Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Rodrigues

Rodrigues Environmental Education Project (REEP)

MWF Rodrigues Education and Ecotourism staff discussing tourism projects with Le Chou College students

Annual Report: January - December 2020

Version 22nd June 2021

Liliana Meunier - Environmental Educator
Reshad Jhangeer-Khan - Rodrigues Manager

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation - Rodrigues Branch.
Forestry Quarters, Solitude, Rodrigues
Tel: +230 8314 558 -- Fax: +230 8314 559
E-mail: mwfrod@mauritian-wildlife.org
Website: http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org
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Rodrigues Environmental Education Programme Annual Report: January – December 2020

This report describes the work done to accomplish REEP goals between January and December 2020.

1.0 Objective 1: School based program

The Environmental Educator will carry out the school based program in both the Government and Roman Catholic Aided primary schools along with the secondary schools in Rodrigues. This will involve meetings with the school Inspectors, Rectors, Head Teachers and teachers. Educational talks will be given in the primary schools to support the curriculum on topics such as endemic plants and animals, rare plants and environmental issues. Furthermore, educational outings are organised for the students to experience conservation work in the Solitude nursery and Nature Reserves (Grande Montagne and Anse Quitor).

1.1 Re-initiate the School Based Program for 2020

In January 2020, a letter was drafted and sent to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and the Roman Catholic Aided (RCA) primary school Manager requesting approval for the MWF REEP Educator and other MWF staff to continue outreach work in all schools throughout Rodrigues.

1.2 Educational talks in Primary and Secondary Schools

Educational talks were given to 317 school children, youth groups and 51 adults on the following dates in 2020 (Table 1, Plate 1):

Table 1. Educational talks in Schools, villages and with youth groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>N° of Students</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/06/20</td>
<td>Grand la Fouche Corail Government School</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>World Environment Day – Celebrating Biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/06/20</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>World Environment Day – Celebrating Biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/06/20</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Roche Bon Dieu Government School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Endemic fauna &amp; Flora of Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>MWF Conservation Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/08/20</td>
<td>All Head Masters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Eco schools Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/20</td>
<td>Port Sud Est Government School</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Endemic Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/20</td>
<td>Port Sud Est Government School</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Endemic Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11/20</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Government School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/11/20</td>
<td>Notre Dame de Lourdes Brulé Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Wedged-Tailed Shearwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/12/20</td>
<td>Roche Bon Dieu Community Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wedged-Tailed Shearwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/12/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Club Mer</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wedged-Tailed Shearwater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total       | 317             | 51              |
Plate 1. Educational talks delivered at Port Sud Est Government School with grade 5 and 6 students

1.3 Educational Visits in Nature Reserves and/or Nursery

Educational visits were given to 1,116 students and 181 teachers during 2020 at the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, Anse Quitor Nature Reserve and the Solitude Nursery, see Table 2 and Plates 2 & 3.

Table 2. Details of students and teachers visiting the Nature Reserves and Solitude Nursery in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School/Group</th>
<th>No of Students</th>
<th>No of Teachers</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06/03/20</td>
<td>Batatran Government School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3 T &amp; 8 P</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/03/20</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/03/20</td>
<td>Antoinette Prudence Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/05/20</td>
<td>Le Chou College</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery &amp; Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/05/20</td>
<td>Rotary Youth Empowerment Symposium group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/06/20</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Roche Bon Dieu Government School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/06/20</td>
<td>Ste Therese de l’enfant Jesus Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/06/20</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>School/Group</td>
<td>Nº of Students</td>
<td>Nº of Teachers</td>
<td>Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/07/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Club Mer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/07/20</td>
<td>Terre Rouge Government School</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/20</td>
<td>All Secondary Schools</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/07/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Participants</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/09/20</td>
<td>Araucaria Community Government School</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/09/20</td>
<td>Araucaria Community Government School</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/09/20</td>
<td>Antoinette Prudence Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/09/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Community Government School</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/10/20</td>
<td>Mt Charlot Community Government School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/10/20</td>
<td>Mt Charlot Community Government School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/10/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Community Government School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/10/20</td>
<td>Terre Rouge Government School</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/10/20</td>
<td>Port Sud Est Government School</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/10/20</td>
<td>Basile Allas Government School</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/10/20</td>
<td>La Rose, Soupir Pre-Primary School</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/10/20</td>
<td>La Colombe Pre-Primary School</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/11/20</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Government School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/11/20</td>
<td>Mt Goyaves Community Government School</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/11/20</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/20</td>
<td>Basile Allas Government School</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/11/20</td>
<td>Terre Rouge College</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/12/20</td>
<td>Butterfly Pre-Primary School</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 1,116 181
Plate 2. Senior Nature Reserve Assistant, Jean Daniel Pierre Louis, talking to students and parents from Batatran Government School about the endemic rare plants in the Anse Quitor Nature Reserve.

Plate 3. At the viewpoint, a school teacher elaborating with children on topics taught in the classroom while visiting the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.
2.0 Objective 2: Curriculum Development

Develop lesson plans for educational talks and outings with Standard V, Standard VI, and secondary school students. These lessons should involve as many visuals (PowerPoint), learning aids (props, artefacts) and practical activities as possible in order to keep the student’s attention and to increase the effectiveness of the program. Many studies show that there is a higher retention rate from the participatory approach such as ‘learning by doing’ and we aim to maximise the use of these methodologies.

2.1 PowerPoint Presentations

A 27-slide PowerPoint presentation was developed on the nesting Wedge-Tailed Shearwater colony in Rodrigues, see Figure 1, below. The topic was chosen for village and students in the eastern region of Rodrigues where the nesting site is located and where mortality events had recently been reported.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** PowerPoint presentation slides on Wedge-tailed Shearwater nesting in Rodrigues.

3.0 Objective 3: Develop Indices of Success to assess REEP’s impact

It is important to assess the work of REEP and whether the program is attaining its aims and objectives. Thus, a working session will be organised with primary school teachers to assess the impact of educational talks and visits to the Nature Reserves. The feedback can be used during the development of future REEP work plans.

