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Conservation of the Critically Endangered Niau Kingfisher by the Local Community

Targeted territory: French Polynesia

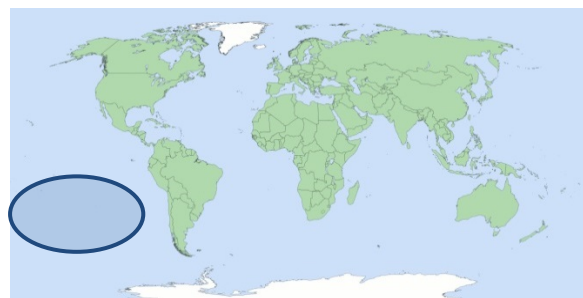
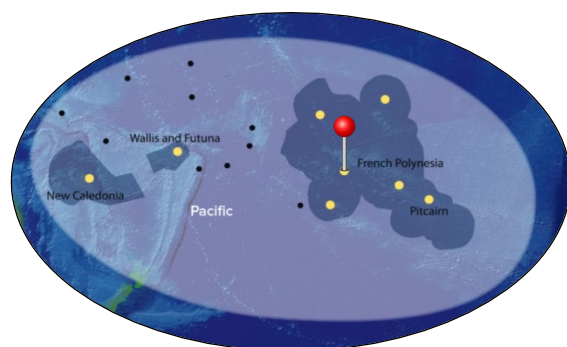
Total project budget: 50,000 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 50,000 Euros

Duration: February 2017 – July 2018 (18 months)

Lead organisation: Association Vaitamae

Partner organisation/s: Societe D'Ornithologie de Polynesie – Manu



Background:

The project will contribute directly to the conservation of biodiversity by focusing on improving the status of a species critically threatened by extinction according to the IUCN Red List. The Niau Kingfisher exists only on the atoll of Niau, in the Tuamotu archipelago in French Polynesia. The island is also part of the Fakarava Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO). The risk of predation of the species by cats is the main factor limiting the growth of the population identified in the Action Plan for the species. Juveniles are very vulnerable to predation because they are sometimes stationed near the ground, are noisy and very naive. Another important limiting factor is changes to the species habitat and the cutting of dead coconut trunks which are used for the establishment of nests.

Description of the Project:

The main objective of the project is to help increase the numbers of this species, estimated at only 144 individuals in 2014, by addressing the factors limiting population growth and involving the local community. The project is based on 4 main pillars to achieve tangible conservation results for the Niau Kingfisher.

- Reduction of the risk of predation of the kingfisher by cats. This action, already initiated in 2015, identified important cat dens. Trapping of wildcats will be carried out on the southeast third of the atoll. The sterilization of domestic cats in the village will also be carried out.
- Evaluation of the actions by monitoring the demographic parameters of the species. This action will make it possible to monitor the effects of the actions undertaken on the survival and reproduction of the species.
- Protection and consideration of the Niau Kingfisher in agricultural practices. Work to involve farmers has been necessary for many years and will be implemented during the project thanks to a charter of good agricultural practices. A plant waste shredder will also be set up to give a concrete alternative to the use of fire for the clearing of plots.
- Conservation of the Kingfisher is evaluated and shared. This project, carried out directly by the local community of a small Pacific atoll and involving farmers, is a pilot project and will be shared not only in French Polynesia but also throughout the Pacific.



Intended results:

This project will increase the survival and improve the reproductive success of the Niau Kingfisher, coupled with monitoring of the species to evaluate the effect of the measures implemented, and involving the local community in the implementation of respectful agricultural practices.

The Species Action Plan of the Niau Kingfisher for the period 2014-2018 will be evaluated and revised for a new period of 5 years. Experts will support the predator control actions and the revision of the Action Plan.

CONTACT

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