

Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	15/038
Project Title	Restoring island biodiversity: The reintroduction of endemic Mauritian reptile communities
Country(ies)	United Kingdom and Republic of Mauritius
UK Contract Holder Institution	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
UK Partner Institution(s)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and University of Bristol
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and National Parks and Conservation Service
Darwin Grant Value	£181,995
Start/End dates of Project	June 2006 to May 2009
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 June 2006 to 31 Mar 2007. Annual report 1.
Project Leader Name	Dr Carl Jones
Project website	http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org
Author(s), date	Dr N. Cole (UoB/DWCT), Dr C. Jones (DWCT), Mr. R. V. Tatayah (MWF), Mr. V. Bachraz (NPCS), April 2007

1. Project Background

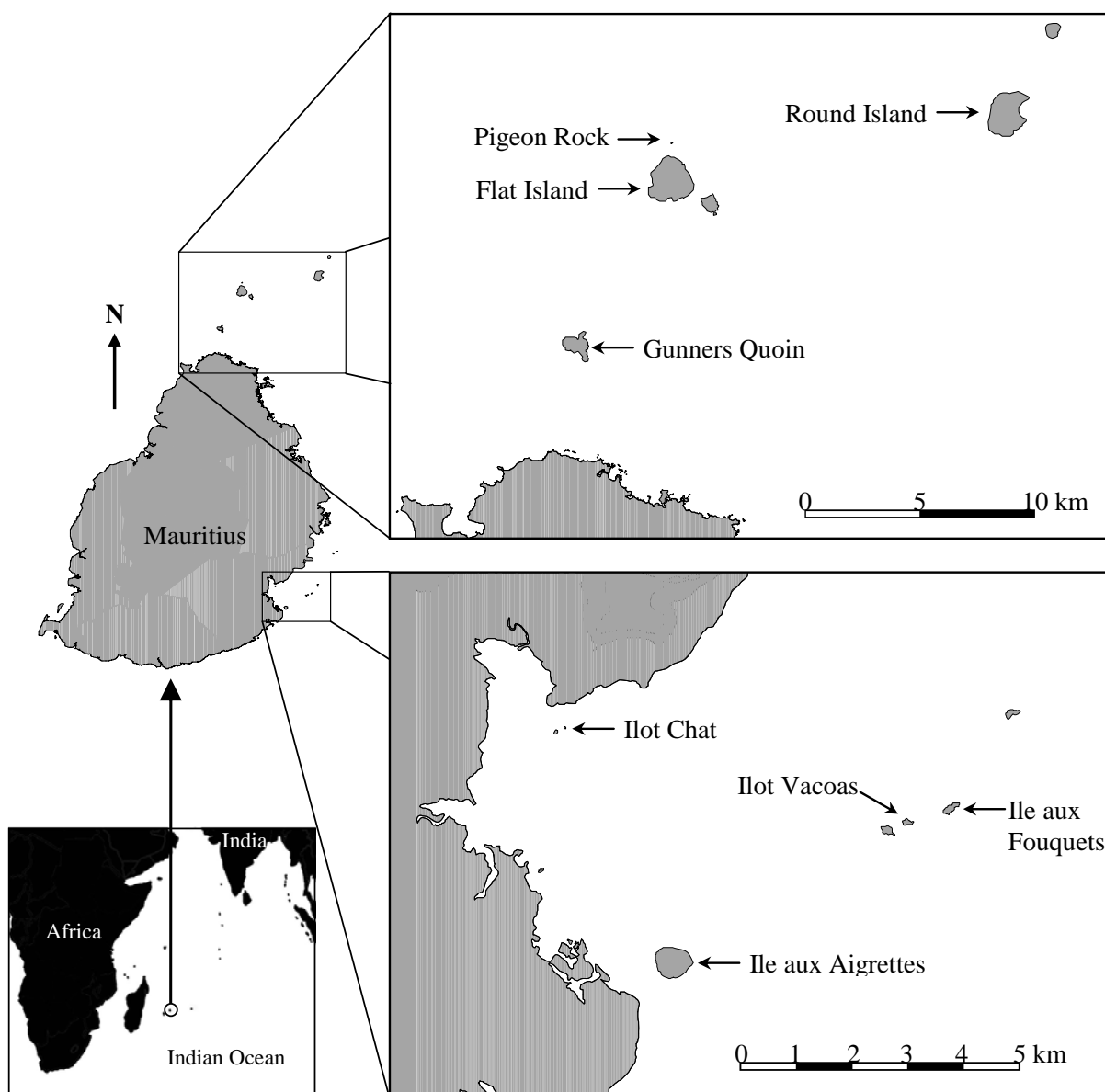
The unique ecosystem of the oceanic island of Mauritius was once underpinned by one of the richest reptile diversities in the world. The reptiles occupied the main functional groups as predators, prey, grazers, seed dispersers and pollinators. Since the 16th Century extensive habitat destruction and the introduction of numerous alien species have severely depleted and fragmented the unique reptilian fauna, such that the important ecological links and food webs integral to native ecosystem stability are impoverished. Many of the reptile species are now restricted to one or a few of the offshore islands and are vulnerable to further disturbances and ultimately extinction.

For the past 30 years the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT), and more recently in conjunction with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) and National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS), has been instrumental in restoring island ecosystems by eradicating predatory and herbivorous mammals responsible for reptile extinctions and habitat destruction. For the restoration process to continue it is a necessity that reptile species are re-established on islands where they used to occur, thereby restoring reptile communities and past ecological relationships. Extensive island surveys and detailed scientific studies have been fundamental to underpinning the re-establishment of reptile communities and four species have been selected for initial trial translocation, based on their current suitability and great need for conservation. All were once widespread throughout Mauritius, but have undergone catastrophic

declines: the Durrell's night gecko *Nactus durrelli* and Telfair's skink *Leiolopisma telfairii* became restricted to Round Island, the south-eastern variant of the Bojer's skink, *Gongylomorphus bojerii* sp. became restricted to Ilot Vacoas, and the Lesser night gecko *Nactus coindemirensis* can now only be found in restricted areas of Flat Island, Gunners Quoin, Ilot Vacoas and Pigeon Rock. Four recipient islands have been chosen based on the past distribution of the species, habitat and food resources, bio-security and lack of introduced competitors and predators. Ilot Chat has been chosen for the release of the Durrell's and Lesser night gecko, Ile aux Fouquets for the release of the Bojer's skink and Gunners Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes for the release of the Telfair's skink.

The rarity and cryptic nature of the island reptiles means that many of the species are largely unknown to Mauritians. Training Mauritian individuals from the MWF and NPCS in herpetological conservation and monitoring techniques is therefore of paramount importance for the future survival of this diverse and biologically important group of animals. Under the supervision of the UK partner, Mauritians will conduct the translocations and monitoring to assess the success and impact upon each island. The re-establishment of healthy reptile populations on the islands will help restore functioning ecosystems, aid in securing the unique endemic Mauritian biodiversity and reduce further risks of extinction within one of the most important biodiversity hotspots.

