

Indian Ocean Special

Comoros, Reunion, Mauritius and Seychelles

**Tour Leaflet
2026**



Barau's Petrel © Colin Rogers

23 - 31 October 2026 (Comoros)
1 - 11 November 2026 (Seychelles and Mascarenes)

Indian Ocean Special 2026



INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND

- Back-to-back tours covering virtually all the endemics of the western Indian Ocean (Madagascar tour can be added to the end)
- Visit all four of the Comoros Islands, including Mayotte
- Seychelles and ALL the Mascarene Islands (Reunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues)
- Over 50 endemics: Pink Pigeon, Mauritius Kestrel, 5 scops owls, Humblot's Flycatcher, seabirds

Pink Pigeon © Colin Roger



TOUR LEADER: MICHAEL MILLS



Michael's incredible focus, dedication and ability to locate and show Africa's toughest birds is probably unequalled. He has led dozens of tours across the continent and his experience in locating birds on just the softest of calls or briefest of views impresses those who travelled with him.

DATES (2026)

Comoros	23 – 31 Oct
Seychelles/Mascarenes	1 – 11 Nov
Madagascar	13 – 29 Nov

PROVISIONAL PRICES + SINGLE

Comoros	\$3195 + \$450
Seychelles/Mascar.	\$4990 + \$650
Both	\$8190 + \$1100

Internal flights excluded. Estimates are \$300 (Comoros), \$1100 (Seychelles) and \$1600 (both)

BOOK ONLINE

Visit www.birdingafrica.com
 Deposit (\$150) by credit card
 Email info@birdingafrica.com



Moheli Scops Owl © Michael Mills

Our back-to-back tours, one to Comoros Islands and one to Seychelles and the Mascarene Islands, offer a unique opportunity to see virtually all non-Madagascar endemic birds of the western Indian Ocean Islands. The only island group with endemics not covered is the far-flung Aldabra Group.

In Comoros we start off on Grande Comore Island, where most of our time will be spent on the impressive volcano of Mount Karthala with its endemic-rich forests. A short plane-hop to Moheli allows us to target all the single-island endemics during the two-night stay, before we take a boat trip to Anjouan Island for two more nights and several more endemics. Finally we end on Mayotte, politically part of France, where we hope to see our fourth scops owl.

Regular flights between Mayotte and Reunion make it easy for us to get to the start of the Seychelles and Mascarenes Tour. We start off in the highlands of Reunion, and also watch flocks of Barau's Petrels coming near inshore in the evening.

A short flight brings us to Mauritius, where our birding focuses on the famous Black River Gorges and Ile Aigrettes, and we take a pelagic trip to Round Island with its unique "Round Island Petrels". A day trip to Rodrigues sees us making the short flight there and back in search of the island's

two endemics, before we move onto the Seychelles. The highlands of Mahé hold the greatest number of endemics here, but we will also visit La Digue, Cousin, Aride and Praslin, in search of all of the endemics of the granitic Seychelles.

TOUR FOCUS

The Comoros, Mascarenes and Seychelles Islands offer a total of more than 50 bird endemics, plus impressive seabird spectacles, spectacular landscapes, unique plants and varied cultures, offering ample for both the world lister and more generalist birders.

This trip has a strong focus on watching birds, but there are opportunities too for some mammal watching and very good chances for photography. We will also take many pelagic/seabird trips.

Let us know if you have target species or want to know more about the species we might encounter. A species list will be handed out to you at the start of the tour and is available beforehand upon request.

The tour is timed to coincide with the peak time for birding across the region as a whole. We expect to encounter a small amount of rain. Most days will be warm and tropical, although the highlands in Reunion can be cool.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation and meals are generally of a good international standard, although they are a bit more basic on the Comoros islands of Moheli and Anjouan. All rooms have private ablutions. We plan to do no camping on the Comoros.

Meals are generally Western-style. Please advise if you are vegetarian and what foods you enjoy, so that we can cater for you.

Water is not safe to drink so we supply complimentary bottled water throughout the trips.

