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CASPIAN TERN FEEDING YOUNG IN WINTER QUARTERS - Juveniles of many terns (*Sterna* spp.) appear to have a long period of dependence and remain less efficient hunters than adults for some time following independence (Dunn, 1972, *Ibis* 114: 360-366). Ashmole & Tovar (1968, *Auk* 85: 90-100) observed six-month-old Royal Terns *Sterna maxima* being fed by adults in a wintering area but, in 65 hours of observation of Sandwich Terns *S. sandvicensis* in winter quarters in Sierra Leone, Dunn (*loc. cit.*) saw only a single instance of an immature begging from an older bird and that was unsuccessful. Little is known about the timing of independence in terns, nor about the relationships between parents and young during the transition to independence. In particular, it is not clear at what stage adults cease volunteering food to them, requiring the young to follow while soliciting (*cf.* Davies, 1976, *Behaviour* 59: 280-295) as the Sandwich Tern observed by Dunn was doing.

On 27 December 1982, near Freetown, Sierra Leone, I saw an adult Caspian Tern *S. caspia*, in winter plumage, flying with a fish in its beak from the direction of the sea towards a group of four Caspians, including one in immature dress, standing on a mudflat. The newcomer landed near the immature, which begged, lowering its head, pointing its beak towards the adult and calling. The adult walked a few paces towards the immature and passed the fish to it. The immature then swallowed the fish, which was about twice the length of its bill.

Caspian Terns are not known to breed in Sierra Leone, but are regular winter visitors, probably from colonies in Senegambia or Mauritania. These breed in July (e.g. Morel, 1980, *Liste commentee des oiseaux du Senegal et de la Gambie, Supplement 1*, ORSTOM, Dakar), so the immature was probably 5-6 months old. This incident suggests that, unlike Sandwich Terns (Dunn, *loc. cit.*), Caspian Terns of this age remain dependent on their parents, as the adult returned with a fish 'intended' for its young rather than having to be persuaded to feed it (*cf.* Davies *loc. cit.*).

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RED MANDIBLES IN THE WOODLAND KINGFISHER SUPERSPECIES - Adult Woodland Kingfishers *Halcyon senegalensis* have the upper mandible red and the lower mandible black; in very young birds both mandibles are dusky brown-black. D. B. Hanmer (*Safring News* 12, 1983, 11-14) figured several immature and adult birds which she netted at Nchalo, Malawi, with varying areas of red in their otherwise black lower mandibles. Nchalo is only 150 km from the nearest breeding locality in the coastal range of a closely-allied para-species, the Mangrove Kingfisher *H. senegaloides*, which has both mandibles solid red, and I ventured to suggest (*Safring News* 12, 1983, 14) that the aberrant Nchalo kingfishers might be hybrids between the two species. That notion is shared by Hanmer (*Safring News* 12, 1983, 15) and has been developed by her (*Safring News*, in press).

In correspondence I was rash enough to state that, from memory, I had never noticed red patches on the lower mandible of *H. senegalensis* handled alive in several countries or as skins in several museums. Subsequently I have made a critical study, for *THE BIRDS OF AFRICA*, of the 266 skins of this species at the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, and I find that no fewer than 24, or 9%, have some red in the lower mandible.