

The Grande Montagne Nature Reserve - Guided Ecotour

The **Grande Montagne Nature Reserve** was legally declared a nature reserve in 1983 and is one of only two mainland reserves in Rodrigues. One of the last remaining vestiges of native forest, the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve provides a home to extremely rare endemic plants and animals. It now protects over 40 endemic and native plant species and is a core habitat of the endangered Rodrigues Fody, Rodrigues Warbler and Rodrigues Fruit Bat, the last three endemic fauna species, all of which are on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*.

To date over 80% of the 25.5 ha fenced area of the reserve has been restored with over 200,000 plants, planted by Mauritian Wildlife



Foundation (MWF) staff, volunteers and officers of the Forestry Services of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Restoration of this reserve is a long-term endeavour that began over 20 years ago.



MWF is pleased to welcome visitors to the nature reserve on our guided ecotours, please see details below. **The Dominique Farla Information Centre**, where visits begin, is situated on the main road in Grande Montagne village and is just 20 minutes by car from Plaine Corail Airport, 15 minutes from Port Mathurin and 5 minutes from Pointe Cotton, St

François or Mont Lubin. It is located 300m after the Post Office heading towards St François, and 500m after the St François/Rivière Banane crossroads heading towards Mont Lubin or Port Mathurin.

At the Information Centre, the displays include the most complete preserved skeleton in Rodrigues of the Solitaire (the Dodo's less famous relation) and an endemic giant tortoise – both of which are extinct. There are paintings of Rodrigues' extinct fauna, as well as detailed portraits of the remaining endemic birds and rare plants. The nature reserve is accessed from this building, up a flight of steps, then under the canopy of mature endemic Pandanus trees.

Within the Reserve, you should see Rodrigues' two remaining endemic bird species, the **Rodrigues Fody** with its bright yellow/orange plumage during the breeding season, and the **Rodrigues Warbler**, a handsome and curious little bird with a beautiful melodic song. Look out for the **Rodrigues Fruit Bat**, flying over the reserve in search of fruit, flowers and young shoots and the **Aldabra**



giant tortoises hiding in the forest. You will see and learn more about the endemic and native plant species also conserved here, the best known of which are the *café marron*, the *mandrinette* (Rodrigues' endemic hibiscus) and the *bois puant* (Rodrigues endemic Foetidia).

A guide will take visitors to the main viewpoint, overlooking the east coast including Pointe Cotton, the St François Bay area, Grenade, and as far south as Port Sud Est, the southern lagoon and La Grande Passe.



Following the tour, visitors have the opportunity to purchase souvenirs from the **Information Centre**, such as illustrated books on the fauna and flora of Rodrigues and Ile Cocos, MWF T-shirts and polo shirts, caps, hats, bracelets, or bath and face towels embroidered with pictures of Rodrigues' endemic fauna.

MWF offers **fixed and pre-booked tours**. *Fixed Tour 1* begins at 09:30 Monday to Saturday and *Fixed Tour 2* at 13:15 Monday to Friday. There is no need to book for fixed tours, simply turn up and join in. Fixed tours last between 1.5 and 2 hours. **There are no fixed tours** on Saturday afternoon, Sunday or public holidays.

Tailor-made bird watching or photography tours can be organised by booking in advance with MWF, by phone :Grande Montagne (230) 8314-862 or Solitude (230)8314-558), Fax: +230-8314-559, or by email: grandemont@mauritian-wildlife.org, or pre-book a tour to be adapted to your needs, at a time convenient to you.

In the event of bad weather, the reserve will be closed, although the Dominique Farla Information Centre will remain open, regardless of the weather.

It is advisable to bring a raincoat, bottle of water, walking shoes, mosquito repellent, sunscreen, binoculars to appreciate the views/endemic birds up close, and a camera.

Additional information: our MWF ecotour guides carry a first aid kit and are trained in first aid. All ecotour revenue is re-invested in conservation efforts in Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, including labour and equipment costs, as well as the propagation of endemic and native species in the Solitude Endemic Nursery for planting each year in the Reserve.



Visitors' rates:

Child: Under 12 years of age

Residents: Adult Rs200/Child Rs100

Overseas visitors: Adult Rs300/Child Rs150

For tailor-made, Rodriguan group or pre-booked tours: Contact us for a quotation.

Our location:

