

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

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

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Anarctic tern: pp 196-197.



ANTARCTIC TERN

Family Sternidae

Species *Sterna vittata*

Common name Antarctic Tern

Status Native

Abundance Uncommon around mainland New Zealand

Size 360 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, White-fronted Tern 400 mm)

Habitat A bird of offshore islands and rock stacks where it nests usually in small colonies. Sometimes isolated nests might be found.

New Zealand range Known from the waters around the south of Stewart Island, Snares Islands, Auckland Island, Campbell Island and Antipodes Island.

Description

Crown Black. **Upperparts and underparts** Soft grey. **Rump, undertail and**

uppertail White. **Bill and legs** Bright red.

Conspicuous features

- Red bill and legs.
- Black cap which extends to base of bill.
- When in flight tail has a gently curved fork.

Conspicuous characteristics

- Slightly smaller than the White-fronted Tern, differentiated by its heavier bill which is red coloured rather than black, and its red legs.
- Heavier looking build than White-fronted Tern.
- Birds flock into feeding groups during the months of February to November when away from the breeding colonies.
- Generally a slow flier above the sea when looking for prey.
- Diving is not as forceful as those of the White-fronted Tern or the Caspian Tern.

Where to find – Stewart Island.

Paterson Inlet – Around rock stacks and islands. P. 367.

Port Pegasus – South from Half Moon Bay. P 367.