



# ID GUIDE

## TERN SPECIES

Terns look like small, streamlined and graceful gulls that hover over the sea as they hunt for sand eels. They migrate huge distances each year so we don't see them over the winter. This guide aims to help you spot the difference between gulls and terns and also tell which type of tern you are looking at.



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### ARCTIC TERN

*Sterna paradisaea*

- Migrates 44,000 to 59,000km from Antarctica
- Elegant, longer tapering tail feathers mark it from other terns
- Hovers over the sea before diving for sand eels
- Red bill and legs, 33-35cm in size



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### COMMON TERN

*Sterna hirundo*

- Migrates from West Africa's coast
- More robust looking than the Arctic tern with a swallow-like tail
- Red bill with a black tip
- Hovers and dives to catch sand eels
- 31-35cm in size



### SANDWICH TERN

*Sterna sandvicensis*

- Migrates from South Africa's coast
- Larger than Common terns with a black beak and shaggy black crest
- The beak also has a yellow tip
- Hovers before diving for small fish (named after Sandwich in Kent)
- 36-41cm in size



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Seagulls and terns are in the Laridae family. We're related but quite different! Terns will hover, dive and only eat small fish. Us gulls eat lots of things, including your chips!





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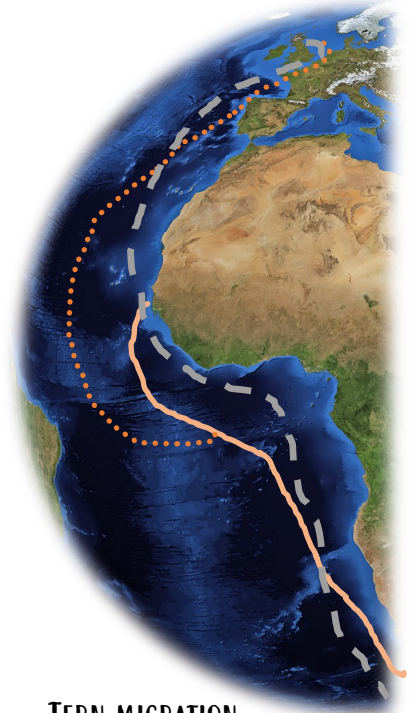


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### LITTLE TERN

*Sternula albifrons*

- Migrates from West Africa's coast
- Hovers and dives for small fish near the shore
- Yellow beak with black tip
- Courtship display sees the male offer a fish in flight to the female
- Smaller than other terns at 22-24cm



### ROSEATE TERN

*Sterna dougallii*

- Migrates from West Africa's coast
- Solid black beak and whiter plumage
- In summer it has rose coloured breast plumage, hence the name Roseate
- Much rarer and only found around East Lothian and Berwickshire coastlines



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### TERN MIGRATION

- Arctic terns
- Common, Sandwich, Little & Roseate terns
- West African coast



© Greg MacVean



Tern and gull chicks look quite different. The beak is a giveaway! These tern chicks are Arctic terns from the Isle of May with a white tummy. The Lesser Black Back chick, on the right, is darker and more robust looking.



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