

**Bring your scope!**  
**– an alternative approach to birding on Mauritius & Réunion**

Dr. Petri Hottola  
University of Joensuu, Finland  
petri.hottola@joensuu.fi

Most of the birders visiting the Mascarenes tend to do the most obvious thing by repeating the beaten track of previously published trip reports, and by following the guidelines provided in the best field guide available (Ian Sinclair & Olivier Langrand 1998: Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands). The idea of this report is to challenge the common approach, especially regarding seabirds. Personally, I included most of the beaten track in my itinerary on Mauritius (16.-28.7.2002) and Réunion (29.7.-1.8.2002), but also made an effort to explore certain uncharted territories. It is my sincere hope that future birdwatching tourists could benefit from and build on this new information. (Please, keep in mind that I am just a visiting birder who has written down his impressions, not an expert on the Mascarene birdlife.)

Before going to Mauritius and Réunion, I read through several Internet reports made by visiting bird-watchers oftentimes more busy with sunbathing and snorkeling than with birding. One of the interesting features in these reports was the general disinterest in seabirds. Some authors even suggested that binoculars are sufficient when birding on the Mascarenes: 'I still think it is no use burdening yourself with a telescope when you go to the Mascarenes' or 'No need to have a spotting scope in the Mascarenes'. At the same time, Ian Sinclair recommends an expensive charter boat to Round Island (Mauritius) or cruising between St. Gilles and St. Pierre (Réunion) in order to see the endemic petrels and shearwaters – all of which can be seen from the shore with a telescope (and most of them with relative ease).

This approach agrees well with the interests of charter boat companies and probably also reflects the South African culture of boat-based sea-watching activities. It may be fun and rewarding if you can afford it, and are comfortable with rough seas. Round Island is certainly worth a visit with its unique nature. Personally, I prefer to spend my money otherwise. Mauritius and Réunion are quite suitable for seawatching from the shore, provided you have a proper scope, time, and knowledge to identify the most suitable sites. Some of the features to look for in winter include close proximity of the surf zone and deep seas, favorable location in relation to breeding islands and the prevalent southeastern wind, favorable light conditions early in the morning and late in the evening (the best observation times), and low levels of disturbance from fellow tourists with different interests.

The island of Mauritius may be surrounded by coral reefs but if you look at the reef maps (e.g. Lonely Planet travel survival kit), you can find certain points where the surf reaches the shore and brings both the coastal and deep seas species within a comfortable range of observation, especially whenever the prevalent (not all year, go there in July-August) southeastern wind gets stronger than usual and forces the birds close to the shore. On Réunion there are in general no lagoons between you and the passing petrels, shearwaters and terns. In such a situation, the corners of the square island (especially the southernmost ones) tend to be productive.

During the two weeks on these islands, I carried my Optolyth 30WWAx80 scope to 12 potential seawatching sites on Mauritius – La Roche qui Pleure, Le Morne peninsula (deep waters too far away), Flic en Flac (deep waters too far away, too much disturbance), Wolmar (deep waters too far away, too much disturbance), Pointe Lafayette, Cap Malh reux, Palmar and Blue Lagoon (difficult access to the shore) – and R union – St. Etienne River mouth, Baril, Mare Longue (surf zone further away than in the nearby Baril) and Pointe du Tremble (too high vantage point).

On Mauritius, two of these sites, La Roche qui Pleure on the south coast (next to Souillac) and Pointe Lafayette (next to Poste Lafayette and Poste de Flacq) on the northeastern coast, proved to be especially productive. At La Roche qui Pleure, there are nice stones to sit on, right by the grassy cliff. Turn left at Gris Gris and follow the dirt track to La Roche qui Pleure (signposted), park your car at the end of the road (not on the private land on the left) and enter the cliffs on the right hand side. At Poste Lafayette, the best observation site is to the south of Coral Beach Bungalows (an excellent place to stay, lower rates during the low season) and the village of Poste Lafayette, at the northern end of a large public beach (trees between the main road and the shore) with a rocky shore and a nice surf (=Pointe Lafayette). There is another public beach on the northern side of the village, but the birds do not come close enough there.