WALKING

The Comoro Islands require a moderate degree of fitness, with one tougher walk. The Seychelles and Mascarene Islands Tour requires very little walking, with one slightly longer hike on Reunion. Conditions underfoot can be muddy at times.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Please plan to arrive on Grande Comore Island by the night of 23 October for the Comoros Tour and at St Denis on Reunion Island on the night of 1 November for the Seychelles and Mascarenes Tour.

Departure at the end of the trip is possible from Mayotte Island on the night of 31 October after the Comoros Tour and from Victoria on Mahé Island in the Seychelles on the afternoon of 11 November after the Seychelles and Mascarenes Tour.

Please email info@birdingafrica.com a copy of your proposed flight details for approval before paying for your ticket.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 9 participants.

White Tern © Colin Rogers



INTRODUCTION

The numerous islands of the western Indian Ocean, surrounding Madagascar, together hold more than 50 endemic birds. Each set of islands has a unique and distinctive evolutionary and human history, which together make for a fascinating region to visit. We offer two back-to-back tours, the first to Comoros and the second to Reunion, Mauritius, Rodrigues and the granitic Seychelles, allowing you to sample the entire region in one go.

The four main islands of the Comoros lie to the north-west of Madagascar, between Madagascar and the African mainland. Three islands form the Republic of Comoros, whereas Mayotte is part of France. They are a chain of volcanic islands, with Grande Comore in the west the youngest (and possessing the highest mountain, Mount Karthala) and Mayotte in the east the oldest and flattest. Each island has its own endemics, but it is the largest, Grande Comore, which holds the greatest number of species. We spend two nights on each of the Comoro Islands, except Mayotte where the endemic scops owl is easily seen in the day, and aim to see all endemic birds of the region, of which there are more than 20, plus many other potential splits currently recognised as endemic subspecies. Each island has an endemic scops owl, and other diverse groups represented on all or most islands include white-eyes, drongos, thrushes, sunbirds, fodies, bulbuls and paradise flycatchers. Top birds include Humblot's Flycatcher, Comoros Cuckooshrike, Comoro Blue Cuckooshrike, Cuckoo Roller, Comoros Blue Pigeon, Comoros Green Pigeon and Comoros Olive Pigeon.

The Mascarene Islands and Seychelles are oceanic islands, located south-east and north-east of Madagascar, respectively. The Mascarene Islands, sadly, are more famous for the birds they have lost (Dodo and Solitaire) than the birds they still hold, but some of the greatest conservation successes globally mean that it is still possible to see Pink Pigeons and Mauritius Kestrels, birds that were teetering on the brink of extinction 50 years ago. Similar successes have saved many of the remaining landbirds on the Seychelles.

The three main Mascarene Islands are Reunion, part of France, Mauritius and Rodrigues. The

volcanic landscape on Reunion is spectacular, and the highlands steep. We start off in the highlands of northern Reunion looking for the rarest endemic, Reunion Cuckooshrike, alongside Reunion Bulbul, Reunion Grey White-eye, Reunion Olive White-eye, Reunion Stonechat, Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher and Mascarene Swiftlet. Reunion Harrier is more common in the lowlands, and offshore we'll watch for Barau's Petrel and Tropical Shearwater, and although we will scan for it, the very rare Mascarene Petrel is the only endemic that we are unlikely to see.

Mauritius and Rodrigues island together hold ten endemics. In the forests of the famous Black River Gorges we should encounter Pink Pigeon, Echo Parakeet, Mauritius Cuckooshrike, Mauritius Bulbul, Mauritius Grey White-eye and Mauritius Fody. Mauritius Kestrel is harder to track down and will require a special outing to find, and a visit to Ile Aigrettes is likely to turn up Mauritius Olive White-eye which is now very rare on the mainland. A day trip to Rodrigues island will enable us to look for Rodrigues Warbler and Rodrigues Fody. We'll also take a pelagic trip off northern Mauritius to Round Island, where a hybrid swarm of petrels breed ("Round Island Petrels"), and other seabirds include Masked Booby, Wedge-tailed Shearwater and Red-tailed Tropicbird.

