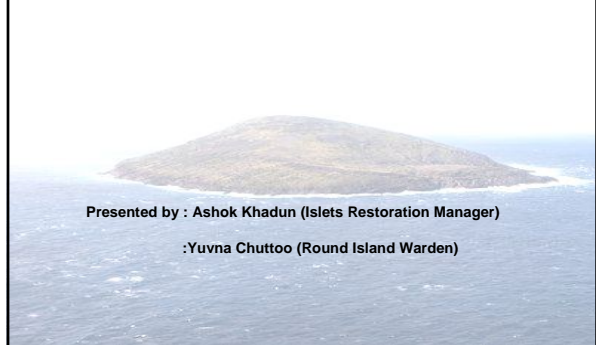


Eradicating invasives on Round Island-a historical perspectives



Round Island

- Round island was designated a Nature Reserve in 1957.
- Has an area of 215 ha and rises to a height of 280 m.
- Had introduced goats and rabbits until 1979 and 1986 respectively.
- Was always rodent free and free from major woody weeds.
- Supports the last remnants of a palm savannah once characteristic of the Northern Plain of Mauritius.
- Provides habitat for at least ten species of threatened native plants including six species endemic to Mauritius.
- Provides habitat for 3 geckos, 3 skinks and 2 primitive boa snakes (one has not been seen since 1975).
- Provides the only known breeding ground for the rare Round Island Petrel and for three other species of sea birds

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Some unique plants

Dictyosperma album
var. conjugatum
(Palmiste de l'île Ronde)

Gagnebina pterocarpa

Fernellia buxifolia

Hyophorbe lagenicaulis

4

THE UNIQUE REPTILES

Guenther's gecko

Telfair's skink

Day gecko

Keel-scaled boa

Night gecko

Keel-scaled boa

THE SEABIRD COLONIES

Paille en queue

Round Island Petrel

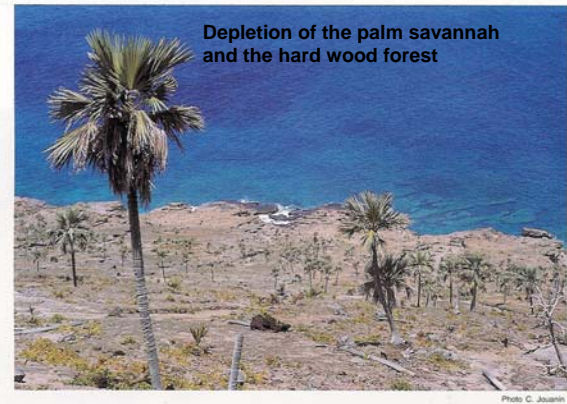
Paille en queue rouge

Fouquet

History of introduced mammals on Round Island:

- Rabbits and goats are the only introduced mammals recorded from Round Island.
- Lloyd (1846) found "swarms of rabbits" introduced before 1810 (Cheke, 1987).
- Goats appeared to have been introduced between 1846 and 1868. Pike (1870) recorded goats in December 1868.
- The effect of browsing by these mammals resulted in dramatic degradation of the vegetation cover.
- The palm savannah was seriously depleted and the hardwood forest lost altogether.
- The endemic land tortoise is likely to have disappeared in the presence of both goats and rabbits.

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- Johnston (1894) drew attention to the damage caused by goats and rabbits (Barkly, 1870) and recommended eradication of both animals,
- Vaughan and Wiehe (1937) and then Vinson (1950, 1964) drew attention to the Scientific and Conservation values of R.I. with Vinson advocating the eradication of goats and rabbits.
- A serious attempt to eradicate goats by shooting was made in 1976 (Bullock, 1977). 883 rabbits were shot and all but 2 goats were shot. The last goat was shot in 1979.
- The Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (JWPT) and International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) pledged assistance from the Government of Mauritius and in March 1984 signed an Accord to jointly implement a wildlife research and conservation programme in Mauritius .
 - Highest priority was given to:
 - Removal of rabbits from R.I.
 - Conservation of critically endangered Echo Parakeet whose population was down to 8 individuals.

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Eradication



- Bullock & North (Aug 1975) estimated rabbit population to be around 650-1500 (Cyclone Gervaise- Feb 1975 may have caused a lot of mortality).
- Only 10 goats were encountered during the 1975 expedition.
- In 1982, rabbit population was estimated at 2450-2900 (Bullock et al, 1982).

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Rabbit eradication

- Rabbits were eradicated between 2nd July – 12th September 1986 using an anticoagulant bait developed by New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Williams et al, 1986) followed by shooting.



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Killers from New Zealand



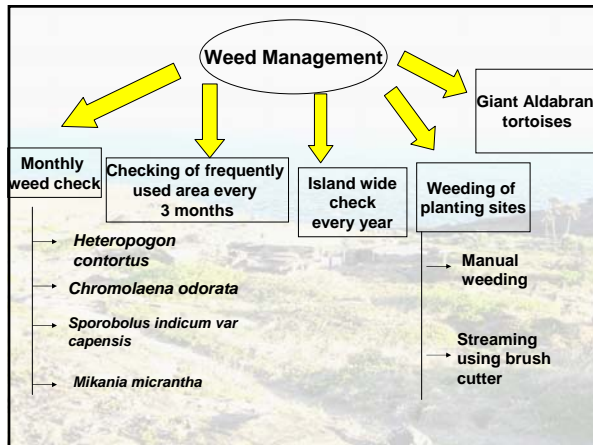
Departure of herbivores and Arrival of weeds

- *Desmanthus virgatus* (L.) was first recorded in 1982.
- In 1984, only 1 patch was found.
- In 1986, all seen plants were pulled out and the areas marked for future weeding attempts (Strahm, 1986).
- In 1987 2 new weeds were recorded.
 - *Cenchrus echinatus* L.
 - *Desmodium incanum* DC.
- Aug 1989, 113 man hours of weeding was done to control *Desmanthus* and *Desmodium*. *Cenchrus* was too abundant for control.
- August 1993- Raleigh International (31 July- 13 Sept 93). *Desmanthus*- 375 m/h (3285 seedlings + 86 with pods) *Desmodium*- 98 m/h (too many to count).
- In 1994 another new weed -*Heteropogon contortus* was recorded

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What are currently being done to eradicate invasive alien species on Round Island?

- Weed Management
- Quarantine



Weeds that are controlled on Round Island



Heteropogon contortus

Chromolaena odorata



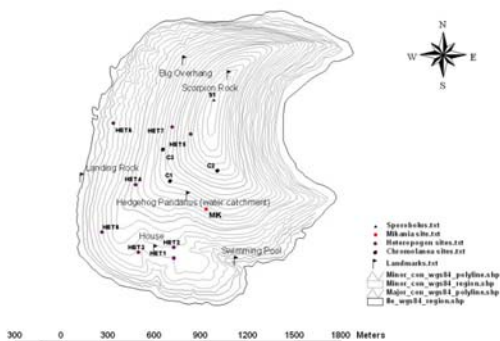
Sporobolus indicum var capensis



Mikania micrantha

16

ROUND ISLAND WEED SITES



Tortoises translocation to Round Island



18

