Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

Annual Report

for 2009 and 2010

Saving Endangered Wildlife From Extinction
I would like to express my gratitude to my predecessor, Félix Maurel, as President of the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation, for the immense contribution to the work of our organization. Félix, who disappeared last year in tragic circumstances whilst in the Seychelles, was a member of the MWF Management Committee for 11 years and President for 4 years. There is a tribute to him later in this report.

The challenge facing MWF regarding conservation remain essentially the same as they were when the Foundation was launched in the 1970s. These include continuing urbanization, and habitat destruction and the proliferation of exotic species – be they trees, reptiles or plants – at the expense of the endemic. A positive development is that there is a greater awareness both on international and local levels of the importance of conservation and the preservation of biodiversity.

Mauritius is developing at a tremendous pace. However, whilst benefitting from this development both Mauritians and visitors to the island also want to appreciate the beauty, biodiversity and nature of Mauritius. MWF’s mission is to work towards the preservation of this natural Mauritius. We continue our work with the various endangered species of birds and reptiles, and the number of individuals in most of these species continues to increase. Our work to protect the endemism of the island is ongoing. MWF is acutely aware that to achieve sustainability, both as regards fauna and flora, requires a major effort concerning our native forests.

The role that the natural world plays in maintaining the balance of nature and the importance of conservation and biodiversity and participating in learning activities in 2010. We received visits from 3,592 pupils and 370 teachers and we hope to increase this number in the coming years.

Unfortunately, conservation is not perceived by most Mauritians to be a national priority. This has been an attitude shared by most of the world, and recently when the subject of climate change and the dramatic impact this could have on all our lives has been highlighted and the staggering cost of artificially replacing destroyed natural services is started to be identified. MWF has traditionally focused on ensuring that the remaining endemic species are not lost to extinction but is now turning towards education as a key element in preserving what is unique and precious to Mauritius.

For our Algopole is a showcase for MWF’s conservation and research work, where members of the public can see at first-hand the work that we are doing. Since we launched our visitor programme in 1998, tens of thousands of Mauritians and tourists have visited the island. In 2009, MWF developed a new programme for schoolchildren, in partnership with Chester Zoo in the United Kingdom, called Learning with Nature. A resource pack for teachers prepares the children for the visit during which they take a walk around the island in small groups led by a MWF ranger. The students discover the native plants, birds and reptiles that have been reintroduced to Ile aux Aigrettes and learn about the importance of conservation and biodiversity and participating in learning activities.

I would like to end my message by thanking all the people and organizations that make MWF’s work possible. These include the National Parks and Conservation Service and Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, our funders both local and overseas, and our many partner organisations including Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and the North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo), our volunteers and staff, especially Dela de Chasal (our Executive Director) and Carl Jones (our Scientific Director).
We have had many successes with the recovery of rare species, including the establishing of the land and reptile communities, and restoring the native plants and forests on Round Island. In our Aigues and Rodrigues. This work provides a solid foundation on which to base MWF’s larger vision to conserve all our native fauna and flora and restore our ecosystems.

Our work on the Aigues is an example of how, over the years, we have started to achieve this. Here, the plight of giant tortoises was once like, before humans arrived, with its beautiful forests, coastal vegetation and giant tortoises. Large islands including St. Pierre’s Dock and Champeaux’s Dock have now been reintroduced and, hopefully, in the near future we will also be able to reintroduce the Aldabra giant tortoise. The Pink Pigeons have an established population here, the Mauritius Fody. More recently, we have established the Mauritius Fody on Round Island and as at May 2011 have a population of 33 individuals. The Pink Pigeon is a conservation priority, and we are developing techniques we are developing a self-sustaining Pink Pigeon population on Round Island.

The Pink Pigeon is a large and charismatic bird found throughout the Mascarene Islands. It is one of the world’s rarest birds with an estimated population of between 1,500 and 2,000 individuals. The species is classified as critically endangered by the IUCN.

Mauritius has become an important training platform for many scientists and conservationists. The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation is a well-respected conservation organisation with a strong reputation for its high-quality science and conservation programs. The Foundation is also a member of the Global Network of Conservation Organisations (GNCO) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Our Mission

To observe threatened species more closely through research, data collection, captive studies and scientific collaboration for direct application to restoration and management work.

To share knowledge gained through restoration programmes with fellow conservationists and other organisations.

To share the data we collect with the scientific community to contribute to the understanding of biodiversity and to improve conservation practices.

To promote awareness of the importance of biodiversity through educational and public outreach activities.

To support efforts to conserve the world’s natural resources, including those found in Mauritius and Rodrigues, by sharing knowledge gained through scientific research and conservation programmes.

Our Focus

To focus on the conservation of the native wildlife of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

To work towards the protection and restoration of the natural habitats of the islands, including upland forests, coastal vegetation and inland freshwater systems.

To support the sustainable use of natural resources, including wildlife, by working closely with local communities.

To develop partnerships with other conservation organisations and governmental agencies, both on Mauritius and Rodrigues and internationally.

To promote the use of science and technology to improve conservation outcomes.

To advocate for international agreements and policies that support conservation efforts.

To support the development of new conservation techniques and approaches.

To promote the use of education and training to encourage the next generation of conservationists.

Our Partners

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation works closely with a number of international and national organizations, including the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), and the Mauritius Department of Conservation and Environmental Management (MDCM).