Finally, the granitic Seychelles are the most remote islands of the region, lying more than 1000 km north-east of Madagascar. The main island of Mahé holds the greatest number of endemics, and in its highland forests we will search for Seychelles Blue Pigeon, Seychelles Scops Owl, Seychelles Swiftlet, Seychelles Kestrel, Seychelles Bulbul, Seychelles White-eye and Seychelles Sunbird. The remaining endemics are confined either to single islands (Seychelles Black Parrot on Praslin and Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher on La Digue), or several small islands such as Cousin and Aride (Seychelles Warbler, Seychelles Magpie-Robin and Seychelles Fody), where spectacular seabird colonies are an added feature, with hoards of breeding Lesser Noddy, Brown Noddy, White Tern and Sooty Tern, smaller numbers of Bridled Tern, and a roost of Greater Frigatebird. We will also look for Crab Plover on Mahé.

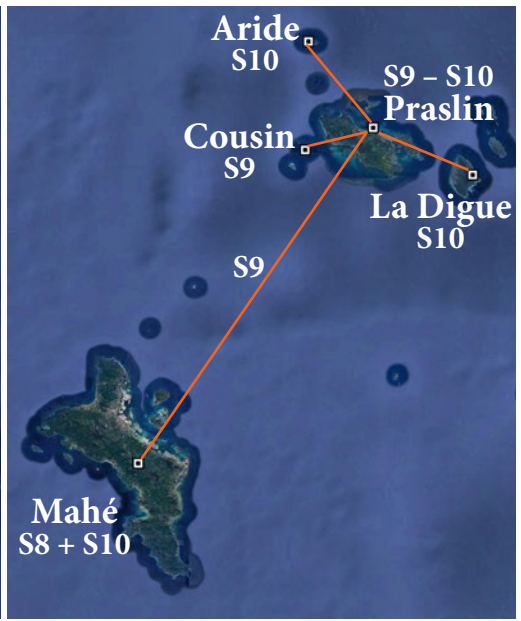
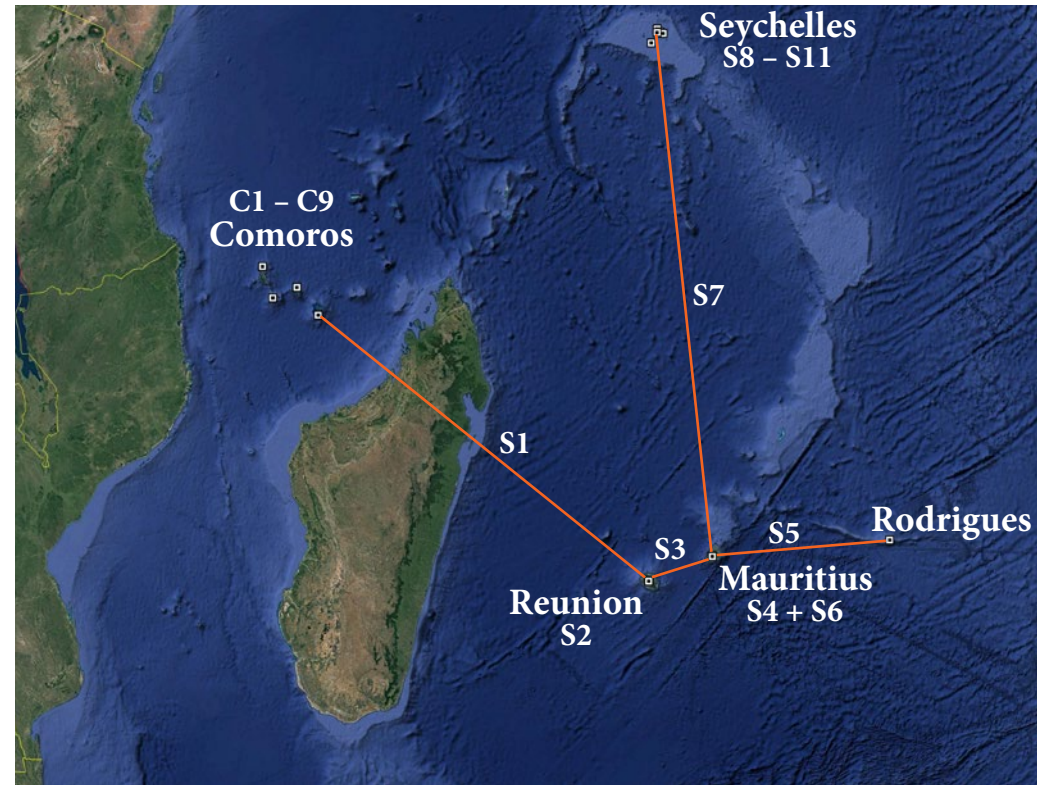
ITINERARY AND MAPS

