffe, Liège. Op 21 november vloog er één over Drogenbos, Vlaams-Brabant, op 7 december één over Lier en op 21 december één over Liège, Liège. Een **Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* werd op 9 november gezien bij Pittem, West-Vlaanderen, en op 11 november pleisterde er één op het grindgat in Stokkem, Limburg.

ROOFVOGELS TOT ALKEN Er waren waarnemingen van **Rode Wouwen** *Milvus milvus* in Angre, Hainaut; Aywaille, Liège; Daverdisse, Luxembourg; Harchies; Heuvy, Namur; Liège; Poederlee, Antwerpen (twee); Séviscourt, Luxembourg; Terwagne, Liège; en Xhoris, Liège. De eerste juveniele **Zeearend** *Haliaeetus albicilla* trok op 9 november over Oud-Turnhout, Antwerpen. Op 29 november vloog een exemplaar laag over de Voorhaven van Zeebrugge en deze vogel bleek tot 2 december te pleisteren in en rond de Uitkerkse Polders. Op 7 december begaf de vogel van Saeftinge, Zeeland, Nederland, zich op het grondgebied van Doel en op 20 december vloog er één over Harchies. Op 9 november werd een **Ruigpootbuizerd** *Buteo lagopus* gezien bij Rotem, Limburg, en vanaf 21 december verbleef een juveniele bij Verrebroek, Oost-Vlaanderen. Van 15 november tot 10 december vertoefde een **grote valk** *Falco* van het Giervalk *F rusticolus*-type in het Houbenhof bij Geistingen, Limburg. Ondanks de sterke gelijkenis met een Giervalk kon een hybride (onder meer door de waarnemingsomstandigheden) niet veilig worden uitgesloten. Vooral in de eerste helft van november was er nog doortrek van **Kraanvogels** *Grus grus* met Vlaamse waarnemingen in Genk, Limburg (31); Houthalen, Limburg (30); Kalmthout, Antwerpen (11); Leefdaal, Vlaams-Brabant; Leuven, Vlaams-Brabant (55); Mechelen, Antwerpen (52); en Neerpelt, Limburg (16). Op 18 december vloog er één over Kruibeke. In Wallonië was de doortrek zoals gewoonlijk veel massaler met overtuigende trekpieken van 5 tot 10 november (vele 1000en met onder meer 2500 over Houffalize, Luxembourg, op 6 november) en begin december (enkele 100en). Van 9 tot 20 december pleisterde er regelmatig één bij Harchies. **Middelste Jagers** *Stercorarius pomarinus* trokken langs Wenduine, West-Vlaanderen, op 1 november; langs Oostende op 10 november en 29 december; en langs De Panne op 15 december. In december vlogen 11 **Grote Jagers** *S skua* langs Oostende en vijf langs De Panne. Winterwaarnemingen van **Zwartkopmeeuwen** *Larus melanocephalus* werden verricht in Lier (hele periode); Wenduine (1 november); Zeebrugge (9 november); Heist (een vondst op 13 november); Oudenaarde, Oost-Vlaanderen (22 november); Oostende en De Panne (22 december); en Nazareth, Oost-Vlaanderen (vanaf 24 december). De adulte **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* bleef nog de hele periode aanwezig langs de Visserskaai in Oostende. Op 21 en 27 december vlogen respectievelijk 579 en 464 **Drieteenmeeuwen** *Rissa tridactyla* langs Oostende. De datums 11 en 16 december bleken voor enkele **Grote Sterns** *Sterna sandvicensis* nog niet te laat te zijn om Oostende te passeren. Verrassend was de verschijning van een eerste-winter **Witwangstern** *Chlidonias hybrida* in Sint-Agatha-Rode, Vlaams-Brabant, van 26 november tot 3 december. 16 **Alken** *Alca torda* vlogen op 29 december langs De Panne. Verder waren er ware topdagen voor trekkende **Alken/Zeekoeten** *Alca torda/ Uria aalge* met respectievelijk 164 en 174 op 27 en 29 december langs Oostende. Op 21 december trok de enige **Kleine Alk** *Alle alle* voor de periode langs De Panne. Op 10 november en 29 december trok steeds één **Papegaaiduiker** *Fratercula arctica* langs Oostende.

UILEN TOT GORZEN Een pas aangereden dode **Oehoe** *Bubo bubo* werd op 25 december opgeraapt bij Aarschot, Vlaams-Brabant, en vertoonde geen tekenen van een herkomst uit gevangenschap. Verrassend was het opduiken van **Hoppen** *Upupa epops.* Eén exemplaar verbleef van 3 tot 30 december in Harelbeke, West-Vlaanderen, en op 31 december was een ander aanwezig in het Domein Bokrijk bij Genk. Een

136 Hybride Witkopgors x Geelgors / hybrid Pine Bunting x Yellowhammer *Emberiza leucocephalos x citrinella*, vrouwtje, Hoegaarden, Vlaams-Brabant, 2 januari 2004 *(Kris De Rouck)*

137 Dwerggors / Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, eerste-winter, Nieuwpoort, West-Vlaanderen, 8 december 2003 *(Koen Verbanck)*

