

# HYBRIDIZATION BETWEEN LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons* AND FAIRY TERN *Sterna nereis* IN BOTANY BAY, NEW SOUTH WALES

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The Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* and Fairy Tern *S. nereis* are largely allopatric breeders, but the incidence of breeding sympatry and hybridization appears to be increasing as the breeding range of the Fairy Tern expands northward. During the summer of 1996–97, a mixed pair comprising a female Little Tern and a male Fairy Tern nested on Towra Spit Island, Botany Bay. Species identification was confirmed by both plumage characteristics and morphometric measurements. The mixed pair successfully hatched two young from a clutch of three eggs. Hybridization may ultimately threaten the continued survival of one or both species.