






Wildlife - Mauritius - Flora & Fauna Rodrigues

This is the only organization in Mauritius to be exclusively concerned with the conservation of terrestrial endemic species. The organization works in close co-operation with the Mauritian Government, including the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The main objectives of the Foundation are:

-  To conserve and manage the indigenous flora and fauna of Mauritius and its territories.
-  To raise and supply funds necessary for the conservation projects undertaken.
-  To inform, educate and involve the Mauritian people in this vital work.

Rodrigues Island

Rodrigues Island covers 109 sq kms and is situated approximately 600 kms to the east of the main island of Mauritius. It has a population of approximately 35,000 people of mainly African and Creole origin. It is a tropical island known for its nature, simple living, and the kindness of its people. The original fauna and flora of Rodrigues is unique in the world. However, it has suffered from the onslaught of four centuries of degradation. Forest clearing, introduction of invasive plant and animal species, predators, exploitation of the island's natural resources, unsustainable agricultural practices, and soil erosion have led to the demise of much of Rodrigues rich biodiversity. Today, out of 45 surviving endemic plant species, the majority is critically threatened and seven species are down to less than 10 specimens in the wild. Well over 20 bird species and a host of plants are extinct. The three surviving vertebrates, the Rodrigues Fruit Bat, Rodrigues Fody, and Rodrigues Warbler are all listed on the IUCN Red List of endangered species. For almost 10 years, the NGO has been actively involved in conservation work on Rodrigues. Its staff has worked hard on the biology, ecology, and conservation of the Rodrigues Fruit Bat, which was once thought to be the rarest bat in the world. This conservation work has resulted in a significant increase in its population. They specialise and focus great effort on habitat and vegetation restoration on mainland Rodrigues and on two islands, Cocos and Sables. Cocos and Sables islets are a bird sanctuary where tens of thousands of seabirds nest. The NGO also has an extensive education programme that works in the primary and secondary schools throughout the island.





Wildlife - Mauritius - Flora & Fauna Rodrigues

Volunteering Experiences

You can play a part in this vital work to protect native and endemic plants and animals. You can contribute to this work bringing a range of skills, interests, time, and enthusiasm. You could find yourself surveying seabirds, monitoring the unique Rodrigues Fruit Bat, removing invasive plants, planting endemic species, and monitoring the plants in the nature reserves, collecting seeds throughout the island, working in the nursery, or participating in outreach and education activities in the schools and village groups.

Our Field Station

The Rodrigues Office is based at Solitude, in the north of Rodrigues, which is five minutes by bus from the capital of the island, Port Mathurin. There are regular buses for access to the office and to other places of interest. The Nursery is found approximately 100 m of the office where endemic plant propagation is done.

What will you do?

The NGO in Rodrigues is currently working on the projects below. Your work will vary depending on the season, the projects, and your interests.

Restoration of Grande Montagne & Anse Quito Nature Reserves

The NGO has been working to restore the two main-land nature reserves of Grande Montagne and Anse Quito since the 1980s. Grande Montagne Nature Reserve is located at high altitude (300-350m) and is relatively wet with a deep rich soil whereas Anse Quito Nature Reserve is located at sea-level in a relatively dry area and has a coralline substrate. The main habitat restoration work involves the removal of invasive species and the planting of nursery-grown native and endemic plant species.



Seabird work on Ile Cocos and Ile Sables

The NGO is restoring the vegetation of Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables, two sandbar islets that host tens of thousand of seabirds. Ile aux Cocos is a main tourist destination in Rodrigues. The main aspects of the project are vegetative restoration and seabird monitoring. The four main seabird species monitored are the Fairy Tern, Sooty Tern, Common Noddy, and Lesser Noddy. The main work that you may be involved in is seabird monitoring. The work on Ile aux Cocos is conducted through a participatory approach in collaboration with the other stakeholders such as Forestry Services, Discovery Rodrigues, and the local tour operators.

Seed Collection throughout the Island

Propagation material such as seeds, seedlings, and cuttings are collected from various areas throughout the island of Rodrigues. This material is then brought to the Nursery for the propagation of the plants. During seed/seedling collection, you will be able to visit various areas of the island and observe the different plant species located throughout the island.



Wildlife - Mauritius - Flora & Fauna Rodrigues









Rare Plant Propagation in the Nursery

In collaboration with the Forestry Department, a Nursery was erected in 1996 at Solitude to produce native plants for the restoration of both Grande Montagne and Anse Quitor Nature Reserves. The Nursery is also used for training of villagers in horticultural techniques to help in native plant production in backyard and village nurseries. Propagation trials of rare Rodriguan endemic species are conducted at Solitude. These plants have been successfully used for the restoration of degraded areas on Rodrigues. Year-long, there is always work to be done in the Nursery.

Education in the Schools

The Rodrigues Environmental Education Project (REEP) was developed in 1998, and for the first two years the emphasis was on the bats themselves. Starting in 2000, REEP expanded their focus to include a wide range of environmental issues and a specific school programs. REEP conducts regular lessons with 5th and 6th grade children in the 13 primary schools of Rodrigues. In addition, REEP teaches the Scientific, English, and Creole names for plants and animals, and takes students on field trips to the Nursery, Nature reserves, and in the field. REEP is also involved in many of the villages throughout the island.

Main Duties and /or jobs that you may experiences will include:

-  Helping with removing invasive species, planting, and plant monitoring in different the nature reserves.
-  Participate in seabird monitoring on Ile aux Cocos and Ile aux Sables
-  Participate in seed and seedling collection.
-  Plugging and potting of seedlings at the Solitude Endemic Nursery and help water the plants in the morning and afternoon.
-  Assist the REEP Educator to develop and produce educational materials for primary schools.
-  Participate in guided visits in the nature reserves and giving talks to communityvillagers.
-  Help in conducting weekly evening bat survey
-  Volunteers should be enthusiastic and adaptable and be able to work in hot climate (depending on the season).



Accommodation

You will be based either at the field station at Solitude or a local guesthouse/studio in Port Mathurin for the duration of your stay and cooking facilities are provided. All bed linens are provided for either type of accommodation. The field station at Solitude is a 20 minutes walk and 5 minutes bus ride from the capital city, Port Mathurin. The volunteers will be required to pay for and prepare their own food. There are grocery shops in Port Mathurin, where food can easily be purchased. Transport will be provided by the NGO from your accommodation to the work sites. In addition, internet access is available at the NGO Office at Solitude.