

Common Terns nest on muskrat lodges and floating cattail mats.—On 16 June 1951 in a large cattail marsh (*Typha latifolia* and *T. angustifolia*) at Point Pelee, Essex County, Ontario, I noted about 100 adult Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) excitedly flying and calling over several nearby cattail concentrations. I spent 3 days, 16–18 June, canoeing in this marsh. During this time I found 35 nests of the Common Tern on two floating mats of cattail which had died, leaving only foot-high stubs with new growth around the outer edges. One of these mats held 20 nests with eggs, another 15 nests. The water under the floating mats was 5–7 feet deep. The mats were completely floating and were pushed from one location to another by the wind. The muck and cattail roots which held the mats together were thin, so that wave action had spattered the eggs with muck. Ten more nests with eggs were found on the tops of muskrat lodges, widely separated. One of these nests was at least one-half mile from its nearest neighbor.

Mr. A. A. Wood, a Canadian naturalist, collected three of these terns for me, and when these birds were compared with specimens at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, their identification as Common Terns was confirmed.

On 9 June 1956, at Tobico Marsh near Bay City, Bay County, Michigan, I found nine other nests of the Common Tern on the tops of muskrat lodges and widely separated, as had been part of those found at the Point Pelee marsh. As both years in which these marsh nests were found were times of higher-than-average lake levels, and as both marshes were connected with lakes, taking their level, I believe that the birds had been flooded off other nesting places on low-lying sand spits not too far away.

I have found one reference to Common Terns nesting on floating vegetation (Bent, 1947. "Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns," p. 240) and one to this species'



FIG. 1. Nest of Common Tern on top of muskrat lodge, Point Pelee, Ontario, 17 June 1951.

nesting on the tops of muskrat lodges (Berger, 1961. "Bird Study." pp. 212-213). This latter reference was from my unpublished field notes.—WALTER P. NICKELL, *Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, 12 February 1965.*

Observations on a captive Northern Phalarope.—On 31 August 1962 I captured a live Northern Phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*) at a brine pond in a *Salicornia* marsh on the west shore of San Francisco Bay at Belmont, San Mateo County, California. The bird was in immature plumage and had suffered a gash about one-half inch long over the left shoulder, and was unable to fly.

The phalarope was placed in a washtub partly filled with freshwater. An anchored wooden platform served as a roost and for feeding. Later, when the bird was strong enough to fly, the washtub was covered with a metal grate. The bird was kept captive for 13 days (31 August-12 September) and then set free.

The following observations were made while it was in captivity.

Posture and locomotion.—The phalarope normally stood with its legs straight and the feet slightly "pigeon-toed," and its neck was not extended. Its body was so carried that the posterior end drooped slightly. It did not appear hunched over like many plovers and it did not teeter at any time like some other shorebirds do. It waddled slightly and pumped its neck while walking. When placed on a lawn for a few seconds, it ran swiftly toward some shrubbery. It kept its wings tightly folded against its sides, and when pursued, it ran in a zigzag course, maneuvering skillfully.

It was unable to perch securely on a narrow, rounded surface such as a pencil or finger because of a lack of flexibility in its toes.

Defensive behavior.—When frightened while on a solid surface, the captive immediately lay flat. Such a reaction probably reflects a response characteristic of the species for escaping detection when on land. As the area of confinement was too small to allow flight, the bird, when frightened on the water, swam rapidly to the dry surface and ran with much wing-flapping to a corner while continually looking in the direction of the disturbance.

It was silent unless disturbed. When I picked it up in order to change the water, it emitted often only one but sometimes two or three short, rasping squawks of low volume. This was the only type of sound I ever heard it utter.

Feeding.—During its first day of captivity, it quickly ate its food, either live or freshly killed insects, which was placed on the surface of the water. The bird would eat food placed either on the dry platform or on the water, but, in the latter case, the food had to be floating. Once, the bird was fed while the water was too shallow to permit swimming. Some cottage cheese was consumed from the platform but, in the process, small chunks fell into the water. Wading in the water, the bird spied a piece of cheese. The water was deeper than the total length of the bird's bill and while the phalarope attempted to pick up the cheese it would not submerge its bill past the nostrils. After several attempts, it gave up.

When eating, the bird had to cock its head to one side since its eyes were placed far back on the sides of the head. Food was grasped between the tips of the jaws and never speared. Small moths could be swallowed in a single gulp, but large noctuid moths and skipper butterflies (*Hesperia columbia*) were manipulated without use of the substrate as a brace until they were oriented headfirst and then were swallowed by means of several gulps.

The bird frequently sipped water by dipping only the tip of the bill and always