

The Seychelles

Naturetrek Tour Report

14th – 27th September 2025



Seychelles Fruit Bat



Brown Noddy



Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher



Seychelles Blue Pigeon

Tour report by Richard Bashford, photos by Frans Buiter



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Tour participants: Gemma James & Richard Bashford (leaders) with 13 Naturetrek clients

Summary

An island-hopping tour in the Seychelles! Sounds good? We had an action-packed tour visiting a total of nine islands – from the hustle and bustle (yes really) of Mahé, to the much more relaxed Praslin, and a range of smaller islands designed specifically to search for all the endemic species of bird. We also enjoyed regular snorkelling or swimming sessions. The island of Cousin was a dream after the larger islands, with an exciting “dry” wet landing and then a walk among trees covered in noddies and White Terns. We visited the Vallée de Mer on Praslin – a highlight for many as Gemma talked us through the different palms and introduced us to other endemic fauna including the Seychelles Parrot in the car park! Perhaps the best was Bird Island. Just an incredible place all to ourselves, with vast numbers of birds including a huge Sooty Tern colony. The snorkelling here was very popular with one or two sessions each of the three days. Great Creole food throughout too. Wonderful!

Day 1

Sunday 14th September

Seven clients and Richard boarded the early afternoon flight to Dubai. Sadly, that was the highlight of the journey – our flight was delayed due to a luggage issue and then we missed our departure slot and then had to return to the terminal because a passenger was ill. Phew!

We got going eventually and realised that this would mean we would miss our connection on to Mahé. Some quick messages to the office and then email to our Seychelles contacts and we should be sorted.

Day 2

Monday 15th September

With three of the group already in Dubai and three already in Mahé, our local guide Gemma would meet the six and take them on an excursion. The delayed party would be catching the next flight, arriving in Mahé at 13:35.

Gemma met the three from Dubai and the other three who had arrived earlier in the week and spent the day out and about in the south and west of the island catching up with a few of the islands special birds such as White Tern, Seychelles Bulbul, Seychelles Sunbird, Seychelles Blue Pigeon and the wonderful Seychelles Fruit Bat showing their ability to soar like raptors and glide and flap overhead - so slowly it was a wonder they stayed in the air!

The newly arrived group landed at 13:45 and were at the hotel 45 minutes before Gemma arrived. After checking into our rooms, most relaxed – although Richard and Pam notched up a few of the same species along the coastal track.

We met together at 18:30 for a welcome chat and briefing for tomorrow, against the sort of sunset you dream about. Then to dinner with a magnificent buffet. And early night for most, ready for the next day.

Day 3

Tuesday 16th September

Mahé

After a decent sleep, we awoke to an excellent breakfast buffet with Zebra Doves and Common Mynas under the tables, and our first Great Frigatebirds over the sea.

We aimed to leave at nine but were five minutes late as early risers had reported several Seychelles Blue Pigeons in the small garden. Sure enough, there was one, joined by another two offering great views a few feet away. There were also sightings of Seychelles Sunbird here. But what was better, after a couple of brief flyovers and a brief perched bird seen by just Gemma and Frans, a fine Seychelles Kestrel flew in calling and perched and allowed great 'scope views. At one stage it was mobbed by two White Terns.

Onward towards the hoped for wader habitat – sadly it was high tide and only a very distant Whimbrel was seen. Here we saw the introduced but cute Common Waxbill, a wonderful Little Heron and more sunbirds. We also saw a non-breeding plumaged Little Tern but it was looking a bit poorly.

Onward and higher to Venn Town where a school was set up for the children of slave trade. Here were commanding views of the islands. Gemma pointed out many exotic trees and plants as well as some planted endemics. We enjoyed much closer views of White-tailed Tropicbirds and then ridiculous close views of Seychelles Bulbul – used to being fed we suspected.

Onward to abandoned tea plantations where a trail across the Tea Plantation Glacis (flat eroded areas of granite) – looking oddly like a bit of old tarmac! Our main target here was the pitcher plant *Nepenthes pervillei*, which we saw, but Gemma pointed out many other species such as the introduced Cinnamon, and a flowering Coco Marron (*Hypoxidia seychellensis*).

