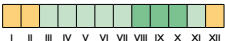









**Pied avocet**  
*Recurvirostra avocetta*





 Klyde  
 Säbelschnäbler  
 Kluut

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
Long-legged wader with black and white plumage and up-turned bill. <b>Age determination:</b> <small>From the very young birds</small>	<b>Breeds</b> on the coasts from the western Baltic Sea to France, in the Mediterranean region as well as in the steppes from Hungary to China. Breeding occurrence also in East	<b>Breeding:</b> Breeds in sparsely vegetated areas on the coast, e.g. shingle or gravel areas and	All year: Small invertebrates in shallow water (crustaceans, insects, occasionally also juvenile fish). Foraging through pendulum-like gait movements through shallow water.	 4  23–25 days  35–42 days

**Known avocet:** 27 years and 10 months. Birds clutches and fledglings by mock attacks by calls.  
 'Kluut' and in Danish 'Klyde' (because of birds cannot keep themselves warm, so often must be brooded by the adults.

This sheet is part of the handbook 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

**Pied avocet**



Illustration: Stoffen Valentz







# Migratory Bird Profiles

Handout for birdwatching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site

The compilation of the migratory bird species profiles is based on a handout ('Excursion sheets') of the Wadden Sea National Park Authority of Lower Saxony for ornithological events in the context of the annual Migratory Bird Days in the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park. The idea and all drawings and the revision of the texts were donated to the International Wadden Sea School for the development of a World Heritage edition for use in educational work throughout the Wadden Sea.



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[www.waddensea-worldheritage.org](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org)  
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Cover photo: Lukas Lehmann

Illustrations: Steffen Walentowitz, Claus Rabba (individually credited)

Maps of migration routes: Reno Lottmann

Design: Liebmann Feine Grafik

Supply source: The file is available for free download for multipliers of Wadden Sea education at [www.iwss.org/resources](http://www.iwss.org/resources)

1. edition 2024

#### Sources:

Koffijberg K., Bregnballe T., Frikke J., Gnep B., Hälterlein B., Hansen M. B., Körber P., Reichert G., Umland J., van der Meij T. 2020. **Breeding Birds in the Wadden Sea: Trends 1991–2017 and results of total counts in 2006 and 2012.** Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 40. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Joint Monitoring Group of Breeding Birds in the Wadden Sea, Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

Kleefstra R., Bregnballe T., Frikke J., Günther K., Hälterlein B., Hansen M.B., Hornman M., Ludwig J., Meyer J., Scheiffarth G. 2022. **Trends of Migratory and Wintering Waterbirds in the Wadden Sea 1987/1988–2019/2020.** Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 41. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Expert Group Migratory Birds, Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

van Roomen M., Citegetse G., Crowe O., Dodman T., Hagemeijer W., Meise K., Schekkerman H. (eds) 2022. **East Atlantic Flyway Assessment 2020. The status of coastal waterbird populations and their sites. Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative p/a CWSS,** Wilhelmshaven, Germany, Wetlands International, Wageningen, The Netherlands, BirdLife International, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

BirdLife International. 2021. **European Red List of Birds.** Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

## Bird diversity in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site – discover and inspire

The Wadden Sea on the North Sea coast of Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands is a unique resting place for more than ten million migratory birds. Every spring and autumn, they gather energy here for their long-distance flights along the East Atlantic migration route, which stretches from the Arctic tundra to the coasts of Africa. The diverse habitats – from the open sea to the mudflats and salt marshes – offer the birds much-needed food and shelter on their often thousands kilometres long migration route.

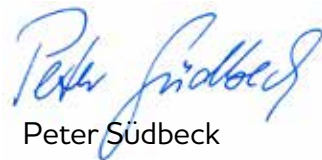
The central role of the Wadden Sea as a resting place for migratory birds and its extraordinary biodiversity were decisive factors for its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As one of the last largely untouched wilderness areas in Europe, the Wadden Sea enables undisturbed ecological processes and provides waterbirds a vital refuge.

Numerous ornithological events throughout the World Heritage Site bring visitors and locals closer to the fascinating world of birds. The bird profiles compiled here offer birdwatching guides a valuable support for illustrative communication.

We hope you enjoy using the fact sheets.



Anja Szczesinski



Peter Südbeck









## Notes on using the profiles

On the front page, characteristic drawings and small migration route maps illustrate the individual species. The reverse side provides succinct information on recognisable features, occurrence, migration routes, food and the seasonal occurrence of the birds.

The population figures are taken from the latest available publications of the resting and breeding bird monitoring programme of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, the East Atlantic Flyway Assessment Report, and the European Red List of Birds. For the spoonbill, more recent Wadden Sea-wide data was already available, which is why figures from 2022 are given here.

## Legend




### Occurrence in the Wadden Sea

-  very common every year
-  annually common
-  annually in small numbers
-  almost every year, small numbers
-  exceptionally
-  never

### Total population

- no population
- ? no data

### Breeding biology

-  Number of eggs in the nest
-  Duration of breeding
-  Period until fledging



Arctic tern



Barnacle goose



Black-headed gull



Bar-tailed godwit



Black-tailed godwit



Brent goose



Common gull



Common tern



Curlew, Eurasian



Dunlin



Eider, Common



Golden plover



Great black-backed gull



Great white egret



Greenshank, Common



Greylag goose



Grey plover



Hen harrier



Herring gull



Lapwing, Northern



Lesser black-backed gull



Marsh harrier



Meadow pipit



Northern wheatear



Oystercatcher



Pied avocet



Purple sandpiper



Redshank, Common



Ringed plover



Red knot



Ruddy turnstone



Sanderling



Sandwich tern



Shelduck, Common



Shore lark



Short-eared owl



Shoveler, Northern



Snow bunting



Spoonbill, Eurasian



Teal, Common



Twite






White-fronted goose



Wigeon, Eurasian

This overview shows all migratory bird profiles in alphabetical order. The arrangement of the profiles in the file follows the group affiliation (ducks, waders, etc.).

Clicking or tapping on a thumbnail leads directly to the corresponding species. The button   allow navigation between the front and back of the relevant profile. The arrow  leads back to the complete overview.



# Brent goose

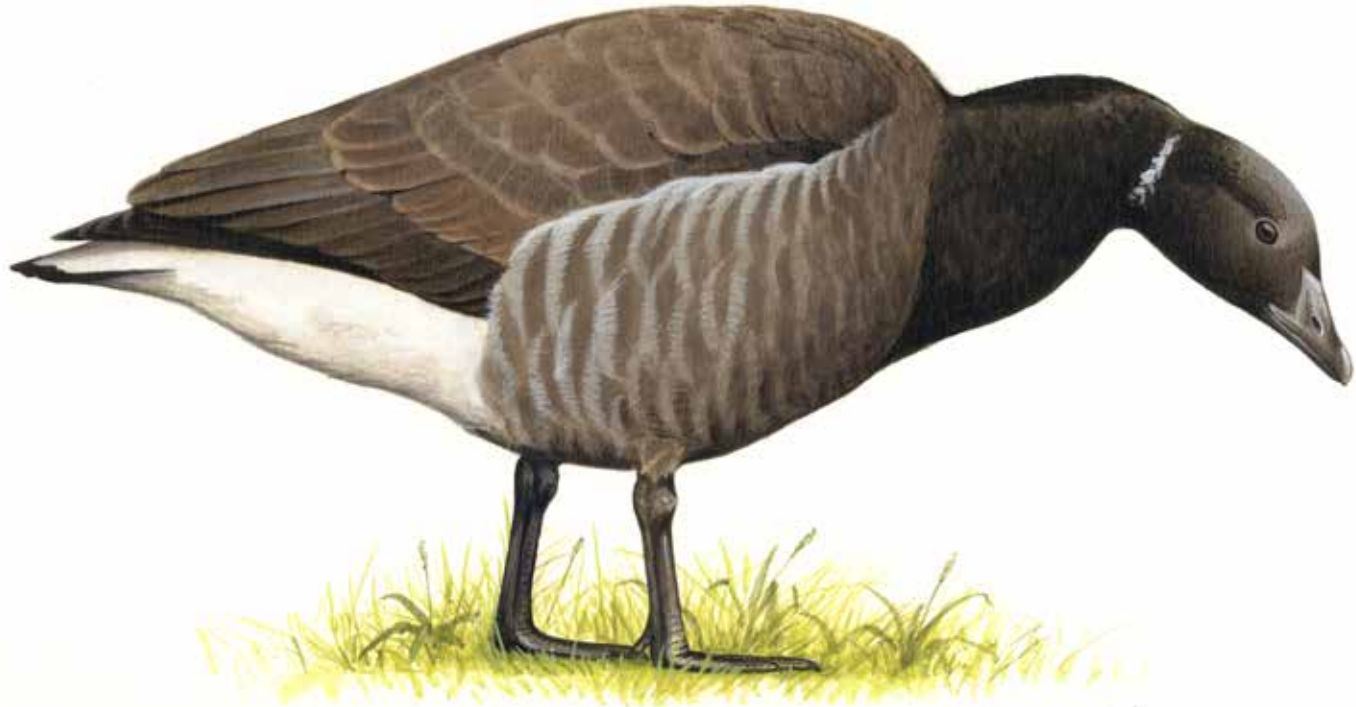
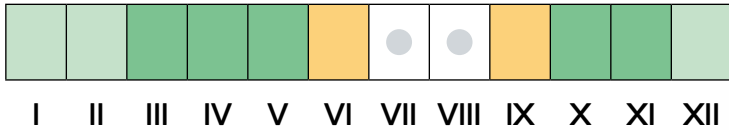


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Brent goose




*Branta bernicla*

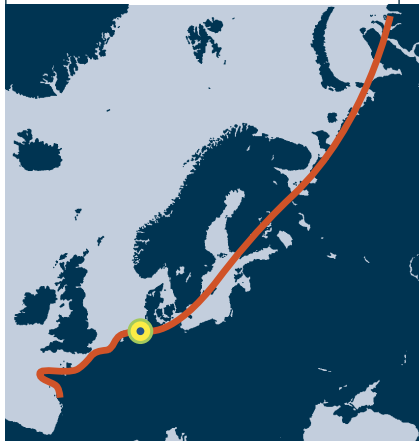


 Knortegås

 Ringelgans

 Rotgans

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Smallest sea goose; black head and neck, white neck ring; grey body, flanks somewhat lighter.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds lack a neck ring, and have white wing bars.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> almost exclusively on the Taimyr Peninsula in Siberia.</p> <p><b>Winters</b> in small numbers in the Wadden Sea, but especially in W Europe.</p> <p>In <b>summer</b> only sporadically in the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, often colonies on islands. Occasionally in the vicinity of nests of Snowy owls or birds of prey, as these fend off Arctic foxes.</p> <p><b>Migration/Winter:</b> Salt marshes and seagrass beds of Wadden Sea and W Europe</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Seaweed, lichens, mosses, small flowering plants.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Seaweed, saltmarsh grass, glasswort, green algae.</p>	 3–5	 24–26 days	 ca. 40 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known Brent goose:</b> 28 years and 8 months.</p> <p><b>Population decline</b> in the 1930s (food shortage, disappearance of seagrass stocks).</p> <p><b>Population recovery</b> since the 1960s due to, among others, hunting bans. This has reduced the escape distance of the birds to one tenth.</p>						



Total population (flyway)		211,000	
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. <b>189,461</b>	–
	<b>DK</b>	max. <b>14,457</b>	–
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>88,645</b>	–
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>17,278</b>	–
	<b>NL</b>	max. <b>90,580</b>	–

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

# Barnacle goose



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Barnacle goose




*Branta leucopsis*



 Bramgås

 Weißwangengans

 Brandgans

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Small goose, slightly larger than Brent Goose. <b>Head and neck black, white cheeks</b>, upper parts grey/patterned black and white, underside whitish.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Rear flanks of <b>young bird</b> diffusely spotted, slightly barred in <b>adults</b>. Darker lores diffusely dark, black in adults. Wing coverts and back feathers more brownish in young birds and without white edge.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> mainly in the tundra of northern Russia. Since the 1980s also in Sweden, more recently also increasingly in the Wadden Sea and Dutch Delta area.</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> mainly in the Wadden Sea and in the German-Dutch lowlands.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Coastal tundra, often large colonies, on islands or on cliffs; often in the vicinity of snowy owls or birds of prey as these drive polar foxes away.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Salt marshes of the Wadden Sea, grassland, rarely arable fields</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Leaves and shoots of arctic plants.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Salt marsh grasses/ other grasses, winter seed.</p>	 4–5	 24–25 days	 40–45 days



Total population (flyway)		1.4 million	
Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*	
<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. <b>579,956</b>	ca.	<b>727</b>
<b>DK</b>	max. <b>126,760</b>	ca.	<b>6</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b> max. <b>189,191</b>	ca.	<b>386</b>
	<b>LS, HH</b> max. <b>113,406</b>	ca.	<b>47</b>
<b>NL</b>	max. <b>220,501</b>	ca.	<b>288</b>

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

## Other information

**Oldest known Barnacle Goose:** 28 years

The population has **increased** significantly over the last 20 years, partially through hunting bans. Breeding area in Arctic recently extended to the west.

Spring departure over a month later due to shorter migration routes (beginning of May).



# White-fronted goose

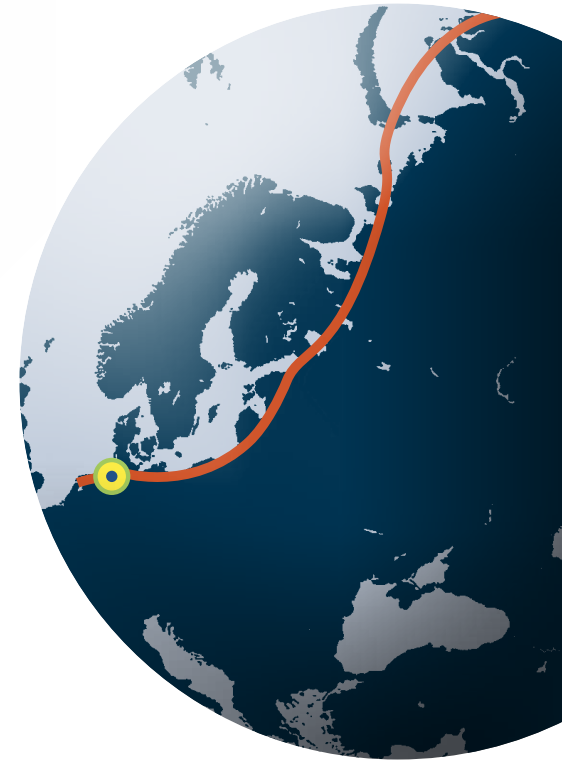


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# White-fronted goose

*Anser albifrons*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Blisgåås

 Blässgans

 Kolgans

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Smaller and darker</b> than Greylag goose.</p> <p><b>Adult birds</b> almost unmistakable with distinctive black belly bars and white forehead.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> without belly bars and without white forehead, with black bill tip ('nail').</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> in various subspecies in the tundras of Russia, Greenland and North America.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> in Central and W Europe as well as in SE Europe.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Elevated sites in Arctic tundra.</p> <p><b>Migration/ winter:</b> Meadows and pastures, less on arable fields.</p>	Plant parts, predominantly grasses.	 5–6	 27–28 days	 40–43 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known bird:</b> 25 years and 3 months.</p> <p><b>Name</b> refers to <b>white patch</b> above the bill.</p> <p>The <b>globally threatened Lesser White-fronted goose</b> also has a white forehead patch and is therefore easily confused with the white-fronted goose – one of many arguments against the hunting of white-fronted geese!</p> <p>Very <b>eager to call</b>: 'gaga'.</p> <p>White-fronted geese live in <b>monogamous long-term pair bonds</b>.</p> <p>While <b>winter numbers</b> in Germany have <b>increased</b> significantly, they have <b>decreased</b> in SE Europe. An <b>exchange</b> between both wintering areas has been documented by ringing.</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**1.18 million – 1.97 million**

Data in individuals

# Greylag goose

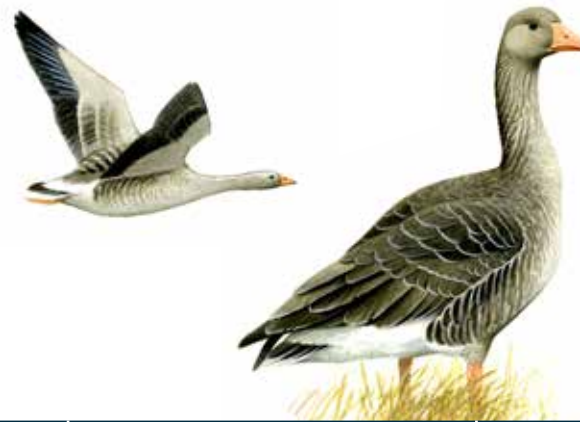


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Greylag goose

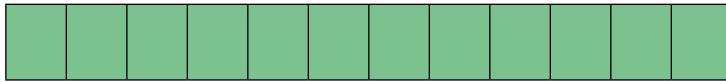
*Anser anser*






 Grågås

 Graugans

 Grauwe Gans



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Largest grey goose</b> with large nearly triangular pink bill.</p> <p><b>Wing coverts</b> mostly clearly lighter than the rest of the wing, in flight therefore unmistakable.</p>	<p>Patchily distributed from W Europe to Asia. Introduced in many areas of Central Europe.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> as far south as SW Europe and even N Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Mainly inland wetlands.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Meadows and pastures, rarely arable fields.</p>	<p>Terrestrial and aquatic plants such as grasses, herbs and perennials.</p>	 4–6	 27–29 days	 50–60 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known bird:</b> 24 years.</p> <p><b>Name:</b> The only common breeding grey goose species in Germany.</p> <p><b>Ancestor of the domestic goose</b>, which is kept in all variations of colour from natural (rare) to white (common).</p> <p><b>Breeds very early</b> in the year: the first young birds can hatch as early as late March.</p>						



