

# TITLE OF PROGRAMME: MAURITIUS PINK PIGEON CONSERVATION PROJECT

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



Pink Pigeon in the Black River Gorges National Park.

## PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Species Conservation
Start of Project	1970's
Scientific name	<i>Nesoenas mayeri</i>
Species	Pink Pigeon
Location	Black River Gorges National Park, Ferney Valley and Ile aux Aigrettes
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
IUCN status	Vulnerable

### OBJECTIVES

- Achieve a self-sustaining wild population (+600) that would require minimal management to survive.
- Re-introduce genes from international zoo populations into to Mauritian wild populations.

### ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Scientific research and monitoring on forest habitat, bird numbers, climate change, food provision, phenology (fruiting and flowering) of

food plants, predation, diseases, territory use and genetics.

- Studies on the dynamics of the Pink Pigeon and limiting factor issues.
- Increasing number of birds produced at the Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary, with the goal of having 10 breeding pairs of Pink Pigeons.
- Release of captive bred and hand-reared birds in suitable habitats and subpopulations that need reinforcement.

### PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Pink Pigeon, 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 Pink Pigeon, *Nesoenas mayeri*, is one of the world's rarest pigeons. Only 9 wild birds were known at its lowest point in 1990. In the last 40 years, an integrated management approach of captive breeding, releases, habitat restoration, predator control and establishing new sub populations has seen the population recover to approximately 450 wild birds. Whilst the conservation work to date has saved the species from imminent extinction, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation cannot relax in its efforts nor reduce the level of support. The original causes of the species' rarity, mainly restricted and degrading native habitat and introduced predators still prevail and unless we continue to manage the effects of these limiting factors, the Pink Pigeon may face extinction once again.

There is a subpopulation of Pink Pigeons established on the offshore island of Ile aux Aigrettes and six more in the Black River Gorges National Park, and two in private lands. Several sites, e.g. Ile aux Aigrettes, Petrin and the Lower Black River Gorges, are open to the public and the birds can easily be seen. Additional subpopulations have been

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established recently in areas of good quality native forest habitat. In 2016/17, 30 Pink Pigeons were released in Ferney Valley and from in 2018 until 2019, 50 birds were released in Ebony Forest.

These releases have increased the area occupied by Pink Pigeons and will support the aim to increase the total population size to over 600 birds, a figure believed to be the minimum viable population size for an avian species. A study supported by our University partners has identified that birds from European & USA zoos have genes that are missing or underrepresented in the wild birds in Mauritius. These genes, reintroduced to the birds in Mauritius, should strengthen resilience, e.g. in fighting diseases. Thus a captive population of Pink Pigeons has been set up at the Gerald Durrell Wildlife Endemic Sanctuary. Birds will be imported and be bred to provide fledglings to be released into all the subpopulations to increase genetic diversity to the current population.

The genetic management of the Pink Pigeon is an indication of success and maturity of the project, and very few conservation initiatives worldwide are at this stage of management. In addition, Mauritians and tourists can easily admire a bird that may have become extinct a few decades ago.



## 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 Project Coordinator, one Assistant Coordinator, one Senior Conservation Biologist, nine Conservation Biologists and support from a Fauna Manager and Head office.
- Equipment: Use of six jeeps, three motor-bikes, ten laptops, eight GPS units, binoculars, bird ringing equipment, disease screening equipment, post mortem equipment, tracking equipment, incubators and brooders.
- Infrastructure: Six equipped field stations.
- Other: Consumables, food for hand rearing, food for birds and laboratory tests on blood samples.

### BUDGET 2021-2022

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	2,690,728
Transport and Travel	894,000
Equipment and Materials	409,200
Veterinary Cost	48,250
Handrearing Costs	644,730
Other Operation Costs	448,550
<b>Total Operational Cost</b>	<b>5,135,458</b>
Administration Cost	500,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>5,635,458</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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