Our next stop was a drive to lunch at Le Jardin du Roi. Another excellent spread of Creole food. The following walk around the gardens provided our best view – but still brief - of Seychelles Swiftlet. Here Gemma introduced many of the medicinal and fruiting plant species. We saw our first Seychelles Skink and the wonderful Mahé Green Gecko.

We next headed back, checking unsuccessfully for wader habitat and then spent a bit of time in a traffic jam. Back at the hotel for 16:50 however giving folks the opportunity to relax, swim etc before dinner and checklist.

Day 4

Wednesday 17th September

A leisurely breakfast for most at 08:00 and then a chilled morning around the hotel – we had to vacate our rooms by 10:00 so with bags in storage, most went for a circular walk along the beach (our Naturetrek party standing out from everyone else in swimwear...) We saw Great Frigatebirds, White Terns, Seychelles Sunbird and a Moorhen. Back at the hotel, one of the staff (Andy) showed Fred a Tropical Shearwater he had found on the beach in the morning. Often seabirds are disorientated by light during the night. This bird did not seem injured, and the group were able to see this wonderful bird close up before Andy released it later.

The bus arrived and we were on the road at noon. Just ten minutes down the road, we had another amazing meal at the renowned Marie Antoinette restaurant.

We then went a few more minutes through town to the Botanic Gardens where we wandered around seeing our first Coco de Mere and many other species Gemma introduced us to, often with a back story. Yellow-bellied Terrapins were seen in a small pool, a Seychelles Fruit Bat posed nicely for photos, and we saw several Seychelles Sunbirds and Bulbuls. We identified Olive-haired Swift and Asian Citrus Swallowtail (the latter an exotic).

Onward to the nearby ferry port where we boarded at 16:00, setting sail to Praslin at 16:30. Pam noted a corvid flying which would be a House Crow here on Seychelles – a most unwelcome exotic.

We had upstairs tickets and all managed a seat with a view not impeded by plastic windows. So after about 20 minutes, we started to see the arching flight of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Just a few at first, but over the 1 hour 15 minutes at sea, we saw many – often quite close. Less common were Tropical Shearwaters with only a small number seen at first and then a larger number about halfway across – flashing black and white as they flew. Also a small number of Sooty Terns, one Bridled and a handful of Lesser Noddies. A couple of other species appeared to be present – a good candidate for Flesh-footed Shearwater, seen well by one participant, and what may well have been a Bulwer's Petrel. The ferry was not ideal for watching the sea however, but we felt we did well.

Docking just before 18:00, we got our bags and met Vinod our new driver for Praslin who took us to the Berjaya resort where we checked in before our checklist and briefing and another great buffet (eventually, once we'd impressed upon the staff we had been booked in to eat for the next five days!) The large lit hotel sign attracted several geckos.

Day 5

Thursday 18th September

Grande Seour

Breakfast at 07:30 and then a wander down to the beach at 08:45. A Seychelles Kestrel swept by as we walked.

Today we were catching a boat to Grande Seour which involved getting pretty wet as we boarded as well as on the journey. But we were prepared with wet shoes and waterproof bags for cameras etc. We noted a couple of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters arching over the water and fairly large numbers of noddies – close ones were Lesser Noddies so they may all have been! About 40 minutes later, we were anchored a little way off the island and waited a few minutes for the boatman to pick us up and transfer us to the shore. Once there, we changed and Gemma explained we would be able to explore the central flat area until the boatmen had prepared a barbeque lunch. Within a minute, we were watching the main target species – the Seychelles White-eye. At least five were calling and feeding actively in a small fruiting tree. At one stage, three sat alongside each other presumably sheltering from the heat – very cute photos were taken!

The usual subjects were present – a few Blue Pigeons, Seychelles Sunbirds, Madagascan Fody. But here too were our best views of White Tern – with some birds perched and one seen feeding a spikey plumaged young bird.

