



ECHO NEWS

No.4

PINK PIGEONS REPATRIATION: A NEW TURNING POINT FOR THE CONSERVATION FIELD

On the 6th September, three Pink Pigeons departed from the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust in Jersey, UK, to return to their native island. Offspring of birds sent to the UK in the late 70s, their repatriation to Mauritius is aimed at enriching the genetic diversity of the species in the wild. With this endeavour, local actors of the conservation community - the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, the National Parks and Conservation Service, and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation - are stepping into the field of genetic management, an advanced stage that very few projects have achieved so far, even at the international level.



The work done around the Pink Pigeon, also known as the pigeon des Mares or pigeon rose, is one of the few success stories of conservation around the world. In the 1970s, the Pink Pigeon was on the brink of extinction and it was thanks to the common efforts of

the Conservation Unit of the Forestry Service, later to become the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS), the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (Mauritian Wildlife), the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (Durrell), and various other organisations,

that the species was saved. The Pink Pigeon was downlisted to "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22690392/131665077>) in 2018. At present, the species population numbers about 470 birds

in the wild, in addition to captive-bred populations in various zoos around the world - namely in Europe and Northern America.

By the end of the 70s, the Pink Pigeon was known as one of the world rarest bird and the most threatened with extinction: the species numbered about only a dozen of birds clustered at Plaine Paul, in the south of the island - the area subsequently became internationally known as Pigeon Wood. The species being then critically endangered, Gerald Durrell, the renowned author and conservationist, deemed it crucial to ensure the species survival by giving Mauritius the opportunity to send birds abroad; first at the Jersey Zoo, then other European and American zoos, so as to avert the eventuality of a localised disease or incidence push the species into complete extinction. Simultaneously, captive breeding efforts in Mauritius was also granted due consideration, particularly through Black River's captive breeding centre - later renamed Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary to honour the late Gerald Durrell's contribution to conservation actions (for the Pink Pigeons, amongst others).

"The Pink Pigeon is subject to a complex and advanced management approach: an integrated one encompassing captive breeding, releases in the wild, native habitat restoration, supplementary feeding of the birds, control of introduced predator species such as rats, establishment of local subpopulations, and soon the strengthening of the genetic management of the species", explains Vikash Tatayah, Mauritian Wildlife's Conservation Director. "A study of the genomic map of the species done by one of our partners, the University of East Anglia, UK, showed a genetic diversity of about 15% which was not present in wild birds: the local population was genetically impoverished. With the repatriation of these birds, which have a different genetic makeup, we will be able to strengthen future generations. We are at a rarely seen level of conservation and reestablishment of a species, even at the



international level..."

It was thanks to the support of several actors, including the Air Mauritius Foundation, the Customs department and the Veterinary Service Division of the Ministry of Agro Industry, that three Pink Pigeons were dispatched from London on Friday 6th September and arrived in Mauritius on the 7th September morning. The birds were, during their transit and the first quarantine days on the island, under the supervision of Harriet Whitford, Durrell Deputy Head of Birds. The latter, who also oversees the species in Jersey, is the Pink Pigeon Studbook Keeper for the European Endangered Species Programme and manages the ex-situ populations in Europe and in the US - Durrell notably having the most significant population with 42 birds. Harriet Whitford's flight to Mauritius was sponsored by the Air Mauritius Foundation, which also

committed itself to supporting other upcoming repatriations. The birds were quarantined in local facilities built at Bras D'Eau.

"Durrell Wildlife has held this beautiful pigeon for 40 years and is incredibly proud to be returning these birds to ensure the genetic health, and survival of this enigmatic species in its homeland", shares Harriet Whitford. "This repatriation will hopefully be the first of many, and is an example of the vital role zoos can make in helping to prevent the extinction of a species."