A third site, Cap Malh reux, was especially productive for Boobies and Tropicbirds. In there, observations were made from a fish landing point by the well-known church with red roof, sitting on the stone benches with a great view to the island of Coin de Mire (Gunner's Coin). Local guys play petanque and football at the fish landing point every afternoon, but they do not mind visiting birders. Also in Palmar conditions are quite favorable at the southern end of the beach, especially if you make an effort to walk closer to the surf. This is, however, not really necessary unless you are really keen on getting close views or do mind being distracted by bikini-clad babes. I did not and therefore parked on grass above the beach, right by the sunbathing people, and did my observations from there.

On R union, the best sites were the well known St. Etienne River mouth (next to St. Louis) and the cliffs of Baril (east of St. Joseph, between Baril and Mare Longue) on the southeast coast. Get off the highway at St. Louis, just after crossing the bridge if you come from St. Pierre (or just before, the other way round), and head towards the coast along one of the small alleys through the industrial zone. It is not necessary to see the river mouth itself. In 2002, the best vantage point was a construction site of a Hindu temple (temple of Lakshmi, the seaborne Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity?) right on the shore (space for parking at the entrance). Do not, however, enter the temple proper or sit on the unfinished wall (as I did, and was politely told to move). The creole neighborhood is a bit depressed and may appear threatening at first glance. I did, however, meet only good people there.

After Baril (east of St. Joseph), there is a coastal recreation area on the right side of the road. Turn right at the very first junction and drive down to a pier with a small restaurant, picnic tables and seaside swimming pool (nice observations early in the morning with the low tide). The place does, however, get too wet with the rising tide and the consequent spray. Continue along the main road for a few hundred meters. On right there are stone benches and picnic tables by the cliffs, with great views to the coastal waters and the birds passing by. Similar sites at Mare Longue are further away from the surf zone and therefore not quite as productive as the ones at Baril.

The +10000 seabirds recorded (and reliably identified) from the shore is an ample proof that seabirding pays off on the Mascarenes, and late July with it's low season rates, empty beaches and hotels, and sunny but relatively cool weather is a good time to 'do' the Mascarenes. Also the total number of 70 species recorded was relatively high. As an indication of the lack of seabird observations on the islands, I saw no less than 4 species on Mauritius not mentioned in Sinclair: Barau's Petrel, Réunion Petrel, Great Egret and White-cheeked Tern. Looking at their breeding and non-breeding ranges, none of these four species were really exceptional. I am sure that with some degree of dedication, many similar records could be made by visiting birdwatchers in the future, without spending a fortune on luxury services.

The species looked for but missed during this visit were the apparently extinct Meller's Duck (that's what they said at the Gerald Durrell Sanctuary), Frigatebirds, and the Java Sparrow. I also spent some time looking for the Mauritius Fruit Bat (*Pteropus niger*), with no success despite the currently +1500 population. The species on my mammal list included: Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), Bryde's Whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*), Tail-less Tenrec (*Tenrec ecaudatus*), Slender Mongoose (*Herpestes auropunctatus*), Natal Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarina acetabulosus*) and Crab-eating Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*).

NOTE 1: The Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary at Grande Riviere Noire, Mauritius, is as a rule NOT open for the public. Ian Sinclair and others may recommend a visit but none of them apparently has asked permission for such a recommendation. As there are no other 'tickable' birds available, and Mauritius Kestrels are guaranteed in more accessible sites, the best thing to do is to let the staff focus on their invaluable everyday tasks of taking care of the endangered bird and mammal species. You are, however, welcome to phone or email their office if you need a guide to see certain species.

NOTE 2: Despite the wet reputation of the location, it may well not rain at all at La Roche Ecrute and the rest of Réunion during the sunny winter days. I had practically no rain during the three days on Réunion (light 10 minute shower at Baril). Got sunburn instead.