Overhead were more and a good number of White-tailed Tropicbirds showing well against the blue sky. Massive Aldebaran Tortoises roamed around the area and one submerged itself quite deeply in the muddy pool.

At noon, the excellent barbeque was ready – the long wooden table under the shelter had a bright orange table cloth and 15 places set. Great food as always!

After eating, we had an hour before we would leave. A notable wildlife sighting came as we watched the surf, noting Bat Fish and Parrot Fish. Next was a 1.5 metre shark! These are apparently quite regular when the barbeque trays are cleaned in the sea – Oceanic Lemon Shark was the agreed species. Harmless (according to Gemma...)

On board by 14:00 and back on Praslin by 14:45. The rest of the day was at leisure with many going for a swim until checklist and dinner as usual. The lit hotel sign attracted a Praying Mantis tonight.

Day 6

Friday 19th September

Cousin and Curieuse

Our day started in the same way as yesterday. Breakfast and walk down the road to board the boat – this time to Cousin. We were on the water by 08:55 and enjoyed a relatively calm and dry crossing – it was cloudy with some occasional light rain. The usual suspects were seen on the crossing with a Wedge-tailed Shearwater or two and a couple of close Bridled Terns and most distant but more numerous Lesser Noddies.

At 09:30 we were offshore waiting for our transfer boat – although we expected a wet landing, the boats were instead driven up the beach at speed, so we were able to get off onto the beach – quite an experience! On shore, we prepared with a change of shoes, long trousers and sleeves, plenty of mosquito repellent. Gemma led us through the coastal vegetation where we marvelled at the White Terns and Lesser Noddies perched at eye level on branches and nest made of leaves, seaweed and quano. White-tailed Tropicbirds flew through the trees and it wasn't long before we found nesting birds in the buttress roots of the trees. Just amazing after mainly seeing these birds in flight. We noticed good numbers of Seychelles Skink but here was the much larger Wright's Skink – both species seemed to be everywhere. The advantages of a rat-free island were very apparent in terms of the wildlife surrounding us as we walked – just amazing. A few minutes later, Pam found our first endemic – the Seychelles Fody – a largely dark brown bird but a good one to see – we saw several on our walk – often in pairs. Next was a very tame Seychelles Magpie Robin. Gemma scraped some soil which attracted the robin to feed – again, we saw a good number of robins, all very tame. We had one more endemic to see and two minutes later, Gemma heard the Seychelles Warbler calling – two very obliging birds actively feeding above us. More were seen on the rest of the walk, including one in song. We also saw two candidates for *rostrata* – the Seychelles Turtle Dove – this hybridises with Malagasy Turtle Dove so it is not considered a separate species, even if pure birds still occur.

As we climbed the hill, we noticed our first perched Bridled Tern. Here too were nesting Wedge-tailed Shearwater and White-tailed Tropicbird with a chick. Our walk ended with a lovely view over the sea to Cousine Island with seabirds floating above and below the viewpoint.

Our return walk brought us back down and to the beach where we saw a Turnstone and many more close views of the seabirds. The overall experience of visiting Cousin will stay with us for many years. Once changed, the small boats ferried us back to our main boat, then we left for Curieuse where Daniel was waiting for us with another

barbeque. Once finished, we had a short boat journey to the other side of the island for a short walk. Here the free-range tortoises were everywhere! Gemma led us to the boardwalk passing through the mangroves where she pointed out the different species. Here we found tiny Fiddler Crabs, the larger Mangrove Crabs and the Giant Land Crabs – although the individuals we saw were fairly moderately sized based on some of the crab holes we saw! We also saw several Cowtail Stingrays in the shallow water. We added Whimbrel and Greenshank to the day list and then returned to the landing site to change into our snorkelling gear. Those at the back of the group held back to listen to the bird calls and were rewarded with a male Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher. Gemma explained that some birds were introduced to Curieuse two years ago but we hoped to see this species tomorrow on La Digue.

Our last stop was a bay near the hotel La Reserve where we enjoyed some time snorkelling. An amazing array of fish fed around the coral, sea cucumber, sea urchin and even a species of shark as we arrived and a passing Manta Ray as we left.

