

TITLE OF PROGRAMME: ROUND ISLAND HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

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



PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Habitat Restoration
Start of Project	1970's
Location	Round Island, Republic of Mauritius
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
Status	Ongoing

OBJECTIVES

- Restore the island's palm, hard-wood and tortoise-grazed vegetation.
- Secure the endangered plants' and animals' future.
- Use the island as a refuge for threatened Mauritian plant and animal species, and as a source of reptiles and seabirds to restore other ecosystems.

ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Control of invasive species: strict quarantine measures to prevent the entry of exotic species, control and eradication of problem species, and weeding in the planted areas.
- Research on soil erosion, habitat restoration and rare species conservation.
- Forest rehabilitation and Carbon Offset: planting and maintaining the forest, planting rare native species and reconstituting the natural environment suitable for native fauna reintroduction.

- Create an ecosystem to support birds, reptiles and invertebrates.
- Monitor the health and survival of threatened reptiles and seabirds.
- Introduce and monitor analogue herbivores (tortoises), for the control of weeds and spreading seeds.
- Train local and international students and volunteers on habitat restoration techniques and conservation of rare and endangered endemic species.
- Media articles, documentaries and public talks on the project.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Native wildlife of Mauritius, Mauritian Biodiversity.
- Decision makers, local and international scientific community including university students, school children and the general public.
- Mauritian population and its future generations, and the world at large.
- Republic of Mauritius, regarding meeting national biodiversity targets (e.g. the National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan 2017-25) and fulfilling obligations towards international biodiversity conventions (e.g. Rio Conventions, Aichi Targets, Millennium Development Goals).



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Round Island, 219 ha, is undeniably Mauritius' most important island for conservation with unique or significantly large remnant populations of endemic plants, reptiles and native seabirds. The island was spared from predators - such as cats and rats - that have caused irreversible damage elsewhere, but goats and rabbits were introduced in the early 19th century that caused severe loss of soil and vegetation. Poaching of seabirds was a common activity on the island. By 1986, rabbits and goats had been eradicated,

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Thank you for considering our appeal.

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and closer management put an end to seabird poaching by 1997. A field station was built in 2002 and it allowed the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to achieve a greater impact on protecting and restoring the island, controlling or eradicating invasive plants and restoring over 15 ha. A permanent staffing of the island has supported reptile rescues through reintroduction to other islands (namely the translocation of the Round Island boa in 2012 and that of the lesser night gecko from Gunner's Quoin to Round Island in 2022), a greater understanding of seabirds (including resolving the identity of the Round Island Petrel), and a host of field studies. The restoration of Round Island has been initiated, but we need to continue to restore the island, conserving its unique plants and animals. This will encompass saving from extinction two endemic plants that are in precipitous decline (*Aerva congesta* and *Phyllanthus revaughanii*), tracking of seabirds to understand where they travel to (thus identifying Marine Important Bird Areas and assessing the impact of global climate change), attracting Masked Boobies from Serpent Island to enhance the number of breeding seabirds on Round Island, monitoring the response of threatened reptiles to restoration activities, curbing soil erosion and planting greater areas of the island with native plants which will benefit the resident endemic animals.



Round Island has been an important training and research ground for local and international restoration practitioners and scientists. Being one of very few islands in the world to have never been invaded by rats or non-native reptiles, combined with ongoing extensive restoration work and pioneering research on highly threatened and unique animals and plants, the global significance of Round Island is increasing as a leading site for conservation and scientific excellence.

REPORTING AND FINANCIALS

PROJECT DATES

The programme is continuous but the level of project activity is assessed yearly to adjust to the project aims and requirements. Annual report & other reports delivery is as per agreed timeframe with main funders.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Human Resources: Manager, Islets Coordinator, Horticulturist, Ornithologist, Herpetologist and Research Scientists, and support from Office staff.
- Infrastructure: Use of an equipped field station, office/store and plant nursery, and mainland staff accommodation.
- Transport: Boat use for island access and vehicle use for mainland support.
- Equipment: Laptops, GPS units, scales, PIT tags, rings for birds, VHF handsets, tools, trimmers, protective gear, medical supplies, carry frames, solar electric system, generators, water tanks, water collection systems, water filtration system, and meteorological equipment.

BUDGET 2024-2025

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	4,162,325
Transport and Travel	2,698,400
Equipment and Materials	423,360
Other Operation Costs	905,875
Total Operational Cost	8,189,960
Administration Cost	400,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	8,589,960

ANY LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION IS MOST WELCOME.

If excess funds are raised, they are carried forward to the next year of the project. A full and detailed project and budget write-up can be given to you on request.

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