



White-tailed Tropicbird on Cousin Island in the Seychelles (Hannu Jännes).

THE SEYCHELLES, MAURITIUS & REUNION

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The islands of the Seychelles, Mauritius, Réunion and Rodrigues located in the western Indian Ocean are the true paradise islands of the imagination offering exotic holidays on palm-fringed beaches lapped by turquoise seas. They are also one of the world's main centres of bird extinctions with at least 30 species of birds, plus a whole range of reptiles, having become extinct since man first visited the islands just 350 years ago. Despite this sad history of extinctions, the Seychelles, Mauritius, Réunion and Rodrigues are still home to a large number of endangered birds and now major conservation efforts are in place to try to save them. We saw a total of 80 species of birds during the tour including nearly all of the 36 endemic birds that still survive, plus a good number of other interesting species. The only serious dips were Trindade Petrel and Red-tailed Tropicbird, which were missed because of inclement weather forcing the cancellation of our planned boat trip to Round Island. During our most enjoyable circuit of these friendly, welcoming countries we had many avian highlights which included Seychelles Kestrel, Seychelles Scops Owl, Crab-plover, Seychelles Black Parrot, Seychelles Magpie-Robin, Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher, Seychelles White-eye and a nice surprise in the form of two different Caspian Plovers in the scenic granitic Seychelles, Rodrigues Warbler and Rodrigues Fody on Rodrigues, Mauritius Kestrel, Echo Parakeet, Pink Pigeon, Mauritius Fody,

Mauritius Grey and Mauritius Olive White-eyes and Mauritius Cuckooshrike on Mauritius, and Barau's Petrel, Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher, a total of five of Reunion Cuckooshrikes and Reunion Stonechat on Réunion. We also visited magnificent seabird colonies brimming with Wedge-tailed and Tropical Shearwaters, Lesser and Brown Noddies, very elegant White Terns, Sooty and Bridled Terns, White-tailed Tropicbirds and numerous Great Frigatebirds. A good selection of reptiles added to the fun, but only a few mammals were seen. All and all this is probably the easiest bird tour I have ever led, with very relaxed daily itineraries, only a couple of longer, but still easy, walks, mostly great weather, good food and infrastructure with excellent accommodations.



White Terns on Cousin Island in the Seychelles (Hannu Jännes).



The Seychelles are well known for palm-fringed beaches lapped by turquoise seas (Hannu Jännes).

This 'Islands of the Indian Ocean' tour began mid-morning at a peaceful hotel in central Mahé on the Seychelles. Mahé is the largest island of the only granitic archipelago in the world and offers some stunning coastal and montane scenery. As I had already been birding the island for couple of days, I knew exactly where to go for our first Seychelles endemics. On a nearby forested hill side our first target was the rare Seychelles White-eye, which was soon seen very well with a confiding group of three birds performing around us for quite a time. Later we found two more birds nearby. Whilst watching the white-eyes we had a chance meeting with conservation scientist Gerard Rocamora and his assistant. Gerard is famous for his work and publications on the protection of Seychelles endemic plant and animal species, and he shared lots of information with us on the white-eye. Apparently the small white-eye population on Mahé had been quite stable with 35-40 individuals for several years, but it had started to decrease recently with only around 25 individuals left. Luckily another population, discovered as recently as 1997, is on the offshore islet of Conception that has over 300 individuals. Also the species has now been translocated to three other islands, and the total population is now estimated at 500-650 individuals, and its conservation status has been downgraded from critically endangered to vulnerable recently. Flowering bushes held scores of modestly-clad Seychelles Sunbirds and stunning Seychelles Blue Pigeons sat sunning themselves in the treetops whilst raucous Seychelles Bulbuls patrolled the mid-storey. Overhead we admired circling, superbly elegant, White-tailed Tropicbirds and both the Malagasy Turtle Dove and Red Fodies were common. We then explored a small wetland where a pair of Seychelles Kestrels sat high on a powerline pylon and a flock of Turnstones stood on the roof of a pig sty. Next on the agenda was a scenic drive through the Morne Seychellois National Park, picnic lunch on the green surrounding at a church at Bel Ombre and a short stop at a reservoir in the hills, where scores of Seychelles Swiftlets were feeding low over the water providing great views. In the afternoon we visited a mangrove-lined mudflat on the outskirts of the tiny capital of Victoria, where, amongst widespread birds like Striated Heron (of the race *degens*), Western Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Grey Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Curlew Sandpiper, we found four Crab Plovers and, best of all, a Caspian Plover! According to Handbook of the Birds of the World there are only around 15 previous records of this species on Seychelles. Just as we were leaving the site we found another much closer Seychelles Kestrel, which gave us all great views and decent photo ops. This tiny falcon is the smallest member of the genus *Falco*. After dinner we drove to the Morne Seychellois National Park, where we soon heard the gruff call of a Seychelles Scops Owl, but it took quite some time before we had good, but rather brief, views of it sitting on an open perch. This species occurs in the highlands of Mahé only.

