Species Guardian Action Update: October 2012

Supported by

Tuamotu Kingfisher
*Todiramphus gambieri*

**Background**

The Tuamotu Kingfisher is confined to the island of Niau in the Tuamotu Archipelago, French Polynesia, where the race *niauensis* was represented by 400-600 birds in 1974, and reported as common in 1990; the nominate *gambieri* having become extinct on Mangareva, Gambier Islands, probably prior to 1922. Surveys in 2003 and 2004 estimated the total population as 39-51 individuals, significantly lower than previously supposed, but surveys in 2006-2008 suggested that the total population had remained relatively stable at around 125 individuals and surveys in 2009 estimated 135 individuals. Competition for food resources with rats may pose a threat to the breeding success of this species. The removal of suitable nesting trees in 1984, following a hurricane in 1983, has reduced the availability of nesting sites. The principal threat to young birds may be predation by feral cats.

**Actions being implemented**

1. Research is being conducted on the diet of **invasive rats and cats** to test whether they are predating on young kingfishers, or competing with the adults.

2. A **rat control programme** is being set up through work with the local community. This will be targeted in stands of coconut palms in which the species nests.

3. The possibility of **introduction** to another nearby island is being investigated. Kingfishers have been shown to readily adapt when translocated within Niau, and so if a suitable island is identified and sufficient funds raised there is a real hope of establishing a second population of the species.

4. A **Site Support Group** has been recently established in Niau, building capacity so the project relies less on outside involvement. The group has disseminated kingfisher leaflets and posters to the public.

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**Founding Programme Sponsor**

**Species Champion Urgently Required**

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