**Total population (flyway)**  
**790,000**

Data in individuals





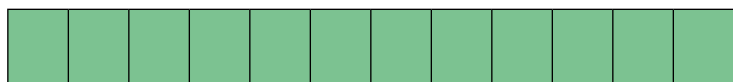
# Common shelduck



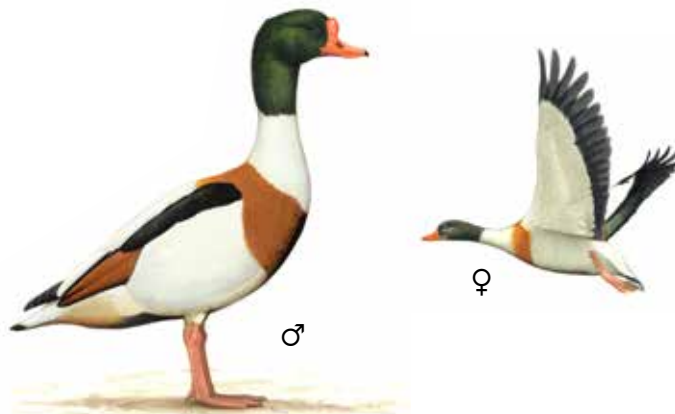
Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common shelduck

*Tadorna tadorna*












I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Gravand

 Brandgans

 Bergeend

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p><b>Unmistakable.</b></p> <p><b>Sex determination:</b> Male with more pronounced bill knob.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds with brown head, white face, dark dappled top and pink bill in autumn.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> at the North Sea, Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean area in Europe, also steppe lakes from Turkey to China.</p> <p>NW European population <b>overwinters</b> mainly in the Wadden Sea and W Europe.</p> <p><b>During moult</b> (July–August) almost the entire NW European population around the area of the Elbe estuary.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Burrows in dunes (e.g. rabbit burrows), also artificial habitats, such as rock or wood piles or similar.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly muddy tidal flats.</p>	<p>Mainly invertebrates (small snails, mussels, annelids, crustaceans, insects), rarely algae.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8–10</td> <td>29–31 days</td> <td>45–50 days</td> </tr> </table>				8–10	29–31 days	45–50 days
										
8–10	29–31 days	45–50 days								

## Other information

Systematically positioned between geese and ducks.

**Oldest known shelduck:** 24 years and 9 months.

**Unable to fly** for about 4 weeks during the **moult-ing season** (like all ducks and geese), then concentrated in a few low-disturbance and rich in food areas, especially in the Dithmarsch Wadden Sea.

The young are led to good feeding areas, up to 30 km from the nest.

Several females join to form **nurseries** (20 or more young birds).



**Total population (Europe) 104,000–154,000**

Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. 281,810	ca. 7,431
<b>DK</b>		max. 39,329	ca. 474
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 77,117	ca. 2,573
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 87,758	ca. 2,680
<b>NL</b>		max. 131,163	ca. 1,694

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

# Eurasian wigeon



♂ Breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Eurasian wigeon

*Mareca penelope*



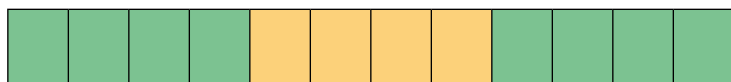
♂ Breeding plumage






 Pibeand

 Pfeifente

 Smient



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p>Small dabbling duck.</p> <p><b>Male</b> with reddish brown head, yellowish forehead, white wing patch and black under-tail.</p> <p><b>Females</b> more inconspicuous, mottled brown.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> and <b>males</b> in non-breeding plumage often reddish maroon.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> from NW Europe to NE Asia, rarely in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> on coasts of central, southern and western Europe. Small numbers sometimes summering in the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Wetlands with abundant vegetation.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Salt marshes, submerged meadows, coastal grasslands, sometimes arable fields.</p>	<p><b>All year round:</b> Mainly plants, leaves of grasses, seagrass, green algae, also roots, buds. On arable fields therefore occasional crop damage.</p>	 9  22–25 days  40–45 days

## Other information

**Oldest known Wigeon:** 34 years and 8 months.

Also called 'whistling duck', referring to the whistling 'wiiju' call.

**Foraging often at night** in areas that are several kilometres away from their daytime roosts.

Wigeons accumulate fat deposits that can help them survive for three days at max. If food shortages last longer (e.g. because of snow cover), they must migrate to other staging areas.



**Total population (flyway) 1.3 – 1.6 million**

Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. 423,725	ca. 24
<b>DK</b>		max. 93,864	ca. 0
	<b>SH</b>	max. 253,411	ca. 23
<b>DE</b>		max. 41,135	ca. 1
	<b>LS, HH</b>		
<b>NL</b>		max. 112,641	ca. 0

Data in individuals, \*in pairs



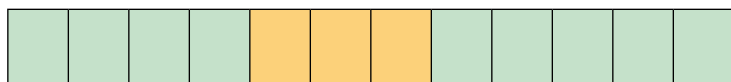
# Common teal



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common teal

*Anas crecca*












I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

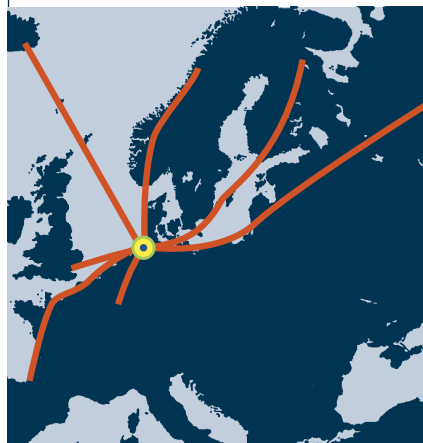


 Krikand

 Krickente

 Wintertaling

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p><b>Smallest European duck.</b></p> <p><b>Male</b> unmistakable with green mask, reddish-brown head and yellow and black 'bum'.</p> <p><b>Female</b> inconspicuous, brownish, bill with orange base.</p> <p><b>Small size</b> is distinctive. Garganey is similar but has a more distinct white head stripe and a plain grey beak with whitish base.</p>	<p><b>Breeding grounds</b> in temperate latitudes of Eurasia.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> mainly S Europe but extending southwards as far as the Sahel.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Shallow inland waters with dense overgrown banks. Also in reedy ditches.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Shallow wetlands and/or mudflats, in particular floodplains.</p>	<p>In winter mainly small seeds, otherwise also small invertebrates.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8–11</td> <td>21–23 days</td> <td>25–30 days</td> </tr> </table>				8–11	21–23 days	25–30 days
										
8–11	21–23 days	25–30 days								
<b>Other information</b>										
<p><b>Oldest known Common teal:</b> 21 years and 6 months.</p> <p>Due to its short neck the Teal inhabits shallower water than other duck species.</p>										



Total population (flyway)		670,000	
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 55,274	?
	<b>DK</b>	max. 21,888	?
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 23,602	?
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 6,029	?
	<b>NL</b>	max. 22,535	?

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

# Northern shoveler



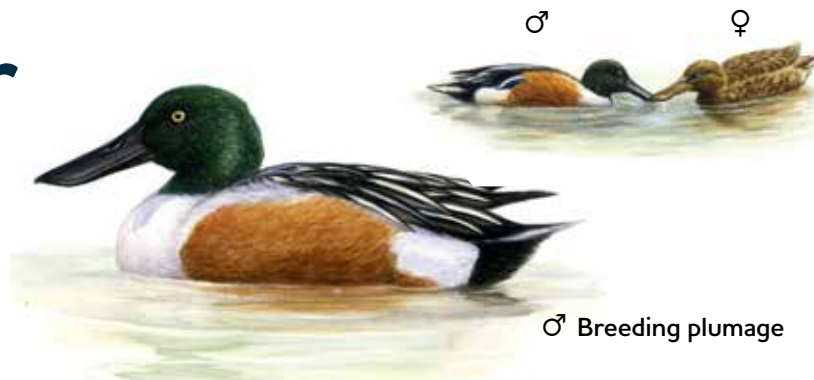
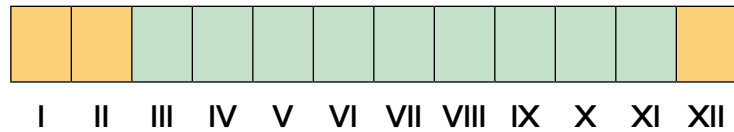
♂ Breeding plumage



Illustration: Claus Rabba

# Northern shoveler










*Spatula clypeata*



 Skeand

 Löffelente

 Slobeend

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p>Medium sized duck with <b>short neck</b>, large head and unusually <b>long and wide spoonlike bill</b>, therefore giving a top-heavy impression.</p> <p>In <b>all plumages</b> with light blue wing coverts (particularly visible in flight).</p> <p><b>Males</b> in breeding plumage with shiny green head, white breast and red-dish-brown belly and flanks.</p> <p><b>Female</b> inconspicuous, brownish, but recognisable by beak shape.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> in Europe, Asia and North America.</p> <p><b>Winters</b> mainly in W and SW Europe.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra, dunes, salt marshes. In the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea almost exclusively on islands.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly inland waters, especially flooded meadows.</p>	<p>Aquatic plants and animals.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8–12</td> <td>22–23 days</td> <td>40–45 days</td> </tr> </table>				8–12	22–23 days	40–45 days
										
8–12	22–23 days	40–45 days								
				Other information						
				<p><b>Oldest known Northern shoveler:</b> 20 years and 4 months.</p> <p><b>Name</b> refers to bill shape. Bill is a highly specialized <b>sieve apparatus</b>, which filters food out of the water.</p> <p>Often swims in circles or meanders while foraging.</p>						



**Total population (flyway) 70,000–80,000**

Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. 1,0538	?
<b>DK</b>		max. 1,908	?
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 6,696	?
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 1,289	?
<b>NL</b>		max. 3,192	?

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Common Eider



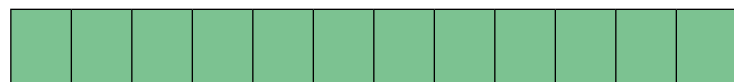
♂ Breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common Eider

*Somateria molissima*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII












♂ Breeding plumage

 Edderfugl

 Eiderente

 Eider

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p>Large, sturdy duck with <b>triangular goose-like bill</b>.</p> <p><b>Male</b> black below, white above, breast pink, head black, green, and white.</p> <p><b>Female</b> patterned warm brown and black.</p> <p><b>Juveniles</b> of both sexes similar to females; males mottled black and white as are <b>adults</b> in non-breeding plumage in the second year.</p>	<p>Arctic of Eurasia and North America; breeding population <b>in the Wadden Sea is at southern edge</b> of worldwide range.</p> <p>Here also influx of north-eastern populations during the moulting season (June/July) and in winter.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra, dunes, salt marshes. In Lower Saxony almost exclusively on islands.</p> <p><b>Migration/moult/winter:</b> Shallow bays with mussel beds, coastal North Sea, sandbanks, harbours, piers.</p>	<p>Mainly shellfish and snails (cockles and mussels, periwinkle), also shore crabs and other crustaceans.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4–6</td> <td>25–28 days</td> <td>65–75 days</td> </tr> </table>				4–6	25–28 days	65–75 days
										
4–6	25–28 days	65–75 days								
<h3>Other information</h3> <p><b>Oldest known eider:</b> 36 years and 10 months.</p> <p>Some <b>Eider down</b> is still collected today for cushions and jackets.</p> <p><b>Mussels</b> are <b>swallowed whole</b> and cracked in the muscular stomach.</p> <p><b>Flightless</b> for 3–4 weeks during <b>moult</b>, so that only wetlands with low disturbance levels are suitable as moulting areas.</p>										



**Total population (flyway) 560,000–920,000**

Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. <b>18,8878</b>	ca. <b>8,163</b>
<b>DK</b>		max. <b>15,910</b>	ca. <b>489</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>59,476</b>	ca. <b>1,138</b>
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>33,472</b>	ca. <b>1,158</b>
<b>NL</b>		max. <b>103,774</b>	ca. <b>5,378</b>

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

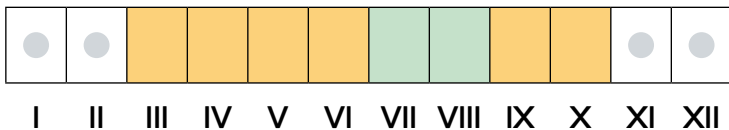
# Eurasian spoonbill



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Eurasian spoonbill




*Platalea leucorodia*



 Skestork

 Löffler

 Lepelaar

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p>Unmistakable due to <b>snow-white plumage</b> and <b>spoon-shaped bill</b>.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> <b>Adult</b> birds have orange-yellow breast band, in breeding season decorative feathers and bill with yellow tip. In <b>young birds</b>, bill initially pink, primaries white with black tips.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> in the Wadden Sea from Texel to Denmark, in the Mediterranean and from Austria to Asia.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> from SW Europe to Senegal.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> 'Tower nests' in salt marshes, on old reeds or in trees and bushes.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Foraging in the tidal channels of the Wadden Sea; reservoirs, small ponds, ditches in coastal inland areas. Here also high-tide roosts.</p>	<p>Small fish (especially sticklebacks), aquatic insects, mussels, snails, crustaceans, amphibians.</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  3–5         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  21–25 days         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  45–50 days         </div> </div>
<b>Other information</b>				
<p>First breeding in Lower Saxony in 1962 (Memmert), then again in 1995. Breeding bird in the Wadden Sea of Schleswig-Holstein since 2000. Since then, <b>strong increase</b> in the entire Wadden Sea.</p> <p>Many Spoonbills in the Wadden Sea are marked with <b>colour rings</b> to understand migration routes and population biology.</p>				



Total population (flyway)		19,000–24,000	
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. <b>8,177</b>	ca. <b>2,396</b>
<b>DK</b>		max. <b>352</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>1,185</b>	ca. <b>469</b>
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>1,976</b>	ca. <b>604</b>
<b>NL</b>		max. <b>5,007</b>	ca. <b>1,323</b>

Data in individuals, \*in pairs; figures from 2022

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.





