



# MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014

**For: the Annual General Meeting of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to be held at its offices at Grannum Road, Vacoas, on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 at 08.30 a.m.**

### **Projects**

#### **Fauna**

##### **Mauritius Kestrel**

- A Habitat Survey to create maps of additional suitable kestrel territories was carried out.
- Areas of high quality forest were identified for releasing of captive bred birds
- Discussions were carried out re captive breeding and releasing Kestrels in 2015/2016 season

##### **Pink Pigeons**

- Preparations for hand rearing of Pink Pigeons at the Black River Aviaries with the use of Barbary doves.
- Discussions with European Zoo's to breed birds with genes missing in Mauritius and export to Mauritius
- Complete the translocation of birds to Petrin.

##### **Echo Parakeet**

- Preparations for the translocation of birds to Ferney Valley.

##### **Mauritius Olive White-eye & Mauritius Fodies**

- Re-assessment of supplemental feeding on Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Discussions about the way forward to protect the Olive White-eye.& Mauritius Fody

##### **Passerine Survey**

- The 3 year island survey was completed
- The population estimates for each passerine species were worked on.
- The monitoring of the Mauritius cuckoo-shrike in the wild carried out to understand the birds habits and requirements. Showed a decline in population, thus necessitating conservation actions.

##### **Tortoise translocation**

- Translocation of smaller tortoises to Round Island having seen that they can survive satisfactorily.
- Vegetation monitoring to determine impact of tortoises continued
- PhD study by Miss Rosemary Moorhouse-Gann on diet and impact of tortoises on Ile aux Aigrettes and Round Island, as well as relations with foodwebs of Pink Pigeon and Telfair's skink

##### **Seabird Translocation**

- Harvest of birds from Serpent Island
- Use of attractants (decoys, call playback).

##### **Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary (GDEWS)**

- Preparations for hand rearing of Pink Pigeons at GDEWS with the use of Barbary doves
- Increase production of mice for kestrel breeding
- Trial captive rearing of Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike.

#### **Rare Plants Mauritius**

- Red listing of Mauritian plants begun with the support of Missouri Botanical Gardens
- Work on the Management plan for Mondrain

## **Round Island**

- Installation of an automatic weather station
- Study and monitoring of soil erosion begun

## **Rodrigues**

### Anse Quitor (DCP project)

- Ten labourers taken as trainees
- 26 persons trained in plant propagation (Jean Claude Sevathian in Rodrigues for the training)
- 36 persons trained in Ecotourism (Vikash Tatayah at the opening and did a few sessions)
- 4 Endemic gardens planned
- 2 Ha of the reserve fenced, cleared and planted
- Book on the Rodrigues plants and animals being written

### Grande Montagne

- Brochure guide to the reserve published
- Discussions and work done towards running an ecotourism visit.
- Restoration continued

### Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables

- Seabird censuses.
- Discussions with the RRA re a field station on Ile aux Sables.

### Other

- Rodrigues Fruit Bats were censused as per usual
- Grenade project clearing of land and planting completed
- Education project continued, a 2015 calendar produced from school children paintings

## **Ferney**

- Planning for the translocation of Echo Parakeets
- Weeding and habitat restoration undertaken and on track
- Assessment undertaken for the enhancement of the tour for visitors
- Work undertaken for the planning for the implementation of an educational tour for students.

## **Mauritius fruitbat**

- Dr Ryszard Oleksy begun a post-doctorate study on the impact of the Mauritius fruitbat on commercial fruit production, and the efficacy of mitigation measures such as lighting, pruning of trees, flags and netting.

## **Education and Awareness**

- Learning with Nature programme reviewed by Dr Maggie Esson and changes implemented (reversed the tour path to anti clockwise, shortened the path, relocated bronzes)
- LWN tour content adapted for needs of specific categories of groups (eg students studying Travel and Tourism or for primary schools).

## **STOC (*Suivi Temporel des Oiseaux Communs*) Project**

- Began implementation of the project in July, the project to be completed in 12 months
- Request for volunteers from the public begun

## General

### Visitors & Collaborators

#### Missouri Botanical Gardens

Dr Wyse Jackson visited MWF from 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February with several colleagues. A programme was organised of a mixture of site visits and meetings.

