



MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

For: the Annual General Meeting of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to be held at its offices at Grannum Road, Vacoas, on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 at 09.30 a.m.

Fauna

Mauritius Kestrel

- Work was carried out as normal. Since the season 2013/14 a decrease in the number of breeding pairs was noticed in the western population which has continued. Once the chicks fledge the survival is maintained. Eggs & chicks disappear so it appears to be predation. We know the number of monkeys has increased in recent years. We also see dead chicks which could be the parents are not able to find enough food. Alternatively the cavity is too cold or hot (this is being looked into via a study).
- Discussions were carried out for captive breeding and releasing Kestrels in 2016/2017 season.

Pink Pigeons

- Populations were managed as usual at 7 sites.
- Preparation were ongoing for hand rearing of Pink Pigeons at the Black River Aviaries with the use of Barbary doves:
 - Aviaries modified at GDEWS to host Pink Pigeon pairs
 - Barbary doves housed in separate cages, first young born in captivity

Echo Parakeet

- Monitoring and supporting the population in the National Park was ongoing.
- Estimated population: 700 birds.
- The first translocation of birds to Ferney Valley took place from February to April.
- 14 birds were released: 10 birds were seen but none of them have settled at Ferney.
- The release technique was assessed for February 2016.

Mauritius Olive White-eye

- There was a re-assessment of supplemental feeding on Ile aux Aigrettes, sugar water replaced nectar.
- A poison grid of 350 poison stations along 1.5km of rivers, to reduce rodents density and increase the probability of OWE fledging chicks.
- Discussions about the way forward to protect the Olive White-eye.

Mauritius Fodies

- There was a re-assessment of supplemental feeding on Ile aux Aigrettes, from daily to three times a week.
- Discussions about a predator grid on the mainland to protect the Mauritius Fody.

Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike

- Studied bird in the wild, no nest fledged any chicks.
- Successful captive rearing of Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike, 5 in 2014-2015, 5 in 2015-2016.
- Preparation for release of Cuckoo-shrike in January 2016.

Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher

- Discussions were carried out re releasing birds in June/July 2016 using hard release.

Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary (GDEWS)

- Hand rearing of Pink Pigeons at GDEWS with the use of Barbary doves.
- Increase production of mice for Cuckoo Shrike handrearing and kestrel breeding.
- Captive rearing of Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike.
- Hand rearing of rescued adult and baby bats.
- All Tortoises translocated to Round Island.

Mauritius fruit bat

- Dr Ryszard Oleksy continued 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.
- Training Rodriguans on the techniques of monitoring fruit trees.
- Lobbying against a cull both before the announcement and afterwards.
- Cull implemented by the Ministry of Agro Industry from 6th November to 11th December 2015.
- Discussions of implications of cull, information to the public and communication on the subject implemented.
- IUCN delegation: discussions and a workshop run (see Training).
- Recruitment of a Project Officer to focus on Education and Awareness to start in January 2016.

Reptiles

Telfair's skink

- Headstarting on Ile aux Aigrettes: 81 hatchlings were obtained for the 2014/2015 breeding season. The juvenile skinks are being reared in the nurseries.
- 66 headstarted skinks PIT-tagged and released in 2015 on Ile aux Aigrettes.
- The population estimate of adult Telfair's skinks on Ile aux Aigrettes has dropped by 66% following the dog incursion in August and November 2014 and the suspected impact of tenrecs.
- Morphometric data for 60 Telfair's skinks were collected on Round Island in December to obtain body condition scores for comparison with the translocated skinks on Gunner's Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Gunner's Quoin annual reptile monitoring: A total of 712 Telfair's skinks were caught and morphometric data collected during the Capture Mark Recapture survey. This data will be used to generate a population abundance estimate, assess the body condition of the skinks and map their distribution on the island.

Günther's gecko

- The 2014/2015 breeding season ended in May with a total of 83 eggs detected at 29 nest sites and an egg survival rate of 88%.
- New methodologies are being investigated to estimate the Günther's gecko abundance on Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Labelled metal tags were placed at each of the 160 Günther's gecko nest sites, denoting nest identification numbers to aid new staff members in data collection.
- Thirty-three Günther's geckos were caught on Round Island during the annual reptile monitoring survey; the data obtained will be used to calculate average body condition scores for comparison with the translocated population on Ile aux Aigrettes.

