

# Roseate Tern

*Sterna dougallii*

**STATUS**

Endangered 

Endangered 



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## Species Description

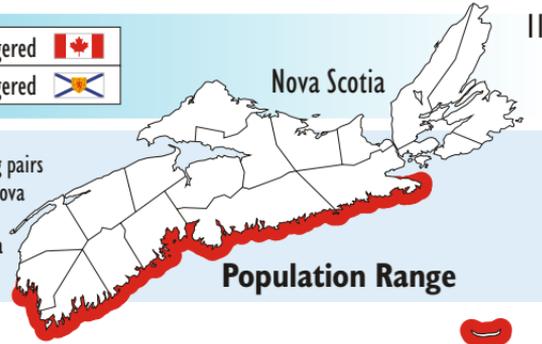
The Roseate Tern is a small gull-like seabird (33-41 cm). Its long, thin bill is solid black in May, and turns to black with a red base as the summer progresses. It has a white body, black head, and deeply forked tail feathers. A pinkish tinge to the breast is sometimes observed. Adults have bright red legs, while chicks have black legs. Its call is a harsh *skivick* or *zraaaaach*.



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In flight, distinctive features are the long split tail and dark bill.

There are 80-120 breeding pairs on coastal islands along Nova Scotia. They winter along the coast of South America from Columbia to Brazil.



**Population Range**

## Habitat

Breed within large colonies of Common and Arctic Terns on offshore islands in areas free of dense woody vegetation. Nests (or nest boxes) are often in low grassy vegetation or heath where the chicks are able to conceal themselves. They require islands that are free of predators and close to foraging sites.



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Nest boxes



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Roseate Terns are typically observed with Common and Arctic Terns along the coast from May to September while migrating, resting, and feeding.

## Interesting Points

- Catch fish by patrolling over the water and plunge-diving from high above the surface.
- Travels up to 20 km to forage for fish.
- Can hybridize with Common and Arctic Terns.
- The name *roseate* comes from the pinkish hue sometimes observed on the breast.



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## Similar Species

### Common Tern:

Similar size (31-38 cm); bill slightly shorter and orange with a black tip; mottled, gray body; adults and chicks have yellow or orange legs; less harsh call.

### Arctic Tern:

Similar size (28-39 cm); shorter red bill; mottled or gray body; short orange legs; less harsh call. Chicks have orange or red legs.



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## Threats to Survival

- Predation from birds (gulls, owls, crows, ravens, hawks) and mink.
- Human disturbance.
- Loss of offshore island habitat.
- Mortality on wintering grounds.

## How You Can Help

Keep an eye out for seabird colonies (large concentrations of birds) on islands from June to August. The presence of colonies may be marked by signs with the bird symbol on the right. Avoid disturbing colonies (with or without signs) by staying off these islands.



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Roseate tern chick



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## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** Environment Canada (506) 364-5044 or [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)

**Info:** [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca) or [www.hww.ca](http://www.hww.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or [sightings@speciesatrisk.ca](mailto:sightings@speciesatrisk.ca)

**Stewardship:** Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation (902) 624-9888, [www.coastalaction.org](http://www.coastalaction.org)