# DUTCH BIRDING

VOLUME 28 • NO 2 • 2006

# Dutch Birding

*Internationaal tijdschrift over Palearctische vogels*

**Redactie**
Dutch Birding
Postbus 116
2080 AC Santpoort-Zuid
Nederland
fax 023-5376749
e-mail editors@dutchbirding.nl

**Fotoredactie**
Dutch Birding
p/a René Pop
Postbus 31
1790 AA Den Burg-Texel
Nederland
e-mail rene.pop@dutchbirding.nl

**Abonnementenadministratie**
p/a Jeannette Admiraal
Iepenlaan 11
1901 ST Castricum
Nederland
e-mail circulation@dutchbirding.nl

**Bestuur**
Dutch Birding Association
Postbus 75611
1070 AP Amsterdam
Nederland
e-mail dba@dutchbirding.nl

**Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna**
CDNA
Postbus 45
2080 AA Santpoort-Zuid
Nederland
e-mail cdna@dutchbirding.nl

**Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna**
CSNA, p/a George Sangster
Stevenshof 17
2312 GM Leiden
Nederland
e-mail csna@dutchbirding.nl

**Telefoonlijnen**
0900-BIRDING (= 0900-2473464)
(vogellijn, EUR 0.35/min)
010-4281212 (inspreeklijn)

**Internet**
www.dutchbirding.nl

## Dutch Birding

**Hoofdredacteur** Arnoud van den Berg (tel 023-5378024, e-mail arnoud.van.den.berg@dutchbirding.nl)

**Adjunct hoofdredacteur** Enno Ebels (tel 030-2961335, e-mail enno.ebels@dutchbirding.nl)

**Uitvoerend redacteur** André van Loon (tel / fax 020-6997585, e-mail andre.van.loon@dutchbirding.nl)

**Fotografisch redacteur** René Pop (tel 0222-316801, fax 0222-316802, e-mail rene.pop@dutchbirding.nl)

**Redactieraad** Peter Adriaens, Ferdy Hieselaar, Roy Slaterus, Roland van der Vliet en Rik Winters

**Redactie-adviesraad** Peter Barthel, Mark Constantine, Gunter De Smet, Dick Forsman, Ricard Gutiérrez, Anthony McGeehan, Killian Mullarney, Klaus Malling Olsen, Magnus Robb, George Sangster, Hadoram Shirihai en Lars Svensson

**Redactiemedewerkers** Rob van Bemmelen, Marten van Dijl, Ruud van Dongen, Gerald Driessens, Nils van Duivendijk, Joris Elst, Dick Groenendijk, Klaas Haas, Marcel Haas, Jan van der Laan, Hans van der Meulen, André van der Plas, Kees Roselaar, René van Rossum en Peter de Rouw

**Productie en lay-out** André van Loon en René Pop

**Advertenties** Laurens Steijn, p/a Dutch Birding, Postbus 75611, 1070 AP Amsterdam
e-mail advertising@dutchbirding.nl

**Abonnementen** De abonnementsprijs voor 2006 bedraagt: EUR 32.00 (Nederland), EUR 35.00 (Europa) en EUR 38.00 (landen buiten Europa).
U kunt zich abonneren door het overmaken van de abonnementsprijs op girorekening 01 50 697 (Nederland), girorekening 000 1592468 19 (België) of bankrekening 54 93 30 348 van ABN•AMRO (Castricum), ovv 'abonnement Dutch Birding'. Alle rekeningen zijn ten name van de Dutch Birding Association. Het abonnement gaat in na ontvangst van de betaling.

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

De volgorde van vogels in Dutch Birding volgt in eerste instantie een klassieke 'Wetmore-indeling'. Binnen dit raamwerk worden voor taxonomie en naamgeving de volgende overzichten aangehouden: *Dutch Birding-namen* door A B van den Berg (2006, Amsterdam) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke, Nederlandse en Engelse namen van West-Palearctische vogels); *Vogels van de wereld – complete checklist* door M Walters (1997, Baarn) (Nederlandse namen van overige vogels van de wereld); en *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world* (derde editie) door E C Dickinson (redactie) (2003, Londen) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke en Engelse namen van overige vogels van de wereld).

Een lijst met tarieven voor de vergoeding van auteurs, fotografen en tekenaars is verkrijgbaar bij de redactie.

## Dutch Birding Association

**Bestuur** Theo Admiraal (penningmeester), Gijsbert van der Bent (voorzitter, tel 071-4024547), Wietze Janse, Marc Plomp (secretaris, tel 0348-433730) en Laurens Steijn; tevens is de redactie van Dutch Birding met een zetel vertegenwoordigd.

**Bestuursmedewerkers** Jeannette Admiraal, Leon Boon, Martijn Bot, Lucien Davids, Arjan van Egmond, Albert van den Ende, Klaas Haas, Marcel Haas, Leo Heemskerk, Arnold Meijer, Chris van Rijswijk, Henk van Rijswijk, Willem van Rijswijk, Vincent van der Spek, Marcel Scholte, Michel Veldt, Jeroen van Vianen en Peter Weiland.

## Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA)

**Leden** Ruud Brouwer, Bert de Bruin (secretaris, tel 050-5716672), Nils van Duivendijk, Dick Groenendijk, Teus Luijendijk, Laurens Steijn, Roland van der Vliet (voorzitter, tel 030-2970013), Arend Wassink en Pim Wolf. **Medewerker** Max Berlijn (archivaris). De CDNA is een commissie van de Dutch Birding Association en de Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie.

## Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA)

**Leden** Arnoud van den Berg, André van Loon, Kees Roselaar en George Sangster (secretaris, tel 071-5143790). De CSNA is een commissie van de Dutch Birding Association en de Nederlandse Ornithologische Unie.

© 2006 Stichting Dutch Birding Association. Het copyright van de foto's en tekeningen blijft bij de fotografen en tekenaars. ISSN 0167-2878.

Drukkerij robstolk®, Mauritskade 55, 1092 AD Amsterdam, Nederland

# Dutch Birding

**Chief editor** Arnoud van den Berg (tel +31-235378024, e-mail arnoud.van.den.berg@dutchbirding.nl)

**Deputy chief editor** Enno Ebels (tel +31-302961335, e-mail enno.ebels@dutchbirding.nl)

**Executive editor** André van Loon (tel / fax +31-206997585, e-mail andre.van.loon@dutchbirding.nl)

**Photographic editor** René Pop (tel +31-222316801, fax +31-222316802, e-mail rene.pop@dutchbirding.nl)

**Editorial board** Peter Adriaens, Ferdy Hieselaar, Roy Slaterus, Roland van der Vliet and Rik Winters

**Editorial advisory board** Peter Barthel, Mark Constantine, Gunter De Smet, Dick Forsman, Ricard Gutiérrez, Anthony McGeehan, Killian Mullarney, Klaus Malling Olsen, Magnus Robb, George Sangster, Hadoram Shirihai and Lars Svensson

**Editorial assistants** Rob van Bemmelen, Marten van Dijl, Ruud van Dongen, Gerald Driessens, Nils van Duivendijk, Joris Elst, Dick Groenendijk, Klaas Haas, Marcel Haas, Jan van der Laan, Hans van der Meulen, André van der Plas, Kees Roselaar, René van Rossum and Peter de Rouw

**Production and lay-out** André van Loon and René Pop

**Advertising** Laurens Steijn, c/o Dutch Birding, Postbus 75611, 1070 AP Amsterdam e-mail advertising@dutchbirding.nl


**Subscriptions** The subscription rate for 2006 is: EUR 32.00 (Netherlands), EUR 35.00 (Europe) and EUR 38.00 (countries outside Europe).
Subscribers in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden are kindly requested to pay the subscription fee to our local bank accounts in these countries. Details can be found on the internet (www.dutchbirding.nl).
British subscribers are requested to pay exclusively by Sterling cheque. This cheque can be sent to Dutch Birding, c/o Jeannette Admiraal, Iepenlaan 11, 1901 ST Castricum, Netherlands.
Subscribers in other countries can make their payment by credit card (Access, Eurocard, MasterCard or Visa). Please send an e-mail indicating your credit card type, account number, the expiry date and full address details to circulation@dutchbirding.nl.
The subscription starts upon receipt of payment and already published issues will be sent.

Dutch Birding is a bimonthly journal. It publishes original papers and notes on morphology, systematics, occurrence and distribution of birds in the Benelux, Europe and elsewhere in the Palearctic region. It also publishes contributions on birds in the Asian-Pacific region and other regions.

The sequence of birds in Dutch Birding basically follows a classic 'Wetmore sequence'. Within this framework, the following lists are used for taxonomy and nomenclature: *Dutch Birding's names* by A B van den Berg (2006, Amsterdam) (taxonomy and scientific, Dutch and English names of Western Palearctic birds); *Vogels van de wereld – complete checklist* by M Walters (1997, Baarn) (Dutch names of remaining birds of the world); and *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world* (third edition) by E C Dickinson (editor) (2003, London) (taxonomy and scientific and English names of remaining birds of the world).

A schedule of payment rates for authors, photographers and artists is available from the editors.


## Dutch Birding Association

**Board** Theo Admiraal (treasurer), Gijsbert van der Bent (president, tel +31-714024547), Wietze Janse, Marc Plomp (secretary, tel +31-348433730) and Laurens Steijn; the editors of Dutch Birding also have one seat in the board.

**Board assistants** Jeannette Admiraal, Leon Boon, Martijn Bot, Lucien Davids, Arjan van Egmond, Albert van den Ende, Klaas Haas, Marcel Haas, Leo Heemskerk, Arnold Meijer, Chris van Rijswijk, Henk van Rijswijk, Willem van Rijswijk, Vincent van der Spek, Marcel Scholte, Michel Veldt, Jeroen van Vianen and Peter Weiland.

## Dutch rarities committee (CDNA)

**Members** Ruud Brouwer, Bert de Bruin (secretary, tel +31-505716672), Nils van Duivendijk, Dick Groenendijk, Teus Luijendijk, Laurens Steijn, Roland van der Vliet (chairman, tel +31-302970013), Arend Wassink and Pim Wolf. **Assistent** Max Berlijn (archivist). The CDNA is a committee of the Dutch Birding Association and the Netherlands Ornithologists' Union.

## Dutch committee for avian systematics (CSNA)

**Members** Arnoud van den Berg, André van Loon, Kees Roselaar and George Sangster (secretary, tel +31-715143790). The CSNA is a committee of the Dutch Birding Association and the Netherlands Ornithologists' Union.


© 2006 Stichting Dutch Birding Association. The copyright of the photographs and drawings remains with the photographers and artists. ISSN 0167-2878.

Printed by drukkerij robstolk®, Mauritskade 55, 1092 AD Amsterdam, Netherlands

# Dutch Birding

*International journal on Palearctic birds*


**Editors**
Dutch Birding
Postbus 116
2080 AC Santpoort-Zuid
Netherlands
fax +31-235376749
e-mail editors@dutchbirding.nl

**Photographic editor**
Dutch Birding
c/o René Pop
Postbus 31
1790 AA Den Burg-Texel
Netherlands
e-mail rene.pop@dutchbirding.nl

**Subscription administration**
c/o Jeannette Admiraal
Iepenlaan 11
1901 ST Castricum
Netherlands
e-mail circulation@dutchbirding.nl

**Board**
Dutch Birding Association
Postbus 75611
1070 AP Amsterdam
Netherlands
e-mail dba@dutchbirding.nl

**Dutch rarities committee**
CDNA
Postbus 45
2080 AA Santpoort-Zuid
Netherlands
e-mail cdna@dutchbirding.nl

**Dutch committee for avian systematics**
CSNA, c/o George Sangster
Stevenshof 17
2312 GM Leiden
Netherlands
e-mail csna@dutchbirding.nl

**Internet**
www.dutchbirding.nl

**Dutch Birding** JAARGANG 28 NUMMER 2 2006 *VOLUME 28 NUMBER 2 2006*

**Artikelen / papers**

69 Extralimital occurrence of Slender-billed Gull in Europe *Gert Ottens*
79 Not every white bird is an albino: sense and nonsense about colour aberrations in birds *Hein van Grouw*
90 Abnormally plumaged Woodchat Shrikes in Bulgaria, with notes on albino and aberrantly pale Laniidae worldwide *Boris P Nikolov, Iva P Hristova, Stoyan C Nikolov, Petar S Shurulinkov & Alexander A Dutsov*
96 Leucism in Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Manfred Brix & Enno B Ebels*
98 Eastern Black Redstart at Kazbegi, Georgia, in May 2003 *Peter Alfrey*

**Varia**

99 Hispaniolan Crossbill *Leo J R Boon, Enno B Ebels & Magnus S Robb*

**Recensies / reviews**

105 *Birds in Bhutan – status and distribution* by Peter Spierenburg *Enno B Ebels*
106 *Birds of Kuwait. A portrait* by Abdullah F Alfadhel *Enno B Ebels*
107 *The birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide* by Pamela C Rasmussen & John C Anderton *Laurens B Steijn*

**Masters of Mystery**

108 Solutions of first round 2006: Alpine Swift and Lanceolated Warbler; Second round 2006 *Rob S A van Bemmelen & Dick Groenendijk*

**WP reports**

110 late January-early March 2006 *Arnoud B van den Berg & Marcel Haas*

**Recente meldingen / recent reports**

119 Nederland: januari-februari 2006 *Ruud M van Dongen, Klaas Haas & Peter W W de Rouw*
125 België: januari-februari 2006 *Gerald Driessens*

**DB Actueel**

128 New species of parakeet; New species of scimitar-babbler; Again new species of tapaculo

**Aankondigingen & verzoeken / announcements & requests**

129 Lars Svenssons *Identification guide to European passerines*; Lars Svensson's *Identification guide to European passerines*; Jaaroverzichten 2005 op dvd; Year reviews 2005 on dvd; Dvd over Nederlandse Oehoes; Photographs of nightjars and related birds requested

**DBA-nieuws**

130 Dutch Birding-vogeldag op 4 februari 2006

**Voorplaat / front cover**

Corsicaanse Boomklever / Corsican Nuthatch *Sitta whiteheadi*, Haut-Asco, Haute-Corse, Corsica, Frankrijk, 11 juni 2005 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

# Extralimital occurrence of Slender-billed Gull in Europe

*Gert Ottens*

In Europe, increasing numbers of Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* have been observed away from the breeding colonies in recent years. This paper describes this extralimital occurrence, both in space and in time, by analyzing the species' migration strategies, dispersal behaviour and vagrant records. In order to establish a picture of all records of vagrant Slender-billed Gulls, reports of national rarities committees were consulted and, in addition, information was asked from several committees (vagrant reports were not taken into account when not accepted by the relevant committee).

**Distribution and status**

Slender-billed Gull breeds locally (and rather disjunct) in coastal areas of West Africa (c 22 500 individuals), the Mediterranean and Black Sea (123 000-237 000 individuals), and eastwards into Central Asia and north-western India (c 150 000 individuals; Delany & Scott 2002). Since the 1960s, it has spread from the Black Sea through the eastern Mediterranean to the western Mediterranean (Serebryakov & Zubakin 1997). More than 90% of the total number of European breeding birds are concentrated at just a dozen sites (BirdLife International 2004; figure 1).

The current European breeding population is concentrated in Italy, Turkey and Ukraine, with smaller populations in Azerbaijan, France and Spain (BirdLife International 2004). The latest published figure for Italy is 3350 pairs in 2001 (Serra & Brichetti 2004). The Spanish breeding population is estimated at 800-900 pairs (Martí & del Moral 2003). In France, c 850 pairs breed, all in the Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône (Sadoul et al 2003).

**92** Slender-billed Gulls / Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei*, adult and first-summer, Île de Noirmoutier, Vendeé, France, 27 July 2004 *(Matthieu Vaslin)*

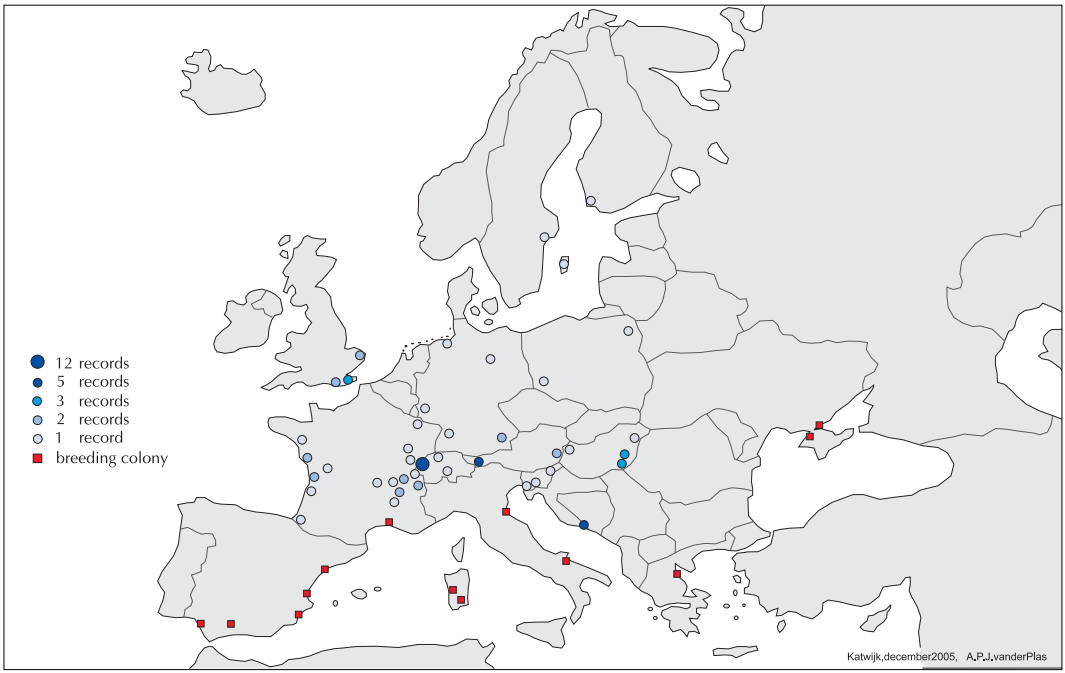



FIGURE 1 Distribution of vagrant Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* in Europe (records per site, 1960-2003) and most important, regular breeding sites / verspreiding van Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei* als dwaalgast in Europa (gevallen per locatie, 1960-2003) en belangrijkste reguliere broedlocaties (Handrinos & Akriotis 1997, Serebryakov & Zubakin 1997, Martí & del Moral 2003; Pierandrea Brichetti in litt)

**Migration**

The European populations have developed different migration strategies. The western Mediterranean populations winter in the south of their breeding range and both the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of north-western Africa, partly together with the western African population (Olsen & Larsson 2004). Birds of the Black Sea population spend the winter on the northern African coast from Egypt west to Tunisia but also in Bulgaria, Greece and Israel (Olsen & Larsson 2004). Most ringing recoveries in Tunisia, for example, relate to birds from the Black Sea population. After the species extended its breeding range into the western Mediterranean, French, Italian and Spanish birds were also increasingly observed there. Individuals ringed in Tunisia have also been recovered in Egypt and Libya (Isenmann et al 2005). The species returns to its Black Sea and western Mediterranean breeding sites from late March, with adults peaking in April and early May and immatures in May (Dies & Dies 2000, Olsen & Larsson 2004).

Most movements outside the breeding season occur within the species' breeding range, with the exception of those by the populations from West and Central Asia that winter around the Arabian Peninsula, east to western India (Glutz von Blotzheim & Bauer 1982, del Hoyo et al 1998). Birds leave their breeding grounds in July (Olsen & Larsson 2004).

**Dispersal and immigration**

The species mostly breeds in dynamic habitats: shallow saline areas or salt marshes where conditions may vary with or within breeding seasons. In the western Mediterranean, breeding colonies are regularly found on artificial islands in salinas. Modern management of these salinas involves levelling each salina to maximize the surface water area. Ground-nesting birds, like Slender-billed Gull, are thus regularly displaced from their breeding sites. Also, natural breeding sites are being converted for agriculture or recreation (Tucker & Evans 1997). From year to year, numbers (as well as breeding sites) tend to fluctuate accordingly (Serebryakov & Zubakin 1997, Oro 2002), causing dispersal.

Within a colony, the females (and their mates) in the best breeding condition have been found

**93** Slender-billed Gull / Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei*, adult, Préverenges, Vaud, Switzerland, 10 May 2001 *(Lionel Maumary)* **94** Slender-billed Gull / Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei*, second calendar-year, Les Grangettes, Vaud, Switzerland, May 1998 *(Lionel Maumary)* **95** Slender-billed Gull / Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei*, adult, with Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *L ridibundus*, Pori, Satakunta, Finland, May 1993 *(Hannu Kettunen)* **96** Slender-billed Gull / Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei*, adult, with Black-headed Gull / Kokmeeuw *L ridibundus*, Playa de Sotavento, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, 22 March 2004 *(Michiel Versluys)*

to select the most suitable breeding site (Oro 2002). This is another cause for the high breeding site turnover in this species, which is confirmed by several ringing programmes.

Individuals ringed in France have been found breeding in colonies in Italy and Spain, birds ringed in Italy have been found breeding in France and Spain, and birds ringed in Spain have been recorded in France. For example, in a newly established colony in Aude, southern France, in 2004, birds were controlled that had been ringed in Italy (one) and Spain (two). The Italian bird was the oldest in the colony; it had been ringed 12 years earlier in the Po delta, Veneto, Italy. Since 1999, it had been controlled as a breeding bird only in the Camargue (Gonin 2004). The Spanish population, however, shows a higher degree of philopatry. Most recoveries of birds ringed in the major colonies at the Ebro delta, Catalunya, and Coto Doñana, Andalucía, are local with only some individuals recovered from France and Italy (Manuela Forero in litt).

In Italy, c 2500 Slender-billed Gulls have been ringed (Po delta, Apulia and Sardinia) in 1991-2004, which resulted in more than 1400 resightings of 666 individuals. Most were observed in or near Italian breeding colonies, as well as in France and Spain, and during winter in Tunisia. Interestingly, one individual ringed as pullus in Foggia was observed in N'Djamena, Chad, the following winter (Nicola Baccetti in litt).

**97** Slender-billed Gulls / Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei*, adults, Les Grangettes, Vaud, Switzerland, 14 May 1997 *(Jean-Marc Fivat)*

**98** Slender-billed Gull / Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei*, adult, with Pied Avocets / Kluten *Recurvirostra avosetta* and Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *L ridibundus*, Île de Noirmoutier, Vendeé, France, 29 March 2005 *(Matthieu Vaslin)*

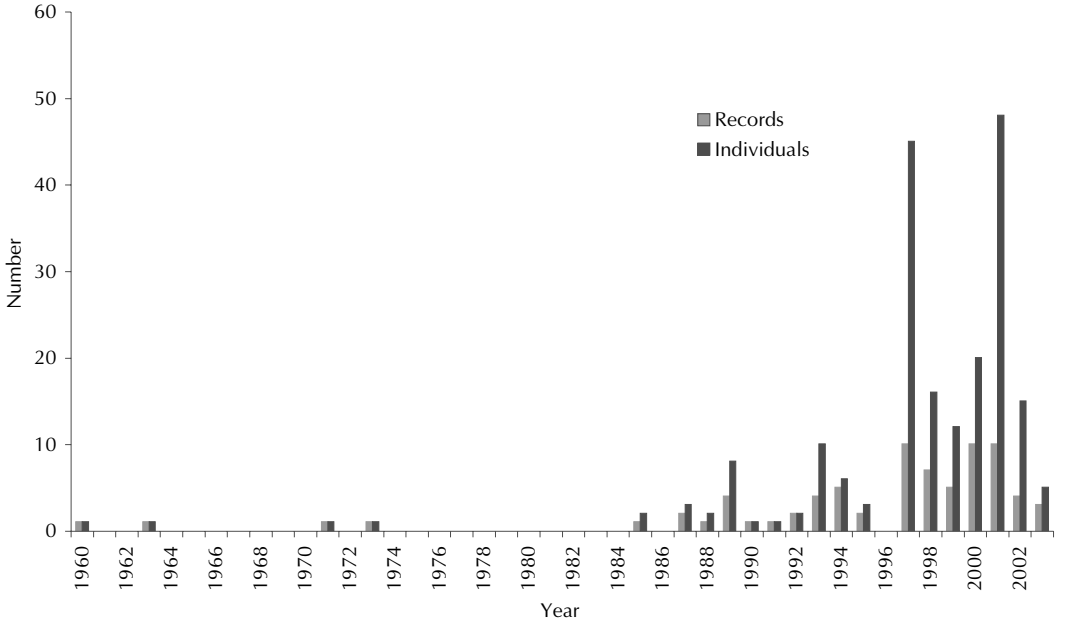



FIGURE 2 Vagrant Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* in Europe (1960-2003) / Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei* als dwaalgast in Europa (1960-2003)

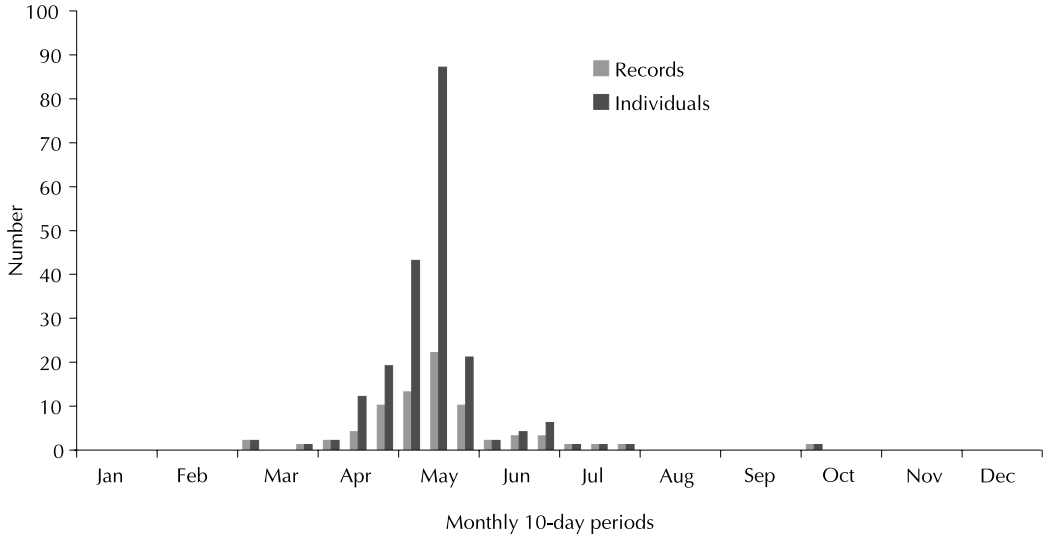



FIGURE 3 Seasonal occurrence of vagrant Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* in Europe (1960-2003) / seizoens-verdeling van Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei* als dwaalgast in Europa (1960-2003)

TABLE 1 Extralimital records of Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* in Europe / gevallen van Dunbekmeeuw *Larus genei* als dwaalgast in Europa (cf Dymond et al 1989, Komsija za Redkosti 1993, Sovinc 1993, Ranner et al 1995, Nikiforov et al 1997, Maumary 1998, Maumary & Fivat 1998, Winkler 1999, Dubois et al 2000, Rogers et al 2000, 2001, Božič 2001, Rubinič et al 2002, Breife et al 2003, www.birdlife.fi/english/rc/index.shtml; Peter Barthel in litt, Jean-Yves Frémont in litt, Leander Khil in litt, Gábor Magyar in litt, Lionel Maumary in litt, Tadeusz Stawarczyk in litt)

*Austria (seven records (14 individuals) until 2004)*
12 May 1985, Seewinkel, Burgenland, two adults
20-21 May 1993, Rheindelta, Vorarlberg, two adults
4 May 1997, Rheindelta, Vorarlberg, four adults
9 April 1998, Seewinkel, Burgenland, adult
13-19 May 2001, Bregenzerachmündung/Rheindelta, Vorarlberg, adult
15-18 May 2001, Rheindelta, Vorarlberg, two adults
16-23 May 2002, Rheindelta, Vorarlberg, two adults

*Belarus (two records until 2000)*
Nikiforov et al (1997) mention one record in the 1920s and another in the 1950s but no further data are given.

