

juveniles of the race *C. a. schinzii* with heavily spotted underparts. Only one was found which was thought in the field to be a possible Schioler's Dunlin, a single bird on the beach at Derrymore, Co. Kerry on 4th October.

This was collected and proved to be an immature female and quite typical of the race *C. a. arctica*. The bill measured 28 mm. from the feather margin, 23.5 mm. from the nostril. This compares with measurements given by Salomonsen (1950) for ♀♀ *C. a. arctica* of 27–31 mm. compared with 30.5–35 mm. for *C. a. schinzii*, while Harrison and Harrison (*loc. cit.*) give measurements from the nostrils for four ♀♀ *C. a. arctica* of 23–24.5 mm.

The plumage characters of this bird in comparison with *C. a. schinzii*, are also quite typical of *C. a. arctica*, the margins of the mantle feathers and scapulars being white or whitish-buff; the nape is paler and the striation finer, while the underparts are particularly pale with only minimal dark spotting on the flanks and narrow pectoral striations.

This is therefore the first example of Schioler's Dunlin from Eire, and is the latest date on which one has been identified in the British Isles.

I am very grateful to my father, Dr. James Harrison, who has confirmed my identification of this specimen.

References:

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The status of the Black Noddy in the Tristan da Cunha Group

by George E. Watson

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Authors who have considered the avifauna of the Tristan da Cunha Group in the South Atlantic Ocean have puzzled over the status of the Black or Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris* (= *A. minutus*) on Inaccessible Island. The single record comes from the Challenger Expedition which collected a nearly fledged juvenile 16th October, 1873. Not only is the date of the Challenger Expedition specimen remarkably early in the season for fledging in an otherwise tropical species, but the circumstances surrounding its capture are somewhat suspect. Furthermore, no subsequent ornithological expedition to Tristan has found the species. I have borrowed the specimen from the British Museum (reg. no. 80-11-18-720) and must reluctantly agree with Elliott (1957) that it is indeed a Black Noddy (see appendix).

The Brown or Common Noddy *Anous stolidus*, on the other hand, breeds on all three islands in the Tristan Group and on Gough Island 250 miles further south. Elsewhere the species nests almost exclusively on the ground but on Inaccessible and Gough Islands it nests regularly or exclusively in *Phylica* trees. The tree nests are constructed of twigs and leaves, while ground nests are rudimentary. Egg laying begins in mid October and hatching in mid November in the Tristan Group. The Black Noddy, which breeds on the same islands and at about the same time as the Brown Noddy throughout most of their tropical range, generally builds a substantial nest of twigs or seaweed in trees or in niches on steep cliffs.

There was no ornithologist on the Challenger Expedition, which was under the leadership of Sir Wyville Thomson, but H. N. Moseley and John Murray were general marine naturalists. Murray was in charge of the collections and according to Saunders (1877) he catalogued and labelled the specimens of gulls and terns. The expedition scientists were not aware that they had collected two species of noddies in the Atlantic Ocean until the bird collections were examined by an ornithologist four years later. Thomson (1878: 156) stated that on Inaccessible Island "the noddy (*Sterna stolidus*) builds loose nests of sticks and leaves in trees". Later Moseley (1879: 123) noted that sitting on the tree tops with the thrushes were numerous noddies "of the same two species as those on St. Paul's Rocks". Earlier (page 69, footnote), speaking of St. Paul's Rocks where the expedition stopped 28th-29th August, 1873, he points out that "the two species of noddies occurring at the rocks are so nearly alike, that I did not notice at the time that there were more than one species present; a fact which I have since learnt from Mr. Howard Sanders' [sic] paper 'on the Laridae of the Expedition', Proc. Zool. Soc. 1877, pp. 797, 798. Possibly the birds, which make bracket-like nests are of one species only [*tenuirostris*], and those which build on the ground, of the other [*stolidus*"]". The later narrative of the voyage (Thomson and Murray, 1885: 262) has a passage on the noddies of Inaccessible very similar to Moseley's account (and probably also written by him) but there is no hint that the naturalists were unaware during their visit that there were two species of noddy on the island.

According to Saunders' report, the Challenger Expedition collected the following noddy tern material in the Atlantic Ocean:—

St. Paul's Rocks

Anous tenuirostris

1 (skin) specimen, 27th August, 1873

Adult, young in down, and egg, in alcohol

Anous stolidus

Egg and newly hatched chick in alcohol 28th August, 1873.

Inaccessible Island

Anous tenuirostris

1 (skin) specimen

In caves and on trees, 16th October, 1873.

Anous stolidus

2 (skin) specimens

Lives in caves and on trees, eyes black, 16th October, 1873.

The Inaccessible Black Noddy skin bears three labels: 1. presumably the original, an inked parchment label which reads: Noddy Tern "lives in caves and on trees"/Inaccessible Island/16th October 1873/eyes black; 2. Howard Saunders identification label; and 3. a British Museum label.

