

Observing Arctic birds

Association of
Arctic Expedition Cruise
Operators **AECO** 



The summer is a hectic and often vulnerable period for Arctic birds, especially those that come here to breed. Please help protect the birds you encounter by following these guidelines.

Birds on land

- Birds that build their nests on the ground get frightened at considerable distances.
- Eggs and chick are often well-camouflaged and not always easy to spot.
- If breeding birds are blocked from returning to their nests, eggs and chicks may get cold or be attacked by other birds and animals.
- Keep your distance to avoid disturbance.
- Avoid unnecessary walking in nesting areas.
- If you come across a nesting bird or a nest, retreat silently the same way that you came from.
- Mind your step to avoid trampling on eggs and chicks.

Bird cliffs

- Birds in colonies try to build their nests in places inaccessible to fox, bear and humans.
- Disturbance may cause chicks to jump from the nest earlier than they should.
- Avoid getting too close – Your presence may disturb the nesting birds.
- Be cautious and keep your voice down.

Birds protecting their young

Attacking birds:

- While nesting, Arctic Terns are very protective and will attack anyone who comes close.
- Attacking terns will first fly shrieking in the air over you before dive-bombing and striking you.
- Skuas may also attack if you get too close to their offspring.

Birds pretending to be injured:

- Shorebirds, terns and skuas may try to draw you away from their nest by pretending to be injured.
- The bird will walk or run with the wings hanging down to appear injured.



Please remember...

If a bird attacks you:

- Do not wave anything above your head. It may injure the bird.
- Hold your hand (or a stick) steadily above your head and move away in the direction you came from.
- Proceed carefully and watch out for eggs and chicks on the ground.
- Leave the area so the breeding birds can return to their nests and keep their offsprings warm and safe.

If you see a bird that appears injured:

- Retreat in the direction you approached from, or follow the bird, as it will lead you away from the nest.