



Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike



MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

ECHO NEWS

Saving endangered wildlife from extinction.

July
August
September
2018

CREATING A MAINLAND ISLAND

Rats *Rattus* spp. have been implicated in the extinction of over half of Mauritius fauna and are the main predator to the endangered endemic Mauritius birds such as the Mauritius Olive White-eye (*Zosterops chloronothos*), Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina typica*) and Mauritius Fody (*Foudia rubra*), whose populations decreased in the Black River Gorges National Park. Introduced rats also affect negatively the breeding of other endemic birds' species like the Pink Pigeon (*Nesoenas mayeri*). In the past, to save the species from extinction, the method used was to hand rear eggs and chicks that would have been predated and release the resulting juveniles on predator-free islets to create a new population. For example, this has been the case of the Mauritius Fody. Unfortunately, this is only a temporary measure as the islets are small and can only hold a limited amount of birds and the number of offshore islets for re-introduction is scarce. To save the passerines species it is imperative to find a solution to effectively control predators on large areas on mainland Mauritius. One



Olive White-eye



Mauritius Fody

solution might be the creation of a 'mainland island' using self-setting traps (GoodNature traps). Funding was secured from the National Geographic Society to create a large and relatively predator-free area (a 'mainland island') of 10 Hectares in Brise Fer in the Black River Gorges National Park, where rats are controlled intensively using

these self-setting traps. The traps would lower predator (in particular, rat) abundance significantly and allow the creation of new sub-populations of endangered passerines while also helping the remaining bird populations to survive. The species for which this would be the most useful are the Olive White-eye and Mauritius

Cuckoo-shrike. The benefits for other species would also be quite important as rats also impact negatively on other endangered birds, plants and even reptiles.

Once a month, a predator index will be done in two grids: one inside the 'mainland island' and one outside so rat densities can be compared. Parallel to this, threatened endemic birds that are already present in the area will be monitored closely to see the effect of the traps on their breeding. Field workers will search territories to find endemic bird nests and monitor them while checking for any signs of predation. The data collected will be recorded electronically for analysis. This monitoring will take place inside as well as outside of the managed area.

The 'mainland island' should reduce drastically the number of predators in a larger area. This should be shown by the rat index measured every month. This reduction in rat densities should result in an increased breeding success of the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike and other threatened endemic birds found in the area such as the Pink Pigeon or Echo Parakeet.

An example of a GoodNature traps as it has been placed on trees in Brise Fer at Black River Gorges National Park



A grant received from National Geographic this year will help MWF in improving predator control to protect the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike, Mauritius Olive White-eye and Mauritius Fody (photos on the previous page).



MAURITIUS FRUIT BAT UPLISTED TO ENDANGERED



The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has uplisted the Mauritius Fruit Bat (*Pteropus niger*) from the status of 'Vulnerable' to 'Endangered' (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/18743/0>). This is the direct result of the official culling conducted in 2015 and 2016, and the parallel illegal killing of fruitbats.

The uplisting is an objective scientific assessment of the threat of extinction of the species, identifying the increased risk that the Mauritius Fruit Bat may face extinction. It has been conducted by the IUCN Bat Specialist Group, an association of the world's experts on the subject (led by Dr Tigga Kingston, co-chair), based on inputs from Mauritian scientists from the University of Mauritius, National Parks and Conservation Service, and the NGO sector. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has been closely associated with the assessment.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has tried extremely hard to prevent culling

and to push for a more scientific approach to understand the proportion of fruits actually taken by bats and humane methods to mitigate the damage since 2002, for example, the use of netting (<http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org>). We also initiated multi stakeholder consultation via the 'Human Wildlife Conflict' action to bring another approach to the problem which has to date produced a netting workshop in August 2017 and a research workshop in May 2018.

We regret immensely that the red list status of the Mauritius Fruit Bat has had to be revised but this was predictable following a warning from IUCN when the Bat was down listed in 2013 that any cull would trigger a re-assessment. The Government of Mauritius was thus aware of the likely consequences of the legal revisions to allow culling of native species (referring to fruitbats) and of the actual cull which then had impacts on the ecology of native plants of Mauritius (fruitbats are the sole surviving long

distance pollinator and disperser of several endemic plants, hence forest maintenance), and on the damage to the reputation of Mauritius as a conservation leader of such actions.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation reiterates its plea to the Government of Mauritius to find alternative solutions to a cull, to continue to support netting of trees and scientific studies on the ecology and impacts of the Mauritius Fruit Bat to fruit production, and investigate humane fruit damage reduction strategies (e.g. tree dwarfing or plantation of dwarf fruit varieties, netting of trees and timely harvest of fruits). We feel that Mauritius can restore its tarnished conservation repute and shine again as a forward thinking conservation champion.

The latest and third bat culling in recent history started on the 27th of October 2018. This is most likely to trigger another red list re-assessment and could result in a further uplisting to 'Critically Endangered'.

ANOU PROTEZ NOU BANN ZIL



Under the auspices of the South East Islets Sensitisation Project, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation held a regatta on Sunday 19th August 2018, at the Mahebourg Waterfront in collaboration with Club Canot Rafia Mahebourg.

