

Water for birds: Club installs bird baths for Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher

Title An after school club called the Friends of the Flycatcher is helping to keep [Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher](#), *Terpsiphone corvina* watered. The club based on La Digue, Seychelles third largest inhabited island, has installed eight bird baths on different locations on the island for the benefit of the iconic bird locally known as the Veuve. The baths were set up at the Veuve Reserve, the La Digue School, the Flycatcher Lodge, Villa Veuve, and the Community Centre at La Passe. A source of water is as important to birds as is food. Apart from drinking, water also removes dust, loose feathers, parasites and other debris from a bird's plumage. Bird baths are man-made shallow pools from which birds can drink, bathe, preen or cool off. They are normally made in the form of a basin. Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher favours native Badamier *Terminalia catappa* and Takamaka dominated *Calophyllum innophyllum* broad-leaved plateau woodland in proximity to wetland areas for its habitat. The wetlands and marshes are also important as breeding grounds for insects, which the birds eat. But in the dry season the marshes dry up, and the birds have been observed going to domestic sources of water which places them in danger of drinking detergent and being caught by cats while on the ground, says Josiana Rose of the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA), and the education officer at the Veuve Reserve. "Provision of water baths for the flycatcher will give them safe and easy access to water for drinking and bathing during the dry season that persists for many months," she says. Nature Seychelles (BirdLife Partner) and the SNPA and have been promoting the conservation of the Critically Endangered flycatcher through an advocacy and education project whose aim is to help protect the species in its stronghold on La Digue. The project is part of the [BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme](#) and is supported by Species Champion, [Viking Optical](#). It's under this partnership that the Friends of the Flycatcher was started at the school. Although still in its infancy, the club has been involved in a number of activities including cleaning up the island on World Clean-up Day and planting trees in the Veuve Reserve. The baths are made of fibre glass and stand up to four feet above the ground on a wooden base.