Our Impact

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation has successfully reintroduced several species to Round Island, including the Pink Pigeon, which has been re-established on the island and is now self-sustaining.

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation has also been involved in the successful conservation of the Aldabra Giant Tortoise, one of the world’s rarest reptiles. The Aldabra Giant Tortoise was once thought to be extinct, but a small population was discovered on the island of Aldabra in 1967.

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation has also been involved in the successful conservation of the Mauritius Fody, a small and endangered bird found on Round Island. The Mauritius Fody was once thought to be extinct, but a small population was discovered on the island in 1978.

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The Need for Conservation in Mauritius and Rodrigues

Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion from 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 rich and most extraordinary terrestrial biodiversity to evolve, giving rise to a high percentage of endemic species. This high endemism and the species diversity per unit area, combined with the threat presented to it by human activity, has resulted in islands along with Rodrigues. The forests and the Seychelles (being classified as Conservation International as part of Indian Ocean biodiversity hotspot).

Mauritius has a particularly diverse flora, with more than 670 native species of flowering plants, at which 315 are endemic. About 200 of the endemic are threatened and some 50 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 18 species down to less than 10 individuals.

When humans first visited the islands they found luxuriant forests. Uninhabited until 1598, Mauritius was occupied in turn by the Dutch, the French and finally the British, before gaining independence in 1968. Rodrigues received its first colonists, who stayed for just two years, in 1691, followed by other French settlers and then the British, remanant part of the Mauritius after independence. Each successive occupying power caused even more to the islands and their native forests and flora. Introduced invasive animals such as rats, cats, mongooses, pigs and monkeys eat the eggs and young of endemic native fauna and flora. Introduced invasive animals such as rats, cats, mongooses, pigs and monkeys eat the eggs and young of endemic native fauna and flora.

Today many of the remaining fauna and flora species are extremely rare on both islands. They are restricted to remnant native forest in remote mountainous areas, the national park, nature reserves and offshore areas. Conservation interventions are essential to save the last forest fragments and to secure the future of threatened species. Not only are these unique forest part of our planet’s biological heritage, but they also play a vital role in our environment by conserving natural water resources and preventing soil erosion. Although some areas have been protected by law, such as the Blue River Gorges National Park, nature reserves and free areas. Although some areas have been protected by law, such as the Blue River Gorges National Park, nature reserves and offshore areas, the populations of these species are still under threat. To save the species, it is essential to remove these limiting factors and to educate the population about the importance of preserving their natural biodiversity.

Mauritius is the world’s only island country in terms of terrestrial biodiversity to evolve, giving rise to a high percentage of endemic species. This high endemism and the species diversity per unit area, combined with the threat presented to it by human activity, has resulted in islands along with Rodrigues. The forests and the Seychelles (being classified as Conservation International as part of Indian Ocean biodiversity hotspot).

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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 natural biodiversity.

Note: Maps below are not to scale.

Mauritius and Rodrigues have a rich history of conservation efforts, with the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) playing a key role in the preservation of the islands’ unique flora and fauna. The foundation has been involved in numerous projects aimed at restoring native forests, monitoring and managing wildlife, and protecting the islands’ biodiversity. Notable conservation initiatives include the establishment of the Round Island Wildlife Sanctuary and the Plaine Lièvre Wildlife Sanctuary on Mauritius, and the Rodrigues Forest Reserve on Rodrigues. These projects have been instrumental in safeguarding the islands’ rich biodiversity and are ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance the islands’ ecological integrity.
The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species gather data on the current status of animal and plant species, 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 Criteria and Categories (version 3.1) to assess a species list of global extinction. The result is The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which gives taxonomic, conservation status details and distribution data evaluated on animal and plant species.

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

Native Species
- Red-tailed Tropicbird (Phaethon rubricauda)
- Pink Pigeon (Ptilinopus roseus)
- Orange-tailed Skink (Egernia marmorata)
- Mauritius Olive White-eye (Zosterops mauritianus)
- Mauritius Kestrel (Falco punctatus)
- Mauritius Fruit Bat (Pteropus rodricensis)
- Mauritius Grey White-eye (Uropsyche fuscata)
- Mauritius Fruit Bat (Pteropus rodricensis)
- Mauritius Kestrel (Falco punctatus)
- Mauritius Fruit Bat (Pteropus rodricensis)

Introduced Species
- Red-whiskered Bulbul (Pycnonotus jocosus)
- Sooty Tern (Sterna fuscata)
- Round Island Petrel (Pterodroma compacta)
- Round Island Boa (Epicrates subcinctus)
- Rodrigues Warbler (Acrocephalus rodericanus)
- Durrell’s Night Gecko (Phelsuma guentheri)
- Common Noddy (Anous stolidus)
- Aldabra Giant Tortoise (Aldabrachelys gigantea)

Projects and Involvements

The Mauritius Kestrel project currently monitors two separate populations in the Black River Gorges National Park in the south-west and the Black River Gorges National Park in the south-east. The trend population reintroduced into the Moka Mountains in the 1970s is thought to have become extinct.