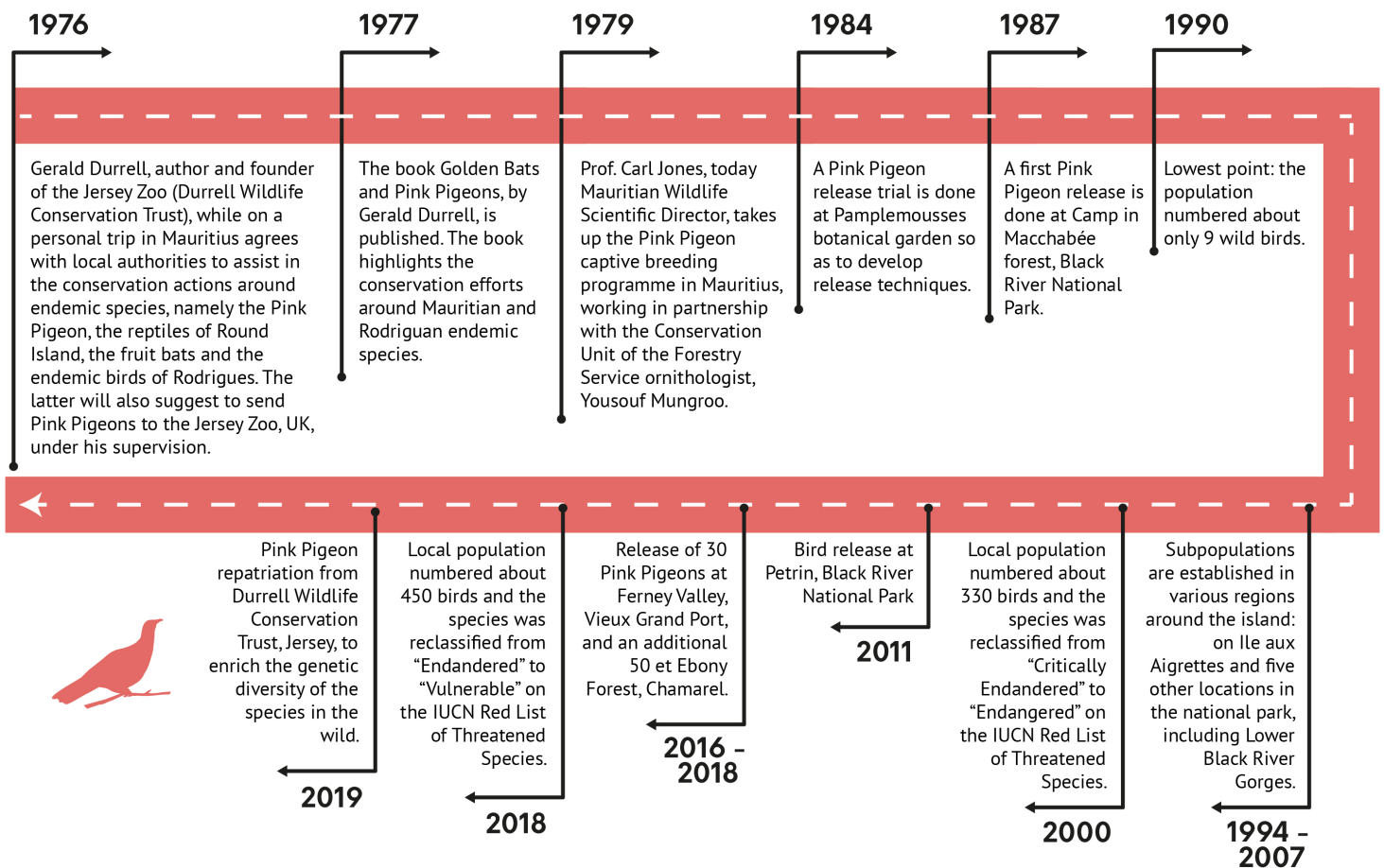
"Once on Mauritian territory, the birds were quarantined for a period of four weeks in the Bras D'Eau National Park aviary and then sent to Black River's Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary for captive breeding purposes. Meanwhile, Durrell and other zoos will continue to breed birds in captivity and the latter will then be repatriated to

Mauritius in upcoming years”, indicates Kevin Ruhomaun, National Parks and Conservation Service Director.

Despite being at an advanced stage, and one of the oldest of the project of the Mauritian Wildlife and the National Parks, the leading cause of the bird’s rarity remains; a plethora of introduced predators and a restricted and deteriorated native habitat. Fortunately, the Pink Pigeon conservation project still receives support from firms and organisations mindful of the Mauritian biodiversity, the most significant support coming from the Mauritius Commercial Bank, Fondation Medine Horizon and SWAN Group Foundation.



