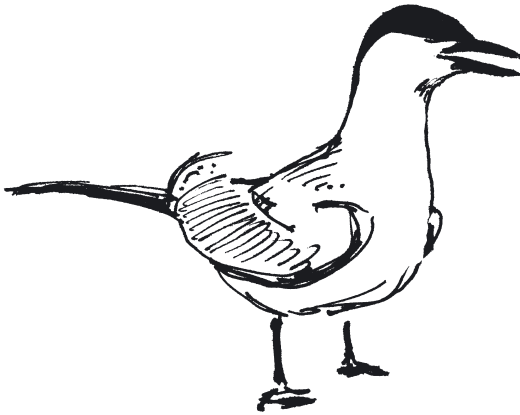


The breeding population of Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* in Denmark 1976-1996

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(Med et dansk resumé: *Ynglebestanden af Sandterne i Danmark 1976-1996*)

Introduction

The Gull-billed Tern has declined dramatically as a breeding bird in Denmark in this century (Møller 1975a). Since the end of the 1980s the last strongholds in Limfjorden and Nissum Fjord have all been abandoned, and the only breeding area remaining in Denmark is the Wadden Sea (Sørensen 1995). In the recent Danish Red List the status of the Gull-billed Tern is "endangered" (Asbirk & Søgaard 1991), and the species may disappear as a breeding bird within a few years.

The European population of Gull-billed Terns is discontinuously distributed, mainly around the Mediterranean Sea. A small population in North-west Europe is now restricted to the Wadden Sea, mainly to Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen at the river Elbe (Hälterlein 1996), far away from other breeding grounds of which the nearest is in Camargue, France (Cramp 1985).

In this paper the distribution, colony sites and population development of Gull-billed Terns in Denmark since 1976 are described, and factors causing colony displacements are discussed together with suggested protection measurements,

which might stop the negative trend and perhaps stimulate an increase.

Methods

Unpublished information was obtained from U. G. Sørensen who summarized the population development of Gull-billed Terns through 1976-1991 (Sørensen 1995); unfortunately, detailed information from 1976 to 1978 was not available. Information on the breeding colonies in the Wadden Sea was also obtained from monitoring carried out by the Danish Ornithological Society (Dansk Ornithologisk Forening, DOF) in collaboration with the National Forest and Nature Agency (Skov- og Naturstyrelsen) and the National Environmental Research Institute (Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser). However, some sites were not monitored regularly before the end of the 1980s, especially on the island of Rømø. Data from colonies in the Limfjorden area were provided by the National Forest and Nature Agency (J. Gregersen in litt). Information on colony size was often supplemented by data on the breeding success of the birds.

Danish breeding colonies 1976-1996

Gull-billed Terns were found breeding for at least two successive years at eight sites during the study period (Tab. 1, Fig. 1; below), and at least seven other sites were used occasionally.

Vår Holm and Kyø Holm, Limfjorden. Small islands in Nibe Bredning in the central part of Limfjorden. Nature reserve, no public access. Breeding was never confirmed, but observations of birds indicated that a few pairs bred in large colonies of up to 30 000 pairs of Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*. Gull-billed Terns may have been overlooked in some of the years not indicated in Tab. 1, but there has been nothing to suggest breeding in the entire Limfjorden area since 1988. Black-headed Gulls and Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea* have both declined in the area (U. G. Sørensen pers. comm.).

Fjandø, Nissum Fjord. Small island in the brackish lagoon of Nissum Fjord. Nature reserve, no public access. The colonies of Gull-billed Terns and Black-headed Gulls disappeared in 1986 when foxes *Vulpes vulpes* bred on the island (J. O. Christensen pers. comm.).

