Separation of Western and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear

Magnus Ullman

'Black-eared wheatear' appears in two taxa, the western *hispanica* and the eastern *melanoleuca*. Most often, they have been regarded as two subspecies of the same species (Black-eared Wheatear), *Oenanthe hispanica hispanica* and *O h melanoleuca*, but they are nowadays also treated as separate species, Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica* and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca* (eg, Sangster et al 1999), a treatment that is followed in the present article. This paper focuses on the separation in the field of both taxa which, so far, has received only limited attention in the birding literature and may be more complex than sometimes suggested. The separation from other wheatears is beyond the scope of this paper. Especially Pied Wheatear *O pleschanka* can be easily confused with Eastern Black-eared Wheatear in several plumages and should be taken into account when identifying black-eared wheatears (see, for instance, Ullman 1994). Moreover, Pied Wheatear and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear frequently hybridize where their ranges meet or overlap. Thus extensive hybridization is reported, eg from northern Iran and Transcaucasia (Cramp 1988). In Europe, hybridization occurs in eastern Bulgaria, perhaps to an increasing extent.

Hispanica breeds in north-western Africa, Iberia, southern France, much of Italy and Croatia, while *melanoleuca* breeds in southern Italy, over most of the Balkans south of Croatia and eastwards through Asia Minor to the Levant, the Caucasus, southernmost Russia, western Iran and westernmost Kazakhstan. The two taxa winter throughout the Sahel zone in Africa, *hispanica* in the western part and *melanoleuca* in the central and eastern part. There is some overlap in the area of Mali, Niger and Nigeria. Both taxa generally migrate along a fairly north/south-orientated axis, and thus regularly occur side by side in Tunisia, Malta, southern Italy and adjacent regions (Cramp 1988). Both taxa regularly occur as vagrants in north-western Europe, north and west of their respective ranges, mostly in spring. *Hispanica* seems to be more regular than *melanoleuca* but in many cases vagrant black-eared wheatears have not been identified to taxon and any patterns in occurrences of both taxa may only become clearer when all vagrants are correctly identified – when possible – to taxon.

Ageing and sexing

Adult male

The ear-coverts and throat (unless white-throated) are pitch black, possibly with some buffish mottling in fresh plumage – particularly at the rear end of the ear-coverts and/or the lower part of the throat-bib – but even then essentially black and with the lower border well defined. Chin and lores are always pitch black. In fresh plumage in early autumn, the wing-feathers are black with pale – whitish, buffish or ochre – fringes on the greater (and sometimes median) coverts as well as the tertials and the remiges, particularly the inner secondaries. The primaries and primary coverts are finely tipped white. The lesser coverts are all black or with very narrow pale fringes that soon wear off. During spring migration, ie, from March onwards, the wings are normally all black, but may retain traces of pale fringes on the feathers, at least on the inner secondaries. The axillaries and underwing-coverts are black, occasionally with very narrow whitish tips to the marginal coverts.

Immature male

The ear-coverts and throat (unless white-throated) are basically black but with obvious pale fringes in first autumn, generously spread over the whole black area. In spring, the throat and ear-coverts of immature males vary from adult-type all-black to blackish parts all covered by pale fringes, though narrower and more sparse than in autumn. From early autumn to winter, the wing-feathers are blackish with obvious whitish, buffish or ochre fringes on most feathers, including the lesser coverts. While the primary coverts of most adult males are – at most – white tipped, the entire outer web shows a pale fringe in first-autumn males. The pale fringes wear considerably but to some extent usually are still visible in April and sometimes throughout

FIGURE 1 **Autumn birds**. Western Black-eared Wheatears / Westelijke Blonde Tapuiten *Oenanthe hispanica* (left two birds of each group) and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuiten *O melanoleuca* (right two birds of each group) *(Peter Elfman)*. Upper four: adult males, middle four: immature males, bottom four: females.

1a Adult male *hispanica*. Typical bird with rather warm brownish-buff, uniform upperparts (not unlike spring bird). Black face pattern much as in spring plumage: small amount of black above lores and on forehead; virtually all-black feathers indicate adult male.

1b Adult male *hispanica*. Another typical bird, also quite reminiscent of spring male. Restricted black face pattern, smaller than in *melanoleuca*. Lower border of throat-bib may be quite ill-defined in autumn, but apart from that most feathers all-black.

2a Adult male *melanoleuca*. Typical bird with rather dull, grey upperparts (and less suggestive of spring plumage than in *hispanica*). Some birds have even darker upperparts than this one. Large, black face pattern as in spring males, although some birds may have faint pale fringes on lower throat (generally less than in *hispanica*).

2b Adult male *melanoleuca*. Another typical bird with two-toned upperparts: darkish grey crown/nape and slightly paler, warmer mantle. Some birds have lighter mantle (or whitish, underlying feathers more obviously visible). Black face pattern much as in spring birds.

3a Immature male *hispanica*. Typical bird with obvious brownish-buff tinge to upperparts (recalling adult male but slightly less warm). Face pattern similar to adult male but blackish area extensively covered with pale fringes, which make it more difficult to assess actual size of black mask.

3b Immature male *hispanica*. Some birds have slightly greyer or darker upperparts but still recall adult males. There may be so much pale fringing to lores and ear-coverts that it resembles a female.

4a Immature male *melanoleuca*. Rather typical, quite dark, greyish bird, recalling adult and less warm brownish than *hispanica*. While the black face pattern is extensively covered with pale fringes (indicating immaturity), some individuals still display the large black area typical of *melanoleuca* and which excludes *hispanica*.

4b Immature male *melanoleuca*. Another typical bird with crown–nape–mantle very similar to adult bird and too grey, too little brownish-buff to fit *hispanica*. On many *melanoleuca*, pale fringes of black face-mask obstruct reliable assessment of its true size.

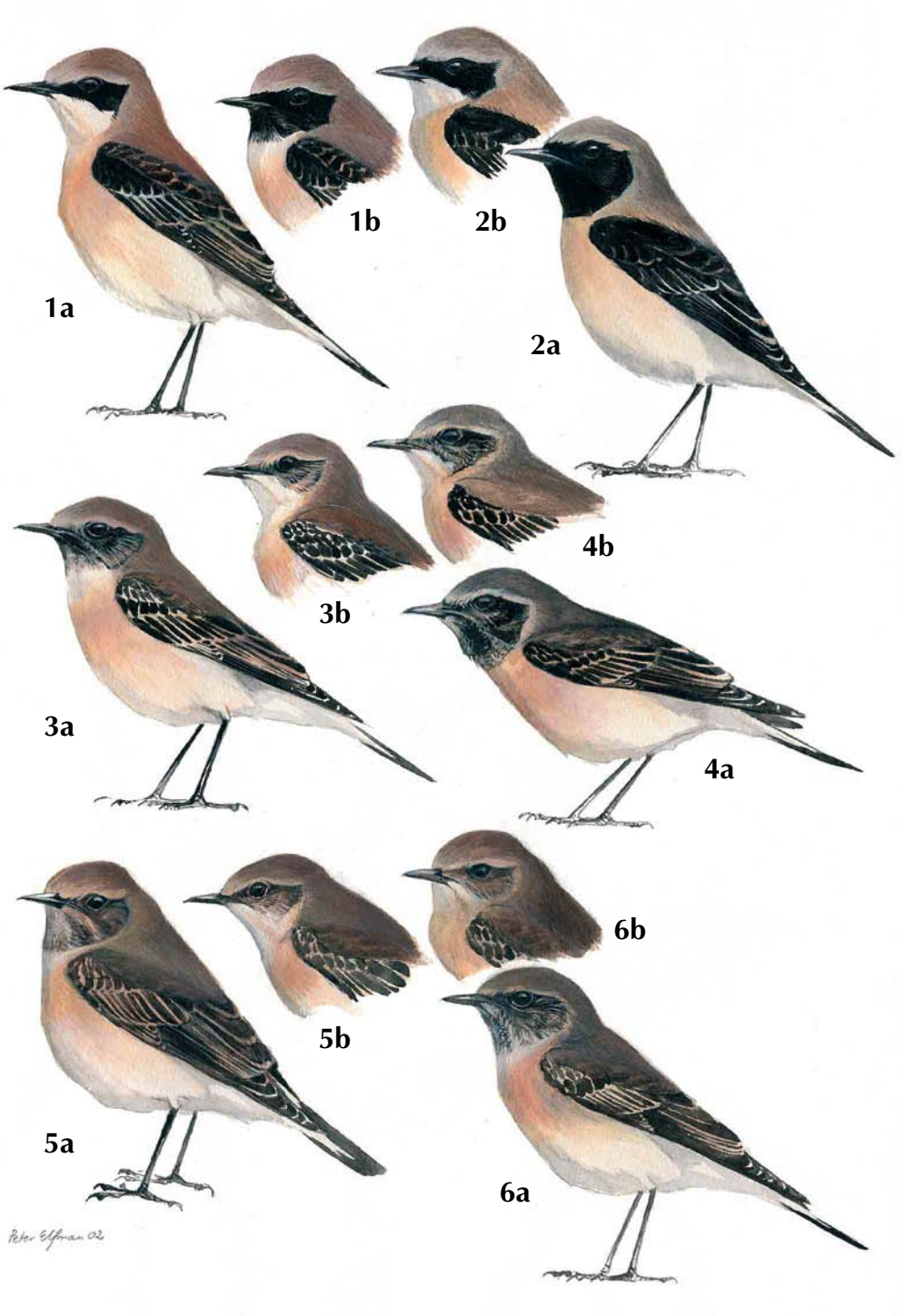
5a Female *hispanica*. Typical bird, somewhat warmly brownish coloured and slightly recalling immature male.

5b Female *hispanica*. Another typical bird, slightly darker brown, but still with warm, russet tinge. Some females may have the dark of lores and ear-coverts just a trifle darker than crown and nape.

6a Female *melanoleuca*. Rather dark individual. Some birds may have such a faint brownish tinge on the upperparts, that it is impossible to see in the field on a dull autumn day.

6b Female *melanoleuca*. Rather typical bird, with brownish upperparts showing slight russet tinge, very similar to a dark *hispanica*. Some females may have the dark of lores and ear-coverts just a trifle darker than crown and nape.

May or even later. In a similar way, the black scapulars of adult males are all-black in spring, while they normally retain at least some pale fringes in second calendar-year birds, while in others they are only slightly darker than the mantle. By spring, the originally blackish remiges have become quite brownish in immature males. This is often particularly evident in the primaries, which contrast with the blacker central rectrices. Ageing by pale primaries (or tertials), however, may not always be reliable, because the exposed parts of these feathers become bleached by the African sun during winter even in adult males, and may sometimes be noticeably pale by spring. A more reliable way to age difficult second-year males is by the contrast between newly moulted, black feathers and retained, brownish feathers. Thus, most immature males have black lesser and median coverts, a variable number of greater coverts (varying from none to all) and sometimes single tertials (see below for differences between *hispanica* and *melanoleuca*). These feathers contrast with the rest of the wing, and the contrast is often most easily observed in the area of black coverts versus brownish primary coverts, or sometimes black median coverts versus brownish (outer) greater coverts. Quite often, newly moulted, black scapulars 'intensify' the black of the lesser and median coverts. (The newly moulted, black feathers may or may not have pale fringes.) In adult birds, all these feathers are black. The axillaries and underwing-coverts are quite dark – blackish or dark brown-grey. The marginal coverts (sometimes all underwing-coverts) have obvious pale fringes. Although these fringes normally are difficult to see under field conditions, they may be visible when the bird is preening or on good photographs.


1a
1b
2b
2a
4b
3b
3a
4a
6b
5b
5a
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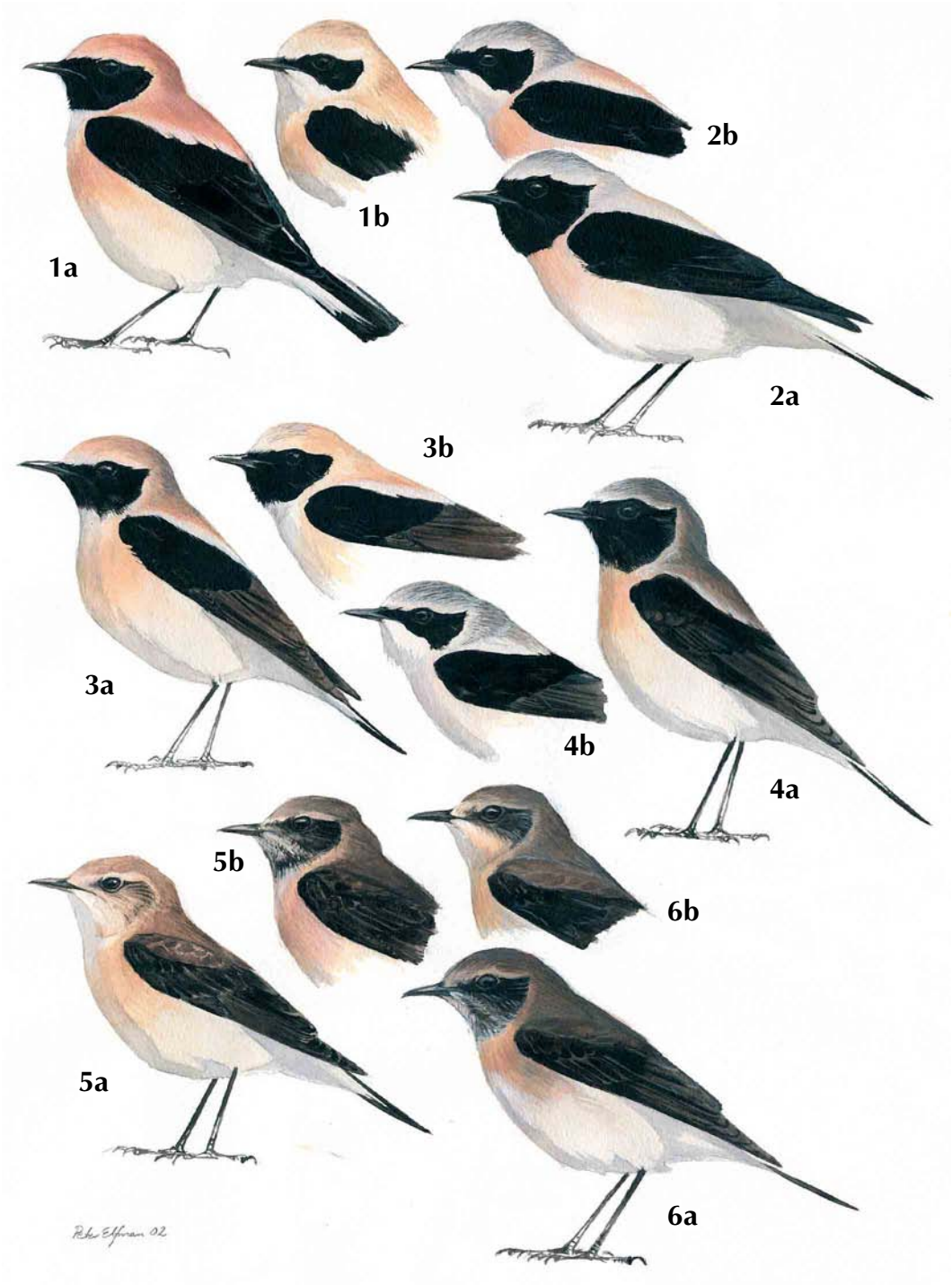


FIGURE 2 **Spring birds**. Western Black-eared Wheatears / Westelijke Blonde Tapuiten *Oenanthe hispanica* (left two birds of each group) and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuiten *O melanoleuca* (right two birds of each group) *(Peter Elfman)*. Upper four: adult males, middle four: immature males, bottom four: females.

1a Adult male *hispanica*. Rather typical bird with warm, uniform upperparts, small amount of black on forehead and throat, but slightly more than normal on lores. Also note rather wide pale mantle section.
1b Adult male *hispanica*. Some males lack the deep ochre upperparts of typical birds (but most still are rather uniform on crown–nape–mantle). Some are even whiter and more like *melanoleuca* than 1b. In pale-throated males, the ear-coverts patch is slightly smaller than in *melanoleuca*. Some birds have very little black on lores/forehead.
2a Adult male *melanoleuca*. Typical bird with 'dirty' whitish upperparts, much black above bill and large throat-bib. On many *melanoleuca*, there is a slight but obvious difference between the hue of crown/nape and mantle. Also note rather narrow pale mantle section.
2b Adult male *melanoleuca*. Another typical, bi-coloured bird with 'dirty' greyish crown/nape and rather obviously ochre mantle. Some may have more ochre on the head, thus resembling *hispanica*. Apart from more black on lores and forehead, white-throated males have a larger ear-coverts patch than *hispanica*.
3a Immature male *hispanica*. While some immature males have the same deep ochre upperparts as adult males, birds with more obvious grey or brown tinge are not uncommon. Black of face is generally similar to that of adults, although lower border of throat-bib is often less well defined.
3b Immature male *hispanica*. Typical, rather 'clean' ochre upperparts, slightly paler than in normal adult males. Some are even whiter than 3b.
4a Immature male *melanoleuca*. Typical bird with dull, greyish (and quite uniform) upperparts as well as slightly brownish coverts, retaining more immature appearance than *hispanica* generally does. Large amount of black on head is typical for *melanoleuca*.
4b Immature male *melanoleuca*. Particularly from mid/late spring, ie, from May, some birds are whiter, much in manner of 'dirty' white adult males. Note that some immature *melanoleuca* have as little black above eye and on lores/forehead as *hispanica*, while some have newly moulted coverts as black as *hispanica*.
5a Female *hispanica*. Typical bird with pale, rather warm tinge to upperparts, somewhat recalling ochre of male *hispanica*.
5b Female *hispanica*. Dark female, very much like *melanoleuca*. Many dark *hispanica* have slight russet tinge, which others lack. Some females may have very dark ear-coverts and throat-bib, but not fully black as in males. Dark-throated females normally have a pale chin.
6a Female *melanoleuca*. Typical, rather dark, dull bird. Upperparts very similar to many *hispanica*. Although most lack russet tinge to upperparts (as depicted bird), some have a slight hue. Some females may have very dark ear-coverts and throat-bib but not fully black as in males. Dark-throated females normally have a pale chin.
6b Female *melanoleuca*. A minority of females have slightly lighter upperparts, normally with no or very little russet.

Female

The ear-coverts and throat (unless pale-throated) may be brown, brownish or rather dark greyish brown. However, in fresh plumage, there are pale tips to the feathers, often making the ear-coverts quite similar in colouration to the nape and mantle, so that there is only a faint impression of an ear-coverts patch (this impression may be retained throughout the spring). In spring and summer, some females may be quite dark but in good light there is still a brown tinge to the perhaps blackish general impression. Even in spring, when the pale tips have worn off, the pattern is often quite mottled. Unlike males, some females exhibit a 'dusky' throat-bib even in spring – neither whitish, nor 'dark', but still clearly separated from the colouration of the breast. The remiges are not black but rather very dark brown or blackish brown, often becoming slightly paler in spring. In autumn, they are pale fringed, while most of the fringes have worn off by late spring, usually leaving some traces, though. Ageing may be possible in autumn females, if there is a combination of outer, shorter, juvenile greater coverts and inner newly moulted, longer, adult coverts, indicating that the bird is immature. The axillaries and underwing-coverts are similar to those of immature males, though often slightly paler.

Female or immature male?

Some immature males may be difficult to separate from females. In autumn, the face-mask or 'dark' throat of females is normally only slightly darker than the crown and nape, while in males there is an obvious pattern of mixed blackish and whitish feathers. Thus, while the dark face-mask

(and throat-bib) is clearly visible in autumn males, it often seems to merge with the rest of the darkish upperparts in females. In spring, females may have a surprisingly dark face-mask and throat, sometimes even blackish, but still with a brown tinge. In males, the base of these feathers is pitch black (unless pale-throated), although they may be covered by pale fringes, particularly on the throat. Most dark-throated females show a pale chin throughout spring and summer, while the chin is black in black-throated males once the pale tips have worn off (normally by March or earlier). While males normally have black scapulars in spring (with or without pale fringes), the scapulars of most females are uniform with the mantle. However, some spring females may have quite dark, contrasting scapulars, although not truly black ones. Similarly, some spring females have fresh, surprisingly blackish wing-coverts, although a close look will reveal a brownish tinge. Still, difficult birds may be puzzling. In some cases, underlying obvious whitish parts to the mantle feathers revealed by the wind may prove the bird to be a male. However, there may also be single cases when the true sex of an autumn bird in the field may be impossible to assess.

Identification

Characters shared between *hispanica* and *melanoleuca*

Both taxa are quite small and neatly built wheatears with fairly long wings, longish tail and fine bill, which give them a light and rather slim outline, lacking the somewhat stocky expression of some other wheatears. Moreover, both *hispanica* and *melanoleuca* appear in a pale-throated and a dark-throated morph, white or black in the case of males but less contrasting in the case of females, which also may appear with intermediate throat patterns. The black tail pattern is quite anchor-shaped in both taxa, rather than like an inverted 'T' as in Northern Wheatear *O oenanthe*. There is much variation and some birds altogether lack black in the middle of each side of the tail-tip. This distinctive tail pattern is shared with Pied Wheatear.

Primary projection

The primary projection is, on average, slightly shorter in *hispanica*. The difference indeed is small but may be used as a supporting field mark in single, extreme birds, and can sometimes be judged on excellent photographs or video-stills. For details on (other) in-hand biometric characters, see Cramp (1988) and Svensson (1992).

Adult male

Upperparts

In fresh autumn plumage, *hispanica* is brownish buff on crown, nape and mantle with a rather obvious warm touch, sometimes tinged ochre or slightly reddish. By spring they have become lighter and less brownish, normally with a rather strong ochre colour. During much of the spring there is even a slight yellowish or orange tinge to the ochre upperparts, while single birds become more whitish in late spring and summer.

Adult males *melanoleuca* have less warm upperparts in autumn with crown, nape and mantle quite greyish. It is not uncommon that the crown and nape are fairly obviously grey, while whitish and ochre tones shine through on the mantle. This gives many *melanoleuca* a less 'clean' appearance than *hispanica*, with an obvious difference between the crown-nape and the mantle, while these parts are rather uniform in *hispanica*. By spring, the upperparts of *melanoleuca* have become distinctly whitish. Thus, crown and nape may be whitish with

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62 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, adult male, Italy, May 1981 *(Göran Pettersson)*. Narrow black mask as well as bright ochre nape and mantle typical for *hispanica*. Although most *hispanica* – unlike *melanoleuca* – have uniform upperparts (crown/nape/mantle), birds with whiter crown than mantle are not rare.

63 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, immature male, Spain, September *(Vicente Moreno)*. A rather typical immature male with slight but obvious warm tinge particularly to nape and sides of neck, and to some extent also on mantle. Immature *melanoleuca* has slightly duller, darker and more greyish-brown upperparts. The extensive amount of pale fringes to lores, ear-coverts and wing-coverts rules out an adult male. However, it is not self-evident that the bird actually is an immature male and not a female (which can be very similar!). Still, the underlying colour to lores and ear-coverts is too obviously blackish for a female (revealing that these parts will be jet-black by spring). In addition, the scapulars are very dark, even blackish, beneath the paler, warmish tips (revealing that these, too, will be black by spring).





Separation of Western and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear





64 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, immature male, Valladolid, Spain, July 2002 *(Alejandro Torés Sánchez)*. The very whitish plumage may suggest *melanoleuca*, but 'white' *hispanica*'s do occur, particularly in summer. Also note, that the bird lacks the greyish, 'dirty' suffusion to crown and/or nape, characteristic of *melanoleuca*. Very small amount of black above bill typical for *hispanica*, but not impossible for immature *melanoleuca*. However, throat-bib too small for *melanoleuca*. While this is not really a 'half-bib' male, the bib is restricted enough to reveal the rear shape of the ear-coverts, typical for *hispanica* and inconsistent with *melanoleuca*. While this very distinct black-and-white bird certainly looks like an adult male at first glance, the retained brownish, pale-fringed greater coverts and primary coverts reveal that it actually is an immature bird (and the adult perception of an immature male is, in itself, indicating *hispanica*).

65 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, immature male, Portugal, June 1998 *(Ray Tipper)*. Fresh black wing-coverts and scapulars in contrast with worn, brownish remiges show this bird to be a second-year male. Restricted amount of black above bill, lores and eye typical for *hispanica* but not impossible for immature Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca*. However, throat-bib small, typical for *hispanica* and indicating that this is not a *melanoleuca*. Moreover, new coverts are blacker than normally on *melanoleuca*. While most immature *melanoleuca* males have darkish browner/greyer upperparts in spring, some are as pale as this bird but still normally with greyer crown, and whiter, less ochre mantle. Rather white crown and slight ochre tinge on mantle are typical for the palest immature *hispanica* males.

much grey admixed, giving a 'dirty', sooty impression, while the mantle is whitish with an ochre tinge. Or crown, nape and upper mantle are 'dirty' whitish and lower mantle whitish with an ochre tinge. Or all of crown, nape and mantle is 'dirty' whitish. While summer *melanoleuca* generally have less ochre than spring birds, they may be essentially white – displaying or lacking a sooty tinge – already in March.

Thus, the vast majority of adult males are typical. However, the situation is quite complicated by the fact that some *hispanica* males are 'dirty' whitish from early spring as in *melanoleuca*, while some *melanoleuca* are deep ochre on all of the crown, nape and mantle. So, although upperpart colouration is not a safe character on its own, especially in spring, it is often a good guide.

In both taxa, the scapulars are essentially black, albeit with pale brownish fringes in fresh autumn plumage. Generally, the black scapular area is somewhat larger in *melanoleuca*, leaving the pale mantle section narrower and slightly more triangular. So, the pale mantle section of *hispanica* is broader and sometimes a trifle more U-shaped; in some *hispanica*, most of the scapulars are actually uniform with the mantle, thus suggesting Desert Wheatear *O deserti*. Obviously, there are variations but in typical birds this is a good complementary character (although of less value in autumn plumage, when the pale fringes tend to obstruct judgement).

Underparts

In autumn, the underparts of *hispanica* are similar to the upperparts, although showing a paler hue of ochre. The ochre is usually strongest on the breast, while the belly normally is a little paler and the vent is whitish, sometimes with a faint ochre tinge. The underparts of *melanoleuca* are very similar, definitely within the variation of *hispanica*. However, there seems to be a slight general difference regarding the ochre of the breast which roughly reaches the black throat-bib in *melanoleuca*, while there is a diffuse whitish (or very pale ochre) border between the breast and the black throat in *hispanica*.

By spring, most *hispanica* have become slightly paler, with an obvious ochre breast-band while the rest of the underparts are whitish with a faint ochre tinge. Most spring *melanoleuca* are very pale with a slight ochre tinge on the entire breast, belly and vent. However, some have a breast-band like typical *hispanica*, while others have entirely ochre underparts, much as in autumn.

Thus, the deeper ochre a late spring bird is, the greater the chances that it is a *hispanica*. And the paler and whiter an early spring bird is, the greater the chances that it is a *melanoleuca*. Still, none of these are safe characters on their own.

