

Tahiti Monarch conservation wins first BirdLife People's Choice Award as new threats emerge

Title

Results revealed today show that Manu (Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie: BirdLife in French Polynesia) has won a public vote to become the first BirdLife People's Choice Award. However, celebrations were short-lived as new threats from invasive species and heavy rain threaten the last 10 breeding pairs in the world.

Looking back at 2013, there are so many achievements to highlight from within the BirdLife Partnership, said Dr Hazell Shokellu Thompson - Interim Chief Executive of BirdLife International. Congratulations to Manu for their work controlling invasive species in the Tahiti Monarch's home range which enabled last year to be the best breeding season since they started their work sixteen years ago!

Manu have been monitoring monarchs, controlling introduced predators such as rats and improving habitat for the Critically Endangered species since 1998. Manu's award-winning work marries conservation education with cutting-edge science. Children raise native trees in their school's tree nursery, volunteers plant the trees, and ecologists worked with volunteers to combat introduced species.

As a result last year saw the most successful breeding season on record; some pairs raised two broods, and double the number of chicks compared to previous seasons. The project forms part of the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme which is saving the world's most threatened birds from extinction.

However, 2014 is bringing new threats, heavy rains have been battering Tahiti for the last fortnight posing a risk to fledglings as they leave the nest. Fire ants, capable of eating adults, chicks and eggs, within minutes, have been found on the edge of the Tahiti Monarch's valley, while funds for the conservation work have dried up.

These conditions are bad for the breeding birds, warned Caroline Blanvillain from Manu. Monarchs need continuous predator control to keep them safe, and if we don't quickly eradicate the fire ant colonies they will reach the birds and kill them.

?We need to act now, the 10 breeding pairs are struggling to keep their nests safe. On Friday, eight chicks had survived the rain, now every chick needs to be given a chance against the rats and the ants. If we can raise enough funds we can make the forest safe for the fledglings.??

In order to help tackle the threats to the Tahiti Monarch, BirdLife and Manu have launched an urgent appeal for funding. Together they need to raise £33,000 to ensure a safe 2014 breeding season. **Please support the Tahiti Monarch urgent appeal.** Your support can provide:

- **£15** will run a rat baiting-station for the next three months as eggs hatch.
- **£30** will run a rat baiting-station for six months as chicks leave the nest for the first time.
- **£60** will run a rat baiting-station for a whole year so fledglings can mature in safety and return to the breeding sites next season to raise their own young.

Please help to create a forest full of fledglings by [donating here](#). Every penny helps.