

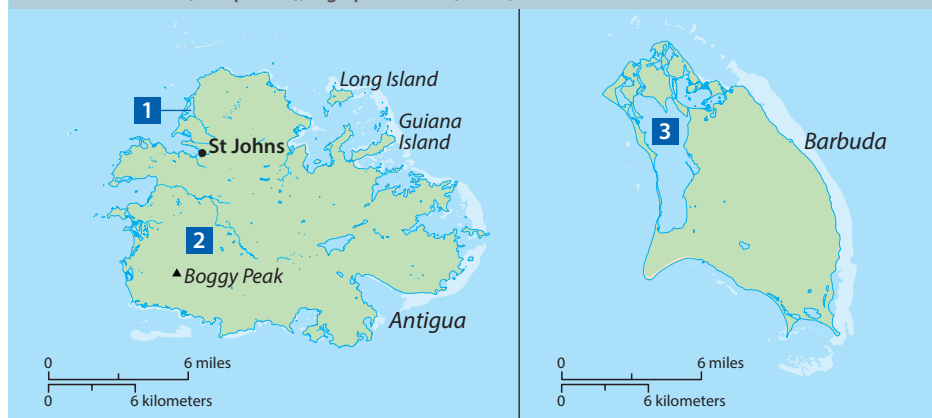
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Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua—280 km² (108 sq. miles), Mount Obama (Boggy Peak) 402 m (1,318 ft)

Barbuda—161 km² (62 sq. miles), high point 45 m (148 ft)

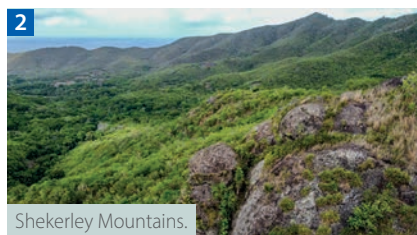


Antigua has areas of scrub and dry forest on the eastern side and pockets of evergreen forest on the highest ground in the Shekerley Mountains. Impressive numbers of breeding and migratory waterbirds can be seen on a range of wetlands and coastal lagoons. The extensive limestone scrub that covers most of Barbuda is home to the endemic Barbuda Warbler, and the Magnificent Frigatebird colony on Codrington Lagoon is one of the Caribbean's finest wildlife spectacles.

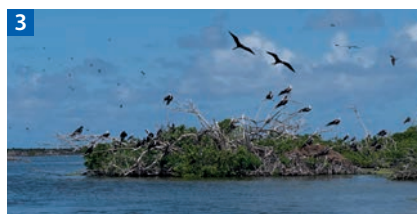
Endemics: Antigua and Barbuda	Barbuda Warbler (Barbuda only) WU , Antigua Groundlizard NT , Antigua Bank Bush Anole, Antigua Bank Tree Anole, Antigua Bank Dwarf Gecko, Antiguan Racer CR
Specialty species	West Indian Whistling-Duck NT , White-crowned Pigeon NT



1 **McKinnon's Salt Pond, Antigua** (Public/private ownership) Large brackish wetland, mangroves and scrub with accessible viewing from the causeway and perimeter road. Look for breeding and migratory waterbirds, including West Indian Whistling-Duck, dragonflies and butterflies.



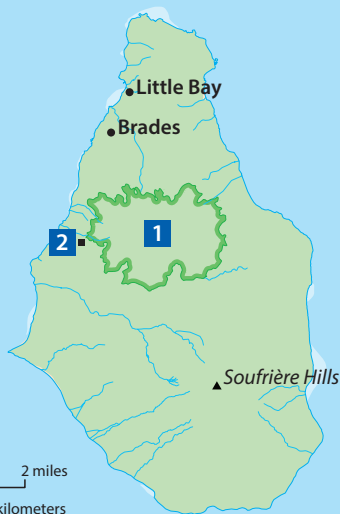
2 **Christian Valley, Antigua** (Public/private ownership) A series of trails through agricultural land and dry forest in the Shekerley Mountains take you to the summit of Boggy Peak. The valley is good for forest birds, Broad-winged Hawk and both endemic anoles.



3 **Codrington Lagoon National Park, Barbuda** Extensive lagoon, mangroves, sand dunes and surrounding scrub woodland. Boat tours visit the largest frigatebird colony in the Caribbean. Look for Barbuda Warbler in the scrub and dragonflies on nearby seasonal pools.

Montserrat

102 km² (39 sq. miles), Soufrière Hills (Chances Peak) 914 m (3,000 ft)



The Centre Hills provide a rare chance to experience the transition from coastal scrub through dry forest and rainforest to elfin forest. Enjoy spectacular views north to the more open Silver Hills and south to the smoldering Soufrière Hills volcano, in an exclusion zone since the 1997 eruption. Look for Montserrat Oriole, endemic reptiles and forest butterflies. Red-billed Tropicbirds nest along the rugged cliffs, and Brown Booby, Brown Pelican and Royal Tern can be seen over inshore waters year-round.

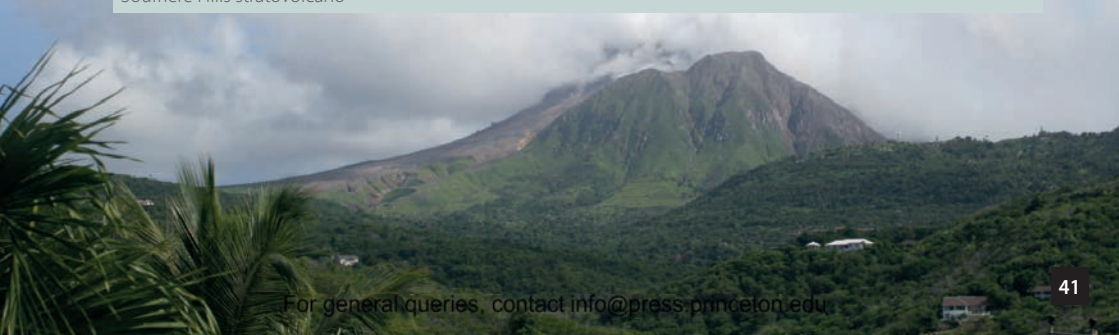
Single-island endemics	Montserrat Oriole VO , Montserrat Groundlizard NT , Montserrat Galliwasp CR , Montserrat Anole NT , Montserrat Racer NT
Restricted-range endemics	Forest Thrush NT , Mountain Chicken Frog CR , Caribbean Black Iguana CR , Southern Leeward Dwarf Gecko



1 Centre Hills Trails (Public/private ownership) Series of eight managed forest trails; local guides are recommended especially for Katy Hill and the higher slopes. Highlights include Montserrat Oriole and other forest birds, Montserrat Anole, Montserrat Racer snake and butterflies, including Red Rim.

\$ 2 National Trust Botanical Gardens (Managed by the Montserrat National Trust) Small but interesting gardens, with visitor facilities, maintained by the National Trust. Tropical plant collection includes scarce native species, which attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

Soufrière Hills stratovolcano



Guadeloupe

Guadeloupe 1,479 km² (571 sq. miles), La Soufriere 1,467 m (4,813 ft); Marie-Galante 155 km² (60 sq. miles), Morne Constant 204 m (669 ft)



The largest island in the Eastern Caribbean with the greatest variety of birds (over 280 species recorded within the archipelago), butterflies and dragonflies in the region, with cetaceans off the leeward coast. Well-managed trails, some accessible, can take you through wetlands and mangroves or high into spectacular rainforest. The offshore islands and cays are important for seabirds; Marie-Galante, La Désirade and Îles des Saintes each have one or more endemic reptiles.