# Great white egret



Non-breeding plumage

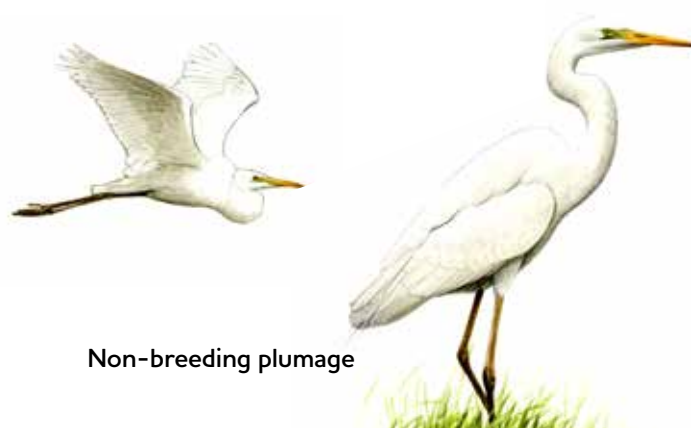


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Great white egret

*Casmerodius albus*



Non-breeding plumage




 Sølvhejre

 Silberreiher

 Grote zilverreiger



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Like a white grey heron, but somewhat <b>smaller</b> and <b>more delicate</b>.</p> <p><b>Bill</b> yellowish in winter, in summer almost all black.</p>	<p>Heron species with the widest geographical distribution, <b>breeds</b> on all continents except Antarctica.</p> <p>Partial migrant, <b>winters</b> in Western Europe in increasing numbers.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Large reed beds on lakes, rivers, oxbow lakes or swamps.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Large meadows and pastures, in the Wadden Sea mainly on mainland coasts, less frequently on islands.</p>	<p>Insects, amphibians, fish, mice in winter.</p>	 3–5	 25–26 days	 42–63 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known great white egret:</b> 22 years (ringed bird).</p> <p>In recent years there has been a <b>strong increase in the number of wintering birds</b> in Germany, probably because of an increase in breeding pairs in Eastern Europe. The majority of wintering birds are likely to come from Russia and Ukraine, moving to the NW in winter.</p> <p>In the Lower Rhine area often in the vicinity of geese, which keep the grass short and facilitate foraging.</p> <p>Great white egrets gather in the evening on <b>night-time roosts</b>.</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**79,800–132,000**

Data in individuals

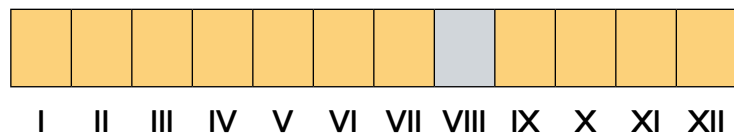
# Hen harrier



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Hen harrier

*Circus cyaneus*



♂






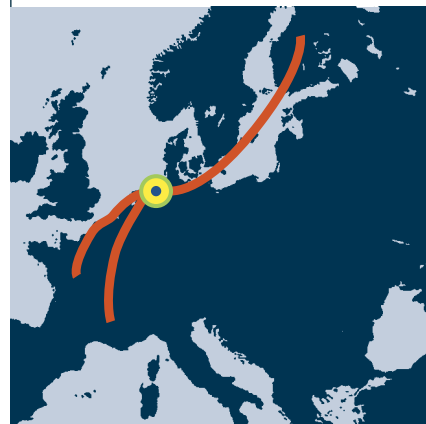
♀

 Blå kærhøg

 Kornweihe

 Blauwe kiekendief

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Large slender bird of prey</b>, usually hunts with <b>slightly raised wings</b>.  <b>Broader wings</b> than Montague's Harrier.  <b>Male</b> plain grey with black wing tips, white rump and somewhat lighter underside.  <b>Female</b> brown above with white rump and light brown underparts with dark chest markings and dark barred underwings.  <b>Young birds</b> more reddish underneath.</p>	<p><b>Breeding</b> from SW Europe to Ireland and from there eastwards as far as eastern Siberia.  <b>Winters</b> in the Wadden Sea, also from SW Europe to NW Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Moors, heathland and dunes, in SW Europe also wheat fields.  <b>Migration/winter:</b> Open areas such as grassland and arable land; night-time roosts in medium-high vegetation such as reeds and wet heathland.</p>	<p>Especially voles, rabbits, birds and bird chicks.</p>	 4–6	 29–31 days	 31–38 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known hen harrier:</b> 17 years and 1 month.                      One male often has <b>several (max. 7) females</b>.                      One of the <b>rarest breeding birds</b> in Germany, numbers in the Wadden Sea are declining, after destruction of original breeding habitats (bogs), settlement of the islands in the Wadden Sea.</p>						



Total population (Europe)		112,000–174,000	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		?	ca. 21
Dänemark		?	ca. 0
Deutschland	SH	?	ca. 2
	LS, HH	?	ca. 8
Niederlande		?	ca. 11

*Data in individuals, \*in pairs*

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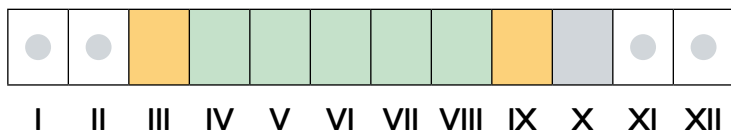
# Marsh harrier



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Marsh harrier










*Circus aeruginosus*

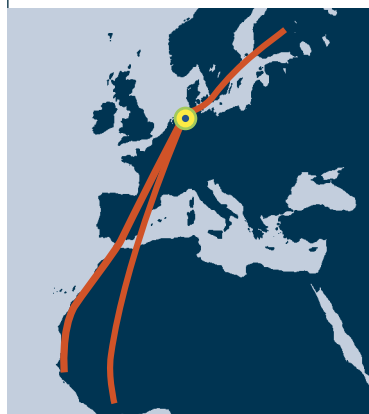


 Rørhøg

 Rohrweihe

 Bruine kiekendief

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p><b>Large slender bird of prey</b>, usually hunts with <b>slightly raised (V-shaped) wings</b>.</p> <p><b>Male</b> with grey wing feathers above, black wing tips and brown back and upper wing coverts; belly reddish brown, underwing pale with black tip.</p> <p><b>Female</b> coloured solid chocolate brown with beige crest and leading edge of wing.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> are like females but without beige in wing.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> from W Europe and NW Africa to Central Siberia.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> predominantly south of the Sahara, in S Europe, India and SE Asia.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Reed beds, damp dune valleys, cereal and rape fields.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Marshes, farmland.</p>	<p>Small birds, rodents, chicks, eggs, also frogs and large insects.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3–6</td> <td>31–36 days</td> <td>38–40 days</td> </tr> </table>				3–6	31–36 days	38–40 days
										
3–6	31–36 days	38–40 days								
<h3>Other information</h3> <p><b>Oldest known marsh harrier:</b> 20 years and 1 month</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Refers to preferred breeding habitat.</p>										



Total population (Europe)  
303,000–485,000

Data in individuals

# Oystercatcher



Breeding plumage

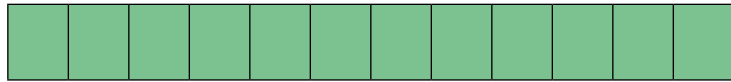


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Oystercatcher

*Haematopus ostralegus*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII






Breeding plumage

 Strandskade

 Austernfischer

 Scholekster

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Large wader</b>, unmistakable. In <b>non-breeding plumage</b> has white neck ring.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> young birds with dark bill tip and darker legs.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> along the coasts from France to N Scandinavia and NW Russia, locally in the Mediterranean. Other subspecies in the steppes from the Black Sea to Asia.</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> in the Wadden Sea and W Europe.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Sparsely vegetated areas along the coast, e.g. beaches, gravel areas, salt marshes, grassland, but also on flat roofs. Foraging on the mudflats.</p> <p><b>Migration/Winter:</b> Salt marshes and beaches, foraging on the mudflats.</p>	<p><b>Wadden Sea:</b> bivalves (especially cockles and mussels, possibly also young Pacific oysters), snails, crabs, annelids.</p> <p><b>Inland:</b> earthworms and others.</p>	 3–4	 24–27 days	 32–35 days



Total population (flyway)		750,000–970,000	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 359,682	ca. 26,313
DK		max. 39,126	ca. 1,461
DE	SH	max. 93,619	ca. 9,185
	LS, HH	max. 115,947	ca. 7,915
NL		max. 141,472	ca. 7,752

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

## Other information

**Oldest known oystercatcher:** 43 years and 4 months.

**Name by eating bivalves**, although oysters are too hard-shelled and only young small ones are eaten, if at all.

**Defends** clutches and fledglings by mock attacks and noisy calls.

**Excessive mussel fishery** and **cold winters** can lead to severe losses in winter.



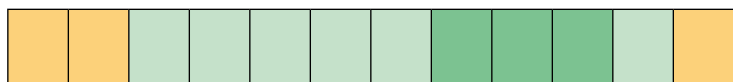
# Pied avocet



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Pied avocet

*Recurvirostra avocetta*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Klyde

 Säbelschnäbler

 Kluut

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Long-legged wader with black and white plumage and up-turned bill.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> In young birds dark plumage parts brownish instead of black.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> on the coasts from the western Baltic Sea to France, in the Mediterranean region as well as in the steppes from Hungary to China. Breeding occurrence also in East and South Africa.</p> <p>All breeding birds of North Sea and Baltic Sea moult in the Wadden Sea (esp. in the Jade Bay and in Denmark).</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> mainly from the French Atlantic coast to Senegal.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Breeds in sparsely vegetated areas on the coast, e.g. shingle or gravel areas and salt marshes.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> High tide roosts mostly in salt marshes, foraging on the mudflats.</p>	<p>All year: Small invertebrates in shallow water (crustaceans, insects, occasionally also juvenile fish). Foraging through pendulum-like sideways movements of the bill.</p>	 4	 23–25 days	 35–42 days
				<p><b>Oldest known avocet:</b> 27 years and 10 months.</p> <p><b>Defends</b> clutches and fledglings by mock attacks and noisy calls.</p> <p>Dutch 'Kluut' and in Danish 'Klyde' (because of call).</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> cannot keep themselves warm, so they often must be brooded by the adults.</p>		



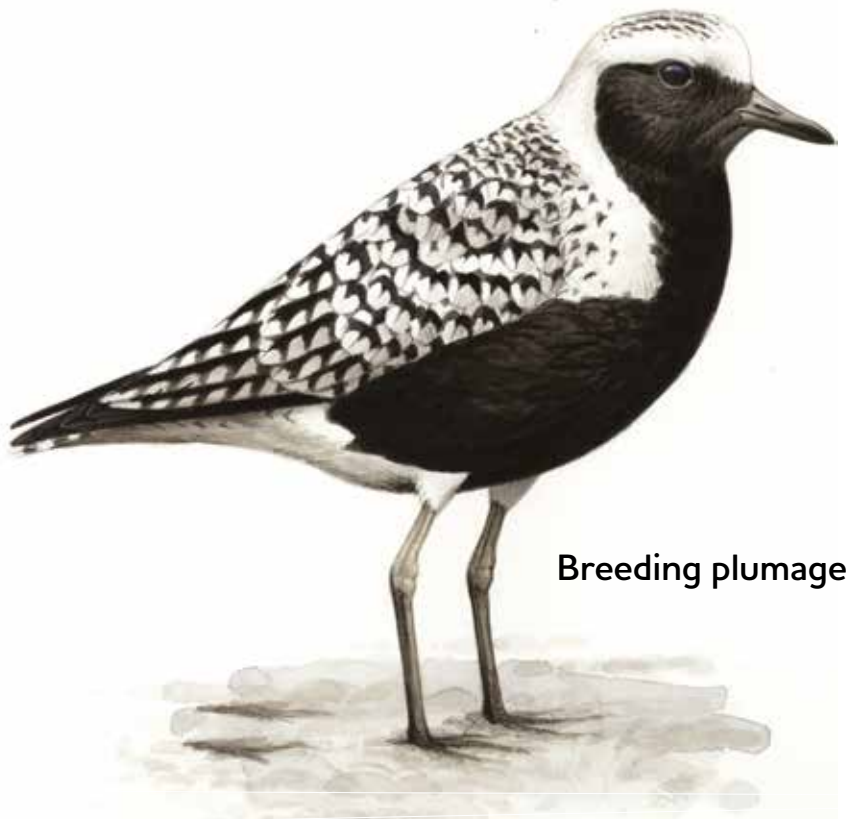
Total population (flyway) 100,000–110,000			
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 35,424	ca. 7,179
	<b>DK</b>	max. 5,830	ca. 280
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 3,586	ca. 2,805
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 14,711	ca. 2,136
	<b>NL</b>	max. 23,220	ca. 1,958

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

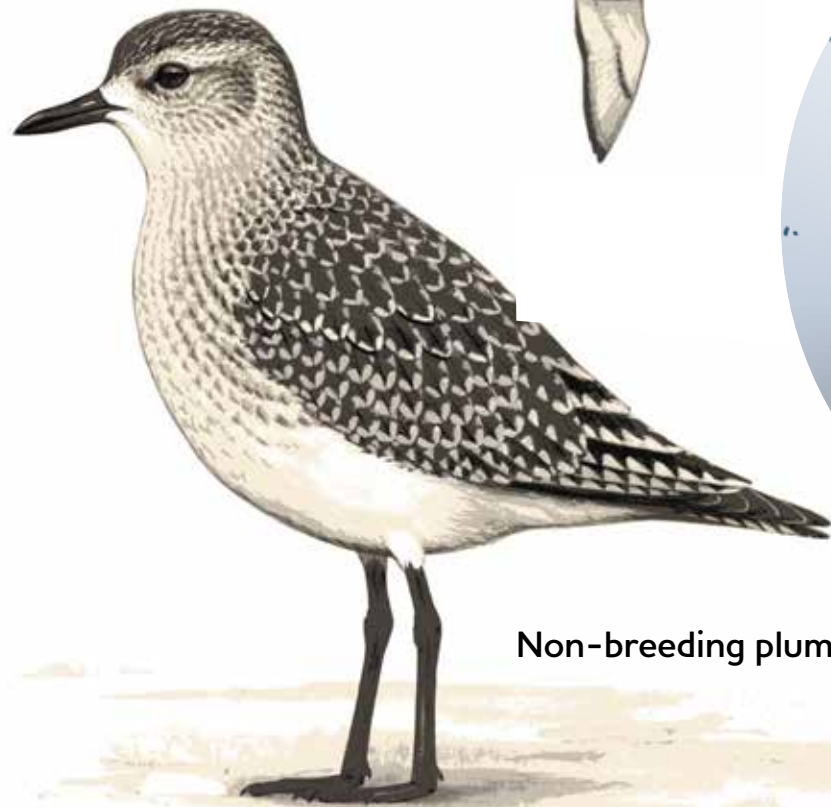
This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Grey plover



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage

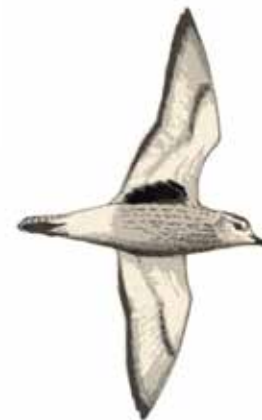


Illustration: Claus Rabba (right, ), Steffen Walentowit (left)



# Grey plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage



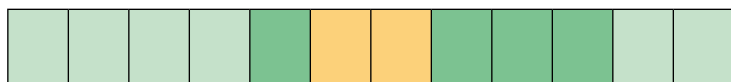
Strandhjejle






Kiebitzregenpfeifer

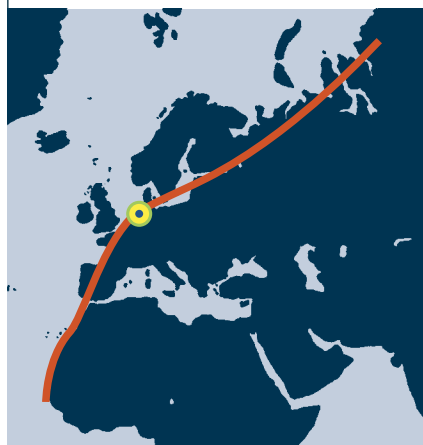


Zilverplevier



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Medium-sized wader</b> with <b>short, straight bill</b> and <b>large eyes</b>, slightly larger than Golden plover.</p> <p>Conspicuous black 'armpits' in <b>all plumages</b>.</p> <p>Upperparts with white feather fringes in all plumages. In <b>breeding plumage</b> with black belly and sides of head.</p> <p>In <b>juvenile and winter plumage</b> with light belly and dotted chest.</p>	<p>Arctic of N America and N Russia, is missing as a breeding bird in Greenland and Scandinavia.</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> on the coasts of Central Europe to the southern hemisphere.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, salt marshes; almost exclusively on the coast.</p>	<p>Mainly polychaetes, small mussels, snails and crustaceans. In the breeding area also insects and berries.</p>	 4	 26–27 days	 23 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known grey plover:</b> 25 years and 7 months.</p> <p>Keeps an eye out for prey by turning its head sideways and perceiving smallest movements on the surface of tidal flats.</p>						

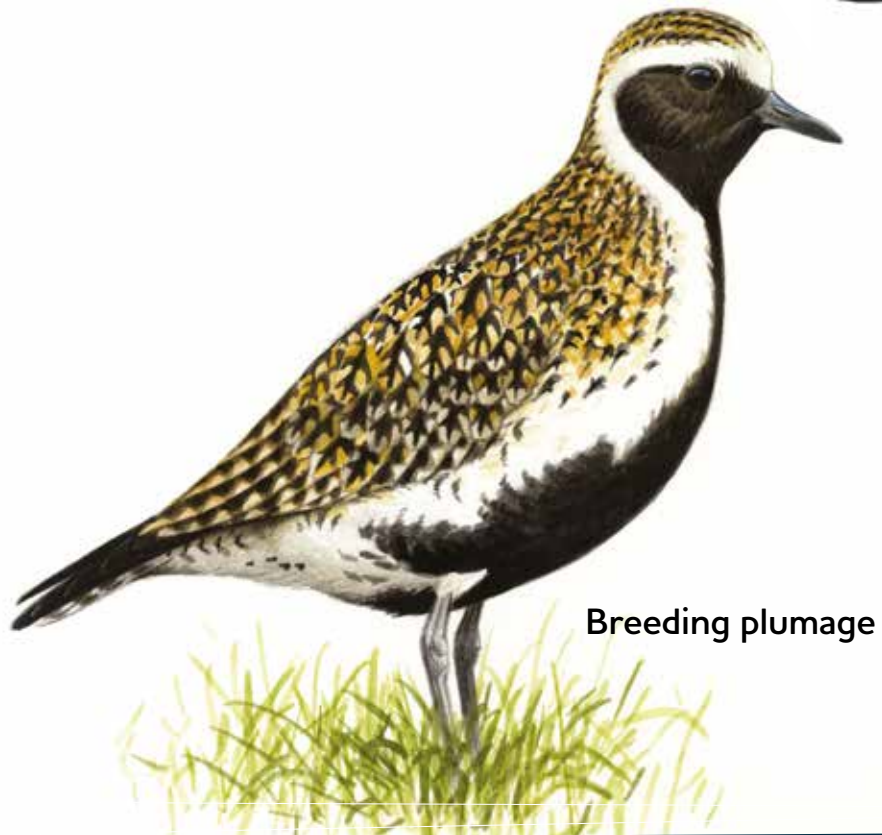


Total population (flyway)		200,000	
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. 136,087	–
<b>DK</b>		max. 8,205	–
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 43,354	–
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 32,675	–
<b>NL</b>		max. 69,499	–

