

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisea

The Arctic Tern is the only member of the tern family that is firmly established in Iceland. They are slender, elegant birds. In summer they have a black cap from the base of the bill to the back of the nape.

Otherwise they are blue-grey, with a white strip below cap, white tail and primaries with black edge. The tail is deeply forked, wings are long and pointed. They have a pointed bill, feet are bright red in adults and eyes are black. They are expert flyers, and defend their young by fearlessly attacking anything that comes near.



They breed in various habitats, both in vegetation and on barren land. The



largest colonies are in coastal lowlands and islands. Their nest is generally a simple scrape, lined with vegetation. The Arctic Tern migrates farther than any other bird, they winter in the South Atlantic off the coast of South Africa and in the Antarctic Ocean off Antarctica.

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

Images: Daníel Bergmann, taken from

<https://www.ni.is/biota/animalia/chordata/aves/charadriiformes/kria-sterne-paradisaea>