COMOROS

Day C1	23 Oct 2026	Arrive on Grande Comore. Overnight in Moroni.
Day C2	24 Oct 2026	Full day on Grande Comore. Overnight in Moroni.
Day C3	25 Oct 2026	Full day on Grande Comore. Overnight in Moroni.
Day C4	26 Oct 2026	Grande Comore to Moheli. Overnight on coastal Moheli.
Day C5	27 Oct 2026	Full day on Moheli Island. Overnight on coastal Moheli.
Day C6	28 Oct 2026	Moheli to Anjouan. Overnight on the west coast of Anjouan.
Day C7	29 Oct 2026	Full day on Anjouan Island. Overnight on north coast of Anjouan.
Day C8	30 Oct 2026	Anjouan to Mayotte. Overnight in central Mayotte.
Day C9	31 Oct 2026	Full day on Mayotte Island. Tour ends.

SEYCHELLES AND MASCARENES

Day S1	1 Nov 2026	Arrive Reunion. Overnight in St Denis.
Day S2	2 Nov 2026	Full day on Reunion Island. Overnight in St Denis.
Day S3	3 Nov 2026	Reunion to Mauritius. Overnight on south-eastern Mauritius.
Day S4	4 Nov 2026	Full day on Mauritius. Overnight on south-eastern Mauritius.
Day S5	5 Nov 2026	Day trip to Rodrigues Island. Overnight on south-eastern Mauritius.
Day S6	6 Nov 2026	Full day on Mauritius. Overnight on south-eastern Mauritius.
Day S7	7 Nov 2026	Mauritius to Seychelles. Overnight on Mahé.
Day S8	8 Nov 2026	Full day on Mahé Island in Seychelles. Overnight on Mahé.
Day S9	9 Nov 2026	Mahé to Praslin to Cousin. Overnight on Praslin Island.
Day S10	10 Nov 2026	Praslin to La Digue to Aride to Mahé. Overnight on Mahé.
Day S11	11 Nov 2026	Most of day on Mahé. Tour ends



DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

----- COMOROS -----

Day C1: Arrive Grande Comore

Welcome to the Comores! After a half-hour drive from the airport you will be dropped at our comfortable hotel in Moroni town, for an overnight stay.

Days C2–C3: Grande Comore

We have two full days to explore forests of Grande Comore Island. All birds except Grande Comore Drongo are best seen on Mount Karthala, and we'll make a special detour on our first morning to the north-east of the island to search for it.

Mayotte Scops Owl © Michael Mills



The rest of our time will be spent on the mountain itself, where we plan to drive in 4x4s to 1600 m altitude and then continue to walk up to search for Karthala White-eye in the upper heathlands. Overhead we'll watch for the endemic form of Madagascar Spinetail. Lower down the forests become lush and taller, and it is here that we'll search for Comoro Fody (Endemic Subspecies = ESS), Grande Comore Brush Warbler, Comoro Blue Pigeon, Comoro Olive Pigeon, Humblot's Sunbird, Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher (ESS), Lesser Vasa Parrot (ESS), Madagascar Green Sunbird (ESS), Cuckoo Roller (ESS), Comoro Cuckooshrike, Grande Comore Bulbul, Humblot's Flycatcher and Comoro Thrush. Staying after dark we will search for Karthala Scops Owl, before driving back to Moroni in the evening. Nights in Moroni

Day C4: Grande Comore to Moheli

Some 40 km south-east of Grande Comore lies the smallest island of the region, Moheli. We'll take a short flight to Moheli, visiting the central highlands in the afternoon to search for our first endemic forms, namely Comoro Thrush, Humblot's Sunbird, Madagascar Green Sunbird and Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher, with Moheli Brush Warbler the most widespread endemic species. As it gets dark we'll search for Moheli Scops Owl, before descending to our basic seaside hotel on the coast. Night in coastal Moheli.

