

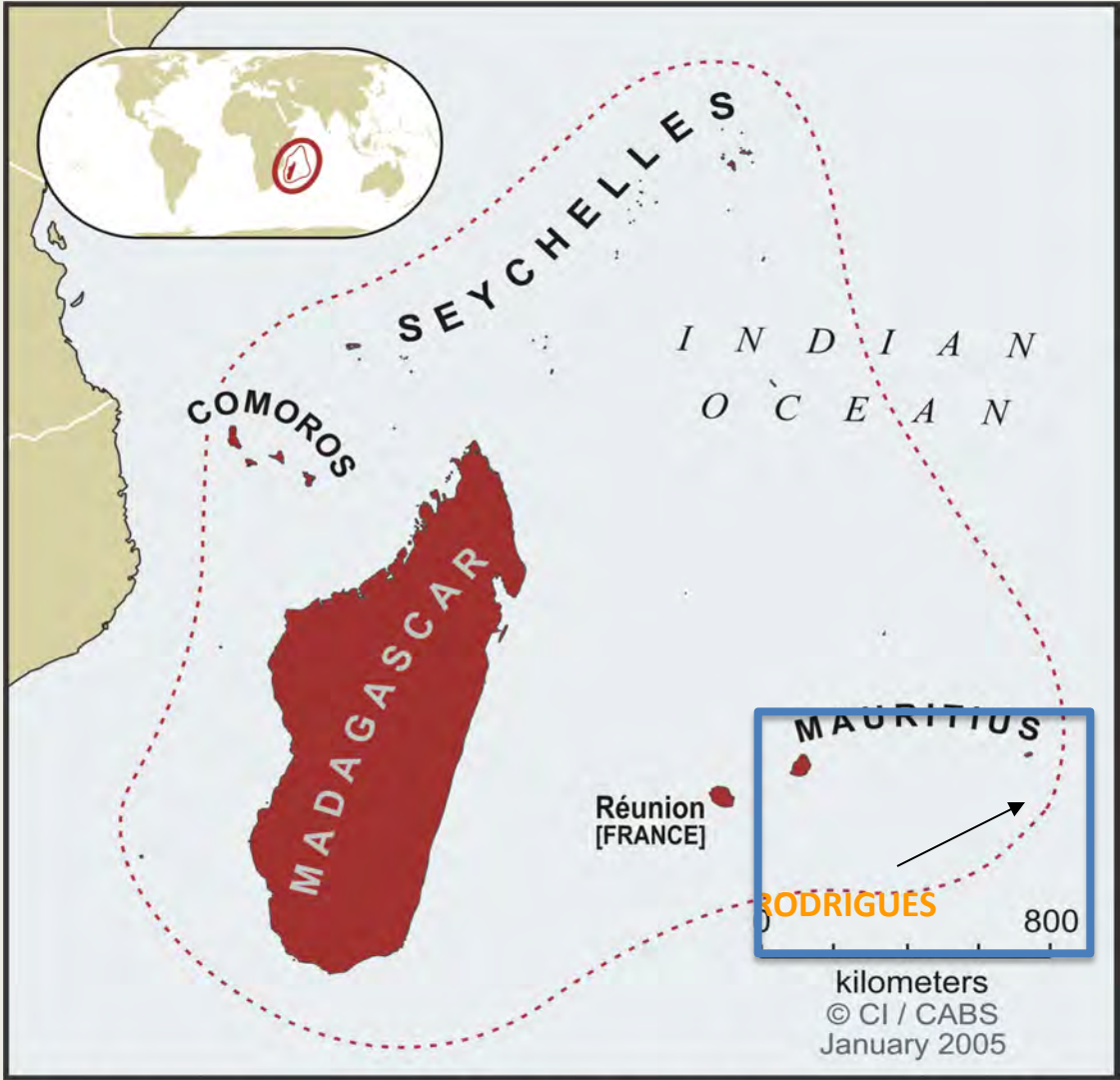
CONSERVATION IN THE LAND OF THE DODO

Dr. Vikash Tatayah CSK, Conservation Director, MWF

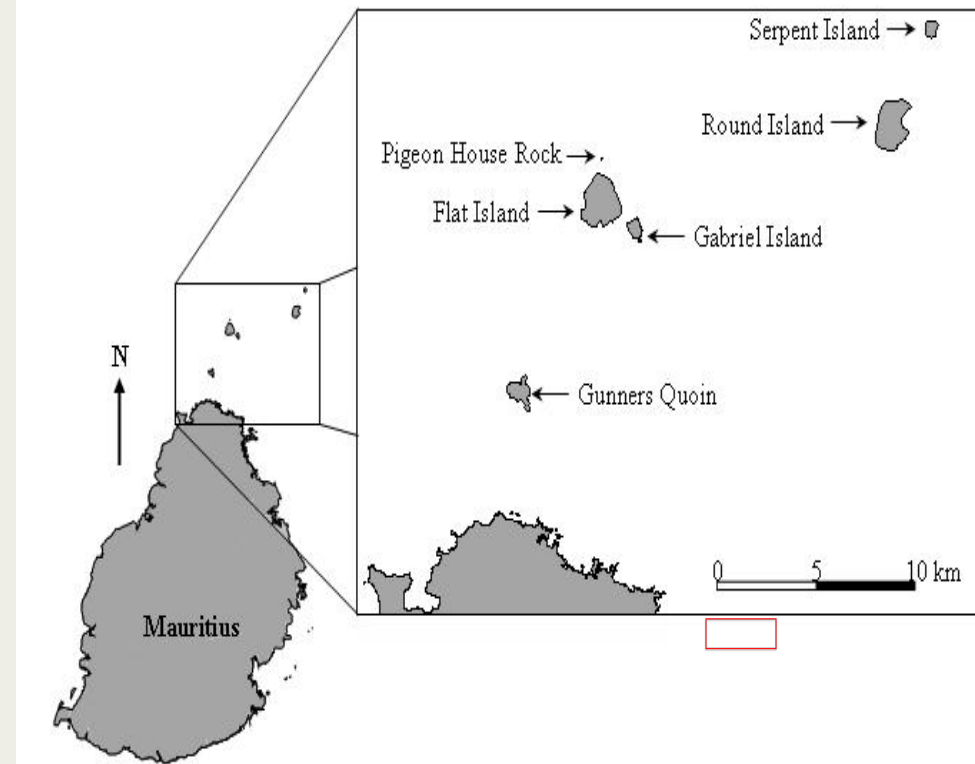
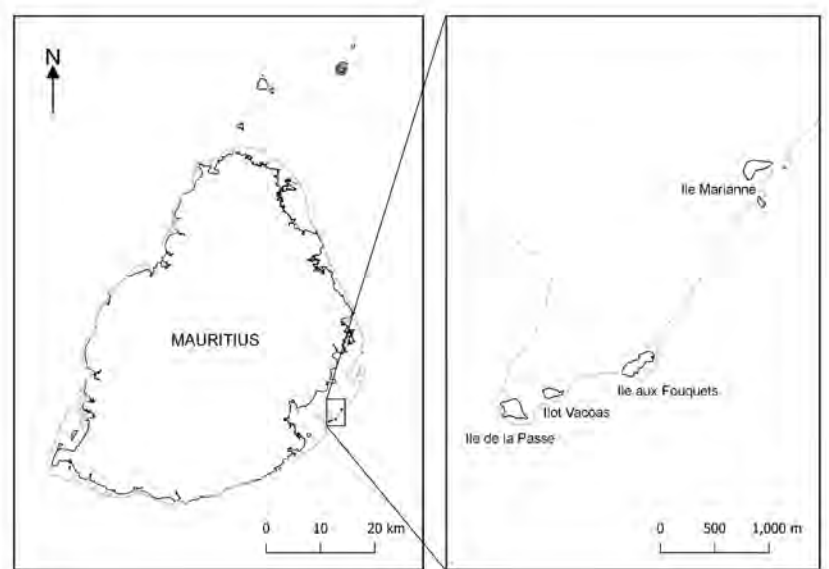
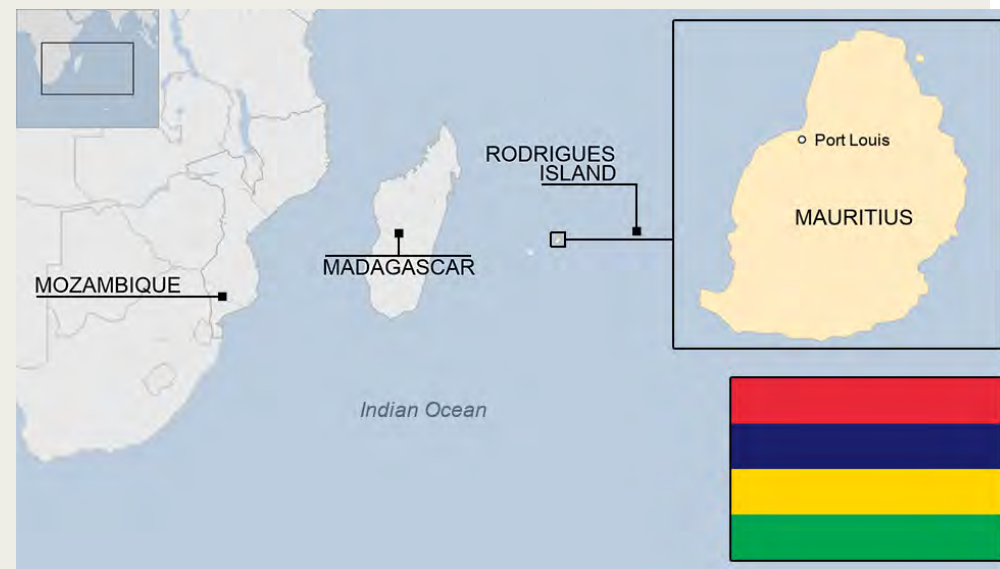
Ecological, Social and Political Context

