

## 9.2. Seabird observations

Text by P. Fauchald and R. Klepikovskiy

Figures by P. Fauchald

Seabird observations were carried out by standardized strip transect methodology. Birds were counted from the vessel's bridge while the ship was steaming at a constant speed of ca. 10 knots. All birds seen within an arc of 300 m from directly ahead to 90° to one side of the ship were counted. On the vessels Helmer Hansen, GO Sars and Johan Hjort, birds following the ship i.e. "ship-followers", were counted as point observations within the sector every ten minutes. Ship-followers included the most common gull species and Northern fulmar. Total transect length covered by the Norwegian vessels (Helmer Hansen, GO Sars and Johan Hjort) was 5281 km. Total transect length covered by Vilnius was 5704 km.

A total of 113 279 birds belonging to 32 different species were counted (Table 9.2.1). Similar to previous surveys, the highest density of seabirds was found north of the polar front. These areas were dominated by Brünnich's guillemots (*Uria lomvia*), little auk (*Alle alle*), kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) and Northern fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*).

The distribution of the different species was similar to the distribution in previous surveys (Figure 9.2.1). Alcids were observed throughout the study area but the abundance and species distribution varied geographically. Little auks were found in the northern area, Brünnich's guillemots were found in the central and northern area, Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) were found in the western area and common guillemots (*Uria aalge*) were found in the south-eastern area. Among the ship-followers, black-backed gulls (*Larus marinus*) and herring gull (*Larus argentatus*) were found in the south, close to the coast. Glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) was found in small numbers in the central western area, kittiwakes were found in high density in the north-east, while Northern fulmars were encountered in highest numbers in the west and south.

## ECOSYSTEM SURVEY OF THE BARENTS SEA AUTUMN 2014

Table 9.2.1. List of species encountered during the survey in 2014. Note that ship-followers were counted differently on the Norwegian and Russian vessels.

English name	Scientific name	Norwegian vessels	Russian vessel
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>	41	1
Little auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	570	1223
Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	3	0
Purple sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	5	7
Black guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	190	25
Ringed plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	0	1
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	0	1
Atlantic puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	1012	18
Northern fulmar*	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	92152	2027
Black-throated loon	<i>Gavia arctica</i>	0	6
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	1	0
Herring gull*	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	802	38
Heuglin's gull*	<i>Larus heuglini</i>	0	59
Glaucous gull*	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	1873	69
Great black-backed gull*	<i>Larus marinus</i>	371	61
Northern gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	9	7
Ivory gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	110	6
Red-necked phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	1	0
Snow bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	0	1
Sooty shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	9	1
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	7	0
Black-legged kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	4576	2661
Ross's gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	1	0
Common eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	1	10
	<i>Stercorarius</i>		
Long-tailed skua	<i>longicaudus</i>	17	0
Arctic skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	86	100
Pomarine skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	230	315
Great skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	12	1
Unident. Skua	<i>Stercorarius sp.</i>	11	0
Arctic tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	57	10
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	0	1
Common guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	166	120
Brünnich's guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	3090	1080
Unspec. guillemot	<i>Uria spp.</i>	18	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>105421</b>	<b>7858</b>

\*Ship-followers

ECOSYSTEM SURVEY OF THE BARENTS SEA AUTUMN 2014

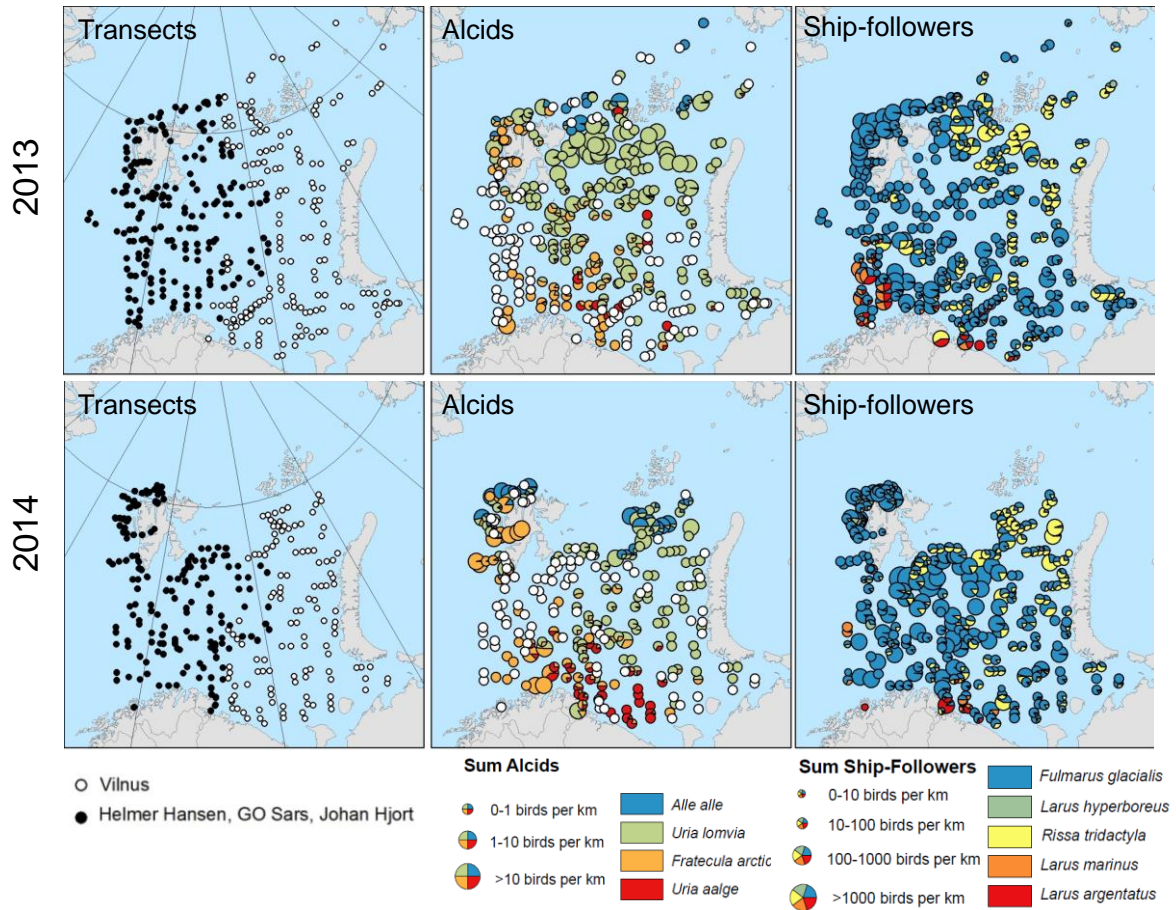


Figure 9.2.1. Seabird observations in 2013 (top) and 2014 (bottom). Left panel; positions of transects, middle panel; distribution of auks, right panel; distribution of ship-followers (gulls and fulmar).