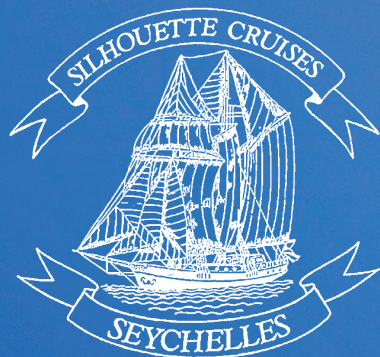


# THE SEYCHELLES GRANITIC ISLAND BIRDWATCHING CRUISE

18TH - 25TH OF JANUARY 2025



# Seychelles - A Birdwatchers Paradise

*The inner islands of Seychelles are comprised of granite that formed around 650 million years ago as part of the Gondwanaland supercontinent. The islands separated from India about 65 million years ago, becoming the oldest oceanic islands in the world. They are generally mountainous and covered in dense vegetation, with an almost pristine tropical splendour.*

*For the birdwatcher, the attractions of Seychelles are threefold: the unique rare endemic land birds, the spectacular seabird colonies and a host of migrants and vagrants. The archipelago is home to 62 breeding bird species including some of the rarest land birds in the world. We will explore their terrestrial habitats to see these birds in their natural environments, to discover a rich flora and fauna. This includes giant tortoises, fruit bats, mangrove forests, palm forests and much more.*



# Our Birdwatching Cruise

*Join us, and enjoy the comfort of our beautiful SY Sea Star and SY Sea Bird yachts on this once in a lifetime Birding Cruise set in one of the most beautiful environments in the world.*

*As well as seeking out beautiful and rare species of birds, we will also snorkel or dive to view an abundance of marine life including tropical reef fish, sea turtles, a variety of rays, and sharks, against a backdrop of granite rock formations and coral reefs. We shall sail through crystal blue waters, visiting desolate islands, with breathtaking views of secluded bays. Finally, we'll sip cocktails and eat wonderful food with new friends on board.*



## SY Sea Star & SY Sea Bird

*The SY Sea Star and SY Sea Bird, modern custom-built yachts, offer spacious and comfortable accommodations with private-ensuite facilities, providing authentic hospitality at sea during our weekly live-aboard cruises and private charters around the inner Seychelles islands.*

*The 40m SY Sea Star features three masts and five Bermuda sails, while the SY Sea Bird is a two-masted 42m yacht with four Bermuda sails. Both vessels are ideal platforms for exploring the islands' most exclusive and hard-to-reach places, from tiny granite islets to beautiful hidden coves.*





# Birdwatching Cruise Itinerary

Day 1 \_ Saturday the 18th January. Embark on-board the Sea Star or Sea Bird at Mahe at 10:30 AM and sail to Round island, near Praslin.

Day 2 \_ Sunday the 19th January. Visit Praslin

Day 3 \_ Monday the 20th January. La Digue (Birdwatching Diving / Snorkelling)

