Chagos Archipelago: An ornithological update 2015–2025

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Abstract

Chagos Archipelago/British Indian Ocean Territory lies at the end of the Chagos-Laccadive Ridge and is the southernmost region in South Asia. A comprehensive checklist of this region was published here in *Indian BIRDS*, in 2015. Here, the same checklist is updated with information from the ensuing decade, including new records and taxonomic changes. Presently, a total of 127 species are now thought to have occurred in the Chagos Archipelago beyond reasonable doubt. This includes12 additions to the previous Chagos checklist published in 2015.

Introduction

An update to the birds recorded in the British Indian Ocean Territory/Chagos Archipelago (hereafter Chagos – Figure 1) was published in *Indian BIRDS* in 2015 (Carr 2015a). Over the ensuing decade, additional ornithological records from the Chagos were published (Carr 2019) and a second edition of *A Guide to the birds of the Chagos Archipelago* has also been published (Carr 2023a). Since 2017, the Bertarelli Programme in Marine Science (BPMS) has undertaken much research in the archipelago which has resulted in a greater understanding of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Ornithologically, the BPMS research included a review (Carr et al. 2021) of the status, breeding phenology and distribution of the breeding seabirds and a revision of the marine and terrestrial Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). The web portal eBird (https://ebird.org/region/IO) has continued to be the primary repository for records gathered by the very few ornithologists visiting Chagos. A publicly accessible data platform exists (https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/seabird_connectivity) that is being loaded with tracking data and breeding records for the region's seabirds.

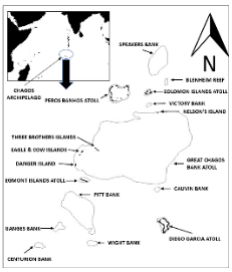


Fig. 1. The islands of the Great Chagos Bank and other atolls, banks and reefs of the Chagos Archipelago.

This article updates the Chagos checklist published in *Indian BIRDS* in 2015 (Carr 2015a). It commences with new species seen over the ensuing decade and, new species derived from taxonomic splits. It follows with deletions from the Chagos checklist. It gives brief notes on some interesting observations and provides a reference for the first record of every species thought to have occurred in the Chagos (Table 1), where required, explanatory notes are provided.

The recording area covering the Chagos in this article is as used previously in *Indian BIRDS* (Carr 2015a) and is from 02°–11°S, 68°–76°W. Nomenclature and taxonomy follow *Indian BIRDS* taxonomy (Praveen et al. 2025). Where a species in this article is not on the South Asia checklist, nomenclature follows the eBird/Clements Checklist (Clements et al. 2024). All records are mine unless stated otherwise.

Additions

Cotton Pygmy-Goose *Nettopus coromandelianus*: On 08 June 2018, a single male was found and images obtained on a freshwater lake on Diego Garcia(Carr 2019). It is thought that this individual has remained on Diego Garcia since arriving, with a male still present on the same lake in January 2025 (Carr 2025a). This individual was temporarily joined by a further two birds in February 2023 (Carr 2023b).

Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea*: A female Watercock was identified on Diego Garcia on 16 January 2018; images were obtained the following day. It was seen intermittently until 04 February 2018, when effective observations ended (Carr 2019).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: A juvenile Black-winged Stilt was found on Diego Garcia on 09 October 2016, images were taken the following day and it was last seen on 11 October 2016 (Creps & Joula 2017). On 28 January 2018, an adult was found on the same island in a remote barachois (Carr 2019). These are the first and second records of Black-winged Stilt for the Chagos.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*: A single adult Red Knot moulting out of breeding plumage was found and photographed on an intertidal mudflat on Diego Garcia on 08 November 2024 **[1]**. It is presumed that this bird, in non-breeding plumage, was the bird found on 09 January 2025 at the same site (Carr 2025b).

