

Least Terns



Description

- Size: 21-23 cm (8-9 in)
- Wingspan: 48-53 cm (19-21 in)
- Weight: 30-45 g (1.06-1.59 ounces)
- Small tern. During breeding, black cap ending at white forehead. Short white eyestripe. Bill yellow with black tip. Back light gray. Underside white. Black leading edge to wing. In nonbreeding plumage has black eyestripe extending to back of head, white top of head, and black bill.

Least Terns

Summer Range

Breeds along coasts from central California and southern Maine southward to Mexico. Also along Missouri, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers to Montana, Kentucky, and Missouri, and other scattered inland locations in to New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, and Nebraska. Also in Mexico, northern Central America, and Caribbean.

Winter Range

Winters along coasts from Mexico southward to southern South America.

Least Tern
Sterna antillarum



Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe

Least Terns

Habitat

- Seacoasts, beaches, bays, estuaries, lagoons, lakes and rivers, breeding on sandy or gravelly beaches and banks of rivers or lakes, rarely on flat rooftops of buildings.

Food

- Small fish. Some invertebrates.

Foraging

- Plunges into water from flight; may hover briefly before plunging.

Nest Type

- Shallow scrape in sand, soil, or pebbles.

Clutch Size

- Usually 1-3 eggs.**Condition at Hatching**

- Downy, eyes open, able to walk but stays in nest.



Least Terns



- **Conservation Status**
- Although widespread and common in places, its favored nesting habitat is prized for human recreation, residential development, and alteration by water diversion, which interfere with successful nesting in many areas. It is classified as "Threatened," "Endangered," or "species of concern" for most states because of loss of nesting habitat. Interior Population federally listed as "Endangered" in 1985.

Least terns at Bethel Beach 2005



Least tern eggs at Bethel Beach 2005



Least tern eggs at Bethel Beach 2005







Least terns at Bethel Beach 2005

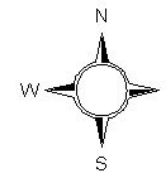


Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve Least Tern Nest Area



Area between the fences is temporarily closed to the public.

-  Hughlett_point_boundary_dd.shp
-  Winter water trail.shp
-  Observation deck.shp
-  Bay shore trail.shp



Least Terns at Hughlett Point 2008







Least Tern Plan

- Monitor early and often to see if they are nesting
 - enlist more help:
Audubon? Master Naturalists? Others?
- Close Beach
 - fence and signs
- Newspaper article?
- Brochure?
- Monitor closure
 - Volunteer interpreters
 - Scheduled visits during high traffic times



Rigby Island Near Gwynn's Island by Hole in the Wall