Kortteenleeuwerik *Calandrella brachydactyla* werd op 4 december geringd bij de Oostdam in Heist. **Strandleeuweriken** *Eremophila alpestris* werden opgemerkt in Blankenberge, West-Vlaanderen (twee); Knokke (twee); Lier; en Zeebrugge (c 23). De laatste **Boerenzwaluw** *Hirundo rustica* vloog op 15 november over Knokke. Op 30 november vloog nog een **Huiszwaluw** *Delichon urbicum* over Avelgem, West-Vlaanderen. **Grote Piepers** *Anthus richardi* werden gezien in de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge op 4 en 23 november en in de Voorhaven op november. Er waren waarnemingen van **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* in Knokke op 1 november; in Gullegem, West-Vlaanderen, op 6 november (13); in Kortrijk, West-Vlaanderen, op 6 november (twee); in Lier op 8 november; in Oostende op 9 november; in Kalmthout op 10 november (twee); in Mechelen op 13 november (acht) en 16 november (drie); in Arlon, Luxembourg, op 15 december (twee); in Wierde, Namur, op 16 december; in Schelderode, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 22 december; in La Hulpe, Brabant-Wallon, op 19 december; in Lint, Antwerpen, op 22 december (twee); bij Oostmalle, Antwerpen, op 23 december; en in De Panne en Liedekerke, Vlaams-Brabant, op 25 december. **Cetti's Zangers** *Cettia cetti* bleven verder werken aan hun comeback met vier zangposten in Zeebrugge, twee in De Gavers in Harelbeke en telkens één in De Panne, in Heurne, Oost-Vlaanderen, en in de Uitkerkse Polders. Er werden nog **Graszangers** *Cisticola juncidis* waargenomen in de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge (maximaal zeven tot 30 november), in de Voorhaven van Zeebrugge (maximaal drie tot 20 december) en in Het Zwin te Knokke (op 14 november). Een eerste-winter **Provençaalse Grasmus** *Sylvia undata* werd op 25 november ontdekt in de duinenreep bij Blankenberge en bleef daar tot na de jaarwisseling. Een **Pallas' Boszanger** *Phylloscopus proregulus* die op 4 november werd ontdekt in Raversijde, West-Vlaanderen, kreeg op 5 november gezelschap van een tweede. Op 6 november was er één aanwezig in de haven van Oostende en op 9 november een andere in Heist; op 11 november vond een binnenlandwaarneming plaats in Hingene, Antwerpen. Een late **Bladkoning** *P inornatus* was op 30 november aanwezig in Middelkerke, West-Vlaanderen. Op 23 november werd de tweede twitchbare **Humes Bladkoning** *P humei* voor België ontdekt in de Voorhaven van Zeebrugge. Of de vogel die van 25 tot 27 november in de Voorhaven zat dezelfde was, is nog niet helemaal duidelijk maar fotografisch materiaal biedt alvast geen uitsluitsel. Op 5 december volgde een melding in Bredene, West-Vlaanderen. De eerste veldwaarneming van een **Bruine Boszanger** *P fuscatus* dit jaar gebeurde van 25 tot 27 november in de Voorhaven van Zeebrugge. Op 30 november ontdekte men een 'skulkend' binnenlandexemplaar in Stokkem, vlakbij de Nederlandse grens. Een boszanger met de kenmerken van **Siberische Tjiftjaf** *P collybita tristis* verbleef op 18 december bij Verrebroek. Op 30 november werd een wel erg late **Fitis** *P trochilus* opgemerkt in Raversijde. Op vele plaatsen werden behoorlijke aantallen **Baardmannen** *Panurus biarmicus* waargenomen, met een grootste groep van c 70 bij Verrebroek. Bij Ottenburg verbleef op 14 december een **Taigaboomkruiper** *Certhia familiaris*. Er werden **Buidelmezen** *Remiz pendulinus* gezien in Tienen, Vlaams-Brabant, op 8 november; bij Harchies op 10 november; en in Zelzate, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 16 november. Bovendien pleisterden er van 16 november tot 7 december twee te Kallo-Melsele, Oost-Vlaanderen. **Bonte Kraaien** *Corvus cornix* werden gezien in De Panne, Knokke, Lovendegem, Oost-Vlaanderen, Raversijde en Retie, Antwerpen. Een eerste-winter vrouwtje **Witbandkruisbek** *Loxia leucoptera* werd op 31 december geringd bij De Haan, West-Vlaanderen. Er waren drie november- (Zeebrugge) en twee decemberwaarnemingen (Uitkerke en Aldeneik, Limburg) van **IJsgorzen** *Calcarius lap-*

138 Provençaalse Grasmus / Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, eerste-winter, Blankenberge, West-Vlaanderen, 9 december 2003 *(Koen Verbanck)*

139 Dwerggors / Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, eerste-winter, Nieuwpoort, West-Vlaanderen, 8 december 2003 *(Johan Buckens)*

ponicus. Op verschillende plaatsen langs de kust pleisterden groepen van maximaal c 50 **Sneeuwgorzen** *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Dit bleek ook al snel bekend bij illegale vogelvangers waardoor de meeste waarnemingen niet werden bekendgemaakt. Ver in het binnenland waren er waarnemingen in Wavre, Brabant-Wallon, op 14 december en in Tongeren, Limburg, op 1 december. Op 7 november was er een ringvangst van een eerstewinter vrouwtje **Witkopgors** *Emberiza leucocephalos* in Merksplas, Antwerpen. Een vermeend vrouwtje dat vanaf 26 december te zien was bij Hoegaarden, Vlaams-Brabant, bleek bij nauwgezette waarneming toch gele randen te vertonen aan de handpennen zodat België een 'hybride-soort' rijker werd. Op dezelfde ringplaats in Merksplas werd op 20 november een eerste-winter mannetje **Bosgors** *E rustica* geringd. Op 7 december werd een **Dwerggors** *E pusilla* ontdekt in de IJzermonding in Nieuwpoort, West-Vlaanderen; deze vogel liet zich tot na de jaarwisseling uitstekend bekijken.

Deze waarnemingsrubriek kwam tot stand met medewerking van Peter Collaerts (Oost-Brabant), Frank De Scheemaeker (Mergus), Koen Leysen (Limburg) en Willy Verschueren (Groenlink). Ook de hulp van al diegenen die (hun) waarnemingen inspraken op de Natuurpunt-Vogellijn was hier onontbeerlijk. De Natuurpunt-Vogellijn is nu alleen vanuit België bereikbaar op het nummer 0900-00194 (EUR 0.45/min), de Natuurpunt-Inspreeklijn is te bereiken op 0800-11194 (gratis).