Interestingly, this species, discovered in 1880, was declared extinct in 1958 and rediscovered in 1959! The population is currently estimated to be around 300 individuals.



Seychelles Kestrel and Madagascar Fody (Hannu Jännes).

The following day we visited a small bird sanctuary in the outskirts of Victoria, where we found a couple of Yellow Bitterns before boarding a small plane that took us to the nearby island of Praslin, where we spent the afternoon exploring the atmospheric palm forest of the Vallée de Mai. The amazing Coco de Mer Palms (*Lodoicea maldivica*), which boast the largest seed in the world, together with several other palm species, create an almost surreal forest. On the beautiful walk we found several Seychelles Bronze-eyed and Green Geckos, a Tail-less Tenrec (introduced from Madagascar), but the highlight was a small flock of the endemic Seychelles Black Parrot feeding on palm fruits. This rather dull looking parrot is the national bird of Seychelles, and breeds only on Praslin with a total population of 340-600 individuals and it is currently listed as vulnerable by Birdlife International.



Tropical Shearwater (Hannu Jännes).



Introduced Aldabra Giant Tortoises were rather tame on the island of Curieuse (Hannu Jännes).

Next day we enjoyed, if you like sailing that is, boat trip to the island of Aride, a tropical seabird paradise. Our original plan was to land on the island, but due to rough seas we could only sail around it admiring a couple of thousands of frigate birds roosting on the island's trees. They breed on another island several hundred kilometres away, and spend their post-breeding time here. The great majority were Great Frigatebirds, but few Lesser Frigatebirds were seen too. Also seen during the trip were Sooty and Bridled Terns, Lesser and Brown Noddies, White-tailed Tropicbirds, Tropical Shearwater and couple of Hawksbill Turtles. Later we landed on the rather touristy island of Curieuse and walked cross the island to a bay, where we had a good lunch that included tasty grilled fish. The definite highlight of this island are the introduced Aldabra Giant Tortoises, which gather around the picnic area to be lauded and fed by visiting tourists. As well as the boat trip we had time to explore some beaches and grassy fields for waders, finding, among other things another Caspian Plover and the first Sanderlings of the trip. Early morning and late afternoon walks around our hotel yielded displaying Seychelles Blue Pigeons and a few Seychelles Black Parrots.



Two Caspian Plovers were seen in the Seychelles (Hannu Jännes).



Lesser Noddy on Cousin (Hannu Jännes).

The following morning, after an unfortunate logistical hiccup, we took the ferry to La Digue island. La Digue lives at a very relaxed pace, and we were offered bicycles for transportation, but we had to decline this offer as some of the group were not able to ride them. Instead our local guide managed to get us a lift in a rather elaborate tourist truck, which took us the short distance to the small La Veuve (local name of the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher) Reserve. We spent a rather nervous time before we found the first flycatcher, but in the end we had good close-up views of several individuals of this handsome species. Historically it was known from five islands, but only survived into modern times on La Digue although it has recently been reintroduced to Saint Denis. The current population of this critically endangered species is now almost 300. After spending quite some time with this gem of a bird, we took the bus to a famous coconut farm, where we spent time pottering about admiring the unique, rocky coastal scenery, which is a famous place for weddings. After a tasty lunch we returned by ferry to Praslin

