

worn and nearly square. Replacement of lost first-year retrices and the alteration, through wear, of typical first-year retrices to adult-type retrices could both result in erroneous age designation of first-year birds. Qualitative features of primary feathers, there-

fore, should probably be used in preference to tail characteristics in age determination in Black-billed Magpies.

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BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS, BANDED AT MIDWAY ISLAND, RECOVERED OFF BAJA CALIFORNIA IN FIRST YEAR

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A specimen of *Diomedea nigripes*, carrying U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leg band 767-93705, was caught on baited hook, with four other specimens of the species, on 11 December 1966, from a cluster of 11

that gathered for food about the stern of Scripps Institution of Oceanography RV *Horizon*, at 31° 55.5' N, 120° 14.0' W, off extreme northwestern Baja California near the extension of the international boundary. These birds were collected for the new marine-bird exhibit of the San Diego Zoo and for research, by Bernice M. Wenzel, of the University of California, Los Angeles, on the physiology of olfaction of the Tubinares. The banded individual had not attained the adult plumage.

Philip S. Humphrey, of the U.S. National Museum, provides the information that this albatross had been banded as a chick on Sand Island at Midway Island, in the Hawaiian archipelago, on 2 March 1966 (less than a year previous), by Chandler S. Robbins.

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DISPERSAL OF CATTLE EGRET AND LITTLE BLUE HERON INTO NORTHWESTERN BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

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In January 1967 the Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, and the Little Blue Heron, *Florida caerulea*, appeared for the first time, so far as I can ascertain, in northwestern Baja California. For the egret there appears to have been no prior record anywhere in the Baja California peninsula. The dispersal of these birds into northwestern Baja California may be attributable to a severe storm of southern origin that swept the outer coast of the peninsula, and adjoining California, with strong winds and heavy precipitation, during the first week of December.

CATTLE EGRET

The first indication of the penetration of this notorious wanderer into Baja California was provided by two pictures (by Gene Behrman) of a "white tern" on the "Outdoors" page of the San Diego Union for 22 January 1967 (the identification was corrected in the 5 February issue of the newspaper). The caption indicated that this bird adopted the passengers on the sportfishing boat *Holiday*, out of San Diego, "on recent San Martin, Mex., fishing trip." One picture unmistakably showed a Cattle Egret, in drooping pose; the other showed the bird perched on the fishing pole of one of the anglers! Through the kind efforts of Rolla Williams, outdoors editor of the newspaper, I was able to obtain details of the strange occurrence, and corroborating photographs, from Captain Steve Giffin of the *Holiday*. The bird came aboard on 16 January, while the boat was at anchor, where the ocean is about 35 fathoms deep, about six

miles southwest of Punta San Isidro (as shown on H.O. Chart 1149). The location, therefore, was approximately 31° 13.5' N, 116° 30.2' W. The bird seemed "drunk or sick," "looked thin," and appeared fearless, but refused food. It stayed about an hour on deck, and when it lighted on a fishing pole the angler had to snap the rod to dislodge the bird. It stayed on or about the boat for about six hours.

Since the adjacent coast is very arid and very sparsely populated, with few cattle, it seems highly probable that this weakened Cattle Egret had just arrived from a long journey, presumably from the southward, or that it had come some time previously and had found the region inhospitable.

That the Cattle Egret is maintaining its spectacular wandering propensity on the Pacific side of the New World was indicated by the circumstance that an individual of this species flew aboard the Scripps Institution of Oceanography RV *Argo*, on 25 November 1961, between Cocos and Clipperton islands, at 06° N, 97° W, about 920 km west of the Central American mainland (Lint, Auk 79:483, 1962). Migrants have now reached the Galápagos (Lévêque, Bowman, and Billeb, Condor 68:85, 97, 1966).

These circumstances lend weight to the hypothesis that the Cattle Egret colonized the Americas by trans-Atlantic flight. The capture in Trinidad of a Little Egret, *Egretta garsetta*, which had been banded in Spain (Downs, Auk 76:241, 1959), confirms the plausibility of the transoceanic flight of the Cattle Egret. Presumably this species first became established on the western side of the Atlantic in northern South America, for Bond (Second Suppl. to W. Indian Check-list, 1957) has mentioned sight records between 1877 and 1882 and in 1911-12 in British Guiana and Surinam, and Wetmore (Auk 80:547, 1963) has presented evidence of its occurrence in Colombia in 1916 or 1917, whereas the earliest indication of its arrival in North America (in Florida) seems to have been in 1941 or 1942 (Sprunt, Smithsonian Rept. 1954:259-276, 1955). Its subsequent spread in North America has been notably rapid (Peterson, Natl. Geogr. Mag. 106:281-292, 1954;