Head

Hispanica has a smaller black face-mask than *melanoleuca* (whether white-throated or not). On *hispanica*, the black in front of the lores barely reaches above the culmen, while on *melanoleuca*, there usually is a black band of up to 3 mm width above the base of the bill. When seen head-on, there is a pale gap of *at least* 1 mm above the culmen in *hispanica*, even in birds with relatively much black on the lores (in some birds the black actually meets above the bill). In many *melanoleuca*, the black barely meets





66 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, adult male, Spain, April 1988 *(Ola Bondesson)*. Typical male with uniform, warm upperparts, small amount of black above bill and small throat-bib. **67** Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, immature male, Spain, April 2001 *(Vicente Moreno)*. Deep ochre/orange crown and nape (and apparently uniform with what is glimpsed of the mantle) typical for male *hispanica* and suggesting an adult bird. However, pale fringes to the coverts as well as over much of the centre of the throat-bib reveal that it is an immature bird. Small amount of black on lores/forehead typical for *hispanica* but not impossible for immature *melanoleuca*. Note, however, throat-bib which is too small for *melanoleuca*, and a diffuse whitish/pale ochre zone between the breast and the black throat, more consistent with *hispanica*.

68 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, adult male, Valladolid, Spain, July 1999 *(Alejandro Torés Sánchez)*. A very white *hispanica*, although this is partly due to the late date (early July). It certainly recalls a *melanoleuca* with a rather 'deep' ear-coverts patch and greyish crown and nape contrasting with the white mantle. Note, however, the untypical distribution of grey – which in *melanoleuca* normally is concentrated to the centre of the crown and nape, leaving a broad, white 'supercilium'. Small amount of black on lores and particularly forehead confirms that this is a *hispanica*. **69** Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, immature male, Spain, May 1988 *(Lluís Gustamante)*. Fresh black wing-coverts in contrast with worn, brownish remiges show this bird to be a second-year male. Restricted amount of black above bill and lores typical for *hispanica* but not impossible for immature *melanoleuca*. However, throat-bib very small (nearly 'half-bib' type) and uniform pale ochre upperparts typical for male *hispanica* (of any age) but not good for immature *melanoleuca*. Also note that the new coverts are jet black, typical for *hispanica*.





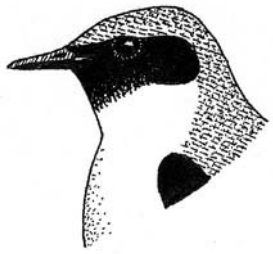


FIGURE 3 Adult 'half-bib' spring male Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica (Magnus Ullman)*. While most black-throated male *hispanica* have slightly smaller throat-bib than Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca*, a minority has noticeably restricted throat-bib, so small that the silhouette of the black ear-coverts becomes clearly visible (the 'rear-end-shape' of the ear-coverts tends to be suggested in many normal *hispanica* as well). In most 'half-bib' males, the lower border of the bib is diffusely marked.



FIGURE 4 Adult spring males of Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica* (left) and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *O melanoleuca* (right) *(Magnus Ullman)*. In difficult males, it may be necessary to assess the amount of black on lores/forehead both from the side and from the front. When *hispanica* is seen from the front, the black of the lores normally does not meet at all above the bill (even in males that seem to have a lot of black from the side), but a gap of at least 1 mm (often more, sometimes obviously more) is left. In some *hispanica*, the black of the lores just about touches above the bill. In *melanoleuca*, the black of the lores meets above the bill. However, even in males with a lot of black, the meeting area is often rather narrow, so that a small notch is visible just above the culmen. So, while there *are* differences in typical birds, the difference in some birds may be smaller than expected when the bird is seen side-on.

above the culmen, while in others the area of contact is 1 mm, occasionally more (see figure 4). Although the difference is normally obvious on birds which are seen well, there may be problematic individuals. Thus, this is a good character in most birds, while some birds seem intermediate.

Similarly, the black extends 1-2 mm above the eye in *melanoleuca*, while the eye tends to reach just above the black feathering in many *hispanica*. In other *hispanica*, the black seems to raise above the eye, although there may be only little black in front of and behind the eye. These differences are usually less obvious (and less reliable) than the lores/forehead pattern.

In black-throated males, the black only covers the throat in *hispanica*, while it also reaches some 2-4 mm down the upper breast on *melanoleuca*. In typical birds, the difference may be obvious. However, there is some variation in both taxa, and in birds where the black reaches some 1-2 mm down the breast, this character should not be used. Moreover, the true extension of the black bib may be concealed by the way the bird holds its head. And likewise, it is not always possible to tell where the throat ends and the breast starts.

In white-throated males, there is a similar difference in the size and shape of the black patch. In *hispanica*, the black forms a narrow band along the lores, while the black ear-coverts patch is also quite narrow. On *melanoleuca*, the band along the lores is broader and the ear-coverts patch is larger and 'deeper'.

Some black-throated males *hispanica* have a very narrow black bib, just reaching little more than halfway down the throat. The lower border is usually more ill-defined than in normal black-throated birds and the rear end of the ear-coverts tends to have the same shape as in white-throated birds (actually, the 'rear-end-shape' of the ear-coverts tends to be suggested in many normal *hispanica* as well). Such 'half-bib' males are generally easily identified, since they do not occur in *melanoleuca*.

Immature male

Autumn

Crown, nape and mantle are similar to adult male in first-autumn male *hispanica*, though on average somewhat duller and more brownish or greyish, but still with a warm, perhaps ochre or cinnamon tinge in typical birds. Breast and belly are also very similar to those of adult, though somewhat paler, not so deeply coloured.

The crown, nape and mantle of first-autumn male *melanoleuca* are similar to the darkest,

most brownish-grey adult males, occasionally with a slight warm tinge (particularly on the mantle), sometimes rather dark brown and not unlike a female. They are thus darker, more greyish brown and less reddish than *hispanica*. The underparts of *melanoleuca* are similar to those of adults, though perhaps slightly duller. There is no substantial difference in relation to *hispanica* (although *melanoleuca* essentially lacks *hispanica*'s diffuse whitish stripe between the breast and the black face-pattern, as in adults).

Spring
Most immatures *hispanica* have ochre upperparts in the same manner as adults (thus varying from deep orange ochre to white with a slight ochre touch), although some are quite obviously browner and duller. Immature *melanoleuca* normally retains much of the greyish brown autumn tinge of the upperparts throughout April, not uncommonly throughout May, some still resembling female upperparts colouration. With wear the mantle turns 'dirty' white, initially leaving the crown and nape greyish brown, whereupon the head turns 'dirty' greyish (rather than white). Although by May some young males are quite similar to adult, *melanoleuca* generally retains more immature features than *hispanica*.

The fact that the pale mantle section is smaller in *melanoleuca* than in *hispanica*, due to more black in the scapulars, is just as pronounced in immature spring males as in adults. While the newly moulted wing-coverts, and sometimes single tertials, are pitch black in *hispanica*, they often have a slight brownish tinge in *melanoleuca*, thus contrasting less to the old feathers (although birds with pitch black new coverts do occur). These circumstances intensify the more 'immature' character of *melanoleuca*.

The underparts – breast, belly and vent – are similar in the two taxa, varying from virtually white with a slight ochre tinge on the upper breast, to quite deep ochre on breast and pale ochre on belly and vent. However, a bird with obvious ochre on belly, vent and undertail-coverts is more likely to be a *hispanica*, although not necessarily so. (There is still a tendency that *melanoleuca* lacks *hispanica*'s whitish stripe between the ochre breast and the black throat-bib.)

Head
Generally, the same conditions regarding the size of the black face pattern apply to both immature spring males and adult males. In principle, they apply to first-autumn males as well, although the size is often impossible to assess due to ample cover of pale fringes (however, many *melanoleuca* do have extensive throat-bibs, thus facilitating identification). The lore-pattern is normally not a useful character in first-autumn males. Also, beware that in spring, immature *melanoleuca* males sometimes show a *hispanica*-type black face-mask: the eye reaching above the black and limited black across the lores and above the base of the bill. In some spring males with many retained pale fringes, these characters may be difficult to apply.

Female
Female *hispanica* sometimes reflects the male in being somewhat warmly coloured. In autumn, the crown, nape, mantle and scapulars may be rather light brown with a warm buffish tinge, ie, just slightly darker and browner than adult males. Others are darker and browner, some rather dark brown, but generally with a touch of russet. *Melanoleuca* seems to vary less, and are generally rather dark or at least dull brown with a slight greyish touch. While some lack the warm tinge of the brownest *hispanica*, others have it. Occasionally the feathers on the lower part of the mantle and scapulars have faint pale fringes in fresh autumn *melanoleuca*, which is not the case in *hispanica* (although the odd exception certainly could occur!). The underparts – breast, belly and vent – are very similar: pale with a slight ochre tinge and with a diffuse deeper ochre breast-band. There is a slight tendency for *hispanica* to be paler, including the breast-band, while *melanoleuca*'s ochre tones generally are a bit deeper, a bit more reddish and with a greyish or brownish smudge to the breast-band (or the sides of the breast). However, the difference is slight and may be of little value in a single bird, unless very typical.

By spring, not very much has happened to facilitate identification, although perhaps a larger percentage of *hispanica* have typically pale, buffish upperparts, sometimes with an ochre tinge, occasionally approaching Desert Wheatear.

Conclusions
While most males are typical and quite easily identified within their breeding ranges, vagrant birds may prove very tricky, and some are not possible to identify accurately.

Adult male
In autumn, dusky, greyish upperparts in adult



70 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Egypt, March 1997 *(Johan Vanautgaerden)*. Typical bird in most respects: *1* much black above eye, lores and bill; *2* large throat-bib covering upper breast; *3* whitish crown and nape with traces of grey on crown in slight contrast with whitish mantle with some ochre; and *4* very slight ochre of breast not separated from throat-bib by white division. Pale mantle section seems rather narrow but not typically so.

71 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Israel, March 1993 *(Felix Heintzenberg)*. Typical bird in most respects: *1* much black above the base of the bill; *2* fairly broad black band across the lores; *3* whitish crown and nape with traces of grey on crown in contrast with whitish mantle with slight ochre tinge; and *4* narrow pale mantle section. Typical *melanoleuca* males have more black above the eye and a slightly 'deeper' black ear-coverts patch.





72 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Lesvos, Greece, April 2001 *(René Pop)*. Typical bird, showing very white upperparts (apparently without any trace of ochre or yellow) but obvious peach wash on breast. Much black on lores and forehead as well as 'deep' black ear-coverts patch also typical.

73 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Lesvos, Greece, May 2001 *(René Pop)*. Typical bird, showing whitish upperparts with slight contrast between grey-stained crown and ochre tinge to mantle. Very slight ochre/orange tinge to breast reaches rather large black throat-bib. Much black on lores and forehead.





74 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Lesvos, Greece, April 2002 *(René Pop)*. Rather typical bird with much black on lores, forehead and throat, too much for *hispanica*. The ochre tone on the breast is very weak (and will probably have disappeared within a month or so), leaving a narrow whitish fringe below the black throat-bib, more typical for *hispanica*.



75 Eastern Black-eared Wheatears / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuiten *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male (lower left) and juvenile, Crete, Greece, July 1984 *(René Pop)*. Typical bird with obvious grey suffusion to crown and nape, and all-white triangular, rather narrow mantle, giving bi-coloured character to upperparts. By July, adult *melanoleuca* males rarely display any obvious ochre. Moult has started and the middle, black, rectrices are missing.

males point towards *melanoleuca*, while bright, deep ochre upperparts point towards *hispanica*. In spring, whitish crown and nape with pale brownish/greyish tinge and only a slight ochre/orange touch on the mantle, as well as whitish breast and belly indicate *melanoleuca*, while deep ochre, uniform upperparts indicate *hispanica*. The most reliable of these plumages is the typical autumn *melanoleuca* plumage. The others are not conclusive and will need supportive characters for identification. *Melanoleuca* has more black on the scapulars, leaving a narrower pale mantle section than on *hispanica* – a good additional field mark for typical birds, mainly in spring. There is more black on the head in *melanoleuca* than in *hispanica*, thus covering a larger area of the lores, the forehead, the ear-coverts and – in black-throated males – the throat. This is *the most reliable single field character* in autumn as well as spring, and safe identification normally requires trustworthy assessment of this pattern. Please note that a minority of males exhibit intermediate plumage in this respect.

Immature male

In autumn, immature males *melanoleuca* are quite dark greyish brown on upperparts, some approaching the darkness of females, while *hispanica* are lighter and brighter, with an obvious ochre tinge, generally just a trifle duller than adult males. Typical birds probably are safe to identify on upperparts colouration. In spring, most *hispanica* have the same bright ochre upperparts as adult males, while *melanoleuca* retain much of the 'immature' brownish grey, although by May some have become extensively whitish, in the manner of adults. Typical bright ochre upperparts strongly indicate *hispanica* and brownish-grey upperparts strongly indicate *melanoleuca*, while whitish plumage is less significant. As in adults, immature male *melanoleuca* has more black on the scapulars, leaving a



76 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Israel, March 2001 *(Arend Wassink)*. Traces of pale fringes on the black throat and ear-coverts, as well as newly moulted black median coverts and most greater coverts in contrast with brownish wing show this male to be an immature. New coverts are black with slight brownish tinge, not jet-black as in Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*. Although the rather bright ochre upperparts are more typical for *hispanica*, the large throat-bib and extensive black above the lores and the base of the bill verify that this is a *melanoleuca*.

narrower pale mantle section than in *hispanica*, which is a good supportive field mark for typical birds in spring. Moreover, the same difference in the extent of the black on the head (lores, forehead, ear-coverts and throat) as in adult males applies to immature spring males of *melanoleuca* and *hispanica*. However, there is one exception, since immature *melanoleuca* may have a small *hispanica*-type black face-mask. Thus, much black on the lores indicates *melanoleuca*, while little black on the lores not necessarily indicates *hispanica*.

Female

Many vagrant females should be left unidentified, including all intermediate ones. However, females with obviously light ochre-tinged upperparts and ochre breast-band lacking deep reddish or greyish tones may be identified as *hispanica*. At the other end of the scale, the darkest, brownest females will cause problems. While – statistically – most of them definitely are *melanoleuca*, some *hispanica* will perhaps be inseparable. A somewhat dark, greyish breast-band will strengthen the case for the bird to be a *melanoleuca*.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to Mark Adams (British Natural History Museum, Tring), Jon Fjeldså (Universitetets Zoologiske Museum, Copenhagen) and Göran Frisk (Naturhistoriska riksmuseet, Stockholm) for access to skin collections. Also, many thanks go to the following photographers, for loaning me their wheatear photographs, several of which are included in this article: Eugene Archer, Ola Bondesson, Jan-Michael Breider, Hans-Jochem Fünfstück, Detlef Gruber, Lluís Gustamante, Felix Heintzenberg, Gert Huijzers, Volker Konrad, Vicente Moreno, Göran Pettersson, René Pop, Ray Tipper, Alejandro Torés, Johan Vanautgaerden and Arend Wassink.

Samenvatting

HERKENNING VAN WESTELIJKE EN OOSTELIJKE BLONDE TAPUIT Dit artikel behandelt de herkenning van Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica* (hierna *hispanica*) en Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *O melanoleuca* (hierna *melanoleuca*), die voorheen meestal beschouwd werden als twee ondersoorten van Blonde Tapuit *O hispanica*. Het broedgebied van *hispanica* strekt zich uit over Noordwest-Afrika, het Iberisch Schiereiland, Zuid-Frankrijk, grote delen van Italië en Kroatië, terwijl *melanoleuca* broedt in Zuid-Italië, de



77 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Lesvos, Greece, April 2002 *(René Pop)*. Typical bird with obvious 'immature impression' produced by black coverts with slight brownish tinge (and with obvious pale fringes) and grey-brown touch to crown, nape and lower mantle. 'Immature impression' in itself is a character for *melanoleuca*. Extensive fringes to black on lores and ear-coverts as well as blackish greater coverts in contrast with brownish primary coverts and remiges are all signs of immaturity. **78** Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Eilat, Israel, March 1990 *(René Pop)*. New blackish coverts in contrast with brownish remiges and primary coverts indicate immature bird. Typical *melanoleuca* with obvious 'immature impression' produced by the fact that the coverts are not the jet-black coverts immature Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica* usually displays. The rather dull buffish-brown crown, nape and mantle are more reminiscent of a female than of an adult male and are incompatible with a spring male *hispanica*. Restricted black in the region of the upper eye, lores and forehead is more typical for *hispanica*, but is regularly found in immature *melanoleuca*. However, the black ear-coverts patch is too 'deep' for *hispanica*. The non-black scapulars may suggest a female, but the face-mask is too black to support that suspicion, while the somewhat diffuse borders and pale fringing emphasize that this male is an immature.





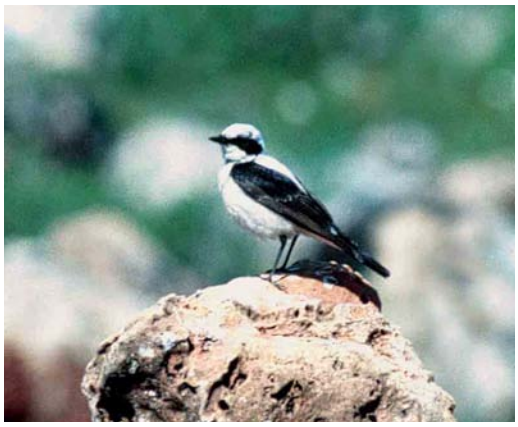
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79 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, adult male, Yemen, November 1993 *(Magnus Ullman)*. Totally black (indicating adult bird) and very large face-mask typical for *melanoleuca*.

80 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Israel, March 1999 *(Ola Bondesson)*. Traces of pale fringes on the black throat and ear-coverts, as well as newly moulted black median coverts and inner five greater coverts in contrast with brownish wing show this bird to be an immature. New coverts are black with slight brownish tinge, not jet-black as in Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*. Although the upperparts colouration as well as the size of the throat-bib are possible for both immature males *hispanica* and *melanoleuca*, the large amount of black above the lores and the base of the bill are consistent only with *melanoleuca*.

81 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Eilat, Israel, March 1990 *(René Pop)*. Typical bird with obvious 'immature impression' produced by black coverts with slight brownish tinge (and with obvious pale fringes). 'Immature impression' in itself is a character for *melanoleuca*. Somewhat diffuse lower border to throat-bib indicates immature rather than adult bird. Throat-bib large and black, too large for *hispanica*. While the black reaches high up on the lores (excluding *hispanica*), there is not very much black above the bill – as is not uncommon in immature *melanoleuca* males. Ochre tones of the breast reach the black throat-bib.

82 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Turkey, May 1988 *(Magnus Ullman)*. Newly moulted black wing-coverts in contrast to old brownish feathers (particularly primary coverts and outer greater coverts) show that this is an immature male. New coverts in this bird are jet-black, as is typical for Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*, but this may also be the case in *melanoleuca*. Narrow '*hispanica*-type' black band across the lores and inner bill is not conclusive for *hispanica*, as it occurs in immature *melanoleuca* as well. 'Deep' black ear-coverts patch and narrow, triangular mantle demonstrate that the bird is a *melanoleuca*.

83 'Black-eared wheatear' / 'blonde tapuit' *Oenanthe hispanica/melanoleuca*, female, Italy, May 1981 *(Göran Pettersson)*. Pale, slightly warm buffish upperparts as well as light ochre breast-band render it highly likely that this bird is a Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*, although safe identification is not possible. Fairly short primary projection indeed indicates *hispanica*.

84 Western Black-eared Wheatear / Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe hispanica*, female, Spain, April 2000 *(Ola Bondesson)*. Rather pale, slightly warm bird, too 'bright' for Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca*. Unlike immature males, many females (of both taxa) have very faint face markings that could hardly be called a 'mask'.

Balkan (ten zuiden van Kroatië), Turkije, het Midden-Oosten, de Kaukasus, Zuid-Rusland, West-Iran en West-Kazakhstan. *Hispanica* overwintert in het westelijke gedeelte van de Sahel-zone in Afrika, en *melanoleuca* in het centrale en oostelijke gedeelte. Beide zijn als dwaalgast vastgesteld in Noordwest-Europa.

Voor de herkenning van beide taxa is leeftijds- en geslachtsbepaling van belang. Met name het onderscheid tussen eerste-zomer mannetjes en volwassen mannetjes, tussen onvolwassen vrouwtjes en volwassen vrouwtjes, en tussen vrouwtjes en onvolwassen mannetjes is in sommige gevallen niet eenvoudig. De meeste eerste-zomer mannetjes verschillen van volwassen mannetjes door een zichtbaar contrast tussen (zwarte) pas geruide veren en (bruine) oude veren in vleugel en schouder. Kleine en middelste dekveren en een variabel aantal grote dekveren, schouderveren en soms tertials steken zwart af tegen bruine overige vleugel- en schouderveren bij eerste-zomer mannetjes, terwijl bij volwassen mannetjes al deze veren zwart zijn. Leeftijdsbepaling van mannetjes uitsluitend op grond van lichte handpennen en tertials is niet volkomen betrouwbaar, omdat de onbedekte delen van deze veerpartijen relatief snel kunnen verbleken onder invloed van fel zonlicht.

85 Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, female, Turkey, June 1990 *(Hans-Jochem Fünfstück)*. Combination of rather dull brownish upperparts lacking ochre or russet tinge and brownish patches on the breast-sides strongly indicates that this female is a *melanoleuca*.





86 'Black-eared wheatear' / 'blonde tapuit' *Oenanthe hispanica/melanoleuca*, female, Egypt, March 1997 *(Johan Vanautgaerden)*. Since this bird is photographed on migration in Egypt, it is most likely an Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca* but as a vagrant elsewhere it would be impossible to identify with certainty. A little paler on the upperparts than typical *melanoleuca* and a little greyer, less ochre than typical Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*, the bird is intermediate and could be any of the two. Also, note the lack of a grey or brown tinge in the breast-band, which would have been a pointer towards *melanoleuca*. Fairly long primary projection indeed indicates *melanoleuca*.

87 'Black-eared wheatear' / 'blonde tapuit' *Oenanthe hispanica/melanoleuca*, female, Lesvos, Greece, April 2002 *(René Pop)*. Lack of any obvious black tones to ear-coverts or wings shows this to be a female rather than an immature male. While some *hispanica* have an ochre or russet tone to the upperparts and some *melanoleuca* are darker, more obviously deep brown, birds like this one occur in both taxa. Since the photograph is taken on Lesvos, it is most likely *melanoleuca* but it is not possible to identify a vagrant displaying a similar appearance.



Leeftijdsbepaling van vrouwtjes is in het najaar mogelijk bij onvolwassen vogels, die nog juveniele buitenste grote dekveren bezitten, die korter zijn dan reeds geruide, meer naar binnen gelegen, grote dekveren.

Sommige onvolwassen mannetjes kunnen veel lijken op vrouwtjes. In het najaar blijkt het onderscheid vooral uit de meer uitgesproken koptekening van mannetjes. In het voorjaar is het verschil in koptekening geringer, maar dan tonen de meeste mannetjes zwarte schouderveren, terwijl vrouwtjes hooguit donkerbruine schouderveren hebben.

De herkenning van *hispanica* en *melanoleuca*, die beide voorkomen in een lichtkelige en een donkerkelige vorm, is door overlap in kenmerken niet eenvoudig. Voor verschillen in biometrie, zoals een gemiddeld kortere handpenprojectie bij *hispanica*, wordt verwezen naar Cramp (1988) and Svensson (1992). Een aantal kenmerken, die bruikbaar zijn bij veldwaarnemingen, wordt genoemd.

Volwassen mannetjes
Kleur van kruin, achterhoofd en mantel is over het algemeen warmer bij *hispanica*, maar er bestaat overlap. Door individuele variatie en verbleken van kleuren gedurende voorjaar en zomer is dit kenmerk alleen niet doorslaggevend. De lichte mantelvlek is door een grotere hoeveelheid zwart op schouderveren, geringer in omvang en meer driehoekig in plaats van U-vormig bij veel *melanoleuca*, vooral in het voorjaar. Door individuele variatie is dit slechts een aanvullend kenmerk. De kleur van de onderdelen is over het algemeen warmer bij *hispanica*, maar het verschil is gering en er bestaat overlap. Een mogelijk verschil is dat de okerkleurige borst bij *hispanica* vaak gescheiden is van de zwarte keelvlek door een lichte baan, die ontbreekt bij *melanoleuca*. Deze kenmerken zijn echter niet doorslaggevend. Het zwarte masker is bij *melanoleuca* omvangrijker, en reikt verder boven snavel en oog en tot op bovenborst (uitsluitend bij donkerkelige exemplaren) dan bij *hispanica*. Ofschoon de omvang van het masker vaak moeilijk exact is te bepalen, geldt dit als een goed kenmerk.

Onvolwassen mannetjes
De meeste onvolwassen mannetjes *hispanica* in het najaar onderscheiden zich van *melanoleuca* door een warmere kleur op kruin, achterhoofd, mantel en onderdelen, en mogelijk ook door een lichte baan tussen borst- en koptekening. Zoals bij volwassen exemplaren toont *melanoleuca* een omvangrijker donker masker, maar de verschillen kunnen kleiner zijn, doordat lichte veerranden het werkelijke patroon vertroebelen. In het voorjaar verschillen onvolwassen mannetjes weinig van volwassen mannetjes, ofschoon *melanoleuca* over het algemeen meer kenmerken van onvolwassen kleed behoudt dan *hispanica*.

Vrouwtjes
Net als bij mannetjes vertoont het verenkleed van vrouwtjes *hispanica* gemiddeld een warmere kleur dan *melanoleuca*. In tegenstelling tot bij *hispanica*, worden de achterste mantel- en schouderveren van diverse *melanoleuca* gekenmerkt door vage lichte randen. De onderdelen van *hispanica* zijn over het algemeen lichter gekleurd, maar het verschil is gering en zonder vergelijkingsmogelijkheden van weinig waarde. Determinatie van vrouwtjes zal niet altijd mogelijk zijn.

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Brieven

'Black-eared wheatear' at Aagtekerke, the Netherlands, in June 1996

An immature male 'black-eared wheatear' at Aagtekerke, Zeeland, the Netherlands, on 2-4 June 1996 was identified and accepted as a Western Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* (hereafter *hispanica*) (eg, Klootwijk & Kuijpers 1996, van den Berg & Bosman 1999, 2001; Dutch Birding 18, 154, plate 168, 1996, 20: 157, plate 120, 1998).

However, first-summer males *hispanica* generally resemble adult males with a uniform and often rather warm ochre crown, nape and mantle as well as jet-black coverts. This is inconsistent with the Aagtekerke bird which shows an obvious contrast between the greyish, 'dirty' crown and nape and rather ochre mantle as well as brownish-black greater coverts indicative of immature male Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *O melanoleuca* (hereafter *melanoleuca*). Moreover, the throat-bib to some extent covers the upper breast, again inconsistent with *hispanica*. While many *melanoleuca* males undeniably show a larger throat-bib than the Aagtekerke bird, the blackish 'stains' below the rear end of the ear-coverts suggest that 'there is more to come' – this bird will probably have a larger throat-bib when it becomes adult. The fact that the breast is thoroughly warm ochre all the way up to the throat-bib also indicates *melanoleuca*, while typical *hispanica* has a narrow pale, off-white zone between the throat-bib's black and the breast's ochre (cf Ullman 2003).

The amount of black above the eye and across the forehead may seem too restricted for *melanoleuca*, but immature males *melanoleuca* regularly have less black on these parts than adult males. And anyway, the black on the lores reaches too high for *hispanica*, and indicates that the bird is a *melanoleuca*.