Map of Mauritius and offshore islands mentioned in text



2. Project Partnerships

For the past two decades the DWCT together with the MWF have held a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries, and more recently with the NPCS, to facilitate co-operation on joint conservation projects such as this. All three partners have been involved at every stage of the project, from its planning to implementation. In-situ training of individuals by Dr N. Cole, UK project manager, has been continuous. The fulltime presence of the UK partner in the host country has allowed the development of a strong and cohesive partnership since the project started.

This project supports the commitment of Government to meet the CBD requirements in several ways. Co-operation between the project partners and associated organisations supports the Government's implementation of Article 5. Training of individuals in the necessary techniques to conduct herpetological research and conservation, ecosystem monitoring, and the implementation of reptile translocations supports the country's National Biodiversity Strategic and Action Plan (2006-2015) in accordance with Articles 6, 7, 8, 9c and 12 of the CBD. Dr N. Cole is a member of the IUCN/SCC Invasive Species Specialist Group and raising awareness about bio-security issues associated with the project that pose a threat to reptile diversity and island ecosystems. The bio-security measures utilised by all partners for island trips and monitoring of resident alien species within this project support the commitment of the country to meet the requirements for Article 8h of the CBD. Nationwide publicity of this project contributes to the country's implementation of public education and awareness of biodiversity issues in accordance with Article 13 of the CBD.

The partnership with the International Zoo Veterinary Group (IZVG) in the UK has proved invaluable. The IZVG veterinarian, Andrew Greenwood, visited Mauritius to train project staff in the collection and analysis of samples for health screening prior to and post reptile translocation.

Regional partnerships with the National Coast Guard and the Police Helicopter Squadron have been a necessity for transport of personnel, equipment and reptiles to and from islands. Their involvement in project related meetings and workshops has increased their awareness of the project and willingness to assist at often short notice.

The cohesive nature of the partnerships generated in this project and the transparency by which the work is conducted by all partners has been a great strength to the project. Having both host organisations working together with the UK partner affords the project the flexibility of an NGO with the jurisdiction of a government agency.

The UK lead institution has worked with both host country organisations on projects over the past 20 years and therefore has the infrastructure and capacity to be an effective project partner within Mauritius.

Other Collaborations: This project is working in collaboration with the existing database systems of MWF, developed under a previous Darwin Initiative project, 'Information system for biodiversity and conservation management in Mauritius (Ref 8064)'. The seasonal sampling of island invertebrate populations for this project has led to the collaboration with Mauritian and UK personnel that were involved in the recent Darwin grant 'Rediscovering the neglected insects of Mauritius - building in-country capacity (Ref 12-005)'.

Links have been established with the M.Sc. course at the Applied Ecology and Conservation Department, University of East Anglia, UK where students have the opportunity to study the translocated skink population on Ile aux Aigrettes. This allows Mauritian project staff to demonstrate and teach the visiting students in the necessary field techniques, thus building confidence in their abilities and capacity to disseminate information to others.

This project is directly linked with the CBD technical focal point. The NPCS, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries, is directly responsible for all issues related to the conservation of terrestrial fauna and flora in Mauritius. The NPCS is the nominated Focal Point for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the CBD and the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit is the national focal point to this convention.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

Activities to translocate reptiles have been completed. Reptile translocations started as planned in October 2006, whereby 30 Durrell's night geckos from Round Island and 30 Lesser night geckos from Ilot Vacoas were collected, health screened and released onto Ilot Chat. At the same time 30 Telfair's skinks were collected from Round Island and held in captivity to obtain baseline data on health and disease, and to test suitability of PIT tagging. Further releases and planned translocations for October/November were delayed owing to the severity of the dry season. It was agreed that this activity should commence once the rainy season started. In December 2006 government representatives and stakeholders were invited to release the 30 Telfair's skinks onto Ile aux Aigrettes in addition to nine skinks held on the island for tourism and education. In January 2007 the first cohort of 20 Bojer's skinks were collected from Ilot Vacoas, screened and released onto Ile aux Fouquets. To allow ample time for the Ilot Vacoas population to recover the removal of further cohorts for translocation will occur in January of each year, not in October as stated in the proposal. In February 2007, 470 Telfair's skinks were collected, screened and tagged; 221 were released onto Ile aux Aigrettes and 250 onto Gunners Quoin. On account of the delayed translocations activities to monitor translocated populations in the dry season 2006 only occurred for Ilot Chat. The monitoring trips for the 2007 rainy season were also delayed by cyclonic conditions, but are now nearing completion. Seasonal monitoring activities will now continue as planned for the duration of the project.

Activities to assess the impact of the translocations are progressing well. Baseline population estimates for terrestrial vertebrates on all recipient islands and dietary data for all donor reptile populations were completed by early October 2006. Activities to collect the first season of post-translocation data have been completed and will continue as planned. Additional activities, such as island habitat classification and seasonal invertebrate sampling have also been implemented. These extra activities will aid in determining the impact assessment of the translocations on island invertebrates and permit the assessment of shifts in diet and habitat selectivity.

Theoretical and practical aspects of field techniques were demonstrated by Dr Cole to members of both organisations at the beginning of the project. Specified trainees and additional personnel from both host organisations received further practical training in the field on Round Island and Ile aux Aigrettes between September and October 2006. Guidance and monitoring of the trainees by the Project Manager has been continuous throughout all island trips and project related work on the mainland over the past ten months. The participation of two trainees on the 12 day Island Species-Led Action (ISLA) course did not occur in September 2006. As stated in section 18 of the proposal, the course would occur in 2007 if delayed in 2006 (see section 4 below). Nevertheless all other training activities have progressed as planned and will continue throughout the project.

Activities to raise awareness about the project and the unique reptile diversity have progressed as planned. Between July and October 2006 meetings, seminars and a workshop were held for all members of host partners, associated stakeholders and the Nature Reserves Board of the Ministry of Ago-Industry and Fisheries to raise awareness and agree upon project planning and implementation. By August 2006, project details were incorporated into the ecotourism and education activities on Ile aux Aigrettes. A notice board has also been erected on the tour route and talks are frequently given by the project staff to visitors on Ile aux Aigrettes. Two poster campaigns have occurred, one in October 2006 and the other in March 2007. In December 2006 government representatives, all partner and non-partner stakeholders and invited press released the first Telfair's skinks on Ile aux Aigrettes. During February and March 2007 leading national newspapers, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation's primetime national TV news and radio channel covered the translocations of the Telfair's skink. Project news and progress have also been dispersed to national and international stakeholders in Mauritian conservation every four months through the MWF newsletter, which is available on the Internet. Articles on the restoration of Ile aux Aigrettes mentioning the project have been published in Air Mauritius' in-flight magazine Islander Issue 47 and by Reuters who are currently dispersing the article to numerous international news groups and popular science magazines. Reuters have also recently filmed project staff monitoring the skinks.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Completion of the key reptile translocations is a major step towards achieving the establishment of Telfair's skinks on Gunners Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes, Bojer's skinks on Ile aux Fouquets and night geckos on Ilot Chat. Further progress towards this goal is evident from recent monitoring expeditions, whereby all translocated populations are healthy in addition to the recruitment of juvenile night geckos into the founder populations on Ilot Chat.