The light warm rain had been occasional today and we returned home in misty rain conditions – since most were all wet from snorkelling and it was still warm, we hardly noticed.

Back at the hotel by 16:00 to rest before briefing and dinner.



Seychelles Swiftlet



Seychelles Sunbird



Seychelles Magpie Robin



Seychelles Fody



White-tailed Tropicbird

Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes pervillei*)

Seychelles Parrot



Seychelles White-eye

Day 7

Saturday 20th September

La Digue

After breakfast, we left promptly at 08:15 to drive to the ferry port. We left at 09:00 and arrived on La Digue half an hour later. We transferred to a lorry with an open seated area. First stop was Veuve Reserve where we saw two female Seychelles Paradise Flycatchers within the first minute. A short distance further on Gemma showed us a nest hanging in the low branches of a trackside tree. Nearby a glorious long tailed male flycatcher perched and fed. While watching the male, the female came in to feed the chicks a couple of times. After a few minutes, we left them in peace and walked a bit further finding another male. Well that worked out well!

Onward at 10:40 to the nearby coconut processing area with historical artefacts showing how it was done in the past and how it was done today. Gemma gave us a tour around the area, showing us how to get the kernel out by smashing it against a sharp metal spike in the ground. Then opening the coconut with a machete, and finally “zesting” the flesh using a sharpened instrument fixed to a small tool. It all seemed to work but it was a bit scary to watch her doing it... But she remained unscathed!

After trying the flesh and some trying the fermenting “milk”, we completed our walk noting the endemic La Digue Day Gecko. We then drove a little further to a coastal path with some impressive granite rocks and some fossilised coral.

At noon, we drove to a very nice-looking hotel and restaurant for an enormous buffet which we enjoyed looking out over the sea.

After lunch, we had some free time to relax before the bus returned to take us on a little drive along the road to the north with some lovely beach areas, and then back to the ferry terminal. As we parked, Gemma noted a Seychelles Swiftlet over the buildings. We’d not seen these too well thus far, so we spent a few minutes and obtained some good close views of two flying around the buildings.

Back to the ferry dock we noted a couple of Greater Crested Terns and a small group of Turnstones.

We left at 16:00 and arrived back for a swim for those that wanted to, before the usual evening itinerary.

Day 8

Sunday 21st September

Praslin

This morning we had a 9am start to visit the Valeé de Mer. This reserve is home to five of the endemic palms and also a good place to see Seychelles Parrot. The forest is thick and so the best place to see the parrot is the small car park which gives a fair view of the sky. Within five minutes Gemma had heard the call and then we had two flying over. The views were brief but not too bad. Waiting another 20 minutes and we had a calling bird come in and perch, still calling. A much better view. We all saw it well through the ‘scope and then started to cross the road for our walk in the reserve. Three more flew over, then the same or another perched on a Coco de Mer and stayed for more photos. Good stuff!

Gemma then led us into the trail introducing us to the Coco de Mer and other endemic palms. She enhanced the walk with many amazing facts – the more you heard about the Coco de Mer the more amazing it is. We saw the colossal seeds hanging above our heads – they only fall when mature and when a tree is mature, they put a sign by it to warn people! Having seen the seeds, we saw several of the equally suggestive male tree. What was amazing to hear was that the flowers on the male are not pollinated by bees (even though there were bees on the flowers), but the Praslin Day Gecko of which we saw many. Gemma also found several of the other Praslin endemic, the Dwarf Bronze-eyed Gecko. Here too were two endemic snails – the Coco de Mer Snail and the Praslin Snail.

Back at the bus after our circular walk at 11:30, we drove back searching briefly for waders on the beach or mangrove creek – no joy. Onward to another large lunchtime buffet at noon.

At 13:30, we drove to Anse Lazio for a swim and snorkel. Waves were pretty big and the water cloudy with sand, so we spent a refreshing hour here but gave up on the snorkelling. Returning to the hotel for 15:00 for more time in the sea or relaxing.