NOTE 3: In 2002, I paid between Rs. 400-1000 per night for accommodation in double or single rooms with private bath, television, hot water, and in one case a swimming pool (see LP guidebook for economical accommodation and reduce 10-30% for low season rates) and Rs 800 per day for car (Suzuki Maruti, Hotel Les Aigrettes, Mahébourg) on Mauritius. In Réunion I slept several hours in my rental car during a night trip to Cascade Maniquet, and spent two nights in a double room at Les Azalées at the Plaines de Palmistes for 35 euros per night.

## SPECIES LIST

The following list includes all the species recorded, their numbers and some of the locations where observations were made. Even the House Sparrows and other less interesting introduced species have been included in order to provide a full picture. In addition to these species, a small owl was seen flying across road soon after sunset at Cascade Maniquet, Réunion, and heard calling soon afterwards (two to three notes call). There have been other records at the nearby Plaine d'Affouces forest of this apparently yet undescribed owl species, 'Réunion Scops Owl' (or perhaps vagrant Madagascar Scops Owl?). An escapee Budgerigar was seen at Cap Malhèreux. Altogether, 58 species were seen on Mauritius and 32 on

Réunion (a total of 70 species). More detailed information on seabird observations in the end of the report.

*M = Mauritius (Ile Maurice): BB = Bassin Blanc, BM = Belle Mare, BRG = Black River Gorges (main road), CM = Cap Malheureux (Cape of Misfortune), DC = Domaine du Chasseur, GB = Grande Bassin, GCN = Grande Case Noyale, IA = Ile aux Aigrettes, LB = Le Bouchon, LG = Lower Gorges, M = Mahébourg, MAV = Mare aux Vacoas, MFR = Macchabee-Bel Ombre Forest Reserve, P = Palmar, PF = Poste de Flacq, PL = Pointe Lafayette, RP = La Roche qui Pleure (Crying Rock), W = Wolmar.*

*R = Réunion: B = Baril, BOB = Bois Blanc, CAM = Cascade Maniquet, ERM = Etienne River Mouth, PA = Plaine d'Affouces, PT = Pointe du Tremble, RE = La Roche Ecrite.*

**Pintado Petrel** (*Daption capense*) 1 B (R)

Single (exhausted?) bird observed very close to the shore (20m) at Baril, early in the morning on the 31st July.

**Barau's Petrel** (*Pterodroma barau*) 1 RP (M), 75 ERM, B (R)

The close by individual seen at La Roche qui Pleure on the 21st July allowed much better views than any of the birds on Réunion. Less than five relatively close (150-200m) views at Etienne River Mouth – the majority of birds stayed further away, identifiable but not really a pleasure to watch. Upper sides appeared drabber, with fainter open 'M' and with more brownish tinge, than in Sinclair & Langrand. Underwing color the most diagnostic feature.

**Trinidad Petrel** (*P. arminjoniana*) 3 PL (M)

Good views at Poste Lafayette on the 23rd July, three individuals flying south along the shore, in a strong southeastern wind. All pale or intermediate phase. Rather distinctive shape and flight style, and a contrasting white belly with a clearly demarcated breast band, pale wing patches especially visible on the underside.

**Réunion Petrel** (*P. aterrima*) 1 RP (M)

Excellent views at La Roche qui Pleure on the 19th July, single bird passing close to the shore. Stocky petrel with matt black plumage, including the underside of wings, high forehead and an exceptionally thick bill & prominent tube nostril.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** (*Puffinus pacificus*) 8 311 RP, PL etc. (M), 7 ERM, B (R)  
Easily the most common shearwater in the Mauritian waters (beyond the surf zone), but rather scarce on Réunion. Close views especially at Poste Lafayette.

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** (*P. carneipes*) 1 RP (M)

On the 19th of July. Probably a regular visitor to the Mascarene waters in small numbers throughout the year, but easily overlooked. Look first for structural differences (e.g. tail, wings) and flight, rather than pale bill (the bills of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters often appear pale in strong sunlight).

