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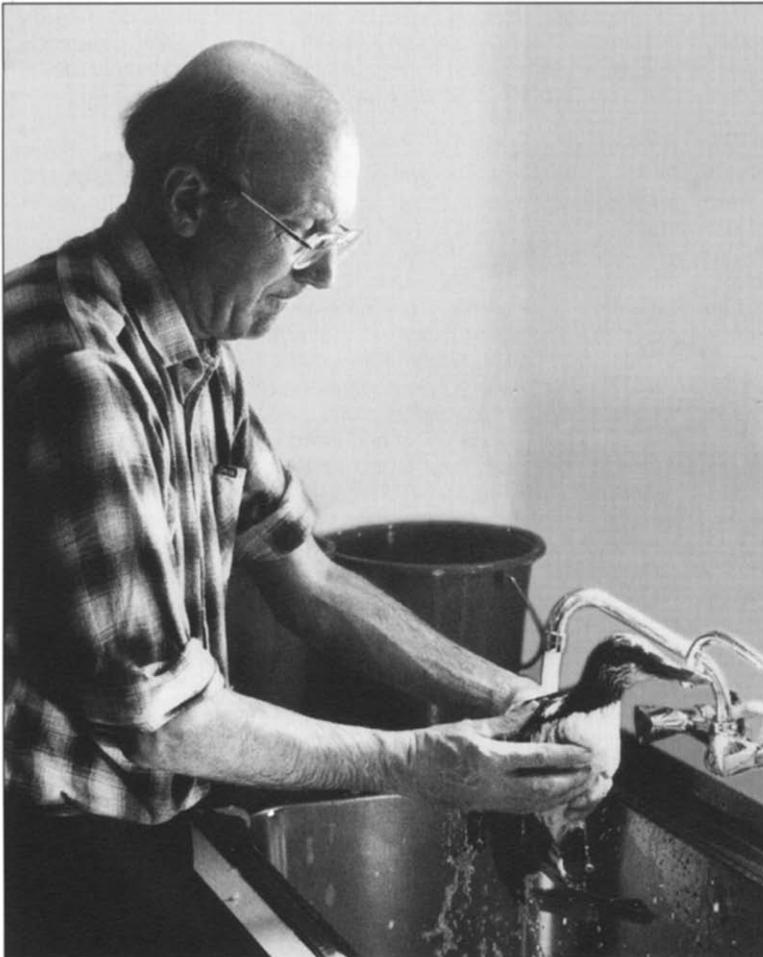
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DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to the 65th anniversary and the retirement of

C. Swennen

marine biologist and ornithologist



With the retirement of Kees Swennen the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research loses a scientist with a wide range of experience and knowledge. Kees has worked at NIOZ for 30 years. It is hard to decide, whether he should be called primarily a taxonomist, a marine ecologist or an ornithologist. In all of these fields he has won his spurs and left his tracks, as evidenced by the extensive bibliography at the end of this note.

Kees started his career in biology as an amateur with a keen interest in the marine fauna. Soon he became a leading specialist in the taxonomy of nudibranchiate molluscs. During the 1950s, he was a central figure among the Dutch amateur students of marine biology. He took this position both as an editor of *Het Zeepaard* and a manager of the *Centraal Systeem* (a file of all interesting records of marine organisms observed in the Netherlands). A long list of short notes on notable finds of marine species originated from these activities. Many colleagues then and now have profited from his wide taxonomical knowledge.

Kees' real fame, however, stems from his research on bird ecology. As early as 1952, a short paper on eider ducks near Vlieland indicated both his favourite bird species (*Somateria mollissima mollissima*) and his favoured working area (the West-Frisian island of Vlieland). For some 40 years, he followed the wax and wane of the eider population at and around Vlieland. His long-term record of the highly variable annual recruitment success of eiders is one of those scarce long series of consistently gathered data that reflect the ups and downs of our coastal environment. Though gradually growing, the Vlieland breeding colony experienced a serious dip in the early 1960s when chlorinated hydrocarbons killed a high proportion of the breeding females in the western part of the Wadden Sea. Kees actively and successfully collaborated in tracking down the originator of the calamity.

An animated dispute on the damaging nature of the also growing colonies of herring gulls on the Frisian islands could be decided in favour of the persecuted gulls. Gulls indeed took high numbers of eider chickens, but these victims were only weakened specimens that were already doomed to die. By elegant field experiments, Kees could show that shortage of suitable food rather than gull predation was the primary cause of the frequent recruitment failure in eiders. His arguments surely played a role in the termination of the unlucky persecution of gulls in the Netherlands.

Another achievement that added significantly to his fame as an ornithologist was the invention and development of an experimental set-up to keep birds in captivity that normally live far offshore, such as guillemots and razorbills. This expertise in keeping such true seabirds healthy for long periods opened the way to detailed studies of their behaviour and has found wide application in the recovery of oiled birds.

Several other studies on bird ecology were successfully completed. The significance for wintering birds of the extensive stretches of water in the Wadden Sea and Lake IJssel was mapped by frequent flights in small aircraft. Numerous studies linked birds with their food resources, both by documenting successive hosts in helminth parasites and by assessing food choice and food-intake rates in various bird species. Studies on the relationships between coastal birds and their food stocks were not only carried out in the Wadden Sea area, but also in such remote (but comparable) areas as Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Surinam.

The relationship between shorebirds and their benthic prey is also the theme of this special issue of the NJSR. Therefore, we think it is appropriate to honour Kees Swennen by dedicating this issue to him.

Jan J. Beukema and Theunis Piersma