I do not know how birds were prepared and labelled on the Challenger Expedition, although presumably they were skinned in the zoological laboratory aboard ship. All of the specimens collected in the Atlantic Ocean in 1873 were packed, catalogued and landed at Cape Town, South Africa, for shipment back to England at the end of the year. I suspect that in some fashion a juvenile Black Noddy collected on St. Paul's Rocks ended up in the British Museum with an Inaccessible Island label and that speculations on a recent change of breeding range or abundance in the South Atlantic Ocean (Hagen, 1952: 8) are not justified.

APPENDIX

The adult Black Noddy is smaller, slimmer and blacker than the Brown Noddy and has a proportionately longer bill and smaller head. It also has a more extensive white area on the head, especially in juveniles; young Brown Noddies rarely have white on the head at all. The specimen in question is in juvenal plumage, however, with remiges and rectrices still in growth; the bill and feet are not yet fully developed. It is therefore impossible to use absolute measurements for identification. Its forehead and crown are fully white. Foxing on old *tenuirostris* skins makes them nearly as brown as fresh *stolidus* skins, and this is the case with the 'Inaccessible' specimen. The head of the specimen and the general make-up of the skin are slim, as in *tenuirostris*, unlike even the youngest *stolidus* specimen. Because of the allometric growth in the chick period, legs and feet of noddies attain near-adult size well in advance of primary remiges and rectrices. A comparison of measurements of wing chord and tarsal length (Figure 1) shows that the Inaccessible Island specimen falls within the range of the *tenuirostris* group rather than the *stolidus* group.

I am grateful to Ian Galbraith for sending me the Inaccessible Island specimen to examine.

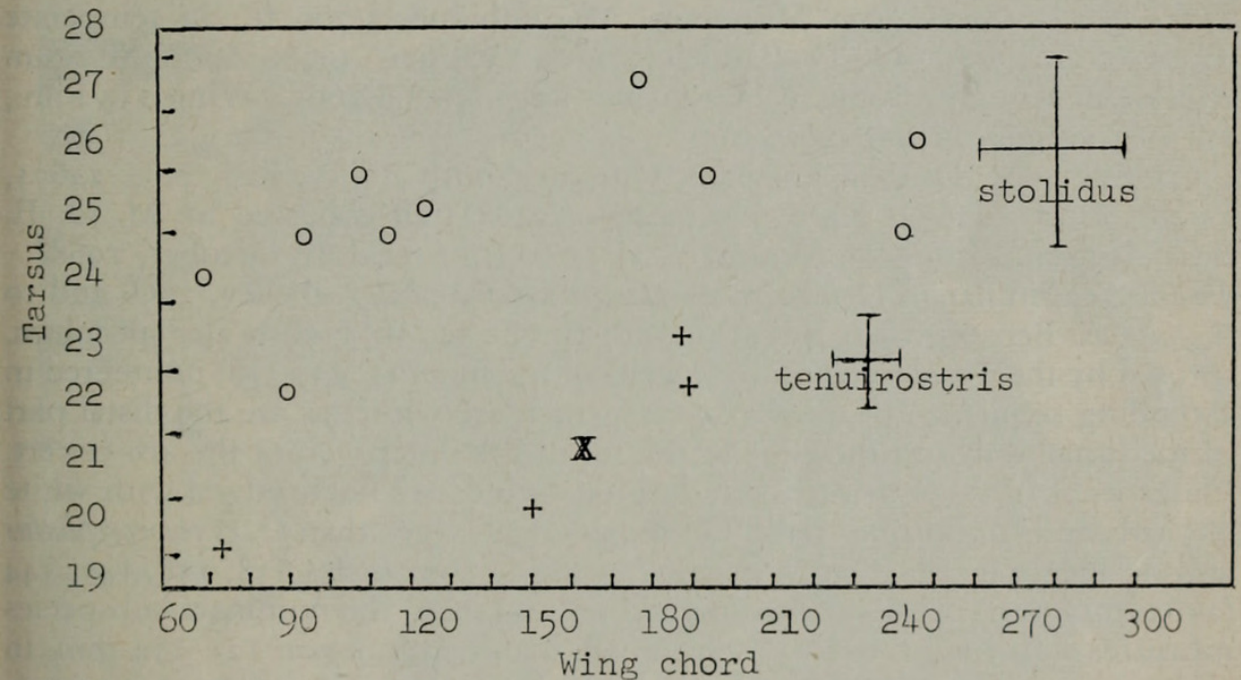


Figure 1. Comparison of tarsal and wing chord measurements in millimetres of juvenile Brown (o) and Black (+) Noddies and Inaccessible Island specimen (X). Ranges of adult measurements are shown by bars. Data are derived from specimens in the Smithsonian Institution.

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