Single-island endemics	Guadeloupe Woodpecker, Guadeloupe Stream Frog EN , Guadeloupe Forest Frog EN , Guadeloupe Anole, reptiles on offshore islands, Guadeloupe Threadtail
Restricted-range endemics	Forest Thrush NT , Plumbeous Warbler, Southern Leeward Dwarf Gecko, Leeward Ground Snake NT
Specialty species	Ringed Kingfisher

 **1 Parc National Guadeloupe** (Managed by the [Parcs Nationaux de France](#)) Rainforest, mountain streams, waterfalls and lakes, including Grand Étang, with an extensive network of trails, plus visitor facilities. Look for Guadeloupe Woodpecker, Forest Thrush, Plumbeous Warbler and endemic dragonflies.

 **2 Marais de Port-Louis** (Managed by [Conservatoire du Littoral](#)) Extensive area of mangrove, marsh and dry forest with accessible trails and boardwalks. Good populations of fiddler and mangrove crabs, and dragonflies.

 **3 Pointe des Châteaux** (Public ownership) Series of trails through coastal scrub with cliffs, saline lagoons, salt marshes and views of small islets. Resident and migratory seabirds and waterbirds can be found in the bay and lagoons with reptiles and butterflies in the scrub.



Dominica

751 km² (289 sq. miles), Morne Diablotin 1,447 m (4,747 ft)



The mountainous interior has some of the most dramatic pristine rainforest in the Eastern Caribbean—home to endemic parrots, reptiles and butterflies. Spectacular fast-flowing streams with waterfalls and pools high in the mountains become slower and wider towards the coasts and are good places to see crabs, dragonflies and Ringed Kingfisher. Cetaceans in the deep-water channel include dolphins and breeding Sperm Whale.

Single-island endemics Red-necked Parrot **VU**, Imperial Parrot **CR**, Kalinago Wren, Dominica Frog **EN**, Dominica Groundlizard, Dominica Anole **NT**, Dominica Skink, Dominica Boa, Dominican Hairstreak, Dominican Snout

Restricted-range endemics Blue-headed Hummingbird, Plumbeous Warbler, Martinique Frog **NT**, Mountain Chicken Frog **CR**, Southern Leeward Dwarf Gecko, Northern Martinique Dwarf Gecko, Leeward Ground Snake **NT**

Trafalgar Falls.



1 Morne Diablotin National Park Several managed trails through large tracts of rainforest, including Syndicate Trail and visitor center. One of the best places to look for Red-necked and Imperial Parrots, Blue-headed Hummingbird and endemic reptiles.

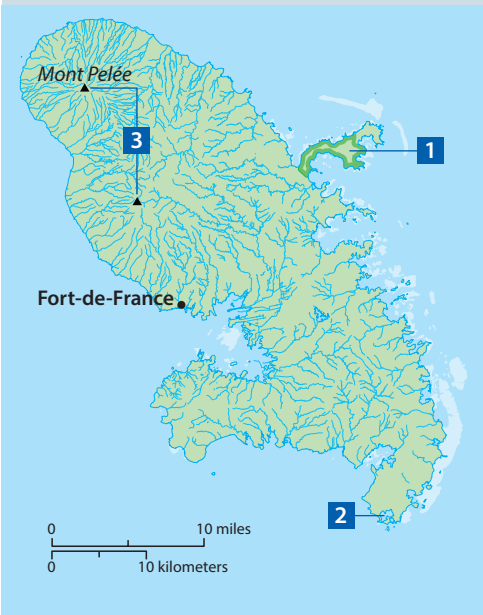
2 Morne Trois Pitons National Park Managed trails through rainforest and elfin forest. Visitor centers include **Freshwater Lake** and **Emerald Pool**. Look for Forest Thrush, Plumbeous Warbler, Rufous-throated Solitaire, dwarf geckos and forest butterflies.

3 Cabrits National Park Managed coastal trail through wetlands, swamp and dry forest with visitor center. Good for waterbirds, Dominica Groundlizard, Dominica Racer and dragonflies.

All sites are managed by the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division.

Martinique

1,129 km² (436 sq. miles), Mont Pelée 1,397 m (4,583 ft)



The impressive mountainous north of the island has extensive areas of rainforest, with elfin forest on the highest peaks, where rare frogs, endemic reptiles and a wide range of forest birds can be found. In the lower-lying south and east there is a mix of large-scale agriculture, dry forest and scrub, where specialty species include Martinique Thrasher and Dominican Leafwing butterfly. A range of wetlands and coastal lagoons with mangroves attract migratory waterbirds and hold large populations of fiddler and mangrove crabs.

Single-island endemics	Martinique Thrasher EN , Martinique Oriole VU , Martinique Volcano Frog CR , Martinique Anole, Martinique Lancehead EN
Restricted-range endemics	Blue-headed Hummingbird, Gray Trembler, Martinique Frog, Northern Martinique Dwarf Gecko, Southern Martinique Dwarf Gecko
Specialty species	White-tailed Nightjar



1 **Réserve Naturelle de la Caravelle** (Private/public ownership, partly managed by Parc Naturel Régional de la Martinique) Trails and boardwalks through mangroves, grassland and extensive dry forest. Look for Martinique Thrasher, Lesser Antillean Saltator, Martinique Anole and butterflies.

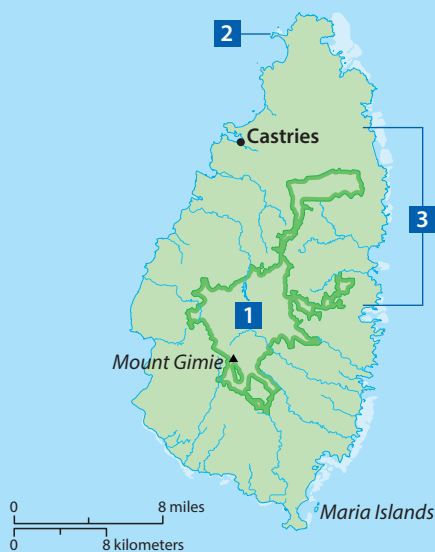


2 **Étang de Saline** Boardwalk and trails encompassing salt-pond and scrub, enabling close views of breeding and migratory waterbirds, fiddler crabs and mangrove crabs.

3 **Pitons du Carbet and Mont Pelée** (Public/private ownership) A network of managed trails take you through grassland then rainforest into elfin forest; access can be difficult at higher elevations. Good for Martinique Oriole, Blue-headed Hummingbird and Gray Trembler, plus endemic reptiles and amphibians, including the rare Martinique Volcano Frog.

St Lucia

616 km² (237 sq. miles), Mount Gimie 950 m (3,117 ft)



The landscape of St Lucia is dramatic, with mountainous peaks, dense rainforest, fast-flowing streams and waterfalls. The Central Forest Reserve holds an impressive number of endemic birds and reptiles, Yellow Land Crabs and scarce dragonflies. The often-overlooked dry forest and scrub on the east coast is worth exploring for specialties such as St Lucia Thrasher. Rare reptiles occur on offshore islands.