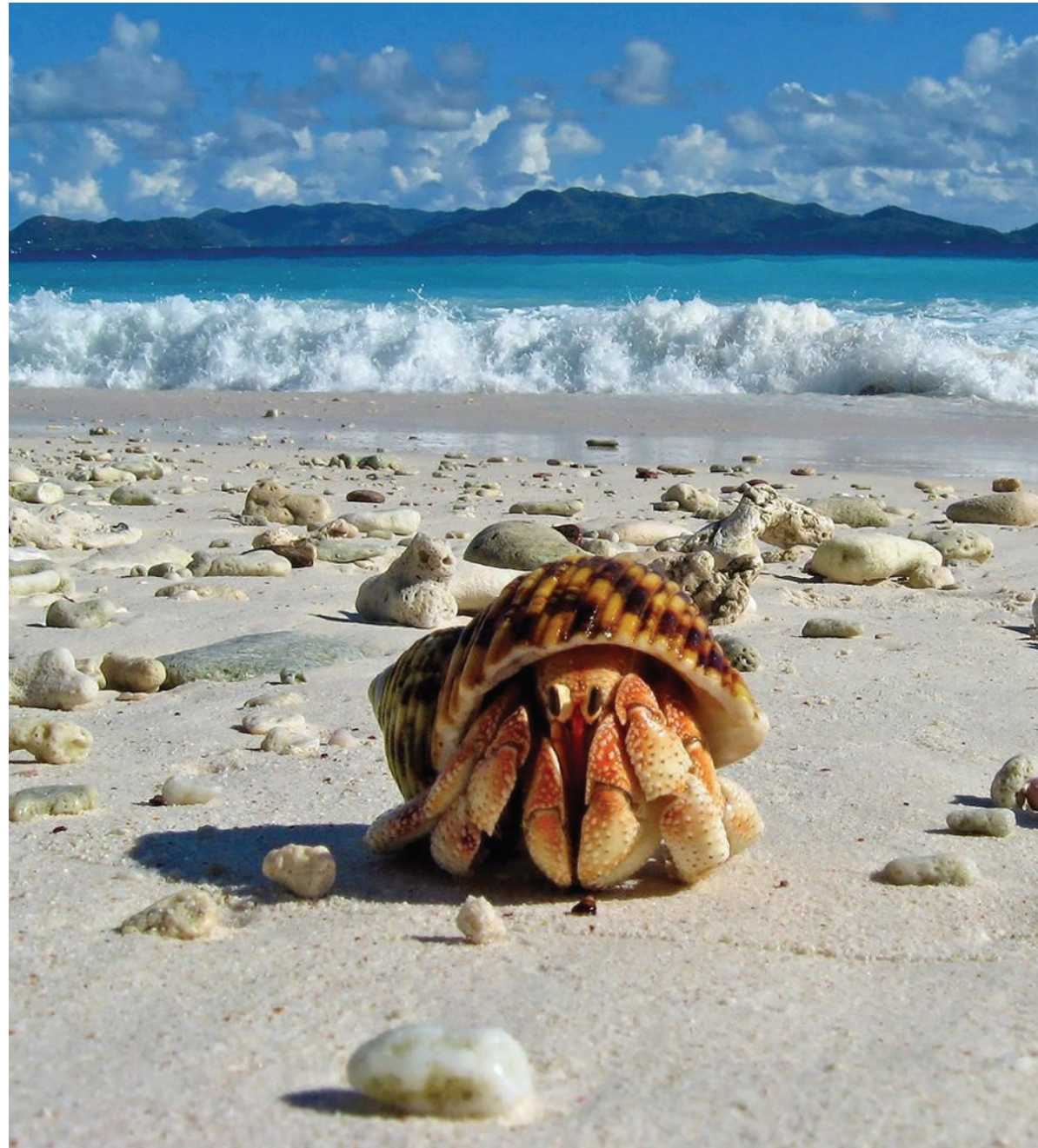
Day 4 \_ Tuesday the 21st January. Aride (Birdwatching / Diving/Snorkelling)