3.1 Developing pre and post surveys

To assess the effectiveness of the REEP at changing attitudes and raising awareness on environmental issues, collaboration was sought with the social science research team of Chester Zoo in 2018. The key person on this project is Conservation scientist, Mr Greg Counsell.

Following a first visit in 2018 observing outreach actions and meeting key staff, a questionnaire was designed in early 2019, see Figures 3 to 7, below. This questionnaire was to be filled before and after a MWF intervention i.e. a talk delivered in schools or a guided tour in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve. Using pre- and post- survey differences, the REEP effectiveness will be evaluated.
In mid-2019, the questionnaire was trialled with 195 students from Grade 4, 5 and 6 at two primary schools. Greg Counsell returned to Rodrigues in October 2019 to:

- Review and input the data from the 2019 trial run of questionnaire and conduct a preliminary analysis.
- Develop a scoring system for the open response questions and drawing tasks.
- Present preliminary results.
- Reviewed the process and discuss ways to improve the questionnaire with MWF staff.
- Developed strategies for altering the evaluation or mitigating for the difficulties encountered.

Another adjusted and final version of the survey questionnaire was designed and was used in 2020 with students visiting the nature reserve. Throughout the year 2020, 244 surveys were collected from 5 schools with Grade 4, 5 and 6 and the age groups are from 9 to 10 years old.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a 1-month lockdown between March and April 2020 in Rodrigues and significant changes in school term start and end dates, that restricted access to all schools such that surveys could not be resumed until late May 2020.

Figure 3. Page 1 of the student final survey questionnaire
Figure 4. Page 2 of the student survey questionnaire
8 c. Cochez les espèces animales listées ci-dessous qui sont envahissantes à Rodrigues. Vous pouvez cochez plus qu’une case:

- □ Fauvette
- □ Golden bat
- □ Kameleon
- □ Tortue Géante d’Aldabra
- □ Rat
- □ Martin

9. Il est important de protéger les espèces végétales endémiques parce que…
(choisissez une réponse)
- □ elles poussent plus vite que d’autres plantes
- □ elles coûtent chères
- □ leurs fruits sont mangés par les chauves-souris

10. Il est important de protéger les espèces animales endémiques parce que…
(choisissez une réponse)
- □ elles servent de nourriture
- □ elles sont des pollinisateurs et des distributeurs de graines
- □ elles vivent plus longtemps que d’autres animaux

11 a. Pensez-vous que vous pouvez contribuer à la protection de l’environnement à Rodrigues?
- □ Oui
- □ Non
- □ Peut-être

11 b. Si oui, que pouvez-vous faire pour contribuer à la protection de l’environnement à Rodrigues?

Figure 5. Page 3 of the student survey questionnaire
12. Etes-vous d’accord ou en désaccord avec les affirmations ci-dessous (veuillez cocher une réponse):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOUT À FAIT D’ACCORD</th>
<th>EN ACCORD</th>
<th>UN PEU EN ACCORD</th>
<th>NI D’ACCORD</th>
<th>UN PEU EN DÉSACCORD</th>
<th>NI EN DÉSACCORD</th>
<th>EN DÉSACCORD</th>
<th>TOUT À FAIT EN DÉSACCORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protéger les espèces endémiques de Rodrigues n’est important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les plantes indigènes sont bonnes pour l’environnement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Pouvez-vous dessiner et indiquer les noms des composantes d’une forêt indigène?
14. Choisissez le dessin ci-dessous qui représente le mieux votre relation avec l’environnement naturel (entourez une seule lettre svp)

- A: Moi - Nature
- B: Moi - Nature
- C: Moi - Nature
- D: Moi - Nature
- E: Moi - Nature
- F: Moi - Nature
- G: Moi - Nature

**Figure 7.** Page 5 of the student survey questionnaire

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4.0 Objective 4: Develop Educational Tools for 2020

MWF Educational tools, with due acknowledgement to the funders, will be produced to help the receiver remember the educational talk and the conservation issue discussed. The stickers, the Rodrigues Fruit Bat video and brochures on invasive species created the years before will be distributed during the year.

Discussions began with potential funders on materials scheduled to be produced in 2020, including posters on rare plants, a kids colouring books featuring endemic animals and plants outline and a bat game. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns and restrictions these educational tools were not developed.

The educational and ecotourism information displays previously in the Dominic Farla Information Centre and the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve were outdated and many were also in poor condition, thus required updating. Developed in collaboration with Chester Zoo’s Exhibitions and Interpretation department through 2018, the display consisting of over 20 panels was manufactured in Mauritius, shipped and delivered to Rodrigues in mid-2019. On the 22nd of January 2020, the first information board was installed by the MWF staff, including the Rodrigues Manager, Project Support Officer, REEP Educator, Ecotour Officer and the Anse Quitor Senior Nature Reserve Assistant. On the 22nd May 2020, in conjunction with International Day for Biological Diversity, the display was officially launched by the Commissioner for Environment, Mr Jean Richard Payendee. On the same day the 5-year Memorandum of Understanding between the MWF and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly was also signed. This colourful and information-rich display, see Plates 4 to 10 below and on the following pages, has become an invaluable tool to educate visiting school children and tourists about the work done by the MWF and various species of flora and fauna we strive to protect.

Plate 4. The fully renovated and upgraded Dominique Farla Information Centre, leading into the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.
Plate 5. The new welcome sign showing visitors what can be seen in the Nature Reserve.


Mauritian Wildlife Foundation
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Plate 7. Inside the main display room, left hand side.

Plate 8. Inside the main display room, right hand side.

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Plate 9. The display cabinet, showing off Rodrigues most complete Solitaire skeleton, the skeleton of an extinct land tortoise, and the REEP’s 2018 Global Conservation Award.

