



## Bird-Banding On And Near Christmas Island

During the first two weeks of June, 1965, we visited Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean just south of Java to study the social behaviour of its endemic seabirds. Our luggage included mist nets and bird bands for use as opportunities offered themselves.

Our boat, the "Triadic", arrived at Christmas Island at dusk, Sunday, 31st May, 1965, and stood off shore during the night before going to anchor in Flying Fish Cove at dawn the next morning. Shortly after dusk several Red-footed Boobies (*Sula sula*), started to circle around the ship apparently dazzled by its light. Four of them landed on deck and were caught by hand. They were released with Australian leg bands and left behind 17 squid two to three inches long and one flying fish six inches long.

We heard several stories about seabirds flying aboard boats on dark nights, and it may be worthwhile for nautical ornithologists to take up bird-banding at sea.

On the island we caught and banded 13 Island Thrushes (*Turdus poliocephalus*), and 31 Christmas Island White-eyes, (*Zosterops natalis*). For this we used string to tie mist nets to saplings

in the jungles of the shore terrace and the inland plateau. This method, which saves packing poles, reminded us of Lord Medway cutting creepers to support his mist nets near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He complained then that he had not yet acquired the skill the Saki have there in the use of vines for tying things.

While we were at Christmas Island we recruited Dave Powell for the bird-banding scheme. He is a very good all round naturalist and we hope that by banding migrants travelling between Australia and Asia he will help in elucidating their flyways.

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• Illustrations of Red-footed Boobies in flight.

by G. F. van Tets.