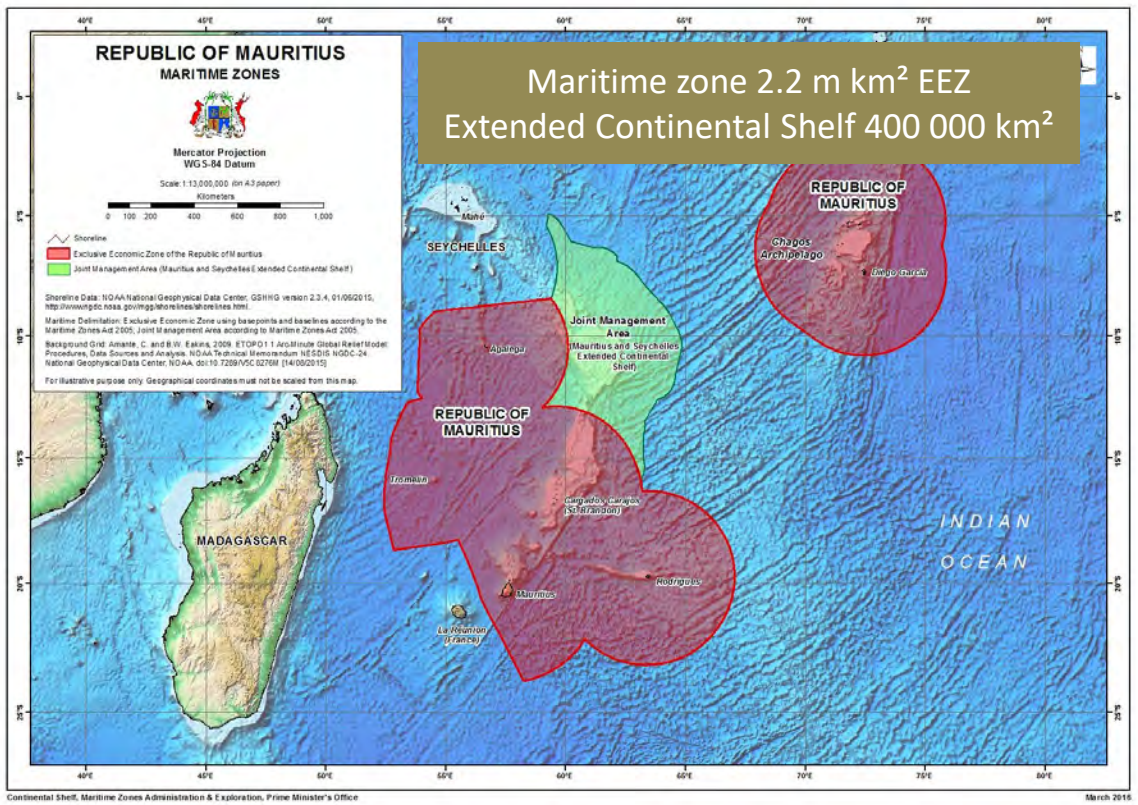


The Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot



Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot





Demographics & Geography (2026 Projections)

Population: 1.265 million

Life Expectancy: 79.32 years

Land Area: 2,040 km²

Density: ~623–638 people per km²

GDP Growth (Real): 3.5%

GDP Per Capita: Estimated at USD 13,362

Tourism: 1,480,000

Adult Literacy Rate (15+): Females and males (92.8% and 96.3% respectively)

Total Connections: 2.25 million (178% of the total population)

Broadband Connectivity: 97.1%

Passport Index/Henley: Rank: 27th

African countries by GDP per capita

Highest income (upper tier)

Seychelles

Mauritius

Gabon

Botswana

Equatorial Guinea

Libya

South Africa

HDI Value: 0.806 (classified as Very High)

Global Rank: 73rd out of 193 countries

Regional Rank: Top performer in Africa (alongside Seychelles)