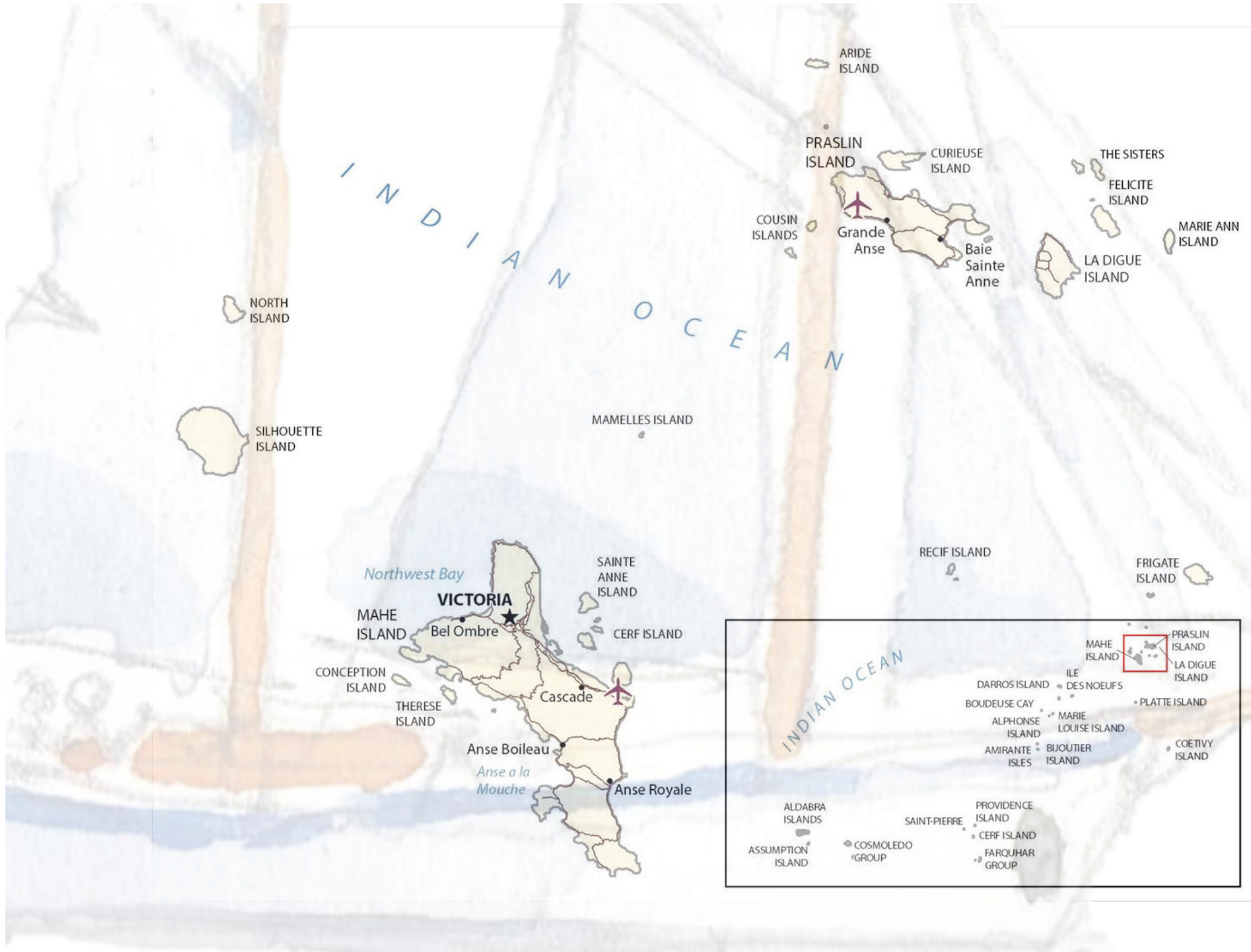
Day 5 \_ Wednesday the 22nd January. Cousin and sail towards Mahe. (Birdwatching / Diving / Snorkelling)

Day 6 \_ Thursday the 23rd January. Visit Mahe from Anse Royale. (Birdwatching / Snorkelling)

Day 7 \_ Friday the 24th January. Visit Mahe from Port Victoria. (Birdwatching)

Day 8 \_ Saturday the 25th January. Disembark.





