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Voor taxonomie, volgorde en naamgeving van vogels in Dutch Birding worden de volgende overzichten aangehouden: *Dutch Birding-vogelnamen* door A B van den Berg (2008, Amsterdam; online update 2016, www.dutchbirding.nl/page.php?page_id=228) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke, Nederlandse en Engelse namen van West-Palearctische vogels); *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world* (derde editie, door E C Dickinson (redactie) 2003; vierde editie, deel 1, door E C Dickinson & J V Remsen Jr (redactie) 2013) (taxonomie en wetenschappelijke namen van overige vogels van de wereld); en *IOC world bird names 5.4* door F Gill & D Donsker (2015, www.worldbirdnames.org) (Engelse en Nederlandse namen van overige vogels in de wereld; Nederlandse namen door P Vercruijsse en A J van Loon).

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

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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.

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# Identification of Rüppell's Vulture and White-backed Vulture and vagrancy in the WP

*Guillermo Rodríguez & Javier Elorriaga*

In the past, the identification of *Gyps* vultures in Europe has traditionally been considered straightforward, since Griffon Vulture *G fulvus* was the only recorded member of this genus. This changed with the rather recent addition of two African species to the European list: Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli* (in 1992) and, more recently, White-backed Vulture *G africanus* (in 2008), both recorded for the first time in Spain. Rüppell's is now a scarce but fairly regular visitor to the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. To date, White-backed has been recorded six times in the WP (Morocco, Portugal and four in Spain) but other occurrences may have been overlooked. Both species are quite distinctive in adult plumage but separating juvenile and immature individuals can be more challenging. This is mostly due to the incomplete treatment in the identification literature of individual age-related variation, which until recently has not been comprehensively described for the three species (cf Forsman 2016).

This paper deals with the identification of Rüppell's Vulture and White-backed Vulture in a European context and we include Griffon Vulture to complete the picture. We particularly focus on the individual variation of immature plumages,

**552** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli* (left) and Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *G fulvus* (centre), Cadiz, Spain, September 2014 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait)*. This image shows an immature Rüppell's, an adult Griffon and a strikingly small vulture at right that at first glance appears to be a juvenile White-backed Vulture *G africanus* (with uniformly brown plumage). These three *Gyps* species are the focus of this paper. However, is the right-hand bird actually a White-backed? More about this tricky identification in plate 576.

**553** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, juvenile, Gibraltar, 25 June 2016 *(Stewart Finlayson)*. Note streaked plumage and relatively dark overall coloration. **554** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 10 September 2012 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait)*. Immatures are more chocolate brown than juveniles. Note block of four fresh inner primaries (p5 is growing), absence of moult in secondaries and new central pair of tail-feathers. Body patterning spotted rather than streaked.

which correspond with the most frequent age classes found among the vagrants in the WP. Our field experience with Rüppell's and White-backed comes from vagrants of West African origin at the Strait of Gibraltar, complemented with observations during different trips to Ethiopia and Senegal. The paper has to be used with care in the east of the Western Palearctic (WP) region, where a different subspecies of Rüppell's has reached Israel as a vagrant from East Africa, and where Himalayan Vulture *G himalayensis* and White-rumped Vulture *G bengalensis* occurred as vagrant in the Arabian peninsula. However, most features described here can be applied in the eastern WP as well and a brief discussion on this is offered in the last section.

Given the alarming decline that vulture populations are experiencing throughout the African continent (both Rüppell's Vulture and White-backed Vulture have been upgraded from a conservation status of 'Lower Risk/Least Concern' in 2000 to 'Critically Endangered' since 2012; BirdLife International 2015), a correct assessment of the identification criteria for hard-to-identify immature plumages is of importance not only within the WP boundaries but also for monitoring populations within the regular ranges in Africa.

**Distribution and geographical variation**

Both Rüppell's Vulture and White-backed Vulture have an Afrotropical distribution, occupying a broad belt from the southern Sahara through the Sahel region, from Senegal to Ethiopia and Somalia, and extending south to Kenya and northern Uganda (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). White-backed also occupies an apparently disjunct region in southern Africa. Rüppell's is generally associated with more arid and open landscapes, being regular in extremely arid desert areas of the Sahara, whereas White-backed is found in more wooded areas (Wacher et al 2012). Most likely as a consequence of this habitat selection, the breeding range of Rüppell's in West Africa extends north into southern Mauritania, whereas White-backed is restricted to the southern half of Senegal (Borrow & Demey 2001, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001).

Two subspecies of Rüppell's Vulture are cur-

**555** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, third plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 6 February 2011 *(Paco Guerrero Roldán)*. Primary moult has progressed and bird also shows extensive replacement in secondaries and tail.

rently recognised: nominate *G r rueppelli* occurs across most of the species distribution area while Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture *G r erlangeri* (hereafter *erlangeri*) is restricted to the Abyssinian region (northern Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia) (Gill & Donsker 2016). It is remarkable, however, that significant phenotypic variation is also found within the nominate's range; eastern birds are paler and much more densely patterned than those found in West Africa, especially adults (pers obs). No geographic variation has been described for White-backed Vulture since its split from White-rumped Vulture *G bengalensis* (also named Indian White-backed Vulture) and it is considered monotypic. Griffon Vulture has two recognised subspecies: *G f fulvus* (occupying the entire WP range, and thus the taxon of interest in this paper) and *G f fulvescens,* of which the range extends from Afghanistan to India (Gill & Donsker 2016).

**Vagrancy**

African vultures, particularly White-backed Vulture, are often found in captivity in Europe, and proven escaped individuals have been documented, eg, adult White-backed Vultures in Britain, Portugal and Spain and adult Rüppell's Vultures in, eg, Britain, Greece and the Netherlands (April 2004) (Small 2007; Enno Ebels in litt). Consequently, it is necessary to ensure that any given record in the region relates to a bird not showing signs of a history in captivity, especially when phenology and state of moult state do not fit the pattern shown by genuine vagrants from the Strait of Gibraltar.

*Rüppell's Vulture*

The presence of Rüppell's Vulture in Europe was discovered in the early 1990s, when several records occurred in southern Spain, and its occurrence north of the Sahara was considered rare and irregular until the mid-2000s (Gutiérrez 2003, Forsman 2005). Over the last decade, the number of records has increased significantly in Spain's neighbouring countries: Morocco (five records and c 15 additional reports not (yet) submitted; Patrick Bergier pers comm), Portugal (13 records; Jara et al 2011) and France (five records, all involving adult birds; CHN 2013). Recently, in May 2014, one was recorded in Israel (Dutch Birding 36: 198, plate 242, 2014). However, the majority of records still originates from Spain, where Rüppell's now occurs annually. Up to 2013, there have been 75 records representing 94 individuals (Gutiérrez et al 2010, Copete et al 2015), and around 40 more records since then which are currently under consideration. Additionally, there is a remarkable number of sightings that have not been officially reported. It is estimated that up to 20 different individuals have occurred around the Strait of Gibraltar within a single year, and a few groups of five to six birds have been recorded. Since 2015, Rüppell's is no longer considered by the Spanish rarities committee (CR/SEO).

As first proposed by Gutiérrez (2003), and later confirmed by field observations at the Strait of Gibraltar, the natural arrival of Rüppell's Vulture to western Europe results from their association with the Griffon Vultures that disperse annually in winter from the Iberian Peninsula to the African Sahel (mainly Senegal), where Rüppell's is widespread (eg, Dutch Birding 33: 395, plate 514, 2011). Rüppell's reach the Iberian Peninsula via the Strait of Gibraltar mainly from late spring to mid-summer. Once in the peninsula, they show a high mobility, and despite a significant concentration of records in the vicinity of the Strait of Gibraltar, Rüppell's has also been recorded in most major areas where Griffons occur, including the northern Atlantic coast. From late September to mid-

**556** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, old immature, Saint Louis, Senegal, January 2013 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait)*. Older birds can be similar to either second-plumage birds or more classic 'white' adults, depending on extent of patterning. Ordered moult sequence and worn p4 indicate this bird has third-generation (p1-3) and second-generation (p4-10) primaries; adults show disordered moult, alternating new and worn primaries. **557** White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *Gyps africanus,* juvenile, Yabelo, Ethiopia, 4 January 2013 *(Daniel López-Velasco)*. Note more finely streaked plumage and duller grey greater coverts than in Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli*. Note that p1 has been dropped in both wings.

**558** White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *Gyps africanus*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 7 September 2008 *(Markus Varesvuo)*. Bird showing typical moult of second-plumage birds, with fresh inner primaries. Otherwise, plumage similar to juvenile. **559** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, juvenile, Tarifa, Spain, 11 October 2013 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*. Note extremely long wings, as well as prominent and typically closed tail.

**560** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, third plumage, Tarifa, Spain, April 2015 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*. Griffon usually moults p5 during spring/early summer of second moult-cycle, in contrast to African vulture species which typically replace p5 earlier, around September, within their first moult cycle. For this reason, replaced inner primaries present gradually wear in Griffon, as opposed to Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli* and White-backed Vulture *G africanus* in which they look more uniform.

November, a remarkable occurrence of Rüppell's takes place in the Strait of Gibraltar, in association with juvenile Griffons concentrating there in large numbers before their departure to Africa. It has been documented that a majority of the Rüppell's that reach Europe successfully return to Africa (eg, Ramírez Román 2012). However, a few individuals stay into the winter.

The age-class composition of the Rüppell's Vultures in Spain is intriguing. Most individuals are in second plumage (ie, born the year before their arrival to Europe), while older individuals and juveniles are remarkably scarce. As an illustrative sample, of the 44 individuals with positive age determination recorded in Spain in the period 2011-14, three were juvenile (7%), 33 were in second plumage (75%), four were in third or fourth plumage (9%), and four were adult (9%). The explanation of this pattern is likely found in the breeding phenology of the species. According to Wacher et al (2013), Rüppell's in the Sahel breed slightly earlier (roughly one to three months) than Griffon Vultures in Spain, and most juveniles fledge in May. The return migration of Griffon in the Strait of Gibraltar is concentrated in May, with a few groups arriving from late February to early July. Accordingly, when the bulk of Griffon leaves the Sahel (presumably in mid-April), most young Rüppell's have not yet fledged. Therefore, only second-year or older Rüppell's join the groups of Griffon on their northbound migration. The occurrences of juveniles could involve extremely early fledglings that become associated with the latest migrant Griffon. This hypothesis is consistent with the observation of several fresh juvenile Rüppell's reaching Gibraltar in July (eg, Garcia & Bensusan 2006). Meanwhile, the scarce records of adult Rüppell's in Europe should be interpreted as persistent resident mature individuals, which might have originally reached Europe as immatures. This idea fits well with the proportionately higher occurrence of adults in regions further away from the Strait of Gibraltar, mostly around Griffon colonies, for example in France where most records referred to adults.

*White-backed Vulture*

There have been four records of White-backed Vulture in Spain, all near the Strait of Gibraltar, on 7 September 2008, 25 June 2009, 19 September 2011 and 17 June 2016, and single records in southern Portugal and northern Morocco (both in 2014, on 24-25 August and 25 May, respectively; cf El Kamlichi et al 2014, Godino & Machado 2015); a record of an adult in Portugal in October 2006 was accepted in Category D (cf Small 2007). All six records involved second-plumage birds. Despite the limited number of records, the emerging pattern is similar to that described for Rüppell's Vulture. However, White-backed is associated with rather forested areas, being much rarer than Rüppell's in the northern part of the Sahel and nearly absent along the edges of the Sahara desert. Due to this distribution, despite being regarded as the most abundant vulture in Africa, it is less likely to be attracted to migrant groups of Griffon Vultures, and therefore is a rarer vagrant to Europe than Rüppell's.

*Future records*

Due to the physical limitations for vultures crossing large stretches of open water (Bildstein et al 2009), their arrival in the WP from Africa is probably restricted to both extremes of the Mediterranean Sea (Strait of Gibraltar in the west and

Israel, Lebanon and Syria in the east). Once arrived, rather regular long-distance movements of immature Griffon Vultures along the Mediterranean arch are known to occur (eg, birds from the Iberian Peninsula reach central France and the Netherlands (including colour-ringed birds) and birds from the Balkan reach Israel and Italy). Therefore, there is a potential for extreme vagrancy of the African vulture species wandering in Europe together with Griffon.

Several factors may determine the future vagrancy patterns of these species. The future trends of the Griffon Vulture population in Europe and, more importantly, its migratory behaviour to Africa, may significantly influence the arrival of African species. However, the extremely rapid human-induced decline of vulture populations in West Africa will undoubtedly be the most decisive factor. Rüppell's Vulture has already disappeared from large regions and White-backed Vulture declines have exceeded 90% (Thiollay 2006). Given this trend, it seems likely that the occurrence of African vultures will decrease in the WP.

**Ageing and flight-feather moult**

Accurate age determination based on the state of moult, including plumage wear, and correct assessment of the corresponding body plumage, is crucial for a reliable identification, particularly in non-adult or tricky individuals. Ageing vultures in the field is feasible by looking at the combination of several characters that differ between age classes (eg, Duriez et al 2011). These features, summarized in table 1, provide an age classification into three major groups: juvenile, immature and full adult. In general, juveniles show a dark lanceolated ruff and pointed greater upperwing-coverts, whereas full adults show a whitish downy ruff and round-tipped wing-coverts. Immatures (ie, from the first moult onwards) and subadults gradually acquire mixed and intermediate characters. It must be noted that White-backed Vulture shows a black bill (including cere) and dark iris in all ages, while Rüppell's Vulture and Griffon Vulture gradually shift from blackish in juvenile to pale in adult. More precise ageing requires a detailed study of the moult pattern, and particularly the moult of the flight-feathers. In general terms, the three species follow the same moult sequence characteristics of large Accipitridae (cf Houston 1975, Forsman 1999, Newton 2009). Moult in Griffon and its application to ageing has been comprehensively described by Zuberogoitia et al (2013). We describe it here to provide a helpful baseline that is applicable to the African species.

Because African vultures start breeding around October-November, whereas Griffon Vultures start in January-February, birds from the same season correspond with different calendar-years. Therefore, in this paper we use the classification of plumages rather than calendar-year (as used by previous authors). In the case of Griffon, juvenile

TABLE 1 Key of ageing in *Gyps* vultures, generally applicable to all species unless otherwise stated in main text. See Duriez et al (2011) and Zuberogoitia et al (2012) for further information. White-backed Vulture *G africanus* maintains blackish iris and bill colour during adult stage. / Sleutel voor leeftijdsbepaling bij *Gyps* gieren, meestal toepasbaar op alle soorten, tenzij anders aangegeven in tekst. Zie Duriez et al (2011) en Zuberogoitia et al (2012) voor meer informatie. Witruggier *G africanus* houdt zwartachtige iris en snavel als adult.

| | **juvenile** | **immature** | **adult** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **bill** | uniform dull brownish | as juvenile but developing pale close to upper bill edge | creamy or ivory (not in White-backed) |
| **ruff** | brownish, concolorous with body-feathers | as in juvenile during first four years of life | creamy or white |
| **iris** | black | blackish until c fourth year of life | pale (not in White-backed) |
| **feather shape (especially obvious in greater coverts)** | long, narrow and pointed | after first moult, as in adult | rounder, shorter and broader than in juvenile |
| **moult** | flight-feathers jet black with uniform trailing edge | blocks of new and old feathers involving many feathers; eg, in second plumage, 3-4 inner black and 6-7 outer brownish | new (black) and old (brownish) primaries alternated, with at most 2, rarely 3, of same age in row |

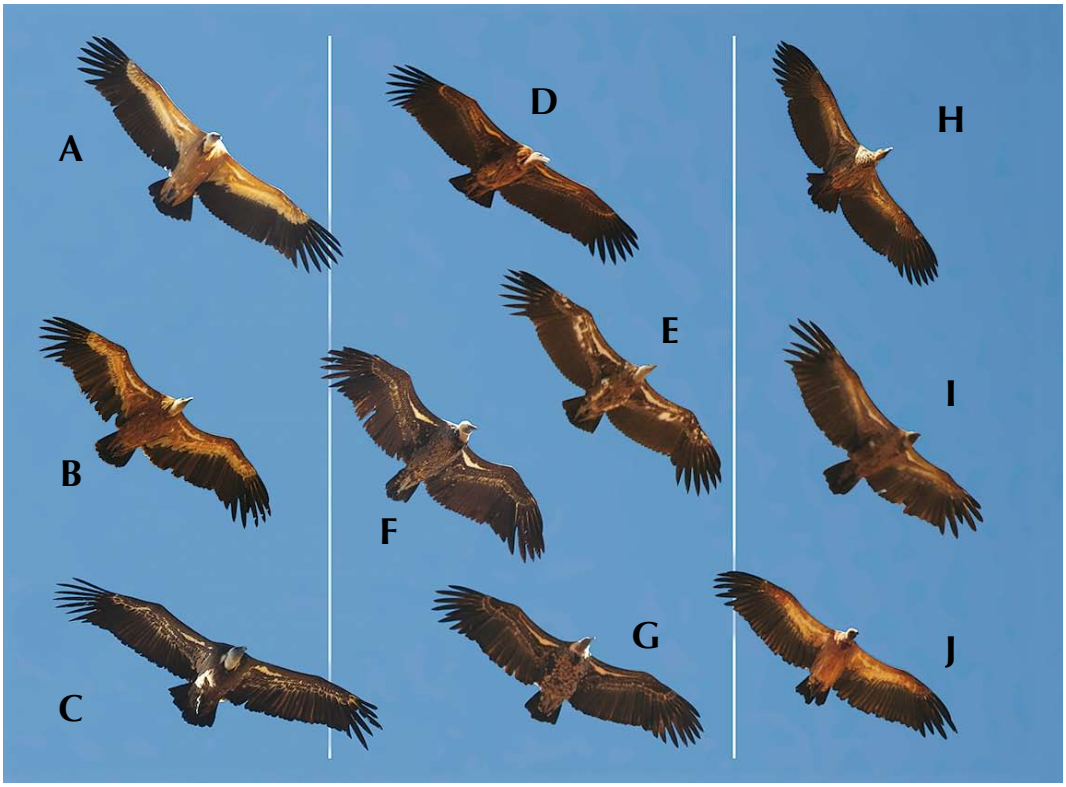



FIGURE 1 **A-C**: Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*; **D-G**: Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli* (**D-G**); and **H-J**: White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *G africanus (Guillermo Rodríguez)*. Size roughly equalized in all photographs in order to emphasize silhouette differences. Compare uniform trailing edge and distinctive silhouette of juveniles (**A**, **D**, **E** and **H**) with older birds, especially with more squared-winged adults (**C**, **G** and **J**, although the latter is old immature). In all plumages, extremely long wing of Griffon evident, and 'open hand' provides rectangular wing-shape that is especially different from that of White-backed. Differences in bulkiness also noticeable in flight, particularly eye-catching in slim White-backed. Finally, note pale 'commas' on primary coverts of fresh juvenile Rüppell's (**D**), which is much less obvious in older bird (**E**), partially due to wear.

plumage corresponds with birds without primary moult, which lasts until May of the second year of life; second plumage corresponds with birds between May of the second year and May of the third year of life, when the second moult cycle starts; and so on. The classification is analogous in the African species, although the first primary moult and transition between plumages starts in December-January in the African vultures.

*Griffon Vulture*

The first moult starts c 14 months after hatching, around May of the second calendar-year, and it is arrested by December. The moult of primaries (p1-10) starts from the innermost (p1), progressing outward in an orderly fashion. It normally involves the replacement of two to four of the innermost primaries. The moult of the secondaries starts around mid-summer, from different foci and involving just a few feathers, and indeed individuals with no secondary moult are not rare. Moult resumes by late April of the third calendar-year, continuing with the feather next to the last one moulted in the previous season. On average the next four juvenile primaries are replaced, reaching c p6-8. In some cases, p1 is also replaced within this moult. The moult of the secondaries is much more extended in this season, involving a large proportion of the feathers. By December, when the moult is arrested, most individuals still show a few retained juvenile primaries in the wing-tip and retained secondaries interspersed in the inner half of the wing. In subsequent moult cycles, again extending from late April to

**561** Three *Gyps* vultures (right): Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, adult (left), Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *G fulvus*, second plumage (centre), and White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *G africanus*, juvenile, Saint Louis, Senegal, 15 January 2013 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait*). Griffon is bulkier and more massive compared with other two species, particularly White-backed. Note characteristic black mask of White-backed due to absence of feathering around face, as well as pale greater coverts in juvenile plumage. Hooded Vulture / Kapgier *Necrosyrtes monachus* on far left. **562** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, second plumage (front), and Griffon Vulture *G fulvus*, juvenile, Tarifa, Spain, 10 June 2005 *(David Cuenca)*. These birds were seen landing after arriving directly from Africa. Compare typical long-billed impression of Rüppell's with more triangular head of Griffon. Note also extensive body moult of second-generation feathers in Rüppell's.

December, the remaining juvenile feathers, which are notably worn, are replaced and full adult plumage is acquired. Adults moult within the same period of the year; their moult does not follow an evident pattern but they show a mixture of alternating new and old feathers. Finally, migratory individuals seem to perform a faster moult during their first one or two winter seasons in Africa compared with resident birds (pers obs), making the ageing of certain birds more complicated.

*Rüppell's Vulture*

Unlike Griffon Vultures in Iberia but similar to many other Afrotropical species, non-adult Rüppell's Vultures apparently moult year-round, probably lacking a fixed moult schedule. Based on our observations in Africa, primary moult usually starts in December-January. Second-plumage Rüppell's reaching the Iberian Peninsula in spring (roughly 16-18 months old in May) have replaced the innermost one to three juvenile primaries but generally no secondaries. By September, the primary moult at this age normally has reached p4 or

**563** Rüppell's Vultures / Rüppells Gieren *Gyps rueppelli*, juvenile (below) and adult, Gadabeji, Niger, 2 August 2014 *(Thomas Rabeil/SCF)*. Some juvenile Rüppell's are pale and remarkably unstreaked, resembling Griffon Vulture *G fulvus*. Note characteristic planar head profile. **564** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, Cadiz, Spain, 13 October 2009 *(John Wright)*. This image demonstrates the huge plumage variability exhibited by Griffon, including grey, rusty, and deep brown birds.

**565** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, in second plumage, Ceuta, Spain, 16 May 2011 *(José María Cárceles/avesdeceuta)*. Compare long and more pointed juvenile feathers (though extremely worn) with pattern of second-generation feathers. Note also details of red neck skin, white down in wing, forming characteristic wing-bar, and paling of bill edge already apparent at this age. **566** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, October 2014 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*. Upperside showing classic patterned upperwing and rump. Note also typical moult pattern, although this bird showing unusually extensive moult in tail-feathers.

FIGURE 2 **A-C** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, second plumage, third plumage and juvenile, respectively, Dadia National Park, Greece, October 2003 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*; **D** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, juvenile, Mourao, Portugal, 9 June 2013 *(Alfonso Godino)*; **E** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, immature, Tarifa, Spain, 4 October 2008 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*; **F** White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *G africanus*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 25 June 2013 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*. Details of diagnostic pattern of greater coverts. Juvenile Griffon shows extensive variation, from entirely white (**A**) to almost completely black (**C**), and though even in latter they usually retain diffuse pale edge. In immatures and adults, feather, though still variable, usually white fringed with sharper transition from white to black (**B**). Note that white edge surrounds entire feather. In Rüppell's, pale fringe restricted to feather-tip (**D**) and lacking on lateral edges; it is just a spot in juveniles but becomes broader line in older birds. Remarkably, pale markings are sandy tinged, not snowy white as in Griffon. However, worn greater coverts can lack pale markings (**E**). Note also larger size of spot on innermost secondaries. This pattern produces fine, well defined line along wing, both on upperwing and underwing. Immature White-backed always exhibits dull greyish greater coverts, lacking any pale markings (**F**).