TIMELINE



PLAN D'ASSISTANCE FINANCIÈRE POUR LA PROTECTION DES FRUITS: SAISON 2019-2020

Le Ministère de l'Agro-Industrie et de la Sécurité Alimentaire informe les producteurs de fruits (litchis, mangues et longanes) et le public en général de la mise en place du Plan d'assistance financière pour la protection des fruits pour la saison 2019-2020.

Ce plan vise à encourager l'achat des filets afin de protéger les fruits contre les oiseaux et les chauves-souris.

La période de validité du plan s'étendra du lundi 26 août 2019 jusqu'à la fin de janvier 2020 suivant le principe de premier venu premier servi.

Les bénéficiaires potentiels auront droit à une subvention de 75 % sur le coût des filets pour couvrir un maximum de 5 arbres fruitiers.

Seulement ceux n'ayant pas bénéficié du Plan d'assistance financière pour la protection des fruits durant les deux dernières années seront considérés. Chaque bénéficiaire aura droit à une seule demande.

Les filets devront être placés sur les arbres une fois que les fruits auront atteint un diamètre de plus de 5 mm.

Pour plus de renseignements et autres conditions, veuillez prendre contact avec le FAREI sur les numéros ci-dessous en jour de semaine de 13:00 à 16:00 heures.

1. Mapou Model Farm (Tel. No. 266 2087)
2. Flacq Model Farm (Tel. No. 413 8125)
3. Rivière des Anguilles Demonstration Centre (Tel. No. 626 2554)
4. Plaisance Demonstration Centre (Tel. No. 637 8112)
5. Vacoas – Sub Office (Tel. No. 606 3087)
6. St Pierre Extension Office (Tel. No. 433 9350)



PROTECTION OF FRUITS FROM BIRDS AND BATS HOW TO NET A TREE



**SCAN THE QR CODE
TO DOWNLOAD THE
TREE NETTING BROCHURE**



CHESTERZOO



INJUNCTION AGAINST BAT CULL WITHDRAWN



Source: National Geographic

In 2018, Ms Fabiola Monty of the non-governmental organisation, DIS-MOI (Droits Humains – Ocean Indien), <https://www.facebook.com/DisMoiDroitsHumains/> lodged an injunction in court to end culling of Mauritius Fruit Bats (*Pteropus niger*) on animal welfare grounds. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has been involved as a witness and Associate Professor (Dr) Vincent Florens of the University of Mauritius has acted as a scientific expert.

On 29th October 2019, a meeting with the judge in chamber was called. On the advice of Mr Erickson Mooneepillay, lawyer to the plaintiff, the injunction has been removed due to there being no culling in sight in 2019 and no sitting government at the moment. The approach will be to focus on the ongoing main case in 2020 on the basis that culling is contravening the Animal Welfare Act 2013, therefore declaring culling of the Mauritius Fruit Bat as illegal. The legal representatives of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, and the Mauritius Police Force have agreed that the injunction be removed without prejudice and at no cost.

In the event of a cull at any point, a new injunction can be lodged to halt the cull. The opponents to culling will continue to play their role as 'watchdogs'. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation will continue to work with all partners, whether from government, private sector, scientists, and especially fruit growers, to promote non-lethal solutions to fruit protection, including tree pruning, netting and reduction of non-harvested fruit.

BACKYARD FRUIT GROWER'S HALF-DAY WORKSHOP

The Backyard Fruit Grower's half-day Workshop was held on Wednesday 23rd October 2019 at the MSIRI, Reduit. The aim of the workshop was to provide a platform for backyard fruit tree owners affected by Mauritius Fruit Bats and other fruit predators to share their experience. The dialogue resulted in a range of ideas and suggestions that could be implemented to address the problems that backyard fruit growers face.