Day 9

Monday 22nd September

Praslin and Bird Island via Mahé

We checked out of the hotel and were on the road by 08:55. We arrived at the small but perfectly formed Praslin Airport about half an hour later and had our bags scanned and checked in. The group split here as six clients and Richard would be taking the 10:35 plane. Scanning from the departure lounge, a Seychelles Kestrel was seen by Izzy and a few Whimbrels fed on the short grass. On board, while waiting, Nigel spotted a Tenrec running across the grass! We landed in rain, at 10:48 and waited for the second party. At 11:10, they arrived and we gathered our non Bird Island bags together so they could be stored at the Coral Strand hotel. Gemma and Richard then popped down the road to the supermarket to get a few more provisions. Returning at noon, the group lined up at a nearby eatery for a sandwich and a drink - Richard (Naturetrek), picking up the bill.

We were called about 40 minutes later and then ushered into departures. Still raining but we managed to see a good number of Whimbrels, a Grey Plover, some Turnstones and about 20 Cattle Egrets.

The rain delayed us for just over an hour, but we were off into the clouds and landed at 15:35 to much better conditions. Incredible views as we came in through clouds of noddies.

We met Lucas who introduced us to the island and showed us to our chalets and kitchen areas. Around us were noddies, overhead squadrons of frigatebirds. Turnstones and Whimbrels walked away from us as we passed. The nesting noddies just scowled...

Gemma and Richard nipped to the small shop to stock up on the rest of the provisions we needed for tomorrow's breakfast and lunch.

We met at 17:00 for a short walk up the western footpath to the Sooty Tern colony. As we joined the path, we met Esmerelda – the second oldest tortoise in the world at 179 years old. Although she is actually a he, the tortoise experts discovered some time later!

Onward and we got to grips with our first Lesser Frigatebirds with predominantly black birds showing small white patches near the "armpit" and females with white wedges extending from the body and under the wings. We saw the odd Red-footed Booby flash past and when we finally got to a gap in the trees, another went past – although....hold on... (at least three or four of us thought at the same time), this was an adult Brown Booby! It made another pass and then disappeared among the other birds over the sea. On the path in front of us were both the Horned Ghost Crab and the Chunky Ghost Crab.

Onward to the Sooty Tern colony. Well... It is hard to describe – a field full of very striking birds, all spaced, and interacting with each other, flying, calling, some gorgeous young birds – black with silver dots. We just had to stop and stare and take it all in. On the trees around were Great and Lesser Frigatebirds and in the distance, a tree-full of Red-footed Boobies – we would be visiting these tomorrow.

With time marching on, and darkness falling quickly, we returned to the chalets. Meeting at 18:30, we squeezed in our checklist in the lights of the bar and then had a fine dinner in this remotest of locations – our Naturetrek party

were the only guests on the island, so it was quite a privilege. Probably 20 people in total on this coralline atoll, 106 km from the next nearest habitation.

Using torches to get back to avoid the crabs, we turned in for the night to the constant noises from the seabirds.

Day 10

Tuesday 23rd September

Bird Island

Gemma and Richard prepared and delivered the breakfast for the group in two shifts. By 9am, we gathered for our morning walk. A few waders had been seen around the chalets – Grey Plover and Curlew Sandpipers. Before we set off, Fred spotted the Brown Booby in a tree which provided a good opportunity for those with big lenses. Onward and into the forest track on the eastern side of the island – here was a Greenshank ahead of us and a Common Sandpiper on another track. After a short time, we'd reached the edge of the Sooty Tern colony but the tree ahead of us was the main reason for this route – many Red-footed Boobies and frigate birds – one or two of the latter has semi-inflated throat pouches. We then walked along the southern edge of the Sooty Terns – hard not to take lots more photos of this wonderful sight. We worked our way back to the chalets and then checked out the airstrip where several Whimbrels were present as well as a few Tibetan Sand Plovers. Gemma then returned to prepare the lunch. Onto the beach where we saw Sanderlings and more of the usual waders. Our first views for a while of White-tailed Tropicbirds – over the beautiful reef. Some of us walked the beach around the southern tip and back to the chalets.

