

Report Of A Birding Trip To

# Mauritius and Rodrigues

from 9 June till 22 June 2003

**Participants:**

Jan van der Laan

Marieke Wiringa

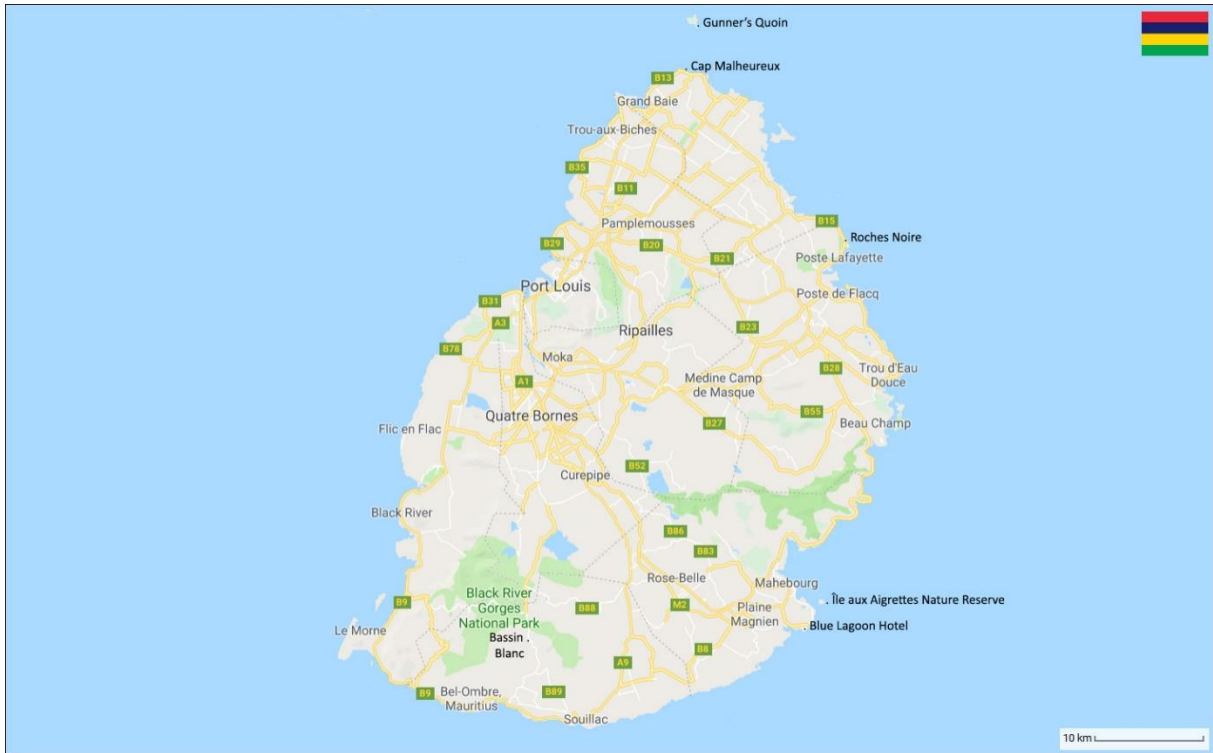
Joop van der Laan



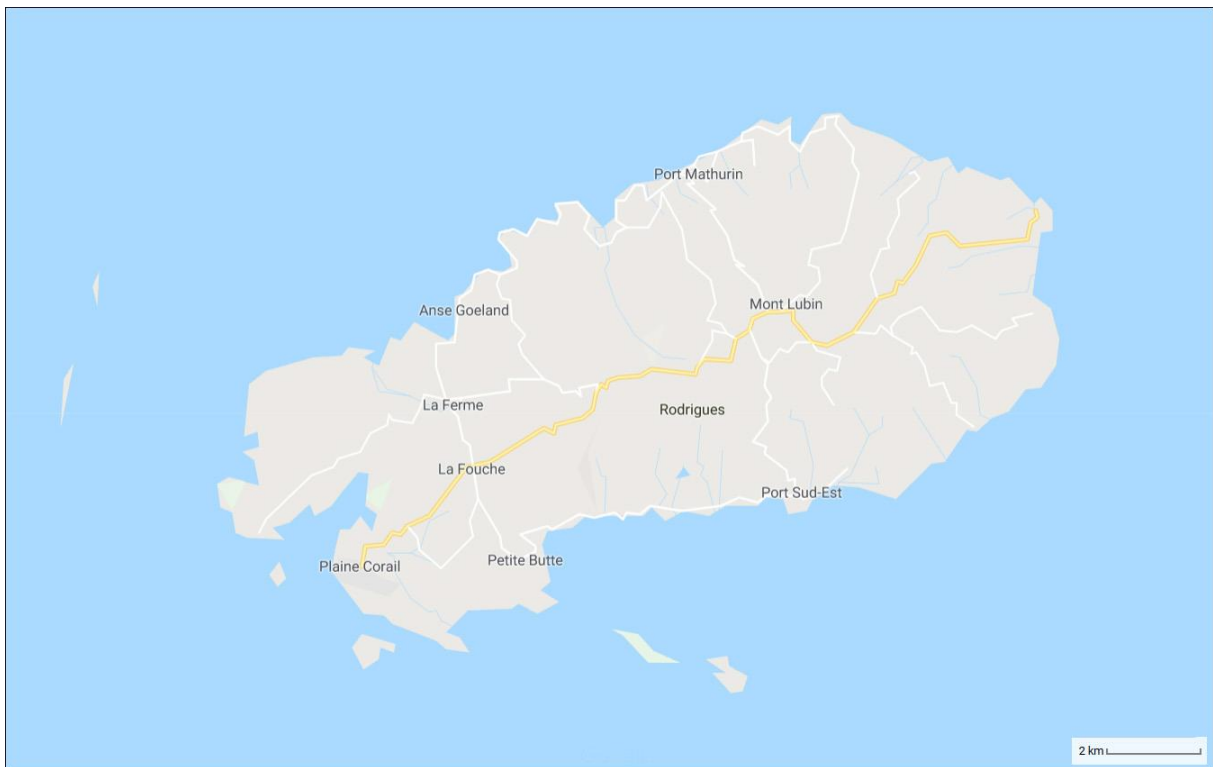
Mauritius Kestrel – *Falco punctatus*; 15 June 2003, Macchabée Forest Trail, Mauritius; © Jan van der Laan.



