

the home scrape is and by recognizing the adult's voice. Although I think Sooty Tern adults and chicks do recognize each other individually, I believe that much of this recognition is done by the adult, while the chick may try to get food from almost any adult that comes near.

CHICK BEHAVIOR

Sooty Tern chicks can walk almost immediately after hatching and stand and beg for food within 4 hours. For the first few days they are closely brooded by one of the parents, the chick resting either between the parent's feet or crossways in front of them. At first they walk by half crouching with the body low and almost on the ground, but they soon walk upright like adults. After a disturbance these small chicks frequently end up in the wrong scrape. I often saw two small chicks under one adult that seemed to accept both of them. The extra chick eventually returned to its own scrape, usually when called by an adult. A common alarm response of these small chicks is to lie flat on the ground with the head and bill extended forward. Chicks apparently do this to avoid being pecked by adults, as adults peck and sometimes kill strange chicks that come close. Chicks 5 days old preened and voided with movements typical of adults.

For the first 2 weeks one adult nearly always stays at the scrape with the chick. During the 3rd week this attention gradually diminishes, and by the end of this week the chick is often alone. Chicks defend the scrape, pecking at and driving off other chicks and Brown Noddies that intrude.

Most chicks stay close to their scrape until they can fly, but older chicks that wander or are moved can find their way back to the scrape when displaced several hundred feet (Burckhalter, 1969). Chicks from scrapes close to the beach may sun and rest with adults in large flocks on the beaches during the day, and then disperse in late afternoon. Generally the chicks congregate just above water level and the adults assemble higher on the beach. Occasionally adults feed chicks in such flocks but usually chicks seem to return to their home scrape or some other nearby place to be fed.

I saw 6-week-old chicks jumping into the air and flapping their wings vigorously. I lack exact records of when they begin to fly, but one chick flew several hundred feet on 4 July and others were doing so within a week. If that chick had hatched from one of the eggs laid on 1 April (it was in that part of the colony), it would have been about 9 weeks old. In 1971 some chicks at Bush Key were flying at 8 weeks of age. One year chicks at Ascension were flying when about 8 weeks old and the next year, when food apparently was scarce, birds around 9 weeks old still could not fly (Ashmole, 1963). Burckhalter (1969) saw 8-week-old chicks flying on the Hawaiian Islands, but they stayed at the island another 2 to 3 weeks.

Most of the chick's activities before it starts flying seem to be related to feeding and temperature maintenance. Obviously the adults help with the latter when the chicks are small, but 3- to 4-week-old chicks start assuming their juvenal plumage and are largely independent. When placed