[1] Red Knot moulting out of breeding plumage. Along with the choice of saltwater habitat, note the short-legged, plump structure and short, straight, thick bill. Photo: Pete Carr

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*: Further to the first record on 20 June 2018 (Carr 2019), there have been three further sightings of *Stercorarius* sp. in the Chagos, all thought to be South Polar Skua; at sea at (03.854°S, 74.555°E) on 13 October 2024, off Speakers Bank on 14 October 2024 and off Ganges Bank on 27 October 2024 (see Fig. 1). Recent, dedicated pelagic recording indicate it is likely this species is under recorded in the Chagos and central Indian Ocean.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*: Bellamy (1979:92) tells the story of a Lesser Black-backed Gull that became habitualised to expedition members on the Egmont Islands in the 1970s. Whilst the taxonomy and identification of the *Larus fuscus* group was still in flux in the 1970s, it seems unlikely that a bird being hand fed processed cheese would be misidentified at species level. This constitutes the first record for the Chagos and was overlooked in previous iterations of the checklist.

Carr (2016) provides an account of a Lesser Black-backed Gull found and photographed on Diego Garcia on 04 February 2016 that was identified as a Steppe Gull *L. f. barabensis* **[2]**. Han Larsson, when consulted, commented thus: 'My impression is of a medium dark-backed, rather elegant and somewhat slender, large gull and that is what I associate with Steppe Gull, *barabensis*….. *armenicus* is a pitfall of course, with more or less identical plumage and bare part colouration, but I think the slim and elegant shape (including bill) and presence of rather long grey underwing primary tongues (including prominent on p10) rules out that possibility. Also, on range it would be a most extreme record for *armenicus*, but rather expected for [Steppe Gull] *barabensis*' (Hans Larsson, in email dated 06 April 2016). This constitutes the second confirmed record of a Lesser Black-backed Gull for the Chagos.

[2] Lesser Black-backed Gull (Steppe Gull) photographed on 04 February 2016 on Diego Garcia showing long grey underwing primary tongues. Photo: Pete Carr

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*: Following a review of all tern species in the Chagos, the first record for Whiskered Tern is of nine birds on Diego Garcia on 28 May 2005 (Carr 2005a). There are now 21 records of this species that is regularly recorded in small groups. This species may have been overlooked by observers in the past.

Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma baraui*: (Carr 2023a) includes this species for the first time in the Chagos checklist. Trevail et al. (2023), as part of a multi-species Indian Ocean seabird migration analysis tracked 20 Barau's Petrels. Of these, at least 10 entered and ranged across the Chagos Marine Protected Area (MPA). A state-space analysis movement model was run on the tracks with an estimated spatial error of 90km (Trevail, pers. comm. December 2024). As several of the tracks crossed the centre of the *c.*645,000km^2 MPA, it is safe to assume that one of these birds, despite the spatial error, definitely entered the Chagos as defined in this article.

White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis*: Two bulbuls were reported on Diego Garcia in 2023 and were eventually photographed on 09 October and identified as the nominate subspecies of White-eared Bulbul *P. l. leucotis* (Historic-Records 2023) due to their lack of yellow eye ring **[3]**. These founding two birds appear to have bred, with at least three additional individuals seen in November 2024, distant from the founding pairs' location in the Downtown area. A territorial pair were located on the golf course on 10 January 2025.

The provenance of these birds is a mystery. Fishpool & Tobias (2024) state that this species is "Largely resident, but subject to local movements; poorly understood seasonal migrations". There is no possibility on Diego Garcia of these birds being escaped cage birds and, arrival with ship assistance is extremely unlikely as there is virtually no commercial shipping to the island. It is a possibility that these two birds arrived as overshooting 'seasonal' migrants' from the nearest known populations in north-western India.

[3] White-eared Bulbuls were first seen on Diego Garcia in 2023 and have established a small breeding population. (Photograph courtesy of Zoe Townsley).