## Maps



**Mauritius**



**Rodrigues**



## Introduction

Between June 8th and June 22nd 2003 I went to Mauritius for a holiday. Again like in 2002 on the Seychelles I was there with my girlfriend Marieke Wiringa and our daughter Joop. Our main objective was to have a nice pleasant holiday, for me also on the agenda was to see all island endemics plus some photographing. We had it all, although photographing was quite difficult. Most endemic birds are in the forest and there are no seabird colonies like in the Seychelles which we visited in 2002.

## Birds

Birding in Mauritius was not easy in June. Only the Myna's and the Red-whiskered Bulbuls were in song. I would not recommend this as your next birding destination, unless you combine it with a birding trip to Madagascar, Réunion or the Seychelles. Do not skip Rodrigues, a very pleasant island with two nice endemic birds and one endemic mammal (Rodrigues Fruit Bat *Pteropus rodriguensis*).

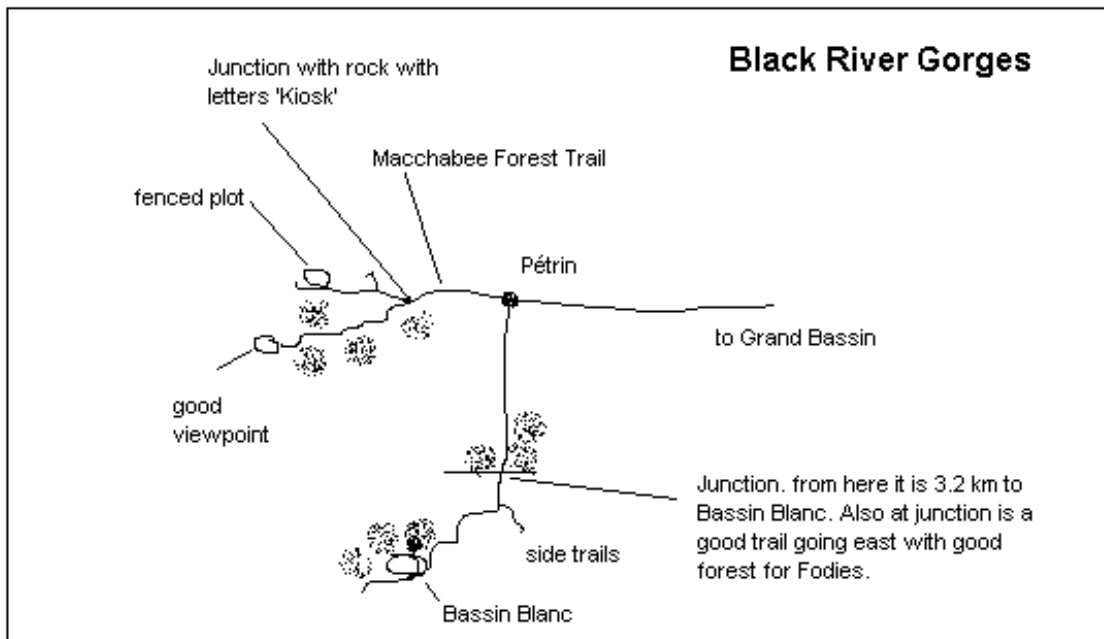
Mauritius and Rodrigues have 10 endemic bird species and depending on the status of pending new research on the *Pterodroma* population on Round Island and the status of the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher, it could be 12.