Progress in the collection of seasonal data on resident vertebrate and invertebrate populations on the recipient islands, in addition to food and habitat utilisation by the translocated reptiles continues. These data are crucial in the assessment of any negative or positive impact caused by the translocated reptiles on the recipient islands. An impact assessment cannot be made until at least two years of post-translocation data have been obtained.

The trainees are now proficient in the basic skills of reptile surveys and data collection and can conduct the necessary fieldwork after initial guidance by the UK project manager. To reinforce these skills, including laboratory techniques and sample identification, guidance and training will progress as planned throughout the project. In addition to the planned training activities an experimental design and statistics course will be held for members of both host partners in the next year. The ongoing monitoring and training activities are building the capacity towards setting future protocols for reptile monitoring and translocations by the host partners within Mauritius.

Few Mauritians are aware of the unique reptile species that still survive on a few of the offshore islands, their importance to the biodiversity of the region and the issues that threaten their future survival. The level of publicity generated from this project in the first ten months has contributed greatly in raising a greater awareness within the country. On several occasions on some of the more accessible islands project staff have been approached by fisherman, boatman and picnickers with knowledge of the project.

3.3 Standard Output Measures

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Year 1 (10 months) Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	TOTAL
4C	Number of Mauritian/UK postgraduate students to receive training	1/1				
4D	Number of training weeks for Mauritian/UK students	4/10				
5	The number of Mauritians to receive at least one year of training	4				
6A	The number of Mauritians to receive training on the ISLA course/Experimental & Stats course					
6B	Number of training weeks on ISLA course/Experimental & Stats course					
	Number of Mauritians/International staff and volunteers to receive training from one week to one month in project field techniques	13/5				
8	Number of weeks to be spent by UK project staff on project work in the host country	40				
9	Number of species management/action plans produced for MWF and NPCS					
11B	Number of papers to be submitted to peer reviewed journals					
14A	Number of seminars/workshops given to present or disseminate information or findings on the project	2/1				
14B	Number of seminars/workshops attended to present or disseminate information or findings on the project					

15A	Number of national press releases in host country	3				
16A	Number of newsletters to be produced	2				
	Estimated circulation of each newsletter to international organisations and national stakeholders	300				
	Average monthly Internet hits on MWF website detailing the project and access to newsletter	2000				
	Number of poster campaigns within host country	2				
18A	Number of national TV programmes or features within Mauritius	2				
19A	Number of national radio interviews or features within Mauritius	2				
20	Estimated value of physical assets handed over to host partners					

Table 2 Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
Poster*	Saving the reptiles of Mauritius, Cole, N., 2006	Imprimerie Ste Thérèse, Curipipe	The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Grannum Road, Vacoas, Mauritius email: executive@mauritian-wildlife.org	£105
Poster*	Endemic Mauritian reptiles, Cole, N., 2007	QUAD Printers, Quatre Bornes	The National Parks and Conservation Service, Reduit, Mauritius. email: npcs@mail.gov.mu	£865
Newsletter MWF No.5 (August 2006)	The restoration of island reptiles, Cole, N., 2006	MWF, Vacoas	MWF, Grannum Road, Vacoas, Mauritius http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org/newsletters.php	
Newsletter MWF No.6 (December 2006)	First lizard translocations in the Indian Ocean, Cole, N., 2006	MWF, Vacoas	MWF, Grannum Road, Vacoas, Mauritius http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org/newsletters.php	

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

The main translocations have been completed with initial indications of successful re-establishment within at least one system. Ongoing monitoring continues to facilitate confirmation of sustainability and positive impact upon island ecosystems. Training and involvement of the host partners continues to ensure that the project purpose is achieved and that future monitoring and reptile conservation work continues within Mauritius after Darwin Initiative funding. Purpose level assumptions still hold true, with the exception of unforeseen anthropogenic-related events on Ilot Chat, whereby three exotic predators have been released by unknown visitors. The predators have been removed, but it is too early to tell what impact this may have had upon the founder night gecko populations. Indicators remain adequate in measuring project outcomes, although it has been realised that trainees lack the necessary experimental and statistical knowledge to adequately set up and analyse their own future reptile conservation projects. To address these issues individuals from both host partners will be trained on an experimental design and statistics course held within Mauritius in the next period.

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

It is too early to determine the full positive impact upon biodiversity made through the actions conducted within this project. Nevertheless, the initial translocations and their success to date contribute greatly in securing the future survival of each vulnerable reptile species in one of the world's leading global biodiversity hotspots.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

Monitoring and evaluation of the project to achieve the outputs in line with the project purpose are covered in sections 3.1-3.4. Progress over the first ten months has been a learning process for all as each island has presented its own unique difficulties that we have needed to overcome. Flexibility and initiative is therefore essential particularly when dealing with uncontrollable events, such as the introduction of alien species (see section 6) and severe weather conditions that hinder work and access to and from remote and exposed islands. It has therefore been difficult to adhere to the implementation timetable exactly (see section 3.1). Planning for future adverse conditions is not possible, although the project partners will remain flexible to achieve the activities and outputs. Finding the appropriate individuals to work the long hours in often harsh conditions took slightly longer than expected, which contributed to the delay with the ISLA course. However, as stated in the project proposal ISLA training would occur in 2007, if the 2006 course was delayed.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews - Not Applicable

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Delays mentioned in section 3.1 have forced project staff to be involved with island monitoring activities throughout March and April 2007. These delays have prevented the annual report reaching the host partners by March 2007. It has therefore been agreed that the annual report will be completed by the end of the project year in May 2007.

The risk of alien species being introduced to the islands poses a great threat to the long-term sustainability of the translocated and existing island reptile populations, as seen with recent alien introductions to Ilot Chat. To address this issue the Government have permitted NPCS to organise a workshop directed at the National Coast Guard (NCG) who police the islands. Project staff will be directly involved in the workshop and will assist in informing the NCG of the sensitivity and biological importance of the islands and to train them in relevant bio-security issues.

7. Sustainability

The profile of the project has increased within the country over the first ten months and efforts to promote the work are detailed in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 8. Non project partners within the country, such as the Forestry Service have expressed much interest in being trained in relevant techniques and becoming further involved with the project. Increased support of this kind contributes to building the capacity within the country for further work of this kind and continuation of this project. This project is part of the long-term strategy of MWF and NPCS to restore islands and their biota. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries has granted government support for the restoration of reptile communities to ensure that this project and future protocols have the continued input of both host partners in achieving the impact and legacy. Despite a six fold increase in helicopter costs per hour, Government is still committed to honour its obligations under this project by providing the necessary additional funding.

