

Sandwich Tern Breeds on the Atlantic Coast of Florida

The A.O.U. Check-List of North American Birds (1957) gives the United States breeding range of the Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) as "Virginia to South Carolina" and "Southern Texas to Louisiana." Howell (1932) has pointed out that in the 19th century the species also bred on the Gulf Coast of Florida and in the Dry Tortugas.

Stevenson (1972) found the species nesting on a small island near Port St. Joe in July 1970. This is the first known Florida breeding of the species in the 20th century.

On 8 June 1974 the authors were investigating the nesting colony of Royal Terns (*T. maximus*) on a small sand island near Bird Island in Nassau Sound, northern Duval County, which we have named "Little Bird Island". This small island is of recent origin and does not appear on charts of the area. It is located about 1 mile NW of Bird Island. We found 4 Sandwich Tern "nests" containing one egg each grouped together in the Royal Tern colony which had 1250 nests on this date. A good series of photographs of the adults tending the eggs was obtained. There were 5 "nests" with one egg each on 16 June, 3 eggs in 3 nests on 22 June, 3 eggs in 3 nests on 7 July, and no eggs on 14 July. No eggs were seen on four subsequent trips to the colony in July and August. We are unsure whether the eggs hatched or were destroyed. No young Sandwich Terns were seen, but they could easily have been overlooked among the hundreds of Royal Tern chicks present in the colony. This is the first breeding record of the species for the Atlantic Coast south of South Carolina (Burleigh, 1958).

We thank William B. Robertson, Jr., for his comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

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