Least Tern [Interior Population]
(Sternula antillarum)

Photo Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Federal status: Endangered
Colorado status: Endangered

This bird grows to a length of nine inches, with a wingspan of just under two feet. The upper parts are a fairly uniform pale gray, and the underparts white. The head is white, with a black cap and line through the eye to the base of the bill, and a small white forehead patch above the bill. The bill is yellow with a small black tip in summer, all blackish in winter. The legs are yellowish. The wings are mostly pale gray, but with conspicuous black markings on their outermost primaries.

Habitat: Breeding birds nest on bare sandy shorelines of islands in reservoirs. Migrants occur at reservoirs, lakes, and rivers with bare sandy shorelines. The species can be found in 26 Colorado counties, mostly east of the Continental Divide.

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