

drawn out "kaaa" note from the terns and sometimes starting a panic. The Sooties often chase egrets in the air and dive at them, mobbing them more commonly in flight than when the egret is on the ground. Brown Noddies frequently join the Sooties in these attacks on Cattle Egrets and the Noddies are much more aggressive, striking them on the ground and in the air, and chasing them farther than the Sooties do.

A few Herring (*Larus argentatus*), Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*), and Laughing Gulls frequently linger around Bush Key. I never saw one enter the Bush Key colony to prey on tern chicks or eggs, although they could do so easily. Watson and Lashley (1915) saw Laughing Gulls prey on Sooties at the Tortugas.

Adult Sooties often peck and kill chicks that wander onto their scrape and can be a serious cause of mortality.

Despite the isolation of most Sooty Tern colonies, humans still collect eggs for food at some of them (Cott, 1954; Ridley and Percy, 1958), but National Park Service protection eliminated eggging at Bush Key after 1935.

I could not help disturbing the birds every time I entered or left my blind. Although they soon habituated to this and rapidly returned to the scrape once I was out of sight, I occasionally stepped on eggs or separated chicks from their parents. Such mortality is inevitable whenever a human works extensively in a Sooty Tern colony.

Disturbances such as sonic booms, boat whistles, and low flying airplanes may cause the birds suddenly to leave the island in a dread. However I did not see any of these disturbances keep the birds away from their scrape for more than a few minutes unless they were repeated.

OTHER TERNS

Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies are abundant and widespread in the tropics and nest together on many islands. On Bush Key the Brown Noddies nest primarily along the edge of the bay cedar, but also in other low vegetation and occasionally on the ground. Although some Sooties nest under the bay cedar, they always nest on the ground and hence are usually vertically segregated from the Noddy nests. Most Sooties nest in the open flat parts of the island outside the bay cedar, again separating them from the Noddies. Some Noddies nest in low vegetation within inches of Sooty scrapes. I often saw young of both species in such situations, so apparently they can breed successfully in close proximity.

Early in the nesting season Noddies often searched for nest material on my study plot. In all 35 instances of direct supplanting between these species that I saw on my study plot, the Sooty drove off the Noddy. In two of these a Sooty chick drove an adult Noddy off the plot. Generally the Sooty stretched its head and neck forward, held the wings either tight against its sides or slightly away from the body, and advanced toward the Noddy until the Noddy retreated or flew. I never saw a Noddy fight back or withstand the attack long. Once I heard a Sooty give a low