8. Dissemination

Dissemination activities have included seminars and a workshop directed at non-project staff of host organisations, associated stakeholders and the advisory council to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries. Incorporation of project details into the existing ecotourism and education programs on Ile aux Aigrettes and the placement of an informative notice board (see Annex 3) on the tour route disseminate

information to approximately 50 visitors per day. Project staff frequently give talks about the project to visiting tourists, Mauritian nationals, school and youth groups, corporate organisations, national and international students, and scientists on the island. Two poster campaigns (see Annex 3) have targeted the public and government sectors within Mauritius, these include all secondary schools, the University of Mauritius, visitor's centres at all nature reserves, post offices, National Coast Guard and Police Helicopter Squadron posts, and Ministerial buildings. The general public have also been targeted about the project through two prime-time televised national news broadcasts, interviews with project staff on two popular national radio stations and articles within three leading national newspapers (see Annex 3). The MWF and NPCCS are already facilitating the implementation of communication, education and public awareness. Programmes are under development for promoting biodiversity-related issues through the press, the various media and public relations and communications networks at the local and national level in line with Article 13 of the CBD.

9. .

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for ECTF and the Darwin Secretariat to publish the content of this section

The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius typifies the problems facing biodiversity on a global scale. Extensive habitat destruction and the introduction of alien species have caused numerous extinction events, most notably the dodo. These disturbances have also caused the loss of more than 60% of the endemic Mauritian reptile species from the main island and continue to threaten the last remaining reptile populations on the offshore islands.

Thirty years ago it was recognised that marooned reptiles on Round Island faced extinction and that translocation was a necessity to secure their future survival. Several other reptile species, restricted to one or a few of the small offshore islands, have since been discovered and are also threatened by extinction.

Funding from the Darwin Initiative has enabled Mauritians to build upon years of research and island restoration to conduct the first lizard translocations within the Indian Ocean. The reintroduction of four vulnerable species to islands within their former range is therefore an outstanding achievement for conservation within the Mascarenes. These are the first steps towards the re-establishment of sustainable reptile populations and the restoration of unique island communities within one of the leading biodiversity hotspots.

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006 - March 2007	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: <i>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of biological diversity,</i></p> <p><i>The sustainable use of its components, and</i></p> <p><i>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</i></p>		<p><i>The translocation of four vulnerable reptile species is a major step towards restoring island ecosystems and securing future Mauritian reptile diversity. This initial achievement is of great value for conservation in the Mascarenes within one of the world's leading biodiversity hotspots.</i></p>	<p><i>(do not fill not applicable)</i></p>
<p>Purpose The re-establishment of sustainable reptile communities in Mauritius to secure future reptile populations and restore functional island ecosystems.</p>	<p>Establishment of translocated reptile populations by yr 3. Evidence of benefits to recipient island ecosystems by yr 3. Effective management protocols for long term sustainability of biodiversity by yr 3.</p>	<p>The main translocations have been completed. Ongoing monitoring continues to facilitate confirmation of sustainability and positive impact upon island ecosystems. Continued training, interest and support within the host country are paramount in achieving the project purpose and leaving a lasting legacy.</p>	<p>Seasonal monitoring of island ecosystems and training of Mauritians involved will continue into the next period. Trainees will gain further ecological expertise on planned courses within the next period. Publicity in creating greater awareness of biodiversity issues will continue.</p>
<p>Output 1. The establishment of: Telfair's skinks on Gunners Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes; Bojer's skinks on Ile aux Fouquets; night geckos on Ilot Chat.</p>	<p>Survival and growth of individuals from translocated populations by yr1 and yr2. Evidence for recruitment of juvenile reptiles into the founder population by yr3. Trained individuals capable of conducting surveys alone by yr3.</p>	<p>All translocated populations appear healthy and are surviving. The recruitment of juvenile night geckos into the founder populations of both species on Ilot Chat is already occurring. Such findings demonstrate the appropriateness of these measurable indicators for achieving Output 1.</p>	
<p>Activity 1.1. The translocation of reptiles</p>		<p>The following translocations have been completed: Telfair's skinks to Gunners Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes; the Durrell's night gecko and Lesser night gecko to Ilot Chat; and the 1st cohort of Bojer's skinks to Ile aux Fouquets, release of the 2nd cohort will occur in the next period. These activities represent a major step in achieving Output 1.</p>	
<p>Activity 1.2. Monitoring of reptile populations in donor and translocated populations.</p>		<p>Ongoing monitoring is progressing well. Initial results indicate that populations are fit and healthy and that both night gecko species have successfully reproduced on Ilot</p>	

		Chat. These early findings are extremely encouraging for success in achieving Output 1. This activity will continue throughout the next period.
Output 2. Impact assessment of translocations.	Changes in populations of resident native and non-native vertebrates by yrs2-3. Evidence of seasonal impact upon island ecosystem by yrs2-3.	Baseline monitoring data have been obtained, and progress is being made with obtaining seasonal post translocation data. Monitoring activities are detecting seasonal variation in reptile populations and that translocated Telfair's skinks are dispersing seeds on recipient islands. These observations demonstrate that the indicators are appropriate for detecting changes and potential impact caused by the translocations.
Activity 2.1. Monitoring the impact of translocated populations on native and non-native species.		Pre-translocation and the first set of post translocation monitoring data have been collected. This activity is an ongoing process and will continue throughout the next period. Ongoing seasonal monitoring is essential for assessing the impact of translocated populations against natural variation and seasonal trends within each island ecosystem and is integral to achieving Output 2.
Output 3. Continued monitoring of established populations by host partners.	Individuals from both host partners trained by yr 2 to conduct reptile surveys.	Mauritians continue to be trained in the necessary techniques. Following protocols for each island trip and under initial guidance in the field trainees can now conduct the necessary field surveys. Although the measurable indicator is appropriate for the collection of data it does not address their analyses. It has been realised that the necessary skills for analysing data are lacking and this issue is being addressed.
Activity 3.1. Continual training of individuals from host organisations in the methods used.		Training is ongoing. The project staff have demonstrated and taught colleagues in the necessary techniques so that they can also assist. These activities ensure the host partners will have the skills and confidence in achieving Output 3. Training will continue into the next period. Two individuals will be sent on the ISLA course and an experimental design and statistics course will be held in Mauritius.
Output 4. Lessons learned and protocols disseminated for further reptile translocations.	Future procedures agreed upon with host organisations. Progress and management plan produced and distributed before the end of yr3.	This is an ongoing process and cannot be fully comprehended until near completion of the project. Nevertheless, preliminary discussions on future translocations are underway. Agreement upon a future management plan dependent upon the findings of this project will be an appropriate indicator.
Activity 4.1. See Activities 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1		Ongoing progress on each of the activities, 1.1 to 3.1, is paramount to achieving Output 4 and will continue throughout the next period.
Output 5. Greater awareness of the unique Mauritian biodiversity.	Incorporation of the project within the ecotours and education by yr1. News broadcasts and newspaper articles by yr1-2. Scientific journal papers prepared by yr3.	A significant amount of progress has been made in disseminating information about the project and related biodiversity issues. Awareness is evident from feedback by the general public and demonstrates the appropriateness of the indicator.