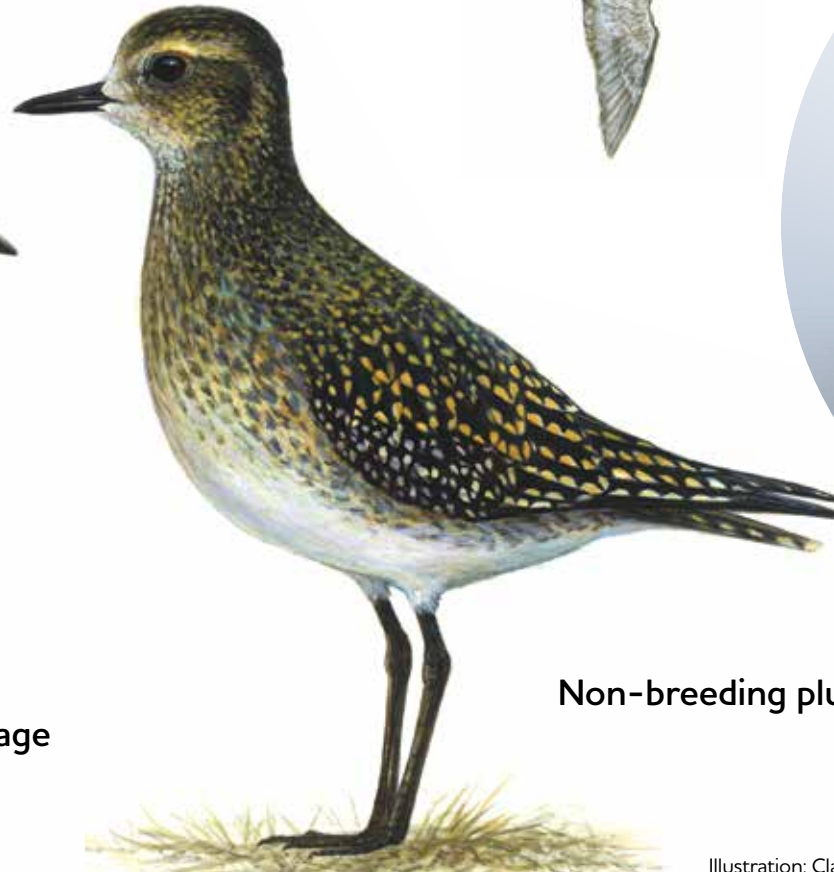
Data in individuals, \*in pairs



# Golden plover



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage



Illustration: Claus Rabba (right, [Flugbild](#)), Steffen Walentowit (left)



# Golden plover

*Pluvialis apricaria*

Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage






 Hjejele

 Goldregenpfeifer

 Goudplevier



Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Medium-sized wader</b> with <b>short straight bill</b> and <b>stocky legs</b>. Upperparts with golden feather fringes in all plumages. <b>'Armpits' always pale</b> (cf. Grey plover). In <b>breeding plumage</b> with black belly and (variable) sides of the head. In <b>juvenile and winter plumage</b> with white belly and dotted chest.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> East Greenland, Iceland, Scotland and from Scandinavia to N Russia. Small population in Lower Saxony. <b>Wintering area:</b> SW Europe, in mild winters also wintering in Germany.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra, moors, heathland. <b>Migration/winter:</b> Grassland and arable land, more rarely on the mudflats.</p>	<p>Worms, insects and their larvae, small snails, berries. Annelids on the mudflats.</p>	 4	 27–30 days	 30–35 days

## Other information

**Oldest known Golden plover:** 12 years and 9 months.

**Name:** 'Golden' refers to the colour of the upper side.

Southernmost **breeding occurrence** in the former peatlands of NW Germany **extinguished since 2015**.



Total population (Europe)		1.66 – 2.31 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 141,632	–
DK		max. 52,060	–
DE	SH	max. 45,387	–
	LS, HH	max. 24,032	–
NL		max. 50,551	–

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

# Northern lapwing



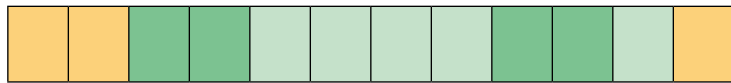
Breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Northern lapwing

*Vanellus vanellus*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII






Breeding plumage

 Vibe

 Kiebitz

 Kievit

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Medium-sized bird with distinctive crest. Crest is smaller in non-breeding plumage.</p> <p><b>Sex determination:</b> In females white cheeks mostly spotted dark (males: white), black breast band often with slight pale spotting (males: pure black), feathers of upperparts often with pale fringes.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds with small crest, breast band narrower and browner.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> in the temperate and editerranean zone from W Europe to the Pacific.</p> <p><b>Winters</b> mainly in W Europe and the Mediterranean.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> In short vegetation on grassland, arable land, salt marshes etc.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly on grassland and arable land, often visits fresh water for drinking.</p>	<p>Small soil animals like insects and their larvae, earth-worms, grass-hoppers, ants, etc. In winter also plant parts.</p>	 4	 26–29 days	 35–40 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known lapwing:</b> 23 years and 7 months.</p> <p><b>Name:</b> also known as peewit or pyewipe, referring to the ‘peewit’ sound of the display calls.</p> <p>The distinctive sound in <b>courtship flight</b> is created by the narrow outer primaries.</p>						



Total population (Europe)		3.18 – 4.59 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 120,496	ca. 10,834
DK		max. 27,467	ca. 1,893
DE	SH	max. 46,841	ca. 3,799
	LS, HH	max. 20,395	ca. 2,378
NL		max. 41,014	ca. 2,764

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout ‘Migratory Bird Profiles’ for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Ringed plover



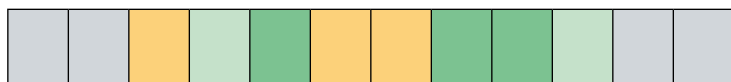
Breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Ringed plover

*Charadrius hiaticula*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII






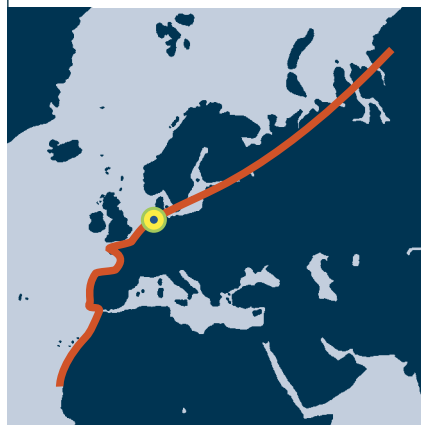
Breeding plumage

 Stor præstekrave

 Sandregenpfeifer

 Bontbekplevier

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Size similar to sandpiper, but with <b>short, thick bill</b>, plain brown upper side and predominantly white underside.</p> <p>In <b>breeding plumage</b> bill orange with black tip, legs orange, closed black chest band and black and white head markings.</p> <p>In <b>winter plumage</b> chest band not closed at the front and all black parts of the plumage brown.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> similar to winter plumage, but with indistinctly mottled upperparts.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Subspecies <i>C. h. tundrae</i> from N Scandinavia to E Siberia. Subspecies <i>hiaticula</i> from NE Canada via Greenland and Iceland to Central Europe, W France and S Scandinavia.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> in SW Europe and in Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Areas with very short patchy vegetation such as Arctic tundra, sand and gravel beaches.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats and salt marshes on coast.</p>	<p>Annelids, crustaceans and molluscs, during breeding season also insects.</p>	 4	 21–28 days	 24 days
				Other information		
				<p><b>Oldest known Ringed plover:</b> 20 years and 10 months.</p> <p>In <b>defence</b> of the young, the adults simulate an injury and pretend to be easy prey (other plovers also do this).</p>		



Total population (flyway)		220,000–280,000	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 50,651	ca. 632
DK		max. 2,625	ca. 100
DE	SH	max. 26,958	ca. 284
	LS, HH	max. 9,237	ca. 175
NL		max. 18,999	ca. 73

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

# Eurasian curlew

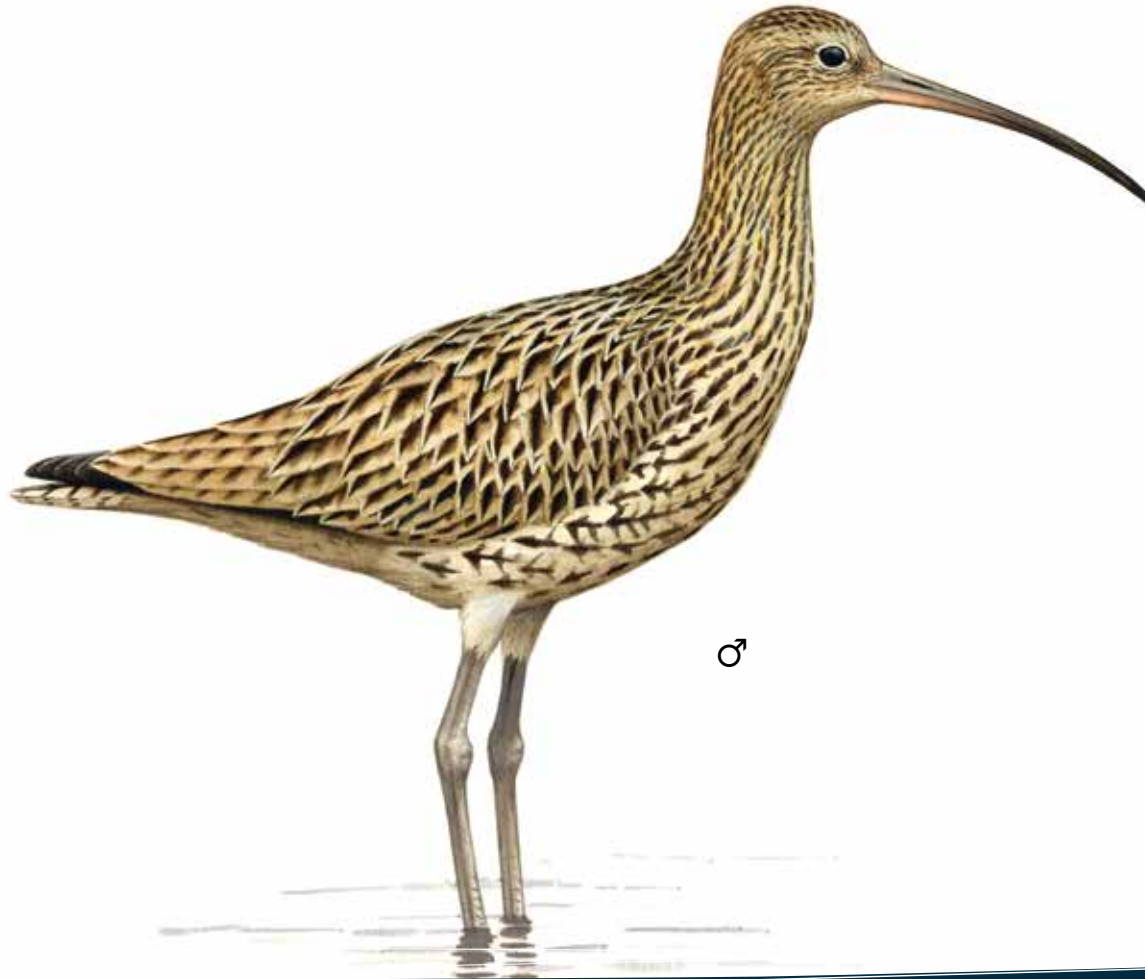
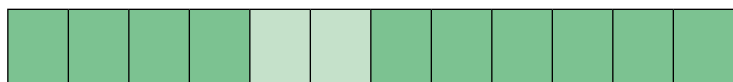


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Eurasian curlew

*Numenius arquata*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Storspove

 GroÙer Brachvogel

 Wulp

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p><b>Largest</b> European wader, <b>long curved bill</b>. Larger than Whimbrel, without conspicuous head stripes.</p> <p><b>Sex determination:</b> Females often have a significantly longer bill than the males.</p>	<p>Widespread from W Europe to Asia.</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> from the Wadden Sea to N Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Mainly in moors, but also grassland and damp dune valleys.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, estuaries, salt marshes.</p>	<p>On the coast mainly mussels, annelids and crustaceans, inland insects and spiders, also small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.</p>	<p>  </p> <p>4      27–39 days      32–38 days</p>

## Other information

**Oldest known curlew:** 31 years and 10 months.

**Strongly decreasing inland**, due to loss of habitats (moors and extensively used wet grasslands)

Curlews are **extremely sedentary**, breeding in traditional breeding territories although these are no longer suitable.



**Total population (flyway) 610,000–830,000**

Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. 265,335	ca. 505
<b>DK</b>		max. 18,713	ca. 48
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 44,827	ca. 0
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 84,599	ca. 118
<b>NL</b>		max. 145,916	ca. 339

Data in individuals, \*in pairs



# Black-tailed godwit



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Black-tailed godwit

*Limosa limosa*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XII XII

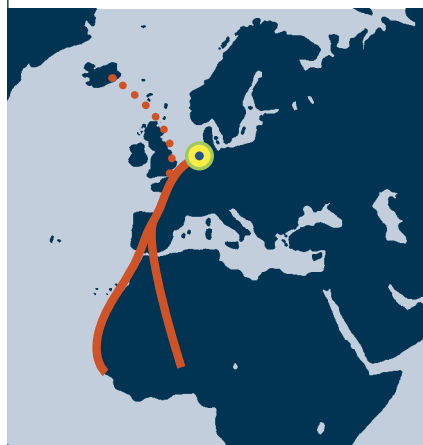


 Stor kobbersneppe

 Uferschnepfe

 Grutto

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Large, long legs, <b>long straight bill</b> (Bar-tailed godwit usually slightly curved upwards). White tail, black tail band and white wing band in flight (Bar-tailed godwit without both). Chest and neck orange.</p> <p><b>Sex determination:</b> Females larger and longer-billed than males.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Juveniles have chest without dark bands, feathers on upperparts without black centres.</p>	<p>From W Europe to Asia, also Iceland (subspecies <i>islandica</i>).</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> of Central European birds mainly from SW France to W Africa.</p> <p>Subspecies <i>islandica</i> regularly also in the Wadden Sea, some hundreds of individuals from fall to winter.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Wet, extensively used meadows.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Estuaries, lagoons, floodplains, rarely salt marshes/tidal flats.</p>	<p>Versatile: Earthworms, beetles and snails, in winter also seeds.</p>	 4	 22–24 days	 25–30 days
<h3>Other information</h3> <p><b>Oldest known Black-tailed godwit:</b> 23 years and 6 months.</p> <p>Central European Black-tailed godwit <b>population strongly decreasing, strong increase</b> on Iceland, from there even spreading to Norway.</p> <p>Dutch name 'grutto' because of the distinctive call.</p>						

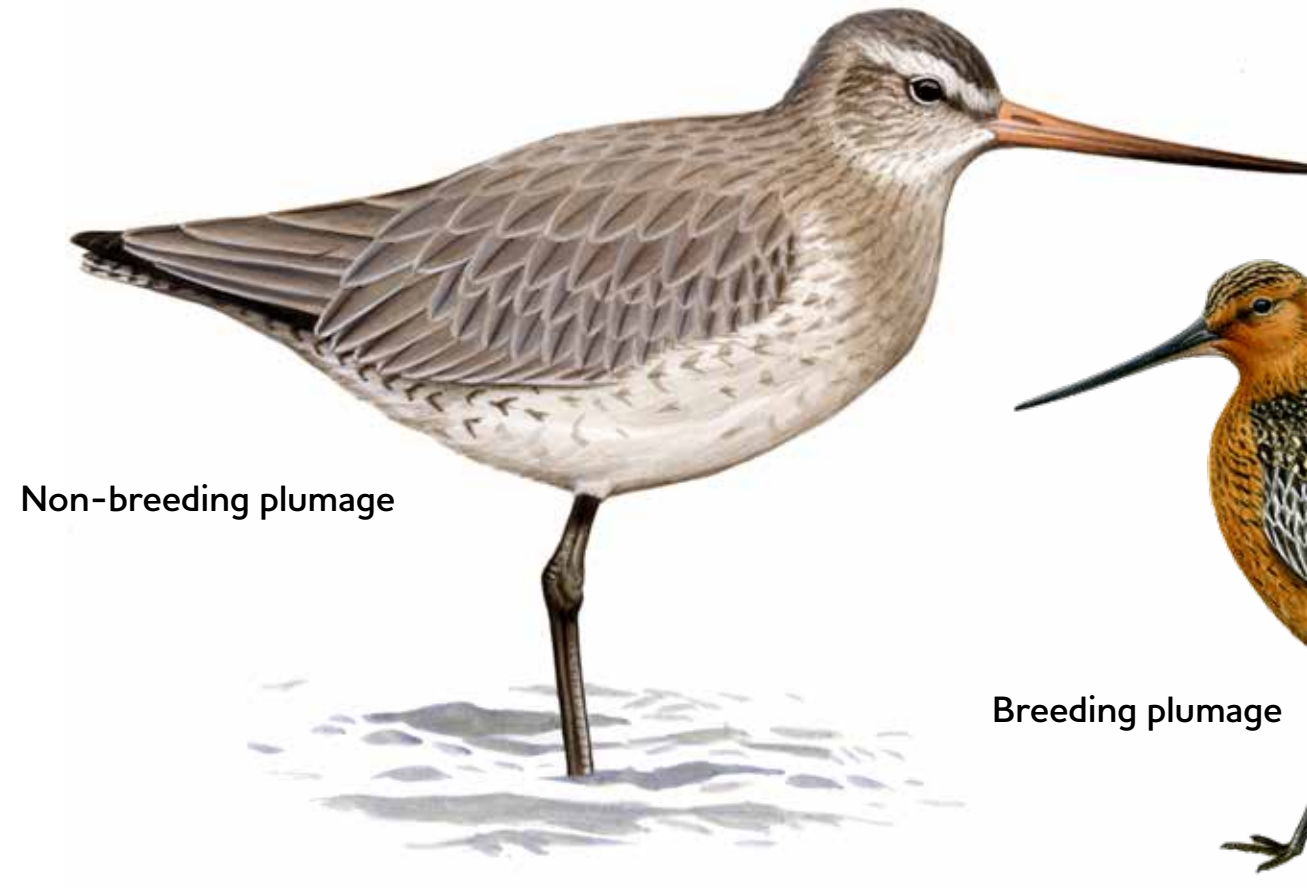


Total population (Europe)			272,000–334,000
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	Wadden Sea	?	ca. 2,472
	DK	?	ca. 299
DE	SH	?	ca. 620
	LS, HH	?	ca. 461
	NL	?	ca. 1,092

