

OCCURRENCES OF THE COMMON TERN IN THE INTERIOR OF SOUTH AMERICA

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Range statements in Meyer de Schauensee (1966) and Blake (1977) report the winter range of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), in South America as restricted to the coasts with a single inland occurrence, a bird collected on the Rio Araguaia, at Aragarças, Goiás State, Brazil (16°S, 52°W, #1 in Fig. 1). This specimen is now in the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (Escalante, 1972). I was prompted to search the literature for inland records when a bird banded on Great Gull Island, NY was recovered in northern Bolivia, approximately 2,000 km from the mouth of the Amazon River. The inland records cited above as well as the following from Bolivia and Brazil (Bull, 1974, 1976) suggest that individuals of this species may wander into the interior, along the river systems, to a greater extent than regional treatments for South America have indicated.

Neithammer (1953) does not list the Common Tern among the known avifauna of Bolivia. Bull (1974) reports the recovery of a banded bird on the Río Tarija, near Tarija, Tarija State, Bolivia (22°S, 63°W, #2) a few months after it was banded as a nestling at Oneida Lake, NY. The recovery of the Common Tern banded on Great Gull Island appears to be the second record of the species for Bolivia, so I will report it in some detail.

On 18 November 1977, a young Bolivian boy, Gerrado Manareco, caught a banded Common Tern by hand. The bird was sitting on a raft, on Lake Tumi Chucua, on the Río Beni about 19 km upriver from the town of Riberalta, Beni State, Bolivia (11°S, 66°W, #3). He brought the bird to Gene F. Smith of the Institute Linguistique de Verano in Riberalta the following day. The bird died in captivity two days later, and Mr. Smith sent the band and a detailed report of the recovery to the United States Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, MD. The bird had hatched 19 June 1977 on Great Gull Island, NY (41°N, 72°W) and was banded there as part of a long-term research project on the breeding biology of the Common Tern. It was 152 days old at the time of its recovery.

Bull (1974) also reports the recovery of a Common Tern originally banded as a nestling on Long Island, NY and recovered that winter on the Rio Velhas, near Pirapora, Minas Gerais State, Brazil (17°S, 45°W, #4). In a supplement to his earlier work, Bull (1976) reports an additional recovery of a banded juvenile at Corumba, Mato Grosso State, Brazil (19°S, 58°W, #5). I find no other published records of Common Terns for inland South America.

The above records show that Common Terns do, at times, reach the interior of South America, almost undoubtedly via the rivers. That they are not restricted to one river system is shown clearly in Figure 1. That four of the five records now known are of birds definitely in their first winter suggests that this may be a phenomenon restricted primarily to

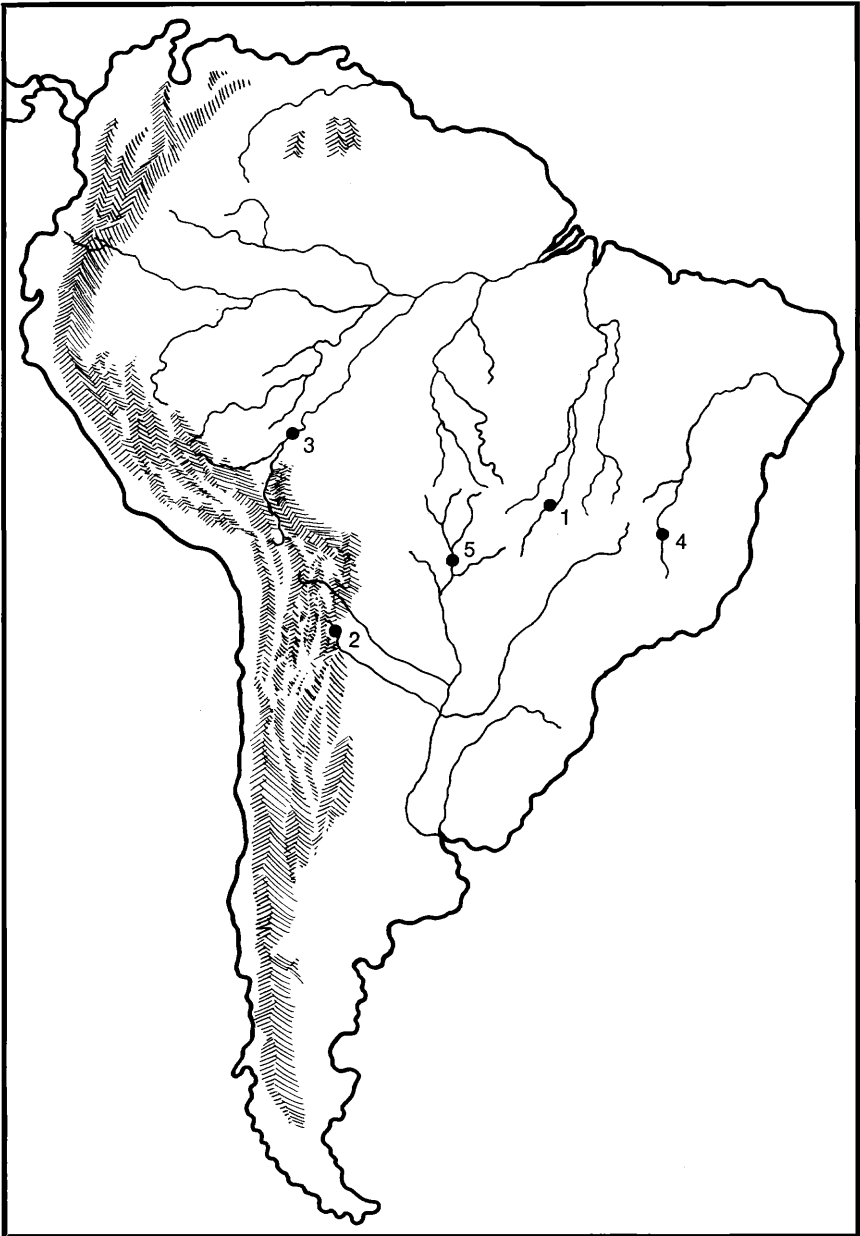


FIGURE 1. Records of Common Terns in the interior of South America.

young, inexperienced birds. It can be inferred from the scarcity of records that they do not go inland in large numbers.

In conducting the research for this note I found that Bull (1974) also records the recovery of a Common Tern at Valdivia, Valdivia State, on the coast of Chile (40°S, 73°W) on 30 August 1963 of a bird banded as a nestling on Long Island, NY on 21 July 1962. This is approximately 3,100 km south of Lima, Peru, the southernmost limit of the species on the Pacific coast given by Meyer de Schauensee (1966). It also appears to be the first record for Chile (Philippi, 1964; Johnson, 1967). Bibra (1853) reported Common Terns in Valparaiso Bay but Hellmayr (1932) dismissed the report as being a probable misidentification of the South American Tern (*Sterna hirundinacea*).

The recent recoveries are the result of the hard and persistent work of North American banders. Through their efforts there are now thousands of marked terns migrating to and wintering in South America. Information gained from recoveries of these birds, such as those reported above, is just one of the benefits of this banding effort.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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All banding on Great Gull Island is done under the banding permit of Helen Hays.

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