Gemma had done a fine job and created a lovely lunch - roasted chicken, papaya salad, green salad, pasta and fish. The group was free to take a dip in the sea which many did, before we met at 16:30 for another walk up the western side. Walking past the Sooty Tern platform, we headed out onto the sandy northern tip of the island. Gemma spotted a Terek Sandpiper, but this was running away from us. A few Pacific Golden Plovers were seen against the constant blizzard of Sooty Terns. We hope to see Crab Plover, but it was proving elusive. Glyn spied two right at the tip and most of us got good views of these spectacular birds. Here too were about 12 young terns which we have confidently identified as Saunder's Terns thanks to photographs Frans managed to get. Recent work on sub adult plumages has shown Saunder's Terns are regular on the coralline Seychelles but rare on the granite island. With an eye on the sunset time, we walked back as briskly as we could across the soft sand and back to our chalets. On the way Glyn, Nigel and Izzy saw a Manta Ray at the water's surface!

We met for list and dinner at 19:00. Another fine day in paradise...

Day 11

Wednesday 24th September

Bird Island

After another self-catered breakfast orchestrated by Gemma, we met for a short walk at nine, taking the route through the trees to the northernmost part of the runway. Common Sandpiper was again seen on the path, with Whimbrels and many Curlew Sandpipers on the runway itself. We could only see Tibetan Sand Plovers in this group. We then opted for a snorkel so returned to get our gear and spend a good hour in the relatively shallow

water. Richard hit the jackpot with his first sighting being a Green Turtle. Sadly, no one else was near enough to see it. We notched up a few fabulous looking fish.

Back for lunch – an amazing spread from Gemma as usual with a mixture of homemade ingredients and shop-bought staples.

At 15:00, a small band went to experience the Sooty Tern colony once more and then most of us went for another snorkel. Richard saw a Green Turtle again but luckily Marleen and Frans had also seen it earlier...avoiding Richard getting a reputation... We got to grips with a few more species of fish and returned ready for the evening procedures at 19:00.

Day 12

Thursday 25th September

Bird Island & Mahé

A leisurely morning with another breakfast cooked by Gemma and aided by Richard. We did not have to vacate our rooms until 13:00 so we basically did our own thing – some walking to the Sooty Terns, some further to the Crab Plovers, others more sedate photography nearer to the chalets. Most went for a last Bird Island snorkel finding many beautiful fish and a couple of sightings of Green Turtle.

Today we did not have the island to ourselves – a group of skydivers had dropped in and were doing a few skydives during the day.

Gemma was busy preparing lunch ready for 12:30 and 13:00 sittings. Fabulous food as ever.

We mustered nearer 14:00 and waited for the sound of our plane. It arrived a little late but no great problems. Our take off was delayed by 30 minutes while the pilots reset their systems and we were off. We landed in Mahé 15:50 and whizzed through and onto our waiting bus. Sadly, the delay meant rush hour so our journey to the Coral Strand took an hour. We checked in and ran through the itinerary for the next day. A small band would have a later dinner as we went into the mountains to try for the last endemic bird – Seychelles Scops Owl. A call was heard once at the first stopping point but after 30 minutes, we drove back a little way and into the forest where we just about heard more calls on and off for about 45 minutes – they sadly never too close and the tree frogs were rather noisy. A bit disappointing really but we had expected this to be the hardest species to catch up with. We also saw a firefly (actually a beetle in the *Lampyridae* family). Back for 20:10, we joined the others for another massive buffet dinner.

Day 13

Friday 26th September

Moyenne and Cerf Island

Our last full day but action packed with a 09:15 departure to the port and a chartered glass bottom boat trip to Moyenne. We notched up one or two Common Terns in the harbour and set off just after 10:00. We also saw nesting Grey Herons and breeding plumage Cattle Egrets with pink legs and bill. Several Little Herons here too.

About 20 minutes later we approached Moyenne and we slowed down to view the coral and fish under the boat before anchoring and all going for a snorkel. It was amazing of course with several new species to try and identify later!