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

# Bar-tailed godwit



Non-breeding plumage

Breeding plumage



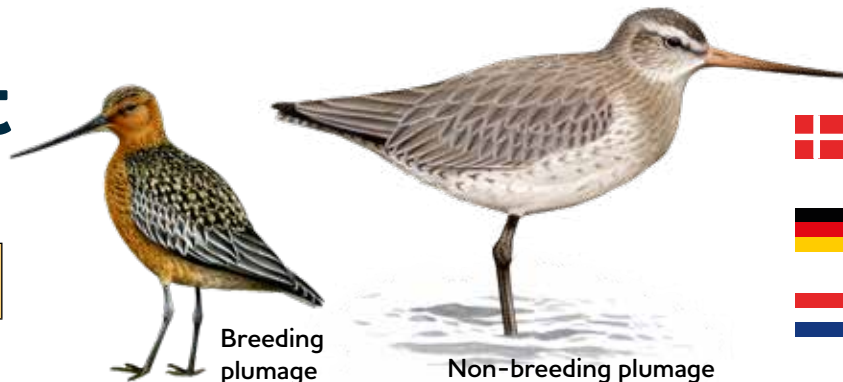
*Limosa lapponica lapponica*  
*Limosa lapponica taymyrensis*

Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Bar-tailed godwit

## *Limosa lapponica*






 Lille kobbersneppe

 Pfuhschnepfe

 Rosse grutto



Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p><b>Long legs</b> (but shorter than black-tailed godwit), long, slightly <b>upturned bill</b> (Black-tailed godwit mostly straight).</p> <p><b>Sex determination:</b> Female larger, males often with intensive rusty colour, females usually much plainer.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds in autumn similar to females, but breast mostly light brown.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Arctic from Scandinavia to Alaska. Birds in the Wadden Sea come from Northern Scandinavia (ssp. <i>lapponica</i>) and Siberia (ssp. <i>taymyrensis</i>).</p> <p><b>Wintering area:</b> W Europe (Scandinavian breeding birds) and W Africa (Siberian breeding birds).</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Wet tundra.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, salt marshes and sandbanks.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Mainly insects.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly annelids, small mussels, snails, crustaceans.</p>	   <p>3-4    20-21 days    ca. 28 days</p>

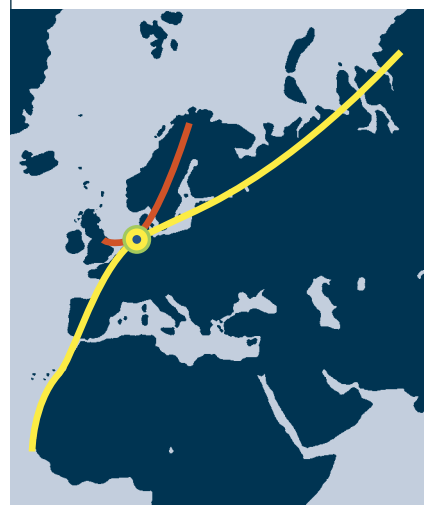
### Other information

**Oldest known bar-tailed godwit:** 33 years and 1 month.

Scandinavian birds **winter** much closer to breeding grounds.

**Occurrence in spring:** *lapponica* March/April, *taymyrensis* late April - late May.

2022 world record in **nonstop flights** from Alaska to Australia (EAAF; 13,500 km in 11 days!).



Total population (flyway)		530,000 – 600,000	
<i>Limosa lapponica lapponica</i>		150,000 – 180,000	
<i>Limosa lapponica taymyrensis</i>		380,000 – 420,000	
Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*	
<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 296,799	-	
<b>DK</b>	max. 42,546	-	
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b> max. 70,552	-	
	<b>LS, HH</b> max. 37,623	-	
<b>NL</b>	max. 183,468	-	

Data in individuals, \*in pairs



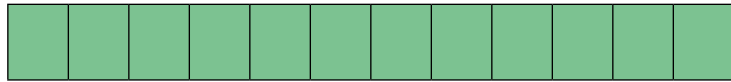
# Common redshank



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common redshank

*Tringa totanus*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Rødben

 Rotschenkel

 Tureluur

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Long, bright <b>red legs, bill red with dark tip</b>, upper-parts brown with light spots, underside whitish with distinct chest markings. In flight wings with broad white trailing edge.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Juvenile birds with more orange legs and clearly yellowish-white spotted upper side.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> on the coasts as well as inland wetlands from Europe to Asia.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas:</b> Coasts from W Europe to W Africa, also in the Wadden Sea but these are mainly the breeding birds from Iceland (<i>Tringa tetanus robusta</i>).</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Salt marshes, wet grassland, upland moors and swamps.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly on mudflats and in salt marshes or wet meadows.</p>	<p>On the coast and on the mudflats mainly annelids, crustaceans, mussels and snails. Inland small animals, insects and their larvae, earthworms.</p>	 4	 22–29 days	 35 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known redshank:</b> 26 years and 11 months.</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Because of leg colour, shank being an alternative word for leg.</p> <p>During each low tide, one redshank can eat up to <b>12,000 corophiums</b> (small crustaceans).</p> <p>In inland areas, <b>populations are declining sharply</b>, as hardly any suitable breeding habitats are left.</p>						



Total population (Europe)		522,000–694,000	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 78,661	ca. 10,159
DK		max. 12,703	ca. 1,022
DE	SH	max. 14,072	ca. 3,582
	LS, HH	max. 10,199	ca. 3,497
NL		max. 55,288	ca. 2,058

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Common greenshank



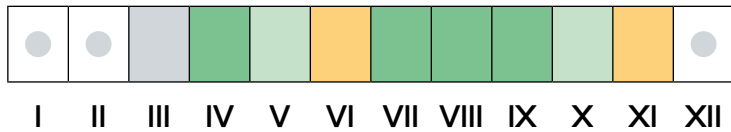
Non-breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common greenshank

*Tringa nebularia*






Non-breeding plumage

 Hvidklire

 Grünschenkel

 Groenpootruiter

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Medium-sized wading bird with long, <b>greenish legs</b> and long, <b>slightly upturned bill</b>. In flight tail predominantly white and with <b>white dorsal wedge</b>. Upperparts grey (in breeding plumage with black spots), underside white with dark chest markings.</p>	<p><b>Breeding</b> in the Taiga belt of Eurasia from Scotland to Siberia. <b>Wintering areas</b> from SW Europe and Africa to Australia. Migrants from the Wadden Sea overwinter predominantly in W Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Moors and heathland with sparse tree cover. <b>Migration/winter:</b> Shallow water areas on mudflats, lagoons, salt marshes, floodplains and ponds.</p>	<p>Invertebrates living in mud and shallow water such as annelids, crustaceans, insects and their larvae. Also small fish and tadpoles.</p>	 4	 23–26 days	 25–31 days

## Other information

**Oldest known greenshank:** 24 years and 5 months.

**Name:** In almost all languages due to the greenish legs.

Often **hunts** in shallow water, **running fast** and with jerking movements after fish.

**Flight call** loud 'tju-tju-tju'.

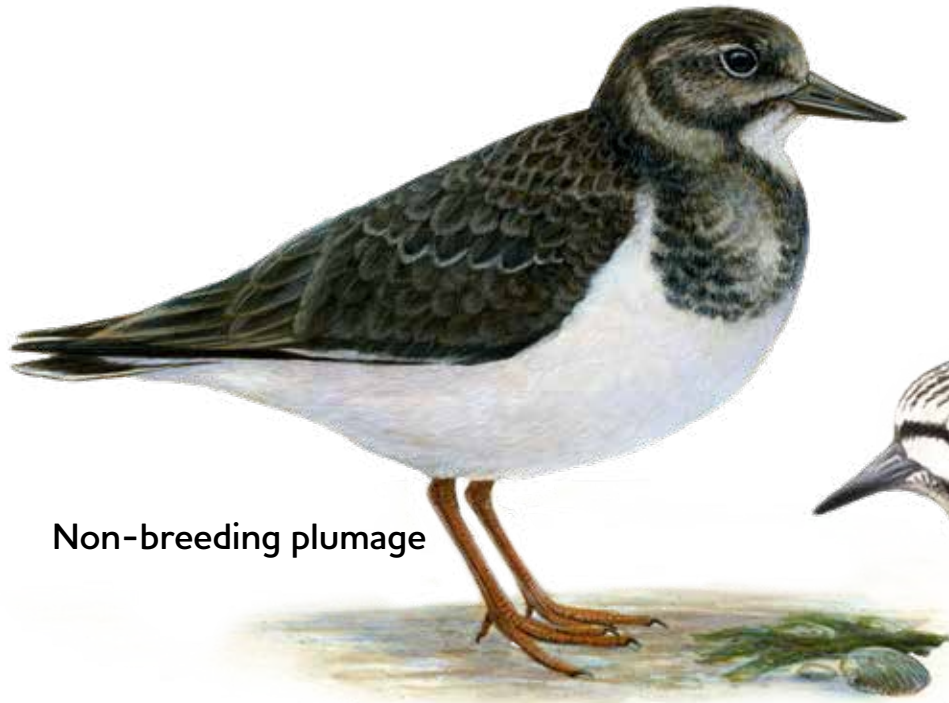


**Total population (flyway)** 230,000–360,000

Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 23,804	–
<b>DK</b>	max. 4,369	–
<b>DE</b>	SH	max. 7,075
	LS, HH	max. 4,741
<b>NL</b>	max. 10,864	–

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

# Ruddy turnstone



Non-breeding plumage



Breeding plumage

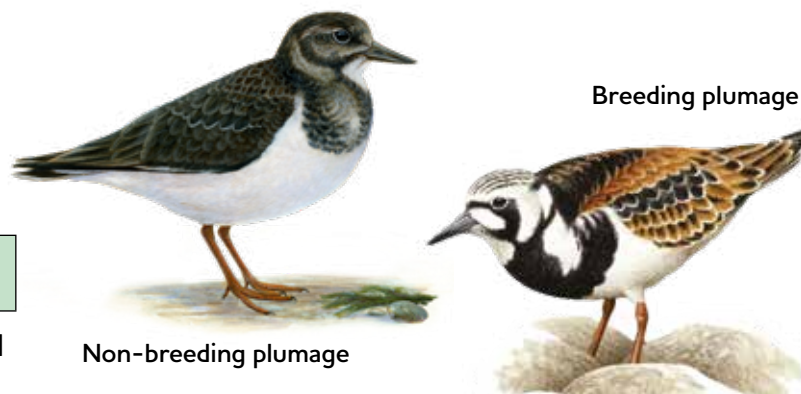
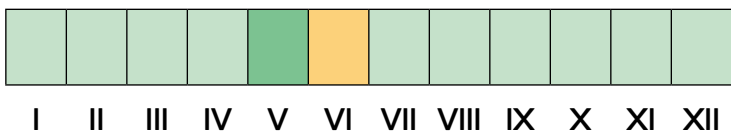


Illustration: Claus Rabba (li), Steffen Walentowitz (re.)






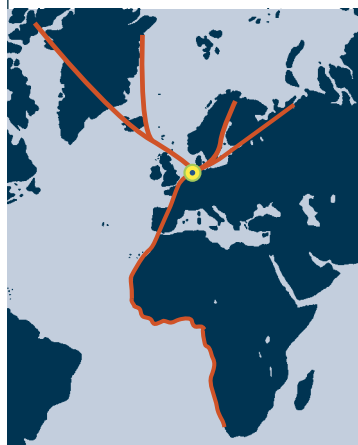
# Ruddy turnstone

*Arenaria interpres*



-  Stenvender
-  Steinwalzer
-  Steenloper

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p><b>Short, sturdy, pointed bill,</b> broad black breast band, orange legs.</p> <p><b>Breeding plumage:</b> orange feathers on upperparts, black and white head markings.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds (autumn) have paler legs, pale feather fringes on upperparts.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Arctic (circumpolar), exceptionally in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p><b>Wintering area:</b> almost worldwide on coasts. In the Wadden Sea wintering birds from NE Canada, Greenland, Scandinavia and Russia.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra, especially on coasts.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Almost exclusively on coasts, especially rocky areas, but also on the mudflats.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Seeds, insects.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Crustaceans, mussels and snails, annelids; also waste and carrion.</p>	   <p>4      22–24 days      19–21 days</p>
<b>Other information</b>				
<p><b>Oldest known Ruddy turnstone:</b> 21 years and 5 months.</p> <p><b>Name</b> by type of food acquisition: Turns stones in search of prey.</p> <p>Ringed Turnstone from the Netherlands was found in <b>South America</b> the next winter.</p> <p>In Pacific Turnstones, <b>non-stop flights</b> up to 7,600 km (Australia–Taiwan) have been recorded.</p>				
<p><b>Total population (flyway)</b>      <b>244,000–347,000</b></p>				
		<i>resting birds</i>	<i>breeding birds*</i>	
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. <b>11,518</b>	–	
<b>DK</b>		max. <b>242</b>	–	
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>2,506</b>	–	
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>3,106</b>	–	
<b>NL</b>		max. <b>7,186</b>	–	



*Data in individuals, \*in pairs*

# Red knot



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage

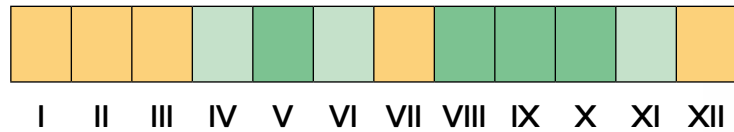


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Red knot

## *Calidris canutus*



Breeding plumage






Non-breeding plumage

 Islandsk ryle

 Knutt

 Kanoet

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p><b>Plump wader</b>, rather <b>short legs</b> and bill.</p> <p><b>Breeding plumage:</b> Red underparts.</p> <p><b>Non-breeding plumage:</b> White underparts.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> Young birds like non-breeding plumage, but feathers on the wings and back with black subterminal bands and light-coloured edges and slightly pinkish underneath.</p>	<p><b>Breeding grounds</b> in Arctic Greenland and NE Canada (subspecies <i>islandica</i>) or Siberia (subspecies <i>canutus</i>). Both common in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> clearly separated (<i>canutus</i>: Mauritania/Guinea-Bissau, <i>islandica</i>: Great Britain/Wadden Sea).</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> In dry arctic tundra.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, high-tide roosts on salt marshes and sandbanks.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Insects and plant parts.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Particularly small mussels (e.g. Baltic macoma and cockles) and snails, also small crustaceans, more rarely annelids.</p>	 4  21–23 days  19 days



Total population (flyway)		570,000–635,000	
<i>Calidris canutus canutus</i>		260,000–275,000	
<i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>		310,000–360,000	
Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*	
<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 358,629	–	
<b>DK</b>	max. 98,352	–	
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 161,373	–
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 31,595	–
<b>NL</b>	max. 205,195	–	

**Other information**

**Oldest known Red knot:** 26 years and 8 months.

Main food strongly decreased through mussel fisheries in the Netherlands, Red knot now also much less common.

**Non-stop migration** from Wadden Sea to Siberia (4000 km). **Weight gain in the Wadden Sea** from 140 g at arrival to 240 g at departure.

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

# Sanderling



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage



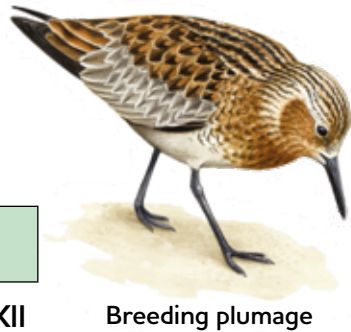
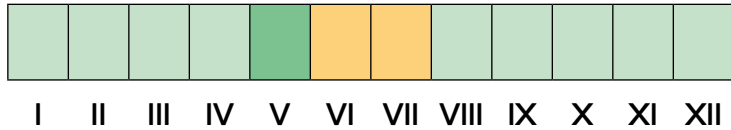
Illustration: Claus Rabba (re.), Steffen Walentowitz (li.)