Keel-scaled Boa

- A total of 14 keel-scaled boas (13 new juveniles and 1 adult recapture) were found during the annual reptile monitoring survey on Gunner's Quoin in November 2015. Only one snake was found during last year's survey and this demonstrate the translocated boa population on Gunner's Quoin is growing. The distribution of the boas on the island has also increased with new snakes being captured outside the initial release range.
- Twenty eight boas (17 new) were captured during the annual reptile monitoring trip on Round Island. The morphometric data collected will be used to obtain body condition scores for comparison to the snakes on Gunner's Quoin.

Bojer's skink

- Annual Capture Mark Recapture surveys for south-eastern Bojer's skinks revealed that the source population on Ilot Vacoas as well as the translocated population on Ile aux Fouquets and Ile de la Passe are thriving and the skinks have good body condition.
- An IUCN Red List assessment was written for the Bojer's skink and submitted.

Lesser night gecko

- Capture Mark Recapture surveys on Ilot Vacoas gave a population estimate of 294 adults (95% CI: 170-509).
- The translocated population on Ile Marianne is doing well although the number of recaptures was too low for obtaining a population estimate.

Orange-tailed skinks

- A total of 48 sightings and 12 captures were made on Gunner's Quoin in November. Some skinks were found within areas outside of their previously recorded range.

Flat Island expedition

- Surveys were done to determine the presence of orange-tailed skinks, Bojer's skinks and lesser night geckos and to monitor for new invasive species incursions. No individuals of these species were found which indicates the high likelihood of total extirpation from Flat Island. On the last day a rat was spotted.
- NPCS organised a trapping trip in July with the assistance of one member of the reptile team. No rats were caught or seen, although traps provided were not effective.

Genetic work

- DNA samples were collected from Bojer's skinks on Ile aux Fouquets and lesser night geckos on Ile Marianne to assess the genetic diversity within these translocated populations and determine if future translocation is required.
- It was found that the keel-scaled boas on Round Island, Gunner's Quoin and in captivity at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust have almost complete genetic equality and that genetic management is not required.
- DNA samples were collected from ten Bojer's skink, ten Telfair's skink and ten orange-tailed skinks. Tissue samples collected from each individual consisted of the tail tip, buccal swab and cloacal swab. These samples were sent to Cardiff University to determine whether the use of swabs is an efficient way to obtain DNA, thus reducing the need for more invasive methods, such as tail tip removal.

Research projects

- Cardiff PhD student Rosemary Moorhouse-Gann continued her field work to investigate the diets of giant tortoises, Telfair's skinks and Pink Pigeons as well as investigating the effects of tortoise herbivory upon native plant diversity, community structure, their role in seed dispersal and suppression of alien plants. This work is ongoing.
- Twelve peer review journal publications have been co-authored and research projects supervised by reptile project staff in 2015.
- Articles were written on Bouton's skinks *Cryptoblepharus boutonii*, green turtles *Chelonia mydas* and lowland forest day geckos *Phelsuma guimbeaui* for the MWF files Osmose publications in l'Express national newspaper.

Tortoises

Ile Aux Aigrettes

Free-roaming tortoises:

- Five adults donated by State House in May (3 males, 2 females). One female sent to Ferney on account of her broken leg - unsuitable for IAA terrain.
- Twenty-five adult free-roaming tortoises on IAA at end of 2015 (13 males, 12 females).
- Faecal samples collected by PhD student R. Moorhouse-Gann to analyse tortoise diet.

Enclosed tortoises:

- Baby tortoises born on the island kept in a nursery and able to be viewed by the public.
- Morphometrics done monthly and body condition scores used as gauge of health.

Round Island

Enclosed tortoises:

- Juveniles translocated to RI by helicopter in March.
- A new larger enclosure was constructed to house the juvenile tortoises and to assist in the management of deworming and quarantine.
- Enclosed tortoises fed and watered daily. Morphometrics done monthly and body condition scores used as gauge of health.

Free-roaming tortoises:

- One Aldabra giant tortoise juvenile found dead of unknown causes.
- Madagascar radiated tortoises successfully breeding, with hatchlings discovered for the first time in June. Two seen in 2015.
- Morphometrics carried out every three months.
- Faecal samples collected by PhD student R. Moorhouse-Gann to analyse tortoise diet.
- A tortoise condition calculator was created to alert staff when individual headstarted tortoises required extra care.

