

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

Sterne caugek - Brandseeschwalbe - Grote stern - Kentsk tarna – Cabot's Tern

Common summer visitor and passage migrant, often breeds



The first arrivals normally appear in mid March and numbers quickly build up to reach a spring peak any time between late March and early May. The first two pairs nested at Ternery Pool in 1984 and breeding has occurred there in all but four years since, with a maximum of 150 pairs in 1987 and 1994. The colony has been successful in recent years, the best being 2010 when 750 pairs raised about 1000 young. A late summer influx is often evident between mid July and early September, usually involving smaller numbers than the spring passage. Few generally remain thereafter, and the last are typically noted in late September. Peak counts

relate to roost gatherings at Ternery Pool, normally at high tide or overnight: 1364 on 18 August, up to 900 in late April/ early May 2004 and 650 on 7 July 2003. Numbers have increased significantly since the 1970s, with few significant counts until the late 1980s, and the spring arrival starts much earlier than formerly. During the 1970s the first was not normally noted until early April, whereas three-figured counts are now not unusual in late March, and a record March count of 220 was made on 31 March 1996. There is one winter record: a single on 8 and 11 January and 11 February 1981. Several colour ringed birds seen on passage have come from Aberdeenshire and the Farne Islands, while a juvenile found dead at Rye Harbour on 27 July 2005 had been ringed as a nestling at Heist in Belgium on 6 Jun that year.



Chicks in the colony



Adult in breeding plumage

Breeding Sandwich Tern at Rye Harbour

