

# MAURITIAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

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Indianapolis Prize – award celebrating outstanding achievement in animal conservation, March 2012

## MWF's Scientific Director, Professor Carl Jones' work recognized worldwide

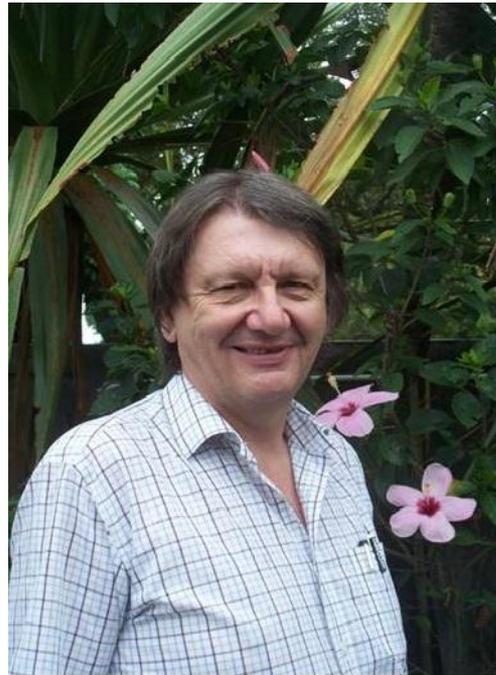


**Professor Carl Jones** is one of the six outstanding conservationists in contention for the \$100,000 Indianapolis Prize to be awarded at the Indianapolis Prize Gala presented by Cummins Inc., on September 29, 2012.

Born and raised in Carmarthen, Wales, United Kingdom, Carl received his undergraduate degree at the University of London and both his masters of science and his doctorate from the University of Wales in Swansea. His work commitments are currently split between Wales, Jersey (Channel Islands) and Mauritius, known worldwide as the only home of the most famous extinct species in the world – the Dodo.

Faced with challenging field conditions, limited funding, government bureaucracy, scepticism of colleagues, none of these discouraged Carl, scientific director of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and international conservation fellow at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust.

It's because of his tireless dedication to preserving the ecology and native species of these small, remote islands in the Indian Ocean that a dozen species have been saved from certain extinction including the Mauritius Kestrel, Pink Pigeon and Echo Parakeet whose effective populations were less than ten and now range in the hundreds.



Carl has mentored and trained innumerable young Mauritians and conservationists from a host of countries, stimulated and directed research of world-class quality, revitalized over a dozen degraded islets, controlled the spread of invasive species, and reintroduced endemic plants, reptiles and birds. He has also pioneered techniques of applied population management to reverse the decline of the most endangered species – many of which have been developed using captive common species as models.

Carl is an outstanding naturalist and scientist, constantly curious, innovative and focused, a mine of information and insights, and collaborative. He continues work on the restoration of the Mascarene Islands' ecosystem – which is no mean feat.

The other finalists are:

Steven C. Amstrup, Ph.D., senior scientist at Polar Bears International;  
Markus Borner, Ph.D., head of the Africa Program for the Frankfurt Zoological Society;  
Rodney Jackson, Ph.D., founder and director of the Snow Leopard Conservancy;  
Russell A. Mittermeier, Ph.D., president of Conservation International; and  
Patricia Wright, Ph.D., director at the Institute for the Conservation of Tropical Environments.

To learn more about each of the finalists, how you can support their work, and the Indianapolis Prize, visit [indianapolisprize.org](http://indianapolisprize.org).

## Three-year project to survey endemic passerines



Above: Olive White-eye  
Left: Mauritius Fody  
Photos: J. Mittermeier

In September 2011, MWF started a three-year project to survey the endemic passerines of Mauritius, with the aim of reviewing their current distribution and to obtain population estimates for the species. It is being conducted with the support of the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) and Forestry Services. The first year of the project focused on the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye, and the second season will focus on the Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike, the Mauritius Paradise Flycatcher and the Mauritius Bulbul. The third year will be used to obtain more accurate numbers and distribution for these different species.