Taxonomic Splits

Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis* and Eastern Cattle Egret *A. coromanda*: The splitting of Cattle Egret into Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis* and Eastern Cattle Egret *A. coromanda* resulted in a review of Cattle Egret records for the Chagos. Carr (2015b) provides a useful account of this species' history and present-day status in the archipelago, where both new species are known to occur; Eastern as a natural immigrant, Western as an introduced species. Both are thought to breed and hybridisation is thought likely. Bourne (1971) provides the first reference for Eastern Cattle Egret, a male shot on Diego Garcia in 1885. Introduction of Western Cattle Egret from the Seychelles as an historic attempt at biocontrol of insects and other pests is well-documented (Lever 2005:16–17).

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: Yellow Wagtail has been split into Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* and Eastern Yellow Wagtail *M. tschutschensis.* A review of the Chagos records of this species was necessary as all eBird sightings were automatically (and logically) designated as Western. There are numerous sightings of Yellow Wagtails in the Chagos, thought to relate to at least eight birds, all on Diego Garcia. Following the review, two birds have been reassigned as Western/Eastern Yellow Wagtail due to a lack of description (Carr 2005b) and a single photograph not providing enough specific detail (Carr 2008). All the remaining records have sufficient information to confirm they are Western Yellow Wagtail. The first confirmed record is now from a bird present on Diego Garcia 25–26 October 2011 reported in (Carr 2011a), claimed as *M. f. beema* based upon photographs (Carr 2011b). There are no confirmed records of Eastern Yellow Wagtail.

Deletions

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*: Carr (2023a) included this species in the Chagos checklist based upon a record from the Egmont Islands in the 1970s contained in an unpublished UK Joint Services expedition report. There was scant detail of this species in the report and the report itself is no longer available. Due to the lack of detail, this species is removed from the Chagos checklist.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*: There is a historic record of this species from Nelson's Island on 07 February 1975 produced by a UK Joint Services Expedition (Baldwin 1975). Reviewing this record, it is now thought that there is some uncertainty over the identification. Black-backed gull taxonomy and identification was embryonic in the 1970's and the description in the expedition report is insufficient to exclude other, more likely, black-backed gulls. Kelp Gull has been removed from the list of birds that have been seen in the Chagos 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: A record of Black Tern exists from one of the UK Joint Services Expeditions to the northern atolls in the 1970s (Baldwin 1975). This record was previously rejected due to a lack of detail. A re-examination of the photographs of three 'accepted' Black Tern in a Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* colony on South Brother in the Chagos (Carr 2013, 2014, 2015a) have proven these birds to be recently fledged Sooty Tern. Black Tern is removed from the Chagos checklist.

White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*: A re-examination of photographs of claimed White-cheeked Tern in the Chagos has not conclusively proven that this species has occurred and, there are no written descriptions adequate to justify its inclusion. Therefore, this species has been removed from the list of birds that have been seen in the Chagos 'beyond reasonable doubt' (Carr 2023a).

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: Lanner Falcon is a contentious species in the region that is not included in the Checklist of the birds of South Asia - that includes the Chagos (Praveen et al. 2025). There has been one record of this species historically included in the Chagos checklist, based upon an Editor's Note to Guzman (2003) – the note is transcribed below *verbatim*:

> "Lanner. To these [Amur Falcon] can be added Lanner's Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*).There have been sightings over the last two or three years of a hawk or falcon [on Diego Garcia] but no positive identification. One evening in February 2002 the Executive Officer NSF came to tell me [John Topp, then Scientific Advisor on the Chagos to the UK Government] he had that day sighted a pair of Lanners at Point Marianne. He is a sometime falconer so would know. Next day he, Britrep, the Meteorological Officer and I saw the birds and took photographs."

