

ATLANTIC COAST TERN WATCH

In the summers of 1969/70 volunteers from Nova Scotia to South Carolina banded (or ringed) young Common and Roseate Terns with coloured plastic bands in addition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands. The plastic bands were placed on the leg opposite the aluminum. Each province and state used a different colour so that observers could recognise birds from different areas.

Through observations of these colour-banded birds it was hoped to gain information regarding the following questions. How far do birds banded from different areas along the coast as well as inland range from their breeding colonies during their post-breeding dispersal? Do birds from different areas along the coast concentrate at particular areas in the fall (autumn)? How late are these species seen at different points along the coast?

Although this project was designed specifically for observers in the U.S.A., it may interest Trinidad residents that at least two terns banded under the scheme arrived in Trinidad recently. On a day in June 1970 members of the Coastguard picked up an exhausted Common Tern at Nelson Island. Its bands revealed that it was originally banded as a bird too young to fly at its nest near Great Gull Island, New York on 5 July 1969. Then another Common Tern was found dying near Pointe-a-Pierre on 31 October 1970. Its bands have been reported and information on its origins are still being awaited.

Field naturalists are requested to observe small white seabirds around our coasts carefully. If any are carrying coloured plastic bands, please note the colour and positions of the bands and report to the editor of this journal or any official of the Club. Exact observations are essential.