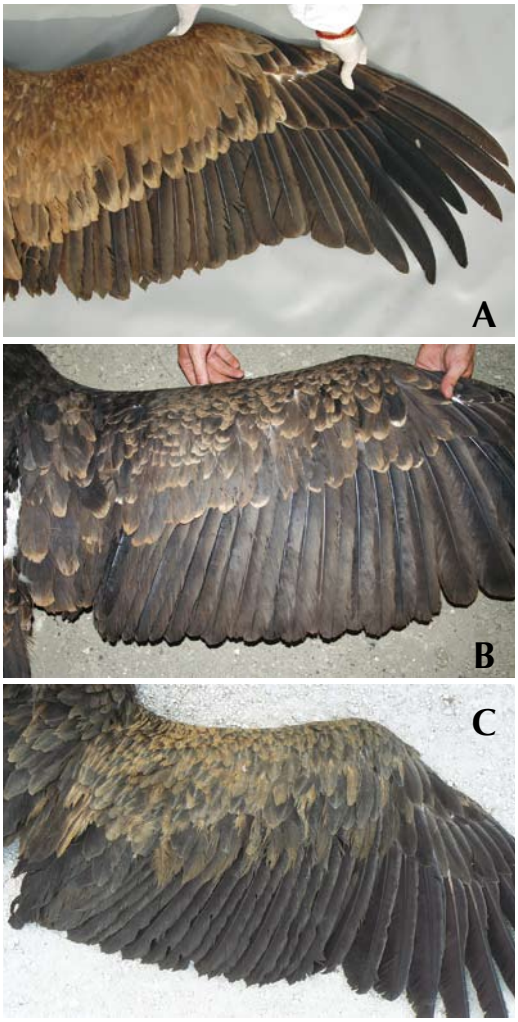



FIGURE 3 **A** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, Pais Vasco, Spain, 13 August 2005 *(Iñigo Zuberogoitia)*; **B** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, immature, Tarifa, Spain, 4 October 2008 *(Javier Elorriaga/ Birding The Strait)*; **C** White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *G africanus*, Tarifa, Spain, 25 June 2009 *(Javier Elorriaga/ Birding The Strait*). Details of upperwing. Note plain upperwing-coverts in Griffon and characteristic pattern of greater coverts, with sandy edge surrounding the feather profile. In comparison, in Rüppell's, pale markings restricted to tip and lacking on lateral feather-edges, and vary from pale line to triangular spot, conferring typical patterned appearance. Compare also feather shape, which is rounder and smaller in Rüppell's. In White-backed, although feathers are individually plain, contrast between different generations often producing slightly similar patterned appearance. Note pale colour of greater coverts.

p5 (40% and 60%, respectively, based on 20 birds; pers obs) and the moult of the secondaries starts from different foci. In third-plumage individuals in September, primary moult typically has reached p9, most of the secondaries have been replaced, and the retained juvenile feathers are heavily abraded.

*White-backed Vulture*
North of the Sahara (at the Strait of Gibraltar), the only two individuals for which the moult state was determined were two second-plumage individuals in which the moult limit reached p4 (nearly full-grown) and p5 (recently shed; see plate 558) in late June and early September, respectively. The observations fit well with the typical pattern of vagrant Rüppell's Vulture.

*Summary*
In summary, immature African vultures in Europe show an advanced moult compared with Griffon Vulture. This asynchrony may help identification; the presence of a uniform block of moulted p1-5 in autumn (around September), looking very fresh and contrasting with the faded outer primaries, strongly points to an African origin. In a second-plumage Griffon, the moult limit in September generally reaches p2-3. Some Griffon may show the moult limit reaching p5 in September as well but this would imply, in most cases, third-plumage birds. Thus, the set of moulted feathers belongs to two different annual moult cycles, in which the innermost primaries (moulted in the first cycle) may show a notably higher degree of wear than the outer feathers replaced during the current second cycle (see plate 560 and compare with plate 554 and 566).

## Species descriptions

### Griffon Vulture

*Size and structure*
Griffon Vulture is a large vulture, looking notoriously heavy and bulky both in flight and perched. It has very long wings and tends to hold the primaries well separated from each other (looking like an 'open hand'), resulting in a rectangular wing shape. Juveniles typically show a slightly rounder trailing edge to the wing than adults. In flight, the tail-base is separated from the wings, so that part of the rump is usually visible in the silhouette; the tail is often kept closed, making it quite prominent in the flying silhouette.

Griffon Vulture has a strong neck with a heavy

**567** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli,* juvenile, Tarifa, Spain, 11 September 2013 *(Javier Elorriaga/ Birding The Strait)*. Note small pale spots on greater coverts and primary coverts, otherwise generally very similar to White-backed Vulture *G africanus* and, to lesser extent, Griffon Vulture *G fulv*us. **568** White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *Gyps africanus,* second plumage, Yabelo, Ethiopia, 4 January 2013 *(Guillermo Rodríguez)*. Moulted p1 indicates age. Note completely dull, washed out greater coverts. Small head and characteristic facial pattern usually obvious.

head. It is more square headed than the other species. The front slope is pronounced and not continuous with the bill, forming an angular (concave) front profile. Nonetheless, a certain degree of sexual dimorphism in head shape exists and females show a slightly rounder head shape.

*Head and neck*

The down colour is white and it densely covers the entire neck and head but a hint of facial mask is sometimes present due to the greyish (or in adults, more bluish) skin showing through areas of absent (or less dense) down, especially behind the eyes and auriculars.

*Bare parts*

The crop is dark brown-grey. The circular bare patch at the side of the neck base (typical of the genus *Gyps*) is greyish-blue, although the colour is variable, sometimes appearing deep red or bicoloured red/blue, apparently depending on the bird's condition or stress (currently not clearly known). The tarsus is dull greyish, although it can be brown-tinged in young birds, individually variable, or affected by dirt. The bill is dark in juvenile and second plumages and develops small pale patches during the third plumage; it only becomes predominantly pale from the fourth plumage onwards. The iris colour remains dark during the first years of life but is very pale in adult birds.

*Main plumage*

Juvenile and immature plumages are similar overall in Griffon Vulture, and accordingly they are treated here together. The main differences are found in the shape of the feathers, being long and pointed in juveniles and more square in older birds, particularly in the greater coverts (these age differences likewise apply to the other species). The overall coloration is usually sandy or griffon but see 'Discussion'.

Typically, the body-feathers are plain in all plumages but some Griffon Vultures (especially juveniles) show a fine streaking. The appearance of a streaked body in these birds can lead to potential misidentifications as juvenile White-backed

**569** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, juvenile, Tarifa, Spain, 15 September 2013 *(Javier Elorriaga/ Birding The Strait)*. In few individuals, pale markings on greater coverts and primary coverts almost absent. This bird, although resembling White-backed Vulture *G africanus* in plumage, can be identified by more powerful structure. **570** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, third plumage, Skåne, Sweden, 21 July 2013 *(Tommy Holmgren)*. Griffon can be streaked in all plumages and although not as heavily marked as two other species, pattern can sometimes be confusing.

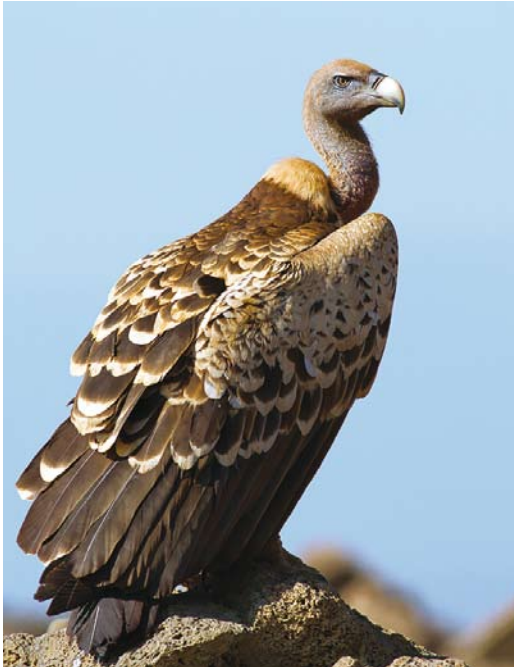
Vulture or Rüppell's Vulture (see plate 569). When present, the streaks in Griffon are usually finer than in the other species. The upper back is plain and concolorous with the body and wing, whereas the rump-feathers are black with wide pale fringes. In general, these dark feathers are developed after several moults; they are lacking in juveniles, whereas (possibly older) adults may show a completely scaled dark back. The lesser coverts and median coverts are concolorous with the body, while the primaries are contrastingly black. The pattern of the greater coverts changes significantly with age. In juveniles, the feather is pointed and pale tipped, showing a diffuse transition between dark centre and creamy fringes. In subsequent plumages, the greater coverts are round tipped with a black centre and show a pale fringe all along the feather contour, showing a more distinct contrast than in juveniles but still not markedly sharp. The pale fringe is concolorous with the lesser coverts and median coverts. The primary coverts and alula feather are plain black. The lesser coverts and median coverts are plain and concolorous with the body, while the primaries are jet black. In contrast, the greater coverts and primary coverts are bicoloured whitish-black but are very variable, ranging from uniform white (especially in juveniles) to nearly all black. In most adults and immatures, however, these feathers show a black centre with diffuse white fringe. Like the other species, Griffon lacks feathers in a small patch in the lesser to median coverts limit, close to the body, and the white down that is exposed beneath forms a short white 'wing bar'. The axillaries are plain and concolorous with the body.

## Rüppell's Vulture

*Size and structure*

Rüppell's Vulture is smaller than Griffon Vulture (roughly 30% in weight; Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001), and it generally looks slimmer and less bulky bellied. When perched, it often looks slightly humpbacked. In flight, it has a slim body but medium-long wings that are not strikingly shorter than in Griffon. The wing shows a clear narrowing

**571** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, adult (left), and White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *G africanus*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 7 September 2008 *(Markus Varesvuo)*. Direct comparison provides straightforward identification due to much larger size of Griffon. Note differences, including more delicate silhouette in White-backed, with slender wing. **572** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, juvenile (top), and Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 8 October 2010 *(Pako Zufiaur)*. Compare typical wing position of Rüppell's with closed hand pointing backwards with squarer wing and massive body of Griffon. **573** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, adult (top), and Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, adult, Tarifa, Spain, 28 October 2013 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait)*. In adult plumages, differences are generally less accentuated, although note shorter wings of Rüppell's.



**574** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus,* adult, Tarifa, Spain, 27 February 2015 *(Fernando Goytre)*. Example of 'scaled' Griffon, showing second line of pale-fringed wing-coverts. Back also abnormally dark and particularly streaked below. Compare with Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli erlangeri* in plate 575, noting especially differences in pattern of scaled greater coverts and median coverts. **575** Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture / Abessijnse Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli erlangeri*, adult, Awash, Ethiopia, 11 November 2012 *(Fran Trabalon)*

from the arm to the hand and birds tend to soar with the hand held closed, so that the outer primaries are not well-marked and when gliding are typically oriented backward. This position produces a rounded wing tip in distant views. Adults show a more square-winged silhouette than young birds. Compared with Griffon, Rüppell's has an apparently shorter distance between the tail and wing-base, so that in flight the base of the trailing wing edge and the outermost tail-feather overlap. They also tend to hold their tail open, making it look less prominent in the silhouette than in Griffon and resulting in a 'short-tailed' impression. These differences in size and structure separating Griffon from the other two species are, however, rather subtle and require some experience (see figure 1).

Rüppell's Vulture has a flat head profile with a rather even transition between the bill and front slope. This is compounded with the comparatively slender bill to produce an accentuated long-billed impression (as shown in plate 562).

*Bare parts*

The crop is blackish, similar to White-backed Vulture but darker on average than in Griffon Vulture. The circular bare patch is blue/greyish as in Griffon. The tarsus is dark brown, with some variation between individuals; it is not a reliable characteristic for separating Rüppell's Vulture from Griffon (but see White-backed). The neck skin is brownish around the head and strikingly deep red on the lower part of the neck. The down colour is white. The bill tends to become pale at an earlier age than in Griffon, with a few second-plumage birds already showing pale patches, although more typically the pale regions are developed during the third plumage.

*Juvenile plumage*

Juveniles are profusely streaked and brown overall, usually darker in colour than Griffon Vulture and often slightly rufous-tinged. They have dense brown ruff, darker than the other two species, as well as a black bill and eye.

The entire body is thickly streaked, with streaks

formed by the creamy shaft and centre of the feather contrasting with the darker surrounding colour. Around the feather-tip, the pale colour also extends to the lateral fringes, producing an 'arrow' or 'anchor' pattern, which is particularly visible in the undertail-coverts. The back and rump are concolorous with the body and upperwing. Here, the streaking is less contrasting or even absent. On the upperwing, the lesser and median coverts are concolorous with the body-feathers but are plain or rarely finely streaked. The primaries and secondaries are blackish, creating only a moderate contrast with the wing-coverts. The pointed and dark brown greater coverts are pale tipped (typically creamy or sandy). On the underwing, the lesser coverts are concolorous with the body-feathers but very finely streaked. The median coverts are similar but with thicker streaks and feather-tip, and are slightly darker. The greater coverts are dark brown and unstreaked but show a small white spot at the tip. This spot is much larger in the primary coverts, sometimes forming a 'comma' like in Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*. The white bar in the wing is broader than in the other species. The axillaries are long and darker than the surrounding feathers, and therefore the pale 'anchor' pattern is usually more contrasting and well defined.

*Immature plumages*

After the first body moult, Rüppell's Vulture loses its streaked juvenile plumage and immatures are dark and spotted overall. When second-plumage individuals arrive in Europe in late spring, they are usually finishing this first moult of the body-feathers. In subsequent moults, the spots become increasingly larger and some mature adults have a heavily patterned plumage. A dark brown ruff is maintained for at least the first three plumages.

In addition to having a squarer shape than juvenile feathers, the second-generation body-feathers maintain a pale central line but with a broader spotted tip, so that the pattern now resembles a 'T' rather than an anchor. They look 'streaked and spotted' overall (see plate 565). In third-plumage individuals, the central streak tends to disappear and the pale tip becomes larger, conferring the characteristic patterned appearance of the species. In subsequent moults, the pale white tips increase gradually in size, eventually acquiring the large V-shaped spots of adults. The feathers of the back and rump are blackish, sometimes contrasting with the paler wing. They also show the characteristic V-shaped pale tip, contrasting sharply with the rest of the feather. The feathers of the uppertail-coverts (except of the last line) are strikingly small and round, resulting in a high feather density (eg, plate 566) that differs from Griffon Vulture. On the upperwing, all wing-coverts are dark centered with a sandy V-shaped tip and they are also smaller and rounder than in Griffon. On the lesser coverts, the pale tip is dominant and only the pale area of the feather is exposed; on the median coverts, it is proportionally smaller and the dark base is visible, forming a heavily scaled area. On the greater coverts and primary coverts, the pale tip is just a fine line, and the feather looks basically blackish. Unlike in Griffon, the pale fringe is restricted to the tip and invariably not present on the lateral edges (ie, it is not complete). On the underwing, the wing-coverts are concolorous with the body-feathers. The lesser coverts are plain and unstreaked. The median coverts have a thick streak and a small white tip in second-plumage birds (plate 565); in third plumage, the streak is absent and the white tip is larger. The greater coverts are darker and unstreaked and show a distinctive white tip, forming a short line on immatures due to the square feather shape, in contrast with the white spot that is on the pointed juvenile greater coverts. This line on immatures becomes thicker in subsequent moults, forming a well-defined white bar across the entire wing. The combination of dark wing-coverts and abraded brownish primaries results in a low (often unnoticeable) contrast on the underwing.

**White-backed Vulture**

In this species, there are marked differences between the young plumages (which are similar to either juvenile Rüppell's Vulture or Griffon Vulture) and adults. The characteristic white back and underwing of adults are not developed until roughly the fourth plumage.

*Size and structure*

White-backed Vulture is a small vulture, roughly 50% and 30% smaller than Griffon Vulture and Rüppell's Vulture, respectively (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). It looks slimmer and lighter than the other two species. In flight, White-backed is short-winged due to comparatively short primaries, looking more compact than Griffon or Rüppell's. The wing clearly narrows from the arm to the hand. Like Rüppell's, White-backed usually holds the hand closed, with all the outer primaries kept together and not as differentiated as in Griffon. Juveniles show a markedly rounded trailing edge to the secondaries, a feature that is likewise shared with Rüppell's but is less obvious in

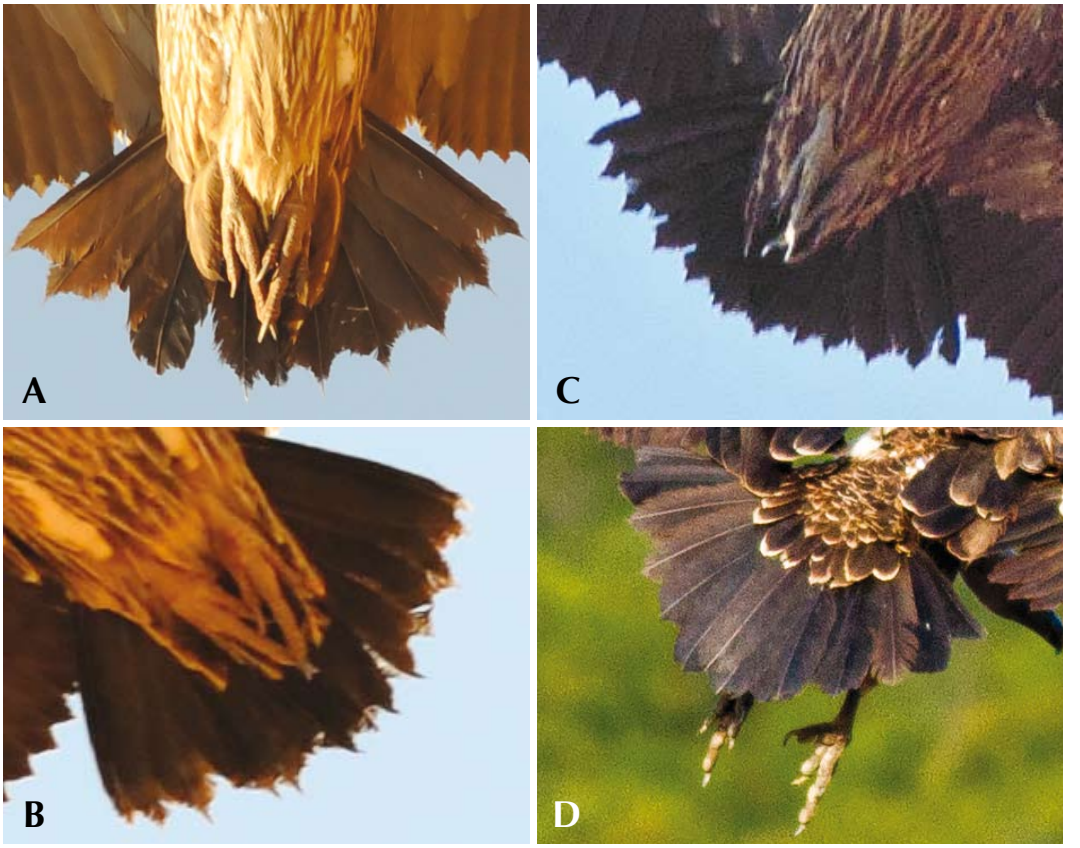



FIGURE 4 White-backed Vulture / Witruggier *Gyps africanus* (**A**) and Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli* (**B-D**). Detail of tails. White-backed has 12 tail-feathers; both Rüppell's and Griffon Vulture *G fulvus* have 14. **A**: although r2 missing in this individual and r4 broken, 11 feathers clearly visible. **B-C**: in both these Rüppell's, 13 tail-feathers can be counted; 14th feather must be hidden or moulting. **D**: 14 tail-feathers visible in this uppertail view, although one or two difficult to see and probably not visible from below.

Griffon. The neck is notably slender and less powerful than in the larger vulture species. The head has a characteristic triangular shape.

*Head and neck*
The head exhibits a conspicuous black mask due to the complete absence of down covering extending from the lore through the eye area and auriculars. Only in a few juveniles is the mask lacking or restricted to just the lore.

*Bare parts*
The crop is jet black and the circular bare patches are sometimes strikingly yellow. The black tarsus has traditionally been considered an important identification feature, compared with the greyish tarsus of the other two species (van Duivendijk 2010). We consider this feature to be of limited use and only applicable to birds with an extremely black tarsus. The actual tarsus colour is often dark greyish, and not markedly different from that of immature Rüppell's Vulture or, to a lesser extent, Griffon Vulture. The bill is short and remains black, including the cere, even in adults. The skin is dark brown or blackish, and the down colour usually looks dirty compared with the other species. It retains a dark iris colour with age.

*Juvenile plumage*
Juveniles are darker than immature and adult birds, and are often similar to or even darker than the average juvenile Rüppell's Vulture. In general, some juveniles are extremely similar to Rüppell's and their identification relies on subtle details.

The body-feathers are streaked, with streaks of intermediate width (finer than in Rüppell's Vulture and thicker than in Griffon Vulture), which are also sometimes paler than in Rüppell's. The streaks are pointed, lacking any spot or anchor at the tip and are concentrated on the belly and breast, being more diffuse on the upperparts. The back and rump are plain and slightly browner than the body-feathers and underwing. On the upperwing, the lesser and median coverts are concolorous with the body-feathers and are plain or at most finely streaked. The greater coverts are also plain and paler than in the other species, usually being only slightly darker than the median coverts and therefore contrasting with the dark brown primaries. The wing often looks tricoloured. On the underwing, the lesser and median coverts are finely streaked and concolorous with the body-feathers. The greater coverts and primary coverts are plain and have a characteristic dull appearance, giving a washed-out impression even when fresh, and lacking any pale spot. The axillaries are concolorous with the underwing-coverts. The flight-feathers are dark but often with a distinct brown tinge,

**576** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, juvenile, Tarifa, Spain, 5 September 2014 *(Yeray Seminario/Birding The Strait)*. Same bird as right bird in plate 552. In this image, pale markings on primary coverts and inner greater coverts confirm that it is runt Rüppell's but this bird would likely be misidentified as White-backed Vulture *G africanus* in more distant views. **577** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, adult (back), and Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli*, juvenile, Cadiz, Spain, 22 September 2009 *(John Wright)*. Other example of small Rüppell's, which could be difficult to separate from White-backed Vulture *G africanus* because of fine body streaking and intermediate facial pattern. Note slightly pale tipped greater coverts, although probably not marked enough to be diagnostic.

**578** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus,* adult, Tarifa, Spain, 3 September 2012 *(Alan Gilbertson)*. Bird showing large white stripes on underwing, contrasting with rather darkish plumage, causing potential confusion with Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli*. Note that white ruff indicates adult; adult Rüppell's is expected to have visible patterning. Note also typical structure with very long wings and tail and bulky body. **579** Griffon Vultures / Vale Gieren *Gyps fulvus,* adults, Castellon, Spain, 19 March 2011 *(José Luis Joanpere)*. Other example of dark adult Griffon which can lead to misidentification, emphasized here by direct comparison with paler and much larger classic Griffon.

**580** Rüppell's Vulture / Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 22 August 2013 *(Yeray Seminario/ Birding The Strait)*. Uniform bird looking similar to dark Griffon Vulture *G fulvus*; however, narrow hand, short-tailed impression and patterning on undertail-coverts when seen in detail clinch identification as Rüppell's. **581** Griffon Vulture / Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, second plumage, Tarifa, Spain, 13 October 2014 *(Javier Elorriaga/Birding The Strait)*. If not seen in flight, some birds can be difficult to separate. In this bird, relatively uniform upperwing and characteristic head shape rule out Rüppell's Vulture *G rueppelli*.

**582** Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture / Abessijnse Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli erlangeri*, juvenile, Aledeghe Plains, Ethiopia, 18 November 2012 *(Nik Borrow)*. Some juveniles are plain and uniformly sandy, resembling Griffon Vulture *G fulvus*. Note, however, typical Rüppell's pattern to greater coverts, axillaries and underwing coverts, as well as silhouette.

