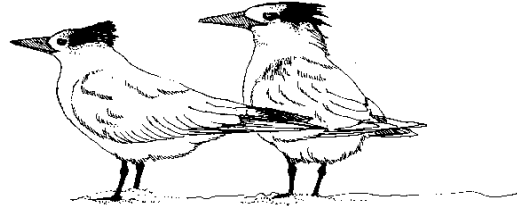


[From Fall 1998]

Royal Tern Banding

For over fifteen years, John Weske has banded Royal Terns (*Sterna maxima*) on breeding sites from Maryland to the North Carolina/South Carolina border. The purpose of this banding is to learn the distribution and demographics of Royal Terns. At 5 a.m. on July 9, 1998, a group of 24 hardy individuals arrived at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge (ESNWR) and were shuttled to Virginia's largest Royal Tern colony on Fisherman Island. The volunteers came from throughout the Mid-Atlantic including the ESNWR, CNWR, the Migratory Bird Banding Office, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Prime Hook NWR in Delaware and the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV.



Once the volunteers arrived at the colony, a temporary wire corral was constructed and herding of the young terns began. Chicks of all ages were trapped and banded, and after they were released they quickly ran back to the colony and were located by their parents. A handful of Sandwich Terns were in the colony and were outfitted with smaller bands to accommodate their smaller size.

The tally for the first of two banding events was 2,490 Royal Terns and 39 Sandwich Terns. Another round of banding was done several weeks later to band birds that were too young or not hatched on July 9th, resulting in banding an additional 282 Royal Terns and 29 Sandwich Terns.

As the totals for recent years suggest, this was a good year for Royal Tern breeding and a record year for Sandwich Terns on Fisherman Island.

Terns Banded at Fisherman Island

Year	Royal Terns	Sandwich Terns
1998	2,772	68
1997	1,872	5
1996	2,605	0
1995	2,132	1
1994	2,840	1
1993	2,277	19
1992	2,588	15

Sheila Faith, Recreation Assistant