

Gale warning

High seas on the Northsea



FLYING FOCUS AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

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– High seas on the Northsea –

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Colophon

Title: Gale warning – High seas on the Northsea

ISBN/EAN: 978-90-79716-16-6

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Published by Flying Focus BV

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Internet: www.flyingfocus.nl

Photography: Flying Focus, Herman IJsseling

Design: René Bijman

Printing: Zalsman, Kampen

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Index

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Abis Dover | 23/25 | Luro | 6/9 |
| Adamas | 64/66 | Koning Willem I | 70 |
| Alexandergracht | 11 | Missouriborg | 14/15 |
| Alrek | 28 | NH1816 | 22 |
| Angermanland | 47 | Orasund | 48/49 |
| Antje K. | 41 | Parida | 81 |
| Arie Visser | 94/96 | Paul Johannes | 71 |
| Baltic Performer | 83 | Polfoss | 84/86 |
| Baumwall | 43 | Priscilla | 58 |
| BBC Rhine | 80 | PZ-657 | 79 |
| BF Victoria | 69 | RMS Ratingen | 74 |
| Bothniaborg | 55 | Samira | 82 |
| Burak Bayraktar | 50 | Schillig | 38/39 |
| Coral Leaf | 92 | Skandi Waveney | 32 |
| Eems Servant | 52/54 | Smaragd | 67 |
| Eendracht | 62/63 | Spiegelgracht | 76 |
| En Avant | 20/37 | Stadiongracht | 10 |
| Erasmusgracht | 59/61 | Star Bonaire | 20/21 |
| F.D.Invincible | 33 | Stella Wega | 30/31 |
| Fri Moon | 46 | Stolt Kittiwake | 26 |
| Furioso | 51 | UK-153 | 12 |
| Graaf van Bylandt | 87 | UK-22 | 13 |
| Hanseatic Trader | 90 | Unimar | 29 |
| HD-27 | 78 | Universal Durban | 77 |
| Helsinki | 44 | Uta | 91 |
| Hunter | 16/17 | Vedette | 45 |
| Hydra | 68 | Vos Precious | 56/57 |
| Ievoli Amaranth | 88/89 | Wilson Mosel | 72/73 |
| John Augustus Essberger | 4/5 | Wilson Ruhr | 40 |
| Lady Nola | 93 | Wisby Verity | 34/36 |
| Lady Nona | 27 | Zillertal | 75 |
| Lelie | 18/19 | | |
| Lindo | 42 | | |

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Foreword

Family and friends have become used to the fact that between September and March, twice a day, I closely monitor the wind and weather forecasts. They have come to recognise the sense of unrest that takes me over when there is a slight chance of gale force 8 or more in a few days' time followed by disappointment whenever the expected wave heights are scaled down. In August our storm aircraft receives extra attention during the major service inspection. Everything is checked to make sure we never miss an opportunity. It is a waiting game after that.

Sometimes a whole winter will go by without real gales. Nothing more than the occasional stormy southwesterly but not a single full-blown force 10 northwesterly storm. In other years we are lucky to experience a few mostly force 9 winds. Since we purchased our storm aircraft we have been able to take off in force 9 or 10 winds, but more so have faced the fact opportunities for storm flights are rare.

We now know every storm is unique. Sea, skies, turbulence are always different, that is exactly what makes storm flying so remarkable. The challenge of grasping opportunities for spectacular photographs!

The northwesterly gale on 1 November 2006 was the ultimate opportunity. Early in the morning, just after the storm had reached its highpoint, we took off from the northwestern runway at Borkum airfield. Within a few minutes we were able to photograph the *Cementina* with rudder problems in the stormy waters and waves of more than 10 metres in height. We came back with unique photographs of ships in the most difficult of conditions. Since that time, we have enjoyed two similar storm flights and many more in 'just' force 9 gales.

The last two winters, we had numerous opportunities for heavy weather flights, recording plenty of new photographic material; enough to publish part three of this photographic series. Nonetheless, this wealth of material is no reason to sit back and relax. Who knows when the next opportunity for even more and more spectacular photographic material could arise, this storm season, or the next, or two years from now...

To be continued!

Herman IJsseling, aerial photographer

John Augustus Essberger

June 2, 2015 – The chemical tanker *John Augustus Essberger* sails regularly between the Baltic and Rotterdam/Antwerpen. During wintertime she often has to cross the Northsea in heavy weather.