Seabird translocation

Translocations of seabird chicks to Ile aux Aigrettes

- 20 Common Noddys and 45 Sooty terns were translocated from Serpent Island in January.
- 53 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were translocated from Round Island in March.
- 29 Sooty terns and one Lesser Noddy were translocated from Serpent Island in September.
- 12 Red-tailed Tropicbirds were translocated from Round Island in November.
- 22 Red-tailed Tropicbirds and three White-tailed Tropicbirds were translocated from Round Island in December.
- A new spreadsheet data entry form was created to track the health, condition and food intake of the birds and also the process of translocation to successful fledging of each individual.

Decoys

- Seabird decoy silicon moulds (including protective jacket) and castings for Red-tailed Tropicbird, White-tailed Tropicbird and a generalised Tern have been made by Scott Gleeson.
- Plastics for mass producing the decoys need to be sourced within Mauritius.

Seabird call playback

- The sound system for playing seabird calls was affected by corrosion (salt spray) and is being repaired.

Infrastructure

- The Tropicbirds' release site was enhanced with metal fencing.
- To shelter the Sooty Terns and Noddys against the heavy rainfall, six wooden shelters were built at the released area.
- The Wedge-tailed Shearwater enclosure was built in October.

Rescued birds

- Three rescued Tropicbirds were brought to Ile aux Aigrettes in January.

Round Island

Red tail tropic birds

- All the nests in the survey areas were monitored once a month for activity.
- The ring number of the adult birds was noted and new adults and chicks were ringed.
- 435 birds were found during surveys and a total of 229 birds were ringed (29 chicks and 200 adults).

Petrel

- 620 birds (403 adults and 217 juveniles) were found during petrel surveys from April to December. A total of 18 chicks and 32 new adults were ringed.
- Wardens received training on petrels in May and December from Malcom Nicoll on bird's handling, ringing, deployment of geotags, and collecting blood samples.

Keel-scaled boa

- Each of the seven boa quadrats was monitored once a month during night surveys.
- A total of 140 boas (87 adults and 53 juveniles) were found in 2015. Another 83 incidental boa encounters were also recorded.
- The morphometric measurements of the boas were recorded along with the GPS coordinate of their location and other environmental and micro-habitat information.

Günther's gecko

- 17 Günther's gecko sites were selected for monitoring depending on their accessibility in order to increase the accuracy of the egg data recorded. The sites are visited twice a month and new eggs and hatched or failed eggs are recorded to determine hatching success.
- 175 eggs (146 pair and 29 single) has been found so far for the 2015/2016 breeding season. 71 have hatched by December 2015.

Plant Nursery

- Approximately 29,000 seeds of 14 hardwood species were collected on Round Island. Some 385 seeds were collected from mainland sources and another 262 seeds from Ile aux Aigrettes.
- 9466 seeds from 21 species were sown.
- 353 seedlings have germinated by end of December, out of which 133 were potted.
- Plants sent to Round Island: 128 direct transplants from Morne Sec and 454 plants from Ile aux Aigrettes nursery. These plants suffered a high mortality rate due to the stress of bare rooting.
- Searches for shallow soil planting sites were done, several were identified for around 856 plants.
- By the end of November 2015 the Round Island nursery contained 760 plants.
- The irrigation system for the new planting sites was set up in December.
- The wardens were trained on plant and nursery work on Ile aux Aigrettes and on Round Island.

Invasive Weed management

- *Chromola odorata* and *Heteropogon contortus* sites were checked on a monthly basis. Plants found were uprooted and removed from the island.
- *Lycopersicon esculentum* was found on the southeast coast of the island in November. It was removed and sent to the mainland.

Infrastructure

- In August LEAL technicians repaired the photo voltaic system after power issues.
- Three NPCS officers changed the tool shed roof and replaced the field stations back wall protective cover in August.
- New canvas tents were erected to replace conventional tents, that are costly and do not last long.
- New windows are being made for the field station.

