

anything wrong with it.

Unfortunately, I had to leave the area about two hours after this last incident. I am, however, at a loss to explain the strange behaviour and can only assume that some physical factor might play a part in it. Clearly more observations are needed to come to any conclusion, and I would appeal to anyone ringing terns to take note of any unusual encounters.

BIRD-IN-THE-HAND

TERN MORTALITY

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I was interested to see your appeal on tern mortality in Safring (Potential difficulty when ringing terns 5(1):8). I had a very similar experience to the one described when trapping terns in the Ivory Coast in February 1968. I had mistnetted them at a roost on a sandbank, and kept them overnight in large cardboard boxes, several to a box. The next day all but three flew off alright, but I had three recoveries within days of birds picked up wandering about on beaches further up the coast. I caught about 90 birds on two occasions, losing three directly as they failed to fly away and later died, on the second more successful occasion, which also produced the recoveries. The birds were about half-each Common and Black Terns, and were affected indiscriminately. At least some survived all right, as two of the Black terns were recovered in subsequent years in Ghana. Although my boxes were perhaps less stuffy than Tony Tree's bird bags, they were clearly not good enough, though well impregnated with airholes. The overnight temperature at Grand Bassam, where I caught the birds, was certainly not less than 25°C, and though in the open, the bird boxes were under cover on a verandah and sheltered from any breeze there may have been. Tony Tree specifically mentioned sea-terns but obviously ALL terns are at risk, as half of mine were Black Terns.
