

COMMON TERN, *STERNA HIRUNDO HIRUNDO* L., BANDED IN SWEDEN
AND RECOVERED IN AUSTRALIA*

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On January 7, 1956, an exhausted tern was picked up by Mr. Kevin Reed, Bassendean, W.A., on Coogee Beach, 4 miles south of Fremantle, W.A. It was banded with a Swedish band, number YK2201. The bird died next day and was buried, but the band was brought to the author who took steps to recover the body. It was partly decomposed and is now preserved in alcohol in the collection of the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O.

Advice from Sweden indicated that the band was placed on a nestling common tern, *Sterna hirundo hirundo* L., on July 9, 1955, at Marum, 21 km east-north-east of Norrtälje, in the province of Uppland, Sweden. This bird had therefore travelled at least 13,000 miles (via the Cape) in 6 months. Since this is the first record of *S. hirundo* for Western Australia and the first record of *S. h. hirundo* for the Australian continent, the identification was carefully checked and confirmed.

The common tern is a holarctic breeding species which migrates south in the northern winter. The species is split into several subspecies but distinctions seem doubtful (Witherby *et al.* 1941). However, the race breeding in north-east Asia is *S. h. longipennis* Nordmann, and specimens of this race have been found at Cape York, Torres Strait, and Lord Howe Island (Hindwood 1944), and at Cairns (White 1946). There is no evidence that *S. h. longipennis* comes round the western coast of Australia, though it is known to spend the northern winter around New Guinea and as far west as the Moluccas and the Malayan Peninsula (Hindwood 1944). The European form, *S. h. hirundo*, is known to winter down the west coast of Africa, Madagascar, and around the Arabian Sea (Witherby *et al.* 1941).

References

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- WHITE, S. R. (1946).—North Queensland birds. *Emu* 46: 98–9.
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