



## Fact sheet Unique to St Helena

Life arrived on St Helena by chance. Plants and animals were blown in by the wind, washed up by the sea or carried by birds. Isolated, the plants, birds, insects and marine life adapted to local conditions and developed into hundreds of unique species.

Before the arrival of humans the island was green with a flora that has long disappeared. Gumwoods, Tree Ferns, Redwoods, Ebonies, and Cabbage Trees once covered the island in strange forests.

For centuries St Helena was a haven for birds. Thousands of sea birds colonised the rocky cliffs and islets. The forests and plains were home to several species of land birds, many flightless.

Scientists do not know much about the unique invertebrates, such as insects, that evolved on St Helena. Many are extinct but we still hope that the Giant Earwig, the largest in the world, survives somewhere.

Unique species also developed in the sea around St Helena. These were given Saint names such as Bastard Five Finger, Deep Water Jack, Green Fish and Skulpin.