## Visited Locations for endemics.

To see the endemic birds plus several of the seabirds, you need to visit the following sites:

### Bassin Blanc, Mauritius

This is an old volcanic crater, now filled with water. The sides are steep and has still good forest. The surroundings have degraded forest, either caused by hurricanes or overgrazing. To reach this lake, drive south from Pétrin until you reach the junction that goes to one of the viewpoints (signposted). From here it is exactly 3.2 kilometers to Bassin Blanc. You can park your car at the lay-by and bird from here by sitting silently for hours to watch the trees and bushes at the shores of the lake. When bored, just walk north a kilometer or more to pull your luck. Otherwise there seems to be good forest between the junction and Pétrin (several side-trails).



### Macchabée Forest Trail, Mauritius

At Pétrin, park your car and walk the road (not open to public cars, it is closed with a chain) to the west. After c 3 km there is a junction. On a rock you can read the word Kiosk. A good trail goes left and ends about 2 km later at a beautiful viewpoint.



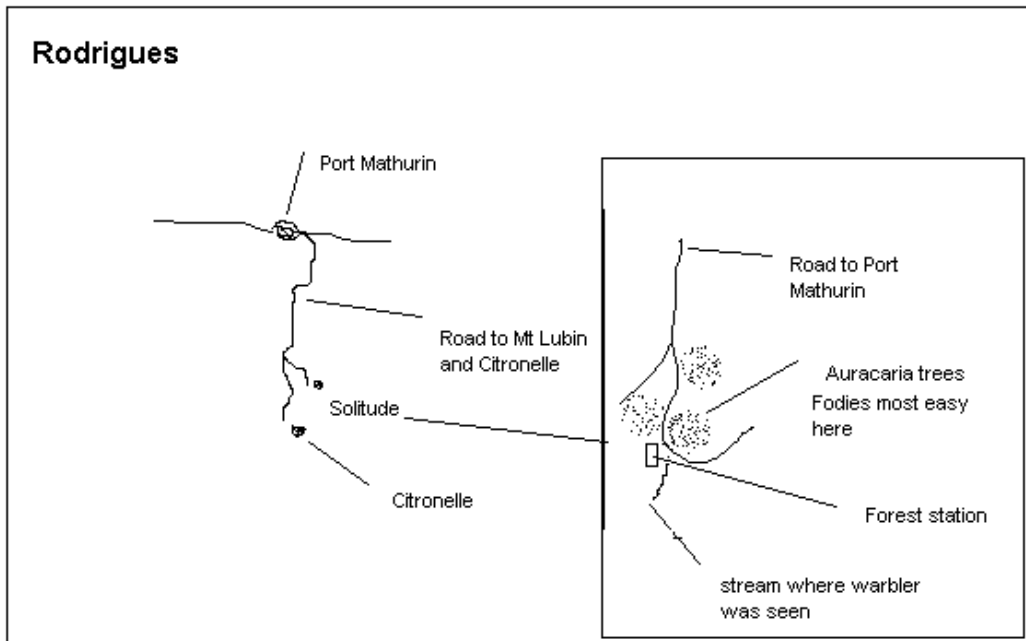
When you take the right trail at the rock, you will eventually reach one of the fenced plots with indigenous trees and plants (keep left). I did not continue there.

### Cap Malheureux, Mauritius

From here you can see the island Gunner's Quoin. With a telescope, you can easily see the Red-tailed Tropicbirds breeding on the large cliff.

### Île aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve

A nice island just outside Mahébourg. Only accessible with an organized tour. Every hotel knows how to get there. Here the Pink Pigeon can be observed at close range, but the Mauritius Kestrel has left the island for the mainland. In July 2003 a captive breeding program will start for Mauritius Fody and Mauritius Olive White-eye. The cages were ready and situated on this island. The island is also nice for all kinds of reptiles.



### Solitude Forest Station, Rodrigues

The place to be for both Rodrigues endemics. From Port Mathurin, take the road to Mount Lubin. After c 2km there is a descending road going to the left (east) and reaches the forest station after c 600 meters. The first house on the right is the forest station. The Rodrigues Fodies can be found in the Araucaria trees, the Rodrigues Warbler can be found more uphill, although I saw one in the gully or stream just behind the house.

## Recommended Literature and Trip Reports

For birding I used the *Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands* by Ian Sinclair and Olivier Langrand, published in 1998 (ISBN 1-86872-035-7). Note that Mascarene Shearwater is nowadays considered not to be a valid taxon, but is most probably an immature Audubon's Shearwater of the subspecies from the Mascarenes, *P (Iherminieri) bailloni* (cf *Birding World* 14:78-85, 2001).

Good information about distribution and numbers are in *Threatened Birds of the World* by BirdLife International, published in 2000 (ISBN 0-946888-39-6).

For travel guides I used Lonely Planet's *Mauritius, Réunion & Seychelles* published in 2001 (ISBN 0-86442-748-4) and *the Spectrum Guide to Mauritius* published in 1997 (ISBN 1-874041-09-1). The last guide has a nice picture of the Mauritius Fody (p 237) that shows the diagnostic bill shape.

