MASCARENE PETREL AND RÉUNION ISLAND ENDEMICS

07–10 DECEMBER 2027
07–10 DECEMBER 2028



*We hope that **Mascarene Petrel** will be the highlight of the trip (photo Olivier Comte).*

Overview

THIS TOUR PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MASCARENE PETREL

This short, three-night tour is carefully timed to maximize our chances of seeing the Critically Endangered **Mascarene Petrel**, a Réunion breeding endemic. Two dedicated pelagic trips are planned to give us the best possible opportunities to encounter this highly sought-after species. We should also see a good selection of other pelagic birds, including **Barau's Petrel**, another Réunion breeding endemic.

Réunion is a spectacular volcanic island situated in the western Indian Ocean between Mauritius and Madagascar and forms part of the Mascarene Islands. The island is renowned for its dramatic mountain scenery, lush forests and towering volcanic peaks. Much of the island is dominated by steep forested slopes and deep valleys, while the towering Piton des Neiges rises to 10,069 feet (3,069 meters) above sea level. Réunion is also home to the famous Piton de la Fournaise, one of the world's most active volcanoes.

Other than the pelagic birding, we will also do our best to see all six of the island's endemic land birds. Species we will search for include **Réunion Cuckooshrike**, **Réunion Stonechat**, **Réunion Bulbul**, **Réunion Grey White-eye**, **Réunion Olive White-eye** and **Réunion Harrier**, as well as endemic subspecies of **Mascarene Swiftlet** and **Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher**.



Réunion Stonechat *is one of the Réunion endemics that we are likely to see during our time on the island (photo Charles J. Sharp).*

The pelagic trips off Réunion can be particularly exciting, with opportunities for large numbers of **Barau's Petrel** gathering offshore in the evenings. Other possible seabirds include **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, **Tropical Shearwater**, **Lesser Noddy**, **Brown Noddy** and **White-tailed Tropicbird**. By far the most sought-after species, however, remains the **Mascarene Petrel**, one of the world's rarest seabirds.

Detailed Itinerary (4 days/3 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Réunion

After arriving at Roland Garros Airport (near Saint-Denis) before midday, we will transfer to our hotel. We can spend a bit of time birding in the afternoon. The aim is to have our first attempt at some of the Réunion Island endemics. We can spend a few hours on the forested mountain slopes not far from our hotel. Otherwise, we will enjoy a meal together as we look forward to a good tour ahead.

Overnight: Réunion hotel

Day 2. Réunion endemics birding and afternoon pelagic

Our first morning will be spent finding the endemics that inhabit the island. We should have no problem finding most, if not all, of them. Réunion is an incredibly mountainous island with the tallest mountain Piton des Neiges reaching just over 10,069 feet (3,069 meters) above sea level. We will focus our search along the trail going up the forested slopes of La Roche Ecrite in the north of the island.



Réunion Cuckooshrike *is the rarest terrestrial endemic (photo Jaime Martinez).*

We should hopefully pick up **Réunion Grey White-eye** and **Réunion Olive White-eye** without much hassle. The **Réunion Grey White-eye** has several distinct forms, including three lowland forms and a highland form with two color morphs, and we will do our best to see all four forms. **Réunion Stonechats** are sometimes seen in the parking area at the base of the trail. After spending some time on the trail, we should hopefully pick up **Réunion Bulbul** and the *bourbonnensis* subspecies of **Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher**. Our main target here is **Réunion Cuckooshrike**. This species is regarded as Critically Endangered, with a population estimated at less than 100 mature individuals, that is still decreasing rapidly. With a good amount of time in its preferred microhabitat, and a bit of luck, we should add this species to the list. During our time moving around the island, we should also see **Réunion Harrier** and the endemic *saffordi* race of **Mascarene Swiftlet**.

After a good morning searching for the endemics, we will transfer to the southern coast of the island where we will check into our accommodation for the next two nights. At about 2:30 p.m., we will board a boat and head out to sea for our first attempt at seeing **Mascarene Petrel**. We will spend a couple of hours at sea, most likely until dark!

Overnight: Réunion hotel

Day 3. Morning birding and afternoon pelagic

This morning will remain flexible; we will aim to visit one or two nearby sites for some more terrestrial birding and possibly visit Piton de la Fournaise, an active volcano in the south. This time will be used to improve views of some of the island's endemics. After our morning endeavors, we will head back to the accommodation, enjoy a sit-down lunch and then head back out to sea for our second pelagic.



Barau's Petrel *is one of the two endemic breeding petrels on Réunion.*

Pelagic trips off Réunion aim to offer an incredible opportunity to see large numbers of **Barau's Petrels**. This species breeds on the island, and we will likely spend considerable time with them as they gather offshore in the evenings. We will most likely see some other seabirds, including **Wedge-tailed** and **Tropical Shearwaters**, **Lesser** and **Brown Noddies** and a few other seabird species. By far, the most sought-after and rare bird on the trip would be **Mascarene Petrel**. This species is the sole reason for offering two pelagic trips in the hope of maximizing our chances of seeing this incredible species. With only an estimated 50–100 pairs left, seeing this species would be a very special experience.

Overnight: Réunion hotel



Brown Noddy *is one of several seabird species we should see on our pelagic trips.*

Day 4. Departure from Réunion

Our last morning will be spent enjoying a slow breakfast at the hotel, before making our way to Roland Garros Airport (Saint-Denis) for departure. We kindly ask that you book your international flight to depart after 1 p.m. today.

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration:	4 days
Group Size:	4–8
Dates:	07–10 December 2027 07–10 December 2028
Start:	Saint-Denis, Réunion
End:	Saint-Denis, Réunion
Prices:	€ 3,110 per person sharing (2027) € 3,452 per person sharing (2028)
Single Supplements:	€ 550 (2027) € 610 (2028)

Price includes:

All accommodation
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 4)
Unlimited bottled water
Expert tour leader
All entrance fees
All ground transport
Airport pick-up and drop-off, on Day 1 and Day 4 only
Two pelagic boat trips

Price excludes:

International/domestic flights
Visas
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.
Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals or birding excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our tipping guidelines blog)