*Britain (seven records (nine individuals) until 2004)*
19 June to 10 July 1960, Langney Point, East Sussex, England, first-summer
28 April 1963, Rye Harbour, East Sussex, probably first-summer
21 July to 1 August 1971, Dungeness, Kent, England, & 15, 31 August & 6, 12 September 1971, Minsmere, Suffolk, adult
12-15 May 1987, Cley and Blakeney Harbour, Norfolk, England, two adults
5 May 1999, Grove Ferry, Kent & 6-8 May 1999, Monk's Wall, Kent, adult
5 May 2000, Cley, Norfolk, two adults
30-31 May 2000, Dungeness, Kent, adult

*Croatia (five records (18 individuals) in 1997-2002)*
2 October 1997, Delti Neretva, Dubrovnik-Neretva, adult
29 April 1998, Delti Neretva, Dubrovnik-Neretva, six adults
1 May 1998, Delti Neretva, Dubrovnik-Neretva, five adults
27 April 2001, Delti Neretva, Dubrovnik-Neretva, four adults
5 May 2002, Delti Neretva, Dubrovnik-Neretva, two adults
Before 1997, a few, mostly early 20th century, records were published (Rubinic et al 2002).

*Finland (one record until 2004)*
23 May to 22 June 1993, Pori, Satakunta, adult

*France (20 records (53 individuals) outside breeding range until 2004)*
28 April 1973, Villars-des-Dombes, Ain, adult
21-24 May 1989, Art-sur-Meurthe, Meurthe-et-Moselle, one
10 June 1989, Saint-Cyr, Vienne, two adults
26 April 1993, Certes/Audenge, Gironde, adult
9 May 1993, Montrevel-en-Bresse, Ain, six adults
1 May 1994, Meyzieu, Rhône, two adults
12 May 1994, Rochefort, Charente-Maritime, adult
12 May 1995, Excenevex, Haute-Savoie, adult
8 March 1997, Île de Ré, Charente-Maritime, first-winter
20 May 1997, Clermont-Ferrand, Puy-de-Dôme, adult
27 April1999, Baie de Chingoudy, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, first-summer
24 May 1999, Miribel-Jonage, Rhône, two adults
8 April 2000, Lac de Grand-Lieu, Loire-Atlantique, first-summer
14 April 2000, Embouchure de la Dranse, Haute-Savoie, eight adults
27 April 2000, Étang des Landes, Creuse, two adults
23 March 2001, Île de Noirmoutier, Vendée, adult
13 May 2001, Desnes, Jura, 17 adults
13-14 June 2001, Lac de Freycenet, Haute-Loire, adult
24 May 2003, Pouilly-sur-Loire, Nièvre, two adults
14 April 2003 into 2005, Île de Noirmoutier, Vendée, first-summer
The last bird on Île de Noirmoutier stayed in 2004 and 2005 and was joined by a first-summer female in May 2004; the two birds attempted to breed in 2004 but without success.

*Germany (six records (14 individuals) until 2004)*
23 May 1989, Urmitzer Werth, Rheinland-Pfaltz, adult
8 July 1994, Dornumersiel, Niedersachsen, adult
8-1 May 1995, Tagebau-Restloch Haselbach, Sachsen, two adults
9-15 May 1997, Wollmatinger Ried, Baden-Württemberg, seven adults
18 May 1997, Chiemsee, Bayern, adult
1 May 1999, Rothsee, Bayern, two adults

*Hungary (eight records until 2001)*
3-7 May 1992, Hortobágyi-halastó, Hajdu-Bihar, adult
22-29 June 1994, Décsi-rizsföldek, Békés, adult
11 May 1998, Begécsi-víztároló, Békés, adult
30 May to 4 June 1998, Fertőújlak, Győr-Sopron-Moson, adult
22 April 2000, Biharugra, Békés, first-summer
25 April 2000, Borzas, Hajdu-Bihar, adult
2 June 2000, Fenyes, Hajdu-Bihar, first-summer
30 June to 21 July 2000, Jászjákohalma, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, first-summer

*Poland (two records until 2004)*
19 and 25-26 July 1987, Vistula mouth, Pomorskie, adult
21 May 1998, Brzostowo, Biebrza marshes, Podłaskie, first-summer

*Slovenia (three records (six individuals) until 2001)*
25 June 1989, Cerniško jezero, Notranjsko-Kraška, four adults
11 April 1990, Hojtina vas, Podravska, adult
10 March to 7 April 1991, Secoveljške soline, Obalno-Kraška, adult

*Sweden (two records until 2004)*
17 May 1992 to early June 1992, Furilden, Gotland, adult
29 April 1994 to 1 May 1994, Övre Föret/Lilla Ultuna, Uppland, adult

*Switzerland (15 records (76 individuals) until 2004)*
4 May 1988, Préverenges, Vaud, two adults
3-11 May 1997, Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, and Fanel, Bern, seven adults
11 May 1997, Yverdon, Vaud, two adults
14 May 1997, Préverenges/Les Grangettes, Vaud, 20 adults
15 May 1997, Genève, Genève, adult
16-31 May 1998, Les Grangettes, Vaud, first-summer, wearing colour ring
30 May 1999, Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, six adults
15 April 2000, Fanel, Bern & Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, two adults
10 May 2001, Préverenges, Vaud, five adults
10 May 2001, Morges, Vaud, five adults
11 May 2001, Fanel, Bern, and Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, at least 11 adults
13 May 2001, Klingnauer Stausee, Aargau, adult
16 May 2002, Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, 10 adults
5 June 2002, Wangen, Schwyz, second-summer
24 May 2003, Chablais de Cudrefin, Vaud, two adults, one wearing colour ring

**Vagrancy in Europe**

Figure 1 shows both the breeding distribution and records of vagrant Slender-billed Gulls in Europe. In France, observations away from the Mediterranean coast have increased corresponding with the exponential increase in numbers of breeding pairs in the Camargue. Most of these records are from the valley of the Rhône and its tributaries (up to northernmost France), with some birds reaching the Atlantic coast (Dubois et al 2000) where, in 2004, the first (unsuccessful) breeding attempt took place on Île de Noirmoutier, Vendée (Desmots et al 2004). Interestingly, the majority of these vagrants in Europe were recorded at inland sites. As with many French vagrants, birds found in Central Europe may have followed rivers like the Rhône and the Po (and their tributaries) and from here to, for example, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Other birds probably follow the (Atlantic) coast lines and end up in the North Sea area. In Spain, however, the species is very rare on the Atlantic coast, with only a handful of records for Asturies and the Basque country (Ricard Gutiérrez in litt). In Portugal, the species is being assessed since 1995, when the Portuguese rarities committee (Comité Português de Raridades, CPR) became operative. During 1995-2003, 14 records of 71 individuals have been accepted. It is very rare on the west coast but probably a scarce migrant (and rare winter visitor) to the eastern Algarve, especially Castro Marim. It is not unlikely that in the near future the CPR will stop considering the species (Gonçalo Elias in litt). The Portuguese records have therefore not been included in table 1. On the Croatian and Slovenian side of the Adriatic Sea, the species is surprisingly rare, given the rather close proximity of Italian populations. However, recent records (see table 1) may suggest that the species is probably a very scarce visitor (Komsija za Redkosti 1993, Rubinič et al 2002, Sovinc 1993).

The French and Spanish breeding populations have increased by more than 80% over 1990-2000 (BirdLife International 2004). It is clear from figure 2 that, accordingly, the number of extralimital individuals in Europe has increased dramatically over the past decade. The French and Spanish populations (together with the growing Italian population) are also the likely sources for vagrancy north of the European breeding range. The fact that both of the ringed birds found in Switzerland (see table 1) had been ringed in the Camargue seems to confirm this.

The first three British records (see table 1) are very interesting in this respect, because they occurred at a time when the European breeding population was concentrated around the Black Sea, while breeding in the western Mediterranean was irregular, involving very small numbers. Likewise, records from Belarus, Finland, Poland and Sweden and some of the Hungarian records (see figure 1) seem to confirm the notion that some European vagrants originate from eastern populations (Breife et al 2003). On that note, Cramp & Simmons (1983) mention a bird ringed as a chick in the Ukraine and found on the Canary Islands. However, this record is considered suspect due to the possibility of misidentification with Mediterranean Gull *L melanocephalus* in the breeding colony (if the chick was seen away from the parents). The species is currently considered a vagrant in the Canary Islands, with only a few records (Ricard Gutiérrez in litt).

Interestingly, a bird ringed in Coto Doñana in 2001 was observed on Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, in January and March 2002. In March 2004, it was again observed and photographed there (Michiel Versluys in litt) and, the following month, it was observed at Oued Souss, Morocco (Manuela Forero in litt).

Away from France, the increase in the number of vagrants in Europe started with the influx in Switzerland in 1997. Until that year, records were widely scattered around Europe but since 1997 have been concentrated in central Europe (Austria, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland) and France (table 1). The reasons for this changing pattern are unclear. Data on French and Spanish colonies indicate that nothing out of the ordinary happened in the years leading up to 1997 (Daniel Oro in litt). Further influxes took part since then and particularly in 2001, which was most pronounced in France and Switzerland and, to a lesser degree, Austria. Also, until the invasion of 1997 mainly individual (in a few exceptions more than two) birds were recorded (see figure 2). Since that year, group size increased dramatically. Besides Portugal, the largest groups were recorded in Switzerland (20 in 1997, 11 in 2001 and 10 in 2002) and eastern France (17 in 2001).

Of a grand total of 205 individual vagrants in Europe (78 records), only 11 first-summer and two second-summer birds have been recorded. Most observations were of birds that stayed for only a very short period, usually one day, before moving on. All groups consisted of adults only. Since many immature birds stay on the wintering grounds (Olsen & Larsson 2004), this is not unexpected. This could indicate that mostly birds in breeding dispersal were involved, as was evident from observations of displaying pairs in Austria, Britain and France. Of the seven birds present in Germany in May 1997 (see table 1), two pairs showed courtship behaviour and even copulated. The notion of breeding dispersal is further augmented by the seasonal pattern of extralimital European records, with the great majority of birds (151) recorded in May (figure 3). A notable exception is the influx in France in 2000, which took place in April (see table 1). The total for April is 33 individuals (16 records, figure 3). The few late June-July records of adults probably relate to post-breeding dispersal (or failed breeders). No pattern is evident for records of immature birds but (as far as the few data allow) their occurrence seems to mirror that of adults, although with a slight emphasis on April.

**Vagrancy outside Europe**

In Asia, Slender-billed Gulls have reached Nepal and Sri Lanka (Olsen & Larsson 2004). Further east, vagrants have been recorded in South Korea (adult-winter at Gwangyang Bay, Jeollanam, on 9-11 January 2002; Moores 2002) and Japan (two wintering in Fukuoka City, Fukuoka, with one returning to the same areas between 1984 and 1992 and the second (or another) bird in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, in the winter of 1991/92 (Brazil 1991, Moores 2002). Three records have been accepted for Hong Kong, China; an adult on 10 and 25-26 February 1990, a first-summer on 3-10 April 1992 and an adult on 27-28 February 1993, with several (mostly recent) records for China (Carey et al 2001). In Thailand, the species is considered a vagrant to the central coast (Robson 2000).

The western African population is considered to be resident. The record mentioned before of an Italian ringed bird recovered in Chad is possibly the furthest inland record for Africa, although a few Saharan records are known for Algeria (Isenmann & Moali 2000), Morocco (Thévenot et al 2003) and Tunisia (Isenmann et al 2005). Other vagrants in Africa have been recorded in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sudan (Urban et al 1986). In Kenya, it is considered a scarce migrant to the Rift Valley lakes, with a few coastal records (Zimmerman et al 1996). The species' status in (landlocked) Uganda is comparable with inland Kenya, as it appears to be extending its Eastern African wintering range (Carswell et al 2005). An exceptional record is that of an adult at Durban Bay, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, on 10-13 September 1999 (Trevor Hardaker in litt).

In the Western Hemisphere, vagrancy to the Caribbean region has been suggested but could not be substantiated (cf Ebels 2002).

**Discussion**

Most populations in Europe have increased considerably over the last two decades, especially in the western Mediterranean basin. This period corresponds with the putative decrease of the Black Sea populations due to degradation of the wetlands on which the birds depended (Rudenko 1996). The increase in the western Mediterranean therefore appears to derive from displaced birds from these populations (Sadoul 1997).

It is thought that some populations are not even viable without immigration. In southern France, for example, breeding success remained quite low while the population size has increased exponentially from the 1990s. The expansion,

generally interpreted as an indication of a healthy population, does not match the observed breeding success (Sadoul et al 2003).

The recent upsurge of vagrant Slender-billed Gulls might be a consequence of conditions in the wintering range that could push some individuals to change migration routes. Hence, some birds decide to move northwards and others follow them (see Dispersal and immigration, Daniel Oro in litt). Increasing vagrancy in a northern direction has, in this species, also been explained as a response to climatic warming as with a number of other southern breeding species (Burton 1995). This last subject needs more research, as its effects on bird distribution are not yet fully understood. Increased observer awareness of the species' subtle characteristics (Barthel & Königstedt 1993, Corso 1999) could be another factor but probably does not account for the rapid increase of records.

It is clear that Slender-billed Gulls have become more prone to vagrancy over the last decades, probably because of apparently increasing movements between breeding colonies and between different countries. Whether this is due to population pressure or other (ecological) factors remains to be seen. More research is needed, preferably over the whole breeding range.

**Acknowledgements**

Nicola Baccetti (INFS), Peter Barthel (Deutsche Seltenheitenkommission), Janis Baumanis (Latvijas Ornithofaunistikas Komisijas), Anders Blomdahl (Raritetskommittén), Pierandrea Brichetti, Rommert Cazemier, Christian Cederroth (Raritetskommittén), Enno Ebels, Gonçalo Elias (CPR), Manuela Forero, Annika Forsten, Jean-Yves Frémont (Comité d'Homologation National), Ricard Gutiérrez (Comité de Rarezas de la Sociedad Española de Ornitología), Trevor Hardaker, Adrian Jordi, Hannu Kettunen, Leander Khil, Gábor Magyar (MME-NB), Lionel Maumary, Daniel Oro, Uku Paal (Eesti Linnuharulduste Komisjon), Carlos Sánchez, Tadeusz Stawarczyk (Avifaunistic Commission of the Polish Zoological Society), Antero Topp, Alfréd Trnka (Slovenska Ornithologicka Spolocnost) and Michiel Versluys were most helpful in providing photographs and/or information. Gerard Steinhaus and particularly Ted Hoogendoorn made useful comments on earlier drafts.

**Samenvatting**

DUNBEKMEEUW ALS DWAALGAST IN EUROPA Het afgelopen decennium zijn in toenemende mate Dunbekmeeuwen *Larus genei* waargenomen in Europa, tot ver buiten de Europese broedgebieden. De soort heeft zich in de tweede helft van de 20e eeuw vanuit de Zwarte Zee uitgebreid in westelijke richting. In het westelijke Middellandse-Zeegebied bestaan groeiende populaties in Frankrijk, Italië en Spanje. Deze populaties brengen de winter door langs de Noord- en West-Afrikaanse kusten. Dit zijn waarschijnlijk ook de bronnen van waaruit de toename aan dwaalgasten, vooral in Centraal-Europa, heeft plaatsgevonden, hoewel sommige Europese gevallen (bijvoorbeeld in Polen, Wit-Rusland en Zweden) waarschijnlijk eerder zijn terug te voeren op een oorsprong uit het Zwarte-Zeegebied. De meeste gevallen betreffen adulte vogels en vaak gaat het om meerdere exemplaren, tot groepen van 20. Mei is bij uitstek de beste maand voor dwaalgasten, gevolgd door april en juni (tabel 1, figuur 1-3).

De toename van het aantal gevallen buiten de broedgebieden is begonnen in 1997, zonder dat hier aanwijsbare redenen voor zijn. Sinds dat jaar duiken jaarlijks Dunbekmeeuwen op in (Centraal-) Europa, vooral in het binnenland langs meren en rivieren. Het betreft hier waarschijnlijk vooral dispersie van broedvogels op zoek naar geschikte broedgebieden. Aanwijzingen hiervoor zijn niet alleen het feit dat het vooral om groepen adulte in mei gaat maar ook hun gedrag (zo zijn balts en paringen vastgesteld).

Dunbekmeeuw is een soort van dynamische habitat (waaronder zoutmoerassen), waar de omstandigheden jaarlijks en soms zelfs binnen een broedseizoen sterk kunnen veranderen. Dispersiegedrag is deze soort dan ook niet vreemd. Door de veranderende condities worden kolonies soms gedwongen om elders hun geluk te beproeven. Met ringprogramma's is bovendien vastgesteld dat dezelfde vogels afwisselend tot broeden kunnen komen in Frankrijk, Italië, Spanje en Tunesië. Waarschijnlijk is een deel van deze populaties zelfs niet levensvatbaar zonder immigratie.

Als oorzaken voor de toename aan gevallen buiten de broedgebieden worden de verslechterende omstandigheden in broedgebieden in het Zwarte-Zeegebied, de situatie in de wintergebieden en gevolgen van klimaatverandering genoemd. Deze factoren zijn tot op heden echter niet of nauwelijks onderzocht.

Het is duidelijk dat Dunbekmeeuwen de laatste decennia meer de neiging hebben om (ver) buiten de broedgebieden op te duiken. Waarschijnlijk komt dat door de toegenomen bewegingen tussen verschillende kolonies en tussen landen. Of populatiedruk hieraan ten grondslag ligt of andere (ecologische) factoren zal moeten worden onderzocht in het gehele verspreidingsgebied.

**References**

Barthel, P H & Königstedt, D G W 1993. Die Kennzeichen der Dünnschnabelmöwe *Larus genei*. Limicola 7: 165-177.

BirdLife International 2004. Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status. BirdLife Conservation Series 12. Cambridge.

Božič, L 2001. A list of birds confirmed in Slovenia

with an overview of rare species. Acrocephalus 22: 115-120.
Brazil, M 1991. The birds of Japan. London.
Breife, B, Hirschfeld, E, Kjellén, N & Ullman, M 2003. Sällsynta fåglar i Sverige. Stockholm.
Burton, J F 1995. Birds and climate change. London.
Carey, G J, Chalmers, M L, Diskin, D A, Kennerley, P R, Leader, P J, Leven, M R, Lewthwaite, R W, Melville, M S, Turnbull, M & Young, L 2001. The Avifauna of Hong Kong. Hong Kong.
Carswell, M, Pomeroy, D, Reynolds, J & Tushabe, H 2005. The bird atlas of Uganda. Oxford.
Corso, A 1999. Slender-billed Gull. Alula 5: 138-141.
Cramp, S & Simmons, K E L (editors) 1983. The birds of the Western Palearctic 3. Oxford.
Delany, S & Scott D A 2002. Waterbird population estimates. Third edition. Wetlands International Global Series 12. Wageningen.
Desmots, D, Ponton, A, Tapin, R & Vaslin, M 2004. Première tentative de nidification du Goéland railleur sur le littoral atlantique français, en Vendée. Ornithos 11: 316-318.
Dies, J I & Dies, B 2000. Breeding parameters of the Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* in a new colony located at l'Albufera de Valencia (E Spain). Ardeola 47: 255-258.
Dubois, P J, le Maréchal, P, Olioso, G & Yésou, P 2000. Inventaire des oiseaux de France. Avifaune de la France métropolitaine. Paris.
Dymond, J N, Fraser, P A & Gantlett, S J M 1989. Rare birds in Britain and Ireland. Calton.
Ebels, E B 2002. Transatlantic vagrancy of Palearctic species to the Caribbean region. Dutch Birding 24: 202-209.
Gonin, J 2004. Premier cas de reproduction d'une colonie de Goélands railleurs dans l'Aude. Ornithos 11: 318-323.
Glutz von Blotzheim, U N & Bauer, K M (editors) 1982. Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas 8/I. Frankfurt am Main.
Handrinos, G & Akriotis, T 1997. The birds of Greece. London.
del Hoyo, J, Elliott, A & Sargatal, J (editors) 1996. Handbook of the birds of the world 3. Barcelona.
Isenmann, P & Moali, A 2000. Oiseaux d'Algérie / Birds of Algeria. Paris.
Isenmann, P, Gaultier, T, El Hili, A, Azafzaf, H, Dlensi, H & Smart, M 2005. Oiseaux de Tunisie / Birds of Tunisia. Paris.
Komsija za Redkosti 1993. List of rare bird species in Slovenia 1990. Acrocephalus 14: 99-119.
Martí, R & del Moral, J C (editors) 2003. Atlas de las aves reproductoras en España. Madrid.
Maumary, L 1998. Oiseaux rares et observations inhabituelles en Suisse en 1997. Nos Oiseaux 45: 209-226.
Maumary, L & Fivat, J-M 1998. Vingt Goélands railleurs *Larus genei* sur le Léman. Nos Oiseaux 45: 247-249.
Moores, N 2002. New Korean species: Slender-billed Gull, 9 January 2002, Gwangyang Bay. Website: www.birdskorea.org.
Nikiforov, M E, Kozulin, A W, Grichik, W W & Tischechkin, A K 1997. [The birds of Belarus at the turn of the 20th century.] Minsk. [In Russian.]
Olsen, K M & Larsson, H 2004. Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America. Second edition. London.
Oro, D 2002. Breeding biology and population dynamics of Slender-billed Gulls at the Ebro Delta (Northwestern Mediterranean). Waterbirds 25: 67-77.
Ranner, A, Laber, J & Berg, H-M 1995. Nachweise seltene und bemerkenswerte Vogelarten in Österreich 1980-1990. Egretta 38: 59-98.
Robson, C 2000. A field guide to the birds of South-east Asia. London.
Rogers, M J & Rarities Committee 2000. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 1999. Br Birds 93: 512-567.
Rogers, M J & Rarities Committee 2001. Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 2000. Br Birds 94: 452-504.
Rubinič, B, Božič, L & Sackl, P 2002. The actual status of Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* on the southern Dalmatian coast. Acrocephalus 23: 35-37.
Rudenko, A G 1996. Present status of gulls and terns nesting in the Black Sea biosphere reserve. Colonial Waterbirds 19 (Special publication 1): 41-45.
Sadoul, N 1997. The importance of spatial scales in long-term monitoring of colonial charadriiformes in southern France. Colonial Waterbirds 20: 330-338.
Sadoul, N, Besnard, A, Hafner, H & Lebeton J D 2003. Is an increase in numbers an indication of a healthy population? The case of the slender-billed gull in southern France. In: Abstracts Third International Wildlife Management Congress, Christchurch.
Serebryakov, V & Zubakin, V 1997. Slender-billed Gull. In: Hagemeier, W J M & Blair, M J (editors), The EBCC atlas of European breeding birds: their distribution and abundance, London, p 331.
Serra, L & Brichetti, P 2004. Popolazioni di uccelli acquatici nidificanti in Italia – resoconto 2001. Avocetta 28: 44-48.
Thévenot, M, Vernon, R & Bergier, P 2003. The birds of Morocco. An annotated checklist. BOU checklist series 20. Tring.
Sovinc, A 1993. Report on rare bird species in Slovenia in 1991. Acrocephalus 14: 120-123.
Tucker, G M & Evans, M I 1997. Habitats for birds in Europe: a conservation strategy for the wider environment. Cambridge.
Urban, E K, Fry, C H & Keith S (editors) 1986. The birds of Africa 2. London.
Winkler, R 1999. Avifauna der Schweiz. Ornithol Beob, Beiheft 10. Sempach.
Zimmerman, D A, Turner, D A & Pearson, D J 1996. Birds of Kenya and northern Tanzania. London.

*Gert Ottens, Ganzebloem 14, 3984 CG Odijk, Netherlands*
*(glanskraai@hotmail.com)*

# Not every white bird is an albino: sense and nonsense about colour aberrations in birds

*Hein van Grouw*

In the birding world, general confusion seems to exist about colour mutations in wild birds and the correct naming of these aberrations. Almost all whitish aberrations are called '(partial) albino'. However, most of these are not albino and 'partial albinism' is – by definition – not even possible. Some mutations are hard to distinguish in the field (and in museum collections) because the colour of feathers with a pigment reduction is easily bleached by sunlight and can even become almost white. For the correct identification and naming of colour mutations, it is necessary to know which changes have occurred in the original pigmentation. But first of all, it is necessary to understand which pigments determine the normal colours of feathers and how these pigments are formed. All colour aberrations described here have a genetic basis, ie, they are caused by a mutation.

There are more possible colour mutations in birds than those described below. However, the ones dealt with here are those occurring most frequently and are more or less clearly recognizable, either in the field or in museum specimens.

The aim of this paper is to present clear definitions of the most common types of colour mutations in birds and to give a basic insight into the genetic or food-related mechanisms that cause or influence these mutations. The paper is based on the study of colour mutation genetics and the study of many 1000s of bird skins and live birds during the course of 15 years of working with cage birds and as bird collection manager and taxidermist of the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis at Leiden, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands, as well as in other European natural history museums (van Grouw 1997, 2000ab).

**Pigmentation**

The most important pigments that determine plumage coloration in birds are melanines and carotenoids. Carotenoids vary in colour from pale yellow to scarlet red. They are taken in with food and transformed into colour pigments by enzymes. The deposition of the pigments takes place directly at the start of feather growth.

