

REFERENCE CHECKLIST

INDIGENOUS SPECIES

- Phoenix Petrel
- Bulwer's Petrel
- Wedge-tailed Shearwater
- Christmas Shearwater
- Audubon's Shearwater
- White-throated Storm-petrel
- Red-tailed Tropicbird
- White-tailed Tropicbird
- Masked Booby
- Brown Booby
- Red-footed Booby
- Great Frigatebird
- Lesser Frigatebird
- Pacific Reef Heron
- Great Crested Tern
- Black-naped Tern
- Grey-backed Tern
- Sooty Tern
- Brown Noddy
- Black Noddy
- Blue Noddy
- White Tern
- Pacific Pigeon

ENDEMIC SPECIES

- Kiritimati Reed-warbler

INTRODUCED SPECIES

- Red Jungle Fowl
- Feral Pigeon
- Kuhl's Lorikeet
- Common Myna
- Jungle Myna

MIGRANTS

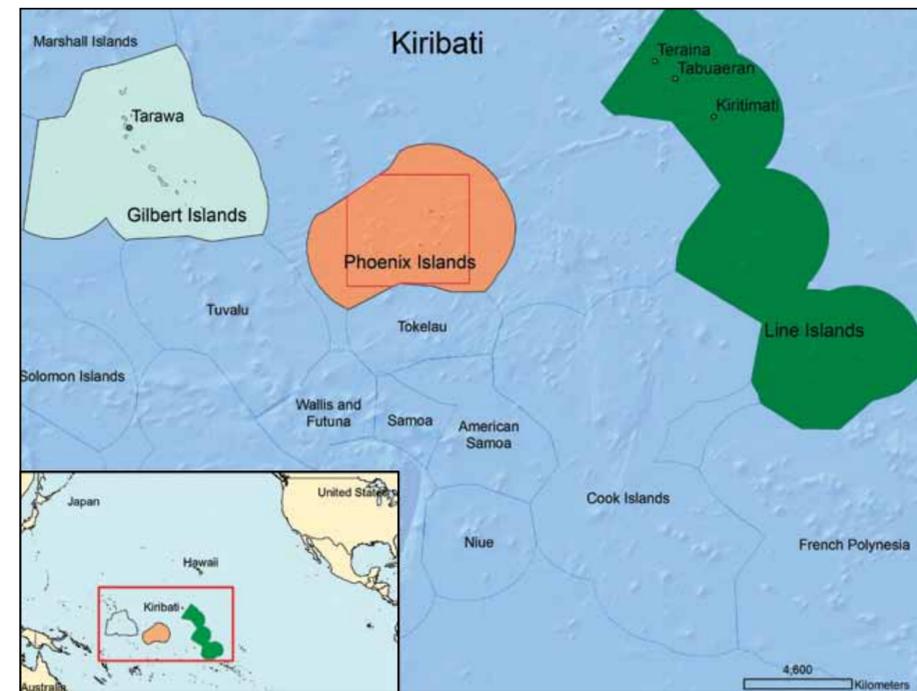
- Pacific Golden Plover
- Wandering Tattler
- Bristle-thighed Curlew
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Long-tailed Koel

BIRDS OF KIRIBATI

A POCKET GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF KIRIBATI



A Pocket Guide to the Birds of Kiribati



The Birds of Kiribati

The islands of the Republic of Kiribati span over 3,500,000 km² of ocean but together account for only 811 km² of land. The islands are divided into three groups – the Gilbert Islands, Phoenix Islands and Line Islands (which includes Kiritimati Atoll). The Kiribati islands are host to a number of bird species many of which are found on only a few islands. Many sensitive species are restricted to predator-free islands or motu. Several introduced species are found mostly around towns and harbours.

