

## Two New Terns for Flores: Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* and White Tern *Gygis alba*

MARK SCHELLEKENS

Woloara – Ende – Kelimutu, Flores, NTT. 86372, Indonesia. Email: ljmschellekens@yahoo.com  
(alternative address, c/- J.H.de Pontplein 27, 5041 GC Tilburg, The Netherlands)

**Ringkasan.** Dua spesies camar baru untuk Flores: Camar-angguk coklat *Anous stolidus* dan Dara-laut putih *Gygis alba* teramati dalam pelayaran dari Maumere ke Kupang. Identifikasi untuk Camar-angguk-coklat dewasa dan muda dijelaskan dalam catatan ini. Demikian juga Dara-laut putih dapat diidentifikasi sangat jelas ketika berada diantara kelompok burung Dara-laut kumis *Chlidonias hybridus*.

While sailing from Maumere (8°37'S, 122°13'E), east central Flores (Sikka Regency, NTT Province), to Kupang (West Timor) on the PELNI liner 'Awu', I observed Brown Noddies *Anous stolidus* approximately 1.5 – 2 km off the northeast coast of Flores, on six occasions on 2 September 2001. One occasion involved two individuals (one adult and one juvenile), while the remainder involved single birds, but in all cases the birds were flying in straight lines alongside the ship, about 2-3 m above the water's surface. Identification notes were made as follows: dark brown overall plumage, with white cap extending from bill to beyond the crown onto the neck. On one bird, the under wings were observed to be paler brown. The juvenile bird lacked the white cap but had a whitish forehead. It also had some whitish barring or mottling on the upper wings. The brown plumage on all of the birds was observed well in the late afternoon sunlight (from c. 16:45 hrs onwards).

Two other species of noddy could occur in the region: the Black Noddy *A. minutus* and Lesser Noddy *A. tenuirostris*; but both have blackish plumages (including juveniles) instead of dark brown. The Black Noddy also differs in having uniform black underwings, and a white crown sharply contrasting with the rest of the head. Black Noddy has been noted only once in the Flores Sea (Coates & Bishop 1997). The Lesser Noddy has a dark grey (rather than brown) head and neck, and has not yet been recorded in Indonesia, although it breeds off northwest and western Australia (Pizzey & Knight 1997). The Brown Noddy has been noted throughout Wallacea, both north (Moluccas, Sulawesi) and south (Timor and Sumba) of Flores (Coates & Bishop 1997), but this record represents the first off Flores (Verhoeve & Holmes 1999).

On 20 November 2003, I watched a group of terns as it hovered over and behind a fishing boat, about 50-75 m offshore, near the village of Ndete, c. 20 km west of Maumere. The group of c. 25 terns comprised mostly Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybridus*, their slightly forked tails, grey upperparts and black nape of non-breeding plumage, being distinctive. However, one of the terns was pure white (which contrasted strongly with the azure blue sky), and showed a black bill, a slightly forked tail and a black area around the eye. It seemed slightly larger than the other terns, but was behaving mostly like the other terns, flying low over the water and picking prey off the water behind the fishing boat. After about 15 min the fishing boat made its way to shore and the flock of terns moved out to sea, including the all-white tern.

The above characteristics are unique to adult **White Terns** *Gygis alba*, a highly nomadic species which is encountered in the tropical and subtropical Pacific, Indian and Atlantic oceans, as well as waters of Australia (Pizzey & Knight 1997; Robson 2000) and western Indonesia: Sumatra and Java (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993). The present record constitutes the first off Flores (Verhoeve & Holmes 1999), and the third record of this species in Wallacea, previous records involving a dead bird on a ship off Ternate (Maluku) in 1989, and two birds off the eastern coast of Sumbawa (Coates & Bishop 1997).

### References

- Coates, B.J. & K.D. Bishop. 1997. *A Guide to the Birds of Wallacea*. Dove Publications, Alderley, Queensland.
- MacKinnon, J. & K. Phillipps. 1993. *Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Pizzey, G. & F. Knight. 1997. *Birds of Australia*. Harper Collins Publishers, London.
- Robson, C. 2000. *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia*. New Holland Publishers (UK), London.
- Verhoeve, J. & D.A. Holmes. 1999. The birds of the islands of Flores – a review. *Kukila* 10: 3-59.