Plate 10. The REEP Educator alongside one of the seven new information signs deployed in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, designed specifically for the educational tours delivered as part of our education programme. The other six panels cover the Rodrigues Fody, Rodrigues Fruit Bat, café marron, Aldabra Giant Tortoise, various cryptic species, and functioning of the ridge to reef ecosystem.
5.0 Objective 5: Develop Community Outreach Strategies

Educational awareness strategies will be developed to improve general knowledge and appreciation of the endemic flora and fauna of Rodrigues and also on other environmental topics such as invasive species. The strategies to outreach to the community will include village talks, corporate talks, newspaper articles, radio talks, donation of plants, and volunteer participation.

5.1 Community Involvement in MWF Projects

MWF ensures community participation in MWF projects by having volunteers help in the Solitude Endemic Nursery, in the nature reserves and during bat surveys. A visit is usually given to each volunteer group, and the aims and objectives of MWF’s projects, including the REEP are explained. A lunch or refreshment is provided for all volunteers. During 2020, MWF Rodrigues welcomed 152 volunteers, and 245 volunteer work-days helped contribute towards terrestrial conservation in Rodrigues, see Table 3 and Plates 11 & 12.

Table 3. Details of volunteer work that helped towards Rodrigues terrestrial conservation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Nº of volunteers</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19/09/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Volunteers from Club Mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Volunteers from Club Mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Volunteers from Port Sud Est</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/11/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Volunteers from Club Mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/11/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Volunteers from NYCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/11/20</td>
<td>Island Wide bat counts</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/11/20</td>
<td>Island Wide bat counts</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/11/20</td>
<td>Island Wide bat counts</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/20</td>
<td>Solitude Nursery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Volunteers from Roche Bon Dieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/12/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interact Communautaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12/20</td>
<td>Field – Soupir</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/12/20</td>
<td>Field – Cascade St Louis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/12/20</td>
<td>Field – Anse Quitor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/20</td>
<td>Field – Jardin Mamzel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/12/20</td>
<td>Field – Cascade St Louis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Volunteers around Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>245</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plate 11. Volunteers from Rotaract group participating in restoration activities in the reserve

Plate 12. Volunteers removing invasive species in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve
5.2 Donation of Endemic Plants
Each year MWF Rodrigues donates native and endemic plants propagated in its plant nursery to primary schools, colleges, youth groups, villages and other organisations to embellish school surroundings, create endemic and medicinal plant gardens. A total of 537 plants were donated during the year 2020. Regrettably, due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was not possible to donate one plant, as we do each year, to every grade 6 child. For donation details, see Table 4 and Plate 13 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No of Plants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/01/2020</td>
<td>Port Sud Est Government School</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/03/2020</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/2020</td>
<td>Cascade Pistache</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/06/2020</td>
<td>Terre Rouge Government School</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06/2020</td>
<td>Grand la Fouche Corail Government School</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/06/2020</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Aided School</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/06/2020</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Government School</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2020</td>
<td>Notre Dame de Brulé Church</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2020</td>
<td>Secondary School Participant</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2020</td>
<td>Notre Dame de Lourdes Church</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/07/2020</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Government School</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/07/2020</td>
<td>Baladirou Residential and Training Centre</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/09/2020</td>
<td>Songes College</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/09/2020</td>
<td>Terre Rouge College</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/09/2020</td>
<td>Batatran Endemic garden</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Details of plant donations made in 2020.

Plates 13. Donation and symbolic planting of endemic and native plants to the Parish of Brulé.
5.3 Media coverage
To sensitise the Rodrigues population, MWF ensures important events and conservation actions are covered by the local, national and international media. Throughout the year 2020, conservation projects in Rodrigues benefited from numerous social media postings, newspaper, radio and television coverage. See Table 5 for details of standard media coverage, Table 6 for topics covered in MWF’s social media platforms, and Plates 14 & 15 for examples of MWF staff interviews.

Table 5. Media coverage during the year 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>MWF staff interviewed</th>
<th>Subject/Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/01/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Alfred Bégué</td>
<td>Rodrigues Fody (Foudia flavicans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/01/20</td>
<td>Radio &amp; TV</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Invasive ‘Pikan loulou’ (Accacia nilotica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/01/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>John Cliff Jean</td>
<td>‘Bois carotte’ (Pittosporum balfourii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/01/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Martine Brasse</td>
<td>‘Bois puant’ (Foetidia rodriguesiana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/02/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Estelle Agathe</td>
<td>‘bois pipe’ (Dombeya rodriguesiana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/03/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Alfred Bégué</td>
<td>Sea Bird Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/03/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Rodrigues Fruit Bat Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/04/20</td>
<td>TV &amp; Radio</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Environmental Impact of COVID-19 in Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/04/20</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Earth Day Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/04/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Liliana Meunier</td>
<td>Earth Day Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/04/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Rodrigues Fruit Bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/05/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Stephen Kirsakye</td>
<td>Rodrigues Fody (Foudia flavicans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/05/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan,</td>
<td>Endangered Species Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Cliff Jean, Martine Brasse, Anieta Shan Yu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/05/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Jean Daniel Pierre Louis</td>
<td>‘Cafe Marron’ (Ramosmania rodriguesii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/05/20</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Liliana Meunier</td>
<td>World Biodiversity Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/05/20</td>
<td>TV &amp; Radio</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>World Biodiversity Day and MoU signature between RRA and MWF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/06/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>John Cliff Jean</td>
<td>‘Mandrinette’ (Hibiscus liliiflorus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06/20</td>
<td>TV &amp; Radio</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>World Environment Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/06/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Jean Daniel Pierre Louis</td>
<td>Tourism Alternative livelihood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/07/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Stephen Kirsakye</td>
<td>Ecotours in the GMO Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/07/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Liliana Meunier</td>
<td>‘Bois Mangues’ (Pyrostria revoluta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/07/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Sweety Shan Yu</td>
<td>‘Bois Trois feuilles’ (Vepris lanceolata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/08/20</td>
<td>AVS Production</td>
<td>Sweety Shan Yu</td>
<td>Restoration project funded by the GEF UNDP SGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/08/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Stephen Kirsakye</td>
<td>Introduction of Iguana to Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/09/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Stephen Kirsakye</td>
<td>Ecotour promotional filming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/09/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Rodrigues Manager</td>
<td>Beach clean-up activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/09/20</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer khan</td>
<td>International Palm Society - A Virtual Tour of Rodrigues Island by Andy Hurwitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/20</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Liliana Meunier &amp; Reshad Jhangeer-Khan</td>
<td>Island Wide Rodrigues Fruit Bat (Pteropus rodricensis) counts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11/20</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Reshad Jhangeer-Khan, Sweety Shan Yu</td>
<td>‘bois puant’ (Foetidia rodriguesiana) in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 6. Monthly blog subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Setting up of new information boards in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Embellishment of School... A 2020 Rodrigues Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>World Wildlife Day - &quot;Sustaining all life on Earth&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Conservation of endangered native fauna &amp; flora during the COVID-19 lock-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Earth Day – Climate Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Upgrading of the Volunteer Memorial Green space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Planting at the Grenade Community Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>World Biodiversity Day 2020 in Rodrigues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Community Participation in Forest Restoration- Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>World Environment Day 2020 – Celebrating Biodiversity!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Post-COVID-19 RRA Tourism Alternative Livelihood programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Support for biodiversity conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Restoring ecosystems with analogue tortoises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Beach clean-up with students from Gonzague Pierre Louis Special Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>World Clean-up Day 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td><em>Zanthoxylum paniculatum</em> conservation work in the Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Together We Can Through Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plate 14. MWF Project Support Officer, Alfred Bégué interviewed by the MBC TV for World Wildlife Day on Ile Cocos Nature Reserve on the topic of conservation and restoration work achieved and MWF’s Sea Bird Monitoring activities.