Identifying Birds

Many birds are most active in the morning, and some seabirds arrive and depart from their nests at dawn and dusk. Useful features in identifying birds include the colouration and presence of any distinctive markings; the length, shape, and colour of the bill; the length and colour of the legs; bird's size and wingspan; foraging habitat (ocean, shoreline, vegetation); nesting habits (on the ground, in a tree, in a burrow); and calls. All the birds except the migrants breed on the islands.

CODE KEY		Distribution	
I	= Indigenous	LI	= Line Islands
E	= Endemic	PI	= Phoenix Islands
In	= Introduced	GI	= Gilbert Islands
IUCN Redlist Status		Size	
LC	= Least Concern	L	= length of bird (bill to tail)
VU	= Vulnerable	w	= wingspan
EN	= Endangered		

Phoenix Petrel

Pterodroma alba
Te Ruru

I EN
PI LI

Nests on ground under vegetation on predator-free islands.

L = 35 cm **w** = 83 cm

White on belly, underwings dark except for pale leading edge, bill short and thick.



Bulwer's Petrel

Bulweria bulwerii
No I-Kiribati name

I LC
PI

Nests on ground in rocky crevice.

L = 26 cm **w** = 67 cm

All dark with pale stripe across inner upperwing, small head, short bill, tail longer and more pointed than Christmas Shearwater. Soft barking call at night.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater

Puffinus pacificus
Te Tanguoua

I LC
PI LI

Nests in underground burrow in sandy areas, sometimes in large dense colonies.

L = 46 cm **w** = 98 cm

Dark phase (more common) all dark, light phase has white on breast, belly, and under wings. Bill longer and thinner than petrels. Feet pinkish. Moaning calls at night.



Christmas Shearwater

Puffinus nativitatis
Te Tinebu

I LC
PI LI

Nests on ground under vegetation, sometimes in burrow.

L = 36 cm **w** = 76 cm

Smaller and darker than Wedge-tailed Shearwater with shorter tail and more rounded wings, calls softer and lower. Bill thinner than petrels.



Audubon's Shearwater

Puffinus lherminieri
Te N'na

I LC
PI

Nests on ground in burrow, sometimes under vegetation.

L = 31 cm **w** = 69 cm

Smaller than other shearwaters. White below extending onto face and flanks. High, laughing calls at night.



White-throated Storm-petrel

Nesofregatta fuliginosa
Te Bwebwe Ni Marawa

I EN
LI PI

Nests on ground in dense grass or in crevices. Only on predator-free islands.

L = 24 cm **w** = 51 cm

Small, white collar, long legs. At sea may patter with feet on water surface.



Red-tailed Tropicbird

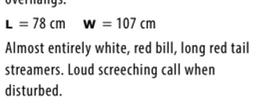
Phaethon rubricauda
Te Taake

I LC
GI PI LI

Nests on ground, under trees, shrubs or coral overhangs.

L = 78 cm **w** = 107 cm

Almost entirely white, red bill, long red tail streamers. Loud screeching call when disturbed.



White-tailed Tropicbird

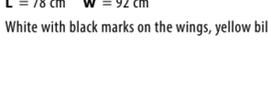
Phaethon lepturus
Te Ngutu

I LC
GI PI LI

Nests in tree cavity or among coconut palm fronds.

L = 78 cm **w** = 92 cm

White with black marks on the wings, yellow bill, long white tail streamers.



Masked Booby

Sula dactylatra
Te Mouakena

I LC
PI LI

Nests on ground in the open.

L = 86 cm **w** = 152 cm

Very large. White with black wings and black tail, yellow bill with bluish base. Plunges head first into water from high in the air to catch fish.



Brown Booby

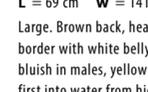
Sula leucogaster
Te Kibwi or Te Korobwaro

I LC
GI PI LI

Nests on ground in the open.

L = 69 cm **w** = 141 cm

Large. Brown back, head, and neck, sharp border with white belly except juvenile. Bill bluish in males, yellow in females. Plunges head first into water from high in the air to catch fish.