Around 11:30, we went to Moyenne itself. We waded in and changed shoes, clothes etc and then went for a wander. Moyenne has an interesting back story. The most recent owner was Brendon Grimshaw who, after years of creating an island of endemic plants and indeed, ensuring it was maintained after his death in 2012, helped designate the area as a national park. Gemma pointed out the endemic plants and other interesting features. The wild roaming Aldabra Tortoises were great fun and it was nice to see the tortoise nursery – seeing our first small (normal?!) sized tortoises. Onward back to the boat after a quick drink and snack. We waded back to the boat and then went to our ninth island of the tour – Cerf Island. This island had a jetty leading to a fine hotel where we enjoyed an amazing meal looking out over the sea.

We then returned to Mahé just after 15:15 and managed to avoid most of the rush hour (which is pretty bad on the island around 16:00). Back at the hotel, we had the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

We all met up for our final dinner and offered our thanks to Gemma for looking after us and showing us her home! We also took the opportunity to say goodbye to Marleen and Frans, Izzy and Nigel and Penny.

Day 14

Saturday 27th September

Mahé to UK

Our bus arrived for the remaining eight of us to leave for the airport at 05:45 – each with an enormous bag containing a packed breakfast. The dawn was breaking, and Seychelles Fruit Bats were flying against the sky to give us a good send off.

We thanked Gemma once again and went through to departures. Bearing in mind the delay at Gatwick two weeks ago, it was pleasing to report that we had a far better journey to the UK, arriving ahead of schedule at 19:30.

Many thanks to the group for their company and for the collective project identifying the beautiful but bewildering fish. Many thanks to Frans who carried around his camera everywhere and offered up a range of amazing photos to enhance this report.



Brown Booby



Red-footed Booby & Lesser Frigatebird



Non-breeding Saunderson's Tern



Crab Plover

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September 2025											
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Seychelles Swiftlet - E	<i>Aerodramus elaphrus</i>		✓				2	✓					✓
Feral Rock Dove - I	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓
Seychelles Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturata rostrata</i>					✓							
Malagasy Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seychelles Blue Pigeon - E	<i>Alectroenas pulcherrimus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓		2	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>									✓			
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>								✓	✓			
Tibetan Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius atrifrons</i>									✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>									✓	✓	✓	
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>							✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>									LO			
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>									✓	✓		
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Crab-plover	<i>Dromas ardeola</i>									2	✓	✓	
Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lesser Noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
White Tern	<i>Gygis alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>		✓										
Saunders's Tern	<i>Sternula saundersi</i>									✓	✓	✓	
Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>			✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	
Sooty Tern	<i>Onychoprion fuscatus</i>			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		September 2025											
Common name	Scientific name	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>												✓
White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>			✓	✓	✓			✓		H		
Flesh-footed Shearwater?	<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>			1									
Tropical Shearwater	<i>Puffinus bailloni</i>			✓									
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	
Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓	
Little Heron	<i>Butorides atriapilla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Seychelles Scops Owl - E	<i>Otus insularis</i>											H	
Seychelles Kestrel - E	<i>Falco araeus</i>		2	1	✓			✓	✓				H
Seychelles Black Parrot - E	<i>Coracopsis barklyi</i>							✓					
Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher - E	<i>Terpsiphone corvina</i>					✓	✓						
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>			✓									
Seychelles Bulbul - E	<i>Hypsipetes crassirostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Seychelles Warbler - E	<i>Acrocephalus sechellensis</i>					✓							
Seychelles White-eye - E	<i>Zosterops modestus</i>				✓								
Common Myna - I	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seychelles Magpie-Robin - E	<i>Copsychus sechellarum</i>					✓							
Seychelles Sunbird - E	<i>Cinnyris dussumieri</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seychelles Fody - E	<i>Foudia sechellarum</i>					✓							
Common Waxbill - I	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>		✓										

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	September 2025											
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Seychelles Fruit Bat	<i>Pteropus seychellensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Tailless Tenrec	<i>Tenrec ecaudatus</i>								✓				