**583** Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture / Abessijnse Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli erlangeri*, in third plumage, Debre Libanos, Ethiopia, 6 November 2012 *(Fran Trabalon)*. This bird is steadily developing patterned body and underwing of adult but still looks uniform overall. Note characteristic white bar along wing formed by white tips of feathers of greater coverts and primary coverts.

especially compared to the jet black that is characteristic of Griffon. The white wing-bar is narrow and short.

*Immature plumages*
Second-plumage birds are paler overall than juveniles. Although they retain the contrasting streaking on the underparts, in second-generation feathers the streaks are rather blunt, not pointed as in juveniles. The streaking is, in addition, more diffuse and sandy tinged. Other plumage features remain similar to juveniles, including the underwing. Second-generation greater upperwing-coverts and flight-feathers are now black. In third plumage, it gradually acquires a sandy colour and the streaking washes out, giving an 'untidy' impression. In subsequent moults, they become increasingly uniform. The development of white feathers on the underwing, usually starting on the median coverts and the upper rump, normally takes place within the third or most commonly fourth plumage.

**Identification key**
To facilitate identification, in this section we highlight the usual impressions shown by a potential vagrant African vulture, emphasizing the key features. A systematic comparison of the important features is presented in table 2.

*Griffon Vulture versus Rüppell's Vulture*
Rüppell's Vulture's smaller size is not always striking in flight; it is more obvious on the ground but, still, there is some overlap in apparent size. When close examination is possible, differences in head shape and particularly front slope (flat or convex in Rüppell's versus angular and concave in Griffon Vulture) are important, along with the deep red skin of Rüppell's, although Griffon stained by blood can look similar. The silhouette is not very distinctive (and it requires some experience) but can be a supporting feature in certain circumstances. Juveniles, in general, are surprisingly inconspicuous in a Griffon flock, despite their heavily streaked appearance. Immatures are more evi-

dent due to their overall dark brown color and patterned upperparts. In all plumages, Rüppell's have bicolored undertail-coverts ranging from V-shaped fringes in juvenile to large white spots in adult. Pale marking is also noticeable in the spotted and dark axillaries, usually visible at large distances. The greater coverts pattern is diagnostic: in Griffon, the pure white is usually extensive, not showing a contrast with the dark feather centre, and the white surrounds the entire feather edges; in Rüppell's, the pale area is sharply defined, restricted to the feather-tip, and lacking on the lateral edges. These differences are actually valid for all patterned feathers of the wing and back.

*Rüppell's Vulture versus White-backed Vulture*
Rüppell's Vulture looks larger and bulkier but there is some size overlap with White-backed Vulture and the difference is not always notable, especially in flight. The silhouette is similar in both species, especially in juveniles. In resting birds, the combination of a black mask and triangular head in White-backed, instead of the long-billed profile of Rüppell's, is quite reliable. The main identification problem occurs with the streaked juvenile plumages. One diagnostic feature is the form of the streaks on the body-feathers (particularly the axillaries and undertail-coverts): White-backed shows just a line, lacking the 'anchor' pattern of Rüppell's. Also, the presence of a pale tip to the greater coverts, while characteristic of Rüppell's, immediately discards White-backed. The number of tail-feathers (12 in White-backed and 14 in Rüppell's), as explained in the 'Discussion' section, could be a key feature for clinching the identification of difficult individuals. Immatures are usually distinguished more easily due to the darker coloration of Rüppell's.

*Griffon Vulture versus White-backed Vulture*
Despite the strong size difference, evaluation of size is often difficult and the difference only evident when the two species are side by side. The silhouette is distinctive enough, with the slim, more fragile impression of White-backed Vulture and its narrow, closed hand contrasting with the massive body and long, square wing of Griffon Vulture. When perched, the black mask of White-backed is a prime feature but beware of Griffon that can have a faint darkish mask due to feather loss. In all juvenile and immature plumages, the presence of white marking in the greater coverts

TABLE 2 Key features for separation of Griffon *Gyps fulvus*, Rüppell's *G rueppelli* and White-backed Vulture *G africanus* in juvenile and immature plumage / Sleutelkenmerken voor onderscheid tussen Vale Gier *Gyps fulvus*, Rüppells Gier *G rueppelli* en Witruggier *G africanus* in juveniel en onvolwassen kleed

| | **Griffon Vulture** | **Rüppell's Vulture** | **White-backed Vulture** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **silhouette** | long-winged, square wings, massive body | relatively short wings, closed hand, slim body | short wings, closed hand, very slim body |
| **head** | squared, bill dark until third/fourth plumage | very long-billed, flat forehead, bill becomes pale during second/third plumage | triangular, short black bill, jet black facial mask |
| **neck skin** | blue/greyish; blue circular patches | deep red; blue circular patches | black; often yellow circular patches |
| **body-feathers (especially undertail-coverts)** | usually uniform although sometimes with fine pale streaking | broad pale streaking with pale spot at feather-tip (anchor in juveniles) | intermediate pale streaking lacking any spot at feather-tip |
| **greater coverts and primary coverts** | from white to an almost black feather, but always entirely pale fringe | black with pale tip, particularly evident in primary coverts; lacking lateral fringe | dull black with no pale marking |
| **upperwing** | plain, uniform griffon/sandy except dark greater coverts with visible pale fringe | scaled upperwing with several rows of black pale-tipped feathers (greater and median coverts) | plain, uniform sandy/brown with uniform brownish greater coverts |
| **moult (birds in September in Spain)** | second plumage: fresh p1-2/3 third plumage: fresh p5-6 | second plumage: fresh p1-5 third plumage: fresh p6-8 | second plumage: fresh p1-5 |
| **number of tail-feathers** | 14 | 14 | 12 |

or primary coverts (both on upperwing and underwing) immediately rules out White-backed. During early summer and mid-summer, Griffon in active moult often show an almost entire white underwing, reminiscent of adult White-backed.

## Discussion

### Variability of key features

*Plumage coloration*
Juvenile and immature Griffon Vultures show a considerable (and largely overlooked) variability in their overall coloration, ranging from greyish-brown to rusty or cinnamon, or even chocolate brown (plate 564). Dark brown individuals, often immatures, are frequently mistaken for immature Rüppell's Vultures. Even dark adults (especially in underexposed photographs) are sometimes misidentified as Rüppell's (plate 578). All in all, plumage colour is an eye-catching but far from diagnostic feature. Both Rüppell's and White-backed Vulture exhibit significant variation in plumage coloration as well (plate 563). Adult Rüppell's also have extensive variability in plumage pattern. Some West African individuals are largely plain brown with only a fine pale barring, giving a dark appearance overall, while on the other extreme, some heavily spotted individuals look predominantly pale.

*Greater coverts in Rüppell's Vulture*
The greater coverts pattern is a diagnostic feature in all three species. It is particularly relevant in the identification of some small looking juvenile Rüppell's Vultures. Whereas the greater coverts and primary coverts in East African Rüppell's always show a large spot at the tip, in some West African birds the pale tip is almost absent or reduced to just a small spot that is only visible with close observation (eg, plate 569), which may hinder a positive identification. The spot is usually larger on outer primary coverts and axillaries (see plate 576).

*Wing-bar*
Frequently pointed out as a diagnostic feature of Rüppell's Vulture (Svensson et al 2009, van Duivendijk 2010), the underwing-bar is actually present in all three species and is very variable, especially in Griffon Vulture, where in many individuals this feature overlaps or exceeds the amount present in the average Rüppell's Vulture (plate 578). Note that this feature also depends on the extension of moult and, as previously mentioned, Griffon in strong active moult (mainly during the summer) often show large white patches in the wing.

*Tail-feathers*
White-backed Vulture is sometimes placed together with White-rumped Vulture in a separate genus, *Pseudogyps*, because both species have only 12 tail-feathers instead of the 14 characteristic of the rest of the *Gyps* taxa. In some cases, the number of tail-feathers could be a diagnostic feature for separating White-backed from both Griffon Vulture and Rüppell's Vulture. This feature, however, must be carefully considered for a variety of reasons. First, any feather loss in Rüppell's or Griffon could be misleading and mistakenly point towards White-backed. Second, the accurate count of the tail-feathers of birds in flight is often tricky, so the total count usually gives 12-13 feathers in Rüppell's and 10-11 in White-backed. However, even in these cases, White-backed gives the impression of 'having few tail-feathers' (see figure 4). Additionally, it has been suggested that there is some individual variation, and not all vultures may fit the described number of tail-feathers (Mundy et al 1992). These authors state that 20% of White-backed diverge from the usual 12 tail-feathers, although from 12 birds analysed we have not found any bird exceeding the expected number. In general, this character should be applied with caution in the field.

### Controversial cases

*'Scaled' Griffon Vulture versus Rüppell's Vulture (plate 574-575)*
A few adult Griffon Vultures show a second line of dark, pale-fringed upperwing-coverts, in addition to the greater coverts. Sometimes, the same pattern is also observed in a few sparse lesser coverts. The last line of median coverts is completely exposed, showing a similar pattern to the greater coverts and thus giving a scaled-wing impression, resembling that of Rüppell's Vulture. Moreover, these birds also have a markedly scaled back, with striking black-centred feathers, forming a dark back contrasting with the wing. All these features make these birds quite similar to adult Rüppell's, particularly to *erlangeri*, and these Griffon have caused some online debate over birds from Spain and Israel (Gordillo 2012; http://birdingfrontiers.com/2014/11/02/ruppells-vulture-or-hybrid). Identification is not difficult if one is aware of this plumage variation, as the scaling in this plumage is restricted to one line of median coverts (rather

than more extended along the entire wing as in Rüppell's), and the pattern of the feather is also typical of Griffon, showing a diffuse pale fringe along the entire feather contour. To our knowledge, it is unclear whether scaled plumages are associated with individual variation or related to plumage development with age.

*Abyssinian Rüppell's Vulture*

The taxonomic status of Rüppell's Vultures in the Abyssinian region (Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia) is currently poorly understood. Some authors distinguish between the subspecies *erlangeri* in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, and nominate *rueppelli* in the southern part of the latter country (Ash & Atkins 2009). *Erlangeri* is usually described as paler than *rueppelli* but little is known about its actual variability. It seems that Abyssinian Rüppell's present two distinct morphs, one brownish and only partially different from birds from further west and south, and a striking pale morph which is very similar to Griffon Vulture, to the extreme that a hybrid origin has been proposed (Forsman 2016). Given the singularity of these vultures, as well as our limited experience with *erlangeri*, we just offer some brief comments as an introduction to its identification.

*Erlangeri* is, in several plumage aspects, intermediate between Griffon Vulture and nominate *rueppelli*, although structural aspects and silhouette are not appreciably different from their western counterparts. Juveniles of *erlangeri* are plain and sandy coloured, lacking any streaking, and have a plumage extremely close to Griffon (for an example of such controversial individuals, see plate 582). Adults and immatures are browner and more patterned than juveniles, although not as strikingly as in nominate *rueppelli* (plate 583). Specific plumage features such as the pattern of the greater coverts or axillaries are usually similar to those in nominate *rueppelli*.

Rüppell's Vulture vagrants to the Middle East are expected to originate from the northern area of Ethiopia or further north (eg, Eritrea, South Sudan and Sudan), where most Griffon Vultures from Eurasia winter (Ash & Atkins 2009). Hence, the aspect of potential vagrants to the Middle East is actually uncertain, and perhaps the closer resemblance of these *erlangeri* to Griffon has obscured the actual status in the region. Remarkably, the only Rüppell's recorded in Israel was quite typical and not significantly different from the Iberian vagrants (Dutch Birding 36: 198, plate 242, 2014).

*Potential hybridization in the WP*

Hybridization in the wild has never been proven within the genus *Gyps*. However, given their phylogenetic and ecological proximity and the proven cases of hybridization in captivity (McCarthy 2006), the possibility of mixed pairing between Griffon Vulture and Rüppell's Vulture, even if very unlikely, should not be disregarded, particularly in an extralimital scenario (Hubbs 1955). In this context, there are several cases in the Iberian Peninsula that could indicate a likelihood of (future) hybridization. ***1*** Between 1999 and 2007, an adult Rüppell's was regularly seen in a Griffon colony in Portas de Rodao, Portugal (Caty et al 2010). In 1999, this bird was recorded presumably incubating, although its progress was not monitored and no conspecifics were observed. Mixed pairing was therefore a possible explanation. ***2*** In 2011, an immature Rüppell's and an immature Griffon were observed twice exhibiting pairing behaviour (ie, mutual preening and neck intertwining; Elorriaga & Gutiérrez 2011) in Cádiz, Spain (video at http://tinyurl.com/z424cbo). This could be interpreted either as the prelude of pair formation or as just abnormal behaviour among immatures. ***3*** A widely discussed adult vulture photographed in Cáceres, Spain (Gordillo 2012), showed putative mixed characters. However, the characters shown were not conclusive and the explanation of an aberrant individual seems likewise acceptable.

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**Samenvatting**

Determinatie van Rüppells Gier en Witruggier en voorkomen als dwaalgast in de WP Rüppells Gier *Gyps rueppelli* verschijnt regelmatig in Zuidwest-Europa en Witruggier *G africanus* is er een aantal keren als dwaalgast vastgesteld. Hoewel van beide de determinatie en het onderscheid van Vale Gier *G fulvus* doorgaans eenvoudig is in adult kleed, kan de herkenning van juveniele en onvolwassen kleden lastig zijn.

In dit artikel wordt het voorkomen in de WP van de twee Afrikaanse gierensoorten besproken, waarbij duidelijk wordt dat vogels in het tweede kleed het vaakst voorkomen. Het betreffen waarschijnlijk dispergerende vogels die zich aansluiten bij groepen Vale Gieren tij-

dens de trek naar Europa in het voorjaar. Juveniele vormen slechts een klein percentage, waarschijnlijk omdat de meeste nog in het nest zitten op het moment dat de Vale het Afrikaanse overwinteringsgebied verlaten.

Vervolgens worden de kleden van de drie soorten beschreven met de nadruk op de belangrijke determinatiekenmerken: ***1*** Grootte & bouw: Vale Gier is het grootst, en het zwaarst gebouwd, met lange rechthoekige vleugels. Rüppells Gier en Witruggier zijn kleiner, met meer afgeronde vleugelpunten en een kortere staart; ***2*** kop: elke soort heeft een opvallende kopvorm. Rüppells toont erg 'langsnavelig', en met een verlengde kop; Witruggier en Vale hebben een meer driehoekige kop, die bij Witruggier korter en compacter eruit ziet. De kleur van de kophuid verschilt ook tussen de drie soorten, diep rood bij Rüppells, blauwachtig bij Vale en donker bij Witruggier; laatstgenoemde heeft bovendien een karakteristiek zwart masker door het ontbreken van donsveren op de kop waardoor de donkere huid zichtbaar is; ***3*** algemeen kleurpatroon: Vale is variabel van kleur maar doorgaans tamelijk egaal, zonder opvallende tekening op de onderdelen, terwijl beide Afrikaanse soorten een opvallend gestreept juveniel kleed hebben, dat bij Rüppells gevlekt wordt in opeenvolgende ruiprocessen. Er is bovendien een subtiel verschil in het streeppatroon: bij Witruggier eindigen de strepen in een scherpe punt maar bij Rüppells in een pijlvorm die zich uitstrekt naar de veerrand (vooral duidelijk op de onderstaartdekveren en okselveren; ***4*** grote bovenvleugeldekveren (diagnostisch kenmerk): bij Vale met een donker veercentrum en een zandkleurige zoom om de gehele veer, bij Rüppells zwart met een lichte (doorgaans witte) vlek aan de veertop, en bij Witruggier geheel egaal en bruinachtig; ***5*** aantal staartpennen: 14 bij Rüppells en Vale, 12 bij Witruggier, maar dit kenmerk moet met enige voorzichtigheid worden gehanteerd (verlies van veren of actieve rui kunnen gemakkelijk tot een foute telling leiden).

Ten slotte wordt Rüppells Gier van de Abyssijnse regio in Oost-Afrika besproken (*G r erlangeri*). Deze ondersoort ziet er anders uit dan westelijke vogels, veel bleker en meer lijkend op Vale Gier. Dergelijke vogels kunnen in een oostelijke context (bijvoorbeeld Israël) een determinatieprobleem vormen. De structuurkenmerken en het patroon op de bovenvleugeldekveren zijn echter vrijwel identiek aan die van nominaat *G r rueppelli.*

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# Thayers Meeuw bij Egmond en Bergen in april 2015

*Leon Edelaar & Enno B Ebels*

In het voorjaar van 2015 vonden in het kader van de nationale kustversterking langs de kust van Noord-Holland uitgebreide zandsuppletiewerkzaamheden plaats. Deze werkzaamheden trokken grote aantallen meeuwen aan die tijdens de suppleties voedsel op een presenteerblaadje kregen aangereikt. Leon Edelaar bezoekt regelmatig de Noord-Hollandse stranden op zoek naar interessante en zeldzame meeuwen. Omdat de suppleties begin april 2015 plaatsvonden bij Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland, had hij zijn 'werkgebied' tijdelijk daar geconcentreerd. Op zaterdagochtend 11 april 2015 had hij al 1000en meeuwen bekeken totdat het weer verslechterde. 's Avonds klaarde het echter op en ging de wind liggen en keerde LE terug naar het strand. De suppletiewerkzaamheden waren vrijwel afgerond en het aantal meeuwen was ten opzichte van de ochtend flink afgenomen. Na enige tijd scande LE op c 100 m afstand een groepje meeuwen; er bleek een spannende meeuw met geheel egale onderdelen en bleekgrijze handpennen tussen te staan. LE liep dichterbij en maakte enkele foto's. In vlucht zag hij een ongetekende brede staartband en duidelijk aanwezige tekening op de bovenstaartdekveren, wat duidde op een Kumliens Meeuw *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* of Thayers Meeuw *L thayeri*. Het was zaak snel te handelen want overal liepen mensen en honden, en er reden shovels rond. De vogel was op een buis geland en LE kon nu goed de tertials zien; deze deden sterk aan Thayers denken. Hij bekeek zijn foto's en stuurde een whatsapp-bericht naar enkele lokale vogelaars (die niet reageerden…). Hij ging naar huis om snel de foto's op zijn computer te laden en literatuur te raadplegen. De conclusie was: Thayers Meeuw! Hij stuurde enkele foto's aan Peter Adriaens en Mars Muusse. Een half uur later reageerde PA met de bevestiging dat het een Thayers moest zijn.

De volgende ochtend vroeg waren langs de vloedlijn enorme groepen van in totaal 10 000en meeuwen aanwezig – en slechts enkele 10-tallen vogelaars. Desondanks zag Vincent van der Spek de Thayers Meeuw rond 08:20 vliegen boven de branding en konden de meeste aanwezigen hem gedurende c 10 min zien. Hij werd die dag nog enkele malen gezien en goed gefotografeerd, zowel op het strand als zwemmend of in vlucht, in totaal door zeker 200 vogelaars en voor het laatst om c 16:00. Een cameraploeg van het tv-programma 'Man Bijt Hond' die Arjan Dwarshuis volgde was 's ochtends aanwezig bij de terugvondst. De volgende dag werd tevergeefs gezocht maar op dinsdagavond 14 april vond Eric Menkveld hem terug op het strand van Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, waar naar toe de suppletiewerkzaamheden waren opgeschoven. Hier werd hij vrijwel dagelijks gezien tot en met 27 april (de laatste dag

**584** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 12 april 2015 *(Vincent Legrand)*

**585** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 12 april 2015 *(Rob Halff)*

van de suppleties op deze plek), vooral tijdens de opspuitwerkzaamheden. Het afspeuren van de grote groepen meeuwen leverde als bonus ook een adulte Kumliens Meeuw (op 14-19 april), een volwassen en enkele onvolwassen Kleine Burgemeesters en vele 10-tallen Pontische Meeuwen *L cachinnans* op.

**Beschrijving**

De beschrijving is gebaseerd op foto's van onder meer Roelof de Beer, Julian Bosch, Frank Dröge, Enno Ebels, LE, Jan van der Laan, Vincent Legrand en Marten Miske (www.dutchbirding.nl, www.waarneming.nl; Dutch Birding 37: 197, plaat 307, 212, plaat 335-336, 2015).

GROOTTE & BOUW Algehele indruk als koud grijsbruin gekleurde juveniele 'zilvermeeuw'. Formaat als Zilvermeeuw *L argentatus* maar iets slanker gebouwd, met slankere snavel en kleinere kop. Kop met afgeplat voorhoofd, waardoor kopvorm 'spits' ogend.

KOP Licht met fijne grijze streping; kop duidelijk lichter dan mantel en onderdelen.

BOVENDELEN Grijsbruin met fluweelachtig ('zacht') karakter. Schouder- en mantelveren met lichte zoom, donkere subterminale U en donkere schachtstreep, op afstand geschubde indruk gevend. Op onderrug aantal vers geruide lichtgrijze veren aanwezig.

ONDERDELEN Overwegend grijsbruin, vergelijkbaar met mantel; minder vlekkerig dan bij onvolwassen Zilvermeeuw en met fluweelachtig karakter. Donkere tekening doorlopend tot tussen poten. Boven- en onderstaartdekveren zwaar gebandeerd.

VLEUGEL Armpennen donkerbruin. Binnenste handpennen en buitenste (zes) handpennen met donkere buitenvlag en lichte binnenvlag, uitgebreid licht venster vormend. Donkere top van buitenste handpennen 'ombuigend' naar binnenvlag. Scherpe lichte rand aan top van handpennen. Tertials bleekbruin met egaal donker centrum en alleen aan top wat karteltekening. Binnenste grote vleugeldekveren met beperkte tekening aan basis en donkere 'baan' vormend over bovenvleugel. Ondervleugel lichtgrijs; onderkant van de handpennen witachtig. Okselveren overwegend donker en ongebandeerd.

STAART Bovenstaart egaal bruingrijs, met alleen lichte bandering op basis van buitenste drie staartpennen.

NAAKTE DELEN Snavel zwart, zonder lichte tekening aan basis. Iris donker. Poot dieproze, voet paarsachtig roze.

GELUID Regelmatig roepend gezien maar door lawaai van suppleties en door vele andere roepende meeuwen roep niet vastgesteld.

RUI & SLEET Vrijwel geheel in juveniel kleed; aan einde van verblijf enkele tweede-generatie mantelveren en schouderveren aanwezig.

GEDRAG Meestal foeragerend of rustend in grote groep meeuwen, soms meer solitair optredend. Tijdens foerageren agressief en dominant naar andere meeuwen.

**Determinatie**

De herkenning van Thayers Meeuw kan lastig zijn vanwege overeenkomsten met vooral Zilvermeeuw, Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw *L smithsonianus*, Beringmeeuw *L glaucescens* en de meest donkere varianten van Kumliens Meeuw. Daarnaast vormen sterke individuele variatie en hybridisatie tussen een aantal meeuwensoorten complicerende factoren. De onderstaande kenmerken vormen de belangrijkste bouwstenen voor de determinatie; de combinatie van deze kenmerken sluit elke andere meeuwensoort of een hybride uit (cf Gosselin & David 1975, Sutton & Parmelee 1978, Garner & McGeehan 1998, Ebels et al 2001, Garner & Mactavish 2001, Howell & Elliott 2001, Howell & Mactavish 2003, Olsen & Larsson 2003, Howell & Dunn 2007, van Duivendijk 2011, Gibbins & Garner 2013).