ARIDE ISLAND

PRASLIN ISLAND

CURIEUSE ISLAND

THE SISTERS

FELICITE ISLAND

MARIE ANN ISLAND

LA DIGUE ISLAND

COUSIN ISLANDS

Grande Anse

Baie Sainte Anne

NORTH ISLAND

SILHOUETTE ISLAND

MAMELLES ISLAND

RECIF ISLAND

FRIGATE ISLAND

Northwest Bay

**VICTORIA**

SAINTE ANNE ISLAND

CERF ISLAND

MAHE ISLAND

Bel Ombre

CONCEPTION ISLAND

THERESE ISLAND

Cascade

Anse Boileau

Anse a la Mouche

Anse Royale

INDIAN OCEAN

ALDABRA ISLANDS

ASSUMPTION ISLAND

COSMOLEDO GROUP

SAINT-PIERRE

PROVIDENCE ISLAND

CERF ISLAND

FARQUHAR GROUP

MAHE ISLAND

PRASLIN ISLAND

LA DIGUE ISLAND

ILE DES NOEUF

PLATTE ISLAND

DARROS ISLAND

BOUDEUSE CAY

ALPHONSE ISLAND

MARIE LOUISE ISLAND

AMIRANTE ISLES

BUJOUTIER ISLAND

COETIVY ISLAND

# Endemic & Migrant Birds of the Seychelles

*With 62 breeding bird species, rare endemic land birds, spectacular seabird colonies and a host of migrants and vagrants, our cruise will give you the opportunity so spot a wonderful variety of birds.*



Seychelles  
Scops Owl



Seychelles  
Kestrel



Seychelles  
Sunbird



Fairy Tern



Seychelles  
Swiflet



Seychelles  
Magpie-Robin



White Tailed  
Tropic Bird



Seychelles  
Blue Pigeon



Seychelles  
Black Parrot



Lesser  
Noddy



# Biography Of Your Guide

*Your Birding guide is Steve Agricole, Manager/Guide of Birding Seychelles, who is a birding guide from the Seychelles, has since 2012 deliver birding tours on the main granitical islands. His experience comes from working on Cousin and Aride Islands after years of being exposed towards a conservation aspect of living. Steve would find himself using the knowledge gathered as the beacon of being a great and enthusiastic bird guide.*





# Detailed Itinerary

*Our Itinerary takes you through Seychelles' granitic islands, visiting a number of incredible islands for unrivalled panoramas, incredible and rare birds, and instant memories.*

*Day 1 \_ Embark onboard the Sea Star or Sea Bird.*

*Embarking at 10:30am at the port, we'll then sail towards Round Island, a small island near Praslin. We will sea-watch en route to identify various species of shearwaters, terns, noddies and tropicbirds. Guests will be briefed about the cruise program and in the afternoon, may enjoy snorkelling around round the island or relaxing on deck. In the evening, we will have a welcome BBQ. There will also be an evening lecture and slide show from our bird specialist.*

*In the afternoon, the guests can enjoy water based activities.*



## *Day 2 \_ Praslin (Birdwatching /Diving/ Snorkeling)*

*Disembark after breakfast at around 08:30am to visit Praslin.*

*Praslin is the Seychelles' second largest inhabited island and a popular destination for nature lovers. The island was discovered by the French explorer Lazare Picault in 1744, who named it 'Isle des Palmes' in reference to its luxuriant palm forest. It is the only home of the endemic Seychelles Parrot, the countries national bird.*

*The tour will start with a visit to the famous World Heritage Site, the Vallee De Mai. This ancient forest is home to the famous and rare Coco de Mer, which produces the largest seed in the plant kingdom, weighing over 15kg. It is also a stronghold of the Seychelles Parrot. Other birds of the forest include Seychelles Blue Pigeon, Seychelles Sunbird and Madagascar Turtle Dove. In open areas we will search for Seychelles Swiftlet.*

*The tour will also take you to other sites, where we can search for birds including migratory shorebirds and terns.*

## *Day 3 - La Digue (Birdwatching /Diving/ snorkeling)*

*We disembark on La Digue at 09:00am.*

*La Digue is the third most populated island in the Seychelles Archipelago and home of the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher. The island's economy is mostly based on tourism and offers Seychellois cultural authenticity. On the island, bicycles are the main mode of transportation. One can cycle to enjoy private coves, Creole villages and some of the most amazing beaches, pausing at local bars or restaurants along your cycling path for refreshments.*

*The tour will include a visit to the Veuve Reserve to search for the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher (Veuve is the local name for the flycatcher). There is a small fee to visit the site. Guests will also be able to discover beautiful sites, including L' Union Estate and one of the world's most photographed beaches, Anse Source D'Argent.*

## Day 4 - Aride Island (Birdwatching /Diving/snorkel)

After breakfast at the anchorage, guests disembark at on Aride Island. This is the largest nature reserve of the granitic islands and home to more seabird species than any other. Breeding species include the world's largest populations of two seabirds: Tropical Shearwater and Lesser Noddy.