**Audubon's Shearwater** (*P. lherminieri*) 5 PL, P (M), 58 ERM, B (R)

Appears to be difficult to observe and identify on Mauritius, the birds flying too far from the shore. On Réunion, on the other hand, easy to see and identify both at Etienne River Mouth and especially so in Baril. (Including the 'Mascarene Shearwater' (cf. Sinclair & Langrand)

**Redtailed Tropicbird** (*Phaethon rubricauda*) 96 CM, PL, P (M)

Large colony on Coin de Mire (Gunner's Coin), easily seen from Cap Malh reux with a scope, + single individuals along the coast south to Palmar.

**Whitetailed Tropicbird** (*P. lepturus*) 120 (M), 23 B, ERM, CAM etc. (R)

Common especially along the coasts and by high mountain cliffs.

**Redfooted Booby** (*Sula sula*) 2 CM (M)

Probably difficult to see from the coast? I felt lucky to find a mixed flock of Boobies off Cap Malh reux on the 24th of July.

**Masked Booby** (*S. dactylatra*) 8 CM (M)

Look for this species at the northern end of the island, especially around Coin de Mire.

**Striated Heron** (*Butorides striatus*) 55 (M)

Common everywhere along the coast. Also at Bassin Blanc.

**Great Egret** (*Egretta alba*) 1 (M)

Single winter-plumaged individual at Baie du Cap, St. Denis river estuary, by a short stretch of mangroves, on the 22nd of July. I would rather preferred a Dimorphic Egret...

**R union Harrier** (*Circus maillardi*) 5 CM, RE etc. (R)

Common in a variety of non-coastal habitats, best views at La Roche Ecrite.

**Mauritius Kestrel** (*Falco punctatus*) 6 IA, MFR, LG, DC (M)

Current population +800. First one seen from a hotel roof (Hotel Aigrettes) at Mah bourg, sitting on top of a tree at Ile des Aigrettes. Best views at Domaine de Chasseur, along the track between parking and the hilltop restaurant, and at Lower Gorges (Grande Rivier Noire access to the BRG park). May be difficult at upper Black River Gorges because prefers to hunt from a hidden perch, often in the middle of a tree. Saw two up there, one flying across the trail and another swooping down the gorges. Both habits and structure appear quite unlike a Common Kestrel.

**Grey Francolin** (*Francolinus pondicerianus*) 56 (M)

Tame and easy to see esp. along sugarcane fields early in the morning.

**Madagascar Partridge** (*Margaroperdix madagascariensis*) 1 male BRG (M)

Single male was observed between the information center and lookout/Chamarel crossing, in a grassy open area by the road, in the middle of the day, in light rain. One can not rule out a recently released captive bird, as the original population is supposedly extremely low or extinct.

**Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*) 49 PL, BB, PF (M)

**Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*) 49 M, CM etc.(M)

**Crab Plover** (*Dromas ardeola*) 1 imm. GCN (M)

One individual on a sand bar at the seaside end of the lagoon.

**Grey Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) 8 GCN (M)

**Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) 1 BM (M)

**Greater Sand Plover** (*C. leschenaultii*) 17 GCN (M)  
All in winter plumage, mostly in the north end of GCN.

**Bartailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*) 1 CM (M)

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*) 45 (M)

**Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*) 3 GCN, PL (M)

**Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*) 2 GCN (M)

**Curlew Sandpiper** (*C. ferruginea*) 2 GCN (M)

**Subantarctic Skua** (*Catharacta antarctica*) 1 CM (M)  
One individual passing by along the coast, above the lagoon, heading west.

**Whitecheeked Tern** (*Sterna repressa*) 1 adult RP (M)  
New species for Mauritius? In full breeding plumage, resembling a Common Tern with dirty (brownish tinge) grey belly, throat, tail and rump. No contrasts between the upper side of the deeply forked tail, rump and back. Long, sharp red bill with a dark tip. Flew E close to the shore and could be observed from a distance of less than 100 meters.