Plate 15. The REEP Educator being interviewed by the MBC TV on the Wedge-tailed Shearwater nesting site at Pointe Coton and the mortality events that also took place there in the past.
6.0 Objective 6: Celebrate the International Volunteer Day (IVD)

In an average year, MWF has over 250 volunteers that help with the conservation work including helping with the propagation of plants in the nursery or weeding and planting in the Nature Reserves. Each year MWF aims to organise and celebrate the International Volunteer Day (IVD) on the 5th December. IVD is an important event for the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation as we have a long-term and ongoing volunteer programme. The aim is to thank the volunteers for their effort and their contribution in helping us to save the endangered species of Rodrigues.

The annual International Volunteer Day is celebrated each year on the 5th of December. It is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organisations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities, non-governmental organisations and government authorities.

Throughout the year 2020, MWF Rodrigues worked with 152 volunteers, who helped towards MWF’s conservation mission. This included assisting with the propagation of plants in MWF’s endemic nursery in Solitude, weeding and planting native seedlings in the Grande Montagne and Anse Quitor Nature Reserves, participating in field work collections and helping with bat surveys around the island.

This year, on the 4th December 2020, MWF Rodrigues organised a volunteer walk from MWF’s Office in Solitude to the Village of Grand Baie, see Plate 16, with a lunch at the destination for the volunteers. 26 volunteers and most of the MWF Rodrigues staff team were present throughout the day. Each volunteer received a MWF taffeta bag and a signed certificate of participation to show MWF’s appreciation for their contribution to our cause.

With this event, MWF aimed to commemorate and thank the volunteers for their time and dedication in helping save Rodrigues’ endangered species of from extinction.

Plate 16. MWF Volunteers enjoying a trek in the wild, led by MWF staff on International Volunteer Day 2020.
7.0 **Objective 7: Support Rodrigues Fruit Bat Field Research**

Bat counts of the endangered Rodrigues Fruit Bat are conducted on a regular basis at the Malabar Roost Site by MWF staff. In addition, Intra-island bat counts are conducted at 9 permanent roost locations of Rodrigues and a number of additional roosts 3 times per year with the help of volunteers from government and non-governmental organisations, private sector, schools and the community. The Environmental Educator participates in these activities in order to learn about the bat population and patterns in roosting and movements of the endemic Rodrigues Fruit Bat. During the year 2020, the Environmental Educator will organise for volunteers from schools and the community to participate in the regular bat counts to have a more hands-on and personal experience.

7.1 Fortnightly Cascade Pigeon Roost Bat Counts

Bat counts were conducted fortnightly of one of the main roost in Rodrigues, namely the Cascade Pigeon Roost, every second Friday through 2020, counted at the main Malabar road intersection by MWF staff. The Environmental Educator helped to organise and participated in these surveys, together with all other MWF staff. Data collected were entered into the Rodrigues Fruit Bat Count Excel database to produce and illustrate the 2020 trend, see **Figure 5** below.

![Bats Counted from Jan to Dec 2020](image)

**Figure 5.** Results of the fortnightly bat counts carried out on the Cascade Pigeon roost in 2020

7.2 Island-wide Bat Counts

Following the close passage of a cyclone in March 2020 and the 1-month Rodrigues COVID-19 lockdown that led to the postponing of the March and July Island-wide Bat counts respectively, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation decided that only 1 Island-Wide Bat Count would be carried out in November 2020. Further discussions on the necessity of carrying out 3 IWBCs each year took place and the MWF ultimately decided that as from 2020, only November counts would be done, since that...
survey had always generated the most representative counts of the Rodrigues Fruit Bat (*Pteropus rodricensis*) population.

In preparation for the November count, MWF Rodrigues staff met to list all potentially active roosts. One staff member was allocated per roost, thereafter carrying out a series of site visits to each roost to confirm bat presence, clearly establish roost extents, flight paths and get GPS coordinates of the vantage points, in a view to making the count as effective as possible. Later, these spatial data were all mapped in QGIS, a Geographical Information System.

