

Arctic Skua

Stercorarius parasiticus

An identifying feature of the Arctic Skua are their long pointed central tail feathers which extend 5-10 cm beyond the tail. Two colour phases exist, dark and light. Dark Arctic Skua is mostly brown, with black cap, wings and tail. They have white patches near wingtips, more noticeable on underwing. Light Arctic Skua has light cheeks, nape, breast and belly, with a noticeable dark cap and often with a dark band on the breast. Wings and tail look the same as in the dark phase. The dark phase is more common, but the light is commoner in north than south Iceland. Bill is black, lighter at the base, feet are black and eyes are dark.



Arctic Skua's have long wings and are agile flyers. Breed in various habitats from shore to mountains, marshes, heathlands and highland oases. Are found all over Iceland at altitudes up to 700 metres. Are migrants and winter in the southern hemisphere. Breed all around the North Pole, and on the North Atlantic south to

Scotland.

Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson. (2005). *Icelandic bird guide*. Reykjavík: Iðunn.

Image: Daniel Bergmann, taken from

<https://www.ni.is/biota/animalia/chordata/aves/charadriiformes/kjoi-stercorarius-parasiticus>