Next day after breakfast we were taken by boat to the nearby island of Cousin, which was bought by the Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts in 1968 to protect the dwindling population of Seychelles Warblers. Ownership transferred to BirdLife International in 2002 and it is now managed by the local NGO Nature Seychelles. The 29 hectares of woodland are inhabited by thousands of seabirds offering an unforgettable spectacle. We strolled around accompanied by a local naturalist and soon had great views of the three landbird targets: Seychelles Warbler, Seychelles Fody and the attractive Seychelles Magpie-Robin. The warbler and the fody are drably attired and forage quietly in the lower storey, but the handsome Magpie-Robins, all of which are colour ringed and closely monitored, allowed eye-ball to eye-ball views! The robins originate from Frégate from where they were translocated for conservation purposes in 1994, and to Cousine (in 1995), Aride (2002) and Denis (2008). The species was formerly widespread on Seychelles, but disappeared from most former haunts between 1878 and the 1930s, and reached the all-time low in 1965 when only 12-15 birds survived on Frégate. Now, thanks to conservation measures, and translocations to other islands, the total population was estimated to be 283 individuals in 2015, and the species is no longer classified as critically endangered. Although it was great to see these three rare landbirds, for me the highlight of the day, and pretty much the entire tour, was being able to witness a tropical seabird island in all its glory! Thousands of Lesser Noddies and dozens of the beautiful White Terns hovered overhead or sat quietly within the canopy, where we found one bird brooding her single chick on a horizontal bough. Tens of White-tailed Tropicbirds, including many downy young, sat amongst tree roots or in natural cavities and allowed close approach. We walked up the hill where Wedge-tailed Shearwaters tried to hide in their shallow

burrows and adult Bridled Terns displayed. Skinks and geckos were everywhere and the large Wright's Skinks made a special impression. We were lucky also to be able to watch a close-up huge Hawksbill Turtle that had crawled up the beach to lay eggs in a hole it had dug inside the forest.



Bridled Tern on Cousin Island (Hannu Jännes).



Seychelles Magpie-Robin on Cousin (Hannu Jännes).



Male Mauritius Kestrel (Hannu Jännes).

In the evening we flew back to Mahé for an overnight stay, and the next morning we continued our journey to our next port of call, the island of Mauritius, which exuded a very different atmosphere to that of the Seychelles. In Mauritius we began by visiting Vallee de Ferney, where we had a guided walk in the protected forest with many interesting tree species.

New birds here included the endemic Mauritius Grey White-eye and the striking Pink Pigeon. The white-eye was positively common, but not so the pigeon. In 1994 the wild population of the pigeon numbered just 77 individuals, but thanks to a captive breeding programme, supplementary feeding and rat control, the population is now estimated to be around 250 individuals and the species is no longer classified as critically endangered. During the walk we also had rather unsatisfactory flight views of Mauritius Kestrels, our main target in the area, but things changed dramatically when, at the end of the walk, we were taken to a kestrel territory, where we enjoyed really great views of a pair of the handsome falcons. In 1974 only four Mauritius Kestrels were left, but thanks to a major captive breeding effort there are now around 400 kestrels hunting geckos in Mauritius. Attractive Traveller's Trees (*Ravenala*), introduced from Madagascar, covered major parts of the forest and we also saw Greater Mascarene Flying Foxes, introduced Rusa (Javan) Deer and Long-tailed Macaques. A short visit to the seafront at Mahebourg produced two Brown Rats for our mammal list!