Followed by Dr Jim Miller & Dr George Schatz who were in Mauritius from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October conducting a Red-Listing Course followed by an Assessment workshop.

#### Durrell

Dr Richard Young visited MWF from 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February. He participated in site visits, gave a talk to the staff and met management. He has developed the 'Durrell index' and we discussed being able to use the Mauritian data for a 'MWF index'.

#### International Zoo Veterinary Group

Dr Andrew Greenwood: was in Mauritius from 23<sup>rd</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. In previous years he has visited us yearly on a consultancy to provide veterinary advice but due to funding issues he has not been for several years. During this visit he advised on a range of issues including the planned translocation of Echo Parakeets to the Ferney Valley and the future captive breeding plans.

Dr Greenwood returned on 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 accompanied by Debbie Nicolls. During this visit he advised on a range of issues including the planned translocation of Echo Parakeets to the Ferney Valley and the future captive breeding plans.

#### Chester Zoo

Dr Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager visited us from 5<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014. She was advising on the current Learning with Nature education project and the proposed upgrading of the educational tour in the Ferney Valley. She worked closely with Dilshaad Balbolia, Head of Environmental Education while in Mauritius.

#### Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London

Dr John Ewen, Research Fellow, was in Mauritius in June 2014 on holiday with his family but during that time he advised on the projects and gave a talk. Dr Ewen is working closely with MWF for research on supplemental feeding.

Prof. Ken Norris and Dr Malcolm Nicoll moved to IOZ from Reading University in August. They were in Mauritius for their regular yearly visit in October / November 2014. This year they visited Round Island.

#### University of Pretoria

Prof Paul Summer and Ms Tamsyn Bean were accompanied by colleagues from the University of Fort Hare and UNISA arriving in Mauritius on 5<sup>th</sup> November for ten days as a follow up visit from studies carried out in 2013. They had earlier exported equipment to Mauritius to measure soil erosion which was installed on Round Island during this visit.

#### Other

Staff from collaborating institutions visit MWF to assist on projects or for a professional visit.

## Training

#### Induction for new MWF Staff

We now take the opportunity for field staff to attend the ESR modules but we supplemented this training, to cover subjects for all new staff, with one office based day on 27<sup>th</sup> November and one day on Ile aux Aigrettes.

### Endangered species recovery course

This course ran from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September with eleven full time overseas students. In addition staff from MWF attended selected modules. Two staff from Rodrigues attended one module each.

	<b>MWF</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
No of attendees Module 1	2	11	12
No of attendees Module 2	0	11	11
No of attendees Module 3	1	11	22
No of attendees Module 4	6	11	17
No of attendees Module 5	5	11	16
Total no of MWF staff weeks	14		
No of MWF staff benefiting	10		

### **Presentations and Talks**

These are held when we have visitors as part of our staff capacity building and our staff also deliver talks. In 2014 the following were held:

- Dr Wyse Jackson, President of Missouri Botanical Gardens on “The Missouri Botanical Gardens: an overview of the organization and the work it carries out”.
- Dr Chris Birkinshaw, Assistant Curator, Africa and Madagascar Missouri Botanical Gardens (MBG) on MBG's work in Madagascar.
- Dr Richard Young, Head of Conservation Science, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Co-Chair IUCN SSC Small Mammal Specialist Group on “The Durrell Index – measuring and communicating conservation actions and impacts”.
- Dan Lay, Herpetology Department Supervisor at Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust on the work in the herpetology department at Durrell’s headquarters in Jersey, particularly the ex-situ work with Mauritian reptile species.
- Dr Andrew Greenwood, International Wildlife Veterinarian, International Zoo Veterinary Group held discussions on veterinary issues.
- Dr Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager, Chester Zoo on how education supports conservation, the objectives of education at the Zoo and what messages this aims to communicate.
- Dr John Ewen, Research Fellow, Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London & Co-Chair of the Hihii *Notiomystis cincta* Recovery Group and
- Dr Claudia Carraro, Veterinarian, disease risk analysis, release of regent honeyeaters *Anthochaera phrygia*, Australia on disease risk management in reintroduction biology.
- Mr Charlie Gardner, PhD candidate at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent, whose research is focused on reconciling conservation and development in Madagascar’s rapidly expanding protected area system on creating new protected areas in Madagascar.
- Endangered Species Recovery (ESR) course students presented their projects.
- Dr Nik Cole, Reptile Conservation Manager on ‘Searching for Lost Species: Seychelles and the Caribbean’
- Prof Ken Norris, Director of Science & Dr Malcolm Nicoll, Senior Research Fellow, both from the Institute of Zoology, London presenting various projects the speakers have been involved in & future issues that are likely to affect Mauritius conservation
- Tamsyn Bean, MSc Student from the University of Pretoria, South Africa on ‘Erosion phenomena on Round Island’
- Prof. Paul Summer, University of Pretoria, South Africa, on ‘Rainfall erosivity on Mauritius: an overview’
- Mr Jeff Dawson, Amphibian officer, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust on his work to address the amphibian crisis.