Thus, I suggest that the Aagtekerke wheatear is, in fact, an Eastern Black-eared Wheatear.

88 Presumed Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / vermoedelijke Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Aagtekerke, Zeeland, Netherlands, June 1996 *(René Pop)*





89-90 Presumed Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / vermoedelijke Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Aagtekerke, Zeeland, Netherlands, June 1996 *(René Pop)* **91-92** Presumed Eastern Black-eared Wheatear / vermoedelijke Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca*, immature male, Aagtekerke, Zeeland, Netherlands, June 1996 *(Marten van Dijl)*. Obvious 'immature impression' increased by slight brownish tinge to black greater coverts is a character for *melanoleuca*. The contrast between the greyish, 'dirty' crown/nape and 'cleaner' ochre mantle is typical for *melanoleuca*. The throat-bib is too large for Western Black-eared Wheatear *O hispanica*, while the ochre of the breast reaching the throat-bib is more typical for *melanoleuca*. Moreover, there is too much black on the lores for *hispanica*.

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Editorial note: On basis of Magnus Ullman's arguments described in this letter, the record has been resubmitted to the Dutch rarities committee (CDNA); the CDNA has decided that the record should be reviewed as Eastern Black-eared Wheatear. In addition, all accepted records of black-eared wheatear on the Dutch list (four *hispanica* and two *melanoleuca*) will be reviewed, together with a pending record of a presumed *hispanica* from 2001 (cf van der Vliet et al 2002) (Nils van Duivendijk in litt). EDITORS

Varia

Plains-wanderer

Plains-wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus* is an endemic bird species of eastern and south-eastern Australia. Its exact taxonomic status has long been debated, with most authors formerly placing it in the order Gruiformes (cranes), closest to the family Turnicidae (buttonquails), which it superficially resembles. However, studies of anatomy and behaviour (Olson & Steadman 1981) and recent DNA research have confirmed that Plains-wanderer is, in fact, most closely related to the Thinocoridae (seedsnipes) of South America and thus belongs to the Charadriiformes (cf Madge & McGowan 2002). The species probably represents 'an ancient member of Australia's avifauna, with origins dating back to when Australia was part of the Gondwanan supercontinent and connected to South America via the Antarctic land bridge' (del Hoyo et al 1996). Plains-wanderer only inhabits sparse grassland with low growing plants and a considerable amount of bare ground (Baker-Gabb 1988, 1998). Its very low habitat tolerance contributes to the decreasing numbers of the species, the most important factor being cultivation of native grasslands. Plains-wanderer is one of the few bird species in which the male is the most active parent. Incubating is done mostly (or exclusively) by the male and the male solely takes responsibility for rearing the young. In 10-15 nests investigated in c 20 years, Philip (or Phil) Maher (in litt) never found an incubating female. Estimates of the number of birds vary from 2500-5000 in drought years to 8000-11 000 in good years, but numbers are decreasing (Stattersfield & Capper 2000, Madge & McGowan 2002). The conservation status of the species has been 'upgraded' from 'vulnerable' in 1996 to 'endangered' in 2000 (cf Stattersfield & Capper 2000).

Because of its most interesting avifaunistic position, Plains-wanderer was the species we (Pieter and Sandra van der Luit) most wanted to see during our six week birding trip through Australia in June-July 2002. Before leaving for Australia, we searched the Internet, trying to find a way to see the species without the help of *the* Plains-wanderer guide, Philip Maher (see, eg, Maher 1997). It soon became obvious that it would be almost impossible to find the bird ourselves, so we contacted Phil, asking him what the success rate would be for a night of spotlighting in June. His wife Patricia replied, saying Phil would not be around at that time, thereby reducing our chances of seeing the species to virtually zero. A few weeks later, we sent a message to the Australian birding e-mail group, *Birding-aus*, asking for details on where to find specific birds, among which Plains-wanderer. Again Patricia replied, this time telling us she was going to look for another option to enable us to see the species. An arrangement was made to meet another guide who would try to show us the species.

The only known and reliable way to see a Plains-wanderer is by taking a spotlighting night tour through suitable habitat with a knowledgeable guide. Very few people have ever seen birds or heard their mysterious mooing call without the help of a guide (for a sample sound recording, see www.philipmaher.com). Our guide was Robert Nevinson, a farmer in New South Wales and owner of a large area of suitable Plains-wanderer habitat. Usually Robert accompanies Phil Maher on his tours, scanning the ground with a spotlight. Robert told us beforehand he estimated our chances of seeing Plains-wanderer at 80% and less than 10 min into our tour, he had already found a single bird. Plains-wanderers are very reluctant to fly, only doing so if forced to, and therefore getting close to the bird was a simple matter. Our bird was a female, distinguished from the male by its slightly larger size, brighter colours, and, most obviously, by a black-and-white collar and buff breast-band (cf Madge & McGowan 2002). Due to these obvious differences, in the past, the male and female have been described as separate species. After studying the bird for some time, Robert continued, finding more difficult-to-see species, such as Inland Dotterel *Peltohyas australis*, Banded Lapwing *Vanellus tricolor*, Stubble Quail *Coturnix pectoralis*, Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides* and Australian Bush Lark *Mirafra javanica*. At the end of the tour, his invitation to spend the night on his driveway in our campervan was gladly accepted.

Next morning, 20 June 2002, Robert went to work and we left for the nearby town of Deniliquin. Robert's property is in the middle of extensive grasslands and while driving on the dirt road to the main road, we suddenly spotted a

[*Dutch Birding 25: 100-102, 2003*]



93-94 Plains-wanderer / Trapvechtkwartel *Pedionomus torquatus*, adult female, near Deniliquin, New South Wales, Australia, 20 June 2002 *(Pieter van der Luit)*



small bird crouching across the road, which we expected to be a Stubble Quail. However, when I (PvdL) got out of the car to take photographs, the bird was nowhere to be found. When, after a minute, I decided to stop looking, the bird blinked its eye just 2 m away and much to my surprise turned out to be a Plains-wanderer! I immediately realized how very fortunate we were to have found a Plains-wanderer, especially considering the fact that it was at broad daylight. Making a full circle, I photographed the bird from every angle. Still amazed, but fully satisfied, we returned to Robert's house to tell his wife Rhonda about the bird. She told us that seeing a Plains-wanderer during daytime is indeed extremely rare. Normally, mostly farmers sometimes see birds during daytime, when they are flushed by sheep. Some of the photographs taken are shown here. They are, as far as we are aware, the first published photographs of a Plains-wanderer in daylight. One of these photographs was included in *World of birds 2003* (supplement to Birdwatch issue 127, January 2003), a review of the world's top 50 (most-wanted) birds. More photographs of the bird are shown on the Internet (members.lycos.nl/warbler). If you know of any other daylight photographs, please contact PvdL at the address below.

We want to thank Patricia Maher for arranging another guide and Robert and Rhonda Nevinson for their hospitality. Philip Maher added some interesting information to the text. Patricia and Philip Maher can be contacted through Internet (www.philipmaher.com). Their site gives details about scheduled Plains-wanderer trips.

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Corrigenda

In het artikel van Daniele Occhiato over herkenning van Witkopgors *Emberiza leucocephalos* zijn de bijschriften van figuur 2 en 3 (Dutch Birding 25: 12-13, 2003) helaas verwisseld. REDACTIE

In the paper by Daniele Occhiato on identification of Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos* the captions of figure 2 and 3 (Dutch Birding 25: 12-13, 2003) unfortunately have been switched. EDITORS

Trends in systematics

Speciation in *Pica* magpies

The magpies of the genus *Pica* form a distinctive group within the corvids Corvidae and are easily separated from other corvids by their black-and-white plumage and long and graduated tail. Until recently, two species were recognized: the polytypic Common Magpie *Pica pica*, occurring widespread throughout the Nearctic and Palearctic region, parts of south-eastern Asia and very locally in Arabia, and the monotypic Yellow-billed Magpie *P nuttalli* with a restricted range in central California, USA, and occurring north almost to Oregon only by exception. Although some authors prefer to lump all *Pica* taxa into a single species (for instance, Phillips 1986), this two-species treatment has prevailed for most of the 20th century.

In the early 1990s, a stone was thrown in these tranquil waters when studies of the North American taxon *hudsonia* revealed that there was sufficient evidence to distinguish this taxon as a separate species from *Pica pica* (Birkhead 1991, Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead 1992, Madge & Burn 1993). Vocal and behavioural data suggested that *hudsonia* is actually more closely related to *nuttalli* than to nominate *pica* and thus that retaining *hudsonia* in *Pica pica* would create a paraphyletic species (cf Sangster et al 1999). The choice was to consider *hudsonia* as a distinct species or to combine all *Pica* taxa into a single species. As a consequence, *P hudsonia* was instated as a monotypic species on the North American checklist by American Ornithologists' Union (2000) and named Black-billed Magpie (the Palearctic *Pica* complex being renamed Eurasian Magpie).

Black-billed Magpie was described as *Corvus hudsonius* by Sabine in 1823 from Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, Canada. It is resident from southern coastal Alaska, USA, through western Canada and northern Minnesota, USA, south to California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, western Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, USA. Wan-

95 Black-billed Magpie / Amerikaanse Ekster *Pica hudsonia*, Rocky Mountains NP, Colorado, USA, June 2001 *(Brian E Small)*





96 Yellow-billed Magpie / Geelsnavelekster *Pica nuttalli*, Nojoqui Park, California, USA, 12 March 1982
(Arnoud B van den Berg)



97 Yellow-billed Magpie / Geelsnavelekster *Pica nuttalli*, Nojoqui Park, California, USA, 12 March 1982
(René Pop)

derers have been recorded in most eastern states of North America and vagrants have reached the Atlantic coast of all eastern states from Newfoundland, Canada, south to North Carolina, USA (cf Sibley 2000). Magpies are reluctant to cross large stretches of water (cf Cramp & Perrins 1994) and the chances for a Black-billed Magpie to cross the Atlantic Ocean to Europe must be considered zero. However, the possibility of ship-assisted vagrancy to Europe should perhaps not be entirely ruled out and this would lead to a serious identification challenge. The same would be true for the hypothetical (ship-assisted) Eurasian Magpie turning up on the Atlantic coast of North America.

Morphologically, Black-billed Magpie differs only slightly from Eurasian birds such as western European *P p pica* and, especially, eastern Asian *P p sericea* (Kees Roselaar in litt). In the field, separation on plumage and bare parts would be almost impossible. The main differences described are a smaller size (weight) with relatively longer wing and tail in Black-billed, a blue iris at least in first-years (brown in Eurasian birds) and the gloss of upperwing and tertials in Black-billed being dark bluish-green, less deep blue on the secondaries and tertials than in Eurasian. In addition, the gloss on the crown is slightly more bronze-green in Black-billed (Birkhead 1991, Madge & Burn 1993, Cramp & Perrins 1994).

Research by Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead (1992)

Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead (1992) studied the so-called 'chatter calls' of *hudsonia*, *nuttalli* and nominate *pica*. Four different characters were analysed: duration of separate notes, duration of intervals, chatter rate and frequency (Hz). They found that the calls of *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* are much more similar to each other than either is to *pica*. In *pica*, the duration of the chatter elements is about half of that of the two Nearctic taxa, as is the average interval between elements. The chatter rate in *pica* is faster and the frequency is lower. In short, *pica* calls more hurriedly and slightly lower than *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* (cf figure 1). The calls of *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* differ only slightly in most characters but the mean frequency is different, with *hudsonia* (3876 ± 491 Hz) positioned between *pica* (3426 ± 571 Hz) and *nuttalli* (4638 ± 769 Hz). Remarkably, the difference between the calls of American and European birds and the similarities between the calls of the two Nearctic taxa were noted in publications as long ago as 1833 and 1931, respectively (Birkhead 1991). For recordings of *hudsonia* and *nuttalli*, see Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (1992), Neville (1995, 1996, 1997) Colver (1996, 1999), and Peyton (1999). To compare these with calls of *pica* and *fennorum*, see, for instance, Kettle & Ranft (1992), Wahlström (1995) and Trilar (1999).

According to Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead (1992), the similarities between *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* could be a result of convergent evolution but are more likely to reflect a closer evolutionary relationship between these two taxa than between *pica* and either *hudsonia* or *nuttalli*. In addition to these vocal similarities, *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* are much more closely related based on aspects of communication behaviour and social

organization. According to Birkhead (1991), who compares 'Black-billed Magpie in Europe', 'Black-billed Magpie in North America' and Yellow-billed Magpie, '…the two [European and North American Black-billed Magpie] are very different and in terms of their social systems, North American Black-billed Magpies are more similar to Yellow-billeds than they are to European magpies'. Although obvious to birders, the distinctive yellow bill and facial skin colouring of *nuttalli* may, in fact, represent only 'a fairly minor genetic change, since several European magpies have been recorded with yellow bills' (Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead 1992).

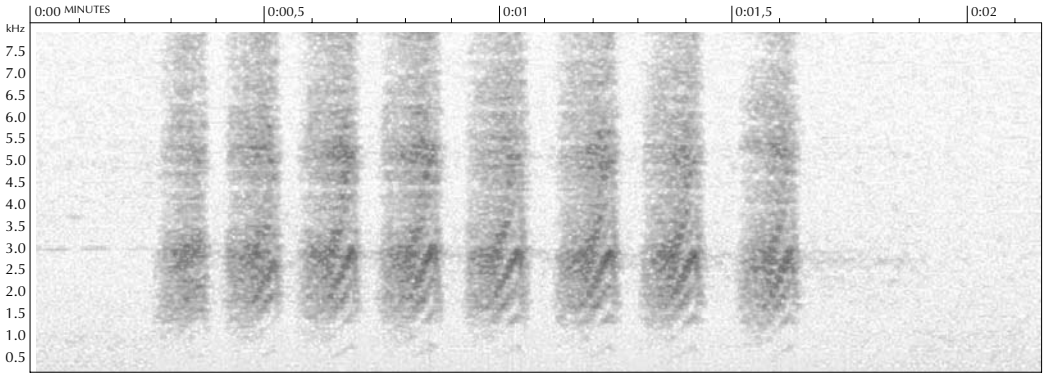
Enggist-Düblin & Birkhead's (1992) suggestion that *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* are presumably more closely related than either is to the closest Eurasian taxa was confirmed by Zink et al (1995), who found that Russian (*camtschatica*) and American (*hudsonia*) samples 'are highly differentiated in mtDNA' and therefore unlikely to be each other's closest evolutionary relatives. These results indicate that Voous's (1960) hypothesis that North American magpies are relatively recent Asian colonists following the end of the last glaciation (and thus should be more similar in molecular terms to Asian taxa such as *camtschatica*) can no longer be upheld. This conclusion led the AOU to their decision to recognize *hudsonia* as a full species, separate from the Eurasian taxa.

The remarkably slight morphological differences between *hudsonia* and *pica* may be a result of the long-term separation of these taxa and their reluctance to wander. As a result, 'mtDNA evolution may have proceeded faster than that of plumage' (Zink et al 1995). In other words, the fact that some taxa *look* the same does not have to indicate that they *are* the same (species).

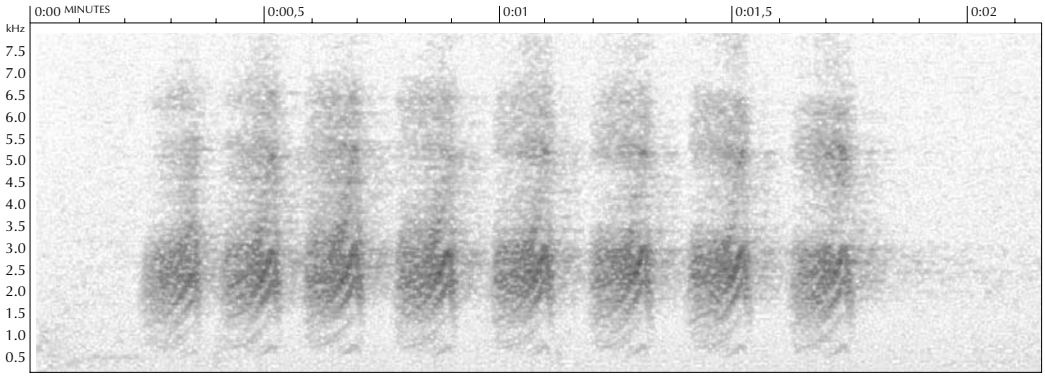
The close affinities of *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* are illustrated by the fact that southern *hudsonia* are, on average, smaller and smaller billed than northern birds and tend to show a small patch of bare skin around the eye, thus approaching *nuttalli* in appearance (cf Sibley 2000). This patch of bare skin is also present in juvenile birds in the Old World and is prominent in adult *mauritanica* from north-western Africa and, to a lesser extent, in adult *melanotos* of Iberia (see below). This may well indicate that this patch of bare skin is a vestigial character that was once present in all *Pica* ancestors but is now retained in adult plumage by just a few taxa.

98 Yellow-billed Magpie / Geelsnavelekster *Pica nuttalli*, Nojoqui Park, California, USA, 12 March 1982
(René Pop)

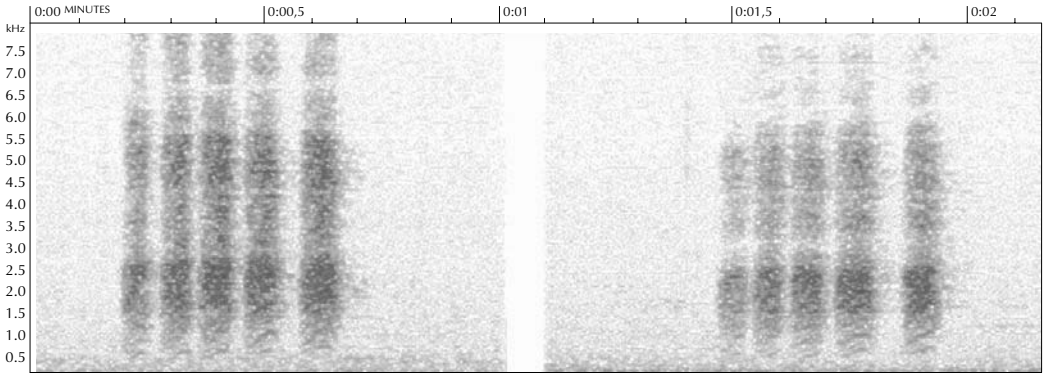




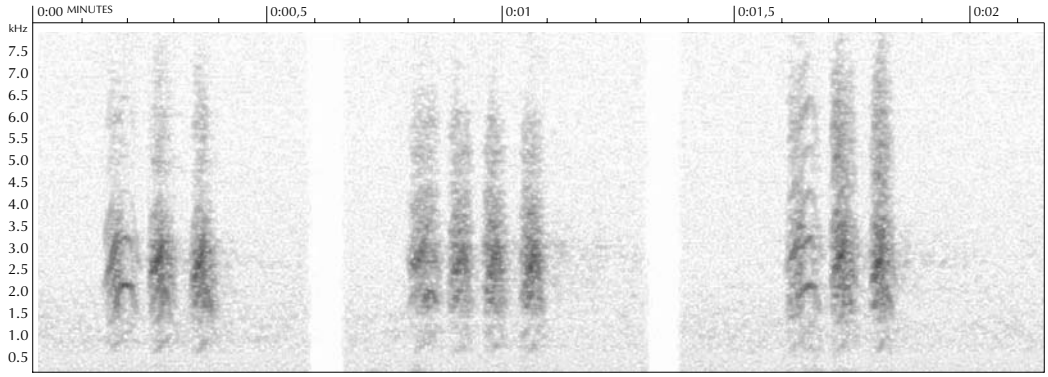
1 *P hudsonia*



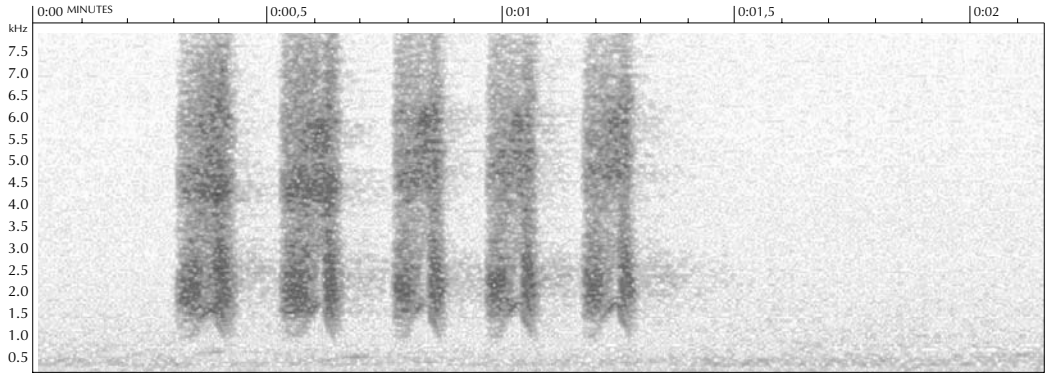
2 *P nuttalli*



3 *P pica pica*



4 *P (pica) mauritanica*



5 *P (pica) sericea*

FIGURE 1 Chatter calls of magpies *Pica*: **1** Black-billed Magpie / Amerikaanse Ekster *P hudsonia*, California, USA, reproduced from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (1992). **2** Yellow-billed Magpie / Geelsnavelekster *P nuttalli*, California, USA. Reproduced from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (1992). **3** Eurasian Magpie / Ekster *P pica pica*, Velsen, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 11 September 2002 *(Magnus S Robb/The Sound Approach)*. **4** Maghreb Magpie / Maghrebekster *P (pica) mauritanica*, c 100 km south of Agadir, Morocco, February *(Claude Chappuis)*, reproduced from Chappuis (2000). **5** Oriental Magpie / Oosterse Ekster *P (pica) sericea*, Ganghwa-do, South Korea, 26 October 2002 *(Magnus S Robb/The Sound Approach)*. Compare mean frequency and, especially, duration of chatter elements and of intervals between elements.

Palearctic taxa

The taxonomic developments in North America may well lead to a renewed interest in the Old World taxa of the *Pica* complex. Up to 21 different subspecies have been described for the Old World (Arabia, North Africa and Eurasia), although some are of doubtful status or even erroneous. This latter qualification, for instance, applies to the subspecies *japonica* given to the population on Kyushu, Japan (see table 1). Given that these birds are known to be descendants of birds introduced from Korea in 1598, they belong to the subspecies *sericea* (cf Brazil 1991). Other subspecies, however, are distinctive and show one or more unique characters. For these most distinctive taxa, species status has been suggested by different authors. An overview of all subspecies and their possible treatment is given in table 1. Of the 23 taxa listed, the two Nearctic species are not further discussed here. Of the remaining 21, 11 are of doubtful status and not recognized by one or two recently published handbooks (Madge & Burn 1993, Cramp & Perrins 1994) or by Birkhead (1991). Of the



99 Oriental Magpies / Oosterse Eksters *Pica (pica) sericea*, Ganghwa-do, South Korea, 26 October 2002
(Arnoud B van den Berg)

100 Eurasian Magpie / Ekster *Pica pica pica*, Julianadorp, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 14 February 2003
(René Pop)



TABLE 1 Taxa within the *Pica*-complex with author and year of original description and distribution. Extinct taxa only known from fossil remains, such as *P mourerae* from the Balearics (cf Seguí 2001), are not included.

alashanica ***	Stegmann, 1928; China
amurensis ***	Stegmann, 1928; eastern Siberia
anderssoni **	Lönnberg, 1923; northern China, Korea and extreme eastern Russia
asirensis	Bates, 1936; Asir massif, western Saudi Arabia
bactriana	Bonaparte, 1850; central and eastern Russia
bottanensis	Delessert, 1840; north-eastern Qinghai, south to north-eastern India and Bhutan
camtschatica	Stejneger, 1884; north-eastern Siberia, Russia
fennorum	Lönnberg, 1927; Scandinavia to western Russia
galliae *	Kleinschmidt, 1917; western Europe (excluding south-west)
germanica ***	Brehm, 1831; Germany
hainana ***	Momiyama & Isii, 1928; Hainan, Guangdong, China
hemileucoptera *	Stegmann, 1928; western and central Siberia, south to Xinjiang Zizhiqu, China
hudsonia	(Sabine, 1823); central and western North America (originally described as *Corvus hudsonius*)
jankowskii ***	Stegmann, 1928; southern Ussuriland to eastern Manchuria
japonica ***	Temminck & Schlegel, 1848; Kyushu, Japan
kot ***	Gavrilenko, 1929; eastern Ukraine
laubmanni ***	Stresemann, 1928; Pakistan
leucoptera	Gould, 1862; southern Transbaikalia and eastern Mongolia
mauritanica	Malherbe, 1845; north-western Africa
melanotos	Brehm, 1857; Iberia
nuttalli	(Audubon, 1837); California, USA (originally described as *Corvus Nuttalli*)
pica	(Linnaeus, 1758); northern and eastern Europe (originally described as *Corvus Pica*)
sericea	Gould, 1845; eastern Asia, from Amurland south to Vietnam and Laos

* recognized in Birkhead (1991) and Madge & Burn (1994), not recognized in Cramp & Perrins (1994)
** recognized in Cramp & Perrins (1994), not recognized in Birkhead (1991) and Madge & Burn (1994)
*** additional taxa not recognized or mentioned in Birkhead (1991), Madge & Burn (1994) and Cramp & Perrins (1994) (cf Becker 2001, Kees Roselaar in litt). Kees Roselaar (in litt) supports a classification with 11 valid subspecies for the Old World: *anderssoni* (including *jankowskii*, *amurensis* and *alashanica*), *asirensis*, *bactriana* (including *hemileucoptera*, *laubmanni* and *kot*), *bottanensis*, *camtschatica*, *fennorum*, *leucoptera*, *mauritanica*, *melanotos*, *pica* (including *galliae*), and *sericea* (including *japonica*).

bold = possible specific status according to Madge & Burn (1994)
underlined = possible specific status according to Cramp & Perrins (1994)
bold & underlined = specific status according to AOU (2000)

remaining 10, four have been suggested as possibly deserving specific status (cf Goodwin 1986, Madge & Burn 1993, Cramp & Perrins 1994, King 1995, 2000, Zink et al 1995).

As illustrated above, Black-billed Magpie is morphologically much like Eurasian Magpie and differs mainly in vocalizations and behaviour. With this in mind, it is well possible that more taxa within the complex – some of which show much more obvious morphological differences – may deserve specific status, especially if they show vocal differences as well. Distinctive vocal differences – compared with nominate *pica* – have been noted for *asirensis* from Saudi Arabia (Cramp 1980, Yahya & Salamah 1996) and for *mauritanica* from North Africa (Madge & Burn 1993, Roché & Chevereau 1998, Chappuis 2000; Arnoud van den Berg in litt). Information on vocal differences between different taxa can be found in, for instance, Goodwin (1986).

