

## GPS tracking network of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls breeding at the southern North Sea coast

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As part of our terrestrial and marine observatory for LifeWatch (<http://lifewatch.inbo.be> and <http://www.lifewatch.be/en/gps-tracking-network-large-birds>), the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), Ghent University (UGent), and University of Antwerp (UA) are tracking Lesser Black-backed and Herring gulls with lightweight, solar powered GPS trackers. The project builds upon the extensive knowledge the INBO has acquired over the last 15 years when studying in particular postnuptial migration, as well as mate and site fidelity of large gulls, by means of sightings of colour-marked individuals ringed in Belgium and via individual-based life-history studies by UGent and UA. The data collected through this bird tracking network allows to study the migration patterns and habitat use of the gulls in more detail. Furthermore, they are no longer biased towards locations where observers can see colour-ringed birds. To allow greater use of the data beyond our research questions, all data are published as open data. The recorded data are periodically released in bulk as open data (<http://dataset.inbo.be/bird-tracking-gull-occurrences>), and are also accessible through CartoDB and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).

During the afternoon demo session Eric Stienen will present some persuasive results of the tracking study showing interesting aspects of gull migration, habitat use and individual specialization and he will elaborate on unexpected gull behaviour during the breeding season.