Langli, the Wadden Sea. An 80 ha island with large colonies of Black-headed Gulls, Herring Gulls *Larus argentatus*, Common Gulls *Larus canus*, Arctic Terns, Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis*, and Avocets *Avocetta recurvirostra*. Nature reserve, no public access. In 1995, one of the Gull-billed Tern pairs gave up the breeding attempt owing to the presence of a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, and the other pair failed during incubation (J. Thalund pers. comm.). In 1996 both pairs hatched young, but none of these fledged, probably due to very unfavourable weather (M. J. Hansen pers. comm.).

Keldsand, the Wadden Sea. A small vegetated and sandy island 200 m east of Sønnerho, Fanø, with breeding Black-headed Gulls, Arctic Terns and Avocets. Part of the Wadden Sea Nature Reserve. Many reports on human disturbance. The breeding of the birds failed in 1990 due to daily visits by foxes.

Mandø, the Wadden Sea. Salt marsh, intensively grazed by sheep. There is a large colony of Arctic Terns (350 pairs in 1992, falling to 164 pairs in 1995), Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*, Black-headed Gulls and Avocets. Public access. Apart

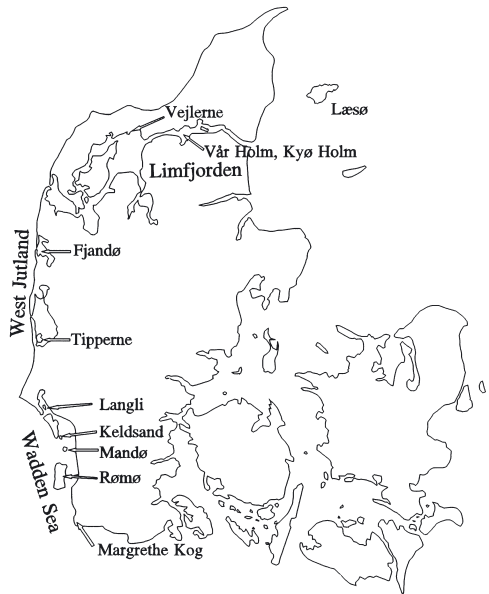


Fig. 1. Map of Denmark showing breeding sites for Gull-billed Terns in 1976-1996.

Ynglelokaliteter for Sandterne i Danmark 1976-1996.

from single pairs, the Gull-billed Tern colony was established in 1992 after the abandonment of Keldsand. In 1993 the twelve pairs disappeared by 1 June for unknown reasons. It is probable that grazing sheep disturbed the birds or destroyed the nests, but egg collection may have been a contributing factor, since collection of eggs by residents and visitors is an old tradition on the island where, as late as in 1995 and 1996, a visiting school class was offered gulls' eggs (K. Melbye pers. comm., N. Rattenborg pers. comm.). Foxes on Mandø are regulated to a low level and are not considered a problem.

Juvre, Rømø, the Wadden Sea. A 1200 ha sandy salt marsh with colonies of Black-headed Gulls and Arctic Terns. Military training and bombing area with no public access. Regular monitoring data from the area are lacking, but breeding in different parts of the island may have occurred in most years during the study period. In 1995, eggs of gulls and terns were collected in the part of the colony where the Gull-billed Terns bred (pers. obs.). Within the military target area all nests of breeding gulls are destroyed each year. Tern nests are usually spared, but the activity may indirectly affect the Gull-billed Terns. Seven of the nine

pairs in 1996 bred in a colony with more than 300 pairs of Arctic Terns, which was flooded shortly before hatching during a summer storm on 21 June.

Lakolk, Rømø, the Wadden Sea. Cattle-grazed salt marsh with a small lake. No associated breeding species. Public access to the area is unrestricted, but not frequent (O. Thorup pers. comm.). Formerly, the area has been visited only irregularly, so Gull-billed Terns may have bred there earlier than indicated in Tab. 1. A single young fledged in 1995, but in 1996 the two pairs abandoned their nests owing to the presence of foxes.