# Sanderling

*Calidris alba*



-  Sandløber
-  Sanderling
-  Drieteenstrandloper

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Typical sandpiper with <b>straight</b> and quite <b>sturdy bill</b>, usually running <b>fast along the water's edge on sandy beaches</b>.</p> <p>In <b>breeding plumage</b> with white belly, ± reddish breast and mottled upper-parts.</p> <p>In <b>winter plumage</b> upperparts light grey and underside white.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> similar to winter plumage, but upperparts more clearly patterned.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Arctic from Canada via Greenland, Svalbard as far as N Russia.</p> <p><b>In winter</b> on almost all coasts of the world from temperate to southern latitudes.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Rocky tundra with sparse vegetation in vicinity of water.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mainly sandy beaches, less often on mud-flats.</p>	<p>Insects, small crustaceans, annelids, small mussels and snails, even waste and carrion.</p>	 4	 24–32 days	 17 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known sanderling:</b> 18 years and 7 months.</p> <p><b>Name</b> after the preference for sandy beaches.</p> <p><b>Scientific name</b> means <b>white Sandpiper</b> and exceptionally refers to winter plumage.</p>						



Total population (flyway)		200,000–250,000	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 52,734	–
DK		max. 5,092	–
DE	SH	max. 16,689	–
	LS, HH	max. 3,595	–
NL		max. 35,197	–

*Data in individuals, \*in pairs*

Diese Karte ist Teil der Handreichung „Zugvogel-Steckbriefe“ für vogelkundliche Führungen im Nationalpark und Weltnaturerbe Wattenmeer.

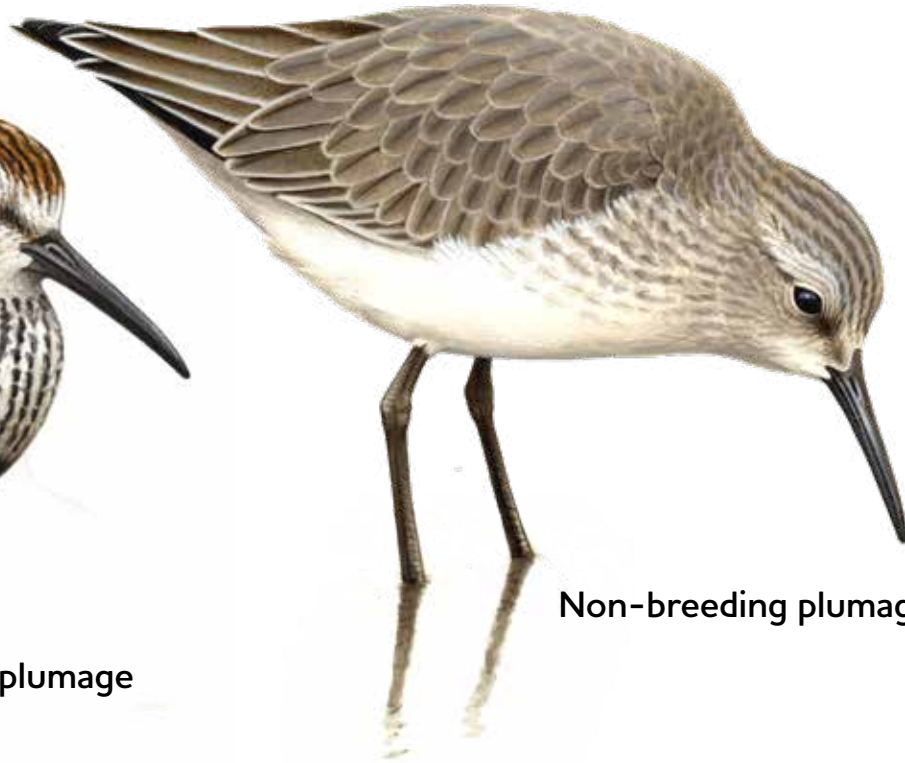




# Dunlin



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage

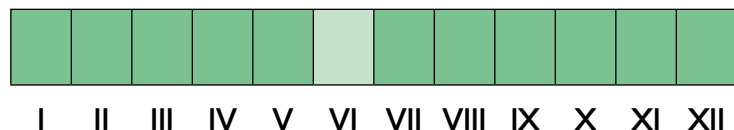


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Dunlin

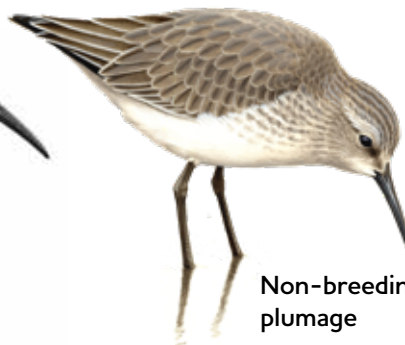
## *Calidris alpina*















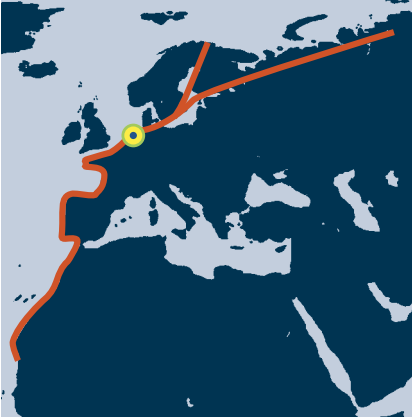
Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage



-  Almindelig ryle
-  Alpenstrandläufer
-  Bonte strandloper

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology																										
<p><b>Small wader</b> with medium length, <b>slightly downturned bill</b>. Bill slightly shorter than Curlew Sandpiper, longer than Red Knot and Sanderling.</p> <p><b>Breeding plumage:</b> Black belly patch, upperparts mottled reddish brown.</p> <p><b>Non-breeding plumage:</b> Upperparts grey, underside white, breast slightly spotted.</p> <p><b>Young birds:</b> Upper side dark feathers with light beige/brown edges, head and breast tinted nut-brown/beige, belly feathers with weak to strong black spotting, white in the centre.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Arctic (circum-polar), but also in the Baltic Sea, also used to be found in northern German moors, including the Wadden Sea until a few years ago. Now <b>nearly extinct</b> there, in summer non-breeders of Arctic populations in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p>Found on <b>migration all over Europe</b>, but most numerous in the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Wetlands and tundras N-Europe and the Arctic.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, resting places on salt marshes and sand-banks</p>	<p><b>Wadden Sea:</b> Annelids, snails, mussels.</p> <p><b>Breeding area:</b> Insects/ insect larvae.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>21–24 days</td> <td>19–20 days</td> </tr> </table>				4	21–24 days	19–20 days																				
																														
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Data in individuals, \*in pairs

# Purple sandpiper



Non-breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Purple sandpiper

*Calidris maritima*



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII






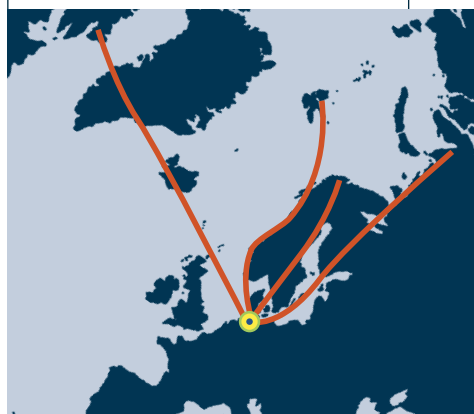
Non-breeding plumage

 Sortgrå ryle

 Meerstrandläufer

 Paarse strandloper

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
Somewhat <b>chubby sandpiper</b> , unmistakable with <b>orange legs</b> , <b>orange base of bill</b> and dark grey plumage.	<b>Breeding:</b> NE Canada via Greenland, Iceland and Scandinavia to NW Russia. <b>Winters</b> on the east coast of North America and on the coasts of NW and W Europe.	<b>Breeding:</b> Coastal and mountain tundra. <b>Migration/winter:</b> Rocky coasts, piers; only on the coast.	Especially mussels and snails (e.g. periwinkle), small crustaceans (e.g. barnacles), insect larvae.	 4	 21–22 days	 21–28 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known purple sandpiper:</b> 20 years and 9 months.</p> <p>Birds on Helgoland return to their previous wintering site every year.</p> <p>The small number of Purple sandpipers wintering in Germany originate from breeding grounds as far apart as <b>NE Canada, N Norway, Svalbard</b> and <b>Russia</b>.</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**179,000–196,000**

Data in individuals



# Black-headed gull



Non-breeding plumage



Breeding plumage



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Black-headed gull

*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*



Non-breeding plumage

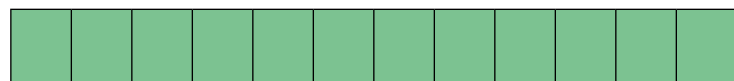


Breeding plumage




 Hættemåge

 Lachmöwe

 Kokmeeuw



I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Reddish legs and bill (in winter with black tip). In flight conspicuous white outer primaries.</p> <p><b>Breeding plumage</b> with dark hood and white 'eye rings'; dark ear patch in <b>non-breeding plumage</b>.</p> <p><b>Age determination:</b> In juveniles, upperparts and wing coverts brownish, posterior wing dark, legs orange until the next moult in 2nd calendar year.</p>	<p><b>Widespread</b> from Europe to Asia.</p> <p><b>Wintering</b> as far south as N Africa. Most common inland gull.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Salt marshes, islands in wetlands (inland).</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Mudflats, meadows, arable fields, rivers, wetlands.</p>	<p>Very versatile: Mudflat organisms, earthworms, insects, rubbish and food scraps.</p>	 3–4	 22–27 days	 26–28 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known Black-headed gull:</b> 30 years and 7 months.</p> <p>Illegal egg collection for human consumption is a recurring problem in colonies.</p> <p>From 1965 to 1990, the <b>Black-headed gull population</b> in the German Wadden Sea increased almost tenfold, more recently decreasing significantly again.</p>						



Total population (flyway)		2.5–3.4 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		max. 581,153	ca. 113,723
DK		max. 61,745	ca. 11,037
DE	SH	max. 118,999	ca. 39,132
	LS, HH	max. 174,801	ca. 24,753
NL		max. 253,591	ca. 38,801

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.

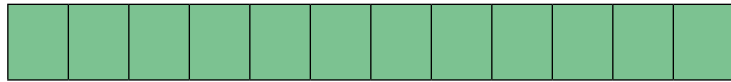
# Common gull



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Common gull

*Larus canus*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Stormmåge

 Sturmmöwe

 Stormmeeuw

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Small long-winged slender gull</b>, bill thin, adult after three years. Plumage similar to Herring gull, but always distinguishable by size and shape (round head).</p> <p><b>Adults</b> with slightly darker upper-parts in comparison to herring gull, more conspicuous white patches on primaries and a thinner yellow bill without a red gonyx spot. <b>Legs greenish yellow</b>, eye dark.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> British Isles to Asia and even N America, often also inland. Birds in the Wadden Sea originate mainly from Northern and Eastern Europe.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> North Sea, Baltic Sea and East Atlantic, south to NW Africa. Not uncommon in inland areas.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Dunes and marshes, less common in salt marshes.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Grassland, mudflats, salt marshes, rubbish tips.</p>	<p>Earthworms on grassland, annelids on mudflats. Also insects, fish, organic waste and plants.</p>	 3	 23–28 days	 28–33 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known Common gull:</b> 33 years and 8 months.</p> <p>Adult after three years.</p> <p>Often follow agricultural machinery (e.g. tractors with ploughs) to reach food (together with Black-headed gulls and Herring gulls).</p> <p>Breeding birds in fruit growing region along the Elbe also eat <b>cherries</b> in large quantities.</p>						



Total population (flyway)		1.4 – 2 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
<b>Wadden Sea</b>		max. <b>183,120</b>	ca. <b>12,224</b>
<b>DK</b>		max. <b>22,280</b>	ca. <b>1,425</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>35,326</b>	ca. <b>2,538</b>
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>42,251</b>	ca. <b>6,393</b>
<b>NL</b>		max. <b>108,837</b>	ca. <b>1,868</b>

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Great black-backed gull

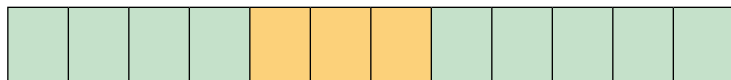


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Great black-backed gull




*Larus marinus*



 Svartbag

 Mantelmöwe

 Grote mantelmeeuw

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Largest gull in Central Europe.</b> Distinctly bulkier, thicker-billed, shorter-winged than Herring gull and Lesser black-backed gull.</p> <p><b>Juveniles</b> similar to Herring gull, but upper feathers patterned more finely, lighter on head and underside, thick black bill, tail band less clear and often interrupted. With <b>increasing age</b> larger grey areas on upperparts.</p> <p><b>Adult plumage</b> with dull black-grey mantle, black wing tips with white spots, legs flesh-coloured (Lesser black-backed gull: yellow), bill yellow with red dot ('gonys spot'). Distinguished from Lesser black-backed gull by size, shape and position of the white primary spots.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Coasts of France, Great Britain, Iceland to NW Russia. Rarely also in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Coasts of North Sea and Atlantic south to Portugal.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Rocky coasts, dunes.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> sandy beaches, rubbish tips; foraging also in the open sea. Rare in inland areas.</p>	<p>At sea, mainly fish and fisheries discard. Also birds up to duck-size and small mammals.</p>	 3	 26–28 days	 45–50 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known Great black-backed gull:</b> 27 years and 1 month. Adult after 4 years.</p>						



Total population (Europe)		172,000–215,000	
Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*	
<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. 9,620	ca.	64
<b>DK</b>	max. 1,175	ca.	10
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. 1,218	ca. 32
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. 1,251	ca. 5
<b>NL</b>	max. 7,580	ca.	17

*Data in individuals, \*in pairs*

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.





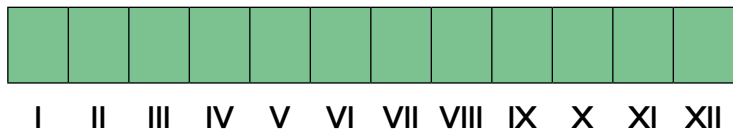
# Herring gull






Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Herring gull

*Larus argentatus*



-  Sølvmåge
-  Silbermöwe
-  Zilvermeeuw

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology
<p><b>Young birds</b> mottled brown very similar to juvenile Great and Lesser black-backed gulls. With <b>increasing age</b> more <b>silver-grey areas</b> on upper-parts.</p> <p><b>Adult plumage</b> with black wing tips with white dots, bill yellow with red dot ('gonys spot'). Significantly lighter mantle than great and lesser black-backed gulls. Larger than common gull.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> W France to NW Russia, Iceland. Predominantly coastal, often large colonies.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> roaming, in the Wadden Sea also birds from Russia.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Undisturbed coastal areas without predators, dunes, salt marshes, rocky coasts (e.g. Helgoland).</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> In the past in large numbers at rubbish dumps, nowadays increasingly back in their natural habitats in the Wadden Sea or at the coasts.</p>	<p>Very versatile: Crustaceans, mussels, snails, starfish, fish, juvenile birds of other species, organic rubbish of any kind, earthworms.</p>	 2-3  26-32 days  35-50 days

## Other information

**Oldest known Herring gull:** 34 years and 9 months.

Adult after 4 years.

Also prey on young birds of other species (e.g. waders, terns), however not problematic for healthy breeding bird populations.

Recently some birds have specialized in stealing ice cream, pizza, fish sandwiches – spectacular surprise attacks. **Refrain from feeding gulls!** Benefits from fishing, fisheries discard/by-catch as food.