Since there would be only 1 IWBC in 2020, the national channel Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) was contacted to publicise the event. A pre-survey broadcast on the local radio was done on the 11th of November giving MWF the opportunity to talk about the importance of the fruit bat, explain the 2019 mortality event following cyclones Gelena and Joainha, explain how and why MWF count the fruit bat, and to invite the public to volunteer with MWF to do the November count. The MWF Rodrigues Manager spoke about the status of the fruit bat and its importance, while the MWF Environmental Educator talked about the volunteering component.

Between the 25th and 27th of November 2020, all 15 MWF Rodrigues staff and ninety (90) volunteers participated in 45 simultaneous Evening Dispersal Counts at 15 permanent roosts and 27 in-situ visual estimations at 9 temporary and inaccessible roosts, see Plate 17 below. Fortunately, the survey week was spared from heavy rain and the counts took place without trouble.

Media coverage was again scheduled with the MBC, so the public could see how MWF carry out bat population surveys. On the 26th of November, the MWF Ecotour Officer and his volunteers were filmed and interviewed counting bats the La Ferme Roost.

On the last day of the survey, 18,430 individual fruit bats were counted by the MWF survey team. Calculated using the distribution curve of the 5-minute interval count data, MWF estimates that another 1,957 bats were likely missed, leaving their roosts after dark, and bringing the extrapolated total to 20,387. Many suckling bats were seen clinging to their mother flying out of their roosts, but these were not counted.

MWF therefore estimates that there were approximately 20,000 bats in Rodrigues as at late November 2020. A few days after the last survey, once the data had been entered and partially analysed, the MWF Rodrigues Manager was interviewed by the MBC local radio station, on the 6th December, sharing the bat count results with the public, during the radio news.

Compared to the results from November 2018 at 23,962 bats and November 2019 at only 5,423 bats, the alarmingly low number, then thought to be a result of the reported mortality following the two cyclones Gelena and Joainha, are now thought to be due to some bat deaths, but more so, due to bats in roosts having been dispersed. Until roosts form again to their pre-cyclone status, most of the surviving bats that had been dispersed by the cyclones were therefore missed at roost counts in November 2019. The results of the island wide bat counts conducted in November 2020 are given in Table 7, below.

**Table 7.** Results from the island wide bat surveys in November 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Roosts</th>
<th>25 Nov</th>
<th>26 Nov</th>
<th>27 Nov</th>
<th>Nov 2020 Highest Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accacia</td>
<td>3963</td>
<td>3815</td>
<td>3987</td>
<td>3987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vainqueur</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>1241</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>1322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mourouk</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Roosts</th>
<th>25 Nov</th>
<th>26 Nov</th>
<th>27 Nov</th>
<th>Nov 2020 Highest Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mourouk 2</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malabar</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jardin Mamzel</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>1,147</td>
<td>1,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anse Baleine</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>1,237</td>
<td>1,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivère Coco</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Cimetière</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graviers</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel Air (Main)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel Air (Mid)</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>1,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivère Banane lower</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade Pigeon (Lower)</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>1,166</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>1,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade Pigeon (Middle)</td>
<td>1,808</td>
<td>4,361</td>
<td>4,330</td>
<td>4,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Var</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anse Ally</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade St louis</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangues</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Ferme</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade Victoire</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,344</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,630</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,341</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,341</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporary Roosts</th>
<th>25 Nov</th>
<th>26 Nov</th>
<th>27 Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pistaches</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baie du Nord</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fond la Digue</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassola</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Grand Total**   | **13,441** | **17,717** | **18,418** | **18,438** |

**Plate 17.** A young volunteer counting bats at the Accacia bat roost during the Island-Wide Survey.
To note, Rodrigues is located in an area of the ocean affected by tropical storms that form during the summer season of the southern hemisphere, i.e. between November and April. The Rodrigues Fruit Bat population which is endemic to the island is vulnerable to the effects of cyclones. Cyclones affect the bat population directly, through mortality from the strong winds. Following the passage of a tropical storm, the bats that survived the direct effects of a cyclone can, depending on the damage caused to vegetation, suffer severe shortage of food, i.e. leaves, fruits and flowers which in turn can cause dehydration. Under these circumstances, bats will behave oddly, flying at all hours of the day, eating immature fruit, fruit they are not used to eating, and even ‘climbing’ down to the ground to feed on fallen fruit. The lack of food also results in more bats feeding on backyard fruit trees, which in turn leads to human-wildlife conflict.

8.0 Objective 8: Organise the 12th Annual Rodrigues Fruit Bat Day

This year MWF will maintain its awareness programme on the Rodrigues Fruit Bat to promote the work done by MWF to protect this unique species with the aim for people being keen to protect the animal and change their attitude towards it. In 2020, the 11th Annual Rodrigues Bat Day will be focused on giving talks, doing group work on finding solution to mitigate the human and wildlife conflict and showing of the video ‘Treasure of Rodrigues: The Rodrigues Fruit Bat’ in villages and to youth group.

To emphasise the Rodrigues Fruit Bat sensitisation programme, MWF had initially planned to organise a working session with selected villages, to give talks and show the video ‘Treasure of Rodrigues’ to villagers. This was scheduled in the week surrounding the International Bat day, unfortunately, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on gatherings, made it impossible to gather villagers for a working session at the time. Nevertheless, the wider population was reached on three occasions via outreach over the local radio and television before, during and after the November 2020 island-wide bat count, during which MWF staff explained the ecological importance of the Rodrigues Fruit bat, how and why it is counted, the involvement of volunteers from the public, as well as the results following the count. As such, these actions may be considered to have contributed to fulfilling objective 8.

9.0 Objective 9: Support Environmental Activities

MWF Rodrigues will support and participate in activities organised for Environment Week in June along with other environmental activities initiated by the government or other non-governmental organisations.