Aberrations in this pigmentation are mostly caused by a food problem and usually do not have a genetic cause. Well-known examples are flamingos Phoenicopteridae and Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*, which owe their respective pink and red colours to the presence of red carotenoids in their natural food. When these carotenoids are in short supply, these birds will appear white after the next moult. In the past, this happened frequently in captive individuals of these species before caretakers understood this relation between food and coloration.

In several European passerines, part of their colours are caused by yellow and red carotenoids, eg, Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, European Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, Great Tit *Parus major*, Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*, Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, Eurasian Siskin *C spinus* and Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*. But also the red in spotted woodpeckers *Dendrocopos* and the yellow-green in green woodpeckers *Picus* are caused by carotenoids. However, not every reddish coloration is a result of carotenoids; for instance, the red underwing-coverts and flanks of Redwing *Turdus iliacus* and the orange-brown breast in European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* are caused by a melanin (see below). Mutations causing changes in carotenoid-based colour pigments are rare but melanine mutations occur far more often.

**Melanins**

Two types of melanin are present in birds: eumelanin and phaeomelanin. Depending on concentration and distribution within the feather, eumelanin is responsible for black, grey and dark brown feathers. In a high concentration, phaeomelanin is responsible for reddish-brown feath-

**99** Carrion Crow / Zwarte Kraai *Corvus corone*, Heeze, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands, 12 June 2005 *(Rob G Bouwman)*. Albino, juvenile wild bird. Complete absence of melanins in plumage, skin and eyes caused by genetically determined absence of enzyme tyrosinase. Because Carrion Crow has no carotenoid-based colours, whole plumage is colourless (white), as well as skin and eyes. Red of eyes is caused by blood shining through. In nature, survival chances of such birds are very low because of bad eyesight of albinos.
**100** Common Blackbird / Merel *Turdus merula (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Albino, adult in captivity. Complete absence of melanins in plumage, skin and eyes caused by genetically determined absence of enzyme tyrosinase. Because Common Blackbird has no carotenoid-based colours, whole plumage is colourless (white), as well as skin and eyes. Red eyes are caused by blood shining through.
**101** European Goldfinch / Putter *Carduelis carduelis (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Albino, adult in captivity. Complete absence of melanins in plumage, skin and eyes caused by genetically determined absence of enzyme tyrosinase. Carotenoid-based colours are still present.
**102** European Goldfinch / Putter *Carduelis carduelis (Pieter van den Hooven)*. 100% leucistic. Total absence of melanins in all feathers but melanins are still present in skin and iris. Carotenoid-based colours are still present.
**103** European Goldfinch / Putter *Carduelis carduelis (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Diluted (isabel). Reduction in eumelanin concentration, phaeomelanin is unaffected. Normally black plumage parts have turned grey. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only.
**104** European Goldfinch / Putter *Carduelis carduelis (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Ino. Strong reduction of both melanins: phaeomelanin (back) is almost absent, while there is hardly any oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black plumage parts have turned pale brown. Carotenoid-based colours are still present. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only.

---

ers. In lower concentrations, the colour will appear as yellow-brown to almost white. Both melanins together can give combination colours such as greyish-brown. In skin and eyes, only eumelanin is present.

In some species, the colour is completely caused by eumelanin, eg, Common Murre *Uria aalge*, Razorbill *Alca torda*, Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*, Rook *C frugilegus* and Carrion Crow *C corone*. In most species, however, both types of melanin are present. As far as currently known, there are no wild bird species in which only phaeomelanin occurs. In feathers that contain both types of melanin, the eumelanin is mainly found in the central part of the feather while the phaeomelanin is mainly located in the feather edges.

Most of the basic knowledge on biochemistry and development of melanins already originates from studies in the first half of the 20th century (eg, Frank 1939, Mason 1953, Rawles 1953, Lubnow 1963). The normal formation of melanins starts after the first cell divisions of the fertilized egg. Already in this early stage of embryonal development, basic colour cells are formed which soon migrate to the so-called pigmentation centres. From these pigmentation centres, the basic colour cells spread to, amongst others, the feather follicles. The basic colour cells contain the amino acid tyrosine. Controlled by the enzyme tyrosinase, the basic colour cells can produce melanins during feather development; the basic colour cells are now called the colour cells.

Melanin formation involves a series of chemical reactions, starting with the oxidation of tyrosine, katalysed by tyrosinase. The melanin itself is a polymere molecule which is also subject to oxidation. The amount of oxidation varies: black is the strongest oxidation form, brown a weaker form. The colour cells deposit the pigments into the feather cells through 'extensions'.

The melanin formation process is determined genetically. Any aberration in the process has a potential influence on the colours of a bird. A mutation in the formation of the enzyme tyrosinase may (partially) inhibit the formation of melanin. Also a mutation causing a change in intracellular conditions may have an effect on the eventual outcome of melanin formation, eg, causing a reduction in either phaeomelanin or eumelanin. Changes may also occur in the distribution of the basic colour cells which may result in reduction or complete absence of coloration in some feather tracts. And when a mutation blocks the formation of extensions, the feathers will also remain devoid of colours.

In summary, eumelanin is responsible for the colours black and brown, depending on the amount of oxidation. Differences in shade are mainly caused by the concentration of pigments. For example, the amount of oxidation of the eumelanin in grey and black feathers is similar but the concentration of eumelanin pigment granules is much lower in grey feathers.

Phaeomelanin is responsible for red-brown pigments. Probably, phaeomelanin is also an oxi-

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

**105** Eurasian Coot / Meerkoet *Fulica atra*, Capelle aan den IJssel, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, 28 February 2004 *(Chris van Rijswijk)*. 100% leucistic. Total absence of melanins in all feathers but melanins are still present in skin and iris. In this almost completely white bird, virtually all feathers lack melanins.
**106** Snow Bunting / Sneeuwgors *Plectrophenax nivalis*, Vlieland, Friesland, Netherlands, 15 November 2004 *(Menno van Straaten)*. 100% leucistic. Total absence of melanins in all feathers but melanins are still present in skin and iris.
**107** Eurasian Oystercatcher / Scholekster *Haematopus ostralegus (Pieter van den Hooven)*. 50% leucistic. Total absence of melanins in some (random) feather tracts but melanins are still present in skin and iris. Note that deposition of melanins in affected feathers is blocked, not development of melanins itself. Therefore, unaffected feathers have their normal colours.
**108** Eurasian Oystercatcher / Scholekster *Haematopus ostralegus*, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, May 1974 *(René Pop)*. Probably 100% leucistic. This white bird lived for many years on Texel, which makes an albino very unlikely. Colour of eye and down layer have to be studied to identify it as a certain 100% leucistic bird and not a bleached ino. In an ino, the down layer would be cream-coloured and the pupil 'dark red' (see main text). In a leucistic bird, the down layer would be pure white and the eye would be normal (red iris with 'black' pupil). These features can not be properly judged from this single photograph but considering the pure white plumage, a 100% leucistic bird is the most likely identification.
**109** Eurasian Coot / Meerkoet *Fulica atra*, Rotterdam-Ommoord, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, 2 March 2003 *(Chris van Rijswijk)*. Diluted. Reduction of melanin concentration. Because Eurasian Coot only has eumelanin in its plumage, no distinction can be made in 'pastel' or 'isabel'. Normally black plumage parts have turned grey, normally grey parts are now paler grey.
**110** Eurasian Jay / Gaai *Garrulus glandarius (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Diluted (pastel). Strong reduction of concentration of both melanins, but they are still present. This results in very pale plumage but skin remains unaffected. Same mutation as in House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* of plate 111. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only.

dation product of eumelanin. The different shades of this pigment as the human eyes see it, from deep red-brown to yellowish-cream, also depend on the concentration.

**Albinism**

Albinism is defined as a total lack of both melanins in feathers, eyes and skin as a result of an inherited absence of tyrosinase (Fox & Vevers 1960). It is probably one of the most frequently mentioned colour mutations whereas it is, in fact, one of the least frequently observed mutations (especially in adult birds) in the field. Due to a mutation, an albino completely lacks the enzyme tyrosinase in its body. Tyrosinase is necessary for the chemical process that produces melanin pigments in vertebrates. Because of the absence of tyrosinase, an albino cannot produce melanin at all. The result usually is a completely colourless bird (but see below the remark on albinos with carotenoid pigments). Also, the eyes and skin are colourless. The red or pinkish 'colour' of these parts is caused by the blood that can be seen through the colourless tissue of eye and skin. A mostly white bird which nevertheless shows some form of melanin pigmentation is *never* an albino, by definition. 'Partial albinism' does *not* exist and is a 'contradictio in terminis', even if it is often used in the birding literature (eg, Ogilvie 2001). It is simply impossible, just like being 'partially pregnant'.

Tyrosinase has no influence on the formation of carotenoids. In an albino of a species with carotenoids as additional colour, these pigments remain present. Such a bird will remain completely or partially yellow (or red), dependent on the natural location of the carotenoids in the plumage. These birds do have red eyes and a colourless skin. Contrary to popular belief, albinos are therefore not necessarily all-white.

In all animal species, the mutation albino is inherited through an autosomal recessive gene. This gene is not rare and occurs in most populations. Albinos are born more frequently than one would expect, given the rarity with which they are observed. The reason that (adult) albinos are observed so infrequently is related to their bad eyesight. Due to the absence of pigments in the eye, albinos are very light-sensitive and they have difficulties in observing depth. As a result, they are an easier prey for predators than normal birds and also more readily fall victim to traffic and other hazards. Most of them die soon after the start of their independence, at fledging.

**Leucism**

Leucism is defined as a partial or total lack of eumelanin and phaeomelanin in the feathers as a result of inherited disorder of the deposition of these pigments in the feathers. It is probably the most frequently occurring inheritable colour aberration in birds and it is most often – errone-

**111** House Sparrow / Huismus *Passer domesticus*, Camperduin, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, May 2000 *(René Pop)*. Diluted (pastel). Strong reduction of concentration of both melanins, but they are still present. This results in very pale plumage but skin remains unaffected. There are many gradations of dilution but this is one of the more extreme examples. Weather and sunlight have caused further bleaching. So, visible colour is result of mutation in combination with bleaching by sunlight.
**112** Common Starling / Spreeuw *Sturnus vulgaris (Pieter van den Hooven)*. 'Brown'. Incomplete oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black plumage parts have turned dark brown. Phaeomelanin is unaffected. Incompletely oxidised eumelanin is very light-sensitive and, in nature, 'brown' plumage will soon strongly bleach. However, bleached 'brown' Common Starlings in adult-type plumage will not become as white as juveniles because of still rather dark 'starting point' of adult-type feathers. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only.
**113** European Greenfinch / Groenling *Chloris chloris (Pieter van den Hooven)*. 'Brown'. Incomplete oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black plumage parts have turned dark brown. Phaeomelanin is unaffected. Dark (melanine) ground colour of green parts is paler than normal. Incompletely oxidised eumelanin is very light-sensitive and, in nature, 'brown' plumage will soon strongly bleach. Because carotenoids are unaffected, a bleached European Greenfinch will gradually appear more yellow. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only.

ously – called albinism or 'partial albinism'. In leucistic birds, the enzyme tyrosinase is normally present and the production of melanin in the *basic colour cells* and the transformation into *colour cells* is normal. However, the deposition of melanin in the feather cells does not occur due to an inherited disturbance disorder of the pigment transfer. As a result, more or less colourless (white) feathers occur at random anywhere in the plumage.

Different forms of leucism are known and can vary from only a few white feathers (<25%) to totally white individuals (100%). White feathers of leucistic birds are fully without melanin, with no coloured patches (however, similar to what has been described above under albinism, if colours are present that are caused by carotenoids, these remain visible). In certain forms, only feathers become colourless while eyes, skin and horny bare parts are normally coloured. In other forms, these parts can become colourless as well. Nevertheless, even birds with the latter form of leucism still have dark eyes. The reason for this is that only the pigments of the iris are missing. The pigments in the back of the eyeball remain present and therefore the eyes look dark.

So, leucistic birds always have coloured eyes which distinguishes them from albinos. In all forms of leucism, the eyesight is normal. Such birds are not hampered by reduced eyesight, and thus do not have reduced chances of survival. Consequently, leucistic birds are observed rather frequently.

Partly coloured feathers are very unusual in leucism. Individual feathers that are partly coloured usually indicate a bad condition of the bird during feather growth and is not an inheritable character (ie, is not leucism). This is often seen in, eg, Carrion Crows, especially those eating junk food in cities.

**Brown**

Brown as aberration is defined as a qualitative reduction of eumelanin. In this mutation, the amount of pigment remains unchanged but the appearance of the eumelanin is changed (cf Kopf 1986). As a result of an inherited incomplete oxidation of eumelanin, black feathers will turn dark brown. The phaeomelanin is unaffected.

In bird species in which both melanins occur naturally, this mutation is less obvious than in species which only have eumelanin. So, a 'brown' House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (both melanins present) appears less aberrant than a 'brown' Carrion Crow (only eumelanin). However, feathers with a qualitative reduction of eumelanin are very sensitive to (sun)light and bleach quickly and strongly. So, old plumage is often almost white because the feathers are bleached by (sun)light. For that reason, this mutation is sometimes hard to distinguish in the field. In the hand, such a bleached 'brown' bird can be recognized by, eg, the colour of the down layer *under the contour feathers* and the colour of those parts of the remiges and rectrices covered by neighbouring feathers (often inner webs). In these parts, sunlight cannot penetrate and reduce the actual coloration.

The mutation 'brown' is widespread and can be encountered regularly. The juvenile 'biscuit-coloured' Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* reported from Weerselo, Overijssel, Netherlands (Dutch Birding 18: 244-245, 1996) is also an example of this mutation. Many reports of so-called 'leucistic' birds actually refer to 'brown' birds. For instance, the published photographs of pale Great

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

**114** Northern Lapwing / Kievit *Vanellus vanellus (Pieter van den Hooven)*. 'Brown'. Incomplete oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black plumage parts have turned dark brown. Phaeomelanin is unaffected. Incompletely oxidised eumelanin is very light-sensitive and, in nature, 'brown' plumage will soon strongly bleach to almost white. In this bird, many old feathers have bleached strongly, a combined effect of the mutation and exposure to sunlight. From a distance, it seems to have white and coloured feathers, and might be taken for a leucistic bird. However, closer view reveals that the pale feathers are not white and the coloured feathers do not show their normal coloration. In the hand, the down layer will be 'brown'.
**115** Common Gull / Stormmeeuw *Larus canus canus*, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, May 1981 *(René Pop)*. 'Brown'. Incomplete oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black plumage parts have turned dark brown. Phaeomelanin would have been unaffected but Common Gull does not have phaeomelanin. In first-winter/first-summer Common Gull, normally black colours are restricted to outer primaries and primary coverts and tail-band. Grey of mantle has turned into pale creamy-brown. Remainder of brown feathering (especially wing-coverts) has bleached to almost white. Feathers that are still brown are at rest covered by other feathers, and have been less influenced by sunlight.
**116** Song Thrush / Zanglijster *Turdus philomelos (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Ino. Strong reduction of both melanins: phaeomelanin is almost absent, while there is hardly any oxidation of eumelanin. Normally black breast-spots (eumelanin) have turned pale brown and are only faintly visible. Because this bird remained in captivity, there has been no further bleaching by weather and sunlight and visible colour is result of mutation only. In nature, an ino soon will bleach to almost white and may resemble an albino or 100% leucistic bird. Inspection in the hand of the down layer (or other parts covered from sunlight) will reveal that it is the mutation 'ino'.
**117** House Sparrow / Huismus *Passer domesticus* (Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover, Germany) *(Hein van Grouw)*. Schizochroic ('grey') male. Phaeomelanin is completely absent, whilst eumelanin is unaffected. This results in black or grey appearance.
**118** House Sparrow / Huismus *Passer domesticus (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Schizochroic (phaeo) male. Eumelanin is completely absent. Phaeomelanin, which is largely restricted to the feather edges, is unaffected and even seems brighter in absence of eumelanin.
**119** House Sparrow / Huismus *Passer domesticus (Pieter van den Hooven)*. Schizochroic (phaeo) female. Eumelanin is completely absent. Phaeomelanin, which is largely restricted to the feather edges, is unaffected and even seems brighter in absence of eumelanin.

---

Grey Owls *Strix nebulosa* in Finland (Dutch Birding 17: 19-20, 1995, 20: 296, 1998) do not involve leucistic but bleached 'brown' birds.

In all species, the inheritance of the mutation 'brown' is recessively sex-linked. It is also the only colour mutation that is sex-linked *in all bird species*. This means that a brown mutant with two normally coloured parents is always a female. In nature, 'brown' males are very rare because they can only be born from a 'brown' mother and a normal father that is heterozygotous for this mutation (and of course from parents that are both 'brown'). The chance for this to occur in nature is normally very minute. (Remember that in birds, males have two X chromosomes and females have X and Y.)

## Dilution

Dilution is defined as a quantitative reduction of melanins. In this mutation, the amount of pigment is reduced (cf Kopf 1986). The pigment itself is not changed but due to a reduction in pigment concentration, a 'diluted' colour is observed compared with the original coloration. Two forms of dilution can be distinguished.

### *Pastel*

Pastel is defined as a quantitative reduction of both eumelanin and phaeomelanin. Black feathers will turn grey and reddish-brown feathers will turn yellow-brown. The degree of dilution can differ within a single species. But in general, melanin reduction is c 50%. Such a mutant will look like a bleached wild-coloured bird. Several forms of pastel are known to occur within one species, all based on different heritable traits. In pastel birds, old plumage is often almost white because the feathers are bleached by (sun)light (as in the mutation 'brown'). Bleached 'brown' and bleached pastel birds can usually be told apart by examining the colour of the down layer.

### *Isabel*

Isabel is defined as a quantitative reduction of eumelanin only. Black feathers will turn grey. The phaeomelanin is unaffected. In species with only eumelanin in their plumage, such as crows Corvidae, it is difficult to identify a mutant as an isabel or pastel, because both mutations have the same effect: a reduction of the concentration. The difference can only be seen in the phaeomelanin and these species do not have that pigment. Therefore, the general term dilution is used

in these instances, without making a further distinction.

**Ino**

Ino is defined as a strong qualitative reduction of eumelanin and phaeomelanin. In this mutation, phaeomelanin has (almost) disappeared and there is hardly any oxidation of eumelanin. Black feathers will turn very pale brown (almost white). In fresh plumage, colour and pattern are vaguely visible. Especially in species with a natural amount of white in their plumage, it can be seen that there is some pigmentation left in the remaining non-white plumage. In an ino, the plumage parts with normally the highest pigment concentrations remain the most clearly visible parts, for instance the black cap in Western Jackdaw. Old plumage is almost completely white in an ino because the feathers are bleached by (sun)light.

An ino has reddish eyes because pigments have disappeared there as well. But the eyesight of an ino is much better than that of an albino. It can be stated with great certainty that any adult 'white' bird with red eyes in nature is an ino, not an albino.

In most species, the inheritance of this mutation is recessively sex-linked (see also the mutation 'brown').

**Schizochroism**

Schizochroism is defined as the absence of only one of both melanins. Two forms of schizochroism can be distinguished.

*Phaeo*

Phaeo is defined as a complete reduction of eumelanin (non-eumelanin schizochroism). In this mutation, only reddish-brown phaeomelanin is present in the feathers.

*Grey*

Grey is defined as a complete reduction of phaeomelanin (non-phaeomelanin schizochroism). In this mutation, the plumage only contains the black/grey and brown eumelanin.

These two mutations are rather rare. They can be recognized especially in species with both eumelanin and phaeomelanin in their plumage. In many species, phaeomelanin is mainly located in the feather edges. When eumelanin is absent (phaeo), the darker feather edges result in a scaly pattern. When phaeomelanin is absent (grey), only black-grey and dark brown colours will be visible, the red-brown to yellowish-cream colours having disappeared.

In species with only eumelanin in their plumage, the recognition of a phaeo (non-eumelanin schizochroism) can be difficult, because the feathers of such a bird will be almost completely white (ie, without colour) and the eyes are coloured. Such a bird may resemble a 100% leucistic bird but the feathers of the latter are usually pure white.

Phaeo can be mistaken for the mutations 'brown' and 'dilution' in birds in old and bleached plumage. As said earlier, feathers with reduced eumelanin (both quantitatively and qualitatively) are sensitive to light and can bleach to almost white. All eumelanin seems to have disappeared, and therefore such birds look like a phaeo. However, they can be recognized by the coloration of those parts of the feathers where light could not penetrate (see also the mutation 'brown'). Again, examination of the feather parts where light could not penetrate as well as the down layer can often reveal the correct aberration.

**Melanism**

Melanism is defined as an increase of melanins. Two forms can be distinguished.

*Eumelanism*

Eumelanism is defined as an increase of eumelanin. In this mutation, the total appearance of the bird is blackish.

*Phaeomelanism*

Phaeomelanism is defined as an increase of phaeomelanin. In this mutation, the total appearance of the bird is reddish-brown.

Partial melanism sometimes occurs but this is not caused by a mutation but by, eg, disease, malnutrition or lack of exposure to sunlight. If these causes are removed, normal feathers will appear during the next moult. Melanism is one of the few mutations in which there is no loss of pigments but, on the contrary, an increase in pigment concentration. Birds with an increase in concentration of both melanins at the same time are not known. Also, one melanin form does not replace the other. For instance, phaeomelanin is not transformed into or replaced by eumelanin. So, in an eumelanistic bird, the amount of phaeomelanin remains normal but through the increase of eumelanin concentration, the phaeomelanin will not or hardly be visible. Eumelanism occurs more frequently than phaeomelanism.

**Differently coloured**

The term 'differently coloured' is used here to indicate all other inheritable colour aberrations. Two other aberrations are mentioned here because they occur quite frequently, although their appearance can be very diverse, making recognition difficult.

*Grizzle*

This is a leucism-like mutation. In contrast to leucistic feathers, grizzled feathers are partly pigmentless.

*Acromelanism*

Acromelanism is defined as the deposition of eumelanin and phaeomelanin in the feathers depending on body temperature and environmental temperature of the bird (Lubnow 1963). This mutation is allelic (involving the same gene) with albino. The coldest parts of the body, such as the top of the head, have more pigmentation than the warmer parts.

**Concluding remarks**

Giving a complete overview of possible inheritable colour aberrations in a limited amount of space is hardly possible. The aberrant plumages discussed above are grouped according to their appearance so that they can be identified in the field or in the hand. For instance, there are many different types of leucism, all with a different mechanism of inheritance and connected to different genes, but all resulting in more or less colourless feathers. The same holds for the mutations 'dilution' and, to some extent, 'ino'. It is, therefore, impossible to give strict and exhaustive descriptions and definitions for these groups of comparable mutations: an exception can always be found.

Only the mutations 'albino' and 'brown' are connected to the same genes in all species; and the gene for 'brown' is always located on the sex chromosome.

**Acknowledgements**

I thank Rob Bouwman, Pieter van den Hooven, René Pop, Chris van Rijswijk and Menno van Straaten for supplying photographs.

**Samenvatting**

NIET ELKE WITTE VOGEL IS EEN ALBINO: ZIN EN ONZIN OVER KLEURAFWIJKINGEN BIJ VOGELS De belangrijkste pigmenten die kleuren van vogelveren bepalen zijn carotenoïden en melaninen. Carotenoïden zijn verantwoordelijk voor gele tot scharlakenrode kleuren; ze worden via de voeding opgenomen en met behulp van enzymen in kleurpigmenten omgezet. Afwijkingen in deze pigmentkleuren zijn meestal een voedselprobleem en slechts zelden genetisch bepaald. Melaninen zijn te verdelen in eumelanine (zwartbruin pigment) en phaeomelanine (roodbruin pigment). Melaninen ontstaan door een serie chemische reacties, te beginnen met de oxidatie van het aminozuur tyrosine, onder invloed van het enzym tyrosinase. De uiteindelijk gevormde melaninen zijn zelf ook onderhevig aan oxidatie en dit oxidatieproces kan zich in verschillende gradaties afspelen. Zwart is de sterkste oxidatievorm, bruin is een zwakkere vorm. Afwijkingen in door melaninen bepaalde kleuren zijn in belangrijke mate genetisch bepaald. Er zijn allerlei verschillende mutaties die op verschillende punten in het vormings- en distributieproces van melaninen kunnen ingrijpen. Enkele van de belangrijkste worden in dit artikel besproken: albinisme, leucisme, bruin, dilutie (pastel en izabel), ino, schizochroisme (phaeo en grijs) en melanisme. Hierbij worden ook enkele hardnekkige foutieve opvattingen over kleurafwijkingen uit de weg geruimd, zoals de per definitie onmogelijke aanduiding 'partieel albinisme' (albinisme is een mutatie waardoor het enzym tyrosinase ontbreekt, waardoor melaninen totaal ontbreken). Vaak hebben vogels met een gedeeltelijk wit verenkleed betrekking op leucisme. Afwijkingen die in literatuur als leucisme worden gemeld hebben dikwijls betrekking op de mutatie 'bruin' of dilutie ('verdunning').

**References**

Fox, H M & Vevers, G 1960. The nature of animal colours. London.

Frank, F 1939. Die Färbung der Vogelfeder durch Pigment und Struktur. J Ornithol 87: 426-523.

van Grouw, H 1997. Color genetics of the Ringneck dove. Pigeon Genetics News, Views & Comments, September, Plain City, USA, pp 1-14.

van Grouw, H 2000a. Genetica bij duiven. Derde druk. Amerongen.

van Grouw, H 2000b. Kleurmutaties bij vogels. Vogeljaar 48: 6-10.

Kopf, F H M 1986. Het kweken van kanaries. Best.

Lubnow, E 1963. Melanine bei Vögeln und Säugetieren. J Ornithol 104: 69-81.

Mason, H S 1953. The structure of melanins. In: Gordon, M (editor), Pigment Cell Growth – Proc 3rd Conf on the biology of normal and atypical pigment cell growth, New York, pp 277-303.

Ogilvie, M 2001. Albinism, partial albinism and all the other -isms! Website: www.birdsofbritain.co.uk/features/mao-jun-01.htm.

Rawles, M E 1953. Origin of the mammalian pigment cell and its role in the pigmentation of hair. In: Gordon, M (editor), Pigment Cell Growth – Proc 3rd Conf on the biology of normal and atypical pigment cell growth, New York, pp 1-15.