Margrethe Kog, the Wadden Sea. Salt marsh reclaimed in 1981, now an artificial saltwater lagoon. Nature reserve, no public access. Most breeding attempts have been unsuccessful. In 1995 the clutches were destroyed by grazing sheep shortly before hatching (pers. obs.); in 1996 the colony area was inhabited by foxes and no breeding was attempted, although Gull-billed Terns were present. Together with Rickelsbüller Koog on the German side of the border Margrethe Kog may be regarded as a single locality where 1-5 pairs of Gull-billed Terns have bred annually since 1985, excepting 1993 (Rasmussen 1995).

Population development

The Danish population of Gull-billed Terns has ranged between 150-500 pairs since the turn of the century. Beginning in the 1940s the population decreased to around 120 pairs in 1960 and only 13 pairs in 1974 (Møller 1975a), at which level it stabilized (10-16 pairs in 1980, Fischer 1990). The population in 1976-1977 has been reported at about 30 pairs (Dybbro 1978), but no documentation for this statement exists (U. G. Sørensen pers. comm.). An estimate of 26 pairs in 1980 (Sørensen 1995) is in error (includes 21 pairs of Common Terns wrongly reported as Gull-Billed Terns; pers. obs.), and only 10-16 pairs bred that year.

Prior to the study period, Gull-billed Terns are known to have bred four times in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea, on Langli: in 1933 (73 pairs), in 1936 (130 pairs), and in 1947-1948 (40 pairs).

In the 1960s and 1970s, when the Limfjorden population decreased, the most important colony was in Nissum Fjord. The disappearance from Limfjorden was followed by the establishment of a population in the German Wadden Sea in Schleswig-Holstein, especially from 1960 onwards (Møller 1978, Südbeck & Hälderlein 1994, Fleet et al. 1994, Hälderlein 1996). Numbers in this German area peaked during 1975-1983 with 48-72 pairs (mean 62 pairs) but then decreased to 40-55

Tab. 1. Breeding pairs of Gull-billed Terns in Denmark 1976-96. *Antallet af ynglepar af Sandterne i Danmark 1976-1996.*

	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	
Læsø	6	-	-	-	-	-	2-3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Klosterholm	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vår & Kyø Holme	10	25	21	13	20	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Horsgårdholm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lille Vildmose	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Jutland*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vejlerne	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Fjandø	10	5	4	10	6	4-5	4-6	8-10	6	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Tipperne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	-
Wadden Sea <i>Vadehavet</i>																						
Langli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Keldsand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	+	8	5	5	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mandø	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1-2	1	1	8-10	12	0	5	0	0
Juvre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1-2	1	-	1	0	3	2	3	3	9	2	2
Lakolk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0-2	0-2	0-2	2	2	2	2
Margrethe Kog	-	-	-	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Wadden Sea total	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	4	2+	13	9	7	14	13	2	15	16	5	14	13	
Denmark total	28	30	26	26	26	5	9	11	15	6+	19	11	8	14	13	2	16	16	5	14	13	

* unknown localities *ukendte lokaliteter (Nordjylland)*

+ breeding, number unknown *yngeforekomst, antal ukendt*

- no information *ingen oplysninger*

pairs (mean 46 pairs), with many colony displacements (Hälterlein 1996). One major colony with 20-60 pairs has shifted between five different sites. Other colonies rarely exceeded four pairs. The most stable of them was situated in Meldorfer Bucht in Ditmarschen during 1973-1990; before disappearing this colony broke up into several smaller colonies, probably owing to an increased number of breeding foxes in the surroundings and human disturbance (Hälterlein l.c.).

During 1990-1994 the main colony, then south of the river Elbe, fledged few young owing to predation, trampling by grazing cattle, and disturbance from boat traffic. In 1995 the 25-30 pairs moved to a recently established colony of 1180 Common Terns at Neufelder Vorland on the north side of the river mouth. Here, geese and sheep graze the foreland, and foxes are fenced out; the colony had a good breeding success in 1995.