HALF-DAY WORKSHOP ON HUMAN-FRUITBAT CONFLICT

The Backyard Fruit Grower's half-day Workshop was followed by another workshop held at the Media Trust on 24 October 2019, in collaboration with the IUCN Human Wildlife Conflict Task Force and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, hosted a half-day workshop on the Mauritius Fruit Bat. The human-fruit bat conflict was discussed with journalists, who represent a key stakeholder group in trying to reduce the conflict. The main speaker was Mr. Virat Singh, an Indian reporter, who covers wildlife and environment and has been very involved with the conflict with leopards in Mumbai.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION



Local communities in Rodrigues play a vital role in the fight against species decline by becoming aware of the need for conservation and participating in habitat restoration and monitoring efforts. To reach out to the community, Mauritian Wildlife Rodrigues organises Conservation Work Days with village groups, youth groups and women's clubs amongst others. Activities organised include: plant propagation, restoration and general appreciation of Rodrigues' biodiversity to foster better stewardship.

During these sessions the local community receive information from Mauritian Wildlife Rodrigues staff on our mission and activities to better understand the importance of biodiversity conservation. Then, they have the opportunity to contribute to restoration efforts by volunteering in

the Solitude Endemic Nursery, Nature Reserve and at other field work sites. During the month of August alone, MWF Rodrigues welcomed 47 volunteers of which 20 were youngsters from local marine conservation Association Shoals Rodrigues, which has an active long-term marine education initiative called Club Mer. During this exchange, the 20 youngsters, supervised by two Shoals Educators, helped propagate native plants in Mauritian Wildlife's nursery in Solitude. The next day, they helped weeding and planting endemic seedlings in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve. In the past Club Mer kids have also participated in Rodrigues Fruit Bat surveys.

In the nursery, the volunteers cleaned and sowed the seeds of endangered plant species, filled polythene potting bags with soil, transplanted, potted and

watered seedlings. They also helped weeding out invasive seedlings from the potting bags. In the nature reserve, the volunteers participated in weeding of larger invasive species and planting of endemic and native seedlings on an active restoration plot.

During these sessions, the participants learn about plant propagation and restoration techniques, which can be useful in future employment or in self-employment should they opt down the route of Agriculture, as is often the case in Rodrigues. Participating in Conservation Work Days also motivates some of the participants to further their studies in the field of science and ultimately work in the conservation sector. We firmly believe that reaching out to and involving local communities is essential to the success of conservation efforts.

COMMEMORATING - WORLD CLEAN-UP DAY 2019 - KEEP IT CLEAN

This year's World Clean-up Day took place on September 21st 2019. World Clean-up Day is a global social action programme aimed at combating the global solid waste problem, including the problem of marine trash. Around the world, various activities are carried out to demonstrate support for environmental protection and to combat waste and plastic pollution. To celebrate the World Clean-up Day 2019, which also coincided with Coastal Clean-up Day, the Rodrigues Branch of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, in collaboration with Forestry Services and Fisheries Department, organised a beach clean-up on Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables Nature Reserves.

Four Mauritian Wildlife staff and two



Forestry Service Enforcement Officers collected litter on the two islet reserves during which, 24 bin bags were filled with plastic bottles and one bin bag filled with glass bottles. It was observed that most of the litter collected was washed up from the mainland.

The collected rubbish was transported back to the mainland, for correct disposal, using the Mauritian Wildlife's boat, Yéyé, and another boat kindly provided for the day by the Forestry Service. It was estimated that only one quarter of the rubbish accumulated on the Isle aux Sables had been collected, so the Mauritian Wildlife team aims to return several times before the end of 2019, to complete the clean-up.

MAURITIAN WILDLIFE EDUCATION STRATEGY WORKSHOP



Between 1st and 4th October 2019, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation organised a 4-day Education Strategic Planning Workshop, held at the Dodo Club, in Curepipe, in Mauritius, aimed at developing a long-term strategy for ensuring maximum impact of the Mauritian Wildlife's outreach programme and its partnerships with other key stakeholders.

The workshop was facilitated by Ms Charlotte Smith, Head of Discovery and Learning and supported by Mr Greg Counsell, Conservation Scientist

and Dr Claire Raisin, Field Programmes Coordinator, all three from Chester Zoo. The workshop was attended by Mauritian Wildlife staff involved in Education and Awareness; the REEP Environmental Educator from Rodrigues was also invited. During the workshop Mauritian Wildlife staff shared their views, experience and knowledge on conservation threats and how education and awareness could be used to mitigate them. A stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out to categorise stakeholders by their level of interest and influence over the Mauritian Wildlife's goals. This task was done through group work and discussion.