***1*** De totaalindruk was die van een koud grijsbruine 'zilvermeeuw', vergelijkbaar van formaat met een Zilvermeeuw maar wat slanker gebouwd, met een slankere snavel en kleinere kop. De vogel was te donker voor een 'burgemeester *L hyperboreus/glaucoides*' en miste de 'vriendelijke' ronde kop van Kleine Burgemeester. Een Beringmeeuw zou aan de andere kant juist forser moeten ogen, met een zwaardere snavel. Bij de observaties bleek dat veel waarnemers bij Thayers Meeuw het (zoek) beeld hadden van een 'hele donkere Kleine Burgemeester'. De afmetingen (ook van de snavel) van een mannetje Thayers overlappen echter met die van bijvoorbeeld Zilvermeeuw. ***2*** De vogel was overwegend in juveniel kleed, ondanks het feit dat hij meer dan driekwart jaar oud moet zijn geweest; dit is een goed kenmerk voor Thayers. De meeste andere grote meeuwensoorten zijn in het voorjaar vaak al verder doorgeruid. ***3*** De bovenvleugel had een kenmerkend patroon met donkerbruine (niet zwarte) armpennen, een uitgebreid licht venster op de binnenste handpennen en buitenste (zes) handpennen met donkere buitenvlag en lichte binnenvlag ('Venetian blinds'), en met de donkere top van de buitenste handpennen 'ombuigend' naar de binnenvlag. Dit kenmerk is typerend voor Thayers. Bij Zilvermeeuw en Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw zijn de buitenste handpennen meer egaal donker. De lichte onderzijde van de handpennen is karakteristiek voor Thayers. ***4*** De scherpe lichte randjes aan de top van de donkerbruine handpennen passen goed op Thayers. De meeste andere soorten hebben zwartere handpennen met een meer diffuse lichte zoom. ***5*** De egaal grijsbruine onderdelen, vooral op de buik en doorlopend tot tussen de poten, passen goed op Thayers. Bij Zilvermeeuw zijn de onderdelen meer vlekkerig. Bij Amerikaanse

**586** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 16 april 2015 *(Julian Bosch)* **587** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, met Zilvermeeuwen / Herring Gulls *L argentatus*, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 16 april 2015 *(Julian Bosch)* **588** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 26 april 2015 *(Enno B Ebels)* **589** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 26 april 2015 *(Leon Edelaar)*

Zilvermeeuw is het patroon vaak vergelijkbaar met dat van Thayers, maar vaak nog donkerder. ***6*** De bovenstaart was egaal bruingrijs, met alleen lichte bandering op de basis van de buitenste drie staartpennen. Bij Zilvermeeuw is de staart zwart of donkerbruin, in de regel met een witte basis, en bij Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw vaak geheel donkerbruin tot zwart. ***7*** De bleekbruine tertials met egaal donker centrum en alleen aan de top wat karteltekening passen goed op Thayers. De tertials waren lichter dan de handpennen. Bij Kumliens Meeuw zijn de handpennen meestal niet donkerder dan de tertials. Bij Zilvermeeuw en Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw zijn de tertials meer gevlekt en voorzien van een bruin-witte kartelrand. ***8*** De (binnenste) grote vleugeldekveren hadden een beperkte tekening aan de basis en vormden een donkere baan over de bovenvleugel. Dit patroon is anders bij Zilvermeeuw en Amerikaanse Zilvermeeuw en is minder contrastrijk bij Kumliens. ***9*** De schouderveren en mantelveren hadden een lichte zoom, donkere subterminale 'U' en donkere schachtstreep; op afstand gaf dit een geschubde indruk. Dit patroon wijkt af van de andere genoemde taxa. ***10*** De overwegend donkere snavel past minder goed op een 'burgemeester' of hybride; bij sterke invloed van bijvoorbeeld Grote Burgemeester zou de snavelbasis lichter zijn. ***11*** De (paars)roze pootkleur, met name zichtbaar bij de voeten, was dieper dan de vleeskleurige poten van bijvoorbeeld Zilvermeeuw.

Kenmerken die goed passen op Thayers Meeuw

**590** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 12 april 2015 *(Marten Miske)* **591** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 26 april 2015 *(Leon Edelaar)* **592-593** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 21 april 2015 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

maar een donkere Kumliens Meeuw niet uitsluiten zijn de zwaar gebandeerde boven- en onderstaartdekveren en de overwegend donkere en ongebandeerde okselveren.

Samenvattend zijn de belangrijkste verschillen met een donkere Kumliens Meeuw de contrasterend donkere armpenbaan, de effen donkere tertials, de iets donkerdere handpennen en staart, het wat zwaarder getekende patroon op grote dekveren, en de nog volledige set juveniele mantel- en schouderveren met opvallende witte randen. Om een burgemeesterhybride of terugkruising uit te sluiten zijn de kleinere snavel, felroze tot bijna paarsachtige pootkleur en de nog volledige set juveniele mantel- en schouderveren het belangrijkst. Ook het patroon van de tertials, met uitgebreid effen donker centrum en slechts enkele geïsoleerde, bruine vlekjes aan de top is typisch voor Thayers Meeuw.

**Verspreiding en voorkomen**

Thayers Meeuw is een broedvogel van arctisch Canada en een wintergast langs met name de Amerikaanse westkust (Olsen & Larsson 1995). Het is een zeldzame dwaalgast in Europa met ten minste 18 gevallen en daarnaast c 20 meldingen die nog niet beoordeeld zijn (vanwege de lastige determinatie en verschillen in taxonomisch inzicht zijn veel waarnemingen nog in behandeling of nog niet in behandeling genomen): in Brittannië (ten minste drie, één in Noord-Ierland en twee in Engeland), Denemarken (ten minste één), Ierland

TABEL 1 Gevallen van Thayers Meeuw *Larus thayeri* in Europa / records of Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri* in Europe (* nog niet aanvaard / not yet accepted) (Arlow 2016; www.tarsiger.com, www.netfugl.dk; Peter Adriaens in litt, Marcel Haas in litt)

*Brittannië (3+)*
1-7 maart 1997, Belfast dump, Antrim, Noord-Ierland, juveniel
* december 2007 tot januari 2008, Oxfordshire, en februari 2008, Derbyshire, Engeland
6 november 2010, Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex, Engeland, adult
* januari tot 6 februari 2012, Enniskillen, Fermanagh, Noord-Ierland, juveniel
3 tot 18 april 2012, Elsham, Lincolnshire, Engeland, juveniel
* 13 november 2013, Cley, Norfolk, Engeland, juveniel
* 6 januari 2014, Burry Holms, Gower, Glamorgan, Wales, juveniel
* februari tot april 2014, Bruichladdich, Islay, Argyll, Schotland, juveniel
* 27-28 december 2014, Mirfield, West Yorkshire
* 2 maart 2015, Rufforth Airfield, North Yorkshire, Engeland, juveniel
* 19 januari 2016, Donmouth, Aberdeenshire, Schotland, juveniel
* 27 maart 2016, Minsmere, Suffolk, Engeland, adult

*Denemarken (1+)*
15-16 januari 2002, Hirtshals Havn, Nordjylland, en 19 februari 2002, Hanstholm Havn, Nordjylland, juveniel
* 4 februari 2012, Hvide Sande, Ringkøping, juveniel

*Ierland (8+)*
21 februari tot 5 maart 1990, The Lough, Cork city, and Cobh, Cork, juvenile
22 februari tot 10 maart 1998, Killybegs, Donegal, adult
19 december 1998 tot 3 april 1999, Newport dump, Mayo, juveniel
2-5 februari 2003, Killybegs, Donegal, juveniel
5-19 maart 2005, Barnatra, Mayo, juveniel
19 januari tot 10 februari 2010, Ross Beach, Cleggan, Galway, juveniel
* 1 februari 2011, Liscannor Harbour, Liscannor Bay, Clare, tweede-winter
18 februari tot 5 maart 2011, Rossaveal, Galway, juveniel, en 5 april 2011, Nimmo's Pier, Galway
* 19 januari 2012, Killala Harbour, Mayo, juveniel
16 december 2013, Killybegs, Donegal, adult; vermoedelijk zelfde exemplaar als jaarlijks terugkerende vogel in Spanje in 2008-16 (Charles 2014; http://birdingfrontiers.com/2013/12/21/adult-thayers-gull)

De veelbesproken juveniele vogel die op 11-31 maart 1989 verbleef te Galway city dump, Galway (Mallins 1989, McGeehan 1989), is niet aanvaard door de Ierse dwaalgastencommissie ('considered indeterminate on current knowledge').

*IJsland (3+)*
* 10 maart 2004, Sandgerði, adult
* 3 april 2004, Eskifjörður, juveniel
* 3 maart 2005, Höfn, tweede-winter
8-9 april 2006, Hafnarfjörður, adult
30 januari tot 1 februari 2008, Þorlákshöfn, juveniel
* 6 januari 2009, Kolgrafarfjörður, juveniel
* 31 augustus 2010, Sandgerði, subadult
27 september 2010, Stykkisholmur, tweede-winter
* 9-18 januari 2012, Höfn, tweede-winter
* 17 februari 2012, Garður, tweede- of derde-winter
* 7-8 en 10-11 februari 2013, Kársnes, Kópavogur, en 24 februari, Reykjavík, derde-winter
* 24 december 2014, Sandgerði, juveniel

*Nederland (1)*
11-12 april, Egmond aan Zee, en 14-27 april, Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, juveniel

*Noorwegen (1)*
3 januari 2000, Bergen, Hordaland, juveniel

*Spanje (1)*
februari 2008 tot april 2016 (elke winter aanwezig), Xove en San Cibrao, Galícia, juveniel (in 2008) tot adult; vermoedelijk zelfde exemplaar als in Ierland in maart 2013 (Charles 2014; http://birdingfrontiers.com/2013/12/21/adult-thayers-gull)

(ten minste negen), IJsland (ten minste drie), Noorwegen (één) en Spanje (één). Een overzicht van alle Europese gevallen en meldingen die nog in behandeling zijn of wachten op behandeling is opgenomen in tabel 1. De waarneming bij Egmond en Bergen is door de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) aanvaard als eerste geval voor Nederland.

Er zijn (naast de eerder in dit artikel genoemde verwijzingen) veel publicaties over afzonderlijke waarnemingen in Europa en over individuen die kenmerken vertoonden van Thayers Meeuw maar (nog) niet als zodanig aanvaard konden worden of werden 'ontmaskerd' als een ander taxon, een hybride of een vogel waar geen eenduidig label op kon worden geplakt. Voor dergelijke publicaties en aanvullende publicaties over de determinatie van Thayers, zie bijvoorbeeld Lehman (1980), Hoffman & Hoffmann (1986), Dowdall (1989), Kilbane (1989), Mallins (1989), McGeehan (1989, 1997ab), Editors (1990), Wilson (1990), Gantlett (1991), Golley (1991), Hogg (1991), Walker (1991), Zimmer (1991), Howell & King (1997ab), Kok & van Duivendijk (1997), McGeehan & Gar-

**594** Thayers Meeuw / Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, juveniel, met Zilvermeeuwen / Herring Gulls *L argentatus*, Egmond aan Zee, Noord-Holland, 12 april 2015 *(Vincent Legrand)*

ner (1997), Howell (1998, 2000), McGeehan & Millington (1998), Howell et al (1999), Lonergan (1999), Mjøs & Garner (2000), Garner & Mullarney (2001), Batty (2002), Kristensen (2002), Batty et al (2003), Garner (2004, 2011), Mullarney & Millington (2005), O'Keeffe (2005), Hallam & Lewington (2007), Hallam (2008), Breen (2010), Arlow (2011), Rowlands (2011), Charles (2012), Lowe (2012) en Arlow (2016); zie ook www.irbc.ie/announcements/announce28.php en www.bou.org.uk/about-the-bou/recent_news. Veel artikelen kunnen als pdf worden bekeken op http://gull-research.org/thayers/thayerspdf.html. Deze lange (maar niet uitputtende) reeks van publicaties illustreert hoezeer dit taxon al enkele decennia in de belangstelling van ornithologen en veldvogelaars staat.

**Taxonomie**

De taxonomische geschiedenis van Thayers Meeuw is een van de meest complexe van alle meeuwentaxa en onderwerp van veel discussie en controverse sinds het taxon voor het eerst werd beschreven in 1915. De woelige taxonomische geschiedenis heeft te maken met de grote variatie in uiterlijk binnen de taxa, vanwege (vermeende) hybridisatie en vanwege de logistieke problemen om goed onderzoek te doen in de broedgebieden en eventuele overlapzones van de verschillende taxa. Thayers maakt deel uit van het complex *glaucoides-kumlieni-thayeri*. Tegenwoordig worden (nominaat) *glaucoides* (Kleine Burgemeester) en *kumlieni* (Kumliens Meeuw) meestal beschouwd als ondersoorten van één soort (waarbij *kumlieni* mogelijk ontstaan is uit een historische hybridepopulatie van *glaucoides* en *thayeri*. *Thayeri* (Thayers Meeuw) wordt meestal als aparte soort gezien maar ook nog wel als ondersoort van Kleine Burgemeester. In het verleden werd *thayeri* ook als ondersoort van het zilvermeeuwen-complex (*argentatus-smithsonianus*) beschouwd. Voor artikelen over de taxonomische status en (mogelijke) hybridisatie binnen het complex, zie Dwight (1917), Gaston & Decker (1985), Pittaway (1992, 1999), Howell (1998), Weir et al (2000), Howell & Elliott (2001), McGowan & Kitchener (2001) en www.irbc.ie/announcements/announce28.php. Pittaway (1999) gaf een overzicht van meer dan 40 publicaties over de taxonomische status die werden gepubliceerd tussen 1917 en 1999. De Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA) beschouwt *thayeri* als aparte soort.

## Summary

Thayer's Gull at Egmond and Bergen in April 2015 On 11-12 and 14-27 April 2015, a second calendar-year Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*, still mostly in juvenile plumage, stayed with 10 000s of large gulls near Egmond aan Zee and Bergen aan Zee, Noord-Holland, the Netherlands. This was the first record for the Netherlands. There have been 17 previous records in Europe (Britain, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Spain) and c 20 additional reports are still under consideration or await submission; see table 1).

The identification was based on the following set of characters: ***1*** The overall impression was that of a cold grey-brown 'herring gull' *L argentatus/smithsonianus*, similar in size but with a more slender build, slender bill and smaller head (the measurements (including the bill) of a male Thayer's overlap with those of European Herring Gull *L argentatus*). The bird was too dark for Glaucous Gull *L hyperboreus* or Iceland Gull *L glaucoides* and lacked the friendly rounded head shape of Iceland. Glaucous-winged Gull *L glaucescens* should be larger, more robust and with a heavy bill. ***2*** The bird was mostly in juvenile plumage, despite the fact that it must have been at least nine months old; this is a good feature for Thayer's. Other large gull species in spring have normally moulted (much) further at this time of year. ***3*** The upperwing showed a characteristic pattern with dark brown (not black) secondaries, an extensive pale window on the inner primaries and the outer (six) primaries with a dark outer web and pale inner ('Venetian blinds'), and with the dark marking on the tip of the outer primaries 'curving back' on the inner web. On the underwing, the primaries were very pale. This wing pattern is typical for Thayer's. In European Herring and American Herring Gull *L smithsonianus*, the outer primaries are more uniformly dark. ***4*** The sharp bright edges on the tip of the dark brown primaries fit Thayer's. Most other species have darker primaries with a more diffuse pale edge. ***5*** The uniform grey-brown 'velvety' underparts, especially on the belly and between the legs, fit Thayer's. European Herring is more streaked or patchy on the underparts; in American Herring, the pattern is often similar to that of Thayer's but often even darker ('muddy'). ***6*** The uppertail was evenly coloured brown-grey, with only some pale barring at the base of the outer three tail-feathers. In European Herring, the tail is black or dark brown, usually with a white base, and it is often completely dark brown to black in American Herring. ***7*** The pale brown tertials with smooth dark centre and only some pale notches at the top fit Thayer's. The tertials were paler than the primaries. In Kumlien's Gull *L g kumlieni*, the primaries are usually not much darker than the tertials. In European Herring and American Herring, the tertials are more mottled, with brown-and-white notched edges. ***8*** The inner greater wing-coverts had limited markings at the base and formed a dark band on the upperwing. This pattern is different in European Herring and American Herring and less contrasting in Kumlien's. ***9*** The scapulars and mantle-feathers had a pale edge, dark subterminal 'U' and dark shaft-line, giving a scaly impression. This pattern differs from the other mentioned taxa. ***10*** The predominantly dark bill fits less well for Glaucous, Iceland or a hybrid involving one of these species, which often show some or even extensive pale at the base. ***11*** The purple-pink leg colour, particularly visible on the feet, was deeper than the flesh-coloured legs of, for example, European Herring.



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## Pincoya Storm Petrel: comments on identification and plumage variation

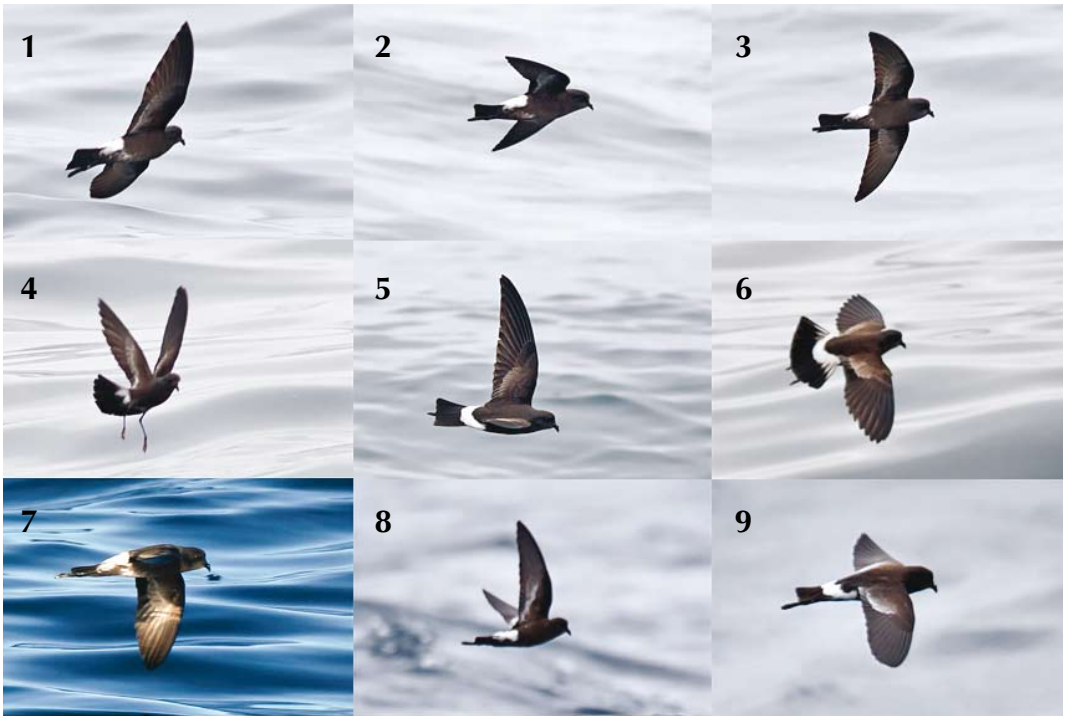
In February 2009, a group of birders travelling by ferry in southern Chile encountered a distinctive-looking storm petrel, which was not readily identifiable (Dowdall et al 2009). Follow-up work resulted in this being described as a species new to science, Pincoya Storm Petrel *Oceanites pincoyae* (Harrison et al 2013), known primarily from the Seno Reloncavi area of Chile, near the city of Puerto Montt. The species' breeding grounds remain unknown, and at-sea observations remain scarce. Based on our field experiences with Pincoya in 2011 and 2013-16, we here discuss identification pitfalls with respect to the poorly known Fuegian Storm Petrel *O (oceanicus) chilensis*.

Fuegian Storm Petrel is a smaller version of the more widespread and familiar Wilson's Storm Petrel *O oceanicus*, from which it typically differs in having whitish tips to the median and greater underwing-coverts; many birds also have some whitish belly feathering (Howell 2012; figure 1). It is known to breed on islands in the Cape Horn region and most birds migrate north into the Humboldt Current off Peru and Chile, rather than being transequatorial migrants like Wilson's.

*Observations*

During a visit to Seno Reloncavi on 28 October 2011, Steve Howell, along with Dave Shoch and Jake Mohlmann, spent three hours observing feeding groups of *Oceanites* storm petrels that ranged from 30 to 50 birds, and in total involved 100+ individuals. Birds were seen at ranges down to 3 m; many were photographed. Based on subsequent comparison of photos with the formal description of Pincoya Storm Petrel, most if not all

FIGURE 1 Variation in presumed Fuegian Storm Petrels / Fuegostormvogeltjes *Oceanites (oceanicus) chilensis* off central Chile (1.1-1.6 off Valparaíso, 7 November 2011; 1.7 off Valparaíso, 30 October 2007) and Peru (1.8-1.9 off Lima, 11 May 2014, observed in association with numerous Elliot's Storm Petrels *O gracilis*) *(Steve N G Howell)*. Most birds have slightly paler greater underwing-coverts forming variable pale panel, usually accentuated by whitish tips to median and greater underwing-coverts; some have small whitish belly patch. One presumed juvenile (1.8-1.9), showing bolder pale ulnar bands on upperwing than typical of adults (1.5-1.6) and also bolder white underwing panel. Like several storm petrel species, white bases to outer rectrices usually hidden but can be seen on widely spread tail (1.6).

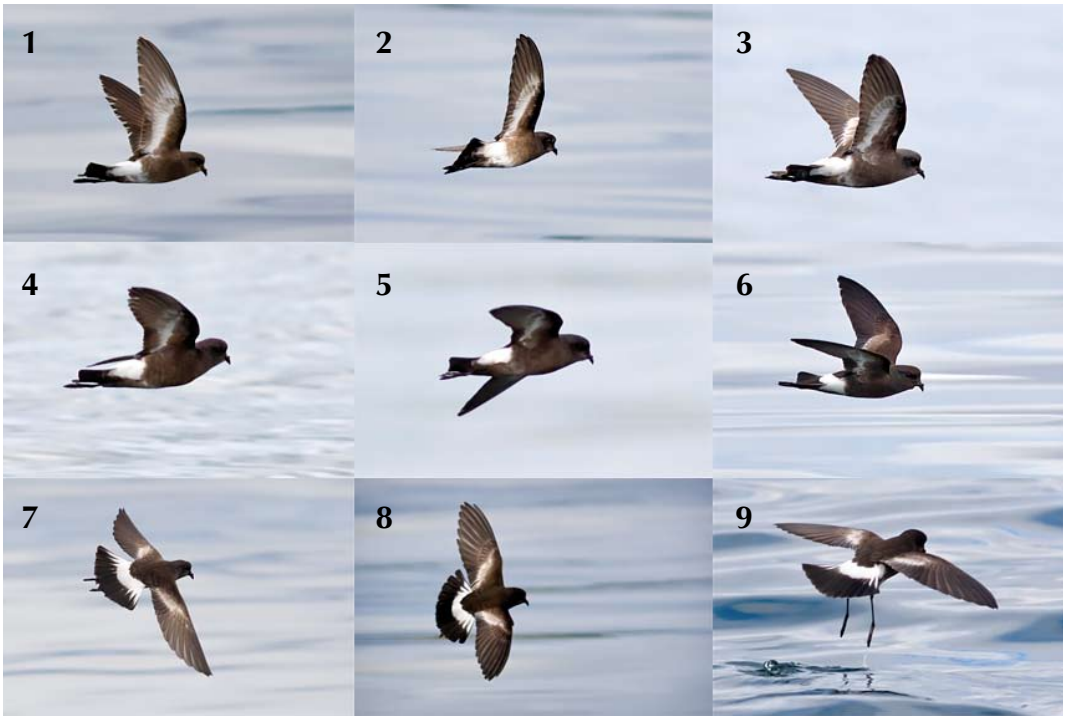


birds were Pincoya, but they were less uniform in appearance than suggested by Harrison et al (2013), and some birds appeared indistinguishable from (and may have been) Fuegian Storm Petrels. 'Classic' and well-marked Pincoya were obvious, but some birds had little (sometimes apparently no) white on the belly, the upperwing ulnar bands were sometimes muted, and the amount of white on the bases of the outer rectrices was variable; the broad white underwing stripe was perhaps the most consistent feature, but still variable. The whitest birds also had white shafts and inner webs to the exposed bases of the primaries, which were dark on other birds. Thus, there was a cline in features from the whitest Pincoya to birds resembling Fuegian, and it was unclear where Pincoya stopped and where Fuegian might begin (figure 2).