Luro

March 31, 2015 – The *Luro* owned by Marin Ship Management from Delfzijl. Here she is captured sailing in ballast and fighting the waves during a gale Beaufort 9.









Stadiongracht

November 25, 2012 – The 172 meter long *Stadiongracht* owned by Spliethoff heading for her homeport Amsterdam at reduced speed. She repeatedly plunged her bow deep into the six metre-high waves of a southwesterly gale.



Alexandergracht

November 25, 2012 – On its way to the English Channel Spliethoff's *Alexandergracht* bumps into the waves in the southwesterly shipping lane west of Den Helder.

UK-153

June 2, 2015 – The Urk based trawler *UK-153* riding high during a rare summerstorm, Beaufort 9 before continuing fishing



UK-22

June 2, 2015 – During the same storm sterntrawler *UK-22* has stopped flyshoot-fishing waiting for better weather.



Missouriborg

February 15, 2014 – The *Missouriborg* owned by Delfzijl-based Wagenborg Shipping is seen here shedding tonnes of water in a force 9 southwesterly gale.





Hunter

December 6, 2013 – In an attempt to assist a freighter with engine trouble the Terschelling based tug Hunter of Noordgat Shipping is sailing in shallow waters near Texel during a stormy northwesterly wind.







Lelie

December 6, 2013 – The coaster *Lelie* swamped by a wave during a northwesterly gale off Texel. The ship was occasionally forced to sail almost abeam of the 5 metre-high waves.



Star Bonaire

October 22, 2014 – The tanker *Star Bonaire* of Koole Shipping in Zaandam regularly sails the Northsea with foodstuff. The ship was handed over by the shipyard in 2008 and has had a lot of bad weather experience since.







NH1816

April 14, 2014 – The new lifeboat *NH1816* was presented to the KNRM by Damen, in 2014. Following extensive sea trials, the vessel was tested in all weather conditions, before full operational deployment. On this photograph, the ship is clearing a set of high waves between the piers at IJmuiden with her wave-piercing axe bow.

Abis Dover

November 25, 2012 – The *Abis Dover* owned by Harlingen-based Abis Shipping is really put through her paces among the six metre-high waves of a force 9 southwesterly gale, just a few hours after leaving her homeport.







Stolt Kittiwake

January 11, 2015 – The *Stolt Kittiwake*
bumps into the waves of stormy
northwesterly winds north of Ameland.



Lady Nona

March 31, 2015 – The partially loaded *Lady Nona* owned by Wijnne en Barends from Delfzijl dives deep into the waves during a westerly storm. The vessel's propeller regularly rises above the water.





Alrek

March 31, 2015 – With a deckload of containers the vessel Alrek is navigating the shippinglane north of Terschelling during a westerly storm passing the southern Northsea.

Unimar

January 11, 2015 – With strong winds and high waves from starboard the freighter *Unimar* is rolling heavily. Drinking coffee during their watch on the bridge can be a challenge for captain and crew.





Stella Wega

January 10, 2015 – On her way to Rotterdam the chemical tanker *Stella Wega* bumps into the heigh seas now and then. The vessel from 1996 is owned by Theodora Tankers BV.



Skandi Waveny

January 9, 2015 – The supplier *Skandi Waveny* is heading back to homebase Den Helder and has to fight its way to the entrance of the Schulpengat during a stormy Southwesterly, Beaufort 8.





F.D. Invincible

October 28, 2013 – The supplier *F.D. Invincible* after leaving Den Helder for a long trip to a remote platform to deliver cargo containers. The seas are still high after a storm that passed to the east. More to the west it will be better.

Wisby Verity

January 10, 2015 – During the passage of a coldfront the wind increases rapidly. From the air we spotted *Wisby Verity* in streaming rain fighting the quickly building waves with a severe bump every now and then.







En Avant 20

October 22, 2014 – Towing a pontoon with rocks from Norway to Rotterdam the tugboat *En Avant 20* encountered problems during a passing northwesterly storm. In high seas some stones went overboard and the line broke. On the photo the tug is nearby the pontoon awaiting better weather to reconnect.



Schillig

February 15, 2014 – The *Schillig*, operated by Briese Schifffahrt from Leer in Germany, struggling through 5/6 metre-high waves of a southwesterly gale.







Wilson Ruhr

November 25, 2012 – The Northsea in wintertime can be a challenge for a smaller vessel like *Wilson Ruhr*, seen here in between the high and steep waves of galeforce winds.