Gerald Driessens, Pastoriestraat 16, 2500 Lier, België (gerald.driessens@pandora.be)

DB Actueel

New species of wood-wren An international team of ornithologists has described a new species of wood-wren *Henicorhina* from cloud forest of the high Andes of south-western Colombia. The species was named **Munchique Wood-Wren** *H negreti* after the mountain (Cerro Munchique) where it was discovered (Salaman, P, Coopmans, P, Donegan, T M, Mulligan, M, Cortés, A, Hilty, S L & Ortega, L A 2003. A new species of Wood-Wren (Troglodytidae: *Henicorhina*) from the western Andes of Colombia. Ornitol Col 1: 4-20). As well as being an exciting new discovery, this species breaks new ground because it is the first new bird species to be described electronically in the first issue of the new on-line bird journal Ornitología Colombiana. British and Colombian ornithologists, working with the Colombian bird conservation organization Fundación ProAves, discovered the new species during surveys on Cerro Munchique in Colombia's western Andean range. They found that wood-wrens in Munchique National Park had a distinctive flute-like song, quite different from that of other similar looking wood-wrens found elsewhere in South America, as well as distinctive plumage features and biometrics. The new species is found only in difficult-to-access forest typified by perpetual cloud in the highest elevations of the Munchique massif. Stephen Hilty, author of the *Field guide to the birds of Colombia* (1986), first noted the distinct vocalizations of these wood-wrens in 1978 and heard the birds again in the early 1980s. In the early 1990's, Paul Coopmans noticed the peculiar song during his studies in the area. It then took another 10 years to finally solve the wood-wren puzzle of Munchique. The new wood-wren is specialized to living in densely saturated forest typified by persistent low-level cloud above 2250 m on the pacific slope of Cerro Munchique. The widespread Grey-breasted Wood-Wren *H leucophrys* – which occurs in coastal mountains from Mexico down to Bolivia – replaces Munchique Wood-Wren in less densely saturated forest below 2250 m on the pacific slope (subspecies *H l brunneiceps*) and also on the much dryer eastern slope of the massif (subspecies *H l leucophrys*). Two other species of wood-wren are known: Bar-winged Wood-Wren *H leucoptera* was first described in 1977 and occurs very locally in northern Peru, whereas White-breasted Wood-Wren *H leucosticta* is widespread in most parts of northern South America.

Munchique Wood-Wren is confined to the highest elevations of just one mountain and, as its population and geographical range are extremely small, is proposed for the 'Critically Endangered' status. Due to its highly specific ecological requirements, it is potentially threatened by ecological changes and by illegal deforestation, which continues to occur within Munchique National Park. Fundación ProAves has recently entered into an agreement with Colombia's Environment Ministry to improve management and protection of the habitat of the newly discovered species.

The species' scientific name honours Alavaro José Negret (1949-98), one of Colombia's leading naturalists and ornithologists. He was a professor at Cauca University in Popayán, Colombia, and later became director of the Natural History Museum of Cauca University (MHNUC).

The International Code for Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) specifies that descriptions of new species must be made in 'published work', which does not include

publications on the worldwide web (www). The description of Munchique Wood-Wren has been published in an electronic on-line journal. However, Ornitología Colombiana has an ISBN number, meaning that a hard copy of it is printed and sent to copyright libraries. The journal can also be printed out by others and therefore meets the requirements set by the ICZN. This is the first time that a new species for science has been published electronically and in accordance with the ICZN rules. For more information on the Asociación Colombiana de Ornitología (ACO) and its journal Ornitología Colombiana, see www.ornitologiacolombiana.org; the complete article can be viewed under 'Revista'. ENNO B EBELS

Witkopstaartmezen bij Makkum Op 1 november 2003 vond Sietze Bernardus enkele Witkopstaartmezen *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* in een groep van c 15 Staartmezen *A c europaeus* op camping de Holle Poarte bij Makkum, Friesland, die zich daar tot in januari 2004 ophielden. Hun langdurige verblijf bood vogelaars voor het eerst een makkelijke gelegenheid om deze ondersoort in Nederland te zien. Ten minste drie vogels voldeden aan de complete set kenmerken die nodig is voor een zekere determinatie als *A c caudatus*: een zuiver witte kop zonder enige vlektekening, scherp afgesneden zwarte nekband, brede witte randen aan armpennen en tertials (met witte buiten- en binnenvlag en met variabele hoeveelheid zwart in het centrum), ongestreepte zuiver witte onderdelen zonder borstband en met alleen roze op de flank en onderstaartdekveren, en zeer fijne snavel. Sommige waren minder duidelijk en vertoonden wat vlektekening op de kop of op de onderdelen. Het exacte aantal Witkopstaartmezen is daardoor moeilijk aan te geven. Ze werden fraai gefotografeerd door onder anderen Arnoud van den Berg en Bas van den Boogaard en ook hun geluiden werden opgenomen. Begin december 2003 werden ook elders in Nederland groepjes Witkopstaartmezen gemeld, zoals bij Lies op Terschelling, Friesland, en bij Camperduin, Noord-Holland.

