

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Reunion Cuckooshrike *Coracina newtoni*



Male Reunion Cuckooshrike (© F. Theron).



Société d'Etudes Ornithologiques
de la Réunion
**Société d'Etudes
Ornithologiques de la Réunion**

Background

Reunion Cuckooshrike is an island endemic, restricted to the Plaine d'Affouches and Plaine des Chicots in the northwest of Réunion. Whilst the population was apparently stable at c.120 pairs between 1974 and 1991, since then there has been a steady drop accompanied by a worsening male-biased sex ratio. In 2007 only 25 pairs were estimated to remain.

The species may have occupied lowland forest in the past, but is now only found at elevations between 1,000 and 1,800m. This montane distribution has led to suggestions that it may suffer with climate change, and its tiny population also leaves it susceptible to stochastic factors like disease and natural disasters. The main current threats though are poaching for trade and food, and nest predation from invasive rats. The latter provides a clear explanation for the species's low reproductive success and may also be responsible for its skewed sex ratio.

Actions being implemented

1. Fieldworkers have set up **transects for rat poisoning**, in which bait stations are placed every 25m along a 21km line. This will tackle the primary threat to the species's survival.
2. In addition, **bait stations** have been set up in areas that were previously deemed inaccessible to workers.
3. By monitoring activity at the stations, researchers hope to be able to **estimate the importance of rat predation** in causing the species's decline.
4. The Species Guardian will hold **meetings** to evaluate the success of rodent eradication.
5. Research is being carried out on the **reproductive biology** of the species by studying all known pairs throughout the breeding season.

Supported by



**Species Champion
Urgently Required**