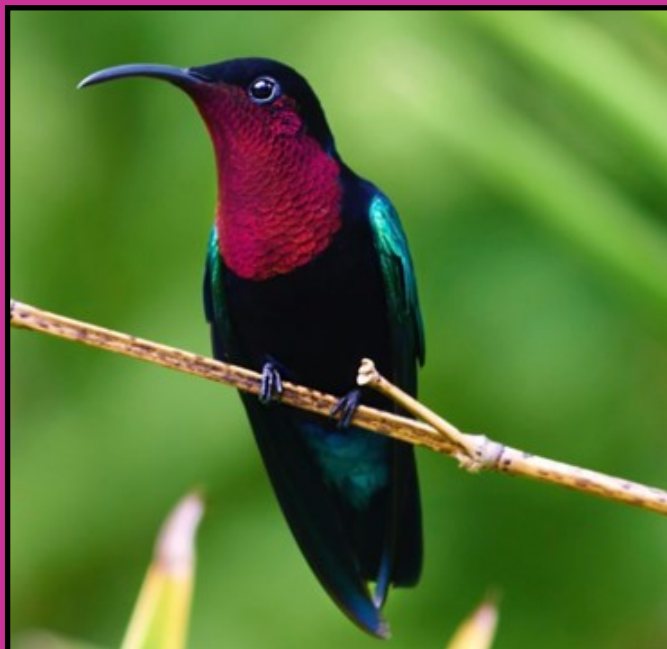


FOREIGN BIRDS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
FOREIGN BIRD LEAGUE
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THE PREMIER FOREIGN BIRD
KEEPING SOCIETY IN THE UK

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A big thanks to all those who contributed to this magazine—Darren

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Cover illustration : The Purple-throated Carib (Eulampis jugularis)

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The Premier Foreign Bird Keeping Society

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Vol 86 No3	Autumn	July-Aug-Sept	Friday Week 2 August	3rd Week Oct
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As with any correspondence a S.A.E. would be greatly appreciated.

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Editor's Page

Darren Sefton

Subscriptions are now due—the rates have stayed the same again, so don't delay. This will be the last edition you receive if you forget.

In the last edition we posed you the question “What species do you think I am?”. The bird in question was the Fork-tailed Drongo—*Dicrurus adsimilis*. The David Attenborough programme mentioned was where the Drongo fooled Meerkats into dropping food by falsely making an alarm call. Regrettably, we only had one correct answer. This was by Geoff Smith of Norfolk. As he knew the member who posed the question, he did feel that it would be unfair to claim the prize.

As a consequence this will be carried forward to the next poser below.

[What species do you think I am?](#)

[I am a small bird, that COULD be associated with a pirate, although not the first to come to mind. I do not fit into the dictionary definition of “murderous, cruel or ruthless” and I could have even been used by the Flying Squad, in cockney slang. I am now available in several colour variants and make a great addition to any garden aviary.](#)

Again the first member emailing me with the correct answer wins the book.

Ray Holland has spent a great deal of time putting together a celebration of John Mollindinia, who wrote for the League many moons ago. I have included all the input from Ray in this edition to allow it to be read together. I hope you enjoy it.

Sadly, life member Gary Robbins has passed away. Gary was author of *Quail: Their Breeding and Management* and also *Partridges and Francolins: Their Conservation, Breeding and Management*. The Council send their deepest condolences to his family.

Background Notes on the Wood Duck

(*Chenonetta jubata*)

By Graeme Hyde

Other Names

Maned Duck, Maned Goose, Australian Wood Duck.

Introduction

Although the “waterfowl family” is both large and widely distributed throughout the world the Australian continent is, according to the widely respected ornithologist/researcher/author, the late H J Frith, “the poorest of all in respect to waterfowl”. In the revised edition of his comprehensive work, *Waterfowl in Australia* (1982), Harry Frith wrote: “There are 148 species in the world and of these only nineteen are native to Australia ... This may be compared to North America where the *Handbook of North American Birds* lists 64 species. Even Great Britain has 47 species, including a few introduced feral ones.”

The Early Days

Of all the prominent and widely experienced ornithologists living in England in the 19th century the name John Gould was probably the best known. When he and his wife Elizabeth visited Australia for 19 months from 1838 to 1840 to study and illustrate birds John Gould spent considerable time in the field. His massive seven volume folio work, *The Birds of Australia* (published 1840-1848), was the result of the enormous project he undertook of studying, describing and organising the illustration of Australia’s hitherto unknown, and unnamed, avifauna.

In 1865, almost twenty years later, he published his *Handbook to the Birds of Australia* as a “resume of the entire subject”, as a work especially suited “for the explorer and student”. In the *Handbook* when discussing the wood duck he wrote, in part, “During the early days of the colony of New South Wales, it was very common on the rivers near Sydney, particularly on the Hawkesbury; at the present time it is sometimes seen there, and is still numerous on the Hunter and other rivers towards the interior of the colony. ... It presents a very pleasing appearance while flying up and down the brooks in flocks of from six to thirty in number, and is equally interesting when perched in small companies on the branches of fallen trees which

have found a resting-place in the beds of the rivers and water-holes, or when sitting on the topmost branches of the high gum-trees in the midst of the woods."

In his definitive book, *Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds*, published in 1900, Archibald Campbell stated: "The Maned Goose, more commonly called the Wood, is one of the most beautifully marked of its tribe. It is a tolerably tame and well-known species, being found throughout Australia. ... I suppose it is called Wood Duck because, unlike most other ducks, it frequently perches upon trees. Its note is remarkable, being loud and trumpet-like, uttered while mandibles are widely extended."

First Overseas Breeding

The first officially recorded overseas breeding of the Wood Duck occurred at London Zoo in 1910.

Description

ADULT The sexes are similar but the head of the female is lighter brown than the male and the face has two white bands separated a dark band through the eye. As noted by Queensland enthusiastic waterfowl breeder, veterinarian Dr Danny Brown, in his informative book, *A Guide to Pheasants & Waterfowl*, "Adults in breeding plumage are readily sexed by obvious visual differences." Length: 47-48cm; weight: 660-980gm. It is a beautifully marked bird despite its sombre colours.

JUVENILE Immature birds of both sexes resemble the female but are lighter in colour.

Distribution, Movement and Nesting

DISTRIBUTION Frith observed that: "The wood duck can be found anywhere on the continent and has been recorded in some of the most arid areas, living on a tank or spring. Because of its habitat requirements it is most numerous in the better-watered parts of the inland and on the tablelands of the south-east to as far north as Toowoomba in Queensland, in south-east South Australia, and in Western Victoria, particularly in areas devoted to mixed grazing and farming. ..." It also occurs in Tasmania as a visitor from the mainland.

Forty-three years ago, Serventy and Whittell noted that, in West-

ern Australia, as a visitor to the southern parts of the state the wood duck had increased in recent years . . . Adding: "Birds are sometimes seen in the city parks and visit even the far south coast, as at Nornalup."