Organizing reintroduction of the Mauritius Kestrel population has enabled us to form an exceptionally complete data set. The first reintroductions in 1974 to 1977 to the present day. Each season the majority of pairs are found breeding in nest boxes directly into the species’ historical distribution. More recently the population has increased as a result of habitat restoration, hunting and, more recently, pesticide re-use. In 1974, only four individuals were known to remain in the wild, and it was feared that this species would become extinct.

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

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

Even though Mauritius is considered to have one of the most endangered biodiversity in the world, it is encouraging to know that the following five endemic species have been saved.

- Mauritius Kestrel: the Pink Portland (Falco punctatus)
- Mauritius Fruit Bat: the Rodrigues Warner (Pteropus rodricensis)

This ranks Mauritius as the leading country in bird species recovery, ahead of the United States of America and New Zealand, each of which has four birds from extinction. In significant improvements have been made in saving the Mauritius Bird, the Mauritius Olive White-eye, the Mauritius Fruit Bat, the Rodrigues Warner and related fruit bats, and numerous species of fruit bats, endemics and introductions.

In addition, the Mauritius Kestrel project has greatly added to our knowledge of the species and the factors that limit its survival.

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Pink Pigeon (Nesoenas mayeri)

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This medium­sized pigeon, with a pink body, brown wings and a

IUCN status: Endangered.

During the past two years, young fledglings harvested from the mainland

had been harvested from Ile aux Aigrettes, hand reared at the Gerald Durrell

Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary and released at the site in the national park. So

The population dwindled to just 8 to 12 known individuals in the 1980s. However, due to the discovery of previously unrecorded

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Passerines of Mauritius and Rodrigues

Today only eight endemic passerine (or song) species remain, two on Rodrigues and six on Mauritius. They are all forest-dwelling birds of which two, the Mauritius Fody and the Madagascar Fody, are subjects of intensive recovery programmes. MWF works in close collaboration with the National Parks and Conversation Service in Mauritius and the Forestry Service in Rodrigues, with funding and support from international organisations and private sources. The other species, described briefly below, are not currently subjects of recovery programmes. However, the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike (Coracina typica) and Rodrigues Warbler (Acrocephalus rodricanus) have been classified as Least Concern. We currently have no need for more information on these species, excluding establishing additional population.

The Mauritius Fody is one of the rarest endemic birds of Mauritius, with just 98–126 wild pairs remaining in upland forest in the gorges of the Bambous Mountains. The establishment of the Ile aux Aigrettes population has been a great success, and although the IUCN status of the species was downgraded in 2009, this does not mean that the Mauritius Fody is safe from extinction. The isolation of the remnant populations, both on Ile aux Aigrettes and the upland areas, makes them vulnerable to catastrophic events, such as a disease or extreme weather conditions. In order to safeguard the species, further our aim is to increase the number of populations and ultimately rewild the species to Rodrigues. Preparations for a translocation of Mauritius Fodies to Round Island have been made, and we are now concentrating on monitoring and management of this population.

Monitoring of the Ile aux Aigrettes population has given us valuable insights into the breeding and foraging ecology of the Mauritius Fody. As numbers of birds or the island have increased, territory size and breeding success rates have declined. The population of 10–12 birds appears to be the carrying capacity of the island. Management of the population is an ongoing process and will be the focus of future research.

The Mauritius Fody is a small, forest-dwelling songbird, which feeds on nectar and insects. It closely resembles the introduced, and much commoner, Madagascar Fody (Foudia 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 a white eye-ring, unlike the Madagascar Fody. They also have a thinner bill, which they use to feed for insectivorous, whereas the Madagascar Fody feeds predominantly on seeds.

R Rohinges had at least 12 endemic bird species of which only two remain: the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler. Rodrigues and Mauritius are the only passerine species that are not threatened. The Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler, two of the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher, the other subspecies that appeared to be Extinct, have now been linked to pesticides, predation by introduced rats, and we would like to re-establish a population in the Bambous Mountains.

Rodrigues Fody and Rodrigues Warbler

Monitoring of the Rodrigues Fody population on Ile aux Aigrettes showed that the population was on the increase with around 225–340 pairs. This species is common all over Mauritius.

A recent study on the Rodrigues Warbler showed that the population was estimated at 260 pairs by 1993, but as this bird’s range is expanding into the low forest areas, the population may be on the increase with around 17 individuals in 1982, increasing to around 8,000 individuals in 2010. This is one of the most successful recoveries in the history of avian conservation. The Rodrigues Warbler is a small passerine that feeds dominantly on seeds. Both male and female Rodrigues Warblers have a white eye-ring, unlike the Madagascar Fody. They also have a thinner bill, which they use to feed for nectarivorous, whereas the Madagascar Fody feeds predominantly on seeds.

The Rodrigues Fody is one of the rarest endemic birds of Mauritius, with just 98–126 wild pairs remaining in upland forest in the gorges in 2020. The loss of suitable habitat has been a major threat to this species, as well as predation. We have successfully established a second subpopulation of Mauritius Fodies on Ile aux Aigrettes, significantly increasing the numbers of this rare bird.

This conservation programme seeks to reduce the risk of extinction of the Mauritius Fody by means of establishing additional subpopulations on offshore islands. The project has been ongoing since 2009 and currently has two subpopulations: one on Rodrigues and one on Ile aux Aigrettes. It is a very ambitious project and we 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.

