

## Forster's Tern Nest Found near Cape Lookout, N.C.

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On 18 May 1973 I found a Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) nest near Cape Lookout, North Carolina. It was on a small island (approximately 150 feet by 150 feet) 1/3 mile W of Morgan Island, which lies immediately W of the Cape Lookout Channel about 2 miles S of Harkers Island. The island was covered entirely by *Spartina alterniflora* and would be almost completely flooded by high tides.

I was attracted to the island by two adult Forster's Terns in full breeding plumage that were sitting on a windrow of dry eel-grass (*Zostera marina*). They flew up as I approached and began circling overhead, constantly uttering the diagnostic "zurr" call. I found the nest on the mat of eel-grass from which the birds had flown. It consisted of a few dry pieces of *Spartina alterniflora* culms loosely arranged around a single egg. The egg was essentially identical to those of the Common Tern (*S. hirundo*). It was 46 mm in length, was dark olive, and had numerous brown blotches of various shades.

This is the first positive nesting record of the Forster's Tern in Carteret County, although the species almost certainly nested at North River Marsh in 1971 (*American Birds*, 25:845), and possibly nested there as early as 1963 (personal observation).

## Aspergillosis in a Royal Tern from Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, S.C.

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Large numbers of Royal Terns (*Thalasseus maximus*) and Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) nest on Marsh Island, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, in the company of Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*), Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*), Clapper Rails (*Rallus longirostris*), Snowy Egrets (*Leucophoyx thula*), and Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*). Royal Terns comprise about 90% of the breeding tern population, which has been doing very well. Reproductive success seems excellent, and there has been, as yet, no indication of eggshell thinning. By contrast, the local Brown Pelican population has undergone marked decreases, and the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center is currently investigating the cause of this decline.

During field studies on 13 May 1972, a dead Royal Tern was picked up on Marsh Island and was later submitted for necropsy (examination) and chemical analysis. The bird was an emaciated adult male, weighing 317 grams, with a prominent sternal keel. Moderate amounts of subcutaneous and abdominal fat were still present. All air sacs were thickened and contained several variously sized yellowish mycotic plaques (fungal growths); one plaque in the right thoracic air sac (10 x 8 x 3 mm) was greyish. Microscopically, it was a typical aspergillosis lesion and contained typical conidiophores (asexual fruiting bodies) of *Aspergillus* sp. Sections of the lung contained similar, but much smaller, *Aspergillus* lesions. Although no attempt was made to identify the *Aspergillus* culturally, it is likely that the infection was caused by *Aspergillus fumigatus*, the most common cause of aspergillosis among birds.

Chemical analysis revealed only 0.20 ppm DDE in the brain. PCB brain levels were less than 0.5 ppm. The carcass contained 0.68 ppm DDE and 1.3 ppm PCB. No dieldrin, DDT, heptachlor, mirex, or chlordane derivatives were found in either the brain or the

carcass. These values of DDE and PCB are all regarded as being far below the lethal concentrations for either chemical; in fact, this Royal Tern was surprisingly clean of pesticide residues.

Although aspergillosis is widely recognized as a cause of avian mortality, the disease does not appear to have been reported among terns. Chute et al. (*A Bibliography of Avian Mycosis*, Maine Agri. Exp. Station, Miscell. Publication 655, 1962) gave no references to aspergillosis among terns. The disease as seen in this Royal Tern is similar to the disease as it occurs in domestic poultry, waterfowl, and gulls.

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Compiled by ROBERT P. TEULINGS

Route 2, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

(All dates 1973 except as otherwise indicated)

**COMMON LOON:** An early fall migrant was noted on 22 August at Roanoke Rapids, N.C., by Merrill Lynch. In western North Carolina, an individual was found dead on the Blue Ridge Parkway between Asheville and Craggy Gardens in Buncombe County on 6 November by David Horton, as reported by Leon Carter who examined the specimen.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE:** An early fall visitor was sighted at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, S.C., 5 August by Sidney Gauthreaux.

**SHEARWATERS AND STORM-PETRELS:** Increasing interest in the species to be found offshore resulted in a series of six pelagic cruises to the Gulf Stream off the North Carolina coast during late summer and early fall of 1973.

18 August off Morehead City (Ake-DuMont party)

19 August off Hatteras (Ake-DuMont party)

20 August off Morehead City (Mattocks party)

2 September off Hatteras (Ake-Buckley-DuMont party)

16 September off Hatteras (Sonneborn party)

21 October off Morehead City (DuMont-Sykes party)

The party tallies are given below, listed in chronological order for each species:

Cory's Shearwater .....	33	294	54	82	45	18
Greater Shearwater .....	1	120	17	29	3	1
Audubon's Shearwater .....	0	42	14	2	1	1
Shearwater sp. ....	3	0	50	100	20	9
Leach's Storm-Petrel .....	0	0	0	0	2	0
Wilson's Storm-Petrel .....	26	59	45	92	100	0

Trip Leaders: Robert Ake, Paul Buckley, Paul DuMont, James Mattocks, David Sonneborn, Paul Sykes.

**GREAT BLUE HERON:** Merrill Lynch observed a flock of 48 at Roanoke Rapids Lake near Vulture, N.C., on 23 September.

**GREAT EGRET:** Summer and fall visitors were noted in several areas distant from known nesting localities. An individual summered at Umstead State Park near Raleigh, N.C., where it was seen regularly by park naturalist Nelson Chadwick between 1 July and 22 September. Nine were observed in a flock at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, S.C., on 5 August by Sidney Gauthreaux, an unusual count at that western piedmont reservoir. At least one was still present at the latter location as late as 9 October, reported by Harry LeGrand. Elsewhere, three were seen at Wildwood Lake, Caswell County, N.C., on 12 October by Fenton Day.

**LOUISIANA HERON:** One appeared at Umstead State Park near Raleigh in mid-July, lingering there until 5 September (Nelson Chadwick) and several were seen in late