**Brown Noddy Anous stolidus**  
Other name: Common Noddy

Common Noddies, despite their name, are fairly rare around Ascension Island. The bird is similar in size to a Sooty Tern (length 42 cm, wingspan 83 cm). Their plumage is mainly dark brown with black tail and wing tips. The tail is wedge shaped with a shallow V indentation. Both sexes have similar colouration (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. A pair of Brown Noddy Anous stolidus flying along the coast at Waterside, Ascension Island, South Atlantic in 2009. Photo C. Dickey.](image)

The bird is generally silent but when disturbed makes a harsh *kark*. The forehead and crown are pale grey or white. There is a white arc below the eyes. The bill and legs are black (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. A Brown Noddy Anous stolidus roosting at Waterside, Ascension Island, South Atlantic in 2009. Photo T. Giles.](image)
In other parts of the world, Brown Noddies may nest on sand or build bulky nests in bushes, but around Ascension, they nest on some of the stacks lying off-shore from Comfortless Cove to Porpoise Point and a few in crevices on cliffs at South East Bay. Following the eradication of feral cats in 2004 the Brown Noddy has started to nest on the main island at three sites North West Point, Waterside and at “Ladies Loo” on the coast between North Point and Porpoise Point. Nests are found in crevices of rock and are composed of a few flat pebbles and shells. Guano does not form part of the nest construction. A single egg is laid. It is buff coloured with reddish spots. Egg laying occurs usually in December to March. The nesting areas on the main island tend to be deserted between breeding seasons. Chicks vary in colour from dirty white to dark brown (Figure 3).

![Figure 3. A Brown Noddy Anous stolidus chick hiding in a crevice at Waterside, Ascension Island, South Atlantic in 2009. Photo R. Dickey.](image)

There are no records of Brown Noddy nesting on mammalian predator free Boatswain Bird Island (BBI). The breeding population of Brown Noddy on Ascension Island is approximately 250 pairs but the bird in more common on some islands in the Caribbean, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The most convenient site to observe Brown Noddy both during the breeding season and the non-breeding season is from the clinka covered headland overlooking stacks 6, 7 & 8 at “Ladies Loo”. Alternatively they can be observed at North Point departing the island for their feed grounds at 0800hrs and returning at 1800hrs.

References:
