

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

Annual Report 2007/8



-Saving Endangered Wildlife From Extinction



Contents

Message from the President	1
The Vision of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation	2
Who Are We?	3
The Need for Conservation in Mauritius and Rodrigues	4
IUCN and Conservation Status	6
Common and Scientific Names	6
Projects and Involvements	
Mauritius Kestrel	7
Pink Pigeon	8
Echo Parakeet	9
Passerines of Mauritius and Rodriaues	10
Fruitbats	13
Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Project	15
Rare Plants	17
Habitat and Island Restoration	19
Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary	24
Education and Awareness	25
Data Management	29
Scientific Research	29
Consultancy	30
	21
Financial Information	31
Our Donors	33
Our Pariners	34
Our statt	35

Note: Wherever 2007/8 or similar appears in this report, this refers to the Southern Hemisphere summer months between late August/early September to end February/early March. The following endemic animals breed during this period: Mauritius Kestrel, Echo Parakeet, endemic passerines (including Mauritius Fody, Mauritius Fody, Mauritius Olive White-eye, Rodrigues Fody and Rodrigues Warbler) and the fruitbats. However, one notable exception to this general trend is the Pink Pigeon, which breeds throughout the year. This period also corresponds to the fruiting of a wide range of endemic plants, although there are also some endemic plants that fruit in winter e.g. bois de lait (*Tabernaemontana mauritiana*). Where stated otherwise (e.g. 2005), the dates correspond to a calendar year.

Message from the President

have great pleasure in presenting to you the Annual Report 2007/8 of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. This report, marking twenty-five years of activities of the Foundation, will give our friends and supporters a comprehensive view of our endeavours in favour of conservation in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation was established in 1984 (initially as the Mauritian Wildlife Appeal Fund) by a small group of Mauritian businessmen under the chairmanship of Colin Hare, motivated by the vision of Gerald Durrell, founder of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, now known as the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Over the years, we have maintained a very close relationship with Jersey and also have the support of other conservation organizations such as Chester Zoo (UK), the World Parrot Trust, the Peregrine Fund, Philadelphia Zoo (USA) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), who are all working in close collaboration with us, providing funding and sharing expertise in conservation management issues. Since MWF's inception, we are proud to have been at the leading edge of conservation work in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The passion and relentless dedication of our staff and volunteers in the field have led to some of the world's rarest endemic bird, reptile and plant species being brought back from the brink of extinction.

The first recovery programme was the one considered least likely to succeed when the Mauritius Kestrel became the world's rarest bird. From only 4 individuals remaining in 1974, we have established a population of 500-600 individuals, which now live on the two main mountain ranges of the island. To achieve this, and other success stories related in this report, we have pushed the frontiers of conservation science and management, exploring innovative methodologies such as the genetic management of species restored from limited founders. These approaches are of great benefit to our present and future programmes.

These achievements would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of the Mauritian Government, in particular the National Parks and Conservation Service and the Forestry Service of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries. We value this relationship and are also immensely grateful for the financial support we receive from the Government as well as from international organizations, local corporations, and individuals, which enables us to continue in our efforts to preserve our native biodiversity.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report and learning about the work of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. You can find out more by visiting the nature reserve of Ile aux Aigrettes and can actively contribute to our projects by making a donation (see *back cover*). We need your support and commitment to help us save our endemic wildlife and the habitat it needs to survive.

Felix Maurel President, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation



The Vision of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation



auritius has an unfortunate international reputation, as most people associate it with the Dodo and its demise. The Dodo has gone, along with a host of other wonderful birds, lizards, bats, plants and invertebrates, and many have felt that it is inevitable that Mauritius will continue to lose its precious wildlife. There has been extensive destruction of the native habitat, together with continuous pressure on the remaining wildlife caused by introduced cats, rats and monkeys that kill the birds and reptiles, and introduced plants that replace the native ones.

For the last quarter of a century the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has been working to reverse this trend by conserving the rarest species and rebuilding habitats. With the Government of Mauritius, and the help of international conservation organizations, we have been able to reverse the downward trend of many of our rarest species. A recent survey showed that over the last twenty years more bird species have been saved from extinction on Mauritius than in any other country. We have saved the Mauritius Kestrel, the Pink Pigeon, the Echo Parakeet, the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler, and soon we hope to add the Mauritius Fody to that list. In addition to these, the recovery of the Rodrigues Fruit Bat is the most successful bat conservation project ever. It is also possible to add the recovery of many plant and reptile species to our successes.

These restored populations are a great credit to us, but they are not enough; we must work towards rebuilding whole ecosystems, restoring habitat and putting back the missing species. The projects on Ile aux Aigrettes, Round Island and Rodrigues are good examples of this approach. On Rodrigues we have replanted a forest that is now home to fodies, warblers and bats, and on Ile aux Aigrettes and Round Island we have removed introduced mammals and are restoring the vegetation and putting back the missing species. By restoring Ile aux Aigrettes we are providing important sites for ecotourism and education so that our conservation work can be shown to the public.

A significant initiative that we are pioneering is the replacement of extinct species with closely related ones. The giant tortoises of Mauritius have long since disappeared and we are replacing them with the Aldabra Giant Tortoise and the Radiated Tortoise from Madagascar. These introduced tortoises fill the role of browsers and grazers, spreading the seeds of native plants. We have introduced tortoises to lle aux Aigrettes and Round Island and they have already started to fulfil the roles of the extinct tortoises. This approach can be developed further, and we would like to bring flightless rails and egrets back to lle aux Aigrettes.

We have made great strides but there is still a vast amount to be done. It is encouraging to see that in addition to our conservation work we are developing increased capacity to restore our wildlife. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has long had the help and support of expatriate scientists, and although this will continue all senior management roles within the organization are now being filled by local people. We have developed a staff training programme and want to expand this to see Mauritius become a training school for conservationists from all over the world in the practical skill of endangered species management. Increasing our capacity is a major objective and two of our managers are in the process of getting their doctorates. We want staff development to be an important component of our work.

There are many challenges ahead and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation will continue in its work to restore our animal and plant communities and to become a shining example of good conservation.

Prof. Carl G. Jones MBE

International Conservation Fellow, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust Scientific Director, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Conservation Fellow, North of England Zoological Society

Who Are We?

The 1970s were a low point in conservation, with several birds, the Rodrigues Fruit Bat and a host of plants on the brink of extinction. A number of key habitats (e.g. Round Island, Ile aux Aigrettes and upland forests) were equally threatened. Against this gloomy background emerged the first significant actions in favour of conservation. In 1976, Gerald Durrell visited Mauritius for the first time, and this marks the turning of the tide in biodiversity decline. Durrell wanted to take a lead role in saving animals in Mauritius and Rodrigues, but after several years of involvement he felt that a local organization should be created to manage and conduct the field conservation programmes and help raise funds. In 1984, the Mauritian Wildlife Appeal Fund was created, with the support of the Government of Mauritius, BirdLife International (formerly the International Council for Bird Preservation) and the Peregrine Fund. In 1995, it was renamed the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF). It is the only non-governmental organization (NGO) in Mauritius exclusively concerned with the conservation of the native wildlife of Mauritius and Rodrigues. MWF works in close cooperation with the Government of Mauritius, in particular with the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS), the Ministry of Environment and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Our Mission

- To save threatened Mauritian species through the restoration of entire ecosystems.
- To seek new information through field research, data management, captive studies and scientific collaboration for direct application to restoration methods and management.
- To share knowledge gained through restoration programmes with fellow Mauritian and international conservationists.
- To share the joys and benefits of native wilderness and wildlife with the Mauritian people.
- To secure the future of Mauritian species through income generation and sound management of human, fiscal and capital resources.

Organizational Structure

MWF is governed by the Management Committee, which consists of thirteen members comprising prominent Mauritian businessmen and women, and representatives from the National Parks and Conservation Service, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and other international partners.

Currently, MWF employs about eighty Mauritian staff at all levels of responsibility, and up to twelve expatriate staff. Their work is supported by around fifteen Mauritian and expatriate self-funded volunteers at any one time. In addition, up to five international postgraduate students and up to eight Mauritian undergraduate students annually carry out research projects that focus on practical conservation management issues. MWF and the Management Committee are also advised by a number of scientific associates from various organizations, namely Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the North of England Zoological Society, the International Zoo Veterinary Group, the Peregrine Fund (USA), the World Parrot Trust, New Zealand Department of Conservation and the Natural History Museum (London).

Key Areas of Involvement

The organization has a history of successful species recovery programmes and those for the Mauritius Kestrel, the Pink Pigeon, the Echo Parakeet and the Rodrigues Fruit Bat have become textbook cases in conservation. Mauritius is at a critical stage in the recovery of a number of species, which, although they have undergone significant increases in population size, will require continuous support until large-scale habitat restoration is implemented.

MWF has established a number of habitat restoration projects on several offshore islets, including Round Island and Ile aux Aigrettes, and in mainland forest plots known as Conservation Management Areas (CMAs). These involve the eradication of alien predators and plants, propagating and planting native plant species and reintroducing the native fauna, starting with birds and reptiles. These projects will help to recreate the biodiversity of the unique native forests and contribute to the conservation of the endangered endemic fauna.

The Need for Conservation in Mauritius and Rodrigues

Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion form the Mascarene Archipelago, which is located in the western Indian Ocean. These islands were never connected to a continental landmass and this isolation, and the age of the islands, allowed some of the richest and most extraordinary terrestrial biodiversity to evolve, giving rise to a high percentage of endemic species. This high endemicity and the species diversity per unit area have resulted in the islands (along with Madagascar, the Comoros and the Seychelles) being classified by Conservation International as part of an Indian Ocean biodiversity hotspot.

Mauritius has a particularly diverse flora, with more than 670 native species of flowering plants, of which 315 are endemic. About 200 of the endemics are threatened and some 5 species are known only from less than 10 individuals in the wild. Rodrigues has 145 native species, of which 38 species are endemic, nearly all of which are threatened, with 9 species down to less than 10 wild individuals.

When man first visited the islands, they were covered with luxuriant forest teeming with unique plant and animal life. The forest contained trees such as lataniers (one unique to each island), bois d'ébène and bois de natte (Mauritius), and bois pipe and café marron (Rodrigues). The forests provided a home for Dodos and Blue Pigeons (Mauritius) and Solitaires (Rodrigues), as well as giant parrots, giant geckos, giant skinks, giant tortoises, and fruitbats.

Uninhabited until 1598, Mauritius was occupied in turn by the Dutch, the French and finally the British. In 1691, Rodrigues received its first colonists, who stayed for just two years, followed by occupations by the French and then the British. Each successive occupying power caused its own damage to the islands and their native flora and fauna. Introduced invasive animals such as rats, cats, mongooses, pigs and monkeys eat the eggs and young of endemic birds and reptiles. Introduced plants such as Chinese Guava, Privet, Lantana and Traveller's Palm grow rapidly, and out-compete the native plants for space, light and soil nutrients. As the older trees die out exotic plants replace them.

Forest clearance for agriculture and construction, and overgrazing by introduced cattle also negatively impacted on the native flora, so that after four centuries of human settlement less than 2% of the native forest on Mauritius remains. In Rodrigues today there is no native forest remaining, only secondary areas of mostly exotic species.

All the endemic giant tortoise species on the islands were exploited and hunted to extinction and many other animal species, including the Dodo and the Solitaire, were simply unable to adapt to the invaders and to the loss of their habitat, and rapidly became extinct.

Today many of the remaining flora and fauna species are extremely rare, restricted to remnants of native forest in remote mountainous areas of Mauritius or the national parks in Rodrigues, or on the outer islets. Conservation interventions are essential to save the last forest fragments and to secure the future of threatened species. Not only are these unique forests part of our natural heritage, but they also play a vital role in our environment by conserving natural water resources and preventing soil erosion.



Deforestation of Mauritius since 1773

Although some areas have been protected by law, such as the Black River Gorges National Park and some offshore islets in Mauritius, as well as Grande Montagne and Anse Quitor nature reserves and Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables in Rodrigues, this alone is not sufficient to save the forest and its native inhabitants.

Active conservation management is essential if we want to keep our wildlife, and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has been at the forefront of this movement for the last twenty-five years. Our habitat restoration projects on both main islands and on some of the small islets are long-term projects involving the control and eradication of introduced animal pests such as rats, cats, shrews and monkeys, the elimination of invasive alien plant species, and planting endemic plants grown in nurseries. MWF has also taken steps to preserve the most critically endangered plant species, by propagation and by maintaining field gene banks.