On 17 February 2014 and 16 February 2015, Fabrice Schmitt observed, respectively, 200+ and 19 Pincoya Storm Petrels in the Seno Reloncavi area while leading birding tours on cruise ships passing through the area. Although some birds were 'classic' Pincoya, he found it difficult to identify others, which showed characters of both Pincoya and Fuegian Storm Petrel.

On 11 March 2016, we observed 2000+ *Oceanites* storm petrels in the Gulf of Corcovado between Guafo Island and the Guaitecas Archipelago (c 44°S 74°W, c 300 km south of Seno Reloncavi and Puerto Montt); many of these birds were steadily streaming late in the day towards the Guaitecas Archipelago, suggesting those islands might host appreciable breeding populations of storm petrels. These birds were viewed from a cruise ship, so that close and prolonged viewing was not possible. However, all of 250+ birds seen at closer ranges showed white on the underwing-coverts, ranging from whitish tips typical of Fuegian Storm Petrel, to a broad, solidly white band like Pincoya Storm Petrel (figure 3). Few showed an extensively white belly, as on

FIGURE 2 Variation in presumed Pincoya Storm Petrels / Pincoyastormvogeltjes *Oceanites pincoyae* in Seno Reloncavi, Chile, 28 October 2011 *(Steve N G Howell)*. Top row shows classic white-bellied birds with decreasing amounts of white on inner web of outer primaries and on belly. Middle row shows three poorly marked presumed Pincoya, which from these images are difficult to distinguish from well-marked Fuegian Storm Petrels *O (oceanicus) chilensis* (eg, figure 1.2 and 1.4). Bottom row shows variation in extent of white in outer rectrices of Pincoya (cf Fuegian in figure 1.6 and Wilson's Storm Petrel *O oceanicus* in figure 4.1-4.3).



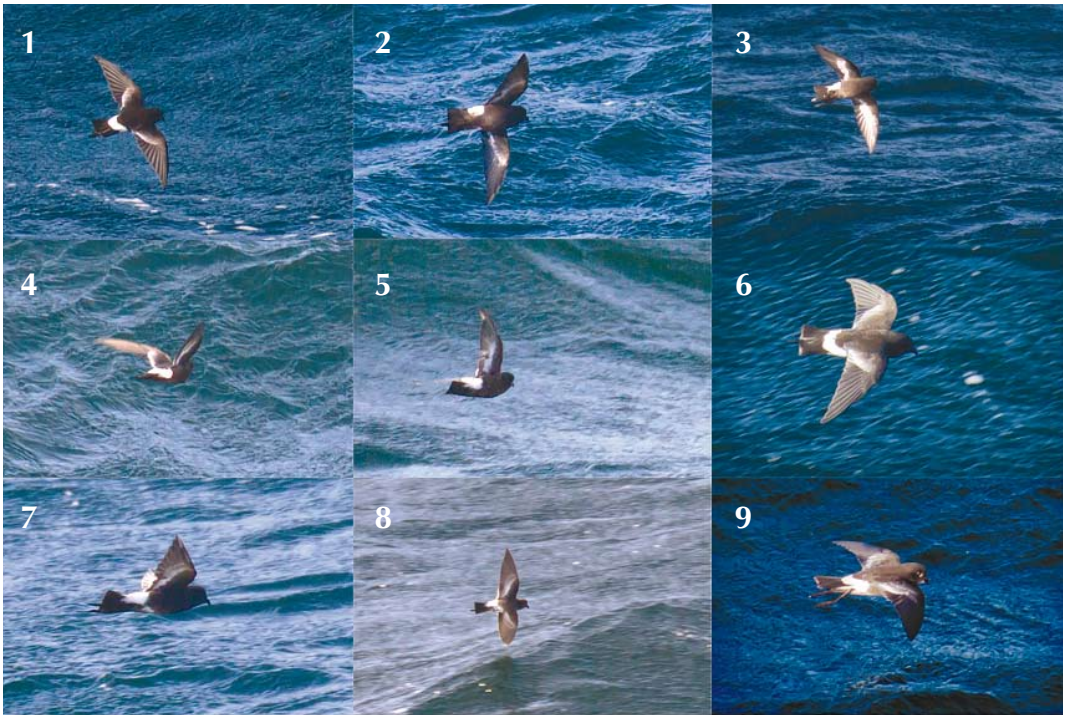



FIGURE 3 Variation in Pincoya/Fuegian Storm Petrel / Pincoyastormvogeltje/Fuegostormvogeltje *Oceanites pincoyae/ (oceanicus) chilensis* in Gulf of Corcovado, Chile, 11 March 2016 (*Steve N G Howell*). Both Fuegian (3.1-3.2) and Pincoya (3.6-3.7) completing wing moult with growth of outermost primaries; figure 3.3-3.5 show dark-bellied Pincoya and/or Fuegian with bold white underwing panels, including birds completing primary moult; figure 3.8-3.9 show two presumed juvenile Pincoya in fresh plumage.

classic Pincoya, and the identity of many birds was uncertain, as occurred on the 2014 and 2015 cruises: were they dark-bellied Pincoya, Fuegian with broad white underwing stripes, or some combination of both? Again, it was unclear where Pincoya stopped and Fuegian might begin (figure 3). The birds included fresh-plumaged individuals, some of which showed the white loral spot noted by Harrison et al (2013) as a feature of juvenile Pincoya (figure 3.8-3.9). Other fresh-plumaged birds may have been immature (year-old) birds that had recently undergone their first complete moult, and many birds were in the final stages of wing moult (figure 3.1-3.3).

*Comments*

While 'classic' Pincoya Storm Petrels appear distinctive in the field, we have not found the identification of all birds to be as straightforward as suggested by Harrison et al (2013). As noted by Harrison et al (2013), the size and structure of Pincoya overlap with those of Fuegian Storm Petrel, so at-sea identity comes down to plumage features. The plumage characters of Pincoya are largely matters of the extent and contrast of whiter plumage areas on the wings and belly. Most Pincoya features are approached or even matched by Wilson's Storm Petrel and/or Fuegian (figure 1-4) but perhaps not all are present in combination on any individual Wilson's or Fuegian. The features of Pincoya also suggest those of Elliot's Storm Petrel *O gracilis*, which occurs farther north in the Humboldt Current; that species seems unlikely to overlap in range with Pincoya, and is not discussed further here. As with many closely related species or subspecies, the problem revolves around establishing the extent of variation within each taxon. In particular, to what extent can Pincoya be dark-bellied and to what extent can Fuegian show bold white underwing bands (figure 3)?

Harrison et al (2013: p 180) reported that 'Among species of *Oceanites*, it [= Pincoya Storm Petrel] is unique in showing white outer vanes to the outer two pairs of rectrices', although their

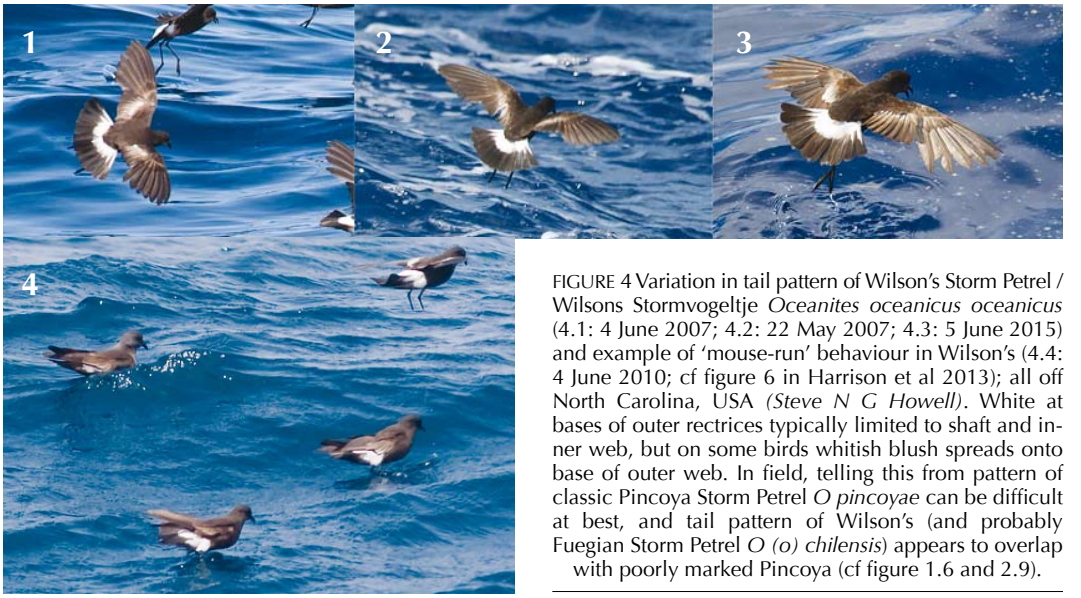



FIGURE 4 Variation in tail pattern of Wilson's Storm Petrel / Wilsons Stormvogeltje *Oceanites oceanicus oceanicus* (4.1: 4 June 2007; 4.2: 22 May 2007; 4.3: 5 June 2015) and example of 'mouse-run' behaviour in Wilson's (4.4: 4 June 2010; cf figure 6 in Harrison et al 2013); all off North Carolina, USA *(Steve N G Howell)*. White at bases of outer rectrices typically limited to shaft and inner web, but on some birds whitish blush spreads onto base of outer web. In field, telling this from pattern of classic Pincoya Storm Petrel *O pincoyae* can be difficult at best, and tail pattern of Wilson's (and probably Fuegian Storm Petrel *O (o) chilensis*) appears to overlap with poorly marked Pincoya (cf figure 1.6 and 2.9).

sample of Pincoya was small, and white on the outer vane is limited to the extreme base of the feathers. Our experience with presumed Pincoya (figure 2) suggests this feature is variable, as it is on Wilson's Storm Petrel (figure 4) and probably also on Fuegian Storm Petrel. There appears to be overlap in this feature among these three taxa, although it is difficult to evaluate under at-sea conditions.

The timing of wing moult can be helpful when identifying certain storm petrel taxa but our observations in March 2016 indicate that moult timing of presumed immature Pincoya Storm Petrels and Fuegian Storm Petrels are broadly similar (figure 3). Or, as noted above, might the dark-bellied birds simply be a plumage variant of Pincoya? However, if Fuegian breeds farther north than presently known (quite possible in a vast and largely unexplored region), then the breeding and moult cycles of northern Fuegian might approach or coincide with those of Pincoya.

Despite claims that 'The new taxon's foraging ecology and behavioral habits are unique among the southern Oceanitinae...' (Harrison et al 2013: p 180), the traits described (so-called 'mouse-runs' and diving) are behaviours regularly exhibited by Wilson's (eg, figure 4.4), Fuegian, and Elliot's Storm Petrels, as we and others have observed on numerous occasions (Flood & Fisher 2011; pers obs; Brian Patteson pers comm, Kate Sutherland pers comm; Hadoram Shirihai unpublished data). Given the closely related nature of these taxa, this is not surprising. These behaviours may reflect sea conditions (occurring mainly in calmer waters), prey items (sinking pieces of chum), and other factors. We have detected no specific behavioural differences at sea that might aid in the identification of Pincoya Storm Petrel, and we consider as spurious the attribution to Pincoya of a unique feeding ecology.

Given that plumage patterns are often conservative among storm petrels, with several cryptic taxa being all but indistinguishable in the field (other than perhaps by voice; Robb et al 2008) or in the hand (outside a genetics lab), the striking and distinctive appearance of classic Pincoya Storm Petrel is notable. But equally, given considerable plumage variation and polymorphism within several taxa of storm petrels (eg, Howell 2012), it would not be surprising if plumage patterns within Pincoya (and Fuegian Storm Petrel) were variable. Pending further study, however, it appears that some birds in the Pincoya/Fuegian complex may not be safely identifiable in the field as one or the other taxon.

Our records in March 2016 of 'classic' Pincoya Storm Petrel (including presumed juveniles) in the Gulf of Corcovado (figure 3) represent an appreciable southward extension to the known range of Pincoya, which remains an enigmatic taxon, one that observers should continue to study whenever possible.

Of interest is that Hadoram Shirihai (unpublished data) studied several 1000s of *Oceanites* storm petrels in the Gulf of Ancud during January

and February 2013, when he documented similar variation to that we have described above. He found many birds were dark-bellied (sometimes outnumbering white-bellied Pincoya Storm Petrel) but that all birds appeared similar in size, shape, behaviour and moult timing.

Our field observations, along with those of Hadoram Shirihai, show that *pincoyae* is less easily identified in the field than previously thought, because of many birds that appear morphologically intermediate between *pincoyae* and *chilensis*. Critical study is needed to address this plumage variation, and future research might focus on measuring intermediate birds and on comparing DNA of *pincoyae, chilensis, oceanicus* and intermediate birds, with a view to shedding light on this interesting complex.

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## Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data, part 7

After six previous editions of 'Birds of Kazakhstan: new and interesting data' (Wassink & Oreel 2008, Wassink 2009-10, 2013-14, 2015ab) and the publication documenting four new species for Kazakhstan (Wassink et al 2011), another selection of new data for Kazakhstan is presented here, including the first record of Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, the first winter records of Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrinus*, Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini*, Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus maurus*, the first documented record of Lapland Owl *Strix lapponica* outside the Altai, the first documented breeding of Redwing *Turdus iliacus* outside the Altai and the first breeding of Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* in Atyrau province and, with that, the first breeding in the Western Palearctic.

**White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*
On 13-16 September 2016, more than 20 000 were counted in the Tengiz-Korgalzhyn region. The number recorded in this region alone is already 20% higher then the 16 000 that were estimated to be the world population (www.acbk.kz).

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*
On 24 March 2015, a flock of 18 birds was found at Baybala lake, Almaty province (Berezovikov & Filimonov 2016). This is the seventh record for Kazakhstan.

**Taiga Bean Goose** *Anser fabalis fabalis/johanseni*
On 29 November 2015, one was photographed at Karakol lake at the eastern Caspian coast (Yasko 2015). This is the first documented winter record for western Kazakhstan.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*
On 10 January 2015, a male was photographed together with a large flock of Long-tailed Ducks *Clangula hyemalis* at the Caspian Sea, off the coast of Bautino (Kovshar & Karpov 2015). Since previous records were all insufficiently documented (Wassink 2015b), this is a new species for Kazakhstan.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides*
On 23 July 2016, a first-summer or adult was photographed at Shoshkakol lakes in South Kazakhstan (Belousov 2016). Formerly, this species bred in the Syrdarya valley but now it is only known to occur in the westernmost parts of Kazakhstan.

**Kentish Plover** *Anarhynchus alexandrinus*
On 4 January 2016, a second calendar-year was photographed at Aqtau at the eastern Caspian Sea coast (Yasko 2016). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*
From 21 December 2015 to 24 January 2016, one was photographed at Sorbulak lake, Almaty province (Shmygalev 2016). This is the second winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*
On 12 January 2016, one was photographed at Karakol lake at the eastern Caspian coast (Katuncev 2016). This is the first winter record away from south-eastern Kazakhstan, where the species has been repeatedly found in winter (Wassink 2015b).

**Mediteranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*
On 16, 22 and 24 May 2015, single second calendar-year birds were photographed at the north-eastern Caspian Sea (Mischenko 2015). These are the seventh to ninth record for Kazakhstan.

**Heuglin's Gull** *Larus heuglini*
From 1 December 2015 to 9 January 2016, a third calendar-year was present at Aqtau at the eastern Caspian Sea coast (Yasko 2016). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*
On 3 December 2014, an adult was found at the Tentek delta, Almaty province (Berezovikov & Filimonov 2016). This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus*
On 20-24 May 2016, 20 birds were found at Korgalzhyn, Aqmola province (Clark 2016, Iskakov 2016; plate 595). After records at this location in 2012 and 2013, it seems that this raptor is a rare but regular spring passage migrant here.

**Steppe x Eastern Imperial Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* x *heliaca*
In 2013-15, at least three mixed pairs Steppe x Eastern Imperial Eagle were found in northern West Kazakhstan province and in the Urda sands in south-western West Kazakhstan province. There were indications that mixed breeding occurs more widely, for instance in the Betpak-Dala desert (Karyakin et al 2016). The authors suggested this phenomenon is somehow connected with the rapid decline of Steppe Eagle (40% over the last 10 years), whereas Eastern Imperial Eagle increases amd occupies the habitat of the former.

**Lapland Owl** *Strix lapponica*
On 10 October 2015, one was photographed at Lebyazhe, North Kazakhstan province (Krasnikov 2015). This is the first documented record outside the Altai.

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach*
On 14 June 2016, one was photographed at Atyrau (Sahi 2016). Later it became clear that a pair succesfully bred at this location, with three young (Saraev 2016). This is the first breeding record for Atyrau province and with that, the first breeding record in the Western Palearctic.

**Asian Short-toed Lark** *Alaudala cheleensis*
On 25 October 2015, two were photographed at Sorbulak lake, Almaty province (Fedorenko 2015). This is the first recent record outside the Syrdarya delta, currently its only known breeding site (Wassink 2015b).

**Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*
From 1 December 2015 to 1 January 2016, an adult was present at Almaty (Isabekov 2015). This is the second winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Hume's Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia althaea*
Analysis of DNA samples of lesser whitethroats *Sylvia* trapped at Nura valley, Aqmola province, on 12 May 2013 revealed the presence of a Desert Lesser Whitethroat *S a halimodendri* amongst

**595** Crested Honey Buzzard / Aziatische Wespendief *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, adult female, Korgalzhyn, Aqmola province, Kazakhstan, 23 May 2016 *(John Clark)*

**596-597** Desert Lesser Whitethroat / Vale Braamsluiper *Sylvia althaea halimodendri*, first calendar-year, Nura valley, Aqmola province, Kazakhstan, 12 May 2013 *(Patrick Palmen)*

Siberian Lesser Whitethroats *S a blythi* (Peter de Knijff in litt; plate 596-597). This is the first documented record of *halimodendri* in the northern half of Kazakhstan.

**Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida*
On 4 June 2016, adult birds feeding young were photographed at Karynzharyk desert in southern Mangghystau province (Kornev 2016). From this region only one record was known: 16 June 1955 (Wassink 2015b).

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*
New breeding locations were found at Balykty (Tarasov 2008) and between Ulken-Burli lake and Syrdak lake, Qostanay province (Malkov 2016). The northernmost parts of this province is the only region in Kazakhstan where breeding has been proved.

**Blue Whistling Thrush** *Myophonus caeruleus*
In spring 2015, a nest was found at the Vesnovka river in Almaty at an altitude of 900 m (Zhdanko 2016). This is the first breeding record in Almaty and, previously, breeding was only established at altitudes from 1100 m (Wassink 2015b).

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*
On 25 June 2009, a nest containing six eggs was photographed at Ishim valley at Ivanovka, North Kazakhstan province (Gubin 2009). This is the first documented breeding record outside the Altai. On 7-27 December 2015, one was found at Karabalyk, north-western Qostanay province (Malkov 2015). This is the first winter record in northern Kazakhstan.

**Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata*
On 5 September 2015, a pair was photographed at Turgen valley, Almaty province (Bevza 2015). This is the second record for Almaty province and the easternmost in Kazakhstan ever. On 6 September 2016, a first calendar-year male was photographed at Aqtau (Yasko 2016). After four spring records at the eastern Caspian coast (Wassink 2015b), this is the first in autumn.

**Caspian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus hemprichii*
Spring birds photographed at Aqtau in 2015 and 2016 (Yasko 2015, 2016) indicate that this taxon is a rare but regular spring passage migrant at the eastern Caspian coast.

**Siberian Stonechat** *Saxicola maurus maurus*
On 17 January 2016, a second calendar-year was photographed at Chardara lake in southernmost South Kazakhstan province. This is the first winter record for Kazakhstan (Kovalenko & Gubin 2016, Nukusbekov 2016).

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*
On 16 December 2015, one was photographed at Almaty (Isabekov 2015). This is the second winter record for Kazakhstan.

**Masked Wagtail** *Motacilla personata*
On 1 January 2016, a second calendar-year was photographed at Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty province (Belyaev 2016). This is the fifth winter record for (south-eastern) Kazakhstan.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*
From 31 December 2015 to 20 February 2016, one was photographed at Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty province (Belyaev 2015). This is the first winter record away from the eastern Caspian Sea coast, where the species winters regularly (Wassink 2015b).

**Great Rosefinch** *Carpodacus rubicilla kobdensis*
On 4 August 2016, a female-type bird was photographed at Katon-Karagay NP, southern Altai (Vorobyov 2016). This is the fourth record of this subspecies for Kazakhstan. The records (all from Katon Karagay NP) suggest that it might breed there.

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*
On 9 June 2016, a singing male was photographed at Isatai at the northern Caspian Sea coast (Isabekov 2016). This species is a more or less regular spring passage migrant only at the eastern Caspian Sea coast (Wassink 2015b).

**Godlewski's Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii*
From 25 November 2015 to 17 February 2016, two birds of the nominate subspecies *E g godlewskii* were present at Katon-Karagay in the southern Altai (Vorobyov 2016). This is the fourth record of the nominate for Kazakhstan. The subspecies *E g decolorata* occurs more often and is an occasional or very rare resident and visitor (Wassink 2015b).

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*
On 16 June 2016, a male was photographed in Katon-Karagay NP in the southern Altai (Vorobyov 2016). This is the first record in Kazakhstan of this globally rapidly declining species since 2013 (cf Wassink 2015b).

*Records not included in the systematic list of Kazakhstan*

**Siberian Crane** *Grus leucogeranus*
On 5 September 2015, one was reported at Belokamenka at Irtysh valley (Feldman & Berezovikov 2015). Being a 'hear say' record of a bird that was not photographed and far away from its 'traditional migration route' in Kazakhstan, it is considered insufficiently documented.

**Mongolian Gull** *Larus mongolicus*
On 17 September 2015, a subadult was reported at Irtysh valley at Öskemen (Kim 2015). Because the identification did not seem convincing from the photograph, Andreas Buchheim and Chris Gibbins, who both have extensive experience with this taxon, were consulted. They both agreed that based on the photograph the bird seems to be a Caspian Gull *L cachinnans* and that a set of flight images showing a wing pattern would be needed to confirm the identification as Mongolian Gull. So far, there are no documented records of Mongolian in Kazakhstan (Wassink 2015b).

**Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*
On 14 May 2016, a breeding pair was reported at Bisen, West Kazakhstan province (Oparin et al 2016ab). This would be the first documented breeding record in Kazakhstan. However, photographs of the birds show Eastern Imperial Eagles *Aquila heliaca*.

**Ehrenberg's Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisicus*
On 15 April 1963, a male was collected at Mangghystau peninsula, Mangghystau province (Mitropolskiy 1965, Wassink 2015b). The skin now seems to be lost and hence the identification cannot be verified. On 20 April 2016, a second calendar-year male was reported at Aqtau, Mangghystau province (Yasko 2016). Based on the photographs, the subspecies *P p phoenicurus* with white in the wing cannot be excluded. Therefore, there are no sufficiently documented records of Ehrenberg's Redstart in Kazakhstan.

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# WP reports

This review lists rare and interesting birds reported (mostly) in the Western Palearctic mainly from **August to late September 2016**. 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 Mol Phylogenet Evol 101: 303-313, 2016, Ottenburghs et al published a new phylogenomic perspective on the evolutionary history of 'true geese Anserini' based on sequencing 19 goose genomes. The results confirm that two major lineages (corresponding to *Anser* and *Branta*) are strongly supported; that Cackling Goose *B hutchinsii* is a sister species of Barnacle Goose *B leucopsis* and not of Canada Goose *B canadensis*; and that Tundra Bean Goose *A serrirostris* is a sister species of Pink-footed Goose *A brachyrhynchus* and not of Taiga Bean Goose *A fabalis*. Jia et al (2016) estimated that 14 000-19 000 **Lesser White-fronted Geese** *A erythropus* were present in the non-breeding period in East Asia (China, Japan and South Korea); this represents more than half of the species' global population (http://tinyurl.com/gljs7qm). The second **American White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi deglandi* for Britain from 25 June remained near Blackdog, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, until at least 29 August. A **Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* photographed at Stankiškių, Šilutės, on 1 September was (only) the third for Lithuania. In Italy, up to five adults **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris* summered in Sardinia (where the species bred for the first time in 2013). The second **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* for Kuwait was a female at Jahra pools on 13 September (the first concerned nine individuals in 2011). The long-staying **American Black Duck** *Anas rubripes* at Strontian, Highland, Scotland, was still present in September.