De status van Witkopstaartmees in Nederland is van oudsher onduidelijk. Regelmatig worden in Nederland Staartmezen met witte koppen gezien maar daarmee zijn het nog geen Witkopstaartmezen. De Midden-Europese ondersoort *A c europaeus* is variabel in (kop)tekening en exemplaren met een vrijwel of zelfs geheel witte kop komen voor, al dan niet als gevolg van intergradatie of hybridisatie met *A c caudatus* uit Noord- en Oost-Europa. De populatie van *A c europaeus* wordt waarschijnlijk regelmatig gevoed door oostelijke vogels, die vervolgens niet meer teruggaan en zorgen voor 'witkoppig' nageslacht. Witkoppige staartmezen die in het winterhalfjaar in groepen worden gezien, zeker op de Waddeneilanden of elders langs de kust, worden meestal beschouwd als 'echte' Witkopstaartmezen. In Nederland werden in diverse winters groepen vastgesteld, zoals c 200 vogels in één groep die werden waargenomen door F en L F Rijnja op landgoed Groeneveld te Baarn, Utrecht, op 19 december 1971. Deze waarneming werd aanvankelijk als eerste geval voor Nederland beschouwd (Limosa 46: 65, 1973). Verder werden tussen 20 en 30 oktober 1992 maximaal 13 Witkopstaartmezen gemeld op Texel, Noord-Holland, en op 17 oktober 1992 20 bij De Blocq van Kuffeler, Flevoland (Dutch Birding 14: 238, 1992). Meer recent werden op 11 november 2001 20 vogels waargenomen bij Hoogwatum, Groningen (Dutch Birding 24: 67, 2002).

Waarschijnlijk zijn de in Nederland waargenomen Witkopstaartmezen afkomstig uit Oost-Europa en niet uit Noord-Europa (cf Ornis Fennica 54: 47-65, 1977, Ber Vogelwarte Hiddensee 11: 89-91, 1994). Witkopstaartmees is geen beoordeeltaxon voor de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA). Dit verklaart waarom er niet alleen onduidelijkheid bestaat over het voorkomen maar ook over de kenmerken waaraan een staartmees moet voldoen om als Witkopstaartmees geboekt te mogen worden.

Onderzoek door Justin Jansen in de collecties van de natuurhistorische musea in Leiden, Zuid-Holland (NNM), en Tring, Engeland (NHM), en door Maarten-Pieter Lantsheer in Amsterdam, Noord-Holland (ZMA), bracht aan het licht dat er ten minste één overtuigende Witkopstaartmees in Nederland is verzameld, door A van Bemmelen op 1 november 1859 te Leiden, Zuid-Holland. In de Leidse collectie bevinden zich voorts verschillende exemplaren uit hetzelfde en het volgende jaar met gemengde kenmerken van *A c caudatus* en *A c europaeus*. In Nederland zijn geen ringvangsten

140 Witkopstaartmees / White-headed Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*, Makkum, Friesland, 29 november 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)*

141 Witkopstaartmees / White-headed Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*, Makkum, Friesland, 29 november 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)*

bekend waarvan onomstotelijk vaststaat dat het Witkopstaartmezen betrof. Alle eerder gepubliceerde foto's van (mogelijke) Witkopstaartmezen in Nederland bleken na bestudering exemplaren uit de brede overgangszone van *A c caudatus* en *A c euopaeus* of een *A c europaeus* met witte kop niet uit te sluiten. Eén van de weinige artikelen over voorkomen en herkenning van Witkopstaartmees in Nederland werd gepubliceerd door Koen van Dijken in Taxon 1: 10-14, 1997. De twee foto's van een witkoppige Staartmees in januari 1992 in Groningen, Groningen, bij dit artikel laten een vogel zien met veel kenmerken van Witkopstaartmees maar de vlektekening op het achterhoofd en de donkere flanken geven aan dat er toch sprake is van intermediaire of hybride kenmerken.

Bovenstaand overzicht geeft aan dat 'zuivere' Witkopstaartmezen in Nederland zeldzaam zijn en dat de documentatie bijna altijd onvolledig is. De foto's van Makkum zijn voor zover bekend de eerste van zekere (levende) Witkopstaartmezen. In de toekomst is meer aandacht voor de herkenning en documentatie van deze ondersoort nodig om te bepalen hoe zeldzaam hij nu werkelijk is – onontbeerlijk is daarbij een gedetailleerde observatie vergezeld van foto's en/of videoopnamen. ENNO B EBELS & JUSTIN J F J JANSEN

WHITE-HEADED LONG-TAILED TITS White-headed Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* is considered a rare but regular (winter) visitor in the Netherlands, mostly occurring in invasion years. This northern and eastern subspecies of Long-Tailed Tit is not considered by the Dutch rarities committee (CDNA). There is, however, only one specimen of *A c caudatus* collected in the Netherlands (on 1 November 1859) and well-documented records of *A c caudatus* (safely excluding white-headed Continental Long-tailed Tits *A c europaeus* of western and central Europe) are very rare. The presence of at least three White-headed Long-tailed Tits in a small flock of Continental Long-tailed Tits at Makkum, Friesland, from 1 November into 2004 provided a rare opportunity to observe and photograph this taxon in the Netherlands. For a firm identification, an all-white head is just a start. A true *A c caudatus* also shows a contrasting black upper mantle, broad white fringes to tertails and remiges (the inner tertial often with just a dark shaft streak), unstreaked underparts without a trace of a breast band and pink on the underparts restricted to the rear flank and undertail-coverts.

