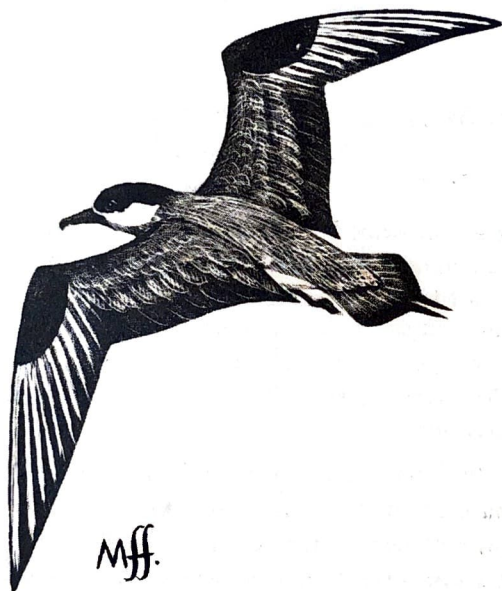


**OBSERVATIONS OF JAEGERS AND TERNS
FROM N.E. TRINIDAD**

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Jaegers (or skuas in English terminology) are gull-like seabirds that feed by chasing other seabirds and forcing them to disgorge their last meal. Two species – the Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers (*Stercorarius parasiticus* and *S. pomarinus*) have been recorded in Trinidad, but the number of individuals is only 11 (French 1973). This note describes two recent observations of jaegers, together with some notes on terns which also feed off the Trinidad coast.



Parasitic Jaeger or Arctic Skua

On 30 December 1973 I saw an immature or dark phase jaeger (probably a Parasitic) chasing a Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) off Galera Point, Toco. The jaeger persisted until the frigatebird was forced to disgorge an item of food. (This encounter is of special interest in as much as frigatebirds prey on smaller seabirds in this same manner; with its 7-foot wing span this species is a lot bigger than any jaeger. Ed. note).

While spending a day at a cottage 4 miles NE of Balandra on January 28 1974 I had good views of a flock of about a thousand terns feeding offshore, presumably on shoals of small fish. They were nearly all "white terns" (i.e. Common or Roseate Terns - *Sterna hirundo* or *S. dougalli*) but included one or two Brown Noddies (*Anous stolidus*) and a few Black Terns (*Chilidonias niger*). The latter, distinguished by their size (distinctly smaller than the white terns) and dark wings and back, had not previously been recorded in Trinidad at this time of year (French 1973).

Other birds associated with the flock were an adult Laughing Gull, (*Larus atricilla*), some Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) and two pale-phase jaegers. The jaegers were feeding in their usual manner by chasing the terns and forcing them to disgorge. They were too far away for the central tail feathers to be seen clearly enough to distinguish Parasitic from Pomarine, but their size, recorded as slightly larger than the Brown Noddy also present, suggests that they were Parasitic Jaegers. (Relevant lengths and wing spans in inches are: Brown Noddy 16 and 33; Parasitic Jaeger 18 and 36; Pomarine Jaeger 22 and 48).

REFERENCE

French, R. P. 1973. A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago. Livingston Pub. Co., Pennsylvania.