

### PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

#### **Polynesian Ground-dove** *Gallicolumba erythroptera*



**The survival of the Polynesian Ground-dove will depend on keeping rats away from the islets where it remains**  
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#### **Background**

Polynesian Ground-dove was once found on islands throughout French Polynesia and the Southern Cook Islands. Today, just three populations totalling c.115 birds persist on forested atolls of the Tuamotu Archipelago. Surveys carried out in 2002 found that c.50 birds remained on islet of Tenararo and similar numbers were discovered on Morane. There is also a tiny population on the Rangiroa Atoll comprising just 10-15 birds. This extremely threatened population is of particular interest as it exhibits significant plumage differences and may constitute a separate subspecies or race. The species favours primary forest with a dense shrub layer, but has also been found to survive in abandoned coconut plantations that have become overgrown with shrubs and ferns. The principal cause of the species's severe decline is predation by introduced species, particularly black rat *Rattus rattus*. Although Tenararo and Morane are currently free of rats, the rodents are present on several islets or motu within the Rangiroa Atoll. Recent conservation measures have succeeded in eradicating rats from six motu.

#### **Actions being implemented**

1. Work is currently underway to **eradicate rats** from a further four motu in the Rangiroa Atoll, enabling the ground-dove to re-colonise from neighbouring islets.
2. The **Species Action Plan** is currently being revised and updated.
3. Measures to **prevent rat re-establishment** are being implemented on the rat-free islets of Rangiroa. This is being achieved by raising awareness through education and signage, and providing support for land owners to manage tourist visits.
4. Work is underway to support and advocate the **development of protected areas** for Rangiroa, Morane and Tenararo

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5. Fieldwork is being planned to colour ring the population and **undertake enhanced monitoring** to assess productivity and adult survival. The Rangiroa population will be monitored annually, whilst the populations on Morane and Tenararo will be visited when transport is available. **Genetic studies** on all three populations are ongoing.
6. Work is underway to **raise awareness** through educational activities and to develop a **Site Support Group** (SSG).

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