*Hein van Grouw, Collectiebeheerder vogels, Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, Netherlands (grouw@naturalis.nnm.nl)*

# Abnormally plumaged Woodchat Shrikes in Bulgaria, with notes on albino and aberrantly pale Laniidae worldwide

*Boris P Nikolov, Iva P Hristova, Stoyan C Nikolov, Petar S Shurulinkov & Alexander A Dutsov*

During 2004-05, two abnormally plumaged female Woodchat Shrikes *Lanius senator* were recorded in Bulgaria. On 16 and 26 June 2004, an aberrant female was observed and photographed close to the village of Zlatoklas (43:55 N, 27:03 E) in the Silistra region, north-eastern Bulgaria (bird 1). On 24 July and 6 August 2005, an aberrant female was observed and photographed near the village of Baskaltsi (41:29 N, 23:00 E) in the Blagoevgrad region, south-western Bulgaria, at 1100-1150 m above sea level (bird 2). The latter is among the highest breeding localities of this species in Bulgaria (Nikolov in prep). Because of confusion concerning the terminology on albinism and leucism in birds – albinism is sometimes considered an 'all or nothing' condition and 'partially albino' birds are then described as leucistic (Sage 1962ab, Ross 1963, Harrison 1964, Rollin 1964, Gross 1965, cf van Grouw 2006) – we will use the neutral terms 'abnormally-plumaged' or 'aberrant' when describing these birds.

## Descriptions

*Bird 1*
Most of plumage off-white, except for those parts of mantle, wings and tail normally black in adults, now having a pale brownish tinge. Wing-mirrors, scapulars and base of tail pure white. Facial mask brown with greyish tinge. Crown and nape orange-brownish. As a whole, head pattern subdued in colour. Legs and bill pinkish. Iris appearing dark. This bird could be referred to as the mutation 'brown' (amount of pigment remains unchanged but appearance of eumelanin is changed due to inherited incomplete oxidation of eumelanin; therefore, black feathers will turn dark brown; Hein van Grouw in litt, cf van Grouw 2006).

*Bird 2*
Parts of body plumage which are normally black were pale brownish ('washed out') with a slight greyish tinge, remainder of body off-white. Facial mask dark brownish and darkest part of plumage. Crown and nape very pale yellow-reddish. Legs and bill pinkish. Iris normally dark. This is a typical example of so-called 'dilution' (quantitative reduction of melanins; Hein van Grouw in litt, cf van Grouw 2006).

## Breeding details and behaviour

*Bird 1*
The aberrant bird was breeding with a normally plumaged male. The territory was 1.5-2 ha in size, covering mainly pastureland, and, to a lesser extent, bushy (Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* – 18 bushes) and tree vegetation (four Wild Pears *Pyrus pyraster* and a single willow *Salix*). The nest was comparatively small for the species, with sheep wool incorporated, and placed at a height of 2.55 m above the ground in a 3.30 m high Hawthorn bush. It was placed inside the bush, constructed between two parallel horizontal branches. During the first visit (16 June), seven nestlings were found in the nest – four of them at an age of c 5 days, and the other three aged as 4.5, 4 and 2.5–3 days old (age determined according to six body parameters: weight, wing length, tarsus length, and three types of bill measurements, established for Woodchat Shrike in Bulgaria on the basis of growth curves; Nikolov in prep). On 26 June, five fledglings were observed, all of them normally plumaged. Two of them (apparently the smallest which had only recently left the nest) were still inside the nest bush, and the other three young were found in a large Wild Pear at 30 m distance, alighted 5-7 m above the ground. The male mainly cared for the fledglings in the nest bush, while the aberrant female provisioned the young in the



[*Dutch Birding 28: 90-95, 2006*]

**120** Woodchat Shrikes / Roodkopklauwieren *Lanius senator*, aberrantly coloured female with normally coloured male, Zlatoklas, Silistra, Bulgaria, 26 June 2004 *(Boris P Nikolov)* **121-122** Woodchat Shrike / Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator*, female, Zlatoklas, Silistra, Bulgaria, 26 June 2004 *(Boris P Nikolov)* **123** Woodchat Shrike / Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator*, female, Zlatoklas, Silistra, Bulgaria, 26 June 2004 *(Iva P Hristova)* **124** Woodchat Shrike / Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator*, female, Baskaltsi, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, 6 August 2005 *(Iva P Hristova)* **125** Woodchat Shrike / Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator*, female, Baskaltsi, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, 6 August 2005 *(Boris P Nikolov)*

pear tree. A similar separation of the parents' duties is also known in the Sofia region in western Bulgaria (Nikolov in prep). When visited for the second time, the pair showed intraspecific behaviour towards some other breeding bird species. They chased away indirectly or purposely a European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*, male Red-backed Shrike *L collurio* and Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*. Twice, a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* attacked the aberrant female Woodchat Shrike (c 40 Barn Swallows were present while the fledglings were fed). A short 'conflict' was recorded between the aberrant female and an adult Lesser Grey Shrike *L minor*.

*Bird 2*

The aberrant female was recorded in a territory of c 2 ha covering rocky pastureland with single Hawthorn and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* bushes, bordered by plantations of Scottish Pine *Pinus sylvestris* and Beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Except using the bushes and trees, the aberrant Woodchat Shrike was frequently observed using a high power line as perching site. It was mainly catching prey on the ground (large insects and, in one case, a small lizard). A normally plumaged fledgling was recorded in the same territory, sometimes begging for food from the aberrant female. An adult male was not observed within the territory – there was a male c 300 m down the slope but probably not from that pair.

**Discussion**

These two cases of abnormally plumaged Woodchat Shrikes are the first records of aberrantly pale shrikes in Bulgaria and most probably the second- and third-ever-published for this species. The only other case was reported from Mali, western Africa (Crickmore 2004, see below). In the first Bulgarian case, no other breeding Woodchat Shrikes close to the paired aberrant female were present to compare the breeding stages between pairs. However, a two-week delay in start of breeding has been reported in the case of an aberrantly pale female Great Grey Shrike *L excubitor* in comparison with a neighbouring pair of normally plumaged birds; however, the same bird did not manage to find a partner during the following season, probably because of being 'not equal in value' compared with normal females (Südbeck 1995). Because of the fact that aberrantly pale birds are generally conspicuous, it is often argued that they are more likely to fall victim to predators and rarely survive for long (Campbell & Lack 1985, Toms 2004; Judy New in litt). However, the aberrant Great Grey Shrike lived at least two years, while a 'partially albino' Magpie Shrike *Corvinella melanoleuca* in South Africa probably lived for a year (Watson & Watson 1983, Südbeck 1995). It is also known that the reduced pigmentation in the aberrantly pale birds weakens the feathers, causing more abrasion and wear and thus affecting the birds' manoeuvrability (Campbell & Lack 1985).

The two aberrant female Woodchat Shrikes appeared to show normal behaviour. In the first case, the only 'strange' relationships were the attacks by the Barn Swallows, not normally observed in other parts of the country (Nikolov in prep). In contrast, no abnormal behaviour was recorded either in the case of a 'partially albino' Magpie Shrike, foraging together with normally coloured birds of the same species (Watson & Watson 1983). A pure white (presumed albino) Fiscal Shrike *L collaris* was also observed with normally plumaged birds (Tyndale-Biscoe 1981). Remeeus (1977) reported Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* and Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* frequently attacking a leucistic juvenile Red-backed Shrike, which behaved extremely secretly. Two leucistic juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes *L ludovicianus* were easily approached by golf carts for close observation (Anderson 1971).

Similar to bird 1, almost wholly white or bleached birds but with retained rusty or red plumage colour (red and orange pigments appear resistant to albinistic change), have been recorded for a number of other species, eg, European Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*, Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens* European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* and Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (Anonymus 2003, Toms 2004), although different factors may cause such cases.

In the field, aberrantly pale Woodchat Shrikes such as bird 2, especially in juvenile or first-winter plumage and if seen apart from normally plumaged individuals, could cause confusion with 'isabelline shrikes' *L arenarius/isabellinus/phoenicuroides*.

**Other cases of aberrantly pale Laniidae**

Below is a compilation of all published and some unpublished records of aberrantly pale true shrikes Laniidae brought to our knowledge until now, pertaining to nine species (29% of all currently recognized true shrikes Laniidae; Lefranc & Worfolk 1997).

*Red-backed Shrike*

Most cases for Red-backed Shrike are known from central and western Europe: ***1*** As early as in the end of the 19th century, an albino (pure white with red eyes) juvenile was described (Grond 1884). ***2*** On 22 July 1952, a totally white juvenile (with red eyes and pale bill and legs) was observed close to Lüneburg, Niedersachsen, Germany (Makowski 1953). The bird did not behave secretly and was still not capable of flying. It was discovered c 25 m away from the empty nest of the pair. The adults and the other two juveniles in the area were normally plumaged. ***3*** On 1-19 July 1972, a fledgling with completely white plumage (including legs and bill; but with dark iris) was observed close to Gera, Thüringen, Germany (Lieder 1973). ***4*** On 25 August 1975, a 'partially albino' bird (with two to three white flight-feathers on each wing) was recorded close to Perleberg, Brandenburg, Germany (Vökler 1979). ***5-6*** In 1976-77, leucistic birds were observed twice near Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands. From 24 July to 7 August 1976, a juvenile with head and ventral side white, except for a dark lore and some cream-coloured feathers near the tail base; tail and dorsal side of the rump isabelline; bill and legs very dark, probably black; eye dark red (Remeeus 1977). On 7-8 August 1977, a family of six birds including two leucistic birds (probably one juvenile and one adult male), two partly leucistic birds (probably juveniles), and probably one normal juvenile and one normal adult female (Remeeus et al 1979) was observed at the same site. ***7*** On 23 June 1995, a leucistic male was recorded near Ulsenheim, Neustadt/Aisch, Bayern, Germany (c 49:34 N, 10:17 E) (Michael Knoll in litt; photograph in Limicola 9: 342, 1995). Except for the black facial mask and bill, dark iris and possibly legs, this male was overall white, with a slight buff tinge on the mantle, and with crown and nape faintly tinged greyish. ***8*** On 22 June 1996, an albino individual was recorded by Lars Pettersson close to Hossmo, Kalmar, south-eastern Sweden (Eriksen et al 1997). ***9*** On 22 May 1998, a leucistic adult was recorded close to Evershagen, Rostock, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany (Müller 1998). ***10*** On 29 May 2000, a 'partially albino' or leucistic bird was seen near the Arajadzor village, Syunik, southern Armenia (Vasil Ananian, Simon Busuttil & Adam Stuart in litt); the bird showed a completely white plumage but with a dark iris and a mostly (completely?) blackish bill; the legs were possibly dark too.

*Brown Shrike*

On 19 May 2002, a remarkable male Brown Shrike of the taxon *L cristatus lucionensis* was recorded at Shanghaiguan, north of Qinghuangdao, Hebei, China (Colm C Moore in litt). One half of the body (left side) was washed out pale buff, the other side was normal. Bare parts were greyish flesh on the left side. The division extended to head, tail and even bill and legs. Such a half-sided pale bird is often referred to as a 'mosaic' bird (Hein van Grouw in litt).

*Woodchat Shrike*

At least three cases are known for Woodchat Shrike. Except for the birds described here for Bulgaria in 2004-05, an aberrantly pale bird was seen on 7 December 2003 in Sokolo area, Mali (14:44 N, 06:00 W) (Crickmore 2004). The overall plumage was whitish but with slightly darker (pale brownish-grey) mask, tail and wings.

*Great Grey Shrike*

Only European records for Great Grey Shrike are known: ***1*** From 25 May 1989 to 14 July 1990, an aberrantly pale female was observed in a peat bog in north-western Niedersachsen, Germany. It showed white plumage, with flesh-coloured legs and bill; iris appeared dark; from autumn 1989, some body parts on back, head and wings slightly darkened. In 1989, it bred successfully with a normally coloured male, producing four normally plumaged fledglings (Südbeck 1990, 1995). ***2*** On 2 January 1994, a leucistic bird was observed close to Oberndorf, Tübingen, Germany (Kratzer & Kratzer 1994); it had a very pale overall appearance: crown, nape and uppertail-coverts slightly greyish, facial mask dark-brown, bill yellowish with dark tip, legs and eyes black, belly and wings white (with some pale-brown wing feathers), tail reddish-brown (outer tail-feathers clearly chestnut-brown, contrasting to a considerable extent with the other tail-feathers). ***3*** On 4-25 February 2001, a leucistic first-winter was observed near Pavia, northern Italy; it showed a number of plumage features suggestive of Steppe Grey Shrike *L pallidirostris* (Janni et al 2001).

*Long-tailed Shrike*

On 7 July 1989, an albino Long-tailed Shrike *L schach* (wholly white with red eyes), was collected as nestling in central-western Taiwan, Chang-hwa county (24:00 N, 120:28 E) (Taiwan Endemic Species Research Institute Avian collection Cal. No. TESRI-W431; John S-H Wu & C-T Yao in litt).

*Loggerhead Shrike*
At least four cases are known for Loggerhead Shrike to date: ***1*** Ross (1963) reported about a pure white specimen kept at the National Museum of USA. ***2*** On 1 July 1967, an immature albino was collected at Wilmar in Drew County, Arkansas, USA (Hanebrink 1969). ***3*** Two completely white juveniles with beady black eyes were fed by their normally plumaged parents at Hampton, South Carolina, USA (Anderson 1971). ***4*** On 12 September 1997, a leucistic bird (snowy white plumage with black face mask and black feathers in tail and wings) was recorded close to Colton, San Bernardino, California, USA (Michael Gurbada in litt).

*Fiscal Shrike*
The only data for Fiscal Shrike come from the southern parts of Africa: ***1*** On 8 March 1979, a pure white bird (presumed albino) was recorded near Avondale West, Harare, Zimbabwe (Tyndale-Biscoe 1981). ***2-3*** In 1998-99, two cases were recorded on a wine farm close to Paarl, c 50 km from Cape Town, South Africa (Judy New in litt). First observed as fledgling, fed by both parents in February 1998, later on this bird showed apparent signs of leucism when it acquired immature plumage: not quite pure white but with the faintest tinge of pearly grey to its plumage; no black cap, no visible white shoulder patches, bill and feet dark grey/blackish, and eyes black; observed as fending for itself for some time in its parents' territory. In May 1998, it was found dead, probably because of pecking injuries. A second leucistic offspring, looking almost pure white, was raised by the same adults the following year (1999); this bird was seen for two or three weeks, then disappeared. ***4*** In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a leucistic bird (entirely white with distinct eyestripe only) was observed at Botchabelo (formerly Fort Merenski) just north of Middelburg in Mpumalanga province, South Africa (Martin Kerr, Martin Lilje & Leon Lilje in litt).

*Yellow-billed Shrike*
In March-April 1993, a leucistic Yellow-billed Shrike *C corvina* (very uniform creamy individual) was recorded on several occasions near Brufut, Western Division, The Gambia (13:23 N, 16:45 W; Clive Barlow in litt).

*Magpie Shrike*
On 25 and 31 May 1982, a leucistic Magpie Shrike (completely white, with eyes, bill and legs dark) was seen in the Kruger National Park, South Africa; a similarly plumaged bird (the same?) was reported a year before in the same area (Watson & Watson 1983).

**Acknowledgements**
The aberrant female Woodchat Shrikes were discovered within the frame of the projects 'Conservation of Species and Habitats in Bulgaria: EU Approximation' (known also as 'Project Natura-2000 in Bulgaria': DANCEE/MOEW) and 'NATURA 2000 in Bulgaria – public contribution' (CEIE–PIN/MATRA). The second visit in the region of Silistra was made possible thanks to Climatech Engineering Ltd company. Vasil Ananian, Clive Barlow, Simon Busuttil, Martin Kerr, Leon Lilje, Martin Lilje, Colm C Moore, Judy New, Adam Stuart, C-T Yao and John S-H Wu kindly shared their unpublished observations. Marry Crickmore, Ottavio Janni and Daniel Kratzer ensured access to their publications. Nayden Chakarov, Marten Geertsma, Walther Thiede and Reuven Yosef delivered some of the literature sources.

**Samenvatting**
AFWIJKEND GEKLEURDE ROODKOPKLAUWIEREN IN BULGARIJE, MET NOTITIES OVER ALBINO EN ANDERE AFWIJKEND LICHT GEKLEURDE KLAUWIEREN ELDERS IN DE WERELD In juni 2004 en juli-augustus 2005 werden twee afwijkend gekleurde vrouwtjes Roodkopklauwier *Lanius senator* waargenomen in Bulgarije. De vogel in 2004 betrof de mutatie 'bruin' en was gepaard met een normaal gekleurd mannetje; de vogel in 2005 betrof de mutatie 'dilutie' (cf van Grouw 2006). Beide vogels gedroegen zich normaal, hoewel de eerste wel opvallend vaak werd aangevallen door Boerenzwaluwen *Hirundo rustica*. Gepubliceerde gevallen van afwijkend licht gekleurde klauwieren Laniidae elders in de wereld worden eveneens besproken.

**References**
Anderson, M B 1971. White birds outdraw at Hampton Club. Chat 35: 88.
Anonymous 2003. A white Downy Woodpecker at Haines Junction. Yukon Warbler, Spring 2003: 13.
Campbell, B & Lack, E 1985. A dictionary of birds. Calton.
Cooke, F & Buckley, P A 1987. Avian genetics: a population and ecological approach. London.
Cramp, S & Perrins, C (editors) 1993. The birds of the Western Palearctic 7. Oxford.
Crickmore, M 2004. Recent reports. ABC Bulletin 11: 70-79.
Eriksen, J, Ewerlid, T, Gullquist, K, Jennersjö, H & Kasselstrand, M 1997. Fågelrapport för 1996. Fåglar i östra Småland 9: 72.
Grond, W 1884. Ein seltener Albino. Mitt Ornithol Ver Wien 8: 143.

Gross, A O 1965. The incidence of albinism in North American birds. Bird-Banding 36: 67-71.
van Grouw, H 2006. Not every white bird is an albino: sense and nonsense about colour aberrations in birds. Dutch Birding 28: 79-89.
Hanebrink, E L 1969. An albino Loggerhead Shrike collected from Drew County, Arkansas. Migrant 40: 61.
Harrison, J M 1964. Plumage: Abnormal and aberrant. In: Thomson, A L (editor), A new dictionary of birds, New York, pp 643-646.
Janni, O, Rubolini, D & Festari, I 2001. An interesting grey shrike in Italy. Birding World 14: 170-171.
Kratzer, D & Kratzer, R 1994. Leucistischer Raubwürger (*Lanius excubitor*) bei Oberndorf/Tübingen. Ornithol Schnellmitt Baden-Württ 42: 67.
Lefranc, N & Worfolk, T 1997. Shrikes: a guide to the shrikes of the world. London.
Lieder, K 1973. Rotrückenwürger-Albino bei Gera. Falke 20: 211.
Makowski, H 1953. Notizen über Vogelalbinos. Ornithol Mitt 5: 130-131.
Müller, S 1998. Bemerkenswerte Beobachtungen aus dem 1. Halbjahr 1998. Ornithol Arbeitsgem Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 1998 2: 6.
Nikolov, B P in prep. The shrikes (family Laniidae) (Aves: Passeriformes) in Bulgaria – distribution, breeding biology and migrations. PhD thesis. Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
Portenko, L A 1960. [The birds of the USSR 4.] Moscow. [In Russian.]
Remeeus, A 1977. Waarneming van een leucistische grauwe klauwier *Lanius collurio* bij Wassenaar. Limosa 50: 147-148.
Remeeus, A, Kampf, R & Kampf-Rekelhof, C C M 1979. Waarneming van een gedeeltelijk leucistische familie grauwe klauwier *Lanius collurio* bij Wassenaar in 1977. Limosa 52: 75-76.
Rollin, N 1964. Non-hereditary and hereditary abnormal plumage. Bird Research 2: 1-44.
Ross, C C 1963. Albinism among North American birds. Cassinia 47: 2-21.
Sage, B L 1962a. Albinism and melanism in birds. Br Birds 55: 201-225.
Sage, B L 1962b. The incidence of albinism and melanism in British birds. Br Birds 56: 409-416.
Südbeck, P 1990. Erfolgreiche Brut eines Raubwürger-Albinos (*Lanius excubitor*). Ökol Vögel 12: 91-95.
Südbeck, P 1995. Ergänzende Beobachtungen an einem Raubwürger-Albino *Lanius excubitor*. Jahresber Ornithol Arbeitsgem Oldenburg 13: 55-59.
Toms, M 2004. Blackbird – Whitebird! Bird Table 38: 6-7.
Tyndale-Biscoe, R 1981. Albino Fiscal Shrike. Honeyguide 105: 24.
Vökler, F 1979. Bemerkenswerte avifaunistische Beobachtungen in Mecklenburg. Jahresbericht für 1977. Ornithol Rundbr Mecklenburg 20: 91.
Watson, R T, & Watson, C R B 1983. A partial albino Longtailed Shrike. Bokmakierie 35: 43-44.

*Boris P Nikolov, Bulgarian Ornithological Centre, Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1 Tsar Osvoboditel Boulevard, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria (lanius.bg@gmail.com)*
*Iva P Hristova, Climatech Engineering Ltd, 51 Prof Kiril Popov Street, 1700 Sofia, Bulgaria (fotobiota@abv.bg)*
*Stoyan C Nikolov, Central Laboratory of General Ecology, 2 Gagarin Street, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria (nikolov100yan@abv.bg)*
*Petar S Shurulinkov, Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1 Tsar Osvoboditel Boulevard, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria (shurulinkovps@mail.bg)*
*Alexander A Dutsov, Lyulin, bl 432, entr B, app 66, 1359 Sofia, Bulgaria (adutsov@balkani.org)*

## Leucism in Dark-bellied Brent Goose

Albinism and leucism occur in many bird species, including wildfowl (cf van Grouw 2006, which see for definitions followed here). Although there has been – as far as we know – only one published record of an albino Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* (all white with red eyes) in the European wintering areas – on Texel, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands, on 28 March 1995 (Brix 1995, 2000) – the occurrence of leucistic (often erroneously referred to as 'partially albino', cf van Grouw 2006) birds is rare but regular, at least on Texel (cf Brix 1998). In 18 years (1986-2004), Manfred Brix observed a total of 13 leucistic birds on Texel, all during visits in March-April. Although leucism can affect all plumage parts more or less strongly, the observations by MB indicate that the head and neck down to the white semi-collar are most often affected. Of the 13 individuals observed, 12 showed – sometimes in addition to white in other feather tracts – more or less white on the head. This white coloration ranged from a few small patches or spots to large white areas all over the head.

Some of the most distinctive birds are described here in more detail. One bird showed a chequered black-and-white head pattern. Another showed an almost all-white head with some white flecking on the neck above the neck collar. An individual observed in three years (1998, 2003 and 2004) showed, apart from white flecking on head and upper neck, a broad white eye-ring (plate 126). The presence of white feathering near the lower mandible enabled recognition of this individual during the years. A similar bird but only with a broad white eye-ring was also seen in 2003 (plate 127). Another individual showed white flecking from the crown over the breast down to the lower belly. Very distinctive was an individual that showed white flecking from the nape and hind neck down to the back. In yet another individual, the lower part of the head on the left side was pure white, with the sharp demarcation just below the eye. The rest of the head, including the whole right half, showed the normal dark coloration. In addition, this bird had a c 5 cm broad white band across the breast just below the demarcation between the dark breast and the paler brown belly. Outside Texel, several other leucistic Dark-bellied Brent Geese have been observed in the north of the Netherlands. For instance, a bird with a largely white head was observed at Bantpolder, Friesland, on 26 February 2003. In late March and early April 2005, Enno Ebels observed and photographed at least two 'white-headed' birds in a flock of 500-1000 individuals on Schiermonnikoog, Friesland. One showed only a few irregular white spots on the head (plate 128). The other – which was still present on 14 May 2005 – was much more distinctive and showed a largely white head, especially behind the eye, down to the white neck collar (plate 129). These two birds showed no aberrant

**126** Dark-bellied Brent Goose / Rotgans *Branta bernicla*, adult with white eye-ring and white flecking near bill base and on side of head, De Bol, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 26 March 2004 *(Manfred Brix)*

**127** Dark-bellied Brent Goose / Rotgans *Branta bernicla*, adult with broad white eye-ring, Dijkmanshuizen, Texel, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 29 March 2003 *(Manfred Brix)*

**128** Dark-bellied Brent Goose / Rotgans *Branta bernicla*, adult with limited white flecking on head, Banckspolder, Schiermonnikoog, Friesland, Netherlands, 1 April 2005 *(Enno B Ebels)*

**129** Dark-bellied Brent Goose / Rotgans *Branta bernicla*, adult with extensive white flecking on head, Banckspolder, Schiermonnikoog, Friesland, Netherlands, 1 April 2005 *(Enno B Ebels)*

white parts in the rest of the plumage. Outside the Netherlands, a similarly looking bird with a largely white head with dark forehead and loral region was photographed near South Fambridge, Essex, England, on 11 February 2005.

The reason why this type of colour aberration seems to affect the head and neck more often than other (dark) parts of the plumage is not yet understood.

In addition to the birds described above, several Dark-bellied Brent Geese showing a normal plumage pattern but with 'washed-out' or 'bleached' colours have been reported. Thiede (1998) mentioned several records. Two 'bleached' first-year birds were seen in autumn 1982 between Thornham and Wells in Norfolk, England; both returned next winter and one was seen every next year until autumn 1992 (in autumn 1991, it arrived with two young). Two bleached birds were seen in Essex, England, in the winters of 1992/93, 1993/94 and 1994/95, with one bird returning in the next two winters. In Denmark, two pale birds were observed at Kongelunden, Sjælland, on 2 June 1992; one was almost completely white, the other strongly bleached but still showing a ghost image of the normal plumage pattern. Others were seen in Denmark on 27 May, 7 October and 12 November 1995 and such birds were reported 'to appear annually'. More recently, a bleached individual was photographed between Brancaster Staithe and Burnham Deepdale in Norfolk in November 2004 (Boustead 2004). In North America, there have been two reports of pale brent geese (Black Brant *B nigricans* or Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B hrota*), one in the late 19th century and one of a 'white bird' without further details (Thiede 1998).

**References**


Boustead, I 2004. A winter's weekend birding in north Norfolk. Website: www.surfbirds.com/mb/trips/norfolk-winter-2004.html.

Brix, M 1995. Ringelgans-Albino (*Branta bernicla*) am Wattenmeer. Orn Mitt 47: 271.

Brix, M 1998. Vermehrtes Auftreten van Ringelgans-Teilalbinos. Orn Mitt 50: 101.

Brix, M 2000. Ringelgans-Albino (*Branta bernicla*) am Wattenmeer. Orn Mitt 52: 396.

van Grouw, H 2006. Not every white bird is an albino: sense and nonsense about colour aberrations in birds. Dutch Birding 28: 79-89.

Thiede, W 1998. Das sparsame Wissen über Erscheinung und Lebensweise leuzistischer Ringelgänse. Orn Mitt 50: 101-102.