Activity 5.1. Publicity	Seminars, meetings and a workshop have been given to raise initial support and awareness of the project. The project has been incorporated into the existing ecotourism and education programmes. Newsletters, posters, newspaper articles and television/radio broadcasts have been released. Publicity over the past ten months has contributed greatly in achieving output 5. Publicity will continue into the next period.
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Annex 2 Project's full current logframe

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Goal:</p> <p>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</p>			
<p>Purpose</p> <p>The re-establishment of sustainable reptile communities in Mauritius to secure future reptile populations and restore functional island ecosystems.</p>	<p>Establishment of translocated reptile populations by yr 3. Evidence of benefits to recipient island ecosystems by yr 3. Effective management protocols for long term sustainability of biodiversity by yr 3.</p>	<p>Field survey reports and publications from all partners. Report of recommendations and working plan for future translocations.</p>	<p>The continued support of both host partners. Government continues to subsidise transport for island trips and stewardship of the islands remains in the hands of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. The establishment of: Telfair's skinks on Gunners Quoin and Ile aux Aigrettes; Bojer's skinks on Ile aux Fouquet; night geckos on Ilot Chat.</p>	<p>Survival and growth of individuals from translocated populations by yr1 and yr2. Evidence for recruitment of juvenile reptiles into the founder population by yr3. Trained individuals capable of conducting surveys alone by yr3.</p>	<p>Report of collated data from seasonal field survey reports on each recipient island.</p>	<p>Unforeseen anthropogenic-related and stochastic events, such as intentional release of mammalian predators, arson or lightening fire; oceanic surges and high-class cyclones do not hinder establishment success.</p>
<p>2. Impact assessment of translocations.</p>	<p>Changes in populations of resident native and non-native vertebrates by yrs2-3. Evidence of seasonal impact upon island ecosystem by yrs2-3.</p>	<p>Report on resident vertebrate population changes. Report on dietary analysis and seasonal shifts.</p>	

3. Continued monitoring of established populations by host partners.	Individuals from both host partners trained by yr 2 to conduct reptile surveys.	Surveys conducted and field reports received.	Trained individuals continue to assess reptile populations and disseminate their knowledge to colleagues.
4. Lessons learned and protocols disseminated for further reptile translocations.	Future procedures agreed upon with host organisations. Progress and management plan produced and distributed before the end of yr3.	Records of meetings, feedback on report of progress and management plan. Copies sent to Darwin Initiative.	N/A
5. Greater awareness of the unique Mauritian biodiversity.	Incorporation of the project within the ecotours and education by yr1. News broadcasts and newspaper articles by yr1-2. Scientific journal papers prepared by yr3.	Copies of posters, pamphlets, articles and publications sent to Darwin Initiative.	Ecotours continue to run on Ile aux Aigrettes and that broadcasts and articles are high profile.
Activities	Activity Milestones		Assumptions
The translocation of reptiles.	Oct 06: Collection, health screening and pit tagging of larger reptiles completed and release onto recipient islands underway.		Continued logistical support from host partners and National Coast Guard.
Monitoring of reptile populations in donor and translocated populations.	Nov 06/07/08; Mar 07/08/09; July 07/08: Seasonal monitoring of all translocated populations, distribution, fitness, health, recruitment, mortality and comparisons of niche utilisation with donor populations.		
Monitoring the impact of translocated populations on native and non-native species.	Sept 06: Baseline population estimates collected on resident terrestrial vertebrates and repeated seasonally: Nov 06/07; Mar 07/08; July 07/08. Seasonal dietary analyses of translocated reptiles to determine the impact on recipient islands.		
Continual training of individuals from host organisations in the methods used.	Protocols of monitoring procedures agreed upon by July 06. Training at Jersey in 2006/2007. All seasonal monitoring trips accompanied by at least one individual from each organisation, such that training may be conducted in the field		Trained individuals are interested, enjoy the work and remain within host organisation.
Publicity.	High publicity release of Telfair's skinks on Ile aux Aigrettes in Oct 06 inviting government representatives. Posters disseminated to schools by the end of yr1 and newspaper articles released at the end of each year.		Public, tourist and government interest is sustained.

Annex 3 onwards – supplementary material (optional)

Newspaper article: Le Mauricien - Article publié le Mardi 20 février 2007. Text available from: <http://lemauricien.com/mauricien/070220/so.HTM#5>

FAUNE ET FLORE En danger d'extinction

Le Scinque de Telfair réintroduit à l'Île-aux-Aigrettes

■ C'est par hélicoptère qu'une dizaine de Scinques de Telfair (*Telfair's Skinks*), en provenance de l'Île Ronde, seront réintroduits demain sur l'Île-aux-Aigrettes, au large de Mahébourg. Décimés par les rats, ces lézards endémiques à Maurice ne se trouvaient plus jusqu'ici qu'à l'Île Ronde, au nord du pays.

La présente réintroduction des Scinques de Telfair est un projet réalisé conjointement par le National Parks and Conservation Service du ministère de l'Agro-industrie et de la Pêche, de la Darwin Initiative de Grande-Bretagne, du Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust et de la

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Ce projet fait partie du grand projet de la réhabilitation de l'Île Ronde de la Banque Mondiale/Global Environment Facility (GEF) qui fait ressortir que l'Île-aux-Aigrettes sera le site pour la réintroduction de la flore et de la faune en danger d'extinction.

« *The Telfair's Skink has been repeatedly identified as a priority species for conservation and the most suitable species for a first translocation attempt* », explique un communiqué de la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. « *Île-aux-Aigrettes is the only island suitable for translocating Telfair's*

Skinks to, that has the year around presence of biologists that would be able to monitor the

population every day, and derive detailed information on how the skinks adjust to the island », poursuit le communiqué.

Cet essai de réintroduction des Scinques de Telfair de l'Île Ronde à l'Île-aux-Aigrettes sera effectué par l'hélicoptère de la police. La cargaison sera attendue demain vers 10h45 sur le terrain de football de Cité-La-Chaux. Et c'est par bateau que par la suite, la cargaison regagnera l'Île-aux-Aigrettes, où les lézards seront relâchés dans

la forêt d'ébène au centre de l'île.

La Darwin Initiative est une agence britannique de financement des projets de conservation qui vise à sauvegarder la biodiversité de monde, en s'appuyant sur l'expertise britannique en la matière, en collaboration avec des partenaires locaux dans des pays riches en biodiversité, mais pauvres en ressources financières.

Fondé en 1963 par l'écrivain britannique de renom Gerald Durrell, le Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust travaille depuis plus de dix ans avec la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation dans des projets de conservation

à Maurice.

Lone Raffray, Fundraising Coordinator de la MWF, profite de ce « *historic conservation event* » pour plaider pour davantage de participation locale dans des projets de conservation. « *Pour assurer la poursuite des projets de la MWF, nous avons l'ambition de constituer 50% de notre budget annuel de Rs 21 millions* », explique-t-elle. « *La sauvegarde de la faune et de la flore risquant l'extinction à Maurice ne peut se faire qu'avec la participation active des secteurs privés et publics et de tous ceux concernés* », rappelle-t-elle.

PATRICK YVON

Column
by Pauline ETIEMME

Stop making fantasies a taboo!

Three women and two men were arrested after the police made a raid at the Ritz Club in Baie-Jombou. The three ladies were arrested because they were dancing almost naked on stage. How many of us were shocked by the news? Let's make a bet... I am sure, no one! The court might rule that striptease is an illegal activity but the fact remains - apologies to those who might find it shocking - that it is healthy for a society to have such activities!