In the 1980s, the population in Limfjorden/Nisum Fjord disappeared completely and may have moved to Keldsand in the Danish Wadden Sea. In the first years many Gull-billed Terns occurred here throughout the breeding season without nesting. In 1991, with a particularly cold, windy and wet spring affecting breeding of most water-bird species in the Wadden Sea (Fleet et al. 1994), 25-30 Gull-billed Terns were observed at Keldsand and other parts of the Wadden Sea, the number matching the breeding population in both 1990 and 1992. Also in 1994, when only three pairs bred, Gull-billed Terns were regularly seen throughout the Wadden Sea, especially on Langli and Rømmø. Despite the fluctuating number of breeders, the Danish population has been fairly stable over the past sixteen years (Tab. 1, Fig. 2).

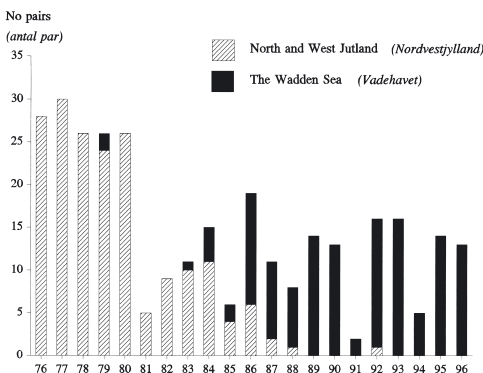


Fig. 2. Breeding pairs (maximum numbers) of Gull-billed Terns in Denmark, 1976-1996.

Bestandsudvikling (maksimumtal) for Sandterne i Danmark 1976-1996.

Safeguarding colonies

Visits by tourists and birdwatchers arriving by boat caused increasing disturbance of the colonies of the Gull-billed Tern in Limfjorden (Møller 1975b). This development was the reason for the establishment of reserves on the islands Vår Holm and Kyø Holm in Limfjorden and Fjandø in Nisum Fjord.

When the Gull-billed Tern started breeding on Keldsand in 1984, there was public access to the island which, at low tide, may be reached on foot from Sønderho 300 m to the east. In 1986-1988 the colony on Keldsand was kept under regular observation by K. Fischer who found that during the first year disturbance from sunbathers and worm-diggers occurred frequently; two downy young found dead had been stepped on by visiting people. As a consequence, public access to the island was prohibited in 1987 which reduced the traffic, although two people were seen collecting Gull-billed Tern eggs there in 1988. In 1989 the colony was guarded and experienced a good breeding success. In late May and throughout June 1990 the colony again was guarded, this time by volunteers financially supported by DOF, but the regular occurrence of foxes that year led to breeding failure of the terns, and when these returned to the colony the following year they did not breed.

In 1992 the majority of the Danish Gull-billed Terns settled on Mandø, and a guarding system was subsequently organized by volunteers from DOF, so that from late May to the end of June the colony was under daily observation. Horse-riders caused some disturbance, and two days with military flights at low altitudes stressed the birds. The biggest threat to the colony, however, came from grazing sheep. The Gull-billed Terns nested on an elevated sandy spot in the middle of the ternery, where also sheep preferred to rest and feed, and the terns often spent prolonged periods on the wing in unsuccessful attempts to drive the sheep away. The 8-10 pairs present only fledged six young.

In 1993, the colony (12 pairs) was probably destroyed by sheep when the foreland was partially flooded. In such situations, the sheep congregate at the elevated parts of the foreland, where also the terns and gulls breed.

The observations from 1992, indicating that grazing sheep caused most of the disturbance of the Gull-billed Terns and other birds on Mandø, were confirmed in 1996. In May that year the County of Ribe arranged for 3 ha out of Mandø's 50 ha of salt marsh to be fenced during the breeding season and kept free of grazing sheep. After



I Nordeuropa yngler Sandternen nu kun i Vadehavet, hvor den danske bestand udgør 11-16 par. Foto: John Larsen.

four weeks of intensive sheep grazing, 420 pairs of Black-headed Gulls where breeding inside the fenced area, compared to 140 pairs in the surrounding, much larger area. Furthermore, during a flood on 21 June, approximately 40 pairs of Common Terns nesting outside the fence had their nests destroyed by sheep. Unfortunately, no Gull-billed Terns bred on Mandø in 1996, although two pairs displayed in May.