*Manfred Brix, Zum Schürenberg 2, 49740 Haselünne, Germany*
*Enno B Ebels, Joseph Haydnlaan 4, 3533 AE Utrecht, Netherlands (ebels@wxs.nl)*

## Eastern Black Redstart at Kazbegi, Georgia, in May 2003

When reading with much interest the paper on two extralimital Eastern Black Redstarts *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides* in north-western Europe and their identification (Steijn 2005), I was reminded of an unidentified redstart which I came across on 7-10 May 2003 in the Kazbegi area, Khevi, Georgia. My birding companions and I suspected that it was some type of Black Redstart *P ochruros* or perhaps a hybrid. I looked again at the photographs that I took at the time (plate 130-131) and compared them with the details in the paper. The amount of orange-red on the underparts was much more extensive than in Caucasian Black Redstart *P o ochruros*, which is the Black Redstart taxon breeding in the Kazbegi region (see map in Steijn 2005, cf van den Berg & The Sound Approach 2005). Superficially more like Common Redstart *P phoenicurus*, the Kazbegi bird lacked the facial pattern and upperpart contrast of Common and the black on the throat extended onto the upperbreast (not reaching this far in Common). Moreover, the regular taxon of Common Redstart in the region is Ehrenberg's Redstart *P p samamisicus*, which has a prominent pale secondary panel, absent in our bird.

After comparing the wing formula with the details in Steijn (2005), my observations seemed to point towards Eastern Black Redstart *P o phoenicuroides*, which would be a vagrant to the Kazbegi region. I therefore sent the details to Laurens Steijn and he kindly replied as follows: 'The bird looks like a typical *phoenicuroides* to me. The emarginations on p3-6 are typical for Black Redstart and rule out Common Redstart. The spacing ratio between p5-6 and p6-7 is difficult to assess accurately because of the angle but appears to be somewhere between 1:2.2 and 1:2.5. The wing-tip is at p5. All other features also point to *P o phoenicuroides*, eg, the absence of a pale patch on the secondaries and tertials, the amount of red on the underparts and black extending to the upperbreast. The wing formula rules out a hybrid Black x Common Redstart.'

As far as I know, this is the first record of this taxon for Georgia.

### References

van den Berg, A B & The Sound Approach 2005. High birding at Kazbegi, Georgia. Dutch Birding 27: 241-247.

Steijn, L B 2005. Eastern Black Redstarts at IJmuiden, the Netherlands, and on Guernsey, Channel Islands, in October 2003, and their identification, distribution and taxonomy. Dutch Birding 27: 171-194.

*Peter Alfrey, 23 Freshwood Way, Wallington, Surrey, UK (Kgarmstron@aol.com)*

**130-131** Eastern Black Redstart / Oosterse Zwarte Roodstaart *Phoenicurus ochruros phoenicuroides*, male, Kazbegi, Khevi, Georgia, May 2003 *(Peter Alfrey)*. Wing formula shows wing-tip formed by p5, ratio p5-6:p6-7 between 1:2.2 and 1:2.5, and emarginations on p3-6.

# Varia

## Hispaniolan Crossbill

Once, life was easy. Or, at least, crossbill taxonomy was easy. For a long time, just three *Loxia* species were acknowledged: the rather localized Parrot Crossbill *L pytyopsittacus* of Scandinavia and north-western Russia, the widespread Common Crossbill *L curvirostra* in many parts of the Holarctic and Oriental regions, and Two-barred Crossbill *L leucoptera* with a mainly Holarctic distribution. In the 1970s, things began to change when the resident large-billed crossbills from the old forests in Scotland – aptly named *scotica* – were elevated to species level and Scottish Crossbill *L scotica* became Britain's only endemic bird species (cf Knox 1975, 1976, 1990). Common Crossbill has been divided into 20 subspecies (cf Clement et al 1993), some with an isolated range and with distinctive morphological characters. The upgrading of *scotica* to species level therefore raised the question whether some of these Common Crossbill subspecies could be elevated to species status as well – and maybe even with better credentials. Prevailing taxonomic treatments were challenged further when research in North America (Groth 1988, 1993, cf Sangster 1996) revealed that nine different vocal types of Common Crossbill found in North America did not correspond with the seven appointed subspecies in that region and that each vocal type could in theory represent a 'cryptic species'. Research on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean (Robb 2000), indicated that at least six different vocal types also exist in the Palearctic region – all within populations that are presumed to be part of the nominate subspecies *L c curvirostra*. This suggests that further research may eventually lead to the recognition of more crossbill taxa (mainly based on vocal differences) and that upgrading of known subspecies or even currently unnamed taxa to species level may be anticipated. The 'break-down' of formerly polytypic species into two or more separate species has also affected Two-barred Crossbill. Once

**132** Breeding habitat of Hispaniolan Crossbill *Loxia megaplaga*, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 15 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*. Deforestation is visible in the background, which is Haitian territory.

**133-134** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga,* adult male, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

**135-136** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga*, adult female, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 15 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

**137** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga*, adult male, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

**138** Hispaniolan Crossbills / Hispaniolakruisbekken *Loxia megaplaga*, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

divided into three subspecies, the latest systematic treatments recognize at least two and sometimes three separate species (cf Smith 1997, American Ornithologists' Union 1998, Barthel & Helbig 2005): White-winged Crossbill *L (l) leucoptera* from North America, Two-barred Crossbill *L (l) bifasciata* from Eurasia and Hispaniolan Crossbill *L megaplaga* from Hispaniola.

The latter, first described in 1916, has always been one of the most intriguing crossbill taxa. In plumage, its distinctive white wing-bars suggest that it must be closely related to White-winged Crossbill and Two-barred Crossbill but its localized breeding range on the Carribbean island of Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) sets it apart from the other two, which live in the taiga zone. Indeed, Hispaniola is even c 2500 km from the nearest regular wintering areas of White-winged in the northern states of the USA (although vagrants during invasions have come as far south as Florida and Texas; Sibley 2000). This, together with some differences in morphology and vocalizations from the other two taxa, made it a prime candidate for specific status and this was most convincingly proposed by Smith (1997). Since then, Hispaniolan Crossbill has generally been treated as such and has become a major target for birders visiting either the Dominican Republic or Haiti. The remarkable breeding range may be explained by the theory that the West Indies were more temperate during the Pleistocene and that, when the region warmed up during the past 10 000 years or so, the once widespread 'wing-barred crossbills' were 'trapped' in the high peaks, the last cool refugia on the island (Rafaelle et al 1998). The only records outside Hispaniola are of several birds seen in the Blue Mountains on the neighbouring island of Jamaica from December 1970 to April 1971 (there have been no subsequent records; Bond 1985, BirdLife International 2005) – assuming that these were not White-winged Crossbills that had wandered exceptionally far south. The distance from the westernmost point of Hispaniola to the easternmost point of Jamaica is c 200 km.

Hispaniolan Crossbill breeds exclusively in West Indian Pine *Pinus occidentalis* forests in mountains, now mainly in the Dominican Republic and in smaller numbers in Haiti (where

it was more widespread in the past). In Haiti, it is known from the Massifs de La Selle and de La Hotte, although deforestation may mean that it is now (almost) extinct there. In the Dominican Republic, it occurs mostly in the Sierra de Bahoruco and occasionally in the Cordillera Central (Armando Bermúdez National Park). Breeding starts in the period from early February (sometimes as early as December) to April. The population was estimated at less than 1000 individuals in 1994 and at 3375 (with 3000 in the Sierra de Bahoruco) in 1996-99; numbers probably fluctuate depending on food availability but estimating numbers of such a nomadic species is very difficult. The species is listed as 'endangered' (IUCN Red List 2005) because of its very small population, limited range, the continuing fragmentation of its habitat and the fact that these isolated populations are susceptible to local pine-cone failures (Benkman 1994, Stattersfield & Capper 2000, Keith et al 2003, BirdLife International 2005). The loss of habitat has been going on for centuries; between 1630 and the 1880s, the lowland forests were converted to sugar-cane plantations. Then, following the abolition of slavery, destruction of montane forest took place as many freed slaves established themselves in the mountains. Haiti is now one of the most environmentally degraded and densely populated countries in the world, with forest cover of less than 1.5%, the largest remaining blocks being in the Massifs de La Selle and de La Hotte. The Dominican Republic has c 10% of its land forested but the rain and cloud forests which remain are in danger of further loss, mainly due to slash-and-burn agriculture, and the remaining forest is very fragmented. Dry forests have been altered considerably by charcoal production with only a few pristine areas left; pine forests face fewer threats because they are mainly at higher elevations and are less affected by fires but have also been devastated by logging and clear-cutting. Also, reforestation with exotic pine species does not necessarily provide good bird habitat. There are many protected areas in the Dominican Republic (a network of 22 areas amounting to c 16% of the land surface), but these do not include all the major ecosystems, with montane forest in particular being underrepresented. In addition, several Hispaniolan parks and reserves are small (under 75 km$^2$), and thus have limited prospects for overcoming threats from development and of achieving the long-term maintenance of biological diversity. In Haiti, there are only two small national parks with any significant forest fragments, La Viste (20 km$^2$) and Macaya (55 km$^2$). The wildlife service in the Dominican Republic has recently identified gaps in the representation of ecosystems within the nation's protected-area system: 15 new areas have been proposed for protected status including six with cloud forest, four with lowland rain forest and four with dry or semi-deciduous forest (BirdLife International 2005).

In July 1998, Magnus Robb made numerous sound-recordings of Hispaniolan Crossbill at Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic. Their vocalizations differ from White-winged Crossbill and Two-barred Crossbill in several aspects, perhaps most notably in the enormous individual variability displayed in these sounds. Although this may have been partly due to the large number of juveniles present with their underdeveloped, more 'plastic' vocal repertoire, there were enough adults contributing to indicate that the variation was not only due to this. A possible factor is that Hispaniolan Crossbills never come into contact with other crossbills and are presumably under little selective pressure to limit the variability of their sounds compared with mainland crossbills, which more often occur in flocks containing more than one vocal type. A similar variability was found by Magnus Robb in the vocalizations from another island, Cyprus, where *L c guillemardi* breeds in a tiny remnant of high altitude pine forest. Meanwhile, both Two-barred and White-winged are notable in that each has an apparently uniform vocal repertoire over its huge and shifting breeding range. In these two taxa, nomadism is so extreme that it is not unlikely that, for example, an individual White-winged which bred in Alaska, USA, in one year might breed in Quebec, Canada, in the next breeding season. All three 'wing-barred' taxa have diagnosably distinct vocalizations, adding to the arguments (plumage and structural differences as well as differing ecology) for all three to be treated as separate species. Indeed, vocalizations of *megaplaga* were so distinct from those of the other two taxa that it was not even straightforward to work out which calls of *megaplaga* correspond with which of *bifasciata* and *leucoptera*.

The accompanying photographs were taken during a visit by Leo Boon to the Sierra de Bahoruco in March 2004 (cf Boon 2006), when at least 50 birds were observed on 15 and 16 March. The photographs show the three main plumages. Regardless of age and sex, all Hispaniolan Crossbills show a very large, deep and

**139-140** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga*, immature male, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)* **141** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga*, juvenile, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)* **142** Hispaniolan Crossbill / Hispaniolakruisbek *Loxia megaplaga*, juvenile, Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, 16 March 2004 *(Leo J R Boon/Cursorius)*

long bill with long projecting mandible tips, quite different from the long but much finer bill of White-winged Crossbill and Two-barred Crossbill. Hispaniolan shares the white wing-bars (formed by the tips of the median and greater coverts) with these two taxa. In Hispaniolan, however, the bars are not quite as broad – the greater covert bar is often very restricted – and run more or less parallel, while in the other two taxa the bars run at different angles (ie, there is a greater size difference between the inner and outer greater coverts). Juveniles are mainly brownish grey and heavily streaked, especially on the underparts. Females are mainly grey with greenish yellow on breast, throat, rump and (in a variable amount) head and mantle and faint streaking below. Males show a varying amount of red – which is not as pinkish as in some males of the other two taxa – mainly on the crown or complete head, breast, belly and rump. Like females, males can show quite a lot of grey and are rather heavily streaked on the mantle. The large bill is presumably an adaptation to the pine cones they feed from, instead of the finer larch *Larix* and spruce *Picea*-cones that the other wing-barred taxa prefer.

**References**

American Ornithologists' Union 1998. Check-list of North American birds. Seventh edition. Washington DC.

Barthel, P H & Helbig, A J 2005. Artenliste der Vögel Deutschlands. Limicola 19: 89-111.

Benkman, C W 1994. Comments on the ecology and status of the Hispaniolan Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera megaplaga*), with recommendations for its conservation. Caribbean Journal of Science 30: 250-254.
BirdLife International 2005. BirdLife's online World Bird Database: the site for bird conservation. Version 2.0. BirdLife EBA factsheet: Hispaniola. Website: www.birdlife.org. Update 9 September 2005.
BirdLife International 2005. Species factsheet: *Loxia megaplaga*. Website: www.birdlife.org. Update 23 August 2005.
Bond, J 1985. Birds of the West Indies. Fifth edition. London.
Boon, L J R 2006. Birds of the Caribbean. Part 1: Dominican Republic. Dvd. Zandvoort.
Clement, P, Harris, A & Davis, J 1993. Finches & sparrows: an identification guide. London.
Groth, J G 1988. Resolution of cryptic species in Appalachian Red Crossbills. Condor 90: 745-760.
Groth, J G 1993. Evolutionary differentiation in morphology, vocalizations, and allozymes among nomadic sibling species in the North American Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) complex. Univ Calif Publ Zool 127: 1-143.
Keith, A R, Wiley, J W, Latta, S C & Ottenwalder, J A 2003. The birds of Hispaniola. Haiti and the Dominican Republic. BOU Checklist Series 21. Tring.
Knox, A G 1975. Crossbill taxonomy. In: Nethersole-Thompson, D, Pine Crossbills, Berkhamsted, pp 191-201.
Knox , A G 1976. The taxonomic status of the Scottish crossbill *Loxia* sp. Bull Br Ornithol Club 96: 15-19.
Knox, A G 1990. The sympatric breeding of common and Scottish crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* and *L. scotica* and the evolution of crossbills. Ibis 132: 454-466.
Rafaelle, H, Wiley, J, Garrido, O, Keith, A & Raffaele, J 1998. Birds of the West Indies. London.
Robb, M S 2000. Introduction to vocalizations of crossbills in north-western Europe. Dutch Birding 22: 61-107.
Sangster, G 1996. How many species of crossbill are there? Dutch Birding 18: 29-32.
Sibley, D 2000. The North American bird guide. New York.
Smith, P W 1997. The history and taxonomic status of the Hispaniolan Crossbill *Loxia megaplaga*. Bull Br Ornithol Club 117: 264-271.
Stattersfield, A J & Capper, D R (editors) 2000. Threatened birds of the world. Barcelona.

*Leo J R Boon, Keesomstraat 103, 2041 XD Zandvoort, Netherlands (leo@cursorius.com)*
*Enno B Ebels, Joseph Haydnlaan 4, 3533 AE Utrecht, Netherlands (ebels@wxs.nl)*
*Magnus S Robb, Baarsjesweg 237/3, 1058 AA Amsterdam, Netherlands (magnus.robb@xs4all.nl)*

# Recensies

PETER SPIERENBURG 2005 *Birds in Bhutan – status and distribution*. Oriental Bird Club (OBC), PO Box 324, Bedford MK42 0WG, UK; e-mail mail@orientalbirdclub.org, website www.obc.org. 383 pp. Hardback. ISBN 0-9529545-1-6. GBP 45.00 (Europe).

Bhutan has long been one of the most politically isolated countries. Only since a few years, the small Himalayan kingdom has cautiously opened up to the rest of the world. This has resulted, amongst other things, in an increase of birding visitors, especially by organized birding trips by some of the world's major traveling companies. As a result, the information about the status and distribution of birds has increased dramatically in recent times. This book covers all 645 species recorded in Bhutan up to 2004 with 950 maps and graphics backing up the species accounts, providing a detailed overview of the geographical, altitudinal and seasonal distribution. With altitudes ranging from 150 to almost 8000 m, the avifauna is remarkably rich for such a small country (in size comparable with Switzerland). This is also influenced by the fact that Bhutan has been spared from large scale agricultural or industrial developments, leaving most of the country's biodiversity intact. While most of Asia's bird habitats (forests) are being and have been decimated, Bhutan is the exception to the rule because of its lack of deforestation and the government's commitment to preserve wildlife; 60% is now forested and, by law, will remain forested. Bhutan has the highest percentage of ecological preserves in the world; over 26% of the area is designated for environmental conservation. Birds can be found from the glacial alpine regions of the north to the tropics and grasslands of the south.

The book offers exactly what the title promises: for every species, an overview of records in time and place is presented, with maps and clear graphics illustrating the altitudinal distribution of every species throughout the year. The use of two supporting colours in the maps and graphics make them easy to 'read'. Throughout the text, small black-and-white drawings by different artists enliven the text (colour illustrations of most bird species recorded in Bhutan can be found in the field guide *Birds of Bhutan* (Inskipp et al 1999)). Of course, the distribution maps are influenced by the fact that most birding groups tend to follow the same itinerary and

visit Bhutan in the same time of the year (April-May being favourite) but the author succeeds well to compose a complete picture, even if data are limited.

The attractiveness of Bhutan as a birding destination is the combination of a rich Himalayan avifauna and unspoiled natural scenery. The target species for which the country is best known is Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* wintering in the temperate Phobjikha valley highland marshes but several of the other 644 species dealt with in the book are equally rare or just as hard to find worldwide, such as Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis* that occurs in the lush tropical rain forests of the south. Other species rare elsewhere are White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis* and Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa*. The species sequence and taxonomy follow OBC's *An annotated checklist of the birds of the Oriental region* (Inskipp et al 1996). This sequence will be unfamiliar to most readers, with, eg, Yellow-rumped Honey-guide *Indicator xanthonotus* and woodpeckers Picidae following directly after the Anatidae and button-quails *Turnix*, raptors being placed after gulls Laridae, and these being followed by grebes Podicipedidae, cormorants Phalacrocoracidae and herons Ardeidae, and the crows Corvidae being almost up front within the songbirds – without the index, I would still be browsing to find some of the species I wanted to check…

Apart from the species accounts, separate chapters describe the methodology used to collect and assess observations, the history of bird study in Bhutan (starting with the first collecting expedition in 1837-38), habitats, migration and seasonality, threats and conservation, a glossary of local geographical names, an update to 2004 (including two new species for Bhutan received too late to be included in the main text), an overview of birding sites in Bhutan and an extensive list of references, including several unpublished trip reports.

This is the first book published by the OBC since the club's checklist in 1996. Funding has come from the Bertram Smythies Memorial Fund. It is a remarkable achievement for a single author (Peter Spierenburg from Katwijk, the Netherlands), who lived in Bhutan for more than five years while developing the plan to produce this book. Some readers probably would have preferred to see a selection of photographs from the main birding habitats, birding hotspots and – especially – some of the 'key species'. This, however, would probably have raised the price even higher. This high price apart, I can only just recommend this book to any birder with a special interest in the Oriental or Himalayan region. ENNO B EBELS

ABDULLAH F ALFADHEL 2005. *Birds of Kuwait. A portrait*. Published by Abdullah F Alfadhel. E-mail info@kuwaitbirds.com, website www.kuwaitbirds.com. 304 pp. ISBN 99906-76-77-1. GBP 29.95.

Kuwait is situated in the extreme south-eastern corner of the Western Palearctic region as defined by 'BWP'. At the same time, it forms the north-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. The avifauna is predominantly Palearctic, although a few species with a mainly oriental or Arabian origin occur as breeding birds, on passage or as vagrants. The country's bird list holds c 380 species, some of which are hard or almost impossible to see elsewhere in the WP (but are often easily found in other Arabian countries). These include Socotra Cormorant *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*, Shikra *Accipiter badius*, Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* (the population on Bubiyan island probably being the largest in the world), Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*, Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi*, Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*, Eversmann's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythronotus*, Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* and Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*. Year-round species with an 'oriental' touch include White-cheeked Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis*, Red-vented Bulbul *P cafer*, Bank Mynah *Acridotheres ginginianus*, Common Mynah *A tristis* (all four common breeders) and Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica* but, probably apart from White-cheeked Bulbul, these are all of feral origin. From an 'peninsular' point of view, Kuwait holds several breeding species that are rare or absent elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula.

This book presents more than 400 colour photographs of birds, all taken in Kuwait by the author. Almost all are of good quality and several are excellent, including some remarkable close-ups. However, not to everyone's (at least my) liking will be the heavy cropping of several photographs, resulting in birds with tails or other feather parts being 'lost'. The photographs include some of the specialities mentioned above – but not all. The text accompanying the photographs is in Arabic but English and scientific bird names are added. The source for the English and scientific names is not mentioned but the treatment is generally up to date as far as taxonomy and nomenclature are concerned. For instance, Greater Flamingo is named *Phoenicopterus roseus*, 'Red-tailed Wheatear' *Oenanthe chrysopygia/xanthoprymna* is treated as two species (although the name 'Kurdish Wheatear' for *O xanthoprymna* is curious as Persian Wheatear is the most commonly proposed new name), Basra Reed Warbler is treated as a full species and the same holds for Desert (Lesser) Whitethroat *Sylvia (curruca) minula*. The English text holds a few errors or curiosities. For example, Eastern Orphean Warbler should be *S crassirostris* (not *S jerdoni*), Black Bush Robin should be *Cercotrichas podobe* (not *C podobes*) and Sykes's Warbler *A rama* is incorrectly spelt as Syke's Warbler. From a taxonomic point of view, the naming of 'Red-wattled Plover' (Red-wattled Lapwing) as *Hoplopterus indicus* and 'Sociable Plover' (Sociable Lapwing *V gregarius*) as *Chettusia gregaria* seem outdated, especially when, at the same time, 'Spur-winged Plover' (Spur-winged Lapwing) *V spinosus* is included in *Vanellus*. Also remarkable is the naming of Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* as *Hirundo fuligula*, whereas the closely related Crag Martin *P rupestris* is included in *Ptyonoprogne*.

The book includes a chapter describing the 34 best birdwatching sites in Kuwait and an introduction to the Kuwaiti environment with a brief overview of the conservation efforts undertaken towards the protection of birds. Although not a prime destination for birders, this small country (17 800 km$^2$, about half the surface area of the Netherlands) has good birding on offer and has a strategic position to add new species to the WP list (as defined by BWP). In fact, according to the text, the country already has records of some extreme WP rarities, such as Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (a long-staying bird in 1981-92), Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* and Oriental Reed Warbler *A orientalis* (photographed on 20 April 2004; see http://birdsofkuwait.com/Birds/birds_of_kuwait.htm), although the first and latter species are not mentioned in the bird list. ENNO B EBELS

PAMELA C RASMUSSEN & JOHN C ANDERTON 2005. *The birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. Volume 1: Field guide, 378 pp; volume 2: Attributes and status, 683 pp. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. ISBN 84-87334-65-2 (volume 1, hardback); ISBN 84-87334-67-9 (volume 2, hardback). EUR 75.00 (both volumes).

Birdwatchers visiting India or others parts of southern Asia have been lucky enough to choose from a variety of bird books recently. Most were typically compact, eg, *A pocket guide to the birds of the Indian subcontinent* (Grimmet et al), *Field guide to the birds of Nothern India* (Grimmet et al) or *A guide to birds of the Indian subcontinent* (Kazmierczak & van Perlo). *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide* is much more complete and up-to-date than those mentioned above. An impressive 3400 illustrations have been used to depict virtually all species and most distinctive subspecies in the region. More than 2500 known taxa have been included.

*The birds of South Asia* is dedicated to S Dillon Ripley, former secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, who died at the age of 87 in 2001. Ripley has written several 100s scientific publications on taxonomy, systematics and distribution of birds of the Old World and was a big inspiration to both authors.

*The birds of South Asia* consists of two parts: *Field guide* (volume 1) and *Attributes and status* (volume 2). This is not the first time a bird book is being split into two: *The birds of Ecuador* (Ridgely et al) also consists of two parts. I think the authors have made the right decision, the book would have been to heavy to be used as a field guide. So what's new in this book (books!) that can't be found in others? To begin with the *Field guide*, the first thing that struck me was the high quality of the plates. 12 different bird painters have worked on this book and generally, the quality is very high. And what an amazing amount of drawings have been used: 3400 illustrations on 180 plates! The *Field guide* is typically designed to quickly identify birds. What I find to be the most distinctive difference between this and other field guides is the smart way information on the different taxa is presented. All distribution maps face the plates so one doesn't have to search for the maps on different pages. This is much easier to use than, for instance, the *Pocket guide to the birds of the Indian subcontinent* (Grimmet et al). Many subspecies have their own distribution maps, which I find very helpful for identification. The maps do not only show information on distribution but also on status, habitat choice and on variation within the species. For instance, in the distribution map of Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula*, one can read that in the extreme south of the Indian subcontinent, birds are larger, darker and more rufous than in the northwest. Both forms are depicted in the plates opposite the maps. Another difference is that a large number of taxa have been upgraded to full species status. Black Bulbul *Hypsipites leucocephalus* has been split into Himalayan Black Bulbul *H leucocephalus* and Square-tailed Bulbul *H ganeesa*. Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* has been split into three species: Black-crested *P flaviventris*, Black-capped *P melanicterus* and Flame-throated Bulbul *P gularis*. Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* has been split into European Golden Oriole *O oriolus* and Indian Golden Oriole *O kundoo*. The list of split species is long. Let's see what the authors have to say on this. That brings me to volume 2: *Attributes and status*, about twice as thick as the *Field guide*. The text on Indian Golden Oriole in volume 2 starts with 'usually considered a race of *O. oriolus*'. A taxonomic note at the end of the text states: 'does not appear to intergrade with *O. oriolus*, despite proximity of breeding ranges. Differences in morphology and (evidently) vocalizations are comparable or greater than those between certain other oriole species; hence *kundoo* is treated here as a full species.' In the taxonomic section of the introduction of the book, the authors explain why a rather progressive taxonomic line is followed. In all cases of taxonomic changes, 'a separate taxonomic treatment is underway or planned'. I must say that, judged on morphological differences, they do have a point in most of the proposed splits. So, if you are a world lister, this book has some good news! However, some taxonomic treatments may be classified as conservative: Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* (four races occur in South Asia) is still treated as a subspecies of Common Stonechat *S torquata*. Note also that *The birds of South Asia* follows a conservative order (eg, starting with divers, grebes and ending with crows) so is different in this respect to the Grimmet guides.

The species accounts (in volume 2) are detailed and thorough and deal with identification, size, occurrence, habits, voice (many sonagrams are included) and taxonomy. This part is probably best left at your hotel room (it is a little heavy) and can serve as an important resource when getting back from a day's birding.

I think the Ripley guide is fantastic and will set a new standard in Asian birdwatching. Buy it! LAURENS B STEIJN

# Masters of Mystery

SWAROVSKI
OPTIK

## Solutions of first round 2006

The solutions of the mystery photographs I and II (Dutch Birding 28: 37, 2006) of the 2006 Masters of Mystery competition appear below.