The Executive Officer and sometime falconer (Cdr Chris Jewett USN) mentioned in the Editor's Note above had previously seen and identified the first Amur Falcons for the Chagos (Guzman 2003). Unfortunately, the photographs mentioned have never been traced. There seems little doubt that two large falcons were present on Diego Garcia in February 2002, whether they were Lanner Falcon must remain inconclusive from this evidence, at least until the photographs are traced and therefore, this species is removed from the Chagos checklist.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*: Grey Wagtail has historically been placed in the Chagos checklist based upon a personal communication to the author. This species is a north-south migrant that has occurred in the Maldives (Anderson & Shimal 2020). The competency of the two finders is not in doubt, however, as this is the only record and there is no written report or photographs to support the claim, this species is removed from the Chagos checklist.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: This species was formerly present on at least the atolls of Peros Banhos and the Salomon Islands up until 1960 (Bourne 1971). Every island of these two atolls has been visited by ornithologists since 1995 and House Sparrow has never been recorded. It is likely that this commensal of man was primarily found on the inhabited islands of Boddam (Salomon Islands) and Coin (Peros Banhos). I have visited both these islands at least 15 times and never have come across House Sparrows there, nor anywhere in the Chagos Archipelago. It is thought this introduced species has died out and is now extinct in the Chagos Archipelago.

Further information on some ornithological records

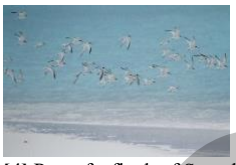
Red Junglefowl (Domestic Chicken) *Gallus gallus*: Following a successful eradication programme (2009-2011), this species is no longer found on Diego Garcia though is still present on islands in the northern atolls (Carr 2023a).

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus*: There are nine records of Pacific Swift on eBird for the Chagos, thought to relate to seven birds; a single 03–08 November 2007, five together 10–14 May 2010 and a single 14–15 May 2011 (https://ebird.org/species/fotswi/IO). Following the split of Pacific Swift into four species, these records were reviewed. There are numerous photographs of rakish, white-rumped, forked-tailed swifts associated with the above records, none of the photographs are of sufficient quality to produce a specific identification.

Pacific Swift is stated to be a long-distance migrant that breeds across southern and eastern Siberia, Japan, Korea, eastern China and the northernmost Philippines which winters in Indonesia, Melanesia and Australia, where it is common during October–April. It is a known vagrant reaching as far as the USA, Europe and sub-Antarctic islands (Chantler et al. 2020). Blyth's Swift *A. leuconyx* is a species that breeds in the Himalayas, mainly above 2,000m and, in winter appears to disperse widely, being seen as far south as the southwestern Ghats in southern India, but the true extent of its non-breeding range, and its relative frequency at this season in different areas, are both poorly known (Kirwan et al. 2020). The two other species from the split of Pacific Swift are not thought relevant to the Chagos records. Based upon the dates of arrival in the Chagos, when Pacific Swift would have left its' southern hemisphere non-breeding quarters and heading north or *vice versa* season dependent and, when most Blyth's Swifts would be on or near its Himalayan breeding grounds, all of the Chagos records are thought to relate to the former species. Therefore, as happened with records of Pacific Swift considered by the Seychelles Birds Record Committee (Skerrett et al. 2024), with the caveat that Blyth's Swift cannot be completely ruled out, these records are accepted as Pacific Swift. Pacific Swift was already included in the Chagos checklist and therefore, is not an addition.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* and Saunders's Tern *S. saundersi*: Identification to species level of Little and Saunders's Tern has improved with the publication of Mullarney & Campbell (2022). A paper covering the distribution of these two terns in the Malagasy region and Chagos Archipelago has been accepted for publication (Safford et al. *In press*). As part of the research for the forthcoming Indian Ocean *Sternula* distribution paper, numerous photographs of *Sternula* terns from the Chagos were examined by the authors (primarily Mullarney and Campbell). As a result, Saunders's Tern is now considered a regular northern hemisphere non-breeding visitor to the Chagos with some 200–400 individuals involved centred upon Diego Garcia and the Egmont Island atoll **[4]**. Little Tern is now considered a rare northern hemisphere non-breeding visitor (< 30 individuals) and an extremely rare breeding species (< 10 pairs annually).