If specific status is advocated for certain *Pica* taxa, most authors propose to separate distinctive and geographically isolated taxa as monotypic species and to retain one widespread polytypic species (cf Madge & Burn 1993). Zink et al (1995) also suggested treating the *Pica* complex as six species but at variance with other treatments, to treat 'the set of populations … from south-eastern Asia' as a single species. This would result in two species in the New World (*hudsonia* and *nuttalli*) and four in the Old World, with specific status for birds from south-eastern Asia (presumably *bottanenis* and *sericea*), Europe to Central Asia (*anderssoni*, *bactriana*, *fennorum*, *galliae*, *hemileucoptera*, *leucoptera*, *melanotos* and *pica*), North Africa (*mauritanica*),

and north-eastern Asia (*camtschatica*). [Remarkably, a*sirensis* is not mentioned in this study.] Most interesting are the results based on recent DNA studies by Choe (2002). In this study, the grouping of *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* as closest relatives is again supported. Other conclusions, however, are much more unexpected and may have strong impact on the known phylogeny of the *Pica* magpies. Choe (2002) infers that *camtschatica* and western European *pica* are each other's closest relatives and that *sericea* is the basal group of the genus, standing further apart from *camtschatica* and *pica* than from *hudsonia* and *nuttalli*. Comparison of the chatter calls seems consistent with this hypothesis (cf figure 1). If valid, these results imply that grouping of *camtschatica*, *pica* and *sericea* within one single species whereas *hudsonia* and *nuttalli* are treated as separate species can not be retained because it creates a paraphyletic species. It also implies that *camtschatica* can not be split from *pica* and other Eurasian taxa without the status of *sericea* being established first.

The taxa most worthy of further research from a systematic point of view are *asirensis*, *bottanensis*, *camtschatica*, *sericea* and *mauritanica*. Each of these taxa is briefly discussed here to highlight the main characters, after summarizing the general variation within the *Pica* complex.

Variation within the *Pica* complex

The different subspecies within the *Pica* complex in the Old World mainly show clinal variation and the definition of some subspecies is difficult. As a result, the number of recognized subspecies differs from author to author (see table 1). The main differences relate to the colour of the rump (ranging from white through grey to black), amount of white on the scapulars and outer wing-feathers, presence or absence and colour of sheen on wings and tail, and overall measurements including wing and tail length and wing to tail ratio; these characters are only valid in adults. The cline related to size and wing to tail ratio of Palearctic taxa (excluding *asirensis* and some doubtful taxa, cf table 1) is as follows: *mauritanica – melanotos – galliae – pica – fennorum – kot – bactriana – hemileucoptera – leucoptera – camtschatica*. In this cline, there is a 'step' between *mauritanica* and *melanoto*s (Kees Roselaar in litt). The amount of white increases from south-west to north-east, being most extensive in *camtschatica* of north-eastern Siberia. The southern taxa *melanotos* and *asirensis* show an all-black rump. Size generally increases from south-west to north-east, with *bottanensis* being the largest subspecies. *Mauritanica* shows the smallest wing to tail ratio, with relatively short wings and relatively long tail, whereas *asirensis* and *bottanensis* have a relatively short tail. From west to east, the sheen on the secondaries changes from blue to green and on the tail from green to brass-yellow (Cramp & Perrins 1994).

Asir Magpie *Pica (pica) asirensis*

The most remarkable member of the Old World *Pica*'s may well be this taxon. It has an extremely restricted range and occurs only in juniper scrub between 2400 and 3000 m in the Asir massif in extreme south-western Saudi Arabia. Given that the Asir massif is part of the Hayez and Asir mountain range stretching into Yemen and home to a significant number of Arabian endemics, it seems likely that Asir Magpie has been separated from other *Pica* populations for a very long time (Madge & Burn 1993). These endemics include Philby's Partridge *Alectoris philbyi*, Arabian Woodpecker *Dendrocopos dorae*, Yemen Thrush *Turdus menachensis*, Yemen Warbler *Parisoma* (or *Sylvia*) *buryi*, Arabian Accentor *Prunella fagani*, Arabian Serin *Serinus rothschildi*, Yemen Serin *S menachensis* and Yemen Linnet *Carduelis yemenensis* (cf Porter et al 1996). In the past, some of these taxa have been regarded as subspecies of more widespread Afrotropical or Palearctic species; for example, Arabian Accentor has been considered a subspecies of Radde's Accentor *P ocularis* and Arabian Serin a subspecies of Yellow-rumped Seedeater *S atrogularis* (cf Howard & Moore 1984).

The population of Asir Magpie is presumably very small; five surveys between February 1995 and July 1996 resulted in a total of 147 sightings of only 90 birds in the area between Taif and Abha. Peter Symens (in litt) estimated that less than 1000 and possibly only less than 500 birds remain. This taxon presumably used to occur throughout the Asir region up to Taif but its existence in 1995-96 was limited to Abha and an area of 120 km north of this town, as well as Jebel Qahar. Considering the earlier reports from a wider area, the small number recorded is a cause for concern and this taxon may be in immediate danger of extinction. Natural habitats in the Asir region are disappearing alarmingly, mainly due to promotion of tourism, and the biodiversity of this unique region may even be at stake (Yahya & Salamah 1996). Changes in climate, however, may also account for the reduced numbers; the warmer and drier weather



101 Maghreb Magpie / Maghrebekster *Pica (pica) mauritanica*, Sidi Bou Rhaba, Morocco, 24 March 2002 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

102 Asir Magpie / Asirekster *Pica (pica) asirenisis*, Raydah, Asir Province, Saudi Arabia *(Bruno Pambour/NWRC-Taif)*





103 Black-billed Magpie / Amerikaanse Ekster *Pica hudsonia*, Glacier NP, Montana, USA, 19 September 1988 *(René Pop)*

104 Eurasian Magpie / Ekster *Pica pica pica*, Julianadorp, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 14 February 2003 *(René Pop)*



forces birds to concentrate in the few remaining cool and wet places high in the mountains (Peter Symens in litt). On the positive side, Asir Magpies feed as opportunistically as most other *Pica* taxa and breed in many types of habitat, as long as year-round water is near (Peter Symens in litt).

Asir Magpie has developed some unique characters in structure and plumage, such as a very dull plumage, small amount of white on scapulars and outer wing, short tail with purple gloss, strong feet and large bill (Madge & Burn 1993, Cramp & Perrins 1994; Peter Symens in litt). Birds are gregarious and occur in small groups throughout the year, mostly of three to seven birds. Compared with nominate *pica*, vocalizations are 'very different' (Cramp & Perrins 1994), 'markedly different' (Birkhead 1991, based on recordings by Bruno Pambour) or even 'startlingly different [calls]' (Yahya & Salamah 1996). Peter Symens, who studied this taxon during many visits to the Asir region in 1986-96, was puzzled when he heard the call for the first time in 1987 and remarked (in litt) that the call was completely different from European magpies. Yahya & Salamah (1996) described three types of calls, a full loud *quaynk quaynk* (presumably the main contact call, when calling from top branch or while moving), a similar-toned *quenk quenk* (a sort of alarm call, when searching for insects or under some stress), and a much softer *qua qua* (uttered by young birds when begging for food or following their parents) (Yahya & Salamah 1996, Yahya 1998, which see for more details on behaviour and breeding).

Regardless of its possible specific status, this taxon must be one of the rarest of the corvids. It is rare even in collections. For example, Birkhead (1991) states that only two specimens are present in the collection of the Natural History Museum (NHM) at Tring, England. However, in the late 1980s, Peter Symens (in litt) examined 'nearly 10 specimens' at NHM, so Birkhead (1991) may not have traced all specimens present in this collection. The limited accessibility of Saudi Arabia for foreign birdwatchers and researchers may have contributed to the restricted knowledge.

Himalayan Magpie *Pica (pica) bottanensis*
This taxon occurs in the eastern Himalayas in eastern and north-eastern Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim, India. It is very large (the largest taxon), with a very long wing and a relatively short tail, and is extensively dull black; these characters may justify specific status (cf Madge & Burn 1993). However, intermediates with *anderssoni* reportedly occur in the north-east of the range and the characters of *bottanensis* are generally similar to those of *P p pica*. The case for specific status seems rather weak.

Kamchatka Magpie *Pica (pica) camtschatica*
This taxon occurs in extreme north-eastern Siberia, Russia, mainly on Kamchatka with an extension into Anadyrland. Its range is isolated from other *Pica* taxa, with *P p jankowskii* occurring most 'nearby' in Amurland, Russia. Although occurring geographically close to Black-billed Mapies in Alaska on the other side of the Bering Strait, these two taxa differ considerably, for instance, in the amount of white in the wing. Kamchatka Magpie is relatively large and has the largest amount of white in the outer wing and, even on the closed wing, white is visible on the primary tips. The gloss on the tail and wing is greener than in any other taxon. *Camtschatica* is generally considered to be at the end of a cline from west to east (see above). In many bird species (for instance, raptors, woodpeckers and *Parus* tits), populations breeding in Kamchatka are larger and paler/whiter than their relatives breeding in central and eastern Siberia. Generally, these differences are not considered sufficient basis for specific status (Kees Roselaar in litt). Probably, *camtschatica* and *leucoptera* have been in contact 'recently' and old reports from the Ma'gadan region and possibly Aldan-Maya-Onon region seem to support this assumption (Kees Roselaar in litt). As *camtschatica* has not yet been compared with *leucoptera* and *sericea* in detail, the case for specific status of *camtschatica* seems rather weak.

Maghreb Magpie *Pica (pica) mauritanica*
This taxon occurs in the Maghreb countries in north-western Africa, mainly in Morocco but also in northern Algeria and, possibly, Tunisia (where there are no recent records; Cramp & Perrins 1994). This taxon seems to have a healthy population and does not seem to be at risk. It is easily separated from other *Pica* taxa by its relatively long tail and, especially, the conspicuous patch of bare blue skin around the eye (largest behind the eye). However, birds in southern Spain belonging to *P p melanotos* may show a similar patch as well and this complicates the discussion about possible specific status for *mauritanica*. South of Madrid, some birds have a small spot and from Extremadura southwards, many or all

birds show this spot (Cramp & Perrins 1994).

Compared with European races, *mauritanica* seems to utter a more varied selection of calls, with a higher-pitched chatter and uttered with a more undulating rhythm (Madge & Burn 1993). Chappuis (2000) remarks that the structure of the notes in south-western Morocco is markedly different from that in Europe, whereas the structure prevalent in the north is far more closely linked and that the population (therefore) appears to be acoustically heterogeneous.

In other species or species complexes, a similar situation exists in which the North-African taxon has been granted specific status, distinct from the taxon or taxa in western Europe. In some of these cases, the Iberian taxon shows intermediate characters (at least in morphology) and its status is still subject of discussion. An example are the green woodpeckers *Picus*, where European Green Woodpecker *P viridis* and Levaillant's Green Woodpecker *P vaillantii* are generally regarded as separate species but where species status for the 'in-between' Iberian Green Woodpeckers *P sharpei* has only recently been given (cf van den Berg 2001, Redactie Dutch Birding 2002). Another example are the pied flycatchers *Ficedula* where the proposed specific status for Atlas Pied Flycatcher *F speculigera* (cf Sætre et al 2001) highlights the complicated position of Iberian Pied Flycatcher *F (h) iberiae* which shows intermediate characters of both Atlas Pied and European Pied Flycatcher *F hypoleuca*.

Oriental Magpie *Pica (pica) sericea*

This taxon may prove to be the basal taxon within the *Pica* group (see above). It is widespread in eastern Asia, occurring from Amurland, Russia, through China, Korea and (introduced) on Kyushu, Japan, south to Vietnam and Laos. It looks much like nominate *pica* but is characterized by a relatively small and short bill, relatively long wings and short tail and a more purple blue gloss on wings and tail. Its chatter call is much slower than the same call of nominate *pica* and therefore closely resembles the chatter call of both Nearctic taxa. The strong similarities between the Nearctic taxon *hudsonia* and the Palearctic taxon *sericea* (including *anderssoni*) were already noted in the mid-1900s by the German/Hungarian ornithologist Endre Kleiner (who changed his name after World War II to Anders Keve) (Kees Roselaar in litt). Sound recordings from Japan can be found in Ueda (1998). Behaviourally, it appears to be more often highly gregarious than European taxa (cf Moores et al 2002).



105 Maghreb Magpie / Maghrebekster *Pica (pica) mauritanica*, Sidi Bou Rhaba, Morocco, 24 March 2002 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

Further research

The developments in North America will hopefully stimulate research into the taxonomic relationships and status within the Old World *Pica*'s. The American experience with Black-billed Magpie shows that vocalizations and behaviour are important for speciation and further research could focus on these aspects, as well as on further molecular analyses.

Under the premises of the Phylogenetic Species Concept, Asir Magpie should probably rank as a separate species and, given its presumed long-time separation from any other *Pica* taxon, applying the Biological Species Concept could well lead to the same conclusion. Given its unique distribution, it deserves protection and any taxonomic debate should not overshadow the fact that this may be one of the most threatened taxa of Arabia, in need of urgent conservation measures. For Himalayan Magpie, the reported intergradation of *bottanensis* into *anderssoni* should be further studied and the nature of a presumed zone of hybridization should be investigated. The isolated breeding range and distinctive morphological characters of Kamchatka Magpie make it a candidate for specific status. Further research should concentrate on differences in vocalizations, behaviour and mt-DNA from the other *Pica* taxa breeding 'nearby' (*leucoptera* and *sericea*). The indications that *camtschatica* is genetically more closely related to *pica* than to *sericea* deserve to be

further investigated. This may lead to the conclusion that Oriental Magpie, rather than *camtschatica*, should be regarded as a separate species and even that this taxon (*sericea*) may be more closely related to the Nearctic taxa than to other Palearctic taxa. For Maghreb Magpie, research may concentrate on establishing further differences – if present – from European birds (*pica/galliae*), especially in behaviour, vocalizations and mt-DNA. Further studies could also focus on Iberian birds (*melanotos*) to present a clearer picture of this population's affinities with those from north-western Africa and from Europe north of the Pyrenées, respectively.

In addition to these taxa, another interesting topic of research may be the magpies on Cyprus. These birds are included in nominate *pica* (Cramp & Perrins 1994) but have a very different wing to tail ratio (Kees Roselaar in litt). Since Cyprus is home to a number of endemic taxa, further research could well lead to interesting conclusions.

Acknowledgements

I thank Arnoud van den Berg, André van Loon, Gerald Oreel, George Sangster and Gerard Steinhaus for their help to obtain relevant literature. Kees Roselaar commented on a draft of this paper and kindly allowed me to consult his distribution maps. AvdB, Magnus Robb and GS commented on drafts and were most helpful to obtain sound recordings of various taxa. MR prepared the sonagrams. Peter Symens provided information on Asir Magpie and helped to obtain a photograph of this rare taxon from the National Wildlife Research Centre (NWCR) at Taif, Saudi Arabia. AvdB, René Pop and Brian Small provided photographs. Greg Budney, curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology), kindly gave permission to make use of the library's sound recordings and Claude Chappuis kindly permitted to make use of his recordings.

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Masters of Mystery

SWAROVSKI
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Solutions of first round 2003

The solutions of mystery photographs I and II (Dutch Birding 25: 53, 2003) appear below.

I Clearly, mystery photograph I shows a nearly full grown chick of a coot *Fulica*. In the Western Palearctic, three species of coot occur. The most common is Eurasian Coot *F atra* which occurs over large parts of Europe, northern Africa, Asia and Australia. The second is Red-knobbed Coot *F cristata* occurring mainly in subsaharan Africa with a limited range in Morocco and southern Spain. The third is American Coot *F americana* which occurs commonly in the Americas and is a rare vagrant in Europe with records in the Azores (October 1988, October-November 2001), Britain (April 1996 and April 1999), the Faeroes (November 1985), Iceland (November 1969 and March 1971), Ireland (February-April 1981), Portugal (September 1990) and Spain (November 1999 and January-February 2003). Identification of adults of the three coot species is straightforward, given good views at close range. However, differences are much less obvious in immatures or nearly fully grown chicks and these differences are rarely treated in identification literature. To tell these birds apart, one has to focus on details of bill colour, bill structure, body colour and differences in shape and proportions.

For American Coot, the plumage of the mystery bird is highly unlikely to be observed in the Western Palearctic. Maybe for this reason, only a few entrants opted for this species. American in nearly juvenile plumage would show a more or less uniform ivory grey bill. Both in Eurasian Coot and Red-knobbed Coot, the bill is darker dull grey and especially in Eurasian the bill is sometimes tinged with olive. In adult American, a distinctive black partial ring around the bill tip is always present and normally already visible, although weakly, in immature birds. The absence of this character and the bill colour, therefore, easily eliminate American as one of the possibilities.

So, the choice is left between Eurasian Coot and Red-knobbed Coot. In a paper on the identification of Eurasian and Red-knobbed by Dick Forsman (Dutch Birding 13: 121-125, 1991), only differences for adults were described. It was put forward that differences in head shape between the two species may also be useful in separating birds outside the breeding season and perhaps even immatures. When looking at the mystery bird, it shows a rather steep forehead typical of Red-knobbed instead of the more rounded head typical of Eurasian. In addition, the mystery bird shows a long and flat, almost rectangular body which is typical for Red-knobbed. In Eurasian, the body is shorter and espe-



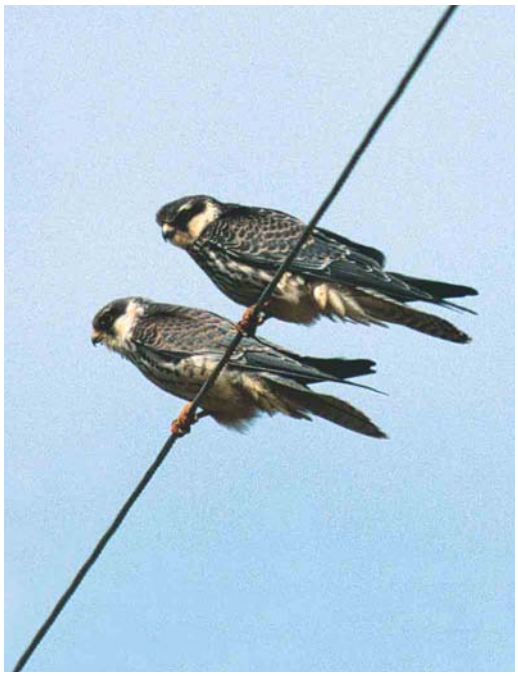
106 Red-knobbed Coots / Knobbelmeerkoeten *Fulica cristata*, adult and juvenile, Ifrane, Morocco, 27 March 2002 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*

cially rounder, the highest point at just a little more than halfway the back. Another difference between Red-knobbed and Eurasian in immature plumages is the overall body colour. Juvenile Red-knobbed is much darker overall than juvenile Eurasian. The body colour of Red-knobbed is dark black-grey, whereas the body colour in Eurasian is grey and even whitish on parts of the head and breast. A careful look at the mystery photograph shows that the white parts are restricted to the lores, chin and central parts of the throat and breast. Other parts of the head, such as ear-coverts and sides of the breast, are dark black-grey and this character is, therefore, in favour of Red-knobbed. A very important identification character of Red-knobbed at all ages is the shape or loral feathering between bill and shield. In Eurasian, the loral feathering projects forwards in a sharp point at the base of the upper mandible. In adults, this feature creates the well-known white indentation between the white frontal shield and the bill. In Red-knobbed, the loral feathering is more or less rounded and does not project forwards in a point above the bill. In the mystery bird, the adult's shield is not present yet but the loral feathering near the upper mandible can be seen well. The mystery bird shows that the shape of the feathering at the base of the bill is rounded and not projecting forward in a point, proving that the bird is a Red-knobbed indeed.

This Red-knobbed Coot was photographed in the Middle Atlas near Ifrane, Morocco, on 27 March 2002 by Arnoud van den Berg. Another picture showing the same bird with one of its parents is shown in plate 106. The date on which the photograph was taken is another hint for the identification as Red-knobbed since, at least in the WP, Eurasian Coots appear to have a more seasonally restricted breeding cyclus, rendering this kind of immature plumage a phenomenon of late spring and summer. This bird was correctly identified by 50% of the entrants. The other entrants identified the mystery bird as Eurasian (44%) or American Coot (6%).

II Mystery photograph II shows a falcon *Falco*, and all entrants recognized it as such. The mystery bird flies towards the observer and only the head and parts of the upperwings and tail are visible from this angle. All visible primaries and primary coverts show broad pale buffish or rufous tips. Based on this, and the September date, the bird can be safely aged as a fairly fresh





107 Amur Falcon / Amoerroodpootvalk *Falco amurensis*, juvenile, Dongmak-ri, Ganghwa-do, South Korea, 11 October 2002 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)* **108** Amur Falcons / Amoerroodpootvalken *Falco amurensis*, juveniles, Okgu, Gunsan, South Korea, 14 October 2002 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*. Note entirely dark crown and rather dark and cold upperparts, creating general impression like Eurasian Hobby *F subbuteo*. **109** Red-footed Falcon / Roodpootvalk *Falco vespertinus*, Eemshaven, Groningen, Netherlands, 2 September 2002 *(Roef Mulder)*. Note broad, dark, blackish trailing edge and black barring on the remiges contrasting strongly with the pure white ground-colour.



juvenile. The head pattern is very sharply defined. The shape of the pale cheek-patch is circular with an extension onto the neck well beyond the dark mask. Furthermore, there is no trace of a supercilium beyond the eye. This set of characters only fits juvenile Red-footed *F vespertinus*, Amur *F amurensis* and Sooty Falcon *F concolor* and Eurasian Hobby *F subbuteo*.

Both Eurasian Hobby and Sooty Falcon normally show a much more buffish coloured cheek-patch than the mystery bird. This is, especially in Eurasian Hobby, known to be variable and can be fairly light. The mystery bird, however, shows a very clean white cheek-patch, with a strongly contrasting blackish mask. In addition, Eurasian Hobby and Sooty would show a much less complete neckband and a darker brown crown. The colouration of the pale fringes on the upperparts is also very variable in all mentioned species, but both Eurasian Hobby and Sooty would normally show colder buffish fringes than the mystery bird.

By excluding Eurasian Hobby and Sooty Falcon, we are now left with Red-footed and Amur Falcon. In juvenile plumage, Amur tends to show a rather dark grey-brown crown, greyer and much less contrasting with the dark eye-mask compared with juvenile Red-footed. Again, this character is subject to considerable variation. However, if rufous colouration in the crown is present in Amur, it is at the most restricted to slight streaks only. Both species usually show a suggestion of a thin pale supercilium reaching to the back of the eye but in Red-footed this is somewhat more prominent, joining with an invariably pale forehead and forecrown. In Amur, the forehead is usually much darker. In the mystery bird, the crown appears rufous, at least much more so than the upperparts, and contrasts with the blackish eye-mask. The forehead and forecrown are pale, joining a whitish, rather conspicuous supercilium. The colouration of the upperparts in juvenile Amur tends to be colder and darker than in juvenile Red-footed. The upperparts of the mystery bird, as far as visible, look rather warm with rufous-brown fringes. Juvenile Amur shows a much stronger grey tone to the uppertail than Red-footed, contrasting more strongly with the brownish-grey upperwings and back. In the photograph, the uppertail seems to be as dark brownish as the outer wings.

In addition, the mystery bird's age is another hint as juvenile Amur Falcon has never been recorded in the WP (excluding the southern Arabian peninsula). Amur is breeding in eastern Asia and wintering in southern Africa, where they arrive in late November. The migration routes are mysteriously unknown but probably involve a lengthy transoceanic route unique for raptors. In Oman, it is irregular in spring and rare in autumn; further north in the Arabian peninsula, in the United Arab Emirates, there are only three records, two in spring and one (an adult male) on 18 November 2001 (cf Dutch Birding 24: 50, 2002). In Europe, it has only been recorded at the Straits of Messina, Italy, where three out of seven sightings (in April 1995, May 1998 and May 1999) have so far been accepted (Bull Br Ornithol Club 121: 222-230, 2001, Dutch Birding 24: 175, 2002). All these data seem to confirm that, in the WP, Amur may be less likely to occur as a vagrant during autumn migration (when prevailing north-easterlies across the Indian Ocean facilitate a direct route) than during spring migration (when some birds may follow a more northerly route over the African continent). As a result, juvenile Amur does not seem a realistic option for the WP.

In conclusion, the mystery photograph shows a juvenile Red-footed Falcon which was photographed on 2 September 2002 at Eemshaven, Groningen, the Netherlands, by Roef Mulder. Plate 109 shows another photograph of the same individual. In this photograph, a very important feature can be seen in the pattern of the underwing. In juvenile Red-footed, the underwing shows a broad, dark, blackish, trailing edge. On the remiges, the black barring contrasts with the pure white ground-colour. This pattern is a useful field character for excluding juvenile Eurasian Hobby, which is the major identification pitfall in north-western Europe. The underwing of a Eurasian Hobby appears uniformly patterned, featureless and rather darkish, lacking the dark trailing edge. Juvenile Eleonora's Falcon *F eleonorae* and Sooty Falcon, however, share the prominent dark trailing edge with Red-footed but differ by their buffish ground-colour both to the remiges and the underwing-coverts. The latter show blackish-brown markings in juvenile Eleonora's, while in Red-footed these markings are medium brown, similar to the colour of the breast streaking. In addition, Eleonora's differ from Red-footed in head-pattern. In juvenile Sooty, the underwing pattern is less strong, with softer tones, giving a more uniform general impression. Both Eleonora's and Sooty breed late in the season in respect to other European raptors. As a general rule, juveniles do not fledge



Mystery photograph III (May)

until October. Hence, vagrant juveniles of both species cannot be expected in early September in northern Europe.

This mystery bird was correctly identified by 76% of the entrants. As could be expected, incorrect answers included Amur Falcon (4%) and Eurasian Hobby (6%).

There were 140 participants in the first round of 2003 and 56 of them managed to identify both mystery birds correctly. The names of all these entrants can be viewed at www.dutchbirding.nl. From them, Jaap Dijkhuizen was drawn as the winner of a copy of *Sylvia warblers* by Hadoram Shirihai, Gabriel Gargallo and Andreas Helbig, donated by A&C Black (Publishers) Ltd.



Mystery photograph IV (August)

Second round 2003

Photographs III and IV represent the second round of the 2003 competition. Please, study the rules (Dutch Birding 25: 54, 2003) carefully and identify the birds in the photographs. Solutions can be sent in three different ways:

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

Entries for the first round have to arrive by **1 May 2003**. From those entrants having identified both mystery birds correctly, two will be drawn who will receive a copy of the identification guide *Rails* by Barry Taylor and Ber van Perlo, donated by GMB-Uitgeverij. Swarovski Benelux generously agreed to sponsor this competition, this time with a pair of marvellous SLC 10x50 WB binoculars. The overall winner after six rounds will win these Swarovski binoculars.

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CDNA-mededelingen

Recente CDNA-besluiten Op de wintervergadering van de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna (CDNA) van 22 februari 2003 zijn de volgende besluiten genomen. In de loop van dit jaar zal een herziening plaatsvinden van alle gevallen van 'blonde tapuiten' met het oog op de veel moeilijker gebleken determinatie van Oostelijke Blonde Tapuit *Oenanthe melanoleuca* en Westelijke Blonde Tapuit *O hispanica*. Hierbij wordt met name gebruik gemaakt van het determinatieartikel van Magnus Ullman in dit nummer van Dutch Birding (25: 77-97, 2003). Tevens zal een herziening plaatsvinden van alle gevallen van Kleine Spotvogel *Acrocephalus caligatus* om te zien of deze (nog) voldoen aan de kenmerken van dit taxon. De toegenomen kennis van het 'vale spotvogel-complex' en met name de recente toename van gevallen van Sykes' Spotvogel *A rama* in West-Europa – mogelijk als gevolg van deze toegenomen kennis – geeft hiertoe aanleiding. Daarnaast zal een al eerder voorgenomen herziening plaatsvinden van Siberische Tjiftjaf *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*. Vanwege de moeilijke determinatie van dit taxon komen vooralsnog alleen gevallen voor aanvaarding in aanmerking waarbij de documentatie zowel voorziet in een gedetailleerde beschrijving en/of foto's of video-opnamen als in een geluidsopname. Ringvangsten (zonder geluidsopname) komen eveneens voor aanvaarding in aanmerking mits het geval goed beschreven en bij voorkeur ook gefotografeerd is.