Mogelijke Woestijnbraamsluiper in Katwijk aan den Rijn
Op zondag 23 november 2003 maakte ik mijn gebruikelijke rondje op mijn 'local patch', het Heerenschoolbos in Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland. Vanaf 1990 heeft deze gewoonte geresulteerd in onder andere een Draaihals *Jynx torquilla*, negen Bladkoningen *Phylloscopus inornatus* en een najaarsgeval van een onvolwassen Roodmus *Carpodacus erythrinus*. Afgezien van twee Vuurgoudhanen *Regulus ignicapilla* en een Tjiftjaf *P collybita* was er deze middag niet veel te beleven. Dit veranderde toen ik rond 14:15 op een

vogel stuitte die ik snel als een Braamsluiper *Sylvia curruca* determineerde. Gezien het voor deze soort late tijdstip in het jaar en de melding van een Siberische Braamsluiper *S c blythi/halimodendri* eerder op de dag bij Starum (Stavoren), Friesland, besloot ik de vogel aandachtig te bekijken. De kans was immers groot dat het hier eveneens om dat taxon ging. Mijn kennis ging op dat moment niet verder dan dat ik wist van het bestaan van Siberische Braamsluiper, zonder te weten welke kenmerken bij dat taxon hoorden. Toen ik mijn vogel wat beter te zien kreeg vielen de zeemkleurige onderdelen en vrij egaal lichtbruine bovenzijde op waardoor hij bij oppervlakkige beschouwing een overwegend vaalbruine indruk maakte. Verder zag ik dat het grijs van de kruinveren niet ver doorliep naar achteren en zeer geleidelijk overging in het lichtbruin van de mantel. Nadat ik nog wat kenmerken als de kleur van iris, poten en snavel had opgenomen, besloot ik snel naar huis te gaan om literatuur te raadplegen. Ik pakte de *Dutch Birding Kenmerkengids* (2002), de enige gids in mijn bezit waarin ik een redelijke beschrijving van deze ondersoort verwachtte. Tot mijn verrassing bleken er meer ondersoorten van Braamsluiper beschreven te staan. Op basis van wat ik in het veld had vastgesteld kwam de beschrijving van *S c minula* (Woestijnbraamsluiper) het meest overeen. Ik besloot de vogel via een 'terughoudende' code door te piepen als Siberische Braamsluiper. Al snel arriveerden lokale vogelaars en de vogel werd redelijk vlot teruggevonden. Wat velen meteen opviel was dat hij – zeker onder bepaalde lichtomstandigheden – duidelijk afweek van onze vertrouwde Braamsluiper. Links en rechts hoorde je kreten als 'Het lijkt wel een Woestijngrasmus' of 'Het lijkt wel een Baardgrasmus'. Niemand van de aanwezigen had veel ervaring met het braamsluiper-complex. Desondanks waren de meesten op basis van onder meer de egale zandkleurige bovendelen, de onduidelijke koptekening, het kleine formaat met korte vleugels en lange staart (waarbij een aantal staartpennen ontbrak en/of onvolgroeid was) en de rusteloze bewegingen het eens dat de kenmerken goed pasten op wat we van *minula* wisten. We werden gesterkt in ons vermoeden door een telefoontje van Hans ter Haar die op dat moment bij de Siberische Braamsluiper van Friesland stond. Inmiddels was deze vogel voorzichtig gedetermineerd als *S c halimodendri,* de ondersoort die wat betreft kenmerken tussen de nominaat *S c curruca* en *minula* instaat. Hans vertelde echter dat zijn vogel, afgezien van nogal buffe onderdelen, wat bruin op de mantel en meer wit in de staart, nauwelijks anders was dan Braamsluipers zoals hij die in Nederland gewend was, terwijl de Katwijkse vogel wel duidelijk afweek! Niet meer dan 20 vogelaars zagen de Katwijkse braamsluiper tot c 16:00; daarna werd het licht snel slechter en kon hij niet meer worden gevonden.

De volgende ochtend duurde het tot c 10:30 voordat de vogel weer werd gezien. Die dag en gedurende de rest van de week werd hij door vele 10-tallen vogelaars bezocht. Er zijn twee pogingen ondernomen om de vogel te vangen voor het nemen van maten en verzamelen van een DNA-monster, maar zonder resultaat. Wel werden er uitstekende video-opnamen en foto's gemaakt, waarop door vergelijking onder meer het groeiproces van de staartpennen te bepalen is. De vogel is tijdens zijn gehele verblijf slechts eenmaal kort – en niet met zekerheid – gehoord (een meesachtig geluid). Op 1 december werd hij voor het laatst waargenomen.

Bij de eerste aanblik was het dus direct duidelijk dat het om een braamsluiper ging. De combinatie van compact formaat, donkere oorstreek, lichtere grijze kruin en zwarte poten sloot andere grasmussen uit. Vervolgens duidde de combinatie van contrastarme lichtbruine bovendelen, zeemkleurige onderdelen, witte buitenvlag aan de buitenste staartpennen (zichtbaar op de in de loop van de week aangroeiende staartpennen), de witte top aan t5 en de lichtgele iris op een andere (onder)soort dan de nominaat. Er worden minimaal zes taxa onderscheiden binnen de braamsluipers: *althaea* (Humes Braamsluiper), *blythi*, *curruca* en *halimodendri* (Braamsluiper), *margelanica* en *minula* (Woestijnbraamsluiper). De meeste taxa vallen af bij de Katwijkse vogel omdat ze overwegend grijs en relatief donker en groot zijn, met een vrij forse snavel. Voor de determinatie blijven *halimodendri* en *minula* over. Het kleine formaat, de fijne snavel, de lichtbruine contrastarme bovendelen, de korte handpenprojectie (zes handpentoppen zichtbaar), de lichtgele iris en het rusteloze gedrag passen het beste op *minula*. De vogel vertoonde opvallend veel overeenkomsten met een veronderstelde *minula* die zich van 9 tot 26 november 2000 in Teesside, Engeland, bevond (cf Birding World 13: 451-453, 2000). Alleen de bovenstaart van de Katwijkse vogel was iets donkerder.