Single-island endemics	St Lucia Parrot WU , St Lucia Wren, St Lucia Thrasher EN , St Lucia Warbler, St Lucia Oriole EN , St Lucia Black Finch EN , St Lucia Anole EN , St Lucia Dwarf Gecko NY , St Lucia Boa EN , St Lucia Pit Viper EN , reptiles on offshore islands
Restricted-range endemics	Lesser Antillean (St Lucia) Pewee, Gray Tumbler, Southern Lesser Antilles Horned Iguana
Specialty species	Rufous Nightjar

1 Central Forest Reserve (Public/private ownership) An extensive network of trails (Des Cartier, Millet and Soufrière), some with visitor facilities, leads deep into the rainforest to look for St Lucia Parrot, St Lucia Black Finch, St Lucia Boa and Lesser Antillean Threadtail. Guides are recommended.

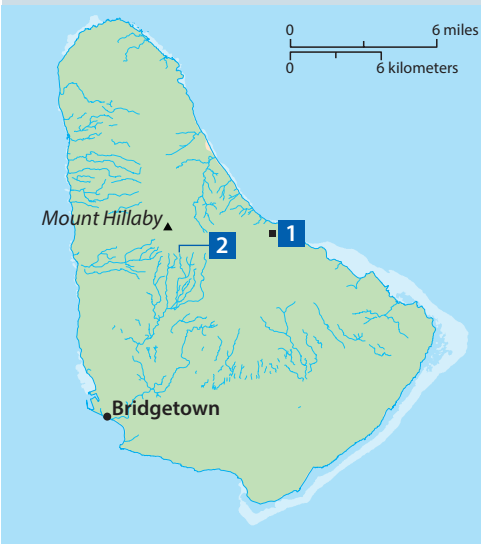
2 Pigeon Island (Managed by St Lucia National Trust) Historic site with visitor facilities and trails through grassland, scrub and dry forest. Look for hummingbirds, Spectacled Thrush and St Lucia Anole in the scrub, and for seabirds offshore.

3 East coast dry forest Entry points can be difficult but include tracks to Grande Anse beach. Guides are recommended. Highlights include St Lucia Thrasher, Rufous Nightjar and Orion Cecropian.



Barbados

430 km² (166 sq. miles), Mount Hillaby 343 m (1,125 ft)



An island with gentle slopes, open agricultural landscapes and small pockets of remnant forest, often nestled in gullies, such as Turner Hall Woods. The rocky windward coast is wilder in character, with cliffs, exposed stretches of grassland and low scrub. Its isolated location, over 161 km (100 miles) east of St Vincent, makes Barbados an important landfall for birds on migration. Large numbers of waterbirds drop in to rest and feed on wetlands between August and November, and rare or vagrant birds and insects can occur from as far away as Africa and Europe.

Single-island endemics	Barbados Bullfinch, Barbados Anole, Barbados Leaf-toed Gecko CR , Barbados Threadsnae CR
Specialty species	Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Masked Duck

\$ ♿ **1 Andromeda Botanic Gardens** (Managed by Barbados National Trust) Mature gardens with visitor facilities and partially accessible paths lead through an extensive collection of tropical plants and water features. Hummingbirds, Barbados Bullfinch, Barbados Anole, and a good range of butterflies and dragonflies can easily be seen.



\$ ♿ **2 Welchman Hall Gully** (Managed by Barbados National Trust) Visitor facilities, plus a trail through remnant areas of dry forest with native plants and limestone-cave features. Look for forest birds and Barbados Anole.



3 Barbados wetlands (Most under private ownership) A network of wetlands, some seasonal, attract a remarkable range of migratory waterbirds. Some have viewing from a perimeter road or beach, but there is uncertainty over public access, which should always be checked.

Rocky scrub on the windward coast.



St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)

388 km² (149 sq. miles), La Soufrière 1,234 m (4,049 ft)



This large volcanic island has a heavily forested, mountainous interior that is home to endemic reptiles and birds, including St Vincent Parrot. The Grenadines are lower lying, with scrub, dry forest and coastal wetlands that attract a range of waterbirds. Beaches and rocky cays are important for nesting sea turtles and seabirds, including Red-footed Booby, with cetaceans offshore.

Single-island endemics	St Vincent Parrot VU , St Vincent Wren, Whistling Warbler EN , St Vincent Frog EN , St Vincent Bush Anole, St Vincent Tree Anole, Union Island Clawed Gecko CR , St Vincent Treeboa, St Vincent Coachwhip (Black Snake) CR , St Vincent Hairstreak
Restricted-range endemics	Grenada Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Lesser Antillean Tanager, Southern Lesser Antilles Horned Iguana, Antillean Ameiva, Southern Martinique Dwarf Gecko, Windward Tree Racer

\$ National Park trails: Vermont Nature Trail and La Soufrière Nature Trail (Managed by the National Parks Authority) Visitor facilities and well-managed trails through rainforest, with elfin forest on the La Soufrière trail; some sections are steep and difficult. Look for St Vincent Parrot, Whistling Warbler, Rufous-throated Solitaire, endemic reptiles and Yellow Land Crab.

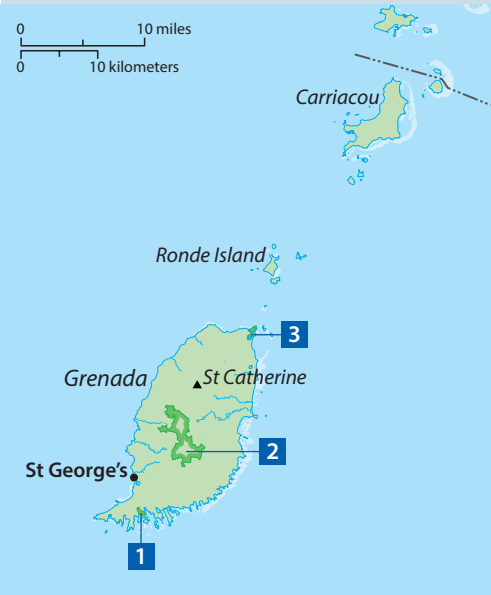
\$ 1 SVG Botanic Gardens, Kingstown (Managed by the National Parks Authority) Mature formal gardens, with visitor facilities, that attract Common Black Hawk, the all-black form of Bananaquit, anoles, butterflies and dragonflies. The St Vincent Parrot captive breeding program is on site.

2 Ashton Lagoon, Union Island An inspiring habitat restoration project, with walkways, trails and an impressive suspension bridge. The lagoon holds migratory waterbirds, crabs and dragonflies. Seabirds and sea turtles can be seen offshore.



Grenada

344 km² (132 sq. miles), Mount St Catherine 840 m (2,756 ft)



A heavily forested volcanic island with three distinct National Parks that hold the whole range of endemic birds and reptiles. Dry forest is especially important to the critically endangered Grenada Dove, one of the rarest birds on earth. Several bird and bat species from South America reach Grenada but are rare or absent farther north. The offshore Grenadines have areas of scrub and dry forest, accessed by trails including the High North Peak on Carriacou: these are important for breeding seabirds and nesting sea turtles.

Single-island endemics	Grenada Dove  , Grenada Wren, Grenada Frog  , Grenada Tree Anole, Grenada Bush Anole, Grenada Treeboa
Restricted-range endemics	Grenada Flycatcher, Lesser Antillean Tanager, Antillean Ameiva, Windward Tree Racer
Specialty species	Hook-billed Kite, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Fork-tailed Flycatcher



1 Mount Hartman National Park Visitor center and trails through dry forest bordering mangrove-fringed coastal lagoons. One of the last two remaining areas for Grenada Dove. Look for Hook-billed Kite, Grenada Wren, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, endemic reptiles including Grenada Treeboa, land crabs and butterflies, including South American Mestra.