Hutson (1975) claims seeing a flock of 15 Little Tern on Diego Garcia on 12 April 1971, these were very likely to have been Saunders's. Symens (1999) is now thought to have the first confirmed record of Little Tern from the Chagos with three breeding pairs on Diego Garcia in February/March 1996. Carr (1996a) claimed the first record of Saunders's Tern, with a flock of 56 being noted on Diego Garcia on 27 March 1996.



[4] Part of a flock of Saunders's Tern with a single Little Tern (darker grey bird with little black on the upperwing - centre right), photographed on the Egmont Islands, Chagos Archipelago on 19 February 2016. Photo: Pete Carr

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*: As predicted in Carr (2015a), breeding has been confirmed in the Chagos on Diego Garcia. A bird was found nesting in December 2017, with an image obtained of a flightless chick (Carr 2019).

House Crow *Corvus splendens*: The last sighting of this unwelcome invasive alien species was on Diego Garcia on 04 February 2018. This bird was thought to be one of the long-staying two birds first found in 2002 (Guzman 2003). A new sighting was made on 07 November 2024 involving a lone bird flying over the airfield on Diego Garcia being mobbed by White Terns *Gygis alba* (Carr 2024a). It seems unlikely that this is one of the two birds from the early 2000's and, is far more likely to be a new arrival.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*: In 1905, this species was found to be common on the Egmont Islands atoll having escaped from captivity; it is thought that birds spread from this atoll to Diego Garcia sometime around 1953 (Bourne 1971; Lever 2005). However, this species has been reported to be confined to Diego Garcia atoll in the Chagos Archipelago with a population of 500–1,000 birds, though was once found [elsewhere in the archipelago] on at least the Egmont Islands atoll (Carr 2023a). The preceding statement was based on over two decades of travel around the Chagos and having visited and ornithologically surveyed every island in the archipelago. However, on 28 October 2024, 12 birds were seen and photographed

on Ile Sudest, Egmont Islands (Carr 2024b). It is now uncertain if these birds are a relict population missed on all previous surveys of the island (>15) or, are recent (return) immigrants from Diego Garcia some 80km to the south.

The finding (or possible relocating) of this species, listed in the 100 World's Worst Alien Invasive Species (Lowe et al. 2004) and controlled on some tropical islands due to their predation of seabird eggs and chicks (Feare & Saavedra 2009; Saavedra 2009), is disconcerting. The Egmont Islands are less than 30km from the Western Great Chagos Bank Island group terrestrial IBA that supports international and regionally important breeding seabird populations (Carr 2021).

Discussion

A total of 127 species are now thought to have occurred in the Chagos Archipelago beyond reasonable doubt (Table 1). There have been 12 additions to the Chagos checklist since Carr (2015a). Three are simply taxonomic changes - Western/Eastern Cattle Egret and Western Yellow Wagtail. One species, Lesser Black-backed Gull, is included based upon an overlooked historic record but, has subsequently been recorded in the Chagos. Barau's Petrel has been added through tracking data and, seven further species have been recorded for the first time: Cotton Pygmy Goose, Watercock, Black-winged Stilt, Red Knot, South Polar Skua, Whiskered Tern, and White-eared Bulbul.

Table 1: A checklist of the birds of the Chagos Archipelago (as at June 2025)

Legend

? = Status or date of occurrence uncertain; ○ = Occurs very exceptionally (< 10 birds ever) or involves long-staying individual birds; ● = Occurs annually in very low numbers (generally < ten birds/year); ▌ = Occurs annually or resident (generally <100 birds); ▉ = Occurs annually or resident (generally >100 birds)

[1]. Recorded from Diego Garcia only; [2]. Recorded only at sea; [3]. Recorded from northern atolls only; [4]. Recorded in all appropriate habitat throughout the Territory

IBR = Introduced breeding resident, BR = Breeding resident, NBR = Non-breeding resident, NWV = Northern winter visitor, SWV = Southern winter visitor, PM = Passage migrant, V = Vagrant, ? = Status uncertain

First reference. This is a record of what is thought to be the first occurrence of the species in the Chagos Archipelago. Bourne (1971) summarised what was known of the avifauna of the region up to 1971 and is used here as the single reference for records prior to 1971.

