Can you spot them?



Wirebird
Chardrius sanctaehelenae



Indian Myna
Acridotheres tristis



Red-billed Tropicbird
Phaethon aethereus



Storm Petrel
Oceanodroma castro



White (fairy) Tern
Gygis alba rothschildi



Brown Booby
Sula leucogaster



Java Sparrow
Padda oryzivora



Yellow Canary
Serinus flaventris



Masked Booby
Sula dactylatra



Common Waxbill
Estrilda astrild



Zebra Dove
Geopelia striata



Madagascar Fody
Foudia madagascariensis



Black Noddy
Anous minutus



Sooty Tern
Sterna fuscata



Brown Noddy
Anous stolidus

One of the remotest islands on Earth; an extraordinary place to visit.

Nearly halfway between southern Africa and Brazil, the subtropical St Helena Island rises dramatically from the midst of the South Atlantic Ocean.

The 47 sq. mile island is home to a globally important natural environment, both land and sea, with spectacularly contrasting scenery and astounding biodiversity – all available within a few minutes' drive.

The island's unique culture and cuisine reflect the melting pot of peoples and nationalities that have transited St Helena since its 1502 discovery. The community of around 4,400 'Saints' is renowned for being safe (serious crime is a rarity), welcoming (the driver of each car waves to the other as they pass) and more deeply connected to 'people and planet' than to modern technology (mobile phones were introduced in late 2015).

An off-the-beaten-track, bucket-list location, St Helena is a breath of fresh air in today's busy modern world.

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St Helena Island









Birds of St Helena









Birding on St Helena

On land and by sea, the sights and sounds of St Helena's birdlife are a delight. To the local community, the sound of birds going to roost signals the time of sunset.

As you're exploring St Helena, be prepared for inquisitive White (Fairy) Terns to hover down toward you for a visit. Enjoy a **sunset boat cruise** to Egg Island, watching hundreds of seabirds swoop noisily around the nesting spot. Watch a Wirebird perform a 'broken wing display', while learning about remarkable **conservation success stories** from the Saint Helena National Trust.

St Helena's birds are a mixture of **land birds** and **seabirds**, endemic (found nowhere but St Helena) and introduced. While the island's bird populations have suffered vulnerabilities and extinctions over the centuries, conservation efforts in recent decades have been successfully **protecting and recovering** key populations.

On your journeys around the island, observe reclusive Moorhens, spindly legged Wirebirds and colonies of Boobies, Noddies, Petrels, Terns, Red-billed Tropicbirds and more.


asked Booby

Land birds

With the exception of the **endemic Wirebird and the native Moorhen**, all St Helena's current land birds were introduced to the island by man, since the island's discovery in 1502.

The Chukar Partridge, Ring-necked Pheasant and the Pigeon were brought to the island in the 16th century by the Portuguese as a source of food for passing ships and residents. Later, **colourful seedeaters** such as the Peaceful Dove, Madagascar Fody, Java Sparrow, Common Waxbill and Yellow Canary were introduced, likely as **aviary or cage birds**. Some introduced bird species, particularly the Indian Myna, have begun to breed at unsustainable rates and put the health of endemic plants and animals at risk, necessitating conservation projects to combat this negative environmental impact.

Seabirds

St Helena is home to **nine breeding species** of seabird, including the popular Red-billed Tropicbird (locally named Trophy birds). With some exception (White Terns and Masked Boobies) these species nest on the **coast**, on **offshore islands** and on **steep cliff faces**.

White Terns (known locally as Fairy Terns) are the most commonly sighted seabirds, as they are found all over the island. They breed year-round, each bird laying a single pale-grey, speckled egg balanced on tree branches, cliff faces or even on window ledges. Since 2008 Masked Boobies have been found nesting on the mainland (between Castle Rock and Lot's Wife), with regular monitoring showing a **high fledging success rate**.


Wirebird

Wirebird

The **St Helena Plover**, known locally as the **Wirebird**, is endemic to the island (meaning it is found only in St Helena and **nowhere else on Earth**). In fact, it is the last survivor of St Helena's endemic land bird species. Its total adult population as of the 2023 Wirebird Census was around **592**.

A source of **national pride**, the Wirebird is featured on St Helena's coat of arms as well as the St Helena Airport logo. It is the national bird of St Helena. Its habitats vary from grassland to semi-desert areas and drier pasturelands, usually between 820 and 1,970ft (250 and 600m) above sea level. Predation from cats and rats, as well as habitat fragmentation have in recent years put population numbers at risk. Conservation and monitoring projects have been ongoing for decades, tracking and protecting this **IUCN Red Listed species**.

Male and female Wirebirds, which are virtually identical in appearance, form pair bonds that may last for several seasons. **Peak nesting season** occurs around January each year, and at this time visitors and locals enjoy watching the 'broken wing' displays the Wirebirds use to lure predators away from their nests. The Saint Helena National Trust undertakes a Wirebird Census each January, and offers guided **Wirebird tours**.