Er gaat geen 'generaal pardon' (aanvaarding van alle meldingen, ook zonder dat er documentatie is ingediend) gelden voor Roze Spreeuw *Sturnus roseus* en Witbandkruisbek *Loxia leucoptera* in respectievelijk de perioden juni-oktober 2002 en augustus 2002 tot voorjaar 2003. Om de recente invasies van beide zo goed mogelijk vast te leggen roept de commissie waarnemers op alle waarnemingen van deze soorten in te dienen. Van de c 46 Roze Spreeuwen die in de genoemde periode in Nederland zijn gemeld (waarvan ongeveer driekwart adulte of eerste-zomer vogels) is tot nu toe minder dan de helft ingediend. Bij deze gemakkelijk te herkennen soort kan worden volstaan met een korte beschrijving; bij juveniele vogels zijn de eisen iets strenger.

Helaas zijn er (weer) pakketten bij de post kwijtgeraakt. Om dit hardnekkige probleem in de toekomst te voorkomen heeft de CDNA navraag gedaan bij TPG Post en enkele tips gekregen. De (bijna afgeronde) herziening van Baardgrasmus *Sylvia cantillans* (vaststelling van ondersoorten) loopt hierdoor aanzienlijke vertraging op. Daarnaast zijn er ook beschrijvingen van potentiële nieuwe soorten voor Nederland als Wenkbrauwalbatros *Thalassarche melanophris* en Rotszwaluw *Hirundo rupestris* met deze pakketten verdwenen en worden hernieuwd in roulatie genomen. Indieners hoeven zich geen zorgen te maken omdat vrijwel altijd kopieën van het ingediende materiaal circuleren terwijl het originele materiaal in het archief blijft.

De door digitale optiek sterk toegenomen mogelijkheden tot snel en goed documenteren van gevallen – wat de CDNA uiteraard van harte toejuicht – maakt tegenwoordig sneller documentatie beschikbaar die in principe in roulatie zou kunnen worden gebracht. De CDNA verzoekt echter met klem om ook altijd aantekeningen in het veld te (blijven) maken als aanvulling op (digitale) opnames. Bovendien zal het indienen van een beschrijving van een waarneming waarvan al fotografisch materiaal beschikbaar is, de roulatie aanzienlijk bespoedigen omdat daarmee alle gegevens omtrent datum(s), waarnemer(s), locatie(s) en bijzonderheden rond de waarneming bekend zijn. Om het indienen van beschrijvingen te stimuleren zullen CDNA-leden vaker dan voorheen waarnemers actief benaderen. NILS VAN DUIVENDIJK & BERT DE BRUIN

Recensies

DICK WATLING 2001. *A guide to the birds of Fiji & Western Polynesia, including American Samoa, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis & Futuna*. Environmental Consultants Fiji Ltd, 259 Prince's Road, Box 2041, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji; website www.environmentfiji.com, e-mail watling@is.com.fj. 272 pp, 16 colour plates. ISBN 982-9047-01-6. GBP 22.50, USD 30.00.

This guide covers the birds of Fiji and Western Polynesia, including American Samoa, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis & Futuna. It is a completely revised and reformatted edition of the guide *Birds of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa* (1978) by the same author, involving an extension of the area covered (now including the atoll states of Tuvalu and Tokelau). For most European and American birders, the islands covered in this guide – roughly halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand – are largely unknown. Their names may sound just as mysterious as those of their equally unknown birds. Travelling to the area involves long journeys and the number of species to be seen is relatively low. Yet, the area covered in this guide has hosted 173 species (with 22 more species unconfirm-

ed), of which no less than 54 (more than 30%) are endemic or near-endemic. In addition, there are over 100 endemic subspecies. As on nearly all oceanic islands, many species have become extinct and others are severely threatened. Examples of the latter group are Polynesian Scrubfowl (also known as Niaufoou Scrubfowl or Tongan Megapode) *Megapodius pritchardii*, believed to be the sole remaining member in the region of a once much more widespread group of megapodes, and MacGillivray's Petrel (or Fiji Petrel) *Pseudobulweria macgillivrayi* from Gau, Fiji, which was known for more than a century from only one fledgling collected in 1855 until an adult was caught in April 1984. Since then, only a further six presumed juveniles have been sighted. The guide not only depicts and describes most species but also offers chapters with statistic information and short descriptions of the eight countries. Other chapters deal with conservation, the ornithology of the region and birding, with information on how to see the most characteristic species. The guide has been published with the specific intention of distributing 1500 free copies to schools, libraries, universities and colleges to promote a greater understanding of the conservation status and needs of the regional avifauna and to stimulate a conservation interest among the inhabitants.

The plates by Chloe Talbot Kelly are taken from the 1978 guide and can not compete with the standards of some recently published 'western' field guides or handbooks. However, given the fact that most species in the region have no or just a small number of 'confusion species', the plates seem quite adequate for use in the field. The book is divided in three parts, covering land and freshwater birds, seabirds and shorebirds, respectively. This division is somewhat confusing for the experienced birder but may help local people to recognize their birds more easily. For each species, it can be quickly glanced on which islands it occurs. Small symbols indicate threats and habitats, making it easier for novice birders to understand where each species can be expected and why it may be shy and/or rare.

For anyone visiting this region, either with the aim to see as many endemics as possible or just to enjoy some of the local birds, this is the guide to have. For those staying at home but interested to learn more about the diversity of bird life on the numerous Pacific islands, it offers pleasant reading and browsing. ENNO B EBELS

LARS JONSSON, STAFFAN SÖDERBLOM & BJÖRN LINNELL 2002. *Birds and light. The art of Lars Jonsson*. Christopher Helm/A&C Black Publishers Ltd, 37 Soho Square, London W1D 3QZ, UK; e-mail ornithology@acblack.com. 232 pp. ISBN 0-7136-6405-3. GBP 35.00.

This heavy-weight (28 x 30 cm, 2 kg) retrospective on the life and art of Lars Jonsson is divided into the sections foreword, introduction, conversation, paintings 1983-2000, graphic works, biography, exhibitions, bibliography and postscript. The whole book is filled with numerous reproductions of Jonsson's work, including field sketches, water colour and oil paintings, yes even his earliest bird drawings as a child. Printing quality is good: plates used in his field guide *Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East* are reproduced with a far better resolution than in the guide itself. Almost every reproduction is labeled with title, year, species, medium and format. Apart from some editorial mishaps, such as quite a few out of place hyphenations and a label without a picture on p 182, the book is beautifully produced.

Books on wildlife art often suffer from a sentimental, strongly romanticized text, which I find a bore. It is the section 'conversation', which is an interview between Lars Jonsson and Björn Linnell, a Swedish culture critic, which makes this retrospective totally different from other wildlife books and far more interesting. In this conversation, Jonsson gives insight into his life as an artist. He talks about his motives as a youngster, and how by chance his first exhibition, at the age of 15, in the Natural History Museum at Stockholm, Sweden, came to be. The famous rejection at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts doesn't seem to have bothered him as much as one might expect. Jonsson relates the whole story of his revolutionary series of five field guides and later his totally revised compilation *Birds of Europe*, how it began, the disciplined way he worked, his thoughts on depicting birds for identification purposes and how the work stood in the way of his artistic development. He talks about the importance of his sketchbooks and how he works in the field and in his studio on Gotland, Sweden, and his love for open landscapes. The various stages in a large painting with Northern Pintails *Anas acuta* are described and illustrated and this offers some interesting insight into Jonsson's working method and the choices he makes. He describes what it is that makes him paint birds in the field, how it 'dissolves' him, another word for 'flow' (a state of mind, caused by deep concentration, where time seems no longer to exist). Sometimes, Jonsson tries so hard to put his passion for birds and paint into words that it becomes almost a bit uncomfortable, as if he feels obliged to give an explanation for something that may well be beyond explanation. As if a painter should have to explain his work intellectually instead of being free to say 'it's fun!' Maybe for the same reason, the titles of his paintings often seem a bit sentimental to me. He describes the directness of watercolours and the sluggishness of oils and his 'immaturity' in the latter. He is greatly inspired by Bruno Liljefors and Andes Zorn, two Swedish painters about a century ago, but sadly no work of these two is presented. For some odd reason the use of photographs in wildlife art is still a matter of debate and often looked down upon. Jonsson's attitude is no exception; he uses photographs 'only' as a reference, but it would have been interesting to know to what extent. Not to 'accuse' him for using photographs 'too much', but to learn how detailed his field observation and sketches can be.

Judging paintings on the basis of reproductions is tricky. The impact on the beholder of a large format

(Jonsson's paintings often are more than 1 m in width), the exact colour and the structure of brushstrokes and textures of paint in oils are lost. Still, Jonsson's art reproduced in his book is a real treat. One of the great powers of his work is the telescope perspective. This enhances the beholder's feeling that he is watching the scene through his own eyepiece. And that never bores and is always surprising. My personal favorites are a stunning Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* (p 153) which makes you freeze or it might fly away, a majestic Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus* (p 167), two Yellow-billed Loons *Gavia adamsii* (p 189) which makes you shiver in the Siberian Arctic's summer night, and Sea Otters *Enhydra lutris* (p 115) where you can almost hear them cracking shells on their belly-stone. Interestingly, there are a few oils which are a bit out of tune and where SuperLars proves to be human too! White-morph Gyr Falcons (pp 175 and 187) are beautifully painted but the composition gives a too classical and old-fashioned impression. Some other oils suffer from this same problem too, being too composed and lacking the liveliness of most of his work and the sense of being there yourself. In some paintings, the leftover pieces of white canvas give a dirty impression and do not seem to work well (but here you really have to see the original to make an accurate judgement). Maybe this is what Jonsson meant in the interview when he said that he had still not matured in oils and is still developing. However, most paintings look very mature to me, so everyone with an interest in wildlife art in general and Jonsson's art specifically should not hesitate to buy this beautiful and very interesting book. DIRK J MOERBEEK

CHARLIE MOORES, NIAL MOORES & KIM SU KYUNG 2002. *Birds of South Korea* (videocassette). Charlie Moores Video Productions, Portland, UK. For ordering instructions, see www.wbkenglish.com/video.asp. GBP 19.95.

South Korea is rapidly becoming a popular birding destination for many birders with an interest in Asian birds. The combination of several sought-after species, an adequate tourist infrastructure and a relatively small size, enabling the visit to different habitats within a short period of time, is the main explanation for this growing popularity. Nial Moores is the driving force behind the organization Wetlands and Birds Korea (WBK) which works on the protection of vulnerable areas in South Korea and which puts much effort in promoting South Korea as a prime birding destination (see, for instance, Dutch Birding 22: 204-219, 2000). Together with his brother Charlie and local wetland activist Kim Su Kyung he has now produced a video of the birds of South Korea. By increasing the interest of foreign birders in the country they aim to promote conservation. In keeping with this ambition, the profits of this video will go to conservation programmes.

The video runs for almost 3 h (170 min) with an English commentary (versions with Korean and Japanese commentaries are in preparation). It starts with a short introduction to birding in the country, followed by a few more minutes on Korean culture and birding tours. The next 10 min focus on common roadside birds and then c 17 min on waterbirds and waders. The following part of c 30 min deals with birds likely to be seen during spring migration, followed by c 35 min on autumn migration. The final part takes more than 70 min and focuses on winter birds, illustrating that the winter period is one of the most interesting seasons to pay a visit. In total, c 175 species are shown, the exact number depending on the chosen systematic treatments. Where relevant, taxonomic debates are discussed, such as the status of bean geese *Anser serrirostris/fabalis*, Black Brant *Branta nigricans* of the form *orientalis*, 'large white-headed gulls' *Larus*, 'white wagtails' *Motacilla* and skylarks *Alauda*. Each of the seasonal sections deals with the birds that can be expected at these times, so some groups appear in all three sections, while others appear in both spring and autumn parts. Some viewers may prefer a more systematic treatment with all related birds in one section but the advantage of the chosen sequence is that it gives the visitor a much better impression of what to expect – and when to expect it. Two groups receiving more than average coverage are waders (c 27 min) and gulls (c 20 min).

Many difficult groups like waders, gulls and buntings get extensive coverage with video footage of excellent quality. The comments pay attention to plumage variation, ageing and identification and, where relevant, to conservation concerns. Some of East Asia's most-wanted species are shown, often very closely, including Scaly-sided Merganser *Mergus squamatus*, Steller's Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus pelagicus*, Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*, Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, Relict Gull *L relictus* and Saunders's Gull *L saundersi*. Another highlight are the huge swirling flocks of c 250 000 Baikal Teals *Anas formosa* – presumably *the* main attraction in South Korea for foreign birders.

This video presents a most tempting overview of what birding in South Korea has to offer – if you have never considered going there, this video may change your mind. The video also stresses the urgent need for conservation in many wetland areas, several of which still lack any legal protection. ENNO B EBELS

TONY JUNIPER 2002. *Spix's Macaw – the race to save the world's rarest bird*. Fourth Estate, HarperCollins Publishers, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB, UK; website www.4thestate.com. 296 pp. ISBN 1-84115-650-7. GBP 16.99.

Tony Juniper, co-author with Michael Parr of the well-known Christopher Helm family monograph *Parrots* (1998), has written a gripping book about the fate of (one of) the rarest bird species in the world, Little Blue Macaw, better known as Spix's Macaw *Cyanopsitta spixii*. Although it may be hard to substantiate the claim of being *the* world's rarest bird, Spix's Macaw

has good credentials. For c 14 years, just a single male was known to survive in the wild in a tiny fragment of remaining habitat near Curaçá in western Brazil. Given the fact that the species had always been rare and localized and combined with the intensive quest to find the last wild birds (in a rat-race between scientists and poachers), it seems highly likely that this lone male was indeed the last surviving individual in the wild. After its presumed death (or at least disappearance) in 2002, only c 60 birds survive in captivity, mostly in private collections.

This book tells the whole story about the species, from the first specimen collected by Johann Baptist Ritter von Spix in 1819 to the fruitless efforts to re-introduce captive-bred young in the wild before the last male would die or disappear. The book also tells the stories of the three other blue macaws from South America. One of these (Glaucous Macaw *Anodorhynchus glaucus*) is believed extinct for several decades, another (Lear's Macaw *A leari*) is extremely localized and is now possibly one of the rarest wild breeding parrots of the world, and the remaining (Hyacinth Macaw *A hyacinthinus* – the largest parrot in the world) is the only one to have a wider distribution but is still threatened by illegal trapping and habitat destruction. The only moment when mankind had the opportunity to see 'The Four Blues' side by side was in the Berlin Zoo in Germany in 1900; since then, they have become rarer and rarer, both in captivity and in the wild.

A large part of the book is dedicated to the efforts to establish a worldwide breeding programme to save Spix's Macaw from rapid extinction – after more than 10 years of struggling, coordinated attempts failed and the fate of the species and any possible re-introduction is now in the hands of a small group of parrot breeders in quite different parts of the world. Although not all hope has been lost, the future looks quite grim. The fact that the rarer a species, the more reluctant the few remaining owners will become to put their living treasures on loan for breeding programmes, plays an important role. Knowing that '…by the end of the 20th century, Spix's Macaws became gram-for-gram more valuable than heroin', this may hardly be surprising. Birds were so treasured that they reportedly drew up to USD 40 000 on the black market.

Many birders will have vaguely heard the story of the last Spix's Macaw but few will have heard the full story behind this bird. Tony Juniper's book offers anyone interested the chance to catch up with the whole story and, in addition, presents a small selection of photographs, including two photographs of the last wild bird in its favourite tree. This story is both fascinating and saddening and will appeal to many birders who have a special interest in 'rarity'. Juniper's style of writing may be a bit overdone at times but then, this is not a story to handle lightly. Take, for example, the following description: 'Not only were we in the presence of the last Spix's Macaw at Curaçá – it was the last wild Spix's Macaw anywhere... Unlike all other mortal creatures that must one day face the inevitable reality of their own demise, the death of this bird would mark the end not only of himself but his entire kind.' In all, this is a most readable book and I can highly recommend it. Pass the word, as parrots do… ENNO B EBELS

HADORAM SHIRIHAI 2002. *A complete guide to Antarctic wildlife. The birds and marine mammals of the Antarctic continent and Southern Ocean*. Alula Press Oy, Knapantie 49, 10160 Degerby, Finland; website www.alula.fi. 510 pp. ISBN 951-98947-0-5. GBP 43.00.

When first browsing through this impressive work, one immediately notices the enormous amount of information gathered. The resulting book is actually so stuffed with data that it was probably for that reason that it was decided to use a rather narrow font, which some readers may find difficult to read without glasses. However, there is no reason to criticise, for the reader is in the meantime rewarded with a complete and up-to-date guide to the Antarctic wildlife. In that respect, the hope the author expresses in his preface is fully met with.

Now let's suppress the urge to look up the part in which the species of the area are described, and first have a look at the way this work is constructed. For it is more a book on the full natural history of the region than a bird (and mammal) guide.

The lay-out of the book is very systematic. After a short introduction there is a chapter on what makes this part of the world so special: geological history, the formation of the subantarctic islands, climate, sea currents and a description of biological aspects, all are treated extensively. The Antarctic is not just a cold, ice-covered forgotten part of the world, but a delicate and complex ecosystem, not in the least because of the intriguing background to the richness in food in these waters. The author explains the cohesion of all these factors influencing this, and particularly worth mentioning is the importance to the wildlife of the divergences and convergences in sea currents, the result of complex flows of water systems around the Antarctic ice cap. He even goes as far as describing the different types and shapes of icebergs found in the southern seas. This all makes this part of the book one that allows pleasant reading.

After the full checklist of bird and mammal species that occur in the region, one would then expect to find the species accounts, but first there is an interesting account of the history of Antarctic exploration, a factor which has had such a large impact on the wildlife. The main part of the book is formed by the species accounts. These are roughly divided in the pelagic birds, birds of the subantarctic islands, and mammals. The species' descriptions are extensive and give ample information on identification, distribution, habits, breeding, taxonomy, etc. They are enlivened by first-class pictures and the only reason why I imagine the reader could refrain from continuing to the end in one stretch is the saddening conservation paragraphs, in

which the threats (eg, the highly lethal longline fishing) to all these wonderful species are summed up.

The bird plates do not have facing-page captions, but that does not make them any less useful. They are without exception of a very high standard and it is obvious that the illustrator (Brett Jarrett) has had the opportunity to spend a lot of time studying many if not all of the region's seabirds and most of its mammals. The plates are large and similar species are illustrated on the same page, allowing close comparison of the field characters. By choosing captions giving full species names on the plates themselves, the authors have in my opinion chosen for the best method, as numbering the illustrations with accompanying descriptions of what number refers to what species often gives rise to at least some confusion.

There are, however, some minor points of criticism. Illustrations of the juvenile/immature plumages of Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca* and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *P palpebrata* are lacking and their descriptions in the text do not give any clarity to the pointers of separating these two. This can be important, as juvenile Sooty, due to the contrast between dark head and pale collar, could be mistaken for Light-mantled Sooty.

The authors state that the projection of the tip of the feet beyond the tail in Black Petrel *Procellaria parkinsoni* [check Engelse naam, svp] helps to distinguish this species from White-chinned Petrel *P aequinoctialis* and Westland Petrel *P westlandica*. However, a projection is also present in the latter two species (although to a lesser extent), so the usefulness of this as a field character is debatable.

Prion *Pachyptila* identification is notoriously difficult, but the author has listed a good deal of characters that can be used to identify at least some of these species. However, the illustration of Antarctic Prion *P desolata* is by no means mirroring the description, in which the species is suggested to have more extensive grey breast-sides and less pure and less extensive white face marks than Salvin's Prion *P salvini*. The latter character is even contradicted by the accompanying pictures.

South Georgia Shag *Notocarbo georgianus* is said to be distinguishable from Antarctic Shag *N ransfieldensis* by – among other characters – the white cheeks not extending as high as that in Antarctic. The head-patterns of the two on the plate, however, are virtually identical. A few more points could be mentioned but that would do injustice to the effort put in these illustrations.

In contrast to the bird plates, the mammal plates do have a small description of every species on the facing page. This facilitates identification, especially since there is also a small plate included of what usually is seen emerging from the water, or the shape of the blow. Also, possible variations in the fin shape are shown. All in all these plates make a very sound impression and therefore follow the high standard of the bird plates.

Maps are available for every species regular in the area and offer a clear view of the breeding ranges, including the subantarctic islands, which have a fixed numbering. Distribution at sea is shown by pink shading, if necessary in different intensities to represent differences in abundance. This all makes the maps very clear and easy to interpret.

The final main section of the book is dedicated to describing the island groups of the Southern Ocean and regions of the Antarctic continent. This part, too, makes good reading. For instance, what to think of the discovery in 1739 of Bouvetoya, one of the most remote islands in the world measuring not more than 49 km^2, when it took the Frenchman Bouvet de Lozier (the discoverer) *12 days* to determine whether the land he had found was an island or part of an as yet unknown continent!

Finally, the index should be mentioned, for it is a bit of a mess: all bird species appearing on plate 19-26 are wrongly indexed. Although this fortunately only applies to the plate numbers, and not to text and photographs, it is just sloppy!

One could argue whether this is a book to bring on deck as a pocket guide for quick identification, or as a reference guide down in the cabin or on the bridge, but one thing is certain: it is without doubt a work one cannot do without. It is absolutely invaluable for anyone visiting the Antarctic and/or its adjacent areas and is therefore strongly recommended, also for those who do not as yet have any travel plans but just have a general interest in the Antarctic wildlife. I myself visited Antarctica once and I regret I did not have the opportunity to bring it with me on that occasion. TEUS J C LUIJENDIJK

KAZIMIERZ WALASZ (editor) 2000. *The atlas of wintering birds in Małopolska*. Małopolska Ornithological Society, Skr, pocz, 110, 31-104 Kraków 45, Poland, e-mail walasz@eko.uj.edu.pl. 602 pp. ISBN 83-85222-39-1.

Małopolska is located in south-eastern Poland. It covers an area that is about 1.4 times bigger than the Netherlands and includes part of the Carpathian mountains. Its elevations range from 130 to 2499 m above sea level. The entire area is under intensive agricultural use, with the exception of the higher parts of the Carpathians. Still, forests, rivers and reservoirs enliven the landscape. In this land of Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Rook *Corvus frugilegus* and Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* winters can be severe. *The atlas of wintering birds in Małopolska* is the first detailed work focusing on the occurrence and distribution of wintering birds in Poland, and one of the few such works in Europe. It is the second part of the work *Birds of Małopolska* and follows after *The atlas of breeding birds in Małopolska*, which was published in 1992. The atlas work was carried out over the nine winters (December-February) of 1984/85 to 1992/93. Information about rare species – which include Steller's Eider *Polystica stelleri*, Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, Black Lark *Melanocorypha yeltoniensis* and Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus* – was updated to

29 February 2000. The first 108 pages in this book deal with subjects like the study area, climate and fieldwork methodology, while the following 444 pages are devoted to the species accounts (of 193 species). Appendices and a total of 178 pictures of landscapes and birds are included in the final pages. Both size and accessibility of this work have been enlarged by the fact that all information is given in Polish *and* English. Altogether, this is a thorough piece of work, which gives birders from wide and far insight in the occurrence of birds in this part of the world. For those with a special interest in distribution patterns of European birds this book is a welcome addition. ROY SLATERUS

PAUL DOHERTY 2002. *Birdwatching in Mallorca*. Bird Images Video Guides, 28 Carousel Walk, Sherburn-in-Elmet, North Yorkshire LS25 6LP, UK, e-mail paul@birdvideodvd.com. GBP 19.95 / EUR 29 (incl p&p).

A holiday in Mallorca is an easy way to get to grips with a whole range of Mediterranean species, perhaps for the first time, and a place where non-birding companions may leave you in peace to do so too. This video, subtitled *the perfect introduction to Mediterranean birding*, is clearly aimed mainly at birders contemplating a holiday in Mallorca, with such thoughts in mind. In the course of 62 min the viewer is treated to some excellent footage of birds, such as Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*, European Scops Owl *Otus scops*, Eurasian Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, Western Swamp-hen *Porphyrio porphyrio* and Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*, which most northern European birders could only hope to see as very rare vagrants in their own countries. The video takes us to several of the most popular and productive sites on the island, mainly centred around the north-east, where most birders stay. Several of the key sites are here, such as the Boquer valley, the Formentor peninsula and 'the Albufera'. Indeed the sites featured are probably a good reflection of the ones most likely to be covered by a first-time visitor. A little more information on peak dates for most-wanted migrants might have been a good idea. The commentary is informative, and delivered with humour and enthousiasm by Bill Oddie. Pronunciation of place names is a dilemma when making such a video. Trying too hard to emulate the native tongue can seem pretentious to English-speakers. However, strongly anglicised pronunciations such as in this video are likely to cause problems for viewers whose native tongue is not English! Think of all the possible permutations of Puig Major! Perhaps a compromise is possible. More demanding viewers will be disappointed that very little is made of the Balearic endemics. For example, the endangered Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* is merely 'Mediterranean Shearwater' here. That the Balearic Warbler *Sylvia balearica* is still 'Marmora's Warbler' can be forgiven, since this split is a very recent one. MAGNUS S ROBB

LIM CHAN KOON & EARL OF CRANBROOK 2002. *Swiftlets of Borneo: builders of edible nests.* Natural History Publications (Borneo), PO Box 15566, 88864 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. 171 pp. ISBN 983-812-060-X. Local price RM 89.00 (Malaysian currency), c EUR 24.00. Obtainable directly from publisher at GBP 24.00 for one copy, GBP 44.00 for two copies (incl airmail postage).