This exercise is important for the Mauritian Wildlife to be able to prioritise the stakeholders it works with as it has proved difficult, in the past, to work with them all. Using the stakeholder mapping table, it should now be easier to identify the priority

stakeholders to achieve the highest impact in relation to conservation education goals. In the morning of the last day, a draft strategic plan was proposed and discussed. The key external stakeholders including representatives of the National Parks and Conservation Service, Forestry Service, University of Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Education, Action for Environment Protection and REEF Conservation (a local marine NGO), were invited for a consultative work session, during which the draft strategic plan was explained and discussed. The feedback collected will be used to fine-tune Mauritian Wildlife's long-term Education Strategic Plan.

It was noted that the current education actions in Rodrigues fit into the strategy but some will take a more prominent role in the future while additional actions will be developed.

I RUN WE SUPPORT – JULIEN LAFRESIÈRE

Julien s'est envolé à l'île de la Réunion pour participer à la Diagonale des Fous qui a eu lieu le 17 octobre. C'est un rêve devenu réalité, ou plutôt un challenge qui s'est concrétisé après une année d'entraînement intense.

Il a affronté ce parcours de 165 km avec 9 500 m de dénivelé positif et il a réussi à parcourir dans moins de 66 h.

Cette course était importante pour Julien car elle symbolise la fin d'un long chemin parcouru, tant au niveau physique que mental. Pour marquer le coup, il a décidé d'associer ce challenge à une levée de fonds en faveur de la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. En prenant compte que notre ONG participe activement à la conservation et réhabilitation de la faune et la flore endémiques de Maurice et Julien a pensé que c'était une bonne cause qui se mariait bien avec sa passion pour le trail et son amour pour la nature.

Le principe de cette levée de fonds était simple ; chaque kilomètre valait Rs 100 (2.5 euros) et finalement il a pu recueillir Rs 30 000 comme sponsor pour son trajet !!



SSC CHAIR'S CITATION OF EXCELLENCE LETTER

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Mascarene Islands Plant Specialist Group has been awarded the SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence at the SSC Leader's meeting in Abu Dhabi in October 2019.

The Mascarene Islands Plant Specialist Group is a voluntary network of non-governmental, governmental and international plant scientists with expertise in Mascarene flora conservation. It cuts across institutional and geographical barriers for the good of conservation of threatened flora of our region.

The group is hosted by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation for Mauritius and Rodrigues (with Dr Vikash Tatayah, as co-chair) and the Reunion National Park for Réunion Island (with Dr Stéphane Baret, as co-chair).

The SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence the Mascarene Islands Plant Specialist Group is an international accolade to the plant conservation work on Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion, especially the plant red-listing work.

This award is a success shared by all local and international institutions and individuals collaborating in a way or other for the conservation of plants of the Mascarenes, such as the National Parks and Conservation Service, Forestry Service, Mauritius Herbarium, University of Mauritius, Ferney Valley, Ebony Forest, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (Mauritius and Rodrigues), Conservatoire Botanique de Brest (France), Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (UK), Missouri Botanic Garden (US), Botanical Gardens Conservation International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Forestry Service (Rodrigues), François Leguat Cave and Tortoise Park, and on La Réunion, Conservatoire Botanique National des Mascarins, Office

National des Forêts, Parc National de la Réunion, CIRAD, Université de La Réunion), NGOs (such as the friends of plants and nature -APN-, Plant

Ali and others). The award can only encourage us to go even further and higher in plant conservation.



*On behalf of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature I am proud to grant the **IUCN SSC Mascarene Islands Plant Specialist Group** with **The SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence** in recognition for outstanding contributions to the SSC Key Species Results of the IUCN SSC Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020, especially for accomplishing key outcomes under the **PLAN & ACT** components of the Species Conservation Cycle.*

The contribution of this Group is significant and noteworthy for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Species Survival Commission Leaders Meeting

Abu Dhabi, October 9th, 2019.

*Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair
IUCN Species Survival Commission*

SSC Chair's office: Avenida Libertador con Calle La Joya, Unidad Técnica del Este, Of. 29-30, Chacao, Caracas, Venezuela. Tlf: +58 0212 2656996 | 2670897 | 2637240, +58 424 2363474. Email: JonPaul.RODRIGUEZ@ssc.iucn.org

ERIC JOLIN'S ADVENTURE WITH THE MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

After a whirlwind three weeks, the final week of which will remain hazy due to a combination of food poisoning and my phone falling into a river, my time in Madagascar has come to an end. Although my trip was full of incredible wildlife and even more incredible people, I feel like I barely scratched the surface of the Red Island. I also want to take a moment to thank all those I met with Durrell Madagascar, without whom this trip would have been half as exciting and twice as difficult.

Whether you were helping me navigate the streets of Tana, showing me the ins-and-outs of tortoise conservation, or giving me a glimpse into the tough world of giant jumping rat research, you were the reason this trip was so special. Thanks!



Now it's time for the prelude to end and the real adventure to begin!

The next six months (starting from August) will be spent planting critically endangered plants, controlling invasive species, and monitoring the recovery of endemic animal species with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation's Island Restoration Team. While our crew prepares for our next expedition to the remote islet of Round Island, I'll be getting to know the local flora and fauna by spending time on the much closer Ile Aux Aigrettes, soaking up as much knowledge as I can.



The pink pigeon, once listed as Critically Endangered, has been brought back from the brink of extinction.



An Aldabra Giant Tortoise on Ile Aux Aigrettes. This introduced species fills the niche once occupied by the now extinct Mauritian Giant Tortoise.

Although I've only been here for a short amount of time, I'm already blown away by the incredible uniqueness of this country and the hard-working biologists working to protect it. This is just the beginning folks and I cannot wait to share my adventures with you over the next few months. Stay tuned! - Eric

Adapted from: Wildlife Preservation Canada website

NEW ECOTOURS OFFERS

In addition to the recently introduced EcoTours activities of Grande Montagne Nature Reserve and our traditional Ile aux Aigrettes (IAA) tours, discover some of the newly developed activities offering new means to learn more on our endemic fauna and flora.

South East Islets Adventure



Embark on a full day trip* on a speed boat to discover the treasures of the southeastern islets of Mauritius.

Together with one of our rangers discover the unique mix of endemic animals and plants of Ile aux Aigrettes as well as the enduring historical monuments of Ile de la Passe and Ile aux Fouquets - commonly known as Ile au Phare.

Ile de la Passe, important for its geographical role in Mauritius historic events, and Ile au Phare, for its distinctive 1864 lighthouse, will share their secrets and awe-inspiring views of the Mahebourg Bay.

*Snorkeling opportunities at Trou Moutou marine park are also available. Lunch is provided.

Northern Islets Seabirds Tours

Enjoy a half-day sea trip* on a deep sea fishing boat to seabirds islands in the north of Mauritius

Come see Gunners Quoin and Flat Island and - sea conditions permitting - Serpent Island and Round Island.

Landing is not permitted on Gunners Quoin, Serpent Island and Round Island.

biologist and an experienced captain, you will be shown seabirds flying around the islands and skimming above the sea.

You may see the Round Island Petrel, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Red and White-tailed Tropicbirds, Sooty terns, Common noddies, Lesser Noddies and Masked boobies, depending on the season.



Accompanied by a Mauritian Wildlife

*Soft drinks and snacks provided.

Spectacular Outflights Bats Tours

The Mauritius Fruit Bat (or Flying Fox) is a controversial figure in Mauritius with fruit growers on one side lobbying for culls and conservationists on the other for protection.

Discover this megabat species with a special tour* allowing you to meet and see, close up, bats in captivity. The tour then culminates with a journey to a roost site in early evening; their emergence and the bats flying overhead offering an amazing sight and great photo opportunities.

*Soft drinks and snacks provided.



For more information about how to book any of the above activities, please consult our website www.mauritian-wildlife.org

WORLD TOURISM DAY 2019



On the 27th of September every year, the world celebrates the World Tourism Day. The reason for World Tourism Day is to cultivate and create awareness among the society globally on the significance of tourism, and its social, political, financial and also cultural worth and value.