Intensive species recovery programmes have been set up to save endangered endemic birds. These have involved captive breeding and release of individuals to increase wild populations, progressing to monitoring and wild management of the species as it recovers. These programmes have gained worldwide acclaim for the methods used and results achieved.

Although much progress has been made in conservation management on Mauritius and Rodrigues, many of the original threats to plant and animal species still exist today (alien invasive species, loss of habitat, poaching, etc.). Efforts will have to continue long term to remove these limiting factors and to educate the population about the importance of preserving their native biodiversity.





Note: Maps are not to scale.

IUCN and Conservation Status

The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), now referred to as the World Conservation Union, was the first global environmental organization aiming to improve and expand conservation work around the world. One component of the IUCN's work, under the Species Survival Commission, is to gather data on the current status of animal and plant species worldwide, using *The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria* (version 3.1) to assess a species risk of global extinction. The result is *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, which gives taxonomic information, conservation status and distribution details on evaluated animal and plant species.

The conservation status categories are given below:

Extinct (EX)

- there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died.

Extinct in the Wild (EW)

- known only to survive in captivity or as a naturalized population well outside the past range.

Critically Endangered (CR)

- facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
- Threatened

Endangered (EN)

- facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.
- Vulnerable (VU)
 - facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Near Threatened (NT)

 does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable now, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future.

Least Concern (LC)

 does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened, and is widespread and abundant.

Even though Mauritius is considered to have one of the most endangered biodiversities in the world, it is encouraging to know that through our conservation efforts with our partners the following five endemic bird species have been saved from extinction: the Mauritius Kestrel, the Pink Pigeon, the Echo Parakeet, the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler. This ranks Mauritius as the lead country in bird species recovery, ahead of the United States of America and New Zealand, each of which has saved four bird species from extinction.

Common and Scientific Names of Some Native and Introduced Fauna in Mauritius and Rodrigues

Native Species

Bojer's Skink (scinque de Bojer) Gongylomorphus bojeri Common Noddy (macoua) Anous stolidus Echo Parakeet (grosse câteau verte) Psittacula eques Fairy Tern (oiseau-la-vierge) Gygis alba Guenther's Gecko (gecko de Guenther) Phelsuma guentheri Lesser Night Gecko Nactus coindemirensis Lesser Noddy (marianne) Anous tenuirostris Mauritius Black Bulbul (merle) Hypsipetes olivaceus Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike (merle cuisinier) Coracina typica Mauritius Fody (cardinal de Maurice) Foudia rubra Mauritius Fruit Bat (chauve-souris de Maurice) Pteropus niger Mauritius Grey White-eye (pic-pic) Zosterops mauritianus Mauritius Kestrel (crécerelle de Maurice) Falco punctatus Mauritius Olive White-eye (oiseau à lunettes) Zosterops chloronothos Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher (coq des bois) Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata Orange-tail Skink (scinque de l'ile Plate) Gongylomorphus sp. Ornate Day Gecko (lézard vert) Phelsuma ornata Pink Pigeon (pigeon des Mares/pigeon rose) Nesoenas mayeri Red-tailed Tropicbird (paille-en-queue à brins rouges) Phaethon rubricauda Rodrigues Fody (cardinal de Rodrigues/zoiso zon) Foudia flavicans Rodrigues Fruit Bat (chauve-souris de Rodrigues) Pteropus rodricensis Rodrigues Warbler (fauvette de Rodrigues/zoiso long-bec) Acrocephalus rodericanus Round Island Boa (boa de l'ile Ronde) Casarea dussumieri Sooty Tern (sterne fuligineuse) Sterna fuscata Telfair's Skink (scinque de Telfair) Leiolopisma telfairi Wedge-tailed Shearwater (fouquet de Pacifique) Puffinus pacificus White-tailed Tropicbird (paille-en-queue à brins blancs) Phaethon lepturus

Introduced Species

Aldabra Giant Tortoise (tortue d'Aldabra) Geochelone gigantea Black/Ship Rat (rat noir) Rattus rattus Brown Rat (rat brun/surmulot) Rattus norvegicus Common/Indian Mynah (martin) Acridotheres tristis Giant African Land Snail (kourpa) Achatina spp. Indian House Shrew (rat musquée) Suncus murinus Indian Wolf Snake (couleuvre) Lycodon aulicus Lesser Indian Mongoose (mangouste) Herpestes javanicus Long-tailed/Crab-eating Macaque (singe/zaco) Macaca fascicularis Madagascar Fody (cardinal de Madagascar) Foudia madagascariensis Radiated Tortoise (tortue radiée de Madagascar) Geochelone radiata Red-whiskered Bulbul (bulbul orphée) Pycnonotus jocosus Ring-necked Parakeet (perruche de l'Inde/petite câteau) Psittacula krameri Wild Boar/Pig (cochon marron) Sus scrofa

Note: The scientific name of key species is given upon first mention, thereafter only the common name is given.

Projects and Involvements Mauritius Kestrel

Mauritius Kestrel (crécerelle de Maurice) Falco punctatus IUCN status: Vulnerable.

This is a small bird of prey, which feeds mainly on lizards but also catches insects, birds and small mammals. The Mauritius Kestrel usually lays its eggs between September and January, in a hole in a tree or cliff face.

It was probably once a common bird occurring throughout Mauritius, in both coastal areas and the mountains. More recently it became restricted to just three areas: the Bambous Mountains of the east coast, the Moka Mountains in the north, and the Black River Gorges area in the southwest. The population declined due to habitat destruction, hunting and, more recently, pesticide misuse. In 1974, only four individuals were known to remain in the wild, and it was feared that this species would become extinct.

The intensive conservation programme started in 1973, with captive breeding/rearing and release of birds, followed by continued management in the wild, and also the provision of nest boxes. Initially, the aim had been to boost the remnant population around Black River Gorges but sufficient birds were available to restore kestrels to the Moka and Bambous mountains.

In 2007/8, for the first time in six years, work was conducted on the Mauritius Kestrel population in the Black River Gorges National Park and surrounding areas. In addition, a survey was carried out in the Moka Range. The aim was to provide an accurate estimate of the current range and population of this species following some anecdotal reports of a recent decline, especially in range-edge areas. Monitoring work continued on the east coast population in the Bambous Mountains, as in previous years.

On the west coast, thirty-one breeding attempts were confirmed and monitored, and at least thirtyseven young fledged, comparing favourably with past seasons. It seems that the kestrels are thriving in their core habitat in the National Park. As predicted, it does appear that there has been some range contraction, with birds now seemingly absent from areas of less favourable habitat at the edges of their range.

The survey failed to locate any birds in the Moka Range and it is thought that this population, whilst never very large, may now have died out.

Based on the known population and estimates of breeding densities and non-breeding individuals there are likely to be 300-350 kestrels in the west coast population. Not all of the area was surveyed, due to access problems, so it is possible that the numbers are in fact slightly higher. The survey of the west coast population will continue in the 2008/9 season, monitoring the known sites and extending the search for new ones. More time will be spent determining the full extent of the population, and in searching for tree-cavity nest sites. This will allow us to further refine our population estimate and establish what are the limiting factors on the population. New sites for nest boxes will also be selected to bolster the population, and trials may take place with a new, more durable nest box design.

The 2007/8 period was the twenty-first season of the east coast monitoring, during which fortyone individual nesting attempts were identified. This continuous data set of more than 95% known,



Mauritius Kestrel

Endangered in 1994, downlisted to Vulnerable in 2000. The Mauritius Kestrel recovery is the most spectacular of any raptor conservation programme in the world.

ringed individuals is unique and has greatly added to our knowledge of the kestrel, in turn improving our ability to conserve this species. Monitoring will continue next season.

Including ringed non-breeders and young recruits into the breeding population, the east coast population is estimated at 200-250 birds, giving a tentative combined total of 500-600 individuals. This is a decline on the estimates given in the late 1990s, though at that time the west coast population was perhaps artificially high because of the effects of released birds and supplementary feeding.

Main Donors 2007/8 Domaine d'Anse Jonchée National Parks and Conservation Service Peregrine Fund University of Reading

Pink Pigeon (pigeon des Mares/pigeon rose) Nesoenas mayeri

IUCN status: Endangered.

This medium-sized pigeon, with a pink body, brown wings and a broad rusty brown tail, is the largest pigeon/dove species on Mauritius. It feeds on leaves, flowers and fruits of native and exotic plants.

The Pink Pigeon was once widely distributed throughout Mauritius but by 1990 only nine individuals remained, restricted to a small area of upland forest in Black River Gorges. As a result of an ongoing intensive conservation programme, which included captive breeding, there are now 380-400 birds in the wild. Ultimately, the goal is to have a minimum of 600 free-living Pink Pigeons, which will be a huge step towards securing the long-term survival of this species.

Threats to this pigeon's survival include habitat destruction and degradation, disease, and predation by rats, mongooses, monkeys and feral cats.

Captive breeding of this species was initiated in 1976, followed by the first Pink Pigeon releases in the wild at Brise Fer in 1987. There are now six sub-populations of the Pink Pigeon: five in the Black River Gorges and one on Ile aux Aigrettes (an island leased to MWF for conservation purposes). The latest sub-population was introduced in the lower Black River Gorges in December 2007 and releases continued through 2008. This release site is a joint project with the National Parks and Conservation Service. It will be necessary to establish additional sub-populations to continue to increase the wild



population and to encourage dispersal between different areas, in order to maintain genetic diversity. Aviaries are being constructed at Petrin where new releases are planned. Other sites such as Ferney Valley are also being considered.

Each sub-population is intensively managed by monitoring (including ringing each bird with a unique ID), supplementary feeding, and predator and disease management. Monitoring enables us to understand the factors affecting the Pink Pigeon's survival and reproduction and improves our knowledge of its feeding habits. In the long term, supplementary feeding and disease and predator management will need to continue, to protect this bird's fragile existence. In addition, large restored forest areas (with reduced predator densities) will have to be created so that the pigeon population can exploit safe nesting areas and spread out into the rest of the upland forest.

The Pink Pigeon team has been closely involved in monitoring the flowering and fruiting of both native and exotic trees that the pigeons feed on. This will not only yield important data on the patterns of flowering and fruiting of Mauritian plants, but will also assist with identifying periods of natural food shortages for Pink Pigeons, and other endemic species. Currently, supplementary feeding remains necessary due to food shortages for part of the year, and it enables the birds to remain in breeding condition. By monitoring the flowering and fruiting patterns of known Pink Pigeon food sources it will be possible to identify exactly when the shortages are and supplementary feeding can be more specifically tailored to



Pink Pigeon Critically Endangered in 1994, downlisted to Endangered in 2000.

those shortages. However, more importantly, by knowing these patterns we will be able to identify a plant/forest complex of species, which should provide year-round food for wild Pink Pigeons. This information can then be used to find suitable areas for future releases and for restoration.

Main Donors 2007/8 CIEL Group Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust National Parks and Conservation Service University of East Anglia

Pink Pigeon chick

Echo Parakeet

This recovery project has used a wide range of conservation techniques in order to bring the Echo Parakeet back from the brink of extinction. These have included captive breeding at the Black River Aviaries, the manipulation of wild breeding pairs, harvesting eggs and chicks from wild nests that are prone to failure and rearing these in captivity, and the release of chicks back into the wild. However, with the significant increase in the population size, captive breeding is no longer required. Current techniques concentrate on supplementary feeding, provision of additional nesting sites in the form of nest boxes, habitat protection, regular inspection of active nests, and the weighing and monitoring of chicks to check condition. The current wild population of Echo Parakeets is around 400 birds.



Female Echo Parakeet

The 2005/6 breeding season was to be the final year of intensive management, with the population set to pass the 300 mark. However, an outbreak of the highly contagious and fatal Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD) during 2005/6 forced a change of management strategy. For the last three years the programme has been working to a minimal management strategy, aiming to reduce the risk of spreading PBFD, whilst ensuring continued good breeding success. A major aim is to screen the population for PBFD, in order to identify the extent of the disease. In 2007/8, we managed to obtain samples from 258 individuals. Results from samples taken in previous seasons have shown that 18% of birds tested so far are positive for the active virus.

