

RINGING OF HERRING GULLS *LARUS ARGENTATUS* AND GREATER
BLACK-BACKED GULLS *LARUS MARINUS* ON COPENHAGEN DUMP

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From 23.05.1970 - 01.03.1971, 3 582 Herring Gulls and 77 Greater Black-backed Gulls were caught and ringed on Copenhagen dump (55°39'N 12°34'E), Denmark. This dump was an important feeding area for thousands of Herring Gulls, many Black-headed Gulls and Greater Black-backed Gulls as well as a few Lesser Black-backed Gulls. The dump is undoubtedly the basis for the increasing number of breeding Herring Gulls in Cresund, Saltholm (minimum 20 000 pairs). Herring Gulls from the Baltic Sea area and Kattegat visited the dump as well, especially outside the breeding season.

The gulls were caught as follows: I put on working clothes and gloves and dug a hole in a heap of garbage, sufficiently big for me to lie on my back. A plastic-bag with holes for the eyes and mouth was pulled over my head (as camouflage), garbage was put on the legs and body in a manner which left the hands free. I was lying completely quiet until the Herring Gulls arrived by hundreds after some 10-15 minutes in order to feed. However, I could not start catching them right away as I was busy protecting myself against their weight. 20-30 Herring Gulls were quite a heavy burden on my head, shoulders, arms and breast. Furthermore I had to take great care of my eyes as the Herring Gulls would pick at them immediately, if they detected them. Anyway, within a few minutes the flock spread and the ringing could start. I caught the birds with my hands.

Quiet movements with the arms were not observed by the gulls, as there was a vivid activity among them. The birds were taken by a firm grip around the back or wings and taken down to my body, where the ringing took place. When the ringing was done, the bird was released and either flew away or continued to feed as if nothing had happened. Thereafter the next bird could be caught. In case any Greater Black-backed Gulls were nearby, I had to be especially careful and stop catching Herring Gulls, as the Greater Black-backed Gulls showed very much suspicion and shyness.

Under favourable conditions which means quietness in the area a lot of bait (sometimes I took big bags of bread along) and hungry gulls, I was able to catch and ring up to 50 Herring Gulls an hour. However, it was easiest to ring the young Herring Gulls as they were less shy than the adults. The young

birds were mainly caught in August-September. Under these conditions it was mostly impossible to use paper and pencil to the result that I had to ring young and adult birds with different ring series. Measuring of birds was impossible as well. The maximum catch a day of adult Herring Gulls was 200 (19.07.1970) and the corresponding number of young birds 210 (23.08.1970).

The ringing could take place under practically all weather conditions. The results were, however, not so good in storm and rain as the gulls then were very careful.

During 1971 the amount of garbage was reduced as it was taken to a new refuse disposal plant so that the catching of gulls had to stop.

Besides a great number of Herring Gulls ringed in Denmark, following foreign ringed birds were caught: from Germany 70 (mostly wintering guests in Rostock, DDR), Sweden 32, Finland 25, USSR 1, Belgium 1.

Up to 01.09.1975, 440 Herring Gulls of the 3 582 ringed were recovered (= 12%), namely: from Denmark 325, Sweden 86, F.R.G. 20, DDR 5, Holland 1, Norway 1, USSR 2, and 6 Greater Black-backed Gulls of the 77 ringed were recovered (= 8%), namely: from Sweden 4, Finland 1, Norway 1. At the end some of the most interesting recoveries:

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

493305	P	06.05.50	Amager, Copenhagen:	55°38N,	12°34E
	x	05.02.71	Copenhagen dump:	55°39N,	12°34E
4005842	A	05.09.70	Copenhagen dump		
	+	28.08.73	Belomorsk, USSR:	64°35N,	34°50E
4003776	A	17.01.71	Copenhagen dump		
	x	28.08.71	Kem, USSR:	64°58N,	34°37E

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

336536	A	24.12.70	Copenhagen dump		
	+	16.07.73	Granbody, Finland:	60°03N,	20°27E
336537	A	24.12.70	Copenhagen dump		
	x	20.05.73	Ersfjordboth, Norway:	69°42N,	18°36E

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