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**PROTECTION OF WATERBIRD
HABITATS IN THE UPPER VISTULA
RIVER VALLEY
LIFE.VISTULA.PL**

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Protection of waterbird habitats in the Upper Vistula River Valley
LIFE16NAT/PL/000766

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Foraging and prospecting movements of Common Terns in Croatia

The Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* breeds and forages in a wide variety of habitats in both freshwater and marine environments. In Croatia, both freshwater and marine populations are present, inhabiting areas located between 200 and 300 km apart. Using GPS loggers, we studied the foraging range, patterns, and colony attendance of 26 adult breeding Common Terns from freshwater and marine colonies. Terns from freshwater colonies foraged at shorter distances from colonies and had higher daily colony attendance than terns from marine colonies.

The maximum distance to the colony, as well as 50% and 95% utilisation distributions, were higher during the chick-rearing phase, while colony attendance was higher during the incubation. Compared to freshwater terns, marine birds foraged later in the evening, which was probably related to the local wind dynamics. Freshwater colonies are nowadays located on islands at gravel pits, but terns mostly foraged along parts of the river shallower than 1 meter. Terns often foraged in the area where historical colonies on river islands existed, and birds from colonies situated further away had larger foraging ranges and shorter colony attendance.

Adult Common Terns showed prospecting movements during the active breeding, between two nesting attempts, and during the post-breeding period. Active breeders prospected colonies at distances up to 70 km, while failed breeders up to 108 km. Ongoing and required conservation measures to protect freshwater terns are discussed.



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