Students and Research

- From April to September Durrell's all PG-dip students received training on Round Island work and assisted wardens and tortoise staff.
- Cardiff PhD student, Rosemary Moorhouse-Gann conducted her Round Island field work in February and July.
- Mathieu Malherbe, MSc student, conducted his field work on Round Island in April.
- Zairabee Ahmund and Christabelle Duhamel conducted vegetation and invertebrate surveys from the tortoise exclosures and the control plots in November.

Research

- David W Hedding and Werner Del, from South Africa, visited Round Island in October to collect weather and soil erosion data and upgrade the equipment in place.
- The Mauritius Meteorological Office had made available an automatic weather station for Round Island but due to delays in permission the station was redeployed to a mainland site.

Media

- Photography: Gabby Salazar, American nature photographer.
- Filming: Damien and Alexis Dittberner from Mocean Films.

VIP visits

- Durrell's delegation comprising of Oliver Johnson (CEO), Richard Young (Head of conservation science) and Andrew Terry (Head of conservation programmes) visited Round Island in April along with Nik Cole, Carl Jones, Debby de Chazal, Vikash Tatayah and Mr Puttoo (Director of NPCS), Mr Ragen (NPCS) and Mr Jhumka (Forestry Services).

Ferney

Fauna

- Translocation of Echo Parakeets in February to April 2015.
- Preparation for release of Cuckoo-shrike in January 2016.
- Building of Pink Pigeon release aviaries completed.
- Planning for the translocation of Pink Pigeon in 2016.
- Planning for the translocation of Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher in June/July 2016.

Flora

- Weeding and habitat restoration progressing.
- Propagation of plants and planting in the restored areas.
- Training of restoration labourers.
- Rare plant seaches.

Education

- Enhanced tour 'In touch with the Forest' implemented for visitors and students.
- 'In touch with the Forest' for students followed by 1791 visitors from 38 educational institutions.
- Trail contents were reviewed regularly.
- Practical training sessions were organized for the guides.
- Fact sheets were prepared and circulated to the eco-tour team.
- Signage was worked on to provide information to visitors.
- A trail map was designed for the Visitors' Centre.

Training

- Specialised technical workshops on plant conservation and practical hands-on sessions were run by the MWF Plant Conservation Officer.
- Reinforcement sessions were held on the Mauritius Kestrel feed presentation.
- Guides were informed about the Echo Parakeet translocation.
- Exchange sessions was organized with the MWF Rangers to compare the handling of their respective trails.

Flora

Rare Plants

- Rare Plant propagation ongoing at Pigeon Wood and Ile aux Aigrettes. Supported by the expertise of Missouri Botanical Gardens.
- The description of a new plant species is in process. It will honour of Mr Gabriel d'Argent : *Turraea dargentiana*.
- Thanks to MWF intervention, the enlargement of the road at Henrietta bridge has been done in such a way to save one of the last *Ficus laterifolia*.
- A list of new plant locations continue to be added as field work progresses.

Red Listing of Mauritian Plants

- Red listing of Mauritian plants, with the support of Missouri Botanical Gardens, and the collaboration of NPCS and Forestry continues. Major progress has been achieved.

Mondrain Nature Reserve

- Work on the Management plan for Mondrain has progressed and is nearing completion.
- Medine Sugar Estate once again provided labour for weeding.
- A new species has been described from Mondrain : a bois de pomme, *Syzygium pyneei*.

Other

- MoU under preparation between MWF, Missouri Botanical Gardens and Min of Agro-Industry.
- Project proposal submitted by Conservatoire Botanique National de Brest to CEPF for re-introduction of rare plants in 2016 accepted.
- Work at Ferney Valley ongoing (see Ferney).
- Work on Round Island ongoing (see Round Island).

Future Islet Projects

Flat Island

- We continue to promote our vision when appropriate.
- The future GEF 6 has included conservation work on Flat Island in the proposal which MWF would be involved in.

Vision for St Brandon

- St Brandon is now an official MWF project in order to promote the conservation of the atoll.
- Funding was applied for from the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund to help develop a common vision for the sustainable management of St Brandon.
- MWF was in consultation with Raphael Fishing Co Ltd for collaboration for a field station on St Brandon.
- MWF will be approaching the Outer Islands Development Cooperation for this vision.