Development Category: Very High Human Development

Mauritius, Pristine



Rodrigues, Pristine



J.P. K. 2001





Dutch on Mauritius, 1602



French Huguenots on Rodrigues, 1691

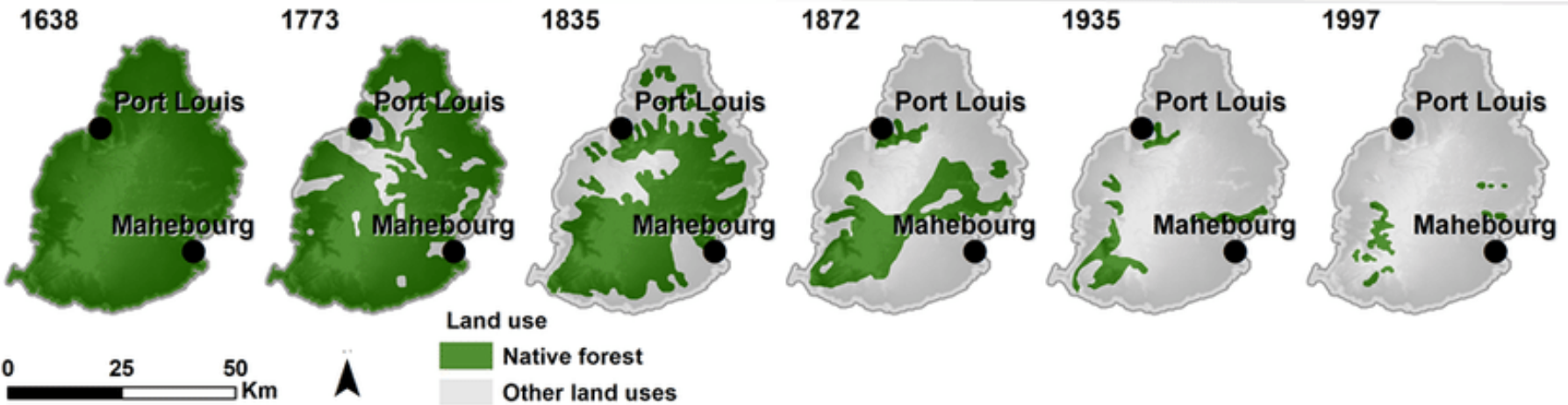
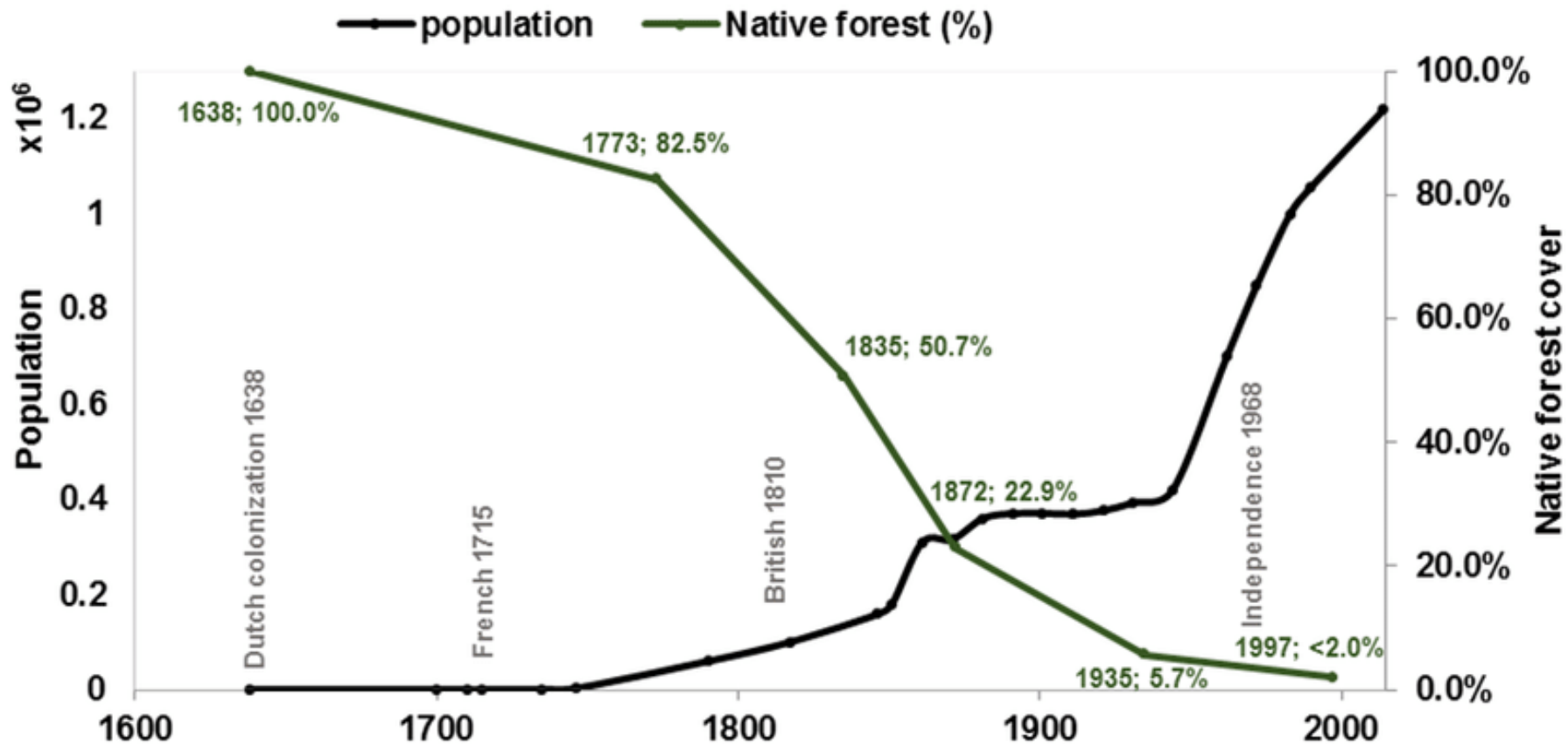


Extinction

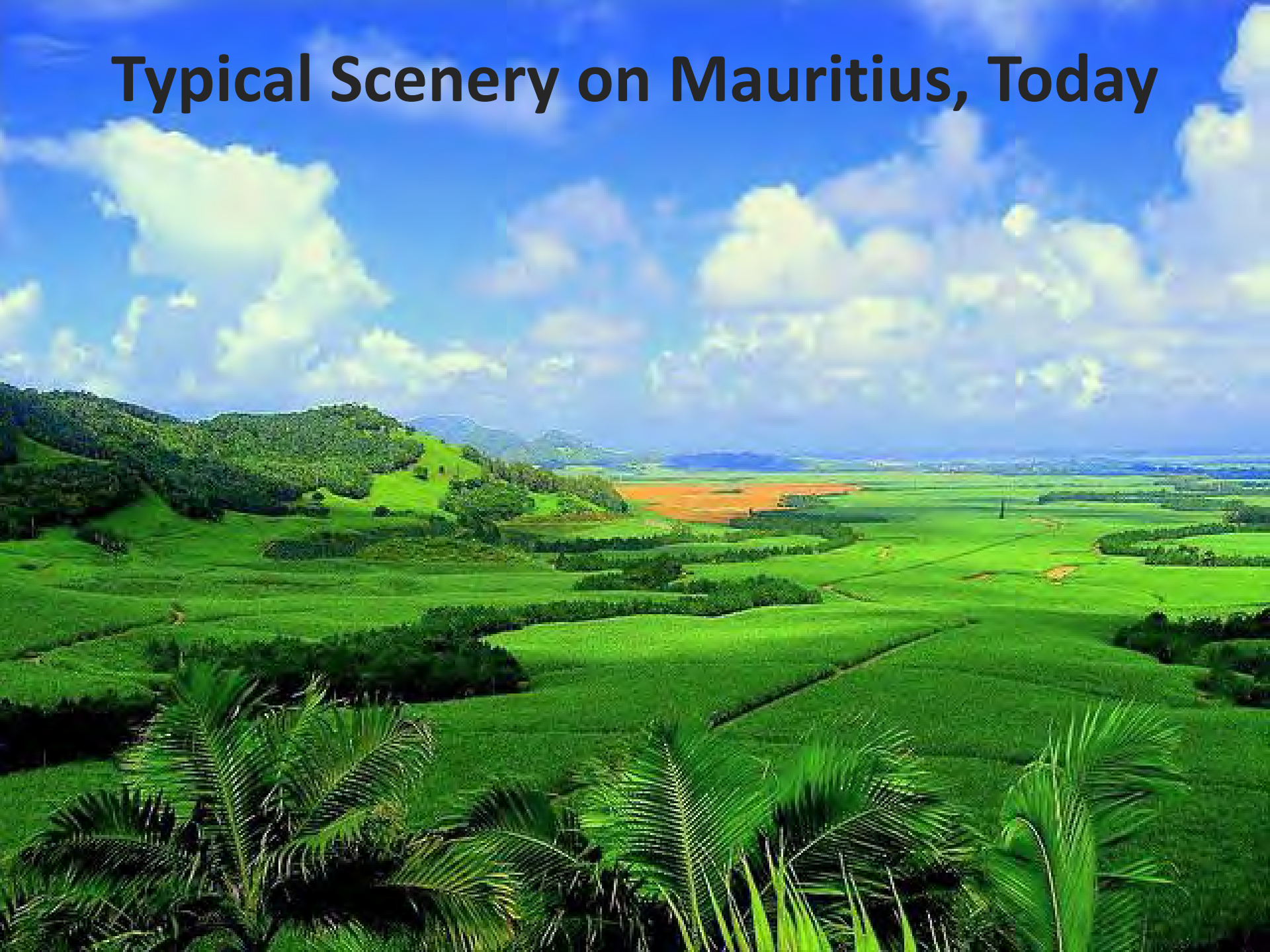


‘As dead as a Dodo’

First time Man realised
that he’d caused the
extinction of a species.



Typical Scenery on Mauritius, Today



Typical Scenery on Rodrigues, Today

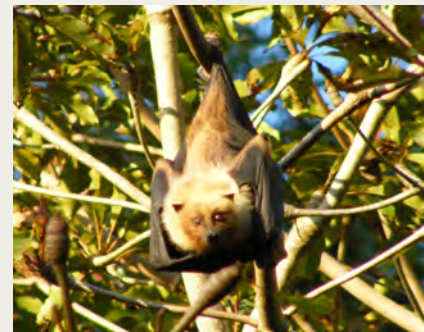
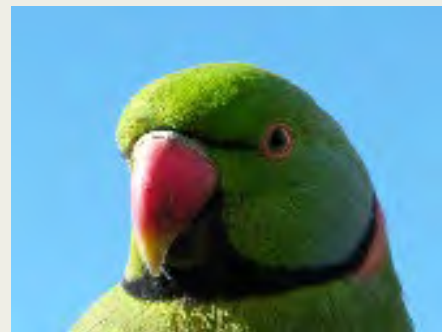


In the 1970's, several species were on the verge of extinction and habitats seriously at risk (e.g. Round Island, Ile aux Aigrettes).