The most useful trip [report was by Petri Hottola](#). He strongly recommends to bring your scope and do a lot of sea-watching. He visited Mauritius in July 2002, the period when the southeast trade winds start. Probably that



explains his good numbers of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and other goodies. In his report also advises not to bother the staff of the Mauritius Wildlife Fund.

Another good trip report is [by Jan Vermeulen](#) (who has always good trip reports). From this report almost all other trip reports have copied this sentence: *“Do not visit the park without prior arrangement with the Mauritian Wildlife Appeal Fund. The staff at the Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary are doing their utmost to ensure the continued survival of the great rarities Mauritius Kestrel, Pink Pigeon and Mauritius (Echo) Parakeet.”* I could not agree more.

Other reports can be found at the same [www.birdtours.co.uk](http://www.birdtours.co.uk) or now at the new trip report portal [Cloud Birders](#).

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following persons: George Sangster, Jur en Netty van der Laan, Matty Wiringa, Annet Meijer, Gien Peerenboom, Hans de Jong, Petri Hottola and the [Ward Travel and Tours agency](#).

## The Species Accounts

The order and nomenclature follows [www.worldbirdnames.org](http://www.worldbirdnames.org), version 11.2. Species marked with an \* means these are photographed by me. Species in capitals are endemic for the Mascarene Islands (Réunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues).

Alkmaar, June-July 2003, updates September 2019 and July 2021

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## Notes on Endemic Birds

### Round Island Petrel

A very intriguing article by Brooke, Imber & Growe (Occurrence of two surface-breeding species of *Pterodroma* on Round Island, Indian Ocean in *Ibis*, 142: 139-158, 2000) states that there are two species of *Pterodroma* on Round Island, one that matches Trindade Petrel *Pterodroma (a.) arminjoniana* or Herald Petrel *P (a.) heraldica* and one other that is most probably Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*. The first has no white bases on the upperside of the primaries, the Kermadec Petrel has the white base on both upper- and underside, which makes the picture in *Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands* by Ian Sinclair and Olivier Langrand a Kermadec Petrel!

I spent a lot of hours seawatching, but without any *Pterodroma*. One option is to go to Round Island by boat, but this is rather expensive. There is a skipper called Captain Lindi Vencatassin (tel. 2637275) in Grand Baie that will take birders around Round Island for c 10.000 rupees (c 340 euro).

### Pink Pigeon

I did not see any at the Black River Gorge, although I heard one near Bassin Blanc. They are probably scarcer in winter or have decreased considerably the past two years. On Île aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve this pigeon is common, but I can imagine you will not see this as the real thing. Jones et al. (2013) estimated the population to number 370-380 individuals in total. The species does undergo fluctuations, and over recent years the known wild population has ranged from c 325 to c 410 individuals, while the possible wild population has ranged from c 375 to c 490 individuals (N. Zuel in litt. 2017). It is tentatively assessed that the population size numbers > 250 mature individuals, and so would fall in the range 250-999 mature individuals (BirdLife International 2019).

### Echo Parakeet

Everyone sees the Echo Parakeet along the Macchabée Forest trail. So did I, but to be successfully, please learn the calls of both parakeets. The Echo Parakeet has a very distinct flight call. The population is estimated to have experienced an extremely rapid increase over the last 23 years (three generations). The population increased from < 50 birds in 2000 to 280-300 in 2005 (C. Jones in litt. 2005), and the 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 breeding seasons have shown continued improvement (Raffray 2005, V. Tatayah in litt. 2006, Malham 2007). By March 2006 the population had increased to an estimated 309-335 birds, although numbers fell to an estimated 290 birds by August 2006, probably due to Psittacene Beak and Feather Disease (Pbfd) (V. Tatayah in litt. 2006). Despite this, the population had increased to an estimated 343 birds in 2007 (Raffray 2007) and c.580 birds in 2011/2012 (V. Tatayah in litt. 2010; BirdLife International 2019).

### Mauritius Kestrel

In most trip reports birders see this falcon either at Domaine du Chasseur, the Visitor Center at Black River Gorge NP or on Île aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve. During my stay I heard that the first two were dead and the third had left the island! Therefore the Black River Gorges is now the best place. I was lucky to find one along the Macchabée Forest trail, but I would not count on it. The total population was estimated at 400 individuals in 2011-2012 and the current overall and on-going trend is assumed to be negative (BirdLife International 2019).

### Mauritius Cuckooshrike

The most easy to find of the threatened endemics, although I heard them only! Most birds were at Bassin Blanc and one kilometer north of the lake. You could mimic its song by whistling and indeed the birds will react and come closer. Currently there are probably c.300-350 pairs (C. Jones in litt. 2000), which is interpreted as indicating a population of 600-700 mature individuals, roughly equating to 900-1,100 individuals in total. However, caution may be necessary as the number of pairs is based on counts of singing males, and doubling these numbers may be misleading (R. Safford in litt. 2007). It is possible that the species exhibits a skewed sex ratio, in which case the effective breeding population would be lower than presently assumed (R. Safford in litt. 2007) (BirdLife International 2019).