**I** Most entrants had no problems in identifying the first mystery photograph of the 2006 Masters of Mystery competition as a swift *Apus*. The pointed and narrow wing, with extremely long hand section and the characteristic head with short and relatively broad bill and dark eye-patch easily lead to the swifts Apodidae and only a minority of the entrants opted for other species, like Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*. Five species of swift were received as answers: Plain *A unicolor* (1%), Common *A apus* (16%), Pallid *A pallidus* (11%), Alpine *A melba* (64%) and Little Swift *A affinis* (1%). The latter is most easily excluded because it has a broad white rump patch that extends well onto the flanks and can even be seen in flight from below.

One of the most striking features of the mystery bird is the amount of white just visible on chin and throat. This rules out Plain Swift, which has a diffuse and small pale (not white) chin-patch only. Also, in most Common Swifts the amount of white on chin and throat is variable, but much less prominent. In some individuals, however, the throat-patch can show an extensive amount of white, comparable with Pallid Swift, and such birds can be difficult to distinguish from Pallid. However, the border between pale and dark throat-feathers is quite obscure in both species. In the mystery bird, on the other hand, there is a sharp and clear-cut demarcation between the white chin and throat and the dark brown feathers of the rest of the head. This is a strong pointer towards Alpine Swift. However, the blackish-brown wing and tail and the dark brown ground colour do not seem to support this identification and the same holds for the pale fringes to nearly all visible feathers. Note, however, that the bird is photographed in July and that it is a nearly full-grown nestling and, therefore, in very fresh juvenile plumage. In swifts, this plumage is not easily studied in the field due to their aerial behaviour. Juvenile Alpine show extensive white tips to the wing-coverts and all flight-feathers and are easily distinguishable in close view from worn adults on the same date. In most European field guides, pale fringes in swifts are associated especially with Pallid but they can also be expected in fresh juvenile plumages of other species. In juvenile Alpine, the ground colour of the upperparts is darker than in adults, even darker than in fresh adults, and this is clearly demonstrated by the mystery bird, which is an Alpine Swift. The dark blackish-brown colour was probably the main reason for some entrants to opt for Pallid or even Common Swift. This Alpine Swift was photographed by Jan Wierda at San Andrean, Logroño, Rioja, Spain, on 27 July 2005.

**II** Obviously, the passerine in the second mystery photograph is not a bunting, as it does not show the typical *Emberiza* tertial pattern and has – just visible – a pointed bill. Some entrants voted for accentors *Prunella* but these show grey or black patterns on crown and nape. Also many species of pipits *Anthus* show streaked upperparts like the mystery bird but are characterized by long tertials. Finally, larks Alaudidae can be excluded as these also show longer tertials with usually less clear-cut fringes than the mystery bird.

The tertial length and clear-cut fringes fit several *Acrocephalus* and *Locustella* warblers perfectly, as well as Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*. However, the *Acrocephalus* species all show a

**143** Lanceolated Warbler / Kleine Sprinkhaanzanger *Locustella lanceolata*, Happy Island, Hebei, China, May 2005 *(Nils van Duivendijk)*

[*Dutch Birding 28: 108-110, 2006*]

Mystery photograph III (July)

Mystery photograph IV (May)

dark crown or crown-side and a contrasting supercilium, which are both absent in the mystery bird. Zitting Cisticola can also be ruled out as it shows more contrasting pale lines on the mantle. In addition, it does not show such a primary projection as the mystery bird.

Thus, only three species of streaked *Locustella* warblers are left: Pallas's Grasshopper *L certhiola*, Lanceolated *L lanceolata* and Common Grasshopper Warbler *L naevia*. From these, Pallas's Grasshopper can be ruled out most easily, as it is more contrastingly coloured, with a greyish crown and warm reddish brown upperparts with well-spaced narrow streaks. Furthermore, it often shows a white spot or bulge on the inner fringe of the tertials, which are not shown by the mystery bird. One of the most conclusive characters distinguishing Lanceolated and Common Grasshopper concerns the tertial margins, which are even in width and sharply defined in Lanceolated. In Common Grasshopper, the tertial margins broaden towards the basal part and are much less sharply defined, and the feather centres of the tertials are grey-brown, not black-brown as in Lanceolated. This character is not easy to judge in the mystery bird, due to the position of the secondaries. Other characters can be found in the streaking on the upperparts, which is more obvious and contrasting in Lanceolated. Also, the uppertail-coverts and rump are typically more heavily streaked and spotted in Lanceolated than in Common Grasshopper. The mystery bird shows both broad black lines on the mantle and a heavily spotted rump, revealing its identity: it is a Lanceolated. Note, however, that the subspecies *L n straminea* of Common Grasshopper, Seebohm's Grasshopper Warbler from Siberia and western Asia, is smaller and paler greyish overall compared with the nominate. In addition, Seebohm's Grasshopper is more contrastingly streaked on both underparts and upperparts and is, therefore, more similar to Lanceolated. Still, the tertial pattern is a strong character for separating Lanceolated.

This Lanceolated Warbler was photographed by Nils van Duivendijk on Happy Island, Hebei, China, in May 2005. Another photograph of the same bird is shown as plate 143. It was correctly identified by 87% of the entrants, with incorrect answers being Dunnock *P modularis* (5%), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (3%) and Common Grasshopper Warbler (2%).

In the first round for 2006, there were 105 entrants of which 65 managed to identify both mystery birds correctly. From them, Menno Hornman was drawn as the winner of a copy of *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia* by Craig Robson. The names of all entrants with at least one correct identification can be viewed at www.dutchbirding.nl.

## Second round 2006

Photographs III and IV represent the second round of the 2006 competition. Please, study the rules (Dutch Birding 28: 37, 2006) 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 second round have to arrive by **1 May 2006**. Please, indicate if you are subscribed to Dutch Birding. From those entrants having identified both mystery birds correctly, two persons will be drawn who will receive a copy of the DVD *Dutch Birding jaaroverzicht 2005* donated by Natuur Digitaal. Swarovski Benelux has generously agreed to sponsor this competition again in 2006. This year, the overall winner after six rounds will receive a pair of marvellous 10x32 EL binoculars.

*Rob S A van Bemmelen, Stavangerweg 535, 1013 AX Amsterdam, 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 **late January-early March 2006**. The reports are largely unchecked and their publication here does not imply future acceptance by a rarities committee. Observers are requested to submit their records to each country's rarities committee. Corrections are welcome and will be published.

GEESE TO DUCKS In Israel, six **Siberian Greylag Geese** *Anser anser rubrirostris* were seen at Ma'agan Michael on 17-18 February. A **Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis* ringed as a first-winter on Islay, Scotland, on 9 November 2004 was shot by a hunter in autumn 2005 near Hawkesbury east of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, constituting the species' first ringing recovery for North America. In southern Morocco, a first-winter **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *B bernicla* was discovered at Knifiss lagoon, north of Tarfaya, on 20 January. In the Netherlands, the adult male **Canvasback** *Aythya valisineria* at Castricum aan Zee, Noord-Holland, was again present from 13 January to 13 February; this individual was seen here before from 9 January to 5 March 2003 and from 14 October to 12 November 2005. Possibly the south-easternmost ever **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* concerned a single female photographed at Gajaldoba barrage, West Bengal, India, on 3 February. The male at Broadwater, London, England, remained through January. The male **Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana* first seen in March 1999 wintered at Llanfairfechan, North Wales, through March. The unringed male **Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola* at Gaatkensplas, Barendrecht, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands, remained for its second winter until at least 18 February (at least one more male, presumably ringed, stayed at Gooimeer and Naardermeer, Noord-Holland, from 2 January). On 16 January, the first for Romania was photographed at Fejérdomb at the Danube river. In France, one was seen at Lac de Ginestière east of Saverdun, Ariège, on 5 February. From 1 to at least 11 February, an unringed male was present at Plön, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany; in the same period, a male **Hooded Merganser** *Lophodytes cucullatus* was photographed at this site as well. On 15 March, a **Bufflehead** was reported from Klepp, Rogaland, Norway. The first **Barrow's Goldeneye** *B islandica* for Northern Ireland remained at Quoile Pondage, Down, from 20 November 2005 to at least 15 March. A male **American Wigeon** *Anas americana* was swimming at Oued Massa, south of Agadir, Morocco, on 15-26 January. Another was found at Marrakech, Morocco, on 21 January. In Senegal, two males were seen in the Djoudj area near the Mauritanian border on 19-20 January; a group of 15 **Ferruginous Ducks** *A nyroca* was also present here. The female **American Black Duck** *A rubripes* on Tresco, Scilly, England, last seen in May 2005 was back from 12 February through March. The long-staying individual at Ría de Foz, Lugo, Spain, was still present on 14 January and the male at Garður, Iceland, remained into March. From 4 March, a male was seen at Kilcolman, Cork, Ireland. Up to 10 000 **Baikal Teals** *A formosa* roosting at a fish pond in Chongming Dongtan, Shanghai, on 24-27 January constitute the biggest flock wintering in China for many years (and the only major wintering flock outside Korea in recent decades). In Northern Ireland, an unringed male was present at Belfast Lough, Antrim, from 29 January to 8 February. In India, a male was discovered on the Yamuna river, Delhi, on 15 February.

LOONS TO GREBES During January and the first two weeks of February, nine **Great Northern Loons** *Gavia immer* were found at different sites in Germany. The second **Yellow-billed Loon** *G adamsii* for Scilly turned up on 12 February. A **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* was seen for 10 min 25 km south of El Ouatia, Tan Tan Plage, Morocco, on 18 January. In the Azores, a first-winter **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* was present at Madalena, Pico, from 23 January to at least 17 February. A **Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* and two **Goliath Herons** *Ardea goliath* were found at Wadi Lahami and Marsa Hemira mangroves, Egypt, on 7 February. In the Netherlands, counts at winter roosts of **Great Egrets** *Casmerodius albus* resulted in 800 individuals; in Belgium, more than 160 were counted. The **Great Blue Heron** *A herodias* at Lagoa Branca, Flores, Azores, was still present on 15 February; it was first seen on 22 September 2005. A **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* ringed at Izmir, Turkey, on



[*Dutch Birding 28: 110-118, 2006*]

31 July 2005 was present in Slovenia from 30 November to 6 December. Both **Pied-billed Grebes** *Podilymbus podiceps* on São Miguel, Azores, stayed into March at Lagoa Azul and Lagoa Furnas. On Pico, one was seen at Lajes on 23 January. The first breeding of **Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* for Malta at the small Is-Simar marsh reserve resulted in three fledglings as early as 10 February.

RAPTORS TO CRANES On 27 January, the annual count by 20 birders at Karei Naaman, the largest **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* roost of Israel, resulted in 11 266 individuals (compared with 11 843 in 2005); an additional 13 000 individuals were present at five other large roosts in Israel. Reportedly, **White-tailed Eagles** *Haliaeetus albicilla* were nesting at Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, in early March; there has never been a breeding record for the Netherlands. An adult male **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* was discovered at Belleville, Aube, France, on 1 March. In Italy, a group of five **Booted Eagles** *Aquila pennata* was observed at Gulf of Palmas, Sardinia, in late January. The subadult **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *A heliaca* over Næsbyholm, Sweden, on 14 January was seen again in Skåne on 22-23 January and 13 March (cf Dutch Birding 28: 42, 2006). A **Sora** *Porzana carolina* was present at Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire, England, from 5 March onwards. An **American Coot** *Fulica americana* was seen at Lajes, Pico, on 23 January. In southern Morocco, on 18 January, a **Red-knobbed Coot** *F cristata* was photographed at Oued Massa, where it is a rarity. The fifth **Sandhill Crane** *Grus canadensis* for China was present at Chongming Dongtan, Shanghai, on 24 February.

WADERS In the Azores, single first-winter **Semipalmated Plovers** *Charadrius semipalmatus* were seen at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, from early January to at least 14 February (up to two) and at Ponta Delgada, Flores, on 1-15 February. In Egypt, two **Three-banded Plovers** *C tricollaris* were foraging at west Sehel, north of old dam, Aswan, on 25-30 January and at least one was still present here on 10 February. The **Greater Sand Plover** *C leschenaultii* wintering for the second consecutive year on Gorino near Boccasette in the Po delta, Emilia Romagna, Italy, was still present on 11 February (cf Dutch Birding 28: 42, 2006). The **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* staying in the Dubai pivot fields, United Arab Emirates, since 17 November 2005 was still present on at least 27 January. The fifth for Bahrain was discovered at Badaan Farm on 28 January. From 29 January, three were seen near Sokar, Oman. On Terceira, a **Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla* was at Cabo da Praia from at least early January to 14 February. A **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* remained until at least 16 March at Hayle Estuary, Cornwall, where it was first seen in October 2005. A **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* found at Salinas de Janubio, Lanzarote, Canary Islands, on 12 January was still present on 5 March. On Flores, one stayed at Lajes from at least 30 January to 10 February.

**144** Sora / Soraral *Porzana carolina*, Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire, England, 7 March 2006 *(Marc Read)*

**145** Forster's Tern / Forsters Stern *Sterna forsteri*, Nimmo's Pier, Galway, Ireland, 2 January 2006 *(Paul & Andrea Kelly/irishbirdimages.com)* **146** Northern Hawk Owl / Sperweruil *Surnia ulula*, Dubrau, Brandenburg, Germany, February 2006 *(Axel Halley)* **147** Kumlien's Gull / Kumliens Meeuw *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*, Nimmo's Pier, Galway, Ireland, 11 February 2006 *(Paul & Andrea Kelly/irishbirdimages.com)*

**148** Greater Flamingo / Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*, Secovlje's Salin, Slovenia, November 2005 *(Iztok Skornik)*

**149** Red-flanked Bluetail / Blauwstaart *Tarsiger cyanurus*, Hannover-Lehrte, Niedersachsen, Germany, February 2006 *(Stefan Pfützke)*

GULLS TO TERNS In the United Arab Emirates, an adult **Little Gull** *Larus minutus* was found at Sharjah dump near the University City on 21 January. **Bonaparte's Gulls** *L philadelphia* were seen at Cobh, Cork, from 16 January through March (adult), at Lunan Bay, Angus, Scotland, (again) on 2 February, and at Xixón, Asturies, Spain, on 28-29 February. The first **Laughing Gull** *L atricilla* for Switzerland at Thuner See, Bern, from 19 December 2005 was again reported on 6 March. At least eight remained in Britain and Ireland into March. In Spain, seven were reported during January, including two on the Mediterranean coast. Up to eight were found in the Azores and five at Funchal harbour, Madeira, during the period. Another turned up at Arghoud near Agadir, Morocco, on 1 March. The first **Franklin's Gull** *L pipixcan* for Switzerland at Schaffhausen from 5 January was last seen on 12 February; presumably the same first-winter was at Limmatstau, Dietikon, from 20 February into March. On 18 January, one was found at Lac Grand-lieu, Loire-Atlantique, France. In Spain, a first-winter occurred at El Abra, Santurtzi, Bilbao, from 20 January to at least 20 February; another first-winter at Cambrils harbour, Tarragona, on 20 January; and an adult at Guadalhorce river mouth, Málaga, on 16 February. A first-winter was first seen at Dundrum Bay, Down, from 28 January to 4 February and then at Belfast Lough, Antrim, from 21 February into March; another was in Cork from 29 January. From 12 February, a first-winter was in Devon, England. The fourth for Morocco was a first-winter bathing at the Oued Souss mouth in Agadir on 17 February. In the Azores, up to three first-winter **Mediterranean Gulls** *L melanocephalus* were seen west of Ponta Delgada harbour on São Miguel from early January to at least 19 February and up to two first-winters and a second-winter were at Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, from early January to at least 12 February. The second **Ring-billed Gull** *L delawarensis* for Denmark was a first-winter trapped and ringed near Copenhagen, on 26 February; it remained into March. The report of a **Pallas's Gull** *L ichthyaetus* at Bahar ic-Caghaq on 13 December 2005 (cf Dutch Birding 28: 46, 2006) was erroneous and concerned in fact the second **Great Black-backed Gull** *L marinus* for Malta. The fifth **Pallas's Gull** for Sardinia was an immature in the Cagliari gulf in late December 2005 and, in Malta, a first-winter was seen at St Elmo on 21 January and at Rinella on 22 January. The eighth **Great Black-backed Gull** for Israel occurred at Acre on 14-19 January. In southern Morocco, a second-winter and two third-winters were found at Knifiss lagoon on 20 January. The second **Baltic Gull** *L fuscus fuscus* for Spain was a first-winter wearing a red ring (CS91) at Palma de Mallorca, Balearics, on 8 February which appeared to have been ringed at Korpilahti, Finland, on 9 July 2005. The long-staying **Cape Gull** *L dominicanus vetula* on Zira, Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, paired with a Yellow-legged Gull *L michahellis* was still present on 11 January (it was first

**150** Laughing Gull / Lachmeeuw *Larus atricilla*, Merligen, Thuner See, Bern, Switzerland, 7 January 2006 *(Christian Schüler)*

**151** American Herring Gull / Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *Larus smithsonianus*, first-year, Getxo, Bizkaia, Spain, 13 February 2006 *(Fernando Arce)*

**152** Daurian Shrike / Daurische Klauwier *Lanius isabellinus*, Eilat, Israel, 8 February 2006 *(Wouter Puyk)* **153** Red-fronted Serin / Roodvoorhoofdkanarie *Serinus pusillus*, Rosh Pinna, Israel, 4 January 2006 *(Tomer Landsberger)* **154** Black-throated Thrush / Zwartkeellijster *Turdus atrogularis*, male, Swansea, Glamorgan, Wales, 4 March 2006 *(Andrew Lawson)*

**155** Lappet-faced Vulture / Oorgier *Torgos tracheliotus*, Muscat, Oman, 3 February 2006 *(Adrian Jordi)* **156** Grey-headed Gull / Grijskopmeeuw *Larus cirrocephalus*, Zira, Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, 11 January 2006 *(Chris Batty)* **157** Kittlitz's Plover / Herdersplevier *Charadrius pecuarius*, adult, West Sehel, Aswan, Egypt, 5 February 2006 *(Dick Hoek)* **158** Three-banded Plover / Driebandplevier *Charadrius tricollaris*, adult, West Sehel, Aswan, Egypt, 27 January 2006 *(Dick Hoek)* **159** Sociable Lapwing / Steppekievit *Vanellus gregarius*, Sohar, Oman, 30 January 2006 *(Adrian Jordi)* **160** Baikal Teal / Siberische Taling *Anas formosa*, male, with Common Teals / Wintertalingen *A crecca*, male, Belfast Lough, Down, Northern Ireland, 29 January 2006 *(Andrea Kelly/irishbirdimages.com)*

seen here in April 1997), together with at least 15 **Grey-headed Gulls** *L cirrocephalus*. At least three **American Herring Gulls** *L smithsonianus* were reported in Britain and Ireland, and there were also three in the Azores. The second for Spain was a first-winter at Getxo, Bizkaia, from 28 January. In California, USA, at least nine **Slaty-backed Gulls** *L schistisagus* were found this winter until 5 February, mostly in the San Francisco area (see www.coastside.net/chucao/gulls/Slatyback.htm). In Canada, also this winter, Ontario had its third in the Point Pelee area, and an adult at Quidi Vidi Lake, St John's, from 28 January into February was the first for Newfoundland. An adult **Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri* remained at Nimmo's Pier, Galway, Ireland, from 26 November 2005 to at least mid-March. A first-winter was seen at several sites in Cork from 11 January into March. In France, one was watched at Les-Moutiers-en-Retz, Loire-Atlantique, on 28 January and at Sion-sur-l'Océan, Vendée, on 5 March.

DOVES TO WOODPECKERS The first **Stock Dove** *Columba oenas* for Madeira was photographed at Ponta de São Lourenço on 19 January. The **Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis* at Falköping, Västergötland, Sweden, from 25 December 2005 remained until at least 17 March. In the Netherlands, at least three pairs of **Eurasian Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* were breeding at quarries in Limburg while, like last year, a tree-nesting pair was found in Achterhoek, Gelderland. In Ireland, a female-type **Snowy Owl** *B scandiacus* was seen near Spiddal, Galway, on 31 January while it or another took up residence at a large expanse of peat-bog near Athlone, Westmeath, from mid-February to early March. The long-staying individual in the Outer Hebrides, Scotland, was seen on North Uist on 23 January. The first twitchable **Northern Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula* for Germany in more than 20 years was in Dubrau, Brandenburg, from 19 February to at least 13 March. Several also occurred in Denmark this winter, including one at Gribskov first seen on 14 January and rediscovered on 5 March. In the Netherlands, an injured **Tengmalm's Owl** *Aegolius funereus* was taken into care at Belfeld, Limburg, on 9 March. In the Azores, the female **Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon* on Graciosa from 9 December 2005 was still present on 18 February. The number of breeding pairs of **Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius* in the Netherlands kept rising and, by early March, 50 pairs were located in Limburg and 16 in eastern Noord-Brabant, while at least a handful was present in eastern Overijssel. In Belgium, 11 individuals were found in Vlaanderen during January-February. At least until March, despite much searching, it was impossible to obtain evidence of any surviving **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** *Campephilus principalis* in Big Woods, eastern Arkansas, USA, this winter (cf Dutch Birding 27: 215, 250-253, 2005). For a discussion on the identification of the alleged Ivory-billed videoed here on 14 February 2005, and believed to be a Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus* by an increasing number of birders, see www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/311/5767/1555a and b.

LARKS TO WARBLERS Two **Dunn's Larks** *Eremalauda dunni* and 15 **Desert Sparrows** *Passer simplex* were encountered south-east of Bou Lanouar in Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Mauritania, on 9 January. The **Greater Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* at Luqa, Malta, in autumn 2005 was found on 30 September, not on 30 October (contra Dutch Birding 27: 413, 2005). The first **Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* for Denmark first seen near Køge at Ølsemagle Revle, Sjælland, on 1-4 January, was rediscovered on 3 March. The **Blyth's Pipit** *Anthus godlewskii* at Turnhout, Antwerpen, Belgium, from 10 November 2005 was seen again on 21 January. The **American Buff-bellied Pipit** *A rubescens rubescens* at Frampton Marsh, Lincolnshire, England, on 4-13 December 2005 was reported again on 24-29 January. In the Azores, one turned up at Lagoa do Peixinho, Pico, on 23 January. In Israel, three single **Siberian Buff-bellied Pipits** *A r japonicus* were found in January and, at Yotvata, two remained through February. In the Netherlands, a nationwide count of **Bohemian Waxwings** *Bombycilla garrulus* on 4-5 February resulted in 1745 individuals mostly in a broad band from Haarlem, Noord-Holland, in the west to Achterhoek in the east. In the Canary Islands, the **Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos* at Patalavaca, Arguineguin, Gran Canaria, since November 2004 was trapped on 29 January and is now kept in captivity. The second **Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* for Spain at Albufera, Valencia, from 16 November 2005 was still present on 13 January and found dead on 29 January. A first-winter stayed at Hannover-Lehrte, Niedersachsen, Germany, from 27 January to 5 February. In Israel, a male **Persian Wheatear** *Oenanthe chrysopygia* was seen at wadi Zananier, near Ma'ale Efraim, eastern Samaria, from 27 January through February. In Wales, a male **Black-throated Thrush** *Turdus atrogularis* stayed at Swansea, Glamorgan, from 18 January until at least 15 March. The male at Isfjorden, Møre og Romsdal, Norway, from 7 January was still present in March. Also in Norway, the female at Borhauggarden, Lista, from 18 December 2005 was still present on 26 January. In Hungary, a male was photographed at Szigetszentmiklós, Pest, on 24 January. In Adrar, Mauritania, a male **Tristram's Warbler** *Sylvia deserticola* and 26 **Desert Sparrows** were found at Tazazmout-es-Shrir on 14 January. In England, **Hume's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus humei* were seen at Whitley Bay, Northumberland, from 14 January through March, at Holkham Park, Norfolk, on 8-18 January and, possibly the same bird, at Horsey, Norfolk, from 25 January to 6 February. The one on Ouessant, Finistère, France, from 16 December 2005 was still present on 17 March. In Israel, one remained at Mizpe Ramon from 21 January through February, and another at Lotan from 15 February was trapped on 23 February. The first for Spain was found 4 km south of Cabañas del Castillo, Cáceres, on 4 February.

SHRIKES TO BUNTINGS In Israel, **Daurian Shrikes** *Lanius isabellinus* were wintering at Gesher, Hula, and one was at Eilat on 8 February. In the Netherlands, an all

**161** Rustic Buntings / Bosgorzen *Emberiza rustica*, Godovic, Slovenia, 24 November 2005 *(Dare Sere)*

time high of at least 18 **House Crows** *Corvus splendens* were counted at Hoek van Holland, Zuid-Holland, during February; the first successful breeding occurred here in 1997. The first **Fan-tailed Raven** *C rhipidurus* for the United Arab Emirates flew over the Qusaihwira area in south-eastern Abu Dhabi, c 1000 km from the species' nearest breeding area, and headed south into Saudi Arabia. The adult male **Spotless Starling** *Sturnus unicolor* at Tane Sø, Oksbøl, Jylland, first seen in spring 2002 and back from 15 April to at least 18 May 2003 has recently been accepted as the first for Denmark. The second **Common Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra* for Madeira was a male photographed on 26 February. The fourth **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* for Spain was a male at Cases del Señor, Monovar, Alacant, from 15 January to at least 16 February. In Finland, one occurred at Närpiö, on 17-18 January. The third record of **Rustic Bunting** *E rustica* for Slovenia concerned two trapped and a third individual seen at Godovic on 24 November 2005.

For a number of reports, Birding World, www.azores.seawatching.net, www.birdguides.com, www.netfugl.dk and www.rarebirdalert.co.uk were consulted. We wish to thank Simon Aspinall, Renaud Baeta, Chris Batty, Beijing Bird Watching Society, Amir Ben Dov, Max Berlijn, Yohann Brouillard, Simba Chan, Andrea Corso (Italy), Kris De Rouck, Jochen Dierschke, Hugues Dufourny, Enno Ebels, Lee Evans, Rob Felix, Dick Forsman, Raymond Galea (Malta), Barak Granit, Marcello Grussu (Sardinia), Ricard Gutiérrez (Spain), Joakim Hammar, Dick Hoek (Egypt), Niklas Holmström, Jean Iron, Nidal Issa, Justin Jansen, Alvaro Jaramillo, Erling Jirle (Sweden), Adrian Jordi, Kejia Zhang, Howard King, Guy Kirwan, Yann Kolbeinsson, Hermann Leitner, Alexandre Liger, André van Loon, Bruce Mactavish, Blake Maybank (Nova Scotia), Richard Millington, Dominic Mitchell, Nial Moores, Killian Mullarney, Micha Neumann, Kenneth Rude Nielsen, Andreas Noeske, Gert Ottens, Menotti Passarella, Tommy Pedersen, Yoav Perlman (IRDC), Ron Pittaway, Luuk Punt, Jouni Riihimäki, Mathias Ritschard, Magnus Robb, Staffan Rodebrand, Luciano Ruggieri, Michael Sammut, Miguel Sánchez, Nir Sapir, Wim van der Schot, Dare Sere, Russell Slack (BirdGuides), Brian Small, Uwe Streese-Browa, Julien Thurel, Poul Ulrik, Hisko de Vries, Gejo Wassink, Rik Winters and Maxime Zucca for their help in compiling this review.

