

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Raso Lark *Alauda razae*



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**Raso Lark (Right: © René
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Background

Raso Lark is restricted to the very small (7 km²), arid, uninhabited island of Raso in the Cape Verde Islands. The population size fluctuates and since the 1960s estimates have returned figures between 50-250 individuals. These fluctuations are primarily attributed to rainfall, a prerequisite to breeding. It lives on level plains with volcanic soils and is associated with small vegetated patches along stream-beds. The lark's dependence on precipitation renders it highly susceptible to droughts when populations can fall to extreme low levels. Therefore climate change represents a long-term threat, as does the accidental introduction of invasive mammals.

Actions being implemented

- 1. Annual monitoring** has been carried out since 2001, revealing that the population fluctuates between 65 and 250 individuals.
2. Future **research** will focus on understanding the conditions that permit successful breeding seasons.
3. The practicalities and desirability of a possible **translocation project** are being investigated.



Monitoring of Raso Larks occurs during field visits to its arid island home (© Paul Donald).

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