### Mascarene Paradise-Flycatcher

In all reports Bassin Blanc seemed to be the best place. Another location discovered recently is the Combo Forest Station. This location had 21 territories of Olive White-eyes, 8 pairs of the Mascarene Paradise-Flycatcher and three pairs of Mauritius Fody (source: <http://www.mauritian-wildlife.org>). I did not attempt to visit this site. But, according to an article in the Bulletin of the African Bird Club, the best place is Bras d'Eau (Safford, RJ 1997. Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone*





*bourbonensis*. Bulletin African Bird Club 4: 130-131). This location has 66-89 pairs. In that same article Roger Safford, an authority on Mascarene Birds, proposes to split the Mascarene Paradise-Flycatcher into two separate species. I didn't read the article until I was back home again. Bras d'Eau is a forest reserve between Roches Noire and Poste de Flacq. I stayed nearby for a week, without knowing that!

### **Mauritius Bulbul**

At Bassin Blanc this Bulbul was not difficult and they showed themselves very well in the large tree at the lay-by. Most of the time they stay well hidden, but one time or another they will reveal themselves. In *Threatened Birds of the World* (BirdLife International 2000) there was an estimate of 280 pairs in 1993.

### **Rodrigues Warbler**

This species is easy to find at the Solitude Forest Station on Rodrigues. According to the people working there the best spot is behind and a little uphill the Forest Station (which is a building with a sign MWF). They also will react on hissing and pishing, but will lose their interest when they see you. In 1999, the population was estimated to be at least 150 individuals, according to *Threatened Birds of the World* (BirdLife International 2000 and Showler, DA, Côté, IM & Jones, CG 2002. Population census and habitat use of Rodrigues Warbler *Acrocephalus rodericanus*. Bird Conservation. International 12: 211-230.

### **Mauritius Olive White-eye**

In reports this one is considered the most difficult to find endemic of Mauritius. I was very lucky to see this species almost immediately during both of my visits to Bassin Blanc, although I did not had great views on both occasions. Apparently the best strategy is to wait at the lay-by of Bassin Blanc and continuously looking for a feeding flock to arrive. Highest densities are between Montagne Cocotte and the Combo area with up to 10 pairs/km<sup>2</sup> (C. Jones in litt. 2000). The population estimate of 191-327 mature individuals is derived from 160-296 mature individuals on the mainland (from Nichols et al. [2004] and Ormsby et al. [2012]) and a population of 46 individuals (roughly equivalent to 31 mature individuals) on Iles aux Aigrettes (Ferrière et al. 2015) (BirdLife International 2019).

### **Mauritius Grey White-eye**

Most common of the endemics and typically in flocks of 5-10 birds. Will react and come close when you do some hand-smacking (make sure nobody sees you doing that...).

### **Mauritius Fody**

The best place to see this rare Fody is around Bassin Blanc, the road between Bassin Blanc and Pétrin and an inaccessible small reserve called Les Mares WR. An article in the bulletin of the African Bird Club (Status of the critically endangered Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* in 2001, Nichols, Phillips, Jones & Woolaver in Bulletin ABC 9 (2): 95-100, 2002) states that there are 108-122 pairs, with 60-65 pairs in the Montagne Cocotte-Piton Savanna area (Bassin Blanc is in this general area as is the road between Bassin Blanc and Pétrin) and 21-24 pairs at Les Mares NR. The mainland population was estimated at 216-244 individuals in 2002, with a minimum of 108 breeding pairs, and the population was estimated to have remained at 108 pairs in 2012 (V. Tatayah in litt. 2012). This is roughly equivalent to 140-170 mature individuals. The latest population estimate for the mainland population in 2011-2014 is 240-330 individuals (V. Tatayah, C. Jones and N. Zuel in litt. 2015), equivalent to 160-220 mature individuals

### **Rodrigues Fody.**

This species is easy to find at the Solitude Forest Station on Rodrigues. According to the people working there, morning is best and the birds appear in the trees around the building and can be attracted by hand-smacking.

The population is estimated to consist of 911-1200 individuals (from: Population recovery of the threatened endemic Rodrigues Fody (*Foudia flavicans*) (Aves, Ploceidae) following reforestation, by Impet, Côté & Jones in Biological Conservation 107 (2002) 299-305).



