

BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee

Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission to document a major rare bird in Australia. Its use is NOT mandatory. Please attach and/or include all relevant information including any digital images. Please Email the completed form/submission to the BARC Chair, Tony Palliser tonyp@bigpond.net.au

BARC considers submissions that include a minimum of the submitter's name(s), the bird species claimed and the location and date(s) of the record. However, more information and evidence will usually be required for BARC to accept a record. So, please submit as much detailed information about the bird as possible.

If you choose not to use this form please make sure all relevant information requested in this form is included in your submission. However, it is our preference that you fully complete sections "A" and "B", or follow their headings, so that BARC has some continuity between all submissions.

Section A: Submitter details	
Your name(s) Joint submissions are fine	Jon Spicer-Bell
Your email, phone or address	

Section B: Record details	
Common and scientific names Include subspecies if relevant	Black-fronted Tern – <i>Chlidonias albostratus</i>
Site location (with GPS if possible)	Fort Scratchley, Newcastle, NSW GPS: -32.926338, 151.791584
Date(s) and time(s) of record (First and last date of occurrence if known)	20/06/2021 11:09 viewed and photographed by both Michael Kearns (MK) and Jon Spicer-Bell (JSB). The bird had been seen earlier that day by MK at the same location. At time of writing the bird hasn't been seen since.
How many individuals were there?	1
What was the distance to the bird(s)?	Initially ~40m, then as close as ~5m
Habitat description	Urban lawns, on a raised hill overlooking an oceanic beach and rockpools.
Sighting conditions (e.g. weather, visibility, light conditions)	Weather was heavily overcast with occasional periods of rain and otherwise persistent showers. Strong southerly winds. Apart from occasional rain visibility was clear, no obstructing vegetation or other obstacles. Equipment –10x42 binoculars and a DSLR camera with 100-400mm lens was used.
How confident are you in the identification (as a %) and why?	100% due to the clear views and reasonable photographs obtained of the bird showing its field characteristics.
Did you find and/or identify the bird initially? Who else recorded the bird and do they agree with the identification?	I arrived at Fort Scratchley Function Centre balcony at 10:42 for sea-watching. Coincidentally MK was already onsite. MK advised JSB that an Arctic-type Tern had been seen earlier. At 11:09 MK called out that the Arctic-type Tern had reappeared. Both MK and JSB started viewing/photographing and pursued the bird into the lawns of Fort Scratchley where prolonged close views and photographs were obtained.

	At the time identification was tentatively an Arctic Tern, however upon closer examination and review of the observations and photographs, bird guides and collaboration with Facebook birding groups identification of Black-fronted Tern was 100% agreed upon.
What experience have you had with this species?	Zero experience before this observation.
Has this species been seen at this location before? When?	No
Have photographs of the bird or discussion of it occurred on the internet? (Please provide the site name, a summary, electronic link, etc.)	Yes, Facebook Australian Twitchers page and Facebook NSW Rare Bird Alert page. The link for both these posts is attached in a separate file.
Do you permit BARC to display your images etc. electronically (credited with your name)	Yes

You may choose to delete or ignore this page, but please include as much of the requested information in your submission as possible, especially Sections C and E.

Section C: Supporting evidence

Please include evidence that supports the identification, such as photographs, video, call recordings, etc. Digital images can be pasted into this document below, at the end, or provided separately. Digital video and sound recordings can be sent separately to this form. Label photos etc or insert captions to make note of relevant features they show.

Image summary:

Editing included cropping of the original RAW files and slight brightness and sharpness increase.

JSB BFTern_001 – In flight showing dorsal view of white rump, black cap, white line, grey plumage, and orange bill.

JSB BFTern_002 – In flight showing front view of black cap, white line, grey plumage, and orange bill.

JSB BFTern_003 – In flight showing underwing.

Section D: Description of the bird(s)

Please provide a description of the bird(s) including all identification features recorded. Provide all possible details that might corroborate the identification.

Plumage	Black cap extending to bill with white line separating cap from surrounding grey plumage. White rump. Otherwise all grey. Tail forked.
Bare parts	Bill bright orange with a faint black tip.
Moult details	Breeding plumage.
Structure and 'jizz'	Buoyant, agile flight in strong wind. Silver Gulls were nearby, and this bird was notably smaller approximately ~50% the size of the Silver Gulls.
Calls	No calls were noted.
Behaviours	Flying low over the lawns of the Fort, foraging close to the grass. Generally moving south in lines above the lawn before flying up and back to the northern end and starting again. Almost landed occasionally and at least once took a worm. Last views the bird headed out to sea, last seen above the breaking waves over the rock platforms.
Age, sex and/or taxonomy	Unknown

Section E: Confusion species

Please indicate other species that the bird(s) might be confused with and how they can be eliminated

Combination of diagnostic features (Bright orange bill; black cap extending to bill; white line separating cap; white rump; otherwise all grey plumage) observed eliminate all other Terns.

Section F: References and aids

Did you use books, journal articles or on-line sites or pages to help you prepare this submission? Which ones?

Facebook post 20/06/2021 on NSW Rare Bird Alert page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nswrarebirdalert/posts/1713472468839973/>

Facebook post 20/06/2021 on Australian Twitchers page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/718576241555767/posts/4055186281228063/>

Identification:

www.Ebird.org

Would you like to acknowledge the assistance of others in the identification process or preparation of this submission?

Michael Kearns for his assistance in the initial observation. Michael Kearns and Mick Roderick for their assistance in reviewing this submission.



JSB BFTern_001



JSB BFTern_002



JSB BFTern_003