

## Report (報告)

# First Record of the Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* in Japan

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**Abstract.** The Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* is a critically endangered seabird that nests in China and Korea and has long been expected to be recorded in Japan. In October 2018, the first observation of this species in Japan was made near Irabu Island, Okinawa Prefecture.

**Key words:** Distribution, Endangered, Miyakojima, Nansei Islands, Ryukyus.

**キーワード:** 分布, 絶滅危惧, 宮古島, 南西諸島, 琉球.

## Introduction

The Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* is one of the world's rarest birds, with a global population currently estimated to be ~50 mature birds (Birdlife International 2017, Song *et al.* 2017). Listed by the IUCN as Critically Endangered, it nests in China and Korea (Birdlife International 2017, Song *et al.* 2017) and has long been expected to be recorded in Japan (Brazil 2018), and specifically in the Nansei Islands (Ryukyu Islands) (Brazil 2009).

## Methods

Observations were conducted opportunistically from a car. Photos were obtained using Sony RX10 camera.

## Results

On 20 October 2018, approximately two hours before sunset, a single large tern with a deeply forked tail (Fig. 1) was found flying in WNW direction parallel to Irabu-ohashi Bridge near Irabu Island, Okinawa Prefecture (24°48'18"N, 125°13'26"E). It was observed for less than a minute and photographed only twice due to heavy traffic on the bridge. The bird was immediately suspected to be a Chinese Crested Tern based on it having a yellow bill with a black tip. Other identification features visible in the photos are the uniformly pale mantle, contrasting blackish primaries, and extensive white forehead, indicative of an adult Chinese Crested Tern in non-breeding plumage (Brazil 2009, Song *et al.* 2017). The bird was probably migrating from the known breeding site in Korea (Song *et al.* 2017) or an unknown breeding

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Fig. 1. Chinese Crested Tern *Thalasseus bernsteini* near Irabu Island, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan, 20 October 2018.

site in northeastern China, Korea, or Japan.

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## ヒガシシナアジサシ *Thalasseus bernsteini* の日本初記録

ヒガシシナアジサシ *Thalasseus bernsteini* は中国と朝鮮半島で営巣する近絶滅種（CR）の海鳥で、日本でも記録されるであろうと考えられてきた。2018年10月、沖縄県伊良部島近辺で本種が初めて観察された。

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