

PERIODIC LITERATURE :

Moller, A.P. 1981. THE MIGRATION OF EUROPEAN SANDWICH TERNS. Die Vogelwarte 31: 74-94; 149-168.

This two-part work is a comprehensive study of the dispersal and migration of Sandwich Terns. Approximately 41 000 pairs of these birds breed in Europe. The paper is based on the analyses of 5 099 recoveries. There are interesting differences in the wintering quarters of different age groups, most of which are dependent on upwelling areas. West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea are favourite areas for juveniles. Of the 338 recoveries from South Africa, 45,3% are 1st-year birds, 37,6% are 2-3y birds and the remaining 17,1% are 4y + (adults). These comprise in all only 6,6% of the total recoveries dealt with in these Papers.

The trapping of large numbers of Sandwich Terns in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea may threaten the species, especially as trapping appears to be on the increase. It is stated that ringing recoveries show a decrease in the proportion of birds wintering in southern Africa and an increase in the percentage of birds wintering in the Guinea Gulf, but it is not clear from these Papers whether such supposed changes in proportional distribution are not artefacts of bias in recovery rates.

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Handel, C.M. & Gill, R.E. Jr. 1983. YELLOW BIRDS STAND OUT IN A CROWD. North American Bird Bander 8: 6-9.

An interesting article which shows convincingly how the use of highly visible techniques such as plumage dyes can significantly increase the sightings of small birds, in this case Dunlins and Western Sandpipers. 5 926 were ringed, 94% of these were also colour-ringed and 91% were dyed yellow with picric acid. After recoveries and recaptures had been subtracted, it was estimated that 38% of the colour-ringed birds sighted would have gone undetected but for the dye markings. The authors conclude that a sandpiper dyed yellow was about 16 times more likely to be seen than one that was only colour-banded.

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