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Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

White-winged black tern: pp 190-192.



WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN

Family Sternidae

Species *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Common name White-winged Black Tern

Status Migrant

Abundance Rare

Size 230 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, White-fronted Tern 400 mm)

Habitat Generally a coastal species which feeds over muddy pools and takes mainly aquatic insects. Moves inland to lakes and wet areas near the coast.

Worldwide range A small species of marsh tern which breeds in eastern Europe and Siberia and migrates south to East Africa, South-east Asia, Indonesia and Australasia. A few end up in New Zealand where they have bred.

New Zealand range Records come from both islands of New Zealand.

Description – breeding plumage

Head, neck, back and underparts Black. **Wings** White, with pale grey primaries black tipped. **Underwings** Coverts black, with primaries grey and black tipped.

Tail White above and below. **Bill and legs** Red.

Description – non-breeding

Head White forehead with indistinct partial black cap. **Upperparts** White. **Wings** White with grey leading edges and primaries. **Rump and underparts** White. **Bill and legs** Black with reddish tinge.

Conspicuous features

- Smaller than the Little and Fairy Terns.
- Indistinct black cap, in non-breeding birds, separates it from Little Terns.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Feeds while hovering just above the water.
- Very buoyant when in flight almost dancing in the air.
- Will alight and settle among other terns or on sticks or posts.

Call “keet keet keet”.

Where to find – North Island

Sightings come from –

Northland – Karikari at Lake Waiporohita. P. 280.

Auckland – Puketutu Island causeway Mangere. P. 298.

South Auckland – Manukau Harbour at Te Hihi. P. 300.

Hawkes Bay – Ahuriri Estuary. P. 330.

Manawatu – Manawatu Estuary. P. 336.

Wellington – Waikanae Estuary. P. 339.

Where to find – South Island

Canterbury – Lake Ellesmere. P. 351.

Canterbury – Sedgmere at Coopers Lagoon just south of Lake Ellesmere and almost on the coast, accessed east of Leeston, off McEvedys Road. P. 351, 352.

South Canterbury – Lake Wainono accessed east of Studholme on Poingdestres Road. P. 356.

South Canterbury – Tekapo at the Cass River. P. 354.

South Canterbury – Opihi River-mouth east of Temuka where birds have been recorded breeding.