MOVEMENT According to Frith: "The wood duck is more regular in its habits and more sedentary than many ducks. After breeding it gathers into flocks, which may number up to 2000 birds but more commonly are less than 100, and each flock locates itself on a camp. The campsites are traditional and in most years flocks of wood ducks locate themselves there. The site may be almost anything – a ground tank, irrigation canal, river bank, or a bare piece of ground on the edge of a billabong."

NESTING They nest in tree hollows and the eggs, which are laid on the bare wood, are eventually covered with down. Incubation is 28 days.

Habitat

It frequents grasslands, pastures, open woodlands, farm dams, lakes, wetlands, flooded pastures, coastal inlets, bays, sewage ponds, crops, rice fields and town parklands. As a grazing bird it is often found in its preferred habitat of lightly timbered country near water. They graze green herbage and this includes a range of plants including grasses and legumes as well as insects. Their grazing habit, including the consumption of rice in rice irrigation areas - as well as other crops, can be a cause of concern to many farmers. An example of this "nuisance aspect" is when 98 years ago [1921] in New South Wales they "invaded the infant Murrumbidgee Irrigation Areas and destroyed the first crop of peas and other vegetables to be grown."

Call

The call has been variously described as "high-pitched mew and low cluck", "long and drawn-out and mournful mew" or "gnaroo".

Aviculture

Although Australian waterfowl are an interesting and diverse group of birds but are not widely kept by Australian birdkeepers. The aforementioned book, *A Guide to Pheasants & Waterfowl*, provides the essential information for housing, feeding, managing and breed-

ing this species based on the author's own personal experiences. Another useful book on the aviculture of waterfowl is the American publication *Waterfowl: Care, Breeding and Conservation* by Simon Tarsnane, published by Hancock House, (USA & Canada).

In its native country the wood duck is considered to be an attractive, inexpensive and interesting avicultural species which is relatively simple to keep and breed. As a matter of interest for League's members the Avicultural Society of Australia's 2018 guide to bird prices list recommends \$A40 a pair for this species on member to member basis.

Personal Experiences in the Wild

Observing the wood duck in the wild has been, and continues to be, one of my most enjoyable birdwatching experiences. I have observed it in the wild, and at close quarters, in two well-known but quite different tourism areas in the state of Victoria:

- swimming in and *flying above* the Murray River in the Sunraysia District near the city of Mildura the far northwest on the grassy foreshore adjacent to the launching ramp of Mallacoota inlet near the Croajingolong National Park in the far southeast of the state

On another occasion while holidaying in the state's northwest we had wonderful sightings of large flocks of wood ducks as they perched on tree branches overhanging the river as we travelled slowly past by on a paddle steamer. Later, on the same day, as we picnicked on a bank of the Murray River, we enjoyed watching them as they swam around in the river.

Personal Experiences Nearer Home

Two weeks before your editor Darren accepted my offer of an article with an Australian flavour for *Foreign Birds*, I sighted a small flock flying across Lake Colac a well-known tourist attraction in the city where we live. Then, a week later a pair flew across one of our busiest main streets as I was driving home.

Perhaps, the most amazing occurrence was when a pair flew into our backyard, landing on a large two-metre high tree stump that was in the centre of the lawn area, and then, after giving our property the "once-over" they flew away.

Summary

Despite its sombre coloration it is an ideal avicultural species as it is mainly a grazing bird. In addition, the wood duck is one of several interesting native Australian waterfowl that offer great birdwatching experiences and, at the same time, enable bird observers expand their knowledge of birds that are unique to the Australian continent.

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Photo of an adult male Australian Wood Duck taken at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens in 2007. Photo courtesy of **Fir0002/Flagstaffotos** (Wikipedia)

John Mollindinia 1921-2001



Reading this story you may wonder how it came to pass. John moved to Denbigh Road, Luton, Beds in 1925 with his parents from I believe India where his father had been a major in the Indian Army. He also served in India but during WW2 as a Quartermaster Sergeant in the British Army. Had he and my father met, they would no doubt have swapped stories about the Pariah Kite (*Milvus migrans*) affectionately known by all the troops as the Sh**e Hawk which gave rise to much laughter, usually at the expense of newly arrived squadies.

Anyone not familiar with the “friendly” Kite was in for a surprise. Eating outside in the open was an invitation to this uninvited guest. The victim would usually be mugged from behind, over the shoulder with plate and cutlery flying in all directions. They were very quick

and clever but according to my Dad so were some of the victims. By tying a long string to a juicy piece of meat and jerking it free when the kite had reached a good height. Sweet revenge indeed. John, a founder member of the Parrot Society, introduced the idea of local area meetings. The first being in his home town of Luton. The idea rapidly spread across all of the UK and is still operating to this day.

During his lifetime he was a great traveller, Africa, The Seychelles and his favourite Australia were among his many trips. He was closely involved with Ray Ackroyd and supported the project which tinned tree trunks, successfully preventing Goannas predated the young of various cockatoo species and in particular Major Mitchell's. Ray is still concerned with this project but takes a less active role, relying on land owners to do the necessary work. John left a large legacy which was administered in a most generous way by the then secretary of the Parrot Society David Coombes his closest and trusted friend. The final beneficiary, The Parrot Society Conservation Fund has been carefully managed ever since to the benefit of many deserving causes across the world.

After John's funeral in 2001 a number of books, magazines and bird related items were sold off at a local area meeting with the proceeds adding further to the conservation fund. Among the literature were various photographs, one of John's father in uniform and several copies of "The Illustrated Weekly of India" dated 1945 and priced at eight pence each. This was just after the end of WW2 in Europe but whilst the conflict with Japan was still ongoing.

The news stories, even the advertising hark back to a time long ago but strangely a lot of familiar names appear. Do you remember "Sunlight Soap," "Ekco Radios," "Brylcreem by Jove" and "Have you learned the Lifebuoy habit"? One has to bear in mind this was 1945 when some of the ads read, "Huntley and Palmer shipments will be resumed as soon as conditions permit" and "Sorry-but at present there just isn't any Colmans mustard" The one I really like "How he cured the Dhobi itch with prescription DDD."

In amongst all these gems was a handwritten manuscript by John on eighteen pages of A3 about his trip to the Seychelles. It has been in my possession for nearly twenty years and I have always felt it needed to be published for the benefit of those interested in natural history.

Well, to their great credit the Foreign Bird League published way back in the 1980s but without any pictures and a follow up article has never materialised, that is until now. Fortunately there is now someone else we have to thank for his co-operation in bringing the story right up to date.

After a deal of investigation and a flurry of e-mails involving various people connected with the British Natural History Museum in Tring, Herts, I was finally put on to the right man, Adrian Skerrett. A member of the SBRC-The Seychelles Birds Records Committee and author of several book titles such as the Birds of the Seychelles, Birds of Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands and Journey through the Seychelles all published by Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. Now nearly 50 years on with the Seychelles being a very newsworthy place it seems the ideal time to bring the story to a conclusion.

Personally I have learned a great deal about the Seychelles, its birds, fauna, history and people. If you enjoy the following story please consider adding a donation to the conservation fund for Australia and the Seychelles when renewing your annual subscription. John would have been thrilled to learn he could still help.