Discussion

Although cold and wet conditions during the breeding season may occasionally reduce breeding frequency or success, long-term climatic changes are not generally considered an important regulating factor for Gull-billed Tern populations (Møller 1975a, Hälterlein 1996). Møller (1975a, 1975b) suggested that the decline after 1940 was a consequence of drainage and cultivation of heather and meadows, degrading foraging and breeding habitat used by the birds, with changes in the wintering areas as probable contributing causes. Only after the species had become rare did human disturbance come to play a role.

The Wadden Sea landscape has certainly changed during this century, with much reduced

Gull-billed Tern feeding habitat (pasture, salt marsh, heather) as a result. On Fanø and Rømø the main changes were the emergence of conifer plantations and the enormous growth in recreational areas, while on the mainland the most decisive changes were dike construction and the subsequent drainage and cultivation of freshwater marshes. During the past twenty years, however, the remaining feeding habitat for Gull-billed Terns has changed relatively little, and compared with the Limfjorden area, the Danish Wadden Sea landscape still exhibits large areas of unfragmented, open and treeless habitat. Since 1981 most of this land has been legally protected, and numbers of grazing animals have not changed much.

Food appears not to be a limiting factor for the Gull-billed Terns in the German Wadden Sea where, in most years, they prey on mice (Hälterlein 1996). Breeding terns from Fanø mainly forage near this island, although they are also regularly seen at Skallingen and Langli. Gull-billed Terns from Mandø have been observed foraging on Fanø and Rømø, where our observations indicate that mice, lizards and downy young of birds make up much of the food. In Margrethe Kog the main prey also appears to be mice and young birds (in early May especially Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Tab. 2. Number of fledged Gull-billed Tern young in Denmark, from sites and years where it is known. *Antallet af flyvefærdige Sandterne-unger i kolonier og år, hvor tallet er kendt.*

Locality	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Tipperne	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	–	–	–	–
Langli	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
Keldsand	10	1	3-4	13	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mandø	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	0	–	0	–
Juvre	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
Lakolk	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	0
Margrethe Kog	2	0	–	2	0	0	–	–	–	0	–

chicks), and nothing suggests that food availability should limit the population in the area, although bad weather has caused poor breeding success in some years.

Fox predation, on the other hand, is obviously an important factor regulating Gull-billed Tern distribution, causing the abandonment of localities like Fjandø and Keldsand, and also Meldorfer Bucht in Schleswig-Holstein. Foxes do occur on Rømø, Mandø and Fanø, where their presence threatens the continued existence of the Gull-billed Tern colonies. The foxes have reached Rømø and Mandø by man-made dams built in the 1930s and 1970s, respectively. They arrived on Fanø across the ice in the 1940s; here they thrive on the numerous rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. Foxes on Mandø are regulated in order to reduce their effect on bird colonies, obviously with some success. On Langli, no foxes have occurred during the breeding season of the birds after 1989, and since then the colonies here of Herring, Common, Lesser Black-backed and Black-headed Gulls, and of Arctic and Sandwich Terns, have grown to become the largest in the Danish Wadden Sea (Rasmussen & Thorup 1996).

Gull-billed Terns in Denmark generally breed in colonies with Black-headed Gulls. They did not colonize Fanø until 1984, when the first Black-headed Gulls settled on the island, although they had been seen regularly from 1968 onwards (Schøtt 1971).

