

near Calicut (=Kozhikode) (Matthew & Shukkur 1974), and another recent specimen recovered near Valparai in Tamil Nadu (Robin & Rao 2006). Recent sight records for this decade are from the Lakshadweep archipelago, and Kerala. Mike Prince records two individuals seen off Agatthi and Kavaratti Islands in the Lakshadweep group of islands (Prince 2008). One was found at Kallambalam, Kollam, and another at Kothamangalam, both in Kerala, at the end of May 2011 (Sreekumar 2011). A flock was observed at sea off the coast near Kannur on 28 May 2011 (Praveen 2011).

From the distribution map given in Kazmierczak (2000), there are only a few scattered records of the bird, mostly along the western shores, and very few off the eastern seaboard. This is consistent with the records of the species given above. Ali & Ripley (1987) record the species as being, "A pelagic tern seldom coming to land except in the breeding season ... Usually seen in flocks well out to sea." In a straight line, the nearest coast from Kotepally, where we observed the bird, is approximately 350 km.

This record (vagrant) of the Sooty Tern is an addition to the birds of Andhra Pradesh (Taher & Pittie 1989), and appears to be the farthest inland record of the species for India; the earlier inland record could be of a bird from Cachar (Baker 1912), which is about 125 km. from the sea. Once again, our observation seems to emphasize the cardinal rule of birdwatching: to observe each individual even in a large flock of any species.

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Ring recoveries of Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* along the Maharashtra coast, India

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According to Ali & Ripley (1987) the Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* is, "Resident? According to Ticehurst [it is] the commonest tern of Karachi Harbour and coast-line. [It] Occurs commonly along the western and eastern seaboard of India, Andaman and Nicobar Is., and in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] waters practically throughout the year; more abundant between September and end April. Presumptively breeding on the Makran coast (W. Pakistan), Rameswaram Island, Laccadive and Maldive Is. ... but no direct evidence as yet." Rasmussen &

Anderton (2005) state that it, "Breeds towards end of monsoon in Pakistan ... [It is] Resident, breeding on small islets on Sind coast, possibly Lakshadweep and Maldives, and reported breeding Orissa coast. [It is a] Winter visitor to coasts of rest of region, from Mekran Coast to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Andamans ... and Nicobars."

We report three instances of ring recoveries of Lesser Crested Terns along the Maharashtra coast, which are significant in understanding the migration pattern of the species.

Fig. 1. Map showing migration of Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*.


Ring recovery at Arnala Beach, Mumbai: D. P. Bannerjee found a sick Lesser Crested Tern at Arnala Beach, Virar, along the Mumbai coast on 31 December 2009. The exhausted bird had a ring embossed with, "Inform British Museum London, SW-DD08695." The bird died subsequently. The author (RK) reported the ring recovery to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The Ringing Unit of BTO provided the ringing information (Table 1).

Ring recovery at Sindhudurg: A ringed Lesser Crested Tern was found dead at Sindhudurg Fort near the coastal Sindhudurg town in Maharashtra (south of Mumbai) on 11 November 2010. It was widely reported in local newspapers, which gave the ring number as, "ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN DH2377." This information was given to RK by his friends, Vinod Patil, and Bhau Katdare. RK contacted Hamid Amini, Senior Ornithologist at the Wildlife Bureau of Tehran. The latter provided the ringing details of the tern (Table 1).

Ring recovery at Alibag, Raigad: VD found a dead Lesser Crested Tern at Akshi beach near Alibag, in Raigad dist., Maharashtra on 9 January 2010. It had a ring on its left leg with, "ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN DW07196," embossed on it. Hamid Amini, Senior Ornithologist of Wildlife Bureau of Tehran once again provided the ringing details of the tern (Table 1).

Conclusion

These recoveries of ringed Lesser Crested Terns from the Maharashtra coast have thrown light on some facts about their migration. All the birds were recovered between November and

January indicating that they migrate towards the Indian coast as soon as their breeding is over. All the birds were ringed as chicks (pullus) as they breed on the islands in the Persian Gulf. Though the breeding status of the species in India remains a question, these records indicate that we do get migratory birds from the Persian Gulf, which travel nearly 2500 km to reach our coasts for wintering (Fig. 1).

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Table 1. Ring recovery data on three Lesser Crested Terns *Thalasseus bengalensis* along the Maharashtra Coast, India

Ringing Information			Recovery Information			Findings	
Date	Location	Coordinates	Date	Location	Coordinates	Lifespan	Distance
27 June 2008	Jarim Island South, Baharin and Qatar	26°23'N, 50°28'E	31 December 2009	Mumbai	19°27'N, 72°44'E	One year and seven months	2428 km
16 July 2006	Nakhilu Island, Iran	27°49'N, 51°28'E	11 November 2010	Sindhudurg	16°02'N, 73°27'E	Four years and three months	2599 km
9 August 2009	Nakhilu Island, Iran	27°49'N, 51°28'E	9 January 2010	Alibag	18°37'N, 72°53'E	Five months	2400 km