Ray Holland—Jan 2020

Introduction to the article Birdlife of the Seychelles

These notes were penned in 1973. I went to the Seychelles in 1972. The first year aeroplanes VC 10's had been able to land on the runway. Prior to 1972 one had to travel by boat from Mombasa which took several days. It would be intriguing to know how the rare birds and habitat have fared since 1972.

When I arrived at Mahe there were a few family hotels and many private homes were putting up visitors due to the sudden influx.

Have any members been to this paradise since 1972? If so it would be nice to know what has happened to the indigenous bird population and habitat. Looking forward to reading a current account from any member of the Foreign Bird League.

Notes on Birdlife in the Seychelles

by

JOHN MOLLINDINIA

The Seychelles which are situated in the Indian Ocean have been variously described as the Islands of Love, The original Garden of Eden and the Pearls of the Indian Ocean. They lie 1,000 miles east of Mombasa, 1,750 miles south of Bombay and 1,400 miles south of Aden. Vasco de Gama discovered them in the 16th Century. It was not until 1770 that the French attempted colonisation with settlers from France and African slaves. In 1814 the Islands were ceded to the British. The accompanying article describes this Island's birdlife including rarities that deserve special protection. Paying a visit to the Seychelles is a "must" for all keen on ornithology. Some of the world's rarest land birds can be seen there among species found nowhere else. In fact some are indigenous to individual islands in the group of 86. Mahe', the largest of the granite islands is the location of the capital Port Victoria named after our Queen Victoria.

On Praslin Island there exists one of the strangest fruits, the Coco-de-Mer 40lb double coconuts. There are no dangerous animals or poisonous snakes. One of the Islands I visited was Cousin Island. A na-

ture reserve which was acquired in 1968 by the British Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation. At the time of my visit a British Ornithologist was looking after the welfare of the bird population, helped by a devoted native staff. No rats or cats exist and no nesting Barn Owls. One goes by launch from Mahe' and off shore of Cousin you get into a canoe for this final journey. It is quite an experience as the waves can be high. This method does stop cats, dogs, mice and rats from getting on Cousin. The **African Barn Owl** was introduced into Mahe' to destroy rats and mice. It flourished so successfully that it had to be controlled. In fact Barn Owls are shot if seen on Cousin. As a result of such rigid elimination one can, if fortunate, see the Seychelles Brush Warbler and one of the last populations of the Seychelles Weaver. Both species unique to the Island.

The **Brush Warbler** is a small grey brown bird with a slender beak and pale throat and underparts. It has a rich melodious song. Essentially an insectivore feeding mostly on larvae found on the underside of certain leaves. This species has been seen in many parts of the Island. It prefers, however, the coastal plain which is marshy and has thick vegetation, frequenting trees with beautiful sounding names like Boise Tortue, Mapou, Tan Gin and Casvarin. It is not a strong flier and in fact has not been seen on Praslin Island which is only a mile away. Another bird found only on Cousin Island is the **Seychelles Fody** or **Toq Toq**. A small dark brown bird with a fairly long stout bill. The breeding male has a golden chin and forehead and a black bill. It feeds in groups on grass seeds, fruits and insects found in the vicinity of the fruit. During the breeding season both sexes are alike. Some individuals have a white patch on the primary wing coverts involving one to several feathers. Juveniles are the same as the females.

The breeding season, which lasts from early October to June, starts with a very marked courtship which commences with the male building the foundation of the nest. After his boisterous display which ends with mating, both sexes finish off the nest. This is a loosely woven structure with an entrance hole in the form of a six inch long tube. Normally two pure white eggs are laid with a 48 hour interval. The pairs are territorial. Incubation lasts 14 to 18 days. The chicks leave the nest fully fledged after 18 days.

Other land birds to be found on the Island are the Seychelles Sunbird,

Turtle Dove, Barred Ground Dove, Moorhen and the Green Backed Heron. These species can be seen on many of the other Islands.

Sea birds are abundant on Cousin Island and consist of the Fairy Tern, Common Noddy, Lesser Noddy, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern, White Tailed Tropicbird, Lesser Frigate, Wedged-Tailed Shearwater and Anderson's Shearwater.

The **Fairy Tern** a delightful bird graceful and conspicuous thanks to its all snow white plumage. Its bill is blue at the base and it has huge black eyes. It does not build a nest but lays its single egg on the branch of a tree where it is incubated. How the egg remains in such a precarious position I do not know. Similarly the chick when it is hatched manages to stay put. During one visit pairs were in various stages of breeding.

Some were incubating the single egg, others were looking after their solitary chick and then there were youngsters fending for themselves. When pairs were not breeding they could be seen sitting side by side.

The **Lesser Noddy** abundant on the Island nests in colonies. It is a dark grey bird fluttering in flight and with some white on the head which is variable. The nests are an untidy collection of dead leaves.

The **Common Noddy** is also a dark grey Tern with distinct white on top of the head and is a much bolder bird. The flight of this species is strong and direct. It usually nests singly but sometimes two nests can be found close together.

It is less common on the island than the Lesser Noddy. Among other birds seen, the **Bridled Tern** is dark grey-brown in colour with a leading white edge to its wings, a black cap and a stripe through the eye. The nesting sites are found among rocks on the hillside. Similar in the head as the Bridled, the Sooty Tern is black on the upper parts not grey and is larger. It does not nest on Cousin Island but prefers Aride Island which is a few miles away. The **White Tailed Tropicbird** is a large heavily built white bird with black markings on the wings and a yellow bill. The adult bird develops elongated central tail feathers which resemble streamers. This species breeds among rocks on the hills. A species which frequents the island but breeds on two others (Aride and Ilot Fou) is the **Lesser Frigate**. Its black feathers contrast with the white underparts. Two **Sheerwaters** were seen. The **Wedge-Tailed** is a large dark bird. It is quite common and spends most of

the daylight hours at sea, coming in at night to feed the young which are to be found in burrows among the rocks.

Audubon's breeds similarly to the Wedge-Tailed but only a few are known to do so on Cousin Island. The adults are dark with white underparts. The young are initially indistinguishable from those of the Wedge-Tailed. The next island I visited was La Digue named after one of the early French expedition ships. It is the home of one of the most endangered of the rare indigenous birds found in the Seychelles. I refer to the **Veuve** or **Black Paradise Flycatcher**. It is only found on this island. The Veuve is closely related to the Paradise Flycatcher found over much of central and southern Africa. Another closely related bird is the Coq de Bois which is found on the islands of Mauritius and Reunion. This bird is also declining in numbers. It is said there may be only 50 pairs of the Veuve left in the world. It is fighting for survival in the rapidly dwindling areas of suitable habitat. Nests are often conspicuous and vulnerable to disturbance. They are usually sited in the Badamier or Takamaka trees. The food consists of the abundant insects found about the leaves of the Badamier.

In common with many birds of small islands the Veuve has a normal clutch of only one egg and occasionally two. Nests are sited in damp, shady and marshy woodland. The threat that these marshy areas may be cleared and drained as development of the Seychelles continues could spell the end of this delightful bird. LET US HOPE CONSERVATION AND COMMON SENSE WILL PREVAIL.