This third season of minimal management was very successful. We monitored 68 breeding females and found that 101 chicks fledged in the wild from 149 eggs, making this, in terms of the numbers of eggs laid and chicks fledged in the wild, the most productive season since the recovery project began.

In the future, the management and monitoring of the population will be continued, with the focus on gathering breeding data, ringing all birds and the continued screening of the population for PBFD. In addition, gathering data on the use of natural food sources will be given greater emphasis.

The Echo Parakeet was the only species in the world to be downlisted on *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2007, from **Critically Endangered** to **Endangered**. This was justified by the 'steady and prolonged increase in numbers in the wild population as a result of intensive recovery management' (IUCN, 2007). This is the world's most successful parrot recovery programme.



Weighing an Echo Parakeet chick

Echo Parakeet (grosse câteau verte) Psittacula eques

IUCN status: Endangered.

Originally, at least six native species of parrot could be found in the Mascarenes, but the Echo Parakeet is the only one to still survive today. Although similar to the introduced, and much more common, Ring-necked Parakeet (*P. krameri*) from India, the Echo Parakeet can readily be distinguished by the lower pitch of its call, shorter tail and darker green plumage.

These parakeets feed on flowers, leaves and fruit of native and exotic trees. The species was once common in Mauritius but began to decline in the mid-1800s, largely due to the destruction of native forest and predation by rats and monkeys. Common exotic birds, such as Common Mynahs and Ring-necked Parakeets, also compete with the Echo for food and nesting sites.

The population dwindled to just eight to twelve known individuals in the 1980s. Efforts to recover the Echo Parakeet were initiated in the early 1970s and were intensified by MWF, the National Parks and Conservation Service and the World Parrot Trust after 1987. The population is predicted to exceed 400 individuals during the 2008/9 season. The present wild population is restricted to less than 40 km² of remnant native upland forest within the Black River Gorges National Park.

Main Donors 2007/8 Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust Ireland Blyth Limited Kaytee North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) University of Kent

Passerines of Mauritius and Rodrigues

Today only eight endemic passerine (or songbird) species remain, six on Mauritius and two on Rodrigues. They are all forest-living birds of which two, the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye, are the subjects of intensive recovery programmes. MWF works in close collaboration with the National Parks and Conservation Service in Mauritius and the Forestry Service in Rodrigues for the recovery of endemic passerines, with funding and support from international organizations and private sources. The other species, described briefly below, are not currently subjects of recovery programmes. However, the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike and Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher have recently been identified as suitable for future translocation to parts of their former range.



Mauritius

The **Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher** (*Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* desolata) is an endemic subspecies of the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher, the other subspecies is common in Réunion. Flycatchers were once widespread on Mauritius but are now found in scattered localities across the island with just 100-233 pairs in 1993. A recent survey has not been conducted although they are still classified as Least Concern. We currently monitor nesting attempts but would like to work more on this species, including establishing additional populations.



The **Mauritius Black Bulbul** (*Hypsipetes olivaceus*) is listed as Vulnerable and is currently estimated at a population of around 280 pairs. This appears to have remained stable for the past fifteen years, although a new survey is required to establish a more precise population size and range. Threats include competition from exotics (such as the Red-whiskered Bulbul and Common Mynah), nest predation and habitat destruction.



The **Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina typica*) population was estimated at 260 pairs by 1993, but as this bird's range is expanding into the lowlands the population may now be as high as 600-700 birds. Past declines have been linked to pesticides, predation by introduced mammals and habitat destruction. Classified as Vulnerable, this species is not seen as a conservation priority as numbers and range seem to be slowly increasing. There is still a need for some management of the species and we would like to re-establish a population in the Bambous Mountains.



The only passerine that is not threatened is the **Mauritius Grey White-eye** (*Zosterops mauritianus*), with an estimated population of as many as 50,000 or more pairs. This species is common all over Mauritius.

Rodrigues

Rodrigues had at least twelve endemic bird species of which only two remain: the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler. MWF has carried out regular censuses on the two remaining endangered passerines, both of which reached very low levels in the 1970s. We have implemented forest restoration with native plants in nature reserves and this increase in habitat has resulted in the spectacular recovery of these two species. Further habitat restoration will contribute to the long-term survival of these species, although cyclones can still be responsible for population declines.



Having once been abundant, the **Rodrigues Fody** (Foudia flavicans) declined dramatically to around 6 pairs in 1968, yet by 2007 it had recovered to around 3,000 or more individuals. This is one of the most successful recoveries in the history of avian restoration. Predation by rats and cats is still a threat and the species is classified as Vulnerable.



The **Rodrigues Warbler** (Acrocephalus rodericanus) was reduced to a population size of around 17 individuals in 1982, but increased to around 1,000 by 2007. Although the population is growing, the species remains Endangered. MWF would like to establish additional populations on Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables.

Mauritius Fody

This conservation programme aims to reduce the risk of extinction of the Mauritius Fody by means of safeguarding wild nests, rescuing eggs and chicks to hand rear them before reintroduction to the wild, and ecosystem restoration. The programme began in 2002, and by 2004 a population of Mauritius Fodies had been successfully reintroduced to Ile aux Aigrettes, adding to the 100 or so pairs found on the mainland. Today there are around 150 birds on Ile aux Aigrettes, the result of the releases and subsequent breeding. Efforts are now concentrating on monitoring and management of this population, including providing additional food. Monitoring improves our knowledge of the species, which in turn can aid future translocation attempts and contribute to the development of long-term management strategies.

From monitoring the IIe aux Aigrettes population, we have found that over the past four years territory establishment and pair formation has increased each season, with a total of fifty pairs at the end of the 2007/8 season. Rates of breeding success and productivity have slowed, but fifty fledglings were produced from eighteen pairs during the season. Chances of survival on IIe aux Aigrettes remain high at 72% per year. These figures are very encouraging for the long-term self-sustainability of the population.

Though the establishment of the Ile aux Aigrettes population has been a great success, the Mauritius Fody still remains Critically Endangered. The isolation of the remnant populations, both on Ile aux Aigrettes and the upland forests, makes them vulnerable to catastrophic events, such as a disease or extreme weather conditions. Thus, in order to safeguard the species still further, our aim is to increase the number of populations, and ultimately downgrade the species to Vulnerable. A proposal for the establishment of a second population of Mauritius Fodies was recently completed, and all relevant permissions have now been granted. Preparations for the translocation of Mauritius Fodies to Round



Measuring a Mauritius Fody chick

Island are well under way.

The main objectives for the 2008/9 season are the ongoing preparations for the establishment of a population on Round Island, whilst continuing to monitor and manage the population on IIe aux Aigrettes. This season will also see continued monitoring of the upland population at Pigeon Wood in order to estimate the current rates of nesting success and population size. Following the success of the releases on IIe aux Aigrettes, the Mauritius Fody is being considered for downlisting from Critically Endangered to Endangered.



Male Mauritius Fody

Mauritius Fody (cardinal de Maurice) Foudia rubra

IUCN status: Critically Endangered.

The Mauritius Fody is a small forest-dwelling songbird, which feeds on nectar and insects. It closely resembles the introduced, and much more common, Madagascar Fody (*F. madagascariensis*), with which it is often confused. One distinguishing feature is that the male Mauritius Fody has a red head and breast during the breeding season, whereas the male Madagascar Fody also has completely red underparts. Both male and female Mauritius Fodies have white wing bars, unlike the Madagascar Fody. They also have a thinner bill, which they use to probe for invertebrates, whereas the Madagascar Fody feeds predominantly on seeds.

The Mauritius Fody is one of the rarest endemic birds of Mauritius, with just 98-126 wild pairs remaining in 2002/3. The loss of suitable habitat has been a major threat to this species, as well as nest predation. Due to the success of our work, population figures now stand at over 400 birds.

Main Donors 2007/8 Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust HSBC New Noah Program (Wildlife Preservation Canada) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation Ruth Smart Foundation

Mauritius Olive White-eye



Juvenile Mauritius Olive White-eyes in Black River Aviaries

Mauritius Olive White-eye (oiseau à lunettes) Zosterops chloronothos

IUCN status: Critically Endangered.

This is a small songbird that feeds primarily on nectar, but also on insects. It is easily identified by its white eye-ring, olive-green plumage and fine curved bill. It is likely that this bill has been adapted over time for improved nectar feeding. This is the least known of all the Mauritian birds.

In 2001, a survey showed that approximately only 100 or so pairs of this species were still to be found, mainly in the Black River Gorges National Park. Numbers have declined continuously over the previous 100 years, largely due to habitat degradation and nest predation by mammals and other bird species, both native and exotic. Between 1975 and 2001 the habitat range of the Mauritius Olive White-eye contracted by 50%, with the species now occupying less than 25 km² on mainland Mauritius.

This beautiful small passerine has continued to decline in numbers, so in 2005 MWF began a project to save the species from extinction. The remaining wild population was closely monitored to find nesting attempts and to observe their behaviour. Where possible, the contents of nests that were at risk from predators were rescued and the eggs and chicks taken to the hand-rearing facility at the Black River Aviaries. Up to and including the 2007/8 season, we have been able to monitor eighty-four nests, and numerous eggs and chicks have been rescued for hand rearing.

In 2006, this work resulted in the release of thirty-four Olive White-eyes on Ile aux Aigrettes, although not all of these survived, and the current population now stands at seventeen individuals, comprising five pairs. Research on the island aims to understand the species more thoroughly and to identify the pressures facing this bird on Ile aux Aigrettes. It will also help to establish future plans for the long-term management of the species.

The first breeding attempts of the Olive White-eye pairs on Ile aux Aigrettes were one of the main highlights during the 2007/8 season. Twenty nesting attempts occurred throughout the season, three of which produced chicks, although unfortunately these did not fledge. Following the 2007/8 season, we have had many breeding attempts in the released population and in October 2008 one pair successfully fledged two chicks. These are the first Olive White-eye fledglings on Ile aux Aigrettes and this is extremely promising news for the breeding population.

Future plans include the continued monitoring of both populations, with ongoing egg and chick rescues from the forests in the south, so that more birds can be hand reared and released onto lle aux Aigrettes. All breeding activity on lle aux Aigrettes will be monitored in order to understand more fully the individual roles of males and females. In 2008/9, we will also be studying provisioning rates (the number of times adult birds feed their chicks), and identifying predators. The failure to fledge chicks in the 2007/8 season was thought to be due to the very dry conditions when the adults could not feed their chicks enough. We are correcting this problem by feeding the birds and planting species that will provide nectar and attract insects. Although lle aux Aigrettes is free from mammalian predators, predation of nests by other bird species still occurs. We aim to identify these predators in order to create an effective management programme and to reduce the amount of nest failure for the threatened birds.

Main Donors 2007/8 African Bird Club Boulle, N. Conservation International Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust Gamma Civic Ltd New Noah Program (Wildlife Preservation Canada) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation Ruth Smart Foundation Sun Resorts Ltd

Fruitbats

Bats are the only mammals native to the Mascarenes. There used to be three fruitbat species on the islands: one is now extinct, leaving one species each on Mauritius (*Pteropus niger*) and Rodrigues (*P. rodricensis*). They feed on fruit and the nectar of flowers, and both species play an important role in seed dispersal and the pollination of fruiting trees.

Mauritius Fruit Bat (chauve-souris de Maurice) Pteropus niger

IUCN status: Endangered.

The Mauritian species is a large bat that can be seen flying at dawn and dusk, using both sight and smell to find trees in fruit. These are social bats which usually roost together in large numbers. This bat was once widespread over Mauritius but the population has decreased considerably due to habitat loss, cyclones and illegal sport hunting.

Although the Mauritius Fruit Bat became extinct on Réunion, where it was last recorded in 1790, the island has been recolonized by a handful of individuals over the last decade.