We will follow the nature trail to discover five endemic land bird species, including the largest global population of Seychelles Warbler with about 2,000 individuals. Ground-nesting and tree-nesting seabirds are very approachable, giving a special opportunity to observe them at close range. The elegant White-tailed Tropicbird and delicate Fairy Tern are particularly photogenic.

The trail takes us to dramatic cliffs towering above the Indian Ocean and hundreds of frigatebirds soar overhead or roost in the trees. This is the largest frigatebird roost of the granitic islands with two species present, Great Frigatebird and Lesser Frigatebird.

Aride is also the only natural location in the world for the endangered Wright's Gardenia, a small tree with beautiful fragrant flowers. It also has one of the densest population of lizards in the world.

## Day 5 - Cousin Island (Shore excursion / Birdwatching / Dive / Snorkel)

We sail to Cousin Island in the early morning hours. After breakfast, we disembark on the island.

This small granitic island became a protected area when purchased in 1968 following an international appeal under the auspices of BirdLife International. The entire island, including the surrounding 400 metres marine area, was also declared a 'Special Reserve' by the Seychelles Government in 1975. The island has been managed by Nature Seychelles since 1998.

The day will comprise of a shore visit to observe the birds and other flora and fauna. Five of Seychelles endemic land birds are found on Cousin Island: Seychelles Magpie-robin, Seychelles Sunbird, Seychelles Fody, Seychelles Blue Pigeon and Seychelles Warbler.

Two varieties of shearwaters, Tropical Shearwater and Wedge-tailed shearwater breed on the island, the former -round and the latter mainly May to October.

In the afternoon, we cruise to Mahe island.

## *Day 6 – Visit Mahe from Anse Royale.*

*Mahé is the largest granite island of Seychelles, covering about 150 sq km. Away from the capital and beaches, this mountainous island is covered with dense forest, home to an exceptional flora and fauna, including many endemic plants, lizards and invertebrates. There are seven endemic land birds, including Seychelles Scops Owl, Seychelles Kestrel and Seychelles White-eye. Mudflats offer the opportunity to see Crab Plover and Yellow Bittern inhabits wetland areas.*

*The first day on the island we will cover much of Mahe, including shorebird sites and mountain forest, led by our specialist birding guide. The tour will also take you through the Morne Seychellois National Park via the Sans Souci Road.*

*In the evening, guests disembark again at 17:00 hrs for an afternoon birding tour into the Morne Seychellois National Park, continuing at dusk to search for the rare and enigmatic Seychelles Scops Owl, unique to these highland forests. When first described in 1880, the owl had already acquired the Creole name "Syer" meaning woodcutter, a reference to the call, resembling the sound of wood being sawn.*

## *Day 7 – Visit Mahe.*

*Disembark at 06:30 am after breakfast, for a second day of bird watching on Mahe.*

*The tour will continue to other various sites that were not covered the previous day or return to an important site to capture a desired bird sighting that may have been missed the previous day.*

*(lunch box and bus)*

*A trip to the Seychelles will not be complete without a visit to our capital, Victoria. The guide will walk you through our small city, to various locations for a feel of our culture and history.*

## *Day 8 – Disembarkation at 08:30 am.*

*Onward travel and transfers can be arranged, to hotels in the area we can recommend, or back to the airport in time for many of the flights that depart in the afternoon.*

# Contact Us

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