

Australian Government  
Director of National Parks



BIRDS OF  
NORFOLK ISLAND  
NATIONAL PARK AND  
BOTANIC GARDEN



*Discover the wonders  
of Norfolk's birds*





WELCOME TO NORFOLK  
ISLAND NATIONAL PARK  
AND BOTANIC GARDEN



CAPTAIN COOK  
MONUMENT AND  
BIRD ROCK ARE  
GREAT PLACES TO  
SEE THE SEABIRDS,  
PARTICULARLY IN THE  
WARMER MONTHS.



# NORFOLK'S FEATHERED FRIENDS



Norfolk Island is home to a fascinating mixture of land, water and seabirds. Presented here are a few of the more common and interesting species you may see in the park and garden.

The island's isolation means that although Norfolk has relatively few land and forest bird species, a high proportion of these birds are found nowhere else in the world.

Over 20 species of seabirds can be readily seen from the coastal areas of Norfolk Island. The smaller islands of Nepean and Phillip and the smaller islets off the Norfolk coastline are important breeding habitats for most of Norfolk Island's seabirds.



Like many isolated island ecosystems, the types of birds found on Norfolk Island changes over time. Occasionally, new species will visit – some only stay for a short time, while others will settle and make Norfolk Island their home.



Take a walk on one of the 15 tracks through the national park or botanic garden to see some of Norfolk's forest birds. Stop and listen and you may hear the melodious trilling of the golden whistler, and if you're lucky you'll catch the distinctive *kek-kek-kek-kek* of the endangered Norfolk Island green parrot. While on the coast, look out for the spectacular long tail feathers of the red-tailed tropic birds as they engage in their amazing and noisy acrobatic displays.





# SEABIRDS

## Wedge-tailed shearwater

*Puffinus pacificus*

If you look out to the ocean at sunset you may see these birds floating on the water before coming ashore just after nightfall. Known to locals as 'ghost birds', you may hear their moaning calls echo across the island at night. Shearwaters cover vast distances during their annual migration, travelling as far as 300 kilometres a day on their way to Norfolk to breed.



© Tobias Hayashi

## Masked booby

*Sula dactylatra fullagari*

These large and distinctive seabirds have a white body, black tail and a small black mask around their large yellow or yellowish-green beak. Phillip Island, Nepean Island and the Norfolk islets are the main local breeding areas for the masked booby. You can often see these birds at their nests between August and February. See if you can spot a chick – they are nearly as big as their parents.



## Red-tailed tropic-bird

*Phaethon rubricauda roseotincta*

Flushed with rose on the breast and black borders on the wings, you will see these spectacular snowy-feathered seabirds between October and May. Using their two bright scarlet tail quills, they perform elaborate and unique courtship rituals that can include hovering in a vertical position or even flying backwards.



© Duncan Wright

## Sooty tern

*Sterna fuscata*

With their sooty grey back and white underside, you might see these birds in large noisy flocks of thousands returning to one of Norfolk's offshore islands to breed. The local name for these birds is the whale bird, as they arrive back on Phillip Island at the same time as the spring/summer whale migration.



## White-capped noddy

*Anous minutus*

Also known as black noddies, you can recognise these birds by their black-brown feathers and distinctive white patch on the top of their heads. During summer, many of the tall trees become home to large numbers of white-capped noddies. They are known locally as 'titeracks' – a sound similar to an adult bird's call.



## White tern

*Gygis alba*

These graceful birds are snow-white except for their black bills, feet and eyes. Often flying in pairs, they are a symbol of Norfolk Island's summer sky. Fairy terns (as they are referred to locally) normally leave the island in May to spend several months at sea, flying constantly before returning in mid-August to mate.