The Indo-Pacific region has some noteworthy and particular birds. To this category belong the swiftlets, a group of small swifts very similar in appearance and specialized in living and breeding in caves. Because swifts and swiftlets (as the name indicates) are swift, normally always on the wing and morphologically more or less alike, they are difficult to identify in the air. They indeed belong to the most difficult group for birders to identify. It is therefore a great merit of Philip Chantler (Dutch Birding 15: 97-135, 1993) that he has tried to provide a kind of guide for the identification of swifts in flight for field workers and bird observers, however restricted to those of the Western Palearctic region. Later publications of the same author dealt with the swifts of the whole world (*Swifts: a guide to the swifts and treeswifts of the world*, 1995, revised edition 2000, Pica Press; and in *Handbook of the birds of the world 5*, 1999), including the swiftlets of the Eastern Palearctic, Oriental and Indo-Pacific regions. Nevertheless, some of these species – particularly the small and middle-sized swiflets – are a tricky group to identify even for the average museum curator. For the field observer it is even more difficult, although white-bellied and dark-bellied swiftlets can be distinguished in flight – but how to tell Glossy (or White-bellied) Swiftlet *Collocalia esculenta* from Cave (or Linchi) Swiftlet *C linchi*, both white-bellied and in which the single difference is the presence of a small feather tuft on the hind-claw, without holding the bird in your hand? And not to speak of the large, uniform sooty-black species, where even museum experts with the skins in their hands can not identify them readily without thorough knowledge of this group. It is therefore very fortunate that Lord Medway (now Earl of Cranbrook) in the 1960s has thrown light on this difficult group by pointing out specific differences in ecology and nest-type between them, which proved to be a very valuable tool to differentiate these species. The same author, now together with Lim Chan Koon, has written a book on the biology and life cycle of exclusively those swiftlets which produce edible nests. Edible nests are an important source of revenue in a number of South-East Asian countries. In the last 10-20 years, the production and export of this product from natural sources tended to decrease by over-exploitation of these cave-breeding colonies. Therefore, conservation measurements should be undertaken to safeguard the survival of these swiftlet populations. In 1994, there was an attempt to place all species of swifts on CITES Appendix II. However, this failed because the edible-nest exporting countries and their representatives reacted, as they found that CITES listing was unjustified. The later CITES Technical Workshop (Surabaya, 1996) left

the producer countries to ensure that the trade is carried out on sustainable basis. It is the aim of the book *Swiftlets of Borneo: builders of edible nests* to show, based on scientific research, what measures should be taken to achieve sustainable management of these resources. The book deals primarily with three species of edible-nest swiftlets, however some other Bornean swiftlet species are also mentioned. The three main species discussed are Edible-nest (or White-nest) Swiftlet *C fuciphaga* and Black-nest Swiftlet *C maxima*, which produce the bulk of the edible bird nest trade worldwide, and the non-echolocating Glossy Swiftlet, which breeds more near the entrance of the caves in daylight or dim daylight. This species produces an inferior type of nest mainly composed of vegetable matter with sparse salivary cement, but in periods of less supply and high demand and driven by some lucrative monetary reward, these inferior nests are also harvested. The nests of White-nest Swiftlets are made almost entirely of pure hardened saliva with sporadically a small number of feathers. Black-nest Swiftlets incorporate feathers from the birds' own plumage in variable degree into their nests: sometimes these feathers comprise up to half of the bulk of the nest.

A complete breeding cycle takes about three months, ie, 30 days for nest building, c 24-25 days for incubation and c 45 days fledging period. Noteworthy is the very long incubation time for the tiny eggs (1-2 g) of these swiftlets compared with a hen's egg (c 58 g) – both 21 days. At the latitudes where the authors have worked, the swiftlets employ a multi-brooded reproductive strategy with a complete cycle of three months, which allows four breeding cycles a year. This is, however, rarely reached and three breeding cycles are normal, ie, the first from August-November followed by December-March and April-July. To achieve sustainable management, the swiftlets must be allowed to raise undisturbed one generation of nestlings per year. In practice, the last peak or bout of nest building activity is around April and this cycle should be left undisturbed.

The book is well written in a clear style avoiding technical jargon or terms, it is very well organised in separate chapters dealing with all aspects of the life of swiftlets and their relation to human beings. It is indeed a very charming book, marvellously illustrated with colour photographs of the birds, the various stages of their breeding cycle, the harvesting of nests, the tools used and nice colour pictures of the various cave sites in Borneo. For birdwatchers and at the same time globe-trotters there is still a lot to do. Sight records of Giant (or Waterfall) Swiftlet *Hydrochous gigas* in Borneo are cited in the book, however, without details. They can be found in *Birds of Borneo* by B E Smythies (fourth edition, 1999, revised by G W H Davidson). These need, however, assessment as some of these are not well documented by field notes. Up to now its occurrence in Borneo is still unconfirmed by (museum) specimens. Moreover, all sight records are confined to the north-western part of Borneo (Sarawak, Brunei and Sabah). Are Giant Swiftlets absent in other regions of Borneo? In addition, in respect to the famous mystery bird contest of Dutch Birding: What is the taxonomic status of the mysterious Kinabalu Swiftlet *C (linchi?) dodgei*, which could be a race of the nearly endemic Linchi Swiftlet of Java occurring far outside its range and of which to the present only three specimens (obtained in 1904 and 1937) are known to science? This should be verified as, according to unconfirmed claims (Duckworth, W & Kelsh, R, ICBP Study Report 31), it was seen in good numbers on Mt Kinabalu in 1988. JAN-HENDRIK BECKING

Editorial note: Another book on White-nest Swiftlet and Black-nest Swiftlet was also published in 2002: PHACH NGUYÊN QUANG, YÊN VO QUANG & JEAN-FRANÇOIS VOISIN 2002. *The White-nest Swiftlet and the Black-nest Swiftlet: a monograph*. Société nouvelle des éditions Boubée, 9 rue de Savoie, 75006 Paris, France. 297 pp. ISBN 2-85004-103-3.

WP reports

This review lists rare and interesting birds reported in the Western Palearctic mainly in **January-February 2003** and focuses on north-western Europe. Some earlier reports and additions for early March are also included in this review. The reports are largely unchecked and their publication here does not imply future acceptance by the rarities committee of the relevant country. Observers are requested to submit records to each country's rarities committee. Corrections are welcome and will be published.

SWANS TO GEESE On 11-14 January, 35 **Bewick's Swans** *Cygnus bewickii* were present at Sevan lake constituting the second record for Armenia. From 1 January into March, five adults and a first-winter **Whooper Swan** *C cygnus* at Wimpey Pits, United Arab Emirates (UAE), joined three Mute Swans *C olor*. The first six Whooper Swans for Oman were found at Al Ansab on 2 January, where one remained until 5 January, and one was seen at Quarawat on 10-31 January. Populations of feral species in the Netherlands in 1998-2001 numbered, eg, at least 60 pairs of **Black Swan** *C atratus*, 70 **Barheaded Goose** *Anser indicus* pairs, 200 **Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata* pairs and 250 **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* pairs (Sovon-monitoring rapport 2002/03). A four-province survey in the lower Yangtze river basin, China, resulted in high winter totals of, eg, 27 100 **Swan Geese** *A cygnoides*, 16 600 **Lesser White-fronted Geese** *A erythropus*, 1362 **Oriental Storks** *Ciconia boyciana* and 6500 **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* (for more information: markbarter@optusnet.com.au). In England, two single **Ross's Geese** *A rossii* wintered in Cumbria and Norfolk. In Oman, three **Greylag Geese** *A anser* occurred at Sun Farms, Sohar, on 20 February. In the Netherlands, at least seven **Greenland White-fronted Geese** *A albifrons flavirostris* were seen at Yersekemoer, Zeeland, two at Slochteren, Groningen, and seven singles at other sites between 18 January and 17 February. A **Hutchins's Canada Goose** *Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii* (also known as Richardson's Canada Goose) was photographed at Lissadell, Sligo, Ireland, on 24 February. In early March, a **Taverner's Canada Goose** *B h taverneri* was seen in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. Breeding numbers of **Barnacle Geese** *B leucopsis* in the Netherlands rapidly increased in 1998-2001 to at least 1500 pairs; in 2002, for instance, 628 pairs nested on two islets in Haringvliet, Zuid-Holland. In France, up to four single **Black Brants** *B nigricans* were seen in Finistère, Côtes d'Armor and Vendée during February.

DUCKS TO GROUSE The first **Canvasback** *Aythya valisineria* for the Netherlands was a male at Castricum, Noord-Holland, discovered on 9 January and remaining to at least 5 March. The male **Redhead** *A americana* which had returned to Glamorgan, Wales, by 21 September 2002 was still present in late February. At Lac Léman, Switzerland, four **Ferruginous Ducks** *A nyroca* and four **Long-tailed Ducks** *Clangula hyemalis* were noted at Pt Bise, Bern, on 9 February. It was an excellent winter for **Lesser Scaup** *A affinis* in Britain with five in January and, for instance, first-winter males in West Yorkshire and London turning up in mid-February. A female was at Roquito del Fraile, Tenerife, Canary Islands, through February. In the Netherlands, a male at Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, on 19-24 February may have been the same individual as at Haringvliet in the winter of 1999/2000. Females were seen in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, on 1-23 January and in Loire-Atlantique, France, from 30 January into March. A second-year **Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri* attracted many birders at Nivå Bugt, Denmark, in January-February. In Norway, an adult male **Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus* was found at Olonkin on Jan Mayen on 10 February. The male **Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana* at Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd, Wales, remained for yet another winter from 3 November 2002 to at least 15 March. In Norway, the adult male and a first-winter **Surf Scoter** *M perspicillata* remained at Lista, Vest-Agder, until at least 23 February; a third male turned up at Dromnes, Møre og Romsdal, from 2 February into March. Counts of at least 229 **Smews** *Mergellus albellus*, 94 **Common Goldeneyes** *Bucephala clangula* (actually constituting the third record) and 160 **Goosanders** *Mergus merganser* at Sevan lake on 11-14 January were the highest ever for Armenia. In mid-February, a female **American Wigeon** *Mareca americana* and a female **Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* were present on Tenerife. A **Green-winged Teal** *A carolinensis* was still at Aiguamolls de l'Empordá, Girona, Catalunya, Spain, through January. The first **American Black Duck** *A rubripes* for the Faeroes was at Thorshavn on 10 January. The well-known long-stayers remained in Iceland, Ireland and Britain during February. The number of **Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix* in the Netherlands further decreased from 14 males in 2001 to eight in 2002, all at one site in Overijssel.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS The fifth **Yellow-billed Loon** *Gavia adamsii* for Italy was found at Golfo di Trieste on 15 January. A first-winter stayed in southern Bayern, Germany, from 25 January into February. Another was seen off Molène, Finistère, France, on 31 January. Recently published high breeding bird numbers for the Netherlands in 2000 and 2001 included, eg, mimima of nine **Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*, 470 **Black-necked Grebe** *P nigricollis* (a record high), 250 **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*, 13 000 **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*, 440 **Purple Heron** *A purpurea*, 108 **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*, 35 **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*, 545 **Corn Crake** *Crex crex* (in 2001), 31 **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*, 875 **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*,



110 Northern Bald Ibises / Kaalkopibissen *Geronticus eremita*, Tamri, Morocco, January 2003 *(Eric Koops)*

111 Macqueen's Bustard / Oostelijke Kraagtrap *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, first-winter, Lombardsijde, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, 20 January 2003 *(Johan Buckens)*



93 700 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *L graellsii* (a record high), 20 500 **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* (highest since 1960), 2477 **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* (highest since 1970) and 32 000 **Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* (a record high) breeding pairs (Sovon-monitoring rapport 2002/03). On 31 December 2002, a **Black-browed Albatross** *Thalassarche melanophris* reportedly flew past Mundesley and Scratby, Norfolk, England. The first **Bermuda Petrel** *Pterodroma cahow* for the WP was trapped and photographed on an offshore islet in the Azores on 17 November 2002; in 2002, this species' population had increased to a record 65 pairs raising 36 young, all on Nonesuch Island, Bermuda (Birding World 16: 22, 2003; see also Dutch Birding 24: 307, 2002). The third record of **Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas* for the WP concerned one flying off Aqaba, Jordan, and off Eilat's north beach, Israel, in the afternoon of 2 February (possibly, two individuals were present); previous records were in 1992 (two or three birds) and 1993. In Sweden, a **Cory's Shearwater** *C borealis* was seen off Halland on 15 and 16 January. The first **White-faced Storm-petrel** *Pelagodroma marina* for mainland Spain was found dead at Pontevedra, Galicia, in late January as a victim of the Prestige oil disaster. Three **Leach's Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* were seen off Ashkelon, Israel, on 15 January. The third **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* for Spain was a Prestige victim photographed at the Pontevedra recovery centre on 8-10 December 2002. The fourth **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus* for Switzerland (and the first twitchable) occurred on Lac Léman, on 1-9 February; it was fishing and flying in the central part of the lake, not visible from the shore, urging birders to organize 'pelagic trips'. The fourth **Pygmy Cormorant** *Microcarbo pygmeus* for the Netherlands (and the second for Belgium) roosted along the Maas river at Oost-Maarland, Limburg, from 1 March onwards; by day, it was sometimes seen in Belgium at Hermalle-sous-Argenteau near Visé, Liège. The adult at Bodensee, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, was not reported after 4 January. In Georgia, 560 were counted at Jandari lake on 27 December 2002. The three **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* in Sevilla, Spain, were still present on 10 February at Aznalcázar. The specimen of an immature female frigatebird *Fregata* found moribund on Tiree, Inner Hebrides, Argyllshire, Scotland, on 10 July 1953 and originally identified as Magnificent Frigatebird *F magnificens* has recently been reidentified as the first **Ascension Frigatebird** *F aquila* for Europe and the North Atlantic (Br Birds 96: 58-73, 2003). It therefore appears that the only Magnificent for Britain is a female found exhausted on 22 December 1998 in a field at Scarletts Point, Isle of Man. Vagrant frigatebirds in eastern USA have included not only Magnificent *F magnificens* but also Great *F minor* (Oklahoma, 3 November 1975) and Lesser Frigatebird *F ariel* (Deer Island, Maine, 3 July 1960), suggesting that these four species are all possible candidates for vagrancy in the North Atlantic region.

HERONS TO SPOONBILLS An **American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus* found on 28 February at Erjos ponds, Tenerife, is thought to be the same individual seen here earlier. At the same site, the **Dwarf Bittern** *Ixobrychus sturmii* first seen on 23 August 2002 was again present on 19-28 February and from 9 March. At least 12 territories of **Little Bittern** *I minutus* were reported in the Netherlands in 2002 of which four at Nieuwkoopse Plassen, Zuid-Holland. Also in the Netherlands in 2002, 45 nests of **Great Egret** *Casmerodius albus* were counted at Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, while breeding **Little Egrets** *Egretta garzetta* were found at several sites, like Voornes Duin, Zuid-Holland (c 20 used nests), Braakman, Zeeland (four pairs) and Schiermonnikoog, Friesland (two pairs). In southern Morocco, two **Great Egrets** were seen at Ouarzazate on 8 February. An influx of at least 11 **Grey Herons** occurred in Iceland during January-February. On 3 February, a flock of 115 **Northern Bald Ibises** *Geronticus eremita* was seen 8 km north of Tamri in southwestern Morocco. At Oued Massa, Morocco, 52 **Glossy Ibises** *Plegadis falcinellus* were counted on 4 February. In Tainan, Taiwan, 73 **Black-faced Spoonbills** *P minor* had died from botulism by early January (possibly more than 7% of the world population); 17 sick individuals were taken into care. These 17 survivors were colour-ringed and (15 of them) released on 18 February.

RAPTORS A **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* was present in the Camargue, Bouches-du-Rhône, France, on 16-18 February. If accepted, a **Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* in Cádiz on 10 February will be the first for Spain; the only WP records so far are from northern Mauritania and southernmost Morocco. In England, the first-winter female **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* wintering in Norfolk from 24 December 2002 was still present in March. A **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* has been wintering at Maccarese, Roma, Italy. Two singles remained in the Camargue until at least 22 February. In Germany, the adult at Gut Seligenstadt, Bayern, since 5 September 2002 was still present on 13 February. In Switzerland, the **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* at Niederriedstausee, Bern, was again seen on, eg, 19 January and 24 February (the species has been a winterer here since February 1996). Up to five were reported from the Camargue this winter and seven from Evros delta, Greece. In Israel, two **Verreaux's Eagles** *A verreauxii* were seen near Lotan on 12-13 February. An unseasonal **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* occurred at Agrigento, Sicily, Italy, on 21 January. A record 12 breeding pairs of **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* for the Netherlands were counted in 2002. The **Saker Falcon** *F cherrug* at Vasche di Maccarese, Roma, Italy, stayed from early November 2002 to at least late February.

RAILS TO WADERS On Tenerife, an adult **Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrula alleni* was seen at Erjos ponds on 17 and 24 February and 9 March (notably, an





112 Dwergaalscholver / Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmeus*, adult, Eijsder Beemden, Limburg, maart 2003 *(Karel Lemmens)* **113** Brown Shrike / Bruine Klauwier *Lanius cristatus*, La Tomina, Modena, Italy, 18 January 2003 *(Daniele Occhiato)* **114** Northern Gannet / Jan-van-gent *Morus bassanus*, adult, Lac Léman, Switzerland, February 2003 *(Lionel Maumary)*








115 Verreaux's Eagle / Zwarte Arend *Aquila verreauxii*, adult, Lotan, Israel, 13 February 2003 *(James Smith)* **116** White-rumped swift / gierzwaluw *Apus*, Bull Island, Dublin, Ireland, 25 December 2002 *(Sture Persson)* **117** Spotted Sandpiper / Amerikaanse Oeverloper *Actitis macularia*, Saline di Augusta, Sicily, Italy, January/february 2003 *(Andrea Corso)* **118** Pallid Scops Owl / Gestreepte Dwergooruil *Otus brucei*, Lotan, Israel, 24 February 2003 *(James Smith)*

American Bittern and a Dwarf Bittern were also present here). The second **American Coot** *Fulica americana* for Spain first seen on 5 January was still present on at least 21 February at Barreiras de Rouxique, Sanxenxo, Galicia. In the UAE, the **Red-knobbed Coot** *F cristata* at Wimpey Pits remained the entire period. In January, a total of 4004 **Siberian White Cranes** *Grus leucogeranus* were counted in a recent survey at Poyang lake in Jiangxi province, China (this number surpasses the world estimate of 3000). A sighting of three adults at Qa Khanna on 2 February 2001 has recently been accepted for Jordan. On 19-20 January, the first **Macqueen's Bustard** *Chlamydotis macqueenii* for north-western Europe since 1974 occurred at Lombardsijde near the IJzer estuary, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium; the bird seemed weakened and was trapped and taken into care. There had been three previous records for Belgium (all in November-December in 1842-45) and only one for the Netherlands (on 10 December 1850). In Germany, a male **Great Bustard** *Otis tarda* was reported at Bielefeld, Nordrhein-Westfalen, on 22 January. In Ireland, a **Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus* was at Cork Harbour and Ballycotton, Cork, in February (all three records this winter may concern the same individual). A **Three-banded Plover** *C tricollaris* at El Gouna on 14 March was the fourth for Egypt and the WP. A **Greater Sand Plover** *C leschenaultii* remained at Hirel, Ille-et-Vilaine, France, from 7 September 2002 to at least mid-March. In Scotland, a **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* first seen on South Uist, Outer Hebrides, in November 2002 turned up again in February. A **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius* was observed at Laguna de Tiscar, Puente Genil, Córdoba, Spain, on 16 January; this or another bird was also seen in Doñana, Sevilla, on 25 January. In Oman, four were found at Sun Farms, Sohar, on 7 February. In France, one turned






119 Yellow-billed Loon / Geelsnavelduiker *Gavia adamsii*, juvenile, Augsburg, Bayern, Germany, February 2003 *(Markus Roemhild)* **120** Green-winged Teal / Amerikaanse Wintertaling *Anas carolinensis*, male, Aiguamolls de l'Empordá, Girona, Spain, 12 January 2003 *(Rafael Armada)* **121** Canvasback / Grote Tafeleend *Aythya valisineria*, adult male, Castricum, Noord-Holland, Netherlands, 11 January 2003 *(Bas van den Boogaard)* **122** Hutchins's Canada Goose / Hutchins' Canadese Gans *Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*, Lissadell, Sligo, Ireland, 24 February 2003 *(Chris Batty)*

up in Aisne on 5 March and one in Somme on 9 March. On 28 February, 11 **Great Knots** *Calidris tenuirostris* were seen at Khor al-Beidah, UAE. The long-staying **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* at Sohar, Oman, was still present on 21 February (first noted in 1997; cf Dutch Birding 23: 158, plate 177, 161, 2001, 25: 57-58, plate 33, 2003). The one in Cheshire, England, was still seen in early February. Other long-stayers at Inver Bay, Highland, Scotland, from 8 November 2002 and at Clonakilty, Cork, Ireland, from 30 November 2002 were still present in March (although the latter was lost for many weeks). The second **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia* for Italy at Saline di Augusta, Siracusa, Sicily, from 9 December 2002 was still present in late February. A **Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* on Lac Léman near Lausanne, Valais, from December 2002 to at least mid-February became a national celebrity famed by tv and newspapers and watched by 1000s of Swiss birders.

GULLS TO MURRES In Germany, adult **Pallas's Gulls** *L ichthyaetus* were seen in Sachsen and Sachsen-Anhalt on 15-18 January, in Thüringen from 15 January to 26 February, and in Niedersachsen on 9-10 February. If accepted, one reported from St Elmo on 31 December 2002 will be the first for Malta. In Armenia, a record high of 1413 were counted at Sevan lake on 11-14 January. Two were watched at Foce del Simeto, Sicily, on 18 January. A first-winter **Bonaparte's Gull** *L philadelphia* at Inchydoney, Cork, on 29 December 2002 remained until at least 7 January, and one was near Middleton, Cork, on 14-17 January. The adult in Blekinge, Sweden, was not seen after 3 January.






123 Lesser Short-toed Lark / Kleine Kortteenleeuwerik *Calandrella rufescens*, Utlängan, Blekinge, Sweden, 14 February 2003 *(Mikael Nord)* **124** Glaucous Gull / Grote Burgemeester *Larus hyperboreus*, second-winter, Punta de Jandia, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, 7 February 2003 *(Andreas Buchheim)* **125-126** Thayer's Gull / Thayers Meeuw *Larus glaucoides thayeri*, juvenile, Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland, 24 February 2003 *(Chris Batty)*

Another adult occurred at Castro Urdiales, Cantabria, Spain, from 9 February to March. A first-winter was present at Entressen, La Crau, Bouches-du-Rhône, from 25 February to at least 9 March, together with a first-winter **Ring-billed Gull** *L delawarensis* and an adult **Glaucous Gull** *L hyperboreus*. In both France and Spain, eight **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported during February alone. At Pt Saint Elmo, Malta, a first-winter **Slender-billed Gull** *L genei* and a first-winter **European Herring Gull** *L argentatus* were seen on 18 January and several **Pontic Gulls** *L cachinnans* in January-February. On 16 February, seven migratory **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** flew over Reykjavík, Iceland. In the third week of February, six first-winter **American Herring Gulls** *L smithsonianus* were reported from Cork and Londonderry, Ireland, and one from Cornwall, England. Up to 11 were present in the Azores in February. On 2 February, a juvenile **Thayer's Gull** *L glaucoides thayeri* was found at Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland, where it was reported again on 24 February. If accepted, one near Sokcho on 23 February will be the first for South Korea. A second-winter **Glaucous Gull** was photographed at Punta de Jandia, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, on 7 February. A small second-winter was amongst Yellow-legged Gulls *L michahellis* at Lira harbour, Carnota, Galicia, on 11-15 February. In southern Norway, a first-winter **Ivory Gull** *Pagophila eburnea* was photographed at Bømlo, Hordaland, on 4 March. The first **Lesser Crested Tern** *S bengalensis* in winter for Israel was an adult at Eilat on 2-4 February. In Ireland, the long-staying **Forster's Terns** *S forsteri* in Mayo and Kerry were still present in February. In Argyll, Scotland, one occurred at Oban Bay on 8-11 January. The adult between Saint-Pol-de-Léon and Carantec, Finistère, remained from 13 January into March. The first for the Azores was a first-winter photographed on Terceira on

22 February. An **Atlantic Murre** *Uria aalge* was seen at Arrecife, Lanzarote, Canary Islands, on 6 December 2002. In Norway, **Brünnich's Murres** *U lomvia* were seen at Jomfruland, Telemark, on 16 January and 14 February, and at Valsneset, Sør-Trøndelag, on 14 February. On 16 and 17 January, singles were seen in Halland, Sweden.

DOVES TO HYPOCOLIUS The wintering **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* at Litjvatnet, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway, survived until at least 22 February. In Israel, a record 20 **Pallid Scops Owls** *Otus brucei* were known to winter by February in wadis over the southern Arava and the Eilat mountains. In 2002, numbers of **Eurasian Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* increased to 130 pairs in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, with three pairs raising young in adjacent areas of the Netherlands. On 7 February, a **Northern Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula* was seen at Uzava, south of Ventspils, Latvia. Up to four **Long-eared Owls** *Asio otus* were roosting in a tree of Mushrif Park, Dubai, UAE, from 17 February into March. A **Sykes's Nightjar** *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* was discovered at Al Whatba camel track, UAE, on 28 January (the first for the UAE was seen here on 4 February 2001); at the same site, up to 23 **Egyptian Nightjars** *C aegyptius* were counted during January. On 25 December 2002, a 'white-rumped swift' *Apus* (either a **Fork-tailed Swift** *A pacificus* or a **White-rumped Swift** *A caffer*) was photographed by a Swedish birder over the North Wall, North Bull Island, Dublin; either identification would constitute a first for Ireland (cf Birding World 16: 16-17, 2003). Up to four **Eurasian Hoopoes** *Upupa epops* turned up in Ireland in late February, including one well-twitched at Ladysbridge, Cork, from 26 February to at least 3 March, and others were in Scilly and Cornwall, England. For the fourth consecutive year, the fourth **Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus* for the Netherlands was drumming at Oosterbeek, Renkum, Gelderland, from 23 January. The third **Lesser Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella rufescens* for Sweden occurred on Utlängen, Blekinge, on 10-14 February (previous records were in April 1986 and May 1991). In Israel, eight **Thick-billed Larks** *Ramphocoris clotbey* were found at Hameishar, southern Negev, on 16 January. In the UAE, a **Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* turned up at Wimpey Pits on 10 January. The first two for Oman were an adult and an immature at Sun Farms, Sohar, from 7 to at least 21 February. Among the more unusual wintering **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* in western Europe were 13 in eastern Sicily in January, c 10 at several sites in Asturies, Alicante and Sevilla, Spain, in January, and a flock of up to eight near Cagliari, Italy, on 16-20 February. The **Blyth's Pipit** *A godlewskii* discovered on Gringley Carr, Nottinghamshire, England, on 28 December 2002 was not seen after 5 January. In early February, a **Water Pipit** *A spinoletta* was photographed at Hals, Nordjylland, Denmark (where it is a rarity). In Norway, one survived at Obrestad, Jæren, Rogaland, from 5 November through January. The first **Forest Wagtail** *Dendronanthus indicus* for several years in the UAE was at Mushrif Palace Gardens, Abu Dhabi, from 25 February. Two **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* were seen at Muntasar, Oman, on 9 February.