FLAMINGOS TO TROPICBIRDS In Sardinia, c 13 000 young **Greater Flamingos** *Phoenicopterus roseus* were raised at Molentargius, Gulf of Cagliari; in 2011-16, the number of breeding pairs ranged from 7000 to 17 500. Near Jubail, 30 adults and two not-yet-flying juveniles constituted the first breeding for Saudi Arabia. The long-staying adult **Pied-billed Grebe** *Podylimbus podiceps* in France since July 2012 remained at Saint-Martin-de-Crau, Bouches-du-Rhône, into September; another adult stayed at La Préviére, Maine-et-Loire, from 26 July to 10 August. In the Canary Islands, one found this winter was again seen at Estanque del Matorral, Gran Canaria, on 6 August. The long-stayer on São Miguel, Azores, was still present in September. The first **Black-necked Grebe**

**598** Western Swamphen / Purperkoet *Porphyrio porphyrio*, adult, Minsmere, Suffolk, England, 31 July 2016 *(Steve Gantlett)*

*Podiceps nigricollis* for Bhutan was photographed near Pelea on 19 April 2015. An (early) adult **Rufous Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis meena* was found at Kujalannurkka, Hailuoto, Finland, on 29 August. A **Laughing Dove** *S senegalensis* photographed at Murdeira, Sal, on 3 May 2015 was the first for the Cape Verde Islands (Bull Afr Bird Club 23: 225-226, 2016). In Morocco, the family of **Namaqua Doves** *Oena capensis* was still present at Mijk near Dakhla, Western Sahara, on 4-12 August (breeding was confirmed in May; cf Dutch Birding 38: 322, 2016). During May, c 20-25 **Red-billed Tropicbirds** *Phaethon aethereus* were counted on Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, and eight to nine pairs were breeding; two non-breeders had been recorded in 2014-15 (elsewhere in the Canary Islands, the species breeds occasionally in single pairs on El Hierro and Lanzarote).

NIGHTJARS TO CUCKOOS The **Egyptian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus aegyptius* found near La Lajita beach, Fuerteventura, on 29 March 2007 (ringed and released the next day) has recently been accepted; other European records have been in Malta (10; the last in 1978), Italy (eight; the last in 1991), England (two; 1883 and 1984), Germany (1875), Sweden (1972) and Denmark (1983). In Israel, **Nubian Nightjar** *C nubicus* became very rare due to the disappearance of saltmarshes north of Eilat; in the late 1990s, up to 60 pairs survived at the Sdom saltmarsh

**599** Royal Tern / Koningsstern *Sterna maxima*, second-summer, Roonagh Lough, Mayo, Ireland, 16 August 2016 *(Dermot Breen)* **600** Laughing Gull / Lachmeeuw *Larus atricilla*, adult, with Black-headed Gull / Kokmeeuw *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Salthammer Odde, Bornholm, Denmark, 16 August 2016 *(Sune Riis Sørensen)*

**601** Red-footed Booby / Roodpootgent *Sula sula*, subadult, off Puerto Colón, Tenerife, Canary Islands, 4 August 2016 *(Chloé Yzoard)* **602** Swinhoe's Storm Petrel / Chinees Stormvogeltje *Oceanodroma monorhis*, adult, Fair Isle, Shetland, Scotland, 15 August 2016 *(Lee Gregory)* **603** Red-footed Booby / Roodpootgent *Sula sula*, adult (found exhausted on beach at St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, England, on 4 September 2016), Whitesmith, East Sussex, England, 4 September 2016 *(Trevor Weeks/East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service)*

**604** Stilt Sandpiper / Steltstrandloper *Calidris himantopus*, first-summer, Børaunen, Rogaland, Norway, 24 August 2016 *(Bjørn Mo)*

**605** Long-toed Stint / Taigastrandloper *Calidris subminuta*, juvenile, Ars-en-Ré, Île de Ré, Charente-Maritime, France, 12 September 2016 *(Thibaut Michel)*

**606** Long-billed Dowitcher / Grote Grijze Snip *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, first-year, Viðareiði, Viðoy, Faeroes, 18 September 2016 *(Silas Olofson)*

**607** Least Sandpiper / Kleinste Strandloper *Calidris minutilla*, adult summer, Seaton marshes, Devon, England, 3 August 2016 *(Tim White)*

south of the Dead Sea and one or two elsewhere (contra *Birds of Israel*, Shirihai 1996). In recent years, however, the species made a comeback at other sites in Israel due to measures of restoring small bits of saltmarsh habitat (http://tinyurl.com/j2qluw9). The first breeding of **Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* for Romania was confirmed at Giurgiu in June-July. A first-year **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* was photographed at Osterfeiner Moor, Niedersachsen, Germany, on 24 July.

RAILS The first **Sora** *Porzana carolina* for Brazil was found at Lagoa de São José, Rio de Janeiro, on 15 January 2015 (Atualidades Orn 191: 60-66, 2016). A female **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* at Wadi Turghat, Tripolitania, on 15 February 1970 has recently been accepted by Isenmann et al (2016) in *Birds of Libya* as the first for Libya; chronologically, it was the second for the WP (the first was in Algeria in 1867). If accepted, an adult **Western Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* at Minsmere, Suffolk, England, from 31 July to 5 August will be the first for Britain. Maybe the same individual stayed c 220 km to the north-west at Alkborough Flats, Lincolnshire, from 30 August through mid-September. In France, an unprecedented high number turned up far north from the species' breeding range; eg, two were seen at Marnay, Saône-et-Loire, on 2 July; one at Beaurepaire, Deux-Sèvres, on 19 July; one (adult) at Guidel, Morbihan, from 20 July to 16 August; one (trapped) at Creys-Mépieu, Isère, on 22 August; and at least two in Dombes, Ain, during the summer. A juvenile **Lesser Moorhen** *Paragallinula angulata* accidentally captured by a fisherman three sea miles off Laxe harbour, Galicia, on 5 February 2000 has recently been accepted by the Spanish rarities committee; it was first labelled as Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* but later correctly identified (chronologically, it was the first for Spain and the second for the WP; other records were in Madeira in 1895 and in Spain in 2003).

CRANES TO BUSTARDS An adult **Demoiselle Crane** *Grus virgo* at Bøtø, Falster, Sjælland, from 27 July to 4 August was the fifth (involving seven individuals) for Denmark (previous ones were in 1901 (two), 1984 (two), 1986 and 1992). Probably the same adult turned up in the Barycz valley on 12-15 August as the third for Poland; previous ones were in 1911 and 1912. In Italy, three were observed at Alassio, Savona, on 9 August. At least 1260 individuals in 20+ flocks flew over Cyprus between 23 August and 15 September, making it the best year ever. Alonso et al (2016) found a 40% decline of **Great Bustards** *Otis tarda* in 2005-15 in north-western Morocco, the species' only population in Africa, with a remaining total of 40-44 individuals at just two lekking sites (there were still seven lekking sites in 2005); since productivity was calculated to be higher than ever before with hunting on the decrease (a third being males), it was suggested that the main mortality threat concerned collisions with new power lines (http://tinyurl.com/j7tomkz). This spring, the first **Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueenii* nest in Jordan was found since captive-bred individuals were released into the wild (500 in 2014 and 300 in 2015). In the Negev, Israel, c 200 individuals were counted at Hazerim air base on 23 July.

TUBENOSES If accepted, a **Wilson's Storm Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus* reported off Eilat on 12 September will be the second for Israel (the first was in 1983). During August, the species was seen almost on a daily basis from the Scilly boat trips, England, with maxima of six on 4 August and four on 22 August. In the Canary Islands, the fourth **Black-bellied Storm Petrel** *Fregetta tropica* for the WP was photographed at Banco de la Concepción off Lanzarote on 4 September; previous WP ones were off Madeira in 2011 and off Lanzarote in 2011 and 2012 (cf Dutch Birding 33: 340, 2011, 34: 325, 2012). In England, **Black-browed Albatrosses** *Thalassarche melanophris* flew past Prawle Point, Devon, on 19 August and Low Newton-by-the-Sea, Northumberland, on 18 September. An immature albatross was photographed off Store Færder, Vestfold, on 9 September and reported off Jomfruland, Telemarken, on 10 September. It could be the same as the third for Sweden photographed at Marstrand and Hönö, Bohuslän, on 11 September. An adult **Swinhoe's Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* trapped on Fair Isle, Shetland, Scotland, on 14 and 15 August and observed on 23 August had been ringed here on 27 July 2013 but, unlike a second one ringed here in summer 2013, not been seen since (cf Dutch Birding 35: 255, 337-339, 2013). The sixth for the Azores was present at the Bank of Fortune, off Graciosa, on 31 August and 1 September. The sixth for Israel was seen at Eilat on 12 September, together with the Wilson's. A **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis* remarkably flying over Regent's Park in central London on 16 September was regarded as the second inland record for Britain. No less than 2725 Cory's were counted at Cape Clear, Cork, Ireland, on 3 September; on the same day, 824 flew past Galley Head, Cork, and 101 off Porthgwarra, Cornwall, England. In the Canary Islands, three **Cape Verde Shearwaters** *C edwardsii* were recorded: on Gran Canaria (trapped) on 18 July; on Montaña Clara islet off Lanzarote on 22 July (and previous days); and at Playa del Matorral, Fuerteventura, on 30 July (photographed). At Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire, England, more than 1000 **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus* (and two **Great Shearwaters** *P gravis*) were counted on 17 September. On 27 August, c 500 Great Shearwaters were seen at Skjálfandi bay; until 2011, only 41 had been recorded in Iceland. On 3 September, in Ireland, as many as 4245 were counted at Cape Clear and 1479 at Galley Head. In England, 4843 **Manx Shearwaters** *P puffinus* were counted at Start Point, Devon, on 2 August. A **Barolo Shearwater** *P baroli* was noted c 300 km south-west of St Agnes, Scilly, England, on 26 July. The hurricane Newton in the Pacific reached the Gulf of California on 7 September, sending an amazing set of pelagic seabirds inland towards Tucson, Arizona, USA, including not only a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *P pacificus* and several **Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels** *O tethys* (both new for Arizona) but also the first **Juan Fernandez Petrel** *Pterodroma externa* for North America.

**608** Griffon Vultures / Vale Gieren *Gyps fulvus*, immatures, Kællingtand, Nordjylland, Denmark, 28 June 2016 *(Jan Skrubbeltrang)* cf Dutch Birding 38: 331, 2016

**609** Tawny Eagle / Savannearend *Aquila rapax*, second calendar-year, Tze'elim, Negev, Israel, 23 July 2016 *(Ezra Hadad)*

**610** Presumed Kamchatka Gull / vermoedelijke Kamtsjatkastormmeeuw *Larus canus kamtschatschensis* (right), with Common Gulls / Stormmeeuwen *L c canus* (left and right) and Black-headed Gulls / Kokmeeuwen *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Black Rock, Kerry, Ireland, 6 March 2014 *(David O'Connor)* **611** Least Sandpiper / Kleinste Strandloper *Calidris minutilla*, adult summer, Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône, France, 7 August 2016 *(Damien Gailly)*

STORKS TO FRIGATEBIRDS In Madeira, seven **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* were seen at Paúl da Serra on 1 August; up to five individuals were reported in late June (cf Dutch Birding 38: 328, 2016). In Sardinia, the one remaining **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* from the influx in spring 2008 was still present at Molentargius (cf Dutch Birding 34: 289-293, 2012). In England, the long-staying adult **Dalmatian Pelican** *P crispus* from 7 May frequented different sites in Cornwall at least until mid-September. Recently, the Polish rarities committee accepted a second calendar-year at Borów from March 2015 as the sixth for Poland, while an immature in Wielkopolska and Kujawy from August 2015 to August 2016 was rejected as it was identified as a cagebird that escaped from the Münster zoo, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, in November 2014; the latter bird was also recorded in central Germany in March-April 2015 (Ornis Pol 57: 117-147, 2016, cf Dutch Birding 37: 122, 342-343, 2015, 38: 105, 107, 186, 245, 328, 2016). If accepted, a seemingly unringed and pristine photographed immature flying south over Marais d'Harchies, Hainaut, on 13 September will be the first for Belgium. Two obvious and proven escapes were seen in the Netherlands in August-September. On Terceira, the third **Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* for the Azores from 9 and 12 April was found exhausted on 13 April and died two days later (cf Dutch Birding 38: 245, 2016).

HERONS If accepted, an adult **Indian Pond Heron** *Ardeola grayii* photographed at Turku, Finland, from 31 August to 2 September would be the first for Europe; there are two records in the 'WP sensu BWP', in Kuwait in 2009 and 2013 (one in Egypt has been rejected). The first confirmed breeding of **Cattle Egrets** *Bubulcus ibis* for Czechia this year concerned a pair raising three young. A study on DNA barcoding and phylogenetic relationships of 32 heron species Ardeidae by Huang et al (2016) revealed that each species possessed a unique barcode except **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* and **Little Egret** *E garzetta,* which shared the same barcode, putting in doubt

**612** Saker Falcon / Sakervalk *Falco cherrug*, juvenile, Simplon, Valais, Switzerland, 22 August 2016 *(Lionel Maumary)* **613** Indian Pond Heron / Indische Ralreiger *Ardeola grayii*, adult, Turku, Finland, 31 August 2016 *(Ville-Veikko Salonen)* **614** Western Sandpiper / Alaskastrandloper *Calidris mauri*, juvenile, Aird an Runair, North Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, 1 September 2016 *(Steve Duffield/western-isles-wildlife.co.uk)*

their specific status (http://tinyurl.com/jv7e9de). For the breeding population of **Little Egret** in Britain, 2014 was a record year with 1025-1033 pairs while in six counties nesting occurred for the first time; the first breeding in Britain took place in 1996 (Br Birds 109: 491-545, 2016).

BOOBIES TO CORMORANTS It appears that there is no proof of breeding of **Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* on Raso, Cape Verde Islands, despite the presence of seven individuals on 6 June (contra Dutch Birding 38: 328, 2016); on 2 August, at least nine individuals were counted here. A subadult was photographed off Puerto Colón, Tenerife, Canary Islands, on 4 August (previous ones in 'Spain sensu lato' were in 2010, 2012 and 2015). An adult white-tailed brown morph found exhausted on a beach at St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, England, on 4 September was the first for Britain; it was taken into care at a wildlife rehabilitation centre where it was doing quite well 10 days later. Two **Brown Boobies** *S leucogaster* flew north past Berlenga island, Leiria, Portugal, on 8 August. On several days from 23 July to at least late September, one was seen near Sesimbra. If accepted, an immature photographed perched on a trawler c three km off the coast of Kerry on 13-14 August will be the second for Ireland (the first was found dead in Cork in January; cf Dutch Birding 38: 105, 2016). A few **Pygmy Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax pygmeus* were staying as far north-west as Germany and a first-year at Diksmuide, West-Vlaanderen, from 18 September was the fourth for Belgium.

OYSTERCATCHERS TO PLOVERS In the Netherlands, the ring-code of a **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* of at least 46 years old, ringed on 3 March 1972 on Texel, Noord-Holland, when at least two years old, was read at Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, on 1 August. Other examples of aged individuals involved a 43-year-old in Germany ringed on 19 June 1949 and killed on 27 November 1992 (Vogelwarte 37: 144, 1993, Dutch Birding 16: 33, 1994), and a 33-year-old at Gent, Oost-

Vlaanderen, Belgium, on 13 March 2015 (Dutch Birding 37: 191, 2015). If accepted, an adult male **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* at Tacumshin, Wexford, on 26 July will be the fourth for Ireland, just weeks after the third, a first-summer bird at the same location in May-June. In the Azores, up to six were present at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, from at least 27 May to mid-September (cf Dutch Birding 38: 328, 2016). The first for the Faeroes was photographed on Sandoy on 13 September. **Sociable Lapwings** *Vanellus gregarius* were found, eg, at Lettele, Overijssel, the Netherlands, on 23-28 August (juvenile); at Burgliebenau, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany, on 29-31 August; at Seewinkel, Burgenland, Austria, on 2-6 September; and at Pietrowice Wielkie, Silesia, Poland, on 13-14 September. Adult male **Greater Sand Plovers** *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* at Seewinkel, Burgenland, on 28-30 April and 21-28 June constituted the third and fourth for Austria, respectively (previous ones were in 1964 and 1979). In Germany, one was seen at Schmoel, Schleswig-Holstein, on 24-25 July. The fourth for Spain photographed at Santoña, Cantabria, from 31 July to 1 August was the same individual as the first for Ireland on 20 July (cf Dutch Birding 38: 328, 2016).

SANDPIPERS TO PRATINCOLES In February-March, two adult **Steppe Whimbrels** *Numenius phaeopus alboaxillaris*, one of the rarest taxa in the world, were found and for the first time ever photographed alive and sound-recorded in a flock of 30 Eurasian Whimbrels *N p phaeopus* at mudflats in Maputo, Mozambique (Afr Birdlife 4 (3): 10-11, 2016). Outside central Asia, there have been c 10 previous records for eastern Africa of which five in Mozambique, all skins including the holotype (see Allport et al (2016) and Allport & Allan (2016) at http://tinyurl.com/j6yk3qw); a live bird has recently been traced in Yemen (Callan Cohen pers comm). Allport & Cohen (Afr Birdlife 4 (6): 48-54, 2016) explain how to find this taxon in winter, and how to identify it. At rest, unlike nominate *phaeopus*, they show clean, white belly, vent and undertail-coverts, without even a single dark chevron, and no brown wash on outer tail-feathers. In flight, the underwing and axillaries are a clean pure white bordered by a contrasting narrow dark flank-bar, while nominate *phaeopus* show more dark with nearly always blackish-brown barred axillaries. In Cornwall, the long-staying **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *N hudsonicus* from October 2014 remained at Perranuthnoe through mid-September. In the Azores, single birds stayed on Terceira from August to early September, and on Faial on 19-20 August. An adult **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* photographed on Seal Island, Maine, on 23 July was the second for the eastern part of the USA (the first was in West Virginia in 2007). In the Netherlands, a female **Red Knot** *C canutus islandica* ('Paula') carrying a satellite transmitter landed on Terschelling, Friesland, in July after leaving her breeding grounds near Ellesmere Island in northern Canada in a non-stop flight of 60 hours covering 4000 km via Greenland and along the eastern coast of Iceland (http://tinyurl.com/j3ktslj). A juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** *C acuminata* photographed at Laguna Colorada, Bolivia, on 14 November 2014 concerned the first for South America (Cotinga 38: 20-22, 2016). If accepted, one at Porto Lagos, Thrace, on 31 July will be the first for Greece. A first-summer **Stilt Sandpiper** *C himantopus* at Børaunen, Rogaland, on 23-27 August was the seventh for Norway; the sixth was found two months earlier, also in Rogaland (cf Dutch Birding 38: 328, 2016). If accepted, a juvenile **Long-toed Stint** *C subminuta* photographed at Ars-en-Ré, Île de Ré, Charente-Maritime, on 12-13 September will be the second for France and the 11th for the WP. A study on **Baltic Dunlins** *C alpina schinzii* by Pakanen & Thorup (2016) showed that the decline in the Danish population from 734 to 245 breeding pairs in 1990-2006 could be explained by a decline in adult survival; a lack of protection in non-breeding sites was suggested to be the main factor (http://tinyurl.com/jsbjuze). At least 25 **Baird's Sandpipers** *C bairdii* were recorded in western Europe between 23 July and 19 September, including 15 in Britain and Ireland (four of which were in Kerry), five in the Netherlands, three in Spain, and singles in Germany and Iceland. In England, a confusing stint at Cley on 7-8 July, first considered to be a Temminck's Stint *C temminckii*, has been reidentified as Norfolk's first **Least Sandpiper** *C minutilla* (http://tinyurl.com/zcr2lcf). First one and then two stayed at Seaton marshes, Devon, on 2-5 August. An adult was photographed at Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône, France, on 7-15 August, and probably another on 17 September. In Ireland, singles were found at Tacumshin on 13 August and at Loop Head, Clare, on 14-24 August. In the Azores, singles were present on Terceira from 17 August into September and on Faial on 13-17 September. The first **Pectoral Sandpiper** *C melanotos* for Bali, Indonesia, was an adult on Serangan on 19-21 August 2015 (Wader Study 123: 153-155, 2016). A first-summer male **Western Sandpiper** *C mauri* at Tacumshin on 23-26 July was the fifth for Ireland; a juvenile at Aird an Runair, North Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, from 31 August to 4 September was the 10th for Britain; and the sixth for France was a juvenile photographed at Grand-Lieu, Loire-Atlantique, on 18 September. A first-summer or adult **Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria* photographed at Cloghaun Loch, Clare, on 15-20 August was the seventh for Ireland. In the Azores, up to eight **Wilson's Snipes** *Gallinago delicata* were found on Terceira on 17 August. A first-year **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* at Viðareiði, Viðoy, on 18 September was (only) the first for the Faeroes. Two juvenile **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* photographed on 2 October 2015 were the first for Guadeloupe (North Am Birds 69: 178-185, 2016).

SKUAS TO GULLS A **South Polar Skua** *Stercorarius maccormicki* was reported at Estaca de Bares, A Coruña, Spain, on 28 August. The first **Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* for Bangladesh was photographed at Tulatuli, Bhola, on 4 January. A first-winter **Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* at Tasitolu lake on 22 February 2015 was the first for Timor-Leste (BirdingAsia 25: 117-118, 2016). The long-staying adult **Grey-headed Gull** *C cirrocephalus* in Italy from June 2013 was again

**615** Great Spotted Cuckoo / Kuifkoekoek *Clamator glandarius*, juvenile, Osterfeiner Moor, Niedersachsen, Germany, 24 July 2016 *(Jörn Clausen)* **616** Demoiselle Crane / Jufferkraanvogel *Grus virgo*, adult, Bracław, Barycz valley, Poland, 13 August 2016 *(Stanisław Turowski)* **617** Greater Sand Plover / Woestijnplevier *Anarhynchus leschenaultii*, adult, with Common Ringed Plover / Bontbekplevier *Charadrius hiaticula*, adult, Santoña, Cantabria, Spain, 31 July 2016 *(Jesús Menéndez)*

seen at Bisceglie, Apulia, on 17 August. An adult **Laughing Gull** *Larus atricilla* at Salthammer Odde, Bornholm, on 16 August was the seventh for Denmark and an adult **Franklin's Gull** *L pipixcan* at Holter Hammrich, Niedersachsen, on 1 September the seventh for Germany. A first-winter **Audouin's Gull** *L audouinii* photographed at Praia da Monte Verde, Ribeira Grande, São Miguel, was the second for the Azores (the first was in 2005). If accepted, an adult **Kamchatka Gull** *L canus kamtschatschensis* photographed at Black Rock, Kerry, on 6 March 2014 may be the first for Ireland and the WP (for this taxon's identification, see Dutch Birding 38: 1-64, 2016). The first **Ring-billed Gull** *L delawarensis* for Russia was an adult photographed at Khatanga, Krasnoyarsk Krai, on 1 September 2015 (BirdingAsia 25: 116-117, 2016). In Portugal, an adult **Cape Gull** *L dominicanus vetula* at Quinta de Marim, Olhão, Algarve, from 5 July was still present on 9 August; based on old photographs, it may perhaps concern a returning bird from 2009.

