

Extra-limital Records of the Australian Whiskered Tern

By KENNETH C. PARKES,
Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa., U.S.A.

The Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*) badly needs a thorough revisionary study in order to re-define the races (some of which are of doubtful validity) and their respective ranges. One of the few rather well-marked races is the Australian *C. h. fluviatilis* (Gould), of which *rogersi* (Mathews) is a synonym. This subspecies can be recognized in any plumage by the colour of the upper-parts, as it is the palest of the races of the Whiskered Tern. The range ascribed to *fluviatilis* by current authors is Australia, New Guinea, and the Moluccas. This note is written to place on record three specimens I have identified as *fluviatilis* in American museums, which were taken outside the known breeding range of that race, and within range of the race *C. h. javanica* (Horsfield).

Listing the specimens in order of increasing distance from the normal range of *fluviatilis*, a specimen in the American Museum of Natural History, New York, was taken at Bulekomba, southern Celebes, on November 8, 1895. The U.S. National Museum, Washington, has a specimen taken at Batavia, Java, on April 22, 1909. Finally, the late Dr. John T. Zimmer collected a specimen of *fluviatilis* (now in the American Museum of Natural History) at Mabitac, Laguna Province, Luzon, Philippine Islands, on December 7, 1914.

The variation noted within a good series of Whiskered Terns from the Philippines suggests that migrants of a race other than the expected *javanica* may be present. The proper names to use for these birds must depend on a careful re-evaluation of the currently-recognized races *swinhoei* (Mathews), *indica* (Stephens), *leggei* (Mathews), and *javanica* (Horsfield). However, no Philippine specimen examined other than the one listed above is referable to *fluviatilis*. A specimen I collected at a flooded ricefield near Tagig, Rizal Province, Luzon, September 20, 1956, is noticeably paler than six others taken at the same time, but is not pale enough to be called *fluviatilis*. The Australian subspecies of Whiskered Tern can hardly be more than an accidental visitor to the Philippines.

Specimens at the American Museum of Natural History and U.S. National Museum were examined through the courtesy of Dr. Dean Amadon and Mr. H. G. Deignan, respectively. Carnegie Museum specimens were taken by Mr. Telesforo Oane and me in connection with an expedition of the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, under the sponsorship of the Commission on Viral Infections, Armed Forces Epidemiological Board, and supported in part by the Office of the Surgeon General, United State Department of the Army.