

found seasonal variation in responses to calls of White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus*) and rails respectively.

Thus, playbacks can be very useful in censusing bird populations, but seasonal variation in response must be determined before results of such experiments can be assessed properly.

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Sooty Tern nest found near Cape Lookout, N. C.

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ON JUNE 16, 1978, while surveying colonial waterbird nesting colonies, we found a single Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) and its nest on Morgan Island in the estuary north of Cape Lookout, N. C. We located the nest by watching until the bird flew down to it.

In 1978, Morgan Island consisted of a dome of relatively bare spoil material (approx. two hectares) enclosed by a sand dike and a surrounding, low-elevation fringe of marsh and shrub vegetation. Several thousand Royal Terns (*Thalasseus maximus*) and a few hundred Sandwich Terns (*S. sandvicensis*) nested on the dike and dome and several thousand Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) nested in the marsh fringe. The Sooty Tern nest was not among those of the other terns, but was located in the marsh fringe among nests of the Laughing Gulls.

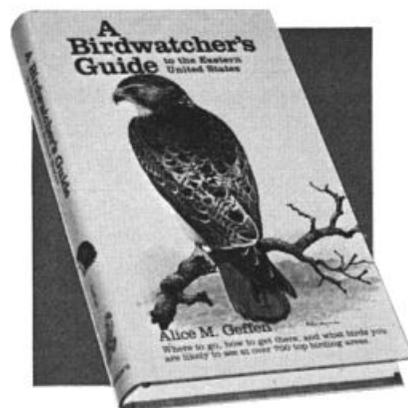
Like many of the Laughing Gull nests, the Sooty Tern nest was not visible from directly above, as it was placed beneath a clump of *Spartina patens*; however, unlike the relatively well-constructed gull nests, it consisted only of a very slight depression with a few dried *Chenopodium ambrosioides* leaves loosely arranged around it. There was one egg. It was similar in size to those of the Laughing Gulls, and in general appearance, except that the background color was much lighter.

Fussell and Hader returned to the colony June 25, but found the nest apparently depredated. Fragments of the egg shell were found one m from the nest and no adult bird was seen during the 15-min stay. No Sooty Tern was seen during visits to the island in July.

This is the first confirmed nesting of the Sooty Tern in North Carolina, and, along the East Coast of the United States, the only confirmed nesting north of the Dry Tortugas, approx. 1300 km SSW. However, Sooty Terns have been observed in the nesting season at Morgan Island (or nearby Rat Island, a spoil island 1.5 km S) on previous occasions [*Chat* 23:63 (Morgan Island); 25:63 (Morgan Island); 36:114 (Morgan Island, but cited as Shackelford Bank); 41:15 (Morgan Island, but cited as Cape Lookout); 42:18 (Rat Island, but cited as near Beaufort)]. Probable nesting was

indicated for the first record, which was in 1959.

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