MWF has carried out regular censuses on the re-
**Mauritius Olive White-eye (oiseau à lunettes)**

This small bird has continued to decrease in numbers, and in 2013 MWF began a project to save the species from extinction. The remaining wild population was closely monitored to find nesting attempts on the island. In the season 2007/2008, the first nesting attempts were found on Ile aux Aigrettes, and from then on we have monitored the birds from this time onwards. From 2009 onwards, egg clutches have been rescued for hand rearing.

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**Fruit Bats**

This is a small songbird that feeds primarily on nectar, but also on insects. It is sexually identified by its white eye-ring, plumage pattern and fine carved bill. It is likely that this bill has adapted over time for improved food retrieval. This is known to be the case for all of the Mauritius bird species.

In 2007, a survey showed that approximately only 15 pairs of this bird would be found, mainly in the Black River Gorges National Park. Husbands had declined continuously over the previous 100 years, largely due to habitat degradation and nest predation by rats. In 2007, the population was estimated to be around 500 individuals. Hence, the species has a large scale to be seen flying at dawn and dusk, using both sight and smell to find its food. These are social bats which usually roost together in large numbers. Over time, over widespread the Mauritius, the population has decreased consider-

Rodrigues Fruit Bat

This species is used to found on Mauritius but is now found only on Rodrigues. It is often known as the Golden Fruit Bat. It is found in most of the island habitat from coastal areas to 100 and 700 individuals but has now recovered to several thousand, largely due to increased forest cover and restoration efforts. These bats are threatened by destruction, one of which severely affected the popula-

**Mauritius Fruit Bat (chauve-souris de Maurice)**

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Darwin Initiative Reptile Translocation Project

Before the first cohort arrived in Mauritius some 400 years ago, if we assume on island of reptiles and birds. The reptiles were introduced in to fill many of the roles that mammals usually occupy: giant tortoises were the grazers and browsers, skinks ate smaller reptiles and birds, reptile snakes that were predators, and smaller birds that dispersed plant seeds and pollinated flowers.

However, the new arrivals brought with them a number of invasive animal and plant species from elsewhere and cut down much of the original Mauritian forests. This disturbance caused many of the roles usually held by mammals (grazers, browsers and seed dispersers). Once humans arrived on the island, the tortoises were harvested as a food source and their young were targeted by introduced species such as rats, cats and mongooses.

In the late 19th century, the majority of Mauritian reptiles are restricted to either Round Island or another one of the numerous islands around Mauritius. Particularly those that had not been invaded by predators, such as rats and mongooses. In 2009, the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) was given a grant of $2.1 million from the Darwin Initiative for the Conservation of Nature (the Darwin Initiative) to protect and restore tropical reptile species in Mauritius.

The establishment of reptile communities within an Mauritian isle. It is hoped that, in addition to the eradication of feral predators and management of introduced competitors, the introduction of a new population will provide additional opportunities for the island’s reptiles to evolve new behaviors to discover more of the roles now occupied by the ecosystem.

Reptile conservation in Mauritius faces many challenges: in terms of continuous introductions of alien predators and competitors, destruction of habitat by feral pigs and other invasive species, illegal hunting and from Round Island to Gunner’s Quoin, are proving to be healthy and are reproducing. The release of skinks to Ile aux Aigrettes in 2010 coincided with the additional arrival of a number of invasive animal and plant species. To enhance the chances of survival, a further 150 Black-sided Turtles have translocated in 2010 to Gunner’s Quoin and 90 individuals were released on Caradon Island (Caledon Island) in 2008.

Future plans include the continued monitoring and management of the introduced and transported populations, the collection of genetic material, the establishment of captive breeding facilities capable of supporting regeneration and restoration, and the development and implementation of plans to facilitate the transport and release of terrestrial reptiles on Flat Island for further research to tackle the shrew problem.

Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Service

The decision to translocate in 2008 was justified, as shrews were detected on Flat Island to Gunner’s Quoin are proving to be healthy and are reproducing. Since 2009, monitoring of reintroduced populations of Telfair’s Skinks (Nactus phelsum) has proceeded well. From the 30 individuals collected from Flat Island in 2006, the populations are monitored and managed where possible to ensure the survival of the species and thus enhance their chances of survival. New populations are monitored and managed where possible to ensure the survival of the species.

The reintroduction of seabirds aims to restore lost habitat, enhance ecosystem interactions such as grazing and seed dispersal, and thus enhance ecosystem interactions. One of the main objectives of the project is to facilitate the transport and release of terrestrial reptiles on Flat Island in early 2010 and have already decimated the island’s reptile populations. To enhance the chances of survival, a further 300 Orange-tailed Skinks were translocated in 2010 to Gunner’s Quoin and 90 individuals were released on Caledon Island (Caledon Island). With the extinction of the tortoises, many ecosystem interactions such as grazing and seed dispersal were lost. Translocation of the Aldabra giant tortoise (Aldabrachelys gigantea) to Round Island. At the end of 2010, a further 60 Aldabra Giant Tortoises were translocated there and 300 Aldabra Giant Tortoises on to Round Island in 2010 continue to increase. In 2009, a total of 125 Aldabra Giant Tortoises were translocated to Round Island to facilitate the transport and release of terrestrial reptiles on Flat Island.