Ecotourism (also called sustainable tourism) can be defined by a variety of travel practices, but it all comes down to a general set of ideas. As an eco-tourist, you decide to travel in a way that shows respect to nature and does not contribute to its degradation.

Additionally, ecotourism is a part of environmental conservation, and understanding what the needs of the people are who are local to the area so that you can help to improve their quality of life. It also involves learning more about the history of other cities and preserving the historical landmarks.

At the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, visitors can benefit from a range of activities both in Mauritius and Rodrigues which would enrich their knowledge about the conservation work of our organisation.

Text : Awareness Days website & Madeira Island News Blog
Source of Photo: Ask Ideas website

IUCN CALLS FOR HALT TO SPECIES DECLINE BY 2030

The Abu Dhabi Call, issued at the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Leaders' Meeting, urges governments to take emergency measures to save those species at the highest risk of extinction and tackle key threats that are driving population declines and extinctions. These include the lack of incentives for landowners and managers to retain wild species and natural habitats; poor or abusive practices in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry; wildlife crime; emerging infectious diseases; the disruption of water flow; inadequate management of waste and discharges; invasive alien species; and increasingly, climate change and ocean acidification.

"With 2020 comes the opportunity to curb the escalating extinction crisis and invest in a more optimistic future. With this Call, IUCN stands ready to support governments and civil society, including young people, to work for a world in which species are preserved and valued for their intrinsic worth as well as the benefits they offer," said IUCN Acting Director General Dr Grethel Aguilar. "The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 will bring together states, civil society and indigenous peoples to work together towards halting species declines by 2030."

The Call is the result of more than 300 SSC Leaders coming together in Abu Dhabi on the cusp of 2020, a year that will see critical decisions for the future of the planet taken by policy makers. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change will be reviewed, and the Convention on Biological Diversity will adopt the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. A new UN legal binding agreement on marine biodiversity in the High Seas is under negotiation. The IUCN World Conservation Congress will amplify this Call, which will then be addressed by the United Nations Heads of State Summit on Biodiversity.



"The Species Survival Commission is the world's largest network of species scientists and a fundamental contributor to IUCN's role as provider of the knowledge that underlies nature conservation. They devote their lives, generally on an entirely voluntary basis, to saving species. The high quality of the work of SSC Specialist Groups provides a strong scientific foundation for conservation action. We now appeal to governments to urgently respond to this Call by helping pull species back from the brink of extinction," said Dr Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission.

A global Programme of Work on Species Conservation will be launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in June 2020. IUCN calls on Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the other biodiversity-related conventions to respond by including this Programme in the post 2020 global biodiversity

framework and follow up with urgent implementation. At the Congress, governments, civil society and indigenous peoples' organisations will come together to drive conservation efforts for 'a just world that values and conserves nature.'

"Decisions made in 2020 will define the future of the planet," said Dr Jane Smart, Global Director of the IUCN's Biodiversity Conservation Group. "We face a nature emergency. Species are the primary source of income and resources for hundreds of millions of people around the globe; their aesthetic values and spiritual roles provide comfort and inspiration as well as recreation. At this critical moment, the world's governments must accept responsibility for this emergency and act now to ensure we pass on a rich natural heritage to future generations. This is a unique opportunity to mobilise society and galvanise the necessary action to address the species crisis."

IUCN also recalls that the global target to bring about the recovery of known threatened species adopted in Nagoya, Japan in 2010 is unlikely to be met, despite substantial efforts from conservationists worldwide. Looking forward, IUCN emphasises the importance of including clear, ambitious targets on species conservation in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

“Species conservation is a key imperative going forward and I am so happy that the SSC Leaders meeting in Abu Dhabi has identified this as an urgent need that is a key outcome of the Leaders meeting. We recognise that there are many other key challenges impacting biodiversity, however we must tirelessly work to ensure that species conservation remains at the forefront of any conservation discussion,” said Her Excellency Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Managing Director of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD). “UAE has assumed a leadership role in the conservation of biodiversity and our partnership with IUCN and SSC in particular further reiterates that.”