The nest of the Veuve is oval shaped and built of vegetable matter. It measures approximately three inches in diameter. I spent about five hours or so wandering through the woods with a local guide and was very fortunate to see two males. The male about the size of a sparrow, is entirely metallic steel blue.

The two central tail feathers are greatly elongated. To see this bird on the wing is a lovely sight. The female is about the same size but totally different in colour and does not have the long tail. The neck, head and throat are metallic steel blue with the underparts of the body white. The upper parts from

the neck downwards together with the short tail and wings are brown. Both sexes have black eyes, beak and legs. The juveniles male and

female are the same colour as the respective parents. The male develops the elongated tail feathers shortly before the first breeding season. The eggs are oval shaped and vary in colour from pinkish to dirty white and are heavily marked with brownish-red spots. The young hatch out after twelve days and three weeks from hatching become fully feathered and leave the nest. From observations it would seem that while both parents took part in feeding only the hen did the sitting. Throughout the daylight hours the pattern of feeding was regular. About every twenty minutes the hen would leave the nest and the male which appeared to have been waiting would fly in with food. The feeding lasted some ten minutes. The male would then fly away and the hen would reappear and resume sitting. While on La Digue I saw several **Seychelle Sunbirds** or **Colibri**.

This species is also to be found on Mahe', Cousin and some of the other granite islands near Mahe'.

It is related to Sunbirds of other tropical countries but lacks the bright colours of the many forms I have seen in Africa. It is a small sooty-grey coloured bird about three and half inches long with a long black curved beak. The male has a metallic green coloured throat and an orange coloured tuft on each side of the breast. The pectoral tufts are exposed only when the wings are spread open during the courtship display. The colour of these tufts varies individually from pale yellow to orange-red. The rest of the plumage is sooty-grey on the under parts and darker on the upper parts. The female does not have the coloured throat and pectoral tufts. Both sexes have the characteristic long black curved beak, black eyes and legs. The tail feathers are edged with whitish-grey. Juveniles resemble the female. On La Digue and the other islands it lives and nests almost anywhere but on Mahe' the usual habitat is the forest areas. The foundation of the nest is laid by the male. Once that has been completed the male can be seen singing near the site to attract a hen. The appearance of a mate within two days or so triggers off more work on the nest which is pear shaped with the entrance to one side. The nests are generally found hanging from the branches of a Casuarina Tree. The single egg is a dirty white colour and heavily spotted with dark brown. The youngster hatches out after 11 days. The Sunbird feeds mostly on nectar of the flowers of Hibiscus, flamboyant Rose of Venezuela and Bougainvillea which are

more favoured than that of other flowers. Insects especially small spiders form part of the Sunbirds diet when there are young to rear. The **Seychelle Bulbul** or **Merle** is confined to the Islands. The male has the whole of the upper parts of the body brown. The underparts are of the same colour but lighter. During the mating season the plumage on the underparts becomes slightly tinged yellow. The general colouring of the female is identical to that of the male but somewhat duller. Both sexes have an orange coloured beak and yellow legs. Juveniles are the same colour as the female, except for the beak and the legs which are a honey-brown. The orange yellow colours developing only during the first breeding season. The Bulbul is naturally noisy and aggressive and is often seen successfully attacking birds bigger than itself. It is found throughout most of the Islands.

It is a bird of the forest and about the size of an Indian Mynah. Both an insect and fruit eater. Spiders, Caterpillars and Grasshoppers form part of the diet. Fruit from the Bois Rouge, Bois-de-pomme, Cinnamon, Flang-Flang and wild fig are particular favourites. The Bulbul is considered a pest on La Digue and Praslin but while common there it is found nowhere else in the world. For that reason they must be protected but as they have a marked fondness for Vanilla flowers the Vanilla growers can by law kill these birds during the flowering period.

The **Seychelles Kestrel** or **Katiti** found only in the Islands is fairly common. It is a small brown coloured hawk. Both sexes are identical. The upper parts of the body including the back of the neck, wings and upper tail coverts are brown and there are feathers spotted with black. The underparts are light brown fading to a brownish-white on the abdomen. The beak is curved and of a bluish-yellow colour. Lizards form the main diet. Nests have been found among rocks on the mountain side or in odd cavities in walls. They contain one or two eggs which are white heavily spotted with brown. The **Cattle Egret** or **Buff-Backed Heron** known locally as Madame Paton is a slender white bird about twenty inches long. It is usually found with cattle or feeding on refuse dumps. During the breeding season, buff coloured hair like plumes appear on its head and neck and long egret plumes of the same colour develop on the back of the male. The legs and bill are

pinkish during the breeding season, otherwise the bill is yellow and legs black. It is widely distributed through the Islands and less aquatic than most herons.

Nests are built in colonies high up in trees. There is one gigantic colony in Mahe. The clutch is made up of two to four eggs, white in colour with a faint blue or greenish tinge. The diet is varied consisting of small fish, lizards, insects, flies, small birds and eggs. The species is predatory and damage is worse where Terns are thinly distributed and less able to defend their eggs. The Egret will even swallow newly hatched Terns. A further island I visited was Praslin, home of the **Black Parrot**. Even on its native home of Praslin this rare bird is



not well distributed being found mainly in certain areas where the Co-co-De Mer and the Pandanus forest exist in an area known as the Valle De Mal. Its restriction to these areas cannot be governed by food availability as the berries on which it feeds are to be found in unlimited quantities in the other parts of Praslin. It must be due to other factors possibly environment and suitable nesting sites. The Black Parrot feeds on quite a number of fruits and berries the most common being

the Guava, Bois de Pomme, Bois Rouge and Bilimbi.

Not a lot is known about the breeding season, nesting sites, clutch or incubation. It would appear the Black Parrot or the Praslin Island Vasa is the smallest of this species. The **Indian Mynah** is an introduced species and now is the most common bird found on Mahe'. It is seen everywhere from the forest areas to the centre of the town. This bird is so well known in Britain that it needs no introduction. The four rarest native species are the Magpie Robin, Seychelles Warbler, Paradise Flycatcher and the **Seychelles Bare-legged Scops Owl**. The Owl is probably the species least known about due to inaccessibility of habitat. This small brown bird about nine inches fully grown has a horny black bill and a bright orange-yellow iris. Locally this bird is known as the Sieur because of its distinctive call and has been heard in the mountain forest areas of Mahe' but seldom been seen. Last year one was killed in error in the dark for a Barn Owl. The bird is now to be found in the local museum in Mahe'. Perhaps it will remind people of their responsibility to the local wildlife.

The **Magpie Robin** is only found on Frigate Island. At the last census 30 birds existed. Unfortunately I did not have a chance to visit the island. The sea was so rough that no boats would make the trip. In fact none had reached Frigate during this period for six weeks. The **Seychelles Turtle Dove** is now becoming exceedingly rare. It is largely brown coloured with the head and neck a deep red extending to the chest and underparts where the colour becomes lighter. Back, wings and upper tail coverts are brown. Abdomen and underparts of the tail are greyish-white. The introduced **Madagascan Turtle Dove** is very similar to the native species but is slightly larger and paler in colour. It has a bluish-grey head, white abdomen and under tail coverts. The Seychelles Turtle Dove is rare not because of disappearance in the true sense of the word but through interbreeding with the Madagascan variety so that a new race has been derived from the two species. The true Seychelles species is still to be found on Cousin and Cousine islands.