9.1 World Wildlife Day 2020 - "Sustaining all life on Earth"

World Wildlife Day has become the most important global annual event dedicated to wildlife. In 2020, this day was celebrated under the theme “Sustaining all life on Earth,” covering all wild animal and plant species as key components of the biodiversity of the world. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in Rodrigues celebrated this day on the 3rd March 2020 by organising the removal of invasive exotic Palma christi (Ricinus communis) plants, followed by the planting 25 native and endemic seedlings on Ile aux Cocos Nature Reserve. The action was carried out by the MWF Rodrigues staff: Project Support Officer, Alfred Bégué, Ecotour Administrative Officer, Rosyla Meunier and Environment Educator, Liliana Meunier. The following three native species were planted: Sophora tomentosus, Pisonia grandis and Asparagus umbelulatus. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation was present during the action to cover this event, which was later broadcasted on radio and national television, sensitising the population of the Mauritian Republic at large. Click on the following link to see the coverage: https://www.mbcradio.tv/article/journal-rodrigues-mars-04-2020.
9.2 International Day of Forest 2020

Each year on the 21st of March the International Day of Forests is celebrated by the United Nations to raise awareness on the importance of forests. For the year 2020, the theme was Forest and Biodiversity. Forests are a sustainable source of resources, acting as the main contributors to combat climate change. To ensure a better living for the future, we need to take care of our forests and the wildlife surviving in them. To commemorate the International Forest Day, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in Rodrigues scheduled restoration activities with 15 participants from Rotaract Club of Rodrigues in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve natives including planting and the removal of invasive exotic species.

9.3 Earth Day - Climate Action

Earth Day is an event held each year on the 22nd April to celebrate environmental movement, raise awareness about pollution and learn how to maintain a clean and healthy habitat. This year, we celebrated Earth Day’s 50th anniversary under the theme of Climate Action. As the Rodrigues COVID-19 lockdown had only recently come to an end, the population was urged to maintain social distancing and avoid social gatherings. We therefore commemorated Earth Day amongst MWF staff only, weeding invasive exotic species and planting 300 endemic seedlings as reinforcement in a previously restored plot in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve. To ensure we reach still out and sensitise the public for Earth Day, the Rodrigues Branch of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation was invited to film the event. The MWF Rodrigues Environmental Educator and Manager were also interviewed, explaining what MWF was doing in celebration of Earth Day and why it was important. The media coverage was broadcast both locally and nationally, and can be seen by clicking on the following link: https://mbcradio.tv/article/r%C3%A9serve-de-grande-montagne-mise-en-terre-de-plantes-end%C3%A9miques-%C3%A0-rodrigues

9.4 World Biodiversity Day 2020 in Rodrigues

The 2020 theme "Our solutions are in nature" emphasises hope, solidarity and the importance of working together at all levels, to build a future life in harmony with nature. As Rodrigues was still free from COVID-19, the lockdown came to an end on the 16th of April 2020. On the 22nd May this 2020, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation Rodrigues Team was lucky to be able to organise a series of activities in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to commemorate this special day. Nineteen Grade 13 Travel and Tourism students of Le Chou College, accompanied by 2 teachers, visited the MWF Solitude Endemic Plant Nursery, where they learnt about the endangered plant species. After touring the nursery with the MWF Nursery Officer and Environment Educator, the group headed to the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve, where they were sensitised further on the importance of environmental conservation. In the reserve, they learnt more about different endemic and native species of plants and animals found in Rodrigues, and ended the tour, delivered by the Ecotour Officer, symbolically planting 15 native seedlings.

9.5 World Environment Day 2020 – Celebrating Biodiversity!

World Environment Day is celebrated on the 5th of June each year, to raise public awareness and encourage people to protect the environment. The theme of World Environment Day 2020 is ‘Celebrating Biodiversity’ and we at MWF agree Biodiversity must not only be celebrated, but that we must fundamentally rethink our relationship with the living world, with natural ecosystems and their biodiversity always in mind. To commemorate World Environment Day, in the morning, MWF
Rodrigues organised the planting of five very rare and critically endangered species of tree, namely: café marron (*Ramosmania rodriguesii*), bois clou (*Eugenia rodriguesensis*), bois pipe (*Dombeya rodriguesiana*), bois papaye (*Badula balfouriana*) and bois mangue (*Pyrostria revoluta*), see **Plate 18**, below. The young trees were planted by various MWF staff at Solitude in front of the MWF office. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation covered the event too and interviewed the manager. On the same occasion, in the afternoon, a talk on the importance of biodiversity was delivered to the Grade 6 students of Grand la Fouche Corail Government School, by MWF Environment Educator. This was followed by a distribution of native and endemic plants to each student by various MWF Rodrigues staff.

**Plate 18.** The MWF Rodrigues Manager planting an IUCN Critically Endangered bois mangue (*Pyrostria revoluta*) on World Environment Day 2021 in front of the MWF Rodrigues Office.

9.6 Rodrigues Council of Social Services

In the context of the Rodrigues Council of Social Services’ ongoing island-wide embellishment project, *Nu Joli Village* members of the local NGO platform and members of the Rodrigues Village Committee were invited to help upgrade the Volunteer Memorial Green Space located at Mon Plaisir, on the Saturday 16th May 2020. The activity consisted of controlling invasive alien Jamrosa and Eucalyptus plant regrowths using chainsaws, while the other participants helped stack the chopped branches. The site upgrade was done under the supervision of the President of the RCSS, Mr Wilmode Edouard and MWF Rodrigues Project Support Officer, Alfred Bégué, thanks to his expertise in restoration activities. The MWF Environmental Educator, Liliana Meunier also attended and participated that day.
9.7 World Clean-up Day 2020

To celebrate World Clean Up Day 2020, on the 19th of September, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Rodrigues staff, in collaboration with Emtel Ltd staff, carried out a guided tour of the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve with 47 young participants of the Club Mer. Club Mer is the education programme, run by marine conservation NGO Shoals Rodrigues, who also distributed World Clean-up Day T-shirts, see Plate 19, below. Following their guided tour, the group did an hour-long clean-up in the nature reserve and removed invasive weeds.