THRUSHES TO BUNTINGS The third **Dusky Thrush** *Turdus naumanni eunomus* for Oman was at Qitbit on 3 January; on 8-10 February, up to two were seen here. In Finland, three **Black-throated Thrushes** *T ruficollis atrogularis* and a possible **Red-throated Thrush** *T r ruficollis* were discovered during January; a female was photographed at Oberpullendorf, Austria. A kind of influx of **Mistle Thrush** *T viscivorus* occurred along the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, with one on Hawar in Bahrain, two in the UAE and a number in Oman. In Israel, a **Ménétries's Warbler** *Sylvia mystacea* wintered at wadi Zihor in the southern Negev. In Germany, a **Pallas's Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* was seen infrequently in Nordrhein-Westfalen near the Dutch border at Venlo, Limburg, between 11 January and early March. The **Yellow-browed Warbler** *P inornatus* at Stiffkey, Norfolk, from 17 December 2002 was still present in March. In Israel, one wintered at Be'er Sheva. The **Hume's Leaf Warbler** *P humei* trapped at the Jerusalem Bird Observatory in December 2002 remained to February. The one discovered at Bodensee, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, on 14 December 2002 was seen until 20 January. The fifth for Italy was found dead at Isola della Cona on 14 January. A **Dusky Warbler** *P fuscatus* stayed at Kessingland, Suffolk, England, from 30 December to 6 January. The first **Brown Shrike** *Lanius cristatus* for Italy at La Tomina, Modena, Italy, from 1 December 2002 was present until 7 February. A **Long-tailed Shrike** *L schach* remained at Al Qurm Park, Oman, from 2 January to at least 24 February. The second for the UAE was at Dubai's Airport Hotel on 3-4 March. In Israel, a **Steppe Grey Shrike** *L pallidirostris* wintered at K19, Eilat, and another was at Hameishar, southern Negev, from 25 January. In the Netherlands, 12 **House Crows** *Corvus splendens* were counted at Hoek van Holland, Zuid-Holland, on 6 March. If accepted, a **Violet-backed Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* at Al Beed farms on 6 February will be the first for Oman. A **Mealy Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea* trapped on Jeløya, Moss, 50 km south of Oslo, Norway, on 10 February appeared to have been ringed in Heilongjiang in north-eastern China, between Mongolia and North Korea, on 4 October 2001. In the past, redpolls have made it the other way: one ringed at Joensuu, Finland, on 30 March 1985 was retrapped in China on 25 October 1986, 5113 km to the east-south-east. In Denmark, after sightings on 2 and 26 January, **Arctic Redpolls** *C hornemanni* were seen more frequently from 7 February onwards, indicating a possible influx. In January-February, many **Two-barred Crossbills** *Loxia leucoptera* were still present in Denmark, including flocks of six to 14. In Norway, numbers seemed to drop in mid-February, with 66 in a week. From August 2002 to February, at least 13 had been seen in the Netherlands, including a popular long-staying male at Huizen, Noord-Holland, from September 2002 to 23



127 Black-throated Thrush / Zwartkeellijster *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*, Rautjärvi, Finland, January 2003 *(Pekka Komi)*

128 Water Pipit / Waterpieper *Anthus spinoletta*, Hals, Nordjylland, Denmark, 3 February 2003 *(Ohle Krogh)*



February. Another well-watched individual was in Buckinghamshire, England, from 27 January to at least 15 March (the third for the British mainland this winter). The first **White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys* for South Korea was an immature photographed at the Nakdong estuary on 3 February. By late February, a total of nine **Pine Buntings** *Emberiza leucocephalos* had been found wintering in Italy at the traditional sites in Toscana (four) and at Magredi del Medeuna, Pordenone (five). In Israel, two were at Biriya, upper Galilee, on 5 January. A second-year female was at Kråkelund, Småland, on 1-13 January. **Little Buntings** *E pusilla* were wintering at Kabusa, Skåne, Sweden, from 21 February into March and at Tidenham Chase, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, England. In France, two singles were found at two sites on 8 March.

For a number of reports, publications in Birding World, Birdwatch, British Birds, Sandgrouse, Sovon-nieuws, Winging It, World Birdwatch and Xinhua News were consulted. I wish to thank Alexander Abuladza (Georgia), Vasil Ananian (Armenia), Geir Andersen, Mark Barter, Chris Batty, Max Berlijn, David Bigas, Andreas Buchheim, Martin Cade, Geoff Carey, Simba Chan, Alain Chappuis, Ji Hong Clarke, Tony Clarke (Canarian Nature Tours), Andrea Corso (Italy), Gunter De Smet, Jochen Dierschke, Hugues Dufourny, Enno Ebels, Frode Falkenberg, Raymond Galea (Malta), Gerard Gorman (eastern Europe), Marcello Grussu (Sardinia/Tunisia), Ricard Gutiérrez (Spain), Tomas Haraldsson, Martin Helin, Joachim Hellmich, Gaukur Hjartarson (Iceland), Remco Hofland, Justin Jansen, Erling Jirle (Sweden), Yann Kolbeinsson (Iceland), Martin Kraft, Pierre Le Maréchal (France), André van Loon, Richard Millington, Geir Mobakken, Nial Moores, Daniele Occhiato, Gerald Oreel, Menotti Passarella, Yoav Perlman (IRDC), Peter Ranke, Colin Richardson (UAE), Mathias Ritschard, Magnus Robb, Luciano Ruggieri, Michael Sammut (Malta), Nir Sapir (Israel), Holger Schritt (team@birdcall.de), Dare Sere (Slovenia), James Smith (Eilat), Benjamin Steffen, Stefan Tewinkel, Jan Timmer, Pierre Unge (Sweden), William Velmala, Angus Wilson and Maxime Zucca (France) 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 en België beslaat voornamelijk de periode **januari-februari 2003**. De vermelde gevallen zijn merendeels niet geverifieerd en het overzicht is niet volledig. Alle vogelaars die de moeite namen om hun waarnemingen aan ons door te geven worden hartelijk bedankt.

Waarnemers van soorten in Nederland die worden beoordeeld door de Commissie Dwaalgasten Nederlandse Avifauna wordt verzocht hun waarnemingen zo spoedig mogelijk toe te zenden aan: CDNA, Postbus 45, 2080 AA Santpoort-Zuid, Nederland, e-mail cdna@dutchbirding.nl. Hiertoe gelieve men gebruik te maken van CDNA-waarnemingsformulieren die eveneens verkrijgbaar zijn bij bovenstaand adres, of via de website van de DBA op www.dutchbirding.nl.

Nederland

GANZEN TOT VISAREND Er werden 12 **Sneeuwganzen** *Anser caerulescens* gemeld, waaronder lang verblijvende in de Zoutkamperril bij Zoutkamp, Groningen, tot 6 februari en één vanaf 25 januari bij de Scheelhoek, Zeeland. Een groep van vier werd op 5 januari gezien bij Aldemardum (Oudemirdum), Friesland. De **Ross' Gans** *A rossii* van de Delta werd tot 3 januari gezien in het gebied van de Korendijkse Slikken, Zuid-Holland, en bij Strijen, Zuid-Holland, en vanaf 14 januari bij de Scheelhoek. Mogelijk een andere liep van 17 januari tot 12 februari bij het Rammegors, Zeeland. Bovendien werden nog enkele waargenomen waarvan middels ringen duidelijk was dat zij niet van wilde herkomst waren. Bijzonder was de waarneming van 300 **Kleine Rietganzen** *A brachyrhynchus* op 12 januari in de Wieringermeer, Noord-Holland. **Dwergganzen** *A erythropus* werden tot 27 januari in de omgeving van de Korendijkse Slikken en Strijen gezien, met een maximum van 24 op 18 januari. Van 16 januari tot 8 februari verbleven er 10 in de Pettemerpolder, Noord-Holland, en op 15 februari verbleven er 15 bij Bleskensgraaf, Zuid-Holland. Bovendien werden er elders nog 18 gemeld. **Groenlandse Kolganzen** *A albifrons flavirostris* werden opgemerkt op 18 januari bij Aijen, Limburg, op 25 en 26 januari maximaal zeven in de Yersekemoer, Zeeland, op 5 februari bij Beilen, Drenthe, op 9 januari ten minste één bij Piaam, Friesland, en twee tussen Slochteren, Groningen, en Schaaphok, Groningen, op 14 februari bij Himmelum (Hemelum), Friesland, op 15 februari bij het Slotermeer, Friesland, en op 17 februari ten noordoosten van Dwingeloo, Drenthe. Er werden 24 **Roodhalsganzen** *Branta ruficollis* doorgegeven. Vanaf begin januari tekende zich een aanmerkelijke influx van **Witbuikrotganzen** *B hrota* af. De grootste aantallen verbleven op en rond Wieringen, Noord-Holland, van 6 januari tot 14 februari met een maximum van 83 op 18 januari, en in de Pettemerpolder van 3 januari tot 19 februari met een maximum van 130 op 6 februari. Ook in de Delta werden er 55 tot 65 gezien en elders rond de Waddenzee 25 tot 35. Er werden 'slechts' 11 **Zwarte Rotganzen** *B nigricans* gevonden. Een mannetje **Grote Tafeleend** *Aythya valisineria* verbleef van 9 januari tot in maart in het Noordhollands Duinreservaat bij Castricum aan Zee, Noord-Holland; indien aanvaard, betreft het een nieuwe soort voor de Nederlandse lijst.



129 Sneeuwgans / Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*, met Grauwe Gans / Greylag Goose *A anser*, Stellendam, Zuid-Holland, 25 februari 2003 *(Marten van Dijl)*

130 Witbuikrotganzen / Pale-bellied Brent Geese *Branta hrota*, met Rotgans / Dark-bellied Brent Goose *B bernicla*, Camperduin, Noord-Holland, 6 februari 2003 *(Arnoud B van den Berg)*





131 Dwergganzen / Lesser White-fronted Geese *Anser erythropus*, Oude Land van Strijen, Zuid-Holland, 6 februari 2003 *(Marten van Dijl)*

132 Roodhalsgans / Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*, eerstejaars, met Brandganzen / Barnacle Geese *B leucopsis*, Korendijkse Slikken, Zuid-Holland, 5 januari 2003 *(Koen Verbanck)*





133 Grote Tafeleend / Canvasback *Aythya valisineria*, adult mannetje, met Tafeleend / Common Pochard *A ferina*, vrouwtje, Castricum, Noord-Holland, januari 2003 *(Eric Koops)*

134 Ringsnaveleend / Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, adult mannetje, Hardenberg, Overijssel, 19 januari 2003 *(Phil Koken)*





135 Witoogeend / Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, vrouwtje, Heel, Limburg, 10 februari 2003 *(Ran Schols)*

136 Kleine Topper / Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis,* adult mannetje, Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, 21 februari 2003 *(Jan van Holten)*



Er zwommen **Witoogeenden** *A nyroca* tot 3 januari bij Uithuizen, Groningen, een mannetje tot 9 februari bij Heel, Limburg (regelmatig was hier ook een vrouwtje te zien), op 5 januari bij Zwolle, Overijssel, op 11 januari bij Eindhoven, Noord-Brabant, van 13 tot 17 januari bij Boxtel, Noord-Brabant, en op 17 februari bij Diepenheim, Overijssel. Een mannetje **Ringsnaveleend** *A collaris* werd van 12 tot 19 januari gezien in Hardenberg, Overijssel. De vijfde **Kleine Topper** *A affinis* voor Nederland was (opnieuw) een mannetje van 19 tot 24 februari ten oosten van de Scheelhoek. Op 4 januari was er een melding van een vrouwtje **Koningseider** *Somateria spectabilis* bij Vlissingen, Zeeland. Het vermelden waard zijn 27 langstrekkende **IJseenden** *Clangula hyemalis* op 11 januari bij Huisduinen, Noord-Holland. Mannetjes **Amerikaanse Smient** *Mareca americana* werden gezien op 4 en 5 januari op de Kraaienbergse Plassen, Noord-Brabant, en op 7 en 8 januari en 16 februari bij Surch (Zurich), Friesland. Een vrouwtje werd op 18 februari gemeld op de Haarrijnse Plas bij Maarssenbroek, Utrecht. Grote aantallen **Roodkeelduikers** *Gavia stellata* werden niet alleen gezien bij de Brouwersdam, Zuid-Holland; zo verbleven er enkele 100en op 10 februari voor de kust bij Camperduin, Noord-Holland, en vlogen er 640 langs Petten, Noord-Holland, op 14 februari. **IJsduikers** *G immer* werden waargenomen tot 8 januari bij Zwolle, van 5 januari tot 18 februari bij de Brouwersdam, met op deze laatste dag ook nog twee op de Grevelingen, Zeeland, op 6 januari kort ter plaatse bij Camperduin, en op 25 januari vliegend langs IJmuiden, Noord-Holland. Op 5 januari werd een juveniele gevonden die zich tegen een hoogspanningskabel had doodgevlogen bij Leiderdorp, Zuid-Holland; de vogel is opgenomen in de collectie van het Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis te Leiden. Op en rond de Grevelingen werden op 18 februari 107 **Kuifduikers** *Podiceps auritus* geteld. Buiten hun gebruikelijke seizoen waren een **Grauwe Pijlstormvogel** *Puffinus griseus* op 8 januari min of meer ter plaatse en een **Noordse Pijlstormvogel** *P puffinus* op 5 februari langsvliegend bij Camperduin. De vierde **Dwergaalscholver** *Microcarbo pygmeus* voor Nederland en tevens de tweede voor België, werd op 1 maart ontdekt bij Oost-Maarland, Limburg, maar verscheen vanaf 4 maart ook regelmatig langs de Maas bij Visé in België. **Kuifaalscholvers** *Stictocarbo aristotelis*, waaronder een adulte, werden vrijwel de gehele periode gezien bij de Oosterscheldekering, Zeeland, met een maximum van acht op 8 februari, en verder op 5 januari één en 7 februari drie bij IJmuiden, op 8 januari bij Westkapelle, Zeeland, en op 23 januari bij de Maasvlakte, Zuid-Holland. Buiten de Delta werd slechts één **Kleine Zilverreiger** *Egretta garzetta* doorgegeven, en wel op 28 februari bij Utrecht, Utrecht. Het maximum in de Delta betrof 17 op 8 januari in het krekengebied bij Ouwerkerk, Zeeland. De maximale aantallen **Grote Zilverreigers** *Casmerodius albus* op de belangrijkste pleisterplaatsen betroffen: maximaal c 60 in januari in

137 Grote Zilverreigers / Great Egrets *Casmerodius albus*, Brabantsche Biesbosch, Noord-Brabant, januari 2003 *(Marco de Paauw)*













138 Witbuikrotganzen / Pale-bellied Brent Geese *Branta hrota*, Camperduin, Noord-Holland, 24 februari 2003 *(René Pop)* **139** Groenlandse Kolgans / Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, Slochteren, Groningen, 9 februari 2003 *(Willem Hartholt)* **140** Zwarte Rotgans / Black Brant *Branta nigricans*, adult, Grevenbicht, Limburg, 24 november 2002 *(Ran Schols)* cf Dutch Birding 25: 64, 71, 2003. **141** Witoogeend / Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, mannetje, Schipbeek, Diepenheim, Overijssel, 17 februari 2003 *(Han Bouwmeester)* **142** Kleine Topper / Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*, adult mannetje, Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, 19 februari 2003 *(Max Berlijn)*



143 Kleine Alken / Little Auks *Alle alle*, Scheveningen, Zuid-Holland, 5 februari 2003 *(Vincent van der Spek)*

144 Slechtvalk / Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Julianadorp, Noord-Holland, 18 februari 2003 *(René Pop)*





145 Pestvogel / Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*, Noordwijk, Zuid-Holland, januari 2003
(Menno van Duijn)

146 Pestvogel / Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*, Noordwijk, Zuid-Holland, 10 januari 2003
(René van Rossum)








147 Witbandkruisbek / Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata*, mannetje, IJzeren Veld, Huizen, Noord-Holland, 3 november 2002 *(Wim Heylen)* **148** Rode Wouw / Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Oosterland, Zeeland, 14 februari 2003 *(Marten van Dijl)* **149** Kleine Alk / Little Auk *Alle alle*, Zoetermeer, Zuid-Holland, 16 februari 2003 *(Edwin Winkel)* **150** Siberische Tjiftjaf / Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, Hoogkerk, Groningen, Groningen, 24 januari 2003 *(Huub Lanters)*

de Brabantsche Biesbosch, Noord-Brabant, 12 begin januari in de omgeving van 's-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant, 17 op 1 februari bij de visvijvers van Valkenswaard, Noord-Brabant, 10 op 2 februari in De Banen, Limburg, 18 op 17 februari in Polder Groot-Mijdrecht, Utrecht, en 12 op 16 februari bij Doornspijk, Gelderland. Vroege **Lepelaars** *Platalea leucorodia* werden opgemerkt op 9 februari in de Beemster, Noord-Holland (vier), en op 10 februari een uitzonderlijke groep van 72 vliegend over het Veerse Meer, Zeeland. Een **Zwarte Wouw** *Milvus migrans* werd gemeld op 17 januari bij Leusden, Utrecht. Behalve zeven losse **Rode Wouwen** *M milvus*, verbleven er twee vanaf 8 januari in de omgeving van Ouwerkerk en Oosterland, Zeeland. Niet minder dan 17 **Zeearenden** *Haliaeetus albicilla* verbleven in Nederland, waaronder adulte (nog) op 1 januari langs het Drontermeer, Gelderland, en op 21 februari bij Windesheim, Overijssel. Op 27 december zou de **Bastaardarend** *Aquila clanga* nog gezien zijn in de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland. Op 4 januari verbleef er één op de Slikken van Flakkee, Zuid-Holland. Voorts waren er claims op 19 januari bij Almere, Flevoland, en op 16 februari in de Meinweg, Limburg. Winterse **Visarenden** *Pandion haliaetus* werden gemeld op 19 en 26 januari in de Lauwersmeer, Groningen, en op 9 februari bij Tacozijl, Friesland.

KRAANVOGELS TOT ALKEN In januari werden enkele losse **Kraanvogels** *Grus grus* waargenomen. De doortrek begon op 9 februari, maar was het meest opvallend in de laatste week van die maand. Van de c 900 gemelde exemplaren werden er alleen al op 24 februari 600 gezien boven Limburg. **Rosse Franjepoten** *Phalaropus fulicarius* zwommen tot 4 januari bij IJmuiden, op 13

januari bij Vlissingen en op 18 en 19 januari bij de Keihoogte Inlaag, Zeeland. Een **Middelste Jager** *Stercorarius pomarinus* werd op 7 februari dood gevonden bij IJmuiden. Een **Lachmeeuw** *Larus atricilla* werd op 25 januari gemeld bij de Brouwersdam. De **Ringsnavelmeeuw** *L delawarensis* van Goes, Zeeland, maakte zijn zesde winter hier vol tot 4 januari. De overwinterende adulte **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* bleef tot 15 februari in Den Helder, Noord-Holland. Verder waren er onvolwassen exemplaren op 8 januari langs Westkapelle, op 19 januari bij IJmuiden, op 25 januari op Texel, Noord-Holland, en op 28 januari over Lauwersoog, Groningen. Een verzwakte **Zwarte Zeekoet** *Cepphus grylle* werd op 18 januari gevonden bij Wierum, Friesland. Een levendiger exemplaar zwom op 6 februari langs bij Camperduin. C 125 **Kleine Alken** *Alle alle* werden geteld, voornamelijk van 1 tot 8 februari, waaronder c 20 dode of bijna dode. De hoogste aantallen vlogen langs op 5 februari: 24 langs Westkapelle en 31 langs Camperduin. Op 5 en 6 februari werden op verschillende plaatsen groepjes vogels ter plaatse gezien, zoals bij IJmuiden, de Maasvlakte en Scheveningen, Zuid-Holland. Een lang verblijvende vogel trok vanaf 11 februari veel bekijks op een plas ten noorden van Zoetermeer, Zuid-Holland. Niet minder dan 48 gestrande (en meestal dode) **Papegaaiduikers** *Fratercula arctica* werden geteld van 1 tot 10 februari. Daarnaast werden acht langsvliegende gezien, waarvan slechts één in januari. Ook werden nog grote aantallen (meestal) dode **Zeekoeten** *Uria aalge* en **Alken** *Alca torda* langs de kust gevonden, waarvan de meeste met stookolie, vermoedelijk afkomstig van het wrak van de Tricolor, of van andere schepen die van deze ramp misbruik meenden te kunnen maken door illegaal olie te lozen.

UILEN TOT GORZEN Op 9 december werd een uiltje opgeraapt in de omgeving van Dokkum, Friesland. Na aanvankelijk als Steenuil *Athene noctua* in een asiel te zijn opgenomen (en later te zijn ontsnapt), ontpopte deze vogel zich bij controle van de foto's als **Ruigpootuil** *Aegolius funereus*. De vogel die inmiddels bekend staat als dé **Grijskopspecht** *Picus canus* van Oosterbeek, Gelderland, werd daar vanaf 23 januari voor het vierde voorjaar op zijn vaste boom gezien. De invasie van **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* die in december voorzichtig aanving, leverde in deze periode meldingen op van in totaal c 900 exemplaren. De aankomst bereikte een hoogtepunt in de tweede helft van januari en tot in maart werden nog grote groepen gezien. De grootste concentratie verbleef in de omgeving van Zeist, Utrecht, met een maximum van ruim 100 in de eerste helft van februari. Een andere grote groep beliep eveneens ruim 100 en werd slechts op één dag gezien, en wel op 18 februari in Julianadorp, Noord-Holland. Een **Waterspreeuw** *Cinclus cinclus* verbleef op 13 februari bij Rijssen, Overijssel. Een leuke vondst betrof een **Cetti's Zanger** *Cettia cetti* die op 25 en 26 februari gehoord werd in het recreatiegebied Spaarnwoude, Noord-Holland. Een **Bladkoning** *Phylloscopus inornatus* werd gemeld op 19 februari bij De Bilt, Utrecht. De **Siberische Tjiftjaf** *P collybita tristis* van Hoogkerk, Groningen, was daar aanwezig van 30 december tot 26 januari. Er waren meldingen van **Taigaboomkruipers** *Certhia familiaris* van 15 december tot 3 januari bij de Grebbeberg, Utrecht, en op 1 februari in Hoogkerk. Het mannetje **Witbandkruisbek** *Loxia leucoptera* van het IJzeren Veld bij Huizen, Noord-Holland, werd tot 23 februari gezien en ook zingend gehoord. Op 22 februari werd daar ook weer een vrouwtje gezien. Andere Witbandkruisbekken waren een vrouwtje op 26 januari in Zeist en een mannetje van 16 tot 24 februari achter de Slotplaats bij Bakkeveen, Friesland. Een spectaculair 'bijproduct' van het hamsterreservaat bij Sibbe, Limburg, waren de overwinterende gorzen alhier: maximaal 690 **Geelgorzen** *Emberiza citrinella* op 14 januari en 41 **Grauwe Gorzen** *E calandra* op 17 februari.

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België

ZWANEN TOT FLAMINGO'S Naast de klassieke, verspreide groepjes **Kleine Zwanen** *Cygnus bewickii* werden grote aantallen geteld bij Woumen, West-Vlaanderen, op 4 januari (101). De grootste concentraties **Wilde Zwanen** *C cygnus* waren te zien te Berlaar, Antwerpen (14), Schulen, Limburg (10), en bij Roly, Hainaut (tot 23). De twee juveniele **Dwergganzen** *Anser erythropus* die begin januari bij Viersel, Antwerpen, verbleven, bleken ontsnapte vogels te zijn. Op 8 januari werd er één gezien bij Uitkerke, West-Vlaanderen, en op 11 januari twee adulte bij Boekhoute, Oost-Vlaanderen. Daarna twee bij Woumen van 24 januari tot maart en één in de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge, West-Vlaanderen, op 26 januari. Op 1 en 2 januari was een adulte blauwe vorm **Sneeuwgans** *A caerulescens* aanwezig bij Doel-Kieldrecht, Oost-Vlaanderen; mogelijk dezelfde vogel werd op 19 januari opgemerkt bij Mol, Antwerpen. Op 5 januari werd de eerste **Witbuikrotgans** *Branta hrota* ontdekt bij Stene, West-Vlaanderen, gevolgd door twee bij Uitkerke van 6 tot 19 januari. Tussen 23 en 27 januari verbleven vermoedelijk dezelfde twee te Bredene, Wenduine en Middelkerke, West-Vlaanderen. Op 8 februari was een **Roodhalsgans** *B ruficollis* aanwezig bij Woumen. Met drie mannetjes **Amerikaanse Wintertaling** *Anas carolinensis* kan van een recordjaar worden gesproken: van 6 tot 18 februari zwom er één te Vilvoorde-Machelen, Vlaams-Brabant; van 16 tot 22 februari één bij Destelbergen, Oost-Vlaanderen; en op 21 februari één te Harchies-Hensies. Reeds op 23 februari werden de eerste zes **Zomertalingen** *A querquedula*

opgemerkt te Zonhoven, Limburg. Er werd in totaal slechts een 10-tal **Krooneenden** *Netta rufina* gemeld. De **Ringsnaveleend** *Aythya collaris* van Antwerpen, Antwerpen, bleef nog de hele periode aanwezig. Op 8 januari zwom een vrouwtje **Witoogeend** *A nyroca* te Hofstade, Vlaams-Brabant. Mannetjes werden gezien bij Antwerpen op 18 januari en op 15 en 16 februari; bij Gent, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 17 en 18 januari en later te Drongen, Oost-Vlaanderen, vanaf 13 februari; te Wintam (Bornem), Antwerpen, heel februari; en te Harchies, Hainaut, op 20 februari. Vanaf 9 februari lieten een adult mannetje en een vrouwtje **Brilzee-eend** *Melanitta perspicillata* zich weer regelmatig bekijken (zij het van ver) op zee voor Oostduinkerke, West-Vlaanderen. **Parelduikers** *Gavia arctica* zwommen in de haven van Antwerpen op 7 januari en te Oostende op 23 januari. De juveniele **IJsduiker** *G immer* van Oostende, West-Vlaanderen, bleef daar nog op de Spuikom tot 5 januari. Tengevolge van de olieramp langs de Belgische kust werd op 28 januari een dood adult exemplaar opgeraapt. Op 23 januari vloog eveneens langs Oostende een adulte **Kuifaalscholver** *Stictocarbo aristotelis*. Er werd in januari nog een 10-tal **Kleine Zilverreigers** *Egretta garzetta* opgemerkt, waaronder maximaal vier bij Verrebroek, Oost-Vlaanderen, op 4 januari. Ondanks de 's winters slinkende aantallen **Grote Zilverreigers** *Casmerodius albus* waren er toch nog groepjes in de Dijlevallei ten zuiden van Leuven (zes) en bij Schulen (vier). Tijdens de laatste decade van februari werden reeds 15 overtrekkende **Ooievaars** *Ciconia ciconia* gesignaleerd. De eerste **Lepelaar** *Platalea leucorodia* verbleef op 15 februari te Zeebrugge. Op 7 januari vloog een **flamingo** *Phoenicopterus* over Leuven, Vlaams-Brabant.