Mauritius Fruit Bat

Mauritius originally had three species of fruitbats, but today only one species remains. Although the Mauritius Fruit Bat currently exists in relatively high numbers, it is facing a new and serious risk to its existence. In September 2006, the Mauritian Government began to discuss the possibility of culling this species, despite its IUCN listing, in order to protect the interests of fruit farmers. MWF fears that



Mauritius Fruit Bat leaving its daytime roost to feed

the revised Wildlife and National Parks Act may legalize the shooting of bats on Mauritius (which may extend to Rodrigues), and has asked to comment on draft bills. Since then MWF has continued to provide scientific and management advice to the Government to convince them that plans to legalize culling of Mauritius Fruit Bats could have catastrophic effects. Certainly the extent to which this fruitbat takes lychees in comparison to other fruit eaters (such as the Ring-necked Parakeet, Common Mynah, Red-whiskered Bulbul and rats) should be scientifically studied before such drastic action is taken. It is our belief that culling plans that do not have a sound scientific



Mauritius Fruit Bat

basis and strict monitoring could lead to serious population declines, and even extinction. This is a view that is shared by international bat conservation scientists.

In 2007, MWF supported a study to investigate distribution of this bat in order to estimate a minimum population size. Over 60 roosts were surveyed and a minimum population of around 25,000 was found. Although this may initially seem quite a large number this fruitbat has just been uplisted from Vulnerable to Endangered by IUCN, due to its isolated range, the continuing decline in the extent and quality of its habitat, and the reduced numbers due to hunting and potentially by culling.

Main Donors 2007/8 Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Bat TAG Lubee Bat Conservancy Philadelphia Zoo (USA)

Rodrigues Fruit Bat

Rodrigues Fruit Bat (chauve-souris de Rodrigues) Pteropus rodricensis IUCN status: Critically Endangered.

This species used to be found on Mauritius but is now found only on Rodrigues. It is often known as the Golden Fruit Bat.

In the 1970s, the population dwindled to between 70 and 100 individuals but has now recovered to around several thousand, largely due to increased forest cover. These bats are threatened by cyclones, one of which severely affected the population in 2003.

In 2007/8, three complete population surveys were conducted at eleven roost locations over three consecutive days in order to estimate current bat numbers and to monitor the population. Weekly bat surveys are also conducted at the Cascade Pigeon roost, which is one of the major roost sites on the island. From these surveys it has been found that the number of individuals now stands at around 5,000-6,000. To continue with this level of monitoring, volunteers from the local community have been trained to carry out some of the work, in addition to MWF staff. Similar surveying levels will be maintained in the future.

A database comprising the data from the surveys has been established and will continue to be maintained to provide a unique and comprehensive source of information on this species. This will increase our knowledge of the Rodrigues Fruit Bat and contribute to the development of long-term conservation strategies.



Western Indian Ocean Islands Pteropus Fruitbat Workshop, 2008

The first ever **Western Indian Ocean Islands** *Pteropus* **Fruitbat Workshop**, funded by Conservation International (Madagascar), was held in Mauritius in November 2008. Participants from the islands of Madagascar, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Rodrigues, Seychelles, Réunion, Pemba and Comoros attended as well as interested parties from Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The Western Indian Ocean Islands are home to seven surviving *Pteropus* fruitbat species, three of which are Critically Endangered. The objective of the workshop was to bring together representatives from these islands, to understand the work being carried out in each location, to appreciate the different threats facing the bats and to investigate possibilities for interisland cooperation in bat conservation.

The initial meeting was a success, formalizing links between the individual NGOs and providing a practical forum for the exchange of experiences, research results, monitoring protocols and environmental education initiatives. The group was keen to build on the progress made in this workshop, in particular to formally establish a regional bat conservation alliance and to further investigate the development of regional fruitbat initiatives.

Main Donors 2007/8 North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Philadelphia Zoo (USA)



Rodrigues Fruit Bat

Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Project

The re-establishment of reptile communities within Mauritius is an initiative building on over thirty years of reptile research and offshore island conservation management by the Government of Mauritius, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and MWF. The project involves translocating vulnerable reptile species, such as Telfair's Skink (*Leiolopisma telfairi*) and the Orange-tail Skink (an undescribed *Gongylomorphus*), found only on one or a few offshore islands, to additional islands in order to form new populations and thus enhance their chances of survival. These new populations are monitored to assess the success of the translocations and also the impact on other species in their new habitat, to discover more about the reptile's role within the ecosystem.

This high-profile project aims to increase public awareness of biodiversity issues in Mauritius. This is done by including the translocated Telfair's Skink in the Ile aux Aigrettes ecotour for members of the public, and also by promoting progress and results of the project on national radio and television broadcasts, and in newspapers, leaflets, posters, websites and scientific publications.

Monitoring released Telfair's Skinks on Ile aux Aigrettes and Gunner's Quoin has shown that skink survival and reproductivity is high, and for the first time in more than 150 years Telfair's Skinks have hatched in the wild outside Round Island. There have been no significant declines in endemic or native terrestrial vertebrate populations as a result of the translocations. However, certain persistent invasive species have noticeably declined or disappeared since the skink's arrival e.g. Indian House Shrews, Giant African Land Snails and Indian Wolf Snakes.

A total of forty llot Vacoas' Bojer's Skinks (Gongylomorphus bojeri) have been translocated to nearby lle aux Fouquets, and are currently thriving, with more than 95% of captures now representing the offspring





Telfair's Skink

of those that were released. In addition, eighty-two Orange-tail Skinks were translocated from Flat Island to Gunner's Quoin and monitoring shows evidence of successful reproduction.

Future plans include the continued monitoring of the resident and translocated populations and another translocation of twenty Bojer's Skinks to Ile aux Fouquets. We are currently creating artificial nesting sites for Telfair's Skinks to increase the success of egg survival on Ile aux Aigrettes.

In addition, we will initiate the second phase of the reptile translocation project, which will continue monitoring the translocations to date, and start building upon what has been learnt to conduct additional reptile translocations.

Before man arrived in Mauritius some 400 years ago, it was an island of unique reptiles and birds. The reptiles flourished and adapted to fill many of the roles that mammals usually occupy: giant tortoises were the grazers and browsers; snakes ate smaller reptiles and birds; and large lizards, that were also predators, and smaller lizards both helped to disperse plant seeds and pollinate flowers.

However, man brought with him a number of invasive animal and plant species from elsewhere and cut down much of the original Mauritian forests. These disturbances caused the loss of more than 60% of the unique Mauritian reptiles from the main island. Five endemic reptile species became extinct. Some species managed to persist on a few of the offshore islands, particularly those that had not been invaded by predators, such as rats and mongooses. In Rodrigues, all of the endemic reptiles became extinct.

Currently, the majority of Mauritian reptiles are restricted to either Round Island or another one of six of the forty-nine islands around Mauritius.

> Main Donors 2007/8 Darwin Initiative (DEFRA, UK) Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust National Parks and Conservation Service

Orange-tail Skink

A Small Piece of History





The Mascarene Islands have suffered the disappearance of a number of unique species since the arrival of man over 400 years ago. A project was conceived jointly by MWF and Pangolin Editions in England to recreate some of these extinct creatures in the form of life-size bronze sculptures. The ten sculptures are the work of Nick Bibby, and include species such as the Dodo, the Giant Skink, the Rodrigues Giant Gecko and the Red Rail. The aim is to draw attention to the tragedy of extinction and also to inspire a deeper understanding of the need for conservation.

A complete collection of the bronze replicas has been donated to the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and is now exhibited on Ile aux Aigrettes. This nature reserve is particularly suitable for this role as it encompasses all aspects of our work and is accessible to the general public. This is a unique opportunity for visitors to look closely at, and touch, representations of extinct native species. In addition to the life-size bronzes, hand-made mini-bronzes are also available for sale.

Another exciting project is the Dodo footprint, which has been modelled on the preserved remains of a Dodo foot from the Natural History Museum (London). The original foot is now lost, but fortunately we have a cast of the foot and from this we have been able to make this 100% authentic Dodo footprint, which is available for sale.

The sale of these items raises funds for our conservation projects and at the same time the projects enhance the ecological, historical and educational aspects of Ile aux Aigrettes.



If you are interested in purchasing either the bronzes or the Dodo footprint, they are available at lle aux Aigrettes, or *see back cover* for our contact details.

Mauritius has been ranked by the IUCN as having the third most endangered flora in the world. Around 200 of the 315 endemic plant species are threatened and Mauritius may already have lost as many as 70 plant species.

The island has experienced four centuries of large-scale forest clearance for agriculture and urban development, and when combined with the introduction of invasive species of plants and animals, this has had a disastrous effect on native flora. Some endemic plants such as the palm *Hyophorbe amaricaulis* have been reduced to just one individual in the wild.

Mauritius Rare Plants

Work this season has continued with the core elements of the project, which are rare plant monitoring and search, and the field gene bank. Rare plant monitoring is carried out weekly with a survey in one of the forested areas on the mainland. The data is used to monitor the plants in their original habitat and to update the IUCN plant list. The data recorded includes the height of the plant, number of individuals, details of flowers, fruits and seedlings, type of habitat, and the location, including the GPS coordinates. This information is also used to assist in collecting plant samples for the Mauritius Herbarium. Exciting finds have been made such as the rediscovery of the fleur de lys du pays (*Crinum mauritianum*) near Perrier Reserve, which had previously been assumed to be extinct in the wild.

In an attempt to save not only species but also the genetic diversity of the rarest plant species, a field gene bank was set up in the uplands in the year 2000. It is a collaborative project between the National Parks and Conservation Service and MWF. Currently targeting fifteen species with less than fifty individuals in the wild, this project aims to capture the genetic diversity of rare species by taking cuttings or seeds from each known wild individual, and developing a duplicate collection in a protected environment. Initially, a plant survey is carried out in the known location, and plant materials are taken (cuttings, seeds, seedlings) to propagate in the nurseries at Pigeon Wood (upland plants), and also on Ile aux Aigrettes (lowland plants). Cuttings are generally preferred but when sufficient material cannot be obtained seeds and seedlings are collected. Successful plants are then planted in a 40 m x 40 m field gene bank, which is a plot of forest in Pigeon Wood (Plaine Paul, Black River Gorges National Park). Rare plants propagated at the Ile aux Aigrettes nursery are either planted on the island itself or reintroduced in other suitable locations. Plants in the gene bank are monitored regularly and weeding has been set up. These plants will eventually be mass propagated in different nurseries for future restoration projects.

Main Donors 2007/8 Air Mauritius Domaine de la Vallée de L'Est Marbella Espace Maison Ltée North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Sofap Ltd



Crinum mauritianum





Juvenile leaves

Heterophylly (having different types of leaves on the same plant)

Some Mascarene plant species, especially from the lowlands, exhibit heterophylly. The lower (juvenile) leaves have brightly coloured (usually red) leaf midribs and patterns, and may be small, or long and narrow, compared to the generally larger, un-patterned, round adult leaves. The reasons for heterophylly are not completely understood, but it is thought to be a defence against herbivores (mainly giant tortoises and some endemic birds, such as Dodos and Solitaires) and droughts. The smaller, differently shaped juvenile leaves may be more difficult for tortoises (which have poor eyesight) to see and therefore eat, whilst the bright colours may act as a warning to herbivores not to eat the leaves, indicating that they are poisonous. The leaf pigments may cause the leaves to be bitter to taste and unpalatable. Mascarene endemic heterophyllus trees include benjoin (*Terminalia bentzoë*), bois de boeuf (*Gastonia* spp.) and bois d'olive (*Cassine orientalis*).

Bois de boeuf

Rodrigues Rare Plants



Hibiscus liliiflorus

Rodrigues, with its highly endangered flora, has had an active rare plant conservation project for over two decades, although initially this work was modest. In collaboration with the Forestry Service, a larger, improved nursery was erected in 1996 at Solitude to produce native plants for the restoration of both Grande Montagne and Anse Quitor nature reserves, and more recently Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables. At Solitude, plants are also produced for private restoration projects, such as the François Leguat Giant Tortoise and Cave Reserve, and for donation to schools, local communities and social organizations. In addition, the nursery is used to train local villagers in horticultural techniques to improve native plant production in

backyard and village nurseries. Propagation trials of rare Rodriguan endemic species are conducted here.

Plant conservationists have spent a great deal of effort in recent years in locating, propagating and reintroducing Rodrigues' rarest plant species into protected areas. In some cases this has resulted in bringing individual species back from the brink of extinction. This has been the case for one Rodriguan



Ramosmania rodriguesii

endemic, mandrinette (*Hibiscus liliiflorus*), which had been thought to be extinct in the wild but hundreds of individuals have been propagated and planted in protected areas over the last few years. Even for this species the recovery work is not yet complete since most of the planted individuals are still young and more reintroduction sites are required.