Total population (flyway)		1.6 – 1.78 million	
	Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>	max. <b>164,766</b>	ca. <b>62,278</b>
	<b>DK</b>	max. <b>37,645</b>	ca. <b>9,862</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	max. <b>27,493</b>	ca. <b>10,576</b>
	<b>LS, HH</b>	max. <b>32,809</b>	ca. <b>11,088</b>
	<b>NL</b>	max. <b>109,559</b>	ca. <b>30,752</b>

*Data in individuals, \*in pairs*

# Lesser black-backed gull



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Lesser black-backed gull

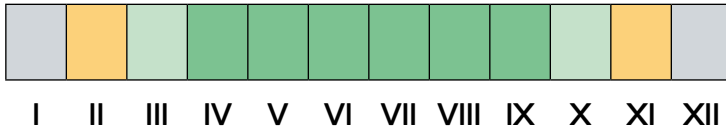
*Larus fuscus*






 Sildemåge

 Heringsmöwe

 Kleine mantelmeeuw



Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Longer-winged than Herring gull. <b>Young birds</b> similar to Herring gull, but darker overall (esp. greater secondary coverts), dark tertials with light fringes and wider tail band.</p> <p>With <b>increasing age</b> more greyish areas on upperparts.</p> <p><b>Adult plumage</b> always darker than Herring gull, black wing tips with white dots, <b>legs yellow</b> (Herring gull and Great black-backed gull 'flesh-coloured'). Distinguishable from Great black-backed gull by size, long wings clearly overhanging the tail, and position of white primary spots.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Coasts from Spain to NW Russia.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Mainly Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal. Rarely also Wadden Sea.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Undisturbed coastal areas without predators, especially in dunes. Foraging at sea or on grassland.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Sandy beaches, rubbish tips; foraging also on the open sea.</p>	<p>Fish on water surface, swimming crabs and fisheries waste. On grassland earthworms and insects, on rubbish tips organic waste.</p>	 2–3	 26–31 days	 35–40 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known Lesser black-backed gull:</b> 34 years and 11 months. Adult after 4 years.</p> <p><b>Three subspecies</b> breeding in Europe, the Central European subspecies (<i>L. f. intermedius</i>) is currently increasing markedly, the NE Scandinavian (<i>L. f. fuscus</i>) is decreasing.</p> <p><b>Foraging</b> inland at daytime, open sea at night-time (illuminated fishing boats).</p>						



Total population (flyway)		1.04–1.11 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		?	ca. 94,496
DK		?	ca. 1,788
DE	SH	?	ca. 14,256
	LS, HH	?	ca. 25,584
NL		?	ca. 52,868

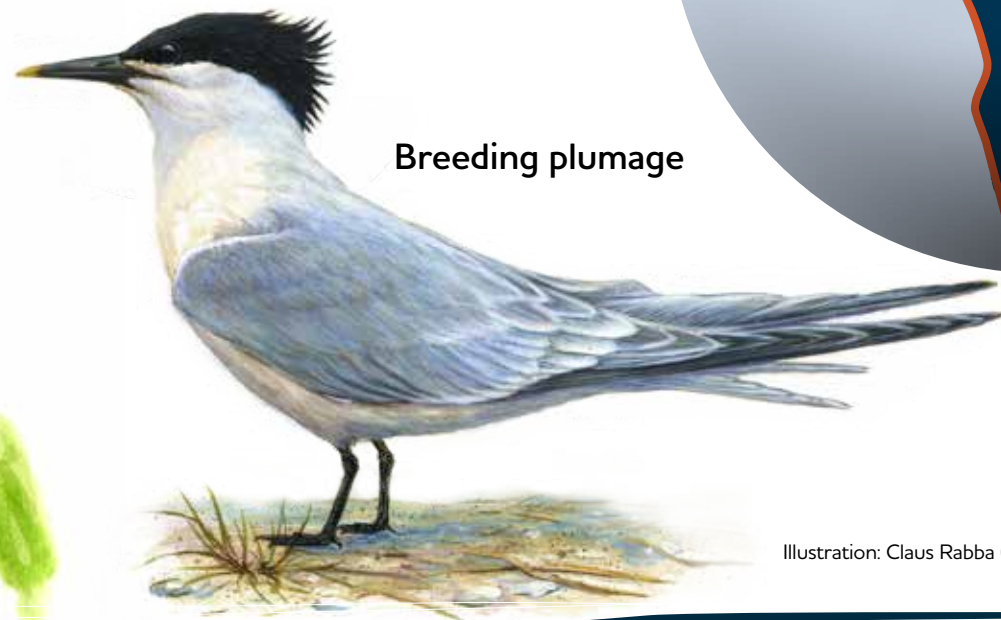
Data in individuals, \*in pairs



# Sandwich tern



Non-breeding plumage



Breeding plumage



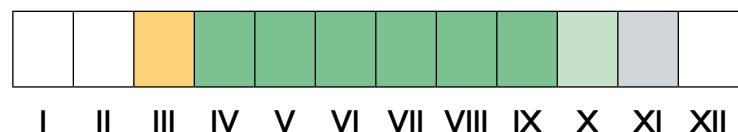
Illustration: Claus Rabba (li), Steffen Walentowitz (re.)





# Sandwich tern




*Thalasseus sandvicensis*



 Splitterne

 Brandseeschwalbe

 Grote stern

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Large pale tern, with <b>black crest</b> in breeding plumage. Bill black with striking <b>yellow tip</b>. In non-breeding plumage with white forehead.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> much more mottled on upperparts than other terns, bill without yellow tip.</p>	<p><b>Coasts</b> of North and Baltic Seas, Eastern Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea and Caspian Sea.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> from Spain to South Africa</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Large, dense colonies mostly on sparsely vegetated islands, peninsulas, gravel and sand banks. Foraging often in areas far away from the colonies (&gt; 50 km).</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Coasts, roosts mainly on sandy beaches.</p>	Slender schooling fish from 5–15 cm in size.	 1–2	 22–26 Tage	 25–35 Tage
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known Sandwich tern:</b> 30 years and 9 months.</p> <p><b>German breeding population</b> is restricted to a few large colonies. 2022 strongly effected by bird flu.</p>						



Total population (flyway)		170,000–200,000	
Population of	resting birds	breeding birds*	
Wadden Sea	?	ca. 15,780	
DK	?	ca. 147	
DE	SH	?	ca. 3,100
	LS, HH	?	ca. 4,249
NL	?	ca. 8,284	

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

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# Common tern

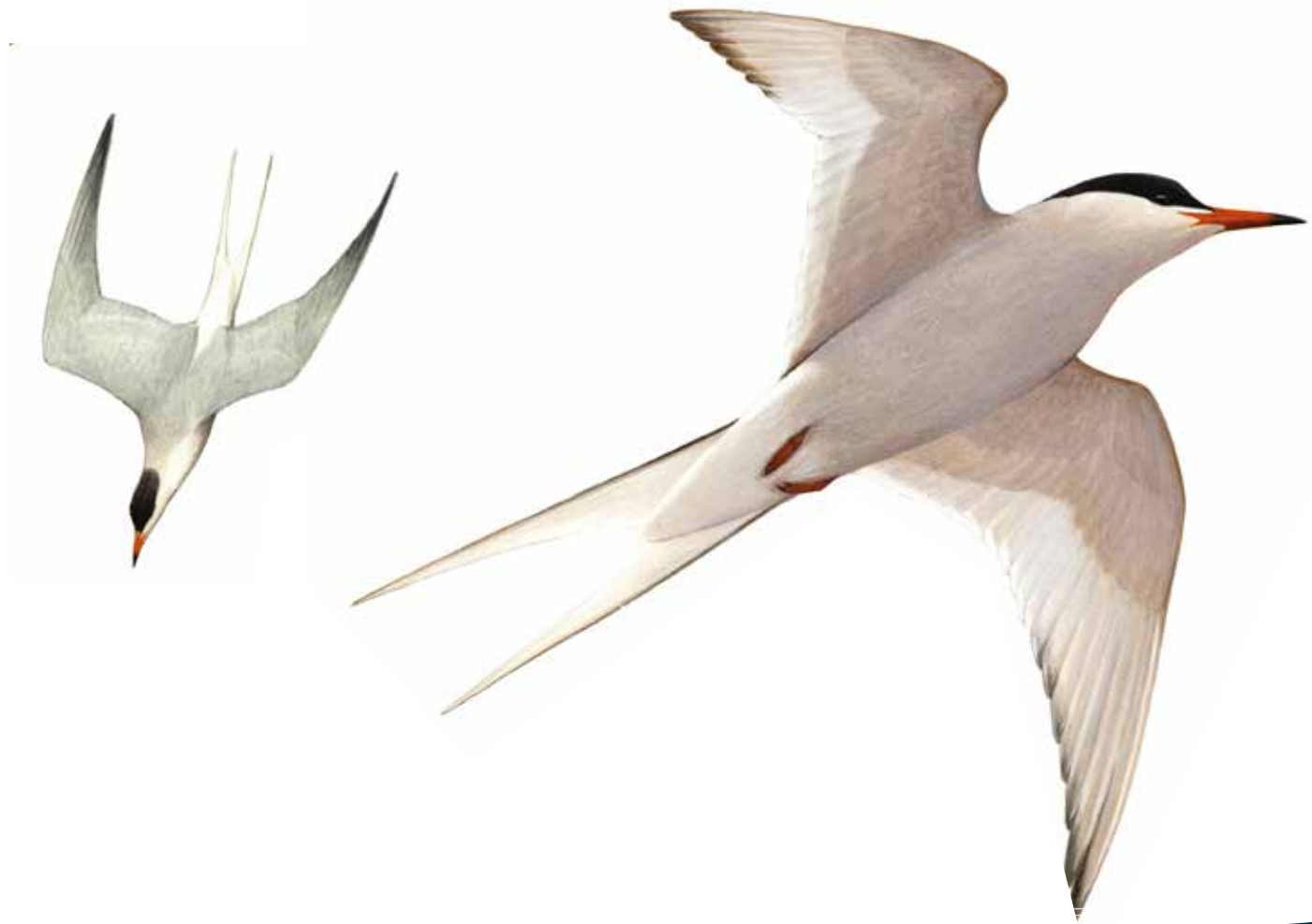
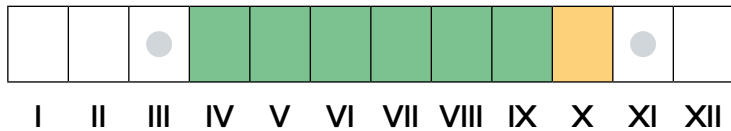


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Common tern





*Sterna hirundo*



 Fjordterne

 Flusseeeschwalbe

 Visdief

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Very similar to Arctic tern</b>, legs somewhat longer, tail reaching at most to the tip of the wings. Black bill tip, primaries mostly darker on top, on underside more diffuse and with broader dark borders.</p> <p><b>Juveniles</b> with very dark lesser coverts, red base of bill and distinctly patterned upperparts.</p>	<p><b>Breeding range:</b> From W Europe to Asia and N America. Also breeding inland.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Mainly coasts of W Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Salt marshes, gravel and sandy areas. Foraging on rivers and tidal channels.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> River estuaries, upstream areas near the coast.</p>	<p>Small surface fish (herring, sprat, stickleback), crustaceans, water-dwelling insect larvae, on Baltic coast also annelids.</p>	 2–3	 20–26 days	 23–27 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known common tern:</b> 33 years.</p> <p>Due to similarity, Common and Arctic terns are often not determined to species level, English term then ‘comic terns’ (from Common and Arctic tern).</p> <p>Belongs to the <b>best researched bird species</b>, because a colony in Wilhelmshaven has been under intensive scientific observation for many years.</p> <p><b>Very aggressive defence</b>, researchers in the breeding colonies work with hard hats.</p>						
	<b>Total population (Europe)</b>		<b>0.881–1.43 million</b>			
	<i>Population of</i>		<i>resting birds</i>	<i>breeding birds*</i>		
	<b>Wadden Sea</b>		?	ca. <b>8,375</b>		
	<b>DK</b>		?	ca. <b>88</b>		
	<b>DE</b>	<b>SH</b>	?	ca. <b>764</b>		
<b>LS, HH</b>		?	ca. <b>4,272</b>			
<b>NL</b>		?	ca. <b>3,251</b>			

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

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# Arctic tern

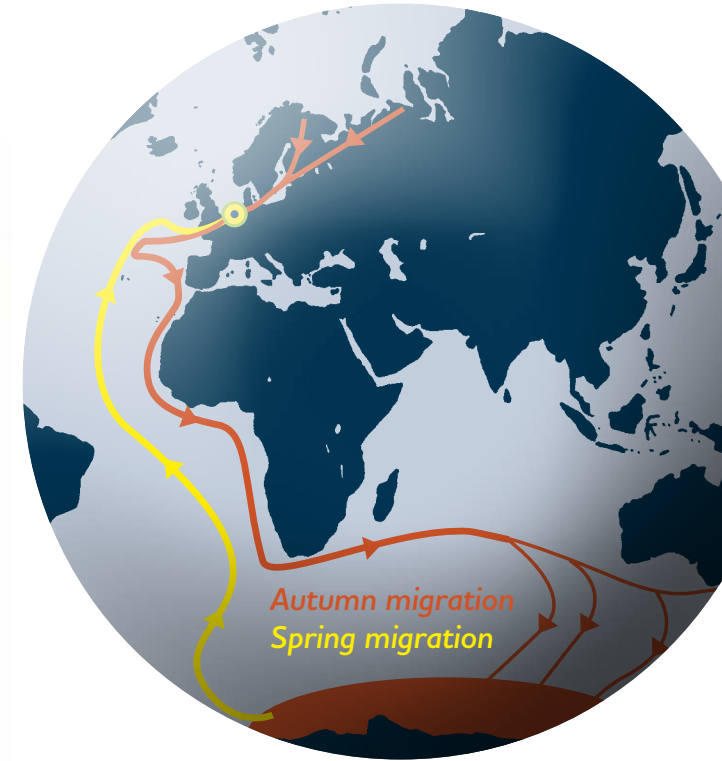
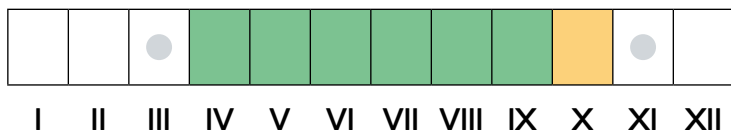





Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz






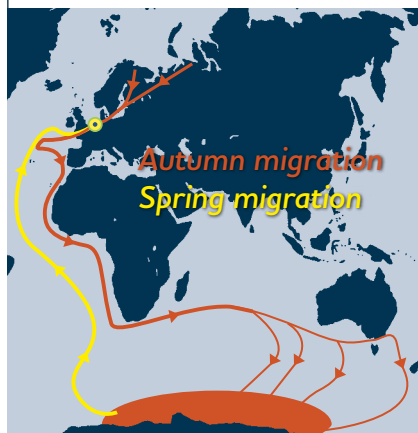
# Arctic tern

*Sterna paradisaea*



-  Havterne
-  Küstenseeschwalbe
-  Noordse stern

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Very similar to Common tern</b>, but shorter legs when standing, wings usually overhanging tail tip. <b>Bill red without black tip</b>. Little contrast in upper wing between primaries and remaining wing, sharp black trailing edge on underside of wing.</p> <p><b>Young birds</b> without dark lesser coverts, bill black, slightly patterned upperparts.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area:</b> Arctic (circumpolar), in Europe to Great Britain and the Wadden Sea.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Antarctic waters (mainly Weddell Sea).</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> sandy beaches with little or no vegetation, gravel islands, rarely salt marshes; foraging on open sea more often than common tern.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Antarctic waters (esp. Weddell Sea)</p>	Small fish and crustaceans, fish content often smaller than in Common tern.	 1–3	 20–22 days	 21–24 days
Other information						
<p><b>Oldest known Arctic tern:</b> 30 years and 11 months.</p> <p><b>Record holder</b> among the long-distance migrants. Arctic breeding birds migrate over distances of about <b>60,000 km</b> each year. A tagged bird took a detour to Australia from the Weddell Sea for a total trip of <b>80,000 km</b>.</p> <p>The Arctic tern is the bird species that sees the most <b>daylight</b> during a year!</p> <p><b>Very aggressive nest defence</b>, even causes bleeding head wounds – do not disturb nests!</p>						



Total population (Europe)		1.06 – 1.51 million	
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		?	ca. 4,849
DK		?	ca. 369
DE	SH	?	ca. 2,867
	LS, HH	?	ca. 699
NL		?	ca. 914

Data in individuals, \*in pairs



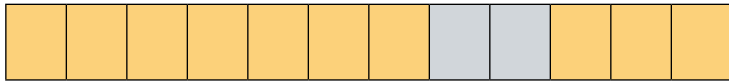
# Short-eared owl



Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz

# Short-eared owl

*Asio flammeus*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Mosehornugle

 Sumpfohreule

 Velduil

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Medium-sized long-winged</b> owl with only small ear tufts. Similar to Long-eared owl, but <b>eyes yellow</b> (Long-eared owl: orange), in flight with <b>strong contrast</b> on the <b>underwings</b> (Long-eared owl: white with light brown barred tip).</p>	<p><b>Widespread:</b> Eurasia (with a focus on northern landscapes). North and South America and even on single islands in Micronesia (South Pacific).</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> reach as far south as N Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Open landscapes with low vegetation, especially tundra, bogs and wet meadows.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Similar to breeding habitat, but also on fallow fields.</p>	Mainly voles, in years with low vole density also other small mammals and birds.	 7–10	 26–27 days	 31–36 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known short-eared owl:</b> 20 years and 9 months.</p> <p><b>Also hunts during the day</b>, especially in years with little food. <b>Size of breeding territories</b> depends on food supply: in vole-rich years they are therefore smaller. Lives <b>nomadically</b>.</p> <p>Young birds <b>leave the nest after 15–17 days, before they have fledged.</b></p>						



Total population (Europe) 169,000–284,000			
Population of		resting birds	breeding birds*
Wadden Sea		?	ca. 68
DK		?	ca. 14
DE	SH	?	ca. 5
	LS, HH	?	ca. 34
NL		?	ca. 15

Data in individuals, \*in pairs

This sheet is part of the handout 'Migratory Bird Profiles' for bird-watching tours in the Wadden Sea National Park and World Heritage Site.