Let us end the hypocrisy about sexual activities in this country and face reality! There is nothing wrong in going to see women dance on a stage. The moral issue appears only if the person who goes to see the show is not single but, then, it becomes a personal issue to deal with. It should not have anything to do with law!

Such clubs work quite well and this may prove that there is a need for such activities. In a country where there is not much night life, where traditions might stifle people's personalities and where sex has always been taboo, striptease might be a safe way of letting out inhibitions. These clubs are especially made for "satisfying" some people and giving there could reduce the risks that they go out in the streets and annoy women and ladies!

And the same logic could be extended to pornographic movies and even brothels. Humans were made with fantasies and needs. Prostitution has existed for centuries and there is no reason that it disappears because human nature will not change. Just as striptease clubs, prostitution is a way of channelling the fantasies and energy of some men, which might otherwise appear in the form of rape or sexual assaults. In France, they have come to an agreement on this issue: prostitution is not prohibited as a private activity but law punishes any public expression. As soon as such activities are done within four walls and of one's own free will, then it is a way of making sure that society is not stuck with taboos and people can express themselves within certain limits. It might reduce risks of paedophilia, rapes and other atrocious crimes.

But let's not dream! There is a long way ahead before any political leader has the courage to come forward with the proposal of legalising prostitution. Mauritius is such a hypocritical society that we prefer to wear blinkers rather than face reality. But we could at least expect a move from the authorities to make striptease clubs legal. After all, every one knows such practices exist and most of these people have already been in such places. So, why continue hiding behind outdated appearances? It would be better controlled if a law were there to clearly state the limits...

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Notice for installation of any engine under the section 40 of the Building Act
 Take notice that we, H.K.A.D. Nandee Co. Ltd will apply to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for a licence to install the following electric motors/engines at Gopal Lane, La Source, Quatre Bornes.
 (1) One Generator of capacity 130 kva 3 phases of 400 volts.
 (2) 2 motors of capacity of 12.57 & 3.69 kw.
 Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the abovesmentioned Council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.
 Date: 20/02/2007

Application to Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for the issue of a Licence under Part II of the Excise Act
 I, Mr Roger Noel Louis, of 22 Street D, Cité Barkly, Beau-Bassin, have applied to the Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for issue of a new licence of Retailer of Liquor and alcoholic products (off) in respect of premises situated at 22 Street D, Cité Barkly, Beau-Bassin.
 Any objection to the issue of the above licence should be made to the Director General, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Ehram Court, c/o Monsieur Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.
 Date: 19/02/2007

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The Management 19.02.2007

ENVIRONMENT
Bringing life to conservation

The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation is proud. More than a hundred pairs of Fody, the endangered "cardinal de Maurice" are now nesting free on Ile-aux-Aigrettes. Today, this NGO releases ten Telfair's skinks there.

HAD we had a time machine, could we assist indifferent to the last days of the Dodo? Yet many endemic species in Mauritius fared the same fate as our national emblem and the present is not so rejoicing. Mauritius has the second most endangered biodiversity in the world. Save the action of non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (MWF), the environmental cause would not have really improved with time.

Yesterday he officially donated a 4 x 4 vehicle to MWF at Pointe-Jérôme, the British high commissioner, His Excellency Anthony Godson, paid tribute to the "enormous professionalism" of that NGO, whose members have nevertheless adopted a low key profile during decades of sound work.

In fact, as Jacques Julien, chief executive officer of the NGO, puts it, 20 years have elapsed since Ile-aux-Aigrettes began to be managed by MWF: "The land was left to itself and was covered with harmful exotic plants, as acacias. Invasive reedling and other aquatic species had to be undertaken."

Now that dozens of field workers and searchers have successfully dedicated themselves to the flora and fauna of this island, it has become almost a showcase, the most favourable site to carry conservation programmes.

Among the last examples of these irremediable chains of our original environment, was the critically endangered Mauritius Fody or Cardinal de Maurice, quite different from our familiar Cardinal, notably by their robin-like feature.



The same fate threatened the Mauritius Olive White-eye. As recalls Ruth Cole, one of the young biology researchers, five years ago, only 93 pairs of Mauritius Fody were left on the mainland, and were threatened of extinction by pests like rats. Meanwhile, an endangered species like the Bengal tiger, though highlighted by the media, "enjoys" a population of 12 000... So, it is even more moving to learn that 53 pairs of Fody were released on Ile-aux-Aigrettes, which by that time had become a predator-free island. "The deliberate re-introduction of the island provided an ideal place to our programme", explains Lone Raffray, fund raising Coordinator of the NGO. The action of voluntary workers had been determining: now the stage of 100 pairs of Fody, reached by December 2006 and celebrated yesterday, has been even surpassed.

The case of the Olive white-eye or *Olivon à lunettes* was as hopeful. An intensive management plan was initiated in 2005 where the remaining wild population was closely monitored in field nesting attempts and safe behavioural observations. "Where possible, nest that were at risk from predation were rescued and the eggs and chicks taken to our hand-rearing facility at the Gerald Durrant Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary, Black River", notes the fund raising Coordinator.

Whatever goodwill and effort all this rescue programmes represented, the workers never lost sight of the real issue: "the survival of the unique and highly endangered Mauritian fauna and flora". Which means not only researchers from abroad and some mad nature lovers were being concerned, but also everyone. And the greatest response came from sponsors and partners who chose to involve themselves actively in this fight for life, from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) to Gamma Civic, without forgetting Sun Resorts and the



help of the National Parks and Conservation Service. "The importance of this event is both local and international. MWF's current corporate supporters and partners back our mission because they are convinced that the citizens of Mauritius and those of the world - their customers, shareholders, employees, and suppliers - are united in their concern about protecting the environment. They know that economic development is only sustainable and durable when the preservation of nature is taken into account and protected from damage and destruction", underlines Lone Raffray.

This is not mere waffle. When one hears Mooghen Veeramootoo, public relations officer from Gamma Civic, one cannot doubt that he really adheres to conservation and has a real concern for the future of our natural patrimony. He makes a real point when he raises the problem of a lack of fund management in Mauritius. Not only the company provided funds for the Olive White-eye project (Rs 100 000), but also energy (logistics) and passion (sensibilisation of the staff and families through guided visits). The environmental concern does also show on the Gamma Civic office site where measures have been taken to prevent pollution and favour green spaces.

It is not Christian Delais, chairman, Sun Resorts, who would disapprove. As member of the Mauritius hotels, and a senior MWF, he understands the true wealth that nature represents for our economy. The support to the Fody project was only one of the

Mauritius has the second most endangered biodiversity in the world. Save the action of NGO such as MWF, the environmental cause would not have really improved with time.

Environmentally yours
Putting citizenship into practice

Result areas:
 Responsible environmental action is at the heart of environmental citizenship.

