

## A third Philippine specimen of Chinese Crested-tern *Sterna bernsteini*

N. J. COLLAR

The Chinese Crested Tern *Sterna bernsteini* is a highly enigmatic Asian seabird with a known breeding population of only a few pairs on the Mazu Dao islands in Taiwan, China (BirdLife International 2001). Peters (1934), followed by Mees (1975), established the first record of the species from the Philippines, a dataless skin in the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, supplied by Governor Cameron Forbes. Dickinson and Eck (1984) reported a second skin in the Staatliches Museum für Tierkunde, Dresden, taken in Manila Bay on 6 May 1905.

During a visit to the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid in April 2003 I found a third specimen. This bird (MNCNM 23115) unfortunately discloses no more data than the one in MCZ. From the four labels it bears one can determine merely that it was sent to the museum by 'D. Sánchez', evidently during the time of Spanish rule of the Philippines (i.e. prior to 1898), which would make it the first of the three to have been collected there (the most recent of its four labels bears in pencil the words 'anterior a 1913', which one would assume—mistakenly—to be the date of cataloguing). In fact, the museum catalogues reveal that the specimen's year of accession was 1886, and that it was part of the avian material sent by Domingo Sánchez in that year as a commission from the Spanish government in preparation for a major exhibition on the Philippines that took place in Madrid in 1887 (J. Barreiro *in litt.* 2003). D. Sánchez is not mentioned in the list of collectors in Appendix 3 of Dickinson *et al.* (1991), although MNCNM is listed in their Appendix 1, and Sánchez (from my very cursory inspection) seemed to be responsible for a good percentage (if not all) of the museum's Philippine material.

The specimen has a black crown extending to the culmen above an otherwise white head (including white lores); the undersides are white; back, wings and tail

are pale silvery-grey, outer primaries mid-grey with whitish inner edges; legs black; bill yellow with a blackish distal third and a tiny yellowish tip – this last feature being specifically noted in the field by Liang *et al.* (2000). Bill from outer edge of nares is 44 mm, from feathers on culmen 59 mm; approximate width of blackish distal third 27 mm, yellow tip 2 mm; depth of bill at inner edge of nares 13 mm. Right wing 293 mm; tail 175 mm; tarsus 27 mm.

It is worth noting that the account of Chinese Crested-tern in BirdLife International (2001) makes repeated reference to Mees (1975), but accidentally omits the relevant citation from its bibliography.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to Sra Josefina Barreiro for access to the MNCNM collection, and for her help in supplying information on the specimen from the museum catalogues.

### REFERENCES

- BirdLife International (2001) *Threatened birds of Asia*. Cambridge, U.K.: BirdLife International.
- Dickinson, E. C. and Eck, S. (1984) Notes on Philippine birds, 2. A second Philippine record of *Sterna bernsteini*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 104: 72.
- Dickinson, E. C., Kennedy, R. S. and Parkes, K. C. (1991) *The birds of the Philippines: an annotated check-list*. Tring, U.K.: British Ornithologists' Union (Check-list 12).
- Liang, C., Chang, S. and Fang, W. (2000) Little-known Oriental bird: discovery of a breeding colony of Chinese Crested Terns. *Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 32: 18-19.
- Mees, G. F. (1975) Identiteit en status van *Sterna bernsteini* Schlegel. *Ardea* 63: 78-86.
- Peters, J. L. (1934) *Check-list of birds of the world*, 2. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

*N. J. Collar, Conservation Biology Group, Department of Zoology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ, U. K. & BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, U.K.*

## Notes on flocking and breeding behaviour of Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota* in eastern Tibet

X. LU

The Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota* is restricted to the Qinghai-Tibet plateau and the Himalayan mountains. Little has been published on the ecology of this species (Cheng *et al.* 1983, Ali and Ripley 1987, Grimmett *et al.* 1998). From May to October 1995, I regularly

observed this species at Sa Wang, eastern Tibet. I have also observed this species from 1995 to 2002 in eastern and northern Tibet, and during long-term ornithological surveys in the Lhasa region.