

TITLE OF PROGRAMME: THREATENED REPTILES TRANSLOCATION PROJECT

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



PROJECT TECHNICAL SHEET

Project Type	Species Translocation
Start of Project	2006
Location	Black River Gorges National Park, islets (National Park) and islands (Nature Reserves)
Priority Area	Environmental & Sustainable development - Biodiversity
Status	Ongoing

OBJECTIVES

Rebuild and conserve native Mauritian reptile communities by reintroducing native species back to islands where they once occurred.

ACTIVITIES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Scientific research of reptile distribution, survival, population growth, genetics, health and disease and impact upon island ecosystems.
- Rebuild island communities through reintroduction of threatened species.
- Survey Mauritius and offshore islands to monitor, detect and - where possible - remove introduced invasive species that threaten island ecosystems.
- Produce high quality awareness material on the conservation of threatened reptiles, their role in restoring island ecosystems and the threats island biodiversity faces.

- Profile the importance of restoring island communities through sensitisation work and ecotourism/educational activities on the open nature reserve island Ile aux Aigrettes.
- Monitor the southeast islet ecosystems and threatened reptile populations in response to the Wakashio oil spill to identify long-term impacts upon reptile abundance, health and unique genetic diversity to guide appropriate management with captive assurance populations held at Durrell's Jersey Zoo to reduce extinction risks.
- Train Mauritian project staff to enhance skills and legacy.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

- Threatened reptile species, island communities, Mauritian Biodiversity.
- Mauritian population and its future generations, school children, tourists and the world at large.
- Republic of Mauritius, regarding meeting national biodiversity targets (e.g. the National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan 2017-25) and fulfilling obligations towards international biodiversity conventions (e.g. Rio Conventions, Aichi Targets, Millennium Development Goals).



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The small islets around Mauritius support numerous unique species that were once abundant on the main island, but are now found nowhere else in the world. Several species, particularly reptiles, are presently restricted to single island populations where they are at great risk of extinction from the threats that caused their loss elsewhere. Many other endangered Mauritian animals and plants are dependent upon the unique geckos and skinks for their survival, such that their preservation is crucial for sustaining island communities and local biodiversity. Since 2006, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) has been reintroducing threatened reptile species back to other islets. A total of

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2,609 reptiles from seven species were moved to one or more of seven different release sites. Furthermore, 128 individuals of five reptile species have been moved from six islets to establish captive assurance populations at Jersey Zoo or for research at the Jersey and London Zoos to reduce extinction risks. The reptile reintroductions have also contributed to the rebuilding of lost Mauritian ecosystems. Major threats (e.g. introduced predators, habitat loss and habitat degradation) continue to be addressed to lessen the risks of extinction. In 2020, due to the Wakashio oil spill, 30 Bojer's skinks (ten each from Ile de la Passe, Ilot Vacoas and Ile aux Fouquets), 30 lesser night geckos (15 each from Ilot Vacoas and Ile Marianne) and six Bouton's skinks (from Ile de la Passe) were removed rapidly from the islets following the oil spill, due to the potential impact on the populations. They were held in captive facilities on the mainland and then transferred to a captive breeding facility at Durrell's Jersey Zoo, Channel Islands.

These actions are enhancing the distribution and abundance of endangered reptiles. To date, the extent of occurrence and abundance of five threatened Mauritian reptile species have been substantially increased. The Günther's gecko and Keel-scaled boa have been down-listed through the IUCN red-list of threatened species. A sixth species, the orange-tailed skink was translocated from its only known location on Flat Island to Gunner's Quoin and Gabriel Island, prior to its extinction due to invasive species threat. To maintain this success, the MWF needs to continue the high level of research and monitoring done on islands to direct appropriate conservation management decisions, to detect and adapt to emergent threats and to continue to build upon what has been started for the conservation of endangered island communities.



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: Three Conservation Biologists, and support from a Coordinator, Manager and Head Office.
- Infrastructure: Use of two equipped field stations.
- Equipment: Use of a jeep, one laptop, one GPS, PIT tagging and monitoring equipment, tools and equipment for camping on remote islets.
- Other: Consumables, operating costs to support staff on remote islands, communication and disease screening.

BUDGET 2023-2024

Description	Budget (Rs)
Project Staff Cost	2,079,321
Transport and Travel	361,000
Equipment and Materials	395,000
Veterinary Costs	127,000
Other Operation Costs	147,200
Total Operational Cost	3,109,521
Administration Cost	150,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	3,259,521

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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