

Seychelles, 18th to 26th September 2009

Mike Powell

Diary

18th September. Arrived at Mahe from London via Dubai at around 14.00 before flying onto Praslin for a 4 night stay at L'Archipel Hotel, Anse Government.

Highlights: Mahe, Seychelles Kestrel. Praslin, Seychelles Swiftlet, Seychelles Bulbul (4) & Seychelles Blue Pigeon (4).

19th September. Morning at Vallee de Mai National Park then rest of the day around Praslin. **Highlights:** Black Parrot (5), Seychelles Bulbul (16), Seychelles Blue Pigeon (21), Great Frigatebird (12) & Seychelles Swiftlet (25).

20th September. Early morning visit to Valle de Mai NP car park then mid morning ferry to La Digue for rest of the afternoon. **Highlights:** Praslin, Black Parrot (10), Seychelles Swiftlet (9), Seychelles Bulbul (5) & Seychelles Blue Pigeon (3). Praslin to La Digue, Lesser Noddy (15), Brown Noddy & Bridled Tern. La Digue, Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher (13), Seychelles Bulbul (4), Great Frigatebird (2) & Seychelles Swiftlet (2).

21st September. All day private boat charter to Cousin & Curieuse then snorkelling around St Pierre Islet. **Highlights:** Cousin, Brown Noddy (200), Lesser Noddy (10,000+), Bridled Tern (10), Lesser Frigatebird, Wedge-tailed Shearwater (6), Seychelles Fody (25+), Seychelles Magpie Robin (3) & Seychelles Warbler (7). Curieuse, Bridled Tern (3) & Crested Tern (5). Praslin, Crested Tern.

22nd September. Early morning around L'Archipel Hotel before transferring to Mahe via inter-island Hydrofoil for a 4 night stay at Le Meridien Hotel, Fisherman's Cove. **Highlights:** Praslin, Seychelles Bulbul (5) & Seychelles Blue Pigeon (2+). Praslin to Mahe, Lesser Noddy (250), Brown Noddy (5), Wedge-tailed Shearwater & Bridled Tern (6). Mahe, Great Frigatebird (2) & Seychelles Swiftlet (2).

23rd September. Morning spent around Fisherman's Cove then the afternoon at the mudflats and Mangroves at Providence. **Highlights:** Great Frigatebird (2), Seychelles Blue Pigeon, Terek Sandpiper (4), Crab Plover, Greater Sandplover (10) & Seychelles Kestrel.

24th September. Morning & evening spent with local birder Gérard Rocamora whiteye@seychelles.net. The morning was spent at La Misere for the White-eyes followed by a short visit to the Plantation Club marsh (where access was denied by the security guards due to reconstruction of the hotel complex). In the evening we visited the tea plantations at Mission near the footpath to Morne Blanc for the Scops Owl. **Highlights:** Seychelles Blue Pigeon (7), Seychelles Bulbul (7), Seychelles White-eye (5), Yellow Bittern, Seychelles Scops Owl (2).

25th September. Day spent around Fisherman's Cove. **Highlights:** Seychelles Swiftlet (2).

26th September. Hired a car and re-visited most of the sites on Mahe including Providence, Mission, Takamaka & La Misere. **Highlights:** Seychelles Blue Pigeon (10), Seychelles Bulbul (12), Crested Tern (12), Seychelles Swiftlet (4), Greater Sandplover (4), Lesser Sandplover, Crab Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Seychelles White-eye.

Systematic list

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

One over the beach at Cousin on 21st and a further 5 brooding birds amongst rocks ashore. A single next day at sea between Praslin & Mahe from the inter island boat.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Seen every day on Praslin, max 10 on 20th and most days on Mahe, max 20 on 23rd. In addition 8 on La Digue on 20th and at least 50 including small young on Cousin on 21st.

Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*

Twelve around Praslin on 19th, 2 at La Digue harbour on 20th, 2 at Victoria Harbour on 22nd & 2 at Fisherman's Cove on 23rd.

Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*

The only bird was seen harassing other seabirds close to the landing beach at Cousin on 21st.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Single on Praslin at Baie Ste. Anne on 19th & 20th. On Mahe 3 on 22nd, 5 on 24th, one on 25th, 5 on 26th and a maximum of 10 on 23rd at Providence mudflats including a nest containing two young.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Only seen on Mahe. Single at Fisherman's Cove on 23rd. At least 100 at Providence on 23rd with 125 there on 26th. 10 inside Victoria market on 25th around the fish stalls.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

Three on Praslin on 19th and a single on 20th. Two on La Digue on 20th. On Mahe seen daily, max 6 at Providence on 26th.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*

One seen briefly at the Plantation Club marsh on 24th.

Seychelles Kestrel *Falco araea*

A surprisingly difficult bird to find. A male showed very well sat in a tree at Mahe International Airport on 18th & one showed briefly in a tree at Providence on 23rd.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

One in the mangroves close to Mahe International Airport on 18th. On 21st, three on Cousin & three on Curieuse. On Mahe 4 at Fisherman's Cove on 22nd and 7 at the Plantation Club marsh on 24th.

Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*

An immature showed well on the Providence mudflats on 23rd & 26th.

