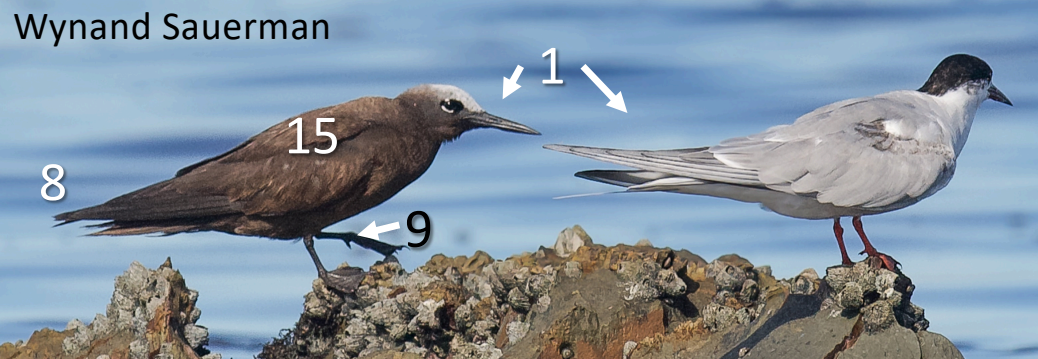


Theuns Kruger



Wynand Sauerman

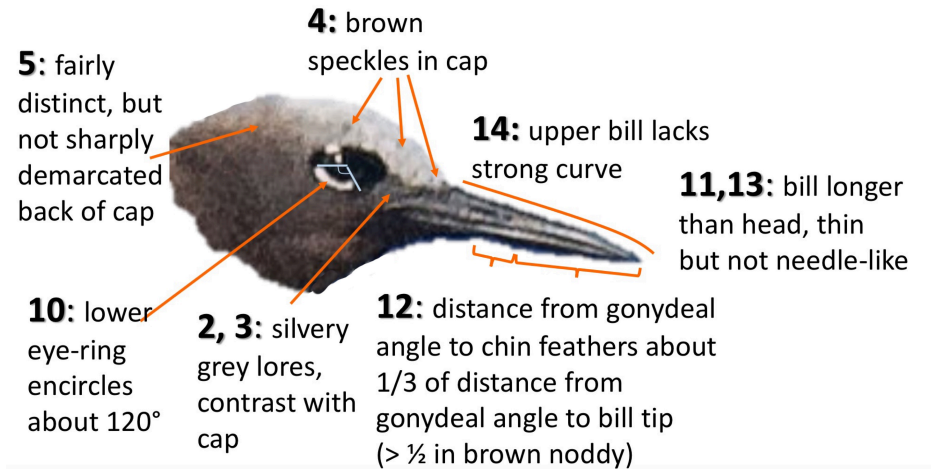


## Features of the Strand Noddy (Cape Town, April 2021):

(Compiled by Callan Cohen & Susie Cunningham on 13 April 2021)

1. Small size, smaller than Common Tern
2. Lores silvery grey
3. Lores contrast with cap
4. Cap speckled with brown
5. Back of cap fairly distinct but not sharply demarcated
6. Greyish wash extends down back of neck
7. All dark underwings
8. Short tail falls well short of wing tips
9. Legs black
10. Lower eye ring encircles about 120 degrees
11. Bill clearly longer than head
12. Gonydeal angle closer to bill base than bill tip (see below)
13. Bill long and narrow but not needle-like (length:depth ratio of 4)
14. Upper bill lacks strong curve
15. Wing covert feathers show brown bleaching in direct light

This is a 3 page document:  
 1. Strand noddy features  
 2. ID analysis table  
 3. Lesser Noddy photos



**Identification analysis of the Strand noddy** (by Callan Cohen and Susie Cunningham on 13 April: please send comments to [callan@birdingafrica.com](mailto:callan@birdingafrica.com) or whatsapp +27 83 256 0491).