Red-footed Booby

Sula sula
Te Koota

I LC
GI PI LI

Nests in trees, usually in groups, rarely on the ground.

L = 71 cm **w** = 152 cm

Bright red feet. Dark phase (more common) brown with white head, neck, and tail. White phase white with black wings. Immature mottled brown and white with indistinct border on belly. Plunges head first into water from high in the air to catch fish.



Great Frigatebird

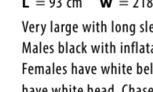
Fregata minor
Te Eitei Are e Bubura

I LC
GI PI LI

Nests in bushes, sometimes in loose colonies.

L = 93 cm **w** = 218 cm

Very large with long slender wings. Males black with inflatable red throat pouch. Females have white belly and throat. Immature Great Frigatebirds have white head. Chases other seabirds and steals food from them.



Lesser Frigatebird

Fregata ariel
Te Eitei Are e Aki Rangi Ni Bubura

I LC
PI LI

Nests on ground or in bushes, sometimes in dense colonies.

L = 76 cm **w** = 184 cm

Slightly smaller than the Great Frigatebird. Males have a white mark at base of wing, females have black throat. Immature Lesser Frigatebirds have variable rufous head. Chases other seabirds and steals food from them.



Pacific Reef Heron

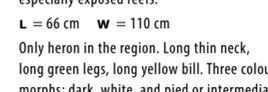
Egretta sacra
Te Kaai

I LC
GI PI

Breeds GI. Forages along shoreline especially exposed reefs.

L = 66 cm **w** = 110 cm

Only heron in the region. Long thin neck, long green legs, long yellow bill. Three colour morphs; dark, white, and pied or intermediate.





Pacific Golden Plover

Pluvialis fulva

Te Kun

I LC

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forages for invertebrates on shoreline, coral, lagoon edge and inland grassy areas. Nests in Alaska and Siberia.

L = 25 cm W = 50 cm

Long greyish legs, short black bill. Non-breeding plumage (usual in Kiribati) brownish above, greyish-white below. Breeding plumage black below, white stripe on side and head, gold spots above.



Wandering Tattler

Tringa incanus

Te Kirikiri

I LC

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forages for invertebrates on shoreline, coral, lagoon edge. Nests in Alaska and Siberia.

L = 28 cm W = 53 cm

Long yellow legs, long greyish bill. Dark grey above with white stripe above eye. Non-breeding plumage (usual in Kiribati) pale grey below. Breeding plumage barred underneath. Named for its trilling call usually given in flight.



Bristle-thighed Curlew

Numenius tahitiensis

Te Kewe

I VU

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forages for invertebrates on shoreline, lagoon edge and in forested areas. Nests in Alaska.

L = 42 cm W = 82 cm

Long curved bill, long legs, stripes on head. Kiribati name reflects its loud call, often given in flight.



Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

Te Kaka

I LC

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forages for invertebrates on shoreline, lagoon edge. Nests in northern Eurasia and Alaska.

L = 38 cm W = 75 cm

Long bill slightly upturned, long legs. Mostly a transient in Kiribati on southern migration with most birds continuing south after refueling.



Ruddy Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Te Kitibwa

I LC

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forages for invertebrates on shoreline, lagoon edge and in inland grassy areas. Nests in northern Eurasia, Alaska, and Canada.

L = 24 cm W = 55 cm

Short orange legs, short black bill. Non-breeding plumage (usual in Kiribati) mottled brown above with black stripe on breast. Breeding plumage (on arrival in Kiribati and prior to departure) boldly patterned with black, white, and rufous.



Great Crested Tern

Sterna bergii

Te Karakara

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests on ground in colonies. Feeds offshore and in shallow lagoons and ponds. Plunges head first into water from air to catch fish.

L = 46 cm W = 104 cm

Larger than other terns. White with black cap, large yellow bill. Immature mottled on back and wings.