## **Events, Media and Communication**

### Filming & DVD's

The DVD prepared in 2013 on the Rodrigues Fruit Bat was distributed in 2014 and shown in Rodrigues in schools and community centres.

Paradise Island, back from the brink, a DVD filmed by Yasmin White in July 2013 on Ile aux Aigrettes, has won the Award for Best Amateur Film at the 2014 Wildlife Conservation Film Festival (WCFF) held in New York, USA.

### 'MWF Files' articles

Continue to be published on the Osmose page of L'Express and are available on our website.

### Facebook

The MWF Facebook page has been much more active in 2014.

### Publishing Books

The Native Plants and Animals of Mauritius was reprinted after an extensive review in October 2014.

The book by Jacques de Speville on birds of Mauritius and Rodrigues has been printed and is in book stores. MWF collaborated with Jacques for the writing of the book.

## **Government Relations**

A General Election was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014, which resulted in a change of governing party and a new Minister for Agro Industry.

## **Flat Island Vision**

We mentioned our conservation recommendations for Flat Island at relevant meetings during the year.

## **Financial Matters**

### Accounts

- The backlog in the accounts department caused by the change of accounting system was finally cleared in 2014
- The audited accounts were signed off in October 2014
- The financial situation improved as a result of having reduced staffing in previous years and only spending on essentials with a reduction in Capital Expenditure. Income levels improved due to obtaining two major grants (DCP for Rodrigues (*Anse Quitar*) and UNDP for Mauritius (*Ferney Valley*)). CSR funding was maintained.
- Government Debtors were maintained at the same level
- Income in advance has improved due to the DCP and UNDP grants.
- The cash flow has been managed and no additional overdraft facility was required.
- A review of the allocation of duties and the procedures needed for the Accounts Department to streamline all the reporting and accounting requirements was begun.

### Fundraising

### CSR

The amount raised from CSR funders in 2014 was nearly Rs 13m maintaining the revenue at 2013 levels. This sector is increasingly competitive and demanding needing regular contact with funders, CSR activities organised and regular reports submitted.

### International Funding

The funding for the Ferney Valley from the GEF SGP UNDP was operational during the year. Funding from the Decentralised Cooperation Project, DCP (European Union) for the Restoration of Anse Quitor Nature Reserve started on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014 covering 14 months. We received \$24,375 from BirdLife International for part funding for the Seabird Project. MWF has submitted two applications for funding under CEPF and has been a partner for funded activities in 5 additional applications in 2014. The funding, if obtained will be operational in the second half of 2015. Our traditional international funders continued to support MWF at the 2013 level.

### Ecotourism:

Overall our Ecotourism activity has maintained the status quo but has not managed to increase visitor numbers or revenue.

### Other sources of revenue:

Other sources of revenue are considered and explored if felt to be a potential for fundraising. Consultancies are undertaken if available and suitable. Partnerships with 'Trails' (Dodo Trail, Rando Raid) were maintained. The Adoption project has been adapted for the local market with a cost of Rs250 per adoption. The Rs1,000 adoption is also available but is mainly targeted at the international market. Product placement has been developed during 2014 with Paper Converting (Kleenex Boxes) (Rs 120,000 for 2015) and two other possibilities were under discussion and c/f to 2015.

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

