

### PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

#### **Tahiti Monarch** *Pomarea nigra*



**Tahiti Monarch (© Pete Morris/www.rarebirdsyarbook.com)**



#### **Background**

The Tahiti Monarch, endemic to the Society Islands, is one of four globally threatened *Pomarea* flycatchers found in French Polynesia. A further four species have already gone extinct with Eiao Monarch *P. fluxa* and Ua Pou Monarch *P. mira* having been lost as recently as the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. Although Tahiti Monarch is believed to have been rare throughout the 20th Century, by the 1980s it was on the verge of extinction being restricted to just four valleys in the west of the island. Surveys conducted in September 1998 confirmed the species's perilously low population, with a mere 27 individuals (12 pairs) located. Although numerous factors may have contributed to the species's decline, including introduced birds and plants, the primary factor is thought to be nest predation by black rat *Rattus rattus*. Indeed, following the introduction of year-round rodent control in 2004, abandoned territories have been reoccupied and the population has recovered to about 40 birds.

#### **Actions being implemented**

1. Manu are conducting **surveys** are being conducted to identify new territories and birds in areas that have not been surveyed to date.
2. An **enhanced monitoring programme** is being developed that will utilize colour ringing and pilot the use of nest cameras.
3. The **rodent control programme** is ongoing and research is underway to identify the optimal baiting regime to ensure efficient use of staff time and bait usage.
4. A programme of **research on the species's ecological requirement** is being carried out that will inform future habitat management and translocation options.
5. Plans are underway to establish a **site support group** and a **technical advisory group**.
6. A campaign to raise **community awareness** through the dissemination of educational materials and school visits is underway.

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