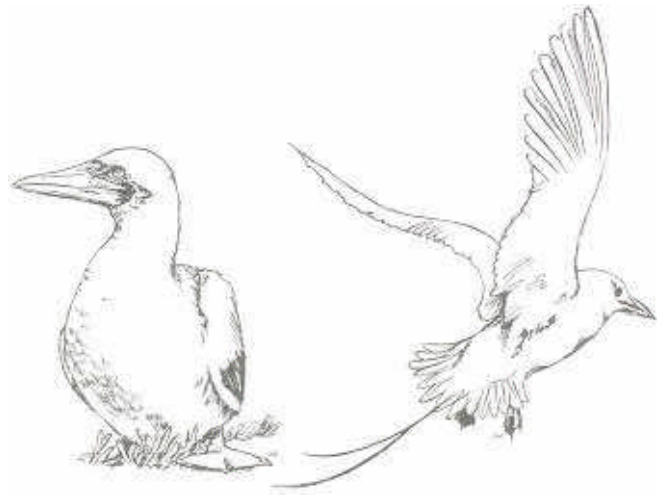


## Lord Howe Island Seabirds

**Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* and **Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricanda*

The ocean around Lord Howe Island provides abundant food for seabirds, to rear their young. With fourteen species, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, the seabirds are one of the special assets of Lord Howe Island that contribute towards World Heritage Listing.



### **Petrels and Shearwaters**

All have a hooked bill to grasp prey of fish and squid which they take from just below the surface in shallow dives. All are migratory and fly a considerable distance away from Lord Howe Island after breeding, before returning the following season.

#### **Providence Petrel** *Pterodroma solandri*

A dark grey seabird with white flashes under the wings and short stubby black bill. Winter breeding birds, they nest in burrows on the two southern mountains. They arrive in March to commence courtship and breeding and by November they depart northeast into the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Little Island is the best place to see them, especially in the afternoons. Lord Howe is the only breeding location in the world apart from a few pairs at Norfolk Island.

#### **Kermadec Petrel** *Pterodroma neglecta*

A medium sized petrel, this bird has several colour phases - dark grey all over; or sooty brown above and white underneath. The only breeding location in the Australian region for this species is at Ball's Pyramid. At sea they tend to be solitary, flying with deep wing beats followed by long glides, dipping to pick food from the surface.

#### **Black-winged Petrel** *Pterodroma nigripennis*

A small black and white petrel present for breeding between November and May, they are one of the few petrels to visit their breeding colonies during the day. They nest in burrows on many headlands around the Island, but can be most easily seen at Ned's Beach where pairs or threes fly in courtship patterns around the cliffs at the southern end of the beach.

#### **White-bellied Storm Petrel** *Fregetta grallaria*

A tiny black and white petrel about the size of a canary, that breeds on the offshore islets, but occasionally seen when on a round-Island cruise. When feeding they patter the water with their feet as if walking on the surface.

#### **Fleshfooted Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*

Known as Muttonbirds, these dark grey birds are on the Island from September to May and breed in large colonies on the floor of the forests of the east coast between Ned's Beach and Clear Place; with smaller colonies at Old Settlement Beach and Transit Hill. Each day they leave before dawn to feed at sea, and return at sunset.

**Wedgetailed Shearwater** *Puffinis pacificus*

Slightly smaller than the Flesh-footed Shearwater these birds are also here between September and May, but mainly breed on the offshore islands including Blackburn Island in the lagoon. They can be seen flying into this colony from early afternoon until dark. A small number breed at locations on the main island including Signal Point and Lovers Bay.

**Little Shearwater** *Puffinis assimilis*

A small shearwater, black above and white underneath. They breed mainly on the offshore islets and their breeding season is June to November. In recent years small numbers are colonising the main island, probably because cats have been removed.

**Terns and Noddies**

All have long slender, pointed bills to pick their prey of small fish, squid and crustaceans from the surface of the water

**Sooty Tern** *Sternafuscata*

These striking black and white terns are the most numerous of the seabirds to breed at Lord Howe, with over one hundred thousand pairs breeding each spring and summer. The largest colonies are on the offshore islets, but substantial numbers breed on the northern hills including Mt Eliza; a small number breed at Muttonbird Point and Ned's Beach. They lay one speckled egg on the ground in September.

**White Tern** *Gygis alba*

A beautiful white tern that breeds mainly around the settlement area in spring and summer when they can easily be seen flying above the lagoon, or nesting on branches in the trees along Ned's Beach and Lagoon roads. By sitting patiently you can observe the parents fly in and feed small fish and squid to the waiting chick.

**Common Noddy** *Anous stolidus*

A brown-grey bird with a white cap on the head. Another spring and summer breeding bird, they build a rough nest of seaweed and twigs on bushes growing around the cliffs of the main island and offshore islets. Accessible colonies are at Old Gulch and the southern end of Blinky Beach.

**Black Noddy** *Anous minutis*

Slightly smaller and blacker than the Common Noddy, this noddy only occurs in small numbers around Lord Howe Island. They often feed picking food from the surface of the water close to the cliffs. They can sometimes be observed flying around the cliffs at Old Gulch where they have bred in some years.

**Grey Ternlet** *Procelsterna cerulea*

A small light grey seabird which is the first of the spring breeders to lay eggs, in early September. Some can be observed at most times of the year around the cliffs or at sea feeding on the surface.

**Large seabirds**

Large seabirds that dive from a height and plunge several metres below the water to catch their prey of fish and squid.

**Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra*

The largest of the seabirds to breed at Lord Howe Island, they are all white except for a black mask around the eyes and small black flashes on the wings. They are not migratory and remain at the colonies all year. They breed on the offshore islets and also at King Point and Muttonbird Point, where there is a viewing platform overlooking the colony.

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda*

A white bird with two long red tail streamers and a bright red bill. They breed in summer around cliffs of the main island and are a delight to watch as they perform aerial courtship flights in which they fly in backward somersaults over each other. Malabar and the northern hills are the main locations to see them, also Goat House. Visitors to Lord Howe Island have a rare opportunity to closely observe seabirds at their breeding colonies. Remember to give the seabirds respect - they are at home in the air and while on the ground are vulnerable. When they have eggs or chicks they may feel threatened if approached too close, so please keep a reasonable distance.