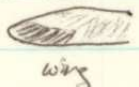


Common Tern - 3+

May 19, 1980

Willow Slough, Mills County, Iowa

Description: ordinary sort of small white tern, with black caps and bills orange or red with black tip. Ends of primaries distinctly darker than the rest of the wing. One that flew close had a narrow white streak on the outer edge of the outer primary, and alternating gray + very dark along the length of the others.   
wing

Similar species The more common Forster's Tern has wings all one color or paler on the primaries. One was present at the slough this day. However, young Forsters, I've been told, can have dark primaries. If this is so + they retain these feathers ~~as~~ in the spring, the ~~possibility~~ possibility of Forster's Tern is not entirely eliminated.

Distance, etc: distance ~~to~~ varied from a few yards to over 100 feet. Seen with 20x telescope + 8.5x binoculars. Field notes written soon after seeing the birds, without consulting a book. Someday I'll have to memorize all the field marks of Common Terns, but I haven't. This was written May 26 from notes taken in the field, but after I'd seen the birds, - an hour or more after the terns.

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