Twijfel over de ware identiteit van de vogel rees nadat André van Loon een vijftal balgen van *minula* had bekeken in het Zoölogisch Museum te Amsterdam, Noord-Holland (ZMA). Deze vogels hadden een beduidend lichtere, meer zandkleurige mantel dan de Katwijkse vogel en tevens liep het grijs op de kruin verder naar achteren door en stak duidelijker af tegen de lichtere mantel. Deze balgen zijn alle afkomstig uit West-China, het meest oostelijke deel van het verspreidingsgebied van *minula,* en zijn in het voorjaar verzameld. Westelijke populaties van *minula* zijn volgens de literatuur grijzer. Er is echter nauwelijks onderzoek verricht naar deze westelijke populaties. Naast de determinatie is er nog discussie gaande over de juiste taxonomische indeling van het braamsluipercomplex. In de Sibley-lijst (*Birds of the world*, 1996) – tot 1 januari 2004 de taxonomische leidraad voor Dutch Birding – worden drie soorten onderscheiden (*S althaea*, *S curruca* en *S minula*) en in *Sylvia warblers* (Shirihai et al 2001) zelfs vier 'allospecies' (ook *S margelanica*). In de nieuwe *Howard and Moore Checklist* (Dickinson 2003) die vanaf 1 januari 2004 door Dutch Birding gevolgd wordt is echter alleen *althaea* afgesplitst.

Minula broedt in steppen en woestijnen van West-China, Turkmenistan, Centraal-Iran, West-Afganistan en Noordwest-Pakistan. Het overwinteringsgebied omvat Pakistan, Noordwest-India en in mindere mate het zui-

142 Mogelijke Woestijnbraamsluiper / possible Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca minula*, Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, 25 november 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)*

143 Mogelijke Woestijnbraamsluiper / possible Desert Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca minula*, Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, 27 november 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)*

delijke deel van het Arabisch Schiereiland. Het verspreidingsgebied van *halimodendri* ligt ten noorden van de populaties van *minula* en is geconcentreerd in de Centraal-Aziatische steppen van met name Kazachstan.

In Nederland heeft de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) twee vangsten van *S c blythi/halimodendri* aanvaard van 30 november 1986 en 5 november 1992, beide te Castricum, Noord-Holland. *Minula* is niet eerder in Nederland vastgesteld. In Brittannië – waar Siberische Braamsluiper volgens Lee Evans (in litt) een jaarlijkse 'doortrekker' zou zijn – zijn er verschillende meldingen van zuid-oostelijke vogels (*halimodendri/minula/margelanica*), waaronder c 10 in oktober-november 2003. Voorlopig werd alleen bij de vogel van Teesside in 2000 de determinatie als *minula* voldoende zeker geacht. Een exemplaar op Fair Isle, Shetland, Schotland, in juni 1999 vertoonde kenmerken van *margelanica* (cf Birding World 12: 281-283, 1999). Overige Europese waarnemingen hebben betrekking op drie gevallen van *halimodendri* in Zweden (cf Birding World 14: 12-15, 2001) en een *halimodendri/minula* in Denemarken. CASPER ZUYDERDUYN

POSSIBLE DESERT WHITETHROAT From 23 November to 1 December 2003, a small and pale Lesser Whitehroat *Sylvia curruca* stayed in a small wooded area at Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands. On basis of its small size, short primary projection (six primary tips visible), reduced face mask, dull brown upperparts, buffish underparts, short bill and pale yellow iris, the bird most closely resembled Desert Whitethroat *S c minula*, a taxon not recorded before in the Netherlands. No call was heard with certainty. Attempts to trap the bird failed but the bird was excellently photographed and videoed. It may be difficult to exclude Siberian Whitethroat of the south-eastern subspecies *S c halimodendri*. Both the identification and the taxonomy of lesser whitethroats are complex: depending on the author(s), one, two, three or even four species are recognized.

Afrikaanse Vink in Haren Op maandag 8 december 2003 keek Arnold Heikamp om 13:00 vanuit zijn woning aan de Onnerweg 51 in Haren, Groningen, naar een groepje Vinken *Fringilla coelebs*. Zijn aandacht werd getrokken door een afwijkende vink die hij korte tijd kon observeren. Na raadpleging van de ANWB-vogelgids kwam hij tot de conclusie dat het een Afrikaanse Vink *F c africana* moest zijn. Die avond plaatste AH zijn waarneming op het discussieforum van www.avifaunagroningen.nl. Laat die avond las Dušan Brinkhuizen het bericht. Hij vond de beschrijving zo overtuigend dat hij het adres van AH opspoorde en direct de volgende ochtend poolshoogte ging nemen. Na enige tijd zoeken had DB de vogel kort in beeld en kon hij de determinatie bevestigen. Het nieuws werd via Martin Olthoff doorgegeven op het semafoonsysteem. Frustrerend was dat de vogel de rest van de dag niet meer gevonden kon worden ondanks zoeken door een viertal vogelaars. De volgende dagen werd de vogel echter met enige regelmaat gezien in de tuin van Dick en Greet Beks aan de Onnerweg 59. De vogel bevond zich hier in een grote groep Vinken die met Huismussen *Passer domesticus*, Ringmussen *P montanus* en Groenlingen *Chloris chloris* in bomen of struiken zaten te wachten op het vogelzaad dat Greet Beks een aantal keren per dag achter haar huis strooide. Haar gastvrijheid richtte zich niet alleen op vogels maar ook op vogelaars. Het was zelfs mogelijk om bij haar in de woonkamer op te warmen met een kop koffie en tegelijkertijd de vogel te observeren vanachter het raam. Op vrijdag 12 december liep de zoveelste voorbijganger langs met de vraag: 'Waar kijken jullie naar, een bijzondere vogel of zo?'. Na het bevestigende antwoord keerde deze persoon, J W Wakker van de Berkenlaan 39, even later terug met de mededeling: 'Ik heb laatst ook een bijzondere vogel gezien.' Hij overhandigde een foto met daarop vol in beeld de Afrikaanse Vink! 'Die zat op 28 november op mijn voederplankje. Ik had geen idee wat het was.' Hoewel de vogel kennelijk verschillende foerageerpunten had en soms urenlang zoek was, bleek de tuin van Onnerweg 59 toch de beste plek en met een beetje geduld kon men hem hier tot 23 december en nog een keer op 6 januari 2004 fraai bekijken. Hij viel tussen de Vinken vooral op door de kenmerkende blauwig grijze kop en hals met onderbroken zwarte teugel en witte oogring boven en onder het oog, de lichte rozeachtige kin, keel en (groot deel van) onderdelen en de blauwgrijze schouderveren. Een van de staartpennen had een afwijkend wit topje. Aanvankelijk werd door sommigen aan een vrouwtje gedacht. Echter, de kop was daarvoor te grijs, de mantel te groen en de onderdelen te roze. De op foto's zichtbare ronde toppen van de staartpennen en het ontbreken van een ruicontrast op de vleugeldekveren wijzen op een adulte vogel.

