

Other ducks and broods seen included five broods of Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) of various sizes and ages, one brood of Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), and a Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*).

The northern portion of Franklinton Vlaie, where most of these birds were observed, appears to be ideal breeding habitat for Hooded Mergansers; it is not unlikely that they have bred there before.

Patricia Riexinger, Wildlife Resource Center, Delmar, New York 12054;
William T. Corbett, Wildlife Resource Center, Delmar, New York 12054;
William Sharick, Rte. 10, Stamford, New York 12167

Noddy Tern on Long Island: On the evening of 7 November 1977, a large high pressure system of cool air over the Maritime Provinces and New England combined with a low pressure system in the Gulf States, and with the remains of a tropical depression in the Atlantic, to produce a north-easter. This storm lashed the New York City region with gale-force winds and five to seven inches of rain.

On the following morning (8 November), while observing the ocean from the lee of the restaurant at Parking Lot No. 2 in Robert Moses State Park, Fire Island, Suffolk Co., I saw what I believe to have been a Noddy Tern (*Anous stolidus*). At the time of this sighting (10:30 a.m.), the rain had ceased and the visibility was clear for approximately three quarters of a mile; the wind velocity was 25-30 mph, and the sky was cloudy. I was using a 20X spotting scope.

As I scanned the ocean from left to right with my scope, I caught a glimpse of a dark bird, some 200 yards from the shore, as it entered a trough in the extremely rough sea. Anticipating where the bird might reappear, I swung toward the east and saw a fairly large tern flying low over the water. The most outstanding characteristic was its white cap. As it beat laboriously into the wind, I could see that it was dark brown both above and below. The tail was rather long and pointed, similar in shape to that of a gannet; I could not, however, confirm that the tail was actually wedge-shaped. As the bird passed directly in front of me, I had an unobstructed view of it for about five or ten seconds. It then flew into another trough, from which I did not see it emerge.

Having had the opportunity to study this species at length in Tobago, I am certain that the above observations constitute a legitimate sighting. However, since a remote possibility exists that the bird was a Black Noddy (*Anous minutus*), I felt compelled to visit the collections of the American Museum of Natural History, to compare specimens of the two species. Having done this, I feel there are three salient characteristics that tend to eliminate *A. minutus* from consideration. First and foremost, *minutus* is very dark brown, specimens appearing black even when viewed at a distance of only 60 feet (the length of the

room in the American Museum). The difference is even more apparent when specimens of the two species are viewed side by side. Second is size, specimens showing that *minutus* is definitely the smaller of the two species; my impression at Robert Moses State Park was of a fairly large tern. Third, Atlantic populations of *minutus* exhibit a white cap that ends abruptly at the blackish nape, providing a distinct demarcation line, whereas in *stolidus* the pale crown blends gradually into the brown of the nape; I feel sure I would have seen such a line of demarcation had it been present.

In conclusion, I remain convinced that the bird I saw was *Anous stolidus* rather than *Anous minutus*.

Jim Ash, 163-29 87th Street, Howard Beach, New York 11414

The above sighting constitutes the first report of the Noddy Tern for New York State; in the absence of a specimen or photograph, the record must be referred to the Hypothetical List. —Eds.

Brown Boobies at Riis Park, Queens County: At 5:15 p.m. on 29 September 1977 the authors were standing north of the Mall at Jacob Riis Park in Queens County, enjoying the tail end of a large migration of hawks. The weather was clear, with light winds from the northwest, producing a flight of several thousand accipiters and falcons along the barrier beach that day.

At this time two large, gannet-like birds were perceived flying close together toward us from the direction of the ocean. The birds flew with continuous, deep strokes of the wings, one bird slightly in front of the other. They passed over us at an altitude of 50 or 60 feet, continued on toward the base of the Marine Park Bridge, and then turned back toward the ocean and disappeared from view. The underparts of the birds were patterned like those of an oystercatcher—the dark head and neck sharply separated from the white breast and abdomen by a line across the breast from the leading edge of one wing to that of the other. The tapered tail was dark. The wing linings were white, edged with black, the trailing edge broader than the leading. The long, tapering bills were yellowish. The upperparts were not seen clearly, but the upper surface of the wing appeared dark brown.

All these points leave no doubt in our minds that these birds were Brown Boobies (*Sula leucogaster*), even though neither of us has had previous experience with the species. Both of us are familiar with Gannets (*Morus bassanus*), including subadults.

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