These are the first island-wide surveys for more than ten years, with the last being conducted in 2001. The distributions of the Mauritius Fody and the Mauritius Olive White-eye were obtained by using territory mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Population estimates were obtained from territory mapping and counting pairs. Mist-netting and ringing of adult birds were undertaken when possible, to facilitate territory mapping. The surveys took place in south-west Mauritius, incorporating the escarpment south of the central plateau and surrounding areas of native and non-native vegetation, including the national park and surrounding hunting lands.

Preliminary results show that both the Mauritius Fody and Olive White-eye have increased their distribution compared to 2001. For the Mauritius Fody their distribution is closely related to the presence of pine trees. Preliminary results for population estimates for both bird species show that numbers have also increased compared to 2001. It is encouraging that distribution and population size have increased for both species.

## The first Orange-tailed Skinks bred in captivity

*Programme supported by the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation & the National Parks and Conservation Service*

Last year the reptile team collected 22 Orange-tailed Skinks from a translocated population on Gunner's Quoin to establish a small captive population at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's Herpetological Department. This action came after the team discovered that introduced shrews had caused the extinction of the Orange-tailed Skink on Flat Island. Fortunately, the team pre-empted total disaster by translocating individuals to Gabriel Island and Gunner's Quoin.

However, the success of the translocations remains unknown, partly owing to the difficulty in monitoring this elusive sub-fossorial lizard at very low densities, under the thick foliage of their new habitats. Until the abundance of the skinks in the translocated populations increases to a level that success can be determined, the team have installed a safety net by initiating the captive population.



*One of the first five captive-born Orange-tailed Skinks*

However, Orange-tailed Skinks have never been maintained in captivity before and little is known about their reproductive biology. The reptile team therefore supplied information about critical ecological requirements, such as microhabitat and dietary preferences prior to taking the skinks into captivity. The team has also just collected remote data loggers that they placed within the skink's preferred habitat and microhabitat on Flat Island. These data loggers were set to record hourly temperatures for a year within the soil, leaf litter and under logs, on the ground and the air temperature 1m above ground. These readings will be used to manage the temperatures in captivity for optimal activity, growth and reproductive output. Nevertheless, Durrell's herpetological staff have been maintaining the skinks in peak condition over the past year and have just been rewarded with the first baby Orange-tailed Skinks ever to hatch in captivity. In recent weeks five skinks have hatched with another two soon to arrive. These new additions raise hope for the survival of this unique Mauritian animal that is on the edge of extinction.

## Photographer of the month



### Laura Gallagher – March 2012

Laura came to Mauritius from Ireland two years ago as a PhD assistant and last year she joined the team helping to conserve the vulnerable Mauritius Kestrel.

Laura submitted a photograph of a female Mauritius Kestrel *Falco punctatus* protecting her nest cavity, taken at Bassin des Aigrettes in the lower Black River Gorges.



### Melissa Wynn – April 2012

Melissa is a graduate ecologist who came to Mauritius from Australia seven months ago. She is a volunteer on the Mauritius Reptile Translocation Project, helping to conserve endemic Mauritian reptiles.

Melissa submitted a photograph of a juvenile Guenther's Gecko *Phelsuma guentheri*, taken in the palm savannah on Round Island, for April's MWF photographer of the month competition.

Volunteers and field staff who wish to participate in the photographer of the month competition for the coming months can submit **one** photograph by email to [it@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:it@mauritian-wildlife.org) or on a memory stick that can be given to MWF's IT officer, Riad Rujad. MWF is also looking for photographs for a display in the IAA shop showing staff and volunteers at work in the field.

## Member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

At the 77th IUCN Council meeting held in New Delhi, India, on 14-17 November 2011, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation was admitted as a member of the Union in the category of national non-governmental organization.

Membership will allow the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to benefit from exchanges with a large pool of scientists and managers and provide us and our staff with access to the latest thinking and techniques in conservation, so that our actions on the ground to save species and habitats are as effective as possible.

Founded in 1948, the IUCN brings together states, government agencies and a diverse range of NGOs in a unique world partnership: over 1,000 members in all, spread across some 160 countries.

