



CASPIAN TERN

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary
United States
Caspian Tern
Hydroprogne caspia

Collected from Scammons Lagoon, Shell Island, Baja California, Mexico, 1932
The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

Found on every continent except Antarctica, Caspian Terns breed near coastal estuaries and lagoons, lakes, reservoirs, and rivers that offer small- to medium-sized fish, the major food source for these diving birds. They often return to their former nesting grounds, which might be species-specific colonies, or ones mixed with other species of terns, as well as gulls, plovers, cormorants, stilts, pelicans, and skimmers. Nest construction is rudimentary, with both sexes scraping a shallow depression in the ground, adding rocks, shells, sticks, seaweed, and other plant material, and relying on the color of their eggs to camouflage them in the open.

COUP D'ETAT



The nests were photographed in four science collections: The California Academy of Sciences, The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, The Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the Cornell Museum of Vertebrates, and the American Museum of Natural History.

Subject Details:

Mexico, Baja California

Scammons Lagoon, Shell Island

17 Jun 1932

WFVZ 177065

The Tern's well camouflaged eggs are laid on the ground in barely a scrape in the terrain. In this case it was in a tide line of shells. The collector managed to keep the shells from the nest site.

From the collection of nests and eggs at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. Camarillo, CA

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