



# Protecting the Rare and Threatened Birds of Ua Huka

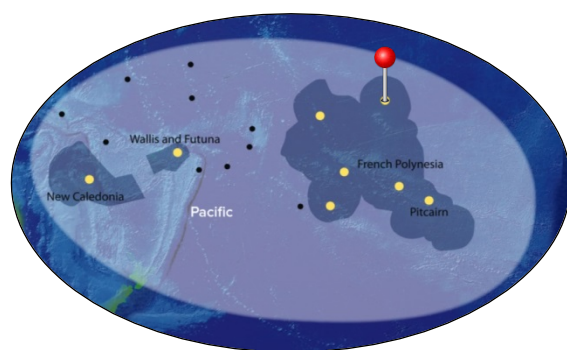
**Targeted territory:** French Polynesia

**Total project budget:** 49,959 Euros

**BEST 2.0 grant awarded:** 49,959 Euros

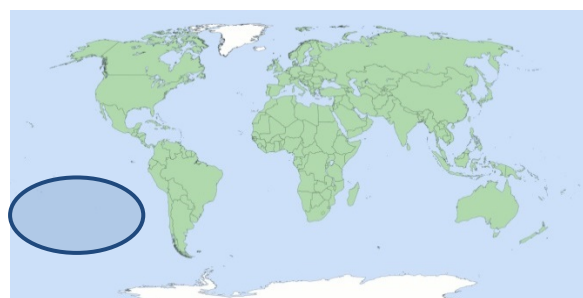
**Duration:** January 2018 – December 2018 (12 months)

**Lead organisation:** Association VAIKU'A



## Background:

Since it is one of the last two inhabited French Polynesian islands that remain free of the black rat, Ua Huka still has two species of endemic birds, restricted to this island and present nowhere else in the world. The Ultramarine lorikeet (*Vini ultramarina*) classified as Critically Endangered on the Regional Red List and the Iphis monarch (*Pomarea iphis*) classified in the Endangered category.



In order to protect these birds the Society of Ornithology of Polynesia has initiated various biosecurity actions in Ua Huka since 2012 which have gradually been taken over by the local association VAIKU'A since 2014. The current basic biosecurity program focuses on protecting the island from the arrival of the black rat. It includes the following actions: the maintenance of rat poison stations at all points of arrival of goods on the island; control of sea freight by a rat detector dog; actions to raise the awareness of school children and the island's population.

Despite the importance of its work, the VAIKU'A association remains fragile to date and needs to be strengthened.

## Description of the Project:

The demands placed on the association to protect the island against invasion by the black rat continue to intensify due to the increasing volume of freight, increasing passage of freight boats and the quantity of freight to control. The association needs to strengthen its capacity and find new means of support. In this context the present project provides for the implementation of a recruitment strategy for members and donors as well as the training of a person responsible for implementing this strategy.

In addition, in order to compensate for the unexpected departure a year ago of two of the three people trained to be dog handlers, training will be provided to the two replacements.

Finally, many sensitization actions are planned targeting the population of Ua Huka as well as the other Marquesas Islands with the objective of transmitting the correct practices to follow when sending freight to Ua Huka in order to avoid the introduction of the black rat.

To ensure sustainability the drafting of a technical and financial assessment of biosecurity activities will be carried out for the institutional partners, as well as a validated analysis of the needs, priorities and solutions to improve the protection of the rare birds of Ua Huka allowing the Vaiku'a Association to develop its future program on the basis of a solid and sustainable approach.

## Intended results:

In order to better protect the island's terrestrial biodiversity, the local Vaiku'a Association will strengthen its capacity to continue and consolidate the protection program for the rare and endangered birds. The expected results are as follows:

- The development and implementation of awareness raising, and the recruitment of new members and sponsors among the population of the island and throughout the archipelago, the Marquesas diaspora and cruise passengers visiting the island to strengthen the support base of the association.
- The training of two replacement dog handlers and a person who will be in charge of sensitizing and recruiting new members and donors.
- Drafting a technical and financial assessment of biosecurity actions for institutional partners and a validated analysis of needs, priorities and solutions to improve the protection of Ua Huka's rare birds in the future.



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