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Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF) Annual Report 2009/10

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A Small Piece of History

The Mascarene Islands have suffered the disappearance of a number of unique species since the arrival of humans over 400 years ago. A project was conceived jointly by MWF and Pangolin Editions in 2008 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of humans in the Mascarene Islands. A project to capture the wildlife and natural history of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Ile aux Aigrettes and the Red Rail Foundation has been developed to capture the Mascarene Wildlife Foundation and is now exhibited in the Mascarene Islands. The project aims to capture the diverse history of the Mascarene Islands, focusing on the wildlife and natural history of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Ile aux Aigrettes and the Red Rail Foundation. The project is a collaboration between the National Parks and Conservation, France, and MWF. This project aims to capture the diversity of species by profiling each species in a painting, sculpture, photograph, or text. This is a collaboration between the National Parks and Conservation, France, and MWF. The project aims to capture the variety of species in the Mascarene Islands, focusing on the wildlife and natural history of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Ile aux Aigrettes and the Red Rail Foundation. The project is a collaboration between the National Parks and Conservation, France, and MWF. The project aims to capture the diversity of species by profiling each species in a painting, sculpture, photograph, or text.

Another exciting project in the Mascarene Islands is the Dodo footprint, which has been cast and now on display in the Mascarene Islands. The original foot is now lost, but fortunately it has been cast and now on display in the Mascarene Islands. The original foot is now lost, but fortunately it has been cast and now on display in the Mascarene Islands.

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In an attempt to save not only species but also the diversity of these species, a project has been initiated in 2006 to capture the wildlife and natural history of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Ile aux Aigrettes and the Red Rail Foundation. The project aims to capture the diversity of species by profiling each species in a painting, sculpture, photograph, or text. This is a collaboration between the National Parks and Conservation, France, and MWF. The project aims to capture the variety of species in the Mascarene Islands, focusing on the wildlife and natural history of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Ile aux Aigrettes and the Red Rail Foundation. The project is a collaboration between the National Parks and Conservation, France, and MWF. The project aims to capture the diversity of species by profiling each species in a painting, sculpture, photograph, or text.
Rodrigues Rare Plants

Until recently, Rodrigues was one of the few islands in the world without any native forest. The island's unique climate and topography, combined with a lack of natural predators, have allowed introduced species to thrive. In recent years, projects have been implemented to restore native vegetation and reintroduce native species to Rodrigues. One such project is the MWF Solitude Nursery, which was erected in 1996 to produce native plants for the island's conservation efforts. The nursery has been successful in propagating several rare Rodriguan species, including Dombeya rodriguesiana, Gouania leguatii, and Badula balfouriana. These species are propagated through cuttings, and the recovery work is not yet complete since the propagation method is modest. In collaboration with the Forestry Service, a larger, improved conservation project for over two decades, although initially this work was...
Habitat and Island Restoration: Rodrigues

Anse Quilot and Grand Montagne Nature Reserves

MWF has worked on the restoration of all four nature reserves in Rodrigue, namely Anse Quilot, Grande Montagne, le Ilet Satelles and le Citronneres, for more than two decades. The reserves have a variety of different habitats. Anse Quilot is on a subterranean limestone plateau and is a relatively dry area. Grande Montagne is considered to be at high altitude (300–500 m) and is relatively wet with many exotic shrub species, which also provide a habitat for the two surviving endemic birds (the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler) and the Rodrigues Fruit Bats.)

Since Rodrigues has lost its intact forests we have been working to restore the areas that still retain remnant populations of endemic plants. Restoration of these areas will make the endangered plant species a private habitat for the two surviving endemic birds, the Rodrigues Fody and the Rodrigues Warbler. It will also increase the population of islands, thus helping to complete the entire ecosystem.

Approximately a third of the 15 ha fenced Anse Quilot Nature Reserve (25.5 ha have been restored) and the 20 ha fenced Grande Montagne Nature Reserve (15.0 ha) have been restored, with progress being made in the 21 ha fenced le Ilet Satelles Nature Reserve (18.9 ha) and the 21 ha fenced le Citronneres Nature Reserve (17.5 ha).

With the intense restoration efforts over the past few years, nearly the entire area of the Anse Quilot Nature Reserve (25.5 ha) have been restored, with progress being made in the 21 ha fenced le Ilet Satelles Nature Reserve (18.9 ha) and the 21 ha fenced le Citronneres Nature Reserve (17.5 ha).

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During the last year, ongoing weeding of invasive species and regular monitoring of seedlings continued to be planted in the restored areas to increase diversity. Since 2006, the Anse Quilot Nature Reserve has received over 63,000 endemics seedlings. Similarly, 3 ha have been restored at Anse Quilot and 6 ha at Grande Montagne Nature Reserve with over 43,000 endemic seedlings.

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In 2010, 534 working days were carried out in addition to the 21.3 ha implemented in 2009. Weeding 13.9 ha of land was completed, 11.2 ha were weeded and 1.5 ha were untreated. Unlike earlier weeding exercises where the weeded biomass was used for composting, several plants such as Mesona caerulea and Paua leucophloe were successfully conserved there.

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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 hence important coastal vegetation communities and seabird populations 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. Seabirds native to these islands include the Common Noddy, Fairy Tern, Gygis alba, and Sooty Tern, Pterodroma without. 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 hence important coastal vegetation communities and seabird populations 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. Seabirds native to these islands include the Common Noddy, Fairy Tern, Gygis alba, and Sooty Tern, Pterodroma without.