Sl No	Species	Status	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	First Reference
1	Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides* (Jardine & Selby, 1828) [1]	Vagrant									○	○	○		Guzman (2003)
2	Cotton Pygmy-Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* (Gmelin, 1789) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Carr (2019)
3	Garganey *Spatula querquedula* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●						●	●	●	Burner (1995)
4	Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* Linnaeus, 1758 [3]	Vagrant					○								Carr (2011b)
5	Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* Linnaeus, 1758 [3]	Vagrant	?	?	?									○	Bellamy (1979)
6	Red Junglefowl (Domestic Chicken) *Gallus gallus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [3]	Introduced resident	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Bourne (1971)
7	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Gmelin, 1789 [1]	Vagrant									○	○			Carr (2011b)
8	Malagasy Turtle-Dove *Nesoenas picturatus* (Temminck, 1813) [1]	Introduced resident	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Bourne (1971)
9	Zebra Dove *Geopelia striata* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1]	Introduced resident	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Bourne (1971)
10	White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* (Latham, 1801) [1]	Vagrant											○		Carr (2008)
11	Common Swift *Apus apus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Vagrant (possibly annual)										●	●	●	Carr (2008)
12	Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* (Latham, 1801) [1]	Vagrant					○						○		Carr (2008)
13	Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Breeding resident	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Carr (2008)
14	Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* (Gmelin, 1789) [1]	Vagrant	○	○											Carr (2019)
15	White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (Pennant, 1769) [1]	Breeding resident	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Burner (1995)
16	Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○	○									○	○	Carr (2019)
17	Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▌	▌	▌	▌	●	●	●	●	●	▌	▌	▌	Bourne (1971)
18	Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (Gmelin, 1789) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	Burner (1995)
19	Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Linnaeus, 1758 [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○							○	○	○	Bellamy (1979)
20	Little Ringed Plover *Thinornis dubius* (Scopoli, 1786) [4]	Vagrant		○										○	Carr (2011b)
21	Oriental Plover *Anarhynchus veredus* (Gould, 1848) [1]	Vagrant	○								○	○			Carr (2014)
22	Tibetan Sand-Plover *Anarhynchus atrifons* (Wagler, 1829) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	Burner (1995)
23	Greater Sand-Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* (Lesson, 1826) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	▌	Hutson (1975)
24	Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrines* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●							○	●	●	Bellamy (1979)

25	Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	Bourne (1971)
26	Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1]	Vagrant												○			Carr (2008)
27	Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Bourne (1971)
28	Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	●	●	●	●	●	●	▮	▮	▮			Hutson (1975)
29	Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Burner (1995)
30	Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura* (Bonaparte, 1831) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○						○	○	○			Carr (2011b)
31	Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○							○	○	○			Carr (2008)
32	Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (Linnaeus, 1758)	Vagrant	○									○	○	○			Carr (2011b)
33	Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (Güldenstädt, 1775) [1]	Non-breeding visitor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Hutson (1975)
34	Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	○	○	○	○	▮	▮	▮			Hutson (1975)
35	Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant		○	○												Carr (2011b)
36	Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* (Vieillot, 1816) [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Burner (1995)
37	Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* (Bechstein, 1803) [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○					○	○		○		Curtis (1975)
38	Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Linnaeus, 1758 [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●		○			○	●	●	●			Hutson (1975)
39	Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Vagrant			○							○	○				Burner (1995)
40	Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* (Pallas, 1764) [1]	Vagrant			○		○										Burner (1995)
41	Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (Gunnerus, 1767) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●			Hutson (1975)
42	Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮			Bourne (1971)
43	Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○										○	○			Carr (2025b)
44	Ruff *Calidris pugnax* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○	○								○	○	○			Carr (2008)
45	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* (Horsfield, 1821) [4]	Vagrant										○	○	○			Carr (2011b)
46	Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (Pontoppidan, 1763) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮			Bourne (1971)
47	Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* (Leisler, 1812) [1]	Vagrant	○	○								○	○	○			Curtis (1975)
48	Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* (Middendorff, 1853) [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○						○	○	○			Carr (2011b)
49	Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (Pallas, 1776) [1]	Vagrant											○				Burner (1995)
50	Sanderling *Calidris alba* (Pallas, 1764) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●			Bourne (1971)
51	Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (Linnaeus, 1758) [3]	Vagrant	○										○				Bellamy (1979)
52	Little Stint *Calidris minuta* (Leisler, 1812) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			Burner (1995)
53	Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (Vieillot, 1819) [4]	Vagrant	○	○								○	○	○			Carr (2008)
54	Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* Paykull, 1805 [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			Bourne (1971)
55	Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○							○	○	○			Carr (2011b)
56	Oriental Pratincole *Glareola maldivarum* Forster, 1795 [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○							○	○	○			Carr (2008)
57	Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant											○				Carr (2008)
58	Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Temminck, 1815) [3]	Vagrant										○					Curtis 1976
59	South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* Saunders, 1893 [2]	Vagrant						○				○	○				Carr (2019)
60	Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* Linnaeus, 1758 [4]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			Bellamy (1979)
61	White Tern *Gygis alba* (Sparrman, 1786) [4]	Breeding resident	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮			Bourne (1971)