Day C5: Moheli

We have a full day to explore the best forests located on the south-west of the island. The rarest bird is Comoro Green Pigeon, which we hope to find lower down not far from the coast. A small climb will start getting us into suitable habitat for Moheli Bulbul and Comoro Blue Vanga, Comoro Fody and Cuckoo Roller. Those that wish to continue

higher stand the chance to see the very rare local forms of Comoro Cuckooshrike and Madagascar Brush Warbler, but the climb is steep so most people will probably elect to return to the hotel early for a relaxed time at the coast. Night in coastal Moheli.

Day C6: Moheli to Anjouan

Today we transfer to the second largest island, Anjouan, some 60 km east of Moheli. We will either take a flight back to Grande Comore and on to Anjouan, or, if at all possible, use a good quality fishing boat to make the journey, which would allow us to look for the local race of Persian Shearwater. Arriving at Anjouan we'll search for Anjouan Scops Owl in the evening. Night on the south-western coast of Anjouan.

Day C7: Anjouan

We have a full day to bird Anjouan, and will focus on searching for birds in the western and central forests. Comoro Fody, Crested Drongo (ESS), Anjouan Sunbird, Greater Vasa Parrots, Comoro Blue Pigeons, Comoros Thrush, Anjouan Brush Warbler and Madagascar Turtle Dove will all be on our radars. Along the coast we hope to find two local forms of Striated Heron and Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher. Night on the north coast of Anjouan.

Day C8: Anjouan to Mayotte

Leaving Anjouan by air we'll touch down on the nearby island of Mayotte, much more developed than the other Comoros islands and politically part of France. A short drive will bring us to our accommodation in the central highlands, surrounded by forest where Mayotte Scops Owl, Mayotte Drongo, Mayotte Sunbird and Mayotte White-eye are found. Frances's Sparrowhawk



Anjouan Scops Owl © Michael Mills

is especially common, and Cuckoo Roller conspicuous by voice. Night in the highlands of Mayotte

Day 9: Mayotte

Our final day in the Comoros will be split between the highlands and lowlands of Mayotte. Near the coast we will search for Comoro Fody, Mayotte White-eye and Mayotte Sunbird, and other species we may find include Allen's Gallinule, Madagascar Pond Heron and Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher. The tour ends after lunch for those not joining the Seychelles and Mascarenes Tour. Overnight in coastal Mayotte.

- SEYCHELLES & MASCARENES -

Day S1: Arrive Reunion

Those joining both tours today take the flight from Mayotte to St Denis on Reunion Island, where those joining only the Seychelles and Mascarenes Tour will join us. Overnight in St Denis.

Day 2: Reunion

With a full day on Reunion we'll start off with an early drive into the highlands above St Denis. All the endemic land birds of Reunion occur here and it should not take long before we find

our first Reunion Stonechat and Reunion Olive White-eyes around the famous a Roche Écrite trail head. Our main reason for visiting this area is to search for the islands rarest endemic, the Critically Endangered Reunion Cuckooshrike, of which a few pairs occur along the trail. As we climb we'll watch out for Reunion Grey White-eye, Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher and Reunion Bulbul. Overhead we'll watch out for Reunion Harrier and Mascarene Swiftlet. In the afternoon we'll visit some different parts of the island before an evening seavatch to see thousands of Barau's Petrels and Tropical Shearwaters (sometimes split as Baillon's Shearwater), coming ashore. Night in St Denis.

Barau's Petrel © Colin Rogers



Mauritius Kestrel (left) and Rodrigues Fody (right) © Colin Rogers

Day 3: Reunion to Mauritius

We have a second morning on Reunion to find any species that may be missing, before taking a short flight to Mauritius Island. Night near Mahenbourg.

