



A young Common Tern chick at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Summer 2002. Photo by Jackie Dann.

ability of birds to feed during migration (continued flushing would not allow the birds to rest and forage), or to successfully nest (brooding birds were flushed from their nests, exposing eggs to the elements and marauding gulls).

Senior naval officials approved of the project and Bob VanBendegom could not have been more helpful. The success that was subsequently achieved would not have been possible without the Navy's cooperation, which was enthusiastic and wholehearted.

Before the 2001 nesting season, Brad Semel and Bob VanBendegom obtained the requisite funding from the IDNR and Navy and constructed a 400-foot long east-west fence along the tip of the peninsula. Complete separation from the island was accomplished. The fence was also electrified to further deter mammalian predators.

We were very encouraged initially, as the numbers of adults observed (49), nesting attempts (54), and eggs laid (109), were record or near record numbers, especially in recent years. However, throughout

the nesting season, mammalian predators ultimately destroyed all eggs and nesting was unsuccessful. Detailed analysis of egg remains suggested the interlopers to be Norway Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*).

We concluded that even more intensive management would be necessary for the colony to breed successfully. For 2002, Brad conceived of the idea of building a second fence, approximately 30 meters square, on the island itself, electrifying it and using a fine mesh material to preclude the smallest mammalian predators. By 2002, not only were mammalian predators threatening the colony, but also ag-

gressive invasive plants were making the nesting area less suitable. Before the tern's arrival, Danny Diaz and David B. Johnson joined Brad Semel and me in a workday to clear the area of excessive plant material from within and immediately around the enclosure. Establishing ideal nesting habitat within the enclosure would hopefully encourage the birds to nest only within the protection of the electrified fence.

By any measure all these labors paid off handsomely. Johnson, Semel, Diaz and I monitored the site weekly throughout the breeding season, and at its conclusion the confirmed totals were 49 adult

**Table 1.** Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) nesting summaries for Illinois. Summary data provided by Brad Semel (pers. comm.).

Year	Site	Maximum Tern Number	Maximum Nesting Attempts	Maximum Eggs Laid	Total Young Fledged
1975	Unknown-Chicago area				
1976	Johns-Mansville		2		0
	Midwest Generation		8		0
1977	Waukegan Harbor	16	9		0
	Waukegan Island		12		9
1978	Waukegan Harbor		16	0	
1979	Midwest Generation	43	15	35	
1980	Midwest Generation	60	29	52	0
1981	Midwest Generation	70	33	98	0
1982	Midwest Generation	50	25	70	16
1983	Midwest Generation	64	32	87	21
1984	Midwest Generation	22	17	41	0
1997	Midwest Generation	26	10	0	
	Johns-Mansville	6	3	9	0
1998	Midwest Generation	17	9	7	
1999	Midwest Generation	35	8	0	
2000	Midwest Generation	17	1	1	0
	Naval Training Center	42	12	27	0
2001	Naval Training Center	49	54	109	0
2002	Naval Training Center	49	18	44	26
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>566</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>95</b>