Mauritius Wildlife Foundation has had a long-term involvement with these islands, although the relationship has only been formalized since 2004. Our work here aims to extend the captive flocks of the races, both of which are under threat of extinction. The project involves introducing numbers of Rodrigues to Ile Cocos, which is an intensive and intensive education measure. For this project, MWF is working in collaboration with the Forestry Services and Discovery Rodrigues.

The Forestry project involves habitat restoration, weeding and the planting of endemic seedlings. The key way this work is compartmentalised into bird monitoring and the restoration of the vegetative community. The four monitoring surveys are now run out jointly on the forestry and National Parks Conservation Service. Originally, the project was concerned with the captive breeding and hand rearing of the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye. The breeding cycle of the species, and their population patterns.

An integral part of the programme is the rehabilitation of the general public, through the provision of field guides and educational awareness. The Guide de la Faune et la Flore de l’Ile Cocos was launched in February 2009 and a complementary copy was given to the stakeholders as well as to every secondary school. We are also involved in helping with the propagation of over 35,000 plants of 19 different species. These include vallé (Valonia hirsutula), maitre de jardin (Lavandula angustifolia), and lycium lancea. Volunteers from youth and community groups, secondary schools, the Scouts and Ile aux Aigrettes keepers have been involved in this process, a long walk, without disturbing the fauna or damaging the flora.

Rodrigues staff have in several years been involved in an extensive research monitoring programme and four monitoring surveys are now run out jointly on the four native species involved. The Forestry and National Parks Conservation Service. Originally, the project was concerned with the captive breeding and hand rearing of the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye. The breeding cycle of the species, and their population patterns.

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With the increasing public awareness of the conservation work on ile aux Sables some of the islands, including sharing, have already solicited. It is hoped that the ile aux Sables will continue in the near future.

Future plans for ile Cocos and ile aux Sables include continued quieter seabird monitoring and the introduction of the Project’s community, including weeding and the planting of endemic seedlings.
HRH Princess Anne visited the Ile aux Aigrettes nature reserve on 4 December 2010. During her visit to the island she encountered Aldabra Giant Tortoises and endemic birds as well as meeting with MWF biologists, staff and some of our key supporters. The Princess Royal first visited the island in 1998 as patron of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (now MWF) and wanted to come back to pay tribute to the recent developments in conservation work undertaken by the organization. Furthermore, this visit coincided with the end of celebrations for the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

Prominent Visitors to Ile aux Aigrettes

Dr Woodrow Clark II, co-recipient with Al Gore of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.
21 August 2010

John Cleese, British writer, actor and funder of the seabird translocation and tortoise analogue project through the charity Conservation Works.
11 November 2010

Yann-Arthus Bertrand, French photographer, journalist and environmentalist.
10 April 2010

Mr and Mrs Le Sueur of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands. Mr Le Sueur is Chief Minister of Jersey.
31 July 2010

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is committed to education and promoting awareness as vital components of the conservation of biodiversity. In Rodrigues, we have a well-established and successful education programme working closely with schools and local communities. As yet Rodrigues does not have a full-time educator role, but there are plans to extend education and awareness-raising activities in the near future. Most of our conservation work is not accessible to the public, with the exception of Ile aux Aigrettes which acts as the formalised centre for education and awareness-raising activities in Mauritius (see page 27). Since the visitor programme to Ile aux Aigrettes began, increasing numbers of Mauritians and tourists have visited the island as a feature that has developed to keep pace with the expansion of our conservation projects. In 2009, the ‘Learning with Nature’ programme was launched, which is specifically targeted at Form 2 students, but is open to other ages and visitors to the island. In addition, we work with schools and other institutions on request to talk about environmental and conservation issues and are now collaborating with education authorities in Mauritius to make conservation information and resources available to science teachers. Most of our education and awareness activities in Mauritius are now sponsored under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The new legislation was introduced in 2009 and requires businesses in Mauritius to donate 2% of their pre-tax profit to approved projects that contribute to the social and environmental development of the country. Since the introduction of CSR, a number of local companies have supported MWF’s projects under the scheme and numerous activities have been organized in this context. Although CSR is still very new, it is likely to have an important role in the financing of our projects, the participation of the personnel of the involved organization is just as important. Specifically, we have worked with local businesses including in Mauritius to support the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation’s conservation work.

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Education and Awareness

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**Rare Pride Campaign**

This three-year awareness campaign ended an International Environment Day in June 2010. The campaign centered on endemic species – the Lesser Night Gecko, Ilot Vacoas form of Bojer’s Skink, Telfair’s Skink and Guenther’s Gecko. The final event saw the launch of educational material such as a colouring book, a song and a film, all specifically created for this community-based activities.

The campaign focused on the local boat skippers who take visitors to the islands, and involved educating and motivating them so that they become ambassadors for the local wildlife. Raising awareness in the local community was another key component, using different techniques including posters, stickers, brochures, transparent tables, children’s drawing competitions, special awareness days, sports activities, puppet shows, and many other community-based activities.