De vele ondersoorten van Vink worden in drie fenotypische groepen gerangschikt die in verenkleed en geluiden verschillen en die volgens *The birds of the Western Palearctic* 8 (Cramp & Perrins 1994) als drie soorten kunnen worden opgevat. Behalve de Europese *coelebs*-groep is dat de *canariensis*-groep met zes ondersoorten op de Azoren, Canarische Eilanden en Madeira en de *spodiogenys*-groep in Noordwest-Afrika met twee qua verenkleed sterk op elkaar lijkende ondersoorten, *africana* en *spodiogenys*. Verrassend genoeg wijst genetisch onderzoek er op dat *africana* nauwer verwant is aan de nominaat Europese Vink dan aan de Tunesische ondersoort *spodiogenys* of een van de *canariensis*-ondersoorten. Dit zou betekenen dat ook *africana* en *spodiogenys* tot aparte soorten gerekend kunnen worden. De hoeveelheid wit op de vleugel van de Harense vogel, vooral op de tertials, was te gering voor *spodiogenys*.

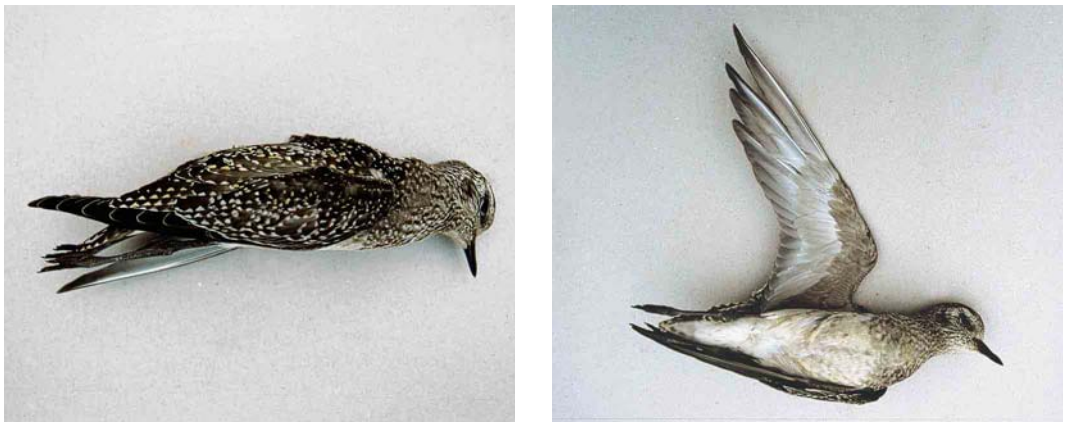
Er zijn in Nederland drie eerdere meldingen van Afrikaanse Vink, waarbij (nog) niet duidelijk is welke van beide ondersoorten het betrof en of ze voor de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) aanvaardbaar zijn. De eerste was vermoedelijk een vrouwtje gedocumenteerd door een geluidsopname in de Eemshaven, Groningen, op 30 april 1999, de

144-145 Afrikaanse Vink / African Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs africana*, adult mannetje, Haren, Groningen, 11 december 2003 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

tweede een mannetje op 4 en 5 april 2003 op de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, en de derde een mannetje waargenomen op de Grote Praambult, Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, op 14 april 2003. Elders in Noordwest-Europa zijn meer dan 10 waarnemingen bekend. Deze zijn echter ook (nog) niet aanvaard omdat er onduidelijkheid bestaat over mogelijke variatie bij Europese Vink. Afrikaanse Vink wordt vrijwel niet in gevangenschap aangetroffen en er is daarom geen reden om te denken aan ontsnapte kooivogels. Het is opvallend dat de meeste meldingen dateren uit april en dat er inclusief de drie van Nederland liefst vijf in 2003 werden ontdekt. Hieruit zou men kunnen afleiden dat Afrikaanse Vinken met de in Marokko overwinterende Europese Vinken meevliegen en dat daar in sommige jaren misschien een grotere kans op is dan normaal. De voorjaarstrek van Vink speelt zich rond de Straat van Gibraltar voornamelijk af in februari-april. En er zijn in Marokko ringterugmeldingen van Vinken uit noordelijke landen als Finland, Noorwegen en Rusland. Het lijkt aannemelijk dat een in het voorjaar met Vinken noordwaarts getrokken Afrikaanse Vink zich ook in de rest van het jaar bij Vinken aansluit. Dušan M Brinkhuizen, Arnold Heikamp & Arnoud B van den Berg

African Chaffinch From 28 November 2003 to at least 6 January 2004, a presumed male African Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs africana* was present in a flock of Common Chaffinches *F c coelebs* at feeders in Haren, Groningen, the Netherlands. Its most conspicuous features were the bluish-grey head and neck with pale pink chin and throat and broken white eye-ring and the very pale underparts which were partly pinkish. It was tentatively identified as a male. It was an adult due to its rounded rectrices and the absence of a moult contrast in the wing-coverts. The whitish edges to the secondaries and tertials appeared too narrow for the Tunisian subspecies *F c spodiogenys*. There have been three previous reports of African Chaffinch (*africana/spodiogenys*) for the Netherlands. The first was a presumed female documented by a sound-recording at Eemshaven, Groningen, on 30 April 1999, the second a male photographed at Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, on 4-5 April 2003, and the third a male observed at Grote Praambult, Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, on 14 April 2003. All four are still under consideration by the Dutch rarities committee (CDNA). There are more than 10 reports for Europe (none accepted by the relevant rarities committee), most of them dating from April. If these birds can be safely identified as African Chaffinch, this occurrence pattern suggests that vagrants may join flocks of Common Chaffinches returning from winter quarters in North Africa.