 **2 Grand Etang National Park** Freshwater lake and rainforest with trails, accessible viewpoints and a visitor center with formal garden. One of the best sites for Rufous-breasted Hermit, Cocoa Thrush, Lesser Antillean Tanager, endemic reptiles and forest dragonflies.



 **3 Levera National Park** Rocky windward coast and beaches with information center and a large, mangrove-fringed lagoon with a boardwalk and observation tower. Look for seabirds and Green Turtles offshore, with migratory waterbirds and mangrove crabs around the lagoon.

All sites are managed by the National Parks and Forestry Department.

How to use this guide

Each species account includes the following information:

Names: **common** and *scientific* names are given for each species. Recent research has led to some taxonomic revision and reclassification, affecting both names of several species, particularly reptiles. Where taxonomy is unsettled, this is indicated; for clarity, some former common and scientific names are included in parentheses.

For consistency, names are aligned with the American Ornithological Society's *Checklist of North and Middle American Birds* (used by eBird), the American Society of Mammalogists' *Mammal Diversity Database*, and for amphibians and reptiles, *Caribherp* and *Reptiles of the Lesser Antilles* (Thorpe, 2022). For the remaining groups, the most current and widely accepted common and scientific names are used, largely based on iNaturalist.

IUCN Red List Status is given for all globally threatened species (see box at right).

Endemic species are indicated to identify those species unique to the region. All other species occur more widely in the Americas:

- E** Species endemic to the wider Caribbean
- E** Species endemic to the Eastern Caribbean
- e** Subspecies endemic to the Eastern Caribbean (may be more than one)

IUCN Red List Status

EX	Extinct
CR	Critically Endangered
EN	Endangered
VU	Vulnerable
NT	Near Threatened
DD	Data Deficient

Distribution gives an indication of presence and is always listed north to south from the Virgin Islands to Grenada. Data for some species and/or islands are limited.

- **Throughout** Found on all the main islands; may be absent from smaller offshore islands.
- **Widespread** Found on most of the main islands.
- **Limited or restricted** Found within a specific geographic range, either contiguous (e.g., “found from Anguilla to Antigua”) or discontinuous (e.g., “only on Dominica and St Lucia”).

Relative abundance for a species can vary between islands, and with both habitat and seasonality, and is allocated to one of four broad categories:

- **Common** Occurs in high densities; can be easy to see in its main habitats.
- **Locally common** Occurs in high or moderate densities but can be limited to discrete areas of habitat.
- **Uncommon** Occurs in low densities, often in discrete areas of habitat.
- **Rare** Occurs in very low densities or as an occasional visitor, often highly localized in particular habitats.

Identification (ID) At least one measure of **size** is given for the adult of each species; an approximation is used for the few species where data are not available:

- **L** Total length, including tail.
- **HB** Head and body length.
- **HS** Height at shoulder.
- **WS** Wingspan.
- **FW** Forewing length.
- **CL/CW** Carapace length/width.

Species are described with **key identification** features **highlighted** together with images. Similar species are grouped on a page where possible, so are not always presented in systematic order.

Voice (i.e., calls and/or song) is described phonetically where helpful for identification.

Rare and highly restricted-range species that are difficult to see or found only on offshore islands, together with introduced species, are not always fully described. Most are included, often in tabular form, for completeness.

Birds

Over 300 bird species have been recorded in the Eastern Caribbean, of which 36 are endemic. Rare and vagrant species are not included here but are widely covered in some excellent field guides to birds of the West Indies (see “Further Reading”, p. 301). Birds Caribbean regularly updates *The Complete Checklist of the Birds of the West Indies* (birdscaribbean.org), which also includes island checklists.

For ease of use, birds are separated into three sections, based on habitat: seabirds; waterbirds and shorebirds; and landbirds.

Species are resident and present year-round unless indicated through one of the following categories:

- **Breeding visitor** Mainly April to September; migrates to wintering areas elsewhere.
- **Non-breeding visitor** Visits for part of the year, typically August to April.
- **Passage visitor** Visits briefly during migration, which is mainly southbound between August and November, with fewer northbound between March and May.

Identification (ID) describes the plumage that you are most likely to see. Differences between male (♂) and female (♀) are given; juvenile or immatures are described where these can be confusing:

- **Adult plumage (ad, ♂ [male], ♀ [female])** All resident species with little or no change year-round.
- **Breeding plumage (b)** Mainly between April and July/August.
- **Non-breeding adult plumage (n)** Mainly between September and April.
- **Immature (i)** Non-adult plumages. 1st-winter is used for birds that have undertaken a first partial molt from their juvenile plumage (mainly terns and gulls).
- **Juvenile (j)** First plumage.



Black-necked Stilts (p. 76)

SEABIRDS

The rugged coastlines, sandy spits and scattered islands of the Eastern Caribbean are fantastic places for seabirds. Some pass through on migration and can be seen off Atlantic coasts, but 17 species breed, several in globally important populations—such as Brown Booby and Red-tailed Tropicbird.

Royal Tern, Brown Booby, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird and Red-billed Tropicbird are resident species and can be a common sight on some islands, often feeding close inshore. Terns, gulls and some boobies are breeding visitors, returning in April and May to small islands where they can safely breed. They form mixed colonies, noisy seabird cities full of action with courtship displays, aggressive interactions with neighbors, juveniles calling to be fed and the constant activity of adults flying to and from feeding grounds. By September young have fledged and colonies begin to empty as birds disperse; some to the coasts of South America, while pelagic species, such as Sooty Tern and Bridled Tern, head out to sea, often to unknown wintering areas.

Only a few species nest on the main islands, where they are vulnerable to disturbance, habitat loss and predation from introduced mammals. Least Terns breed in colonies along undisturbed coasts and around the edges of some salt-ponds and brackish lagoons. Tropicbirds find secure crevices and holes on inaccessible or remote cliffs, and Brown Pelicans nest in some of the larger mangrove forests.

Most of the major seabird colonies are recognized as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), but many are vulnerable, with no formal protection. Introduced rodents that prey upon seabird eggs and chicks are one of the biggest threats. Rodent-eradication projects have been undertaken on several small islands, resulting in improved seabird breeding success while also benefitting populations of rare reptiles.

Adult breeding plumage is described for all species. For those species that overwinter or that may be seen on migration, non-breeding and juvenile/1st-winter plumages may be included.

Sooty Terns (p. 52) can form large colonies.



Terns

Terns are slender, streamlined seabirds, with **narrow, pointed wings** and a light, buoyant flight. Most have a long slender bill and **forked tail**, **although this is not always obvious**. They feed by hovering and dipping or diving to catch small fish on or near the surface, rarely settling on the water. Royal Tern is the only resident species; the rest occur as breeding or passage visitors, but adults in duller non-breeding plumage and immature birds may linger until November and can be tricky to identify!

1 **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* L 39 cm (15½") | WS 81 cm (32")

Uncommon breeding visitor **throughout**; occasional records year-round. Breeds in scattered colonies, mostly on small, uninhabited islands, nesting on cliffs, rocky outcrops, and in bushes. Surprisingly rare off main island coasts, but loose flocks are occasionally seen feeding over inshore waters.

