

# Harbor Island, Naturally

AUGUST 2015

A PERSONAL PROJECT OF JOHN ALBERT



## SANDWICH TERNS

### ELEGANT VISITORS

Sandwich Terns (*Sterna sandvicensis*) are often found mingling with their larger



cousins the Royal Terns (*Sterna maxima*). These two species even nest together.

Easily identified these birds are white and pale gray with black legs, crown, and crest the bill is black with a yellow tip.

PHOTOS BY JOHN ALBERT

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These birds are found near warm shallow waters. They are ground nesters and prefer sandy beaches, sandbars and offshore islands.

They eat small fish such as mullet and greenies. They also eat shrimp, marine worms and insects. Sandwich terns feed by hovering then plunging into water to grab their prey. Insects may be taken in flight.

Their courtship features high spiraling flights and long glides. On the beach the male feeds fish to the female. Both may point bills up and droop wings.



The Sandwich terns got their name from the town of Sandwich in the English County of Kent where they were first discovered.

Sandwich terns almost went extinct in the late 1800's when their eggs were prized by egg collectors (Oologists). They have made a long slow comeback. They are still considered uncommon and are vulnerable to loss of habitat.



Sources

[Lives of North American Birds](#)

by Kenn Kaufman

[South Carolina Bird Life](#)

by Alexander Sprunt