Records of Rarity

- Rarest bird of prey – Mauritius Kestrel, 1974 (4 known birds, incl. 1 breeding female)
- Rarest pigeon – Pink Pigeon (12-20 birds in the late 1970's)
- Rarest parrot – Echo Parakeet (15-25 birds in the 1970's)
- + Rarest Fruit Bat – Rodrigues Fruit Bat (c. 75 individuals in 1974)
- + Rarest reptile? – Round Island Boa, 1978 (c. 75 individuals)



Why? Organization's Vision for the Landscape, Past and Present





Round Island

1972

Present



Ile aux Aigrettes

1960s

Present



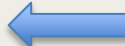
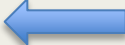
Anse Quitor, Rodrigues

1960s

Present



Conservation Management Areas, end 1980s-mid 1990s



Black River Gorges National Park Mauritius



How?: The Way We Work



Five Stages of Species Restoration



- **Know your species**
- **Understand Limiting Factors**
- **Intensive Management
(critically endangered species)**
- **Population Management
(addressing controlling factors)**
- **Monitoring and research**



Pink Pigeon

Nesoenas mayeri



Mauritius Kestrel

Falco punctatus



Echo Parakeet

*Alexandrinus
(Psittacula) eques*

Passerines (Mauritius and Rodrigues)



Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra*



Mauritius Olive White-eye
Zosterops chloronothos



Rodrigues Fody *Foudia flavicans*



Rodrigues Warbler
Acrocephalus rodericanus



Captive breeding



Reintroduction



Predator control



Supplementary feeding



Nest box provision



Monitoring



**Habitat
restoration**



Research

Restoration of Ile aux Aigrettes



Invasive Alien Species



Leucaena leucocephala

Restoration



Restoration of Round Island



The Palm Savannah



Photo C. Jouanin

1972 to present



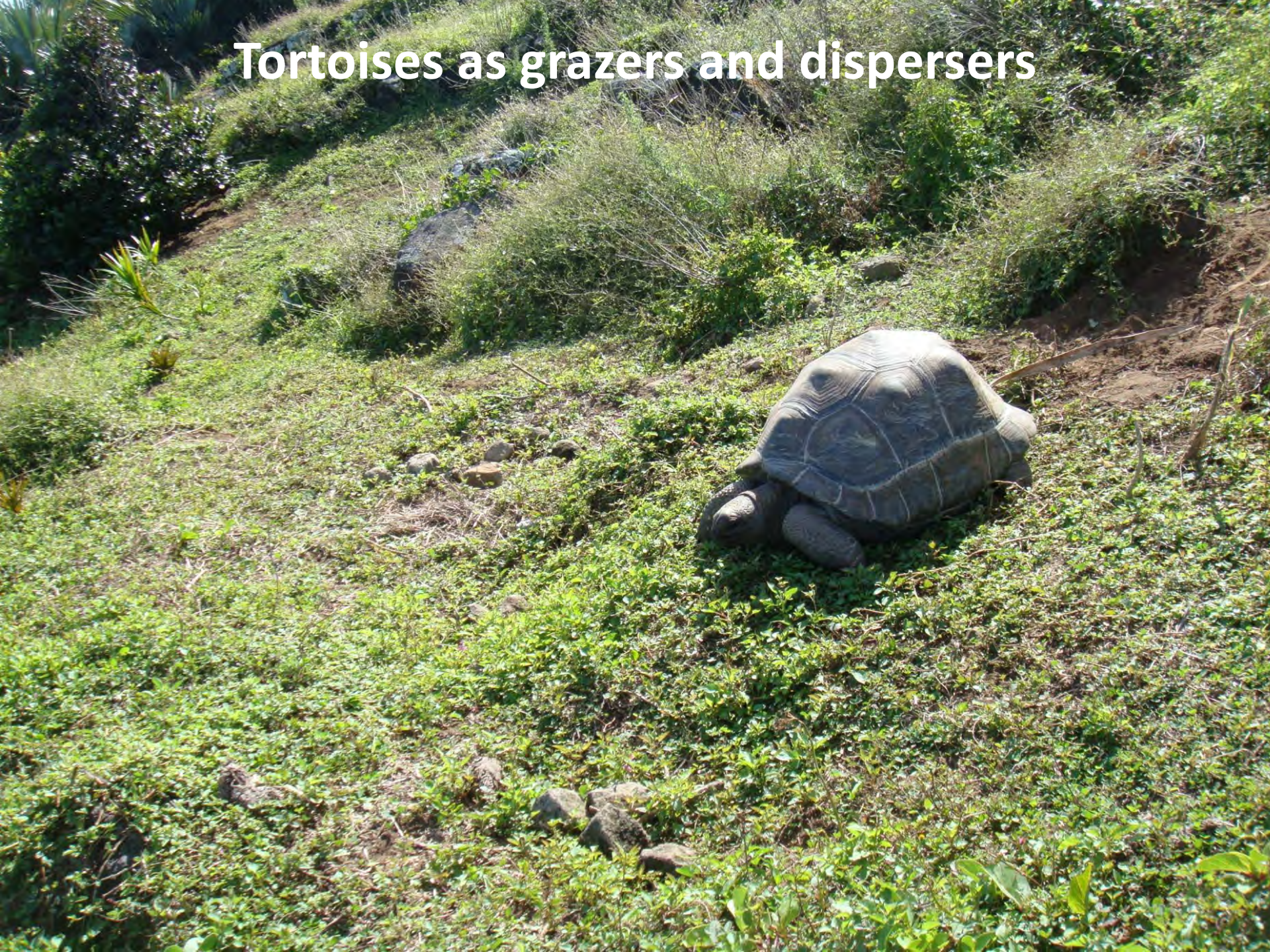
Goat and Rabbit Hunters in 1973



Seabird poaching, 1996



Tortoises as grazers and dispersers

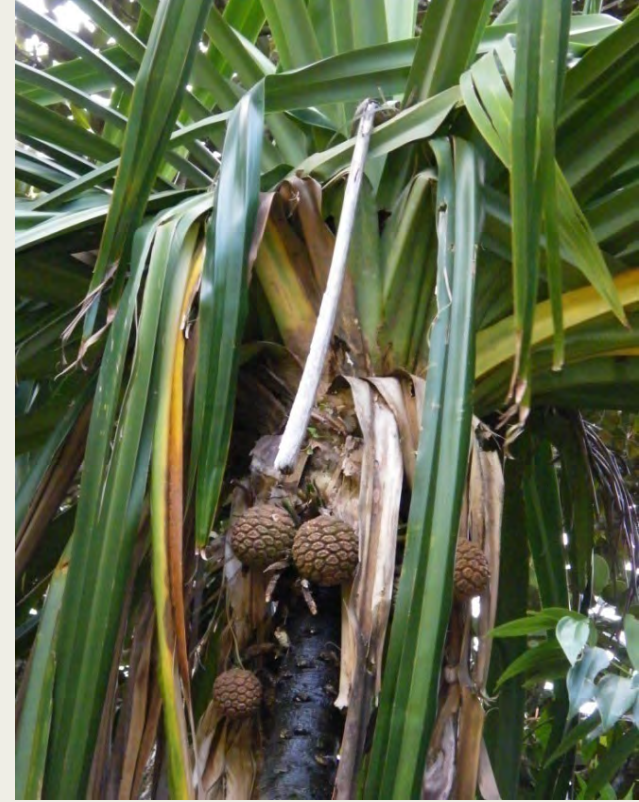






Reptile translocation

Rare Plants



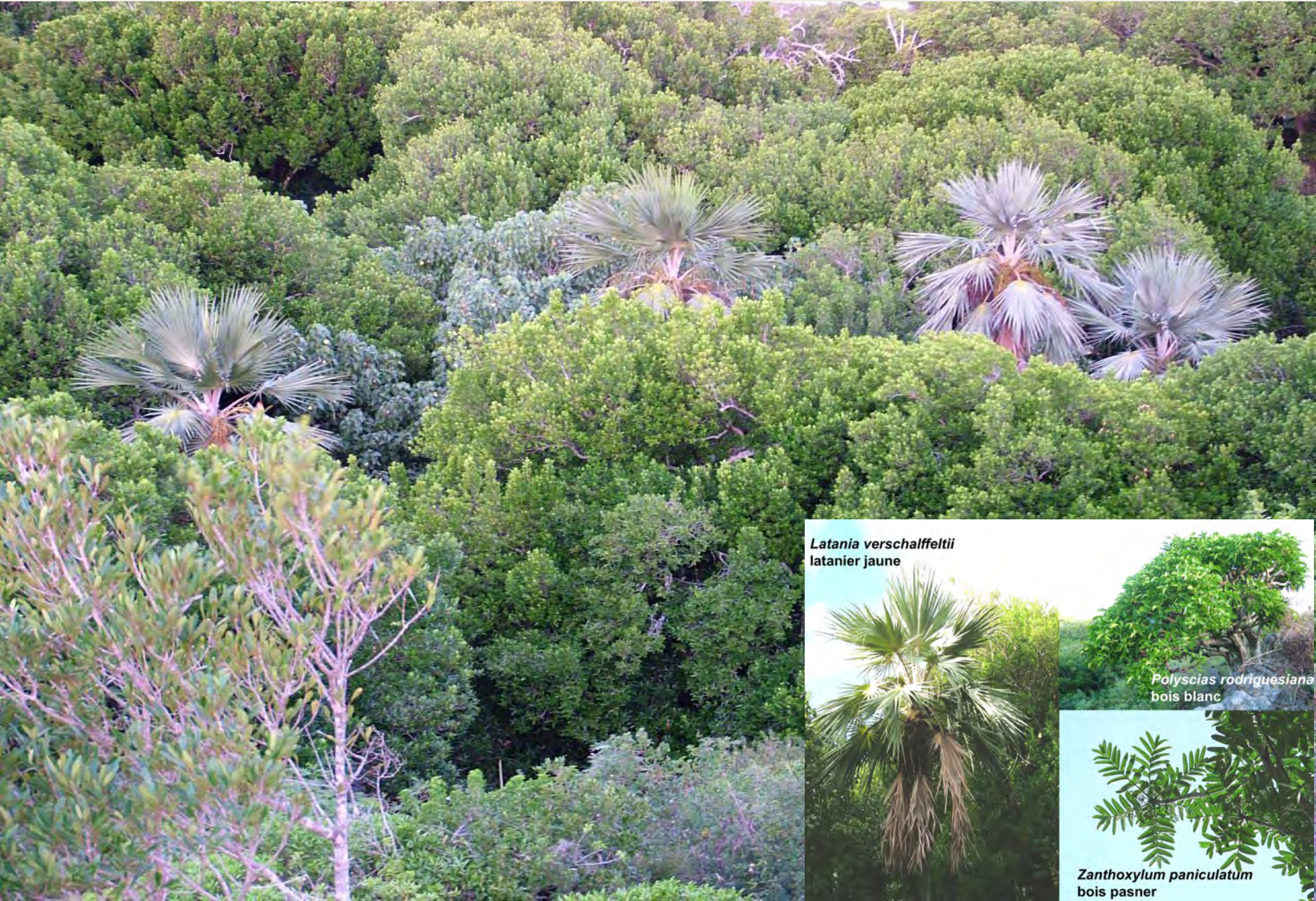
Endemic plant exploration and propagation



café marron
Ramosmania rodriguesii



Anse Quitor Nature Reserve



Latania verschaffeltii
latanier jaune



Polyscias rodriguesiana
bois blanc



Zanthoxylum paniculatum
bois pasner

<100, 1974

c. 20 000, 2020

> 25 000, 2025

Rodrigues Fruit Bat



Environmental Education Programme



Reach out to school children of all ages



Mauritius Fruit Bat

Human-Wildlife Conflict Resolution







Rescue of Reptiles from South East Islets

Threatened geckos returned to the wild five years after being rescued from oil spill in Mauritius

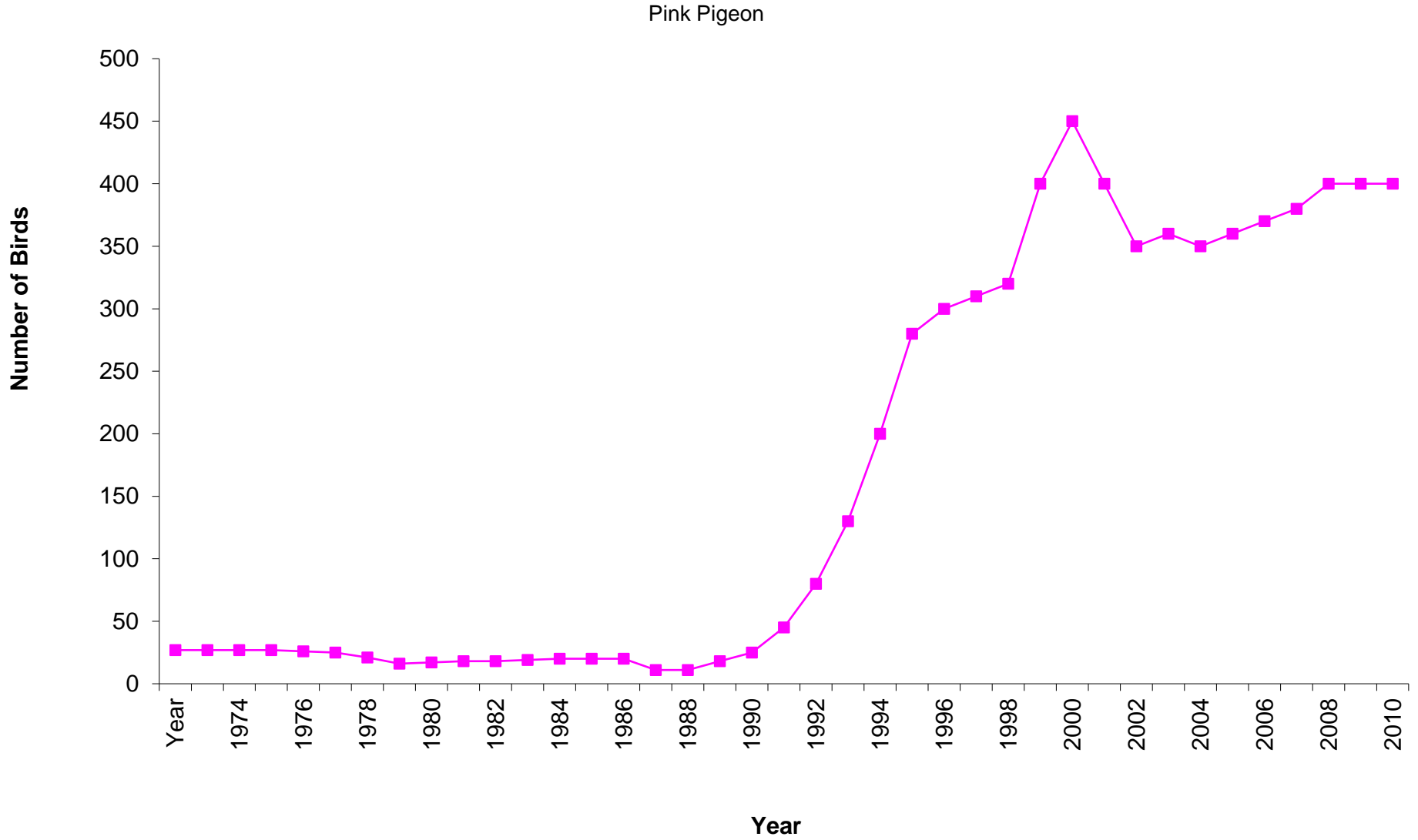
July 22, 2025 in Charity & Community, Education, Jersey News, Lifestyle News