Amerikaanse Gouplevier door wilsterflappers gevangen bij Hindeloopen Op 8 december 2003, een dag met lichte tot matige vorst, werden door Doede en Eeltje Mulder te Hindeloopen, Friesland, tijdens het wilsterflappen 34 'wilsters' – Goudplevieren *Pluvialis apricaria* – gevangen. Om c 11:00 werd tevens een 'kleine goudplevier' *P dominica/fulva* bemachtigd. Beide broers herkenden deze vogel meteen als een 'lytse swarte' aan de hand van de beschrijvingen via overlevering van hun vader en ooms, die in het verleden regelmatig dergelijke vogels hadden gevangen. Bij het uit het net halen viel meteen op dat de vogel kleiner was, met grijze borst, buik en ondervleugeldekveren. De bovendelen en kop waren donkerder gekleurd dan bij een Goudplevier, met een opvallende witgrijze wenkbrauwstreep. Joop Jukema werd geïnformeerd over de bijzondere vangst met het verzoek om deze te determineren, te beschrijven en voor documentatie foto's te maken. Bij aankomst een uur later bleek de 'lytse swarte' in het vangkooitje dood te zijn, waarschijnlijk als gevolg van de klap door het slagnet op de harde bevroren grond. De vogel is inmiddels geprepareerd en als balg opgenomen in de collectie van het Fries Natuur Museum te Leeuwarden, Friesland. De borst, buik en ondervleugeldekveren waren asgrijs. De



146-147 Amerikaanse Goudplevier / American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, eerste-winter, Hindeloopen, Friesland, 8 december 2003 *(Joop Jukema)*

bovendelen met mantel, rug, en schouderveren waren zwart met kleine vuilwitte stippen en met enkele gele stipjes. De kop was donker met contrasterende witgrijze wenkbrauwstreep. De volgende biometrische gegevens zijn verzameld: vleugellengte 187 mm, tarsuslengte 41.1 mm, snavellengte 22.1 mm, lengte van snavel en kop 57.5 mm, handpenprojectie 6/7 en gewicht 155 g.

Op basis van de grijze ondervleugeldekveren kon een Goudplevier (die witte ondervleugeldekveren heeft) worden uitgesloten en was duidelijk dat het een Amerikaanse Goudplevier *P dominica* of Aziatische Goudplevier *P fulva* betrof. Het onderscheiden van de beide soorten is niet mogelijk aan de hand van biometrische afmetingen door de grote overlap, met uitzondering van de vleugellengte. De vleugellengte bij *fulva* is 160-178 mm en bij *dominica* 180-191 mm. Deze maten zijn alle afkomstig van balgen in museumcollecties. De maten van 43 levende *fulva*'s in de broedgebieden in de Medusabaai in Taimyr in West-Siberië, Rusland, gaven een spreiding te zien in vleugellengte van 158-177 mm. Een uitzondering zijn de overwinterende *fulva*'s van Victoria, Australië, waarvan de vleugellengte met een spreiding van 161-186 mm tussen de *fulva*'s uit Siberië en de *dominica*'s uit Alaska, VS, ligt. Deze 'langvleugelige' *fulva*'s zijn vermoedelijk van de broedpopulatie van Alaska. De vleugellengte van 187 mm van de vogel van Hindeloopen sluit *fulva* uit. Een belangrijk ondersteunend kenmerk is de handpenprojectie. *Fulva* heeft een korte handpenprojectie waarbij de tertials reiken tot p8-9 en *dominica* heeft een lange handpenprojectie waarbij de tertials reiken tot p6-7. Bij de vogel van Hindeloopen reiken de tertials tussen p6 en p7. Ook het overwegend grijze verenkleed met relatief weinig geel en de witgrijze wenkbrauwstreep zonder geel wijzen op *dominica*. De licht gebandeerde borst en buikveren en de slijtage aan de tertials geven aan dat het om een eerstejaars gaat.

Deze vogel betreft de tweede vangst van een Amerikaanse Goudplevier voor Nederland; de eerste betrof een eerste-winter vrouwtje dat in november 1900 werd verzameld bij Birdaard, Friesland, eveneens door wilsterflappers. Pas in oktober 1989 werd het tweede geval voor Nederland vastgesteld op Texel, Noord-Holland. Sindsdien is de soort bijna jaarlijks vastgesteld. In totaal zijn tot en met 2002 14 gevallen aanvaard, waarvan vijf in oktober en drie in november. Uit december waren nog geen gevallen bekend. JOOP JUKEMA, DOEDE A MULDER & EELTJE A MULDER

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER On 8 December 2003, a first-winter American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* was trapped with 34 European Golden Plovers *P apricaria* at Hindeloopen, Friesland, the Netherlands. The bird died shortly after it was caught. This is the second American Golden Plover to be collected in the Netherlands. The first – also constituting the first record for the Netherlands – was collected in November 1900. In total, there are 14 records up to and including 2002, of which 13 since 1989. The 2003 record is the first for December.