

12. RECOVERY OF A RINGED SANDWICH TERN, *STERNA SANDVICENSIS SANDVICENSIS* FROM RAMESWARAM ISLAND, TAMILNADU

Terns are known for their long inter-continental wintering migration. Though the sandwich tern *Sterna s. sandvicensis* Latham has been known to frequent Sind and Makran coast (Ali and Ripley 1981) and Sri Lanka coast (Ceylon Bird Club Newsletter 1978), it has not so far been recovered from the mainland of India. However it has been sight recorded from Saurashtra (Dharmakumarsinhji 1958).

On 17.9.1983 a sandwich tern was recovered from Kundukal point of Rameswaram Island with a metal ring having Russian inscription and a number P. 702628 on it. The salient characters of the bird are as follows: Crown black, a black stripe continues from the eye back to the crown; body ash colour dorsally, white ventrally; bill long, slender tipped with yellow; legs, web foot and the pri-

maries black. The bird is locally known as 'Katrenji' in Tamil.

It may be mentioned that two other birds of the species were also recovered from the Pillaimadam lagoon, near Mandapam on 24.6.1983 and 7.11.83, indicating that the bird is a common visitor to these areas. They were found along with other common terns, namely *Hydroprogne caspia* (Caspian tern), *Sterna aurantia* and *Gelochelidon nilotica*.

It is of interest that the bird is found in Rameswaram area from 24.6.1983 as indicated by its capture. It is much earlier than its occurrence in the Sri Lanka coast in December. It is not known how much time these birds stay in their wintering areas.

This recovery, the second of the sandwich tern with a ring, confirms that the species is a common migratory bird to the Southern Peninsula.

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August 18, 1986.

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