## Itinerary

- 8 June (su)** Departure from **Amsterdam** 16:25 hours with flight AF 1941 (Air France). Arrival at **Paris** 17:45 hours, departure 19:10 hours with flight AF 980 (Air Mauritius).
- 9 June (mo)** Arrival **Mauritius** at 8:45 hours, picked-up rental car (169 euro for one week) and went straight to **Roches Noire** to our bungalow **Villa Pierre** for 7 nights (125 euro).
- 10 June (tue)** All day at **Roches Noire** with some shopping at in the neighbourhood. Seawatching all afternoon produced both Tropicbirds, lots of Noddies and two Red-footed Boobies.
- 11 June (we)** Visited **Cap Malheureux**. From there the island **Gunner's Quoin** is visible. With a telescope you can see the Red-tailed Tropicbird colonies on the steep cliffs and identify the flying birds. More seawatching at **Roches Noire** produced Masked Boobies.
- 12 June (thu)** We visited **Casela Bird Park**. Highlights were the Pink Pigeons, the Luzon Bleeding-Heart and the Edward's Pheasant. All time low were the three Tigers in a cage. Future is orange, but only in cages. Afternoon seawatching produced c 20 flying fishes and 1 tuna!
- 13 June (fr)** I drove to **Bassin Blanc** which took me three hours to get there. Some three hours birding along Bassin Blanc produced a few birds. I managed to find the Olive White-eye, the Bulbul and the Cuckoo-Shrike without trouble. Also the only Mascarene Martin of the holiday. Tried in vain to find **Les Mares NR**, but I probably found **Bois Sec NR**, but no Fodies.
- 14 June (sa)** We visited to the **Botanical gardens of Pamplemousses**. We took no guide, so we could walk quietly in this nice park. We forgot to visit the tortoises.
- 15 June (su)** In the early morning I undertook a brave attempt to visit the **Black River Gorges NP**. Started at **Le Pétrin** and walked along the trail starting there, the **Macchabée Forest Trail**. At a junction there is a stone with a vague marking 'Kiosk'. I took the left trail and that ended at a beautiful viewpoint. Birds were extremely few, but on my way back I managed to find a Mauritius Kestrel and two Echo Parakeets. Still no Mauritius Fodies.
- 16 June (mo)** We left the bungalow at 10.30 and went straight to the **airport**. The car was returned without any trouble, although I damaged the rear outside mirror and had to pay 200 rupees, very reasonable. At the check-in we heard our reservations to **Rodrigues** were cancelled, but in the end we made it for the flight MK130 to **Rodrigues** with 3 tickets for 8500 rupees. Departure at 14:20. After a very nice one-hour flight we reached Rodrigues. From the airport a bus brought us to **Port Mathurin**, where we took the **Tamaris hotel**. After 18:00 hours the town was completely dark and deserted, but we managed to find a shop and bought fruit, beer, milk and water.
- 17 June (tue)** Morning walk in **Port Mathurin**, a nice lively town. At noon we took a taxi to **Pointe Cotton** and stayed at the beach the whole afternoon.
- 18 June (we)** Morning walk in **Port Mathurin**, a nice lively town. At noon we took a taxi to **Port Sud-Est** and again stayed at the beach the afternoon. On our way back, the taxi driver brought me to the **Solitude Forest Station** (which lies between **Port Mathurin** and **Citronelle**, c 2 km south of Port Mathurin). I asked the people at the station where the birds where and they pointed immediately to a feeding Rodrigues Warbler. They said the Rodrigues Fody was common here, but not in the afternoon. However with some hand-smacking several birds appeared in a minute. After an hour I left the place and at the junction with the main road I stuck upon a beautiful adult male Rodrigues Fody in full summer plumage! Took a passing bus and was back in the hotel 15 minutes later. At dusk we discovered two flying Rodrigues Fruit Bats, one of the rarest mammals in the world (c 200 individuals)!





- 19 June (thu)** We walked at noon to **Anse Anglais** and stayed the whole afternoon at the swimming pool of the nice **Les Cocotiers hotel**. Walked back just before dark (again two Rodrigues Fruit Bats were seen in the southern outskirts of **Port Mathurin**) and had dinner in the hotel.
- 20 June (fr)** We took the MK121 flight at 9:30 hours to **Mauritius** and arrived at 11:00 hours. At the airport our driver for the **Blue Lagoon hotel** was already there and 15 minutes later we enjoyed the swimming pool and cocktails!
- 21 June (sa)** We did a morning excursion to the **Île aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve**, where I managed to find the Pink Pigeon, re-introduced there. In 2003 the guide told us there were 87 birds and they were doing fine, although I wonder what will happen with this beautiful pigeon if they stopped feeding them. Other highlights were the Aldabra Tortoises, the Wolf Snake and the very beautiful endemic geckos. In the afternoon Marieke went shopping in **Mahébourg** and I did several hours seawatching. I saw my first Tropical Shearwater. Also several Sooty Terns, Turnstone and a lone Sanderling. Unfortunately no Round Island Petrel.
- 22 June (su)** I took a taxi to **Bassin Blanc** for a final attempt for the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher and the Mauritius Fody. On arrival at 7:10 hours the first birds I encountered were two Olive White-eyes! After two hours waiting I managed to find three Mauritius Fodies, but no luck for the Flycatcher. I hope they will not split the flycatcher into two separate species!  
In the evening we took the 22:30 hours AF981 flight for **Paris**.
- 23 June (mo)** Arrived at **Charles de Gaulle's Airport** in **Paris** in time, but this is a huge inefficient airport, so we had to walk a long way to the departure platform on the other side of the Airport. The AF 1440 flight for Amsterdam was on time. We arrived at 10:45 hours in Amsterdam, but had to wait for the luggage for more than an hour. In the end our buggy was not returned.
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01. **Grey Francolin** – *Francolinus pondicerianus*  
Seen only in the first three days in the surroundings of Roches Noire and Poste de Flacq, Mauritius, with a maximum of 6 birds on 10 June. Introduced.
  