The indigenous **Dutch Pigeon** is a tree inhabiting fruit pigeon, blue black in colour with a conspicuous whitish grey collar and a red head. In general appearance the male and female look alike. The male has a marked red crown of small plume like feathers. The beak is reddish brown and the legs are black. Although classed as a fruit eating bird

and seldom found near the town it is not destructive and is a forest dwelling species. Normally seen feeding in flocks. It does not drink water but gets all its liquid from the berries and fruit which it finds ie Cinnamon, Wild Figs , Guava, Flang Flang and is very fond of flowers of the rubber tree. Its feet differ from those of other local birds. Two toes point forward and two backward like those of the Black Parrot. Fortunately it is fairly well distributed over the granite islands. Two white eggs form the clutch and there is an eighteen day incubation period. The **Seychelles White Eye** is extremely rare. It is a tiny olive grey bird with the white conspicuous circle of feathers around the eyes.

The underparts of the body are of a lighter colour than the upperparts. It frequents well wooded areas. Nothing definite is known of the breeding season, nest, clutch and the incubation period. Its food consists of tiny insects and nectar. **The Cardinal or Madagascan Fody** was introduced to Mahe` towards the end of the 19th century. It has adapted itself well and is found in flocks around houses as well as wooded areas. The non-breeding plumage of both sexes are alike in colour. The Madagascan Fody is smaller than the **Seychelles Fody** known locally as the Toq Toq. Possibly the reason why both species are holding their own is due to their feeding habits. The Seychelles



Fody is more of an insect eater than a seed eater whereas the Madagascan Fody is the reverse. The Madagascan Fody has the underparts of the body a dull pale olive-green with the upper parts somewhat darker. Feathers in the back and wing coverts are edged with yellowish-white. However when the male is in full breeding plumage it is a very striking bird.

Primarily rich red in colour except for the feathers on the back, wings and tail which are almost entirely black. This colour change is gradual and I noticed several males in various degrees of change. The nest has a hole in the side and the hen (pictured at the bottom of previous page) lays a clutch of between two and five eggs. Another **Heron** one may see is the **Green-Backed**. This genus is widespread around the Indian Ocean but the sub-species is unique to the Seychelles. It is a small streaky bird to be seen on the seashore among the rocks or perching motionless on coconut palms. The Green Backed is a shy bird and by luck driving along one of the roads on Mahe' I spotted one on a sand bank. Momentarily it was motionless. However by the time I had reached a vantage point to film it, it was on the move. Another retiring bird is the **Seychelles Moorhen**. It is well distributed on most of the islands. Another introduced species is the **Barred Ground Dove**. Apart from the Indian Mynah it is the most common bird in the Seychelles.

Of Indo-Malayan origin it could have been introduced from Mauritius where it also occurs. It is found on most of the islands and is a small long tailed species. The general colouration of the plumage varies from pale slate grey to dark sooty grey. On Mahe' the Barred Ground Doves are generally of the pale coloured type while on Cousin Island they are darker. Two eggs are laid with incubation twelve days. These birds appear to feed entirely on grain and grass seeds. The only **Love-bird** to be found on Mahe' is the **Grey Headed**. It is of budgerigar size. The male has the head neck and upper parts white with the body grass green with yellowish pale green on the under parts. The hen is same as the male. Head neck and chest are pale green. Juveniles are the same as adults. It is only found on the west side of Mahe' living in the forests and coco-nut groves where the conditions are more secluded and peaceful. The clutch consists of two to three eggs. Incubation lasts eighteen days and chicks leave the nest about four weeks after hatching. Food consists entirely of grass seeds.

One bird in particular I would like to give some details of is the **Sooty Tern**. It is by far the most common sea bird. It breeds on Bird Island. During the breeding season numbers are overwhelming. In the Atlantic it is found on the Tortugas off Florida. It also frequents Ascension Island and some of the Pacific islands. In areas around the Indian ocean not only does it breed on Bird Island but also on Aride Island, African Banks and Desnoeufs. Do these populations interbreed or do they in fact traverse from ocean to ocean ? No one seems to know where this vast population lives when not breeding. The Terns come to land to breed and then vanish. It is thought the Sooty feeds and sleeps on the wing for some seven to eight months. In fact they cannot swim on the calmest ocean. They sleep by rising to a great height, set the wings and glide. They appear to feed on small fish, shrimps and small squid on the waters surface. This bird which apparently has no enemies is known as the Sea Swallow. The Sooty Tern breeds at different times according to where it is located. It is said there is always one colony somewhere in the world that is breeding. On Christmas Island the Sooty breeds every six months. Could it be by different populations? In the Seychelles it invariably breeds during the south-east monsoon. There is a good reason for this timing. The monsoon brings the food they and their young require. The monsoon also affects the oceans nutrient salts that feed microscopic plants which in turn provide sustenance to the plankton that feed the fish and squid. Within hours the Sooty Terns will arrive at their destination in countless numbers and lay their single egg. Social stimulus and gregarious, safety in numbers has survival value. The food supply appears to stop when the monsoon subsides. Many young starve to death if their parents do not arrive in accordance with the cycle and the food chain collapses.

Birdlife of Seychelles from 1972 to 2020

Adrian Skerrett

John Mollindinia visited Seychelles in 1972, a landmark year in the history of this island nation. On 20 March, Queen Elizabeth II visited Seychelles to officially open the international airport on Mahé. Crowds gathered to marvel at the wonder of the sight of the first jets to touch down at their islands. Perhaps they realised even then, nothing in their world would ever be the same again. An isolated mid-ocean archipelago accessible only by taking a long and arduous sea voyage was now accessible to the world within a matter of hours. Since 1972, the population has almost doubled from around 50,000 to almost 100,000. Tourism has brought wealth to Seychelles, so that GDP has increased by a factor of fifty from just US\$30m in 1972 to US\$1.5 billion today. In 2020, Seychellois enjoy the highest per capita income of any nation in the African region. Inevitably, the environment and birdlife have also been hugely impacted by these changes.

Contrary to what might have been expected, the fortunes of several endemic bird species have improved immensely. This is partly down to the efforts of local and international conservation bodies, but also increased awareness and a recognition of the value of the environment to the tourism industry. In fact, the populations of most of the twelve endemic bird species of the granitic island group have increased or at least remained stable and their survival prospects have generally improved. John Mollindinia mentions in his text, eleven of these endemics (all except **Seychelles Swiftlet** *Aerodramus elaphrus*).

Unique to the Praslin Group, Seychelles, **Seychelles Warbler** *Acrocephalus sechellensis* (referred to as Seychelles Brush Warbler by John Mollindinia) was Critically Endangered in 1972. It was one of the rarest birds in the world with about 30 birds confined to Cousin Island. Today, due to habitat restoration and translocations to other rat-free islands there are about 3,000 birds, a one hundred-fold increase! Apart from Cousin, it now flourishes on Cousine, Denis Island and Aride (which has the largest population of 2,000 birds from 29 transferred from Cousin in 1988). The species is no longer globally threatened, and is currently classified as Near Threatened, a huge conservation success story.