**Roseate Tern** (*S. dougallii*) 5 B (R)  
Single flock flying E along the coast.

**Lesser Crested Tern** (*S. bengalensis*) 2 PL (M)  
A pair in winter plumage flew southeast off Pointe Lafayette.

**Sooty Tern** (*S. fuscata*) 6 908 PL, RP, M, P (M), 50 ERM, B (R)  
Easily the most common tern in the Mauritian coastal waters, less common on Réunion.

**Bridled Tern** (*S. anaethetus*) 60 RP, PL (M)  
Clearly less common than Sooty Tern along the coast. Many Sooty Terns appear quite light in strong light. At first you notice the structural difference, the short body and the consequent potbellied appearance of Bridled Terns.

**Brown Noddy** (*Anous stolidus*) 3 320 PL, RP, P (M), 445 ERM, B (R)  
Most common tern on Réunion and very common in Mauritius, as well. Usually the species among the 'sea-terns' which flies closest to the shore. Very nice views especially at Pointe Lafayette and Baril.

**Lesser Noddy** (*A. tenuirostris*) 1 608 PL, RP, P (M), 68 ERM, B (R)  
In most cases easy to identify, thanks to the dark (blackish brown) undersides of wings or striking difference in size when seen together with Brown Noddies.

**Spotted Dove** (*Streptopelia chinensis*) 496 (M)  
A bird of fields and roadsides in rural areas, appears to prefer more open environments than the following species.

**Madagascar Turtle Dove** (*S. picturata*) 102 (M), 12 (R)

A bird of gardens, forests and shady plantations, commonly seen in every part of Mauritius. Tame individuals at Cap Malhéréux.

**Rock Pigeon** (*Columba livia*) 380 (M), 43 (R)

**Barred Ground Dove** (*Geopelia striata*) 340 (M), 13 (R)

**Pink Pigeon** (*Nesoenas mayeri*) 10 IA, MFR (M)

Current population +400 in the wild and many more waiting to be released. Most easily observed at Mahébourg, either from the shore with a scope, or by visiting the Ile les Aigrettes, where they breed. Prefers treetops and has an easy to spot territorial flight.

**Echo Parakeet** (*Psittacula echo*) 5 MFR (M)

Current population +200. Both the picture and depiction of voice slightly misleading in Sinclair & Langrand. In the field, short and strongly graduated tail with a broad base is the best identification feature. Those familiar with Ringnecked Parakeet will also notice the heavy structure (much thicker plumage) and dark green color. Call more varied and parakeet-like (softer) than the 'kaark kaark' suggested by Sinclair. Many released birds are quite approachable, one such female made a point of checking me out at the MFR track. Best observation spot 500-800 m after the Y-crossing, along the left (kiosk) trail, around km 3,5 lookouts (great views of the gorges).

**Ringnecked Parakeet** (*P. krameri*) 23 LG, PL, LB (M)

All records in agricultural lands close to human habitations. Light green, slender bird with very long, narrow tail.

**Mascarene Swiftlet** (*Collocalia francica*) 317 (M), 71 (R)

One of the easiest Mascarene endemics to spot. Also in cities.

**Mascarene Martin** (*Phedina borbonica*) 7 GB, MFR, MAV etc. (M), 2 (R)

Not as common as one could expect. Odd birds here and there, Grand Bassin being the most reliable site (check the wires around the Hindu temple).

**Mauritius Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes olivaceus*) 2 BB (M)

Current population? Surprisingly difficult to see. Both birds just above Bassin Blanc, along the main road.

**Réunion Bulbul** (*H. borbonicus*) 25 CM, RE (R)

Common but somewhat difficult to see. Best observations along the La Roche Ecrite trail, early in the morning.

**Redwhiskered Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) 2 092 (M), 62 (R)

Irritatingly common in mountain forests, it's main stronghold on Mauritius (common on the plains, as well). On the other hand, it is nice to see this species doing well somewhere in the world. Cagebird trade has taken its toll in Southeast Asia.

