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NOTE ON RECOVERY OF LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons* 040–51030 RE-BANDED 041–27635

The recovery of Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* 040–51030, retrapped on nest with one egg at Towra Point, New South Wales, by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Seabird Project on 29 Nov. 1995, (Corella 8(1)), is of particular interest. The original band was badly corroded and reading the numbers correctly presented some difficulty. It was therefore sent to the banding office in Canberra for final identification of the band number. Meanwhile replacement 041–27635 was attached to the bird together with colours red/white and pale green/metal. This individual was sighted again at the same place, but not at a nest, on 30 Oct. 1997 (K. Egan, pers. comm.).

On 28 Dec. 1980, on a flat part of the sandy artificial construction site at Port Botany, New South Wales, I banded two Little Tern runners, 040–51030 and 040–51031, which were found together a few metres from their now empty nest. The first bird was noted as [crown] 'honey colour streaks just appearing', and the second bird

as [crown] 'sandy colour streaks just appearing'. Later that day both these runners had reached a high artificial dune approximately 100 metres from the banding place.

On 11 Jan. 1981 the two runners were still together in vegetation on top of the artificial dune. I noted 040–51031 '... in distressed condition with two sticky eyes', and 040–51030 'recovered with sticky eye and released'. The original intention was to take 040–51031 as a specimen for analysis of the bunged-up eye condition, but the problem appeared to be caused by windblown sand and the attention of black ants. It was considered the birds were at least partially blind and had little chance of survival and both birds were left together to let nature take its course (Larkins 1984).

Thus the recovery of 040–51030 over 14 years 11 months after banding, and its reappearance in October 1997 as 041–27635, was a surprise and particularly pleasing.

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