*Arnoud B van den Berg, Duinlustparkweg 98, 2082 EG Santpoort-Zuid, Netherlands (arnoud.vandenberg@planet.nl)*
*Marcel Haas, Hora Siccamasingel 167, 9721 HD Groningen, Netherlands (m.haas@wpbirds.com)*

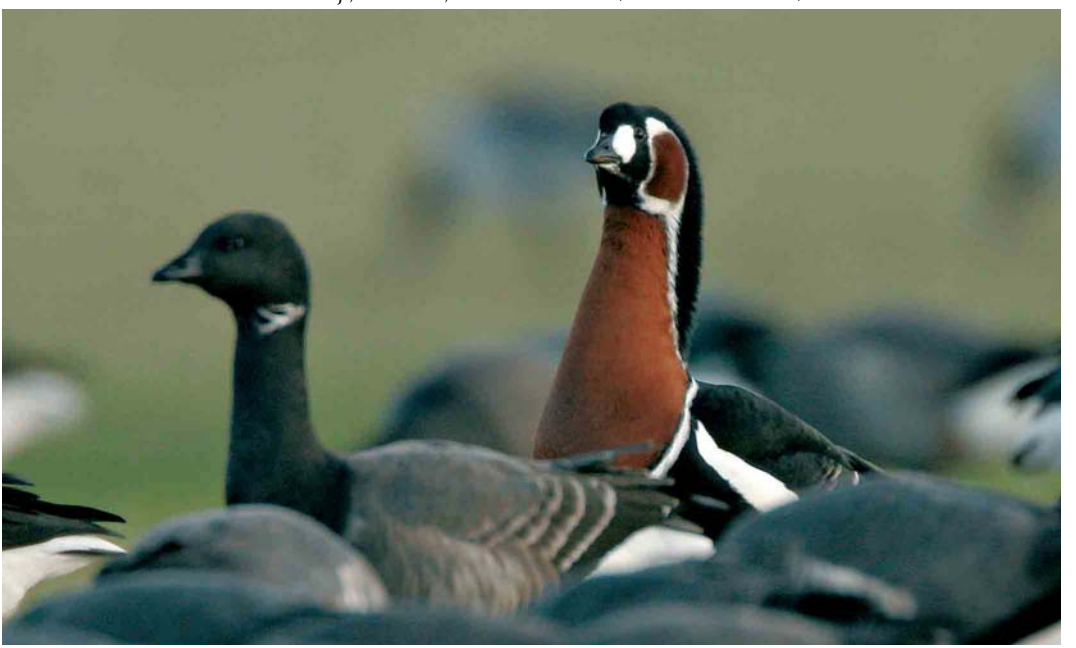
# Recente meldingen

Dit overzicht van recente meldingen van zeldzame en interessante vogels in Nederland en België beslaat voornamelijk de periode **januari-februari 2006**. 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 VALKEN **Ross' Ganzen** *Anser rossii* verbleven tot 3 februari in het Lauwersmeergebied, Friesland, op 28 en 29 januari in de Yerseke Moer, Zeeland, op 6 februari in de Scherpenissepolder, Zeeland, en op 7 februari in het Oude Land van Strijen, Zuid-Holland. **Dwergganzen** *A erythropus* werden gezien op 1 januari bij Streefkerk, Zuid-Holland (11), van 3 januari tot 25 februari bij Petten, Noord-Holland, met een maximum van 42 op 13 januari, tot 22 februari bij Strijen met een maximum van 25 op 4 januari, vanaf 21 januari maximaal 14 op de Korendijkse Slikken, Zuid-Holland, en op 19 februari 12 bij Tibma, Friesland. Daarnaast werden nog ruim 25 'losse' exemplaren gemeld. **Groenlandse Kolganzen** *A albifrons flavirostris* werden opgemerkt op 21 januari bij Strijen, op 12 februari in het Annermoeras bij Spijkerboor, Drenthe, en op 18 februari in de Sondelerleien, Friesland. Verspreid over de periode werden c 20 **Roodhalsganzen** *Branta ruficollis* waargenomen. Naast her en der wat losse **Witbuikrotganzen** *B hrota* werden er kleine groepjes geteld: tot 26 februari vijf bij Scharendijke, Zeeland; in februari maximaal 14 op Wieringen, Noord-Holland; in januari maximaal zes en februari maximaal 14 bij Petten; van 14 januari tot 5 februari acht in de omgeving van Monster, Zuid-Holland; en op 11 februari vijf op Ameland, Friesland. Er werden tenminste 21 **Zwarte Rotganzen** *B nigricans* gezien, waaronder meldingen van vier op 11 februari op Ameland en vijf op 22 februari op Schiermonnikoog, Friesland. De grootste groepen **Krooneenden** *Netta rufina* telden 30 exemplaren op 14 januari op het Veluwemeer bij Polsmaten, Gelderland, en 51 op 19 februari op het Wolderwijd bij het Harderbroek, Flevoland. Het mannetje **Grote Tafeleend** *Aythya valisineria* werd onregelmatig gezien tot 13 februari op het Hoefijzermeer bij Castricum aan

**162** Roodhalsgans / Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* en Rotganzen / Dark-bellied Brent Geese *B bernicla*, Ezumazijl, Friesland, 26 februari 2006 *(Hillebrand Breuker)*



**163** Zeearend / White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, adult, Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, 27 februari 2006 *(Han Zevenhuizen)* **164** Middelste Bonte Specht / Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius*, Eindhoven, Noord-Brabant, 3 maart 2006 *(Rob G Bouwman)* **165** Zwarte Zeekoet / Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*, NIOZ-haven, Texel, Noord-Holland, 21 januari 2006 *(Menno van Duijn)*

Zee, Noord-Holland. Van 11 locaties werden **Witoogeenden** *A nyroca* gemeld. Tot 22 januari zwommen er één en soms twee vrouwtjes **Ringsnaveleend** *A collaris* bij Budel-Dorplein, Noord-Brabant. Een **Brilzee-eend** *Melanitta perspicillata* werd weer eens opgemerkt vanuit een vliegtuigje tijdens zeevogeltellingen en wel op 16 februari in het Brouwershavensche Gat, Zeeland. Het adulte mannetje **Buffelkopeend** *Bucephala albeola* van de Gaatkensplas bij Barendrecht, Zuid-Holland, liet zich daar tot 18 februari bewonderen. Een andere op 10 en 14 januari op het Gooimeer bij Huizen, Noord-Holland, bleek (op basis van een kleurring) dezelfde als degene die daar vorige winter verbleef. Mogelijk hetzelfde exemplaar werd vanaf 2 januari tot in maart regelmatig in het Naardermeer, Noord-Holland, waargenomen maar liet daar zijn ring (nog) niet zien... Er waren meldingen van **Bronskopeenden** *Anas falcata* op 1 januari bij Oost-Maarland, Limburg, en op 19 februari in de Koornwaard bij Gewande, Noord-Brabant. Mannetjes **Amerikaanse Smient** *A americana* verbleven van 9 januari tot 6 februari nabij Colijnsplaat, Zeeland, van 16 januari tot 4 februari op de Zegerplas bij Alphen aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, vanaf 29 januari bij Ouderkerk aan den IJssel, Zuid-Holland, en op 18 februari kortstondig bij Oegstgeest, Zuid-Holland. **IJsduikers** *Gavia immer* werden gezien op 2 januari bij de Hompelvoet op de Grevelingen, Zeeland; op 16 januari en 6 februari op het Haringvliet, Zuid-Holland; op 3 februari bij Huizen; op 11 februari bij de Brouwersdam, Zuid-Holland; op 16 februari bij Westkapelle, Zeeland; en op 18 februari op de Krammer bij Oude Tonge, Zuid-Holland, en langs de Veerse Dam, Zeeland. **Kuifaalscholvers** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* pleisterden tot 8 januari in de Eemshaven, Groningen, waar op 21 januari eentje dood werd gevonden; tot 21 januari drie verschillende bij IJmuiden, Noord-Holland; tot 10 februari maximaal acht bij Neeltje Jans, Zeeland; tot 23

februari maximaal drie tussen Vlissingen en het Sloegebied, Zeeland; en van 16 januari tot 15 februari maximaal drie bij Den Helder, Noord-Holland. **Koereigers** *Bubulcus ibis* verschenen op 6 januari in de Kapelsche Moer, Zeeland, en ten zuiden van Werkendam, Noord-Brabant, op 8 januari ten noorden van Middelburg, Zeeland, en op 19 januari langsvliegend bij Raamsdonk, Noord-Brabant. Slaapplaatstellingen van **Grote Zilverreigers** *Casmerodius albus* brachten aan het licht dat ten minste 800 exemplaren overwinter(d)en! De standvastige **Zwarte Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* van Den Helder bleef in die omgeving tot in ieder geval 22 januari, waarna nog één waarneming volgde op 21 februari. Op 1 januari werd er één overvliegend gezien bij Delft, Zuid-Holland. Na enkele exemplaren in januari, volgde vanaf 18 februari de eerste doortrekgolf van **Rode Wouw** *Milvus milvus* met ruim 50 meldingen. Er werden niet minder dan 19 **Zeearenden** *Haliaeetus albicilla* gemeld, waaronder adulte of bijna adulte in de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, bij het Vossemeer, Flevoland, en op de Korendijkse Slikken. De **Witte Giervalk** *Falco rusticolus* die van 16 tot 23 januari werd gemeld op Texel, Noord-Holland, op 23 januari bij Camperduin, Noord-Holland, en op 28 januari bij Den Helder betreft waarschijnlijk de met een blauw ringetje geringde hybride Saker- x Giervalk *F cherrug x rusticolus*, die al enkele maanden in de kop van Noord-Holland rondzwerft. Het is echter niet uitgesloten dat er meer dan één grote lichte valk in deze omgeving verbleef.

KRAANVOGELS TOT ALKEN **Kraanvogels** *Grus grus* op doortocht werden al gezien vanaf half januari. Kleine pieken van 10-tallen tot enkele 100en waren er op 22 en 26 januari en op 19 en 28 februari. Verrassend was de aanwezigheid van een **Steltkluut** *Himantopus himantopus* van 18 tot 21 januari in het gebied De Ruidhorn aan de westkant van de Emmapolder, Groningen. Daarnaast waren er meldingen van twee langsvliegende exemplaren op 14 januari bij Schijndel, Noord-Brabant, en op 11 februari bij Borculo, Gelderland. Er werden slechts vier **Rosse Franjepoten** *Phalaropus fulicarius* gemeld: op 1 januari bij Westkapelle en IJmuiden, op 14 januari op het Veerse Meer bij Veere, Zeeland, en op 21 januari op Ameland. De **Ringsnavelmeeuw** *Larus delawarensis* bleef tot 25 februari in Tiel, Gelderland. Daarnaast was er een melding op 7 januari in Dordrecht, Zuid-Holland. Een eerstejaars 'zilvermeeuw' met nagenoeg geheel zwarte staart in de Eemshaven op 7 en 8 januari bleek na zorgvuldige bestudering toch niet te kunnen overtuigen als Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *L smithsonianus* en werd als **Zilvermeeuw** *L argentatus* gedetermineerd. **Pontische Meeuwen** *L cachinnans* deden het goed deze winter, met bijvoorbeeld in februari tot c 10 in de Delta Schuitenbeek bij Nijkerk, Gelderland, in januari maximaal acht in de stad Groningen, Groningen, en eind februari acht bij Borgharen, Limburg. **Grote Burgemeesters** *L hyperboreus* verbleven tot 10 januari en weer vanaf 5 februari bij Katwijk aan Zee, Zuid-Holland; van 4 tot 28 januari en weer op 27 februari (de bekende adulte) in Den Helder; op 21 januari op Texel en bij IJmuiden; op 12 februari langs de telpost IJmeerdijk, Flevoland; op 16 februari langs Scheveningen; en op 22 februari bij Noordwijk, Zuid-Holland. Een eerste-winter **Kleine Burgemeester** *L glaucoides* pleisterde vanaf 7 januari bij Scheveningen, Zuid-Holland, en een andere was op 4 februari kort ter plaatse bij Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland. Een adulte **Zwarte Zeekoet** *Cepphus grylle* in winterkleed zwom vanaf 21 januari tot in maart regelmatig in het NIOZ-haventje op Texel. Een **Kleine Alk** *Alle alle* vloog op 21 januari langs de Eemshaven en een **Papegaaiduiker** *Fratercula arctica* op 23 januari langs Camperduin.

UILEN TOT GORZEN Vooruitlopend op de volgende rubriek kan alvast melding worden gemaakt van de bijzondere vondst van een gewonde **Ruigpootuil** *Aegolius funereus* op 7 maart bij Belfeld; dit is het eerste geval voor Limburg. De **Middelste Bonte Specht** *Dendrocopos medius* lijkt met een opmerkelijke opmars bezig. In Limburg zijn inmiddels tot begin maart 50 locaties bekend geworden en in Noord-Brabant al 16. Vanuit Twente is nog niet veel meer bekend dan een waarneming van vijf in De Hooge Lutte bij Oldenzaal, Overijssel. Daarnaast was er een melding op 18 februari uit de omgeving van Apeldoorn, Gelderland. De beste plek voor de steeds schaarser wordende **Kuifleeuwerik** *Galerida cristata* was Tradeport-West bij Sevenum, Limburg, waar in februari regelmatig zes tot 11 vogels werden gezien. Van in totaal vijf andere locaties werden enkelingen of hooguit tweetallen gemeld. De invasie van **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* zette stevig door met 1000-en exemplaren. In januari werden op 10-tallen plaatsen groepjes van enkele 10-tallen tot meer dan 100 gezien. In februari leken ze zich wat te concentreren, waarbij de groepen plaatselijk groeiden tot 200 of meer. De grootste groepen waren: op 6 februari 160 in Harderwijk, Gelderland, en 200 in Zwolle, Overijssel, en op 17 februari 300 in Amersfoort, Gelderland. Pas eind februari begonnen de aantallen wat af te nemen. Een landelijke telling in het weekend van 4 en 5 februari leverde 1745 exemplaren op, waarvan ongeveer een kwart in de provincie Gelderland. **Waterspreeuwen** *Cinclus cinclus* verbleven op 2 januari bij Epen, Limburg, op 11 januari in De Bol op Texel en van 31 januari tot 23 februari langs de Geul bij Wijlre, Limburg. Een exemplaar langs het Geldersch-Nierskanaal op De Hamert, Limburg, van 2 januari tot 23 februari was de eerste twitchbare **Roodbuikwaterspreeuw** *C c aquaticus* in bijna 12 jaar. Een **Cetti's Zanger** *Cettia cetti* bleef de gehele periode bij Stellendam, Zuid-Holland, en vanaf 5 februari liet zich ook weer een exemplaar horen bij Zwijndrecht, Zuid-Holland. Een **Graszanger** *Cisticola juncidis* verbleef van 5 tot 18 februari bij telpost Breskens, Zeeland, met op de laatste dag twee exemplaren. De **Braamsluiper** *Sylvia curruca* mogelijk met kenmerken van **Vale Braamsluiper** *S c halimodendri* werd de gehele periode nog gezien in de wijk Vinkhuizen in Groningen, Groningen. Nog een Braamsluiper verbleef

**166** Pontische Meeuw / Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*, eerste-winter, IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, 3 februari 2006 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)* **167** Kleine Burgemeester / Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*, eerste-winter, Scheveningen, Zuid-Holland, 24 februari 2006 *(Martijn Hammers)* **168** Roodbuikwaterspreeuw / Red-bellied Dipper *Cinclus cinclus aquaticus*, De Hamert, Limburg, 19 februari 2006 *(Ran Schols)*

**169** Braamsluiper / Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*, Vinkhuizen, Groningen, Groningen, 10 februari 2006
*(Edwin Winkel)*

**170** Kuifleeuwerik / Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, Sevenum, Limburg, 23 februari 2006
*(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

**171** Huiskraaien / House Crows *Corvus splendens*, Hoek van Holland, Zuid-Holland, 10 maart 2006 *(Renée de Kleijn & George Pieterse)* **172** Dwerggors / Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, Katwijk, Zuid-Holland, 26 februari 2006 *(René van Rossum)* **173** Witstuitbarmsijs / Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*, IJmuiden, Noord-Holland, 27 januari 2006 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

vanaf 27 januari in Leiden, Zuid-Holland. De **Pallas' Boszanger** *Phylloscopus proregulus* werd tot 2 januari nog gezien in Oosterbeek, Gelderland. De **Humes Bladkoning** *P humei* van dezelfde locatie hield het iets langer uit en bleef tot 14 januari. Een **Witkopstaartmees** *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* werd op 21 februari gefotografeerd in Den Haag, Zuid-Holland. **Notenkrakers** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* werden gemeld op 7 januari op de Strabrechtse Heide, Noord-Brabant, en 19 februari over de Grebbeberg bij Rhenen, Utrecht. Het aantal **Huiskraaien** *Corvus splendens* in Hoek van Holland, Zuid-Holland, blijft ieder jaar langzaam toenemen; op 17 februari werden hier 18 tot 20 vogels geteld. De eerste-winter **Roze Spreeuw** *Sturnus roseus* van Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, liet zich de gehele periode zien. **Witstuitbarmsijzen** *Carduelis hornemanni* bleven tot 2 januari (twee) bij Holwerd, Friesland, tot 7 januari bij Zutphen, Gelderland, en tot 5 februari in de wijk Selwerd in de stad Groningen. Daarnaast werden er nog opvallend veel nieuwe ontdekt: op 17 januari in Alphen aan den Rijn; op 18 januari in Haren, Groningen; op 27 januari bij het Leekstermeer, Groningen; vanaf 27 januari ten minste drie in IJmuiden; van 30 januari tot 12 februari bij Zuidlaren, Drenthe, met op 5 februari twee; op 31 januari en 18 februari in de wijk Beijum in Groningen; op 27 februari elders in de stad Groningen; en op 12 en 13 februari bij de Bijland, Gelderland. Twee **Witbandkruisbekken** *Loxia leucoptera* werden op 22 februari kort gezien bij de Berkenplas op Schiermonnikoog. Op 26 februari werd een **Dwerggors** *Emberiza pusilla* ontdekt bij Katwijk aan Zee; deze bleef tot 4 maart. Ruim 40 **Grauwe Gorzen** *E calandra* waren in februari aanwezig in het hamsterreservaat bij de wijk Amby bij Maastricht, Limburg.

*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*

## België

ZWANEN TOT OOIEVAARS Er werden **Wilde Zwanen** *Cygnus cygnus* waargenomen in Erpion, Hainaut (zeven); Falemprise, Namur; Kalmthout-Nieuwmoer, Antwerpen (twee); Koksijde, West-Vlaanderen; Kotem, Limburg; Brecht-Oostmalle-Sint-Lenaerts, Antwerpen (vier); aan het Lac de la Plate-Taille, Hainaut (acht); bij Maasmechelen, Limburg; Reninge, West-Vlaanderen (twee); Roly, Namur (21); Schulen, Limburg (maximaal 17) en Zonhoven, Limburg (twee). Op 8 januari verbleef een blauwe vorm **Sneeuwgans** *Anser caerulescens* in de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge, West-Vlaanderen. Een **Ross' Gans** *A rossii* werd op 4 februari gezien in Roksem, West-Vlaanderen. **Dwergganzen** *A erythropus* lieten zich vooral zien in West-Vlaanderen, en wel in Damme van 7 tot 15 januari; in Oudekapelle (twee) op 5 januari; in de IJzerbroeken te Reninge-Noordschote tussen 15 januari en 11 februari; in Stalhille op 21 januari; bij Knokke op 31 januari; en in Vlissegem op 18 februari. Uit Oost-Vlaanderen kwamen twee meldingen, bij Kieldrecht op 18 januari en bij Gentbrugge op 26 februari. Van 2 tot 12 januari vertoefde een **Roodhalsgans** *Branta ruficollis* in de omgeving van Oostkerke-Koolkerke-Dudzele, West-Vlaanderen. Van 18 januari tot 5 februari verbleef er één tussen Sint-Margriete, Oost-Vlaanderen, en Boekhoute, Oost-Vlaanderen. **Krooneenden** *Netta rufina* werden gezien in Amay, Liège (vijf); op Blokkersdijk, Antwerpen; in Duffel, Antwerpen; Gent, Oost-Vlaanderen; Harchies, Hainaut; Hofstade, Vlaams-Brabant; Mechelen, Antwerpen; Nazareth, Oost-Vlaanderen; Niel, Antwerpen; Schelle, Antwerpen; en Schoten, Antwerpen (twee). Er tekende zich een mini-invasie van **Witoogeenden** *Aythya nyroca* af met de meeste waarnemingen in de provincie Antwerpen: in Antwerpen, op Blokkersdijk en in Brecht, Broechem, Buitenland, Duffel-Lier (twee), Ekeren en Hombeek. Waarnemingen uit andere provincies kwamen uit Knokke; Harelbeke, West-Vlaanderen; Lokeren, Oost-Vlaanderen; Ploegsteert, Hainaut; Schelle; Seraing, Liège; Waasmunster, Oost-Vlaanderen; Zelzate, Oost-Vlaanderen; en Zingem, Oost-Vlaanderen. Een mannetje **Ringsnaveleend** *A collaris* in Dendermonde, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 19 februari, kon later helaas niet worden teruggevonden. Een van de twee vrouwtjes die langdurig in Noord-Brabant, Nederland, verbleven, zwom van 30 januari tot 6 februari op de Zuid-Willemsvaart bij Lozen, Limburg. De waarneming van een vrouwtje **Witkopeend** *Oxyura leucocephala* op Het Blak in Beerse, Antwerpen, op 8 januari werd pas later bekend. Op 8 februari zwom een **IJseend** *Clangula hyemalis* in de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge. Ontsnapte vrouwtjes **Kokardezaagbek** *Lophodytes cucullatus* vertoefden van 6 tot 9 januari bij Hombeek en op 4 februari bij Lozen. Bij Aalter, Oost-Vlaanderen, werd op 3 februari een mannetje **Bronskopeend** *Anas falcata* opgemerkt. Op 22 januari was er een melding van een mannetje **Amerikaanse Smient** *A americana* op het Schulensmeer. Op 14 januari dook het mannetje **Amerikaanse Wintertaling** *A carolinensis* weer op in de Damvallei in Destelbergen, Oost-Vlaanderen, en bleef daar tot in maart. Tot 9 januari zwom de juveniele **IJsduiker** *Gavia immer* nog op het Grand Large bij Nimy, Hainaut, waar tot 7 januari bovendien een **Parelduiker** *G arctica* aanwezig was. Een andere juveniele IJsduiker liet zich van 14 tot 21 januari uitstekend bekijken in de haven van Oostende, West-Vlaanderen. Op 22 januari werd hij voor het laatst opgemerkt op de Spuikom. Er werden in totaal 17 **Roodhalsfuten** *Podiceps grisegena* opgemerkt, waaronder drie in Hofstade tot 21 januari, en slechts zeven **Kuifduikers** *P auritus*. Op 4 januari foerageerde een eerste-winter **Kwak** *Nycticorax nycticorax* in de Reymeren in Merelbeke, Oost-Vlaanderen. Tot ten minste 29 januari verbleven nog tot twee **Koereigers** *Bubulcus ibis* in de IJzerbroeken tussen Woumen,

**174** Kleine Burgemeester / Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*, eerste-winter, Oostduinkerke, West-Vlaanderen, 18 december 2005 *(Diederik D'Hert)* cf Dutch Birding 28: 67, 2006

Pollinkhove en Noordschote, West-Vlaanderen; van 22 tot 25 januari werden er daar weer drie gezien. Op 17 januari was er een waarneming in Gistel-Moere, West-Vlaanderen, en op 12 februari in Mendonk, Oost-Vlaanderen. 'Hoge' aantallen **Kleine Zilverreigers** *Egretta garzetta* werden geteld op de slaapplaatsen in Het Zwin te Knokke (10 op 25 februari); in Lissewege, West-Vlaanderen (13 op 16 januari); in Sijsele, West-Vlaanderen (26 op 8 februari); in Sint-Andries, West-Vlaanderen (14 op 11 februari); bij Sint-Kruis, West-Vlaanderen (29 op 4 februari); bij Snellegem, West-Vlaanderen (zes op 11 februari); en in Woumen (11 op 18 februari). Langs de kust waren verder de klassieke verspreide waarnemingen met onder meer acht in de IJzermonding in Nieuwpoort, West-Vlaanderen, op 6 januari. In het binnenland was de soort op c 12 locaties aanwezig, waaronder acht in Hensies op 14 januari. De grootste concentraties **Grote Zilverreiger** *Casmerodius albus* werden aangetroffen in Hensies (maximaal 29 op 6 januari); in Freux, Luxembourg (zeven op 15 januari); in het Schulensbroek (maximaal 18 op 7 januari); Verrebroek, Oost-Vlaanderen (zes op 29 januari); Oud-Heverlee, Vlaams-Brabant (zeven op 22 januari); Roly (zeven op 25 januari); Zolder, Limburg (10 op 8 februari); en Zonhoven (zes op 16 januari). Op c 70 plaatsen waren er waarnemingen van één of enkele exemplaren. Hier en daar overwinterden kleine groepjes (meestal geringde) **Ooievaars** *Ciconia ciconia* (zoals vijf bij Bornem, Antwerpen, op 2 januari en acht bij Vlierzele, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 17 januari). Op 19 februari trok er één over Blokkersdijk. Vanaf 24 februari kwam de trek echt op gang met groepjes van vier, zes en acht vogels over respectievelijk Viersel, Antwerpen, Relegem-Asse, Vlaams-Brabant, en Gent. Op 26 februari trokken er 16 over Mechelen.