Other success stories include **Seychelles Magpie-robin** *Copsychus sechella-*

rum and **Seychelles Fody** *Foudia sechellarum*. John Mollindinia notes the population of Magpie-robins was just 30 at the time of his visit, confined to a single home, Frégate Island. Today, following successful translocations to Aride, Cousin and Cousine around 250 birds breed on four islands and its threat status has been downgraded from Critically Endangered to Endangered. Seychelles Fody (referred to as Seychelles Weaver by John Mollindinia) was restricted to Cousin, Cousine and Fregate in 1972. It still survives on all three islands, but in higher numbers and has also been successfully translocated to Denis Island and Aride. Like the warbler, it is no longer globally threatened, but remains a Restricted Range species currently classified as Near Threatened.

Seychelles Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone corvina* (referred to by John Mollindinia as Veuve or Black Paradise Flycatcher) has enjoyed mixed fortunes in the face of the twin pressures of a growing population and tourism, which have greatly reduced the area of forest cover on La Digue. In 1972, this was the only island with a resident population of flycatchers, but birds have since been transferred to Denis Island and Curieuse. In 1969, it was



thought the total population was not more than 50. Today there are around 200-300 birds, numbers increasing on La Digue despite significant habitat loss. The improvement is probably due to the cessation of wilful destruction

of nests and killing of birds for "sport" as well as education and effective protection. Nevertheless, the species remains Critically Endangered.

As John Mollindinia notes, **Seychelles White-eye** *Zosterops modestus* was extremely rare in 1972, thought to breed only on Mahé. However, following discovery of an unknown population on Conception and successful translocation to North Island, Frégate and Grande Soeur, it too has been downlisted from Critically Endangered to Vulnerable.



The **Seychelles Blue-pigeon** *Alectroenas pulcherrimus* (above) was not uncommon in 1972, but nevertheless is even more common today as it is no longer taken as a food item. **Seychelles Sunbird** *Cinnyris dussumieri* was then and remains today the most common endemic, found on almost every granitic island. If anything, it has probably become even more common following introduction to Bird Island in 2006 and colonisation of Aride Island by natural means. Its success is due to the fact it is probably the only Seychelles endemic bird to have actually benefited from the arrival of man, feeding on the nectar of introduced flowering trees and shrubs in gardens, hotel grounds etc. Also, it is too small to have ever been a food item and the nest site is usually inaccessible to introduced mammalian predators. **Seychelles Bulbul** *Hypsipetes crassirostris* (shown below) numbers are also stable since 1972. Endemic to Seychelles it is common on Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and Silhouette. Nevertheless, its preference for mature woodland means its future is linked to the conservation of this habitat. It is not globally

threatened being fairly common and widespread.

Seychelles Kestrel *Falco araeus* is present in reasonable numbers on Mahé and Silhouette as it was in 1972, with smaller numbers on North Island, Praslin and some of the smaller satellite islands of Mahé. In the last few years, it has colonised La Digue by natural means. It is classified by IUCN as Vulnerable, previously considered not globally threatened, as its range contracted. **Seychelles Scops-owl** *Otus insularis* is considered Endangered, confined to the mountains of Mahé but reasonably well protected within Morne Seychellois National Park.

Finally, an endemic bird no doubt close to the heart of John Mollindinia is **Seychelles Parrot** *Coracopsis barklyi* (described as the Black Parrot, an alternative name). As in 1972, the species remains confined to Praslin but numbers have increased following the implementation of protection measures. DNA has shown it to be a full species, distinct from populations of related species in Comoros and Madagascar.

The seabirds of Seychelles remain the same as in 1972, populations generally somewhat higher due to protection of nesting sites. Indeed, some ground-nesting species have recolonised some islands such as North Island due to the successful eradication of rats. However, in more recent years there have been signs that populations are now in decline possibly due to factors including climate change or over-fishing.





The Indo-Pacific population of **Audubon's Shearwater** *Puffinus lherminieri* has since 1972 been split from the Atlantic population, the former retaining the name Audubon's Shearwater and the latter renamed as **Tropical Shearwater** *P. bailloni*. Aride Island in Seychelles had the world's largest population of this species as well as another seabird mentioned by John Mollindinia, **Lesser Noddy** *Anous tenuirostris*. **Common Noddy** *A. stolidus* and **Fairy Tern** *Gygis alba* remain reasonably common, probably similar in number to 1972.

John Mollindinia describes in some detail the breeding habits of **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* (shown above) noting its presence throughout tropical seas. In the western Indian Ocean, it is by far the most common seabird. He asks "Do these populations interbreed or do they in fact traverse from ocean to ocean?" No doubt he would have been fascinated to learn that since 1972, birds ringed in Seychelles have been recovered off Somalia, and in Sri Lanka, India and Australia. One bird ringed as chick on Raoul Island in the Kermadecs, southwest Pacific Ocean, was found breeding on Aride, Seychelles 34 years later.

Not everything is rosy in the Garden of Eden. Mudflats that attracted huge numbers of waders to the east coast of Mahé have been largely been reclaimed and built upon. Many of the problems of the modern world are problems in Seychelles too, including the volume of traffic in Victoria, the increased number of people at beaches and other tourist sites, the loss of wetlands due to the high value of flat land for building and the unquantifiable loss of a simple way of life where people were closer to nature. However, the tide of progress has undoubtedly brought benefits to Seychellois including increased life expectancy, better health care and education and modern conveniences. In 1972, there was no electricity on any island other than Mahé. Today, Seychellois enjoy a standard of living equivalent to a middle income country. Yet the environment has not been sacrificed in the name of progress. John Mollindinia was aware that the Seychelles he witnessed was on the threshold of change. He would no doubt have been delighted to learn that his impassioned plea, LET US HOPE THAT CONSERVATION AND COMMON SENSE PREVAIL, has for the most part been realised.

