

Case 13: M A U R I T I U S

Habitat restoration and Eco-tourism activities on Ile aux Aigrettes by the Government (Forestry Service) & the NGO, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

Reported by Cecily CYPARSADE

Affiliation: Forestry Service under the ageis of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security Email: ccyparsade@govmu.org

Ile Aux Aigrettes is an Islet Nature Reserve under the mandate of the Forestry Service of the Ministry of Agro Industry & Food Security. It is located at 850 m from the South East Coast of Mauritius and is managed by Mauritian Wildlife Foundation(MWF) which is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in collaboration with the Forestry Service.

Long ago, the island, as same as the mainland was affected by tree logging of its native species and land clearance. The introduction of exotic flora and fauna species has caused further land degradation. Hence, the island was declared Nature Reserve in 1965 and since then it has been restored through introduction of rare species of both flora and fauna. The Islet has been leased to Mauritian Wildlife Foundation from 1986 to 2006 and now it has been renewed up to 2036 for the restoration works and also to undertake eco-tourism activities. Presently, the MWF is managing the islet as an Eco-Tourism Activity. Funds raised from the visitors are injected for the restoration of the Nature Reserve. Species of Flora include endemic ebony trees, Tatamaka trees and other rare species. Species of fauna include Pink Pigeon, Mauritius Fody, Gecko and Telfair Skink among others. Nowadays, it has been noted that both flora and fauna species' population have increased and they are thriving in perfect harmony.

Implementing Organization	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) Add : Grannum Road, Vacoas, Mauritius WEB URL : http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org
Funding Source	Conservation fund from the Government of Mauritius, from the eco-tourism activities, donations and application to ODA for projects.
Implementing Period	1986 -2006 and lease renewed up to 2036
Project site	Ile aux Aigrettes (Islet Nature Reserve), Mauritius

Key Words: Biodiversity conservation, Species recovery, Habitat Restoration, Sensitization and Awareness, Eco-tourism



Ile aux Aigrettes-Aerial View (© V.Mudhoo)
Islet nature Reserve Habitat restoration and
Eco-tourism Activities

Background of the Project

Ile aux Aigrettes is a small (27 ha) island situated in the Mahebourg Bay, about 850 m off the south-east coast of Mauritius. Unlike the mainland which is of volcanic origin, Ile aux Aigrettes is made up of coralline limestone. It is home to the last remnants of dry coastal forest, once found around most of Mauritius.

Like the mainland, Ile aux Aigrettes was affected by tree logging and land clearance, and the introduction of exotic animal and plant species almost destroyed the native fauna and flora. In 1965 the island was declared a nature reserve and our intense conservation efforts have resulted in the restoration of the forest and reintroduction of rare species that had long since disappeared from the island.

(Source; Mauritian Wildlife Foundation website)

Overall Goal and Objectives of the Project

Objective 1: To save threatened Mauritian species through the restoration of the Islet Nature Reserve.

Objective 2: To promote the native species wilderness and wildlife

Objective 3: To sensitise the importance of native forests and the biodiversity conservation to the visitors and tourists

Major Activities

- ✓ Habitat restoration of endemic and threatened species
- ✓ Biodiversity conservation and Forest Management
- ✓ Eco-tourism activities and ecotour provides a guided trail around the sites of interest on the island, lasting approx. 1.5 to 2 hours, with a short boat trip to and from the island rediscover some of the extinct species of the Mascarene islands in our museum, in the form of impressive life-size bronzes and paintings.
- ✓ Sensitisation and Awareness by Learning with Nature tour for the students. Along the way the students learn about the flora and fauna as well as the conservation process, in line with their science syllabus. Stopping points along the trail enable the students to take part in hands-on activities, exploring themes such as biotic and abiotic factors, habitat, herbivores and carnivores, endemism, food chains, etc.
- ✓ Creation of job to local communities

Direct Outputs from the Project

- ✓ Sustainable Forest Management- The forests are managed sustainably by providing environmental, social and economic benefits
- ✓ Biodiversity Conservation Activities – Protects and conserves the native species and provides ecosystem services. Successful rate of survival of native species
- ✓ Eco-tourism Activities provides funds for the restoration works and also create job opportunities to the local communities
- ✓ Learning by Nature provides sensitization and awareness programme for younger generation to learn the native biodiversity and their importance of protection
- ✓ Enjoy the wilderness of the local wildlife and scenic landscape for wellbeing

Indirect Impact of the Project

- ✓ Biodiversity Conservation
- ✓ Ecosystem Service
- ✓ Recreational and Leisure Activities
- ✓ Sustainable use of Natural resources
- ✓ Creation of jobs and livelihood
- ✓ Participatory approach for the management of natural resources
- ✓ Habitat Restoration

Intervention of Central/Local Government and other stakeholders

The Government has leased the site / Islet Nature Reserve, as it is a State land under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Service to the MWF an NGO for the habitat restoration and ecotourism activities.

Way Forward

The Government is supporting the NGO for implementing the project in a participatory manner and consultations are undertaken with all relevant stakeholders for a good practice in line with all policies and legislative framework.

Reference Documents/Materials

- ✓ Forests and Reserves Act 1983
- ✓ National Forest Policy 2006
- ✓ <http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org>
- ✓ Films on the Ile aux Aigrettes is available in You tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5zhOtJepes>

Resource Persons

Name	Affiliation	email
Mr.Vikash TATAYA	Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF)	---



Students learn about the flora and fauna as the conservation process (© Jacques de Speville): Learning by Nature Programme at Ile aux Aigrettes