Rodrigues

Anse Quitor

- DCP project ended in April.
- 7 of 10 restoration labourers released in March, 3 currently employed.
- Restoration continued.
- Octopus fishers participated in restoration for 2 months.
- Sentier Pasner Eco-tour launched.

Grande Montagne

- GEF-SGP project ended in February.
- 5 restoration labourers still employed.
- Field guide Brochure to the reserve updated and reprinted.
- Restoration continued.
- Octopus fishers participated in restoration for 2 months.

Eco-Tours Grande Montagne

- Executive council permission for MWF to run ecotourism project in GMNR.
- Business Registration Card (Number) obtained for GMR.
- Ecotourism Activities Licence obtained for GMNR.
- Preparations and plans made for running guided tours.

Rodrigues Environmental Education Programme (REEP)

- Environmental Education Programme continued as normal.

Rodrigues Fruit Bat

- Rodrigues Fruit Bats censuses carried out 3 times island-wide, and fortnightly at one site.

Ile Cocos and Ile aux Sables

- Seabird censuses carried out 4 times per year.
- No restoration of plants in 2015.
- Field station on Ile aux Sables pending due to financing.

Other

- Rodrigues staff contributed 16 work-months to the Round Island Project.
- Book: *La Faune et Flore de Rodrigues* published in April.
- Grenade project ended in March, monitoring of site continued through the year.
- Suivi Temporel des Oiseaux Commun (STOC) project initiated.
- Discussions with the RRA continued regarding the Mourouk Botanical Gardens.
- Support from Missouri Botanical Gardens for Rare Plant work.
- Anieta Shan Yu completed the 3-month Desman course in Jersey.
- Two new permanent members of staff on the team.

Education and Awareness

Learning with Nature on Ile aux Aigrettes

- Following a review of our *Learning with Nature* by Dr Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager, Chester Zoo, changes were fully implemented in 2015:
 - The trail was reversed to an anti clockwise direction for added coherence.
 - Content of the tour was shortened and adapted for younger visitors.
 - Content of the tour was adapted to suit the needs of particular groups of student visiting for specific purposes such as presenting an Eco-Tourism project for the Cambridge International Examination in Travel and Tourism.
- A total of 4694 students followed the LWN trail in 2015 from 110 institutions of which 2066 students from 47 institutions were CSR sponsored and received educational and food packs.
- Specialised programmes were organized on request for a number of groups following modules in conservation as part of the National Curriculum.
- Feedback was collected from educators and students and analysed to evaluate ranger performance and learning outcome.
- A reference library was set up.
- The National Curriculum and school textbooks for all subjects were reviewed and resource material was updated.
- Training of Rangers ongoing.

Mauritius Beyond the Dodo

- A travelling Photographic Exhibition on local endemic species mounted by Freelance Conservation Photographer Gabby Salazar and volunteer MWF photographer Jacques de Speville.
- Sponsorship obtained from a grant from the U.S. Embassy.
- Opening at Rogers House on 28th August 2015.
- Exposed at open access venues where entry is free of charge minimum one week to over one month.

Other

- Plant donations extended to schools.
- Special occasions like Earth Day, World Biodiversity Day and World Environment Day were celebrated.
- A *No Litter* campaign was initiated for the Pointe Jerome jetty area.
- A structured tour for Ile de la Passe was worked on and training given to Rangers.
- A structured tour for Mondrain was begun.
- Wide media exposure obtained on the subject of the cull of the Mauritius Fruit Bat.
- The educator worked on the Ferney project (see Ferney).
- Educational Material 'Discovering Dodos' was written and funding sought.

General

Visitors & Collaborators

Mr Andrew Wyatt: heading a team of four scientists from the Missouri Botanical Gardens arrived in Mauritius on 14th January for one month. The team worked with MWF to support our Rare Plant project, gave some training, visited Rodrigues and, independent of MWF, advised Pamplemousses Botanical Gardens.

Mr Oliver Johnson: along with Dr Andrew Terry and Dr Richard Young visited Mauritius from 10th April to the 15th April. The programme included a Council meeting, a courtesy visit to the Minister of Agro Industry, a visit to Round Island, visits to Camp, Ile aux Aigrettes and Ferney and a cocktail at the British High Commission to launch the accredited Post Graduate Diploma course in Endangered Species Management.

