

# Coconut crabs attack, kill crazy birds sleeping to eat meat

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Mark Laidre, professor at Dartmouth College, USA, and an National Geographic Association explorer spent two months on the Chagos Islands to study this mysterious coconut crab. After witnessing this giant crab's hunting strategy, he claimed that coconut crabs are enemies of ground-nesting birds.



In early March 2016, Laidre suddenly witnessed quite a scary hunting scene. A coconut crab tugs a red-footed crazy bird (scientific name *Sula Sula*) sleeping on a low tree branch. The crazy bird was clinging to its wings but still tried to fight back. Within 20 minutes, five other coconut crabs came to the place because they "sniffed" the smell of blood. After a few hours, the bird was torn to pieces by crabs and eaten.

Video: National Geographic.

Coconut crabs cannot breathe underwater so they cannot swim to another island. In the island where coconut crabs live, Laidre doesn't see any birds nesting on the ground. Birds with fragile eggs also choose nesting places on islands without the presence of coconut crabs to avoid danger.



Coconut crab is a special crustacean. They are quite large in size, weigh about 4kg, 1m long in width. The reason why this crab is called coconut crab is because they specialize in climbing coconut picking trees to peel the pulp. They live in underground caves in some islands in the Indian Ocean.

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