![Plate 19. Emtel Ltd Rodrigues staff participating in maintenance weeding activity](image)

9.8 Beach clean-up

On Friday 4th September 2020, MWF Rodrigues organised, in collaboration with Marine NGOs, Shoals Rodrigues, a short walk along the east coast of Rodrigues and beach clean-up at Anse Philibert, with 53 students and 12 teachers from the Gonzague Pierre Louis Special Learning centre. The CEO of Emtel Ltd, Mr Teddy Bhular was present and participated in this activity, accompanied by Emtel’s Rodrigues Branch Manager Mr Rodney Capdor, Quality and CSR Manager Mr Shezaad Auchoybur and several other Emtel delegates from their Mauritius and Rodrigues Offices. The local written and televised press were also present to cover the event.
10.0 **Objective 10: Support Other MWF Activities**

Many of the MWF projects include community participation and have an education aspect. The Environmental Educator will support this aspect of the MWF projects. Furthermore, by participating in MWF projects, the Environmental Educator stays aware of project status and continues to learn about the flora and fauna of Rodrigues.

10.1 Team Building Activity

The REEP Educator participated in an Exploration walk on 17th January 2020 from Cascade St Louis to Graviers together with other MWF staff namely Martine Brasse, Jenifer Cesar, Mikel Azie and Estelle Agathe. Several endemic plants were spotted on the path.

On 13th October 2020, another team building activity was organised among the MWF Rodrigues team through an adventurous and enjoyable road trip around the island. This activity was organised to help increase motivation and collaboration and to encourage communication among the staff. During the day new places were discovered, very rare founder plants visited and a considerable amount of propagation material collected for the following species: *Cassine orientalis*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Diospyros diversifolia*, *Hibiscus liliiflorus*, *Carissa spinarum*, *Eugenia rodriguesensis* were also monitored.

10.2 Support for biodiversity conservation

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation often collaborates closely with non-governmental organisation Shoals Rodrigues, which has as mission to conduct marine research, monitoring, education and training activities on Rodrigues. Shoals Rodrigues is working on a project entitled, "*Implementation of Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Projects for Marine Protected Areas*”. The project involves 25 fishers living in the Northern part of the Island, and operating near or within the 4 northern Marine Reserves of Rivière Banane, Passe Cabris, Grand Bassin and Passe-Demi.

Throughout this project, Shoals Rodrigues staffs are ensuring the involvement of these fishers in biodiversity conservation programmes around the island. Throughout July 2020, MWF Ecotour Officer, Stephen Kirsakye and the REEP Educator, Mrs Liliana Meunier organised and delivered a guided tour of the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve to 18 fishers from the north of the island accompanied by the Shoals Rodrigues Technical Officer, Ms Anielle Espiegle, to further sensitise them on the importance of species and habitat conservation. Other activities were also organised in the Solitude Endemic Nursery, see Plate 20 below, where they learnt more about how MWF propagates and saves Rodrigues plant species from extinction.
10.4 Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables Seabird Census

On the 20th February 2020, 26th May 2020 and 13th November 2020, the REEP Educator participated in a seabird survey on Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables Nature Reserves, with other MWF staff namely the Restoration Assistant, Mikel Azie, Ecotour Officer, Stephen Kirsakye, Project Support Officer, Alfred Bégué, Field Officer, John Cliff Jean and the newly recruited Management Support Officer, Nella Pasnin.

10.5 Eco-schools Indian Ocean Programme

The Eco-Schools Indian Ocean Programme enables children from island nations, sharing a common ocean and any similar challenges, to take collective action in their schools and communities and gain regional and international partnerships, support and awards.

Under the project actions for the development of the Eco-Schools Programme in Rodrigues, it is specified that: Reef Conservation, the Ministry of Education, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Commission for Education, in partnership with Rodriguan NGOs will support the Eco-Schools programme in Rodrigues through the following actions: 1) Follow up visits to schools; 2) Assessment of schools (Bronze, Silver and Green Flags); 3) Organisation of an Award Ceremony; 4) Organisation of a feedback workshop about the programme implementation.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation as per the agreement was responsible to carry out follow up visits in 12 schools including 3 colleges for the Eco-Schools programme in Rodrigues.
### Table 8. Details of follow up visits in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/08/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Community Government School</td>
<td>Poultry farming and school garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/08/20</td>
<td>Araucaria</td>
<td>Araucaria Community Government School</td>
<td>Bio Agriculture, Mini orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/08/20</td>
<td>La Ferme</td>
<td>La Ferme College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/08/20</td>
<td>Mangues</td>
<td>Fock Seng Mangues Government School</td>
<td>School garden, medicinal garden and strawberry cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/08/20</td>
<td>Citron Donis</td>
<td>Father Ronald Gandy Roman Catholic Authority School</td>
<td>Windbreak and rainwater harvesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/08/20</td>
<td>Terre Rouge</td>
<td>Terre Rouge College</td>
<td>Not yet finalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/08/20</td>
<td>Roche Bon Dieu</td>
<td>Marc Etienne Roche Bon Dieu Government School</td>
<td>School garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/08/20</td>
<td>Mt Goyaves</td>
<td>Mt Goyaves Community Government School</td>
<td>School garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/08/20</td>
<td>Brule</td>
<td>Notre Dame de Lourdes Roman Catholic Authority School</td>
<td>Hanging garden, Transforming a dumping site into a green space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/08/20</td>
<td>Batatran</td>
<td>Batatran Government School</td>
<td>Saving water, Drip irrigation using plastic bottle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/08/20</td>
<td>Grand La Fouche Corail</td>
<td>Grand La Fouche Corail Government School</td>
<td>Healthy living and school garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.6 Covid-19 lock-down in Rodrigues and its impact on REEP

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 3 days after the first cases were officially reported, mainland Mauritius officially went into lock-down on the 20th March 2020. In an effort to ensure any COVID-19 cases would be contained in Rodrigues, even though there were no reported cases, a similar lock-down was implemented in Rodrigues, by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on the 21st March 2020, lasting until the 16th April 2020. International and national borders were effectively closed with Rodrigues and most people stopped going to work, except those who were part of the essential services like the Police Force, Fire & Rescue Services and Hospital Services. Most MWF Rodrigues’ activities came to a standstill with only two members of staff able to continue working from home and another 3 having work access permits to care for the Solitude Plant Nursery and the Aldabra Giant Tortoises in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.