Dr Malcolm Nicoll: was in Mauritius from 26th April to 8th May 2015 primarily to place tags on Petrels at a different time of year (it is usually October/November).

Dr John Ewen: Research Fellow, Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London was in Mauritius on holiday with his family but during this time he is advising on the projects. Dr Ewen is working closely with MWF for research on supplemental feeding.

Mr Jonathan Drew: British High Commissioner has shown great interest in MWF's work. He visited Camp on the 23rd June and when he was recently in Rodrigues visited our project at Grande Montagne on 28th August 2015.

Dr Tigga Kingston, Co-Chair Bat Specialist Group, IUCN Species Survival Commission and Mr Luthur Anukur, Director, IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Office were in Mauritius on a fact finding mission in connection with the cull of the Mauritius Fruit Bat. They met with Timothy Taylor, Vikash Tatayah and myself on Monday 9th November. (see Training for the Workshop conducted).

Mr Mike Jordan and Mr Scott Wilson: from the North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo) visited from 13th to 21st November. Their programme included a Council meeting, visits to the Black River Gorges National Park, Ile aux Aigrettes and Ferney.

Dr George Schatz: from the Missouri Botanical Gardens, USA, visited from the 18th November to 28th November 2015 to continue the Rare Plant work.

Dr Malcolm Nicoll and Prof. Ken Norris: from the Institute of Zoology, London, carried out their annual visit to projects they are involved in from 24th November to 12th December 2015.

Training

Endangered species recovery course

This course ran from 1st April with the practical modules ending on 30th September. It is managed by Durrell Conservation Training Ltd with the collaboration of MWF and the Ministry of Agro Industry. An MoU was signed on 13th February 2015 and permissions obtained from TEC for accreditation. Fourteen full time overseas students and two full time Mauritian students were enrolled and in addition staff from MWF attended selected modules. Three staff from Rodrigues attended one module each.

	MWF	PG Dip Students	TOTAL
No of attendees Module 1	3	16	19
No of attendees Module 2	4	16	20
No of attendees Module 3	5	16	21
No of attendees Module 4	3	16	19
No of attendees Module 5	3	16	19
Total no of MWF staff weeks	18		
No of MWF staff benefiting	16		

Table 1: No of students attending each Module of the PgDip.

Bat Conservation and Survey Workshop

Dr Tigga Kingston led this workshop on the 12th and 13th November while in Mauritius on a fact finding visit in connection with the cull of the Mauritius Fruit Bat. The workshop was held in the MWF offices with practical sessions in the field in the late afternoon / evening. Participants came from various organisations: MWF, NPCS, MSAW and FAREI. Topics covered were bat conservation worldwide and in Mauritius, Population growth model, Counting methods, a National count, standard protocol for damage assessment in orchards and mitigation methods.

Presentations and Talks

These are held when we have visitors as part of our staff capacity building and our staff also deliver talks. In 2015 the following were held:

- Dr Nicolas Zuel, Fauna Manager & Miss Issabelle Desire, Conservation Biologist on the seabird translocation trip to Serpent Island
- Mr Andrew Wyatt, Vice-President, Horticulture & Living Collections, Missouri Botanical Garden, US on Work of the Missouri Botanical Garden
- Dr Simon Tollington, DICE, University of Kent, UK on Disease and diet of Echo Parakeets
- Ms Debbie Fogell, MSC student of Kent University working on Pbfd on Echos on "Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease in the Endangered Mauritius parakeet"
- Ms Gabby Salazar, Wildlife Photographer on "Conservation in Focus: How Compelling Imagery can Move Your Message Forward."
- Ms Brittany Sawrey, MSc Student (Conservation Science) at Imperial College, London on "Investigating the Impacts of Training in Mauritius"
- Dr Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director MWF on his visit to the USA (film show and presentation).
- Dr Vikash Tatayah, Conservation Director MWF on "History of anthropogenic change in the Republic of Mauritius"
- Jamie Copsey, Managing Director, Durrell Conservation Training Ltd on "Developing your group training and coaching skills"
- Sharon Taylor, Deputy British High Commissioner on "Understanding fund 'giving'"
- Kelly Barker, Head of Marketing at Durrell (Online talk) "Managing the media"
- Durrell Conservation Training Pg Dip Students presenting their projects:

"Achieving excellence in wildlife conservation: Effectiveness of Passerine recovery on Ile aux Aigrettes and thoughts on future management."