**Réunion Chat** (*Saxicola textes*) 38 RE, PA, CM (R)

Quite common and very tame along mountain roads, trails and picnic sites. Some adult males show a trace of white supercilium, some do not.

**Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone bourbonnensis*) 1 BB (M), 13 PT, RE, CM (R)

Apparently very rare in Mauritius (I would recommend doing the trail around Bassin Blanc). Fortunately quite common and easy to see on Réunion, especially at Pointe Tremble (coastal forest along the lookout access road).

**Mauritius Olive White-eye** (*Zosterops chloronothus*) 1 BB

Current population? Rare and difficult to see species. Probably the most difficult of the Mauritian endemics. Six short visits to Bassin Blanc (vulnerable to bad weather and groups of domestic tourists looking for a toilet) produced a single bird. Take care when entering roadside bush/tall grass. The slopes are steep and the vegetation reeks of urine.

**Réunion Olive White-eye** (*Z. olivaceus*) 38 CM, RE (R)

Pleasingly common at high altitudes on Réunion, especially along La Roche Ecrute trail. Once you learn its song, you realize how common they actually are.

**Mauritius Grey White-eye** (*Z. mauritanus*) 236 (M)

Most common on the hills but can be seen in any habitat, including pool-side exotics such as cacti, as I once witnessed. You do not have to leave your hotel to see this one.

**Réunion Grey White-eye** (*Z. borbonicus*) 65 RE, CM, PA etc. (R)

Not quite as common as its cousin on Réunion. More montane, as well. Differences in plumage, calls and habitat support the split.

**Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina typica*) 8 BB, MFR, DC (M)

Interestingly, only males were seen. Rather active in July, singing and defending their territories. Excellent views could be obtained by mimicking the territorial whistle. Appear even more short-tailed in the field than in Sinclair.

**Réunion Cuckoo-shrike** (*C. newtoni*) 1 RE (R)

Rather restricted range on Réunion. I saved a lot of sweat when a singing male appeared along the La Roche Ecrute trail at km 2 (or so), instead of the recommended km 3 site. The trail may be easy to walk, but it is uphill all the way and there are not many spots where you can sit down without getting mud on your pants.

**Indian Mynah** (*Acridotheres tristis*) 2 086 (M), 53 (R)

Especially common around beach resorts. Large congregations around sugarcane field fires, attracted to insects.

**House Crow** (*Corvus splendens*) 19 W, PL etc. (M)

Relatively uncommon, most birds seen at Wolmar and along the populous north coast.

**Madagascar Fody** (*Foudia madagascariensis*) 526 (M), 20 (R)

Very common species especially around human habitations, in town and cities. Many males in full or almost full nuptial plumage in the end of July.

**Mauritius Fody** (*F. rubra*) 4 GB, BRG, DC (M)

Surprisingly difficult to spot in July (only one adult male seen). In addition, two dozen probable Mauritius Fodies were seen in the forests of Black River Gorges, but left unidentified because of unsatisfactory views.



**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*) 192 (M), 150 (R)

**Village Weaver** (*Ploceus cucullatus*) 1 400 (M), 40 (R)

**Yellow-eyed Canary** (*Serinus mozambicus*) 41 (M), 1 PT (R)  
Coastal plains, close to human habitations.

**Cape Canary** (*S. canicollis*) 4 CM (R)  
Odd birds seen flying across valleys above Saint Denis.

**Red Avadavat** (*Amandava amandava*) 1 BOB (R)  
Single roadside observation, an adult male.

**Spice Finch** (*Lonchura punctulata*) 89 (M)

**Common Waxbill** (*Estrilda astrild*) 65 (M), 4 (R)

EXPERIMENTAL SEA-WATCHING ON MAURITIUS AND RÉUNION  
19th - 31st July 2002

## LA ROCHE QUI PLEURE (MAURITIUS)

19.7.2002

Morning (7.30-9.10): Relatively strong SE wind, cloudy, showers of rain.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 53 W

Evening (16.30-18.10): Strong SE wind, cloudy, no rain.

