

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: Arctic Tern, *Sterna paradisaea*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): **One, not really sure on age, but presumably second summer. Bill and cap like adult in alternate plumage; however strong carpal bar present and gray on breast not particularly intense. The “second summer” bird, photograph #101, in Olsen and Larson looks pretty close.**
3. **Parish: Plaquemines**
Specific Locality: Breton Island, Breton NWR
4. Date(s) when observed: **July 10, 2015**
5. Time(s) of day when observed: approximately 1400-1430 h.
6. Reporting observer and address: David P. Muth, 2765 Orchid St., New Orleans, Louisiana, 70119.
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): **Peter Yaukey, Dan Purrington, Steve Liffmann.**
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s): none.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): A bright glary summer afternoon, but able to view the bird from various directions.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): **Eagle Platinum 10x—I also looked through scopes of Peter and Dan but don’t remember details.**

11. Distance to bird(s): **At a minimum 50-75 feet.**

12. Duration of observation: about 30 minutes though it flew a few times and had to be relocated. We finally left it in order to continue the survey.

13. Habitat: **Barrier island; it was observed on the backside loafing on sand or in water in shallow muddy flats, as well as in flight. Hot, mostly clear, light southeasterly breeze. Water brown, floating duckweed indicated high river influence and low salinities.**

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): **Resting and flying. While perched on sand or in mudflat it was alert, tracking birds flying over – there was considerable commotion.**

First pointed out by P. Yaukey when he spotted it from the boat as we were anchoring and preparing to disembark on the backside of the island--we had been searching for the first COTE of the day to show Liffmann (we later found three COTE down the island.) We quickly became suspicious of this bird and began stalking it from the water, orally comparing notes and trying to obtain photos as we waded ashore. It was pretty cooperative but flushed more than once as did the birds around it. (I went ashore without a camera but waded back out and eventually got photos.)

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

See Ebird report <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S24227716>

Small compact Comic tern on sand, in shallow flat, and in flight; fairly short dark red legs; short neck; short all red bill to tip (there may have been the faintest trace of duskiness on the tip of the upper mandible—not sure); full black cap with very thin white loreal line (again in some photos I see what might be a few scattered white feathers on the forehead); white cheeks above dark gray throat; dark gray below (but not intensely dark), gray above; dark carpal bar; wing with translucent primaries and thin dark trailing edge, made by tips of outer primaries--upper primaries translucent in flight in back lighting, paler than rest of upper wing in all light. Upper secondaries gray with white tips, also translucent, no contrast with secondary coverts and upper wing surface; no darker wedge in upper outer primaries; tail, long, forked white with narrow dark outer webs; rump white.

16. Voice: **not heard.**

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): **Common Tern eliminated by pattern on flight feathers, specifically completely translucent primaries with only a very thin dark trailing edge and translucent secondaries with no contrast.**

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos by D. P. Muth (attached), S. Liffmann (attached), R.D. Purrington.

19. Previous experience with this species: **Very little—seen in fall on Monterrey Bay, CA in early 1990s.**

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: none except discussion with Yaukey and Purrington

b. after observation: Olsen and Larson, National Geographic, Sibley.

21. This description is written from:

	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	
xx	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	7-11-15 Ebird entry
	memory		
xx	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: **Yes. I am a little perplexed by the combination of a very prominent carpal bar but complete dark cap and red bill (though in some of my photos I might see just a hint of white spotting on the forehead and the faintest dusky tip to the upper mandible). The leg length seemed within the range for Common and not as short as I've been led to believe for Arctic, but it is not that hard to find photos of similar looking birds, especially alert ones.**

23. Date: **February 21, 2016**

Time: **1400 h.**

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? yes