

"Some notes on seabirds in the Catalan Sea"

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SUMMARY: Some data on distribution of seabirds in the Catalan Sea are presented. An amount of 22 species have been sighted. This sea is an important area of wintering north-atlantic seabirds.

RESUME: On présente quelques notes sur la distribution d'oiseaux marins en Mer Catalane. On a pu observer un total de 22 espèces. Cette mer est une importante zone d'hivernage d'oiseaux marins de l'Atlantique nord.

INTRODUCTION: During oceanographic and fishing studies off the Catalan coast notes have been taken on the sightings, distribution and abundance of seabirds. Very few studies have been made on seabirds in the area, being carried most of them from land, with some exception (LLORENTE & MONTORI, 1982). All our sightings have been made from sea. The aim of this paper is to present some first data and comments on observations which are still being carried on.

METHODOLOGY: Specific identification, abundance, date, hour, position, depth and meteorological data are noted for each sighting. Sightings are being carried more accurately since 1984.

RESULTS: An amount of 22 species of seabirds have been sighted.

F. PROCELLARIIDAE

Puffinus puffinus (mauretanicus)

Puffinus griseus

Puffinus gravis

Calonectris diomedea

F. HYDROBATIDAE

Hydrobates pelagicus

F. SULIDAE

Sula bassana

F. PHALACROCORACIDAE

Phalacrocorax carbo

F. STERCORARIIDAE

Stercorarius pomarinus

F. LARIDAE

Larus argentatus (michaellis)

Larus fuscus

Larus minutus

Larus ridibundus

Larus audouinii

Larus melanocephalus

Rissa tridactyla

Sterna sandvicensis

Sterna hirundo

Chlidonias niger

F. ALCIDAE

Alca torda

Stercorarius parasiticusFratercula arcticaCatharacta skua

NOTES AND REMARKS: Sightings of P. griseus are first for the area. Data of some other species are very scarce (MALUQUER, 1981).

- Puffinus griseus: Two sightings: one ind., 31 JAN 84, 41°31'N 2°58'E; one ind, 8 MAY 84, 39°53'N 3°33'E.
- Puffinus gravis: One individual, 31 JAN 84, 41°31'N 2°58'E.
- Calonectris diomedea: It practically disappears in winter. In April and May its numbers increase all over the Catalan coast until autumn, when it congregates in flocks.
- Sula bassana: Adults, immatures and juveniles occur throughout the winter attending trawlers. In late spring and summer some individuals, not adults, still remain. Juveniles begin to appear in September-October.
- Stercorarius pomarinus: Few sightings of this very rare skua, all of them in spring: 1 ind, 3 MAY 83, 40°54'N 1°23'E; 1 ind, 4 MAY 83, 40°51'N 1°18'E; 1 ind, 7 MAY 84, 40°50'N 3°13'E; 1 ind, 15 MAY 84, 41°24'N 3°13'E.
- Stercorarius parasiticus: It seems to occur throughout the year in very small numbers: 1 ind, 18 OCT 83, 41°13'N 1°59'E; 1 ind, 22 MAR 84, 41°20'N 2°08'E; 1 ind, 10 APR 84, 41°30'N 2°37'E.
- Catharacta skua: Much commoner than thought in autumn and in winter, when it is a common bird.
- Rissa tridactyla: Very common in winter. Almost never close to land. Sometimes in harbours. Some individuals still remain in spring, most of them immatures.
- Alca torda: Very common in winter.
- Fratercula arctica: Sometimes sighted in winter: 1 ind, 1 FEB 83, 41°08'N 1°58'E.

REFERENCES:

- LLORENTE, G. & A. MONTORI. 1982. Algunas observaciones de Rissa tridactyla (Linn.) (Aves, Laridae) y Stercorarius skua (Brúnnich) (Aves, Stercorariidae) en el litoral barcelonés. P. Dept. Zool. Barcelona, 7: 81-83.
- MALUQUER, J. 1981. Els ocells de les terres catalanes. 3ª ed. Ed. Barcino. Barcelona.