Tourism is a dominant "industry" in the Wadden Sea islands. Rømø annually receives about two million day visitors, and one million stay overnight. 30000 people are present at any time during the summer, concentrating on some of the beaches (Kaae 1996). Colonial breeding birds are restricted to areas with little human activity, such as nature reserves or military areas. On Fanø the situation is similar. Seven out of nine Black-Headed

Gull colonies in the Danish Wadden Sea in 1995 were in areas to where the public had no access.

Regulations only protect the birds if they are enforced. Egg collection may, for example, be a more serious problem for the Gull-billed Terns than the few known instances imply. Collection of gulls' eggs has been prohibited in Denmark since 1994, but still took place on Mandø and Rømø in 1995 and 1996. Egg-collecting and disturbance are believed to have played a significant role in the late phase of decline of the Gull-billed Tern in Denmark after 1950 (Møller 1975b).

Intensive grazing by sheep is a well documented problem on Mandø and in Margrethe Kog. At least on public owned land with bird colonies, sheep grazing should be reduced or abandoned during the breeding season.

The entire Wadden Sea population has been fairly stable during the last 20-30 years, but this is not true for the particular colonies. Big colonies of 20-40 pairs are usually more stable than lesser ones (Møller 1978). The average colony size in Denmark 1976-96 was only 4.7 pairs (n=75). Before 1973, the mean size was about 36 pairs (n=260), according to Møller (1978). Small unstable colonies suggest a low breeding success. The available information on fledging success in Denmark since 1986 is fragmentary (Tab. 2), but reproduction appears generally to have been low and in some years nil. It has probably been insufficient to balance mortality. The single large colony in Schleswig-Holstein is apparently the only colony in the area that has had a stable and successful reproduction. Decreased reproduction will only affect the population after several years (Møller (1975c) estimated the average longevity of Danish Gull-billed Terns at 7 years). Reduced recruitment could well be the cause of the moderate decline seen in the Wadden Sea population during the last 20-30 years.

Conclusion and recommendations

Despite the abandonment of the traditional Danish breeding sites in North Jutland, the total Danish population of Gull-billed Terns has been fairly stable since 1981. Colony site changes are frequent and breeding success is low.

Fox predation, nest destruction by grazing livestock, and possibly human disturbance are the major factors causing low reproduction and shifts between colony sites. If the decline of the population is caused by a poor reproductive success, it may still be possible to turn the trend. Within a few years it could be too late.

We recommend that a coherent management plan for the Gull-billed Tern is prepared jointly by the Danish and German authorities. The plan should set up guidelines for the protection of actual and potential breeding sites, adequately addressing the problems of intensity and timing of grazing at breeding colonies, human disturbance and direct persecution, and fox predation. Control of foxes should be a part of the management plan.

The plan should include an intensive monitoring scheme to obtain precise data on population development, breeding success, causes of breeding failure, and foraging.

Acknowledgments

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Resumé

Ynglebestanden af Sandterne i Danmark 1976-1996

Bestanden af Sandterne *Gelochelidon nilotica* er gået voldsomt tilbage i løbet af dette århundrede. Siden kernelokaliteterne i Limfjorden og Nissum Fjord blev forladt i begyndelsen af 1980'erne yngler hele den nordvest-europæiske bestand nu i Vadehavet. Bestanden er isoleret fra de øvrige europæiske bestande ved Middelhavet.

Bestandsudviklingen og udbredelsen i Danmark i perioden 1976-1996 fremgår af Tab. 1 og Fig. 1-2. Vår Holm i Limfjorden var i en årrække i 1970'erne den vigtigste danske koloni, men siden 1988 er der ikke konstateret yngleforsøg i Limfjordsområdet. Årsagen til, at området blev opgivet, var iflg. Møller (1975b) ødelæggelse af fourageringsområderne. Kolonien på Fjandø i Nissum Fjord forsvandt pga. tilstedeværelsen af ræv.

