



Saving the Two Most Threatened Birds of French Polynesia from Extinction

Targeted territory: French Polynesia

Total project budget: 524,131 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 390,000 Euros

Duration: May 2016 – August 2018 (28 months)

Lead organisation:

Association Manu Société
d'Ornithologie de Polynésie

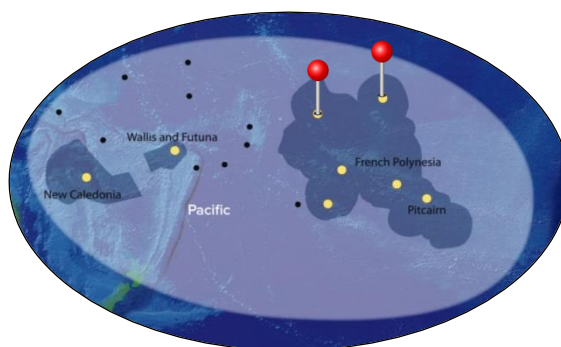


Background:

Twenty-nine species of birds are endemic to French or eastern Polynesia and of these 62% are threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List. French Polynesia has the highest number of globally-threatened bird species of all the EU Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

Invasive alien species (IAS) have been responsible for a significant proportion of the loss of terrestrial biodiversity in French Polynesia; over 37 taxa are extinct and the majority of the current 29 species of land birds have faced significant reductions in their range.

Among the 7 birds classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, two species are among the most endangered birds in the world in terms of numbers: the Tahiti Monarch and the Fatu Hiva Monarch, with only 23 and 5 pairs respectively in 2015. These species are threatened by a number of predators including rats, cats, the little fire ant and birds such as Common Myna, Red vented Bulbuls and the Swamp Harrier.



Urgent action is needed to conserve these two species by addressing the threat posed by IAS before it is too late.

Description of the Project:

Implemented on the islands of Tahiti and Fatu Hiva this project aims to contribute to the safeguarding of the Fatu Hiva Monarch and Tahiti Monarch by controlling the predation threats to these species whilst monitoring their population sizes and breeding success. The habitat, dominated by invasive plants, will also benefit from the project through restoration measures.

Local populations will be informed and involved in the efforts being undertaken to preserve these species to raise their profile and support for their protection.

To help ensure the longer-term conservation of the Tahiti Monarch the feasibility of a translocation project to Rimatara will be assessed along with the potential of other islands in French Polynesia to accommodate a population of Monarchs.

The project will also assess the current conservation strategies for the two species and develop Species Action Plans covering the period 2018-2023.



Intended results:

- Threats to the population of Fatu Hiva Monarch and Tahiti Monarch are more effectively controlled leading to a decreased extinction pressure on the two species.



- The local population and local policymakers are better informed about and more involved in efforts to protect the Fatu Hiva Monarch and Tahiti Monarch.

- The feasibility of a translocation project for the Tahiti Monarch is ascertained.

- Longer-term conservation strategies are established for both species.

CONTACT

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