



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

White-fronted tern

Sterna striata Gmelin, 1789

Length: 30cm

Weight: 160g

Similar species: Common tern, Arctic tern

New Zealand status: Native

Conservation status: Declining

The white-fronted tern is a medium-sized, long-tailed sea tern that is common around New Zealand coasts. It is pale grey above and white below, with a black cap that is separated from the bill by a white band (or by an entirely white fore-crown in non-breeding plumage). The tail is white and forked; the length of the tail and depth of the fork decrease in size outside of the breeding season. The outer edge of the first primary has a narrow black or brownish-black band.

Voice: the main call is a high-pitched siet; a harsh keark or keeahk is uttered by birds defending their nests.