The threat of extinction facing many species of plants and animals is highlighted by the presence along the length of four kilometre tracts of land of rare species which were once abundant on either Mauritius or Rodrigues. The campaign centred on endemic species – the Lesser Night Gecko, Telfair’s Skink and Guenther’s Gecko. The final event saw the launch of educational material such as a colouring book, a song and a film, all specifically created for this community-based activities.

The campaign’s main aim was to establish grassroots support for conservationists to use social marketing tactics to increase awareness, influence attitudes and enable positive change. The campaign focused on the local boat skippers who take visitors to the islands, and involved educating and motivating them so that they become ambassadors for the local wildlife. Raising awareness in the local community was another key component, using different techniques including posters, stickers, brochures, transparent tables, children’s drawing competitions, special awareness days, sports activities, puppet shows, and many other community-based activities.

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**Ile aux Aligetiers EcoCamps**

Since 1995, MWF has managed this site as a restoration project, containing rare plants and reintroducing the native fauna to recreate pristine Mauritius. Ten years later we adopted an objective to promote educational projects. The campaign centred on endemic species – the Lesser Night Gecko, Telfair’s Skink and Guenther’s Gecko. The final event saw the launch of educational material such as a colouring book, a song and a film, all specifically created for this community-based activities.

The campaign focused on the local boat skippers who take visitors to the islands, and involved educating and motivating them so that they become ambassadors for the local wildlife. Raising awareness in the local community was another key component, using different techniques including posters, stickers, brochures, transparent tables, children’s drawing competitions, special awareness days, sports activities, puppet shows, and many other community-based activities.

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During 2009 and 2010, 561 and 690 students, respectively, visited either Grande Montagne or Anse Quitor to experience the restored habitat of these species. Evergreen garrises have been created in old-primary and secondary schools as part of the MWF Schools Programme. Schools were further involved with organized visits by local field teachers to see our conservation work in action.

In the water community, MWF’s environmental educator organizes school visits, talks, delegations of plant groups, workshops, articles and radio talks. Events to celebrate specific days related to conservation issues are also organized, such as Forest Day and also mark the fifteenth anniversary of MWF in Rodrigues. The educator gives classroom talks in all 14 primary schools on the island and cover the nursery, nature reserves, water sources and treatment plants. Field outings are an important component, which allow the children to see how the Pink Pigeon and Round Island Petrel databases.

2010, REEP classroom talks reached 1,314 and 513 students, respectively. The information on the databases has already been used to compile the Mauritian Pink Pigeon and Round Island Petrel databases. Centralizing and managing the data to make it more comprehensive and accessible are aims that we aim to develop in the future. The event provided the ideal forum for the MWF publications A Guide to the Plants of Rodrigues, Guide de la Faune de l’Île de Rodrigues, and also a poster exhibiting monitoring of species in action.

Scientific Research

Locally we work in conjunction with the University of Mauritius, providing field-based support to fishery biomass and other research projects. The aims of the six-day course were to enhance understanding of conservation-related subjects. In addition, Mauritian and Rodriguan staff attend courses and workshops where they contribute to discussions and benefit from the training and exposure.

Over the past few years, we have managed workshops and training courses for the benefit of our staff and partner organizations. In November 2010, in cooperation with a number of local and international bodies, MWF held an invasive Species Management course, attended by 25 participants from government, non-government and private organizations. The aims of the six-day course were to enhance understanding of the impact of exotic plants and animals (the diseases they often bring with them) on human livelihoods but in particular on native wildlife once they become established and begin to spread. The course developed strategic planning skills for invasive species management as well as practical field skills for the control or eradication of problematic species in the wild. The event provided the ideal forum to establish partnerships between the different organizations involved in the area, working towards achieving the aims of the recently developed National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (NASSAP).

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**Data Management**

Through its individual recovery and restoration projects, MWF is in the process of developing databases on rare species and on conservation techniques, which could help in future projects and in long-term management of species. Efforts are continuous to update the Rodrigues Kestrel database and the Pink Pigeon database. The database for the Rodrigues Kestrel has been improved and is jointly managed by MWF and the Centre for Agri-Environmental Research (CARE) at the University of Rodrigues. CARE is also assisting us with the improvement of the Pink Pigeon and Round Island Petrel databases.

MWF is also maintaining existing databases on rare plants and reptiles. The data are already used by a number of research students to make it more comprehensive and accessible. Field outings are an important component, which allow the children to see how the Pink Pigeon and Round Island Petrel databases. Centralizing and managing the data to make it more comprehensive and accessible are aims that we aim to develop in the future. The event provided the ideal forum for the MWF publications A Guide to the Plants of Rodrigues, Guide de la Faune de l’Île de Rodrigues, and also a poster exhibiting monitoring of species in action.
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 Eagle, Alan Green, and Newport Rivers; the Nature Reserves Board, which controls the Black Eagle, Alan Green, and Newport Rivers; and the Wildlife and National Parks Advisory Council, which manages the Black Eagle, Alan Green, and Newport Rivers.

We are also working with, and providing advice to, a range of national (and some international) conservation and development organizations and projects.

