

# Mindre meddelelser

## Bird observations from the head of Danmark Fjord, North Greenland, 8 June - 10 July 1993

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The lowland areas around the head of Danmark Fjord (80°38'N, 23°48'W) are among of the largest in North Greenland. They hold a vegetation cover of 5-8% (Bay 1992). The avifauna of the area is poorly know, as the only previous report is from an extensive helicopter reconnaissance in 1978 (Håkansson et al. 1981).

During our survey in 1993 we visited the following three areas (Fig. 1): Sandslot Foreland has snow-patch vegetation from sea level to about 180 m a.s.l. along the east coast towards Danmark Fjord. Holbæk Foreland has snow-patch vegetation from sea level to about 130 m a.s.l. along the south coast towards the delta; observations were only made on this coast. Campanula Valley is a long valley with a narrow, well vegetated area along the

river; the central and southern parts of the valley contain relative large lush grass plains.

We used two different base camps: Camp 1 on Sandslot Foreland and Camp 2 in the Campanula Valley (Fig. 1). Birds were censused along a 12 km route on Sandslot Foreland, a 6 km route on Holbæk Foreland, and along various routes in the Campanula Valley. The route on Sandslot Foreland was censused during 20 June to 6 July, while the routes in Campanula Valley were censused during 11-15 June and again during 7-10 July. Holbæk Foreland was censused from 9 to 13 June and again during 15-18 June.

The climate of the area is continental. In early June the temperature averaged -7°C, and the snow cover was

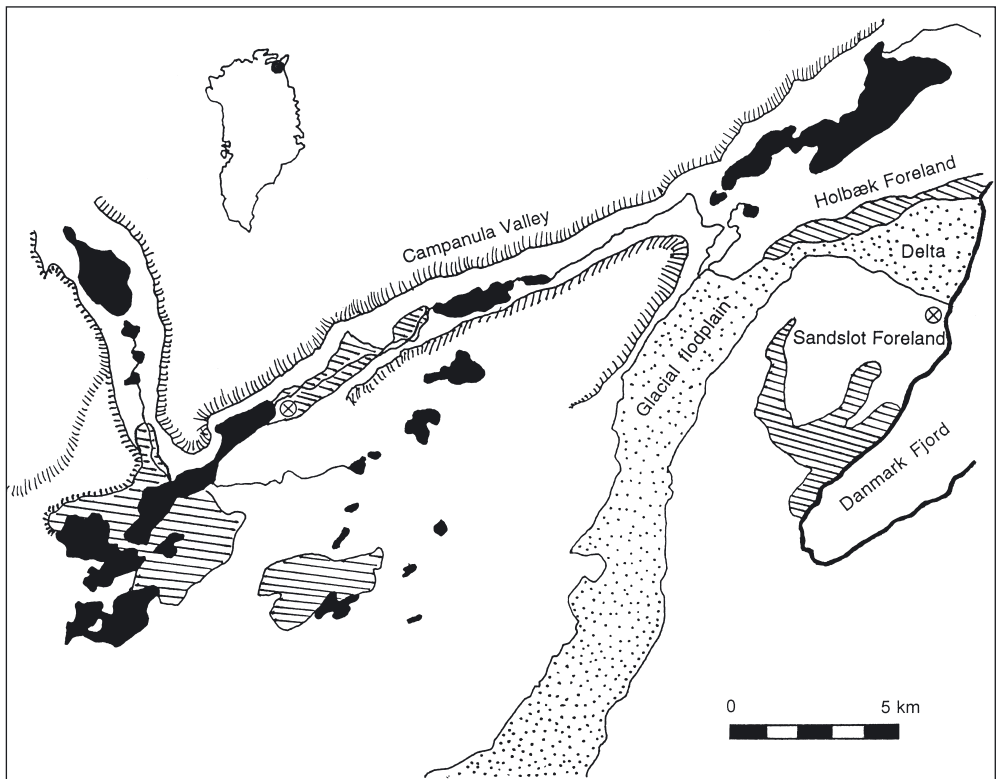


Fig. 1. Map showing the study areas around the head of Danmark Fjord. Campsites are marked by ⊗; hatched areas have relatively dense vegetation cover.

