Gulls, terns and noddies are a large cosmopolitan group of mainly coastal birds. Most have short, straight, pointed bills and strong legs. They are usually grey, black or brown above, and white below in adults; juveniles usually have brown bars on back and wings. Bill and legs are often brightly coloured but usually change with age and/or sex.

**WHITE-CAPPED (Lesser) NODDY**

*Anous tenuirostris*

**Locally common native**

SCOTTY TERN

GULLS, TERNs AND NODDIES

Around 88 species (47 gulls, 37 terns and 4 noddies) worldwide: 3 gulls, 6 terns and 4 noddie breed in the New Zealand region, and 8 species visit regularly or are vagrants.

Gulls are coastal or inland birds in New Zealand. Adults have white heads and grey or black backs, and broad wings with black and white patterning at the tips. Juvenile plumage has a distinctive buff bar on the back and wings. Gulls are a strong flier with a distinctive shape, deepest about a third of the way back from the tip. They walk well on quite long legs. Gregarious; breeding in colonies and roosting in large numbers. The ground nest is a shallow cup in a low, well-vegetated mound of vegetation. Chicks are fed by regurgitation. Gulls feed on a wide variety of food, including human refuse, fish, shellfish, crustaceans and other invertebrates (including earthworms and grubs excreted by plagouges) and eggs of other birds.

Terns and noddies are mostly pelagic or coastal birds and spend much of their time over coastal waters. Noddies breed only in the tropics or subtropics, and sailors may have named them for their absurdly seeming, roosting, display courtship displays. Terns are usually

**251. WHITE-CAPPED NODDY**

**Other names:** Lesser Black-naped Tern, Sooty Tern

**Geographical variation:** Of several sub- species, 250 Sooty Terns breed in the tropical and subtropical islands of the South Pacific, 300 Sooty Terns breed in the South Pacific, and 250 Sooty Terns breed in the South Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Distribution: Breeds on tropical and subtropical islands of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. The White-capped Noddie breeds widely in the Pacific tropics, from the South Pacific to the North Pacific between 30°N and 30°S, as well as in the subtropics of the North and Kimberley regions of Australia. Non-breeding: Recorded as far north as the North Pacific and South Sea Islands and the Kimberley coast and Cuvier Island. Noddies are found in the southern Hemisphere: populations of single birds from the North Pacific, and sometimes as far as New Zealand, moving occasionally as far north as the Gulf of Carpentaria.**