



St Helena Island

www.sthelenatourism.com



TRAVEL UPDATE

St Helena as of April 2022 reduced its COVID-19 entry requirements:

- Pre-departure COVID tests are no longer required
- Fully vaccinated persons must complete 7 days of quarantine rather than the usual 10 days

Full information on these revised entry measures can be found at www.sthelenatourism.com. Additionally, fortnightly Airlink flights recommenced as planned on Saturday, 26 March 2022. Flights are now taking place every other Saturday between OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) and St Helena Airport (HLE). A monthly inter-island flight with Ascension is also scheduled.

Bookings can be made at www.flyairlink.com or by contacting travelagent@solomons.co.sh.

SUBMIT YOUR BIRTHDAY WISHES TO JONATHAN

The beloved Jonathan the Giant Tortoise is turning 190 this year – making him a double Guinness Book of World Records holder! He is the oldest living land animal in the world, and the oldest chelonian to have ever lived.

This year, St Helena Tourism is helping Jonathan celebrate his historic 190th birthday, and we need your help:

- Submit your video-message birthday wishes via <https://share.vidday.com/b-9gsgye>
- Submit your photos with Jonathan, from anywhere throughout his nearly two centuries of life, to any of our social media accounts or visit@sainthelena.gov.sh.



PEAKS PROJECT SECURES YEAR 2 FUNDING



In mid-March, the St Helena Cloud Forest Project received confirmation from the FCDO of £1m funding for Year 2 of the project. A further £1.8m for years 3 and 4 has been provisionally agreed.

The St Helena Cloud Forest Project is a highly collaborative, multi-year project centred on restoring St Helena's 'Peaks National Park,' which houses the remnants of an ancient cloud forest.

This globally significant area holds over one sixth of the UK's total endemic biodiversity (approximately 250 species found only at the Peaks), provides the majority of the island's fresh water through mist capture and groundwater recharge, and offers a unique wilderness experience in an area that has been voted one of St Helena's 'Seven Wonders.'

"Restoration of the St Helena Cloud Forest is important for global biodiversity and is a fantastic example of nature and people living in harmony through the improvements to the water supply that this will bring," Jo Gilbert, RSPB Conservation Programmes Director, said.

The RSPB is managing the project, working alongside local partners such as St Helena Government, the Saint Helena National Trust and Connect St Helena, as well as international partners.

The UK Government had provided £900k funding for 2021-2022 (Year 1), with matched funding through project partners and various Darwin Plus projects, taking the total Year 1 funding up to £1.3 million. However, funding past Year 1 had not been confirmed until mid-March.

WIREBIRD NUMBERS INCREASE

The Saint Helena National Trust recently conducted its annual Wirebird census, revealing a population increase for St Helena's endemic land bird.

This year's census documented 626 total Wirebirds, which is 9.4% more Wirebirds than were documented last year.

In total 582 adults, 7 juveniles, 13 chicks and 24 nests were documented.

The Wirebird is found only on St Helena and is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. The annual Wirebird census helps to determine the success of conservation efforts aimed at maintaining and increasing the population.

This year's census was conducted under the Darwin-funded Invasive Vertebrate Project (which controls and reduces invasive vertebrates that threaten Wirebird survival), in conjunction with the RSPB.



THE 325 ARE FINALLY BACK IN RUPERT'S VALLEY

The remains of 325 'liberated Africans', unearthed in Rupert's Valley during 2008 St Helena Airport Project works and kept in Jamestown ever since, were in March transported back to Rupert's.

Since the remains were unearthed, respectful re-interment had been the responsibility of St Helena Government. In January, reallocation of underspent funds from the 2021/22 Economic Development Investment Programme finally enabled reburial preparations. The first tangible step was the transportation of the remains from the Pipe Store, Jamestown to No. 1 Building, Rupert's Valley.

No. 1 Building was used as a hospital during the time of the Rupert's Valley liberated African depot and is designated longer-term to become an interpretation centre for the site. Reburial is planned for later this year, at a site near to the No. 1 Building and next to the lower burial ground. Coffin production by local secondary school vocational programme students is moving quickly.

The Liberated African Advisory Committee is in charge of reburial and memorialisation works, and Chairperson Helena Bennett can be contacted via helena.bennett@trust.org.sh.

The remains were 325 of the 8,000+ 'liberated African' remains buried in Rupert's Valley, where a liberated African slave depot existed during Britain's 1800s attempt to eliminate the transatlantic slave trade. In total, between 1840 and 1872, more than 25,000 'liberated Africans' were offloaded at St Helena.

The site is of enormous cultural and historic significance, both to St Helena and to the world: It is the only place on Earth containing solely remains of people taken straight from slave ships only days or weeks out of Africa, and is known as "the most significant physical remaining trace of the transatlantic slave trade on Earth."





VANESSA THOMAS-WILLIAMS APPEARS ON SKY NEWS BREAKFAST

In February, Vanessa Thomas-Williams appeared via live video link on the Sky News Breakfast Show, reaching millions of viewers.

The interview took place on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Vanessa talked about why conservation is an ideal career path for both girls and boys, and discussed her local conservation work at the Endemic Nursery and with the St Helena Cloud Forest Project.

The interview was secured and executed through co-working between the Cloud Forest Project, SHG's Sustainable Development team and SHG's contracted UK PR firm, FINN Partners.

ST HELENA AIRPORT RUNWAY CHANGES

Recently, St Helena Airport (HLE) experienced a rare phenomenon: a magnetic declination change. This rare phenomenon has resulted in St Helena Airport's runway designators being changed from '20 02' to '19 01'.

Magnetic declination is the variation between true north and magnetic north. Compasses must be calibrated to compensate for the difference between true north and magnetic north. The magnetic declination at a given location on Earth changes slowly over time, possibly as little as 2 degrees every hundred years or so, depending on how far from the magnetic pole the location is.

Here in St Helena, the declination change is faster than many places in the world, and this required a change to HLE runway designators because they are now pointing in a slightly different magnetic direction to when the runway was first built in 2015.

Several changes are required to adapt to the new magnetic heading. This includes changing runway designators and airfield signage, updating charts and flight procedures used by pilots and updating documentation associated with the airport practises and procedures.

