

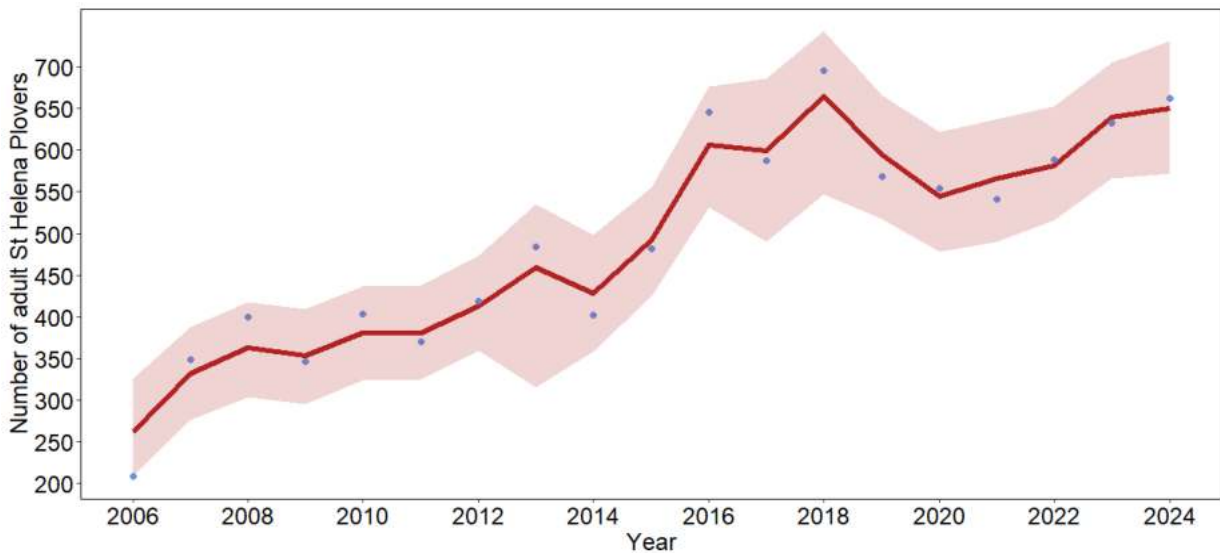
# NOTICE BOARD



## Wirebird Census Report 2024

This year saw the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Wirebird Census led by the St Helena National Trust since 2005/6 with the first Wirebird Census taking place in 1988/89. This census takes place at 31 Wirebird sites distributed across the island.

The 2024 Wirebird Census counts saw an increase in adult numbers for the third year running with a total of 639 adults counted, an 8% increase from 2023 count and surpassing our highest ever count in 2018, which was 627, the highest number of adults recorded. The number of adults found would have been greater if we had not lost 20 birds on the Haul Road due to road kill.



Graph: Wirebird population 2007 – 2024

A total of 46 nests were found during the census counts with most being found on the eastern side of the island (37) compared to the western side (9). In 2023 a total of 33 nests were recorded therefore this is a 39% increase due to maintaining short grass, and a lack of predators. In addition, 12 out of the 23 juveniles seen during the census month were found on Longwood Golf Course. There were 13 chicks and 23 juveniles (fledged) recorded for this year, giving an overall combined census total of 675 a slight decrease of 3% from 2023 which totalled 691.

The increase in numbers can be in part, attributed to the previous Darwin Plus Project, DPLUS107: “Community supported multispecies invasive vertebrate control on St Helena” in 2020 -2023 where control methods were trialled on the common myna bird, European rabbit, feral (wild) cats and rats. This project trapped 114 feral cats and exceeded the target of 3000 common mynas at three Wirebird conservation sites. It is likely that the impact of this project is still being felt a year following its completion.

There has been an increase in Wirebirds on the grasslands - Deadwood Plain, Man and Horse, Longwood Farm -with 334 adults counted, versus the 305 counted on semi-desert sites - Prosperous Bay, Horse Point and Donkey Plain.

The current 3 year Darwin Plus Project DPLUS190: “Improving St Helena’s grasslands to benefit people and wildlife” started in April 2023 and focuses on improving pasture management in the island’s grasslands which are highly vulnerable to effects of climate change, particularly the rapid spread of invasive species such as bull grass. This project aims for longer-term sustainability that would provide a win-win for people and wildlife further supporting Wirebird conservation efforts.