

Sun, sea and saving birds: A Pacific cruise of a lifetime

If the thought that saving a species from extinction while soaking up the sun and scenery on a Pacific cruise appeals to you, then you will be interested in the following opportunity from the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK). The RSPB is currently working to prevent the extinction of the Henderson petrel, from its only home: the island which shares its name in the Pacific. Currently, introduced rats are taking a heavy toll on seabirds by killing over 25,000 chicks a year. To help fund the conservation project to remove the rats, protecting seabirds and other unique species, the RSPB is raffling two luxury cabins for two, each worth over £16,000, on a luxury cruise across the Pacific from Tahiti to Easter Island. Visiting historic Pitcairn Island, home to the descendants of the HMS Bounty mutineers, and the remote Henderson Island, a forgotten UK World Heritage Site that holds over 55 unique species, this trip of a lifetime to the most far-flung of Britain's Overseas Territories is an incredible opportunity to experience some of the jewels of the Pacific. The winners will be guided by Peter Harrison, widely considered to be the world's foremost authority on seabirds. All proceeds from the raffle will go directly towards the RSPB's work to save Henderson Island World Heritage Site. Dieter Hoffmann, Head of Global Programmes at RSPB, said "From the cultural wonders of Tahiti, the remote beauty of the untouched Marquesas, and the mysteries of Easter Island, this will be an unforgettable cruise. Above all, this trip is one of the very few opportunities to visit the unique Henderson Island. Henderson is one of the most remote islands on the planet, and the last pristine limestone island of its size in the world." Henderson Island World Heritage Site is home to a dazzling array of unique wildlife found nowhere else on earth, including four species of endemic land bird (Henderson lorikeet, Henderson fruit-dove, Henderson crake and Henderson reed-warbler) and the endangered Henderson Petrel. However, despite being remote and uninhabited, Henderson's biodiversity is currently under threat due to the presence of introduced Pacific rats. These rats are preying on the rich wildlife and killing over 25,000 petrel chicks every year. The Henderson Island Restoration Project, which can only proceed if £1.7 million is raised, will save Henderson's unique wildlife by removing the introduced rats which threaten their survival. This will save the endangered Henderson Petrel from its slide towards extinction and allow seabird numbers, which have been reduced to just thousands since rats arrived, to return to the order of millions. With a maximum of only 400 tickets to be sold, purchasers have an excellent chance of winning one of these two trips, generously donated to the RSPB by Zegrahm Expeditions. Raffle tickets for this amazing opportunity cost £500, and all proceeds will go directly towards the RSPB's Henderson Island Restoration Project. Photo credit: Alve Henricson (rspb-images.com)