The IUCN seeks to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. A central secretariat coordinates the IUCN programme and serves the union membership, representing their views on the world stage and providing them with the strategies, services, scientific knowledge and technical support they need to achieve their goals. Through its six commissions, IUCN draws together almost 11,000 expert volunteers in project teams and action groups, focusing in particular on species and biodiversity conservation and the management of habitats and natural resources.

The Union has helped many countries to prepare national conservation strategies, and demonstrates the application of its knowledge through the field projects it supervises. Operations are increasingly decentralized and are carried forward by an expanding network of regional and country offices, located principally in developing countries.

IUCN builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.



MWF Rodrigues – 8 November 2011

## Celebrating 15 years



Although MWF has been present in Rodrigues for over 25 years, the opening of the MWF Rodrigues office only came later, in 1996. On 8 November 2011, MWF Rodrigues celebrated its first 15 years in Rodrigues with an *action de grâce* church service in the morning, followed by an official ceremony and an exhibition showing the accomplishments that MWF Rodrigues has achieved over the past 15 years.

The chairperson of MWF, Mr Tim Taylor, and executive director, Mrs Debby de Chazal, were there to celebrate this occasion with the MWF Rodrigues team. The official ceremony included a presentation on the history of MWF Rodrigues and its projects, along with a testimony from both a present and past member of the staff. The Chief Commissioner, Mr Gaetan Jabeemissar, GOSK, and Mr Tim Taylor spoke about their appreciation of the MWF Rodrigues work and together cut the celebratory cake.

International Volunteer Day – December 2011

## Port Louis Waterfront

MWF participated in an event held at the Port Louis Waterfront on Friday 2 and Saturday 3 December to celebrate International Volunteers Day. This was organized by Volonter pou Moris and is a United Nations Volunteers initiative. It marked the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

Two of our Mauritian staff who began by volunteering for MWF were present to talk about their work and experiences and answer questions from visitors to the exhibition about MWF and volunteering for MWF.

## Rodrigues

MWF Rodrigues works regularly with various volunteer groups who help with the conservation work in the nursery, nature reserves and on bat surveys. During 2011, volunteers gave over 500 work-days of service towards conservation in Rodrigues. For the third year in a row, MWF Rodrigues organized a Volunteer Appreciation Day on the International Volunteer Day on 5 December.

This year, MWF Rodrigues took its volunteers on a walk through the forest ending at Mourouk beach, with a half-day of activities including lunch and a ceremony where the volunteers each received a certificate of appreciation.

Salon des ONG – December 2011

## Participation in Salon des ONG



MWF participated in a *Salon des ONG* hosted by the Rodrigues Council of Social Services (RCSS) on Friday 9 and Saturday 10 December 2011 at the bus station in Port Mathurin, Rodrigues.

Approximately 30 NGOs participated in the event, including 5 from Mauritius. The *Salon des ONG* was organized as part of the 40th anniversary of RCSS. It was an opportunity to show the work of MWF and its involvement in the community.

Kew Gardens, London, UK – 9 January 2012

## Talk by Professor Carl Jones

The subject of Prof. Carl Jones' talk was *Rebuilding paradise: conservation on Mauritius, saving species and rebuilding ecosystems*. He began working on Mauritian species in the late 1970s and is best known for having been a key player in saving the Mauritian Kestrel, thought by some to be a hopeless case, as well as other fauna and flora. His involvement with Mauritius has continued to this day and his experience in conservation issues, particularly regarding saving endangered species from extinction, is extensive.

His talk was listened to by an audience of about 150 people. As well as talking about bird and other fauna conservation projects he expanded on the importance of habitat restoration (of particular interest at Kew) and on many ongoing projects in Mauritius and Rodrigues. He also talked about the key role played by volunteers and – after the lecture – received a number of approaches from Kew diploma students (arguably with the world's best horticultural qualification) seeking more information about such opportunities.

The talk was organized by the Kew Mutual Improvement Society which is run by the students at Kew. They host lectures covering a wide range of topics on Monday evenings from September to March all of which are open to the general public.

