

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF 113 DIPPING FLIGHTS BY SOOTY TERNS

Where flight ended	Total flights	Flights that included dipping:			Number of times body parts were dipped:			
		Feet	Bill	Breast	Feet	Bill	Breast	Total
On beach	35	13	34	0	22	60	0	82
In colony	78	45	74	19	102	158	49	309
Totals	113	58	108	19	124	218	49	391

and sometimes almost lands momentarily, wetting the feathers in the process. About 100 to 300 feet offshore the bird turns abruptly and flies back to the island. An individual may dip from 1 to as many as 10 times on one flight. In 113 flights between 13 May and 7 June in which I recorded all dipping movements, and also whether the bird landed back in the colony or with groups of terns sunning on the beach, over 80 percent of all dipping occurred on the flight out. In about 95 percent of the flights the birds dipped the bill at least once (Table 2), and in only about 17 percent they dipped their breast feathers. As one dipping motion might result in more than one part of the body being dipped, I recorded the number of times each part of the body was actually dipped (Table 2). The number of times a bird dropped down to dip is somewhat less.

None of the flights that ended with the bird landing on the beach among terns sunning or resting included dipping the breast feathers, while about 25 percent of the flights that ended with the bird going into the colony where eggs and young were present included dipping the breast feathers (Table 2). This suggests that dipping the breast feathers

TABLE 3. FLIGHTS AWAY FROM THE EGG BY ADULT SOOTY TERNS

Time	Number seen during:		
	First 15 days of incubation	Second 15 days of incubation	Total
06:00—07:00	4 ¹ (4) ²	1 (1)	5 (5)
07:00—08:00	6 (3)	0 (0)	6 (3)
08:00—09:00	8 (7)	5 (4)	13(11)
09:00—10:00	31(24)	4 (3)	35(27)
10:00—11:00	31(25)	11 (8)	42(33)
11:00—12:00	24(18)	5 (5)	29(23)
12:00—13:00	21(19)	17(15)	38(34)
13:00—14:00	24(20)	14(11)	38(31)
14:00—15:00	23(20)	4 (4)	27(24)
15:00—16:00	18(12)	3 (3)	21(15)
16:00—17:00	20(14)	1 (1)	21(15)
17:00—18:00	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Totals	210(166)	66(56)	276(222)

¹ Number of times in activity records birds were away from egg.

² Number of actual flights represented, i.e., one flight might involve two or more spot observations in activity records.