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62	Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
63	Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris* (Temminck, 1823) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
64	Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus* (Linnaeus, 1766) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
65	Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* (Scopoli, 1786) [4]	Breeding resident	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	Baldwin (1975)
66	Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* (Pallas, 1764) [4]	Rare breeding resident	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Symens (1999)
67	Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi* (Hume, 1877) [4]	Non-breeding visitor	■	■	■	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	■	■	■	Carr (1996a)
68	Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (Gmelin, 1789) [1]	Vagrant				○	○								Carr (2005a)
69	Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* (Pallas, 1811) [1]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	Burner (1995)
70	White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* (Temminck, 1815) [1]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	Burner (1995)
71	Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Linnaeus, 1758 [4]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	Baldwin (1975)
72	Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Raffles, 1822 [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
73	Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* Montagu, 1813 [4]	Rare breeding resident	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hutson (1975)
74	Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* (Lesson, 1831) [4]	Vagrant		○	○	○	○	○							Hutson (1975)
75	Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* (Lichtenstein, 1823) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
76	Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Pallas, 1811 [3]	Vagrant				○									Carr (2011b)
77	White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Daudin, 1802 [4]	Breeding resident	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	Bourne (1971)
78	Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* Linnaeus, 1758 [2]	Vagrant		○											Carr (2011c)
79	Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* Boddaert, 1783 [4]	Breeding resident	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	Bourne (1971)
80	Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (Kuhl, 1820) [2]	Non–breeding visitor	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Bourne (1971)
81	White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* (Latham, 1790) [2]	Vagrant										○	○		Bourne (1971)
82	Black-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta tropica* (Gould, 1844) [2]	Vagrant						○							Bourne (1971)
83	Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel *Hydrobates monorhis* (Swinhoe, 1867) [2]	Vagrant		○											Carr (2011c)
84	Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel *Hydrobates matsudairae* (Kuroda, 1922) [2]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮							▮	▮	▮	Carr (2014)
85	Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma baraui* (Jouanin, 1964) [2]	Non-breeding visitor	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	▮	Trevail et al. (2023)
86	Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* (Jardine & Selby, 1828) [2]	Non-breeding visitor	▮ ○	▮	▮	▮	●	●	●	● ○	●	▮	▮	▮	Baldwin (1975)
87	Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax* Jouanin, 1955 [2]	Vagrant	○												Bourne (1971)
88	Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata* (Peale, 1848) [2]	Vagrant											○		Carr (2014)
89	Flesh-footed Shearwater *Ardenna carneipes* (Gould, 1844) [2]	Non-breeding visitor	●	●	●	● ○	●	●	●	● ○	●	●	●	● ○	Bourne (1971)
90	Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* (Gmelin, 1789) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
91	Tropical Shearwater *Puffinus bailloni* Bonaparte, 1857 [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
92	Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel* (Gray, 1845) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
93	Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor* (Gmelin, 1789) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
94	Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* (Linnaeus, 1766) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
95	Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* (Boddaert, 1783) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
96	Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* Lesson, 1831 [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
97	Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Burner (1995)