After a night at a very good hotel near the airport we took the 1.5 hour flight to the small island of Rodrigues, situated 563km to the east. Upon arrival we transferred to our comfortable hotel, where we had lunch. Rodrigues is an arid island covered mainly by scrub in the lowlands, but forest patches survive on the slopes of the hills. One of these forest patches is at Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, where we birded for a couple of hours in the afternoon. With the help of our excellent local guide we soon connected with both Rodrigues endemics: the Rodrigues Warbler and the Rodrigues Fody. The colourful Fody was admired displaying at close range and the olive-coloured Warbler showed well on several occasions in the mid storey. The populations of both species are now in their thousands and both are doing well after a period of disastrous years in the seventies, when their numbers became critically low. We also saw a few Rodrigues or Golden Flying Foxes and the introduced Indian Masked Shrew. The display at the small education centre of the nature reserve told the sad story of the extinctions on the island. Since the first explorers reached it a

species of giant tortoise and nine species of birds, including the famous Solitaire, two owls, a night heron and a rail have disappeared from the Rodrigues fauna forever.



Both the Rodrigues Warbler and Rodrigues Fody were easily found (Hannu Jännes).

Next day we flew back to Mauritius, and spent the afternoon in a patch of hill side forest near Bel Ombre, where the best birds were two Mauritius Kestrels, Mascarene Swiftlets, Pink Pigeons and Mauritius Grey White-eyes. During the afternoon we added Red-legged Partridge, Grey Francolin and Common Pheasant, all introduced of course, to our list. We also received final confirmation that due to a passing weather system, that had created high winds and rough seas, our much anticipated visit to Round Island with its seabirds had been cancelled!



Pink Pigeon on Mauritius (Hannu Jännes).



The endemic Echo Parakeet is best separated from the very similar Rose-ringed Parakeet by the female's dark bill (Hannu Jännes).

Next day we explored a part of the famous Black River Gorges National Park, where a fairly long walk along the Maccabe trail yielded Mauritius Fodies, ten or so confiding Echo Parakeets, Mauritius Bulbuls and Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher, which were all new for us. Finding the Mauritius Cuckooshrike took some effort, but in the end we were rewarded with some decent views of a pair. Later, after a picnic lunch, we checked couple of different areas for the rare Mauritius Olive White-eye, but the weather had turned rainy, and the bird was nowhere to be found. Before heading back to our hotel in the NW of the island we managed a seawatch on the south coast at Roche qui Pleure, where Wedge-tailed Shearwater was rather common and smaller numbers of Tropical Shearwaters were seen also.



Mauritius Fody and Mauritius Bulbul (Hannu Jännes).



Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher was quite common on Réunion (Hannu Jännes).

The following day we returned to the Black River Gorges National Park and the most reliable stake-out for the Mauritius Olive White-eye. After a longish waiting, we heard the bird calling, and soon Brian located a bird in a treetop right in front of us. The bird performed really well for a few minutes and gave great views for everyone. This species is critically endangered, with a population fewer than 150 pairs, that is still declining! Next on the agenda was a visit to the island of Ile aux Aigrettes. This small predator free offshore island has been used as a safe haven for Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye. Apparently the white-eye population here now has 24 pairs, each with their own nectar feeding station! We also saw Telford's Skink and the colourful Ornate Gekko. We failed in our attempt to see Red-tailed Tropicbird, which apparently sometimes visits two nearby islands, few White-tailed Tropicbirds circling over them.

In the afternoon we took the short flight to nearby Réunion, and drove straight to our hotel in downtown Saint Denis for an early break. Réunion is a departement of France and it felt as if we had arrived on the Côte d'Azur with its bistros and gendarmes. Early the following morning we were about to board our vehicles, when we realised our smaller car had a puncture. Luckily there was enough room in our larger vehicle for the whole group, and we just abandoned the other car at the parking lot and headed for the birding adventure that awaited us. The endless winding road took us from the sea level to the hamlet of Le Brûlé at ca1200 metres above sea level, from where we started to walk along a famous trail towards the landmark of La Roche Écrite. The highlands of Réunion are covered in plantations of introduced Japanese Red Cedar in good stretches of native forest. Well laid out trails cover large portions of these otherwise hard to access mountains. The highest top reaches 3,070 m and Réunion harbours the famous Piton de la Fournaise, one of the most active volcanoes in the world. The weather was lovely during the morning and our walk produced all the target birds with Reunion Stonechat, Reunion Grey and Reunion Olive White-eyes, both of which proved to be rather common, the very smart Mascarene Paradise Flycatchers and Reunion Bulbuls were frequently heard and eventually seen. As expected the Reunion Cuckooshrike proved hardest of the endemics to find. Our first encounter was with a silent pair the other side of a forested valley, where they sat on treetops and in bushes for some time, but unfortunately not everyone managed to connect with them. Later we came across another calling bird, which eventually came to check us out, and even brought his wife with him, giving good close-up views for all. In addition to these we also heard one other bird, bringing our cuckooshrike total to five. The population of this critically endangered species is currently as low as 26

