

SOUTH CAICOS

A NATURAL PARADISE

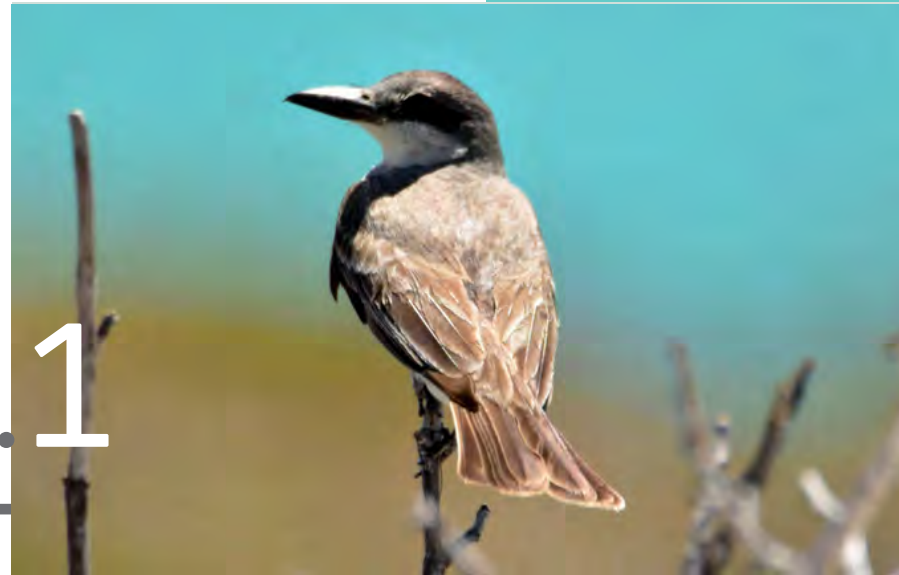




Cover: Bahama Woodstar Hummingbird

Previous Page: South Caicos Donkey

0.1



BIRDS | 4

0.2



PLANTS | 33

0.3



DONKEYS | 41

SAILROCK RESORT: Sailrock Resort is South Caicos' premier luxury resort nestled privately along the pristine beaches of the Caribbean Sea. Home to the third-largest coral reef and miles of undiscovered land, Sailrock Resort is the perfect setting for connoisseurs of authentic experiences.

The Turks & Caicos Islands are located 550 miles southeast of Miami, Florida, and consist of 40 different islands and cays. White sandy beaches, crystal-clear turquoise waters and the 3rd largest coral reef in the world have helped to define the Turks & Caicos Islands as a premier luxury destination. Sailrock Resort is located in South Caicos, a short 20-minute flight from Providenciales.

0.4



LIZARDS | 51

SAILROCK LIVING: Sailrock South Caicos is a thoughtfully planned community where white sandy beaches, ocean-side bluffs, the world's third largest barrier reef system, quiet backwater bays and salt flats with pink flamingos harmoniously coexist. This low-density community consists of Sailrock Resort, for short-term vacationers looking for a luxurious island experience and Sailrock Living, for connoisseurs of authentic experiences desiring to own real estate in Turks & Caicos – island paradise.

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THE EASY GUIDE TO THE

BIRDS OF SOUTH CAICOS

With Naturalist and Photographer Tiffany Thornton

TEXT AND DESIGN BY
SARA LYNN BURNETT



KILLDEAR



FROM TIFFANY THORNTON: "For centuries birds have been depicted in literature, fables, and ancient art. No matter what part of the world you are in, birds have always coexisted with people connecting us to the natural world.

Sailrock Resort is a bird watching haven. Doves greet the new day with their morning song, while colorful hummingbirds flit from flower to flower. Perched on a withered tree under the sun, an American Kestrel scopes out the arid terrain searching for its prey.

Be sure to grab your camera and binoculars before you head out on a Sailrock birding adventure."

KILLDEAR ON THE MOVE



Identifiable by two distinctive stripes on an otherwise white chest, the shore-loving Killdeer is a large plover found in the Americas and is a regular in South Caicos. Killdeer get their name from the wailing kill-dear call they often give as a very vocal bird. Early naturalists often called this species of bird Chattering Plovers or Noisy Plovers.

Killdears like to nest on the open ground and when their nests are threatened they will perform a routine that gives the impression of broken wings thus luring the predator away from hatchlings.

Spot Killdears in open areas such as sand flats, fields, or the South Caicos salt ponds.