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98	Cinnamon Bittern *Botaurus cinnamomeus* (Gmelin, 1789) [1]	Vagrant	○										○	?	Carr (2011b)
99	Yellow Bittern *Botaurus sinensis* (Gmelin, 1789) [1]	Rare breeding resident	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Carr (2008)
100	Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant (possibly annual)	○	○	○							○	○	○	Carr (2008)
101	Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1]	Vagrant (possibly annual)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Carr (1997)
102	Striated Heron *Butorides striata* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Breeding resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
103	Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* (Sykes, 1832) [4]	Non-breeding resident (possibly breeds)	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	Carr (2008)
104	Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis* Linnaeus, 1758 [4]	Introduced resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Lever (2005)
105	Eastern Cattle Egret *Ardea coromanda* (Boddaert, 1783)	Breeding resident and immigrant	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
106	Great Egret *Ardea alba* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant (possibly annual)	○	○	○	○						○	○	○	Carr (1996b)
107	Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* Wagler, 1829 [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○				○	○	○	○	○	Carr (2011b)
108	Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○				○	○	○	○	○	○	Carr (2009)
109	Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Linnaeus, 1766 [1]	Vagrant	○	○									○	○	Guzman (2003)
110	Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [4]	Vagrant									○			○	Carr (2011b)
111	European Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant									○	○			Carr (2014)
112	Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* (Pennant, 1769) [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○								○	○	Carr (2011b)
113	White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Icthyophaga leucogaster* (Gmelin, 1788) [3]	Vagrant		○											Baldwin (1975)
114	Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant			○										Historic-Records (2011)
115	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* Pallas, 1773 [4]	Vagrant	○			○									Carr (2011b)
116	European Roller *Coracias garrulus* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant											○		Carr (2011b)
117	Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* Fleischer, 1818 [1]	Vagrant												○	Carr (2011b)
118	Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* Radde, 1863 [4]	Vagrant	○	○									●	●	Carr (2002)
119	Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Tunstall, 1771 [1]	Vagrant											○	○	Guzman (2003)
120	House Crow *Corvus splendens* Vieillot, 1817 [1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Guzman (2003)
121	Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant										○			Carr (2014)
122	Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant (possibly annual)	○	○								○	○		Carr (2011b)
123	White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* (Gould, 1836)[1]	Vagrant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Historic-Records (2023)
124	Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* (Linnaeus, 1758) [1]	Vagrant	○	○									○	○	Carr (2011b)
125	Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus, 1766) [1/4]	Introduced resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
126	Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis* (Linnaeus, 1766) [4]	Introduced resident	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Bourne (1971)
127	Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* Linnaeus, 1758 [1]	Vagrant										○			Carr (2011a, b)

Following review, seven species have been removed from the Chagos checklist. Five are removed due to a lack of detail: Small Pratincole, Kelp Gull, White-cheeked Tern, Lanner Falcon, and Grey Wagtail. The sixth species, Black Tern, is removed due to misidentification and, the seventh, the introduced House Sparrow, is now considered extinct.

Two species' status have had a major revision, Little and Saunders's Tern. Research has recently revealed the former to be a very rare breeding species whilst the latter is a regular, common northern hemisphere non-breeding visitor.

Despite the lack of any ornithologists being present full-time in the Chagos since 2012, visiting researchers and personnel associated with the military facility on Diego Garcia are still producing vital data from this extremely difficult to access area (https://ebird.org/region/IO). Until any formal 'records committee' for the Chagos Archipelago is formed, eBird will likely remain the repository of historical, incidental, and current records.

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