

## Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*)

Masked boobies are a large, predominately white seabird with black tips and trailing edges to the wing. Juveniles are greyish brown with a pale collar and white belly.

Since 2008 these birds have started nesting on the mainland between Castle Rock and Lot's Wife. Regular monitoring has taken place and nests show a high percentage of success.



A pair of adult masked boobies

## Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

Brown boobies are similar in shape to masked boobies, but smaller and more slender. The upper parts of the body are chocolate brown in colour with a sharply defined white belly and a large banana yellow bill. Juveniles have pale grey bellies and greyish bills.



Adult brown booby

Photo © Ascension Island Conservation



The ringing scheme aims to increase our understanding of the lives of seabirds on St Helena which is vitally important to effectively protect and conserve them. Ringing is a technique that allows birds to be individually identified by the fitting of a uniquely numbered metal ring on their right leg. In addition masked boobies have a plastic colour ring also fitted to their left leg. The colour ring is orange with a black two alpha-numeric code which allows birds to be easily identified visually from a distance.

## What to do if you see a ringed seabird

Try to remember the following;

**What** you saw (description/colouration of the bird, colour ring code).

**Where** you saw it (rough location (e.g. Lot's Wife) or GPS reference).

**When** you saw it (time).

**How** many you saw (individuals/juveniles).

Even if you are not sure what you saw we will help identify it for you, photos are also a great help!

**Contact Us** on Tel: 22270 or visit our website for more information

[www.sainthelena.gov.sh/marine-division](http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/marine-division)

**Environmental Management Division**



# Seabirds of St Helena



**St Helena has eight breeding species of seabird.**

**Nesting occurs on the coast of the mainland, the offshore islands and on steep cliff faces.**



## Fairy Tern (*Gygis alba*)

Fairy terns are a small pure white seabird with a finely-pointed black bill. Closer inspection reveals a ring of black feathers around its eye.

Fairy terns are the most commonly seen seabird and are found almost all over the island. They breed all year around, laying a single pale grey speckled egg that is balanced on branches of trees, cliff faces and even on window ledges in Jamestown.



Adult fairy tern roosting (left) and in flight (right)  
Photo (right) © David Higgins

## Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*)

Sooty terns have contrasting black and white plumage with a deeply forked tail and a very loud “wideawake” call – hence the local name.

The breeding population is not as vast as on Ascension Island but can usually be seen nesting on Shore, George and Speery Island.



Adult sooty terns in flight  
Photos © Andrew Darlow

## Madeiran Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

The Madeiran storm-petrel is St Helena's smallest seabird. Their plumage is dark brown with a prominent white band around the base of its tail.



Adult Madeiran storm petrel nesting (left), in flight (right)  
Photos © Andrew Darlow (left) and David Higgins (right)

## Red-Billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*)

Red-billed tropicbirds have a white body with scattered black feathers, with adults exhibiting a long white tail and prominent red bill. Juveniles are yellow billed and lack the long tail. These birds are locally called Trophy birds and their shrill call can be often heard in lower Jamestown in the afternoon.



Adult red-billed tropicbird in flight  
Photo © David Jenkins

## Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*)

Brown noddies are a large chocolate brown coloured tern with a white forehead and a pale grey crown. These seasonal breeders can be found nesting on all of the major offshore Islands around St Helena.



Adult brown noddy nesting (left), in flight (right)  
Photo © Woodrow Stevens (left) and Ed Thorpe (right)

## Black Noddy (*Anous minutes*)

Black noddies are similar to the brown noddy, but smaller. Plumage is a darker brown almost black with a more prominent white crown. Both these tern species may have become known as “noddies” because of the behaviour of both sexes to constantly dip their heads during their breeding display.

Black noddies nest on ledges made up of a mixture of seaweed and guano on cliffs along St Helena's coast and offshore islands.



Roosting adult black noddies (left), adult and chick (right)  
Photo © Mark and Fraser (left) and Ed Thorpe (right)