To secure the survival of rare species we have been working on a field gene bank. Valuable genetic diversity of the last wild individuals of threatened Rodriguan endemic plants can be replicated and secured for the long term. Cuttings are then taken from the individuals in the field gene bank rather than from plants in the wild. The field gene bank at Solitude has been in operation for ten years, targeting thirty species including café marron (*Ramosmania rodriguesii*) and palmiste blanc (*Dictyosperma album* var. *aureum*), which both have less than ten individuals left in the wild. The gene bank aims to have several copies of each individual. Monitoring of the plants and detailed nursery records will continue to be maintained to ensure the ongoing success of the project in saving not just species but also genetic diversity.

Invasive alien woody weeds dominate all forest areas on Rodrigues and, with the exception of intensively restored areas in the nature reserves, no contiguous areas of native forest exist. Elements of the original biodiversity do remain in some forest fragments, but without restoration work these will degrade into thickets of entirely introduced vegetation of the type that covers much of the island.

Back from Extinction! – Ramosmania rodriguesii

This member of the coffee family is a Rodrigues endemic with attractive white flowers. After 1940, the plant was thought to be extinct, with the only evidence being a drawing made by the botanist Balfour who visited Rodrigues in 1877. In 1980, Mr Raymond AhKee, a schoolteacher on Rodrigues, encouraged his biology pupils to look for Rodriguan endemic plants. One pupil, Hedley Manan, collected a specimen next to a road at Mon Plaisir, near to his house. This was identified as the last remaining wild café marron, and in 1986 cuttings from the tree were sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew (UK). It took several years to propagate cuttings successfully in Rodrigues, but by 1996 three plants were obtained. Another breakthrough came when artificial pollination was successful both in Rodrigues and in Kew in 2003, although only the Kew seeds were viable. Some of these seeds were brought to MWF in Rodrigues where they germinated. Additionally, Kew Gardens sent some young plants to Mauritius and Rodrigues and some of these are now growing in Pamplemousses Botanical Garden (Mauritius), and in Grande Montagne Nature Reserve and the field gene bank at Solitude (Rodrigues).

> Main Donors 2007/8 Air Mauritius François Leguat Ltd Mauritius Oil Refineries Ltd (Moroil) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo)

Habitat and Island Restoration: Mauritius Round Island

Round Island covers just 214 ha, and is situated 22.5 km northeast of Mauritius. It has often been stated to have more endangered species per unit area than any other comparable area on earth. Many species are unique to the island. The last remnants of palm savannah are found there, including latanier (*Latanier loddigesii*) and palmiste blanc (*Dictyosperma album* var. *conjugatum*).

The island was (until the Reptile Translocation Project) the only location for some reptile species including the Round Island Boa (*Casarea dussumieri*), three skink species and three species of gecko.

Also important are the seabirds, which have their breeding grounds here, with relatively large populations of shearwaters, tropicbirds and petrels.

The island was classified as a nature reserve in 1957 and is administered jointly by the National Parks and Conservation Service and MWF.

Projects on Round Island include work on both the plant and animal communities. The main priorities are to restore the plant community and to monitor and manage the reptiles and seabirds. Since 2002, work has greatly progressed with the presence of the field station and the wardens, who have the day-to-day responsibility for activities on the island. Wardens are posted on the island for four weeks at a time and while there have to be largely self-sufficient, due to the isolation of the island. Round Island is a basaltic volcanic cone, with steep slopes, and half of which is bare rock. Access is difficult and dangerous by boat, as the island has a rocky shoreline and the sea is usually rough; the preferred form of transport to and from the island is the helicopter.

A nursery has been set up, and during the current year over 4,000 plants were raised, with an additional 1,119 plants from IIe aux Aigrettes. Nearly 2,500 individuals from different species of hardwood, including vetiveria indigène (*Vetiveria arguta*) and bois de chandelle (*Dracaena concinna*), were planted out during this period. Plant survival was monitored in July and December 2007 and March 2008; and fixed-point photos were taken (to record changes in vegetation structure) in July 2007 and May 2008. Ongoing weed management remains important, and at least two species of weeds have not been seen for around two years, which means that we may have succeeded in eradicating them. A strict quarantine protocol is in place to prevent introduction of new plant and animal species.

As part of a PhD study, two experiments were conducted; one was a telemetry study of Telfair's Skink, Guenther's Gecko (*Phelsuma guentheri*) and the Round Island Boa, gathering information on their home range size and movement. The second was a germination study of eight species of differently treated fruits, after they had passed through the gut of Telfair's Skinks. Biannual reptile monitoring and monthly boa searches were carried out as usual.

Aldabra Giant Tortoises (Geochelone gigantea) and Radiated Tortoises (G. radiata) were translocated to Round Island in July 2007 as part of a PhD study to determine whether these two species can fulfil the ecological role of the extinct Mauritian species. It is planned that the population of Aldabra Tortoises will be boosted with the release of about fifty sub-adult tortoises annually.

Round Island is home to a community of seabirds and at least seven species breed here. The rarest is the Trindade Petrel (Pterodroma arminjoniana), which only breeds here and on Trindade Island off Brazil and is classified as Vulnerable. Recent studies have shown that this rare petrel is hybridising



Aldabra Giant Tortoise



White-tailed Tropicbird

with two other species, the Kermadec Petrel (*P. neglecta*) and the Herald Petrel (*P. heraldica*). This is the only place in the world where we have a three-species hybrid mix. Petrel monitoring is carried out monthly, with the ringing of new individuals. For the much larger populations of Red-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon rubricauda*) and White-tailed Tropicbirds (*P. lepturus*) monitoring is restricted to an area close to the field station.

Future plans include the release of the Mauritius Fody on Round Island and the translocation of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) and White-tailed Tropicbird from Round Island to Ile aux Aigrettes.

Round Island is being considered by the Government of Mauritius as a candidate for nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Main Donors 2007/8 Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd National Parks and Conservation Service

Ile aux Aigrettes

Located in the bay of Mahébourg, about 800 m off the southeast coast of Mauritius, these 26 ha of coralline limestone, partially overlain with sand and humus deposits, are what remain of an eroded dune exposed after a drop in the sea level some 10,000 years ago.

Previously much degraded and weed invaded, this islet is the last refuge of the dry coastal forest, an ecosystem once common around much of coastal Mauritius.

Free from human presence for a long time, Ile aux Aigrettes became a natural museum with a remarkable collection of endemic species of Mauritian fauna and flora. However, the arrival of man on the islet in the early 1600s disturbed and almost totally destroyed this island ecosystem. Tree felling, particularly of ebony, continued even after the island was first declared a nature reserve, in 1965.

MWF initiated a habitat restoration project here in 1985, taking over full management of the island in 1987.

Restoration work on the island began with a weeding programme to eradicate introduced invasive plants such as the faux acacia (*Leucaena leucocephala*) and prune malgache (*Flacourtia indica*). This type of forest was once rich in the unique and Critically Endangered species of ebony (*Diospyros egrettarum*), the Endangered bois de chandelle (*Dracaena concinna*), and a species of orchid (*Oeoniella polystachys*), amongst others. The next step was to eradicate introduced predators such as rats, paving the way for the reintroduction of native fauna. Interestingly, once the rats had gone there was a dramatic emergence of ebony seedlings.

In 1997, a nursery was built for the propagation of endangered native plants for replanting on the island. The nursery now produces about 25,000 plants per year of which most are planted on Ile aux Aigrettes, although some are sent to Round Island. The entire island has now been weeded at least once and replanted with around thirty threatened endemic plant species.

With the establishment of native forest on the island we began to reintroduce the endemic species of birds and reptiles, which would once have populated lle aux Aigrettes. The Mauritius Kestrel was the first species to be reintroduced. However, it transpired that this unique bird of prey prefers the nearby mainland Bambous Mountains, and birds rarely come back to the island. Pink Pigeons, Mauritius Fodies and Mauritius Olive White-eyes have also been reintroduced, along with the Aldabra Giant Tortoise (to replace the extinct giant tortoise once found here) and Telfair's Skink. The beautiful endemic Ornate Day Gecko (*Phelsuma ornata*) still occurs on the island naturally.

Ile aux Aigrettes has become a showcase for the work undertaken by MWF with animal and plant species unique to Mauritius found in a habitat restored, as closely as possible, to its natural state of 400 years ago. Members of the public have been able to visit the island since 1997 to experience for themselves this transformation as part of our ecotours project (see page 27).

As the island is central to many ongoing species recovery projects, as well as the ecotours, liaison between the guides and scientists working on the island has been more formally structured with programmed training and interaction sessions, and the involvement of guides in other MWF projects. These measures ensure knowledge-sharing and effective cooperation by all staff.



Ornate Day Gecko

Main Donors 2007/8 Air Mauritius Ecotour visitors North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo)

Mondrain Nature Reserve



Mondrain Nature Reserve

This reserve was created in 1979 following the rediscovery there (in 1968) of *Hibiscus genevii*, which had been considered to be extinct for over 150 years. The 5 ha private reserve is leased by the Medine Sugar Estate to the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences and represents the last native forest on the Vacoas Ridge, in the west of the island. The reserve can be visited upon approved request only. The plant species in the reserve include both those from the humid upland forest as well as some from the drier lowland. Another rare plant found there is bois corail (*Chassalia boryana*), a shrub with distinctive white coral-like flowers. The single plant in the reserve was thought for a long time to be the last surviving individual in the world. However, several others have been found recently in a private forest at Chamarel.

Since 1984, MWF has been very closely associated with the restoration work, having carried out a detailed study of the reserve and through the employment of a botanist to supervise the weeding of exotics and replanting of rare and endangered natives. The Medine Sugar Estate and the nearby hunting estate regularly supply workers to carry out weeding and to maintain the fence. As recently as 2007, a new native plant species was discovered following the weeding process.

Mondrain is a shining example of the conservation of native flora, where species reintroduction is actively undertaken. Rare species are planted here after propagation and this reserve provides a further safety net for endangered species.



Chassalia boryana



Hibiscus genevii

Habitat and Island Restoration: Rodrigues Anse Quitor and Grand Montagne Nature Reserves

Since Rodigues has lost its intact forests we have been working to restore the areas that still have remnant populations of the endemic plants. Restoration of these areas will serve to protect the endangered plant species, provide a habitat for the two surviving endemic birds (the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler) and the Rodrigues Fruit Bat, and enhance the population of insects, thus helping to complete the entire ecosystem.

At present, about 14 ha of the native forest have already been restored in the valley of Anse Quitor and many of the endemic rare plants of Rodrigues have been planted in this reserve. Anse Quitor is home to very rare endemic plants, such as bois pasner (*Zanthoxylum paniculatum*) and bois d'éponge (*Gastonia rodriguesiana*).

Although only approximately a third of the area of the nature reserve at Grande Montagne has been restored, this work has progressed well due to the high success rate of seedlings planted. Several plants such as café marron (*Ramosmania rodriguesii*) and bois lubine (*Poupartia castanea*) are being successfully conserved here. The reserve is open to the general public and allows for an excellent educational opportunity to observe conservation at work.



Staff and volunteers carrying out restoration work in Grande Montagne Nature Reserve

The methodology of restoration in these reserves

involves sectioning off chosen areas, thinning of invasive species, planting seedlings propagated in the nursery, followed by weeding and monitoring. Local groups such as the Scouts, Rotaract, youth clubs and secondary school children are involved in this process and educational outings by primary school children are organized so that the local people can learn about their environment and the importance of conservation.

During the last year, ongoing weeding of invasive species and regular maintenance of restored areas were carried out in both reserves. Restoration is a long-term process and seedlings of different species continue to be planted in the restored areas to increase diversity.

A Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP) funded by the European Union is being implemented in Grand Montagne, which involves the restoration of a further 5 ha, creating jobs for the local population as well as raising the profiles of conservation education and ecotourism. As part of the recently launched Air Mauritius One Take-off, One Tree initiative 6,000 endemic plants are being planted at Anse Quitor. MWF has worked on the restoration of a number of nature reserves in Rodrigues, namely Anse Quitor, Grande Montagne, Ile aux Sables and Ile Cocos, for more than two decades. The reserves have entirely different habitats: Anse Quitor is almost at sea level, with coralline substrate and is a relatively dry area; Grande Montagne is considered to be at high altitude (300-350 m) and is relatively wet with a deep rich soil; and Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables are isolated sandbar islands.

