



9-11-2007 • Northwesterly gales

The northwesterly gale rages on. After our stopover at Borkum airport, we fly westwards to photograph a coaster north of Terschelling. As we circle the coaster many times, a large shower coming from the north, carrying another load of squalls, catches my eye. I see how the shower and wind field slowly move toward two monotowers – small, unmanned platforms – standing north of the shipping lane. We immediately interrupt our session with the coaster to have a quick look at the small platform. As we draw nearer, a breathtaking seascape reveals itself windward. I spot a few towering breakers. Eager not to miss the hit, we continue at speed until the very last moment. Just before reaching the platform, pilot Brien van Wijk eases down on the throttle, perfectly timed to see a huge wave break against the underside of the platform and curl around it. I'm later told that the underside of the platform is 16 metres above sea level, meaning we

laid eyes on and photographed a wave that was over 15 metres high. The photo series was a publicity magnet and is still widely used today to show how the southern North Sea is no stranger to extreme weather.