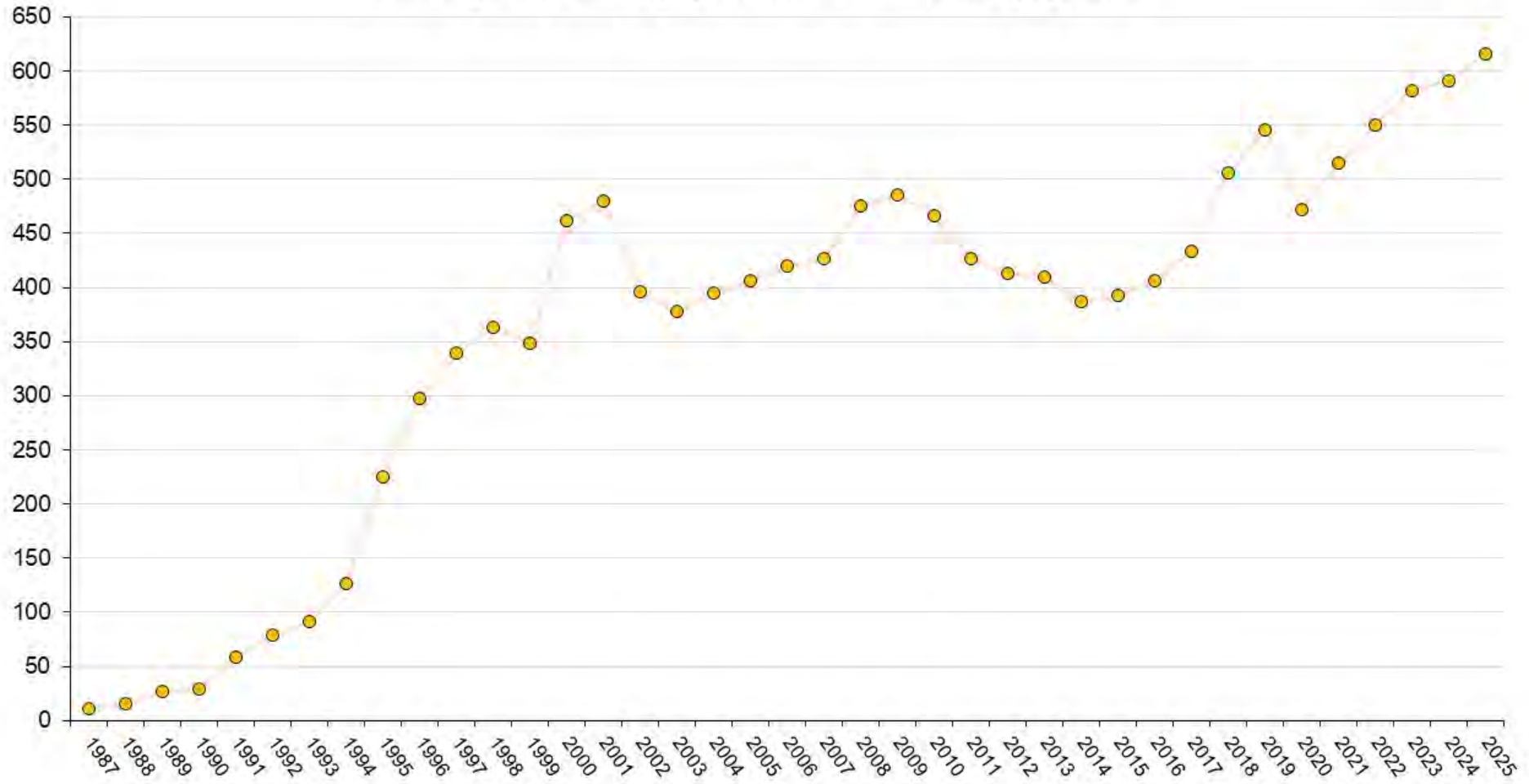
What?: Remarkable outcomes in ecological, social and economic terms: impacts on nature and people