Day 4: Mauritius

With a full day on Mauritius, we'll first head to the island's premier wildlife destination, the Black River Gorges. We'll focus our efforts on two areas, the Maccabee Trail where we will search for Mauritius Grey White-eye, Mauritius Fody, Mauritius Cuckooshrike and Echo Parakeet. Around Pigeon Wood we should see good numbers of Pink Pigeon. In the afternoon we'll drive to the north of the island for a pelagic trip to Round Island. Here we will study the Round Island Petrels, which are a hybrid swarm composed of Trinidad Petrel, Kermadec Petrel and Herald Petrel, no doubt debating what can and can't be ticked. Other seabirds likely to be encountered include Masked Booby and Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

Day 5: Rodrigues

The far-flung island of Rodrigues lies some 600 km east of Mauritius. Fortunately there are several flights per day between the main islands, making it possible to visit Rodrigues as a day trip. We'll take an early morning flight lasting 1h 40 min to the island and return in the late afternoon, which should give us ample time to find the two endemics of the island, now fortunately much more common than they were some 20 years ago. Both Rodrigues Fody and Rodrigues Warbler are rather common in patches of native forest, and we'll visit two of the best sites during our visit.

Day 6: Mauritius

We have a second full day on Mauritius, during which we plan to track down Mauritius Kestrel and visit Ile Aigrettes which is being restored by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. At the latter site we hope to see Mauritius Olive White-eye and Mauritius Fody. We will also revisit Black River Gorges if we are missing any species from here.

Day 7: Mauritius to Seychelles

Today we fly from Mauritius to Victoria on Mahé island in the Seychelles. Depending on our time of arrival we will ascend into the central highlands for some diurnal birding, and after dark search for Seychelles Scops Owl. Night near Victoria.

Day 8: Mahé Island

We have a full day to explore the island of Mahé, the largest of the granitic Seychelles. The focus of our day will be the forests of Morne Seychellois National Park. The rarest of the landbirds is the highly threatened Seychelles White-eye, and we hope to find a few pairs of this scarce

species. Other birds we will watch out for in the surrounding forest include Seychelles Sunbird, Seychelles Bulbul, Seychelles Blue Pigeon and Seychelles Swiftlet. White-tailed Tropicbird is usually conspicuous too. Seychelles Kestrel is one of the more widespread endemics and we may need to visit several sites to find this scarce species. Some time will also be spent wader watching, where we hope to see Crab Plover, and we may have time to look for Yellow Bittern. Night near Victoria.

Day 9: Mahé to Praslin to Cousin

This morning we take an early flight to neighbouring Praslin Island, where an early

Seychelles Kestrel © Colin Rogers



Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher © Colin Rogers

morning outing to forests of the central highlands should allow us to find Seychelles Black Parrot. Later in the morning we'll take a boat trip to nearby Cousin Island, where impressive numbers of Lesser Noddy, Brown Noddy and White Tern breed, and Seychelles Magpie-Robin, Seychelles Fody and Seychelles Warbler can usually be found with ease. In the afternoon we'll visit the adjacent Island of La Digue where the striking Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher is found. Night on Praslin Island.

Day 10: Praslin to La Digue to Aride to Mahé

Our final day in the Seychelles see us take a morning trip to Aride Island, with spectacular numbers of seabirds including Sooty Tern,

Bridled Tern, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Tropical Shearwater (sometimes split as Seychelles Shearwater), Greater Frigatebird and Lesser Frigatebird. We also have a second chance to see Seychelles Magpie-Robin, Seychelles Fody and Seychelles Warbler. Second visits to search for Seychelles Black Parrot and Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher will be made if necessary. In the late afternoon we will return by air to Mahé Island. We have another chance for Seychelles Scops Owl this evening, if necessary. Night near Victoria.

Day 11: Mahé

We have a final morning in the highlands of Mahé. The tour ends in the early afternoon, after lunch.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR

- services of Birding Africa tour leader and local guides
- entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- ground transport on all islands, including airport transfers
- accommodation and all meals starting with dinner on the first night and ending with lunch on the last day
- internal flights are billed separately, at cost price
- bottled water in the vehicle and one soft drink per meal
- general tips

QUESTIONS?

Please email the office, info@birdingafrica.com, to reserve a place or ask questions (you can also cc michael@birdingafrica.com and callan@birdingafrica.com, who are both involved in the planning of this tour).

BOOKLET AND CHECKLIST

Birding Africa provides:

1. this tour leaflet with detailed itinerary
2. the tour information pack, emailed to you
3. the tour booklet with checklists, on the tour

HOW TO BOOK

1. Complete our easy online booking form.
2. Secure your booking deposit by credit card on our 3D secure online payment site (\$150).
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the banking details.



Seychelles Blue Pigeon © Colin Rogers