MWF offering endemic plants to AFD's guests – March 2012

## AFD's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary



*Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, receiving an endemic plant from Mrs Stephanie Chaleon, AFD's project officer*

L'Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD) organized a series of events to celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From February 28 to March 10 the French Institute of Mauritius hosted the exhibition *Objectif Développement*.

Mauritian photographers were invited to share their view on the seven themes of the exhibition Magnum. MWF's volunteer photographer Jacques de Speville exhibited two photos, one of the Olive White-eye and another of the Upland Forest Day Gecko *Phelsuma rosagularis*. Videos on the *Maurice Ile Durable* participatory workshops, panels and De Gaulle's Bank were also presented. The exhibition ran in the French schools in Mauritius.

On March 7, an evening function was held with the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and over 150 personalities from the public and private sectors. Laurence Breton-Moyet (director of the local branch), Yves Boudot (director of AFD), Jean-François Dobbelle (French ambassador to Mauritius), and the Prime Minister of Mauritius all praised the contribution of AFD to the development of Mauritius and enumerated the main lines of cooperation France-Mauritius. After the ceremony and a tour of the exhibition, a reception was held. As the guests departed they were each given a plant endemic to Mauritius. These plants came from Ile aux Aigrettes, thanks to the MWF flora team !

Rodrigues – 21 March 2012

## Celebrating World Forest Day



Visiting Grande Montagne Nature Reserve



Schoolchildren presenting poems and slams on the occasion of World Forest Day

World Forest Day is celebrated annually on 21 March to commemorate the contribution and value of forests and forestry to the community. Forests cover over 30% of the earth's surface, are one of the most important storehouses of biological diversity on land and play a key role in regulating our planet's climate. For World Forest Day 2012 in Rodrigues, an official ceremony was held at Grande Montagne Nature Reserve in which the Chief Commissioner, Mr Serge Clair, GCSK, and Commissioner for Forestry, Mr Richard Payendee, addressed the public, and different poems and slams were presented by nearby schools.

On this occasion, the Interpretation Centre at Grande Montagne was renamed Louis Dominique Farla Interpretation Centre after a dedicated forester who worked towards the conservation in this nature reserve. Grande Montagne is one of the two mainland nature reserves in Rodrigues and has undergone restoration for over 15 years in order to recreate the native forest. From 1994 to 2011, over 145,000 native seedlings were planted at this site by MWF and the Forestry Services. For World Forest Day, MWF helped with the upgrading of the centre and led visits around Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.

Regional workshop in Mayotte – January 2012

## Workshop on invasive alien species in the Indian Ocean

The MWF Rodrigues administrator, Mrs Andrea Waterstone, participated in a workshop on invasive alien species (IAS) in the Indian Ocean, held in Mayotte, 23–26 January 2012.

The workshop was organized by the IUCN France and included four sub-workshops:

- (1) definition of a local strategy against invasive alien species (IAS)
- (2) putting in place a regional exchange network for the IAS in the Indian Ocean
- (3) biosecurity, and
- (4) agricultural activities and IAS.

Over 60 participants from 15 different countries, islands or organizations attended.

Bronzes return to Ile aux Aigrettes

## Bronzes of extinct species on show at the Blue Penny Museum now back on Ile aux Aigrettes



Life-size bronze of the extinct Broad-billed Parrot

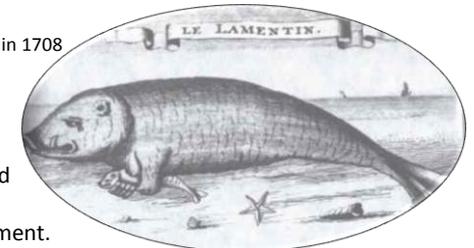
As part of the special exhibition which was organized by the Blue Penny Museum, MWF agreed to lend some of the bronzes of extinct animals, usually on view on Ile aux Aigrettes, to enable a wider public to view them. These bronzes represent species which lived in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion but became extinct due to man's actions.