ID: A distinctive **chocolate-brown** tern, mostly seen in flight, where it appears all-dark with a striking **white forehead and crown**, and a **square-ended tail**. Immature similar to adult but with reduced white on head.

VOICE: A range of croaking and rattling calls, rarely heard away from breeding colony.

2 **Sooty Tern** *Onychoprion fuscatus* L 41 cm (16") | WS 81 cm (32")

Breeding visitor; can occur **throughout**. Easily the most numerous seabird in the region but is difficult to see away from breeding sites on small, often remote islands. The largest colonies are around USVI, Anguilla and St Lucia: some are in excess of 10,000 pairs.

ID: **Black upperparts** contrast with clean white underparts. Very similar to Bridled Tern, but obvious **white forehead** on black crown extends only to **top of the eye**, not beyond. Flight strong and steady, showing white edges to forked tail. Juvenile is sooty-brown with dark breast and **lines of pale spots** on upperwings.

VOICE: Characteristic three-note call “wacky-wack” or “wide-awake”.

3 **Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus* L 38 cm (15") | WS 76 cm (30")

Breeding visitor **throughout**, but difficult to see from the main islands. Nests in small, scattered colonies on remote, rocky islands, often with other seabird species but typically in less open situations among rocks and in crevices.

ID: Differs from Sooty Tern in having paler **gray-brown upperparts** with an obviously **black cap** and **longer white forehead** that **extends as a line behind the eye**. In flight shows white edges to **long forked tail**. Juvenile has **pale barring** on back and upperwings.

VOICE: Short nasal “kek kek” and softer trills.







BROWN NODDY
 BREEDING
p. 52



SOOTY TERN
 BREEDING
p. 52



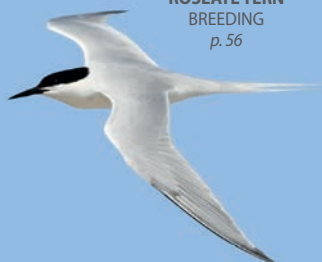
BRIDLED TERN
 BREEDING
p. 52



LEAST TERN
 1ST WINTER
p. 56



LEAST TERN
 BREEDING
p. 56



ROSEATE TERN
 BREEDING
p. 56



ROSEATE TERN
 JUVENILE—1ST WINTER
p. 56



COMMON TERN
 BREEDING
p. 56



SANDWICH TERN
 BREEDING
p. 56



GULL-BILLED TERN
 BREEDING
p. 56



ROYAL TERN
BREEDING
p. 58



ROYAL TERN
NON-BREEDING
p. 58



ROYAL TERN
JUVENILE
p. 58

CASPIAN TERN
NON-BREEDING
p. 58



LAUGHING GULL
BREEDING
p. 58



LAUGHING GULL
JUVENILE—1ST WINTER
p. 58

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
1ST WINTER
p. 58



1 **Least Tern** *Sternula antillarum* L 23 cm (9") | WS 51 cm (20")

Widespread but localized breeding visitor from the **Virgin Islands to Martinique**, passage visitor farther south. Forms small colonies, mostly fewer than 100 pairs, on sandbars, beaches, coastal lagoons and salt-ponds. The only tern that regularly breeds on the main islands.

ID: **Tiny**; the smallest tern. Neatly marked with **pale gray** upperwings, **black cap** and **white forehead**.

Bill bright yellow, can show a small black tip; legs yellow. A thin dark line on the wingtip shows as a **dark leading edge** to outer wing in flight. Post-breeding adults and the browner, more marked juveniles, have a dark bill, speckled crown and, especially on juveniles, a dark bar at bend of wing. First-winter birds can be confusing, with large dark wedge on outerwing and **striking white panel** on rear inner wing. Flight is very fast, readily stopping to hover before splashing into water for prey.

VOICE: Very vocal: a shrill, chattering “krit-krit”, often heard when birds are hard to see against the sky.

2 **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii* L 37 cm (14½") | WS 74 cm (29")

Breeding visitor; can occur **throughout**, but more numerous in the Virgin Islands and northern Lesser Antilles. Nests in scattered colonies on low-lying offshore islands but is vulnerable when breeding; colonies are known to move between sites if disturbed. Occasionally seen over inshore waters, especially during migration.

ID: A **very pale gray** tern; can show a pale pink flush to white underparts, hence common name. Black cap; black bill, becoming **orange-red at base when breeding**; and bright orange-red legs. Long outer tail feathers **extend beyond wingtips** when perched, showing as long, forked tail in flight. Juvenile has dark V's on back and a reduced black cap. Flight is dashing and rapid, with angular shallow dives.

VOICE: A sharp two-note “chiv-ick”.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* L 37 cm (14½") | WS 76 cm (30")

Uncommon breeding visitor from the **Virgin Islands to Martinique**, passage visitor farther south, rarely seen from the main islands. Similar to Roseate Tern, but upperparts are darker gray, with a broad dark trailing edge to wingtip (*pp.* 54–5).

3 **Sandwich (Cabot's) Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis acuflavidus*

L 43 cm (17") | WS 86 cm (34")

Uncommon breeding visitor to the **Virgin Islands** and **northern Lesser Antilles** but can be seen throughout on passage over inshore waters and coastal lagoons. Readily rests on buoys, jetties, beaches and salt-pond walls; nests in small colonies with other terns on sandy spits and cays.

ID: Upperwings and back **very pale gray**, underparts white: looks all white at distance. **Shaggy black cap**, much reduced post-breeding, long black bill with small but **obvious yellow or pale tip**, and black legs. Flight is strong with long narrow, angular wings and **short, forked tail**.

VOICE: Flight call is a characteristic and far-carrying, harsh, two-note “kir-rick”.

(Common) **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* L 42 cm (16") | WS 85 cm (33")

A rare breeding visitor to **Anegada (BVI)**; occasional passage visitor elsewhere. Similar to Sandwich Tern but with **shorter and heavier black bill**, broader wings and shorter, lightly forked tail (*pp.* 54–5).



1 **Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus* L 49 cm (19½") | WS 104 cm (41")

The only tern **present year-round**. Found **throughout**, but more numerous on the northern islands. Nests in small numbers on sandy spits and small cays. A familiar sight on many islands over shallow bays, inshore waters and coastal lagoons: often seen resting on boats, salt-pond walls and rocky outcrops.

ID: The **largest** commonly seen gray tern. Distinctive with a **stout orange bill** and **shaggy black cap** (post-breeding, this is much reduced to dark band behind eye). Flight is strong and direct, showing long wings and shallow-forked tail. Upperwing has thin dark bar near trailing edge and a black wedge on upper wingtip, which shows as **dark trailing edge on underwing**. First-winter has more extensive dark markings to upperwings and tail.

VOICE: Rasping, high-pitched "*kur-rerr-ik*", often heard when bird is hard to see against the sky.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* L 55 cm (22") | WS 110 cm (43")

Uncommon to rare non-breeding visitor that can occur throughout. Similar to Royal Tern but is larger with a heavier, dark-tipped red bill and **large black patch at tip of underwing** (pp. 54–5).

Gulls

Laughing Gull is the only breeding species of gull, but several occur as rare or non-breeding visitors or vagrants. Numbers and sightings of larger gulls are increasing, especially on the northern islands. Lesser Black-backed Gull is the most frequent, but Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls are all possible. All have a series of immature plumages, which can make identification difficult. Larger gulls can take four years to reach full breeding plumage.