With special thanks for photos and discussion to Theuns Kruger, Trevor Hardaker, Steve Howell, Dan Mantle, Adrian Skerrett, Wynand Sauerman, Stuart Dunlop, Dom Rollinson, Cliff Dorse, Richard Crawshaw, Vince Ward, Joel Radue, John Graham, and many friends on the rocks at Strand.

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Character shown by Strand noddy (Cape Town, April 2021)		Brown Noddy	Atlantic Black	Lesser Noddy
1	Small size, smaller than Common Tern	X	✓	✓
2	Lores silvery grey	X	X	✓
3	Lores contrast with cap	✓	✓	sometimes (see p.3)
4	Cap speckled with brown	juvs/imm	juvs/imm	juvs/imm
5	Back of cap fairly distinct but not sharply demarcated	sometimes	X	juvs/imm
6	Greyish wash extends down back of neck	sometimes	X	✓
7	All dark underwings	X	✓	✓
8	Short tail falls well short of wing tips	X	✓	✓
9	Legs black	✓	✓	✓
10	Lower eye ring encircles about 120 degrees	X	✓	✓
11	Bill clearly longer than head	X	✓	✓
12	Gonydeal angle much closer to bill base than bill tip	X	✓	✓
13	Bill long and narrow but not needle-like (length:depth ratio 4)	X	juvs/imm	juvs/imm (see p.3)
14	Upper bill lacks strong curve	X	✓	✓
15	Wing covert feathers show brown bleaching in direct light	✓	✓ worn	✓ worn (see p.3)

In our opinion the bird is thus most likely a juvenile/immature **Lesser Noddy** (although a more detailed study of the moult of the bird is ongoing before we can confirm the age). Three trickier features which make this ID challenging are explored in further detail on the next page.

**Can juvenile/imm Lesser Noddy show:**

A. Lores that contrast with the cap?

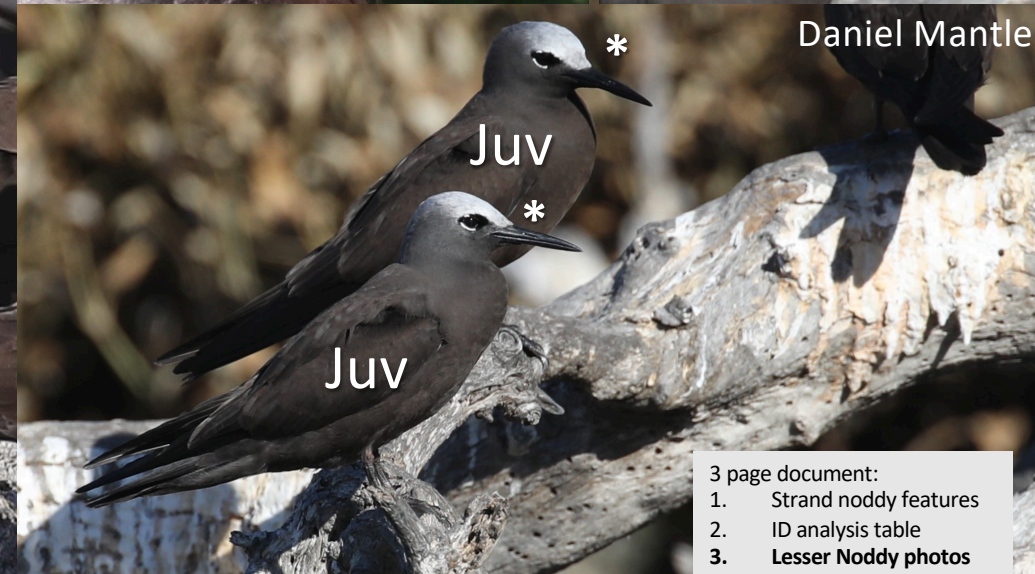
*Yes, this feature seems quite regular (many examples here, marked with \*, in both the tenuirostris & melanops subspecies)*

B. Less slender bill than the adult?

*Yes, especially when young, and slowly reaching adult proportions. See especially the photo below and compare the adults and juvs.*

C. Brown plumage tones?

*Yes, juvs are browner overall and less silvery than adults, and this is also exaggerated by sun bleaching as they age.*



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