"An investigation into the effectiveness of Asian house shrew musk as a trapping attractant"

"Do Fodies with territories closer to the feeding stations make more nests and fledges more chicks?"

"Education games"

"Exotic plant invasions and butterfly communities"

"Exploratory Research of Motivation in Conservation Volunteers"

"Ficus Seeds and Fruit Bats"

"Geographic Variation in the Blue-tailed Day Gecko (*Phelsuma cepediana*)"

"Identifying suitable sites for Echo Parakeet nestboxes"

"Impacts of predator control on target invasive vertebrates"

"Population monitoring of invasive Giant African Land Snail (*Achatina* spp.) on Ile aux Aigrettes, Mauritius"

"The dietary preferences of the Mauritius fruit bat"

"The Habitat Preferences of Ornate Geckos (*Phelsuma ornata*) on Ile aux Aigrettes, Mauritius"

"Time-activity budgets in captive Southern Ground Hornbills (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*) pre- and post-relocation"

"Understanding willingness to invest in new protective measures and determining if this is influenced by grower size"

"How Do Telfair's Skinks' (*Leiolopisma telfairii*) Body Condition and Distribution Respond to Different Habitat Types on Round Island?"

- Dr Vikash Tatayah Conservation Director MWF and Dr Ryzard Olesky, Post Doc Researcher, Bat Project to present the findings of the studies on bats and discuss MWF's position on the fruit bat culling plan.

Events, Media and Communication

Filming: MWF has collaborated with the project led by Damien Dittberner for a film 'Mystik Mauritius' and has agreed to Mr Lutchmadoo filming on Ile aux Aigrettes to prepare a short documentary to participate in a competition 'Festival Ile Courts'. Part of a film 'Follow the trail of the Dodo' was shot on Ile aux Aigrettes. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training filmed MWF staff on Ile aux Aigrettes for a TV programme for the broadcast of vacancies and information on sectors and occupations.

Publishing Books: "La faune et la flore de Rodrigues" was published in April with funding from the DCP project. We are collaborating on a project to publish 'Discovering Dodo's' with Alain Grihault (author) to donate to Std 5 pupils and give as educational material for Std 5 to Form 2 in the Learning with Nature project.

Facebook: This media is being increasingly used for MWF communication. It was particularly active during the bat cull.

Media: Two press conferences were organized to communicate on the bat cull, one before the cull was announced and one afterwards. Dr Tatayah has been interviewed and asked for information on numerous occasions which has resulted in three radio talks, several radio interviews and many local and international press articles. In Rodrigues staff are regularly interviewed about the work MWF Rodrigues carries out. In Mauritius MWF is regularly featured in newspaper articles.

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

Financial Matters

- The financial results in 2015 are satisfactory. A small surplus was generated with overall income increasing slightly to cover an increase in expenditure.
- The amount raised from CSR funders in 2015 was just over Rs 12m compared to Rs 13.5m in 2014. There were two major funders who reduced their contribution and this was not recovered via other funding. This sector continues to be very competitive and demanding needing regular contact with funders, CSR activities organised and regular reports submitted.
- The amount raised from International Donors overall remained steady. The Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF) was delayed in processing the funding applications submitted in 2014 but then accepted to fund some of the proposals submitted as from July 2016. Our traditional international funders continued to support MWF.
- The Ecotourism activity had a very good year in 2015 and generated an additional Rs2m revenue of which around Rs 1.5m would be contribution to running conservation projects. Tourist figures in Mauritius were up, MWF employed a Marketing officer and increased advertising. It is also possible that MWF is now building up a more public profile with more media cover which also could bring visitors to Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Other sources of revenue are considered and explored if felt to be a potential for fundraising. Consultancies are undertaken if available and suitable. Training has remained at the same level. Partnerships with 'Trails' (Dodo Trail, Rando Raid) were not successful in 2015 and our involvement or approach will be reviewed in 2016. The Adoption project, adapted for the local market with a cost of Rs250 per adoption has not taken off. The strategy will be reviewed for 2016. Product placement, developed during 2014 has proved successful with a number of new companies for 2015 and some interesting prospects for 2016.

19th March 2016