2 **Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla* L 41 cm (16") | WS 104 cm (41")

Breeding visitor **throughout**, with occasional records year-round: the only regularly occurring gull. Nests in colonies on sandy cays and low-lying islands. Noisy and gregarious, often gathering in large flocks over sandy coasts, inshore waters and coastal wetlands. Associates with other seabirds when feeding but, unlike terns, will settle on water, picking food from the surface. Tolerant of people: readily scavenges around ports and harbors.

ID: **Smoky-gray** upperparts with **black wingtips** and **obvious black hood**, much reduced with a whiter head post-breeding. Dark bill is slightly **down-curved at tip**. Juveniles, seen from June onwards, lack black hood and are dusky gray-brown overall, with a slightly paler belly and a bold dark band near tip of white tail, obvious in flight.

VOICE: Nasal, laugh-like calls are a familiar sound on many islands during the breeding season.

3 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* L 53 cm (21") | WS 137 cm (54")

Non-breeding visitor, from the **Virgin Islands to Guadeloupe** and **Barbados**, with occasional records year-round: numbers appear to be increasing throughout the Caribbean. A surface-feeder typically seen over inshore waters, coastal lagoons and salt-ponds, but will readily scavenge around ports.

ID: **Large** (noticeably bigger than Laughing Gull), with a heavy bill. **Back and upperwings dark gray**, head pale, **bill and legs yellow**. Juvenile and 1st-winter birds are more common in the region: mainly dark gray-brown with heavy streaking, paler streaked head and dark bill.

VOICE: A variety of nasal calls and often repeated bark-like "*awoo*".

1b



1n



BREEDING TO NON-BREEDING

2



2

1ST WINTER



3n



3j



Tropicbirds and shearwaters

1 Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* L 48 cm (19"), 99 cm (39") including tail plumes | WS 105 cm (41")

Resident **throughout**, but localized on remote headlands, cliffs and rocky islands. Largest populations are on the **Virgin Islands, Saba, St Eustatius and Guadeloupe**. Most easily seen when breeding (Jan–Jul): they nest in crevices and holes along cliffs but feed out at sea, where they hover at height before diving to catch fish and squid. These beautiful seabirds can put on an amazing show with their screaming calls and spectacular display flights.

ID: Mostly seen in flight, showing distinctive **long white tail streamers**. Adults are strikingly white with fine black barring on back and inner wings and **black edges to outer wings**. A **bold black line** runs from the **short red bill** through the eye. Juvenile lacks tail streamers; bill is paler, more yellowish.

VOICE: A range of rattling and screaming calls at breeding sites, including a harsh, extended “*keee-arrrr*”.

2 White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* L 39 cm (15½"), 81 cm (32") including tail plumes | WS 93 cm (37")

Breeding visitor **throughout**, but less numerous than Red-billed Tropicbird. The largest populations are on the **Virgin Islands and Guadeloupe**. Nests along coastal cliffs and on rocky outcrops, where pairs perform wonderful synchronized display flights. Feeds out at sea, hovering before diving to catch fish and squid.

ID: Similar to Red-billed Tropicbird but with a **yellow bill** and a **bold diagonal black stripe on inner wing**, obvious in flight. Juvenile has coarse barring on back and hindneck; lacks tail streamers. Flight is fast with shallow wingbeats, typically at height over the sea.

VOICE: Deep nasal croaking and high-pitched “*kwit*”.

3 Sargasso (Audubon’s) Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri*
L 30 cm (12") | WS 69 cm (27")

Widespread but elusive resident in small scattered colonies along isolated cliffs and on offshore islands. Returns to nest sites at night and is difficult to see when breeding, but small groups fly past exposed headlands or gather to form rafts out at sea, where they are occasionally seen from boats and ferries. Makes shallow or surface dives for small squid and fish.

ID: **Dark brown upperparts** contrast with **clean white underparts**. **Head brown to base of eye** but can show thin pale eye-surround; lower face and throat white. Bill thin and dark, hooked at tip. Flight is characteristic of shearwaters: a few fast wingbeats interspersed with glides very low over water, when it shows **dark undertail** and white center to dark underwing.

VOICE: Silent at sea, but highly vocal around nesting colonies after dark. Calls include a soft rolling, repeated four-note “*pum-il-i-co*”.





Boobies

Large seabirds, distinctive in flight with obvious projecting head, neck and bill; a pointed tail; and long thin wings. Boobies fly with stiff, shallow wingbeats, interspersed with glides, typically low over water, where they make angular dives for fish and squid. Three species occur. All nest colonially on small, often remote rocky islands. They can have an extended breeding season in the region.

1 **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* L 74 cm (29") | WS 145 cm (57")

The most numerous and easy-to-see booby: resident **throughout**, with the largest populations on the **Virgin Islands** and **Anguilla**. Regularly feeds close inshore and can be confiding, resting on rocks, buoys, boats and jetties.

ID: Dark brown overall with a **sharply contrasting white belly** and white center to base of underwings. **Face, legs and large webbed feet are pale yellow**. Immature has a gray bill and is a paler, washed-out brown, with a **clearly defined line between darker breast and lighter belly**.

VOICE: Calls include a sharp, nasal honking, mostly heard at breeding sites.

2 **Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula* L 71 cm (28") | WS 152 cm (60")

Widespread resident with a fragmented distribution: the largest populations are on **USVI, the Grenadines** and **Grenada**. Breeds in scattered colonies, often nesting in low bushes and trees. Difficult to see away from breeding sites.

ID: There are **two main color phases**: all **white** or **buff-brown**. Both have dark brown-black outerwings extending to form a broad dark band along innerwings, and typically, a **buff-white tail**. White phase can show yellowish wash to head and neck. All have a **pale blue bill** and distinctive red legs and feet. Immature variably gray-brown with paler underparts, dark underwings, grayish bill and dull red feet.

VOICE: Calls include a harsh "squawk" and deep rattle.

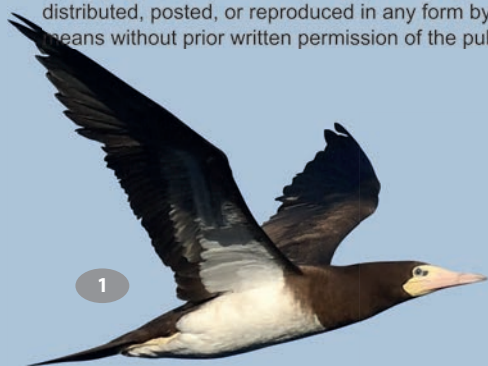
3 **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* L 86 cm (34") | WS 165 cm (65")

Localized resident, mainly around the northern islands, where the largest populations are on **USVI** and **Anguilla**. Breeds in small numbers in a few scattered colonies, with Brown Boobies. Adults make regular flights from nest sites to deeper water to feed and are rarely seen from the main islands.

ID: **Strikingly white** with **black tail** and outerwings extending to form a broad dark band along innerwings. Obvious **dark mask around yellow eye and bill**; legs and feet gray. Immature browner with strongly contrasting **white underparts and collar**, and a paler bill.

VOICE: Calls include a goose-like braying and whistles.