KILLDEAR ON THE SAND

KINGBIRD



KINGBIRD IN THE BUSHES





AMERICAN FLAMINGO

The American Flamingo is closely related to the Greater Flamingo and the Chilean Flamingo. This species has also been known as the Caribbean Flamingo, but its presence in the Galapagos Islands made the name problematic. The world over, there are six species of flamingo and they are easily recognizable by their pink or orange feathers, a color they get from the carotenoid pigments in their food. The American Flamingo is one of the largest species of flamingos with an average adult weighing four to eight pounds and reaching up to five feet.

Flamingos in South Caicos are most often found in and around the salinas since their preferred feeding habitats are marine wetlands. Flamingos feed on minute aquatic organisms such as brine, fly larvae, shrimp, and mollusks that they filter out of the mud through their unusual, downward-bending bills. Their bills contain a row of bristles called lamellae through which they strain the water and in a gravity-defying feat, swallow their tiny catches without lifting their heads. As they feed while wading the shallows, flamingos use their feet to stir up the bottom and put their head to the surface so that the bill is upside down (with the tip pointing backwards) and sweep from side to side.

Flamingos are one of the few birds that feed their young crop milk, which is created in a gland along the flamingo's digestive tract and fed to their young for the first few days.

Afterwards, the parent flamingo will mix the crop milk in with other foods until the hatchling can feed on its own. It takes about two months for a young flamingo to mature enough to stop needing crop milk and to learn how to use its bill. Pigeons and doves are two other types of birds that produce and use crop milk in the raising of their young.

They have no set breeding season, lay just one egg a year, and don't reach a reproductively mature age until they are six. Chicks hatch covered in white down and do not turn pink for several years. Once a young flamingo can walk and swim, it joins the flock's crèche which is a group of young flamingos that are still fed by their parents, but guarded by an unrelated adult.

Flamingos are social creatures and their flocks can number in the thousands. Left to their own devices, flamingos thrive due to a lack of predators in the inhospitable saline environments that they prefer, however, flamingos have been persecuted for their feathers, meat, and eggs. John White, an early European visitor to the Turks and Caicos Islands whilst on his way to Virginia in 1587, wrote that his men hunted "Swanees" and caught many of them. Flamingos seemed doomed to extinction until they made a comeback once legal protections were put in place. Anyone caught harming one of these beautiful birds or their eggs in Turks and Caicos faces fines and possible prison time.



NIGHT HERON

GROUND DOVE



DOVE



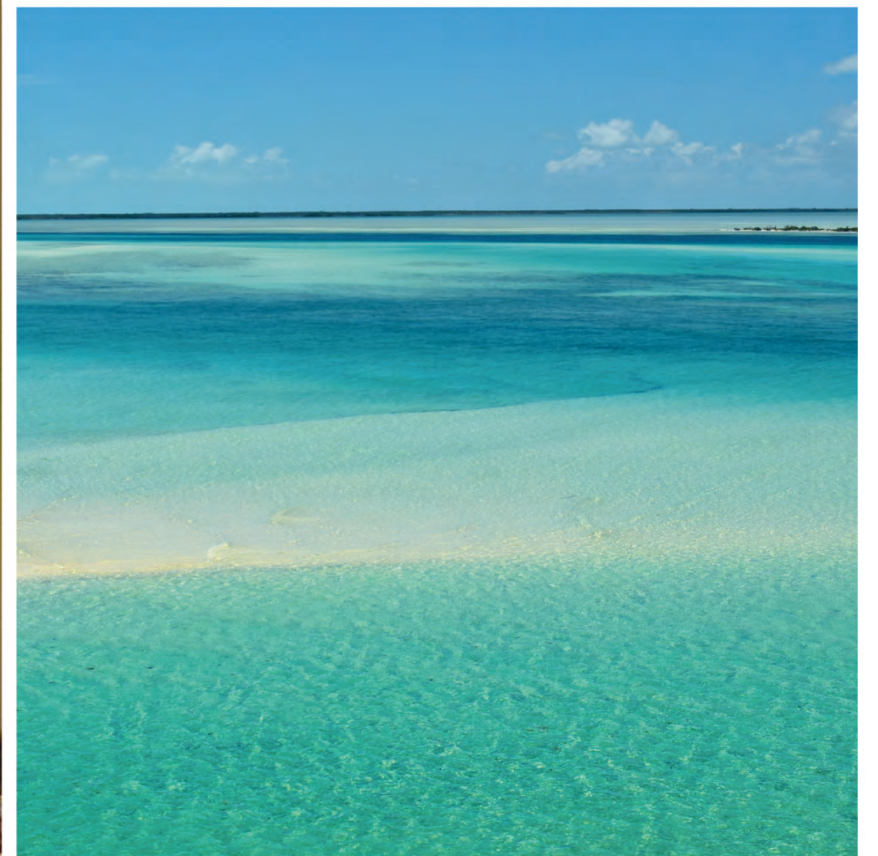
YELLOW WARBLER



WARBLER



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD



BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERON



The Black Crowned Night Heron is a stalky and compact heron that often tucks its neck into its body giving the bird a hunchback look. Its name comes from the black feathers on its head, giving the bird a capped appearance.