breeding pairs so we had come across a good proportion of the world population! Nest predation by Black Rats appears to be the main threat. Another problem is that two thirds of the remaining individuals are male, and this ratio has worsened for unknown reasons. From 2010, predator control measures by the Société d'Etudes Ornithologiques de La Réunion (SEOR), with support from the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme, have shown positive results. During our walk down to the carpark we encountered the last missing Réunion landbird, the Reunion Harrier. In the afternoon we drove along a good highway to the southwest of the island, where from a carefully selected vantage point we did a seavatch that produced hundreds of Barau's Petrels, often at close range giving us great views of a species that remained undescribed until 1964. We also saw Wedge-tailed and Tropical Shearwaters. On the final morning of the tour we decided to drive up to the famous viewpoint of the Piton Maïdo. At an altitude of 2,200m you get an amazing view of an enormous crater (Cirque de Mafate), where the tiny villages of escaped slaves are deep in the caldera. These are still only reachable on foot (or by helicopter!). In the surrounding maquis we saw many Reunion Stonechats. After a fabulous lunch at our hotel in Saint Denis it was time to head for the airport and say thank-you to everyone for being such great company, which, together with the great birding and exciting places, combined to make this a most memorable tour. See you in 2018 perhaps?



Reunion Grey White-eye and Reunion Olive White-eye were easy to see (Hannu Jännes).

TOP THREE BIRDS OF THE TOUR

- 1st SEYCHELLES PARADISE FLYCATCHER
- 2nd MAURITIUS OLIVE WHITE-EYE & BLUE PIGEON
- 3rd WHITE TERN, SEYCHELLES ROBIN & REUNION CUCKOOSHRIKE



Seawatching on Mauritius (Hannu Jännes).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds. 2017. IOC World Bird Names v7.3. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

C = Critically Endangered, **E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* Two on Mauritius (introduced).

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* One seen and two more heard on Mauritius (introduced).

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* One seen on Mauritius (introduced).

Barau's Petrel ◊ *Pterodroma barau* (**E**) Numerous during our seawatch on Réunion.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* Seen on Seychelles, Mauritius and Réunion.

Tropical Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus bailloni* A few on Seychelles and Mauritius, and 50 during our seawatch on Réunion.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Widespread, sometimes in good numbers.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* Two on Mahé in the Seychelles.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* One on La Digue in the Seychelles.

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* Small numbers were noted on all main islands visited.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* On Mahé a roost of 250 and one there the next day.



Ruddy Turnstone, a common winter visitor to Seychelles (Hannu Jännes).

- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers on four days in the Seychelles.
- Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* Several hundred in the thousand strong frigatebird roost at Aride. A few elsewhere.
- Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* Handful of birds amongst the Greater Frigatebirds at Aride.
- Reunion Harrier** ♦ *Circus maillardi* (E) Two at La Roche Ecrite on Réunion.
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Noted on five days in the Seychelles. Also two on Mauritius.
- Crab-plover** *Dromas ardeola* Four on Mahé in the Seychelles.
- Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* Fairlyther widespread in small numbers.
- Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian P)** *Charadrius mongolus* One at the end of the airstrip on Praslin in the Seychelles.
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* A total of four in the Seychelles.
- Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* One on Mahé and another on Praslin. A rare visitor to Seychelles.
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* A total of six on Seychelles.
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* Small numbers noted almost daily.
- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* (NL) One on Curieuse in the Seychelles.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers almost daily in the Seychelles.
- Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* Two on the outskirts of Mahé.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Three in the Seychelles.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Up to 45 a day in the Seychelles.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* Five on the outskirts of Mahé.
- Sanderling** *Calidris alba* Small flock of 4-5 birds near our hotel on Praslin in the Seychelles.
- Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* Small numbers on two days on Seychelles, and a few on Réunion.
- Lesser Noddy** ♦ *Anous tenuirostris* Locally common in the Seychelles.
- White Tern** *Gygis alba* Locally common, including ca200 at Cousin, in the Seychelles.
- Greater Crested Tern (Swift T)** *Thalasseus bergii* Almost daily in the Seychelles, and two on Mauritius.
- Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus* Small numbers, with some excellent views, on three days in the Seychelles.
- Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* Hundreds at and around Aride in the Seychelles.
- White-winged Tern (W-w Black T)** *Chlidonias leucopterus* One on Praslin on the way to La Digue ferry.
- Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia*
- Malagasy Turtle Dove** ♦ *Nesoenas picturatus* Seen daily except on Rodrigues (introduced).
- Pink Pigeon** ♦ *Nesoenas mayeri* (E) Small numbers, with many excellent encounters, on Mauritius.
- Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Small numbers on Mauritius (introduced).
- Zebra Dove** *Geopelia striata* Noted daily (introduced).
- Seychelles Blue Pigeon** ♦ *Alectroenas pulcherrimus* Good views of this stunning bird in the Seychelles.
- Seychelles Scops Owl** ♦ *Otus insularis* (E) One calling bird in Morne Seychellois National Park on Mahé.
- Seychelles Swiftlet** ♦ *Aerodramus elaphrus* (V) Fairly common Seychelles.
- Mascarene Swiftlet** ♦ *Aerodramus francicus* (NT) Small numbers on Mauritius and Réunion.



Malagasy Turtle Dove (Hannu Jännes).

- Mauritius Kestrel** ♦ *Falco punctatus* (E) Five at Vallee de Ferney and two near Bel Ombre on Mauritius.
- Seychelles Kestrel** ♦ *Falco araeus* (V) Six in total, with great views, in the Seychelles.
- Seychelles Black Parrot** ♦ *Coracopsis barklyi* (V) Small numbers on Praslin in the Seychelles.
- Echo Parakeet** ♦ (Mauritius P) *Psittacula eques* (E) Ten at Black River Gorges NP on Mauritius.
- Mauritius Cuckooshrike** ♦ *Coracina typical* (V) Two, a pair, at Black River Gorges NP on Mauritius.
- Reunion Cuckooshrike** ♦ *Coracina newtoni* (C) A total of five at La Roche Écrite Reserve on Réunion.
- Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher** ♦ *Terpsiphone corvina* (C) Total of eight, with good views, at La Digue.
- Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher** ♦ *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* One on Mauritius and three on Réunion.
- House Crow** *Corvus splendens* A few on Mauritius.
- Red-whiskered Bulbul (introduced)** *Pycnonotus jocosus* Common on Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion.
- Seychelles Bulbul** ♦ *Hypsipetes crassirostris* Fairly common in the Seychelles.



The critically endangered Reunion Cuckooshrike and Seychelles Fody (Hannu Jännes).



Reunion Stonechat (Hannu Jännes).