Antje K.

November 25, 2012 – The *Antje K.* crashing bow-first through a huge breaker in the shipping lane northwest of Texel, in a full-blown force 9 southwesterly gale





Lindo

November 25, 2012 – Wilson's *Lindo* has the look of an insignificant speck of flotsam in the wave landscape of a southwesterly gale.

Baumwall

November 25, 2012 – The German coaster *Baumwall* has to shrug off a wall of water during a southwesterly Gale north of the island of Terschelling.





Helsinki

October 17, 2012 – The *Helsinki* operated by Bojen from Neermoor in Germany dives deep into the waves of a stormy southwesterly Gale.

Vedette

December 30, 2012 – The *Vedette*, delivered by Damen Shipyards Bergum to the English operator Faversham in 2001, regularly defies the rough waters of the Northsea during the winter months.



Fri Moon

December 31, 2012 – The *Fri Moon* operated by the Norwegian Kopervik shipping company heading for Rotterdam with a very slow groundspeed because of the 4 meter high waves in a southwesterly gale.



Angermanland

November 25, 2012 – The *Angermanland* operated by Navalis Shipping surrounded by waves in a southwesterly gale. Speed has been reduced to avoid breaking water and to protect the deck cargo.



Orasund

December 5, 2013 – The tanker *Orasund* forcing a passage to Rotterdam. Force 9 southwesterly wind and heavy rain slap the water. The vessel has reduced speed to avoid being swamped.







Burak Bayraktar

December 6, 2013 – On 5 December 2013, the Turkish vessel *Burak Bayraktar* found herself in difficulty in the shipping lane off Texel. The waves of a northwesterly gale regularly lifted the screw clear of the water, and the vessel was unable to maintain headway, threatening to run aground between Vlieland and Texel. Anchors were deployed just in time.

Furioso

December 5, 2013 – More than 50 knots of wind almost head on causes *Furioso* to an almost stationery position for a few hours north of Texel.



Eems Servant

March 31, 2015 – The freighter *Eems Servant* owned by Kornet Shipping Company climbs a 5 meter high wave during a westerly gale Beaufort 9 north of Terschelling.









Bothniaborg

March 31, 2015 – Even larger vessels like this Wagenborg owned ro-ro carrier *Bothniaborg* are diving into the high waves of a westerly gale, force 9, now and then.

Vos Precious

January 9, 2015 – On its way from a platform far north
Vos Precious has to fight its way to homeport Den
Helder, steaming up into the seas of stormy
southwesterly winds up to 50 knots







Priscilla

January 10, 2015 – When the coldfront of a frontal system passes the shipping lane west of Texel, the winds rapidly increase to more than 50 knots in heavy rain and building up seas. Half an hour later the bad weather passed and *Priscilla* could speed up again.



Erasmusgracht

January 12, 2015 – The almost 140 meter long *Erasmusgracht* owned by Spliethoff in Amsterdam battling the 4 meter waves of a southwesterly gale, force 8.





Eendracht

January 12, 2015 – The *Eendracht* from Global Seatrade at Urk fighting the waves in stormy southwesterly winds. The function of the wave-barrier on the bow is well demonstrated by this photo.







Adamas

December 5, 2013 – The coaster *Adamas* operated by Van Donderen overcoming a series of extra high waves during a westerly gale above the Wadden Islands.





Smaragd

November 25, 2012 – The *Smaragd* owned by De Bock Maritiem in heavy weather west of Texel. Rainstorms with regularly poor visibility and wind gusting up to more than 50 knots make for difficult progress.



Hydra

December 31, 2012 – The freighter *Hydra* in the shippinglane north of Ameland heading for Rotterdam. Winds up to Beaufort 8 and a waveheight between 3 and 4 metres.



BF Victoria

June 2, 2015 – The container vessel *BF Victoria* diving deep into a wave during a rare summer storm.





Koning Willem I

January 4, 2012 – KNRM Lifeboat *Koning Willem I* sailing out the shallow Westgat from her station at the island of Schiermonnikoog to the Northsea. A tiny but sturdy vessel between the breaking seas during stormy northwesterly winds.

Paul Johannes

December 10, 2012 – The *Paul Johannes* of the Noordwijk lifeboat station passing through the breakers following a beach launch. This semi-open lifeboat of the Valentijn class is equipped with two engines, each delivering 430 hp.