Black-naped Tern

Sterna sumatrana

Te Kiakia

I LC

GI

Nests on ground on sandy beach or coral. May feed close to shore, typically in the lagoons, and a very short distance out to sea.

L = 31 cm W = 61 cm

Small, white below, pale grey above, black line through eye, forked tail.



Grey-backed Tern

Sterna lunata

Te Tarangongo

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests on ground in open, usually in small colonies. Feeds at sea.

L = 36 cm W = 74 cm

White below, dark grey above, black cap, white stripe on forehead extending behind eye, forked tail.



Sooty Tern

Onychoprion fuscatus

Te Keeu/ Te Taraariki

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests on ground in huge dense colonies. Feeds at sea often in large flocks far from shore.

L = 43 cm W = 90 cm

White below, black above, white patch on forehead smaller than in Grey-backed Tern, forked tail.



Brown Noddy

Anous stolidus

Te Iou

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests on ground or in bushes, sometimes at base of fronds of coconut trees above cat-climbing height, often in loose colonies. Feeds at sea.

L = 42 cm W = 82 cm

Similar to Black Noddy but larger, lighter brown, longer tail, thicker bill.



Black Noddy

Anous minutus

Te Mangikiri

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests in trees, often in loose colonies. Feeds at sea, typically close to shore.

L = 34 cm W = 76 cm

Similar to Brown Noddy but smaller, darker black, thinner bill, more contrasting white cap.



Blue Noddy

Procelsterna cerulea

Te Raurau

I LC

GI PI LI

Nests on bare ground. Only on predator-free islands. Feeds at sea.

L = 27 cm W = 60 cm

Small, pale bluish-grey bird with buoyant flight.



White Tern

Gygis alba

Te Matawa

I LC

GI PI LI

Egg laid on bare branch or coral rock, no nest. Feeds at sea often far from land.

L = 30 cm W = 78 cm

White with black eye, bill black with blue base.



Red Jungle-fowl

Gallus gallus

Te Moa Ura

In LC

GI

Towns, forests.

L = 76 cm (male), 43 cm (female)

Male larger and more brightly coloured.



Pacific Pigeon

Ducula pacifica

Te Bitin

I LC

GI

Forests, nests in large trees.

L = 41 cm

Larger than Feral Pigeon, head and breast paler than rest of body. Common at South Tarawa.



Feral Pigeon

Columba livia

Te Bitin

In LC

LI

Towns, harbours.

L = 30 cm

Most individuals have grey wings, dark head and neck, white rump, but colouration variable.



Kuhl's Lorikeet

Vini kuhlii

Te Kura

In EN

LI

Feeds and nests in coconut trees. Endangered in its native range on Rimatara.

L = 18 cm

Only parrot in the Kiribati island group. Small and brightly coloured. High pitched calls.



Long-tailed Koel

Eudynamis taitensis

Te Kabannea

I LC

GI PI LI

Migrant. Forests, coconut groves. Nests in New Zealand.

L = 41 cm

Large brown bird with long, barred tail, thick bill. Call is a loud screech but mainly silent in Kiribati.



Kiritimati Reed-warbler

Acrocephalus aequinoctialis

Bokikokiko

In EN

LI

Larger trees.

L = 15 cm

Small, greyish-brown, pointed bill. Endemic to Kiritimati and recently confirmed on Washington.



Common Myna

Acridotheres tristis

Mwaina

In LC

GI

Threatens to establish at Betio in the port area and spreading to other islands.

L = 25 cm

Invasive species and potential pest on fruit trees. Brown with yellow bill and legs and conspicuous white wing-bar.



Jungle Myna

Acridotheres fuscus

Mwaina

In LC

GI

Threatens to establish at Betio in the port area and spreading to other islands.

L = 25 cm

Invasive species and potential pest of fruit trees. Smaller than Common Myna, grey-black with orange bill and legs and white wing-bar.

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