Lesser Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus*

A single bird at the Providence mudflats on 26th.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Ten on the Providence mudflats on 23rd with four there on 26th.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

On Praslin, two on 19th and 20th and two on Curieuse on 21st. On Mahe one at Fisherman's Cove on 22nd & 25th and at Providence mudflats 8 on 23rd & 10 on 26th.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Two on the Providence mudflats on 23rd with a single there on 26th.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Two on the Providence mudflats on 23rd & 26th.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Seen on 8 out of the 9 dates. Max. 5 on Praslin on 19th and 30 on Mahe at Providence mudflats on 23rd.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

One at Fond de L'Anse on Praslin on 19th, two at the old turtle pound on Curieuse on 21st, 2 at Providence mudflats on 23rd & 8 there on 26th.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Four on the Providence mudflats on 23rd with a single on 26th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Singles on Praslin on 19th and 20th. One at Fisherman's Cove on 22nd.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Like Whimbrel, seen on 8 out of the 9 dates. Max. 8 on Praslin on 19th, 8 on Curieuse on 21st and 10 on Mahe at Providence mudflats on 26th.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

20 on the Providence mudflats on 23rd rising to 27 on the 26th.

Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*

One at Chevalier Point, Anse Lazio on Praslin on 21st & 5 at the old turtle pound on Curieuse the same day. 12 at Anse a la Mouche on Mahe on 26th.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*

One from the Praslin to La Digue ferry on 20th. At least 10 ashore on Cousin & three at the old turtle pound on Curieuse on 21st. Six from the Praslin to Mahe ferry on 22nd.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

One between Praslin & La Digue on 20th. At least 200 ashore on Cousin on 21st & 5 from the Praslin to Mahe ferry on 22nd.

Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris*

15 between Praslin & La Digue on 20th. At least 10,000 ashore on Cousin on 21st & 250 from the Praslin to Mahe ferry on 22nd.

Fairy Tern *Gygis alba*

Seen every day of the trip, even in the centre of Victoria. Maximum 10 Praslin on 19th, 3 La Digue 20th & 20 Mahe 25th. Largest numbers seen were 400+ on Cousin on 21st and 150 between Praslin & Mahe on 22nd.

Madagascar Turtle Dove *Streptopelia picturata*

Recorded every day of the trip & on all islands visited. Maximum 20 Praslin on 19th, 4 La Digue on 20th, 21 Curieuse on 21st & 7 Mahe on 24th. Three on Cousin on 21st included one bird that strongly resembled the race *rostrata*.

Barred Ground Dove *Geopelia striata*

Recorded at both hotels on Praslin & Mahe & noted around most other habitation.

Seychelles Blue Pigeon *Alectroenas pulcherrima*

On Praslin, 4 at L'Archipel Hotel on 18th, 21 at various locations on 19th, 3 at Vallee de Mai on 20th & 2 at L'Archipel Hotel on 22nd. On Mahe, one in Victoria on 23rd & three there on 24th, 2 at La Misere & 2 at Plantation Club on 24th and ten on 26th at various sites around the island.

Seychelles Black Parrot *Coracopsis (nigra) barklyi*

Five over the car park/new Vallee de Mai visitor centre late on 19th with ten together in the car park early next morning showing exceptionally well in a small fruiting tree.

Seychelles Scops-owl *Otus insularis*

A pair showed very well for 15 minutes from 19.15 in a bare tree near the Tea Factory visitor centre on 24th.

Seychelles Swiftlet *Aerodramus elaphrus*

Good numbers recorded on Praslin, smaller numbers on La Digue & Mahe. On Praslin, 1 on 18th, a minimum of 25 at various sites on 19th and 9 on 20th. On La Digue, two over the harbour on 20th. On Mahe, two at Fisherman's Cove on 22nd & 25th and 4 at two sites on 26th.

Seychelles Bulbul *Hypsipetes crassirostris*

A highly vocal species recorded on the three main islands. On Praslin, 4 at L'Archipel Hotel on 18th & 5 on 22nd, at least 10 at Valle de Mai & 4 elsewhere on 19th, 5 on 20th & 2 on 21st. On La Digue, 4 on 20th. On Mahe, one at Fisherman's Cove on 23rd, two in Victoria near the bus station & 5 in La Misere on 24th and 12 around the island on 26th.

Seychelles Magpie Robin *Copsychus sechellarum*

A single and a pair around our feet on Cousin on 21st.

Seychelles Warbler *Acrocephalus sechellensis*

At least 7 seen on Cousin on 21st. Can be difficult to hear above the calling Lesser Noddies but did responded well to 'pishing'.

Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone corvina*

A minimum of thirteen on La Digue on 20th. A male & female attending a nest found by accident in a small copse c600mtrs along the coast road from the harbour then five males, an immature male & five females in the La Digue Veuve Reserve.



Seychelles White-eye *Zosterops modestus*

Five in gardens at La Misere on 24th with one of the same birds seen again on the 26th.

Seychelles Sunbird *Nectarina dussumieri*

Recorded every day of the trip and on all the islands visited. At least 10 in the car park of the International Airport on 18th. On Praslin, seen every day at L'Archipel Hotel, max 10 on 20th. Elsewhere, 12 on 19th & 3 on 21st. 11 on La Digue on 20th, 5 on Cousin on & 5 on Curieuse on 21st. On Mahe 8 at Fisherman's Cove on 22nd & 3 on 25th, 3 at Providence on 23rd, 8 at La Misere & 3 at The Plantation Club on 24th and 8 at various sites on 26th.

Indian Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

A very common introduction, seen every day. Maximum count was 40+ at Praslin Airport on 18th.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

3 behind the beach at Fisherman's Cove, Bel Ombre on 22nd.

Madagascar Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*

Very common & widespread on the three main islands although absent from Cousin & not seen on Curieuse. On Praslin, max 15 at L'Archipel Hotel on 20th and 25+ on La Digue on 20th. On Mahe, max 30+ in Victoria on 24th.

Seychelles Fody *Foudia sechellarum*

At least 25 on Cousin on 21st with many young birds being fed by adults.

MCP December 2009