WOUWEN TOT GORZEN Op 1 januari opende een **Rode Wouw** *Milvus milvus* het nieuwe jaar te Geel, Antwerpen. Op 12 januari vloog er één over Brecht, Antwerpen, en op 17 januari één bij Marche-en-Famenne, Luxembourg. De eerste drie doortrekkers verschenen tijdens de laatste week van februari. Een subadulte (derde- of vierdejaars) **Zeearend** *Haliaeetus albicilla* pleisterde vanaf 21 februari in de Dijlevallei, meestal bij Sint-Agatha-Rode, Vlaams-Brabant. De juveniele **Ruigpootbuizerd** *Buteo lagopus* liet zich nog tot maart bekijken bij Kieldrecht. De adulte **Kraanvogel** *Grus grus* bleef nog de hele periode aanwezig op diezelfde plaats. Tussen 19 en 25 februari trokken er c 3230 over België, waarvan 2300 over Wallonië. Op 19 en 20 januari was een verzwakte en sterk vermagerde **Oostelijke Kraagtrap** *Chlamydotis macqueenii* aanwezig bij Lombardsijde, West-Vlaanderen. Op deze laatste dag werd hij overgebracht naar het vogelasiel van Oostende waar hij relatief snel op krachten kwam. Het ging om een vogel in eerste winterkleed zonder sporen van gevangenschap! Op 2 januari werd een adulte **Ringsnavelmeeuw** *Larus delawarensis* opgemerkt te Evergem-Belzele, Oost-Vlaanderen. Van de in totaal 13 gemelde **Pontische Meeuwen** *L cachinnans* verbleven er op 19 januari acht bij Maaseik, Limburg. 'Jean', de adulte **Grote Burgemeester** *L hyperboreus* van Oostende, werd nog gezien tot in maart. Hier was op 2 februari nog een tweede adulte aanwezig. Ook werden adulte gezien te Lombardsijde op 2 februari en te Wintam (Bornem) op 23 en 25 januari; deze vogel vloog op 25 januari ook over Duffel, Antwerpen. Op 26 januari was een eerstewinter aanwezig bij Zeebrugge en op 22 februari een tweede-winter te Oostende. Op 30 en 31 januari werden als gevolg van de Belgische olieramp vijf dode **Kleine Alken** *Alle alle* opgeraapt op de stranden van West-Vlaanderen. Tijdens de eerste week van februari werden er zelfs enkele 10-tallen (de meeste dood) opgeraapt. Op 5 februari zaten er telkens twee bij De Panne, West-Vlaanderen; Wenduine, West-Vlaanderen; en Oostende; en één zat bij Zeebrugge. Op 27 en 30 januari werd een **Papegaaiduiker** *Fratercula arctica* opgeraapt. Tijdens de eerste week van februari werd er nog een 10-tal gevonden; geen van deze vogels overleefde de nachtmerrie. Op 5 februari vloog er toch nog één langs De Panne. De olieramp had met name zware gevolgen voor **Alken** *Alca torda*; van de vele 100en slachtoffers werden slechts weinige levend opgeraapt, maar zelfs daarvan overleefden er slechts enkele 10-tallen. Bij **Zeekoeten** *Uria aalge* kan gerust over 1000en slachtoffers worden gesproken, al bleken die naar verhouding toch sterker te zijn. In januari was er slechts één waarneming van (negen) **Strandleeuweriken** *Eremophila alpestris* in de Baai van Heist, West-Vlaanderen. Tijdens de periode van 5 januari tot eind februari werden **Pestvogels** *Bombycilla garrulus* gezien te Broechem, Antwerpen (12); Brugge, West-Vlaanderen (drie); Deinze, Oost-Vlaanderen (twee); De Panne (14); Dilsen, Limburg; Duffel-Rumst (vijf); Doel; Ekeren, Antwerpen; Evere, Brussel ('meerdere'); Geluveld, West-Vlaanderen (drie); Heist (drie); Hulsoniaux, Namur (twee); Kallo, Oost-Vlaanderen (acht); Korbeek-Lo, Vlaams-Brabant (vier); Louvain-la-Neuve, Namur (drie); Mortsel, Antwerpen (26); Nassogne, Luxembourg; Oelegem, Antwerpen; Oostmalle, Antwerpen (vier); Ophoven, Limburg (drie); Peutie, Vlaams-Brabant; Rijkevorsel, Antwerpen (drie); Roly (vier); Semmerzake, Oost-Vlaanderen (negen); Turnhout, Antwerpen (acht); Werbomont, Liège (12); en Wuustwezel, Antwerpen. In de Achterhaven van Zeebrugge werden op 24 januari nog vier **Graszangers** *Cisticola juncidis* geteld. Een **Siberische Tjiftjaf** *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* liet zich op 18 januari aardig bekijken te Koksijde, West-Vlaanderen. Naast de maximaal zes overwinterende **Sneeuwgorzen** *Plectrophenax nivalis* te Heist, verbleef in januari ook een groepje van maximaal zeven bij Kessenich, Limburg.

Deze waarnemingsrubriek kwam tot stand met medewerking van Ken Lossy (Natuurpunt-vogellijn: 015-330194) en verder Peter Collaerts (Vlaams-Brabant), Frank De Scheemaeker (Mergus), Koen Leysen (Limburg), en Willy Verschueren (Groenlink). Ook de hulp van al diegenen die (hun) waarnemingen inspraken op de Natuurpunt-vogellijn was hier onontbeerlijk.

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DB Actueel

Oostelijke Kraagtrap bij Lombardsijde Op zondag 19 januari 2003 bemerkte Johan Valcke op een kleine akker nabij een woonwijk in Lombardsijde, Middelkerke, West-Vlaanderen, rond 16:45 een voor hem onbekende vogel. Hij belde naar Dirk Peene met de melding dat de vogel leek op een kleine Struisvogel *Struthio camelus* maar liep als een Kalkoen *Meleagris gallopavo*. Er werd een vogelgids opgediept en na telefonisch overleg bleek de rare vogel nog het beste met een kraagtrap *Chlamydotis* overeen te stemmen. DP onthaalde deze determinatie op enig ongeloof maar moest tot zijn ontzetting de waarneming bevestigen toen hij de volgende dag voor het werk naar het nabijgelegen Nieuwpoort moest en toch maar even ter plaatse een kijkje nam. De vogel werd in de namiddag van 20 januari ook nog gezien door Johan Buckens, Jeremy Demey, Tim Goethals en Erik Vanloo. JB maakte enkele foto's in het veld. De kraagtrap was dermate verzwakt dat hij zich rond 16:30 gemakkelijk met een schepnet liet vangen, waarna hij voor revalidatie naar het vogelopvangcentrum van Oostende werd overgebracht. Vanaf 22 januari verschenen de eerste foto's op diverse websites (users.skynet.be/digibirds, users.skynet.be/wielewaal en www.dutchbirding.nl). Een korte mededeling over deze vogel verscheen in Birding World 16: 18-19, 2003. Na enige discussie werd de vogel gedetermineerd als eerste-winter Oostelijke Kraagtrap *C macqueenii* en kon Westelijke Kraagtrap *C undulata* worden uitgesloten, met name op grond van de tekening van de kruinveren en van de bovendelen. De leeftijd was afleesbaar aan het ruistadium en de vorm van de handpennen. Begin maart was de vogel nog steeds in gevangenschap.

151 Oostelijke Kraagtrap / Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii*, eerste-winter (gevangen bij Lombardsijde, West-Vlaanderen, op 20 januari 2003), Oostende, West-Vlaanderen, 22 januari 2003 *(François Roland)*



Het is meer dan anderhalve eeuw geleden dat er een Oostelijke Kraagtrap in België werd waargenomen. De eerste, een adulte, werd in september 1842 geschoten. De tweede was een adult mannetje geschoten te Rotselaar, Vlaams-Brabant, in december 1844. De derde verbleef van 7 tot 13 december 1845 op het plateau van Woluwe te Diegem, Vlaams-Brabant; op de laatste dag werd de vogel geschoten en voor 10 frank verkocht aan het Musée Royal in Brussel. In Nederland is één geval bekend van een exemplaar dat op 10 december 1850 werd geschoten bij Zeist, Utrecht. Waarnemingen in West-Europa zijn de laatste decennia zeer schaars. Vermoedelijk is dat een gevolg van het feit dat de soort in zijn broed- en wintergebieden door habitatverlies en overbejaging sterk in aantal is achteruitgegaan. De meest recente Europese gevallen waren in Suffolk, Engeland, in november-december 1962 (het enige Britse geval uit de 20e eeuw, na vier gevallen in 1847-98), in Zweden in oktober 1974, in Italië in november 1997, in Griekenland in april 1998 en in Cyprus in november 1998. Hoewel de gevallen uit de late jaren 1990 enige hoop gaven, zullen weinig vogelaars serieus rekening hebben gehouden met de mogelijkheid dat in de 21e eeuw nog een kraagtrap in West-Europa zou opduiken. GUNTER DE SMET

MACQUEEN'S BUSTARD On 19-20 January 2003, a first-winter Macqueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis macqueenii* was seen at Lombardsijde near Nieuwpoort, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. After its discovery, five birders saw the weakened bird on the second day, before it was taken into care and brought to Oostende. The bird was still in recovery in early March. If accepted, this is the fourth record for Belgium, after birds collected in September 1842, December 1844 and December 1845. The only record for the Netherlands is from December 1850.

Kleine Topper bij Scheelhoek Al vele jaren – vanaf mijn beginperiode van vogelen – zoek ik vooral in de winter duikeenden af in de hoop om iets leuks te vinden. Op een Witoogeend *Aythya nyroca* bij Eijsden, Limburg, in de jaren 1980 (mijn eerste) na, bleef dat zoeken al die jaren zonder succes. Tot 19 februari 2003… Tijdens mijn lunchuurtje(s) wilde ik een bij de Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, gemelde Sneeuwgans *Anser caerulescens* toevoegen aan mijn (jaar)lijst, wat na enig zoekwerk lukte. Toen ik de vogel nog iets beter wilde zien om te kijken of hij ringen droeg, besloot ik ten oosten van de Scheelhoek nabij het gemaal op de dijk een onverhard pad in te rijden. Dit ging eerst goed maar bij het draaien reed ik bijna in de uitwateringsloot van het gemaal waar een groep Meerkoeten *Fulica atra* en enkele Kuifeenden *A fuligula* en Tafeleenden *A ferina* zwommen. Van de schrik bekomen (gelukkig stond ik nog op de kant) keek ik snel het groepje eenden af en zag ... een adult mannetje Kleine

Topper *A affinis*, direct te herkennen aan de 'bobbel' op het achterhoofd, de zilvergrijze gebandeerde bovendelen en de zwarte nagel aan de verder grijze snavel. Ik raakte gelijk in de zenuwen; doorpiepen, videoen, digiscopen, waar moet je mee beginnen? Gelukkig bleef de vogel rustig zwemmen en nadat ik alle vorige genoemde zaken had gedaan vloog hij ook nog een rondje waarbij het tweekleurige vleugelpatroon te zien was. De volgende dag was de vogel op dezelfde plek aanwezig en liet zich tot in de middag fraai bekijken en fotograferen. Vastgesteld werd dat de vogel aan beide poten ongeringd was. Later die dag en de dagen erna verbleef de vogel vaak buitendijks op het Haringvliet voor de Slijkplaat, soms op aanzienlijke afstand. Enige malen werd balts ten opzichte van vrouwtjes Kuifeend waargenomen. De laatste waarneming was op 24 februari.

Het betreft na aanvaarding het vijfde geval voor Nederland. Het zou echter goed kunnen dat het om dezelfde vogel gaat die van 20 december 1999 tot en met 15 januari 2000 op het Haringvliet aanwezig was, en die voornamelijk vanaf een boot gezien werd. Andere gevallen waren in Zeeland van november 1994 tot juni 1995, bij Lelystad-Haven, Flevoland, in januari 1996 en in Groningen, Groningen, in mei 2002. Alle gevallen hadden betrekking op mannetjes. MAX BERLIJN

LESSER SCAUP From 19 to 24 February 2003, an adult male Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* stayed near Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands. On the first two days, it stayed in a small group of wildfowl and could be studied at close range. The other days, it was mostly observed at long range. If accepted, this is the fifth record for the Netherlands (all concerning males), although it could possibly be the same bird that was seen in the Haringvliet area in December 1999 and January 2000.

Dwergaalscholver in Limburgs grensgebied Op 1 maart 2003 besloot Paul van Engelshoven zijn zojuist aangeschafte digitale camera uit te proberen bij de Eijsder Beemden ten zuiden van Maastricht, Limburg. De eerste drie foto's die hij door zijn telescoop maakte waren van een kleine aalscholver die op een paar stronken in het water zat. Hij dacht aan een Kuifaalscholver *Stictocarbo aristotelis* en belde 's middags een kennis die ook naar vogels keek met deze mededeling; dit leidde echter niet tot vervolgacties. Op 2 maart besloot Ben Gaxiola de Eijsder Beemden – zijn voormalige 'local patch' – te bezoeken omdat hij vanwege familieverplichtingen het weekend in Limburg vertoefde. Op weg terug naar zijn auto werd rond 16:30 zijn aandacht getrokken door een kleine aalscholver en hij dacht onmiddellijk met een Dwergaalscholver *Microcarbo pygmeus* van doen te hebben. Hij zag de vogel zonder telescoop en was door het slechte weer nog niet 100% zeker van de determinatie. De volgende ochtend bleek de Dwergaalscholver vroeg aanwezig op zijn visplek en kon Ben de determinatie definitief afronden. De vogel was in zomerkleed, met een donkere keel, iets lichtere buik en witte pluimveertjes op met name oorstreek en achterkop. Om c 07:40 vloog de vogel op in zuidelijke richting en verdween richting België. Rond 17:00 verscheen hij weer in de Eijsder Beemden, blijkbaar zijn vaste slaapplaats.

De volgende dagen bleek de vogel het beste vroeg in de ochtend of in de late middag waargenomen te kunnen worden bij het uit- of invliegen van zijn slaapplaats. Op 4 maart werd hij door twee doortastende Belgische vogelaars midden op de dag teruggevonden op een met wilgen begroeide plas bij Hermalle-sous-Argenteau bij Visé, Liège, België, c 8 km ten zuiden van de Eijsder Beemden, en kon daar door verschillende Belgische twitchers worden bewonderd. Op 5 maart herhaalde dit patroon zich; gedurende de dag ontstond er nog enige tijd twijfel omtrent de determinatie en

152 Kleine Topper / Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*, adult mannetje, Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, 20 februari 2003 *(Jan den Hertog)*



153 Kleine Topper / Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*, adult mannetje, Scheelhoek, Zuid-Holland, 19 februari 2003 *(Max Berlijn)*





154 Dwergaalscholver / Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmeus*, adult, Eijsder Beemden, Limburg, maart 2003 *(Jeroen van der Zwan)*



155 Dwergaalscholver / Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmeus*, adult, Eijsder Beemden, Limburg, 7 maart 2003 *(Marten van Dijl)*

werd gedacht dat het om een (ontsnapte) aalscholver uit Zuid-Azië of Australië ging. Later op de dag bleek dit gelukkig vals alarm. In het weekend van 8 en 9 maart trokken veel waarnemers naar Zuid-Limburg om de Dwergaalscholver te bekijken; op deze dagen was de vogel de meeste tijd op zijn Nederlandse stek te vinden. Op 16 maart was de vogel nog aanwezig.

Indien aanvaard betreft het de vierde Dwergaalscholver voor Nederland; eerdere gevallen waren op 23-24 januari 1999 bij Montfoort, Utrecht, op 12 juni 1999 in de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, en op 6 mei 2000 bij Soerendonk en Budel-Dorplein, Noord-Brabant. Voor België gaat het om het tweede geval, na een vogel die van december 2000 tot in januari 2001 in de Leievallei, Hainaut, op de grens met Frankrijk verbleef. Het is frappant dat de vaste kring waarnemers van de Eijsder Beemden het vaak heeft gehad over deze soort als de te ontdekken 'klapper' voor dit gebied, vanwege het geschikte biotoop met stilstaand visrijk water en overhangende wilgen. PAUL VAN ENGELSHOVEN, BEN GAXIOLA & MAX BERLIJN

PYGMY CORMORANT From 1 to at least 16 March 2003, an adult-summer Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmeus* was seen at Eijsder Beemden south of Maastricht, Limburg, the Netherlands. On 4-6 March, it was also seen across the border near Hermalle-sous-Argenteau, Liège, Belgium. If accepted, this is the fourth record for the Netherlands, after birds in January 1999, June 1999 and May 2000. It is the second for Belgium, after one in December 1999 into January 2000 (which was also seen across the border in France).

DBA-nieuws

Dutch Birding-vogeldag 1 februari 2003 De opkomst was minder groot dan vorig jaar, maar de DBA-vogeldag van 1 februari 2003 was zeker interessant genoeg. Vanwege '25 jaar Dutch Birding' kreeg iedere bezoeker een speciale jubileummuismat als presentje; een leuke binnenkomer. Voorzitter Gijsbert van der Bent ging kort in op de roerige en een kwart eeuw omspannende geschiedenis van het tijdschrift Dutch Birding, waarbij zowel de opkomst van de punkmuziek als de beginselen van de SGP aan de orde kwamen. Ricard Gutiérrez uit Barcelona, Spanje, verraste zijn gehoor met een technisch perfecte en fascinerende lezing over Vale Pijlstormvogel *Puffinus mauretanicus*. Vrijwel de hele (kleine) populatie van deze soort liep gevaar tijdens de ramp met de olietanker 'Prestige'. Misschien was dit slechts uitstel van de ondergang, want Ricard liet zien dat deze soort in broedkolonies door Yelkouanpijlstormvogels *P yelkouan* wordt verdreven. Jan van der Laan verzorgde dit jaar op competente wijze de mystery bird-competitie. Winnaar werd Rick Winters met 20 goed van de 25 dia's. Er waren ereplaatsen voor Rob van Bemmelen en Hein Prinsen (beiden 19 goed) en Nils van Duivendijk en Dirk Moerbeek (beiden 18 goed). Prijzen werden beschikbaar gesteld door Plomp Digital Video, Cursorius en Birdsongs International. Dat Chris Schenk schitterende beelden kan schieten, met name uit Siberische streken, wisten we al. Zijn Lepelbekstrandlopers *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* (vooral de donsjongen met hun reeds enorme lepelsnavel) stalen dit jaar de show.

Wie na de lunchpauze koos voor een te verwachten makkelijk verhaal (over het vogelen in Spanje door Ricard) miste de overrompelende lezing van Peter de Knijff over het ontstaan van het 'grote meeuwen-complex'. Op buitengewoon heldere wijze werd door Peter een genetische reconstructie (normaal toch taaie materie) voor het voetlicht gebracht waar we ongetwijfeld meer over zullen horen. Gerald Driessens en Wim Wiegant namen ruimschoots de tijd voor respectievelijk het Belgische en Nederlandse jaaroverzicht van 2002, met uiteraard alvast een voorschotje op 2003 in de vorm van Oostelijke Kraagtrap *Chlamydotis macqueenii* en Grote Tafeleend *Aythya valisineria*. Een spontane collecte leverde ruim EUR 200 op voor de actie 'Laat de albatros niet verdrinken!' van Birdlife International. Het werd een latertje waarna iedereen ook nog heftige sneeuwval moest trotseren om thuis te komen. Het bestuur dankt allen die hebben meegewerkt aan het welslagen van deze dag. GIJSBERT VAN DER BENT, LEONIE OLIVIER & ROB OLIVIER

0900-BIRDING operationeel Sinds afgelopen februari is het nieuwe nummer van de Dutch Birding-vogellijn operationeel: 0900-BIRDING (=0900-2473464; EUR 0.35 pm). Het oude nummer (0900-2032128) blijft gewoon bestaan. Het nieuwe nummer is gemakkelijker te onthouden en beter te promoten door de koppeling aan de naam Dutch Birding. De inhoud van de vogellijn blijft onveranderd: het meest actuele, complete en betrouwbare nieuws over waarnemingen van zeldzame en schaarse vogels in Nederland (en soms daarbuiten). THEO ADMIRAAL

Dutch Birding-vogelweek in oktober 2003 De Dutch Birding-vogelweek op Texel, Noord-Holland, zal dit jaar aanvangen op zaterdag 4 oktober 2003. Over het programma is nog niets bekend. Nadere informatie over de lezingen, de Big Day en eventuele andere activiteiten wordt gegeven in komende nummers van Dutch Birding, via de Dutch Birding-vogellijn (0900-BIRDING) en via de website www.dutchbirding.nl. GIJSBERT VAN DER BENT

Nieuw adres fotoredactie Wij maken u erop attent dat met ingang van heden het adres van de fotografisch redacteur, René Pop, is veranderd. Het nieuwe adres luidt: René Pop, Postbus 31, 1790 AA Den Burg-Texel, Nederland, telefoon 0222-316801, fax 0222-316802. REDACTIE

New address photographic editor Please note that the address of the photographic editor, René Pop, has changed. The new address is: René Pop, Postbus 31, 1790 AA Den Burg-Texel, Netherlands, telephone +31-222316801, fax +31-222316802. EDITORS

Aankondigingen & verzoeken

Dutch Birding videojaaroverzicht 2002 Op de DBA-vogeldag op 1 februari 2003 in Utrecht werd het Dutch Birding-videojaaroverzicht 2003 gepresenteerd. Op de band staan ruim 2.5 uur aan opnamen van zeldzame en schaarse vogels in Nederland en België in 2002. De meeste opnamen zijn gemaakt door Marc Plomp en Leo Boon, aangevuld met opnamen van zes andere videografen; in totaal gaat het om 70 Nederlandse en 20 Belgische opnamen. Het commentaar is net als bij de vorige editie (2001) ingesproken door Max Berlijn en behandelt uiteenlopende zaken als determinatie van de bewuste vogel, status van de soort of bijzonderheden rondom het geval. Afgezien van een slordigheidje af en toe (zo is Zwartkeellijster *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis* in Nederland (nog) niet afgesplitst van Roodkeellijster *T r ruficollis*), is het commentaar onderhoudend en verhelderend.

Hoogtepunten op het Nederlandse deel van de band zijn – wat zeldzaamheid betreft – in chronologische volgorde de Steenarend *Aquila chrysaetos* van Midden-

Drenthe, het zingende mannetje Bosgors *Emberiza rustica* van de Kennemerduinen, Noord-Holland, de Poelsnip *Gallinago media* van Maassluis, Zuid-Holland, de Lammergier *Gypaetus barbatus* van Texel, Noord-Holland, de twee Ralreigers *Ardeola ralloides* van Zuid-Schermer, Noord-Holland, de Witstaartkievit *Vanellus leucurus* van Nieuwendijk, Zuid-Holland, de Amerikaanse Goudplevier *Pluvialis dominica* en zomerkleed Franklins Meeuw *Larus pipixcan* van Wissenkerke, Zeeland, de Grote Franjepoot *Phalaropus tricolor* van Scherpenisse, Zeeland, de Siberische Strandloper *Calidris acuminata* van de Ezumakeeg, Friesland, de Turkestaanse Klauwier *Lanius phoenicuroides* en onvolwassen Citroenkwikstaart *Motacilla citreola* van Texel, de Bastaardarend *A clanga* van de Oostvaardersplassen, Flevoland, het mannetje Witbandkruisbek *Loxia leucoptera* van Huizen, Noord-Holland, de Kleine Geelpootruiter *Tringa flavipes* van de Amstelmeerdijk, Noord-Holland, de Alpengierzwaluw *Apus melba* van Wageningen, Gelderland, en de Zwartkeellijster van Harlingen, Friesland. Zeven soorten uit dit rijtje verschenen voor de eerste keer op het videojaaroverzicht; de achtste was Graszanger *Cisticola juncidis*. Voor België worden de hoogtepunten gevormd door de naar wordt aangenomen 'ship-assisted' maar daarom niet minder fraaie Sneeuwuil *Nyctea scandiaca* van Veurne, West-Vlaanderen (van vrijwel zeker dezelfde vogel staan opnamen op het Nederlandse gedeelte, te Hippolytushoef, Noord-Holland) en de grote groep Vale Gieren *Gyps fulvus* bij Nokere, West-Vlaanderen. Tussen de echte dwaalgasten door zijn weer flink wat 'mindere' zeldzaamheden te bewonderen, vaak met zeer fraaie opnamen.

De meest vogels op de band zijn vaak langdurig en door veel waarnemers geobserveerd, zodat uitstekende opnamen gemaakt konden worden. Des te verrassender is het om op de band ook opnamen te zien van zeldzaamheden die maar kort ter plaatse waren of maar door weinig waarnemers bezocht werden. Dat geldt bijvoorbeeld voor de Aziatische Goudplevier *P fulva* in de Ezumakeeg op 28 juli, de Kleine Geelpootruiter van Texel op 26 oktober en de Witbandkruisbek van Lage Mierde, Noord-Brabant, eind december. Van de vier potentiële nieuwe soorten voor Nederland die in 2002 werden vastgesteld staat alleen de Lammergier op het overzicht. Twee andere (het Wilsons Stormvogeltje *Oceanites oceanicus* van Westkapelle, Zeeland, en de Geelsnavelkoekoek *Coccyzus americanus* van Texel) werden niet gefotografeerd of gevideood, en van de vierde, de mogelijke Sierlijke Stern *Sterna elegans* van Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, en Camperduin, Noord-Holland, waren de vluchtopnamen te slecht om te worden opgenomen in het overzicht. Voor alle vier geldt overigens dat aanvaarding nog geen uitgemaakte zaak is.

Het videojaaroverzicht is een productie van Plomp Digital Video in samenwerking met de Dutch Birding Association en Cursorius Photo & Video Library. De band kost EUR 27.00 en is te bestellen door EUR 29.75 (inclusief portokosten) over te maken op rekening 899007287 ten name van Plomp Digital Video in Linschoten, onder vermelding van 'Video 2002' en naam en adres. Eerdere jaaroverzichten zijn nog leverbaar; informatie is beschikbaar via www.dutchbirding.nl (onder 'The Shop', via deze link zijn de banden ook direct te bestellen) of via info@plompdigitalvideo.nl. ENNO B EBELS

Dutch Birding video year review 2002 The Dutch Birding video year review contains 2.5 h of video recordings of rare and scarce birds in the Netherlands and Belgium in 2002. In total, 90 sequences are shown including eight species not featured before on the Dutch Birding video reviews (since 1995). Highlights in chronological order from the Netherlands include Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (in song), Great Snipe *Gallinago media*, Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*, adult Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*, Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*, Turkestan Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides*, Greater Spotted Eagle *A clanga*, Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, Alpine Swift *Apus melba* (in flight and roosting!) and Black-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*. For Belgium, highlights include the group of Eurasian Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus* and the (presumably ship-assisted) Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*. The video can be ordered from Plomp Digital Video; for details contact Marc Plomp at plompdigitalvideo@planet.nl, telephone/fax + 31-348433730 or order directly from the Dutch Birding website (www.dutchbirding.nl, under 'The Shop'). Previous year reviews are still available and can be ordered in the same way. ENNO B EBELS

Expositie Martin Brandsma: Vogelschetsen Gedurende de maanden april, mei en juni 2003 exposeert vogelaar en vogeltekenaar Martin Brandsma (1972) onder de titel 'Vogelschetsen' in galerie Dit Eiland te Hollum, Ameland, Friesland. De expositie biedt een overzicht van zijn schetsbladen en studies met diverse vogelsoorten die hij de afgelopen jaren voor zijn kijker kreeg. Daarnaast wordt een selectie getoond van zwart-wittekeningen uit het boek *Schaarse vogels in Fryslân* dat door hem is geïllustreerd (SOVON/FFF 2002, ISBN 90-9015684-4; cf Dutch Birding 24: 364, 2002). In de expositie ligt de nadruk op soorten die voorkomen in het waddengebied en op de waddeneilanden.

De expositie richt zich niet op gave uitgewerkte composities of vogelschilderijen in naturalistische stijl, maar op het moment waarop bepaalde vogelsoorten door MB daadwerkelijk zijn gezien. De 100en schetsen slaan een brug naar de feitelijke situatie, het specifieke licht en de waarnemingsomstandigheden.

De expositie is te bezichtigen van 2 april tot en met 22 juni 2003. De opening vindt plaats op zondag 30 maart 2003 van 15:00-17:00. Op de internetsite van de galerie (www.ameland.net/diteiland/gallery.html) is een selectie van het geëxposeerde werk te zien. De openingstijden van galerie Dit Eiland zijn woensdag t/m zaterdag van 13:30-17:00 uur en op afspraak. Adres: Galerie Dit Eiland, Burenlaan 1, 9161 AJ Hollum, Ameland, telefoon 0519-554405.