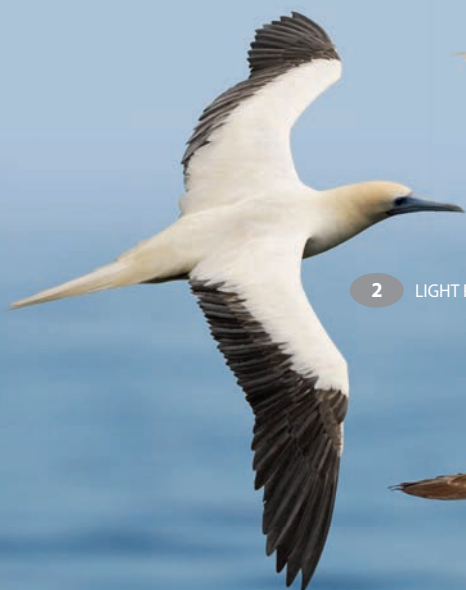


1



2

DARK PHASE



2

LIGHT PHASE



3i



3

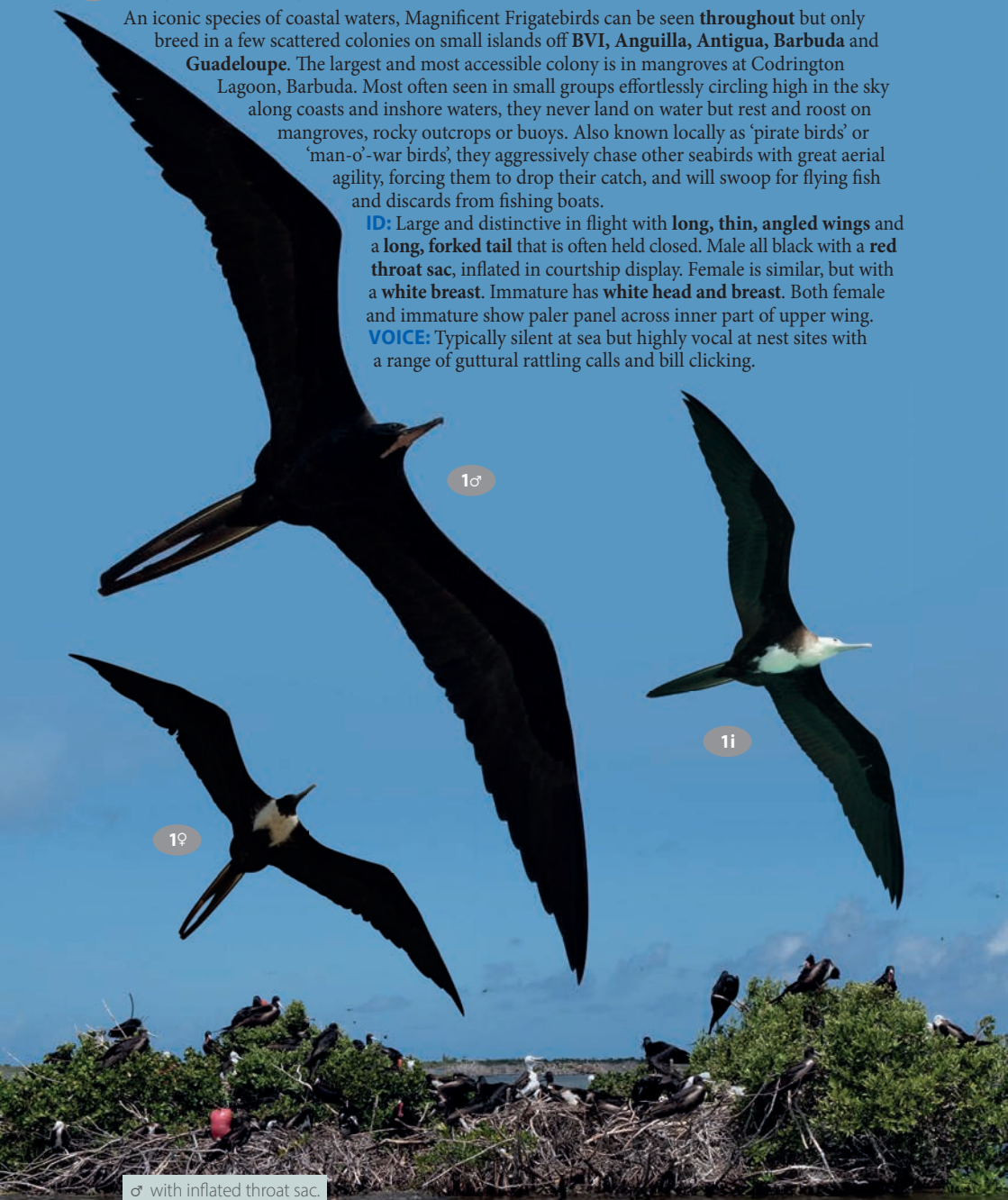
Distinctive, large seabirds

1 **Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* L 102 cm (40") | WS 229 cm (90")

An iconic species of coastal waters, Magnificent Frigatebirds can be seen **throughout** but only breed in a few scattered colonies on small islands off **BVI, Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda** and **Guadeloupe**. The largest and most accessible colony is in mangroves at Codrington Lagoon, Barbuda. Most often seen in small groups effortlessly circling high in the sky along coasts and inshore waters, they never land on water but rest and roost on mangroves, rocky outcrops or buoys. Also known locally as 'pirate birds' or 'man-o'-war birds', they aggressively chase other seabirds with great aerial agility, forcing them to drop their catch, and will swoop for flying fish and discards from fishing boats.

ID: Large and distinctive in flight with **long, thin, angled wings** and a **long, forked tail** that is often held closed. Male all black with a **red throat sac**, inflated in courtship display. Female is similar, but with a **white breast**. Immature has **white head and breast**. Both female and immature show paler panel across inner part of upper wing.

VOICE: Typically silent at sea but highly vocal at nest sites with a range of guttural rattling calls and bill clicking.



♂ with inflated throat sac.

2 Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* L 122 cm (48") | WS 215 cm (85")

Unmistakable, seen year-round along inshore waters, cliffs and coastal wetlands **throughout**, with smaller numbers south from Martinique. Nests in small, scattered colonies in mangroves and on sea cliffs. Their spectacular plunge-dives for fish are often close inshore and can even be among people swimming! They sometimes gather on ponds and form tight, surface-feeding flocks. Can be confiding when resting in mangroves and on rocks, trees, jetties and boats.

ID: Huge and distinctive with heavy body, short tail and **characteristic long bill with pouch**. Head and neck white, becoming more colorful when breeding, with yellow forehead and chestnut hindneck. Immatures drabber, with paler underparts and darker head. Often seen in flight, which is heavy with a few flaps and short glides; small groups fly in lines.

VOICE: Guttural grunts and squeaks with bill-claps, but usually silent away from breeding colonies.



WATERBIRDS

The varied wetlands of the Eastern Caribbean are vital habitats for waterbirds, from flocks of elegant Black-necked Stilts fringing a salt-pond to a solitary Yellow-crowned Night Heron stalking crabs in the deep shade of a mangrove swamp. Migration periods can be particularly dramatic, especially between August and November, when large numbers of plovers and sandpipers arrive, some just days after leaving their Arctic breeding grounds. The best places to see a range of waterbirds are the more extensive open ponds, coastal lagoons and mangrove swamps. Numbers of birds on any wetland fluctuate in response to rainfall and water levels: many shallow wetlands periodically dry out, and waterbirds respond by moving between sites or even between islands.