“EAD and Abu Dhabi place a high premium on species conservation. Conservation of species, locally as well as globally, is a legacy of our founding father and the leadership in Abu Dhabi is fully committed to it. Initiatives to conserve the Arabian Oryx, Scimitar-horned Oryx and many other local and regional conservation initiatives are a fine example of this.

We work very closely with IUCN on the Red List of Species and the Green List of Protected Areas and we wish to ensure that these key knowledge products are integrated within the local level planning and regulations,” said Her Excellency Dr Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheeri, Secretary General of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi.

In recognition of the scale of transformative change that is needed, the Abu Dhabi Call for Species Conservation Action encourages

governments and donor institutions to allocate substantial additional resources for conservation of species and their habitats.

The IUCN Species Survival Commission is the world’s largest network of species conservation experts with over 9,000 members globally. It is mandated by the Members of IUCN (governments, NGOs, and indigenous peoples’ organisations) to conserve species.

This unique body includes biologists, ecologists, wildlife managers, health and social scientists, educators, community representatives, economists and government officials. The Call was developed by SSC Leaders meeting in Abu Dhabi with generous support from the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi.

The Species Survival Commission generates the knowledge for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, the world’s most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species. SSC experts have unique insight into the extent to which species are undergoing unprecedented and growing threats from unsustainable human activities, reflected in The IUCN Red List.

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Source: Yahia Nazroo

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2019



This year's World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2019 took place on Saturday, 12 October.

The theme of World Migratory Bird Day this year is "Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!" to put the spotlight on the negative impact of plastic pollution on migratory birds and their habitats.

With an annual production of more than 300m tons, plastic is one of the most widely used materials in the world. What often escapes one's attention is that the plastic is used for its main purpose for only a moment compared with its lifecycle of 20 to 500 years. Lightweight and designed to last, the discarded pieces are easily transported into ecosystems through the forces of nature causing serious threats to migratory species around the world.

Sadly, having wings does not help birds escape the threat of plastic. Birds with stomachs full of plastic, entangled and smothered by plastic rings and nets, are all too real consequences of the toll that plastic takes on wildlife.

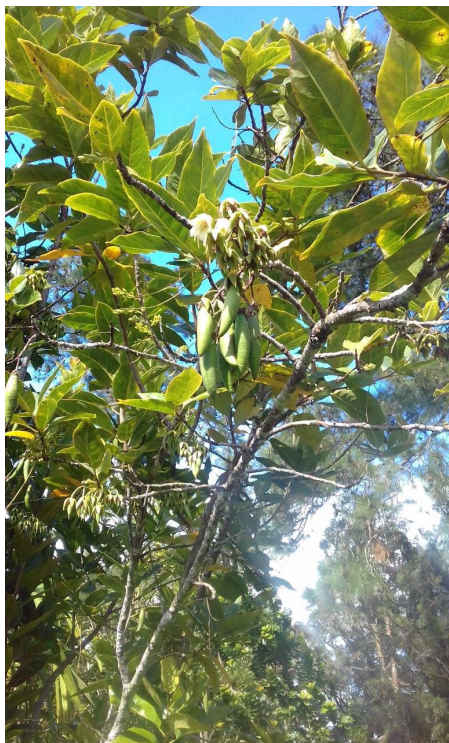
The number of seabirds dying from the effects of plastic every year is currently 1 million and growing. Existing research pinpoints the urgency of the matter: not only do 90 per cent of seabirds have plastic in their guts, but this proportion will reach 99 per cent by 2050. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation aims to raise awareness about issues affecting migratory birds and to inspire the Mauritian people to take measures for their conservation.



Adapted from World Migratory Bird Day website

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Discover a few of the beautiful photos shared by our nature-loving Facebook friends.



bois dentelle (left) &
Hibiscus genevii
(right) by
Pascal Mucktoom



Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher by Patrick Montocchio



Trochetia boutoniana by Dean Ah Sen



Red-tailed Tropicbird by Stephanie Manuel Photography



1. White-tailed Tropicbirds - 2. Grey-white Eye - 3. Bulbul- 4. Mauritius Fody
by Théo Tzélépoglou Photography



Bouton's Skink by AN TI SH