The following is a guide to the result areas we (as individuals, communities and organizations) should take action to achieve:
 Protecting water resources, forests, grass lands, rivers, beaches and lagoons, oceans, mountains and all their biodiversity; fast development of practical sources of renewable energy to take over as oil and gas run out; keeping toxic substances out of the environment; reducing pollution through (gradual) use of only environmentally clean technologies; Reducing wastage and re-using waste; protecting sensitive areas and access to nature; sustaining the diversity of wildlife and plants; Protecting historical and cultural heritage; stabilising greenhouse gas emissions; phasing out ozone-depleting substances; planned human development, based on sound ecological and ethical principles and education for all;
 improved transportation, housing, shopping; schools, medical, recreational and other facilities for all; allowing only sustainable use of renewable resources; respect for and knowledge of traditional practices, specially when these can make unique contributions to world civilisation; promoting lifestyles which are people-friendly as well as environment-friendly; noting that war, violence, drugs, exploitation and poverty, becoming a global scourge, are unlimited growth and ignorance of natural laws are not part of such lifestyles.

WHAT CAN BE DONE:
 Converting the assessment into uncaring and thoughtless Mauritians into an environmentally responsible individual takes the following three steps:

1. The Mauritius Fody, an endangered species.
 2. Vishal Tahirah and Jacques Julien, conservation manager and CEO of MWF with Anthony Godson, British high commissioner (left to right).
 3. The Darwin's skink has found a new habitat on Ile-aux-Aigrettes.
- Learn about the environment through some of the following available opportunities. This will improve your understanding of the environment. If, at school, the formal education system has, ideally, integrated the environmental component throughout all subjects at all levels - primary, primary, secondary, technical or university. Environmental learning experiences, i.e. learning by doing a new environment-friendly action a day. The media, e.g. TV, radio, press, Parliament, public debate. For example, go and see the excellent film of Al Gore on global warming or any of the numerous environmental documentaries on Discovery Channel. NB: Join a local environmental group. Look up the work and publications of international organizations such as UNEP, UNESCO, WWF, IUCN, Green Peace, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, etc. Check the huge body of publications on the subject at your local library and/or go to a good bookshop and invest in a book such as *Garbi Fabiani's* *Confessions of a medicinal plants or Claude Michel's Fishes of Mauritius*. Discussion and interaction with others in our family, with friends, colleagues at school or work, in action groups, clubs about small, simple environment-friendly actions, which all can take, daily, alone or in groups. For those who have a car or travel by bus, include in your plan for tomorrow the replacement of one short motorized trip by walking or cycling. And feel good about it!
- Michael ATCHBA
 (Co-ordinator, from 1986 to 1996, for the UNESCO-UNEP International Environment Education Programme, with a Ph.D. in Education)

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De l'île Ronde à l'île aux Aigrettes

Réintroduction réussie des Telfair skinks, espèce menacée de disparition



L'hélicoptère de la police embarque les Telfair skinks dans des fûts bleus à l'île Ronde, pour les transporter jusqu'au terrain de foot de Cité la Chaix

L'hélicoptère de la police a transporté, la semaine dernière, des passagers bien particuliers: des lézards. Mais pas n'importe lesquels. Des Telfair skinks, reptiles endémiques qui ont fait l'objet d'un transfert qualifié d'historique de l'île Ronde à l'île aux Aigrettes. La réintroduction réussie d'une espèce menacée d'extinction qui, grâce au travail de la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation et du National Parks and Conservation Services, marque une nouvelle étape dans le capital travail de préservation de notre unique biodiversité. Car outre son caractère unique, le Telfair skink peut aussi aider à la propagation d'espèces très menacées de notre flore endémique.

Judi 22 février. Malgré les conditions climatiques inclementes que l'approche du cyclone Gamede fait prévoir sur la région, l'hélicoptère de la police décolle de l'île Ronde, au nord, porteur d'une cargaison très inhabituelle. À son

bord, des fûts en plastique bleu qui abritent une centaine de gros lézards d'une variété très particulière: les Telfair skinks. Autour d'un court vol, l'hélicoptère se pose au sud de Maurice, sur le terrain de football de Cité la Chaix. Là, la précieuse cargaison est transférée sur

des 4x4, et acheminée par route vers Mahébourg, avant d'être embarquée sur une pirogue. Direction: l'île aux Aigrettes, île gérée par la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation depuis 1986. Là, ces lézards seront relâchés dans la nature.

Plus qu'une simple anecdote, ce transfert effectué sous la supervision du Dr Nik Cole est qualifié, dans les milieux de la conservation, d'historique, vu qu'il s'agit en effet du premier transfert officiel de lézards dans l'océan Indien. Mais encore ? peut-on être tenté de dire.

Une aide pour la flore endémique

L'importance particulière de cette réintroduction réside à la fois dans le caractère particulier de ce petit reptile, et dans la perspective plus large de la capitale préservation d'une biodiversité de plus en plus menacée.



L'équipe ayant procédé, sur l'île Ronde, à la collecte des Telfair skinks. De gauche à droite: Vimal Nundloll du NPSC et Steeves Buckland, Pushpa Seepaul et Rouben Mootocurpen de la MWFF

Le Telfair skink était en effet, à une époque, une espèce que l'on pouvait trouver à travers Maurice et sur plusieurs îlots avoisinants. Mais les rats introduits à Maurice par diverses expéditions navales causèrent la quasi-extinction de cette

espèce unique. Seuls quelques spécimens auraient ainsi réussi à subsister sur l'île Ronde. Aujourd'hui, la décision de transférer une centaine de Telfair skinks sur l'île aux Aigrettes relève d'une volonté d'assurer une meilleure possibilité de

survie à cette espèce. Pas seulement importante de par sa qualité unique mais aussi pour son rôle jugé important de prédateur par rapport à d'autres espèces et pour la dispersion de graines et de plantes endémiques qu'il assure.

Un rapport daté de 1993 établit ainsi que "On Round Island they spread the seeds of many species in their droppings (e.g. *Scaevola taccada*), or carry seeds around while chewing on the juicy pulp (*Pandanus vandermeeschii*). They may also be important pollinators of the palm *Latania loddigesii*. The skinks visit these palms in large numbers during the flowering season and get covered in pollen and move from male to female palms in search for nectar".

L'île aux Aigrettes comme laboratoire

L'île aux Aigrettes poursuit ainsi sa vocation de laboratoire de réintroduction d'espèces menacées de la faune et de la flore endémique, les Telfair skinks étant réintroduits après d'autres initiatives réussies de réintroduction du pigeon des mares en 1994, de l'oiseau connu comme le Mauritian Fody depuis 2003 et des tortues géantes d'Aldabra depuis 2004.

Les Telfair skinks sont déposés sur le terrain à la fois herbeux et rocaillieux de l'île aux Aigrettes, auquel ils vont graduellement s'acclimater



Le Dr Nik Cole tenant un Telfair skink

Un robuste lézard



Gros lézard robuste, le Telfair skink est omnivore: s'il consomme beaucoup de fruits, il est aussi un prédateur reconnu de plus petites espèces de lézards. Adapté à la vie en forêt, la structure de ses pattes en fait un bon grimpeur. Préférant s'abriter de la lumière directe du soleil en se nichant dans les rochers et la végétation, il sort surtout au crépuscule. Il montre des similitudes avec le *Mabuya wrightii* des Seychelles.



