

WHISKERED TERN (*Chlidonias hybrida*)

IDENTIFICATION

23-24 cm. In spring, with white cheeks; black crown; blue grey body feathers; red bill and legs. In winter, white plumage with grey upperparts; dark ear spot; crown with black tinge.

SIMILAR SPECIES

In **breeding plumage** this species is unmistakable due to its black crown and hindneck and blue greyish plumage. In **non breeding** plumage recalls a **Black Tern** with dark tinge on lesser coverts and outer primaries. **Juvenile Black Tern** has feathers on the upperparts grey edged.

SEXING

Plumage of both sexes alike, but underparts of **female** sometimes slightly paler. Size can be an useful character in extreme birds: **male** with wing longer than 254 mm; **female** with wing shorter than 224 mm.

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile without pale collar on hindneck; pale grey feathers on mantle, scapulars and inner wing coverts with sepia-black subterminal bars.

2nd year similar to **adults** and indistinguishable after loss of last **juvenile** feathers; only a few number of birds can be recognized since remain in **non breeding** plumage during spring.

Adult in **spring** with black crown and hindneck; uniform pale grey plumage; in **autumn** with pale collar on hindneck; uniform pale grey feathers on mantle, scapulars and inner wing coverts, without sepia-black subterminal bars.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult changing in breeding places most of the body feathers and outer primaries (to 3-7); then suspended prior to migration and finished in winter quarters. Complete **postjuvenile** moult usually starting in breeding areas with few body feathers and some outer primaries; then suspended prior to migration and finished in winter quarters. Both types of age have a partial **prebreeding** moult changing most of the body feathers and some inner primaries (**CAUTION:** a few **immature** birds acquire their first **breeding** plumage in their **3rd year**).

PHENOLOGY

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

- Summer visitor ■ Resident
- Wintering ■ On passage