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## Notice:

### Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata*

<sup>1</sup>Tony Tree, <sup>1</sup>Norbert Klages & <sup>2</sup>Les Underhill

<sup>1</sup>Port Elizabeth Museum & <sup>2</sup>Avian Demography Unit

The Antarctic Tern is a regular winter visitor to South Africa. The first birds arrive in about March, and numbers build up to a peak in August. Departure takes place mainly in September and October, and is complete by November, with only isolated birds remaining in South Africa for the summer months. Regular roosts lie between Lamberts Bay and Cape Agulhas and between Cape St Francis and Bird Island, Algoa Bay. Beyond these areas it is a vagrant.

Prior to 1998, 249 Antarctic Terns had been ringed. These delivered five remarkable recoveries (see *Review of ring recoveries of waterbirds in southern Africa* by Underhill *et al.*, 1999).

Between July 1998 and September 2000, several expeditions to ring Antarctic Terns have been made to Bird Island, Algoa Bay. More than 1000 terns have been ringed, and colour leg flags were also fitted to 600 of

these birds. A request to look out for these birds was made in September 2000 to all researchers visiting Southern Ocean islands. Within three months there was an exciting response. Eric Woehler of the Australian Antarctic Division saw one of these leg-flagged birds between Christmas and New Year on Heard Island. This is at 53°S 73°E, in the southern Indian Ocean and 4300 km from Bird Island.

If you have access to a roost, please scan each bird for leg flags. If any sightings of these birds are made, report them to the South African Bird Ringing Unit. In fact, all sightings of Antarctic Terns, either at sea or at roosts, can usefully be reported to the ADU's Bird Sightings system.

For more information see the ADU webpage: [www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu](http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu) under Seabirds; Antarctic Terns.