*Kort over undersøgelsesområderne i bunden af Danmark Fjord. Lejrpladser er afmærket med ⊗; vegetationsdækkede områder er skraverede.*

about 95%. During the heavy thaw from 12 to 23 June the snow cover decreased to 10-40%. From the last part of June to our departure on 10 July the temperature varied between +7° and +17°C.

#### **Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

Small groups of 2-7 individuals were seen in the delta and in a lake at Camp 2 during 11-15 June. A nest with 1 egg was found in Campanula Valley on 8 July.

#### **Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

The first observation was of 19 individuals on 26 June. A flock of 39 flew northwards on 2 July. Flocks of 6-39 were seen both at Sandslot Foreland, Holbæk Foreland and in Campanula Valley from 26 June to 10 July. No flightless birds were recorded. Previously, only few birds have been observed this far north (Boertmann 1994).

#### **King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*

On 11 and 12 June, respectively, 2 pairs were recorded in a small glacial lake in Campanula Valley. On 15 June we counted 52 individuals (26 females and 26 males showing display) in the delta. The next day they had disappeared. A female incubating three eggs was found on 8 July in the central part of Campanula Valley.

#### **Knot** *Calidris canutus*

Knots were seen throughout the period in pairs and in mixed flocks with other waders, but no territorial behaviour was recorded.

#### **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

A minimum of four pairs out of seven encountered in Campanula Valley on 10 July exhibited territorial behaviour. Dunlins are not known to breed north of 79°N (Boertmann 1994).

#### **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Skuas were common and their main prey, the collared lemming *Dicrostonyx groenlandicus*, was very abundant during the melt off. In all, 15 pairs and eight nests were found, six with two eggs and two with one egg. Six clutches hatched during the first half of July. One nest was flooded by melt water and abandoned on 24 June. Previously, only scattered records of breeding have been made in the region (Håkansson et al. 1981, Boertmann 1994).

#### **Other species**

Many tracks of Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus* were seen in the snow on all three locations. One pair was seen mating on 13 June. In total, six territorial males were encountered. We recorded a total of eight pairs of Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* and a minimum of 14 additional individuals. One nest with four eggs was found on 30 June. Fifteen pairs of Sanderling *Calidris alba* were present in the study area, of which one, in Campanula Valley, showed breeding behaviour. The Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* was the most common bird seen during our field work, five pairs and at least 42 other individuals in mixed flocks with other waders. Up

to four Glaucous Gulls *Larus hyperboreus* occurred around the camp at Sandslot Foreland during 8-13 June, and at least three Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea* were seen in the area between 13 June and 9 July. The Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* was common in Campanula Valley, four pairs and at least nine other males; breeding evidence included adults carrying insects on 8 July.

#### **Resumé: Fugleobservationer fra bunden af Danmark Fjord, Nordgrønland, 8. juni til 10. juli 1993**

Under et ophold i bunden af Danmark Fjord (80°38'N, 23°48'W) blev der foretaget observationer af fugle. I deltaet mellem Sandslot Forland og Holbæk Forland sås i perioden 11. til 22. juni op til 7 Rødstrubede Lommer *Gavia stellata* samt d. 15. juni 26 par rastende Kongeederfugle *Somateria spectabilis*. Sidstnævnte var væk igen d. 16. juni. Vi lokaliserede en rede af Kongeederfugl med 3 æg, samt en rede af Rødstrubet Lom med ét æg i Campanuladalene den 8. juli. Op til 39 Kortnæbbede Gæs *Anser brachyrhynchus* foragerede i området i perioden 26. juni - 10. juli, men der blev ikke set afslæde individer. Fjeldrype *Lagopus mutus* var almindeligt forekommende med i alt seks registrerede territoriale hanner. En parring sås d. 13. juni. Lille Kjove *Stercorarius longicaudus* var hyppig, og i 6 af 8 lokaliserede reder var der 2 æg. Første æg klækkedes før 7. juli. Stenvenderen *Arenaria interpres* var den hyppigst forekommende fugl i perioden, i alt 5 par og mindst 42 andre fugle i blandede flokke med Stor Præstekrave *Charadrius hiaticula*, Islandsk Ryle *Calidris canutus*, Sandløber *Calidris alba* og Almindelig Ryle *Calidris alpina*. Gråmåge *Larus hyperboreus* og Havterne *Sterna paradisaea* var fåtallige, med henholdsvis 4 og 3 individer set. Snespurven sås hyppigt og ynglede givetvis, idet adulte sås med insekter i næbbet.

#### **References**

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