TERNS The threatened north-western European population in Schleswig-Holstein of **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* numbered 37 pairs this year; a new late summer roosting site was discovered at the Dollard shores of north-eastern Groningen, the Netherlands, where at least 32 individuals (including 12 juveniles) were counted on 29 July. Further west in the Netherlands, up to 19 (including nine juveniles) were counted at the traditional late-summer roosting site of Balgzand, Noord-Holland, on 12 August. The highest late-summer count of **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* roosting in the northern Netherlands was 143 on 26 August. The seventh **Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* for Kuwait was found at Jahra pools on 30 July. In Ireland, an adult **Forster's Tern** *S forsteri* moved between Cruisetown and Dundalk, Louth, in August-September. As mentioned in Dutch Birding 38: 330, 2016, the identification of three 'pure' **Elegant Terns** *S elegans* in France (two) and Spain has been confirmed by genetic analyses. The two in France

**618-619** Black-bellied Storm Petrel / Zwartbuikstormvogeltje *Fregetta tropica*, Banco de la Concepción, off Lanzarote, Canary Islands, 4 September 2016 *(Michael Gerber)* **620** American Cliff Swallow / Amerikaanse Klifzwaluw *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*, first-year, St Mary's, Scilly, England, 6 September 2016 *(Joe Pender)* **621** European Roller / Scharrelaar *Coracias garrulus*, first-year, Koersel, Limburg, Belgium, 6 September 2016 *(Kris De Rouck)* **622** Solitary Sandpiper / Amerikaanse Bosruiter *Tringa solitaria*, first-summer or adult, Loop Head, Clare, Ireland, 16 August 2016 *(Paul Connaughton/Shearwater Wildlife Tours)* **623** Arabian Golden Sparrow / Arabische Goudmus *Passer euchlorus*, adult male, Eilat, Israel, 18 August 2016 *(Lior Kislev)*

were trapped at the Sandwich Tern *S sandvicensis* colony of Banc d'Arguin, Gironde, on 18 June 2007 and 15 June 2013, respectively. The Spanish Elegant concerned a bird first trapped and identified as Lesser Crested Tern *S bengalensis* in Huelva on 8 October 2002 and re-trapped and re-identified at L'Albufera València on 2 June 2006. Apart from this, the identification of a fourth orange-billed tern trapped at Banc d'Arguin in July 2003 as a 'pure' **Lesser Crested Tern** was also confirmed (Dufour et al 2016; http://tinyurl.com/zxpbe6y). In France, this summer, adults **Lesser Crested** were seen in Camargue on 27 July and at Hyères, Var, on 1 August and an **Elegant** was again on Oleron island on 26 August. This spring, **Elegant** successfully bred at Marjal del Moro, Sagunto, València; on 2 August, an adult and a juvenile were photographed at Cádiz bay, where an adult was last seen on 6 September. Apparently, up to four have been reported at Cádiz bay during July. In the Azores, a presumed **Cabot's Tern** *S acuflavida* was reported at Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, on 29 August. DNA analysis of faeces from the third Royal Tern *S maxima* for Ireland at Roonagh Lough, Mayo, on 16-17 August revealed it was an **African Royal Tern** *S m albididorsalis*; on 23-28 August, the same bird stayed at Littor Strand, Rinevella Bay and Carrigaholt Bay, on the border between Kerry and Clare (previous ones were in 1954 and 2009). If accepted, a Royal Tern seen at Plounéour-Trez, Finistère, on 24 August will be the third for France. Two breeding pairs of the critically endangered **Chinese Crested Tern** *S bernsteini* nested this year for the first time in South Korea on an uninhabited islet in South Jeolla province. This is the species' first breeding outside coastal China and marks a significant range expansion c 800 km to the north-east (cf Dutch Birding 37: 347, 2015). Moreover, a second new breeding site was found in the middle of the Taiwanese Strait where three pairs nested on Jishan-yu, Penghu islands.

RAPTORS In Britain, the breeding population of **Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* has grown to 203-237 pairs in 2014, including introduced birds, the highest number for over a century (Br Birds 109: 491-545, 2016). The second **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* for Armenia turned up in Kotayk region on 4 July; the first was in May and both involved the subspecies *E c vociferus* (cf Dutch Birding 38: 245, 2016). At Zichow, Brandenburg, Germany, one remained from 2 July through August, and possibly another was found in Sachsen-Anhalt on 4-10 August. In the Netherlands, after one or two in April and one in June, others were seen at three sites in two provinces between 23 August and 10 September; besides, one occurred at Doel, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium, on 12 August. Singles turned up at Falsterbo, Skåne, Sweden, on 12 September and (again) at Gedser, Falster, Sjælland, Denmark, on 15 September. Several first-year **Crested Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* were seen in Israel in September. The second-year male **Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus* ('Larzac') from a reintroduction project in Grands Causses, France, which stayed in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany in June-July, was found dead in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, on 25 July after a collision with a power line. A third-year male ('Adonis') that flew to the east from Grands Causses in June, stayed almost all July in Romania before returning west via Ukraine in August to the Tatry mountains on the border of Poland and Slovakia, where it stayed until at least mid-September (cf Dutch Birding 38: 331, 337, plate 526, 2016). In the Canary Islands, 62 occupied territories were counted of the endemic subspecies of **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus majorensis*; 90% of this population is concentrated on Fuerteventura, with the remainder on Lanzarote and the Chinijo archipelago (there were only 21 territories in 1998; last year, the total number of individuals was estimated at 277). A **Rüppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppelli* in a flock of Griffon Vultures *G fulvus* was photographed near Jbel Moussa, Morocco, on 28 July. In Cádiz, two were present at Algeciras on 13-14 August and at Tarifa on 3 September. A **Griffon** near Sharkaushchyna on 17-18 August was the fifth for Belarus. In Spain, a total of 192 young **Cinereous Vultures** *Aegypius monachus* fledged this summer from nests in Andalucía; due to conservation programmes, the population has increased significantly from 190 adults in 2002 to 560 this year (cf Dutch Birding 37: 409, 2015, 38: 246, 2016). Eight **Lesser Spotted Eagles** *Aquila pomarina* near Vyskov, central Moravia, on 27 August were the highest number for Czechia. A juvenile **Greater Spotted Eagle** *A clanga* photographed at Kumana National Park on 21 November 2015 was the first for Sri Lanka (BirdingAsia 25: 106-108, 2016). In Israel, the immature **Tawny Eagle** *A rapax* at Tze'elim, north-western Negev, from 14 July remained until 14 August. A second-year **Steppe Eagle** *A nipalensis* at Jardins à Ransart, Charleroi, on 18 August was the third for Belgium; on the next day, the same individual was observed at Süchteln, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. In France, a second calendar-year **Spanish Imperial Eagle** *A adalberti* was present at Dancevoir, Haute-Marne, on 5-6 August, and a first calendar-year was photographed over Col d'Orgambidexka, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, on 26 August. Karyakin et al (2016) described the first successful breeding of mixed pairs of **Eastern Imperial Eagle** *A heliaca* and **Steppe Eagle** in western Kazakhstan in 2013-15; the paper with photographs is available at http://tinyurl.com/zh9rlhu. In Belgium, an immature **Golden Eagle** *A chrysaetos* flew over Vielsam, Luxembourg, on 3 September. An adult **Bonelli's Eagle** *A fasciata* photographed at Djoudj National Park on 22 December 2015 was the first for Senegal. For the first time in half a century, breeding of **Levant Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter brevipes* could be confirmed in southern Moldova. In Scotland, 82-97 pairs of (re-introduced) **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* were counted in 2014, almost all in Highland, Argyll and Outer Hebrides (Br Birds 109: 491-545, 2016). Analyses of mitochondrial and nuclear DNA of 184 **Red Kites** *Milvus milvus*, 124 **Black Kites** *M migrans* and three F1 hybrids from central Europe showed high gene flow within populations of both species, ie, important for the origin of birds used for re-introduction programmes, and no gene flow from hybrid offspring through the maternal line. The latter indicates that the species' broad hybrid zone is not affecting Red Kite conservation (Heneberg et al 2016; http://tinyurl.com/hjo8buu). A large number of **Long-**

**legged Buzzards** *Buteo rufinus* was noted in Czechia and Poland between June and mid-September, with 28 and 27 individuals, respectively.

OWLS TO FALCONS Between August and mid-September, an influx of c 100 **Northern Hawk-Owls** *Surnia ulula* was noted in southern Norway. A **Eurasian Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium passerinum* at De Groote Peel, Noord-Brabant, from 2 April to 6 June was the ninth for the Netherlands and the first in spring. This summer, **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus* bred for the first time since 20 years in Albania. A first-year at Koersel, Limburg, Belgium, from 5 to 13 September had been colour-ringed at its nest at Garkalnes, Latvia, on 10 July (the Latvian population numbered 21 pairs in 2012). In the north of France, a female-type **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* wearing a Spanish ring was trapped at Pont-Saint-Mard, Aisne, on 22 August. In Morocco, 1217 nests of **Eleonora's Falcon** *F eleonorae* were counted in the Mogador islands, Essaouira (an increase from 940 breeding pairs in 2015). In Sweden, probably the same dark-morph individual was first seen at Härsjölund, Blekinge, on 1 August, then at Västergarn, Gotland, on 28 August, and finally at Gnosjö, Småland, on 29 August; in May, one was reported also on Öland (cf Dutch Birding 38: 331, 2016). If accepted, a juvenile **Saker Falcon** *F cherrug* photographed at Simplon, Valais, on 22 August will be the first for Switzerland. In Poland, a record c 16 (both adults and juveniles, including a juvenile ringed in Slovakia) were seen from July to mid-September. The 2014 survey of **Peregrine Falcons** *F peregrinus* in Britain revealed the presence of 1694 breeding pairs, an increase of 18% compared with the survey in 2002 (Br Birds 109: 491-545, 2016). A record four pairs bred and successfully raised a total of nine young in Malta this summer.

SHRIKES TO BULBULS On 14 June, an adult male **Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach erythronotus* was discovered by visiting birders in a park at Atyrau, Kazakhstan, at the mouth of the Ural river; then, a second adult was feeding with the first on 25 June, but no nest could be found. On 6-14 August, however, the two adults were still present together with three fledglings. This constituted the species' first breeding in the European part of Kazakhstan and the WP (http://tinyurl.com/h7jvldv). Up to 2015, there were nine records of this species in the WP 'sensu BWP'. The second **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* for Russia was seen at Mikhailovka, Mikhaylovsky district, Primorye, on 3 and 16 July; the first was in 2011 also in Primorye (Russian J Orn 25: 3038-3039, 2016). A survey of **Red-billed Choughs** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* in Britain in 2014 resulted in 394-471 pairs, with the majority in Wales and on Isle of Man (Br Birds 109: 491-545, 2016). In Austria, two were reported at Dreizinkenspitze, Tirol, on 3 August. The first nesting record of **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix* for Spain in Barcelona concerned a pair at Prat de Llobregat, not at Riu Vell (contra Dutch Birding 38: 331, 2016). A first-year **American Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* photographed on St Mary's, Scilly, on 6-10 September was the 10th for Britain (half of them in Scilly) and the earliest-ever in autumn for the WP. In August-September, two **Common Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus barbatus* were again reported from Tarifa at the species' only European breeding site.

BUSH WARBLERS TO LEAF WARBLERS On 6 August, two **Cetti's Warblers** *Cettia cetti* were found in north-eastern Germany in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, where it is rare. The **Large-billed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus magnirostris* at Al Mamzar Park, Dubai, on 11 October 2014 has been accepted as the first for the United Arab Emirates and the 'greater' WP; because no calls were heard and the bird was not trapped, the identification was not straightforward but photographs revealed that its wing formula eliminated all WP species except Two-barred Warbler *P plumbeitarsus*, which differs in bill size and habits (Dutch Birding 36: 410-411, plate 546, 2014, Sandgrouse 38: 201-204, 2016). If DNA analysis confirms its identification, a **Kamchatka Leaf Warbler** *P examinandus* sound-recorded, trapped and ringed on Husøy, Træna, Nordland, Norway, on 8 September will be the first for the WP; the species breeds in southern Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Hokkaido and Kurile Islands (see Alström et al in Ibis 153: 395-410, 2011, for its phylogeny, taxonomy and vocalizations differing from Arctic Warbler *P borealis*). The first for the mainland of Australia was photographed and sound-recorded at Broome, Kimberley, on 14 February (previously, it had been recorded on Ashmore Reef, 320 km north-west of Australia). Withrow et al (2016) reviewed the taxonomic status of 'Arctic Warblers sensu lato' in North America and, by using phenotypic and genetic markers, they identified those occurring in the Aleutian Islands as Kamchatka Leaf; in addition, they recommended to treat the subspecies of Arctic breeding in Alaska, *P b kennicotti*, as a synonym of *P b borealis* (Wilson J Orn 128: 268-277, 2016). Two early **Yellow-browed Warblers** *P inornatus* were trapped at Kampen, Sylt, Schleswig-Holstein, on 29 August (the previous earliest record for Germany was on 7 September; see Vogelwelt 125: 41-52, 2004). The first **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *P humei* for Cambodia was reported at Jahoo Gibbon Camp, Andong Kraleong, on 25 March. In spring 2015, a pair of **Iberian Chiffchaffs** *P ibericus* produced two broods in Gower, Wales, constituting the first successful breeding for Britain (Br Birds 109: 457-463, 2016).

SYLVIAS TO GRASSHOPPER WARBLERS Linossier et al (2016) investigated the relationships between migratory pattern, song variation and genetic diversity for a migratory population of **Eurasian Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* (two groups near Paris, France) and a sedentary population (three groups in Corsica). Their analysis not only showed a strong wing size difference between both populations but also acoustic divergence, with geographical variations in songs relying on both syllable and sequence content, while there was no genetic divergence between the two. Unexpectedly, migratory groups shared as many syllables and sequences as sedentary groups, raising interesting issues on song learning and the maintenance of 'dialects' in migratory birds (http://tinyurl.com/jtmrsdy). An adult male hybrid **Sardinian** x **Western**

**624** Presumed Kamchatka Leaf Warbler / vermoedelijke Kamtsjatkaboszanger *Phylloscopus examinandus*, Husøy, Træna, Nordland, Norway, 8 September 2016 *(Terje Kolaas/terjekolaas.com)*

**Subalpine Warbler** *S melanocephala* x *inornata* photographed at Alcollarín, Extremadura, Spain, on 23 March was the first for these two species (Br Birds 109: 415-416, 2016). A first-winter **Moltoni's Warbler** *S subalpina* calling at Nanjizal, Cornwall, on 1 September was the eighth for Britain and the first in autumn. This autumn's first **Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella certhiola* for western Europe was a first-year trapped at Ergavatnest, Rogaland, on 15 September.

REED WARBLERS In Norway, an intriguingly early first-year **Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata* on Jomfruland on 29 July followed a sighting of an adult at the same place in early June. If accepted, one at Mai Po from 27 November 2015 to January will be the first for Hong Kong. In Scotland, a **Sykes's Warbler** *I rama* was trapped on North Ronaldsay, Orkney, on 28 August. This summer, **Upcher's Warbler** *Hippolais languida* bred for the first time in Georgia. A **Melodious Warbler** *H polyglotta* trapped at Ottenby, Öland, on 18 August was (only) the fifth for Sweden. Between 10 July and 19 September, at least 16 **Paddyfield Warblers** *Acrocephalus agricola* were recorded in central and western Europe (nearly all trapped for ringing), including the first for Czechia at Hrabanovska Cernava on 27 August; the second for Faeroes on Nólsoy on 12 September; and the fifth for Poland at Siekierki, Vistula spit, on 25 August. Others were noted in Belgium, Denmark, Estonia (five trapped), France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden. **Blyth's Reed Warblers** *A dumetorum* trapped and ringed at Sumony on 27 August and at Sándorfalva on 28 August were (only) the third and fourth for Hungary, respectively (previous ones were in 2014 and 2015). In Norway, the first **Marsh Warbler** *A palustris* for Svalbard was photographed at Adventfjorden on 11 September. In Lithuania, 245 singing **Aquatic Warblers** *A paludicola* were counted this year, the highest number since 2000; the population had decreased from 400 singing in 1995 to only 50 in 2013, but then the population increased again due to a conservation project.

THRUSHES A **Swainson's Thrush** *Catharus ustulatus* photographed on Heimaey on 20 September was the sixth for Iceland. A first-winter **Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* photographed at Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, Senegal, on 10 December 2015 was the first for sub-Saharan Africa (Bull Afr Bird Club 23: 215-216, 2016). A first-winter **Western Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas galactotes galactotes* at Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, from 20 September was the second for the Netherlands; the first was in September 2013. As early as 18 September, one or two **Red-flanked Bluetails** *Tarsiger cyanurus* were found at Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, England.

SPARROWS TO PIPITS If accepted, an adult male **Arabian Golden Sparrow** *Passer euchlorus* at Eilat on 6-20 August will be the first for Israel. The only previous report in the WP 'sensu BWP' was in Kuwait at Al Abraq in November 2010 but that one has not been accepted by the Kuwaiti rarities committee because of doubts about its provenance; there is a small feral population in north-eastern Saudi Arabia while the species' breeding range in Arabia

is limited mainly to a narrow strip along the Red Sea coast. A **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* photographed at Khatib on 19 October 2015 was the first for Singapore (BirdingAsia 25: 113-114, 2016). The earliest-ever autumn records of **Olive-backed Pipit** *A hodgsoni* for Norway concerned birds trapped at Valdakmyra, Finnmark, and at Revtangen, Rogaland, on 5 September.

BUNTINGS A male **Lapland Longspur** *Calcarius lapponicus* photographed at Dawaling Ju, Bhutan, on 21-22 February 2014 was the first for the Indian Subcontinent (Indian Birds 12: 24, 2016). A first-winter (possibly female) **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* stayed at Ridderkerk, Zuid-Holland, on 3-5 September; the 15 previous ones in the Netherlands were males. Jiguet et al (2016) published an update of breeding population trends of **Ortolan Bunting** *E hortulana* in Europe in the past 10-15 years, documenting the species' extinction in Belgium, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovakia, and a decline in 12 other mostly northern European countries, but also an increase in Germany and Serbia (http://tinyurl.com/zy47gtx). In Hebei province, China, police and NGO activists raided an illegal captive site on 5 September and rescued c 36 400 migratory birds, including c 6100 dying **Yellow-breasted Buntings** *E aureola*; since 2013, this species is classified as 'endangered' due to a rapid population decline of 90% since the 1980s caused by trapping outside breeding grounds (cf Dutch Birding 37: 337-338, 2015). The Spanish rarities committee has recently rejected the only WP record of **Louisiana Waterthrush** *Parkesia motacilla* on La Palma, Canary Islands, in November 1991; the bird was re-identified as the first **Northern Waterthrush** *P noveboracensis* for the Canary Islands (and Spain). A study of the genomic variation in the yellow-rumped warbler *Setophaga* species complex by Toews et al (Auk 133: 698-717, 2016) confirms previous results based on fewer genetic markers that phenotypically distinct groups are also genomically highly differentiated, pointing at full species status. It means that the discussion on, eg, the Dutch systematics committee's decision to warrant species status to **Myrtle Warbler** *S coronata* (Dutch Birding 19: 21-28, 1997) can be laid to rest.

RARE BIRDS OF SLOVENIA A recent inventory in the Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz, Steiermark, Austria, revealed previously unknown specimens representing first or second records for Slovenia of, eg, a **Cream-colored Courser** *Cursorius cursor* (November 1892), **Long-tailed Jaeger** *S longicaudus* (October 1892), **Cinereous Vulture** (19th century), **Long-legged Buzzard** (24 July 1896) and **Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata* (December 1889) (Acrocephalus 36: 173-178, 2015).

**625** Black-headed Bunting / Zwartkopgors *Emberiza melanocephala*, first-winter, Crezéepolder, Ridderkerk, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, 3 September 2016 *(Jaap Denee)*

For a number of reports Birdwatch, British Birds, Go-South Bulletin, Sovon-Nieuws, www.birdguides.com, www.netfugl.dk, www.rarebirdalert.co.uk, www.tarsiger.com and www.waarneming.nl were consulted. We wish to thank Peter Adriaens, Gary Allport, AbdulRahman Al-Sirhan, Mohamed Amezian, Jem Babbington, Corstiaan Beeke, Dermot Breen, Simba Chan, Jörn Clausen, Adri Clements, Callan Cohen, Paul Connaughton, José Luis Copete, Kris De Rouck, Philippe Dubois, Steve Duffield, Enno Ebels, Rachid El Khamlichi, Lee Evans, Thijs Fijen, Damien Gailly, Steve Gantlett, Michael Gerber, Julien Gonin, Luis Gordinho, Lee Gregory, Marcello Grussu, Ricard Gutiérrez, Marcel Haas, Ezra Hadad, Trevor Hardaker, Vincent Hart, Már Höskuldsson, Qiang Jia, Josh Jones, Zbigniew Kajzer, Leander Khil, Peter de Knijff, Lior Kislev, Bence Kókay, Terje Kolaas, Alexandre Leitão, André van Loon, Erik Maassen, Lionel Maumary, Jesús Menéndez, Thibaut Michel, Bjørn Mo, Geir Mobakken, Killian Mullarney, Carmen Naves, David O'Connor, Silas Olofson, Klaus Malling Olsen, Gert Ottens, Gerard Ouweneel, Joe Pender, Yoav Perlman, Pablo Pita Criado, Manuel Pose Picado, Žydrūnas Preikša, Brett Richards, Colin Richardson Markus Risch, Magnus Robb, Staffan Rodebrand, Miguel Rouco, Markku Saarinen, Ville-Veikko Salonen, Michael Sammut, Fedor Sarayev, Ani Sarkisyan, Jaroslav Šimek, Jiri Sirek, Jan Skrubbeltrang, Sune Riis Sørensen, Rasmus Strack, Nate Swick, Fanis Theofanopoulos, Hugo Touzé, Stanisław Turowski, Dirk Verroken, Luc Verroken, Roland van der Vliet, Trevor Weeks, Tim White, Steven Wytema and Chloé Yzoard for their help in compiling this review.

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# Recente meldingen

Dit overzicht van recente meldingen van zeldzame en interessante vogels in Nederland beslaat voornamelijk de periode **juli-augustus 2016**. De vermelde gevallen zijn merendeels niet geverifieerd en het overzicht is niet volledig. Alle vogelaars die de moeite namen om hun waarnemingen aan ons door te geven worden hartelijk bedankt. Waarnemers van soorten in Nederland die worden beoordeeld door de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) wordt verzocht hun waarnemingen zo spoedig mogelijk in te dienen via www.dutchavifauna.nl.

EENDEN TOT RALLEN Een **Witbuikrotgans** *Branta hrota* werd op 7 juli waargenomen op Texel, Noord-Holland. Op vijf plekken in het midden van het land werden nog **Roodhalsganzen** *B ruficollis* gemeld. Net als in voorgaande zomers verbleef een groep van ten minste 90 **Sneeuwganzen** *Anser caerulescens* in de omgeving van Westhoek, Friesland. Ook hingen her en der weer enkele **Dwergganzen** *A erythropus* rond, waaronder de geringde vogel van 31 juli tot 10 augustus (nog steeds) bij Westzaan, Noord-Holland. Een vrouwtje **IJseend** *Clangula hyemalis* zwom op 3 augustus op de Dijkwielen in de Wieringermeer, Noord-Holland. Het mannetje **Buffelkopeend** *Bucephala albeola* in de Brabantse Biesbosch, Noord-Brabant, werd voor het laatst gemeld op 9 juli en vanaf 17 juli zwom er weer één bij Den Oever, Noord-Holland. Verspreid over het land werden ruim 10 **Witoogeenden** *Aythya nyroca* gemeld. Slechts vier **Kwartels** *Coturnix coturnix* werden geringd, namelijk op 16 en 17 augustus in de Ooijse Graaf, Gelderland. Een **Alpengierzwaluw** *Apus melba* werd op 20 juli gefotografeerd boven Den Burg op Texel. In totaal zeven **Porseleinhoenders** *Porzana porzana* werden geringd. **Kleine Waterhoenders** *Zapornia parva* lieten zich nog horen tot ten minste 10 juli in de Weerribben, Overijssel, en op 7 juli in De Onlanden bij Peize, Drenthe. Tot begin juli werden **Kleinste Waterhoenders** *Z pusilla* gehoord in de Onnerpolder, Groningen, en in de Weerribben en van 5 tot 12 augustus scharrelde een juveniel rond in de Groene Jonker bij Zevenhoven, Zuid-Holland.