I slutningen af 1980'erne var den største koloni i Vadehavet Keldsand ved Sønderho på Fanø. Denne koloni forsvandt også pga. ræv, og fuglene flyttede til Mandø,

hvor ynglesuccessen imidlertid var ret ringe (Tab. 2), formentlig pga. græssende får og menneskelig færdsel (incl. indsamling af æg i fuglekolonier). Ægindsamlingen fortsatte endnu i 1996 trods et generelt forbud siden 1994.

Margrethe Kog har i det meste af perioden huset et til to ynglepar, men ynglesuccessen har været ringe, formentlig pga. græssende får. Ræve ødelagde dog koloniområdet i 1996.

I det meste af perioden har Sandterne ynglet to steder på Rømhø. Data er ret mangelfulde, men tilsyneladende har ungeproduktionen ikke været særlig stor. Årsagerne hertil er ukendte, men også her forekommer der ægindsamling i betydeligt omfang. I 1996 flyttede hovedkolonien (7 par) til et nyt opvækstområde i det lukkede militære øvelsesområde på forstranden på Rømhø; området er ret uforstyrret, men kolonien blev oversvømmet i slutningen af juni kort før klækningen.

Måge- og ternekolonien på Keldsand blevet lukket for færdsel pga. Sandternens tilstedeværelse. DOF har i enkelte år organiseret et opsyn med kolonierne på såvel Keldsand som Mandø.

I hele perioden har langt den største koloni i Vadehavet (20-60 par) ligget i Slesvig-Holsten. Bestanden syd for grænsen toppede med 60-70 par mellem 1975 og 1983, men er siden faldet til 40-50 par. Den store koloni er flyttet mellem flere lokaliteter og lå i 1995-1996 ved Elbens nordlige bred i en stor koloni af Fjordterne og Hættemåge, som opstod efter at området effektivt var blevet hegned mod ræve. Den danske del af bestanden har siden 1981 været ret stabil på 11-16 par.

Fourageringsmulighederne i Vadehavet er formodentlig tilstrækkeligt gode og har ikke ændret sig væsentligt de sidste 20 år. Imidlertid betyder den meget lille bestandsstørrelse og de hyppige koloniskift, sammenholdt med den ret beskedne ungeproduktion, at bestanden må betegnes som akut truet.

Det foreslås, at myndighederne i Danmark og Tyskland i fællesskab udarbejder en forvaltningsplan til bevarelsen af bestanden af Sandterne. Denne plan bør sigte på at minimere de negative faktorer, der vides at påvirke bestanden. Bl.a. bør ræve bekæmpes på Vadehavsoerne, og antallet af potentielle ynglekolonier bør øges ved at gennemføre en bedre beskyttelse af kolonier af Hættemåger og terner. Endelig bør planen indebære en intensiv overvågning, så forhold omkring ynglesucces og fouragering kan klarlægges, og effekten af en effektiv beskyttelse kan følges.

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Økonomisk støtte fra Videnskabeligt Udvalg

DOFs Videnskabelige Udvalg (VU) yder økonomisk støtte til videnskabelige ornitologiske arbejder. Uddelingen finder normalt sted i december måned. Ansøgninger om støtte bedes derfor indsendt til VU **senest 1. december** året før beløbet skal bruges.

Ud over at yde økonomisk støtte til DOFs faglige grupper og fuglestationer, har VU i de senere år støttet en række feltornitologiske projekter, bl.a. fødeundersøgelser hos Stor Hornugle, ynglebiologi hos Slørugle, udveksling af fugle mellem alkekolonier i Østersøen, monitoring af Natravn og Rød Glente. VU har også givet støtte til deltagelse i konferencer og til udgivelser, fx af *Ishøj Fuglestation 1994-1996*.

Støttebeløb udgør normalt ikke over kr. 5000. Ansøgningskema og retningslinier kan rekvireres hos VU på adressen: Dansk Ornitologisk Forening, Vesterbrogade 138-140, 1620 København V. Ansøgninger sendes til samme adresse.