© Fusion Films

## Little shearwater

*Puffinus assimilis*

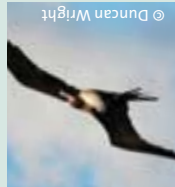
Two subspecies of this little bird are known to visit Norfolk to breed. They are black on the back with some white on the face, extending to a white belly and underwings which appear to be edged in black. At only 25-30 centimetres in length they are one of the smallest species of shearwater in the world.



## Greater and lesser frigatebirds

*Fregata minor and F. ariel*

With a two-pronged forked tail and long, bent wings, these birds are distinct from all other Norfolk's birds. Once only a transient visitor to Norfolk, frigate birds are now more regularly sighted flying high overhead, often along the coastline.



© Duncan Wright

R

C



C



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# FOREST BIRDS



**Green parrot**  
*Gyanorhamphus cookii*

The green parrot is the symbol of Norfolk Island National Park and a conservation success story. Thanks to an assisted breeding program, this iconic bird is recovering from near extinction. Listen for their characteristic 'kek-kek-kek' call and keep your eyes out for this parrot's bright green feathers, red crown-patch and blue-edged wings.



**Norfolk Island boobook owl**  
*Ninox novaeseelandiae undulata*

With only one female known to exist, this owl was once the rarest bird in the world. Thankfully it has been saved from extinction through crossbreeding with closely-related morepork owls from New Zealand. You can hear their particular 'boo-booork' call from dusk until midnight, especially on warm moonlit nights.



**Sacred kingfisher**  
*Todiramphus sanctus norfolkensis*

With their blue-grey wings, green back and golden breast, these kingfishers can often be seen perching on branches and posts. The local name for these charismatic birds is 'nuffka', literally meaning Norfolk. From September to December they form burrows for nesting by flying full speed into the ground to loosen dirt before finishing the job with their claws and beak.



**Scarlet robin**  
*Petroica multicolor multicolor*

There is no mistaking the male robin's spectacular red breast contrasting with a black back and white head-patch. The female is brown rather than black, and with a chest more dull orange than red. Pairs lay two to four eggs in a small nest made from plants and spider webs, the exterior camouflaged with lichens and moss.



**Golden whistler**  
*Pachycephala pectoralis xanthoprocta*

The melodious 'wh-wh-wh-wit - seep' is one of the most beautiful birdsongs in the Norfolk forests. Whistle back and you just might begin a 'conversation' with these curious birds (known locally as tamays). Males and females look similar, brown above with a pale gold underside that becomes brighter during breeding season.



**Grey fantail**  
*Rhipidura fuliginosa pelzelni*

These small, inquisitive birds are grey and brown with white markings, and never seem to stay still, flitting their fan-like tail as they move. They are not shy and may follow you along the walking tracks, singing in a vigorous chatter. Grey fantails live in forests and gardens across the island.



**Grey gerygone**  
*Gerygone modesta*

Gerygones, or hummingbirds, are Norfolk's smallest birds. They are also one of the most widely distributed species on the island. Both sexes are a dull grey-brown above and whitish below. You may see them darting or hovering with their fast moving wings. Also listen out for their melodious trilling song.



**Silvereye**  
*Zosterops lateralis*

With a white eye-ring distinctive of this family of birds, you can distinguish these grinnells (the Norfolk name for all the white-eyes) from their relatives by their grey chest colouring. Silvereyes have adapted to life on the island within the forest and around human habitation. You can find them year-round wherever fruit is available.





**Long-billed white-eye**

**R** ↓

These white-eyes, or grinnells, are unique to Norfolk Island. They are easily distinguished from the silvereye by their longer slender beak and their yellow-green chest colouring. Foraging in groups, they use their down-curved bill to search crevices in bark for insects and to feed on nectar.



**Emerald dove**

**C**

These small plump pigeons have a pinkish brown body with bright, emerald green wings. Male birds can be distinguished from females by their white shoulder patch and distinctive white barring across their rump. You can often hear their gentle cooing consisting of about six to seven coos starting quietly and rising.