Wilson Mosel

January 11, 2015 – The *Wilson Mosel* sailing the southwest lane of the Traffic Separation System north of the Dutch Isles. The waves of a northwesterly gale are beating her starboardside again and again.





RMS Ratingen

January 9, 2015 – The small coaster *RMS Ratingen* with tons of water on the frontdeck after bumping into a high wave. Life on board will not be easy.



Zillertal

January 9, 2015 – The bow of the *Zillertal* slowly rises again after diving into a 4 meter barrier of water in stormy weather.



Spiegelgracht

December 11, 2014 – The 169 meter long Spiegelgracht between the waves coming in from starboard caused by northwesterly winds up to 50 knots.





Universal Durban

October 22, 2014 – The 160 meter long bulkcarrier *Universal Durban* on its way to Hamburg on a choppy Northsea.

HD-27

February 15, 2014 – During galeforce winds of up to 55 knots the Den Helder based beamtrawler *HD-27* is still fishing enduring the high seas.



PZ-657

December 11, 2014 – The Harlingen based beamtrawler *PZ-657* heading home 20 miles north of Vlieland. Within about 2 hours of sailing waves will decrease on the lee side of Vlieland.



BBC Rhine

December 11, 2014 – The 143 meter long *BBC Rhine* from 2008 struggling in the shipping lane north of Terschelling. Although she is not fully loaden and therefore high on the water, she bumps into a high wave now and then.





Parida

December 11, 2014 – The German vessel *Parida* dives deep into the waves of a stormy southwesterly wind. The precious cargo on deck is being protected by the wheelhouse in front.

Samira

October 28, 2013 – On its way to Amsterdam the small coaster *Samira* is facing high seas coming in from starboard side after a stormfront has passed.



Baltic Performer

October 22, 2014 – Underway from Rotterdam to the Baltic the *Baltic Performer* has to endure the high seas from the northwest in the beginning. After passing Den Helder the ship can change course direct to Skagen and the waves will come more from portside, resulting in a higher groundspeed.





Polfoss

October 28, 2013 – The *Polfoss* owned by Icelandic operator Eimskip dives deep into a wave created by the recently passed force 11 southwesterly gale. After the storm front passes, force 8 to 9 winds continue to whip up high waves.





Graaf van Bylandt

December 9, 2011 – The KNRM lifeboat *Graaf van Bylandt* is stationed at the island of Vlieland. This Arie Visser class lifeboat is designed to be able to sail out in every weather. The photo was taken in the shallow Stortemelk area, the small entrance between Vlieland and Terschelling. The ship is surrounded by breaking waves over the entrance.





levoli Amaranth

October 28, 2013 – The Dutch Coastguard has chartered the Italian tug *levoli Amaranth* as emergency towing vessel. The vessel is stationed in Den Helder and always puts out for standby duty off the coast whenever winds exceed force 5, to provide emergency cover. This photograph was taken in wind force 8.





Hanseatic Trader

October 22, 2014 – The coaster *Hanseatic Trader* sailing in the west-south-westerly shippinglane north of Terschelling, with the seas of stormy southwesterly winds coming in from portside. Within a few hours the vessel will have to change course 40 degrees to port and will have to endure the waves coming in head on.

Uta

October 28, 2013 – The *Uta* operated by Intersee from Haren Ems, delivered in 2007 by the Damen shipyard, dives deep into a wave in a southwesterly storm.



Coral Leaf

June 2, 2015 – The bow of the chemical tanker Coral Leaf, operated by Anthony Veder from Rotterdam, is surrounded with spray after smashing into a 6 meter high wave during a rare summerstorm.





Lady Nola

March 31, 2015 – Wijnne and Barend's *Lady Nola* surrounded with spray after bumping in an extra high wave..



Arie Visser

January 4, 2012 – The KNRM lifeboat *Arie Visser* stationed at West-Terschelling has been designed to be able to sail out to sea via the dangerous Stormmelk entrance under the most heavy circumstances.





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Flying Focus

The stormseasons 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 were wild and stormy now and then. Aerial photographer Herman IJsseling of Flying Focus was once again able to take off in his Cessna Skymaster PH-FLF to photograph ships in the roughest of weather conditions on the Northsea. These flights over the high seas provided sufficient spectacular pictures to compile volume 3 of the Gale warning series.

www.flyingfocus.nl

ISBN/EAN 978-90-79716-16-6