- Reunion Bulbul** ♦ *Hypsipetes borbonicus* Four at La Roche Écrite Reserve on Réunion.
- Mauritius Bulbul** ♦ (M Black B) *Hypsipetes olivaceus* (V) Four at Black River Gorges NP on Mauritius.
- Mascarene Martin** ♦ *Phedina borbonica* Six on Réunion.
- Seychelles Warbler** ♦ *Acrocephalus sechellensis* (V) Ten on Cousin in the Seychelles.
- Rodrigues Warbler** ♦ *Acrocephalus rodericanus* (NT) Great views of this obliging warbler on Rodrigues.
- Reunion Grey White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops borbonicus* Reasonably common in suitable habitat on Réunion.
- Mauritius Grey White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops mauritianus* Common in suitable habitat on Mauritius.
- Seychelles White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops modestus* (V) Five of these drab looking white-eyes on Mahé.
- Reunion Olive White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops olivaceus* Fairly common in suitable habitat on Réunion.
- Mauritius Olive White-eye** ♦ *Zosterops chloronothos* (C) Two birds were seen on Mauritius.
- Common Myna (Indian M)** *Acridotheres tristis* This introduced species was noted daily.
- Seychelles Magpie-Robin** ♦ *Copsychus sechellarum* (E) Four showy birds on Cousin in the Seychelles.
- Reunion Stonechat** ♦ (Tek-Tek) *Saxicola tectes* Rather common on Réunion.
- Seychelles Sunbird** ♦ *Cinnyris dussumieri* This rather dull sunbird was common on Seychelles.
- House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* Common on Mauritius, Rodriguez and Réunion (introduced).
- Village Weaver (Black-headed W)** *Ploceus cucullatus* Rather common on Mauritius and Réunion (introduced).
- Red Fody** ♦ (Madagascar F) *Foudia madagascariensis* Widespread throughout the tour (introduced).
- Mauritius Fody** ♦ *Foudia rubra* (E) Several seen on Mauritius.
- Seychelles Fody** ♦ *Foudia sechellarum* (NT) Common on Cousin Island, Seychelles.
- Rodrigues Fody** ♦ *Foudia flavicans* (NT) About 10 at Grande Montagne Nature Reserve on Rodrigues.
- Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* Noted on Mauritius and Rodrigues (introduced).
- Scaly-breasted Munia (Spice Finch)** *Lonchura punctulata* Five on Mauritius (introduced).
- Yellow-fronted Canary (Yellow-eyed C)** *Crithagra mozambica* Noted on Mauritius and Réunion (introduced).



Mauritius Ornate Day Gecko (Hannu Jännes).

MAMMALS

Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* One on Mauritius. Introduced.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus* Two on Mauritius and one on Reunion.

Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* Total of five on Mauritius. Introduced.

Tailless Tenrec *Tenrec ecaudatus* (NL) Seen on Praslin. Introduced.

Indian Masked Shrew *Surnus murinus* One on Rodrigues. Introduced.

Greater Mascarene Flying Fox *Pteropus niger* Many on Mauritius.

Rodrigues Flying Fox *Pteropus rodricensis* Three on Rodrigues.

Seychelles Flying Fox *Pteropus seychellensis* Regular on Mahé and Praslin.

Long-tailed Macaque (Crab-eating M) *Macaca fascicularis* Small numbers on Mauritius. An introduced pest.

Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris* A pod of 35 during seawatch at the southern end of Mauritius.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* Whales on Réunion (two) and Mauritius were thought to be humpbacks.

Rusa (Javan Deer) *Cervus timorensis* A dozen were noted on Mauritius. Introduced for hunting.

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Seychelles Day Gecko *Phelsuma astriata* We found several on Praslin (Seychelles).

Mauritius Ornate Day Gecko *Phelsuma ornata* Five on Ile des Aigrettes, Mauritius.

Bronze-eyed Gecko *Ailuronyx tachyscopaeus* Close views in the Vallée de Mai on Praslin.

Wright's Skink *Mabuya wrightii* Very common on Cousin and Aride. A seabird island specialist.

Seychelles Skink *Mabuya seychellensis* Several were seen on Seychelles.

Telfair's Skink *Leiopisma telfairii* Two on Ile aux Aigrettes. Transferred from Round Island in 2006/7.

Agama Lizard *Agama calotes* Apparently this species was noted on Rodrigues.

African Common Toad *Amretophrynus gutturalis* One on Mauritius.

Seychelles Wolf Snake *Lycognathophis seychellensis* One showed briefly in the Vallée de Mai on Praslin.

Aldabra Giant Tortoise *Aldabrachelys gigantea* Introduced animals were seen on Seychelles and Mauritius..

Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* A total of four on Seychelles including one egg laying female on Cousin.

Seychelles Tree Frog *Tachycnemis seychellensis* One found in the Vallée de Mai on Praslin.