

# Seychelles Seabirds

Seabirds are adapted to life at sea, catching fish for food. Many have waterproof feathers and webbed feet and feed by diving for their prey. Some sea birds (like Sooty Terns and Frigatebirds) are long-distance fliers, spending most of their life at sea, many miles from land, while others (like Fairy Terns) feed closer to shore. However, all seabirds have to return to land to nest and raise their young. The best places for them to nest are small islands with no introduced predators like cats or rats.

Seychelles' islands are nesting grounds for about 18 species of seabirds. Many seabirds breed during the southeast monsoon season, from April or May onwards. Species like the Lesser Noddy and Sooty Tern form large breeding colonies, with many thousands of birds all breeding at the same location. Others, like the Fairy Tern and the White-tailed Tropicbird, breed in pairs, at different stages of nesting and chick-rearing all year round.



**Red-footed Booby *Sula sula***  
Distribution in Seychelles: Aldabra and Cosmoledo and some other outer islands.  
Population: about 25,000 pairs



**Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra***  
Distribution in Seychelles: Cosmoledo and Boudese  
Population: about 9,000 pairs



**Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster***  
Distribution in Seychelles: Cosmoledo  
Population: about 60 pairs



**Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor***  
Distribution in Seychelles: occurs throughout Seychelles, breeds only on Aldabra and nearby islands  
Population: at least 4,000 breeding pairs



**Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel***  
Distribution in Seychelles: occurs throughout Seychelles, breeds only on Aldabra and nearby islands  
Population: about 6,000 breeding pairs



**Fairy Tern or White Tern *Gygis alba***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on all islands  
Population: at least 14,000 pairs on granitics, several thousand more pairs on outer islands.



**Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on Aride, with small populations on two of the Amirante Islands  
Population: breeding population of about 1600 pairs



**Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on Aldabra and Amirantes; outside breeding season, occurs throughout Seychelles.  
Population: 300-700 breeding pairs



**Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on predator-free islands - Aride, Bird, Cousin, Cousine, Récif, Mamelles and in the Amirantes to the South  
Population: about 85,000 breeding pairs



**Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on predator-free islands - Aride, Bird, Cousin, Cousine, Récif, Mamelles and in the Amirantes and Aldabra to the South  
Population: about 60,000 breeding pairs



**Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on predator-free islands - Aride, Cousin, Cousine, Récif and other small islands  
Population: 4,000 pairs



**Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on Aride, Bird, Cousine, Récif and other small islands, and some coral islands to the South (African Banks, Cosmoledo, Desnoeufts)  
Population: at least 3 million pairs



**White-Tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on almost all islands  
Population: at least 5,000 pairs on the granitic islands, with 2,500 pairs on Aldabra



**Red-Tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on Aride, and Aldabra  
Population: only 3-5 pairs on the granitic islands; over 2,000 pairs on Aldabra



**Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on rat and cat free islands including Aride, Bird, Cousin, Cousine, and Frigate  
Population: at least 300,000 pairs



**Common or Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus***  
Distribution in Seychelles: breeds on predator-free and all coral islands  
Population: about 30,000 pairs