

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Charadriiformes
Scientific Name: *Larosterna inca*

Family: Sternidae
Common Name: Inca tern

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other South America

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Found along the beaches and coasts of South America, from Peru to Chile

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal Crepuscular Nocturnal Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Diet: Frugivore Carnivore Piscivore Insectivore
 Nectivore Omnivore Folivore Other (Add Below)

Captive Dietary Needs:

Fish based diet supplemented with commercial meat diet, insects, and thiamin supplement. Will readily consume small rodents, like pinkies. Large pools or water tubs will be used for both bathing as well as dipping fish. Water should be changed often if a waterfall or large pool is not available.

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Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: unknown Females: unknown

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: Up to 28 years Females: Up to 28 years

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 2 years old Females: 2 years old

Courtship Displays: Head bobbing, synchronous vocalizations, excavation of nest sites and courtship feeding.

Nest Site Description: In the wild nests can be in burrows, caves or other cavities. They have been known to use old Humboldt Penguin nests. In captivity, several nest structures have been used, including nest boxes, artificial tunnels and open platforms. Nests can be situated about 5' from the ground, but some Inca terns have nested on the ground in tunnels or halved planting pots.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 1-2 brown speckled eggs. Eggs can measure app. 51mm long x 36mm wide

Incubation Period: 24-27 days with a 25 day average

Fledgling Period: Approximately 40 days

Parental Care: Both parents incubate and rear the chicks.

Chick Development: Chicks may begin to explore outside the nest before fledging. Chicks are brownish-grey and have small moustache plumes. As the chicks age, their bills and legs will develop the distinct red color. It can take several years before chicks develop into complete adult plumage.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Colonial species forming large flocks, up to 5000 birds when feeding

Social Structure in Captivity: Colonial species and form pairs. Pairs may change annually with the courtship displays highlighting newly formed pairs. Same sex pairs have been known to form in captivity.

Minimum Group Size: Ideally more than 6. Should not be housed singly.

Maximum Group Size: Dependent on exhibit size only.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes **Comments:** Have been successfully housed with other Charadriiformes, Galliformes, Passeriformes, Sphenisciformes, Columbiformes

Optimal Habitat Size: Inca terns are normally kept in large flight or walk through aviaries. They will utilize multiple levels of exhibits that include high rock work or elevated perching areas as well as mid-level perching and the ground. Inca terns in the wild will hover above the ocean before plunging to find prey. If the exhibit is tall enough, this behavior can be seen in the captive environment.

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Management Challenges: Monitoring pairs in large colonies to determine parentage of chicks can be challenging.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Information about the current AZA population can be found in the member's section of AZA or questions can be addressed to Sunny Nelson, SSP coordinator

REFERENCES:

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COMPLETED BY:

Name: Sunny Nelson

Date: 3/27/2014