We have run trials in these areas with different native species and different planting regimes to establish the most suitable restoration programmes. In general, exotic shrubs (unlike native ones) tend to utilize a lot of water in order to adapt to the dry Rodrigues environment. Since water is a precious resource in Rodrigues, work has been carried out to replace exotic forest with native planting.

Main Donors 2007/8 Air Mauritius British High Commission Decentralised Cooperation Programme – European Union François Leguat Ltd Mauritius Oil Refineries Ltd (Moroil) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo)

Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables

Ile Cocos (15 ha) and Ile aux Sables (8 ha) are important island nature reserves in the lagoon of Rodrigues. Ile Cocos is a key tourist site, whereas Ile aux Sables is a nature reserve with restricted access.

Both are home to important coastal vegetation communities and seabird populations, which are under threat from introduced weeds and unmanaged tourist development. With habitat restoration and appropriate management the populations of seabirds found on the islands should increase, with the potential to become internationally important seabird reserves.

Seabirds native to these islets include the Common Noddy (*Anous stolidus*), Lesser Noddy (*Anous tenuirostris*), Fairy Tern (*Gygis alba*) and Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*).

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has had a long-term involvement with these islets, although the relationship has only been formalized since 2006. This project aims to restore the native flora of the islets, both of which are home to thousands of seabirds, and to encourage increasing numbers of Rodriguans to visit lle Cocos, which will serve as an educational and ecotourist resource. For this project, MWF is working in collaboration with the Forestry Service and the Fisheries Department of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and with other local stakeholders, who are included in the decision-making process and in the project's implementation. As part of the project, stakeholders were given a one-week theoretical and practical training in September 2007 on the history, flora, fauna, legislation and marine life of the two islets. It is believed that this approach will encourage those that make a living from tourism to lle Cocos to have a greater involvement in the islands, to participate in long-term planning and to take responsibility for preserving the restored habitat.



Common Noddies on Ile Cocos

The intense programme of work has comprised land preparation and general weeding, plant propagation in the Solitude Native Plant Nursery, and planting of over 10,000 plants of 19 different species. These include vacoas (*Pandanus heterocarpus*), latanier jaune (*Latania verschaffeltii*) and *Lycium tenue*. Volunteers from youth and community groups, secondary schools and the Scouts have been active in helping with the planting of seedlings on these islands. As part of the ecotourism component on Ile Cocos a new pathway for tourists has been proposed, giving options of either a short or a long walk, without disturbing or damaging the flora and fauna.

Rodrigues staff received specialist training on seabird monitoring techniques and two monitoring surveys have already been carried out in the past year on the four native seabird species. Seabird monitoring will help us to learn about the breeding cycle of the species, and their population patterns.

An integral part of the programme has been the creation of a field guide on the native flora and fauna of Ile Cocos (*Guide de la Faune et de la Flore de l'Ile* Cocos). This colourful book will be printed on waterresistant paper so that it can be used on site for species identification. A complimentary copy will be given to the stakeholders who participated in the training session in September 2007 along with each primary and secondary school on the island, whilst the remaining copies will be available for purchase.

With the increasing public awareness of the conservation work on Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables some of the abuses, including littering, have already declined. It is hoped that Ile aux Sables will continue to be maintained as a strict nature reserve, without trespass from fishermen or tourists.

Future plans to complete the projects will involve ongoing planting, the publication of the Ile Cocos field guide, gaining Rodrigues Regional Assembly approval to implement the new pathway, erecting educational signboards for Ile Cocos, and the continuation of quarterly seabird surveys.

Main Donors 2007/8 Barclays Bank Plc Forestry Service UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme

Bringing plants from the mainland for planting on Ile Cocos

Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary

Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary, or Black River Aviaries as it is commonly referred to, was established in 1976 and is run jointly by MWF and the National Parks and Conservation Service. Originally, the project was concerned with the captive breeding and hand rearing of the Mauritius Kestrel and the Pink Pigeon for release into the wild. Due to the success of these programmes there is no longer a need for captive breeding of these two species. Echo Parakeets were also captive bred in the aviaries for release but with the increase in the population this, too, has been discontinued. A number of parakeets remain here for captive studies.

The Black River Aviaries has many roles, including the rehabilitation of sick or injured rare native birds and bats, training staff in animal handling and general vet practices, and passerine and reptile work in support of ongoing projects. The facilities were upgraded in 2004 to strengthen the recovery programmes for our endemic bird species, with the focus on two of the endemic passerines, the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye. Currently, eggs and chicks are rescued or harvested from the wild, the eggs are then incubated and the young are hand reared and later released.

This centre is also used as a quarantine station for animals, such as the reptiles recently translocated to the nearby islets, or, in the case of fruit bats, prior to being sent overseas.



Mauritius Olive White-eye chicks



Female Echo Parakeets at feeding time

In addition, a total of 224 baby Giant Aldabra Tortoises are being raised here. Tortoises born on Ile aux Aigrettes have to be removed from the island until they are older and larger, to avoid the risk of being poached and kept as pets. Later they will be released back on Ile aux Aigrettes, Round Island or other suitable islands. An area in the compound has been fenced off to allow the larger tortoises to move around freely and securely.

The role of the aviaries has evolved over time and has become more complex as it has greater involvement and integration with the fieldwork of MWF. Future work will concentrate on the incubation and hand rearing of Mauritius Olive White-eyes, and on reptile and seabird projects.



Mauritius Fruit Bat

Main Donor 2007/8 National Parks and Conservation Service

Education and Awareness

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is committed to promoting awareness and education as a vital part of the conservation of biodiversity. In Rodrigues, we have a wellestablished and successful education programme working closely with schools and local communities. As yet Mauritius does not have a full-time educator post, but there are plans to extend education and awareness activities in the near future. Ile aux Aigrettes is currently the formalized centre for awareness-raising activities in Mauritius (see page 27), with the informative tours of the island led by trained guides.

We visit schools and other institutions on request, to talk about environmental and conservation issues. In June 2007, we collaborated with the Mauritius Research Council on a project regarding data management. This involved assessing a different approach to sensitizing schoolchildren to the biodiversity of their country, with the aim of encouraging interest in science. Ninety pupils from three participating schools were taught botanical drawing, and were introduced to the restoration and conservation work being carried out in Mauritius, including a visit to Monvert Nature Reserve, where they practised their newly acquired skills.

We are also collaborating with education authorities in Mauritius to make conservation information and resources available to science teachers.



Schoolchildren learning botanical drawing





Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (2005) The Native Plants & Animals of Mauritius. Mauritius: MWF.



Our books

Atkinson, R. and Sevathian, J.-C. (2005) A Guide to the Plants in Mauritius. Mauritius: MWF.

A Die d Guide to rue Reptilies and Amplabians of Mauritian

Coming soon



Cole, N. (2009) A Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Mauritius. Mauritius: MWF.



Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (2009) Guide de la Faune et de la Flore de l'Ile Cocos. Mauritius: MWF.



A variety of awareness projects have been undertaken with local companies, linked with their activities and aimed at the general public, clients, stakeholders and staff. Above are examples from a couple of projects from 2007 and 2008.



Campaign poster

The campaign in Mauritius is centred on endemic reptiles – the Lesser Night Gecko (Nactus coindemirensis), llot Vacoas' Bojer's Skink and Telfair's Skink – with a focus area of Mahébourg. Some of the endemic geckos are Critically Endangered and are only found on the southeast islets of Mauritius. It is hoped that the campaign will stop damage caused by humans, such as littering, introducing alien invasive species and lighting of barbeques out of designated areas, and that the Mauritian people will begin to play an active role in safeguarding their natural heritage. The National Parks and Conservation Service is a partner in the campaign.

The campaign mascot is the Ornate Day Gecko, named Miss T, which will be used to promote the important role of the gecko in local biodiversity.

In late 2007, an educator was recruited and then attended an intensive twelve-week course at the University of Kent (UK), in biodiversity science, conservation and the law, social science and learning theory, and the skills necessary to run an outreach campaign. Once in Mauritius, the first task was to plan a comprehensive campaign, with objectives, activities, and tools for monitoring and assessing the impact so that future recommendations can be made.

Activities are planned to run from November 2008 to April 2009 and will concentrate on targeting the local boat skippers who take visitors to the islands. Through a programme of workshops they will be educated and motivated so that they become ambassadors for the local wildlife. The skippers have been involved in choosing the mascot and slogan, as well as in formulating a code of conduct for island visits, and will continue to be central to the campaign. Raising awareness in the local community is another key component. Various techniques will be used to communicate the environmental message, such as posters, stickers, brochures, temporary tattoos, children's drawing competitions, special awareness days, sports activities, puppet shows and many other community-based activities.

Once the skippers are trained and the awareness-raising programme is complete, monitoring will be carried out to assess the impact of the campaign.

Rare is an international conservation organization that has worked in over forty countries to equip people in the world's most threatened natural areas with the tools and motivation they need to care for their own natural resources. This is particularly important where wildlife is threatened by a lack of public awareness and community support. Rare's Pride Campaign aims to establish grassroots support for environmental protection, by training local conservationists to use social marketing tactics to increase awareness, influence attitudes and to enable positive change.

Campaigns are implemented locally by conservation partners, such as MWF. Conservation educators are trained and financed by Rare and other collaborators. This is the first time that a national conservation awareness campaign of this type has been carried out in Mauritius.



Ile aux Aigrettes Ecotours



Ile aux Aigrettes

Since 1985, MWF has managed this islet as a restoration project, conserving native plants and reintroducing the native fauna to recreate pristine Mauritius. Ten years later we adopted an objective to 'Promote ecotourism, as a means to raise public awareness, generate income and employment and to contribute towards the sustainable development of Mauritius and Rodrigues', and in 1997 Ile aux Aigrettes opened to the public. The main aims of the project are to help finance the ongoing restoration programme and to raise awareness about our conservation work. We also endeavour to show that biodiversity conservation need not be an exclusion activity but can, and should, lead to employment and educational and recreational opportunities for the improvement of local communities, through responsible and sustainable tourism.

Visitors must pre-book their tour, which starts with a short boat ride from the mainland, and continues with a guided tour of the island, lasting one and a half hours. To avoid damage to the vegetation, visitors are required to remain on the specially designed trail that goes around the island to the main sites of interest. With an informed guide leading the way visitors can learn about various species of plants that have been rescued from extinction, such as bois de boeuf (*Gastonia mauritiana*) and vacoas (*Pandanus vandermeeschii*), and their importance in the functioning of the ecosystem. In addition to the flora, visitors can view the local fauna including the Ornate Day Gecko, Pink Pigeon, Mauritius Olive White-eye,

Mauritius Fody, Aldabra Giant Tortoise and the recently reintroduced Telfair's Skink. The visitors' centre presently houses a collection of life-size bronzes of Mauritian and Rodriguan extinct endemic animals including the Rodrigues Giant Tortoise, the Giant Mauritius Skink, the Red Rail and the Dodo. The tour introduces visitors to the natural heritage of Mauritius, from which they gain a deeper understanding of our natural surroundings, ideally leading to a desire to protect them.

At the national forum on tourism (*Les Assises du Tourisme*) held in February 2006, the lle aux Aigrettes Visitors' Programme was hailed as the only genuine ecotourism project in Mauritius and it has become a benchmark in this specialized tourism sector.

During 2007/8, visitor numbers increased compared with previous years and the target for next season has been set at over 14,500 visitors. Future goals include upgrading the existing tours and creating additional tours to encourage more visitors. The website will be improved to promote the project.



Schoolchildren on an ecotour

We are currently designing an environmental education programme for schools and community groups in Mauritius, which will include visits to Ile aux Aigrettes. The aim is to raise awareness amongst the citizens of tomorrow and instil in them pride in their native wildlife. This programme is being developed in cooperation with the Education Division at Chester Zoo. The tours will be curriculum based and will include a new, longer education trail with support materials and worksheets. Schools will pay a nominal fee, although the actual cost will be paid for by income generated from the existing ecotours programme. We also hope to erect an education centre on the mainland, opposite the island.

