

TITLE OF PROGRAMME: MAURITIUS ECHO PARAKEET CONSERVATION PROJECT

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



PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Species Conservation
Start of Project	1970s
Scientific name	<i>Psittacula eques</i>
Species	Parrot
Location	Black River Gorges National Park, Bambou Mountains and Chamarel Mountains, Mauritius
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
IUCN status	Vulnerable

OBJECTIVES

Maintain a viable population of the Echo Parakeet in the Black River Gorges National Park with minimum management and increase the distribution of the bird to other good quality forests.

ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Support the wild Echo Parakeet population to produce the maximum possible number of wild-reared fledglings each season.

- Further develop minimal management techniques to enable effective management and monitoring of a continually expanding population.
- Fully investigate the impacts of Psittacene Beak and Feather Disease (Pbfd) on the Echo Parakeet population through disease screening and research.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Mauritius Echo Parakeet, 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 Echo Parakeet *Psittacula eques* is the last endemic parrot of the Mascarenes and was close to extinction as the wild population numbers were estimated at around 20 birds in the mid-1970s. The Echo Parakeet is closely associated with good quality native forest, and the decline of the bird has been due to habitat decline and degradation, causing shortage of food and tree cavities for nesting. Predators and diseases severely impact on the survival of Echo Parakeets.

The population has now reached 800 birds thanks to a conservation programme that has included rescue of eggs and chicks in the wild, captive breeding and rearing, releases into the wild, pest and disease control, supplementary feeding, nest site provision and habitat restoration. The Echo Parakeet is arguably the most successful parrot restoration programme and is a model for the rescue for other parrots worldwide. The immediate challenge is overcoming Psittacene Beak and Feather Disease (Pbfd), a deadly viral disease, whilst the long term aim is large scale habitat restoration that will cater for natural food and nest sites. Despite the disease, the population is still growing which would indicate that the current minimum management is adequate.

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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Since the Echo Parakeet was restricted to the Black River Gorges National Park, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation worked to further secure the species from a localised event which could severely impact on the population. Suitable areas with good quality native forest were identified, namely in the Bambou Mountains and at Ebony Forest in Chamarel, for translocations. The translocation to Ferney (Bambou Mountains) began in February 2015: 14 birds were released in 2015, 29 birds in 2016 and 30 birds in 2017. At the end of 2019, there were regular sightings of released birds in the Bambou Mountains. Un-ringed juvenile birds were also observed indicating breeding. In 2018, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation began the translocation to Ebony Forest, releasing 26 birds. The translocations continued in 2019 with 24 birds released.

To support the birds in the wild the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation continues to maintain nest boxes and provide supplementary food which improves general bird fitness and breeding success. Monitoring enables us to ring birds and assess how many fledge into the wild as well as identify birds suitable for translocation. Our university partners are undertaking a number of studies which look at PBF, supplementary feeding, genetics and population dynamics - all of which will inform conservation actions in the future. Our current aim is to identify a minimum management strategy which will not impact on the numbers of birds in the wild.



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: One Fauna Manager, one Project Coordinator, one Senior Conservation Biologist and four Conservation Biologists.
- Infrastructure: Use of three equipped field stations.
- Equipment: One jeep, three motorbikes, six sets of climbing equipment, three laptops, six GPS units, bird ringing equipment, blood sampling equipment and nest boxes.
- Other: Laboratory tests on blood samples, consumables and food for the birds.

BUDGET 2020-2021

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	1,845,420
Transport and Travel	483,000
Equipment and Materials	425,600
Veterinary Costs	81,090
Other Operation Costs	385,500
Total Operational Cost	3,220,610
Administration Cost	350,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	3,570,610

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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