STORMVOGELS TOT AALSCHOLVERS Zeetrektellers zagen in totaal zes **Noordse Stormvogels** *Fulmarus glacialis* en zes **Vale Pijlstormvogels** *Puffinus mauretanicus* passeren. Landtrektellers noteerden 59 **Zwarte Ooievaars** *Ciconia nigra*. Aan de grond werden ook enkele mooie groepen gezien, zoals op 31 juli in De Groote Peel, Limburg (15), en eind augustus bij Nederweert, Limburg (eveneens 15). Liefhebbers van pelikanen konden hun lol op met een ongeringde **Kleine Pelikaan** *Pelecanus rufescens* op 21 juli bij Borgharen, Limburg, een ontsnapte **Roze Pelikaan**

**626** Dwerguil / Eurasian Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium passerinum*, De Groote Peel, Noord-Brabant, 2 april 2016 *(Theo Bakker)*

*P onocrotalus* in Friesland (met blauwe ring) en twee **Kroeskoppelikanen** *P crispus* in Drenthe en Friesland. De Kroeskoppelikaan bij Diepenveen, Drenthe, van 15 augustus tot in september droeg een blauwe ring en was afkomstig van Aquazoo bij Leeuwarden, Friesland; het exemplaar dat vanaf 24 augustus en daarna vanaf 1 september op verschillende plekken in Friesland werd gezien was ongeringd maar had een sterk beschadigde rechtervleugel en werd daarom ook als ontsnapt beschouwd. Personeel van Aquazoo gaf aan dat beide exemplaren in de collectie gekleurringd waren maar dat zo'n ring bij stevig watertrappelen soms verloren kan gaan. **Ralreigers** *Ardeola ralloides* werden gemeld op 3 juli langs de Knardijk bij Lelystad, Flevoland; op 4 juli 's nachts roepend over Santpoort-Zuid, Noord-Holland; op 7 juli in het Verdronken Land van Saeftinge, Zeeland; op 23 juli in De Onlanden; en op 15 augustus in het Harderbroek bij Zeewolde, Flevoland. Op c 30 locaties werden één of meerdere **Koereigers** *Bubulcus ibis* gezien. Vooral opvallend was een groep van maar liefst 11 op 25 augustus bij het Stinkgat op Tholen, Zeeland. Naast gekleurringde **Grote Zilverreigers** *Ardea alba* uit onder andere Frankrijk, Hongarije en Letland was vooral een exemplaar op Texel op 31 augustus bijzonder: 'wit KUN' bleek op 22 mei als nestjong geringd in Wit-Rusland, en betekende pas de tweede terugmelding van deze soort uit dat land. **Zwarte Ibissen** *Plegadis falcinellus* werden op c 20 locaties waargenomen, met de grootste groep (vier) in het gebied Dannemeer bij Slochteren, Groningen. Een eerste-kalenderjaar **Kuifaalscholver** *Phalocrocorax aristotelis* met een sterk vergroeide bovensnavel werd op 25 augustus in een tuin in Maastricht, Limburg, opgeraapt en overgebracht naar een dierenopvangcentrum in Opglabeek, België. Dat de vogel met zo'n snavel in leven was en in Limburg opdook, wierp de vraag op of het dier hier wel op eigen kracht verzeild was geraakt. Nog geen drie dagen later dook (echter) een andere eerstejaars vogel op bij Itteren, Limburg, gevolgd door nog eens drie in september bij Borgharen. Van voor 2016 is maar een handjevol waarnemingen uit Limburg bekend.

GRIELEN TOT VORKSTAARTPLEVIEREN Het goede voorjaar voor **Grielen** *Burhinus oedicnemus* kreeg een vervolg in de zomer, met exemplaren van 23 juli tot 12 augustus in de omgeving van Homoet en Heteren, Gelderland; op 3 augustus bij Sint Laurens, Zeeland; en op 30 augustus op het Kootwijkerzand, Gelderland. Op 18 en 19 augustus verbleef een tweede-kalenderjaar **Amerikaanse Goudplevier** *Pluvialis dominica* bij Oost op Texel. **Aziatische Goudplevieren** *P fulva* werden gemeld op 9 en 10 juli op Vlieland, Friesland; op 20 en 21 juli op de Slikken van Flakkee, Zuid-Holland; van 22 tot 30 juli op Texel; van 4 tot 6 augustus bij Nieuwkoop, Zuid-Holland; op 7 augustus over telpost Loozerheide bij Weert, Limburg; en op 13 augustus wederom op Texel. Vanaf 12 augustus werden c 60 **Morinelplevieren** *Charadrius morinellus* waargenomen, waaronder 34 langs trektelposten. Een juveniele **Steppekievit** *Vanellus gregarius* verbleef van

**627** Zwarte Ooievaar / Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*, juveniel, Driebergen, Utrecht, 20 augustus 2016 *(Luuk Punt)*

**628** Franklins Meeuw / Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*, eerste-zomer, Broekhuizen, Limburg, 14 juli 2016
*(Mariet Verbeek)*

**629** Griel / Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*, eerste-winter, Driel, Gelderland, 29 juli 2016
*(Alex Bos)*

**630** Griel / Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*, eerste-winter, Driel, Gelderland, 5 augustus 2016 *(Jolanda Wannet)* **631-632** Slangenarend / Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, derde kalenderjaar, Asenray, Limburg, 7 augustus 2016 *(Patrick Palmen)*

**633** Veldrietzanger / Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, eerste-winter, Wormerland, Noord-Holland, 31 augustus 2016 *(Jan van der Geld)*

**634** Noordse Nachtegaal / Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*, eerste-winter, Noordhollands Duinreservaat, Castricum, Noord-Holland, 28 augustus 2016 *(Leo P Heemskerk)*

**635** Witwangstern / Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*, tweede kalenderjaar, Molenpolder, Ossenisse, Zeeland, 10 juni 2016 *(Paul van Tuil)* **636** Bastaardarend / Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Nieuwegein, Utrecht, 6 mei 2016 *(Bram Rijksen)* cf Dutch Birding 38: 343, 2016 **637** Steppekievit / Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius*, eerste-winter, Lettele, Overijssel, 25 augustus *2016 (Julian Bosch)* **638** Bonapartes Strandloper / White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*, adult, Westhoek, Friesland, 2 september 2016 *(Aart Vink)* **639** Graszanger / Citting Zisticola *Cisticola juncidis*, Groesbeek, Gelderland, 5 augustus 2016 *(Wim van Zwieten)* **640** Citroenkwikstaart / Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*, eerste-winter, Jaap Deensgat, Lauwersmeer, Groningen, 20 augustus 2016 *(Martijn Bunskoek)*

23 tot 28 augustus bij Lettele, Overijssel. Van de c zeven **Breedbekstrandlopers** *Calidris falcinellus* werd een juveniel van 18 tot 26 augustus bij Den Oever het meest bekeken. Een adulte **Bairds Strandloper** *C bairdii* werd op 23 juli waargenomen in de Breebaartpolder bij Termunten, Groningen; indien aanvaard, betreft dit het 11e geval. Van 10 augustus tot 2 september werd (bij hoogwater) af en toe een adulte **Bonapartes Strandloper** *C fuscicollis* waargenomen bij Westhoek. Op 20 augustus werd deze zelfs vergezeld door een tweede. Vanaf 24 augustus verbleef bovendien een exemplaar bij Dannemeer. Een **Blonde Ruiter** *C subruficollis* werd tussen 30 juli en 2 augustus onregelmatig waargenomen in de Ezumakeeg, Friesland. Op 14 augustus werd er één gefotografeerd bij Kloosterburen, Groningen, en op 24 augustus was er een melding op Texel. Met acht **Gestreepte Strandlopers** *C melanotos* deed deze soort het weer eens wat beter dan de afgelopen maanden. Een adulte **Grijze Strandloper** *C pusilla* verbleef op 25 juli op de Kwade Hoek, Zuid-Holland; indien aanvaard betreft dit het 11e geval. Verreweg de meeste van de c 25 **Grauwe Franjepoten** *Phalaropus lobatus* verbleven in de noordelijke helft van het land. Een zomerse **Rosse Franjepoot** *P fulicarius* zwom van 10 tot 14 juli in de Brabantse Biesbosch. Van 16 tot 19 juli verbleef wederom een **Terekruiter** *Xenus cinereus* in de Breebaartpolder. In juli werden acht **Poelruiters** *Tringa stagnatilis* waargenomen en van 19 tot 25 augustus liet een juveniel zich goed bekijken bij Den Helder, Noord-Holland. De vogel van Tholen, Zeeland, bleef tot ten minste 24 augustus. Op 23 augustus werd een foeragerende **Steppevorkstaartplevier** *Glareola nordmanni* opgemerkt en gefotografeerd langs de Afsluitdijk bij Koarnwertersân (Kornwerderzand), Friesland.

JAGERS TOT STERNS Zeetrektellers noteerden twee **Kleinste** *Stercorarius longicaudus*, (slechts) 78 **Kleine** *S parasiticus* en één **Grote Jager** *S skua*. Adulte **Vorkstaartmeeuwen** *Xema sabini* vlogen op 9 augustus langs Ameland, Friesland, en op 28 augustus langs Camperduin, Noord-Holland. Op 29 augustus werden twee bijzonder vroege juvenielen gemeld langs Muiden, Noord-Holland. Een eerste-zomer **Franklins Meeuw** *Larus pipixcan* werd op 14 juli ontdekt bij Broekhuizen, Limburg, maar helaas niet teruggevonden (10e geval). In het Westelijk Havengebied van Amsterdam, Noord-Holland, werd op 13 en 28 juli opnieuw een tweede-kalenderjaar **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* waargenomen. Al op 4 juli verschenen de eerste **Lachsterns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* op de inmiddels vaste stek bij Nieuwe Pekela, Groningen. Op 25 juli werden er hier maximaal 26 waargenomen (waaronder drie juvenielen). Op 29 juli werd een slaapplaats gevonden op de Dollardkwelders, Groningen, waar 32 vogels (waarvan 12 juvenielen) de nacht doorbrachten. Op de traditionele slaapplaats op het Balgzand, Noord-Holland, werden er op 12 augustus maximaal 19 geteld (waaronder zeven juvenielen). Op drie avonden werden slaapplaatstellingen van **Reuzensterns** *Hydroprogne caspia* georganiseerd; het hoogste aantal werd geteld op 26 augustus en betrof 143, waarvan 84 langs de Friese IJsselmeerkust (2013 was met 153 tot nu toe het beste jaar). Bij Dannemeer brachten c 10 paar **Witwangsterns** *Chlidonias hybrida* c 15 jongen groot. Ook op enkele andere plekken werd de soort gezien, zoals een tweede-kalenderjaar van 31 mei tot 19 juni bij Ossenisse, Zeeland, en drie op 25 juli op de Kwade Hoek. In totaal werden c 15 **Witvleugelsterns** *C leucopterus* doorgegeven.

VISARENDEN TOT UILEN Trektellers noteerden in totaal 86 **Visarenden** *Pandion haliaetus*, 983 **Wespendieven** *Pernis apivorus*, 826 **Bruine** *Circus aeruginosus*, 15 **Blauwe** *C cyaneus* en 23 **Grauwe Kiekendieven** *C pygargus*, 18 **Rode Wouwen** *Milvus milvus* en vijf **Zwarte Wouwen** *M migrans*. **Grijze Wouwen** *Elanus caeruleus* werden gemeld op 23 augustus over telpost Brobbelbies bij Schaijk, Noord-Brabant, en op 27 augustus op het Wierdense Veld bij Nijverdal, Overijssel; sinds het voorjaar van 2015 is het aantal gevallen nauwelijks nog bij te houden... De tweede-kalenderjaar **Lammergier** *Gypaetus barbatus* ('Larzac') zwierf nog tot begin juli door Nederland en werd op 25 juli als draadslachtoffer opgeraapt in Schleswig-Holstein, Duitsland. Er werden ten minste 10 **Slangenarenden** *Circaetus gallicus* waargenomen. Op een aantal 'vaste' plekken bleven exemplaren voor langere tijd: de gehele periode op het Dwingelderveld, Drenthe, tot 18 juli op de Hoge Veluwe, Gelderland, en van 2 juli tot 4 augustus op het Fochteloërveen, Drenthe/Friesland (maximaal drie). Daarbuiten werd de soort gemeld op 2 en 3 juli op de Strabrechtse Heide, Noord-Brabant; op 3 juli bij Winterswijk, Gelderland; op 24 juli bij Kiel, Groningen; van 25 juli tot 15 augustus bij Asenray, Limburg; en op 6 augustus over De Cocksdorp op Texel. Een 10-tal langstrekkende **Steppekiekendieven** *C macrourus* werd waargenomen, voornamelijk in de laatste decade van augustus. Een **Dwerguil** *Glaucidium passerinum* bevond zich van 2 april tot 6 juni op een stil gehouden locatie in De Groote Peel, Noord-Brabant.

HOPPEN TOT LEEUWERIKEN Er was een handvol zomerse **Hoppen** *Upupa epops*, waaronder één van 8 tot 10 augustus op een vakantiepark bij Sint Maartenszee, Noord-Holland. Vooral in het (zuid)oosten van het land werden her en der **Bijeneters** *Merops apiaster* waargenomen, grotendeels als uitvloeisel van geslaagde broedgevallen aldaar. Verspreid over het land werden in augustus c 30 **Draaihalzen** *Jynx torquila* geringd. Eind augustus werd een handvol **Roodpootvalken** *Falco vespertinus* opgemerkt. Trektellers noteerden verder zes **Smellekens** *F columbarius,* 230 **Boomvalken** *F subbuteo* en 65 **Slechtvalken** *F peregrinus*. Er was een melding van een juveniele **Roodkopklauwier** *Lanius senator* op 19 augustus bij Bergen, Noord-Holland. **Notenkrakers** *Nucifraga caryocatactes* vlogen op 27 augustus over de Ooijpolder, Gelderland, op 28 augustus langs Veenendaal, Utrecht, en op 31 augustus over Hengelo, Overijssel; de laatste twichtbare dateert van november 2008. Zeer bijzonder was het eerste gedocumenteerde zomergeval van **Strandleeuwerik** *Eremophila flava* op 23 juli op de Krammersche Slikken bij Oude Tonge, Zuid-Holland.

BOSZANGERS TOT GRASZANGERS Op 29 augustus waren twee (of drie) **Grauwe Fitissen** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

aanwezig op Vlieland. Een **Bergfluiter** *P bonelli* werd op 6 juli waargenomen bij Maarn, Utrecht. Het mannetje **Iberische Tjiftjaf** *P ibericus* in Enschede, Overijssel, bleef na het volbrengen van zijn ouderlijke taken nog tot 10 september. **Sperwergrasmussen** *Sylvia nisoria* waren vrij schaars. Er waren slechts zeven vangsten (waaronder een adult vrouwtje bij Almere op 13 augustus), tegenover 20 in 2015 en 18 in 2014. Ook veldwaarnemingen waren schaars, met vanaf 10 augustus slechts zes, uitsluitend op Waddeneilanden. De **Orpheusspotvogel** *Hippolais polyglotta* bij Mill, Noord-Brabant, zong op 16 juli voor het laatst. Een **Veldrietzanger** *Acrocephalus agricola* werd op 28 augustus ontdekt in de Eemshaven, Groningen, maar verdween helaas snel uit beeld; indien aanvaard betreft dit pas de derde veldwaarneming. Een eerste-kalenderjaar werd op 31 augustus geringd in Wormerland, Noord-Holland. De eerste **Waterrietzanger** *A paludicola* werd al op 25 juli in de Amsterdamse Waterleidingduinen geringd. In augustus volgden nog (slechts) c 11 vangsten. Veldwaarnemingen vonden plaats op 17 augustus bij Berkel en Rodenrijs, Zuid-Holland, en op de Kwade Hoek (maar liefst vijf). Er werden maar liefst 14 **Grote Karekieten** *A arundinaceus* geringd, waarvan vier in de duinstreek. Voor het eerst sinds september 2012 waren er weer eens **Graszangers** *Cisticola juncidis* twitchbaar buiten Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Ze verbleven vanaf 31 juli bij Groesbeek, Gelderland; van 20 tot 25 augustus bij Maassluis, Zuid-Holland; op 25 augustus op de Dijkgatsweide bij Den Oever; op 26 augustus bij Ritthem, Zeelend; en op 29 augustus bij Sliedrecht. Zuid-Holland.

SPREEUWEN TOT GORZEN **Roze Spreeuwen** *Pastor roseus* waren er vroeg bij, met juvenielen op 18 en 19 augustus op de Kwade Hoek, op 19 augustus op de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, en van 31 augustus tot 2 september op de noordpunt van Texel. **Noordse Nachtegalen** *Luscinia luscinia* werden geringd op 25 augustus op Texel en op 28 augustus bij Castricum, Noord-Holland. Een **Kleine Vliegenvanger** *Ficedula parva* werd op 20 augustus gefotografeerd in de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland. Een juveniele **Citroenkwikstaart** *Motacilla citreola* verbleef van 20 tot 24 augustus bij het Jaap Deensgat in de Lauwersmeer, Groningen. Trektellers registreerden in augustus een aardig totaal van c 100 **Duinpiepers** *Anthus campestris*. Er werden bij Castricum drie **Roodmussen** *Erythrina erythrina* geringd, waaronder een adult mannetje en een net uitgevlogen juveniel op 5 augustus. De eerste najaarsvogels verschenen op 20 augustus op Terschelling, Friesland, en op 26 (vangst) en 28 augustus op Vlieland. **Ortolanen** *Emberiza hortulana* deden het vergeleken met recente jaren aardig, met vanaf 16 augustus onder meer 42 langs trektelposten. Op 18 augustus was er bovendien een vangst langs de Oostvaardersdijk, Flevoland. Een **Grauwe Gors** *E calandra* vloog op 24 augustus langs Vlissingen, Zeeland.

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

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# DB Actueel

**Rosse Waaierstaart op Maasvlakte** Na een fantastisch Deception Tours-weekend op Vlieland, Friesland, met de 'Birding Basterds', een vriendengroep van fanatieke vogelaars, hadden Thijs Fijen, Mark de Vries en ik de smaak te pakken. We besloten daarom op dinsdag 20 september 2016 de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, weer eens 'goed leeg te trekken'. Dit najaar waren de Birding Basterds al heerlijk op dreef dus er moest haast wel iets leuks in het vat zitten. Met het eerste licht bezochten Mark, Thijs en ik de inmiddels welbekende greppel nabij de brandweerkazerne. Dat begon goed met mooie aantallen Fitissen *Phylloscopus trochilus* en Tapuiten *Oenanthe oenanthe* maar daarna bleef het angstvallig stil en bleek de Vuurtorenvlakte leeg. De zon begon te schijnen en het werd lekker warm. Daarom gingen we naar de Westplaat waar veel schaduw is. Hier waren veel vogels te vinden dus dat gaf weer wat moed! Vanaf de Westplaat baanden we ons een weg door de duindoorns om vervolgens langs het Slufterdepot terug naar de auto te lopen, Mark en Thijs aan de wegkant van de haag met duindoorns en ik tussen de haag en het hoge hek.

Met de verrekijker checkte ik wat Tjiftjaffen *P collybita* toen ik plotseling een oranjebruine vogel met lange staart met witte toppen het pad en het hek over zag vliegen. Direct schoot ik in stressmodus: dit was een Rosse Waaierstaart *Cercotrichas galactotes*! Meteen riep ik Mark en Thijs maar die moesten een behoorlijk stuk omlopen om bij me te komen. Ondertussen probeerde ik de vogel in beeld te krijgen maar door de stress en het hek lukte dit eerst niet. Met Mark en Thijs erbij werd hij gelukkig snel teruggevonden: we keken naar een Rosse Waaierstaart! Wat een ongeloof en euforie! Dan nog de bewijsplaatjes… de autofocus snapte het hek voor de vogel niet en ik snapte niet dat mijn camera dit niet

**641** Rosse Waaierstaart / Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*, eerste-winter, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 20 september 2016 *(Jorrit Vlot)*

snapte: 'Jorrit kan even niks'. De vogel bleek gelukkig vrij tam en toen hij ook nog even aan de goede kant van het hoge hek kwam, zat het met de plaatjes wel goed.

Daarna begon het genieten! De vogel was continu in beeld waarbij de kenmerkende staart vaak omhoog werd gestoken. Al snel schoven de eerste vogelaars aan. Ondanks het hoge hek en de betonnen rand met wat riet waarachter de vogel vaak verborgen bleef, was hij de rest van de dag (en ook de volgende dagen) goed twitchbaar, al dan niet vanaf een keukentrapje. De laatkomers werden zelfs nog getrakteerd op een prachtige juveniele Steppekiekendief *Circus macrourus* die over de waaierstaart vloog! Op 24 september werd de vogel voor het laatst gezien; op deze dag oogde hij niet meer erg fit.

Dit betreft het tweede geval van Rosse Waaierstaart in Nederland. De eerste verbleef van 25 tot 27 september 2013 in de Harger- en Pettemerpolder nabij Petten, Noord-Holland (zie Dutch Birding 35: 380-383, 2013). Ook nu gaat het net als bij het vorige geval om de westelijke ondersoort *C g galactotes* die overwintert in West-Afrika en broedt in Zuid-Spanje, Noord-Afrika en in en rond Israël. Na 2013 werd de soort slechts eenmaal als dwaalgast in noordelijk Europa vastgesteld: van 4 tot 10 juli 2016 in Finland (Dutch Birding 38: 334-335, plaat 519, 2016). Het bewijst hoe extreem zeldzaam hij ten noorden van zijn broedgebied is. Jorrit Vlot

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin On 20 September 2016, a Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* was found at Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands, where it stayed until 24 September. It belonged to the western subspecies *C g galactotes*. This is the second record, after a bird at Petten, Noord-Holland, on 25-27 September 2013.

**642** Rosse Waaierstaart / Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*, eerste-winter, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 20 september 2016 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

**643** Rosse Waaierstaart / Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*, eerste-winter, Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland, 20 september 2016 *(Wietze Janse)*

# DBA-nieuws

**Abonnementen in 2017** Het bestuur heeft met ingang van 2017 de prijs voor het tijdschrift Dutch Birding licht verhoogd en de prijs voor Dutch Bird Alerts (DBAlerts) sterk verlaagd. De belangrijkste verandering is echter dat vanaf dit najaar digitaal kan worden betaald. Op de website (www.dutchbirding.nl) kan men het gewenste abonnement kiezen, waarna meteen wordt betaald (bijvoorbeeld met credit card of iDEAL). Nieuw zijn onder meer de introductie van het combi-abonnement en het jongerenabonnement (tot 25 jaar). De voornaamste tarieven in 2017: een abonnement op Dutch Birding kost EUR 40.00 voor abonnees in Nederland, in combinatie met DBAlerts EUR 60.00. Alleen DBAlerts kost EUR 25.00. Voor abonnees in België kost Dutch Birding EUR 42.50. Jonge abonnees (tot 25 jaar) betalen in Nederland EUR 25.00 en in België EUR 27.50. Voor DBAlerts betalen jongeren tot 25 jaar EUR 10.00. Volg de aankondigingen op de website voor meer details. Remco Hofland

**Subscriptions in 2017** The board has decided to raise the subscription fee of the Dutch Birding journal in 2017 to EUR 40.00 for subscribers in the Netherlands, EUR 42.50 for Belgium, EUR 43.50 for other countries in Europe and EUR 45.00 for countries outside Europe. From late autumn 2016, membership renewal can be easily done on the website (www.dutchbirding.nl) by credit card. Please keep an eye on the website for further details. Remco Hofland