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RECOVERY OF A RINGED SANDWICH TERN, *STERNA SANDVICENSIS* *SANDVICENSIS* FROM RAMESWARAM ISLAND*

The sandwich tern *Sterna s. sandvicensis* Latham, which is known to perform intercontinental wintering migration has been known to frequent Sind and Makran Coast (Ali and Ripley, Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, 3:1-70, 1981) and Sri Lanka Coast (*Ceylon Bird Club Newsletter*, Sept., 1978). In India the bird has been sight recorded from Saurashtra (Dhara-kumarsinghji, *Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 55: 357, 1958).

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On 19-9-1983 one specimen of the sandwich tern was recovered from Kundukal point of Rameswaram Island (Fig. 1) with a metallic ring having a Russian inscription and a number P.702628 on it. The bird (Fig.2) which is locally known as *Katrenji* in Tamil had the following salient features.

Crown black; a black stripe continues from the eye back to the crown; body ash coloured dorsally, white ventrally; bill long, slender, tipped with yellow; foot webbed and primaries black.

Table 1. Details of the sandwich tern caught in India

Sl. No.	Bill (mm)	Tarsus (mm)	Locality	Date	Remarks
1.	52	26	Pillaimadam lagoon, Mandapam	24-6-1983	Without ring
2.	50	25	Kundukal point, Rameswaram Island	19-9-1983	With ring
3.	45	25	Pillaimadam lagoon, Mandapam	7-11-1983	Without ring

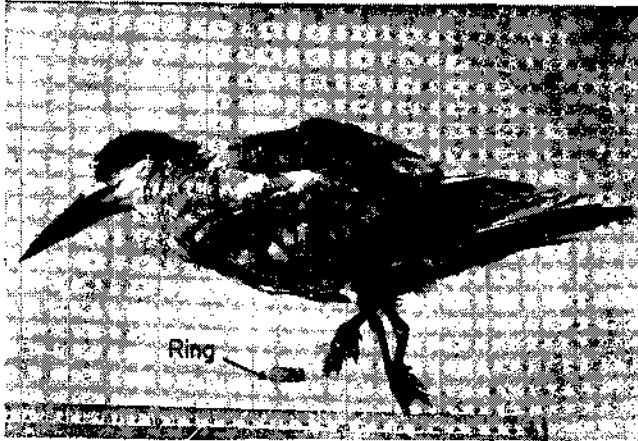


Fig. 1. *Sterna sandvicensis sandvicensis* with the ring from Rameswaram Island.

The ring (Fig. 2) suggests that the bird was ringed in Russia. It may be mentioned that two other birds of same species were also recovered from the Pillaimadam Lagoon near Mandapam which indicates that the bird is a common visitor to these areas. They were found along with other common terns namely *Hydroprogne caspia* (Caspian tern), *Sterna aurentia* and *Gelochelidon nilotica*. The details of the birds recovered are given in Table 1.

There has been record of recovery of the Sandwich tern from Kalpitiya, Sri Lanka on 24-12-1977 which

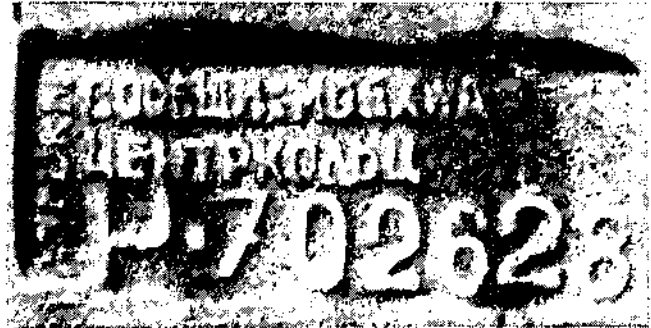


Fig. 2. The metallic ring with Russian inscription recovered from the sandwich tern (Length of the ring 18 mm).

was ringed at Astrakhan Reserve, Caspian Sea, Russia (*Ceylon Bird Club Newsletter*, 1979).

The present capture of the sandwich tern from Rameswaram area in June is of special interest as it is much earlier than its usual arrival in Sri Lanka coast which is around December. The species is known to breed in British Islands, North sea Islands, Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Europe, Black Sea and Caspian Sea. It winters on the coasts of Northern Africa, Western Africa to Cape of Good Hope, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Makran and Sind coast and Sri Lanka. Its wintering area now includes Southeast coast of India including Rameswaram island.