* The Ninth National Parks Strategy and Management Plan, which sets out an overall conservation strategy in the management of islands in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
* The Sixth of the Fifth National Report on private enterprises with a aim to ensure that environmental and conservation standards are met.
* The project of the Millennium 2,000-2,010 to MWF for the conservation of the Stuttgart's, which is a United Nations Development Programme and Government of Mauritius project in cooperation with MWF, aiming to overcome the social and private funds with conservation values, so that biodiversity can be better protected.
* The Atlantic Alien Species Strategy, which is an initiative towards the Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (NIASSAP) to overcome the risk of alien species introduction, manage the effects of established/establishing alien species and propagate awareness of the risk of alien species introduction. It is therefore a strategy that has been complied with the action plan in adjoining the project of the Fifth National Report on private enterprises and the Government of Mauritius project on Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
* The Mauritius Environmental Outcomes Report, including chapters on island biodiversity, offshore areas, and Agriculture and Ecosystems.
* The Second National Communication on Climate Change, working to ensure that Mauritius has the capacity to adapt and measure the potential impacts of climate change, as well as those impacts that adaptive strategies can be developed.
* The integrated processes and approaches to facilitate national reporting to the Fifth National Report on biodiversity, climate change and desertification.
* The Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP) aiming to integrate climate change adaptation policies into national development plans and policy in all the regions in Mauritius and Rodrigues and to define goals.

Habitat Restoration Projects

We continue to be involved in restoration projects in partnership with government and private local partners working to protect native plants on their land. These projects usually progress in phases as follows: initially the baseline study is carried out to establish exactly which a native species is growing there, once a nursery is set up, seeds of native plants may be collected for propagation and animals are trained to identify not native plants, to screen exotic plant species, and in different techniques to control weeds species.

Projects include:

* Vallee de Ferney

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 exotic had been weeded out it was possible to see which native plants remained. The nursery and only require our presence once or twice a month to monitor progress and provide advice.

* Ferney Valley

The Ferney Valley in Ferney started in August 2008 after 326 ha of forest were cut as an open-cast mine. The forest has a special design within the project for four activities, on which MWF worked and restoration work focused on the activities in order to maintain its biodiversity and create a nature reserve. The project of the Fifth National Report on private enterprises and the Government of Mauritius project on Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Mauritius and Rodrigues was conducted and regular monitoring of rare native plants is carried out. 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 faces.

* Bel Ombre, Case Noyale and Chamarel

MWF is working with the Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre on a three-year project for the restoration, conservation and management of their forests and Bel Ombre, Case Noyale and Chamarel. The project is in order to prepare a plan for the management and conservation of the native species and ultimately creating walking trails for ecotourism purposes.

* Conserving the Ebony Forest Reserve, Chamarel

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 exotic had been weeded out it was possible to see which native plants remained. The nursery and only require our presence once or twice a month to monitor progress and provide advice.

* Vallée de l'Est

The 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. 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 faces.
Our Donors
- Zoological Society of Philadelphia
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- Nature Seychelles
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- Nature Parks (with special mention to the National Parks of St. Brandon)
- Nature Seychelles
- North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo)
- Pitié de La Réunion
- Pitié de Madagascar
- Royaume Uni
- Royal Society of Arts and Science
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Management Committee

President
Mr Félix Maurel (to November 2009) Businessman (Insurance) Managing Director (Mauritius)

Mr Tim Taylor Economist Company Chairman and retired Chief Executive (Mauritius)

Vice President
Mr Félix Maurel (to April 2010)

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Mr Georges André-Robert Retired Director (Mauritius)

Mr Feerdaus Bundhun Senior Counsel (Mauritius)

Mr Paul Masterton In-house Lawyer (Mauritius)

Mr Andrew Greenwood Veterinary Surgeon Specialist in Zoo and Endangered Species International Zoo Veterinary Group (UK)

Mr Paul Masterton Chief Executive Officer, Daniel Wein/Conservation Trust (UK)

Management Team

Executive Director
Mr Robert de Chazal (to August 2010)

Mrs Deborah de Chazal (from September 2010)

Conservation Manager
Mr Tim Taylor Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

Funding Manager
Mrs Brigitte Talbot (to August 2010)

Mr David Pollock Director, National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agro Industry (Mauritius)

Finance Manager
Mrs Andrea Rosebery (from July 2010)

Mrs Freida Clowdus Senior Counsel (Mauritius)

Mrs Andrea Waterstone Rodrigues Conservation Manager

Mr Vikash Tatayah Conservation Manager (from September 2010)

Mrs Deborah de Chazal (to August 2010)

Mr଻渫� 圧Luca Bonelli Luca Bonelli

Mr Paul Masterton In-house Lawyer (Mauritius)

Mr Andrew Greenwood Veterinary Surgeon Specialist in Zoo and Endangered Species International Zoo Veterinary Group (UK)

Mr Paul Masterton Chief Executive Officer, Daniel Wein/Conservation Trust (UK)

Mr Paul Masterton (to August 2010)

Mr David Pollock Director, National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agro Industry (Mauritius)

Félix Maurel

Committee Member 1996 to 2010/President 2003 to 2009

It was with great shock that we learnt, on 8 April 2010, of the disappearance of Félix while on Farquhar Island in the Seychelles. Despite extensive searches, no trace of him has been found. Félix was a member of the MWF Management Committee for 14 years, and his loss leaves a large void. His leadership has been appreciated his calm and measured approach to issues facing the organization, his gentlemanly manner and passion for our work.

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**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: 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: 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 fundraising@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: www.mauritian-wildlife.org/donate
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: fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org

**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.)

**To make a donation:**
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**Thank you for your support**