# Northern wheatear

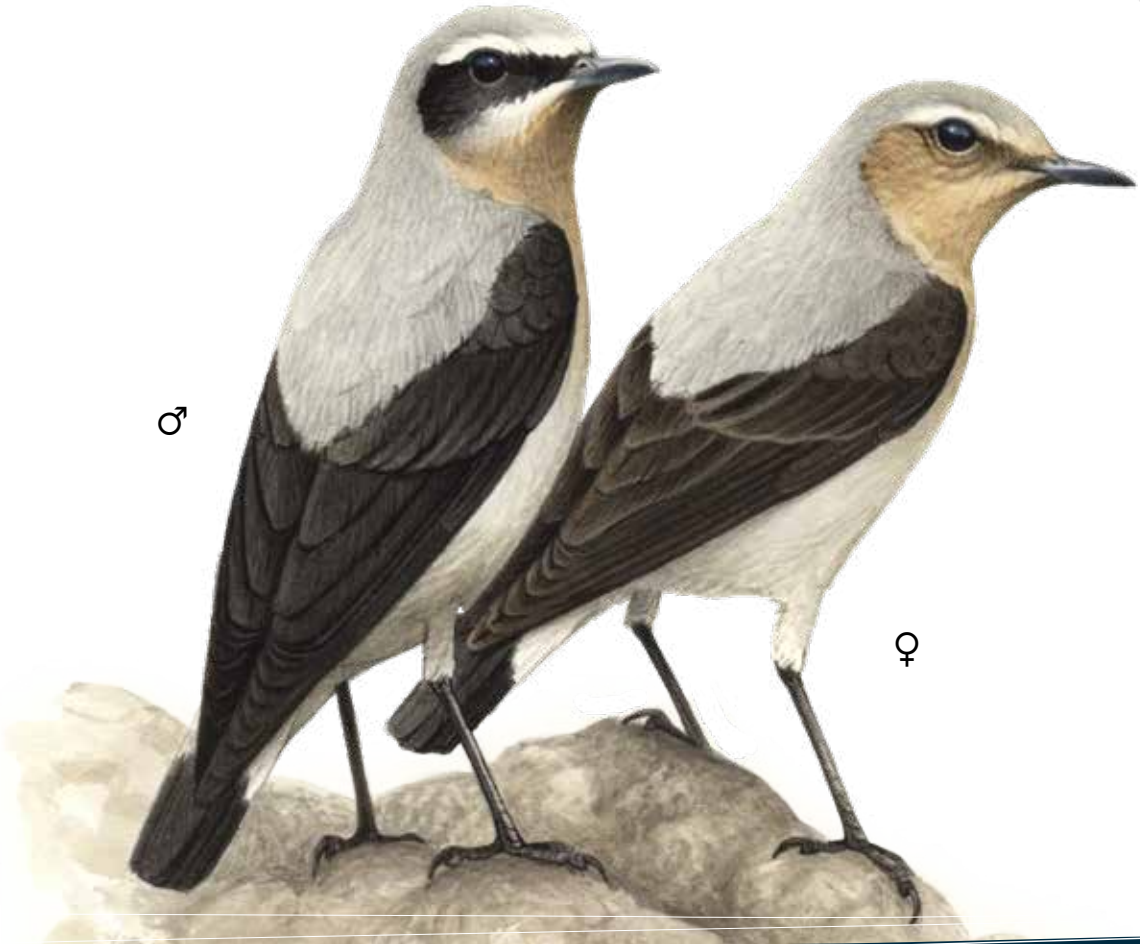
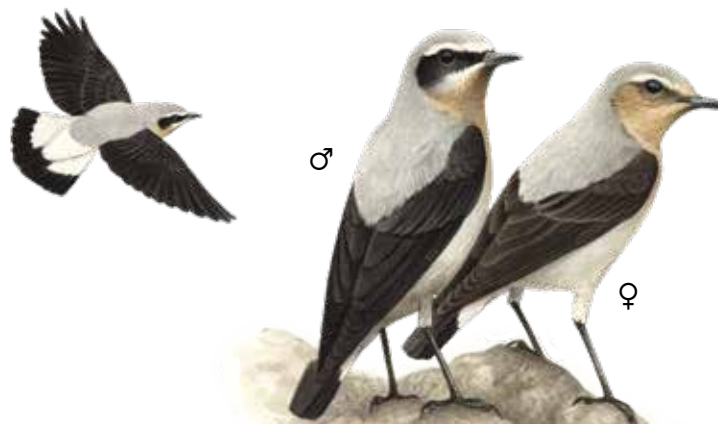
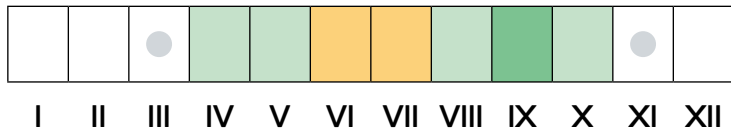


Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz



# Northern wheatear




*Oenanthe oenanthe*



 Stenpikker

 Steinschmätzer

 Tapuit

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>In all plumages with striking <b>black and white tail</b>.</p> <p><b>Males</b> in breeding plumage with conspicuous black wings and black eye mask, <b>females</b> and <b>young birds</b> quite inconspicuous overall.</p>	<p><b>Breeds</b> throughout the northern hemisphere, in the north to the Arctic, in the south to the Middle East.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas:</b> all wheatears overwinter in sub-Saharan Africa</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Open areas, e.g. rocky debris, clear-cuts, peat bogs, extensively used farmland, in the Wadden Sea especially in dune areas (there often in old rabbit holes).</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Open terrain of all kinds, also on dykes. Likes to hunt from perches.</p>	<p>Mainly insects, but also spiders, earth-worms and snails, in autumn occasionally also berries.</p>	 4–8	 11–15 days	 15–17 days
<h3>Other information</h3> <p><b>Oldest known northern wheatear:</b> 9 years (ringed bird).</p> <p>Birds from Alaska migrate via Russia and the Middle East to Africa, covering over <b>14,000 km</b> in three months.</p> <p>Birds from Arctic Canada (Baffin Island) migrate to Africa via the British Isles. Some of them cover the 3,400 km in just 4 days, i.e. at least <b>850 km each day</b> (flying mainly at night).</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**10.8 million–29.3 million**

Data in individuals

# Meadow pipit



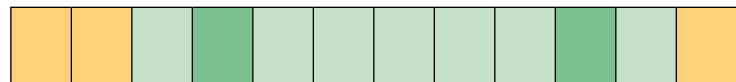
Illustration: Steffen Walentowitz





# Meadow pipit

*Anthus pratensis*






I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII



 Engpiber

 Wiesenpieper

 Graspieper

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Small, <b>inconspicuous</b> songbird with a thin bill and relatively long tail. Chest and back finely <b>streaked</b>.</p> <p>Attracts attention mainly by its flight call, a sharp 'isst', sometimes doubled 'isst-isst'.</p>	<p>Very common <b>breeder</b> in large parts of Europe. Breeding area reaches east to the Urals, west to NE Greenland.</p> <p><b>Wintering areas</b> are in Central and W Europe, south to N Africa.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Mainly damp, open terrain, e.g. tundra, moors, salt marshes, wet grassland, heathland.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Similar to breeding season.</p>	<p>Very variable, especially small insects, spiders, but also small worms.</p>	 2–7	 13 days	 12–13 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p>During migration the <b>most common pipit</b> in the Wadden Sea, can be seen almost everywhere, resting birds especially on grassland (often also on dykes).</p> <p><b>Decrease in population</b> due to habitat loss (agricultural intensification).</p> <p>Also <b>winters</b> in salt marshes and grassland of the Wadden Sea, but much less common on salt marshes in winter than the very similar Rock pipit (more poorly contrasted than Meadow pipit, with a more sturdy bill and darker legs). For this species the Wadden Sea salt marshes provide <b>winter quarters of international importance</b>.</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
22 million–29.8 million

*Data in individuals*

# Twite



Winter plumage

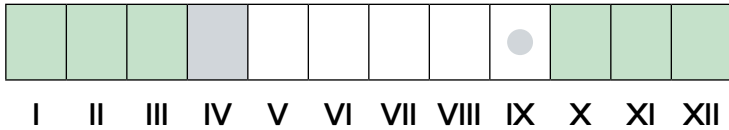


Illustration: Claus Rabba



# Twite

*Linaria flavirostris*













Winter plumage



 Bjergirisk

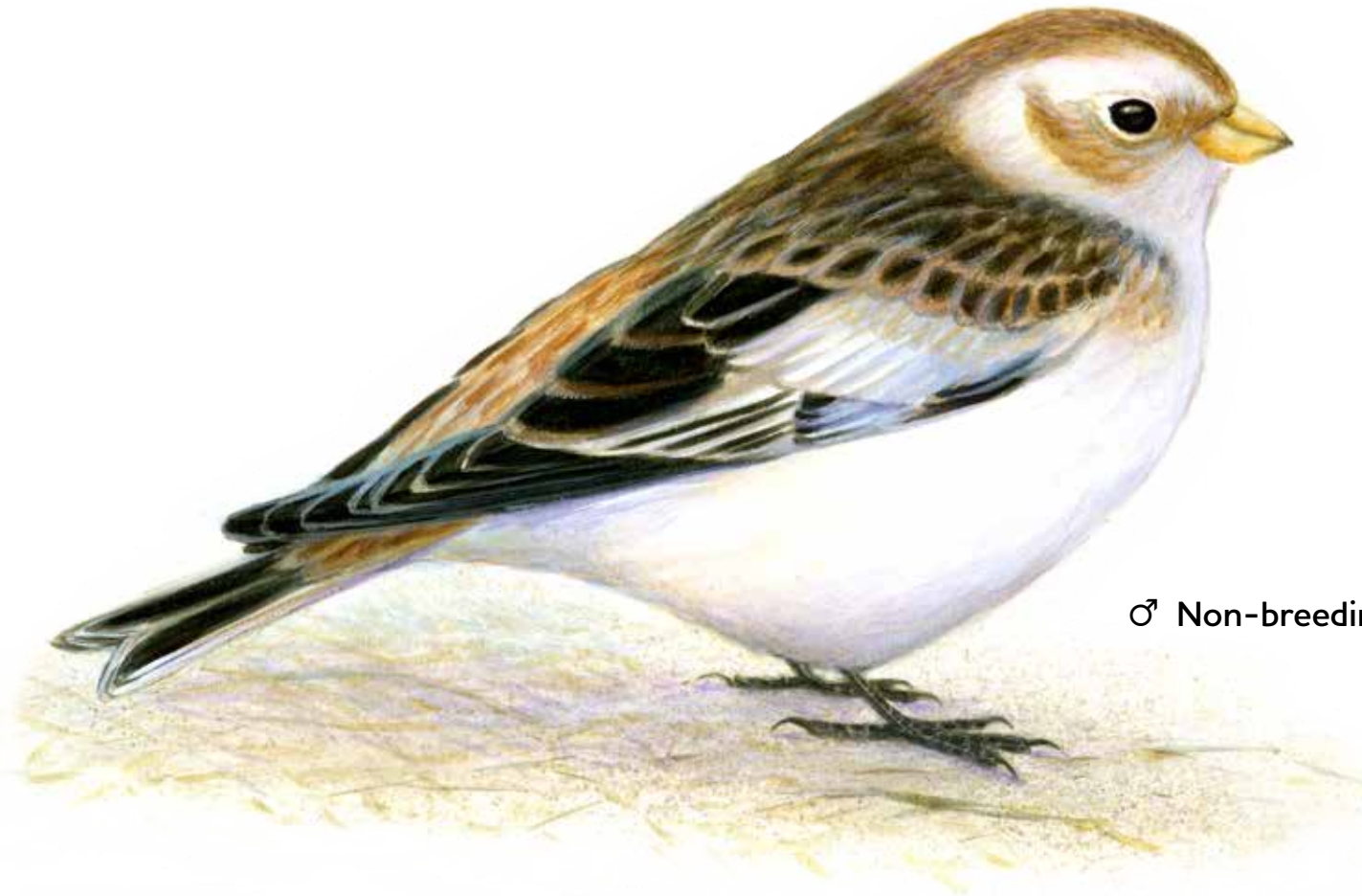
 Berghänfling

 Frater

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology						
<p><b>Inconspicuous</b> small brown songbird with small <b>yellow bill</b>.</p> <p>Similar to Linnet in non-breeding plumage, but with inconspicuous pale wing patch and predominantly orange-beige breast/throat.</p> <p><b>Male</b> with rusty rump.</p>	<p><b>Breeding grounds</b> located in the boreal and temperate zones of NW Europe, in high mountains and in steppes of Asia.</p> <p>Scandinavian birds <b>overwinter</b> mainly in the Wadden Sea and inland in Eastern Europe.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Tundra, heathland, alpine meadows.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Salt marshes, ruderal areas.</p>	<p>Small seeds, in the Wadden Sea especially glasswort and seablite.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5–6</td> <td>12–13 days</td> <td>10–13 days</td> </tr> </table>				5–6	12–13 days	10–13 days
										
5–6	12–13 days	10–13 days								
<p><b>Other information</b></p> <p><b>Oldest known twite:</b> 9 years and 5 months.</p> <p>Has bred in Germany once (Helgoland, 1960). In contrast to the and Snow bunting usually not at the tideline, but feeding directly on the plants. Night roosts sometimes in buildings and in the middle of cities. During migration sometimes in <b>dense flocks</b>, very active and sometimes not very shy.</p> <p><b>Very mobile in the wintering area:</b> &gt; 30 km in one day and &gt; 200 km within one winter.</p>										
		<p><b>Total population (Europe)</b> <b>159,000–548,000</b></p>								

Data in individuals

# Snow bunting



♂ Non-breeding plumage



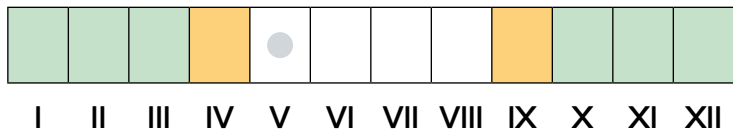
Illustration: Claus Rabba





# Snow bunting

*Plectrophenax nivalis*






♂ Non-breeding plumage



 Snespurv

 Schneeammer

 Sneeuwgor

Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p><b>Compact</b> bunting with <b>short and thick bill</b>, yellow in winter.</p> <p>In <b>breeding plumage</b> (rarely seen here) white with a dark back and black wing tips. In <b>winter</b> upper side brownish and underside whitish. Upper wing with <b>white wing patch</b> which varies in size according to age, sex and subspecies.</p>	<p><b>Breeding area</b> circumpolar in the Arctic tundra.</p> <p><b>Wintering grounds</b> in Europe mainly on the coasts but also in inland steppes of Eastern Europe. Icelandic breeding birds partly overwinter close to their breeding grounds. Breeding birds from E Greenland migrate to Europe, wintering areas of Scandinavian breeding birds are unknown so far.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Open tundra with rocks and lichens.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Sparsely vegetated areas, in the Wadden Sea on sandy beaches and on tidal debris.</p>	<p><b>Summer:</b> Mainly insects</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Seeds, sometimes insects.</p>	 5-6	 12-13 days	 12-15 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known snow bunting:</b> 9 years and 6 months.</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Habitat often covered with snow.</p> <p>The <b>most northerly</b> breeding songbird!</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**38,000–86,200**

Data in individuals



# Shore lark



Non-breeding plumage





Illustration: Claus Rabba

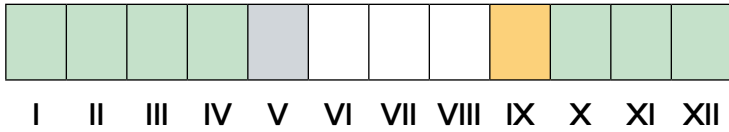
# Shore lark




*Eremophila alpestris*

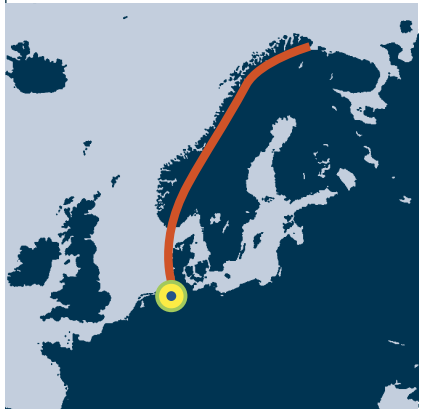


Non-breeding plumage

-  Bjerglærke
-  Ohrenlerche
-  Strandleeuwerik



Identification	Range	Habitat	Food	Breeding biology		
<p>Lark with <b>black bib</b> and black ear covers/lores and <b>yellowish face</b>. Black feathers on top sides of the head can be raised to form 'horns'.</p> <p>Age and sex cannot be distinguished with certainty in the field.</p>	<p><b>Breeding grounds</b> in tundra of Eurasia and N America and in the mountains and steppes of SE Europe, NW Africa, Asia and N America.</p> <p>In Europe in <b>winter</b> mainly in the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p><b>Breeding:</b> Sparsely vegetated areas with low vegetation height such as tundra and steppes.</p> <p><b>Migration/winter:</b> Steppes, in Central Europe mainly salt marshes or tidelines by dykes.</p>	<p><b>Summer:</b> Insects and other arthropods.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Small seeds, especially of glasswort, seablite and various saltbush species.</p>	 4	 10–14 days	 9–12 days
<b>Other information</b>						
<p><b>Oldest known Shore lark:</b> 5 years and 10 months.</p> <p><b>Winters in flocks</b>, with the average flock in the Wadden Sea using 2.3 km of tideline. Very site faithful, <b>returning</b> to exactly the same spot each winter!</p>						



**Total population (Europe)**  
**6,300–13,300**

Data in individuals