

adults feed at night. As during incubation, mist-netted birds regurgitate far more frequently in the evening than at other times.

The average flight speed of Sooty Terns is about 27 mph (Schnell, unpublished). Thus on longer trips they may forage as much as 100 miles from Bush Key, but the average foraging trip of about 3.5 hours gives them a maximum range of about 47 miles. Sooties from Bush Key usually fly toward the west when they leave the colony and return from that direction. How far they go is unknown but they easily could fly to the nearby Florida Current and forage there.

At about 3 weeks of age the chicks begin to wander from their scrape. They may spend much of the day alone, being accompanied by an adult mainly when being fed. Some adults seem to check their chick periodically during the day, landing beside it, possibly feeding it, and then flying off only to return in an hour or so. These adults probably spend much of their time loafing on the beaches or soaring.

I was not able to visit Bush Key during the height of Hurricane Abby (3 June) but on 4 June it was obvious that the tern's normal schedule had been disrupted as few adults were present until that evening when they started to stream into Bush Key and continued to do so until the evening of the 5th. They probably had been unable to forage during the storm and had left as soon after the storm as possible to obtain food for themselves and their chick. Mason and Steffe (1966) noted a similar disruption after Hurricane Alma. Some of the returnees undoubtedly were birds displaced by the storm.

INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION

As the chick grows, its physical appearance changes and it may wander farther from the scrape. As the colony has thousands of chicks, adults undoubtedly have problems locating and feeding their own (or adopted) offspring. Sooty Tern chicks and adults evidently learn to recognize each other so the chick can be located and fed.

Much as Lashley (1915) and Burckhalter (1969) report, I found that parents apparently do not recognize their chicks individually at first. In the first 4 or 5 days chicks often return to the wrong scrape and are readily accepted and reared by foster parents. After that they are pecked savagely if they intrude near another scrape, and some are killed. Thus recognition seems to develop when the chicks are about 4 to 5 days old. As Davies and Carrick (1962), Hutchison et al. (1968), and Stevenson et al. (1970) suspect for other terns, this recognition probably is based largely on calls between the adults and chicks.

After a disturbance, typically the adult tries to attract its chick back to the home scrape with a combination of bill movements and low calls. The call is a low two syllable "kraa-unk" note accompanied by bowing movements of the bill and head, ending with the bill pointing down toward the breast feathers. Often an adult uses such behavior to lure the chick back to the scrape, backing away from the chick and toward the