

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE MASS - MIGRATION OF
 BRIDLED TERNS STERNA ANAETHETUS
 (AVES : LARIDAE) OFF SRI LANKA 1982 -1988

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Large numbers of Bridled Terns Sterna anaethetus migrate southwards off the west coast of Sri Lanka each year. Counts made during the years 1982-1988 enabled estimates of the total extent of the migration to be determined. The results indicated that the numbers of migrating terns declined from an estimated total of approx. 365,000 in 1982 to 130,000 in 1988.

A simplified method, using binoculars and stopwatch, was devised to ascertain the flight - speeds of the migrating terns. The results obtained are given below.

Range	-	13.0	to	26.0	km/hr.
\bar{X}	-	19.0	km/hr.		
s	-	4.6	km/hr.		
n	-	9			

The reasons for the decline in both duration of migration and numbers of migrating birds is not known at present and could either be a natural cycle or the result of environmental factors. This clearly indicates the need for more work in future years and the study is continuing.

The flight - speeds recorded in this study are the first ever obtained for S. anaethetus and are in close agreement with speeds recorded for allied carried out elsewhere.

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References:

De Silva, R.I. (1987) Observation on the mass migration of Bridled Terns Sterna anaethetus off the western coast of Sri Lanka. Ibis 129:88-92.