



FACTSHEET

Crested Tern



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Common Name: Crested Tern

Scientific Name: *Sterna bergii*

Conservation Status: Listed as Least Concern under ICUN (2014). All Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

Habitat: Coastal habitat, Wetlands.

Body length: 43-55 cm

Weight: 350-400 g

Gestation period: 25-30 days

Number of young: 1-2 (2 eggs)

Description:

The Crested Tern has a distinctive black crown with some of its forehead feathers raised into a crest. Its upper surfaces are grey and its neck chest and under surfaces are white. It has a deeply forked tail, brown eyes, a long yellow bill and black legs. When it flies, its wings look long, narrow and pulled back.

Diet:

Fish, squid, snails, crustaceans, insects.

In the Wild:

The Crested Tern is the most common tern on the Island. It is a very noisy bird sounding a rough throaty cry as it flies. The main nesting colonies are on Lake Baghdad and Lake Herschel and the birds can be heard at all times of the day and night. The nesting sites are very crowded. The nests are a single scrape in the ground and they are packed tightly.

These birds feed on fish which they catch by diving quickly into the water. The tern plucks the fish out of the water by seizing it just behind the head with its bill.

The Crested Tern has interesting courtship rituals. They put on impressive aerial displays where they dive, climb and zig zag in perfect close formation. As they do this, they make loud calls. On the ground, the male and female birds will "dance". They circle around each other with their head crests raised and their wings held out away from the body and dropped downwards.





Threats:

- Human activity causing disturbance
- Pest birds
- Pollution
- Human activity causing disturbance

DID YOU KNOW?

Rottnest breeding colonies make so much noise that they can be heard up about 3km from the breeding sites!