

scrape until the two are finally back at their own scrape. Once I watched an adult hold a fish in its bill and back away from its chick, apparently using the fish to lure it back to the scrape.

By 3 weeks of age most of the chicks on my plot spent much of their time hiding under the nearby bay cedar. By removing most of the vegetation from the nesting plot I may have forced them to move to this cover. Typically these older chicks emerged from the bay cedar late in the afternoon and stood at its edge or ran out to their scrape. The chicks ran swiftly to a spot and stopped, seemingly knowing where they could stop and not be attacked by other chicks and adults. Once on the scrape, they stood and waited for an adult to come and feed them. Whenever I caught one of these chicks, it was always at the scrape where it had been reared and thus had "homed" correctly. Also when an adult fed the chick, normally the adult was one of the pair that had used that scrape. Hence the chicks apparently knew their home scrapes and returned there to be fed.

Sometimes the adult landed at the scrape before the chick arrived. At first the adult circled 10 to 15 feet over the scrape and delivered loud "wid-ik" or "ka-wid-ik" notes from the air until it was answered by a loud piercing "che-up" call from a chick hidden under vegetation. The two birds exchanged calls several times and the adult landed. The chick then ran out to the adult, begged, and was fed. As the chick approached the adult, the adult often gave what appeared to be a greeting, flying straight up 2 to 5 feet in the air, giving a loud "wide-a-wake" call at the peak, and dropping back down to the ground to feed the chick. These "fly-ups" occurred in other situations and are discussed later. Occasionally the adult pecked the begging chick sharply. I was not able to determine the relationship of the two in these cases, but I suspect that the two had made a mistake in recognition and the adult did not realize it until the chick came close.

Although chicks are usually fed by their parents (or by adults that adopt them in shuffles before chicks are individually recognized), at least eight times I saw a tern feed a chick other than its own. In five of these instances an adult that had lost its chick or whose egg had failed to hatch fed a chick, usually at an adjacent scrape. Three times an unmarked adult fed a chick whose parents were both marked and thus recognizable.

Some chicks seemed to approach and beg of any adult that came near. Although these chicks were not marked, I am fairly sure that some were fed by adults other than their parents. Often the adult pecked the chick and drove it away, but at times the adult tried to regurgitate, and occasionally it brought up food and fed the chick. Possibly these chicks had lost their parents in the shuffle of chicks in the first few days of life, and no adult recognized them as its own. The adults that fed them or tried to feed them may have been their lost parents, or other adults that had lost their chick or egg.

Thus older chicks seem to find their parent both by knowing where