

The first state record involved a bird at Raleigh from 2 to 5 November 1976 (Hader and Howard, Chat 41:70-71); the second was of two birds near Hayesville from 17 October to 11 December 1981 (see LeGrand, Chat 49:71-72). Full descriptions of the Hayesville birds have not been published, but photographs have been deposited at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. Haberyan has conclusively documented the occurrence of the adult male Rufous reported in this paper by donating color photographs to the State Museum.

First Nesting of Sooty Tern in South Carolina

PHIL WILKINSON

South Carolina Wildlife & Marine Resources Department
407 Meeting Street, Georgetown, S.C. 29440

On 10 June 1980, I found a pair of Sooty Terns (*Sterna fuscata*) nesting on Bird Key at the mouth of the Stono River in Charleston County, S.C. I was conducting the annual survey of shorebird and seabird colonies along the South Carolina coast when I found the nest. It contained one egg, which was colored white and was speckled with dark brownish spots and larger blotches. The nest was a shallow scrape in the sand, unlined, but with pieces of dried Saltmeadow Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) pulled around the edge of the scrape. The egg was on bare sand. Next to the nest was a clump of *S. patens*, which partially drooped over the nest. The nest was situated behind the dunes on a relatively low, flat, sandy area that was elevated above all but storm tides. It was on the periphery of a Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) and Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) colony.

I returned to Bird Key on 26 June 1980. The nest was still attended, but the egg was unhatched. At that time pictures of the egg, nest, and adults were taken. These pictures are now at the Charleston Museum (ChM 1987.7.001-005).

I returned to the rookery again on 13 July 1980, at which time neither the egg nor a chick was found. However, there were thousands of chicks of other species present, and the one Sooty Tern chick could have easily been missed.

This is the first nesting record of the Sooty Tern for South Carolina. In 1978 a pair of Sooty Terns attempted to nest at Morgan Island in the estuary north of Cape Lookout, N.C. A nest with an egg was found there on 16 June 1978, beneath a clump of *S. patens* (Fussell et al., Amer. Birds 35:236, 1981).

Otherwise, the nearest nesting areas of the Sooty Tern are in Florida at Bush Key in the Dry Tortugas, and on the Chandeleur Islands in Louisiana (Clapp et al., Marine Birds of the Southeastern United States and Gulf of Mexico, Part III, 1983).

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Another Sooty Tern pair nested in the lower Cape Fear River, N.C., in 1982 (Shields and Parnell, Chat 48:73-74, 1984).—WP]