**Welcome swallow**

**C** 🦋

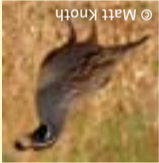
Rosy-breasted and fork-tailed, these agile dare-devils can often be seen flying in fast circles and figure eight patterns over fresh water and fields. They feed on insects while flying. These swallows are winter visitors to Norfolk, being here from the end of March until October.



**Feral chicken**

**A**

The colour of the feral fowl varies from plain black, white or red/brown, through to showy mottled metallic-green, and speckled. Widespread on the island, this domestic escapee causes serious disruption to natural regeneration of native plant species and threatens some of Norfolk Island's endangered snails.



**California quail**

**A**

Easily recognised by a characteristic 'flag' on their head, this quail was introduced to the island as a game bird in 1895. You might see them in flocks of five to 20 feeding on the ground, quickly running or springing into short explosive bursts of flight to escape a threat.



**Crimson rosella**

**C**

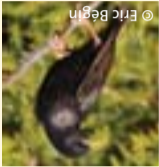
Introduced in the early 1800s as a cage bird, this showy red parrot with a blue face-patch, tail and wing margins is now prolific around the island. They directly compete for nest sites, territory and food with the endangered green parrot.



**European blackbird**

**C**

The male blackbird, as its name suggests, is usually all black with an orange to yellow beak. Young birds have a brown coloured beak. The female is a plain brown colour with a yellowish beak. They can often be seen hopping along the ground in search of insects or worms, or feeding on fruits in the tree tops.



**Common starling**

**A**

These glossy birds form large flocks in open pastures and also occur in smaller groups in forested and residential areas. You can distinguish them from blackbirds, as starlings always run when on the ground while blackbirds always hop.



**Song thrush**

**C**

The song thrush has small brown inverted 'V' shaped markings from its chin to its rump. The warm olive-brown on its back can lighten to a paler grey-brown by mid-summer. When on the ground, song thrushes hop and run alternately in short bursts. They feed on Norfolk's snails and other invertebrates.



**Feral pigeon**

**C**

Believed to have arrived on Norfolk in 1790 with the wreckage of the *Sirius*, the flagship of the First Fleet, pigeons are now common around the entire island. Their colour varies from pale grey with a metallic green sheen on their necks and black wing stripes, through to dark greyish-black with minimal patterning.



# SYMBOL LEGEND

## NUMBERS ON NORFOLK

**A** ABUNDANT These birds occur in large numbers and are very easy to find

**C** COMMON These birds are harder to spot, but by spending some time in the park, you are likely to see them

**R** RARE VZ These birds occur in very small numbers and might be hard to find

## RESIDENCY STATUS

**MIGRANT** Only present on Norfolk and/or Phillip islands at some times of the year

**ENDEMIC** Occur naturally on Norfolk Island and nowhere else in the world

## CONSERVATION STATUS



VULNERABLE

These species are likely to become endangered if the threats to their survival or reproduction are not reduced or removed



ENDANGERED

These species have a high risk of becoming extinct and require special management to secure their future

For a complete Norfolk Island National Park bird checklist, please visit:  
[environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk](http://environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk)



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NORFOLK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK  
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- stay on the tracks to avoid damaging plants and causing erosion
- all plants, animals, timber and soil are protected throughout the park. Please do not disturb or take them
- please take your rubbish with you when you leave the park
- feeding the birds or leaving food scraps around helps the introduced birds and rodents – please don't feed the wildlife

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- please wear sturdy footwear – bare feet, thongs or high heels are not recommended
- take extra care after rain because the tracks may become slippery
- some tracks may be uneven with protruding tree roots, or have numerous steps – please watch your step and use handrails where provided
- do not use mountain bikes, cars, quad-bikes or motor bikes on walking tracks (Park Service and emergency vehicles are permitted)
- slip, stop, slap! – protect yourself from the sun
- please stay away from cliff edges

## FOR YOUR SAFETY