Rodrigues Environmental Education Project

Environmental education programmes aim to improve ecological awareness and understanding, and encourage better appreciation and conservation of our natural resources. To further our belief that conservation goes hand-in-hand with education in order to be successful, MWF employs a full-time environmental educator on Rodrigues. The Rodrigues Environmental Education Project (REEP) started in 1998, targeting both primary school children and local communities. MWF liaises with the Commission for Education, part of Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and has been present in primary schools since 2001. Although the educator post was vacant in 2007, we were still able to deliver talks in schools and local communities on request. More recently, MWF has met with the head teachers of all thirteen primary schools to relaunch the school programme, now that the educator post has been filled.

Usually classroom presentations in each school are every two weeks and introduce topics related to native flora and fauna, the water cycle and pollution, and the importance of conserving our environment. These are integrated with science, history and geography elements of the curriculum. Getting the children to understand the environmental challenges that the world currently faces and how even they can make a difference is fundamental to the project. Field outings are an important component, and cover the plant nursery, nature reserves, local rivers and water sources, and treatment plants. During 2007/8, 57 students visited Grande Montagne, and 234 visited Anse Quitor to experience the restored habitat of these important reserves.

School community projects are another way to involve both children and teachers in environmental issues, and include the planting of endemic shrubs in school gardens or playground areas. We provide the expertise and then the teachers, parents and children take on the project on a day-to-day basis. This three-way involvement and commitment is vital to meet the programme's aims.



REEP educator talking at a local community centre



Schoolchildren visiting Grande Montagne Nature Reserve

In the wider local community, MWF's environmental educator organizes workshops, exhibitions, clean-up days and question-and-answer sessions. Highlights this year included organizing volunteer groups on twenty separate days throughout the year and involving them in different projects in the current conservation work on Rodrigues. We participated in World Environment Day by donating 3,000 plants for the *One Plant per Household* campaign and forming part of a panel of judges for a school competition for each primary and secondary school to develop its own environmental project.

MWF also works with the Government and other NGOs to coordinate island-wide awareness-raising projects, and has donated plants to the Rodrigues Human Resource Centre to create an endemic garden.

Future plans include the continuation of educational talks in all primary schools and to undertake more visits to the nature reserves and plant nursery. It is also hoped that volunteer groups can be organized to inform and involve the population on conservation. In the coming year, educational posters and other tools will be devised and distributed, with a focus on the Rodrigues Fruit Bat.

Main Donor 2007/8 Philadelphia Zoo (USA)

Data Management

Through its individual recovery and restoration projects, MWF is in the position to collect unique data on rare species and on conservation techniques, which could help in future projects and in long-term management of species. Although funding for the development of some specific databases ended in November 2007, efforts are continuing to update the Echo Parakeet and Pink Pigeon databases.

Other databases that were also developed under the data management project will continue to be maintained (these include those on rare plants, seabirds and reptiles). Centralizing and managing the data to make it more comprehensive and accessible are areas that we aim to develop in the future. The information on the databases has already been used to compile the MWF publications A Guide to the Plants in Mauritius, Guide de la Faune et de la Flore de l'Ile Cocos and also a Phenology Monitoring Manual.

Scientific Research

Locally we work in conjunction with the University of Mauritius by providing logistical field support to BSc final year student projects. Every year BSc Biological Sciences students visit lle aux Aigrettes for practical advice and discussion on field projects. We view this as an important step in local capacity building and in generating interest in our conservation projects. We also work with international universities of repute to obtain self-funded MSc and PhD students to carry out research in areas central to our mission. The applied (rather than pure theoretical) nature of the research studies has been a pillar of our successful conservation programmes.

We are continually looking at ways to extend the knowledge base of our staff, through exchange programmes with other conservation organizations and on university placements. MWF hosted Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's Island Species-Led Action course in 2007, aimed at training Mauritian and expatriate field scientists, coordinators and managers. This type of training will become an annual feature of MWF's local and international capacity building effort.

Research Studies Commenced During 2007 and 2008

Sarah Cunningham University of East Anglia, UK (MSc) Assessment of the suitability of the Bambous Mountain Range for the reintroduction of Mauritius Cuckoo-shrikes (Coracina typica) and Mauritius Paradise-flycatchers (Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata).

Thomas Gerner University of Zurich, Switzerland (MSc) Home range, intra- and interspecific interactions and diet in Guenther's gecko (*Phelsuma guentheri*).

Alyson Lumley University of East Anglia, UK (MSc) The influence of captive rearing on vocalisations of a reintroduced population of Mauritius Fody (Foudia rubra).

Charlotte Packman University of East Anglia, UK (MSc) The ecology of the introduced Madagascar Fody and its interactions with the endemic Mauritius Fody on Ile aux Aigrettes, Mauritius.

Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka University of East Anglia, UK (MSc) Assessment of prey availability in the Bambous Mountains for the reintroduction of Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike (Coracina typica) and Mascarene Paradise-Flycatcher (Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata).

Heather Richards University of East Anglia, UK (MSc) An investigation into the macro and microhabitat use and diet of the translocated population of Telfair's Skink (Leiolopisma telfairi) on Ile aux Aigrettes.

Ruth Brown Queen Mary College, University of London, UK (PhD) Molecular ecology of petrels (Pterodroma spp.) from the Indian Ocean and NE Atlantic, and implications for their conservation.

Samantha Cartwright University of Reading, UK (PhD) Agriculture, natal environment and the life histories of Mauritius Kestrels (Falco punctatus).

Christine Griffiths University of Bristol, UK and University of Zurich, Switzerland (PhD) Conservation of Mauritian plant communities using ecological analogues of the extinct tortoises.

Claire Raisin DICE, University of Kent, UK (PhD) Population genetics, disease and reproductive fitness in the endemic echo parakeet (*Psittacula eques*) and the introduced ringneck parakeet (*P. krameri*) on Mauritius.

Deepa Senapathi University of Reading, UK (PhD) Assessing the effect of changing climatic conditions in Mauritius on the population dynamics of the endemic Mauritius kestrel (Falco punctatus).

Vikash Tatayah University of Mauritius, Mauritius (PhD) The breeding biology of the Round Island Petrel (Pterodroma spp.) and factors determining breeding success.

Simon Tollington DICE, University of Kent, UK (PhD) The effects of inbreeding on immune function and interactions with disease in endangered Mauritius bird populations.

Nicolas Zuel University of Zurich, Switzerland (PhD) Ecology and conservation of an endangered community on Round Island, Mauritius.

Dennis Hansen Stanford University, USA (Post-doctoral research) Investigating the ghosts of seed dispersal past: Extinct seed-dispersal networks in Mauritius.

Consultancy

National Conservation Issues

As part of our role as a conservation organization, MWF provides advice and expertise to national committees, boards and government departments, regarding conservation-related issues. This ensures that we can contribute actively to discussions on projects or policies that may impact on the local flora and fauna.

Some of the committees that we are currently involved with are: the Wildlife and National Parks Advisory Council, which manages the Black River Gorges National Park; the Nature Reserves Board, which controls the nature reserves of Mauritius and Rodrigues; and the Ramsar Committee, which works to conserve wetlands and protect them from development.

We are also working with, and providing advice to, a range of national conservation and development projects:

- The Islets National Parks Strategic Plan and Management Plan, which aims to give an overall strategy to the conservation management of islets in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
- The lease of Flat Island and Gabriel Island to private enterprises MWF aims to ensure that environmental and conservation standards are met by the lessees.
- The prospective lease of some Mahébourg Bay islets to MWF for conservation management.
- Protected Areas Network (PAN) is a United Nations Development Programme and Government of Mauritius project, in cooperation with MWF, aiming to establish a network of public and private lands with conservation value, so that biodiversity can be better protected.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas project funded by the Ministry of Environment to earmark areas of Mauritius that should not be developed, or should only be developed with great caution on account of their ecological/environmental sensitivity.
- Invasive Alien Species consultancy, which aims to have a national strategy to overcome the risk of alien species introduction, manage the effects of established/establishing species and promote awareness of the risk of alien species introductions.
- A UNDP-GEF, Food and Agricultural Organization, and Government of Mauritius project on Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
- National Forest Policy and National Forest Action Plan undertaken by the Forestry Service and the Food and Agricultural Organization, aiming to preserve the remaining native and cultivated forests, and set out future priorities.

Habitat Restoration Projects

We continue to be involved in restoration projects in partnership with government and private local partners wanting to restore native plants on their land. These projects usually progress as follows: initially the forest or land is surveyed to establish exactly which species are growing there; a nursery is set up; seeds of native plants may be collected for propagation; and workers are trained to identify native plants, to weed specific exotic plant species, and in different techniques to control exotic species. Projects include:

Vallée de L'Est

The restoration of this forest started in 2004 with the objective of controlling exotic plant species and propagating native plants in the nursery for planting. Specific areas of good quality native forest were selected for the initial conservation work and once the exotics had been weeded out it was possible to see which native plants remained. This project is now well established and only requires our presence once or twice a month to monitor progress and provide advice.

Ferney Valley

The project in Ferney Valley started in August 2006 after 200 ha of forest were set aside as a conservation area. The restoration work has progressed well and the forest now has a specially designed walking track, on which MWF advised. The general public can visit remnant forest and be informed by ecotour guides, trained in conservation and the identification of native plants. This project is ongoing, with plans to set up a MWF field station and to reintroduce the Pink Pigeon.

Ebony Forest Reserve, Chamarel

Restoration work started here in January 2007 with the initial objective of establishing a native nursery to grow plants to restore the forest. A plant survey was conducted and regular monitoring of rare native plants is carried out. Following weeding several rare plants were found, including some individuals of bois corail (*Chassalia boryana*), previously known from only one wild individual. Once restoration is well advanced the public will be able to visit the restored forest and the educational centre to learn about Mauritian biodiversity and the problems it still faces.

Financial Information

BALANCE SHEET

Asset	s	
Non-c	current	assets
6		

Current assets Inventories Receivables

Cash in bank

Total Assets

Equity and Liabilities

Accumulated fund Non-current liabilities Current liabilities

Total Equity and Liabilities

2008	2007
Unaudited	
Rs m	Rs m
7.8	7.5
1.4	1.3
6.9	8.3
3.7	1.0
12.0	10.6
19.8	18.1
0.4	0.4
0.4	0.4
7.0	6.5
12.4	11.2
10.0	10.1
19.8	18.1

INCOME STATEMENT

	2008	2007
	Unaudited	
	Rs m	Rs m
Revenue		
Grants	20.8	17.9
Donations	1.0	1.2
Other income	6.0	6.5
	27.8	25.6
Expenses		
Project expenses	25.2	22.5
Other expenses	0.6	0.7
Depreciation	2.0	2.0
	27.8	25.2
Net Surplus for the Year	0.0	0.4

Notes:

Figures are in rupees millions.

The Government of Mauritius, organizations and individuals contribute goods and services to the projects at no cost or at cost. The value of no-cost goods and services is not included in our accounts, except if they are fixed assets when they are accounted for at market value.



Our Donors

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit organization, which can only operate through the support of voluntary donations. We are proud to list the businesses, organizations and individuals who have contributed during 2007 and 2008. Every donor is important to us, large or small, for without your continuing participation our work would not be possible. We thank all of you equally.