The Blue Penny exhibition theme was the endemic fauna of the Mascarenes, much of which has now disappeared. As a dramatic centrepiece, casts of an adult and a baby dugong, the former measuring 3 metres in length, were on display. Dugongs were common in the waters of Mauritius and Rodrigues but now only exist elsewhere in the Indian Ocean (e.g. Australia, Madagascar, Comores, the Red Sea), where they are in decline.



Painting by Ria Winters of the extinct Mauritius Blue Pigeon

An illustration of the Dugong by François Leguat in 1708



Books, documents and other exhibits were on show to provide information, and dramatic visual support was provided by the paintings of Ria Winters under commission from Artists for the Environment.

The exhibits showcased the regrettable loss of animals of the Mascarenes and will hopefully have raised awareness of the need to prevent further extinctions.

Forthcoming event: Dodo Trail – July 2012

## Run and fund raise for MWF

Once again MWF is partnering with Dodo Travel and Tours for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Dodo Trail. Registration is now open and participants can choose to run for an endemic bird and sponsor the work of MWF in saving these endangered species from extinction.

The Dodo Trail crosses through forest areas that are the last refuge for some very rare and endangered endemic birds. Mauritius has undergone several waves of extinctions of flora and fauna, the most recent being during the 1990s and today the country is classified as having the third most endangered biodiversity in the world. It is also the country that has saved the most endangered species, thanks to our conservation efforts with our partners. However, native forests continue to deteriorate due to the invasion of exotic plant and animal species and destructive human activities. Conservation efforts must be supported to save the remaining endemic birds and their habitats.

### WHAT SHOULD THE RUNNER DO?

On registering for the Dodo Trail, the runner chooses one of five rare endemic birds:

- the Mauritius Kestrel
- the Pink Pigeon
- the Olive White-eye
- the Mauritius Fody
- the Echo Parakeet.

He/she then becomes a sponsored runner, and invites their friends, family, private companies, work colleagues or any other person to sponsor them and their chosen bird species.

The sponsored runner is requested to contact MWF immediately after registering for the Dodo Trail 2012 by email on [executive@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:executive@mauritian-wildlife.org) or on phone on **697 6117** to receive the necessary forms to collect donations from the sponsors.

Please visit [www.dodotrail.com](http://www.dodotrail.com) for more information.

**DODO TRAIL 2012**  
*Une traversée d'enfer vers le Paradis*  
**Soyez prêts pour la 2<sup>ème</sup> édition**  
 21 juillet 2012

**Les inscriptions sont ouvertes sur notre site:**  
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**Courez le Dodo Trail et parrainez un oiseau avec la MWF**

## Donations

- **To make a donation you can either:**

*Send a cheque or postal order, made payable to:*

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation,  
Grannum Road, Vacoas, Mauritius

*Or donate online at:*

<http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org>

*Or make a bank transfer to:*

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Please include your full name and contact details, including email address,  
with all donations and address your correspondence or questions to:

The Fundraising Manager, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation,  
Email: [fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org)

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

MWF is an accredited NGO (reg. charity number: 2143) for CSR activities (NEF reg. N/1070) ([www.nef.mu/csr](http://www.nef.mu/csr)) and is seeking funds for its 23 different projects in 2011/12. If you are part of a private company, various activities linked to Corporate Social Responsibility can be arranged with MWF, please contact us for more information by email on:

[fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org)

- **To make a donation, UK residents can either:**

*Contact Friends of Mauritian Wildlife*

UK Registered Charity No: 1080788: Contact: Robert J. Wesley,  
19 East Sheen Avenue, London SW14 8AR. Tel: 020 8876 1761  
Email: [fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:fundraising@mauritian-wildlife.org)

*Or donate online at:*

[www.justgiving.com/mauritianwildlife](http://www.justgiving.com/mauritianwildlife)

- **Ile aux Aigrettes**

You can book your ticket to visit the island by phone on: (230) 631 2396

Email: [reservation@mauritian-wildlife.org](mailto:reservation@mauritian-wildlife.org)

## Acknowledgements

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