- Réunion Petrel (*Pterodroma aterrima*) 1 E 17.10 - 17.14
- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 86 E
- Fleshfooted Shearwater (*P. carneipes*) 1 E 16.50-16.52
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 1 E
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 58 E
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 78 E

20.7.2002

Evening (16.30-18.00): Very strong ESE wind (scope vibrations started to interfere with observations), mostly cloudy, no rain.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 22 E
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 4 E
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 9 E
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 10 E

21.7.2002

Morning (7.15-9.00): Slightly less wind (ESE) than yesterday evening, partly cloudy, no rain.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 12 E + 1 W
- Whitecheeked Tern (*Sterna repressa*) 1 adult E 7.52-7.55
- Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*) 32 E
- Bridled Tern (*S. anaethetus*) 3 E
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 12 E
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 28 E

+ Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) 1 W

Evening (16.40-18.00): Weather remained the same, with less clouds and more sunshine.

- Barau's Petrel (*Pterodroma barau*) 1 E 16.50-16.53
- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 107 E
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 98 E
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 6 E
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 18 E

28.7.2002

Late morning (8.30-10.00): Average SE-wind, warm and sunny weather.

- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 2 E
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 182 E

No shearwaters!

## **POINTE LAFAYETTE (MAURITIUS)**

23.7.2002

Afternoon + evening (15.30-18.00): Rather strong ESE wind, sunshine.

- Trinidade Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjoniana*) 3 S
- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 110 S, 350 N
- Audubon's Shearwater (*P. lherminieri*) 4 N
- Lesser Crested Tern (*Sterna bengalensis*) 2 S
- Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*) 5 S
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 5 N
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 22 N

24.7.2002

Morning (6.50-8.30): Rather strong ESE, partly cloudy, mostly sunny.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 3 600 S

- Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*) 42 S
- Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*) 4 500 S
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 1 400 S
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 800 S

25.7.2002

Morning (6.50-8.45): 'Average' SE wind, nice and sunny weather.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 1 600 S
- Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*) 14 S
- Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*) 600 S
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 800 S
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 300 S

### **CAP MALHÉREUX (MAURITIUS)**

24.7.2002

Evening (16.15-17.30): Relatively strong ESE wind, no clouds.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 100 W + 30 E
- Redfooted Booby (*Sula sula*) 2
- Masked Booby (*S. dactylatra*) 8
- Subantarctic Skua (*Catharacta antarctica*) 1 W
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 200
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 120
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 30

25.7.2002

Evening (16.10-17.30): 'Average' SE wind, sunshine and calm waters.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 80 E

### **PALMAR (MAURITIUS)**

26.7.2002

Evening (15.30-17.50): 'Average' SE wind, sunshine.

- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 1 800 N
- Sooty Tern (*S.fuscata*) 560 N
- Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 400 N
- Lesser Noddy (*A.tenuirostris*) 270 S

### **ST. ETIENNE RIVER MOUTH (RÉUNION)**

30.7.2002

Evening (16.00-17.55): 'Average' SE wind, nice and sunny evening.

- Barau's Petrel (*Pterodroma barau*) 68 (E)
- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 6 E
- Audubon's Shearwater (*P. lherminieri*) 34 E
- Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 280 E
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 1 E
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 42 E

## **BARIL (RÉUNION)**

31.7.2002

Late morning (8.40-10.00): 'Average' SE wind, nice and sunny weather.

- Pintado Petrel (*Daption capense*) 1 (E)
- Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) 2 E
- Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 89 E/W
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 24 W
- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) 5 E

Afternoon to evening (13.00-18.00): 'Average' SE wind, nice and sunny weather, with one 15 minute shower in the middle of the afternoon.

- Barau's Petrel (*Pterodroma barau*) 7 E at around 4 PM
- Wedgetailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) 1 W
- Audubon's Shearwater (*P. lherminieri*) 9 W + 15 E
- Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) 68 E/W
- Lesser Noddy (*A. tenuirostris*) 43 E/W
- Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) 8 E

+ Bryde's Whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*) 3 W