Black Crowned Night Herons often spend their days perched on trees concealed by foliage and at night they forage for food in water and on mudflats. Though they feed alone, they are social birds that nest in groups.

BANANAQUIT



The Bananaquit is a small bird with a yellow belly whose beak is adapted to feeding on nectar from flowers. It sometimes stabs the side of the plant to extract the nectar in addition to puncturing fruit for the sweet juices. While feeding, the Bananaquit must perch – it cannot hover like a hummingbird.

Bananaquits are known to be quite friendly and can be tamed. They build spherical lined nests with side entrances and often like to build their nests on or around human-made objects like garden trellises.



AMERICAN KESTRAL



SMOOTH BILL ANI





NASHVILLE WARBLER



The Nashville Warbler is a small songbird that migrates south to California, Mexico, Texas, Central America, and the Caribbean. They have a complete, white ring around their eyes and a thin, pointed bill. Males have rusty brown patches on their heads, while the females have a more olive-gray color.

Nashville Warblers breed in Canada and northeastern United States and forage in the lower parts of trees and shrubs where they also build their nests.

YELLOW WARBLER



Yellow Warblers are identifiable by their bright, egg-yolk color, beedy eyes, and stout bills. Seek Yellow Warblers in the tops of tall shrubs and small trees. They are endless foragers and quickly hop from branch to branch looking for caterpillars and other insects.

Males like to sing their whistled songs from high perches and Yellow Warblers prefer to breed along watercourses and wetlands in shrubby thickets.

BAHAMA WOODSTAR HUMMINGBIRD

The Bahama Woodstar Hummingbirds you find on South Caicos are in the most southern reaches of their habitat and are endemic to the Caribbean. Their coloring includes green and gold backs, brown wings, and blackish-purple tails. Males have bright purple iridescent throat areas lined with a white stripe that fades as the breeding season ends.

Bahama Woodstars are not very social and can become aggressive around other birds. They are also little home-bodies and prefer to stay close to their habitats in scrublands, gardens, tropical evergreen forests, and pine woods.

These hummingbirds feed on nectar in the mornings and evenings and supplement their diets with occasional insects. During flight, Bahama Woodstar Hummingbirds make a mono-syllabic chirp sound, when antagonized they add a second syllable, and when mating, the males sing songs for up to thirty seconds. During the breeding season males also perform courtship displays that include aerial dives and side to side flight patterns, all while constantly looking at the female. The repeated performance of these displays is called a shuttle. At the end of each shuttle segment, the male slowly closes the distance between him and his beloved until he is only centimeters away from her.

Nesting is done in a small cup-shaped construction of soft materials like cotton or feathers and woven together with various plant materials like twigs. Nests are usually created between two and twelve feet from the ground and the female Bahama Woodstar Hummingbird lays two oval shaped eggs that she will incubate for two weeks.

The cactus that this Bahama Woodstar is landing on is the Turks Head cactus, one of four endemic species of cacti in the Turks & Caicos Islands. The Turks Head is called as such because many believe that it gave the appearance of a Turkish Fez hat. You can see this cactus on the Turks & Caicos flag and coat of arms.



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SOUTH CAICOS

PLANT GUIDE

A Rugged, Natural Beauty

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TIFFANY THORNTON

LOTS OF PLANTS ALL AROUND



WEIGELA
Weigela

Weigela is an old favorite when it comes to flowering shrubs since they are relatively carefree and fast growing. They have been cultivated across the world and are loved for their ornamental value.

There are several fossil records of Weigela seeds from the Middle Miocene era (a million years ago) that were found near Silkeborg, Denmark.

Weigela plants are drought tolerant and prefer full sun making them ideally suited for South Caicos.



PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS
Opuntia

The prickly pear cactus is known for its thorns and paddles, but despite these defensive prickles, some types are edible. Prickly Pear cacti form trunks that can grow up to a meter in diameter.