02. **MASCARENE SWIFTLET** – *Collocalia francica*  
Daily seen on Mauritius with daily numbers from 10-50. Some birds were moulting their remiges.
  
03. **Rock Dove** – *Columba livia 'domestica'*  
Common on Mauritius and Rodrigues. Introduced.
  
04. **Malagasy Turtle-Dove** – *Nesoenas picturata*  
Common on Mauritius, especially in the Botanical Gardens at Pamplemousses. Introduced.
  
05. **PINK PIGEON** – *Nesoenas mayeri* \*  
13 June                    1    (heard) Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.  
21 June                    c 20    Île aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve (near Mahébourg), Mauritius  
The birds on Île aux Aigrettes were seen at close range. They are being fed and there are now 87 birds on this island.
  
06. **Spotted Dove** – *Streptopelia chinensis* \*  
12 June                    c 20    Casela Bird Park, Mauritius. Introduced.
  
07. **Zebra Dove** or **Barred Ground Dove** – *Geopila striata* \*  
Common on Mauritius and Rodrigues. Introduced.
  
08. **Common Moorhen** – *Gallinula chloropus*  
C 10 seen daily in an pond at Roches Noire, Mauritius.
  
09. **Pacific Golden Plover** – *Pluvialis fulva*  
11 June                    1    flying south, Roches Noire, Mauritius.
  
10. **Whimbrel** – *Numenius phaeopus*  
Seen daily along the coast in small numbers (1-5 birds), both on Mauritius and Rodrigues.
  
11. **Ruddy Turnstone** – *Arenaria interpres*  
20 June                    1    Blue Lagoon, Mauritius.  
21 June                    3    Blue Lagoon, Mauritius.
  
12. **Sanderling** – *Calidris alba*  
21 June                    1    Blue Lagoon, Mauritius.
  
13. **Brown Noddy** - *Anous stolidus*  
Common at sea at Roches Noire and Blue Lagoon, Mauritius, c 1000-2000 birds seen daily. Also c 10 birds seen on Rodrigues on 15 June 2 km east of Port Mathurin.
  
14. **Lesser Noddy** – *Anous tenuirostris*  
Common at sea at Roches Noire and Blue Lagoon, Mauritius, c 100-200 birds seen daily.



15. **Sooty Tern** – *Onychoprion fuscatus*  
 21 June            c 100    seen from the Blue Lagoon Hotel, Mauritius.
16. **Red-tailed Tropicbird** – *Phaethon rubricauda*  
 10 June            3    seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.  
 11 June            c 100    seen from Cap Malheureux at Gunner's Quoin, Mauritius.  
                           c 10    seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.  
 12 June            c 5    seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.  
 13 June            1    seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.
17. **White-tailed Tropicbird** – *Phaethon lepturus*  
 Seen daily, but in small numbers of 1-3 daily. Also seen in Black River Gorge along the Macchabée Forest Trail and at Bassin Blanc. Also seen daily (1-3) on Rodrigues.
18. **Tropical Shearwater** – *Puffinus bailloni*  
 21 June            1    seen from the Blue Lagoon Hotel, Pointe d'Esny, Mauritius.
19. **Masked Booby** – *Sula dactylatra*  
 11 June            2    (fishing) seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.  
 12 June            4    (fishing) seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius.
20. **Red-footed Booby** – *Sula sula*  
 10 June            2    (adults, identified by the white tails) seen from Villa Pierre, Roches Noire, Mauritius
21. **Striated Heron** – *Butoroides striata* \*  
 Seen daily (1-3 birds), both on Mauritius and Rodrigues. Also one at Bassin Blanc on 13 June and 22 June.
22. **MAURITIUS KESTREL** – *Falco punctatus* \*  
 15 June            1    Macchabée Forest Trail, Black River Gorges NP.  
 Discovered when it flew overhead. Then it sat in a tree along the trail and could be watched and photographed from a distance of 10 meters! I did not see any rings, so I presumed it was of wild offspring.
23. **Rose-ringed Parakeet** – *Psittacula krameri*  
 15 June            c 5    Macchabée Forest Trail, Black River Gorges NP. Introduced.
24. **ECHO PARAKEET** – *Psittacula eques*  
 15 June            2    Macchabée Forest Trail, Black River Gorges NP.  
 Two birds flew over the trail just before the junction to the Kiosk Trail. The birds were not seen very well, but the flight-call was easy to identify. I work in two cities where the Ring-necked Parakeet is common, so I know the calls better than the average visiting birder.  
 On the site [www.mandarinproductions.com](http://www.mandarinproductions.com) there used to be a short sample of the flight call.
25. **MAURITIUS CUCKOOSHRIKE** – *Lalage typica*  
 13 June            3    Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.  
 15 June            1    Macchabée Forest Trail, Black River Gorges NP, Mauritius.  
 22 June            2    Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.  
 All birds were singing males. The song is a very conspicuous warble, a quick flow of 4-5 descending notes. I did not see any of them, although one bird was as close as 10 meters, hidden in the canopy of a tree.