More than 50 species are resident or regular visitors, and identification can be challenging at a wetland teeming with unfamiliar ducks, herons, egrets and shorebirds. A good starting point, especially for shorebirds, is to compare size, leg length and bill shape and look for different feeding strategies. For example, some species probe in deeper water, some disperse around muddy or vegetated margins, and others feed together in tight flocks.

Most migratory species are seen in non-breeding plumage between September and March, so this is described. However, some birds arrive early in August or leave later in April/May, when they can be in breeding plumage or in transition between the two. Key features of breeding and juvenile plumages are given where these are likely to be seen or cause confusion.



Close views of waterbirds on a coastal wetland, Anegada, BVI.

Ducks and grebes

1 White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis* L 43 cm (17")

Widespread and locally common resident from the **Virgin Islands to Guadeloupe**, becoming scarcer farther south; often the only duck species present. A dabbling duck found on deeper freshwater and brackish wetlands, including salt-ponds, where flotillas of ducklings can be a common sight. Fluctuating water levels result in some local movement or dispersal.

ID: Unmistakable combination of **white cheeks**, **red bill patch**, boldly spotted brown underparts and **pointed white tail**. Brown and green bands on upperwing and white patch on underwing are visible in flight.

VOICE: A range of rasping quacks and whistles.

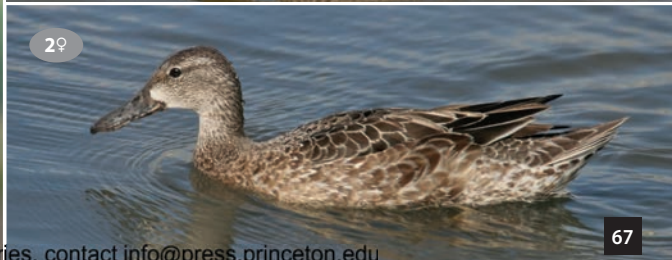
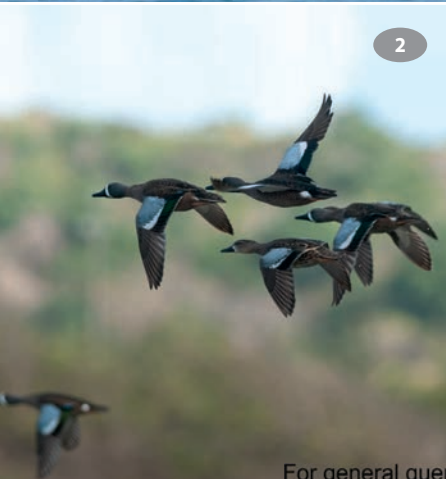
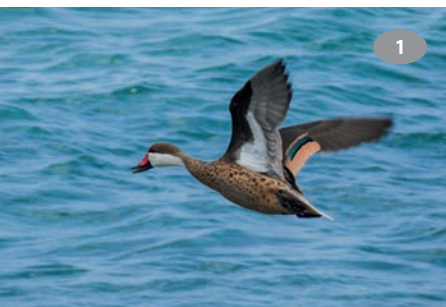
2 Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* L 39 cm (15½")

Non-breeding visitor **throughout**, with smaller numbers south from Guadeloupe: the only common migrant duck. Often in flocks, it can occur on any large freshwater or saline wetland, where it feeds by dabbling in shallow water and along wetland margins.

ID: Male finely spotted brown with **dark gray-blue head**, **obvious white crescent in front of eye** and white patch on flanks before dark tail. Female dull mottled brown, with **pale patch at base of bill** and thin dark line through the eye. In flight both show an obvious **pale-blue panel** on upperwing and **white center** to underwing.

VOICE: Mostly silent when in the region, but female has a bark-like “quack”, male a thin repeated whistle.

Scarce and rare dabbling ducks can be found by searching through flocks of Blue-winged Teal. The most frequent are Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*, American Wigeon *Mareca americana*, Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* and Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*.





E **1 West Indian Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna arborea* L 53 cm (21")

NT **Endemic to the Caribbean**, with the main populations in the Greater Antilles and Bahamas. Only reliably found on **Antigua and Barbuda**, with occasional records elsewhere. Small flocks feed mainly at night on seeds and plants, often flying to grassland away from water. Can be difficult to see in the daytime when roosting around brackish lagoons, freshwater ponds and marshes. Habitat loss, predation by introduced species and hunting have all contributed to its decline: extensive conservation and public awareness programs are now well established.

ID: Large with **upright posture**, long neck and long legs. Mostly warm mottled brown with **boldly marked black and white flanks**; throat and neck pale, except for dark brown line down hindneck. Bill and legs gray. Shows **large pale patch on upperwing** in flight.

VOICE: A mournful, high-pitched whistle and brighter, rapid trilling.

2 Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* L 51 cm (20")

Uncommon resident on **Barbados** and increasingly seen on **Grenada**. A rare wandering visitor elsewhere. Localized on freshwater ponds and marshes, flying out at dusk to forage for seeds and plants in fields and grassland.

ID: A large, striking duck with a distinctive **black belly**, **white band across wing** and pale face with obvious **white eyering**. **Bill and legs** are a **bright pinky-red**. Juvenile duller overall with less black on belly. In flight shows black underwings and **broad white bar on upperwing**.

VOICE: Shrill trilling whistles and a sharp "chit".

3 Fulvous Whistling-Duck

Dendrocygna bicolor L 48 cm (19")

A rare and transient non-breeding visitor to coastal marshes and wetlands. It can occur anywhere in small numbers but is most often recorded on **Barbados**, where possibly introduced.

ID: Dark brown upperparts, contrasting **warm tawny-brown** underparts with **white flashes on flanks** and **white undertail**. Bill, legs and feet are **bright blue-gray**. In flight **wings are all-dark** and **tail has obvious white band at base**.

VOICE: Wheezy and high-pitched "pi-tuuu" and rasping "rruppp".





1 **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* L 43 cm (17")

An uncommon and sporadic non-breeding visitor **throughout**. A diving duck found mostly on deeper freshwater ponds and wetlands, where it makes frequent short dives for plants and invertebrates.

ID: Male is striking with black upperparts and contrasting **pale gray flanks** with obvious **white band at the front**. A red-brown ring at base of neck explains its common name but is difficult to see. Female brown with paler head, white base to bill and **white eyering**. Both have a distinctively patterned **bill: gray with black and white bands at tip**.

VOICE: A short, deep barking quack.

2 **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* L 42 cm (16½")

Uncommon to rare non-breeding visitor. Can occur **throughout** on freshwater ponds and saline lagoons, where it dives for aquatic invertebrates.

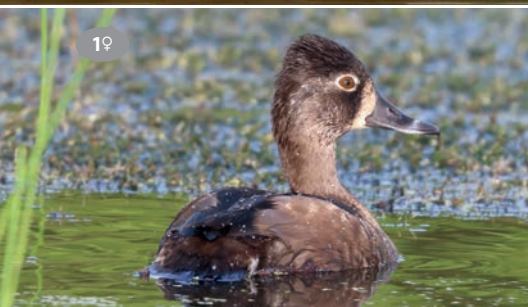
ID: Male black with contrasting **white flanks** and **pale, finely barred back**. Female brown overall with paler flanks and obvious **white patch at base of the bill**. Both have bright yellow eyes and pale gray bill with **small dark tip**.

VOICE: Growling, low repeated "rrrra".

1♂



1♀



2♀



2♂



(continued...)

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