L'équipe qui a réintroduit les Telfair skinks à l'île aux Aigrettes. De gauche à droite: le Dr Nik Cole, Martine Goder et Zayd Jhumka (Round Island Warden), Vimal Nundloll (NPSC), Pandoo Seewajee (NPSC), Rouben Mootocurpen (MWFF)

À la recherche du financement

Depuis des années, la Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWFF) œuvre à la préservation de la biodiversité locale grâce à des financements venant d'organismes internationaux comme la Darwin Initiative et le Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Mais un accroissement du financement local est aussi nécessaire aujourd'hui, pour pouvoir espérer continuer à bénéficier du financement international.

"Nous devons arriver à assurer 50% de notre budget localement d'ici l'année 2008", fait ressortir Lone Raffray, Fundraising Coordinator de la MWFF. Ce qui équivaut à quelque Rs 21 millions par an. "Years of effort would be wasted if significant local funding fails. It is now time for Mauritians to take ownership of their country's biodiversity and investing in its conservation. MWFF believes that the survival of the unique and highly endangered Mauritian fauna and flora can only occur with the active participation of the local private and public sector among other stakeholders", insiste Lone Raffray. Une urgence en effet, quand on sait que Maurice est considérée, au niveau mondial, comme le deuxième pays ayant la biodiversité la plus menacée. Mais aussi celui qui voit certains de ses efforts de conservation, comme ceux concernant la corallienne et le pigeon des mares, classés au premier rang international.

Les biologistes qui s'y trouvent toute l'année s'apprêtent, dorénavant, à suivre de près la population de Telfair skinks qui vient d'y être réintroduite. Le programme prévoit en effet un suivi quotidien de cette espèce, afin de recueillir toutes les informations nécessaires sur leur processus d'adaptation. Grâce à des capteurs placés sous leur peau, ils seront en permanence localisables, et un certain nombre sera attrapé à intervalles en vue de recueillir des données précises sur leur poids, leur morphologie, leur régime alimentaire, et leur rôle effectif dans la propagation de graines, entre autres. Ces données seront comparées avec celles recueillies sur l'île Ronde. Tout cela en vue d'aider aux réintroductions qui devraient suivre sur d'autres îlots de la région. "We will use the île aux Aigrettes population as a research population to ask important questions that will help us with its long term management and help us to develop guidelines for translocations to other islands", font ressortir les responsables de ce projet.



De Cité la Chaix, les fûts sont transportés par route puis par mer jusqu'à l'île aux Aigrettes



ENDEMIC MAURITIAN REPTILES FOUND ONLY ON THE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

Keel scaled boa, *Casarea dussumieri*
Round Island
Size = 140cm

Bojer's skink, *Gongylomorphus bojerii*
Flat & Gabriel Island, Gunners Quoin,
Pigeon Rock, Round Island
Size = 11cm

Lesser night gecko, *Nactus coindemirensis*
Flat Island, Gunners Quoin,
Ilot Vacoas, Pigeon Rock
Size = 6cm

Ilot Vacoas skink,
Gongylomorphus bojerii sp
Ilot Vacoas
Size = 12cm

Durrell's night gecko, *Nactus durrelli*
Round Island
Size = 9cm

Orange tail skink,
Gongylomorphus fontenayi erythrurus
Flat Island
Size = 15cm

Serpent Island night gecko,
Nactus serpensinsula
Serpent Island
Size = 18cm

Serpent Island skink,
Gongylomorphus vinsoni
Serpent Island
Size = 14cm

Guenther's day gecko,
Phelsuma guentheri
Round Island
Size = 28cm

Telfair's skink, *Leiopisma telfairii*
Round Island
Size = 30cm

Mauritian reptiles were once abundant throughout the mainland
 Since the 16th Century habitat destruction and the introduction
 of species from outside Mauritius has caused many extinctions
 More than 60% of the reptile species have disappeared from the
 mainland, but some managed to survive on a few offshore islands

These reptiles are not found anywhere else in the world,
 they are unique to Mauritius and are extremely important
 for the biodiversity richness of the Indian Ocean

But many are now found on only one or a few small
 islands and are vulnerable to extinction

To prevent the complete loss of these fascinating animals,
 conservation work is underway to restore some of the
 populations back to islands where they used to occur

Darwin Initiative
www.darwin.gov.uk

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
www.durrellwildlife.org

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation
www.mauritian-wildlife.org

National Parks & Conservation Service
www.gov.mu

Nik Cole 2007

Telfair's skink *Leiolopisma telfairii*



Since the 16th Century human related habitat loss and the impact of introduced predatory mammals throughout the Mascarenes has caused widespread destruction of one of the richest reptile diversities in the World.

Round Island (northern Mauritius) was one of the few locations in the Mascarenes never to be invaded by rats, the cause of many reptile extinctions worldwide. The island therefore maintained much of its reptile community, typical of pristine Mauritius.

By the 19th Century more than half of the reptile species on Round Island that were once widespread throughout Mauritius could no longer be found anywhere else. One of these species was the Telfair's skink, *Leiolopisma telfairii*, the sole surviving member of a group of large endemic lizards that inhabited the Mascarenes. This lizard played an important role within the pristine Mauritian ecosystem as a prey item for larger birds and reptiles, a predator of smaller animals and a pollinator and seed disperser of native plants.

To enhance the future survival of these ecologically important animals the reintroduction of reptile populations back to islands where they used to occur was initiated. In December 2006 the first skinks were released at this location (Ile aux Aigrettes) to establish a new population and start rebuilding the lost reptile community on this island. Conservation work of this kind is currently underway with other endemic reptile species on other islands around Mauritius.

Depuis le XVI siècle, une perte liée aux colonisation humaines ainsi que l'impact de mammifères prédateurs introduits à travers les Mascareignes ont provoqué une très grande destruction d'une des plus riches communautés de reptiles au monde.

L'île Ronde, au nord de Maurice, est l'un d'un des rare lieux des Mascareignes qui ne furent jamais envahis par les rats qui causèrent l'extermination de nombreux reptiles à travers le monde. Par conséquent, cette île conserva beaucoup de ses espèces de reptiles, caractéristique de Maurice des premiers temps.

A partir du XIX siècle, plus de la moitié des espèces de reptiles de l'île Ronde, répandus autrefois à travers Maurice, ne pouvaient plus être retrouvés ailleurs. L'une d'elles était le scinque de Telfair, *Leiolopisma telfairii*, la seule espèce survivante d'un groupe de grand lézards endémiques qui vivaient jadis dans les Mascareignes. Ce lézard joua un rôle important dans l'écosystème mauricien, car il fut la proie d'oiseaux et de reptiles plus grands mais aussi un prédateur de plus petits animaux en même temps qu'il dispersait le pollen et les graines des plantes endémiques.

Afin de favoriser la survie de ces animaux importants sur le plan écologique, la réintroduction des espèces de reptiles a été initiée dans les îles où ils vivaient autrefois. En décembre 2006, les premiers scinques furent libérés à l'île aux Aigrettes pour donner naissance à une nouvelle population et restaurer la communauté disparue des reptiles sur cette île. Ce type de pratique est étendue à d'autres reptiles endémiques qui seront transférés à d'autres îles autour de Maurice.