The lock-down was lifted in Rodrigues on Thursday the 16th of April 2020. However, a number of restrictions were still imposed on certain activities, in public spaces and public gatherings which led to no village talk nor school visits. Schools in Rodrigues remained close in an effort to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 until the 4th May 2020 and to allow children to catch up with their learning and prepare for their future assessments. On the 27th May 2020, the REEP Educator met with the Acting Head of Education to discuss the period and procedure to access schools again.

During this period, the REEP Educator also participated in other field activities and attended a number of meetings. Tables 9 and 10, below, detail these activities and stakeholder meetings.
**Table 9. Field Participation by the Environment Educator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>MWF Staff Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/04/20</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>Weeding in pots</td>
<td>LM, MB, JDP, NP, JC, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/04/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Transporting seedlings</td>
<td>LM, SS, MB, JDP, JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/20</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>Weeding in pots</td>
<td>MB, LM, SS, JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/04/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Seed collection of <em>Pleurostylia putamen</em></td>
<td>LM, MB, SE, SS, JDP, EA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/04/20</td>
<td>Roseaux</td>
<td>Seed collection of <em>Diospyros diversifolia</em></td>
<td>SK, LM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/04/20</td>
<td>Pointe Coton</td>
<td>Site visit on the breeding site of Wedge-tailed shear water</td>
<td>SK, LM, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/04/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Initial thinning in the Chester Zoo plot</td>
<td>LM, NP, JC, MB, SE, JDP, JAB, EA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/04/20</td>
<td>Mt Malgache</td>
<td>Collection of <em>Pandanus sp.</em> seedlings</td>
<td>SK, NP, LM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/05/20</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>Weeding in pots</td>
<td>LM, MB, SK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/05/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Transporting seedlings</td>
<td>LM, MB, AB, JCD, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Seed collection of <em>Premna serratifolia</em></td>
<td>LM, NP, SS, MB, JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/05/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Planting</td>
<td>LM, MB, SE, SS, JDP, EA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/05/20</td>
<td>Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables Nature Reserves</td>
<td>Sea bird Census</td>
<td>AB, LM, NP, JCD, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/10/20</td>
<td>Anse Quitor Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Participated in the effort to conserve the rare <em>Zanthoxylum paniculatum</em></td>
<td>LM, JC, JCD, JDP, AB, SS, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/10/20</td>
<td>Grande Montagne Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Seed collection and assisted in the protection of <em>Foetidia rodriqueziana</em></td>
<td>LM, JC, MA, RJK, AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11/20</td>
<td>Batatran</td>
<td>Cuttings from <em>Hibiscus liliiflorus</em></td>
<td>LM, SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/20</td>
<td>Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables Nature Reserves</td>
<td>Sea bird Survey</td>
<td>AB, SK, MA, JCD, LM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10. Meetings with stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23/01/20</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Education Authority Manager, Dr Anick Tolbize</td>
<td>Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Sought approval to carry out MWF activities in RCA schools and discussed evaluation survey with students and eco schools project follow-up</td>
<td>REEP Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/01/20</td>
<td>Senior School Inspector Karl Allas and Shoals Rodrigues Educator, Runolph Raffaut</td>
<td>Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Discuss the organisation of the eco school feedback workshop and reactivation of the Rodrigues Regional Ecoschools committee.</td>
<td>Eco Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/02/20</td>
<td>Eco tour Officer, Stephen Kirsakye, teachers and students of Grade 12</td>
<td>Le Chou College</td>
<td>Travel &amp; Tourism project</td>
<td>School Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/02/20</td>
<td>Head Master and Grade 4 Teachers</td>
<td>Batatran Government School</td>
<td>Evaluation survey trial</td>
<td>REEP Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Staff</td>
<td>MWF Office</td>
<td>Potential collaboration to bring 25 fishers to participate in restoration work at Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/05/20</td>
<td>Head of Education, Commission for Education, Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Commission for Education, Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Discussed the MWF activities in schools after lockdown.</td>
<td>REEP Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/20</td>
<td>Youth Officer, Christophe Casimir</td>
<td>Baladirou Residential and Training Centre</td>
<td>Site visit in view of creating an endemic garden</td>
<td>REEP Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/08/20</td>
<td>Head of Education, Director of Education and School Inspector</td>
<td>Commission for Education, Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Preparation of Eco school follow –up visits calendar</td>
<td>Eco Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/08/20</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Educator</td>
<td>Shoals Rodrigues Centre, Pointe Monier</td>
<td>Preparation of Eco school follow –up visits calendar</td>
<td>Eco Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/10/20</td>
<td>Environment Unit Officer in Charge, Henri Félicité, Commission for Environment and Shoals Rodrigues Educator Runolph Raffaut</td>
<td>Environment Office, Port Mathurin</td>
<td>Planning of a master plan on Environmental Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/10/20</td>
<td>Commissioner for Youth &amp; Sport Mrs Rose de Lima Edouard Ravina and Youth Officers</td>
<td>Conference Room of Mont Plaisir Culture Centre</td>
<td>Implementation of the National Youth Civic Service Programme in Rodrigues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.0 Objective 11: Training and Exchanges

As learning is a never-ending process, it is important for the Environmental Educator to receive training each year in order to better answer to the demands of the job.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, the REEP Educator was not able to participate in any training sessions or exchanges. We hope that 2021 will be a better year in this respect.

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