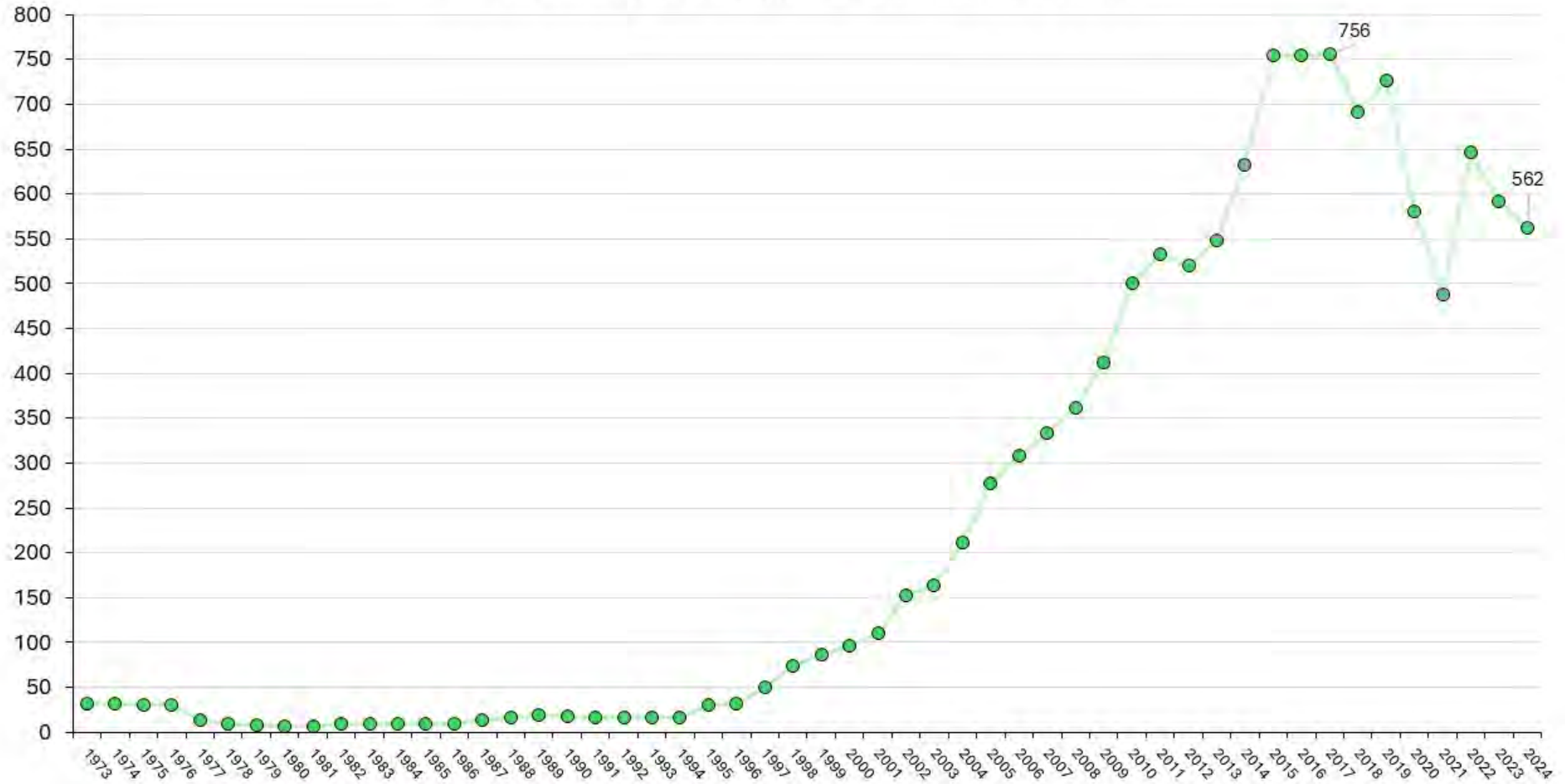
Population growth of the Pink Pigeon



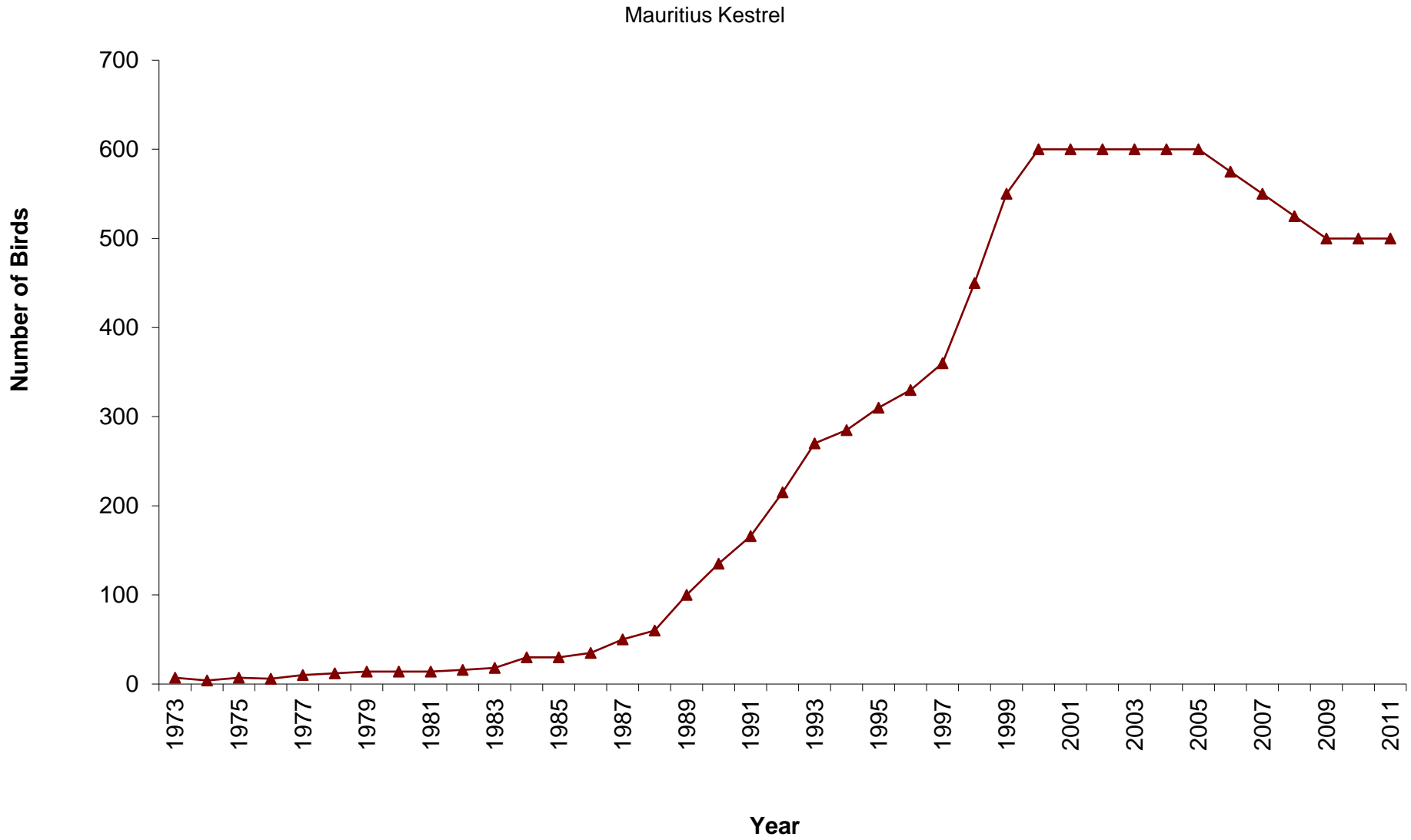
Pink Pigeon possible population - Mauritius wild population



Echo Parakeet population trend 1973/1974 to 2024/2025



Population growth of the Mauritius Kestrel



20 animal species on the road to recovery: IUCN Red List update



Shreya Dasgupta

16 Oct 2025 [Global](#)

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POPULATION TREND: TELFAIR'S SKINK



1975:

5,000



2012:

49,612



POPULATION TREND: ROUND ISLAND BOA



2012:
1,446



1975:
50



2009:
25,700



2003
2,000



**Declared National Bird of Mauritius
on 12th March 2022**



Black River Gorges National Park Mauritius



Mauritius' first National Park in 1994, 6,574 Ha

Man and Biosphere Reserve (1977), expanded in 2020 to 8,582 Ha



31 bird species have been saved from extinction during 1984-2004. 5 are from Mauritius and Rodrigues! (Mauritius Kestrel, Pink Pigeon, Echo Parakeet, Rodrigues Fody, Rodrigues Warbler).

In: How many bird extinctions have we prevented? Butchart, S.H., et al. , 2006, How many bird extinctions have we prevented?, Oryx, 40.

Hoffmann M et al. (2010) The Impact of Conservation on the Status of the World's Vertebrate. *Science* 330, 6010. DOI: 10.1126/science. 1194442

Young P R, et al. (2014). Accounting for conservation: Using the IUCN Red List to evaluate the impact of a conservation organisation. *Biological Conservation*. 180.



Policy analysis

An organizational framework for effective conservation organizations

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ARTICLE INFO

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Institutional ecology
Leadership
Organizations
Communication
Intrinsic value

ABSTRACT

There is a scarcity of studies on how to design conservation organizations to improve biodiversity outcomes. We use information from four conservation organizations (African Parks, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, and Rewilding Argentina) to update and describe an organizational framework for effective conservation organizations. This framework includes (1) clear and shared proactive vision inspired by innovative on-site senior leadership; (2) high contextuality based on shared leadership, on-the-ground administrative autonomy, and practice-based learning; (3) outstanding and well-communicated conservation outcomes; (4) linkages across-scales to access varied types of resources (i.e. political, social and economic); and (5) long-term financial viability. All these attributes form a dynamic and self-reinforcing “virtuous cycle,” with each attribute being both cause and effect at different moments in time, though the whole process is jump-started by on-site senior leaders. We believe that our framework can help to identify key questions that will facilitate the design and assessment of private and public conservation organizations towards improved effectiveness.




Ile aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve 🌿

4,6 ●●●●○ (686 avis) N° 7 sur 271 activités à Île Maurice



- ✓ Trip Advisor Travelers Choice Best of the Best Award 2022, 23, 24, 25
- ✓ Ranked within top 25 Things to Do in the African Region and 7th out of 271 Things to Do in Mauritius

Grande Montagne Nature Reserve

4.9  (179 reviews) #1 of 15 things to do in Rodrigues Island

**Trip Advisor's
Traveller's Choice 2025
(also in 2020, 2021,
2023 and 2024)**

**Trip Expert's 2025
Experts' Choice Award
(also in 2021, 2023, 2024)**



Challenges and Opportunities



Challenges

Funding



Invasive Alien Species: rats, cats, monkeys, pigs, deer, parakeets, mynah -----

Asian House Crow *Corvus splendens*



Rodrigues



Green Iguana

Indian Ring-necked Parakeet



Destruction of wetlands
Destruction of caves
Forest loss on Mauritius



Human-Bat Conflict



Pink Pigeon Road Kills

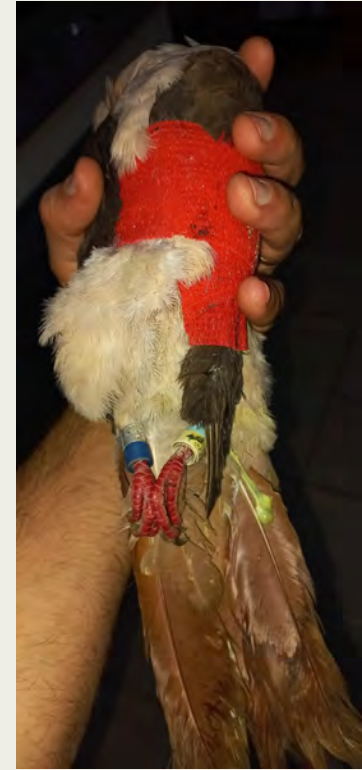
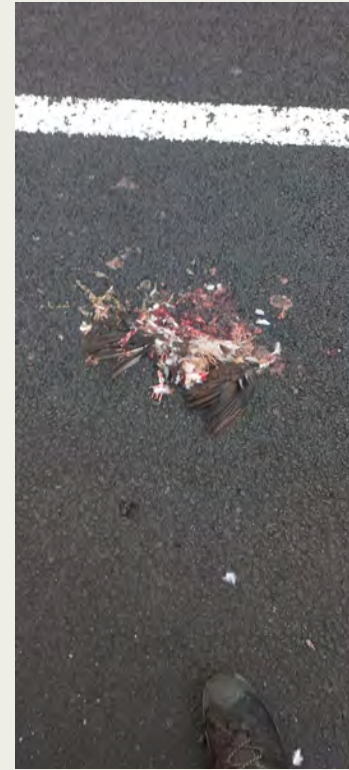


MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Sion Henshaw : «La mortalité du pigeon des mares à Pétrin est alarmante»



Sion Henshaw, responsable de la faune chez MWF.



