

Roseate Tern

Description

Roseate tern is a striking and elegant bird, with black cap, rose flushed white plumage and long tail streamers. It is one of Europe's rarest seabirds. The white breast is variably flushed with pink, which gives the roseate its name. The bird has a jet black cap and a dagger-like black bill with a red base which increases in extent as the summer wears on.



In the UK and Ireland, Roseate tern nests exclusively on offshore islands and prefers nest sites with good vegetation cover where it can conceal its eggs. The birds also use artificial nest boxes where provided. Normally, only two eggs are laid. By mid-August (at the latest), both adults and young leave the colony to start the journey to their African wintering grounds. They do not return to the north Atlantic to breed until they are at least two years old.

Distribution

This species is usually found on off shore islands. However, in Northern Ireland they can be found in Larne Lough County Antrim.

Action

The Northern Ireland colony in Larne Lough, County Antrim is managed by RSPB on behalf of Environment and Heritage Service. The site is designated as ASSI and SPA. The reserve is regularly monitored throughout the breeding season. Nest boxes have been placed on site to provide shelter and protection for the species.

Newsletters and occasional international workshops have been organised by the Roseate Tern Working Group. Contact Dr Norman Ratcliffe for more information.

Further Information

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/priority/species.asp?item=364>

MLA Species Champion