WOUWEN TOT UILEN Een juveniele **Rode Wouw** *Milvus milvus* overwinterde op de grens van Lier en Boechout, Antwerpen. In Wallonië overwinterden er exemplaren in Aische-en-Refail, Namur; Habay-la-Neuve, Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Flamisoul, Luxembourg; en Mont de l'Enclus, Hainaut. Vanaf 15 februari kwam de trek op gang en volgden nog 15 waarnemingen in Vlaanderen en 30 in Wallonië. Het neerschieten van twee vogels in Vlaanderen zorgde voor de nodige verontwaardiging en paste in een ware golf van afschot en vergiftiging van roofvogels! De juveniele **Ruigpootbuizerd** *Buteo lagopus* bleef tot 20 januari in Verrebroek en de adulte werd daar nog tot 19 februari waargenomen. Op 26 februari joeg er één bij Berlare, Oost-Vlaanderen. Een ontsnapte **Sakervalk** *Falco cherrug* (of 'look-alike') zat op 5 januari op het strand van Blankenberge, West-Vlaanderen. Een mogelijke juveniele **Toendraslechtvalk** *F peregrinus calidus* pleisterde op 19 februari bij Sint Jan in Eremo, Oost-Vlaanderen. De **Kraanvogel** *Grus grus* bleef nog tot ten minste 5 januari in De Brakeleer in Oud-Turnhout, Antwerpen, en werd nadien nog verschillende malen in Nederland opgemerkt. Op 29 januari verbleven er nog steeds vier in de IJzerbroeken. In januari kende Wallonië vijf waar-

nemingen met meer dan 100 op 23 januari. Twee exemplaren pleisterden half februari bij Bree, Limburg. Tussen 16 en 25 februari trokken vele 100en over Wallonië met als piek c 300 over La Roche, Luxembourg, op 21 februari. In Vlaanderen werd van 19 tot 25 februari lichte trek opgemerkt met waarnemingen in Honsem, Vlaams-Brabant (19); Poederlee, Antwerpen (twee); en Sijsele (twee). Op 26 februari pleisterden er 22 bij Lozer, Oost-Vlaanderen. Er werden in totaal 21 **Zwartkopmeeuwen** *Larus melanocephalus* waargenomen, meer dan in de doorsnee winter. Op 5 en 7 januari en op 11 februari werd op de Callemoeie in Nazareth, Oost-Vlaanderen, een adulte **Ringsnavelmeeuw** *L delawarensis* ontwaard tussen de 1000en meeuwen op de voorverzamelplaats. Op 25 januari was er een waarneming op het Sifferdok bij Gent. De eerste-winter **Kleine Burgemeester** *L glaucoides* met enkele kenmerken die kunnen duiden op een Kumliens Meeuw *L g kumlieni*, die in november en december in Oostduinkerke, West-Vlaanderen, werd gezien, verscheen op 22 januari kortstondig op het strand van Oostende. De adulte **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* van Oostende bleef tot ten minste 31 januari. Op 16 januari was een eerste-winter aanwezig in de Gentse Kanaalzone bij Sint-Kruis-Winkel, Oost-Vlaanderen, en een derde-winter dook op 30 januari op bij Oostduinkerke. Op 21 januari trok een **Papegaaiduiker** *Fratercula arctica* langs De Panne, West-Vlaanderen. Er werden slechts vijf waarnemingen van **Velduilen** *Asio flammeus* doorgegeven.

HOPPEN TOT GORZEN Op 3 en 4 januari foerageerde een **Hop** *Upupa epops* op het industrieterrein van Deerlijk, West-Vlaanderen. **Middelste Bonte Spechten** *Dendrocopos medius* brachten een succesnummer en overrompelden Vlaanderen. Er waren waarnemingen in Ardooie, West-Vlaanderen; De Panne; Ename, Oost-Vlaanderen; Galmaarden, Oost-Vlaanderen; Geraardsbergen, Oost-Vlaanderen; Gierle, Antwerpen; Kanne, Limburg; Lubbeek, Vlaams-Brabant; Mater, Oost-Vlaanderen; Ronse, Oost-Vlaanderen; en Schilde, Antwerpen. **Strandleeuweriken** *Eremophila alpestris* waren schaars met drie exemplaren in De Panne op 4 januari en maximaal 10 gedurende de hele periode in Het Zwin. De **Grote Pieper** *Anthus richardi* in de IJzermonding in Nieuwpoort werd op 8 januari voor het laatst gezien. Op 21 januari bleek de **Mongoolse Pieper** *A godlewskii* nog steeds bij Turnhout, Antwerpen, te verblijven. Er werden in totaal 25 **Rouwkwikstaarten** *Motacilla yarrellii* opgemerkt, met zes in Fleurus op 13 februari en acht in Focant op 26 februari. **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* waren weer op veel plaatsen te zien, met de volgende totalen per provincie: West-Vlaanderen 23, Oost-Vlaanderen 20, Hainaut nul, Antwerpen 177, Vlaams-Brabant drie, Brabant-Wallon 16, Limburg 211, Namur 15, Liège 61 en Luxembourg zeven. De grootste groep telde 62 in Hasselt, Limburg. De waarneming van een **Waterspreeuw** *Cinclus cinclus* in Merksplas op 27 januari raakte te laat bekend. Op vijf plaatsen werden in totaal nog c 13 **Cetti's Zangers** *Cettia cetti* opgemerkt. In de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge overwinterden ten minste twee **Graszangers** *Cisticola juncidis*. Verrassend was de aanwezigheid van een zingend exemplaar in Roly op 25 en 26 januari. In Obourg, Hainaut, werd op 12 januari een **Braamsluiper** *Sylvia curruca* gezien en een dag later was er één in Sint-Laureins, Oost-Vlaanderen. Van 13 januari tot 7 februari bezocht een **Witkopstaartmees** *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* een voedertafel in Zelzate, Oost-Vlaanderen, en op 22 januari werden er vier opgemerkt in Koolkerke. Een **Buidelmees** *Remiz pendulinus* liet zich op 28 januari bekijken in Bokrijk bij Genk. **Klapeksters** *Lanius excubitor* verbleven op het Groot Schietveld in Brecht (de hele periode maximaal vier), in Maasmechelen (2 tot 14 januari), Oud-Heverlee (tot 8 januari), in het Grenspark in Essen (de hele periode maximaal drie), in Bree (15 januari), in Lommel (22 januari), in Zonhoven (23 tot 26 januari), in Sint-Agatha-Rode, Vlaams-Brabant (12 februari), in Schaffen, Vlaams-Brabant (19 februari) en in Beverlo, Limburg, en Neeroeteren, Limburg (24 februari). Wallonië deed daar nog eens 25 exemplaren bij met alleen al bij Marche-en-Famenne, Luxembourg, zeven. De klassieke twee **Bonte Kraaien** *Corvus cornix* overwinterden nog in Het Zwin en op 7 januari verbleef er één bij Doel, Oost-Vlaanderen, en op 15 januari één in Doornzele. Op 21 januari vloog een **Raaf** *C corax* over Duffel. Een mannetje **Grote Kruisbek** *Loxia pytyopsittacus* liet zich op 24 februari bekijken in Beverlo. Hier en daar waren langdurig groepjes **Noordse Goudvinken** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula pyrrhula* met de inmiddels bekende trompetroep aanwezig. De grootste concentratie telde 29 in Bonheiden, Antwerpen, op 7 januari. Nog indrukwekkender was het aantal **Appelvinken** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* dat tegen het voorjaar elkaars gezelschap opzocht. De grootste groepen zaten in de Blaarmeersen in Gent (maximaal 52 op 18 februari) en in Mortsel (maximaal 30 op 19 februari). In de Baai van Heist werden maximaal nog 106 **Sneeuwgorzen** *Plectrophenax nivalis* geteld op 8 januari. Verrassend was het opduiken van een mannetje **Cirlgors** *Emberiza cirlus* in Wommelgem, Antwerpen, van 10 tot 19 februari; echter, al snel bleek deze vogel te zijn voorzien van een rode kleurring.

De hulp van al diegenen die (hun) waarnemingen inspraken op de Natuurpunt-Vogellijn was hier onontbeerlijk. De Natuurpunt-Vogellijn is alleen vanuit België bereikbaar op het nummer 0900-00194 (EUR 0.45/min), de Natuurpunt-Inspreeklijn is te bereiken op 0800-11194 (gratis). De Waalse gegevens werden in hoofdzaak geput uit de AVES-website.

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

# DB Actueel

**New species of parakeet** Most members of the Neotropical parakeet genus *Aratinga* have a predominantly green plumage. Parakeets of the Sun Parakeet *A solstitialis* species group, however, have bright yellow and orange colours on head and underparts. This group, also including Jandaya Parakeet *A jandaya* and Golden-capped Parakeet *A auricapillus*, occurs in dry areas in northern and central eastern South America. Sun Parakeet is known from a few localities in the Guyanas and in northern Brazil (states of Amazonas, Pará and Roraima). Comparison of specimens from Pará with birds from Roraima and the Guyanas showed considerable and consistent differences, and the Pará population has recently been described as a new species, **Sulphur-breasted Parakeet** *Aratinga pintoi* (Silveira, L F, de Lima, F C T & Höfling, E 2005. A new species of *Aratinga* parakeet (Psittaciformes: Psittacidae) from Brazil, with taxonomic remarks on the *Aratinga solstitialis* complex. Auk 122: 292-305). It is named after Olivério Mário de Oliveiro Pinto (1896-1981), who was in fact the first ornithologist to notice differences between *A pintoi* and *A solstitialis*. Diagnostic features include green mottling on the yellow crown and nape (pure golden-yellow in *solstitialis*), the green mantle and upperwing-coverts with distinct yellow suffusion and mottling (pure yellow in *solstitialis*), and the predominantly yellow underparts with pale orange restricted to flanks and belly (deep orange from throat to belly in *solstitialis*).

Sulphur-breasted Parakeet is a fairly common bird of open areas on the northern bank of the lower Amazon river in the state of Pará. Specimens of the new species have been present in collections at least from the beginning of the 20th century. One of the reasons that it took so long to be recognized as a separate species is that the specimens were long considered to be juvenile Sun Parakeets or hybrids between Sun and Jandaya Parakeet. On the other hand, specimens of both Sun and Sulphur-breasted appeared to be scarce in collections. Interestingly, collections in North America and Europe hold mainly Sun Parakeets, whereas the Brazilian collections hold almost exclusively Sulphur-breasted Parakeets. André J van Loon

**New species of scimitar-babbler** The genus *Jabouilleia* was long considered a monotypic genus within the Timalidae, the only representative being Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler *J danjoui* from Vietnam and Laos. Recently, a new species of *Jabouilleia* has been described from northern Myanmar (Burma) (Rappole, J H, Renner, S C, Shwe, N M & Sweet, P R 2005. A new species of scimitar-babbler (Timalidae: *Jabouilleia*) from the sub-Himalayan region of Myanmar. Auk 122: 1064-1069). In February 2004, an expedition of representatives from the Myanmar Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division and the Smithsonian National Zoological Park's Conservation and Research Center visited Naung Mung on the Nam Tisang river in the extreme north of Kachin, Myanmar. This town is located at an elevation of 540 m in the sub-Himalayan region of the country, 118 km south of the Tibetan border and 53 km west of the border with Yunnan, China. The purpose of the trip was to make an inventory of the poorly known avifauna of the premontane temperate rainforest habitat. On 6 February 2004, the expedition members captured two female scimitar-babblers that appeared to be representatives of the genus *Jabouilleia*. Two days later, an additional female was captured in the same area. These were the first records for *Jabouilleia* from Myanmar and subsequent investigation showed that these specimens belonged to a previously undescribed species. The new species was named **Naung Mung Scimitar-Babbler** *Jabouilleia naungmungensis* after the locality where it was captured. The number of known species within the genus may soon rise to three because another new *Jabouilleia* species from northern Vietnam is expected to be published in due time.

Naung Mung Scimitar-Babbler has the long, curved bill, long legs, toes and nails and relatively short tail and wings found in Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler. It differs from Short-tailed by its longer bill and a single black malar stripe. The new species' habitat is presumed to be limited to the premontane rain forests of northern Myanmar, but similar habitats may extend westward into regions of Myanmar and Assam, India, and to the east into Yunnan, China, although remaining suitable habitat there may be hard to find. Kachin is a restricted area and permits for visits are hard to obtain.

This discovery further documents the region's remarkable biodiversity and has implications for the conservation value of the area, which is presently unprotected. In this area, scientists have discovered a new species of deer, a new monkey, and several new species of plants, amphibians and reptiles, all within the past decade. Enno B Ebels

**Again new species of tapaculo** Most members of the species rich (c 40) Neotropical tapaculo genus *Scytalopus* occur in the Andes and adjacent areas. In southeastern Brazil, only two species groups occur with, respectively, two and three named species so far. Field (morphology and vocalizations) and museum studies revealed that in one of these groups, some populations usually considered to belong to Mouse-coloured Tapaculo *S speluncae* appeared to represent an unknown species, which was recently described as **Planalto Tapaculo** *Scytalopus pachecoi* (Maurício, G N 2005. Taxonomy of southern populations in the *Scytalopus speluncae* group, with description of a new species and remarks on the systematics and biogeography of the complex (Passeriformes: Rhinocryptidae). Ararajuba 13: 7-28). The main plumage characteristic is the black and buff flank barring in *all* ages (barring only

present in juvenile, absent in adult *speluncae*). Furthermore, it has distinct vocalizations, including a clearly slow-paced song and a unique song type which accelerates at the end ito a thrill. *S pachecoi* is named after the Brazilian ornithologist José Fernando Pacheco.

The new species occurs in three distinct areas: Serro do Sudeste, southern Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; Misiones province, north-eastern Argentina, and adjacent areas in Brazil; and the highest parts of the plateau (Planalto) of north-eastern Rio Grande do Sul and adjacent south-eastern Santa Catarina, Brazil. Although the species has a rather small and disjunct distribution, it is not rare and not in danger of extinction, since it occurs in both primary and secondary forests, and is apparently even more numerous in the latter.

It is expected that the continuing research in this south-eastern *Scytalopus* group will reveal further new species. André J van Loon

# Aankondigingen & verzoeken

**Lars Svenssons *Identification guide to European passerines*** De British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) kondigt aan dat de vierde (groene) editie van Lars Svenssons 'ringersbijbel' *Identification guide to European passerines* (1992) als ongewijzigde herdruk sinds 2005 opnieuw beschikbaar is. Het boek is voor iedere vogelringer in Europa essentieel om leeftijd en geslacht van 229 zangvogel(onder)soorten te bepalen. Vele van de vermelde handkenmerken zijn dankzij moderne optische hulpmiddelen ook voor andere vogelaars dan ringers van belang. Aan een nieuwe, vijfde editie wordt weliswaar gewerkt maar die kan nog jaren op zich laten wachten. De herdruk van de vierde editie is bij de BTO te verkrijgen per e-mail (sales@bto.org) of via Chris Morley, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, Engeland, telefoon +44-1842750050.

**Lars Svensson's *Identification guide to European passerines*** The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) announces the availability of reprints made in 2005 of the fourth (green) edition of Lars Svensson's *Identification guide to European passerines* (1992). Svensson's guide has been an absolute essential in every ringer's box for decades and details the characteristics used in determining the age and sex of 229 European species and subspecies. With recent advances in optics, modern birders now also have the opportunity to see many features that were once only seen in the hand by ringers. A new, fifth, edition of the guide is in preparation but that may take several years. The reprint of the fourth edition is available from the BTO by e-mail (sales@bto.org) or via Chris Morley, BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, England, telephone +44-1842750050.

**Jaaroverzichten 2005 op dvd** Op de Dutch Birding-vogeldag op 4 februari 2006 werd traditiegetrouw het *Dutch Birding jaaroverzicht 2005* gepresenteerd, ditmaal alleen op dvd. Het overzicht bevat 120 min met opnames van 68 soorten, waaronder één nieuwe voor Nederland, de Killdeerplevier *Charadrius vociferus* van de Rottige Meente, Friesland/Overijssel. Verder biedt de dvd opnames van veel andere hoogtepunten van 2005, zoals de Steppekiekendief *Circus macrourus* van Middelburg, Zeeland, de Woestijnvink *Bucanetes githagineus* van de Eemshaven, Groningen, de Roodkeelstrandloper *Calidris ruficollis* en Grijze Strandloper *C pusilla* van het Wagejot op Texel, Noord-Holland, de Scharrelaar *Coracias garrulus* van Texel, de Schreeuwarend *Aquila pomarina* van Walcheren, Zeeland, de Roodoogvireo *Vireo olivaceus* van Westkapelle, Zeeland, de Sperweruil *Surnia ulula* van Westerbork, Drenthe, en drie van de in totaal negen in 2005 waargenomen Woestijntapuiten *Oenanthe deserti*. Daarnaast biedt het overzicht fraaie of opmerkelijke opnamen van gewonere soorten (waaronder zelden op video vastgelegde zeldzaamheden als Kleinst Waterhoen *Porzana pusilla* en Noordse Nachtegaal *Luscinia luscinia*) en een aantal bewezen of vermeende escapes, zoals de Oeraluil *Strix uralensis* van Enkhuizen, Noord-Holland, de Japanse Pestvogel *Bombycilla japonica* van Wageningen, Gelderland, en de veelbesproken Daurische Spreeuw *Sturnus sturninus* van Vlieland, Friesland. Verder krijgt de kijker enkele vogels te zien waarvan de determinatie of aanvaarding nog niet rond is, zoals de vermeende Kamtsjatkastormmeeuw *Larus canus kamtschatschensis* van Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland (indien aanvaard de eerste voor de WP) en de Mongoolse Pieper *Anthus godlewskii* van de Eemshaven). Net als bij de editie van 2004 zijn er enkele opnames van vogels in de hand van het ringstation in Castricum, Noord-Holland. Het commentaar is op inmiddels vertrouwde wijze verzorgd en ingesproken door Max Berlijn. Het gesuggereerde vertrek of zelfs overlijden van de Roze Spreeuw *S roseus* van Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, werd door de vogel zelf gelogenstraft (hij was in maart 2006 nog steeds aanwezig) maar afgezien van zo'n slippertje biedt het commentaar veel leerzame informatie over de herkenning en status van de getoonde soorten. De meeste opnames zijn gemaakt door Marc Plomp, met aanvullende opnames van 11 andere videografen. Net als bij de vorige editie zijn bijna alle foto's die in 2005 op de DBA-website (www.dutchbirding.nl) hebben gestaan op de dvd geplaatst, in totaal meer dan 500.

Ook dit jaar heeft Leo Boon van Cursorius een jaar-

overzicht op dvd uitgebracht. In totaal gaat het om ruim 40 opnamen, op twee na allemaal van Leo zelf. Het commentaar bij de beelden is net als vorig jaar verzorgd en ingesproken door Roy Slaterus. De speelduur van deze dubbel-dvd is met 135 min langer dan van het andere overzicht en het aantal opnames is aanzienlijk kleiner; daardoor is het commentaar bij iedere opname aanmerkelijk uitgebreider. Vanzelfsprekend is de overlap in het aantal zeldzame soorten dat op beide overzichten figureert groot maar er zijn wel enkele verschillen. Zo presenteert Leo opnamen van de Monniksgier *Aegypius monachus* ('Carmen') bij Beers, Noord-Brabant, de Bronskopeend *Anas falcata* van Nijkerk, Gelderland, de Kleine Geelpootruiter *Tringa flavipes* van Morriaanshoofd, Zeeland, en de Aziatische Roodborsttapuit *Saxicola maurus* van Den Haag, Zuid-Holland. Daarentegen ontbreken in zijn overzicht bijvoorbeeld de Woestijnplevier *Charadrius leschenaultii* van Harlingen, Friesland, de eerdergenoemde Woestijnvink en Roodkeelstrandloper, de teruggekeerde Grote Tafeleend *Aythya valisineria* van Castricum en de Ringsnaveleend(en) *A collaris* van Budel-Dorplein, Noord-Brabant. Overige verschillen zijn vooral te vinden bij de minder zeldzame soorten waarvan een groter aantal op het andere overzicht staat. Naast videobeelden bevat de dvd ook 188 foto's van meer dan 80 schaarse en zeldzame vogels; hiervoor is materiaal van Leo zelf en van een select aantal andere fotografen gebruikt.

Het *Dutch Birding jaaroverzicht 2005* is te bestellen door het overmaken van EUR 25.00 (EUR 30.00 voor België) op rekening 336357869 ten name van Plomp Digital Video te Linschoten, onder vermelding van 'dvd 2005'. Het *Cursorius jaaroverzicht 2005* is te bestellen voor EUR 27.50 op rekening 511580444 ten name van Cursorius Photo & Video te Zandvoort, onder vermelding van 'dvd 2005'. Voor informatie, zie www.cursorius.com of neem contact op met sales@cursorius.com. ENNO B EBELS

**Year reviews 2005 on dvd** Rare and scarce birds videoed in the Netherlands in 2005 are presented in two different dvd publications. The *Dutch Birding year review 2005* offers 120 min of recordings on dvd of 68 rare and scarce birds, mostly filmed by Marc Plomp, as well as more than 500 photographs of most species. It presents nearly all rarities, including one new species, Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*, and many other highlights, such as Northern Hawk Owl *Surnia ulula*. The *Cursorius year review 2005* presents over 40 rare and scarce birds in the Netherlands on two dvd's, nearly all filmed by Leo Boon, as well as a slide show of 188 photographs. Again, nearly all noteworthy rarities from 2005 are on offer (including a few not shown in the other review, and vice versa). For ordering details of the Dutch Birding review, see www.natuurdigitaal.nl or contact info@ plompdigitalvideo.nl (ordering is also possible from the Dutch Birding website, www.dutchbirding.nl, under 'The Shop'). For ordering details of the Cursorius review, see www.cursorius.com or contact sales@cursorius.com. ENNO B EBELS

**Dvd over Nederlandse Oehoes** Mathieu Kouters volgt al ruim 10 jaar het wel en wee van de kleine maar gestaag groeiende populatie Oehoes *Bubo bubo* in Zuid-Limburg. Hij heeft in eigen beheer een dvd uitgebracht met opnamen van deze soort, waarbij het bekende paar van de St Pietersberg bij Maastricht een broedseizoen lang gevolgd wordt. In de beelden en het commentaar wordt verder ingegaan op zaken als biotoop, (broed)gedrag en de uitbreiding van de broedgebieden in aangrenzende delen van Duitsland. Ook bevat de dvd enkele vraaggesprekken met Oehoeonderzoeker Gejo Wassink uit Lievelde in de Achterhoek, Gelderland (waar Oehoes – in tegenstelling tot in Limburg – in bomen broeden). De doelstelling van deze uitgave is om op zo groot mogelijke schaal mensen laten genieten van 10 jaar lang Oehoes in Nederland. De dvd *De Oehoe, koningsuil terug in Nederland* is geheel vrij van rechten en mag zonder beperking door iedereen die betrokken is bij natuurbescherming, -educatie of -observatie worden gekopieerd. Vogelaars die geïnteresseerd zijn in een kopie van de dvd kunnen voor meer informatie een bericht sturen naar editors@dutchbirding.nl. REDACTIE

**Photographs of nightjars and related birds requested** For a new photoguide to nightjars and related birds of the world that is currently in production, photographs of all species of nightjar Caprimulgidae, frogmouth Podargidae, potoo Nyctibiidae and owlet-nightjar Aegothelidae are needed. Proceeds from the book are to go to BirdLife International. Please contact Nigel Cleere, 2 Hawthorn House, Roundfields, Upper Bucklebury, Berkshire RG7 6RQ, UK, e-mail cleere@churr.freeserve.co.uk.

# DBA-nieuws

**Dutch Birding-vogeldag op 4 februari 2006** Op de Dutch Birding-vogeldag op 4 februari 2006 waren meer bezoekers dan in voorgaande jaren, maar door het verplaatsen van het merendeel van de stands naar de begane grond hadden die gelukkig meer ruimte en frisse lucht. Helaas kunnen we voortaan geen gebruik meer maken van deze perfecte locatie, waar we vanaf 1993 in totaal 14 keer te gast zijn geweest. De faculteit Diergeneeskunde zijn we dankbaar voor hun gastvrijheid en Roel Zwitselaar voor zijn assistentie gedurende al die jaren. Inmiddels wordt gezocht naar een vervangende locatie. Voor tips houdt het DBA-bestuur zich aanbevolen.

Onze buitenlandse gast Yann Kolbeinsson kweet zich



[*Dutch Birding 28: 130-131, 2006*]

uitstekend van zijn taak met een onderkoelde lezing over 'massatwitches' op IJsland (door een vriendenclubje van maximaal acht man) en de IJsland-specialiteiten. De mystery bird-competitie was opnieuw in de goede handen van Dick Groenendijk en Rob van Bemmelen. Er waren 30 opgaven (foto's en geluidsfragmenten). De uitslag: Ruud van Beusekom (21 goed), Pim Wolf (19), Hein Prinsen, Ruud van Dongen en Martijn Bunskoek (16). Aantrekkelijke prijzen werden beschikbaar gesteld door Lynx Edicions, Birdsounds (mp3-dvd's met vogelgeluiden uit Zuid-Amerika, vooraf uitgereikt aan de voorzitter tijdens zijn welkomstwoord), Cursorius en Natuur Digitaal. De belangstelling voor de lezing van Bas van den Boogaard en Nils van Duivendijk over Happy Island, China, was groot. De zaal kwam ruimschoots aan zijn trekken.

Erik van Winden van SOVON kwam met tal van interessante wederwaardigheden over de soorten die nu in het BSP-project zitten en van waar deze gemeld worden. De presentatie van de CDNA met aansluitend discussie werd bijgewoond door een select maar onderlegd gezelschap. Marc Argeloo deed zijn naam als Indonesiëkenner eer aan met een interessante lezing over de vogels van 'het land van de onbegrensde onmogelijkheden', waarbij de nadruk lag op de oostelijke eilanden en foto's van vogels in de hand. Op het jaaroverzicht door Wim Wiegant zit nog geen sleet. Integendeel, Wim was weer scherp en alert in zijn compacte overzicht van 2005. Het programma was dit jaar breed van opzet, waardoor nogal wat bezoekers ondanks de frisse lucht toch buiten adem raakten; een aandachtspunt voor de organisatie van volgend jaar.

In de 14 jaar dat de DBA-dag op deze locatie werd gehouden is de 'vogelaarsbeurs' uitgegroeid van een veredelde DBA-stand tot een heuse beurs, met dit jaar maar liefst 25 stands van organisaties, bedrijven en particulieren. De stands zijn daarmee een steeds belangrijker en interessanter deel van de vogeldag gaan vormen. Dit is vooral te danken aan de Vogeldag-tandem van de laatste jaren, Rob Olivier en Arjan van Egmond. Rob vindt het na acht Dutch Birding-vogeldagen welletjes geworden en stopt ermee. Vanaf deze plaats wordt hij bedankt voor zijn grote inzet. Uiteraard ook dank aan het team-Katwijk voor de assistentie dit jaar: Bas van der Burg, Menno van Duijn, Arnold Meijer en Casper Zuyderduyn.

Volgend jaar zal er zonder twijfel opnieuw een Dutch Birding-vogeldag zijn. Waar die zal worden gehouden en of dat ook weer op de eerste zaterdag van februari zal zijn, kunnen we dus nog niet zeggen. Houd u in ieder geval de aankondigingen in Dutch Birding, op de vogellijn en op de website goed in de gaten. Gijsbert van der Bent