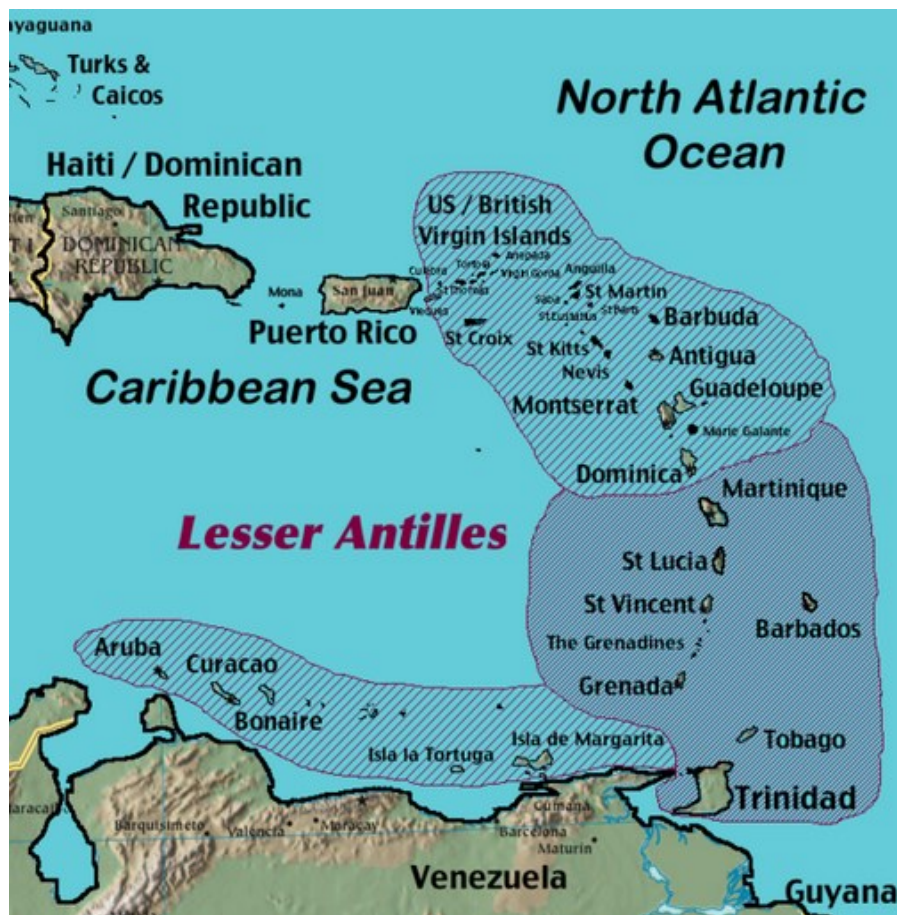


Seychelles Magpie-Robin

Parrots of the Lesser Antilles

Darren Sefton

The Lesser Antilles are a large collection of 24 small Island states in the south and east of the Caribbean and include the well-known tourist islands of St. Lucia, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Dominica, St. Vincent and Barbados. These range from Trinidad and Tobago in the south up to Puerto Rico in the north.



These islands are remote to the mainland continents of North and South America, so have quite a large number of endemic birds and

animals. These include/included several species of Parrot, some of which have sadly become extinct. The remaining species have been under great pressure in the 20th and 21st centuries due to exposure to hurricanes, expanding human populations, deforestation and, in some cases, capture for food and the pet trade. Population surveys are not up to date, so we don't really know how many still exist.

For the purposes of this article I will be concentrating upon the species linked to St Lucia, Dominica and St. Vincent following a recent trip that me and Sue took to celebrate a landmark birthday.

St Lucia

The St Lucia Amazon - *Amazona versicolor* – is currently the only endemic species of Parrot found on St Lucia. There are 2 main populations on the island, both on the mountains in the centre and south of the island. Although separated the island is still small enough for individuals to come and go between the two locations. Our guide known as “Vision”, (a very amiable and knowledgeable Rastafarian, with the largest woolly hat I’ve come across) took us to see both populations.



“Vision” and Adams Toussaint

The population that is easiest to see is situated in the south above a small coastal town called Soufriere. There are steep forested slopes just inland and the birds can be seen flying from one side of the valleys to the other. Like many other Amazon species they are quite large and stocky with a short tail. In flight they are generally heard first and can be distinguished from other large birds, such as the Broad-winged Hawk, by their fast fluttering wing beats (and of course their vivid colouring).



St Lucia Amazon – Photo of Adams Toussaint
(www.stluciawildlife.com)

The other population is further north in the mountains surrounding the Des Cartiers Rainforest Trail. This is a more arduous place to see the birds, but a much more interesting place to be. The trail starts at about 1200 ft at a small picnic spot and this is accessible by road. The Antillean Bullfinches at this picnic spot are very confiding and give you a real opportunity to watch them closely. The trail itself winds through the rainforest for about 2 ½ miles (4Km) and has been surfaced with large smooth stones. Unfortunately, the rain and humid atmosphere

means that these are quite slippery, so you do have to watch where you are stepping rather than concentrating on seeing the birds. Eventually you come to a spot on a steep valley side that has a sturdy fence to lean on. The Parrots roost in the trees on the opposite slope. On the day we visited there were birds calling all around us, but we could not see them perching. Several fleeting views were had as the Amazons flew up the valley. Sadly, I was not able to react quickly enough to get a photo.

The St Lucia Amazon is classed as vulnerable, but since their adoption as the country's national bird and conservation efforts, their numbers are increasing and as of 2009 number 1750-2250 individuals. Several European Zoos have kept the species (in the UK they were at Chester Zoo, Paradise Park in Hayle and London Zoo and Jersey Zoo – who may still hold this species). Jersey were the first UK collection to breed this species in 1982.

Dominica

Dominica is also a mountainous island. Like St Lucia the island was formed by volcanic activity. These steep mountains continue down into the sea and within three miles of the coast the water is in excess of 8000ft deep. Dominica (not to be confused with the much larger, more northerly country of Dominican Republic) has 2 species of endemic Amazon Parrot - the Red-necked Amazon *Amazona arausiaca* (locally known as the Jaco or Jacquot) and the Imperial Amazon *Amazona imperialis* (known as the Sisserou).

The Imperial is the largest species of Amazon found anywhere and is now very rare (it is estimated to number only 60 individuals), whereas the Jaco is smaller and more numerous, although it certainly cannot be called common as there are estimated to be only approx. 850-1000 birds. This number is only a rough estimate, as no survey has been done in many years. Sightings have increased in recent years, so the assumption is that this means that the population is increasing too.

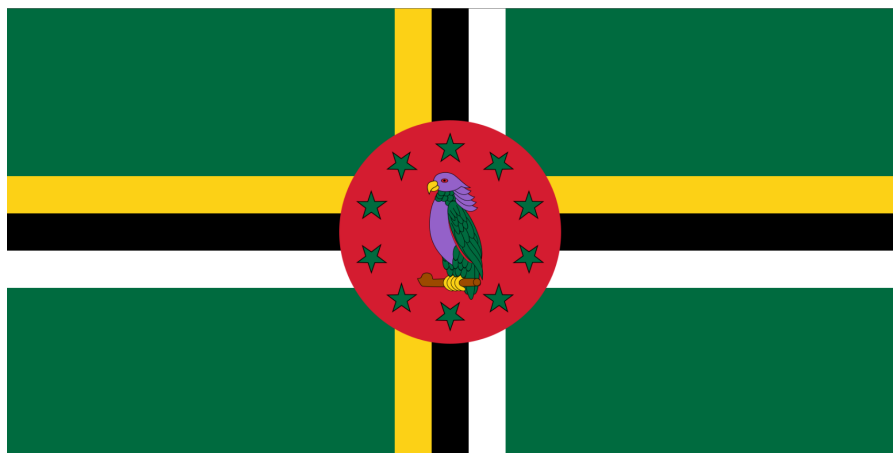


Sisserou – Photo courtesy of “Dr Birdy”

At one point Dominica had a population of Brown-throated *parakeet*, *Eupsittula pertinax* (sometimes known as the St. Thomas Conure in captivity). These were not naturally occurring, but the result of escapees. No-one has seen any in recent years, so the population would appear to have died out.

