

# TITLE OF PROGRAMME: ILE COCOS & ILE AUX SABLES RESTORATION PROJECT

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



## PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Ecosystems Restoration
Start of Project	Mid-1980s
Location	Ile Cocos, Ile aux Sables, Rodrigues, Republic of Mauritius
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
Status	Ongoing

### OBJECTIVES

- Restore natural habitats on Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables.
- Monitor, study and protect the nesting seabird colonies.
- Support sustainable ecotourism development on Ile Cocos.

### ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Conduct quarterly seabird monitoring censuses.
- Continue with the removal of invasive alien species.

- Plant endemic and native seedlings in selected areas.
- Advise the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the conservation of the native biodiversity.
- Promote safe ecotourism practices on Ile Cocos by the Discovery Rodrigues Company.
- Train stakeholder on biosecurity measures.

### PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Native wildlife of Rodrigues and ecosystems of Rodrigues, Rodriguan Biodiversity.
- Villages of Rodrigues (West), Rodriguan 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

Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables, two sandbar islets to the West of Rodrigues, 15 and 8 ha respectively, are renowned for breeding seabirds (Common Noddy, Lesser Noddy, Sooty Tern, Fairy Tern and Roseate Tern) and water birds (Green Heron), as well as migratory birds (Ruddy Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Crab Plover and Whimbrel) and occasional prospecting seabirds (White-tailed Tropicbird and Lesser Frigate bird).

The islets are also the last remaining sites in Rodrigues where there is natural vegetation succession (from coastal strand to shrub to tree), and which - despite their small size - hold several ecotypes (strand, grasses, marshes, forests). Ile aux Sables also supports the only known population of bois mapou *Pisonia grandis* in the Mascarenes. By virtue of the biodiversity hosted by these islets, they are classified as an 'Important Bird Area for Africa' by BirdLife International.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) has had a long history of involvement with these islets, and has advised the Government of Mauritius and the Regional Rodrigues Assembly in formal and informal capacities for over three decades on their management; giving advice on planting, weed control, bird management, ecotourism and stakeholder training.

For CSR activities and more information please contact the Fundraising Manager or email [fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org)

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Despite their native biodiversity, the islets have been severely modified by man, the vegetation communities have been replaced to a great extent by casuarina and coconut plantations, and have been damaged by invasive alien plants and animals, coastal erosion and by inadequately managed human visitation.

The MWF has initiated habitat restoration on the islets, controlled invasive plants, raised awareness, collected baseline data on bird populations and breeding habits. Additionally, on Ile Cocos, MWF improved signage and guiding, redesigned trails, and trained stakeholders in the biodiversity and management of the islet. There has been some improvement in the management and conservation status of these islets, raising both its environmental quality and visitor appeal. However, there is great potential to improve their management further.

MWF continue habitat restoration by planting on both islets and carry out regular seabird surveys to ensure that the populations are not affected by visits or other impacts. We will continue to work closely with all stakeholders, especially the Forestry Service, Discovery Rodrigues and the tour operators to bring about further improvements for visitors.



## 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 [Part-Time]: Manager and Conservation Staff.
- Transport: Use of a vehicle, boat and engine.
- Infrastructure: Use of a fully equipped plant nursery.
- Equipment: Nursery and restoration equipment (e.g. plant trays and potting bags), use of laptop and GPS.
- Other: Consumables.

### BUDGET 2024-2025

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	247,970
Transport and Travel	79,400
Equipment and Materials	105,000
Other Operation Costs	9,310
<b>Total Operational Cost</b>	<b>441,680</b>
Administration Cost	40,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>481,680</b>

**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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