Reptiles

Common name	Scientific name	September 2025											
		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Aldabra Giant Tortoise	<i>Aldabrachelys gigantea</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>										✓	✓	
Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>						✓						LO
Yellow-bellied Mud Turtle	<i>Pelusios castanoides intergularis</i>			✓									
Seychelles Bronze Gecko	<i>Ailuronyx seychellensis</i>					✓							
Mahe Ailuronyx	<i>Ailuronyx tachyscopaeus</i>							✓					
Common (Pacific) Four-clawed Gecko	<i>Gehyra mutilata</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common (Asian) House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>		✓				✓						✓
Seychelles Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma astriata</i>					✓		✓					
Seychelles Giant Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma sundbergi</i>							✓					
La Digue Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma sundbergi ladiguensis</i>						✓						
Mahé Day Gecko	<i>Phelsuma sundbergi longinsulae</i>	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		✓
Seychelles Skink	<i>Trachylepis sechellensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wright's Skink	<i>Trachylepis wrightii</i>					✓							

Fish (please note, this following list is a collective effort during our snorkeling sessions)

Common name	Scientific name
Flying Fish	<i>Exocoetidae</i>
Oceanic Lemon Shark	<i>Negaprion acutidens</i>
Yellow-edged Lyretail	<i>Variola louti</i>
Longfin (Tiera) Batfish	<i>Platax teira</i>

Orbicular Batfish	<i>Platax orbicularis</i>
Common Mudskipper	<i>Periophthalmus kalolo</i>
Spinetail Devil Ray	<i>Mobula mobular</i>
Cowtail Stingray (Feathertail)	<i>Pastinachus ater</i>
Sergeant Major	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>
Scissortailed Segeant	<i>Abudefduf sexfasciatus</i>
Longfin Bannerfish?	<i>Heniochus acuminatus</i>
Goldenbar Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma hebraicum</i>
Sand Lizard Fish	<i>Synodus dermatogenys</i>
African Coris	<i>Coris gaimard</i>
Bluestreak Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>
Picasso Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus aculeatus</i>
Bicolour Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus bicolor</i>
Steephead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorus strongylocephalus</i>
Bicolour Puller	<i>Labroides bicolor</i>
Dragon Wrasse	<i>Novaculichthys taeniourus</i>
Star Puffer	<i>Arothon stellatus</i>
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>
Orangespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>
Yellowhead Butterflyfish	<i>haetodon xanthocephalus</i>
Threadfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon auriga</i>
Melon Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifasciatus</i>
Convict Tang	<i>Canthurus triostegus</i>
Long-barbel Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus macronemus</i>
Seychelles Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus seychellensis</i>
Black Patch Emperor	<i>Lethrinus harak</i>
Green Jobfish	<i>Aprion virescens</i>
Blue Trevally	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>
Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus sutor</i>
Painted Moray Eel	<i>Gymnothorax pictus</i>
Seychelles Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis seychellensis</i>
Two-line Threadfin Bream	<i>Scolopsis bilineata</i>
Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>

White-tailed Dwarf Angelfish	<i>Centropyge flavicauda</i>
Lemon Damselfish	<i>Pomacentrus moluccensis</i>
Caerulean Damsel	<i>Pomacentrus caeruleus</i>
Two-tone Damsel	<i>Chromis dimidiata</i>
Messmate Pipefish	<i>Corythoichthys haematopterus</i>
Lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>
Convict Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>
Powder Blue Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus leucosternon</i>

Butterflies

Common name	Scientific name
Lang's Short-tailed Blue	<i>Leptotes pirithous</i>
Olive-haired Swift	<i>Borbo borbonica</i>
Asian Citrus Swallowtail	<i>Papilio demoleus</i>
African Grass Blue	<i>Zizeeria knysna</i>

Damselflies & dragonflies

Common name	Scientific name
Phantom Flutterer	<i>Rhyothemis semihyalina</i>
Blue Percher	<i>Diplacodes trivialis</i>

Plants

Common name	Scientific name
Seychelles Pitcher Plant	<i>Nepenthes pervillei</i>
Coco Marron	<i>Hypoxidia seychellensis</i>