Opuntia hybridize rapidly between species and because of this they can be difficult to classify. There are currently around 180 different types of opuntia.



PERIWINKLE
Vinca

Vinca, commonly known as periwinkle, is a genus of flowering plants in the family Apocynaceae. Vinca have slender, trailing stems that take root wherever they touch ground, allowing the plant to grow and spread widely. Because of this, periwinkle is often used as ground cover and requires little maintenance.

Extracts from Vinca is used in the chemotherapy agent vincristine and used to treat some leukemias and lymphomas.

They are the easiest living companions



BOUGAINVILLEA
Bougainvillea

Bougainvillea are thorny and ornamental vines, trees, or shrubs. The flowers are actually small and white, but they are surrounded by six bracts with the bright color that the plant is known and loved for.

The first European botanist to describe this plant was Philibert Cammercon's lover, Jeanne Bare (a woman who disguised herself as a man in order to get on board). Both were botanists and were sailing with Louis Antoine de Bougainville as he attempted to circumnavigate the Earth.



BEARDTONGUE
Penstemon subulatus

Hackberry beardtongue is a relatively rare flower and in the United States, is only native to Arizona. The stamens of these blooms do not extend beyond the flower and it is a popular plant with hummingbirds.

Hackberry beardtongues have a perennial bloom and thrive in full sunlight.



OLEANDER
Nerium oleander

Nerium oleander is a toxic shrub and is called as such due to its resemblance to unrelated olive trees. Oleander is one of the most poisonous commonly grown garden plants and has been so widely cultivated and for so long that no one knows where it originated from.

Human toxicity issues with oleander are very rare because such a large amount of the plant must be consumed for it to be dangerous or life-threatening. Since oleander has such bitter tasting leaves, few sample it.



“ WE ALL SAID



IT'S
THE
SMALL
THINGS



...THEY ALL COUNT

”

OUTDOOR LIFE

SOUTH CAICOS DONKEYS

It's not just an ordinary island

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TIFFANY THORNTON



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DONKEYS

While the donkeys in South Caicos like to think that they were the original inhabitants of the island, the first were the Taíno and Lucayan Indians who called the string of islands “caya hico” which later morphed into Caicos. The indigenous populations were decimated after the arrival of Columbus and settling Europeans established a salting industry.

In the early 1700s, it is believed that South Caicos became a haven for pirates and since then has flown the French, Spanish, and British flags.

In addition to Grand Turk and Salt Cay, South Caicos produced salt by allowing sea water to evaporate from shallow ponds (salinas). In South Caicos, this industry began around 1850 and eventually the island became the top producer of salt in the country. Today you can see walls, windmills, and sluice gates along with the Boiling Hole, a subterranean tidal passage that supplied the salinas with ocean water.

Much of the history of Turks and Caicos is unrecorded or passed down as oral history, and since many people won’t believe something until it is written down, the National Museum is trying to put facts behind the stories.

Without a doubt donkeys were used during the salting years to cart salt from the salinas to awaiting boats, but how did the donkeys get here?

During the 16th and 17th centuries it was common practice for explorers to leave animals on the islands they stopped off at to breed and settle in order to provide a source of meat during subsequent voyages. Though the early history of donkeys in the Turks & Caicos Islands is not really known, the first law concerning “roaming donkeys” dates to the 1780s.

Over time other ventures were attempted on South Caicos such as sponge farming and conch shell exporting but none were as successful as salt.

In 1944 the United States built an anti-submarine base on South Caicos and later constructed a LORAN station on the north end of the island. This base was part of a global network of thousands of similar sites that allowed for ship and aircraft positioning through the triangulation of radio frequencies. This technology was later replaced by satellite GPS systems and the the LORAN station fell out of use.





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CAN YOU SPOT THE

SOUTH CAICOS LIZARDS

Now you see them, now you don't

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TIFFANY THORNTON



THE LIZARD LIFE



The Turks and Caicos Islands consists of around one hundred islands and cays with only eight hosting human inhabitants. Many of these islands are home to vast numbers of endemic flora and fauna, with reptiles and amphibians constituting the majority of land animals in the archipelago, the most famous of which is the Turks & Caicos rock iguana. The Turks and Caicos curly-tail lizard is one of the more commonly seen species and reach lengths of 10 inches. Anoles are also often seen and are slightly smaller than the curly tail, though they enjoy the same diet of fruit and insects.

Caicos barking gecko and the Caicos reef gecko are both endemic to the islands.