26. **House Crow** – *Corvus splendens*

12 June 1 Port Louis, Mauritius.

14 June c 20 Botanical Gardens, Pamplémousses, Mauritius. Introduced.

27. **MAURITIUS BULBUL** – *Hypsipetus olivaceus* \*

13 June 2-4 Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

15 June 1 Macchabée Forest Trail, Black River Gorges NP, Mauritius.

22 June 1 between Pétrin and Grand Bassin, Mauritius.

1 (heard) Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

On June 13th I did some tape luring with the song of Seychelles Bulbul, but none of the birds reacted.

28. **Red-whiskered Bulbul** – *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Common to very common on Mauritius, even at Bassin Blanc. Not seen on Rodrigues. Introduced.

29. **Mascarene Martin** – *Phedina borbonica*

13 June 1 1 km north of Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

30. **RODRIGUES WARBLER** – *Acrocephalus rodericanus* \*

18 June 1-2 Solitude Forest Station, Rodrigues.

Very easy to find c 50 m behind the forest station. Reacts and comes closer when pishing, but will lose interest once it detects it is you. Very active and constantly feeding, looking under leaves for insects.

The total world population is about 150 birds, but is slowly increasing.

31. **MAURITIUS OLIVE WHITE-EYE** – *Zosterops chloronothus*

13 June 1-2 Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

22 June 2 Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

Although notoriously difficult to find, on both visits, these were the first birds I saw, but on both occasions only cursory views of olive green white-eyes with a diagnostic call (a metallic *tjiet-tjiet*, different from the ubiquitous Grey White-eye).

32. **MAURITIUS GREY WHITE-EYE** – *Zosterops mauritianus* \*

Common on Mauritius. Especially common in the Black River Gorges NP.

33. **Common Myna** – *Acridotheres tristis* \*

Common bird on Mauritius and Rodrigues. Introduced.

34. **House Sparrow** – *Passer domesticus* \*

Common bird on Mauritius and Rodrigues. Introduced. Here we saw what we are currently missing in the Netherlands, male sparrows fighting for a female, a dozen sparrows around you waiting for bread, dust bathing etc. In the Netherlands the House Sparrow is currently getting rarer and rarer.

35. **Village Weaver** – *Ploceus cucullatus* \*

Common bird on Mauritius. Introduced. Only the yellow-headed form was seen. In Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands (Sinclair & Langrand 1998) only the black-hooded northern form is illustrated.

36. **Red Fody** – *Foudia madagascariensis* \*

A common bird on Mauritius, however only a few were seen on Rodrigues (1 in the garden of Hotel Cotton Beach and 1 between Solitude and Port Mathurin). Introduced.

**37. MAURITIUS FODY – *Foudia rubra***

22 June                    3    (all birds in basic plumage) Bassin Blanc, Mauritius.

The popular belief is that this taxon is hard to identify and in winter virtually impossible. These birds were darker-backed and the underside was a uniform dark grey. However, the most easy identification marker is the bill: the curved bill of Mauritius Fody has a convex upper mandible, the Red Fody a straight, almost concave upper mandible. This was even visible in flight (but seen with binoculars in focus and close-by!).

**38. RODRIGUES FODY – *Foudia flavicans* \***

18 June                    c 6    Solitude Forest Station, Rodrigues.

This birds are common around the forest station at Solitude. They will react on the good old hand-smacking. All birds were in basic plumage, but one male was in superb summer plumage and reacted on hand-smacking by singing: a *sweet-sweet* warble, accelerating and descending at the end.

**39. Scaly-breasted Munia – *Lonchura punctulata***

Common (sometimes flocks of c 50 birds) at Roches Noire, Mauritius. Introduced.

**40. Common Waxbill – *Estrilda astrild***

15 June                    c 10    Grand Bassin, Mauritius. Introduced.

**41. Yellow-fronted Canary – *Crithagra mozambica***

Common (c 10-25 birds seen daily) at Roches Noire, Mauritius. Introduced.



Mauritius Kestrel – *Falco punctatus*; 15 June 2003, Macchabée Forest Trail, Mauritius; © Jan van der Laan.