The theme of the project is “ANOU PROTEZ NOU BANN ZIL” and the event marked the distribution of certificates to participants. To date, over 260 Skippers, fishermen, National Coast Guards and private boat owners have participated actively in the project aiming to preserve the unique endemic species found on the south east islets.

There were several regattas, for fishermen (pirogue), children (optimist), girls, boys and adults (Canot Rafia toy boats). As it was a family day, there were many activities such as drawing competitions, face painting and play dough competitions. Several artists also performed during the event, including Eric Triton and Hans Nayna.

Overall, the regatta was a success and MWF was proud of this collaboration with Club Canot Rafia Mahebourg.

South East Islets Sensitisation Project was funded by the EU through the Indian Ocean Commission and carried out in collaboration with National Parks and Conservation Services, Forestry Services, National Heritage Fund, National Coast Guards and other Ministries.



All boats (pirogues) ready to sail for the regatta.



Face painting done with mostly kids at the event.



Canot Rafia toy boats displayed.



Local artist Eric Triton doing a live acoustic.



Children receiving their prize for winning and participating in the Canot Rafia toy boats competition.



National Coast Guards awarded certificates of recognition,



WORLD CLEANUP DAY 2018

A huge thank you to everyone from Investec Bank Mauritius, Emtel and Protez Later Nou Zanfan for having initiated cleaning activities on the 13th and 15th of September to commemorate this day in Calodyne, Ebene and Albion.

Let us continue to keep our environment clean!



Photo: Pile of rubbish collected by hundreds of volunteers on Butte a L'herbe public beach. Clean up initiated by Investec Bank.

 **Investec**



Photos: Cleaning up of Ebene Cybercity initiated by Emtel.



Photo courtesy:  **EMTEL**

Hats off to a group of individuals from Albion. Protez Later Nou Zenfan mobilized the authorities and big machinery to remove dumped waste from Montagne Zaco. MWF donated 50 endemic plants to the participants who are happy to now have endemic trees in their gardens.



Photo courtesy: Protez Later Nou Zafan

ULTRA TRAIL RAIDLIGHT BEACHCOMBER (UTRB) 2018



This year MWF has been associated with the Ultra Trail Raidlight Beachcomber (UTRB). Thanks to a contribution per participant, a sum of Rs. 66 400 has been raised to support MWF's conservation projects.

The 2018 edition comprised of four fascinating and innovative races that took place on the 28 & 29 July. This year the Trail des 7 Couleurs included a new 100-km run path, which also featured a new option for the 2018 edition: participants were able to run in pairs, which was a nice option for trailers who prefer relays. The three other races (47km, 25km and 10km) remained almost the same, seducing runners through their technicalities and scenery. One of the MWF Staff also participated in the 10km race.

MWF staff were present during the two days to sensitise the public who came to the event.



Panoramic view on Le Morne from the mountain track.



100km Trail participants started very early morning.



MWF stand at the UTRB event.

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Thank you for sharing.



Photo of the Mauritius Fody by Alex Ma Main



Photo of the Paradise Flycatcher by Patrick Montecchio



Photos of the Blue-tailed Day Gecko taken by Jissé-Mon Ile Maurice



Photos of the Grey White-eye by Keshav Nauthoo

MWF ECOTOUR TEAM VISIT TO EBONY FOREST

Taking a break from a busy schedule, Danny Thisbe, our Ecotour Manager, led the Ile Aux Aigrettes Ecotour Team, for a visit to Ebony Forest on 27th of September where MWF is releasing the Pink Pigeon and Echo Parakeet.



Melanie, one of the rangers, helping with the planting.



Some good food after a hard day.



Danny Thisbe planting an endemic tree.

SUMMER IS HERE!

A good deed to kickoff your summer vacation could be by purchasing of one of our products, such as our Tote Bag at Rs. 400, our Beach Towel at Rs. 475 or even the Jute Beach Bags at Rs.510.

You can enjoy your summer to the fullest whilst also contributing to a great cause. Sales proceeds help us to raise funds for our various conservation and educational projects.

Available at: MWF's Head Office, Grannum Road, Vacoas or tel +230 697-6097 or at Ile aux Aigrettes boutique.



Beach bag PROMO at **Rs.510.**



Tote bag at **Rs.400.**

Get involved!

Stay in Touch

Follow MWF news on a regular basis via our website, or find us on Facebook at the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Also see our new weekly 'MWF Files' on the Osmose page of L'Express, regularly on Tuesdays.

CSR activities

If you are part of a private company, various activities linked to corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be arranged with MWF, please contact us for more information by email on: fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org



Ile aux Aigrettes

Visit Ile aux Aigrettes

You can book a visit to the island by phone: (230) 631 2396 email: reservation@mauritian-wildlife.org Special tours adapted to your interests can also be arranged.

Donations

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is an accredited NGO (reg.number: 2143) for CSR (NCSR reg.NCSR/2017/0158) and is seeking funds for its 20 different projects. Whether you are an individual or a company, you can support our organisation.

Please contact

The Fundraising Manager,
Mauritian Wildlife Foundation,
Grannum Road, Vacoas,
Mauritius, or email: fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org