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Terns that frighten human beings along summer-resort beaches are merely demonstrating the defense value of armed bluff in the bird world, Dr. Ira W. Gabrielson, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of the Interior, said this morning (July 8) on reading news reports that terns "are menacing the safety of persons who venture on the beach at the summer home of Joseph P. Kennedy, Ambassador to Great Britain", near Hyannisport, Mass.

Dr. Gabrielson said that he and other ornithologists of the Biological Survey had often been violently threatened by terns during investigations on nesting grounds but never wounded. "Sometimes these swallow-like members of the gull family will swoop down, screaming, to within a foot of a trespasser's head," Gabrielson explained, "but I have never heard of a tern touching a human being."

The Biological Survey chief pointed out that the terns are included in birds protected by treaty with Great Britain because they are attractive, graceful creatures that do no harm and a little good by destroying insects. When birds protected by Federal law are found to do damage, permits for their control are issued. This, however, has never been necessary for terns, except in a few instances where they have occurred in large numbers near boats fouled by the birds' excrement.