Mauritius

Corporate/Organizations/Government

Abdul Rahim Osman & Co Administrator & Consultants Ltd Air Mauritius Anglo-Mauritius Assurance Society Ltd Anthurium Export Co Ltd Associated Textiles Ltd Barclays Bank Plc Beau Vallon Ltée Beechand Co Ltd Bel Air Sugar Estate Ltd Bel Ombre Golf Club Ltd Bel Ombre Sugar Estate Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd **BR** Property Ltd British American Tobacco (Mauritius) Bulk Bitumen Co Ltd Carambole Export Ltd Cellplus Ceres Ltd CIEL Group Compagnie Agricole de Labourdonnais Compagnie d'Exploitation Agricole Ltée Connections Ltd Consultancy & Co Cosmos (Indian Ocean) Ltd Data Communications Ltd Domaine d'Anse Jonchée Domaine de la Vallée de L'Est Dry Cleaning & Steam Laundry Ltd Ebony Ltd Emcar Itd Ernst & Young **Etude Roland Constantin**

Fideco Global Business Services Fidelity Trust Ltd Finlease Company Ltd Flacq United Estates Ltd Fondation Espoir et Développement Food & Allied Industries Ltd Francois Leguat Ltd Gamma Civic Ltd Les Gaz Industriels Ltd General Construction Company Ltd Harel Frères Ltd HSBC IBI Staff Association IES Trustees Ireland Blyth Ltd Kalachand & Co Ltd Kathrada & Sons Livestock Feed Ltd Marbella Espace Maison Ltée Maritim Hotel (Mauritius) Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd Mauritius Housing Co Ltd Mauritius Oil Refineries Ltd (Moroil) Mauritius Research Council Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute Mautourco Ltd Mechanisation Co Ltd Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries Naïade Resorts National Parks and Conservation Service New Mauritius Hotels Itd Oberoi, Mauritius Price Waterhouse Coopers

Rogers Group Sega Sail Charters Service Bureau Shell Mauritius Ltd Skål International Mauritius SKC Surat & Colltd Société Rouillard Frères & Cie Sofap Ltd Solis Indian Ocean Ltd Star Knitwear Ltd State Bank of Mauritius Ltd Sugarex Ltd Sun Resorts Ltd Le Telfair Golf & Spa Resort White Sand Tours Ltd Women's Corona Society Yemaya

Individuals

Boulle, N. Burrenchobay, D. D'Arifat, F. Degrissac, P. Lim Fat, R. Monia, E. Montocchio, J. Moollan, C. Ramasamy, L. Ramhotar, P. Richard, R

Our Donors (continued)

International

Corporate/Organizations/Government

African Bird Club American Friends of BirdLife International Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Bat TAG British High Commission Conservation International Darwin Initiative (DEFRA, UK) Decentralised Cooperation Programme - European Union Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust Earthwatch Institute Friends of Mauritian Wildlife India Capital Management Japanese Government Kaytee Kinnoull Foundation Lubee Bat Conservancy Mary Vernor-Miles Charitable Trust New Noah Program (Wildlife Preservation Canada) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Peregrine Fund Philadelphia Zoo (USA) Rare Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation Ruth Smart Foundation St Mary's Charity Sylvanus Charitable Fund UNDP **UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme** Universities of East Anglia, Kent, Nottingham Trent, Reading, and Zurich

Individuals

Canning, Mr Clowry, E. Craig, D. Cuniah, P. Glynn, R. Gohlke, M. E. de Vries Heseltine, Lord M. Monroe, A. Pulle, A. Salamolard, M. Taylor, D., Jr Urquart, P.

Donations are vital to the continuation of MWF's work. For UK taxpayers the best way to support us is to make a donation via the UK charity Friends of Mauritian Wildlife (registered charity no. 1080788), which works closely with MWF. Cheques in any currency can be sent to: Friends of Mauritian Wildlife, 19 East Sheen Avenue, London SW14 8AR. Email enquiries can be sent to: robertwesley@east-sheen.demon.co.uk.

Please remember that if you are a UK taxpayer Friends of Mauritian Wildlife can reclaim Gift Aid on your donation once you have signed a Gift Aid form, which the UK charity will be pleased to send to you.

If your individual or organization name is not listed, or is incorrect, please accept our apologies and inform us so that we can amend our records.

Our Partners

Agricultural Research and Extension Unit Barnard, V. BirdLife International Conservatoire National Botanique de Mascarin, Réunion Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust Forestry Service Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) Institute of Zoology (London) International Zoo Veterinary Group IUCN (World Conservation Union) Mauritius Ports Authority Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries Ministry of Education and Human Resources Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit Ministry of Health and Quality of Life National Coast Guard National Parks and Conservation Service Natural History Museum (London) North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) Police Helicopter Sauadron Queen Mary College, University of London Rodrigues Forestry Service La Sentinelle Group Special Mobile Force Universities of Aarhus, Cambridge, East Anglia, Kent, Mauritius, Nottingham Trent, Plymouth, Reading, Stanford, and Zurich

Our Staff

Local Staff

Marie Estel Agathe Genevieve Ah-Yen Bibi Zairabee Ahamud Liliana Ally Sunita Ancharaz Patricia Antoine Nadine Armelle V. Armoogum Jennifa Augustin Marie Michella Azie Marie Sabring Azie Roshan Bacorisen Sylvain Baptiste Alfred Beque Harel Beque Fristing Bernard Lekhram Bissoo Faizal Boochanah Vanisha Boodhram Martine Brasse Steeves Buckland Anissa Calloo Christiana Casimir Jenifer Cezar Roberto Cezar Aurelie Chowrimootoo D. Choytun J. Chrishna S. Chumbit Yuvna Chuttoo Preetam City of Palaces Sylvie Clair Gianni Clarisse Cathleen Cybele Gabriel D'Argent Dominique De Marasse Enouf Dorine Duquesclin Cindy Duval-Kouame Sourai Dwarika Jean Karl Emilien Louis Stanley Espiegle Hans Etwaroo Karen Francoise



Mauritius

Martine Gebert Martine Joelle Goder Poonam Gungaram Marie Joera M. Harrison Benny Henry Christio Speville Hortense Alain Husseiney Christine Issah Fabrice Jean John Cliff Jean Zayd Jhumka Diane Juhoor Jacques Jullienne Ashok Khadun Padmini Khurtoo Stephen Kirsakye Frederique Koenia Amanda Ladkoo K. Lallsing Denis Lamarque Nadine Lamarque

Jean Michel Laurent Denis Li Lung Hok Marie Daniella Lolo Joseph Jokenson Manan Isabelle Martine Marie J. Matoka Nicole Matoka Marie Vanessa Mirbelle Corinne Montocchio Fabiola Monty Annejinee Moonoosamy S. Mootoocurpen Kevin Nundloll Jose Palmire Jocelyn Pariapen **Richard Payendee** Jean Olan Joyce Perrine Jean Daniel Pierre Louis Jean Tonio Polimon Sandra Poongavanan Asha Poonyth

Mary Jane Raboude Emilie Raffa Lone Raffray Shoma Devi Ramdhany Frissot Raphael Marie Florese Raphael Nabijha Roomaldawo Joanna Salece Lilowtee Seechurn Avinash Seegoolam Pushpa Seepaul Jean Claude Sevathian Mesack Sham Anieta Shan-Yu Hans Soman Vikash Tatayah Danny Thisbe Valerie Thummadoo Bruno Vardapanaicken Rudy Virassamy Yannick Virginie

Andrea Waterstone Nicolas Zuel

Local Volunteers

Jamiil Chady Anabelle de Chazal Frederic de Fleuriot Elie DeRidder Harry Earle-Mundil Ashley Gooljar James Kong Win Chang Fabiola Lamarque Mundhi Ling Gunawan Jean Christophe Lubois Jason Lun Leung Gavin Poonoosamy Hansradah Ramburn Sophie Robin Dinesh Seechurn Angelle Souci



Rodrigues

Expatriate Staff and Volunteers

Laura Bambini Sally Baross Richard Baxter Ewa Bednarczuk Sophie Bell Mathew Bidski Nicholas Bolton Henry Brown Amy Campbell Samantha Cartwright Madeleine Charlton Emilie Chavel Thomas Churchyard Julie Cole Nik Cole Ruth Cole Suzanne Coombes Sarah Cunningham Richard Dale Christina Davy Erika Dawson Kimberly Dawson Heather Dixon Kelly Edmunds Gareth Evans Robert Ferguson Iwan Fletcher John Fletcher Elaine Fraser Lucy Garrett Andrea Gear Mathew Gee Thomas Gerner Morgan Gilmour Harriet Good Kiri Green Ben Grief Christine Griffiths Jerome Guelat David Hamilton Jaeger Hamilton Dennis Hansen Suzanne Hogg Lee Hollingsworth Emma Ingrams Mathew Ingrand Caroline Jeanneret Mig Jessen Jannie Linnebjerg Paul Lintott Natasha Lloyd Nicole Lorhmann Sarah Lovibond Andrew Lowin Alyson Lumley Gwendolyn Maggs Grace Maglio Jason Malham Walter Mangroo Phil Marsh Denise McGowan Shane McPherson Anne Morris Marie Nevoux Charlotte Packman Zoe Pittaway Madeleine Pott Claire Raisin Amruta Rane Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka Anna Reuleaux Nicholas Reynolds Heather Richards Cassandra Ridley **Regula Rieser** Yoann Rocton Alexander Sandham **Richard Seaton** Andrew Skinner Joey Skinner Donal Smith Marielle Smith Jennifer Stockdale

James Thompson Simon Tollington Rachel Tucker Jason Van de Wetering Gary Ward Harriet Whitford Jennifer Wilcox Lachlan Wilmott



Management Committee

President Mr Felix Maurel Businessman (Insurance) Managing Director (Mauritius)

Vice President

Mr Tim Taylor Economist Company Chairman and retired Managing Director (Mauritius)

Executive Director Mr Jacques Jullienne Retired Sugar Estates Administrator (Mauritius)

Scientific Director Prof. Carl G. Jones MBE Scientist (Mauritius/UK)

Honorary Treasurer Mrs Deborah de Chazal Chartered Accountant (Mauritius)

Deputy Treasurer Mr Gerard Pascal Certified Accountant and retired Chief Finance Executive (Mauritius)

Members Mr Christian Dalais Company Director (Mauritius)

Mr Luc Pilot Retired Sugar Estates Administrator (Mauritius)

Mr Manickchand Puttoo Director, National Parks and Conservation Service (Mauritius)

Dr Andrew Greenwood Veterinary Surgeon Specialist in Zoo and Endangered Species (UK)

Mr Paul Masterton Director, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (UK)

Dr Roger Wilkinson Head of Conservation and Science, Chester Zoo (UK)

Mr Philippe la Hausse de la Louvière Scientist Company Manager (Mauritius) **Editor:** Elizabeth Weaver, Ex Libris Consulting Ltd. **Design and printing:** Précigraph Ltd, West Pailles, Mauritius.

Text © 2009 Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Photographs © as indicated. Cover photographs © Gregory Guida/Christopher Kaiser-Bunbury/Vikash Tatayah. All rights reserved.

Thanks to the photographers, Véronique Barnard (for the gecko drawings) and the staff/students/volunteers of MWF (past and present) for their contributions to this report.

Printed on Forest Stewardship Council certified paper. Also available for download from our website at http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org.

Production of this annual report was generously funded by La Prudence Mauricienne Assurances Ltée and Précigraph Ltd.





Getting in Contact

For queries, suggestions or comments please contact us at:

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Grannum Road Vacoas Mauritius Tel: (230) 6976097 Fax: (230) 6976512 Email: executive@mauritian-wildlife.org Website: http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org

To visit Ile aux Aigrettes:

You can reserve your ticket for a tour of Ile aux Aigrettes by telephone on (230) 6312396, or visit our website for further information at http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org.

How can you become involved?

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit organization and can only carry out its work with the support of donations. Please take the opportunity to become one of our donors and support vital conservation work.

Various activities linked to corporate social responsibility can be arranged with MWF, please contact us for more information. Or you can simply become a Friend, please email us for more information at **Iraffray@mauritian-wildlife.org**.

To make a donation:

- Send a cheque or postal order, made payable to Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (see address below).
- Make a donation through our website at http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org/donate.
- Send a direct credit at your bank. Beneficiary Bank: The Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd. Port Louis – Mauritius. Swift BIC: MCBLMUMU / Account Number: 010204792 / Account Currency: Mauritian rupees.

Please include your full name and contact details, including email address, with all donations.

Address your correspondence or questions regarding donations to:

The Fundraising Manager Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Grannum Road Vacoas Mauritius Tel: (230) 6976097 Email: Iraffray@mauritian-wildlife.org

Thank you for your support.

Volunteer for Us

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is always keen to hear from university graduates who would like to gain practical hands-on experience and pursue a conservation career working within our organization. We accept volunteers throughout the year to work on a range of our projects.

The work may involve endemic bird nest location and monitoring, radio tracking, population monitoring, report writing, animal handling of Pink Pigeons, Echo Parakeets, Mauritius Kestrels and passerines, and conservation of rare plants. Projects are located on mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues, as well as on offshore islets such as Round Island and Ile aux Aigrettes.

Working for MWF gives you the opportunity to gain valuable first-hand experience of conservation work in the ongoing recovery of endangered species, for which we are world-renowned.

If you are interested and require further information please send your CV and personal details and/or queries to us:

By post

The Executive Director Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Grannum Road Vacoas Mauritius

By email

volunteer@mauritian-wildlife.org

(Please state clearly on your envelope or email subject APPLICATION FOR JOB.)