

Conservation

# Migratory birds: soaring spirits

Birds are brilliant, let's be nice to them.

By Aurélie Duhec | Conservation Officer on Farquhar, Island Conservation Society



In May, thousands of Sooty Terns arriving on Goelettes Island, Farquhar, for a nesting attempt.

Pause a moment and consider this: what if they were no birds? A bit depressing, isn't it? No need to be a crazy enthusiast of birds to enjoy their melodious sound. These feathered creatures inspire our lives. They are not only a source of inspiration for singers, poets and dreamers but also for scientists, engineers and politicians. They are the inspiration for many popular songs, for airplanes and have powerful significance, as for example the pure white dove deploying its wings as a symbol of peace and freedom. More than any other animal, they are part of the scenery of our daily lives.

Why have we chosen birds to be the symbol of freedom? Maybe because flying has always been one of the greatest dreams of mankind. In the air there is no barrier, and they can fly anywhere they want. We will never get wings, so does it mean that you and I are not as free as we believe? That is the point, when we think

about it, we are never really free. I want to go home to have a dinner with my family this weekend. Ok, well... firstly, there is no plane from Farquhar for a month, so I am stuck! There will no dinner because of logistics and cost constraints associated remote Island living. Sorry mummy, I have no wings!

It sounds like birds have some advantages over us. And I believe birds merit our humble respect. Who are we to create obstacles to their freedom? We are focusing so strongly on our one faith, concerned about our comfort without taking into consideration the other hosts of Planet Earth! Wake up people, we are not alone! Keep your eyes open, appreciate what is around you, learn it and respect it. How many people know about the threat migratory birds are facing today? Not many. The migratory birds such as terns, cranes, storks, shorebirds and eagles are kinds of "superbirds"; they can travel thousands of kilometers

without a red cape and ridiculous blue spandex pants! If "superbirds" are the superheroes, then humans are the "bad guys" who make their life difficult.

Every year, millions of migratory birds struggle with the massive expansion of various means of generating and distributing energy: collisions and electrocution due to power lines as well as barrier effects from energy infrastructure causing mortality and displacement. Power lines are one of the major causes of unnatural deaths for birds. Every year up to 10 000 birds, particularly larger species, are electrocuted and on average many hundreds of thousands are affected by collisions in every country in the African Eurasian region. In addition, the birds suffer the effects from habitat loss and degradation and other disturbances from the deployment of hydropower, bio-energy, ocean, solar, wind and geothermal energy technologies near to important breeding, wintering or

stop-over sites.

With the theme "Energy - make it bird-friendly!", World Migratory Bird Day (which took place in May) aimed to highlight the importance of deploying energy technologies in a way that prevents, minimizes and mitigates impacts on migratory birds and

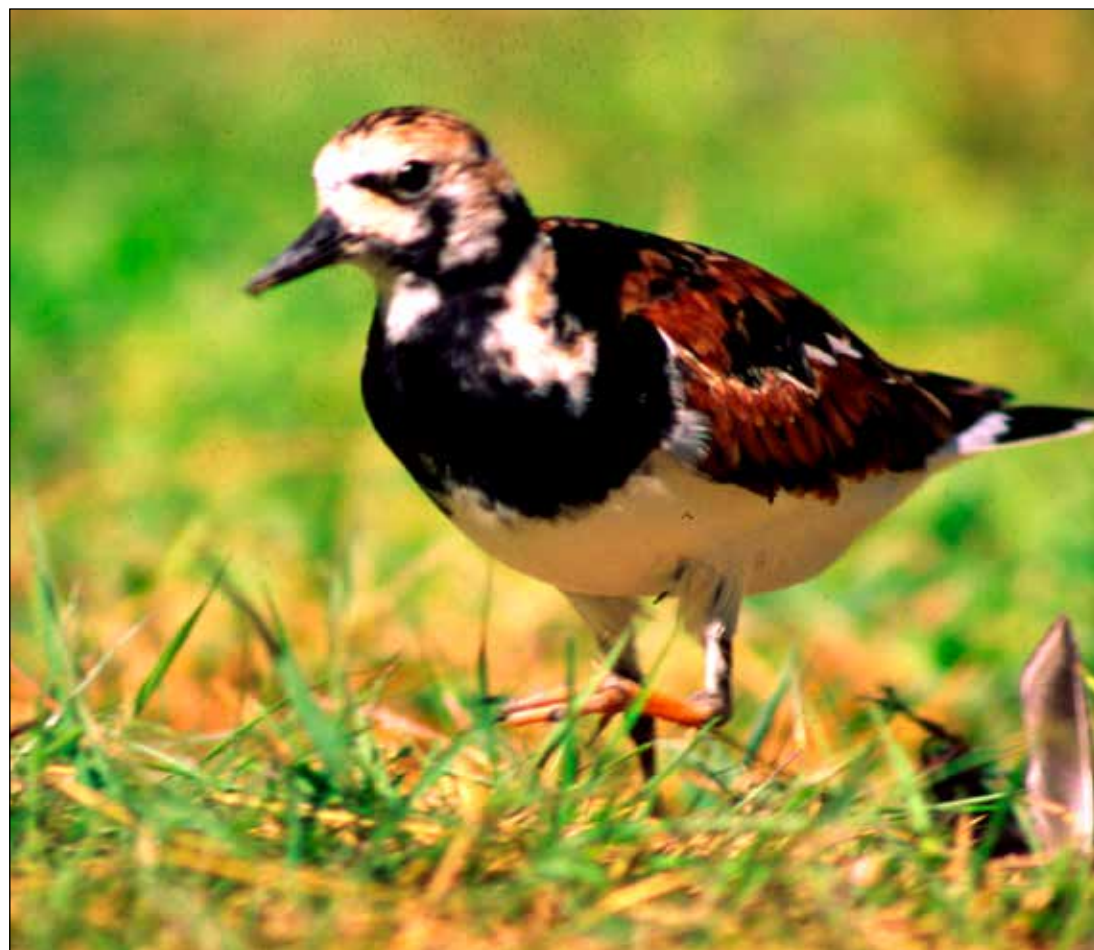
their habitats.

While you are reading this, millions of birds are on the move in Seychelles heading for their nesting grounds. The Lesser Crested Tern and Saunders' Tern, head to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and the waders as far afield as the Arctic Ocean. But the Sooty Terns are

back on Bird Island, Desnoeufts, and Farquhar... hundreds of them are arriving every day, after travelling from as far as the Pacific Ocean. The migratory birds need our support and our respect to accomplish the most important task of their life, giving birth to a new generation.



Sooty terns in flight.



A Turnstone out for a stroll.

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