Administrative delays and blockages

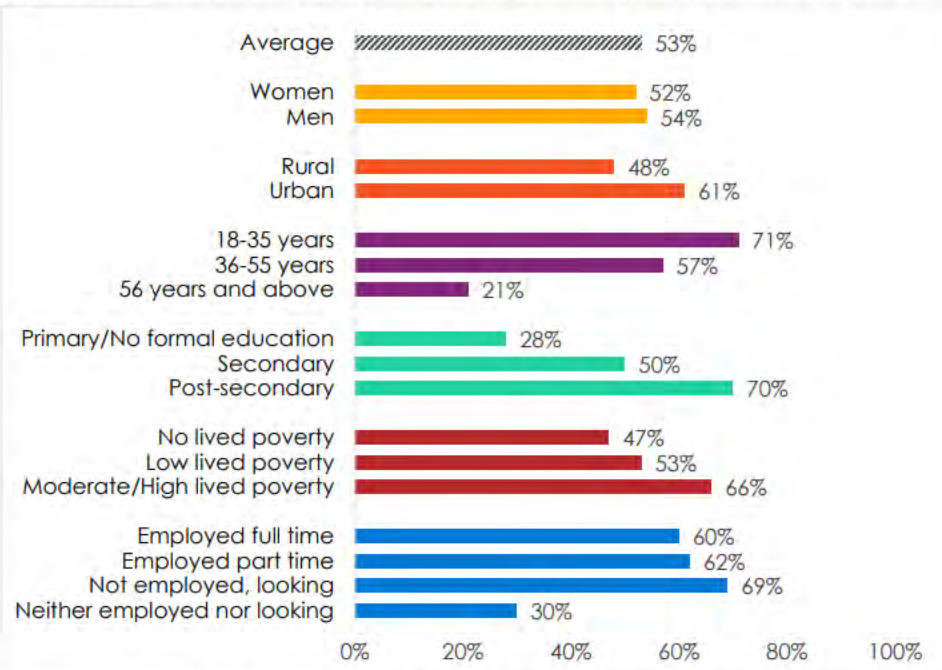


Human Resources



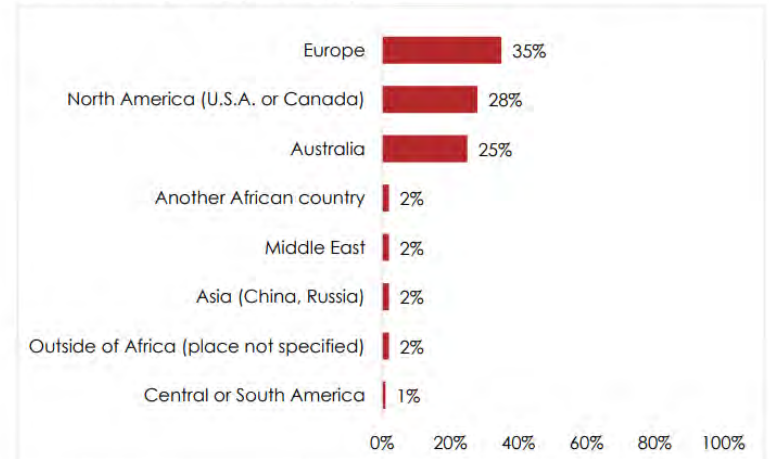


Figure 9: Considered emigrating | by demographic group | Mauritius | 2024



Respondents were asked: How much, if at all, have you considered moving to another country to live? (% who say "a little bit," "somewhat," or "a lot")

Figure 11: Preferred destination for emigration | among respondents who have considered emigrating | Mauritius | 2024



Respondents who say they have considered emigrating were asked: If you were to move to another country, where would you be most likely to go? (Respondents who say they have not considered emigrating are excluded.)

In 2023 alone, more than 5,000 young people migrated to Canada

Lessons learnt



Hang in there! Conservation is a marathon!



Ramosmania rodriguessi
Café marron

Hang in there!
Build upon
your failures!



Hang in there!
Not everyone will be on-board!



'We might abandon the Mauritius Kestrel to its all-but inevitable fate and utilise the funds to proffer stronger support of any of the hundreds of threatened bird species that are more likely to survive.'

Norman Myers, The Sinking Ark, 1979

Hang in there!
Fundraising is never-ending!



Hang in there! But inspire others!



Your (ex-)staff are your greatest allies!
Treat them well!



Conservation Diplomacy

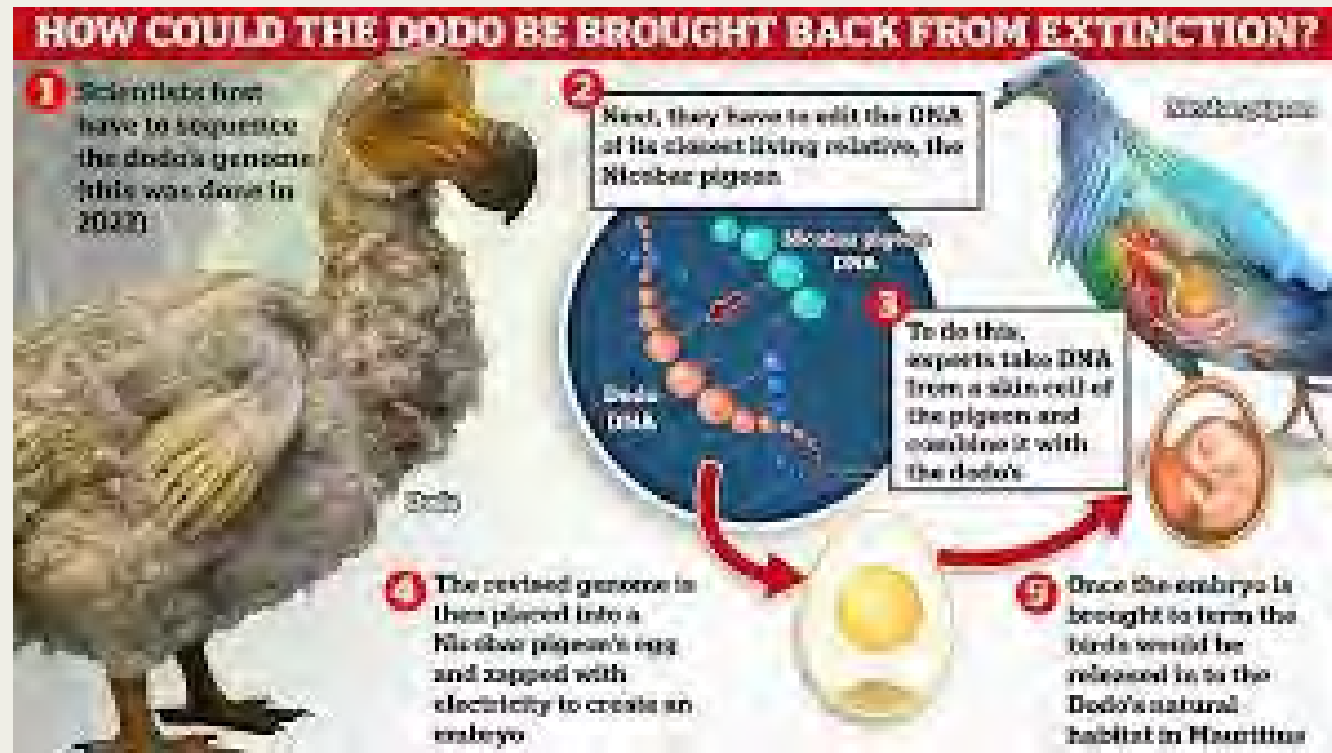


Timing must be right!



Gis

Embrace technology!



A close-up photograph of a flowering branch, likely from a shrub or small tree. The branch is covered in vibrant pink blossoms with five petals and prominent stamens. Interspersed among the flowers are several small, round, green buds. The leaves are dark green, oval-shaped, and have a slightly glossy texture. The background is a soft-focus view of more branches and leaves, with a hint of a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a warm, pleasant day.

**Thank you,
Merci,
Gracias.**