In November 2017 Dominica was very badly affected by Hurricane Maria. Many of the trees still bear the effects of this deadly storm. In some areas over 70% of the coconut palms had their tops removed (which will never grow back). Undoubtedly, some of the parrots were killed or blown out to sea, but our guide Bertrand Jno. Baptiste (AKA “Dr Birdy”) told us that many of the birds were able to react quickly enough and shelter in the leeward side of mountains or even climb into crevices in between the buttresses of large rainforest trees. In fact, in the long term, the hurricane could create more nesting sites, where large branches have broken away. Immediately after the hurricane there were reports of large flocks of Jaco (in excess of 30) as they gathered together in the few remaining areas of vegetation.

The main place to see both Sisserou (Dominica's national bird, which also appears on their flag) and Jaco are on the slopes of a mountain called Morne Diablotins within the reserve known as "The Syndicate". This used to be a citrus plantation and the birds now feed on these fruits. Dr Birdy told us that they generally only go for the pips though, disregarding the fruit pulp !



We saw several Jacos on our trip, getting really good views of feeding birds through the telescope (the photos are also through the telescope hence the circular effect). They were usually in pairs or small family groups (3, 4 or 5). Although we searched them out, we did not see or hear any Sisserou. With only 60 left, and with a local telling us that in 22 years she had only seen them twice, it would have been nothing short of a miracle if we had seen them in such a short trip.

Only London Zoo has kept the Sisserou in the UK – most recently was the mid 60s. Both London and Jersey have exhibited the Jaco, but not since the 70s. Neither species has been bred in the UK.

If visiting Dominica then, as well as going birdwatching, I would highly recommend the whale-watching tours that leave from the capital Roseau most days. Over a 3-4 hour period we saw 2 different species (Sperm and Pilot whales) in large numbers, within a few metres of the boat.

St. Vincent

St. Vincent is south of St. Lucia and is clearly visible from any highpoint on the south coast. There is one endemic parrot species (*Amazona guildingii*) on the island (again this species is designated as the national bird) and is possibly the most familiar to members. Currently, there are no St Vincent Amazons in UK public collections, but were formerly at Hayle, London, Jersey and at Knowsley Safari Park. It is estimated that there are approx. 800-900 birds still living in the heavily forested mountainous areas of the island. In addition to the normal threats to bird species (de-forestation, hunting, disturbance by humans etc) the St. Vincent has a very strange threat. There are lots of introduced 9-banded Armadillos, which are undermining mature trees causing them to fall. This reduces the number of nest sites available.



This species is unique in that it has two naturally occurring colour morphs – a yellowy-brown (shown on the stamp above) and the less common green morph. There are captive specimens held at the St. Vincent Botanic Gardens and these are of the brown morph. Paradise Park at Hayle were the first UK collection to breed this species in 1991. It was here that I first saw the St. Vincent – the only other European collection I can recall seeing them was in Loro Parque, Tenerife.

There are several of these Amazons held at the Graeme Hall sanctuary on Barbados (now closed to visitors). Very little is known about these birds, but the owner is attempting to get permission from the Barbados government to export them. Due to a long-running dispute, this permission is not forthcoming.

ACTP

The Association for the Conservation of Threatened Parrots (ACTP) in Berlin, Germany currently holds all four species. This is not a public collection and is rather controversial. I won't go into this, but the UK newspaper "The Guardian" did some investigations into their activities in 2018 – an internet search will provide more details.

ACTP have bred the St. Lucia, the St. Vincent and the Red-necked, but so far not the Imperial. The Red-necked was bred in 2019 (2 chicks), which was a world first. Both the St. Lucia (at least 5 chicks) and St. Vincent (at least 3 chicks) were also bred in 2019, with some birds being returned to their native islands. ACTP also have placed some of their birds with the zoo at Pairi Daiza in Belgium. As far as I can tell this is the only public collection that currently has St. Vincents on exhibit in Europe. Houston Zoo and the Bronx Zoo in New York also had St. Vincents in recent years and may still have.

The Red-necked and Imperial parrots at ACTP were transferred to Germany in 2017 in rather strange circumstances. Having spoken to various Dominican people to ask their opinions, I found that they are not happy with their government's actions regarding these birds. The consensus seems to be that they were either "stolen" or "bought" and that they should be returned. However, we were on Dominica during the run-up to a general election and there was quite a bit of all-round disgruntlement with the government, so I would take this with a little pinch of salt.

Extinct Antillean Species

The species living on the islands of the Lesser Antilles are particularly vulnerable. This has led to a number of extinctions of parrots. Wikipedia lists them as :-

The Martinique Macaw

The Martinique Amazon

The Lesser Antillean Macaw

The Guadeloupe Amazon

The Guadeloupe Parakeet

The St. Croix Macaw is also listed, but is known from the analysis of bones, the colouration is not known.



Red-necked Amazon (Jaco) parrot high up in a tree in the Syndicate reserve taken with a small pocket camera through a spotting scope (hence the black circle) - photo by Darren Sefton

Front Cover Bird

The **Purple-throated Carib** (*Eulampis jugularis*) is a species of Hummingbird in the family Trochilidae. It is endemic to, and breeds on, the Lesser Antilles islands of Antigua, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Montserrat, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Saint Eustatius. It has occurred as a vagrant in Barbados, Barbuda, Grenada and the Virgin Islands.

There are some notable differences between the sexes. The male is larger and stronger than the female and has a shorter straight beak, however the plumage is similar. Her beak is curved and about 1/3 longer. This long curved beak is used to feed upon Heliconia flowers. Males tend to have smaller territories that have lots of flowers to feed upon. At our hotel in Dominica there was a male that had a yellow split ring upon its leg. This allowed its territory to be ascertained. This was about 200m square and contained several flowering bushes and also the sugar feeder hung up outside the restaurant. Other Caribs would be chased away, although the smaller Antillean Crested Hummingbirds would be tolerated more.

While most common at middle to high elevations in humid forest, this species can be fairly common down to sea level especially in secondary growth; and can occur in mangrove and dry forest. This bird is unmistakable in most situations, though a silhouetted bird could be mistaken for the similarly-shaped Green-throated Carib (*Eulampis holosericeus*)

According to the Zootierliste.de website, the Centro Colibri di Margherita Hack research centre in Udine, Italy is the only European collection that keeps currently this species, although London Zoo, Cleres Zoo in France, Berlin Zoo, Vogelpark Wiesental and Walsrode in Germany have kept them in the past.

They are named Caribs after the American Indian people who inhabited the islands at the time of the Spanish Conquest

The League will be having a table at the Cambridge Bird Sales days in 2020—it would be great to see you there. Please stop by and say hello—Phyllis doesn't bite ...much!

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership to the sale is required to attend. This is free of charge for the time being and automatic when you book tables and/or wristbands.

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COST

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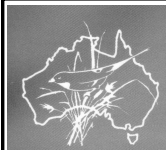
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