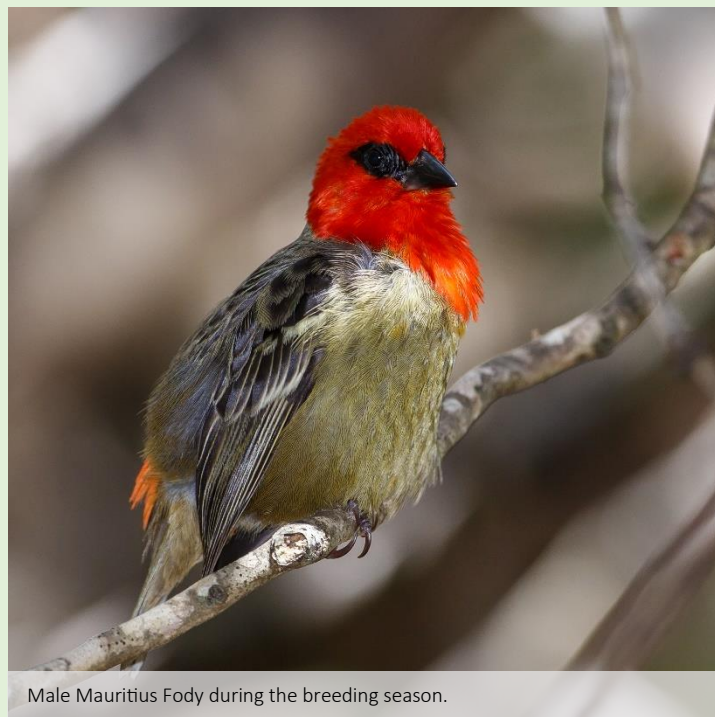


TITLE OF PROGRAMME: MAURITIUS FODY CONSERVATION PROJECT

By **Mauritian Wildlife Foundation** [NCSR Reg No: NCSRF/2017/0158]



Male Mauritius Fody during the breeding season.

PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Species Conservation
Start of Project	1987
Scientific name	<i>Foudia rubra</i>
Species	Mauritius Fody
Location	Focusing on Black River Gorges National Park and surrounding areas, and Ile aux Aigrettes
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
IUCN status	Endangered 7

OBJECTIVES

- Decrease the risk of extinction of the species from Endangered to Vulnerable in the next decade.
- Study the population dynamics of the Fody and the limiting factors, and address these.
- Identify suitable sites for a new subpopulation.

ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Provide supplementary food to support the reintroduced population on Ile aux Aigrettes.

- Keep a fully ringed population on Ile Aux Aigrettes to enable monitoring of the population.
- Monitor the survival and breeding of the birds on Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Collect feeding observations from all birds.
- Identify a suitable place to create a new sub-population.
- Investigate methods to control predators on a mainland site for future translocations and set up a mainland population.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Mauritius Fody, Mauritian Biodiversity.
- Mauritian population and its future generations, school children, tourists and the world at large.
- Republic of Mauritius, regarding meeting national biodiversity targets (e.g. the National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan 2017-25) and fulfilling obligations towards international biodiversity conventions (e.g. Rio Conventions, Aichi Targets, Millennium Development Goals).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Foudia rubra*, Mauritius Fody, is a small charismatic weaverbird endemic to Mauritius, once distributed all over the island and was most likely on several offshore islets. The number of Fodies has fallen drastically since the early 1970s, coinciding with the last large-scale forest clearance on Mauritius. In 2002, conservation action was considered essential to decrease the risk of extinction of this attractive small bird whose habitat had dwindled to a small known area in the Black River Gorges National Park.

Having identified predators as the main threat to the species, concrete action was undertaken from 2002 to establish a population on the predator-free island of Ile aux Aigrettes. From 2002 to 2006, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation biologists rescued eggs and chicks from failing wild nests at Pigeon Wood, Black River Gorges National Park.

For CSR activities and more information please contact the Fundraising Manager or email fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org

Thank you for considering our appeal.

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Female Mauritius Fody.

The eggs were incubated, and chicks hand raised at the Black River Aviaries, and fledglings released onto Ile aux Aigrettes. A second team of biologists monitored the progress of the birds on the island to understand the species biology and habitat requirements and continues to do so to this day. This knowledge will inform future translocations to other protected areas. Habitat restoration and supplementary feeding support the population of birds which has successfully developed on Ile aux Aigrettes. The best indicator of success was the down listing of the species from Critically Endangered to Endangered by BirdLife International and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 2009. It is now possible for the public to have a glimpse of the Mauritius Fody, the bird with one of the most successful conservation projects in the world, during all visits to Ile aux Aigrettes.

By 2019 the possible population rose to over 450 birds but in 2021 it has dropped to around 300 birds. The question has been, what is the carrying capacity of Ile aux Aigrettes? One limitation for the growth of a population of birds is food but supplementary food is provided and this could have supported the initial growth in numbers. Birds are also territorial and so limited space will also restrict the number of birds an area can support. The reason for the reduction is being researched. A study of GoodNature self-setting traps is underway in the Black River Gorges National Park to create a 'mainland island' and indications to date are that these traps significantly reduce rat presence which is a major predator for the Mauritius Fody. If mainland islands are shown to be effective then the Mauritius Fody can be translocated within them to re-introduce the bird to areas which it previously inhabited. The experience gained on Ile aux Aigrettes will be invaluable in guiding release techniques and subsequent support care. A Passerine survey is also planned in the near future to assess the current population status of the Mauritius Fody, identify areas where there are still populations and guide the deployment of the GoodNature traps to help protect a maximum of species.

REPORTING AND FINANCIALS

PROJECT DATES

The programme is continuous but the level of project activity is assessed yearly to adjust to the project aims and requirements. Annual report & other reports delivery is as per agreed timeframe with main funders.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Human Resources: Two Conservation Biologists, and support from a project Coordinator, a Manager and Head Office.
- Infrastructure: One equipped field station.
- Equipment: Use of one jeep. One laptop, one GPS unit, bird ringing equipment and supplemental feeding equipment.
- Other: Food for the birds and consumables.

BUDGET 2022-2023

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	1,024,030
Transport and Travel	114,800
Equipment and Materials	114,250
Other Operation Costs	24,600
Total Operational Cost	1,277,680
Administration Cost	175,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	1,452,680

ANY LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION IS MOST WELCOME.

If excess funds are raised, they are carried forward to the next year of the project.

A full and detailed project and budget write-up can be given to you on request.

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